

ON THE TRAIL OF THE WOODSMAN IN MINNESOTA¹

When the Pilgrim Fathers chopped the first white pine to provide them with shelter in the immense wilderness to which they had come, they little realized that they were launching one of America's greatest industries, the manufacture of lumber. As people sought haven in America in ever greater numbers they began literally to absorb the pine around them, and they looked for new forests to supply the needs of the ever-growing population. Then began the trek of the woodsman into regions of untouched monarchs. The woodsman became an explorer. He moved ever westward. He marched in the vanguard of civilization. Surely he, no less than the fur-trader and the cowboy, deserves a place in the history of the West—and his name, like theirs, is passing into history. The kingship in the north woods of the "jack," the "riverman," and the "cruiser" is sinking into oblivion.

On the shores of the Atlantic the woodsman found the first white pine. It fell before his ax in Maine, and New York, Michigan, and Wisconsin in turn gave up their supplies. Westward, ever westward, moved this woodsman. The white pine in the region of the upper Mississippi was the last to go. There it had stood serenely for centuries. It had known only the red man as he glided in and out, and saws and axes were not tools peculiar to him. But one day these same pines sensed tragedy. The "army of axes" was upon them, and the harvesting of the white pine was to continue until its disreputable relative, the jack pine, was all that remained.

¹A paper read on July 15, 1932, at the Moorhead session of the eleventh state historical convention held under the auspices of the Minnesota Historical Society. *Ed.*

It was in 1836 and 1837 that the woodsman began his work within Minnesota's boundaries. Pines, centuries old, faced the woodsman's ax, and the monarchical achievement of the ages came crashing down. As the gold-diggers sought California and the Klondike, so the "pine hungry" lumbermen were attracted to the forests of Minnesota. Hither trekked men from Maine—men who had driven logs on the powerful Penobscot, like Daniel Stanchfield; or who had lived on the banks of the Androscoggin, like William D. Washburn; or who had labored on the banks of the turbulent St. Croix, which separates Maine from Canada. The names of many Mainites who came into the upper Mississippi territory are well known in Minnesota today—DeLaittre, Bovey, Eastman, Stanchfield, Morrison, and Washburn. On the banks of the Mississippi and of its tributaries, they found what they sought, and in the region of the virgin pine they settled down to make their homes. Tozier, Hersey, Staples, McKusick are names familiar in the St. Croix lumber region, and the men who bore them likewise came from Maine and New Brunswick in quest of forests. Stephen Hanks, who logged on the Snake River, a branch of the St. Croix, in 1841, found that most of his coworkers were old loggers from Maine and other eastern logging states.² Men old in the business of lumber today give to the men of Maine unstinted praise: "Mainites knew logging."

These newcomers did not come as single men in big gangs, here when the season was on and gone when it was over. They came to stay, they brought their families. They settled in the woods and carried on logging as their chosen life work. If they had little farms, these were but incidental to their chief business. The first operators in

² "Memoir of Capt. S[tephen] B. Hanks," vol. 2. These recollections in six volumes of an early Minnesota lumberman were written from his dictation by Mr. C. B. Paddock in 1907 and 1908. The manuscript is now in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

the pine forests of Minnesota were pioneers who ventured into the new country for the purpose of cutting timber for a livelihood, and not for speculation.³

Though the early woodsmen were largely from New England there were some New Yorkers, some French and Scotch from Canada, some Irish, and occasionally a German, a Norwegian, or a Swede. The Scotch who came into Minnesota from Canada were from the Glengary district below Ottawa. MacDonald, MacIntosh, MacLain, and MacLaughlin are names still heard in Minnesota. The Scotch loggers were men of repute, and they often developed sufficient skill to be advanced to the position of cruiser; others became foremen of camps; and some went into the business of logging for themselves.⁴

Then came also the hardy, rawboned French-Canadian, who was proud of his hairy chest which showed through the unbuttoned collar of his black and red flannel shirt. This French-Canadian was full of imagination; he had a store of songs; and he was known for his speed and general efficiency. He was said to have been "born with an ax in his hand," and he moved with the "tall pine." He was at home in no other place, and when the pine was gone he, too, was gone.⁵ He excelled as a sawyer, but was also known widely for his skill in handling the cant hook. He

³ William H. C. Folsom, "History of Lumbering in the St. Croix Valley, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 9: 296.

⁴ George H. Warren, *The Pioneer Woodsman as He Is Related to Lumbering in the Northwest*, 78 (Minneapolis, 1914); interview with Mr. Robert Ap Roberts of the office of the surveyor general of logs, St. Paul, June 17, 1932. Much of the material used in the preparation of this paper was gathered through interviews with men who have engaged in the logging business in Minnesota, particularly during the pioneer period. Several of the men interviewed are now over eighty years of age, but they were youths when they began work in the Minnesota forests.

⁵ *Mississippi Valley Lumberman* (Minneapolis), vol. 21, no. 4, p. 6 (January 22, 1892); interview with Mr. J. W. Bayly of Duluth, August 13, 1932. The firm with which this lumberman was connected — Alger, Smith and Company — at one time employed the largest number of loggers of any firm in the Duluth lumber district.

could serve both as a top loader and a landing man, and so he was much in demand. The Canadian plays no humble part in the development of the lumber industry.

The meagerness and simplicity of the conditions under which the woodsman worked offer a strange contrast to the later methods used in lumbering by "big business." A shanty, low and dark, served as the woodsman's living quarters. It was built of logs; its sides were never more than four feet high, and the roof was steep and sometimes ran almost to the ground. "One had to learn to stoop in those days," according to a tall lanky Irishman of eighty-one summers, who has lived his life in the logging camps and knows its evolution. The gables were built of logs, for windows were very rare. The shanty varied in size, depending upon the number in the crew. One on the banks of the Snake River in 1841 was twenty-five by forty feet.⁶ Moss and clay filled the openings between the logs to keep the warmth in. The shanty had but one big room, where at least twenty men lived during the coldest days of the year.

The life of the shanty centered about a big open fire, which baked the bread, dried the clothes, gave cheer and warmth, and illuminated many a squaw dance.⁷ Sleeping quarters were at one end of the room. Beds of balsam boughs a foot deep gave rest at night. With their heads to the walls and their feet to the fire, the men slept side by side covered by large blankets—so large that each served for many men.⁸ Strange it must have been at night

⁶ *St. Croix Union* (Stillwater), March 6, 1855; Hanks, "Memoir," vol. 1. Files of the newspapers used in the preparation of this paper are in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷ *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 13, 1873. There were few white women living near the lumber camps, and the Indian women were invited to the lumberjack's dances. Woodsmen tell that the endurance of the squaws when dancing surpassed even that of the lumberjacks.

⁸ In an interview on August 14, 1932, Mr. Michael McAlpine of Grand Rapids recalled that "on the drive" he had slept with eleven other men under one blanket.

to see by the glow of the fire the bewhiskered faces of the lumberjacks peering out above the blankets. There were whiskers like Paul Bunyan's and there were those like Abraham's of old. A grindstone, a wash sink, and a barrel of water were also parts of the equipment of the men's sleeping quarters.

At the farther end of the shanty was the kitchen. Cooking was not very complex. It was done over the open fire or in the bean hole. The cook had a wooden crane by which he moved the red hot kettles over the burning logs. Bread was baked in a reflector standing beside the open fire. Beans were put into a Dutch oven and buried in the bean hole, which was alongside of the big fire. They cooked mysteriously at night while the men slept, and were ready to be served in the morning with boiled salt pork. Both dishes appeared again at noon and at night, and for a change on Sundays the salt pork was fried. Bread, sometimes in the form of hot biscuits, salt pork, black strap, and bean-hole beans, eulogized by the early woodsmen, formed the regular diet. Once in a while a mince or an apple pie appeared. Venison, fish, and fowl were sometimes a happy change, and one lumberjack speaks of being served with a "fine mess of red squirrels in a delicious stew."⁹ The early woodsmen ate and slept in the one-room Maine shanty or hovel, where their cooking and baking were done. They lived together like one family. Such were the humble beginnings of a big industry in Minnesota.

John Boyce was the first to assemble a crew to cut pine in the region of what is now Minnesota. In a Mackinaw boat he traveled from St. Louis in the fall of 1837, setting camp where the Snake River rolls into the proud St. Croix.

⁹ *St. Anthony Express*, January 31, 1852; *St. Croix Union*, March 6, 1855; Martin Page, "The Camp in the 50's," in *Daily Telegram* (Eau Claire, Wisconsin), February 24, 1916; Hanks, "Memoir," vol. 2. The item from the *Telegram* is a clipping in the William Bartlett Collection in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society.

His outfit consisted of eleven men and six oxen.¹⁰ More meager still was the crew of Franklin Steele, who became a prominent lumber promoter in Minnesota. When he first "fleshed his axe" in the wilderness of the St. Croix in 1837 his outfit consisted of an ox, a cart, and six half-breeds.¹¹

Ten years later camps began to appear on the Rum River, a tributary of the Mississippi, where Anoka now stands. In 1847 Daniel Stanchfield placed the first logging camp there with twenty men to cut the pine. And in 1848 Sumner W. Farnham, a son of the surveyor of logs on the St. Croix River in Maine, established a second logging camp on the Rum River.¹² By 1852 twenty-two firms of loggers were operating on this river alone. In that year Minnesota's lumber brought a net revenue of \$2,500,000 — a sum more equally divided among the "bone and sinew" of the territory than that from almost any other trade.¹³

Pine was plentiful and water on which to transport the logs was there, but food was scarce, and that which was to be had was very expensive. A logging team required much food. In the usual outfit in 1852 there were from six to eight oxen and from twelve to fourteen men. Two of the men were choppers, two or three were swampers, two sled tenders, two barkers, two sawyers, one a teamster, and one a cook. Three hundred bushels of corn, two hundred bushels of oats, twenty barrels of flour, a hundred and fifty pounds of lard, ten bushels of beans, six hundred pounds of beef, and fifteen tons of hay were the foodstuffs necessary for such a crew during five long cold winter months.¹⁴

¹⁰ Wilson P. Shortridge, "Henry Hastings Sibley and the Minnesota Frontier," *ante*, 3: 120; Edward W. Durant, "Lumbering and Steamboating on the St. Croix River," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 10: 648 (part 2).

¹¹ *Express*, January 21, 1854.

¹² Daniel Stanchfield, "History of Pioneer Lumbering on the Upper Mississippi," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 9: 357.

¹³ *Express*, January 31, April 10, 1852.

¹⁴ *Express*, January 31, 1852; January 21, 1853.

In 1836 Nicollet found that at Fort Snelling fifteen dollars were paid for a barrel of flour and twenty-five dollars for a barrel of pork. These articles had no doubt been purchased for five or eight dollars in St. Louis. In 1837 Franklin Steele paid four dollars a barrel for beans, eleven dollars for flour, and forty dollars for pork. Even in the late fifties wheat cost four dollars a bushel and flour ten dollars a barrel.¹⁵ The woodsman used to fine advantage meadow hay, wild rice, and maple sugar, but there were not enough farmers in Minnesota to supply him with the necessary corn, oats, and wheat. Such provisions must all come from down river.¹⁶ In 1846 Stephen Hanks bought at St. Louis for John McKusick, who was then the lumber magnate of Stillwater, several tons of food, including uncured bacon, eggs, beans, hominy, and dried apples. At Bellevue above St. Louis he bought fifty barrels of flour and several barrels of whisky. At Albany, Illinois, on the same trip, he purchased oxen and horses, paying fifty dollars in gold for a yoke of oxen. St. Louis was a market for lumber and from St. Louis in turn came the lumberman's provisions. But the exorbitant prices resulting from the distance from the source of supply and difficulties of transportation worked a real hardship on the loggers. In 1853 logging teams on the Rum River were reduced in number for this reason.¹⁷

The virtues of the Minnesota climate were extolled as a means of attracting settlers. "We wish all the world were here in Minnesota to enjoy the magnificent weather which now 'comes off' daily," reads an item in the *St. Anthony Express* of June 14, 1851. "Skies are blue and air as balmy as Italy can boast, and an atmosphere so pure as to

¹⁵ Return I. Holcombe, *Compendium of History and Biography of Minneapolis and Hennepin County*, 67 (Chicago, 1914); *Express*, January 21, 1854; interview with Mr. O. D. Dahlin of Port Wing, Wisconsin, June 5, 1932.

¹⁶ *Express*, November 12, 1853; *St. Croix Union*, November 3, 1854; April 24, 1855.

¹⁷ Hanks, "Memoir," vol. 2; *Express*, January 21, 1853.

defy the approach of disease—of such marvelous virtue indeed as might 'create a soul under the ribs of death.'" Territory and state attempted vigorously to attract settlers, and prominent Minnesotans carried the gospel of the North Star State to Europe—Franklin Steele, for example, to England, and Hans Mattson to Sweden. Minnesota did eventually become an agricultural state, but it was lumber providing a market for farm produce that first gave agriculture an impetus there. Pillsbury's Best and Gold Medal Flour owe something to Minnesota white pine and the early woodsman.

The early period of logging in Minnesota could well be called the hand-tool period. It was a period of heavy lifting, when plain brute strength figured. It was a period of slow motion, when the deliberate movement of the ox and the hand of man made power. The Maine men brought to the Minnesota forests the go-devil and the ax and that instrument so necessary in the drive, the peavey.¹⁸ The chopper was an artist in the opinion of the woodsman. To swing the ax and strike right every time was the work of an expert, and therefore the chopper could command wages above those of other woodsmen.¹⁹ These men did not know the cross-cut saw. It had not seen the light of day. It had not yet come to replace the ax, and to take from the chopper the position which he later jealously had to guard.

There was no hewing out of log roads during the period of early logging in Minnesota. The pines stood thick on the banks of streams. A go-devil, a wishbone shaped affair with a crossbar—only the crotch of a hardwood tree—

¹⁸ Mr. John E. Gilmore of Minneapolis told the writer, in an interview on August 15, 1932, that the peavey was invented by a man of that name at Oldtown, Maine.

¹⁹ In an interview on May 18, 1932, Mr. Jesse H. Ames, president of the Wisconsin State Teachers College at River Falls, whose father was an early Maine logger in the Northwest, told the writer that the first loggers in this region did not use cross-cut saws. See also William McDonald, "Logging Equipment and Methods," a clipping in the Bartlett Collection, from the Eau Claire *Telegram*, October 7, 1916.

was the chief means of transportation in the woods. This rough sled sufficed to take the trees from where they fell to the landing, whence they should go downstream when the spring freshet came. When the chopper had finished his work and the tree was prostrate on the ground, the swamper came to lobe the branches. Then followed the barker, who ripped the bark from underneath so the tree would slide more easily.²⁰ The ox pulled it through the brush and snow to the landing, where it was made into logs ready for the spring drive.

The cant hook, used in rolling logs, was not so important among the tools of the early Maineites. It seems to belong rather to the Canadian, who cut the trees into logs where they fell. Thus the loggers could carry bigger loads to the landing. This brought about a change in the mode of transportation in the woods, which led to the use of bobsleds, bigger teams, bigger loads, and log roads. Early logging in Minnesota, it is evident, was a contribution of the ways of the Maineites and those of the Canadians.²¹

But heavier market demands were forcing a speedier output, for settlements in Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska — the great treeless prairie states — were calling for lumber for homes. And in 1863 the Mississippi saw such drives of logs as it had never been a witness to before.²² Wages for loggers were on the increase, evidence that the industry was making progress. In the winter of 1870, four thousand men and two thousand horses and oxen went into the woods of Minnesota. Lumber did have a setback in the panic year of 1873, but in 1874 loggers on the Mississippi found themselves hewing down the tall pine north of Grand Rapids.²³

²⁰ George W. Hotchkiss, *History of the Lumber and Forest of the Northwest*, 530 (Chicago, 1898).

²¹ Stanchfield, in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 9: 321-361.

²² *St. Cloud Democrat*, November 26, 1863.

²³ J. W. McClung, *Minnesota as It Is in 1870*, 149 (St. Paul, 1870); Warren, *Pioneer Woodsman*, 77. Mr. McAlpine, who went to the Grand Rapids region in 1874, asserts that he was one of the first woodsmen in the district. Interview, August 14, 1932.

In 1878 the first mill at Cloquet began its work, and the Duluth district was modestly carrying on logging.

Improvements were being made in order that production might meet the market demand. The passing of the pioneer stage of logging cannot be precisely dated, for the change depended to a considerable extent on whether a given logging establishment was that of a small owner, or of a jobber, or of a man of "big business." It was in the seventies that the more primitive methods of logging began to disappear, however. The one-room Maine shanty was passing, and in its place was coming a good-sized lumber camp with perpendicular sides, which was warmly built and lighted with windows. The new camp housed from fifty to eighty men.

Sometimes a partition separated the eating and sleeping quarters; often camps were constructed with these quarters in separate buildings. Men no longer slept on the floor, but in bunks with mattresses filled with hay, straw, or perhaps balsam boughs. The bunks were single, or double, or treble, depending upon the size of the camp. They were arranged like berths in a Pullman car. With his turkey or his tussock, the bag which held his possessions, under his head, the lumberjack rested well after the day's labor, only to be called again before the light of another day. There was no mistaking the call of the shanty boy, later known as the bull cook, when he blew the camp horn in the morning. The horn was made of tin and it was five feet long. Its din was followed by another, the call of "Daylight and the swamp boys—roll out!" or "Roll out, daylight in the swamp."²⁴ Perhaps the most original of calls was one used on the St. Croix, "Roll out, tumble out, any way to get out. This is the day to make the fortune."²⁵ Surely a

²⁴ *Stillwater Messenger*, March 21, 1873; *Tribune*, February 20, 1875; *Telegram*, March 27, 1916; *Duluth Herald*, August 21, 1926.

²⁵ This call was used on the St. Croix in the eighties, according to Mr. Dahlin. Interview, June 5, 1932.

stimulus for any lumberjack! It caused the sleeper "to tremble and start from the land of dreams to the land of pork and beans," wrote a would-be poet in 1875.²⁶

The first ray of light sent the lumberjack to work. The teamster was up at four. His day was long, but he was of the upper caste in the hierarchy of lumberjacks. His wage compared with that of the cook, and was lower only than that of the foreman. The teamster drove thousands of feet of logs in a single load with two, four, or six horses over the iced boulevards that were introduced into Minnesota by Michigan lumbermen. He had a dare-devil's job; one accident, and he was forever gone from the list of able teamsters. The "road monkey" or "hayman on the hill" was of importance to the teamster, for it was the business of the road monkey to put hay or sand on the very steep places to be traversed by the teamster.²⁷ If he failed in his work, a dangerous accident might ensue.

Each man had his job and at break of day each was in his place. "The sharp ring of well plied axes, the crash of falling trees, and the see-saw clang of cross-cut saws . . . the rattling of chains and the crunching of snow" all made up a scene of busy toilers whose work went steadily on until the bull cook—who during the morning had supplied wood and water for the men's shanty, had washed the roller towel, cleaned the lamp, and swept the floor—blew his big horn for lunch. The noon meal was nearly always eaten in the open, for sometimes the woodsmen were several miles from camp. In a big box on a homemade sleigh drawn by a horse came the food for the big, husky, hungry woodsmen. The beans froze on their tin plates. Their whiskers froze too, though they ate around a big open fire. Then

²⁶ *Tribune*, February 20, 1875.

²⁷ *Mississippi Valley Lumberman*, vol. 27, no. 9, p. 3 (February 28, 1890); Edward G. Cheney, "Development of Lumber Industry in Minnesota," in *Journal of Geography*, 14:194 (February, 1916). Mr. Arthur Sjoberg of Mora has explained much of the lumberjack's language to the writer.

more sharp ringing of well-plied axes until dark and their day was done. Work from daylight to dark was the lot of a lumberjack. No six-hour day, no eight-hour day for him!²⁸ The lumberjack took pride in hard work. Every sawyer, every teamster, every undercutter, reported to the clerk the number of feet of heavy timber he had handled during the day. Competition was keen.

The lumberjack had respect for physical prowess; he was proficient; he was trustworthy, generous, and dependable. He pitted red blood against a hard job. He was noted for his generosity; he would contribute toward a hospital or funeral bill of any fellow-worker, though he were someone almost unknown.²⁹ They had a code, these lumberjacks, and it was a chivalrous one.

At the end of a day the lumberjacks went home to partake of the cook's good meal. The cook—and what a man was he—second to none in the camp except the foreman! He was the major-domo whose precinct no one dared to invade.³⁰ It was good business, too, to stand well with the cook, for it was quite likely that somewhere he had a bit of toddy stored. In the cook's domain the bean hole had gone and the big cookstove had taken its place. The food had improved greatly. Better facilities brought better supplies. Fresh meat and mashed potatoes had been added to salt pork and beans; pound cake, rice pudding with raisins, vegetables, hot biscuits, and pies of many varieties were served to the men.³¹ The prune, called in camp parlance the "loggin' berry," seemed to rank high. Black strap had been replaced by brown sugar, and after 1890 white sugar took the place of brown.

²⁸ *Messenger*, March 21, 1873; *Tribune*, April 29, 1876.

²⁹ Wright T. Orcutt, "The Minnesota Lumberjacks," *ante*, 6:11. Mr. J. W. Bayly of Duluth, who was assistant to the vice president of Alger, Smith and Company and who had dealings with thousands of lumberjacks, told the writer that generosity was very characteristic of them.

³⁰ *Tribune*, April 29, 1876.

³¹ *Tribune*, April 29, 1876; *Mississippi Valley Lumberman*, vol. 19, no. 25, p. 2; vol. 21, no. 5, p. 3 (June 13, 1891; January 29, 1892).

The Stone-Ordean-Wells Company of Duluth, a wholesale grocery firm, sold the lumber concerns of the nineties ten-pound cans of peaches, plums, and pears. Oleomargarine was used almost always in place of butter—five thousand pounds of it was the usual order for a hundred men for two hundred days. Alger, Smith and Company of Duluth, a Michigan lumber firm that removed to Minnesota in the nineties, bought on the average 365 sacks of beans a year, and a sack weighed 165 pounds. Thus beans were still a good old stand-by. The annual tobacco and snuff bill of the same concern alone amounted to twenty-five thousand dollars. And the grocery bill paid by that firm to the wholesale grocers mentioned above was about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars annually during the period of its greatest activity in 1898 and 1899. "Has anything replaced the business which the logger gave you?" the writer asked Mr. J. Edgar Willcuts, who had charge of the supplies sent to loggers for Stone-Ordean-Wells. "Nothing," he said, "nothing. Those were the good old days."³²

But to return to the lumberjack. On Saturday night a stag dance would probably take place; men with handkerchiefs around their arms played the part of women. Or by chance there was a squaw dance.³³ Music—such music as there was, and it was not all bad for one finds comparisons to Camilla Urso and Ole Bull—was usually furnished by a fiddler, who was as necessary in the lumber camp as the ox teamster, or perhaps by someone who played the mouth organ or the accordion. But music there was. "Hot Bottom," "Shuffle the Brogue," and "Buy My

³² Interview with Mr. Willcuts, July 13, 1932. In the winter of 1887 Isaac Staples, who had a crew of three hundred men logging on the Snake and Ann rivers, ordered for their use eighteen thousand pounds of beef, a hundred and four barrels of pork, nine thousand pounds of sugar, nineteen hundred pounds of tobacco, fifteen hundred pounds of currants, and fourteen hundred pounds of prunes. *Kanabec County Times* (Mora), March 12, 1887.

³³ *Tribune*, December 13, 1873.

Sheep" were favorite games.³⁴ Especially popular was "Buy My Sheep," whereby a greenhorn was initiated into the fraternity of lumberjacks. Some of the men amused themselves by singing songs of their own composition. These usually had an epic theme, recounting the heroism of some lumberjack, usually in their own camp. Perhaps one of the oldest that has survived is the "Pokegama Bear," composed in camp in 1874 by Frank Hasty.³⁵

Come all you good fellows who like to hear fun,
 Come listen to me while I sing you a song;
 Come listen to me while the truth I declare,
 I am going to sing the Pokegama Bear.

One cold frosty morning, the winds they did blow,
 We went to the woods our days work to do,
 Yes, into the woods we did quickly repair,
 It was there that we met the Pokegama Bear!

One, Morris O'Hern, — a bold Irish lad,
 Went to build a fire all in a pine stub;
 He rapped with his ax when he went there,
 When out popped the monstrous Pokegama Bear!

With a roar like a Lion, O'Hern did swear,
 Saying, "Run boys for God's sake, for I've found a bear!"
 As out through the brush Jim Quinn did climb,
 Saying, "To hell with your bear, kill your own porcupine!"

Into the swamp old bruin did go,
 O'Hern and Hasty did quickly pursue,
 As on through the brush those heroes did tear,
 To capture or kill the Pokegama Bear.

Old Bruin got angry — for Hasty did steer!
 He prepared to receive without dread or fear,
 With his teeth firmly set and his ax in the air,
 He slipped and fell on the Pokegama Bear.

³⁴ In an interview on June 6, 1932, Mr. J. C. Daly of Port Wing, Wisconsin, told the writer how these games were played. Even in his amusements the lumberjack did not spare his body.

³⁵ Mr. McAlpine gave the writer a copy of this poem on August 15, 1932.

Out on the road old bruin did go,
 He thought that was better than wading in snow,
Yet little he knew what awaited him there,
 For fate was against the Pokegama Bear.

There was one, Mike McAlpine, of fame and renown,
 Noted for foot racing on Canadian ground,
He ran up the road, raised his ax in the air,
 And dealt the death blow to the Pokegama Bear.

When out to the camp old bruin was sent,
 To skin him and dress him it was our intent.
And we all agreed that each should have a share,
 Of the oil that was in the Pokegama Bear.

To the cook it was taken, the tallow fried out,
 Each man with his bottle did gather about,
When Hasty and McAlpine they both lost their share,
 Of the oil that was in the Pokegama Bear.

Then it was taken by cook and it fried,
 It was all very good it can't be denied,
It tasted like roast turkey, Bill Moneghan did swear,
 As he feasted upon the Pokegama Bear.

Now my song is ended, I am going to drop my pen,
 And Morris O'Hern, he got the bear skin;
Here is long life to you boys, and long growth to your hair,
 Since it is greased with the oil of the Pokegama Bear.

Stories relating vague rumors of dreadful beasts which the lumberjacks had met on the tote road formed no small part of the evening's entertainment. There was the "agropelter." That animal, infuriated by the invasion of his secret precinct, the great forest, was a terrible threat to the logger. From Maine to Oregon the lumberjack feared his uncanny stroke. This horrible animal found shelter in hollow trees, and anyone who was unfortunate enough to pass his abode was usually reported as killed by a falling limb. Only one human being is ever known to have escaped death when given a blow by this treacherous beast. He

was a Minnesota lumberjack. Big Ole Kittleson, cruising on the St. Croix, was the hero. The "agropelter" dealt the blow, but the "limb was so punky" that it flew into bits on Big Ole's head. He got a good view of the vicious creature before it bounded into the woods.³⁶ Many such stories were told and retold by the lumberjacks. The men of that fraternity pass the palm for story-telling to the French-Canadian, who excels in superstition and imagination.

Nine o'clock was the usual bedtime for men in the camps; but on Saturday night, when games of chess or cards were played, the hour was usually later.³⁷ Cards were not allowed in some camps, and in some, gambling was forbidden except when tobacco was used as a stake. Sunday was "boil-up" day. This one day in the week was used by the lumberjacks to shave, to cut hair, and to clean clothes. A big lard can was placed over an open fire outdoors, and there each lumberjack in turn scrubbed and boiled his clothes. Then the men patched their clothes and sewed on buttons. Sunday night saw them early to bed, in preparation for another week of hard work.

In no sphere is the lumberjack so distinctly individual as in his mode of expression. His environment is the source from which his peculiar vocabulary comes, and his phrases are quite unintelligible to anyone not of his fraternity. Not long ago a woodsman over eighty years of age, who was found planting potatoes by the writer, made her realize how unfamiliar was the woodsmen's tongue. She knew she could not spell the words, and she had no notion of the meaning of some of the queer terms that the lumberjack's Irish tongue sputtered so easily. When the writer asked him what certain terms meant, he laughed and said, "Well you're having the same trouble as did a Sister who used

³⁶ William T. Cox, *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods*, 35 (Washington, 1910).

³⁷ *Anoka Union*, January 5, 1878.

to take care of our boys in the hospital at Duluth." Such was his story: A certain top-loader had had his leg crushed by a log. The nun had inquired just how so serious an accident could have happened. The lumberjack replied: "Well, Sister, it happened this way. I dropped in at one of the Sawyer Goodman Company's camps and as I was the first 'gazebo' who came down the 'pike' and the 'push' needed men, he put me to work 'skyhooking.' The first thing the 'groundhog' did was to send up a 'blue.' I hol-lered at him to throw a 'Saginaw' into her but he 'St. Croixed' her instead. Then he 'gunned' her and the result was I got my stem cracked."³⁸ Every term has its meaning. The woodsman's special vocabulary numbers about three hundred words and is both picturesque and significant.³⁹

The business of logging grew. By 1900 no state in the Union could compete with Minnesota in this domain. In the quantity and value of timber produced the state surpassed all others. A larger amount of capital was invested in logging in Minnesota than in any other state. Indeed, the capital invested per establishment was nearly double that of Wisconsin or California, Minnesota's nearest competitors. Minnesota likewise employed twice as many men in its camps as were employed in camps in any other state.⁴⁰

In recent years the Maineite, the Canadian, the German, and the Scandinavian have been replaced by the Russian, the Finn, and other Europeans. The simple go-devil in time gave way to the giant steam over-head skidder, which grabs in its claws the logs that once were lifted by the masterful arms of the lumberjack. As in other industries,

³⁸ Mr. Daly told the writer this story in an interview on June 6, 1932. A similar tale is related by John E. Nelligan, in "The Life of a Lumberman," in the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 13: 57 (September, 1929). This writer uses the word "gummed" instead of "gunned."

³⁹ J. W. Clark, "Lumberjack Lingo," in *American Speech*, 7: 47 (October, 1931).

⁴⁰ *United States Census, 1900, Manufactures*, 9: 818.

machine power has replaced man power in the logging business. In 1900 the Rum and St. Croix rivers could no longer boast the largest logging camps in the state. They had shifted far into the northland, to Beltrami, Itasca, and St. Louis counties, where fifteen to twenty thousand men logged during the cold winter months.⁴¹

The lumber industry reached its height in the early years of the present century. In 1837 Franklin Steele and six half-breeds cut white pine in Minnesota. In 1912 about forty thousand lumberjacks logged in its forests.⁴² Many of them cut logs for the largest white pine mill in the world—that at Virginia. Today the mill is gone. So is the lumberjack. This young giant, strong and wild in body and spirit, rough in dress and manner, belongs to the past. His stories, his songs, his language, his mode of dress, and his manner of living should be carefully recorded, for they are of interest to the historian. As a part of the group that helped to lay the basis of the state, he deserves to be studied. He is the hero of the drama of the pine forest, a drama that has now ended in Minnesota.

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⁴¹ *Duluth Weekly Herald*, May 2, 1900.

⁴² William T. Cox, *Timber Resources of Minnesota*, 87 (St. Paul, 1913).



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