

**MENOMINEE**



**RANGE**



**MEMORIES**

**PRESENTS**

# EARLY LOGGING ON THE EASTERN MENOMINEE IRON RANGE

Life in a Logging Camp

&

Cutting Timber

&

Log Drives



*Compiled by  
William John Cummings  
2011*

## THE LIFE OF A LUMBERJACK OR “SHANTY BOY” LUMBER CAMPS — LOADING LOGS — LOG DRIVES



This unidentified lumber camp crew probably worked in Breen or Felch Township, Dickinson County. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*

# ESTABLISHING A LUMBER CAMP — SELECTING THE SITE — 1

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

John Emmett Nelligan's years as a camp cook, land looker, logger, river boss, cutting contractor, woods foreman and buyer spanned the years from the end of the Civil War to the cutting of the pines in Minnesota in the early 1900's. He worked in the pineries in New Brunswick, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and helped lay out Foster City. The following excerpts from his autobiography *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* provide authentic descriptions of logging in the western Upper Peninsula and beyond.

- *The foreman and crew select a site for a camp, clear the ground, and construct several buildings, a men's camp, a cook's camp, a stable, a hay shed, and a granary.*
- *While the crew is engaged in constructing the camp, the foreman has been prowling around the forest making blazes on certain trees with his axe, laying out roads. The main road is laid out along a creek bottom if the nature of the terrain permits, so that there will be ample water at hand with which to ice it. And the land along the creek is usually level and devoid of obstructions and troublesome grades.*
- *The main road varies in length with the size of the operation, sometimes being six miles or more long, and is laid out with the greatest care. From it branch roads stretch out like the limbs of a tree, covering the land to be logged with a network of thoroughfares, all of which lead into the main camp.*



This photograph, probably taken in Breen or Felch Township between 1900 and 1910, shows another unidentified lumber camp crew, proudly showing four teams of horses and a team of oxen. Note the size of the logs in the building at the far left, and the nearby piles of smaller, decked logs which probably were a source of fuel to heat the log camp buildings. Camp operators bought forty acres of pine for from 65 cents to \$1.25 an acre. Some operators bought one forty of pine and cut all the surrounding forties by trespass. This was known as cutting “round forties.” [Beatrice Blomquist]



Another unidentified lumber camp crew, again probably from Breen or Felch Township, gathered six teams of horses for this photograph, probably sometime between 1900 and 1910. Logging camps were rough and crude structures built for temporary use. A typical logging camp consisted of a cook's camp, men's camp or bunkhouse, office, stable and a shed to keep feed for the horses dry. The camp buildings pictured here were constructed of logs with tarpaper-covered roofs, the tarpaper secured with lengths of logs. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*



Lumberjacks and the kitchen crew posed outside of Olaf Olson's camp, the Morgan Lumber & Cedar Company's Camp 3 or Camp 7, at Norway Lake in 1919 — as the snow was melting from the rooftop — in this Breen Township scene. Logging and drive camps were often identified by number or the name of the foreman. Many camp numbers were interchanged and transposed with the passage of time. The roof appears to be of cedar shakes, covering two buildings and a “dog trot” which connected them. Notice that the lumberjack seated second from the right was holding the camp's cat. [WJC Photo]



This postcard view was probably taken in the State of Washington's timber county in about 1910-1915. The young man, wearing a cap and jacket, appears to have climbing gear on his legs over his boots. The single-seated, two-wheeled cart pulled by a horse on a dirt road would have been unusual in Michigan or Wisconsin logging operations. However, camp foremen sometimes had a "rig" to travel to where the lumberjacks were working or to another camp. Note the timber on the ground in the wooded area. [WJC Photo]

# ESTABLISHING A LUMBER CAMP — 2

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *When the foreman has finished his blazing and the camp buildings are completed, the axemen begin the road cutting. They cut all the trees in the roadway, which has a width of about four rods, down to the surface of the ground. After completing the main road, they turn their attention to the tributary roads.*
- *Certain places along the roads have been picked out as skidways and at these places a small clearing is made in which two logs are placed parallel to each other and at right angles to the road. On these timbers the logs are piled after they are cut and before they are carried to the landing.*
- *Horses haul the timber from the roadway, the foreman stakes out the road to a width of eight feet on the straightaway and more on the curves, and the scene is prepared for the entry of the grading crew.*
- *The grading crew is made up of men unskilled in the handling of axes, but fairly adept with hoes, picks, and shovels. They follow the foreman's stakes and level the road to the best of their ability, chopping out roots, shoveling away humps, throwing out rocks and blasting boulders. In the rapid and efficient construction of roads no body of men on earth can excel a skilled logging crew.*



Sprinkler sleighs like this one at Jauquet Brothers' logging camp in the Sagola area, Dickinson County, were used to make ice roads to facilitate hauling loads of logs. A barrel of water was being dumped into the sprinkler sleigh. Iced roads enabled a team of horses to pull enormous loads of logs. At times two or three teams were used to "break" the load, meaning to get the load moving, and were then quickly unhitched, leaving the hauling team to complete the trip to the rollways. When roads were iced, a gouger was used to cut the width of the sleigh runner into the ice to prevent the sleigh from leaving the road. Note the teams of horses in the background in this 1900-1910 photograph. *[James Jauquet]*



This postcard view, postmarked July 6, 1910, Suring, Wisconsin, shows a wooden sprinkler sleigh drawn by a team of horses with heavy, cogged horseshoes to aid in traction on the ice road. The smoke or steam coming from the chimney between the teamster and his assistant atop the sleigh shows that heat was used to keep the water used to sprinkle the road from freezing. The runners of the sprinkler sled were in the grooves which were carefully maintained so loads would travel smoothly. [WJC Photo]



This photograph, probably taken in Breen Township between 1910 and 1915, shows another sprinkler sleigh pulled by a team of heavy work horses with the teamster seated in front and the lumberjack in charge of sprinkling the water at the rear. There were a number of holes in the rear at the base of the box-like sleigh which could be opened or closed by using wooden “pins.” A good team of Belgian or Percheron horses cost the lumber operators from \$500 to \$700. They received the best of care and were fed all the oats, hay and bran mash they would eat. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*



Postmarked February 6, 1910, at Granite Bluff, in Michigan's Dickinson County, this postcard view shows a relatively flat-topped sprinkler sleigh icing a logging road. Notice how slick the ice appears, and the heavy cogged shoes on the team of horses. The teamster, seated on the sleigh, holds the reins, while the lumberjack in charge of discharging the water puffs on his clay pipe. Note his low footwear with rubber bottoms and leather tops called shoe packs which were worn in cold weather with several pairs of socks. The teamster is identified as Nels P. on the back of the postcard. [WJC Photo]

SNOW PLOWING, CAMP 2, H. & M. CO., QUINNESEC, MICH.

F. G. HORN-CO., MILWAUKEE.



Postmarked February 23, (year missing from cancellation, but circa 1910) at Quinnesec, Michigan, a black-and-white halftone postcard shows four teams on heavy work horses in front of some logging camp buildings at the Hamilton & Merryman Company's Camp 2 in the vicinity of Quinnesec plowing snow to keep the roads passable. Sometimes as many as five or six teams of horses were used to draw the snowplows which cleared the snow from the hauling roads. [WJC Photo]

# ESTABLISHING A LUMBER CAMP — 3

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *A logging camp is a flexible organization. The division of labor is not too closely defined and the lumberjacks take upon themselves various duties as opportunity offers and efficiency demands. In general, however, the arrangement which prevails is somewhat as follows.*
- *Five men and a two-horse team usually constitute a unit for actual manufacture of timber from trees. There are several such units in every crew, the number, of course, depending on the size of the crew. It is the duty of two of these men to fell the timber.*
- *The two sawyers quickly decide which way the tree shall fall, taking into consideration the direction in which the tree leans, if it does lean, and the best open space in which to bring it to earth. On that side toward which they want it to fall they take their stand, facing each other, and their keen axes bite with steady regularity, one after the other, into the tree until a sizable cut has been made in its tough, dark hide and the white wood beneath.*
- *Then they take their shining crosscut saw and attack the other side of the tree, drawing the sharp teeth across the trunk at a point an inch or two or three or four above the lowest point of the axe cut on the opposite side.*



Possibly from Breen Township, this crew of lumberjacks may have been constructing a logging road. The two sawyers at the left were preparing to cut down a good-sized Norway pine tree and the two lumberjacks at the right were wielding doubled-bitted axes. The majority of the other men were probably members of the grading crew, some holding mattocks which would be useful in leveling the roadway. The tree branches and other debris on the ground were called “slashings.” *[Beatrice Blomquist]*



This postcard view, dating between 1907 and 1918, shows two lumberjacks holding a saw in preparation for cutting a large pine tree. Note the double-bitted axes secured in the base of the tree in the background. [WJC Photo – eBay]

# ESTABLISHING A LUMBER CAMP — 4

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *A heavy, steel wedge is inserted in the cut back of the saw, which has now penetrated more than its width into the tree trunk. Strokes from a heavy sledge drive it into place and force open the cut. Oil is sprinkled on the saw blade and the work goes on.*
- *As the teeth of the saw reach a point almost above the inner limit of the axe cut, there is a premonitory crack. A few more rapid, relentless strokes of the saw and there is another louder crack.*
- *The cry “Timber!” echoes through the woods and everyone within the danger zone scampers for safety, the sawyers with them, carrying their saw with them or leaving it in the cut, as wisdom demands.*
- *The monarch of the forest now lies prone and helpless and the work of dissection begins. The bright, sharp axe blades lop off the upper limbs of the tree and the saw divides the great length, sometimes one hundred and fifty feet, into a number of logs of specified size.*



A crew of men stood on a portion of a large pine tree which apparently had been cut into lengths. Most of these men were holding cant hooks, used to maneuver logs. The presence of Martin Rian, identified at the right, helps place this scene in Felch Township. The area appears to have numbers of damaged or rotted trees. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*



This postcard view, taken near an unidentified logging camp in Felch Township between 1907 and 1918, shows three lumberjacks standing on a pine log. The lumberjacks at the left and center were using cant hooks to maneuver the huge logs while loading sleighs to take them to skidways, where they were probably decked along the river or else at a site for loading onto railroad cars. Note the team of horses hitched to a loaded sleigh in the background at the left. [WJC Photo]



Probably taken near the Morgan Lumber & Cedar Company's Camp 3 in Breen Township between 1918 and 1930, Rudy Peterson, a teamster, guided his team of horses. Teamsters jealously guarded and diligently cared for their teams, sometimes referred to as "hayburners" by lumberjacks, but probably when out of earshot of the teamster. Skilled blacksmiths were hired to keep the horses shod with high, sharp-calked shoes to enable them to maneuver over the ice roads and through the deep snow. A Swiss bell was sometimes hung from the bottom of the horses' collars to warn other teamsters to "turn out" when a load of logs was coming down a hauling road. *[WJC Photo]*



The crane arrangement, called a “jammer,” was usually built of wood. Using the leverage principle, timber was loaded by the use of a team of horses on one end of the balancing beam and a chain with hooks on the other. Two men would set the hooks, one on each end of the log. Then the team would be maneuvered so the swinging timber was fairly well placed when decking or loading logs onto railroad cars. The postcard view above shows six lumberjacks standing on a log supported by chains at each end and raised by a team of horses. The views were probably taken in the Hardwood area between 1915 and 1920. [WJC Photos]

# LUMBERJACK CLOTHING AND GEAR

- Calked boots or corked boots — Boots with short, sharp spikes set in the soles. River drivers used these boots to keep from slipping off the logs when they had to ride them.
- German sox — Thick woolen socks worn by the lumberjacks.
- Shoe pack — Footwear with rubber bottoms and leather tops. These were worn in cold weather with several pair of socks.
- Turkey — Packsack or any kind of sack such as a meal sack in which a lumberjack carried his belongings.
- Nose bag — A sack in which a jack carried his lunch, or a feed bag which was tied over horses' nose.

# ESTABLISHING A LUMBER CAMP — 5

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *The logs are dragged, one at a time, along “travoy trails” made by the “swamper,” on a “travoy sled” pulled by a horse, or horse team, to the skidway. The teamster is assisted in his work by a helper known as the “chain man” or “chainer.” One end of the log drags on the ground. The other is rolled onto the “travoy sled” with a peavy and chained in place.*
- *Arrived at the skidway, the logs are piled up, tier upon tier, being rolled to the top of the pile by a block and chain arrangement powered by horses. There they rest until a logging sled comes along.*
- *The logging sled is a simple affair consisting of two sets of runners with a “bunk” on each. The first log loaded is left in the middle to balance the “bunks.” Then a log is chained to each side, after which logs are packed between and the loading begins.*
- *The sled is loaded as high and heavy as the condition of the road and the drawing power of the horses will stand. When completed, a wrapping chain is bound tightly about the load to keep it from spreading and it is pulled along the icy roads to the landing or banking place.*
- *There the logs are put in great piles on the riverbank to await the coming of spring when the blocks which hold them in place are pulled out, and they are tumbled into the river and run downstream to the mill booms.*

# **LOGGING TOOLS – SKIDDING TONGS AND POLE AXE**

**Skidding tongs, like ice tongs, clamped to the end of a log to enable the team to skid it out of the woods.**

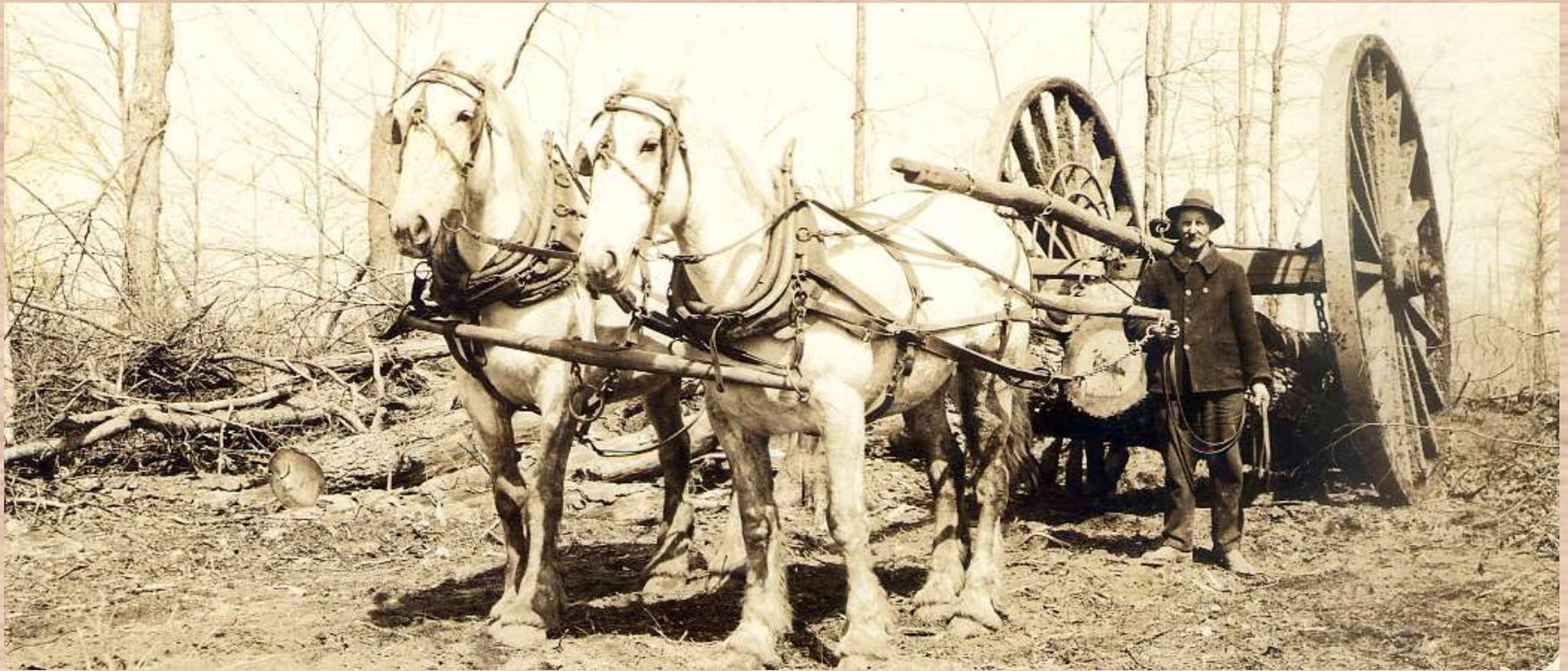


**A pole axe was a single-bit axe for chopping or driving wedges and for releasing a crosscut saw from binding when trees were being felled. The pole axe was also used in felling trees in early logging days.**





Three lumberjacks holding cant hooks stood on a huge pine log with their team of horses in the foreground, posing for this unidentified Michigan postcard view dating between 1907 and 1918. A teamster and his horses pulled logs out to the hauling roads on a travois, dragging the log to the skidways, where they were loaded into logging sleighs and decked along the river or near railroad tracks awaiting loading onto railroad cars. Note the skidding tongs gripping the end of the log. [WJC Photo]



Michigan logging wheels (*big wheels*) were invented by Silas C. Overpack, a wheelwright from Manistee, Michigan, in 1875. Overpack's logging wheels could haul logs without the need for icy ground. They did not sink into mud in the wet terrain of the northern woods, where ordinary wagon wheels would get mired in the spring thaw. The wheels also enabled a team of horses to pull several logs at a time. The logs were held by a chain that suspended the logs' weight from the wheel axle, creating a stabilizing, low center of gravity. The wheels could carry logs from 12 feet to 100 feet in length. Overpack sold three sizes of big wheels: 9 feet high, 9 feet 6 inches high and 10 feet high, at a cost of \$100 per diameter foot. The axles were manufactured from hard maple, and the 16-foot tongues were made of ironwood. The wheels were clad with iron rims to protect them from stumps, fallen trees, and rocky terrain. Interior iron rings reinforced the wooden spokes of the wheels. His equipment could be identified as genuine as it was always painted red. Identified as "Uncle Fred" in Munising. [WJC Photo]



The Sillmer logging crew loaded logs on a hauling sleigh, using cant hooks and chains to position the logs. A team pulled the logs up skids by means of a decking chain. Quick skill with a cant hook was required by the top-loaders. The tongue of the sleigh, attached to the front bunk, points down the logging road. This postcard view was taken February 2, 1911, probably in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan or northeastern Wisconsin. [WJC Photo]



This view, probably taken in Breen Township, Dickinson County, between 1910 and 1915, shows a logging sleigh, consisting of two sets of runners with a “bunk” or crosspiece on each “bunk,” being loaded. Note the two poles or “skids” at the left side of the sleigh and the chains around the log on the ground which was to be skidded up the poles, guided by the lumberjack at the left and the lumberjack standing atop the load of logs. The team of horses, guided by the teamster at the right, would assist in moving the log by pulling the chain. When completed, a wrapping chain would bind the load tightly to keep it from spreading. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*



A teamster and two lumberjacks posed on a small load of logs on a bobsled pulled by a team of horses in New England. A “sled” in a New England lumberjack’s vocabulary was a “sleigh” in the Midwest, according to “A Logger’s Dictionary” printed as an appendix in Stewart H. Holbrook’s classic work *Holy Old Mackinaw: A Natural History of the American Lumberjack*, published in 1945. This postcard view dates from about 1910. Note the “bunks” or runners of the two-part “sled” and the chains tightly fastening the logs. [WJC Photo]



This postcard view, probably taken in northern Wisconsin or the western part of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan in about 1910, shows a teamster driving a sleigh holding a huge load of large pine logs along an iced logging road. Note that the runners of the two “bunks” are in the grooves in the road and the team of horses wear heavy cogged shoes for better traction. These sleighs had runners 4 inches wide and 7 inches deep. The beams between runners were 10 inches x 14 inches. The bunks holding the logs were from 8 feet to 12 feet wide to hold enormous loads. [WJC Photo]



Another logging photograph dating between 1910-1915, probably from Breen Township, Dickinson County, shows sleigh loads of logs being moved along an iced logging road. A four-horse hitch was pulling the first sleigh where five lumberjacks posed atop the load. The second sleigh contained shorter, smaller logs loaded in the opposite direction. [*Beatrice Blomquist*]



This postcard view, a “show load” containing 6,000 feet of pine, designed for the photographer, was taken in about 1910-1915 in the Wausau, Wisconsin, area, for Weinkave & Co. Note the dog, possibly a camp mascot, the lumberjack playing the cornet and the two women holding the bridles of the team. [WJC Photo]



# ESTABLISHING A LUMBER CAMP — 6

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *Oxen were used for hauling in the woods almost entirely in the early days, but these slow, steady beasts gave way to horses in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. Long runner sleds were used with the oxen and, as a general rule, one thousand feet to the load was more than enough.*
- *The oxen had to be shod and this was one of the most difficult chores in the lumber camp, as the ox wouldn't raise its foot like a horse, but had to be lifted from the ground. A heavy frame was built against a tree and the clumsy beast was raised off its feet by wide leather straps passed under its body, fore and aft, and fastened to spools operated by cranks on each side of the frame. In this position, where its feet were accessible to the shoer, it was kept until the job was complete. Due to its cloven hoofs, each ox required eight shoes.*
- *With the improvement of logging roads from mere trails to long, level, icy thoroughfares, oxen gave way to horses weighing about one thousand pounds each. Heavier horses were used and heavier loads hauled as the roads were made better. The largest load of logs ever hauled by one team in our camps was drawn along an ice road for four miles by a team of horses weighing thirty-two hundred pounds at a camp on the Popple River, a tributary of the Menominee River, during the winter of 1891. The load scaled 21,603 board feet and was so high the driver had to stand on the roller of the sled in order to shun the tree tops.*



Taken during the first decade of the twentieth century at the Michael Kenny farm at Hylas, Breen Township, this photograph documents the use of oxen in logging operations in Dickinson County. Oxen were used as “horsepower” in many of the camps in the early days. Two oxen weighing from 1,200 pounds to a ton each, hitched in a yoke, were more powerful than a team of horses of the same weight. In deep snow they worked more easily and efficiently than horses. [Beatrice Blomquist]



A team of horses, held by their teamster, and a yoke of oxen provided power as logs were decked with this swing boom jammer. The man with the long prod was the driver in charge of the oxen. Unlike horses, oxen never became excited or panicked. Oxen required less care, lived on less feed and were seldom subject to illness or accident. Their equipment was simple and inexpensive. However, they moved at a provokingly slow gait. This postcard view was taken in about 1910, near Schaffer in Delta County, and La Branche in Menominee County, southeast of Foster City. [WJC Photo]

# CAMP LIFE — DAILY ROUTINE — 7

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *The daily routine of life in a lumber camp began long before the break of day. At about four o'clock in the morning the chore boy would crawl from his cozy nest of warm blankets into the chill early morning atmosphere and start the fires — one in the cook's camp, one in the men's camp, and a third in the camp office, where the foreman and the scaler and one or two others slept.*
- *When a good healthy blaze was roaring in each of the three stoves, the chore boy would go into the men's camp and shake the teamsters into wakefulness, being careful not to disturb the sleep of the other men.*
- *The teamsters would sleepily and noiselessly arise, pull on their outer garments, and depart for the barns, where they fed, cleaned and harnessed their horses in preparation for the day's work. This done, they returned to the camp, dressed their feet fully, washed for breakfast and, perhaps, took a chew of plug tobacco as an appetizer.*

# CAMP LIFE — DAILY ROUTINE — 8

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *By the time the teamsters were ready for breakfast, the camp reveille, blown on a big tin horn, had roused the rest of the camp at about 4:35 A.M., and the jacks had rolled out of their blankets, pulled on the clothes they had taken off the night before, taken their heavy socks from the drying racks, donned them and were washing for breakfast. At 4:50 or 5:00 A.M. the “gaberal” would blow the breakfast horn as a signal for the jacks to “come and get it.”*
- *Breakfast in a lumber camp was as large and important a meal as any other. Flapjacks or pancakes stacked in great piles along the oil cloth covered tables were favorite items of fare among the jacks. There might be baked beans, or fried meat and potatoes, or hash, or any other dish which could be prepared from the extensive larder. All this was washed down with great draughts of coffee...and there were tasty cookies and cakes. Lumberjacks were always fed well. The better they were fed, the better work they did.*
- *Breakfast over, the men pulled on their outer working clothes and departed for their various posts. Most of them wore wool caps, heavy flannel shirts, mackinaw cloth jackets and pants, heavy German socks and low rubbers. This was the warmest, most comfortable, and most efficient costume for woods work.*



Postmarked Ralph, Michigan, February 5, 1912, a crew of lumberjacks posed in front of the cook house in a northeastern Dickinson County lumber camp. Checked woolen shirts, suspenders, short pants and tall, caulked boots were typical and appropriate apparel for working in the woods. Note the man holding the double-bitted axe in the second row. One shanty boy holds a cat and another holds a dog, undoubtedly camp pets. Wearing an apron, the young cook's assistant – or “cookee” – holds a tin Gabriel horn. Such horns measured from 4 to 5 feet in length and were used to call the men at mealtime. [WJC Photo]

# CAMP LIFE – DAILY ROUTINE – 9

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *When the scene of the cutting wasn't too far from the camp, the men returned to the cook shanty for their midday meal, but when it was some distance away, the "flaggin's" were carried to them on a large sled by the chore boys. Great, thick sandwiches, large cans full of hot food from which the jacks filled their tin plates, and great, steaming cans of hot tea satisfied the midday hunger.*
- *Back to work they went and labored until after dark. In those days there was no eight hour day and while there was day-light the work went on.*
- *Then they would straggle into camp and eat their evening meal with appetites such as only tired and hungry men can develop. The teamsters put away and cared for their horses before eating.*
- *After supper the jacks would gather around the great red-hot stove in the bunkhouse, pull off their wet, stinking socks and hang them on the drying racks around and above the stove, where they steamed away and emitted an indescribably atrocious odor which permeated the bunkhouse atmosphere.*



A logging crew enjoyed lunch in the woods, probably around 1900-1910, someplace in Homestead, Florence County, Wisconsin, according to *Heritage of Iron & Timber 1880-1980*, the county's centennial book. Note the table constructed of straight saplings, the metal container right of center for carrying the food from the cook's camp to the work area and the dog sitting up for the photographer. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]



Five lumberjacks and two young boys seated on a couple of logs around a fire were cooking something on sticks over the flames. Note the axe in tree behind the young boy and crosscut saw standing against tree at right. This postcard view, possibly taken in Vermont, probably dates between 1910 and 1920. [WJC Photo]

# CAMP LIFE — FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT — 10

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *For several hours the jacks enjoyed themselves to the best of their various abilities. A few, perhaps, read, but there was little to read aside from a few old newspapers and the Police Gazette, which was always very popular.*
- *The lumberjacks enjoyed themselves doing the stag dance, the jig dance, and playing games.*
- *“Shuffle the Brogue” was a typical lumberjack game and was often played in the evenings and on Sundays. It was plain horseplay, but it appealed to the lumberjacks and was always productive of a great deal of merriment.*
- *A bunch of jacks would sit on the floor in a ring. In the center of the ring was another jack who was “It.” The men in the ring sat close together and passed a rubber [lumberjack footwear] around behind their backs, at the same time yelling “Shove! Shove! Shove!” When it was convenient, one of them would hit the man who was “It” in the back with the rubber and then quickly pass it behind him again and shove it to his neighbor.*
- *When “It” caught one of the jacks with the rubber, the caught one had to trade places with “It” and suffer the punishment dealt out by the ring until he caught a man.*



Substantial, well-cooked meals were essential to the lumberjacks, who worked long, hard hours outdoors in all kinds of weather. This logging crew paused before beginning their meal in the cook shanty of Camp Three in Breen Township sometime between 1910 and 1920. The cups placed upside down upon tin plates in the same position marked each setting at the sawbuck table. Lumber camp crews were required to observe silence throughout the meal except when asking for something to be passed. The cook at the left sat on the drainboard of a primitive sink which was needed to wash all the dirty tableware after each meal. Note the pole rafters above. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*

# CAMP LIFE — FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT — 11

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *“Greenhorns” in the camp always had to be initiated and this was done in many ways and provided much amusement. One favorite method was the “sheep game.”*
- *One of the jacks played the part of a “farmer” who owned a sheep, another posed as a “sheep buyer” and the greenhorn was rolled up tightly in a heavy blanket and became the “sheep.” He was carried by two other jacks. The farmer and the sheep buyer would stage an argument over the weight of the sheep. To determine its real weight they would let it down repeatedly on the “scales.”*
- *The “scales” was a sharply pointed stick and the “sheep” was always thrown onto the “scales” in such a way that the point of the stick came into violent contact with the tender, rear central portion of his anatomy. This was very uncomfortable for the greenhorn and very laughable for the rest of the crew.*
- *Another favorite stunt was to send a greenhorn to the cook shanty to borrow the “bean hole.”*
- *Such sessions were, of course, only occasional and most of the time the evening was taken up with shop talk, rough banter, stories, feats of physical prowess, and games.*



A greased pig contest enlivened the lives of these lumberjacks at Camp One of the Morgan Lumber & Cedar Company somewhere in Breen Township near Foster City between 1910 and 1920. The lumberjack at the far right attempting to capture the pig may have been named Dufresne. The four men in the background were standing on the broad backs of some of the camp's horses to get a better view of the fun. Note the log and tar paper bunkhouses, typical of accommodations in most lumber camps. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*

# CAMP LIFE — LIFE IN THE BUNKHOUSE — 12

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *After a few hours of entertainment, the smoky oil lamps would be blown out and the tired men would roll into their bunks. Quiet reigned for a time and was then broken by a chorus of hearty, healthy, masculine snores which steadily increased in volume until it rivaled the sigh of the night wind in the pines outside.*
- *The bunks were usually double decked and lined the walls of the bunkhouse. Some camps had mattresses while others simply had bunks filled with clean straw.*
- *Camps were none too clean, due to the roving habits of the men. In the old days there were no bathing facilities in the camps and men roving from one camp to another would louse the very horses in the barns.*
- *In the old days most of the jacks went without bathing all winter long and even when spring came some of them were loath to indulge.*
- *The lumberjacks washed their faces and hands morning and evening during the winter and bathed their feet at intervals to keep them in good condition. Some of them shaved, but most went with long beards during the winter months. They cut each other's hair when it became inconveniently long.*



The crew at the Jauquet brothers logging camp, pictured above in February, 1905, posed in front of the bunkhouse located in Section 24, Township 43 North of Range 30 West in Sagola Township. The first man at the left in the front row was David Curtis. The Jauquet brothers — Frank, Hubert, Clem and John — and their sister Mary, holding her son, were also sitting in the front row. Women visitors came only on Sundays when the men spent their time at washing, “crumb-picking,” playing cards and telling “whoppers.” *[James Jauquet]*



Another unidentified logging camp photograph, probably taken in Felch Township, Dickinson County, sometime between 1907 and 1918, includes three women in the back right of center under the eaves of the building constructed of large logs. Note the saplings used to hold the tar paper roof covering in place. Three teamsters were holding their horses, the one in the center wearing a long fur coat for warmth. A chunk of wood at the left was probably used as a chopping block for the neatly-stacked kindling. [WJC Photo]



Taken in November, 1919, this postcard view shows Olaf Olson's Camp, possibly Camp 3, in Breen Township, Dickinson County. The man playing the accordion or concertina seated at the far left was Ed (?) Kling, the older man seated between the men with rifles was "Old Battiste," and the man with the rifle seated to the right of Battiste was Erick Dorman. The camp cook stood in his apron in the back, while a lumberjack with his double-bitted axe sat at the far right. The short pants some of the men were wearing is indicative of clothing worn during the river drive. Note the size of the logs in the building which appears to have a dogtrot between two structures with a continuous cedar shake roof. [WJC Photo]



Another unidentified logging camp photograph, probably taken in Breen Township, Dickinson County, between 1900 and 1910, includes two women and three small children. The men's short pants probably indicate they were members of a river drive crew. The lack of snow on the ground and leaves on the trees suggests the photograph was taken in the spring when the annual drive would occur. The group was standing on a board walkway in front of a building constructed of large pine logs with a cedar shake roof. Note the wooden barrel and tubs at the far left. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*

# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 13

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

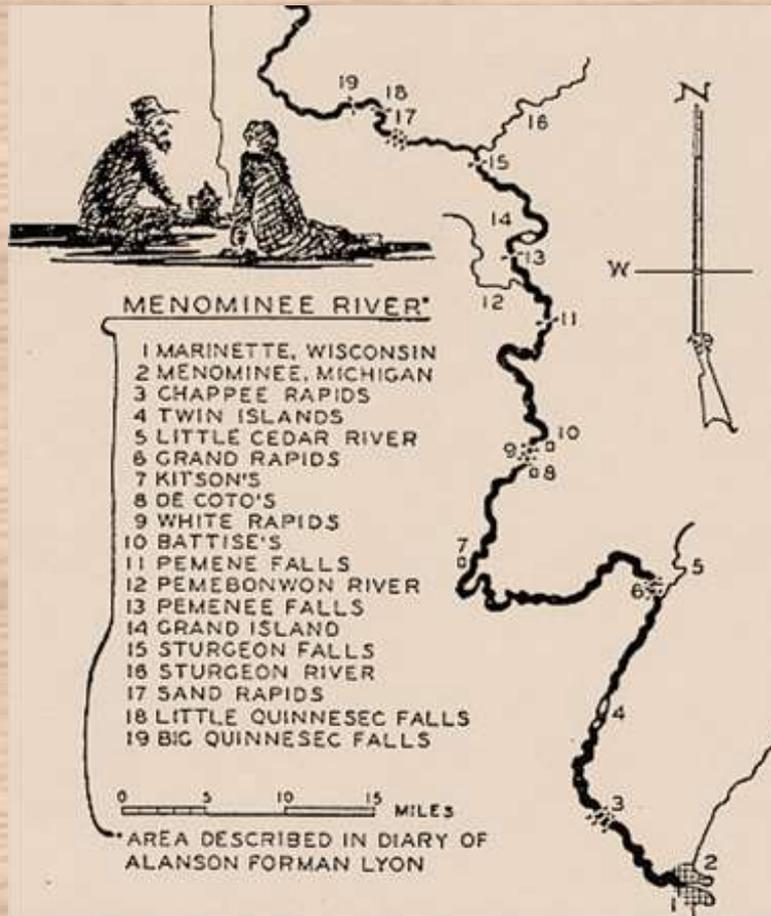
- *In the old logging days of Wisconsin and Michigan, every spring saw the curtain roll up on a tremendous drama along the rivers of the timber country; a drama greater even than that in which the great pines were felled and dissected; the epic drama of the drive.*
- *All winter long preparations went forward for this brief period of intense activity and struggle. Thousands and thousands of logs were banked along the riversides, or on the ice of the streams. There they lay, in serried ranks, awaiting the day when they would be tumbled into the streams and rivers, to become the multitudinous parts of a mighty, surging monster, the drive.*
- *In reservoir dams at the headwaters of the rivers the waters of the spring thaw were stored up to carry the logs along the first lap of their journey to the mills.*
- *In the camps cutting operations came to an end. Some of the men left for an early spring spree. Others stayed on, changing their rubbers for calked boots, the many spikes of which, on sole and heel, were filed to sharp points that would bite into the pine logs. The heavy flannels of winter gave way to overalls which would be lighter when wet and would dry out faster.*



This 1903 photograph appeared in *Heritage of Iron & Timber 1880-1980*, Florence County's centennial book. The decked logs were on the ice covering the Menominee River near Aurora, Florence County, Wisconsin, awaiting the thaw for their ride down the river to the sawmills in Menominee, Michigan, and Marinette, Wisconsin, where the river empties into Lake Michigan. [Dick Ferris]

# BRIEF HISTORY OF LOGGING DRIVES ON THE MENOMINEE RIVER

## 1868 – 1916



THE MENOMINEE RIVER IN 1854

Since 1868 to the present time (1916) there has been a gradual falling off in the number of feet banked on the river and in size of the logs. There have been spurts, when years were greater than previous ones, but on the whole there has been a gradual falling off.

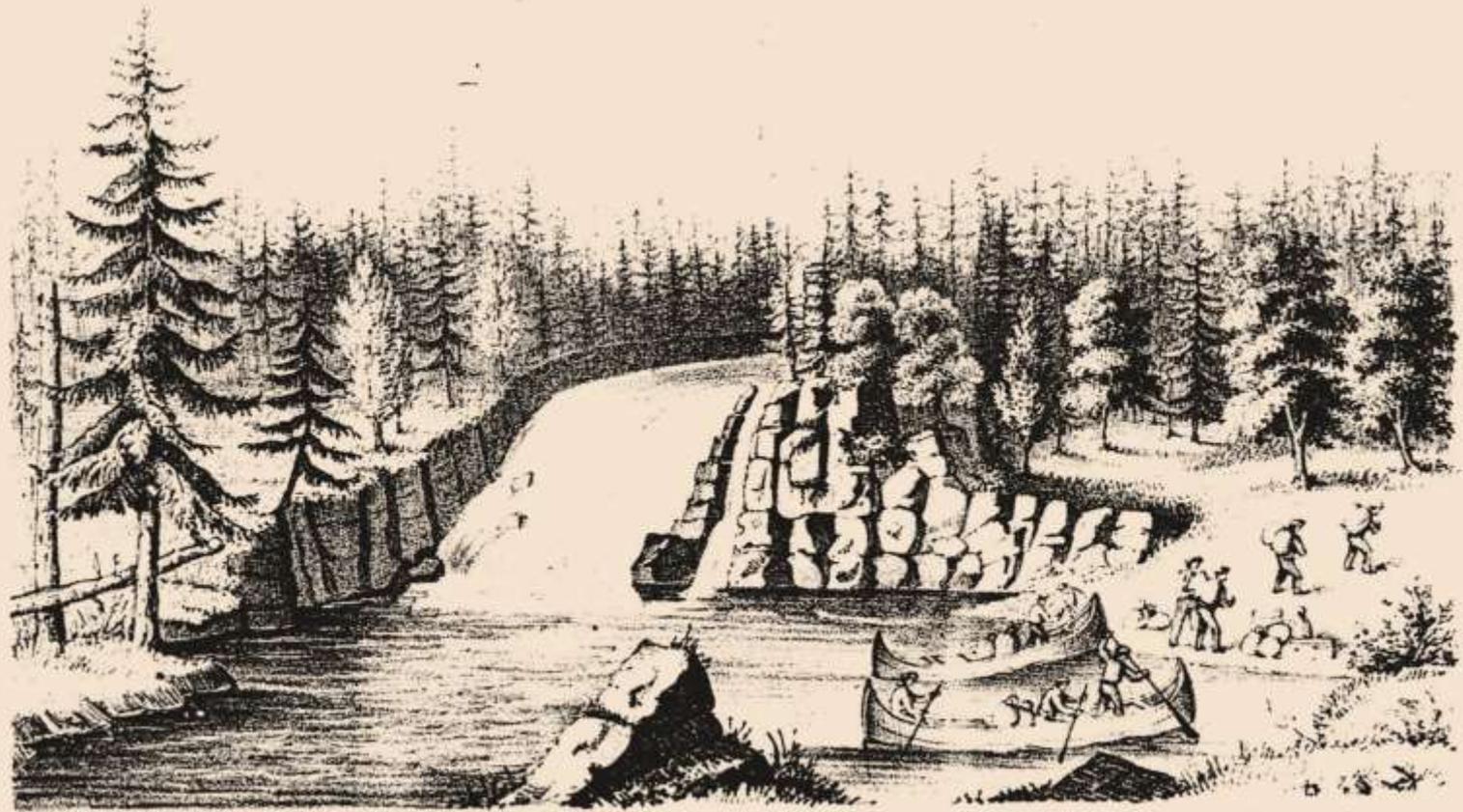
Including the season just closed and from 1868 there have been 10,794,749,178 feet of timber sent down the Menominee river. The largest year was in 1889 when 642,138,318 feet were floated. The smallest year was in 1914, the total being 22,734,190 feet. Last year there was a sudden spurt over 1914, 23,474,222 feet having been banked.

The passing of the large timber is also seen in the figures of the Boom company. For instance, in 1888, the average log which came down the river had 192 feet of lumber in it. The average in 1913 and 1915 was but thirty-eight feet.

*Iron Mountain Press*

Iron Mountain, Dickinson County, Michigan

Thursday, January 13, 1916



BIG BEKUENESEC FALLS MEMOMONEE RIVER

This lithograph, identified as “Big Bekuene Sec Falls Menomonee River” is the oldest graphic representation of any Dickinson County landmark known to date. Identified as Plate II in “Part I: Copper Lands” of the *Report on the Geology and Topography of a Portion of the Lake Superior Land District, in the state of Michigan*, the lithograph was produced by Ackerman Lithographers, 379 Broadway, New York. J.W. Foster and J.D. Whitney, United States geologists, submitted this report to the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., in 1850. [Michigan Technological University]



Photo. Only, Copyright 1905 by the Rotograph Co.

Hydraulic Falls, Iron Mountain, Mich.

Log jams were common during the spring drive, and getting the logs moving again was dangerous and tested the lumberjacks' skills with a peavy, cant hook and balance. This halftone postcard, postmarked September 3, 1907, showed the sluiceway and logs amassed at the foot of Upper Quinnesec Falls or Hydraulic Falls. [WJC Photo]



The cliffs on the Michigan side of the Menominee River below the Lower Quinnesec Falls attracted a number of well-dressed rock climbers in this photograph, taken in about 1890, possibly by J.J. Eskil. Notice the logs which had accumulated near the base of the cliffs. The buildings in the background just left of center could be part of Niagara, Marinette County, Wisconsin. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 14

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

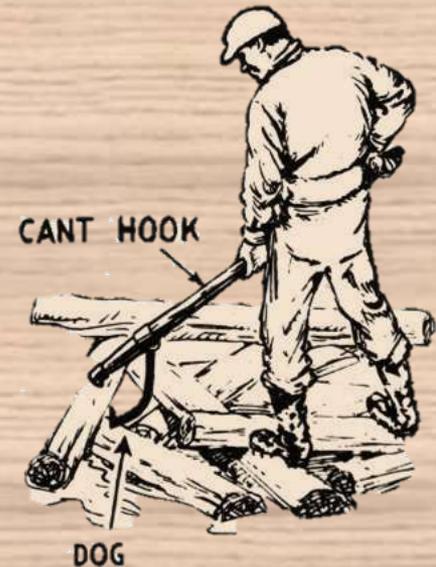
- *These rivermen were the pick of the camps, lumberjacks of unusual strength, agility, daring, and hardihood. They had to be. For days they had to go with but little sleep and with snacks of food snatched whenever and wherever possible. They had to suffer frequent dunkings and were almost continually soaked to their skins at a time of year when the weather was still far from clement. The price of their safety was constant and unfaltering vigilance. They worked in a treacherous element, and the slightest misstep or miscalculation might send them relentlessly to their deaths.*
- *The rivermen wore their overalls stagged, that is, they were cut off at a point just above the boot tops. This cutting was usually done with a knife or ax and was, as a result, very uneven. The rivermen took pride in the irregularity of the staggings and they usually cut one leg shorter than the other. Flannel shirts adorned the upper parts of their bodies as a rule, and the most nondescript hats imaginable rested on their heads. They carried peavies and pike poles, with which they wrestled with and directed the course of the logs along the wandering rivers.*
- *There would come a day in spring when the gates of the reservoir dam on each stream were lifted and its stored up waters turned loose. Down the river bed they rushed, eager and irresistible, tearing up and carrying along the rotten ice which covered the stream.*

# LUMBERJACK TOOLS – CANT HOOK VS. PEAVEY

A peavey (left) was similar to a cant hook, but with the end armed with a strong, sharp spike used for rolling and handling logs in the water. Joseph Peavey, born in 1799, became a blacksmith in Upper Stillwater, a town along the Penobscot River north of Bangor, Maine. In 1858, while watching some river drivers at work with the old swing-bail cant-dog, Peavey conceived an improvement, went to his blacksmith shop nearby and worked out his idea. Also known as a cant-dog, a tool with a sharp point and a movable hook on it, the peavey was used on a river drive to create leverage when moving floating logs.



A cant hook (right) was a tool like a peavey, but had a toe ring and lip at the end instead of a spike. A stout wooden lever, the cant hook had a blunt, usually metal-clad end and a movable metal arm with a sharp hook. Once a tree was felled, the lumberjack used a cant hook to roll and handle the log. The cant hook was used to handle logs on land or on river drives to dislodge logs from the banks and to break up jams. A “cant” is a log which has been squared off on at least two sides.



# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 15

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *The rollways were broken out and, in a smother of spray and tumult of noise and confusion, the logs were tumbled into the rushing waters. Out upon their heaving, surging backs scampered the rivermen, pushing, pulling, and prying with their peavies and pike poles, doing their best to keep the logs always on the move. The drive was on!*
- *Down the river it wended its way, around bends, over falls, through rapids. Upon the constantly shifting carpet of logs the agile rivermen labored. Whenever there became discernible the slightest cessation in the steady, downstream movement of the logs, a jack was on the job to remedy the matter. Every effort was made to avoid jams, which were apt to exact a heavy toll in both men and money.*
- *The first lap of the journey came to an end at the dam next below the reservoir dam. In the great pond back of this dam the logs came to a temporary rest, while a sufficient head of water was raised to carry them along the next lap.*
- *During the day there was usually an upstream wind and this drove the logs to the back end of the dam pond. This made it necessary to work them down at night, when there was little or no wind, and to throw a boom across the pond to hold them close to the sluiceway.*

## LUMBERJACK TOOLS – PICKAROON AND PIKE POLE



A pickaroon was a hand implement about the size of an axe, the working end of which curved out to a point about five inches perpendicular to the handle and the butt end squared off in a crude hammer. A pickaroon was used with one hand to finesse a log into position when a lot of force wasn't required. Broken axes were often made into pickaroons. They were used primarily in cedar cutting and hauling.



A pike pole was a long pole, twelve to twenty feet long, with a sharp spiral spike and hook on the end used to handle and push floating logs. The pole was typically constructed of spruce or fir. The straight point was used to push logs, while the curved hook was used for grabbing and pulling them.



The name of the river and the exact location of this postcard photograph is unknown, although the scene is probably in northeastern Wisconsin or the western portion of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and dates between 1915 and 1920. These fourteen rivermen, often referred to as “river pigs” or “river hogs” in lumberjack vernacular, were possibly members of a “rear crew” charged with getting logs which became “stranded” during the main drive moving downstream. They were working in frigid water using their pike poles and peaveys. The pike poles had a steel point attached to a very long handle to push logs on the river drives. Only the hardest, most skillful, the most reckless men were hired to withstand the rigors of “river hog” work. *[WJC Photo]*

# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 16

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *When a good head of water had been raised, the gates of the dam were pulled up and the water allowed to run through for some time before the logs were sluiced. This is due to the fact that the logs will outrun the water and strand themselves in a jam if they are released soon after the gates are opened.*
- *The length of the interval between the opening of the gates and the sluicing of the logs was usually decided by a calculation of the speed of the current, determined by throwing a board in the water and timing it for a mile, and the distance between the dam and the next one below.*
- *Sluicing the logs, that is, directing them through the gates of the dam and down the sluiceways, is rather dangerous work. If a man happens to be washed into the sluice, there isn't much hope for him, as there are too many swiftly moving logs around to knock him senseless.*
- *When, in spite of the unfaltering vigilance and quick action of the rivermen, the logs piled up into jams, there were enacted the most interesting scenes of the drive. Thousands of logs would sometimes work themselves into an intricate mass, as hard to take apart as a Chinese puzzle, and hold in check tons of angry, pent-up water.*



The name of the river and the exact location of this postcard photograph is unknown, although the scene is probably in northeastern Wisconsin or the western portion of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and dates between 1910 and 1920. These six “river hogs” appear to be working logs through a sluiceway at a dam gate. They were using their pike poles to direct the logs downstream. Note that their pants had been cut short and their clothing was not heavy, both safety measures for a dangerous job. The onlooker at the far left apparently was in a supervisory position. *[Dick Ferris]*

# CAMP LIFE – THE RIVER DRIVE – 17

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *There were many ways of breaking jams and the method used usually depended on the size of the jam and its general condition. A small jam could often be broken up by the rivermen with their peavies. They would attack the logs on the side of the stream where the current was swiftest and push and pull the logs into the current one by one until the whole jam was broken loose. As a general rule there were one or two key logs which held the jam and when these were pulled out, the jam would break up or move on to another position, in which case the removal of another key log or so was necessary.*
- *The riverman must be constantly alert, for when the jam breaks, it usually goes out in a hurry and he must run for his life over the surging logs. Sometimes a key log was removed with a swamp hook. This was in cases where the key log was wedged very tight, or where it was unusually dangerous for the men to work. The swamp hook was placed on the key log and its teeth made to bite deep by the use of a trip line from one side of the stream while the gang of men pulled a rope from the other side and endeavored to extricate the log from its position. Dynamite is by far the safest and most effective method for breaking up large jams.*
- *Gruelling work coupled with such hardship and exposure as the rivermen were forced to stand invited the use of liquor and whenever possible the men obtained it. When used in moderate quantities, whiskey is a helpful stimulant for men engaged in such work, but excessive indulgence is dangerous.*



This privately-printed postcard view, dated in early March, 1910, shows a small log jam which formed at Sand Portage on the Menominee River. Sand Portage was located just down river from Piers Gorge. [WJC Photo]



Maude Gee (standing) and Jamie Gee, Jeffie Whitehead and John Bush posed for the photographer on a huge log jam near either the Upper or Lower Quinnesec Falls of the Menominee River on April 23, 1899. A item in the April 14, 1892 edition of Iron Mountain's *The Iron Range*, noted: *SCORES of people have visited Quinnesec falls the past week to see the immense log jam there, which extended from the Hydraulic works to within a short distance of the railroad bridge. A force of men were employed blasting the ice and breaking the jam, and succeeded in starting the logs last Tuesday. It is estimated that there were 6,000,000 feet in the jam. [Dr. John Newkirk]*



LOG JAM AT TWIN FALLS, IRON MOUNTAIN, MICH.

*Oh how quick what a kind of a timber and  
you having some having a good time  
get a long list of E. G. K.*

HAND COLORED WORK. E. G. KRÖPP. MILWAUKEE.

This hand-tinted early postcard, postmarked Norway, Michigan, August 6, 1907, depicts a large log jam at Twin Falls on the Menominee River, near Iron Mountain, Michigan. Postcards produced prior to 1907 have a space on the front where the message was to be written, as the other side was not divided and designated for only an address, unlike later, divided-back postcards. [WJC Photo]

# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 18

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *A driving crew was divided into two sections, one of which handled the fore part of the drive, breaking up jams, sluicing, and so forth, and the other the rear end, picking up logs which were stranded when the high water receded.*
- *Although the jam crew had a bit more dangerous work, the members of the rear crew had to labor much more strenuously and they were paid accordingly.*
- *On long drives the “wannigan,” a raft on which the cook carried supplies and utensils, came down with the “rear” and whenever possible the men ate regular meals. When this was not possible the men carried what were called “nosebags,” haversacks filled with lunches. Canned tomatoes, eaten cold out of the tin, were a favorite dish with the rivermen, as they were very refreshing on warm spring days. Tea was usually used instead of coffee, because it was a better simulant and more refreshing.*
- *Only pine logs could be driven with real success on the rivers. A large proportion of hemlock, basswood, and hardwood logs were apt to sink and so they were usually railed to the mills. There must be one hundred million feet of sunken timber in the main Menominee River and its tributaries which have been there for the last twenty-five years.*



This unidentified photograph, probably dating between 1890 and 1910, may show a river drive crew eating, since there were tents pitched and conditions appeared to be rather primitive. Quite a number of the men were wearing pants cut short and lighter clothing...and the snow was not present which are all indicators of a river drive. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]



This crew from the R.N. Washburn Camp was taking a lunch break in the woods, probably in northeastern Wisconsin or the western Upper Peninsula, sometime between 1890 and 1910. The man standing at the right, probably the cook's assistant, stood next to what appears to be a sled with a box on top which may have been used to transport the steaming pots of food the hungry lumberjacks were eating. [*Menominee Range Historical Museum*]

Camp of Menominee Boom Co., near Iron Mountain, Mich.

Seibert Drug Co.



This hand-tinted postcard, sent from Iron Mountain, Michigan, to Norway, Michigan, in about 1910, shows the Menominee Boom Company Camp on the Menominee River, near Iron Mountain. Undoubtedly this was a river drive camp taken in late spring. The smoke must have been coming from the cook tent. The card was sold by the Seibert Drug Company, a pioneer Iron Mountain business. *[WJC Photo]*



Taken near Hydraulic Falls in about 1890, this photograph shows a typical log drive camp. Note the cook tent and crew just right of center and the large kettles suspended and steaming over an open fire. Some typical lumberjack fare had colorful terminology. “Red horse” was either salt beef, corned beef or pickled beef. “Grapefruit” referred to cold, canned tomatoes. “Morning Glories” were flapjacks or pancakes served every breakfast. “Sowbelly” referred to fat pork pickled in brine and served daily. Food at a logging camp was referred to as “chuck.” At the right is the air pipe which served the Chapin and Ludington Mines with compressed air to work machinery, running nearly three miles from the Hydraulic Power Company at the Upper Quinneesc Falls (Hydraulic Falls) to Iron Mountain. A favorite pastime for several generations was “walking the pipe” to the falls and back. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 19

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *When the logs of a number of different companies were all taken down in one drive, as was often the case, the drive came to a stop in the sorting booms and there the logs were divided according to the marks stamped on their ends and taken separately to their respective mills.*
- *Stray logs, that is logs which were not end marked or bark marked, were taken care of by a committee appointed by the boom corporation. They were sold and the boom company, which was often jointly owned by the mill owners and loggers, received the money.*
- *The mills which received the cuts of independent loggers always scaled the logs in the woods and almost invariably they had their scalers instructed to give low scale and thus cheat the loggers. Of course, there were some honest mill owners who did not stoop to such practices.*
- *Occasionally, at camps along the river or at the mill towns where the drive came to an end, the rivermen would indulge in a bit of sport on the logs. Two or sometimes more would jump on a log together and roll and snub it furiously to see which could stay on longest. Sometimes they all took a ducking, sometimes one of them proved himself better than his comrades by staying atop the spinning timber and forcing it into subjection. Out of this grew the modern sport of birling or log rolling.*

# MILL COMPANY LOG MARKS FOR THE MENOMINEE RIVER

COMPANY NAME	NICK-NAME	SIDE MARK	END MARK	CATCH-MARK
N. Ludington Co.	Isaac			10
H. Witbeck Co.	Carney			111
Sawyer-Goodman Co.	Sawyer			K
Kirby-Carpenter Co.	Sam		KS	I
Menominee River Lumber Co.	Jessie			110
Ludington, Wells & Van Schaick Co.	Bob		X	11
Girard Lumber Co.	Wells			110

MILL COMPANIES LOG MARKS

The above chart appears on page 55 of *Logs on the Menominee: The History of the Menominee River Boom Company* by Fred C. Burke. This book was published in Marinette, Wisconsin, in 1946. The chart shows a few of the nicknames, side marks, end marks and catch marks used in logging on the Menominee River. Lumberjacks used stamping hammers to mark the logs which were floated down the river during the spring drive and then sorted out by company at the boom company so payment could be accurately made.

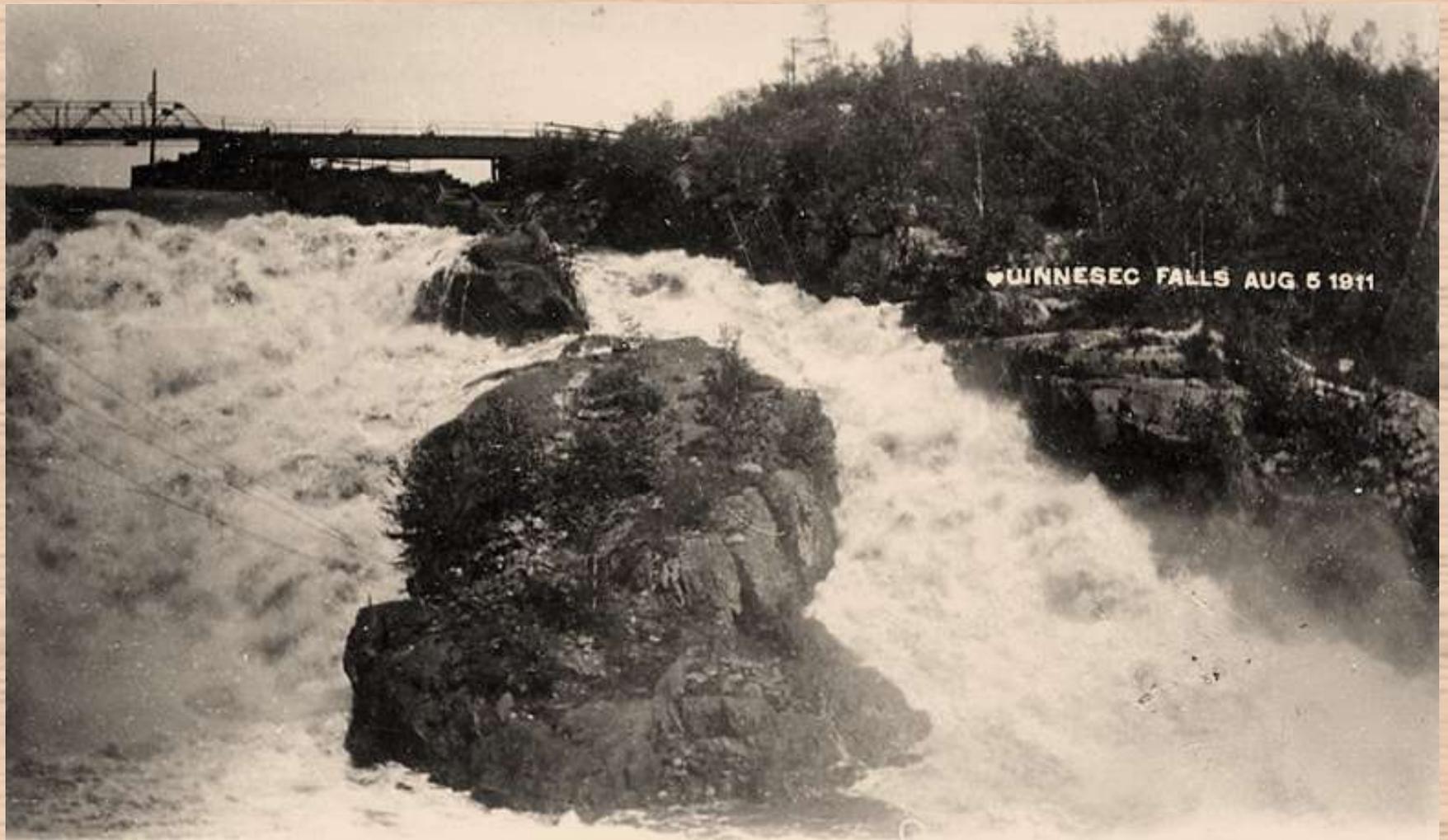


This photograph, taken between 1890 and 1900, showed low water on the Menominee River. Note the size of the logs in relation to the men seated on them at the lower right. These logs remained behind following the spring river drive. A water-soaked log lying on the bottom of a river or lake, or a partially sunken log was called a “deadhead.” *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

Quinnesic Falls and Hydraulic Powerhouse, Iron Mountain, Mich.



Postmarked in Iron Mountain, Michigan, on May 22, 1911, this halftone postcard view of the Upper Quinnesec Falls (Hydraulic Falls) and the Hydraulic Falls Powerhouse shows the sluceway through which logs would pass just to the left of the smaller building near the center of the view. [WJC Photo]



This privately-printed postcard view dated August 5, 1911, shows the raging water coming down the sluiceway around the rock formations at the Lower Quinnesec Falls at Niagara, Marinette County, Wisconsin. The walkway and railroad bridge above the dam can be seen in the background. *[WJC Photo]*



This privately-printed postcard view, postmarked in Quinnesec, Michigan, in about 1910 or 1911, shows the raging water coming down the sluceway at the Upper Quinnesec Falls (Hydraulic Falls). A large number of logs had congregated at the foot of the falls. Note the houses and other buildings on the Michigan side of the Menominee River in the upper left. *[WJC Photo]*



This photograph, dating between 1890 and 1910, shows a boom constructed on the Menominee River. A boom was sometimes composed of a line of logs chained together to contain other logs. The term also refers to the log-sorting yards that developed on major logging streams where a long string of chained logs was used to catch the logs being floated to the mills. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

# CAMP LIFE — THE RIVER DRIVE — 20

Excerpts from *A White Pine Empire: The Life of a Lumberman* by John Emmett Nelligan, 1929

- *Death constantly walked by the side of the men on the river and made its frequent appearances in the most casual and unexpected ways. It was so casual that it was treated almost callously. A drowning did not even slow up the work. The drive had to go on. No mere human misfortune or agency could stop it. Not even death could stop it. A slight miscalculation, a slight misstep and a man might disappear beneath the logs on which he had worked.*
- *The body was recovered at once if possible. The work went on. Jaws set a little harder, eyes blinked away moisture which might distort vision and prove fatal, feet stepped a little more carefully, and that was all.*



William Holmes & Son invested in a narrow-gauge railroad to permit year-round logging. In 1881, Holmes went to Pittsburg to purchase two H.K. Porter & Co. nine-ton locomotives, cars and rails, paying \$10,000 cash. The railroad grade was started during the summer. The locomotives and cars were shipped to Florence, Wisconsin, then the railroad terminus, in the fall and, when there was sufficient snow, were hauled by sleigh to Holmes Landing on the Michigamme River. The locomotive on the right, named the Winnebago, pulled a coal tender with the letters S. & E.M. (or F.M.) R.R., Car 3. [WJC Photo]



In 1886, William A. Holmes & Son were logging just across what became the Dickinson County line in Section 26 of Township 43 North, Range 31 West, east of the Michigamme River, an area in which Holmes & Son logged extensively between 1881 and 1893. The primitive narrow gauge steam engine, a 9-ton wood burner, which was used to pull carloads of pine logs along a track which extended from a point south of Sagola, then Holmes Siding, in a northwesterly direction to the Michigamme River and was used for a period of six years to move the logs from the woods to the river. [WJC Photo]



A William A. Holmes & Son logging crew had just finished loading a narrow gauge railway car, probably somewhere east of the Michigamme River in the mid-1880's. William A. Holmes was standing fourth from the left in front of the carload of logs. Tom King, a Menominee Indian who lived around Dickinson County for many years, was seated on the log, holding his hat against his leg with his left hand. The lumberjack behind King with his foot resting on the log and a cant hook over his left shoulder was Patrick "Paddy" Costigan. *[WJC Photo]*



Tom King (1827-1910), a Menominee Indian, ran a trading post at what became the New York Farm on the Menominee River, selling it to Eli Wright in 1869, and moving to Badwater to run a half-way house where the old State Road crossed the Menominee River. In 1879 he kept a boarding house at Saunders and later moved to Randville.

The account to the left is recorded in *Be-Wa-Bic Country: The Story of the Menominee Iron Range in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan* by Herbert F. Larson, Sr.

One spring [William] Holmes and Son were driving their logs down the Michigamme from their landing and a jam formed in one of the rock gorges. Sizing up the situation, Holmes saw there were three key logs that apparently were interlocked in such a way that horses with a set of block would be of no avail, and as dynamite had not made its appearance on river drives, the only thing to do would be to chop them loose. He called for two volunteers. Tom King, a Badwater Indian, and Paddy Costigan volunteered.

Before going out on the logs, Holmes gave careful instructions as to what they were to do. As these key logs were standing almost upright, they were to chop almost through to the breaking point and then stop and wait until each man had reached the same point. Each man was then to set himself. At his command they were to give two good wallops, drop their axes and run for shore.

When Holmes and Costigan struck their first blows, they heard the logs begin to crack. They dropped their axes and ran for shore. However, Tom's log didn't crack with the first blow. He started to run for shore but was too late. The entire mass loosened with a terrific roar and started down the river, carrying him along with its increasing momentum. The only thing Tom could do to save his life would be to try to ride out the mass of logs. That's exactly what he proceeded to do. The sudden release of the water's terrible pressure cause the logs to act in many peculiar ways. They twisted, swirled, rolled and were tossed high into the air. The men followed on shore, watching Tom, and praying that he would make it. Some, when they saw Tom thrown in the air, were afraid to look, expecting every moment to see him either crushed or drowned. Agile as a cat, Tom managed to stay on foot. He finally accomplished what seemed the impossible by riding out that infernal rush of water and logs through the chute to the calm waters below. When he reached the calm waters, Tom quickly ran the logs for shore. As he stepped on dry land the men who had followed him downstream ran forward to meet him and let out a mighty cheer. Seeing him approach, Tom grasped Holmes's outstretched hand and remarked, as he wiped his forehead with his other hand, "Billy, you know Mrs. Tom King 'scaped being a widow by half inch." Holmes often remarked that Tom King's performance that day was the greatest exhibition of log-riding he had ever seen.



A swing boom jammer was a crane arrangement, usually built of wood, using the leverage principle to load timber by the use of a team on one end of the balancing beam and a chain with hooks on the other. Two men set the hooks on each end of the logs, and the team was maneuvered so the swinging timber was fairly well placed on any load. Any further positioning was done by other men with canthooks or peaveys. This boom hoisting device was frequently used to load logs on railcars. This postcard view was probably taken between 1907 and 1918 in the western Upper Peninsula or northeastern Wisconsin. [WJC Photo]



Postmarked in Quinnesec, Dickinson County, on May 23, 1912, this view shows the logging yards south of Quinnesec along the Menominee River above the Lower Quinnesec Falls at Niagara, Marinette County, Wisconsin. The dusting of snow indicates late winter or early spring, when a large number of logs would be stockpiled to transport to the mills. [WJC Photo]



In December, 1908, Foster City's Morgan Lumber & Cedar Company began operating a steam hauling locomotive which could haul from eight to ten loads of hardwood logs, each of which would require four teams of horses to pull. Patrick Milligan I stands at the extreme left. At the wheel is "Chicken" Wilson, while Homer Grondine is seated in the cab. R.W. Pierce, company superintendent, stands on the ground in front of the first load. *[Beatrice Blomquist]*



The Morgan Lumber & Cedar Company's log hauler was captured in this postcard view by E. Burkardt near Foster City in about 1910. Note the engineer at the wheel and another man standing on the front sled of the hauler. The message on the back reads in part: *My what a big engine it is. They have ice roads and haul 18 or 20 loads a trip and three trips a day. You can see all the logs that is in one of those pictures. They have a lot on bank of river.* [WJC Photo]



Another postcard view of the steam hauler of the Morgan Lumber & Cedar Company in Foster City dates from 1910 to 1920. Traveling on man-made ice roads which were sometimes sanded if conditions warranted it, the steam hauler hauled 15 to 20 loads at a time on day and night shifts, bringing logs and “short stuff” from the camps to the company’s mill in Foster City.  
*[WJC Photo]*



This postcard view of a sawmill operating in Winchester, Vilas County, Wisconsin, was postmarked Dec. 3, 1910. The hot pond can be seen in the background at right with a chain hauling apparatus to bring logs into the mill. The covered area in the upper left on two levels contained loaded lumber carts. Horses were eating in the foreground. Merit J. Hesselsweet, the mill superintendent, wrote the following message on the reverse: *We arrived home all right. We are having quite a winter here, haven't seen bare ground since Oct. 27<sup>th</sup> and snowing every day, have about 16" now.* [WJC Photo]



Another postcard view of the same sawmill operating in Winchester, Vilas County, Wisconsin, was postmarked July 29, 1910. Four loaded horse-drawn lumber carts paused for the photographer on the lumber mill's wooden ramp, leading from a shed covering sawmill in background. The message reads: *This is the way we take the lumber from the mill to the yard here. We are cutting about 65 thousand per day.* A purple stamp on the reverse reads "Photo by T.B. Tyler, Hurley, Wis.," and on edge of reverse "Sackett's Studio, Hurley, Wis." [WJC Photo]

**MENOMINEE**



**RANGE**



**MEMORIES**

**THE END**

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