



John Berry and Charles Pointer are manning the cross-cut saw at a Cummer and Diggins Camp. A recent invention, this type of saw was introduced into lumbering not too long before this picture was taken.

Bessie Cook Green at fifteen worked with her parents at a lumber camp for several years. Her job besides dishwashing was to make biscuits for breakfast. "As I grew older my duties changed", Bessie related. "I became the supply buyer for the camp and I'd leave before daylight in the winter-time and return at dusk with enough supplies for a week or two. The last thing my Dad put in my hands before handing me the reins was a sawed-off shotgun. We never knew what we'd meet going through the woods".

Shingle mills were around the area. Lots of cedar grew in the swampy ground and along the rivers. Isaac Berry and his sons cut and hauled shingle bolts to Mecosta the first two winters after they moved here.

Whenever logs are piled up, they are subject to coming down. In fact, it is said that on the day this picture was taken of twenty-one year old John Berry, Sr., these logs did roll down and killed a man.



The "Big Wheels" in Action.

John H. Berry, Sr. remembered hauling shingle bolts by sleigh one year as late as May. "Kate" Berry cooked for Shaw's shingle mill on Cedar Creek.

As the virgin pine vanished so did the mills. Descendants of some of the lumber barons still occupy the "gingerbread" houses built during the "golden age" of lumbering.

After the lumber business left, the new business of clearing the stumps took place. Pulling and dynamiting the stumps was faster than burning them. Charlie and Dan Norman had stump machines and cleared many acres around Mecosta.

Bert Lett was known as "dynamiter" and was in much demand from Ionia to the Straits. He became daring with his expertise and would stand on a stump until the last minute after the fuse was lit.

John H. Berry, Sr. had a license to dynamite but his family feared for his safety. He did work with dynamiters, but preferred surveying the area with Neil Morton.

Today the stumps are the only visual reminder that once the mighty pine flourished around Mecosta.

—Marguerite Berry Jackson

Although this picture was actually taken at a camp near Marion, several Mecosta area lumberjacks were included in the group photograph.

