

Before Edward W Hines Lumber Co.; Some Photos¹

CAMP 1:



The only known photographs to exist of the Camp 1 sawmill in operation are those that you see here. These are not professionally made. They come from the collection of Bessie Farley and were donated to the Harney County Museum by Gordon & Laura Glass. The sawmill is at the left. Larger than that usually associated with a “portable” sawmill. No pond used; logs are decked right on the ground. The primary purpose of this mill was to make railroad ties. For a short time, an entire city existed here. I visited the site in 1992 with the students of Seneca School and there remains lots of evidence of family living.

1. When Hines left Oregon they left without taking any of the company’s paperwork. This included photographs. They appointed a custodian, Johanna Corson, who has since turned over most of the material to the Harney County Museum. The Museum has been very generous in allowing me to copy everything that interested me. The photo collection alone, mostly by professional photographers, and especially Rufus Heck, is extensive. What you will see here is just the tip of the photographic iceberg. Johanna Corson has been very helpful to me in my quest for information. Most of what she taught be remains in my files for another time, should one arise.



The mill was orientated almost north-south; this is the southwest corner. That looks like a pile of waste just this side of the railroad track. Bachelor quarters seen in the distance. These were small units, about the size of a box car, that Herrick had built at the big mill site. They were later moved here and later to Seneca where sometimes two, three, or four were combined into family living quarters.



Herrick's stockpile of bunkhouses. Herrick's plans didn't call for a Camp 1-like sawmill. Apparently he was going to use these living quarters at the main millsite itself. These cabins were designed to house four men each but without eating or bathing facilities, which were communal. Photo by Heck.



Camp 1 dining hall on right and a line of bachelor's living quarters on left. The women appear to be cooking staff. At least one of the four men standing next to the women appears to have kitchen duty but the role of the others is not clear. I'm unclear of the number of men that lived here. Married men, at this time, lived in quarters spread around the woods. Construction of these buildings is not detailed anywhere that I've been able to find. Photo by Heck.



Life Hudspeth, Hines didn't fully appreciate the large size of the pine to be harvested. Hines brought about 40 horses to Camp 1. Lists of their vitals are on file at the Harney County Historical Museum in Burns. This is the only known photo of horses. It was scanned from a printed source and the photographer, man and horses' names and date are not recorded.



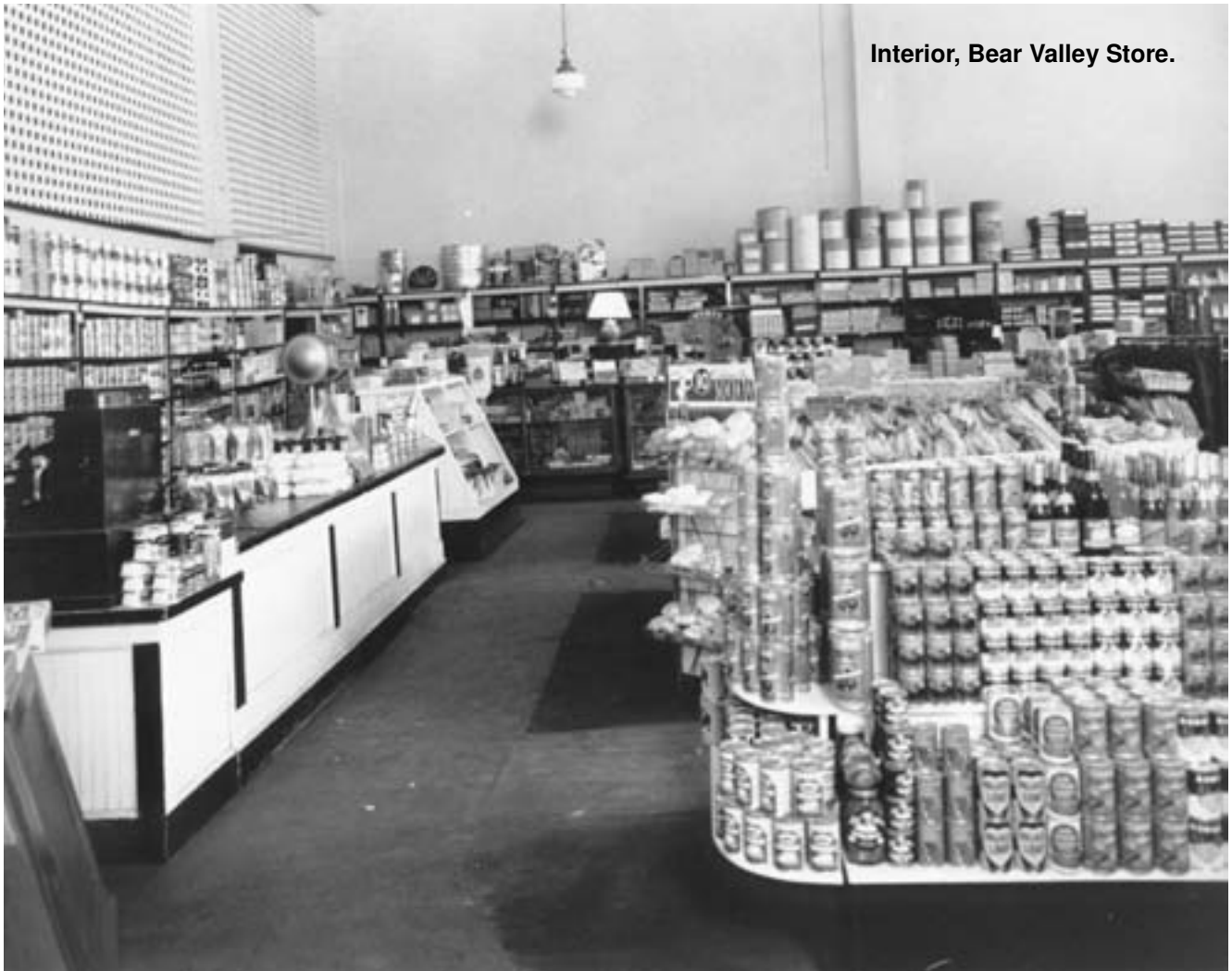
Seneca town, late 1920s, was incorporated in 1970. About 150 people still live here and the school, seen at left, is without doubt the best in Grant County; enrollment is about 60 students with a staff of five. Those are the Strawberry Mountains in the background. Between the town and the mountains is acres and acres of meadowland. This meadowland also stretches for miles to the west. It was the area outside the meadowland that was the beginning of the Hines logging operations. Photo by Heck

SENECA:

Right is Bear Valley Lodge. This was bachelor quarters after the closing of Camp 1. Has 40 rooms, and all other facilities. It can be had right now for just under \$200,000. That's another story! Both photos by Heck, courtesy HCH Museum.

Seneca was home to two very unique buildings. Left, Bear Valley Store, which included the post office, general store, tavern, dance hall (upstairs) and a full movie theatre, the Olive Theatre, at right. The theatre was named in honor of Edward Barnes' wife.





Interior, Bear Valley Store.



OLIVE THEATER



Seneca had two important reasons for existing: providing a logging town and the center of railroad maintenance for the Oregon & Northwestern Railroad. Above is the extensive maintenance facility which had its own power plant (smokestack). There is a building between the viewer and the power plant, then there is what looks like a white square even closer. That was the town's swimming pool. It was built at this spot so it could be heated by the power plant. Evidence of the pool, but not much, is still visible today. Much of the cement foundations and floors of the facility are still present too. All railroad track, except that embedded in concrete is gone. Notice at upper left, the track swings to the right. This curve doubled back and continued east to provide transportation for logging operations east of Seneca. It was on this double-back that Lloyd (Speck) Hudspeth built his dry kiln-planer facility which is often called a sawmill site. No sawmill has ever been at this site.

The wigwam burner Hudspeth built at his Seneca plant as it is today (2005).



THE MAIN PLANT AT HINES, OREGON:



Main plant at Hines; town in background (photo by Valley Flying Service, courtesy of Harney County Historical Museum). Hines was proud that once a log went up the slip into the mill, the lumber from that log was under cover until it was loaded into a covered box car. Every aspect of the operation was top-notch. The long building at right measured a full half-mile and is still being used today. Looking closely, you can see a railroad spur just to the right of the long building. A bit further right is the Union Pacific's main line. The track to Burns continues out of sight upper right. UP's line to Crane starts its turn away from the mill site at bottom of photo. Right: main office. Office photos by Heck.





Above, my favorite Heck photo. A Seneca artist, Joy Lane, has reproduced this scene on a slab of juniper tree and it hangs in my office.

Although the log being sawed at left isn't large by standards of that time there is some nice lumber coming out of it.



Trucks eventually replaced the railroad to move logs from woods to mill. These trucks are coming in from Snow Mountain where Hines upset everyone's apple cart by winning a sale beyond what other mill owners saw as Hines' territory. Lots of hard feelings.



Left, a Harney County landmark; long may it stand. Above, in 2000, intermittent demolition work had reduced the 40 dry kilns to this. I would have gotten closer but since I had no permission I was worried about being run off completely.

The glory days of Hines' operations in Harney County will never return. The timber is gone and the railroad is gone. While the county's economy may once again flourish it is very doubtful if that will involve the timber industry in any meaningful way. Yet the Burns-Hines community continues. The towns are clean and lots of activity is going

on. The 40 mile drive on U.S. Highway 395 between Burns and Seneca is beautiful and most of the route follows the old railroad bed. A couple of bridges remain standing but the tunnel, if you could find it, has been filled with earth, eliminating a "safety hazard".



The Hines company took great pride in the care they gave their timber and lumber. They never failed to tell buyers that from the time the log entered the sawmill, the lumber was never again exposed to the elements.

Here you see lumber awaiting loading into box cars, one of the most tedious jobs in a sawmill. (This is a professional photographer, probably Heck, but date and photographer are not indicated. It appears here through the courtesy of the Harney County Historical Museum.