



A Newsletter
From
Forest History
Association of Wisconsin, Inc.
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Officers & Directors 1988-1989

Thomas R. Albrecht
304 W. Richmond Street
Shawno, WI 54155

Joyce Bant - Vice President
Route 1, Box 62
Prentice, WI 54556

Karl Baumann - President
1119 Florence Street
Marinette, WI 54143

Frank N. Fixmer - Secretary-Treasurer
604 9th Street
Mosinee, WI 54455

Eugene Harm
Route 2, Box 468
Cadott, WI 54727

Russell H. Roberts
363 W. Leather Street
Tomahawk, WI 54487

Michael Sohasky
1435 Neva Road
Antigo, WI 54409

Ralph G. Swanson
P. O. Box 361
Winchester, WI 54567

Jacque D. Vallier
100243 N. Westport Circle
Mequon, WI 53092

Editor's Notes

This year's annual meeting will be held October 6-7, at Marinette. Final preparations are nearly complete and members will be receiving details soon. The local arrangements committee, Alan Wooden, Karl Krog, Bob Brisson, and Karl and Helen Baumann have planned an excellent agenda. There will be field trips to the Marinette County Logging Museum and Peshtigo Fire Museum and Cemetery and scheduled presentations include papers on retrieving dead-heads, the Marinette County Forest, life at the former mill town of Peshtigo Harbor, and the transitional period from pine logging to hardwoods.

Plans call for our second annual auction but we need more items. The auction was one of the highlights of last year's annual meeting, and we were able to generate some much needed income. This year we'd like to have an even bigger and better auction but we need more items. Any type of lumbering memorabilia is welcome -- books, artifacts and relics, logging tools, photos, postcards, etc. Please contact Frank Fixmer or the editor as soon as possible.

Randall Rohe, Editor

Early Forest Survey

The period around the turn of the century signalled many changes in the lumber industry of Wisconsin. As the need for conservation became apparent, the state recognized the necessity of a survey of the northern forests as a basis for planning for the future. The *Eagle* (27 October 1897) devoted several columns to such a survey conducted by Filbert Roth for the Wisconsin Geological Survey in the late 1890's.

Three Billion Feet

Filbert Roth, a Forestry Expert, Makes Estimate of Standing Pine Tributary to Marinette and Menominee Mills.

One Billion in our County

Most Important Figures on Timber Resources Ever Given Out - Enough to Run the Mills for Over Ten Years.

The *Eagle* last evening obtained from Filbert Roth, a forestry expert, the most important figures ever given out here in regard to the standing pine and hardwood in Marinette county and tributary to the Menominee River.

They were secured by inquiry among the lumbermen and cruisers on the river. Isaac Stephenson, A.C. Merriam, Fred Carney, Sr., Ben Hall, D.J. McAllister, and others assisted him in getting at the figures which can be considered the most reliable ever published. Mr. Roth's figures on the pine available for the Marinette and Menominee mills is higher than any of the local lumbermen will concede. He estimates it at three billion at the least, or enough to run all the mills here for ten years to come, sawing 300,000,000 feet a year.

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Comes From Washington

Mr. Roth comes from Washington, D. C., and is of the United States department of agriculture. He spent several days here in the interest of the Wisconsin state geological survey. He is making a tour of the northern counties to determine the amount of standing timber of different kinds, hardwood, etc., as well as pine, and at the same time to inquire into the conditions of the standing forest as well as the cut over pine lands.

Main Point of Inquiry

One of the points of inquiry is to settle the much vexed question of how far these cut over lands are capable of reforestation and to what extent nature is doing this under present conditions.

The Standing Pine

As regards the standing pine Mr. Roth finds considerable difficulty in this as well as other counties. Of the sixteen billion feet of pine which he places as probably standing originally in the 100 towns tributary to the Menominee river in both states, that only about ten billion have been cut, and that either a great deal more timber has been destroyed by fire than is usually assumed or that there is still a much more respectable amount standing than is conceded by those best acquainted with both land and timber.

Three Billion Left

Mr. Roth said he was confident that there were three billion feet left which could be sawed by the Marinette and Menominee mills. Most of the Marinette lumbermen say that it is not more than a billion and a half but Mr. Roth believes from all that he has heard that this is cutting the proper figure in two. He says that wherever he has gone the best informed men have underestimated the amount of standing pine. In some counties where the pine is supposed to be cut he finds that forty and fifty million feet per year is being manufactured. In Marathon county which is supposed to be exhausted of its pine resources there are fifty small mills and none of them cut less than a million feet of pine as well as much hardwood.

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Billion in Marinette Co.

The pine in Marinette Co. is all in the northern half, and the hardwood in the southeastern corner. His estimate of the standing pine in Marinette county is one billion feet. This is all north of Wausaukee. This is also above the commonly accepted estimate.

300,000,000 Feet of Hardwood

On the other hand the amount of hardwood in this county falls short, by considerable, of his expectations, almost in proportion as the area of bare lands exceeds them. There seems to be a little over one-tenth of the county in hardwood and hemlock together, and while the opinions on the probable yield of this territory vary considerably there is no likelihood of this cutting much over 300 million feet. This, of course, does not include the immense tracts of hardwood owned by Marinette companies outside of Marinette Co.

Second Pine Growth

Here, as elsewhere, he finds the views of men differ as to whether young pine grows on old choppings, though a visit to some of the land on the Soo line, or to the hills surrounding Iron Mountain, ought to make converts of the most doubtful. The young trees are growing nicely there. How far nature is capable of accomplishing great results in a territory where fire is a normal accompaniment of dry summer weather, is, of course, a totally different question.

Object of Statistics

The object of securing the statistics is to estimate the timber resources of the state and also to look up data in regard to reforesting the cut over lands. The forestry commission recently appointed by the governor will appear before the next legislature and probably ask for an appropriation to seed the cut over land in white pine. The lands will probably be purchased by the state and a good system of fire wardenship maintained. In thirty years after planting, Mr. Roth believes that the cut over lands will yield pulp wood and other small timber. In fifty, box timber, etc., and in seventy-five, he thinks that the pine trees will again

be ready for logging. Lands which are practically worthless now will yield the state over \$150 an acre in seventy-five years. Mr. Roth believes the plan entirely feasible. He says that there are lands in Maryland which have been held since colonial times and are worth now only about three dollars an acre. If they had been planted in pine, \$150 an acre would be their value.

Mr. Roth's home is in Germany, and he had a wide experience in reforestation there. He left this morning for Oconto, where he will work for several days.

Peshtigo Historical Days

Overlapping with our annual meeting, Peshtigo will hold its annual historical days (October 6, 7, 8). Tentative events include bath tub races down the Peshtigo River, antique fire engine display, model airplane fly-in, 10K "Fire Tower" run, craft and antique shows, Peshtigo Fire Museum tours, canoe races, hayrides and other events.

Moving Mills

As lumber companies exhausted their timber supply in Wisconsin, they often moved on to the Pacific Northwest or South, taking many of their employees with them. Sometimes, the companies even moved their mills. Several Marinette lumber companies did this when they ended their operations on the Menominee. The *Eagle* of February 14, 1899 wrote:

To Move a Mill South

New Mill of L.W. & V.S. Co. Will not Saw this Year, but will be Moved to Louisiana.

The Employees Notified.

Most of Them will Probably be Taken South—Other Interesting Menominee Notes.

Menominee, Feb. 14, 1899.

Isaac Stephenson Jr., leaves this evening for Louisiana. Mr Stephenson owns vast tracts of southern pine and goes south to look it over and perfect plans for operating a sawmill. He has notified the old employees of the L. W. & V.S. Co. that the new mill has sawed the last log in this city and will be removed to the southern pine lands immediately. This matter has been contemplated for some time and Mr. Stephenson goes south to perfect arrangements for the removal of the new mill from this city.

The company finishes cutting all its timber this winter. They will leave enough stock to supply the old mill this season and then it will be removed south. The company has sold nearly all the old stock, but have made no contracts yet for the '99 cut.

Mr. Stephenson will take a complete crew of Menominee men south to operate the mill. Some of the old employees have already made plans to remove south. This is the first migratory step of sawmill men to remove to the southern pine lands.

The *Eagle Star*, (8 March 1904), reported another company moving its mill from Marinette, this time to the Pacific Northwest.

Shipping Entire Mill

Machinery and Timbers of the M.R.L. Mill Being Sent to Spokane, Wash.

The work of tearing down the old mill of the Menominee River Lumber Co., which has been in progress for some time, but it will take several weeks yet to complete the work. Most of the machinery has been shipped to Spokane to the A.M. Fox Co. and now all the timbers are being placed on cars and sent out there. Seven carloads of timbers have already been shipped and everything in the mill except the siding, will be utilized in the west. The Sawyer Goodman Co. will use the mill site for piling purposes.

By this date the companies still operating at Marinette had largely switched to cutting hemlock and hardwoods and shipping by rail. The *Eagle-Star* (19 February 1904) noted.

Many Logs by Rail

**About Seventy Per Cent of Logs Coming this Winter are
Hemlock and Hardwood
A Total of 50,000,000 feet
Will Probably be Brought in Here. --
Only About Thirty Per Cent of This is Pine.**

Alex Lindsley, who is looking after the scaling of logs brought in here over the St. Paul, says that the company is unable to furnish cars enough for the business. Logs are being rushed in here at a great rate. It is believed that the St. Paul will bring in to Marinette this winter about 18,000,000 feet and into Menominee about 12,000,000 feet. The Wisconsin & Michigan is also doing a bigger log business than ever this winter and will bring into Marinette and Menominee a total of over 15,000,000 feet, making the grand total that will come in here between 45,000,000 and 50,000,000 feet. Of this large amount, about fifty per cent of it is hemlock and about twenty per cent hardwood and thirty per cent pine. This data shows how the cut of the mills on the river is changing from pine to hardwood and how much of the cut now consists of hardwood and hemlock.

The railroads not only hauled most of the logs by this date, but most of the lumber as well. The *Eagle-Star* (18 August 1905) contained the following note.

Lumber by Rail

Major Portion of Local Cut Seems to be Going That Way

There has been a great change in the local lumber business in the past two years. The major portion of the lumber seems to be going out by rail. From Menominee this year hardly a boat has been loaded, the J.W. Wells Co. and the Spies Co. shipping their stock by rail. In Marinette the same condition obtains with the exception of the Hines stock at the Ludington mills, most of which goes by water.

The Ann Arbor car ferries have been doing a big business this year in lumber. The Menominee companies and the Sawyer Goodman Co. have been shipping a great deal via the car ferries. The Sawyer Goodman Co, has rafted the lumber across the river and then loaded it on cars to prevent switching charges.

Auction Items Still Needed

Our annual auction is one of the best ways we can generate additional revenue for FHAW in order to expand and improve our services. If you are willing to donate something, please contact me (414-521-5126 office or 414-691-1091 home) or Frank Fixmer (715-693-2995). Any kind of lumbering memorabilia - photos, artifacts, relics, tokens, books, logging tools, postcards, etc - are welcome.

Information Wanted

Recently FHAW member Paul Brenner wrote the editor about the maximum distance logs were sledged to driving streams during the pine era. He also wondered how far apart a company would build their camps if it had a large block of timberland. Would a company bother to build a camp for a small block (a few forties) or simply have them walk in to cut it? Finally, Paul wants information on log marks used by various companies, especially other than those used in the Chippewa River District. Paul can be reached at Box 108, Boulder Junction, WI 54512.

Editor's note: It would seem that even during the pine era the maximum sledding distance would vary considerably because of such factors as terrain, available technology, time (late or early pine era), size of operations, location of timberland, etc. Bernhardt Kleven in his dissertation wrote: "The roads were usually limited to approximately five miles in length, although some were ten to twelve miles long." Bryant and Brown considered it unprofitable to walk men more than 1 to 1.5 miles from camp to work. A few examples of sledding distances that I've found in period newspapers: 3 to 4 miles, Au Sable River, Mi (1879); 3/4 to 1 1/4 miles, Leathem and Smith Camp, Peshtigo River, Wi, (1887); Nelson Camp, Clam Falls, WI, about 5 miles (1886); Morrison Camp, Rum River, MN., 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 miles, (1875); Begole, Fox and Co. Camp, Marathon, MI, 4 1/2 miles; North Branch, MI 1 mile; Bur-

lington, MI, 2 miles; North Branch MI, 7 miles, (1871); W.W. Crapo Camp, Deerfield, Mi, 4 1/2 miles, (1871).

The Past in a Brush Stroke

Not every ghost town has its own artist to portray its past. Kaiser and Kennedy, Wisconsin do though. Edith Fleming, self-taught artist, has left a legacy of sketches, oil and acrylic paintings that record the logging era of the Park Falls area, her own family's history and life in northern Wisconsin.

Edith Elizabeth Atwood came with her family to Kennedy in 1917. She was 8 years old. They came to tar paper shacks, stumps and trails, sawmills and a company town. The Kaiser-Blackwell Mill provided jobs for the men who brought their wives and children to settle the cutover forties of the Kennedy community west of Kaiser. Here she remained, married Gordon Fleming, raised her children and lived on their wooded land until her death in 1986. From her memories she created her pictures. The Price County Historical Society, friends and family of Edith presented a tribute to her at the Christ the Servant Lutheran Church/ELCA, Highway 13 South, Park Falls, WI July 30 - August 6, 1989, as part of Park Falls' centennial celebration.

The Price County Historical Society was organized in 1959 and took on its first substantial project in 1967 when the Town of Fifield deeded the town hall to it. Work to restore the building was begun in 1968 and in 1976 its doors were opened to the public regularly for the summer seasons. The

society maintains and develops the museum with county, town and private donations and volunteer help.

Today the Old Town Hall houses artifacts from the logging days of Price County from 1879 through the 1930's. Beginning on the lower floor, the clerk's office displays logging tools, camp artifacts and railroad memorabilia. A Victorian period living room and kitchen occupy the old jail area and the two kitchens from which the Congregational and Catholic ladies' societies dispensed dinners on special occasions, now present collections of household and personal items and changing exhibits. A gift shop offering books about local and Northern Wisconsin history and life is located in the treasurers' office.

For more information contact Price County Historical Society, HCR 2 Box 717, Park Falls, WI 54552

Phone: 715/762-4571

The Peshtigo Fire

The significance of the Peshtigo Fire is demonstrated by the national coverage it received. While researching mining in California, I ran across the following note in the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* (28 November 1871).

Incidents of the Peshtigo Fire

A member of the Cincinnati Relief Committee, after visiting the burned district of Wisconsin, makes a report in which he gives the following incidents of the Peshtigo fire:

"To give some idea of the effects of the fire, and the impossibility of escape, we will mention the case of Charles

Lamp, an intelligent German, whom we found sitting in the office of the hospital, badly burned in the hands and feet. He said that, on the Sunday night of the fire, he heard a rumbling noise, not unlike that made by a heavy train of railroad cars, and, on going out of his house to ascertain the cause, found the wind rising to a hurricane. Fearing that the fire, which had been burning in the woods to the west of where he lived, would reach and destroy his house, with such a wind-storm, he hastily hitched up his team and drove to his door, and seizing some bedding and throwing it into the wagon, called to his wife and five children to come out of the house that he might take them to a place of safety. Scarcely had they got into the wagon, leaving all behind them, when the whole country was enveloped in flames. Mounting on the front of his wagon he pushed his horses forward to the Peshtigo road, hoping when he got out of the timber to escape; but everywhere the fire raged furiously. Pressing the horses to their utmost speed, one of them fell. He jumped off to get his horse up, and when he resumed his seat to again start, he looked back and his wife and children were dead! burned into a crisp. Almost suffocated by the flames, smoke and dust, and finding he could do nothing for his family, and being badly burned, he left them to their fate and sought safety for himself. The fire burned the harness so that the horses escaped; and, said he, they are now in Green Bay, all that I have left of wife, children, or property."

"To show the intensity of the heat of the very atmosphere, we may mention that while some of the citizens had taken the fire engine to the river on the first alarm, and laid the hose from the river to the boarding-house, at least one hundred yards distant, and while throwing the water to the full capacity both of hose and engine, the hose burned to a crisp while full of water, and the brass connections melted like lead, and this hose laid on the ground where there was not the least combustible matter, not even a spear of grass. Close to the river stood a small office, on which hung a bell of, perhaps, fifteen or sixteen inches in diameter, made of

bell metal. Such was the intense heat of the air, that the half of the bell out from the house melted, while the other half next the office fell with the burning buildings, and remained intact."

A Logging Myth?

By John Saemann

The May, 1988 issue of "Chips & Sawdust" had an article on a logging sled and its load of logs that had been left abandoned in the woods. This reminded me of a couple stories I've heard in northeastern Wisconsin.

Back in 1958, Marinette County held Farm Progress Days at Wausaukee. For years a story had circulated about a sleigh load of pine logs breaking through the ice of Wolf Lake and folks claimed it must be still there. Our County Agent, Vic Quick, thought it would be a great attraction if the logs, sleigh, harnesses, etc. could be recovered and put on display. Vic had people probe the lake with poles and even sent down scuba divers, but no sleigh load of logs could be found.

I recall another story told to me by Sumner and Putnum Robbins of Spread Eagle Lake in Florence County. Their father lived in Iron Mountain but had a farm across the Menominee River in Florence County, WI at Aurora. He had a steam hauler that he used in the woods during the winter and on the farm in the summer. For some reason, it was at Iron Mountain and they needed it at the farm. It was night when he tried to cross the river. Since the hauler had no lights, he had the hired hand take a lantern and led the way. At that time the bridge was about 1/8 mile below the present location

and had no side rails. As the hired hand was walking across the bridge, he heard a big sturgeon splashing below and wandered over to the side of the bridge to investigate. Mr. Robbins just followed the lantern and drove off into the river.

According to Sumner, the steam hauler didn't stay there more than two or three days. With gin poles, block and tackle, another steam hauler and plenty of manpower, they managed to retrieve the hauler from the river. It's my contention that the old time loggers were too resourceful to ever abandon a locomotive, load of logs, or anything of like value. They'd figure out some way to salvage it. I repeat that the old timers were resourceful! I'd think twice about wasting time tracking down some myth about abandoned logging sleds, steam haulers, or the like.

Editor's note: I have run across a number of reports in period newspapers of sled loads of logs, horses and all breaking through an ice-covered lake or river, but rarely have found an account of any attempt to recover them. Hopefully someday a historian-diver will thoroughly investigate several of the reports given in period newspapers and provide us with a definite answer. I should note that I've actually seen an old, abandoned logging sled in the woods near Gresham, WI. The wood of the sled was so deteriorated that when several teenagers pulled it out of the woods most of the wood disintegrated.

Sylvester Honored

William Sylvester, long time FHAW member, was publicly thanked recently for his role in transforming a marginal cow pasture into a natural field station that is bringing international recognition to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Treehaven's newly-constructed assembly hall, with seating for 125 people, was dedicated in his name on the nearly 1,000-acre nature preserve east of Tomahawk.

The assembly hall was filled with Sylvester's friends, former colleagues and family members in a dedication ceremony marking the completion of a nearly quarter-million-dollar addition connecting a main lodge with a classroom building. The William Sylvester Auditorium is on the ground level and the Irvin Young Dining Room is on the second floor.

Sylvester, of 211 Green Ave., is a retired forestry professor at UW-SP who has had a long-time association with Jacques and Dorothy Vallier, donors of the field station land. Dorothy Vallier announced the naming of the Sylvester Auditorium after telling of the assistance the long-time forester gave in the early 1950s when she began searching for land to use in establishing a tree farm. He remained involved in the transformation of the property from pasture land to a protected area for wild flora and fauna.

Sylvester was on the staff of Trees for Tomorrow, Inc. for 23 years before taking a position on the natural resources faculty at UW-SP in 1969. He was in his former position when Treehaven was being founded and at UW-SP when the Valliers decided to arrange for an organization to take over the

property and continue their philosophy of its management. Sylvester suggested Treehaven become a natural resources camp for students.

Alan Haney, dean of the UW-SP College of Natural Resources, which operates the facility, says Treehaven "represents the spirit and philosophy of the college." At a time when leaders of similar programs in the country were phasing out field work from their curriculum, UW-SP was promoting it by planning Treehaven. While other programs have experienced significant enrollment declines, UW-SP's College of Natural Resources has not only become the largest in the country, "but one of the best in the world."

Leonard De Baker, past president of the UW-SP Foundation, Inc., which has facilitated fund raising for the construction projects, noted that Treehaven has attracted international attention from students and professionals from abroad who have participated in programs in the northwoods setting. (News Release, Office of News and Publications, UW Stevens Point)

Logging Site Added to National Register

W*isconsin Preservation* (vol. XIII, May-June 1989) noted that ten new entries from Wisconsin had been listed in the National Register of Historic Places including

"Trout Point Logging Camp, Ashland County. Site of an early 20th-century logging operation, the property is significant for its potential to yield a wide variety of scien-

tific information on historic logging camps in northern Wisconsin. Also listed in the State Register."

This camp, probably operated by the John Schroeder Lumber Company during the early decades of this century, is the subject of a monograph by Jeffrey J. Richner, "Archeological Evaluation of the Trout Point Logging Camp" (see "C&S" February, 1988 for a review of this book)

Public Forest Tours

Two Consolidated Papers Inc. forest tours are open to the public, according to Daniel G. Hartman, timberlands services manager for the company.

Forest Tour I, a 17-mile, self-guided automobile tour of a Consolidated industrial forest near Rhinelander, opened May 26.

Forest Tour I includes an explanation of Consolidated's efforts to convert poor and understocked natural forest stands to red pine plantations. In addition, there is an example of effective use of herbicide.

At Biron, near Wisconsin Rapids, the company offers a demonstration of forestry practices on a self-guided, 1.5-mile walking tour. Known as Forest Tour II, it is on the site of Consolidated's first tree nursery established in the early 1930's. Forest Tour II is open to the public year-round and is used as a cross-country ski trail in the winter.

Tour booklets are available from the Three Lakes Chamber of Commerce and from Consolidated's public affairs department, P.O. Box 8050 Wisconsin Rapids, Wis, 54495-8050.

Peshtigo - Marinette Lumbering History

Since our 1989 annual meeting will be held at Marinette and focuses on the forest history of the Peshtigo - Marinette area, an overview of that history seems appropriate. The following is excerpted from Bernhardt J. Kleven, "Wisconsin Lumber Industry," unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota 1941, pp 361-385, 285-290.

Marinette & the Menominee Lumber District

The Menominee River system drained ten thousand square miles of pineries in Wisconsin and Michigan, supplying timber for the many mills in Marinette and Menominee at the mouth of the river. The river was vital for driving logs, and Green Bay and Lake Michigan furnished the necessary connection with the great lumber markets. The coming of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad in 1871 did not reduce the significance of the Lake Michigan route, for lumber continued to be shipped in immense quantities throughout the lumbering period.

The Marinette settlement had only three dwellings in the early fifties, one belonging to Dr. Hall, another to Queen Marinette of the Menominee Indian tribe, and a third to her son, John B. Jacobs. A mill and boarding house had been erected on Mission Point. Further down the river was Menekaune, or Pleasant Town, which the Indian name signified. The essential nucleus for this settlement was also a sawmill, that of the New York Lumber Company. The two villages were connected by a road in 1859 when the Corry brothers, who had the contract to remove the mill refuse from the New York mill, built a road two feet thick of

edgings and sawdust across the marsh which had separated the communities.

Marinette, which centered about the N. Ludington Company sawmill, was organized as a village in the spring of 1855. The two villages were incorporated in 1887 as the City of Marinette. Additions were plotted at various times by the N. Ludington Company, and the Menominee River Lumber Company, the successor of the New York Lumber Company. The communities centered about the mills, not only because they were the chief sources of livelihood, but also because the mill companies provided general merchandise stores, and boarding houses. The economic activities depended almost entirely upon these firms.

When the lumber boom of Wisconsin was working into its highest pitch in the late seventies and eighties, the city grew rapidly, and houses and rooms were wholly occupied. In 1882, with a population of six thousand, there were employed in the lumber industry over two thousand, which would indicate many single men. There was no other center in the state where the mills were as concentrated as at the mouth of the Menominee. At one time there were twenty mills located within a two mile radius.

A brief resume of the lumber production on the Menominee River will help to better realize its magnitude. The cut of the Menominee River mills in 1865 was less than 40,000,000 board feet of lumber. This had risen to 144,739,662 feet for the season of 1876. By 1889 the figure had been increased to 578,448,573 feet for the season.

During the logging season in the winter of 1890 there were employed in the two hundred logging camps on the Menominee River almost 5,000 men. During the following season about 4,000 had been employed in the mills in the two cities. The majority of these men went to the camps after the sawing season had been completed.

In 1892 Menominee had twelve sawmills in operation, sawing 287,492,348 feet of lumber, whereas Marinette had nine mills, sawing 286,618,774 feet of lumber the total amounting to 574,111,122 feet. The production of lumber

in the former place experienced a far more precipitate decline than on the Wisconsin side. In 1903 there were five mills sawing in Menominee, but producing only 35,000,000 feet of lumber, about as much as the Detroit Lumber Company of that place cut in 1892. The seven Marinette mill companies in 1903 sawed 198,000,000 feet of lumber.

By 1913 Marinette was reputed to be producing more maple, birch, basswood, and elm lumber than any other sawmill center in the state. Thirty million feet of hardwoods were manufactured each year, requiring 1,300 men working 310 days a year. The annual payroll was over three-quarters of a million dollars. Each one thousand feet of hardwood manufactured paid in wages two to three times as much as white pine.

Peshtigo & the Peshtigo River Lumber District

Peshtigo had become an important lumbering center by the sixties. William B. Ogden of Chicago, who was president of the Chicago and Northwestern railroad, was one of the heavy investors in the Peshtigo Lumber Company, which had been incorporated in 1856.

Isaac Stephenson entered the firm in 1867 when he purchased 50,000 dollars worth of stock, becoming vice-president and general manager. The capital stock was 1,500,000 dollars. The company prospered from the beginning. The timber lands held by the company were increased from 50,000 acres in 1867 to 160,000 by 1882. These were located in the Peshtigo River area. The stumpage on these lands amounted to 800,000,000 board feet at the latter date.

The water mill of the firm was located at Peshtigo, and the steam mill at Peshtigo Harbor, about seven miles from Peshtigo. The water mill was equipped with two circular head saws, and in 1881, during a season of seven months, operating days only, sawed 18,000,000 feet of lumber. The steam mill was equipped with two circular head saws, and two gang saws, and produced between 34,000,000 and

36,000,000 feet of lumber the same year. Lath and shingles were also among the products of the mills. In the fall of 1873 a test run of utmost capacity of the mill at Peshtigo Harbor, which had a rated capacity of 350,000 feet in twelve hours, was made. In eleven hours 365,000 feet of lumber were sawed.

In addition to lumber, lath, and shingles, the company manufactured in its large woodenware plant wooden pails, broom handles, clothes pins, and other articles. Because of general over-production and inadequate transportation facilities in the sixties, the company did not realize profits on this phase of its activities. The tragic fire of 1871 destroyed the entire plant, and the woodenware factory was not rebuilt.

Before railroad facilities had been extended to Peshigo in 1871, it had been necessary to ship the products by water to the company's yards at Chicago. A barge line was established by Isaac Stephenson in 1867. The tug, "Admiral D. D. Porter," was used to tow two old barges which were loaded with lumber, shingles, and lath. At the Harbor mill it was necessary to construct a harbor. This was done by driving piles into the water and filling the intervening spaces between the piles and the shore with slabs, edgings, and sawdust from the mill. The depth of the water at the harbor when work had been completed was fourteen feet.

When the work was completed, ships were loaded directly at the docks without the necessity of first loading onto scows, and then transferring the load to the larger vessels. By 1882 the company had a powerful tug and six barges. Each tow transported one million feet of lumber with a total of 8,000,000 feet carried in a month.

At the end of the sawing season of 1895 work at the Harbor mill was discontinued. The mill had been in operation every sawing season since the spring of 1868, operating day and night shifts for a number of years. Part of the mill machinery was installed in the plant at the village of Peshigo. The remaining plant of the company at Peshtigo was enlarged to an annual capacity of 25,000,000 to 30,000,000

feet making it one of the large lumber producers in the state. Perley Lowe secured control of the company at the turn of the century. Lumber continued to be manufactured there for many years, but all activity in this field has now long since been discontinued.

Logging Camp Inspires Play

Life in the logging camps not only left a rich heritage of folklore, but in at least one case inspired a popular play. The *Eagle* (24 November 1987) wrote:

In a Lumber Camp.

Gus Heege wrote *Ole Oleson in a Spalding Lumber Co's Camp Several Years Ago*.

Gus Heege; the originator of the Ole Oleson comedy, who appeared last night with "The Girl From Frisco" company, gathered the inspiration for his play in a camp of the Spalding Lumber Co. near Spalding Mich. He became stranded with a theatrical company at Escanaba and soon after secured work in the woods. There were a great many Scandinavians in the camp and Mr. Heege finally decided to write a play incorporating the dialect in the production.

He was working as cookee and found time to get out the production after his work with the cook was done. Ole Oleson was a great success and Mr. Heege made a barrel of money with it. To an Eagle reporter this morning he said that he had a Swedish opera in preparation and expected to soon produce it before the foot lights. Mr. Heege made an ideal Ole Oleson. He is a big burly German with flaxen hair and his dialect was perfect.

Members in the News

- **Alvin Barden**, Eagle River, was appointed executive director of the Wisconsin Forest Productivity Council, a coalition of public and private groups interested in improving the productivity of the state's non-industrial, privately-owned forest lands.
- **John Grosman**, Tomahawk, has become editor of "The Forestry Grapevine," newsletter for employees of the Bureau of Forestry, Department of Natural Resources.
- **Mary Lagerbloom**, Merrill, has been named curator of the newly established museum in that city. The two-story home built in 1882 by T. B. Scott, a pioneer lumberman and Merrill's first mayor, was renovated under the direction of **Mike Weckwerth**, also a member of F.H.A.W. and a member of the board of directors of the Merrill Historical Society, sponsor of the project.
- **Jack & Dory Vallier**, Mequon, were cited for their philanthropy at the annual recognition dinner of the College of Natural Resources, UW-Stevens Point. The Valliers donated nearly 1,000 acres of land on which the Treehaven Field Station is located, and subsequently made a large contribution toward the construction of its facilities.
- **Walt Goldsworthy**, Three Lakes, was the prime organizer and master of ceremonies of the dedication of the Sam Campbell Memorial Forest & Hiking Trail

on the Eagle River District of the Nicolet National Forest.

Drought is Fatal Blow for Stand of Pines

It took almost a year, but last summer's drought has claimed one of the last remaining virgin stands of white pines in the lower two-thirds of Wisconsin.

About 80 white pines, all about 300 years old, have been removed from the farm of Paul Bovee, whose family had protected them since settling in the Town of Pine Grove in Portage County four generations ago.

Bovee, 63, said most of the trees were between 65 feet and 75 feet tall. The largest yielded 1,500 board feet of lumber when cut up at a Crandon saw mill, he said.

Weather had ravaged some of the trees over the years, "but last year's drought hurried their decline," he said. "All that stress was the knock-out blow." (*Milwaukee Journal*, 16 July 1989)

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Committee Chairmen 1988-1989

1989 Annual Meeting

Karl Baumann

Distinguished Service Award

Frank M. Fixmer

Publicity

Russell Roberts

Student Awards

John Saemann

Mike Sohasky

Annual Proceedings

Randall Rohe

Newsletter

Randall Rohe



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

403 McIndoe Street
Wausau, Wisconsin 54401



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of Wisconsin, Inc.
403 Michdoe Street
Wausau, Wisconsin 54401

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