

LOGGING PROGRAM



ST. LOUIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OBJECTIVES

In this program, students will learn about Minnesota and St. Louis County's rich mining history with a focus on the industry's peak around the turn of the 19th century. Students will also learn about the various roles in a typical 1910s Minnesota logging camp and have the opportunity to create their own unique log mark.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Create Your Own Log Mark

Students will have the opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of a typical logging camp stamper and design their own log mark! *Virtual and hands-on options available.*

Activity can be accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11EgU64aURXKGwV4CBzItHa_zYlIAX0G3?usp=sharing

RESOURCES

- "Logging Camps: The Early Years" by MN Dept. of Natural Resources
 - <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/history/logging-camps.html>
- "Logging in Northeastern Minnesota"
 - <http://zenithcity.com/archive/historic-industry/logging-in-northeastern-minnesota/>
- "Minnesota Logging Railroads" by J. C. Ryan
 - <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHistoryMagazine/articles/27/v27i04p300-308.pdf>
- "Logging Industry" by MNHS Forest History Center
 - <https://www.mnhs.org/foresthistorylearn/logging>
- "Minnesota Log Marks" by Elizabeth M. Bachmann
 - <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHistoryMagazine/articles/26/v26i02p126-137.pdf>
- "Peak Logging Years"
 - https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/history/peak_logging.html

MINNESOTA/ST. LOUIS COUNTY LOGGING HISTORY

As immigration to the United States increased, so did the need for building materials to accommodate the newcomers. It was around this time that people in Maine discovered that white pine was an ideal material to meet these needs: it is a “soft” wood so it’s easy to saw, it floats well, and is strong, durable, and resistant to rotting. To accommodate the influx of immigrants settling into the area, Minnesota entered the logging business in the 1830s and peaked from 1900 to 1910. In the St. Louis County region, white pine was the most commonly logged.

Much of Minnesota’s logging took place in the winter months, typically between November and April. When the weather was cold, riverbanks froze and iced over. This made for easier transportation of logs because lumberjacks could slide them down the river rather than have to drag them through dirt, mud, and brush. The cold weather also meant less bugs, so lumberjacks would not be bothered by mosquitoes as they worked. The frozen ground was also beneficial to the oxen and horses that hauled the lumber because it prevented them from sinking into the ground under their heavy loads.

Once the weather began to warm up in the spring, most men returned to their farms or families. Those who stayed, however, were tasked with guiding the cut lumber downriver for distribution to lumber mills.

MINNESOTA LOGGING PEAKED IN THE YEAR 1910. THAT YEAR:

- 400 lumber companies were harvesting timber.
- 2.3 billion board feet of lumber was produced in Minnesota (2.1 billion of this was white pine) – this made the state the third largest timber producing state in the nation at the time.
- Three of the four largest lumber mills in the United States were located in Minnesota.
- An estimated 20,000 lumberjacks worked in the pine stands in Minnesota.
- An estimated 20,000 men worked in sawmills.

LIFE IN LOGGING CAMPS

While working, lumberjacks lived together in logging camps near their work sites, which were often near waterways such as rivers and tributaries for transportation purposes. In the early years of logging, logging camps were fairly small with only a couple of buildings, but as the need for lumber grew, so did the camps, which quickly became small communities of 100+ men. These men, which were typically farmers looking for work between seasons, worked six (6) days a week, sunrise to sunset, rain or shine.

Living near waterways meant that lumberjacks typically ate a lot of wild game and fish while living in logging camps. Camp owners also provided workers with staples such as beans, peas, flour, sugar, and salt. It wasn't uncommon for lumberjacks to eat upwards of five pounds of food a day. In fact, food was so important to many lumberjacks that if they did not like the camp cook, it was not uncommon for them to find work at another camp the following winter.

The logging industry slowed down considerably by 1910, and by the 1950s, logging camps were a thing of the past. Today, much of the work that was once done manually by lumberjacks is now done by machines, power saws, and trucks.

LOGGING CAMP ROLES

On the following pages you will find 16 logging camp role cards. Each card includes the title of a logging camp job as well as a brief description of what the job entailed.

These cards may be used simply to further guide discussion of what life in a typical 1910s Minnesota logging camp was like, or the cards may be used for a roleplay activity, with each student being assigned a card and role.

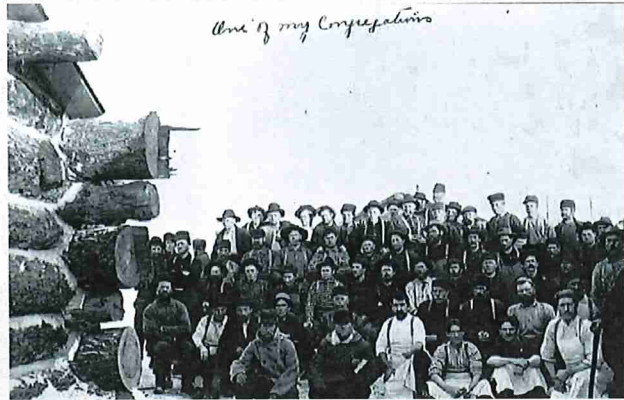


No. 34 Breaking the Jam, near Duluth, Minnesota, ca. 1899

Photo courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota Duluth, on permanent loan from the St. Louis County Historical Society

LUMBER BARON

The lumber baron was the man who owned the lumber, camp, and the land. Lumber barons were often very wealthy men who had great power and influence over the lumber industry.

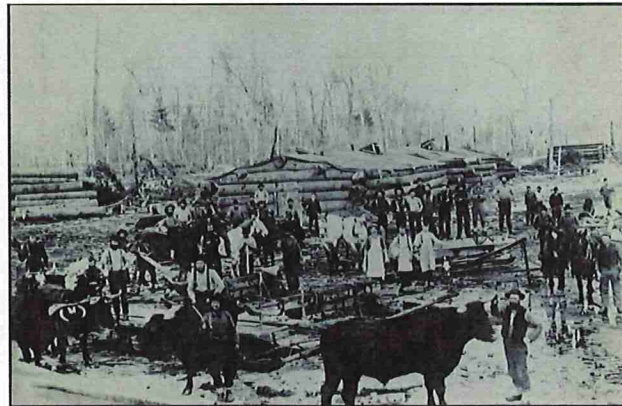


Lumber camp crew, ca. 1914

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

FOREMAN

The foreman oversaw everything that happened at the logging camp, from the building of the camp to which trees would be cut and where they would fall.



Logging camp with oxen, Duluth, Minnesota, ca. 1900

Photo courtesy of Archives and Special Collections,
University of Minnesota Duluth, on permanent loan from
the St. Louis County Historical Society

AXMAN

The axman notched each tree near the base on the side that they wanted the tree to fall.



Loggers undercutting Norway Pine tree in preparation for felling

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

SAWYER

Sawyers were tasked with cutting trees down with saws after they had been notched by the axmen. Sawyers worked in pairs to cut trees down with a cross-cut saw, which required two people to operate.



Lumberjacks sawing tree into logs, ca. 1905

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

SWAMPER

Swampers were responsible for cleaning up and keeping the work site tidy. They would trim the limbs of felled trees, clear brush and roadways, and remove manure left behind by the work oxen and horses.

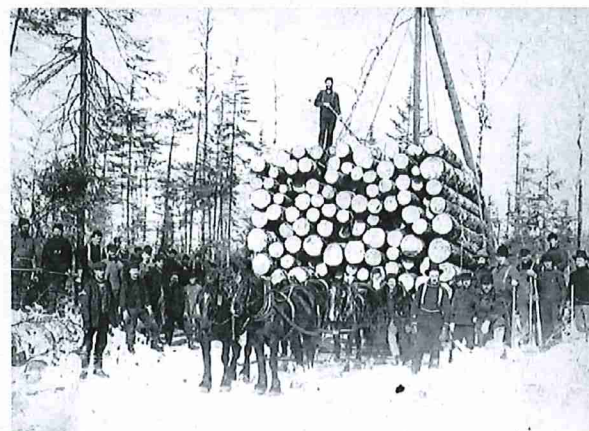


Cutting logs, ca. 1900

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

TEAMSTER (SKIDDER)

Teamsters (or skidders) were responsible for relocating felled lumber after it had been cut. They would use horses to pull the trees to landing areas where they would later be loaded and sent off the lumber mills.



Horse drawn sled hauling logs near Zim, 1904

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

ROAD MONKEY

The road monkey was the man in charge of building and maintaining the logging roads. These roads were often made of ice for easier transportation. Along downhill areas, a man known as a *hayman-on-the-hill* would throw hay on the road to provide traction and slow the sleighs down to prevent them from overcoming the teams of oxen/horses pulling them.



Breaking out the road at the Alger Smith & Company camp number eight, Cook County, 1916

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

<https://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/Bufalo/PB39.html>

DECKER

Once at the landing area, men known as deckers were tasked with arranging the lumber into parallel stacks for easy transportation to the water. Once in the water, the deckers would then tie the logs onto rafts to float downstream.



Men loading logs onto wooden sled, ca. 1910

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

<https://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/Bufalo/PB39.html>

RIVERMEN / RIVER DRIVERS / RIVER HOGS

These men worked and guided the rafts of logs down the waterways by walking alongside them along the shore.



Lumberjacks on a log drive down the St. Louis River near Duluth, 1888

Photo courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota Duluth, on permanent loan from the St. Louis County Historical Society

BIRLER

Sometimes the rafts of logs would get stuck or jammed in the water. It was the task of the birlers to walk out on the logs to keep them moving along. The birlers wore spiked boots and used small, quick steps to spin the logs in place and get them moving again. Birlers would sometimes do this for fun, seeing who could stay on the log the longest. This is where the sport of logrolling originated.



Logging crew members stand on logs in water with cant hooks, ca. 1899

Photo courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, University of Minnesota Duluth, on permanent loan from the St. Louis County Historical Society

BULL COOK

The bull cook tended to the camp buildings – they would clean, heat, and supply wood and water. In most camps, bull cooks were older lumberjacks.

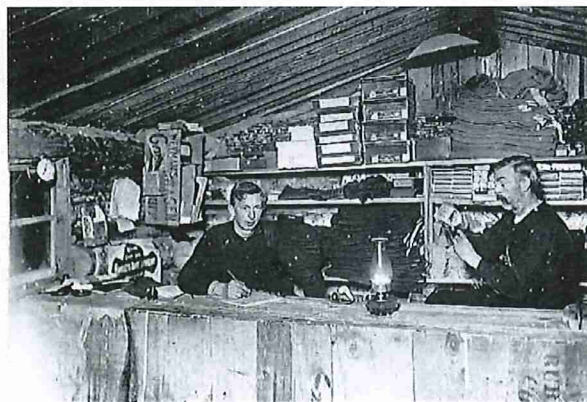


Minnesota lumber camp bull cook, ca. 1940

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

CLERK

The logging camp clerk sold items in the camp store and kept records of the men who worked in the camps, their payroll, and supplies.



Lumberjacks in company store, Page-Hill logging camp near Bemidji, ca. 1895

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

COOK

The cook was the person in charge of preparing much of the food the lumberjacks ate. Assistants to the cook were known as "cookees."



Cook shack in a logging camp near Bemidji, ca. 1908

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

BARN BOSS

The barn boss tended to the oxen/horses and the barn.



Blacksmith shoeing horse at a lumber camp, 1912

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

SCALER

Once the logs had been cut and brought to the river, the scaler was responsible for estimating how many board feet could be cut from each log based on its dimensions.



Scaler measuring logs on the landing, ca. 1922

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

STAMPER

At the river, the stamper was tasked with stamping each log with the appropriate log stamp. This was an important step in ensuring that the correct company would be paid once the logs reach the lumber mills.



Log stamp hammer, ca. 1900

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society



Log stamp sample, ca. 1900

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

ACTIVITY: CREATE YOUR OWN LOG STAMP

This activity is intended for elementary and middle school-aged students

An important role in early logging camps was that of the **stamper**. The camp stamper was in charge of labeling the cut logs to let others know which company cut them to ensure that the correct company would be paid once the logs reached the lumber mills.

Log stamps were unique and stamped on each end of the cut logs as well as on the bark with a heavy stamp hammer, which was made of cast iron and had an ax handle. Some stamps were as simple as the initials of the logging company they came from, while others incorporated small designs such as stars or arrows.

For this activity, your students will design their own unique log stamp. First, have your students give their fictional logging company a name. (In the past, most logging companies were named after the people that owned them.) Next, show your students examples of real log stamps for inspiration. Some log stamps were as simple as the initials of the company name or the people who owned them. Other times they included unique symbols, such as arrows or snowshoes. Have your students think about their own interests and hobbies and incorporate them into their design.





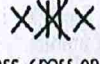


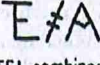




DAVID TOZER  Pitchfork	E. W. BACKUS  B scalped A	W. D. WASHBURN  C. double Y reversed H
CHAS. BRVENTON  Reel	JONATHAN CHASE  Cross cross on two girdles cross	ERASTUS BYERS  Two double darts
THOMAS CARMICHAEL  Snowshoe	J. S. PILLSBURY & CO.  TEL combined girdle twenty A	J. B. BASSETT & CO.  Roof Y girdle twenty
M ^c FARLAND & PICKETT  New hat	T. B. WALKER  TWB combined	FARNHAM & LOVEJOY  F thirty combined H
END MARKS	BARK MARKS	END MARKS

Image credit:

<https://weworkhere.tumblr.com/post/7383655470/minnesota-log-marks-the-marks-were-a-means-of>

Digital version of activity and activity directions can be accessed here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11EgU64aURXKGwV4CBzltHa_zYlIAX0G3?usp=sharing

Offline version of activity requires the following materials:

- Construction paper (brown), markers, scissors (to cut paper in shape of circle)
- Printed or digital examples of real log stamps for students to refer to

• See examples provided in lesson plan or gather your own examples from the internet