

Volume 26

Number 1



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A Quarterly newsletter from the

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

P.O. Box 1001  
Marinette, WI 54143

**Spring - 2001**

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# *Chips and Sawdust*

Volume 26, Number 1

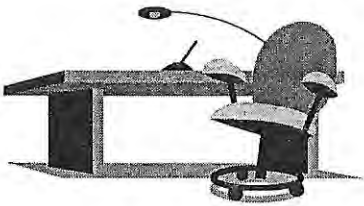
## Table of Contents

From the Editor's Desk	2
Board of Directors' Update	4
Meeting Notes: November, 2000	4
2001 Annual Meeting Preparations	6
Forest History Books of Note	7
News From Around the State	10
News and Announcements	14
Membership Application	16



*Kurt Korvenhof Collection*

A Robbins Lumber Company train pulls into Robbins Depot, circa 1905. Robbins, now known as Sugar Camp, is located 10 miles north of Rhinelander along State Highway 17.



## *From the Editor's Desk*

As many of you know, the Forest History Association of Wisconsin has been searching for a new *Chips and Sawdust* editor for some time now. With the publication of this issue, I am pleased to announce that I have accepted this challenge and have taken the reins from the capable hands of Ray Clark. Ray thank you for eight years of dedicated service and quality work, you are clearly a tough act to follow.

I thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself to those of you who I have not yet had the opportunity to meet and explain a bit of my background and how I came to be your editor. I first became involved with the FHAW in the Spring of 2000 when I was approached to give a talk on Eugene Shepard for the 2000 Annual Meeting to be held in Rhinelander, Wisconsin that Autumn. I delivered a talk and found instantly that this group was comprised of interesting people who shared my passion for forest history. Finding that both the *Annual Proceedings* and the *Chips and Sawdust* Newsletter were in need of an editor, I quickly accepted both positions.

Growing up in Sugar Camp (a small community just north of Rhinelander, WI) my interest in forest or lumbering history started at an early age. As a child I watched my father fish out sunken logs or "deadheads" from Jennie Webber Lake (an old holding pond for several Rhinelander-area lumbering firms), and I rode my bike along deserted narrow gauge logging railroad paths. I pursued history as a course of study in both college and graduate school and self-published several books focusing on aspects of Northern Wisconsin's lumbering past. I currently live with my wife and daughter in Savage, MN and am employed at the Minnesota Historical Society as a program associate in the Education Outreach Department.

Under my editorship this newsletter will continue to provide a forum for our organization to announce upcoming association events, report on the activities of our Board of Directors, provide information on items of interest, and perhaps most importantly, to serve as a forum for FHAW members to share information. As in the past, we strongly urge all FHAW members to submit items of interest, post "want adds" and continue to use this newsletter to communicate with others in our group. Please send items for this newsletter to:

**Kurt Korten Hof**  
**Editor, FHAW**  
**4107 131st Street West**  
**Savage, MN 55378**  
**phone: (952) 808-1475**  
**email: FHAW\_editor@msn.com**

Additionally, you will notice that I have altered the format of the newsletter a bit from its past form. The new format includes several standard sections that I intend to maintain in future issues. "From the Editor's Desk" includes short essays on a variety of forest history topics; "Board of Director's Update" includes meeting minutes and other information from our Board; "Forest History Books of Note" contains press releases and reviews of new and existing books relating to forest history; "News from Around the State" includes articles and information submitted by members; and "News and Announcements" contains items of interest for our readers either from our directors or from short notes submitted by our readership.

With your assistance, I will do my best to continue the high-quality this newsletter enjoyed under Ray's guidance. Although this year's Spring issue (volume 26, number 1) has been a bit delayed due to the logistics involved with changing editors, you can once again expect this publication quarterly. I look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

-Kurt Korten Hof



## *Board of Director's Update*

### **☞ Minutes of the November 2, 2000 Board Meeting**

The meeting was called to order by Executive Secretary Bob Brisson at 10:00 AM at the Black Forest Restaurant in Shawano. Directors present were Albert, Baumann, Benson, Brisson, Harm, Lambrecht, and Rohe. Adamson, Cline and Sohasky were not present.

#### **Minutes**

The minutes of the August 8, 2000 Board of Directors and September 23, 2000 Annual Member Meeting were allowed to stand as distributed October 10, 2000.

#### **Treasurer Report**

Treasurer Albrecht reported that President Cline did not ask for the Treasurer Report at the Annual Membership Meeting September 23, 2000. Albrecht distributed Financial Summaries for July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000 and July 1, 2000 to November 1, 2000. The FY 99-00 final report shows operating receipts of \$8,414 plus capital donations of \$1,515 while total expenses were \$8,852. Total cash assets at the end of the fiscal year were \$53,222.30. Albrecht presented a signed statement that the 1999-2000 financial records were audited by members Sid Maas and Don Lambrecht September 12, 2000 and found to be in order. A motion by Benson, supported by Lambrecht, to approve the Treasurer's report was approved, all in favor.

#### **Executive Secretary Report**

Executive Secretary Brisson distributed a report on the annual meeting showing a total attendance of 41. Discussion of the auction indicated a need for better organization; Director Rohe volunteered to help organize future auctions. A suggestion was made to allow time during the meeting for people with displays to

explain their items. Brisson reported the membership as of November 1 stands at 136 individual, 3 family, 1 student, 5 nonprofit organization, 4 corporate and 19 life for a total of 168. Seventy took advantage of the two year for \$25.00 membership from 2000 to 2002.

### **Distinguished Service Awards**

Director Rohe reported on potential recipients and requested nominations.

### **Exhibits**

Rohe reported the Forest Archeology display of the logging camp excavation was at UW-Waukesha. Albrecht said the traveling display of river logging/reforestation is at the DNR office in Shawano.

### **Forestry Hall of Fame**

Director Lambrecht reminded that FHAW will resubmit Forrest Stearns as a candidate for 2001.

### **Annual Meeting 2001**

Director Harm offered to host the meeting in September or October 2001 at the Stanley, Wisconsin, Historical Museum. Harm reported on accommodations, facilities and tour possibilities in the Stanley area. A motion by Albrecht, supported by Baumann to hold the 2001 Annual Meeting in Stanley was approved, all in favor.

### **Publication Financing**

Director Rohe gave an update on publishing his book *Ghosts of the Forest; Vanished Lumber Towns of Wisconsin*. He distributed quotations from The Print Shop and Thomas Press for printing the book in hard cover, and printing a dust jacket in full color. Rohe proposed that he would apply the dust jackets, distribute copies for review, and provide storage, sales and distribution at no cost to FHAW. Rohe stated he will prepare and enter a contract with FHAW providing that all book sale proceeds will go to FHAW until FHAW recovers its total investment; after FHAW has recovered its investment book sale proceeds will be divided on a basis

of 60% to FHAW and 40% to Rohe. FHAW will be the publisher, Rohe will retain the copyright.

A motion was made by Benson, supported by Baumann, to approve financing publication of the book and dust jacket by The Print Shop up to a maximum of \$25,000.00 including overrun. The selling price will be determined by the FHAW Board of Directors after final costs are known. The author is to be provided thirty complimentary copies for review and distribution. Motion carried, all in favor.

### **Adjournment**

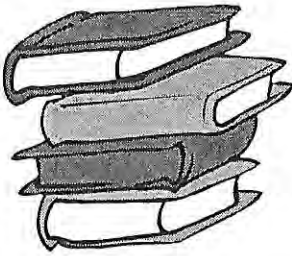
A motion by Albrecht, supported by Benson, to adjourn was carried at 2:15 PM.

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### **2001 Annual Meeting Preparations are Moving Along**

Planning for this year's upcoming Annual Meeting are well on their way. The meeting will be held on Friday September 21 and Saturday September 22 at the Stanely Historical Society in Stanley, Wisconsin. Director Harm and the rest of the Board are busy making tour arrangements for Friday and lining up speakers for Saturday. Tentative tour highlights currently include: IKE International Corporation (producer of world-class veneer); Stanely International, LTD (retailer of Logs in the Far East); Cadott School Forest; and Cook Rutledge Mansion in Chippewa Falls. Friday evening will conclude with a visit to Cabin Ridge Rides in Cadott for a banquet dinner. Saturday's speakers tentatively include: Randall Rohe, speaking on Porter's Mill; members of the Stanley Historical Society speaking on the history of the NW Lumber Company, the Stanley, Merrill and Phillips Railroad and the Stanely Fire; and Robert Gough, speaking on the development of tourism in Northern Wisconsin. So mark your calendars now and be on the lookout for more information about the annual meeting in the next issue of *Chips and Sawdust*.





## *Forest History Books Of Note*

*Planning a Wilderness: Regenerating the Great lakes Cutover Region.* By James Kates. University of Minnesota Press. 208 pages. \$29.95.

*This book is available on Amazon. com*

It comes to us every spring, as tantalizing as a breath of pine-scented air: the urge to go "Up North."

For millions of people in the Upper Midwest, there is no other place quite so inviting as the forest of Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. It's a pristine and timeless landscape, caught between the modern world and the lore of Paul Bunyan.

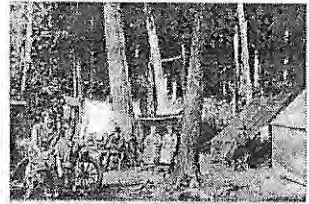
Lumberjacks plundered this land a century ago, ravaging some 50,000 square miles in the three states. In spite of this folly, biology has asserted itself; the trees have grown back. Nature, not man, is the animating force of the woods.

Or is it?

"People tend to assume that, because the forest looks more or less 'natural,' that its rebirth has been something of an accident, or solely an act of God," says James Kates, a Wisconsin journalist.

Not so, as Kates discovered during several years of research leading to a new book on the subject. The modern forest, he argues, is a carefully crafted landscape, literally a place that had to be "built." Conceived of and constructed by experts, it's designed to yield a wide range of material goods and social amenities, from timber to tourism.

In other words, this may look like your great-grandfather's forest, but it's something entirely different.



PLANNING  
A  
WILDERNESS  
Regenerating the Great Lakes  
Cutover Region  
JAMES KATES

Focusing on the years after World War I, Kates notes that most planners initially assumed that the "cutover" region would fill up with farms. When fires flared in what was left of the woods, they were allowed to burn.

"Most folks figured that the cutover was destined to be farmed, so in that sense fires were doing people a favor by clearing the land," Kates says.

A crippling farm depression crushed the hopes of cutover agriculturists in the 1920s. Foresters stepped in, but found that they had to "sell" their ideas to a skeptical public.

The most successful of them, Kates writes, were clever publicists who adopted the psychological appeals of modern advertising. In magazine articles and books, forestry was tied to a host of intangible desires, such as the yearning for a recently vanished American frontier.

Forest recreation was touted as a means by which citizens could maintain their hardy spirit, which was thought vital to their employers and their nation. Hiking, hunting, fishing and camping -- though linked in the public mind with rugged individualism -- were in fact facilitated by massive government planning efforts.

"Herbert Hoover, who was the kind of guy who went fishing in a three-piece suit and a starched collar, used to talk about 'organizing the production of leisure,' "Kates says.

For Hoover and other planners, recreation was serious business. "They were scared to death of movies and other vicarious amusements, which they feared would turn the American people into a bunch of mindless ninnies," Kates says.

Americans took Hoover's wishes to heart in the 1920s, so avidly that they threatened to overrun the landscape. A craze for automobile camping (or "flivveristing") triggered an epidemic of forest fires as careless campers invaded the woods. Planners responded by creating the modern campground, with cleared campsites and natural-looking barriers that prevented motorists from wandering.

This new frontier was not nearly as rugged as the old one, of course. Kates notes that the best planners were masters of artifice, maintaining the appearance of wild lands even as they intensively managed them to produce fish, game, scenery and timber.

"Aldo Leopold, whom many people regard as the father of environmentalism,

used to bemoan what he called the 'artificialization' of natural resources," Kates says. "At the same time, though, he was an active practitioner of the art -- he was a founder of the discipline of game management. He knew that unless people's worst impulses were curbed, and resources were made highly productive, the forest could literally be destroyed at the hands of the people who loved it."

The title's reference to "wilderness" is more than a little ironic, the author admits. "Wilderness" denotes something untouched, primitive, wild. The regrown forest may look primeval, Kates says, but every acre of it has in fact been carefully engineered.

Consider, for example, the most far-reaching element of the forest revival: rural zoning. First used in Wisconsin in 1933, rural zoning barred human settlement on millions of acres in the Great Lakes states. The aim was to prevent scattershot homesteading, which was bankrupting local governments with its high costs for roads and rural schools.

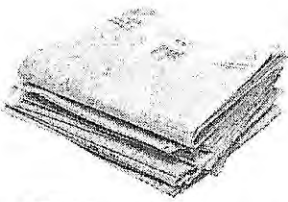
Today, in parts of the North Woods, it's possible to walk several miles without crossing a road. Look at a topographical map, and you'll see an unbroken sea of green.

A wilderness? Not quite.


"It looks wild, certainly," Kates says. "But if you mistake it for the frontier and try to build a log cabin on it, you could end up in jail. Even if you own the land, it's illegal to live there."

A sobering thought for would-be Daniel Boones, perhaps. But Kates says the book's message for today is a hopeful one.

"It's a call to stewardship," he says. "The forest is part of the human world, not something 'out there.' A hundred years ago, we destroyed it. But fortunately for all of us, nature gives second chances."



## *News From Around the State*

 The following article by Amber Paluch appeared in the *Wausau Daily Herald* last summer. It was sent in by F<sup>H</sup>A<sup>W</sup> President, John Kline.

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### *New Life Spins for Old Mill: Veneer to be Made at Former Ward Paper Plant*

MERRILL - An Eagle River company plans to breathe new life into the long-dormant Ward Paper Mill and create 40 jobs in the Merrill area.

Wisconsin Logs bought the mill and surrounding land this month, almost six years after International Paper shut down its fine paper plant and put 150 people out of work.

Company President Richard Loppnow said Wisconsin Logs will buy sunken logs and manufacture veneer - a valuable, high-quality wood - in the former plant. That's good news for a community still critical of International Paper for its handling of the 96-year-old property, including the removal of a dam.

"It puts industry back in the mill." Merrill Mayor Mike Caylor said. "It's a new phase, if you will, on this history. We're looking forward to having it back and seeing it as a productive part of our city."

Wisconsin Logs bought 53 acres of mill property - except the river bottom, an acre of land at the end of Cedar Street and the mill's landfill - for \$300,000 June 1 [2000], according to information from the Lincoln County Register of Deeds office.

Loppnow is meeting with Caylor and the city's building inspector and said he hopes to have an occupancy permit by early next week. The company can begin moving equipment in within the next few months and could be up and running by mid-fall.

#### **About Wisconsin Logs**

Loppnow bought Wisconsin Logs, which recovers and processes sunken logs, from

Doug McGriff in 1997.

Although the company has recovered its own wood from waters across the United States and three Canadian provinces, it buys already recovered wood in Wisconsin, Loppnow said.

The underwater wood that will be processed at the Merrill plant is valuable and can never be duplicated, he said.

In original forests, the canopy of trees was so tightly grown that the trees fought for sunlight and aged with tight growth rings. Each tree had from 20 to 50 rings for every inch of growth, rather than the eight to 15 rings trees have today, Loppnow said. Tight growth rings produce a better quality of trees that is in demand by makers of furniture and musical equipment. So far, Wisconsin Logs has done only custom work and contracted with other companies that cut, dry and mill the wood.

But Wisconsin Logs is looking to consolidate each job into the Merrill mill, Loppnow said. The most critical part of the process is in handling the fragile wood, and keeping the process in one location provides quality control.

The Merrill mill was chosen largely because it provides a central location in the state, he said. A rail service is needed to bring in the supply logs, and the company will look at reinstating the rail across the Prairie River, Loppnow said.

In the past, the Company has processed wood and sold it to manufacturers but now is leaning toward manufacturing its own products, such as moldings, floorings and paneling.

Wisconsin Logs bought the 53-acre parcel but plans to sell extra property and lease the nearly two-thirds of building space the company doesn't need, Loppnow said.

The main office in Eagle River will move to the mill's office

### **The property's history**

The mill property has changed hands at least six times previously:

- Merrill Paper Manufacturing Co. was formed in 1904 when the mill was created.
- Two years later, it became the Grandfather Fall Paper Co.

- In 1937, Ward paper Co. took over the plant's assets.
- In 1941, the Transo Envelope Co. bought the plant.
- In 1957, it was sold to Arvey Corp.
- International Paper acquired all of Avery's operations in 1987, and the Ward mill became part of International Paper's Strathmore Paper Co.

International Paper announced in August 1994 it would close Ward Paper Mill because one of its specialties - fine writing paper - was in low demand.

A Ward Task Force, made up from representatives from International Paper, the paperworkers' union and local and state agencies, was created, and Gov. Tommy Thompson promised to help find a replacement company to make sure the plant continued to run.

In the meantime, International Paper refused to sell the mill while it used the plant to test new product lines and inventoried equipment. The company also would not sell to a company that would compete with it, which restricted its use as a paper mill.

When the mill finally closed two months later, almost 150 employees, including long-term workers facing only a few years until retirement, took severance of about \$8,000, depending on the years of service.

Although the mill closed six years ago - taking millions of dollars each year in wages, taxes and sales to local vendors out of the community - the company did not begin seriously marketing the property until two years ago, Caylor said, and it took that long to sell.

### **For the community**

If all goes well, the plant will be up and running by early fall and could provide the community with 20 to 40 jobs, Loppnow said. About 20 people will be needed for the mill's flooring operation, and the company will need workers in the paneling and trim molding departments.

Loppnow declined to say how much has been invested in the operation but said "backers have put a substantial amount into this."

Lincoln County has a tight labor market like everywhere else but also has

residents actively seeking work - and the mill opening is good news in that regard, said Tom Geiger, community development agent of the county's University of Wisconsin Extension office.

The county had a 6.0 percent unemployment rate in April and is at the end of a low unemployment cycle, Geiger said.

"Any time we create jobs, they're welcome in the community," he said.

Not only are the jobs a benefit, but Wisconsin Logs will bring a unique industry to Merrill, Loppnow said.

"It's something the community can be proud of," he said. "Lying right in the town of Merrill waters are rivers that contain tremendous numbers of very valuable oak logs."

Loppnow would buy the wood if someone recovered it from the former Prairie Lake but said he has no plans to recover it himself.



*Kurt Kortenhof Collection*

This image of a Robbins Lumber Company camp (circa, 1905) became a popular Northern Wisconsin postcard.



## News and Announcements

☞ The Board of Director's wishes to remind you that the Forest History Association of Wisconsin has a new address. Please send all FHAW correspondences to:

**Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 1001**  
**Merinette, WI 54143**

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☞ Mark your calendars for the 2001 Forest History Association of Wisconsin's Annual Meeting. This years meeting will be held on September 21st and 22nd at the Stanely Historical Society in Stanely, WI.

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☞ Randall Rohe's *Ghosts of the Forest: Vanished Lumber Towns of Wisconsin*, being published by the Forest History Association of Wisconsin, is nearing completion. Look for more updates on the progress of this project, publication date and information about the book in upcoming issues of *Chips and Sawdust*. Randall Rohe of Waukesha, Wisconsin holds a Ph.D. in Historical Geography and is a member of the FHAW Board of Directors. He has taught at the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha since 1983.


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☞ FHAW is always looking for people with interests in forest history to join our organization. If you know of anyone that may be interested in joining us, please provide them with the membership application on page 16. Membership benefits include: a subscription to the *Chips and Sawdust* quarterly newsletter, a subscription to the *Annual Proceedings*, opportunities to attend meetings of the association and affiliates, contact with others who share




your general or specialized interest in forest history and the satisfaction gained from participation in a worthwhile organization.

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 The Twenty-fifth Anniversary edition of the FHAW *Annual Proceedings "Historic Rhinelander Area (Land of the Hodag)"* is now available. All members received their copy by mail earlier this Spring. Additional copies are available for purchase. To order additional copies or for more information contact:

**Bob Briton, FHAW Executive Secretary**  
**568 River Drive**  
**Menominee, MI 49858**

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 WANTED: Items for this newsletter, including:

- Forest history news items from local, state or regional news publications that would be of interest to our readership. Please make sure to include the publication, date and author so *Chips and Sawdust* can appropriately cite the material. This information will be published in the "News from Around the State" section in each issue.
  - Historic pictures, advertisements and other items of interest to share with our readership. If you submit a photo that is not your own, be certain to contact the owner and acquire permission for *Chips and Sawdust* to print the picture.
  - Forest history-related information advertisements. If you are looking for forest history information - ask our readers! If you have information to share - let our readers know!
- 

 FHAW announced the winner of the 2001 student writing award. This year's recipient of the \$500.00 cash prize is Mary Voytovich of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The Forest History Association of Wisconsin has sponsored the student writing award for over 20 years. Look for more information about Mary's winning paper in upcoming issues of *Chips and Sawdust*.

# 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 (\$5.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership (\$15.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership (\$25.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Non Profit Organization Membership (\$25.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Corporate Membership (\$50.00)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Life Membership (\$250.00)

#### Other Contributions:

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Detach and mail this application with payment to:

**Executive Secretary**  
**Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 1001**  
**Marinette, WI 54143-1001**

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✂ detach along this line ✂

**Committee Chairs      2000 - 2001**

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**Mike Sohasky**  
Auction

**Donald G. Lambrecht**  
Forestry Hall of Fame

**Randall Rohe**  
Distinguished Service Awards

**Carl Krog**  
Publicity

**Kurt Korten Hof**  
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**John Saemann**  
Scholarship

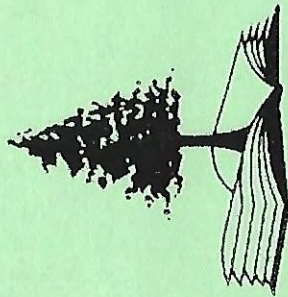
**James Adamson**  
Exhibits

**unfilled**  
Archives

FHAW Members are encouraged to submit items of interest for  
this newsletter to the editor:

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