

Lumbering

Evidence still lingers in and around Mecosta that it once was forested with white pine. Many stump fence rows, some complete, can be seen throughout the county testifying that a golden age of lumbering existed before the turn of the century.

Here and there, a tumbling log building can be seen—a few are restored, but for the most part, the tree that became a state symbol, furnished shelter, gave heat, supplied the dividers for fields and profit for the lumber man, mill owner and early settler has vanished. The last vestige of virgin pine timber in the lower peninsula is the Hartwick pine stand in Roscommon County.

Logging of the pine was necessary to es-

tablish communities, especially farming land, and it supplied ready cash for a winter's work when the cleared lands were snow covered.

Only pictures tell the story of that era between 1860-1900. Deeds of those early settlers show that three brothers, George W., Joseph and Andrew Webber owned much of the virgin timber land. Webber mills existed in and around Mecosta, Altona, Barryton and Millbrook.

Lumber camps had no problem finding lumberjacks, especially in the winter and early spring months. Two camps were east of Mecosta and Remus in the Bundy Hills, Joe Lett's and O.E. Hall's. Bundy Hills was lumbered off three times of pine, hardwood and pulp. The late John Norman worked in all three operations. John first worked in Lett's camp and later in Hall's.

With no Women's Lib movement to guide her, Bessie Green Jackson managed to become her own person in her own way. A

lumber-camp cook from the age of fifteen, she is shown here, at the left, holding the reins.

