



**A Newsletter**  
From  
**Forest History**  
**Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**  
403 McIndoo Street                      Wausau, WI 54401

February 1993

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# Editor's Notes

**T**his issue of "Chips & Sawdust" ends my tenure as editor. As a new editor has not yet been found, the next issue may be delayed. I hope that members will be patient. I urge all members to help the new editor by sending in any news of their activities or that of other members, articles on logging and lumbering history, information on new books, requests for information on forest history, or notes on their current research. Thanks again to all those who helped me over the last five years.

**Randall Rohe, Editor**

## Last Drive on the Oconto River

**R**oy H. Gilkey described the last log drive on the Oconto River in the August 3, 1961 issue of the *Oconto County Reporter*.

One could feel the tenseness in the still air as it was being talked in the country and cities that on April 1 the Drive would start on the upper Waupsee thence into the Oconto and on to the mouth of that river where the waiting sawmills were ready.

This drive, one of the last and largest, would need 100 men of strength and courage to keep the lumber moving. Wages were good with meals furnished, the pay being \$3 per day rain or shine, long hours or short, all depending the water available. All through the winter, pine, tamarack, cedar poles and posts, hemlock and spruce had been cut and stored on various ponds and

above the dams on the Waupee, North and South Branch. Each feeder creek was ready as soon as the ice melted and logs started flowing toward the main Oconto river.

Dams were constructed at various points in order to conserve water. The gates were opened when needed. All logs had to be sluiced through the gates with the rushing water anxious to press forward towards Green bay.

It was a long winding trip full of hardships, but the word Drive meant to push on regardless.

Upon entering a pond there was a few days of rest prior to getting through the gates. Then drive on each day, getting closer to the main object, Oconto.

Never before in the path of progress was there a more colorful figure than the River Driver - a stout fearless fellow. His felt hat cocked on the side, wool trousers cut off below the knee, shirt open at the neck, short sleeves. In the pocket could be seen the Bull Durham sack, around the neck the bright red handkerchief. In his hands he carried the peavy or pikepole.

The rear consisted of two large rafts, 18x60 feet made of logs strapped together. On one was a large tent over the cook stove, supplies and wonagan [wani-gan]box. In that box were shirts, pants, shoes, tobacco, medicine to be sold to the men when needed.

I kept time and with the help of a team of mustangs and a buckboard foraged the country for eggs and vegetables. Eggs were fifteen cents a pound and potatoes one cent per pound. No canned goods were used - salt pork, corned beef in brine, white beans, home made bread, prune pie and cakes.

All the timber of Pendleton and Gilkey was stamped P&G and spotted with blue paint. This timber was stacked in the Waupee pond east of Crooked Lake, not far from Nelligan Lake. All this timber was sluiced through the lower dam on the Waupee thence into Chute pond and the main Oconto river.

After one month the rear reached Suring. Here the drive rested a few days in order to let all hands go into Suring for a few days recreation.

After leaving Suring the river winds through Underhill then over the Flat Rock into Oconto Falls. After leaving the Falls and Bradley rapids behind, we arrive at Stiles. Here the main part of the drive was abandoned. The river was full of logs for a distance of six miles above Oconto.

All was not all work on the drive. Many incidents were amusing. On quiet days logrolling was indulged in, each trying to duck the other. The accompanying picture, taken below the flats, shows how the men worked in the water to keep the logs from forming a jam. This picture is a copy of one taken in 1907 on the lower Waupee. The man on the bank right was my father and next to him Jim Elliott - driver and boss. Just below Flat Rock there was a low bridge and as the raft passed under, the tent and cookstove were raked off into the river.

Suring in that day had many saloons. One of the largest was Fredenberg's and here many gathered. As no one had cash, Fredenberg gave credit as follows. The barkeep handed \$5 to the driver and he bought a drink for the house. The \$5 was placed back on the bar - no change back. Record was taken and was later deducted from wages. Black Label whiskey sold for \$1.50 per quart. Each man poured his own liquor. The bar was some forty feet long with six barkeepers serving.

When Stiles was reached, we camped. Andrew Pearl and myself occupied a small tent, waiting a few days for the teams to take the equipment into Oconto. That night we would walk five miles on a sandy road to a country dance.

Arriving at Oconto all the logs were sorted into the proper pockets by men on the booms, then run through the mills and cut into timber, boards, shingles, fence posts, telephone poles and blocks.

Memories remain of the sights in the early morning on the ponds. Mist rising in the sunlight, the call of a loon and swish of the fast flying duck. Aroma - what could be better than the odor of bacon being fried on the open fire, and steaming coffee. Then the change of breeze bringing that pine and cedar aroma mixed with sweet fern - all above the roar of the rushing water, bumping logs, clicking peavies, sound of the boot caulk as they dug into the spinning log.

So passes the drive, making way for modern progress. But none can compare to the colorful River Driver who rode the logs down the Oconto.

## The Future of Forest History

Recently Frank Fixmer received a thought provoking and insightful letter from our Honduras member Cornelio Groothousen that challenges all interested and committed to forest history. I thought at least part of it should be brought to the attention of our entire membership.

When I was a forestry student in the 50's there was no forest history course as part of forestry curriculum at University of Minnesota. During Dr. Kaufert's Introduction to Forestry, however, he called our attention to the past fires that consumed the north woods and to outside extra reading, such as books by Aldo Leopold, Stewart Holbrook, Gifford Pichot and perhaps Thoreau's Walden Pond; even though in the 50's this was before the main environmental period of forest history. Also I'd cut pulpwood at Forest Center in Upper Minnesota before that area became a part of the Quetico Superior Wilderness. Another experience which forestry students of today don't have is seeing acres of stump pastures or stump farms as they were called. By 1950 they were all cleared away by dozers, although if it were possible today, saving examples of those giant pine stumps,

would be equal as interesting as saving examples of virgin forest.

How can Forest History Association have more impact on the younger generations? The 1990 Proceedings on page 37 states that fall enrollment 1990 at Stevens Point was 1220 undergraduates and 47 graduate students. Then on page 60 of the 1991 Proceedings its representation on the Forest History Association Board was dropped because of lack of interest by the Student Chapter of SAF at Stevens Point. Not all of those 1267 would have become members of the student chapter SAF. Yet somehow from the size of the student population the failure to interest not even one is a failure. It must be due to the fact that those aspiring to natural resource careers haven't experienced the "stump farms" nor other real forest experiences that we old timers have had. They need not just a list of suggested books to read but also a college course that deals with the environmental history of the Wisconsin Forest. A most interesting text for such a course could be, "The Great Lakes Forest," edited by Susan Flader, and published in 1983 by the University of Minnesota.

Forestry for sustained development and forest biotechnologies are on the frontiers of forestry today. Although this is not to say that the past forestry of the oldtimers has no place today. In European countries the virgin forest was all denuded by 1800 or before and forestry began from then on. They have a longer history and incorporate this background into today's forestry courses. So in Wisconsin our forest denudation began 100 years later. We need to learn from European experiences, our own experiences and apply this knowledge to the current tropical forestry problems. The past tends to repeat itself if we don't learn from it. And one cannot learn about it if they are not interested. If they aren't interested, WHY?

When I was growing up in northern Wisconsin I felt there were no more challenges. The land was already cleared and the farms developed. The factories were built and one could only seek employment in one of

them. There were no challenges such as those faced by parents and grandparents whom first settled the region when it was first denuded and full of stumps. My father had an obsession with those stumps. He had worked in the forest camps from 1900 until 1925 and could not rest until every pine stump was cleared from the farm. The best wild berry picking was around those old pine stumps, though my father was not interested in knowing that.

The best stimulation for those seeking natural resources careers and the promotion of the Forest History Association at the same time is in knowing more about where we came from. Where the forest came from? What we would like the forest to develop into and how best to steer to get there....

## Recent Publications

- Larry H. Johns, "The Round Lake Logging Dam: Last Survivor of Wisconsin's Logging Era," *Wisconsin Outdoor Journal* (December 1992) 6:33-35.
- John G. Franzen, "Northern Michigan Logging Camps: Material Culture and Worker Adaptation on the Industrial Frontier," *Historical Archaeology* Vol 29 (1992):74-98.
- Robert J. Gough, "Richard T. Ely and the Development of the Wisconsin Cutover," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Autumn 1991) 75:3-38.
- Sharon Thatcher, "Five Generations of Logging History," *Timber Producer*, (January 1992):30-31 [Two logging families in Michigan and Wisconsin].



# Welcome New Members

Norman Syrjald	Crystal Falls, MI
F.F. Schlosser	Durand, WI
Bruce Clumpner	Ogdensburg, WI
Joe Joas	Chippewa Falls, WI
Earl Holmquist	Niagara, WI
Eugene Eastway	South Milwaukee, WI
Karl Baumann II	Marinette, WI
Robert Kloes	Seymour, WI
Ann Goethal	Rhineland, WI
James Corbett	Wauwatosa, WI
Paul Klassey	New Glarus, WI
James Adamson	Green Bay, WI

## Meet Our Members

- **William "Butch" Johnson**, Hayward, president of the Johnson Timber Company, was the 1992 recipient of the Wisconsin Merit Award at the Logging Congress in Green Bay. The award from the Timber Producers Association of Michigan-Wisconsin recognizes meritorious service to the forest products industry. "Butch" was also named Wisconsin's Outstanding Forestry Activist of the year by the Lake States Technical Committee of the American Pulpwood Association.
- **Terry J. Moore**, Rhineland, retired U.S. Forest Service forest management planner on the Nicolet National Forest,

is an active amateur archaeologist when not engaged in other part-time hobbies. He has participated in several "digs" involving pre-historic Indian sites that were superseded by early-day logging camps.

- **F.F. "Bud" Schlosser**, Durand, is one of the F.H.A.W.'s newer members, but he is no stranger to the lumber industry and forest history of his area. Co-owners of the Schlosser Lumber Company, "Bud" and his son, Bob, are currently celebrating the company's 50 years of sawmilling. The mill was originally purchased by Bud's father in 1942 and logs were skidded directly from the woods to the mill. It was moved to its present site in 1964 and produces well over five million board feet of lumber annually for about 200 wholesale customers all over the United States and parts of Canada who want top quality lumber of specific dimensions.

## Report from the President

**D**uring the 1991-92 the association has continued to be active in preserving and promoting forest history. Listed below are the primary activities accomplished by the Association.

**Publications** - Editor Dr. Randall Rohe of Waukesha continued his fine work for the association in publishing "Chips and Sawdust" and the "Annual Proceedings". Unfortunately, due to time constraints, Dr. Rohe has decided to resign his editorship of "Chips and Sawdust", effective with the February 1993 issue. He will continue as editor of the "Proceedings" until the spring of 1994. Therefore, we are in need of an editor for "Chips and Sawdust" and I encourage any member to consider the job and contact me accordingly.

**Distinguished Service Awards** - At last year's annual meeting in Medford, the association recognized Milton E. Reinke and the Price County Historical Society as recipients of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin's annual Distinguished Service Awards. This year two more Distinguished Service Awards will be presented.

**Membership**- Of critical importance to the association is the retention and acquisition of members. Fifteen new members were enrolled in 1991-92. In addition, three new corporate members, three new non-profit organizations, five new families, and one new lifetime member were added. Offsetting these gains was the loss of five members by death and nine for nonpayment of dues. This speaks well, considering the fact that general dues were increased by \$3 effective July 1, 1991.

**Future Plans** - The association plans on updating and reprinting Educational Leaflet #1 - "Firsts in Wisconsin's Forest History". In addition, we must find an editor for "Chips and Sawdust" before next spring. The 1993 annual meeting will be held in Antigo and will be centered around the theme "Archaeology and Forest History". Dr. Rohe will chair the event.

**Final Thoughts** - As our membership continues to age, we need to continue our efforts to recruit new members, especially the younger people who need to be encouraged to join. History to many people is not glamorous. Our association must compete against many demands for people's leisure time. It has been documented that things such as "mass mailings" and advertisements are not nearly as effective as word-of-mouth. We all must ask and invite someone to join our organization. Understanding history will help us to live into the future.

**Michael Sohasky, President**

# Highlights F.H.A.W. Board Meeting, October 22, 1992

Secretary Fixmer reported that the Association's exhibit on the theme of early-day log drives and lumber rafting had drawn better-than-average crowds at both the Logging Congress and WWOA conventions.

President Sohasky was authorized to investigate the possibilities of a graduate student at UW-Stevens Point cataloging the Association's archival collection at the Area Research Center.

The 1993 annual meeting committee will be chaired by Randy Rohe and the agenda built around the theme of archaeology and forest history and held in Antigo. Don Lambrecht volunteered to serve on this committee.

Chairperson Joyce Bant reported (by mail) that advance publicity about the annual meeting had been sent to about 30 newspapers and periodicals, as well as local radio and TV stations. A follow-up release about the recipients of our distinguished service awards was also distributed to the media.

The Secretary pointed out the need for reprinting our Educational Leaflet # 1 - "Firsts in Wisconsin Forest History" inasmuch as the original supply of 10,000 copies is now exhausted. However, some revision is also necessary and funding needs to be solicited unless capital funds are tapped. On motion and second, approval was given to proceed with the revision.

The Secretary also announced that a special archaeological exhibit featuring relics from a logging camp of the 1870s

(donated by the U.S. Forest Service) would be assembled by Tom Schleif, director of the Marathon County Historical Museum, for our 1993 annual meeting.

The desirability of publishing a membership directory was discussed in view of the interest of a number of members. Cost and rapid turnover of membership, changes of address, etc. are deterrents. However, copies of the computer print-outs of our membership roster for mailing label purposes could serve as a directory. On due motion and second, approval was voiced to make available to the general membership such copies at a cost of \$5.00 per copy, including postage. The Secretary was also instructed to get a cost estimate for including the special interest (in code form) of each member on such a directory. (Members interested in obtaining a copy of this directory should contact Frank Fixmer)

## Log Driving On The Chippewa In The Later 80's

C.H. Henry was a famous logger and dam builder on the Chippewa River. The *Eau Claire Leader* (May 24, 1916) contained an article on his experiences between 1866 and 1881.

My experience in the lumbering business began quite early.

I was born at Mexico, Oswego county, New York, the 7th of May, 1848, but was only one and one-half years of age when my parents removed to Wisconsin. They first located at Waterford, Racine county, and remained there about twelve years, when they removed to Adams county locating in the town of Easton, which was within twenty miles of lumbering operations on Yellow river, a tributary of the Wisconsin river.

In December, 1863, at the age of fifteen years and seven months. I enlisted, and Jan. 14 was sworn into the United States service for three years, or during the war, in Company K, Twenty-fifth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry and served in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Army Corps, Army of the Tennessee under General W. L. Sherman, where we served until the close of the war, the term of the Twenty-fifth having expired June 7, 1865, the regiment was mustered out at Washington, D.C. After the Grand Review of May 23 and 24, and my time not having expired, I was transferred with others of our regiment to Co. G of the Twelfth Wisconsin Veteran Volunteer Infantry, and we, with all of Sherman's army, whose term had not expired, were moved by railway to Parkersburg, VA., thence by steamboats to Louisville, KY., where we were held, expecting to be sent into Mexico to straighten matters out in that country. We were mustered out of the service at Louisville so that we reached home in August in time to help harvest the crops.

Fifty-one years ago now, we were on the March between Raleigh, N.C. and Washington, after Gen. J. E. Johnston had surrendered to Gen. W. T. Sherman, the 26th day of April.

This last part of Sherman's more than two thousand miles march was the hardest, as we raced all the way from Raleigh to Washington, homeward bound. I celebrated my seventeenth birthday on that march, near the southern line of Virginia.

October 6, 1866, my chum, Nathan Thorn, and I started from Necedah for the lumber camps and mill of Blake, Dawes & Ayers, located between Yellow and Black rivers about six miles from Yellow river where the lumber was rafted on the ice, the lumber having been hauled by teams across the cranberry marshes and swamps, which extended nearly the whole distance.

My work was felling the timber with the ax, (instead of with the saw as the felling was done in later years), sawing, loading and for a time, working in the mill. About the first of March, 1867, my chum Thorn, Wm.

Thatcher, a Wisconsin river pilot and a comrade of the war, (Thorn also was a comrade) and myself were sent to the rafting camp at the river to help catch up with the rafting of the lumber and square timber, and fit up the strings for running out of the Yellow river. The stream was narrow and crooked so that the lumber had to be run in strings 16 feet wide and seven cribs long. The same timber was rafted about the same dimensions as the lumber.

The season's cut was forty-six (46) of those strings rafted twenty-four inches deep, and they were loaded with lath and shingles. These strings were handled by two men with a fifty-foot oar on bow and stern. We ran three trips between the landing and the Necedah log booms, and four trips between Necedah and the mouth of Yellow river having started out from the landing the 12th day of April.

When we reached the mouth of Yellow river the strings were coupled into Wisconsin river floats, four strings abreast, and four men to handle the same, (a whole lumber yard). When coupled up at the mouth, ready to start down the Wisconsin, there were but eight of the crew of fifty-eight who started from the landing. Thatcher, Thorn and Henry were three of the eight. The heavy falls of snow and rain, the cold weather and the scarcity of blankets and food was what caused the desertions.

When ready to tie loose at the mouth of Yellow river, another chum was sent onto our float, Big Alex. McGilson, and these four remained together until we reached Galena, Ill., where our portion of the Mississippi river raft was marketed. I believe that it took us three days to pole from the Mississippi up the Fever river to Galena. We reached home the 3rd day of July in good shape for farm work.

I worked in the lumber camps, saw mills and on the farm until 1869, when I began cruising for timber on the upper Wisconsin river, making my headquarters at Stevens Point, where the government land office was

then located. Later the land office was moved to Wausau, and I made that place my home. Sometimes the timber cruisers were employed by lumbering or timber land companies at a stated salary and sometimes they went out on their own responsibility. Locating and estimating timber on desirable tracts that could be bought from the government and state and selling these descriptions or minutes to persons in the market for timber land. The price paid for these minutes depended largely on the confidence placed on the judgment and reliability of the cruiser. Sometimes those cruisers would find men of capital to go into partnership with them, putting up their capital against the experience and judgment of the cruisers and giving the cruiser a share of the profits which might be made.

I had never engaged myself to any company. While at Stevens Point, I came in after a long cruise and was met by General Charles D. Gilmore of the timber land company of Chipman, Hosmer & Gilmore of Washington D.C. General Gilmore asked what success I had met with in my cruise and if I had located some good timber. I told him that I had eighty-three descriptions of very desirable, fine land. He made me an offer of sixteen a description, which after I accepted he then offered me eight dollars a day and all expenses if I would take steady employment with their company. As I had been making fairly well cruising on my own account I was not anxious to engage with any company, but General Gilmore finally prevailed on me to accept his offer, with the understanding that I could take some time off occasionally to operate in the ten mile limits of the Wisconsin Central Railway, where the vacant government lands in the even numbered sections were subject to homestead and pre-emption and later to entry with soldiers additional homestead script in which Judge Charles M. Webb, D.L. Qenaw and myself were interested, I doing the cruising and estimating. I remained with the Washington company about seven years. In addition to locating and estimating timber, I had charge of their land and timber operations on the Wisconsin and Chippewa waters. I



bought the land and sold the timber, (stumpage) for them. It was while in the employ of this company that I came into close connection with the logging and log driving methods of the upper rivers in the state.

In the early winter of '79 and '80 I was returning from a cruise northwest of Phillips, while on the old Wisconsin Central train. I met an acquaintance by the name of Geo A. Henry, though not a relative of mine that we know of, who was a special government timber agent. He told me that there was a man in the other car, a very capable lumberman from Eau Claire, that he would like to have me meet. The lumberman's name was O. H. Ingram. He further stated that Mr. Ingram was on the lookout for a man to take charge of his timber operations, and suggested myself for the position.

I had met Mr. Ingram first in 1876, when I had sold timber for my employers to jobbers who sold their logs to the Ingram-Kennedy company, and gave orders on that company for payment, and later, when over here collecting from them and other lumber companies, who paid for stumpage sold by me to their jobbers.

When Mr. Ingram offered me the position I told him that I was not looking for such a position, and had no notion of leaving my home at Wausau. However, I informed him that he would get a letter from me within one week. My answer was yes, and I have never been sorry, as Mr. Ingram and others of the Chippewa valley have always been good to me.

It is my opinion that it will not be out of place to state here that what influence I had with members of the legislature was used in the interest of Eau Claire in the old Dells dam fight in the year 1870 and until the fight ended. All lumber and timber men knew that a log reservoir was needed here, more than anything else, as under the old system of holding the logs at this point but a few logs could be held, and they were not safe against high water.

During the logging season of 1879 and 1880 I looked after the logging interests of the company, visit-

ing all of the camps as often as possible and at the same time getting ready for the spring drive. If my memory serves me, Ingram & Kennedy Co. had banked that season, about eighty-five (85) million feet.

For years there had been a conflict of interests on the rivers between the Mississippi river people, or down river interests, and those operating on the Chippewa. Both no doubt, thought themselves in the right and proposed to maintain their rights as they considered them. Not only was this true of the proprietors and foremen, but it was equally true of their crews of men. The rivermen were intensely loyal to their employers and equally ready at all times to work or fight for their interests. Some of the leaders on both sides had arrived at the conclusion that their should be concessions and a co-operation in the driving of logs. That splendid gentleman, Frederick Weyerhauser, and Mr. O. H. Ingram were the leading spirits in this movement.

Mr. Ingram informed me that there had been a talk of a co-operation on the log drives and that such arrangements as entered into between Mr. A. B. McDonald, who had charge for the M. R. L. Co., and myself would be carried out by him and the people interested with them. Mr. McDonald and I did arrange during the logging season of '79 - '80 to work in harmony in the driving of the logs in the Spring, but later developments proved that conditions were not ripe for such a radical change. Years of strife had aroused considerable feeling and some bad blood. Like the soldiers of the South and North in the Civil war, they later learned to respect each other and become friends, but it takes time for such changes in sentiment.

All of the drives were moving along nicely in the Spring, except on the Elk river where the logs were held back by head wind on the lakes and ponds. This we had expected and had agreed that when the south fork of Flambeau crews reached the mouth of the Elk, we would bring them onto that stream to help that drive out. John Pearl had charge of the south fork crew for Mr. McDonald and he started his drive from a long distance above

Fifield and Billie Smith had charge of our south fork crew and started in on our upper logs which were banked below Fifield. Smith, as agreed, broke in all landings, trimmed the wings and rolled in logs that were out of the stream (the rear) and left the river in good shape for Mr. Pearl, and when Smith reached the mouth of Elk river I brought him on to that stream where they worked to the best interests of all parties. Smith's crew was camped a short distance below the Long Lake dam, eight or nine miles above the mouth of Elk river and worked above and below, wherever they could be used to the best advantage for both parties, when by chance a comrade of the war and a friend of mine, Jock Doonan, who worked for Jas. McKinley as blacksmith on the farm and in his camp, overheard the orders given to Mr. Pearl to move his crew down the south fork as rapidly as possible, get away so that Smith could not catch him. The blacksmith started out in the night and found me about daylight, near Smith's crew, who were soon on the way toward the mouth of Elk river. The dam above was closed so that there were several places where we were obliged to portage boats and supplies, to get into the lower Elk pond, where we had fair sailing.

The lower Elk dam was closed and guarded by six men who had positive orders to not open a gate. Notwithstanding these orders, we opened the gates and surprised the opposition by reaching the south fork in good season that evening, though Pearl's crew was camped several miles below us that night.

Smith overtook Pearl between the big and little falls of the main Flambeau where Mr. Pearl proposed to me that we join drives. I said no, Smith and crew have worked night and day to get this advantage and they will keep it to the mouth of the river, where the drive ends. I left the crew at Little Falls and went back to the Elk river drive, which was hung up later. When Pearl and Smith were within about ten miles of the mouth, what was known afterward as the Flambeau, war broke out between the crews at the head of a slough, when orders were given by the M. R. L. Co. foreman to run the

diamond D. and diamond L. K. logs into the slough. This place was named by the log drivers of those crews Battle Island and was known and called by that name by the drivers, and, I presume, is known and spoken of as Battle Island to this day. There was but little damage to either crew, and soon after, all became good friends and worked together as during the same month (June). Billie England, as foreman for the M. R. L. Co. and L. joined drivers on Elk river and drove together on that terrible flood of 1880, until he, England, received orders from Mr. A. B. McDonald at Big Falls to stop driving as the logs were going into the Mississippi. I, receiving no such orders from Mr. Ingram, hired all of Mr. England's crew, who wished to remain with us, and drove into the Dell's pond here at Eau Claire, where we finished with a crew of one hundred and fifty or more men as ever handled log driving tools.[sic]

About the close of the following season, 1880-1881, when on my last round of inspection of logs for Ingram, Kennedy & Co., Mr. Weyerhauser and their cruiser, Mr. B. F. Millard, overtook me on the east fork of the Chippewa, I having left my driving rig at home and was finishing my work on foot. Mr. Weyerhauser asked me to ride with them to the next landing, where both had logs to examine. When on that landing and separated a short distance from Mr. Millard, Mr. Weyerhauser informed me that their men had told him about the trouble during last spring's log drive and said that Mr. Ingram had talked with him about the trouble in a joking way, and asked me to tell him all that took place from the beginning to the end. I did so and when the story was finished, he asked me, "Would you under the same conditions act as you did all the way through?" My answer was, "Yes sir." He said, "I guess that I would under the same circumstances."

# Logging in the Nicolet in the 30's

**M**ost lumbering history focuses on the period before 1900. Those works that look at the 20th century usually examine the end of the rail-hardwood era. Very little at all has been written about the gasoline - truck - pulpwood era that began in the 1920's and 1930's. As the following article demonstrates, the material for such a study is readily available in period newspapers, trade journals, etc. The subject would make a good presentation for one of our annual meetings.

The logging of government owned timber on the Nicolet National Forest provided enough labor to support 1,295 people during 1939.

Revenue from timber sales on this National Forest increased more than three hundred percent during the last calendar year.

According to Mr. Galen W. Pike, supervisor of the Nicolet national forest, 10,580,000 board feet of the timber were sold and 7,602,000 board feet were cut during 1939. About 3,000,000 board feet of the timber sold during 1940. The sale of this timber yielded a gross return to the government of \$36,600.00. Twenty-five percent of the amount received is returned to the counties within the National Forest for the upkeep of schools and roads, and an additional ten percent is returned to the state for forest road development.

Many of the areas from which the timber was cut had been previously logged about thirty years ago.

"While these statistics are very interesting", said Pike, "they do not tell the really important story in connection with the timber sales on this forest. There are two things, in my mind, that are of much greater

significance than the amount of money of the number of board feet cut.

"The first important thing is the fact that all of the timber was cut under approved forestry methods which insures the restocking of the areas cut and provides for a permanent yield.

"The second and most important aspect of the sales business is its effect on the people within the forest. The majority of the sales made were family sized or sales of less than \$500. Many farmers spent the winter months with their sons cutting pulp and thus adding a substantial cash income to the returns from the farms. In some cases this employment removed the necessity of their having to apply for relief to carry their families over the winter months.

"Men formerly on WPA have found it more profitable to go back to the woods on small sales, thus reducing the relief costs materially.

"The morale of the people has improved a great deal during the past few months", continued Supervisor Pike, "and many small towns now have a new outlook on life. Take the Town of Hiles, for an example. A few years ago it was considered a "Ghost Town". The mill was closed and no employment was available for the people outside of WPA. Now most of the men in the town are cutting government timber and regular shipments of pulpwood and forest products leave this little community every week.

"During 1940 we plan on increasing our sales business to the maximum allowable cut and thereby increase the amount of employment provided by about fifty percent."

The preceding article appeared in the *Wabeno Advertiser* February 22, 1939.

# The Round Lake Dam

Several recent "Chips & Sawdust" have had notes about the Round Lake logging dam. The *Milwaukee Journal* (September 19, 1992) contained a lengthy article on efforts to preserve this dam.

Price county residents and workers from the US Forest Service are joining forces on the western shore of Round Lake to preserve one of the country's last 19th-century logging dams.

By Wednesday or Thursday, crews from the Friends of the Round Lake Logging Dam expect to finish the first phase of their restoration project--taking the thing apart. Putting it back together, Phase Two of the project, is scheduled to begin at low water next August or September.

This week's incessant rain complicated the work, but didn't stop it. A sandbagged dam, approved by the state Department of Natural Resources, successfully diverted water from Round Lake into the South Fork of the Flambeau River. Despite rising waters, the temporary dike held.

For John Vogel, 40, of Milwaukee, supervising historian, the restoration is "a unique opportunity to document an important part of America's past."

For Bob Kemper, 73, of Park Falls, a retired Forest Service construction superintendent, it's about time.

"I screamed and hollered for years about preserving this thing," he said as he took a break from hefting timbers off the top of the dam.

He wasn't alone.

Mindful that each spring's floodwaters swept away more of the structure, the Forest Service paid for the

narrative history and measured drawings that eventually won the dam--built sometime between 1878 and 1886--a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

### **COSTLY PROJECT**

Rebuilding the dam was a costlier proposition, for which the Chequamegon National Forest budget had no funds.

Fortunately, an earlier owner did. In 1915, only six years after the last log drive on the South Fork of the Flambeau, the dam became the property of Otto C. Doering, a vice president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. and a dedicated preservationist.

Throughout the 1930's, Doering shored up the structure, replacing rotted timbers as nearly as possible with replicas that preserved the original appearance. To reduce water pressure on the dam, he constructed a weir that now holds Round Lake at a constant level

But now some of Doering replacements are failing.

The three original sluice gates are gone, the last in a spring flood just a few years ago.

"It was still standing when I did the documentation for the National Register of Historical Places," Vogel said. "It was a gorgeous piece, hand hewn. You could see the adz marks."

To Manny Stein, 56, a retired forester who was born in the area and still lives year-round on the South Fork below the dam, it seemed a shame that the rest of the dam also might be lost to time and the river.

Jack Wierzba, 56, who had summered in the area most of his adult life, agreed. His wife, Avis, 58, grew up vacationing on Round Lake.

"We canoed below the dam, walked across it, didn't realize its historic importance until just recently," said Wierzba, a former Milwaukeean. Now he's co-chairman of the Friends group, which is seeking \$2000,000 to match an equal amount from the Forest Service to pay for the restoration.



## 50-50 SPLIT

According to Becky Dinsmore, 41, Forest Service project manager, the cost-share partnership between the Friends group and the Forest Service is a flexible arrangement.

We've agreed to go 50-50 on the cost of the project," she said. "That means we each contribute half, but we can negotiate what will constitute that half."

Some contributions will be in kind -- loaned equipment, donated building materials and hard work.

So Wierzba is wearing a hard hat and hauling timbers along with Jim Robb, 55, who drives up to his cottage on nearby Turner Lake all the way from Mundelein, Ill.

"It's important to us summer people, too," Robb said of the restoration project. "It would be a shame to see it all swept away."

For Vogel, the disassembly is the most fascinating part of the project. As he records the exact measurements and position of each giant timber hauled from the dark wood structure, Vogel is unlocking secrets of 19th-century technology.

Logging dams like this on the South Fork of the Flambeau River used to be familiar fixtures throughout America's forestlands. Trees felled in the area were stored in the pond behind the dam. When it was time for a log drive, the sluice gates were opened, and the rush of water carried the logs downstream to the sawmills. Breaking up jams to speed the logs along were nimble lumberjacks, armed only with their own amazing agility and spiked tools known as cant hooks and pike poles.

However, though historians know how the dams looked and how they worked, scholars don't really know how they were constructed.

"The people who built them were folk technologists, who worked from experience and the materials at hand, not from blue-prints," Vogel said.

Vogel is looking forward to raising the "flooring" broad planks at the base of the dam. Underneath, the historians in hard hats will discover what the original dam builders used to stabilize the river bed.

He said, "I'm not aware of any other logging dam in the country that is undergoing a piece-by-piece restoration. We're uncovering secrets every day.

## Movies of Camp Life

**T**he *Forest Republican* (Crandon) of January 17, 1920 mentioned that several logging camps in the vicinity of Crandon were the subject of a movie.

Duane H. Kipp, Superintendent of the Department of Education and Publications of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission, left for Madison, Wednesday, after spending a week in the county taking moving pictures of camp life at the Bowler Lumber company's camp and Forest County Lumber company's camp on 55.

Mike Brennan will have a very conspicuous part in one of the scenes. John Schabadok will also have a part in this movie film which when completed, together with several thousand feet of wild life scenes, will be shown at the movie houses.

Mr. Kipp is also writing a story of camp life and outdoor recreation as he finds it in Forest county.

The films and story should be very interesting when completed.

It would be interesting to know if these movies still exist.

**Paper for this issue of "Chips & Sawdust"  
was provided courtesy of  
Badger Paper Co., Peshtigo, WI.**

## **Committee Chairmen 1991-1992**

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