



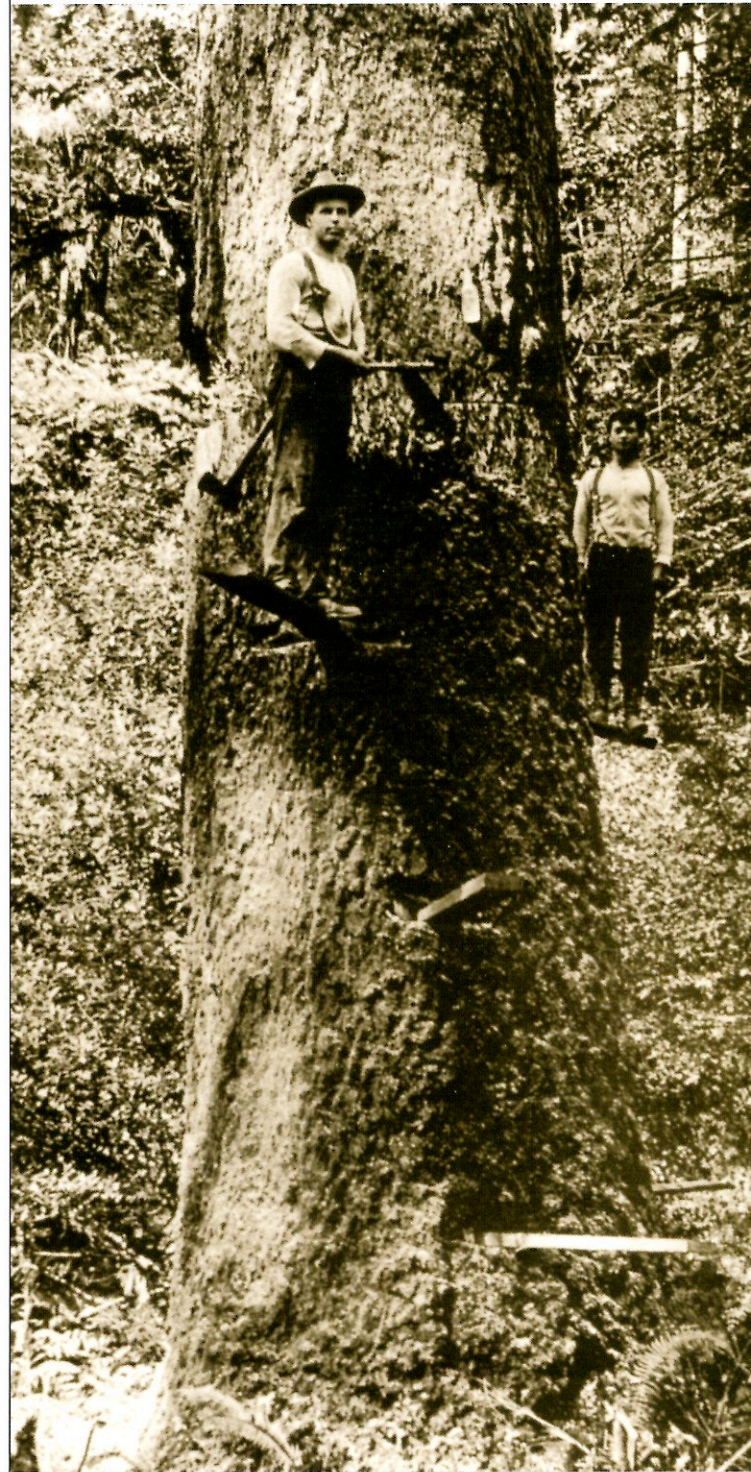
The combination of a bull team and a narrow gauge rail line made for excellent production when the timber was located some distance from a river or slough. Note the log carts behind the homemade locomotive, and how the logs are “sniped” or beveled on the end to prevent hang-ups when skidded by the bull team, circa 1895. Coos Historical and Maritime Museum, Jack Slattery Collection 992-8-0380

might cut the tree ten feet or more above the stump while standing precariously on their spring boards.

These boards, stuck into trees up to fifteen feet above the ground, were used to give the fallers a standing place well above the tree’s often irregular or overly large base. The boards were four to five feet in length and about eight inches in width, tapering inward from an inch at the end to two inches where the faller stood. A metal flange with an angle spur was attached to the part inserted into the tree for added strength. The spur prevented the board from slipping out of the tree – most of the time! Maple and Douglas fir were the preferred species for the spring board. In 1918, a head timber faller’s wage was around \$3.00 per day.

Once these giants were on the ground, the task of bucking the tree into segments created a new set of challenges for the logger. The logs had to be cut into a size that could be moved to water for further transportation as well as handled by the steam-driven saws in the mills. Unless the logs were felled directly into water, moving them from the stump to the water’s edge posed a major challenge for loggers. Oxen teams were the answer. The animals were brought to Coos Bay in the holds of ships or driven overland from Eugene or Roseburg. Their strength was incredible, and the sight of these teams in action was truly a sight to behold. The mechanism developed to connect the animals and the logs was quite ingenious. According to one observer:

A wooden yoke was placed across the necks of a pair of bulls standing side by side with a U-shaped piece of wood called a “bow” placed under each bull’s neck and fitted into two holes and



Two timber fallers in Coos County prepare to fall a large Sitka spruce. Note the height above the ground where the cut will be made. These fallers are at least ten feet above the ground and have used several spring boards to reach the desired height. Coos Art Museum, Victor West Collection