

A Newsletter

From

Forest History

Association of Wisconsin, Inc.

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Editor's Notes

Bob Brisson recently asked to be relieved of his duties as editor of "Chips and Sawdust." The Board of Directors extend its thanks and appreciation to Bob for his efforts as editor. Since I did not take over the position until the end of February, this issue is regrettably late. I ask the patience of the F.H.A.W. membership during this transition in editorship. Normal publication schedule will resume with the May issue.

Unless members suggest otherwise, "Chips and Sawdust" will maintain a similar format and publication schedule as that of past years, and attempt to keep members informed of all Association activities between its annual meetings and provide short notes on forest history, news of members' activities, reviews of recent publications, etc.

"Chips and Sawdust" began as a forum for members, about members, and by members. Yet in the past, it's been largely a one man effort. As often as previous editors encouraged it, members rarely responded to requests for contributions of news items or articles. Again, I encourage members to submit news of their activities, newspaper clippings on forest history, short articles, or other items of possible interest to our members. Even materials deemed unsuitable for use in "Chips and Sawdust" will be a welcome addition to the Association's archives. Those members engaged in research in forest history and looking for information please send the editor a brief summary of your research interests for inclusion in "Chips and Sawdust."

Your suggestions for improvement of our newsletter are always welcome.

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Land Companies in the Cutover

Many people envisioned northern Wisconsin as a vast new agricultural frontier once lumbering ended; some even dreamed of a second dairy empire. Though it never happened, it was not from lack of effort. Lumber and land companies, county and state government, and even the University of Wisconsin Extension promoted the development of agriculture in the north. Paul Brenner of Boulder Junction has researched the activities of one of these companies in that area of northern Wisconsin. We are pleased to publish a brief summary of his findings and encourage other F.H.A.W. members to submit similar articles on forest history for publication.

The Dells Lumber Company acquired land in the Boulder Junction area from the late 1870's to 1892 and logged here from 1892-1900. In 1900 the Dells Lumber Company became the Dells Lumber and Shingle Company and in December sold their cutover lands to the Home Investment Company of Stevens Point. In 1902 the Home Investment Company sold

their lands to the Bluegrass Land Company of Baldwin, WI. In 1905 the Bluegrass Land Company built the Bluegrass Hotel, which had rooms, a post office, and land office in it, at Oxley about 3 miles west of Boulder Junction. On a nearby lake, they set up a small farm and saw mill. In the next several years or so, there were several mortgages, foreclosures and reorganizations. The Bluegrass Land Company became the Wisconsin Bluegrass Land Company, also the Western Bluegrass Land Company. In the last major court case in 1912, the Central Wisconsin Trust Company became receiver for the Northern Bluegrass Land Company and acquired much of the company's acreage. In the Boulder Junction area, John Nichols and Ervin Fressell acquired some of the land and various other individuals purchased the other parts of the holdings. By 1917 John Nichols apparently bought out Fressell and sold land in this area probably until the early 1930's when the Bluegrass Hotel burnt down. The last land agent here was Bill Wolfle who died some 30 years ago.

Most of the old time Boulder Junction families bought their land from Nichols and Fressell, whose main office was in Minneapolis. They would bring prospective customers over by train, put them up at the Hotel or at the farm on Nichols Lake, show them what they had for sale, and then haul them back to Minnesota. Most of the settlers who bought land tried farming for one to five years, but gave up because of the short growing season and poor soil and either left the area or started up small resorts, carpentry businesses, etc. The majority of the land around Boulder Junction owned by the

logging companies was sold to the Wisconsin Conservation Department in the 1910-20 era and was the start of the Northern Highland State Forest.

The Vilas County Historical Society at Sayner has a large map of the Blue Grass Land Company holdings in Vilas County.

Information Wanted

I am working on an article that deals with the migration of people from the Southern Appalachians, specifically Kentucky and West Virginia, and their role in the lumber industry of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota between 1890-1930. A number of writers have briefly noted the presence of "Kentuckians" in the workforce of the Great Lakes lumber industry around the turn of the century. One source even claimed that "Kentuckytowns" once dotted parts of the northern Lakes States. As yet, however, a detailed study of "Kentuckians" and their role in the Lakes States lumber industry is lacking.

I'm interested in obtaining photos, newspaper articles, diaries, or anything else that concerns "Kentuckians" in the northern portions of WI, MN, and MI in the period 1890-1930. So far, library research has not disclosed much information and I'm hoping that personal interviews and surveys of still living "Kentuckians" will provide the necessary information for completion of this project.

If you can be of assistance to me in any way, it will be greatly appreciated.

Please respond to:

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Welcome, New Members

Johnson Timber Company, Hayward, WI

William Krochmalski, Black River Falls, WI

Recent Publications

"An Archeological Evaluation Of The Trout Point Logging Camp." Midwest Archeological Center Occasional Studies in Anthropology #17. By Jeffrey J. Richner (Lincoln: Midwest Archeological Center, 1986, vii and 108 pp. Figures, references. Limited distribution).

This report chronicles the archeological investigation of a logging camp, probably operated by the John Schroeder Lumber Company during the early decades of this century at Trout Point on Stockton Island, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

Though only 12 square meters were excavated, 1119 artifacts were recovered and

36 site features, including 9 former structures, were mapped. Richner combines archeological information with documentary evidence to establish the approximate date of occupation, to determine the function of site features and to develop a data base for examining the history and significance of the site within a regional setting and to provide a sketch of logging camp life. The monograph is well illustrated with excellent maps, sketches, photos, and graphs.

DUNBAR REMEMBERED, 1888-1988. By the Dunbar Centennial Book Committee (Dunbar: Dunbar Centennial Committee, 1987, 208 pp. Figures \$25.00)

The Girard Lumber Company of Menominee, MI in 1888 built a sawmill about 13 miles west of Pembine, WI and established the company town of Dunbar. In organization and plan, this book is quite similar to the centennial books published by other communities in the last few years. About a quarter of the book deals with the logging and lumbering period in Dunbar's history and contains numerous illustrations. F.H.A.W. member Jim Kaysen contributed substantially to this section of the book. Anyone interested in lumbering history or in the history of northern Wisconsin should enjoy this book.

"White Lake, Wisconsin: Lumber Center On the Soo," Part I. By Randall Rohe. The Soo (January 1988), pp. 30-49.

In July 1916, the Yawkey-Bissell Lumber Company was organized and incorporated by a group of lumbermen known as the "Wausau

Group." The newly incorporated company then purchased a large tract of timber in Langlade County. The company built a sawmill at White Lake and established a company town of the same name--one of the last lumber company towns founded in Wisconsin. Part one of this article deals with the founding of White Lake and the logging operations of the Yawkey-Bissell Lumber Co. Numerous photos and several maps illustrate the article.

"Great Lakes Lumber Towns and Frontier Violence A Comparative Study," by Jeremy W. Kilar Journal of Forest History (April 1987), pp. 71-85.

During the white pine era, the three largest lumbering centers in Michigan developed reputations as the toughest towns on the Great Lakes. Kilar examines frontier violence in Muskegon, East Saginaw, and Bay City in comparison with that in western cattle towns and mining towns. He found that in almost all areas--prostitution, fighting, rowdyism, and homicide--the lumber towns were well within the mainstream of America's violent frontier tradition.

The Nekoosa Story By J. Marshall Buehler (Port Edwards: Nekoosa Papers, Inc., 1987, 169 pp. Figures, references)

The year 1987 marked 150 years since Nekoosa Papers Inc. entered the lumber business, 100 years since it began pulp/paper making, and 50 years since it began producing fine writing paper. J. Marshall Buehler has compiled an interesting monograph to commemorate these anniversaries. Buehler divides his story of how a small sawmill grew

into one of the world's largest producers of fine paper into four periods: The Lumber Era (1831-1887), From Lumber To Newsprint (1887-1918), Wrapping Papers and Speciality Sheets (1918-1937), The Switch To Fine Papers (1937-1987). The book is well illustrated with many fine photographs.

Foster's and Nobody Else's. By William [W] O'Gara (North Freedom: Mid-Continent Railway Historical Society, 1988, 72 pp. Figures \$10.97)

This book chronicles the lumbering operations of N.C. Foster, who operated lumber mills at Owego (Shawano Co.) from 1870 to 1876 and at Fairchild (Eau Claire) from 1876 to 1905. An early innovator in moving logs to the mill by rail in Wisconsin, he started a logging line in 1882, which became the Fairchild and Northeastern in 1898. At its peak the F & NE operated over 65 miles of track. The book contains numerous photographs of Foster's railroad and lumbering operations. William J. O'Gara, charter member of F.H.A.W., provided many of the photos. The book is available for \$10.97 from Publication Sales, M.C.R.H.S., P. O. Box 55, North Freedom, WI 53915

Editorial

Despite the efforts of the Officers and Board of Directors, the F.H.A.W. remains an unknown quantity to most people. If we are to keep membership dues down and maintain present services, we need to increase our numbers. Any thoughts of expanding our publishing efforts are impractical at current membership levels.

We therefore appeal to all concerned members to make an effort, either directly or indirectly, to increase our membership. The most efficient and least expensive way to acquaint non-members with our organization is by word of mouth. Please explain the benefits of membership: the various publications, the annual meetings, the chance to interact with others having similar interests, the importance of preserving our forest heritage, etc. Members can help further by providing local and county historical societies, local museums, libraries, schools, etc. with information on the F.H.A.W. Frank Fixmer, Secretary-Treasurer, would be glad to furnish members with flyers on the Association which include a membership form.

We need all of our members' help to recruit new members, to grow, and to improve.

Historic Notes

The logging camps of Wisconsin underwent enormous changes between the beginning and end of the lumber era in terms of size, architectural style, plan, ethnic composition, building material, and other characteristics. The following article, which appeared in the Ashland Daily Press on January 28, 1921, described one of these changes and signalled the imminent end of an era.

Jacks Must Take Baths

Crandon Firm Insists on Workmen
in Camp Taking Bath Once
A Week at Least

CRANDON, Wis.--Chevrier and Son's logging camp near North Crandon is said to be an ideal one for cleanliness. One of the unusual features of the Chevrier camp is a bathroom and woe be to any lumberjack who fails to take weekly Saturday night plunge.

According to the rules of the camp, just a little tea cup bath doesn't go, but Mr. Jack must get right into the water and give himself a thorough scrubbing. As a result "cooties" "head squirrels" and other strange animals do not loiter around the Chevrier camp but hurry for more lucrative fields.

In some upper Wisconsin camps the boys consider it almost a crime to come in contact with soap and water, and go through the winter without a bath. Everything about the Chevrier camp is spick and span and the "jacks" enjoy it.

Wisconsin's Hardwood Forest -- The Way It Was

by Frank Fixmer

Browsing through a recent issue of THE TIMBER PRODUCER magazine, one cannot help but notice the numerous references to hardwood forest products. At least a half dozen "want ads" announced markets for hardwood pallet lumber, hardwood veneer logs and hardwood sawlogs. Current hardwood lumber prices were reported as good, and even getting better for oak; 1986 statistics indicated that more hardwood pulpwood was being used than ever before. A Wisconsin firm was reported to have bought 120,000 acres of U.P. Michigan timberland, mostly hardwoods.

All of these facts served to emphasize the growing importance of the state's hardwood forest resource.

It wasn't always that way. One hundred years and more ago, pine was king and most species of hardwoods were bypassed by the loggers and lumbermen. But as the pinery gradually became depleted and railroads replaced rivers for the delivery of logs to the mills, the utilization of the extensive areas of hardwoods increasingly attracted the attention of entrepreneurs.

What was the situation during the latter quarter of the nineteenth century? The March, 1874 issue of The Wisconsin Lumberman gave its views on the hardwood resource as follows:

"As yet the immense hardwood forests of northern Wisconsin have hardly been disturbed by the tread of the landlooker, much less by the axe of the woodman. Hundreds of thousands of acres of magnificent hardwood lands yet remain subject to entry or homestead settlement. Today there is, proportionately, more active demand and more ready cash sale for hardwood lumber than there is for pine. The railroads are now making the hardwood timber of the north accessible, and sawmills, stave factories and wagon hub factories are commencing to utilize this portion of the material wealth of the state. One of the best regions for the investment of capital in the manufacture of hardwood lumber is along the line of the Wisconsin Central north from Stevens Point. A fine opportunity is soon to be offered on the route of the Wisconsin Valley Railroad as that line is extended to Wausau and the north. The Green Bay and Minnesota Railroad already traverses localities growing the finest hardwood timber and possessing first-class facilities and inducements for manufacture. Portions of the Milwaukee and St. Paul line of road and the

West Wisconsin Railroad also render accessible thousands of acres of these valuable timber lands. The pine forests have naturally engrossed the attention of the manufacturers almost exclusively, but for profitable investment for those who can afford to tie up capital for a few years, the hardwood lands undoubtedly offer rare inducements. The experience of investments made in former years in eastern states indicate to a certainty the profitableness of the opportunity now offered in central and northern Wisconsin. There is yet large tracts of these hardwood lands in this state subject to entry at the government price per acre, and we would call the special attention of capitalists to the fact."

Today about 80% of the logs harvested (for sawlogs and pulp) consists of hardwoods. In 1982 Wisconsin produced 692,675 million board feet of hardwoods, 133,650 million board feet of softwoods and 2,855,300 cords of hardwood and 751,750 cords of softwoods (pulpwood). The state contains 360 sawmills, 75-80% of which probably manufacture mainly hardwoods, and 600 secondary wood using industries. (Tom Albrecht.).

Members in the News

JAY CRAVENS, Milwaukee, charter member and former director of F.H.A.W., was elected Vice-President of the Society of American Foresters.

L. J. MARQUARDT, Madison, is the author of an article in the December, 1987 issue of the Journal of Forestry on the contribution made by the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory in Madison to international wood research. Marquardt served the Forest Products Laboratory for 45 years before retirement.

ED NAGEL, Land O'Lakes, was a 1987 recipient of the Merit Award presented annually by the Timber Producers Association of Michigan and Wisconsin. The Award recognizes his outstanding service to the forest products industry in the Lake States region. Nagel has been a director and past-president of F.H.A.W.

RANDALL ROHE, Pewaukee, Director of F.H.A.W, presented a paper, "Population Characteristics of Great Lakes Logging Camps, 1830-1930," at the Annual Meeting of the National Council for Geographic Education, Springfield, MO, October 17-22, 1987.

Library Acquisitions

The Association's reference library has been enriched in recent months by donations of the following:

The Age of Paper: Consolidation of the Water Power at Wisconsin Rapids, 1886 - 1904. David Engel, Wisconsin Rapids, 1987. A contribution from Consolidated Papers, Inc., this well illustrated history of the beginnings of the paper industry on the Wisconsin River at Grand Rapids (now Wisconsin Rapids) is a collection of articles that appeared in several Wood County periodicals of that era.

Wisconsin Conservation Corps Biennial Report 1985-1987. A review of the W.C.C.'s accomplishments in the field of natural resource protection and development.

"Merrill Area Logging History." Compiled from area newspapers of the late 19th century by Mike Weckwerth of Merrill, this collection of news items represents the day-to-day activities in the logging camps and sawmills of the region.

Names on the Land

The placenames of Wisconsin are a mirror to the past. They record the major economic phases and cultural groups that form the history of the state. An examination of northern Wisconsin, for example, reveals the presence of many placenames that originated during the lumber era, many of them derived from the distinctive nomenclature of logging and lumbering. Each issue will spotlight a place named by the loggers and lumbermen of yesteryear. Contributions from readers are welcome. The following appeared in the Clintonville Tribune on June 2, 1893.

The inquiry is sometimes heard "How did the Pigeon river obtain its name? " A careful investigation by the Tribune discloses the following: About forty years ago in the halcyon days when the pine logs could be gathered on the banks of our little river without the formality of paying for them, a party of lumbermen were camped on the bank driving the timber put in the previous winter. One morning they discovered the woods about them swarming with pigeons. A six months diet of pork and beans had created in their breasts a craving for fresh meat and they hailed with delight the advent of the birds. The cook was instructed to kill pigeons and prepare a feast for the "first lunch." Now the cook had a grievance. During the past winter he had heard at times some rather harsh criticisms of his cuisine and he mentally decided that his opportunity had arrived for playing even with the "boys." He soon collected his birds, prepared an enormous pot-pie, and inserted therein pigeons, feathers, toenails and all, baked it and set it out surrounded by the other camp fare, picked up his wardrobe, cast a malicious grin around the shanty and started "down river" for Oshkosh. Soon after the hungry rivermen with their monstrous appetites whetted by their mornings visions of feasting sat around the shanty table and a big fellow plunged his knife into the smoking pot-pie. He landed a green looking mess upon his plate and his neighbors gazed in consternation for a moment, and then, well, the language that was used will hardly bear repetition and we will leave this part of the tale to the imagination of our readers. It was finally resolved to give chase to the cook, bring him back and make him eat the entire dish. But the cook had several miles the start and a guilty conscience to aid his flying steps. The remembrance of their peculiar dinner caused the lumbermen to call the stream "the Pigeon."

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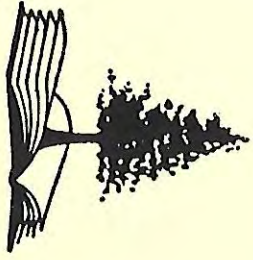
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