

## Empire of Timber

### *Labor Unions and the Pacific Northwest Forests*

The battles to protect ancient forests and spotted owls in the Northwest regularly splashed across the evening news in the 1980s and early 1990s. *Empire of Timber* re-examines this history to demonstrate that workers used their unions to fight for a healthy workplace environment and sustainable logging practices that would allow themselves and future generations the chance to both work and play in the forests. Examining labor organizations from the Industrial Workers of the World in the 1910s to unions in the 1980s, this study shows that conventional narratives of workers opposing environmental protection are far too simplistic and often ignore the long histories of natural resource industry workers attempting to protect their health and their futures from the impact of industrial logging. Today, when workers fear that environmental restrictions threaten their jobs, learning the history of alliances between unions and environmentalists can build those conversations in the present.

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ERIK LOOMIS

*University of Rhode Island*



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*To my father, for instilling in me a love of the forests even  
as he worked himself to the bone in the plywood mills to keep  
our family fed and clothed.*

*And to my mother, for giving her undying love and support  
in all the decisions I've ever made.*

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