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OUT OF THE WOODS by Jim Stevens

"Father Wilbur"...

The Rev. James H. Wilbur sailed around the Horn in 1846 with his wife and small daughter, to join the Methodist missionaries of the Willamette Valley. He was 30, and physically another Jason Lee, standing six feet, four inches, and matching Joab Powell, the prodigious circuit rider, in bull strength and voice.

In 1862 the Rev. Wilbur was sent to the Yakima Indian Reservation, the country of fighting Chief Kamiakin, as schoolmaster at Fort Simcoe. He rode into the threat of an Indian uprising.

It was the abiding territorial and U. S. military policy to employ force and the power to starve the Yakimas and other reservation tribes, in order to compel submission to a condition of captivity. The Indians were growing hungrier and more violent day by day. In their turn, the scattered white settlers of the Yakima Valley lived in increasing fear for their lives.

"Father Abraham"...

Wilbur did his teaching by day and by night he labored as a mediator between the military and the chiefs. Some compromises were worked out. The preacher-teacher won the friendship of the Indians. They had known only priests before him. So they called him "Father Wilbur." At last he became one more pioneer of Washington who struck out for the national capital to see President Lincoln--"Father Abraham" in song and story of the Union Army.

And Father Wilbur did see the President, who was inspired to appoint him as Indian agent for the Yakima reservation. Back home, Agent Wilbur lost no time in putting his Lincoln-approved program before his friend, Chief Moses, who was not of the Yakima tribe, but ruled a group of tribes that had been bunched and corraled on the Yakima reservation. Chief Moses was willing to give the Wilbur plan a trial. Other chiefs, remembering Chief Kamiakin's one-time interest in irrigation, followed the Moses lead, or gave no opposition.

It was simply a family plan for lumbering and agricultural enterprise by the reservation Indians--an established farm and home for the family, with crops, livestock, pasturage, and buildings held secure for each family. Use of the land in the white man's way, Wilbur told the Indians, was the only way in which they could be sure of holding their own against white invasion and seizure. To fight was to die. But let an Indian family take root on a given area of land within the reservation borders, and the right of possession would be guarded by the United States government. A sawmill must be built, he said, and the Indians must run it, making lumber for homes and farm buildings.

Wilbur's Peace...

Hundreds of Indian family men responded, amazing the whites who were sure and certain that all Indians were too lazy and worthless by nature to work. Father Wilbur demonstrated that, given economic incentive, Indians as individuals and as family heads could do as well as men of other colors in enterprise on the land.

Peace was made between white authorities and red-skinned wards on the Yakima despite evils and wrongs from both sides. Father Wilbur and Chief Moses kept the peace patched up, outside the Nez Perce War of the 1870s, which was outside their control.

A coulee, a lake, and a town honor the name of Chief Moses, and Father Wilbur's name is borne by a modest modern Methodist church in the Yakima Valley. It is the kind of memorial to give rest to his soul.

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Birth of the Bulldozer...

It has been told that the bulldozer was first heard of as a steam-powered contraption made for Paul Bunyan for spreading the molasses on his hot cakes. More conservative historians, say Hols Holbrook and Chuck Hoonan, like to play up Ed Stamm and other logging and machinery engineers as the crew that first rigged up the modern bulldozer and put it to work in the woods.

Hoonan himself tells that in 1927 Edward P. Stamm, then a construction engineer for the forming Crown Zellerbach Corporation at Cathlamet, took a trip to machinery centers of the Midwest. While there, he saw a tractor with a makeshift pusher blade at its front. It was operating on a garbage dump--- or, as Chuck Hoonan, a college man, calls it, "a sanitary fill."

Ed Stamm came home with his head full of fine ideas for a big and powerful rig with a really rugged blade for shoving blast rock before it. He went to work with the Hyster people at Portland. And the first big, beautiful and true bulldozer of the woods came forth. There are yet old Douglas fir loggers who refuse to give the bulldozer any name but "the Stamm blade."

Christmas Card...

Now Ed Stamm has joined the ranks of the "retarded," as Dizzy Dean calls them. But he like Retarded George L. Drake, who pioneered in tractor yarding for Simpson Logging Company, and Retarded Roy Morse of Long-Bell, will be on hand with bells on at the Pacific Logging Congress in Seattle, October 30 through November 1. And he will be heard.

The logging industry does not forget its pioneers. They also remember Ed Stamm as the engineer who introduced small one-and-one-half yards, and smaller, power shovels into logging railroad construction, reducing costs, in one astounding case, from \$100,000 to \$14,000 per mile.

2-out of the woods

A more recent improvement fathered by Ed Stamm was log bundling. A Finnish forester visited Stamm and inspected Crown-Z timber lands and logging operations.

Upon his return home, the Finnish woodsman mailed the Stamms a Christmas card made from a pen and ink etching from real life.

The card depicted a scene at a pulp mill in Finland, and Ed noted that the logs shown in the etching were bound in bundles by chains. This was an idea he'd been looking for. Subsequent experiments at CZ camps developed log bundling techniques used today, with steel bands instead of chains.

Forestry Leader...

Ed Stamm has been in the forefront of the Tree Farm program. During his service with Crown Zellerbach, thinning and snag falling became established practices. He was vitally interested in the establishment of the Keep Oregon Green and Keep Washington Green programs. Only last year, he stepped down as chairman of the Keep Oregon Green association.

Stamm was the first chairman of the Industrial Forestry Association; he is a director of the American Forestry Association; a past deputy chairman of the Forest Industries Council; a trustee of the Foundation for American Resource Management; a past board member of the Pacific Northwest Loggers Association; a member of the Society of American Foresters---and last and noblest---a former president of the Pacific Logging Congress.