

Volume 42

Number 1 & 2



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A quarterly newsletter from the

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

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

Spring—Summer 2017

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Forest History Association of Wisconsin members interested in  
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should submit their name, a brief biographical sketch,  
and contact information to:

FHAW Nominating Committee Chairman, David Peschau  
[dpeschau@compuserve.com](mailto:dpeschau@compuserve.com)

# Chips and Sawdust

Volume 42, Number 1 & 2

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# From The President's Chair

Dear friends,

*This past weekend (Labor Day Weekend) we came to the unofficial end of summer and collectively wonder where it went? Each year here in Marshfield the day is celebrated as the last day of our annual Central Wisconsin State Fair. Besides the usual attractions this year fair goers had the opportunity to view our FHAW traveling exhibits as part of the annual local history displays. They seemed to be enjoyed and provided us an opportunity to share information about our association and the upcoming annual meeting.*

*I'm looking forward to the upcoming meeting in Menomonie, September 14th -16th. Our local arrangements coordinator, Ed Forrester, has done a phenomenal job arranging for the venues, presentations, tours and overall schedule. My compliments to Ed for the fine job arranging the 42nd FHAW annual meeting. While the registration deadline has passed now, if you're reading the electronic version of this newsletter and still want to join us at Menomonie, give Bob Walkner a call at (920) 793-4010 to make your last minute reservation. And of course, you're always welcome to walk in and register at the door for either Friday or Saturday.*

*As part of each annual meeting, the general membership gathers for association committee reports, presentation of awards, and election of individuals to the Board of Directors. Three board members terms will expire this year, David Peschau, Bob Walkner, and my own. David has been a member of the board since 2009 and indicated that he will not seek another term. In addition, James Romlein finds it necessary because of other obligations to step down with one year remaining on his current term. As such, elections will be held for four director positions this year.*

*Right now, the nominating committee is searching for members interested in serving as members of the association's board of directors. The positions would be for either one of three, three-year terms, ending in 2020, or the one-year remaining on the unexpired term ending in 2018. It should go without saying that the board needs talent, but most important is individuals who care about the preservation of Wisconsin's forest history*

and willingness to actively participate in those efforts. Realistically board members will attend three or four meetings throughout the year, including the annual meeting and commit to a few hours work each month on behalf of a project or committee. If you'd like to become more involved with our association, please contact Bob Walkner at the number above, or me at (715)383-9775, and we can talk more about position on the board. If you're not ready to commit to a board position, there is always the need for committee members too.

Our 2018 FHAW meeting local arrangement committee, Arno Helm and John Berg, are already busy making plans for that event. The dates and preliminary details will be shared during our meeting in Menomonie, as well as reported in an upcoming issue of Chips and Sawdust. We can also share the news that our 2019 annual meeting will be held in Black River Falls, focusing on historical logging on the Black River.

That's about it for now. The official first day of fall is fast approaching. I have much to do before the leaves begin to fall, but first I hope to see many of you in Menomonie, and I hope that you will all enjoy the fall colors that are already peeking through the forests' green canopy.

Best regards,

-- Don "Schnitz" Schnitzler

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### **Last Log Drive Ending Pineries of Lake States**

*(from the Stevens Point Journal,  
July 25, 1929, page 1)*

Manistique, Mich. — Down the swift waters of the Manistique River there swept today the last big drive of logs in the great lakes states, marking the end of bonanza lumber which first brought wealth to Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

### **Your Assistance Needed!**

Rural Historian Jerry Apps is writing a book on the logging history in Wisconsin beginning in 1820. He is especially looking for lumberjack letters, stories from the early lumber camps, camp cook stories, log driving stories, and newspaper articles about early logging in Wisconsin. If you have any of these materials, contact him  
at

[jerryappsauthor@gmail.com](mailto:jerryappsauthor@gmail.com)

Thanks much for your help.



## From the Newspaper Archive



### Grand Rapids Lumber Capitalist In Big Deal

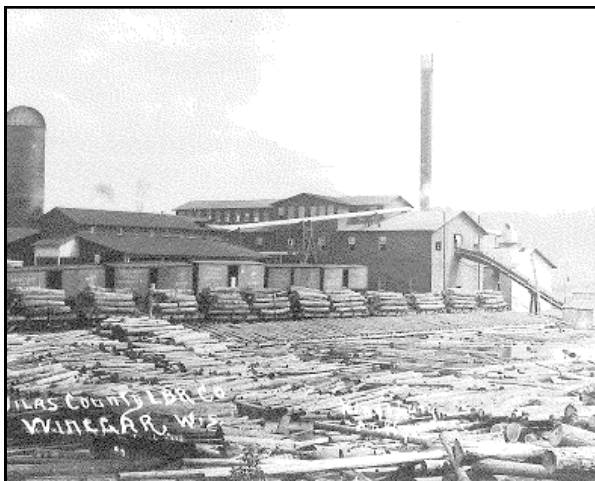
*(from the New York Lumber Trade  
Journal, Volume 37, September 1,  
1904, page 12)*

Grand Rapids, Mich., August 19  
— The organization of the big lumbering company which has been in process of formation by local and outside capital has now been completed and the construction of a railroad and sawmill on the tract in Wisconsin, where the company will operate has begun. The new company, which is one of four large companies comprising Grand Rapids capitalists for operations in northern Wisconsin, the combined capital of which exceeds \$2,000,000, is known as the Vilas County Lumber Company, and the officers are as follows: J.J. Foster, Greenville, president; L.H. Withey, Grand Rapids, vice-president; W.C. Winchester, Grand Rapids, secretary; Henry Idema, Grand Rapids, treasurer. The board of directors consists of the officers and C.W. Johnson, of Greenville. The stock in the company has been largely subscribed by local capitalists and by Greenville men. The company is capitalized at \$400,000, and the local capitalists have subscribed from \$10,000 to \$25,000 each.

There are about 20,000 acres of timber on the tract in Wisconsin, where the new company will operate, and it is estimated that 250,000,000 feet of timber will be cut. It is estimated that it will take twenty-five years or more to cut the timber now held by the various companies of which this company is one.

The stockholders in the Vilas County company are as follows: F.S. Gibson, C.W. Johnson, T.B. Winter, E. Routan, Greenville; William Sayres, Spring Lake; T. Monroe and L. Eyke, Muskegon; W.C. Winchester, Henry Idema, C.C. Follmer, L.N. Withey. J.J. Tucker, J. M. Barnett, John Murray, C. Hamilton, E.L. Maddox, S.A. Sears, W.S. and F.B. Winegar, Albert Stickley, J. Boyd Pantlind, B.S. Hanchett, C. O. Skinner, M.S. Keeler, Enos & Bradfield, L.T. and O.B. Wilmarth, all of Grand Rapids.

That Grand Rapids capital is



Vilas County Lumber Company Sawmill, Winegar, Wisconsin

heavily invested in the lumbering industry is shown by the fact that besides these four big companies there have been three other companies organized within the last three years for operation in northern Michigan, in which local men are interested, and the combined capital of these companies exceeds \$1,200,000.

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### **Mills For Vilas County**

#### **Sawing Plants to Cost \$75,000 And \$80,000 Are Projected**

*(from the The Minneapolis Journal,  
March 01, 1905, Page 11)*

ASHLAND, Wis. —Two large sawmills will be erected in Vilas County as soon as the frost is out of the ground. The Vilas County Lumber Company will build one, and the other will be erected by the Turtle Lake Lumber Company. The mill of the former will be on Presque Isle Lake and will be ready for sawing by the first of September. It will be a double-band and resaw, and the company intends running it night and day. The cost is estimated at \$80,000. The Vilas County Lumber Company recently purchased over twenty-two thousand acres of white pine and hardwood land in Vilas County, and will begin logging as soon as the mill is completed. The North-Western railroad has started a logging spur from its main line to Presque Isle Lake, which will go thru this large belt of timber.

The Turtle Lake Lumber Company, composed of practically the same stockholders as the other company, has purchased over two thousand acres of timber land in Iron and Vilas counties, and will erect a large double-band and resaw mill at Turtle Lake, to cost in the neighborhood of \$75,000. Part of the timber owned

by the Turtle Lake company was purchased of the Home Investment company of Ashland.

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### **Runke Figures in Land Deal**

#### **Merrill Man Buys 13,000 Acres Near Michigan Boundary**

*(from The Rhinelander Daily News,  
September 20, 1926, Page 1)*

One of the biggest land deals completed in northern Wisconsin within the past few years was announced yesterday at Merrill.

It involves the sale of some 13,000 acres of lake country land representing the total holdings of the Vilas County Lumber Company, formerly located at Winegar. That company finished its operations last year and removed a heavy cover of pine, hemlock and hardwood, but considerable areas of the tract are still well wooded and there is abundant timber and material for construction of summer homes, cottages and resort buildings.

Richard B. Runke, of Merrill, and associates purchased the land which has an actual lake frontage of more than 20 miles on 35 lakes along the Wisconsin-Michigan state line. Of these lakes, 17 are entirely included in the tract.

#### **Did you know...**

Vilas County, Presque Isle township

- Established by Legislature, 13 March 1907, from Flambeau and Arbor Vitae.

Fosterville

- established 25 January 1906
- name changed to Winegar, 11 April 1913
- Name changed to Presque Isle, 1 June 1956

Source: *Wisconsin—Its Counties,  
Townships and Villages*

## **Timberworkers of States Close Confab**

*(from the Green Bay Press-Gazette,  
September 12, 1919, page 4)*

Rhineland, Wis., —The annual convention of the International Union of Timberworkers from the district comprising northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and the Canadian border, closed a three day session with the adoption of a program of an eight-hour day which will be put into effect soon. A hundred delegates from 41 cities in the district were in attendance.

- - - - -

## **Order Strike of Timber Workers On Monday, May 3**

**Green Bay Union Members of  
International Association  
Called Out**

**Expect Refusal of  
8-hour Day Demand**

**Wood Producing Centers In  
This Vicinity Will Be Tied  
Up By Walkout.**

*(from the Green Bay Press-Gazette,  
April 28, 1920, page 6)*

The local members of the International Association of Timber Workers have been notified to go on strike next Monday morning, May 3, unless they are given an eight-hour day, according to word received by local manufacturers. It is not known at present just how many of the timber workers in Green Bay belong to the union, one manufacturer stating that he knew some of his workers belong to the organization but the exact number was unknown to him.

Local manufacturers have been notified of the issuance of this order which was ordered sent to all associa-

tions, owners, operators, managers, and superintendents of lumber mills and logging operations, and planing mills and factories incident thereto in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and the Canadian provinces bordering thereon. It is understood the strike order was issued from Rhineland headquarters of this district following a referendum vote of the members in the district, which is known as District No. 2, which it is stated was almost unanimous for the strike.

## **Will Refuse Request**

It is believed the request for an eight-hour day will be refused throughout the district and that the strike will be inaugurated next Monday morning.

The managers of local manufacturing plants which will be affected had no formal statement to give out today relative to the situation. One manufacturer in this section of the state, who probably voices the sentiments of many others said that with an eight-hour day he could not continue with his present rate of production and therefore, could not meet the demands of the market.

"The prices of lumber are very high at present," he said, "and it is impossible to increase them. Should the attempt be made we would find it impossible to compete with the southern mills, which are working ten and sometimes eleven hours per day."

## **Eight-Hour Day**

"We have received no demand from the men themselves for an eight-hour day," he continued, "and I do not believe they would desire to work only eight hours at the present rate of pay per hour when they could work longer and receive more pay."

One manufacturer said that the national headquarters of the union was in Seattle and therefore he was



not in favor of negotiation with the labor leaders from that state who were inoculated with the virus of the I.W.W. He added however, that he believed his men here were being led astray by radical leaders.

It is understood quite a few men will go on strike next Monday in large lumber centers in the northern part of the state. Oconto, Marinette, Wabeno, Crandon, and other points reported that large numbers of men there would walkout which would virtually paralyze the lumber industry of those cities and towns.

- - - - -

### **Timber Strike Is In Its Sixth Week**

*(from the Appleton Post Crescent,  
June 11, 1920, page 3)*

Marinette, Wis. — The Timber Workers' strike for the eight-hour day has entered upon its sixth week. Outside of one of two attempts to operate the mills and box factories in Marinette and Menominee have been idle, with the employers inviting the men to return to work and the strikers maintaining a picket line that has made operation impractical.

The manufacturers claim that 80 per cent of the mills in the district affected. Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and part of Canada are operating and they publish a list of companies they claim are operating.

The strikers claim that the number of mills operating has been exaggerated and that 80 per cent of them are down, although no list of the closed mills is published.

President Claire Covert, head of the International Union of Timberworkers, arrived in Rhinelander, district headquarters, yesterday to confer with union officials. All attempts to negotiate a settlement here have failed and the mill owners here Saturday issued an announcement stating

that they were closed until the men see fit to return.

- - - - -

### **Timberworker's Strike Is Declared Ended**

*(from the Wisconsin Rapids Daily  
Tribune, July 27, 1920, page 1)*

Wausau, Wis. — At a meeting held Friday evening the members of the Timberworkers Union at Rhinelander by a vote of 68 to 21 voted to return to work on the ten-hour basis. Rhinelander is the district headquarters and has one of the strongest locals in the district. The workers there were practically the last to give up the fight for an eight-hour work day and doubtless the example will be followed at the few places where the men have not returned to work.

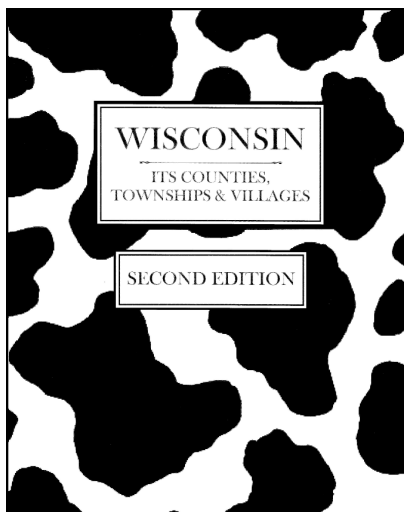
A report from Rhinelander states that all the woodworking plants will resume operation this week except the Collins Lumber Company, which will not be ready to resume for several weeks.

Most of the plants will take their old men back, but as a large number of men have left the city there will be work for them in addition to those now employed in the mills and factories.

#### **Did you know...**

Continued union pressure for shorter hours eventually brought laws creating the 8-hour day for railroad workers in 1916 and during the New Deal Years the 1938 Federal Fair Labor Standards Act established the rule for time and one-half pay after 40 hours of work and a minimum wage of 25c an hour.

Source: *Wisconsin Labor History  
Society*



## Wisconsin - Its Counties, Townships and Villages, Second Edition

Compiled by the Wisconsin State  
Genealogical Society  
Christine Klauer and Vickie Schnitzler

*Wisconsin - Its Counties, Townships and Villages* identifies locations and relationships of as many Wisconsin cities, towns, villages, railroad depots, and post office names as could be determined. It is amazing how many names have changed over the years, or how many communities no longer exist. These names were gathered from a variety of sources including gazetteers, history books, plat maps and atlases.

### Each county includes:

- list of cities and villages with the dates when their post offices may have began and discontinued
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- name changes when available

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- Evolution of Wisconsin Counties
- Terms in Land Records

### Format:

- Perfect binding, 8½ X 11 inch, 260 pages; fully indexed

## PIERCE

**CLINTON** (Est. 3 March 1837, from Prescott and Greenwald)  
Clinton Mills (Est. 12 May 1838)  
P.O. was disc. 20 Oct. 1886. It was located in Section 18.)

**DEERFIELD** (Est. 11 Nov. 1886, from Merrill. Name changed to Clinton 27 May 1968.)

**DIAMOND BLUFF** (Est. 29 Nov. 1836, from Prescott)  
Diamond Bluff (See Section 18.)  
Toyskeween (Est. 22 June 1854. Name was changed to Diamond Bluff. 14 Feb. 1855. P.O. was disc. 11 Oct. 1857. It was located in Section 13.)

**ELIZABETH** (Est. by St. Croix Co. Rd., 24 Feb. 1849. Name changed by Legislature to Prescott. 24 Jan. 1851.)

**ELLSWORTH** (Name changed, 24 Nov. 1896, from Perry.)  
Chesfield (Est. 9 Nov. 1838. P.O. was disc. 11 Dec. 1899. Was disc. 21 July 1893. It was re-set 4 Aug. 1894 and finally disc. 21 Dec. 1897. It was located in Section 54.)  
East Ellsworth (Est. 13 Sept. 1813. Was disc. 30 June 1875. P.O. became a Community Post Office of Ellsworth 1 July 1875. It is located in Section 17.)  
Ellsworth (Est. 12 Sept. 1885. P.O. is located in Section 18. May also have been known as Perry.)  
Lawson (Est. 29 Feb. 1862. P.O. was disc. 31 Jan. 1902. It was located in Section 1.)  
Perry (See Ellsworth.)

**EL PASO** (Est. 18 Nov. 1836, from Pleasant Valley.)  
El Paso (Est. 22 July 1818. P.O. was disc. 3 Dec. 1847. Was re-set 18 Jan. 1858. P.O. was finally disc. 31 Dec. 1904. It was located in Section 2.)  
Long Creek (Est. 28 May 1875. Name was changed to Eastrock, 25 May 1889. Was disc. 31 Jan. 1902. It was located in Section 28.)  
Leontrock (See Eastrock.)  
Rock Elm 1 (Est. 21 Dec. 1863. P.O. was changed to Waverly, 2 May 1878. Was disc. 31 Dec. 1916. P.O. was located in Section 15.)  
Waverly (See Rock Elm 1.)

**GILMAN** (Name changed, 27

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# LUMBER RAFTING ON WISCONSIN RIVER

By Simon Augustus Sherman

I first came West in 1848, and landing at Milwaukee soon made my way to Plover in Portage County where my cousin, A. L. Sherman, had already settled.

It was in 1849 that I made my first trip down Wisconsin River. April 7 of that year, my cousin and I went up to the Big Eau Claire, and began running lumber over the dam.

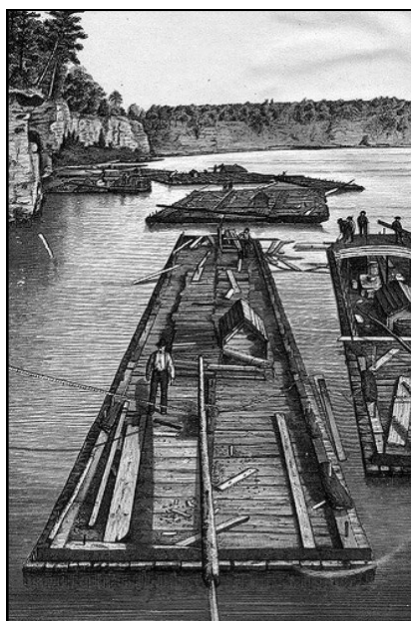
The white and Norway pine of the Wisconsin pinery was, as a rule, cut into logs sixteen feet long, which were made into lumber at the neighboring mills. This lumber was then rafted to market.

## The making of a Raft

The raft was made by taking three planks and boring two-inch auger holes about one foot from each end and another in the middle. Into these holes grubs were inserted. These grubs were small trees about two inches in diameter, dug up with a portion of the roots, and cut off about three feet above and made to fit the holes with a head upon the lower end. After the grubs are fitted into the plank, three boards (the same as the grub planks) were put upon the grubs crosswise. Then the raft-building commenced, the lumber being put on crosswise alternately, until sixteen courses were laid. Then binding planks were fastened on to the grubs, and witched or drawn tight together with an instrument called a witch, and then wedged fast. This formed what was known as a crib, and contained about 4,000 feet of lumber.

Six or seven of these cribs were put together, one in front of the other, and fastened by coupling planks. A

head-, and a tail-block were put on and very strongly fastened, to which were attached oars, each made of a plank sixteen feet long and about eighteen inches wide, about two-and-one-fourth inches thick at one end, and three-fourths of an inch at the other. This oar was fastened to an oar-stem, which was from thirty-six to forty feet long. This made an oar from fifty to fifty-six feet in length



*In those days three sections, or strings, formed a complete lumber raft. Before running the Rapids at Kilbourn Dam (now the Dells), the raft was separated, each string making the run independently, and then reassembled below the Dam so as to resume the journey downstream. ( from H H. Bennett photograph, from the Raftsman's View of the Wisconsin River, held by the McMillan Public Library, Wisconsin Rapids)*

that was used to guide the raft.

Six or seven cribs fastened in this wise were known as a "rapids piece," because in this condition they can be run over rapids and through swift water. Two or more of them make what is called a "Wisconsin raft," and several of those rafts comprise a "fleet of lumber."

Frequently the lumber raft gets the advantage of the person running it, and passing under leaning trees sweeps him off into the river. I was thus served on the Eau Claire. While at the head of Little Bull Falls (April 15), I accidentally fell in again. In passing over the falls at the "Jaws," I came very near being knocked overboard by the oar getting away from the steersman. No one thus thrown off at this place has been known to have been saved.

### A Rafting Trip

We passed on down (April 20) to Stevens Point and Conant Rapids. On the 21st we stopped at the Yellow Banks, near Plover, and later were caught on Crooked Riff. We next passed on to Grand Rapids, where three men were drowned. En route we saw drunken Indians, one of whom was fatally stabbed.

May 1, our run was from Grand Rapids to Pointe Bas, over the Whitney Rapids, which are the lowest on Wisconsin River. At this point there were a lot of Indians with bows and arrows, whom we set to shooting at a mark. Leaving Point Bas on the 4th, we next day passed Peten Well, a singular rock standing upon a level plain on the bank of the river, from two to three hundred feet high, nearly perpendicular, and difficult to ascend.

On the 6th we saw millions of pigeons, and passed the Roche a Cri flats. Such flats occur usually at the mouth of some affluent, where the

river spreads out very wide and the water is so shallow that at a low state it is difficult to raft the lumber over.

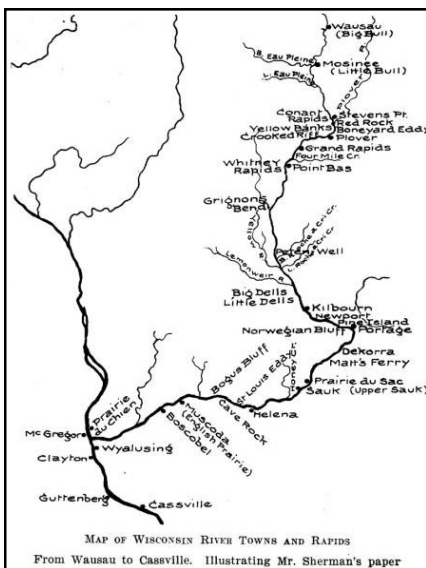
About sundown on the same day we passed through the Dells. The raft ahead of ours struck Notch Rock, and turned a whole rapids piece bottom side up, breaking it to pieces. The great river, which at some places is half a mile wide, at this point is narrowed down to fifty-four feet, with a rapid current. There is an eddy formed by a rock, which is liable to catch the bow of a raft, and owing to its great velocity dash it against a notch in a projecting rock.

Just below this is a bridge which spans the gulf, sixty feet in width, at a height of seventy feet above the water. Directly below the bridge is a sharp bend in the river, which forms a powerful whirlpool or eddy. I have been through there on a lumber raft in high water, when the swirls looked as though they were ten feet deep, and when three oars out of four were unshipped or broken, and some portions of the raft would be three or four feet under water.

The next bend below is called the Rainbow. Rafts were apt to run into it and strike the rocks very hard. Just below this stood the Dell House, where there was a good eddy to land lumber.

After passing Kilbourn City and Newport, Sugar Loaf Rock appears, and farther down on the opposite side Lone Rock, a solitary pinnacle thirty or forty feet high, much dreaded by raftsmen, since the current sets strongly against it, and rafts were frequently driven to destruction there. This is at the foot of the Dells, which are five miles in length.

From the Dells we passed on by Norwegian Bluff, Pine Island, and Portage City; and still farther down, Sauk Prairie. A few miles below this are the Honey Creek flats. At this



point the settlement of Old Helena, destroyed by the Indians, was located. By the watchfulness of General Dodge the inhabitants were taken across the river and saved.

We next passed Bogus Bluffs, which are very high, and noted for their singular caves. New Helena lay just beyond, a little town with a shot tower built by Daniel Whitney. The tower is built upon a rock, with its perpendicular side 175 feet high next to the river; from this the shot fell. Mr. Whitney is the same pioneer who built at Whitney Rapids the first sawmill upon Wisconsin River.

The next place I noticed was Cave Rock Slough. From here we passed on by English Prairie and Prairie Dubay to the mouth of the Wisconsin, where on the south side the bluffs are 500 feet high and very steep, and where the great Mississippi fronts us, with her towering bluffs on the lowa side.

We drifted on to the bosom of the "Father of Waters" and connected our rafts together, thus making what is known as a Mississippi raft. We had scarcely got the rafts secured togeth-

er, when I heard a roaring noise and looking up over the bluffs discovered a large black cloud rolling over us. In less than fifteen minutes we were engulfed in one of the most terrible thunder storms I ever witnessed. The wind blew a gale, the rain fell in torrents, and thunder rolled, and the lightning flashed. The waves rolled upon the raft, and we were in fear of being broken to pieces.

It looked still more awful and sublime, because we were floating along under those gigantic bluffs. Night setting in, left us in total darkness, except when the lightning flashed and furnished all the light we had by which to guide the raft. About midnight the storm abated and another set of men took the oars, when I crawled into my bunk, wet as a drowned rat.

Towards morning I heard the shout for all hands at the oars, and on getting up found the raft sagging down towards an island; with all the pulling we could do, we could not change its course, and the bow struck the island right in the head and ran the front end high and dry upon the land. However, it lay quartering with the current, and by pulling at the oars we swung it around and soon got off.

Some of these rafts cover several acres of surface, and when under motion in a rapid current it requires a great force to stop them. I recollect that one day we were having a game of ball, when the pilot called us to the oars. The raft was sagging into a bend, and into that bend it went in spite of us, one corner striking the bank and taking two or three loads of dirt upon it. With all this resistance, its headway did not appear to be in the least checked.

We finally arrived at Dubuque, where my cousin, another man, and I got into a skiff and went across to Galena, a distance of sixteen miles. I

began to feel ill, and before I reached Galena was badly off. The cholera was then raging on the Mississippi, and there was great excitement about it. I went to my cousin's and stopped five or six days, then feeling better, I started back for the pinery on the steamer "Newton Wagoner." After stopping at Prairie du Chien, we ascended Wisconsin River to Portage City. Here my cousin purchased a horse, and we started for Plover, taking turns in riding. We stopped one night at the Marsh House, and the next day reached our destination.

### **About Simon A. Sherman**

Simon Augustus Sherman was born at Westboro, Worcester County, Massachusetts, on January 27, 1824. His father was a shoemaker and farmer, and the son was obliged early in life to assist in maintaining the family. His education were much interrupted, but he made use of every opportunity to attend district schools and academies. He learned the trade of carpenter and joiner, and lived in various towns near his birthplace while following this pursuit.

In 1845, feeling that the opportunities for advancement were few in the older states, young Sherman determined to migrate in Wisconsin. Leaving Worcester on October 5, he came by way of Albany, Schenectady, and Buffalo, the trip between the two latter cities being by canal boat. From Buffalo our traveler came around the lakes on the steamboat "Nile," commanded by the noted Captain Blake. After a pleasant trip he reached Milwaukee, and set out at once for the pineries of Wisconsin River.

Settling at Plover, five miles south of Stevens Point, Mr. Stevens (sic) worked at his trade until he acquired timber land and a mill site where Plover River enters the Wisconsin, about a

mile from the village. For many years, he engaged actively in the lumber business taking contracts for cutting timber, buying logs, sawing and planing lumber at his mill, selling it retail, and rafting it to market. Although he owned large tracts of land, and handled lumber in large amounts, he never became rich.

Mr. Sherman had literacy and scientific interests, but his meager education furnished inadequate basis for attainments in these lines. He believed in spiritualism, and to some extent relied upon "manufactures." In later life he was much interested in local history, and acted as president of the Portage County Old Settlers' Society. This organization held its meeting annually at his house, near his old mill site, where he had provided picnic grounds for this purpose. At the time of his death, in December 1906, he contemplated using the biographical material that he had collected, together with other data of local history, as the basis for a history of Portage County.

Mr. Sherman claimed to have imported from the East, the first planing mill in the Wisconsin Pinery. The following article compiled from his diaries gives an early and reliable record of rafting operations on the Wisconsin, in the days of growing importance of that industry—Albert H. Sanford.

*(Editor's note: taken from Sherman, Simon Augustus. Lumber rafting on Wisconsin River. ((Madison : State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1911). Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at its ... annual meeting ; 58th (1910), p. 171-180). Online facsimile at: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=908>; Visited on: 9/7/2017 Additional paragraphs; Rafting Incidents, An Exciting Run, and On the Mississippi may also be of interest and can be found at the url above.*

Agenda—Annual Business Meeting of FHAW Members  
September 15, 2017  
Menomonie, Wisconsin

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting, Burlington, Wisconsin
3. President's Report
4. Membership Committee Report
5. Treasurer's Report—Audit Report
6. Board of Director's Elections—Nomination Committee Report
7. Scholarship Report
8. Exhibits Report
9. Awards Presentation
  - Fixmer Award—to be announced
  - Connor Award—to be announced
10. Old Business
  - 2015 Proceedings
  - 2016 Proceedings
  - 2017 Annual Meeting—Menomonie, Wisconsin
11. New Business
  - 2018 Annual Meeting—Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin
  - 2019 Annual Meeting—Black River Falls, Wisconsin
  - FHAW Strategic Planning
12. Other Business
13. Adjournment

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# **TRACKS FROM THE PAST**

## **HILES LUMBER COMPANY LOGGING RAILROADS**

*An archeological exploration and historic review of the Hiles and Eastern Railroad Company in Forest County, Wisconsin.*

Written by Brad J. Pagels

### **- PREFACE -**

When one walks through a forest to hunt or fish certainly finds old railroad corridors and wondered where a particular railroad started and where it has ended. This pamphlet will satisfy that curiosity to a high point as it will tell the reader who built, owned, and operated these railroads. It is mostly focused on the present day evidence of logging railroad activity of the Hiles and Eastern Railroad and a little bit of history of the Hiles Lumber Company also, it is a journey on the tracks from the past.

Logging railroads were connected to the common carrier lines such as the Chicago and Northwestern, Wisconsin Central, and etc. Timber created a prosperous business opportunity for these major railroads and assisted the lumber companies in the construction of logging lines. The railroads that were built and owned by lumber companies are known as private lines and were not subject to state or federal regulations. Hauling logs was the primary purpose for logging railroads and these lumber companies were free to abandon any line that was no longer needed.

While the maps within this report show all of the rail corridors it is known that these rail lines were not all in at the same time, but as a stand of timber was cut the rails were taken up and moved into the next areas to be harvested.

### **- HISTORY -**

Tim Sasse who is a logging railroad historian has written this brief account about the Hiles Lumber Company.

"This line ran in a northeasterly direction from Hiles. It began operations in 1905 as the F.P. Hiles Lumber Company railroad. It was called the Hiles & Eastern. In 1906 the line was sold to the Forster-Whitman Lumber Company, and then to the Forster-Mueller Lumber Company in 1909. In the 1919 it became the Charlie Fish Lumber Company, also called the Forest County Lumber Company. Fish went bankrupt in 1929 and sold out to the Hiles Lumber Co in August of that year. Hiles Lumber's intent was to liquidate the company and sell off all assets including the railroad. Operations which had become quite extensive, reaching 20 miles northeast from Hiles, ceased in January of 1930."

The Chicago & Northwestern Railway built a branch line from its Monico to Watersmet Line to Hiles in 1903. Hiles Junction was located about three miles north of the Soo Line Railroad. This line ended just south beyond the saw mill at Hiles Mill Pond and was abandoned in 1942. This rail bed can be seen by Hiles Junction Road it crosses Highway 45 south of Margaret Lake Road in the Township of Piehl in Oneida County.



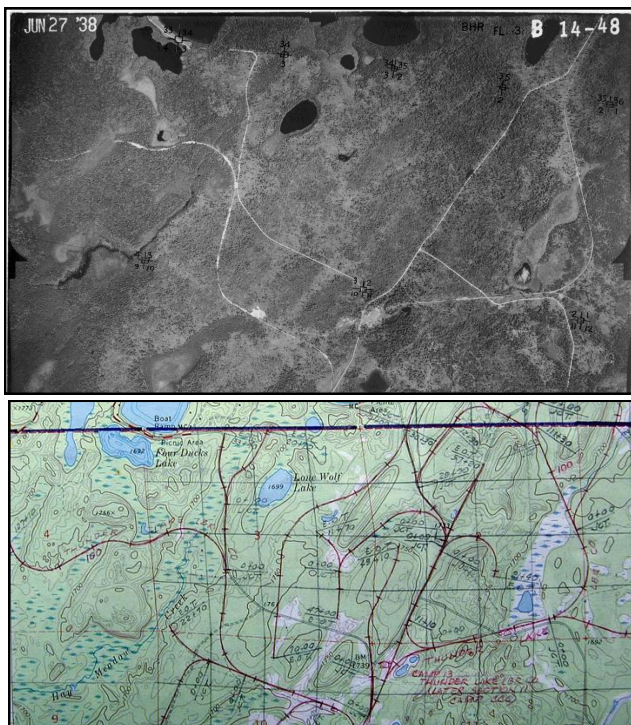
## - MAPS -

All of the maps in this essay are portions of USGS Topographic Quadrangles and have been modified by the author. Railroad information has been obtained from the James P. Kaysen Collection at the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. Mr. Kaysen was a civil engineer who annotated all of the railroad corridors of Wisconsin on to the USGS maps using the information found on the 1938 series of aerial photographs. These maps are available on the World Wide Web or Internet by logging on to Wisconsin Historical Society: ([content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/search/collections/maps](http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/search/collections/maps)).

Also aerial photos from the 1938 series are available on the Wisconsin Historic Aerial Image Finder: ([maps.sco.wisc.edu/WHAIFinder](http://maps.sco.wisc.edu/WHAIFinder)).

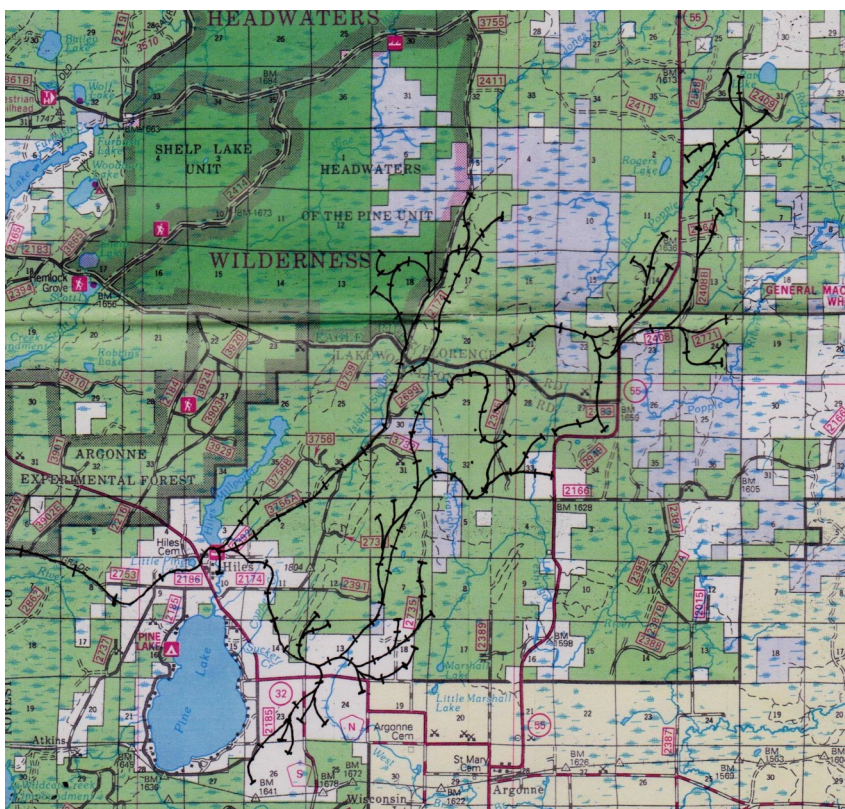
In this booklet copies of the 1970 series of USGS maps are used with the pertinent information to enable the reader to clearly see the features and the author modified the maps along with copying Kaysen's annotations with index numbers to show outstanding features. Mosaics put together from four different quadrangles show rail lines in their entirety. For such a gigantic task as it were for Mr. Kaysen, discrepancies have been discovered in field explorations such as rail lines crossing wetlands or very deep valleys, in other words, they just not were there. So it is that going out in the field one can verify the locations and also find additional grades to add the inventory. The land has recovered with regenerated forest and has hidden some rail beds from Mr. Kaysen and too the facts that rail lines were built in the flattest areas without much earthwork eliminating the building

*The map is part of the Alvin NW USGS (Series 1970) Quadrangle showing Kaysen's drawings of railroads along with the distance of each spur. This area is located on the Divide, Four Ducks Lake, and Jones Dam Roads in the Township of Hiles in Forest County. Distances are marked in hundred foot stations (eg. 11+10 is 1110 feet). Kaysen enhanced about 1200 maps in this fashion, typically drawing rail lines in red ink and adding historical information about lumber companies and railroads in the margins.*



of cuts and fills.

Several rail beds that were not documented on the Kaysen maps were found by the author in many areas he has explored and has recorded the findings in his journals.



An overview of the rail lines operated by the F.P. Hiles, Forster-Whitman, Forster-Mueller, Charlie Fish (Forest County Lumber Co.) and Hiles Lumber Companies is displayed on this portion of the Nicolet National Forest Map. Within the Headwaters Wilderness Area are rail beds of the Thunder Lake Lumber Company Narrow Gauge Railroad that began in Rhinelander.

## Town, Road, Land Sold In Lump

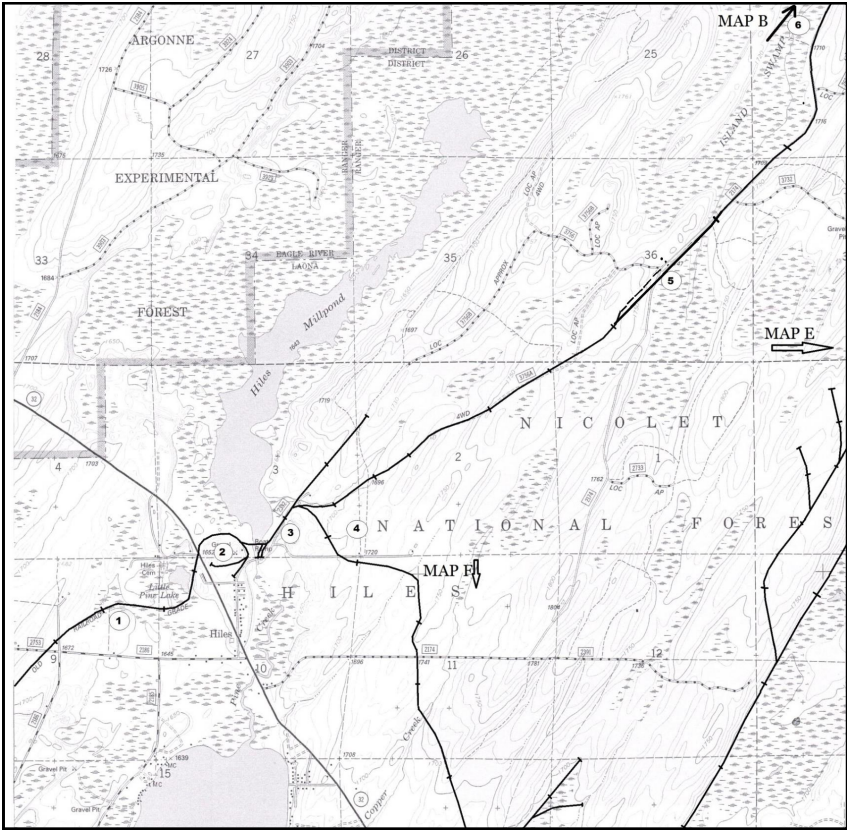
(from the Minneapolis Journal,  
April 22, 1906, page 15)

Negaunee, Mich. — A \$500,000 deal, involving the transfer of the village of Hiles, a logging railroad and other equipment, and 25,000 acres of fine hardwood timberland has been closed whereby the F.P. Hiles Lumber Company has

sold its extensive holding in Forest County, northern Wisconsin, to a syndicate of which W.A. Whitman of Marquette, and Charles Forester and C.H. Mueller of Milwaukee are the leading members.

The village of Hiles, founded by F.P. Hiles five years ago, included two sawmills, a shingle and lath mill, a planingmill, stavemill, general store, hotel and thirty cottages.

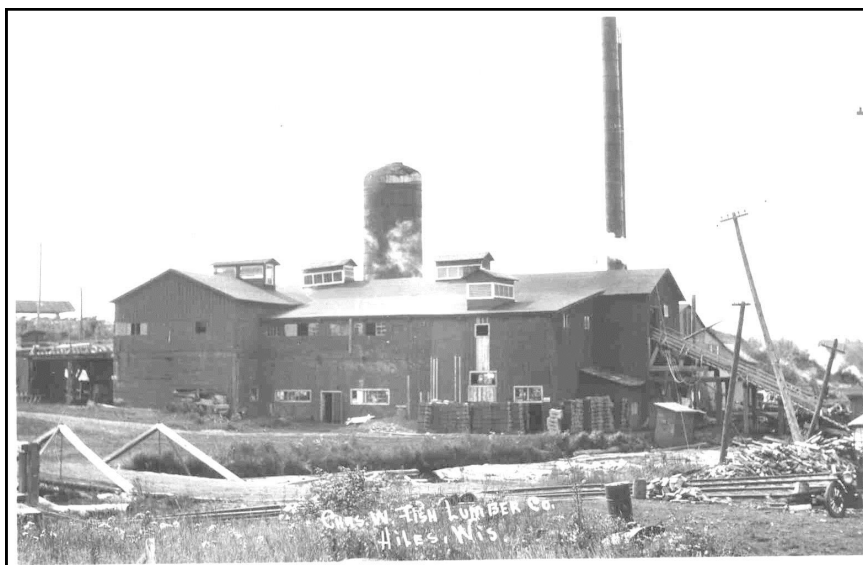
Map A



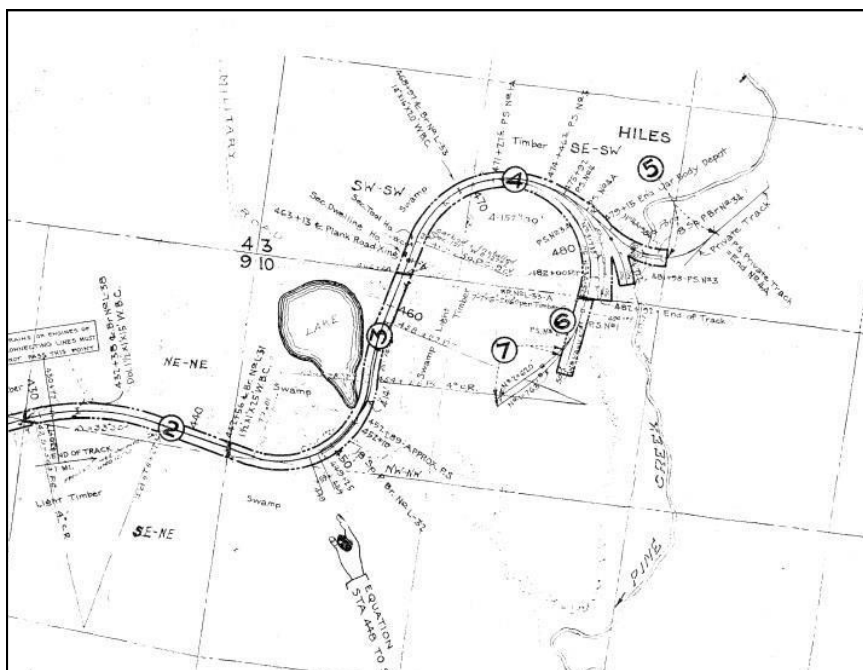
### NOTES FOR MAP A

1. The Chicago & Northwestern Railway built a branch line from its Monico to Watersmet Line to Hiles in 1903. Hiles Junction was located about three miles north of the Soo Line Railroad. This line ended just south beyond the saw mill at Hiles Mill Pond and was abandoned in 1942. This rail bed can be seen by Highway 45 south of Margaret Lake Road in the Township of Piehl in Oneida County.
2. This area was the site of the saw mill.
3. This Point is explained in detail on the next page.
4. Track runs toward Pine Lake and more details of railroad evidence are found in Map F.
5. Between the Mill Pond and Forest Road 2174 the rail bed has been converted to a logging road as Forest Road 3756- A ending at Section 36. The untouched section of the rail bed crosses FR 2174 and follows a swamp for one quarter of a mile at which the grade carries FR2174 once again.
6. Forest Road 2174 is now over the rail bed.

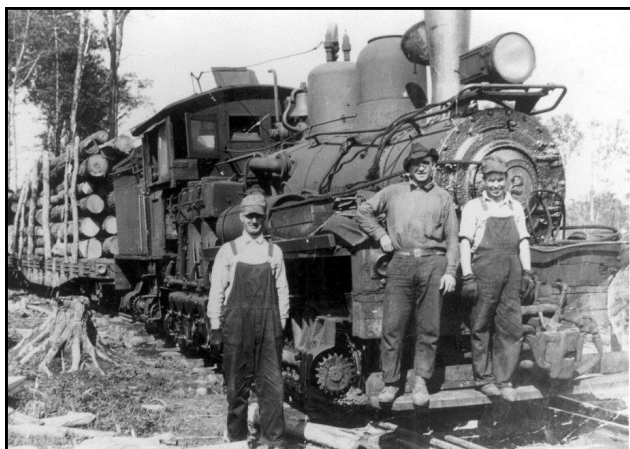




Chas. W Fish Lumber Company, Hiles, Wisconsin



The Valuation Map shows where the private track of the Hiles and Eastern Railroad was connected to the Chicago and Northwestern Railway's ownership which is at Point 5 on this map and it is indicated as Point 3 on the author's Map A on page 5.



*Trains loaded with pine logs., Chas. W Fish Lumber Company, Hiles, Wisconsin. (Courtesy of the Hiles Historical Society)*

## **200 Out of Work When Hiles Sawmill Closes**

*(from the Eau Claire Leader, August 26, 1931, page 2)*

Hiles, Wis—Closing of this village's main industry, a saw mill operated steadily for 30 years, may force it become another of Wisconsin's "ghost lumber towns."

Two hundred persons on the company's payroll were thrown out of work when it suspended operations with 20,000,000 feet of lumber in its yards. The village's population

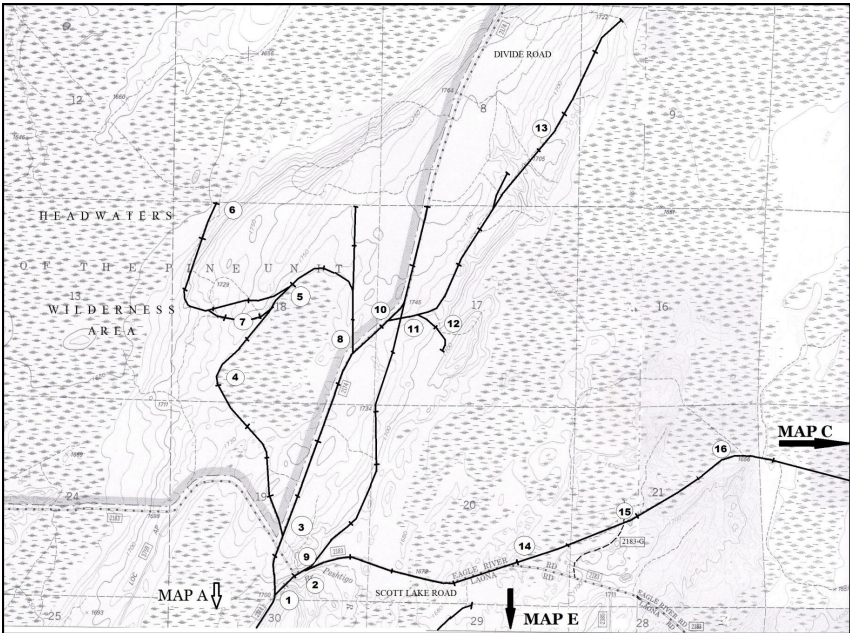
includes about 60 families. It is being considered as a possible site for a boy's summer recreation camp.

## **Forest Co-op Has Election**

*(from the Rhinelander Daily News, February 16, 1939, page 5)*

William F. Bonach of Hiles has been named president of the recently organized Hiles Forest Product Co-operative association, which will market timber from stumpage purchased from the federal government officials of the Nicolet National Forest announced her today.

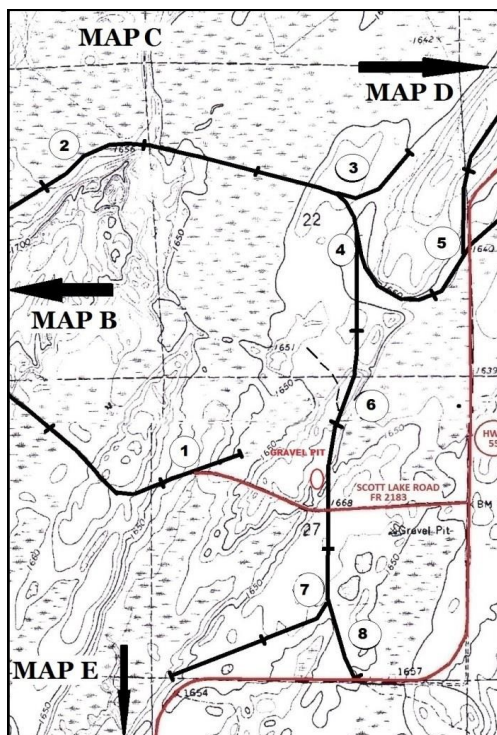
Map B



### NOTES FOR MAP B

1. South from here the rail bed carries Divide Road (FR 2174) to a point at which the rail bed leaves the road and travels on to Hiles. A gravel pit is on the site of the junction and beyond the pit the rail bed is found crossing the North Branch of the Peshtigo River where there is evidence of a wooden box culvert.
2. The track meets Scott Lake Road (FR 2183) and a deep cut is seen from the road.
3. The junction evidence has been destroyed and the track was built on a low profile fill and it is easily followed.
4. At this point the evidence is gone as the area is very flat. Toward the next junction a small portion of rail bed is seen.
5. The track from Point 4 is found and the junction is gone. West from this point the grade runs on flat ground and beyond the curve it goes through a cut and the end of track could not be determined.
6. Kaysen indicated a logging camp site here and the only evidence found is scattered cans, galvanized buckets, a broken down cook stove, cable, and an oil drum. These are historic sites and protected by Federal Law.
7. Rail bed is not found and probably never was built. Beyond this point the evidence eventually fades.
8. The 1938 aerial photo shows these rail beds but nothing is found as the ground is flat and numerous timber harvests have taken place.
9. The spur is easily followed north from Scott Lake Road.

10. Between Divide Road and a gate a short portion of rail bed is found.
11. The spur from point 9 crosses the spur east of the gate. It is not known how the sequence of track building was conducted.
12. Short spur is found and a logging road is connected at the end.
13. The track ends at an open field and no evidence of a logging camp annotated by Kaysen
14. The mainline rail bed leaves Scott Lake Road and descends to a swamp. At this point it is difficult to walk through the thick brush that has taken over the grade which is on a fill.
15. A logging road (FR 2183-G) meets the rail bed which enters high ground through a cut and east from there the corridor has been lightly maintained by sportsmen. Here the track was built across a pond as seen in the 1938 aerial photo.
16. Rail bed has not been explored between the pond and Point 2 on MAP C as this was the main line of the Hiles Railroad.

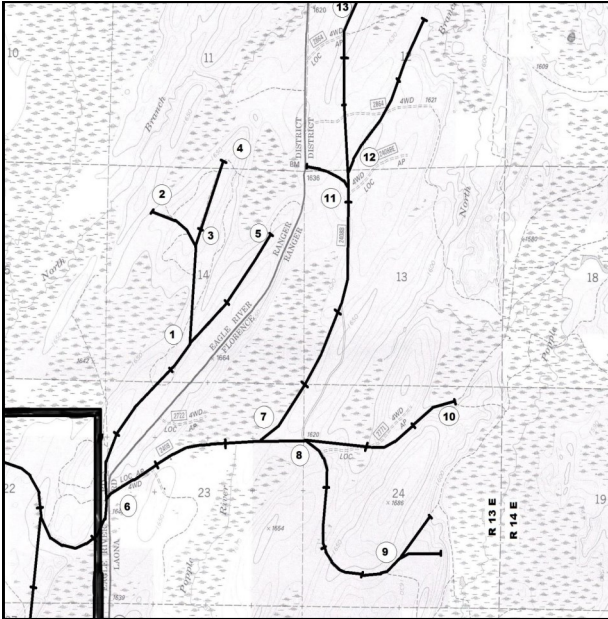


#### NOTES FOR MAP C

1. Beginning at Point 2 on Map B the grade carries Scott Lake Road. Kaysen annotated the rail bed leaving the road but no evidence of it is found.
2. The main line continues from Point 16 on Map B.
3. Spur is found for about 800 feet on a low fill with tie ruts and evidence disappears in flat rocky ground.
4. This spur runs through the swamp on high fill to Scott Lake road.
5. HWY 55. Junction is in a flooded swamp and the spur crosses the highway at which is now FR 2408. Spur to north is a converted logging road (CLR) and access road up to a point. Following south along the swamp the evidence appears in high ground and meets Point 4.

6. South from Point 6 the spur is untouched to a point by a gravel pit at which it is a CLR.
7. South from Scott Lake Road the grade runs on flat ground in a red pine stand. The evidence disappears toward the junction site.
8. Some tie ruts are found at the end of track. North toward point E no evidence is found in the level terrain that has seen both clear cutting and thinning of timber in recent years.

Map D Southern Portion



Notes for Map D  
Southern Portion

1. Rail beds running parallel along Highway 55 have been used in recent logging and possess a flat profile running on rolling terrain.
2. This spur ends at the edge of low land.
3. Junction site.
4. The rail bed ends short of Kaysen's an-

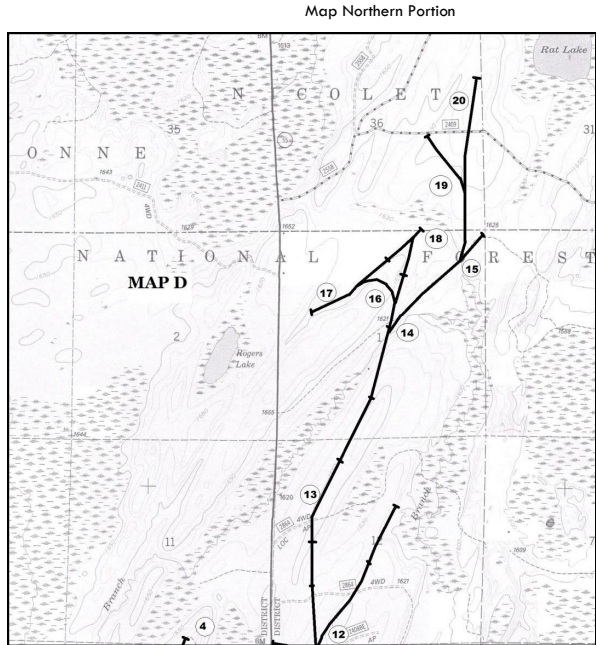
notation that also indicated a logging camp site which has not been found. An untouched portion of the corridor crosses the section line and then the evidence of tie ruts disappears. The 1938 aerial photo shows a rock strewn field where Kaysen indicated a logging camp site.

5. An old road leaves the End of Track and ends at Highway 55.
6. HWY 55. Junction is in a flooded swamp and the spur crosses the highway at which is now FR 2408.
7. Evidence of the junction is gone but the rail bed is easily followed and has been untouched. It meets FR 2408 at Point 11. Some large trees are found on the grade toward Point 11.
8. A logging road has been built on the rail corridor for one half mile.
9. Grade ends overlooking the swamp and the spur is found as annotated by Kaysen.
10. Rail bed is now FR 2771 and ends near a gate.
11. Possibly this a short spur ending at HWY 55.
12. North beyond Point 11 the rail bed is rather flat and crosses a swamp on low fill. The shorter track was not found.



## Notes for Map D Northern Portion

13. North beyond Point 12 the rail bed is rather flat and crosses a swamp on low fill. The shorter track was not found. Beyond the swamp the track has been obliterated in a pine plantation. By following the compass bearing through the pine a large midden, or can dump, is observed which has

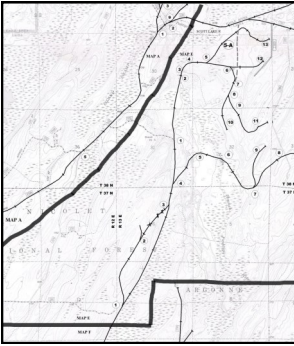


mostly rusted cans. Apparently the cook used a cleaver or hatchet on the tops of cans to empty them. This logging camp site has been annotated by Kaysen.

14. At the northern FR 2864 the compass bearing fits and following the road to where the grade leaves the road and it is untouched and easily followed up to the North Branch Popple River.
15. The rail bed crosses a slough and enters a pine plantation in which the evidence is gone.
16. Rail bed discovered in random walkover on 4-3- 2016. Found connection to Point 18 on 4-16-16. Tie ruts are seen and some are barely discernible and the rail bed is rather flat. This was a "Y" track. The curved spur rolls over a hill and descends to join the spur on Point 17. There is just enough earth work to follow and much brush in junction.
17. Spur cuts across a corner of private land and follows along a slough and ends on high ground near Highway 55 at a logging camp site.
18. The end of this track is on flat ground.
19. The spur indicated on the Kaysen map does not exist.
20. An old logging road matches the location of the track shown on the map.

Section 36: According to Robert Duerwachter's writings about the Charles Fish Lumber Company, Fish purchased 4500 acres of timberland to supply the Hiles and Cran-don mills. Included in this purchase was all but the southwest quarter of Section 36 in T39N-R13E shown on this map. Also Section 2 in T38N-R13E was bought which includes Rogers Lake west of Highway 55 on this map. These two tracts were bought between 1921 and 1924.

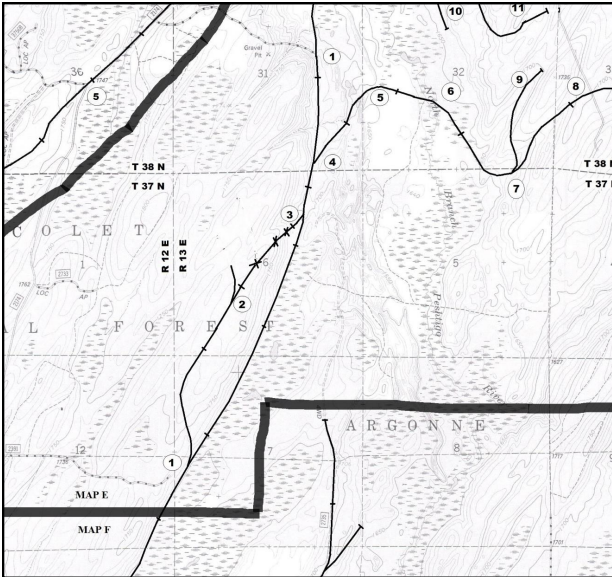
Map E



## Notes For Map E Southern Portion

1. The rail bed was found by walking east off of the end of FR 2391. This was a major line that turned off from the main line east of the Hiles Mill Pond. Parts of this grade are difficult to follow due to thick brush and flooding. The turn-off track is found and it is rather easy to follow except for where it runs on flat ground.
2. This spur was only evident for 420 feet. Beyond this point the evidence disappears.

Map E Southern Portion



3. This spur is rather short and it was cut through a hill, possibly a borrow pit.
4. In the watery lowland the spur is followed on a profile slightly higher than the ground.
5. Running parallel with a creek the spur then enters a cut.

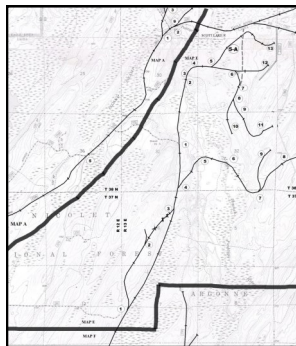
It then crosses the creek on a fill and enters more lowland. It was here the author turned back due to the thick brush.

6. From Point 7 the grade is cleared and runs on a fill through a tamarack swamp. About 100 feet east of the North Branch Peshtigo River (NBPR) the grade is untouched and enters the creek meadow which marked by row of high bushes. Remnants of a bridge are seen in the water. (Photos on page 28)
7. Turn off was found and it is easily followed with fills and cuts.
8. Rail bed has been indicated as a trail on the map and it steadily descends to the NBPR. It has been kept open by hunters. The rail bed east of FR 2385 has not been explored.
9. EOT (End of Track) has not been located in a stand of thick aspen regrowth. A detailed explanation about aspen regrowth or regeneration is found on page 29.

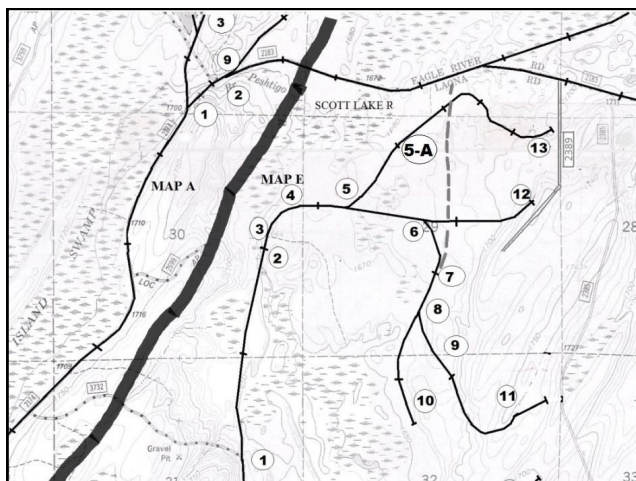
## Notes For Map E Northern Portion

1. A small grove of young balsam hides the rail bed from view. It runs on a low profile and it rather easy to follow. Toward Point H there are some cuts and further north the grade runs on flat ground.
2. Track was built across the North Branch of the Peshtigo River and enters a spruce plantation in which portions of the grade have been obliterated.
3. The dashed line indicates a possible road

Map E



## Map E Northern Portion



that ended at a few piles of both cone top and flat top beer cans. This may have been a hunting camp.

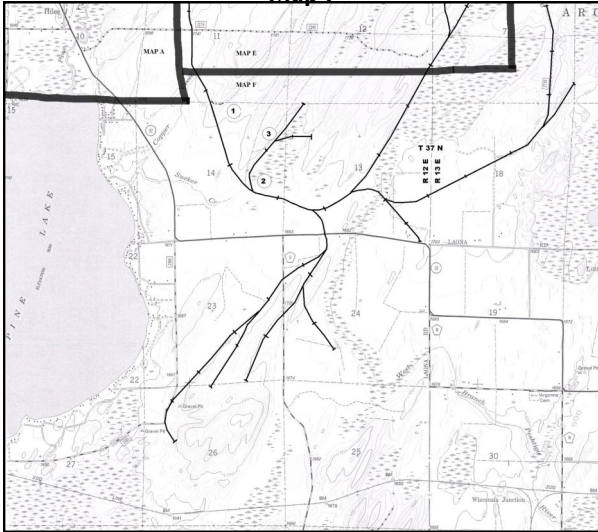
4. Some coal and cinder is found on the east side of a meadow. Between

point K and I scattered piles of junk are found containing cans and barrel hoops which indicates a logging camp site.

5. Junction is found marked by a piece of coal and the rail bed runs through a spruce plantation. It then enters a stand of aspen regrowth and it is on flat ground. Upon crossing a wetland the grade is marked by a row of high bushes.
- 5-A. Part of this grade has been used as a logging road to a point where the untouched grade runs through aspen regeneration and then into a red pine plantation. Some sections have no evidence.
6. The junction site is not found in the spruce plantation. There are many earthen mounds found throughout the plantation.
7. Rail bed carries an old logging road in the spruce and pine plantation. This road ends and the track continues crossing a creek on a high fill.
8. The track follows the edge of the lowland and the short turn-off is found. These tracks are difficult to follow. The only clues are side ditches and pocket holes that are evenly spaced width wise and follow a line pattern.

9. Erosion and logging obliterated a section of this rail bed.
10. End of track.
11. The End of Track is found a few hundred feet west of FR 2385.
12. EOT is found at a ditch. The Kaysen map showed this circling to Point 13.
- Back to Point 6 the rail bed runs through a stand of aspen regeneration.
13. EOT is about 200 feet west of FR 2385.

**Map F**



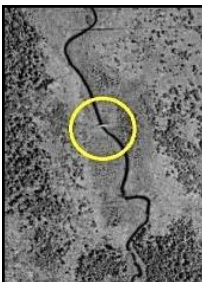
**Notes For Map F**

1. By following a logging road south from FR 2174 the rail bed is found. This was a main line for the Forster-Mueller Lumber Company which bought the Hiles and Eastern Railroad. In 1906 the railroad was sold to the Forster-Whitman Lum-

ber Company, and then to the Forster-Mueller Lumber Company in 1909. The grade is easily followed as it has much earthwork resulting in several deep cuts. Due to above average rainfall in the Spring of 2017 several rail corridors are very soggy and muddy.

2. The evidence for the junction could not be located on the flat ground due to past attempts to farm this area which now covered by trees. The track is found rising out of the open marsh and it can be followed along the marsh and it ends west of a double dam beaver pond.
3. The short spur is now a beaver dam that is holding a great volume of water.

In Sections 13, 18, 23, and 24 the rail beds have not been explored due to the fact that there are several private land holdings of which several of these were converted to farm land or an attempt was made to do so.



Left: The crossing remained after the track was taken up as shown in this 1938 aerial photo. This is Point 6 on page 26.



Right: This Google Earth™ photo shows the evidence found in the present day.



Photo at right:  
Aspen regeneration, about ten years ago many acres in the author's study area for the Hiles and Eastern Railroad have undergone clear cutting. In the next growing season a new forest emerges with aspen or popple seedlings along with other tree species. It is a challenge to trace rail



beds in these areas. The only clues are side ditches and pocket holes that are evenly spaced width wise and follow a line pattern. On some occasions the center line of a rail bed remains clear; also some corridors have low profile fills and cuts built through small hills and knolls. In other situations the evidence is completely destroyed in sections and by following the map a connection can be made.



Photo at left: Point 5-A., Page 24. Part of this grade has been used as a logging road to a point where the untouched grade runs through aspen regeneration and then into a red pine plantation. It was at this point the author aimed the centerline of the grade into the aspen and found it.

### **References Cited and Acknowledgements**

Timothy Sasse, website: Wisconsin  
Logging Railroads  
James P. Kaysen Archive Collection,  
Wisconsin Historical Society

### **About the Author**

Brad Pagels and his wife Krystal  
live in Eagle River, Wisconsin. Since

2003 he has been exploring rail-  
road grades in Vilas, Oconto, Forest,  
and Langlade Counties and has writ-  
ten journals of his findings.

Prepared by:

Brad Pagels

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Eagle River, WI

E-mail: pagreb13056@yahoo.com

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**42nd FHAW Annual Meeting**

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