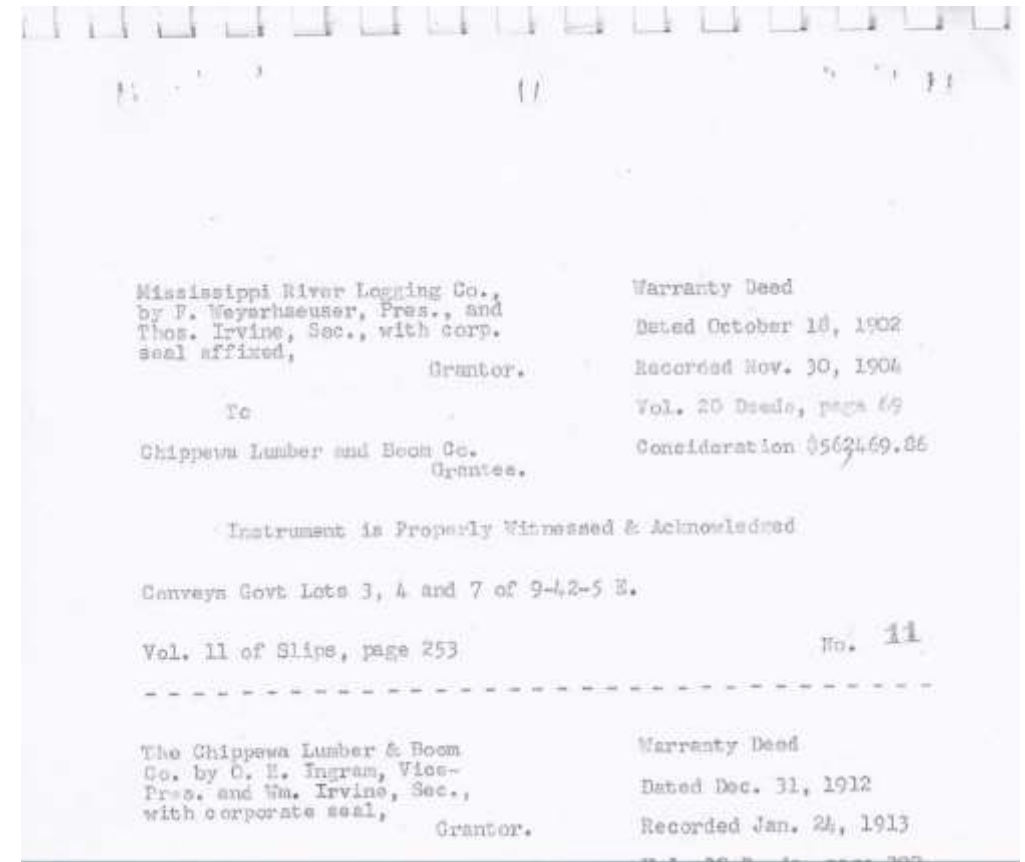


# Logging Impacts on the Manitowish Waters Area and Land Policies



Since the earliest European explorers arrived on the eastern seaboard, North America virgin timber ranked as one of the most prized commodities of the new world. Timber resources, especially in New England, were harvested and marketed for more than two centuries before these practices migrated to the Northwoods of Wisconsin.



Logging defined the Northwoods during the late 19<sup>th</sup>  
Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Modern scholars divide logging and lumber industries into three different Phases:

- 1) river drives of white pines
- 2) railroad logging and harvesting the remaining white pines, red pine, hardwoods and other trees and
- 3) post WWI small logging camps using trucks and tractors

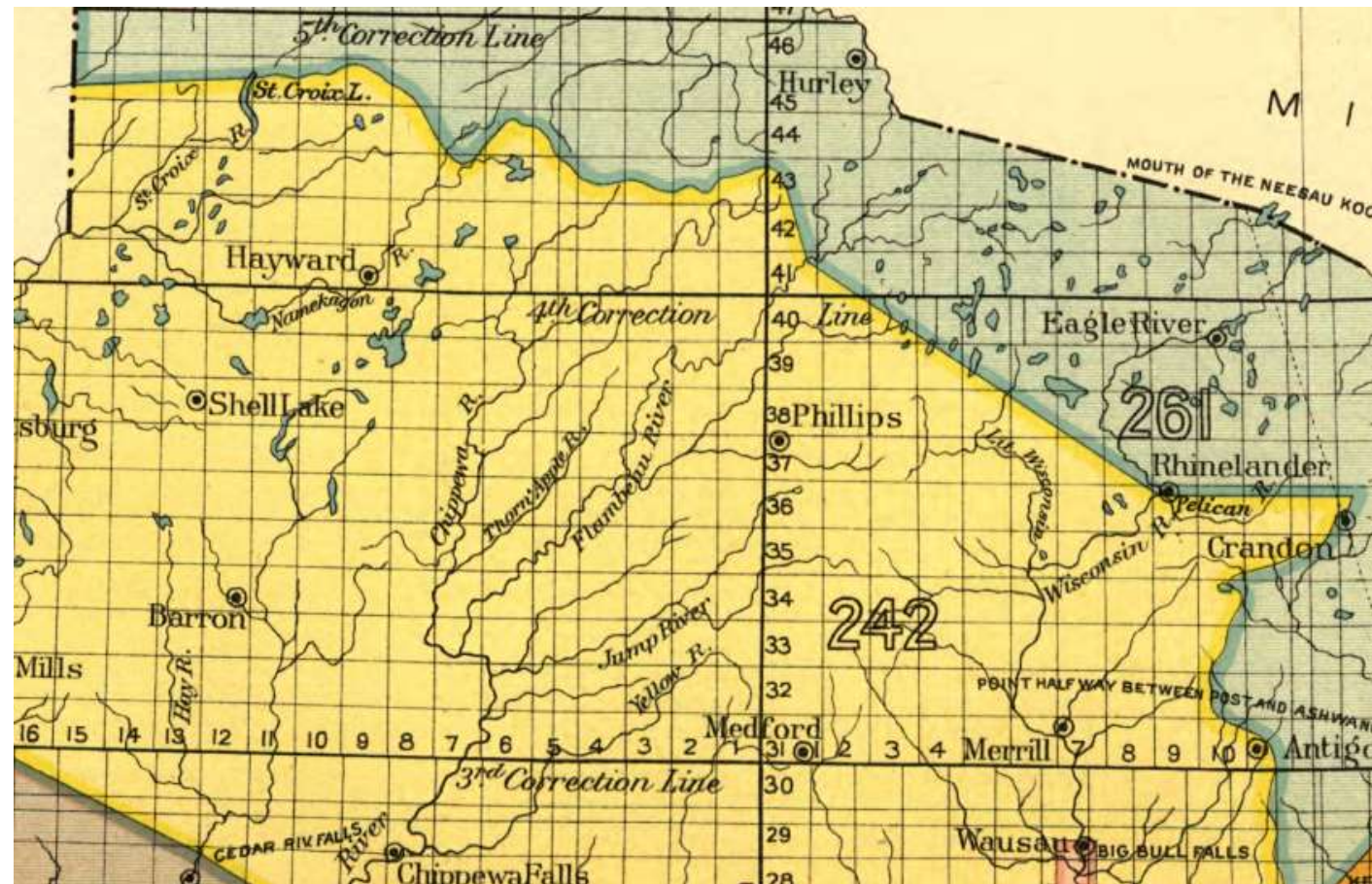
Formal land policies for logging began with the treaty process with the Ojibwa.





The 1837 Pine Tree Treaty and the 1842 Copper Treaty with the Ojibwa ceded timber and mining lands to the U.S. government.

Specifically, the 1842 Treaty codified the land cession for what would become Manitowish Waters Township.





By the 1860's itinerant timber cruisers and the first government surveys documented the land for both harvest and sale



226

Township 42 North

64	See Section 6 again
N 60 W	3.00 Var. 6" 6' East
N 68 E	2.72 To meander post between Sections 5 & 6. Banks high. Timber Pine, Birch & Aspen

65	See Section 5 again
N 83 E	3.60 Var. 6" 6' East
66	To meander post in Township line on East shore of Lake Banks high. Timber Birch & Aspen

Oct. 6th, 1862

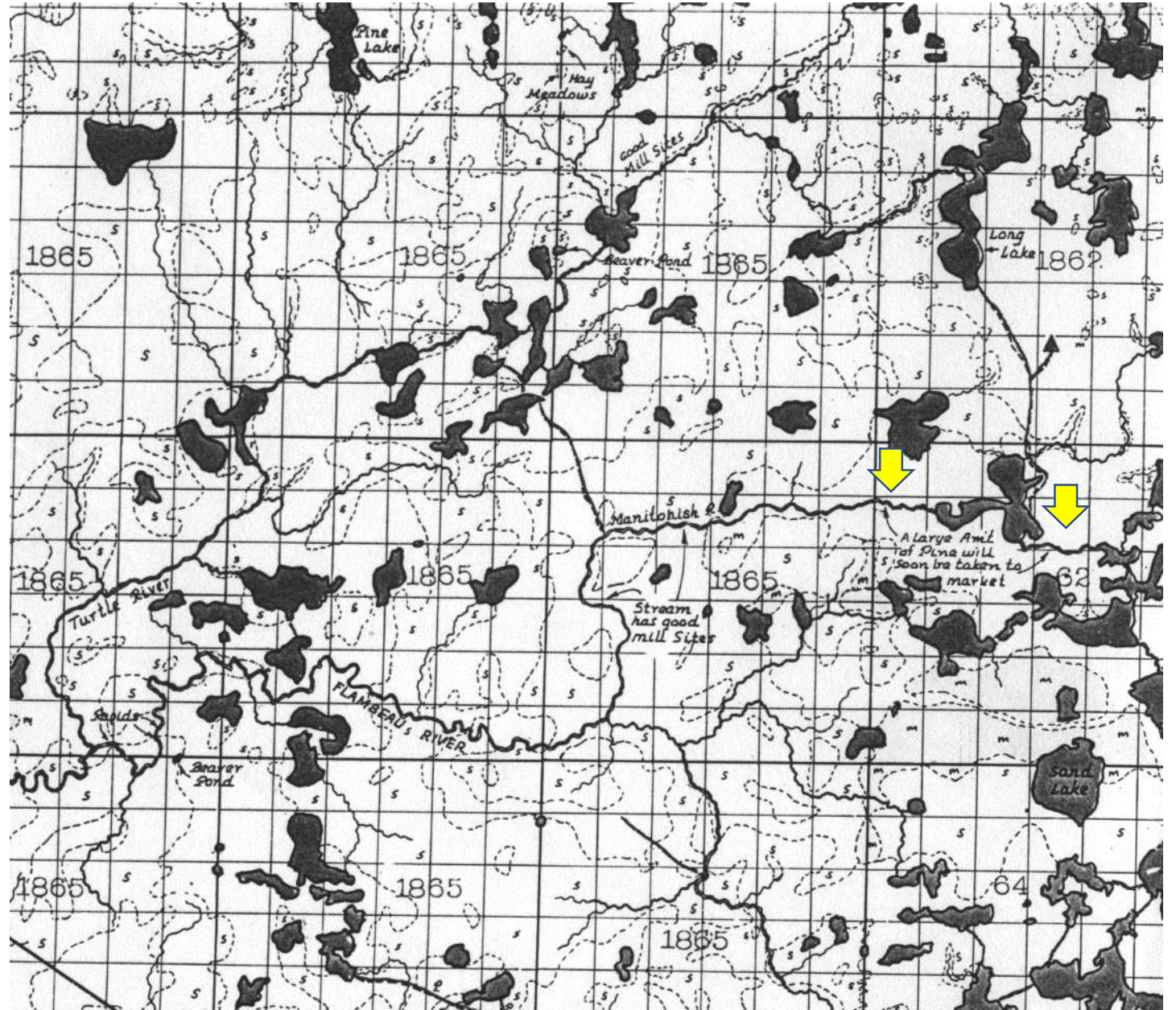
227

Range 5 East 4th Prim Mer

General Description  
In the South part of this Township there are two extensive marshes that are entirely worthless. The remainder of the Township is dry and gently rolling. The soil is sandy and poor as is generally the case in pine timbered tracts. There is in this township a large amount of pine timber much of which is valuable and will very soon be taken to market by floating down the streams which are sufficiently large and are well adapted to the running of lumber.



Trygg Maps are composite maps from several original land surveys which also contain key cultural details from surveyor journals. Note the yellow arrow pointing at the outlet of Benson Lake noting that: “A large AM’T of Pine will soon be taken to market” This survey was completed in 1862.

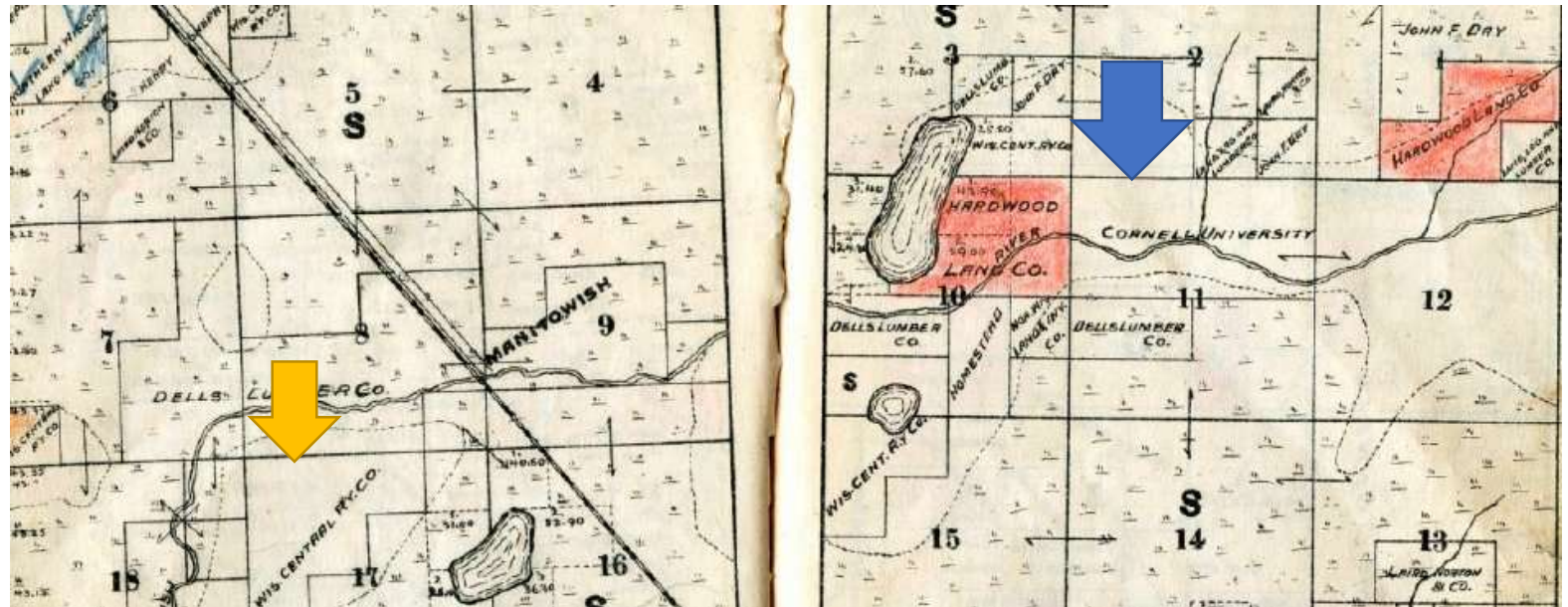




Competition for the newly surveyed land in the Northwoods was both intense and rigged.

The U.S. Government lacked cash resources to promote settlement, infrastructure and agriculture education; turning to granting government lands to qualifying interests as a subsidy for development.

Railroads enjoyed numerous railroad grants from 1850-1870's.





Morrill Land Grant Act for agricultural colleges were passed, opening more preferred access to government lands. Cornell University was able to acquire 500,000 acres of land in the Chippewa Valley to sell for agricultural education in New York.

*The*  
WISCONSIN PINE LANDS  
*of* CORNELL UNIVERSITY

A Study in Land Policy  
and Absentee Ownership

By  
PAUL WALLACE GATES



MCMLXV  
THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN  
MADISON

Phase I White Pine loggers were the first to impact MW and noted both the rich pineries and fantastic streams necessary for a profitable harvest





Logging in the winter, logs were skidded to the banks of rivers, streams and lakes





# “Flashing” logs

## Evaluating Minnesota's **HISTORIC DAMS** A Framework for Management

Prepared by Principal Investigators:  
Sigrid Arnott, Douglas A. Birk, and David Maki

with contributions by Geoffrey Jones

DECEMBER, 2013

The *Annual Report Chief of Engineers to the Secretary of War for the Year 1879* briefly describes the three main types of dams used in Minnesota log transport systems: gated driving dams, “roll” driving dams, and temporary “cutaway” dams.

The lumbermen (loggers, properly speaking) have been in the habit, for years, of building dams at will upon the tributaries and the main streams as well, many of the dams of a permanent character and erected at great cost, while others are temporary structures or "cut-away" dams. These dams pond up the water until a sufficient quantity is collected so that the logs may be floated down to the dam, when they are driven or flashed through, or over, according to the construction of the dam, depending upon the head of water, into the reach below, the process to be repeated at the next lower dam. The term "cut-away" is applied to a cheap temporary dam, without gates or sluices, erected to collect the water above it; sufficient water being collected, an opening is made in the dam, the logs run through, and the dam abandoned (Frizzel and Allen 1879:1196).



An example of an early temporary logging dam with a sluice for logs



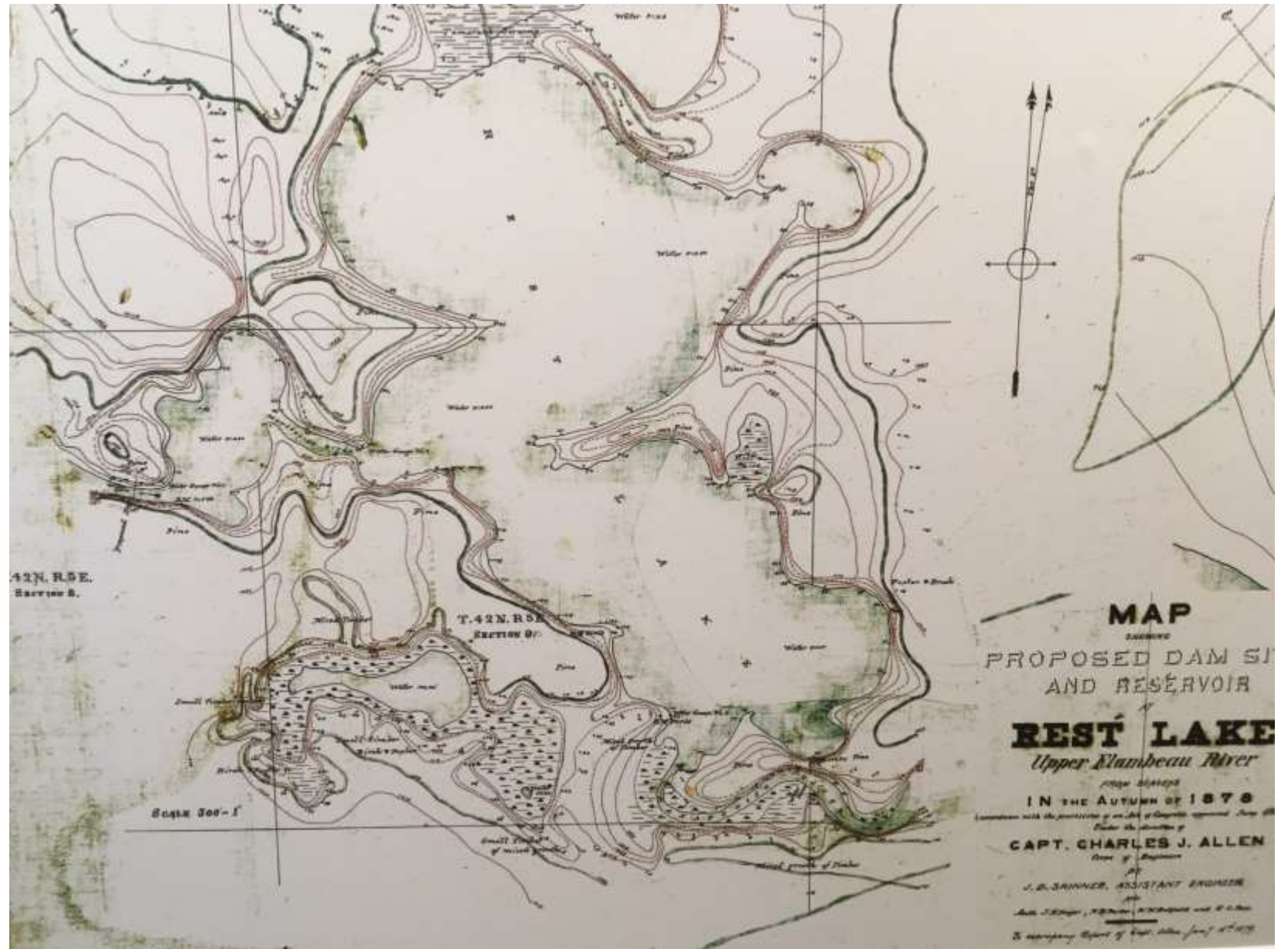
# 1879 House of Representatives 45th Congress

## 3rd Session Doc. No. 54 Page 1173

The running of loose logs, and the practice of loggers on the tributaries of the Chippewa, and the Chippewa itself, in shutting off the supply of water, whenever they deem it necessary to do so, by means of huge dams across the streams, until enough water is collected to enable them to gather the logs above and flash them down into the reaches below, are also detrimental to the navigation below Eau Claire. The logs, flashed down thus, from reach to reach, finally enter the main stream. The dams, alternately closed and opened, very seriously affect the stages of water in the stream. The largest of these dams is at Little

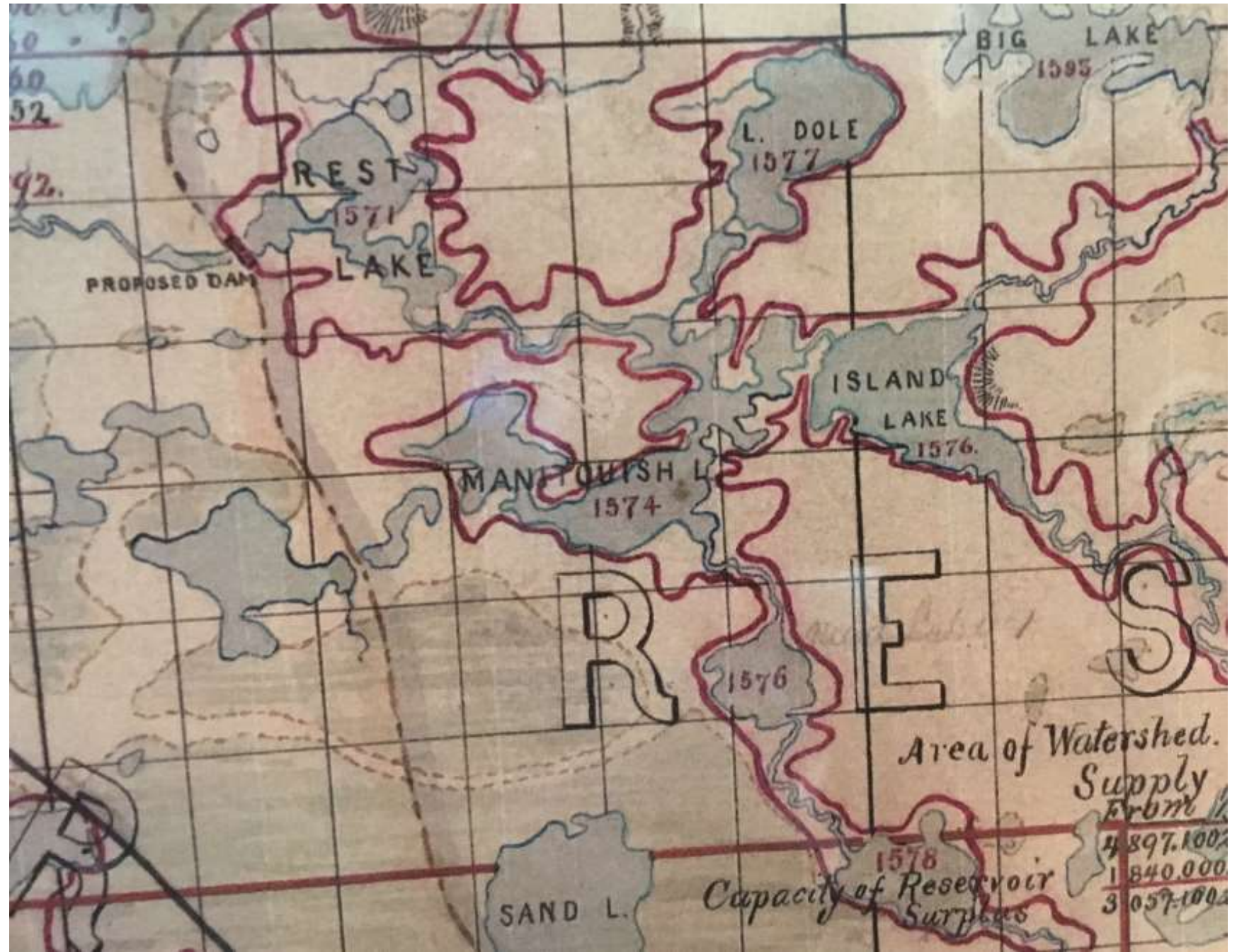


Shortly after  
1880 the first  
government  
sponsored dam  
was created on  
Rest Lake



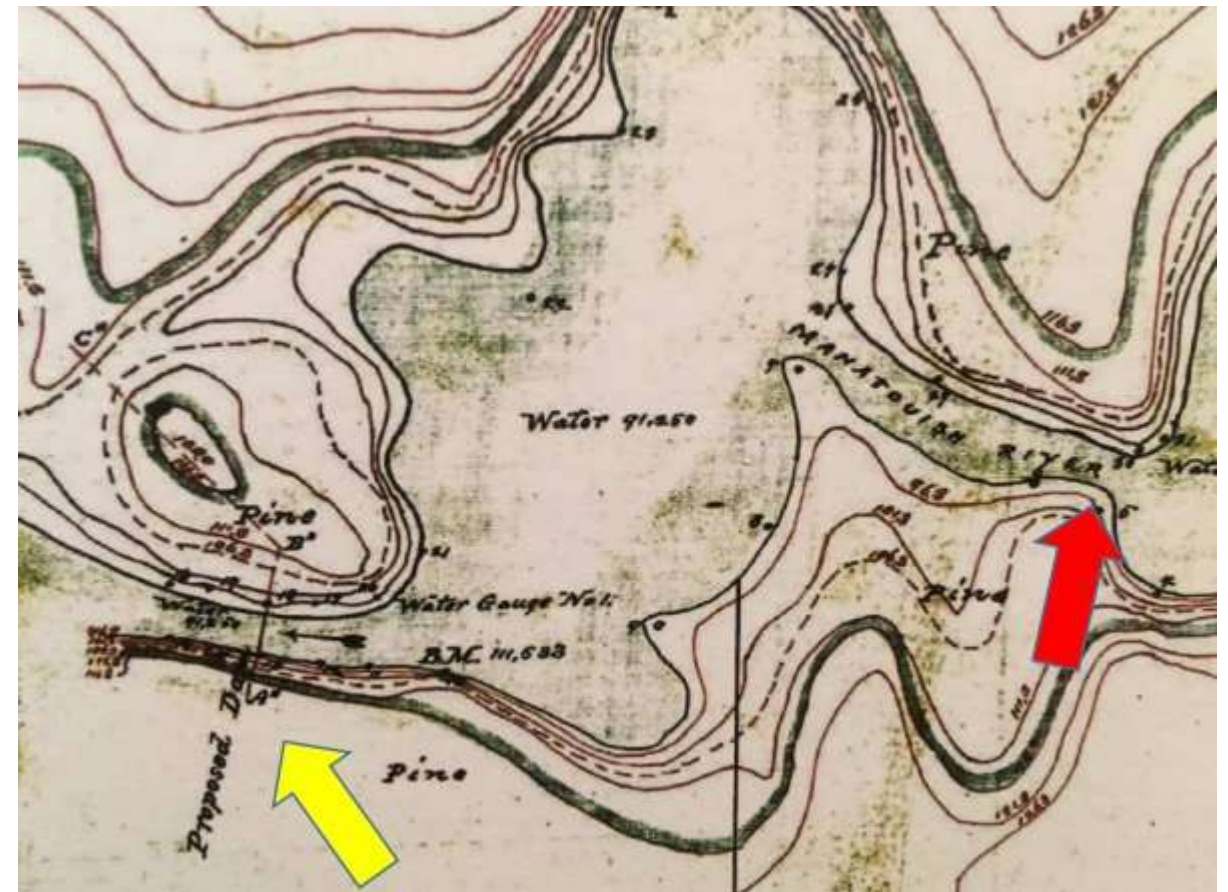


This recently discovered map solves one of the historic mysteries, because in 1878 the Army Corps of Engineers drew in red the new shoreline of the 25 foot dam on Vance Lake. Would this dam have impacted your property?





After the legislated water rise shifted from 25' to 15', residents like Peter Vance likely suggested the dam building shift from the outlet of Vance or Dam Lake to it's current location to save on time and materials





Contrary to most local historian's accounts, the Mississippi River Logging Co. operated the Rest Lake Dam during the majority of the River drive logging era

Mississippi River Logging Co., by F. Weyerhaeuser, Pres., and Thos. Irvine, Sec., with corp. seal affixed,	Grantor.	Warranty Deed Dated October 18, 1902 Recorded Nov. 30, 1904 Vol. 20 Deeds, page 69 Consideration \$562469.86
To Chippewa Lumber and Boom Co.	Grantee.	
Instrument is Properly Witnessed & Acknowledged		
Conveys Govt Lots 3, 4 and 7 of 9-42-5 E.		
Vol. 11 of Slips, page 253		No. 11
-----		
The Chippewa Lumber & Boom Co. by O. H. Ingram, Vice- Pres. and Wm. Irvine, Sec., with corporate seal,	Grantor.	Warranty Deed Dated Dec. 31, 1912 Recorded Jan. 24, 1913 Vol. 20 Deeds, page 282

Early dam operations  
by the Mississippi River  
Logging Co. created a  
dam and logging  
Dingle camp at Rest  
lake in 1887-88.



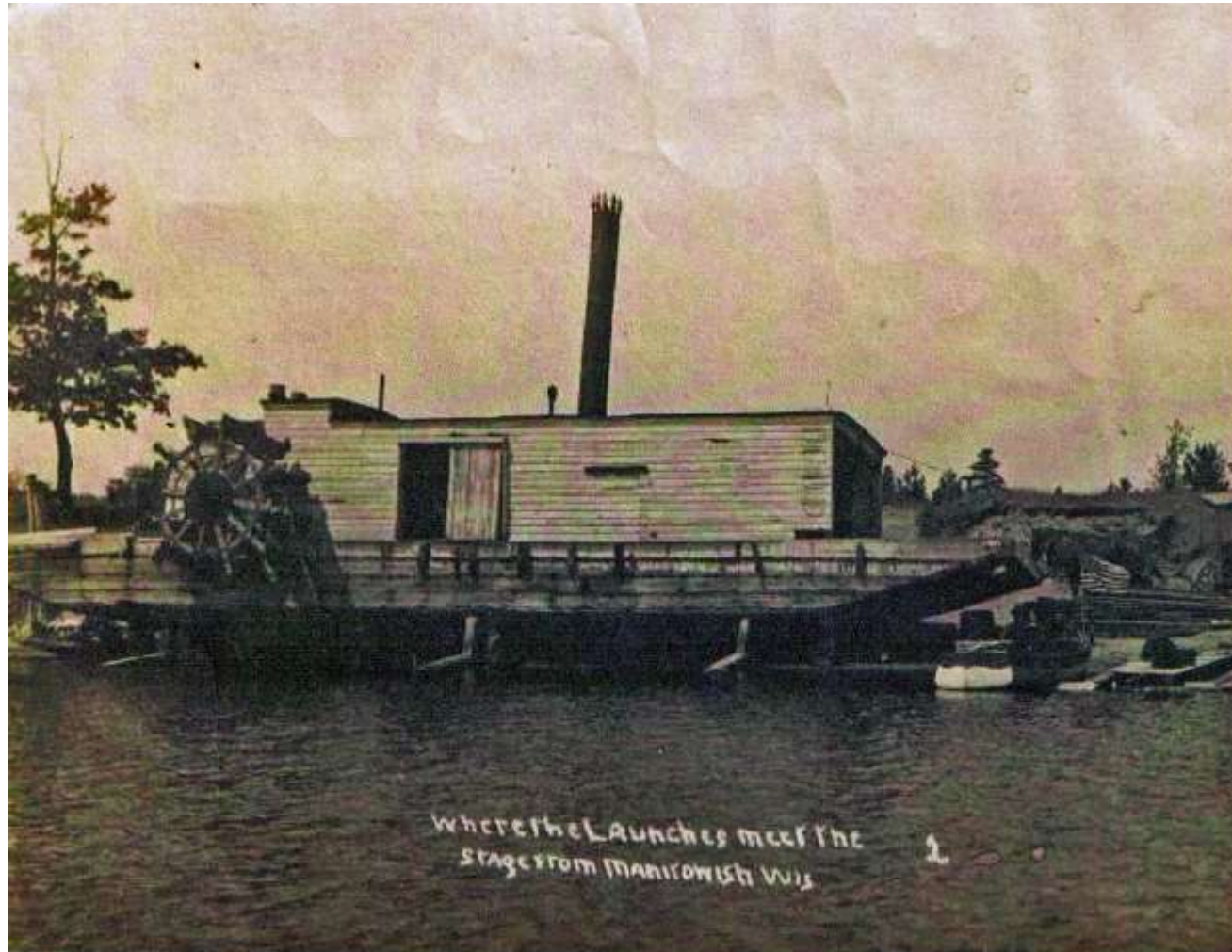
*Dam at Manitowish*

Long term impacts of the Rest Lake Dam include massive erosion and cutover.





Steamboats rafted logs over MW lakes to first the Rest Lake dam and later railroad hoists



Logging paddle wheel that pulled rafts of logs to railroad hoists and the dam. Launches from resorts also picked-up and dropped-off guests at this stage landing.

The Rest Lake Dam sluiced logs down stream to  
Chippewa Falls or even the Mississippi River





Almost immediately, log jams were created at the narrows above Sturgeon Lake





Log jams sometimes required explosives to open up streams



Dynamite, tied to the ends of long sticks, used to break up log jams.

Sorting logs from different logging companies required special stamps that were incised into the logs by logging hammers



## Logging camps varied dramatically in the Northwoods

The village of Woodruff, Wisconsin is in the fishing season the port of entry for Trout Lake and the Manitowish muscallunge waters, and at that time it has a sort of transient life. In the winter season it is dull, squalid and tough with a toughness not easily to be paralleled. I think there is no population in America of so low a grade as the riff-raff of the lumbering regions. The small towns of the Western frontier are tough, but they have a brilliant wickedness which gives them a fascination of their own. The logging town is low, sodden, degraded, and does not rise to the dignity of wickedness.

E Hough 1895



(Left) Turtle Lake Lumber Co  
Railroad



(Right) Mississippi River  
Logging Co-river drive



Many logging camps were organized in company towns paying wages in “company currency or tokens”

C.M. CHRISTIANSEN COMPANY



MASON-DONALDSON LUMBER COMPANY



YAWKEE-BISSELL LUMBER COMPANY



VILAS COUNTY LUMBER COMPANY





# Henry and Susan LaPorte, a classic logging family



- Arrived 1889, according to Ruth Gardner, and worked at the Rest Lake Dam lumber camp, likely the Mississippi River Logging Co.
- LaPortes worked as timber cruisers, cooks, loggers, builders, blacksmiths, and later as farmers.



# The LaPortes worked across the Northwoods



- Based in Marathon County, the LaPortes traveled seasonally in order to make a living.
- Wintering in the Northwoods for logging, timber cruising during summer and fall, but returned to Marathon County homesteads annually.
- The LaPortes were very transient and industrious, relocating several times a year to new communities to complete a variety of tasks associated with the logging and lumber industries.

# Joyce Laabs 1978 interview with George LaPorte

If, in the year 1905, you had been anywhere near the Chicago-Northwestern depot in what is now the Manitowish Waters area, you would have seen a young lad busily near the water tank...for it was George LaPorte's job to keep the great tank full so that the engines could take on water to keep their boilers rolling.

Each evening George would start the pump that brought the water from the Manitowish River into the tank. He was required to have it filled by 10 p.m. The job wasn't too difficult during the summer months, but winter was another story. He had to keep the fires in the pump house going around the clock, plus draining the pipes each evening to keep them from freezing.

For these chores, George was paid the magnificent sum of 75 cents a day. To further supplement this income, he earned an additional 75 cents every two weeks for scrubbing the depot. This was wonderful money for an 11-year-old boy in those days...

It was a nomadic life for the LaPorte family. In fact, George figured he had moved some 53 times with this family after he was four years old. Now these moves weren't easy, for everything moved---household items, horses, cattle, and even chickens were piled into the boxcar to be carried to their new destination.

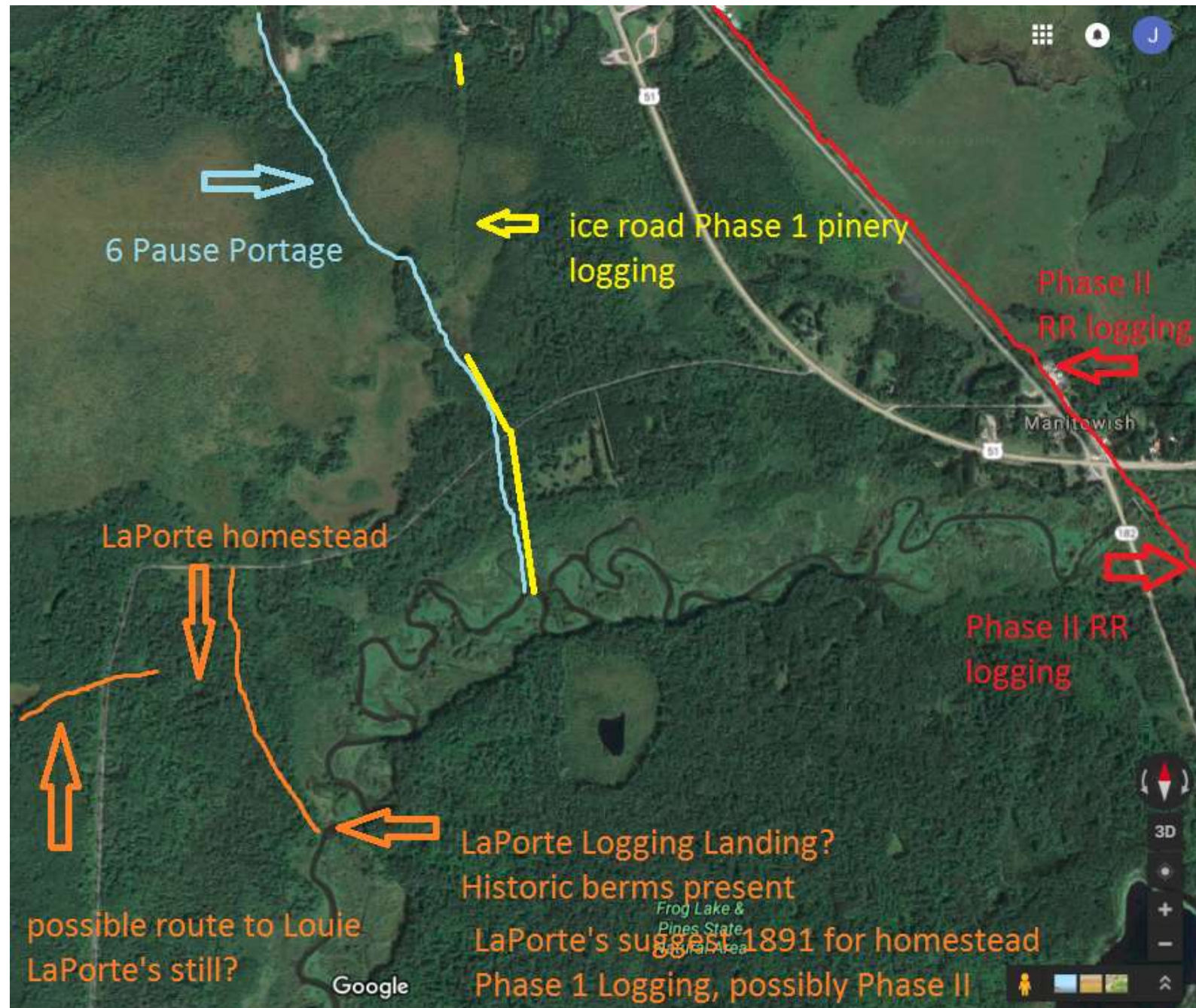
# Lloyd LaPorte Interview reveals a mystery regarding the old office from the log driving days

When LaPorte's came back around 1911 and logged back of Manitowish Jolly had meanwhile moved to the Manitowish River to a logging camp on a high bluff still known to old timers as Jolly's Camp. Shack was the old office from log driving day—about 2 miles from “town”; he had a lock (a hidden wire) on its door. He moved to Michigan ca 1910-1912





Cultural  
connections for  
the area near  
the LaPorte  
Homestead



# George LaPorte interview with Michael Dunn

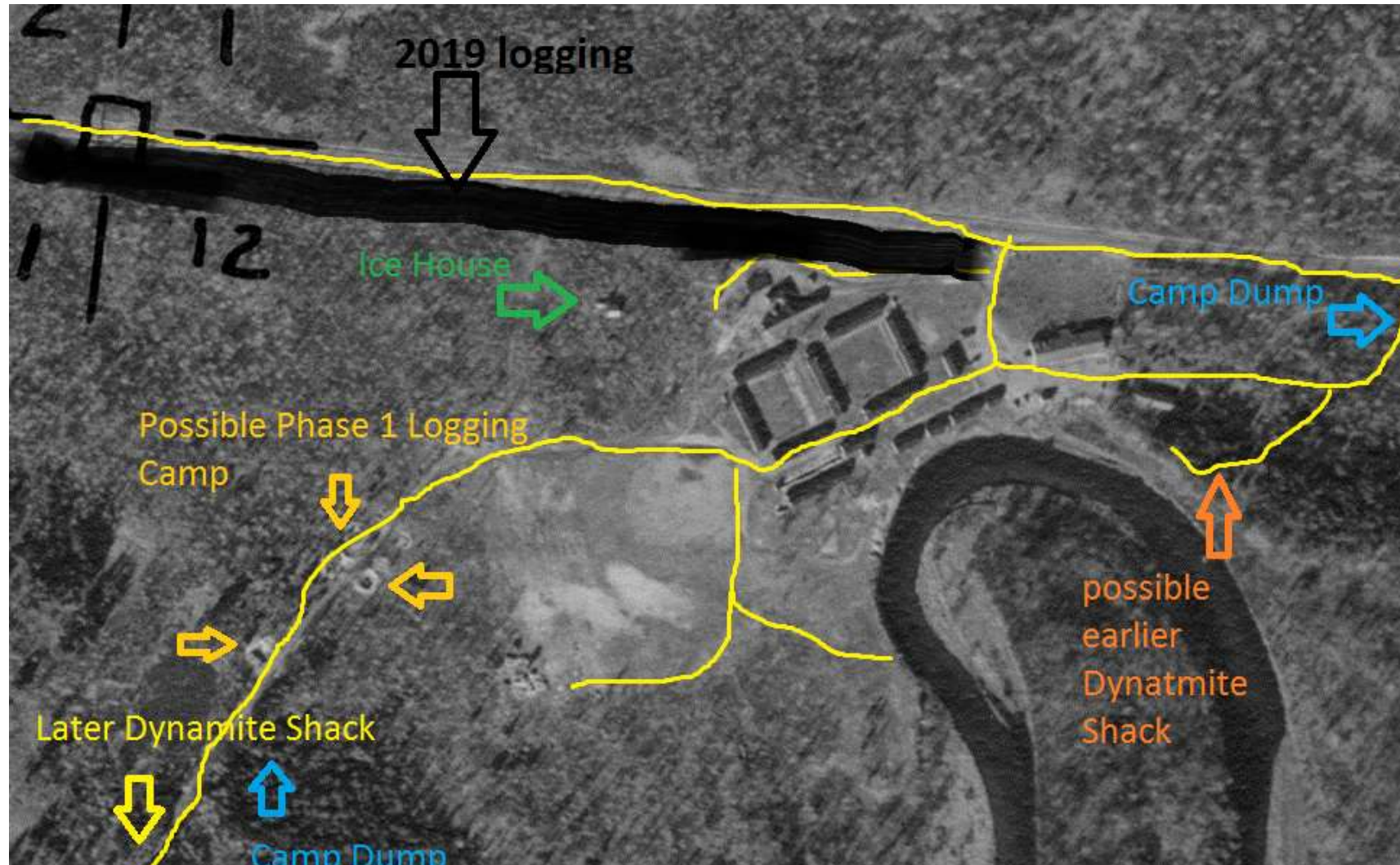
George LaPorte worked in 1908 logging with Brogan & Boland- he worked in their camp- they cut for Scott and Howe who would make 3<sup>rd</sup> bridge planks of tamarack. Also cut scrub pine too, for posts (fence posts, etc) about 2 miles west of Manitowish

George LaPorte and his dad logged in 1910-1911 as contractors on 3 forties-- camp where CCC camp was in the 1930. They put the logs into the river, boomed them to Manitowish, loaded them on rail cars to go to Scott & Howe, Ironwood.

George in 1911-1912- logging -built camp 1 mile west of Manitowish in fall 1911.- one big building 50 feet long with root cellar at one end and a 16 foot addition at on end for sleeping quarters.



The berms in this 1938 air photo suggest a logging camp site that matches the citation from George LaPorte





# LaPorte homestead near the Manitowish River



## Northwoods land policies favored corporate power, universities and wealthy speculators

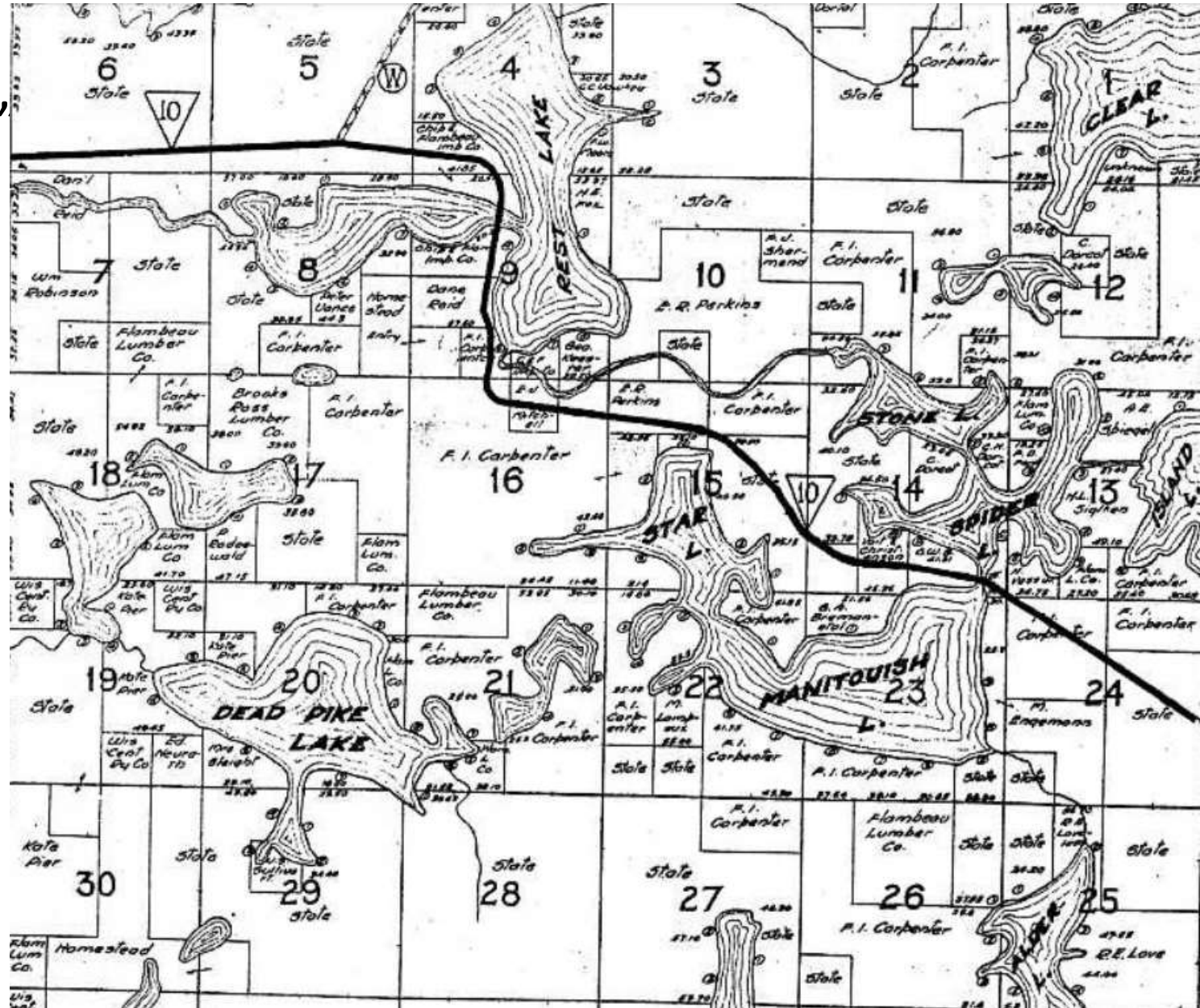
- The notion that the 1862 Homestead Act empowered ordinary Northwoods citizens to fairly benefit from 19<sup>th</sup> century government land policy was laughable.
- Most northern Wisconsin settlers were handed a “fixed deck”; assuming new statutory access to “free” land, would-be homesteaders soon discovered uncooperative land agents, who enjoyed near monopolistic control of government lands.
- The collusion, bureaucratic manipulation, price fixing, and specially interest abuses that followed, created a powerful cartel; defining both land policy and logging into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## More than half of MW early pioneers had difficulty securing their homesteads

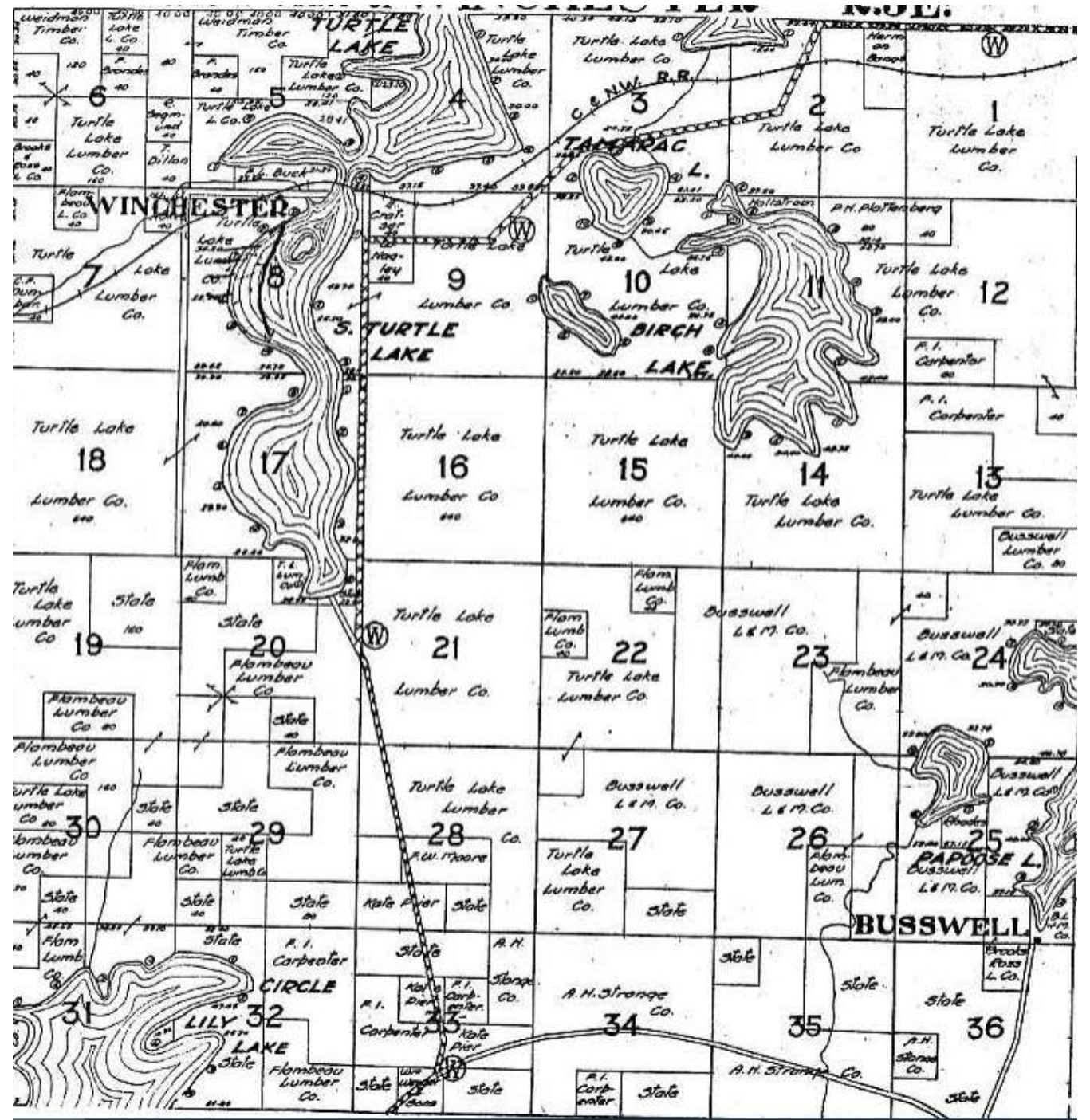
- Manitowish Waters pioneers facing days of travel to a county seat to claim their homesteads could be easily stonewalled by land agents.
- Pioneers seeking “ownership” of their already established homesteads risked being identified as squatters on land already acquired by members of the land cartel.
- Pioneers would then need to legally establish “squatters rights” under the Preemption Act from 1841-1891.
- Early pioneers faced additional obstacles in owning their homesteads, including: liability for back taxes, recording fees, fines, and professional support to navigate survey complexities to ensure a deed’s accuracy.



- Not surprisingly, local pioneers and logging operators “accessed” timber on the vast properties of absentee land and lumber barons, trespassing to capture their slice of the “American Dream.”
- Honestly, in-depth analysis of late 19<sup>th</sup> century Northwoods land practices provides the perfect scheme for a rural version of the popular board game Monopoly.



Winchester township  
had even less private  
land as evidenced by  
this 1913 Plat map.





Land policy confusion and manipulation created land conflicts for several MW pioneering families.

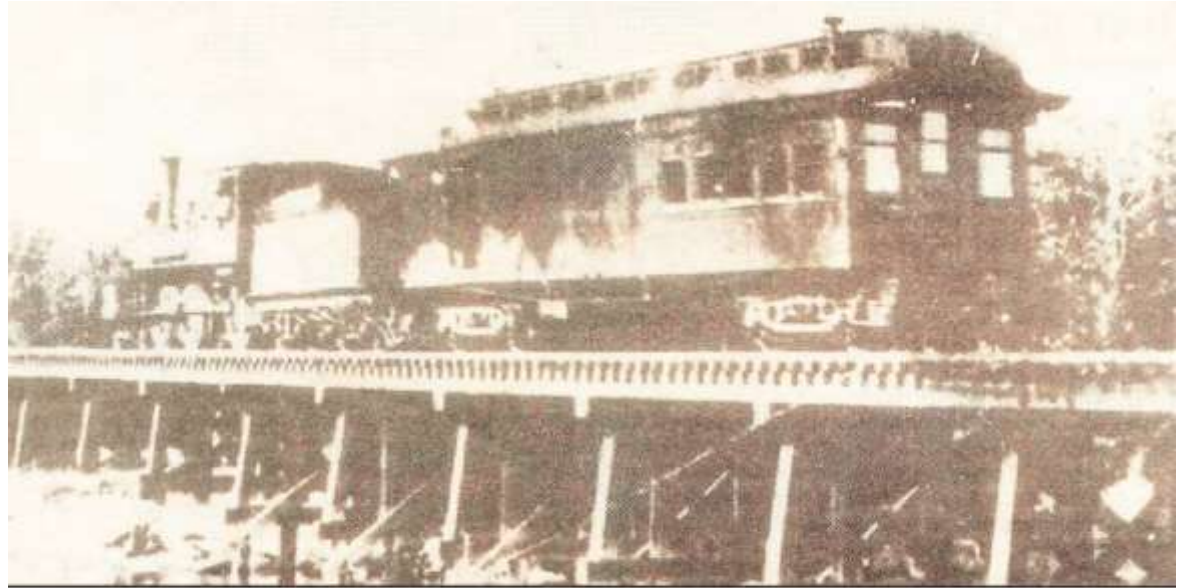




Phase II Railroad logging 1888-1920's accessed red pines, hardwoods, softwoods, and also, white pines too distant from rivers and streams. The Chicago Northwestern railroad reached Powell and Manitowish in 1889.



Railroads reached MW later than other Northwoods communities, and only tertiary routes accessed the chain.





MW was 7.25 miles away from the major rail stop of Manitowish WI. Below is the Rest Lake landing just north of the dam where stages and wagons delivered passengers and supplies.



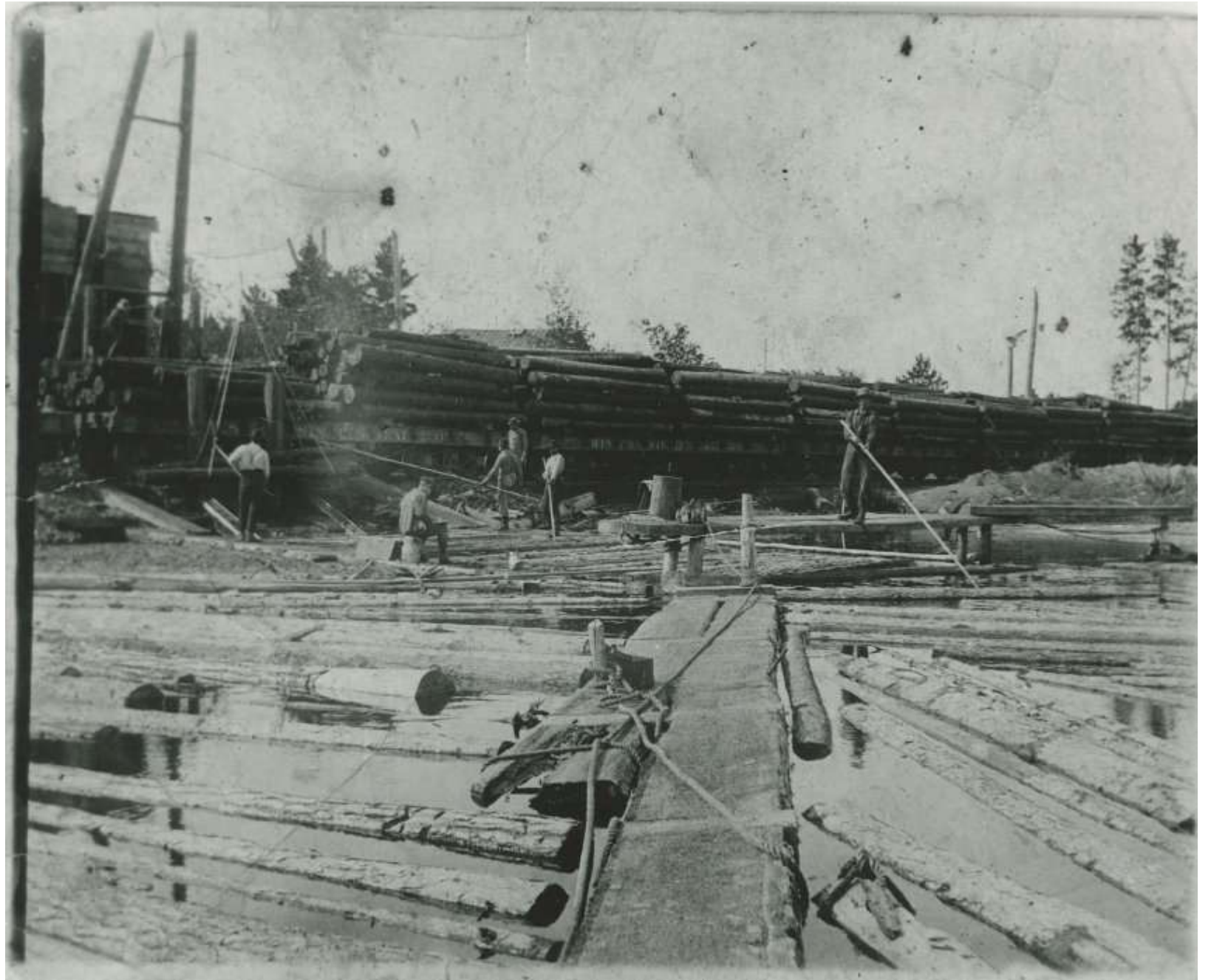


The first rail line to reach the MW chain was a spur operated by the Flambeau Lumber Co. in 1900. The Little Star Landing was between the Stepping Stone and Little Star Lakes



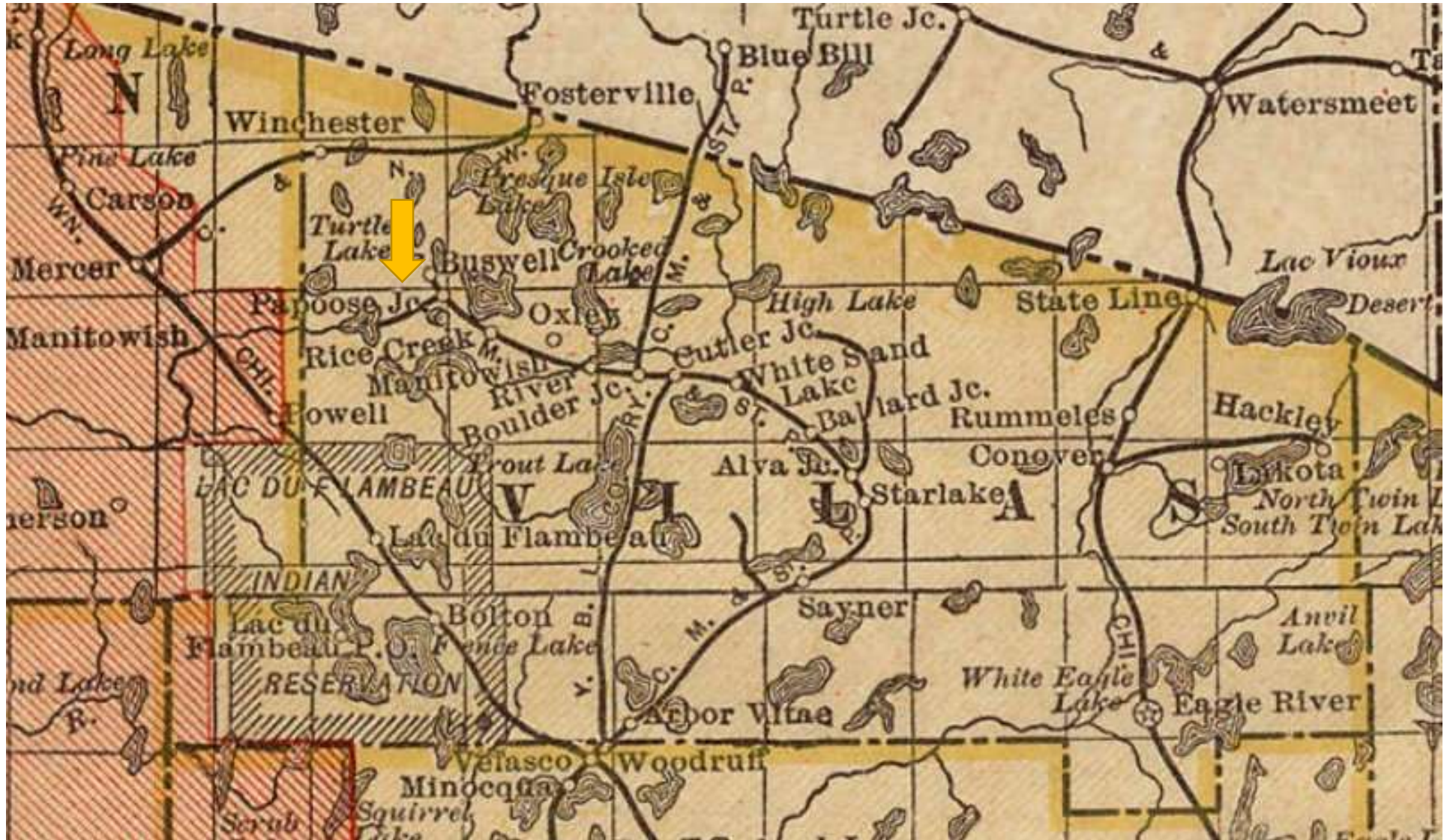
Buswell article

The Little Star  
Landing and hoist  
moving red pines  
delivered by  
steamboats.



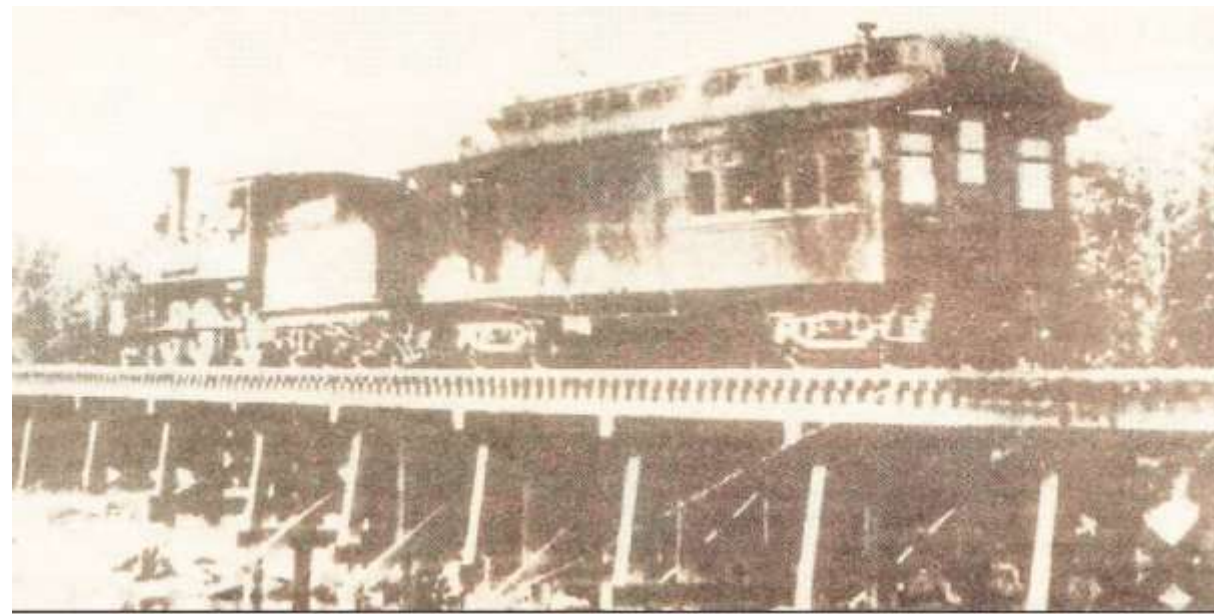


Milwaukee Road railroad reached the northern part of the MW chain in 1905.





Train engine and  
passenger car  
crossing Rice Creek,  
and a hoist that  
would be similar to  
the logging hoist  
used at Rice Creek.



Winegar, or Fosterville, and Winchester both had large Phase II railroad lumber companies. Vilas and Turtle Lumber used railcars for dining and bunk houses.

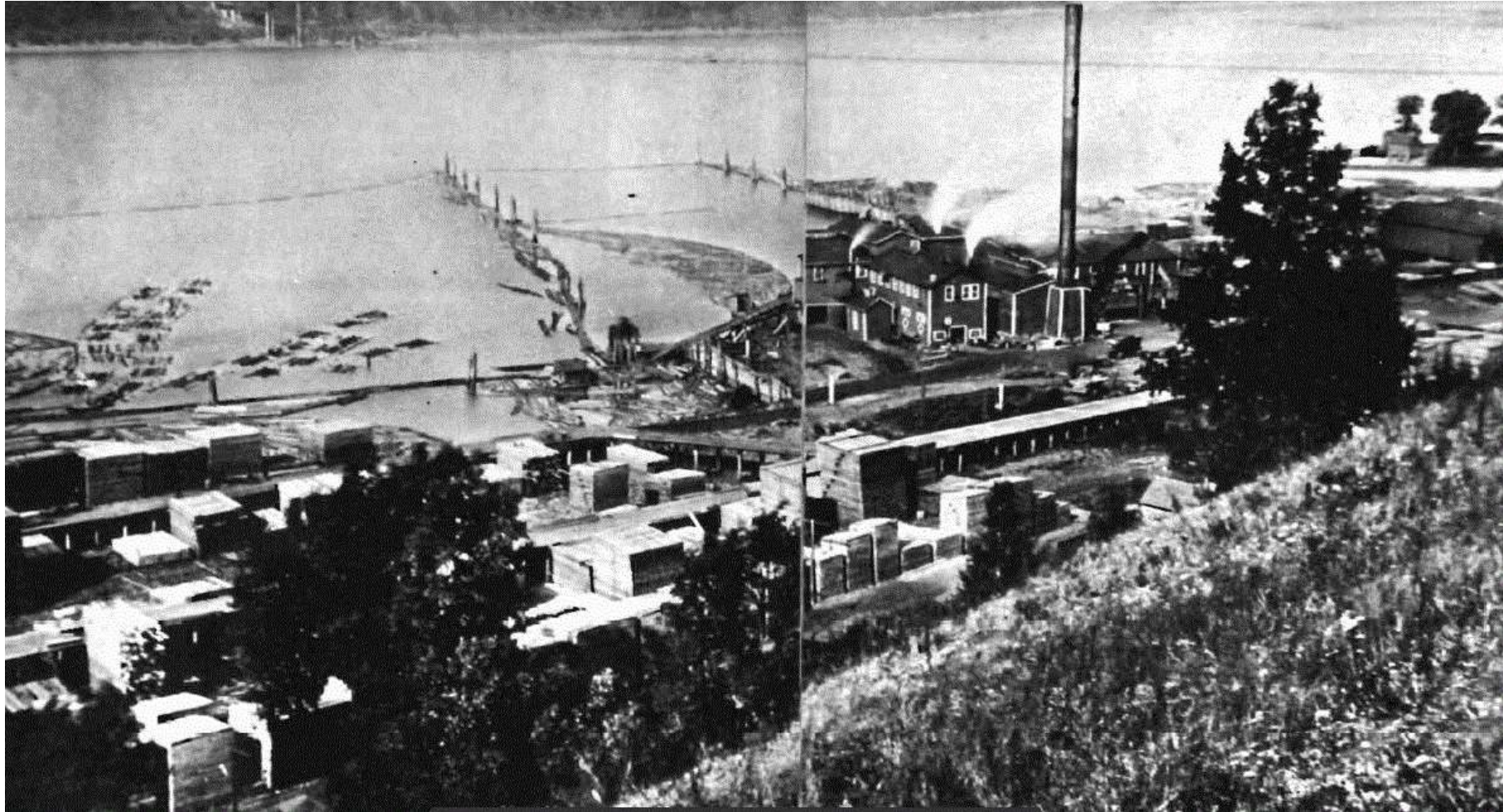




# Turtle Lumber co in Winchester

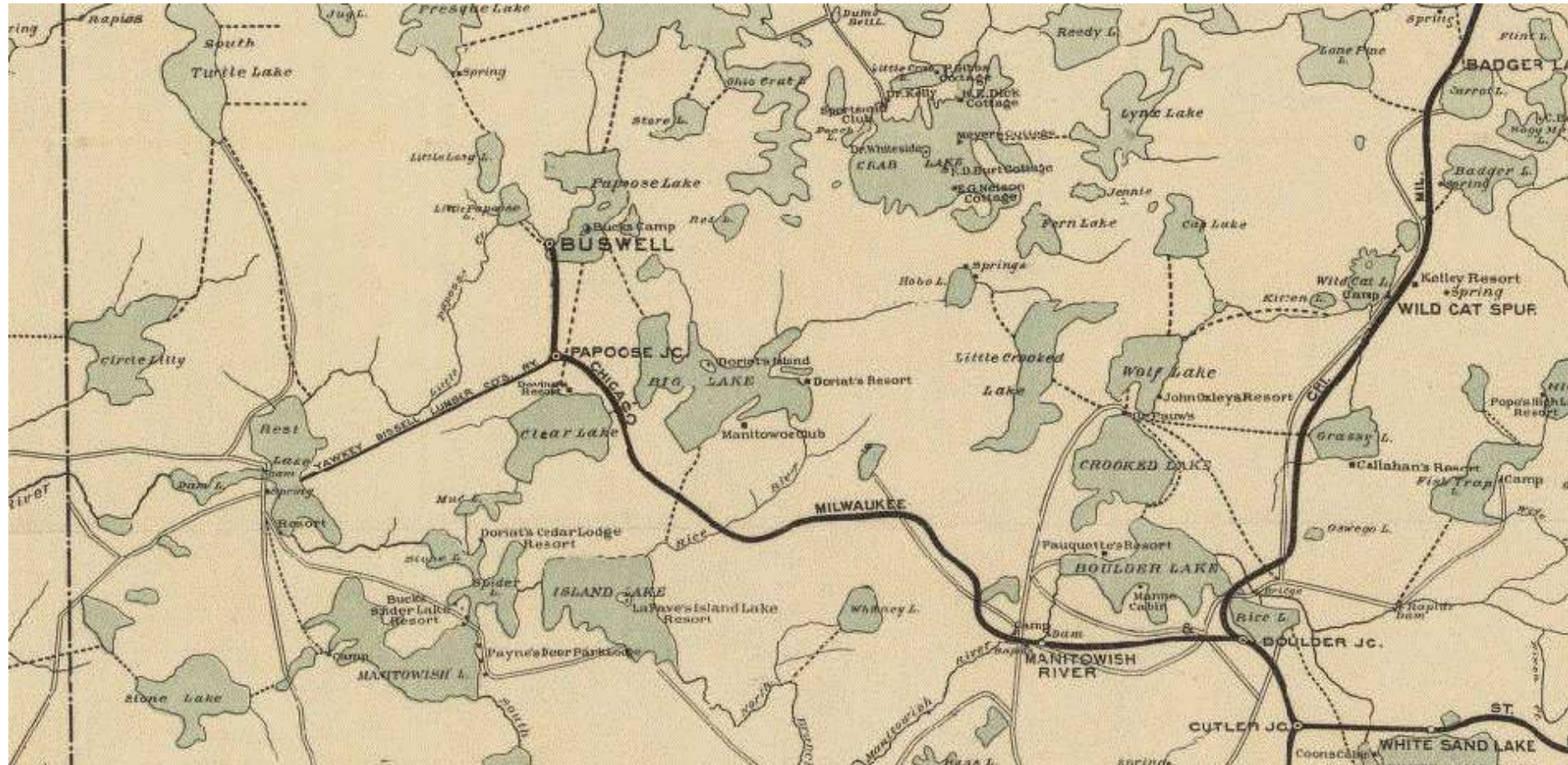


Vilas Lumber co in Fosterville, Winegar or Presque Isle.



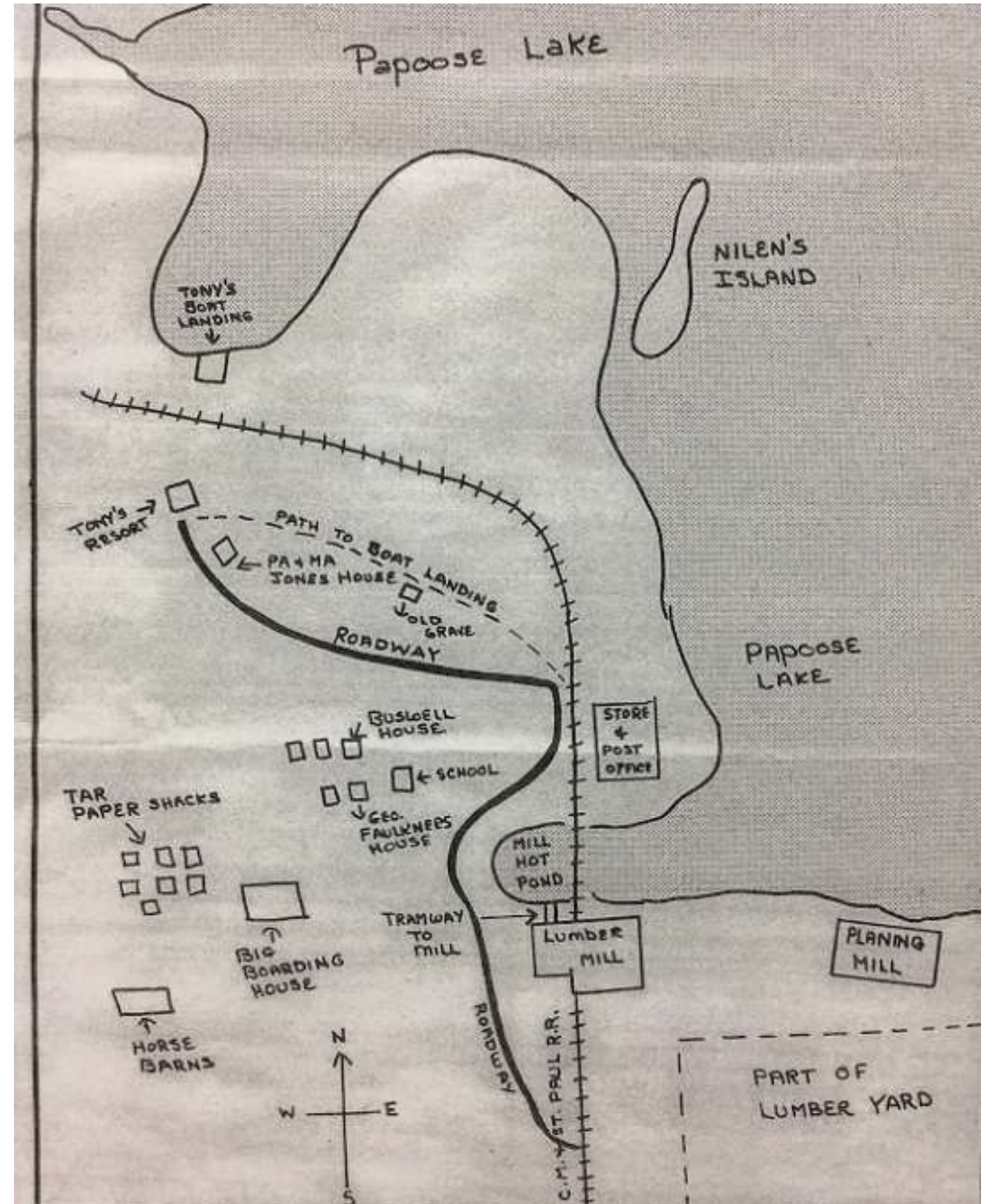


The Milwaukee Road rail line service even had a logging spur that entered Rest lake across the bay from Camp Jorn.

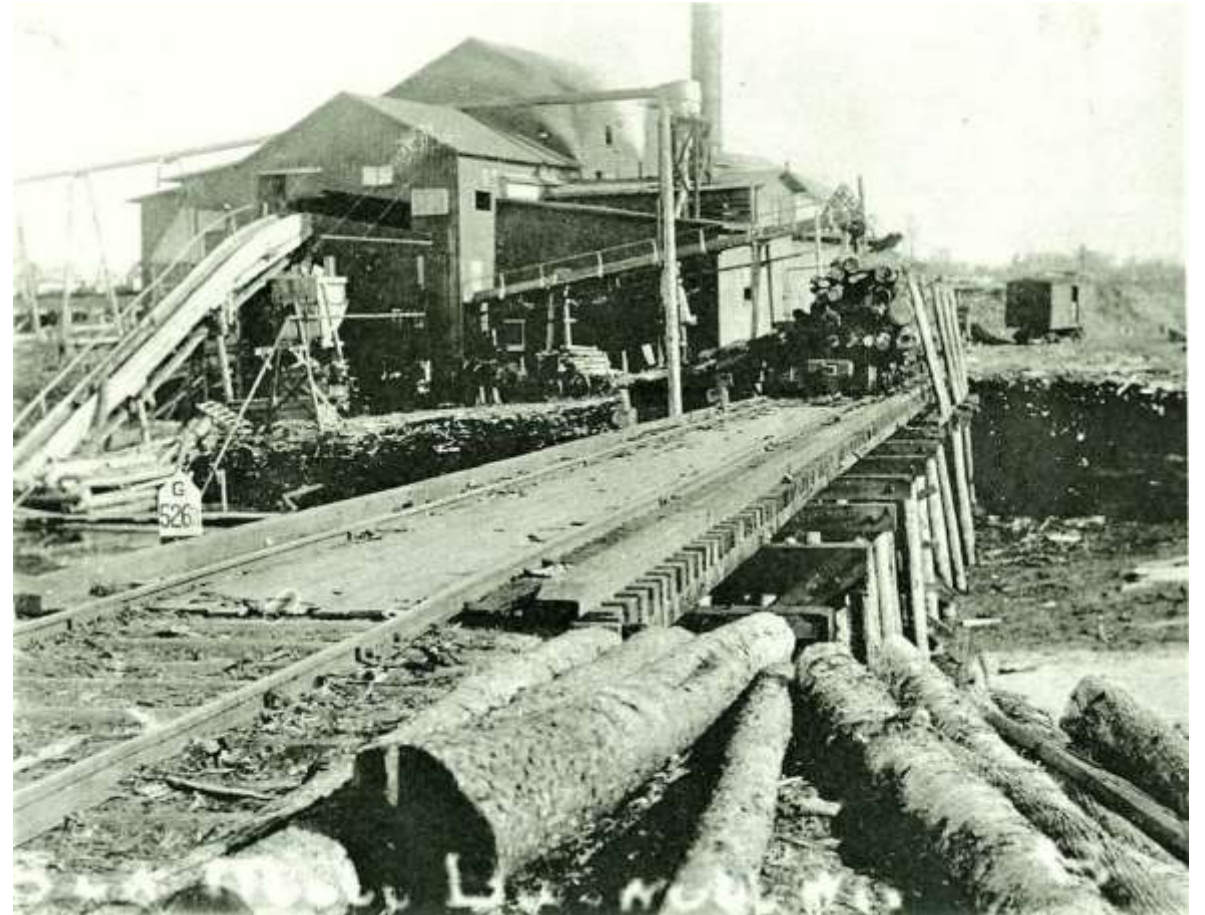




Starting in 1905, the growing logging community of Buswell showed great promise, until 1910 when fire ravaged the entire area

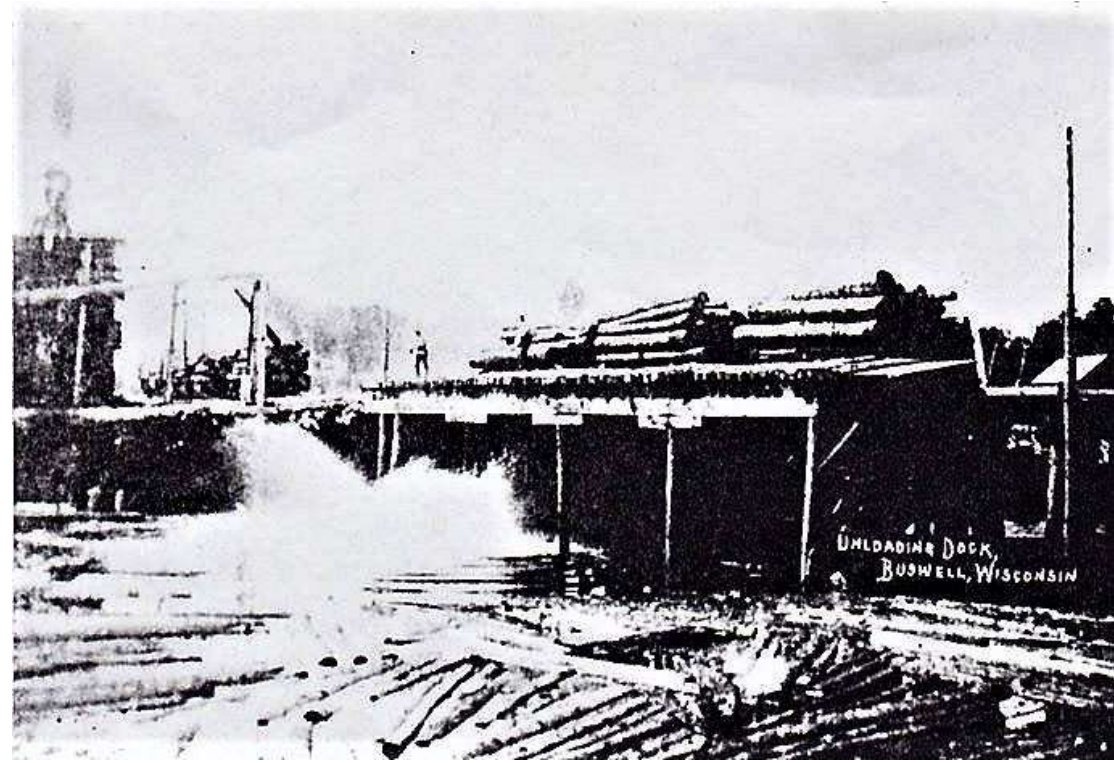


Buswell's mill supported a growing community for families.



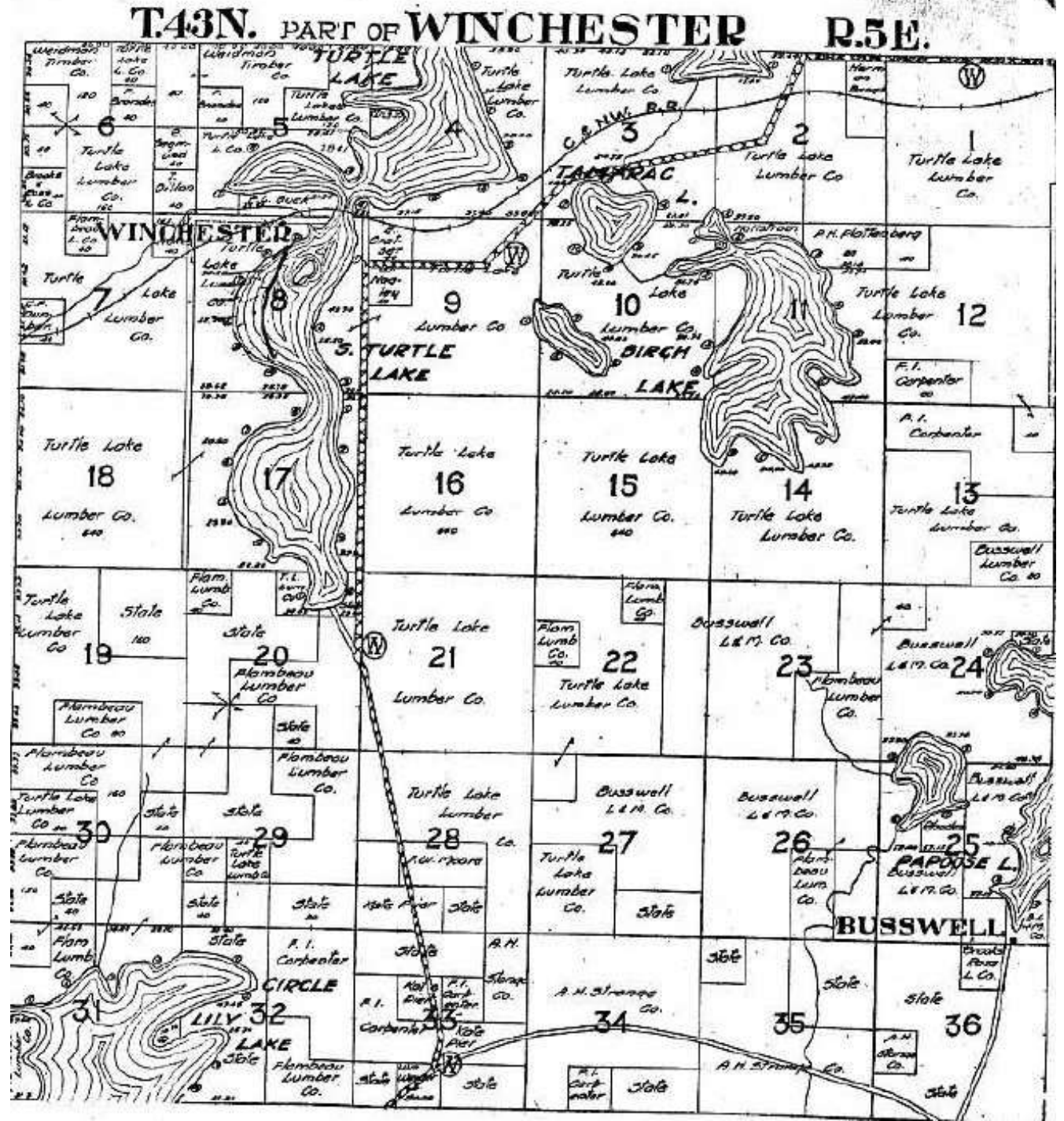


Buswell Lumber Co off loaded lumber to the lake for storage and processing. The community grew quickly with families and a schoolhouse.





Buswell Lumber and Mill Co, Turtle Lake, Flambeau, A.H Stange, ang other lumber companies, along with F. I Carpenter (a mining corporation), controlled more 95% of the land in Winchester in 1913.

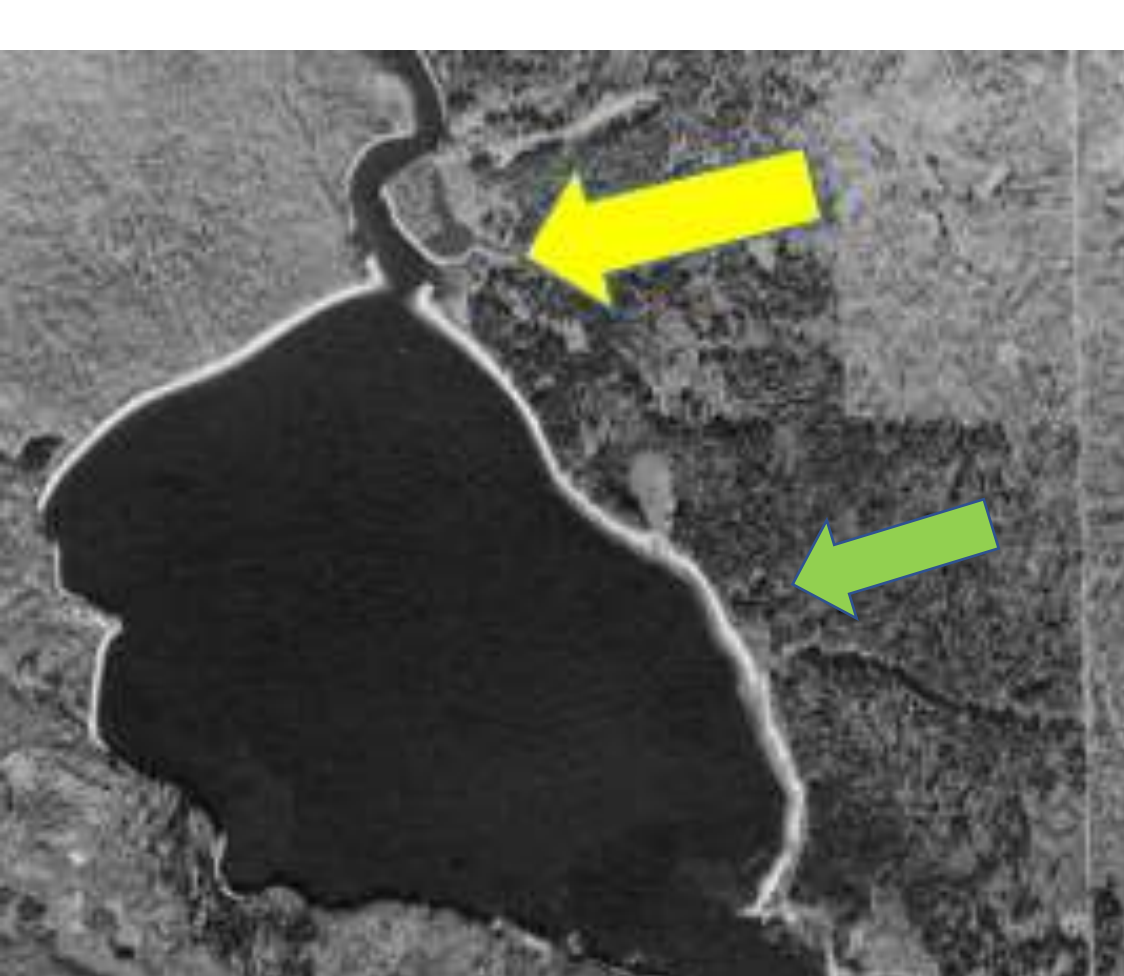


Phase III logging shifts to small mills and pulp wood harvest using trucks and tractors.





# Loveless Virgin Forest Park and sawmill on Alder Lake



Spinning blade  
of the Loveless  
Sawmill prior to  
the  
construction of  
the building.





In the 1920's, logging and lumber transitioned from large companies to smaller operations like the Loveless mill on Alder Lake.



Yellow arrow marks the water access and sawmill site, while the green arrow targets wagon landing and skidding trail for saw logs.





Modern view of the  
sawmill and log water  
access.



Drop in pine trees marks  
the landing and log  
skidding for timber  
delivered by wagon.





Loveless property  
on Alder Lake  
featuring the boat  
livery and a large  
pile of lumber  
waste.





Later, Loveless moved the Phase III mill from Alder Lake (yellow arrow) to his highway 51 property (green arrow).





[illegible]



Mystery phase III logging camp to be explored near  
Circle Lily Lake.



- Robert Loveless broke the stranglehold of lumber companies and speculators on pioneers, by completing a land contract from the Wisconsin Bluegrass Land Company for 80 acres on Government lots 3 & 4 of section 25 on the north shore of Alder Lake in 1909.
- Adding additional acres from lot 2 of section 25 in 1910.
- Typifying a pioneer family's struggles, hard work, ingenuity, and vision; ultimately achieving the American Dream.

Wausau 01721.

WHEREAS, There has been deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Wausau, Wisconsin, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of

ROBERT F. LOVELESS

has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the Lots three and four of Section twenty-five in Township forty-two north of Range five east of the Fourth Principal Meridian, Wisconsin, containing ninety-one and fifty-five hundredths acres,

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the Surveyor General:

NOW KNOW YE, That there is, therefore, granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said Robert F. Loveless

the tract of Land above described; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Robert F. Loveless

and to his heirs and assigns forever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, William H. Taft, President of the

United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

(SEAL)

GIVEN under my hand, at the City of Washington, the NINTH day of MAY, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and TEN, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and THIRTY-FOUR

By the President:

*Wm. H. Taft*

By

*W. P. Le Roy*

, Secretary.

*John O'Connell*

Acting Recorder of the General Land Office.