



## Eighty Years of Starker Forests, Inc., August 29, 2016

### **Title**

“Starker Forests through the Generations”

### **Date**

August 29, 2016

### **Location**

Starker Forests, Inc. headquarters, Corvallis, Oregon.

### **Summary**

In the interview, Bond Starker, Anna May, and Gary Blanchard all discuss their involvement with Starker Forests, Inc. and Oregon State University. Throughout the interview, each individual also shares their memories of T.J. Starker and Bruce Starker, and comments on the impact that both men made on the company that bears their name.

The session begins with brief biographical sketches of each narrator, followed by memories of high school and college. Of particular note are multiple comparisons of OSU Forestry education between generations, as well as observations on changes in the culture of the Oregon State campus and community. Topics of specific interest include OSU during the Vietnam War-era; class sessions in Moreland Hall and Peavy Hall; fieldwork during different time periods; and Anna May's experiences as a woman in Forestry.

From there, Bond Starker and Gary Blanchard provide their perspective on the growth of Starker Forests, Inc. over time, noting some of the innovations and business practices that T.J. Starker and Bruce Starker implemented to help make the company a success. All three narrators also share their points of view on keys to the continued health of the company in the years to come. Bond Starker then responds to questions about the major challenges that he has faced as Chief Executive of the company, and each interviewee adds their thoughts on contemporary practices utilized today by Starker Forests.

As it nears its conclusion, the interview shifts focus to the Starker family's community outreach and involvement over the years, as well as its continuing investment in the OSU College of Forestry. The session winds up with notes on each narrator's life away from work.

### **Interviewees**

Gary Blanchard, Anna May, Bond Starker

### **Interviewer**

Mike Dicianna

### **Website**

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/starker/>

## Transcript

**Mike Dicianna:** Today is Monday, August 29th, 2016, and the OSU Sesquicentennial Oral History Project has the honor of capturing the Starker family story. The name Starker and OSU Forestry is linked through four generations, two of which are represented in this interview. Present today at the Starker Forests main office in Philomath, Oregon are Bond Starker in the center, OSU Forestry class of 1969; his daughter, Anna Starker May, OSU Forestry class of 2005; and Gary Blanchard, who is the chief forester for Starker Forests, and he is from the class of 1961, so Beavers all.

My name is Mike Dicianna, I'm an oral historian for the OSU Library Special Collections and Archive Research Center. And basically we like to start out with a quick biographical sketch. The Starker family has been associated with Oregon State since the early 20th century with T.J. Let's look at each of your histories separately, while selecting to key in to where you fit in the Starker family story.

So let's start with Bond. How about a little quick bio, when and where you were born, and some early childhood memories maybe?

**Bond Starker:** Ok, well I was born in Corvallis at the Good Samaritan Hospital, the one that was on Harrison, and spent essentially my whole life here. Went to school at Harding Grade School and Corvallis High School and then onto OSU. We lived on the far west end of Van Buren street - the address is 3800 Van Buren street. It was within the city limits, but we had an acre of land there. So during my - oh from about age ten to thirteen or so, we had a Welsh pony that we were able to ride. and sort of rode him around the neighborhood and then up through the Corl property where the park is at the end of Circle now. That was sort of a way to stay off the roads and get on over to what was then the Brandis property out in the Timberhill area where it is now. And that's where we had the pony shod so we had to, twice a year or so, ride across that route through the western edges of Corvallis as a youngster.

And then went to - I think it was just one year - to Highland View Junior High which is now, was torn down and is now Linus Pauling. And then also, this is going to get repetitious I guess, but went to Western View, which has now been torn down. [laughs] And then went to Corvallis High School, which again has been torn down and rebuilt. And so moved on to OSU, and the tearing down and rebuilding sorta ends there, except for what's happening currently at Peavy. But spent most of my time at OSU in the College of Forestry building, across from the MU, which I think is now Moreland hall. So I didn't get to spend any time at Peavy other than we did some class projects - surveying, transit work and so forth - out on the bare ground where Peavy is now. And then graduated in '69. My brother Barte graduated in '72, so he was able to spend some time in what's now, I guess, the old Peavy.

[0:04:37]

**MD:** We can get into - I want some college memories here, we'll get into those. How about Anna: growing up a Starker?

**Anna May:** Kind of similar. I was born in Corvallis, and then I went to Adams Elementary, which is still there. But then I went to Western View, which is torn down, and the old Corvallis High School, which also was torn down shortly after I graduated. That's one of the last few classes through that building. And then went onto OSU. We lived - I mean, I guess our childhoods are a little similar. We lived right on the edge of town but had a little bit of property that we could roam around on. Grew up next door to my cousins - my uncle Barte lived next to us, his family.

**BS:** That's a good group. Next to my cousins which are on Jackson Street, the west end of Jackson Street. [laughs]

**AM:** So we had fun kind of exploring our little hillsides, digging in the little rock pits and doing some fun outdoor stuff right at our house. And then we also took quite a few trips to the woods and got to probably learn to drive earlier than some people, 'cuz I got to drive around on our forest roads and just kinda doing some fun stuff out in the woods every once in a while. Got to go to quite a few meetings too, probably at an early age. Dad would take me to industry gatherings and Fernhopper reunions at OSU and things like that, so I got some early exposure to the forest industry - people and places and issues and stuff like that.

**MD:** Kind of in your blood.

**AM:** Yeah. [laughs]

**MD:** Well Gary, you're as much of a part of this family after fifty years I suppose?

**Gary Blanchard:** Yep. They've made me feel like part of the family. I was actually born in Hood River, so I'm a native Oregonian also. Born in Hood River in 1939. I grew up in the little town of Mosier, which is just five miles east of Hood River up the Columbia River. Had a great childhood. Mosier is a little town, there were only 250 people all the time I lived there, so it was really a rural sort of a town. Mostly farming and forestry.

My dad had a little sawmill, and that's probably the thing that piqued my interest in forestry; in the beginning anyway. But in the beginning or toward the tail end, I guess, of my 6th grade year, my dad decided he wanted to go down to southern California and work in warmer weather, so we moved to San Diego. So I spent the last half of the 6th grade and the first half of the 7th in San Diego. At the time I didn't like that, but I look back on it and it was a pretty good learning experience. But then, came back and graduated from Mosier High School. There was a total number of twelve of us in our graduating class, and that was a big class. Fortunately for me, my future wife was also in that class, so we have a lot of fun with class reunions. We have a little class reunion every year, so we go back to Mosier. Even though I've lived in Corvallis for most of my life, I still look at Mosier as kind of home, and that's probably where I'll be buried.

Corvallis has certainly been a great place to live and raise my family; we have three daughters and they've all enjoyed being here. Have gone different places now, but it's been a good place to live. Certainly close to OSU also. I graduated from Oregon State in 1961, as you said in your earlier introduction. A few comments about that when we get to it.

**MD:** I love campus history. Well, growing up a Starker, what was the forestry industry and forests and trees to you at a young age?

**BS:** I guess I did wanna tag on to what Anna said in terms of – it's gotten to be a kind of family tradition, I guess, of taking kids with the older generation both to the woods and meetings and things. I had that same experience with both my dad and granddad. So I got to know a lot of the folks that they associated with at a much earlier age than what I otherwise would have.

**GB:** Let me help you out a little here Bond.

**BS:** Yeah, go ahead, please.

**GB:** Bond's grandmother, his mother's mother, told me that when Bond was, I think she said two years old but that seems pretty young, but at least at a very young age said he wanted to be a forester. So I don't think he's ever wavered from that. [laughs]

[0:10:09]

**BS:** No, probably not. Certainly had some interest at college years anyhow. If the opportunities in forestry hadn't been quite as good as they are, I might've had some interest in business and in law besides forestry. So I sorta channeled my forestry career towards the business side of things and in some degree the law side, but probably forgotten more law since college than I knew at the time.

But always enjoyed getting out, both walking and driving in the woods with both my dad and my granddad. That's another big part of our experiences as kids, was family camping vacations to the Cascade lakes. And also we had a kind of family tradition, which would lapse a little bit, was an annual hike from Jack Lake into the Canyon Creek meadows for wildflowers on the north edge of Three Fingered Jack. So I remember lots of those hikes.

The other thing that we had a special advantage growing up was that my folks had built a small, I don't know, about two-acre pond, west of Philomath. And I remember being a part of the finishing touches on that, and then spending lots of time camping and picnicking up there. So we got introduced - and one of my favorite things to do as a kid out of that place, it had a nice gravelly bottom stream that fed the pond. I spent a lot of my time out there building little mini cobble rock dams out there in the creek. I guess I did have a little engineering bent also. [laughs] I remember when we were at the Van Buren house we still had a gravel driveway; in my early ages anyhow. And it had developed some potholes and one of

my favorite things from early on was to get out after a rain and try to build little canals and drainage ways and so forth to drain one puddle into another. So I guess I had some interest in hydrology and engineering at an early age.

**MD:** So I suppose you followed everyone around in the trees too?

**AM:** I did, yeah. Kind of on weekends and things, it's just kind of – people ask what his hobby is and I think it's all the business. [laughs] So it was like, the hobby on the weekends was to go driving in the woods to go look at what was happening or to visit the people who were doing it. If we were doing a slash burn, we'd go check on the burn or bring people dinner; I remember doing that lots of times. The employees were working late or weekends, we would come out and bring them food and water and stuff like that. Did a lot of that. We did a lot of just driving around to look at what's happening, look at new properties that might be for sale. It just seems like if you wanted to spend time with Dad you did something in the woods. [laughs] So we did a lot of that.

**MD:** So one of the questions that I, a lot of times, will ask people because there's this theory that significant historical events will stick in a person's memory and affect them for the rest of their lives. Like Pearl Harbor, the Challenger disaster, or how about when JFK was assassinated? How about the first steps on the moon when you were in college? These memories, do you have an imprint like that, each of you?

**BS:** I guess the one I remember the most was the JFK assassination. I was in high school and happened to be in German class in the basement of the old CHS. I remember being totally shocked and saddened by that event. Obviously it was enough of an event that I remember exactly where I was and so forth. That's one thing I remember. I guess the other one that I remember is 9/11. We had the family over at Sunriver and had an early fall vacation over there, and I remember that we had the in-laws with us as well. Definitely remember that event as imprinted in terms of where I was at the time, for sure.

[0:15:59]

**MD:** I mean, you're a different generation. [pointing to Anna Starker May]

**AM:** I was gonna say September 11th is the only one I remember out of those. I think my brother and I had come back early from Sunriver to work in the woods. So this is the summer between – I had just graduated high school and was going into college. So it was kind of added extra uncertainty when I was just about to move out and move into a dorm and all that, that was kinda scary. And then to have this big event happen just two weeks before that, kinda scary. But yeah, I remember it. So we were home, brother and I were home, and I remember – I think it was on the radio of my alarm, so I kind of heard it, and I wasn't sure if I was dreaming something 'cuz I kind of - something about planes hitting buildings. And then I woke up and realized it was true and then I still came to work. We were working out on the county line, Benton and Lincoln County, measuring young research plots; trees and research plots. And so we kept trying to work, but we'd take kind of long breaks listening to the radio trying to figure out what's going on and what's happening. But yeah, that's the main one.

I remember that, and I remember in middle school they stopped class to listen to the OJ Simpson verdict. [laughs] Those are the two kind of big things that I remember.

**MD:** Well Gary, you've got a couple of years on them.

**GB:** Well, of course Pearl Harbor happened after I was born, but I was too young to remember. What I do remember was the – we knew the names, we knew everybody in a small community like Mosier. We knew all the people, all the men that went to war, and some didn't come back. I have an aunt that was engaged to a fellow who was killed in the second World War; I remember that was pretty traumatic for our whole family. But I too remember the JFK real well, but the actual event doesn't stick in my mind as much as the day he was buried, or the day of his funeral. I, like Anna, carried a transistor radio with me and I was actually doing some property surveying down on the Breech Creek [?] property that Starkers own. And I carried that transistor radio with me all day, listening to that. And so it was a pretty significant event. There have been, of course, the other things and they've covered them real well. But those things shake your foundation. You don't know what's gonna happen next.

[0:18:44]

**MD:** Yeah, it's an imprint that everybody has one, no matter what generation, they all have this imprint. One of the things I like to get a little bit on is what was your high school like? Were you working towards being a college student? Or were you active in high school? What were your high school days like?

**BS:** Well, one of the things I remember about high school, I guess, was that in junior high I played intramural football, and one of the things I remember about high school was that I sort of chose not to play high school football because it interfered with continuing to work in the woods in the summertime. Made peace with that. I don't know if that was ever a big part of my life necessarily, but I remember at least working out with the wrestling team; I'm not sure I was ever good enough to really be on the team.

But I guess that triggers another memory, though. I remember after wrestling practice, my mom was supposed to go and pick me up. Must've been really early in high school, freshman probably – that was junior high, so I guess I would've been a sophomore 'cuz I would've done 9th grade at junior high. But anyhow, I remember the October 12th '62 windstorm. I was out on the south edge of Corvallis High School campus on Pierce Street, and there was all this wind happening, and I was wondering when mom was going to get there to pick me up. But the other thing I remember, we just recently moved into this building as a house, so we came back out here and spent the evening experiencing the storm. And one of the things I remember about that is the windows sort of flexing back and forth. The other – we've got a porch with an overhanging roof out here and we were concerned that the wind was going to get underneath that and lift it off of there. So that's on the south side of the building here. So one of the things we did to at least try to hold things together was we had a small jeep kind of vehicle. We tracked that up and put a chain up over the main beam out here and added some weight to hold the roof down during the Columbus Day Storm.

**MD:** How about you Anna? What was your high school like?

**AM:** High school. I didn't do a whole lot in high school. I mean I liked school; I mostly focused on my schoolwork, didn't do a whole lot of extracurricular stuff. I did golf team one year. [laughs] It seems like I didn't...I don't know, we're more similar. I did some in middle school and then just decided not to continue like volleyball and softball and stuff into high school, 'cuz I enjoyed it but not on that level of competition. National Honor Society. Other than that, I mostly worked in the summers out here in the woods. Just focused on schoolwork mostly. [laughs]

**MD:** Yeah, a lot of it revolves around being part of the family business.

**AM:** Yeah, I think at that point we were probably attending the board meetings and stuff like that, at least some of them.

**BS:** Some meetings. I don't know if we had a very official board at that point, but we had some family meetings about the business. [laughs]

**GB:** Bond and Anna have each mentioned several times about working. And that's one of the things I've always admired about this family is, when I worked with Barte and Bond actually out in the woods, when I was hired here full time in 1961, and Barte and Bond were still in grade school, I guess, or junior high-

**BS:** Junior high probably.

**GB:** Yeah. But all their free time they spent working in the woods, learning the business. And then, of course, when Anna, she's mentioned that too. So they've learned a lot, they knew a lot before they went to school about forestry.

**MD:** So you were in high school then towards the end of the 1950s?

**GB:** Mhmm. Graduated in '57.

**MD:** '57? I was born in '57. So, in a small high school; that's an interesting story.

**GB:** Well, there are advantages and disadvantages. Probably the advantages, everybody in school played all the sports. Everybody was in the school plays. All the activities that the school had, you had to have just about everybody involved to have a team or have a turnout of some kind. But the disadvantage, of course, is when I came to Oregon State I hadn't had any advanced math so I had to take, at the time, what they called bonehead math.

So when I came to school here they didn't have entrance exams, they had placement tests. So everybody that wanted to come got to come to school, but you took a test to see what your proficiency was in each of these various disciplines. And I did very well in everything except math, so I had to make up math here; which was good, I thought that was pretty cool. But no, the whole school environment - and I see that with some of the students that work for us in the summers, they've had a lot of experiences, broad experience, because everybody has to participate. But the little schools just can't offer the breath of curriculum that bigger schools can.

**MD:** Yeah.

**GB:** All of our three girls went to school here in Corvallis and they had great opportunities for learning whatever they wanted to learn. The school I went to, of course, didn't have that.

[0:25:21]

**MD:** Well, I don't suppose that this question is even a question, but what did influence your decisions to go to OSU? A history that goes back to 1910 with T.J. graduating from the first class of Forestry. Did you look at other schools?

**BS:** I don't think I did much. I think I mentioned the possibility at a dinner some evening. A lot of times, about that time in my growing up, my granddad T.J. would often times have dinner with us 'cuz he lost his wife in '64 and I graduated high school in '65. A lot of times we would have three generations at the dinner table. When we'd bring up a conversation like that, in terms of maybe looking at options for college, the answer I got back was "oh, why would you do that? We've got the best Forestry school right here." So that conversation didn't last very long. [laughs]

**MD:** Same with you, probably. [gesturing to Anna]

**AM:** They were, at least, tried to be more open I think. They were more, let my brother and I kinda lead if we wanted to look. We went and toured Willamette University. I looked a little bit at a college back in New York, 'cuz I also was interested in culinary; I think it was called Paul Smith College or something. The two main things are culinary school and a forestry school so I thought "ahhh, that sounds kind of ideal other than its in New York." Eventually came to the same conclusion that if I really wanted to do Forestry, might as well go to the best Forestry college there is, even though its three miles from home. [laughs]

**MD:** Did you live in the dorms or did you live at home?

**AM:** I lived in the dorms for - I think I only made it one term. Not my social scene. So I got an apartment with my cousin.

**GB:** When I was a senior in high school I was invited to come down to Oregon State to visit a cousin of mine who was in Forest Engineering at the time, Ken Evans. He toured me around the school, introduced me to a few people. One of the unique things about the School of Forestry was everybody was on a first name basis. Walter McCulloch, who was the dean, was "Mac." Bill West, who was the head of Forest Products at the time, was Bill. That informal atmosphere, I think, attracted quite a few kids from the woods that had an interest in the woods.

So Cannon [?] said he thought it was a great curriculum, so next year I was signed up to be in Forest Engineering. After I was there awhile, I decided I really didn't want to be an engineer, I'd rather be a manager, so I switched to Forest Management. That was kind of the reason I came to Oregon State. I had met a couple of other foresters - I mentioned earlier that my dad had a little sawmill - and one of them was actually a product buyer for J.H. Baxter in The Dalles. Baxter has a big railroad tie tree plant there, and this guy went around and bought railroad ties from people who had little mills scattered around in the hills. That's another story about the things that have changed in forestry is when I first started working here, there were still a few little sawmills scattered around. Of course now there are very few.

**BS:** Some of them were portable sawmills.

**GB:** That's right. My dad was; his moved. He'd be in one place for a month or two and then move to another place. So that sounded like a fun place to come and it turned out to be great for me.

[0:29:39]

**MD:** Well the OSU School of Forestry is world renowned as far as the place to go to get a degree in Forestry; I can't think of why anybody would go anywhere else. What are your feelings on what you got out of your education in forestry, specifically at OSU?

**BS:** I don't know, I think it probably helped organize my thoughts and thought processes versus just what I had previously learned by informal experiences. I learned more about some of the engineering aspects, but also the sort of science and techniques behind calculating growth and yield and annual harvest levels and those kinds of things. Just the ability to sort of grow as a person.

I spent most of my first year, I think, I stayed at home. But my second year I did pledge a farmhouse fraternity, was reasonably active there, and sort of just an officer at a couple of different times in the fraternity. Participated as well in the Forestry Club on campus. So it gave me some experience with more people kind of outside the family. I guess those were all good growing and learning experiences.

**MD:** Forestry had changed by the time you had entered school. [gesturing to Anna]

**AM:** Yeah. The main thing I got – I felt fairly confident with what we do here, but I think a lot of what I got from school was the perspective of what others land owners or land managers do with different goals. Just kind of different systems and just a different perspective on management or non-management, or whatever. [laughs]

**GB:** It would be pretty difficult to learn the science of forestry just hands on.

**AM:** Yeah.

**GB:** You can learn the relationship between how trees grow and what you need to do to make them grow. You could learn to be a gardener just by practice, but there are things about economics and engineering and so forth that you wouldn't normally learn. So I think that, if nothing else, in college you learn where the references are. You learn how to go back to find the answer to some detailed question.

**AM:** I think a lot is, like, yeah, our employees or our family had told me this is true, but I didn't know why or how to figure that out for myself. Just things that I had kind of seen or could ask and get an answer. Yeah, I know that's a Douglas Fir tree but I didn't know - there's all these little details about how to identify that from this other type of tree and the properties of the wood and all that kind of stuff. I don't know why I would've known that or needed to know that before then or otherwise, and so school had a lot of those kinds of technical details.

[0:33:55]

**MD:** Well, I always like to get kind of a feel of what campus life was like. Both of you guys were at Oregon State, Bond and Gary, during the turbulent 1960s. You [Gary] at the beginning, when it was a different world. But by the time you were leaving school, the height of the Vietnam war, the counter culture, how much did that penetrate the School of Forestry? Do you have any memories of the wild 1960s? Were you a wild 1960s hippy? [laughs]

**BS:** Surprise, surprise, no I wasn't. [laughs] No, I think my sense is that I and a lot of the other folks at the College of Forestry were kinda observing that, but I wasn't participating.

**GB:** Let me add a little bit. My group was fairly unique because there were a bunch of Korean War veterans in school at the same time I was. Now, I've never been in the military, I came straight out of high school into college. But there were a number of them that were there on the GI Bill, and some not on the GI Bill but had delayed starting college or had started before they went into the service and continued after they got out. So there were kind of two age groups. Everybody worked together - we're still friends with some of them. But those older guys had a little different outlook on life.

I remember one particular fellow, Harry Dano. Harry came to school and the first thing he did was bought a house. Most of the rest of us rented or lived in the dorm or had some other living arrangement, but Harry and his wife - he had a family, he had at least one child - he said he was old enough to realize that if you buy a house, by the time you're done with school you can sell it and probably make a profit. Which he did. And the rest of us just paid rent. [laughs] So there were some perspectives like that in the group that I went to school with.

**MD:** Well yeah, 'cuz you're at the very beginning of the 1960s when there was a whole different culture. And by the time all hell had broken loose by the time you graduated in '69-

**GB:** No, I'd say things were very stable when I graduated in 1961. There were a lot of jobs available. It wasn't a matter of just picking the job you want, you still had to apply, but there was a lot of work. I think the whole economy was stable, society was stable, the Korean War had gotten over with. The Vietnam thing may have been simmering, but it hadn't blown like it did a little bit later.

**MD:** Did you have a draft number?

**BS:** I did have a draft lottery number and so forth. I guess at that time, the draft was in effect in the early part of the Vietnam War. But there were student deferments available, so I finished my undergraduate career on student deferment. But then when I graduated then, the student deferment was no longer an option, and that's about the time they came up with the lottery system. I remember I got so far as to go up and get a physical in Portland for induction into the service. But between that and actually having to report to come up with this lottery system, and I got a lucky number, so I didn't have to serve. That would have been – I don't know. It would have been very difficult for me to – well, I'm sure it is for everybody, but being in that kind of top-down hierarchical thing so you do it because you're told to do it rather than no one wanting to do it. So I was very thankful not to have to do that.

I guess the other thing that probably had my head in the sand in terms of what was going on in society, besides the Vietnam War, there were race issues at that time as well. In Corvallis that didn't impact us very directly, but obviously we could see big issues in other places. Once I think about it, the Watts and the riots at the Democratic Convention in Chicago, and those kinds of things were happening at that time. But in a lot of ways, I probably ducked and let it fly over the top. Probably the thing that influenced more than anything was the music of that era as well, that period, and the rock and roll and protest songs and those kinds of things were a part of the common culture at that time.

[0:40:09]

**MD:** Yeah. Now the OSU campus was famous for its concerts. All the greatest names, they didn't play the big stadiums they played Gill Coliseum. Do you remember going to any of the concerts while you were in school?

**BS:** Yeah, I went to a few anyhow. But the one I remember was Petula Clark, and somehow or other I got assigned to escort the house mother to the Petula Clark concert. So that wasn't real exciting from that standpoint, but I enjoyed her music and continued to follow her music after the concert.

**MD:** How about - what was your era? Peter, Paul and Mary? Or that was even before that?

**GB:** Yeah, before that. No, mine was the beginning of the rock and roll era. My wife and I still love those songs. But my draft situation was kind of a little different. My draft board was actually in The Dalles in Wasco County. When I came to school here, they still had the draft, and you still had to sign up for the draft, but all you had to do was tell them your situation. So I just reported that I was going to college, and I think the situation was that there were enough volunteers from The Dalles area, because there weren't that many kids going to college, that they filled their quotas. Apparently each draft board had a quota that they had to fill - this is my understanding of how it worked anyway - that they filled their quota and so they didn't ever draft anybody, at least during the period when I was in college. So I didn't have to get a deferment, I didn't have to do anything other than tell them what my situation was. I didn't get drafted. I'm kind of like Bond, I had some mixed feelings about that. There were certainly people who felt a strong obligation to join the military and we admire them for doing that, but that wasn't my choice.

**MD:** Now you're a slightly different situation with being a woman in science. I mean, in the early 2000s, it wasn't the stigma that it had maybe fifteen years, twenty years before that. But probably in the Forestry school you were, well, obviously a minority. But how is it to be a woman in science? That's the new buzzword today. Any thoughts about that?

**AM:** I don't know. I think part of it was that I was used to it, just being here and going to Forestry things where I was just, "eh." It was mostly men and I was already kind of used to that culture. I didn't notice anything big about it, but thinking back on it, yeah, there's probably only five or six women in my class. But we all had friends. It's not like we made our own little women's group; we were pretty integrated into the college, I felt like.



**MD:** Well yeah 'cuz you were all foresters, it didn't matter, that's the thing. That is the big buzzword today, women in science.

**AM:** I didn't remember ever feeling discriminated against or anything like that, and I never really felt like it was an issue.

**GB:** Things had changed a lot between when I was in school and when she was in school, because Dean McCulloch didn't want women in the School of Forestry, and I don't think there were any.

**BS:** I think so, but I think there was somebody before McCulloch.

**GB:** I think that's right. I don't know who that was, but that's what I had always heard. But yeah, Mac, he didn't want women in Forestry. He thought – I don't know what he thought what women should do.

**MD:** Well, he was from that era. Well, you both worked and did your classwork in what is now known as Moreland, which is right over next to the MU on the main campus. That had been the Forestry building for basically clear back to your dad's time at least, and T.J. had a little bit more different buildings that he dealt with. What was Moreland like as far as a class setting and how much time did you spend there? Because you were probably out in the field.

**GB:** Spent virtually all the class time was at Moreland as well as what we call Peavy. But it was a great place, you walk in the front door and here are these wooden murals on the walls. I mean, it was impressive to walk in the front door of that building; I don't know if those are still there are not.

**BS:** The murals got moved to Richardson.

[0:45:09]

**GB:** Richardson, ok. But when you first walked through the door, you're impressed, you're in a forestry setting. And then of course, they had an arboretum out behind the building. And that, coupled with other plantings around campus, is where we learned tree identification. I think some of those trees have now been removed, but there were things like tulip poplars. I'd never heard of a tulip poplar, but there's a gorgeous big tulip poplar behind Moreland.

It was a fine place. The downstairs, the basement, was where all the equipment was, and when we went out to the woods, everybody got their cork boots on or your dress. You had a locker down there and you put all your gear on. And then upper floors were classrooms. Various classrooms had – the tree identification classroom that everybody used had pinecones, and I remember a noble fir cone that they had to varnish to hold together because noble fir cones disintegrate on the tree, and so they had to figure out some way to hold it together so students could look at it and see. And in the Wood Technology parts of the building there were examples of wood tech things. You know, I thought it was very well laid out for teaching us what we were there to learn.

**MD:** You were there not long after?

**BS:** About eight years between us, I think.

**MD:** How much out in the field work did you do? I mean, there was a lot of classroom but you guys were also stomping around in the woods.

**BS:** We had at least one class, maybe a couple of classes a year; especially the junior and senior years we did a fair amount of fieldwork at McDonald-Dunn Forest. I guess one of the things that's changed, and Gary should chime in here, but by the time I was there I know I still had some World War II surplus sort of personnel carrier things with just pull down wooden benches along each side and a canvas canopy over it. So that was quite an adventure.

**GB:** Those were the only things that we rode to the woods in. We went on a field trip clear down to Roseburg and rode down the highway in those open ended vehicles. But it was great, it kind of made us feel like we were a superior group of people. [laughs]

**MD:** To be able to survive that. [laughs]

**BS:** One of the senior capstone field trips that I remember, I guess we must have used those same vehicles for it, but we went over the Santiam Pass and I think we spent one night at a campground along the Metolius and then we spent another night at the Forest Service Experimental Station south of Bend.

**GB:** Pringle Falls.

**BS:** Pringle Falls, yep. And that was upscale 'cuz they had a bunkhouse there, so that was better than sleeping on the ground at the Metolius. Anyhow, we got to ride that form of transportation for that distance and that was quite the experience.

**GB:** That was the pine forest management field trip.

**BS:** Right, yeah.

**AM:** They still did that when I was in school. We went over and camped on the Metolius; I don't think we went to Pringle Falls.

**MD:** In a nice van. [laughs]

**AM:** Yeah, in a nice van that you had to take a safety test before you could drive it and everything.

**MD:** Well, they are tearing down Peavy. They're going to be putting up this fantastic new high tech building. Are you sorry to see Peavy go?

**AM:** I don't know, not really. I think it – I mean, it had some good memories, but it at least needed a pretty major upgrade to be functional and to attract the kind of students they're wanting to attract and that we need to attract to Forestry. Especially now with all the building that's happened, but even when I was there, we kind of felt like all these other buildings seemed kind of nice and Peavy was, like, you had classes in the basement with no windows and just lots of deferred maintenance and stuff that seemed kind of like...I don't know.

It would've been fine if it was a few classes and then out in the woods a lot, but a lot of it was classes or classes across campus. Then you'd see the other facilities and you'd feel like Forestry was not really up to par with other facilities on campus. I mean, it maybe would've been nice if they would have been able to upgrade that building, but I think it's kind of the best decision to start over or something.

[0:50:25]

**MD:** You [Bond] basically saw the hole in the ground, 'cuz Peavy ended up being operational in '71, '72.

**BS:** Yeah, I don't know. I guess I was a recent graduate so I wasn't spending a lot of time on campus since the time that current Peavy was being built. But I guess the other thing that I wanted to bring in here about the campus experience and the old Peavy/Moreland building, was that I remember still doing all these complicated growth and yield and annual cut calculations and so forth worth on a hundred-key adding machine kind of calculator.

The other thing is we were sort of on the cusp, when I was in school, between slide rules and transistor-based calculator kinds of things. So I did spend a fair amount of time on both, but started out doing a lot of calculations on slide rules. By the time I got - at least, right about the time I graduated, handheld calculators were coming in to being. Tended to make things a lot easier.

**GB:** The first handheld calculator that the Forests owned was the Texas Instruments, and it added, subtracted, divided, and multiplied. Those were the only functions it did, and it cost \$150. But it was great; we thought it was really cool then.

**MD:** And now there's probably an app on your phone [laughs] to do all the scientific calculations. Well, let's shift gears a little bit and let's put this OSU experience and degrees into practice, and let's talk about the Starker Forests. One of the things I've always been interested in is what influence and what are some of your special memories about T.J. and, of

course, your father Bruce. T.J. was the class of 1910, your dad graduated just before the war, just at the war. How did they influence what Starker is today?

**BS:** I don't know, they certainly have a lot of moral authority influence. I guess they both, besides their OSU academics, went on and got master's degrees. My grandad got his master's at Michigan and then went from there into the Forest Service for several years and into a private industry association, and then back to teach at OSU from 1922 to 1942. So he had quite a lot of that experience before he started the family business. My dad graduated from OSU in 1940 and went on to get his masters at Yale; got that right as the war was brewing. Went from there into the Coast Guard Academy and graduated from the Coast Guard Academy just as the war was getting cranked up. Spent a lot of time – most of the rest of the active war, anyhow – as the skipper of a sub chaser based in Brazil. And the end of his service career was spent on troop trips bringing troops back from the Pacific. So they had that experience. I guess my dad also came back after the war and started working with and for my granddad and went on to get his surveyor's certificate. He had –

**GB:** Number 3-10

[0:55:18]

**BS:** Number 3-10, was his land surveyor's license number. So he had that as a fallback and an additional income supplement, to do surveying for others.

**GB:** During his time in the service he sent at least part of his pay back to T.J. to invest in forest land. And that always impressed me, because both T.J. and Bruce were committed enough to the future of forestry. And that was at a time when there was still a lot of old growth timber available for harvest. And T.J. recognized that second growth, young trees, would become valuable at some point. So he invested in a lot of cutover land; always liked to have a little timber on it someplace. But he had instilled that same belief in the future in his son Bruce, that Bruce sent money home and T.J. found investments, forest investments, with parts of it anyway.

**MD:** Right. This whole idea of buying stuff that was already logged off, the other foresters thought he was crazy!

**GB:** Yeah, some of them did. Now, there were a few other people around, some of the whole family, other family interests, that also bought second growth land. So it wasn't just T.J. But it took a lot of commitment to do that. On several occasions I heard T.J.'s ex-students say "well, T.J. might be complaining about the high taxes on the land." And they said, "yeah, but you bought that for five dollars an acre." And T.J.'s reply was always "but on that day, I was the highest bidder." And that's the perfect answer, because nobody was willing to pay more for it, even if it was five dollars an acre; it's no different today.

**MD:** And most of that line is all basically around here, the Blodgett Tract was one of the first wasn't it? Fairly close, right?

**BS:** Well, we have a tract at Blodgett and in fact one of the ones that Gary was talking about, T.J. bought with my dad's money, was the Eisel Place, which is straight west of the town of Blodgett. But it shouldn't get confused with the College of Forestry's Blodgett tract, which is up in Columbia County. As far as I know, it didn't have anything to do with that.

**GB:** Well, at least I was talking about the commitment they had to forestry. Tree planting was sort of new, if people were planting trees, but not everybody thought that tree planting was worthwhile. A lot of people were still relying on natural regeneration from seeds - from seed trees - and so forth. T.J. and Bruce felt that it was the right way to go, and I don't know if they were pioneers exactly, but they certainly supported this new industry of growing and planting seedlings.

**BS:** Especially in those early years. A lot of trees that were planted, both by us and other folks, were natural seedlings that happened to be available in recent road cuts or whatever. The gravel was fairly loose where the trees could be pulled and transplanted. Early seedlings were acquired in that way. The other thing is – and [Gary] might have a better clue on this – is the other way we got a lot of seedlings in the early years was the Industrial Forestry Association, actually. It was an early pioneer in creating nursery seedlings, as well as the state forestry department. They had an early small nursery out at Peavy Arboretum. There's a separate name for that and I can't remember now.

**GB:** You're right, but I don't remember the name either. They learned a lot about growing seedlings at that nursery.

[0:59:58]

**BS:** Right. Second iteration of the – at least that I'm aware of – of the state nursery's was the one at Elk, and it eventually got named for the first state forester, Dwight Phipps, I think. And I think they were actually transitioned out of that so the state forestry department, as far as I know, no longer has a seedling growing program. So there's some of that.

But I guess the other thing I know I could - Gary came here officially full time in '61, although he worked some summers and such prior to that. But my folks, there were seedlings available prior to that because I know one of the stories is that some of those early properties that we bought were old kind of abandoned farms that have some fields on them. And one of the challenges is to figure out how to reforest those field areas, both from a grass competition standpoint and getting the trees in the ground and so forth. And one of the things that those field areas lent themselves to was an ability to plant using a more automated system using a tree planting machine. It actually dug a furrow with a plow kind of a thing and then put the seedling in the ground right behind the plow. And then the operator sat above some tires that were angled towards the center of the thing that tamped the soil in behind the seedling. I know that was something they developed in the late 40s, early 50s. I heard stories anyhow of my mom, while she was pregnant with my brother, being the operator that put the seedlings in the ground behind us in this planting machine. That, again, happened on the Eisel Place, just west of Blodgett.

**GB:** Bruce and T.J. were really pioneers in lots of ways and I think, because Bruce's life ended prematurely in 1975, he didn't get the recognition that T.J. did. But Bruce really was a pioneer in reforestation techniques and the use of herbicides. Agriculture had been using herbicides for a long time and foresters kept trying to plant trees, and the competition from other plants would suffocate or crowd out the trees. So Bruce, along with some other people - Mike Newton is one; Mike's still active although he's officially retired.

**MD:** They think he is but he isn't. [laughs]

**GB:** But they developed some formulas and techniques for applying and using herbicides that are standard procedure now. But Bruce was - these people who pioneer these things, not only do they have the ideas and the willingness to work at it, but they've got to put their own money in it. So when you're doing a sort of untested technique, it takes a lot of courage. And I was here and had the privilege of watching them do that.

Now T.J. didn't think much of herbicides initially, he called them "weedicides," and he wasn't familiar with them, it was kind of a new thing. It's probably like modeling is now to some of us older folks that we don't have the confidence that the younger people do. But T.J. and Bruce did a lot of things. T.J. didn't like fire very much, but he had a couple of students - Rex Wakefield was one of them, there was some others, and Bruce, who supported using fire as a technique.

**BS:** T.J. was real wary of fire. He graduated in 1910, the same year as a lot of the big fires across the Northwest. That's one of the things he always preached is that you can't start practicing forestry until you get your snags down to reduce the spread of wildfire. That's one of the things we spent a lot of time and effort on was getting our snags taken care of, which obviously now we gotta intentionally leave snags for wildlife.

**GB:** But they still are the problem for fires when T.J. was starting forestry.

**MD:** Well, that brings up an idea – we're talking seventy-five years of Starker Forests.

**BS:** Eighty this year.

[1:05:08]

**MD:** That's true! So the changes in technique, the changes in science, the changes in students coming in. Have you, especially you [Gary], rode that wave? Does Starker Forests go after the newest and best techniques and science?

**GB:** Well, you know, it started with T.J. and then through Bruce, and Bond and Barte, and now Anna's generation. They've always been very supportive of new techniques. Now they don't just jump into them and start throwing money away, but –

**BS:** Start at a small scale and build up; have it established that it really works.

**GB:** But Bond's brother Barte likes to use the term cutting edge or leading edge.

**BS:** Or bleeding edge. [laughs]

**GB:** Or bleeding edge, that's right. The bleeding edge. We watched that, and it's been fun to be here. You can't do that if you're not a successful business. You can't afford to put money out on experimental things if you don't have some success behind it. So I've always appreciated the conservative way they've operated, to have the money to be able to do some of those things. And then this whole industry is kind of unique. As soon as somebody learns something new, they can't wait to share it with the whole industry, instead of hold back and try to gain an advantage on their neighbor that they're competing with. Everybody is out there sharing information.

**BS:** I think it has something to do with the long-term nature of the business. You might be able to hold back something for a year or two, but you're not going to hold it back for ten, twenty, thirty years. It just helps everybody get better rather than trying to get a personal advantage that won't last in the long term anyhow.

**GB:** Bruce was an advocate for buying lands that were very productive - high sites lands - that didn't have much in the way of timber on them. T.J. had always looked for properties that had some timber, he didn't like fighting the brush. And I think Bruce had the vision to believe that those lands could be converted from brush patch to productive timberland.

**BS:** A lot of that had to do with the combination of the change in values and also the availability of herbicides.

**MD:** Oh yeah, make a space for the trees to grow.

**BS:** So that's one of the big changes we had all right. T.J. was, like I said earlier, always nervous about fire, but he had been observing other people's success using fire, so he was, especially towards the end of his life - I know one of the moments was a culmination of me being fresh out of college and so forth. One of our escapades I remember fairly clearly was at our - we did, in combination with Mike Newton - did some experiment plots out at Tract Ricole [?], Amber Lake [?], I don't know must have been '69 or '70 as I recall. I think I was just out of college. But we did some where we did some herbicide-only trials. These are roughly ten-acre blocks. Another one where we tried crushing the brush and the younger trees with a Caterpillar tractor. Another one where we actually grubbed them out, pushed stuff together into piles. I don't remember what the other variations were. And then we also tested planting different seedlings in different growing conditions. Different species of seedlings, that was what, I guess, was different. Stock types, depending on whether they were bare root seedlings or the early - we were just starting to experiment around with containerized seedlings, as I recall, about that time as well.

Anyhow, we had all those things happening on this one tract of land, and I remember T.J. visiting that as we were in the - well, I guess that was the other piece of it was, besides those other treatments, we had some fire treatments, so he was out there observing the fire thing at the time. He was still nervous, but he was interested and encouraging of us to try the new techniques that might make some of those lands my dad had bought more productive.

[1:10:40]

**MD:** That was all about production too, when it comes to T.J., wasn't it?

**GB:** There were several graduate theses worked on that Amber Lake project; Bruce Kelps, I think, did a master's thesis, and I think there were some other students of Mike Newton's at the time that worked - did graduate work, anyway, on that. That's been another interesting and fun relationship for me is Starker Forests close relationship with OSU. We've shared information back and forth; we've shared properties. There are some things that can be done on private land that can't be done on public land without a lot of hoops to jump through, primarily with the use of herbicides. But Starkers have a land base over a much broader area, of course, than OSU's land base. So there are a lot of OSU experiments that have gone on Starker land, and we've learned a lot from things that have gone on OSU land. So it's been a good relationship from the research end.

**MD:** Well, as a new forester of the 21st century, in 2005, what did you bring as far as the new forestry to the company?

**AM:** I don't know if I've brought a whole lot to the company yet other than kind of an understanding of the newer modeling and stuff. I've probably had more classroom experience with some of the computer growth models and stuff like that. A lot of our employees were up to date on it; it's just that I came in with that as my base instead of slide rules and stuff like that.

**BS:** A little better understanding about some of the behind the screen things that happen to those modeling programs.

**GB:** One of the things Anna's brain and her cousins are bringing is the continuing stability of the company. The employees and all of these people, the contractors and the neighbors, all of the people who are in some way associated with and affected by Starkers, look at Anna's generation and say "you know, it looks like this company is going to continue like it has in the past." And people want that stability. So that's really an important role that she's played. She's just as steady as her dad was, just as steady as his dad was, and so that's really nice to see.

**MD:** And that's unique in a lot of companies, to have that generations of stability. Well, with that said, where is Starker Forests going? Ten years, twenty years, when your kid comes out as a graduate, as a fifth generation, where will Starker Forests be then?

**AM:** I don't know. I mean, I think they would want to maintain the legacy of the research and the trying new things, slowly or carefully or whatever you want to say. But I think we wanna keep expanding and supporting the practice of forestry, and just being a place for other people to come to learn and for us to continue to learn from others. I think we probably have more and more people get involved; there's more diverse interests, even among the family. We might look at other kind of compatible uses, other things that could happen on the land while we're growing our crops of trees. Other than that, I think we wanna be steady.

**GB:** Starker Forests, starting clear back with T.J., have always been amenable to having other people use their land. T.J. started putting up gates a long time ago, and he said "you gotta think about this a little bit," but it wasn't to keep people out, it was to protect what was behind the gate. They didn't mind having people use their lands, but they wanted the people that used the lands to use it with respect and help protect it. So I think it actually started with your [Bond's] dad, the written permit policy. T.J. may have written some permission slips to people, but he didn't have a form that he filled out. He might have just said "you have my permission," I don't recall. But I know with your dad it actually started having a form that people would sign that essentially says "I'll respect the land that I'm on." That's continued on.

[1:15:39]

**MD:** Three people were in the office this morning, as I walked in, for their permits.

**GB:** A huge variety of requests for use of the land. Some of them probably are for illegitimate uses that are cloaked by a permit for hunting; maybe to grow marijuana or something. But no, they've been very generous, and we think this person-to-person contact is valuable.

**AM:** That's kind of a focus of my generation and my cousins' is trying, probably at this point, to reconnect the public with the forest and the values and the resources that it provides, and kind of getting people back outdoors and understanding the connection between our resources and our lives in the city and stuff like that. That's one of our focuses going into the future, trying to get people out there and getting them to understand and appreciate what happens in a managed forest.

**MD:** Well Bond, your leadership in the '80s of this organization, I always like to ask: what were some of your greatest achievements? What was your biggest challenge you had to face? Spotted owl or whatever?

**BS:** That's a good question. I guess, I don't want to leave - especially talking about the 80s, 90s, early 2000s - I don't want to leave Barte out of the equation. He's still definitely a big part of that era, as well as Gary was. Problem with that - this goes back to the 70s rather than the 80s - but obviously our biggest challenge was recovering from my dad's death in an airplane accident in 1975. Gary was a big part of holding us together and being the steady hand on the rudder while I was recovering from our injuries. Probably had better memories of that era than I do in some respects, especially in terms of the role that Barte played during that time. But that's by far the biggest challenge that we've dealt with as a family and as a company. Dealt with that pretty successfully just by understanding that it is heaven. A family commitment to a long, long-

term orientation of owning; continuing to manage the land base in perpetuity essentially. So having that mindset is very helpful in terms of keeping things steady, and any wound and event in perspective.

I guessed you mentioned the spotted owl, and I guess that was more early 90s. The main thing I remember about that is the effect that it has had on the rest of the industry, and especially the federal and, to some extent, the state forests, reducing their ability to produce commodities products anyhow. I guess we're free enterprise - labor, supply and demand and so forth. So that nonsense reduced the supply to the extent we were still...excess milling capacity that we benefited, to some degree, in the short term by having excess milling capacity in that transition period. Well, the spotted owl, since early years, controversy drew timber prices up, at least in the short term, above what it otherwise would have been. That's the other thing that we did was go out and survey our land to see whether we had spotted owls or not, 'cuz nobody had really been that aware that there was such a thing as a spotted owl out there prior to that time, and didn't know for sure what kind of habitat they truly required. We're still having those debates, I guess, in terms of whether it truly requires old growth or just requires some kind of clumps of trees here and there that provide some nesting opportunities, those kinds of things.

I guess the other thing we kind of believe in, that's one of the pieces that I hope is still a part of the forestry curriculum - I know it was when I was still in school - was the introductory course in fish and wildlife and kind of getting into people's thought process. The idea of animals require food to eat and some animals, prey-based, requires its own separate sort of conditions. From a wildlife standpoint anyhow, that's very important. And so the other piece that I remember from - I guess it made it more range than wildlife - is the idea of caring capacity of the land to grow forage for both game animals as well as cows and sheep and other things. You can't have spotted owls if they don't have anything to eat, so they've gotta have places to hunt and catch their prey. Some of that, at least, happens in rodents and so forth that inhabit the - more recently - cut over areas, and it's certainly, they're easier to fly and catch things in a less complex area. Gotta dodge the trees to catch your rodent and so forth. Those things all have to come together in a big matrix over the landscape to make sure everything is available for everything else.

**GB:** In the early '70s we had something on the order of fifteen different forest products facilities in the Philomath/Corvallis area - sawmills, planers, log handling facilities and various things. Now we're down to one sawmill, George Pacific...and Hull-Oakes, down near Monroe. But part of that reduction in milling capacity was brought about by the restrictions placed on public timber by spotted owls and marbled murrelets and some of these other things. And that actually, in some ways, many ways, hurt Starker Forests and other private land owners, because we don't have the competition for our products that we once had.

**BS:** There's a variety of different mills that need different products for their input.

**GB:** Right. This area was the hot market for quite a few years. We had markets for small logs, medium-sized logs, big logs. We could sell anything and we didn't have to haul logs very far. Now we're restricted. We don't have that many markets and so we have to haul our logs farther, which costs, which puts less money back on the land here. So the spotted owl had not only immediate impacts on people who were harvesting timber and the sawmills who were trying to buy those timber, but it's had this long-term ripple effect to reduce our markets.

**BS:** We cry about that a little bit, but on the other hand, we're still much better off in terms of proximity and variety of markets than a lot of forest land owners. It's getting to be a real problem in eastern Oregon where you may have to haul your logs a hundred miles or something to find a mill. We can find quite a few mills within fifty miles here, but it's fifty instead of thirty like it used to be here.

[1:25:33]

**MD:** Well, that brings up the fact - where was Starker Forests then and what's the state of Starker Forests today? How about some statistics, anybody got them off the top of their heads? As far as size, acreage held, things like that?

**AM:** Yeah, we're about 85,000 acres now.

**BS:** We were about fifty-two at the time T.J. died.

**AM:** Yeah, so with thirty-three years we've grown about 30,000 acres.

**BS:** About a thousand acres a year on average, isn't it?

**AM:** Yeah. [laughs]

**MD:** And each one of those is on a cycle to where it's been harvested and the next one is growing up, and that's this whole idea of forest management.

**AM:** Yeah, I think we harvest less than ten percent of our – I don't know, how many acres do we harvest a year? Around –

**BS:** About one percent a year of acres harvested, more or less.

**MD:** And how many employees does Starker have?

**AM:** We have about twenty-one full time.

**BS:** Another eleven in the summer.

**AM:** We try and hire mostly OSU students in the summer to do some of our timber cruising and other tree farm maintenance, road maintenance, gate maintenance. Most of the work is done by contractors, so we have a pretty steady set of logging contractors and road maintenance and road builders. Some of them are probably in their second generation or third generation of working for us, I think. We're trying keep those relationships, because we know they do good work and they know what we expect, so they've been good partners for us.

**GB:** We have several that are in their third generation now. The Cook family, the Gaster family; there are a couple that come to mind.

**MD:** Well, one of the things I'd like to see is what part of the Starker Forest story we have not touched on? And what needs to be told and shared for prosperity in this project?

**GB:** I'll jump in here a little bit. We've said virtually nothing about Bond's mother, Betty, and her influence on the company. To know Betty was a privilege. She was a very gracious lady, loved beauty of all kinds, was artistic in her own right. And I remember one specific thing that we - we have a lot of roads to maintain, so we decided for a period there that we would hire a guy with a brush cutter that would go along the roads. And these things kind of mow the limbs off the brush. She saw that done and off the trees-

**BS:** Trees especially.

**GB:** Yeah. She saw that done and she said "I don't want any more of that." So we had to go out with handsaws and prune those stubs off. And that whole thing changed our – well it didn't change so much as firmed up our commitment to have things look nice out there, as well as be nice.

**BS:** T.J. was right there with her as far as having the frazzled stubs on the trees in terms of – he didn't like the looks of it, but he was also concerned about the possibility of that being an easy place for tree diseases to enter the tree. Fungus and so forth.

**GB:** And we still do some of that because, out of necessity, when you have a road that is just totally choked with brush, it takes forever. You're putting your workers at risk and, in fact, Anna's husband Adam has a little business where he does some of that brush mulching stuff. And that works out good. But Betty not only had that influence, but I watched her function during the period where, after Bruce died, she was the steady hand that kept the company going pretty much as it had been in the past. We didn't change much; she was the rudder there that kept things going straight, I think.

**BS:** Along with you and Barte.

[1:30:12]

**GB:** Well, and Barte, and we also have a whole cadre of long-term employees. Dick Powell was the next; he was just a few years behind me. Dick's been with us for a long time, and a whole bunch of others have continued on. There's



virtually no turnover in this company in employees, because everybody likes it here and, you know, I think we're continuing to do the same work that we've done in the past, maybe trying to improve a little as we go.

**MD:** Well, I would like to kind of shift gears a little bit and talk about the Starker family community involvement and also your ties with Oregon State University and the School of Forestry. I know that you and Barte have been giving back to Benton County and your local community for years. What are some of your favorite projects that you guys have been working on?

**BS:** Well, I guess I could do that. I guess just connect that back a generation maybe would be useful too, in terms of something that's been a family tradition as, well, I guess in terms of especially beginning with T.J. And he was involved with a draft board back in World War II era, then the county park board for many years. Used to boast a little bit about having helped to host one of the most expensive breakfasts in Benton County or something when there was a fundraiser for the Good Samaritan Hospital back in early '50s. And he's continued that. My grandmother Margaret was active in the Folk Club and the Good Samaritan Hospital auxiliary; so was my aunt Jean. So there's definitely a family history there.

I guess the other piece we haven't talked about much is my other grandparents, Fay and Aubrey Bond. I guess one of the common ties there is back to the Red Cross. Fay was a big Red Cross booster and supporter. Actually, I think my mom worked for it and I know my aunt Roberta both worked for the Red Cross at various times. Roberta was the chapter manager here in Corvallis for several years, but we had a terrible relationship there for a long time. Actually, one of Roberta's children, Kaye, was killed in a farming accident while she was in college, and one of the things that we did to memorialize her was make a contribution to the beginning of building of an office fund kind of thing for the Benton County Red Cross. So that is something that we've had a long history with, as well as the Good Samaritan Hospital.

And obviously OSU, and Boys and Girls Club especially. Barte had a very long and significant both time commitment and dollar commitment to the Corvallis Boys and Girls Club. The other one that we supported and had great employee involvement with is the Philomath Youth Activities Club. It's sort of a Boys and Girls Club-like thing that's without a national affiliation, I guess. And Philomath - I guess we have a long history with the Philomath High School forestry program, both encouraging staff volunteer efforts as well as providing land for their field trips. And for several years they had a - I don't know if it's still happening - but they actually did some hands-on logging training where they used equipment on some of our close-to-town properties, to provide technical training to the kids in the Philomath High School forestry program.

I guess the two other more Barte-centric programs were the Rediscovery Forest at the Oregon Garden and the Tillamook Forest Center. It was an outreach and education thing for the Tillamook State Forest up along the Wilson River Highway. Two sort of out of the community things, anyhow.

Multiple other things. Another piece that they have along - well, two other things that are geographically connected, I guess, are the Bruce Starker Arts Park in Corvallis. My mom, especially, was instrumental in having the family donate that property to Corvallis. Kind of the original - that was pre-Majestic Theater - and kind of the original concept - Bob Mix from the arts community was the connector, I guess, between us and the arts community in terms of that. But the original thought was that there would be a new performing arts building built roughly where the sage garden is now at Bruce Starker Arts Park.

Oh, the other geographic connection there is too, the co-located, is the Old Mill Center for Children and Families. And that's something that we've had a connection with since from the early days. Actually, we've known the Larson family forever and actually T.J. and especially my Uncle Kermit Roth were stockholders. Kermit was an officer and successor in management of Larson Lumber Company, but the connection there that I'm trying to pull together here is that Bev Larson is the founder of Old Mill Center for Children and Families. She had the Old Mill name - I think it referred back to the Larson Lumber Company Mill that was out off of Highway 34, I don't know, three or four miles southwest of Philomath. But in terms of that being old mill, the new mill was on Reservoir Road just west of 53rd. But I guess the other connection was that Bev Larson was our grad student at OSU and had speech therapy. Soon after my dad was killed in the plane crash, my mom struck up a rekindled or friendly relationship with Jack Cameron, who was a Yale classmate of my dad's. After he died, they eventually married, so that's where the Elizabeth Bond Starker Cameron succession comes in. But Bev was a speech therapist who had had a stroke about the same time they were married - might have been about 1978, I think - but they were married. My dad died in '75.

So anyhow, my mom and Bev's relationship was based on Bev being a speech therapist for Jack. Soon after that, Bev founded the Old Mill Center for Children and Families. Anna and her brother Jim both went to the Old Mill Center for preschool when it was located on north 8th street next to the Cannery Mall, when they were about three, four and five years old.

**AM:** Yeah. [laughs]

**BS:** But the Old Mill Center eventually kind of outgrew that building, so we gave some land and a building we had been renting as a residence to Old Mill, which was immediately west of the Bruce Starker Arts Park. They've since torn down the old house and built a new building, which we helped fund as well. So we've got a long history with that organization.

[1:41:33]

**GB:** I need to add a little bit here. The Starkers have always been supportive of the employees and their extracurricular things - support through secretarial service, telephone, time on the job to make appointments. Marc Vomocil comes to mind. He's, what, a couple of years ago, was Corvallis's first citizen. But Marc's been very active with the Lions Club and a variety of other organizations. And all the rest of us have had some involvement with service clubs and other things, and they've helped a lot. It would be very difficult to be active, as active in these service clubs, without that kind of support, without being able to make a phone call on company time or maybe even write a letter on company time.

**BS:** Yep. Use company secretarial service to write the letter.

**MD:** Yeah. Well Barte's a big Rotarian, isn't he?

**BS:** Yeah, he's a Rotarian.

**GB:** So there are a number of things like that. Bond mentioned Philomath Youth Activities Association, we've had a series of people here that have been active in that. Not only have the Starkers given monetary support, but this backup support to help the employees be active has been pretty beneficial to the community.

**BS:** Both T.J. and Bruce were long time Corvallis Lions Club members as well.

**GB:** It was always fun to go to Lions Club meetings with T.J., because they always found a reason to fine him for something. He would say something or do something, so he would take his coin purse out of his pocket, and he would open it up very carefully, and he'd paw around in there with his finger and pull out the quarter. And they all made a big deal about that.

**BS:** Sometimes I think he'd prepare for that and put a little piece of paper or something in there and open it up, and he'd blow in there and this paper would fly out of his coin purse. And he say, "oh that's all that there is in there." [laughs]

[1:43:48]

**MD:** Well, along with this community involvement, the Starker family has been long time supporters – I mean, clear back to the beginnings of the School of Forestry. But there are things like the Starker Lecture series which began in 1985. I like the idea that it is open to the public and places an emphasis on some of the issues on management of forests and stuff. Now, are you guys still involved with that? Or is it run by the School of Forestry but you support it?

**BS:** Yeah, it's pretty well run by the College of Forestry. We do support it; Barte and I have, from the beginning, served on the committee. If it's an academic activity, it has to have a committee right? [laughs] So we've served on that committee over the years and continue to do that. Barte's not able to anymore, because he's suffering from Parkinson's Disease. He certainly continued as long as he could. But yeah, we're just continuing and we're probably going to have our organizational meeting for the Winter/Spring '17 series coming up in the next week or two. We continue to fund that on an annual basis.

The other piece regarding College of Forestry: we are also the funders of the Starker Chair in Private and Family Forestry. Had two professors serve in that capacity; John Bliss was the first one. He kind of retired out of that position into an

assistant dean position here three or four years ago. We were fortunate enough to recruit Tammy Cushing to be the second holder of that chair, and she's doing a great job there. And she serves on the Starker Lecture committee as well. Maybe not that unique in academic terms, but we've had trouble finding anybody wanting to be the official chair of that committee. So it's kind of a rotating chair depending on who has the best idea for the series that year and so forth.

**GB:** Also have the Cameron Tract.

**BS:** Oh yeah, that's true. That's part of the same— maybe it was a different — well, I guess it was about that same area anyhow, with where mom gave the Cameron Tract to the College of Forestry. That was intended to be a demonstration area that would be available to the Starker Chair to help to hold field trips and demonstrations about what's different and unique about family forestry versus other kinds of industrial or federal forestry, or whatever. That's a piece of that. I guess the other piece, the first million dollars to come off of that, of what's now the Cameron Tract, was designated to go to the Valley Library. So that's also a piece of the history there.

**MD:** Well, the family has been recognized by the institution, Oregon State, for many, many years. I mean with the honorary doctorate degree for T.J., and I know both you and Barte have been recognized many times. In 2002, the School of Forestry gave you their distinguished alumni award, and then also in 2011 the Alumni Association awarded both of you the E.B. Lemon Distinguished Alumni Award. Your reflections on giving back to your alma mater a little bit?

**BS:** Well, I don't know. Again, that's kind of in the family DNA, I guess. I mentioned earlier, T.J. came back — T.J.'s recollection is that, at Dean Peavy's, he request came back in 1922 to teach. He taught a variety of subjects, all the way from camp cookery to dry kiln technology, packing, use of purses to carry goods and supplies and stuff in the early days, to sawmill technology and solar culture. There wasn't as strong of departmental separation back then as there is now, so he taught a variety of things. The reason that he stayed until 1942, after having started buying land for his own account in 1936, was that my grandmother Margaret wouldn't agree to him retiring or giving up that steady income until my aunt, Jean Roth, graduated in home economics in 1942. Once he got both kids graduated from college, then Margaret was willing to allow him to put full-time into his business. But even at that, he never said that he retired or quit or whatever; he claimed that he was on extended leave. He always enjoyed coming back to the classroom to give guest lectures and give the dean a piece of his mind about whatever was happening. So that was something that we just do, I guess, as being part of the family.

So we've continued to be involved. Barte, for a long time, was a member of the College of Forestry Board of Visitors which was, again, a kind of an advice-giving group as well as a fundraising group for the dean. Members of that group provide unrestricted donations for the dean to use as he sees fit, kind of thing. So that gives some flexibility to the dean to initiate new programs or try things to see if they are going to work or not before it goes for official budget line items. So he's done that for a long time. Now that he's no longer able to do that, I've taken on that the last couple of years.

[1:52:00]

**MD:** And you're also a member of the Board of Trustees for the OSU Foundation?

**BS:** Yep. I have been on that since, what, I'm about on my eighth year, ninth year of service there. So I've got about three more years until they kick me off to pasture, I guess. I think there's a four three-year term limit on service on the OSU Foundation Board of Trustees.

I guess the other thing that's not as well known is that the forestry industry as a whole helped to pass a law here about five years or so ago I guess, to supplement the money available to the college from the harvest tax. As part of the oversight for that tax money, they created an organization called the Oregon Forestry Education Council, a group nominated by the dean and ratified by the president to oversee the curriculum. At least a portion of their curriculum is geared towards private and industrial forests, to make sure that that's truly — there is an option within the College of Forestry that would be conducive to that kind of a career. So there's five of us that serve on that committee. Besides myself it's Larry Giustina, Scott Folk from Roseburg Forest Products. There's been some turnover in the Weyerhaeuser position, the current holder of that is Matt Williams. And the fifth one is Alan Vouch from Miami Corporation. One of his stockholders, Rick, is also a donor to the college. So that is how the five of us, I guess, kind of got picked in terms of being either big contributors through the tax roll or otherwise to the college.

**MD:** So like I say, you never really left OSU. [laughs] For all intents and purposes, you've never left OSU; you've never left the School of Forestry.

Fernhoppers. Don't want to miss the Fernhoppers; you're all Fernhoppers. Now you're going to be going to Fernhopper reunions?

**AM:** Well, they don't really have them much anymore.

**BS:** Well, it's certainly changed over the years. The traditional Fernhopper reunion that Gary and I always experienced was held in the MU Ballroom. It was a formal evening event and oftentimes, I guess, they had a day program that involved either some lectures or a tour of the College of Forestry to see what was new and different, what's changed since alums had left school and now they'd come back. It was a pretty big deal. My recollection is that the MU Ballroom was pretty well filled most years. Back in the, I don't know, that's one of the things that T.J. and Bruce encouraged us to come to – I was about to say drug us to. At least in those early teen years, probably more dragged than anything else. [laughs] But the incentive to go was that they always served the MU sticky rolls at the Fernhopper banquet.

[1:56:35]

**AM:** I remember going to some of them in the ballroom with you, at least through the early '90s, I bet.

**MD:** Yeah, because the whole idea of being alumni – because the schools have gotten so large, the camaraderie is not what it used to be, I believe.

Well, one of the things I always give my people a chance to do is fill us in a little bit – and this is all family anyways so we've heard quite a bit about family, but where are you guys at today? What do you enjoy? What do you do for fun? That type of things. You've [Anna] got little kids running around, so yeah. But do you have any interests outside of this building?

**AM:** Outside this building. Well, I spend a lot of time with kids and running the kids around. I have four young kids. But we own our own little twenty acres of forest out south of town, so we kind of run around there, which backs up to another, I don't know, 400 acres of Starker Forest or something behind us. And we have a little lake up there, so we're kind of continuing the tradition of the company property. So we go up there and have picnics, and we've got kayaks and canoes up there that the kids like to go and do fishing and just kind of little picnic trips up there.

**MD:** A life outdoors, even for being a kid.

**AM:** Yeah, we try to keep them outdoors as much as we can. Other than that, I mean, they play sports in the summer with the Philomath Youth Activities Club and they are more active with their school. They go to Ashbrook Independent School. So we do lots of volunteering and stuff there. Just driving around to their activities. [laughs] We try and get to OSU – at least like football games and basketball games. They enjoy doing that and they always get excited when we drive by the stadium: "It's OSU! There's OSU!"

**MD:** So they'll be the fifth generation.

**AM:** Yes, hopefully. At least my oldest, they say "we're foresters right?" And I say, "yeah."

**GB:** They're being groomed whether they know it or not.

**AM:** That's right. [laughs] Every once in a while my second likes to pop up and say she likes the Ducks just to get us upset. [laughs]

**MD:** Yeah, just to get a rise out of her siblings.

**GB:** Anna's husband Adam is also a forester.

**MD:** And what do you [Bond] do when you're not on people's boards and things like that?

**BS:** I don't know, I do a lot of dreaming about travelling I guess. I guess one of the things that T.J. always expressed an interest in was the Panama Canal. He kind of wanted to go but he wasn't much of a traveler. But I guess maybe he felt like he had one closer to home - there's a place out on our Tum Tum tree farm that we call Panama Canal. It's a place where the railroad refigured the river to eliminate a trestle or two, and so there's a short stretch, maybe a half a mile, that's channelized. The railroad did it back in the late '50s or something.

**GB:** They avoided two trestles that way.

**BS:** I don't know if you heard when that was happening.

**GB:** It was before, so it had to had to be in the '50s.

**BS:** Had to be in the mid-50s. All right.

**GB:** He named it the Panama Canal.

[2:00:30]

**BS:** Right. To some degree that connection – I've had an interest in trying to transit the Panama Canal, so that's on my to-do bucket list, I guess. While I'm here, I stay pretty focused, I guess, on the forestry and the business. But I'd enjoy a week to ten day - I could stretch it to two weeks plus maybe - winter vacation in Hawaii. But my wife is not quite as much of a traveler as I am; ten days is beginning to stretch it for her.

We've tried to do that. We've got more opportunities for recreation and so forth than were able to take advantage of. We've got place at Sunriver that's nice to go and get away and relax a little bit. But what it winds up being, since we're owners, there's always things to do about the vacation property. So that's a little bit of a problem.

Recently, in a partnership with our son Jim, I've acquired a small cabin on Triangle Lake, so that's a little closer. We have aspirations to get down there more frequently on the weekends or maybe even extend the weekend a little bit. We've been able to do that a few times; it's harder to do than it seems like it should be. But I guess the other thing that's coming up at some point is kids, and our outside Board of Directors are telling me that I'm gonna have to retire sometime. So I'm beginning to collect some ideas about what to do when I'm only spending twenty hours a week working instead of sixty hours a week.

**MD:** Yeah, free time! [laughs] Have you actually retired Gary? Or are you...?

**GB:** No, I've got a pretty good gig going here. I spend about half time working, if you can call it work, doing a variety of things. I've sort of become the company historian, although Bond and I aren't that far apart in age, so we rely on each other to help each other's memories and things. But no, my outside activities primarily center around my family. I have three children, grandchildren, even a couple of great grandchildren now. So those have been good things. It's interesting how I think all three of us, on frequent occasions, will take family and friends to the woods on our off time.

**MD:** When you're out there on business... [laughs]

**GB:** So that's an important recreational part of our life. My wife and I don't camp - we don't sleep on the ground anymore - but we still enjoy going camping in a camper. I think that changes with time too, because it's harder and harder to get up off the ground.

**BS:** The ground is harder and harder to sleep on. [laughs]

**GB:** That's right. But no, I think most of my outside activities center around forestry in one way or another. One of the things that's – you know, when you offer to volunteer, the people who you volunteer for pick up on that real quick. So the last few years I have become involved in selecting the Tree Farmer of the Year for the state of Oregon. So you've got tree farms to visit, to evaluate, and that's been a pleasure. It's sort of work-related in some ways, but mostly it's just a recreational kind of a thing for me. I enjoyed looking at what some of these other folks have committed their lives too. For some of them it's just a hobby, but a lot of them, it's their life's income, their life's work. So that's been a fun thing to do.

[2:05:01]

**MD:** Well, it's been an honor to capture the story of generations of Oregon State foresters dating back to the turn of the century until the next century. So on behalf of the Sesquicentennial Oral History Project, I want to thank you for your thoughts, your memories, and your participation in this project. You're now a permanent part, as if you weren't before, of Oregon State University. Thank you.

**GB:** One of the things that I think we glossed over a little bit was the connection that we have with OSU for a source of summer employees. Anna mentioned it and I think maybe we have mentioned it a time or two, but we have no obligation to them. But it's a great place for us to find people. And all Forestry students have to have – there's a work requirement in addition to their curriculum requirement, or their class requirement. And I think it's probably still six months, isn't it?

**BS:** I think so, at least for the Forest Management degree, and it might be even getting narrower than that. But as I remember, it's not a strict requirement of every graduate of the College of Forestry, but certainly those who are in the Forest Management/Forest Operations options.

**GB:** We've hired young foresters here in the last five years - I guess three that I can think of - and they were all OSU graduates.

**BS:** Virtually all of our employees tried out as paid interns from the College of Forestry.

**GB:** And one of our fairly recent hires is also a graduate of Philomath High School and their forestry program.

**BS:** Two of them, I think?

**GB:** Travis? Oh, Jeff.

**BS:** Riley and Jeff.

**GB:** I guess, I was thinking of Jeff as being more long-term since he has been here for fifteen years or so. But yeah, and Bond mentioned that we have a connection with the Philomath High School forestry program, we support it. But that's been a great thing for us too. There's a pretty strong connection there that continues on with Starker employees being connected to OSU. It's not a requirement. We know Randy Hereford-

**BS:** He didn't intern, but he is an OSU graduate. [laughs] We had a Duck for a long time, but not so much in the forestry; it was more maintenance and rental area.

**GB:** And then Steve downstairs.

**BS:** Oh yeah, the Viking.

**GB:** Yeah. So, you know, it's not 100%. [laughs]

**MD:** But 99.9.

**GB:** We have to have some diversity. [laughs] The company for a long time, I don't know if it was a requirement, but at least it was an encouragement to have family members work outside too. I know Bond worked for Crown Zellerbach back at one time, you [Anna] worked for Roseburg Lumber. Others have worked in various – well your cousins have been schoolteachers and various other things. So that adds some diversity to the family as well.

**MD:** Well, that was great.

**BS:** OK.

[2:08:41]