

# Shady Cove Grandmother Is Log Truck Driver

By CLEVE TWITCHELL  
Mail Tribune Staff Writer  
If you pass a logging truck on almost any southern Oregon highway or back road and see a woman behind the wheel, don't be surprised. It more than likely is Mickey Cooper, 42-year-old Shady Cove resident, who has been driving a logging truck for 12 years.

As far as Mrs. Cooper knows, she is the only woman logging truck driver in the Pacific Northwest, and she's pretty certain she is the only grandmother driving one. She has driven something in excess of half a million miles, and is now in the process of wearing out her fourth truck.

Mickey is Mrs. Alford Cooper, and she hauls for Al Cooper Logging of Shady Cove, "working for and with her husband, hauling about 1 1/2 million board feet of logs a year."

Mrs. Cooper had been in a logging truck just twice before she started driving one.

**Start New Business**  
Her debut as a driver came about when her husband started a new type of business dealing with salvage logging.

It necessitated getting a new type of truck to haul eight-foot logs. The truck needed a driver.

"I'm fortunate in having a husband who has taught me that I can do anything I put my mind to," Mrs. Cooper commented.

Actually, Mrs. Cooper had quite a bit of contact with the lumber industry before she started driving.

"My first job in the woods was at the age of 16 as a flunky in a logging camp," she explained.

"We arose, another two women and I, at 4:30 in the morning to cook and serve breakfast to 75 men in the Walker-Houvey logging camp in Eastern Oregon."

She served, made lunches, prepared vegetables, scrubbed floors and washed dishes.

As the years went on she worked in a box factory, fired a boiler in a steam mill where all the sawdust had to be shoveled, worked on a log pond where she sawed 32 foot logs to length and fed the log slip, ran trim saws in a mill, helped to fell timber with a two-man saw and

ventures of the occupation.

"I've had blow outs, brakes fail, loads dumped, wheels come off, trucks turn over, rear-ends walk out from under the truck when spring hangers were left loose, logs spill out into the chains, people pull out on the highway without stopping and babies get away from their mothers and walk out into the road in front of me," she reminisced.

"And several years ago while I was peacefully following the Cat out through the woods, a snag tree fell on me."

Mickey also reports she's fallen off the truck, had 20-pound stakes fall on her head, been black and blue from putting on and taking off chains, and has driven in snow, ice, fog, rain, cold and heat.

"She doesn't stand back and let the men do all the work," comments her husband. "She's treated the same on the job as the other truck drivers."

"In all those 12 years I've never heard any of the men swear, and I've never heard them tell any off-color stories," Mrs. Cooper added.

Mickey says she is frequently asked if her husband has a truck and if so does he follow along behind her as sort of a chaperone. "People do not understand when I say that he runs a logging outfit. They don't realize that he doesn't have time to chaperone me," she explained.

noting that her husband has plenty to do.

**Running Logging Outfit**  
Running a logging outfit involves coordinating fallers, watching the terrain of the ground in order to log to the best advantage, maintaining skid trails and landings ahead for the cats and fallers to work up to, guarding against erosion, keeping roads open for the trucks, building water reservoirs for summer fire protection, keeping equipment repaired and so forth, she said.

She feels she is well taken care of anyway—by the several hundred other truck drivers on the road.

The biggest single problem facing a woman truck driver is emotional stability, Mickey

thinks. But her co-workers don't consider this a problem for her anymore. "She's driven some narrow mountain roads that would have shattered almost anyone," her husband remarked.

The Coopers started as just a husband and wife team in the logging business. Today they have five employees, and Mickey takes care of the business when her husband is away.

It is not exactly a 9 to 5 sort of job. "I come home when the truck is in shape to come home," she explained.

When Mrs. Cooper began driving the logging truck, her daughter Joanne was just 11, but the family agree that the situation has worked out well.

"I learned to keep house," says Joanne. Her parents point out that she was given responsibility at an early age, learned home management, to help keep books, the mechanics of a motor vehicle and to help in case of a forest fire.

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MRS. ALFORD COOPER  
Driven Truck for 12 Years



12 YEARS BEHIND THE WHEEL - Mickey Cooper of Shady Cove, who may be the only woman logging truck driver in the Northwest, poses beside the truck she drives. She's in the process of wearing out her fourth truck in 12 years of driving, during which time she has driven in excess of half a million miles and been treated to some rather unusual experiences.

## Spring Graduates Urged To Start College Studies

Ashland—High school graduates receiving diplomas this spring should seriously consider attending college during the summer," according to Dr. Bill Sampson, chairman of the education division and director of summer sessions at Southern Oregon college.

Such students find it easier to make the transition between high school and college study. They take fewer credit hours, classes are smaller, allowing for more individual attention, and there is the opportunity of contacting people at all stages of the educational process—whether it be at undergraduate or graduate level—and in many fields, he pointed out.

Another factor to be considered is that most of the summer employment opportunities in this part of the state do not materialize, particularly in the fruit harvesting period, until shortly after the summer session which begins June 17 at Southern Oregon college, and ends July 26, Dr. Sampson said.

**Openings Are Fewer**  
Because of certain labor laws, an economy which demands more white collar employees, and the impact upon the labor market made by the increasing automation of industry, job openings for high school graduates are fewer in number each year, thus indicating that this critical period could well be employed to attend college, he noted.

For the current year, the Oregon state system of higher education has conducted a public relations program directly aimed at attracting the recent secondary school graduate to attend college as soon after receiving his diploma as possible.

Members of high school visitations teams have been stressing the need for an immediate start on obtaining college degrees in order to prepare Oregon's young people for meeting educational demands of the future.

Those interested in obtaining more information concerning the summer offerings are asked to contact the registrar at SOC about courses, fees, housing, transcripts, and other details.

**Staff Members Resign**  
Portland—Three Portland State College staff members have submitted their resignations. President Bradford J. Millar announced Thursday.

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