

# Oral history interview with Norm Schaaf and Joseph F. Murray, 2010

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Interviewee</b>	Schaaf, Norm
<b>Title</b>	Oral history interview with Norm Schaaf and Joseph F. Murray
<b>Dates</b>	2010 (inclusive) 2010 2010
<b>Quantity</b>	Originals as received: 1 digital audio file (WMA), 1 computer file (DOC), 521 MB of digital photographs (JPEGs)
<b>Collection Number</b>	5983 (Accession No. 5983-001)
<b>Summary</b>	Oral history with two employees of Merrill & Ring, Ltd., a logging company located in Washington State.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections</a> Special Collections University of Washington Libraries Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-1929 Fax: 206-543-1931 <a href="mailto:speccoll@uw.edu">speccoll@uw.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	Open to all users.
<b>Languages</b>	English

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## Biographical Note

Norm Schaaf is the Vice President for Timberlands and Administration at Merrill & Ring Lumber Company. He was born on August 22, 1951.

Joseph F. Murray is Forester at Merrill & Ring Lumber Company. He was born on April 14, 1948.

## Historical Background

Thomas Merrill, the son of a Maine lumbering family, began a series of logging companies in Michigan in the 1860s. In 1886 he joined Clark Ring to form the Merrill & Ring Lumber Company, headquartered in Saginaw. As the white pine forests of the Great Lakes states thinned in the 1890s, Merrill & Ring bought timberland near Grays Harbor on Vancouver Island and on the northern Olympic Peninsula in Washington. In 1902 the company moved its headquarters from Saginaw to Hoquiam, Washington. The center of Merrill & Ring logging operations was in the rugged territory near the Pysht River, west of Port Angeles, Washington.

Merrill & Ring was often at odds with other lumber companies in the region. Since Merrill & Ring owned timberland in British Columbia, the company resisted the efforts of most lumber firms to raise tariffs

on Canadian forest products. In the late 1920s and 1930s Merrill & Ring allied with the other large timber owner on the Olympic Peninsula, the Bloedel-Donovan interests, and successfully pressured the Forest Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to keep nearby public timber off the market. This drove many small sawmill and logging companies, who had already cut their own lands, out of business. It also slowed the extremely rapid cutting of timber in this region. Merrill & Ring was later active in the campaign to reduce the size of the Olympic National Park in the late 1930s.

Merrill & Ring managed its lands near Grays Harbor in cooperation with loggers Alex and Robert Polson. Although Merrill & Ring owned half of the Polson Logging Company, formed in 1903, Alex Polson still ran this company. Polson cooperated with Merrill & Ring in a number of ventures. Along with Merrill & Ring, Polson was a co-owner of the Ozette Timber Company, a firm which bought substantial amounts of timberland from the Quinalt Indians after the application of the Dawes Act to their reservation. In 1927 Polson joined Merrill & Ring and William Boeing in purchasing the Crescent Logging Company, another firm that owned land on the northern Olympic Peninsula. Merrill & Ring and Polson continued to diversify, adding a pulp mill in Port Angeles to their holdings in 1930. In the early 1940s the Merrill & Ring Lumber Company and its subsidiaries dissolved and transferred their assets to Merrill & Ring, Ltd. Merrill & Ring, Ltd. continues to run a sustained-yield logging operation along the Pysht River to this day.

## Content Description

Flash drive containing materials from Ileen DeVault's 2010 interview with Norm Schaaf (Vice President for Timberlands and Administration, Merrill & Ring) and Joseph F. Murray (Forester, Merrill & Ring). The interview was a total of 6 hours long and included time in the car, at the Pysht Lodge/Cottage, restored family houses, and other areas outside. Items include photographs of the tour (including the Lodge, the farm, Pysht River, a logging unit, and more), brief interview transcript/summary, and an audio file.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

Creator's literary rights transferred to the University of Washington Libraries.

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Ileen A. DeVault, 2014-10-06

### Related Materials

[Merrill & Ring Lumber Company records](#)

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## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Oral history interview with Norm Schaaf and Joseph F. Murray, 2010  
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv95166>

Logging--Washington (State)  
Lumber trade--Washington (State)  
Lumber trade--Washington (State)--Employees  
Personal Papers/Corporate Records (University of Washington)

**Personal Names :**

Murray, Joseph F. (Forester)--Interviews

Schaaf, Norm--Interviews

**Corporate Names :**

Merrill & Ring, Ltd

**Other Creators :**

**Personal Names :**

DeVault, Ileen

(interviewer)

Murray, Joseph F. (Forester)

(interviewee)

2017 (Last modified: 1/31/2020)



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