

# **Lumbermen on the Chippewa**

**by  
Malcolm Rosholt**



**ROSHOLT HOUSE**

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# Foreword

In the preparation of this book I have been generously aided by Alberta Rommelmeyer, John A. Stoneberg, Dale A. Peterson and Dr. R.C. Brown, all of Eau Claire, Wisconsin; Joe Joas of Chippewa Falls; Eugene and Dolores Harm and Joyce Gannon of rural Cadott; Howard Peddle of Iron River; Ed Brick of the Department of Natural Resources, Madison; and by Michael F. Slasinski of Saginaw, Michigan.

For editorial assistance I am indebted to Beulah Larson of Stevens Point and to my daughter, Mei-fei Elrick of the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

I wish to thank Mrs. Leslie Jones of Holcombe for bringing to my attention the daily journal kept at the Little Falls dam, and for introducing me to Zac Jardine of Verona who, as a youth, watched the last pine log sluiced through the dam in 1911. His sketches on how the "splash planks" were used in the dam have been enlarged by students of cartography at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point under the direction of Ray Specht. The students also did several maps in the book for which I am grateful. Finally I want to express my appreciation to Randal E. Rohe of Menasha for the diagrams of the up-and-down sawmill, the Tainter gate, and the bear trap sluice gate.

I recall with nostalgia the many people who have donated pictures to me over the years, people I talked to about working in the woods and on the rivers and in the mills. One of the first who come to mind is the late Hans Lee of Rosholt who drove logs on the Little Wolf River from the "Upper Dam" in Marathon County to Boom Bay on Lake Poygan. My old friend, Nils Quisla, who lived east of Rosholt, I visited many times on the family farm and listened as he talked about his days in the sawmills and in the woods. He vividly remembered the fear among the superstitious lumberjacks on the night of Halley's Comet in 1910.

Chester Colpitts of Radisson worked on the landing one winter on the Thornapple for Chippewa Lumber & Boom Company and recalled the struggle between John F. Dietz and the boom company at Cameron Dam. And Walter Bunk of Eau Claire told me about the winter he worked on the Thornapple for Moses & Gaynor moving logs by steam hauler to Babbs Landing on the Flambeau.

Henry Arnold of Green Bay remembered how the icing tankers were used in Upper Michigan and, by inference, in Wisconsin. Peter Brzezinski of Portage County, a head sawyer for Mohr-Stotzer Lumber Company at Holt—now a ghost town in Marathon County—remembered John Griffith, the mill foreman, whom he liked because even though he had a "bad temper" he "never held any grudges and he was an honest man."

Bob Mears of Mercer spent much of his life in the woods and what he didn't know about logging wasn't worth a whistle. John Mortenson of Aniwa was one of the last jobbers for Hines Lumber Company on the Lac Court Oreilles Indian Reservation in the 1930s.

William Hoyer of Cudahy, born in Chippewa Falls, I quote at length in the *Wisconsin Logging Book* (1980) and briefly in this volume.

The present volume takes advantage of the wealth of pictorial material found in the Chippewa Valley, most of it previously unpublished. In several instances I was forced to borrow pictures from the *Wisconsin Logging Book* because of their uniqueness, for example, the photograph of the fin sheer boom taken at Alma which appears to be the only one of its kind in Wisconsin.

Finally, I wish to thank Tony Wise for the privilege of photographing the picture of the log driver which appears on the cover of the dust jacket. It is a detail taken from a large mural done by Lyle Roger Nelson for one of the restaurants at Telemark Lodge, Cable, WI.

The photograph on the back of the jacket I took at Read's Landing, MN May 28, 1982. The view looks east across the Mississippi River to the mouth of the great Chippewa.

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