

LOGGING

Jack Ruohonen's history document adds this information: Lumbering was started right at the lake shore so that it was easy to load the lumber onto the boats and transfer them to Lake Linden, then by railroad up to the mine. At that time boilers were fired by wood, later by coal.

A Daily Mining Gazette article on the 100-year anniversary of Oskar states that 1890 to 1895 was the highest volume of logging. They (Eliassen and Burkman) cut 510 acres for lumber, railroad ties, and cordwood. A few men, several horses and oxen did the lumbering.

Henry, son to early settler Aleksi Garnell, shares on his 1977 WMPL Heritage line interview: Logging -Making cordwood, railroad ties, charcoal, and lumber employed nearly 500 people and 100 horses.

According to a book Michigan Name Places: Jaakko (Jacob) Ojanpera was a Finnish timber man contractor in Oskar from 1875 to 1883 when he moved to Cokato, Minnesota.

An unauthored document states Ojanpera was born in Finland in 1838 and arrived in the Copper Country in 1871. (Age 33) Oscar Eliassen was born in Finland in 1842. He immigrated to the Copper Country in 1872. (Age 34)

According to the book History of Finns: About 1883 Ojanpera sold his home and business to Oscar Eliassen and moved to Cokato MN. Hendrickson had left before.

Unauthored document says: Ojanpera sold his house and business interest to Eliassen and farmed until his death in Cokato in 1919. (Age 80)

Cokato MN museum tells Barb Koski this about Ojanpera from a document The Finns in Cokato: Jakob Ojanpera was born August 6, 1838, son of Sakari Ojanpera and Perda Pere in Kalajoki Finland. He went to Norway in 1867 (age 29) and worked in the Fishing Industry. He came to America in 1870 (age 32) and to Cokato. He and an Eliassen (Oskar) and another Finn (Sakari Hendrickson) bought a woods in Upper Michigan (first named Ojanpera and later Oskar) and went into the lumber business. There was a small settlement named for him there at that time. In 1883 (age 45) he sold out to Eliassen and moved back to Cokato and bought 300 acres. He had a large farm with a fine dairy. The Finnish Agricultural Agent Edward Bjorkenheim, Count of Mannerheim, came from Finland just to see his farm. He was very much interested in public education and the preservation of the Finnish heritage. He died August 21, 1919 (age 81). He married Emelia Halonen who was born March 10, 1842 in Sodankyla. She came to America in 1871. They married in Calumet MI. I suspect this was his second marriage as the 1885 census lists a son Gustaf born 1868 in Finland who can not be Emilia's child. She did have John 1874 in MI, Gemina 1877 in MI, Isaac 1880 in MI, Jalmar 1882 in Michigan and Jeely in 1886 in MN. She died in the 1930's.

(The only items the museum could find was land owner Esais Eliason aka Kostamo from Kemijarvi Finland b. 8-28-1845 and wife Greta b. 1859 d. 9-16-1938. Son, John Oskar was born 1-9-1883 and died 12-3-1932 on the east side of Ap. Luth. Church.. no records of Oscar Eliassen)

Jack Ruohonen in his history of Oskar document shares: "As I have mentioned earlier, Ojanpera sold his portion of the business to Eliassen who enlarged it, adding manpower. These families or single men recently arrived from Finland for whom he built dwellings around the lumbering areas. There were over 60 horses in the enterprise at one time.

At one time he had about 90 horses, also a railroad into the woods (Barb's note.. the Ruohonen Road in Oskar back to Bohjanen's was one railroad grade) from which an engine hauled a load of firewood directly to the ship that took it to Lake Linden and by rail up to the mines. The railroad cars were set in motion with horsepower but then they went by themselves down the long downgrade. One big roan named "Engine Tom" was used.

As the firewood demand increased an engine was installed that brought the wood down.

Then a big sawmill was built right on Portage Lake near the community of Oskar. There were also 3 large charcoal kilns across from the Oskar Cemetery. (These kilns were Eliassen's... Burkman's were down the today Ruohonen road).

Between 1890 and 1895 the operation was at the largest because they had a contract for several tens of thousands of cords of wood as well there was the large sawmill which produced all the lumber needed in construction. They had the necessary equipment - planes etc. There were 500 log cutters, laborers, and teamsters.

Eliassen also had a large lake schooner that took the logs to Lake Linden.

At the edge of the settlement were a large dock and a 100 foot long warehouse for the supplies that Eliassen brought in to supply his store. (This is the area of Noni Ruohonen property). His store (near his home) had everything from pocket watches to men's suits. (His home is David Jukari's today. Barb thinks the home of Otto Saterstat was the store).

And there were other shops as well such as a tannery for preparing skins and two shoemaker shops that prepared a variety of footwear but mostly shoe packs.

One fall a ship brought in 500 barrels of salt, and by the next summer everything including meat was gone. (Used by the families).

As lumbering decreased large farms appeared along with all kinds of businesses such as stores, garages, and gasoline stations. Also there is a liquor store worthy of mention."

Richard Garnell document shares: "A narrow gauge railroad was constructed to bring logs from forest to near shore. A horse named Tomi started cars moving, and then gravity rolled down the incline. Horses pulled the cars back up the hill. Later the horses were replaced with steam locomotives. Later Oscar Eliassen had his own steamer to transport cordwood to Lake Linden.

Oscar Eliassen became the biggest lumberman in a wide area working 100 men and 60 horses at a time. 1890-1895 were the years of highest volume of logging.

Oscar Eliassen had most of the land in Oskar and Liminga. He had at least 10 teams of horses, fifty or more men, and a sawmill. Oskar built many homes in Hancock with the lumber boards from his sawmill.

Much of the wood was also used for the steam locomotives and the mining companies for shoring up the shafts, stopes and tunnels, or firing the steam boilers. Company homes also used the boards from Oscar Eliassen's sawmill."

Son to Alekski Garnell, Henry, shares on his 1977 WMPL Heritage line interview: "Cordwood (hardwood logs about 12" in diameter and 8 foot long were cut in fourths) was needed for the mine boilers before they used coal. In 1892 30,000 cord (4x4x8 feet) of wood was taken from the Oskar area for Calumet and Hecla.

In the fall, lumbermen cut and piled cordwood in the woods. In the winter, lumbermen put on horse drawn sleighs and took the sleigh to the water (Oskar Bay). In summer, a narrow gauge railroad locomotive pushed the logs that were in train cars on a scow. 16 carloads would fit on this scow twice a day. The scow went to Lake Linden and then to C and H mines".

Calumet and Hecla had a railroad from the Oskar Bay shore to the woods where Eliassen's logging operation was. They also made a dock (Susan Riutta document states 100 foot in length, double-decker) where a large barge could tie up.

The barge was equipped with railroad tracks side by side. Ten railroad flat cars would fit on the barge. C and H kept one locomotive at Oskar for bringing empty flat cars to the logging operation to be loaded and back to the dock in Lake Linden via the Portage Canal and Portage Lake and Torch Lake. Richard Garnell does not know if C and H had their own tug for pushing the barge or maybe it was Crose Co. tugs.

Richard Garnell continues: The horses needed hay for the winter. They made hay in the Liminga area as Eliassen owned most of Liminga. Hay was cut by manpower with scythes. My dad, Alex Jr., would tell me that as a young fellow, about 50 men would start to cut a large field of hay, each following the other. My dad would be the person to carry water to the men.

My grandfather, Alex Sr., (Aleksi) was a woodsman for Oskar. My dad would haul lumber and firewood to town for Oskar. Oscar Eliassen's sawmill was at Oskar by the lakeshore.

As coal replaced cordwood, Oscar Eliassen went into business of sawmill. He created dressed and rough lumber.

By 1901 Polk Directory Eliassen only listed Charcoal as his business.

Nels Burkman had his own lumbering operation by 1896. (Polk Directory). .. cordwood, timber, ties, hay charcoal, etc. He competed with Eliassen . He employed a clerk, blacksmith, and charcoal burners. In the best years he had about 100 men working for him (Family oral history).

A forest fire nearly took out the whole community of Oskar in 1896. In 1897 Eliassen lost his stables and horses. In 1900 Eliassen's sawmill burned. In 1901 he declared bankruptcy according to Susan Riutta's document. By 1907 he sold his property to Frank Eilola.

Jack Ruohonen in his history document shares: In those days one of Eliassen's camps was called the Kyrolais camp. (Men from Kyro) Jaakko Peltonen, Tuomas Waltri, Mikko Solkela, John Jukkara, Saarinen, Laurila Rahikka. If there was any matter whatever that required speaking to the higher ups, Jaakko was there to make the presentation. When he was in town and someone asked him where he worked, he would reply "I am in Ojanpera's outfit where we get a dollar per cord and I lose a half of it for board".

Logging on the Salmon Trout.

Clarence Monette in his book Some Copper Country Names and Places shares: An area of logging in the 1920's was just south of Freda on the Copper Range Railroad.

Logs were retrieved out of the heavy timberlands with horses being more effective, while a large tractor corralled the logs for shipment on the Copper Range Railroad. They went to Michael Messner's landing on Lake Superior.

Life in a logging camp.

Walter Johnson, son of William Johnson, grandson of Andrew Johnson who had the North Canal Brick Company on Red Brick Road shares this about life in a lumber camp: His 3 generation family was in logging in Quincy Hill, Mason, Oneco, Ford Motor, Skanee, and Twin Lakes.

Usually you started your day about 5 o'clock in the morning and the men would wash up using the common towel to wash their hands and face. Then your sanitary facilities/ toilets, were all outdoors. The camps were heated by barrel stoves and the chore boy probably got up at 4 to stoke the fires and add more wood so the area was warm when men got up. About 5:30 pm the dinner bell or triangle would ring and men would go into the cook camp for their breakfast and silence. The only time a man spoke is to ask for something. Eat and get out to work on time.

A good typical breakfast would be ham and eggs, or bacon and eggs, oatmeal or something like that one day. Pancakes and sausage and more eggs and cereal and bread and coffee.

Then off to work by about 6 and often times they had to walk several miles, they didn't have transportation like we do today. They had to walk 1/2 hour to an hour sometimes to get on the job. They worked 10 hours a day. So they would carry a lunch in a lunch bucket. There were no thermos bottles. The bucket was cylinder with the coffee poured into the bottom and then the sandwiches and whatever you might want like cake on top. At about 9, they'd stop and eat a bit, warming the coffee over a fire held up over the fire with a stick.

Then about noon they'd take about a 1-hour break, eat some more, chat, smoke, or nap.

Then they'd put in the balance of the day to 5 or 6 pm. Hike back to camp.

Supper would be a great big bowl of soup with potatoes and gravy, vegetables,

beef or pork and pie.

We coped with the bugs with citronella and tar solution.

Yes, lots of accidents with the tools of logging. Loggers got unionized during WW2- International Woodworkers of America.

We had two logging camps and a crew of about 130 men and we were located near Herman (4 miles east), which is south of L'Anse. We used horses and some tractors hauling on the Ford railroad. We used crosscut saws. Power saws came about 1940's. The first power saw was a Mercury and took 2 strong men to lift it. Now of course they are one man and lighter. My wife was living in Hancock Except for the first winter (1935) when she joined me in the woods. After that I'd go out to log on Sunday and come back on Wednesday to pick up supplies and back again on Thursday morning and back again on Saturday night.

Lumberjacks spare time sat around and read or played cards or in conversation with other friends.

In the 50's we used mainly hardwood and hemlock logs. Our operations at that time were almost totally mechanized insofar as cutting was all power saws, the skidding was done by tractors, the hauling was done by trucks. As time went on we would use what we call "jammers" to load our trucks. Then we got into power cranes. In later years 60's we got into pulpwood because hardwood timber began to disappear.. it was cut over, a lack of it. We used the rubber tire skidder. The crawler type tractor was expensive to maintain. Parts were very expensive so the advent of tire skidder to bring out a number of stringer length pieces of pulpwood and buck them or cut them on the landing or skid ways. The rubber tire skidder would travel much faster.

Our pulp was delivered to the Copper Range railroad at Toivola and this was taken mainly to Consolidated paper, Inc in Donken. Our hardwood went to the Vulcan Corp in Donken to be processed into lumber.

Notes from book by Ben Mukkala. Copper, Timber, Iron and Heart.

Lumberjacks. Shanty Boys. Names given to those men "up, fed and out to the woods before daybreak. Eat your fill! No talkin' at the table".

- One of the most hazardous occupations.
- Early profits went to banks out east. They invested in the blood, sweat and life under very primitive conditions.
- Life was basic.. work hard swinging a broad ax, eat, sleep, and drink on payday.
- The push... was name given to the woods foreman - rousing the crew in the dark, feeding them by lamplight and getting them to the woods ready to start cutting at first light.
- First history of cutting in U.P. was with George Sawson discovering the big pine along Big Bay/Marquette. He and his men, cut down large trees with axes, squared them with sharp grub hoe looking tool called an adze. Floated them to Sault Ste. Marie. Then to England for ship building. They were restricted to those trees near the Lake Superior Shore to float to the Sault.
- By the 1870's loggers were down state Michigan and moving into the UP.
- Men used axes, though saws were used but did not work well with large pieces. The

- teeth of the saw tended to jam up with the wood cuttings, the sawdust caused the problem of jamming the teeth. In 1880's that was refined to the crosscut modification. They added a tooth without a cutting edge, square and blunt and slightly shorter than the cutting teeth... these rakers took the sawdust along the moving blade to be dropped out.
- Another problem was the pitch of the pine trees adhering to the blade. Men would pound wedges into the back cuts to keep the tree from squeezing the blade and binding. They would also take a small amount of kerosene to squirt on the blade to clean off the pitch.
 - Life was hard for \$12-\$15 per month.
 - Work 6 days a week in woods. Sunday was day off.
 - Bunkhouse. Men often slept two to a bunk. Some bunks were parallel to the wall, entered from the side head to foot around the "house". Others had heads to the wall. Entered from the end. Men were separated from another by a "snortin' pole down the center of the bunk.
 - Deacon's seat on Sunday near the stove was leader of conversation at night or Sundays. This was time for tall tales, swearing, and cooties. Not many baths often. Smell to keep mosquitoes away!
 - Some men sent money back "home" to family.
 - As railroads came the logging went from horse/oxen power to rail power to haul to sawmill.
 - A German fella' invented the chain saw in the 1937.
 - Saw logs (more mature and larger) were used for lumber. A "board foot" is a piece of lumber 1" thick, one foot long, one foot wide. It takes 16,000 board feet (1" x 12" x 3 miles long to build a 2,000 square foot home. That would equate to 32 cords of wood.

See picture section for collection of photos.

Research and interviews done by Barb Koski, Osma Plat Road, Houghton MI. I welcome stories. Contact the webmaster. Submitted in 2009.