



Frederick W. Powers

1888-1951

Fred Powers was 19 years old in 1907 when he moved with his family from Minnesota to Marshfield, now Coos Bay, Oregon. Born in 1888, Powers was the oldest of the seven children of Albert H. and Johanna Powers. Both Powers, Minnesota and Powers, Oregon, were named after his father, who became a well-respected pioneer logging operator in Oregon.

Like his father, Powers centered his entire career around the timber industry. Although born in Minneapolis, Powers lived most of his adult life in Coos Bay, Oregon. For many years, the region was the center of the family's logging interests.

Soon after the family's arrival in Oregon, Fred went to work for his father at the Smith-Powers Logging Co. Later, when Albert Powers, Sr. retired from the company in the early 1920s, Fred took over the management.

Vic Stevens, a Smith-Powers employee who wrote a brief history of the company, noted that as a manager Fred Powers was "very much in evidence out on the jobs." Fred was

of a more reticent disposition than his father," Stevens wrote. "Still, he made a conscious endeavor to mix with the workmen."

In the mid-1920s, the Coos Bay Lumber Co. became the successor to the holding of the Smith-Powers Logging Company. Shortly after this change, however, Fred Powers left the company. Coos Bay Lumber Co. continued to operate until 1956 when Georgia-Pacific Corp. bought its holdings.

In 1928, Albert Powers, Sr. re-entered the industry and founded Powers-Davis Logging Co. with his son Fred and an associate, Carl Davis. Albert was president of the company until his death in 1930.

In 1935, Fred Powers and Carl Davis, bought a small sawmill at Sweet Home, Oregon, which produced about 20,000 board feet of lumber daily. This was their first venture outside of Coos County and heralded the beginning of a major presence in Linn County.

Thanks to efficient direction and management, the Sweet Home mill prospered. By the beginning of 1945, it had a daily capacity in excess of 75,000 board feet. However, in April of that same year, the mill was completely destroyed by fire; construction of a larger, more modern mill at the same site was started immediately.

In the meantime, the Powers-Davis partnership had acquired a mill site and erected a modern "Swede Gang" mill at Lebanon, Oregon, with a daily capacity of approximately 75,000 board feet.

In August 1946, the logging and milling facilities of the Powers-Davis Company were consolidated with those of C.H. Wheeler. The Santiam Lumber Company was created as a result of this merger, with Fred Powers as its president and chief operating officer. In addition to the timber holdings and sawmills in Linn County, the company operated lumber yards in Sweet Home and Lebanon.

Frederick Powers moved to Powers, Oregon with his family in September 1916. They lived in Powers until 1937, when they moved to Portland, Oregon and established their main residence in Dunthorpe. He served on the Board of Directors of the First National Bank of Lebanon until his death in September 1951. Powers was survived by his wife and sons, John and George.

Fred Powers was regarded by his friends and co-workers as a loyal and genuine friend. They said that he "always had time to talk with any of his men if they had a problem." Many followed him to Coos County when he moved his lumber operation to Sweet Home and Lebanon. It was said that "he was a humble, modest man who refused always to take any personal credit for his own accomplishments

or his good deeds. His influence for good in a community was profound and far reaching."

At the time of his death, the Santiam Lumber Company's Board of Directors said of him, "The moving spirit in the origination and subsequent rapid growth of this truly impressive lumber industry was, without qualification, that of Mr. Fred W. Powers. From the very beginning, it was his foresight and sound progressive judgment that resulted in the remarkable development of this enterprise.

"The very existence of this progressive industry, with its two highly efficient sawmills and its unexcelled logging operation, is a fitting monument to the foresight, industry and integrity of Mr. Powers. But a much more enduring memorial to his memory is, and will be, the kind regard and high esteem in which he was held, not only by the executives of the corporation and his personal friends and intimates, but also by every man and woman who worked for Santiam Lumber Company, almost all of whom he knew individually and whose greatest or smallest care would always receive his prompt personal attention and his most conscientious consideration."