

Guide to Logging and Lumbering History in the Copper Country

Michigan Technological University Archives & Copper Country Historical Collections

Assembled by
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Primary Sources:

“Akogibing” Research Papers (MS-620) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997332273404769

Abstract: Research papers, undated, created and compiled by Marko Lulich used in writing the book, "Akogibing, at, in, from, or to the Lake Called Akogib." Includes handwritten notes, excerpts from other sources, maps, newspaper articles and photographs. The main focus of the collected documents is Michigan's Lake Gogebic region, but some surrounding towns are included as well.

This is the definitive collection on logging and of lumberjacks in the Western UP centered around Gogebic and Ontonogen counties. It is an utterly massive collection of lumberjacks and life in the western UP, including life in rough towns, bootlegging, prostitution, stag dances, camp life, fighting, and everything else. This source due to its size should be used like a framework to hang other material off of and should be at the center of any research in the region due to it being of such broad a scope, and of such a high density of information for a concise geographic area.. With that being said, to understand what is being discussed contained within, Deep Woods Frontier and Holy Old Mackinaw are required reading in regards to the life of lumberjacks.

Alberta Sawmill / Ford Forestry Center Collection (MTU-002) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997296953404769

Abstract:Collection, 1921-1998, compiled by Michigan Technological University Archives & Copper Country Historical Collections contains manuscript material and photographs documenting a sawmill developed by the Ford Motor Company in Alberta, Michigan and its subsequent reincarnation as the Ford Forestry Center, a learning center for the School of Forestry and Wood Products at Michigan Technological University. Also includes oversize plat books and timber records denoting reserves, ownership and type of growth.

This is a collection spanning from the founding of Alberta and its sawmill from its founding, to the property being acquired by Michigan Tech, and its refurbishment in the 1990's. It contains

great supplemental information on how Ford's logging operations functioned. It also contains a collection of photos of the Alberta Sawmill in operation

David Doss Collection on Sparrow-Kroll Lumber Company (MS-965).Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma998800423404769

Abstract:Collection, 1895-1913, of newspaper clippings and photographs pertaining to the Sparrow-Kroll Lumber Company of Kenton, Michigan. The materials consist of a cabinet card picture of the company's general store and copies of contemporary newspaper clippings on members of the Sparrow family and lawsuits faced by the company

Account of an attack by employees of the Sparrow Knoll Lumber Company against David Ducre. This case would make it all the way up to the Supreme Court. While somewhat tangential, it still is of moderate interest to better understand the violent nature of the times. Ducre would engage in a lawsuit against Sparrow Knoll that would eventually make its way up to the Supreme Court.

Goodman Lumber Company Collection (MS-684) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma996916903404769

Collection, compilation by James Pollock, chief geologist at Calumet & Hecla, Inc. of articles, pamphlets and maps on the Goodman Lumber Company, bought in 1955 by Calumet & Hecla, Inc. and known as the Goodman Lumber Division of Calumet & Hecla, Inc.

This source is of the operations of the Goodman Lumber Company, and how they operated in Wisconsin and Michigan through the 1960's. They were some of the first in Wisconsin and the UP to practice responsible land management, and also went into the reasons why land management didn't take place. It was often the only financially sound solution to cut as quickly as possible, and then move on, and then sell the cutover land as quickly as possible, or if it couldn't be sold, let the land fall into tax delinquency due to rising taxes. This only changed due to tax reform and efforts by environmentalists and lumber companies themselves to reform taxation on timber stands, end cutover farming, and make better use of wood slash for the manufacture of charcoal and wood acetate. This also ended the incredibly damaging seasonal forest fires. A branch of Calumet and Hecla Mining Company, they began as one of their sources

of lumber for mine supports, but branched out into the sale of pulpwood and slash for the manufacturer of paper and wood chemicals.

H. Kenneth Hamar Collection (MS-443) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma996980283404769

Abstract: Collection, 1850-1934, compiled by H. Kenneth Hamar. Contains a history of Chassell, Michigan, records from various lumber companies of Michigan's Upper Peninsula including

Hamar Land and Lumber Company, Worcester Lumber Company and the Sawyer-Goodman Lumber Company as well as land grant certificates, Houghton Chassell & Southwestern Railroad papers and various correspondence.

Records of the founding of Chassell and records of the Hamar Land and Lumber Company. Within is correspondence between various lumbermen, a section of log marks, one of deeds and land grants, and survey notes on timber stands in the area. Excellent information for logging in the area, but not much when it comes to looking at the lumberjacks themselves.

"History of Pequaming" Research Collection (MS-859) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997436883404769

Abstract: Collection, circa 1998, of research notes and drafts for the book "The History of Pequaming" by Earl L. Doyle and Ruth B. MacFarlane. Often considered the most famous ghost town in Michigan, the complete story of Pequaming is told from the time of Native American settlement, through the Henry Ford "model community" era, and up to the present. Includes correspondence, manuscript drafts, notes, clippings, financial records, maps, photographs, and other printed ephemera.

This collection spans briefly the early history of Pequaming, with the main focus from the town's purchase by Henry Ford and its life cycle from bustling industrial hamlet, to dead ghost town after his death. The collection also contains many notes by Earl Doyle, author of History of Pequaming.

Lumberjack Folklore Student Paper (MS-457) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997282813404769

Abstract: Paper, 1980, written by Susanne Monasa as an undergraduate student at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. "Lumberjack Life" includes an oral history interview with H. Kenneth Hamar.

This source is rather short, as it is a paper on lumberjack folklore and the lumberjacks themselves in the UP. With that being said, I believe it is a good start for someone delving into the history of this topic due to its brevity.

Martin Kaurala Manuscripts. (MS-458) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997301553404769

Abstract: Manuscripts, 1990-1994, written by Martin Kaurala of Mass City, Michigan. Contains memoirs and recollections of growing up in the Finnish-American community in Michigan, especially the political and social aspects of the co-operative in the community. Manuscripts include "The Co-operative Experience," "Meditations of 1992," "The Mass Co-operative Company," "Interesting Experiences and Random Thoughts," and "Potpourri of 1994," as well as recollections of a stump farmer and lumberjack.

This source is a collection of manuscripts of an old man's musings on the world, and life when he was a boy, containing interesting anecdotes on lumberjacks, lumberjack living, cutover farms, and their mutually beneficial relationship.

Swande Godell Collection (MS-585) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997301313404769

Abstract: Collection, 1912-1978, of Swande Godell of Chassell, Michigan. Includes biographical and genealogical material as well as personal and business correspondence, field notebooks, logging camp account books and Chassell Lumber Company records.

This collection contains records of the Chassell Lumber Company, as well as their expense books, log books, saw books, and accounts. The whole collection is centered on the logging, how it was taking place, and the expenses of the company while doing so instead of a focus on the logger or lumberjack.

The Stenson Collection of Walter S. Pricket Papers (MS-789) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma997332143404769

Abstract: Papers, 1868; 1886-1937, of Walter S. Prickett, a resident and farmer in Sidnaw, Michigan. The majority of this collection is correspondence, but also includes maps, land deeds, farm reports and documents as well as articles and clippings.

On logging, it contains a collection of correspondences of Walter S. Prickett with various land management and logging firms, as well as independent jobbers, further illuminating how management took place during the pine, hardwood, and pulpwood eras.

Timber Property Record Books (MS-431) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma999334029804769

Abstract: Record books, circa 1960-circa 1989, compiled by Michigan Technological University alumni Robert C. LaBelle. LaBelle worked in both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas of Michigan as a land surveyor, timber cruiser, timber buyer, log scaler and grader and logging engineer and this collection consists of his notebooks from his field work. Includes notations on types of wood, estimated board feet, land owners and disposition of the timber.

Primary Sources- Mining Collections:

Calumet and Hecla Mining Companies Collection (MS-002), Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan.

<https://www.mtu.edu/library/archives/collections/documents/ms-002-calumet-and-hecla-mining-companies.pdf>

Copper Range Company Records (MS-080), Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan.

<https://www.mtu.edu/library/archives/collections/documents/ms-080-copper-range-company-records-as.pdf>

Quincy Mining Company Collection (MS-001), Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan.

<https://www.mtu.edu/library/archives/collections/documents/ms-001-quincy-mining-company.pdf>

**Note On Mining Companies:

Mining companies had two major types of wood they required to operate, that being good strong timber for mining supports and railroad ties, and cordwood to run all of the boilers and steam engines at the mining camp. Each of these organizations fulfilled their needs differently. Quincy bought timber through intermediaries, such as the National Pole Company for finished timber supports and the local logging firm Worchester Lumber Company for railroad ties.¹ This timber framing was used for wall and ceiling supports, and the mines required a never ending supply of railroad ties for mine carts and for their internal rail line spurs.

Before this point, C&H and CRC fulfilled their timber needs similarly to Quincy Mine, purchasing lumber through dealers, but also engaging in logging operations for internal use². Calumet and Hecla eventually became one of the largest landowners in the Upper Peninsula through an aggressive buying campaign to control their own supplies and engaged massively in logging white pine and hemlock. However, they did not do any of their logging in the Keweenaw, but instead Chippewa County, with their main sawmill in the now ghost town of Shelldrake where they had access to far better stands of white pine and hemlock.³

For cordwood however, jobbers were used, instead of hiring or managing a company to cut, and these men were generally of French Canadian origin⁴. A jobber is an independent logger that cuts on someone else's land. These were generally preferred as it was extremely cheap for the company and jobbers required no camp infrastructure to operate. They were in the general area already and were living out of thrown together tar paper shacks⁵. This type of logging kept the mines in wood all season to keep their steam engines, pumps, and boilers running, but resulted in the general clear cut of timber on mining land.

¹ Lankton, Larry D. *Cradle to Grave: Life, work, and death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

² Calumet and Hecla Mining Companies Collection (MS-002), Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan.

³ Lankton, Larry D. *Cradle to Grave: Life, work, and death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

⁴ Lankton, Larry D. *Cradle to Grave: Life, work, and death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

⁵ Smith, G. W., & Monette, C. J. (1974). *A copper country logger's tale*.

C&H and Copper Range Company both establish independent logging divisions or purchase logging companies to start fully exploiting timber available on their mining land by the mid 1950's, and these emerge fully formed in the 1960's. Calumet and Hecla owned Goodman Logging Company as a direct subsidiary and the Copper Range Company had its Northern Hardwoods division. These logging divisions began to expand as the mining began to wind down as these established mining companies needed to diversify their assets and income flow. This logging was no longer in support of mining operations anymore, and so drastically changed how logging took place. The aim was no longer, "cut as fast as you can and get out to cut somewhere else", instead a policy of land management was taken to better manage wood resources⁶.

Primary Sources- Photo Collections:

Harold H. Heikkinen Collection, 1871-2001(MS-217) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

A massive collection of period photographs of hunters, loggers, men at the sawmill, and log trucks, but also of general everyday life. It is a good general purpose collection to get a feel of the society around these loggers as a narrow window back into the past. The main focus of this collection however is mining photos, or loggers and sawyers associated with the mining companies. Includes photos of later mining owned logging concerns such as northern hardwoods.

J.W. Nara Photograph Collection (MS-797)Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

A smaller, more concise collection of photographs mostly depicting hunting camp scenes and everyday life, with a few scattered photos of sawmills and loggers. While certainly useful, it is of far less relevance and critical import as the Harold H. Heikkinen Collection.

Copper Country Vertical Files:

- Lumbering (3 folders)
 - Forestry (2 folders)
 - Mills - Sawmills - Alberta
 - Mills - Sawmills - Louisiana Pacific Corp- Seaway Div
 - Mills - Sawmills - Seneca
-

⁶ Goodman Lumber Company Collection (MS-684) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan:

Copper Country Photo Collection:

- Lumbering (2 folders)
 - Lumbering - Camp Scenes (2 folders)
 - Lumbering - Cutting and Hauling (2 folders)
 - Lumbering - Log Drives
 - Lumbering - Mills and Market
 - Lumbering - Saw Mills
-

Secondary Sources:

Bacig, Tom., and Fred. Thompson. *Tall Timber: A Pictorial History of Logging in the Upper Midwest*. Bloomington, Minn: Voyageur Press, 1982. SD 538.2 .L35 B33 1982

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma991389073404769

Tall Timber is a broad account of pine logging in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan from the 1840's to the beginning of the 20th century. While there isn't much information that can not be found in another work, Tall Timber is a wealth of period photos of loggers throughout the midwest, but not only that, has gorgeous photos of the entire lumber industry, from log drivers and rivers chock full of hundreds of thousands of board feet of logs, to saw mills and their workers turning all that timber into good lumber, to the guards brought in during strikes.

Corrigan, George A. *Calked Boots and Cant Hooks*. s.l: s.n.], 1976.(SD538.C67)

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma99928743404769

A firsthand account of hardwood and hemlock logging from around 1912-1937 in the western UP and northeast Wisconsin, as the author works every position imaginable in a lumber camp, from running teams of horses, to being a sawyer, and eventually becoming a forman. This is an excellent source for information on hardwood era logging in the region. North Woods Frontier provides a good overview of the period, and this as a companion is a more focused work that builds upon and gives greater detail.

Dye, Jacob, and Rex. Dye. *Lumber Camp Life in Michigan: An Autobiographical Account*. 1st ed. Hicksville, N.Y: Exposition Press, 1975. TS806.M5 B45

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma99793603404769

Lumber Camp Life in Michigan is a short biography of lumberjack Jacob Drye and logger Rex Drye on logging the eastern Upper Peninsula and the lower Peninsula of Michigan. Like Tall Timber, there is not much material covered here that isn't contained elsewhere, beyond a biographical account of the period, but it has great photographs not found elsewhere of camp life and camp living.

Fitzmaurice, John W. *"The Shanty Boy," or, Life in a Lumber Camp. Being Pictures of the Pine Woods in Descriptions [!], Tales, Songs and Adventures in the Lumbering Shanties of Michigan and Wisconsin.* Cheboygan, Mich: Democrat stream print, 1889. SD537.M69 F5

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma994183093404769

The Shanty Boy is a firsthand account of life in the lumber camps around Gogebic and Ontonagon counties by the camp's hospital agent John Fitzmaurice from the 1880's. He records the songs, stories, and the day to day life of the shanty boys he works amongst, with detailed accounts of everything that a shanty boy may take part in, from general camp life and meals, sawyer work and felling, swamping, hauling timber with a team of horses on an ice road, to driving timber down river . Like Holy Old Mackinaw, it gives further insight into the lives of loggers like a snapshot of the era of pine logging. Unlike other works however, Fitzmaurice provides a wonderful nugget of information not found elsewhere, what these lumberjacks sounded like. He includes excerpts of conversations he has written phonetically to better understand the broad spectrum of men working in the logging industry.

Gagnon, John. *Hard Maple, Hard Work.* Marquette, Michigan: Northern Michigan University Press, 1996. SD538.2.M5 G33

1996https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma994216513404769

A razor focused book directed solely on maple logging in Houghton and Keweenaw counties, Hard Maple Hard Work is a collection of interviews about loggers, lumbermen, buyers, and dealers in the maple logging industry, from the late 1930's up until the early 1990's. This is absolutely essential reading for the study of logging hardwoods and maple, especially figured maple, in the western UP and the Houghton County area.

Holbrook, Stewart H. *Holy Old Mackinaw: A natural history of the American lumberjack.* New York, New York: MacMillan, 1948. SD538 .H7

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma991228383404769

While not directly related to the story of logging in the western end of the UP, Holy Old Mackinaw is focused on how the men who logged this country came to be, where they came from, and their migration with the clearing of the pines. Such a work is extremely useful in understanding the kind of person that was out in the woods logging and working in a lumber camp up until around 1900 in the UP, when paired with other works more focused on logging in this region.

Karamanski, Theodore J. *Deep Woods Frontier: A history of logging in northern Michigan.* Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 1989. SD 538.2 .M5 K37 1989

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma991367493404769

Deep Woods Frontier functions as a comprehensive history of logging and loggers in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan from the 1830's into late 1950's broken out into three eras. Those are Pine, Hardwood, and Pulpwood. This is the fundamental starting point for any research into logging in the Upper Peninsula, as it covers all regions of the UP, from Sault Ste. Marie to Ontonogen and Menomonie. It also shows the evolution of the lumberjack into the logger. The lumberjack was a wild frontiersman living in camps amongst the pines, and fighting, drinking and whoring away his wages when he could get to town. This type generally moved on further west around 1900 once the pines were logged out. This created a new generation of men who logged over rail instead of river. The hardwood and maple loggers, while still rough and wild, started to become more settled, with some driving home at the end of the day and having a family, and by the time of pulpwood logging up to World War II and after, the lumberjack was dead. Towns were cleaned up, the frontier was tamed, the logging camp was gone, so the lumberjack faded into history. No other work so clearly shows this evolution from frontiersman to scientific logger.

Lankton, Larry D. *Cradle to Grave: Life, work, and death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. HD9539.C7 U547
https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma991401283404769

This work is incredibly useful for information on how mining companies made use of wood and how they acquired it, as such information is not found elsewhere. It is however in small nuggets surrounding the larger story of mining that the book is concerned with.

Martin, John Bartlow. *Call It North Country; the Story of Upper Michigan*. First edition. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1944.F572.N8 M3

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma99792203404769

Call It North Country acts as an overview of the entirety of the UP, from its settlement in the 1840's, up until after the Second World War. It has three excellent chapters, 9 through 11, on the lumberjack life and the world surrounding it, with hard towns, and harder men engaged in drinking, fighting, whoring and gambling. It has information on logging towns not found elsewhere.

Smith, George Walton, and Clarence J. Monette. *A Copper Country Logger's Tale*. Lake Linden, Mich: [Smith], 1974. F572.C8 S6

https://col-mtu.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01COL_MTU/13nj5id/alma99742033404769

A Copper Country Loggers Tale is a tale of Depression era pulpwood logging in the Lake Linden area centered on three Quebecer loggers. It is a direct account of life as a logger working in the Keweenaw. It was hard work cutting stove wood by the cord, and it didn't pay particularly well, but they had good company, plenty of good food, and every farm had plenty of moonshine that could be bartered for. It is certainly an extremely useful account as it is one of the scant few books focused specifically on logging in the Copper Country.

Sources in Other Institutions:

Ford Motor Company. (1919). *Lumbering in the north woods*. Retrieved March 5 2024 .
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/874049374>

Made and released by University of Michigan Audio-Visual Education Center. (1956). *Lumbering era in Michigan history*.
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/3643218>

Fort Wilkins (Mich.) : photographs and related materials, 1840-1940
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/1310790215>

Michigan Upper Peninsula glass plate negatives collection, 1897-1930
<https://search.worldcat.org/title/42469331>