Forging Titans: The Rise of Industrial Capitalism in the Northern Forest, 1850-1950

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Abstract:

This dissertation describes the historical processes that made farmers and rural laborers into a coherent class of wage working lumberjacks and it tracks how this class became an iconic symbol of masculinity in twentieth-century America. "Forging Titans" argues that, as rural America industrialized, the built environment and bodies of workers became parts of nature and these natural forces were mobilized to increase the scale and efficiency of production to reach industrial levels. Because lumberjacks were seen as part of nature, they became masculine icons for self-diagnosed, overcivilized, urban, corporate elites who were looking outside the city for examples of natural masculinity. This argument provides insight into a famous question in American historiography, succinctly posed by German economist and sociologist Werner Sombart in 1906: "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" Industrial capitalism left forest workers destitute and dependent, but American culture’s celebration of both their manly strength, and position in the industrial economy satisfied workers and stemmed their resistance.

*   *   *

This dissertation is split into two sections. The first is on Work and is a social and economic history of the process of class formation in the Northern Forest. The second is on Culture and is about the ramifications of lumberjack class formation in American culture. The first chapter of the first section argues that methods of organizing labor and capital for natural resource extraction in the forests of the Northeast preceded the rise of the corporate business form. Consequently, small producers and farmers maintained control of production even as most of the nation’s other industries became concentrated and corporate. This gave loggers an independent, masculine allure but also led to technological stagnation in the depleted resource base of the pineries of the Northeast.
The second, third, and fourth chapters move the analysis into the logging camps and discusses the different factors that led to the development of the lumberjack class. High capital technological innovation was not cost-effective in this remote, rugged, over-exploited environment, so loggers used simple machines, winter weather, and muscle power to produce and transport saw logs. The work required so much muscle power that workers insisted that large amounts of high quality food be provided by operators for free. The vast quantity of food that workers ate allowed them to build bodies which could keep pace with industrial production quotas. The bodies of workers and animals became cheap, natural sources of power which could be appropriated to make profit from this overexploited resource base. During annual summer work breaks, workers spent built-up wages in hedonistic spending sprees which left them destitute by the fall season and in need of more work which they found in the woods. Those workers who repeated this cycle of work and leisure many times in their lives became a class of specialized wage working lumberjacks, distinguished from the non-specialist farming-logging class who had done much of the work in the woods before 1870. By concentrating on how workers' bodies adapted to the organizational structures, labor processes, and seasonal cycles of forest product production, the first section shows that nature was not an obstacle to be overcome during the transition to industrialization but instead industrialization made humans and their built environments into natural sources of power that could be appropriated to increase production.

The second section of "Forging Titans" demonstrates the cultural results of the development of industrial capitalism in the Northern Forest. The lumberjack class, which was a product of rural industrial capitalism, became a masculine icon for middle-class American men who were critical of the degrading effects of urban, corporate capitalism. The first chapter in this section, chapter five, shows that French-Canadian immigrant loggers were one of the many immigrant groups in America who were arranged into categories based on the type of work they were deemed racially fit to
perform. Exploring these racial and industrial hierarchies show how the lumberjack became a symbol of white men's affinity for valorous, civilizing work on wild land. It also shows how the processes and institutions of American industrial capitalism constructed racial categories that labeled some groups of workers closer to nature, and thus justifiably exploitable.

Chapter six and seven show how, through staged outdoor adventures and physical culture routines, middle-class "antimodernists" attempted to make their bodies more like the supposedly naturally masculine bodies of lumberjacks and other rural workers. Urban elites' mimicry of rural workers represents a type of cultural power that flowed from the "bottom" ranks of society up to the "top" ranks, a process I call working-class hegemony. The epilogue covers the forest products industry from 1950 to the present from the perspective of one Adirondack village. It argues that locals valued the memory of the heroic, manly lumberjack and a healthy forest above a prosperous forest products industry. This dissertation shows that the result of the development of industrial capitalism in America was not the creation of a revolutionary proletarian, as Sombart and others expected, but new types of worker identities and new hegemonic gender performances which had even broader social and cultural reverberations through time.
Forging Titans: The Rise of Industrial Capitalism in the Northern Forest, 1850-1950

by

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B.A., Syracuse University, 2008
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Dissertation
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History.

Syracuse University
August 2017
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Introduction

This dissertation is an historical investigation of the rural working class that complicates the idea of "American exceptionalism." The idea that the United States took an alternate route to industrialization than did European countries has perplexed great thinkers from Alexis de Tocqueville to Frederick Jackson Turner but were expressed most succinctly by Werner Sombart in 1906 when he asked: "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" More specifically this dissertation research began as an attempt to address the following question: why did small forest producers in the Northeast fail to rebel against industrial capitalism even though this system disrupted their agricultural livelihood and pushed them into a precarious position in the wage working economy? By shifting the focus of historical investigation of industrialization to rural America, this dissertation asks not only "who will control the fruits of labor" but also "who will control the land and what will they do with it?" Therefore, this dissertation is not a labor history, or a history of the forest products industry, but a history of the connections people formed with their landscape through work and the larger cultural, political, and economic developments that were inspired by these connections.

The Northern Forest was a space where capitalism acted directly upon the American landscape and the effects were evident to all observers. Money did not grow on trees but it certainly grew in them, in the fiber of the wood that, once processed, was very valuable and almost always in

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2 Jared Diamond wrote, "[h]istory flowed different courses for different peoples because of difference among peoples' environment..." Though the environment was not the sole determinate of the development of history understanding, the role that it played in shaping human history is important, Jared M. Diamond, Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1998) 25. Graeme Wynn picked up on this idea in his Timber Colony writing that his book is "ultimately … about the meeting of man and land." Graeme Wynn, Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick, (University of Toronto, 1980), 10; Jake Kosek came to similar conclusions, Jake Kosek, Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) 18.
demand. Because any person could prosper by applying their labor to the felling of trees, the woods seemed to prove American Exceptionalism. The promise of "free land" with abundant forest resources allowed Americans to claim that their country was the truest example of capitalist meritocracy that had ever existed in the world. The reality was far different from the nationalist fantasy. The forest was just as often home to corporations, contractors, and migrant labor as independent loggers and yeomen farmers. Elaborate micro-economic structures developed in the wilderness lands of America which were just as complex as those found in the factories of Pittsburgh or the stock markets of Wall Street.

The geographic space under consideration in this work is not a state, but a bioregion, with consistent natural conditions that allowed for similar micro-economic structures to develop. This area is known as the Northern Forest, a 30-million-acre landmass crossing four states extending 460 miles from the Atlantic coast of Maine to the shores of Lake Ontario in New York (Figure 1).³ Twenty-seven counties are included in the region: In Maine: Aroostook, Franklin, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Hancock, Oxford, Washington; in New Hampshire: Coos; in New York: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Warren, and in Vermont: Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Lamoille, Orleans, and Washington.

The most distinguishing feature of this area is the prodigious forest that currently covers somewhere from 77% to 90% of the land therein, close to the forest cover in 1790 (Figure 5). By superseding political borders in favor of borders set by geological processes, I hope to show how material and environmental factors strongly influence culture and identity formation, but, as the long arc of this research will show, the process of identity formation is multifaceted and it is hard to pin

down any one factor that determines how identities form. For example, narratives about the material world play just as pivotal a role in identity formation as do the material realities that these narratives purport to represent.4

The chronological scope of this dissertation is from 1850 to 1950, a time that will cover both the rise and fall of industrial capitalism in the Northern Forest as well as the development of the lumberjack class identity. There were three major changes in the forest products industry that occurred during this time. 1) The closing of the last geographical frontier zones in the Northeast after 1850, a time that coincided with the end of the cutting of large, valuable white-pine trees. This study begins after 1850 when the forest no longer yielded its value to people easily. The key to successfully getting profit from this wilderness land after 1850 then, was opening new frontiers of value appropriation in logistics and the human body's ability to work.5 2) The transition to cutting smaller, less valuable spruce trees from isolated tracts with rough topography causing an increase in operational costs for loggers. This took place between 1850 and 1870. 3) The rise of the paper industry and pulp wood harvesting between 1870 and 1900, though pulp continued to be one of the most important commodities produced in the Northern Forest from 1900 to 1950. This is only a rough attempt at chronology, however, as pulp was cut before 1870, and mature tracts of white-pine, though rare, could still be found after 1900, particularly in New York. This dissertation also explores changes in the form of capitalism found in the Northern Forest as the nation transitioned from a


parochial, agrarian country of "island communities" to an urban, corporate, interconnected, and industrial country.\(^6\)

The development of industrial capitalism in the Northern Forest was very different than industrialization in other forested areas of the United States. When industrial capitalism came to the forests of the American West it did not take long for a worker reaction to form in the shape of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) (Table 1 and 2).\(^7\) The IWW was arguably the most radical labor organization in the country with an uncompromising, and at times violent disposition towards revolutionary industrial unionism and syndicalism. At its genesis, the IWW was a largely rural movement and, though the changes it inspired for American workers in the long term were minor, the birth of such an organization is unique in American working-class history.\(^8\) Melvyn Dubofsky's description of the "work-culture" of forest products workers shows why a revolutionary proletarian like the IWW was able to form in the forests of the West:

Loggers were perfect IWW recruits. Mostly native-born Americans or northern Europeans, they spoke English, lived together, drunk together, slept together, whored together, and fought together. Isolated in the woods or in primitive mill towns, they were bound by ties much stronger than separate skill or job classification. Whether skilled or unskilled, they wanted room to dry their clothes, clean bunks, decent bedding, and good food. They were tired of carrying bindles on their backs as they moved from job to job and camp to


camp. The IWW promised loggers bindle-burning parties and decent working conditions to be won through industrial solidarity.\(^9\)

Another reason for the formation of this radical class of laborers can be explained by the nature of economic advancement in the western landscape. Settlers and capitalists in the West "skipped the subsistence stage [of settlement] altogether." Americans approached this vast untapped resource base of forests and prairie lands with many of the tools, technologies, and organizational principals of modern capitalism already at their disposal. They sought large and immediate returns from the land and employed a class of landless laborers to make this possible.\(^{10}\) Land was conglomerated, the law sided with those who helped accelerate the American economy, and any costs that could not be tallied in a ledger, such as environmental destruction or worker safety, were ignored. Economies of scale, fixation on efficiency, and cost cutting squeezed labor, and labor pushed back in the form of a radical labor organization.\(^{11}\) The Northern Forest was different.

The Northern Forest hosted no radical labor actions even though the urban hubs of New England and New York were the birth places of the labor movement in the early and mid-nineteenth-century.\(^{12}\) In 1912, the IWW led a successful campaign against the textile industry in

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Lawrence, Massachusetts but this movement did not spread to the hinterland. In 1923, when IWW organizers came to the lumber town of Greenville, Maine, the town's selectman, backed by the local Ku Klux Klan, ordered them to leave and local lumber operators, merchants, and the YMCA supported their removal. Greenville labor leaders were blacklisted and the unionization effort collapsed a year after it began. The community showed no support for these workers and the union failed even though one lumberjack, who had worked all over the country and was active in the western IWW, remembers that the Maine woods had the lowest wages.

Lumber mill workers also organized regularly and successfully in the Northern Forest but not loggers in the woods. The first successful attempt at organization at the pineries of the Northern Forest was in 1955 when, according to one company official, the Brown Company of New Hampshire became "the first company in the Northeast in which the attempt at organization of woodcutters was ... made." By this point, however, more American workers were represented by unions than ever before and unionism no longer presented the radical opportunities for workers that it once had when the IWW formed. The Brown Company union did not last long and it did not spread in the Northern Forest. It is curious that labor organization was lacking in the Northern Forest.

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13 Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All*, 227-262; In an attempt to explain why woods-workers in the Northeast did not unionize, a prolific author of Maine’s labor history wrote that the “seasonal work and the hybrid nature of Maine work life, so typical of many occupations, undoubtedly contributed to a mind-set which made it less likely that collective action would occur.” But the hobo was an itinerant, who moved from profession to profession by definition, but, as numerous studies have shown, they harbored great class solidarity. There is more to the story than Scontras asserted. Charles A. Scontras, *Collective Efforts among Maine Workers: Beginnings and Foundations, 1820-1880*, (Orono, Me: Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine, 1994) 112.


Forest from the time of the rise of industrialization in 1850, through the decline of the industry beginning in 1900, to the present.  

Historical studies of forest products production reveal little about why there was no prolonged union activity in the forests of the Northeast. This is perhaps because historians who have studied the issue have looked for answers in the wrong places. The few historical studies on the forest products industry in Northern Forest states have focused on labor politics, production analysis, conservation, business history, or environmental degradation but not the workers, with a few notable exceptions. Looking at work culture and the labor process in a prolonged and intimate way is essential to understand the politics of workers, politics in workers’ communities, and politics among rural workers nationwide. To draw conclusions about these workers’ politics, any historical analysis must focus on how these workers experienced industrialization.

When the focus of historical analyses is shifted to workers, the labor process, and work culture, it becomes clear that production was organized in a unique way in the Northern Forest and this set the region’s development apart from the extractive industries in the West. Production in the Northern Forest was not initially organized by the corporate business structure, nor was there initially a class of professional, industrial wage workers who cut the wood. Farmers or small producers did much of the cutting in the nineteenth-century and this continued into the twentieth century. Workers were farmers and owners; financiers were bosses and laborers; workers quickly became owner/operators and just as quickly moved back into the world of wage work or disappeared into agricultural pursuits. The history of the rise of industrial capitalism and class formation in rural America is complex. These economic developments were contingent on the environment and land use history. We will turn now to the natural and land use history of the Northern Forest before further explaining how industrialization and class formation developed here.

"Many a lesser Oregon and California …" The Northern Forest Defined

By 1800 the Northern Forest was surrounded by settlement. Excursions and surveys were made into the interior regularly but much of it remained unexplored. The forests of the Northeast

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One of the best studies of logging labor is Ian Radforth’s Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980. Radforth explains that there were three reasons that loggers increasingly unionized after World War II and not before. First, shortages in skilled logging labor led the companies to invest in new technology which changed the work culture in important ways. Tractors and trucks allowed logging to be done year-round and so workers became family men or "respectable citizens" who demanded more from their employers (pp. 31, 131, 172-173). Secondly, operators increasingly looked overseas to import workers and they drew upon a previously radicalized population of Finish loggers. Lastly, there was a "post war compromise" between labor, logging companies and the Canadian government which incentivized unions (pp. 147 155 156) Ian Walter Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987)


were "islands in a growing sea of civilization."

In his *The Maine Woods*, Henry David Thoreau wrote "[w]e have advanced by leaps to the Pacific and left many a lesser Oregon and California unexplored behind us." Around the time that Thoreau penned these lines, Joel Tyler Headley wrote about the Adirondacks that, "I would like to see this desolate country settled; but it never will be till the west is all occupied. … Crowding may drive farmers here, but no gentler means. … [I]t is awfully rough, cold, and forbidding country." Despite Headley’s description of isolation, the Northern Forest was more densely populated than the United States as a whole, until around 1890 when the growth of large cities around the United States made the Northern Forest more sparsely populated than the rest of the country (see Figures 2, 3, and 4). Still, throughout its history and up to the present, it was a sparsely populated landscape.

The factors that slowed settlement here can be traced back millions of years. Glaciations, over twenty different episodes over the past 2-million years, and erosion built the rolling hills and mountains and dug out the lakes and ponds that dot the landscape. Most of the region is between 200 to 500 feet above sea level, but the White, Green, and Adirondack mountains are significantly higher. The irregularly high altitude of northern New York is caused by the "Adirondack dome," bedrock pushed up 1,000 to 2,000 feet above sea level. The Northern Forest contains all the highest peaks in each respective state. Besides the Northern latitude and high altitudes, settlers had to deal

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with harsh weather. In the winter "a pattern of wind … brings cold arctic air down from the north." This causes the soil to be frigid for most of the year. Growing seasons could be as short as eighty days a year.\textsuperscript{23} Precipitation was between eighty-eight and 125 centimeters evenly distributed throughout the year, though this varied greatly in Northern New York. The winters are longer than the summers and there is a deep, lasting snow pack. These weather patterns had an important effect on the economy, labor process, and work culture of the residents.\textsuperscript{24}

Before Europeans arrived in America there were two Native American groups in the Northern Forest, the Iroquois to the west of Lake Champlain and the Algonquians to the east. Both groups limited their settlement to the outskirts of the Northern Forest because of the harsh environment of the interior. Some estimate that there were 20,000 Native peoples who lived mainly on the outskirts and lowlands. Both groups hunted, gathered, cleared, and burned land, but their effects on the most densely forested lands were limited.\textsuperscript{25}

When Europeans arrived in America they initially found the Northern Forest to be nearly unlivable because the agricultural prospects were dismal. Geologist now recognize three soil regions in the Northern Forest. The Tug Hill Plateau in New York has moderate terrain with glacial till derived from sandstone and is well drained in hilly areas. The Northeastern Mountains are rugged with shallow, stony soil that is typically well drained, and lower slopes have glacial till and fragipan.

\textsuperscript{23} Klyza and Trombulak, \textit{The Future of the Northern Forest}, 15; University of Southern Maine, and University of Maine at Orono, \textit{Farms of Maine}, (Portland, Me: University of Southern Maine, 1986) 3-4.


The Northern Uplands have varying, hilly terrain "with a thin mantle of till" and higher hills with well drained soils. The best lands to cultivate in the Northern Forest were the rare, nutrient rich dry lakebeds and valleys. Short growing seasons limited the decomposition of organic matter and coniferous leaf litter acidified large portions of the soil. In early America, pinelands were referred to as "barrens" because they were unsuitable for tillage.

For domesticated flora, every 1,000-foot change in elevation is equivalent to a 500 mile move north, so the variety of crops grown in the Northern Forest were small. In 1861 the Maine Board of Agriculture wrote that "[t]he question usually asked by a farmer, when trying to ascertain the agricultural character of any northern location, is—'Can you raise Indian Corn there?'" In the Northern Forest the answer was most often no. Without expensive improvements, settlers could only regularly expect yields of root crops and hay. Rock removal was a consistent problem, large stumps could take five years or more to rot and hardwood stumps twenty or more. In 1841 it took two men and a yoke of ox twenty days to clear three acres of stumps, though by 1850 there were simple machines that helped in the process. Five to ten acres a year was about the maximum two people could cultivate. Sweat equity was abundant in the Northern Forest, a fact that remained true

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28 Maine Department of Agriculture, Sixth Annual Report, 6, 349, 356-57.


30 Beam, A Maine Hamlet, 28.

31 William, Americans and their Forest, 112-117; Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 141-142.
well into the twentieth-century. Revolutionary War veterans were given free Adirondack land grants, yet few chose to settle there because of the harsh environment. Some settlements had reached the west side of the Adirondacks by 1840 but much of the interior of the Northern Forest remained sparsely settled. Parts of northwestern Maine had no discernible population into the twentieth-century.32

Settlements could thrive along the Northern Forest’s 68,515 miles of rivers and streams. Major headwater rivers in the area include the Hudson, Connecticut, Saint John, Kennebec, Penobscot, and Saint Croix. There are also 16,285 lakes and ponds in the Northern Forest encompassing more than a million acres in total.33 As Thoreau found, large tracts of land in the Northern Forest were poorly drained, and he observed that "[t]he surface of the ground in the Maine woods is everywhere spongy and saturated with moisture." The 2.5 to 3-million acres of wetlands were nearly impossible to cross, especially after the spring melt and during the fall.34 Those who settled in the inland regions away from water did so on high elevations despite the "shallow soil, poor drainage and short growing seasons" typical of most highland tracts. Hardwood trees indicated good soil and the cleared trees could be used for potash or charcoal, important commodities for early settlers. These hill farms supported families for a few generations, after which


the soil was exhausted. With no infrastructure to bring in fertilizer these plots were often abandoned and reclaimed by the forest after a few decades of settlement.  

State governments had little incentive to organize infrastructure improvements because of the small, scattered population of the inland Northern Forest. The Morrison family found a "beautiful tract" in northeastern Maine in 1861 on which they build "an extensive farm … twenty miles from a single neighbor." They had no access to markets and, as one Maine official explained, "[t]hey manifest commendable patience and contentment in their situation, and cheer themselves with the hope and expectation that the Canadian government … will soon make a road through to the St. John settlements."  

Railroads were slow to probe the interior of the Northern Forest. By 1874 "five main-line railroads circled the Adirondacks, and two branch lines penetrated the … eastern Adirondack valleys." In 1887, the railroad reached Saranac Lake, in 1890, it reached Tupper Lake, and by 1893, Lake Placid. Northern Maine remained isolated for the entire nineteenth-century and the ratio of railroad miles to square miles of land was one to 3,000. In 1880 railroads had gotten as far north as Groveton, New Hampshire. In northern Vermont the progress of rail was slow as well.  

Throughout the nineteenth-century, overpopulation in the Northeast pushed people to land previously thought to be uninhabitable. Despite the difficulties that settlement entailed, by 1850 there were 876,021 people living in the Northern Forest. Population growth was slower than the...
United States as a whole but by 1950 there were 1,362,665 people living in the region (Figures 2 and 3). Squatting in the forest frontier was a way to build an estate for poor Americans who had few options. The grid like land division of the US cadastral survey system meant some families bought or squatted on plots that, though equal in size to a neighbor's, might have differed greatly in quality.  

There was little capital invested in agriculture in the Northern Forest. Farmers often used primitive wooden tools, ineffective farming methods, hunted, and gathered to make up for what they could not raise. Small producers here lived in poverty and sometimes on the edge of starvation into the twentieth-century.  

* * *

The wealth of the Northern Forest was in its trees not its farm land. Wood was nearly always in demand in the American economy. Apart from woods' role as fuel, historian Theodore Steinberg explained that "[w]ood played a role in nineteenth-century America akin to that of plastic and steel in our own time. Just about everything that was built … involved wood." As wood in more settled, southern areas of the Northeast was cut, people looked to the Northern Forest as a regional woodlot. Selling crops to lumber camps, working in them, or lumbering independently for fuel or material for the farm were ways that Northern Forest residents survived in the otherwise foreboding environment. Early settlers with easy access to merchantable trees often did very well, amassing

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38 Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 170; Judd, Common Land, Common People, 24; Judd, Second Nature, 78; Albers, Hands on the Land, 170.


capital and attaining important positions in their communities. With abundant wild land and little or no government authority in the area, less well-off families could cut on uninhabited and unimproved "common lands." The Boston and Eastern Mill and Land Company wrote of Machias, Maine that "[i]t is not the fashion in that section of the state for the People to cultivate the land. … [T]he consequence is the population generally are poor and will so remain until they change their occupation."  

The Northern Forest has an amazing ability to regenerate its trees after natural and manmade destruction. Glaciations, fires, hurricanes and people have dramatically altered the soil, flora, and fauna over time but the trees always returned, though the composition of the forest was often altered. "The seeds of natural rebirth … are so strong" one Adirondack resident wrote, "that we have to wage a continual holding action to keep our basic seventy-acre clearing from reverting to wilderness." Many early settlers found this battle against the forest too difficult and abandoned their lands but not before taking the most valuable trees. For these reasons, forest cover declined precipitously in the nineteenth-century (Figures 5, 6, and 7).

As a Laurentian Mixed Forest, the Northern Forest was a diverse ecosystem with a variety of different trees with very different uses. Much of this ecosystems' diversity came from its situation

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between the boreal forest of Canada and the temperate deciduous forests in the south.\textsuperscript{44} Between 8,000 and 1,000 years ago the forest types of today were established as the ice cover reseeded and southern species of trees climbed northwards. Natural incidents like fires, hurricanes, and ice storms caused mixed soil conditions.\textsuperscript{45} There were six main forest types in the Northern Forest "northern hardwoods (beech-birch-maple), spruce-fir, red-white pine, aspen-birch, elm-ash-red maple, and oak-hickory." The pine and the spruce were most valuable for the lumber industry because of their buoyancy, and utility as building materials.\textsuperscript{46}

By the middle of the nineteenth-century 200-foot-tall, straight white pine could still be found in the most isolated parts of the Northeast, but they were rare. These large white pines were a pivotal resource in the development of the American colonies because they were used to make ship masts for the English Navy. The wood from white pine is light, durable, and easy to work. After forest fires, or after farms were abandoned, "old-field pine" quickly regenerated and thrived with the lack of other mature trees to compete with.\textsuperscript{47}

As mature white pine became a rarity, the smaller spruce species became desirable. Before then, lumberman overlooked these trees, and many of the spruce logs cut for paper in the 1900s were over 200 years old. Mature spruce could reach 100 feet tall, forty-five inches D.B.H. (diameter

\textsuperscript{44} Harper, Falk, and Rankin, \textit{The Northern Forest Lands Study}, 22, 24.


\textsuperscript{46} Trombulk, "A Natural History of the Northern Forest," 15-16.

at breast height) and was "easy to plane, with medium strength and a straight, close grain." It grew best in northern latitudes and high altitudes.\textsuperscript{48}

Besides pine and spruce, the "swamp-loving," rot-resistant, tamarack was exploited heavily in Maine for boat knees. The valuable part of the tree was the part where the roots become the trunk as this formed the perfect shape for its shipbuilding application. The rest of the tree could be used for tool making and fire wood. Red and white cedar were coveted for shingle making and railroad ties. Because roofing material was almost always in demand, low capital, ad hoc shingle manufacturing was sometimes a more worthwhile venture than long log harvesting.\textsuperscript{49} When railroads finally came to the region, it brought a nearly unquenchable thirst for hand hewn or machine made cedar ties.

Unlike most of the other trees in the Northern Forest, hemlock trees were valuable because of their bark that contained tannin that was used in leather making. The wood was sometimes used for railroad ties, plank roads, fire wood, and pulp but more often the bare trunks of trees were simply left in the woods after the valuable bark was extracted. In the year 1905 about 51,867 cords of bark was harvested for tanning in Northern Forest states, or about 259,335 hemlock trees worth. This number was likely even greater in any given year of the nineteenth-century. Hemlock require a lot of water so are often found in valleys and the wet northern slopes of mountains.\textsuperscript{50}


\textsuperscript{49} Judd, \textit{Aroostook}, 12, 108; Pike, \textit{Tall Trees, Tough Men}, 30-31.

\textsuperscript{50} One cord is 128 cubic feet or a pile of wood or bark stacked four feet high eight feet long and four feet deep. There are approximately twenty-four small trees in a cord of wood, or 1,536 board feet, and one cord of green wood is approximately 2,000 to 4,000 pounds. C. Max Hilton, \textit{Woodmen, Horses, and Dynamite: Rough Pulpwood Operating in Northwestern Maine, 1935-1940}, (Orono: University of Maine Press, 2004) 33; William M. Steuart, Jasper E. Whelehel, and Henry Gannett, \textit{Census of Manufactures: 1905, Lumber and Timber Products}, (Washington: Govt. Print. Off, 1907) 58; Barbara McMartin, \textit{Hides, Hemlocks and Adirondack History: How the Tanning Industry Influenced the Region’s Growth}, (Utica, NY: North Country Books, 1992) 43-44.
The softwoods listed above were valuable because they could be floated down river to mills. Hardwoods did not float easily so, until rail penetrated the wilderness, they were almost exclusively used locally for fire wood, building material, or tool making. The chemicals in these hardwoods could be extracted on rudimentary farm manufacturing facilities and sold as they were easier to transport than whole trees. Important chemicals produced from trees were carbon (in the form of charcoal and firewood), potassium carbonate (in the form of potash and pearl ash), and later cellulous (in the form of wood pulp). Cellulous only became valuable after the 1880s when a new sulfite paper making process came into widespread use. When extracting chemicals from wood almost any size of log could be used meaning clearcutting, as opposed to selective cutting, became the preferred method of operation.  

By 1850 the largest and most valuable trees in the Northern Forest were cleared from about three miles around major rivers yet forest cover reached its lowest levels around the 1870s. Not surprisingly, this was just as the number of farms in the Northern Forest peaked. The time between 1850 and 1870 was the beginning of out-migration from Northern Forest counties, a demographic pattern that continued to the present (Figure 5, 6, and 7). By 1930 there were only 69,584 farms, fewer then there were in 1850. The slopes of the Green and White Mountains as well as the western uplands of Maine experienced the heaviest outmigration. By 1890, in Maine there were 3,300 abandoned farms encompassing 254,000 acres. The situation was similar in others parts of the Northern Forest.

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52 Wynn, *Timber Colony*, 152.

The exodus of farmers into cities and out West in the second half of the nineteenth-century had a dramatic effect on the land. Abandoned farms quickly regenerated into valuable second growth forest, often white pine. Because nearly all nineteenth-century forest product production was done in the winter it did not compact the soil, so second growth also regenerated quickly on logged over tracts. On these tracts trees were also selectively cut and smaller valuable species that were left behind after a first cut later matured into merchantable timber. For example, one of the largest landowners in Maine in the mid-nineteenth-century Eben Coe never let any of his contractors cut a tree smaller than sixteen inches D.B.H.54 One lumberjack remembered that the woods "would just reforest themselves … the first camp I remember going to was Big Moose, 1934. Well in 1948 I went right back in the same area … And … we lumbered up there."55 Because of the speed of forest regeneration, the idea of planting trees seemed like a ridiculous concept to one camp cook in 1910: "I see them unloading basket after basket of them little spruces and … I couldn’t figure it out. Trees? Hell, trees is what I’d been looking at all my life. Just woods, then more woods. I hadn’t seen much else but woods between Montreal and Boston since I was born. … If there was anything we didn’t need it was more trees."56 Currently, loggers are cutting second and even third generation forests.57

Second growth trees tend to grow thicker than is healthy for a stand of trees and are vulnerable to disease and insects. Also, successive cutting and large area tree removal will decrease


55 The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010.


57 Stephen C. Tromboulk, "A Natural History of the Northern Forest," in Klyza and Trombulak, The Future of the Northern Forest,
biodiversity over time. Because of its small size, second growth had limited use for lumber, but was perfect for the paper industry, a sector that was growing just as these post-outmigration second growth trees were maturing. While there was still old growth on difficult topography and high altitudes where farmers and early loggers had not been able to cut (Figure 8), second growth pine and spruce assured there would be jobs cutting wood throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. When second growth pine was cut, maturing hardwoods typically took their place. This pattern of cutting resulted in the large tracts of broadleaf forests that amaze "leaf peepers" today, though most spectators assume this is a "natural" wonder, not a result of industry.

When old growth cutting was in its prime around 1849 the Northeast was producing half the nation's lumber. Thereafter production slowly declined and by 1880 the Northeast was no longer self-sufficient in its wood supply (Figure 10). This did not mean that lumbering stopped or was an irrelevant industry. Regardless of market conditions, forests are almost always assumed to have their greatest market value in the present moment, partially because of the possibilities of natural disasters and pests that can damage standing trees and decrease their value. The seasonal cycle of work meant that logging operators were in a constant state of undercapitalization and the trees were the most liquid capital they owned so even when there were lumber gluts or cutthroat Western lumber competition, land owners in the Northern Forest continued to cut.

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There was also a tradition of working in the woods that locals found hard to quit.63 These communities had an amazing ability to adapt to market demands and whenever a market opened for a wooden product, locals met the demand.64 Despite the rapid growth of Western timber markets regional statistics shows that the largest years of saw log production in the Northern Forest were in the first decade of the twentieth-century.

The forest products industries in the Northern Forest continued to operate, and continue today, even though these industries are seemingly anachronisms in a globalized economy. The geographical frontier time in the Northern Forest was over by the end of the white pine era however, and thereafter the forest no longer yielded forest resources to workers and operators as easily as it had in the early nineteenth century. For this reason, smart operators would have to open new abstract frontiers within the lumbering labor process to wrestle value from the overexploited land.65

Employment numbers in the woods are difficult to account for over the course of industrialization and its decline. Loggers were farmers, transients, immigrants, and general laborers who did not often self-identify as loggers or lumberjacks.66 Official employment figures do not account for farmers that might have made shingles, hop poles, or any number of minor forest products in their spare time. In 1912 the legislature of New York State, one of the largest and most

63 Historian Beatrice Craig, found that many operators in these early years worked to make "a living rather than a profit." Craig, Backwoods Consumer, 222-226, 135.


65 Moore, Capitalism in the Web of Life, 121-122.

powerful in the country, reported that due to the inherent isolation of lumber camps "it has not been possible to obtain a list of lumber camps or to make any investigations of conditions."

The best remedy for this lack of information on employment over time is to use census data from 1905, right around peak lumber production, as a baseline. In this year it was reported that in Maine there were 411 camps employing between 12,491 and 5,968 people throughout the year; in New Hampshire, 224 camps employing between 4,221 and 1,630 people; in New York, 440 employing between 7,170 and 2,440; and in Vermont, 271 employing between 3,179 and 1,266. In all the Northern Forest states, there were 1,346 camps employing between 14,570 and 11,304 people. This was around 7% of the nation's loggers at the time. Trends in employment over time can be inferred by observing trends in total lumber production and the number of saw mills in operation (Figures 9 and 10). These lumber production and saw mill figures do not represent pulp wood production, however, and the paper industry was booming in 1905.

By the turn of the century more visitors and tourists were coming to the region for vacation. To these outsiders, who were unfamiliar with the forest's regenerative capabilities, clear cutting for potash, charcoal, and pulp gave them vistas and visions like this one, recorded in the Adirondacks in 1891: "For miles and miles we went through and by acres of stump-covered rocks, covered with an inch or so of soil; millions of boulders, piles of iron ore, and worst of all, flock after flock of beehive-like structures [potash kilns] surrounded by thousands of cords of timber ... If Dante had met me that day and asked my opinion as to a good model for his road to the inferno, I think I should have recommended a trip over Chateaugay."

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69 "Circumnavigating the Adirondacks," Forest and Stream, 34, (Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1891), 104-105.
By the 1860s some writers, most famously Vermonter George Perkins Marsh, were beginning to worry about this environmental destruction. Drawing on the history of the destruction of the Mediterranean landscape in ancient times, Marsh argued that the health of a nation was linked to the health of its forests and wild lands. Encouraged by Marsh and other early conservationists and preservationists, between 1892 and 1894, New York State created the Adirondack Park by establishing the "blue line" around a six-million-acre area of northern New York, buying up land and limiting cutting on it. The 1911 Weeks Act allowed land in New England to be purchased by the government for conservation. As of 2005 there were 3,523,330 acres of land in the Northern Forest completely protected from development. 70

Conservation forced residents to change their land use practices. They could no longer cut on informally designated common lands without repercussion. This crackdown on illegal land use happened just as Northern Forest farmers were feeling the effects of Western lumber competition. For these reasons, many farmer-loggers, their sons, and their daughters moved to cities for factory work. 71 Farmer-loggers who stayed in the Northern Forest had to specialize. They invested more time and money in the forest products industry increasingly working on other people's land for wages. 72 Spurred by economic conditions outside of their control, an industrial class began to form.


Sprouting Industrial Workers

From this perspective, the story of forest products labor fits neatly into familiar historical models of industrialization popularized by "new social historians" of the 1960s and 1970s. That is a story of the closing of the commons or the closing of economic opportunities, followed by increased dependence on wage work. The focus of these early social historians was the factory and the city, the obvious manifestations of modern capitalism. But even when the industrial revolution was in its prime in the nineteen-teens and twenties, most Americans still lived in rural areas like the Northern Forest. The history of the rural transition to industrial capitalism is still only partially told. The transition to modernity was often most dramatic in rural areas of the world.73 In rural America the industrial met the agricultural in a more direct way. Here, there was conflict and compromise between new and old economic systems.74

As part of the transition to capitalism, production of forest products on the farm scaled up in predictable ways: there was a slow increase in the concentration of capital and an increased division of labor over time. As this process proceeded, Yankee generalist farmers were outperformed by specialists. The classic example is the textile industry. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, farmers or other independent producers made and sold homespun cloth using materials they produced on their farm or by other means (small producers owned the product across the supply chain and the supply chain was nearly completely vertically integrated by the small

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producer). This production method transformed into the "putting out system" where the raw material was supplied by middlemen to independent producers who contracted with commodity owners to make goods. The final transformation in the concentration of the labor process was the factory system where people worked in a central location and sold their labor to the factory owner. Labor moved to the productive facility as opposed to materials being brought to labor. Cities and towns sprouted up around factories. This process took hundreds of years to develop in Europe and less time in America.75

Forest product production developed similarly in the Northern Forest, but small differences had important repercussions for the development of capitalism here. In early wood production farmers cut and manufactured commodities at or around the farm with hand tools and simple machines then sold the products regionally or locally (small producers owned the product across the supply chain and the supply chain was nearly completely vertically integrated by the small producer, just as in textile production). In the next stage of industrial development, manufacturing of the finished forest products was concentrated in water or steam powered mills. Farmers no longer hewed products from logs but instead brought their logs to specialists by draft animals or in lumber rafts. The next method of production involved outsourcing transportation to river driving companies who took commodities to the mill, and farmer-loggers made contracts for logs not labor. In the last step, the farmer (along with migrant workers or immigrants) sold their labor in a logging camp and to river driving companies, no longer contracting for commodities only labor.

In some ways, then, the development of forest products production was like the development of textile production. In both industries, farmers slowly lost any ownership stake because they sold their labor not manufactured products. They were also insulated from risk, and, as

they became wage workers, were increasingly differentiated from owners. One crucial difference was that in the Northern Forest, workers could never move to the productive facilities permanently as these needed to be temporary and mobile. Also, the means of production, namely skill, remained in the hands of locals and the materials needed for production, including food, credit, draft animals, and tools, were still brought to the workers as in the putting out system. This was the contracting system of forest product production. Lastly, there were large company owned camps, but they developed late here, and were not as important as contracting, a less concentrated form of production.

In the Northern Forest the various stages of industrial production—farmer-logging, contract logging, concentrated company owned logging camps—all existed simultaneously from 1850 to 1950 with no clear linear development from one type of production to the next. There was no steady progression toward increased economies of scale as there was in textile production. The cheapest way to get logs out of the forest was often to rely on the labor and skills of locals who contracted with mills and large land owners. In some cases, farmer-loggers and small producers maintained control of production into the 1970s, even as industrial production in America was becoming increasingly corporate and concentrated.  

Workers bounced between different sized operations on a yearly basis and sometimes moved multiple times in one year. Small family operations might just need an extra man or two, medium sized contractors needed a dozen or more, while larger company camps needed hundreds of workers.

As workers moved physically between camps of different sizes and intensities of production they seemingly moved back or forward in time in terms of the labor processes and conditions of the worksite. Saw log and pulp procurement was stuck in an intermediary position between small scale,  

low capital, agricultural modes of production and new industrial modes. This way of organizing production affected work culture, class formation, the landscape, and American perceptions of this rural class of producers.

Chapter one through four describes this unique system of production in more detail. Part of the reason why industrial production developed differently in the Northern Forest was technological stagnation. Forest products production in the Northern Forest remained in the eotechnic stage of industrial development from about 1850 to 1950, a stage "characterized by decreasing use of direct human energy which was replaced by animal power or simple engines which harnessed natural sources of energy, wind or moving water." Into the 1950s, depending on the size of the operation, logs were still mostly chopped by crosscut saw or axe, skidded by horse and transported to mills via rivers. With a depleted resource base which did not encourage high capital technological innovation, operators relied on the weather, the muscles of men, and animals to power their industry.

The cold climatological conditions of the Northern Forest allowed operators to improve the transportation of logs after they were cut. Through these logistical processes the power of snow and ice were appropriated to add value to the product. In addition to utilizing the power of the weather, science, the state, and industry worked together implementing the latest nutritional techniques to make the bodies of workers and animals into cheap natural sources of power which could be appropriated for profit in the woods. Because of this, massive quantities of nutritionally and calorically dense food became vital to loggers' work culture. The new frontiers which needed to be

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overcome in the Northern Forest were not geographical frontiers but frontiers of logistics and frontiers in the power of organic bodies. Exploiting these frontiers allowed the industry in the Northern Forest to remain competitive in a national, industrial, and increasingly mechanized forest products market.

While these changes were taking place farmer-loggers and specialized forest products operators remained adaptive and could switch back and forth between wage work in logging, independent production in the forest, and near subsistence on their farms. They were never consistently farmers (or farm laborers) or loggers (or logging laborers). When economic opportunities arose, or new markets opened, rural producers seized them. As historian Béatrice Craig wrote, rural people "stumbled towards modern capitalism trying to solve concrete, mundane problems of everyday life."\(^{78}\)

This history of the industrialization of forest products production in the Northern Forest demonstrates the encompassing scope of industrial capitalism, a force that will sustain seemingly anachronistic modes of production, or organizational methods, as long as these are profitable and productive, particularly if those modes and methods are dependent on desperate or coerced labor and cheap forms of nature like the power of the weather. In fact capitalist economies are very good at maintaining a status quo as long as it is profitable, and new studies of capitalism show that the importance of "creative destruction" as the driving force of this economic system may be overstated.

When modes of production or industries become unprofitable, however, capitalism abandons these anachronisms, devastating the communities that depended on them.\(^{79}\)

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\(^{78}\) Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 13.

The contracting system of production smoothed the transition from subsistence farming to industrial modernity. Northern Forest producers remained in control of production during industrialization and most aspects of production differed little from ordinary farm work. The only thing that changed was subtle differences in the ownership of finished products. The shift into industrial forest products production was not as dramatic as the movement into traditional factory work. This was a rural, quasi-agricultural, industrial proletarian. Still, workers had to adjust, particularly those workers who moved more fully into logging for wages as opposed to logging from their farm.

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As pulp production boomed, transients and immigrant labor took the place of local laborers who were abandoning the forest products industry in the Northeast for opportunities further West or in cities. These new workers added to, and adapted to the work culture of the native loggers. Between 1865 and 1945 the American hinterland was home to armies of homeless men who roved across America looking for work in places like the Northern Forest. This "bachelor subculture" was involved in "three sometimes overlapping occupational cultures: sailors, merchant marines, and other seamen; transient workers who spend time in the city between stints in the countryside as agricultural laborers, loggers, construction workers, and ice cutters; and common laborers [in cities]." Along with these itinerants, half a million French Canadians settled in New England by 1901. They were the largest foreign labor group employed in the American pulp and paper industry. Though they spoke a different language, these French Canadians were like Yankee farmer-loggers in that they had a history

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80 The difficulty with this transition is also discussed in Chad Montrie, _Making a Living: Work and Environment in the United States_ (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 80.

81 DePastino, _Citizen Hobo_, 15, 16, 28, 38, 61.

of logging to supplement farming. Other newly arrived immigrants were also drawn to Northern Forest camps.\(^{83}\)

The heterogeneous labor force of Northern Forest lumber camps, composed of part time farmers, specialist contractors, immigrants, and transient workers, does not fit neatly into traditional labor history narratives that have tended to focus on urban workers, organized workers, and the family unit.\(^{84}\) In the 1850s, during his trips to Maine, Henry David Thoreau noticed that forest product workers were unique: "[o]ur woods are sylvan, and their inhabitants woodsmen and rustics … men nearer of kin to the rocks and the wild animals than we." By the turn of the century, loggers were depicted as "a pure strain apart from the ordinary run of men."\(^{85}\) Loggers were called "timber beasts" and "tigers." According to historical geographer Graeme Wynn, lumbering stood out because it "provided a convenient point of convergence for contemporary commentary on the shape of society."\(^{86}\)

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\(^{84}\) In his review of "Past Achievements and Future Trends" in family history, Lawrence Stone pointed out, that "family history is inextricably involved in the great issue of the change from the traditional to the modern society." According to Stone "[t]o as late as the seventeenth century… [the family] was a unit of production, its members working mostly in or around the home, or in nearby fields." Between the seventeenth and the twentieth century the family slowly became "a unit of consumption, productive labor being carried on individually for a wage and outside of the home." This idea that the family is the best lens through which to study modernity is misguided. In Europe and America there has almost always been a large population of unattached workers who did not so easily fit into this narrative. After the first chapter, the logging camp takes up the place that the family home might have in this telling of the movement towards economic modernity. Lawrence Stone, "Past Achievements and Future Trends," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12 no. 1, (1981): 82, 64.


In his book *Common Labour*, Peter Way argues that historians’ fixation on "skilled and organized" workers marginalized the experiences of workers like loggers who might provide a better example of what the transition to industrial capitalism was like:

Most of what has been written on the rise of industrial capitalism in North America comes from one perspective: the breakdown of an artisanal world and the gradual emergence of working-class culture. … This history charts the rise of the factory system and the concomitant decline in the fortunes of the skilled workers. Yet this is only one pathway through to the present. There has been others, arguably much rockier, that trace out a variant experience of class formation. 87

This sentiment is repeated by Ian Radforth in his study of Canadian logging: "From the perspectives of workers and bosses alike, outdoor work in the woods differed profoundly from activities within factory walls." 88

With an understanding of the unique characteristics, circumstances, and environment of the forest products work force, it is easier to pinpoint when, how, and why class emerged in the hinterland, an important process that helps explain why no collective action developed in the Northern Forest. In E.P. Thompso's *The Making of the English Working-class* the early social historian wrote, "class happens when some men [or women], as a result of common experience (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interest as between themselves, and as against other men whose interest are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs." 89 Graeme Wynn and Thomas Cox have tried to pinpoint times and spaces when class emerged in the woods. They mistakenly characterize the movement towards class as one directional and irreversible because they ignore or downplay the complicated history of production in lumbering that I have laid out above.

87 Way, *Common Labour*, 4-6.
For example Cox wrote "[b]y the time the lumbering frontier was in full bloom in the Middle Atlantic States, the workforce was fully industrial."\(^90\) But class formation in the woods cannot be pinned down to a specific year, or even decade, instead it happened multiple times in the same places and in different places at different times as loggers moved between farm and forest; ownership and wage work; or camps of different sizes and scales of production.\(^91\) Moreover, loggers were isolated rural people, migrants, or immigrant workers so first-hand accounts of their thoughts on class and organization are rare.

Influenced by Thompson's definition of class, I argue in the first section that workers who followed a specific seasonal *spatiality of production and consumption*, or movement into and out of camps under conditions of debt and coercion, became a distinct class of lumberjacks. They could leave this class at will, and often did, submerging back into agriculture, or moving out of the Northern Forest altogether, and thus out of the purview of this study.

**The Implications of the Wilderness Workscape**

The physical space of the work environment, as well as national ideas about gender and the body, had a profound effect on the choices loggers made, on their politics, and on their class identity. Thomas Andrews defines a workscape is "a place shaped by the interplay of human labor and natural processes. … [The term] treats people as laboring beings who have changed and been…"

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\(^90\) Wynn, *Timber Colony*, 85-86; 127; Cox, *Lumbermen's Frontier*, 122.

changed in turn by a natural world that remains always under construction.” The "lumbering woods" workscape was relevant to class and organization in three ways. First, as described above, it was a world between agriculture and industry. Second, it was a space where the weather and organic bodies (two forms of nature) were put to work to squeeze profit from the land. Lastly, lumberjacks' workscape was the wilderness, a concept that had a unique appeal in American culture by the turn of the twentieth-century.

The lumberjack, like the farmer, worked in the open air among the trees, soil, ice, and snow. The forest products labor process pushed the bodies of workers to their maximum potential. Loggers were regarded as some of the hardest workers in America; literally natural forces of power. In a rapidly modernizing America, fewer and fewer workers had contact with the natural world in the ways that industrial hinterland workers did. Instead, more Americans worked in cities, indoors in factories, or in other modern spaces like underground mines. For many Americans, the textile mill, the coal mine, or a Fordist factory represented both the promise and dangers of the future of industrialization. These urban industrial workers were divorced from nature, they were artificial and unhealthy. These jobs produced profits, regular wages, consumer goods, and the modern middle-class but they also represented dirt, disease, and the exploitative potential of capitalism.

The expansive wilderness that loggers worked within, and the type of work they did, presented a stark contrast with these new urban, industrial, and corporate worksapes. The workscape of the logger invoked nostalgia in those Americans who valued the personal characteristics that could be built in the American frontier. Other Americans imagined the wild as a presumed sanctuary of masculinity that built proper race and gender characteristics in those who

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92 Andrews, Killing for Coal, 125.
lived within. Critics of industrialization, scientists, and academics thought that the material world of American pineries gave those who lived and worked within them health and vitality. Lumberjacks became symbols of American manhood, vitality, and racial prowess in an increasingly corporate, capitalist, urban nation.

Because conquering the wilderness was critical to the way Americans imagined masculinity, they lamented the closing of the frontier in 1890. Fredrick Jackson Turner, his followers and others who mourned the passing of the frontier, were not mourning the disappearance of a line on a map. Instead they were lamenting the loss of the character and the type of bodies that frontier labor had built in American men. The American wilderness was inert as a cultural icon without people acting on it or in it. It was feats of danger and hard work in the wild, imagined or real, that made wilderness places special to many Americans.

In historian Jackson T. Lears’ *No Place of Grace*, he showed how middle-class men, tired of bureaucracy and self-denial, looked for "intense experiences" that they thought to be absent in their daily lives. Many urban men found these experiences by reliving the lives of historical frontiersman, real and fictional. These frontiersmen were individuals like the fictional Natty Bumppo, Ethan Allen, or Davie Crocket, but they were also classes of workers like fur trappers, rivermen, cowboys, and lumberjacks. Whether these masculine role models were individuals, or classes of men; fictional or real, these frontier people were all workers and they represented times and places that lacked

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homogenizing corporate hegemony. Lears' calls these middle-class men "antimodernists" because of their insistence on the past being more authentic than the present.95

The idolization of work in the wilderness was imbued with ideas of proper racial bodies. Historians of the time argued that American wilderness had given "Old Stock" Europeans the resources and character necessary to create great civilizations. When white people turned forest into farms, civilization and "culture" emerged. The axe was a metaphor for the advancement of civilization but there was a literal element to that metaphor.96 In the eyes of most antimodernists, it was only Anglo-Saxons who could have so rapidly transformed the "free lands" of the wilderness into "flourishing states." When "new immigrant" groups were tested by work in the frontier, and if they demonstrated that they could not cope bodily with wilderness work, their racial inferiority was seemingly proven objectively. A close examination of the immigrants' experience in the American wilderness workscape reveals how the lumberjack became a symbol of white (and partially white) men's unique power to conquer nature.97

Antimodernists saw white, rural, working-class men as a group that shared many characteristics with the historical frontiersmen that they admired. Sociologists and journalists compared these working-class men to middle-class men to show the weakness of the latter and to idealize the former. Historian Todd DePastino notes this cultural fascination with the physical prowess of white workers:


97 Cohen, "Nativism and Western Myth," 29.
As an antidote to the racial disease of 'overcivilization,' middle-class white men welcomed appeals to 'experience,' outdoor activity, and 'the strenuous life,' and sought what one commentator called 'a saving touch of honest, old-fashioned barbarism.' Such therapeutic barbarism could be found, among other places, in lively accounts of the road … Public statues of hammer wielding laborers and classical poses of working-class bodybuilders always implicitly carried threatening messages to middle-class viewers, who worried about their own bodily strength.98

The island wilderness areas of the Northern Forest—a place where men continued to ride logs down raging rivers, live austere lives in nature, and transform their bodies into natural power sources—became perfect retreats where elites could draw inspiration. Psychologists, psychotherapists, and educators incorporated elements of working-class life into their new therapeutic culture and institutionalized these practices in university curriculum and ritual. This was all done in the hopes of improving the effete urban middle-class body.99

If middle-class men were mimicking working-class mannerisms, some basic tenants of American history are wrong. Most historians have used top down models to show how ideas of "proper" gender performances were pushed onto lower-classes from above.100 This way of viewing

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power and influence is pervasive in cultural and social history and one recent monograph, *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America* by Nancy Isenberg, highlights this familiar theme: That is that the poor have been mistreated and misrepresented for the entire history of America, and their victimization causes a feedback loop that results in the perpetuation of mistreatment and misrepresentation. To Isenberg, this pattern repeats for 400 years, apart from a few exceptional "waste" or "trash people" who escape poverty to become political or cultural influences, Andrew Jackson or Elvis Presley for example. Those who are poor remain "always with us" but always disempowered.\(^{101}\) The same type of analysis is used in the historical literature on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, periods of time named after the financial, political, and cultural elites who attempted to make over the countries poor and immigrant populations in their own elite image. The example of the middle-class obsession with logging is an example of a type of hegemony that flowed from the working class up; a type of cultural power projected from the working class onto the middle class; a type of *working-class hegemony* over American ideals of masculinity.

Lumberjacks were aware of their romanticized status among antimodernists and their masculine reputation had real value to them. This value existed outside the cash nexus. Russell Roberts, an economist at Stanford University's Hoover Institute, advocates for a type of economic analysis that includes something like status when thinking about markets:

people care about their reputation—they don't just care about how much stuff they have … they care about love … their family is often the unit at which they make decisions … [they are not], purely individualistic … what makes the approach I'm advocating for tenable … is markets … when you embed the choices that people make into market decisions, you get a very different set of insights

\(^{101}\) Nancy Isenberg, *White Trash: The 400-year Untold History of Class in America*, (NY: Penguin, 2016) xiv, 2,
Lumberjacks and their communities could claim racial and masculine superiority based on their connection to work in the wild. These benefits became more substantial when the industry began to decline after 1905, when monetary benefits from work dried up.\textsuperscript{103}

The Northern Forest Center, an organization that studies contemporary issues in the area understands the important economic benefits of reputation and history. In their analysis of the Northern Forest economy they use a "deeper meaning of regional wealth—one which considers … culture economy, educational systems and environment." "Wealth" they found "stems from the interrelation of a wide range of sometimes hard to understand assets." The lumberjack class identity and this class' connection to land through work had real value to them. Understanding the historical roots of this class identity is an important goal of this dissertation and it can help explain why worker's didn't organize to obtain more tangible benefits from their work.\textsuperscript{104}

\textbf{Dissertation Outline}

This analysis of work, land, and cultural power is split into two sections. The first, titled Work, examines the material history of forest products production to trace how marginal farmers and workers became a class of lumberjacks. Throughout this section we see how workers' bodies adapted to the organizational structures, labor processes, and seasonal cycles of industrial forest products production. This section argues that, as rural America industrialized, the built environment

\textsuperscript{102} Mike Munger, interviewed by Russ Roberts, Econ Talk, "Russ Roberts and Mike Munger on How Adam Smith Can Change Your Life," The Library of Economics and Liberty, podcast audio, October 13, 2014.

\textsuperscript{103} In his book \textit{Wages of Whiteness}, David Roediger argues that white, working-class people were empowered by their claims to whiteness. David R. Roediger, \textit{The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working-Class}, (London: Verso, 1991).

\textsuperscript{104} Northern Forest Center, \textit{Northern Forest Wealth Index}, 3.
and the bodies of workers and animals became parts of nature, and these natural forces were
mobilized to increase the scale and efficiency of production. Nature was not always just an obstacle
to be overcome during the transition to industrialization, but instead industrialization made humans
and their built environments into nature to appropriate their power for the sake of increased
production. The second section, Culture, argues that lumberjacks, who were products of capitalism
themselves, became icons for middle-class American men who were weary of the bodily effects of
urban corporate capitalism. As workers' bodies became nature, elites became envious of these
bodies. Ideas of race, wilderness, and antimodernist culture all contributed to a *working-class hegemony*
over manhood.

The first chapter argues that, in the Northern Forest, where methods of resource extraction
preceded corporate influence, small producers and farmers maintained control of production even
as most of the nations' industries became more corporate and concentrated. The second, third, and
fourth chapters move the analysis into the logging camp, showing the different factors that
transformed farmers, small producers, immigrants, and itinerants into a class of lumberjacks. With a
lack of modern technology loggers used the weather and the power of organic bodies to overcome
natural impediments (chapter two). In the transition from agrarian to modern wage relations,
workers insisted that room and board be provided for free. In chapter three, I show that the vast
quantity of food workers ate, that could amount to six pounds or 8,000 calories a day, allowed
workers to build modern, industrial bodies to keep pace with industrial production quotas. In
industrial logging camps, workers spending habits became different than their spending habits on
the farm. They bought consumer goods on credit and partook in hedonistic spending sprees. Those
who participated in the full *spatiality of industrial production and consumption* that followed the seasonal
patterns of work and leisure in the Northern Forest became part of the lumberjack class, clearly
distinguished from the farming-logging class who had done much of the work in the woods before 1870 (chapter four).

Together the self-exploitation of contract work, the dependence on winter weather, the food wage system, and the spatiality of production and consumption, draw a new picture of the development of industrial capitalism and the environment in America. These processes show that the transition away from an "organic economy," in the words of historian Tony Wrigley, to an economy powered by fossil fuels was not always a requirement for industrialization to develop. The only thing that was truly needed for industrialization to unfold was the "Nature/Society" dichotomy, that demands unlimited profit from "Cheap Nature."

Cheap Nature, as described by Jason W. Moore is "use-values produced with below-average value-composition. In systematic terms, Cheap Nature is produced when the interlocking agencies of capital, science and empire … succeed in releasing new sources of free or low cost human and extra-human natures for capital." Snow, trees, human, and animal bodies—the entire ecosystem of the lumberjacks' workscape— became Cheap Nature in the eyes of logging operators, outside observers, and even some workers themselves. These Cheap Nature's were worked outside the "cash nexus" meaning that operators did not fairly compensate all these forms of nature for the work they did to aid production. This is because in competitive markets "capital pays for only one set of costs [Exchange-Values], and works strenuously to keep all other costs [the work of Nature] off the

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106 Moore, Capitalism in the Web of Life, 53.
It was only by exploiting Cheap Nature that forest products production in the technologically stagnant, over exploited Northern Forest could create surplus value.

The second section of "Forging Titan" shows the cultural results of the exploitation of Cheap Nature in the Northern Forest. Chapter five argues that French-Canadian immigrant loggers were one of the many "new immigrant" groups whose bodies were arranged into categories based on the type of work for which they were deemed racially fit to perform. Exploring these racial and industrial hierarchies show how the lumberjack became a symbol of white men's affinity for valorous, civilizing work on wild land. It also shows how the processes of capitalism created racial categories, some of which were deemed to be closer to nature. People who fell within these less civilized racial categories were often considered to be part of Cheap Nature, akin to trees or snow, and their bodies could then be exploited like other natural commodities.

Chapter six and seven demonstrate how working-class hegemony operated by examining antimodernist culture, literature, rhetoric, college curriculum, and college ritual from the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. These chapters reveal the most surprising results of the exploitation of Cheap Nature in the Northern Forest. Those whose bodies were considered Cheap Nature were venerated by an antimodernist culture who thought that urban corporate Americans were drifting too far away from their natural roots. Through outdoor adventures, college curriculum, ritual and physical culture routines, these antimodernists attempted to make their bodies more natural, more like the natural bodies of lumberjacks. The concluding chapter is a retrospective look at the boom and bust cycle of the forest products industry focusing on Tupper Lake, New York. It argues that locals valued the

memory of the heroic, naturally manly lumberjack and a healthy forest above a prosperous forest products industry.

* * *

Before industrialization transformed farmer-loggers into exploitable Cheap Nature, the country idolized the independent, landholding yeomen because this character exemplified the positive elements of pre-industrial masculinity: independence, frugality, hard work, control of passion, productivity, connection to nature, and mastery over an estate which included land, women, children, and servants. As industrialism assumed its domineering position in the national economy, the smallholding yeomen could no longer be the symbol of American masculinity. He needed to be replaced by a more relevant symbol. The lumberjack was one of these symbols. The lumberjack symbol maintained elements of the yeomen identity such as hard work, independence, and mastery over nature. But the lumberjack also embodied new characteristics of masculinity that would become popular around the turn of the century: bodily strength and health, appropriate release of passion, and resignation to a life of wage work. The chapters that follow begin with a Northern Forest yeomen logger named Abner Toothaker, but by the end of the first section the circumstances that created the lumberjack class will become clear, and we will see how Abner's grandson, Lincoln, became part of this class.

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Charts and graphs that include "Northern Forest" in the title include data from only the twenty-seven counties in the Northern Forest region. Charts and graphs with the term "Statewide" in the title represent data from all the counties in the four states that are included in the Northern Forest region.

Figure 1.
Figure 2.


Social Explorer Dataset, custom, 1850-1950 Aroostook County, Maine; Franklin County, Maine; Hancock County, Maine; Oxford County, Maine; Penobscot County, Maine; Piscataquis County, Maine; Somerset County, Maine; Washington County, Maine; Coos County, New Hampshire; Clinton County, New York; Essex County, New York; Franklin County, New York; Fulton County, New York; Hamilton County, New York; Herkimer County, New York; Jefferson County, New York; Lewis County, New York; Oneida County, New York; Oswego County, New York; St. Lawrence County, New York; Warren County, New York; Caledonia County, Vermont; Essex County, Vermont; Franklin County, Vermont; Lamoille County, Vermont; Orleans County, Vermont; Washington County, Vermont, census 1850 to 1950, based on data from US Census Bureau, compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer.
Figure 3.

**Total US Population vs. Northern Forest Population**

Social Explorer Dataset, custom, 1850-1950 Aroostook County, Maine; Franklin County, Maine; Hancock County, Maine; Oxford County, Maine; Penobscot County, Maine; Piscataquis County, Maine; Somerset County, Maine; Washington County, Maine; Coos County, New Hampshire; Clinton County, New York; Essex County, New York; Franklin County, New York; Fulton County, New York; Hamilton County, New York; Herkimer County, New York; Jefferson County, New York; Lewis County, New York; Oneida County, New York; Oswego County, New York; St. Lawrence County, New York; Warren County, New York; Caledonia County, Vermont; Essex County, Vermont; Franklin County, Vermont; Lamoille County, Vermont; Orleans County, Vermont; Washington County, Vermont, census 1850 to 1950, based on data from US Census Bureau, compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer.

Figure 4.

Social Explorer Dataset, custom, 1850-1950 Aroostook County, Maine; Franklin County, Maine; Hancock County, Maine; Oxford County, Maine; Penobscot County, Maine; Piscataquis County, Maine; Somerset County, Maine; Washington County, Maine; Coos County, New Hampshire; Clinton County, New York; Essex County, New York; Franklin County, New York; Fulton County, New York; Hamilton County, New York; Herkimer County, New York; Jefferson County, New York; Lewis County, New York; Oneida County, New York; Oswego County, New York; St. Lawrence County, New York; Warren County, New York; Caledonia County, Vermont; Essex County, Vermont; Franklin County, Vermont; Lamoille County, Vermont; Orleans County, Vermont; Washington County, Vermont, census 1850 to 1950, based on data from US Census Bureau, compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer.

Figure 5.


### Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Event type</th>
<th>Events by Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kalispell</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>December - Lumbermen Pledge IWW Support</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Missoula</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May - Lumbermen Strike</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>Portland Lumber and Saw Mill Strike</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Somers</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>April - Portland Mill Strike Continued</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Flathead County</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>December - Lumber War in Montana</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>Volunteer organizers were well received in the logging camps.</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Somers</td>
<td>meetings</td>
<td>Organizers convince 300 workers including loggers in remote camps to join the IWW</td>
<td>1908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Flathead County</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>June - Lumber Strike</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fortine</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>July- Somers Lumber Company Forbids Negotiations</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Missoula</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>September - IWW Members Arrested for Rallying Timber Workers</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>April - Loggers Organize and Strike on Puget Sound</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Somers</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>July- Strike Conditions Worsen with Scales and Low Funds</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bellingham</td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>June - IWW Attempt to Recruit Loggers</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Cle Elum</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>July- Shingle Weavers Leave AFL</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sheridan</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>March - 150 Workers at a lumber company went on strike for a 25 cent/day raise.</td>
<td>1910</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>March - Lumbermen Strike</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Bovill</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>April- Lumber Workers Strike</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Deep River</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>August - Loggers Strike</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Grays Harbor</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>March - Lumber Mill Strike</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Hoquiam</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>March - Lumber Mill Workers Strike</td>
<td>1912</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Coaledo</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May - Loggers Strike in Coos Bay</td>
<td>1913</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Missoula</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May - Strike on in Western Montana Logging Camps</td>
<td>1913</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Oregon City</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>June - Lumber Strike Continues</td>
<td>1913</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Pilchuck</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>April- Sawmills and Camp Crippled by Strike</td>
<td>1913</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Puget Sound region</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>June - Loggers and Lumber Workers Vote for General Strike</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>June - Lumber Strike Called Off</td>
<td>1913</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Everett</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>July- Lumber Strike Called Off</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>May - Lumber Strike Called Off</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sedro Woollely</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>August- Lumber Workers Win Strike</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>December - Lumber Barons Seek to Prevent Workers From Joining IWW</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>December - Lumber Barons Seek to Prevent Workers From Joining IWW</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Bellingham</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>December - Some Jailed IWW Members Go On Hunger Strike</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Bonners Ferry</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>July- Lumber Workers Conference Held</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Bonners Ferry</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>November - Mayor Says IWW Did Not Start Everett Riot</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Cle Elum</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>July- Lumber Workers Conference Held</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Eureka</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>November - Large Funeral Held for Everett Massacre VIlts</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Everett</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>December - Awareness Raised About Everett Massacre</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Sedro Woollely</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>July- Lumber Strike Called Off</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May - Funds Needed for River Drivers</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May - “No Compromise” Say River Drivers</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Grays Harbor</td>
<td>persecution</td>
<td>August - IWW Sued for Striking Without Notice</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Maries</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May- Lumber Strike Won</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>June- Loggers Strike Victory</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Pasco</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>September - Members Arrested in Relation to Lumber Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Sedro Woollely</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>March- Lumber Workers Threaten to Strike Over Poor Living Conditions</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Spokane</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>April- River Drivers Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>St. Maries</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>May- Lumber Workers Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>St. Regis</td>
<td>meeting</td>
<td>September - Lumber Workers’ Industrial Union Convention</td>
<td>1919</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Eagle Gorge</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>October- Lumber Boycott Called</td>
<td>1920</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Snohomish</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>March- Lumber Workers Agree to Slow Down</td>
<td>1920</td>
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Table 2.

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>St. John</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>March- Lumber Mill Strike</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>International Falls</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>April- Lumberjacks New Local No. 428</td>
<td>1911</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bemidji</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>December- Lumber Camps Strike</td>
<td>1916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January- Saw Mill Workers Strike</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>January- IWW Appeal for Strike Funds</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>January- Military Support Called to Break Strike</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike Continues</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>International Falls</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>January- Lumberworkers Released From Jail</td>
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<td></td>
<td>January- Military Support Called to Break Strike</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Bemidji</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January- Military Support Called to Break Strike</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike Continues</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>July- Members Arrested and Accused of Burning Down Saw Mill</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Gemmell</td>
<td>strike</td>
<td>January- Lumberjacks Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>January- Members Arrested for Distributing Lumberjack Strike Pamphlets</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>January- Lumberjacks Strike Leads to Arrests</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Duluth</td>
<td>other/mixed</td>
<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>January- Appeal for Strike Funds</td>
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<td>January- Lumberworkers Strike Continues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February- Lumber Strike Called Off</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Significant Lumber or Logging Related IWW Events in the Lake States (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan)

Figure 6.

Social Explorer Dataset, custom, 1850-1950 Aroostook County, Maine; Franklin County, Maine; Hancock County, Maine; Oxford County, Maine; Penobscot County, Maine; Piscataquis County, Maine; Somerset County, Maine; Washington County, Maine; Coos County, New Hampshire; Clinton County, New York; Essex County, New York; Franklin County, New York; Fulton County, New York; Hamilton County, New York; Herkimer County, New York; Jefferson County, New York; Lewis County, New York; Oneida County, New York; Oswego County, New York; St. Lawrence County, New York; Warren County, New York; Caledonia County, Vermont; Essex County, Vermont; Franklin County, Vermont; Lamoille County, Vermont; Orleans County, Vermont; Washington County, Vermont, census 1850 to 1950, based on data from US Census Bureau, compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer.
Figure 7.

Social Explorer Dataset, custom, 1850-1950 Aroostook County, Maine; Franklin County, Maine; Hancock County, Maine; Oxford County, Maine; Penobscot County, Maine; Piscataquis County, Maine; Somerset County, Maine; Washington County, Maine; Coos County, New Hampshire; Clinton County, New York; Essex County, New York; Franklin County, New York; Fulton County, New York; Hamilton County, New York; Herkimer County, New York; Jefferson County, New York; Lewis County, New York; Oneida County, New York; Oswego County, New York; St. Lawrence County, New York; Warren County, New York; Caledonia County, Vermont; Essex County, Vermont; Franklin County, Vermont; Lamoille County, Vermont; Orleans County, Vermont; Washington County, Vermont, census 1850 to 1950, based on data from US Census Bureau, compiled, edited and verified by Social Explorer.
Figure 8.

Extent of broadleaf growth in high altitudes of the White Mountains in the fall, photo credit Jason L. Newton, 10/2014
Figure 9.

Figure 10.

Part I: Work
Chapter 1- Common Labor, Common Lands: Farmers, Loggers, and the Rise of Industrial Capitalism in the Northern Forest

In late autumn 1863 in Northwestern Maine, yeomen farmer Abner Toothaker sent a letter to wealthy landowners Eben Coe and David Pingree asking for a "chance" to cut lumber on Coe and Pingree’s extensive timberlands. Toothaker got his chance, and when the snowpack got deep enough, he organized some neighbors and relatives to cut 9,813 merchantable saw logs, all of which he owned and would sell himself.¹ Almost thirty years later, in the winter of 1891, Abner’s grandson, Lincoln Abner Toothaker also made his way into the same woods to the Blackcat lumber camp. Unlike his grandfather, Lincoln owned none of the logs he helped cut and haul that winter, but instead made a daily wage.² For a period in his life, Lincoln became a lumberjack, an industrial wage worker, part of a class that would become a symbol of masculinity in modern America. Lincoln did not work for a company or under a manager like most industrial workers at the time. Instead he worked for a local contractor known as a jobber. The story of the Toothaker family represents how forest products production in the Northern Forest developed differently than many other industries in America.

This chapter makes two arguments. The first is that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the consolidation of forest land in private hands along with state forest conservation efforts increased the barriers to entry and risks in the forest products business, making it more difficult for small producers like Lincoln Toothaker to access forest resources as a sole proprietor than it had been for his grandfather Abner to do the same. The second is that, because of the increased costs of

¹ "Coe Family Papers," Logging operations, volume 1, 1862-63, Special Collections, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine, Orono, ME.

operating, the scale of saw log production increased and small scale specialist began to play a more important role in the industry than they had in past times, when non-specialist farmers did much of the cutting. Small-scale production did not yield to large bureaucratic corporations as it did in many other industries in America. Small producers jobbed, or contracted with financiers, allowing them to maintain control of production.3 As the tide of capitalism flooded over the American landscape, many rural producers accepted that industrial work would now be the most economically rational, and often, the only viable way to make a living. Contracting eased farmers’ transition into modern capitalist commodity production.4 It gave them hope that they might be able to continue independent production as opposed to becoming a class of workers fully dependent on wages.

The reason that agrarian extractive methods were resistant to change in the Northeast was because generations of farmers, or sole proprietors (I will use the two terms interchangeably below), had been doing logging work for hundreds of years, well before the corporate business model became a popular way of organizing production. Loggers like the Toothakers were hesitant to join the emerging "corporate nation."5 The contracting form of commodity production appeared much earlier than many other historians have assumed, having roots in the independent yeomen ideal of the Early Republic.6 In an unregulated rural environment, however, this system of production

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quickly became exploitative for both contractors and their workers. Workers like Lincoln Toothaker never truly became the free laborers that many Americans aspired to be.\(^7\)

**Farmer-Loggers**

For those Americans who settled on marginal forest lands, trees provided the essentials of life, but it was also the settlers’ prerogative to destroy them. These farmers had an antagonistic but intimate relationship with the forest. The Toothaker family was highly successful in their fight to make a home from the forest. By 1860 Abner's improvements were worth $4,500 and he was in the top quarter of farmers in terms of farm size in all the Northern Forest. Other farmers did not advance so rapidly.\(^8\)

Henry Conklin was one of these struggling Northern Forest farmers. Samuel, Henry's father, was a drinker and a gambler whose bad habits caused the family to go into debt. In 1845 at the age of thirteen, Conklin and his family moved to "the frontier post" of Wilmurt in the Adirondack Mountains and began clearing the forest.\(^9\) The ability to make a farm from the forested land was an important way to build an estate and gain certain citizenship privileges in America, so the family approached the task with vigor.\(^10\)

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\(^7\) Steinfeld, Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor, 284, 313-315.


The Northern Forest land yielded "to nothing but the hardest labor." For the Conklins and others in their position, the fight to remove trees, stumps, stones, rapidly regenerating saplings, and brush seemed never ending. The lack of transportation infrastructure meant that what little surplus was made from clearing and farming the land was difficult to bring to market. For a family like the Conklins, farm work took up all the time in the warmer months, and the slick surface of the winters eased the clearing of trees from forest land so when it was cold they worked in the woods. With this busy schedule, there was no opportunity for schooling for children. Maine resident Jim Gardner remembered working in the woods with two men from another family, neither of whom could read. He told them, "Jesus … the schools right just a little way from [where] you lived. 'Yes … ' [they replied] [']When we get 7 or 8 years old, we think about making money.[']"

Over time the Conklins became very familiar with the woods that surrounded them. When Henry was not working in the fields, he was working or playing in the woods. When his older brother John "had nothing else to do he would tinker away by the great blazing fire for hours making or repairing a sled." Henry would race his brothers and neighbors in chopping contests or in shingle weaving. Their small frontier farm was a convenient place to process forest products into merchantable commodities. New workers learned woods skills from their fathers or other

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relatives who lived in the woods longer than they had. Maine logger Frederick Burke remembered that he learned to work in the woods from his father who was "an expert axeman … And ah, even before I worked for him in the summertime, I used to go in the woods and watch him."17

To families like the Conklins, the axe became more important than the plow. Materials drawn from the woods could help them in forest commodity production. For example, from a young age, Henry Conklin could make new axe handles when one broke and hang the bit to fit his preferences.18 These axes became extensions of limbs for frontier settlers. Maine logger Harry Dryer remembered that "some of them old fellows that' used an axe all their life could … They're wonderful what they can do with an axe. … Just like your pen."19 By selecting the proper branch from a tree forest farmers could make a stem form bow saw handle (Figure 1). They could hand hew wooden beams, boards, build doors, windows, and simple wooden structures.

With little but hand tools and a lot of labor, these farmers could make dozens of simple wooden commodities. These included shingles, clapboards, cordwood, tanbark, potash, railroad ties, barrel staves, laths, planks, tool handles, posts, and pulp wood. They also made specialized niche products such as fiddle butts, canoes, sleds, shoe pegs, spools, clothe pins, toothpicks, wooden bootjacks, shoe last blocks, ship knees, hop poles, spruce oil, countless types of folk-art, and consumables like maple sugar, and spruce gum.20 Skill and power in the woods gained one respect in

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17 Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates, 1971, transcript, pp. 702056-57, (LLC) (MFC)
these forest communities and many young people like Conklin quickly gained a mastery of the forest. As he aged, Conklin became a woodsman, a term that was used to describe both a generalist forest laborer and, later, an industrial wage working logger.\(^{21}\)

Knowledge and ability in the woods allowed farmers like Henry to quickly adapt to changing markets. When a sounding board mill opened in the southern Adirondacks, which put out notices that it would pay well for choice spruce, New York state agents had a hard time keeping residents from cutting trees on state lands to meet the demand. When Massachusetts merchant Shepard Cary announced to residents in Aroostook, Maine that he would buy all the shingles they could make, farmers abandoned their fall farming duties to go to the cedar swamps.\(^{22}\) Lumberman S.D. Warren mailed hundreds of postcards to farmers near his mills when he wanted to buy wood knowing nearly everyone in the community had the skills and ability to bring him logs.\(^{23}\) "What we cut, and where," one Adirondack logger wrote, "depends largely on what timber is accessible and merchantable."\(^{24}\) In an era of rapid urban industrialization, Americans lost the type of skills that allowed people to produce a diverse array of products with only hand tools like woodsmen could. Maine loggers complained of so-called "Boston men" who did not know how to dress for winter work and whose inexperience was both comical and dangerous.\(^{25}\)

When new economic opportunities did open in the Northern Forest, operations were set up quickly and were ad hoc and informal. These operators may have been skilled with axes, but they did


not necessarily have basic business or organizational skills. The following experience, remembered by a small operator cutting during World War II, is the situation that many new settlers and small operators found themselves with throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth-century:

In those first years, during the war, we sold wood as an act of desperation—to pay taxes and basic expenses. We barely succeeded because no one was in effective control and the operation was in the charge of inept fly-by-night operators who had difficulty meeting their basic expenses. … It was a wasteful, sordid operation and when it was done, four hundred acres of fine timberland had been cut over with small benefit to anyone.26

Settlers and small operators learned from mistakes like these, or were outcompeted by more adept woodsmen.

Before the 1850s, not all this small-scale wood product production was legal. In marginal farming communities, taking food, firewood, or other necessities from common or unused land was socially acceptable, as was taking wood products to sell or trade, if that activity was necessary for a family's survival.27 One New York State agent found that for those in the Adirondacks "[g]enerations have made their living by lumbering where ever they please and the most preeminent men in town, the very pillars of the church have a rather queer view about stealing timber."28 Historian Karl Jacoby called this the "law of the woods." If no one in the community had capital or labor invested into a forest plot, it was considered a common resource. Since Colonial times, this was how forest products were made in the Northern Forest.29

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26 Fosburgh, A Clearing in the Wilderness, 15.


28 J.B. Koetteritz to The Comptroller of the State of New York, Dolgeville, NY April, January 27th 1884, Letters from agents appointed to serve notice on illegal occupants of state lands, 1881-1893, folder 3 (2 of 2), BO942-85, New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY.

After Henry Conklin moved out of his parents’ house and began his own farmstead, he continued to rely heavily on the wood resources around him. Though he considered himself a farmer, in 1879, the value of wood products sold or consumed by Conklin was $250 or 12.3% of the value of his entire estate. Speaking about residents in Down East Maine, early sociologist Laura Beam wrote:

The psychology and bent were certainly of the farmer, but all the young men and many of the others also worked ‘in the woods’ for some months every winter. … The occupational classification of farming does not give adequate credit to male ability in all kinds of work with wood.

For most Northern Forest denizens, forest products production was just another part of the seasonal activities of the farm. "Participation in the trade was often sporadic," historical geographer Graeme Wynn found. "Individuals might join a lumbering venture one year and not the next … [or a] farmer might spend a week or two in the woods between tasks." Sometimes a farmer like Henry Conklin might work for himself, other times he might work on a neighbor’s lot or for a mill on an open account. One farmer-logger explained his profession well in a letter to a financier speaking on the topic of finishing a logging job, "the first of June my contract will be all complete and I will be a farmer until I take a job."34

30 US Census Bureau, Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1880, Henry Conklin, Wilmurt, Herkimer, New York, accessed 11 August 2014, ancestry.com; Historical Geographer Graeme Wynn found that "[t]he seasonal demands of part-time lumbering and subsistence farming were almost diametrical. They were often combined with success." Judd, Aroostook, 88, 89, 90, 95; Conklin, Through "Poverty’s Vale", 130, 187, 188; Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses, 28; Graeme Wynn, Timber Colony: A Historical Geography of Early Nineteenth Century New Brunswick, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981) 186.


32 Wynn, Timber Colony, 84.

33 Judd, Aroostook, 88, 89, 90, 95; Henry Conklin, Through "Poverty’s Vale", 130, 187, 188; Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses, 28; Wynn, Timber Colony, 84, 186; Laura Beam, A Maine Hamlet (New York: W. Funk, 1957), 71.

34 E.E. Burkley to Mr. Saheen, March 21, 1896, Luke Usher Papers, 1820-1898, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, NY.
Towards the end of the nineteenth-century, the ideal of the independent yeomen farmer ceased to be a reality for many in the Northeast and farmers who did not move into manufacturing or out West became more reliant on the forest to keep their farms afloat.\(^\text{35}\) By 1897 exports on the Bangor Aroostook railroad in northeastern Maine consisted of 98.3% wood products. Farmers in this part of Maine might have grown a few potatoes during the warm months, but they were principally loggers.\(^\text{36}\)

Compared to the Lake States and the Pacific Northwest, where formal business organizations did most of the cutting, farmers did most of the wood products production in the Northern Forest. A federal report from 1899 found that in Maine, farmers harvested $2,652,252 worth of forest products (46% of the total for the state) while formal businesses cut $3,021,499 (54%); in New Hampshire the numbers were $2,296,265 (39%) and $3,552,268 (61%) respectively; Vermont $2,108,518 (63%) and $1,236,075 (37%); New York $7,671,108 (66%) and $3,844,752 (34%). Combined, Northern Forest state farmers cut $3,073,549 more wood products than businesses, or about 61% of the wood harvested.\(^\text{37}\) The situation was similar in the Canadian shield region where half the timber harvested was cut by farmers as well.\(^\text{38}\) These figures do not include the amount of lumber cut by farmer-loggers through contracts with larger business organizations, a common practice.


\(^38\)Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 160.
In the western frontier, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, where the corporate business form and complex financial institutions were in place before or right after States were legally founded, the trends were reversed, and businesses cut much more logs than farmers (Figure 2 and Table 1). Resource extraction was quickly corporatized and centralized in the West. This was not the case in the Northern Forest.  

There was solidarity among, and recognition of, the marginal farmers in the Northern Forest who made a living from the woods. The Maine Farmer reported on a group of poor farmer-loggers living in Rangeley Lake, Maine who lived primarily off stolen trees. They were, the periodical reported, a "rough, tough, hardy and hawbuckling … group." Conklin wrote of a neighboring family with nine children who were "poor like ourselves" and "lived mostly by making shingles from year to year."

This class of Northern Forest small-producers served a vital economic purpose. When they worked together, they produced saw logs in large quantities with little capital investment. Along the Aroostook and Fish rivers, historian Richard Judd found that cutting was done by "‘wretchedly poor’ settlers" who, when "joined together … make a small quantity [of saw logs] … which they get hauled by some person with a team, they being so destitute." Though Abner Toothaker was not "wretchedly poor," he also pooled the labor and capital of lower and middling farmers for his cuts on the Coe/Pingree lands. Tools, draft animals, sleds, lumber camps, and nearly everything that was

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40 Judd, Aroostook, 46; Judd, Common Lands, 29.
41 Judd, Common Lands, Common People, 34.
43 Quoted in Judd, Aroostook, 25.
needed for a small or medium sized forest products operations could be drawn from the farm or made in the woods. Operations could succeed with this form of non-specialist capital alone.

These woodsmen, poor as they might have been, possessed a familiarity with the forest and skill in the woods that was crucial to forest products industries. Though logging was often characterized as unskilled work, that characterization was "but partially true." Most tasks were "not learned in a month, nor in a season," but during a life living in the woods or through informal apprenticeships in forest communities. One study suggest that each forest products operation was so different that "there were no rules" that guided the industry. This work was done by skilled woodsmen, who after trial and error, learned how to log tracts of land successfully time after time, regardless of the conditions. These small ad hoc operations multiplied by the hundreds allowed vast geographic areas to be lumbered with limited capital input and with few complex financial institutions. For example, the county seat of Holton in Aroostook County Maine remained without a savings bank until 1872.

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, small producers, or sole proprietors, made most of the saw logs on the Coe/Pingree lands where the Toothakers worked. This was during a time in America when industrial output in most sectors of the economy was dominated by corporate entities (Figure 3). Sole proprietors lost ground in terms of output in 1910, but by 1920 they were producing almost as much logs as companies again. Beatrice Craig found a similar pattern, with

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1/4 to 3/4 of all timber licenses in the Canadian side of the St. John River being procured by small operators. 47

Forest products production defied changing trends in business forms during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era by thriving under a decentralized production matrix. Even when large companies got involved in timber land procurement and forest production, much of the actual work was done by small producers under contracts with larger entities. The small producer model was chaotic and labor intensive but it delivered wood to the mills cheaply which was essential in the depleted resource base and difficult topography of the Northern Forest.

**Early Popular Opinions on Loggers**

Despite the vital economic purpose that the Conklins and other Northern Forest farmer-loggers served, before 1860 many outsiders disdained these families and workers, arguing that their poverty stemmed from their refusal either to accept full-time agricultural or industrial labor. 48 Their self-sufficiency, primitive tools, rundown cabins, and homespun clothes were signs of their inability to "advance." 49 In Canada and the Northern Forest, small producers were depicted by outsiders as "the most depraved and dissipated set of villains on earth." Large landholders in Maine complained about their "indolence" while others compared them with Native Americans. 50 Working for wages in mid-century America was a sign of dependence and those who did so were seen as less fit for

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47 Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists*, 89.


49 Judd, *Aroostook*, 82.

50 Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors*, 50, 63.
citizenship than owners. Farmer-loggers' dependence on fluctuating markets made them seem reckless and irrational. Agriculture was depicted as "a more reliable foundation for society than the timber trade ..." Visitors found that the loggers' life led to "prodigality, thoughtlessness of future wants, profaneness, irreligion, inordinate drinking, and other ruinous habits." Middle-class travel writers like E.A. Kendall and Timothy Dwight along with area newspapers argued that logging distanced men from the morality of settled domestic life.

The seasonal cycles of production and consumption of loggers were antithetical to the protestant work ethic of British-Canadians and Americans. "They contracted habit something similar to the gypsies, spent their winter in the woods and their summer lounging about the towns" one Canadian newspaper reported about loggers. A genre of fiction emerged in Canada and the United States that chastised young men who moved away from the farm and into the forest products business. Working in the wilderness was only supposed to be the first step in the process of civilizing the land and not a life-long career. White men were not expected to spend so much time in uncultivated, wild land.

A life of hard wage work under a boss or driver was thought to harm the body. This is best exemplified by the popularity of Leonard Trask "the Wonderful Invalid" whose body, misshapen, by chronic work on the farm and in the lumbering woods, was a spectacle in America in the 1850s. He went on tour showing off his disabled form and wrote an autobiography describing how decades of

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52 Quoted in Wynn, "Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers?" 174.

53 Wynn, "Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers?" 182-183

54 Graeme Wynn's article on this subject made it clear that much of the so called "deplorably dark and demoralized lumberers" of the period were actually farmer-loggers who maintained a connection to settled agricultural life. It was only those middle class outside observers that created an artificial distinction between loggers and farmers. Wynn, "Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers?" 187.
hard work in the woods had destroyed him and his family.\textsuperscript{55} Likely because of the negative stigma associated with logging, most farmer-loggers identified as farmers regardless of how much time they spent in the woods, a fact that has obscured the historical record and made the social and economic history of forest products labor difficult to narrate.\textsuperscript{56}

Around mid-century, as James Fennimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales (1827-1841) rose to popularity, American culture transitioned away from depictions of the forests as strictly "dark, satanic thickets, a regrettable natural obstacle to homesteaders and frontiersmen, something to be clear cut."\textsuperscript{57} Cooper showed that the forest frontier built a type of character that was uniquely American and praiseworthy. Around this time Henry David Thoreau, Joel Tyler Headley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and other romantic and transcendental authors reevaluated the American man's place in the wilderness. Their writing would begin to change how Americans understood these frontier settlers.

When Thoreau visited northern Maine in 1846 he was awed by the natural splendor he found there. To Thoreau the air of the backwoods was infused with the healthful fragrance of pine and was "like a sort of diet-drink."\textsuperscript{58} Part of the healthful wonder of the wilderness came from the people who inhabited it, like his Indian guide Joe Polis, but also the various loggers, hunters, farmers, and backwoodsmen he met and stayed with during his trip. They were not the same homogenous urbanites that Thoreau was so critical of in \textit{Walden}, "vermin" who "club together in


\textsuperscript{56} Cox, \textit{Lumbermen's Frontier}, 80.


\textsuperscript{58} Thoreau and Cramer, \textit{The Maine Woods}, 13.
alleys and drinking-saloons, its highest accomplishment, perchance, to run beside a fire-engine and throw brickbats."\textsuperscript{59}

Thoreau found that some of these rural workers had a type of knowledge that was only gained from experience in the wild: "The deeper you penetrate into the woods" he wrote "the more intelligent, and, in one sense, less countrified do you find the inhabitants ... for always the pioneer has been a traveler ... and a man of the world."\textsuperscript{60} Thoreau also suggested that life in the woods was more authentic than city life: "[h]ow much more respectable also is the life of the solitary pioneer or settler in these, or any woods,—having real difficulties, not of his own creation drawing his subsistence directly from nature,—than that of the helpless multitude in the town who depend on the gratifying and extremely artificial wants of society and are thrown out of employment by hard times!\textsuperscript{61}

Thoreau did not see the loggers he met as ideal men, but he had high standards. Though impressed with their frugal living conditions and intimate contact with nature, Thoreau was disappointed with the loggers' simple mind, which he thought had been dulled by a life of manual labor and profit seeking. In one instance in \textit{The Maine Woods}, as his lumbermen companions were arguing over who could portage a canoe the best, he came to the realization that these men "possessed no qualities which you could not lay hands on."\textsuperscript{62} Too often they stayed farther away from civilization than even Thoreau could condone: "Our woods are sylvan, and their inhabitants

\textsuperscript{59} Thoreau and Cramer, \textit{The Maine Woods}, 227.

\textsuperscript{60} Thoreau and Cramer, \textit{The Maine Woods}, 19.

\textsuperscript{61} Thoreau and Cramer, \textit{The Maine Woods}, 227.

woodsmen and rustics,—that is *selvaggian*, and the inhabitants are *salvages*. They are like "the deer and moose, the bear and wolf" who live in and off the forest without realizing the awesomeness of their environment. Not only were these loggers like animals, they were the worst kind of animals, mice and worms, Thoreau wrote later. Thoreau was a radical, and a contrarian, and his opinions do not reflect those of his contemporaries, but many of his favorable opinions of loggers foreshadowed twentieth century antimodernist reverence of rural working people.

To Thoreau the act of destroying nature for money was reprehensible. "The explorers and lumberers generally are all hirelings, paid so much a day for their labor and as such they have no more love for wild nature than the wood-sawyers have for the forests." By destroying nature for money, these workers could not possibly know it like he did: as inspiration and as a way to access the divine. In the act of production, workers alienated themselves from the true value of trees: "A pine cut down, a dead pine, is no more a pine than a dead human carcass is a man. Can he who has discovered only some of the values of whalebone and whale oil be said to have discovered the true use of the whale? Can he who slays the elephant for his ivory be said to have 'seen the elephant'?" Thoreau assumed there were grander uses for nature than as commodities, "the pine is no more lumber than man is, and to be made into boards and houses is no more its true and highest used than the truest use of a man is to be cut down and made into manure."

Thoreau was an early promoter of the idea of wilderness hatred, that those who worked in nature saw it only as an enemy to be defeated. The guides and hosts that Thoreau met in Maine were

useful because they provided him a "path" to access the wilderness but from that path he would use
to nature for his own devices, as a "philosopher." His use of nature was much more appropriate than
the workers, he thought: "Is it the lumberman, then, who is the friend and lover of the pine? ... Is it
the tanner who has barked it? ... No! no! it is the poet; he it is who makes the truest use of the pine,
—who does not fondle it with an axe, nor tickle it with a saw, nor stroke it with a plane—who know
whether its heart is false without cutting into it,—who had not bought the stumpage of the
township on which it stands."68 Because they were not poets like himself, Thoreau could never see
the lumberers as ideal men, though he respected them more than many of his contemporaries did.69

In taking these positions about woodsmen, Thoreau demonstrated two things about his time
and his own class. First, Thoreau and American society in general were becoming removed from the
agricultural-pioneer culture that defined Colonial America and the Early Republic, times when nearly
everyone lived among and fought against nature daily.70 As an outside observer he could take a
critical glance at the lives of people living in the frontier. Second, Thoreau's opinions show he was
ahead of his time. Thoreau's ideal use of nature, as a space of reflection, a place of profound beauty
and a muse, was a view that would eventually catch on among the leisure class. Thoreau would
inspire John Muir and generations of preservationist, but only a select few at Thoreau's time thought
as he did.71

Among Thoreau's novel insights about nature, however, were very conservative observations
about those who made their living with their hands. The idea of wilderness hatred implied that
workers were too crude to appreciate nature. Insights like Thoreau's would lead to the popular

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conception that Northern Forest denizens should not have control of their own land. These ideas would lead to the creation of state and national parks, that would result in the closing of the commons that negatively affected small producers' traditional economic activities. While Thoreau was removed enough from the agrarian-pioneer culture of early America to reflect critically on it, he was not so far removed as to view the pioneer way of life as nostalgic and as an ethical mode of living.

Ralph Waldo Emerson demonstrated similar sentiments to Thoreau in his admiration for his guides during a trip to the Adirondacks. In his poem *The Adirondacks: A Journal* (1858) he addresses tourists and their guides: "Your rank is all reversed; let men of cloth / Bow to the stalwart churls in overalls: / They are the doctors of the wilderness, / And we the low-prized laymen." Clearly Emerson was not fully convinced of the high status of the guides because they were still "churls." Later in the poem, he displays his real feelings of backwoodsmen more clearly, "We flee away from cities, but we bring / The best of these cities with us, these learned classifiers," such as the scientist and naturalist. "We praise the guide, we praise the forest life: / But sacrifice our dear-bought lore / Of books and art and trained experiment, … / Oh no, not we!" Thoreau and Emerson had an ambivalent reverence for woodsmen.

These two writers give us an indication of how many middle-class Americans thought of the rural working classes and nature but Joel Tyler Headley best encapsulated the mid-century middle-class opinion on the backwoods and backwoodsmen. Headley was an early promoter of the wilderness as a cure for the problems caused by urban civilization. In the 1840s, he went to the

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Adirondacks to recover from an "attack on the brain" caused by a stressful career as a writer in bustling New York City, where, Headley wrote, "everything is in a hurry."74

Headley, like Thoreau, saw the splendor and solitude of nature as healthful, beautiful, and peaceful. The wilderness allowed reflection and introspection, while in New York City "life is all practical and outward."75 He thought that going into the wilderness exposed men to a different perspective and changed them for the better.76 He wrote that, "nature changes me so that I scarcely know myself."77 Though Headley preferred taking a few days’ rest when he first got into the woods, he was confident that the most healthful part of the experience was being physically active, a new and interesting approach to leisure in the 1840s. "For the reduced system that needs tone and manliness given it, strong physical exercise is demanded."78 It was the fatiguing part of wilderness work that Headley believed would build his health. For Headley "fishing, tramping, and camping out in the woods" was what his "health demand[ed]."79 The untamed forest environment made even the simplest tasks hard work, just walking in this untamed land was, for example, "the hardest toil."80 It was through "intimate companionship with nature" he believed "not merely the physical man is strengthened, but the intellectual also."81


76 Headley, The Adirondack, 21-22.

77 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 7.

78 Headley, The Adirondack, 14.

79 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 9.

80 Headley, The Adirondack, ix; Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 46.

81 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 7-8.
Headley found working in the woods so beneficial that he decided to participate in the work of the lumbermen. In one instance, when fishing on an unnamed river in the Adirondacks, he witnessed the spectacle of "driving river," or transporting saw logs via rivers. After reflecting for a time on the movement of the water and the logs, he took off his coat and "laying my gun aside, seized a handspike, and was soon behind a huge log, tugging and lifting away."82 He must have looked ridiculous to the workers and he knew it, for one worker gave a "'half grunt, as much as to say 'Green Horn from the city.'"83

Headley did not see the work of the loggers as necessarily destructive or out of place in the woods. In several instances, Headley expressed the sentiment that work was part of the wilderness. To him the river drive was "a curiosity of the backwoods" not something apart from it or imposed on it.84 Though he compares the drive with the markets of New York City, it seemed much more tactile. Participating in the drive brought him closer to nature and reinvigorated him, unlike participating in urban markets.85 In another instance, he reflected on cutting down a hemlock tree: "The consciousness of power it awakens and the absolute terror it inspires, as the noble and towering fabric at length yields to your assaults, amply repay the labor. … This a backwoodsman would doubtless call transcendentalism, if he knew the meaning of the term."86

Unlike Thoreau, who saw a lack of civility in those who destroyed nature, Headley believed that these rural people's primary weakness was their inability to fully conquer the wilderness. It was a common mid-century belief that God, human nature, and the economy dictated that all wild land

82 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 13.
83 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 13
84 Emphasis added Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 10
85 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 58.
86 Headley, The Adirondack, 28-29.
should be cleared and put into cultivation. What made the wilderness of the Adirondacks awe inspiring was its tangled immenseness, and those who tamed and mastered the land proved their prowess.

The pristine state of nature in the Adirondacks meant that those who lived within had not done their ordained work: civilizing the land. They lacked the ability or ambition to "subdue" the forest. The word squatter, which was often used to describe those who live on, or used forest land that did not belong to them, was pejorative and it denoted vagrancy and idleness. Headley observed, likely erroneously, that Adirondackers lusted after easy to access natural resources and thus "not a man here support himself from his farm. … Some of the best men have left, and those that remain depend on the money (some seven hundred dollars) furnished by the State for the making of roads, to buy their provisions with." To Headley backwoodsmen lived off the unbought fruits of the woods and game meat along with state money. They did not mix their labor with the earth in the way the farmer did (i.e. clear, furrow, and plant the land) and were not manly because of their deficiencies.

These backwoodsmen did not fit the "self-made" manhood paradigm of Headley's time. He commented that the Adirondacks needed, "enterprising settlers—men who go to build their fortunes, not to save themselves from starvation; who take pride in cultivating society, and have some ambition to establish schools and churches." The lack of cultivation in the Adirondacks was the reason for its beauty but it was also the reason that much of it was "neglected waste," as Headley

87 Terrie, "Romantic Travelers in The Adirondack Wilderness," 64.
88 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 42.
91 Headley, Letters from the Backwoods, 43.
wrote. American culture at the time referred to those that inhabited such waste land as "waste people."\textsuperscript{92}

Although Thoreau would not have agreed that subduing nature proved manliness, Headley and Thoreau both argued that rural workers of the Northern Forest had un-virtuous, bestial qualities.\textsuperscript{93} Staying in an untamed wilderness too long and becoming detached from civilized life was dangerous. Headley rejoiced when he got a hold of a newspaper in the backwoods of the Adirondacks because the paper allowed him to reconnect with the real, authentic world outside of the wilderness, and he criticized the backwoodsmen for their lack of desire for contact with civilization. Visiting a hunter's cabin, he was surprised to see "no books, not the sign of a paper, however old."\textsuperscript{94} Backwoodsmen's work blinded them to progress, the future, and worldly events, thus they work and toil away here in the depth of the forest, all heedless of the great world without. How strange it seems, to behold men thus occupied, living contentedly, fifty miles from a post-office or village, and hear their inquiries about the war with Mexico, asking of events that had been quite forgotten in New York! They have their ambition, but its object is a few acres of well-cultivated land, or the reputation of a good hunter; and they have their troubles, but they are born and die in the bosom of the forest.\textsuperscript{95}

Headley compares these loggers to animals. Theirs was "a life of toil and ignorance."\textsuperscript{96}

Headley and his contemporaries were firm believers in the inevitability of progress. The real, civilized world and the future of humanity could be found in cities and towns. Backwoodsmen were

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textsuperscript{92} Headley, \textit{The Adirondack}, v; Isenberg, \textit{White Trash}.
    \item \textsuperscript{93} Isenberg, \textit{White Trash}, 116.
    \item \textsuperscript{94} Headley, \textit{The Adirondack}, 350.
    \item \textsuperscript{95} Headley, \textit{Letters from the Backwoods}, 47-48.
    \item \textsuperscript{96} Headley, \textit{Letters from the Backwoods}, 48; Headley, \textit{The Adirondack}, 28-29; Isenberg, \textit{White Trash}, 112.
\end{itemize}
people of the past and they would progress forward eventually as the land was improved. Civilizing the wilderness of the Northern Forest would destroy some of the beauty of the area but it was inevitable.\(^7\) Some of Headley's associates suggested it would take a century to make the Adirondacks habitable though he thought it would only be sixty or seventy years.\(^8\) If Northern Forest people did not progress, they would die out like Indians.\(^9\) Thoreau's depiction of wilderness hating loggers and Headley's analysis of poor, lazy, "waste people" together typified the prevailing ideas of Northern Forest backwoodsmen, ideas that would persist in the American culture until nostalgic antimodernist in the late nineteenth century began to examine the life of the logger with a new angle of analysis.

**Closing the Commons**

Some of the negative opinions of Northern Forest producers came from the idea that they were subsiding, not of the fruit of their own labor, but from the bounty of the unclaimed, uncultivated wilderness land around them. Despite the conditions that people like Henry Conklin faced in the harshness of the Adirondacks, many of his contemporaries from outside the Northern Forest might have assumed that he was just a loafer.

He was, in fact, anything but lazy. Throughout his young adulthood, Conklin farmed, made shingles, cut "four foot wood" and sometimes "tramped" about hunting and foraging. In the early 1850s he worked for wages in "the lumbering woods" for the first time.\(^{100}\) The transition from working relatively independently to working for wages was a transition that other farmer-loggers made because of growing restrictions on independent access to forest resources. These restrictions

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\(^7\) Headley, *Letters from the Backwoods*, 44.

\(^8\) Headley, *Letters from the Backwoods*, 60.


\(^{100}\) Conklin, *Through "Poverty's Vale"*. 
came from the consolidation of forest lands into private hands and government conservation efforts. For small producers, the results of these two forces were the same: an indirect increase in the cost of accessing forest resources.

Between 1830 and 1890 many Northeastern states embarked on massive sales of forest land to people with access to large amounts of capital. It was assumed that these well connected people would be able to utilize the land efficiently. The idea was that people of means would civilize this "waste land" and make it productive in some way.101 For example in 1874 Esban Coe bought 20,227 acres of land in northeast Maine for $0.35 an acre.102 By the end of Coe's life, his shared land holdings totaled nearly a million acres.103 Large landholders were exempt from improvement taxes, and they also discouraged private settlement on their land that they thought might devalue the lumber.104 They allowed people to access their trees, for a price.

In most of the Northern Forest, land consolidation into private hands resulted in the novel concepts of stumpage and trespassing fees. The term stumpage, which came into popular use by 1835, was a term used to identify the price of forest lands, either to use them for forest products production or to buy them.105 In both cases, the price of the land was most often determined by its value in terms of merchantable lumber. In determining stumpage for forest products production, a land owner estimated "cost of toting or hauling supplies; cost of roads and camp construction[; the] cost of labor and working equipment; and … estimates … for felling, yarding, hauling, landing and

101 Judd, Aroostook, 72; Craig, Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists, 80.
104 Judd, Aroostook, 95; Craig, and Dagenais, The Land in between, 140.
In other words, land that had good trees close to transportation infrastructure had high stumpage costs, while isolated tracts, tracts with sparse or unhealthy trees, or tracts on difficult topography had low stumpage costs. Stumpage on the Coe/Pingree lands ranged from $1.00 to $5.00 per thousand board foot.

In the early nineteenth-century, according to the "law of the woods," tracts of hardwood, dead and dying timber and swampland were considered commons, places where farmers like Conklin might go to make a few thousand shingles or other forest products that were in demand. The labor invested in cutting and transporting trees off these lots were thought to be equal or greater than their value. After the massive land sales, all tracts that fell into private hands were given a price per acre, even if the land was seemingly useless.

Under private landownership regimes, cutting on others' land without permission resulted in a trespassing fee. Most often, when Coe dealt with trespassing it was because a party, which he had given a contract to cut, took trees other than the ones that Coe had given the party permission to. Like many landowners, Coe dealt with trespass by charging increased stumpage after the crime was committed, sometimes as much as double the market value. Trespassing could be ruinous for a small operator like Abner Toothaker who, in the 1863-64 cutting season, invested more than the value of his entire estate in stumpage alone. A trespass charge could also lead to a diminished reputation and a lost chance for a contract in future years. Because of the harsh repercussions for trespass, recorded trespassing on the Coe/Pingree was rare with only about 3,328 trees and 175 cords of illegal wood cut between 1863 and 1930.107


107 "Coe Family Papers," Logging operations vol. 1-6, Special Collections, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine, Orono, ME
Like stumpage, state conservation policies also led to increased operating costs and risks for small producers. In 1872, New York State authorized Verplanck Colvin to survey the area that would later become the 6,000,000 acre Adirondack Park.\footnote{Alfred L. Donaldson, \textit{A History of the Adirondacks}, (New York: Century Co, 1921) 163.} Thereafter the state began to collect back taxes, remove squatters, and increase their surveillance of the forest. They hired agents to collect penalties, seize stolen logs, and even arrest persistent trespassers.

Some of these small producers were so poor they could not pay for the damages charged to them if they were caught trespassing on state land. A state agent in New York found 2,500 or 3,000 hop poles cut from state lands manufactured by poor men "of large families" who owned "nothing but an old horse or two and possibly a cow."\footnote{D.H. Stauton to A.G. Chaplin, Malone, NY April, 7\textsuperscript{th} 1884, Letters from agents appointed to serve notice on illegal occupants of state lands, 1881-1893, folder 2 (1 of 2), BO942-85, New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY.} An agent for New York State around Plattsburgh, New York in 1884 found that "Charles Garrous, John Garrous, Constant Agony, & Lewis Ano, have been cutting small quantities of green timber [on state land] for fuel. … These men are occupants of such land & are poor, having been partially supported by the town in the past. They have no means of paying damages, but I believe a term of imprisonment would have [a] wholesome effect in preventing further trespass by them & others."\footnote{J.B. Riley to A.G. Chaplin, Malone, NY April, 9\textsuperscript{th} 1884, Letters from agents appointed to serve notice on illegal occupants of state lands, 1881-1893, folder 1 (2 of 2), BO942-85, New York State Archives, Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY.} These agents had tremendous power in these small forest communities and there is evidence that state agents siphoned funds from state land sales for personal use.\footnote{"Whipple, Condemned in Report, Resigns" \textit{New York Times}, October 05, 1910. http://search.proquest.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/docview/97022354?accountid=14214, accesses 7/14/2016.}
Despite the "forever wild" agenda of the Adirondack park’s creators, part of an agent’s work was to report on and consider "land values" to assess them for taxation.\textsuperscript{112} To do this they assigned a price per acre to state lands similar to a stumpage price that gave them a basis to charge trespassers. In 1900, out of the forty-six trespassing cases in the Adirondacks only one was connected to a lumber company, the rest were poor people or small operators.\textsuperscript{113} In 1910 there were 150 Adirondack parcels owned by the state with squatters living on them. These squatters now owed back taxes or faced forced removal.\textsuperscript{114}

Other states followed the model of the Adirondacks when they began conservation efforts. In 1911 the Weeks Act "allowed the creation of National Forests in the East."\textsuperscript{115} By 1916, "Vermont claimed 12,000 acres; Massachusetts, 10,000 … [and] New Hampshire, 9,100."\textsuperscript{116} Maine had no large tracts of land under state control until the 1930s, when there was a great expansion in the number of protected acres.

Besides the direct cost in penalties imposed on squatters and trespassers, conservation automatically increased the price of standing timber by taking large tracts off the market. Between 1897 and 1901 the consolidation of land in Northern New York doubled the value of timberland. Lakeside land, land that was as desired by lumberers as by vacationers because of waterside access, was bought by the state at the beginning of the century for $7 an acre and by 1910 the land was

\textsuperscript{112}New York State, First Annual Report of the Commissioners of Fisheries, Game and Forests of the State of New York, (Government publication, 1896) 7.

\textsuperscript{113}Jacoby, Crimes against Nature, 57.


\textsuperscript{116}Judd, Common Lands, 98.
already worth $35 an acre.\textsuperscript{117} This change in the price of land would have been dramatic to older residents who remembered the time of settlement in the Northern Forest, when trees were so worthless they would literally be burned to make room for farms.

Historian Karl Jacoby found that, "conservation inevitably magnified the importance of wage labor" in the Adirondacks, because fewer farmer-loggers could afford the costs and risks of owning and operating.\textsuperscript{118} He also suggests that the goals of state conservationists meshed with those of large forest products operators, both of whom "shared a concern for limiting inefficient uses of the environment."\textsuperscript{119} At the same time conservation was becoming popular, agriculture was becoming concentrated and corporate, with larger farms producing more crops with fewer people. Independent production in the woods and on the farm was becoming untenable.\textsuperscript{120}

Large private land sales and conservation policies were efforts in "state simplification," that "standardized and rationalized local practices to make them more comprehensible—and ultimately more controllable—by government agencies."\textsuperscript{121} The small producer model of forest product production represented a type of economic anarchy. It was the type of production suited for "small island communities" of early America and had become unfashionable by the late nineteenth-century, a time when efficiency was praised above all else.\textsuperscript{122}

Conservation and large land sales squeezed out small producers and this share of the market went to large producers who at the means to make bigger, more efficient cuts. On the Coe lands, the

\begin{itemize}
\item McMartin, \textit{The Great Forest of the Adirondack}, 113.
\item Jacoby, \textit{Crimes Against Nature}, 29.
\end{itemize}
median cut per job for sole proprietors rose from 549 saw logs in the 1863-64 season to 3,549 in 1920-21.123 As a young son of a middling farmer, Lincoln Toothaker could not afford to pay stumpage fees. He could not make a small cut, and sell the product like his grandfather had. He could instead put his woodsmen skills to use for others for a wage. The organization of cutting was changing in the Northern Forest, but change wasn’t one directional, there was compromise between old and new methods. Many rural workers were hesitant to give up their control of production and a type of production between wage work and independent ownership evolved in the Northern Forest.

Jobbing

"The object of the proprietor is to make the land yield a large amount of money," New York City speculator Stephen Mulliany wrote to Nathan Weston, a middling farmer from central Maine. Mulliany had just purchased a tract near Weston’s farm and wanted to make a profit from it however he could. In Maine, making a profit from the land most often meant getting the forest products off of it. Weston was not connected to a company or any formal organization, but like the Toothakers or Henry Conklin, Nathan had woods skill and knowledge as well as the local labor connections to "make the land yield a large amount of money." Without someone like Weston, Mulliany's land was worthless. Mulliany and Weston made this venture happen through jobbing, a financial arrangement that would define industrial forest products production in the Northern Forest into the 1950s.

While Coe and Pingree dealt personally with as many as 194 unique permittees per year, investors who lived farther away from timberlands channeled their business through a select group

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123 Coe Family Papers, Logging operations, volume 1, 1862-63, Special Collections, Raymond H. Fogler Library, University of Maine, Orono, ME; "A trade built on credit, familiarity and trust" Wynn wrote, "was predisposed toward the survival of those ventures with advantages of size, capital, and connections." Wynn, Timber Colony, 132.
of people who had built a reputation in the industry. These intermediaries between labor and finance became known as jobbers. Jobbers typically had access to moderate capital on their farm, often two or more working horses. More importantly, however, they had woodsmen ability and access to others in the community with similar skills even if it was only other family members. Jobbers were often indistinguishable from farmer-loggers unless they had begun to specialize in forest products production. Like most farmers of the time, they were sole proprietors; businessmen with no formal or legal designation. The connections between a jobber and his core crew were paramount to their success. Jobbers used their skills and connections to labor to produce wood products on other people's land, often taking ownership of the resulting raw wood product as arranged in the contract. The goal of the jobber was to make money by producing forest products at a cheaper price than was paid for stumpage.

Jobbers were vetted to prove they could finish a job correctly, on time, and that they could be trusted with credit. The inner workings of this informal credit system can be glimpsed from the Coe/Pingree records. Coe took notes about the personality, logging, and farming ability of all the people he gave permits to. He also consulted with men who knew the perspective loggers. Based on these notes he decided if he should give a logger a "chance" to cut, a common term in the Northern Forest. For example in 1889 a Mr. Barttell asked for a permit and Coe wrote in his ledger: "40 to

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126 Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 35.

127 There is no clear definition for the term "chance" in logging but its use is very interesting and reveals a lot about the belief in the free market mechanisms in the Northern Forest. The term seems to be New English because it is not found in New York. In context, the obvious meaning was that and owner would give a contractor a chance to prove himself, a meaning that would fit the most common definition of the word. Chance is also synonymous with luck, in that there are only so many parcels available for logging and it was only by chance that a specific jobber/farmer might get a job. These two meanings can be used together as in, there were only a fixed number of opportunities, a specific jobber got his chance, now he has the chance to prove himself to the landowner. In the United States specifically chance was also used to specify a quantity of something procured. The Oxford English dictionary
50 years old—has farm & 2 horses rigged." Of David Eastman, another perspective logger, Coe wrote "work small farm—operated one winter, always worked in the wood[s]." He recorded that he was hesitant to give a man named J.J. Wheelock a permit because Wheelock had not paid a past trespassing fee. For a party known as "W. Reed & Co." Coe checked with a Mr. Beana before giving the permit. Beana said they were "all right, smart man—think [same] for his son—good to operate."128

A primary concern for Coe was the number of horses jobbers had available to work. Coe wrote about another permittee "work 6 to 8 horses. Keep 4 on all winter," of another "has his supplies- will put on 14 horses, six which will put on the side of the Mt. & commence Sept. 6th … all ready to take permit." If he trusted the party, he would permit a small job. He permitted to a man who said he "had one son 4 horses," and wrote of him, "think: he might do well." For large operators Coe also made sure the contractor had a good supplier.129 Luckily, Coe wrote some of this down because in most instances these decisions were made with no written record.

From what he did write, it is clear that Coe "managed risk by managing identity" as historian Scott Sandage found to be the case with many long distance financial transactions in the nineteenth-century. As long as a party’s credit and reputation were in good order and they had some capital, even if it was just in the form of lumbering skill and ability, loggers and jobbers could get a chance.130 This way of selecting contractors continued into the nineteen teens and twenties, as Maine

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logger Harry Dyer recalled "you'd have to go to this Fraser Lumber Company and ... make a deal or get a contract with them ... if you was a little operator, you might contract for a hundred thousand [board feet], see? ... we used to get two hundred thousands or something like that."\textsuperscript{131}

Depending on the size of the job, jobbers subcontracted with other independent contractors, leading to complicated cutting arrangements.\textsuperscript{132} In the nineteenth-century, many of these subcontractual agreements were verbal and informal. Court records show that John Toothaker, Lincoln's father, engaged in an oral contract in 1884.\textsuperscript{133} The informality of contracts often extended down the hierarchy and workers typically signed no formal agreement.\textsuperscript{134} At least part of the reason for the prevalence of the subcontracting system was farmer-loggers desire to maintain autonomy in their work.\textsuperscript{135} Facing pressure by stumpage fees and contracting, unable to log on their own behalves, small producers channeled their labor through these contracts in the jobbing system.

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Like other aspects of logging, jobbing and sub-jobbing remained an important way that wood was cut into the period when pulpwood cutting for paper superseded lumber circa 1890. Paper milling, unlike lumber milling, required lots of capital because it was an intense chemical process that was only profitable on a large scale. The paper boom brought tremendous capital to the


\textsuperscript{132} Radforth, \textit{Bushworkers and Bosses}, 50-51.


\textsuperscript{134} Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 65.

Northern Forest, as big companies like Great Northern Paper, International Paper, Santa Clara, and Brown realized that second growth in the region provided the perfect resource base for paper production. Though the pulp producers were large modern companies, they borrowed labor processes and organizational methods from farmer-loggers.

Typically, a paper mill or a land owner would accept bids on a few "large contracts running from 10,000 to 100,000 cords each." Those who got these contracts might then let their job out to four to ten smaller sub-jobbers who might subcontract again with small parties. These contractors might cut on land owned by the paper company, who were, by 1900, buying up extensive tracts of grown over farms, burnt and cut over land as well as stocked timberland, or they might cut on their own land, or the land of a third party delivering wood to the mill.136 A comparative study of jobbing verses consolidated company camps in 1930s found that jobbing incentivized pulp production and typically distributed profits evenly between contractors and subcontractors. The jobber system also reduced labor overhead because some supervisory roles were eliminated.137

This type of contracting was a prominent but sparsely studied way of producing goods in industrializing America. It allowed labor and capital to meet on more equal terms than through direct employment. Early American iron mines and forges relied on contractors and subcontractors for extraction of ore and even labor in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Large urban manufacturing operations like Winchester Repeating Arms Company also relied heavily on contractors. As late as 1904, contractors received 32% of the payroll from Winchester. In factories like Winchester, companies or other financial institutions owned machines and the physical plant and contracted to men with access to skilled labor who did the work. Contractors hired and fired at


will, worked beside their laborers, and had complete control of the production process. Because contractors had the knowledge of production they could demand premium rates for their labor. Contracting made sense to financiers and workers alike who saw managers as unproductive and unnecessary labor.

Historians Dan Clawson, Sean Wilentz, Bruce Laurie, David Montgomery and others have shown that contracting was "essentially a transitional stage" between artisanal-craft production and late stage capitalism. The general trend in urban America, however, was the consolidation of labor under centralized management. When business is concentrated in the hands of a few, and large amounts of capital is required in one location, a corporate model makes sense. This was not the case for forest products production, where small producers were skilled, flexible, and geographically dispersed enough to produce efficiently in this vast rural area. This work was also seasonal so there was little reason to keep a permanent staff.

As in urban industries, in the hinterland the power in the contract slowly shifted to capital and away from labor in many cases. Instead of taking a share of the logs, jobbers were paid a set amount to do the work. For example, Turner Falls Lumber Company worked with a jobber named Royal Jordan. They paid Jordan $6.50 per thousand board foot for logs delivered from Colebrook, New Hampshire, where Jordan lived, to Turner Falls, Massachusetts. The company then advanced

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cash to Jordan by request.\textsuperscript{142} Cash advances in the Northern Forest varied in amount from tens of thousands to only a few hundred.\textsuperscript{143} Even with cash advances, it was hard for Jordan to give up his claim over the logs he cut. Coming from a tradition of farming-logging, it would have been hard for him to comprehend that the labor he put into the trees did not entitle him to a share of the commodities. On March 5, 1892 the company received an urgent telegram, "Jordan is taking cedar home and selling it. Better wire Blakely [to] stop him."\textsuperscript{144}

As the power in the contract shifted to capital, access to cash or credit became extremely important. For a logger like Abner Toothaker working in 1863, most of what was needed for a small operation was brought from the farm or borrowed on an open-account from a local merchant or general storekeeper.\textsuperscript{145} Under these arrangements cash was not always the preferred or most common method of payment. For example, historian Béatrice Craig found that merchants in the upper St. John's Valley in the late 1850s and early 1860s paid between 25\% and 42\% of debts with things other than cash, most commonly farm products, labor, or wood products.\textsuperscript{146} As operations grew larger and moved further from settled areas, a constant flow of cash or goods was required all season. The largest expenses were the tremendous amount of fuel needed to feed men and animals as they worked. The largest camps could house and feed up to 150 men, but camps that held thirty

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\textsuperscript{142}Turners Falls Lumber Company Records, Series II. Unbound material, 1872-1908, Box 3, f. 4 Columbia, Colebrook land, 1889-1897, Box 3, f. 3 Papers re: land, 1889-1897; Box 3, f. 8 Contracts-Johnson land, 1895, Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

\textsuperscript{143} "W.T. Turner to G.W. Sykes, 21 August 1919," Emporium Forest Company Records Box 8. Adirondack Museum.

\textsuperscript{144} "T.M Stoughter to S.M. Comstock" March 5, 1892.

\textsuperscript{145} Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 115; Wynn, Timber Colony, 114;

\textsuperscript{146} Béatrice Craig, and Maxime Dagenais, The Land in between: The Upper St. John Valley, Prehistory to World War I, (Gardiner, Me: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2009) 205, 206.
to fifty men and a dozen horses were most common.\footnote{McMartin, \textit{Great Forest of the Adirondacks}, 58.} The logistics involved in fueling the camps was one of the most complex parts of the business.\footnote{Wynn, \textit{Timber Colony}, 69-70; Craig, \textit{Backwoods Consumers}, 18, 21, 135.}

When operations were organized on a small scale, traditional agrarian open-account keeping and bartering could be used to appease workers who typically had a personal relationship with the operator. As the size of operations increased, wage systems were formalized. Importantly, regular cash wages did not become more common as time moved forward but as the scale of operations increased.\footnote{Conklin, \textit{Through \"Poverty's Vale\"}, 101; Herbert G. Gutman, \textit{Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919,}\textit{ The American Historical Review} (1973): 161.}

According to historians Be\={a}atrice Craig and Maxime Dagenais "[t]he forest industry … was operating under very traditional, if not archaic, principals." In these small camps men might work three to five months without cash payment. Most forest products operators comingled old agrarian and new industrial methods of remuneration as exemplified by the Boston and Eastern Company policy to keep "on hand a Supply of Provision[s] of leading articles, from which our laborers can have anything they may choose to take [on credit], it being known and distinctly understood that no man will be hired except for Cash at the close of each month."\footnote{Daniel Hammond \"Report January 1850/ Whimyville Concern\", B&E records, box 1, folder 2, Maine Historical Society, Portland, ME; Be\={a}atrice Craig, and Maxime Dagenais, \textit{The Land in between: The Upper St. John Valley, Prehistory to World War I}, (Gardiner, Me: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2009) 187.} Even on paydays, it was common to pay workers in script or check that needed to be cashed "downriver." Though the personal credit system at camp will be discussed more in the forthcoming chapters, monthly wages with regular, daily credit extended to workers became common between 1870 and 1920.\footnote{Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 71, 182-183.}
In most industries in the United States there was a gradual decline in the importance of contractors starting in the 1870s. By World War I, contracting was practically gone in American manufacturing.\textsuperscript{152} In the saw log industry, jobbing persisted well past World War I.\textsuperscript{153} Farmer-loggers and jobbers, this odd group of non-corporate, non-specialist producers, played an important role in production into the 1970s (Figure 3).

The contract system of forest products production had beneficial effects for farmer-loggers. Most importantly it continued the tradition of independent production, meaning workers avoided many aspects of industrial discipline and corporate homogenization.\textsuperscript{154} As logging historian Ian Radforth found, the scattered production process and the "forest environment" made it impossible for a central authority to "maintain close, direct supervision over … [the] workforce."\textsuperscript{155} This gave loggers their famous rugged, independent allure. Forest products production was "not the repetitive work of the machine tender. These men work somewhat under the conditions of the handicraft" one Canadian sociologist found.\textsuperscript{156} Jobbing also deferred some risk and some of the startup costs of forest products production to financing parties. A subcontractor who was hired only to cut and haul logs to a landing, for example, did not need to worry about how, or if ever, the product made the long risky trip downriver to the mill, though sometimes that risk would just be placed onto another

\textsuperscript{152} Companies realized that by putting workers directly on their payroll they could maximize profits, particularly when new technologies were introduced to a factory which contractors were unfamiliar with. Workers also began demanding more from owners in terms of regular, reliable, work, and wages. The prestige of contractors upset college educated managers and technocrats who chipped away at their leading role in the factory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Clawson, \textit{Bureaucracy and the Labor Process}, 119.

\textsuperscript{153} Clawson, \textit{Bureaucracy and the Labor Process}, 119-121. The power of scientific management, which helped abolish contracting in factories, didn't reach into the woods of the Northern Forest.

\textsuperscript{154} Sandage, \textit{Born Losers}, 67, 192-193.

\textsuperscript{155} Radforth, \textit{Bushworkers and Bosses}, 72.

\textsuperscript{156} Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 178.
contractor. Jobbers also did not always pay stumpage fees up front, instead they just calculated these costs into their final accounts relying on the financier to pay for cutting rights.

Contracting could be exploitative. If logs were not delivered because of lack of snow or a bad river drive, the legal rule of entirety meant there might be no payment to jobbers at all, or a penalty might be levied.\textsuperscript{157} Contracts could stipulate that the jobber was responsible for trespass or fires. Financiers might also use confusing log rules to rob jobbers or their workers of their fair pay. The log scaler, the man who measured the amount cut or yarded, could alter a ledger to favor the financing party as one worker remembered: "scalers sort of gypped the men who was lumbering. … it happened with me right down here. … I was cutting pine down by the thousand and, and we scaled our own logs … and we had to cut 1200' to get a thousand."\textsuperscript{158} This was also the case with Royal Jordan who expressed concern that Turner Falls was not paying him the correct amount because they were using a different scale rule than he was.\textsuperscript{159} Contracts also diverted the most risky aspect of forest products production, transportation, onto the small producers.\textsuperscript{160} When jobs were contracted out to subcontractors, immense power was held by the original contract holders and subcontractors might be forced or tricked into paying higher than market stumpage prices.\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{157} Steinfeld, \textit{Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor}, 5, 37, 318; The relationship between jobbers and mills/ financiers was similar to the relationship that developed between chicken feed mills and chicken farmers after World War II in the South. Here the risky growing-out of chickens, was contracted to poor farmers, while the slaughtering processing and hatching was done by large, high capital companies. William Boyd and Michael Watts, "\textit{Agro-industrial Just-in-time: The Chicken Industry and Postwar American Capitalism}" in David Goodman, and Michael Watts, \textit{Globalizing Food: Agrarian Questions and Global Restructuring}, (London: Routledge, 1997) 206-213.

\textsuperscript{158} Asa Flagg (b. 1898), interviewed by Rhoda Mitchell, 1970, p. 5750013, transcript, (LLC) (MFC).

\textsuperscript{159} Turners Falls Lumber Company Records, Series II. Unbound material, 1872-1908, Box 3, f. 4 Columbia, Colebrook land, 1889-1897, "Mucker to Comstock, Colebrook, NH, March 16 1891" Baker Library Historical Collections, Harvard Business School.

\textsuperscript{160} Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 178; Boyd, \textit{The Slain Wood}, chapter two "Logging the Mills."

Contracting and subcontracting made it difficult for state or private parties to prosecute small producers for trespassing because jobbers deferred blame up the hierarchy of contracts. For example, in 1895 a state agent in the Adirondacks found that "[a] contract to cut timber usually passed through many hands before it comes to the man who actually does the work" and there was "[a]n effort to shift the responsibility for cutting." "The scheme of 'letting jobs,' the New York Times reported in 1889, "is partly responsible for the difficulty of fastening the fault of the illegal cutting."162

As a scattered form of production, jobbing reduced solidarity and labor activism. The personal or familial relationship between a jobber and his crew and the seasonal nature of the industry made workers hesitant to resist.163 When a company like Brown or Great Northern did consolidate their forest products operations into company-controlled camps in the 1930s, workers quickly attempted to organize. But wherever production depended on independent contractors, collective bargaining was nearly impossible.164

Maine and New Hampshire passed general incorporation laws in 1862 and 1866 respectively, but before 1880, most corporations operating on the Coe/Pingree lands were special charter dam companies that made small cuts.165 Corporate influence in terms of output of saw logs was nearly non-existent on the Coe/Pingree land until the season of 1900. Corporations tended to dominate

162 Quote in Jacoby, Crimes Against Nature, 55.
milling.\textsuperscript{166} With a physical plant and heavy equipment these milling companies had the capital and credit to finance jobbers who specialized in cutting and delivering product.\textsuperscript{167}

Much of the forest products production reportedly done by companies starting in 1900-01 was likely done by jobbers working under company contracts. For example, in 1895 the Ashland Company had 400 to 600 workers cutting directly under them, but they still got about half of their wood from independent jobbers.\textsuperscript{168} In 1916 Great Northern Paper Company contracted out 54,700 cords of pulpwood for their railroad operations. Of that amount 15,500 were contracted to companies, and 41,000, or about 75\textperthousand{}, was contracted to sole proprietors or other informal business forms.\textsuperscript{169} As one forestry student found, "]t[he camps are run by operators who pay stumpage to the Great Northern Paper Company and sell them the spruce and fir." In other words these loggers were not under the direction of a company at all.\textsuperscript{170}

The primacy of jobbing continued into the second half of the twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{171} In 1955 during a senate subcommittee meeting on French-Canadian immigrant labor, jobbing was a major part of the debate. By this time this type of contracting was such an anachronism in most American industries that legislators were confused about how hiring and production was organized.\textsuperscript{172} In 1970

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{166} Radforth, \textit{Bashworkers and Bosses}, 70-72.
\item \textsuperscript{167} Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 49.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Judd, \textit{Aroostook}, 154.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Judd, \textit{Aroostook}, 179.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Senate Committee on Labor and Public Affairs, 84th Cong., 1st sess., \textit{Importation of Canadian Labor}, (Washington: US Govt. Print. Off, 1955) 1-10.
\end{itemize}

95
57% of all pulp cut in Maine was cut by contractors, and some large paper companies used only contract cut wood.173

When companies wanted more control over cutting they co-opted successful jobbers and these former jobbers would run the companies' woods operations. A good example of this is Great Northern who got several important jobbers in Maine to work directly for them instead of contracting with them. Fred Gilbert was a "veteran west branch logger" whose ability and skill at managing people as a jobber was noticed by the company. In 1900 Gilbert began working for the company directly and quickly moved up the ranks to become the head of the Spruce Woods Department, organizing all the woods labor and jobbers. He was later depicted as the powerful woods-boss in Holman Day's famous lumberman novel King Spruce.174

Another reason that jobbing remained vital in the Northern Forest was because of technological stagnation. In the Northeast, it did not pay to innovate or invest in high capital machinery or railroads. The labor-intensive method of small producers remained productive. Loggers knew of new technologies like powered skidders, winches, and cable systems because they were being implemented successfully in the west, but there was "little encouragement to experiment with new ideas … [because] most changes required additional capital investment, and, in the face of diminishing yield from the [largely second growth] forest, were rarely warranted."175 For example, a steam hauler in 1916 cost about $7,000 and a gasoline hauler $2,200, about forty and twelve times the price of the average working horse respectively. The costs to build the roads required to run a


steam hauler in a Maine operation in 1916 was estimated to be $1,000 a mile, or a little less than 10 times the cost for horse logging roads. These investments might have been worth the costs if yields from the forest were high but after 1850 yields were small and scattered across a large geographic space.\(^{176}\)

For the above reasons a government study of logging in Maine in 1904 reported that "methods of lumbering … and the management of camps have change less than in some other regions."\(^{177}\) Even in Canada the pineries in the East were, "due perhaps to climatic condition, or to inherited prejudices … slow to change its bush methods."\(^{178}\) The few technological advancements that were made were, "small refinements of an essentially static technology."\(^{179}\) The horse did not completely disappear from the woods until the mid-1960s.\(^{180}\) Organizing production through jobbers with skilled obedient workers was cheap and it was flexible enough to deal with various cutting situations. As opposed to technological stagnation causing the reliance on jobbing the reverse might have been true. Emporium Lumber Company of New York wrote that the jobbing system "cost this industry much money in direct excess cost, and much more in stagnation of development."\(^{181}\) Likely these two factors—jobbing and technological stagnation—helped to prolong each other.


\(^{178}\) Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 161.

\(^{179}\) Wynn, Timber Colony, 9.


\(^{181}\) Welsh, Jacks, Jobbers and Kings, 45, 85.
Conclusion

Urban industrial commodity production and commodity production in the Western hinterlands were quick to centralize. This was not the case in the Northern forests, where commodity production only slowly became "the province of large organizations." In the rural Northeast production methods preceded the corporate business form and complex financial institutions (Table 1). Because of the jobbing system, saw log production in the Northern Forest remained in the hands of local small producers well past the time that America supposedly became a "corporate nation." This system remained in place even though it was not always the most beneficial for small producers.182 In the Northern Forest, the independent and entrepreneurial yeomen, who had been the symbol of American masculinity since the birth of the Republic, was transforming but this transformation happened slowly, and there was compromise between the old and the new.

The independent jobbers defied the stereotype of the nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial worker.183 Descriptions of loggers highlighted their autonomy. An article for Goody's Magazine written in 1896 described loggers as "a bold independent and manly set of fellows."184 A forester wrote that the "[t]he lumber-jack of Northern New York is a man of hardihood and of self-reliance."185 Researchers noted that loggers "don’t appreciate interference in their way of life …"186


186 Douglas B. Monteith and David W. Taber, Profile of New York Loggers (Syracuse, N.Y.: State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Applied Forestry Research Institute, 1979) 2.
Even today there are a larger percentage of sole proprietors than people who work for others in the Northern Forest when compared to counties outside the region. Speaking of the Northern forest specifically, environmental humanist Stephanie Kaza wrote that "[p]rivate small-scale loggers may speak for a middle ground … seeking community-based decision making while still using the forest for [global] commodity trading." Maintaining control of production through jobbing was these rural producers' method of resisting the changes imposed on them by the forces of capitalism.

* * *

The reliance on jobbing meant there was a diverse array of production methods and scales of operation so the "common experience" of workers is hard to determine. Conditions in the woods were vastly different in operations of different scales. The next three chapters deal with those people who worked in logging camps of all sizes. Some laborers and some methods of production changed in subtle but important ways and these changes differentiated small scale, agrarian farmer-loggers from new industrial loggers. As these changes happened, a unique class of wage working lumberjacks emerged.

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Figure 1.

Bow saw made from stem form branch, photographed by the author, 10/2014.
Figure 2.

![Value of wood products cut by farmers vs businesses in major lumbering regions, 1899](image)


Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Year of statehood</th>
<th>General incorporation law passed</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>1791</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1811</td>
<td>23</td>
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Chapter 2- The Winter Workscape: The Labor Process, Logistics, and Weather

If the organizational structure (corporate, sole proprietor, etc.) of a forest products operation did not distinguish industrial from pre-industrial production in the Northern Forest, what did? To answer that question this investigation will move directly into the lumber camp to show how the labor process defined industrial production and created class. The operations discussed below provide examples of how industrial and class development depended on the work rhythms and worksapes of the forest.

* * *

The success of the Emerson lumber operation of 1908 depended entirely on two factors: 1) Herbert E. Robinson, the son of a Maine potato farmer with a seventh-grade education, and 2) the weather. Robinson, a tall man of medium build with blue eyes and hair that was already starting to gray, exuded an aura of confidence that season. Like other wood bosses who came from a background of farming-loggin he was a leader of men; "king peg … capable at his particular work … [but] very conservative and headstrong." As a youth, Robinson transitioned between work on the farm and in the woods, but began to specialize in woodswork as he grew older, quickly rising to the position of woods boss by 1900, a salaried job where he made around $1,200 a year. Nine years later, Robinson was planning a large lumbering operation in an unincorporated territory in Penobscot County, Maine in which thousands of dollars, the wellbeing of seventy men, and the future of the Emerson Lumber Company was at risk.

The stumpage on this tract was $4 per thousand board feet for spruce and $5 for pine and these could be sold for $18 and $25 respectively, manufactured as lumber. Robinson needed to deliver the wood to the mill for between $14 and $20 per thousand just to break even, though he hoped to get it there for $12. Regardless of the stakes, the company sent no bookkeeper into the woods or any other "professionally" trained man "simply because … [they] have such confidence in their boss, [and] know he is getting as many logs as possible and as cheaply as any man can get them."

Robinson was an adept woodsman, but by the end of November only about six inches of snow had fallen. If his men and horses were to move these logs from the stump, to the river, to the mill, he would need more snow, more ice, and more cold weather. The spaces and labor processes that Robinson and some other Northern Forest operators created in the woods transformed some small agrarian camps into high paced efficient, industrial camps, while at the same time changing the bodies and class identities of the workers who labored within.  

Changes in Northern Forest logging camps and labor processes are indicative of larger changes that were happening as the American countryside industrialized. By about 1850, the geographic frontier in the Northeast had vanished and all the large white pines were cut from easily accessible areas. Thereafter, the forests no longer yielded value to workers as easily as it had when white pine was abundant. The credit that jobbers procured from mill and land owners flowed through the forest, into trees, men, animals, and the snow, increasing the scale and speed of

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production beyond what was possible for farmer-loggers, operating on second growth tracts, with only farm labor and farm capital at their disposal.

Jobbers used credit to manipulate the landscape for the sake of production, but not always to make saw logs. Writing in 1918, one forester found that "[t]he logging business is distinctly an engineering problem since it is concerned principally with the transportation of the raw product of the forest to the manufacturing center."\(^3\) Much of the work that was done in camps, therefore, was done to help speed the transportation of saw logs or pulp wood, not simply to cut down trees. The new frontier in the Northeast would be one of logistics, where operators like Robinson had to explore new ways of adding value to the product after it was cut. "Total cost systems" of logistical accounting was supposedly an invention of the second half of the twentieth-century but any astute observer of nineteenth-century industry understands that businessmen of all varieties, and levels of education, worked to reduce the cost of moving and storing products to add value to them. The inherent incentive to always increase the speed of the movement of goods, people, and money was an attribute of capitalism that gave the system tremendous power and often made it tremendously dangerous. To ensure that logs moved quickly and that no logs were ever left in the woods, operators and workers would use new, less obvious "Cheap Natures."\(^4\)

One common Cheap Nature used to speed the movement of goods and transition the United States to industrial capitalism was fossil fuels, natural resources that attain value only because they produce more energy when burned than it takes to extract and refine them. There were, however, other Cheap Natures that are less often discussed, but perhaps more commonly utilized between 1850 and 1950 which helped transition the United States into a fully industrialized nation.


America only became more than half fossil-fueled by roughly 1900. Before and well after the turn of the century, many industries continued to rely on energy sources that predated the widespread implementation of fossil fuels, and these industries increased production and remain competitive. Older technologies were used for new purposes and with new vigor.⁵

Part of the reason forest products production did not rely on new technology was that, unlike many other modern industries, logging did not lend itself "readily to standardization and mass production methods"; it was not easily "rationalized."⁶ Early forester L. F. Kneipp found in 1918 that "[l]umbering [was] unique … in that the principles underlying it have not been systematized either in theory or in practice."⁷ Operators in the Northern Forest were "less competent to adapt [themselves] to new methods" meaning those methods which involved new, unfamiliar machinery brought from outside the woods.⁸ For example, studies comparing tractors to horses were conducted in the 1940s with inconclusive results. Tractors were not reliable enough to be used on a large scale until the 1950s and horses were not completely obsolete until the 1960s.⁹

Unlike Frederick Winslow Taylor's methods of scientific management in factories which came from the top down, "suggestions for valuable labor-saving devices [in logging] usually … [came] from the rank and file." These suggestions typically deviated only slightly from the folk-
production methods that farmer-loggers were most familiar with. Improving labor processes through small, worker inspired advancements in old technology was a common rout to industrialization. Historian David Edgerton wrote, "[m]ost invention [throughout history] has taken place in the world of use … and furthermore has been under the direct control of the users [i.e. workers]."  

Unlike forest products production in the west, logging in the Northern Forest never made large, high capital leaps in technology because the industry was limited by topography, geography, weather, a dwindling resource base, conservation, and preservation efforts. Forest products production in the Northern Forest remained in the eotechnic stage of industrial development. Still, smart operators found cheap ways to cut costs, and get more logs out from less productive land, faster and with less capital investment. Instead of investing in high cost capital goods like steam or gas motors to speed up production, operators like Robinson hired more workers, increased the division of labor while relying on folk production knowledge, and they took advantage of natural assets like cold weather. Similarly, as operators scaled up their physical plants, they did so using methods and architecture that was familiar to them. Just like farmers, loggers fought a constant battle with, but remained highly dependent on, natural inconsistencies while at the same time industrializing their labor process.

10 Edgerton, Shock of The Old, 187.


The result of this unique set of circumstances was that operators created environments in the woods that were unlike anything else in the industrial world. Isolated in densely forested wilderness tracts, these spaces straddled the line between agricultural/artisanal and industrial/modern. Many workers lived a large part of their year in these intermediary zones into the 1950s.\(^{13}\)

When historian Thomas Andrews created the term workscape, it helped him to explain the causes of collective action in the coalfields of Colorado in 1914.\(^{14}\) Analyzing the unique workscape of loggers can help give a firmer definition to the amorphous concept of "industrialization." In the Northern Forest, operators who surmounted bad weather to increase the scale and efficiency of production distinguished themselves from inconsistent agrarian producers. The former group made forest products production industrial without the widespread implementation of fossil fuels, while the latter group remained agricultural/pre-industrial resource gatherers. The "winter worksapes" that loggers made—the interactions between, men, animals, trees, snow, and ice—shows how industrialization and class developed in the Northern Forest.\(^{15}\)

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\(^{13}\)Though some historians of industrial America have argued that industrial time was ubiquitous in America by the turn of the century in the city and the hinterland, this chapter will show that the dichotomous thinking of "industrial" and "pre-industrial" time should be questioned. It would be very nice if industrialization could be periodized that neatly but that is not how industrialization unfolded. Geography was just an important a factor as time in the industrialization process and some places were slower to transition to modernity than others. There were then, places that were neither pre-industrial or industrial; in-between places. Janet G. Brashler, "When Daddy Was a Shanty Boy: The Role of Gender in the Organization of the Logging Industry in Highland West Virginia," Historical Archaeology 25, no. 4, (1991): 59; Tamara K. Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982) 123; Herbert G. Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America, 1815-1919," The American Historical Review (1973): 531-588.


"The Handsomest Paint and Clapboard:" The Logging Camp as an In-between Space

To create these unique worksapes out of forested land, an operator like Robinson first "cruised," or surveyed his tract. His most important tool for this job was the knowledge he gained from thirty-six years of working and living in the woods.\textsuperscript{16} Winter was the best time to cruise. Snow leveled the ground and on snowshoes the cruiser could traverse the tract easier. With the leaves gone from hardwood trees he could see more as he walked. On the cruise Robinson surveyed the "boundaries … reposting these where it was necessary, [he] located the camp and in a general way decided how much area could be profitably logged from the camp, decided on the location of the main roads including the tote road, and estimated the stand."\textsuperscript{17}

There were hundreds of factors that needed to be considered on the cruise, yet, before the 1910s cruises were almost always conducted by men with no formal credentials or education. "Usually the jobber'd do his own cruising" worker Benjamin Cole remembered, "[i]t wasn't until the paper companies began to get the upper hands that … you heard much about professional cruisers." Some cruisers and foremen had no formal education at all. "My father never went to school" a jobber's daughter remembered "[h]e could read, he could figure. He did all the figuring in his head. … He could tell you the numbers, but if you asked 'how'd you do that dad?' he couldn't put it on


paper." Even though there were many foremen who "could not read or write" they were typically "marvelous [men] to lay out roads and build camps." Through "eye estimates" a logger like Robinson could "tell nearer how much can be cut from a given stand than a man judging from the data of a valuation survey." Banks, mills, and lumber companies put up "considerable sums of money" based on these men's reputation and ability to "look out a block 'a timber and see if it would pay to put a road" through it. The foreman preformed a type of "knowledge work" that was very difficult to teach through formal schooling.

During the time that Robinson was operating, profitable tracts in Maine were most likely second growth tracts or tracts far from settled areas that earlier loggers could not reach because of lack of access to capital. Specifically, the tract that Robinson was operating on was "typical of the spruce forest of northern Maine," a forestry student wrote. Part of it had been burnt by a forest fire leaving about "4000 [board] feet of dead timber per acre." The other part was divided into a spruce tract and a mixed growth stand that included hardwoods, white pine, and spruce all of which had been cut over years before. On second growth tracts, each tree was worth less than first growth trees in terms of board feet though they "require about as much effort to fell" and transport.

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18 Kinnear, "Cruising for Pinelands," 94.


20 For example, when Hollingsworth & Whitney Co. went into Squaw Mountain township Maine for their 1911-1912 season they were cutting on a tract that was logged in 1867-68 and 1870-77 then after 1883 the tract was lumbered "nearly all the time." Prescott and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region," 7; Miller, Poole and Sweetser, "A Lumbering Report of Work on Squaw Mountain Township," 2-3; Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 7; Chandler, "Lumbering in Northern Maine ... Emerson Company," 10.
While some operators were logging second growth, others were pushing the limits of the primitive technology at their disposal by extending their cuts to higher altitudes, onto rough hilly terrain, and further away from dependable rivers and supply hubs. For example, during the 1906-1907 season, B.W. Howe & Co. attempted to log the northern side of Traveler mountain in Maine, a tract that had been attempted twice before without success. 21 By the turn of the century, using new and dangerous methods of hauling, the altitude limit for forest products production in the Northeast was about 2,000 feet above the watercourse. Because of the geography of the tracts they grew on, these trees were also often smaller than the trees lumbermen had cut fifty years prior.

Though Robinson was not logging a mountainside, the topography on his tract was difficult: "Just north of … [the] water line the country rises in a low chain of hills. The tract has a general northerly slope from the mountains in the south to this waterline in the north. On this slope are rock ridges and low marsh land and all gradations between the two." It was also a remote tract. In all of Township six where Robinson was operating there were only six families and a total of forty-three people. This meant that all supplies had to be hauled in to the job from a considerable distance. If Robinson encountered problems, he would have to improvise with material at hand. Because of the burnt trees, second growth, and the rough terrain on his tract, Robinson, like all other operators in the Northern Forest at the time, would have to take "great care" to "keep the expense of lumbering as small as possible." 22

The type of cutting conditions that Robinson faced often pushed non-specialized farmer-loggers out of competition for contracts. Some became farmers only in name, increasingly putting

21 Jensen, Lumber and Labor, 120; Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 2, 7.

their energy and resources into forest products production. Specializing had advantages. Specialists acquired firmer credit with financers and accumulated specialized logging equipment. Leaving the relative stability of agriculture meant that these operators became completely dependent on a volatile lumbering market and a dwindling resource base, a type of risk their fathers and grandfathers never wished to take. Those who saw no good option between farming and logging, moved into factories or out West becoming part of an ever-accelerating outmigration from the Northern Forest.23

Still, the line between agricultural and industrial production remained unclear. Through a mixture of credit and capital brought from the farm, non-specialist farmers could log second growth or difficult terrain. For example, Nathan Weston was a farmer in Madison, Maine who also speculated in land and took on lumbering jobs. Weston employed dozens of men and paid hundreds of dollars in wages in what often look like script. Some of his jobs involved at least six oxen teams. On legal documents, he and his partners were sometimes referred to as "lumberers" though Weston was a farmer according to census records. By 1870 the farm was making $800 from forest products alone, about a quarter of the value of all the products sold on the farm.24

Sometimes the situation was reversed and specialized lumbermen went into farming. This was the case with the Boston and Eastern Corporation as well as the Great Northern Paper Company both of whom owned farms, mostly to supply food and fodder to their camps in the winter. Farms also gave core employees and management work during the summer. Even for specialists, forest products production was often a seasonal activity that remained part of the yearly


cycle of agriculture. The expectation was that after working in the woods "come spring, everybody raised stuff [on a plot of land]" one logger remembered.25

* * *

The fact that the line between agriculture and industry was hazy could be used to the advantage of those outsiders who might be trying to get logs out of the woods as cheaply as possible. Farms were homes as well as centers of production so "the self-exploitative qualities of household enterprises . . . could be captured by capital via forms of vertical integration . . . a form of capitalist development in which there was [financial] centralization without . . . [geographic] concentration."26 Contracting with families of farmers to produce logs allowed financiers or mill men to outsource the riskiest aspects of forest product production and provided protection from a growing set of Progressive labor laws as contractors were not directly employed by the financier. The common practice of producing commodities from home meant that the rural family was not effected by industrialization in the same ways that the urban, factory family was.

On these smaller family jobs, cooks, foremen, and jobbers brought their wives and children from the farm into camp, and camps became extensions of the household. Male children helped with small tasks and learned the trade while females, cooked, cleaned, and in some instances worked alongside men. Harry Dyer remembers that when jobbing for the Ray Fraser Lumber Company in


Maine it was "just a—a little home crew" composed of his step father, his brother, himself and "one man besides, or two besides … our family." Paid workers were typically housed apart from the women and young children.

From as early as 1860 until 1930, gendered divisions of labor were less strictly enforced in these small farmer-logger operations. Henry Conklin remembers working with the women of his family before the Civil War. In 1899 *The Ogdensburg Advance and St. Lawrence Weekly Democrat* reported that "Mrs. Rosalie Charrow wife of Contractor Louis Charrow" died of being "overworked" in her husband's camp. French-Canadian immigrant Tina Daigle remembers working on a multiple family operation with all her children. Some years, instead of going to the camp for the season, she would visit once a week and cook and clean for the men. Daigle remembered a woman named Leona Raymond, a "great big woman" who worked "like a man [in the woods] then come home and … had … six kids [to take care of]."

Some jobbers did very little manual labor, and instead only organized operations and connected labor with capital. Because these jobbers did not need to enter the all-male forest products work culture, some women became successful jobbers. Emporium worked with a woman jobber named Margaret McClinton. Exactly how involved she was in the work is unclear, but she was signing lumbering contracts with Emporium in 1919. A Northern New York family

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28 W.C. Sykes to R. McClinton, 18 Jan 1919, Emporium Forest Company Records Box 2 Adirondack Museum.
remembers their mother "helped with the books" because the father lacked any formal education. Although women had important roles in small operations and among farmer-loggers, their presence in the large corporate camps owned by the mills was virtually non-existent.

For the children of farmer-loggers, working in the woods was part of the maturation process. Through these jobs they were engrossed in the industrial world and exposed to industrial discipline from a young age. Some children started working as young as eleven, but more commonly they began at fourteen and sixteen. Harold Dyer remembers that "our old step-father was pretty rough. And he used to get right after us and we used to have to run. We didn't have time to walk and monkey around. We didn't have no time to play and fool like kids now a days do. We had to keep our end up and when … we counted the logs at night, we-we had to have as many as anybody."  

Hiring systems for these small farmer-logger camps were informal. Jobbers traveled from house to house asking for an extra man or two. A potential worker might "see … [an operator] around town and hired out with them." Some loggers remembered never working with a single person that was from out of state: "All the lumberjacks around here were, ya know, you had a few strangers that would come in and work at the camps, but most of the time they were just family people from the area or towns close by." This did not mean operations were small. Many Northern Forest families were large, particularly French-Canadian Catholics. By drawing on only "neighbors  

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29 The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010.

30 Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, 74.


… relatives or in-laws" camps could employ dozens of workers (Figure 1). Working for a family operation or for a jobber on a small job eased the transition that some workers would eventually make into "the big woods," or camps run by a high capital jobber or large mill company. For example, after working for his father in operations close to home, Fred Burke worked in a medium sized camp, and then finally in a Great Northern camp with over a hundred other men in 1927.33

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Though some loggers remembered logging from home, typically their tract was far enough from the farm to warrant that an operator build a camp in the woods, far from home, that became the hub of production. The idea of building temporary shelters away from home for hunting or gathering wood was a familiar one in the Northern Forest and was practiced well before industrialization. Unlike their European descendants, Americans built large fires, the average family consuming thirteen to fourteen cords a year. This taxed local wood resources in even the smallest towns and villages.34 Anthropologist Horace Miner found that every year in the French-Canadian village of St. Denis all the "able-bodied men of a family take several days' supply of food and go to the mountain wood lots. There they remained, while they fell and trim the timber" for family consumption.

Harvesting fire wood, meat, or taking on a small contract for tan bark, hop poles, or shingles, required only hand tools and no elaborate facilities needed to be built. Draft animals only

33 Benjamin Cole interviewed by Larry Gallant, 1972, transcript, p. 720010, (LLC) (MFC); Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidowski, 1970, p. 698069, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010; Maggie Orr O'Neill, (b. 1872) interviewed by Helen McCann White, 1955, transcript, p. 1, OHI, FHS; Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 59.

34 As a reminder, one cord is 128 cubic feet or a pile of wood stacked four feet high eight feet long and four feet deep. There are approximately twenty-four small trees in a cord, or 1,536 board feet, and one cord of green wood is approximately 2,000 to 4,000 pounds Hilton, Rough Pulpwood, 33; William Cronon, Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983) 25; Irland, The Northeast's Changing Forests, 234.
needed to be brought into the woods once or twice to haul out the finished product. These small producers built temporary shacks or shanties in the woods. Bark, dirt, leaves, and underbrush might be used for walls and roofs for these structures. Some frontier workers used "oat bags stretched from pole to pole with a covering of tarpaulin or tar paper" as shelter. This "poor housing" was "incidental to the very nature of the task" of frontier labor, and some assumed menial workers preferred rough conditions.  

Saw log production was different than the production of small handmade commodities because saw logs were long and heavy. An operation of any considerable size required draft animals at all times during the work day and, when animals were brought into the woods, new structures, more tools, supplies, and fodder needed to be hauled in and stored. The more draft animals needed for a job the more men and capital were required and the larger the camp grew.

Oxen were the working animal of choice for much of the nineteenth-century because of their ubiquity. They cost about $200 a pair, half of what draft horses did, and they "would haul some awful loads." When they were hurt on the job they could be slaughtered for meat. Oxen required more work to be shoed than horses but needed less grooming, less rigging, could "stand rougher treatment," and could be released in the off season to forage and then corralled again for work. They "were used whenever people needed cheap power, but not speed, in regions with subsistence agriculture, little commerce and poor roads, and for jobs requiring very grueling draft work." They were, however, slow, stubborn, could overheat easily, and were less intelligent than horses.

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handmade wooden yokes they were rigged with did not allow them to hold back loads going down grades. Some workers remember using oxen around the turn of the century but they were generally rare by then, though it was not uncommon in small operations to see horses and oxen working together into the twentieth-century.37

Horses were expensive but sped up production and were essential power sources that separated agricultural/pre-industrial from industrial resource gathering. The United States was one of the most productive agricultural countries in the world by the first decade of the twentieth century because of the mechanization of the hinterland. This mechanization was largely horse powered, however. As Edgerton found, in the American countryside "horsepower peaked in 1915 with more than 21 million on American farms, up from 11 million in 1880, a level that it had returned to by the mid-1930s."38

Unlike engines or oxen, horses were smart power. These animals gained experience during the season. Lee Roberts remembers that his horses Fan and Blossom were "experts- they was like myself; they was young 'n' they was rugged." Experienced horses like these knew when to stop and go, memorized orders and operations, and remembered their way to and from the worksite. These abilities saved time and added value to an operation. Roberts proudly recalled that "[a]ll the other hosses made three trips [a day] an' I made four with them."39 A well-equipped farmer or a specialized jobber might own teams that they could bring into the woods though local farmers would rent theirs


38 Edgerton, Shock of The Old, 33-34.

out to operators during the winter. Horses show up on jobbers' timesheets alongside human employees and a team earned wages for their owner that were similar in amount to what human workers made.

Hauling logs required large horses that weighed as much as 2,700 or 3,400 pounds per team. These horses cost about $175 each but premium specimens could easily cost double or triple that price. An operator's ability to rig many teams was a good way to judge their merits and operations were defined by the numbers of teams at work. Big contracts were given only to those who could manage six or eight teams. Each team had two to eight men working under it so an eight-horse operation, for example, required around thirty men.

With the help of working horses, the small shacks and lean-tos that had housed workers could be replaced by more substantial log cabins. Once horse teams were brought in to the woods, at least three structures were needed for any working camp: one to house the men, one to cook in, and a hovel for the animals. Mid-nineteenth-century camps were crude one-room buildings with dirt

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The location of the camp was an important factor in facilitating timely production and jobbers and cruisers made the decision on where to place the camp during the cruise. It was "not considered profitable to walk men for more than 1 ½ miles from camp to work … because" a walk of a mile or more could consume between 10% to 20% of the day. But as profitable tracts became rare some larger operations logged up to nine square miles around the camp. Herbert Robinson located his camp "near the center of the area [to be logged]," close to a fresh water supply in a well-drained spot near a good supply of firewood. A camp went through about 170 cords of wood a year for heating fuel and the large stoves took "a stick of wood 3 ½ foot long."\footnote{Hilton, Rough Pulpwood, 4; Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 91; Boulbbee, Leslie and Matthews, " Report of Logging Operation on Limits of the Canoe Lake Lumber Co.," 13; Chandler, "Lumbering in Northern Maine … Emerson Company," 14, 13; Pike and Jewett, "A Report on a Lumbering Operation on Township No. 29," 5; Bryant, Logging: The Principles and General Methods, 60, 102; Barbara McMartin, The Great Forest of the Adirondacks, (Utica, N.Y.: North Country Books, 1994) 57, 59; Harry Dyer (b. 1896), interviewed by Jeanne Milton, 1970, p. 581014, transcript, (LLC) (MFC);Miller, Poole and Sweetser, "A Lumbering Report of Work on Squaw Mountain Township," 7, 8; Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 14; Prescott and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region," 14.}

Log buildings were familiar sights for jobbers, farmers, and migrant laborers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries though for urban people they were already beginning to denote rustic, rural charm. Log buildings were the earliest sturdy structures built on any plot of forest land while it was being cleared for cultivation. Building cabins was even a form of employment in the Northern Forest in the nineteenth-century when "set-up" men would travel from
county to county helping pioneering farmers build houses for a wage.\textsuperscript{44} Though camps made with boards with tarpaper roofs provided the most warmth and protection from the elements, they were not regularly seen in the woods until 1930 and were almost never constructed by small jobbers.

Most camps before 1930 were built quick and cheap using only "[a]xes, broadaxes, saws, shovels, logging chains, hammers, [and] canthooks." "No hardware was used; the hinges of doors and the like, being made of wood on the ground," one company owner remembered. The logs for walls were rarely peeled or sometimes peeled only on the inside. Floors were made from young trees or "poles" hewed flat on one side. There were few windows and visitors were struck by the darkness of the camps. Mud, clay, oakum, or moss was gathered by young and unskilled workers and used to chink gaps in the logs. The roofs needed to be very well constructed to handle a deep snowpack. Shingles, doors, and other panels were made with a froe and mallet in the woods. Roofing materials were kept in place with wooden pegs, or poles laid across them. Sometime a hole was cut in the roof and fitted "with a hinged head that … opened and closed for ventilation." A horse hovel and cookhouse were build the same way as the bunkhouse was. The entire physical plant could be built without metal fasteners or nails. It took about twelve to fifteen men, two horses and a week to build a medium size camp though more extensive, modern camps took a month to build. There was little care taken in upkeep and camps quickly degraded as workers lived inside.\textsuperscript{45}


Unlike the family farm that was a space for both recreation and work, camps were only spaces of production. Operators provided little in the way of comfort or recreation. Many had "deacon seats" that were long benches made by splitting a log and using small poles for legs. There also might have been "a block of wood or two here and there, great big block sawed off a log there, or something like that" for table space or eating. Formal tables and chairs were rare in places other than the kitchen and office.

The camps were made from whole logs so the buildings were generally large, with dimensions between 25x25 and 30x30. Based on oral histories and university studies from the turn of the century, it seems like operators typically allowed about twenty-seven square foot per man, though small camps allowed half of that. Labor demands fluctuated during the season and during busy times overcrowding was common. Some new arrivals were forced to sleep on benches, the floor, in the barn, or even a pile of sawdust during busy times in camp.

The cookhouse was sometimes built before the bunkhouse so that workers could be fed while they constructed the other buildings and roads. Eating facilities were "rude, homemade tables,

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46 Demos, Little Commonwealth, 183-184.


all [men] being seated on a long, hewn bench. In Maine and New Hampshire it was common to "build a cook room right near ... [the bunkhouse] within ten to twelve feet [with] a little roof over [the space between the buildings to] ... keep the snow out, and you kept your provisions out there." This was called the dingle or the dog trot and it also helped keep the smell and unsanitary conditions of the bunkhouse away from the cook house.

The dingle was likely influenced by the mid-nineteenth-century New England practice of connecting farms and houses into one contiguous unit, so-called "connected farm-houses." This vernacular architectural form became popular between 1820 and 1860 and reflected the mixed husbandry of New England hill farms and a desire for more modern, efficient living and working spaces. The dingle, like the connected farm house, disappears in the frontiers of Northern New York where most camps were two stories with sleeping quarters on the second floor and dining facilities on the ground floor. The presents of a dingle in large and small camps in New England show the close connection between small family saw log production and industrial forest products production. Logging camps were agricultural spaces that were altered to suit industrial purposes.

As operations sped up to keep pace with American industrialism, improvisation with tools and methods were vital to an operation's success. Camps situated far from settled areas had a blacksmith for shoeing horses, fixing, and making equipment. Most loggers had a diverse array of skill sets but the blacksmiths were especially "all around men" who could improvise with limited

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resources. Small operations with no blacksmiths used wood and haywire to repair nearly everything.\(^{51}\) This gave rise to the term "haywire," a term that was perhaps conceived in Northern New York referring to a camp that was unorganized and in disrepair.\(^{52}\) This term also demonstrates the close connection between agriculture and forest products production that continued as operations became industrial.

In larger camps, foremen, clerks, and scalers sometimes had their own camp or office, where they slept and did bookwork. This spatial barrier separated higher paid educated or more experienced workers from lower paid, menial workers and signified a more organized industrial camp. It was also a place where women and children were housed in small family operations. These spaces had more comfortable accommodations. In one camp near Squaw Mountain, Maine the boss had "several unique chairs" including "a cut down barrel with rocker attachment[s]." Others had handmade desks and "chairs of a more artistic design, resembling … chairs found on … [middle-class urban] porches and lawns." Higher paid workers often had metal framed beds with real mattresses, a rarity in the main camp. In smaller camps, the boss slept with the other workers, signifying less differentiation between workers and management/owners. In these camps the women and children slept in the kitchen.\(^{53}\)

After building and supplying the camp, it was typical that an operator would have accrued substantial debt. Cash advances varied in relation to the size and complexity of the job and could be

\(^{51}\) Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 76; Leo Pointe (b. 1891) interviews by Bobbie Violette, 1974, transcript, p. 800010, (LLC) (MFC); Carlisle and Shatney, "Report on a Logging Operation in Northern Maine," 10; Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 96, 129; Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 27.


as much as $16,000 or as little as $300. In some camps, the jobber was paid as he completed certain tasks—$1.25 per thousand board foot after cutting and peeling, $1.25 per thousand when logs were yarded, $0.65 when landed, and $0.85 when "put to float" in the river, for example. An operator could then pay wages or reinvest in the operation over the course of the season.\textsuperscript{54}

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Logging camps stood in stark contrast to the spaces found in urban, industrial America. They were relics of past agro-frontier life, but they also denoted modern efficient industrial production. One industrial observer reported that loggers' "woodcraft blends with, rather than destroys, what is picturesque in nature."\textsuperscript{55} Approaching one of these camps in Maine, Thoreau wrote:

\begin{quote}
We certainly leave the handsomest paint and clapboard behind in the woods, when we strip off the bark and poison ourselves with white-lead in the towns. We get but half the spoils of the forest. For beauty, give me trees with the fur on. This house was designed and constructed with the freedom of the stroke of a forester's axe, without other compass and square than Nature uses. Where the citizens used a mere sliver or board, the pioneer uses the whole trunk of the tree. The house had a large stone chimney, and was roofed with spruce-bark. ... Logs were posts, studs, boards, clapboards, laths, plaster, and nails all in one. ... One end was a regular loggers' camp, for the boarders, with the usual fir floor and log benches. ... Thus this house was but a slight departure from the hollow tree which the bear still inhabits, — being a hollow made with trees piled up, with a coating of bark like its original.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}


The romanticization of the frontier cabin continued into the twentieth century among the countries elites, and will be explored in section two of this dissertation.

Besides their picturesque qualities, camps had a more practical effect on workers in an increasingly industrial nation (Figure 2). Rural workers were notoriously resistant to the discipline and the industrial facade of urban factories. This was particularly true of French-Canadian workers who were often most comfortable in bucolic settings. The familiar setting of the country cabin made the transition to industrial work less disruptive than it might have otherwise been.\(^5^7\) This is perhaps why many workers have fond memories of logging and ached "from one year to another … [to get] back to the camp."

The logging camp was a "middle ground somewhere between, yet in transcendent relation to, the opposing forces of civilization and nature." The camp was the site of action for what Leo Marx called "the most important 'event'" in American history "the capitalist-driven process by which a predominantly rural and agrarian society became predominantly urban industrial."\(^5^8\) It was perhaps because they represented this transition that camps became lauded and emulated structures. While these unique structures were being constructed the weather was getting colder and cutting was underway.

**Weather and the Winter Workscape**


Christmas 1908 would have been a worrisome time for Herbert Robinson. His camp was built and his workers were ready to produce, but the weather was not cooperating. The middle of December had been a fine time for cutting and yarding. Temperatures were consistently below freezing, but it was not too cold for work, and there was regular snowfall. Right around Christmas temperatures rose above freezing for two days straight. At the same time, the consistent snow fall stopped, and the thirteen inches on the ground were beginning to melt (Figure 3). If the warm weather continued into January, he would never get his logs out of the woods. Robinson and thousands of other farmers, loggers and Northern Forest producers would have been praying for cold and a good snowpack.

* * *

In pre-industrial America, winter was a slack time for farmers like Robinson's father, but the needs of the national market forced Northern Forest denizens to make the cold season productive. One way to do this was by taking advantage of the temperature. The Northern Forest lay within what weather historian Bernard Mergen referred to as the "snow frontier," a place where snow could be relied on annually for business. James Fennimore Cooper wrote that in the backcountry of upstate New York "[t]he constancy of this serenely cold weather is one of the greatest blessings which seldom fails us." The reliability of the cold weather increased in the high altitudes of the Green, White, and Adirondack Mountains where more snow fell annually and stayed on the ground longer than in low-lying areas. Forest cover provided shade that also lengthened the life of the

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69 For example, see Cotton Mather, Winter Meditations, Directions How to Employ the Leisure of the Winter. . . (Boston, 1693); Thomas Wickman, "Winters Embittered with Hardships": Severe Cold, Wabanaki Power, and English Adjustments, 1690–1710." The William and Mary Quarterly 72, no. 1 (2015): note 36.

snowpack. Moses Greenleaf gave a good description of the advantages of the winter climate of the interior of Maine in his 1829 survey of the state:

In the interior of the State, at distances from the sea-coast varying from 10 to 30 miles … the ground is usually covered with snow from three to four months in the year. In some seasons it continues … nearly five months. The depth, moderate at first, increasing more or less gradually to three or four, and in some seasons high in the mountain regions, to five feet … [T]he snow affords a foundation for the transportation of heavy commodities, which in a new country thinly peopled and not yet provided with solid and permanent roads to an extent adequate to its wants, is of incalculable advantage. The immense forests of timber with which the country is covered, can be of little value at the distance of even but a few miles from water carriage, unless a solid and smooth road is made from the landing place to almost every tree; and to make such roads on the surface of the earth in summer … would require … expense beyond the ability of the population to accomplish, and … beyond the value of the timber … The uniform continuance of the snow in the forest is calculated upon, with a degree of certainty which is seldom disappointed; and the steady cold winters of the interior … furnish … means of subsistence and wealth … which are denied to those of regions which boast a milder climate. 61

In the snow frontier, the economy grew to depend on snow. 62 W. C. Sykes, owner of Emporium Lumber Company, always relied on sufficient snow to keep his jobs in the Adirondacks moving, but for his interests in Pennsylvania and southwestern New York it was unwise to do the same. 63 Sufficient snow allowed a 1,500 pound load to pass on roads that would typically only hold 500 pounds. Others estimated it "enable[d] one horse to draw the load of five." 64 Ice and snow


slickened the ground, filled the ruts in notoriously poor rural roads and cooled workers and animals as they pushed their bodies to their physiological limits for the sake of production. When rivers, lakes, and wetlands froze, they became highways of commerce. Snow also decreased the chances of forest fires. It impeded bugs like mosquitoes, blackflies and no-see-ums that limited wilderness work in hot weather. During the middle of a reported "freak winter" of very light snow in January 1915 the Bangor Daily News reported that loggers were rejoicing because of a 15-inch snowfall. "The great lumber interest of northern Maine as well as the various industries which depend on the snow" could now continue work as normal, the newspaper reported.65

Logger John Sharpe remembered a season in Northern Maine when there was only eight inches of snow for the haul "[t]hey had to haul in mud all winter … that was the way you had to live … everything was mud." 66 Small producers suffered most due to inconsistencies in the weather: "[t]hose who depend upon snow for hauling cord wood, country produce[,] and other heavy loads have waited many weeks for favorable conditions" the Bangor Daily News reported during the light snow season of 1915. Because of the lack of snow there were "large numbers" of idle workers, both loggers and people who were typically hired for snow removal. The papers thought that the weather was "overburdening the city with unemployed." Under these types of conditions horse teams "came out of the woods" too "rather than remain idle there and incur board bills." Ice cutters also suffered.67


66 John Sharpe (b. 1881), interviewed by Lillian Shirley, 1970, p. 22, transcript, (LLC) (MFC);

67 Bangor Daily News, (Bangor, ME) "Snow at Last, Loggers Rejoice: Heavy Fall Up North Calls Back Discharged Woodsmen a Freak Winter," January, 26, 1915. Also see, Ticonderoga Sentinel, "Moriah" (Ticonderoga, N.Y.) January 11, 1912; The Lake Placid News, (Lake Placid, N.Y.) "Country Events," January 10, 1919; The Lake Placid News, January 10, 1919, (Lake Placid, N.Y.) "Lumbering at a Standstill"; The Malone Farmer, (Malone, N.Y.), "Local Department" January 31, 1906; The Tupper Lake Herald, (Tupper Lake, N.Y.) "Lumberman Want more Snow Fall" January 31, 1919; Chateaugay Record and Franklin County Democrat, (Chateaugay, N.Y.) "Lumbering in North Woods: Lack of Now this Season Handicaps Operation—Will Result in Harvey Lumbering Next Year—
A knowledge of the area's weather was yet another aspect of the job that an operator needed to be aware of. "To reduce the … risk of 'getting caught' by unfavorable weather, full use of past year's [sic] experience and authoritative meteorological predication is important" one 1941 study on hauling found. In the winter of 1908-1909 Robinson decreased the value of his logs by about 20% in his preseason estimates to account for weather problems and inconsistencies.

For American businesses, which preferred predictable conditions, winter weather was "a help and a hindrance … a source of gains and a source of losses." As lumber novelist Edward Stuart White wrote, "The forces of nature are so tame, so simple, so obedient; and in the next instant so absolutely beyond human control or direction, so whirlingly contemptuous of puny human effort." The blizzard of 1886 in Aroostook, Maine blew snow over roads, blocked men and animals from leaving their camps and farms and put people in danger of starvation. In severe weather, snow packed into horses' shoes, reducing their grip. By 1941 when scientific studies of logging methods were finally being made, one study found that "[t]he presents of deep snow is … a serious handicap" for cutting, though it was a boon for hauling. Two feet of snow increased the time it took to cut wood by 25% because the snow impeded workers' movement. Three feet of snow increased cutting time by 50%. After heavy snowfall the time it took to clear the cutting area was

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69 Corduroyed roads are "floored with small trees laid close together across the road on skids laid in the mud." Chandler, "Lumbering in Northern Maine … Emerson Company," 14, 18.


decreased, however, because the snow covered up obstacles and leveled terrain. For these reasons, operators attempted to end cutting by the end of December before the serious snowfall began.

If the snow was not the correct type for sledding, too powdery for example, it hindered transport. In extreme cold, frostbite was a risk for workers. There were also less obvious effects of the cold:

[steel became brittle and broke, the … wood of the standing trees became filled with ice and played vile tricks upon the cutting crews. Men were sometimes killed or maimed through the agency of the frost and cold, when a great tree, its fibers made brittle by continued freezing, would 'jump its stump,' break the saw, spin wildly and fall wide of the spot selected.]

Frozen wood increased the time taken to buck the wood after cutting by as much as 31.8% but it took less time to branch the logs in extreme cold. In cold conditions, workers lost dexterity in their hands. Axes slipped cutting workers, and horses were harnessed incorrectly and dangerously. If it got cold too early in the season, the sap in trees thickened and, peeling bark was impossible. If the snow did not melt fast enough, there was not enough of it by the end of the season, or if the spring rains were insufficient, driving the logs down river to mills was slow or impossible. These were all factors that needed to be considered during the cutting and yarding season, and if solutions weren’t found for all weather-related problems an operation was not likely to make a profit.

All scales of operations ultimately benefited from good weather. Arthur Westcott was a farm laborer in the Green Mountains of Vermont who used the weather to make his logging work easier.

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during the first decade of the twentieth-century. Though he made most of his money in the woods, Westcott identified as a farm worker, not a logger or lumberjack. Westcott had no grown children so typically he logged with one other man, but sometimes he worked alone in the woods with only the snow to help him. Cutting, bucking, and especially transporting logs over the ground were all tasks that were aided by cold and snow.

When cutting by himself, Westcott used many of the skills and methods that a head chopper and teamster would employ in a large camp. He likely cleared debris from the cutting area so he could move quickly away from a falling tree and so branches or bushes would not catch his axe on the backstroke.\(^75\) Accurate felling was accomplished through "notching.\(^76\) Westcott cut a notch in the tree on the opposite side he planned on cutting to direct its descend. He likely tested the accuracy of his notch by placing "the blade of an ax on the horizontal bottom of the notch, with the tip of the ax against the inside of the cut. If the ax handle then pointed in the direction in which the tree was intended to fall … he would begin to cut … "\(^77\) Conditions varied by the tree and terrain and no one cut was the same as the last.

There were a few rules that could be followed to facilitate the movement of the logs out of the woods, even on the small jobs that Westcott was working on. He could cut logs so that they fell parallel to the road or path he was planning on using to haul them out. Logs could then be rolled easily onto his sled. Deep snow provided a cushion for falling logs insuring the product was not


\(^76\) Bryant, Logging: The Principles and General Methods, 105.

\(^77\) "A tree which had grown at a slant required a variation in method. If a tree leaned, say, north, it could be made to fall east or west but not south. To make the trees fall west, it was notched on the western edge of its trunk. The chopper then hacked at the eastern edge, but slightly towards the north, so that, until the moment of falling, the southern section of the trunk might remain intact to counteract the tree's slant to the north and draw it to fall west." Harold K. Hochschild, Lumberjacks and Rivermen in the Central Adirondacks, 1850-1950, (Blue Mountain Lake, N.Y.: Adirondack Museum, 1962) 49.
damaged when it fell, though he could also fall a tree across another log so it was not resting completely on the ground and limbs were easy to remove. Often to avoid moving the cumbersome log a farmer would "practically … [fell] the timber right into the slough [sic]."  

After cutting and bucking the tree, the result was a saw log, a handcrafted item that was nearly worthless until it was transported out of the woods. Typically, Westcott would cut all day for months arranging his saw logs in piles, then he would come back to the site to load the logs onto a dray or sled to take them to their destination. Some farmer-loggers would cut logs then skid or drag them by horse to a more open space, load them with a pair of draft animals, and repeat the process until the sled was full. Not much thought was given to the speed or efficiency of the labor process in these small improvised operations.

More than cutting logs, lumbering of any scale was about moving these heavy, awkwardly shaped objects while incurring as few costs as possible. Though Westcott had experience building public roads, he could not make large well graded roads by himself. Working with no help, a single person might be able to build a mile of disorderly road in three days. Instead of working alone to make roads, a single worker like Westcott relied on the snow to improve his route by covering ruts and obstacles. If there was too much or too little snow for the haul, there was little he could do, and he typically just stayed home that workday. Agricultural communities had ways to mitigate the negative effects of snow. Farmers volunteered their teams to pull plows and haul weighted rollers, pushing or flattening snow as needed. Yet because these improvements caused a free rider problem,

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capital expenditure for snow removal and road improvement in farm communities was always limited unless some tax was levied.

Though Westcott did much of the same work as an industrial logger, he worked from home, by himself, and therefore led a very different life from workers in large logging camps. Westcott's "work pattern was one of alternate bouts of intense labor and of idleness [the same pattern that is found] wherever men were in control of their own working lives." In 1904, as a married man, renting a house, with a child on the way, he made about $220 a year in cash or credit, not including bartering or the money his wife brought in from washing laundry and "selling trunk goods." He also hunted and produced firewood for his house. One hundred and forty-eight dollars and thirty-seven cents of his income came directly from logging, sawing, or drawing wood by the piece, making on average $20.57 a month from these tasks. His monthly rate when logging was unpredictable and some months he could make as little as $15 (he averaged $0.98 a workday when in the woods and at most made $1.80 a day). He also had good months sugaring ($24.55), peeling hemlock bark ($21.98), and working in a local mill ($28.07). Working at what must have been an exhausting rate, he had his best month that year cutting and drawing saw logs, making $29. Undoubtedly, that month he physically worked as hard as industrial loggers, perhaps harder, because he did all the tasks with minimal help. In some non-logging months, he made as little as $3.62. In relative terms Westcott was not making very much money and was poor compared to national and regional averages. At this time average unskilled workers in America made $40.84 a month and in New England farm work paid on average $32 with board. He also made less than even the least skilled worker would have in

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an industrial logging camp in the Northern Forest where wages were between $26 and $30 with the average around $28.\textsuperscript{81}

Westcott was not desperately poor. He was never compelled to work on days when the weather was "rotten as hell" or when "snow blewed [sic] like damnation all day," as he wrote. He took some Saturdays and most Sundays off work, sometimes to go "to church with the old women." In 1902 in a 111-day period (January 1 to April 21) he took off twenty-five days (neither working for himself nor anyone else), sixteen of which were Sundays. One day in 1902 he cut "his dam finger half off in the morning" and allowed himself three weekdays of "loafing" while it healed. He had time for recreation too and one day he wrote: "I went up and cut 4 logs on Wills 650 ft. of Maple and played ball all the afternoon." He often went to friends' homes for dinner and nearly every day he went home to his wife. Some days when he did not feel like working, he did not, and instead as he wrote in his journal he "stayed home and rested with my wife."\textsuperscript{82}

If a worker like Westcott moved into a logging camp, particularly one owned by a large jobber or lumber company, every aspect of his life would be controlled to ensure he worked consistently and efficiently. Days where weather was cold and snowy were not times of relaxation in these camps but times when logs moved easiest and workers worked longer and harder. In camps,


\textsuperscript{82} "Westcott, Arthur and Smith Family" MS-A30, Diary 1902-1905,
men and animals were pushed to the limits of their physical ability for months at a time and more 
logs were produced cheaper and quicker than if each man worked alone from home. If he worked in 
a camp, Westcott would have benefited from this efficiency through more pay and a more 
predictable income but he would have had to sacrifice his time and freedom.

Many Northern Forest farmer-loggers like Westcott, after weighing these costs and benefits, 
moved into camps where intensive forest products production was taking place. The move into a 
camp and into intensive industrial production took a toll on a family's emotional health. Camp life 
differed from factory life because workers were separated from their family for long stretches of 
time. Family members who went away to camps could not provide emotional support to each other 
as they adjusted to the changes caused by industrial capitalism.83

The diary of an anonymous woman whose husband worked as a logger in a camp around 
Weld, Maine in the 1870s reveals the loneliness and anxiety that the move to industrial work in a 
logging camp could cause a family. Her children were grown and gone from the home and when her 
husband was away at camp she was often "very tired" and she wrote she wanted to see her "husband 
very much indeed." On rare occasions, she went "into the woods" to see her husband or cook for 
the workers. On other days, she used her diary as an outlet for her loneliness writing on one cold 
winter day, "O Lord give me the patience to bear and forbear." During winter, secluded in a house 
by herself, time seemed to move slowly: "[h]ave been here to this hated place a week … it seems like 
[a] month." She "dreaded" the cold of winter and the small amount of daylight. She became 
increasingly melancholy and morbid as the logging season progressed. The woman kept a necrology 
in her diary and on her birthday wrote "today would any hearts be made sad if I should be taken

83 Hareven, Family Time and Industrial Time, 364.
away? A few more weary year[s] will roll around and I shall be done with earth." In the depths of the cutting season, as the year changed from 1873 to 1874 she wrote "another year has passed away carrying us along to the end how little we think how near we may be to the last day." Besides loneliness and boredom, it is possible she suffered from seasonal affective disorder, a common mood disorder caused by the short number of daylight hours in the winter. Noting her condition, her husband came out of the woods as often as he could to visit her, typically once a week.84

Men working in the camps often expressed the same anxiety and sadness as the anonymous diarist above. When in a camp in Rangeley, Maine, logger Lincoln Toothaker wrote that he was "homesick." He missed his wife, new baby and younger brothers and sisters. At times he felt like a "state prisoner." "I want to see you so bad," he wrote his wife, "it is only the mighty dollar that keeps me in this forsaken place."85

Lust too was exacerbated by separation. Winter was traditionally a time of increased copulation in rural America, because agricultural work schedules were relaxed, children were away at school, and more time was spent indoors. Lincoln's wife Ida made her desires clear in one letter to him, "I shall be glad to see you when you do get home. I am getting kind of buggy haint [sic] you. I want you to get one of those nightcaps so we won't have a baby the first thing. Be sure and get one and let it be a good stout one."86 The emotional difficulty caused by the movement to camp is also


recorded in the Maine logging song "The Shanty Boy and the Farmer's Son" that compares the lives of the farmer, who can stay home with his wife all year, with that of the logger, who must leave his home for the winter.  

Winter Labor Markets and the Forest as a Warehouse

The winter weather helped farmer-loggers to work in the woods with little or no extra men, it made some people depressed, and it made others "buggy" but winter had its greatest effect on national and regional labor markets. Because of the planting and harvest seasons, labor demand and wages grew to their highest annual levels in the hinterland around June and then again in October. Workers were so expensive during this time that American canal building companies, an industry dependent on warm soil, decided to import cheap labor from Ireland rather than pay high wages to native farm workers. By the end of October labor requirements on the farm dropped precipitously, and wages with them reaching, annual minimums in January when they were about $3.00 per month below October levels. Farmers and farm laborers who did not log by themselves like Westcott were eager for work during the winter slack seasons and forest products operators absorbed much of this labor glut. As Greenleaf pointed out, in the winter in Maine "a large part of the farmers, released from the agricultural labors of summer, employ themselves and their teams in cutting and transporting the timber of the forests to the banks of the streams and rivers…" The lack of work

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87 Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, Minstrelsy of Maine; Folk-songs and Ballads of the Woods and the Coast, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1927)


89 Greenleaf, A Survey of the State of Maine, 103-105.
on the farm pushed land owners and skilled workers into unskilled jobs that, during the summer months, may have been below their station or pay grade. The glut in labor during the winter allowed operators to increase the division of labor in camps increasing efficiency but making forest products production different from what a farm-laborer like Westcott would have been familiar with (Figure 4 and 5). 

The division of labor was not completely new to Northern Forest workers. The labor process was also divided on the family farm woodlot. Children did smaller tasks while adults concentrated on complex and difficult jobs. On Edwin Walker's farmstead in Maine in the 1870s, Walker's son Daniel missed school often to help his father log doing brush clearing work and helping to make roads and skid-paths. In one instance, Daniel had neighbor boys over to play and Edwin recruited them all to help cut and haul elm tops. Just like farmers, large operators hired children for menial tasks, sometimes paying as little as $0.35 a day. Operators could sometimes convince children to work for free because working with adults and animals in the woods was seen as recreation to some bored rural children.90

Grown men were more vital to the labor process. With extra adult labor, cutters could work in teams typically three to five men to a team of horses. Unskilled and young workers called swampers cleared the cutting areas and made skid roads just as Walker's son did on the farm woodlot. Another man could be put in charge of the team, while the best axmen would cut the trees. On larger operations a "head chopper" acted as sub-foremen, directing one cutting crew. In small operations with less division of labor a chopper might cut the tree into logs, cut away the limbs and 

peel the log all himself. If there were more men, the chopper might only fell the logs while others worked prepping the log for transport. In 1850 the idea that adult labor would be divided so strictly based on specific tasks was novel, and author John S. Springer had to explain the idea to readers of his book on logging, "[i]n most cases, indeed, every hand is hired with the distinct understanding that he is to perform a particular part of the labor, and the wages differed accordingly." After 1850 in larger operations the division of labor became normal and unremarkable to workers.

Small changes in tools accompanied the increased division of labor. The double bitted axe was invented around the middle of the nineteenth-century but did not come into wide use in the Northern Forest until around 1870 to 1880. One side of the blade was finely sharpened and used for felling and cutting while the other was duller and used for less precise cuts and for grubbing roots. The switch from single to double bitted axes saved time as workers did not need to change tools between jobs. It made logging more dangerous, however. The extra blade could cut the user or other workers on the backswing or when the axe grazed or missed its target. It was common for workers to stick their axes in tree stumps when idle, meaning there was a sharp edge exposed. The danger to workers increased if snow covered the axe. Simply carrying this axe in the tangle of the forest was dangerous.

Traditionally, Northern Forest farmers made their own axe handles and hung the bit to fit their unique grip and stroke. As operations got bigger, machine made axe handles were purchased in bulk and these were straight and could be used by left or right handed workers, though these axes tended to be more cumbersome than custom hung axes. Between 25% and 50% of accidents in the

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woods were "axe-caused." Even seemingly minor axe wounds were dangerous because dirty camp conditions meant workers were prone to blood poisoning.\textsuperscript{92}

Working alone, a man like Westcott had to use an axe for all tasks, but with a cutting crew a crosscut saw could be employed. Introduced into the woods around 1897, selling at four to five times the price of an axe, these tools were more difficult to upkeep than an axe but were less energy intensive and quicker. With a crosscut saw, the tree was cut further down the stump, about twelve to eighteen inches off the ground saving ten to twenty board foot per tree. With the introduction of the crosscut saw, workers could cut about 10\% more trees a day. When the crosscut saw was employed, the labor process was often divided further and the tree was notched by a special worker ahead of the sawyers.\textsuperscript{93} With axes and saws, experienced workers could cut about forty or sixty logs a day, head choppers possibly seventy or eighty and some "stunt performers," 100 to 110. As the speed of the work increased choppers and sawyers worked harder and faster sometimes to the point of exhaustion, but brisk winter air kept workers cool.\textsuperscript{94} Bark was sometimes peeled off the log to reduced friction as the log was skidded, or dragged on the bare ground to the skidway. Peeling also


increased buoyancy for the river drive. If bark was to be peeled cutting was done before fall because sap congealed in the cold and peeling was difficult.95

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While his crews were working in the woods, the larger plan Robinson conceived during the cruise was beginning to come together in front of his eyes. Each of his cutting teams were assigned a strip of land on the tract. As the teams drove logs through the snow they made a slick trail leading to the "skidway" or "yard" (I will use both terms interchangeably below). This was the first step in the process of secondary transportation in which logs were "brought from the stump to some central location." The system of roads and skidways that an operator like Robinson planned was vital for the successes of a forest products venture.96

New York Superintendent of Forests William F. Fox wrote that, "[a] diagram of the log roads on a big lumber job would resemble a tree with subdividing branches, although a somewhat crooked one owing to the curbs and windings of the ravines or depressions down which the roads must go." In this analogy, on a small job, the tree branches represented skid roads. Where the branches met the trunk of the "tree" was where the logs were collected on skidways. The main haul road was the trunk of the tree, down which a teamster would draw the sled to collect logs in January when the snow pack was deep. The base of the tree represented the final landing, breaking ground, or rollway where the logs were put into the river, or loaded onto railcars. On larger jobs, like the one


depicted in Figure 6 the skidways were at the end of the branch roads and hauling was done on the branch roads and the main haul road.97 Twelve or fifteen foot roads cost between $50 and $15 per mile to build and $12.50 a mile to maintain as the season progressed. This was all labor costs.

Between cutting and hauling, saw logs were stored in the woods on the skidways until the snow was deep enough to haul. During this time, the forest became a warehouse for saw logs and pulp wood. Skidways were simple structures that acted as a loading dock to ensure thousands of logs could be rolled easily and quickly onto hauling sleds. On the skidways, logs were stacked parallel to and above haul roads on a slight slope so they would roll onto sleds one after another. On the skidway the first level of logs was set in notches and others were layered on top separated by wooden blocks so they did not freeze together.98 When the layers got high enough, ramps were made from junk logs to help men roll the logs up the pile. Two workers who used peaveys or cant-hooks rolled each log into place by hand.

Piling logs like this was a labor-intensive process requiring four to five men in addition to the cutting crew. In an ergonomic study, 50% of loggers found that piling was the most strenuous part of the job. The piling was often rushed because the longer it took to cut and yard the logs, the shorter time the teams had to haul the logs to the landing. Quickening the pace of the haul to make up for slow piling was very dangerous. When jobber John Toothaker was out of camp he told his

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son Lincoln to "tell Gary to look after the choppers [so] that the timber is chopped [and piled] so it can be hauled without killing the horses."99

Skidways allowed for easy hauling, but it had limitations. Typically, logs were only piled high enough so that they could be found after a deep snowfall. High piles were dangerous to load and unload with hand tools. But millions of board feet needed to be piled for some jobs, and short piles meant yards took up a lot of land, land that needed to be swamped, shoveled, and sometimes graded which incurred costs. Also, when skidways were stacked short, and a deep snow fell, the level of the roads rose meaning logs needed to be lifted onto sleds instead of rolled down onto them. This wasted time and energy. Short piles also meant there were more piles spread over a larger area and there was more movement from pile to pile for the hauling team, tiring horses and men quicker.100

An operator could reduce the number of skidways by "parbuckling" or "cross hauling" logs to pile them higher. Reducing storage space is a typical strategy in supply chain management to reduce costs. In parbuckling a rope was secured to a horse behind the skidway, then through a gin pole with a block and tackle above the skidway. The other end of the rope was looped around the log that sat at the base of the ramps that led to the top of the skidway and then anchored to the top of the pile. As the draft animal moved forward and away from the skidway, it put tension on the rope, the loop shortened and the log rolled up the ramps to the top of the pile where workers positioned it. Skill and care were required in parbuckling as piles grew to ten, fifteen, or twenty feet high. Parbuckling required an additional horse and worker but allowed logs to be piled higher and

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reduced the physical space required for storage. Less snow needed to be shoveled before the haul, and fewer miles of road needed to be built (Figure 7 and 8). Parbuckling allowed the forest to become a more efficient warehouse.101

From the skidways, logs were loaded onto sleds. These sleds were low capital tools, made from wood sometimes built with metal or wooden runners. They were constructed in the woods with materials at hand in about a day and they could easily be replaced. Flexible sleds had two sets of iron or wooden runners with a wooden bar that extended between them that functioned as a bunk. Two or more of these light, simple devices were connected by a chain or bar to accommodate logs of different lengths. Flexible sleds allowed logs to move from side-to-side and up-and-down during the haul.102 The first logs loaded formed the floor and sidewalls of the sled and the space between was filled with more logs. This process was repeated until the sled was fully loaded and bound with chains.103

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Moving logs over land was labor intensive and expensive but a foreman like Robinson was adept at manipulating the forest landscape to facilitate this transportation despite his lack of formal education. According to a forestry student at the University of Maine in 1906, there were no "hard

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103 Bryant, Logging: The Principles and General Methods, 174, 175; Boulbee, Leslie and Matthews, " Report of Logging Operation on Limits of the Canoe Lake Lumber Co.," 37; Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 105, 107; Hochschild, Lumberjacks and Rivermen, 57; Bird, Calked Shoes, 111.
and fast rules to which the boss can refer. ... He must resort to his own practicability in devising methods, and fall back upon his familiarity with men and horses."

An operator like Robinson needed to know how to build bridges and corduroy roads, blast boulders, and excavate hills if it helped get the logs out of the woods. One of Santa Clara Lumber Company's jobbers in Northern New York was named Fred LeBoeuf and although he was "unable to read or write," he was a "practical engineer of great ability." He could "lay out the ... roads in that rocky, mountainous, heavily wooded terrain with the greatest accuracy and skill, judging levels, direction, and location with uncanny ability." Walter Wyckoff found that the same was true of a boss he worked under named Boss Toler. Wyckoff wrote that "[a]n experience of nearly forty years as a woodsman had developed his natural gifts to the point of highest skill, and he had a marvelous instinct for directing a course through the maze of tangled undergrowth and logs and stumps which marked the ruins of the forest." He was not book smart, in fact Wyckoff wrote that "[h]e can write his name, and there his educational equipment ends." He had the type of knowledge that no book at the time held, however: "To any department of the work of lumbermen he can lend a hand of highest efficiency. And his, in a marked degree, are the manual skill and resourceful ingenuity which are characteristic of the men." Fitz-Adams was also naturally talented in handling other working men. He was "a superb overseer" Wyckoff wrote, "[u]nder his shrewd foresight and direction, the whole work of the crew is urged forward with resistless energy." The work of the logging foremen required experience with ever changing situations in the forest environment and successful operators "owe their success largely to a knowledge of executive and mechanical detail, from the efficiency of

104 Wyckoff, The Workers... The East, 233.
105 Wyckoff, The Workers... The East, 258.
106 Wyckoff, The Workers... The East, 256.
107 Wyckoff, The Workers... The East, 256-257.
labor to the varieties of saw practices, that has taken years to acquire, and which has crystallized into a larger and complicated organization. "The successful operator, "possessed the rare faculty of understanding his men, and knows what they can do."

This type of informal knowledge extended down the hierarchy to head choppers, teamsters, yardmen and other skilled workers who supervised work. This knowledge grew in the minds of young men and the unskilled as they swamped out the cutting area and did other menial tasks. In each aspect of the job there were "[a] thousand and one little details which … a man learns only as the exigencies arise to call in experience." As the division of labor in camps increased creating new types of specialized work, all men, especially foremen, had to be mildly efficient at all jobs.108

Some thought this "hard won insight" could only be approximated but never emulated by the college-educated forester who would be required to do the same type of work in the growing acreage of National Forests.109 One Forestry Professor wrote "[t]he expert knowledge of the forest was generally not possessed by the man at the central office and by the owners; the forest expert of the lumber industry was the foreman of the logging camp and the cruiser, and what little these men had of forestry knowledge they keep to themselves." As we will see later in this dissertation, loggers' expertise in forest product production would inspire college forestry curriculum and form the basis of new ideas of masculinity in America.110

Even though the US Census of Occupation classified lumber work as a "semi-skilled" occupation, at nearly all levels of the job their remained a "touch of a master handicrafts-man."111

108 Ballew, "Yuthin": It's The Opposite of Nothin', 52.
For a foreman like Robinson, the forest landscape was his workbench; men and horses his tools. Just like any craftsmen, who can never be completely sure they will make a saleable item out of a given set of raw materials, loggers had no assurance they would get logs out of any tract of woods on time or at cost. The nation's supply of wood and paper depended on the skill and knowledge of these workers and the unpredictability of weather into the 1950s.

Ice and Industrial Logistics

Despite Robinson's skill in the woods, by Christmas 1908 it seemed like the operation was in jeopardy because very little snow had fallen. New Year's Day was a time for celebration for more than one reason, however. About sixteen inches of snow had fallen on Robinson's tract and the temperatures plunged in the next few weeks (Figure 3 and 10). The conditions were perfect for the haul, the final step before the logs left the woods on the river. This was a hectic time. If the operator had not planned the roads correctly or if there was a poor winter, there would be delays and the logs may not make it to the river before the strong spring freshet. If logs were left in the woods during the summer they were susceptible to rot, infestation, fire, and would shrink as they dried in the sun. Since mills bought logs based on board foot, or volume, value evaporated out of the saw logs over time. For these reasons it was "very discreditable for a foreman to leave logs in the woods."}


"Weather and the sufficiency of snowfall are inseparably bound up with the success of [any forest products venture]" one forestry student wrote after visiting a jobsite. Unlike other industrial activities forest products production became more dependent on snow as it scaled up and became industrial.\textsuperscript{114} For Westcott or other small operators who hauled only ten thousand or so board feet a season, snow was not necessary as draft animals could overcome the friction of mud and bare ground to move small amounts of logs. In muddy conditions, however, a four-horse team might be able to draw a maximum of five hundred pounds. But when harvests reached into the hundreds of thousands or millions of board feet snow was necessary. At this scale, working in dirt or mud physically degraded men, animals, and tools quickly and a slicker surface was necessary.\textsuperscript{115}

Successful operators learned to mitigate the negative effects of unpredictable weather, quickening the pace of their operation beyond what was possible for many farmer-loggers and small operators. Snow reduced friction to make hauling easier but ice was even better. Operators had been using the ice that naturally formed in wetlands and on frozen lakes and rivers since colonial times. This was a quick mode of transport, but hauling supplies on frozen rivers and lakes could be dangerous. Author and logger John Springer’s lead team broke through the ice on his way to camp, but luckily his crew had a system for recovering the oxen and they only lost some of their hay. Some operations would not risk the open ice if they did not have to.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{114} Boultbee, Leslie and Matthews, "Report of Logging Operation on Limits of the Canoe Lake Lumber Co.," 9; Ballew, "Suthin": It's The Opposite of Nothin', 53; Cotrell, Energy and Society, 259.


Instead of using naturally occurring ice, operators learned to harness the substance. When visiting a logging camp in the Adirondacks, Barbra Bird found an amazing sight, "[i]n order to make hauling easier the roads [were] covered in ice up to two feet thick." This process, called "watering" or "sprinkling," gained popularity between 1872 and 1890. It was made possible with the "sprinkler box" a large water tight box typically 8x8x4 built on runners that held up to sixty barrels of water (Figure 9). There were no patents for these devices and they could not be ordered from a catalog, but were instead made locally or even in the woods with materials at hand. Improvised spigots spread water two feet in either direction as the sled moved forward in the dark of night, when workers and teams were off the roads and when temperatures were coldest. Two men tended the device, one drove the horses the other watched the spigot, chipping away ice buildup. One cartload could ice about 1/4 to 3/4 of a mile. To fill the box, the men parked by a stream, unharnessed the horses and drew barrels of water up the side of the cart with guide poles, block, tackle, and horse power.117

Temperatures between zero and twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit were ideal for hauling and on Robinson's tract the frequency of these cold days increased in January. Some of the best and most consistent hauling weather occurred towards the end of February that year, as it did most years (Figure 10).118 It was always best to get the haul done as soon as possible when a period of good


weather appeared. When the temperature was consistently above freezing the roads thawed and refroze causing them to become uneven and dangerous. Cutting ruts into the ice kept sleds from tipping and sped transport. At first, these ruts were made by hand with an axe but later a special horse powered tool was utilized forming the ruts three to six inches deep. Ice roads had to be plowed whenever there was snow and sometimes fences made from brush and windfall were constructed to keep blowing snow off roads. Multiple layers of ice covering roads allowed hauling to continue through the warm weather. Without an ice road, the length of the hauling season was dependent completely on consistent cold weather. With an ice road an operator could count on a ten-week hauling period even if the weather became unseasonably warm.

With so much invested in roads an entire crew was assigned to keep them in good order. Workers called "road monkeys," or "chickadees" oversaw road maintenance. These workers where often the youngest, oldest, or most inexperienced in the camp. On a fourteen-horse operation there were about six to eight employees doing this work at all times. They were stationed at hills, curves, and even on straight courses at two or three mile intervals to keep ruts clear, cover bare spots with snow, and keep teamsters informed about changing road conditions. Workers fought a constant battle with the weather to make sure conditions were ideal for the teams. In the midday sun "roads

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get soft and … [loads would] get stuck. They called that calving, when they had … [to] throw off half their logs off [to keep moving] … that happened a lot" one worker remembered.121

Depending on the length of the haul, on unimproved snow roads alone a team could haul 700 to 1,000 board feet of lumber. In typical camps with improved ice roads "a four horse team could haul 5,000 to 8,000 board feet per load, while two horses can haul from 2,500 to 4,000 feet." If the ground was rough, as on Robinson's tract, 2,000 to 3,000 board feet for four horses and 1,250 to 1,500 feet for two was common.122 A good iced road was a high capital affair and an essential attribute that separated large industrial operations from smaller, contract jobs or the jobs of farmer-loggers. Simply grading roads for ice cost 100% more than snow roads, not counting additional equipment and labor. Some estimated ice roads cost between $200 to $1000 a mile and so they were only undertaken by large company camps.123

The slickness of snow and ice helped make transport more efficient, but there was a tradeoff. In the winter a sled on a downhill slope would catch up with horses and kill or injure them. Typically, operators limited grades to about 5%. On steeper grades, the road monkeys "guarded" the descent by throwing sand, gravel or a special type of stringy, "road hay" onto the snow (Figure 11). If the weather warmed guarded tracts needed to be covered with snow again. With guarding and


123 Hochschild, Lumberjacks and Rivermen, 60-61; Pike and Jewett, "A Report on a Lumbering Operation on Township No. 29," 8; Hilton, Rough Pulpwood, 37, 39-41; Williams, Americans and Their Forests, 211; Bryant, Logging: The Principles and General Methods, 168; Miller, Poole and Sweetser, "A Lumbering Report of Work on Squaw Mountain Township," 20.
Icing operators could increase grades to "10\%" on descents and 1-20\% or less for ascent." As time progressed and valuable tracts receded to the most rugged terrain, limiting grades to 20\% was not always an option. Tree branches, logs, or chains were attached to the back of the sled to increase friction and slow the sled. Chains or "U" shaped "roller braces" could be attached to runners to "tear right into the ice and snow" and slow their descent. These were all imperfect, imprecise systems.  

Another option when taking a load down a grade was to employ a "snub warp." This was a simple pulley that lowered a load down a steep grade gradually. Typically, a rope, or line was wrapped around a tree stump and a lever was constructed to push against the rope and slow the descent. Patented "Barienger Brakes" could be used instead of trees stumps. These were a series of adjacent metal drums around which an iron cable was wrapped to slow the descent. Snub warps and Barienger Brakes allowed teams to transit down forty-degree grades (Figure 12). Tremendous tension was put on the line and getting an arm caught between the rope and a tree or drum resulted in serious injury.  

Icing and snub warps allowed immense loads to seemingly defy the laws of physics by moving quickly on flat surfaces and descending impossible grades. Even with these improvements there was a systematic flaw in the secondary transportation process: Time and resources were wasted

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building, loading, and unloading skidways. On some large jobs, logs were skidded and loaded to sub-skidways, unloaded onto sleds and brought to a main skidway, where they were loaded on skids again only to be unloaded a second time for the final haul. Parbuckling helped make this process more efficient, but time and energy were still lost in the redundant movement of these bulk commodities.

During good winters, some bright operators realized they could haul right after cutting thus avoiding excessive loading and unloading of skidways. At strategic locations operators built one or two skidways where logs were drawn right after they were cut. The logs were loaded onto the skids quickly and in short piles and when a haul sled was available they were loaded onto them for the haul.126 This rudimentary form of "just-in-time" supply chain management was called "hot landing" or "hot yarding."127 With hot landing, fewer yards had to be constructed or shoveled off, no parbuckling was required and operators did not have to worry about logs getting frozen together, burned, or otherwise damaged as they sat in the woods awaiting the final haul. This method depended on a good winter snow, but it saved "quite an additional expense," according to one operator.128

When hot yarding, any delay in the cutting, skidding, yarding, or hauling meant that there was a surplus of logs at the hot yard. "The failure of one gang," Canadian sociologist Edmund Bradwin found, "dislocated the others; any shifting and rearrangement of groups necessarily means

126 Boyd and Watts have found that the just-in-time system was found in American broiler chicken production around the same time Japanese automobile manufactures were first employing the system. Just-in-time delivery in the woods predates that by close to ninety years in the 1960s. Boyd and Watts, "Agro-industrial Just-in-time," 194-195.

127 This practice was also referred to as hot yarding or hauling from the stump. Bryant, Logging: The Principles and General Methods, 139; Smith and Locke, "A Study of the Lumber Industry of Northern Maine," 17; "Logger are Busy" Bangor Daily Commercial, (March 8, 1915).

128 Ballew, "Southin": It's The Opposite of Nothin', 56.
loss."

Hot landing sped up the entire operation and forced all the workers to perform as an interconnected unit. In this respect, work in these high-speed camps drifted away from relaxed agricultural labor regimes towards more controlled and fast industrial regimes. 130

Debora Cowen argues in her book on logistics that it was often biological bodies that must bear the physical stresses of "accelerating the circulation of capital movement through the seamless movement of stuff," and this was certainly the case with the transition to industrial forest products production. 131 Animals were affected most severely by the increased work speed caused by ice roads, snub warps, and hot yarding. In small scale agriculture, oxen and horses were large investments. Farmers had to be careful not to work animals too hard or put them in danger because they were essential for the completion of all other farm duties throughout the year.

In industrial forest products operations, horses were simply a source of power and they were used to their maximum physical potential as often as possible. When using the company's or a jobber's rented animals, workers would inevitably "get mad and abuse their horses." Though animal abuse was a problem in rural America, small communities had ways of shaming people and controlling the problem. For example, Lincoln Toothaker got a letter from his sister about two teams of horses he brought from his farm for woodswork. She chastised him when she got word, saying that he was "going to kill his horses" by working them too hard. 132 In large camps there was limited surveillance or control of abuse. When animals hesitated workers jerked the reins until blood


131 Cowen, The Deadly Life of Logistics, 93.

ran "out of their mouths." As production speed increased horses would "overreach" putting their hind foot over the forward one ripping off their shoes sometimes hurting themselves so badly they needed to be killed. "Never slip" caulks were drilled into horses' hooves to avoid this problem.\(^\text{133}\)

On larger jobs, to ensure the logs were at the breaking ground before the spring melt, "in some camps, big, bigger lumber camps for big companies" an operator might "put up a watch or a suit of clothes to the one that hauled the most lumber through the winter."\(^\text{134}\) "[O]ne crew would be ... a pusher" a teamster remembered,

He'd set a certain amount ... and the rest would be bound to keep up with him. ... [The boss would put up] a kind of a bulletin board in the office. Each night they'd bring in their count and it would be put up on the board. ... Of course, every crew didn't want to be way behind ... that kept 'em yarding logs pretty fast ... end of the week the one that ... yard the most logs would get a probably a lb. of tobacco or a pair [of] stockings, or whatever was in the wangun they wanted. They get a little prize.\(^\text{135}\)

"The crew that hauls the most in a week" one man reported "is hailed as king of the 'sprucers.'"

Even when not directly incentivized, teamsters would compete to see how many logs they could haul. In a big pulp wood operation of 5,000 to 6,000 cords, between eleven and fourteen cords were expected to be hauled to the landing per team, per day. That was about 500 cords a


season or between 500 and 1,000 tons, moved by each team in a ten-week period. There were inherent incentives to overload a sled butting tremendous train on the horses. Properly iced and maintained roads allowed for heavy loads of eighty logs weighing twelve tons with a half-ton of binding chain stacked ten feet high. Some "champion loads" were said to have weighed thirty tons. The sled runners needed to be hit with a mallet to get these loads moving.  

As profitable tracts moved further from rivers and lakes, horses had to make longer trips on the haul and operators worked with teamsters to estimate how far horses could be pushed before dying from exhaustion. Of course, this calculation was always imprecise, and it was expected that some horses would not make it out of camp alive. Horses working at a quickened pace in a forest products operation consumed between forty-two and forty-nine pounds of fodder or close to 60,000 calories a day. On cold days, as they worked, steamed billowed from their massive frames. It cost about $0.75 to $1.50 to feed each animal per day, about 50% to 100% more than it cost to feed the men. Even with this much food, horses still lost weight due to the rigor of the work.  


were paying to house and feed the animals, operators did not want horses "standing idle" so they might only get four hours rest a day.  

Some horses could take this work pace but others could not. Lincoln Toothaker brought two teams from his father's farm to work in camp hauling full loads twenty-two to twenty-four miles a day, the maximum recommended amount to keep horses in good health. His team Phil and Dick were "looking quite well" with four weeks left in the haul while another team, Pepper and Ginger, were "awful poor." "They have been sick" Lincoln wrote his wife, "they done a lot of work since the 15th of December … [and] they got to go 24 [miles] every day now till they come home."  

Besides working faster and longer, horses took on increasingly risky routs as operations were pushed to rougher terrain. Farmer-logger Lee Roberts had two mares, who were supposedly "experts," though once on the haul they went "over th' side a th' mountain … a'course th' snow was deep 'n' kinda saved 'em. But it cut Blossom, my off Mare, right through the brisket—right between th' for'ard legs."  

When hot landing, teamsters had to rush to get to and from the hot yard so the logs did not stack too high on the skids. Some teamsters perfected a method of unloading whereby they intentionally "sluiced" their load onto the landing or breaking grounds thus avoiding the process of unloading the sled by hand. A bank of snow was built at the breaking ground and as the team approached the teamster would turn the sled on the bank, tipping the load in one direction while

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140 The Lincoln and Idella Toothaker Letters, 1890-1892," March 8th 1891, Lincoln to Ida.  

simultaneously releasing the binder chains, and jumping off the top of the sled. This saved time and labor in unloading but put the lives of the horses and men at risk.

On steep terrain, operators became more reliant on ad hoc braking systems, that they knew were prone to failure. Hot yards were used in conjunction with snub warps and bracing adding the need for speed to steep declines. A traveling preacher remembered getting a ride with a teamster named Kenneth who was supposed to wait for the road monkeys to "get the hills all swept out" before he set off. Kenneth ignored the orders and the preacher recounted:

I have never been able to understand why we were not quickly upset. At several places the road crossed streams on the narrow skid bridges. We came on to them by dangerously sharp curves. Time and time again we must have missed going off those bridges by only a very few inches. ... The team was utterly unable to hold the heavy load on the unguarded hills and were in a desperate run to save themselves. The load was swaying and pitching crazily from side to side ... When we finally reached level ground and could bring the load to a stop, Kenneth turned to me and said with a grin, "If all of them get down as well as we did they will be all right."142

When ropes broke on snub warps full sleds overtook horses killing and maiming them. After an eight-ton load caught up with a team on a Santa Clara job in Northern New York a witness reported "[t]here wasn’t a semblance left of either horse. A jawbone of one of the horses was found stripped out and over thirty feet away from the road." Smart horses who learned to work in conjunction with other animals, men, snow, ice and, simple machines were not only valuable, but could ensure their own survival.143

142 Reed, Lumberjack Sky Pilot, 48-49.

143 This does not seem to be an exaggeration as experts attested to "[h]aulers in the Adirondack mountains ... carried fifteen cords of spruce pulpwood over roads having 10 and 11 per cent grades." Bryant, Logging: The Principles and General Methods, 176; Grover Cleveland Field, Clyde Willard, Lester Cole, and Raymond Olmstead interviewed by Dorothy Bodwell, 1970, p. 561006, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 698013, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Reed, Lumberjack Sky Pilot, 47; White, The Blazed Trail, 57.
A student at the University of Maine, Orono in the 1911-12 season found that well treated horses "depreciated" 15% during a season, though some people estimate that the percentage was higher. Workers remember buying horses for $375, working them until they were "all used up" and selling them for $25 in April or May. This difference in price was the used up "brains, muscles, nerves" and hooves that were put into the wood for profit.¹⁴⁴ Horses were Cheap Nature, expendable flesh that expanded the new frontiers in logistics that allowed the overtaxed resource base of the Northern Forest to industrialize.

* * * *

Men also worked harder, faster, and longer as the production process improved via increased control over the weather and improved logistics. With limited capital goods, one logger remembered the "only one thing … reduces cost[,] and that depends on the output per man."¹⁴⁵ By the 1930s, a three-man crew was expected to cut and yard about five cords per day or about 7,680 board feet. In a ten-camp study, with an average of fifty-three men per camp, each camp produced about 469 cords a week, or about 5,160 cords (720,342 board feet) in a typical eleven-week season. When pushed by competition, a crew of eighteen men yarded and loaded about the same amount of wood in a day, reportedly, with no injuries.

The cry for the eight- or ten-hour workday was not heard on the farm nor the more distant lumber camp. Even agricultural work schedules were limited by the setting of the sun and that inevitably decreased during the winter. But in camp, the sun was not a limiting factor. Even without

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electric lights loggers worked before the sun came up and after it went down sometimes employing lanterns. A good jobber planned the camp so it was close to the timber, but this was not always possible. Some workers recall a three mile walk to the job. Zealous foremen made sure the men were at the jobsite by daylight, and did not leave until dark. This sometimes meant waking up at four am. More typically, wake up time was between five and six am. One worker remembered that in the morning "[you] couldn't see hardly what you was doing" and even on normal days, one worker remembered "you had breakfast when the stars were shining and you ate supper when he [sic] stars were shining at night." Icing had to be done at night, so the two-man icing crew often used lanterns. Twelve- to fourteen-hour work days were normal in the summer and up to eighteen hours was common in the winter especially if the haul was behind schedule.¹⁴⁶

Lincoln Toothaker was in this exact position during the 1891 haul, struggling to stay on schedule. Temperatures had been erratic that hauling season and were consistently above freezing during the day but dipped to nearly negative thirty degrees Fahrenheit in the middle of February. Starting around March ⁶th, however, daytime temperatures rose considerably and remained above freezing for multiple days in a row. On March ⁷th, the hauling crew of six teams had hauled 1,106,010 M ft. (720 cords), or about 6,628 logs, and still had about two-million M ft. to go. With mid-March temperatures reaching 60 degrees Fahrenheit, the operation would have been in a panicked rush (Figure 13). On these warming days the early morning was the best time to haul because ice roads were in the best conditions and calving was not a problem. Haulers woke up between three or 4:30 am to prepare their horses. They could then eat breakfast with the other workers at six am before a twelve to eighteen-hour work day. Toothaker could never get to bed

before 9:30 pm. When the operation was behind schedule, two men sometimes worked one team for twenty-four hours.\textsuperscript{147}

During this rushed haul Toothaker reported that he was "awful sleepy" but told his wife he would have to "make up for what sleep I have lost" in the spring. Chronic lack of sleep was a problem during busy hauling seasons. Just as with other industries, as logging work sped up, and workers lost sleep, tiredness became a symbol of a proper manly attitude toward work.\textsuperscript{148}

Overworked and overtired workers were more likely to have accidents. The American Engineering Council did a study between 1922 and 1925 and found that production in logging increased 27\% but during the same period "accidents had increased in severity 464 percent" a "natural concomitant of the increased intensity of the industrial process," the report concluded. On one occasion a log "rolled and struck" an exhausted Toothaker during work leaving him "quite lame." Towards the end of the 1892 hauling season he suffered an accident on the job that resulted in the amputation of his leg. It is impossible to say whether this was a direct result of the increased pace of work, but this accident correlated with the busy time in the season and a period when the labor process was speeding up in general all over the Northern Forest.\textsuperscript{149}


\textsuperscript{149} Prouty, \textit{More Deadly Than War!,} 277-278; Jensen, \textit{Lumber and Labor}, 130; The Lincoln and Idella Toothaker Letters, 1890-1892," Nov. 12 1890, Lincoln to Ida.
The type of injury that Toothaker suffered could be very difficult on workers' families. Levi and Esther Austin were poor farmers who eked out a living on a small unproductive plot in the Adirondacks. As they aged, the Austins came to depend on the wages that their only son George brought home from the "lumbering woods." In the winter of 1891, thirty-one-year-old George was injured on the job. According to Esther, his "collar bone and breast bones [were] broken and out of place" though it is unclear how this happened. Attempting to overcome the limitations of his body, George "went back to work before his bones could heal," but his injuries worsened and he felt "them great with every draw of the saw." With few options left in the middle of an unforgiving winter, Esther decided to write to George's boss lumberman Luke Usher for aid: "It seems hard for us old people to have to suffer for food and clothing" she wrote, "but hush, I am not a beggar, I am only a little hungry and a little cold."150

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Besides facing increased danger on the job, workers who worked in large camps with improved, industrial methods dealt with more discipline. Unlike Westcott, who took time off work for "extremely nasty" winter weather, workers in the big camps had to endure the worst weather for the sake of production. Official documentation calculated the loggers work month at twenty-six days, the same as a farm worker. On the farm, holidays and Sundays meant time off but in the camp that was not always the case. One student studying a camp in Maine reported that three workers refused to work on Christmas, but the threat of expulsion eventually impelled them to work. In camps where the jobber or foreman had little sway workers might demand time off in bad weather

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or during holidays but that was rare. Workers remember cutting and hauling when it was forty degrees below zero.151

The hours and the discipline in camp varied with the size of the operation. In large camps, with new, fast, and interconnected production methods, the boss needed more direct control over the crew and he "urged [them] forward with relentless energy." As opposed to attending to one task, a boss in a big camp like Herbert Robinson walked the job "figuring on new work, showing the men how to do things better or differently, discussing minute expedients with the blacksmith, the carpenter, the cook." To keep the haul on time he needed to know "exactly what each man is doing, and whether or not the work is well done."

Higher ranking workers asserted authority even during rest times. "[The] Cook … has to run his cook room … and have some discipline" one worker recalled, "[t]he boss set at the head of the table … and you set down and mind your business and eat all you want." Yet discipline varied by the scale of the job. The same worker remembered, "In little crews like I worked in most time, it would be a family affair. Some fellow you know … some neighbor up the river there would have a little operation— have three or four men or five or six and stay at the house, and the woman would do the cooking, and that's a different story, see." In these smaller operations there was much less differentiation between bosses/owners and workers. On these jobs every workers' financial gain was tied to the success of the operation. They knew if the logs did not get out of the woods they would

not get paid. These workers sped themselves up when they saw snow begin to melt, for example, and less direct oversight of the workers was needed.  

For medium and large sized operators, dependence on ice, wooden tools, and simple machines continued to be effective logging methods into the 1960s. Comparing mill work with woodwork, one early forester commented that

the woods is far less visited by the manager or other officers of the company. The woods superintendent and foremen are left largely to their own devices, so long as logs are delivered in sufficient quantities and at cost they are deemed proper. It is difficult for the manager under such circumstances to appreciate how a more intelligent care and greater skill in the woods will result in a financial gain, and the woods problem, with all the complications of topography, character of soil, occurrence of trees, varying character of log grades, etc., are such that it is easy for the foreman to convince the manager that no modifications of prevailing methods are possible.

Another reason that it was easy for the foremen to convince the manager his methods were effective was because there were few people in America who had the same level of skill and knowledge about men, animals, and the Northern Forest landscape as an experienced foreman like Robinson.

Conclusion


For small jobbers and family farmer-logger operations, pre-industrial agricultural norms continued in camp, and the winter weather was the ultimate boss. In these operations, the weather decided when work began, when it ended, and the pace of the job. Operations that skewed towards the industrial needed more order, and they wrought regularity from unpredictable nature. Northern Forest operators did not use high capital machines to improve the labor process, instead they depended on the cold and snow, increased the division of labor, and made logistical improvements to make the work more efficient. In creating their workscape, these industrial operators formed a fragile partnership with nature, using it to fix inefficiencies in logistics, thereby transforming men, animals, snow, and trees into Cheap Nature. Cheap Nature allowed operators to profit from low yield second growth tracts on rugged mountainous terrain with minimal investment. In the process they worked their men and animals to their maximum physical potentials.

Historians often describe industrialization as the process whereby steam, gas or electricity replaced muscle, water, and wind power, thus increasing the efficiency and scale of economies. This was clearly not always the case. In the Northern Forest, Cheap Nature was not coal, but snow, ice, animals, men, and wood.\(^\text{154}\) This was the situation in many industries in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. The exploitation of Cheap Nature in all its forms defined industrial capitalism, not the use of any specific type of machinery or power source.\(^\text{155}\)

Though forest products operators used seemingly antiquated production methods, these methods could potentially remain profitable though this profit came at the expense of the organic bodies doing the work: people and animals who, for better or worse, were not replaced by high

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capital machines. The larger the operation, and the more effective operators were at creating and utilizing Cheap Nature, the more "the routine … [of the camp became] as nicely apportioned as that of any large factory."

Variations in the workscape of camps of different sizes affected how workers within them experienced the transition to industrialization. This transition depended on the scale of operations rather than the time in which they existed—geography rather than chronology. This is proven by the differing experiences of Arthur Westcott and Lincoln Toothaker. Westcott was a part time farmer and logger of meager means with a relaxed irregular work schedule. His life was dictated by his financial situation, the weather, and his own judgement. Westcott lived a life much more like the lives of early, pre-industrial nineteenth-century farmer-loggers. Toothaker worked in an efficient camp with more control over the weather but a more demanding work schedule. While he was at camp he lived the life of an industrial wage worker. Toothaker, however, lost his leg in the woods of Maine almost a decade before Westcott was operating by himself in the woods of Vermont.

Industrial modernity was a place, not a time. Still, even Toothaker's industrial modernity was not the same as that which existed in urban factories. Forest products production of any scale could not be scientifically managed in the same way that other industrial work was because "conditions never repeat themselves in the woods as they do in the factory."157

This chapter has demonstrated the encompassing scope of industrial capitalism and characterizes it as a force that sustains seemingly anachronistic and labor intensive practices as long as they are profitable. Even though the labor process was not sped up by large, expensive machines,

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it was still dangerous, as Toothaker's injury proves. There were other negative externalities caused by the industrialization of forest products production such as the emotional harm to families and the pain caused to draft animals. The snow and ice provided free utility to all who needed it and there was little direct or indirect environmental violence caused by the exploitation of this natural resource. Cold weather in this case was a free utility. This analysis has pointed out violent and less violent ways that labor processes were industrialized and should also be implicitly compared to the way that labor processes were industrialized in urban areas and the west, that is with the use of fossil fuels.\footnote{158 Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature," 88. If Moore's fundamental premise is that capitalism is the separation of Nature from Society and that this separation is always deeply violent, or, quoting Marx "dripping with blood and dirt," that seems not always to have been the case. Exploiting Nature is often violent but sometimes it is not; sometimes Nature provides free utility. In this case, winter weather was free utility.}

* * *

For a method of production dependent on weather and muscle power to remain relevant in the national economy, organic bodies would have to be worked extremely hard. To make this possible, bodies would need energy dense fuel in large quantities. The next chapter is about the fuel that powered these operations and the important place food held in defining industrial work and making industrial workers.

Figure 1

A Small Operation, MS 207, Amos and Octavia Moulton Graffte papers, Fogler Library Special Collections, University of Maine, Orono
Figure 2.

Figure 3


http://doi.org/10.7289/V5D21VHZ (4/1/2015)

Stations: HOULTON ME US (GHCND:USC00173897); MILLINOCKET ME US (GHCND:USC00175304)
Figure 6.


Figure 7.

Figure 8


Figure 9


Figure 11. Horse rearing up on a road "guarded" with hay.

http://doi.org/10.7289/V5D21VHZ (4/1/2015) 
Stations: BERLIN NH U.S. (GHCND:U.S.C00270690); WEST MILAN 1 NH U.S. (GHCND:U.S.C00279307)
Chapter 3- Food and the Body as Cheap Nature

How do we know how important food was as a fuel for the industrialization of the hinterland? One of the best sources comes from a group of United States Department of Agricultural scientists who were analyzing the diets of many different groups of Americans around the turn of the century. In the winter of 1902 and 1903 in the forests around Lake Onawa in Piscataquis county Maine, assistant chemists of the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station, Edward Raymond Mansfield and Charles Dayton Woods did an extensive study of the diet of a group of loggers. The study's methods were so rigorous that, alongside recording everything that these workers ate, the scientists collected and dissected their feces. In the report, titled "Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen," the scientists wrote they were pleased at the outcome "[b]ecause of the uniformity of the diet, the regularity of the men in stooling, and the long duration of the experiment, it is believed that no serious error was thus introduced." To Mansfield and Woods, the only unfortunate aspect of the study was that they could not collect the urine of the loggers and so they remained ignorant to the efficiency of their nitrogen "income and outgo." 1 Through these meticulous research methods Mansfield and Woods were able to conclude that the diet of these loggers were "as regards to protein and energy, the highest yet recorded for any class of American laboring men." 2 According to this study, these loggers were among the most prodigious eaters, and hardest workers, in the western world.

* * *


This chapter argues that as industrialization quickened the speed of work in all sectors of the American economy, workers who had access to nutritious rations in large enough quantities could adjust their metabolisms to keep pace with the rigorous speed of production. Industry, science, and government powers worked together to disseminate the latest information about proper nutrition and to increase workers' access to the correct types of food to maximize the productive powers of the human body.

A vital aspect of the transition into modern capitalism was overcoming the insecurities inherent in local food production. The nutritional deficiencies and the seasonally dependent diet of pre-industrial Americans hampered the amount of work that people could do. Improving workers' diet was good for workers and their families but it also served the interests of industrialists because it allowed workers to build bodies capable of coping with the rigors of new, fast, work regimes. Remuneration in food was typical in pre-industrial America and even as other aspects of wage earning modernized, food wages remained an important part of woods labor regimes into the twentieth-century. In industries dependent on muscle power, workers needed the assurance of proper food in unlimited quantities because the work was so physically demanding. For those who worked in the woods—first farmers and later immigrant and migrant workers—camp food was a vital supplement to the food insecurities they faced when they were not in a logging camp.

As was made clear in the last chapter, the speed-up of the labor process in the Northern Forest was not dependent on fossil fuels, but weather, simple machines, and muscle power. In the woods, workers fought the limitations of their bodies for the sake of production. The body itself became a natural barrier—a type of frontier—that workers had to struggle against as mechanization, nationalization, and globalization of forest products markets outside the Northern Forest pushed these loggers to work harder and faster. Food aided these men in their struggle to remain relevant workers in this large, mechanized economy. During the process of eating, labor and nature meet, yet this aspect of work has scarcely been examined by historians. Through the biochemical processes involved in fueling the loggers, capitalism seeped into the veins of workers' bodies and fed the fibers of their muscles, transforming them into creatures of capitalism; a class of industrial wage workers.

Weather aided the speed-up of the labor process in the Northern Forest, but weather could never be part of the "cash nexus," meaning no operator had to pay for the benefits of cold or snow. The physical labor of humans and animals certainly were part of the cash nexus, however. The exchange of money for caloric expenditure was the premise at the foundation of American "free labor" politics. In forest products production, unlike in other industries at the time, muscle power was so important that workers were guaranteed all the high-quality food they could eat for free in addition to their wages. The work of logging was so demanding that even with unlimited, energy dense, nutritious food, workers still suffered from fatigue, injury, and weight loss. The wear on the human body was an aspect of nature and of wage relations that was not part of the cash nexus. This wear became surplus value. The food wage system described below exemplifies perfectly how and

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why fossil fuels were not requirements for industrialization, only the Nature/Society dichotomy that demanded unlimited surplus value from Cheap Nature. Just as the weather was a part of Cheap Nature, so too were the metabolic processes of free laboring bodies.\(^5\)

**Wilderness Rations**

Facing diminishing returns on investment in the overexploited forest of the Northeast, operators relied on the cheapest and most readily available power sources to aid production, namely human and animal muscle, a type of power that had sustained the world's economy before 1800.\(^6\)

Into the first half of the twentieth-century, the general rule in the woods was to hire "two French Canadians in preference to any machine."\(^7\) Men exerted tremendous effort in the woods and it was sometimes said that, "nothing can swing an axe, or move a saw, or roll logs, like baked beans."\(^8\)

But these beans, and the other foodstuffs that workers ate, had to get into the forest before they could become fuel for logging operations. The lack of a local food supply was one of the many obstacles that forest products operations faced when deciding to cut on a tract. By the start of the spruce era in the 1870s, the only profitable tracts were far removed from productive farms. Besides suffering from poorly drained, stony, thin, and acidic soils, the ground in unsettled areas of the Northern Forest were frigid for much of the year. There was little capital invested in agriculture

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Resilient root crops were common for frontier farmers and winters were often "starving times." Without intense improvement and laborious land clearing, settlers could only regularly expect yields of potatoes, oats, and hay. Thoreau mentioned that isolated Northern Forest farmer George McCauslin "grew oats, grass and potatoes ... but he raised also, a few carrots and turnips and 'a little corn for the hens,' for this was all he dared risk, for fear that it would not ripen. Melons, squash, sweet-corn, beans, tomatoes and many other vegetables, could not be ripened there."

Disheartened farmers often abandoned agriculture and turned to forging in the common lands or wage work in order to feed their families. During warm months Adirondack resident Henry Conklin regularly left work on the farm to gather sweet fern, sage, honey, butternuts, walnuts, wild leeks, cowslips, adder tongues, and the many varieties of berries that grew in the wild along with hunting rabbits, deer, and catching fish. The amount of farmed acres in the lumber district of

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Machias, Maine decreased as the nineteenth-century progressed as settlers realized that intensive farming was not logical.  

Even when there were abundant calories for home consumption, in many parts of the Northern Forest the diet was monotonous. Day after day of "bean porridge," boiled cornmeal purchased from a store, or potatoes and salt, would have been common, particularly during the winter. Meat was a rare meal on these farmsteads because before refrigeration it rarely made sense to slaughter an entire animal as the meat would go bad before it was finished. It was not until 1965 that rural meat consumption matched urban meat consumption in America.

Unable to rely on the local food economy, speculators hoping to enter the forest products business had to invest a lot of time and money to bring sufficient nourishment into the region. A company agent for the Boston and Eastern Company operating in Northern Maine wrote to headquarters in Boston in distress, "I have … to request … that you send immediately something for us to eat. One of the saws has stopped for no other reason than the want of provision[s] … [and] there is none about here that could be bought if there was money to buy it with." Cary Brothers Lumber Company found similar circumstances in St. John, New Brunswick in 1849.

Hay, buckwheat, and small amounts of fruits, vegetables, and meat could be procured from hunting and

14 Mancke, The Fault Lines of Empire, 40; USM and UMO, Farms of Maine, 2.
18 Craig, "Agriculture and the Lumberman's Frontier," 129.
19 Throughout the opening years of their operations there are consistent request for pork, flour, corn, hay and oats. A.K. Moore to Samuel S. Lewis, Machias, ME, 28 May, 1837, B&E records, box 1, folder 2, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.
20 C. Whitaker to Shepard Cary, 28 September, 1849, St. John New Brunswick, Canada, Shepard Cary papers, box 1, folder 12, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.
gathering on wild lands but never in the quantity needed to feed a camp of men and animals engaged in industrial labor. When the food situation got desperate, isolated camps ate their working oxen while waiting for supplies.  

Machias was close to the ocean and Boston and Eastern was eventually able to establish regular shipments of pork, corn, and flour to their operations. As operations moved further inland in the 1870s, supplying camps became more difficult. Operators used fresh waterways whenever possible, employing flat bottomed, "horseboats" some of which were "a hundred feet long … capable of carrying 200 barrels of pork, molasses and flour." Supplies often had to be taken overland so operators hired crews to make roads that could cost as little as $5, or as much as $500 a mile depending on the terrain. In Aroostook, Maine the Cary Brothers blazed a road "from L'Isle to Depot Stream to a small tributary of the … Black River" to supply their camps. By the 1850s this rout, known as the "California Road," was so important to commerce that the state began to fund its maintenance. Frozen rivers and lakes served as highways for fully laden teamsters delivering goods to camp, but these could be dangerous.  

Depending on the location of the camp, supplies might come directly from local farmers who operated on sparse fertile tracts. Dedicated lumberers started their own farms, vertically integrating their supply chains by clearing the land near profitable tracts to ensure regular

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24 J.L. Turner to Shepard Cary, 2 April 1857, Fort Kent, Shepard Cary papers, box 1, folder 12, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.

provisions. Locations for these farms were chosen carefully to maximize yields and allow for easy transportation to camps. Lumberman Eben S. Coe's Chamberlain Farm in Pisacquais County Maine was called a "little seaport in the wilderness," because it was tucked conveniently between Chamberlain Lake and Indian pond. Built on a south-facing slope, the area was dryer and the snow melted quicker than the surrounding land. Coe's half dozen farm workers planted 600 acres of potatoes, oats, hay, kept cattle, horses, and hogs for their camps or to sell to contractors. The Cary Brother's "Depot" was a similar but smaller operation located in the "rich alluvial soil" of Seven Islands, Maine. By the end of the nineteenth-century pulpwood operations had larger farms that could produce 300 hogs, 5,000 bushels of potatoes, and keep 800 horses.

Food Wages in Food Deserts

Lumber operators brought money into the Northern Forest and paid formal cash wages, but they also assumed a paternalistic responsibility for their workers, providing for their immediate wellbeing through in-kind payment. Working for a forest products concern was similar to working

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28 Maine Department of Agriculture, Sixth Annual Report, 348; Judd, Aroostook, 51.

29 Flanagan, "Industrial Conditions in the Maine Woods," 211.

30 Today, the USDA defines food deserts as "parts of the country vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers' markets, and healthy food providers." This was the situation in much of the Northern Forest during the winter. American Nutritional Association, "USDA Defines Food Deserts" Nutrition Digest, accessed February 17, 2017, http://americannutritionassociation.org/newsletter/usda-defines-food-deserts; Mary Story, Karen M. Kaphingst, Ramona Robinson-O'Brien, and Karen Glanz, "Creating Healthy Food and Eating Environments: Policy and Environmental Approaches," Annual Review of Public Health 29 (2008): 253-272.

as a farmhand; these arrangements almost always included room and board provided by the owner for free, and workers were rewarded for good work with increased rations. Up until about 1870, forest products contracts might stipulate allotments of sugar, tea, or tobacco for workers to be provided by the financing party. Boston and Eastern Company agent Daniel Hammond wrote to the company for $5,000 in goods "to pay labor for lumbering, driving logs, sawing" and at the end of a season rewarded his men with "½ bbls Flour & 3 bbls apples … for faithful services at moderate wages." Operators and workers saw little discrepancy between cash and in-kind payment.

For example, Peter G. Morrill, farmer and laborer, built up an account of $21.97 in 1849 at Chamberlain Farm mainly for keeping himself and his draft animals overnight on multiple occasions. He paid part of this debt in small increments of cash: $1.50 on December 25th, $4.50 sometime in January, a dollar on March 24th and the remaining amount he paid off through trade and work.

By mid-century the Radical Republicans and Knights of Labor were lobbying for legislation to end paternalism. These groups viewed the transition from in-kind payment to payment in cash as an important part of a modern, egalitarian economy. Simultaneously forest products workers began

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35 "Peter G. Morrill to Chamberlain Farm," account, 1849, Chamberlain Farm collection, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.

working even further away from settled areas and needed fluid, non-perishable compensation, namely cash or credit which they could save, invest, or send out of the woods to their families. Boston and Eastern agent A.K. Moore wrote that he could not conduct business in the Northern Forest without "paying laborers or at least promising to pay them at some time." Operators often lacked cash until finished forest products were sold so they delayed payment whenever possible and dealt in credit. The Cary Brothers operation in Aroostook, Maine specifically had men come down river to more settled areas to be paid. Shepard Cary wrote an associate "I notice that Holman has request[ed] you send him 400 dollars, 200 to pay a man off at Fish River. I should have thought that his man might at least have come to Houlton for money. It is rather poor business for us to send money to pay men off at Fish River. You must hold [Holman] tight for money or he will pay every loafer off he has before he gets [in]."

Most operators commingled new modern methods of paying workers regularly in cash/credit, with traditional pre-industrial methods of remuneration in food and shelter, as exemplified by the Boston and Eastern policy to keep "on hand a Supply of Provision[s] of leading articles, from which our laborers can have anything they may choose to take, it being known and distinctly understood that that same rule will be continued as heretofore that no man will be hired except for Cash at the close of each month." Cash wages were often given out "down river," and wage disputes were handled through legal action. From 1870 to 1920 cash wage distribution was infrequent and unpredictable, food was provided daily and for free, and other goods could be

37 A.K. Moore to Samuel S. Lewis, Machias, ME, 10 July 1837, B&E records, box 1, folder 2, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.


bought in camp stores via open accounts. Because food was an assured form of compensation that was provided regularly it became the fundamental bargaining tool for workers in camp. Without proper meals three or four times a day, work contracts (whether formal or informal) were implicitly void and loggers simply walked away from the job. "Jumping camp" due to poor or lacking food was a major problem in the forest products industry into the twentieth-century.\(^{40}\)

In the harsh winter climate of the Northern Forest, the promise of regular food pushed workers into camps. Food wages were attractive for rural workers who came from small farms with unstable household economies.\(^{41}\) In camp they could get simple food similar to what was available on their farm, but it was offered in large quantities and consistently, two characteristics of diet not always available on small farms. Before 1900, there were few luxuries included in the diet of most loggers. The freight costs into a place like Chamberlain Farm was around $20-60 for a sled that might be able to carry 2,000 pounds.\(^{42}\) For this reason, operators would only tote in enough to give men calories for production, not frivolities for taste. From 1850 to 1900, depending on the size of the camp, buckwheat flour was a staple as were pork, tea, and some sweetener like molasses,

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\(^{41}\) Craig, *Backwoods Consumers*, 6, 173, 176.

\(^{42}\) Judd, *Aroostook*, 56.
sorghum syrup, or maple syrup while fresh fruits and vegetables were lacking in the winter. Like isolated farmers, early industrial loggers complained of the monotony of winter fare.

Pork was the ubiquitous meat of the rural poor until the 1930s, and was the primary protein in the logging camps throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Pigs prospered in harsh unimproved mountain and forest environments. When left to forage on their own they could increase their weight 150% in eight months. The fat and salt of the pork was used to add flavor to other dishes. On remote cruising expeditions, raw salt pork was sliced thin on hardtack bread and was served for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. As Springer wrote "from these gross simples [pork and pilot bread], the hungry woodsman makes many a delicious meal." With limited food choices rural people put pork and pork fat into many dishes to enhance flavor and add calories. Hot liquid pork fat was used as a sauce for quick breads and other dishes.

Until the twentieth century loggers did not eat much beef. In isolated farmsteads, few occasions called for the slaughtering of an entire cow. Fresh beef connoted wealth and status and

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45 Horowitz, Putting Meat on the American Table, 45.

46 Conlin, Bacon, Beans, and Galantines, 11; Faragher, Sugar Creek, 65; Conlin, "Did You Get Enough Pie," 17; The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010; Springer, Forest Life, 76.


48 Springer, Forest Life, 46.


51 Horowitz, Putting Meat on the American Table, 13, 19.
as people moved out of poverty their consumption of beef tended to increase.\textsuperscript{52} Part of the reason for pork's popularity in rural and remote areas was that the higher fat content and shorter muscle fibers of the pig made cured pork more palatable than cured beef. Cured beef took too much time to chew and digest, particularly if it was served in large pieces.\textsuperscript{53} Unlike family farms or small operations, large camps could justify killing cows for consumption and on rare occasions loggers would get some of this meat. When beef was eaten in logging camps it was often tooted in fresh. This was the case at Chamberlain Farm in 1850, when 317 pounds of fresh beef was tooted into camp from 105 miles away in Brownville. Fresh beef was not always desired by the loggers, who found it difficult to eat quickly, and low in energy when compared to fatty pork. The USDA scientists who studied loggers' diets heard a story about a camp where "the men were satisfied with their wages … but didn’t like … 'fresh meat [beef].'" The boss gave them "salt pork three times a day, and peace at once resumed."\textsuperscript{54}

As the nineteenth-century progressed, beans became another staple in the woods. Because they could be dried and rehydrated, they were one of the few vegetable foods that could survive the long trip into remote areas. The idea of putting pork and molasses, the other universal flavoring agent in rural America, into a pot of beans as they cooked was a natural extension of the pork-centric rural American culinary tradition.\textsuperscript{55} The resulting baked beans were one of the most complex,


\textsuperscript{53} Horowitz, \textit{Putting Meat on the American Table}, 18-19.


\textsuperscript{55} Elaine N. McIntosh, \textit{American Food Habits in Historical Perspective}, (Conn: Praeger., 1995) 86; Conlin, \textit{Bacon, Beans, and Galantines}, 58.
energy, nutrient dense, and memorable dishes served in camps. Traditional New England pork and beans were cooked in an iron pot underground for up to fourteen hours. Typically a half of a pound of pork was used for every pint of beans. The dish contained so much energy rich pork fat, that one worker remembered "[y]ou dip [bread] in there [the bean pot] and ther'd be a quart of grease on top of that." By slow cooking the dried beans, the vegetable matter was made to be easily digestible and quick to eat. The fat, sugary, fiber rich, beans were quickly metabolized into energy.

Though today baked beans connote austerity, at one time they were a dish of celebration and a rare treat. For example, in 1891 Lincoln Toothaker's younger brother wrote to him in the logging camp excited that, "[s]chool closes next Friday. We are going to have a bake bean supper." Loggers in a 1902-1903 government study derived 20-33% of their protein and 10-14% of their total energy from this celebrated dish. Besides baked beans, complex dishes that called for elaborate preparation methods were not a regular part of the loggers' diet until late in the nineteenth-century. Writing in the 1850s, Thoreau recalls that loggers coming out of camp desired "cakes and pies, and such sweet things, which are there [in the woods] almost unknown."

Though vegetable matter other than beans were rare in nineteenth-century camps, some operations, particularly those with close affiliations with area farms, did have access to potatoes, turnips, beets, carrots, rutabagas, parsnips, onions, and apples. For much of the nineteenth-century vegetables were not the preferred food of men at vigorous work. Boxers during training abstained from vegetables because they thought meat roused the passions more. Moreover, raw or

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57 Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the American Table*, 45.
60 McIntosh, *American Food Habits in Historical Perspective*, 83, 92.
undercooked vegetables were not as easily or quickly digested as flour, pork, beans, and molasses. The nutritional importance of vegetable foods was not known until the opening decades of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{61} When fruit and vegetables were prepared in camps before 1900 they were typically mashed or stewed, and consumed alongside whatever fat was available. Canned vegetables could be found in isolated areas as early as 1857 but were expensive and sometimes unsafe for consumption because of primitive preservation methods.\textsuperscript{62}

Several foodstuffs were unlikely to make their way onto official inventories. Game meat and fish were a common commodity in camps. Moose, bear, deer, and smaller game like woodchuck found their way onto the loggers’ table.\textsuperscript{63} After returning to camp from a hunting trip he took with his brothers, Lincoln Toothaker wrote home saying they "lived like kings in here the week past. We have coffee for breakfast and great big mince pies."\textsuperscript{64} When eating with a camp of loggers, Thoreau relished the apple sauce but recalled that, among the loggers "our moose-meat was oftenest called for."\textsuperscript{65}

\section*{Who Would Work for Food?}

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\item[\textsuperscript{61}] Hooker, \textit{Food and Drink in America}, 315-316; Logan, "Food, Nutrition, And Substitution", 540.
\item[\textsuperscript{65}] Thoreau and Cramer, \textit{The Maine Woods}, 119.
\end{itemize}
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Although their diet was monotonous, loggers ate more than most of the farmers of the Northern Forest. As food historian Harvey A. Levenstien wrote, up until the 1880s transportation difficulties and cash shortages meant relatively few farmers had easy access to much in the way of affordable processed or exotic goods. Local geography was therefore still the most important factor in shaping rural diets. The winter and spring diets of New England Farmers still revolved around the region's "great trinity" of bread, bacon, and beans, supplemented by some root vegetables.\(^{66}\)

Separated from the growing network of American icehouses and refrigerated railcars, the diet of isolated farmers would not be completely untied from the aforementioned great trinity until the 1920s with the introduction of home refrigeration and rural electrification.\(^{67}\)

The seasons also affected the rural diet making rural people vulnerable to nutritional deficiencies. Historian Robert Dirks found that "[t]he difference between being relatively affluent and frankly poor from a nutritional standpoint was more palpable from the onset of winter through early spring. This, of course, is not to say that there were no differences in quality of diet at other times."\(^{68}\) The poorest families in the Northern Forest grew about half of all their food and for them unpredictable weather meant unpredictable diets.\(^{69}\) Maine logger John Sharp remembered that a blizzard kept his father from returning home from an outing for four days so the rest of the family melted snow for water and "lived … on just potatoes and salt."\(^{70}\) Northern Forest diets were universally lacking in fruits and vegetables and gathered berries were an important source of

\(^{66}\) Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 29.

\(^{67}\) Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 178-179.

\(^{68}\) McMahon "All Things in Their Proper Season" 130; Dirks, "Diet and Nutrition," 95.


nutrition. As a Down East Mainer reported "winter food depended greatly on the woman's skill in canning, drying, preserving, pickling and jelly making." 

National economic trends also negatively affected the diets of Northern Forest farmers. Facing new western competition, small mixed farmers were incentivized to abandoned subsistence farming to plant cash crops that could then be sold to lumbering operations or on the national market. These farmers mostly grew potatoes, oats, and hay. But fluctuating market prices, increasing debt, and railroad monopolies meant cash profits were rare. To maximize yields, farmers planted over home gardens with cash crops and all produce was sold rather than consumed by the family. These small producers spent less time fishing, hunting, and foraging and more time working on their cash crops or for wages. Those isolated farmers who avoided (or were avoided by) the push to commercial agriculture could have procured more of certain micronutrients from gardens and foraging but were not much better off than struggling commercial farmers.

The wealth gap and class differences in rural America in the two decades before the turn of the century manifested itself in diet and health. In the isolated areas surrounding lumber camps it was common to see in the faces of locals a "premature appearance of old age" and a "lack of energy.

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71 Conklin, Through "Poverty's Vale", 45; Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 25, 175-76, 178; Boyd, "The Nature of the American Diet", 250.

72 Beam, A Maine Hamlet, 75; Boyd, "The Nature of the American Diet", 250; McIntosh, American Food Habits in Historical Perspective, 110; Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 176; Craig, "Agriculture and the Lumberman's Frontier" 129, 136.


76 Beam, A Maine Hamlet, 177-179; Cummings, The American and His Food, 172; Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 180; Judd, Common Lands, Common People, 66-67.
and initiative” because of poor diet.\textsuperscript{77} When traveling through Western Pennsylvania, early sociologist Walter Wyckoff was approached by a group of bare foot, dirty children, and he commented "there was no wholesome color in their faces, and … the very beauty of childhood was already fading before a persistent diet from the frying-pan."\textsuperscript{78}

While some poor farmers went hungry, forest products operators brought vast quantities of food into neighboring camps. With access to abundant credit, they could overcome transportation and weather difficulties, insuring consistent supplies in their camps in all conditions. Individual farm families remained in food deserts well into the twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{79} Forest products operators had an advantage in their attempt to feed rural workers. The logging camp concentrated people in one spot, avoiding the need to distribute food to a geographically disparate rural population.

Sometimes hungry locals who did not work in the camps got a share of camp food. A barrel of pork was stolen from the Cary Brothers by a boatman who was transporting their goods.\textsuperscript{80} Workers’ neighbors, relatives, and even strangers, made the long hike into camps for the lavish meals. The government study of loggers’ diets from 1902-1903 recorded sixty-one meals given to "Visitors" during two seasons in Maine. Despite this charity, the bulk of camp food went to workers.\textsuperscript{81} Young men from struggling farms in the Northern Forest were drawn to logging camps

\textsuperscript{77} Levenstein, \textit{Revolution at the Table}, 179.


\textsuperscript{80} C. Whitaker to Shepard Cary, 14 December, 1849, St. John New Brunswick, Canada, Shepard Cary papers, box 1, folder 10, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.

\textsuperscript{81} It is unclear if these people were charged for food but oral histories suggest they weren't. Woods, \textit{Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen}, 17, 21, 24, 29; “The Lincoln and Idella Tothaker Letters, 1890-1892,” Lincoln Tothaker to Idella Tothaker, 27
by the promise of regular nutritious food. At the same time, these young workers could help take some strain off their family's winter food supplies by working away from home. To receive these benefits, however, they would have to push their bodies to their physiological limits producing saw logs.

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Like isolated Northern Forest farmers, the transient and migrant workers who made up an increasingly large part of camp population after 1890 also had precarious food security and were drawn to camp by the promise of regular, quality rations. Accounts from transient workers consistently highlight the hunger of "the road." For mobile workers traveling between jobs, dinner could be as meager as "a dish of bread and milk," a few crackers, or they might eat nothing at all for days at a time. One traveling worker remembered that he "had been hungry enough at times to eat corn husks." Many of those who spent time as a traveling wage worker only expected to earn enough money to eat, drink, and stay mobile. One recalled he would "gladly do anything that offered … bread and board."

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Like the hobos who were pulled to sources of food, immigrant workers were drawn to the United States by promises of "reefs of roast beef and apple pie" in the country of abundance. By 1901, half a million French-Canadians had settled in New England and they were the largest foreign labor group employed in the American pulp and paper industry. The period from 1873 to 1896 was one of great economic contraction in Québec. Facing an agricultural crisis, poor banking systems, the rise of commercial agriculture, and interest rates that were unparalleled in the United States (as high as 20% for some), French-Canadian farmers often found it necessary to work in the woods as a supplemental or often a primary source of cash. The Canadian economy was so bad at times that it was not uncommon for families to move from commercial agriculture back into subsistence farming as a survival strategy.

Immigration studies showed that Canadians who came to America ate double the amount they had in Canada. Another calculated these immigrants ate 28% more calories, 32% more protein,

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86 Quoted in Harvey A. Levenstein, Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry About What We Eat, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012) 50; On immigrants' improved diet in America see, Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 219, 101-102; Trevon D. Logan, "Nutrition and Well-Being in the Late Nineteenth Century," The Journal of Economic History 66 no. 2 (2006): abstract; Dirks, "Diet and Nutrition in Poor and Minority Communities", 94; Conlin, Bacon, Beans, and Galantines, 9-10; Cummings, The American and His Food, 89; Woods, Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen, 30-34; Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 7-8, 15; Peck, Reinventing Free Labor, 28, 35, 132.


and double the amount of fat than those who stayed in Canada. This was especially true of the French Canadians that came from isolated western forest settlements and lived in extremely austere, frontier environments. The situation was the same for almost all immigrant groups most of whom came from rural Europe. Immigrants abundant and easily accessible food in the United States compared to their own country. After overviewing statistics on the American diet, USDA food scientist Wilber Olin Atwater confidently concluded that "the American working man is vouchsafed the priceless gift which is denied to most people of the world, namely … the liberal nourishment, which … [is] essential to large production, high wages, and the highest physical existence."92

**Modern Foods, Industrial Bodies**

Lumber operators had no immediate concern for the hunger of workers, but the demand for wood obliged them to bring food to wilderness areas in large amounts. By the time of the pulp boom around 1900, increased railroad mileage made supplying camps easier. Railroads allowed for more "fresh meats, vegetables, fruits, and even eggs, butter, and milk." Even with increase railroad mileage supplies were still tooted directly into most camps by sled, but the distance was often reduced and operators were less reliant on frozen rivers for transport.93

Industrial food manufacturers were also producing high energy, cheaper, and safer preserved foods that were well suited for remote camps such as pie fillings, cooking lard, commercial jellies,
jams, and condensed milk.\textsuperscript{94} Salt pork and beans remained staples in camps, but workers now had more beef, chicken, and complex, calorie dense dishes like doughnuts, pies, cookies, and cakes.\textsuperscript{95} Like pork and beans, these preserved, processed, and refined foods were easy to eat and digest, yielding their calories to workers quickly enabling them to continue laboring at a grueling pace. By the end of the nineteenth-century, following the trend in American diets more generally, beef was also more often consumed in camps though pork remained popular.\textsuperscript{96} These cheap, energy dense foods opened new frontiers in the power and endurance of the human body. They advanced labor productivity allowing workers to keep pace with the increase physical demands that came about with the advent of iced roads, hot landing, and pulp production.\textsuperscript{97}

From 1901 to 1903, just as these improvements in camp food were taking place, government researchers Charles Woods and Edward Mansfield conducted their revealing series of studies on loggers' diets in Maine that showed just how demanding logging work was on the human body. "Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen," was part of a larger effort by the USDA to dissect the diets of Americans around the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{98} The agenda of this study, and other USDA diet studies, was distinctly progressive, designed to reform the diets of rural Americans and the working poor to keep them healthy and frugal.

The director of the program, Wilbur Olin Atwater, a professor of chemistry at Wesleyan University, thought that if the American under classes could eat smarter they might save money and

\textsuperscript{94}Anne C. Wilson, \textit{Waste Not, Want Not: Food Preservation in Britain from Early Times to the Present Day}, (Edinburgh University Press, 1991) 128; Hooker, \textit{Food and Drink in America}, 214; Beam, \textit{A Maine Hamlet}, 64; Wirt Mineau, (b. 1878) interviewed by Helen McCann White, 1955, p. 5, OHI, FHS.

\textsuperscript{95}Conlin, "Old Boy, Did You Get Enough of Pie?" 167-68; John Sharpe (b. 1881), interviewed by Shirley Lillian, 1970, p. 621029, transcript (LLC) (MFC); James Shea interviewed by David Currier, 1970, pp. 7-8, transcript, (LLC) (MFC).

\textsuperscript{96} Thoreau and Cramer, \textit{The Maine Woods}, 17.

\textsuperscript{97} Moore, \textit{Capitalism in the Web of Life}, 122-123.

\textsuperscript{98} Woods and Mansfield, \textit{Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen}, 36-37.
work their way out of poverty. In the grand scheme of the American industrial economy, however, the studies were designed to figure out how to get as much labor out of workers' bodies for as long as possible, for as little money as possible. Giving little heed to cultural dietary discrepancies, Atwater and his colleagues "gave the highest praise to those who just met the standard [nutritional] requirements at the lowest cost." In their conclusions they often blamed the poor for their own nutritional plight. In their study of poor Yankee and immigrant loggers, the scientists found a praiseworthy example of perfect diets, perfect food distribution, and perfect physical fitness.

The scientists' accounts of the amount of calories, carbohydrates, fat, protein, water, "minerals," and nitrogen found in food were generally accurate, but the science of the time had virtually no understanding of vitamins and little understanding of essential amino acids. The scientists cautioned American consumers not to spend too much money on green vegetables, argued tomatoes were good for nothing but flavor, and promoted the use of refined white flour over what we now know to be healthier options. One historian suggested that "if America turned en masse to follow [the USDA scientists'] advice, rickets, beri-beri, scurvy, and other vitamin-deficiency diseases may have reached epidemic proportions."

In the context of the USDA's larger goals, the purpose of the "Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen" was first, to quantify what many had assumed to be one of the most robust diets of one of the hardest working classes in the United States, and second, to show that a high level of

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99 Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 46; Cummings, The American and His Food, 125.
100 Cummings, The American and His Food, 128.
101 Levenstein, Revolution at the Table, 46-47.
102 Cummings, The American and His Food, 127.
103 Horowitz, Putting Meat on the American Table, 57; Cummings, The American and His Food, 130-131; Dirks, "Diet and Nutrition in Poor and Minority Communities," 83.
nutritional efficiency was possible in austere environments when free market processes dictated food distribution and preparation. As scientists at the end of the nineteenth-century began to discover that food contained quantifiable amounts of potential energy, measured in calories, they very quickly began to compare food to wood and coal. In the eyes of the USDA scientists, food's primary purpose was to allow for work, and studying the diet of hard workers might shed light on the amount of work that the human body was capable of. Improving the diet of Americans and making their bodies efficient for the sake of production was the goal of both private industry and the government in the Progressive Era. Atwater found that the "general principle" when it comes to proper diet is "that liberal food, large production, and higher wages go together." The efficacy of free market food distribution and preparation was assumed fact once the amount of food that loggers ate was recorded. Little heed was paid in this study to the nutritional plight of those poor farm families which likely surrounded the lumber camp.

To Atwater and the other government food scientists, humans were only "steam engines in breeches." In 1887 when Atwater was beginning his work on food he found that healthy human bodies were better at converting the potential energy of food into work than were horses, and oxen or even "the most efficient steam engines." In popular publications, Atwater consistently reported the highest calorie expenditure that the USDA had found to date, a number that continued to


106 Atwater, "What the Coming Man Will Eat," 497-498.


increase up until the results of "Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen" was published.\textsuperscript{109} With a sense of pride, Atwater proclaimed how rigorously the American body could work. As the science of nutrition developed and was disseminated in scientific and popular literature, Americans began to see their food and their digestive processes as something apart from themselves; a part of nature that could be improved and adjusted for the sake of production.\textsuperscript{110}

The "Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen" was conducted like many of the other studies the USDA did around this same time. The researchers measured the weight and cost of food before consumption, considering any leftovers. The amount of protein, carbohydrates, fat, and overall calories in all the different foodstuffs that loggers ate were measured and recorded. With this information, the scientists deduced the composition of what was consumed. The logging camp was a perfect place for a dietary study like this because the isolation of camp meant that workers had no access to outside provisions. Woods and Mansfield conducted five dietary studies in the camp involving forty-seven men. These studies lasted from six to sixteen days. The scientists also conducted six digestion experiments that recorded the consumption and defecation activities of six workers who were "typical of the camp in vigor … the amount … they ate, and in their capacity for work."\textsuperscript{111} The men were for the most part from 25-30 years old, of good working weight … and were an active, rugged set of men," the study declared.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{109} Atwater, "The Potential Energy of Food," 398.

\textsuperscript{110} Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature" 90.

\textsuperscript{111} Woods and Mansfield, \textit{Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen}, 36, 84. From a modern perspective the studies are flawed in several ways but not so much so that the historian cannot draw any conclusions from them. The scientists understanding of the importance of vitamins and the amino acid content of proteins was lacking. They relied on accurate calorie bomb measurements and their understanding of the protein and carbohydrate compositions of food were trustworthy, however.

These loggers were some of the hardest workers that the USDA studied. On average workers ate 6,995 calories a day. This was more than German and Russian loggers and American Football players who ate 6,015, 5,283, and 6,590 calories respectively.\textsuperscript{113} In "Study 390" workers ate a high of 8,198 calories a day, which included 1.83 pounds of meat, 0.31 pounds dairy and lard, 1.19 pounds cereals, 0.40 pounds sugar, 0.68 pounds beans, 1.24 pounds vegetables, and 0.35 pounds fruit or jelly; around 6 pounds of food total.\textsuperscript{114} No other dietary study in the first half of the twentieth-century found numbers this high.\textsuperscript{115}

Despite the isolation of the camp, the food was as varied as the food of people who lived closer to markets. Typical dishes were baked beans, biscuits, cold meats, sugar cookies, doughnuts, stewed prunes, mashed potatoes, mashed turnips, boiled fish, regular and ginger bread, roast beef, beef smother, cake, and vegetable soup. These dishes were prepared in a way that made them easy to consume quickly as workers could not afford to spend time and energy chewing tough, dense foods during meal times. Depending on their location some camps had access to more complex, easy to consume dishes like pies, macaroni, puddings, custards, and chocolate.\textsuperscript{116} This variation in food was demanded by the workers, who often saw "[e]ating … [a]s the chief amusement in the lumber camp."\textsuperscript{117} Ten-and-a-half to 16.1\% of the food consumed was vegetable products, foods that were

\textsuperscript{113} Woods and Mansfield, \textit{Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen}, 30, 59.

\textsuperscript{114} Woods, \textit{Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen}, 17. Other camps of the era had access to more complex dishes like macaroni, puddings, custards, and chocolate. Conlin, "Old Boy, Did You Get Enough of Pie," 167.

\textsuperscript{115} M. J. Karvonen and Osmo Turpeinen, "Consumption and Selection of Food in Competitive Lumber Work" \textit{Journal of Applied Physiology} 6 no.10 (1954): 609.

\textsuperscript{116} Conlin, "Old Boy, Did You Get Enough of Pie," 167.

\textsuperscript{117} A Tenderfoot at Hamlin's: Adventures of A 'City Feller' In A Maine Logging Camp," \textit{Lewiston Journal: Illustrated Magazine}, (January 13-17, 1906)
often absent in the diets of Northern Forest farmers in the winter. Workers ate on average 337g of fat and 812g of carbohydrates a day both of which were easy to digest and energy dense.118

The scientists found that the amount of food consumed was in proportion to the "amount and kind of work performed" and industrial forest products production was very difficult work.119 As late as 1951 a study showed "that the pulpwood cutter used his axe almost half of his working time; the saw log cutter used his about one-third."120 Axes ranged from 2.5 to four pounds.121 With a typical 2 pounds axe working at a moderate rate of thirty-five swings a minute a worker burned about ten calories per minute, at fifty strokes the number rose to 19.3. Bucking logs took 8.6 calories a minute, trimming 8.4, barking 8, and carrying or dragging logs 12.1. Simply walking on hard packed snow is two times as energy intensive as walking on normal terrain and walking in loose snow with a 44 pounds load requires 20.2 calories per minute.122 For comparison, mining coal took 6.1 calories per minute, laying bricks four, and typing about 1.4.123 During the winter energy expenditures increased by as much as 5% because of the cold and because of wet and heavy clothes. Work days were typically from sun up to sun down, six days a week but river drivers and teamsters worked longer.124 Cross-cut saws may have decreased calories per minute expenditures but they


119 Woods, Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen, 8.


124 W.L. Sykes to D. H. Dorr, February, 3 1919. Emporium Forest Company Records Box 13 Adirondack Museum; Asa Flagg (b. 1898), interviewed by Rhoda Mitchell, 1970, p. 5750013, 57500134, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Arnold Hall (b. 1892),
increased expected production quotas forcing workers to do more work in a shorter period. The average man on a 3,000 calorie diet can produce a little less than one horsepower per day. The output of the hardest working loggers was 2.5. Importantly, the government study made no mention of any negative health effects of logging work, but insisted that "[t]he general health of the men in the studies recorded remained good" and that their work environment was "favorable to health." 

Piecework, a typical scheme for paying workers in pulp wood camps, increased energy expenditures to the point of physiological injury. One of the most important effects of the transition to pulpwood cutting was that long logs, which had been cut into twelve foot lengths or longer, began to be cut into four foot lengths. This change allowed for less log jams on the river drives, but it also made the wood manageable for a single man to move. Where as in long log cuts, horses were required to move all wood, on pulp cuts, one worker with the aid of pulp hooks could be assigned to move piles of four foot wood short distances, for example, from a yard into a train car or a river.

Piecework on pulp operations drove cutters to skip breaks and work longer hours sometimes until they were hot, sick and delirious. One Canadian worker reported, "I nearly killed myself making eight-foot piles [of pulp wood] … I found myself crying, it was such strenuous work. Once I was off work for two weeks, I strained myself so badly." Peer pressure was physically

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127 Woods, Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen, 33.

oppressive, as a logger named Gerry Fortin remembered, "I went at it just like a maniac, anxious to show I could hold my own with the old-timers. But I soon started to slow up, until I couldn’t even move my arms. Each morning it took me longer before I could really get going. Then I became swollen all over." Fortin worked himself sick that season and had to quit. One worker remembered that, when working in negative forty-degree weather, "[I had to] work so hard to keep from freezing to death that [I] pretty near worked myself to death."130 Worker turnover was high in piecework camps.131

Hard work and long hours could hamper the digestive processes, subverting the system of food wages that was meant to increase output. During intense physical work, blood flow in the digestive system decreases causing improper absorption of nutrients and sometimes diarrhea.132 Another possible health problem from overwork was rhabdomyolysis, a condition brought on by broken down muscle tissue causing damage to the kidneys. Rhabdomyolysis symptoms were not reported in logging camps, but the disease was not well understood or diagnosed until 1908. Most workers did not work this hard, but they risked poor pay.133 Sometimes workers were simply too tired to eat. Frederick Burke remembered times "when I come in, I was so tired I couldn't eat

129 Quoted in Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses, 55, 76.
131 Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses, 75.
133 Karvonen and Turpeinen, "Consumption and Selection of Food in Competitive Lumber Work" 603-604; Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses, 42.
supper. I had to go right to bed. And a lot of other men, bigger men and rugged men than me couldn't eat no supper, they'd go to bed."\textsuperscript{134}

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River drivers had simpler food than loggers because of the ad hoc nature of a constantly moving kitchen that had to follow the drive, but these workers typically ate four meals a day. During the drive, operators spend 25% less money on food likely because the food was less varied than in camp. Typical meals on the drive included baked beans, biscuits, and some type of cookie or pie.\textsuperscript{135} The work of the drive was multifaceted and involved, rowing, swimming, wading, and moving logs, typically without horses, in cold, flowing, early spring water. It was considered by the USDA scientists to be more difficult than winter logging, even though workers consumed less total calories doing this work. The work was so vigorous that the likelihood of workers falling asleep before eating their last meal was greatest on the drive.

One aspect of the drive required more muscular power and endurance than any other: the headworks. As the logs made their way down river they would sometimes have to travel through the dead water of a lake or a pond before they got to the mill. At these points the free-floating logs were corralled into a boom and then moved by a simple machine known as a headworks. Like the parbuckling system, the headworks system was a technology borrowed from the maritime trades. A wooden raft about forty to fifty square feet was constructed with a capstan with 300 or 400 feet of heavy rope connected to the boom holding the logs. The raft would be anchored with a large ship anchor several hundred feet away from the boom and men would wind the capstan pulling the

\textsuperscript{134} Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702118, (LLC) (MFC).

\textsuperscript{135} Hochschild, Lumberjacks and Rivermen, 26.
boom of logs towards the headworks. Once they pulled the boom to the headworks, the rope would be unspooled, the headworks and anchor would be moved by a bateau further across the body of water, and the process would be repeated, effectively pulling a boom full of as much as three-million board feet of logs—or 3,000 tons—up to twenty miles, with muscle power alone. The wind obviously helped or hindered the transportation process, one worker remembered if "you didn't have a head wind you wouldn't ever stop [winding the capstan] till you got … your logs down to … where you was supposed to take them." Often these workers were paid twice as much as a normal river driver—$2 or $2.50 a day—because the work was so grueling. A headworks device was patented in 1824 by Henry Babb of Cumberland, Maine but the process was in use more than a decade before then. The patent meant very little as most crews made their own headworks on site. Headworks were employed in the Northern Forest up until the beginning of World War I meaning that for nearly 100 years this was judged an effective way to move logs (Figure 1).

On the headworks, workers worked in multiple shifts winding the capstan twenty-four hours a day until the logs made their way to the next outlet. A small bunkhouse was sometimes built on the raft for resting, but some workers still fell asleep while at the capstan. One observer wrote about the process in 1864 "[t]he labor is incessant; night and day the capstan bars go round; fresh men take the place of the weary; every man walks as long as he can endure it. Some will hold out three days and four nights without stopping, except to eat, and without sleep, except the doze into which they fall as they tread around the capstan." One observer commented "[h]ere is where men make horses

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of themselves for nine shillings a day." A former logger remembers "the work often made the men literally sick, and when the weather was cold and raw, the frozen hawser cut and split their hands. Sometimes a man would stumble in the coil of the rope, and go overboard. If the water was cold he might well die there ..." Before camps became dry around 1850 men on the headworks were given rum rations to numb the physical pain and monotony of the work.

* * *

Logging work transformed workers' bodies. Most loggers were not large men. Woods and Mansfield's crew was "of good, working weight, generally about 160 pounds" each and only the camp blacksmith was over 200 pounds. Some loggers reported gaining weight in camp. Logger Julius Joel recalled gaining twenty pounds his first season. Similarly, Maine logger Lincoln Toothaker wrote his wife, "I am just as big as any of [the other workers] or will be soon. Well we have just finished supper and I am unable to write much more for I am full as a tick. ... I have gained 10 pounds in the last two days."

Most loggers did not gain weight. Instead they would have gained lean muscle mass and lost fat in near equal proportion. In Woods and Mansfield's study, workers ate between 152 and 247g of protein per day, that is more than any other worker examined by the USDA and at minimum 2.7

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times the modern recommended daily allowance. One-third to a half of this protein was animal protein that has all the amino acids required for muscle growth. A meat heavy diet like this "increase both the amount of work (through iron, which will prevent anemia) and the ability to do more work (by staving off infection through greater zinc absorption)." Furthermore, abundant protein and muscular labor has been proven to "increase muscle mass and strength gains" making the worker more efficient as time progressed. Workers' high nutrient absorption rates—85.3% for protein, 97.4% for fat, 98% for carbohydrates, and 92.6% for calories in general—were indicative of their general health.

A lean, resilient, muscular body would have been a requirement of the job because, as one logger put it, the men "didn't work with brute strength; they worked with skill." Loggers were described as "clean-built" and "precise" with "small hands and feet." The same author described another logger as somewhat bulky, but emphasized his streamlined physique: "Thorpe was built on the true athletic lines, broad, straight shoulders, narrow flanks, long, clean, smooth muscles." After a season in the woods, muscles were not bigger but were "toughened and quickened by the active, strenuous … work." Other sources described workers as raw-boned or having "muscles like wire


147 William B. Laughead (b. 1885), interviewed by W.H. Hutchinson, September 17th and 18th, 1957, pp. 48-49, transcript, OHI, FHS; Karvonen and Turpeinen, "Consumption and Selection of Food in Competitive Lumber Work," 610.
Reflecting on his future as a laborer Walter Wyckoff wrote that in a year or two his "muscles would be like iron and would lend themselves with far greater ease to the stress of manual labor. … [they would be] hardened in fiber to the point of high efficiency." Later he described a logger named Dick the Kid as "a good six feet of height and straight as the trees among which he worked. Through the covering of rough clothes you felt with delight the curves of his splendid figure, and the sinewy muscles in symmetrical development.

Consecutive seasons of logging degraded even the healthiest workers, however. Apart from injuries caused by catastrophic problems in the labor process, loggers would have been susceptible to several musculoskeletal disorders like carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, thoracic outlet syndrome, back pain, and degenerative disc disease. Chronic pain was a problem for loggers. Pain medication and alcohol numbed the mental and physical pain of work, and loggers consumed a lot of both, as we will see in the next chapter. Many young loggers even "in the full pride of strength bore an awkwardness and an angularity of motion." Among loggers fifty-five was old age and these older workers were noticeably disfigured.

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149 Wyckoff, The Workers… the East, 72-73.

150 Wyckoff, The Workers… the East, 216.


153 Wyckoff, The Workers… the East, 137; Hillard, "Cutting off the Canadians," 70-71; Beam, A Maine Hamlet, 54.
Though workers were not big men, they imagined that the most superior loggers had large powerful frames capable of doing a tremendous amount of work. For example, Adirondack loggers told stories about a romanticized, mythical character named Hadie Brown. Hadie was allegedly between six foot or six foot eight inches and weighed 200 to 250 pounds, well above average for young loggers. In the stories told about him, Hadie was superhumanly strong. One story recounts that when attempting to lift a two-year-old bull on to his shoulders, Hadie pulled its tail right off or when rowing out to break a log jam, he snapped the oars in two. Famous French-Canadian lumberjack and strongman Louis Cyr also seemed to prove that the more someone ate, and the bigger they were, the more work they could perform. Cyr and representations of his body will be discussed more in the second half of this dissertation. 154

Not all forest products workers would have understood the dietary complexities discussed above, but they understood the importance of food wages, as the ubiquitous meal time "silence rule" exemplified. Historians disagree on why workers were often mute when they ate. 155 The rule may have been enforced by the men themselves. Meal times could be as short as ten minutes and workers had to eat up to 3,000 calories per meal. 156 When asked why workers were quiet at the table one former logger simply said "so they could eat." 157 Much of what rural people knew about muscle


157 The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010.
power came from draft animals and it was assumed that the bigger the animal was, and the more work it could do, the more it needed to eat.\textsuperscript{158}

Pushing their bodies to maximum physical potential day after day created deep hunger. This was not "a hunger which comes from a day's shooting, and which whets your appetite to the point of nice discriminations in an epicure's dinner," Wyckoff wrote, but one of desperation, "a ravenous hunger which fits you to fight like a beast for your food, and to eat it raw and in brutal haste for gratification."\textsuperscript{159} Another worker found that "[h]unger takes on a different aspect in the woods it becomes the real absolute starvation of the world, a veritable savageness for food, such as no city park or street can give."\textsuperscript{160} Management and labor agreed that the silence rule allowed workers to consume maximum calories during meal time so they could work to their maximum potential.

Woods and Mansfield understood that food wages were an important part of the implicit negotiations between workers and management. They wrote "[t]he demand for labor … [has] caused competition not only in wages but also in the food and care of the men while in the woods." Lingerling paternalism in the industry dictated that workers were rarely charged for food. The scientists calculated that it cost the operator an average of $0.256 a day for food per man, but this calculation ignored the cost of freight, tote, preparation, service, and cleaning after meals.\textsuperscript{161} If the average cost of transportation and preparation is roughly reconstructed the figure comes to about


\textsuperscript{159} Wyckoff, \textit{The Workers… the East}, 49.

\textsuperscript{160} "A Tenderfoot at Hamlin's"

\textsuperscript{161} These numbers are all calculated without the costs of provisions during the river drive. Woods, \textit{Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen}, 7, 16, 30; Conlin, "Old Boy, Did You Get Enough of Pie," 183-184.
$0.307 a day per man.\footnote{162} Each worker was in fact costing the operator about $0.563 a day in food, a figure that other accounts agree with (a forestry student estimated the real cost for food per man per day at a similar camp to be $0.55).\footnote{163}

The workers in the USDA study had wages between $26 and $30 a month with the average around $28, typical for loggers in the Northern Forest.\footnote{164} Considering actual food costs, loggers in this study made an average of $42.64 a month. Even with this new figure, the average logger made fourteen dollars less per month than the average factory worker. But during this period average unskilled workers made $40.84 and average farm workers only $22.11, both spending on average 40-50% of their income on the family's food. In 1902 farm work with board paid an average of $16.40 a month nationwide, $19.08 in the Northeast, and $20.84 in Maine.\footnote{165} When food costs are added to

\footnote{162} Using the average amount of food eaten by each man in each study (5.822, 4.578, 2.626, and, 5.621 pounds a day), not counting food waste, it is possible to calculate how much the freight costs were for food for each man for each day based on a 26-day work month. Woods and Mansfield wrote that the camp was located near Lake Onawa with the closes railway station, the Onawa station, fifteen miles to the south. They also mention the food was purchased in Bangor. Freight on the Bangor and Aroostook and the Canadian Pacific were an average of 1.343 and 0.48 cents per ton per mile respectively during the years of the studies. The shipment from Bangor had to travel 49.3 miles north on the Bangor and Aroostook line and fourteen miles west on the Canadian Pacific. That means it cost roughly $0.037 to transport one pound of food.

The food also had to be hauled into camp and according to the study there was one man who made regular trips to the train station who made $1.08 a day or $28.08 a month. There was also one cook working at $30 a month, and although the study doesn’t say how many cookees, or assistant chefs, there were, it suggests there was at least two. Assuming there were two cookees, working for $26 a month I divided the wages of the tote man, and the cooking team by the number of men in the studies to get the amount that the company spend on this aspect of preparation and transport and added to this the cost per pound of food transported by train. I did this for all four diet studies to get $0.307 per man per day for food transportation and preparation. This does not include the cost of the depreciation of the horses for making the trips to the station regularly. Omer Lavalle, Canadian Pacific to the East: The International of Maine Division (Ottawa, ON: Bytown Railway Society, 2007) front cover image, "The Short Line and its Connections, 1919"; Jerry Angier and Herb Cleaves Bangor and Aroostook, the Maine Railroad (Littleton, MA: Flying Yankee Enterprises, 198) 26; Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioners of the State of Maine, (Augusta: Burleigh & Flynt, printers to the State, 1905) 17.


loggers' wages they were making about double what they might have in similar occupations. Workers in camp were also protected from volatility in food prices.  

Despite the amount of food provided to workers, or the cost of that food, the rigor of the work meant that the only nine loggers in the study who worked the entire season, from the start of cutting in December to the end of the drive in May or June, lost from one to nine pounds with an average loss of six pounds (one of the nine workers gained a pound). Much of this loss was blamed on the harsh conditions of the river drive where hours were longest and work was hardest. These six pounds were lost even though workers were eating between 6,000 and 8,000 calories a day. These six pounds of flesh were parts of workers' bodies that became, in the eyes of operators and perhaps even workers themselves, part of nature that could be consistently exploited for profit. These six pounds allowed operators to avoid investing in high capital steam and gas engines.

Conclusion

After spending time as a laborer, Walter Wyckoff deconstructed the relationship between the free labor system and the body. Writing for manual laborers collectively he said, "[when] selling our muscular strength in the open market for what it will bring, we sell it under peculiar conditions. It is all the capital that we have. We have no reserve means of subsistence, and cannot … stand off for a 'reserve price.' We sell under the necessity of satisfying imminent hunger. Broadly speaking, we must

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166 Quoted in Douglas, Real Wages in the United States, 19-42.
167 Woods, Studies of the Food of Maine Lumbermen, 32.
sell our labor or starve.” Wyckoff was right, but even he did not see that workers might sell their labor at a "fair price," work harder and eat more than any other worker in America, and still starve.

Trees, snow, and the landscape were all obstacles that workers had to overcome to make a wage, but their bodies were also obstacles. In the transition into industrial modernity, many workers had to work harder and longer to make a living and human bodies resisted these speedups. Still workers had to "labor or starve." Those who could survive season after season of rigorous work in large camps with an adequate supply of food made their bodies into industrial power sources, and came closer to being a class of industrial wage workers. Those rural people who logged in small operations or from the farm, with meager or unpredictable rations remained pre-industrial workers with pre-industrial bodies.

Not surprisingly, the workers themselves and their great feats of labor in the woods were often described as natural spectacles, apart and different from the work of people in settled areas. The work was grueling but food maintained the bodies that industry destroyed, at least in the short term. Premodern food wages remained and important part of labor relations and allowed the labor process to industrialize. As Wyckoff suggested workers were always in a precarious position, close to injury, unemployment, poverty, and hunger.

The food wage system, like ice roads, exemplifies perfectly how the Northern Forest could industrialize without the widespread implementation of fossil fuels. The contracting system, along with the long tradition of farming-logging meant that all that was required for industrialization in this area was the Nature/Society dichotomy which demanded unlimited profit from whatever Cheap Nature was exploitable. When the work of food sciences made the digestive properties part of nature, this nature was worked more than it was compensated, to the point where workers who

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168 Wyckoff, The Workers... the East, 61-62.
worked all season lost an average of six pounds. This was an externality not kept track of on the books of operators and was a fundamentally violent consequence of the exploitation of Cheap Nature under industrial capitalism.\(^{169}\)

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Partaking in the food that was delivered into the wilderness by operators was one step that many farmers and sons of farmers made into the industrial world. These workers could and often did retreat into agriculture, seasonally or sometimes for good, finding the work in camp too rigorous for their bodies. The next chapter shows the steps that some workers took, willingly and unwillingly, to cement themselves into a class of industrial, wage working lumberjacks.

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Chapter 3, Food and the Body as Cheap Nature, Figures

Figure 1.

Chapter 4- "A drunk, a woodsman, a lousy woodsman …" Class and the Spatiality of Production and Consumption in the Hinterland

In 1927, twelve-year-old Frederick Burke started working in his family’s small logging operation in the wilderness of northern Maine. As he got older he worked for jobbers with seven or ten other men, and later in his life he worked in the large camps of the Great Northern Paper Company with a hundred other workers. Though he had the option of attending school, Burke, like many young men in the region, was eager to become a lumberjack. He remembered, "[my family] was trying to keep me in school and I was trying to get out of school [to] work in the woods with my father." For other children, September meant a return to school, for Burke it meant a return to the camp. Admittedly he was "quite a booser" when he worked in the woods. "I was just a young feller" he recalled "[b]ut that was the only way I could make a living, going in the woods, as I say I was an alcoholic. I used to go up in the wood with them [older workers] and come down and drink booze with … [them]." During season ending sprees in Bangor he bought Right Hand Brand "pure alcohol" that was 190 proof at $0.50 a pint, about half a days' wage for him. In their most desperate states of alcoholic dependence, workers like Burke attempted to bring drink back into camps with them after a drinking spree which had lasted the entire summer. Alcohol was not allowed in most camps so some worker sneaked into the kitchen and drank the cook's cooking extracts which were loaded with alcohol for preservation (Figure 1). Because camps were dry, the move back to the woods after a spree prompted workers like Burke to get sober for a time, at least until the log drive was over and they could have another spree.

1 Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702114, (LLC) (MFC); Andrew Chase (b. 1888) interviewed by Linda Edgerly, 1971, p. 697001, transcript, (LLC) (MFC).

2 Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702010, 702103, 702026, (LLC) (MFC).

3 Wirt Mineau, (b. 1878) interviewed by Helen McCann White, 1955, p. 6, (FHS) (OHIC); Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 6980106, transcript, (LLC) (MFC).
Decades of seasonal cycles of wage work combined with the spending and drinking sprees cemented Burke’s position as a lumberjack but took a toll on his health. Old men, enfeebled by alcoholism and a life of grueling labor, could be found in some camps doing light chores or mending roads because they were never able to "keep their stake" or break the cycle of intense work followed by intense recreation and spending. To sociologist and one-time logger Walter Wyckoff, these workers looked like strong, free-laborers on the outside "[b]ut confronted with temptations, the difficulties of their inner life, there they had no strength; and lust and passion mastered them. … Here, in respect of mastery, they were slaves."

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Many rural Americans experienced the transition to industrial capitalism working in remote labor camps, yet historians have hardly studied these sites. When the historian's gaze is turned to these unique spaces the social history of industrialization looks very different than it does in urban industries. Loggers were ideal free laborers according to the rhetoric of the time. Free born, native and immigrant, non-black men, loggers engaged in work out of their own volition and supposedly reaped all the profits from their labor. The seasonal cycles of labor and leisure that arose in intensive logging camps, dictated the extent to which these workers were actually free, though these

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6 Jean Burnet argued that "social scientist have found it easier to deal with communities on the one hand and migration on the other than with something in between" like labor camps. Labor camps were, according to Burnet "a social form that has in many of its characteristic been widespread and persistent but that has no fixed location." Camps temporary status and remote location obfuscate work culture. The small, non-corporate camps that typified lumber production in the Northern Forest rarely kept good records, making life within them difficult to reconstruct. Edmund W. Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man; A Study of Work and Pay in the Camps of Canada, 1903-1914*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972) vii; Rolf Knight, *Work Camps and Company Towns in Canada and the U.S.: An Annotated Bibliography*, (Vancouver, B.C.: New Star Books, 1975); Adam Tomczik, ""He-men Could Talk to He-men in He-man Language": Lumberjack Work Culture in Maine and Minnesota, 1840–1940," *Historian* 70, no. 4 (2008): 697-715.

cycles simultaneously defined these laborers as a coherent class. These cycles were some of the few "common experiences" that loggers shared regardless of the scale of the operations in which they worked. Temporal and spatial patterns of work, along with various consumption rituals that were interdependent with different times and spaces, became integral to the logging work culture and made it easy for workers and jobbers to be trapped in cycles of debt leading to unfree labor.

These cycles were made possible by credit, the invisible lifeblood of the camps that made both production and consumption possible. Credit extended down from financiers, to contractors, to individual workers, who used their share to turn "future income into present consumption." Some of workers' consumption, particularly at small camp stores, aided production, but much of it went to gratify immediate needs and wants both inside and outside the camps.

At different times in the logging season these workers were released from work, received accumulated wages, and participated in spectacles of consumption known as "spending sprees." These spectacles exemplified a blending of two ethos. The first was an agricultural/artisanal "producerist" ethos typical of the first half of the nineteenth-century, in which labor was defined by

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9 Even after the Civil War, the relationship between slavery and freedom was not necessarily dichotomous. Instead within the supposedly new "free labor" market there emerged a spectrum along which laborers could be more or less free. If a particular set of circumstances arose, a worker could become a virtual slave. Robert J. Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 3, 18; Scott A. Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America*, (Harvard University Press, 2005) 64, 67. For logging workers by the turn of the century, consumption, like production, was no longer an activity that revolved around the home, family or farm exclusively. As some workers transitioned from family farmer to bachelor laborer, these workers' place in the world became defined as much by what they could buy as what they could make. Beside the mail order catalog, the study of consumption is "oddly absent from the narrative" of the transition to capitalism in rural parts of the United States. Béatrice Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists the Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada*, (Toronto [Ont.]: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 202, 203, 8-9.


11 These specific patterns of movement have been noted by other historians but not elaborated upon. For example, Ian Radforth found that worker's "contact with the world beyond the workplace changed with the season; most spent the winter in remote districts, cut off from families and taverns, whereas in spring and summer the drivers and raftsmen had access to liquor and opportunities for conflict in the towns and villages they passed through as they moved downstream." Ian Radforth, "The Shanty men," in Paul Craven ed., *Labouring Lives: Work and Workers in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1995) 204-277.
what it could produce. The second was a new industrial "consumerist" ethos, where labor's power was manifested in what it could buy. Wage-working loggers who only recently immerged from the agricultural world held both of these ethos simultaneously and the result of this blend was that workers lived austerely and worked intensively for a time, and then spent in lavish ways, were left destitute and in poor health, forcing them back to the camps and then on to another spree, entrenching them in the cycle of production and consumption that eventually came to define lumberjacks as a class.

The cycles that trapped Burke and other loggers were common in the forest products industry of the Northern Forest, the Lake States, and the Pacific Northwest, places where forest product production was dependent on snow, and was thus seasonal. But these cycles of production and consumption were not unique to forest products production. Wherever workers labored in an austere environment for prolonged periods of time, and then moved to a place with more consumer choice, a type of spending spree took place. Cowboys, miners, fur traders, ice cutters, railroad workers, seamen, miners, construction and demolition workers, prisoners, soldiers, cannery workers, and farm workers participated in similar cycles.

These cycles of production and consumption demonstrate a type of coercion that was sometimes detached from working agreements or labor laws, and sometimes aided by them. This coercion was caused by what I call a spatiality of production and consumption: a systematic cycle of work and spending that involved physical movement from a space of production to a space of leisure along with cycles of debt. Most often, the spatiality of production and consumption simply

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prescribed a path of least resistance, provoking workers to continue a precarious existence in which they were dependent on a boss and a healthy forest products market for their livelihoods. At its most extreme, however, this system caused physical and psychological dependence on alcohol or ensnared entire families in debt peonage.

Though the spatiality of production and consumption was at odds with workers’ best interests, when it was repeated several times in a workers’ life it became a crucial part of class identity. The spatiality of production and consumption was one of the most important ways that rural producers cut their ties with agriculture to become part of the industrial working-class.14 When workers fell deep into physical and psychological dependence on the routines of their class, their bodies could be exploited consistently for a profit. They seemed to be propelled by forces outside their control as Wyckoff noted; their own nature enslaved them. Outsiders and elites drew on their understanding of the spatiality of production and consumption to characterize lumberjacks as different and more naturally masculine than plotting, meticulous, urban, corporate workers.15

"Everything bad that I can think of": Intimate Camp Culture

From about 1850 to 1900, during the spruce era of logging, the young able-bodied sons of farmers who had provided the labor for the forest products industry since the Colonial Era were moving away from the Northeast typically to factories further south or out West. While Yankee

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farmers maintained skilled positions in camps, operators increasingly drew on European immigrants and American migrant workers to do the jobs that required the least amount of skills. The dependence on immigrant and migrant labor only increased at the turn of the century as the pulp industry boomed and labor demands spiked. By 1890 French Canadians had taken American farmers' places in the logging camps. In 1913 an article in the Bangor Daily News had the following headline, "Congress of all Nations in Maine's Lumber Camps, Russians, Poles, Finns, Swedes and Lithuanians Have Succeeded the Canadians Who Displaced Native Loggers." Along with immigrants, roughly three-million migrant or "hobo" workers, both foreign and domestic, participated in a "fixed [annual] rotation, [which preceded] … from the lumber camps, outward to the railway works and thence to the mines and mills of industrial centers."  

According to one Maine worker, after the turn of the century, "you got quite a variety a' men" in camps that had, in previous generations, not been found in the woods of the Northeast. These were men, foreign and domestic, who were "in their prime—men twenty, twenty-five, thirty years old. Just hard as nails … [many of whom] had just two thoughts in mind … rum and women," one worker recalled. This new generation of loggers had few attachments to the area and few dependents.

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16 Hal S. Barron, Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England, (Cambridge University Press, 1988) xi, 7-11, 30, 106; Radforth found that "The owners of the large firms were almost all English-speaking, whereas some of the smaller firms were run by French Canadians." Radforth "The Shantymen" 208; Robert E. Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984) 55; United States Senate, Report of the Select Committee on Immigration and Naturalization: and testimony taken by the Committee on Immigration of the Senate and the Select Committee on Immigration and Naturalization of the House of Representatives Under Concurrent Resolution of March 12, 1890, (Washington: G.P.O., 1891) 324.


Strange new workers challenged decades old, Yankee, Protestant community norms. "You can't expect me to be much of a fellow hereafter," native Maine logger Lincoln Toothaker wrote to his wife from the Black Cat camp of western Maine, "[b]eing in such a crew of men as I have since the 15th of Dec. last … for they lie steal, swear and everything bad that I can think of." For Lincoln, the son of a small farmer-logger, the Black Cat camp was an initiation into the culture of industrial wage work, a life that was very different from the small-scale family production his grandfather had participated in. Lincoln observed himself changing because of the influence of these new workers writing "they are liable to spoil the Person after he had been virtuous all his life."19

This new working population created an environment that, at the time, was seen as inappropriate for women. By the 1890s, "women were unknown" in larger camps.20 Camp visitor Barbara Bird reported that living in the woods with strange men was taboo, "[a] lady … did not do such things!"21 Prospective female workers or visitors might have had a real reason to have been worried, as one male worker made clear:

H: "I worked one place where they had a woman cook. [the interviewer's thoughts next] (Here, he pauses awhile, deciding what's appropriate to say, so I prodded him by asking, bluntly:)
B: Did the men ever pester her while she was there?
H: No her husband was right there … He was the boss.

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H: Yeah, but I got; my leg hurt, and I stayed in one day. (B. Uh-huh.)
(pause) Jesus Christ, y'know uh, I think I could have screwed her, but
I didn't dare to try … her husband was in the woods. … If I'd said
anything to her, and she wasn't … willing, why, she could have told
him, see?  

Workers admitted that "they wouldn't dare to bring a nice woman in there where there was thirty
good men. … She'd be so nervous she couldn't sleep nights." Another worker made a similar
comment about a jobber's wife who stayed in camp apart from the other men, "[s]he didn't want to
stay alone and I can't tell the rest on tape."  

Even though there was a lack of women in camps, the isolation may have allowed for more
sexual freedom among the men than could be found in settled farm communities. Migrant work
cultures drew men with aversions to normal family life and those who might have been ostracized
from their communities because of transgressive sexuality. Constant mobility meant workers were
"ever surrounded with a cloak of anonymity" and it was "not easy to get this class of men into a
position where they fear any stigma." Famous sexologist Alfred Kinsey showed that, while rural
people did not have more same-sex relations than urban dwellers, "the highest frequencies of the
homosexual … secured anywhere have been in particularly rural communities in some of the more

24 Erroll "John" Haley (b. 1898) interviewed by Stephen Richard, 1980, transcript, p. 1384125, (LLC) (MFC); The Malone
University Press, 1995); Chauncey demonstrates that sailors visiting NYC regularly had sex with male prostitutes and sailors on ships
likely had sex with each other. Chauncey, Gay New York, 82-83; George Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion?
Homosexual Identities and The Construction Of Sexual Boundaries In The World War One Era," Journal of Social History 19, no. 2
(1985): 189-211.
26 Peter Boag, Same-Sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in The Pacific Northwest, (University of California
Same-Sex Affairs, 40.
remote sections of the country … among ranchmen, cattle men, prospectors, lumber men and farming groups in general."28 Some unattached workers learned homosexual culture from the "schools of crime" fostered in prisons where they often found themselves after drinking sprees.29

There are records of intimate homosocial bonding in camps. Workers recounted a game called "hot pants" that involved removing one player's pants while others paddled or slapped them on the rear end.30 Some new workers were initiated into camps by being spanked with dried codfish. A game called "big horse," similar to leap frog, involved men mounting each other in the prone position and there was a modified version of tag called "chase the squirrel."31 There is also fleeting evidence of all male "stag dances."32

Before the 1930s, working-class men were less likely to associate same-sex activity with a permanent homosexual identity and were more accepting of certain same-sex relations or queer sexualities.33 When Maine logger Lee Roberts was asked about fellow workers' nicknames, he told of a man nicknamed Mrs. Butler, "Oh, yes Mrs. Butler drove team for us—yeh—yeh. … Well, Mrs. Butler was a big man[,] always wore a black cowboy hat … he … kinda talked like a woman—that's why he was named Mrs. Butler— yuh— kinda funny old fella." Roberts did not associate Butler's

29 Chauncey, Gay New York, 61; Boag, Same-Sex Affairs, 28.
33 Chauncey, Gay New York, 80-81.
feminine mannerism with poor ability at work and said that Butler, "done pretty well though yardin'— took very good care of his hosses."  

Camp sleeping arrangements would have allowed for homosexual activity. Two men often shared bunks. In small operations, it was common for relatives or friends to sleep together, but as operations scaled up this was not always possible and strangers became bunkmates. In 1880, seventeen-year-old Edwin H. Eddy visited one of his father's camps and wrote the following about sleeping arrangements:

on either sides [of the bunkhouse] were the beds for the men—One long bed on each side—the men slept head to the wall feet to aisle—the mattress was made of small spruce or fir boughs covered with one long blanket ... over the men who slept like so many clothes pins over the outside blankets sewn together as one. These beds were built about 3 ft. from the floor and in front of each bed was a long bench chair ... so when the men dressed or undressed they used the benches and either sat on the benches or beds during the evening. I cannot recall just how many men there were but I think between 25 and 30 ... The first night when[,] at 9 P.M[,] all were required to "turn in" as it was termed[,] the foreman said, "["Mr. Eddy I have only one extra bunk in my little place what about the boy? [meaning Eddy himself]" Then a man spoke and said "["give him to me Mr. Eddy[,] Joe and I can make room for him between us[")—so off with coat[,] vest[,] trousers and shoes and in I went Men to the right of me, men to the left of me and across the aisle another bed full the same way. Men tired with swinging axes etc[,] all day out doors were tired enough physically to sleep soundly—they had no mental strain so no exhausted nerves to keep them awake.

This type of arrangement consisting of: a long line of bunks; two men per bunk; bough, or hay mattresses; and one large thick continuous "spread" or "puff" blanket, some up to 30 feet long, was

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36 Edwin H. Eddy, (b.1863) "Lumber Camps (Recollections)" Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine. pg. 6-7.
common in camps into the 1930s (Figure 2). Many camps offered two of these "puff" blankets, one to go under the men and one over. These blankets were not cleaned often and took on a "heavy and musty" smell and some workers caught "abominable skin disease[s]" from them. The bed spreads and the cramped quarters meant men often entered by the foot of the bed and the bunks were therefore sometimes called "muzzle loaders."*

Before D.D.T. (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane), bed bugs and lice were consistent problems in camps. Adirondack worker Eddie Ashlaw remembered "[s]ome guys would be in the top bunk. They’d pick [lice] off and throw ‘em on the other guy. They’d pet ‘em awhile. Why, shit, there’s no need trying to get rid of them—too many!" French-Canadian immigrant worker Romeo Arsenault figured out that he could avoid lice and bedbugs by sleeping in the horse hovel because it was clean and warm.40

For young workers, there were other worries in the bunkhouse besides the pests. Maine worker Gerald Averill remembers a situation that was like Eddy's yet more nefarious. Right after he finished high school in the 1920s, he and a friend went into a camp for work and, Averill recalls,

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38 Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, 77.


"when I saw the greasy, bearded foreigner that I was supposed to turn in with and sensed a peculiar gleam in his eye, we both slipped outside and spend an uneasy night in a near-by sawdust pile." The "gleam" suggests that Averill feared something, perhaps violence, theft, or coerced sex. Another worker reported a similar incident, when he bunked with an older man, "I hated sleeping with him the first night—I wasn't only 15. I thought he was old—he was only 52, but he looked awful old to me then."42

Historians have found some evidence of same-sex relations in Pacific coast camps but the evidence is less clear in the Northeast.43 The isolation of the camps, and the time spent on the road between jobs, was often less intense for workers in the Northern Forest then it was for those in the Pacific Northwest. Many loggers simply had no same-sex desires. For these workers, heterosexual "marriage was a mark of full manhood, and manhood was a status to which [they] …urgently aspired."44 Most workers abstained from sex while in camp, and visited prostitutes, dated, or courted when in towns. Marriage among native workers often meant a change in occupation, typically into some ownership position (on a farm or in the woods) or into wage work that did not require such


grueling labor, danger, or isolation.45 A minority of workers who resigned to a life of forest products wage work also resigned to the bachelor life and some, fewer still, regularly engaged in same-sex activity. Direct evidence of same-sex activity in camps of the East, such as the following anecdote from a Canadian worker in Ontario, is rare:

We all lived together in the big cabins, … there were still a few old bed bunks with straw mattresses, on which two men slept side by side under one blanket. I was on the straw for a few nights. I slept with a quiet, decent fellow who was going to get married in the spring. Unfortunately, I guess in anticipation of the event, he lost control of himself during one night. Imagine! I woke up with this fellow busy giving me the works. Not my ring (my ring is intact to this day in spite of my many misadventures) but he was massaging both of us. We were in a top bunk. I couldn't move too much or everyone would know something was going on. I felt like a stupid ass trying to get rid of him without embarrassing him. He was so shy with me after that!46

Evidence from Northern Pacific logging work cultures show that when a sexual subculture did develop in lumber camps there developed also a sexual hierarchy that mimicked the workplace hierarchy. In camps, men known as "jockers" or "wolves" were sexually assertive, while "lambs" and "punks," often younger, less experienced boys and young men, were passive receivers, who played the female part in the sex act. These roles reflected the hierarchy of experience and skill in the workplace. The term punk was borrowed from prison sex culture and modified to serve as a low rank job title in logging camps (or perhaps the prisoners borrowed from logging work culture). A

45 Maine loggers Frank Carey and Andrew Chase both quit logging when they were married. Andrew Chase (b. 1888) interviewed by Linda Edgerly, 1971, p. 697008, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 698105, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Wyckoff, The Workers… the East, 193; Radforth writes "was sex a part of the nightly shanty routine? Probably not for the vast majority, but this question is difficult to answer." Radforth "The Shantymen," 230.

"whistle-punk" was a young man who tended the logging roads and signaled with a whistle to teamsters.

In some cases, punks and lambs hoped to grow out of that stage to become wolfs and jockers. Historian Peter Boag found one example of a young boy whose first sexual experience was being "molested" by a transient after sowing wheat in Kansas. This made him quit the transient life for a while, but he hit the road again as a grown man and took the role of a wolf/jocker, admitting that he now got "a certain pleasure out of the practice." Rising in the sexual hierarchy was typically a result of rising in the workplace hierarchy that was itself caused by workers growing older and gaining more experience. Same-sex sexual hierarchies were entrenched in the division of labor that came about because of industrialization.

Compensation and Camp Consumption

As the homosocial culture of the bunkhouse shows, a new intimate culture emerged in camp that was distinct from mainstream Northeastern culture. Unlike the stable farmer-loggers of the pre-1850s era, these new bachelor workers did not always have a desire to save and invest their money, nor were saving and investing institutions always available to them if they wanted to use them. Many

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47 Boag, Same-Sex Affairs, 29, 32-33;

48 DePastino, Citizen Hobo, 86; Marcus Rediker, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritine World, 1700-1750, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 291; Frank Tobias Higbie, Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880 –1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 123 - 27; There were also sexually reciprocal and emotional relationships that developed among men in camps. Sociologist Anderson called it "going 50-50" and explained that in this arrangement, each man would "take turns playing the female role." Peter Boag’s Same-Sex Affairs, 29, 32-33, quoted on 36.
had given up the prospect of property ownership and their financial outlook shortened. Items of immediate pleasure were more important for these workers than they might have been for their fathers and grandfathers on small farms in Europe, Canada, or America.

Loggers are typically depicted as individualist frontiersmen who could survive and produce with little need for modern frills. There was some truth to this depiction, as skilled workers could craft many of the tools and the physical plant of the operation from forest material alone. When loggers gained access to consumer goods, however, they did not hesitate to spend their earnings to acquire them.

In the hinterland, systems of remuneration and consumption were very different than they were in urban America. In the Northern Forest, wage relations remained deeply rooted in older agrarian practices. In the pre-1850s industry, many farmers who provided labor for the camps worked for a living, not for a profit. Work, leisure, family, and God were all connected and a life of hard work was meant to do little more than provide for the perpetuation of the family name and reputation. These farmer-loggers invested profits derived from labor or property back into the business, a business that was also their home. The farm and woodlot provided food and building material and, if the business operated correctly, cash could be obtained from the surplus.

In the early and mid-nineteenth-century cash-poor farmers and farm laborers kept informal accounts in ledgers, bartered, and exchanged little currency. Accounts might run for years and

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49 Marcus Rediker argues that the isolation of a seafaring life led to a work culture that was different than any other in the Anglo-American world: "family, church and state—the primary institutions that organized social life" did not daunt seamen. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 29, 13, 78, 300, 101, 105, 162, 252.

foodstuffs and commodities were vital means of exchange. Farmers "seamlessly borrowed for land, crop seeds and [for consumer items like] hats for church," as one historian put it, and they showed little separation between the finances of business and personal life. This financial attitude carried over to small family forest products operations. Unlike in farming, where what was produced could also be consumed, forest products production provided no direct calories to farm families. Most benefits from wood production came only after the product was sold or traded, typically months after the work began. Therefore, loans given to producers for forest products production had to cover everything that an operation, and the families connected to that operation, needed or wanted for the entire winter.

Those farmers who specialized in forest products production began to depend on credit that flowed and seized up with the seasons. Records of the Turner Falls Lumber Company, a mill in Massachusetts that funded operations all along the northern part of the Connecticut river, shows that liberal amounts of credit were extended in the late summer and in the fall when camps were constructed, during the hauling season (January and February), and in preparation for the log drive in the Spring. Debts were paid off in March when the log haul ended, in July and August when the log drive ended, and in November and December when money was redeemed from selling crops or finished forest products (Figure 3).

Historian Louis Hyman and other scholars of American finance have argued that systems of agricultural credit quickly gave way to industrial wage relations circa 1900. In urban industrial

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America it was presumed that cash flowed readily, and credit via open account systems, which had been common in pre-industrial America, became unnecessary. Payment in urban corporate America no longer depended on the seasons but instead "workers got paid every two weeks like clockwork" and consumer credit for personal goods was unnecessary. In the hinterland, industrialism developed differently. Old agrarian and new industrial financial regimes existed side by side into the 1950s. Credit gave rural owner/operators and wage workers what they needed for production and what they wanted for themselves or their families. Laborers could buy tobacco with value they attained from cutting logs that were still dozens of miles from a mill and currency might never exchange hands.

In the isolation of the forest, it often made little sense for a worker to keep much cash; its liquidity and anonymity were liabilities. Tallies next to names in a book kept by a trustworthy boss could be safer than cash. Open accounts with local merchants, jobbers, or financiers also prevented workers from betting away wages in isolated camps where gambling games were some of the few entertainments available. Good operators kept careful track of the invisible flow of credit from financer, to operator, to worker, back to operator (through camp store purchases), in systems that were remarkably like the open accounts of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century rural shopkeepers.

Merchants, traders, and farmers traveled into the forests to tap workers' credit. Notes from mill owners or other financiers could get into the hands of people who had very little to do with the forest products operations directly. Toothaker wrote to his wife from camp reporting to her that a

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53 Hyman, Borrow, 11.

farmer named H.A. Furbish "got $175.00 of trade" in his camp one season. Networks of Syrian and Jewish traders walked from camp to camp with items on their backs. One logging family described them as "jewelry sales men that'd come in [with] ... watches and rings and stuff." Some reported that the goods were always cheap and broke readily, which is what happened to a pendant that Lincoln Toothaker bought for his wife from a "cutthroat peddler." Sometimes the workers got the better of the peddlers as Toothaker reported: "German Peddlers lost $28 worth of clothing here and sold $179.41 so I guess their profit was small for their board bill was $10. And when old Murphy was here he lost about $25 worth of Goods and the man I bought the watch off lost two or three dozen Pipes some worth $1.00 or more." Outsiders also provided services that were not available in small camps such as barbering, photography, and tailoring.\(^{55}\)

Most camps kept a store, van, or "wangan," which, depending on the capital expenditure of the operation, could be little more than a wooden lock box with $100 worth of goods.\(^{56}\) Large camps had more than $6,000 worth of items in a building that resembled a real store. Few workers came into camp with money but almost all had access to as many goods from the wangan as they wanted. In some camps, workers could order special items at the camp office to be brought in on the tote

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\(^{56}\) Shortened from Montagnais Indian atawangan, "wangan" was a regional term and was originally used to describe certain riverboats, or receptacles onboard riverboats which were used to store goods. Like many aspects of logging camp culture, the word was probably adapted from French-Canadian fur traders on the Canadian frontiers; Wangan could also be spelled as wanggan, wannegan, wannigan, or wongen. "wanigan, n.", OED Online, Oxford University Press: 2014, accessed March 13, 2015, http://www.oed.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/view/Entry/225489?redirectedFrom=wanigan, Rogers, Lumbering in Northern Maine, 19-20; "Inventory of personal property sold by McCoy & Son to Emporium Lumber Co." Emporium Forest Company Records Box 2, Adirondack Museum, Blue Mountain Lake, NY; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 49; Raymond J. Smith and Samuel B. Locke, "A Study of the Lumber Industry of Northern Maine," (Thesis, University of Maine Orono, 1908) 8; Prescott, and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region" 20, 22; Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702012, (LLC) (MFC).
road with the next team. Any goods ordered or bought by workers during the winter were, according to one worker, "charged up to you ... and ... settled in the spring."57

Buying goods from the wangan was an important way that workers transitioned from the agricultural world, where many goods were produced at home or nearby, into industrial capitalism, where goods were bought from strangers and often mass produced far from home. The items that workers bought fell into two broad categories: wearables and consumables. Some items, like winter clothes, boots, and painkillers, were investments in production. Other goods, like tobacco and candy, were for immediate personal gratification and added nothing to production.

Wearing clothes made at home was common in the Northern Forest into the 1900s. In Aroostook and Madawaska, Maine, domestic cloth production rose in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Most workers had some article of homespun when they came into camp, typically underclothes, woolen pants, sweaters, wool hats, mittens, or socks. Northern Forest farmers would often wear multiple layers of homemade wool shirts for winter work.58 By the twentieth-century, native workers were buying more factory-made clothes produced specifically for outdoor work and it was typically only immigrant workers who had homespun. Workers from Prince Edwards Island "were noted for the fact that they were always clad in pure-white wool—

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underwear, mittens, caps—spun and knitted by their mothers." This habit was memorialized in a popular Maine logging song "The Boys of The Island:" "The boys of the Island in the woods are contented, / The old bushmen gaze on them with a keen eye; / 'Just look at the homespun the lad is a-wearing! / Isn't that enough to tell you that he's a P.I.?'" The same was true of many French-Canadian workers. These immigrants were often teased for their homespun outer clothes, incentivizing them to buy factory-made clothes from the wangan.59

Workers needed the right kind of factory-made clothes to fit into the logging camp work culture. For example, when jobbers and companies looked to urban areas for unskilled labor after the pulp boom, they often hired urban men who had "never seen a log" and "never been in water." In Maine and New Hampshire, these workers were referred to as "Boston men" and they would come to camp "with … dress clothes on." They had "little thin coats and dress shoes" one worker recalled, "[t]hey'd freeze their damn feet … was a sick looking bunch." Boston men were also notable because they brought suitcases rather than bindles to camp and, as one worker recalled, a "[s]uitcase didn't make a good pillow."60

Besides being fashion faux pas, homespun and urban clothes wore out easily. Even high quality wangan goods might not last the season given the rigorous nature of the work. Experienced Northern Forest workers found they had to buy new clothes on credit after a few weeks of work and typically a whole new set after a season was over. When clothes got "too bad to wear, they put them in the … stove and burned them and got new ones" one logger remembered, or, if they were

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60 Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 6980068-69, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Robert Volney (b. 1890), interviewed by Linda Hubbard, 1970, p. 571043-44, 571053, 571066, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Fred E. Johnson (b. ????), interviews by Paul Gauvin, 1971, p. 639006, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 57-58, 81.
on the log drive, they simply left them on the forest floor. In 1895 in Northern New York the J.B. Mertens & Co. clothing establishment had to bring a sleigh full of clothes to replenish wangan supplies because "the whole woods was all ragged out." Maine logger Lee Roberts remembers that when driving a team wearing good leather gloves "th' friction o' the' reins—one leather against the other- will wear leather mittens out terrible fast- in about ten days." One winter after his gloves wore out, Roberts took a fresh pair off the corpse of a Boston Man who was killed unloading a skidway. Some workers wore three or four pairs of gloves at a time and layered wool mittens inside leather ones allowing them to work in temperatures as low as forty degrees below zero. Great Northern Paper Company's South Branch pulp camps employed approximately 160 men in three separate camps and these workers bought on average ten pair of gloves each over the course of one season.61

Most camps had plenty of heavy Mackinaws for sale, a garment that would come to define the lumberjack class. These jackets were made from "a heavy, napped and felted woolen cloth," typically in a plaid pattern, and "double-breasted … short and often belted (Figure 4 and 5). One worker remembered that in a Mackinaw "you could work all day in the rain. You wouldn't wet through." The "regulation mackinaw" was one of the most expensive items in the wangan.62 The

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pants that were available to buy at the wangan were also heavy duty, but expensive. One worker remembered, "it take you a week's work there, working for twenty-eight dollars a month … to earn a pair of pants, a pair of heavy pants." For workers on the sprinkler wagon or on the river, slicker coats, or greased leather overcoats, were available for purchase later replaced by rubber rain jackets that "crack[ed] … [and] leak[ed] under the arms" and needed to be replaced often.63

Workers bought three types of footwear from the wangan. One worker said that when he thought back to his working days in the woods the first thing he remembered about the "lumberjacks [was that] a lot of them wore high moccasins in the winter." Sometimes referred to as "shoe packs," these moccasins were rawhide leathers with layers of wool socks underneath. Larrigans were a higher oiled moccasin that were waterproof and allowed a worker to "stand right out on the ice in the spring … [and the leather remained] just as dry as though it had been besides the stove."64 Second, were rubber work boots made for working on the riverside landing or in the mud. Third were caulk (sometimes spelled cork) boots: leather work boots with metal caulks driven into the sole to give workers purchase on wet logs (these will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter). Like many other clothing items, footwear wore out quickly. New workers who left leather boots, gloves, and shoepacks too close to the fire at night found their items cracked and ruined by the morning.65


64 Benjamin Cole interviewed by Larry Gallant, 1972, transcript, p. 720022, (LLC) (MFC); John Sharpe (b. 1881), interviewed by Lillian Shirley, 1970, p. 62, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); White, The Blazed Trail, 46;

65 "Inventory of personal property sold by McCoy & Son to Emporium Lumber Co." Emporium Forest Company Records, Box 2, Adirondack Museum; Asa Flagg (b. 1898), interviewed by Rhoda Mitchell, 1970, p. 575104, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 20.
Wangan goods had several benefits over clothes made on the farm. Most importantly, they were more durable. Also, purchasing manufactured clothing allowed new workers to avoid the ridicule that came with bringing homespun to camp. Workers who purchased items from the wangan would have started to look more like their coworkers over the course of a season or over the course of many years working in the woods. This fact is evident from era photographs (Figures 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). During his travels among wage workers, Princeton sociologist Walter Wyckoff learned to identify the experienced laborers by "their superiority in intelligence, accompanied by a certain in definable superiority in dress" while the new workers were "noticeably heterogeneous" (Figure 6). 66 Those who had full suits of wangan bought clothes were clearly lumberjacks, a class of wage workers distinct from farmers, newly arrived immigrants, or "Boston men."

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For many workers, the most desirable wangan items were consumables that helped workers cope with the pain and monotony of camp life. For the former, medicine was very important. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century, alcohol was the pain-killer and cure-all of choice in camps and in American culture more generally. Alcohol also helped cure the boredom that plagued the camps. 67 By the 1850s most woods camps were dry, a rule that reflected both a change in American attitudes towards alcohol as well as a general increase in the speed and efficiency of the labor

66 Wyckoff, *The Workers ... the East*, 38.

67 Matthew Warner Osborn, *Rum Maniacs: Alcoholic Insanity in the Early American Republic* (Chicago ; London : The University of Chicago Press, 2014); W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic, an American Tradition*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 11, 14; By 1832 temperance efforts were beginning in Northern Forest camps, but before then, "so strong was the conviction that men could not work in the water [on the log drive] without 'spirits,'" that one temperance advocate "had great difficulty in employing the first crew of men to drive on the river on temperance principles." In 1832 when a drive was attempted on the St. Croix river of Maine without alcohol, workers were "forced to acknowledge, when they came down river, that they had never succeeded so well before." John S. Springer, *Forest Life and Forest Trees* (New York: Harper, 1856) 151; Graeme Wynn, "'Deplorably Dark and Demoralized Lumberers'? Rhetoric and Reality in Early Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick," *Forest & Conservation History* 24, no. 4 (1980) 168 - 187.
process, which disallowed drunkenness at work (Figure 11). In large camps alcohol was replaced by patent medicines and snake oils. These included Sloan's and Johnson's Lineament, Atwood Bitters, Epsom Salts, Doan's Kidney Pills, niter, peppermint, Jamaica ginger, quinine, various dyspepsia cures, and cough balm. Some of these items were just repackaged alcohol. European and North American farmers would have viewed these medicines as more desirable than odd, home cures that were common in rural areas. In the South Branch camps, about three percent of all the goods that workers bought were medicines (Figure 12).

Tobacco was the "ultimate article of consumption," in the Northern Forest. Loggers chewed and smoked the leaves to an unhealthy excess. Operators of the South Branch camps in Maine sold $2,850.90 in tobacco and smoking paraphernalia in one season. On average, each man bought $17.79 worth of tobacco, over a half a month's wages for some. More than a ton and a half of tobacco was sold that season or about nineteen pounds per man (Figure 12). Although workers had a voracious appetite for tobacco, it had to be a certain type. It was common for French-Canadian workers to grow tobacco in their farm gardens and bring it to camp. Yankee workers assumed that the homegrown leaf lacked quality and called it "Canadian shag." Even hand-rolled cigarettes were

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68 The state of Maine passed an early statewide prohibition in 1851, followed by Vermont in 1852, New York in 1854, and New Hampshire in 1855, though these were all short lived and thinly enforced statutes. Springer, Forest Life and Forest Trees, 151-152; Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic, xi; Bradwin, The Bankhouse Man, 177; Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004); Small camps and family operations sometimes deviated from the norm, however, and allowed liquor in camp. Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 29; Koren, Alcohol and Society, 45-46.


scorned. The preferable type of tobacco for lumberjacks was packaged and had a brand name, like Wing, Buchanan, Turret, McDonald, and Big Ben Chewing Tobacco.71

Like store bought tobacco, candy made with white refined sugar or chocolate was a special treat for those coming from peasant Europe or isolated forest farms in North America, where molasses, brown sugar, maple sugar, or honey were staple sweeteners. At the South Branch pulp camps, workers consumed 1,652 pounds of candy a season, or about 10.3 pounds per man (Figure 12). Tobacco and candy were items of pure pleasure that offered temporary release from the boredom, repetition, and pain associated with camp life. As with clothes, the purchase of brand name tobacco and mass-produced candy from the wangan signified a movement away from seemingly inferior subsistence consumption and into modern consumption patterns.72 These different consumption patterns, and attitudes towards consumption, distinguished the class of wage working lumberjacks from farmer-loggers.

The South Branch operators sold $6,746.28 worth of wangan goods in a season, or about $42.11 per man. That is considerably more than a month's wage for almost every worker, and almost two months' wages for the low paid workers and children. Most operators "did not try to make a lot [of profit] from their wangan but they did not intend to lose anything" either. When goods were more expensive in camp than in settled areas it was because they were toted long distances over

71 Although this might seem like a lot of tobacco 160.2 was the average number of men in camp, though sometimes there were as many as 223 workers. Hilton, Rough Pulpwood, 121; Pike, Tall Trees, Rough Men, 121-122; "The French-Canadians," All the Year Round, 39 no. 928, (1886): 127; Lady Jephson, A Canadian Scrap-Book, (London: M. Russell, 1897) 16; Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 144; John Irvine Little, Crofters and Habitants: Settler Society, Economy, and Culture in a Quebec Township, 1848-1881. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991) 140-141, 154; Pike, Tall Trees, Rough Men, 94; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 63; Bolubee, Leslie and Matthews, "Report of Logging Operation on Limits of the Canoe Lake Lumber Co.," 23.

rough terrain. Wangan prices did not typically exceed ten or fifteen percent above market value. Some operators hoped to make enough money off wangan goods to pay the clerk that sold them. There is evidence that some camps charged as much as one-third above market price and some railroad camps charged double or triple market price, much more than the cost of transport and a clearly exploitative price given the limited options for workers in isolated camps.73 (Table 1 and 2)

"The most complete system of peonage in the entire country …"

The prospect of buying goods on credit benefited most workers but ensnared others. A careless logger could easily spend most of his wages on tobacco or other frivolities. Lincoln Toothaker kept accounts for his father's camp. One of his father's men "called for a bill of his time" on January 31 and Lincoln found "[h]is bill here to camp was $54.10[,] his work came to $66.89 and after paying the cook for a few thing's [sic] he had of liver he had $8.75 left and he come in the woods the 14th of Oct.[.] He went out to the Hotel and called for ham and eggs. Going to feed and dress well if he did not lay up a cent." Toothaker's surprise at the lack of thrift on the part of the worker demonstrates the difference between his own Yankee farming background and the wage laborer's value of immediate sensory gratification.74

Labor agents, who connected workers in urban areas with jobs in the hinterland, added to the debt that workers accrued. When labor was scarce in Maine, labor agents simply lied to migrants, 73 The South Branch camps were observed in the 1930s when it was easier to bring goods into camps and many staple commodities were cheap and available regularly so wangan consumption was probably at maximum levels when compared to late nineteenth and early twentieth century levels. Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 122, 146; Hilton, Rough Pulpwood, 121-122; Smith and Locke, "A Study of the Lumber Industry of Northern Maine," 11; Prescott and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region," 22; Miller, Poole, and Sweeters, "A Lumbering Report of Work on Squaw Mountain Township," 12; Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 19; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 70-71.

immigrants, or "Boston Men," telling them "all kinds of things" to get them to take the job. They would say that the camp conditions were superb, that the camp was close to the city when it was actually thirty to seventy miles into the wilderness, that wages were higher than they actually were, or that they would be able to work specific jobs at camp when that was actually not the case. If a worker took the job they accumulated an agent fee of up to $15 as well as debt for transport, food, and winter clothes. Workers sent by a labor agent to a camp often started work with a $30 to $35 debt. By the time they realized they had been lied to, they were indebted, isolated, and forced to work for a month just to be even. If they spent liberally at the wangan they could accumulate two months’ wages in debt. Wages were withheld during nonproductive days even though workers' time was taken from them (as time spent in a wilderness camp, even when not working, was hardly time off). A worker might take out $40 or $50 worth of goods, planning on working all season, only to be waylaid by injury, illness, or kept in camp because of bad weather. Rarely, a jobber or company might charge a ten-cent fee per day for tools, or charge workers for lost or broken tools, adding further to their debt.

Workers were not exclusively victims of the credit system. The widespread use of contracting, a decentralized way of organizing production, made it easy for some workers to use the wangan/credit system to cheat operators. When labor was scarce, operators were often willing to advance a lot of money to workers before they were sure of their creditworthiness. Some workers took full advantage of the credit and then jumped camp without working off the debt, though reportedly this type of debt did not typically exceed $10 or $20. The same worker might go to

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75 John Clifton Elder, "Peonage in Maine," (A Manuscript Report sent to the Attorney General of the United States), National Archives, Record Group #60, Dept. of Justice file #50-34-0, 13-21, pg. 4.

76 Typically, tools were provided to workers by their boss free of charge, or, on small jobs, brought from the farm or made in the woods. Miller, Poole, and Sweetser, "A Lumbering Report of Work on Squaw Mountain Township," 17; Russell Nutting (b.1887) interviews by Lynn MacFarland, 1971, transcript, p. 626083, (LLC) (MFC); Radforth "The Shantymen," 247; Eckstorm and Smyth, Minstrelsy of Maine, 111-112.
another small camp eat the food, buy from the wangan, and take advantage of the free housing while only working a day or two.

Jumping camp to avoid debt repayment was likely rarer than operators not paying, underpaying, or charging workers too much for wangan goods but operators exercised political leverage to end the jumping problem. In 1907 the Maine legislature enacted a statute that allowed authorities to arrest forest products workers and river drivers specifically who had unpaid debt. If the judge found workers guilty of "intent to defraud" they faced thirty days of jail or a $10 fine. Rural justices in Maine did not understand or willingly ignored the "intent to defraud" provision and punished all debtors, even if workers had legitimate reasons for leaving camp, for example, if the labor agent made promises about the job that were not true. The threat of punishment pressured many indebted workers to continue work and few cases made it to the courts. When workers were arrested under this provision, "in nine cases out of ten the men are made to go back to work," according to one labor agent. Labor advocate John Clifton Elder found during an investigation that some rural justices and police officers in Maine were allegedly in the pocket of large forest products interests, and they took fees for sending workers back to camp. Elder testified that this type of labor abuse was common in most of rural America and thought that "the Labor Law of Maine … make virtual slaves of the laboring classes." The law was decried by some government officials and reform groups like the Maine Federation of Women's Clubs as "class legislation" that was antithetical to the values of free labor, and they appealed for its removal. The law was on the books for at least a decade, however.77

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Even when workers were not in debt, the seasonal nature of forest products production and the varying scale of operations meant that cash payments to workers were irregular and infrequent. Smaller camps had very informal remuneration systems, as one worker recalled, "they didn't have any regular pay days you know. You, you happened to want a little money, why … you'd go to the timekeeper and get it and … when they got done in the spring or when they got done on the drive why they'd just pay them off the whole works."78 There was a chance that workers might not get paid at all when working on small family operations. In these camps, working in the woods was "[j]ust the same as working on the farm," one worker remembered, "[y]ou work there all summer when they dug their potatoes an[d] sold 'em if there was enough left besides the fertilizer bill they paid ya" if not, you were owed money at some indeterminate time in the future.79 One operation in Somerset County Maine in 1908 had an explicit rule posted on the door of the bosses camp: "No wages paid until time of quitting, credit being given at the wanigan box."80 Some camps had a system where workers had to collect compensation when they earned a certain dollar amount and if they did not collect at the right times they could lose wages.81

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80 Prescott and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region," 29.

If workers were not compensated correctly, few had the ability or time to seek legal recourse, particularly if the amount was small. Felix Albert was a French-Canadian immigrant hired to cut wood near Nashua, New Hampshire, at the end of the nineteenth-century. After working hard, he "got overheated and became sick" and the woodlot owner came to measure his stack and discounted him one cord for no discernible reason. When the situation was reversed years later, and Albert had another man working for him, Albert was sued for back wages and argued that his worker was a crook. Because profits and payment were never assured, buying many items on credit from the wangan early in the season was sometimes the only way to be sure a worker would get something for their work. Wage relations did not necessarily improve over time but instead became more reliable in operations with larger economies of scale. In large operations workers were paid regularly, typically by the month. As late as 1917, however, there were reports in Maine of workers getting paid only once a season.82

Experienced workers might think they could get the full value of their labor if they became contractors, but Canadian sociologist Edmund Bradwin found this was rarely the case in frontier industries. Small contractors and farmer-loggers formed close relationships with local merchants or mills to ensure they had a buyer for their forest products, could be resupplied, and could obtain credit with little warning. In the late nineteenth-century, a popular way to pay off debt was through wood products. These merchants often operated as banks, the reserve capital being merchantable timber, saw logs, or cords of pulp wood. Asa Flagg remembered cutting pulp wood for a jobber outside Patten, Maine. All pay was done through the local supply depot: "If [the boss] got done with

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a man" Flagg said "[he'd] give them an order … [at] R.D. Gardner and Sons … for the pay, and they'd go out there and Gardner would pay just, well it seems as though it was a bank really."83

If the contract passed through others' hands before it got to a small contractor these small contractors often faced higher than market stumpage and were operating at a disadvantage from the start. To save money these contractors scrimped on modern tools, food, and housing and they attempted to get more work from fewer men and animals. Small contractors and their workers often endured the poorest conditions in the Northern Forest. The prevalence of oral or informal contracts meant that partners and employees could jump camp, leaving one man to take on the responsibility of the contract. Those who profited under these conditions were over worked and often made a "serious sacrifice of their health."84

Most contracts between jobbers and financiers, or subcontractors and contractors, were not for labor but for logs, which is an important distinction. These contracts functioned like futures contracts. They were agreements that a commodity would be delivered to a certain location, at a certain time. These contracts were based on the legal premise of "entirety" that meant that after the advance was made, full payment could be withheld from the contractor until the task was complete. As historian Robert Steinfeld found, under these legal premises if a contractor failed to get the task done "the employer was under no legal obligation under the contract to make good on his promise to make the one entire payment." Initially this idea applied to any contract. After 1830, contract law in America changed to protect people engaged to work under a contract allowing them to leave any

83 Rogers, "Lumbering in Northern Maine," 50; Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 87, 119, 123-126, 130; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 183; Asa Flagg (b. 1898), interviewed by Rhoda Mitchell, 1970, p. 5750013, 57500134, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Judd and Judd, Aroostook, 61.

time without fear of monetary or judicial punishment. These protections did not apply to those contracted to deliver goods. To ensure payment, smart contractor stipulated in their contract that money be delivered on certain dates, or after certain stages of the logging or hauling was completed.\textsuperscript{85}

The close relationships that contractors formed with financing parties could become predatory and small owner/operators and farmer-loggers sometimes got caught up in a system of peonage similar to systems that entrapped southern sharecroppers. In fact, a federal report found in 1911 "there has probably existed in Maine the most complete system of peonage in the entire country."\textsuperscript{86} One worker remembers that when his family was cutting for the Ray Fraser Lumber Company, "in the spring … [they'd]—take us down to the— lumber store where they furnished everything. And get summer supply, and buy us some clothes, and maybe a box of .22 cartridges or something for … winter's work." This was a common approach to financing any type of frontier labor from forest products operations to railroad grades.\textsuperscript{87}

Most often these indebted contractors lived close to their creditor and were obliged to stay close. Felix Albert worked along the Canadian/American border buying wild lots and improving them then selling the lot and the forest products for cash. He also did the same work for wages, as well as cutting wood by the piece/cord moving between the ownership and wage working-class, a common situation in the Northern Forest. Often he would form a relationship with a local merchant for supplies, and take on debt, forcing him to remain in the area until he paid off the debt. Albert's

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mobility and his ability to see his family were limited while in debt but this was business as usual around the border, and none of the parties thought of the relationship as coercive.  

Southern sharecropping, northern forest contracting, and urban tenement sweating were all common, decentralized modes of industrial production that had a facade of independent production but could quickly become exploitative and ensnaring without active legislation. These methods of organizing production were particularly pernicious when they trapped entire family units. French-Canadian families, new to the United States and unfamiliar with American customs and language, but very familiar with woodwork, were particularly vulnerable to debt peonage for reasons that will be discussed in a later chapter. The isolation of forest product production meant that workers and families could do little to avoid predation once they were drawn into debt.

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Besides the contracting system, debt, and labor laws, there were other types of coercion in the logging camps. Pressuring workers by physical force was supposed to be a thing of the past in the postbellum North, but in the isolation of the Northern Forest, where labor relations straddled the line between familial/agricultural and legal/industrial norms, archaic methods of labor coercion persisted. If a camp boss was not literally the father or older family member of many workers in

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88 Albert, Immigrant Odyssey, 70-72.


90 Newton, "These French Canadian of the Woods are Half-Wild Folk," 146; Quoted in Parenteau, "Bonded Labor" 115.

91 Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 73.

camp he assumed a paternal position. The boss needed to be intimidating so workers would obey him and so he could stop fights, disagreements, or collective action in the isolation of the lumbering woods. Some contractors had their life’s savings invested in their operation and were often zealous and domineering bosses. It was the boss’ job to bring "order out of chaos, by the sheer force of indomitable energy."

Bedtime, meal time, and waking time were strictly enforced by the boss and workers recalled that a boss would "put you to bed" if you chose not to go willingly. A worker remembers the boss having a "fight with one man and knocked this fellow out and beat him up and he quit." The bosses were "hard[est] on the foreign-born" and the inexperienced, weeding out those who were unfit. Walter Wyckoff was admittedly "greener than a green Irish-man," when he took up work in a logging camp, and he was threatened by his boss Fitz-Adams with an axe simply because he was unfamiliar with camp culture. Wyckoff was perplexed when he overheard that the camp boss wanted to kill him rather than simply fire him. It is impossible to know how many workers were coerced to work by physical intimidation alone.

Bullying bosses were exceptional versions of exploitation in the Northern Forest. Most coercion was not initiated or perpetuated by any one bad actor. "It is the system not the man that is at fault," Bradwin found, "[t]he individual contractor, carefree and well-met … have not personally the desire to coerce" nor be coerced, it was the numbers in the account books that forced them to

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skimp, overcharge, delay, become abusive, miss payroll, and take burdensome debt. Coercion was an inevitable result of an unregulated contracting system in an isolated environment. Changes in the contracting system were slow and coercive debt continued to be a problem into the 1970s.\textsuperscript{95}

A Class of Drivers and the Spectacle of the Spree

After spending a portion of wages at the camp wangan, many workers continued to work on the log drive, the most dangerous and demanding part of the logging labor process. The drive brought workers from the hinterland to mill towns and cities, closer to the final act of consumption, the spending spree. Logs had been transferred to mills by water since Colonial times. To speed up transport, lessen the number of log jams, and reduce damage to logs, between 1850 and 1950, rivers were "improved" by building more dams, dredging shallows, blasting boulders, and constructing wing booms to keep logs off the shores. River improvements created a free rider problem, however, because no operation could be restricted from using them though not all parties could be forced to pay to maintain or build them. Multiple drives on large rivers also caused confusion and conflict among operators. As with country road building or "turkey drives," farmers collectivized to drive logs, or left it to the municipal authorities to create monopoly companies for driving, booming, and improving rivers. Small operators and farmer-loggers who wished to stay close to their land drove their logs short distances on small streams to the main river where the drive was taken over by these monopoly companies.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{95} Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 202-203; Osborn, The Paper Plantation.

Those who worked on the big drives worked for driving companies like the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company. Unlike many loggers these drivers were always company men, not contractors or farmer-loggers. On the large drive, workers were rarely bound together by family or neighborhood ties as they were in the camps and, because of the danger and strenuousness of the job, workers were typically younger than most loggers. Though they could also be loggers in the winter, the men who worked the drive worked during summer, the time when their labor was needed most, and worth the most, on regional farms (Figure 13). They consciously chose this industrial work over farm work and clearly became a class of industrial wage workers.97

Drivers had a strong sense of solidarity, a unique identity and reputation in the industry and among the public. Popular historian Stewart H. Holbrook reported that where he grew up in Vermont and New Hampshire "few of us boys wanted to be soldiers or cowboys or policemen. To be a rivermen and go down with the drive was the stated or secret ambition of most of us. To ride a heaving log through white water, to steer a bateau down Fifteen-Mile Falls, to break a jam anywhere. … What we wanted … was a cant dog, a pair of new caked boots, and a fast-moving stream of logs." Northern Forest communities saw drives as spectacles of work and nature. In 1947 on the Moose River in Northern New York a dam broke and scores of drivers were called in to control the chaos. Cars crowded a bridge over the river to watch the action. Some spectators drove over two

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hours to see the event. "The Moose River was a gala performance," an observer reported, "a hot dog man [vendor] could have made a pretty penny … that day."  

A large part of the performance of the drive was the costume. Although those that bought goods from the wangan in the winter camps started to look alike during the course of the season, many farmer-loggers and certain immigrant groups continued to have no standard dress. Winter gear in the woods might have mimicked the sartorial customs of the communities from which workers were drawn. Heterogeneous dress was alluded to in the logging song "The Hoboes of Maine:"

"[workers will] come by the hundreds, those hardy young bloods, / All neatly attired in their own native goods."  

On the large company drive, professional river drivers tended to always dress very similarly. Edward Stewart White, fiction writer and former lumberjack describe the dress well in his short story *The Riverman*:

Nearly all were smoking pipes. Every age was represented in this group, but young men predominated. All wore woolen trousers stuffed into leather boots reaching just to the knee. These boots were armed on the soles with rows of formidable sharp spikes or caulks, a half and sometimes even three quarters of an inch in length. The tight driver's shoe and "stagged" trousers had not then come into use. From the waist down these men were all alike, as though in a uniform, the outward symbol of their calling.

Lumberjack and writer Gerald Averill remembers drivers walking "about the driving wangans in new calked boots and staggered pants. Their feathered felt hats assumed a more cocky angle" he wrote.  

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Log drivers worked in the water with rough wood sixteen or eighteen hours a day literally working the clothes off their bodies so they had to buy new items even more often than winter loggers. Maine writer Fannie Eckstorm made special note of the clothes of drivers she witnessed in the 1880s and 1890s. They were, she wrote, "originally a vivid scarlet" but had been "reduced by rains and perspiration to whitish red, once whole perhaps, but now pinned together with huge horse safety-pins and variously adorned with patches of old mittens." Another driver had "neither heels nor toes to the socks he had on, but still accounted them presentable." Eckstorm recalled one man, whose wardrobe was still intact, saying "I don't look quite so all fallin' to pieces; but the wangan bills on this drive 's goin' to be somethin' hijjus [hideous]" (Figure 9).101

Caulk boots were the most important part of the river driver's apparel. Croghan and Chippewa were common brands and these boots could cost as much as $37 a pair, more than a month's pay for many workers.102 They were one of the few logging tools that had no place on the farm and could not be considered farm capital. They were modern and industrial, an investment, and they signified a commitment to woodswork. These boots were also renowned because of the practice of poxing whereby drivers stomped and raked a foe with the metal caulks leaving marks that resembled the scars left by smallpox (Figure 14). Historian Eliot Gorn called poxing a part of the "rough-and-tumbler's art" that "grew out of a pattern of living" characterized by "[d]rinking, treating friends, impulsive pleasure seeking, heroic labor, and vicious fighting [which] were part of all-male peer groups in the northern woods."103


Local histories and newspapers from all over the Northern Forest recorded many instances of workers using their boots in this way. In one example, a group of eighteen Polish workers fought two French Canadians in Big Moose station in the Adirondacks:

[The] sheer weight of numbers [of the Poles], got the big Canadians down and out. Then, lumberjack style, they put the boots to him. Raking his head and body with sweeping kicks so that the caulks on the boots would slash and rip. … The little Frenchman was taken to the doctors and lost his eye as a result of the fight. The big Frenchman, although badly beaten, had nothing seriously wrong with him. … His hair and part of his scalp had been removed by the calked boots of the Poles.104

Poxing and fighting took place most often in mill towns and junctions where river drives ended, logs were sawn into lumber and where the entire seasons wages were often distributed. Unlike eye-gouging, the focus of Gorn's work on Southern backcountry violence, poxing was only possible because of caulk boots, a trade tool only found in the lumbering woods. This item defined lumberjacks and river drivers as a class in the minds of many Americans who heard stories of lumberjacks and their leisure time exploits.105

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Fights like the one described above often followed the drive, which took place between March and August, a crucial period for forest products industry workers. The way that workers

104 Marleau, Big Moose Station, 331-332; For other accounts of river driver battles see Averill, Ridge Runner, 93-94 and Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men; Walls, "The Making of the American Logger," 243-244; Radforth "The Shantymen," 255-256.

105 Like the eye gouging of Gorn's work, poxing was likely rare and over-hyped in popular fiction. There are some trusted reports however: "Turner Falls and Vicinity" Turner Falls Reporter, August 13, 1883; "Distressing Rudeness" Turner Falls Reporter, September 22, 1897; "Turner Falls and Vicinity" Turner Falls Reporter, September 3, 1879; In New York see "Canton," The Adirondack News, March 28, 1903.
spent their wages after camp breakups or river drives and the geographical path they traveled would either entrench them in the professional class of lumberjacks, or allow them to be absorbed back into the realm of mixed farming-logging. A contractor or foreman's core crew—their immediate family, close friends, and a few of the most skilled loggers—might go into camp again as early as July or August. One worker remembers that if you were committed you "didn't come out unless you had some real urgent reason to" and another added that "single men never hardly ever come out of the woods."\footnote{Flanagan, "Industrial Conditions in the Maine Woods," 216; Russell Nutting (b.1887) interviews by Lynn MacFarland, 1971, transcript, p. 626034, 626091, (LLC) (MFC); Asa Flagg (b. 1898), interviewed by Rhoda Mitchell, 1970, p. 575079, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Benjamin Cole interviewed by Larry Gallant, 1972, transcript, p. 720011, (LLC) (MFC); William James Henry Miller, James Plummer Poole, and Harlan Hayes Sweetser, "A Lumbering Report of Work on Squaw Mountain Township, Winter of 1911-1912" (Thesis, University of Maine Orono, 1912) 15, 20; Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 698044, transcript, (LLC) (MFC).} Workers who spent nearly a full year in the camp were industrial wage workers, the rare few workers who might identify themselves as loggers, lumbermen, or lumberjacks on a census.

Most loggers were not part of this core crew and they faced a choice after the drive. They could continue to work for wages in a saw mill or on farms that were now in the middle of planting season (Figure 13 and 15). Logger Frank Carey remembers that for him,"[t]hat's the way it used to be. … In the woods in the winter and, and home it was, work in the sawmill, [or] around the farm." In Eastern Canada, sociologist Edmund Bradwin found that there were "whole villages the families of which, French and English speaking, have grown up in a like circle of activities—in winter camps, the spring drives, and, then, the sawmills for the summer."\footnote{Lyman Sutton, (1867-1956) interviewed by John Larson ,1954, transcript, p. 10, (FHS) (OHIC); Boultbee, Leslie and Matthews, " Report of Logging Operation on Limits of the Canoe Lake Lumber Co.," 4; Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 698059-61, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Averill, Ridge Runner, 113; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 161; Asa Flagg (b. 1898), interviewed by Rhoda Mitchell, 1970, p. 575066, transcript, (LLC) (MFC).}

As Figure 15 shows, the mills might have absorbed some of the loggers leaving the camps, but not all of them. In 1905, right around the height of lumber production in the Northeast, logging camps in the Northern Forest States employed a maximum of 20,871 men and the number sunk...
down to an annual low of 3,485 in July. That was a total of 17,386 idle men coming from the camps. Employment in the mills never dropped below 12,455 and only gained an additional 10,145 men in the busy season of May. Assuming that the mills hired only idle loggers for the busy season (this was likely not the case) there was still a surplus of men from the camps who did not go into the mills, at least 7,000 people, and these men went to farms, left the area, took up some other wage work, or went on a spree.

Like many young industrial workers, some loggers simply worked in camps or on the drive to get cash to reinvest in the family farm or to start their own farm. The forest products industry was in sync with agriculture, as was the case with many industries in industrial America into the twentieth-century. Farming labor demands rose sharply starting in the middle of April and reached an apex in June when farmers needed help preparing "seed beds, sowing spring small grains," and planting corn. Labor demands on the farm dropped to annual lows from November to April. This was when farms had little work to provide idle hands and when winter weather made the hauling of logs easiest (Figure 13).

As the population in the Northeast increased, patrimony was not always available for sons and taking up wage work during these idle periods allowed aspiring farmers to buy a plot of land.108 It was Lincoln Toothaker's plan to make enough in the woods to "get a cozy little home" where he, his new wife, and his daughter could start a farm. Maine logger Asa Flagg remembers that after his first winter working in the woods in 1914 he was able to buy part of "a junk of land. … My father owned half of it I bought the other half, and we cut the hay on it for years." Flagg was one of the "few farmers and downriver men…[who] went down the river for a cash stake. … They worked in

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the woods all winter, took on a short drive and then planned to be home for the spring plowing and planting. … They earned their pay and saved the money." Gerald Averill remembers that this group "had little to do with the hell-raising gentry" considered to be real lumberjacks. Workers like Flagg were reminiscent of the older class of workers who were never clearly proletariat or owner, a class that never completely disappeared in the Northern Forest but continued to work alongside a burgeoning group of industrial wage working lumberjacks. 109

Some workers took on no other work during the off season but instead stayed in the area and went on a spending spree that lasted as long as their winter wages did. After the camp broke up or the river drive ended, workers had anywhere from $50 to $2,000 (jobbers and foremen might have even more) that many spent in "regular blowout[s]" that lasted a month or more. 110 Averill used the example of a worker named Jamie McGaskill, a pseudonym, to demonstrate the choices that some workers, perhaps even Averill himself, made after the logging season was over.

McGaskill was an experienced logger and was prone to drink his wages away during break ups. After the 1915 season he promised himself "there would be no drinking, foragathering with filthy worn out drabs … no fighting." Instead he would invest in new logging gear, have a good dinner, and "sleep between clean, smooth sheets on a soft mattress instead of … lumpy hemlock bows … [and finally] do the thing he had … yearned [to do] for years. He would go home … to the rock mountain farm … the folks would be glad to see him [and] [h]e would give the old man four hundred dollars to make up for his lost services." Yet McGaskill, like other workers, was tempted to


drink and when word spread that he had $1,000 saved up he was compelled by other workers to spend it all in a week.\textsuperscript{111}

Similar stories were repeated in fiction and non-fiction accounts of logging: young men, intent on saving money and moving back into agriculture were tempted in towns or cities to spend all their wages. Bradwin wrote "all workers in camp have ideas, and dream dreams" and he recounted the story of a worker named Scotty who dreamt of "a snug farm for himself" though was never able to "keep what he had made" in camp.\textsuperscript{112} Some workers devised self-docked payment systems to prevent this type of reckless spending. Lumberjack Dan Murray was only given his wages "a few dollars at a time so that he wouldn't spend it all drinking or through generosity." Even jobbers took part in the sprees, sometimes spending an operation's net profits carousing. Wyckoff wrote about a jobber named Old Man Toler who worked in the industry since he was fourteen and ran "many a camp of his own, and made lots of money" but, a fellow worker recalled, "he ain't ever kept none, and he never will." To avoid the reckless spending that was so common among casual and frontier workers in camps, the Civilian Conservation Corps program required workers to send away $22 of their $30 monthly wage to a dependent.\textsuperscript{113}

During any long breaks from work, and especially after the drive, workers planned sprees. In 1916, the Christmas break up for the men working in the Dead River region of Maine was a grand celebration with a large dinner, a dance, and the men "busily engaged at the bar, drinking toast to their freedom." A student sent to study the camp witnessed a "free-for-all fight" among the men,

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item 111 Averill, \textit{Ridge Runner}, 100-112.
\item 112 Hareven, \textit{Family Time and Industrial Time}, 74-75; Wyckoff, \textit{The Workers ... the East}, 217; Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 124, 182-183.
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"such as you often read about in novels. … Windows were broken, furniture destroyed" the student reported and the "office and the smoking room looked very much as if a cyclone had struck it." The Potsdam Junction (NY) Commercial Advertiser reported in March 1895 the "shanty boys … put their last log in the river Saturday, and their men come out Monday … half-dozen other camps of this company will break up after part of this week or the first of next, and chief of Police Colby will doubtless have a chance to try his muscle when the boys all get down to the county capital with a pocket full of pay."\textsuperscript{114} The Turner Falls Reporter wrote about several fights among the rivermen and one between the crew rivermen and the local baseball club. In another instance in Turner Falls, one driver named Dennis Haggerty, after attempting to bowl in a bowling alley with a lit kerosene lamp, took off his shirt and walked down the thoroughfare offering to "fight the whole town individually or collectively." Besides drinking and fighting, lumberjacks on the spree purchased new clothes, watches, and other consumer goods. Stories circulated about men who would buy new automobiles just to wreck and abandon them before heading back to the camp.\textsuperscript{115}

Alcohol was the most important item bought on the spree. As camps were dry, workers thirsted for alcohol when they could get it. Emporium Lumber Company in New York reported "that our woodsmen, whenever they go to Tupper Lake are able to return with all the liquor they want, both in bottles and inside themselves … some of them were so intoxicated they could not walk." Harsh, cold winters and heavy drinking caused some workers to pass out in the cold and freeze to death or get frost bite. This is what happened to "a man named Butler" near Tupper Lake

\textsuperscript{114} Prescott and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region," 68; Potsdam Junction Commercial Advertiser, (Potsdam, N.Y.) March 13, 1895 pg 3; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 159.

after a spree. The sight of a man passed out in the snow was so common that no other loggers stopped to help the incapacitated man.116

The lumberjacks' spree was an iteration of the type of celebrations that historically accompanied bringing goods to market in rural America. Before 1840 it was common for workers to drink while working and all day. In antebellum America, alcohol consumption increased when the work was done and whenever people were brought together. Harvest time, political events, militia musters, different types of working "bees," and nearly all other social events spurred "communal binges," important rituals in American culture that helped to mark rural producer identities. Akin to these market celebrations were the celebrations that historically accompanied the end of a fur trading voyage in French-Canadian and American frontier cultures.117 River driving, the return from the fur trade, and other market-time celebrations involved a movement from isolation, austerity and production to leisure, recreation, and consumption. The spree of the lumberjacks was a ritual that combined pre-industrial traditions of market celebrations with the heighten pace, rigger, and consumerist ethos of the industrial revolution.

By 1900 most American industries were freeing themselves from dependence on the seasons and this allowed workers to move away from the vices that defined nineteenth-century bachelor work cultures. For urban corporate workers, pay came weekly or biweekly as opposed to once or

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twice a year when commodities were sold. These newer regular paydays were still times of celebration but they were not as intense as the earlier communal binges of rural workers. Reformers and workers’ aid groups tried to figure out how to stabilize the life cycles of lumberjacks and other rural workers to avoid the destructive practice of the spree. By its very nature the geography of saw log and pulp production, where raw materials were always far from settled areas, thwarted attempts at reform.118

The mill towns and cities, where the drives ended, were important causes of the spree. Small villages in the Northern Forest offered few of the financial and consumer options of mill towns where the drives always ended. One young worker remembered getting out of camp with $20 but not being able to find a place to break the bill in his small Northern Forest community. There was not the type of infrastructure in these places to handle industrial wage relations. Mill towns and cities represented modernity, consumer choice, and decadence.119

In mill towns, barmen and prostitutes established elaborate systems that ensured they would get a part of the profit that flowed down the river with the logs.120 Prostitutes provided services that allowed the bachelor subculture to continue. It was understood and accepted that when "Men … are deprived during months at a stretch[,] of the companionship of women, of home ties, and all that elevates life in a man" they will pay for sex. Maine workers remember that a man could "get a


119 Ernest Kennedy (b. 1889) interviewed by Lillian Shirley, 1970, pp. 23, transcript, (L.L.C) (MFC); Martínez, Decency and Excess, 140;

120 Rediker, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, 41; DePastino, Citizen Hobo, 84.
woman" in Bangor on Exchange Street, Hancock Street, and High Street. Other merchants tried
different types of gimmicks and advertising to get workers to their stores. One observer
remembered that in Old Town, Maine, the first thing the workers would do was make "for Water
Street … but they had to get by some people, like ‘Humpy’ Mishou, first … [who was] trying to drag
them in to sell them suits of clothes."

Some drunken workers were robbed in bar rooms, a practice called "rolling."

B: They give ya an advancement. They might give ya, in those days,
they might give ya fifty dollars a week was a big check.
D: That’s why a lot of ‘em when they’d come into town after they
were staying in camp three, four months, big payroll, they would hit
the bar rooms and the women were there, the next morning the guy
would wake up and everything was gone (Laughs). Six months of
working and one night of going out of your head. And you were
broke.
N: I heard that that went on at Long Lake in the Village Inn.
D: Well I’m sure it did in every town.
B: Not only the women but the … [bartenders]
N: I never knew if it was true or not but I heard that Bill Black
[bartender] used to "roll" lumberjacks. 

In March 1908 the Bangor Daily Commercial reported on one worker who was headed from Waterville,
Maine to Boston but woke up at the railroad station and "couldn’t remember any of the events of
the night and didn’t know where he had been, who he had been with or where he had his money [a
‘roll’ of about $75] last." In another instance lumberjack Charles H. Reagan met with a man named
William Masters in Bangor after coming back from the river drive in June 1910. They met with two
women and the four went to four establishments where "liquor had been purchased and drunk."

121 Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 137; Walls, "The Making of the American Logger," 251-252; Frederick Burke (b. 1915)
123 The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010.
Reagan began with a "roll" of $200 and "spent and made gifts to his friends in a most liberal manner" but had $42 directly stolen from him, allegedly by Masters. Sometimes prostitutes were part of the "rolling." Averill remembers an instance when a river driver killed a prostitute who was attempting to rob him.\textsuperscript{124}

At the turn of the century, consumption of spirits dropped to near all-time lows in America so the hedonistic drinking of lumberjacks and all the events that took place as a result of drinking stood out and was reported on widely (Figure 11). The constituent parts of the spree ritual: poxing, fighting, drinking, sex, robbery, and, most importantly, reckless spending were all spectacles—public celebrations of rural working-class, bachelor life. During the spree workers displayed a disregard for bourgeois savings and investment habits. Wild spending instead of judicious saving separated woodworkers from farmers and other property owners.\textsuperscript{125}

The further workers were drawn from the farm and small town life and the more they specialized in forest products production, the deeper many of them were drawn into a cycle of wage work and spending that sometimes resulted in alcohol dependence.\textsuperscript{126} Problem drinking is socially defined and its meaning has changed over time. Lumberjacks and their communities accepted excessive alcohol consumption as a normal part of the logging life. The spree was a hyperbolic form of common industrial drinking practices, where leisure and binging were accepted if they happened during non-working hours. Most men had a "taken-for-granted attitude toward riotous living" and


\textsuperscript{125} Radforth says the workers liked that they were "defying Victorian conventions" when on the spree; Rorabaugh, \textit{The Alcoholic Republic}, 146, Radforth "The Shantyman" 235; Samuel Martínez, \textit{Decency and Excess}, 161.

\textsuperscript{126} White, \textit{The Blazed Trail}, 184.
the desperation of dependence could even be made fun of as opposed to addressed as a serious health concern (Figure 1).127

When lumberjacks reflected on their life in oral histories the problems of bachelor life became more evident: "You'll find that every woodsman that ever worked in the woods, is a rummy[; an] alcoholic" Maine lumberjack Fredrick Burke remembers. He continued, "[t]hey don't [sic] classify themselves an alcoholic … in them days. … He was just a drunk, a woodsman, a lousy woodsman." Other workers emphasized that drinking defined them as a class: "The lumberjack is a fellow that likes to drink. About 90% of them were heavier drinkers." Later in the interview he continued with his definition of class, "I won't say every man, but pretty near everyman that works in the woods is [sic] a boozer." Types of dress, debt, and a separation from agricultural work defined the lumberjack, but for some, heavy drinking was the most predominate characteristic of the class.128

The Spatiality of Production and Consumption

"[S]tore after a big drunk" with no money left, many frontier workers were lured back to the camps by the prospects of free food, a place to sleep, and perhaps free tobacco from a labor agent. The same places where lumberjacks could get alcohol and prostitutes were often the places that they could find work and procure credit. French-Canadian immigrant lumberjack Romeo Arsenault often stayed at the American House in Tupper Lake during seasonal breaks. It cost $9 a week with as

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128 Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702042, (L.L.C) (MFC); Andrew Chase (b. 1888) interviewed by Linda Edgerly, 1971, p. 697032, transcript, (L.L.C) (MFC); White, The Blazed Trail, 26; George Frederick Eitel, (b. 1880) 1950s (?), transcript, p. 4, (FHS) (OHIC); Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702088, (L.L.C) (MFC).
much food as he could eat and the proprietor would keep the men informed as to where the forest products jobs were.\textsuperscript{129}

Workers could be drawn back to camps in other ways. In northern Maine a rural justice admitted that he would wait for debtors to get drunk in mill towns and when they were arrested for some related offense he would check to see if they had any unpaid debt with an operator. If the worker had debt the justice forced them to go back up to camp to work off both the state fine and the debt. Private companies and state officials perpetuated the cycle of production and consumption that coerced lumberjacks into work.\textsuperscript{130}

Returning to camp was a return to a secure setting for many workers particularly for those who had begun this type of work when they were very young. At camp workers knew they could find food, shelter, credit, and work. Wyckoff commented that those workers who were in poor shape after the spree seemed to be revived "as by miracle under the touch of their native life." Lumberjacks like Frank Carey liked the stability and the reliability of the camps, "you knew everyday where you were … what you was going to do, you knew what you was going to eat … you had everything right up there in the woods, I liked it very much."\textsuperscript{131}

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\textsuperscript{130} Newton, "These French Canadian of the Woods are Half-Wild Folk," 145; Elder, "Peonage in Maine," 20; Eckstorm and Smyth, \textit{Minstrelsy of Maine}, 142-143.
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\textsuperscript{131} Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702011, 702026, 702041-42, (LLC) (MFC); Wyckoff, \textit{The Workers … the East}, 181; Frank Carey (b. 1886), interviewed by Rita Swidrowski, 1970, p. 6980109, transcript, (LLC) (MFC); Hareven, \textit{Family Time and Industrial Time}, 361.
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Returning to the logging camp also provided an atmosphere to sober up for a time as all but the smallest camps were dry. The camp was a type of shelter. \[132\] "[T]he biggest reason why, I went [back] to the woods," Frederick Burke recalled, was "to get away from the booze. And course you go up there and you make a stake, and then you come down and its going to be spent for booze. … That's why I say, you can always go right back to the same place [the camp] after you got over your drunk." Around the turn of the century, one forestry student reported: "after they get over their spree they calm down and go back to work in the woods where they will work hard for three or four months without any trouble." \[133\]

American labor leaders and reformers worried that reckless spending on alcohol led to workers who were, "distressed by … [their] vices into slavish necessity of accepting the only terms possible from the most selfish employers." Burke remembers that he and other workers "didn't care," when labor agents charged them the hefty fee of $15 to find a job "as long as we get out of the city, get back to work again … have something to do and get away from the booze." These agents often included hidden charges for meals, tobacco, train tickets, tools, or clothes.

The practice of "shanghaiing," or forcibly removing workers to the isolation of camp while they were intoxicated, was reported in the Northern Forest. According to some reports, however, this was not strictly a coercive practice. Friends, co-workers, and families of men on a spree brought them to isolated, dry lumber camps so they did not kill themselves with alcohol or in some other way while in town. Workers who became fully engaged in the spatiality of production and


consumption became dependent on more than just alcohol, they became dependent on the routines of the industry; no how they used their own time and bodies and to how their time and bodies were used by others.\textsuperscript{134}

The spatiality of production and consumption was a common feature of many nineteenth and early twentieth century logging songs. It is debatable to what extent the songs of loggers represent the lived experience of loggers or the lives of the developing class of lumberjacks in the Northern Forest. Camps were principally places to rest and refuel and the songs and dances that were said to have been an important part of loggers' lives were dismissed by many workers as fabrications. Loggers were often too exhausted to partake in many amusements.\textsuperscript{135} Even if songs were sung in camps, it is impossible to gage how often or how widespread singing was. The narratives depicted in these songs should never be considered trusted accounts of specific events.

Certainly, some songs were authored by workers and some songs do represent the experiences of some workers. Early Maine folklorist Fannie Eckstorm commented that logging songs represent "the mental horizon of the pioneer." Most importantly, however, popular logging songs demonstrate how those outside of the Northern Forest came to understand what living in lumber camps was like for workers regardless of if these impressions were accurate. Though Eckstorm, who collected many of these songs, assume some date back to the early 1800s, they were

\textsuperscript{134} Flanagan, "Industrial Conditions in the Maine Woods," 223. One Adirondack logger remembered taking "lumberjacks into [camp] to sober them up a little bit..." The Dechene Family (Adirondack lumbering family) in communication with the author, September 2010. In England and America rural work camps were established by the state specifically for the rehabilitation of alcoholics. John Field, \textit{Working Men's Bodies: Work Camps in Britain, 1880-1940}, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) 61-64; Barrows and Room, \textit{Drinking}, 275; Glickamn, \textit{A Living Wage}, 80; Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 54, 66-67, 75; Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702042, (LLC) (MFC); These types of outrageous fees were common in frontier zones. Peck, \textit{Reinventing Free Labor}, 66-67; Radforth "The Shantymen," 244-245; Elder, "Peonage in Maine," 2; Gounis, "The Manufacture of Dependency," 689.

recorded from the 1890s to the 1920s and should be assumed to represent attitudes of that time, a
time when an industrial class was forming in the Northern Forest.

Even the oldest lumbering songs of Maine mention seasonal cycles of work and leisure.
These earlier songs have a comedic tone, treating sprees and the spatiality of production and
consumption as an innocent aspect of the industry. The spree and subsequent return to the woods is
an important part of the song "The Falling of the Pine" in which the narrator sings "[o]ur whistles
for to wet / With whiskey or good wine. / With some pretty girl we'll boast / Till our money is all
used up / We're the boys that don't refuse / To return and fall the pine." In "The Boys of the
Island," a song about Canadian immigrant loggers in Maine, the "little P.I. [Prince Edwards Island]
boys can get drunk / And then sober up under the shades of the trees." The song points out that the
spatiality of production and consumption was a common problem: ""Tis true, my brave boys, I have
made lots of money, / But the curse of all bushmen being on me, / Also my money it flew like the
snow in June / and back to the woods every fall I must go." 136

While these earlier songs speak of the revelry of the workers as quaint and harmless, by the
time of the pulp boom songsters began to associate the spatiality of production and consumption
with victimization and exploitation of the worker, most pointedly in the songs "Henry's Concern"
and "The Hoboes of Maine." "Henry's Concern" explains many of the pitfalls that novice workers
might fall into in camps in New Hampshire, such as paying for transport to camp, paying for broken
tools, or board, and finally paying a fine for quitting a job if doing so left the employer "in the
lurch." The narrator points out that sub-contractors in New Hampshire were "apt to lose [their] pay;

136 Eckstorm and Smyth, Minstrelsy of Maine. Some of the songs that feature the spatiality of production and consumption include, "The Falling of the Pine" 18; "Shanty Boy and the Farmer's Son" 27-28; "The Lumberman's Life" 34-35; "The Logger's Boast" 41-43; "The River-Driver" 61; "Mauling Live Oak" 64-67; "Katahdin Green" 76; "The Lumberman in Town" 96; "The Winter of Seventy-Three" 114-118; "The Boys of the Island" 118-119; "The Hoboes of Maine" 140-144; "When the Harvest Days Were Ended" 171-172; "The Lumberjack's Exit" 172-174. Also see, Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, "The Ballad of Roaring Bert" 152-153; "When the Drive Comes Down" 160.
There's no lien-law in the state, the logs you can't retain,” meaning if the contractor was late or short on his delivery of logs, he might get no money at all and also loose the logs he cut.

"The Hoboes of Maine," recorded by Eckstrom in 1924 provides the most complete example of the spatiality of production and consumption in verse. Within the first stanza the narrator establishes that he is "poor and neglected … mean and dejected." Nevertheless, this worker was "in search of employment and earthly enjoyment." Employment and enjoyment are linked activities, but separated by geographic space and time in the life of the logger. The narrator refers to the jobs in the woods as "man traps" that handicapped workers. After spending all his winter wages in "some dive" the narrator then takes work on the river drive.

After the drive the narrator transports the listener to the city where the police "plot and connive / To snare those poor dupes coming off of the drive, / They'll hang around the station, in deep consultation / In watch of those victims before they arrive. / They'll joyfully hail them, all ready to jail them … Each man, as he'll walk up, is booked for the lock-up." After beating the drivers, the narrator sings "'They'll capture his money, his watch and his chain; / Likewise their design to collect a big fine.' The next morning the narrator, "silly from blows of the billy" is brought to "Judge Vose" who says to the worker "'They tell me young man, you've been drinking / again; / a fine I must levy, exceedingly heavy.' The narrator serves his thirty days in jail, the amount of time that the Maine statute on loggers' debt prescribed. In an uncharacteristically revolutionary last stanza, the narrator prophesies that, despite the hardship of the work, the workers of Maine are "would-be rulers" who are "certain to reign."

Eckstrom comments that "'The Hoboes of Maine" "paints a picture of the homeless woodsmen's life in Bangor as it was at the end of [the nineteenth century]." Showing her conservative views and affinity for the romantic, she also comments that the reader "need not accept
the poet's closing prophecy of the proletariat supreme." It is clear from these lumbering songs that some woodsmen understood how they were victims of systems, not individual people or organizations. The songs show how the spatiality of production and consumption, a system with disparate nodes of power (some of which lied within the loggers' own minds and bodies), coerced workers into unfree labor.\textsuperscript{137} Some songs depict death as the final stage in the cyclical life of the logger. Many of these songs depict the heroic death of river drivers or loggers at work. Others are less clear on the cause of death.\textsuperscript{138}

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For some loggers, death provided an escape from seemingly inescapable systems of work and spending. Suicide was a common problem for men and women who could not live up to the standards set by industrial capitalism.\textsuperscript{139} Sobering up after a spree, many alcoholic workers were struck by the pain that their failure had caused them and those dependent on them. For some, this was too much to bear. The shame of failure was one reason for suicide but for some lumberjacks, escape from the spatiality of production and consumption was also a motive.

Twenty-one cases of attempted or actual suicide of lumberjacks can be found in newspapers published in the Adirondacks between 1850 and 1950, though fourteen of the cases took place between 1906 and 1929. There are likely many more cases that were never reported or would be impossible to find because most workers only rarely identified as loggers, lumberjacks, or

\textsuperscript{137} Eckstorm and Smyth, \textit{Minstrelsy of Maine}, 140-144.

\textsuperscript{138} Eckstorm and Smyth, \textit{Minstrelsy of Maine}, 19, 97,

lumbermen specifically. These figures speak only to the Adirondacks and do not include other parts of the Northern Forest. The victims ranged in age from twenty-five to sixty and three were specifically identified as immigrants. In nine of the cases the reporter specifically noted that the workers were on a spree, drinking binge, or had just spend all their money. Workers killed themselves when they got back to camp after a spree, during the spree, and right after a spree while still in town. Shooting, hanging, poisoning, and cutting one’s own throat were popular methods. (Figure 16 and Table 3).

In one sad instance in 1914 the Ogdensburg Journal wrote that a lumberjack killed himself "as a climax to a spree." In this case, James Shattuck had returned to camp from a "drunken debauch" and he was "out of his head." "He produced a razor" the reporter wrote "and cut his throat from ear to ear, dying almost instantly." A young worker named William Oryell was working in his brother's lumber camp, a small informal operation that allowed alcohol. Oryell awoke after a night of drinking, shot himself in the chest with a shotgun, leaving "a gaping wound." He then reportedly "staggered to his feet, shook hands with his brother, bade him goodbye" and died. This melancholy aspect of camp life rarely makes it into romantic narratives of the woods.140

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Why did workers drink to excess, spend recklessly, and sometimes kill themselves instead of saving, investing, and finding a more secure position in the economy? High rates of alcohol consumption among a population is correlated with high rates of suicide, but what caused loggers to drink so much?\(^{141}\) Historian Peter Way has argued that alcohol was used by antebellum canal companies to cause dependence and curb absenteeism among workers. By supplying whiskey in large amounts to workers as part of their wages, "an average of twelve to twenty ounces a day, six days a week, for perhaps two hundred working days a year, exclusive of what they drank after work" some canal workers became physically or psychologically dependent on alcohol and would hesitate to quit work. The same was true of many seamen, soldiers and a plethora of other artisanal workers before 1850. This was not the same situation as that of the forest products industry of the Northern Forest because the contracting system ensured that production was too scattered and irregular for any operator or organization to directly control workers on a large scale.\(^{142}\)

Several factors compounded to cause the spree and the spatiality of production and consumption. For workers drawn from small American, European, or Canadian farming communities—where capital was tied up in land, livestock and equipment—lump sums of cash was a novelty. Formal saving institutions were rare in the most rural parts of the Northern Forest. For young workers, with few financial obligations, the spree was nearly inevitable. For these young men,

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the spree may have been the first time they were with a peer group of bachelors away from the judging eye of family, neighbors, and the church.143

In this environment, social etiquettes could be cast aside. Walter Wyckoff was shocked by the swearing and irrelishious mannerism of lumberjacks. When Wyckoff approached one worker and asked "if he felt no sense of wrong in using lightly the name of the Almighty" the worker responded that he just got back from town where he "ain't swore for a month" but now that he was back in the camp "that's the way that us fellows talk."144 Drinking, like swearing, was a vice that was accepted and encouraged by this class. Less experienced men followed the lead of the older experienced workers who carried forward the work culture and spending rituals. Lincoln Toothaker, who declared himself a "virtuous" person, wrote to his wife near the end of a season "I shall be glad when I get out of here and have a good drunk and I shall feel better[,] that is what most of the fellows are talking about." Consumption helped form solidarity among lumberjacks and Toothaker was displaying kinship in his desire for drink. He was, at least for a time, part of this distinct class of wage working lumberjacks.145

According to anthropologist Samuel Martinez "any interpretation of consumption that … [excludes] sensation-seeking is flawed." Camps were austere, with few comforts or entertainment.146 One jobber remembered "it wasn't often that they had any amusement of any kind in the camp between practically the 15th of December as a rule, until [the] 15th of March … because from that

143 Frederick Burke (b. 1915) interviewed by Norma Coates (1971), transcript, pp. 702026, (LLC) (MFC); Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 215-216; Maritínez, Decency and Excess, 130.

144 Wyckoff, The Workers … the East, 213-214, 220.


time on … when the men got in[,] then they slept." Bradwin wrote that the life of the frontier worker was "often solitary and humdrum, with little change in scene." He continued, "[m]onotony predominates and … [a] mental sluggishness can accompany life continued under such environments. … A restlessness pervades their days which ultimately infects not only their thinking, but their habits of life." Walter Wyckoff witnessed the "acute suffering … of enforced idleness" of off work hours in the camp and observed that "the movement of time was slow torture." Emerging from the forest after a prolonged period of isolation, abstinence, boredom, monotony, and physically grinding work created a strong desire for novel stimulations.147

Contemporary observers argued that it was the long hours that forced workers to spend recklessly on alcohol and other immoralities. This type of spending seemed inevitable among a class of men who worked so hard for so long. A forestry student from the University of Maine who was on assignment in a camp in 1916 wrote that "[t]he men, when confined to the woods for several weeks, become very wild, and whenever an opportunity offers itself, may go to the village to celebrate, which to most men of this caliber means to get drunk and have a good fight." Bradwin wrote "there is a tendency, even under the best of conditions, for the heavy monotonous labor of the campman to become merely routine drudgery endured for a time in the hope of subsequent release, marked by a period of license."148


148 Koren and Farnam, Economic Aspects of the Liquor Problem, 107; Koren, Alcohol and Society, 42-43; Glickman, A Living Wage, 107; Prescott and Rendall, "Lumbering in the Dead River Region," 67; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 180; Wyckoff described the spree as a "cumulative storage of energy, financial and psychical", which was expended "in the sudden outburst of a grand carouse." "They were tied up like in a prison for six or eight months" a foremen recalled, "and then when they come out they went wild..." Wyckoff, The Workers … the East, 255; Lyman Sutton, (1867-1956) interviewed by John Larson, 1954, transcript, p. 19, (FHS) (OHIC).
Increasingly this type of recklessness after a period of work was interpreted as a natural reaction of real men to hard work. Writing in 1916 Dr. George Thomas White Patrick gave the entire American working class the following clinical diagnosis:

the use of alcohol has commonly followed the law of rhythm. Among primitive tribes drinking was periodic, wild orgies of intoxication following considerable periods of plodding life. This periodicity … is a familiar fact in every community at present. … The power of self-restraint, strengthened by public sentiment and private prudence, deters from the use of alcohol up to a certain point, when the cumulative forces of desire, which is the cumulative need of release from painful tension, overthrows all barriers, and excess and complete relaxation follows for a season. … the effect of alcohol is a kind of *catharsis* … a kind of escape. The spirit of the age proclaims that we must be efficient. Efficiency, and ever more efficiency, is demanding, and the desire for alcohol is the desire for rest, for release from tension, for freedom and abandon.¹⁴⁹

Forest products production may have attracted people with a biological impulse for intense sensation seeking. Like previous generations of American drinkers, lumberjacks at the turn of the century preferred hard liquor from the bottle or neat. This was while most Americans were beginning to prefer low alcohol pilsner or lager beer (Figure 11). The intense and immediate sensation invoked by spirits in the throat, stomach, and mind was what workers sought. Walter Wyckoff remembers the type of thirst that hard quarry work caused in him: "water had long since ceased to satisfy [his thirst] … I have never tasted gin, but I remembered in one of Froude's essays a reference to it as much in use among working-men, and as being seasoned to their taste by a dash of vitriol, and eagerly I longed for that." Lumberjacks sought intense sensation in other consumables

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in Koren, *Alcohol and Society*, 103-104.
besides alcohol, like the previously discussed tobacco and candy, but also vinegar, molasses, pork fat, maple syrup, and tea that was so strong and bitter it could "float an axe" or "tan sole leather."150

Logging was a job of constant extreme sensory and emotional fluctuation. There were micro fluctuations, like the movement from the fasting of the day’s work to the gluttony of the camp meals or from the bitter arid cold of winter work to the smelly, moist heat of the bunkhouse. There were also longer term fluctuations, like the move from the nuclear family to the homosocial camp; from sexual abstinence in camp to sexual promiscuity during the spree; from the danger of work to the safety of home; from the austerity of the wilderness camps to the luxury of the mill town; the extremely taxing labor and responsibility of forest product production to a period of rakish relaxation in town; the manic spree to the depression afterwards. Current preliminary psychological research finds statistically significant correlations between impulsive extreme sensation seeking behavior, alcoholism, and suicide. Intense sensations numbed the pain of broken bodies and the psychic pain of fluctuating forest products markets, failing farms, unfulfilled and ensnaring contracts, monotony, and a future of grueling wage labor.151

The feeling that wage work was inescapable also might have led workers to drink. At the turn of the century, the rhetoric of free labor and industrial wage work promised that frugal workers could become successful owners or operators if they worked hard, but in the declining economy of the Northern Forest, advancing to an ownership position was not always a possible or an economically rational choice. The agricultural sector was declining and in areas where there was growth, such as in potatoes or dairy, large agro-industrial operations were outcompeting

150 Wyckoff, The Workers … the East, 59; Rorabaugh, The Alcoholic Republic, 173; Eckstorm, The Penobscot Man, 204; Pike, Tall Trees, Tough Men, 137; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 207.

151 Erin Fink, "The Taste of Danger: Taste Perception and Food Consumption Interact to Predict the Acquired Capability for Suicide," (Dissertation Florida State University: 2012); Martínez, Decency and Excess, 162.
smallholders. Workers who knew the forest products industry well knew that becoming an operator could be exploitative and risky.

Attempting to represent the above disposition, novelist and former lumberjack Stuart Edward White created the character of a jobber named John Radway who failed to meet a contract leaving him bankrupt. When Radway was asked what he was going to "do" after his bankruptcy he responded: "Do! I'm going into the woods, by God! I'm going to work with my hands, and be happy! I'm going to do other men's work for them and take other men's pay. Let them do the figuring and worrying. I'll boss their gangs and make their roads and see to their logging for 'em, but it's got to be THEIRS. No! I'm going to be a free man by G. jumping Moses!" Free in this case meant the relative freedom of a working-class bachelor life but, as this chapter has shown, bachelor life came with its own snares.

Friedrich Engels' 1844, The Condition of the Working Class in England was one of the first texts to argue that the pressures and environments created by industrialization caused workers to abuse substances. Recent scientific and social scientific studies now support this idea. Lack of stimulus, physical and social isolation, dislocation, lack of meaning in ones' life, and anxiety about the future can cause substance abuse. People with few "other affordable sources of pleasure" often turn to drugs or alcohol.

Historian W.J. Rorabaugh argues that the oscillation "between abstinence and binges … blurred the reality, lessening simultaneously … [the] frustration and … hope of ever ameliorating

---

152 C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes, (Oxford University Press on Demand, 1951) 18-19.

153 Glickman asserts that all workers aspired to be owners, or at least they were expected to aspired to become owners, but the example of logging shows that this may have not been the case, some resigned to a life of wage work. Glickman, A Living Wage, 38; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 120, 126.

[the wage workers'] condition." He argues that anxiety and high aspirations mixed with low motivation caused alcoholism. He also thought anxiety was the primary cause for overconsumption but for him the source of that anxiety is not always clear. Both stability and lack of stability seem to insight drinking in his view. Lumberjacks were motivated and were capable of working hard, but moving out of wage work was not always logical or viable.  

When dependence occurred, it was at least partially the result of a geographic pattern of production and consumption that brought unattached workers from extreme isolation, austerity, and boredom to settled areas with abundant cash, consumer choice, and a work culture that encouraged uncontrolled spending and drinking. Workers who took part in the spatiality of production and consumption for many years in a row resigned to their positions as wage workers. Therefore, the final reason for the spree and alcoholic dependence among lumberjacks was resignation. Workers understood that the ownership of productive property, a condition that defined manhood for their fathers and grandparents, was no longer possible or rational. Drinking to excess, and even alcoholism, marked these men’s places as wage workers and lumberjacks separating them from the class of frugal property owners. The spree was an extreme example of the encompassing violence of intensive capitalist commodity production. It was a spectacle that marked the end of the drive a time

when trees and men were delivered from the hinterland to industrial hubs to be dismantled and destroyed for profit.

Most loggers maintained a connection to the farm, either in the Northern Forest or in Canada, and therefore were never entrenched in the spatiality of production and consumption. Others chose to remain in the woods but did not get caught in the cycle, or escaped after a time. Some saved their wages and took the risk of becoming an owner/operator. "[I]f they kept at the work of the woods," one forestry student found, workers often "rise up to be scalers, camp bosses and jobbers." Eckstrom wrote that becoming a river-driver was a "metamorphosis rather than a profession. The more reckless either died young or reformed, the more intelligent an ambitious wandered into other occupations and became head boatmen, head lumbermen, mill-owners, or land owners."\(^{156}\)

**Conclusion**

For frontier wage earners, consumption "was simultaneously a marker of group identity and a way to assert one's individuality." Consumption created class but it could also be a force that coerced men into wage work. As historian Robert Steinfeld argued, "[m]odern free labor did not arise as the result of the spread of liberal ideas or the diffusion of 'free' markets based on 'free' contract." In industrial capitalist economies, labor is always coerced to some degree and only legislation and intervention, Steinfeld argued, could make labor more free. Legislation and intervention came to the Northern Forest more slowly compared to urban areas.\(^{157}\) Though the

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spatiality of production and consumption could be a factor that limited workers' freedom, it also
gave lumberjacks a reputation and helped define a coherent class of wage workers in the messy
world of hinterland industry where farmers, part time loggers, and contractors blurred the line
between owners and the proletarian.

Workers like Fred Burk, who became fully engrossed in the spatiality of production and
consumption, were aware of their status in their communities and in the nation. Their participation
in the spatiality of production and consumption and their rejection of property ownership made
them lumberjacks. As one worker put it, only those men who "came [back to camp year after year]
developed into real lumberjacks." Some were unable to escape the cycle, their very nature turned
against their interests compelling them to work until their bodies and minds were broken.

Figure 17 is a representation of the spatiality of production and consumption as it existed in
the Northern Forest from 1850 to 1950. In a very general way, this figure shows the seasonal
movement and spending habits that separated farmer-loggers from lumberjacks. In the nineteenth-
century, most workers took the yellow path, representing a continuation of the life of a farmer-
logger, rather than the red path, representing a movement into the wage working class of
lumberjacks. Both farmer-loggers and lumberjacks participated in sprees but three factors
demarcated lumberjacks. 1) participating in the big spree at the end of the drive, 2) avoiding farm
work, avoiding ownership of capital goods, and not investing wages and 3) repetition of the
spatiality of production and consumption many years in a row.

The word "lumberjack" would surge in popularity around the turn of the century giving a
firm definition to this new class of hell-raising producers (early on, the word often appeared

hyphenated) (Figure 18 and 19). Terms like logger, lumberer, woodman, woodsman, and especially lumberman were commonly used in the nineteenth-century to describe people making forest products for the market, but none of these words clearly distinguish between owner/operators and hired workers. These earlier terms describe perfectly the role of the farmer-loggers or casual woods laborer before the turn of the century: Sometimes owner/operators sometimes workers, this type of non-specialized person was becoming rare in industrial America where specialization and efficiency were incentivized.

By the 1920s and 1930s, the term "lumberman" was beginning to denote an owner of a large concern who engaged in no manual labor. Twenty years earlier terms emerged to denote those who worked in the woods for a wage only and were not owners: lumberjack, "lumber worker," "woods-worker," (not to be confused with "wood worker," which is most commonly associated with carpentry or joinery) and "woods labor" grew in popularity around 1900. This was the same time when the spatiality of production and consumption was cemented in the Northern Forest and began ensnaring more and more men.

The separation between the new class of specialist wage working lumberjacks, large capitalist lumbermen, and old non-specialist farmer-loggers was not always permanent, that is why a plethora of terms continued to be used to describe forest workers well past the 1950s. But the fact that some


foresters referred to the spatiality of production and consumption as "the problem of the lumberjack" or the "lumberjack problem" shows that this specific movement of people and pattern of spending defined this class in the eyes of many.\textsuperscript{161}

\*
\*
\*

The next section of this work moves outside of the intimate world of the logging camp to discuss the ways loggers were viewed by others who observed this class at work. The Northern Forest was easily accessible to urban Americans in the great cities along the east coast, unlike the wilds of the west, which remained inaccessible to everyone accept the most motivated or experienced outdoors-people. The people and places visitors saw within the Northern Forest helped define nature in American popular culture and allowed urban corporate Americans to reflect on their own experiences of industrial capitalism.

Chapter 4- "A drunk, a woodsman, a lousy woodsman …" Class Formation and the Spatiality of Production and Consumption in the Hinterland, Figures

Figure 1.


Note that this was a staged photo. Drinking the vanilla was a common enough occurrence to be made fun of. Alcoholism was clearly not taken as seriously as it might be today.
Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Money Lent by, and Debts repaid to, the Turner Falls Lumber Company, 1900-1901

Note that data is incomplete from Jan-Mar each year.

Debts Paid
Money Lent


This is a typical mackinaw sold from the wangan.
Figure 5.


Mackinaw worn with a belt.
Figure 6. Noticeably Heterogeneous Dress, Patten Lumber Museum, "Historical Photos" Online Archive Gallery, accessed December 29, 2013, http://www.lumbermensmuseum.org/gallery/picture.php?/129/category/1
Figure 7.


Figure 8.


Notice the near identical dress and the ripped pants of the driver on the left.
Figure 11.

![Graph: Alcohol Consumption in America](image)

Note, "absolute" refers to the volume of actual alcohol in the substance under consideration.


Figure 12.

![Pie Chart: Wangan goods per man (average), South Branch Camps, Maine, 1938](image)

### Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prices of Articles of Clothing</th>
<th>Prices at front (range)</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Price at camp (range)</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Average markup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overalls (chaper quality)</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
<td>$0.63</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overalls (better grade)</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$1.25</td>
<td>$1.13</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socks (good wollen, pr.)</td>
<td>$0.25</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
<td>$0.33</td>
<td>$0.60</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cheap sock</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
<td>$0.35</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy boots, half length, per pair</td>
<td>$2.75</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>$3.63</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy coats</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td>$4.25</td>
<td>$3.88</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towels (per pair)</td>
<td>$0.25</td>
<td>$0.35</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
<td>$0.60</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work shirts</td>
<td>$0.60</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$1.30</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoepacks (half length)</td>
<td>$2.25</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>$3.38</td>
<td>$4.25</td>
<td>$9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy underwear (per garment)</td>
<td>$0.60</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>$1.05</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average markup for all goods</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>128%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prices at camp (range) Prices at front (range) Prices of Articles of Clothing**


### Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prices of Staple Supplies</th>
<th>Price paid by head-contractor</th>
<th>Assumed fair price*</th>
<th>Price Actually Charged</th>
<th>Percentage above fair price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (per bag)</td>
<td>$5.84</td>
<td>$10.80</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lard (in pails of 50 lb., per lb.)</td>
<td>$0.13</td>
<td>$0.22</td>
<td>$0.30</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork (long clear salted, by the side per lb.)</td>
<td>$0.12</td>
<td>$0.21</td>
<td>$0.23</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour (per bag)</td>
<td>$2.65</td>
<td>$5.74</td>
<td>$6.50</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoves (2-holes)</td>
<td>$1.75</td>
<td>$3.25</td>
<td>$5.50</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoves (4-holes)</td>
<td>$4.20</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prunes (in boxes, per lb.)</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>$0.17</td>
<td>$0.25</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans (per lb.)</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
<td>$0.05</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrup (in 1/2 barrels, per lbs.)</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>$0.07</td>
<td>$0.11</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raisins (in boxes, per lb.)</td>
<td>$0.09</td>
<td>$0.15</td>
<td>$0.18</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes (box of 2 doz.)</td>
<td>$3.40</td>
<td>$6.20</td>
<td>$8.56</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condensed milk (case--4 doz. Tins)</td>
<td>$3.80</td>
<td>$7.08</td>
<td>$8.20</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (per lb.)</td>
<td>$0.03</td>
<td>$0.07</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelbarrow</td>
<td>$0.90</td>
<td>$1.90</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>137%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovels</td>
<td>$0.60</td>
<td>$1.10</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw hats</td>
<td>$0.10</td>
<td>$0.18</td>
<td>$0.75</td>
<td>317%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheesecloth (for mosquitoes, per yd.)</td>
<td>$0.02</td>
<td>$0.04</td>
<td>$0.35</td>
<td>775%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average percentage above fair price</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>109%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*An assumed fair price for these article when toted by sleigh forty miles and landed in the warehouse of the sub-contractors. Such a price allows the head-contractor twenty-five percent profit on his purchases, and twenty-five percent in addition to the sub-contractor for his handling. It also includes $30.00 a ton for cost of teaming, with a further allowance of ten per cent to over overhead expenses and costs resulting from unavoidable delays*.

Figure 13.

Seasonality of Farm Work in the Northeastern United States, 1925-1936


Figure 14.

"Caulk boots and peavey postcard," Northeast Historical Film, Store, Figure from the Great Northern Collection at Northeast Historic Film, Fogler Library-Special Collections, http://oldfilm.org/store/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=27&products_id=231&zenid=ae3jatopgipil8embsgjmivo0.

These are a modern type of caulk boot typical of the 1920s or 1930s.
This year was the height of the lumber industry in the Northern Forest measured by board foot cut.
See footnote 140 for source information on this chart.

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Attempted or Actual</th>
<th>Other Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>Lyman Vanderburgh</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>cut throat</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>attempted</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Daniel Shields</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>hanging</td>
<td>on a spree</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>John Casey</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>gun</td>
<td>did not save money</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Frank Fuller</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>poison</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>son of a jobber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>William Oryell</td>
<td>&quot;young&quot;</td>
<td>gun</td>
<td>after drinking</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>in camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Thomas Walsh</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>cut throat</td>
<td>arrested for intoxication</td>
<td>attempted</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Thomas Sutton</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>gun</td>
<td>on a spree</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>George W. Doolittle</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>cut throat</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>in camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>James Shattuck</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>cut throat</td>
<td>had a spree and did not save money</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>hanging</td>
<td>after a spree</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>Russian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Frank Dudley</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>poem</td>
<td>after a spree</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>William Tombs</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>was mute and dispondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>hanging</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Micheal Halleran</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>gun</td>
<td>did not save money</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>&quot;young&quot;</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>highly educated young man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Donald Wisley</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>dynamite</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>James Gardo</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>gun</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Bert Clintsman</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Russian Nick Pancyzk</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>hanging</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>James Shadrick</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>cut throat</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Micheal Cibinisk</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>gun</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>actual</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See footnote 140 for source information on this chart.
Figure 17.

The Spatiality of Production and Consumption

Legend:

- $ Saving/Reinvesting
- Sites of Saw Log/ Pulp Wood Storage
- Level of Spending
- Repetition of the Cycle
- Seasonal Movement of Lumberjack
- Seasonal Movement of Farmer-Logger

Legend:

- Saving/Reinvesting
- Sites of Saw Log/ Pulp Wood Storage
- Level of Spending
- Repetition of the Cycle
- Seasonal Movement of Lumberjack
- Seasonal Movement of Farmer-Logger
Figure 18.


Figure 19.

[] = Combined Google Ngram search for the terms: "lumberjack" and "lumber jack."
Part II: Culture
Chapter 5 - "These French Canadian of the Woods are Half-Wild Folk": Wilderness, Whiteness, and Work in North America

In 1853 the Brown Company was a small water-powered sawmill in Berlin, New Hampshire, but by the turn of the century it had become a successful lumber and papermaking company which made some of the largest timber cuts in the Norther Forest. Its success depended largely on the French-Canadian immigrant laborers it employed to cut and drive its logs. The company found that these workers could be hired cheaply, worked long hours, and, perhaps most importantly, it regarded them as innately suited for forest products work. According to company officials, French Canadians were a "hardy type [of people], accustomed to the work in the bush, such as portaging, running rapids, etc., ... [and were] as a rule, pretty high-grade men." The French-Canadian affinity for forest products work was recognized all over the Northern Forest. Adirondack scholar Alfred Donaldson wrote in the 1920s that French Canadians "seemed naturally endowed with the agility, recklessness, and immunity to exposure that must combine to make them expert. They have always predominated as a race in the lumbering operations." The French from "the settlements," one Canadian sociologist wrote, "[have] the lure ... of the woods tingling in their blood down through the generations."\(^2\)

* * *

From 1850 to 1930, one-million Québécois migrated to the United States pushed by rapid population growth, a shortage of arable agricultural land, and slow industrial development in their

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home country. By the 1870s, new rail lines, specifically the Grand Trunk, Québec Central, and the Canadian Pacific accelerated Canadian immigration to the United States. By 1901 almost one quarter of the entire population of Québec had moved to America. Ninety-two per cent of these immigrants settled in the "border states or in states immediately south of them."

Even though most settled in urban areas, in the forests along the border and in the inland lumber regions of New England and New York there were logging camps composed entirely of French-Canadian workers. By 1890, a congressional report found that "American farmers' sons no longer follow wood chopping for a business, and their places have been filled by the French Canadians." In 1900, 33.6% of New England "woodchoppers, lumbermen [or] raftsmen" were French-Canadian immigrants and the percentage was much higher in the northern portion of the region.

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5 United States Senate, Report of the Select Committee on Immigration and Naturalization: and Testimony Taken by the Committee on Immigration of the Senate and the Select Committee on Immigration and Naturalization of the House of Representatives Under Concurrent Resolution of March 12, 1890 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1891), 324.
The imagined French-Canadian affinity for the woods made them useful for specific tasks in other rural industries as well. On railroad grades, one sociologist found, the French "prefers to be in the vanguard. The space and freedom of the trail and water routes appeal to him … assisting with ready axe to erect the big log company camps." When it came to technical work, however, the experts claimed the French Canadians were useless. Once categorized as frontier workers these immigrants were especially vulnerable to exploitation. They were isolated on wilderness tracts, separated from urban French-Canadian communities, and church support. They were also unfamiliar with the English language and American labor laws. In northern New York, the Emporium, Santa Clara, and A. Sherman lumber companies conspired to set wages lower for immigrant workers than native "white" workers.

The preference for, and exploitation of French-Canadian loggers in American camps evolved from an informal cross-border contracting system in the nineteenth-century into a federal government sponsored contract labor program in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. During the labor shortages of World War II, the Canadian and American governments allied to create a system that "bonded a specific number of Canadian woodsmen to their American employers for fixed terms." Large paper and lumber companies utilized a mode of production known as "shacking," in which entire "bonded" Canadian families were hired to go into an isolated forested area and produce logs

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7 W.C. Sykes to C.H. Sisson, 1 May 1919; C.H. Sisson to W.C. Sykes, 2 May 1919; W.C. Sykes to C.H. Sisson, 3 May 1919, box 13; E.L. Stables to Mr. Sykes, Mr. Caflish and Mr. Turner, 7 November 1912, box 5, Emporium Forest Company Records, AdkM.

on a piece rate in rough, dangerous conditions. The shacking system violated child labor laws and often led to debt peonage.⁹

Perceptions about the French-Canadian affinity for woods work is evidence of the racial hierarchies that were constructed in the United States by scientific, governmental, and industrial institutions. These hierarchies pushed immigrant workers into specific industries based on their perceived racial characteristics. This type of thinking about race and work was applied to many different immigrant groups. For example, Italian immigrant workers were employed in the Canadian and American wilderness as well, but they rarely worked in logging camps. Lumberjack Arnold Hall said that he only ever saw "one or … two Italians in the woods in my life. They don’t work in the woods much. Pick and shovels all right, but they don’t seem to go for the woods." The Maine Department of Labor found that "Italians who work on our dams, railroads, and other construction operations in the summer are not to be found in [logging] camps. It is too cold for them." An Adirondack area newspaper from 1883 reported that, "excepting the French-Canadians[,] the Latins have an insurmountable aversion to the ax."¹⁰

The supposed French-Canadian affinity for forest products work and odd exclusion of Italians exemplifies how North Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries connected their ideas about race with the realities of industrial work. By the early twentieth-century, eugenic and racial thinking had become "so pervasive … that it attained the state of common sense,"


and experts asserted that even "economic virtues … [were] a function of race." As "white" Northern Europeans pushed west to civilize supposedly free, wild land, industries in the East were "directed to attracting to their workshops people representing almost static civilization." These immigrants from the "static civilizations" were considered a "mobile army of cheap labor," and—in order to maximize industrial production—supposedly progressive thinkers constructed racial taxonomies that dictated which races best fit different types of production. The American government found regular patterns in the type of work that different immigrant groups engaged in:

The Austrians have gone principally into construction work and to the iron ore fields. The Finns have been furnished with about the same class of labor. The Greeks and Italians almost without exception have gone into section work for some railroad system. The Scandinavians and Americans have gone into almost every kind of work, but the largest percentage of them have gone into the logging camps. … The Poles and Bulgarians, almost without exception, have gone into construction work. … The Cuban and Spanish races are employed exclusively in the manufacture of cigars and tobacco … North and South Italians are most extensively employed in silk dyeing, railroad and other construction work, bituminous coal mining, and clothing manufacturing … the Slovaks seem to be industrial laborers rather than farmers.
Similar sentiments were expressed by Canadian academics and officials. Though historians of immigration now realize that there were several reasons for the consistent occupational streaming patterns illustrated above, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries these patterns were attributed to innate racial characteristics; these patterns reflected what type of work different racialized bodies were seen as capable of performing.

At their most extreme, immigration policies that followed racial dictates led to draconian exclusionary laws, such as the Chinese exclusion acts in Canada and the United States. In America before the 1924 Johnson Reed Act, however, less than two per cent of immigrants were denied entry into the country. When immigrants were rejected, it was most often because it was presumed they would become a drain on the nation’s economy—because they could not work. Racial thinking was

15 Canadian sociologist Edmund W. Bradwin wrote "[e]ach nationality on a frontier work seems to fit into some particular form of activity; the Slavs … become laborers' helpers, the English-speaking delight in machinery, the Finn … in blasting … [Italians] work with cement…." Bradwin, *The Bunkhouse Man*, 110.


Award-winning historian Mae Ngai has added evidence to Handlin's and Higham’s argument. Her recent *Impossible Subjects* shows how US policies discriminated against and exploited Asian and Mexican people in order to establish a "desired composition … of the nation" which was European and white. According to Ngai immigration laws like the Johnson Reed Act "put European and non-European immigrant groups on different trajectories of racial formation." The *bracero* program was an extension of that thinking. The bracero program was, Ngai argues, "imported colonialism" and based on "the subordination of radicalized foreign bodies," a legacy of "[w]estern expansion" and notions of "Anglo-Saxon superiority." The *bracero* program and the bonded labor system described in this paper relied on similar legal precedent and so the exploitation of seemingly white French Canadian immigrants in non-western states challenges Ngai’s understanding of immigration policy and labor. Mac M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 5, 13, 94.
a major factor in deciding how the millions of immigrants who were allowed into the country were treated and directed once they got here.

Reflecting popular opinion, labor leaders like Samuel Gompers, Terence Powderly, and Frank P. Sargent (the latter two served as public immigration officials) were against allowing immigrants of questionable "whiteness" to compete with "real" white Americans for jobs. If questionably white people were allowed into the country, some justification was needed for why they should work the type of undesirable jobs that American laborers were often leaving: monotonous factory jobs and grueling manual work like forest products production. These arguments not only involved a debate over the low standard of living of immigrant workers, but also whether immigrants' labor was, in a fundamental way, worth less than real white peoples’ labor. One way to justify routing immigrants into demeaning, low-paying jobs was by interpreting culturally valuable types of labor—clearing and civilizing wild land, for example—as work that only real white people could do.17

In his book Barbarian Virtues, Matthew Frye Jacobson focuses on how Americans created and reacted to what he calls the "image" of the immigrant, "[seemingly] unshakable demonstrations of this or that ethnological truth about this nation and the nature of the world’s diverse populations." One of the many ways that these images were formed was through the observation of immigrant workers as they attempted to transform wild land into arable or valuable land, an activity

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that, because of its loaded history in America, seemingly proved a worker’s degree of whiteness and aptitude for citizenship. I will use Jacobson’s concept of the immigrant image whenever discussing the historical evolution of ideas about the French-Canadian race.

Areas designated wilderness receive that designation by the fictions that were created about them. In the wilderness narrative prevalent at the time of industrial capitalism, before preservationism became a mainstream cultural phenomenon, most North Americans of European ancestry thought of wilderness as an isolated tract of unproductive land that required improvement to become valuable or productive, though there were dissenting opinions about this definition. Influential conservationist and forestry expert Gifford Pinchot was famous for saying "wilderness is waste." In this utilitarian view, the pastoral landscape was the desirable landscape.

Immigrants of questionable whiteness who proved capable at improving wilderness land and making it into farms might be more than just expendable industrial workers; they might have the ability to become independent agriculturalists, the bedrock of American democracy. These groups proved themselves worthy of citizenship through their bodily ability to improve the land. Racist nativism made this way of thinking tautological: any person descended from a group with a long history of free citizenship in the country was presumed to have descended from pioneering, wilderness conquering people and was therefore de facto white. In other words, white people were


white because they were pioneering people; white people were pioneering people because they were white people. Observing immigrants’ adeptness at creating civilization on wilderness land allowed state, federal, and business officials to judge their whiteness and sort immigrants into different types of work based on their displayed racial characteristics. Because of the messiness of the "racial sciences" there were people who were "in between" white and non-white, groups whose whiteness remained in question even after being tested by wilderness work. This was where the French Canadians fit into this logic, and these racial discourses are the primary reason they were exploited in the woods for more than a century.

By designating some people of the world white/civilized (or civilizing) and other people savage (non-white)/wild, the Nature/Society dualism became cemented into the racial sciences and the industrial economy. Those people who were more natural/savage could be exploited endlessly for profit just like the rest of Nature. Unlocking the Cheap Nature of racialized bodies was the same as unlocking the Cheap Nature of the weather, or human metabolism; these processes allowed operators to wrestle profit from the dwindling resource base of the Northern Forest. The exploitation of the labor of non-white people based on their affinity with nature was fundamental to both the establishment of the American polity, and the perpetuation of American capitalism. It took place in all parts of the country, victimizing different groups of people in different types of work.

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This type of racial thinking was responsible for other ethnically based immigrant labor systems like the Italian padrone system, tenement sweating in New York City and, by the 1940s and 1950s, federally sanctioned guest worker arrangements like the bracero Mexican farm worker program.\(^\text{23}\) This racial exploitation was a process of capitalism that was difficult to extinguish even after two amendments to the Constitution (13\(^{\text{th}}\) and 14\(^{\text{th}}\)), a Civil Rights Act (1871), and countless state and local laws that attempted to impede it. In fact, the collusion between race and the Nature/Society dualism became more entrenched in the economy, though more subtly implemented, as the power of "objective" science buttressed it in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.\(^\text{24}\) The discourses that formed about French Canadians in Northern Forest logging camps were distinctly rural, however, and therefore have not been the target of historical investigation to the same extent as urban discourses on race and industry have been.\(^\text{25}\)

Looking closely at the example of French Canadian streaming in the forest products industry will show the inner workings of how the state, industry, and science colluded to create these racial-industrial logics. Canadian social historian Béatrice Craig found that opinions on French Canadians depended on "whether [writers] took their cue from Longfellow or Darwin." This provides a rough chronology on how ideas about the French Canadians changed over time.\(^\text{26}\) In the 1840s, as an

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influx of Irish, German, and Canadian immigrants began to complicate the American understanding of whiteness, a distinctive rhetoric emerged that allowed Americans to group immigrants into different racial categories. I have discussed the early French-Canadian image in American literature elsewhere, and understanding these earlier images is not necessary for understanding the cultural impact of the lumberjack class in the twentieth century. I will not repeat this analysis in full here.

Ideas about whiteness began to change as Darwinian interpretations of human evolution merged with the American fixation on a vanishing frontier, and concerns over the health effects of industrialization—a time most clearly denoted by Frederick Jackson Turner’s presentation of "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" in 1893. From the 1890s into the 1930s, the images of French Canadians and other immigrants were elucidated by academics and government officials as a scientific racial consensus solidified in the minds of Americans. The lingering effects of the racialized French-Canadian image were still apparent in the 1950s when the bonded labor and shacking system was documented.

**Literature and the French-Canadian Image**

As historian Reginald Horsman found, in the mid-nineteenth century, there was no "sharp separation between a precise scientific racialism and literary racial nationalism." The influence of

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28 Newton, "These French Canadian of the Woods are Half-Wild Folk."


literature on American ideas of race continued into the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and competed with early, jumbled scientific and social scientific explanations of racial differences.

The French-Canadian image was deeply influence by ideas of the familial and communal connection between the French and Native Americans which dated back to the Colonial era. This connection partially explained the French Canadian “swarthy” complexion and affinity with the forest. James Fenimore Cooper’s Leatherstocking Tales depict the French and Native Americans as not only allies, but also people who share a connection with the forest. Early and mid-century nonfiction works by Zadok Cramer, Francis Parkman, and George Bancroft furthered this idea. According to Parkman, “the French became savages” in early America.31 “Hundreds [of French settlers] betook themselves to the forest, never more to return,” Parkman wrote in his The Conspiracy of Pontiac (1851). After his stay at Walden, Henry David Thoreau wrote A Yankee in Canada (1850), a narrative about his trip to that country. He found that, like the Native Americans, “the French … had become savage” during early North American settlement.32

There was truth to the history of French and Native American linkage. Historian Richard White found that “there is no need to romanticize this relationship … [French and Native American] knowledge of each other’s customs and their ability to live together … had no equivalent among the British.” Even though most French Canadians were not of mixed heritage, by 1911 this belief was so widespread that the United States Immigration Commission felt the need to address it

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in its *Dictionary of Races*, stating “the French Canadian race is not widely intermingled with Indian blood, as some misinformed persons think.” At mid-century, American attention was fixated on the expansion of Anglo-Saxon peoples westward and on the domination and disappearance of Native peoples. The French Canadians were assumed to be spoiling their bloodline by intermingling with Native American peoples just like the seemingly weak Mexicans that the United States defeated in war in the late 1840s. People with Native American blood were on the wrong side of history. They would need to assimilate and put their racial aptitudes to work for the American economy or be destroyed by the inevitable progress of history.\(^{33}\)

The French-Canadian connection to nature and Native Americans was reinforced by the popular image of the French *voyageurs* and *coureurs de bois*, frontier workers who defined the early Canadian experience in the North American wilderness. Importantly, nineteenth-century texts on the voyageurs depicted them as blending into, rather than civilizing, the frontier. The French entered the woods not to “clear and colonize” but to range. The only enduring marks they left on the land were “names upon the map.” Thoreau wrote that they had “overrun the great extent of the country … without improving it.”\(^{34}\) One American author, reflecting on the settlement of the United States wrote, “if these countries had continued to belong to the French, the population would certainly have been more gay than the present American race … but it would have had less comforts and

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wealth, and ages would have passed away, before man had become master of those regions.…”
Clearly American thinkers were quick to forget the real French contribution to the settling of North America when it supported their narrative of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority. French Canadians, like Native people, were a “vanishing” part of the landscape. Unlike Native peoples, however, French Canadians remained valuable to the growing American economy because their connection to nature allowed them to fit into a specific industrial niche.35

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The French-Canadian image not only reflected American writing on these people, but it also reflected political and racial tensions in Canada. La survivance was a cultural and political repatriation movement that formed as a reaction to the mass exodus of French Canadians to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.36 La survivance inspired internal colonization movements in Canada, a topic discussed later in this chapter, but it also spawned a plethora of popular literature all of which depicted the bucolic and wild Canadian landscape as preferable to British or American industrial modernity.37 Most popular among these books was Louis Hemon's 1916 Maria Chapdelaine which narrates a young woman's struggle to decide to leave Québec for America with suitor Lorenzo Surprenat or to stay in her forested homeland with Eutrope Gognon. Gognon was a forest farmer and, like the Chapdelaine family, was endlessly engaged in a "battle" to clear the forest, not to bring civilization to the land, but merely for the sake of the struggle.38 This was the passion of these people:

35. Quoted in Watts, In This Remote Country, 15, 8–9; Thoreau, Yankee in Canada, 62; See also Zadok Cramer, The Navigator; Jacobson, Whiteness of a Different Color, 218; Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny, 156, 198, 200, 230, 291.


"Make land!" Rude phrase of the country, summing up in two words all the heart-breaking labor that transforms the incul woods, barren of sustenance, to smiling fields, ploughed and sown. Samuel Chapdelaine's [Marie's father] eyes flamed with enthusiasm and determination as he spoke. For this was the passion of his life; the passion of a man whose soul was in the clearing, not the tilling of the earth.  

Marie's choice to stay in Québec and continue the life of clearing forest land "symbolizes Québec's determined struggle to secure a foothold for rural, Catholic, French society away from the onslaught of modern, urban, English-dominated life." Maria Chapdelaine was translated into English multiple times and made into three different motion pictures.  

Americans and British Canadians confused fictions with facts when it came to French-Canadian culture. In order to search for the truth behind Maria Chapdelaine, Canadian writer Frank Oliver Call took one of the popular train tours of the small village of Peribonka that Hemon supposedly used as inspiration for his idyllic rural Québec setting. He recorded the trip in his The Spell of French Canada (1926). Call searched for folktales and legends, saw characters from Hemon's book in the visages of real Canadians, and even named a chapter "The Country of Marie Chapdelaine." For Call, visiting Québec was like a trip back in time. Late nineteenth-century folklorist Honore Beaugrand furthered the conflation of fact and fiction by presenting his collections of French-Canadian folklore as non-fiction, creating the impression that the French did live and idyllic, simple life in the forests of Québec. 

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39 Hemon, Maria Chapdelaine, 46.


The voluminous and popular poetry of William Henry Drummond, a British Canadian, was a type of French-Canadian minstrelism that depicted the backwoods French dialect and attitude comically. Drummond's Québec is full of "romantic charm." The land had "natural magic …" and was "wild, free … [and] unspoiled." His characters were stereotypical, nearly all lumbermen, simple habitants (peasant farmers), or voyageurs (fur traders). There are several other authors who employed similar themes in their works on French Canadians including Gilbert Parker, Cornelius Krieghoff, George Boucher, Rosarie Dion-Levesque, Reine Malouin, Camille Lessard, Jacque Durcharme, and Felix Albert. Many of these works on Canada follow a similar story line: French Canadians leave, or are tempted to leave their idyllic forest homeland to face difficulties abroad and often return home to find peace.

Felix-Antoine Savard's *Menaud Maitre-draveur* (1937) is a particularly poignant example of la survivance literature's effect on forming the French-Canadian image. The last in a long line of traditional novels on French-Canadian nationalism" the book was translated twice into English. It depicts the forests and rivers of Québec under the thralldom of an Anglo-Canadian lumbermen who is draining the region's forest wealth. The French take their place in the river crews, using their woods-skills to bring the logs to market, but the main character Menaud is driven mad when his son dies trying to break a log jam. The novel shows the quite real transition that forest habitants made


during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, moving from "making [farm] land" to "making lumber."  

Jack London's popular *The Call of the Wild*, solidified the French-Canadian image in the modern American imagination. In London's classic work, the French Canadians, Francois and Perrault are fundamentally important to the protagonist Buck's reconnection with nature. The two were couriers for the Canadian government and expert woodsmen. They led dog teams across thin ice, slept on the snow, and employed natural resources to help them on their journey. Characters remarkably like Francois and Perrault appear often in the plethora of lumbermen novels that emerged around the turn of the century. These books often have a similar plot: a young man or a group of boys, typically unfamiliar with the forest, make their way to a lumber camp and through a mixture of skill, strength and business acumen, end up saving a lumber company from a threatening situation. The French Canadians in these books occupy supporting roles as part of the loyal logging crew, as a woods-wise villain, or as comic relief.

In his most famous work *The Blazed Trail* (1902) Edward Stewart White, writer, outdoorsmen and friend of president Theodore Roosevelt, drew attention to the French-Canadians' "rough garments" a sign of primitive living. White wrote that Frenchman, Fabian Laveque "typified the indomitable spirit of these conquerors of a wilderness." Laveque knew the industry and the woods

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48 Smith, "Virgin Timber," 194, 196.


The French-Canadian logger character is intelligent in the practical matters of the woods but he was not book smart. Similar characters are found in White’s *Conjuror’s House, A Romance of the Free Forest* (1903), *The Forest* (1903), and *The Westerners* (1901). Popular Maine forest fiction writer Holman Day used these types of French Canadian characters in his *Joan of Arc of the North Woods* (1922) and *The Landloper the Romance of a Man on Foot* (1915). The authors who use these types of French-Canadian ancillary characters, according to historian Edward Watts were "too numerous to mention." In these books, French Canadians are simply tools that help Americans tame the wilderness.

**Hard Race Science**

In fictional works, French-Canadian idiosyncrasies were vaguely explained via allusions to French intermingling with Native peoples, French Canadian's long history in the North American wilderness, and the general American bigotry towards all Catholic immigrants. There were few clues in these earlier works as to why French Canadians were innately imbued with their specific racial

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53 He mentions George Bancroft, Timothy Flint, the Hildreth brothers, the Cutlers (Manasseh and Jervis), Zebulon Pike, Stephen Long, Thomas Farrham, and John Fremont. Watts, *In This Remote Country*, 123.
characteristics. Around the time that the United States census declared the official closing of the Western frontier in 1890 and Frederick Jackson Turner published his thesis on that topic in 1893, North American literati increasingly attempted to fit immigrants into a scientific "hierarchy of evolutionary economic stages" which helped explain causes of different racial characteristics and how these characteristics made different races more or less able to "make civilization." Just as the African American predisposition to slavery was supposedly a result of race, French-Canadian Catholicism, affinity to Native Americans, and connection to the forest became, not the cause of racial difference, but the consequence.\footnote{Jacobson, \textit{Barbarian Virtues}, 50–51, 145. Johannes Fabian, \textit{Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object} (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 31; Jacobson, \textit{Whiteness of a Different Color}, 48, 70; John S. Haller, \textit{Outcasts from Evolution; Scientific Attitudes of Racial Inferiority, 1859–1900} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971).} In this period the social scientific disciplines of sociology, history, and anthropology determined the characteristics of the racialized image of the French-Canadian logger.\footnote{In his \textit{Working Toward Whiteness} Roediger argues that readers should be skeptical of any history that presents the racial thinking of the time as "elegant." Peck calls the racial thinking of the time "unstable." In retrospect it was clear that these were "messy" sciences but around the turn of the century there was a clear, collective attempt to make the racial sciences more precise. Roediger, \textit{Working Toward Whiteness}, 7–8, 37; Painter, \textit{The History of White People}, x; Ngai, \textit{Impossible Subjects}, 33; Peck, \textit{Reinventing Free Labor}, 169; Jacobson, \textit{Whiteness of a Different Color}, 6.}

As the racial sciences developed, experts like anthropologist Franz Boas posited that people were shaped by their environment, and shaped their environment in turn as part of the progression of human evolution.\footnote{Roediger, \textit{Working Towards Whiteness}, 68; Degler, \textit{In Search of Human Nature}, 65.} Anthropological observations of how different cultures made civilization from wilderness, historically and in the present, revealed these groups' innate racial characteristics. Popular travel writer Richard Harding wrote in 1903 about the wild land of uncivilized countries that "there is no more interesting question of the present day, than that of what is to be done with the world’s land which is laying unimproved, whether it shall go to the great power that is willing to turn it to account, or remain with its original owner, who fails to understand its value." Value is a
subjective concept, but to racial thinkers of the time value meant the ability to create salable commodities or services. The ability to cultivate and properly utilize forest land was a sign of "social progress." Taking a term from Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*, historian Matthew Frye Jacobson calls this the myth of "wasted space." Groups who were thought to be able to conquer and wring profit from the land were "civilized," and those who only lived among it or subsisted from it were more "savage." 

America had a long tradition of adjudicating property rights based on individual's ability to mix their labor with the land to create value. Common law squatters' rights, the Homestead Act (1862), The Timber Culture Act (1873) and the Desert Land Acts (1877) incentivized groups who were willing and able to improve the land and make it profitable. The less desirable or isolated the land, the more implicit right the pioneer settler had to it once improved. Independent landholding had been a key requirement for citizenship since Colonial time and aspects of this "yeomen Republic" idea of citizenship remained relevant in the industrial era.

In cultivating wilderness land, "[t]he inherent superiority of the Anglo-Saxon or the Germanic or the Teutonic or the Aryan race was a common intellectual assumption of the day." The supposedly "civilized" races used wild land to make a profit, and to bring forth culture and free government. Savage societies like the Native Americans were wasteful because they did not create as

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much value from wilderness land as civilized people did. By not retaining the same amount of value from their labor as white people, these non-civilized races were always working at a loss and could never be completely economically independent or equal.

White races were more bodily efficient at work when compared to non-civilized races, a United States government report found. The Germans, for example, were better able to "apply their industry and energy" than Southern Europeans. This logic dictated that in a tactile economy, racial characteristics determined the type of professions to which racial groups were predisposed. In his popular Passing of the Great Race, Madison Grant discussed the "racial aptitudes" of different people: "The Alpine race is always and everywhere a race of peasants, an agricultural and never a maritime race. … The Nordics are, all over the world, a race of soldiers, sailors, adventurers and explorers, but above all, of rulers, organizers and aristocrats."63

"Conservative evolutionists" and progressive historians borrowed from, and lent support to, these racial taxonomies. "To these writers, the "free land" of America was "an Anglo-Saxon theatre, an empire which only the ‘old stock’ Americans could have developed and in which the new immigrants played no part." Theodore Roosevelt, Frederick Jackson Turner, Herbert Baxter Adams, Edward Perkins Channing, and George Bancroft all agreed that "when Germanic people were placed in a forest environment they tended instinctively to evolve … free political institutions" and economic power.64 It was the prerogative of whites to bring about civilization wherever there was free wild land.

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63 Grant, The Passing of the Great Race, 227–228.

64 Ostrander, "Turner and the Germ Theory," 259; Peter Novick, That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 81, 457; Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny, 43; Bederman,
The racial-industrial logic of the time suggested that to civilize wilderness and qualify as a white race, an immigrant group needed three crucial characteristics: 1) to be bodily able 2) to have familiarity (personally or hereditarily) with forest land and 3) to be self-directing or have independent inclinations. These characteristics come up again and again in texts on race and wilderness. For example, Turner described these pioneering traits as "coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedience; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism." The last attribute, individualism, was particularly important in qualifying races as civilized. Even slaves could clear land under direction, but true white pioneers tamed the wilderness individually, civilized it, and eventually lorded over others who did the manual labor. Americans on Canadian frontier rail grades expressed their dominance by quickly rising up the ranks to become "pushers," "drivers," or "foremen-bullies." "They take hold of a group of workers and get something done," sociologist Edmund Bradwin wrote. 

The forest environment was a crucial part of creating civilization because it gave the pioneering races vast resources while also imposing a substantial barrier to weed out weaker peoples. According to Turner, "American democracy came from the forest." When white people turned forest into farms, "culture" emerged, as this was the root of the term "agriculture." The movement of the axe was a metaphor for the advancement of civilization, but there was a presumed literal

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65 Attribute number three was an economic and a political virtue. On the frontier, immigrants and citizens were making free markets and making free government at the same time. It is difficult to divide citizenship and economic viability into separate discursive categories like Jacobson seems to want to do in his Whiteness of a Different Color, 72; Peck, Reinventing Free Labor, 166–169; Dillingham, et al., Immigrants in Industries: Part 24; Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, Vol. 2, 175; Turner, The Frontier in American History, 37; Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 98; Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny, 72.
element to the metaphor. Only those capable of sustained manual labor and ingenuity could create civilization from wilderness.

Northern Europeans had a propensity for "unbroken forest land" and naturally avoided urban, industrial work, when and where there was free land to cultivate. They were always owners and their own bosses. The Norwegian, for example had "never known the steamroller of feudalism." The Scandinavian "insisted on getting his living in connection with soil, water and wood," and looked for "good land rather than for land easy to subdue." The German "chopped his homestead out of the densest woods" because, according to early sociologist Edward A. Ross, he knew "heavy forest growth proclaims rich soil." Ross’ comments on these issues carried weight. A renowned but controversial academic, Ross' popular audience widened in 1900 when he was fired from Stanford University for supporting Chinese exclusion which, he argued, would prevent "race suicide," a phrase he coined.

The harshness of the American wilderness weeded out the weak, it was thought, forging a unique American race. In Roosevelt’s words "there was scant room for cowards and weaklings in the ranks of the adventurous frontiersmen … who first hewed their way into the primeval forest." Historian George Bancroft wrote that "the century-training in backwoods life" gave white


Americans advantages over the immigrant germ. Franz Boas, who typically argued against some of the most harmful racial science of his time, found to his own surprise that the "American soil" could change people bodily in only a few generations.  

* * *

Since Darwinian evolution occurred over time, the study of ancient and medieval history provided important evidence to support the racial sciences. Historical evidence was used to help explain the habits of races in the present day. For example, Ross found that Scandinavian people were drawn to "Northern lumber camps, where they wield another pattern of ax than did their forebears, who, eight centuries ago, were known as ‘ax-bearers’ in the Eastern emperor’s bodyguard." Scandinavia was, according to Ross, "the mother hive of the swarms of barbarians that kept southern Europeans in dread a thousand years." They brought to the frontier of America "the spirit of the Viking race," Bradwin found. He continued: "let us think of these things as we watch their descendants … gather in groups on some isolated work, loitering, skulking … men of massive frames, slouch about some obscure Canadian camp." Like the Scandinavians, the Germans were a race forged in the "Hercynian forest." Modern Germans were "descendants from the tribes that met under the oak-trees of old Germany," making them "strong like the oak."

Still influential at the end of the nineteenth-century, the works of the Roman historian Edward Gibbons reinforced ideas of race and nature. The Gallic, Nordic, or Teutonic people

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surpassed Mediterranean people in vigor and manliness, partially because of their ability to thrive in frontier environments. These ancient environments bred in them physical vitality and size. Living in the wilderness was directly linked to their bellicose nature. To various degrees, these warlike people resisted the decadence of the Roman metropolis and were better off for it: "the true mission of the Germanic peoples was to renovate and reorganize the western world. In the heart of the forest, amid the silences of unbroken plains … [they] re-infuse[d] life and vigor and the sanctions of a lofty morality into the effete and marrowless institutions of the Roman world."\textsuperscript{72}

Although he became famous for his ideas on the environment, George Perkin Marsh was also inspired by ideas of race. According to Marsh's \textit{Man and Nature or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action}, Roman decadence and weakness had caused this culture to become out of sync with the environment, leading to the fall of the Empire. In a similar vein, Ross wrote that some Slavic immigrants were destroying American soil, leaving "[d]eath’s-head in the landscape." He argued that North Americans would have to pay for these mistakes just like "France paid for the reckless ax work that went on under the First Republic."\textsuperscript{73} According to Marsh and Ross the ability to make land profitable in the long term was an inheritable racial trait.

With a few exceptions, social scientists of this period declared that races whose ancestral homeland was outside of northwestern Europe had less ability to civilize wilderness land than northwestern Europeans, and thus less aptitude for full citizenship. This perception is perhaps best exemplified by the differing views of Northern Italians and Southern Italians in academic works on race. Ross argued that the "broad head" people of Northern Italy had "Celtic, Gothic, Lombard and


German" ancestry while those to the South were a Mediterranean type with "Greek, Saracen, and African blood."74 Northern Italians were "cool, deliberate, patient, practical … capable of great progress" while the southerners were "excitable, impulsive … imaginative, impracticable … having little adaptability to highly organized society."75 The Dillingham Commission's Dictionary of Races found the two Italian groups "differ from each other materially in language, physique and character."76 "Rarely," Ross wrote, "is there so wide an ethnic gulf between geographical extremes of a nation as there is between Milan and Palermo."77 Therefore the southern Italians could not and, according to Turner, never did contribute much to the advancement of the frontier.78

Russian and Romanian Jews, sometimes assumed to be of Mongolian blood, sometimes Mediterranean, were always depicted as a bad racial type and bad pioneers.79 Referring to native Americans, Ross asked, "to this roaming, hunting, exploring adventurous breed what greater contrast is there than the denizens of the Ghetto [referring to the Jewish part of a city or town]?"80 Lacking in physical stamina, and frugality, Jews were a city people exclusively, it was thought.81 Journalist Jacob Riis, author of the popular How the Other Half Lives reported that "[t]he great mass of them are too gregarious to take kindly to farming, and their strong commercial instincts hampers…"

74 William Dillingham et. al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 82.
75 William Dillingham et. al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 82.
76 William Dillingham et. al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 81.
77 Ross, The Old World in the New, 97.
79 Western Jews were thought to have acceptable racial characteristics which they got from assimilation into white European society. William Dillingham et. al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 74.
80 Ross, The Old World in the New, 290.
81 William Dillingham et. al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 75.
their ability to cultivate the land. According to Ross, "[t]hey came from cities and settled in cities … Centuries of enforced Ghetto life seem to have bread in them a herd instinct. No other physiques can so well withstand the toxins of urban congestion. Not one Hebrew family in a hundred is on the land." 

Jews supposed inability for hard manual labor on the land was tied directly to their race. Jews did not naturally tend to do any type of work with their hands, Ross wrote. They avoided "tilling the soil … food growing … extracting materials … building, construction and transportation. … They contrive to avoid hard muscular labor." He continued his anti-Semitism by declaring Jews were "undersized and weak-muscled" and that they "shun bodily activity and are exceedingly sensitive to pain." Ross admitted that the second generation of Jewish-American immigrants had improved but suggested that "it will be long before they produce the stoical type who blithely fares forth into the wilderness, portaging his canoe, poling it against the current wading in the torrents living on bacon and beans, and sleeping on the ground." The similarly titled period comedy films Der Yiddisher Cowboy (1910) and Der Yidisher Kanbey (1911), mocking accounts of Jewish ineptitude on the American frontier, proved how popular these stereotypes were. Despite the bigoted claims by some that "all the Jewish agricultural colonies failed" many Jewish families did run successful

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83 Ross, The Old World in the New, 145.

84 Ross, The Old World in the New, 146.

85 Ross, The Old World in the New, 289.


homesteads in places like Burleigh County, North Dakota; Portland, Oregon and deep in the woods of the Adirondacks in Tupper Lake, New York.\textsuperscript{88}

Though all racial groups were categorized by racial scientists and government officials, not all fit neatly into the taxonomy. For example, the Polish and French Canadian had an uncertain racial heritage. The Polish were not clearly a Nordic, Gallic, Celtic or Mediterranean people. Their body type was that of the rugged frontiersmen. The derogatory term "bohunk" or simply "hunk" that was applied to them denoted physical prowess.\textsuperscript{89} Even though they were "[l]arge of body" and had "hard-muscles" they had been subjugated by the Gauales and the Germans in ancient Europe and were "soft and yielding" despite their physical strength.\textsuperscript{90} The federal government's \textit{Dictionary of Races} put the Poles "between the Russian people of eastern Europe and the Teutonic people of western Europe. They are neither one nor the other" but slightly more "Eastern" Slavic.\textsuperscript{91} Prominent racial theorist Carl Campbell Bringham used intelligence test to calculate that the Polish were precisely 90% Alpine/Celtic and 10% Nordic.\textsuperscript{92}

American government reports and racial scientists agreed that perceived French-Canadian racial deficiencies were caused by the evolution of French society in ancient and medieval Europe, though there was mixed opinion on their exact racial genealogy. It was assumed by some that the French were Celtic or Gallic people who shared the bellicose nature of other ancient frontier peoples. The \textit{Dictionary of Race} along with a few other sources defined the French as Teutonic, or purely white. The Gauls and Celts, however, had succumbed to the ancient Roman conquest of their

\textsuperscript{88} Ellen Eisenberg, "From Cooperative Farming to Urban Leadership," in Ava Fran Kahn ed. \textit{Jewish Life in the American West}, 117-118.

\textsuperscript{89} Roediger, \textit{Working Toward Whiteness}, 44.

\textsuperscript{90} Ross, \textit{The Old World in the New}, 120.

\textsuperscript{91} William Dillingham et. al., \textit{Dictionary of Races or Peoples}, 104.

\textsuperscript{92} Painter, \textit{The History of White People}, 289.
land easier than German, Teutonic, Nordic, or Anglo-Saxon people, demonstrating their weakness. One visitor to the Acadians of Madawaska found they were clearly "distinct in tastes, habits and aspirations from the Anglo-Saxon race." Still other racial thinkers saw the French as a bifurcated people, the peasant class comprised largely of Roman slave blood, while the aristocracy maintained Teutonic traits. This unstable genealogical position meant that French Canadians, like the Polish, could not immediately be considered proper white citizens.93

New Immigrants and "Winning a Wilderness"94

American investigations into the active settling of wilderness land reinforced the idea that immigrants of questionable whiteness were unfit to create civilization from wilderness. These investigations demonstrated how government, science, and industry worked in unison to denote some groups as more natural and thus more exploitable than white Americans. Collected under the direction of Vermont senator William P. Dillingham (R), The Federal Reports of the Immigration Commission of 1911 were a series of studies on American immigration that focused on industry and agriculture.

Two volumes on "Recent Immigrants in Agriculture" explored how new immigrants took to "pioneer farming" or the clearing and civilizing of wild land.95 The term "pioneer farming" is never fully defined in the report but it is used throughout to refer to those farmers who lived in isolated


95 The authors of the studies on agriculture exposed their racial bias in the abstract, writing that they selected for study only those "races … which we are accustomed to consider inclined to industrial rather than to agricultural pursuits." They included only those "races which come from southern or eastern Europe, and the Japanese." Ostrander, "Turner and the Germ Theory," 258; Dillingham, et al., Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission, 543; Zeidel, Immigrants, Progressives, and Exclusion Politics.
areas, in inhospitable climates and cultivated wild or cut and grown over lands. The site of investigation was the wilderness of Northern Wisconsin but according to the study, wild land was any land that was valueless until hard work produced value from it. Wild land could be swamp, sand, brush, cutover land, second growth, grassland, and any type of forest regardless of how far from settled areas it may have been. The reports even referred to "wild lands" in New Jersey.⁹⁶

The land in Wisconsin where the studies took place was like the forests of the Northeast, Pacific Northwest, and the Canadian Boreal Shield; it was a type of landscape that was imagined to have improved the Northern European races in early America. This land also mimicked some of the features of the landscape of ancient Northern Europe.⁹⁷ Cold, long winters, a short growing season, rugged isolated terrain, tree and rock strewn soil all combined to make it a difficult landscape for any prospective farmer, regardless of race. The commission gave a brief description of what type of work was required to cultivate this landscape, and what would be required for these immigrants to prove their racial aptitude for citizenship:

The first industry to be carried on in this whole region was lumbering. Pine first, then hemlock, hardwood, and finally the inferior timber was cut off and sawed into lumber. The farm was at first a mere adjunct to the lumber camp. Many of the early farmers were first woodsmen or 'lumberjacks.' The pioneer, skillful with his ax, shaped the log for his cabin and his stable; his first fences were made of brush, poles, rails, or stumps. Where the ground was wet or "boggy" he built a corduroy road of logs and brush. He removed the smaller trees and stumps first and worked around the others until they began to decay, when he was able to remove them with his cattle.⁹⁸

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⁹⁸ Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 2, 190.
In a growing industrial economy, this type of wild land had two primary uses: forest products and other natural resources could be extracted from it, and/or the land could be put into cultivation. This type of work was the first step in creating civilization from wilderness and was only suited for the most fit races. "It is just such land as this … that hundreds of Germans, Scandinavians, Poles and Swiss have been buying, clearing and making good living on since the early [eighteen] nineties" the report found.99

The Dillingham Commission reported that immigrants of Southern Italian lineage were naturally ill equipped for pioneer agriculture. They were urban "industrial workers" by nature and "ordinarily the city-bred immigrant does not make a good pioneer farmer."100 The Dillingham Commission found "[a] sharp cleavage" between the racial characteristics of Northern and Southern Italians. Because of this difference "[t]he best of the Italian farmers are fully up to the average of their German and American neighbors" one case study found but "as a whole they are a little behind the Scandinavians."101 Northern Italians, showed a disposition for wild land, while southern Italians disproportionately settled in cities.102 Northern Italians, though not accustomed to lumber work, were able to make a profit from the forest when it was necessary.103 "Contrary to the general

99 Poles inhabited a space in the racial hierarchy that was similar to the French Canadians. Their whiteness was questionable, but they exhibited many white racial characteristics. Dillingham, et al., Immigrants in Industries: Part 24; Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, Vol. 2, 145,175,190, 213, 265, 346, 262; Roediger, Working Toward Whiteness, 44; Ross, The Old World in the New, 120; Painter, The History of White People, 289; Dillingham, et al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 104.

100 Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York (1889; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), 48; Dillingham, et al., Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission, 565, 574; Dillingham, et al., Immigrants in Industries: Part 24; Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, Vol. 1, 41–42, 399, 431; Ross, The Old World in the New, 97, 102; There was, however, "[a] sharp cleavage" between Northern and Southern Italians, proving how specific the racial sciences had become. Dillingham, et al., Dictionary of Races or Peoples, 82; Peck, Reinventing Free Labor, 169; Cohen, "Nativism and Western Myth," 31.

101 Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 1, 399.

102 Dillingham et. al., Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission, 561.

103 Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 1, 205-206, 211-212, 406-408.
opinion," the reports found, Northern Italians could even surpass German pioneer farmers in certain instances.104

"Progress in citizenship is less rapid among the South Italians than among those from the northern provinces of Italy, ordinarily" the study declared.105 According to Ross and Bradwin, the Southern Italian was physically weak because he was vegetarian and thus was not able to do the sustain labor of pioneer agriculture. When Southern Italians did excel at heavy labor it was not because of their "physical strength, but because of their endurance of heat, cold, wet and muck."106 Southern Italians "perhaps" worked in the woods as a supplement for farming but most did railroad work.107

Like French Canadians, Southern Italians lacked independence, according to the Dillingham Commission. They did not possess the "self-reliance, initiative, resourcefulness nor self-sufficing individualism that necessarily marks the pioneer farmer. … The Southern Italians, especially, run in groups and follow a leader."108 Because of their communalism they could not "endure the chill loneliness of the American Homestead" and they "haven't the head" for extensive farming.109 They required too much supervision as farm laborers, and could not be expected to accomplish a complicated task on their own. Not surprisingly the lack of independence in Southern Italians was tied to their Catholicism.110 The studies concluded that Northern Italians were suitable pioneers. They were somewhat capable in forest know-how, had the right bodily traits, and their ability for

104 Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 1, 372


106 Ross, The Old World in the New, 102;

107 Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 1, 414.

108 Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 1, 41-42.

109 Ross, The Old World in the New, 103.

110 Barkan, From All Points: America's Immigrant West, 185.
independent action was questionable but acceptable. Southern Italians were questionable or lacking in all three characteristics of pioneer agriculture (as mentioned above: 1) bodily ability, 2) familiarity with forest land, and 3) an independent inclination)

In 1904 the "Milwaukee Jewish Agricultural Society under the management of its president, a wealthy and philanthropic Hebrew, secured 720 acres of 'wild lands' for the settlement of refugee Russian and Romanian Jews." The Dillingham Commission studied this colony closely and found these immigrants completely inept at pioneer agriculture. To help the colony, the Society employed a local "young man who had had considerable practical experience as a farmer and woodsman" but he could not better the Jews position.\footnote{Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 2, 146.} The local woodsman reported that the Jews knew little "about clearing new lands and crops," and "were ignorant of even [the] simplest operations. … No one could handle or sharpen an ax or a saw, or milk a cow, care for stock or conduct any sort of farming operations … 'Ask one to dig a post hole and he would likely dig a well.'" Even with instruction, the Jewish settlers did not prosper. Like many Jewish agricultural colonies in the West this one failed supposedly because of the "nonagricultural character of the colonist."\footnote{Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 2, 148.} The Jews lacked in physical ability. The commission found that "[t]he pioneer work … proved too severe a strain on the patience and endurance of many a prospective Hebrew farmer."\footnote{Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 2, 93, 143.} There were a few exceptions, the report noted, and these exceptional settlers cleared a "large quantity of timber."\footnote{Dillingham et. al., Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture, vol. 2, 146-147.}

Crucially, the study depicted the Jews as unable to comprehend the concept of independent proprietorship. Jews mistook cash advances for wages, the report said, and when they received the advances they assumed "sustenance [was] assured … [so] few of the settlers were willing to do any
very hard work, relying solely on the advances."\textsuperscript{115} Several case studies found that the Jewish settlers needed to be established on already "improved land" if they were to live outside the city and that they were inclined to "pay more and acquire fields ready for the plow."\textsuperscript{116} Even when they were set up on good land "[c]rops, tillage, quality and quantity of produce, show up rather more poorly than in most of the colonies of several different groups investigated." Employed in pioneer agriculture they "have not added greatly to the rural wealth of their respective adopted States." The same was reported of Jewish immigrants in Canadian frontier works. Bradwin reported that, while there were exceptions, "[f]ew Jews engage in manual work."\textsuperscript{117} The Jews were perceived to be failures at all three aspects of pioneer agriculture making their potential for citizenship questionable. Ross stated the prevailing attitude bluntly: "the Hebrews are the polar opposite of our pioneer breed."\textsuperscript{118}

Even if these people could not work productively on the land, the land worked on them. "Country life and the ownership of landed property have been of great benefit to the Jew as an individual," the studies found.\textsuperscript{119} The Jews showed the capacity for self-government and, Ross asserted, with enough time on the land, and inbreeding with other Americans, the Jews could obtain pioneer characteristics. Interbreeding with Americans would be crucial to help the Jews "gain in physique" and subsequently participate in "normal labor, sports, athletics, [and] outdoor life."\textsuperscript{120}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{115} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture}, vol. 2, 146. \\
\footnote{116} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission}, 479; Dillingham et. al., \textit{Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture}, vol. 2, 143. \\
\footnote{117} Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 108-109. \\
\footnote{118} There were a few exceptions, the report noted, and these exceptional Jewish settlers cleared a "large quantity of timber." Dillingham, et al., \textit{Immigrants in Industries: Part 24; Recent Immigrants in Agriculture}, Vol. 2, 93, 143, 146–147; Bradwin, \textit{The Bunkhouse Man}, 108–109; Ross, \textit{The Old World in the New}, 145, 289. \\
\footnote{119} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission}, 579. \\
\footnote{120} Ross, \textit{The Old World in the New}, 167. \\
\end{footnotes}
The Polish were a new immigrant success story in pioneer agriculture. They were spontaneously attracted to wild lands in Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin and "made excellent pioneers." Unlike the Jews these people needed no financial backing, support, or cash advances to prosper. They tamed the land as individuals like the northern Europeans of previous generations. Instead of being oppressed by the forest, they utilized it, logging for themselves or for companies during the winter to support their farmsteads.\textsuperscript{121} The Poles were so successful at pioneer agriculture that they typically did not need to work for wages after a few years of settlement, instead they were able to support themselves from their farms alone.\textsuperscript{122} Italians, and French Canadians by contrast continued to rely on outwork past early settlement, the former on the railroads, the latter in the lumber camps.

Like the French Canadian, the Pole was a "lover of the land." Old World peasant life prepared them for the hardship of the pioneer life. They were used to "terms little above subsistence" and were equally thrifty as Germans or Norwegians, "though popularly they have a different reputation," the Dillingham Commission found.\textsuperscript{123} The Poles practiced a "self-sufficing, diversified, extensive form of agriculture" that provided families with food and raw material while slowly building a surplus for sale.\textsuperscript{124} They had the ability for frontier improvisation because "they work by rule of thumb."\textsuperscript{125}


\textsuperscript{122} Dillingham et. al., *Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission*, 587.

\textsuperscript{123} Dillingham et. al., *Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture*, vol. 2, 175, 262.

\textsuperscript{124} Dillingham et. al., *Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture*, vol. 2, 585.

\textsuperscript{125} Dillingham et. al., *Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission*, 586.
These hardy Poles "with axe and grub hoe and crowbar and ox team, cleared, broke, and put in cultivation" what seemed to be unprofitable lands.\textsuperscript{126} Tracts "that twenty years ago was heavy forest or unproductive swamp" were, under the Polish reign "80 to 90 per cent in tillage, producing profitably.\textsuperscript{127} They "worked early and late, summer and winter, and were content to see the small clearing eat into the forest and grow slowly into a farm."\textsuperscript{128} Physical ability and sweat equity meant that they could cultivate land with $1,000 less credit than other immigrant groups.\textsuperscript{129} The sons and daughters of Polish immigrants were doing better than their parents showing their ability for "progress."\textsuperscript{130} Unlike the southern Italians and the Jews, Poles worked hard and as individuals to make the land profitable.\textsuperscript{131}

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French Canadians were not included in the Dillingham Commission because their history in the New World proved that they excelled at many aspects of improving wilderness land, yet this did not mean their whiteness was unquestioned. Racial experts perceived the French Canadians to have white people’s physical aptitude and ability in the woods, but they lacked the third crucial element required for civilization: an independent inclination. The collection of essays edited by James George Aylwin Creighton, \textit{French Canadian Life and Character: With Historical and Descriptive Sketches} (1899), demonstrates the common conception of French-Canadian workers at the time, a sentiment that was also found in the aforementioned literary works: "[the] Canadian experiences developed in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{126} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture}, vol. 2, 213.
\item \textsuperscript{127} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission}, 586.
\item \textsuperscript{128} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture}, vol. 2, 175.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission}, 586.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Immigrants in Industries, Part 24, Recent Immigrants in Agriculture}, vol. 2, 175, 213; Dillingham et. al., \textit{Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission}, 586.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Dillingham et. al., \textit{Abstracts of Reports of the Immigration Commission}, 585-586.
\end{itemize}
old French stock new qualities, good and bad, the good predominating ... such men needed only a leader who understood them to go anywhere into the untrodden depths of the New World, and to do anything that man could do."

The shortcomings of the French Canadians and Southern Italians in the realm of independence was attributed to their Catholicism; their devotion was a sign of racial inferiority. Gerald Morgan argued in the pages of The North American Review in 1917 that the will of the French-Canadian people was the same as the will of their priests who had it in their best interest to keep the laity ignorant, isolated, and bound to tradition. The result, according to Morgan, was the "stoppage of national progress." In many texts French-Canadian Catholicism is depicted as almost pagan. Trees and spruce boughs were an important part of some of their Catholic ceremonies. Frank Oliver Call described a church he visited as made of "unpainted spruce wood" with "plain wooden benches" the perfect type of structure to match the "medieval vistas" of French Canada. Their tales and folk beliefs were thought to "reflect the sublime pageants of Nature—the beauty of open skies; the mystery of gloomy, trackless woods; the wild, free life of forest and hillside."

Their lack of independence made the French Canadian good workers but not good leaders. "The French Canadian is a capital laborer," one study found, "[h]e is docile and willing and his light-heartedness gets over all difficulties." Industrial observers frequently pointed out the French-Canadian docile nature, and light heartedness. "No other class among the navies [general construction laborer] seems possessed with the lightheartedness and cheerfulness of these men,"

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134 Call, The Spell of French Canada, 225.


136 Grant, ed. French Canadian Life and Character, 22.
Bradwin found, "the spirit of youth seems not to desert them." To Creighton, the French Canadian was "a genuine survival of the Old Regime … smoke-dried into perpetual preservation."

Convinced by this French-Canadian image, Americans and British Canadians alike depicted French-Canadian agriculture as backwards. There had been an agricultural crisis in Lower Canada since the early nineteenth-century caused by over reliance on wheat, a poor climate and crop failures. In the 1840s Québec could hardly feed itself. The Durham Report on Canadian agriculture written by a British Earl had come to a familiar conclusion, French Canadians were a primitive people who could not manage their land. Later historians confirmed this idea, blaming the crisis on the lack of advance civilization among the French. The French-Canadian economy resurged in 1851 only to decline again in 1873.

Some critics, drawing on their racist assumptions, blamed the French Canadians' unique ribbon land use patterns for their failures. In the United States the Land Ordinance of 1785, later reinforced by the Homestead Act, divided much of the United States into relatively rectangular plots that checkered the landscape. Some plots were good land, others were bad, and the market decided the price of each. The French-Canadian land use patterns were very different. Turner

137 Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 95.

138 Grant, ed. French Canadian Life and Character, 12, 73. Catholic French Canadians supposedly brought to the new world a Norman predisposition to tyranny and absolutism. Northern Europeans were depicted as the "purest Protestants" and thus the most free-thinking, free-acting, and capable people. According to Turner, Scotch-Irish were also great frontiersmen because they were not Catholic Celts, but Saxon Protestants. Barkan, From All Points: America's Immigrant West, 185; Watts, In This Remote Country, 9; Mood and Turner, "An Unfamiliar Essay," 393, 397; Ross, The Old World in the New, 13, 71, 82; Ostrander, "Turner and the Germ Theory," 28, 206; Watts, In This Remote Country, 3; Craig and Dagenais, The Land in Between, 298, 327-337; Ehwell, Aroostook, 25.


141 Yves Roby, "The Economic Evolution of Québec and the Emigrant (1850-1929)" in Claire Quintal, Steeples and Smokestacks, 7.

142 Donald Worster, Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 80-82; Watts, In This Remote Country, 57.
described the French-Canadian ribbon system thusly: "Along the village river front were the log houses, with their orchards and outlying buildings, while the farms ran back side by side from the river, in ribbon-like strips about two hundred feet wide and from two to six miles long." This system, according to one American newspaper, "left the present holders of so-called farms a mere strip of length without breadth, presenting more the appearance of out-door bowling alleys." In the ribbon pattern, each plot stretched from a body of water, through fertile ground and up to timberland, ideally allowing each family equal access to basic resources.

Further frustrating Americans was the communal agriculture of the French Canadians which was established and run by the clergy. Each village had fields unbroken by fences or property lines that all members worked on under the direction of the Church. Each family took a share of the produce and gave a mandatory 10% tithe to the Church. The communal agriculture served as a social safety net for many habitants. Felix Albert wrote in his memoir that his family was saved from poverty and starvation by the labor of his neighbors and family. Despite the advantages of French-Canadian land use patterns, many Americans saw it as disastrous and the cause of their agricultural woes. The French-Canadian "use of land for subsistence rather than enrichment" was depicted as primitive by Americans.

Creighton wrote that Québec "has been less vulnerable than many other districts to outside influences. The face of the country and the character of the people have yielded less to modern

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145 Watts, In This Remote Country, 56.


147 Watts, In This Remote Country, 61; Craig, Backwoods Consumers, 41, 148.
ideas, which, working quietly and imperceptibly, have left intact many of the antiquities, tradition and custom that have disappeared elsewhere within the last generation." Similarly Turner wrote that "the simple and ignorant Acadian farmers, continu[ed] the primitive customs of the basin of Grad Pre, along the tranquil water of the Tesche, remote from the corroding touch of busy modern life."148 Conveying both the French-Canadian lack of independence and their racial inferiority, Madison Grant wrote they were "a poor and ignorant community of little more importance to the world at large than are the Negroes in the South."149 The French proved they could clear wilderness land, but, like "Negroes," Southern Italians, Jews, and other, more "savage" races, they could never truly bring civilization to it.

*  *  *

In 1904 one northern New York newspaper published an article on logging in the region proclaiming "these French-Canadian inhabitants of the woods are half-wild folk." This article encapsulated the prevailing attitudes toward French Canadians at the time. The common belief was that Native Americans made the wild their home and they had no desire to civilize it. This made them wild and savage. Like Native Americans, the French Canadians had an affinity for wild land, but they also had an affinity towards clearing it, the first step towards civilization. If left on their own, however, their racial weaknesses meant they were forever stuck in the process of civilizing the wilderness, never being able to advance to the next stage. They were not hopeless like Jews, but not as enterprising as Poles. Given the fact that they were also seen to have mixed their blood with Native American people, it is easy to see now how they were understood at the time to be in between white/civilized (or civilizing) and savage (non-white)/wild. Therefore, they were "half-wild

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This station in the racial hierarchy made them welcome in America, but directed them towards certain jobs. It also made them vulnerable to exploitation in the working forests.

By the 1950s the explicit racial thinking of the first two decades of the twentieth-century had been almost completely abandoned in popular and academic presses. Racial stereotypes of immigrants remained an important part of public discourses, but these stereotypes were explained using different analytical methods. Mid-twentieth-century "Chicago School" anthropologists and sociologists created narratives of the French-Canadian transition into modernity that reinforced all the characteristics of the French-Canadian image. Even with their fixation on data and ethnographic observation, these expert social scientists were not able to evade commonly held, racist beliefs.

Horace Miner’s 1940 text *St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish* reified the French-Canadian peasant character and provides the clearest glimpse at why forest products companies lobbied for the bonded system of pulp production discussed earlier. According to Miner, in the winter the men of St. Denis all went on multiple day wood cutting excursions as part of "The Yearly Round," the cycle of agricultural life that seemed to repeat year after year, generation after generation to no ends. Each December, Miner wrote, the "able-bodied men of a family take several days' supply of food and go to the mountain wood lots. There they remained, while they fell and trim the timber."

Other studies of French-Canadian life agreed, lumbering was a natural part of these people's

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151 The Holocaust and a retrospective understanding of America’s eugenic policies towards African Americans had proven the dangers of these racial ideologies. English, *Unnatural Selections*, 177, 182; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 95–96, 98–99.

152 Miner, *St. Denis*, 159.
primitive economic routine. They were not land owners like American farmers but peasants. This designation meant they worked on behalf of another, and they did not attain the full product of their labor.

According to sociologist Everett Hughes, when the French did industrialize it was because of British Canadian or American catalysts not because of their own ability. As depicted in Savard’s Menaud Maitre-draveur, the natural transition for these peasant lumberers in an increasingly industrial world was to work in commercial forest products production. The shacking system of pulp production, and the bonded labor immigrant work program were meant to mimic the way that French-Canadian peasants lived and worked in Québec.

The French-Canadian image made these workers specific targets for labor agents in the forest products hubs of the Northern Forest. Immigrant workers were often dependent on middle men to find work in American camps. The Foran Act of 1885 banned immigration of contract laborers, but the Immigration Act of 1917 allowed "skilled workers" to be imported to the United States if there was no native labor available to do the work. Under the 1917 act, immigrant workers were subject to an eight to ten-dollar head tax, a charge that was often factored into a labor agents’ fees.

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155 Miner, St. Denis, 20, 158.

Once in camp, there is evidence that French Canadians were subject to very harsh treatment. Tough bosses in wilderness camps pushed foreigners hard and disciplined them severely hoping to weed out unfit workers. A boss in charge of a lumber operation in St. Lawrence County, New York shot and killed a French-Canadian worker in 1908 after a disagreement about camp food.\textsuperscript{157} This type of rough treatment may have even led to the famous French-Canadian "jumping" disease, a type of post-traumatic stress disorder reported among immigrant workers in a few Northeastern camps.\textsuperscript{158}

The shacking system of forest products production that was documented in the 1950s evolved from over a century of thinking on the French-Canadian racial station.\textsuperscript{159} Between 1951 and 1955, an average of 5,920 French-Canadian workers were "bonded" to logging companies throughout New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine per year, though some years there were more than 7,000.\textsuperscript{160} In Maine during these years the pulpwood cutting force was on average 78.4% French Canadian, though isolated shackers might not have been reported in these statistics.

The shacking system mimicked the way that French-Canadian habitants were thought to have lived in Québec. An employee of Maine's Great Northern Paper Company described it thusly:

A shacker is a man, usually with a family, and one or two relatives who will move onto company land, build himself a shack to live in,
cut pulp through the cutting season and haul it to the designated hauling point … Usually the whole family, regardless of age, works with the father in the woods. The children rarely attend school … The shacker invariably is semi-literate. … If a contract can be drawn that will make these shackers independent contractors we will be able to relieve ourselves of a great deal of responsibility and will be able to produce wood much cheaper.\textsuperscript{161} This cost savings came about because of the supposed racial efficiency of the French-Canadian body at this particular job. The less civilized, more natural body of these Canadians could be appropriated to produce profit from the cut-over land of the Northern Forest.

* * *

The French-Canadian image justified this labor exploitation, but the image obviously did not reflect any true innate characteristics of French Canadians, as such a thing as innate racial characteristics do not exist. Instead the French-Canadian image, like the image of Jews, Italians, and Polish immigrants found in the Dillingham reports, reflected the shallow American understanding of global cultures as well as confirmation bias in supposedly objective social science.

The image of the French Canadian that formed between 1840 and 1950 can be explained in retrospect through a critical examination of the history of the French in North America. Fur trading, a popular occupation of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century French settlers, involved close contact with the wilderness and Native Americans. For voyageurs and coureur de bois, knowledge of the forest and ability to traverse and live off a harsh forest landscape were prized, respected, and lucrative traits. When the fur trade slowed in the 1830s these transient frontier workers, many of whom had been farmers before trading, settled down again. The voyageur culture was communicated to workers' progeny and the traditions of the voyageur— their songs, stories; many

\textsuperscript{161} On ideas of the standard of living of peasants see Glickman, \textit{A Living Wage}, 82–84; Quoted in Parenteau, "Bonded Labor" 115.
elements of an "identity" became transfused throughout French-Canadian culture. Folklorist Bridgette Lane found that the tales and folk-beliefs of the voyageurs made their way into logging camps of the 1890s. 162 Late nineteenth-century French-Canadian songs, customs, literature, and even religious rituals came to reflect the close contact that the early French had with the forest landscape. More importantly, practical woodskills associated with the voyageur identity allowed French-Canadian farm families to live and survive in inhospitable areas of northeastern Canada.

Since the 1820s the Church, working in conjunction with Canadian government agencies, sponsored colonization movements to try to preserve French Catholic culture in North America. These colonization programs moved French-Canadian communities away from the corrupting, irreligious influence of the Americans and British Canadians. 163 Conditions could be very rough in wilderness colonies of the Canadian near west and north, with colonists sometimes forced to resort to hunting and gathering for survival. 164 Separated from urban markets, colonies and the individual French-Canadian families in them came to rely heavily on forest resources, more heavily than other ethnic groups in similar situations. 165 Colonization happened in conjunction with a decline in formal education as colonized land had only rudimentary educational institutions.

Despite his racist approach in categorizing different ethnic groups, even Edmund Bradwin understood parts of the reality of the French-Canadian position:


163 Little, Nationalism, Capitalism and Colonization, 81.


165 Little found that this might have had to do with the French tendency to settle further from urban areas where there was more merchantable timber. Little, Crofters and Habitants, 72, 154.
There was in evidence a wide gap in educational attainment between the mass of French-speaking workers … and their [Canadian] compatriots. … The former continued but hewers of wood and drawers of water, and were desired as laborers because of these inherent qualities, while the latter, often selected from the same homes and parishes, become, owing to the centralized system of education, the well trained products of special schools and local colleges.166

It was just these types of small pioneering, uneducated French-Canadian farmer-colonists who tended to migrate to the United States, bringing with them pioneering skills but a lack of formal education. Approximately 62% of French-Canadian textile workers in New England had been farmers or farm laborers before coming to the United States. Many French Canadians were not able to own land right away so their "supreme resource, as a release from … poverty … was to take to the ax."167

It is also likely that the perpetuation of the French-Canadian image within this immigrant community created what social psychologists call "stereotype lift," whereby exposure to positive stereotypes causes "an elevation in their self-efficacy or sense of personal worth [and] performance." Therefore, those French-Canadian workers who were labeled as superior loggers may have performed better in the woods because of these labels. Whatever caused the French-Canadian affinity for forest products work, the contradiction in depicting French Canadians as a primitive peasant class is glaring, since moving to American lumber camps proved their adaptability toward modernization and progress at a time of economic trouble in their home country.168

166 Bradwin, The Bunkhouse Man, 95.


Historian Bruno Ramirez found in his comparative study of immigration to Canada that, "clearing forest land in Québec required work techniques and an endurance that not all prospective settlers were willing to endure." Thus Italians, Jews, and even many French-Canadian and Northern-European settlers failed at civilizing wild land simply because of the "physical and mental difficulty it entailed." Confirmation bias clouded the supposed objective observation of the Dillingham Commission, drawing observers' attention to the failures of groups they, and the wider American culture, already assumed would fail at pioneer work.

It is important to note, however, that the racial discourse on whiteness, wilderness, and work was not as strong a factor in deciding where immigrants would work as was the iron law of supply and demand. Most immigrants coming to the United States, regardless of their race, settled in factory towns and cities. By 1900 French Canadians made up 50% or more of the entire population of Southbridge and Spenser Massachusetts; Biddeford, Lewiston and Old Town, Maine; Woonsocket, Rhode Island; Danielson, Connecticut, and Suncook, New Hampshire.169 It was estimated that only 10% of all the French Canadians in New England lived in rural areas and as few as one per cent of workers went into "forest work" (there are problems with this latter figure, however).170 While the lumber industry had the second highest percentage of French Canadians as a

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170 These figures are drawn from Vicero, "Immigration of French Canadians to New England." The nature of logging in eastern North America make precise employment figures in the lumber camps difficult to surmise. Logging was inseparable from the agricultural sector, it was seasonal work, most workers took up other jobs when they were not logging, and loggers rarely self-identified as professional forest workers. By combining figures from several categories of work in Vicero’s study which were closely allied with logging, (agriculture, forest workers, pulp and paper, saw and planing mills, general labor, teamsters, railroad and street railway workers, and other occupations) we see the figures could have been as great as 31%. Vicero, "Immigration of French Canadians to New England" 298.
portion of the workers employed in 1900, the brick and tile making industries had an even larger number—more than 50%.171

Conclusion

As early as the 1840s, Americans used notions of wilderness, whiteness, and work to form images of various ethnic groups. After 1893, Americans meshed their ideas about race with an industrializing economy, a disappeared frontier, and a large population of new, exotic immigrants, in the process creating racial-industrial logics. Bolstered by evidence from history, sociology, and anthropology, characters from literature like London’s Francois and Perrault came to represent categories of workers in the minds of many American government officials, businessmen, and even fellow workers. The racial worldviews that formed in industrial America made the rapidly changing world more digestible for many "white" Americans. Given these racial dictates, every group of immigrants had a unique place in this new industrial economy. Racial thinking about immigrants and work on the land made it more difficult for many "non-pioneering" racial groups to become land owners while also insuring that American industries were supplied with adequate cheap labor.172

The objectives of government and business officials were not strictly nativist, however. In creating these immigrant images, public and private bureaucrats were attempting to fit different types of workers into industries where they would be economically efficient and most likely to succeed. From 1840 to 1950, "irrational" nativist thinking competed with the goal of advancing the American economy, the latter goal defined by treating immigrants as their racial and ethnic makeup dictated. Applying "common sense" racial science to immigration and industrial policies helped


improve the economy in the eyes of those who believed in the racial sciences. Nativism was not at odds with capitalism because the desire for a "white republic" was synonymous with a desire for an economically robust republic.

By 1950s systematic racism had been a part of American political and economic thought for more than a century so its effects on immigrants remained even as the explicit discussion on racial whiteness disappeared. The French-Canadian image, with its "unshakable demonstrations … of … ethnological truth," made the label of savage/wild hard to dislodge, and the exploitation of French Canadian immigrants in the Northern Forest remained a problem into the 1970s.173

* * *

This chapter has described a process in the development of capitalism whereby, in the words of Jason W. Moore "[s]ome people became Human, who were members of something called Civilization … most humans were either excluded from Humanity … or were designated as only part Human." Those who were not human, or only part human like the French Canadian, were part of nature, and could be exploited like other natural resources. French-Canadian streaming in the logging industry demonstrates that "the symbolic boundaries between who was—and who was not—part of Nature (or Society) tended to shift or vary; they were often blurry; and they were flexible."174

While these racial hierarchies were cementing in American thinking there was a rising fear among urban corporate Americans over what a future devoted to urban industry might do to the


pioneer blood that their fathers and grandfathers had exhibited before 1890 on the frontier. What would happen to American men with no more wilderness work to shape their racial character? The Jews and southern Italians supposedly represented a race shaped by urbanism.175 As Ross wrote the American "pioneer breed [is] being swamped and submerged by an overwhelming tide of latecomers from the old-world hive."176 What could Americans do to ensure the hardihood of their race did not dwindle?

One remedy was to look for groups of Americans who still exemplified the pioneer heritage and proper racial characteristics. These modern pioneers could save the nation from racial apocalypse. In the lumberjack class, anxious urban Americans found a new identity forged in the seemingly contradictory atmospheres of industry and wilderness. This class identity could be appropriated to improve the masculinity and race of an increasingly "overcivilized" population of urban, effete men. Not surprisingly, one of the men that Americans looked to as an example of proper masculinity was a French-Canadian lumber worker name Louis Cyr, whose raw power and wild ancestry provided an example of proper masculinity to a group of Americans who were searching the industrial landscape for examples of a more primitive, natural masculinity.


Chapter 6- "Consult the teamster, the farmer, the woodchopper": Antimodernist Anxiety and Rural Working-class Hegemony

In 1875, at the age of twelve, French-Canadian Cyprien-Noé Cyr started his first season in the lumber camps around Saint-Cyprien-de-Napierville, Québec, fifteen miles north of the New York border. Cyr stood out among his fellow workers because of his large size and extreme strength. The young Cyr secured the job after impressing a boss by carrying an injured, adult lumberman out of the woods over his shoulder. Despite his young age, he reportedly did as much work as a man, often carrying the heaviest logs, sometimes two at a time. By his mid-twenties, this young farmer-logger became known as the strongest man in the world, traveling Europe and America as an entertainer, impressing audiences with amazing feats of bodily power. Cyr and the lumberjack class he represented became models of how urban Americans could improve themselves bodily at the turn of the century, a time when it was assumed that the American body was being degraded by urban industrial capitalism.¹

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The uneven development of industrial capitalism across the urban and rural landscape changed how Americans envisioned the healthy, natural male body.² The turn of the century was a time of national self-reflection when academic and popular authors nostalgically contemplated the type of men (and type of masculinity) that had conquered the North American continent and had made the United States into a powerful nation. At the same time, medical, sociological, and physiological scientists scrutinized the middle-class body in new ways, often judging it to be inferior


² Bederman finds that the word "masculinity" rose in popularity in the printed text after 1890 to describe a new popular idea connecting the natural predisposition of the male sex with strenuousness, action, passion and corporal power. It was a contested term. This is how I will use the term. Gail Bederman, *Masculinity & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 11, 18-19.
compared to the imagined bodies of past generations. Cyr displayed the type of powerful body that could be built when white, or partially white men fought nature as part of their daily work.

Lumberjacks and hard working classes like them proved that working in nature and with nature helped to craft natural male bodies, bodies whose power could be appropriated to progress the nation economically. Comparing themselves to the naturally strong bodies of the working classes, the sedentary middle class realized that urban corporate capitalism was harming their health. The dwindling number of workers who continued to do rural manual labor became exemplars, and middle-class and elite men attempted to mimic their actions and character to improve their own health and the health of the nation.

In the early twentieth-century, the medical and academic community did not fully understand the fundamentals of biological growth. Crafting valuable objects from nature or transforming the landscape were seen as vital ways that people built their bodies. The rural working-class body and the rural environment were depicted as morally and scientifically healthier, more naturally in-tune with an ideal human form, than the middle-class body and new urban environment. The ideal body that became exemplary was not necessarily as large or as powerful as Cyr's but was simply one with the capacity to do large amounts of productive work in hazardous, natural environments.3

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3 Athena Devlin has argued that middle-class men desired physically efficient bodies, bodies which adhered to both the Protestant work ethic and the Progressive fixation on efficiency. These were bodies which could produce maximum profit in scientifically managed factories. The antimodernist fixation on craft work and nature disrupts Devlin's claims. Antimodernists valued the ability to produce value or simply make products from unpredictable nature. Devlin wrote that the concentration on the working-class body has been overemphasized by historians. This is only true when one intentionally averts one’s historical gaze from the majority of Americans who, until the 1920s, worked and lived in the hinterland and not in factories. Discourses on rural work reveals a different history of masculinity. Athena Devlin, Between Profits and Primitivism: Shaping White Middle-Class Masculinity in the United States, 1880-1917, (New York: Routledge, 2005) 5, 36, 41; Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981) 48, 49, 62, 63; Edward Steven Slavishak, Bodies of Work: Civic Display and Labor in Industrial Pittsburgh, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) 50; Thomas Winter, Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877-1920, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 9, 11, 62, 98; Roberta J. Park, "Biological Thought, Athletics and the Formation of A 'Man Of Character': 1830-1900," The International Journal of the History of Sport, 24 no. 12 (2007): 1559; Ava Baron, "Masculinity, The Embodied Male Worker, and The Historian's Gaze," International Labor and Working-Class History 69, no. 1 (2006): 146;
In *No Place of Grace*, T. J. Jackson Lears gave a fitting name to the type of anxious middle-class men who began to celebrate the bodies of workers like Cyr during the late nineteenth-century. He called them *antimodernists*. This chapter argues that, antimodernists—a disparate group of "journalist, academics, ministers, and literati"—looked down the social strata and into the hinterland for examples of how to avoid the degrading aspects of industrialization and improve their bodies. Therefore, this argument goes further than Lears, or Bederman's influential *Manliness and Civilization*, in making the explicit claim that the working class profoundly affected ideas of proper masculinity at the turn of the century.⁴

For much of the nineteenth-century, middle-class white men aspired to what historian Anthony Rotundo called "self-made manhood." Under the dictates of self-made manhood, success in business, the procurement of capital, and mastery over a physical domain demonstrated proper masculine behavior. But by the turn of the century, the constant struggle towards self-made manhood appeared to be degrading the nation’s virility. The idea of self-made manhood was giving way to *passionate manhood*, an "energetic" form of masculinity that praised austerity, muscular and martial prowess, physical toil, and the expression of passions and emotions.⁵

New masculinities become hegemonic when men (and some women) decide to emulate gender performances that they assume are natural manifestations of their cisgender. As the propagators of urban corporate capitalism became more sedentary and office-bound they realized that they could not trust that their own gender performances were natural. These urban corporate bodies represented artificial civilization, and the bodies of producers like lumberjacks represented nature, or truth. The masculinity that became hegemonic/natural was a gender performance built on

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idealized working men who worked in a natural environment to produce value through physical strength.

Rural workers like loggers made value from nature and were seen as closer to nature themselves because of it. George Chauncey recognized this link between displays of working-class strength and masculinity, "[i]f middle-class men exerted power over the lives of working men (and claimed a degree of superiority) because they worked with their heads, not their hands, they recognized, as well, that the very physicality of workingmen’s labor afforded them a seemingly elemental basis for establishing their manliness." Antimodernist began to do manual labor, or other activities which were inspired by ideas of manual labor, during their leisure time to improve their bodies. Passionate masculinity also co-opted carnal aspects of working-class manhood drawn from observations of working-class culture. Working-class hedonism, sexual indulgence, transiency, violence, and gluttony all came to be viewed as natural manifestations of masculinity. This means that the working-class body was not just a text to be read and interpreted by elites, as some historians have argued, but instead was a source of power (physical and cultural) that influenced elites to the point where the leisure class changed their daily habits and their ideas about gender.

These changes in ideal masculinity signify a reversal of the flow of power and influence through American culture. Historians who study ideas of gender performance have typically depicted influence and power flowing from powerful elites such as reformers, literati, politicians, and


7 Mumford predicted that in a fully industrialized society "work itself will become a kind of game." Progress of this type was only found among the upper classes, however, who, as we see in this chapter would choose to do work for play. Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1934) 279.


capitalists, downwards to the powerless such as, blacks, immigrants, women, poor, and rural people. Scholars assume these disenfranchised groups were culturally inert or only rarely exerted cultural influence. The narrative of lower class disempowerment is firmly entrenched in the history of the Progressive Era, a period named after elite reformers who supposedly molded the disempowered to fit their image of proper citizenship.\(^\text{10}\)

In his introduction to his study of sexuality Michel Foucault tells the reader that, "power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix—no such duality extending from top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body."\(^\text{11}\) Cyr and other workers’ growing cultural influence proves Foucault’s interpretation was correct. This reversal of the flow of power was a type of cultural hegemony, or perhaps even a revolution in thinking. This \textit{working-class hegemony} represented a crisis in the movement towards an ideal liberal state. The idea that industrial progress should continue and would improve and civilize the country was replaced by a pessimistic attitude towards modernity, and the idea that people

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needed to retard social progress to maintain personal and national health. Male citizens needed to become more natural and to do so they needed to seek out and emulate naturally masculine people.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{Cyr and Sullivan: How Superior Working-Class Bodies Were Built}

Cyr had been large from birth, and he increased his size and strength by working on the farm and in the woods.\textsuperscript{13} He learned the importance of bodily strength from his grandfather Pierre, a coureur des bois. Pierre taught his grandson to equate bodily strength with wealth and success, telling the boy, "[i]f you are strong, you are everything. If you are not strong, you are nothing."\textsuperscript{14} The romanticized forest and fields of French Canada were perfect pre-industrial environments for building masculine strength. When he was not working on the farm or in the woods Cyr and his grandfather pushed stones, rolled tree trunks, climbed trees, carried sacks of grain, and lifted farm animals for exercise. The village blacksmith shop was like a local gym, and the blacksmith Trudeau was the local strong man. To the Cyrs and to many North Americans, the blacksmith was a symbol of masculine strength and Trudeau was no exception, twisting iron and lifting his anvils with one hand to impress audiences.

Cyr's grandfather instructed his grandson that building strength was not just a matter of working hard. Overeating was also a way to increase power, so from a young age Cyr consumed tremendous amounts of simple Québécois farm food. By the age of seventeen, Cyr weighed 230

\textsuperscript{12} Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 18, 24; Slavishak, \textit{Bodies of Work}, 101.

\textsuperscript{13} David R. Norwood, "The Sport Hero Concept and Louis Cyr," (Dissertation University of Windsor Dissertation, 1982) 27.

\textsuperscript{14} Weider, \textit{The Strongest Man in History}, 5-6, 7, 13, 14, 17.
pounds and in his prime at thirty years old, he weighed 350 pounds, about the same amount of weight he could lift with one hand, though he was only five feet, ten and a half inches tall.\(^\text{15}\)

Like thousands of other French-Canadian farmer-logger families, the Cyr family moved to Lowell, Massachusetts in 1878. Cyprien-Noé Cyr changed his first name to the Americanized Louis and began working at a high paying urban factory job, but found the work too physically restrictive, preferring lower paying outdoor farm work on the outskirts of the city. When lifting at work or later in the strongman competitions that made him famous, Cyr used "primitive" methods, moving in ways that felt natural even if they were less efficient than modern scientific methods. He was also a showman at work, making movements deliberately and with flare to show off his power.\(^\text{16}\)

In the United States, Cyr won his first strongman competition, in which the challenge was lifting a full-grown horse off the ground. In the winter of 1881, Cyr was again working in a logging camp in Québec, but his reputation as a strongman had grown to the point where crowds of spectators came to watch him work. After that season, Cyr began performing full time, traveling the United States, Canada, and later England, challenging men to beat him in lifting competitions. In 1885, he bested David Michaud, the strongest man in Canada. Soon after, Cyr, dressed in a primitive leather trapper’s jacket, faced the American Oscar Matthes, a well to do young man who trained with modern gym apparatuses. Using his more organic methods, Cyr beat Matthes handily. Not long after that victory, Cyr gave himself the title of strongest man in the world and if his feats of strength were real, he deserved the title. Cyr’s specialty lift was the back lift, a lift he used many times on the


farm and in the woods moving sleds and carts, though he was also adept at lifting barrels full of sundry materials.\textsuperscript{17}

Before the end of his career Cyr defeated several other famous strongmen including Richard Pannell, Sebastian Millar, Franz "Cyclops" Bienkowski, and August Johnson. Dr. Dudley Allen Sargent, a famous and influential physical culture instructor at Harvard, examined Cyr's body and claimed him to be one of the strongest men alive (Figure 1).\textsuperscript{18} Sargent's word in this matter was important. He was an early proponent of anthropometry, or "the knowledge of modern human proportions … derived from the measurement of living persons." Using his unique techniques, Sargent measured hundreds of average college students along with famous examples of masculine health like Cyr hoping to understand how to improve the health of the American race.\textsuperscript{19}

As a "half-wild" French Canadian, Cyr was part of a race that was not fully corrupted by civilization, but was also not as supposedly primitive as black, brown, and Asian people. Cyr's racial makeup was not as threatening to white Americans as was the racial makeup of the famous black pugilist Jack Johnson. Cyr was foreign enough to attract attention but not so foreign as to alienate the white working and middle class men who crowded to watch him in competitions of strength.

Cyr's famous body was built by manual labor, as was the body of one of Cyr's close friends John L. Sullivan, heavyweight boxing champion of the world. Like Cyr, Sullivan came from a working-class background and when he was measured by Sargent, he was found to be one of the

\textsuperscript{17} During his career Cry made a back lift of 4,337 pounds (a record that was not beat until the 1990s), a one handed shoulder press of 350 pounds, lifted off the ground several inches with both hands 1,897 pounds, lifted a 433 pounds barrel of cement off of the ground onto his shoulder with only one arm, and supposedly resisted the pull of four horses, two on each arm, for 55 seconds. These accomplishments were, according to biographer and Cyr fan Ben Wider, "established officially, before qualified judges, and in the presents of many witnesses." Weider, \textit{The Strongest Man in History}, 33-35, 42-43, 52, 54, 65, 67, 70-71, 73, 74, 102.


\textsuperscript{19} Park, "Physiologists, Physicians, And Physical Educators," 1650.
most powerful and "girthy" men ever measured.\textsuperscript{20} According to Sargent, Cyr and Sullivan represented a type of pre-modern body that "conquers both opponents and environments;" the savage, "premodern force" that had forged a great civilization out of wilderness land. They had the types of bodies that were becoming rarer in an increasingly urban, industrial, and corporate America.\textsuperscript{21}

Unhealthy Cities, Unhealthy Capitalism

The "problem of the city" was the primary culprit of degraded American masculinity. In the late nineteenth-century, the population of the United States was the fastest growing in the world.\textsuperscript{22} The number of cities with more than 100,000 residents rose from fifteen to sixty-eight between 1870 and 1920, and those with more than 500,000 rose from two to twelve. These cities and their factories were increasingly artificially powered. From 1850 to 1900 engines became bigger and more powerful. They were displayed as triumphs of technology, but also flagrant displacers of human muscle power. In 1850 approximately "17.6 billion horsepower hours were expended in American industry" and only six percent of that came from mechanical energy. By the 1950s, 410.4-billion horsepower hours were used and 94% of this power came from machines running largely on coal, petroleum, or water. Authors like Jacob Riis and Josiah Strong depicted these massive, artificially


powered cities as new exotic environments and no one was sure how these environments would affect human health in the long term.23

The growth of the city was accompanied by a change in how Americans worked. In 1830, 3/4 of Americans were engaged in agricultural production, by 1880 it was about half that number. Between 1870 and 1940 the "old middle class" of farmers, businessmen, and free professionals dropped from 85% of the total US working population to 44%. The "new middle class" of managers, salaried professionals, salespeople, and office workers—so called "brain workers"—rose from 15% of the population to more than 55% during that same period. In this same seventy-year time frame the percentage of Americans producing goods dropped from 77% to 46% while those coordinating the movement of goods increased from 23% of the working population to 54%. In 1870 clerical workers were less than 1% of the workforce, but by 1910 they were nearly 4%.24

Brain work stripped men of the authority that previous generations gained by working on the land. The idealized rural life that antimodernists imagined as they looked back on American history was one where men ruled over a patriarchal domain and had direct control over "their" landscape, their children, their women, and their animals. Every day, these men would "subjugate nature or personally create something." By the turn of the century, fewer men managed their own business affairs but were instead entrenched in large corporate structures.25 As historian John F.


25 This idea of being "masters of small worlds" defined rural manhood and American liberal democracy in the North and the South. Mrozek, "Sport in American Life," 25; Lears, No Place of Grace, 27, 34; McCurry, Masters of Small Worlds; Richard Cabot, What Men Live by; Work, Play, Love, Worship, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 37; Slavishak, Bodies of Work, 150.
Kasson found "[b]y 1904, about three hundred industrial corporations had gained control of more than 40 percent of all manufacturing in the United States." Between 1897 and 1904, 4,000 US firms "collapsed into 257 combinations, trusts and corporations." Between 1900 and 1940 16-million firms began operation but 14-million went out of business. In this new, huge, interconnected economy, abstract forces could quickly change the economic fate of a man and his family. Economic recessions, market volatility, the lack of a farmstead, and the end of "free land" in the West meant that brain workers were precariously employed in a way that their fathers and grandfathers had never been.

At the same time, women were challenging men's supremacy in the professional world. In 1870 about 3% of clerks, bookkeepers, and salespeople were women, by 1890 women were 15%, and by 1910 approximately half of the 4,420,000 office workers in the United States were women. The traditionally sexually homogeneous American University was also opening its doors to more women. From 1890 to 1920 the number of female graduates increased 500% from 56,000 to 282,900. These changes, and a strong middle-class conviction that this type of "progress" would continue indefinitely, startled the new middle-class man.

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As early as the 1830s, critics like Alexis De Tocqueville and Catharine Beecher wrote on the degrading health effects caused by the fact that an "increasing number of people no longer worked with their hands." Those who did manual labor in cities were now working with large machines that

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28 Prescott, Student Bodies, 79.
enslaved their bodies to the rhythm and monotony of industrial commodity production. Factories had once employed skilled contractors who worked with machines, but had near complete freedom in the labor process. Scientific management and university-trained technocrats slowly ended those freedoms. Industrial pessimists like James Philips Kay and Peter Gaskell worried that the future of labor would be one where the laborer became an extension of the machine, "dehumanized" and unable to "work like a 'man.'"\textsuperscript{29} The luxury of civilization was seemingly ruining American virtue.

Walt Whitman wrote in the 1850s, that the poor "are never injured by those pampering luxuries and condiments that are frequently the bane of the offspring of the rich—who are often literally killed by kindness."\textsuperscript{30} Drawing on Whitman and other early antimodernist, Dr. Dudley Sargent argued that as modern industrial society divided labor into its constituent parts, workers’ bodies developed unevenly. "It is not only possible in many cases to distinguish individuals by their calling," Sargent found, "but the particular branch of work in which they are engaged can be easily determined by its influence upon their physical structure. … The division of labor and the extensive use of steam and electricity have wrought most radical changes in our methods of working and living."\textsuperscript{31}

Sargent and other experts imagined the modern factory workers’ environment to be poisonous. In the steel mills of Pittsburg, mostly immigrant workers faced "damaging noise parching heat … irritating dust that breeds throat and lung trouble … nerve-breaking application demanded


from men who tells the exact moment for pouring metal by the color of the flames above the converter … the soul slaying routine that requires a girl in the boltworks to repeat the same set of movements sixteen thousand times in ten hours … the vital wear and tear is tremendous: the hair of the steel worker grows gray at thirty-five." These urban industrial workers never breathed fresh healthful air, because even when they returned to their tenements or shacks "under the shadow of the smoke-breathing mills" they dealt with overcrowded unsanitary conditions. Once healthy rural workers who took jobs in industrial hubs like Pittsburg were eventually chewed up and destroyed in their new unhealthy urban environment. "Everything about [the industrial city] is … grimy and sooty and sordid and nasty," reformer Edwin Borkman wrote. Antimodernist Dr. Richard Cabot also detested factory work, arguing that "[e]ven when factory labor is well paid, its impersonal and wholesale merging of the man in the machine goes far to make it unfit for men and women." "The division of labor has important effects on the character" as well as the body, reformer Josiah Strong wrote in his The Challenge of the City (1906). Brain workers and factory workers no longer did the type of work that strengthen "both mind and body." The city was causing the American physique to become unbalanced if not outright destroyed.

Though physical commodities were central to brain and factory work, fewer of these types of workers had intimate contact with raw, unprocessed nature in the way people in the past had. To brain workers, commodities were words and numbers on paper. To most factory workers, raw materials were partially processed goods awaiting further processing, not growing or natural things. City life, according to Cabot, "reeks so strong of civilization and the 'finished product."

Antimodernist cultural critics like John Ruskin and Gustav Stickley promoted the arts and crafts

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33 Cabot, What Men Live by, 33, 48.
movement because they extolled the labor and the physical prowess involved in transforming unpredictable raw nature into useful, beautiful devices. Artisanal production was becoming trendy.  

New sciences revealed just how sedentary urban living was making Americans. Starting in 1880, the United States Department of Agriculture began to dissect the diets of Americans using new accurate calorimeters that measured the potential energy in food. Miners, brick layers, and lumberjacks used 7,000 to 8,000 calories a day doing the type of labor required to civilize a continent. Factory workers in New England aided by artificial power were only burning about 4,400 calories a day. "Sedentary" professional men and women burned only 2,700 calories, proof that male and female brain workers were becoming more similar in terms of their productive potential. Some brain workers were found to be harming their bodies by eating too much rich, calorie dense food for the work they were doing.

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In the last two decades of the nineteenth-century, observers noted the physical manifestations of urban corporate capitalism in the male form. Dr. Sargent found that sedentary occupations required the "use of only small parts of the body, such as the fingers and hands," and this led to "various kinds of local palsies, deformities, and nervous collapses." "Bookkeepers, penmen, typewriters, pianist, telegrapher, engravers, [and] seamstresses" were becoming diseased and misshapen because of their work, Sargent found. Social and political reformer Reverend

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36 Atwater, "What the Coming Man Will Eat" 495, 496; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 29-31; Prescott, *Student Bodies*, 32-33.

37 Strong, *The Challenge of the City*, 4-5.

Charles Henry Parkhurst argued that cities caused "physical degeneration" and the men that inhabited them were "chalkyfaced, narrow-chested, lank legged creatures." Famous jurists Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote "I am satisfied that such a set of black-coated, stiff jointed, soft-muscled, paste complexioned youth as we can boast in our Atlantic Cities never before sprang from the loins of the Anglo-Saxon lineage. Anything is better than this white-blooded degeneration to which we all trend." Physical culture advocate H.W. Foster argued that as more people "drift towards the city" there was an "increase in the means to make life easy." According to antimodernists, cities did not require man to "react against his environment" and urban environments lacked "certain essential elements in the training of a vigorous manhood.

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, atypical sexual behavior and sexual "inversion" was linked to the incivility of primitive people, but by the turn of the century a second theory emerged that held that "same-sex eroticism was a form of 'decadence'" caused by urbanism and overcivilization. In the modern city, the home and the nuclear family ceased to serve as a center of production, leisure, and healthful moral conditioning as it once had in rural America. "Homes are disappearing in the city," Josiah Strong wrote, and they were replaced by immoral social clubs, boarding houses, and tenements. In 1890, urban living contributed to the rising age of first marriage among men to a height of twenty-six years. Men experienced more social anonymity in the city, allowing them to meet likeminded people with similar interests, sexual or otherwise.

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and 1930, the homosexual culture appeared to be "growing in pace in New York [city]." "Fag balls," live sex shows, male prostitution, homosexual parades, and homosexual riots were proof that American civilization was deteriorating. Urban homosexual sub-cultures were more visible and more widely reported on than rural homosexuality.\(^{41}\)

The visibility of gay culture helped to form a straight/gay dichotomy in popular culture, forcing reputation conscious middle-class men to prove that they were not succumbing to inversion, a "condition" that professionalized medicine and psychology insisted was unhealthy and thus unmanly. Professionals who studied inversion thought that it hindered men’s ability to do productive work. The urban "fairy," or cismale with feminine mannerism, was assumed to have the body, the mind, and the productive capacity of a woman. Immigrants with sexually "abnormal" anatomy were not allowed entry into the United States because it was presumed they would never become economically productive citizens.

At the same time that the urban homosexual subculture was becoming more visible, men became interested in the superior physiques of people Cyr and Sullivan, which they could view in traveling shows and magazines. These male audiences had to differentiate their healthy admiration for strong bodies and working-class role models from unhealthy sexual inversion. As the straight/gay dichotomy blossomed antimodernists distanced themselves from affiliation with sexually perverse, urban environments, while the sexual health of rural environments and rural people remained unmarred.\(^{42}\)


\(^{42}\) Historian George Chauncey realized that "the very celebration of male bodies and manly sociability initially precipitated in the masculinity crisis required a new policing of male intimacy and exclusion of sexual desire for other men… given the crisis…many middle-class men felt compelled to insist— in a way that working-class men did not—that there was no sexual element in their relations with other men." Homosexuality may have been as, if not more, common among, rural men than the urban men but
Besides general physical weakness and inversion, brain workers might suffer from neurasthenia, a disease that had nonspecific symptoms like headaches, tiredness, lethargy, depression, fainting, and, in the worst-case scenarios, death. In Gunn’s New Family Physician, expert James Gunn argued that, "The active countryman, the farmer, the hunter, the common laborer, and those who take much exercise in the open air, do not suffer from this nervous debility and weakness. It is usually those of sedentary habits, who are confined to the house and the office—those who exhaust the brain by too great mental exertion, or the body by idleness and dissipation." Neurasthenia was virtually unknown before the Civil War, providing more evidence that it was caused by the expansion of urban environments.

Around the middle of the nineteenth-century, scientists and physicians began to perpetuate the idea that men had a quantifiable amount of "nervous" or "vital" energy that kept them healthy, but having too little of this energy or misusing it caused neurasthenia. Men who did not regularly find an outlet for their nervous energy became sick, a small sign of an overall social sickness. Dr. Sargent explained the cause of this disease: "When any tissue or organ is kept in a state of activity, a process of disintegration … is taking place. … The effect on the brain and central nervous system would not be unlike the effect upon an electric battery used to supply a door-bell, if you kept your

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sexuality in general was not as widely policed or reported on in rural areas and therefore was not recognized as a problem at the time. Chauncey, Gay New York, 116, 112-114, 120; Margot Canaday, The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America, (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009) 21; Beachy, "The German Invention of Homosexuality," 812.


finger pressed continuously on the bell button." The accretion of individual cases of nervous disorders was a sign that "[t]he race is getting stunted and neurotic, puny and degenerate."  

In his *The Law of Civilization and Decay* (1895), historian Brooks Adams explained why, as the wealth of individuals and society increased, the symptoms of neurasthenia got worse. A civilization, Adams argued, had a certain capacity to use and store energy. Vital human energy was analogous to all other forms of energy. Adams defined commerce as the patterns in the way a society used and stored this energy. Before modern urban corporate capitalism, societies expended nervous energy working to make value from nature. People ate proper amounts of natural food to restore their energy and there was an overall balance in these pre-industrial societies. "Whenever a race was so richly endowed with the energetic material that it does not expend all its energy in the daily struggle for life," Adams wrote, "the surplus may be stored in the shape of wealth." When too much wealth was concentrated in a few hands, Adams found, the delicate balance of working off stored energy was disrupted. Industrialism was the apex of this crisis of conglomerated wealth and energy. According to Adams "the steam-engine [was] the most perfect of all vents of centralizing energy." When the steam engine was widely utilized during industrialization, "the economic, and, perhaps, the scientific intellect is propagated, while the imagination fades, and the emotional, the martial, and the artistic types of manhood decay." The wealth of industrialization caused lethargy and lethargy was, according to Dr. Cabot "corrosive" and "self-destructive."  

Diet was an important factor in maintaining a proper balance of nervous energy. The disease of dyspepsia was a nonspecific stomach or bowel problem that, like neurasthenia, was caused by a

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lack of masculine vitality. Like neurasthenia, dyspepsia was also found almost exclusively among the affluent. As early as 1858, Walt Whitman was pointing out the problems in the "frightfully injurious … dinner habits of most people who, as they would call it, 'live well.'" He continued, "[i]t is doubtless here [in the stomach] that four-fifths of the weaknesses, breakings-down, and premature deaths, of Americans begin.47 "Unskilled workers," according to Dr. Sargent, particularly those who worked outdoors like "watchmen, fishermen, farmers, sailors, lumbermen, and porters" were the least likely to be disqualified from Civil War recruitment by dyspepsia. Dr. Dio Lewis, the author of Our Digestion: or, My Jolly Friend's Secret argued that previous generations had more hardy stomachs because "[o]ur grand-fathers lived and worked in the open air. We live and work in stove heat. They worked hard — chopping and digging. We sit and move our fingers." For similar reasons, American Indians were seen to be devoid of the diseases of overcivilization: "dyspepsia, and gout, as with many of the common diseases of civilized life, were unknown to [them]."

By the turn of the century, more people had access to the rich foods that in the past, were reserved for the wealthy. These new preserved, refined, high calorie foods mixed with lethargy, caused the surge in dyspeptics. In an essay titled "Why we Should Give Our Children Physical Training," Professor of Biology John Mason Tyler argued that, "the decrease in the use of the heavy muscles reacts upon the digestive and assimilative powers. The sedentary man craves concentrated and easily digestible food. He eats a large amount of lean meat, cannot tolerate fat, and dislikes vegetables. … The kind and amount of food and the lack of exercise result in constipation. Nervous

47Looking back at data from Civil War draft records Dr. Dudley Allen Sargent found that, "[t]he diseases of the digestive system were" common among all draftees but "[t]he mercantile class, such as merchants, innkeepers, grocers, and clerks, furnished the largest number of those exempt from this cause. Then followed in order the professional class, such as lawyers, clergymen, physicians, teachers, and editors." Sargent, Physical Education, 33-34; Roberta J. Park, "Healthy, Moral, and Strong," in Grover, Fitness in American Culture, 148; Whitman, "Manly Health and Training," 210.

dyspepsia, twin-root of almost any conceivable evil, is likely to follow." Lewis argued that like neurasthenia, dyspepsia was a disease where "only morbid appearances were in the head, though some of the most prominent symptoms were felt in the stomach." Dyspepsia could be cured by a change in diet but it was also often cured by "permitting the over-tasked and tired brain to rest." Other medical experts clarified that it was "lack of exercise" which "produces a train of nervous diseases, and a permanent one is that of dyspepsia." According to one popular magazine reporter, "it is the rugged, active out-door life of the lumbermen that save them from the pangs of dyspepsia." 

The imagined effects of urban corporate capitalism on societies became more pernicious when they were extended into the future. Neo-Lamarckian and early Darwinian ideas of biological change over time showed that urban corporate capitalism would eventually change the American race. For example, early physical educator Edward M. Hartwell argued in his 1889 address titled "The Nature of Physical Training" that men who exercise can "transmit to [their] progeny a veritable aptitude for better thoughts and actions." George Perkin Marsh, Franz Boaz, and others attached more importance to environment as the culprit of bodily change than heredity. Both ways of thinking about change in human form over time—heredity and environmental influence—intermingled at the turn of the century providing imaginative antimodernist with the material they needed to make extreme predictions about the future.

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H.G. Wells, an author from England, one of the most industrialized countries in the world, imagined what the earth would be like in the year 802,701. In Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), the world was inhabited by two types of human descendants. The effete *Eloi* were descendants of the middle and upper-classes of industrial society. Nearly sexless, they were preyed upon by large, insect-like *Morlocks*—descendants of the working-classes. The Morlocks lived in the "Underground" maintaining functionless machines. Their workscape transformed these humans into pale, predatory insect like creatures which emerge only at night. The Eloi lived in pristine cultivated nature, but did not struggle with it and because of that they become weak and passionless. *The Time Machine* depicts the possible degradation of the race as a result of rapid industrialization of the type that Wells witnessed in England. Morlocks were obvious predictions of the future bodies of coal miners and machine tenders, who were already depicted at the turn of the nineteenth-century as "wretched lopsided creatures" apelike, brooding, and bent by the nature of their work.

Bodies were not only divided on class lines, but also on the rural/urban basis. Dr. Sargent found that "the best Scotch agricultural population and the manufacturing population of the cities of Sheffield and Bristol, in England, is an average of five inches in height and thirty-one pounds in weight in favor of the farmers." The anthropometric measurements done during World War I found that rural Americans were taller than their urban counterparts.51

The idea of divergent evolution on class, and rural/urban lines was popularized in an 1879 drawing by Thomas Nast known as "Education. Is There No Middle Course?" (Figure 2). Nast depicts a bent, bespectacled, skinny student with a comically large head contrasted with a brutish

worker/prize fighter with a powerful trunk but small head. Each man was disfigured, only together did they make an idealized complete man. Similar pictures showing college athletes compared with bookish scholars appeared in other popular media at the time such as Bailey’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes and the Saturday Review. These antimodernist illustrations were intentional exaggerations of possible futures, but physical decay, inversion, neurasthenia, and dyspepsia were real signs of the degradation of the race.

As the nation transition to industrial capitalism, progressive reformers feared that the corporal problems of wealthy urbanites were more difficult to solve than the problems facing workers. The lives of the working classes, the rural poor, and immigrants could be improved by improving their homes and their conditions of work. The middle class had already achieved a superb standard of living so the solutions to their problems were less clear. Cabot found that, among those classes in America where "the pinch of hunger is unknown" there was still much "languish, chafe, and fret." For the anxious antimodernist, "industrial reform will not help." What could help them then?

**Working-class Hegemony**

Brooks Adams argued that once a race had become wealthy to the point where it started to decay it could only be saved by "the infusion of barbarian blood," or as other antimodernists

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phrased it, "a saving touch of honest, old-fashioned barbarism"; "[a] hint of primitive."56 In the early twentieth-century the type of barbarism that would save urban antimodernists was found in the rural working classes. Rural workers were perpetually at war with nature in its various forms. They lived the lives of frontiersmen and unlike other possible antimodernist role models (Native Americans, for example) they were imagined to be white (American thinkers were quick to forget the contribution of French Canadians, or any other minority group, in their histories of the settling of North America when it supported their narrative of Anglo-Saxon superiority).57 The masculinity of rural workers seemed in many ways more natural than that of urban workers.58

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Antimodernists imagined that working in the forest environment developed man's inner barbarian. German, Anglo-Saxon, and Teutonic/Nordic myths and legends lauded the "Wildman" figure, who lived in the forest and through physical strength and strength of will resisted effete civilization. Different authors alluded to this innate characteristic of white men in slightly different ways. Cabot called these wild passions the "pioneer instinct … [that] ancient hunger to subdue the challenges which we meet, to tame what is wild." Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, and other

56 Adams, *The Law of Civilization and Decay*, 362-363; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 100-103; In antiquity, when Rome was becoming decadent there was an actual infusion of Western European "barbarian" blood that restored history to the proper progressive course. In Western culture barbarians were people who gained strength and stamina from living in wild lands, beyond the control of the metropolis. Gilbert F. LaFreniere, *The Decline of Nature: Environmental History and the Western Worldview* (Bethesda: Academia Press, 2007) 55-56.


widely popular western fiction, wrote "the slumbering untamed Saxon awoke" when the white man faced hostile nature. Later, he calls this same hidden prowess the "medieval man." Forest fiction author Stuart Edward White called it the "primitive man" or the "blood of the frontiersmen." The perfect pioneer type, according to White, had an abundance of these "elemental passions" and found them hard to control at times:

his disputation is at once kindly and terrible. Outside of the subtleties of his calling, he sees only red. Relieved of the strenuousness of his occupation, he turns all the force of the wonderful energies that have carried him far where other men would have halted, to channels in which a gentle current makes flood enough. It is the mountain torrent and the canal. Instead of pleasure, he seeks orgies. He runs to wild excesses of drinking, fighting, and carousing — which would frighten most men to sobriety — with a happy, reckless spirit that carries him beyond the limits of even his extraordinary forces.

This is not the moment to judge him. And yet one cannot help admiring the magnificently picturesque spectacle of such energies running riot. The power is still in evidence, though beyond its proper application.60

When these rural people unabashedly expressed passion, observers saw the beauty of the male body performing naturally, animalistically. In the Early Republic, in polite society, comparing a man to an animal was an insult. Rural workers had historically compared their prowess to the prowess of animals when boasting, however. For urban antimodernists, comparing men to animals was now complementary, as Jack London’s extended metaphorical novel The Call of the Wild proved.61

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Though antimoderns could never go back in time to experience the active frontier, middle-class men could look to their contemporaries in the working class who were thought to have lives similar to the frontiersmen. Some praised the rancher or cowpuncher, others the farmer, or the hobo, but many praised the lumberjack. Any "creative worker and the subduer of nature" was an exemplary man, according to Dr. Cabot.

These outdoor workers lived a physical existence and their vital energies were released regularly through adventurous work. H.W. Foster wrote in the *Independent* magazine 1900, "[i]t is generally conceded that the country-bred boy has made for himself a strong record. Necessity, difficulties, effort, struggle, are essential factors in maintaining a vigorous stock." Through his constant struggle with nature, however the "country-bred boy" gained "fearlessness, pluck, self-reliance, activity, responsibility, patience, endurance [and] judgment. … Upon the farm, labor is dignified; to rich and poor alike it is honorable. … For his labor he is rewarded with strength of body." Civil War veteran Henry C. Merwin urged Americans to "leave the office. … Consult the teamster, the farmer, the woodchopper, the shepherd, or the drover. You will find him … healthy in mind … free from fad, [and] strong in natural impulses. … From his loins, and not from those of the dilettante, will spring the man of the future."

All workers who worked outside the factory could be praised because of their body built by hard labor: "Look at the many fine specimens of drivers, teamsters, firemen, lumbermen, haymen, pilots, &c! What examples of strength, beauty, and activity! What fine color in the complexion—grace in the movement—heartiness in the whole structure and appearance!" Senator Albert

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Beveridge in a book of instruction for young men wrote "[m]oney is not the reward for your work. … The work itself is your reward." Whitman chastised the urbanite writing that, "[s]o long as you give up your own self-control and allow yourself to be a victim to all these pestiferous little gratifications that are offered to you in the city, so long will you present a marked contrast to the noble physique of the lumberman and hunter."\(^6^4\)

Collectively, as organized laborers, and individually in encounters on streets or in bars, working men's bodies and their physical recklessness posed a threat to middle-class men. If working-class people were willing to risk their bodily health daily as part of their jobs, they were much more willing to risk their bodies in contests of strength or for the sake of honor. "There is something fearful about the industry of great and fruitful workers," Dr. Richard Cabot wrote, "something ascetic and at times almost barbaric."\(^6^5\) As one cautious student from the University of Maine recalled after he witnessed lumberjacks on a drinking spree: "[a]nyone who does not know the class of men might think from seeing them in Bangor or Waterville that it would be a dangerous thing to work with them."\(^6^6\)

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To become more barbaric, the first step for many antimodernists was to reconnect with the material environment of the hinterland. When antimodernist entered these environments, they did not hope to just observe them, but to affect the landscape just as workers did. They sought the sources of the commodities, that, within the urban capitalist world, had become only abstractions.


\(^{6^5}\) Lears, No Place of Grace, 108-109; Slavishak, Bodies of Work, 62; Cabot, What Men Live by, 38-39.

The true pioneer type fights nature "until he understands [it]," Stewart Edward White wrote and this is what middle-class wilderness adventurers sought to do. Antimodernists went to the hinterland to shoot, chop, burn, kill, and trample nature, and unlike workers they did not need to gain monetary value from doing so because the bodies and reputations built from the work was payment enough. In fact, they were often willing to pay for the opportunity to live like workers. They took these "vacations" not to relax, but, as Dr. Cabot wrote, to find "that touch with the elemental which should properly form part of daily work."67

The belief that wilderness lands was healthy and could improve masculinity in the urban effete was steeped in the folk and pseudo-science of the time. Cold, forested, high altitude environments like the Northern Forest were the opposite of disease causing miasmas. David Ames Wells's *Principles and Applications of Chemistry* taught that common but poisonous chemical compounds called miasm or miasmata were produced by decaying organic matter found often in the stagnate unsanitary waters around cities, but also in swamps. When these compounds came in contact with humans they could cause disease. "A forest," Wells argued, "interposed to the passage of a current of moist air charged with pestilential miasmata, sometimes preserves all behind it from its effects, whereas the uncovered portion of a district is exposed to disease. The trees, in such cases, appear to filter the air, and to purify it by removing the miasmata." Wells found that "wood-cutters on the banks of the streams where the trees had been cut away, were constantly attacked by malarious fevers, while such diseases among the workmen in the forest were comparatively rare, although the ground on which they worked was quite as moist." This was why, "the vigorous out-of-door life in the pure air of the Maine woods was a factor favorable to health," according to one government

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The belief in the intrinsic health benefits of forested land lasted well into the twentieth-century. Salem D. Charles, President of the Protective Fish and Game Association reported in 1913 that "[T]here is something in the woods which instills strength in the chest, in the arm, [and] in the intellect."

As early as the 1860s patients suffering from respiratory diseases, particularly tuberculosis, could be found relaxing, hunting, fishing, and taking moderate exercise outdoors in coniferous Adirondack air in hopes of curing their ailments. Medical knowledge suggested it was efficacious to expose a patient to as much of the fresh air as possible, even sleeping exposed to the outdoors. Using methods like these Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau claimed he had a 73% success rate in curing tuberculosis. World War I veterans with traumatic injuries were also thought to be restored by doing forestry work.

In his *American Nervousness* Charles Beard advised sufferers of neurasthenia to participate in "camp cures," or the movement of patients from "over-civilized" cities to the country or the forest where they were instructed to relax, stroll about, and eat plain food. Dr. Sargent suggested that, "[t]hose who work in the city should make their homes in the country, where change of air and scenery affords opportunity to relieve the tension upon eyes and ears, and to recuperate from the unconscious wear and tear upon nerves and brain." The forest was devoid of some of the anxiety.

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producing struggles of modern corporate America. Joseph Knowles, who would become famous for surviving in the forest of Maine alone and naked (Knowles will be discussed extensively below), wrote that "[w]hen you live in the open—at one stroke you have eliminated all anxiety about the cost of fuel, rent problems … water bills, light bills and a score of other expenses that are incident to what we term civilization, but what is in reality reined cruelty and a competitive cutthroat game."\(^70\)

Historian Richard Judd found that part of seeking health in the wilderness was seeking "[r]usticity itself." "Rural stagnation—became an important commercial resource" of the Northern Forest.\(^71\) Powerful New York families such as the Rockefellers, Morgans, Vanderbilts, Webbs, Whitenecs, Huntingtons, and the Pruyns built "Great Camps" in the Adirondacks that intentionally mimicked the primitive, handmade dwellings and furnishings of forest farms and logging camps. In an article in *Country Life in America*, published in 1908, Walter Carpenter instructed readers to take "Vacations in Old Lumber Camps." Carpenter wrote that those readers who were interested in the "rougher kind of trips" to use abandoned or seasonally vacated lumber camps that were often "free [to use] as the woods around them." From such a site "youngsters will get their first wholesome love of the real woods," he reported, and for adults it would be a taste of authentic working-class life. Visitors could imagine themselves bunking with pioneer types. "The ‘habitant,’ and the ‘voyageur’ be

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boon companions … their ‘corked’ shoes have pock-marked the rough board floor," a tiny detail that added to the feeling of naturally authentic working class life.72

Another constituent part of the camp cure and the woods vacation was the eating of "plain food" that resembled the austere, rations of rural workers. As food historian Rachel Laudan writes, at the turn of the century there was "a diffuse movement of intellectuals, writers, farmers, and others … [who] rejected the modern, urban, industrial world, including its cuisine and its farming, yearning instead for an idealized rural past. They contrasted dirty, artificial cities with the pure, natural countryside." In 1876 at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition an edible exhibit demonstrated the healthy fare of New England's past. Consumers entered a rustic log cabin and ate "boiled meat, beans, and ginger bread … food the old Puritans grew and waxed strong on." The exhibit was so popular it continued after the fair closed, serving simple dishes like brown bread, coffee, tea, cold ham, roast beef, corned beef, boiled potatoes, oatmeal, pie, doughnuts, and gingerbread. These foods invoked the "thrift, modesty and simplicity" of early Americans and frontiersmen. J. E. Henry & Sons logging company in New Hampshire turned their operation into a kind of "logging theme park" for antimodernists complete with a cook house where patrons could indulge in the simple foods of the lumberjacks.73 The famous boxer John L. Sullivan stuck to a diet of plain food while training for a match to build bodily strength. During his training, he ate nothing but, mutton or beef steak, stale bread, apples, oatmeal, and either tea or beer.74 A similar diet was recommended for college athletes.75

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72 Warwick C. Carpenter, "Vacations in Old Lumber Camps," *Country Life in America*, June, (1908)


According to Cabot the camp cure and proper diet were not enough to fix the problems of overcivilization. In his book *What Men Live by: Work, Play, Love, Worship*, a book specifically targeted at the neurasthenic, both men and women, Cabot wrote that "[t]he patient's 'rest cure' may not rest her at all. She may find that nothing rests her but work." Cabot argued that patient should learn "how to work—a lesson which he usually needs very sorely." "Many times I have seen work pull people out of the misery of a self-centered existence," the doctor found. Cabot argued that Americans’ goal of upward social mobility came at the expense of physical health. He questioned the priorities of modern urban Americans: "In their desire to exalt the spiritual powers of man they are fond of making a hierarchy in which lawyers, writers, teachers, poets, philosophers, preachers, and statesmen come at the top, while those who use their senses and their muscles come at the bottom. Is head-work nobler than hand-work? Should we all strive to become brain-workers as far and as fast as we can?" For antimodernists, the answer was no.

Cabot argued that the therapeutic aspects of recreation were the parts that were most physically strenuous and painful. For example, "[a] camper starting into the woods on his annual vacation undertakes with enthusiasm the familiar task of carrying a Saranaec boat upon a shoulder-yoke. … In the course of half a mile or so, the carry begins to feel like work. The pleasant, snug fit of the yoke has become a very respectable burden, cheerfully borne, for the sake of the object in view, but not pleasant." Painful work was fun, relaxing, stress relieving, and healthful. There was " a queer pleasure in the mere stretch and strain of our muscles … a sort of frowning delight, in taking

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up a heavy load and feeling that our strength is adequate to it. It seems paradoxical to enjoy a discomfort, but the paradox is now getting familiar," Cabot wrote. Contact with raw materials was important during the work cure, because according to Cabot, "wherever we deal with raw material, our hands meet adventures." The unpredictability of nature made working with it mentally as well as physically challenging: "I'll say to Nature X, and then see what she says. My next step, Y, will depend upon her answer. … Her answer comes to us through our muscles and our senses, and keeps us alive from head to foot."77

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While antimodernists were sleeping in old lumber camps and finding pleasure in pain, they were also presented with a new aesthetic of the masculine body, one that was sculpted by unpredictable work in nature. Thomas Eakins depictions of sportsmen and male nudes tended to emphasize the active, the outdoor, the muscular, and the working man. In Eakin's work, masculinity is portrayed as a source of power; a motive force that propelled industry and society before the machine age. Works like Swimming (1885) shows how the muscular male figure was constructed through exercise in nature. In the background of his famous Max Schmitt in Single Scull, Eakins depicts the Quaker workingman who piloted workboats for hauling freight and passengers, and whose boats inspired the modern sport of rowing. In his depiction of the Biglin Brothers, a famous rowing team, Eakins emphasized the power and build of John Biglin, the laborer, and not Barney, the politician. Eakins also championed the working-class, muscular pole-man in his depictions of rail

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77 The violence and pain of working class life became part of "a pornography of pain." Cabot could not imagine that this type of life could be actually dangerous or monotonous: "I have rarely seen drudgery so overwhelming as to crush out altogether the play of humor and good-fellowship during the day's toil as well as after it." Cabot was sincerely out of touch with the lives of real workers and could not understand, when attending a meeting of the Boston Central Labor Union in 1907 why the workers did not take joy in their work. Cabot, What Men Live by, 3, 4, 9, 21, 28-29. 44; Lears, No Place of Grace, 11, 65, 70, 75, 28, 85, 118, 120, 138, 222; Foster "Physical Education vs. Degeneracy" 302-306; Henry Charles Merwin "On being Civilized Too Much" Smith and Dawson eds., The American 1890s, 317.
shooting. The artist believed in nature’s power to restore the body so much that in 1887, suffering from exhaustion, he took a camp cure.  

Famous artist Winslow Homer's works lauded man's connection to nature and the active physique required to work and live in the wild. His landscapes and especially his seascapes were masculine, powerful, virile, and broad. When he depicted laborers within these landscapes his art showed a violent clash between two masculine forces. Homer was particularly keen of the Adirondacks. He visited the area twenty-one times between 1870 and 1910 producing six prints, twelve oil paintings, and one hundred watercolors of the forest, people, and animals of Northern New York. He almost always stayed in The North Woods Club in Essex County, an old logging site turned forest farm, turned sports camp.

In many of his Adirondack paintings, Homer contested the popular narrative of the Adirondacks of the time—a narrative that held the Adirondacks was a natural space that was being intruded upon by men. Instead he depicted the forest as a pristine natural landscape with guides and workers more often depicted as part of the wild rather than intruding on it. Winslow was so enthralled with the locals that none of the works he produced after his first year in Northern New York depicted tourists, a notable divergence from other Adirondack artists.

Homer's *The Trapper* (1870) highlighted the muscular action required for survival in the forest. The model for the trapper was Rufus Wallace, a forest farmer, logger, guide, hunter, and trapper who lived in Warren County, New York. Earlier painters like Arthur Fitzwilliam had almost always depicted forest guides as servants or ancillary characters. In *The Trapper* and several other Homer Adirondack paintings, wilderness workers are the heroes, and implicitly measured against

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outsiders and tourists. The same themes that are found in *The Trapper* appear in Homer's woodcut *Lumbering in the Winter* (1871) but the latter more clearly emphasizes the importance of labor and laborers.

Homer again depicts Wallace in his 1877 painting *The Two Guides*, along with the more famous Adirondack guide Orson Phelps. In the painting two guides stand in what seems to be recently cut over land. Wallace carries an axe, denoting his capacity to change the land through physical power. In *The Pioneer* (1900) the audience sees a logger standing triumphantly in front of a cleared landscape with a double bit axe. The work shows a man who, with hand tools alone, can dominate a landscape. The painting tells the audience that even in this staggeringly complex, interconnected modern economy, there were still pioneering men who wrestled with the landscape daily using little more than their own muscles.\(^79\)

According to art historian David Tatham "[t]he woodsmen's kinship with the natural world was precisely the conditions that outsiders … hoped to find for themselves in the Adirondacks." Appealing "to urbanized businessmen['s] longing for images of outdoor manliness" Homer's paintings tempt his audiences to "become woodsmen" and suggest that those who did would be improved by the experience.\(^80\)

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Antimodernists extolled the leisure activities as well as the work of rural people. The hedonism and spending habits of the working classes had been a subject of ridicule and a target of reform among elites since the rise of wage working classes at the start of the nineteenth-century.


Antimodernism sometimes reinterpreted these vices as virtues. Historian Eliot Gorn wrote that the "internalized self-control—a crucial component of bourgeois manliness grew ever less satisfying in an age of diminishing autonomy." The beginnings of these changes could be seen in popular culture as early as 1850. Whitman noticed that his contemporaries were "prone … to be ‘ashamed of the carnal body’—running very much to brains, at the expense of the brawn and muscle of their limbs." Yet Whitman found that "a certain degree of abandon is necessary to the processes of perfect health and a muscular tone of the system." Some of the "best collection of specimens of hard and developed physiques" were found in the working man's saloon, Whitman argued. "Their movements remind one of a fine animal," he wrote.

By the 1890s, the hedonism of working-class life was interpreted as "body love," a method of embracing the carnal that had, in more puritanical times, been immodest, immoral, and lowbrow. Barnard MacFadden, creator of the magazine Physical Culture, was an influential advocate of "body love." In the words of historian Donald J. Mrozek, "in all appetites and all sensual expression—in food, sex, exercise, sport—[MacFadden's] answer remained consistent: ‘Let nature be the guide.’ Everything depending on the physical side of man, released from inhibition and repression." This was a radical shift from earlier ideals of virtuous, masculine self-control.

Body love needed to be coupled with a period of hard work for it to be acceptably manly. John L. Sullivan, and the sport of boxing itself, shows how hedonistic bouts of pleasure seeking could be depicted as a naturally masculine activity. During training, Sullivan worked hard, abstained...

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from heavy drinking, smoking, unhealthy food, and sex. Then during a fight, he worked himself to the brink of death. After the fight, when not training he took "things as easy as possible. … [I] eat and sleep whenever I feel so disposed. … My food consists entirely of whatever strikes my fancy. I smoke as many cigars as I feel like smoking, attend theatres and shows whenever I wish. In fact, I give my system its whole lee-way." Sullivan's schedule was remarkably similar to the spatiality of production and consumption that developed in the Northern Forest. Hard work followed by intense play was becoming an expected routine for modern men.

Sociologist Wyckoff found there were similarities between the middle-class college men and working men when it came to pleasure seeking. He found that the lumberjacks "speak of past and prospective debauches with the naiveté of callow undergraduates, except that among the lumbermen there is no sense of credit or distinction attaching to vice; it is simply inherent in the order of things." College students were used to heavy drinking and admired workers for their prowess in this area. Reckless spending, gluttony, violence, and sexual license, seemed inevitable among a class of men who worked so hard for so long. Americans now aspire to work so hard that their passions were naturally released during leisure. The industrial metaphor of "blowing off steam" represented this concept and rose to peak popularity around 1900.

Vignettes

83 Gorn, Mainly Art, 252; Sullivan and Sargent, Life and Reminiscences of a 19th Century Gladiator, 90-91, 261.

The following five vignettes provide particularly poignant examples of how elites sought out, were indoctrinated by, or spread, rural working-class values and bodily aesthetics in quests to improve themselves and the nation. These antimodernists entered the environment of the logger, a group of people who lived "in the most primitive fashion" and exemplified the masculine characteristics that antimodernists valued. Each vignette highlights an important theme within working-class hegemony and show the scope of its influence. The stories discussed below show the evolution in thought about the rural working class, from harsh criticism from observers like Thoreau and Headley in the nineteenth-century (discussed in chapter one) to the reverence of antimodernists.

Sewall and Roosevelt

In a romantic article about lumbering published in *Godey’s Magazine* in 1896, author Lee F. Vance observed that, "[n]ow and then a ‘tenderfoot’ tried roughing it in a logging camp." These were people who had no business in an industrial workplace but were looking for adventure and self-improvement. One example of a tenderfoot was Theodore Roosevelt who, about twenty years before the Vance article was written, was wrestling lumberjacks in the forests around Island Falls, Maine to help build his manliness. In Maine, Roosevelt hired farmer-logger William Sewell as a guide and began what would become a lifelong friendship.

Long before meeting Sewall, when Roosevelt was thirteen, he was sent to Maine's Moosehead Lake for a camp cure to help ease his asthma. Some other children on the train teased him, and when he stood to face them he was beaten. After this experience, Roosevelt vowed to build his strength so he would never be treated so poorly again. When Roosevelt went to Maine a


86 Vance, "Lumbering in the Adirondacks" 230, 233-32.
second time, seven years later, the beating on the train was still very much in his mind. As he
traveled north, Roosevelt was looking for a guide through the forest and a guide into manhood. Roosevelt's father died that same year and William Sewall fit the part of a masculine role model well. In 1878, Sewall was thirty-three years old, six foot four inches tall and fully bearded. Roosevelt compared the Mainer to the titular character of Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf*. Sewall was the opposite of Roosevelt, who the logger described as a "thin, pale youngster with bad eyes and a weak heart." Roosevelt later wrote, "I was not a boy of any natural prowess and for that very reason the vigorous outdoor life was just what I needed." The Sewall family were typical Yankee farmer-loggers. William’s father Levi was a cobbler from southern Maine who came to the frontier of the Northern Forest in 1842 for a more vigorous life and to acquire a cheap wilderness tract. He bought and improved a lot in what would become Island Falls, Maine an area that was so remote that William Sewall was the first white man born there. Sewall grew up on the forest farm, learning woods-skins from his father and local Native Americans who lived around the farm. Like others in the Northern Forest, Levi did a diverse array of activities to survive on the frontier, including hunting, guiding, making shingles, and logging, though Levi identified as a farmer in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 census. At the age of fifteen William started on his first river drive, a type of work he would continue to do until he was seventy, years old participating in the last drive on the Mattawamkeag river in 1920.

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As William matured he continued his father's profession of farmer-logging, contracting for logging and driving jobs, sometimes just logging from his home. He also kept an inn and guided vacationers. Sewall had been guiding sports since he was twelve years old and he made three dollars a day for the work plus expenses, meaning he ate for free. This was considerably more than he could make logging or driving for wages. As common land was consolidated and protected by the government and large land holders, guiding urban men like Roosevelt became one of the more lucrative economic pursuits for people like Sewall. When Sewall toiled in the wilderness it was always for immediate necessity. When Roosevelt did so beside him in 1878 and 1879 it was for recreation and rejuvenation.90

Accompanying Sewall and Roosevelt on their outings was William Dow, Sewall's nephew and apprentice, who, by the time Roosevelt visited Maine, was "a master hand in all the ways of the woodsman."91 Sewall and Dow reminded Roosevelt of the heroes he read about as a child. These were white men of the wild like Daniel Boone, Davie Crockett, Ethan Allen, and George Roger Clark, people who Roosevelt would describe as a "class of Indian-fighters, game-hunters, forest-fellers, and backwoods farmers who, generation after generation, pushed westward the border of civilization from the Alleghenies to the Pacific." For Roosevelt, traveling to Maine to live with Sewall and Dow was like traveling back in time to a more masculine era.92

William Wingate Sewall (1845-1930) of Island Falls, Maine: Dedicated to the People of Island Falls in Observance of Centennial Year 1972, (Island Falls, Me.? publisher not identified, 1972) 43, 65.


91 Quoted in Vietze, Becoming Teddy Roosevelt, 17.

Roosevelt's first outing with Sewall and Dow in 1878 involved eighteen days of tramping and hunting in the woods around Island Falls, covering ten to twenty miles a day. Sewall was initially instructed in a private letter by Roosevelt's friend and mentor Arthur Cutler to "be careful of him [Roosevelt], see that he doesn't take too hard jaunts and does not do too much. He is not very strong." Sewall started off taking it easy on Roosevelt, but on each outing Sewall pushed the young man to work harder.93

After his initial visit, Roosevelt went to Maine again in March 1879. This time, besides hunting and tramping, Sewall took Roosevelt to a working lumber camp where he slept, ate, and mingled with the workers. This camp was unusual for the time. It was so isolated that workers depended mostly on game for food. At the camp Roosevelt met with "old woodsmen … who did not know anything but the woods." "I doubt if they could have written their names" Sewall wrote "but they knew the woods … and they knew all of the hardships connected with pioneer life."

Roosevelt wrote in his diary "I like these lumbermen very much, and get on capitally with them—great rough, hospitable fellows." He confessed to Sewall that he was "glad that he had met them. He said that he could read about such things, but here he had first-hand accounts of backwoods life from the men who had lived it and knew what they were talking about." The future president would not use an axe while at camp however because he was afraid he might cut himself.94 Roosevelt attributed the time in the logging camp with improved health, writing that his asthma left him "as soon as I went into camp." At the closing of this trip Roosevelt wrote that he was "feeling as strong


94 Sewall, Bill Sewall's Story, 6; Quoted in Vietze, Becoming Teddy Roosevelt, 50-51.
as a bull." In fact, this trip built in him a store of health "enough . . . to last me till next summer" he believed. 95

Roosevelt's next trip to Maine was in August 1879 and this time Sewall pushed the young man as hard as he could. On the agenda was an eight-day excursion up and down Maine's tallest peak, Katahdin. Roosevelt was competitive and on the trip he noted in his diary and letters whenever he proved himself fitter than his urban friends who accompanied him. He wrote to his sister that he could "carry heavier loads and travel farther and faster than either of them; and could stand rougher work better." When crossing a river Roosevelt lost a boot and had to wear lumberer's moccasins for the rest of the trip, which, he wrote, "protect the feet just about as efficiently as kid gloves." Summiting in this footwear impressed even Sewall. On the way back to Island, Falls Roosevelt wrote that he was in "beautiful condition." According to his diary Roosevelt proved himself to be nearly equal to the lumbermen who guided him: "I can walk, wrestle, or shoot with most of these lumbermen."96

The hard work was not over after Katahdin. Two days later Roosevelt and Sewall set off alone on a ten-day trip up the Aroostook River to the Munsungan Lakes region. This trip took him to very wild country where there were few signs of civilization besides a few "rough backwoods houses."97 Emulating frugality, Roosevelt packed light and continued to wear the moccasins he wore on the Katahdin trip. Roosevelt and Sewall had to portage the canoe over land, and drag it through


shallows. One specific multiday stretch up the Aroostook was particularly memorable. These days it was raining and cold. They could not find a deep enough channel for the boat so they had to

wade all day long in a cold, driving rain storm, the flowing water now up to our hips, and again not reaching our ankles. Except a few moments when we landed to snatch a hasty lunch I was not out of the water once all day long. The physical labor, too, was very severe. It was hard enough work to drag the boat up stream against the strong, rapid current, while our feet slipped on the smooth, slimy rocks, whose sharp edges cut through our boots, and nearly maimed us … now we would lift the boat over ledges of rock, now unload and carry everything around waterfalls, and then straining every muscle, would by main strength, drag her over shoal places, sometimes we would have to cut a sluice way through a beaver dam, or with our axes hew out a tree that had fallen across stream, or perhaps spend half an hour in getting the boat through a jam of great drift logs … Next day, a repetition of this.98

Often the pair would set up camp at night and fall asleep soaking wet. They ate trail food: hardtack, tea, game meat, and salt pork. Roosevelt found the food to be "primitive" and "pretty rough" but it was in important part of the experience. He wrote that the trip up Katahdin was an "absolute luxury" compared to the time on the river and that the trip up the river was the "roughest work I have yet had in the way of camping out."

Roosevelt felt pleasure in the pain however. He was "[t]ired out, and wet through, hungry and cold but … having a lovely time." Later he reiterated, "the work is very hard. I am enjoying the trip greatly." While Roosevelt was struck by how hard this work was Sewall certainly would not have been. He had done this type of work for years as a river driver for a third of the pay. Sewall had even

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run a headwork's across Mattawamkeag lake for years, some of the most difficult work in the Northern Forest.⁹⁹

Upon returning to Island Falls, Roosevelt was not done with his wilderness work. He went out with Sewall and Dow again hunting and tramping up to twenty miles a day, comparing his own marksmanship to the lumbermen's. He later wrote that he could "endure fatigue and hardship pretty nearly as well as these lumbermen" and that "[i]t was a matter of pride with me to keep with my stalwart associates … In their company I would have been ashamed to complain." By the end of his last Island Falls trip, Roosevelt would never suffer asthma attacks again. In fact, he wrote that he was "in superb health … as tough as a pine knot."¹⁰⁰

When Harvard physical culture instructor Dudley Allen Sargent measured Roosevelt's proportions in 1880 he found him to be below average of other Harvard students in all aspects accept for "body length and girth of head and neck." He did, however, score above average in upper body strength tests "surpassing ninety per cent of the college men if his age." His total strength score was 520.4, a score that, along with his defective vision "would not permit [him] to play on even a class team in any of the major sports at Harvard." Sargent remembers Roosevelt used to work so hard in the gym at Harvard he thought it would seriously injure the young man's heart.¹⁰¹ Despite Sargent's findings, Roosevelt thought that his time in the woods benefited his health and masculinity and he continued vigorous training after his trips to Maine.

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Although the 1879 trip was the last year Roosevelt went to the Maine woods with Sewall, he would call on Sewall and Dow again for help. In 1884 he extended an invitation to the Mainers to help him establish and run his new enterprise, a cattle operation called the Elkhorn Ranch in the frontier of North Dakota. At the Elkhorn Ranch he continued associating with working people. Though Roosevelt was disgusted by the rude and intemperate behavior of the workers in the West, he understood these vices as an inherent part of their work. 102 Roosevelt never took the business side of ranching very seriously, but what he lost in money by ranching, he gained in masculinity. Sewall wrote that he "came back [from North Dakota] physically strong enough to be anything he wanted from President of the United States down. He went to Dakota a frail young man. … When he got back into the world again he was as husky as almost any man I have ever seen who wasn't dependent on his arms for his livelihood."

Roosevelt’s trips among the lumberjacks of Maine cured his asthma and the Dakotas finally gave him the body and character he had been searching for since his first train ride to Moosehead Lake. 103 Roosevelt’s life experiences, as well as his experiences in the Rough Riders during the Spanish American War, was fully condoned by Sargent as a proper lifetime workout regiment: "I am fully of the opinion that what Roosevelt did for his physical organism, thousands of other men may do by similar methods practiced from early manhood until middle life." 104

Besides improving his health Roosevelt had another agenda when looking for intimate contact with working people. He understood that the great divide in wealth and standing between working people and elites created a great divide in their understandings of the world. Roosevelt

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102 Townsend, Manhood at Harvard, 263.
104 Sargent, "Roosevelt’s Physique," 2.
explained in his autobiography: "The good citizens I then knew best, even when themselves men of limited means — men like … my backwoods friends Sewall and Dow — were no more awake than I was to the changing needs the changing times were bringing. Their outlook was as narrow as my own, and … as fundamentally sound." He admired working people writing "I don't know a better or more intelligent race of men than the shrewd, plucky, honest, Yankees—all of them hunters, lumbermen or small farmers." These people "represented in their lives the kind of Americanism—self-respecting, duty-performing, life enjoying … which is the most valuable possession that one generation can hand the next."

Roosevelt brought working-class perspectives into politics. Writing to Sewall in 1912 about his presidential campaign Roosevelt said "I am merely standing for the principles which you and I used to discuss so often in the old days north in the Maine woods and along the Little Missouri [North Dakota]. They are the principles of real Americans and I believe that more and more the plain people of the country are waking up to the fact that they [have] the right principles." Once he got to Washington, he talked about Sewall often and wrote him for advice. The lumberman visited the president in the White House on multiple occasions.105 While Roosevelt was in office and, after the president died, Sewall became a minor celebrity, going on tours and giving talks about what he taught the President. To many audience members who saw and heard Sewall on these trips he embodied the laudable traits of rural working-class masculinity.106

_walter wyckoff at the logging camp_

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106 Vietze, _Becoming Teddy Roosevelt_, 170-175.
Walter Wyckoff also delved into the world of the worker to broaden his outlook, to improve his health, and for the "promise of adventure." The future Princeton sociologist took two years away from his elite life in the 1890s to travel across the United States with nothing but his labor to "sell at market price." The son of a wealthy white missionary born in Mainpuri, India, Wyckoff came to the United States to study at Princeton, where he graduated in 1888. After a time traveling Europe, studying in seminary, and graduate school, Wyckoff became discontented. He found his life to be "slender, book-learned" and thought it lacked "vital … practical knowledge." He wanted to leave his "frictionless life" and experience a type of life that was more abrasive. The day he decided to leave he had his butler help him "adjust his pack and strap it" and he was off. The result of this trip was *The Workers*, a two-volume book on the lives of manual laborers in the United States.107

Wyckoff progressed outward from his home in Black Rock, Connecticut taking a variety of jobs that typified the move from city to hinterland: construction, hotel work, and tavern work, farm work, and finally into a Western Pennsylvania logging camp. On his trip he found the friction he desired. He experienced hunger, loneliness, as well as the pains and pleasures of manual labor. When working, he wrote, time slowed and "there were simply ages of physical torture, and short intervals when the physical reaction was an ecstasy." Like Roosevelt and Cabot, Wyckoff found that pain was therapeutic and pleasurable. After a day's work his "muscles were sore, but the very pain turned to pleasure in the case of relaxation." These experiences taught him that, "productive labor performed under [the] right conditions is itself a blessing."108

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Among the work that Wyckoff did, his time in the logging camp stood out as an especially transformative experience. Logging workers were authentically masculine to Wyckoff: "They are hard men who look out upon a world that is hard to them at every point of contact; but they are true men, by virtue of their honesty and directness, and one likes them accordingly." The crew was the "most wholesomely happy company which I have so far fallen in with" despite being "bred to the roughest life."109 "Instinctively" he wrote "you knew these men for men." He described them as perfectly conforming to the new standards of passionate manhood:

they were —strong, brave men who win the mastery which comes to those who clear the way for progress, giving play, in their natural living, to the forces which make men free, and growing strong in heart and in the will to do, as they grow strong of arm and catch the rough cunning of their trade; men of many races, yet meeting on the common ground of men all free and under equal chance to make their way; knowing no differences but those of personality, and winning their places in the crew, each man according to his kind, and his rewards according to his skill.110

Mastery of other men and mastery of the land had been a consistent feature of otherwise fluctuating ideas of manhood since the early nineteenth-century. Though not always property owners, these lumberjacks expressed mastery through the skill and power required to dominate nature. They existed in a meritocracy according to Wyckoff, and those who succeeded did so because they were strong and masculine.

Wyckoff was forgiving of the vice, hedonism, and the lack of education of the workers, to a certain extent: "[t]hey charm you with their freedom of spirit, and their rude sturdiness of character. … On grounds of high morality there is no possible justification for them. But these are men who


110 Wyckoff, *The Workers … the East*, 266.
were born and bred to vicious living; and the wonder is not that they are bad, but that in all their blasting departure from the good, there yet survives in them the vital power of return." A young worker named Dick the Kid expressed to Wyckoff his plans to save is money to start his own logging venture in West Virginia. Unfortunately, Wyckoff and the other men knew that Dick would inevitably spend his savings in town on the spree. Dick's inevitable downfall was seen as appropriate and excusable for a working man of his age. Wyckoff understood that the spatiality of production and consumption limited the freedom of workers by trapping them in cycles of debt and vice. Those who were caught in these cycles, he argued, displayed a lack of inner mastery and were thus less manly than those who suffered the same working conditions but managed to escape these ensnaring forces.

Antimodernists extolled the most those workers who were able to become businessmen after working for wages. For example, George Van Dyke, owner of the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company, was an uneducated boy who started working in the woods at the age of eleven but graduated from the "school of hard knocks" and became very successful. As a worker, he was "the embodiment of intense virility, the possessor of that charming animal maleness." His "physical endowment was … his greatest weapon in quarrelling[,] that which would always remain barrier to the great majority of mankind." Hard work and smart investing made Van Dyke an exemplary figure to his contemporaries. He need not be temperate to prove is masculinity as it was understood that men like Van Dyke would bring some of the hedonism of his former life into polite society.²

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¹² After their spending spree Wyckoff found that the workers were "remorseful [and] ashamed to meet the faces of the other men." A man named Old Toler represented the abyss of the lack of inner mastery of passion. Toler was reportedly the best lumberman in camp. He worked in the woods from the time he was fourteen years old taking time off only to serve in the Civil War. Toler had run his own camps but consistently spent all the profits and was now reduced bodily from a life of working. He worked at menial tasks in camps alongside the inexperienced. Wyckoff, *The Workers … the East*, 249-252; "Tragic Death of George Van Dyke," *Turner Falls Reporter* (August 11, 1909).
To Wyckoff, who admitted that to his untrained mind the "woods were a hopeless labyrinth," the lumberjacks’ workscape was something new and splendid. Wyckoff wrote that: "far up in the mountains, miles from any settlement, we live the healthful life of a lumber camp, working from starlight to starlight; breathing the mountain air, keen with the frosty vigor of autumn, and fragrant of pine and hemlock; eating ravenously the plain, well-cooked food which is served to us, now in the camp and now on the mountain-side." Part of the healthfulness of the camp had to do with the structures themselves "[t]he cabins were splendid buildings of their kind. The logs were clean and fresh and were securely fitted, while the chinks were well plastered with mud, and the roofs tightly shingled, and the gables closely boarded-up."113 The blending of wilderness and industry was described idyllically by Wyckoff,

The camp stood in a little clearing on the mountain; and in contrast with the shadowy gloom in the forest around it, the sunlight flooded this open rift with concentrated light. The chestnut-trees on the edge of the wood shone like burnished gold, and the maple leaves, still green, nearest to the trees, and but lightly touched with red along the boughs, deepened gradually, until, in the full sunlight, they blazed in crimson splendor. It was still with the stillness of autumn, and the sound of the blacksmith’s stroke and the answering ring of the anvil were echoed far into the forest, where you could hear, fretting down its stony bed, a mountain-stream, which, in the speech of the lumbermen, is called a "run."114

A pristine wilderness scene except for the ring of the anvil, an unmistakable sound of industry. This sound did not disrupt the natural splendor but instead accented it. Wyckoff saw the camp workscape as a natural place to rejuvenate, "we sit among the newly stripped logs; sleeping deeply at night in closely crowded beds in the cabin-loft, where the wind sweeps freely from end to end through the

113 Wyckoff, The Workers ... the East, 235.

gaping chinks between the logs, and where, on rising, we sometimes slip out of bed upon a carpeting of snow.\textsuperscript{115}

Alongside a healthful workscape Wyckoff found that another part of manual laborers lives that was supremely rewarding was work's ability to improve the body. When he started his trip Wyckoff was a man of "limited physical strength" whose hands were soft and not "used to work." Many potential employers, including a boss at one of the logging camps, could tell Wyckoff's inexperience and weakness just by looking at him. Most of the time he was at the lumber camp Wyckoff was most concerned about showing his "fitness for the place" through his physical appearance.\textsuperscript{116}

In his writing he highlighted the laborer's ability to build their bodies as they transformed the land. He consistently pointed out his fellow workers' bodily firmness and symmetry. He noted the "muscular frame" of an old worker whose features were "clear-cut and strong." Two young lumberjacks were, according to Wyckoff "clean-cut and well-bred." The workers' body denoted his position in the camp. Recounting a search for a boss among a group of lumberjacks he wrote: "I picked my man at once. They are plainly brothers, but the Mr. Hill of whom I am in search is the stronger-looking man, and is clearly in command of the job. I am reminded of a certain type which one comes to know on 'the street,' a clean-cut, vigorous man, who keeps his youth till sixty, and who, for many years, has had a masterful, compelling hand upon the conduct of affairs."\textsuperscript{117}

The body of Dick the Kid, captivated Wyckoff the most,

\textsuperscript{115} Wyckoff, The Workers … the East, 181, 201.

\textsuperscript{116} Rogers, "Walter A. Wyckoff," 1145-1147; Wyckoff, The Workers … the East, 22-23, 26, 208, 229.

\textsuperscript{117} Smith and Dawson eds., The American 1890s, 146; Wyckoff, The Workers … the East, 119, 134, 148.
He was the finest specimen of them all; not much over twenty, I should say, and grown to a good six feet of height, and as straight as the trees among which he worked. Through the covering of rough clothes, you felt with delight the curves of his splendid figure, and the sinewy muscles in symmetrical development. And then the lines of his throat and neck were so clean and strong, and his face charmed you with its fresh beauty.\textsuperscript{118}

An incident that occurred before Wyckoff and Dick were thoroughly acquainted made Wyckoff realize that his own overcivilized body was no match for woodworker's bodies. After Wyckoff startled Dick: "instinctively [Dick] clenched his fists. For a moment I had a vivid sense of my physical insignificance, as I realized how easily, with a single blow, he could smash in my countenance and make swift end of me." Another time, when the camp boss Fitz-Adams was frustrated at his horses, he lifted an axe as if to strike Wyckoff. Wyckoff wrote that he was "scared out of a year's growth, and my legs were trembling violently."\textsuperscript{119}

In the first volume of \textit{The Workers} Wyckoff was still an amateur but he predicted that after "[a] year or two of such labor … how great the physical change [would be]! My hands would be hard, and the friction of this work … would render them the more impervious to harm. My muscles would be like iron, and would lend themselves with far greater ease to the stress of manual labor. Ten years would find me a seasoned workman." Unlike Cabot, Wyckoff did realize the potential harm of work, however, particularly when it was "begun too early in life."\textsuperscript{120}

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\textsuperscript{118}Wyckoff, \textit{The Workers … the East}, 217.
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\textsuperscript{119}Wyckoff, \textit{The Workers … the East}, 219, 237; Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 147, 223.
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\textsuperscript{120}Wyckoff wrote about "a young quarryman" who was only sixteen: "his gaunt, angular body showed plainly the marks of arrested development, when the growth of the boy had hardened prematurely into an almost deformed figure of a confirmed laborer." Wyckoff, \textit{The Workers … the East}, 72, 137.
\end{flushright}
Wyckoff’s vivid account of learning from rural workers was not the only one of the era. There are dozens of articles written around the turn of the century on lumberjacks, these "magnificent specimen of physical manhood," as one article described this class. People found narrative accounts of hinterland commodity production riveting and it was often described poetically. The work was described by one author as the "miracle of keen steel driven by powerful arms, biting into the heart of living wood." Other academics and popular writers—Nels Anderson, Edmund W. Bradwin, Jack London, Josiah Flynt—lived among and studied different types of rural workers and found the life refreshing, authentically masculine, and poetic. Following the antimodernist logic that manual workers were more like the frontiersmen of early America, Sociologist Robert Park wrote in 1925 that the hobo was nothing more than a "a belated frontiersman."121

*The Dimocks: Frontiers, Forests, and Farms*

Some antimodernist understood that the genesis of the American wage worker was the American farmer whose profession inspired strength and a connection to nature without sacrificing autonomy. Those who worked on the land were free in a way that city people could never be. The father and son photojournalism team of Anthony and Julian Dimock are perfect examples of elites who sought authenticity by connecting to the land and by mimicking the farmers and frontier workers they admired.

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Anthony Dimock’s autobiography *Wall Street and the Wilds* (1915) narrates the transition that many antimodernist men made from the pursuit of self-made manhood to passionate manhood between 1850 and 1920. Born in Massachusetts in 1839, Anthony Dimock had a love of the wilderness from a young age. His influences were Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales and Thomas Mayne Reid’s books about military and wilderness adventures. After graduating college, he became a member of the New York Stock exchange quickly proving his innate gifts in finance and investment. By the age of twenty-three he "dominated [the] gold market," by the age of thirty controlled the Banker and Merchant Telegraph Company, became president of several steamship lines, and started his own brokerage firm.122

Though he had a fruitful career in finance, Dimock burnt out quickly. His first camp cure was doctor ordered in 1873, right after a big market crash. "Cut loose from the office for a month" his doctor advised him, "[g]o into the woods where even a messenger can't reach you, unless you prefer to go to—Heaven." Ironically Dimock went to Tupper Lake, New York, a place with a bustling market of its own in lumber and pulp. He stayed in "a tent in the wilderness," hunted, and interacted with locals. Dimock wrote that "the wilderness worked miracles with me and in times of physical ailment or mental depression I had longed for the solace of the woods, the mountains, the prairies, or the waters of the wild."123

After that first trip, Dimock continued to take periodic trips into wilderness territory reporting on workers, Native Americans, and other "people of the wild" for popular magazines. Like other antimodernists, Dimock found pleasure in the pain of work in the wilderness. In one


instance when he was out West he recalled that after a long ride "every bone in my body ached. … The saddle had skinned me, the Spencer rifle in its sheath bruised the flesh of my leg, and my heavy army revolver had hammered my hip to jelly. I couldn't swallow the dry breath that scratched my parched throat, but I was happy [I had] shucked off the metropolitan husk." Once in Colorado he was given the opportunity to "explore and exploit or examine and condemn a group of … mines." He engaged in manual labor on this venture, not because he had to but simply to vary "the monotony of our work." On these frontier trips his food mimicked the fare of the early explores of the continent: "I don't usually choose tallow for lunch … but when hunting in the cold of the mountains I have found it delicious, for then the craving for meat and especially the fat of it becomes an obsession."124

Anthony Dimock would author countless articles on his adventures and become a well-regarded photographer. He also wrote three fiction books for children that drew from his experience among working people: Dick in the Everglades (1909), Dick Among the Lumber-jacks (1910), and Dick Among the Miners (1913). Dick Among the Lumber-jacks was one of scores of books written around the turn of the century that used the industrial logging site as a setting for tales of adventure and authentic experience. These books often followed a similar trajectory: a young white man or a group of white boys, typically unfamiliar with the forest, travel to a lumber camp and, through a mixture of skill, strength, business acumen, and moral fortitude, save the operation from disaster. Clarence Blendon Burleigh wrote that his Maine woods juvenile narrative, titled All Among the Loggers, or Norman Carver’s Winter in a Lumber Camp (1908), was meant to bring "home to the … readers some conception of the conditions existing among the brave and hardy men who fight the battles of the great Maine wilderness … converting its vast resources to the uses of civilization."

124 Dimock, Wall Street and the Wilds, 12, 247, 248, 387, 393-394, 427, 434.
Maine historian David C. Smith found fifty-four juvenile books published between 1872 and 1935 with the setting of the Maine woods.

Some of these logging camp fictions depict woods hermits, farmer-loggers, lumberjacks, or Indians becoming father figures for one or all the boys who traveled into the woods. Others have characters who were ordered to the wilderness to cure some ailment. Rural virtues are often compared to urban virtues in these books, the former typically proving superior. Like Dimock, many of these authors drew from their actual experiences among workers. Forest fiction writers Holman Day and Edward Stewart White are often credited with simultaneously popularizing the term "lumberjack," proving the cultural sway that these books had.125

Dick Among the Lumberjacks never became a hit book but it showed that Dimock viewed his time in the woods as influential to his masculine development. When it came time for him to retire, Dimock picked a secluded place in the mountains of the Catskills, "far removed from the fevered atmosphere of the Exchange" in a forest area that would remind him of his adventures. On the property he cut and milled his own lumber for building and home repairs. Visitors from his Wall Street days came to his house to "find health and pleasure" not by relaxing but by "climb[ing] rocky cliffs, explore[ing] the caves, [and] wander[ing] through the nearby woods."126

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The lust for authenticity ran in the Dimock family. Like his father, Julian Dimock went directly to Wall Street after preparatory school. He was weak and poor in health as a young man and thought that joining his father on outdoor adventures might improve his condition. On their trips the Dimocks wrote and photographed a wide variety of subjects but were fixated on people who worked and lived in the cold climates of Canada and the Northern Forest.  

Many of their articles were investigations of how everyday commodities were produced and what could be learned from the producers. Between 1904 and 1916 the Dimocks visited lumbering operations of all sizes in the Northern Forest and eastern Canada, from the camps of a large company that ordered 1,700,000 pounds of food a year to feed their men, to the small one horse operation of a French-Canadian habitant. In these camps he found men who "embodied the spirit of the wild." Men who could, if they needed to, live off only the "breast of old Mother Earth." The foremen that the Dimocks met could handle men by intimidation or by force. These operators oversaw huge capital undertakings. They could estimate expenses, and the board feet of a tract even though they had no education. Anthony watched in amazement as an indebted French-Canadian farmer constructed an entire cabin out of forest material. He was even more impressed when the habitant’s single horse was injured and the Frenchman constructed a yoke for himself and began drawing logs with his own muscle power. The skill of foremen and small operators impressed the Dimocks but so did the freedoms of the wage worker. These men were "the only one of the lot who can sleep without worry" he found, as their labor was always in demand, and they could quit and get rehired whenever they liked.  

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The interactions that hinterland workers had with the landscape created in them a unique character that the Dimocks prized. After visiting a camp in Vermont, the place where he would eventually move, Julian wrote that this land "makes men … [and] sends them to all parts of the country to help make the country." Similarly, the hardy river driver of Québec was a "product of his environment." Yet the same environment that brought out the primitive qualities of men made them thirst for the destruction of nature: "Man’s very virility make him a despoiler [of the forest]."129

After experiencing life in the woods, the Dimock’s could not understand why more city people did not choose to live the life of a logger: "The life of a Canadian woodsmen is one of the most thrilling and picturesque to be found on this continent," Anthony found, there was "always excitement in the woods." "It’s wonderful work in a wonderful country … I don’t see how you can keep men away from your camps" he told a foreman. Every day these workers dealt with death or injury and that made their work authentic. In 1910 as the Dimocks reported on a company of river drivers in Québec, nine workers died on the job.130

Like other antimodernists, the Dimocks saw the vice and uncouth spending habits of the workers as an intrinsic side effect of their work but their productive power seemed to excuse their poor morals: "The morals of the river driver are often bad, his language never nice, and in the presence of strong drink he becomes a boastful brute or a drooling idiot, but he is a manly figure when, in his spike boots, carrying his pike-pole he steps quickly from log to log as they swirl down

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the swift stream." After a spree they would always come back to camp "without a cent and with nothing but the clothes on [their] back[s]" ready to produce again.\textsuperscript{131}

On their reporting trips the Dimocks "didn't want to be comfortable" but instead wanted to struggle along with the workers. In their struggle they often found they could not keep up, however. For example, Anthony witnessed an Indian river driver on the portage "climb hills and pass through thickets with the canoe on his shoulders, with perfect ease, while to me [without a canoe] the same path was beset with difficulties." The extreme cold environment that workers lived and worked in was very intriguing to the Dimocks. Upon joining a troop of the Canadian mounted police the oil of Julian's camera springs froze, destroying the camera. Frost bite was common for these producers, and was one of the many elemental forces they struggled with daily, further impressing the Dimocks and their readers.\textsuperscript{132}

In 1914 Julian Dimock took a reporting trip that influenced him deeply. He visited two families who had cleared forest land and made farmland in the frigid climate of northern Ontario. The climate meant that they could only grow root crops, and even those were always in danger of frost even during summer. He found the farmers to be, "brave men who feared neither work, \textit{hard} work, privation, nor cold." They had "wrestled a living from virgin forest land" but in the process found "health, happiness, and prosperity." By moving to the land they won "freedom from [the] commercial slavery" of the city. It seemed to Julian that "any man with fair health and strength, who


is willing to work, can go up there and succeed." "Freedom and success are awaiting many a courageous one" he wrote. 133

When Julian’s father died in 1917, Julian promptly quit full time photojournalism and began a search for an authentic, material existence. He and his wife bought an apple orchard in East Topsham, Vermont, the land that Julian had earlier found "makes men." In 1918 in an article titled "Why I Turned Farmer" in New Country Life magazine Dimock explained his career change, expressing sentiments that many antimodernists were feeling at the time. "All of us want to get back to the soil" he wrote. "As a Wall Street man I was not a producer … [and] photographing the accomplishments of other men made me feel like a useless spectator, a hanger on, a dead weight. … I would rather feed the world than ride luxuriously through it." He sought a meager existence where "[t]he hours are long, the work is hard … and the return in money is small." Dimock refreshed his body after a day of toil with simple, home grown food, "whole-wheat bread … pork and beans served together with vinegar and pickles … [home] canned fruits and vegetables, fresh beef and pork, eggs and chicken, potatoes, milk, and cream."

On Wall Street Julian had been a middle man taking value from producers. His work was regular and bland. He did not want to be a cog in a machine but he wanted to "make his own life." "We must conduct small enterprise or be an inconsequential part of a big one" he wrote. "One American out of every six is a farmer, but there is only one president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and 200,000 employees. … Up on my hilltop I am my own boss, the shaper of my own destiny." 134

Fannie Hardy Eckstorm’s Wilderness

133 Julian A. Dimock, "True Tales of the Northern Frontier V-Pioneers of Today," Country Life in America, (March 1914) 45, 47.

The producer ethos and the masculine mannerisms of working-class people did not only inspire men but women as well. The bodies of middle-class women around the turn of the century were also perceived to be wracked with worry, malnutrition, neurasthenia, and hysteria. As the bodily propellant of the race, women’s unhealthy bodies were a more direct cause of the degeneration of the race than were the bodies of men. They too could look to working-class men for examples of good health, but perhaps more importantly they could use these examples to instruct their male children. New working-class hegemonic masculinity not only created a standard for men to live up to, but limited the spheres of activities that women could participate in while maintaining middle-class respectability. An example of how this new discourse on masculinity inspired and limited women can be found in the life of Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, a scholar of Maine history and folklore. In her work, Eckstorm conveyed the notion that wilderness was incomplete as a setting without the inclusion of naturally masculine workers.

Born in Brewer, Maine in 1865 to fur trader Manly Hardy, Fannie straddled a line between a middle-class existence and the pioneer life. Eckstorm's father was a typical Yankee businessman like his father before him, taking every financial opportunity available to him before finally settling into a position trading furs and other resources with rural Mainers. Her father's trade in animal skins was lucrative. As a child she would climb on the great piles of the soft fox hides he brought home and slide down them. Fannie accompanied her father as he met and traded with farmer-loggers, lumberjacks, trappers, and hunters. While Eckstorm never truly lived the life of a pioneer, she was exposed to adventurous men from a young age: "Most of the people I knew had met adventure … sea captains, … trappers, missionaries, travelers to all lands … men build on … large epic lines; …

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moose hunters, deer stalkers, scalers, lumbermen, river drivers, crack waterman, were coming and going and breaking bread with us." Because of these experiences she grew to admire these "heroic toilers." She also took a keen interest in taxidermy particularly stuffing birds. Once wild, the animals she worked with could be posed at her discretion only because they had been killed by working men and brought to her already partially processed.137

Manly Hardy provided an excellent education for his daughter. She attended a prodigious secondary school and finally Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1885. After reading Charles Darwin's "Close and Cross Fertilization of Flowers" Fannie became, in her own words, "an evolutionist." Importantly, however, she advocated intelligent design. While she could accept that the natural world evolved over time she could not accept the idea that nature acted alone. Only through some initial intrusion by an intelligent, powerful, patriarchal being could nature have become beautiful and valuable. Processed once into a valuable good by God, nature was then processed by working men again before it was completely accessible to her and other middle-class consumers.138

After graduating college, Eckstorm began what would become a lifelong writing career. She considered pursuing graduate training but her desire for domestic life overtook her desire for an advanced degree. The death of her husband and one of her children early in their marriage changed her plans.139 She did not remarry and instead pursued writing vigorously. Her first publications were on the birds of the Northern Forest but she also wrote non-fiction articles about the Maine woods and Maine people.

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137 Quoted in MacDougall, Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, 10, 103.
139 MacDougall, Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, 34-35.
Early in her career Eckstorm fell in line with mainstream thinking on conservation, demonstrated most clearly by her works opposing plume hunting. In these early articles, she argued that the greed of rural producers needed to be quelled by active government intervention or humans would despoil nature. Later, in her more famous works, she took a radical turn.

Her focus shifted to rural ideas about wilderness and to the type of men that she remembered from her childhood: woodsmen, loggers, hunters, river drivers, and Indians, people who actively destroyed nature for profit. These were the subjects of her *The Penobscot Man* (1904) and *David Libbey: Penobscot Woodsman and River Driver* (1907) arguably her most influential works. To write these books, Eckstorm did a considerable amount of research as well as field work in the forest among working men. In her words her protagonists were not the typical heroes of other forest fiction books, "not the fresh, sleek, well-groomed young fellow[s] … but … rough, ragged, dirty, wrinklefaced, sun-burnt, utterly dragged-out [men] with lame arms and sore fingers and bruises from rough treatment, the sort of [men] you pass on the street-corners, spring and fall, and speak of as belonging to the 'lower class.'" Eckstorm was protective of her subjects. It was these people who knew the natural world best. She defended them against detractors who depicted them as drunks and whoremongers. Her subjects were the "strong fine side of New England manhood" she argued, literate and practical engineers of great ability.140

Coming from rural Maine, a landscape that had clearly been shaped by the actions of men for hundreds of years, Eckstorm had a unique understanding of nature. She was a great admirer, but also a critic of Thoreau, and, according to her biographer Pauleena MacDougall, she wanted to correct the narrative that the famous Massachusetts transcendentalist writer created about Maine.141


141 As MacDougall wrote, "Eckstorm realized that most people who read Thoreau's *The Maine Woods* would see a forest nearly devoid of humankind, a wilderness. She wanted people to understand that this was an environment that was socially constructed with Native American hunters and lumbermen and farmers all interacting with and changing the woods and waters that
Eckstorm saw the forests of Maine as socially constructed but also considered them to be wilderness. This meant she had a very different idea of wilderness compared to most of her contemporaries, who thought of wilderness places as places that had escaped human modification. Therefore, like the artist Homer Winslow, Eckstorm saw rural workers as part of the wilderness. Within her famous books The Penobscot Man and David Libbey, she used the term "wilderness" ten times to describe the forests where the loggers and river drivers worked and lived and she used the term "wild" in reference to the landscape another three times.142

In one specific scene in The Penobscot Man Eckstorm depicts loggers and their horses as if they were part of, or keepers of, the forest. As the men worked "squirrels frisked" about them and "the little birds were tame and numerous. The wild hares seemed to know no fear." She mentioned how the men also tamed a fawn who they pet and talked to like a dog. When workers encountered a hermit thrush nest and its inhabitants too close to the logging road, the men took turns guarding the nest so it would not be crushed by the horses, wagons or sleds. Workers likewise protected a clump of lady's-slippers flowers. Eckstorm's last book Indian Place Names, categorized the places in Maine that take their name from Indian words proving that people literally defined the landscape of Maine even before Europeans colonized it.143

Eckstorm argued the wilderness, comprised of both working men and non-human nature, became less authentic when production became corporate and concentrated. In The Penobscot Man, The Minstrelsy of Maine, and her chapters on the lumber industry in historian Louis Clinton Hatch's provided an intimate knowledge of the environment." MacDougall asserted that Eckstorm did not see the forest of Maine as wildernesses but as the home of people... Her stories illustrate very clearly that the Maine woods was no wilderness. It was a place where people worked and lived." MacDougall, Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, 48, 53-54.


143 Eckstorm, The Penobscot Man, 165-166.
Maine: A History, Eckstorm argued that there were three major periods of lumbering: 1) From the colonial times to roughly 1850 when pioneering farm families cut much of the wood in Maine. 2) From approximately 1850 to 1900 when pioneering businessmen worked with one another to harvest forest products from the isolated interior of the Northern Forest. In this period, Eckstorm argues, all men worked in nature for the common good, and working in the woods was romantic and joyful. 3) From 1900 forward, the start of the paper boom when corporations brought tremendous capital to the woods, changing organizational practices, work culture, and nature itself.

Speaking about this third period, Eckstorm wrote that in the year 1901 the "Great Company" (likely Great Northern Paper Company) came to the woods to show "how much better 'Millions of Money' can manage these things." During this period work was no longer done under "the old 'Company' for which our men had slaved so willingly." The "old company," probably referred to the sole proprietorships and partnerships that had cut much of the wood in Maine in the late nineteenth-century. Eckstorm wrote that the lumberers she knew, the "old West Branch guard," resisted the changes that corporations brought to the forest and continued to work in the ways that they always had. The Great Company had "a railroad to its own doors … steamboats … telephone [lines] the length of the river … unlimited capital, — and all these our own leaders lacked fighting the wilderness bare-handed. … [The Great Company] could buy everything. Everything but men!"

Before the corporate era, it was not "greed oppressing [workers] but the demands of a military necessity" and like good soldiers the old breed of loggers went into this battle willingly.144 "In the old times" she quotes one lumberjack as saying, "we did it because we like[d] it. It's a whole lot of fun." "Money cannot drive logs," Eckstorm wrote "nor buy the men who can do it."145 Her view of

144 Eckstorm, The Penobscot Man, 318; Mary Winslow Smyth, Minstrelsy of Maine: Folk-songs and Ballads of the Woods and the Coast, (MI: Gryphon Books, 1927) 140.

145 Eckstorm, The Penobscot Man, 189-191; MacDougall, Fannie Hardy Eckstorm, 94-95, 191, 318.
industrial capitalism, wilderness, and work was shared by popular Maine fiction writer Holman Francis Day, who helped spread the idea that corporate capitalism ruined the wilderness not loggers.\(^{146}\)

Eckstorm and Day were mistaken in their interpretation of logging. Profit had always been the motivation for all but the smallest operators. These authors had progressive, anti-monopoly views of nature and work. In the corporate lumbering period, lumberjacks became normal industrial workers, no longer part of the wilderness. Eckstorm, like other antimodernists, was willing to accept that white American men could become part of nature by working in it, but only under the right conditions.\(^{147}\)

To Eckstorm, pre-corporate lumberjacks were part of wilderness but it was clear that women like herself could never be categorized among them. Her childhood experiences with wilderness workers, her ideas on evolution, religion, and her fieldwork in the woods demonstrated to her that women could not regress into nature as men did. Eckstorm, Roosevelt, Wyckoff, and the Dimocks, entered the forest as outsiders and as less healthy people compare to those who worked in the woods. The outsider men who entered the forest had the opportunity to advance by competing with and learning from workers. As a woman, Eckstorm was always an observer and could never participate to the extent of the men while also remaining loyal to the dictates of femininity.

Her place as an outsider was revealed in *The Penobscot Man* when she recounts how the river drivers, without seeing her, could recognize her footprint as that of a woman's. "Women were unknown in that place at that season" she wrote, they were gazed upon and praised by workers.


"The chance track [of a woman] in the roadway" she wrote "where a week before an unknown woman stepped, [was] kept from obliteration just because she was a woman." Forest products work was seemingly impossible with women around. When researching for *The Penobscot Man* Eckstrom made enemies with a local woodsman, who threatened to shoot her on sight. Most of the other loggers did not take this threat seriously but Eckstrom was still given an armed guard. This experience proved her limitations in this male arena.\(^{148}\)

While Wyckoff was threatened in the lumber camp, once he proved himself useful he could preach to workers and gain an equal footing with them. Roosevelt was implicitly challenged by lumberers in Maine and directly challenged in the Dakotas by a gang of thieves who stole his boat and twice by gun toting cowpunchers. Each time he bested his opponents, once through a physical contest in which he knocked out a drunken cowboy. Working in nature was not an option for Eckstorm, nor was competing with workers. Her experiences in the wild also did not change her bodily as it did the "Nature Man" Joseph Knowles, who I turn to next.\(^{149}\)

*The Nature Man*

In 1913 Joseph Knowles a 44-year-old slightly overweight illustrator from Boston, walked into the woods around Spencer Lake in Maine and took off his clothes in front of a group of reporters, scientists, and spectators. Inspired by his conviction that there "was too much artificial life at the present day in the cities," Knowles planned a two-month long, scientific examination of the benefits of living as a "primitive man" with absolutely no modern resources (including clothes).\(^ {150}\) After his trip Knowles was an improved man, with a physique that was said to have rivaled that of


\(^ {150}\) Knowles, *Alone in the Wilderness*, 1, 4-5, 17.
Eugene Sandow, the world-famous body builder. The Boston Post, which had exclusive coverage of the Nature Man's adventure, claimed that their reporting on Knowles' stunt increased the daily circulation of their paper from roughly 200,000 copies to 436,585 in two months. The trip also resulted in a book, Alone in the Wilderness that sold 25,000 copies of its first run, and, according to one account, a total of 300,000 copies (though Knowles himself reported the more realistic figure of 30,000). Knowles' popularity shows Americans were extremely interested in the question of whether man had drifted too far from his natural roots, and whether the Northern Forest had the power to restore men bodily and save the race.  

Knowles was born in a poor family in Wilton, Maine somewhere between 1869 and 1876. His father was injured in the Civil War and was not able to provide for Joseph and his four siblings so his mother became the family’s primary means of support. Knowles dedicated Alone in the Wilderness to his mother who he credited with teaching him much of what he knew about the flora and fauna of the Northeast. The family was so poor when Knowles was a child that he was teased at school for his handmade clothes, homemade sled, and cornbread and bacon sandwiches. The Knowles drew as many resources as they could from the forest lands to help them survive. As a child Joseph would "disappear" into the forest for days at a time and make toys for himself out of materials he found in the woods. Like the Toothakers or the Conklin from section one, Joseph Knowles likely passively learned about surviving in the forest from working, living, and playing in it as a child.  

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152 There seems to be a genuine confusion about Knowles' birthdate. Different census record say he was born between 1868 and 1879. His biographer Jim Motavalli, also seemed confused about the date. Coming from a poor family in rural Maine, there is a real possibility that the exact date of his birth is unknown. US Census Bureau, Federal Census, 1920, Joseph Knowles, Long Beach, Pacific, Washington, accessed November 25, 2016, ancestry.com; US Census Bureau, Federal Census, 1940, Joseph Knowles, Seaview, Pacific, Washington, accessed November 25, 2016, ancestry.com; Lockley, "From Woodsmen to Artist," 12; Motavalli, Naked in the Woods, 26, 33, 34, Knowles, Alone in the Wilderness, 240.
As Knowles grew up, he worked several different jobs. He worked as a private seaman for a time, joined the Navy, worked in the lumber camps, and as a forest guide for hunters. On the river drive he learned to live in extreme and austere conditions, sleeping in the open after the drive soaking wet. He worked in the woods for five years before taking a job sailing on the Great Lakes, and then he joined a party of Sioux and Chippewa trappers and hunters who taught him more about living off the forest land.153

While working as a forest guide Knowles used to draw pictures with sticks on the back of polypore mushrooms, which inspired him to pursue a career as an illustrator. After years of working at this profession in Boston, Knowles found that his physical condition had degraded greatly compared to the time that he was a lumberjack, guide, and Indian apprentice. "[M]y skin was not tough" he wrote "my muscles were not firm; and my stomach was used to seasoned and well-cooked food." He had "wielded the brush and palette instead of the axe and paddle" for too long.154

Knowles saw his own maturation as a microcosmic version of the development of the American people: moving from a state of constant contact and contest with nature in his youth, to a state of luxury and weakness in his maturity. Knowles shared a belief with most other antimodernist, that "[t]he man who yearly gets farther and farther away from nature in his abnormal search for wealth and luxury is well along the road that leads to the destruction of health." In his opinion the nation was living "an artificial rather than a natural" life. Civilization was a handicap. Knowles thinking on nature and civilization was explicitly eugenic: "I believe because of this great neglect of nature that the world is growing weaker and weaker, and that human beings are the sufferers." He thought he needed a fresh dose of work in the wild to reawaken his barbarous side, as did the nation

153 Knowles, Alone in the Wilderness, 17; Lockley, "From Woodsmen to Artist," 36.

154 Lockley, "From Woodsmen to Artist," 47; Motavalli, Naked in the Woods, 25, 41-42; Knowles, Alone in the Wilderness, 74.
as a whole. "In all man there was a hint of primitive waiting to come to the surface," Knowles argued, "no matter how finely educated or well versed a man may be in booklore." Surviving in the forest by himself for two months would "show that … [he was] a man" and if he thrived in the woods he would show that there was hope for the American race.155

To begin his adventure, Knowles proceeded on a train from Boston to Bigelow, Maine. He then took a stagecoach eighteen miles; then another sixteen miles on buckboard to reach King and Bartlett hunting lodge. From there he hiked four miles away from the camp and began the experiment. In his movement away from the city he traced the reverse path of the development of American civilization: "From wilderness life to the simple country life, and then up through the life of a great city liberty gradually decreases" Knowles argued. Backtracking the steps of American civilization could restore it. The experiment was designed to be as scientific as possible. Knowles underwent an examination by Dr. Sergeant and two New York doctors before entering the forest. They signed a statement that the experiment was authentic and concluded that, before entering the woods Knowles was "fat" but otherwise healthy.156

Working in the forest for survival was an important part of improving Knowles health. The first night in the woods, naked and cold he spent hours just walking back and forth to keep his body warm. Wading through swamp land and crawling around fallen timber was "laborious work … [and] exhausting" with no shoes or clothes. Killing a bear for meat and skin was tremendously difficult work. First he had to dig a four foot pit to capture the bear using no tools. After capturing and bludgeoning the creature Knowles then had to skin and butcher it with no knife. Using a sharpened stone, he had to apply tremendous force to break the skin. It took a full morning to do this work


and afterwards his "hands were cramped and scratched and every muscle in" his back and arms hurt. From the large game Knowles killed he made his trademark suit of skins (Figure 3).\textsuperscript{157}

Though Knowles' work was hard, it was not overly regimented like most urban work was. Knowles wrote that '"I made no deliberate plan for my daily existence, but let each day take care of itself." The lax time schedule of the woods gave him time to really think for the first time in his life. The physical side of the challenge was not as difficult as the mental anguish of being alone for such a long time Knowles found. Arduous physical work, however, help rid his mind of the anguish of isolation.\textsuperscript{158}

Much of the improved health that Knowles gained during his trip was due to his consumption of plain, natural food. For the first weeks, he ate little but fish and berries. Later he had a diversity of game meat including squirrels, partridges (sometimes raw), and eventually bear and deer meat. He found that, despite all the work he was doing, he could go without food for long periods of time, sustaining himself by chewing flavorful tree bark. There were no regimented meal times. "When I was hungry I naturally drifted to a place where I could relieve my hunger" he wrote. Once in the woods busy providing for his basic necessities, he also lost a craving for cigarettes, though he took up the habit again as soon as he left the forest.\textsuperscript{159}

The austerity, work, forest environment, and improved diet made Knowles feel "strong enough to pull up a tree by the roots … stronger than I was the day I entered the forest." Although he became sick once in the woods Knowles insisted that "Nature … is the great physician. … The systematic outdoor life is a sure safeguard against disease." The "fresh air" of the Northern Forest

\textsuperscript{157} Knowles, \textit{ Alone in the Wilderness}, 71-72, 114.

\textsuperscript{158} Knowles, \textit{ Alone in the Wilderness}, 79-93, 227, 254

\textsuperscript{159} Knowles, \textit{ Alone in the Wilderness}, 40-41, 47-48, 52, 56-57, 142, 198, 217, 278, 283; Motavalli, \textit{ Naked in the Woods}, 50, 220-22.
cured all ailments better than any other medicine. "When I came out of the forest I was not only improved physically, but my mind was improved" he wrote. Like the lumberers in Eckstorm's book, Knowles believed during his adventure he had become "part of the forest, and as the forest thrived so did I." He considered himself kin with the wild animals that surrounded him; birds and deer were drawn to him.¹⁶⁰

Being alone in the woods brought out a very conservative sentiment in Knowles. After reflecting on his trip he found that "sympathy was wasted out in the civilized world, especially in regards to the so-called poorer class. I made up my mind that it is the middle class that suffers most … The top-notch of society has the least liberty in the world, being bound hand and foot to a rigid social code." Making sure that poor people were well clothed, sheltered, and fed were not priorities for antimodernist like Knowles because "[i]n this civilized life we have altogether too much" too much food, too much clothing, too much lavish housing.

For the Nature Man, the American abundance of clothing especially needed to be reformed: "years ago, when I was a boy, I thought nothing of going down to the spring in winter in my bare feet. I used to keep moving and the snow did not harm them. … I remember one winter when regularly for six weeks I used to go out in the snow each morning with nothing on my body and race through the snow for half a mile or more. It might have been zero or below zero — it didn't matter." He encouraged other children to go without shoes or warm weather clothing.

To Knowles, the true problem with American life was not the austerity that accompanied poverty but the luxury that accompanied overcivilization. "The child who is given all the luxury of a steam-heated room free from drafts, instead of sleeping practically dies during the night and comes

¹⁶⁰ Knowles, Alone in the Wilderness, 14, 62, 82-83, 94-95, 125-124, 126, 205, 262.
to life again in the morning." Wealth, the goal of so many American families, was hurting their progeny. Antimodernist extolled working class people and their environments and so there was little room for sympathy in their depictions of them.\(^{161}\)

According to Dr. Sargent and the other scientists who observed Knowles before and after the experiment, the Nature Man went through a physical metamorphosis in the woods of Maine (Figure 3). His weight dropped from 204 pounds to a healthier 174. Sargent also wrote that "[a]ccording to the [physical fitness] system employed at Harvard he tested 876 points before going into the woods and 954 on coming out. … His test was 150 points better than the hardest test taken by the [Harvard] football men." His skin improved, he beat the school's leg press record by lifting more than 1,000 pounds, the strength of his lungs increased, his digestion was "perfect," and all his muscular measurements increased. He even gained a half an inch in height. Sargent also brought Knowles to his private physical education school where Sargent's female students could touch his bare back to examine his improved skin. When "deprived of … luxuries..." Sargent concluded, there was "no deterioration, only splendid increase of vigor and vitality."\(^{162}\)

After Knowles left the woods he took his insights to the American public during a national tour. Clad in his bear skin suit, he gave short talks and survival skill demonstrations. He visited Portland and Augusta Maine where he reportedly drew a crowd of 10,000 and 8,000 people respectively. He apparently drew a crowd of 200,000 people at a public speaking engagement in Boston (a more realistic and simultaneously reported number was 20,000). As part of his publicity

\(^{161}\) Knowles, \textit{Alone in the Wilderness}, 89-90, 98, 197, 198, 201, 205.

\(^{162}\) Knowles, \textit{Alone in the Wilderness}, 252, 229; 200-201, 232-233; Motavalli, \textit{Naked in the Woods}, 48-50, 58, 61.
tour, Knowles was brought back to the site where he supposedly killed the bear and he dispatched and butchered a second live bear that was brought along for the demonstration.\footnote{Motavalli, \textit{Naked in the Woods}, 73-74. 57, 51, 55, 66.}

Over the years Knowles repeated his experiment again in different forms although his Maine experiment remained his most popular. After Knowles fame began to fade he worked with the Boy Scouts of America training young men in forest survival. He encouraged the Boy Scouts to become more independent like he had been in the woods and as a poor child in Maine. Knowles had several protractors who thought that the entire adventure in the woods was a hoax, and the book ghostwritten. This includes his biographer who concluded that Knowles "probably" faked the Maine trip (though he believed that he had honestly completed a similar task years later in California.) Regardless of if Knowles actually spent two months in the woods naked and alone, his popularity show how attractive the antimodernist message was at the time. Knowles convinced the nation that work in nature and austerity could transform men bodily like nothing else could. "Centuries of civilization have not robbed us of the resourcefulness of our forefathers" Knowles wrote. All that was required to bring forth the characteristics of the American forefathers in modern men was the proper wilderness environment and the proper type of work.\footnote{Knowles trained a young film actress named Elaine Hammerstein in the hopes that she would try to live naked in the woods around Old Forge, NY. He also replicated his own initial experiment in the forest of California and Oregon. None of these events attracted the same type of publicity that his first adventure had. He also starred in a movie account of his own life. Motavalli, \textit{Naked in the Woods}, 139, 171, 174, 134-139, 219,287. Knowles, \textit{Alone in the Wilderness}, 245–246; Lears, \textit{No Place of Grace}, 115; Park, "Physiologists, Physicians, and Physical Educators," 1656.}

Conclusion

Antimodernists saw differences in the body as the most important differences between the rural working class and the urban middle class. Earlier, Thoreau and Headley had defined wilderness
as having cleansing and rejuvenating powers. Thoreau, Headley, and the antimodernists all saw savage qualities in the loggers, but only the antimodernist depicted the savage qualities as laudable. There was no understanding of Darwinian evolution in Thoreau and Headley's time so they could not comprehend, like antimodernists did, that city people and backwoodsmen might be permanently and bodily changed by the rural and urban environment.

At the turn of the century, urban elites thought that the most effective way to build manly bodies and character was to look down the social strata and into the hinterland to people who were not yet corrupted by urban modernity. The men and women discussed above directly sought the companionship and mentorship of the rural working class, and all of them except for Eckstorm, changed their own bodies and mannerisms to more closely reflect their supposed lessers. This involved urban people going into the woods to mimic the activities of workers, including a mimicry of workers' exploitation of their own bodies through the celebration of hard work and hardy diets. The activities that the antimodernist mimicked were the same activities that made the lumberjack class. Yet antimodernists did not do these activities for survival or for a profit, but for recreation; physical and psychic self-improvement. In this way rural workers produced cultural power that changed American society, they exuded a working-class hegemony.

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As Roosevelt, Wyckoff, Eckstorm, and Knowles adventured in the forest, the ideal antimodernist body began to lose its rural working-class origins. Institutions of higher education sought to address anxieties about middle-class effeminacy and in doing so they institutionalized the idealized working class body in college curriculum and rituals. This is the topic of the next chapter.
Chapter 6- "Consult the teamster, the farmer, the woodchopper" Antimodernist Anxiety and Rural Working-class Hegemony, Figures

Figure 2.

Thomas Nast, "Education. Is There No Middle Course?" Harper's Weekly, (August 30, 1879)
Chapter 7- The Institutionalization of the Working-class Body

In 1892 strongman Louis Cyr, the famous French-Canadian lumberjack, faced a new figure of masculine strength. The rising star Eugene Sandow presented a type of modern body that was drastically different than Cyr's. Though Sandow performed similar feats of strength as the French Canadian, what made the new star popular was his chiseled figure. Sandow performed nude or scantily dressed and he shaved all his body hair to emphasize his muscles. Part of his performances involved allowing the audience to touch and closely inspect his body. He was photographed nude or semi-nude regularly and these images circulated widely. According to historian John F. Kasson, "[i]n intimate detail, [Sandow's] body became better known to more people than that of any previous man in history." A plaster cast of his form even went on tour. Sandow shattered the prevailing image of the strongman, "the thickset, barrel-chested performer … who might be mistaken for a blacksmith but never for a gentleman." Dr. Dudley Allen Sargent wrote that "Sandow is the most perfectly developed man the world has ever seen" (Figure 1).

From a young age Sandow was interested in the male body of antiquity. Around the same time that Cyr was starting his first season in the woods, Sandow was on vacation in Rome and was awestruck by the fine cut figures found in classical era statues. He asked his father why men no longer possessed these types of bodies and his father told him that the luxuries of modern society caused this physical degeneration. From that time on, Sandow vowed to recreate what he saw in those statues in human form. He studied the latest works on human anatomy, athletics, and physical culture perfecting methods of "progressive weight training" using modern resistance training apparatuses.1 Unlike Cyr or Sullivan, whose working-class background was part of their act, Sandow

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did not want to be associated with the lower strata of American workers. Instead, he always presented himself as a gentleman with a refined intellect. For example, Sandow refused to participate in wrestling or boxing, activities that helped define working-class strength, recreation and masculinity. He insisted that "[a] man cannot fight a prize fight and be a gentleman." The fact that Sandow could exercise so intensely to sculpt his body so precisely proved his abundant leisure time. According to Kasson "Sandow appropriated the prestige both of science and of classical art."²

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The shift in the American gaze from Cyr to Sandow coincided with a new type of thinking about how modern Americans could build healthy bodies. The antimodernists were so successful in shifting cultural attitudes of masculinity to passionate masculinity that working-class hegemony quickly became indistinguishable from mainstream culture.³ The masculine body building activities of antimodernist became institutionalized and the foundation of this change, the power exuded by the ideal working-class body, was often hidden in the process. Sandow was competing against working class bodies but diminished body building's association with the working class. The core antimodernist anxiety about middle class masculinity remained as working-class hegemony became institutionalized: that brain workers needed to make their bodies more like the Cheap Nature bodies of rural workers.⁴

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² Eugen Sandow, Sandow on Physical Training: A Study in the Perfect Type of the Human Form, (J.S. Tait & Sons, 1894) 7.


The three sections of this chapter show the role that the American university played in simultaneously institutionalizing and obfuscating the origins of working-class hegemony. The first section of this chapter explores the life and work of famous physical culture instructor Dudley Allen Sargent and argues that he specifically drew on an idealization of rural working men to formulate one of the most influential physical fitness curriculums of the Progressive Era. The next section shows how the rituals that developed on college campuses prepared students to contend directly with workers during and after college. The last section chronicles a debate in forestry schools over whether seemingly effete college trained youths could ever work in the woods as foresters or if only rural laborers had the skill and physical ability to do woodwork. In these different aspects of colligate training explicit mimicry of the working class was obfuscated as working-class hegemony became part of college leisure, ritual, and curriculum.

Dudley Allen Sargent: Educating the Underworked

The physical culture and physical education movements were two of the most important propagators of working-class hegemony. There were many foundational figures in physical education but one of the most preeminent was Dudley Allen Sargent. As an instructor at Bowdoin, Yale, Harvard, and the proprietor of two private physical education schools, Sargent brought a progressive and antimodernist ethos to formalized physical training in its formative years. He had the explicit aim of helping "the advancement of the race" through physical culture. In a field

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dominated by European experts, he was credited with giving the American physical culture movement a distinct "national character."6

Sargent was born in 1849 and spent his adolescent years in the seaside towns of Hingham, Massachusetts and Belfast, Maine. His experiences in working-class, rural areas deeply influenced his ideas on masculine health. In his opinion, the landscape of rural New England had produced a superior stock of men: "No one can deny" Sargent asserted "that, like the Nordic races, northern New Englanders as a class have profited by the opportunities for skating, skiing, coasting, and snowshoeing."7 As a child, Sargent admired his father's vigor and "good physique" that was built by his career as a carpenter and spar maker. Sargent thought that his mother's "emotional and imaginative personality" made him susceptible to nervousness and this kept him "forever at war with" himself working to ensure he did not become an invalid.8

Sargent admired the "great seafaring men" of his communities. Their strenuous adventures on the sea made them "real men who had done real things."9 Sargent's father died when he was seven and by the age of thirteen he was juggling school work with various manual labor jobs.10 His first experience of "man's work" was helping to construct a military battery in Maine. He knew that he had become a man when at the age of fourteen he lifted a 300-pound barrel of nails. Later he worked as a seaman, a lumberjack, and farm laborer.11 The young Sargent was interested in the "laws

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8 Sargent, *Dudley A. Sargent*, 17-19.


of health" but had few opportunities to exercise systematically in rural New England. He read about the embryonic physical culture movement in R.T. Trall's *The Family Gymnasium* (1857) and other similar tracts.12

Among the early cohorts of writers on passionate masculinity was Walt Whitman who, at the time of Sargent's youth, was writing under the pseudonym Mose Velsor about "masculine training." Whitman found that in America "the whole tendency of things is to over-develop – [the mental and emotional], while the physical is cramped and dwindled away."13 This was particularly true of the academic class who Whitman described as "[p]unny and dandy tribes of literary men."14 Addressing students directly Whitman argued they would find that "a broad chest, a muscular pair of arms, and two sinewy legs, will be just as much credit to you … [as] your geometry, your history, your classics, your law, medicine, or divinity."15 Whitman and his contemporaries were only just beginning to realize that working-class life could be healthier than a sedentary middle-class existence:

> In utter defiance of all the laws of physiology, we see it arise, from the denizens of those places [working-class shanties], some of the most splendid specimens of health and physical beauty in the world. Indeed … it is doubtful whether the upper ranks of society, with all their superior advantages, produce as many specimens of well-built and fine-appearing men, clean-blooded and sound, as these very places where health is never thought of, and, in appearance, is constantly violated.16

This was "especially [the case] in the country" Whitman argued: "Carpenters, masons, farmers, laborers, men at work on the shipping, and all at active out-door occupations, of course have a fair


15 Whitman, "Manly Health and Training," 188.

share of exercise already … By reason of it, we see that fine state of health which characterizes hunters, lumbermen, raftsmen, and sailors on shipboard."17 Healthy professions were those that allowed men to enter into "that combat with Nature [and] fight hand-to-hand with the very earth, air, and sea."18

After reading similar early antimodernist messages, Sargent resolved to make his paid labor contribute to the development of his physique: "Ploughing, mowing, tacking, pitching, hoeing, chopping, digging, hoisting, and all diversified forms of labor that fall to the lot of the country boy, were classified according to their specific effect in developing certain muscles of the body."19 This targeted manual labor in combination with gymnastics in an abandoned barn that he equipped himself (he carved his own Indian clubs from cordwood), allowed him to build a strong body modeled after his father’s.20 Sargent joined a traveling circus in 1867 showing off his body and gymnastic techniques becoming a minor celebrity.21 In 1869 at the age of eighteen he was hired by Bowdoin College in Maine to run their gymnasium.22

Early physical educators like Sargent had very few examples to draw from to form a physical education curriculum for American college students. Physical culture had been developing in Europe

17 Whitman, "Manly Health and Training,"194, 208, 212.
22 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 89.
and America since the 1830s but there were no set standards when Sargent went to Bowdoin. In 1858 Whitman described what he, and likely most of America, thought of as the best way to improve muscular health: "The only real necessary exercise was the tossing of heavy weights, a large stone, or a blacksmith’s or stone-cutter’s sledge each person trying to outdo the rest in the distance the sledge or stone is sent." During the Civil War, and immediately after, military training was seen as the most appropriate and productive way to build healthy bodies. Moreover before 1900 the scientific community did not know very basic facts about metabolism or the "physiological functions of exercise." The Association for the Advancement of Physical Education was not founded until 1885 and thereafter began to advocate for a more scientific approach to physical training. Physical education curriculums only began to standardize around 1899 and these would be heavily influenced by the impromptu work of Sargent and a few other forerunners.

What was understood by early antimodernist was that bodily exercise was important for students because bodily perfection led to mental perfection. Sargent wrote that "a certain natural moral goodness is developed in proportion with a sound physical development." Strong healthy

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25 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 124.

26 Park, "Biological Thought," 1559.


bodies necessarily led to strong healthy minds but healthy minds did not always lead to healthy bodies. This was the fundamental problem of overcivilization.²⁹

On the rural campus of Bowdoin, Sargent continued to look to hinterland workers for examples of good health building activities. He found that "it was customary for many students to work about farms, or in shops and mills or at some kind of physical labor … in order to … pay their college expenses." The "boys who came from farms, mills, and lumber camps" exhibited "sheer strength, if little grace or agility" and "generally showed a superior physique" compared to those who did not work at manual labor.³⁰ Even college athletes did not compare to workers in some respects. The oarsmen at Bowdoin had highly developed legs and backs but their "shoulders and chests did not compare with those of the lumberman," Sargent found.³¹ Sargent observed that "some of the most prominent athletes in our colleges and city gymnasiums laid the foundation for their strength and agility while doing farm work or engaging in some form of manual labor that gave them all-round exercise."³² Even celebrated prize fighter John L. Sullivan took up farm work as part of his pre-fight training.³³ Yale rowers measured their accomplishments by their ability to go "[d]own on the farm … [and] make the Yankee farmers weary."³⁴ Unlike his own generation, the generation of students that Sargent taught found it "difficult … to earn enough money by manual labor, even if he could get it to do, to defray all his college expenses..." Therefore these modern students were not


³¹ Sargent, *Dudley A. Sargent*, 129.


spending enough time doing all-around, body building work of a type previous generations had participated in.\textsuperscript{35}

This concept of "all-around" exercise or work would become very important to Sargent, because it was thought to counter the effects of the niche work-tasks that resulted from the division of labor that led to uneven bodily development. Work that was technologically primitive and work that was done in outdoor environments were among these healthy all-around forms of work: "[a]gricultural pursuits have always been among the hardiest and healthiest" Sargent wrote, "as were the primitive trades of the carpenter, the blacksmith, the wheelwright, the gunsmith, etc. … these trades … furnished a man with a great deal of all-round activity."\textsuperscript{36} "In modern times," Sargent asserted, "evidence is wanting to show" that manual laborers like "blacksmiths, iron-workers, coal-heavers, brick-carriers, porters, [and] postmen," were at all injured by their work.\textsuperscript{37} The action of the blacksmith was an often used example of how muscles could be made strong by the repetitive actions required to make useless nature into valuable commodities.\textsuperscript{38} Not surprisingly, blacksmiths were often being replaced by machines in modern urban factories and it was a profession that had prolonged utility in isolated, rural communities.

\textsuperscript{35} Sargent, \textit{Physical Education}, 271-272; Other leaders of the physical culture movement agreed. Leading physical educator Edward Hitchcock wrote, "[w]e see how injurious to health is the stimulating plan adopted in too many of your higher seminaries of learning… too much time is taken up with cultivating the intellect, while the body is left to take care of itself. … The evils of a neglect of this branch of education exhibit themselves, not only in puny clergymen and lawyers, but in meager and attenuated physiques of our mothers and sisters," Edward Hitchcock. \textit{Elementary Anatomy and Physiology for Colleges, Academies, and Other Schools}, (New York: Ivison, Blakeman, Taylor 1860) 421-422; Hitchcock, \textit{Elementary Anatomy and Physiology}, 141.


\textsuperscript{37} Sargent and other physical culture gurus often referred to the "blacksmith's arm" to show how specific muscle groups could be made firm and strong through repetitive motions with resistance. Sargent, \textit{Health, Strength & Power}, 15.

During his observations of students’ health, Sargent began to match subjects’ physiques with past work histories to understand what motions could help fight the negative bodily effects of urban corporate capitalism. He argued that "[i]f actual labor will produce such good physical results in certain directions, why will not a system of exercises in the gymnasium, resembling actual labor, accomplish the same result in opposite directions, and in this way be made to supplement the deficiencies of one's occupation, and to develop him where he is weak." To Sargent, recreation and paid work had the same ends, improving health: "[w]hether the young man chooses … to use the gymnasium, to run, to row, to play ball, or saw wood for the purpose of improving his physical condition matters little, provided he accomplishes that object." Sargent realized that, by forming routines that emulated the actions of working men he could develop for college students "courses of training … calculated to promote vigorous health and to secure physical perfection."

At Bowdoin, Sargent designed a set of exercise apparatus that mimicked the "work of natural labor." Due to lack of funding, however, his apparatus amounted to "pulling window weights over a wooden roller by aid of an iron handle" but his methods still produced results in his students’ bodies. After an impressive gymnastics demonstration at the end of his first year teaching at Bowdoin, Sargent got a pay raise and won the respect of the faculty.

While working at Bowdoin, Sargent completed the requisite coursework to earn a B.A. His award winning senior oration had the fitting title "Does Civilization Endanger Character?"

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42 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 91, 95; Sargent, Physical Education, 132.
43 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 130;
went to Yale Medical school and upon graduating spent time running a private gym in New York City. Shortly after that, in 1879 he closed his private gym to take a post as director of Harvard's Hemenway Gymnasium, a position he would hold until 1919.44

At Harvard, Sargent found many young people in a similar situation to those at Bowdoin, students who had "never made a fire, chopped a stick of wood, driven a nail, or actually worked."45 After many years teaching physical culture, Sargent found that the "studious class" was one of the most physically degraded classes in America, having developed from their work a "drooping head, flat chest, hollow back, and constricted ribs just over the stomach … spinal curvature, soft and flabby musculatures, pale faces, inert skins, cold hands and feet and other evidence of a feeble circulation and malnutrition." "It is not necessary to look for the causes of these defects" Sargent found, as they were obvious, "the pressure of the desk against the body, the constriction of clothing during the growing period, the relaxed state of certain muscles, and the over-strained condition of others."46 At Harvard, Sargent would build upon his manual labor focused curriculum to improve the bodies of these students.47

Sargent understood that the degraded health of individual students at Harvard was representative of a pandemic of masculine health in America: "We must bear in mind the difference in material environment which has come with the twentieth-century. It is true that the aggregated efforts of the people make the nation … but the nation thus constituted reacts upon the life and

44 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 173.
45 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 51.
47 Park, "Physiologists, Physicians, And Physical Educators," 1648.
character of its people." The very "stability of a government" was threatened by overcivilization Sargent argued, and these problems "may be traced to physical causes." Weakened strength was explicitly linked to capital accumulation: "When [the nation] is in its highest state of activity and material prosperity" Sargent asserted "there is the greatest danger that the destruction of individual life will be greater than nature can restore." 

Along with his views on the good health of the bodies of rural workers, Sargent's understanding of history shaped his methods of instruction.

All the evidence we have of the life of primitive man implies a constant struggle with natural forces. ... Within historic times, the progress of civilization has always depended upon the overcoming of material obstacles. Force has met force, and the energy and strength required in clearing forest, breaking up ground, laying out roads, and in building towns and cities with their numerous trades and industries, have given energy and strength to the masses in return for its efforts.

Popular sentiment held that human muscles were built through the reaction of forces inside the body with those outside the body. Because of this, Sargent's idea of masculine health was deeply influenced by the idea of white racial superiority on the American frontier. "In the early history of America's settlement" he wrote "we find no necessity for physical training ... a frontier

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49 Sargent, Physical Education, 39.
50 Park, "Physiologists, Physicians, And Physical Educators," 1161.
life kept our maternal ancestors free from nervous debility and muscular feebleness."52 The generation before Sargent's had all "found their gym in the harvest field and behind the plow."53

In his 1891 book *How to Get Muscular*, Charles Wadsworth Jr. wrote that earlier Americans had built strong bodies in different ways than modern Americans: "[i]nstead of swinging Indian clubs they sawed wood; and instead of pulling chestweights they hoed corn. This is after all the best of methods. Constitutions built up by such exercises have a toughness of fiber and power of endurance which no gymnasium can impart."54 For Wadsworth, paid labor was literally exercise. For these reasons Sargent and other faculty at Harvard encouraged students to visit the American West and work or adventure on the land. For several well-off Harvard students, including Roosevelt and Owen Wister, the West became an extension of the gym.55 Through intimate contact with nature, Sargent argued, it is possible for man "to revive many things which he has lost during the progress of civilization."56

Civil War recruitment records furthered Sargent's and other antimodernists claims about the healthiness of past generations.57 During the Civil War, unskilled workers had the smallest rejection rates based on health, only 348 per thousand, while the professional and merchant classes had the


57 The Civil War was remembered as a time when great white men, both Northern and Southern, exerted tremendous physical strain and suffered death for honorable causes. Those men who survived were better for the experience, it was assumed. T. J. Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*, (New York: HarperCollins: 2009) 22; Joseph F. Kett, *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present*, (New York: Basic Books; 2001).
highest numbers rejected.\textsuperscript{58} Before the age of hyper-specialization even brain workers like "doctors, lawyers, [and] ministers" were part time "farmers … surveyors, sailors, mechanics, and 'Jacks' at all trades."\textsuperscript{59} The "old body-building occupations" were disappearing in the twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{60}

Sargent assumed that nearly all urban people were born into debilitating privilege because cities were increasingly powered by extra human-forces: "[s]team, gunpowder, and electricity are now doing the work and fighting the battles of the world, and they have increased the power of man a thousandfold." These capital goods stole physical vitality from men and the result was that, according to Sargent, "[b]rain and nerve diseases are on the increase, and many common troubles of mind and body which make life miserable to multitudes."\textsuperscript{61} In modern America "[under] the direct effect of the telegraph, daily press, and means of rapid transit … we begin to see that the strain upon the brain and nervous system is much greater than that imposed upon any other people [in the world]."\textsuperscript{62} The extreme division of labor was bisecting and destroying the race: "Not only is all the mental work now done by one class and all the physical work by another, but even the mental and physical work is so divided and subdivided that it is possible for one to perform some necessary function in the business or industrial world by the employment of a very few muscles and faculties."\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{58} Sargent, \textit{Physical Education}, 34-35.


\textsuperscript{60} Sargent, \textit{Dudley A. Sargent}, 202.

\textsuperscript{61} Sargent, \textit{Physical Education}, 18-19, 41.

\textsuperscript{62} Sargent, \textit{Physical Education}, 38-40.

\textsuperscript{63} Sargent, \textit{Physical Education}, 251.
Sargent was not the only Harvard faculty member to advocate working-class hegemony. Geology teacher and Kentucky native Nathaniel Shaler was skeptical of the "tenderfoot" mannerisms of most students and professors at Harvard and believed that the loggers, miners, and other rural workers of his native state provided examples of how the student body could be improved. "This type of strong uneducated man, while he had little learning often had more light than those bred in academic places" Shaler wrote. Shaler and Sargent's way of thinking about class and the body strongly influenced the young Theodore Roosevelt while he was at Harvard.64

Sargent's solution for sufferers of overcivilization were best described in his "popular handbook" titled Health, Strength & Power (1904). The short book contained instructions on how to build healthy bodies and it was written specifically for "persons subjected to the strains of modern life" specifically "students … business and professional men." The problem that Sargent set out to solve in this short book was how to "retain our acquired Health, Strength, and Power under the conditions imposed upon us by modern progress."65

In this book Sargent instructed readers to mimic the actions of laborers inside the gym.66 The specific exercises that Sargent created "were suggested by different forms of labor, now almost obsolete in many communities … [the] various forms of labor which men in city life necessarily abandoned."67 These were exercises like "Striking the Anvil," "Scooping Sand," "Rope Pulling," "Fire Engine," "Teamsters' Warming," "Paddling Canoe," "Throwing the Lasso," and "Driving Stakes." Some exercises were drawn from his direct experience working on the farm, as a lumberjack, and on

64 Townsend, Manhood at Harvard, 112
65 Sargent, Health, Strength & Power, preface, 6.
67 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 151.
the sea, exercises like: "Wood-Chopping," "Mowing," "Pitching Hay," "Grinding Corn," "Sawing Wood," "Hoisting Sail," and "Furrowing Sail" (Figures 2-13). These same motions made the muscles of workers into Cheap Nature for the sake of production but for Sargent they were part of a "scientific and effective" method of building healthy male bodies.

More than just improving their bodies, Sargent's instructions instilled in students the idea that the lives and environments of laborers made strong bodies and healthy characters. Soon after taking his post at Harvard, Sargent began his second private gymnasium where he trained feeble, sick, and neurasthenic boys, women, and future physical culture teachers. The Sargent School was located on the upper floor of an old carriage house in a working-class part of Cambridge, next to a "paint shop, stable, harness makers, upholsters, blacksmith, machinist, printers and repair shops." From inside the gym students could smell "the livery stable, and the odor of burning leather, of horses' hoofs and of old paint pots." Sargent's lectures were often interrupted by the loud sounds of workers at their trade. In Sargent's opinion, this "queer little building, set about by poverty … [represented] [t]he democratic spirit which has always possessed the Sargent School." The location assured that Sargent's students, many of whom were drawn from middle and upper class backgrounds, would learn "that all kinds of manual labor and various physical activities had been not only the foundation of the wealth of the republic but also the health and development of the majority of our people."

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71 Sargent, *Dudley A. Sargent*, 200-204.
At Harvard, the passionate masculine performances that Sargent advocated for were looked upon critically by many faculty members. The mentality of his detractors was, according to Sargent, outdated: "From the old days of slavery and serfdom come an idea that only menials work with their hands. The upper class of society uses only its brain and are consequently professional men. … This deep-rooted tradition cast a most menacing shadow over … the profession of physical training itself." Sargent argued that his critics, "[i]n their snobbish ignorance … hold out against orthopedics and applied gymnastics." The seemingly enlightened views of Sargent's detractors were actually outdated and regressive in Sargent's mind because "[i]n these prejudices we find the medieval concept of the vileness of the body and the sacredness of the mind." It was exactly these outdated and mistaken notions that kept "physical exercises out of some of our schools" and it was the reason why the health of the nation was failing.

Through his efforts at Harvard and the Sargent School, this physical culture guru spread his ideas to over 3,000 physical education teachers, nearly one third of all of these teachers trained by 1919. Teachers trained by Sargent went on to teach at 1,082 different institutions including 232 colleges, 255 secondary schools, 72 YMCAs, and 51 YWCAs. Every state in the union had Sargent trained teachers by 1918 spreading the virtues of working-class physicality.

In formal instruction in the gym, much of Sargent's admiration of the working-class body was lost to his students. The focus became new exercises in a new, controlled indoor environment. As Sargent's students taught his methods to students all over the country, the importance of the working-class physique was probably emphasized even less. Never-the-less, generations of students

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72 Sargent, *Dudley A. Sargent*, 193.
would learn, in an indirect way, that the bodies and characteristics of working people were the type of bodies and characteristics to aspire to.\textsuperscript{74}

**Building and Employing New Bodies**

The colleges and universities that employed Sargent, his colleagues, and his protégés were training men and women who would become very influential in shaping American culture. According to historian Burton Bledstein, "no institution would continue to be more important, more primary for the success of Mid-Victorian social values" than the American University.\textsuperscript{75} In 1890 only 11\% of Americans graduated from high school and by 1920 only 2\% went to college but this small percentage would spread what they learned across the country and affect future generations. As an institution, the university’s goal was to produce all around good citizens, societal leaders, as well as specialized professionals. College graduates were overwhelmingly white, male, elites who had little exposure to the realities of the working-class world.\textsuperscript{76} Because of students' high status, rules and rituals both formal and informal, were created at universities that allowed students to access aspects of working-class masculinity without going into the working-class world directly. Physical culture programs like Sargent's represented one of these rituals, but there were others. The rituals discussed below instilled working-class bodily features and character into students to help improve individual health, the health of the race, and to help them control and defeat the bodies of


laborers in the working world. Cornell University, a school that catered to a high caliber of students but was situated in a rural part of New York, demonstrates well the ways that antimodernist messages and working-class hegemony was institutionalized.

The most important organization helping to instill a working-class character and physique in students at Cornell was the Cornell University Christian Association (CUCA). The CUCA was a multidenominational religious organization modeled after the YMCA. It provided students with housing, jobs, food, general support, religious services, organized team sports, gymnastic exercise, and adventurous missionary work. Because of the scope of the services that the CUCA provided, nearly all students, devout or not, had interactions with the organization.

The CUCA, YMCAs, and similar groups at other colleges promoted a muscular Christian message that taught students that building a healthy body was part of serving God. Muscular Christianity was a transatlantic religious movement that attempted to fix a perceived feminization of the church by appealing to new passionate masculine culture. Muscular Christians at Cornell highlighted the "three sides of men" informing all incoming freshmen that "[t]he body, spirit as well as the mind, need strong exercise and healthy growth."

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80 Setran, "Following the Broad Shouldered Jesus" 1, 5.

Muscular Christian sermons, lectures, and Church activities focused on the material, physical and, in many cases, the working class. For example, in an 1886 sermon given at Cornell by Reverend C.H. Pankhurst titled "Complete Manhood," Pankhurst argued that students should try to be like Christ, who was perfect in the "three H’s," health, head and holiness: "[w]hat ever helps the body … is in the line of the Gospel." To muscular Christians, the best bodies were those of rural workers. After all, it was the "physical brawn of the toilers upon [the lake] Gennesaret" who did the good work of the New Testament.82 Muscular Christians recast the heroes of the bible—Noah, Moses, Elijah, Peter, and John—as "out-of-door men" and Jesus as a "Heroic Artisan" who built muscles by pushing the plane and swinging the adze. They argued that Christ would have had to have been strong and vigorous, to drive the money changers out of the temple without contention.83

The CUCA helped Cornell develop a physical training program that was like the one Sargent formed at Bowdoin and Harvard. In the two decades before the turn of the century Cornell students had to perform manual labor as exercise.84 The idea that manual labor should be part of curriculum in American schools dates back to before the American Revolution and remained a consistent theme until the beginning of the twentieth-century. It was assumed that the studious class should never abandon work, despite how much studying they did. Typically, students did farm or gardening work for exercise.85

Cornell's founder Ezra Cornell came from a working-class background and saw manual labor as an essential aspect of higher education. Under his plan students would labor ten to twenty hours a week, exercising their bodies while they "rested their mind[s]." His view on labor was nostalgic. He challenged students to do a "quarter as much labor as I did at their ages, or as I do now at 60 years of age." The founder was known to visit students at work-exercises and "take a pick ax in hand and demonstrate his own prowess." Similarly at the People's College in Havana, New York students had to do between ten and twenty hours a week of "bona fide labor in some branch of productive industry." This could include carpentry, masonry, or for less skilled students digging, construction, or other farm labor. Other schools such as New York Central College, Connecticut Agricultural College, the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, and Michigan Agricultural College, adopted similar manual labor plans.

Students at Cornell could not support themselves on manual labor wages and the manual labor requirement was slowly phased out and replaced by a formal physical culture curriculum. The specific rules and regulations of the physical culture program were recorded in the university's manuals of "Physical Training" and the "Student Handbook" both of which were printed by the CUCA. Inspired by anthropometric program of human measurements, the manuals were designed to help students progress physically as they moved closer to graduation. All students were subject to physical examinations before the start of their college career and tracked during the next four years.

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86 Bishop, A History of Cornell, 86, 127.
88 Bishop, A History of Cornell, 86, 127.
The physical culture program at Cornell did not highlight the necessity of building big muscles, instead it placed importance on the quality and symmetry of the frame. The manuals promoted a defined physique, the type of well-rounded symmetrical body that was built by all-around work.\textsuperscript{90} Each day students were required to do at least an hour of physical activity.\textsuperscript{91} The pamphlets also set physical fitness standards as a requirement for graduation, a requirement that still exists today. As with Sargent's program, the ultimate idea behind Cornell's physical culture program was to fight overcivilization and ensure that the American race was moving closer to bodily perfection.\textsuperscript{92}

By the start of the twentieth-century the Cornell training manuals favored athletics over gymnastics or calisthenics.\textsuperscript{93} Gymnastics could build bodies like the working class but did not inspire the same manly character that working in nature did. Sports, particularly competitive activities, provided Cornellians with the benefits of "competition and self-reliance" that were "basil to the development of character."\textsuperscript{94} Sargent argued that competitive sports set the mind back to the primitive state, just as outdoor wilderness work and adventure did. Sports conjured in young men "the remnants of primitive characteristics possessed by our early ancestors, when those who were not members of the tribe were enemies of the tribe, and whom it was one's first duty to wound or

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\textsuperscript{90} Irving Doetsch Scrapbook, Box 1, #37-5-3643. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. "Physical Training 1915-1916" 9, 10, 13, 14; Irving Doetsch Scrapbook, Box 1, #37-5-3643. "Physical Training [unknown year]" 8, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library; Park, "Science, Service, And the Professionalization of Physical Education," 1683.

\textsuperscript{91} Irving Doetsch Scrapbook, Box 1, #37-5-3643, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. "Physical Training 1915-1916" 8, 14, 22; Bishop. A History of Cornell, 242.

\textsuperscript{92} Kasson, Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man; Sargent, "The Relation of Physical Education to Race Betterment," 106; Prescott, Student Bodies, 102.

\textsuperscript{93} Irving Doetsch Scrapbook, Box 1, #37-5-3643, "Physical Training [unknown year]" 7-9, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library; Park, "Physiologists, Physicians, And Physical Educators," 1660-1661; Grover ed., Fitness in American Culture, 9; Prescott, Student Bodies, 76.

\textsuperscript{94} Rotund, American Manhood, 20-21.
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kill." Even among the observers cheering wildly in the crowd there was "an exhibition of some of the recurrent traits of our barbaric ancestry."95 Watching and participating in sport provided a "safety-valve for exuberant animal spirits."96 Just like outdoor wilderness adventure, physical pain and injury were an expected and important part of physical training and athletics.97 On the sports pitch, physical harm could be controlled and regulated, unlike in the forests or out West.

At many colleges, including Cornell, football was depicted as the most rigorous and manly sport.98 In his 1896 Football Walter Camp directly compared playing football to fighting in the Civil War.99 While large, muscular bodies were not seen as necessary for the general population of students, increased size and strength were appropriate for football players. Football players could expect an "hardening and adjustment" of their bodies and were expected to gain "anywhere from eight to fifteen pounds."100

Football was only appropriate for the most physically fit students, however: "for one who has the necessary muscular development and vital capacity, it is a game well calculated to cultivate in the various bodily organs a high degree of efficiency and endurance. It should not be played, however, by those who are physically immature or unsound." One Cornell pamphlets suggested that only proper men, not boys, could play football: "It is not a form of exercise suited to the needs of

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95 Sargent, Physical Education, 228-289.
96 Townsend, Manhood at Harvard, 99.
98 Park, "Biological Thought," 1556-57.
100 Irving Doetsch Scrapbook, Box 1, #37-5-3643. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. "Physical Training 1915-1916" 23, "Physical Training [unknown year]" 12, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
schoolboys, and because of the … strenuous character of the game itself, does not commend itself to others than college men, to whom alone as a class are given time and opportunity for the expression of instincts thus reflective of ancestral traits and habits of life."\textsuperscript{101}

Few male students could have avoided the rough physical combat associated with football even if they were not part of an organized sports team. At Cornell before football was fully standardized, the freshman and sophomore classes participated in an annual "Cornell Football" game that was the school's "rush" event. Rushes were common rituals at many colleges and universities and they followed a similar format. Typically during rushes two teams, most often the freshman and sophomore classes, fought over a flag, cane or some other arbitrary item.\textsuperscript{102} Rushes resembled riots. In one Cornell rush, teams of up to forty players fought over a ball progressing it forward to some arbitrary goal area in any matter they saw fit. Observers recounted that the real object of the game seemed to be "the pure delight of the struggle" (Figure 14). Faculty and administrators encouraged these activities. Cornell University's second president Charles Kendal Adams did not want his pupils to be overly studious and insisted that "the time comes when his pent-up physical energies demand scope."\textsuperscript{103}

In the nineteenth-century group combat was common among guilds, unions, fire fighters, and, as we saw in chapter two, even river drivers and baseball teams.\textsuperscript{104} Antimodernist saw this type of group violence as an important part of manly health and development. Dr. Sargent remembers

\textsuperscript{101} Irving Doetsch Scrapbook, Box 1, #37-5-3643. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. "Physical Training [unknown year]" 12.

\textsuperscript{102} For good descriptions see, Bishop, A History of Cornell, 134-135; Norwood, "The Student as Strikebreaker," 333 337.

\textsuperscript{103} Charles Kendal Adams, "Moral Aspects of College Life," The Forum, 80, pp. 672-673.

watching and participating in these types of riotous, working-class faction fighting as a child, and thought himself better off for the experience.  

Cornell alum James Gardner Sanderson’s novel, *Cornell Stories* (1898) describes a big and bloody rush event. The three most physically able students on the freshman and sophomore classes grabbed onto a canvas flag in the center of a field and wrestled it out of the other team's grasp. After a period of time the entire freshman and sophomore class rushed towards the main players to help in the fight. In Sanderson’s story, the three chosen freshmen were, the protagonist Torresdale, the star of the football team, Lockwood, a gymnast and boxer, and lastly Johnson, a "countryman … from the lumber regions of northern New York." Johnson is described as taller than H. Lockwood and "loosely-put-together, raw boned." The Johnson character had been used to handling logs and men all his life, and his outdoor work had made his muscles like wire cords and his lungs like bellows. To him the prospect of a rush was amusing. Until now, his fights had been with drunken Irishmen and bearded Swedes in the lumber camps … he did not anticipate much difficulty in doing his share toward holding the flag.

Lockwood was "short and stocky, with a huge chest and broad shoulders, and the even development of the muscles in his arms and forearms, visible beneath the sleeves of his jersey, showed the unmistakable signs of gymnastic training." Lockwood "had heard of and seen some college rushes, and he did not feel as confident as Johnson." Lockwood is the first to let go of the flag, spraining his wrist in the struggle. In Sanderson’s book, the superiority of Johnson’s working-class physique and mentality was second only to the protagonist Torresdale's.

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105 Sargent, Dudley A. Sargent, 25.

The increased interest in rushing, boxing, football, wrestling and other violent sports was new in turn-of-the-century America. For most of the nineteenth-century fighting, either on the canvas, on fields, or on the streets was a quintessential working-class form of leisure and well-educated elites shied away from these activities, as demonstrated by Sandow’s refusal to prize fight. Fist fighting showed a lack of restraint and was an immoral outlet of passion.\textsuperscript{107} Boxing would eventually become the most popular sport in America and even the aristocratic Theodore Roosevelt could participate in the sport on the White House grounds with little condemnation.\textsuperscript{108} Boxing, rushes, wrestling, and football were institutionalized rituals of violence and competition, intentionally designed to build the bodies and character of the leisure class so that they would match those of the working class.

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Working-class bodies and mentalities were particularly important to students who were training to deal with the problems of class conflict outside universities. During a strike of Interborough Rapid Transit Company workers in New York City in 1905, college students and college athletes at Columbia University came out to the streets as strike breakers and scabs. These anti-labor actions were political statements but also attempts by students to physically compete with laborers in real world, physical contests. Anti-labor actions among college students were common all over the country.\textsuperscript{109} Jack London wrote on this theme in his short story "The Rejuvenation of Major

\textsuperscript{107} Elliott J. Gorn, "’Gouge and bite, pull hair and scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in The Southern Backcountry," \textit{The American Historical Review} 90, no. 1 (1985): 18-43; Gorn, \textit{Manly Arts}.


Rathbone" in which a scientist creates a magical serum that gives him "renewed vitality" allowing him to thrash striking working men.\textsuperscript{110}

What college students learned about working-class masculinity at school was used by those who went to work as industrial reformers, managers, and engineers. The institutionalization of working-class masculinity gave graduates the ability to communicate with and work among laborers directly, as reformers, adversaries, or overseers.\textsuperscript{111} The YMCA created its Railroad Department in 1877 and its Industrial Department in 1902. Both departments were designed to help mitigate the simmering conflict between labor and capital and to direct workers’ energies away from the spatiality of production and consumption and labor agitation and towards company loyalty, saving, investment, and a stable family life. The YMCA accomplished these goals by providing services like Bible study, thrift classes, libraries, lectures, and athletics programs that were often run by college graduates.\textsuperscript{112}

To staff these departments, YMCA officials looked to recruit "manly men … abundant virility was a requisite." To be persuasive to crowds of manual laborers these YMCA workers had to "live up to the manly example set by the railroad men."\textsuperscript{113} It was expected that YMCA workers, having undergone proper physical training at college, would be able to physically match workers in contests of strength if the occasion presented itself.\textsuperscript{114}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{110} Devlin, \textit{Between Profits and Primitivism}, 139.
\item \textsuperscript{111} Austin Cary, \textit{How Lumbermen in Following their Own Interests Have Served the Public}, (Washington, D.C., Society of American Foresters, 1917) 2.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Winter, \textit{Making Men, Making Class}, 89; 51-52, 127.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Winter, \textit{Making Men, Making Class}, 88-89; 100-102.
\end{itemize}
Other college students became professionals in the field of "boys work" that had some of the same directives as industrial reform but younger targets. Institutions like the Woodcraft Indians, Sons of Daniel Boon, and the Boy Scouts of America provided children with structured, moral outlets for their innate barbarous instincts. The names of these organizations allude to historical representations of frontier workers, military men, and Native Americans who, through their work in nature, build strong bodies and upright characters. Boys work institutionalized the activities that people like Roosevelt, Wyckoff, and the Dimocks sought in their jaunts among workers in the wild.

Hundreds of other grown men engaged in elaborate rituals of masculinity in fraternal orders that mimicked the practices and dress of working-class people. The Free Masons; the Improved Order of the Red Man; Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Machinist and Blacksmiths Union; Ancient Order of Gleaners; Patrons of Husbandry; Ancient Order of United Workmen; and the apt Modern Woodmen of America; Ancient Order of Foresters; Independent Order of Foresters (later renamed the United Order of Foresters); Fraternal Order of Lumbermen (also known as the Concatenated Order of Hoo-Hoo) are all examples of these types of fraternal organizations. Despite these names, these groups did not cater to manual laborers, but the middle-classes. They brought elite men together to share bonds of fraternal engagement, and rituals that invoked man's


connection to manual labor and primitive societies. These were reenactments of what middle-class men imagined they were missing by not participating in manual labor themselves.\textsuperscript{118}

**Lumberjack or Technocrat**

Despite their college training there was doubt whether middle-class post-graduates could ever obtain the character and physical ability of manual laborers. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the nascent field of professional forestry, there was controversy over the type of training that a largely middle class, college educated cadre of graduates would need to enter the domain of the lumberjack. Though the United States had always produced forest products, for much of the history of the country management and labor in this industry was composed nearly exclusively of non-expert rural people and entrepreneurs. That began to change in 1876 when Congress commissioned a special agency to study quickly vanishing American forest resources. This study led to the creation of the Division of Forestry in 1881, followed by the 1891 Forestry Reserve Act that created forest reserves across the nation. By 1894 there were 17.5-million acres of National Forests that required an army of technocrats to protect it from fires, to manage it for recreation, grazing and, in some cases, to "produce [on it] the forest tree crop" for forest product production.\textsuperscript{119}

Before 1870 sustainable forestry was not practiced on a large scale in the United States and those few who practiced it borrowed methods from German foresters.\textsuperscript{120} Only Yale, Cornell, and

\textsuperscript{118} Carnes, *Secret Ritual*, 3-4, 51-52, 1, 104, 161-166.

\textsuperscript{119} Circular of The New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, Announcement of Courses no. 30, six, no. 6, (1910): pp. 10, SUNY ESF Moon Library Archives, Syracuse New York (not cataloged); J.A. Ferguson, "The Development of Forestry Education in The United States," *Penn State Farmer*, 3 no. 4, (1910): 73-77.

the one year Biltmore technical forestry school gave any formal instruction in forestry in 1870.\textsuperscript{121} Twenty-five years later the Congressional publication "Forest Leaves" mandated forestry be taught at the land grant agricultural colleges and two years after that twenty colleges were teaching courses on forestry.\textsuperscript{122} Early Foresters were trained in silviculture, dendrology, geology, forest biology, elementary engineering, logging methods, business, and basic liberal arts.\textsuperscript{123} Curriculum designers saw the ideal forester as a \textit{man} who would be part engineer, part biologist, and part lumberjack. The diversity of skills needed by foresters meant that programs were between four and six years long with most lasting five years.\textsuperscript{124}

From the 1890s to the end of World War I, college educated foresters went to work almost exclusively for the federal government working within the National Forest Service. These government employees moved often, dealt with various unpredictable forest conditions and types, and often spent most of their time in offices doing paper work managing large tracts of forest land.\textsuperscript{125} By the nineteen-teens it was clear to the Forest Service and to private forest products operators that there was a lack of foresters who had the wood-skills, ability, and professional training required to manually carry out the "working plans" of high ranking foresters. At the same time there was an increased demand for foresters in the private sector where trained workers were needed to

\textsuperscript{121} Henry Solon Graves and Cedric Hay Guise, \textit{Forest Education}, (Yale University Press, 1932) 685.

\textsuperscript{122} Graves and Guise, \textit{Forest Education}, 689; Ferguson, "The Development of Forestry Education in The United States," 74


protect lumbermen's arboreal investments from fire, theft, disease, parasites, and to help them begin sustainable yield programs.

The private and public sectors both needed people who could make planned cuts, thin out stands, build simple structures and fire towers, manage diseases and pests, put roads through rough terrain, improvise with few tools and raw materials, and do dozens of other types of physically demanding jobs that were required to sustain healthy, productive forests. These trained foresters could also serve as scalers, foremen, and cruisers. Unlike the foresters who were managing the National Forests from offices, these new types of foresters would spend 40% to 60% of their time in the primitive conditions of the woods, alongside rural producers and wage workers. Many leading foresters assumed that those hired to do this on-the-ground work did not need college training but instead only needed to be "competent logger[s]." Influential early forester Gifford Pinchot expected these on-the-ground foresters to know more than a little about … how to organize lumber operations, the equipment and management of logging and milling in various forest regions, the manufacture, seasoning, and grading of the rough and finished lumber, cost keeping in a lumber business, methods of sale, market requirements at home and abroad, prices, the relation of the lumber tariff to forestry, timber associations, timber bonds … insurance [and the] … practical construction of logging equipment.

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126 Ferguson, "The Development of Forestry Education in The United States," 75; Circular of The New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, Announcement of Courses, 30; Just as with mining and railroad construction, the technical aspect of forestry was important early in the process of professionalization, but as the fields developed foresters needed men with both practical and technical experience. Roth, "The School-Trained Forester," 849.


In other words they needed to be "experts in woodcraft" or, as another influential forester Bernhard Fernow argued, these foresters would "do little more than a lumberman can and ought to do."\textsuperscript{130} They also needed to "know how to handle men" a skill that any working foremen already had.\textsuperscript{131} Some foresters saw that "[m]any lumbermen of no technical training … [are] already making some of the very improvements in method that forestry should be able to furnish."\textsuperscript{132}

The increased amount of on-the-ground work that foresters were required to do created conflicts among foresters and forestry teachers about whether new foresters should be scientifically and "technically" trained or "practically" trained in the skills common among lumberjacks and farmer-loggers (a similar debate between the merits of technical and practical training was happening in several engineering fields around this same time).\textsuperscript{133} The argument over the need for technical or practical foresters began around the start of professional forestry in the 1880s but it took place most vigorously in forestry journals and schools from around 1900 to 1930. At issue was whether a school trained forester, with little experience in the woods, could do the type of physically demanding, skill based work in the wilderness that had, since Colonial times, been done by farmers and working-class loggers.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{130} Bernhard Eduard Fernow, "The Education of Foresters," \textit{Canadian Forestry Journal}, II no 4 (1907): 144-147, 149.

\textsuperscript{131} Fernow, "The Education of Foresters,"150-151; Pinchot, \textit{The Training of a Forester}, 19; Hosmer, "The Progress of Education in Forestry" 95; Engineering was analogous in this regard, Ruth Oldenziel, \textit{Making Technology Masculine: Men, Women and Modern Machines in America, 1870-1945}, (Amsterdam University Press, 1999) 67.


Some experts pointed out that the German forestry program had relied on local hunters and loggers, as well as apprenticeships since that country began a systematic approach to forestry in the eighteenth century. The Germans had one of the best forestry programs in the world and they emphasized work in the woods while early American programs were too reliant on classroom instruction, some critics argued.\textsuperscript{135}

Forester Henry Graves asserted that there was a "rather general opinion" among foresters and forestry teachers "that the boy who has been reared on a farm, or at least under influences which gave him the opportunity to become acquainted with manual work, and who does not demand the social contact that go with urban life, may more easily adjust himself to the living conditions which are found in the majority of forest occupations."\textsuperscript{136} Being able to deal with the harsh conditions of the forest workscape was particularly important for those who would work in the West where, "one must have 'sand' and must be willing to put up with hardships and discomforts" and needed to "really love the work and the frontier life."\textsuperscript{137}

The debate between practical and technical forestry also involved debate over the limitations of a college education. Civil Engineers in America during the first half of the nineteenth-century had been trained almost exclusively outside of the classroom on the railroads they were helping to build. The history of the early American university was the history of institutions "keeping up with a

\textsuperscript{135} Roth, "The Curriculum in Forestry Education," 24; James B. Berry, "The Creation of an Ideal," \textit{Forestry Quarterly}, XII no. 4. (1914).

\textsuperscript{136} Graves and Guise, \textit{Forest Education}, 297-298.

changing technological world rather than creating it," historian David Edgerton wrote. The advocates of practical forestry pushed for this type of on-the-ground training.

The experience of elder foresters proved that many graduating foresters were not efficient woods workers compared with experienced workers. In 1912 Henry Graves declared in the *Forestry Quarterly* "[l]umbering is unique only in that the principles underlying it have not been systematized either in theory or practice" and thus they were hard to teach in a classroom. Forester Herbert Chapman wrote that the forest service was an "organization of fighting men" and "demands men … [with] infinite capacity for taking pains..." These qualities, Chapman argued, "an ordinary college education often fails [to bestow on students]." "When the green man with an education is placed under the authority of [working men], he is frequently discredited utterly" Chapman wrote.

Like the logging foremen, the forester did not need a precise knowledge of engineering only the ability to improvise "rough methods of transportation and construction adapted to the conditions which exist in the woods." Successful foremen "owe their success largely to a knowledge of executive and mechanical detail, from the efficiency of labor to the varieties of saw practice, that has taken years to acquire, and which has crystallized into a larger and complicated

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143 Graves, "Standardization of Instruction in Forestry," 382, 383, 385.
organization." This "hard won insight" could only be approximated but never directly emulated by new college graduates.144

When fighting forest fires, a reoccurring and important task in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, local workers were often the most efficient. Henry Graves wrote that "the experienced logger, with his knowledge of local conditions, is often better able to build needed trails and other improvements to assemble and care for equipment, to recruit and oversee the corps of workers, and to take command of fighting a serious fire, than the professional forester who has less practical experience. The same may be said of many other field activities."145 Before the turn of the century what little work that was being done managing forests and fighting fires was done by men "without any special training" who had "never set foot inside a lecture-room."146 These were the type of men "whose schooling was in the doing."147

Foresters with field experience understood that "thinkers are not confined to the college bred" and common workers or foremen were often the most skilled engineers, managers, amateur biologists, and silviculturists.148 One anonymous detractor of the technically trained foresters agreed that a real "lumber jack" was better equipped for the job of forest fire fighting than most college men.149 To truly become woodsmen students would have to do "several years of hard work in the


145 Graves and Guise, Forest Education, 100.


147 Roth, "The School-Trained Forester," 850.


woods, in logging camps, or at the mill, in relatively subordinate positions" because a certain part of the "knowledge of lumbering … [was] impossible to acquire accept by practical business experience.\textsuperscript{150}

Foresters also needed to be able to organize and contend with local loggers, ranchers, and farmers, some of whom foresters depicted as having "a primitive cast of mind, elemental emotions, and childish whims, who often display complete lack of reasoning power, coupled with vicious tendencies." Middle class boys "raised in hothouses without experience with either ignorance or depravity, are slated for some rude jolts and may utterly fail" if they cannot "understand the character and impulses of local residents.\textsuperscript{151} In the words of historian Ruth Oldenziel early technocrats like foresters hoped to "command a cultural fluency of the workplace." To do so they needed to borrow prestige from the lower ranks.\textsuperscript{152}

The debate between the technical and the practical foresters came to a climax in a 1918 edition of the \textit{Journal of Forestry} when a forester by the name of L.F. Kneipp published "The Technical Forester in National Forestry Administration" that derided scientifically trained, college educated foresters. In this article Kneipp repeated many of the common arguments in favor of practical forestry. He argued that the forester needed to be a woodsman and should be able to thrive in "primitive not wholly comfortable conditions." "Too much of the practice of the profession has been detached from trees and sawmills," Kneipp wrote.

\textsuperscript{150} Graves, "The Profession of Forestry," 5; Graves, "Standardization of Instruction in Forestry," 381, 384.

\textsuperscript{151} Chapman, "The Forest Service and Its Men," 657; "Education in Forestry Proceeding of the Second National" 60.

\textsuperscript{152} Oldenziel, \textit{Making Technology Masculine}, 60, 66; Mills, \textit{White Collar: The American Middle Classes}, 243.
Kneipp's article caused outrage among the advocates of technical forestry. Nine other foresters wrote to the Journal of Forestry disagreeing with his article. They argued that the "muscular side of the profession" overshadowed the intellectual side and that the "husky … hard fisted" common laborers could never do the complex, scientific work of the forester. Lumbermen and foremen were good at certain tasks, but they never advanced their methods unless compelled to by educated authority. The superiority of the rural worker when compared to the college educated foresters had been widely exaggerated, Kniepp’s detractors asserted. Others argued that, while the German Forest schools emphasized apprenticeships, ultimately the technical foresters ran German departments and progressed the agenda of making the forest a sustainable crop.

Kniepp and the foresters who argued for more practical training ultimately had more success in shaping early Forestry curriculum between 1900 to 1920. Forestry schools emphasized practical training in three ways. The first was encouraging students to "[knock] against practical conditions" in the woods early and often, in the process learning from workers and lumbermen directly. The second was placing greater classroom emphasis on practical topics like engineering and business at the expense of scientific subjects. The third was the establishment of ranger schools that would train workers who were a hybrid between college educated foresters and lumberjacks.


154 Graves, "Standardization of Instruction in Forestry," 394.

155 This was a common argument made by new professionals as they attempted to grasp power from workers Roth, "The School-Trained Forester," 850.


The most important aspect of practical training was increasing the amount of time that students spent in the woods. This would give them "the right attitude towards hard work" and help them attain "as much vigor of body as … of the mind." Time in the lumberjacks workscape would ensure that students would graduate as foresters and as woodsmen. If a student did not become both a forester and a woodsmen "he will endanger the whole success of his career" Pinchot wrote. Students would learn about logging tools, logging methods, and the organization of men and camps "by living in one for several weeks." Depending on their experiences before college, some forestry students also needed elementary training in woods-lore such as lessons in "how to ride and handle horses, to handle boats, and to shoot … to handle an axe … a knowledge of commissary work, camp cooking … camp hygiene…" and also "common sense." Pinchot argued that "[l]ife in the open, accompanied by vigorous work and recreation, wholesome food, and the companionship of men training in woods-craft assist greatly in laying an excellent foundation for the final years of instruction in forestry." Physical fitness was very important for Forest Service employees. Graves

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163 Pinchot, *The Training of a Forester*, 126; Circular of The New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, Announcement of Courses, 13.
argued that foresters had to contend with the same "hard rough" work as lumberjacks and to do so they would need to "build up a strong healthy body." 164

The New York State College of Forestry was among the forerunners of forestry schools in the United States and set an example for later programs in the realm of practical training. The school was established at Cornell University by the state legislator in 1898. The Cornell facility was closed in 1903 and reopened at Syracuse University in 1911. 165 The amount of recommended and required field work in the New York State College of Forestry program was impressive.

The school recommended all students who applied for the school spend "a summer or two" before college working full time in the woods or a mill. After students' first year of classes they attended a sophomore summer camp, an institution that would become common in many US forestry schools. The New York State summer camp was in Wanakena, New York and lasted three months during which times students made regular trips to tree plantations, forests of various types, and forest products operations, while learning basic outdooring skills, cruising, surveying and other practical skills. Members of the class of 1918 wrote that it was only "[i]n camp [that] one gets that practical knowledge and experience which, to such an annoying degree, is lacking in most … college graduates." In the woods "the foundation of a strong character … [was] laid" and students became "accustomed to the roughest life of the woodsmen, [and] gains from it that quiet confidence which only such a life can produce." 166 During the summer professors had a chance to assess the strengths


and weaknesses of students.\textsuperscript{167} Some "unfit" students dropped out due to the difficulty of summer work.

In the student-published \textit{Camp Log} the Sophomore class of 1917 wrote that it was only after returning from camp that the student became a "vigorous worker, sympathetic teacher, a good 'scout' and above all a FORESTER, which always means a MAN."\textsuperscript{168} One Forestry teacher wrote that those who make it back from camp "we no longer call boys, but men."\textsuperscript{169}

All juniors at the New York Forestry School were also instructed to arrange a longer trip to a lumber camp or mill to work "under a regular boss who will demand full work for regular wages."\textsuperscript{170} Pinchot recommended that a student's entire senior year be spent in the woods, though that seemed to be rare at Syracuse.\textsuperscript{171} Syracuse students who specialized in logging engineering or forest utilization spent an additional two weeks to a month studying operations outside the Adirondacks before graduating.\textsuperscript{172} Many forestry students throughout the country were required to write a thesis based on field notes taken after living in a logging camp.\textsuperscript{173} After this field work "the four-year man is ordinarily but a mere beginner" and an official apprenticeship under an experienced forester or lumberman was recommended.\textsuperscript{174} The reason forestry students went to the woods to learn was the same reason why middle class antimodernists went to logging camps for leisure: to most urban elites,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[170] "Education in Forestry Proceeding of the Second National Conference," 32.
\item[171] Pinchot, \textit{The Training of a Forester}, 127.
\item[172] Circular of The New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, Announcement of Courses 33.
\item[173] Graves, "Standardization of Instruction in Forestry," 382.
\item[174] Circular of The New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, Announcement of Courses, 12.
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the material world of the forest was so imprecise, so hard to convey through written or spoken word, that only through physical contact with its unpredictable form could they learn its secrets and master it.  

Despite how intensely forestry students were trying to emulate the lives of lumberjacks, most never experienced the same difficult work, abysmal conditions, and monotony that working lumberjacks did. A satirical article published in the *Bangor Daily News* in 1910 poked fun at forestry students’ attempts at mimicking workers. Initially published as a response to a New York City author’s exposé of the poor conditions in Maine lumber camps, the article was written from the perspective of students at the imaginary Bumzooksus School of Forestry located at the fictional Hotel Epicurus Gumculcus.  

Students at this fictional school were said to have engaged in "nature study … [and] separating the earth from the mature growth of whiskers i.e. trees." Their daily schedule was whimsically aristocratic: "[i]nstead of rising long before daylight from untidy beds in ill-constructed and unsanitary quarters, the guests … usually are called by their attendant at 9 o’clock when cocktails or coffee are served." Their classes consisted of lectures from "Professor Picher" (likely a reference to Gifford Pinchot) on the "science of sylviculture [sic], the bad habits of most trees in their association with 11,777 different kinds of bugs and the greed of the pulp and lumber manufactures to make money at the expense of the general appearance of the landscape."

After classes these made-up students played golf, skied, snowshoed, or participated in various other "athletic sports." The author goes on to write that the forestry students shuttered at the thought of eating only pork and beans daily. Instead they dined on "stuffed deviled crabs, brochettes of lobster, crab meat Morney en coquille, fillet Mignon, sweetbreads broiled Virginia

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style, assorted cakes … café special chocolate … and sherry." As opposed to buying cheap jewelry from woods-peddlers, these forestry students shopped at "only such wangans as are to be found along Fifth avenue and upper Broadway, New York City."¹⁷⁶ The point of woods trips in forestry schools was to have future foresters live in conditions like those of lumberjacks so they would be prepared for work in the field. This newspaper article shows that Northern Forest residents were not convinced that this was what was actually taking place at forestry schools. It was assumed by locals that college elites could never truly live like lumberjacks.

When not in the field, forestry professors put an increased emphasis on engineering and business which was the second way that practical skills were incorporated into the curriculum of foresters. Through "class work, assigned reading, and special theoretical problems" teachers would lay the foundation in the principles of lumbering [and] acquaint the student with the different problems, the general methods of logging, and manufacture, the factors which influence the choice and use of logging methods, the principles underlying the determination of the cost of lumber operation, problems of markets, a determination of stumpage values, the conduct of lumber sales, etc.¹⁷⁷ Economics, industrial organization, and administration became required classes in forestry schools.¹⁷⁸ These classes only accentuated fieldwork however.

The third and final way that foresters emphasized practical training was through the establishment of ranger schools. These one-year full time, or multiple year part time schools were designed to "fill the gap which exists between woodsmen and professional foresters."¹⁷⁹ Standard

¹⁷⁶ "Is it a Feast or a Famine?" Bangor Daily News, (Bangor, Me), 1910.

¹⁷⁷ Graves, "Standardization of Instruction in Forestry," 382.


curriculum in ranger schools included some classes in silviculture and related sciences but the emphasis was on lumbering and construction work. Rangers would be trained in "enough of the theory and practice of forestry to understand and appreciate its aims" but more importantly they would be taught the skills of the logging foremen and learn "the proper attitude towards work." According to Forester Henry Graves, rangers needed the knowledge to "get things done ... clear a trail, string a telephone line, mend a fence, or paint a building ... to turn his hand to many a task requiring mechanical skill. He must be ready and able to take part in fighting a fire or to do other work involving physical labor and endurance. ... There are times when he is virtually a working foreman." Ranger students learned "the how of doing things rather than the why" so that they could provide labor for foresters or lumbermen and supervision for more menial workers. Rangers were made into "better woodsmen [than technical foresters], skilled in the use of the axe, saw, the canoe, the field camp, and [were equipped with] sufficient woods lore" instructor R.T. Gheen wrote. They learned "to profitably use their hands; to become woods-wise, and woods-useful," all essential aspects of what one forester called "woods philosophy." For students who did not grow up around the woods, the schools would also teach "camp outfitting, camp hygiene, cooking, packing tramping" and other basic skills.

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180 Fernow, "The Education of Foresters," 147.
181 Graves and Guise, Forest Education, 49.
182 C.C. Delavan, "Training Given at Ranger School" in Dedication, Conference and History, The New York State Ranger School, 30.
185 Henry Ranger Schools," Forestry Quarterly, X (1912).
Ranger school was assumed to be so rigorous that administrators only allowed specific types of students into the program. Men from the city were not even worth while to train, some foresters argued. Forester Robert Craig Jr. argued that college men and city people simply "could not get the data out of the woods" as efficiently as someone who grew up in a rural area. Ranger students were "a startling contrast" to the typical college student who one forestry professor characterized as a "chalky faced burner of midnight oil." Those who enrolled in ranger schools were "[n]ot flaming youth but glowing youth—ruddy-faced and indefatigable, living for the most part in the open, devotees of the ax, the saw, the transit and the canoe; students to whom snow and sunshine are one, whose playground and workshop is the forest, whose roof is frequently the stars and whose clothes, often ragged, are designed for rough service."

The lumbermen who looked to employ rangers were, according to one ranger school teacher, looking for men "who have had experience in the woods or at the saw mill, who have an aptitude for mechanical work, who [have] been accustomed to meet ... emergencies, and are natural executives." Some of the ranger students were actually former foremen, scalers, surveyors, or sons of lumberjacks, lumbermen, or farmer-loggers. In the East, the best rangers were "the more advanced mountain farmer ... [who was] a lumber jack in the winter." Forester Fred Olmstead

186 Graves and Guise, *Forest Education*, 221.
188 "Forward," *Dedication, Conference and History*, 6.
wrote, "[t]o my mind, there is no better forester than the ranger who has acquired the science and art of forestry." 191

While the experiences of forestry students were satirized by locals, rangers seemed to live in more authentically working-class circumstances. New York State's Ranger School in Wanakena, New York was located deep in the wilderness in "the last Adirondack fastness penetrated by the automobile." 192 In the first years of the New York school in 1912 the students lived with locals or in tents all winter long. They learned much about woodswork by building their own school. 193 They attended classes in an unheated cabin wearing "caps, mittens and mackinaws" and visited camps, mills, and river drives learning practical skills from locals. 194 The work was so rigorous that those not used to the woods quickly dropped out. 195

Foresters and rangers went to the woods to learn wood-skills but also to borrow prestige downwards attempting to become more like the working classes they would help manage once they were employed by the state or by businessmen. This happened while some engineering professionals were using the prestige of their college degrees to distinguish themselves from the mass of unskilled workers they advised and managed. 196 Most of the predominate figures in forestry—Professor Graves, Pitchot, Berhard, and Kniepp—had the goal of training well-balanced foresters who were

191 Fred Olmstead, Comment's on Kneipp's Paper, 556.
192 Dedication, Conference and History, The New York State Ranger School, 6.
196 Oldenziel, Making Technology Masculine, 61.
indistinguishable from the best lumberjacks in physical fitness and skill but also had the advantages of higher education.197

Conclusion

The development of the forestry curriculum paralleled the development of collegiate physical culture in many ways. Forestry curriculum designers found that, in the absence of any other American examples, they needed to borrow directly from workers and move into workers' environments so they could teach students the proper skills and knowledge to complete their work. This included learning proper rural working-class gender performances. Sargent came to the same conclusion, in the absence of other examples, he turned to workers to understand how to build physical fitness. He brought the movements of workers into the gymnasium to impart upon students his idea of proper physical characteristics. This included proper, working-class gender performances.198 In both fields, working-class hegemony became hidden from plane sight, and the fact that teachers had used laborers as examples was lost to the students over time as curriculum became refined and standardized in the 1920s and 1930s.

The idea that working on the land for a wage was the best way to build bodies had one last moment in American society. The New Deal's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) brought an entire generation of young men, nearly 3-million in total, to rural parts of the country both to work for wages during a time of economic hardship but also build their bodies, a process that historian Neil


198 Park, "Biological Thought," 1548-49; Park, "Physiologists, Physicians, and Physical Educators, 1640; Sargent, *Dudley A. Sargent*, 175.
Maher called "human conservation." Drawing on the example of the Boy Scouts and other boys work programs the CCC's mostly urban, young, participants planted 2.3-billion trees and put a total of 4.5-billion hours of work into the American landscape in various improvement projects. The CCC proved that the nation, and the individual man, could be improved by mixing labor with land, a consistent theme within ideals of proper American masculinity since the birth of the Republic.\textsuperscript{199}

By the time of the CCC, working on the land was no longer seen as the most practical or popular way of building proper masculine bodies. Sports and gymnasiums became more realistic methods. Sandow’s succession over Cyr in American popular culture represents this subtle transition away from explicit working-class hegemony. Sandow never used work in nature to improve his body, instead he used "ropes, swings, balance board, and ladders [in] the place of trees and hay lofts."\textsuperscript{200} Sandow proved that the guiding force of industrial modernity that so many anti-moderns believed were making Americans weak, science and technology, could be used to resist the degrading effects of industrial modernity. To build health, men no longer had to "take ship for distant lands or hark back to savagery."\textsuperscript{201} Instead they could use modern gyms and athletic training facilities that were right in their cities to accomplish the same results.

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Sandow never faced the titanic lumberjack Cyr in direct competition. After seeing the Canadian perform in Montreal in 1891 Sandow admitted he could not best Cyr’s exemplar working-


\textsuperscript{200} Sargent, \textit{Dudley A. Sargent}, 153.

The body and power that Cyr represented, one built by work in the wild, faded but was never conquered. The rural worker still had an important place in the imagination of antimodernists even as Sandow rose to fame.

By 1896 Cyr had partially retired from public strongman competitions, although he did not relinquish his title as the world's strongest man until 1906. Years of touring and the neglect of vigorous work on the farm and in the forest had made him obese. Like other strongmen before Sandow, Cyr believed the more he ate the stronger he was. He took pride in the pounds of meat he would consume during his four daily meals, a dietary schedule he likely borrowed from lumberjacks in Québec who were eating and burning 6,000 or 8,000 calories a day as they worked. Cyr would gather with his friends Cure Labelle and the boxer John Sullivan and the three would consume vast amounts of food and alcohol in patterns of consumption that resembled the spending spree. While touring England Cyr reportedly ate twenty pounds of meat in one meal, among other dishes. In another instance, he and his apprentice Horace Barre supposedly finished an entire twenty-two pound roasted suckling pig. Sullivan's hedonism was similarly grand and by his last fights the effects of his consumption patterns manifested in his "flabby" physique. James J. Corbett,


204 Weider, The Strongest Man in History, 42.

205 Weider, The Strongest Man in History, 86.


207 Weider, The Strongest Man in History, 6, 76-77, 80.
a boxer who relied on precision and science, not untamed working-class power, defeated a larger but noticeably less fit Sullivan in New Orleans around the same time that Cyr's fame was declining.²⁸⁸

By 1904 Cyr's health began to fail. He had chronic nephritis, and had regulated himself to a strict diet of milk and yogurt that he maintained for twelve years. Cyr died on November 10, 1912 at forty-nine years of age from asthma, heart problems, and kidney disease, a victim of the unhealthy unscientific working-class habits he had displayed so proudly for two decades.²⁹⁹ Cyr's fame faded as did the idea that work in nature was the only way to build ideal bodies. Working-class hegemony was never truly extinguished, however, it was just hidden within outdoor leisure activities, college curriculum, and ritual.


Chapter 7- The Institutionalization of the Working-class Body, Figures

Figure 1.

Figure 2.


Figure 3.

Figure 4.


Figure 5.

Figure 6.


Figure 7.


Figure 12.


Figure 13.

Figure 14.

Epilogue

Most summers when I was a kid, my family's 1986 Chrysler LeBaron drove past a twelve-foot-tall wooden lumberjack statue on our way to our vacation home in Tupper Lake, New York (Figure 1). As we drove from our urban New York home into the heart of the Adirondack State Park the roads became narrow and the smell of wood smoke wafted through the car vents. At our family camp, we made camp fires, swam in the lake, and hiked up mountain trails that revealed spectacular views of a great forest dotted with little communities. More than these activities, however, what stood out to me about these trips as a child was the feeling of a new environment. Entering the forest was like stepping back in time.

Along with the changes in the environment, my family witnessed changes in the communities and the people we encountered as we traveled from city to forest. As we drove past the lumberjack statue we could also see the old Oval Wood Dish Company factory crumbling and in disrepair. Closed since 1964, it was once a hub of manufacturing that transformed the vast forest resources into disposable wooden plates, knives and forks.¹ To feed its machines, and the buzzing sawmills all over the Adirondacks, entire communities had been mobilized to house, feed, and entertain loggers and care for their animals.

The Oval Wood Dish Company factory's disrepair signified larger problems in the regional economy. Even as a child, the poverty of Tupper Lake was apparent. The citizens of the village did not live in rustic cabins like our summer home, but in small houses and trailers. The lack of street lights, plumbing, and a hospital, quaint features for vacationers, were signs of a depressed rural economy. Currently only four of New York’s Northern Forest counties have a poverty rate below 15% and Franklin County, where Tupper Lake is located, is the fourth poorest county in the state.

¹ Louis J. Simmons, Mostly Spruce and Hemlock, (Saranac Lake, N.Y.: Hungry Bear Publishing, 1979) 159.
with about one and five residents considered impoverished (Table 1). The food pantry in Tupper Lake feeds 100 of the 998 families in town. In the Northern Forest, three fourths of the counties have fewer hospitals than the national average.\(^2\) I cherish the memories of my summer vacations, but these trips were also early lessons in rural poverty and inequality.

The economic problems facing many Northern Forest communities are the same problems facing much of rural America. Northern Forest counties, like other rural places, have lower rates of educational attainment, more low paying jobs, more idle teens, a smaller middle-class, higher poverty rates, and lower per-capita income while suicide rates and preventable deaths are higher when compared to urban areas.\(^3\) In much of the Northern Forest, manufacturing jobs are plummeting and there is a growing but low paying service sector (Figure 5 and 6).\(^4\)

The poverty and forest landscape of Tupper Lake were juxtaposed in my mind with the imposing lumberjack statue. The lumberjack figure and references to it were found all over Tupper Lake. The Lumberjack Inn on Main street served up pancakes to hungry vacationers, the local book shops sell books with tales of historical adventures in the old camps, the high school has the lumberjack as its mascot, tourists can buy lumberjack tee-shirts at the local gas stations, and every summer there is a Woodsmen's Day festival which draws large crowds. My great grandparents were lumberjacks, I was told, who came to America from Québec in the 1920s, a common family history for many Tupper Lake natives. For nearly 100 years forest product manufacturing was "a mainstay"


\(^4\) The Carsey Institute, "Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative," 29.
of the Adirondack economy that brought money and people to the region.\textsuperscript{5} By the 1930s the wood products industry in Tupper Lake was in decline. In the 1950s my grandparents moved downstate for jobs, becoming part of a trend of youth outmigration that had been hampering economic progress in the area since the late nineteenth century and continues today (Figure 2).\textsuperscript{6}

The memory of commodity production and manufacturing conjures a sense of dignity and pride for people in many parts of the rural United States, the Northern Forest included. Reflecting on the height of the forest products industry, one Northern Forest denizen wrote around 2001 that "[t]he [area] is defined by hard work and commonality. Here, and north of us, the whole lifestyle, ecosystem—they're hard working folks."\textsuperscript{7} Nostalgia for work in nature is powerful. Speaking about economic development in Maine in 2015 governor Paul LePage said that "Maine has had a work ethic for hundreds of years. And while I would be the first to admit it's not as good as it was 150 years ago, it's still the best in America."\textsuperscript{8} Another Northern Forest inhabitant added "cutting trees is part of the process" of identity formation in the area.\textsuperscript{9} One of the purposes of this dissertation has been to explain the process of regional identity formation and the value that this identity had. Using that method, I hope to tell the story of the development of industrial capitalism in the Northern Forest and reveal the political inclinations of rural workers in America. Identity formation is a subtle and complex process that probably deserves another 500 pages to describe fully.

\textsuperscript{5} Northern Forest Center, \textit{Northern Forest Wealth Index: Exploring a Deeper Meaning of Wealth}, (Concord, NH: Northern Forest Center, 2000) 30.

\textsuperscript{6} Jerry and Keal, \textit{The Adirondack Atlas}, 94-95, 106, 114-115; Simmons, \textit{Mostly Spruce and Hemlock}, 404.

\textsuperscript{7} Laura E. Tam and Andrea Bruce Woodall, \textit{At Home in the Northern Forest: Reflections on a Region's Identity}, (Concord, NH: Northern Forest Center, 2001) 67.


\textsuperscript{9} Tam and Woodall, \textit{At Home in the Northern Forest}, 67.
Though forest products are still an important part of the Northern Forest economy today, jobs in Tupper Lake, like most of the Northern Forest, increasingly come from the government and from the service sector. Most of those services are for visiting tourists and owners of vacation homes. This has resulted in a change in regional identity. "I don't know if [this transition is] necessarily a good thing," a logging business owner in New York commented, "[w]aitress don't make as much as loggers, [or] truck drivers. A growing service industry may mean more jobs, but the quality of pay, and seasonality is much worse." (Figure 3). What type of regional identity could be formed around the service industry? Would it be as culturally influential as the lumberjack identity was? Will statues be erected to memorialize these service workers? Despite how deserving these service workers are of praise, I doubt they will be honored in the same way that the lumberjack was.

As I played with the dull fire wood axe we had at my Tupper Lake camp, I used to wonder what happened to the lumberjacks. The trees were still here, but I saw no signs of cutting. Across the street from my camp was a dense forest of mixed second growth where there were no houses, camps, or even trails. This was privately owned land, part of the partnership between citizen landholders and the state government that make the Adirondacks unique. Even though the land was in their hands, local communities preserved the forests instead of putting them to work, instead of reaping from it the "Cheap Nature" that was growing there every year. Industrial forest products

10In the 1980s in all of Northern New England and New York about 15% of the "total direct indirect, and induced jobs [were] attributed to… forest products." Woodwork and lumber mills provide between 20% and 65% of the jobs in manufacturing and the industry employs about 270,000 giving out $2.4-million in direct payroll. Jobs in the wood products industries are some of the best paying. Harper, Falk, and Rankin, The Northern Forest Lands Study, 36; Lloyd C. Irland, The Northeast's Changing Forests, (Petersham, Mass: Distributed by Harvard University Press for Harvard Forest, 1999) 3, 270; "The forest product industries are much more important to the Northern Forest economy than they are to the overall economy of New England and New York." Northern Forest Center, Northern Forest Wealth Index, 36.

11Northern Forest Center, Northern Forest Wealth Index, 28, 31; Jerry and Keal, The Adirondack Atlas, 126.

12Tam and Woodall, At Home in the Northern Forest, 83; Journalist Chris Arnade came to a similar conclusion about the emotional and personal impact of deindustrialization in his very recent tour around rural America. See his Pride and Poverty in America series in The Guardian, particularly Chris Arnade, "Pride and pain in Trump country: 'We all grew up poor, but we had a community,'" The Guardian, September 7, 2016, accessed October 26, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/sep/07/kentucky-trump-obama-unemployment-drugs.
production on most public lands in the Adirondacks is forbidden and cutting on private land is limited in some instances. There was also serious protest in 2014 when plans were announced to develop 6,000 acres of land for a ski area in Tupper Lake. Many locals wanted the land to remain undisturbed, even though the ski area would bring good paying winter jobs (Figure 4). The passion that locals had for preservation extends far back in history. In 1896 when New Yorkers voted for an amendment that would permit forest products production on state lands, every county in the Adirondacks rejected it.

The passion that locals had for preservation extends far back in history. In 1896 when New Yorkers voted for an amendment that would permit forest products production on state lands, every county in the Adirondacks rejected it. One reason that the lack of industry in the region was partially responsible for the poverty that was now as much a feature of the landscape as the trees, lakes, and mountains. In 2012 Bill Towers, head of the Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages suggested that communities like Tupper Lake are in risk of disappearing without more private investment. In the Adirondacks, 80% of the land is forest cover with about 4,000 board feet of standing saw timber per acre. The forest growth rate is more than twice the removal rate. In the Northern Forest about 75% of the land, or more than 23-million acres, is timberland, capable of producing merchantable saw logs, and 84% of the area is privately owned. Still, the mills are shutting down rapidly, devastating entire communities. When I was researching and writing this dissertation in Maine, the news regularly reported on new mills

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15 Northern Forest Center, *Northern Forest Wealth Index*, 44-45.

Environmental humanist Stephanie Kaza wrote that "[t]o accept … [a complex, healthy forest ecosystem] … is to recognize the breadth and depth of people's suffering." The beautiful forests of the Adirondacks exist at the expense of the local population.

Despite popular conceptions that rural people maintain the American status quo and build consensus, rural Americans have historically expressed their grievances in radical, sometimes extra-legal ways. The Paxton Boys, the Whiskey Rebels, the Industrial Workers of the World and, most recently, supporters of trespassing cattleman Cliven Bundy and the related protesters at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Oregon, are a few examples among dozens of others. Catherine M. Stock has categorized these reoccurring actions as "rural producer radicalism." With the expansion of the powers of the State after the Civil War, disadvantaged rural populations in America often attempted to find solutions to their problems by edging into Federal politics. The clearest example is the Populist movement, a massive, radical rural upheaval. Northern Forest communities have never sought alliances with federal government powers, in fact they are typically skeptical of them. These citizens have "a strong sense of independence, and this often manifest itself in a desire to limit the role of the federal government in the region." In fact, while researching for this dissertation I have seen several Confederate flags flying in isolated parts of upstate New York, New Hampshire, and Maine symbolizing some residents' resentment towards

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government interference. There have also been no largescale extra-legal movements voicing the concerns of workers and small producers in the Northern Forest.

Northern Forest residents defy all models of how disempowered people have historically tended to voice their grievances. These communities are dying quietly with little protest, and, from the perspective of classical economists, they have been complicit in their own disempowerment. Despite the problems facing the Northern Forest, the lumberjack, this symbol of past industrial prosperity, is popular throughout the region. I saw lumberjack statues like the one in Tupper Lake in the town of Mexico, Maine, two in Bangor and another next to a lumber dealer in New Hampshire, denoting regional pride of a bygone era.

Given the economic decline in the Northern Forest, the residents’ predisposition towards preservation, their independent political inclination, and lack of extra-legal protest, the pride Northern Forest communities have in the lumberjack figure is confusing. It represents the memory of forest products production and economic prosperity, but also the destruction of the landscapes that locals clearly valued. Why have Northern Forest people seemingly not had their own economic interests in mind? Why did they not fix their problems by voting or somehow advocating for the changes they needed to become more economically prosperous? Why hadn’t unions formed that would have given woodworkers and small producers a voice in how their land and labor was used? Why had they let their landscapes become places of leisure for outsiders rather than places of work for permanent residents? Why is wealth left locked up in the land and why does the lumberjack remain a symbol of past work in the wilderness rather than a current feature of the landscape? These types of questions provoked a congressional investigation into the Northern Forest in 1990.

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Twenty-seven years later these issues have not been solved.\textsuperscript{22} This dissertation is a history of the development of capitalism in this part of rural America that attempts to answer the questions posed directly above. Proving why something did not happen is not a fruitful catalyst for historical investigation, so instead of approaching the history of forest products production from a specific perspective, I intentionally made the investigation broad, exploring the history of capitalism and the lives of workers in the region, letting the evidence expose answers to some of the questions outlined above.

**Memory and Industry**

"Forging Titans" has traced the development of the forest products worker and small producer from 1850, up through the creation of the lumberjack class, and the subsequent rise of working-class hegemony to show how this class of workers became a significant symbolic figure of American industry and masculinity. This narrative ends before 1950, when the work of the lumberjack fundamentally changed due to the widespread implementation of gas-powered engines. The chainsaw de-skilled and reduced the workforce, while the bull dozer, truck, and trailer replaced horses and made camps and river drives inefficient.

The widespread implementation of gas engines also represented a major change in the type of Cheap Nature used to get logs out of the forest. Before 1950, the industry was largely reliant on the built environment of the lumber camp workscape, the weather, and the muscle of men and animals for power. The new gas-powered labor process along with the corporatization of the woods described by Eckstrom, was viewed by the American public and Northern Forest communities as a less heroic type of labor process and organizational arrangement than those of the past. Gas power

and corporate control destroyed the imagined connection that the logger had to the authentic masculinity of white frontiersmen that Americans valued so much.

Locals with connections to the industry mourned the changes that gas power and corporate control brought to the industry because to them it meant the loss of the lumberjack identity. "Adirondack lumbering has lost its isolation, its rigors, its dangers and its aura of romance," one local historian wrote, "[t]he lumberjack has gained in health, in safety of life and limb and in steady employment. He has become respectable and commonplace." Eckstorm and a few other observers of the industry noticed these changes as early as 1904 when they complained of the increasingly corporate nature of forest products production.

Currently, when Northern Forest communities celebrate the memory of the lumberjack they celebrate this technologically primitive, pre-corporate lumberjack, one who worked with the aid of the weather, simple machines, wood, and muscle power. Locals reenact these past workplace activities in woodsmen days and lumberjack competitions to commemorate the past. This specific idea of the lumberjack is incorporated into local narratives, solidifying local identities and the lumberjack symbolism.

Locals hold these narratives in high regard and adhere to their romantic telling of the past. For example, on September 2nd, 2010 in Tupper Lake the local library held a "reading marathon" of


the local history book *Mostly Spruce and Hemlock* by Louis Simmons, a popular local history about the village. According to the *Adirondack Daily Enterprise*, the "reading event … [featured] 76 people reading 461 pages for 19 hours" to "promote reading and local literature."26 Dozens of other local histories reinforce the narrative of the heroic lumberjack, the same figure that Roosevelt, Wyckoff, and Eckstrom, visited and learned from.

When professional historians encounter these romanticized local histories, they are quick to dismiss them even though these histories reveal how antimodernist ideas of masculinity were reabsorbed into the local forest products producing communities that birthed them. For example, Vernon Jensen, in his 1945 *Lumber and Labor*, explains that many popular histories of lumberjacks defer "to the romantic and [overplay] the sensation."27 Writing about Lake State lumberjacks Robert C. Nesbit wrote that the work did not:

require a special breed of men. This is a delusion of memorialists who have been told they led exciting lives in a setting which is forever gone, or of romantics, regional authors, and eager folklorists. It is the province today of advertising agencies pushing fabricated pancake mix and imitation maple syrup. They should be condemned to a season in a logging camp of the 1870s.28

The many authors who criticize local history are not willing to historicize the romanticization presented in local narratives nor question what effect these narratives had on defunct lumbering

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communities. The creation of these narratives is another result of the rise and fall of industrial capitalism in rural America. They are just as relevant to the history of the forest products industry as any other aspect of the region's history. For these reasons, this dissertation has always cautiously considered local history both for the insights they provide into the history of commodity production and for what they reveal about the more recent history of memory and identity formation.

Avoiding local history when conducting a social historical investigation is not advisable. For example, when I asked one award-winning historian of consumption in rural North America about their thoughts on the spending spree—a favorite topic of local historians—I was told that they knew of no work on the subject that did "not perpetuate a stereotype … [and that] it has yet to be proven that loggers went on wild spending sprees." Giving local history the currency it deserves, while also using more conventional sources, I found that the spending sprees not only happened but that they were crucial to class formation and they helped to perpetuate the appropriation of workers' bodies as "Cheap Nature," as I showed in chapter four. These wild expressions of spending and passion in Northern Forest towns affected ideas of masculinity among Gilded Age and Progressive Era antimodernist who saw spectacles of hedonism among lumberjacks as body love; authentically and naturally masculine, a subject I explore in chapter six. Finally, Northern Forest towns tout the rowdiness of the lumberjacks in statues, lumberjack competitions, local history books, and in other aspects of their tourism industry because the lumberjack had profound cultural and economic significance in modern America.

As a child I was also drawn to the Northern Forest because of its connection to lumberjack symbolism just as a young President Roosevelt was. Both myself and Roosevelt felt nostalgia for past deeds of white men in the woods. We both understood the lumberjack as part of the wilderness, and that these workers were manly because of their affinity with the wild. Tourist are drawn to the masculine lumberjack and the affinity that this class had with nature. Local
communities now profit from the allure of the lumberjack which brings spending vacationers to the region. Every chapter of this dissertation speaks to these three levels of historical analysis: the social history of rural producers, how lumberjacks were interpreted by elites in the form of working-class hegemony, and how Northern Forest communities valued the memory of the industry including the lumberjack (though the latter type of analysis is largely hidden in the footnotes).

* * *

When I look at the Tupper Lake lumberjack statue today, it is clear that it never represented worker solidarity or the "heroic artisan" like many other statues commemorating workers do. Instead, ironic as it may seem, these lumberjack statues represent nature and people's connection with their landscape. To understand the statue and its connection to the Northern Forest, it helps to understand what Adirondack historian Philip G. Terrie wrote about landscapes:

> People tell stories about the land that reflects their needs. They project their needs onto the land in the stories they tell about it. They define—in a sense, create—the land in their stories. These stories either achieve currency in the popular imagination or they fail to do so … By 'story' I do not mean fiction; I mean widely shared understanding about the land's meaning deriving from accounts of actual encounters with the land.²⁹

My dissertation shows that Terrie's analysis is correct, but needs to be extended further. The relationship between land and people is symbiotic. Landscapes are defined by people and economic systems, but people also become defined by or even absorbed into their landscapes in the process of working on it. Over time, people can become Nature (or Cheap Nature), but they can also become memories and narratives that are engrained in landscapes. These complex symbiotic relationships between people and the land change over time, and how they are interpreted change as well.

The supposedly masculine performances of the rural working-class which antimodernist praised were actually responses to capitalism's intrusion on the Northern Forest landscape. Up until the 1950s, rural working-class life was a struggle for survival in a place where resources were scares and the economy was in a slow steady depression. Characteristics of masculinity were formed through attempts on the part of smallholding, yeomen farmer-loggers to maintain control of production by contracting as opposed to wage working and by increasing the speed and efficiency of production without the implementation of high cost capital goods. Masculine gender performances were also shaped by the work culture that formed because of the specific mode of production found in the Northern Forest. An example of these gender performances were workers' responses to the food wage system, and the spatiality of production and consumption. These factors of survival and production made workers and contractors into Cheap Nature that produced logs at cost, sustaining the industry by appropriating workers' bodies.

Industrialization in the hinterland was directly juxtaposed by the rise of the new urban corporate class who no longer had to think about survival daily. In self-reflective anxiousness, antimodernist looked to the built environment of the working forest and at the bodies of working lumberjacks for a solution to overcivilization. Antimodernist sought to make their own bodies into Cheap Nature for the sake of their own health. Classifying the racial characteristics of rural workers as purely white frontiersmen, or half-wild Canadian, was an important part of affixing the cultural gaze onto these rural workers. The idea of the manly lumberjack and his connection to the land became so ingrained in modern American culture that it became valuable to Northern Forest communities after the industry declined in economic importance. Both rural working-class masculinity and the projection of it as working-class hegemony, were deeply affected by the specific social/economic/cultural forces that were conjured by the specific type of capitalism that developed in the hinterland.
This dissertation has argued that the emerging rural proletariat in the Northern Forest became national models of masculinity because they represented a connection to work and wilderness that was valorized in urban, corporate America post-1900. Because capitalism worked by exploiting Cheap Nature, lumberjacks themselves—their organizational methods, their environment, their labor process, their metabolism, and their identity—were interpreted as parts of nature. Important and influential sections of the American population desired to be part of nature in the way that lumberjacks were imagined to be.

Working in the wilds of the Northern Forest bestowed an important reputation on rural workers. Through working-class hegemony, this reputation was incorporated into American middle class culture. Northern Forest communities now commemorate the lumberjack identity, an identity created largely by antimodernists, and value the memory of work in their wild landscapes. The memory of a connection to the land through work has value in these communities. The Northern Forest Wealth Index Steering Committee, a group who is exploring ways to preserve the environment and improve the economy in the area, included "personal connection with the landscape" as an indicator of wealth but found that "it would be impossible to quantify the strength or extend of people's relations with the Northern Forest landscape because those connections are so intensely personal." This type of wealth cannot be understood through traditional economic analyses of costs and benefits; supply and demand. These benefits, like much of nature, exist outside the cash nexus. In fact, many aspects of capitalism cannot be understood through studying the cash nexus or exchange values.

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30 Northern Forest Center, *Northern Forest Wealth Index*, 23.

31 For example, Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman find that a simple equation can explain why people move from farm to city or vasa: \( W_u - W_r = C_u - C_r \), where \( W_u \) is the annual urban wage … \( W_r \) is the amount of rural earnings, and \( C_u \) and \( C_r \) are the living cost in city and country. These price factors are obviously not the only factors people considered when deciding if they should move out of a rural area. Carville Earle and Ronald Hoffman, "The Industrial Revolution as a Response to Cheap Labor and
People choose to live in the Northern Forest and "accept lower wages, fewer jobs and limited amenities" because of the connections they have to their land and their regional history. These connections began to form as early as the 1880s and helped to quell labor unrest.\textsuperscript{32} As a symbol, the lumberjack exemplifies these connections. Eckstorm's refusal to separate the natural from the human resonated in Northern Forest communities. They see the lumberjack as part of the landscape, part of their nature.

This concluding chapter has shown that rural working-class people were and, are now, deeply affected by the intersections between capitalism, the environment, and gender identities. These connections may have quieted labor unrest even if working conditions were abysmal. The methods of historical investigation that focus on identity formation need not be cast aside in historian’s new pursuit of the history of capitalism. In fact, identity formation is one of the most important effects that capitalism has on land and people.

Historian Hal Barron wrote that the experiences of those Americans who lived in settled rural areas like New England and New York was much more representative of the American experience than life in bustling, volatile, frontier zones or large cities where historical attention has traditionally been focused.\textsuperscript{33} The processes that this dissertation describes—the rise of capitalism in a landscape and the interaction between land and capitalism that makes valuable identities—happened in similar ways in thousands of different landscapes across the United States. As frontiers closed, the landscape homogenized and became less productive, and the memory of work on the land gained currency. Identity formation might be capitalism’s most enduring and important effect on the land.

\textsuperscript{32} Harper, Falk, and Rankin, \textit{The Northern Forest Lands Study}, 37.

Epilogue, Figures

Figure 1. Bill, "From Tupper Lake to Long Lake," *Windswept Adventure* (blog), accessed January 23, 2015, http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_I3fMEVHcRE/TPokxyB60DI/AAAAAAAAlxw/CqVo-KwHgCM/s1600/IMG_7891.jpg.
Table 1.

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Key:
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Figure 4.


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Vita

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**ACADEMIC POSITION**

2009-Present  Graduate Teaching Assistant (currently away from campus on Fellowship),
Department of History, Maxwell School at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

**EDUCATION**

Present  Ph. D. candidate, degree expected in August 2017, History, Syracuse
University
  
  Dissertation: "Forging Titans: The Rise of Industrial Capitalism in the
Northern Forest, 1850-1950"
  Advisor: Andrew W. Cohen
  Distinctions: Passed oral examinations with distinction
  Exam Field, Major: "Modern US History"
  Exam Field, Minor: "Early American History," "Women, Gender and
  Sexuality"

2012  M. Phil. US History Syracuse University (December)

2012  M.A., US History, Syracuse University (May)

2008  B.A., History, Syracuse University (May)
  Distinctions: Magna cum laude
  Honors Thesis: “Old-Time Adirondack Lumberjacks: A Study of Their
  Lifestyle and How It Disappeared”

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Nineteenth and twentieth century US history; history of capitalism; labor history; environmental
history; gender history.

**GRANTS, AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS**
2015  World Wood Day Foundation research grant, sponsored by the International Wood Culture Society, $12,000

2014  Hotchkiss/Ketcham Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, $17,000

2014  Moynihan Challenge Research Grant, Maxwell School, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, $3,000

2014  The Alfred D. Chandler Jr. Travel Fellowship, Harvard Business School, Cambridge, MA, $1,500

2013  Alfred D. Bell, Jr., Travel Grant, the Forest History Society, Durham, NC, $950

2013  Nelson Blake Prize, to support research by a highly promising graduate student, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, $150

2013  Syracuse University Graduate Student Organization Research Travel Grant, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, $500

2012  Weston A. Cate, Jr. Fellowship, Vermont Historical Society, Barre, VT, $750

2012  The Anna K. and Mary E. Cunningham Research Residencies in New York State History and Culture, New York State Library, Albany, NY, $1,000

2012  New England Regional Fellowship Consortium, managed by the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA, $5,000

2009-2014  Graduate Teaching Assistantship, Department of History, $17,000

2011-2014  Maxwell School Roscoe-Martin Research Fund Award, Maxwell School at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, $1000

2011-2016  Dean’s Summer Research Grant, Maxwell School at Syracuse University Syracuse, NY, $2,000

2007  Wortman-Elman Research Fellowship, Department of History, Maxwell School at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, $500
PUBLICATIONS


INVITED PRESENTATIONS


2016  "Industrial Capitalism and the Wooden World of the Northern Forest", World Wood Day Symposium, Nepal Academy, Kathmandu, Nepal (March)

2015  Labor Camp Workshop: A Special Event Organized by the Geography Department at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY (October)

2013  "Send Immediately Something for Us to Eat...’: Hunger and Work in Northern Maine in the Mid-nineteenth Century," Maine Historians Forum, Maine Historical Society, Portland Maine (August)

2013  "From Small Ale to Big Lager: Changing the American Palate, 1780-1960, Syracuse: A Case Study," Annual Fundraiser of the Dewitt Community Library (May)

2012  “Hobo-sexuality in the Hinterland,” Syracuse University, HST 389 “L.G.B.T. Experience in American History” with Professor Susan Branson (February)
PRESENTATIONS

2016
"The Winter Workscape: Weather and the Meaning of Industrial Capitalism in the Northern Forest, 1900-1950," Histories of Capitalism v2.0, Cornell University (October)

2014

2014

2012
“Forging Proper Men: Food, the Body, and Hegemonic Masculinity in the Working Forests of America, 1880-1920," Presented at Duke University Graduate Student History Conference “(Un)Bound Worlds” (March)

2012

2012
“Muscular Christianity and the Institutionalization of the Working Class Body at Cornell University: 1886-1916,” University of Rochester Graduate History Conference “Image, Truth, and Distortion” (February)

2011
“The Institutionalization of the Working Class Body at Cornell University, 1886-1916.” Thirty-Seventh Annual Great Lakes History Conference “Education and Society” (October)

2011

TEACHING

Accreditations
2015 Certification in University Teaching, jointly awarded by the History Department and the Graduate School's Future Professoriate Program at Syracuse University for excellence and experience in teaching at the university level.

**Instructor of Record**

2017 U.S. Labor History. Cornell University, Industrial Labor Relations School's Pre-Freshmen Summer Program.

2014 HST 201 Slaves, Lumberjacks, and Hobos: Work in 19th Century America. I was awarded the responsibility of teaching a research seminar of my own design. Syracuse University.

**Graduate Student Instructor**

2013 HST 386 US Crime and Society with Professor Andrew Cohen. My responsibility was to grade assignments. Syracuse University.

2013 HST 102 American History since 1865 with Professor Andrew Cohen. My responsibilities were to lead discussion sections and grade assignments. Syracuse University.

2012 HST 101 American History to 1865 with Professor Roger Sharp. My responsibilities were to lead discussion sections and grade assignments. Syracuse University.

2012 HST/QSX 389 LGBT Experience in American History with Professor Susan Branson. My responsibility was to grade assignments and give a guest lecture. Syracuse University.

2011 HST 386 US Crime and Society with Professor Andrew Cohen. My responsibility was to grade assignments. Syracuse University.

2011 HST 102 American History since 1865 with Professor Mark Schmeller. My responsibilities were to lead discussion sections and grade assignments. Syracuse University.

2010 HST 101 American History to 1865 with Professor Roger Sharp. My responsibilities were to lead discussion sections and grade assignments. Syracuse University.
2010  HST 102 American History since 1865 with Professor Andrew Cohen. My responsibilities were to lead discussion sections and grade assignments. Syracuse University.

2009  HST 222 History of American Sexuality with Professor Carol Faulkner. My responsibility was to grade assignments. Syracuse University.

Secondary School

2015  Portland City School District (ME). District wide substitute teacher. I was on call daily to teach wherever I was needed but I focused on high school.

2008-2009  Syracuse City School District. District wide substitute teacher. I was on call daily to teach wherever I was needed but I focused on high school.

Professional Affiliations

2014-present  American Historical Association, Member

2013-present  American Society for Environmental History, Member

Service to the Profession and Community

2014  Conference Organizer for "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Journeys of Belonging and Exclusions," Syracuse University Graduate Student Conference (March)

2013  Panel Chair and Conference Organizer for "Labor Histories Across Time And Space," panel at the Syracuse University Graduate Student Conference "Violence & Resistance" (March)

2012  Graduate Student Representative on Faculty Tenure Committee, Syracuse, University

2011  Historian Advisor to the Erie Canal Museum, Syracuse, NY

2011-2015  Future Professoriate Program, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY

2011-2013  History Department Representative to the Maxwell School, Syracuse, NY

2005  Research Volunteer for the Onondaga Historical Association, Syracuse, NY
REFERENCES

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05/5/2017