



**Chips**  
*and*  
**Sawdust**

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A quarterly newsletter from the

**Forest History  
Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**

P.O. Box 424  
Two Rivers, WI 54241-0424

2013

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Forest History Association of Wisconsin members are encouraged to submit items of interest for this newsletter to the editor:

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# Chips and Sawdust

Volume 38, Number 2

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**Advantages:**

- Faster delivery of Chips and Sawdust Newsletter
- Newsletter with full-color photographs
- Receive additional news items and communications



## From The President's Chair

*Dear Friends,*

*The 38<sup>th</sup> Forest History of Wisconsin Annual Conference will be held in Park Falls, Thursday, September 12 – Saturday, September 14. Mark your calendar for fun, wonderful sites, and forest history.*

*We have changed the format this year to encompass a slower pace. More time for friends to meet and learning about local forest history. We have not forgotten the opening famous "auction" for Thursday night, but have also included Wisconsin's famous "Friday night Fish Fry" and a Saturday "Lumberjack Breakfast." Join us! See the Registration on [www.chipsandsawdust.com](http://www.chipsandsawdust.com).*

*The Summer has brought full pool in the lakes, finally hot weather, and a beautiful weekend for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July! Let's hope it continues!*

*As you plan for upcoming events, join us at the W.D. Connor, Sr. Induction into the Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame at Camp 5, August 16<sup>th</sup>. Your board will be there after its board meeting, along with the other 10 representative organizations from the Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame. Tom Albrecht, past FHAW President and longtime FHAW Board member will be the Master of Ceremony! Mark Nelson, our wonderful re-enactor will perform in an encore performance!! It is at 1PM, August 16<sup>th</sup>.*

*August is a busy month for lots of events with family and friends! Looking ahead to the Fall, the Registration for our 38<sup>th</sup> Conference is included in this issue! You can also download the registration form from the FHAW website and send it to me or email the form.*

*Park Falls, the Price County Historical Society, and Flambeau River Paper Company, our host, is looking forward to your visit!! See you in Park Falls!!*

*Sincerely,*

*Sara*

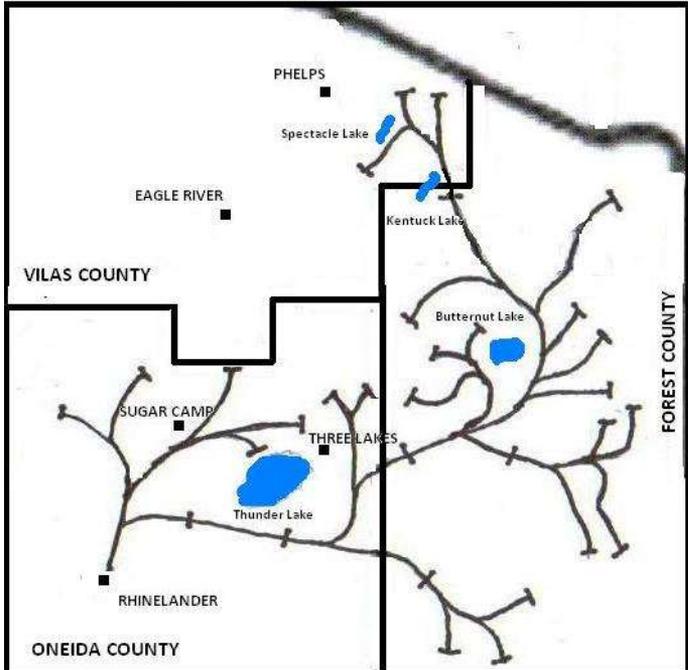
# THUNDER LAKE LUMBER COMPANY'S LOGGING RAILROADS

*By Brad Pagels*

In 1893 Frank S. Robbins built a narrow gauge railroad to haul timber to his mill in Rhinelander due to the low water level in Pine Creek in the spring of that year, and in 1894 this railroad was extended to the present village of Sugar Camp, Oneida County which was at first known as Robbins. This village was the headquarters for the Robbins Railroad Company that was incorporated as a common carrier line in 1901, and from this point lines were built to Tim Lennon and Oatmeal Lakes west of Sugar Camp.

Other lines were built toward Starks and one was run up to Columbus Lake on the northern end of Oneida County. Later the railroad crossed the Chicago and Northwestern Railway on an overpass

and ended north of Julia Lake located northeast of Three Lakes. Narrow gauge railroads were built with a three foot space between the rails whereas standard gauge was four feet, eight and one half inches. It was considered to be less expensive to construct railroads in narrow gauge.



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Robbins sold all of his land holdings, saw mill, and railroad to John Mylrea in 1919. Mylrea was an experienced man in railroad logging as he had a business in Long Lake, Wisconsin. Shortly after the purchase Mylrea abandoned all rail lines west of Sugar

Camp leaving about six miles of common carrier line and proceeded to extend the private main line from Julia Lake up to Spectacle Lake in Vilas County by 1938. Another main line was built toward Highway 55 in Forest County that also had Camp 6.

### Thunder Lake

Lumber Company was the new name due to the fact that Robbins' Camp 2 was on the north shore of Thunder Lake and was long abandoned. An excellent record of this company is found in Harvey Huston's book titled "The Thunder Lake Narrow Gauge" which is yet available for purchase or found in local libraries. While there are no definite dates of camp operations the book nonetheless has a complete roster of locomotives and their histories, many photos, and people involved in the affairs of timber harvesting. The railroad was actually owned by the Thunder Lake Lumber Company but was legally titled as Robbins Railroad Company and was completely abandoned in 1941. The last trains were run out of the Butternut Lake area in 1940 after which the private portion was being taken up back to Rhinelander.

Many spurs were built from the main lines and crews were said to have built and taken up rails for 25 miles in a year. The writer has begun to explore these rail lines in 2004 and has written a journal of field notes about Thunder Lake's operations in Vilas County which was confined to the Township of Phelps. The main line running north is well preserved and parts of it are used as snowmobile trails, and the main line running east is now Forest Road 2182. The writer plans to begin field work the easternmost extent of the Narrow Gauge and working back to junction of the main lines by Wolf Lake. The sites for Camps 14, 15, and 22 are on private lands. Camp 6 was just east of Pine River and the



*Thunder Lake's Engine #5 is displayed at the Rhinelander Logging Museum. It was the only locomotive that was bought brand new. #5 was sold to Mexican mining firm and was brought back to Rhinelander in 1974. John Mylrea donated Engine #7 in 1946 which then in 1974 was taken back to Colorado from which it was purchased by Frank S. Robbins and has been completely refurbished.*

foundations are still intact.

The lumber company operated for a few years after the Narrow Gauge was abandoned relying on timber being hauled in by the Soo Line and Chicago and Northwestern Railroads. The company closed at a profit resulting from the sale of its lands to the U.S. Government which established the Nicolet National Forest. The first land sale was called the Oneida Purchase Unit that had 12,000 acres of cutover land. As the cutting progressed the government continually purchased additional acreage provided that small trees were left to help regenerate forests.



This map is a USGS Topographic Quadrangle that was annotated by James P. Kaysen showing the location of railroad grades. The map shows the easternmost extension of the Thunder Lake Lumber Company's land holdings. The Wisconsin Historical Society is now in the process of putting all of the Kaysen maps on Internet access. There are 1200 maps that have been annotated with railroad corridors. The link for this site is: [http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/highlights/archives/2013/04/kaysen\\_railroad.asp](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/highlights/archives/2013/04/kaysen_railroad.asp)

## **Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame**

### **Induction of**

**William Duncan Connor, Sr.**

**Friday, August 16th, 2013  
1:00 - 2:45 PM**

**Camp 5 Museum  
5068 Hwy 8  
Laona, Wisconsin**



On August 16, 2013, after 69 years, W. D. Connor, Sr. will "return" to the town that he founded, Laona. Historical re-enactor, Mark T. Nelson, will appear as W.D. Connor, Sr. at Camp 5 Museum/Wisconsin Forestry Museum to honor Mr. Connor's induction into the Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame. Nelson's reenactment characterizes Mr. Connor as a lumberman, politician, and a strong family man. Mr. Nelson is well known in Marshfield for his historic portrayals of early community leaders and the Twin Cities area for his many roles in Minneapolis theaters.

The Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame, led by the Society of American Foresters, and including the Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association; Forest History Association of Wisconsin; Wisconsin Woodlot Owners Association; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Wisconsin Resource Alliance; University of Wisconsin - Department of Forestry, Wildlife, and Ecology; University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point; invite you to attend.

### **Event Schedule:**

- 1:00 pm Tom Albrecht, Society of American Foresters
- 1:15 pm Performance of W.D. Connor, Sr.
- 1:45 pm Presentation and Induction of W.D. Connor, Sr. into the 2012 Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame
- 1:50 pm Introduction of Representative Wisconsin Forest History Hall of Fame groups
- 2:00 pm Remarks and Remembrances of W.D. Connor, Sr., by granddaughter, Mary Connor Pierce
- 2:10 pm Reception

Please note: Plan to arrive at the Camp 5 Depot on time to take the 11 o'clock train, or the noon train at the very latest. Guest are welcome to make a tax free donation for the fare of \$15; just mention that you are a member of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin.

The event will conclude so attendees can depart on the 2:45 pm Lumberjack Steam Train to the Camp 5 Depot, or catch the last train at 4:00 pm.



## ***From the Newspaper Archives***



### **Passing Of The Pines In The Chippewa Valley**

*(continued from Chips and Sawdust, Volume 38, No. 1)*

#### **White Pine Prized**

Mr. Putnam in his estimate for 1880 placed the amount then remaining at 15,000,000,00, which he later admitted was much too low. Probably it could be safely raised to 25,000,000,000, making a grand total for the valley of 50,000,000,000 feet. To many the figures quoted in "board feet" do not mean much. The size of logs is designated by the average number required to make 1,000 feet of lumber. In early days, in large timber, with no small logs accepted, it required an average of only from two and one-half to four logs to the thousand. With smaller, and defective logs, the number rose to as high as 10 and even higher.

White pine, the best general purpose timber that ever grew, was in the main the only timber considered in early lumbering days. A considerable amount of Norway pine, an excellent timber for many purposes, although not equal to white pine for finish, was found in some localities growing side by side with the white pine. Like the latter, it was of good size, tall and fairly free of limbs. From quite an early period the Norway pine was cut with the white pine. No other kinds were taken into consideration in estimating the value of standing timber. As to the land itself, that was considered of no value at all. A statement generally accepted as a truism was, "Where white pine will grow, nothing else will." The general practice after the timber was cut was to allow the land to revert to the county or state for unpaid taxes.

After 1880 the lumbering business grew less and less, although so gradually as to be hardly noticeable for many years. Timber land values increased tremendously and likewise the prices of manufactured lumber. Lumbermen paid prices for standing timber that in earlier days would have seemed fabulous – yet it was in

these days, instead of the days of low price timber, and lumber, that the lumbermen made big money. It was then that they reaped the belated harvest of their earlier years.

*(Editor's note: The above is another portion of the first installment of an article from the pen of W. W. Bartlett, early historian from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The full story appeared in both the Milwaukee Journal and the Eau Claire Leader Telegram during February 1923, the remainder of the first installment will be completed in your next issue of Chips and Sawdust)*

### A well deserved "Thank You"

In the last issue of *Chips and Sawdust*, a lead to articles on the Paper Cuts Project and news on the Flambeau River Paper Company was mentioned. Those leads came from FHAW member, James B. Simon of Fond Du Lac. Thanks Jim! Jim also provides a lead to an article titled "**Flambeau River Papers is beating the odds; Park Falls' mill poised for new era of papermaking**" by Paul Nicolaus that might be of interest to you before the annual meeting. The full content of that article can be found at [http://www.haywardwi.com/news/article\\_3a9e0f9c-b7e9-11e2-ada0-001a4bcf887a.html](http://www.haywardwi.com/news/article_3a9e0f9c-b7e9-11e2-ada0-001a4bcf887a.html)



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Lake States  
Logging Congress  
& Equipment Expo

SEPTEMBER 6-7 2013



Escanaba, MI

The first Logging Congress occurred on November 1 & 2, 1945 in Houghton, Michigan, and in 1948 the Congress began the practice of adding different locations to encourage greater exposure and participation. Now in its 66th year, the Logging Congress events have been known to attract over 300 booth setups, 3,500 attendees daily, and cover 875,000 square feet. The 2013 Expo will be held at the Upper Peninsula Fairgrounds, 2401 12th Avenue North, Escanaba, Michigan.

For more information — <http://timberpa.com/event/2013-lake-states-logging-congress-equipment-expo>

## FHAW to visit Old Fifield Town Hall Museum

During the upcoming 38th FHAW Annual Conference, members will have the opportunity to tour Price County Historical Society's Old Town Hall Museum. The Old Fifield Town Hall served as a government building from 1894 until 1967. It had been built to replace the original hall that was lost in the fire of 1893. That fire destroyed the business district of Fifield. The large upstairs hall that held



town meetings also hosted a variety of local social gatherings as well. The lower floor held the town government offices.

Today, this unique building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It houses artifacts from the logging days of Price County from 1879 through the 1930's. Exhibits include logging tools, camp artifacts, railroad memorabilia, a Victorian period living room and kitchen, a collection of household and personal items and changing exhibits. A gift shop offers books about local and northern Wisconsin history and life.

*The Old Town Hall is itself an artifact with the stage, wainscoting and delicate stencil restored to the walls—a touch of elegance for early pioneers.*



*The Greenfield School, Fifield.*

The Greenfield School is located behind the museum and houses exhibits that represent the one room rural schools of Price County.

The Price County Historical Society was formed in 1959 and took on its first substantial project in 1967 when the town of Fifield deeded the town hall to it. Work to restore the building was begun in 1968 and in 1976 its doors were open to the public. The society maintains and develops the museum with county, town and private donations and volunteer help.



## 38th Annual Meeting of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin September 12—14, 2013 Park Falls, Wisconsin

The 38<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin will take place in Park Falls on September 12-14, 2013.

The American Value Best Inn at Park Falls will be the host hotel for this year's conference. Reservations can be made now at the FHAW rate of just \$55.00 per night by calling the Inn directly at 715-762-3383. A block of rooms are reserved on both the ground floor and the walk-up second floor. Make your reservation early to make sure you have suitable accommodations.

### Schedule at a Glance

#### **Thursday, September 12, 5:30 pm**

Reception (cash bar), Dinner and Auction  
Northwood's Supper Club, Fifield

#### **Friday, September 13**

##### **Morning**

Tour: Flambeau River Paper Company

Lectures:

Brad Pagel - The Roddis Line Revisited

Russell Kirchmeyer - Hines Lumber Company

Tom Pestka - Logging in Northern Wisconsin

Dale Heikkinen - Prentice Loader

**Lunch** - Coffee Café—Fifield

##### **Afternoon**

Tour: The Old Town Hall Museum, Fifield and the  
East Highland School Museum, Phillips

*(Depending on the time, there are several other places of interest, including the Fire Tower, Concrete Park & Historical Logging Sites)*

**Evening** - Friday Night Fish Fry - Bay Harbor Restaurant

#### **Saturday, September 14**

**Breakfast** at Moose Jaw Resort, Park Falls

Tour: Round Lake Dam



# Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

## Membership Application

Please enroll me as a member and participant in the Association's program of developing the educational and historical aspects of Wisconsin's forestry and logging industry. Attached is payment for:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Student Membership (\$10.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership (\$20.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership (\$30.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Non Profit Organization Membership (\$30.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate Membership (\$55.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Life Membership (\$250.00)

Other Contributions:

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Student Awards
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Capital Fund
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Operations



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Detach and mail this application with payment to:

**Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 424**

**Two Rivers, WI 54241-0424**

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### 39th Annual Conference

2013

Sara Connor

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2012—David Peschau

2013 — Sara Connor

### Forestry Hall of Fame

#### Representative

Tom Jacobs

### Scholarship & Distinguished

#### Service Awards

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Awards Committee

Auction Committee

Archives

The post office will not forward bulk 3rd class mail.

**Please** inform the membership chair of any change in address.

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