

His knowledge of lumbering became a source of first-hand history. At first Lett operated a camp for colored only, and he cleared the west side of the hills. Hall lumbered the east side and operated a white camp. They both became integrated later as many of the lumberjacks wandered north seeking work.

One of John's reminiscences dealt with a social hall built to be used by both camps. Saturday night was a big social evening, and after a visit to the nearest saloon, the lumberjacks would gather with their local girl friends for dancing. Hall, who had organized both camps but had said they must remain segregated in order "to supply equal opportunity for the whole community" also stated the social hall would be divided—whites on one side, colored on the other.

One Saturday, John remembered when the floor was filled with square dancers, the caller yelled out "second and fourth partners lead to the right and right and left through the length of the hall." John said, "colored couples were on the white side, whites on the colored, everyone dancing and enjoying themselves. Hall picked up his hat and walked out, saying to himself, 'Hell'".

After the pine was cleared, the local men followed the camps as they moved north to Boon, Marion, Harrietta and Boyne City. Art Skinner established a camp at Boon. Art was colored but his camp was integrated.

Many Mecosta area men found work in those camps. John H. Berry, Sr. and his brother-in-law, Charles Pointer worked every winter in the camps. One in particular was Cummer and Diggins. They became expert sawyers and one year won the camp honor beating out a pair of Swedish sawyers who

These nineteen men are very probably taking an entire day off, and probably Sunday. The picture was taken at Art Skinner's lumber camp. Not only a day of rest, Sundays were when the men caught up on their laundry, mending and so on.



Also photographed at Skinner's Camp, this crew is loading logs, a job requiring a great deal of skill and nerve. And, yes, the horses could pull loads that size, and bigger.

had held the title of "best Sawyers" for years.

Contests usually added interest to camp life. Lumbermen would put their teams against each other as to who could pull the heaviest load. Sometimes clogging contests filled an evening with pleasure. John Berry, Sr. remembers a week-long "spitting tobacco juice contest".

A man was hired on a monthly basis and he could receive his salary daily or at the end of the season. Many collected a pretty good pocket of money by spring, and the lumberjack farmers were all set for spring planting.

"Daylight in the Swamp" was the call each morning that tumbled the men from their beds and headed them to the mess shanties before a long cold day's work.

Another one of Skinner's teams, skidding logs out of the woods in preparation for loading on to the big sleds. There is little snow here, making the job more difficult.

