



Lumber Heritage Region

# CURWENSVILLE CANOE LAUNCH

- Curwensville, Clearfield County

## THIS PROJECT AT A GLANCE

**Type of Project**— improve and upgrade the path to the river for easier access and safer entry. Highlight the history of the log booms that are still visible in the river at the canoe launch area.

**Funding** — The LHR contributed \$2.6K toward this Project and additional support from Federal Home Loan Bank-Pittsburgh \$2,600.00 match Curwensville Borough crew-labor Curwensville Regional Development Corporation and Curwensville Area Revitalization Entities-project management.

To ensure the safety of the canoers Curwensville Borough enlisted Curwensville Area Revitalization Entities and The EADS Group who developed the Master Site Development Plan to provide specific design recommendations for the canoe access area.

A new design for the canoe launch was provided. The recommendation was to construct a 6-foot wide x 5-inches deep crushed limestone path with contours and switchbacks in steeper slopes with a grade of 8% to the river. This new path makes access to the river safer and more user-friendly. Meetings with

Clearfield Co Conservation District and the DEP determined that there were not any permits needed for this project. The borough crew was tasked with the installation of the new path. They cleaned and excavated the area to prepare the path for the 2A stone base. An interpretive sign that details the history of the Curwensville log booms was installed at the beginning of the path. As canoers head downstream they can see up close what a log boom looks like, how it was constructed and how it helped hold back the logs in the river.



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Cameron County Courthouse  
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# DIGITAL HISTORY OF CURWENSVILLE

- Curwensville, Clearfield Counties

## THIS PROJECT AT A GLANCE

### Type of Project—

This was a project was a Mini-Grant project awarded to Curwensville Pike Township Historical Society.

### Funding —

The LHR contributed \$275 toward this Project and the Historical society matched our contribution with \$275.



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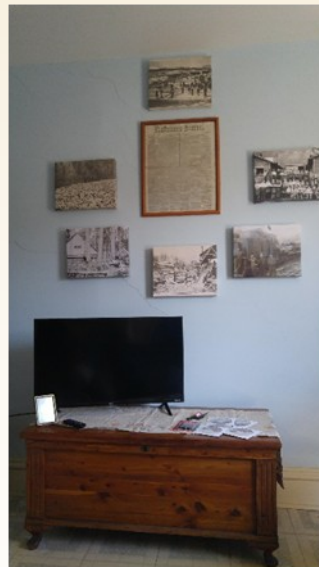
The society created a visual reminder of the history of lumber, the use of the river and the lumber industry in Curwensville. We created a movie, canvas posters and a working center for our museum so that people will be able to learn about the history of the industry in our area.

Many people today are much more drawn to using technology than to just look at a picture in a book.

This project to create a space where

people could come in and enjoy this part of Curwensville's History through modern technology.

The finished project is a movie that plays on a loop for the public when the museum is open. The video is also shown to the local history classes of the Curwensville High School when they visit the museum on the Walking Tour of Curwensville.





# TREE RING DISPLAY

## CURWENSVILLE SCHOOL

Curwensville, Clearfield County

### THIS PROJECT

#### Type of Project—

Interpretive educational exhibit for use by the community and visitors to the region. A display of a cross-section of a tree ring from a red oak log from Irvin Park.

#### Funding —

The LHR contributed \$2K toward this Project. Donation of a segment of log timber along with location at borough owned community park provided by the borough of Curwensville. The environmental education project to be available to both Curwensville Area School District students and community members.



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The project made a direct significant improvement to Irvin Park, located within the borough. Irvin Park is within walking distance of our grade K-12 school district complex. As such, it is used extensively by the school district for various educational activities. The “tree ring display” is an environmental education exhibit for the school district, the community and an attraction for visitors to the region. The exhibit will include historical information of the region relating directly to the lumber history of the region. By encouraging visitors to spend time in and enjoy Irvin Park, along with the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, the region benefits economically from this use from a tour-

ism standpoint. The display itself will be a direct educational exhibit to the lumber heritage of the region and provide additional insight to the nature based attractions of the area.

The building is staffed by volunteers through out the summer season to assist with the needs of travelers.

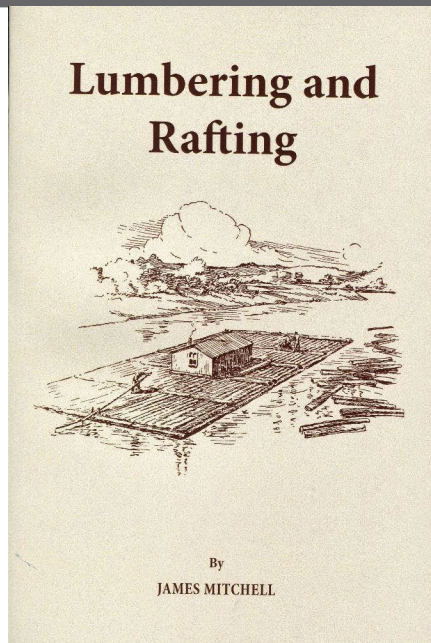
It has become a service project for our honor society students and it is embedded in our technology education, science and history courses. We plan to revisit the signage on the display each year to update and improve based on visitor input



## Lumbering and Rafting Book

### SUMMARY

The Clearfield County Historical Society's Board of Directors decided to republish the 1922 James Mitchell *Lumbering and Rafting* book. The book is a beautifully written historical and narrative account of the glory days of the logging and log rafting industry that flourished in Clearfield County in the last half the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lumbering was the gateway industry that spurred Clearfield County's population and economic growth. It was also the first resource extraction industry, later followed by coal mining and gas drilling, that changed both the landscape and business models in Clearfield County.



### CHALLENGE

Since its modern beginning in 1955, the Clearfield County Historical Society has served as a repository for numerous articles, stories, photos and recorded firsthand accounts regarding the rich logging and rafting history in the area. One book, Dudley Tonkin's 1958 *My Partner, The River*, is a definitive work on the subject. It too was republished by the CCHS.

The book is a comprehensive account of the logging and rafting by a logger and rafter himself; but it reads as sometimes overly detailed. The writing style seems, to some, to be stiff and outdated by 2021 standards. The book sells for \$50.00, which is often unaffordable to would be interested readers.

The Mitchell book, however, is a 94-page compilation of factual details and narrative tales and stories which are captivating. Mitchell, himself, was a logger and rafter. His clear memory and writing style make or superb reading.

### FUNDING

**Grant Award: \$392.38**

**Total Project Cost:**

**c. \$784.75**

### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

The Pennsylvania Lumber Heritage Region group's grant funding helped to offset printing and republishing costs of the *Lumbering and Rafting* book.





## SOLUTION

The CCHS republished an affordable (\$14.00) book that makes the unique logging and rafting era come alive for today's reader. Its board of directors also saw, in the Mitchell book, a resource that will serve as a treasure trove of local history for generations to come.

The CCHS also seeks to encourage younger generations to take up the mantle of county historical preservation. An aging board has an obligation to welcome those, who are decades younger, to involve themselves with the Society. The near century old Mitchell book will have an honored status for future generations.

## RESULTS

Numerous copies of the Mitchell book's first printing were sold at three outdoor front porch sales in August, September, and October 2020. These sales took the place of the annual Holiday sale, traditionally held in December. They were also a solution to accommodating the distancing small group porch visits, required by the COVID-19 pandemic. The CCHS also received many mail orders for the book. It should be noted that the CCHS added at least a dozen original logging and rafting photos, from its collection to the newly republished edition; further enhancing it.

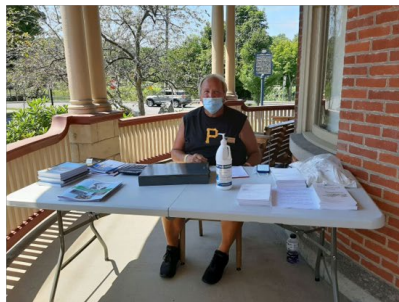
The republication was also the subject of local news media coverage. One CCHS board member, Bob Eshelman, wrote a fine review of the book for the Society's spring 2020 bulletin.


The *Lumbering and Rafting* book is as much as a great accomplishment today, as it was in 1922. The CCHS extends its deepest gratitude and appreciation to the *PA Lumber Heritage Region* for its vital assistance.

## Contact

Clearfield County Historical Society  
 511 Van Valzah Avenue  
 Clearfield PA 16830  
 814-768- 7318  
[clearfieldcountyhistoricalsociety.net](http://clearfieldcountyhistoricalsociety.net)

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**Christmas  
in October**

**BOOK  
SALE**

**Clearfield County Historical Society**  
Kerr House Museum Front Porch • 104 Eat Pine Street, Clearfield  
**Sunday, October 11th • 1:30 to 4:30**

**10% DISCOUNT ON ALL BOOKS  
AND SAM KING MAP SERIES**

Check out entire inventory at:  
[clearfieldcountyhistoricalsociety.net](http://clearfieldcountyhistoricalsociety.net)  
 County Historical Books, Maps, and CCHS Memberships  
 Make Great Christmas Gifts!

**Museum Tours Available - Masks Required.**

# SUCCESS STORY

## John DuBois Lumber Mill Interpretive Panel

**SUMMARY:** This project consists of the purchase and installation of an interpretive panel to educate and highlight the significant impact the DuBois Family and their lumber empire had on the City of DuBois and the surrounding area. The panel will be installed in the municipal park on land donated to the city by the DuBois Family.

### FUNDING

Grant Award: \$900.00

Total Project Cost: \$1,800.00

### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

The Lumber Heritage Region provided funding for the project. The City of DuBois provided the location for the panel in the community park. In addition, the City installed the panel

**Lumber Sparks DuBois' Growth, 1872-1904**

**Big Mill - 28 Years  
Oct. 24, 1874-Aug. 31, 1903**

Lumber Sold in 28 years:	586,245,000
Shipped 59,083 cars of lumber	200,000,000
Shipped 10,000 cars of shooks*	100,000,000
Retail lumber	886,245,000
<b>Total in board feet*</b>	

The Big Mill also provided lumber for use in the various DuBois Lumber facilities including:

Trestles, rebuilt three times	7,420,000
Board Bottoms, rebuilt three times	6,228,000
Railroad trestles from Clear Run to Sandy Lick (sawed timbers)	500,000
Fence around board yard, 1/2 mile square 8 ft high	175,360
Plank road on trestle, 1/2 mile long	579,000
New railroad bridge at mill	31,000
New dock	72,000
Twelve miles of sawed stringers & Logs used by railroad, rebuilt twice	5,425,600
Trestles & bridges on Juniata Railroad	500,000
Platforms for piling lath, shingles & pickets	57,884
Old sheds for planing mill and yard	1,950,000
New sheds for planing mill and yard	500,000
200 feet for tying each load of lumber	7,816,600
30 dams	3,106,956
6 mills, 13 barns, camp on Gravel Run	
Narrow Creek, Green Glen, 3 day houses, 1* Clear Run Camp,	
2 passenger coaches	10,000,000
<b>Total in board feet*</b>	42,562,400
<b>Grand total in board feet*</b>	928,807,400

\*Board feet = 1 foot by 1 inch  
\*Shooks - A bundle of parts (as of boxes) ready to put together

The heart of DuBois' connection to the lumber industry was located in what is locally referred to as "the meadow". Here was the saw mill and lumber yard of city namesake John DuBois (1809-1886).

John DuBois at age 15 first developed a large logging business near Williamsport, where today there is still a town called DuBoistown. He first visited this area in 1842 and saw its lumbering potential in the abundant white pine, hemlock and hardwoods. During his second visit in 1847, he made his first land acquisition in Clearfield County purchasing 291 acres from Israel Nichols for \$1,415. He did not permanently move here until 1871 and would eventually own 21,774 acres of land.

Construction of DuBois Lumber's little mill began in 1871 and was completed in 1872. Lumber cut at the little mill was used in constructing a larger mill, completed in 1872, measuring 250 feet long by 80 feet wide and 55 feet tall. The first log was sawed on September 29, 1874. The mill used a 250 horse power engine and at capacity could produce 120,000 feet of boards, 60,000 shingles, 40,000 lath, and 10,000 pickets a day during 1876. The best production day for the Big Mill was 300,000 board feet in one day. In 1886, the DuBois lumber yard held 20 million feet of manufactured lumber and employed 40 people.

John DuBois built a box factory in 1881 that manufactured shirt cases and tobacco cases, as well as siding and flooring. He brought the iron works that was in Williamsport to DuBois and set that up in production in 1875. He started the Hemlock Mill in 1884, and manufactured hemlock lumber as well as some hardwood lumber. He needed a market for the hemlock bark, so in 1883 John DuBois and A. R. and Edward Van Tassel started a firm for the tanning of leather and built a large tannery where the Third Ward House now stands. That entire area was given to the city for public use in the later 1800s or early 1900s, following John DuBois' death in 1886.

John DuBois' nephew John E. DuBois (1861-1934) inherited his holdings. The last pine on the DuBois estate was cut on February 22, 1901, and signaled the end of the big lumbering era in DuBois. The Big Mill did not operate an entire year in 1903 and only barely in 1904. The Big Mill ceased operations with the "boom" of its whistle on June 13, 1904.

This project is financed by the Lumber Heritage Region, Inc., with a grant from Community Conservation Partnership Program, Environmental Stewardship Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

Sign designed by Tom Schot, DuBois Area Historical Society

**CHALLENGE:** This project was undertaken to educate the citizens and visitors of our community park the important part this land had in the development of DuBois, PA. In 1871 John DuBois began construction of his first mill in what became the City of DuBois. Over nine hundred million board feet of lumber were produced at this site. Hundreds of men found employment in the mill as well as in the woods supplying the logs for the mill to process.





**SOLUTION:** This panel is located at a major access point to the various recreational venues located in the community park. Thousands of visitors will pass the location of the panel and have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the significant impact the lumber industry had on our region.

## RESULTS

We have no quantifiable results because of the newness of the panel.

### Contact

DuBois Area Historical Society, Inc  
Ruth Gregori, President  
PO Box401  
DuBois, PA 15801  
**814-371-9006**



## VanTassel Tannery Historical Panel

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this project was the design and instillation of a historical panel at the site of the former VanTassel Tannery in DuBois, PA.



### CHALLENGE

Many people today are unaware of the rich history that the timber/bark industry played in the development of the industries in our community and the region.

Hemlock bark was a key ingredient in the tanning of hides and the production of the various types of leather. From shoes, gloves, and harnesses as well as industrial belts to power equipment.

### FUNDING

**Grant Award: \$1000.00**

**Total Project Cost: \$1145.00**

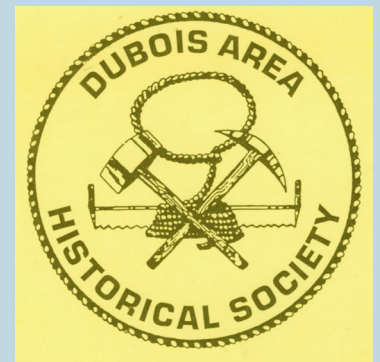
### PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

**DuBois Area Historical Society**

**City of DuBois**

**Downtown DuBois**

**DuBois Area Housing Authority**



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



## SOLUTION

Place a historical panel at the location of the former VanTassel Tannery that included a picture of Mr. VanTassel, the plant and a diagram of the plant layout. The narrative described the tanning process.

## RESULTS

This panel is located on a walking trail that has hundreds of walkers on a daily basis. People are stopping to read the panel and comment on how much they enjoyed this bit of our community history. With the installation of this panel the Historical Society has eight panels describing various historical events from our past. We have plans for an additional ten panels.

### Contact

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Society  
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814-371-9006

