Diversity Research Study

MARCH 21, 2023

By

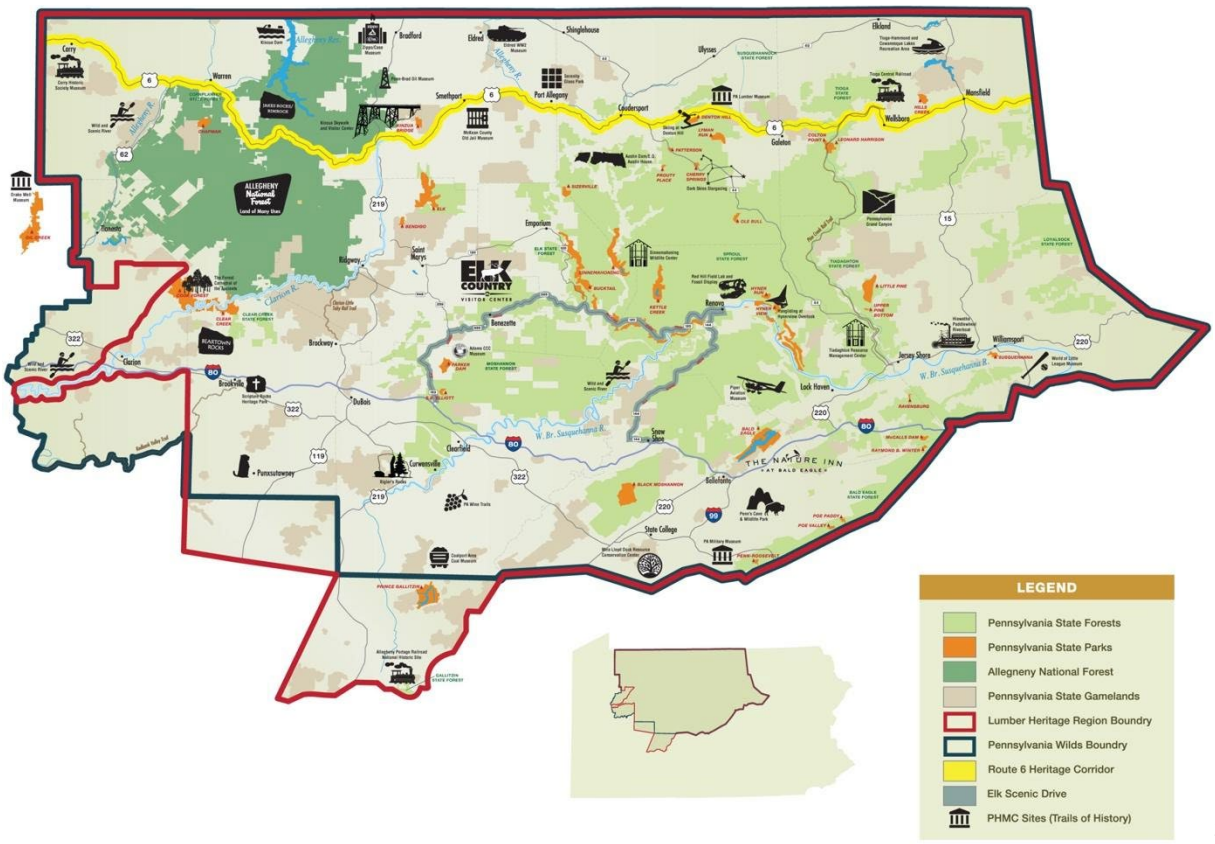
Hilary Folwell Jebitsch

 [1]

[1] LM2019.4.1, untitled image, Newell Collection, courtesy of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Forward

The purpose of this research project was to identify, record and summarize any stories, scenarios and events that highlight the historic role of women and of individuals of diverse and/or marginalized ethnic and cultural identity in the history of the Pennsylvania lumber industry, within the Lumber Heritage Region (LHR). The completion of this research study will assist the LHR in relating and teaching a more comprehensive and inclusive history of the region. The funding for the research came from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Heritage Area Program Grant Round 24. Approximately 250 hours of research was conducted throughout the 15-county region of the LHR from July 2020 through January 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional information was added during 2021.



[2]

Map illustrating the Pennsylvania Lumber Heritage Region

The research found in this report is preliminary. It is important to understand that all areas can be expanded upon. I am truly thankful to all of the historical societies, staff, researchers and individuals who were willing to open their doors to me in the middle of a pandemic. Others were able to communicate over email, phone, and Facebook to share information and answer my questions. A number of historic societies and sites remained closed due to pandemic related restrictions and their holdings may contain additional information and images that would help to enhance the research.

[2] https://lumberheritage.org/about-us/, accessed on 1 May 2021.

The histories of women and people of color as they pertain to the lumber industry are elusive. Various accounts and histories may only have a passing reference to a name or place. African American and Indigenous American cultures often relied on oral traditions to record and pass down their histories. In this region, during the early 19th and 20th centuries, those documenting the area's history were primarily white European males. The early historic accounts we have were up to the discretion of the people who were recording them and their biases. Regardless, the stories of lesser documented populations exist and I'm sure that there are more.

Some of the stories in this paper were truncated to provide balance within the report. For example, the stories of Rose Kocjancic and Mary Bizzak could be a separate project unto itself. The history of the segregated CCC camps was also shortened and could be the focus of another report. Throughout the course of my research, I was able to accumulate a number of images documenting the African American CCC companies that served in Pennsylvania. Again, this could be another relevant project. As I was writing this paper, I continued to ask questions and follow up on threads of stories. I also fell down some rabbit holes. Some information came to me too late in the writing process to include in this report. A favorite professor of mine from graduate school, Dr. Lanny Wright, once told me, "Research is never done. You just come to a point where you need to stop- usually because of a time constraint." So simple and so true, that comment has always stuck with me. It is my sincere hope that I will be able to continue on with additional phases of this project. This version, updated since the original May 11, 2021 submission, does contains edits and a few more stories, which I am grateful to have included.

The historic photographs found throughout the region provide an incredible amount of visual history. Only some of the images have documentation that explains their context and content. When we are fortunate to discover images that relate to one another, we can start to decipher and understand a broader picture. This was the case with Alma Swanson. There is definitely more to research and discover in the photographic collections of the region.

I sincerely thank Holly Komonczi for her support and encouragement during the course of the project. I am indebted to all of those who helped provide me access to historic collections and grateful to the individuals who spoke with me about their private stories or collections, specifically the Kocjancic and Bizzak families.

This project could not have been completed without the help and support of: Linda Devlin from the Allegheny National Forest Visitor Bureau, Samantha Mize from the E. O. Austin Home and Historical Society, Jack Bartok, Alexandria Kaelin from the Cambria County Historical Society, Susan Hoy from the Cameron County Historical Society, JoAnn Bowers and Kathy Arndt from the Clinton County Historical Society, Melissa Mann from the Drake Well Museum and Park, Bob Imhoff of the Elk County Historical Society and Ridgeway Heritage Council, Mary Alice (Jake) Knauff of the Forest County Historical Society, Jonathan Bogert of the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Dr. Harrison Wick- Special Collections Librarian and University Archivist at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Carole Briggs and the staff of the Jefferson County Historical Society, Royce Novosel-Johnson, the Kane Historic Preservation Society- Wendy Oaks, Denny Driscoll, and Richard Bly, Tim Morey and Carey Huber from DCNR,

Joshua Roth and Joshua Fox from the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Ann Marie Ickes from the Pennsylvania State Archives, Dave Castano of the Potter County Historical Society, Caroline and Hildred Rowles, Amy Shields from the Allegheny Hardwoods Utilization Group, Mary Sieminski of the Women's History Digitalization Project- Lycoming College, Bonnie Staughton, Susan L. Stout of the Forest Service, J. Duane Test, Scott Sagar of the Thomas T. Taber Museum of the Lycoming County Historical Society, the Tioga County Historical Society, Michelle Gray of the Warren County Historical Society, Mike Wennin, and Rich Wykoff. Thank you one and all! It was a pleasure to speak with and learn from each of you.

Diversity Research Study

The history of the Pennsylvania lumber industry is marked by the stories of men. These accounts were often written by white men and rarely spoke to the diversity of the region. Accounts of women and people of color are rare and often dismissive. In reality there are stories that relate to the strength, perseverance, and quirkiness of women and men, abled and disabled, white and black, indigenous and foreigner. Their stories are often elusive. Sometimes mentioned only as a passing comment or footnote to a bigger, larger story, but they are just as relevant. They speak to another audience. They tell a more accurate, compelling, and inclusive

story to a region filled with hardwoods and tenacity- two characteristics still found in the region today.

Women cooks and "cookees":

According to the Eight Census of the United States, taken in 1860, 40 women were employed in the lumber industry in Pennsylvania. Thirty-two of these women were listed as working in Forest County.[3] More than likely, these women were working in lumber camps. Women had distinct, albeit traditional, roles in logging camps. Typically, they were present as wives and mothers with the domestic roles of cooks, cleaners, and caregivers. Their children, if old enough, functioned as helpers, preforming basic chores. At some camps, the women came along as part of the family unit of a jobber or foremen, an experienced woodsman who functioned as a contractor with landowners to timber cut a tract of land over a given length of time. Jobbers often had or hired their own crew. As a cost saving measure, they could "employ" their wife, children, and/or extended family members. In the case of the Kettle Creek image below, one of the cooks was the camp blacksmith's wife. Widows and their children were also hired to cook and keep the camps. These instances were often captured in the black and white photographs of Pennsylvania's lumber camps, universal in all of the state's lumber regions, proving that women were involved with daily logging camp life. As illustrated in the images that follow, women can be seen grouped together in the background or along the side of the "woodhicks" or lumberjacks. In some cases, the jobber's family or a group of

[3] https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-30.pdf, accessed June 4, 2021.

children are in the center of an image, surrounded by woodhicks and bark peelers, indicating their place of importance or prominence within the structure of the camp.

[4]

Mrs. Carpenter, Calvin Carpenter and Mrs. Cooper, Lumber Camp Cooks

According to the picture's caption, Mrs. Carpenter and Mrs. Cooper cooked for a lumber camp on Kettle Creek for "60 to 80 hicks". It can be surmised that both women obtained their positions based on their husband's employment at the camp. The drudgery of cooking for upwards of 60-80 men, three meals a day, seven days a week, would have offered these women little free or leisure time to themselves. Here they are seen enjoying a moment in nature. Mrs. Carpenter's hand protectively, or lovingly, on the shoulder of her son, Calvin.

[4] "Kettle Creek Cooks," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

[5]

John Coggin's Camp
June 10, 1907

In the preceding image from June 10, 1907, the camp owners, Mr. and Mrs. John Coggin, are pictured off to the side of the lumbermen. Mrs. Coggin is sitting and holding their son, Robert. The women and children in the middle of the group are standing and were probably the camp cook staff. Mrs. Coggin may also have cooked at the camp. However, that fact that she is seated, and the other women are standing, may indicate her prominence in the camp structure as the jobber's wife. Notice the man lying on the roof top of the center building. Scraps of wood and scattered logs are prominent in the foreground.

[5] "John Coggins, Camp," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

[6]

Dan McLaughlan's Camp

The women of Dan McLaughlin's camp in Potter County are all seated in this image. All of the men are standing. This image speaks to the social norms of the time. The men and women are in visibly separate spheres- home vs. industry. One woman holds a child on her lap. Some of the men are holding the tools of their trade- axes. Being seated, the women are visually and physically lower than the men. Expected to be strong and healthy, they often worked hours longer than their male counterparts.

[6] "Dan McLaughlan camp," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

The following image is of an unidentified lumber camp in Indiana County. Although lumbering was common in the county, few pictures exist of those who labored there. This image features men and women of various ages. One woodhick holds a child and at least one, possibly two, of the women appear to be pregnant, illustrating those who had and raised their families in lumber camps. There are two distinct types of clothing worn by the women, perhaps pertaining to their age, the work they performed, their physical condition, or their relation to the camp. Lumber harvested in Indiana County supplied timber and pulpwood to various industries including paper, steel, coal, glass, and brick. Specifically, lumber was harvested to use as mine props, cross bars, and drift timbers in the coal mines in Indiana, Clearfield, and Cambria Counties.

[7]

Unidentified Lumber Camp, Indiana County

[7] Unidentified image of a lumber camp, Indiana County. Courtesy of the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County.

[8]

Clara Moore, Short Run, Potter County

The image above is inscribed on the reverse, "J.C. Goding's Camp/Short Run, Potter Co./Pa" "Clara Moore/presented to me/Christmas/by Frank Pound/1897". It can be construed that the women standing are the wives to the men by their sides. All of the women may have been involved with the cooking and care of the camp. The three seated women were probably helpers or assistants. Clara Moore would likely be one of these women. The buildings in the background indicate the size and scale of the lumber camp. The woodsmen are prominent in the foreground as well as grouped in the back on and around an outbuilding's roof. Another

[8] "Clara Moore, Short Run, Potter Co. Pa.," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

man is visible in window below the eaves of the roof line. Some of the lumbermen are holding their tools of the trade: a cant hook, axes, and "a misery whip" or a two-man crosscut saw. One man holds a jug of an unknown liquid, possibly used for work, not for pleasure. Alcohol consumption in lumber camps was commonly prohibited as was foul or crude language. These two rules were universal in lumber camps throughout the country.

Based on the handwritten description on reverse of the image, Clara Moore presented this photograph to Frank Pound. They are no longer identifiable in this image. However, the gift is indicative that they had a relationship. According to courting rules of the time, it would not have been appropriate for her to have given him a gift, had he not already given one to her.[9] It was not uncommon for the single or widowed women who worked in the lumber camps to meet their future spouse there. According to Hiram M. Cramer, a self-declared "Pennsylvania Wood-hick," from Hammersley Fork, Clinton County… "Many men that worked in the pine woods became farmers when they quit the woods…Most men that worked in the bark woods quit the woods when they got married and moved to the town to work in the brickyards and factories…"[10] Other men brought their wives and children into the woods.

Boarding houses could hold small crews for periods of time and also catered to those who needed temporary housing due to the transient nature of logging in the region. In the early

[9] Green, Harvey. The Light of the Home: An intimate View of the Lives of Women in Victorian America (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 14.

[10] Cox, Thomas R., "Harvesting the Hemlock: The Reminiscences of a Pennsylvania Wood-Hick." Western Pennsylvania History 67 (1984): 127.

1800's, James Downing and his wife ran a boarding house along the Allegheny River, one mile above Horse Creek, in Forest County. Their dwelling was a log cabin and was available to raftsmen, who would sleep on the floor or along the shore outside the house.[11] The men who stayed there were satisfied because they could get a well-cooked meal and plenty of it, a testament to Mrs. Downing and her cooking. "Raftsmen, as a rule never complained about the lodging. If they could get enough to eat, they were always satisfied."[12]

Other references throughout the region refer to husbands and their wives who jointly operated these establishments, "Bill Rowley and his wife conducted the boarding-house…"[13] There are also situations where they appear to be solely run by a women, "Mrs. Perkin's Boarding house in Cameron…"[14] The following image of the interior of a boarding house in Hammersley, Clinton County, provides a glimpse inside one of these establishments. The figure of a woman, with an apron tied at her waist, is blurred, a testament to the multiple chores she performed. She is positioned to serve. The table is set with care and order for at least 40 men. The room is narrow. The building is constructed of plank lumber. Gaps in the planks are visible at the rear of the room. It is easy to imagine Hiram Cramer, the self-declared "woodhick," seated on one of the benches.

---

[11] Leeson, Michael A. History of the Counties of McKean, Elk, and Forest, Pennsylvania With Biographical Selections, Including their Early Settlement and Development. Chicago: J. H. Beers & CO., Publishers, 1890. 841.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Huntley, George William, Jr. A Story of the Sinnamahone, 1936 (Butler, PA: Mechling Bookbindery & Bookbinders Workshop, n.d.). 160.
[14] Ibid., 185.

 [15]

Hammersley Boarding House interior

[15] "Hammersley Boarding House," courtesy of the Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-6.20, WTC, no. 3873.

The woman pictured would have had the ability to multi-task, be organized, and understand time management in order to have everything properly prepared at the meal times. She would have needed to be flexible and know how to handle the needs of an ever-changing work crew. The women who worked in the camp or boarding house kitchens had to be good cooks and possess literal and figurative strength. Huntley ascertains in his, A Story of the Sinnamahone, that,

> "The hiring of a man or woman cook usually depended on the size of the crew. Those who put in timber for rafting had small crews and in that case women invariably kept the camps. But crews for putting in saw logs often consisted of fifty to one hundred men, which required larger kettles, skillets, and pans with which to cook than for a smaller number of men. These large victuals were too heavy for women to lift and carry, and for that purpose men were employed as cooks."

Although both men and women cooked at lumber camps throughout the Lumber Heritage Region, it is clear and documented that women were cooking at camps that had upwards of 50 to 80 men at their peak season, a clear testament to their strength.

[16]

James Harvey Stephens Camp- early 1890's

A handwritten note on the reverse indicates that the above image is of James Harvey Stephens' (1825-1895) camp in Inez, Potter County. The photograph was taken in the early 1890's. Mrs. Stephens died in 1888. Her daughters, Estelle Goodnoe Griswald and Mary Davis Stephens are identified as the camps cooks. This provides another example of a lumber camp where the cooks were hired internally as part of a family unit. The women are seen in the background on the porch, presumably close to the kitchen. The camp's woodsmen are visible in the foreground holding their axes and a peavey. The teamster's horses are in the midground. The

[16] "James Harvey Stephens Camp- Early 1890's," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

man closest to each team of horses is holding their reins, indicating that they are the teamsters. Each of their individual roles are defined by the tools they hold and their placement when the image was taken.

These capable women persevered under often difficult and isolated circumstances. Sometimes referred to as "flunkies," women often did the cooking, cleaning, and washing at many logging camps. Some camps did have cooks who were men, particularly larger camps. What mattered most, regardless of gender, was that they could cook well and served an abundant amount of food. Those who prepared tasty and filling meals featuring items that the men enjoyed succeeded. According to woodsman Hiram M. Crammer, originally of Hammersley Fork, Clinton County, "The work was hard so men had to be fed well. The food was well prepared and seasoned. Plenty was furnished and if the cook didn't put it on the table, he or she was quickly discharged…"[17] Meals were cooked three times a day, seven days a week, and always on time. Lack of time management was another cause for the dismissal of a cook.

The Wiley Camp Cooks

Logging crews were willing to quit a camp and move to another over the issue of the quality and quantity of the camp's meals. Primarily relating to food that wasn't cooked well or to food that was different from what they were used too. For example, at the Wiley camp near Four Mile Run, in Cameron County, in the early 1870's, Jack Wiley had hired the "widow

[17] Cox, "Harvesting the Hemlock: The Reminiscences of a Pennsylvania Wood-Hick," 115.

Spiegelmeyer and her daughter Daisy, from Dauphin County,"[18] to do the cooking in his logging camp where the men were harvesting "spars," or white pine masts for a sailing ship. By all accounts the widow and her daughter cooked for the camp without complaint. However, when the women quit, a new cook, Sabra Ann Adams was hired. She faced a dilemma when Wiley had a group of men under foreman, John McGuin, complain regarding her cooking. The woodsmen hailed from Maine and were accustomed to eating baked beans, codfish and brown bread. Sabra Ann served them, what was considered to be local fare influenced by regional offerings and German heritage: sauer-kraut, sow-belly, apple butter, and griddle or buckwheat cakes. The crew from Maine threatened to quit over the issue of food. Wiley came to the defense of Adams, stating, "I would rather lose the crew than discharge Sabra Ann."[19] The crew from Maine quit and chose to move on and was quickly replaced by a crew of local woodsmen under foreman, Mark German. The crew had previously worked for Wiley, harvesting spars. Wiley understood the value and importance of a cook who could manage the camp kitchen and cook well.

A large amount of the food served at the camp was raised on Wiley's farm, which allowed the camp to be partially self-sustaining. What Sabra Ann chose to cook did depend on the supplies and resources to which she had access to. The buckwheat flour used for her griddlecakes was made from buckwheat grown on the farm. Apples from its orchard were used to make sauce, apple butter, cider, apple dumplings, and apple pie. The farm also provided a source of work

[18] Huntley, A Story of the Sinnamahone. 114.
[19] Ibid., 123.

for some of the woodsmen during the summer months, as the majority of logging work took place in the late fall, winter and early spring when the loggers could take advantage of the ice, snow and spring freshets to help move the spars and logs. During this time period some camps closed during the warmer months. Common foods in the region during the latter quarter of the 1800's consisted of wheat and corn bread, corn mush, molasses cake, griddle cakes, root vegetables such as potatoes and turnips, onions, sauer-kraut, beans, dried corn and rice, smoked ham, corn beef, salt pork, salt fish, fresh beef and pork during the cold weather months, apple pie, apple sauce, apple butter, cider, molasses, honey, sugar, prunes, dried apples, coffee, and tea. Fresh fruit or vegetables were only available seasonally. Eggs and milk were a rarity due to lack of cold storage, although some camps did have a springhouse where they could keep items cool.

As documented in George W. Huntley's, A Story of the Sinnamahone, Jack Wiley purchased the Mersereau property in 1870 at Four Mile Run. The property included a sawmill, tract of timber and a farm.[20] His operation was typical of the time and provides an excellent example of the turnover and type of cook and housekeeping staff typical of a lumber camp.

Widow Sally Baum and her two daughters, from Lebanon County, were employed first to cook and keep camp. Shortly after the women were hired, "Ma Baum" started "sparking," or courting, with Jake Chandler, a teamster (a person who led or drove the horses who were hauling the loads of lumber) at Wiley's camp. Sally was the camp cook but began neglecting

[20] Ibid., 99-104.

her duties to spend time "sparking" with Chandler. As a result, Sally apparently began oversleeping and her daughters were forced to pick up her workload in addition to their own. Wiley became aware of the situation and decided to fire the mother, because if her daughters were doing her work, then he had no need to retain her services. Timing was also a factor, as winter was approaching and the camp would have been extremely busy, needing meals to be ready without delay. It was imperative for a lumber camp kitchen to run smoothly during the busy winter months. In the end, Wiley fired all three women. Chandler left with the women and married Sally. They returned to the Lebanon Valley farm that the widow owned.[21] You can look at this several ways. Did Chandler "spark" with the widow because of her property? Did Baum "spark" with Chandler because she was looking for a worthy and dependable man to help run her farm out of necessity? Or did they truly mutually fall for one another?

Next Wiley hired a male cook, Dan Mundy. Mundy did not last long due to issues with drinking that caused him to neglect his work at the camp. Wiley repeatedly found Mundy drunk in a bar at town, instead of at work in the camp kitchen. Mundy was followed by the widow Spiegelmeyer and her daughter, Daisy, of Dauphin County. A few months after they started at the camp, Daisy became engaged to a local man, Dave Rankin. Shortly thereafter, the widow and her daughter quit cooking. The Spiegelmeyer's were replaced by Sabra Ann Adams. She was known to be a good cook and stayed through at least one, possibly more, season. Adams then became engaged to Harry Miller, one of the camp teamsters. Miller suffered a hauling accident and was partially crushed by a spar. He died soon thereafter. His death affected the

[21] Ibid., 104-107.

morale of the camp. Adams did not continue to cook at the camp after the accident. Instead, she married another camp teamster, Phil Wolverton. Following Adams, Wiley hired a widow from Lycoming County, Mrs. Seacrist, as the cook. At the close of camp that year, Mrs. Seacrist married camp foreman, Mark German. The following year Annie Highgetter from St. Mary's, Elk County, was hired. She was known as an excellent cook and manager. At the close of camp that year, she married Sam McDonald, a teamster who owned his own team and worked for Wiley. Annie and Sam latter went on to run a hotel in Emporium. It appears that she was the last cook at Wiley's camp. Wiley went on to become an elected Commissioner of Cameron County.[22]

The Wiley lumber camp is an interesting example when looking at the lives of women who were employed as cooks in a lumber camp, in the 1870's, following the Civil War, in Cameron County. Wiley hired 6 camp cooks in a relatively small period of time, approximately 6-8 years. Five of the cooks were women, only one was a man, Dan Mundy. None of these women came with a jobber as part of his family. Mundy did not succeed due to what could be construed as alcoholism. Three of the women were widows. Two were unmarried women. Two of the widows had daughters to care for. Of the five women, four married staff from the lumber camp and quit their positions as a result. The fifth woman, the widow Spiegelmeyer, did not marry. However, her daughter, Daisy, did marry a local man. As a result, they quit the camp. Presumably, Daisy and her new husband took care of the widow. The women were coming to the Four Mile Run area to work from outside of the region. Some of them owned property in

[22] Ibid., 106-162.

their home locations. Finding a woman with property and the ability to cook well, would have been attractive to a man. Finding a man who knew how to work hard and prove his ability, would have been beneficial to a woman in this time period. These women also had to be industrious, independent, and resourceful.

Although phrased in a manner that would now be considered demeaning, Huntley acknowledged the occurrence of matches made between the women cook staff and the working men in the lumber camps.

> "The men did not care much about the appearance of a man cook or his cook-room, but they would not tolerate a woman cook who kept herself or cook-room in an untidy condition. She had to keep herself 'dolled up' because the men were just as particular about her personal appearance as they were about her cooking. They showed her much courtesy, and if she were not a married women, she could pick out the best marriageable man on the works for a husband."

This double standard would have subtlety put more pressure on women working in the camps to keep up their appearance in addition to their work load. This sentiment is an example of the idealized societal and social standards of the nineteenth century. Women represented what was considered good, pure and moral. They were considered to be delicate and the "weaker sex." Men and women lived in separate spheres, the women's being focused on home and the domestic arts. The lives of men were more public, focused on industry and commerce. They were expected to be working and had looser social restrictions. Like many women of the era, those who worked in Pennsylvania's woods lived in an era of contradictions. The work they completed was not easy and was never ending. In 1936, Huntley adequately conveyed this outdated philosophy:

> "In those days the women worked very hard in the homes. They had to cook food, clean house, and wash clothing, besides making wearing apparel, bed clothing and carpets. They nurtured the children, gave religious and educational instruction to the young, provided social enjoyment, nursed the sick and helped bury the dead. Women had no political and very few property rights. They had no place in politics, business, or war, because they could not defend their rights on the field of battle. Woman's divine duty was to get married and raise a family, usually marrying between the ages of fourteen and twenty. Her greatest influence was in the home. It was said, 'The hand that rocked the cradle ruled the world'. She was proud of her sphere and satisfied with it, until 'he-women' agitated a change and indulgent men granted it."[23]

His last sentence is a direct reference to women's suffrage and his resentment towards it.

The travel patterns of both the men and the women involved with lumber camps varied. While some camps used labor from local communities, others relied on transient labor from other regions. Some of the women who cooked at Wiley's camp in Cameron County came from Lebanon County, Dauphin County, and Elk County. One of Wiley's early crews came from Maine. It was not uncommon for logging crews to move throughout Pennsylvania, Maine, Canada, the New York Adirondacks, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, West Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, or further seeking experience and employment.

Wilber and Allen Russell ran several lumber camps, putting in spars, on and around Hunt's Run, Cameron County, from approximately 1873-1883. The Russell brothers built their first logging camp at "Russell Hollow" in 1873. The camp consisted of roughly 60 men. Unlike Wiley, the Russells hired married couples to keep their camps, rather than individual women. The

[23] Ibid., 334.

brothers first hired Dan Crawford and his wife to keep their camp.[24] The next year the brothers hired Rodney McSwan and his wife. Mrs. McSwan handled the cooking while her husband acted as the "cookee" or cook's assistant or helper. The "cookee's" responsibilities included, but were not limited to washing dishes, waiting on tables, peeling vegetables, washing towels/linens/laundry, packing lunches, calling the men to meals, cleaning tables, gathering wood and water. Both Mr. and Mrs. McSwan were instrumental in keeping the camp clean.[25] This included delousing the woodhicks beds in the spring, replacing the straw in the sleeping mats, cleaning and whitewashing the bunkhouse. The McSwan's, like the women at Wiley's Camp, would have resided in separate living quarters from the men, possibly attached to the kitchen. The McSwan's appear to have stayed on as the camp cook/cleaning staff and provided consistency for the remainder of the camp's existence. The married couples who cooked and kept the Russell's logging camp offer a different perspective from the individual women who cared for Wiley's camp.

Idessa Roupp

Relying on their domestic skills, women continued to find employment as cooks at logging camps in the early twentieth century. The industrial era saw advancements in food preservation and access which would impact the kitchens of Pennsylvania's lumber camps. There were also developments in logging equipment. Rail access continued to increase to more remote regions of Pennsylvania's forests. Related industries continued to grow and develop

[24] Ibid., 168.
[25] Ibid., 184-197

including tanneries, stave, kindling, resin, chemical, furniture, veneer factories and paper mills. The need for wood continued to thrive. In some regions second growth would begin to be harvested.

[26]

Possibly Idessa and Viola Roupp

This photograph, from the Lycoming County Historical Society, depicts two young women, most likely cooks, seated upon a pile of firewood. Presumably that firewood is what that they used to heat the camp's stove to cook and to heat water to wash dishes and laundry. Next to the perched women is a wooden milk crate proudly advertising, "VAN CAMP'S/EVAPORATED/ MILK/WILL KEEP INDEFINITELY IN ANY CLIMATE". The box speaks to their responsibilities in the kitchen and the remoteness of their location. Access to canned evaporated or condensed milk

[26] ESU.LL.C.19, "Two Girls on Woodpile with Young Girl in Background." From the Collection of the Lycoming County Historical Society and Thomas T. Taber Museum.

would have helped provide more diversity in the items they were able to make and serve. Fresh milk was a rarity as access to it was limited and the only cold storage available would have been a springhouse cooled by a stream. Behind them is a large stack of Hemlock bark, indicating that they are working at a bark peeler's camp. In the background there is a young girl standing in front of an outbuilding. Next to her is another large pile of bark. Behind the women are some of the camp's buildings. The tall one was most likely the bunkhouse. Tree stumps and fallen trees are visible in the distance.

Although the women in the photograph are not identified, the image came from Lycoming County and could possibly be of Idessa and Viola Roupp.[27] If not, the photographic evidence still illustrates their story. Around 1903 their brothers, John and Grant Roupp, built a lumber camp for a bark peeling job on the Flooks Run timber lands, near their home in Beech Grove, Cogan House Township, Lycoming County. "Their sisters, Idessa and Viola, were the camp cooks. Laura Weaver was hired to help in the kitchen. Sometimes when the crew was extra large, their mother [Harriet Eva Roupp] came to the camp and helped the girls."[28] This is another example of a family effort. Woodlands were still visible behind the young women in the photograph. Within ten years, the entire area would be denuded and desolate. At the turn of the century, women were still not seen as risktakers or physically capable of the same type of

[27] Idessa Edith (Roupp) French, 1884-1969. Jessie Viola Roupp, 1886-1960). Born in Cogan House Township, Lycoming PA. Children of Charles Henry Roupp and Harriet Eva McCracken. https://www.wikitree.com/genealogy/ROUPP, accessed 9 April 2021.

[28] Landis, Milton W., "Sliding Logs in the Old Lumbering Era," The Journal of the Lycoming County Historical Society Vol. V Number 2, (Fall 1968): 12.

work done by the woodsmen, Idessa bucked the social norms of the time. The following story indicates her fortitude, strength, independence, and resourcefulness:

> "One cold, crisp mid-winter's day one of the teamsters came down with a severe sickness and was compelled to put his team in the barn and go to his bunk. The slide was in perfect condition and the logs were coming faster than the teams could shove them down the slide. Idessa could not allow this waste of horsepower and against the protests of her helpers and the men alike, she dressed in warm clothing, went to the barn and hitched up the team and with great determination drove team all that day and the next until the teamster was well enough to resume his job."[29]

Idessa took matters into her own hands and prevented a loss of work, and ultimately profit to her brother's business, by literally taking the reins of the horses. She would have worked side by side with the other male teamsters and woodhicks from the camp. The fact that she worked as a teamster (one who would take care of and drive a team of horses used to pull loads or sleighs of logs) for two days, indicates that she was accepted in this role by her brothers and the men in the camp.

Idessa's granddaughter, Bonnie Staughton, was shown the picture of the two young women on the pile of wood and believed that she recognized them as her grandmother and Aunt, Idessa and Viola. Although Mrs. Staughton was not aware of Idessa's role as a teamster, she did recall that Idessa loved horses and was an accomplished horsewoman, perhaps attributing to her ability to "take the reins."[30]

[29] Ibid., 13.

[30] S., Bonnie. "Re: Idessa French's profile on WikiTree." Message to the author. 14 April 2021. E-mail.

 [31]

Idessa Edith (Roupp) French (1884-1969)

Idessa went on to marry Nathan Edwin French on December 23, 1908, in Wellsboro, Tioga County. Together they had three children. It was recorded that Idessa shared this story again with her brother, William Roupp (1895-1967), when he came to visit her in Mansfield, in 1967, shortly before his death.[32] Idessa's granddaughter recalled that her grandmother spoke of her time as a cook at a logging camp and referred to it as "Canoe Camp," but never indicated that this camp belonged to her brothers.[33] Canoe Camp is located in Richmond Township, Tioga

[31] Staughton, Bonnie. "Idessa Edith (Roupp) French." Genealogy site, January 30, 2019. https://www.wikitree.com/genealogy/ROUPP, accessed on 9 April 2021.

[32] Landis, "Sliding Logs in the Old Lumbering Era," 13.

[33] S., Bonnie. "Re: Idessa French's profile on WikiTree." Message to the author. 14 April 2021. E-mail.

County, and was possibly the site of another logging camp that Idessa worked at. Timber was harvested in Canoe Camp along Whittaker Creek at the turn of the century.

Anna Haberger Eckert

Anna Haberger Eckert was interviewed by Thomas Taber somewhere between 1958 and 1976. Her oral history provides important insight to the life of a woman working at a Pennsylvania lumber camp during the first quarter of the twentieth century. Taber's interview does not include questions, but rather flows just as a stream of consciousness. The information regarding Anna's story is derived from her oral history. Anna worked for several lumber camps, starting when she was only 14 or 15 years old. The first camp she cooked for belonged to Joe Erich and was located at Beechwood[34], near Shippen, in Cameron County. More than likely she started as a "cookee" or cook's assistant. Her father worked for the camp and may have been instrumental in helping her to find employment. She worked at Erich's camp for a couple of years before she married Henry Eckert and moved to her husband's camp along Trout Run, near St. Mary's, in Elk County. Henry was a teamster at Joe Weisner's logging camp. The camp had as many as 35-40 men in the summer, but usually less then 30, and up to 50 men during the winter.[35] Anna began cooking at Weisner's camp around 1910. During this time, she and Henry had several children, who were then raised in the lumber camp. In addition to cooking and caring for the men, she had the additional responsibilities of raising her young children in a relatively isolated environment.

[34] Taber, Thomas. "Oral Memories of Eastern United States Logging." Muncy, PA.: The Author, 2006. 235.
[35] Ibid., 235-236.

As the camp cook, Anna worked from roughly 5am until 10pm, with a two-hour respite in the afternoon to wash and care for her children.[36] Anna did have a helper, referred to as "the girl," in her interview. The helper or "cookee," would have worked similar hours and helped Anna with her children. According to Anna, "I got paid $18 a week and I had to pay my girl. I paid her $5. That good pay for the girl. Lots of them only got $3-4, but I had the children and she helped me there. The youngest girl I had was about twenty."[37] Anna recalled the responsibilities they had and the food they cooked:

> "The girl took care of the table and clearing up. I did the cooking. She helped feed them. We served breakfast at 5:30 in the morning when the men had far to go. They started work at 6:00. I got up before five. I had almost everything ready. You had your meat cut, your potatoes sliced, and everything the night before. You cooked the oatmeal and the pancakes. There were fried potatoes and beef in the summer mostly. In the winter we had pigs which were raised in the summer."[38]

Anna was able to place orders for supplies. She had to manage and calculate which food and supplies would be needed, and in what amounts. Undoubtably, she had a budget to adhere to, although this was not mentioned in her interview. The goods arrived once a week by a supply train. During the summer months fresh vegetables could be acquired from local farmers. They may also have been able to pick wild berries from the brush that grew up in areas where the trees had already been harvested near their camp.

> "Everything came in by the tub full. We used the lard for frying and pies and cake. You made pies of anything you had. All kinds of fruits in the summer. In the winter you had dried fruits and you cooked them and put them in pies. And you had chocolate and all kinds of pudding pies like vanilla and coconut and had lots of custard pies. I would bake a cake every day for breakfast and supper. I

[36] Ibid., 235.
[37] Ibid., 235.
[38] Ibid., 235

> cooked bread and donuts. In the summer the crew wasn't as big and so I didn't have to bake every day. Sometimes we had less than 30 men in the summer. In the winter you baked every day."[39]

Anna and her helper would have also prepared soups, gravies, mashed potatoes, vegetables, dried rice and beans, roasts, beef, ham, fritters, cookies, and coffee. The stove they used to cook on was twelve feet by four feet and was heated by wood, which they would have been responsible for.[40] Water was constantly boiled on the stove to wash the dishes with.

According to Anna's husband, Henry, the men were served eggs and fish on Fridays. Fridays were the only day that they had eggs. The fish was a salted white fish that came in tubs.[41] He reiterated that they had "good cooks in the camps" and that "you were never hungry." In the lumber camps loggers were routinely provided with ample quantities of food. Given the amount of work these men completed on a daily basis, it can be estimated that that they could consume anywhere between 5,000 and 8,000+ calories a day, well beyond our current dietetic recommendations, but necessary for the difficult work they completed. During this era the loggers and their counterparts in the sawmills were probably the best and most consistently fed workers in the country.[42] Although their living conditions in the lumber camps may be construed as primitive and rough, the loggers who worked in these camps were provided with housing and food, in addition to their pay. Those working in the woods, away from the lumber

[39] Ibid., 236.
[40] Ibid., 236.
[41] Ibid., 237.
[42] Conlin, Joseph R., "Old boy, did you get enough of pie? A Social History of Food in Logging Camps." Journal of Forest History 23 (October 1979): 165.

industry related mills and factories, also had the benefit of working in the fresh air, unlike their counterparts who worked in Pennsylvania's coal mines and steel mills.

Alma and Jake Swanson

Cooks and jobbers sometimes had families who lived at the camps where they worked. Growing up in these lumber communities must have been a profoundly unique and prolific experience. Early exposure to hard work, long hours, and isolated conditions, surrounded by the beauty of Penn's woods and later the devastation of the logging industry, and the ever-present woodhicks. These woodsmen came from varied backgrounds and locations but consistently they seemed to abide by common camps rules: no swearing, no drinking or fighting at camp, demonstrate respect for the cook, work hard, and work safely.

The story of Alma and Jake Swanson slowly emerged through the following series of photographs. Separate, they are indicative of the region and similar to other images. Together they provide a more cohesive story of a jobber and his family in Potter County.

[43]

Alma Swanson and Cook, Potter County

The 1902 image above illustrates the lives of two women lumber camp cooks. Handwritten notes label the woman on the left as "Alma Swanson" (1875-1911) and the other woman simply as "Cook." Alma appears to be working as the "cookee" or cook's helper. Included are the blurred and labeled images of her two children, Mary and Leon, ever present in the camp kitchen. Alma was married to Jake Swanson, a jobber who worked near Hulls, Potter County.[44] More than likely, Alma was able to secure her position because of her husband's role in the

[43] "Cook and Cookee," Image courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

[44] Roth, Joshua. "Camp cook image request." Message to the author. 26 March 2021. E-mail.

camp. Notice the basin piled high with dishes and the stacks of bread loaves on the barrels. The shelves are neatly lined with decorative edging paper. The walls are uniformly plastered with sheets of newspaper, possibly providing insulation and a connection with the outside world. As expected, the kitchen was well kept and organized. The cook's tools are visible, neatly organized on shelves and hooks.

 [45]

Jake Swanson's Camp

[45] "Jake Swanson's Camp," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

William T. Clarke was a photographer who at times lived in Potter and McKean Counties. He is known for his images of lumbering in Pennsylvania's forests. The above photograph of Jake Swanson's camp is credited to him. It provides a visual image as to where the Swanson's lived and worked, as well as their surrounding environment. Three women are visible in the back, standing in front of the midsized building, flanked by horses. Presumably one of them is Alma. Slightly in front of them are a group of pigs along the railway. Some camps raised animals as a food source. The pigs would have been raised in the summer and then butchered and consumed in the winter. There are two sets of rail tracks. The number of men, horses, cut trees, and scalped landscape is a testament to the physical strength of the men, the scale of their work, and size of the camp.

[46]

The Swanson Family with James Reed

The above image features "lumbermen" Jake Swanson and James Reed, as well as Swanson's family. Taken a few years later than the previous image of Alma as a cook's helper, this view

[46] "Swanson Family," courtesy of the "Kettle Creek and Cross Fork Remember When" Facebook page. Posted by Lanny Nunn on March 7, 2021. According to a comment posted on the page by John C. Wetzel, "Alma Berfield Swanson, 1st wife of Jake. Born 1-17-1875, died 6-5-1911- Daughter of William and Mary (Brooks) Berfield."

demonstrates how the Swanson family has grown and indicates that they were still present in the lumber camps of the region. The image was likely taken in the Cross Forks area. Notice the size and scale of the logs surrounding them and that the woods have been selectively cut.

[47]

East Fork School about 1906

Not all children who grew up in and around lumber camps had the ability to attend, or access to, a formal education. Taken around 1906, this image of the East Fork School, Potter County, indicates that three of Alma and Jake Swanson's children were able to receive some schooling. Leon, Norman, and Mary Swanson are recorded in the picture's label. Notice the barren,

[47] "East Fork School about 1906," courtesy of the Potter County Historical Society.

denuded landscape surrounding the schoolhouse, a testament to the clearcutting practices of the day. Alma died 5 years later, in 1911, at the age of 36.

Bertha Whitton

Nebraska, located in Forest County, was founded in 1827 and consisted of woods that were harvested by the T. D. Collins Lumber Company on the Tionesta Creek. The town had a number of lumber mills, all of which were torn down around 1940 when the Tionesta Dam was constructed. Nebraska is now just a footnote in history. Lois Lackey, of Tionesta, recalled that her grandmother worked as a cook at one of the lumber camps for T. D. Collins. Her grandmother, Bertha, started cooking at the camp when she was 16, around 1900. When Bertha was 18 years old, she married one of the men who worked for the logging camp, Amos Whitton. They met while she was employed as a cook at the logging camp. Amos was double her age. Lois recalled that her grandfather often kidded Bertha and joked to his children and grandchildren that one of the reasons he married her was because he *knew* that she could cook![48] A sentiment often repeated by lumbermen who met their wife while working in the woods.

Minnie Showers Test

Numerous children grew up in and worked at the region's lumber camps. According to Duane Test, his mother, Minnie Showers Test, moved to Clearfield County from the coal regions of West Virginia, in 1922, when she was orphaned at 9-years-old. She lost her parents and came

[48] Lois Lackey, interview by author. Fieldnotes, Tionesta, Pennsylvania, 8 June 2021.

to live with her aunt Lizzie and uncle Jim Dodge. Together they raised her in several of the area's lumber camps.[49] Minnie was interviewed by Jane Elling, a former staff writer and columnist for Clearfield's newspaper, *The Progress*, in 1998. Much of what was recorded in Elling's article, was collaborated by her son.

The first camp Minnie lived at was between Medix Run and Benezette, Elk County. The camp was housed in a large farmhouse and had 15 men. Minnie and her aunt Lizzie cooked for them. Next, they moved to a camp at Coleman Siding, Clinton County, along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. This camp was one of several operated by her uncle, Jim Dodge. 11-year-old Minnie and her aunt were the cooks for roughly 25-30 men. The number of men rose to 35-40 during bark peeling season. In addition to helping prepare the meals, Minnie's responsibilities included: cleaning the oilcloth table linens, setting the tables at mealtimes, and washing, cleaning, and filling the oil lamps. At this camp, Minnie's uncle hired a man who helped the women in the kitchen. He routinely washed the dishes, cleaned the floors and started the fire in the woodstove before breakfast.[50]

Minnie and her aunt woke at 4:30 each morning to start to prepare the daily 3 meals. A regular breakfast included eggs, bacon, biscuits, and fried potatoes. Supper and dinner consisted of meat, vegetables, potatoes, bread, and desserts. They prepared numerous desserts daily including pies, cakes, and rice pudding. Her uncle constructed a springhouse to keep butter,

[49] Mr. Duane Test, interview by author, fieldnotes. Curwensville, PA., 21 September 2020.
[50] Elling, Jane, "Childhood memories of lumber camps and Dimeling vacations," The Progress, (Clearfield, Curwensville, Philipsburg, Moshannon Valley, PA), 17 April 1998.

diary, and meats cool. All of the camps supplies were ordered from catalogs or purchased from Lauderbach and Zerby, in Clearfield, and delivered to the camp by a weekly supply train. Spring and fall brought on additional cleaning tasks for Minnie and her aunt. During these seasons all of the camp blankets were washed and deloused. Fires were built and water was hauled up from the camps wells and heated for washing the bedclothes. Kerosene was used to kill the bedbugs. The men were responsible for cleaning their own clothes.[51] Bedbugs and lice were common nuisances in the bunkhouses of lumber camps. Fall and spring cleanings were typically performed at all lumber camps.

Eventually, Minnie's uncle became the superintendent of three camps, and they were able to move into a bungalow with running hot and cold water, as well as indoor plumbing. This must have seemed like a luxury to Minnie! Minnie related the kindness of the woodsmen. She relayed to her son, Duane, that they used to bring her back little trinkets and candy when they went into town. She fondly remembered the songs they sang and the music they played on guitars and accordions. Although Minnie was brought up with love and a strong work ethic, she did not have the opportunity to attend school after 3rd grade. Like many children who worked in lumber camps, there were no schools for her out in the remote woods and her help was needed at camp. The camps closed when Minnie was around 15 years old. The lumber company her uncle worked for went bankrupt. This coincided with the Great Depression.

[51] Ibid.

Minnie then returned briefly to West Virginia, before moving to Curwensville with her aunt and uncle. She married Leon Test in 1937 and had three children: Joseph, Kenneth and Duane.[52]

Wheeler's Woods and Dave Frost's Camp

 [53]

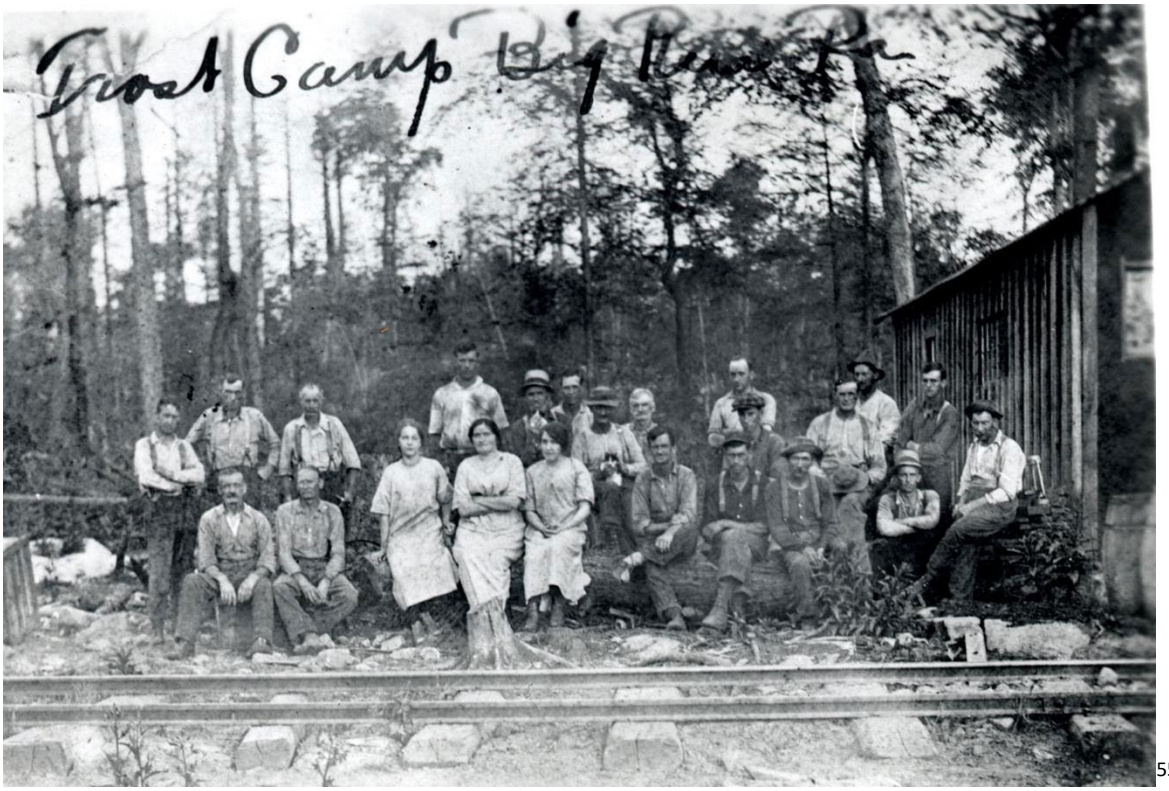
"Cooks at Wheeler's Camp"

Women continued to be present in Pennsylvania's lumber camps entering the second quarter of the twentieth century. The above image was taken at "Camp 19," one of "Wheeler's camps," in "Wheeler's Woods," in Forest County and features two women cooks. The Wheeler and Dusenbury Lumber Company once owned between 40,000 and 55,000 acres of pine, hemlock and hardwood timber in Warren and Forest Counties. "In 1922, the company sold approximately two-thirds of its land to the Federal Government to become part of the Allegheny National Forest. In 1930, the company's remaining lands were known as 'Wheeler's

[52] Ibid., Test interview, author's fieldnotes.

[53] "Cooks at Wheeler Camp." courtesy of the Forest County Historical Society. Image is inscribed, "Cooks at Wheeler's Camp" on the reverse. A similar image with it identifies the camp as, "Camp 19".

Woods.'"[54] In addition to the women's clothing and hair styles, this information helps to identify the era of the photograph, as well as giving context to its location.



[55]

Dave Frost's Camp at Big Run

Pictured are the cooks and woodsmen of Dave Frost's Camp at Big Run. The camp was positioned along the Tionesta Valley Railroad, in Elk County, and was part of the Central Pennsylvania Lumber Company's holdings. The area thrived during the 1920's but fell victim to the 1929 Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression.[56] The women are seated in the front,

[54] Warren County Historical Society, "Wheeler's Woods," Stepping Stones, Volume 15, Number 3, Warren, PA: Warren County Historical Society, n. d.

[55] "Frost Camp, Big Run, Pa," from the private collection of Bob Imhof.

[56] Imhoff, Bob. "The History of Big Run, Elk County, Pennsylvania." Pennsylvania Great Outdoors Visitor Bureau, December 1, 2020. https://visitpago.com, accessed on 9 April 2021.

middle of the grouping. Perhaps the woman positioned in the center, with her arms crossed, was the cook and the two younger looking women, her helpers. Either way, the women were essential to the camp and its function. They were as critical as the men who harvested the timber. Like Wheeler's Woods, Frost's Camp is only a memory recorded by historic photographs. It's location now isolated and overgrown within the boundaries of the Allegheny National Forest.

Rose Kocjancic Paar

The life of Rose (Komidar) Kocjancic Paar (May 15, 1908 - June 28, 1997) unequivocally exemplifies the incredible, challenging, and inspiring life of a Pennsylvania lumberwoman. Rose Komidar was born on May 15, 1908, in St. Mary's, Elk County, to John Komidar and Rose (Valentine) Komidar. She was the oldest of seven children. Her siblings were Mary, Antonia, Ann, Francis, John, and Frank. Rose's parents immigrated to the United States in the early 20th century.[57] Her father immigrated from Slovenia, then part of Austria, then a province of Yugoslavia, now referred to as the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Like so many other immigrants, they sought out work in the woods of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Her father began as a wood cutter who helped supply logs for the wood chemical industry. John and Rose Komidar soon became lumber camp operators and raised their family in their camp. As was common, Rose met her first husband, Joseph Kocjancic, at her parent's camp.[58] She was 17 years old when they married.

---

[57] Kocjancic, Tricia. Junior High School interview project with Rose Paar, 17 February 1988. Private collection of Tricia (Kocjancic) Bell.

[58] Lion, Michael. Timber Issue, March 20, 1992. 29.

 [59]

John and Rose Komidar with their children Rose, Mary, Antonia, Ann and John, c. 1922

Joseph Kocjancic was in his early 20's when he immigrated to the United States. He arrived in New York in 1925. Originally, Joseph went to West Virginia to work in the coal mines, but then migrated to the Pennsylvania in search of work, after he was laid off by the mines. According to

[59] "Komidar Family, ca. 1922," from the private collection of Ed Kocjancic. Rose is holding her baby brother.

the family, he then worked in a mine around Pittsburgh, but it went on strike. Joseph then headed north to in search of logging work.[60] It was at the Komidar's lumber camp where he met Rose. They were married on May 15, 1925, at St. Joseph's Church in Mt. Jewett. According to Ed F. Kocjancic, in an interview with Michael Lion in 1992, "She got married on a Saturday and she ended up cooking, washing, cleaning and sewing for a 25-man crew the following Monday, when they started their own lumber camp."[61] The location of their camp varied over the years, but were all located in either Elk or McKean Counties. The last and longest running camp was in Burning Well, McKean County. Rose and Joseph operated their camp together. She was also known to take on tasks in the woods including removing trees, pulling the cross-cut saw, and chopping wood. Joseph and Rose had four boys, all of whom were born at one of their camps. Together they raised their four boys, Ed, Joe, Rudy, and John, at their various lumber camps. "The boys said that from as early as they could remember they worked at the camps. First their jobs were to ensure a supply of water and firewood, and as they grew older, they would join the men in the woods, felling and cutting trees, stacking wood, leading teams of horses, and loading narrow gauge railroad cars."[62]

Rose's son, Ed, recalled how his parents ran the camp:

> "My mother getting up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning, preparing breakfast, if you can imagine, eggs, bacon, pork chops, potatoes, toast, oatmeal (they could eat all of that). We had different ethnic groups and there were different likes and dislikes. She learned to know what individuals liked. She would make enough food for everyone and usually could figure out just exactly how much to make. Some of the men would not come in for lunch, but if some were close to camp, she would prepare a noon meal. Others would take sandwiches and a jar of coffee. Between breakfast, lunch and supper, my mother was busy keeping

[60] Kocjancic family, interview by author. Fieldnotes, Kane, Pennsylvania, 11 November 2020.

[61] Lion, Michael. Timber Issue, 20 March 1992.

[62] Bartlett, John. The Erie Times News, "Pennsylvania hardwoods: All in the Family." Section E. 21 July 1991.

> the camp clean, washing all the clothes, doing all the sewing, and fixing in all the beds. She did this all day, in between cooking all the meals. By 8 o'clock at night she was totally exhausted and went to bed. Unfortunately for her, all her children were boys and there was no daughter to help her. When her mother died, her youngest sister, Francis, who hadn't been married, came and stayed. She was a big help. My mother even hired summer help…. My mother baked a lot of bread. She was an excellent cook and baker. I never heard my mother complain all the years she worked. My father would run the camp, after breakfast he would help my mother and then he'd go to the woods. One thing my mother did, in addition to everything else, was to go out into the woods and help my father pull the crosscut."[63]

The couple ran the camp together until Joseph was tragically killed in a car accident in 1937. Joseph was picking up his brother, Frank, from the train station. The two had not seen one another in years. When their father was killed, Rose and Joseph's oldest son, Joe, was only 11 years old.

Rose was resilient and determined. Although she was offered options to have others raise her children and the County offered the orphanage, Rose chose to raise her boys together, as a family, in the woods. She took over and continued to run the lumber camp that she and Joseph had started. She raised the boys with the lumberjacks and involved them with the work of the camp. Her children all learned the work involved with logging and became skilled woodsmen. Rose also instilled the value of an education in her children. Rose only had five years of schooling at a Catholic school. She stopped attending school in order to help at her family's lumber camp. Accessibility was also an issue. Her parent's camp was remote and too far away from the school. Good grades were stressed, and Rose made sure that her children all

[63] Kocjancic, Edward F. "Logging Camp History and Consulting in Northwestern Pennsylvania." 20 October 2005. 7-8.

completed high school. Her youngest, Ed, went on to graduate from Penn State with a degree in Forestry.[64] This was something she was very proud of. John related that they were always the best dressed in school. They never wore jeans. They wore knicker-style pants and then regular pants, but never jeans. They bought their clothes in Kane and got a new pair of pants before the patches came.[65]

 [66]

John, Rose, Ed, Joe, Frank, and Rudy Kocjancic

[64] Kocjancic family, interview by author. Fieldnotes, Kane, Pennsylvania, 11 November 2020.

[65] Kocjancic, John, during family interview by author. Fieldnotes, Kane, Pennsylvania. 11 November 2020.

[66] "Kocjancic Family portrait," from the private collection of Ed Kocjancic.

In addition to the management of the camp and raising her boys, Rose still did all of the cooking and cleaning. She is remembered as being frugal and business savvy. Her son Joe emphasized the challenges his mother faced, "This was an era when few women drove, let alone ran rough and tumble businesses and bossed men, but she did and never made it look hard. She would do 10 jobs and never complain. I remember at times after our father died, I would hear her cry late at night. She cried then because it was the only time she had."[67] Rose learned how to drive after Joseph's death. A necessity, as she would need to get provisions for her camp. Her son, Ed, remembered going with his mother to the A&P in Kane.

> "We'd get four or five carts filled up with groceries…. That was just the breakfast foods and canned goods and stuff. Then we'd drive around back to the warehouse part for bushel bags of potatoes and 100-pound bags of flour and sugar. Some provisions, fresh vegetables and fruits would last us about a week but the major stuff, the bulk of the stuff, about a month."[68]

The family's camps were made of lumber with no insulation. Water was piped in from a nearby stream. Rose had a large wood stove on which she cooked. She and her family had separate living quarters and the lumberjacks slept upstairs in the loft. The large dining room was attached to the kitchen. Their bathroom was an outhouse. More remote camps had supplies delivered weekly by rail car. Some supplies were ordered from the Sears catalog. Later their groceries were purchased at the A&P and the Triangle Store in Kane.

The last Kocjancic Family lumber camp was in Burning Well, McKean County, and functioned from 1950 until 1968. The wood their camp harvested was originally purchased by the Clawson

[67] Bartlett, John. The Erie Times News, "Pennsylvania hardwoods: All in the Family." Section E. 21 July 1991. n.p.
[68] Kocjancic, "Logging Camp History and Consulting in Northwestern Pennsylvania." 8.

Chemical Company and later the Susquehanna Chemical Company. It is believed that Rose Kocjancic operated the last active lumber camp in Pennsylvania. Her boys lived at the camp until they married. She retired in 1968 and married John Paar, on June 20, at St. Joseph's Church, in Mt. Jewett. After the wedding, Rose moved from the camp to a farm near Rasselas with John Paar. The Burning Well Camp was a place that Rose's children and grandchildren frequented before she retired. Rudy's daughter, Cindy Iorfido, shared her memories of her grandmother:

> "Grandma was a tough and good businesswoman. She worked from morning to night completing the many chores needed to run the logging camp. She was up at the crack of dawn, cooking, baking, and getting breakfast, lunch and dinner on the big table in the dining room. Then she would wash dishes in the wooden sink in the kitchen fed by a pipe delivering water from the spring and the boiling water out of the reservoir at the back of the giant wood stove that was always fired up in the kitchen. She washed clothes, dried them on clotheslines, cleaned the camp floors with big buckets of water and lye and a huge mop. When you stayed at camp, you were willing to help with these chores! The wood cutters at the camp respected her and knew she was the boss. After eating they would stand at the doorway to the kitchen and Grandma would supply them with items from her 'general store/pantry' as requested. This included the homemade wine and brandy that Grandma would make! I think the woodcutters were afraid to cross Grandma…she could easily switch from English to Slovenian with a raised voice when necessary to get her point across and to express her displeasure!"[69]

The camp was retained by the family and used as a hunting camp. In 1995 the camp caught fire and burned to the ground. Ed remembered: "It was already completely burned by the time we got there- nothing left but ashes. The upstairs beds where the lumberjacks slept fell to the bottom in ashes. It was just like losing a dear old friend."[70] Rose's sons, Ed and John, rebuilt

[69] Iorfido, Cindy. "Re: Meeting." Message to "Jackie Johnson for the author. 6 November 2020. Email.

[70] Kocjancic, "Logging Camp History and Consulting in Northwestern Pennsylvania." 3.

the camp after the fire and it is still used by the family today, a testimony to the camp's history and sense of place. The following images are of the Burning Well Camp prior to the fire.

 [71]

Exterior of the Kocjancic Burning Well Camp

[71] Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

 [72]

Exterior of the Kocjancic Burning Well Camp Kitchen

 [73]

Exterior of the Kocjancic Burning Well Camp

[72] Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

[73] Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

 [74]

Wood stove on which Rose Kocjancic cooked for her family and boarders.

Each of Rose's children went on to work in the lumber industry. Joe was the head sawyer of a sawmill and owned an equipment and implement sales business. Rudy and John operated a logging and trucking business. Ed owned Ed Kocjancic Foresters Inc., and was a consulting forester, timber buyer and forester.[75] His son now operates the business. The family also competed in lumberjack and logging skills contests and competitions. They used cross-cut saws, axes and rolled logs and were champions for decades. Even Rose was known to compete and pull the crosscut saw in the Jack and Jill contests. Ed recounted,

> "The national champs used to come in to Cherry Springs for the PA Championships, and when they left, they were beaten by the PA team, the Kocjancics. When my mother was 60 years old, we were in a little contest in

[74] Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

[75] Bartlett. "Pennsylvania hardwoods: All in the Family." n.p.

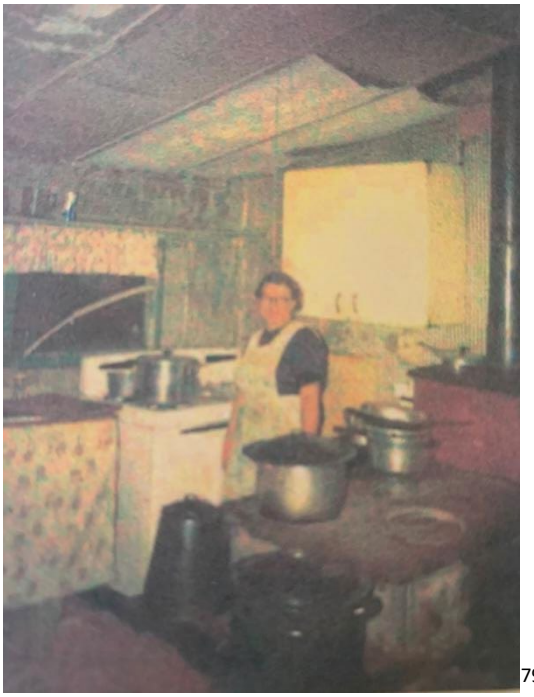
> Sheffield, a Jack and Jill, she pulled the saw with my next oldest brother, John, and he actually had to hold her back, she was so anxious. They beat everybody. We learned how to pull a crosscut from our mother. She was an amazing woman. She was the oldest contestant in the contest, she probably could have placed in the men's event too."[76]

Rose Kocjancic Paar's life is probably the most iconic and arguably the epitome of a Pennsylvania lumberwoman. Born and raised in a lumber camp as a child, she met her husband to be at her parent's camp. They married and started their own camp less than 48 hours after they were wed. She helped operate their camp, and cooked and cared for its woodsmen. Her children were born and raised in their family camp. When her first husband was killed, she literally took over running the camp and all of its responsibilities- the financial management of the camp and the running of the business, the care and boarding of the lumberman, the management of the kitchen and all of the food needed to sustain everyone at the camp without making or ordering too much or too little, plus being a mother and raising her children on top of everything else. She could wield the tools of the trade. Her hobbies included crocheting, sewing, gardening, and splitting wood![77] Even her recreational activities involved lumber competitions, at which she exceled, a testament to the physicality of her strength. Her children all grew up to be involved with various aspects of the trade. The Kocjancic lumber camp at Burning Well, was possibly the last of its kind in Pennsylvania. Her story is one of perseverance, resilience, strength, and love. She was an inspiration to her children and remains so to her grand and great grandchildren. Rose's family continues to keep her memories alive and instills

[76] Kocjancic, "Logging Camp History and Consulting in Northwestern Pennsylvania." 10.

[77] Kocjancic, Tricia. Interview with Rose Kocjancic by Tricia Kocjancic. School paper, February 17, 1988.

her values and work ethic in their families. As Joe so adeptly stated, "The forests have been good to all of us. [but] Our mother deserves the real credit for everything. She is who made it happen."[78]

 [79]

Rose Kocjancic Paar in the Burning Well Camp kitchen

Rose Simcic Ulyan and Mary Bizzak

Mary Bizzak was born on January 14, 1915 in a lumber camp in Dahoga, Elk County without a doctor. Her mother, Rose Simic Ulyan, had just finished preparing breakfast for the loggers when she had Mary. After her birth, her mother "went right back to the kitchen with me [Mary] to prepare lunch and clean laundry."[80] The story of Mary's birth and that of her mother, Rose Simcic Ulyan, set the stage for Mary's life and her work ethic.

[78]Bartlett, John. The Erie Times News, "Pennsylvania hardwoods: All in the Family." Section E. July 21, 1991.

[79] "Rose Kocjancic in the Burning Well Camp Kitchen," private collection of the Kocjancic family.

[80] Bizzak, Mary and Counts, Rose Ann. "The Lumber World from A Women's Viewpoint." Private manuscript, no date. 1

Mary's father, Joe Ulyan, was born in Austria on December 19, 1876. In 1902 he and his brother came to Pittsburgh and then Cleveland, Ohio to work in the steel mills and earn enough money to bring their families to America. Joe returned to Austria in 1906 to marry his girlfriend, Rose Simcic. The couple had a daughter, Fanny, in 1907 and immigrated to Mayburg, PA, Forest County, in 1912. Joe knew a family who was operating a lumbering camp there. Together, he and Rose operated a boarding house. The camp housed 20 men and Rose did all of the cooking, baking, and washing for the family and the boarders. She awoke at 4 am to start the wood fire in the stove and make breakfast for the men. The hearty breakfast could include home-fried potatoes, pork chops, rice, sausage, pancakes and oatmeal. The mid-day meal, or dinner, was served at noon with a menu of beef soup, potatoes, vegetables and home-canned fruit. Supper was at 5:30 and usually consisted of some sort of meat, potato, spaghetti or polenta. The meal varied each day.[81] The men would go to bed by 9pm and Sunday was considered a day of rest. The lumberjacks at the camp cut wood that was used as charcoal by a local chemical factory.

When the job in Mayburg was finished, the young family moved on to another lumbering job. The jobs would typically last 6 months to a year and were located in Sergeant, Hutchins, and Crosby in McKean County; Warren and Tiona in Warren County; Sugar Run in Bradford County, and Bolivar, New York State. The Ulyan's had 11 children. Fanny and a brother, who died at three months, were born in Austria. The rest of their children were born in lumber camps: Melan (July 1913) and Mary (January 1915) were born in Dahoga- Elk County, Joe (1916) in

[81] Ibid.

Glade- Warren County, Frank (1917) in Crown- Clarion County, Josephine (1919) in Dahoga, Rose (1920) in Kane, Stella (1922) in Betula- McKean County, Gertrude (1924) in Bolivar, NY, and Ann (1925) who was born and died in Kane- McKean County. In 1927 Joe Ulyan took a job in North Fork, Potter County. The camp was very remote and was located 7 miles back in the woods, assessible by train only. The train would come in with supplies and groceries and would leave the camp with the harvested wood. The wood was brought to the rails by horses and sleds. There were 10 camps located in North Fork that had children at them. All of them missed a year of school due to the remoteness of the camps. This job lasted 15 months.[82] Only two of the Ulyan children would go on to graduate high school.

Mary and her siblings all helped with chores in the camps. They carried wood and filled the lamps with kerosene and washed the lamp globes. When her brothers were 8 or 9 years old, they would go out with their dad into the woods to help cross-cut, split and pile wood into 4-foot x 8-foot piles. They would also cut wood for the heating and kitchen stoves. The girls would usually carry in the wood and water. There was little time to be bored or to play. If you weren't working, you were taking care of the younger children or learning how to sew and crochet. Mary's mother would say, "If you do nothing, you don't have anything to show, but if you sew and crochet, you have a lot to show."[83] Her mother taught her well. Before she was married, Mary had 15 pairs of pillow cases, one quilt, and a bedspread all made by her own hand.

[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., 2.

The last boarding camp that the Ulyan's operated was in Hutchins, McKean County, from 1935 – 1936. Rose was preparing dinner when she lifted a large kettle of soup off the stove. "She was carrying it to the sink when she hit the edge of the sink and upset the soup all over her."[84] Mary's mother was scalded from her waist, down both of her legs. She was hospitalized for three days before she succumbed to a gangrene infection on April 26, 1936. She would not allow the doctors to remove her legs.[85] Women were not immune to dangers, and experienced hazards of their own, while working at lumber camps.

After her mother's death, Mary began to work at a shirt factory in Kane. On June 20, 1936, Mary married Joe Bizzak. Joe hauled wood for the Day Chemical Plant in Westline. There was an opening for a boarding house in Westline, and it was the only house available. According to Mary,

> "The houses were owned, at that time, by the chemical plant owners. My husband wanted to know if I was willing to keep the boarders. I thought it was a good idea. Since I was raised in the lumbering camps, I knew I could do the work and it would save us a lot of time by not having to drive back and forth to Kane every day. The difference between a lumbering camp and a boarding house was, when the lumbering job was completed, sometimes the camps were dismantled and built in a new location.
>
> …The Day Chemical Company [was] where 'charcoal' was made from wood. There were several women in addition to the men who worked their bagging charcoal. It was a dirty, dusty job and when they finished, they were covered with this charcoal dust; they were so black, you couldn't tell who they were."[86]

[84] Ibid.

[85] Bizzak family, interview by author. Fieldnotes, Kane, Pennsylvania, 9 June, 2021.

[86] Ibid., Bizzak, Mary and Counts, Rose Ann. "The Lumber World from A Women's Viewpoint." 2.

Mary and Joe were supposed to move into the Westline boarding house on December 7, 1937. Instead, Mary went to the hospital and delivered their first child, Mary JoAnn. Mary was released from the hospital on December 26 and went to the boarding house.

> "When I got home with my new baby, I found eight boarders staring at me as I stared back at them. I wondered what I was getting myself into. I was out of bed at 5 am every morning to get breakfast ready for the boarders. Lunch was still served at noon and dinner at 5:30. Along with cooking three meals a day I also did a lot of baking. I made bread, pies, and cakes. The men worked hard and so did I, taking care of a new born baby while cooking and doing the laundry for all the boarders."[87]

The boarders paid 30 cents per meal, if they ate. Four of their original boarders were from Kentucky. They held a variety of positions: a scaler, a chemist, chemical plant workers and woodcutters who worked for Joe. Mary went on to have a set of premature twins in 1940, Joseph and Judy. Only Joseph survived. Things changed drastically in 1942 when the country entered World War II. Several of their boarders and three of her brothers left to go to war. "The logging industry, in addition to other industries, lost their men workers to the war effort. But this became the beginning of [Mary's] life in the logging world."[88]

Joe had two logging trucks that hauled to the Day Chemical Plant, but only Joe was left to drive them. Mary decided that she wanted to drive one of the trucks. Her "husband insisted it was a man's job and that [Mary] couldn't do it."[89] This made Mary more determined than ever, and she learned! According to Mary,

---

[87] Bizzak, Mary. Letter. *Sister Mary Bizzak to President Joseph C. Evanish, SNPJ Lodge 391*. August 2006.
[88] Ibid., Bizzak, Mary and Counts, Rose Ann. "The Lumber World from A Women's Viewpoint." 3.
[89] Ibid.

> "The first day was rough! You had to manually lift the wood and pile it on the truck. My arms were so sore and ached so badly, I could hardly sleep at night. The soreness lasted about three to four weeks and then it got better. As I'm only five feet tall, to reach the pedals of the log truck, I shoved the seat as far forward as possible and to see out of the window, I used pillows to sit on. As I also drove the school bus, my sister Gertie and Margie Patrick would help with the boarders and my children. I would leave Westline at 7:30 am, bus the children to the H. J. Ryan School at Lafayette and return home by 8:45 am to drive the log truck to Mead Run where our wood job was located. Joe would have one truck already loaded. I would drive it to the chemical plant, unload the wood by hand, drive the empty truck back to Mead Run and return with another load of wood. When I finished unloading, it was time to drive the school bus back to Lafayette to pick up the children and my husband would bring in the last load of wood about 5:00 pm."[90]

Mary also learned how to drive their tractor to skid logs. During the War, German Prisoners of War were held at a camp in Red Bridge, McKean County. These men also cut wood for the Bizzak's during the war. At the end of the war, chemical plants in the region began to close and their boarders had left. They operated their boarding house in Westline for 12-13 years, until the Day Chemical Plant closed. Rather than buy the boarding house, Mary and Joe moved to Kane in 1950. Their son, Jerry was born before they left Westline.

[90] Ibid.

 [91]

Mary Bizzak pictured with the school bus she drove

[91] Mary Bizzak pictured with the school bus she drove. From the private collection of the Bizzak Family.

 [92]

Mary Bizzak pictured with the logging trucks she would load, unload, and drive to the Day Chemical Plant

After Mary and Joe moved to Kane, Mary continued to haul wood to chemical plants in Marvindale, Sergeant and Morrison. They also hauled paper wood to the Johnsonburg Paper Mill. No longer having a boarding house, the Bizzak's built cabins for their woodcutters to live in at their job site. They were simple dwellings that consisted of a room with a stove, a bed and an outhouse. They had a logging job at Bloomster Hollow for 13 years where they cut and delivered paper wood. Mary also "girdled trees." This involved carrying a heavy bucket filled with green poison. Mary would use a large brush to apply the liquid on a circle around the tree.

[92] Mary Bizzak pictured with a log truck. Private collection of the Bizzak Family.

The poison would kill the bark. After the trees were treated with the poison for a year, they would remove the bark from the tree for paper wood. Mary would drive the truckload of wood to a "scaling dock" where the scaler would scale or weigh, the wood. Then she would unload her wood into an empty "buggy" by hand.

 [93]

A wood delivery truck about to empty its load into an empty "buggy"

In 1958, Mary had her fifth child, Steve. She continued to work after he was born. Mary's last job was near Nansen Hotel during the mid-1960's. She continued to girdle and poison trees for paper wood. By the late 1960's mechanical debarking was developed, and Mary was "eliminated." Mary lamented, "As history swept away a need for chemical wood, mechanical

[93] Wood truck next to a "buggy." From the private collection of the Bizzak family.

debarking replaced manual brushing and technology developed trucks that could pull out three or four loads in one day, I wasn't needed anymore. That's what made me so mad, they didn't need me!"[94] She went on to say,

> "I have seen changes over the decades in the lumbering world. Today, there are eye goggles, chaps, hard hats, earplugs, special footwear, we had none of these. Today, there are sophisticated machinery to take a tree down, chainsaws, skidders. We used two-man crosscut saws, sledges, hammers, horses with sleds to get the wood out. In the late 30's, my log truck's dashboard contained a temperature, oil and gas gage. I had a simple clutch with a hand emergency brake. If you wanted to stop, I would manually pump and pump those brakes. The back bed was a wooden rack where I manually loaded 52-inch pieces, three racks long by five feet high to make a load of wood worth two-and-a half- to three cords split. My old truck had four tires. Today's trucks have everything imaginable on the dashboard, even telephones and air conditioning; the beds are constructed of steel with mechanical loaders and instead of four tires they have 12, which can carry tons of wood on a load. What took you a week to produce in the early days of lumbering can now be accomplished in one day."[95]

In speaking with her family and in reading Mary's accounts of her life, it was clear that she felt, as she said, "eliminated" by modernization. But Mary went on work and fill her life with the love of her family. From 1970 until 1985, Mary, harking back to the skills she learned from cooking and preparing meals for boarders, worked as a cafeteria cook in a local school. Joe retired from logging in 1975. Their sons went on to haul logs for the Mallory Lumber Company in Emporium. Mary loved her time in the woods. She was strong, literally and figuratively, and incredibly determined. She is remembered fondly by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They recalled her incredible work ethic- she never stopped and was known to be painting and wallpapering buildings and houses for family members while in her 80's and

[94] Ibid., Bizzak, Mary and Counts, Rose Ann. "The Lumber World from A Women's Viewpoint." 4.
[95] Ibid.

90's. Her stamina lasting longer than those of the younger generations. After so many years of cooking for others, she was remembered by her great granddaughter, Marissa Cassolo, as someone who was always "trying to shove food in my mouth….do you want any spaghetti? There's ice cream in the freezer, do you want any pop?"[96] Like Rose Kocjancic, Mary Bizzak touched generations. Her love and her life lessons continue to live on.

 [97]

Mary and Joe Bizzak

[96] Cassolo, Marissa. School paper, "My Great-Grandma: My Hero." No date.

[97] Mary and Joe Bizzak. From the private collection of the Bizzak Family.

Carol Zuzek

Carol Cook was born on December 19, 1935 in Kane, McKean County, to Carl and Elizabeth (Dippo) Cook. Carol married Emil Zuzek on September 26, 1959. Earlier that spring, Emil and his father, Andrew Zuzek, started the Zuzek Lumber Company, a business that Carol Zuzek would later go on to manage and operate. "When Zuzek Lumber was established, there were only four employees, one sawmill, and many hours worked. Both the elder and younger Mr. Zuzek worked in the woods, cutting timber and hauling it to the mill on West Wind Road [in Kane]. Then the two men, along with a sawyer and other employees, cut the timber for sale."[98] Carol Zuzek would learn to operate the high lift, used to move logs along in the milling process, and to operate the debarker. She learned by trial and error and eventually became very accomplished at working the machinery of the sawmill. Carol's husband "trusted her most of all his employees on the debarker because she was the most careful and skilled at debarking."[99] Carol Zuzek joked, "I ran high lift and debarked. And I broke a lot of bones."[100] Although she made light of her responsibilities and the dangerous nature of the work to a reporter in 1994, her words are testament to her skills, perseverance, and dedication to a profession in which few women were part of.

Carol credited hard work and a strong work ethic to their businesses success. Together she and Emil had three sons: Emil Jr. (Joey) in 1965, Paul in 1968, and Andrew in 1971. They also lost an

[98] Piccirillo, Michele. *"Zuzek Lumber: Years and Years of Hard Work."* The Kane Republican, Timber Issue. October 28, 1994, 32.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.

infant daughter, Amy Sue. As their family grew, Carol spent more time working administratively, keeping the books and bidding on timber, then operating equipment. Emil Zuzek passed away in 1989. After his death, Carol took on the operation and management of their lumber company. Her sons would all go on to work in the family business. In 1994, Joey (Emil) ran the mill, Paul handled the trucking, Andy oversaw the logging, and their mother was the boss![101] Carol was 81 years old when she passed away on February 2, 2017. She excelled as both a worker in and an operator of a lumber company at a time when women did not hold those roles in the timber industry.

 [102]

Carol Zuzek

[101] Ibid.

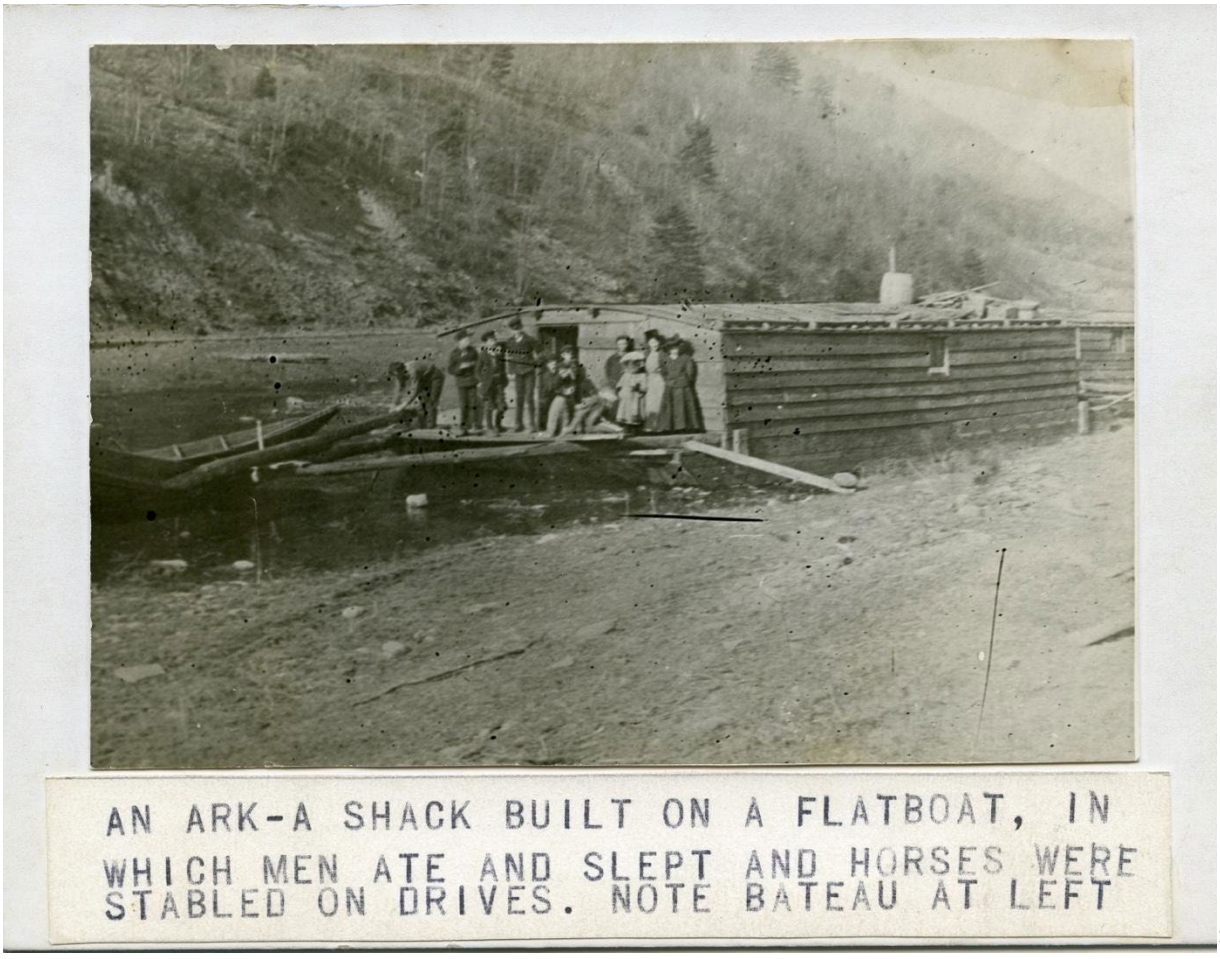
[102] Ibid.

Women and Rafting:

Throughout the 1800's, Pennsylvania's rivers became a highway system for the transportation of its harvested timber. Lumber was harvested during the fall and winter months to take advantage of snow and ice to help move or "slid" the logs. The logs would then be stored along the banks of a river to be floated downstream using the naturally occurring spring freshets to move the harvest to the mills. In some areas splash dams were built to hold the timber until rains allowed for additional drives. This method could be extremely dangerous as log jams often occurred when the harvested timber would literally jam together, preventing the logs from moving downstream. In these cases, lumbermen would climb out onto the floating logs with pikes, peaveys and cant-hooks to try to free the jam. In some cases, dynamite was used to blow open the jam. If a man fell through the logs, he rarely survived.

Later in the 1800's rafting became a viable way to move the timber downstream to markets. The Susquehanna River allowed for travel to markets in Lewisburg in Union County, Marietta in Lancaster County, Havre De Grace and Baltimore, Maryland to the Chesapeake Bay, and other points south. Men would tie the spars together to form rafts. Large sweeps, or oars, were used to help guide the raft downstream and around obstacles, including rocks and islands, in the waters and manmade objects, such as bridge piers. When the raft reached its intended sawmill, it was disassembled. Long spar rafts of white pine were specifically run on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River and its tributaries. Rafts varied in sizes, but typically had a crew of men who helped navigate the rafts, cooked for the staff, and cared for any animals on board. Typically, women and children were not part of the raft crews because it was

considered too dangerous. Raft accidents happened frequently and could often prove fatal. However, there is photographic evidence and written accounts that prove that women and girls were present on ark rafts as both thrill seekers and as essential help.



[103]

Ark Shack

The above photograph features an "Ark Shack" built on a flatboat on the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Ten people are visible including two women and a girl. Given their dress and the

[103] ESU.LL.A.3, "An Ark", from the Collection of the Lycoming County Historical Society and Thomas T. Taber Museum.

blurred nature of the image, it is difficult to ascertain their roles. The bateau in the water alongside the ark is a flat-bottomed boat that was used by lumbermen who worked on log drives. The bateau provided a stable base for a driver to stand on as they used their pikes to move logs along on a drive. The pike could also function as a punting pole to propel the boat forward.

White pine spars were harvested in Cameron County in the 1870's and were sent down the Sinnemahoning Creek to the West Branch of the Susquehanna during the spring when the rivers ran high due to the snowmelt. Rafts were constructed with sleeping quarters, a cook's cabin and sometimes a cabin to stable the teamster's horses and any other livestock needed for provisions. These were known as Shanty Rafts or Ark Rafts. Smaller rafts would be sent down the creeks to the larger Susquehanna River, where they could be tied together, forming a larger raft. A fleet of rafts consisted of at least two rafts lashed side by side. Rafts that undertook longer trips typically had a male cook for its crew. However, there are several accounts of women and children being involved. Jack Wiley from Cameron County frequently ran rafts to the mills at Marietta, Lancaster County, in the early 1870's.

> "It took eight days to run to Marietta. Cabins were built on the raft as cooking and sleeping quarters for the crew. Mrs. Swope, who was an experienced camp cook, went along and boarded the men. This was an unusual feat because women did not cook on rafts as it was considered too dangerous, but Jack Swope was regarded as the safest pilot on the Sinnamahoning, and his wife had no fear. We find no history of any other woman having cooked for eight days on a raft as it floated down the Susquehanna River."[104]

[104] Huntley. The Story of the Sinnamahone. 114.

Jack Swope went on to work for the Russel brothers after his time with Jake Wiley, but it is not known if his wife cooked on any of his other shanty rafts.

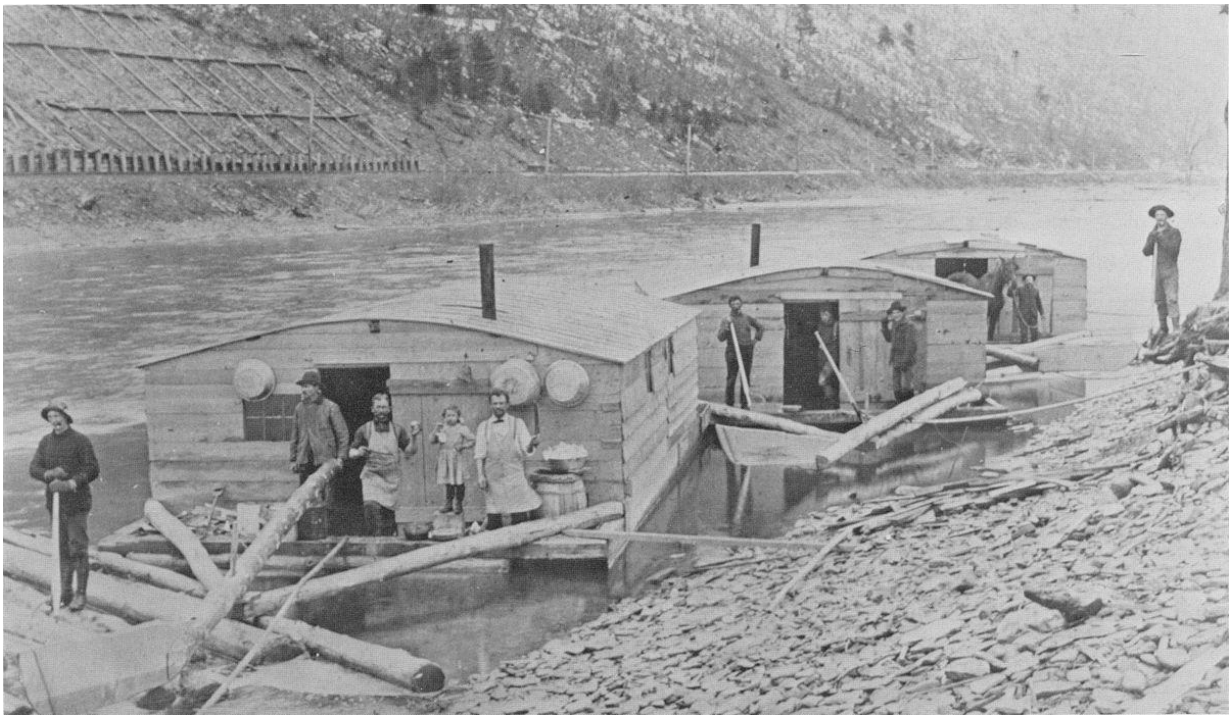
George Huntley documented the following account of two young girls who road on a raft from Russell Hollow, near Cameron, to Keating, where the Sinnemahoning Creek meets the West Branch of the Susquehanna in the mid 1870's. The raft then continued on to Marietta.

> "John Strawbridge was pilot on one raft and Web Russell on the other raft. Kate, eldest daughter of Web Russell and her cousin Ada, the eldest daughter of Al Russell, each about 12 years old, went on the raft with Web Russell as far as Keating and came back on the evening train. This was an unusual event because it was considered too dangerous for women to ride on rafts. These brave little misses felt quite distinguished, and their friends were much elated when they arrived safely home."[105]

While these two young ladies may have chosen to ride on the raft for excitement or experience, there may have been other children who rode out of necessity. Below is an image of a series of shanty rafts. The first shanty, located in the foreground, features the telltale signs of a kitchen: a stove pipe for the cookstove protruding from the roof of the shanty, basins hung on the exterior, a cast iron Dutch oven to the right of the young girl, a bowl of food placed on the barrel, the two men on either sides of the young girl wear a typical cook's apron, the two aproned men and the young girl each hold a kitchen/cooking implement, indicating their purpose. Perhaps she is the daughter of one of these men. Cleary she is part of the cooking crew. She could very well be there out of necessity, not just as a helper, but as the child of one of the workmen. The men who cooked on these rafts may have had their wives and/or children

[105] Huntley. The Story of the Sinnamahone. 177.

with them out of necessity due to the transient nature of their work and higher mortality rates. They would have been fully aware of the dangers involved with river travel.



[106]

Ark Rafts

What is particularly interesting about this image, is that it was turned into a postcard. On the back of the card is printed the following description:

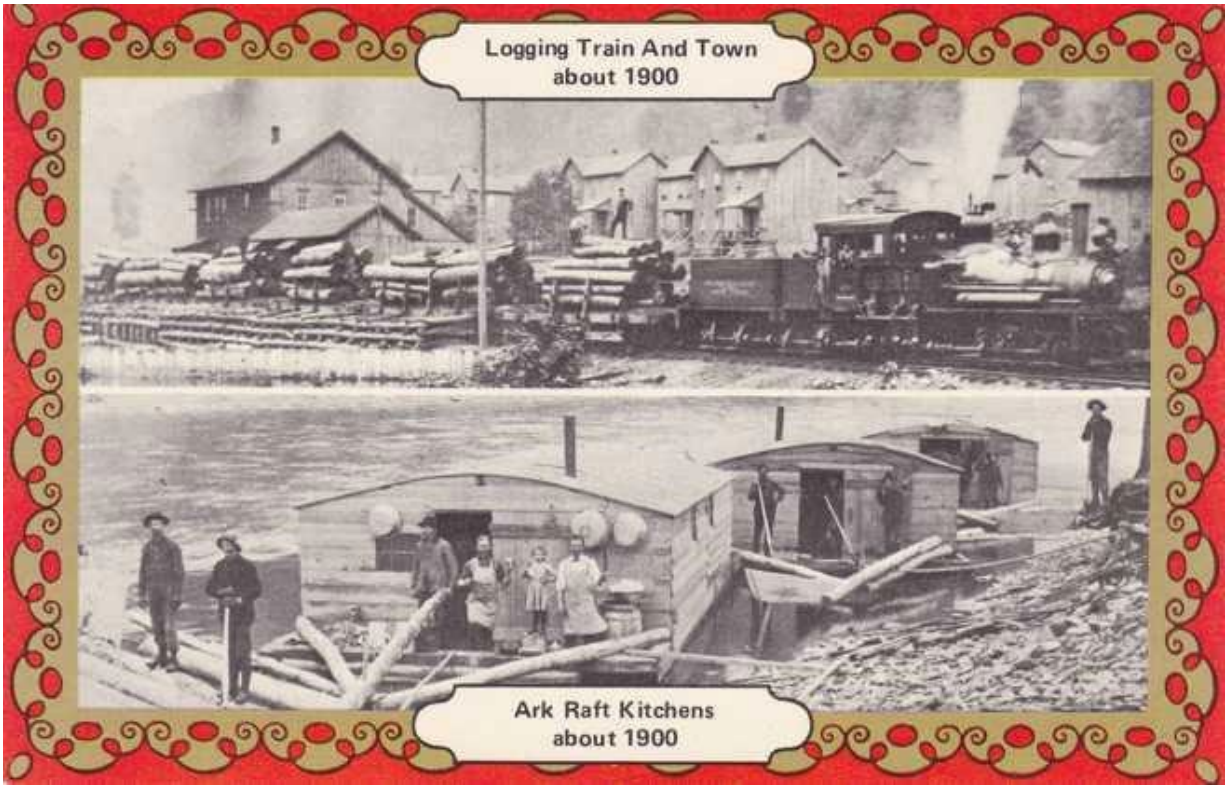
> "Logging scenes reminiscent of the 1870's when Central Pa. was the logging center of the world. Top photo – Train load of logs enroute to lumber mills. The village is typical of logging towns of the era. Bottom photo – Ark Raft Kitchens and bunkhouses following the logs downstream housed the lumbermen during the journey."[107]

For some, Pennsylvania's lumber industry became a destination for a pose or picture, making it an early form of tourism. Postcards of lumber scenes were common. Women and men were

[106] "Ark Rafts". From the Collection of the Lycoming County Historical Society and Thomas T. Taber Museum.

[107] 73-49-1 F, postcard. From the collection of the Cambria County Historical Society.

captured in images as they posed on piles of lumber or stacked board. This particular card was printed throughout the region. Other versions read, "when Williamsport, Pa. was lumbering capital of the world," rather than, "Central Pa." Other versions have promotions printed on the back for local businesses. Notice that the description refers to the image being taken in the 1870's while the front of the postcard states, "Ark Raft Kitchen about 1900". Regardless, the scene captured in the photograph is most likely from the Williamsport area of Lycoming County, along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River.



[108]

Postcard with Central Pennsylvania Logging Scenes

[108] 73-49-1 F, postcard. From the collection of the Cambria County Historical Society.

Annie Myers

Annie (Schroat) Myers was born on October 7, 1855 (- July 8, 1949) in Lock Haven, Clinton County. She married Thomas Myers (1851-1928) and together they had 15 children between 1873 and 1896. They lived in Lock Haven and her husband, Thomas, was a river pilot on the West Branch of the Susquehanna. George William Huntly Jr., notes in his book, A Story of the Sinnamahone, that the Myers Bros. picked up spar rafts delivered from camps along the Sinnemahoning Creek to Lock Haven, and took them to the mills at Marietta, Lancaster County during the late 1800's.[109]

On Wednesday, May 1, 1901, *The Clinton Republican* newspaper published a story entitled, "A Novel Experience. Mrs. Annie Myers Journeys in Marietta on a Raft". The article read as follows:

> "Thomas Myers and Family Take a Fleet of Rafts to the Lower Market in Three Days. Mrs. Annie E. Myers, wife of Thomas Myers, the well-known pilot and a returned Klondiker, enjoys the honor of being the first woman and only woman who has made the journey from Lock Haven to Marietta on a fleet of timber rafts. Last week Pilot Myers left here with a pair of rafts for Marietta, with his three sons Robert, Thomas, and Henry as the crew. The weather promised to be fine and Mrs. Myers decided to accompany her husband and sons and enjoy the novelty of a rafting trip.
>
> Last Thursday at 10:00 a.m. the fleet was started, and Linden was the stopping place that night. The second day's run took them to Northumberland, then the evening of the third day the rafts were tied up at the "White House" for the night. The next morning the run through the Conawago Falls was made and at 10 o'clock a.m. Saturday the fleet was safely landed at Marietta. The return trip was made on the [field, or perhaps "on foot'?] the party arriving here at 3:42 o'clock Sunday morning. Mrs. Myers speaking of her trip said it was a delightful outing. The first night was spent in a hotel on account of rain, but the other nights she slept soundly and sweetly in a tent that was pitched on one of the

[109] Huntley. The Story of the Sinnamahone. 144.

> rafts. At the new bridge at Rockville, when a fleet in front of the one Mr. Myers was running, came near stoving on a pier, there was some anxiety among Mr. Myers' crew. Mrs. Myers says she felt a little bit nervous but concluded if the rafts stoved she could save herself by clinging to one of the timber sticks. The ride through Conawago Falls was a delightful experience for the lady and one that she will never forget. Since her return a dozen or more ladies have asked permission to accompany Mrs. Myers on the trip she already planned to make next spring, and rafting parties are likely to become a fad in Lock Haven."

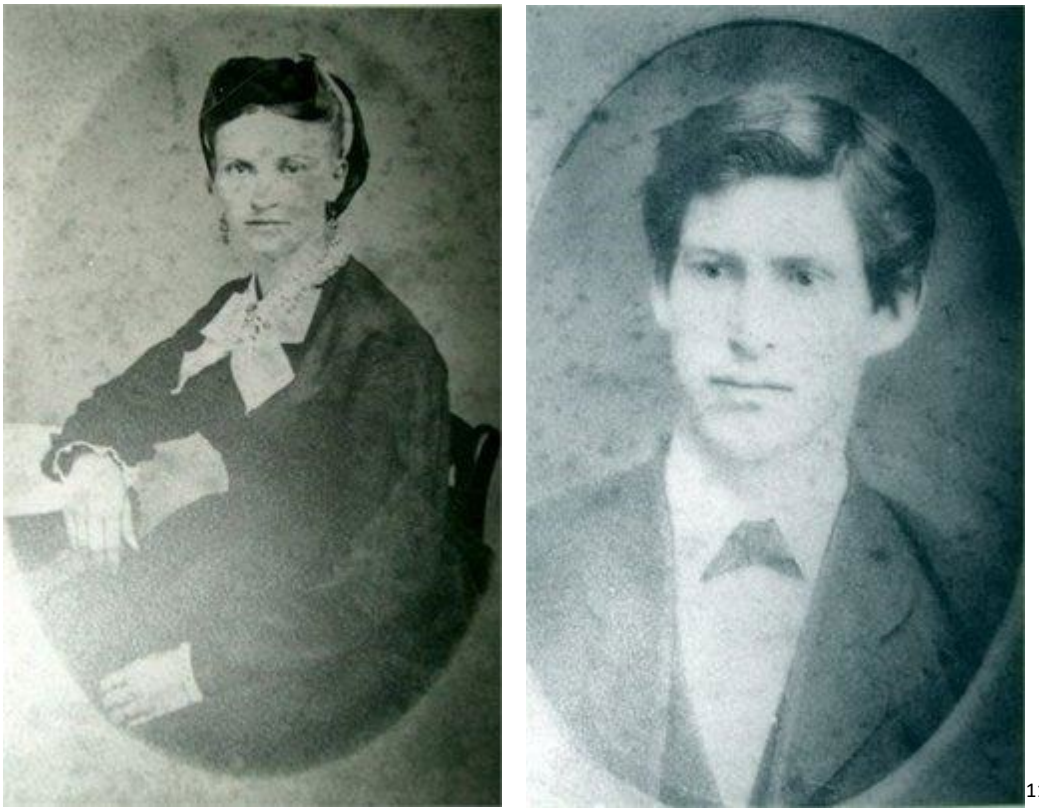
This article offers a large insight to Annie Myers and her life. It credits her with being, "the first woman and only woman who has made the journey from Lock Haven to Marietta on a fleet of timber rafts," indicating how rare or unique her trip was for the time and her physical location. It could also refer to someone in her station of life. The article does not refer to her as someone who cooked for or cared for the raft's crew (albeit they were her immediate family). Rather, it completely details the trip as one of pleasure and choice. Even going as far as to state that such experiences, "are likely to become the fad in Lock Haven." Had a woman been on a timber raft cooking and caring for the crew, like Mrs. Swope twenty years or so prior, would she have obtained the same notoriety? Probably not. Nor would it have been likely to be recorded.

Annie Myers' husband, Thomas, was a known and respected river pilot. As such, he would have had to have been keenly aware of the river's currents, eddies, the placement of its hazardous rocks, sandbars, and bridge piers. He had worked on the river for years and it can be assumed by Huntley's reference that he worked with his brother(s) as some point. His older brother, Marcellas Ellis "Dad" Myers, was also a river pilot and raftsman in Lock Haven.[110] In 1901,

[110] *Find A Grave*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/132043971/marcellas-ellis-myers. Accessed on 22 April 2021.

Thomas Myers had three of his sons (Robert, Thomas and Harry) rafting with him. Similar to those families who worked at the lumber camps in the woods, Myers had his family involved with his river piloting. Robert Myers (October 27, 1873 – October 28, 1964) obituary states that, "As a young man he worked as a raftsman on the River."[111] It also notes that he worked at a paper mill as a repair crewman for 30 years; paper being a biproduct of the forest industry. The 1898 Lock Haven City Directory also identifies him as a "Raftsman." The 1910 Lock Haven City Directory refers to Thomas Myers (November 28, 1878 – September 29, 1941) as a "Boil Maker at the Paper Mill." Later he is found in Johnsonburg, Elk County, working as a "Paper Mill Sealer" in 1920. The 1930 Lock Haven City Directory finds him and his family back in Lock Haven and he was working as a "Mill Wright at the Paper Mill." Harry was listed as a "Laborer" and "living at his parents address at 515 E. Church St." in the 1898 and 1900 Lock Haven City Directories. The paper mills were directly related to the lumber industry.

[111] Robert Myers Obituary, The Lock Haven Express. 28 October 1964. n.p.

 [112]

Annie and Thomas Myers

Although the Myers' crew was experienced, they still had a near incident at the "New Rockville Bridge," just north of Harrisburg, Dauphin County. This bridge was completed in 1902 and still stands. It was preceded by two other bridges. Pilots and their rafts needed to navigate around the large piers of the arches of the sandstone masonry railroad bridge. Rafts could easily "stove up" or sustain damage and break up due to hitting one of the bridge's unyielding piers or unseen rocks, some of the many dangers of river travel at the time. Their next hazard was Conewago Falls, below Harrisburg in Lancaster County. Historically, this section of the

[112] Image of Annie E. (Schroat) Myers from the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission. Image of Thomas Myers from *Find A Grave*, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/124481664/thomas-s-myers. Accessed on 22 April 2021.

Susquehanna River considerably drops in a short span of river and is full of natural hazards. The falls are located around where the Conewago Creek merges with the Susquehanna River and was considered to be one of the most dangerous sections of river.[113] This would have been a risky trip for Annie, but as reported she hoped to repeat the trip the following year.

In addition to her trip on the timber raft, Annie faced the challenges of raising a large family. Annie and Thomas had 15 children, 13 of whom made it in to adulthood. Annie would have faced periods alone when Thomas was rafting. Undoubtedly, her children helped in raising their siblings, which was a common occurrence. However, Annie faced an even longer period without Thomas, when he and his brothers went on a "Klondike." In 1898, Thomas, along with some of this brothers, went to Alaska seeking fortune in the gold rush hoping to find a fortune. According to the *Clinton Democrat*, July 28, 1898,

> "Coming Home. Gold Seekers Have Had Enough of the Klondike. Robert, Thomas, and John Myers and John Grittner who left this city several months ago for the Klondike gold fields, have had enough of the deprivations and hardships of that region, and are now on their way home. From intelligence received by the relatives of the men, it is learned that the gold seekers left Dawson City about the 17th and floated down the Yukon river in their own boats. They then proceeded to Seattle, which city they reached in safety. They expect to reach Lock Haven some time Saturday or Sunday next.
>
> Samuel Myers will remain in the gold fields. He states that he intends remaining as long as his food will last, which will be about a year. He also states that no one should be misled or deceived by the newspaper articles that are being sent out as to the rich finds of returning gold hunters. He states that they are given out with the hope of inducing others to spend money to go to that region. The letter also states that there are so many men around Dawson City and farther north who are very anxious to return, but they have no money to pay for their

[113] Magee, Daniel F. "Rafting on the Susquehanna," Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, v. 24, no. 9. 1920. Np.

> passage. There are many disappointed gold seekers, as there are many more seekers than is yellow dust."

Thomas was lucky that he was able to return to Lock Haven. His rafting skills may have helped him on the Yukon River. As a testament to the power and strength of family, in 1940, Annie was 84 years old and was living in Lock Haven with her son, 3 daughters, grandson, and granddaughter.[114] At this point, Annie had already lost five of her children, two of which were sons who committed suicide. Again, Annie represents a woman of determination and spirit. She, like the rest of her family, were part of the lumber and logging history of Lock Haven.

Women and Lumber Related Industries:

Pennsylvania's lumber industry was not just secluded to its forests. Lumber related industries developed throughout the region including sawmills, chemical plants, pulp and paper mills, stave mills, shingle factories, tanneries, clothespin, toothpick, butterdish, bowl and broom handle factories, kindling factories, resin plants, toy factories, veneer and furniture factories. While these industries typically employed men, some of them also employed women. The late 18th and early 19th century saw a shift for women from domesticity and domestic arts to an active role in industry.

[114] "Annie E. Myers in the 1940 Census," *Ancestry.com*, https://ancestry.com/1940-census/usa/Pessnylvania/Annie-E-Myers_q7zw9. Accessed on 21 April 2021.