



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

Vol. XI - No. 2 - May 1988

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1987--1988

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Editor's Notes

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin will be held in Shawano, WI September 30-October 1, 1988. Make plans to attend now. The program will feature a number of presentations on forest history and a tour of sites related to the area's lumbering history. Details will be forthcoming. Let's make this our most successful annual meeting ever!

A suggestion has been made that we include an auction as part of our annual meeting as a fund raising event. The auction would be of items related to forest history, i.e., logging relics, historic photos of logging and lumbering, lumber company tokens, old lumber trade journals, books on lumbering and forestry, etc. Would members be interested in such an auction? Are there members who would be willing to help organize and run such an event or serve as auctioneers? And would members contribute items to be auctioned? Please send your comments to the editor.

Information Wanted

- Mike Weckwerth, 110 S. Prospect St., Merrill, WI 54452 seeks help in locating issues of the *Rib Lake Herald* for 1922-1938 and photos of the Rib Lake Lumber Company's sawmill and logging operations.
- Randall Rohe, UW-Waukesha, 1500 University Drive, Waukesha, WI 53188 seeks anything on the migration of Kentuckians to the Lakes States and their involvement in logging and lumbering.

Wisconsin's First Logging Railroad: An Addendum

by Randall Rohe

The events surrounding the initial use of railroads for logging in Wisconsin has generated considerable interest among historians of the lumber era. (*C. & S.*, November, 1983) It has generally been accepted that the Crescent Springs Railroad was the state's first successful logging railroad and that it began operations in 1881 (*Proceedings, Third Annual Meeting F.H.A.W.*, p. 40) Although it is not always made clear, acceptance of this date seems based largely on W. G. Hoar's book, *History is Our Heritage*. While Hoar discusses in some detail the Crescent Springs Railroad, he never unequivocally states when the line actually began operation and much of his book is poorly documented. It lacks a bibliography and its few references to period newspapers are not footnoted. Hoar refers to notes that appeared in the *Shell Lake Watchman*, but neither the State Historical Society of Wisconsin nor the Washburn County Historical Society hold copies of the paper for 1882. Correspondence with his widow, Mrs. Jean Hoar, failed to determine his source for this paper.

Evidence from other sources indicate that the Crescent Springs Railroad was not completed and in operation until 1882. Moreover, one of its contemporaries, the Pineville and Great Eastern may have actually been the first successful logging line in Wisconsin. Certainly, the Pineville Railroad preceded in time the Fairchild, Eau Claire River Road, which is generally regarded as Wisconsin's second logging line. In-

terestingly, none of the many works on rail logging in Wisconsin make any reference at all to the Pineville logging railroad.

The Crescent Springs Railroad

The *Burnett County Sentinel* (25 February 1881) and the *Eau Claire News* (19 March 1881) described the Shell Lake Lumber Company as fully organized and reported that the company had built a large boarding house, warehouses, offices, blacksmith shop and other buildings as well as a side track running up to the mill site. Additionally, the company had "purchased the necessary iron, locomotive and cars for a narrow-gauge railroad from here [Shell Lake] to a lake east of us, and will operate it next summer for the purpose of hauling logs." The *Dalles of the St. Croix* (18 February 1881) and the *Lumberman's Gazette* (30 March 1881) likewise reported that the Shell Lake Lumber Company would build a narrow gauge railroad to a lake six miles away and operate it within a year.

Research located no evidence that the Shell Lake Lumber Company built the railway in 1881. The *Northwestern Lumberman* (24 December 1881), however, reported that the company had purchased all the timber tributary to Long Lake and that the North Wisconsin Railroad had agreed to run in a track from Shell Lake and haul out the logs for \$1 per thousand. In March 1882, the *Dalles of the St. Croix* (10 March), the *Lumberman's Gazette* (15 March) and the *Barron County Shield* (10 March) all noted that the Shell Lake Lumber Co. intended to construct a four to six mile long logging railroad. The *Mississippi Valley Lumberman* (29 September 1882) stated that the company had completed some three miles of the line.

David Joyce, who superintended the construction of the railroad, visited the office of the *Northwestern Lumberman* in October and informed its editor of the recent completion of a

nine mile logging railroad from the mill of the Shell Lake Lumber Company. The *Lumberman* (14 October 1882) stated that "The road is now in operation. The track is 35 pound iron, upon which is run a 20-ton engine." The *Mississippi Valley Lumberman* (27 October 1882, 10 November 1882) corroborates these statements.

The Pineville and Great Eastern

The *North Wisconsin News* of 9 April 1880 announced the intention of J. N. Johnson and P. B. Lacy to build a large sawmill three miles above Clear Lake on the North Wisconsin Railroad. The site of Johnson and Lacy's operations soon became known as Pineville. On 14 May 1880, the paper reported that Lacy and Johnson had begun construction of a tram road from their mill toward the Hay River. They had a small tram road locomotive to do the hauling on the road.

The *Polk County Press* (30 July 1881) noted that Lacy and Johnson's new steam sawmill was "in good running order" and cutting about 45,000 feet of lumber daily. In August the *Dalles of the St. Croix* (19 August 1881) and the *Mississippi Lumberman* (26 August 1881) related that Lacy and Johnson would build eight miles of tramway to their mill at Pineville that fall and use iron rails, a steam locomotive, and cars for hauling logs. By late December, Lacy and Johnson had completed some three miles of tram road and were pushing it still further into the woods (*North Wisconsin News*, 24 December, 1881). Within three weeks, the *Dalles of the St. Croix* (13 January 1881) announced that the company had four miles of tram road completed.

By the spring of 1882, Johnson and Lacy had the tramway ready for iron rails and the *News* commented that "When completed it will be one of the best tram ways in this country, in fact it will be a railroad with iron track and engine, and it seems to us that they will be able to supply all the logs their

mill can cut the year around." (*North Wisconsin News*, 7 April 1882). According to the *News* of 21 April 1882, the first dummy engine that Lacy and Johnson bought didn't work properly on their tram road and they secured another one which had been doing excellent service on just such a road. The paper also reported the company was laying iron rails and prophesied that soon they would have a small railroad in full running order. On June 2, the *News* declared:

We see in about every paper of railroads springing into existence almost like magic, but have not seen the mention yet of the Pineville and Great Eastern. We see that the iron has arrived for the above road. The president of the road informs us that as soon as the spikes arrived track laying will commence. The grading is all done, they expect their engine next week, and will soon be running.

The paper proclaimed that "this will be a new departure from the old system, and we hope other roads may see the error of their ways and do likewise."

Unfortunately at this point the *News*, as well as other papers searched, contains little correspondence from Pineville and the exact date of completion and initial use of the Johnson and Lacy logging line remains unknown. Circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that they completed their line sometime in mid summer. In late fall the *News* (8 December 1882) reported that Johnson and Lacy's locomotive had been returned thoroughly repaired and that they had commenced the winter campaign of landing logs at their mill by means of it. The train made "its regular trip most all winter," an average of fourteen trips per day, bringing a total of 35,000 to 40,000 feet of logs a day to the mill according to the 9 March 1883 issue of the *News*. Several years later, the *Northwestern Lumberman* (25 December 1886) described the Pineville and Prairie Farm Railroad as eight miles long, 56 1/2 inches gauge

with 29 lb. steel and iron rails, and one ten-ton Allis locomotive.

The Fairchild, Eau Claire River Railroad

Like at Pineville, the logging railroad at Fairchild grew out of a tramway operation. The firm of Foster, Cook and Co. constructed a tramway in the spring of 1878 (Rohe, "Tramways...", 1985, p. 39). A few years later the *Eau Claire News* (9 September 1882) announced that N. C. Foster and W. T. Price were building standard gauge railroads. "The roads will be equipped with locomotives and flat cars, for handling saw logs. The iron for both roads is in town and a large force of men is employed in constructing the road bed." The *Northwestern Lumberman* (9 September 1882) elaborated that "It will be the usual gauge and run a locomotive and cars direct from the stump to the mill, a plan much in vogue in Michigan, but little adopted in Wisconsin." According to the *Mississippi Valley Lumberman* (1 September 1882) the engine and trucks for hauling logs had not yet arrived and the railroad wasn't expected to be ready for service for a couple of months.

Foster claimed that the first load of logs moved to his mill by steam power arrived October 2, 1882 (O'Gara *Foster's and Nobody Else's*, p. 31). The *Mississippi Valley Lumberman* (10 November 1882) reported the line was still under construction. A correspondent writing from Fairchild to the *Northwestern Lumberman* (9 December 1882) penned the following:

One of the latest improvements to perfect this industry at our place is the steam logging railroad. For some time Foster's have been connected by a spur track to the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha railway. These tracks have been running through his yards, the main line of which he has lately extended some three miles into the woods from where he will extend it from time to time as it becomes

necessary, until all his lands are reached and so connected by rail to his mills. This railway, known as the Fairchild, Eau Claire River Road, will also connect with the road being built by Foreman, Price and Foster.

The *Eau Claire Free Press* of 18 June 1883, under the headline -- "Logs by Rail," reported the N. C. Foster had informed a representative of the paper that he had three miles of logging railroad in operation and planned to extend it another two miles that season. In August, the *Eau Claire Leader* (19 August 1883) announced the opening of Foster's logging railroad, the Chicago, Fairchild, and Eau Claire River Railroad, with an excursion from Eau Claire, Fairchild, and other places. About a year later Foster acquired "a full sized locomotive" for use on the main line. Two smaller engines delivered the logs to the main line and the heavier engine hauled them to the mill. (*Green Bay Advocate*, 7 February 1884)

Perhaps the foregoing has done little more than "add fuel to the fire" on the question of Wisconsin's first logging line. Certainly, it demonstrates that the subject requires additional research for a definitive answer. Moreover, it shows the need for adequate documentation. Had Hoar been more scholarly in his research, lingering doubts about the initial use of the Crescent Springs Railroad might not exist.

Logging on the Wolf River

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the F.H.A.W. will be held at Shawano. Shawano, located on the Wolf River, became an important supply point for logging camps located on the upper Wolf and served as a stopping point for loggers going to and returning from the pineries. In 1884 a correspon-

dent from Shawano sent the *Northwestern Lumberman* (9 February) the following description of logging on the Wolf River.

To those who have never visited a logging camp, the ways and means of converting trees into logs and getting them to the river, the names of tools and the language used, are peculiar and for their enlightenment a description of a Wolf River logging camp is here given by one who has been there for many winters.

The first necessity in starting a logging camp is to employ a competent and experienced man for foreman or boss, as he is usually termed, who has full control over the men. In the fall, before the ground is frozen, the foreman gathers his men together, and with several teams loaded with camp fixings and supplies of pork, flour, beef, beans, and the necessary groceries, starts for the scene of the winter's operations. After leaving the main traveled road a "tote" road has to be cut through the unbroken wilderness, often for a distance of several miles, to the location of the camp. While cutting this road the men camp wherever night overtakes them, as the supply wagons follow as fast as the road is opened. When night comes on, a few hemlock or balsam boughs are set up to break the force of the wind, a few placed on the ground to keep the blankets off the ground, the stove taken from the wagon and in a short time the cook has prepared supper, fried pork, warm biscuit and syrup, a craving appetite leaving no room for grumbling. After supper a log fire is built, the blankets spread on the boughs and all turn in for the night, and if hard work brings an excellent appetite it also assists sleep, as not a sound is heard except the loud and prolonged snoring which curses the light sleeper of every logging camp. Day break finds breakfast eaten and the men again at work cutting the winding road over hills and through valleys toward their final camping place for the winter.

When the desired location is reached, generally near a creek or lake, on account of having water handy, the

ground is cleared of trees and the camps built. The camps are built of logs, notched at the ends so as to allow them to lie close together, and as a general rule they are six logs high. The logs are rolled up with oxen and log chains. After the body of the shanty is up, a roof of pine or cedar "shakes" or "scoops" is put on and covered with boughs, a door and a couple of windows are put in, the cracks between the logs are "chinked" up, the outside cracks are filled with soft mud, the inside ones corked with moss, a floor of poles is put down and smoothed off with an adze, two tiers of "bunks" are made on one side of the shanty, a table is placed on the other side, a large sheet iron heater stands in the center, the cooking stove in one corner, and the shanty is completed. The "hovels" for the horses and oxen are then built in a similar manner. A feed house, store-house for provisions and a blacksmith shop are erected and the plant is complete for a winter's work. Now the crew goes to work making roads; the main road is generally about 20 feet wide, the trees and brush are "grubbed" out by the roots, all knolls leveled with grub hoes and mattocks, and when the road is completed it is as smooth as any turnpike. Branch roads are also cut through the pines and graded. After the roads are completed, if there is not sufficient snow for "hauling," the men are set at work skidding the timber that is scattering or stands in kettle holes or on bluffs. On the Wolf river it is not the practice to skid as many logs as lumbermen do on the Wisconsin, Chippewa and other rivers. The timber on Wolf river is usually large, and the lumbermen believe it is cheaper to "load at the stump." That is done by "swamping" a road to each tree and loading the logs on the sleds with oxen, instead of travoying the logs to large rollways and loading them by hand.

When sufficient snow has fallen so that by aid of the "sprinkler" the main road is fit to haul on, the real work of the winter commences, and huge loads of logs on sleds "six feet on the run," and eight foot banks [bunks], drawn by four horses, perhaps scaling 4,000 feet, and weighing from 16 to 20 tons, are constantly seen.

The modus operandi of getting out logs is as follows: The chopper, who must be a good judge of timber and know how to fell a tree without breaking it, and in a position so that it can be easily hauled to the main road, fells the trees, measures the length of the logs and cuts the mark into the side of each log. After him comes two sawyers with a seven-foot saw, two saw wedges, a beetle, and each carrying an ax. The ax is used to clear away any brush or limbs that may be in the way where the tree is to be sawed into logs. After a tree is partly sawed through its weight causes it to settle and pinch the saw, and the wedges are used to drive into the cut made by the saw, and which slightly raises the logs and prevents the pinching. After the sawyers come the "swampers," whose duty it is to cut a road to the logs from the main road, and to trim the logs. The ox teamster, with one or two yoke of cattle, is now on hand with a travoy, loading chain, cant hooks, a set of sleds, and one or two assistants; called sled tenders, who proceed to load the logs onto the sleds. It is often lively work for the ox teamster and sled tenders, for a certain number of loads must be ready by the time the horse teams get back from the landing, or a trip is lost and large loads must be put on, for a good ox teamster is ambitious to have his teams show up a large scale and at night each brags over the other teamsters. The oxen are hitched ahead of the horses until the main road is reached.

The provisions furnished are all of the best and most substantial kind. They are flour, pork, salt, and fresh beef, rice, dried apples, dried currants, all kinds of spices, sugar, syrup, potatoes, sauer kraut, turnips, onions, buckwheat flour, tea, coffee, etc. and the cooks must be of the best, and "dish up good grub," or there is a meeting in camp, and all hands will quit. The men who work in the woods on the Wolf are autocrats in a small way, and have to be handled with gloves on.

A Relic of Early Logging

Occasionally, one hears rumors of abandoned logging locomotives, steam haulers, logging dams, or logging camps still standing in some remote forest location. Such stories, of course, invariably prove impossible to run down. Perhaps an exception to the rule concerns a logging sled described in an article in the *Wittenberg Enterprise*, 18 March 1915.

A Relic of the Early Logging

When in a reminiscent mood, E. O. Woodbury can always tell something interesting of the long ago, for Woodbury has passed over forty years of his life along the Wolf river and took part in the life of the days of the great slaughter of the pine on this historic stream. Of an observant character, little escapes his eye, and an excellent memory retains the details of everything. He could if so inclined give a history of this country that would be very interesting. Often he relates some little incident that recalls the old days, as he did yesterday to the writer. Said he "would you think a sleigh load of logs could be left in the woods for thirty-five years, with the chains bound about just as it stood ready to be hauled to its landing, and except for decay not changed in the least?"

"There is such a load a couple of miles south of Stone Lake, on section 26-85 18, that I have seen several times and saw about one year ago. It has the old corner bind and wrapping chains and has been there so long that hardwood trees four inches in diameter have grown around and over the load. It is likely that the snow went off suddenly, and the camp broke up, and unknowingly or otherwise it was left, as a monument of the extravagant ways of the old lumber barons and their happy-go-lucky employees."

Mr. Woodbury says he thinks the sleigh and its load are the property of Seymour Hollister, Oshkosh, who lumbered on Swamp Creek in those days, as the sleigh is headed towards the creek. Mr. Woodbury says the sight of this old fashioned sleigh with its load, with the sleigh tongue rotted off, brings to him a panorama of half forgotten memories.

Recent Publications

- "One Hundred Years of Hardwood History: Tigerton Lumber Company's Story of Success." *The Timber Producer* 8 (August 1987): 24-25.

Brief summary of the history of the Tigerton Lumber Company.

- *Uncle Ned, A Biography of Edward Rutledge*. By Ruth C. Willut (Rice Lake: Chronotype Publishing Co., 1987, 76 pp. Figures).

Many residents of Wisconsin have a negative image of the lumber barons and equate them with greed. They believe that they left nothing but cutover forests and abandoned towns. As Ruth Willut demonstrates in her book, this was not always true. Edward Rutledge came from very modest beginnings but in a quiet, unassuming manner became one of the most successful lumbermen in the Chippewa Valley and amassed a large fortune. Today, 75 years after his death, the residents of Chippewa Falls continue to benefit from his generosity.

- *Tigerton Lumber Company, "One Hundred Years" 1887-1987*. By Russell Kostrzak ([Tigerton: Tigerton Lumber Company, 1987] 34 pp. Figures).

The Tigerton Lumber Company began with the construction of a small sawmill by H. R. Swanke, Herman Wilker, William Ottoman, and Henry Hillman about 2 1/2 miles west of Tigerton in 1887. In 1889 the Tigerton Lumber Company, com-

posed of H. R. Swanke, D. C. Buckstaff, R. H. Edwards, and G. A. Buckstaff, succeeded the original partnership. The mill burned in 1891 and the firm built a larger and very modern mill at Tigerton at a cost of \$10,000. Today Tigerton Lumber consists of three wood manufacturing plants and approximately 54,000 acres of managed hardwood timber land. This small book traces the history of the company in the intervening years, noting the innovations adopted by it. Innovations that enabled Tigerton Lumber to continue production for over a century under the management of a single family, while so many other lumber firms passed by the wayside.

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 *New London Press*, 13 August 1896.

Mosquito Hill

A Romantic Story as to how it was Named.

Mosquito Hill near Wolf river is said to derive its name from the fact that no mosquitoes are found at its top. In the early '50s, there was a crowd of men who made Appleton their headquarters, and who slaughtered the pine in winter and drove logs on the Wolf in summer if they were lucky enough to catch the June freshet. Part of them answered to the name

of Wells, Riggs, Jones and Reynolds, the names of the other we have forgotten. One June morning when the mosquitos were unusually vigorous and abundant in the low and overflowed lands, Wells bet Reynolds that there was not a mosquito on the top of that hill; and the five franc pieces were placed in Jones' hands. Wells declined to walk up the hill but the balance trudged through the brambles and blackberry bushes, and returned with torn trousers and scratched hands to announce that there was not sign of a mosquito or any other living thing on the top of the hill.

Institute of Wisconsin Studies

The recently organized Institute of Wisconsin Studies is a University of Wisconsin System recognized entity, with its offices and coordinating committee located at the UW-LaCrosse. Its mission includes the promotion of Wisconsin studies through scholarship and research, curriculum, and public programming. The institute will hold a multi-disciplinary conference on the social, economic, political, and cultural transformation of Wisconsin and its region at LaCrosse, WI., October 28-29, 1988. Proposals on the following subjects are especially welcome: economic development, industry, agriculture, cities and towns, environment, and Wisconsin in comparative perspective. Address inquires to: Kay M. Robinson, Office of Extended Education, UW-LaCrosse, LaCrosse, WI 54601.

Call for Papers

The Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the F.H.A.W. will be held September 20-October 1, 1988 at Shawano, WI.

Anyone interested in presenting a paper at our annual meeting please contact Tom Albrecht, Karl Baumann, or Randall Rohe. Papers on any aspect of the forest history of Wisconsin are welcome, but those dealing with the Wolf River area are especially desired. Slide illustrated presentations are particularly encouraged. The editor would be glad to offer suggestions and assistance to perspective speakers.

Great Wisconsin River Logjam

The Marathon County Historical Society along with the Wausau River Edge Commission and the Wausau and Marathon County Park Foundation is sponsoring this three-day festival Friday, June 17 through Sunday, June 19, 1988 at Wausau. Among the attractions will be three performances daily (June 18-19) by Scheer's Lumberjack Show, a unique blend of sport, history, and comedy. On display will be logging era equipment, including a steam-operated sawmill, and a collection of "deadheads" recovered from the Wisconsin River. Frank Fixmer plans to have an exhibit on the F.H.A.W.

Members in the News

Robert Rusch was the guest speaker at the Merrill Historical Society's monthly meeting on April 26, 1988. Bob's presentation attracted an overflow crowd of a hundred or so people. With slides, photos, and maps, Bob described the extensive logging operations of the Rib Lake Lumber Co. in western Lincoln County from the 1920's to the 1940's. The presentation was well received. William Natzke, a well known

Merrill area logger, who operated five jobber camps for the Rib Lake Lumber Co., commented on the fine job Bob did.

An Indian Tomahawk in a Sawlog

The sawing of logs into lumber sometimes uncovered unusual objects imbedded in the wood. The *Ashland Press* of 24 October 1891 described one such incident.

About that Indian Hatchet

MORSE, Oct. 22 -- A rare curiosity was found here Tuesday in the center of a saw-log, thirty-two inches in diameter, in the shape of an Indian tomahawk or hatchet. It is six inches in length, and has a two and a half inch blade made of roughly forged iron, showing the rough workmanship of a century ago. There was there ten inches of solid timber over the head showing the indenture of a portion of the handle in the timber, which was of different timber from the tree. Our best judges in the growth of pine timber say that it has been in the tree two centuries, as it was twenty feet from the ground.

The band saw struck the head of the tomahawk near the center, taking off a portion of the iron which was very soft, as the temper had been drawn out by the timber. The tomahawk and a portion of the timber that it laid in is on exhibition at the office of the Penokee Lumber company, and will probably be sent to the World's Fair.

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1987-1988

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