

MEMORIES OF THE MENDOCINO COAST

Being a *Brief Account* of the Discovery, Settlement
and Development of the MENDOCINO COAST, together with the
Correlated History of the UNION LUMBER COMPANY
and how Coast and Company grew up together

BY DAVID WARREN RYDER

With Decorations by Dan Adair



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Contents

PREFACE	Page xi
FOREWORD	xiii
CHAPTER 1	3
SOME HISTORICAL FACTS AND UNHISTORICAL SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE OPERATIONS OF DRAKE AND CABRILLO; TOGETHER WITH NAMES OF SOME OF THE FIRST SETTLERS AND SETTLEMENTS ON THE MENDOCINO COAST; AND PROOF THAT ALL FORTY-NINERS WERE NOT MINERS.	
CHAPTER 2	9
ANCESTORS OF CHARLES RUSSELL JOHNSON—VOYAGE FROM MAINE TO HAVANA—YELLOW FEVER AND DEATH AT SEA—A REMARKABLE LETTER—LUMBERING IN MICHIGAN AND WISCONSIN—A JOURNEY UP THE MENDOCINO COAST.	
CHAPTER 3	13
A TUSSELE WITH DESTINY—A BOY FROM WISCONSIN MEETS A PIONEER FROM IOWA—NEWPORT AND KIBESILLA—THE HAZARDS AND HARDSHIPS OF LUMBERING—BULL TEAMS AND RIVER LOGGING—TRAVELLING THE HARD WAY.	
CHAPTER 4	19
A LISTING OF SOME EARLY MENDOCINO COAST TOWNS—WHEN FIRST SETTLED AND OTHER FACTS—FIRST SAWMILLS—AN ABANDONED ARMY POST.	
CHAPTER 5	24
THE FOREST AND THE OCEAN—SAWMILLS, CHUTES AND WHARVES—SHIPS AND SHIPBUILDERS—HOW LUMBER SCHOONERS FROM MENDOCINO <i>DOG-HOLES</i> REBUILT SAN FRANCISCO IN THE EARLY DAYS.	
CHAPTER 6	27
EXCERPTS FROM C. R. JOHNSON'S MEMOIRS—EARLY LOGGING AND LUMBERING METHODS—JACKSCREWS AND SNATCH-BLOCKS—BULL PUNCHERS—THE SUGLER AND THE DOLBEER "DONKEY" EXPLORING FORT BRAGG HARBOR IN A ROWBOAT.	
CHAPTER 7	31
BEGINNINGS OF FORT BRAGG REDWOOD COMPANY—A WHARF IS BUILT DESPITE A SINISTER MAN WITH A SHOTGUN—FIRST FORT BRAGG SAWMILL IN OPERATION.	

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 8	34
FOUNDING OF FORT BRAGG—FIRST SHIP IN FORT BRAGG HARBOR— THE SECOND SHIP AND ITS FAMOUS PREACHER-CAPTAIN—FIRST BANDSAW ON THE PACIFIC COAST—THE NEW SAWMILL BURNS.	
CHAPTER 9	38
THE UNION LUMBER COMPANY IS INCORPORATED—A RAILROAD IS STARTED—DEPRESSION AND OTHER TROUBLES—SHERIFF "DOC" STANDLEY AND THE CHINESE TUNNEL WORKERS.	
CHAPTER 10	43
A REMARKABLE SAILINGSHIP MASTER AND HIS REMARKABLE STORY —A STEAMSHIP COMPANY IS STARTED—ORDEAL BY EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE.	
CHAPTER 11	48
BITS OF FORT BRAGG HISTORY—AN ACCOUNT OF SOME ASPECTS OF LIFE IN THE NINETIES: AMUSEMENTS—TRAVEL BY STAGE AND BY SCHOONER—ABOARD BY "SLING"—UNION LUMBER COMPANY BE- COMES A "RIVER."	
CHAPTER 12	53
SAN FRANCISCO TO BIG RIVER IN 1852. FORD'S LAND JOURNEY— SWIMMING RIVERS WITH EIGHT YOKE OF OXEN. WILLIAMS' SEA VOYAGE—A LEAKING BRIG AND A NEAR MUTINY. HOW THE MEN- DOCINO SAWMILLS WERE STARTED—FORD'S DIARY—WILLIAMS' CHRONICLE.	
CHAPTER 13	59
SOMETHING ABOUT RAILROADS BUT MOSTLY ABOUT SHIPS. MORE LOGGING RAILROADS—COMPLETION OF THE RAILWAY TO WILLITS. AFFRAYS WITH THE "PEACEFUL" PACIFIC—HOW THE <i>NEWSBOY</i> PLAYED LEAP-FROG IN FORT BRAGG HARBOR—THE WRECK OF THE <i>KRUGER</i> AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SHIPS TRYING TO TOW HER —OTHER SHIPWRECK STORIES—LOG RAFTS.	
CHAPTER 14	69
MOSTLY ABOUT THE FAMILIES, GENERATIONS AND FAMILY GROUPS (AND SOME INDIVIDUALS) LONG IN THE SERVICE OF UNION LUMBER COMPANY AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES. "A PRETTY DAMN GOOD PLACE TO WORK!"	
CHAPTER 15	73
REFORESTATION—ITS PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS. THE DEATH OF CHARLES RUSSELL JOHNSON. A PLANING-MILL FIRE—STILL MORE MODERNIZATION—COMPANY ACHIEVEMENTS IN WORLD WAR II— THE ARMY-NAVY <i>E</i> AWARD—EMPLOYEE INVENTIONS—A GLANCE BACK—CONCLUSION.	

List of Illustrations

The plates face or are grouped after the page designated

Charles Russell Johnson, 1859-1940	Frontispiece xi
Edwards C. Williams, from a portrait made in 1846	Page 4
Jerome B. Ford and Captain David Lansing in front of Ford's cabin	10
Fort Bragg in 1885	10
Stewart, Hunter & Johnson's Mill Creek sawmill	14
Newport chute	14
Schooners loading under apron chutes at Gualala	16
A typical log drive	16
Steam schooner loading at wire chute at Greenwood	20
Suspension bridge to the Island at Rockport	22
Kibesilla in 1879	22
Map of the Mendocino Coast from a drawing by Dan Adair	24
Schooners loaded and ready to sail from Iverson Landing	24
Steam schooner <i>National City</i> loading at Cleone	24
"Putting in the undercut"—before power saws	28
Bull teams—predecessors of "cats"	28
A typical "giant of the forest"—down	28
The first sawmill at Fort Bragg	36
Steam schooner <i>West Coast</i> loading at Fort Bragg wharf	36
Union Lumber Company's Fort Bragg plant in 1910	44
Loading log train	44

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Early stagecoaches on the Willits-Fort Bragg road	50
Fort Bragg's first official Fourth of July celebration, 1888	50
Redwood Memorial to C. R. Johnson	56
The C. R. Johnson Memorial Safety Trophy	56
A portion of the Fort Bragg lumber yard	62
A freight train on the California Western Railroad	62
Early-day log raft leaving Fort Bragg Harbor	66
The original <i>Noyo</i> towing the <i>Philippine</i> out of Fort Bragg Harbor	66
Senior Sawyer George Gibbs at his controls	70
"Choppers" using a power-driven chain saw	70
Typical logging camp in the woods	74
Second growth redwood	74
A "cat" bringing in a log	74
Log truck with a full load	74
A typical Union Lumber Company log train	76
The present Fort Bragg mill	76
Bird's-eye view of Fort Bragg plant	78



CHARLES RUSSELL JOHNSON
1859-1940.

Preface

It was about a century ago that white men first began to see the possibilities of opportunity and a new life awaiting them on a strip along the Pacific Coast in Mendocino County, California: the front door to a vast virgin Redwood forest. Ever since the first settlers arrived there, this area has been known as the "Mendocino Coast." Why its history has not been written, over and over, is beyond understanding; but whatever the reason, this has waited until now. Now, at last, the author of this book—after months of research and long talks with many "old-timers" concerning their own knowledge or such as was passed on to them by fathers and grandfathers—has accumulated a rich fund of information, both historical and romantic, which he has drawn upon to write "Memories of the Mendocino Coast."

This book has been written primarily for every member of the Union Lumber Company organization in order that they all may know about the background of their Company and the part it has played in the history and development of the Mendocino Coast.

By thus becoming acquainted with both the highlights of Mendocino Coast history and with the background of Union Lumber Company, all of us, I believe, will the more appreciate the vision, the courage, and the unending struggle it took on the part of the founders to get the enterprise started, and the tireless effort and thought required of them and their successors to keep it going and expanding down through the years.

It is to Charles Russell Johnson and those associated with him in founding the enterprise; to those who worked with him later, and to all who are now active in the Company's operations, that this book is dedicated.

OTIS R. JOHNSON

December, 1948

Foreword

WRITING this book has been a most agreeable assignment. And the chief difficulty it has imposed has been the necessity of seeking to put much in little; of trying to cover such a lot of ground in such small space. Otherwise, it has been unmixed pleasure.

It has been a pleasure to meet and talk with the many persons who have granted me so much of their time and shared with me so generously their interesting recollections. Without their help this book could not have been written, and I want to thank them warmly, everyone. My thanks are due especially to John S. Ross, Sr., Clarence Broback, Charles A. Strong, David Millar, Mary Floyd Williams (daughter of Mendocino Lumber Company founder E. C. Williams), August Heeser, R. Stanley Dollar, C. Russell Johnson, William Vaughn, Ray Shannon, George Nichols, Alvin I. Hermann, Bert Deems, Peter Lowe, J. J. Tallman, Mary Morton Swales, M. J. Sullivan, Howard Gray, Guy V. Weller, Mrs. L. S. Johnson (daughter of Calvin Stewart), Mrs. Alex McCallum, Mrs. J. S. Cotton, Charles R. Weller, Mabel Forster, "Bill" Morris, A. T. Furlong, George Gibbs, Henry Little and Bessie McDonald, all of whom have gone out of their way to provide answers to my numberless questions, or to furnish me with books, diaries, photographs, old newspapers and other helpful material.

It has been equally a pleasure to deal with Otis R. Johnson and the other officials of Union Lumber Company, who, besides answering a multitude of questions, have made freely available to me all books, records and papers of both Union Lumber Company and the various concerns it has absorbed; and who have imposed no restrictions whatsoever upon what I should write.

Finally, it has been consummate pleasure to write, however briefly, about a region so romantic, so historic, so unusual and beautiful as the Mendocino Coast. Somehow, this region, although thoroughly and agreeably modern, still emits the fragrance of an earlier America—of an America when a man's word was his bond; when work was considered a privilege; when men looked to themselves and their own prowess for security; when tolerance was the spontaneous outcropping of natural friendliness, and when a man's worth

FOREWORD

was judged by the *quality* of his life. Visiting the Mendocino Coast; sojourning there for pleasant intervals; talking and communing with its people on the streets, in their homes and in their places of business or employment, I have been forcibly reminded of the *real* meaning of America.

For America means so much more than millions of automobiles, radios, telephones, electric toasters, and the thousand and one other material things we have in such abundance. Beyond and above all these, America means that precious, priceless thing: *Free Spirit!* In all the world today, here only does Free Spirit thrive. In all the world today, here only does Freedom live: freedom for every man—no matter what his calling, race or creed—to think, to believe, to read, to speak, to worship, to plan, to be! That is the *real*, the authentic meaning of America; and it is that meaning of which I am so much aware among the people of the Mendocino Coast. There, in their beautiful surroundings, they have learned that peace—in a world of storms—is peace of mind. There, in tune with the elemental and in unenvious alliance with Nature, they have learned America's real meaning—and learned to live it.

DAVID WARREN RYDER

MEMORIES OF THE MENDOCINO COAST

*There is a pleasure in the pathless woods;
There is a rapture on the lonely shore;
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.*

—LORD BYRON

Chapter 1 SOME HISTORICAL FACTS & UNHISTORICAL SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE OPERATIONS OF DRAKE AND CABRILLO; TOGETHER WITH NAMES OF SOME OF THE FIRST SETTLERS & SETTLEMENTS ON THE MENDOCINO COAST; AND PROOF THAT ALL FORTY-NINERS WERE NOT MINERS.

As man, in his unceasing pursuit of the facts, has constantly expanded the boundaries of human knowledge, vast reaches of the Great Unknown have yielded up their mysteries. With such speed has this expansion taken place during the last fifty years that, today, the veriest schoolboy knows and considers commonplace what his grandfather scarcely dared to dream. Yet despite all this, and lest we become boastful of our increasing knowledge, we do well to recognize that there still remains much that is not known, and some that never will be.

When, for instance, did the first white man set foot on the picturesque fringe of California which we affectionately call the "Mendocino Coast?" No one knows. Who was he? Again, no one knows. There is, of course, rumor and report. But of exact, certain information there is little or none.

We can speculate. Possibly it was Sir Francis Drake. In the year 1579, after a good season of robbing Spanish treasure ships, Drake sailed along the entire California Coast. He was looking, it is said, for a passage home that would not expose him to the risk of having his own ship captured and pillaged.

It was Drake, on this voyage, who named California "New Albion," and "annexed" it to England in the name of "good Queen Bess." Thus, who today can say—for sure—that he did not anchor off the mouth of the Noyo River—sending men ashore to explore the region, or to obtain fresh water? If so, then some blue-eyed British sailor may well have been the first to have trod the very ground where Fort Bragg now shows its pleasing face. There is a Mendocino river called the "Albion." Why was it so named? And who named it, and when?

We are told it was Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo who was the first white man to *see* the Mendocino Coast. Perhaps, then, he—or some

group or member of his crew—was the first white man to set foot upon it. For this Portuguese navigator, in the service of the King of Spain, sailed along this same entire coast a full thirty-seven years before Drake, and “annexed” it in the name of his Spanish liege. It was Cabrillo, history says, who discovered Cape Mendocino, naming it “Cape Mendoza” in honor of the Spanish viceroy in Mexico. Later he also discovered the Farallone Islands, naming them for his pilot, Farall, and Point Cabrillo, between Mendocino and Fort Bragg, was named for him.

So, if Drake did not anchor off the Noyo River, then perchance Cabrillo becalmed a few miles farther south, sent men from his ship to paddle up Big River—to bring back quail and grouse and fresh elk meat for his hungry crew. If so, then some dark-eyed Spaniard may well have been the first white man to walk over those rugged bluffs from which picturesque Mendocino now looks out on the immeasurable sea.

All of this sits on the broad lap of possibility. Like the number of stars in the sky, no one can prove or disprove it. All of this, and much more, despite history’s countless pages, remains within the wide realm of the Unknown. Amazing, how *much* we know! Yes, and startling how *little* we know!

Thus is history, in part at least, “only the least uncertain of the uncertainties.” If, today, two men quarrel over what they saw but yesterday, how can we pretend to be certain concerning what occurred 1,000, even 100 years ago? We cannot be, of course. We have to rely on rumors, reports and other forms of conjecture—all “the product of human memory and subject to human uncertainty.”

Much of what we have to tell of the Mendocino Coast of one hundred or even seventy-five years ago, can only come from this human memory—from the memories of men and women, some living, some dead. And so this modest book comes to you not as somber, pretentious history, but rather as a collection of fragrant memories; lively, human memories—“Memories of the Mendocino Coast.”

Some of these memories have been preserved in diaries, books, and other written records. Some of them have been passed from man to man by word of mouth. Out of these we hope to spin a



EDWARDS C. WILLIAMS

One of the founders of Mendocino Lumber Company.

[From a portrait made in 1846 during the war with Mexico when he was a lieutenant in the First New York Volunteers.]

SOME HISTORICAL FACTS

thread, slender but shining, that, as it guides us down the years, will lead us along these rugged, forest-decked shores of the Pacific from Humboldt in the north to Sonoma in the south.

The story woven by these memories is a story of men—of men against the forest and men against the sea. For here on these Mendocino shores, the ageless forest and the endless sea have grandly met and intermingled. And here, on these same shores, man, mightier than circumstance, with indomitable will and unflagging courage, met and conquered both.

Where sea and forest meet! Here men of the sea came up out of their ships and made the woods their workshop. And here men of the forest came down to the sea and made of it their turbulent but effective ally. They did all this, these men, but think not that it was easy. All of it was done through harsh, bitter and unceasing struggle; making such demands of human energy and strength, and human faith and courage, as we who live today can scarce conceive.

Out of all this, there could not fail to come a story—and what a story! To tell it as it should be told would take a lengthy volume, and even then it could not all be told. And so here, in this slender book, we can only hope to sketch the story's highlights.

What the discovery of gold did for the developing of California, Redwood did for the Mendocino Coast. When, in 1848, the millwright James Marshall discovered gold in Sutter's millrace, California's name and fame spread quickly to the ends of the earth. And when, in 1851, E. C. Williams, Jerome Ford, Henry Meiggs, and Captain David Lansing saw the vast Redwood forests meeting the sea at the mouth of Big River, the Mendocino Coast soon became the mecca for lumbering men all the way from Maine and Canada to Michigan and Wisconsin. As gold settled California, so Redwood settled the Mendocino Coast.

It seems probable that the first white settler reached the Mendocino Coast before 1851. When the Ford and Williams party came to Big River, they found there a man named William Kasten, living in a rude cabin on the bluff overlooking the sea.

Just who this man was or where he came from, no one now living knows; and reports about him handed down from early days are

mixed and conflicting. Some say he was a sailor from the famous "silk ship" wrecked off the Mendocino Coast in 1851. Others contend he was on a fishing boat en route to Humboldt, when it foundered off the mouth of Big River, and he swam ashore. All we know for sure is that he was there when Jerome Ford arrived from San Francisco, and claimed to have been there for some time.

We know this because Ford, who was one of the founders of the Mendocino Lumber Company, kept a diary. He had made his way overland from San Francisco to Big River early in 1852, bringing with him eight yoke of oxen to haul logs to the mill that he and his partners were about to build.

In his diary Ford states that when he finally reached Big River he found "a German named Kasten (or Karsten) living in a log cabin on the bluff." As near as can be figured out, this cabin stood about where August Heeser's home now stands, and Kasten claimed all of what is now the town of Mendocino by "squatter's rights." Ford bought this land and the cabin from him for \$100. What became of Kasten thereafter, we do not know; although it is reported he went to Mexico.

If the distinction of being the Mendocino Coast's first white settler does not go to Kasten, it may belong to another German. While Ford was waiting for his associates to arrive from San Francisco by ship, he continued making entries in his diary. In one of them he says: "Went up the River today to visit the Germans at their Camp." He fails to say who or how many there were, but afterward identifies one of them as Gebhard Hegenmeyer. A few years later we find that a man of the same name is working for the Mendocino Saw Mills as head mechanic. Evidently it was the same person. Thus Hegenmeyer appears to have been one of the Mendocino Coast's earliest white settlers, and there are those who will argue that he may even have preceded Kasten.

Be that as it may, Kasten and Hegenmeyer (or Hegenmeyer and Kasten) soon had company. By the end of 1852, the "good news" about this redwood region had spread, and there was a sprinkling of white settlers scattered along the Mendocino Coast. At Big River, besides Ford, Lansing, and Williams, there were W. H. Kelly, J. C. Carlson, William H. Kent, J. Scharf, George and Gebhard Hegen-

meyer, Robert White, and J. C. Simpson. And two years later these men had been joined in Big River Township by A. F. Mahlman, G. Canning Smith, L. L. Gray, James Nolan, Frank Farrier ("Portuguese Frank"), B. Britten, James Greenwood, Chas. Fletcher, Manuel Lawrence, Lloyd Bell, Sr., Samuel Bell, Capt. Peter Thompson, Capt. R. Rundle, and Samuel Walts.

Many, if not most, of these men were "State o' Mainers." There is a rhymed saying that "all forty-niners were not miners," and this is equally true of those who reached California during the early "fifties." While most of them, having been lured out here by the cries of "gold!" had a fling at mining, only those lucky enough to quickly strike it rich, or who were born gamblers, kept at it. After a few months, others got into something more stable and certain—farming, stock-raising, or some kind of business.

Some of the Mendocino Coast's first white settlers had tried mining—at least to the extent of going through the chief mining regions and looking the situation over. But that kind of life did not appeal to them. They were looking for something much more fixed and permanent. They wanted the opportunity to settle down, erect houses, bring out their families from the East and build new communities. They found this opportunity on the Mendocino Coast.

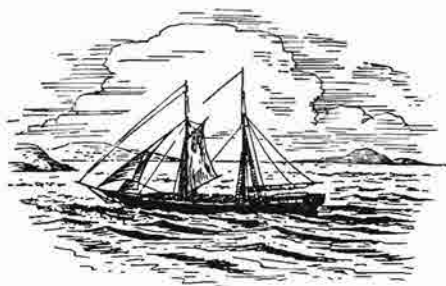
Most of these men knew lumbering from their old homes in Maine. Their fathers and grandfathers before them had worked in the Maine woods, or operated sawmills on the Maine rivers or built ships on the Maine Coast. They were strong, stouthearted, courageous men, and as bold and adventuresome as any gold-miner; but unlike the miner who preferred to roam, they wanted to sink roots and stay put. The miner, hitching his wagon to the star of luck, believed that his pot of gold was "just over that next ridge." The men who settled the Mendocino Coast did not trust to luck. They knew that only one man in ten thousand ever "struck it rich"; that the only sure way to get ahead was to settle down and work hard.

It is fortunate indeed that all "Forty-niners" and those who followed them were not miners. It is fortunate that among the mighty throng which came to California during the ten or fifteen years after the gold discovery, there were many men such as these first white settlers of the Mendocino Coast—brave, bold, resourceful,

hard-working men who wasted no time in chasing rainbows, but settled down at once to hard, constructive work. For it was these men who conquered and tamed a wilderness and laid the foundations for a great new empire.

It is important to repeat, in order to emphasize, that these were the kind of men who settled the Mendocino Coast. Today, after all the intervening years, the flavor of these sturdy pioneers still lingers—through the enterprises and communities they founded, and through their descendants who have built bigger enterprises and communities, but have built them on the same solid foundations their grandfathers and great-grandfathers laid.

It is important to remember this because the Union Lumber Company as it stands today is one of these institutions, founded by one of these men.



Chapter 2 ANCESTORS OF CHARLES RUSSELL JOHNSON—A VOYAGE FROM MAINE TO HAVANA—YELLOW FEVER AND DEATH AT SEA—A REMARKABLE LETTER—LUMBERING IN MICHIGAN & WISCONSIN—A JOURNEY UP THE MENDOCINO COAST.

Someone has remarked that an institution, however great, is but the lengthened shadow of a man. Of Union Lumber Company that is signally true. It is today the expanded image of the man who founded it—Charles Russell Johnson, known up and down the Mendocino Coast for more than sixty years simply as “C.R.” And he, in turn, was but the product and projection of his ancestry. C. R. Johnson was the man he was because he came from that kind of people—simple, unpretentious, hard-working, God-fearing people; with good minds and, above all, good hearts. There is a long record of the Johnson family in England and America, but as this is no place for an extensive family history, we will go back only as far as C.R.’s grandfather, Moses Johnson, who lived in Winthrop, Maine.

Beyond the fact that he was a shipowner and captained his own ship on voyages from Maine to South Atlantic and Gulf ports, we have scant factual information about Moses Johnson. But he did leave a letter which is so revealing that we know from it, as well as we might from a whole volume of facts, the quality of life he embodied. This is his letter:

Havana, Island of Cuba, Nov. 5th, 1821

DEAR WIFE:

We arrived at this place yesterday in twenty-one days from Bath, having had for the most part of the time a pleasant voyage. My health is good, although the heat is almost insupportable. We had permission to land this afternoon, and I would undertake to give you a description of the place if I could find terms to express myself, but that is impossible. My imagination had never painted to itself so curious a scene. I can only say it is a place of uniform confusion. The buildings are all stone and very magnificent. The city contains about 250,000 inhabitants, principally Spaniards and negroes. The harbour full of shipping from all nations; oranges, pineapples and all kinds of fruit in the greatest plenty.

But my dear, I hope you will not be displeased when I tell you that neither the distance nor the novelty of the various objects which present themselves can erase from my mind my wife and children. I hardly knew before that I

loved them so much, and the hopes of returning soon to your embraces is a constant source of comfort to my mind. But as I have only a few moments to write, I must be short. Kiss our babies for me and tell them their father loves them. We have some prospect of selling our boots and shoes at this place. If we should, we shall return home immediately. If not, we shall sail for New Orleans in four or five days.

Please to inform Mr. Clark that we are in good health and spirits, and hope to do well with his property and our own. Mr. Nelson wishes to have his family informed that he is well. I write in haste in the midst of a scene of confusion. Please to excuse all imperfections.

Your affectionate husband,

MOSES JOHNSON

Shortly after writing that letter, Captain Johnson set sail for New Orleans. He never reached there. En route he succumbed to yellow fever and was buried at sea.

That is about all we know of C.R.'s grandfather, but it is enough. After reading his letter, we are left in no doubt as to what manner of man he was.

Moses Johnson's untimely death left a widow with six young children. Somehow she managed, as good mothers usually do, to keep the children all together and provide them a home. As soon as they were big enough, all the children worked to help out. The boys worked at various jobs—whatever would bring in a few needed dollars; and one of the girls was teaching school at sixteen.

Sometime before 1840, Mrs. Johnson and her six children moved from Winthrop to Camden, Maine, which remained the family home for many years. By this time one of the children had grown to young manhood, and set out to make his way in the world. His name was Otis Russell Johnson. He went from Camden to Chicago, and from there to Michigan. In Michigan, he married Emily Welles, and in partnership with her father established a sawmill first at Saugatuck and later at St. Ignace. While he was operating the mill at Saugatuck, he and his wife spent the winters at Racine, Wisconsin, and it was there, on St. Valentine's Day, 1859, that the red-headed boy, Charles Russell Johnson (C.R.) was born.

It was there, also, that C.R. spent a good part of his childhood and had most of his schooling. Those who knew him in his later life, or who read his letters, often commented on his fine command of



Jerome B. Ford (left) and Captain David Lansing. This cabin, in which Ford lived when he reached Big River (Mendocino) in 1852, probably is the first building on the Mendocino Coast.



Fort Bragg in 1885. The white structure on the left, which once served as the Army Post hospital, is the house in which Emily and Otis Johnson were born.

language, and, if they pursued the matter, were greatly surprised to learn he had quit school at fourteen. At that age he fell ill with what the doctors said was rheumatic heart. They ordered his parents to take him out of school and send him to a more moderate climate. This turned out to be San Francisco, for he had relatives there and went to live with them.

In a few months the boy's health was very much improved and being a lively, energetic lad, he wanted something to do. So he went to work in the auction store of his uncle, R.D.W. Davis, in San Francisco—unpacking goods and putting them on the shelves, and packing them up again as they were sold and shipped out.

After two years in San Francisco, C.R. was completely cured, and then went back to join his parents in Saugatuck. His uncle had a store there, and the first winter after his return from San Francisco, C.R. clerked in this store.

Meantime, his father had moved his sawmill to St. Ignace, and in the following spring, C.R. joined him there and went to work for him in the woods.

St. Ignace was a small settlement on the northern Peninsula in Michigan. It was a fishing village, and most of the inhabitants were Indians and French Canadians—the latter descendants of the French *voyageurs*.

Here C.R. spent two years, and always regretted that it couldn't have been longer. For he was fond of these simple, stalwart people, who, besides their language, taught him their attitude toward Nature, and especially their woodcraft. In later years he found the latter of great value, and spoke always of these two years as among the most pleasant and fruitful of his life.

From St. Ignace, C.R. went to Chicago—to learn lumber uses and marketing methods. There he worked for four years in a large lumber distributing yard. He had worked himself up to shipping clerk, and was on the way to a better job, but those two years spent in San Francisco had done to him what they have done to many others—they had put California into his blood and, now, after an absence of six years, he was longing to go back. Soon this longing won out; C.R. gave up his job in Chicago and returned to San Francisco

This was late in the year 1881, and C.R., now twenty-two years old, had finally decided that lumbering, especially lumber production, was to be his lifework. Also, he had as fully decided that he wanted to spend the rest of his life in California.

In this frame of mind he set out from San Francisco to travel California until he could find a favorable location. After travelling over a large portion of the state without finding exactly what he wanted, he stopped in to see an old family friend, A. D. Starr, who had founded the Starr Flour Mills at Crockett, California.

Starr had often told C.R. about the great redwoods of northern California, and now he spoke of them again. Why didn't the young man go up and take a look at them? C.R. thought it might be a good idea, and wondered if Starr couldn't go along and act as his guide. Starr agreed, and in a day or so the two set out together. From San Francisco to Cloverdale they went by train. There they took a buckboard stage through Anderson Valley to Navarro. The whole trip required two full days, and the last several hours of the stage ride was in a drenching rain.

However, no amount of rain could quench C.R.'s enthusiasm for the redwoods his friend showed him; and the more of them he saw, the more he wanted to see. So they hired a team and wagon and made their way on north, passing through an abandoned Army Post called Fort Bragg in order to reach what they had been told was a very lively lumbering town—Westport.



Chapter 3 A TUSSELE WITH DESTINY—A BOY FROM WISCONSIN MEETS A PIONEER FROM IOWA—NEWPORT AND KIBESILLA—THE HAZARDS & HARDSHIPS OF LUMBERING—BULL TEAMS AND RIVER LOGGING—TRAVELLING THE HARD WAY.

It is always interesting, in looking back over the life of a man or an institution, to observe what a tiny weight will tip the scales of fate. Thus, if C. R. Johnson had not talked with his friend Starr just when he did, he might have gone into the pine region instead of the redwood to launch his lumbering operations; in which case his history, and that of the Mendocino Coast for the past seventy years, would have been entirely different. How a man's destiny is fixed—if, indeed, it is fixed—we can only guess; the wisest men of the ages have never been able to tell us.

However that may be, C. R. Johnson had a rendezvous with fate the day he and his good friend, Starr, drove along the Mendocino Coast toward Westport. For a few miles south of Westport he met two men who were operating a sawmill nearby.

C.R. liked the two men at once. He liked their frankness and friendliness; and when they showed him their mill, he liked that, too. It wasn't a very large mill, but it was being well operated and it had possibilities.

The names of these two men were Calvin Stewart and James Hunter. They were brothers-in-law as well as partners, and their sawmill was at Mill Creek on Ten Mile River, not far from the little village of Kibesilla. Of the two men, Calvin Stewart was the elder, and already had had a colorful career. Born in Iowa, as a boy of five he had crossed the plains with his parents in a covered wagon. The family went first to Washington Territory, but after going through an Indian uprising there, moved to California; settling first in San Mateo County, and moving thence to a place on the Sonoma County coast which was later named for them—Stewart's Point. In 1872, Calvin Stewart established a shipping point at Bridgeport Landing. Three years later he moved to the Ten Mile River section and put in a shipping point at Newport. About this time his brother-in-law, James Hunter, came from Vallejo to join him, and the firm of Stew-

art & Hunter constructed and operated the sawmill on Mill Creek.

When C.R. bought into this firm, it was the beginning of a long business association and a lifelong friendship between himself and Stewart. Stewart came with him to Fort Bragg and helped establish the Fort Bragg Redwood Company and later the Union Lumber Company. He served on the first town council with C.R., and in 1891 helped organize and became president of the Fort Bragg Bank. About 1897, Stewart sold out of Union Lumber Company and moved to Bear Harbor, where he organized the Bear Harbor Lumber Company. Ten years later he moved to Petrolia, Humboldt County; forming the Mattole Lumber Company and establishing a shipping point at the mouth of the Mattole River. There he remained; and there, in November, 1938, at the age of ninety-one, his eventful life ended.

When C.R. first met them, Stewart & Hunter were hauling their lumber with horse teams to an ocean shipping point called Newport which was about five miles from the mill. Here, small lumber schooners came in close enough to the shore so that the lumber could be loaded on them by means of a wooden chute which extended from the bluff above to the vessel below. They put the lumber in this chute, a piece at a time, and it slid down onto the deck of the ship.

C. R. Johnson watched the mill operate; then he went down to Newport and watched them load the lumber on a ship. Then he spent some time looking over timber—not only that owned by Stewart & Hunter, but throughout the whole surrounding region, and then he acted. Would Stewart & Hunter take in a partner? They would! How much would a third interest cost him? They named the price, and C.R. left immediately for Michigan to see if he could raise the money.

In Michigan, C.R. went to his father, Otis Russell Johnson, told him the whole story and asked him for the necessary financial backing. It was an important decision for his father to make. The amount of money involved would not be considered large today, but it was a good sized sum then. Besides, this decision would put O. R. Johnson into redwood lumber, and he was a *pine* man. It wasn't a question he could decide in a minute—the discussion con-



Stewart, Hunter & Johnson's Mill Creek sawmill. Here, in 1882, C. R. Johnson began his redwood lumbering career.



Newport Chute. By means of a wooden chute, lumber from Stewart, Hunter & Johnson's mill was here loaded aboard little lumber schooners.

sidered all aspects of lumbering continuing throughout many days.

Here again it is most interesting to watch the play of fate. If C. R. Johnson had been a less persuasive talker—he was still only a boy—or if he had been a little less enthusiastic about the Mendocino Redwoods; or not quite so ready with his facts; if any of these factors had prevailed C.R.'s father might have said "no," and the Union Lumber Company would never have been born.

However, C.R. was most enthusiastic about redwood lumbering; he had all the facts and figures, and so, despite his youth, he put up a convincing talk; so convincing that his father said "yes." And so it happened that, away back in a little town in Michigan in the fall of the year 1882, the foundations of Union Lumber Company were laid. For when O. R. Johnson said "yes" to his son's request for the money to buy into the Stewart & Hunter sawmill near Newport on the Mendocino Coast—that was in reality the beginning of the Union Lumber Company.

After receiving his father's fateful answer, C.R. lost no time in getting back to California and the Mendocino Coast. They changed the name of the firm from Stewart & Hunter to Stewart, Hunter & Johnson, and made C.R. vice-president. That was in December, 1882, and C.R. was twenty-three years old.

The old saying that "mighty oaks from tiny acorns grow," finds ready exemplification in the history of the Union Lumber Company. Compared to the size of the "oak" now standing at Fort Bragg, and whose sturdy branches shelter so much of the Mendocino Coast, the sawmill operated by Stewart, Hunter & Johnson at Mill Creek, was a pretty small acorn, and no one at the time could have believed it would grow into such a massive tree.

Calvin Stewart and James Hunter were honest, industrious, hard-working men, and it is no disparagement of them to say that C.R.'s joining them was the thing that changed this little lumbering enterprise from a static to a dynamic one. "Youth is always right," someone has said; and while this may not always pan out, when youth and age combine and work hard together, it is a hard team to beat. With youth's enthusiasm and tireless energy harnessed to the experience and wisdom of age, you are pretty sure to go places.

So it proved with the firm of Stewart, Hunter & Johnson. The

“push” of C. R. Johnson’s youthful energy was felt right away. Its first manifestation was in the decision to operate the mill nights as well as days. The night shift then was something unheard of, and all sorts of objections to it were raised. But C.R. convinced his partners that none of them was valid and persuaded them to give it a trial. The trial proved a complete success, and increased production substantially. Next, C.R. suggested various improvements, including more boilers, and some donkey engines of an improved type which had just come out. These improvements were expensive but Stewart and Hunter agreed to them; and, together with the night shift they doubled the mill’s production. The “acorn” had taken root and begun to grow.

In 1882, when C. R. Johnson bought into Stewart & Hunter’s sawmill at Mill Creek, lumbering was in full swing all along the Mendocino Coast. There were some twenty sawmills operating at the time, from Usal in the north to Gualala near the Sonoma County line. Most of them were located on rivers or good sized streams—Elk Creek, the Navarro, Salmon Creek, the Albion, Little River, Big River, Russian Gulch, Caspar Creek, the Noyo, Ten Mile, Mill Creek; all these streams, and others, at one time or another had sawmills on or near them. Some mills were larger than others, but all of them operated along the same general lines. The logs were cut in the summer and early fall, hauled to the river banks by bull teams, and rolled into the beds of the streams. There, in huge piles, they would lie until the first freshets of winter lifted and floated them down to the mills. A series of booms, constructed near the mills, usually operated to catch and hold the logs. Occasionally, however, a big freshet would carry away the booms and sweep everything out to sea. Then the mill-owner would watch his whole summer’s work go glimmering. Not only would he lose the thousands of dollars which the logs, and the labor of cutting them, represented, but with no logs to saw, he would have to shut down the mill, perhaps for many weeks, until he could get a new supply. This was one of the hazards of sawmill operations in C.R.’s early days in the industry, and it is little wonder that many an operator went broke. Only the most resourceful and stouthearted survived.

There were many other hazards and difficulties then, which are



Two sailing schooners loading under apron chutes; two others waiting to come in at Gualala.



Log drive. In the summer thousands of logs were rolled into stream beds. Winter freshets floated them down to the sawmills, and sometimes—out to sea.

only barely remembered today. From our modern standpoint, everything was then done "the hard way." It was done that way not through choice but through necessity—*there was no other way*. The only way of lifting or turning or manipulating a big log was by means of the hand-operated "jackscrew," a really wonderful tool for its time, but one which required skillful hands and a strong back. The only means of hauling logs out of the woods, when they had been cut, and down to the streams whence they could be floated to the mill, was by ox or bull teams. (A few horse teams were used, but generally speaking the work was too gruelling for them.) The bull team, with its bull puncher—who was usually the highest paid man in the woods except the logging boss—was a very effective agency for its purpose in our grandfathers' time, but the skill and labor its successful operation entailed, on the part of both man and beast, is scarcely conceivable today. Dozens of other things that in sawmill operations today are comparatively quick, easy, and safe, were then slow, painfully hard and desperately dangerous. Thus today, as, by the pushing of a button or the pulling of a lever, we do easily and quickly by machinery a hundred and one things that fifty or sixty years ago all had to be done by hard hand-labor, we marvel that the men of those days were able to do those things at all. Yet C. R. Johnson and the other sawmill men of early days not only did all these things, but did them—even by modern standards of perfection—remarkably well.

It was, for one thing, an age in which men were not afraid of hard work; indeed relished it. It was an age also in which men were not beguiled into believing they could get something for nothing. They wanted to get something, to get somewhere, and so they were quite willing to work hard for it. Moreover, they were used to hardships. Some of them were men who had crossed the plains in the fifties and sixties—braving desert heat and blizzards and hostile Indians to reach this new promised land. Having conquered all these, lesser vicissitudes could not daunt them, and they instilled into their sons the same courageous refusal to be deterred or discouraged by great and recurring hardships. It is well for the Mendocino Coast that it was early peopled by such men. By such men, and also by such women. For the wives and daughters of those men were no less

courageous, no more deterred by difficulties, no more afraid of vicissitude.

Listen to this: It took Mrs. W. H. Kent and Mrs. W. F. Hill—the first two white women to reach the Mendocino Coast—nearly a week to make the trip from San Francisco to Big River in 1855. They travelled from San Francisco to Petaluma by boat and spent the night there. The next morning they took a carriage for Cloverdale, paying \$20 each. At noon they stopped at Santa Rosa for lunch; and, between there and Petaluma, saw but one house. From Santa Rosa they continued by carriage, getting as far as the Widow Fitch's place, near Healdsburg, by dark, and stayed over there. The next morning, after a breakfast of "hot sheep," they started out again. They had to be ferried across the Russian River in a small skiff; the horses being led after them and swimming across. By evening, at the end of the third day, they were at Cloverdale, stopping at the well-known Markell's House. From Cloverdale to Mendocino City there was no road—only a trail—and Indian ponies were hired for this leg of the trip. The trail they travelled led up through Anderson Valley, coming out on the coast below Greenwood Creek, and then following the coast to Big River.

Think of it! Six long, hard days of travelling for a trip that now can be easily made by automobile in four or five hours in perfect comfort, or in a matter of minutes by air! And yet these women never complained; in fact took it all as a matter of course. And they were no exceptions. Other women who soon followed them to the Mendocino Coast to join their husbands underwent the same hardship without flinching or complaining.

It was well that the Mendocino Coast attracted such men and women. Peopled by them, and imbued with their indomitable spirit, it has battered down encroaching obstacles and conquered hard times and depressions.

Chapter 4 A LISTING OF SOME EARLY MENDOCINO COAST TOWNS—WHEN FIRST SETTLED AND OTHER FACTS— FIRST SAWMILLS—AN ABANDONED ARMY POST.

The Mendocino Coast, though out of its infancy when C. R. Johnson joined it in 1882, was still in its seething youth. Though never quite as tempestuous and unruly as in some of the mining regions, life on the Mendocino Coast in its early days scarcely could have been called mild or effeminate. Sawmill towns were somewhat more stable than mining towns; logging camps were generally less turbulent than mining camps, but in both there was the same lusty, boisterous spirit. Sometimes it broke out of bounds and promoted trouble, but mostly it was channelled into fruitful accomplishment. It may not have been exactly sedate and delicate, but it was healthy and productive.

As in the mining towns, some men drank and gambled their earnings away. And some few indulged in violence. But by and large the people of the Mendocino Coast—even in the earlier days—were peaceful and law abiding. Some came there who were not, of course, but usually they did not tarry long. The decent folks ran them out. There were one or two outbursts of lawlessness along the Coast—the “Mendocino Outlaws” for instance—but the constituted authorities aided by the aroused and resolute citizenry quickly stamped them out. Crime, and especially organized crime, never thrived in communities composed of the kind of people who settled the Mendocino Coast. Men who set out to conquer and tame a wilderness have no time or tendency for crime.

In 1881 when C. R. Johnson made his trip up the Mendocino Coast with his friend A. D. Starr, there were little towns or settlements at Fish Rock, Point Arena, Bridgeport Landing, Cuffy’s Cove, Navarro, Salmon Creek, Albion, Little River, Mendocino City, Pine Grove, Caspar, Noyo, Kibesilla, Newport, Westport, Rockport and Bear Harbor.

Mendocino City was by far the largest of these at the time; with three hotels, four or five general stores, two banks, a newspaper, two drug stores, several restaurants, a saddlery, a millinery shop,

three livery stables, a barber shop, jewelry store, and meat market. Also two churches, a Good Templars lodge, and a public school. The population was about seven hundred. One of the banks had been founded in 1870, the other in 1871. The newspaper, the *Mendocino Beacon* was started October 6, 1877, by William Heeser. (His nephew August Heeser publishes the same paper today.)

It was here at Mendocino that the first sawmill in the county had been started in 1851 by Jerome Ford, E. C. Williams and Harry Meiggs; and it was this sawmill which had made the town. In fact, the first business building there was a store, run by the mill company, which opened in 1853. Soon after that Fred Heldt started a saloon and a year later added a stock of general merchandise. Other business firms came in fairly rapid succession, and in 1859, when the county boundaries were fixed by the State Legislature and a county government provided, there was much talk of making Mendocino City the county seat instead of Ukiah.

Next to Mendocino City in size came Point Arena. It was a shipping port for potatoes, peas, beans and other agricultural products, and the center of a lively business in ties, posts, tanbark, etc. There were three general stores, several saloons, a hardware store, meat market, millinery, livery stable, three hotels, three churches, a grammar school, and a volunteer fire department. The population numbered about 500. Steamers came in regularly, and "Steamer Day," which was every Wednesday, saw the town full of teams bringing in farm products, and butter, eggs, chickens, etc., from the surrounding area for shipment to San Francisco.

Credited with being the first settlers in Point Arena were the Campbell and Bush families, who arrived in 1855; to be followed soon—either there or in the adjoining area—by the Shoemaker, Wright, O'Neill, Morse, Scott, McMullen, Hoyt, Hunter, and Stewart families. The Stewarts—T. J. and Calvin—settled first several miles below Point Arena at a place which was later named for them—Stewart's Point. Afterwards they came to Point Arena and in 1872 established a shipping point at Bridgeport Landing. Three years later Calvin Stewart moved on to Ten Mile River and with James Hunter took over an old sawmill on Mill Creek, rebuilt it, and established a lumber shipping point at Newport. It was in this firm



Steam schooner *Whitesboro* loading at L. E. White Company's wire chute at Greenwood.

and in this sawmill that C. R. Johnson bought a third interest in December, 1882. Subsequently Hunter sold out; but Calvin Stewart and C.R. were associated for many years; coming to Fort Bragg together to establish a sawmill and a town, and the Stewart and Johnson families became lifelong friends.

Point Arena's first business building was a store erected in 1859 by a man named Wilsey. A second store was opened later the same year; followed closely by various other business concerns. In 1866 the first wharf was built, and from this dates the town's importance as an early shipping port. In the seventies several chutes were built in the harbor; one of them by the L. E. White Lumber Company which had a good sized lumbering operation near Point Arena.

Gualala, Bowen's Landing, and Fish Rock to the south, and Manchester and Bridgeport Landing to the north were among the small settlements in the Point Arena region that were in their heyday when C. R. Johnson made his first tour of the Mendocino Coast. Salmon Creek, Albion, and Little River, were also along this route. All three had been settled early; all three were the sites of extensive lumbering operations; all three were important shipping points, and Little River had gained additional fame as a shipbuilding port.

Passing on up the coast, the route led through Pine Grove and Caspar; Pine Grove whose first settler was Capt. Peter Thomson who ran a band of cattle there in 1853, and Caspar which was named for an unknown German who settled there at an unknown date. There, where Caspar Creek met the ocean, a sawmill had been built in 1861 by Kelly and Rundle who sold it three years later to J. G. Jackson. Around the mill a small settlement had grown up—a store and thirty or forty dwelling houses. Years later, J. G. Jackson's daughter, Abbie, succeeded him as President of the Caspar Lumber Company, and managed the company ably for many years. She was succeeded by her younger son, Casimar J. Wood, who is now the company's president. Mr. Wood's older half-brother, Clarence E. DeCamp, became manager of the plant at Caspar when he was only twenty. He died in 1947, after having spent sixty-eight years of his useful life as a highly constructive figure in the Redwood industry.

Leaving Caspar, C.R. passed into Ten Mile Township; and now encountered no more of those little towns he had found every few miles in Big River Township. In one place he did notice a few old buildings, but they were vacant and run-down, and he learned that they were the remnants of an old Army post and Indian reservation which had been abandoned in 1867, when all the Indians were moved to Round Valley.

Soon after passing the abandoned Army Post, C.R. reached Newport; and there, as we know, he met his fate and stopped. Had he gone on to the Humboldt line, he would have found several more busy little settlements—Westport, Rockport, Usal, Northport, Little Jackass Gulch, Needle Rock, Bear Harbor—all centers of lumbering operations and, at the time, important shipping points for lumber, ties and other split products.

Lloyd Beall is credited with being Westport's first white settler, and to have reached there somewhere about 1860; followed closely by Alfred Neyes, and, within a year or two by E. J. Whipple and M. C. Dougherty. Dougherty is supposed to have built the first chute, which was used for shipping potatoes. In the late seventies a man named J. T. Rogers built a wharf and chute which was capable of handling 150,000 feet of lumber a day. Thereafter Westport grew rapidly, and became a busy place, annually shipping thousands of cords of tan oak bark, thousands of split ties and millions of feet of lumber.

A man named Leonard Dodge is said to have been the first white settler at Rockport, or, as it was first called, Cottoneva, but the exact date of his arrival is not fixed. A. J. Lowell and Henry Devilbis came soon after. In 1876 W. R. Miller built a fine wharf and chute at Rockport and a year later a large sawmill. Wharf, chute and mill were claimed to be, at the time, among the finest on the coast.

Still farther north, over steep, narrow roads that clung perilously to the cliffs of the rugged shoreline, lay Usal, Northport, Little Jackass Gulch, Needle Rock, and, finally, near the farthest reaches of the county, Bear Harbor. White men had first come to this bleak region in the sixties; and in 1882, when C. R. Johnson cast his lot on the Mendocino Coast, all these points were busy



Suspension bridge to the Island at Rockport where wire chute was located.



Kibesilla in 1879. It was to this thriving village that C. R. Johnson brought his bride in 1884.

EARLY MENDOCINO COAST SETTLEMENTS

lumbering or shipping centers, rich in the spirit of the frontier.

At this time, as from the beginning of its white settlement, lumbering was the chief industry and activity of this whole region—from Point Arena to Bear Harbor. There was some fishing, some stock raising, and quite a bit of agriculture—potatoes, peas and beans all did well—but as it was timber that brought the first white settlers in 1850, so in 1882 it was converting timber into some form of needed product—lumber, shingles, posts, ties, piles, etc., and shipping them to market—that chiefly occupied the people of the whole Mendocino Coast. When timber products were in demand at good prices, the whole Coast prospered; when they were not, everyone felt it.

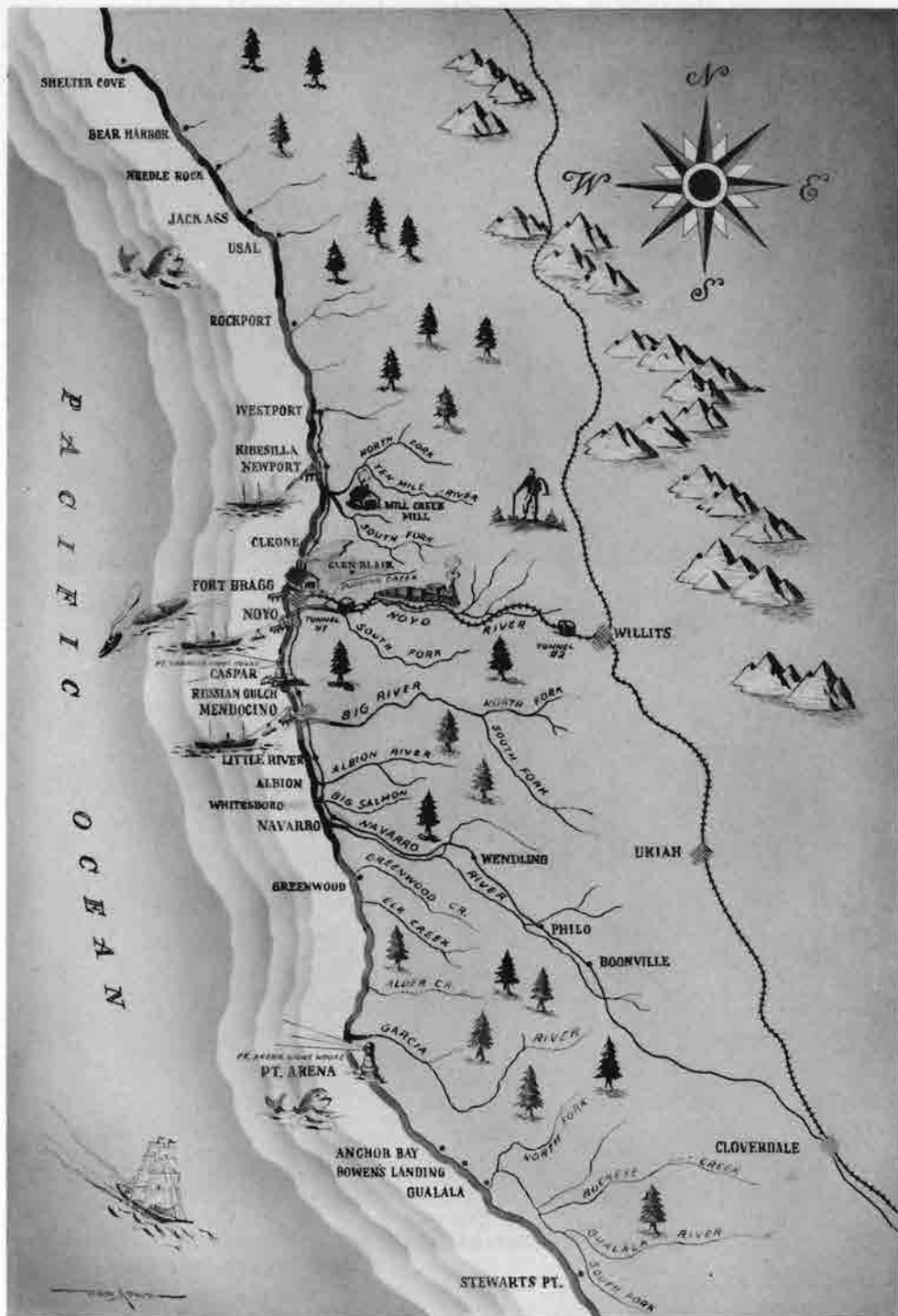


Chapter 5 THE FOREST & THE OCEAN—SAWMILLS, CHUTES AND WHARVES—SHIPS AND SHIPBUILDERS—HOW LUMBER SCHOONERS FROM MENDOCINO DOG-HOLES REBUILT SAN FRANCISCO IN THE EARLY DAYS.

The forests and the ocean—that was what first brought white men to the Mendocino Coast in 1850; that combination was what kept them busy there when C. R. Johnson came in 1882. The forests provided the lumber and other timber products; the ocean provided the highway to market. Without the forests, the ocean would have meant little; without the ocean there could have been no marketing of forest products. Man's function was to promote and cement this natural, this indispensable partnership; and he did it well.

All along the coast he built mills to convert the huge redwood trees into lumber and other wood products. All along the coast, wherever the sea bit into the shoreline to make a tiny harbor, he constructed chutes and wharves and ports. And at special points along the coast he built ships designed to serve these ports. At Little River, Captain Thomas H. Peterson and his crew of skillful craftsmen built twenty lumber schooners—and sold them as fast as they were built. At Navarro, Charles Fletcher built six or eight of these ships—and several were built at other Mendocino Coast ports. These were not, of course, enough to serve the whole Mendocino Coast, so shipyards in San Francisco, Oakland, Benicia, and Vallejo turned out scores of these special ships to meet this special need.

Varying somewhat in size, but none of them over large, they were nearly all of a type—sailing ships and schooner rigged. They could not be too large, for the ports of the Mendocino Coast—"dog-holes" the deep-sea mariners contemptuously called them—were mostly small and shallow and open to the winds and tides. In many of them even these small vessels dared not remain during heavy seas. Many a time one of them, with a storm making up, would have to stop loading abruptly and quickly get out into the open sea to escape disaster. And many a time one would lie off a harbor for days, waiting for the seas to calm so that it could go in to load or unload.





Loaded, flags flying, and ready to sail from Iverson Landing.



Steam schooner *National City* loading split ties at the Union Lumber Company's wire chute at Cleone.

Even in fair weather it was a none-too-easy task to take a ship safely in and out of these harbors; and, through this hazardous experience, officers and men developed a skill in seamanship that would have been far beyond the capabilities of masters and sailors of the largest ships afloat.

Regularly, up and down the Mendocino Coast these little ships sailed for years; in and out of the "dog-holes," bringing in goods, wares and merchandise of all kinds for the stores in the Coast settlements, taking out the steadily increasing cargoes of lumber, ties, posts, piles, shingles, wood, and tanbark. The railway was still many miles away, beyond the high mountains; there were no wagon roads that led to important markets. Thus, without these little ships and the brave officers and men who manned them, the Mendocino Coast would have been helpless; would have stagnated and gone back to untamed wilderness. To these ships, then, and to the men who sailed them, the whole Mendocino Coast owes a mighty debt of gratitude. For years they were the link, and the only link—slender but strong—which connected the Redwood Coast and the redwood lumbering industry with the markets of the world.

Nor is the Mendocino Coast alone in owing this lasting debt. In its first decade San Francisco was almost perpetually on fire. Between 1849 and 1857, besides innumerable smaller fires, there were six devastating conflagrations in which most of the city's buildings burned to the ground. Much—indeed, most—of the lumber required to rebuild after these devastating holocausts, came from sawmills along the Mendocino Coast, and came down in these little lumber schooners. Without this lumber, and without these ships to carry it, San Francisco's early growth and progress would have been much deterred. And, though not to as great an extent, the same is true of other California communities at this time—much of the lumber to rebuild Sacramento, Benicia, Marysville, and San Jose after recurring conflagrations came in the holds and on the decks of these doughty, trim little schooners, from the Mendocino "dog-holes." To San Francisco in particular, as well as to other early California cities, the Mendocino Coast and its sawmills and its redwood lumber fleet, being friends in need, were friends indeed.

It was on one of these little lumber schooners that C. R. Johnson

returned to San Francisco from his first trip up the Mendocino Coast in 1881. It was no strange thing to him because from childhood he had known the similar craft sailing the Great Lakes with cargoes of lumber, some of it from his father's mills, and with one of the ships, the *O. R. Johnson*, bearing his father's name.

Thus when he settled on the Mendocino Coast, C.R., though still little more than a boy, was no greenhorn about either lumbering or water-shipping. Both of them were already in his blood. And so, besides youth's enthusiasm and vigor, he brought to the little lumbering enterprise on the Ten Mile wisdom and knowledge, inherited and acquired, that was to benefit not only himself and his associates, but the entire Mendocino Coast.



Chapter 6

EXCERPTS FROM C. R. JOHNSON'S MEMOIRS—EARLY LOGGING AND LUMBERING METHODS—JACKSCREWS AND SNATCH-BLOCKS—BULL PUNCHERS—THE SUGLER AND THE DOLBEER “DONKEY.” EXPLORING FORT BRAGG HARBOR IN A ROWBOAT.

It was near the end of December, 1882, when C. R. Johnson became a partner in the firm of Stewart, Hunter & Johnson at Newport. He lived for a few months in a hotel about a mile from Newport, kept by John Barrett who was also foreman of the saw-mill. But when the mill started up in the spring of 1883, after the wagon road from the mill to the shipping point was dry enough to use, he moved to the mill. Charlie Murray was boss of the woods, and shortly after the mill opened that spring, he and C.R. laid out a logging road up to the top of the hill above the mill, where there was a large flat of timber.

The tools used in logging at that time were very simple. The entire logging equipment for the night and day run of the mill consisted of two teams of bulls—each team five yoke—with the necessary chains and jackscrews, a few snatch-blocks, some manila rope, and of course, axes and cross-cut saws. In speaking of this in later life, C.R. said he believed the entire logging equipment did not cost them over \$5000. And this was to log 50,000 feet of logs a day—\$100 worth of logging equipment for each 1000 feet per day produced. Today the investment would be fifteen times as great!

Old-timers will of course remember how logging was done sixty-five years ago, but those who never saw it will enjoy the vivid description C.R. gives in his memoirs. He writes:

“The jackscrew was an important tool in the woods. It was wonderful what two men, each with a jackscrew, could do to a log. They could get it out from a hole and turn it clear around. . . . Besides assisting in getting it out, they were also used where the ground was very steep in jackscrewing down to where the bulls could get the logs. A good jackscrew, as I remember it, cost about \$75. They were a wonderful tool.

“The cattle also were wonderful. The bull puncher was the highest paid man the country had. A good driver got equal pay to the foreman. When he wanted his team to start a load, he would commence his antics; yelling at

the bulls, and jumping up and down and hitting them with his goad stick until finally getting them all started and pulling together. And it was a pretty good load that they wouldn't start.

"Depending upon the size of the logs, a load would consist of from four to eight logs. Each log was snipped a little on the forward end, the head log being the largest, and decreasing in size as they went backward. The logs were fastened together with a short manila line having a 'dog' attached to each end. The dog was driven in through the logs.

"The sugler was another important man. He accompanied the load down to the landing, and his job was to throw water ahead of the load. For this purpose he had a long stick which he carried over his shoulder and a bucket attached to each end. From these buckets he threw water on the road just ahead of the load. Water barrels were located at convenient places so he could often replenish his supply. Where the road was very steep, not much water was needed. But in the comparatively level places, it was a great help—to make the logs slide over the wet places. Where the road was nearly level, skids were put in—sometimes running lengthwise with the road, sometimes across the road. Also, chains were attached by 'dogs' to the log, and on steep places were dropped, to act as brakes and prevent the logs from piling onto the bulls. The suglers were very expert at their work. They had to be nimble-footed, and quick in replenishing the water in their buckets and throwing it under the logs.

"After we had logged a few months we heard about a machine called the "Dolbeer donkey,"* and I went to San Francisco and got one. It consisted of an upright boiler with 6 x 8 engine, which was fastened onto the boiler near the top and operated the gear. The gear revolved an upright spool which in turn wound a manila rope which we fastened to the logs in order to yard the logs where a bull team could easily reach them. We used this machine only for yarding purposes. The logs were yarded about 150 feet. Where four to six logs had been yarded out, the bull team was hitched to them and they were hauled about a mile to the pond. We used manila rope entirely. Didn't know anything about wire lines until four or five years later. The introduction of wire lines was a great advance in logging. But we never did put lumber on a vessel any cheaper than we did then, in the early days of logging, with those crude tools."

The lumber from the Stewart, Hunter & Johnson mill was all hauled by six-horse teams—driven with a single line, called a "jerk-line"—from the mill to the landing at Newport, where it was loaded by a gravity chute extending from the shore to the ship below. As Newport was exposed to the open sea, there was no wharf, but several moorings to which the vessel which was loading was made

*Invented by William Dolbeer, partner in the pioneer lumbering firm of Dolbeer & Carson, in Humboldt County.



Before the adaption of power saws to the falling of large timber, choppers spent many hours "putting in the undercut."



Bull teams, handled by expert bull-punchers, once did the work in the woods now performed by "cats."



The first step in converting a "giant of the forest" into material to satisfy one of man's basic needs—shelter.

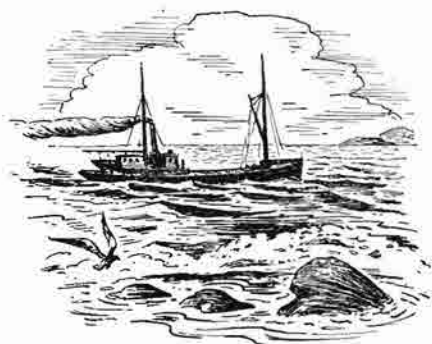
fast by the lines. There was enough slack in these lines to give the schooner a chance of running back and forth twenty or twenty-five feet with the waves. The apron of the chute projected slightly over the deck of the schooner, and the lumber was sent down a distance of eighty feet, one piece at a time. At the lower end of the chute was a man called the "clapperman," who operated a brake-like device which slowed up and finally stopped each piece of lumber just as it reached the apron. Here the crew of the vessel would take the lumber and stow it. These schooners carried from 75,000 to 150,000 feet of lumber, and tales of the skill with which they maneuvered among the rocks, tied up to the moorings, and loaded with a full sea running, are still heard along the Mendocino Coast wherever old-timers get together.

The firm of Stewart, Hunter & Johnson cast up accounts at the end of the first year's operations and found that they had made money. Things were going well, and future prospects looked good. But C.R. was not satisfied. He wanted more production so that more lumber could be sold and more men employed. The site on Mill Creek was not suitable for a second mill, and Newport was far from an ideal loading point. So he set out to find a better location. He had often looked eagerly at the large area of level land comprising the abandoned army post of Fort Bragg—there was a site which would accommodate a mill plant of any size. Besides, adjoining part of it there was an ocean cove called "Soldiers Harbor," which had been used twenty-five years before for landing small craft with supplies for the Army Post. Perhaps it would be suitable for larger vessels—ships large enough for transporting lumber. If so, a wharf might be built behind the projection of the reef of rocks, where vessels could be loaded "alongside," instead of "offshore" under a wire chute.

In his spare time, which was limited to Sundays and the long summer evenings, C.R., with a peg-leg fisherman to row him, went over every foot of Soldiers Harbor in a row boat, from the outer reef to the beaches, taking soundings of the bottom. When he had finished, he knew, and he was the only one who did know, that there was going to be a Fort Bragg harbor with a wharf which would accommodate large lumber vessels—*provided he could raise*

MEMORIES OF THE MENDOCINO COAST

the money to develop the harbor, to build a big sawmill and to buy sufficient accessible timber to keep such a plant in steady and profitable operation. As he had already satisfied himself of the availability of several billion feet of fine timber, the only question—and it was a big one—was whether or not he could raise the necessary money.



Chapter 7 BEGINNINGS OF FORT BRAGG REDWOOD COMPANY—A WHARF IS BUILT DESPITE A SINISTER MAN WITH A SHOTGUN—FIRST FORT BRAGG SAWMILL IN OPERATION.

Faced with this big question, C.R. again headed east. He had been successful in seeking money there before, but this time he needed a much larger amount because the project he visualized was a gigantic one. When he outlined this project to moneyed men in the East, they laughed at him. What was this silly business about hundreds of thousands of redwood trees out in California, six to sixteen feet in diameter and 200 to 300 feet tall? Why, that was ridiculous; fantastic! Everybody knew that Michigan and Wisconsin had the biggest trees that grew outdoors, and the most of them. What was this visionary young fellow—this 24-year-old boy from the Mendocino Coast—talking about? He must have dreamed all this!

Yes, C.R. was laughed at. But he was not laughed down. And finally, after months of effort, persistence and salesmanship won the battle. His father and two of his father's Michigan friends—Senator Stockbridge and James L. Houghteling—agreed to take stock in the new venture.

A company called the Fort Bragg Redwood Company was formed, and the property of Stewart, Hunter & Johnson purchased by it. Next, a larger tract of timber land was purchased from McPherson & Weatherby who sometime earlier had acquired vast holdings in the vicinity. This purchase included all of the present plant site of Union Lumber Company and most of the land now comprising the city of Fort Bragg, as well as certain timberlands on Pudding Creek and on the Noyo River east of the present Tunnel No. 1 on the California Western Railroad.

A great deal of time was consumed in completing all these transactions—forming the new company, negotiating for and purchasing the lands and verifying the titles to them. Innumerable trips had to be made to the county seat at Ukiah, which was a long hard day's drive by team from Fort Bragg. But finally all this was finished, and one day in the spring of 1884, the construction at Fort Bragg was

started. Such machinery and equipment of the Mill Creek operation as could be used in the new mill was moved down, and the orders placed for additional equipment and machinery.

The first job was to build the wharf, so that machinery and supplies could be brought in by water, and thus avoid costly overland transportation. A few years before C.R.'s arrival on the Mendocino Coast, C. L. White and W. P. Plummer had purchased timberland on the lower Noyo River from McPherson & Weatherby. C.R. now arranged with White & Plummer to cut piling from this land for the Fort Bragg wharf, but when the piling was cut, he could find no one to transport it to Fort Bragg. To bring it overland it was necessary to cross property of McPherson & Weatherby, and they placed a man with a shotgun to prevent this. C.R. therefore decided it should be towed out of the mouth of the Noyo to Fort Bragg, but everyone told him this was impossible—that the piling would be lost and probably some lives, too, if he tried it.

But since there was no other way, C.R. elected to try it. Getting his timber cruiser, Dan Corey, to help him, the two of them went at it, and between them they towed enough piling to Fort Bragg by rowboat, two piles at a time, to prove that it was a feasible operation. After that, there were plenty of applications for the towing job, and the piling was delivered as rapidly as they could use it.

Years later C.R. would sometimes meet an elderly man on the street in Fort Bragg and take him up to the Union Lumber Guest House for lunch. Then when the two of them were seated at the table, C.R. would chuckle and say: "You know, Jim, I really oughtn't to feed you. You were the fellow who sat on that big stump, with a shotgun across your knees, and kept me from hauling my piling overland to build the Fort Bragg wharf."

In June, 1884, C. R. Johnson married Mary Stockton Conness—daughter of U. S. Senator John Conness, who was a close friend of President Lincoln and a pall-bearer at his funeral—and brought his bride to a cottage in Kibesilla, which was then a flourishing little town near Newport. Early in 1885, when the wharf at Fort Bragg had been completed and construction of the sawmill and railroad were well underway, they moved to Noyo where White & Plummer ran a hotel and store in conjunction with their split-tie opera-

FORT BRAGG'S FIRST SAWMILL IN OPERATION

tions on the Noyo River. Later that year the young couple moved to Fort Bragg, into a building which had been used as the old Army Post Hospital and had been abandoned twenty years. It was in this building, on the site of the present Company Guest House, that their two children, Emily Charlotte and Otis Russell, were born.

A good many interesting pages could be written of the "trials and tribulations" of building the wharf and the sawmill at Fort Bragg. This would be no small undertaking today, and sixty-five years ago it was comparatively a much bigger one—the biggest project the Mendocino Coast had ever seen. So there were unpredictable difficulties and unpreventable delays, but finally everything was completed down to the last detail. Then, about ten o'clock on the morning of November 16, 1885, the mill whistle sounded a long blast, and C. R. Johnson, surrounded by a group of his associates, friends and co-workers, pulled the lever that started the machinery moving. With the sawyer at the controls, and while everyone present watched with bated breath, the big humming saw bit into a huge redwood log, and what was destined to be one of the three largest redwood lumbering projects in the world—a project that was to found and build the largest community on the coast between San Francisco and Eureka, and to fix the course of Mendocino County history for decades to come—was an actuality.

More than three-fifths of a century have elapsed since that epochal day, and nearly all of the men present on that momentous occasion have gone on to their reward. But the day and the event wrote themselves indelibly upon the pages of Mendocino and Northern California history, and can never be forgotten. For that day and the event it brought forth not only launched a successful business and industrial enterprise which, over the years, has grown and expanded to provide livelihood for thousands of fine American families; but that day and that event marked the beginnings of a community which is one of the finest and most liveable in the world.

Chapter 8 FOUNDING OF FORT BRAGG—FIRST SHIP IN FORT BRAGG HARBOR—THE SECOND SHIP AND ITS FAMOUS PREACHER-CAPTAIN—FIRST BANDSAW ON THE PACIFIC COAST— THE NEW SAWMILL BURNS DOWN.

Twenty centuries ago it was written: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." And again: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Those sayings are as true today as ever, and both have been abundantly exemplified in the lives of Fort Bragg and the Union Lumber Company. One of the many reasons why the community and the Company have achieved so much, is that they have gotten along so well together. And one of the reasons they have gotten along so well together is because, from the inception they were both so planned and organized that neither has been tempted to encroach upon the other.

C.R. laid out Fort Bragg and in 1889, when it was incorporated as an independent town, he was chosen its first mayor. His Company owned most of the land comprising the townsite, but even before the town was organized, C.R. had divided this land into homesites and business building lots, and sold them to the early settlers. Moreover, to encourage home ownership among its workers and other residents, the Company financed individual home-building for many years. Thus, thanks to principles and policies originally laid down by C.R., and adhered to by his successors, the Company and the community, although joined in a common endeavor, have always preserved their separate rights and identities. This has proved to be good for the Company and good for the community. After working together for sixty-five years, Fort Bragg and Union Lumber Company are still congenial companions, still faithful friends.

They didn't saw a lot of lumber, that day the new Fort Bragg mill started in November, 1885. They sawed enough to test all the machinery and equipment, and prove that everything was in proper shape. Then they shut down, and had a jolly celebration. But three weeks later, everybody was at his job, and they started commercial production.

M. J. ("Mike") Sullivan was the first sawyer in the Fort Bragg

mill. Tom Johnson came a few years later and stayed for fifty years. It was this same Tom Johnson who, on February 4, 1945, as the oldest employee, accepted the "E" pins awarded to the employees by the Armed Forces for efficiency in production during World War II.

In building the wharf and mill, C.R. called on a number of men who had worked with him at the mill on Ten Mile. Fred Johnson, who did the shipping at Newport, came down to build the wharf, and had as his right-hand man Luke Maddux. Maddux and his wife moved into one of the houses of the old Army Post, and their baby, born about the time the mill started, was the first white child born in Fort Bragg. To take charge of the building of the mill, C.R. engaged two millwrights—John Cummings and Jack Ross. Cummings was a great millwright, and Ross was known far and wide as an expert at hewing timbers. Most of the timbers in the mill were hewed. Charlie Freeburg, Chris Beck, Dan Corey, Charlie Banker, and Alex Sanderson were among others who came from the mill at Ten Mile to work at Fort Bragg. With these men as a nucleus, a good crew was assembled and the new mill operated well, producing about 85,000 feet of lumber each 12-hour shift.

In equipping the new mill it had been decided to put in a new kind of saw, which was being used in some of the sawmills in the pine regions of the Lakes states. It was called a "band saw," and C.R., who had seen several in operation, believed they could be so designed as to cut the much larger logs of the West Coast. The only way to be sure was to try, so he put one in; and this, according to pioneer sawmill men like John S. Ross, Sr., and M. J. Sullivan, was the first installation of a band head rig on the Pacific Coast.

From all sides came the prediction that it would be a failure in large timber, and for some time its behavior bore out these gloomy forecasts. The saws were made of a type of steel which proved inferior for such heavy-duty sawing, and the wooden wheels could not be kept running true. So there was plenty of trouble. But C.R. insisted the principle was right and kept plugging away; and finally, after more than a year spent in correcting weaknesses and changing the filing methods, the band saw commenced giving proper performance. From there on it was a pronounced success, and soon band saws became standard head rig equipment for permanent saw-

mills throughout the West Coast. Incidentally, the great advantage of the band saw is that its blade is much thinner. Thus the kerf it extracts is much less than that of the circular. In other words, the band saw saves about one-third in sawdust and leaves that third in the form of lumber.

Operating twenty-four hours a day, it did not take long for the mill to provide cargoes enough for several ships; and the wharf, which had been so difficult and costly to build, quickly proved its worth in the speed and efficiency with which vessels tied up "alongside" could be loaded. It had cost a lot more money than the customary chute, which was then in use at most Mendocino ports, but it was more than worth the difference in speeding up loading and making it so much easier.

The first vessel that came into the new harbor at Fort Bragg was the schooner *Golden Gate*. It came in while the mill was being built, and carried 120,000 feet of lumber loaded at Newport, for use in construction of the mill. Speaking of this event in his memoirs, C.R. says:

"Fred Johnson came down on the schooner from Newport to pilot her in. I boarded the schooner outside and came in with her. We got inside and alongside the wharf all right, which was considered quite a feat. So we felt that we had a shipping point at last."

The next vessel to come in arrived after the mill was completed and had begun operations. It was the steam schooner *West Coast*, commanded by one of the most famous masters in the famous "lumber fleet." His name was James S. Higgins, and besides being a splendid ship captain, he was remarkable for being an ordained clergyman—a most unusual combination. He was remarkable also for two sons—Charley and "Nosey"—and a grand-nephew, "Gus," all of whom later became famous captains in the lumber fleet.

Captain Higgins did not want to come into Fort Bragg harbor with the *West Coast*, for although a brave man, he was a cautious one and refused to take undue chances with his ship. So he anchored outside and sent word ashore that he did not believe the harbor was safe and would not come in.

This was a challenge to C.R., who, having sounded every foot of the harbor himself, knew it *was* safe, and refused to take no for an



First Fort Bragg mill—began operating in 1885; burned in 1888.



The steam schooner *West Coast*, skippered by Captain James S. Higgins, carried the first cargo of lumber out of Fort Bragg Harbor.

answer. Getting a couple of men to row him out to the *West Coast*, C.R. boarded her and proceeded to have a heart-to-heart talk with Captain Higgins. He told him that he knew the harbor was safe because he had sounded every inch of it, and he wound up by deftly implying that Captain Higgins' reputation might suffer if it became known that he was fearful of doing what the master of the *Golden Gate* had done.

Whether this was what won the argument, we do not know. But Captain Higgins finally said he would come in—but only this once. He then gave the proper orders and, after a good deal of maneuvering, brought his ship alongside the wharf; insisting, however, that this was no fit place for ships as large as the *West Coast*, and that he would not come in again. Actually, he may have been putting up all this argument to try to “get a rise” out of C.R., for he was quite a character, with a sly sense of humor. In any event, if he was in earnest at the time, he later changed his mind. After taking out the first shipload of lumber from Fort Bragg, he brought his ship back there many times, and he and C.R. became fast friends. At the time of his first entry into Fort Bragg harbor, he was over eighty, and had been a shipmaster for more than sixty years.

The Fort Bragg mill operated steadily and with good production for two-and-a-half years and then—burned down. How the fire started, no one ever knew, but Henry Little, now retired and living in Fort Bragg, was fireman in the engine room at the time, and has given a vivid description of the disaster. It was just before noon on April 18, 1888, Little says, when he heard what sounded like a sharp explosion and, on looking up, saw flames racing along the superstructure. He connected the fire pump, then ran to the whistle to blow a fire warning, but the flames were too fast for him. As he pulled at the whistle-cord, it burned in two.

Since the mill was only partly covered by insurance, this was a real disaster—a heavy blow to the young company. However, the embers were not cold before C.R. was at work on plans for speedy reconstruction. This imposed the problem of raising more money, which was none too easy; but C.R. persevered, got the money, and built another mill.

Chapter 9 THE UNION LUMBER COMPANY IS INCORPORATED—A RAILROAD IS STARTED—DEPRESSION AND OTHER TROUBLES—SHERIFF “DOC” STANDLEY AND THE CHINESE TUNNEL WORKERS.

It is well that man cannot foresee the future. Otherwise, worry over difficulties to come would unfit him to meet and surmount those difficulties when they do arrive. Thus, if C.R., when he was struggling to rebuild the burned mill, and to nurse the band saw into efficiency, could have foreseen what the early nineties were to bring he might have given up in despair. For the early nineties brought a great depression. For various reasons, including the fact that improvements and repairs requiring lumber can always be postponed, the lumber industry is one of the first to feel the effects of a business let-down.

The first waves of the depression of the early nineties struck the Fort Bragg mill just as it was recovering from the 1888 fire. Moreover, by the fall of 1891 another big obstacle had arisen. With the timber on Pudding Creek nearly exhausted, it was obvious that some way had to be found to make the timber on the Noyo River accessible to the Fort Bragg plant.

There were two ways open. Logs from the Noyo could be driven to the river's mouth during winter freshets, then pulled out and hauled about a mile to the mill. This would require the installation of dams above the locations in the river where the logs would be stored awaiting the freshet. Also, it would demand a system of piers near the mouth to prevent the freshet carrying the logs out to sea. This would be very expensive. Furthermore, it had been proven that when a large body of timber was to be tapped, railroads, although initially more costly, were in the long run a cheaper and better means of transportation.

All of this was going through C.R.'s head during the years 1889 to 1891, and the more he thought about it the more convinced he was that to meet all these difficulties he would need more capital and a bigger organization. And so it was that he persuaded W. P. Plummer and C. L. White to merge their interests with his and form

A RAILROAD IS STARTED

a larger company. Over a period of months the details were worked out, and on August 17, 1891, the Union Lumber Company was incorporated; taking over all the property and assets of White and Plummer and of the Fort Bragg Redwood Company.

By the time this was done the problem of how to transport the logs from the Noyo was pressing. The Company already owned considerable timber on this river and had plans and hopes to acquire a great deal more. A decision had to be made without further delay. The decision was made. They decided to extend their railroad, even though this meant the driving of a tunnel a quarter of a mile long through the mountain divide which separates Pudding Creek from the Noyo watershed.

This was a costly and daring undertaking, especially in the face of a nation-wide financial depression, but the wisdom and foresight of C.R. and his new partners, Plummer and White, in deciding to take this step has been proven over and over. For not only did this tunnel unlock the gate to a 25-year supply of timber for the Fort Bragg mill, but it paved the way for an ultimate rail connection, at Willits, between Fort Bragg and the great trunk-line systems of the nation.

Construction of the railroad tunnel was fraught with many difficulties. One of them was obtaining men who knew how to do this kind of work. Men who were not experienced in it, shied away from it as being too hard and too dangerous. Finally, someone suggested to C.R. that he get a crew of Chinese tunnel-men. Chinese, this man said, had done nearly all the tunnel work in California and Nevada mines, and were experts at it. So, C.R. set to work and finally got a Chinese tunnel crew.

Then more trouble arose. At this time the Chinese were very unpopular in California—as the result of propaganda against them by San Francisco's Dennis Kearny and other agitators. People believed the Chinese were about to take over the country.

So, when C.R. brought in his crew of expert tunnel workers, some white men in the area got excited and tried to drive the Chinese out. And they probably would have succeeded except for the courage and horse sense of one man—Mendocino County's Sheriff "Doc" Standley, the father of Admiral W. H. Standley.

As soon as he heard of the trouble, Sheriff Standley, a wise and utterly fearless man, rode over on horseback from Ukiah. He came alone. Learning that the white men had already driven the Chinese as far as Mendocino, Standley put spurs to his horse and soon overtook them. Riding past them, he then turned around, got off his horse and stood facing the crowd—alone.

The crowd stopped and Standley, standing beside his horse, made a short talk. He told the white men they were violating the law, and that he, as a sworn officer of the law could not permit them to continue. The men, impressed by Standley's courage and sincerity, listened in silence as he spoke of how difficult and dangerous this tunnel work was for inexperienced men. And then he asked them a question, "How many of you," he asked, "are willing to go over to Pudding Creek and volunteer to dig this tunnel?"

There was complete silence. No one offered. "Very well," said Standley, "it is just as I suspected. You men aren't willing to do this hard and dangerous work, and for that I'm not blaming you. But in that case you certainly should not try to prevent these Chinamen from doing it. Now, I know you are fair-minded men, so I suggest you disperse and go home, so that these China boys, who know how to do this kind of work, can go back and do it."

There was a moment of silence, and then one of the leaders of the white men walked up to Standley and put out his hand. "You're right, Sheriff," he said, "and we'll do what you say." So the Chinese went back, there was no further trouble, and in due course the tunnel was completed.

The completion of the tunnel was an important achievement and solved one of the pressing problems that confronted the young company. But other problems persisted, and the road the Company travelled for several succeeding years was a rocky one. The most persistent problem was the financial one. Times were hard during the first half of the nineties, and the market for lumber was dull and the prices low. Years later, in commenting on this difficult period, C.R. wrote:

"Business was very poor in the nineties, and it was nip and tuck for the Company to get along. In the later nineties the manager at the mill was

W. P. Plummer, and we could not have gotten along without his economical management."

It was about this time that C.R. moved to San Francisco. With W. P. Plummer handling the operations so efficiently and economically in Fort Bragg, C.R. felt his place was to go out and sell lumber, and he could operate better for this purpose out of San Francisco than Fort Bragg. Speaking of this plan he says in his memoirs:

"For the larger part of the time there were only three people in the office (at San Francisco), Charlie White, the typist and myself. I acted as salesman—going to Los Angeles several times a year to sell lumber. The Southern Pacific bought a great deal of lumber from us. We also sold a great deal to C. A. Hooper. But our best customer was the Newport Wharf and Lumber Company, at Santa Ana, California, which had yards in many parts of Southern California. Besides their large retail business they did a large wholesale business. Thus they were big buyers of lumber and were very important in our scheme of things."

Despite the difficulties of the nineties—hard times, dull markets and low prices for lumber, Union Lumber Company managed to keep going; indeed was one of only two or three mills in the whole redwood industry that did not shut down. It was "nip and tuck," as C.R. wrote, but by careful management and rigid economy they were able to keep the mill running, and even to continue to extend the railroad. Toward the end of the century times gradually improved, and by 1900 the Company was, as C.R. put it, "out of the woods and picking up right along."

In the life of all large and old institutions the historian will find periods, particularly when the institution was younger and smaller, characterized by difficulties that at times threatened complete destruction. Thus, there is nothing exceptional or unusual in Union Lumber Company's having experienced great difficulties and survived them. What is unusual and exceptional, however, is that when other plants in the same industry were closing down, Union managed to keep going through thick and thin. The reason for this was to be found in the character of C. R. Johnson. Starting from scratch, he had, by ingenuity and hard work, built up an industry upon which many people had come to depend for a livelihood. To

close down this industry, even temporarily, was bound to work hardships on these people, and C.R. had made a vow that he would never do it unless everything failed. And so when other concerns shut down for various periods—to conserve resources and save money—C.R. kept his plant going, even at a loss, in order to insure a livelihood for the loyal men who had worked with him to build the institution. To the end of his life, C.R. took pride in having done this; and along the Mendocino Coast today you will hear older men say that part of the reason for the wonderful regard in which his memory is held is that “he never let his fellow workers down.” To which he would probably answer, were he alive today: “Well, how could I? *They* never let *me* down.”



Chapter 10 A REMARKABLE SAILINGSHIP MASTER AND HIS REMARKABLE STORY—A STEAMSHIP COMPANY IS STARTED—ORDEAL BY EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE.

At the turn of the century, Union Lumber Company had emerged from its most difficult period and was making steady progress. And this continued to be true throughout the years 1900 to 1906. Markets were generally good, prices fair, and the whole plant—the mill, the woods, the wharf and the railroad—was operating smoothly and efficiently. With production expanding, the wharf had been improved, the railroad extended; and, with water-shipment steadily increasing, the National Steamship Company had been formed to own and operate steam schooners between Fort Bragg and main California ports—to convey forest products to market and transport passengers and miscellaneous freight between ports. Also, during this period, Union had purchased a half interest in Glen Blair Redwood Company, which had been established about 1886 by the famed sailing ship master, Captain Samuel Blair, and Alex McCallum. From its inception, Glen Blair Redwood Company had shipped and sold its lumber through Union Lumber Company. Thus Union's acquisition of a half interest in Glen Blair was a logical and natural move. And since this concern was one of the "streams" that helped to form the Union Lumber Company "river," it seems appropriate to digress from our main narrative long enough to tell a bit of the unusual story of one of Glen Blair's founders—Captain Samuel Blair.

Captain Blair was unquestionably one of the most colorful characters of the Mendocino Coast. Born on the Eastern seaboard, he went to sea as a boy and at twenty-one was already a shipmaster. Thereafter, for many years, he commanded clipper ships and other sailing vessels operating between Atlantic Coast ports and San Francisco.

Though known as one of the most capable shipmasters of his time, Captain Blair had one weakness. Once he had brought his ship into port and taken proper care of all business matters connected therewith, he turned over everything to his mate and made for the

nearest saloon. There he would remain while his ship was unloading and loading. A day or so before the ship was ready to sail, his mate would get him out of the saloon and back aboard ship, so that he would be in good shape by sailing time. Then Captain Blair would take command again, and, no matter how long the voyage, never touch a drop of liquor until he reached port.

A less capable master would undoubtedly have been fired. But Captain Blair handled his ship so well—both from the standpoint of navigation and business—that the owners put up with his shoreside behavior.

All this went on for years. Then one cold foggy morning in San Francisco, Captain Blair “came to” lying in the gutter on an alley off California Street. How he got there he never knew; nor how long he had been there. But there he was—dirty and cold and broke.

Telling about it afterwards, Captain Blair said that he was so thoroughly disgusted with himself that if the waterfront had been closer he would have jumped in the Bay. Instead, he made a resolution that he would never touch liquor again, and he kept that resolution to the end of his long and eventful life.

Once he had overcome his big weakness, Captain Blair forged ahead rapidly. Buying a ship of his own, he made money with it, and put his profit into the purchase of another. Proving to be as good a business man as he was a navigator, in the course of a few years he was the owner of a number of sailing ships, all of which he operated very profitably.

Captain Blair had a unique system of bookkeeping. Each of his ships had its own money bag. Into this bag went all the money that ship took in on a voyage, and out of it came what was required to pay all voyage expense. The balance was profit, and he put that into a special bag—with that ship’s name on it—and took it aboard the ship which he was commanding.

For years Captain Blair kept all the money his ships earned in these bags—a special canvas bag for each of his vessels—and kept them all aboard his own ship. Banks were alright, he said, for land-lubbers. But when he was out on the high seas, he wanted his money where he could put his hands on it.

Some of Captain Blair’s earlier voyages took him to the Mendo-



Union Lumber Company's Fort Bragg plant in 1910. Badly damaged by earthquake and fire in 1906, it was rebuilt and enlarged.



About eighty cars of logs must be loaded each day to keep the mill at Fort Bragg going.

A STEAMSHIP LINE IS LAUNCHED

cino Coast, and the sight of the great redwood forests inspired him to make another resolution. When he got tired of going to sea, he would sell his ships and put the money into a redwood lumbering enterprise. This he did. Forming a partnership with Alex McCallum, who had married his niece, Daisy Kelly, he established the Pudding Creek Lumber Company, later called the Glen Blair Redwood Company.

Friendship with C. R. Johnson induced Captain Blair to make the arrangement for Union Lumber Company to ship and sell Glen Blair's lumber; and when he was old and getting ready to retire, this same friendship led to Union's acquiring one-half of Glen Blair capital stock. Eventually, Union became the owner of all the stock.

The year 1906 opened favorably for Union. Demand was brisk and lumber prices were good. Everything seemed set for a record year, when, on that never-to-be-forgotten morning of April 18th, the earth rocked so violently it seemed some giant had taken it in his hands and was shaking it as a cat shakes a rat. When it was all over Union's mill was off its foundations and badly wrecked, and a large part of Fort Bragg was destroyed. As in San Francisco, the quake itself was bad, but the fire which followed was vastly worse and did most of the damage.

In his Memoirs, C.R., who happened to be in Fort Bragg at the time, presents a vivid picture of the events of that fearful morning:

"The quake wakened me, but I hardly had time to realize what had happened before our mill superintendent (H. C. Johnson) came rushing into my room and said there had been a terrible quake. I hastily threw on some clothes and went down to the mill, which was a good deal of a wreck. The mill building had an angle of about twenty degrees. The smokestacks had fallen down, the furnaces were down too, sparks were coming out of the furnaces, and a fire was imminent. The fireman reported that the pipe connections were all broken and there was no chance to get water.

"Luckily there was a locomotive under steam, so we hastily summoned it and ran it down on the track, which at that time was laid on the pond dam, and so got the locomotive close to the power house. By this time there was a big crowd of men around the mill, and they connected the locomotive boiler with the fire pump which could get water from the mill pond. We did this in remarkably quick time and by pouring water into the furnaces put out their fires and removed all danger from the mill.

"Meanwhile, fires had broken out uptown, and Captain Hammar of the

steamer *National City*, which was lying alongside the wharf at the time, came up to the mill with some sailors and gathered together all the hose he could find. The water pipes of the town were broken and no water was available. The hotel and several other business buildings were already on fire. Captain Hammar ran his hose up and got water on the burning buildings."

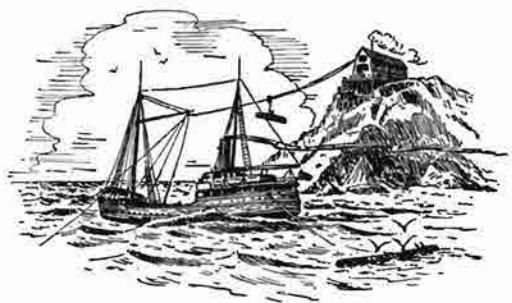
As a result of Captain Hammar's action the fire was checked and part of Fort Bragg saved. But, like San Francisco, much of it burned down, and many people were left homeless and with only the clothes they had on their backs. However, disaster and distress bring out the good in most of us, and the people of Fort Bragg helped one another. Those who had food and clothing shared them with those who did not. From the Company store, C.R. gave out food, clothing, and blankets as long as the stock lasted. And to those who needed lumber for rebuilding he supplied it with the understanding that they could pay for it when they were able. He rushed repairs on the mill so that it could begin providing employment again as soon as possible, and in encouraging his fellow-townsmen to rebuild their stricken city, he went so far as to instruct the wholesale supply houses with whom he dealt in Oakland and San Francisco to restock a rival Fort Bragg merchant and charge the goods to Union Lumber's account.

After the fire was out in Fort Bragg, and he had given instructions for the repair of the mill, C.R. took the steamer *National City* and went to San Francisco. There he found all the ruin and destruction he had seen in Fort Bragg multiplied a thousand fold. The scene was one of great confusion, but C.R. and Captain Hammar managed to help a little. There were a lot of invalids who were to be evacuated, and the *National City* made several trips to transport them all to Oakland. While in Oakland on their last trip, C.R. bought supplies for the steamer and for Fort Bragg, and the next day the ship sailed for Fort Bragg, taking up a number of Fort Bragg and Mendocino people who had happened to be in San Francisco at the time.

Repairs to the mill proceeded rapidly and in about three months it was in operation. Demands for lumber to rebuild San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Rosa and the smaller cities which had burned, kept

ORDEAL BY EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE

Union operating at full capacity, and the employment this provided—at the mill, in the woods, and on the wharf—materially helped and hastened Fort Bragg's own rebuilding.



Chapter 11 BITS OF FORT BRAGG HISTORY—AN ACCOUNT OF SOME ASPECTS OF LIFE IN THE NINETIES: AMUSEMENTS—TRAVEL BY STAGE AND BY SCHOONER—ABOARD BY “SLING”—UNION LUMBER COMPANY BECOMES A “RIVER.”

In considering its rapid recovery from the devastating earthquake and fire of April, 1906, it is interesting to observe that Fort Bragg's earliest beginnings somewhat paralleled San Francisco's, in that both were started for something other than they ultimately became. San Francisco was started as a mission, and Fort Bragg as a military post and Indian reservation.

Since portions of the Mendocino Coast were populated by Indians, it was inevitable that, as the white settlers came, trouble between Indians and whites should occur. The whites, being fewer, required or believed they required protection, and to provide it and prevent serious trouble the Federal Government in the year 1857 sent Lieutenant H. G. Gibson to the Mendocino Coast to establish an Army Post. He and other government officers selected the location for the post; and when the question of a name came up, he proposed to his superiors in Washington that it be called Fort Bragg. This was to honor a classmate at West Point of whom he was very fond—Captain Braxton Bragg, who later became a Confederate general in the Civil War.

Ten years later, in 1867, the Government moved all of the Indians to a reservation at Round Valley, and both the post and the reservation at Fort Bragg were abandoned. But the name hovered over the place and when, in 1884, C. R. Johnson selected the old post as a site for a sawmill and town, the old name was chosen for both the new lumber company and the new town.

Unfortunately there is not space to give the full history of Fort Bragg; to trace its steady growth through the years since its second and *real* founding by C. R. Johnson and his associates in 1884, down to the present time. Suffice it then to give a glimpse of what life in this region of the Mendocino Coast was like when Fort Bragg was in its infancy and early childhood.

Earlier in this chronicle we have recorded in some detail the

manner in which work and business were carried on in the eighties and nineties. Perhaps, therefore, it would help now to complete the picture of life in those days to present a few details of some of the amusements and recreations of the period; to open the storehouse of "Mendocino Memories" and describe some of the things that people—young and old—did on Sundays or holidays or long summer evenings, or when, perchance, they had left work or business behind for a few days or weeks of carefree vacation.

As work and business were simpler in those bygone days, so were pleasures and amusements. There were no automobiles, so people made their trips by horse or boat or bicycle or by "shanks mare." Of course they did not go so far or fast, but maybe they saw more on the way. From the tales that have come down to us, they certainly had good times—doing all sorts of simple things.

Maybe they would drop their nets in the Noyo River for crabs and pull up fifty or a hundred of them an evening, dropping them into big cans over a log fire on the beach, and then sit around in the firelight telling stories, and singing; meantime feasting on crab meat, crackers and cheese.

Maybe on summer evenings, merry parties would row up the river for a moonlight picnic—listening to the "singing fish" and looking for sprigs of "white redwood" which grew on certain special stumps.

On Sundays or holidays there might be trips into the woods by family groups—children and fathers and mothers and even grandparents—to gather big buckets of wild blackberries, black raspberries, huckleberries, currants, salmonberries and thimbleberries or, in the fall, hazel nuts and "Chinkapin." In those days the rhododendrons were too plentiful to require protection, and the youngsters gathered big bouquets of them, and of wake-robins and lady-slippers and of the lovely wild orchids which grew under the redwoods.

Lacking automobiles and railroads those were the days when long trips were made by ship or stagecoach from Fort Bragg or Mendocino; and for every such trip there was always some thrilling episode. Perhaps you were going to make a trip to San Francisco by boat—by steam schooner or, still earlier, by sailing schooner. If so, you planned it and prepared for it weeks ahead. Then when the

great day came, perhaps there was a storm, with the wind howling and the seas running so high that the spray dashed over you as you were shipped out in a sling suspended perilously from a cable. There was certainly a thrill to that. And there was more of it when on the homeward voyage by sailing ship, you were perchance becalmed and maybe spent ten or twelve days on a voyage which steam schooners made later in twelve or fifteen hours.

Perhaps you decided to make your trip "below"—to "the City" as everyone called San Francisco—by land. If so, you "staged it" through Anderson Valley to Cloverdale—an all-day trip in a rocking Concord stagecoach, whose swaggering driver herded his four or six horses down the steep hills and around the sharp curves with breath-taking speed and incredible skill. He was often a talkative fellow, who, besides terrifying the passengers by his fast driving, horrified them with tales of narrow escapes from all sorts of perils. And now and then there was a *real* thrill—as when some disciple of "Black Bart" held up the stage at the point of a gun and forced the driver to throw out the Wells Fargo "strong box."

All these, and many more things too numerous to describe here—church "sociables," school picnics, bazaars, quilting bees, country square-dances—were the amusements and pleasures and recreation and "thrills" of the people of Fort Bragg and the adjacent region in the days when Fort Bragg was in its infancy and early childhood. As such, they are perhaps a greater aid than facts and figures to help us gain a true picture of life in those early days.

One could well liken Union Lumber Company to a stream, flowing through time instead of space; and as it flowed through the years from its source, gathering to itself other streams along the way from time to time until finally it became—with all these tributaries—what it is today: a mighty river.

Some of these tributaries have already been described—Stewart, Hunter & Johnson's Mill Creek operation; White & Plummer's extensive lumber and tie business; Glen Blair Redwood Company. Another of them was the Little Valley Lumber Company, which Union absorbed about 1901. And still another was the Mendocino Lumber Company, taken over by Union, and whose age, size and



Before Union completed its railroad to Willits, stagecoaches like this provided picturesque—and thrilling—“rapid transportation.”



Fort Bragg's first official Fourth of July celebration, in 1888. Man on white horse never has been identified.

unusual history entitle it to special consideration in our story.

The Mendocino Lumber Company—earlier called “California Redwood Manufacturing Company” and “The Mendocino Saw Mills”—established the first large sawmill in Mendocino County and probably in the whole Redwood region. There were several mills established a bit earlier, but they were small water-powered affairs which would not produce in a month what the Mendocino mill cut in a day. One of these was run by Captain Smith, an ex-shipmaster, at Bodega Bay; and it was this little mill first run by water power, that indirectly led to the establishment of a real sawmill at Big River.

As has been briefly mentioned in an earlier chapter, the mill at Big River was established by a group of San Franciscans including Jerome Ford, Harry Meiggs, E. C. Williams and Captain David Lansing. There are several versions of how these men first learned of the Mendocino Coast’s great redwood forests. One holds that Williams & Meiggs, who had been in the lumber business in San Francisco since 1849, had obtained some redwood lumber from Captain Smith’s Bodega Bay mill, liked it and wanted to get a great deal more. With this in mind, Williams sent his friend Jerome Ford up to Bodega Bay to see Captain Smith. Ford reported they could buy the mill, and they did so, but it was soon apparent that it was too small to produce what they needed.

With the Gold Rush still on, San Francisco was growing rapidly and demanding a lot of lumber, most of which came around the Horn or from the Sandwich Islands. It was very expensive, and besides was not nearly enough to supply the demand. So Williams and Ford went to Bodega Bay to see what could be done to enlarge Capt. Smith’s mill. While there, Smith told Williams and Ford they should see the really big redwood trees, and the great redwood forests, seventy or eighty miles farther up on the Mendocino Coast. Whereupon; according to this story, Williams and Ford got a boat and went up the Coast as far as Big River. What they saw there sent them back to San Francisco as fast as they could get there, and shortly thereafter they began planning to build a large mill at the mouth of Big River.

Another version claims that first word of the great Mendocino

Coast redwoods came to Williams and Ford as the result of a shipwreck. A Chilean silk ship was wrecked somewhere off the Mendocino Coast and a party from San Francisco went up to try to salvage its cargo. Some of these men, the story goes, came back and told Williams and Ford of the great forests of giant redwoods.

Whichever story we accept of the beginning does not really matter—for the end is the same. Hearing of the Mendocino Coast redwoods, Williams and Ford went up from Bodega to see them, and what they saw spurred them to immediate action. Early in 1852, Ford left San Francisco to go overland to Big River, and two or three weeks later Williams sailed for the same place aboard a boat which carried complete machinery and equipment for the mill, together with about forty workmen and all necessary food and supplies.



Chapter 12 SAN FRANCISCO TO BIG RIVER IN 1852. FORD'S LAND JOURNEY—SWIMMING RIVERS WITH EIGHT YOKE OF OXEN. WILLIAMS' SEA VOYAGE—A LEAKING BRIG AND A NEAR MUTINY. HOW THE MENDOCINO SAWMILLS WERE STARTED —FORD'S DIARY—WILLIAMS' CHRONICLE.

As Ford was the first to start out, we will follow him on his momentous journey. Fortunately this is fairly easy for he kept a diary. This has come down to us, and from its terse pencilled entries we can retrace his journey from San Francisco to Big River.

Ford took the boat from San Francisco to Benicia, and went from there to Napa, and then to Sonoma by stage. At Sonoma he remained long enough to buy or hire three saddle horses and two pack mules. Also to witness a fight in which one of the adversaries pulled a gun and shot half the other man's teeth out without killing him. Ford then rode to Bodega Corners and stayed a day or two with Captain Smith; buying eight yoke of oxen, and hiring two men to help him with the mules and oxen. From there the party proceeded up the Coast by slow stages, camping wherever night overtook them. There were no roads—only rough, narrow trails—and they had to swim the swollen rivers. Crossing one of them—probably the Gualala, boundary between Mendocino and Sonoma counties—one mule drowned and the other swam downstream, got ashore and ran away. This was a real calamity, for, besides losing the mules, the party lost all its provisions and blankets. Thereafter they had only saddle blankets—"sweat cloths" Ford calls them—to sleep under, and for thirty-six hours they had nothing to eat but some berries they gathered along the trail. Then they reached what Ford referred to as "The Portuguese Ranch," near the Navarro River, and there got their first square meal in nearly two days, replenished their provisions, and rested for two days. Finally, after ten days of hard, slow travel, they reached the mouth of the Big River, which Ford alternately called the "Rio Grande" and the "Bull Don." The former name was the one used by the Spanish, and the latter his own version of the Indian name, "Booldam," which likewise meant "large stream."

Ford's terse account of arriving at Big River is in the following entry from his diary:

"Rio Grand, Thursday, 17 June

"Arrived last evening at six o'clock but owing to the tide being so high were unable [sic] to cross the River with our animals so we crossed over leaving our Animals behind. This morning have got them across—so we are at journey's end. This is a rather pleasant Place. Am stopping in the House I bought of the Blacksmith."

The next day he writes:

"Today have been looking about, defining Boundaries. 'Mr. Caston' has a claim on the point—which with the claim I purchased takes up the whole of the Point—All living here now are six—'Warner' 'Caston' myself and three Germans. The Harbor is a very large Bay and River entering from the Mountains some 20 miles up."

Warner seems to have been one of the men hired in Bodega. In his diary Ford invariably puts these and other men's names in quotation marks, as if to suggest that he was not sure they were the men's real names. Three days later he writes:

"Have taken up the next claim on the river. Have erected a Bough House. Land is quite well timbered and very well sheltered. Spent the night in the Bough House for the purpose of killing Elk in the morning. Early this morn we were woke up by the 'Elk Whistle,' and within the distance of 100 yards there were about 20 Elk, but they had got our location by scent and vamoosed before we could get our rifles. Have but few stores and not much to do with. Expect the ship every hour."

It was a good many hours—days in fact—before the ship finally arrived. In subsequent entries Ford tells of hiring some Indians to split rails—evidently to build a corral to restrain the oxen; of getting a temporary meat supply by going up the river half a mile and killing a very large buck; and of the "three Germans" from up the river—one of whom he identifies as "Gebhard Hegenmeyer"—going down to Little River "to pack some groceries." Each day he expects the ship, which is now long overdue; and of clear evenings, when he can look far out to sea, he sits on the Point until dark, watching for a speck of sail. Finally, when he has become alarmed at the long delay and almost given up hope, the ship arrives. Then Ford's diary abruptly stops—mute but eloquent testimony that "deeds speak louder than words."

The ship which Ford had been so long expecting was the brig *Ontario*. With Ford's partner, Edwards C. Williams, and forty men—besides machinery and supplies—aboard, the *Ontario* was fighting its way up from San Francisco against strong head winds and heavy seas. Williams kept no diary, but in an article he wrote for a lumber magazine about sixty years later, he tells us of this fateful voyage.

Sometime during the previous year, he states, he and Ford and Meiggs had bought the Bodega sawmill, but as soon as he had seen the timber at Big River he had realized this mill was not capable of handling it. So he had gone East, purchased equipment for a large mill, and shipped it to San Francisco via Cape Horn. Returning to San Francisco himself via the Isthmus, he had bought the brig *Ontario*—whose sailors had all deserted to go to the gold mines—provisioned it and, with the aid of his friend, Captain David Lansing, rounded up a crew.

Then when his new sawmill equipment arrived from the East, he had loaded it on the *Ontario* and, with the forty mechanics and laborers hired to build the mill, set sail from San Francisco for Big River.

After relating all this, Williams goes on to say in his article:

"We were not out of sight of land before our troubles began. The ship, which had been at anchor a long time, had become very dry above the water line, and as soon as put upon the wind and headed up the Coast, the motion began to loosen the oakum in the seams and let in the water."

The water, he states, did not come in very badly at first, but—"was increasing from day to day, until the workmen became alarmed and insisted upon going back to San Francisco. The Captain said that with good weather there was no danger, and the workmen agreed that if they were put on pay, they would man the pumps and keep the ship free of water. This was arranged for, and, the weather favoring us, we made port without mishap."

Williams, who had fought in the Mexican War in Colonel Stevenson's famous regiment and, along with his crony Kit Carson, had come to California directly after that war ended, was a man more of action than words. Moreover, with the perspective of sixty years, he was able, when he wrote the article from which we quote, to

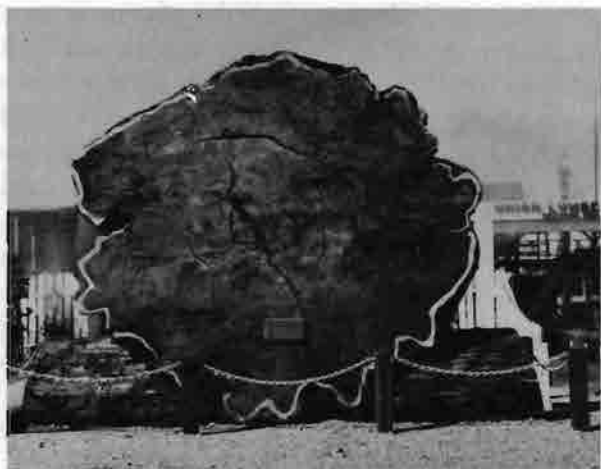
view the events of that near calamitous voyage quite calmly and to speak of them rather lightly. We know, however, from accounts of it which he gave much earlier that when the *Ontario* began leaking badly there was a virtual mutiny aboard, and that only the courage and capable leadership of himself and Captain Lansing averted real disaster.

In his article, Williams went on to record that, arriving at the mouth of Big River, they found Ford already there, with horses and oxen on the ground, and that they moved the ship inside the port with the stern very close to the shore, and unloaded her cargo. Then the task of building the mill began. Of this he writes—again with a terseness and calm which gives increased emphasis:

“The difficulties connected with the building of the mill were many and great. Our millwright proved wholly incompetent; men became dissatisfied and left at a moment’s warning, and their places could only be filled by our sending to San Francisco and bringing men overland up the Coast. Before the mill had its roof on, the storms began; and for years the memory of that winter came to me as a horrible nightmare. But Spring came at last and the mill was finished, and we began shipping its output to market at the rate of 50,000 feet a day.”

Their troubles were far from over, however. It was soon apparent that the mill they had built under such difficulties was not satisfactory. It was a gang mill and not really suited to the size of their logs or the character of their timber. Moreover, they had sales commitments which required an output of 100,000 feet a day. Accordingly, another mill was a necessity. So they set to work and built a second mill. It was located on the flat, beside the river; equipped with circular saws, and had a capacity of 60,000 feet in twelve hours. The engine for this mill and all the machinery was made in San Francisco. It burned down a few years later, but was immediately rebuilt on the same general plan.

All of this had been spread over several years, and had been accomplished in the face of almost insuperable difficulties. Meiggs, who had a substantial interest in the mills, having backed too many other enterprises at the same time, got into financial difficulties and left the country. He had borrowed heavily from the private banking firm of Godeffroy & Sillem and pledged his mill stock as se-



Section of 21-foot redwood tree, dedicated by the citizens of Fort Bragg to the memory of C. R. Johnson.



This bronze plaque, which is annually awarded to the redwood company having the year's best safety record, was created as a memorial to C. R. Johnson by his son, Otis.

curity. As a consequence, Williams and Ford had to shut down the mill for several months while they worked out a settlement with Meiggs' creditors. Finally Godeffroy & Sillem entered into a financial arrangement with Williams and Ford, raised additional capital through their offices in London and Hamburg, and the mills again began operating. From that time on there was mostly calmer sailing. Williams and Ford were both exceedingly able men and hard workers; and, with full production and favorable markets, it was not too long before they had paid off Godeffroy and Sillem and gotten entirely free from debt.

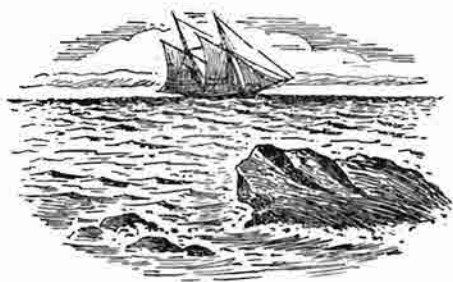
Many interesting pages could be written—if space permitted—of the further history of this pioneer redwood lumber manufacturing concern. It was lumber from the Mendocino Saw Mills (later renamed the Mendocino Lumber Company), that helped materially to rebuild San Francisco after its many conflagrations in the fifties. It was the Mendocino Saw Mills that had what is claimed to have been the first railroad in California—a mile of track over which oxen pulled carloads of lumber from the mill up to the chute on the Point. It was the Mendocino Saw Mills that provided the first cargoes of lumber for the little two-masted schooners which became so much a part of the life and the history of the Mendocino Coast. And it was the Mendocino Saw Mills that founded the town of Mendocino and made it for years the most important shipping center and community on the whole Mendocino Coast.

From this brief sketch of Mendocino Lumber Company the reader will readily see that in absorbing this fine old concern, Union Lumber Company—besides acquiring a valuable mill and plant, extensive timber, and a group of able personnel which included the pioneer lumberman John S. Ross, Sr.—put its roots down still deeper into the soil of the Mendocino Coast and gathered to itself a rich heritage of early Mendocino Coast memories. By this amalgamation, Union Lumber Company became the oldest large redwood lumber manufacturing concern in the world.

The Mendocino Lumber Company's mill at Mendocino operated until about 1937. Then, with a dropping market and the mill being in poor repair, it became necessary to close down. As chance would have it, the old mill sang its "swan song" cutting timber which had

MEMORIES OF THE MENDOCINO COAST

grown hundreds of miles from the Mendocino Coast. In the summer of 1938, a fir log raft belonging to the Benson Lumber Company was being towed from the Columbia River to San Diego, when it broke up off Mendocino. About half of it was salvaged; towed into Mendocino Bay, and sawed up by the Mendocino mill, making about 3,500,000 feet of lumber. The mill was then shut down and later dismantled, but the long and colorful history of the Mendocino Lumber Company will remain always a fragrant segment of the memories of the Mendocino Coast.



Chapter 13 SOMETHING ABOUT RAILROADS BUT MOSTLY ABOUT SHIPS. MORE LOGGING RAILROADS—COMPLETION OF THE RAILWAY TO WILLITS. AFFRAYS WITH THE “PEACEFUL” PACIFIC—HOW THE *NEWSBOY* PLAYED LEAP-FROG IN FORT BRAGG HARBOR—THE WRECK OF THE *KRUGER* AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SHIPS TRYING TO TOW HER—OTHER SHIPWRECK STORIES—LOG RAFTS.

RETURNING to the period following the earthquake and fire of April, 1906, we find Union recovered from the disaster and operating at full capacity. Improvements in the mill were being made right along, and the wharf was enlarged and extended. But the main achievement of this period was the extension of the Company's railroad.

Away back in the early nineties, C.R. had envisioned the advantages of terminal railway rates for Fort Bragg; and from the time of driving the first spike in the Company's logging railroad, he had never abandoned the intention of some day building a railroad all the way, over the mountains, to Willits.

Following 1906, C.R. and his associates went earnestly to work to make this dream a reality. They had organized the California Western Railroad and Navigation Company, as a subsidiary of Union Lumber Company, and, with money raised by selling bonds, pushed the project harder and harder until finally, in November, 1911, it was completed. On December 19, 1911, the first train ran from Fort Bragg to Willits and back, carrying a large number of Fort Bragg people to attend the celebration ceremonies which took place in Willits. From that day on, Fort Bragg has had the great advantages of main line railway connections, and has enjoyed the benefits of terminal railway rates.

The road itself has become one of the most famous “little railroads” in the world. Traversing a very rugged, mountainous region abounding in magnificent scenery, and containing several stretches of track which “doubles back on itself” to rival the famed “Horseshoe Curve” of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the California Western Railroad has attracted railroad enthusiasts from all parts of the

world, and has been written up in numerous national magazines.

Exclusive of the feeder logging lines, it is about forty-two miles in length. It passes through two long tunnels, has about 20,000 feet of trestles and bridges, and climbs from sea level to an elevation of about 1800 feet. The cost of the road was approximately \$1,700,000, or about \$40,000 a mile.

The road operates passenger service connecting with the Northwestern Pacific's main line at Willits, but the major portion of its traffic is the lumber shipped over it, and the general freight which moves in and out of Fort Bragg. Supplemented by some twenty-five miles of logging railroad, it has long been a most important adjunct to the Company's extensive operations, and has served as one of the major factors in the development and progress of Fort Bragg and the surrounding area. And—lest we forget—it, too, grew out of the early dreams of the red-headed young man who came out to California from Michigan and fell in love with the Mendocino Coast.

Pushing its line through to Willits did not terminate Union Lumber Company's railroad-building activities. The construction of the Ten Mile River logging railroad in 1916-1917 was a project that, in size, cost and importance, was comparable to the construction of the Pudding Creek tunnel back in the nineties. This railroad, extending out eleven miles from Fort Bragg and along the Ten Mile River, opened up to the Company a vast supply of very fine timber.

Before the Company completed its line to Willits, all the lumber it manufactured had to move to market by sea. And it was to facilitate this ocean traffic that, in 1901, C.R. and his associates organized the National Steamship Company.

As mentioned earlier, National Steamship Company was created to own, charter and operate steam schooners between Fort Bragg and main California ports, and for more than a third of a century—from 1901 to 1938—it did all that. For thirty-seven years its ships and shipmasters were known far and wide, and the story of their operations provides material enough to make a book by itself. There is romance always in ships and shipping; and in all maritime history no ships ever wrote a more romantic chapter than those little lumber

schooners—propelled first by sail and then by steam—which moved in and out of the Mendocino “dog-holes” to carry the products of Union and other Mendocino Coast sawmills to the markets of the world.

Many of those famous ships were owned or operated, over the years, by Union through the National Steamship Company. Before completion of the railroad to Willits, most of them carried, besides full cargoes of lumber and incoming supplies, from fifteen to forty passengers; and for many years space on them for the overnight voyage between Fort Bragg and San Francisco was always in great demand. They were hardly to be classed as “luxury liners,” but the food on them was good and abundant, the berths were comfortable and, except in case of stormy weather, passengers arrived in San Francisco rested and refreshed.

Three of the ships owned by the National Steamship Company were the *Noyo*, the *National City*, and the *Brunswick*. There were three *Noyos* altogether. The first hit Bull Rock, between Albion and Navarro one night in 1914, in a heavy fog, and sunk about five miles outside the Golden Gate after being towed that far. The second, which was formerly the *Admiral Goodrich*, went ashore off Point Arena on a foggy night in 1935. The third *Noyo*, formerly the *Griffdu*, was sold by Union in 1940 to the Government of Siam.

Other ships owned or operated by Union either directly or through the National Steamship Company, were the *Coquille River*, *South Coast*, *Higgins*, *Berkeley*, *Fort Bragg*, *Phoenix*, *Sea Foam*, *Arctic*, *Greenwood*, and *Sequoia*. The latter was the only ship ever built at Fort Bragg.

The foregoing ships were all steam schooners. The original schooners which carried lumber from the Mendocino Coast were all sailing vessels. They had a jib, a foresail and a mainsail. Later, a boiler was put in them; also the necessary engines, etc., and they became literally “steam schooners.” That is how they got the name. For years after converting to steam, many of these vessels still carried sails; using them on occasion to supplement their engines and gain greater speed.

It is quite well known that the Pacific, as an ocean, is sometimes guilty of conduct which does not comport with its name; hence, no

story of the Mendocino Coast would be complete without accounts of some of the famous battles between lumber ships and this un-pacific sea. One of these concerns the little schooner, *Newsboy*, famous as the first ship owned by the late Captain Robert Dollar, and which carried lumber from his sawmill at Usal to San Francisco. Clarence Broback, long the wharf and shipping superintendent for Union, tells a vivid story of the time this little craft entered Fort Bragg harbor amidst a terrific storm. Captain Dollar was on board, carrying several thousand dollars in his money belt to pay his men at the mill. The *Newsboy*, having been unable to get into Usal because of the storm, had worked her way down the coast, seeking some safe place to land. When she appeared off Fort Bragg, neither Broback nor anyone else on the wharf had any idea she would try to come in with such a storm raging. Presently, however, it was seen that the little ship was going to try. Everyone ashore was certain the attempt would be disastrous, and proceeded to run up signals and blow whistles to discourage her. But despite all this, the ship started in. As she was about halfway, a terrific wave overtook her, lifted her up like a cork and literally tossed her clear over the reef and into the relatively quiet waters of the bay. Captain Dollar came ashore, soaked to the skin and looking as if he had seen a dozen ghosts, but with his money belt still intact. After drinking a quart of hot coffee at the cook house, and phoning his son, Stanley, in San Francisco, that he was safe, he insisted on hiring a horse and riding on through the night to get to Usal and pay off his men. From that time on, the north reef at Fort Bragg harbor has always been called "*Newsboy Channel!*"

Another battle, and one that did not turn out so favorably for the ship involved, was between the Pacific and the *Kruger*.

According to the best recollections of Clarence Broback and Otis Johnson, it was around Christmas, 1906, when the steam schooner *Kruger*, which Union Lumber Company had chartered for one voyage, came into Fort Bragg to take on a full load of lumber. She was commanded by Captain Hansen, and he was as proud of his ship as he was contemptuous of Fort Bragg harbor. While the *Kruger* was loading, an angry "souwester" began to make up, and everybody on the wharf warned against the ship going out in



A portion of the Fort Bragg lumber yard where orders are assembled and made ready for loading on cars for shipment.



Freight train on California Western Railroad. This subsidiary of Union Lumber Company connects with trunk line at Willits and gives Fort Bragg the benefits of terminal rates.

THE WRECK OF THE "KRUGER"

such a storm. But Captain Hansen scoffed at this advice. He said the storm was "just a little blow," and that *his* ship could stand any sort of storm. He even intimated that the men who had warned him did not know a real ship when they saw one; that they were so accustomed to the "little tubs" which came into their "dog-hole" that they didn't realize what a good ship looked like or could withstand.

So Captain Hansen continued taking on lumber, and that afternoon the *Kruger* sailed. The storm was still raging, and kept up all night and throughout the following day. About noon of that day, Broback, who was on the wharf at Fort Bragg, heard four sharp whistle blasts. Now, when four whistles blow at sea, it is always a sign of distress; and Broback, looking out through the rain and mist, saw the bow of the steam schooner *Seafoam* coming from the north, with something in tow. A few minutes later he was able to see that the tow was a terrible wreck of a ship, and it proved to be the *Kruger*. During the preceding night, in the heavy weather, her deck load had carried away, taking the house with it, and she was also badly waterlogged.

The steam schooner *Brunswick* happened to be tied up at the Fort Bragg wharf at the time, and her master, Captain Ellefsen, phoned C.R. in San Francisco and after explaining the situation, asked for instructions. C.R. told him to give full help to the *Seafoam*, which had indicated her inability to handle the wreck alone. So the *Brunswick* set out to help, and Captain Miller, the *Seafoam's* master, megaphoned the *Brunswick* to put a line aboard and help tow. The *Brunswick* did so, and began pulling. She was in the lead, with the *Seafoam* behind her, and with the wreck of the *Kruger* behind the *Seafoam*. There was now no one aboard the *Kruger*. When she had foundered off Caspar, during the preceding night, and her steam had gone out, Captain Hansen and his crew abandoned ship and took to the small boats, and somehow managed to get ashore. Afterwards, with the wind blowing a terrific gale from the south, the wreck had drifted some distance north, where the *Seafoam* found it and put a towline aboard.

The "souwester" continued throughout the second night with undiminished fury, and by morning the *Brunswick* and *Seafoam*, still towing the *Kruger* wreck, had been able to make only about

thirty miles. As it was winter, it was still dark when, at 5 a.m., the *Seafoam*, which was behind the *Brunswick*, blew four whistles and after a short interval repeated them, indicating she was in distress. As soon as there was any visibility, the *Brunswick* turned to, to find out the trouble. Through his megaphone, Captain Miller, the master of the *Seafoam*, shouted that his ship was in imminent danger of being pulled in two by the wreck and he would have to let go at once.

With heavy seas running, it took the *Brunswick* until afternoon to get a towline made fast to the wreck, and by then the swells had worked the ships around until they were headed west. Finally, with its towline secure, the *Brunswick's* master gave the word to go; but in the maneuvering required to get back on their southward course again, the wreck of the *Kruger* turned turtle. This naturally made the *Kruger* still harder to handle, and the master of the *Brunswick* conferred with his chief engineer as to whether the *Kruger* was worth salvaging. The chief said he believed the *Kruger's* engines were still in her and she was therefore worth salvaging, so Captain Ellefsen went back to the bridge and the *Brunswick* started full speed ahead. But pull as she would she still went backward, and by evening it was apparent that unless she let go the tow, she would go on the rocks at Navarro and herself be a wreck. Accordingly, the *Brunswick* let go the *Kruger* and steamed back to Fort Bragg; staying outside all night, but moving into the wharf next day to take on more lumber.

It was now the morning of the third day after this battle with the "peaceful" Pacific had started. The last lumber taken aboard the *Brunswick* was some long 12 x 12 timbers, and a final slingload of these hit the first mate (later captain) "Midnight" Olson and knocked him overboard. He was badly hurt and ordered to the hospital, so the *Brunswick* had to sail without a first mate.

It was now nightfall, and the *Brunswick*, in trying to get out of the harbor in the darkness and heavy weather, struck the north reef and lost her rudder. Captain Ellefsen managed to rig up a foresail, and with this done he would alternately run his propeller and stop it. Running it would force the stern of the ship to the right, and stopping it would cause the foresail to pull the bow around.

This enabled them to keep off the rocks, but as they immediately

THE WRECK OF THE "KRUGER"

began drifting north, it was necessary to rig a jury rudder. In doing this—remember it was dark and the storm had not abated—they somehow got a line into the propeller and jammed the whole works. With no propeller and only a makeshift rudder, there was no way to keep from drifting farther north, and most of Fort Bragg was up all night to watch her; following her course by her lights, and expecting her to go ashore before morning.

Somehow the *Brunswick* managed to avoid going ashore, and finally, through the rain those aboard her saw lights coming toward them. It proved to be the *Seafoam*, and she was coming to help; but try as she did, she could not get close enough—because of the high seas—to put a line aboard.

Morning came at last, and daylight showed the steam schooner *Brooklyn* also standing by. There was a conference among the various masters, conducted by megaphone, and it was decided that the *Brooklyn* would put a line aboard the *Brunswick* and tow her to San Francisco.

It now was the fourth morning after the battle had started, and about eleven o'clock the line was made secure and the *Brooklyn* headed for San Francisco with the *Brunswick* in tow. And sometime later that day, by working the propeller back and forth, the chief engineer of the *Brunswick* "chewed" the line out of the propeller. However, progress was still slow, as the *Brooklyn*, which wanted to run up a tow bill as large as possible, did not pull at all hard. Sometimes she was pulling so listlessly that the *Brunswick* would come up almost even with her; whereupon Captain Ellefsen would roar through his megaphone at the *Brooklyn's* master, demanding that he pull harder. But the *Brooklyn* would pay him no heed.

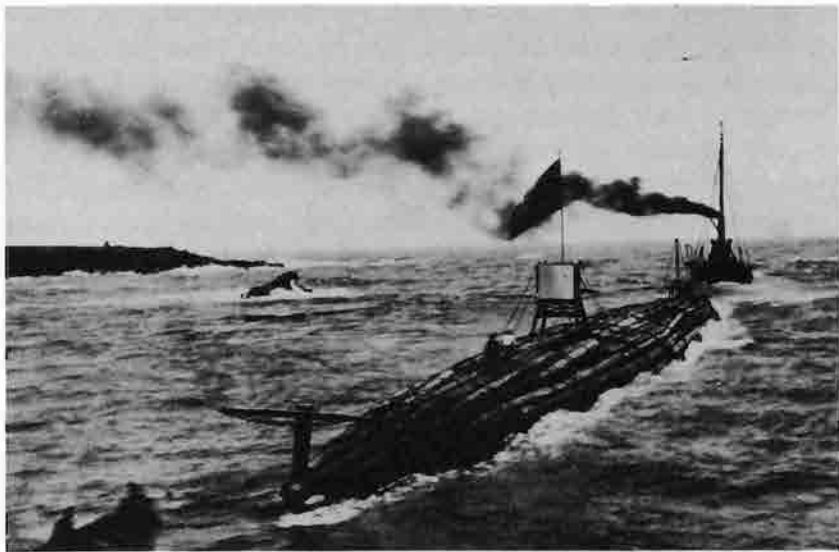
There were, of course, no ships' radios at this time, and the failure of the *Brunswick* to reach San Francisco so alarmed C.R. that he got hold of the steam schooner *Phoenix* and, with Captain Hammar aboard, started her up the coast from San Francisco to find the *Brunswick*. The *Phoenix* met the *Brooklyn* and *Brunswick* off the mouth of the Russian River, and put a line on the *Brunswick's* stern to keep her from veering. From then on this strange ocean cavalcade made much better time. However, when they got just outside the

heads, at the entrance to San Francisco Bay, the *Brooklyn* stopped and announced that with night coming on and the seas still rough, it was too dangerous to go in, so they would have to wait outside till morning. This was too much for Captain Ellefsen and Captain Hammar. They objected so strenuously, and punctuated their objections with such strong sea language that the master of the *Brooklyn* decided he would yield, and they went in that night after all. Later there was a court battle over the whole affair. The *Brooklyn's* claim for salvage was ruled out, and her subsequent claim for a towing bill of more than \$6000 was allowed only in small part.

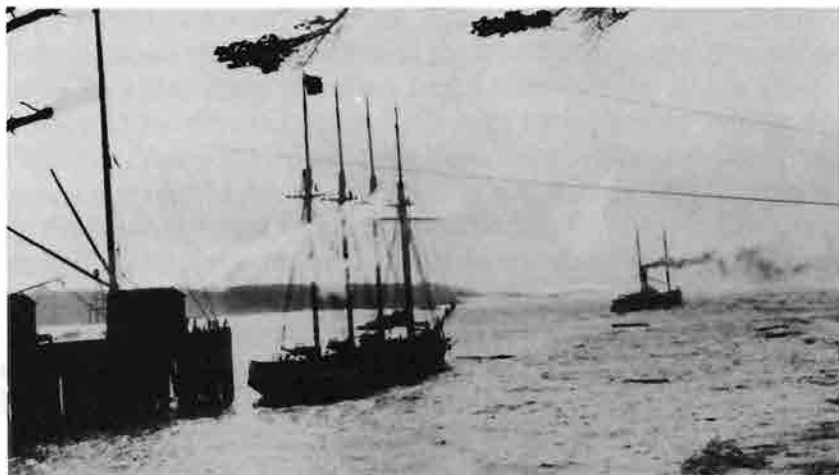
It is of interest, in passing, to mention that with no first mate, and with his second mate incompetent, the master of the *Brunswick* called the bos'n, Tony Wahlgren to the bridge, and that all during this tempestuous voyage he and the captain stood alternate watches. Because of this proof of his seamanship, Wahlgren was encouraged by the Company to try for his officer's papers. He did so, and two years later became a captain in the Company's service, thereafter handling various Company ships and proving to be a very fine shipmaster.

Another shipwreck story, famed in the early annals of the Mendocino Coast was that of a small sailing schooner, which, in the midst of a terrible storm, was sucked into the blow hole on the southerly side of Mendocino Bay and never seen thereafter. Twice the little ship was hurled to the brink of the cavern's mouth, but each time she missed and surged back. Then the enraged sea, with a mighty heave, tried once more and this time drove her in. As she passed into the black hole, three members of her crew jumped overboard and were rescued by ropes thrown to them by Charlie Carlson and W. H. Kelly, who had other ropes around their bodies and tied to trees.

Some have been heard to doubt the authenticity of this story, dubbing it another "old wives' tale." But Kelly's daughter, Mrs. Alex McCallum, who still lives in Mendocino, had the story told to her many times by her father, and vouches for it. John Ross, Sr., who also considers it authentic, believes that the Mendocino blow hole once was connected with Big River, back about two miles from the river's mouth. The water there, on the south side of the river,



Log raft leaving Fort Bragg. This experimental method of transporting piling to market was abandoned because of losses at sea.



Original wooden steam schooner *Noyo*, commanded by Captain George Hammar, towing the sailing schooner *Philippine* out of Fort Bragg Harbor. About 1905.

WRECK OF THE CHILEAN SILK SHIP

was sea blue, he says, and very deep; while on the north side it was the usual color and depth of river water. He believes the blow hole connected with the river through a series of subterranean chambers and channels, and that sea water surging through these in stormy weather produced the moaning sounds heard for years by people walking across the prairie between Mendocino and Little River, and sometimes ascribed, by the superstitious, to the ghosts of sailors who had gone to their deaths in the blow hole. Later on, Ross says, as the result of driving logs down the river, the connection between the river and the blow hole was closed by logs, brush and other debris; and after that the moaning ceased.

Then there is the story of the wreck of the Chilean silk ship, off the coast of Mendocino sometime in 1850 or 1851. Some of the silk bales from this ship were washed ashore and came into the possession of the Indians. Later, when the whites came into the region, they traded the Indians bright calico for the silk. Mrs. Alex McCallum showed the writer a piece of this silk which she carefully preserves as a memento, and states that in her youth she had an entire dress made of it.

As previously related, it was the wreck of this famous Chilean silk ship which, according to one rather widely held report, led indirectly to the white settlement of the Mendocino Coast. The story goes that some of the San Franciscans who came up to see if this ship could be salvaged, went back with such glowing reports to Williams, Ford and Meiggs of the giant redwood trees and limitless redwood forests of the Mendocino Coast, that these three men went up the coast on an inspection trip and, finding the reports to be true, at once made plans for building the Mendocino Saw Mills. If this be true, then surely "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good."

In ending this chapter on shipwrecks, it may be appropriate to mention the experiments in log-rafting which centered in Fort Bragg harbor in the late eighties and early nineties.

These logs were to be used for piling and, as they were hard to load and carry on a ship, it was believed they could be transported more easily and economically in rafts. The photograph facing page 66 shows one of these famous contraptions starting out of Fort Bragg.

MEMORIES OF THE MENDOCINO COAST

A great deal of labor and money went into the attempted working out of this ingenious plan, and it might have succeeded if "that ole Debbil Sea" had not declined to coöperate. Of the three or four log rafts sent out, one broke up and became a total loss, and the others suffered very considerable damage. This clearly demonstrated that if they were to be seaworthy, the rafts would have to be built much stronger. In practice this proved too costly, so log-rafting from the Mendocino Coast was abandoned.



Chapter 14 MOSTLY ABOUT THE FAMILIES, GENERATIONS AND FAMILY GROUPS (AND SOME INDIVIDUALS) LONG IN THE SERVICE OF UNION LUMBER COMPANY AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES. "A PRETTY DAMN GOOD PLACE TO WORK!"

From its beginning and all throughout its long history, Union Lumber Company has been very much of a family institution. Large numbers of family groups, and sometimes as many as three and even four generations of the same family, have worked lifetimes for the Company: their aggregate service running into hundreds of years. To name all of these would transgress space limitations; hence, all that can be done here is to mention a few of the more notable of them.

Among the sixty or more family groups in which several members have been in Company service extending through two or more generations, are the Gray, the Mallory, the Fraser, the Ball, the Cummings, the Donati, the Holmes, the Hanson, the Swales, the Johnson (Tom, Melville and Melville, Jr.), the Mitchell, the Millar, the Potter, the Plummer and the White families. And this situation characterizes the present as well as the past. Working for the Company as this is written are three families of six each; six families of five each; twenty-three of four each; thirty-five of three each, and more than one hundred of two each.

Of the families named, the Plummers have been a part of Union Lumber Company from the start. W. P. Plummer was one of the original incorporators, and it was his economical and capable management that did so much to help C.R. keep the concern going during the troubled days of the nineties. He was succeeded in the Company by his son, Harold Pierson Plummer; and now the latter's son, Harold Pierson, Jr., is a stockholder and serves in the sales department.

The White family likewise became a part of the Company at the very beginning. Carlton L. White, of White & Plummer, was one of the incorporators and original stockholders, and long was the Company's secretary. One of his sons—C.L.—followed him in this position, and another son—Fred—succeeded W. P. Plummer as

general manager. Subsequent holders of this position have been Otis Johnson, Dana Gray, E. L. Green and—presently—Ray Shannon, who began his Company service twenty-six years ago and has been general manager since 1943.

Though not present at the very beginning, the Tom Johnson family has been with the Company since its early years. Tom joined in 1896 and when he retired, as sawyer, in 1945, held the record of having sawed more redwood lumber than any other sawyer in the industry—over 1,000,000,000 board feet, or enough for over 100,000 homes! His edgerman during most of this time was Pete Johnson—no relation to Tom—who was with Union for thirty-seven years. Tom's son, Melville Johnson—nicknamed "Hiram"—was with the Company for twenty-seven years (until his death in 1946) as chopping foreman, and now *his* son, Melville, Jr., is in the planing mill.

Although not large in numbers, the Millar family—Dave and Jim—has been large in its contribution of loyal and efficient service. Dave, who began lumbering at the age of twelve when he went to work for Silas Coombs in his sawmill at Little River, came with Union Lumber Company in 1902 and was in continuous service until he retired in 1944 as foreman of the wharf. Jim, his brother, was with the Company for thirty-two years. Together, the Millar brothers served Union notably for seventy-four years.

Among representatives of the fourth generation of the same family in the Company's service are C. Russell Johnson—the son of Otis R. Johnson, and Peter Lowe—the son of Emily Johnson Orrick. Both are grandsons of C.R., and great-grandsons of the first O. R. Johnson.

Apart from family groups, some of the many individuals who have rendered long and distinguished service to Union Lumber Company are: Dan Corey, who helped C.R. row and tow the first piles out of the Noyo in the building of the Fort Bragg wharf; Fred Johnson, who was in charge of shipping at Newport and came down to superintend the building of the Fort Bragg wharf; Charlie Freeburg, Charlie Banker and Chris Beck who were all with C.R. at Mill Creek and came down to help build and start the first Fort Bragg mill; Jack Cummings who helped build this mill; John



Recently, sawyer George Gibbs celebrated the completion of fifty years with Union Lumber Company.



Though still called "choppers," today's tree-fallers use power-driven chain saws instead of axes and the old "cross-cuts."

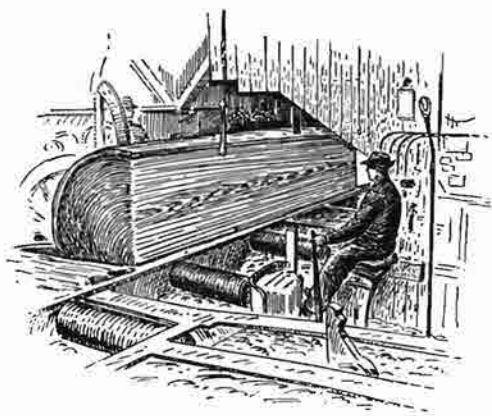
LIFETIMES OF LOYAL SERVICE

Roberts who was also with C.R. at the Mill Creek mill; Emil Larson who joined Union in 1889 and for many years was foreman of the shipping crew; Clarence Broback, who began work in 1901 and retired, as superintendent of the wharf and shipping, in 1945; Charles A. Strong, who started as a stenographer in 1901 and is now vice-president and general counsel; W. R. ("Bill") Morris, who went to work at Fort Bragg in 1908 and is now vice president in charge of sales; Alvin I. Hermann, who began Company service in 1920 and is now secretary-treasurer; Ed Boyle, former logging superintendent of the Mendocino Lumber Company; Caspar ("Skipper") Hexberg, who for many years handled operation of the Company's ships and is now in charge of western sales; Fred Burgers, who has been in the lumber business for fifty-three years and, as a member of Union's sales department, is known and beloved throughout the industry; Captain Jack Bostrom, who commanded the *Noyo* and various other Company ships; Chris Carlson, who was head millwright; Emil ("Cap") Erickson, who was "mule-skinner" on the wharf for forty-seven years; George Gibbs, who has been in Company service over fifty years and is now senior sawyer in the mill; H. A. Nurnberger, who started in 1912 and is now foreman of the planing mill; Tom Burnie who joined the organization forty years ago and is still active; Fred Goranson, who came with the Company forty-one years ago and is still with the railroad; Joe Nadal, who has served forty-one years—most of them as head grader; Alex Sanderson, who was with C.R. at the old Mill Creek sawmill and continued with Union until 1913; Guy Weller, who began his service in 1898 and is now manager of the Company's general merchandise store; Louis Larsen, who began work in 1895 and retired in 1944, as chief mechanic of the Mendocino Lumber Company; "Mickey" McCloud, who was with the Company a full half-century, and Fred L. Hanson, who is still actively on the job after fifty-one years in the Company's service.

All of this adds up to something in which Union Lumber Company finds immeasurable gratification. For, as "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," so it certainly is highly significant that so many men have spent their lifetimes with the Company, and that so many families and family groups—fathers, brothers, sons, grand-

MEMORIES OF THE MENDOCINO COAST

sons and even great-grandsons—have been and still are in its service. It reflects an atmosphere and a condition perfectly summed up by the late head sawyer, Tom Johnson, in the famous speech he made that day in February, 1945, when on behalf of the employees of Union Lumber Company, he accepted the Army-Navy "E" Award for outstanding production in World War II. Speaking in words "with the bark on," Tom said: "I guess it's true that I'm the oldest employee of Union Lumber Company in service. I went to work for this Company in 1896 and found it a pretty damn good place to work, and I stayed here and am here yet!"



Chapter 15 REFORESTATION—ITS PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS. THE DEATH OF CHARLES RUSSELL JOHNSON. A PLANING-MILL FIRE—STILL MORE MODERNIZATION—COMPANY ACHIEVEMENTS IN WORLD WAR II—THE ARMY-NAVY E AWARD—EMPLOYEE INVENTIONS—A GLANCE BACK—CONCLUSION.

Union Lumber Company has been singularly free of labor trouble over the years, and one of the reasons is that so splendidly epitomized by Sawyer Tom Johnson. Another reason is that the nature of the work it provides—lumbering—is not monotonous, but, on the contrary, thrilling and inspiring. The work is largely in the open, with plenty of God's fresh air and sunshine. Besides, men on these kinds of jobs can see that they are doing something which, although strenuous at times, is highly essential and useful. Thus they are proud of their jobs and take pride in their work. The kind of work they do gives them pride because it is creative. For this reason, and because of the friendly environment and the attractiveness of their surroundings, men come to work in their youth and stay twenty-five, forty, even fifty years, and are followed by their sons and grandsons.

In its entire existence, Union Lumber Company has been closed only once by labor trouble. That was because of the strike which occurred in the Redwood industry in January, 1946, and the plant was closed down for six months. In the light of subsequent events, most people now feel that this strike was ill-advised and unnecessary, since the real dispute hinged upon whether or not the individual employee could retain his constitutional right of freedom of choice to join or not to join the union. But hindsight is always easier than foresight; so what seems foolish now, probably seemed wise at the time to those who went on strike. Everybody lost, of course—the employees, the Company, and the community—as everybody always does when production is suspended. After being shut down for six months, the Company reopened on the basis of "freedom of choice" on the part of the employees, and has been operating on that basis ever since. Most of the old employees returned, many of them immediately; and now the same friendly

relationship between management and employees that has characterized Union Lumber Company for sixty-five years prevails, and the whole unfortunate misunderstanding is ancient history.

There are many ways in which Union Lumber Company has shown its appreciation of the loyal service of its employees, and has demonstrated the responsibility it has felt for their well-being. One of them has already been mentioned—there were long periods, during hard times, when the business was kept in operation at a loss because of the realization that the livelihood of so many people depended upon it. Another was the program of reforestation initiated by C.R.

Knowing that redwood trees grew commercially nowhere in the world except along a narrow strip of California coast, C.R. early realized that unless measures were taken to insure their replenishment, the supply would in time be exhausted and the institution he had founded and built up would have to come to an end. There was no danger of this occurring in his own lifetime or in the lifetimes of his immediate descendants, so if he had been interested only in present profits, he would have dismissed the whole matter. He did not do so, because he was always building for the future, and wanted the institution which was providing a livelihood for thousands of people to endure.

Thus, almost from the time he launched his lumbering enterprise, C.R. was thinking reforestation and talking about it to whomever he could persuade to listen. Finally, in the early 1920's, he decided that something must be done about it without further delay. He had discussed the problem frequently with his Redwood industry associates, and now he took the lead in launching a program for the whole industry—with David T. Mason, and later Professor Emmanuel Fritz of the Forestry Department of the University of California, as advisor.

The program was an ambitious and well-determined one. On its own part, Union Lumber Company established a large nursery in which millions of redwood trees were grown from seed, and carefully tended until they were large enough to be transplanted. Then, many thousands of dollars were spent in setting them out, and



Some Union Lumber Company loggers live in logging camps as pictured above. Most live at home and drive to the woods.



Natural second growth. To assure timber like this Union Lumber Company has spent many thousands of dollars in reforestation.



Huge "cats" (tractors) now do—much more quickly and efficiently—the work once done by bull teams.



In some operations trucks transport logs to the railhead where logs are loaded on cars; in other cases trucks dump the logs directly into the mill pond.

everything known to the science of forestry was done to insure their growth.

Unfortunately, this extensive and painstaking effort proved to be impractical. Fire, drought, deer and rodents—especially the two former—preyed upon the little trees to such an extent that most of them were wiped out. Moreover, it was demonstrated that artificially grown redwoods were not nearly so hardy as those which had come up volunteer from seed or sprung, as suckers, from stumps of old trees. And so, with the world depression of the thirties coming on, the effort which had been undertaken so hopefully was abandoned.

That this costly program did not provide the answer to the question of redwood reforestation, was naturally most disappointing to C.R. However, he was not one to despair, and predicted that a solution of the problem would be found. He was right.

Fortunately, tractors came into general use in the woods about this time, and they soon so altered logging methods as to remove many of the principal factors which had operated against natural reforestation. With tractor logging, the younger timber is left undamaged, and this supplies a nucleus for new forests through natural spreading and sprouting of seeds that come from the standing trees. This, plus the growth of suckers from stumps, plus intensive and carefully planned fire protection, provides the best form of redwood reforestation so far developed. As diligently carried on by Union Lumber Company, it aims to create a perpetual yield of timber; thus seeking to insure the permanence of an enterprise which, through providing profitable employment to hundreds of families and assuring at all times a dependable supply of an essential product, has built a thriving community and been a major factor in the development of the entire Mendocino Coast.

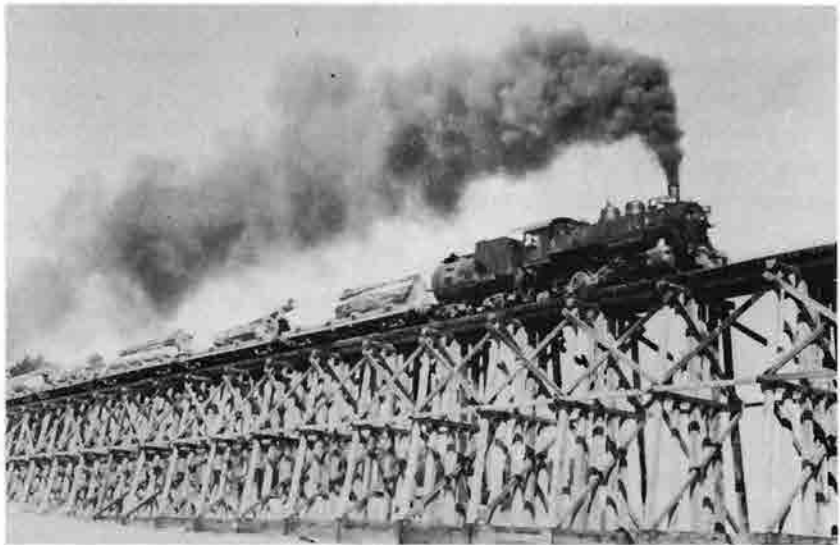
The world-wide depression which struck America in the early thirties, hit the Redwood industry and hit it hard. One by one the mills shut down, and not since the nineties had there been such unemployment along the Redwood Coast. Once more, however, C.R. displayed his courage and his character. Despite most adverse conditions, he kept Union Lumber Company in operation; and, through this whole bitter depression, Union's mill and one other were the only ones in the entire Redwood industry that did not shut down.

Thus in the early thirties, as in the nineties of the last century, C.R. and his associates saw the storm clouds gather, and once again the Mendocino Coast and Union Lumber Company battled hard times together. But again, as forty years earlier, they battled successfully; and, happily, C.R. lived to see the Coast he had loved and the Company he had founded emerge from their difficulties and proceed again along the road of progress and prosperity.

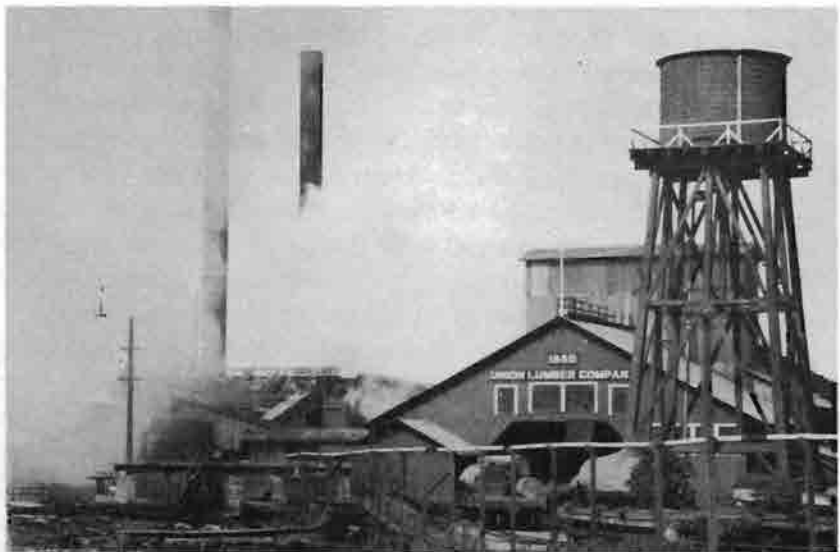
In 1939, C.R. gracefully bowed to advancing age—he was eighty at the time—and resigned the presidency of the institution he had founded. The Board of Directors urged him to reconsider, but, upon his insistence that he wished to be relieved of the burdens of the position, accepted his resignation and elected him Chairman of the Board. To succeed him as President they chose his son, Otis R. Johnson. Relinquishing the presidency, however, did not mark any lessening of C.R.'s interest in either Union Lumber Company or the Mendocino Coast. He continued to take an active part in all Company affairs and, as long as his health permitted, made regular visits to Fort Bragg, which he always called home and whose people he loved. In February, 1940, at the age of eighty-one, his eventful and useful life came to a close.

In writing of Charles Russell Johnson, it has been difficult at times to avoid characterizations which, to some readers, may appear as sheer eulogy. It has been difficult to avoid this because in San Francisco—as in Fort Bragg and all along the Mendocino Coast—to talk about him to men and women who knew him is to evoke their recollections of innumerable incidents epitomizing his fine character and capabilities, his wisdom, courage, kindness and generosity. So pronounced was his aversion to superficialities and so keen was his capacity to cut through the trivial and get direct to the heart of a matter, that even today many of San Francisco's older businessmen still say—when they want to get to the roots of a situation—“Let's C. R. Johnson-ize this!”

In 1939 Union Lumber Company suffered a costly and near-disastrous fire when its planing mill and dry lumber storage shed burned. Besides the shed, the planing mill and all its machinery, the



The Company had to build many miles of railroad for log trains like this one.



Present Fort Bragg mill. Union's is one of most modern and efficient sawmill plants in California.

fire consumed a great deal of lumber and equipment and, but for the heroic efforts of the fire fighters—some of whom came from as far away as Willits—would have destroyed the entire Fort Bragg plant. It caused a loss of nearly a quarter of a million dollars, and for some months considerably curtailed and impeded operations. However, the Company was quick to recognize the chance to turn calamity to advantage. With such a large segment of the plant destroyed, major reconstruction was imperative; and this presented the opportunity to launch a program of modernization and improvement which had long been contemplated.

In reconstructing the facilities which had been destroyed, the Company was careful to fit them into a major, over-all plan, the other components of which could be carried out from time to time as proved practical and convenient. The net result was that in succeeding years the Company made such a substantial rearrangement of its facilities that it now has one of the most modern, streamlined, efficient lumbering plants in California. Moreover, during World War II, these new and expanded facilities enabled the Company to refine and ship from inventory substantially in excess of its augmented wartime production.

No small part of the mechanical efficiency of Union Lumber's plant is due to its policy of encouraging and rewarding inventions by its employees. Whereas, many concerns require men entering their employ to sign agreements relinquishing to the employer anything they may invent, Union Lumber Company allows its employees to retain the ownership and emoluments of their own inventions; in return for which the Company may use the invention without paying royalty.

Among important inventions by Union Lumber Company employees, is the "Electric Dog," which was invented by Messrs. Tallman, Percy and Swinhart, and is now in use by Union and many other big mills. This invention won the National Lumber Manufacturers Association's \$1000 prize award in 1926 for being the most helpful sawmill invention of that year. It is an electrically operated device which holds the log as tight as if it were in a huge vice. It holds the log top and bottom—the face of the log is not touched—so that there is no chance of marring or otherwise spoiling the

lumber. Other inventions made by Union Lumber Company men are:

The "Tallman Tilttable Lumber Hoist," developed by Plant Superintendent J. J. Tallman, and known as the "Fort Bragg Hoist." It is used in the planing mill on five machines, to feed them lumber, and on the re-sorter to feed lumber to the re-sorting table. The Company began using this hoist in 1940, and now more than 100 of them are operating in Pacific Coast and Mid-West lumber plants.

The "Percy Carriage Set Works," invented by Edwin H. Percy who is now Union's Chief Engineer. This machine precisely sets the thickness of the board to be sawed, thus doing away with all guess work.

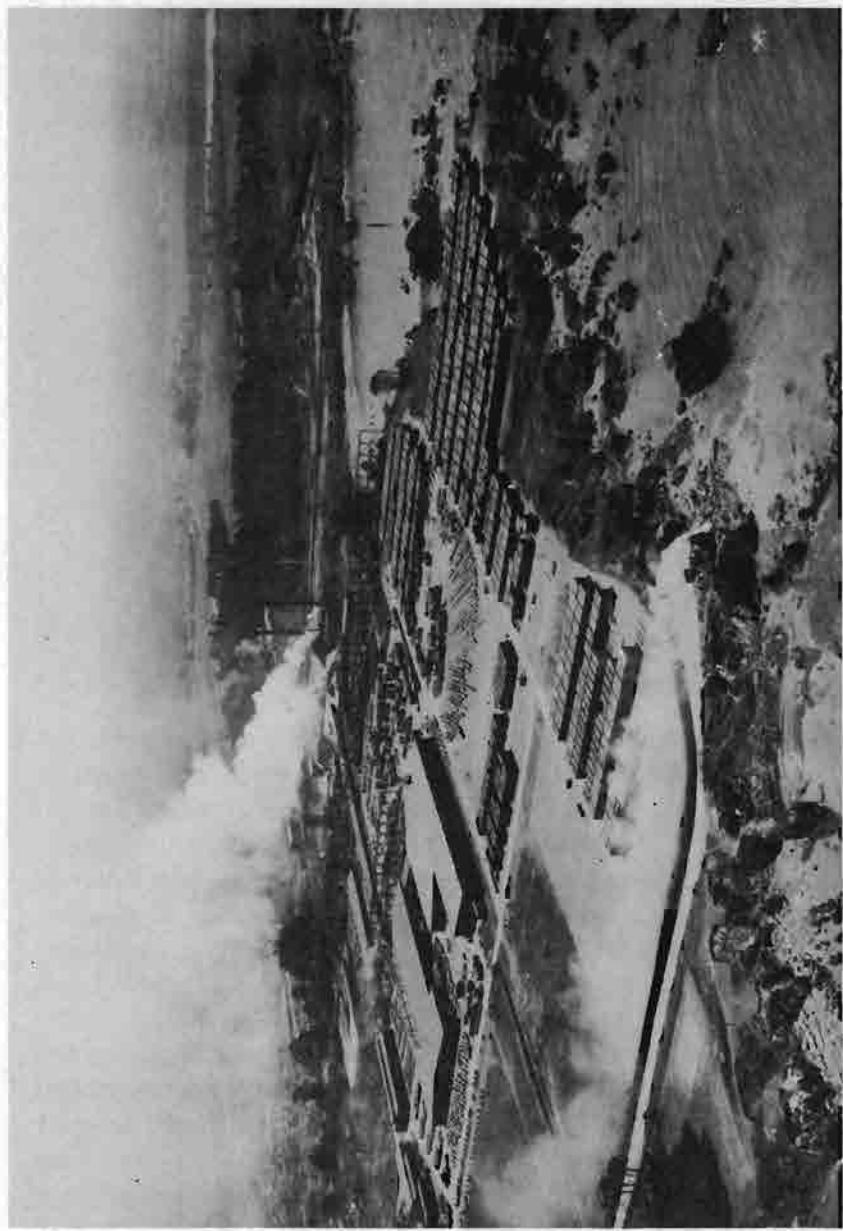
The "Tallman Reloader." This device takes lumber, after it has been surfaced or re-sawn, and loads it into a package unit for shipping. The combination of this reloader and the tilting or feeding hoist previously mentioned, has increased the output of the re-saw by 25%.

The Markkula logging-car chocks, invented by Matt Markkula, and now in use by Union Lumber Company and many other concerns.

The process of converting sawdust into grape packing, which was patented by H. C. Johnson of Union in 1909. Its use was for a time discontinued, but it is again in operation; substantially improved. Previously, billiard cloth was employed to extract the splinters from the sawdust, but now a mechanism similar to a grain separator is being used. This is less costly and much more efficient.

A number of other inventions of employees have helped the Company to make its record of plant efficiency, and in general it is quite apparent that its policy concerning inventions has worked well for all concerned.

As in the first world war, so also in World War II many of Union Lumber Company's employees answered their country's call and fought in Europe or the far Pacific. Some 396 entered the Armed Services, and sixteen made the supreme sacrifice. On the home front, Company workers also rendered vital service to their country; with every man and woman bending his energy toward full production.



Bird's-eye view of Fort Bragg plant, August 1948.

ARMY-NAVY HONORS

During the war approximately 85% of the Company's total production went directly or indirectly into vitally essential war work. This remarkable achievement inspired the following message from Admiral C. W. Nimitz:

U. S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION SERVICE CINCPAC AND CINCPAO		CLASSIFIED OUTGOING		
Date	12 JAN 1945	Grp. Ct.		
From:	Info To:	Classification	Originator	C. W. O.
CINCPAC		PLAIN	06	WM
To:		Precedance	Release	Crypto Grp.
MR. OTIS R. JOHNSON PRESIDENT UNION LUMBER COMPANY, FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA	SAN	ROUT	62	
		System	Show to	
		RDO	6	

I AM GLAD TO ADD MY CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EMPLOYEES OF THE UNION LUMBER COMPANY ON THE OCCASION OF THIS AWARD OF THE ARMY-NAVY E X ALL OF YOU ASSOCIATED IN THIS ENTERPRISE, TOGETHER WITH YOUR FELLOW WORKERS IN THE LUMBER INDUSTRY, HAVE PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION OF THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN X EVERY STEP IN OUR ADVANCE ACROSS THE PACIFIC HAS CALLED FOR HUGE QUANTITIES OF LUMBER AND TIMBER FOR THE USE OF THE FLEET AND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF VITAL BASES AND INSTALLATIONS X THE RESPONSE WITH WHICH YOU HAVE MET OUR NEEDS HAS BEEN EXCELLENT AND OUR FORCES IN THE PACIFIC ARE COUNTING ON YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN OUR COMMON EFFORT TOWARDS VICTORY X

SIGNED C W NIMITZ

A few weeks later it was fittingly recognized by the Armed Services when, on February 4, 1945, the Army-Navy "E" was conferred on Union Lumber Company employees for "outstanding achievement in the production of war materials." *This was the only such award in the Redwood Industry.* And six months later, to signalize the continuance of the extraordinary production which had earned the original award, the Company and its employees received the additional tribute of a white star on its "E" pennant.

It is a far cry from the little redwood sawmill which C. R. Johnson and his partners built in Fort Bragg, in 1885, to the great modern plant of Union Lumber Company in operation there today. In the sixty-five years since its beginning, the Company has grown and expanded to become one of the three largest redwood lumber producing concerns in the world. Consequently, the superstructure of today's edifice is quite different from that of 1885. But, if we look

closely, we will see that, beneath the superstructure, the foundations are the same. The foundations on which Union Lumber Company—with all its far-flung operations—rests today, are those laid more than three-fifths of a century ago by the kindly, unpretentious man known for more than sixty years throughout the whole Redwood industry simply—and affectionately—as “C.R.”

Knowing the Mendocino Coast as it is today, it is difficult for many of us to visualize it as Edwards C. Williams and Jerome B. Ford saw it when they arrived at Big River to build their sawmill nearly a full century ago. Equally difficult would it have been for them to have foreseen what has transpired in the ninety-seven years that have elapsed since that memorable occasion. That they were men of vision, their achievements abundantly prove. But that the little tree they then planted, in that bitter winter of 1852, should grow and thrive to bear the fruits we see today, no mortal man could then have realized.

These men, with their Mendocino Saw Mills, really opened up the Mendocino Coast to white civilization. Thus it is that, in absorbing the institution they established, Union Lumber Company gathered to itself a rich historical heritage and made itself a major participant in the settlement and early development of the Mendocino Coast. However, Union's right to this heritage and to this record of achievement does not rest on the acquisition of Mendocino Lumber Company alone. The merging of the old and very extensive White & Plummer interests in Union, and the acquisition of Glen Blair Redwood Company and of Little Valley Lumber Company, all served to bring into Union Lumber Company more and more of the flesh and blood and bone and sinew of the whole Mendocino Coast.

With the lives of Union Lumber Company and the Mendocino Coast so inextricably intermingled; so closely and completely bound up together, the history of the one becomes—for all practical purposes—the history of the other. Both have been long devoted to a kindred purpose. Down the long road of history both have walked together, in the night's black darkness and in the sunlit day. Both have endured the same hardships and privations, both have battled

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

the same obstacles; both have earned and enjoyed the same reward for conquering difficulty and rising out of disaster. And as, over the long years, both have struggled and triumphed together, so both now look hopefully to the future; facing it together, confidently and unafraid.

