

“Diamond Match Logging Camp Stories
By The Kids Who Lived Them”

Book Progress Report
by
Bill Dennison & Clifford “Blackie” Gilbert

One year ago, on September 27th we began the venture of writing an historic book that will supplement the Butte Meadows/Jonesville Community Association (BMJCA) “Small Corner of the West”.

The heading of this report is not the final title, but is a description of the author’s intent.

The book will include the Diamond Match Co. acquisition of Sierra Lumber Co. mills and timber lands and the resultant history of logging from 1909 to 1945.

The specific details of the West Branch, Powellton and Butte Meadows logging camps (1929-45) are comprised of personal stories by the “Kids” (78-92 years of age today) that grew up in these logging camps. Their words and photos provide a vivid, positive and often humorous account of camp life and the transfer of their homes (cabins on skids) by railroad flat car from camp to camp.

We are able to provide first hand accounts of how these Diamond Match Kids were educated very well in the logging camp one room schools with only one teacher for all eight grades. Exchanging homework questions while sitting in the limbs of a Cedar tree next to the Butte Meadow’s school was deemed a successful teaching method.

You will be able to share the smells, colors and sounds of all the seasons and experience the wonders of being snowed in during the winter of 1932.

The “Kids” will tell you “What’s In The Woods” and leave you with clear images of their logger dads.

The “Kids” recall the specific, severe logging injuries and deaths, but remember how these difficulties caused a strong bond between the logging camp families.

In addition to extensive, personal interviews the authors have completed research through many visits to the old logging camp sites. First time schematic drawings of the West Branch and Powellton sites will be included in the book.

Nearly 150 photographs are available for use in the final book edition. We expect to locate more photos and respectfully request assistance from anyone in providing leads for anything relating to these three logging camps.

BMJCA members Bob and Kathie Bechard, Carolyn Clayton, Jim and Nelda Jessee, Barbara Mann and Ren Wakefield form a committee of advisors that have become very active in molding the final product.

The authors met with the committee for three hours at Barb Mann's cabin on June 14th. We discussed the size, book cover and quality, the potential book title and pre-sales advertisement. No decisions were reached at that time.

Committee volunteer work included the following:

- Dennison and Gilbert are going to locate a cartographer to draw the schematic maps.
- Bechard, Jessee and Dennison were to review and enhance the quality of the 60-70 photos currently proposed for use in the book. That was completed June 27th and the photos have been preserved on a CD and Bob's computer.
- The current 45 Chapters will be consolidated into 12 Chapters by Dennison prior to our next unscheduled meeting.
- Editing of the manuscript will be put on hold until a revised copy is provided by Dennison.
- Jessee has accepted the important service of providing the final book lay-out, after Dennison has completed and presented a "clean" copy.

The book is progressing well. Most important is our belief that BMJCA members and the general public will find the book to be enjoyable reading, educational and historically significant.

Thank you for the interest and support

Bill and Blackie.