



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

JANUARY 2024

REMEMBERING LEWIS BUELL AND HIS SAWMILLS – LOGS TO LUMBER

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Buell's sawmill crew. Bethany Presbyterian Church and Jake Stoller house at NW Springville Road and Kaiser Road in the background looking northeast, ca. 1918.

L. (Lewis) M. Buell operated a portable sawmill in various locations around Washington County, Oregon from the 1900s until 1919, moving his mill when available trees had been depleted.

A newspaper clipping from 1908 stated that he was set up on the Ralph Imbrie Farm. The Hillsboro Argus of September 9, 1909 noted that Buell was establishing his sawmill on the Cooley Place, on the United Railway line near Phillips, the area where Rock Creek Tavern is today. By 1912 his mill was operating in the village of Glencoe which was north of today's US HW26 near North Plains.

The next location mentioned in the newspaper was in 1913 which stated that "L. M. Buell was in town Tuesday. He has moved his sawmill near the Bethany Schoolhouse, and will again be running by February 15." This was on the Graf family property north of Springville Road.



Buell's Sawmill crew, closer view, looking northeast, ca. 1918.



Buell's Sawmill interior with crew, ca. 1918.

Lew Buell told the Hillsboro Argus of March 8, 1916 that his mill will run full capacity all spring and summer and has more orders that he can fill. Buell and his family were well known in the community. They distributed photo postcards of his sawmill to the neighboring farmers.



Buell's Sawmill and logs looking north, ca. 1918.



Buell's Sawmill and logs, looking northwest, ca. 1918.



Buell family, L.M. Buel holding baby (seated front row), ca. 1918.

In the Hillsboro Argus of June 28, 1917, Buell stated that his mill is running on orders all the time and he could sell more if he had a larger capacity.

The Beaverton Times of August 2, 1918 reported that Buell was having his new automobile being inspected at the Stipe Garage. "Mr. Buell is the owner of a sawmill at Bethany (Washington County Oregon), but will move it soon as he has the timber all but all sawed out on the Wismer place where the mill now is. He saws only rough lumber, but he has built up a good trade in that by his close application to business and his genial manners." Buell was photographed with the Wismer family in June 1919.

Buell then relocated to Yamhill County around 1920 and was working as a laborer in a sawmill.

Later that year Lewis Buell became a newspaper distributor. Lewis, his two sons, and two others met the train in Newberg to receive and deliver the *Oregon Journal* newspaper that came from Portland just an hour after they were printed. Ironically, he went from working with logs and lumber to distributing a daily publication in a wood byproduct, newsprint.



L.M. Buell (far right) and Wismer family, June 1919.



Buell setup his sawmill near the Bethany Schoolhouse for a while before it was moved to the Wismer farm. Don Nelson Collection.



RPPC of a drag saw from a Bethany farm family collection. AZO stampbox with all arrows pointed up, ca 1908-1916. Don Nelson Collection.

Sources:

- *Hillsboro Argus*
- *Beaverton Times*
- *Polk's Yamhill and Washington Counties Directory 1912-1913*
- *1920 US Census for Yamhill County*

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