

# Driving Stakes and Surveying the Land in Wyoming As told by Spenser N.

Big Piney, Wyoming

Story Narrative:

"I was seven years old, was with Paul Scherbel, surveyor Scherbel. It was packing stakes for while he surveyed. Paul A. Scherbel, Paul's son was on the other end, and he packed stakes for Ben Ball, which was Paul Scherbel's right hand man during the time that we were surveying. What I was do, I would go along with Paul and I had a big sack alongside of me with the stakes in there, wooden stakes. They would measure off with a chain, and Paul would say, "Pull chain, stick, stuck", and they'd drive the stake.

We would go to the next one and do the same thing. Paul paid me a dollar an hour while I was packing stakes. This was back in 1953 and '54, in there, and Paul made me get a social security number, and I was seven years old. My Dad threw a holy rolling fit. He couldn't understand why I needed a social security number at seven years old. But I had to go get that. Consequently, I have probably one of the older social security numbers that anybody has around because I got it that early. Rachel, Paul's wife, would pack a lunch for us. It was always liverwurst sandwiches. She made homemade bread, and cut ... The liverwurst was about a quarter of an inch thick on there, and she would put mayonnaise, and lettuce between two pieces of bread. The bread was about an inch thick apiece.

So that's what we had for lunch every day. We went to work in an old Chrysler, about a 1948 Chrysler sedan. It was as long as, oh, probably 21, 22-foot long. But we put all the surveying equipment and everything in the back seat, along with Paul A. and I and away we would go. No four-wheel drives then, or anything like that. We'd go as far as we could in this old Chrysler sedan, and then we would get out and carry everything to the job site, whatever it was. Paul was a conservation district manager, at that time, and that's where we did all the surveying. When we weren't surveying, we were picking rocks. Paul

A. and I would pick rocks and Paul would pay us 50 cents a bucket for rocks out of his yard up here. But that was my first job."

This story was collected in conjunction with the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street program and its national traveling exhibition "The Way We Worked" when it was on view at the Sublette County Public Library in Pinedale, Wyoming, in 2018. This story is part of the "Be Here: Main Street" story collection, intended to capture Americans' stories about their neighborhoods, waterways, towns, traditions, and personal experiences.

Asset ID #7656

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