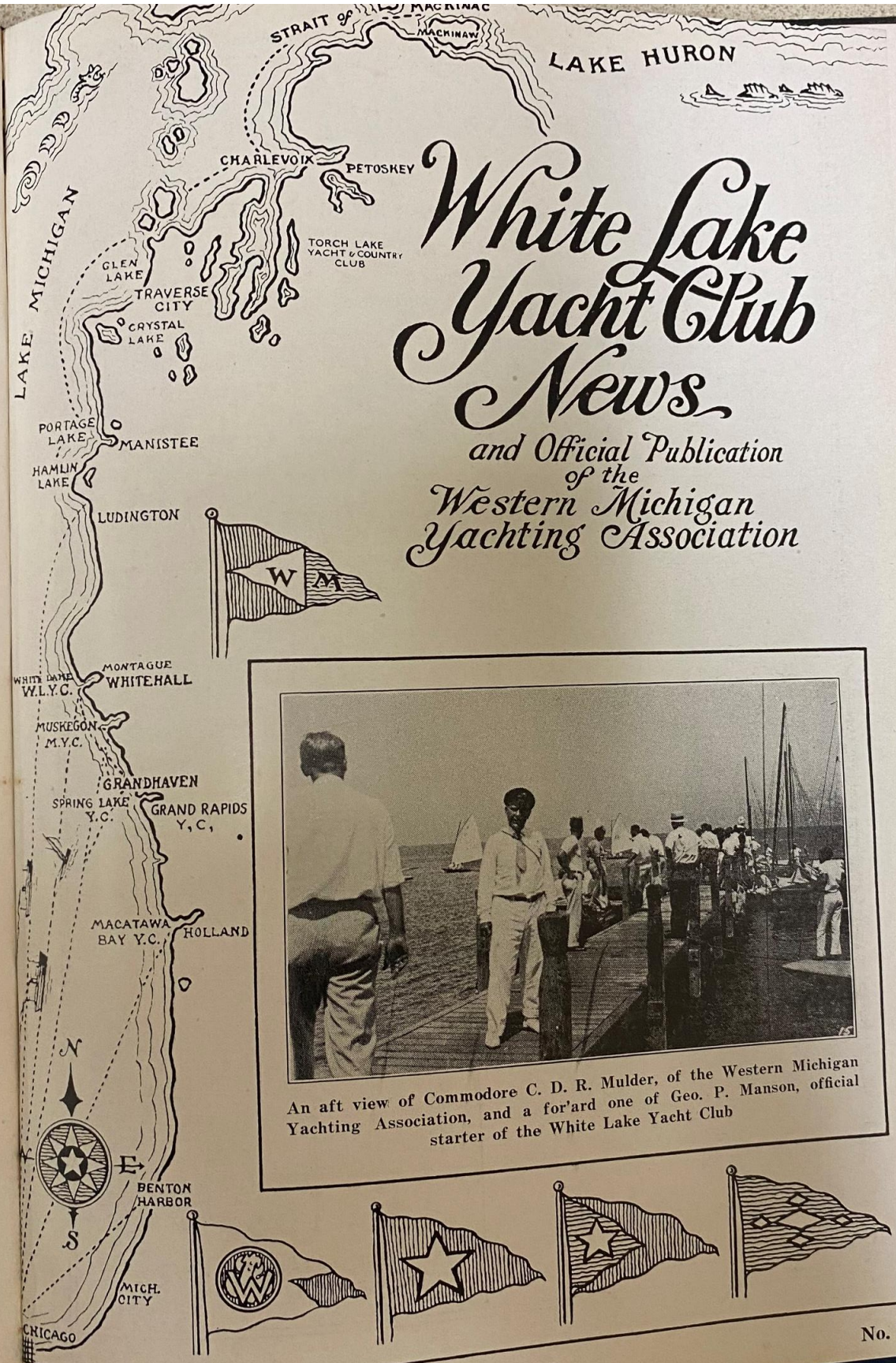


White Lake Yacht Club News

and Official Publication of the Western Michigan Yachting Association

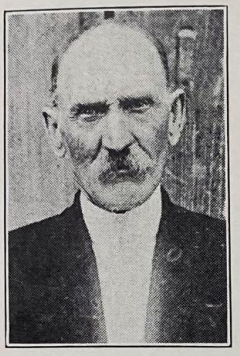
An aft view of Commodore C. D. R. Mulder, of the Western Michigan Yachting Association, and a for'ard one of Geo. P. Manson, official starter of the White Lake Yacht Club

Vol. V MARCH, 1932 No. 7

MEMOIRS OF A LUMBERJACK

Pertaining to the Early History and Logging Era of White Lake

As Told to Clarence E. Pitkin by John H. Gillan



JOHN H. GILLAN
Lumberjack

I have always had a yen to dig into the early history of White Lake, collect by word of mouth many of the actual happenings of the early days and put them in print in the Yacht Club News, where I at least would have some kind of an authentic record of the early days around White Lake.

Many times when looking over the atlas of Muskegon County, and the biographies of the pioneers of Muskegon and Ottawa Counties, I have felt the urge to patronize some of the libraries that are reputed to have collected a considerable number of volumes delving into the period of the great pine forests and their slaughter by those who thought they would last forever. Unfortunately, however sincere my intentions were at the moment of inspiration, I never found the time to spend in these archives, and each publication date of the News found me as far from my proposed authentic record as I was in the beginning. Barring the excuse of not having the time, I had another that I always fell back on and that was, I would rather get my information from some person now living who had a keen memory and could paint word pictures of the things I wanted to know, but this party or person never seemed to cross my path, so I went contentedly along entertaining the thoughts of such a story when the mood struck me. I had often thought, in the hours just before being overcome by sleep, that Guy Covell's Insurance office in Whitehall would be a good place to collect the data I wanted, but somehow whenever I did drop in on Guy the old settlers were having a day off, so we chatted about things more modern. It's funny I never thought to ask Ray Funnell, the local barber, about these things, but I didn't and so one day not so long ago I accidentally stumbled onto the fellow I was looking for. My hair had attained an unusual length, so one noon instead of lying down for my daily dozen snores, I hied myself to Ray's tonsorial parlors figuring that during the noon day lull of the trade, I could get a quick hair cut, a shave and back to work. At that hour, too, most of the baseball and coon hunting fans would be home to beans, and the radio would be shut off, so I could take my snooze in the big comfortable chair, providing of course that I had the wherewithal to pay Ray and he did not use the much advertised credit tools.

I was fortunate, both chairs were empty, and noticing that Ray had just given his razor a final wallop on the finish side of the strap I took off my coat and climbed up. The usual polite conversation between customer and proprietor took place.

"Can you beat this weather, just like spring." "Nope; think we'll get any ice this winter," I queried, thinking of the coming summer and the price of some fifty tons of ice which we would need to cool off the summer populace with ice cream. I was about to start a sure fire conversation regarding the scarcity of snow and rabbit tracks that would lull me to sleep when the door opened and I heard Ray say, "Hell, John; have a chair, you're next." By this time I had a hot towel over my mask and I could not see who it was, but from the reply I knew it wasn't John Carlton, the village street commissioner, because the voice didn't stutter when it replied: "Oh, I don't want nuthin, just came in to pass the time away and listen to a few lies."

"You got the floor," says Ray, "so just go ahead and we'll listen."

Ray took the towel off so I raised up to satisfy my curiosity and saw John Gillan's reflection in the mirror. "When's the next issue of the News coming out, Clarence?" asked Ray. It's always good form to talk to a customer about his hobby. "On the fifth, believe it or not, it's on the press." "Y'u know," said Ray, "I was down to the Forum office this morning and Forbes was showing me some of the old files, away back in the seventies. There was one item in the locals about a big fight up at the Ferry School. If you could get some of those items they would go good with that Diary of Charles Mears you're running."

I heard a shuffle behind me and could sense John's perking up before he spoke. "I saw that too, and do you know I was there that night and saw the whole scrap." By the time John had finished narrating the episode I knew that he was the fellow I had been looking for. The chap I wanted to tell me the things I had been wanting to hear, of the lumber woods, the camps, cooks' shanties, the river, log rollways, spring drives, the lore of the big pine forests and the happenings in the days of the past that made history in Michigan, especially around White Lake. When he had finished the story about the scrap at the Ferry school the course of our conversation brought out story after story and I wished my Alma Mater had conferred upon me the degree Bachelor of Shorthand so that I could have sat in a corner and taken down verbatim the things he revealed and the words he used in telling them. If I had the time at my disposal I'm afraid I would have stayed all afternoon to listen, but I had to go, so I turned to John with the request: "John, won't you come over to the store sometime and tell me a bunch of these stories so I can make notes on them and write them up for our Yacht Club News?" "Why sure, Clarence, I ain't got nuthin' much but time these days, an' I'd be glad to if you think anyone would be interested in them," he replied.

On the evening of the 10th of February he kept his promise. It was near closing time. We close any time from eight-thirty to nine o'clock during the winter months. Leaving Dave and Rolly to lock the front door and roll up the sidewalks, John and I retired to the office. I pulled up the big easy chair for John, and I sat down to the desk with my pencil and note book. Then started one of the most thrilling and interesting evenings of conversation that I have ever experienced. In a few words I explained to John that I wanted his story from the time he left home in New York state, so herewith you have it pretty much as it was related to me.

"It was in the Fall of 1861 that my folks decided to come to Michigan. Our home was in Corning, Stuben County, New York. I was just a kid eleven years old then. The principle crop around those parts was tobacco, and I had worked in the fields along with the older men. I remember the news of my uncle being killed in the Battle of Bull Run, the civil war had just started. My dad got the gypsy fever and wanted to go west where he thought the opportunities were better. Besides my father and mother there was my brother Gilbert, who was sixteen years old, and Charles who was ten, and my sister Sophania. It was five days from the time we got on the steam cars till we arrived in Milwaukee. It ain't just clear to me all the towns we went through but I do remember we went by way of Canada, and it was possibly at Port Huron that we crossed into Michigan. There warn't no steam cars goin' across the state then, so we had to go to Chicago and then to Milwaukee. No, there wasn't any such thing as a sleeping car, and we had to sit up all the way. Ma had brought some grub along so we had our meals right in our seats an' when we got tired we tried to grab off a little sleep takin' turns layin' down on the seats. At Milwaukee we took a steamboat for Grand Haven. No, I don't remember the name of the boat, but I do recollect that she was about a hundred foot long, and was the sister ship to the "Lady Elgin" that was wrecked sometime later. We made the run from Milwaukee to Grand Haven in ten hours which showed a speed of about eight and a half miles an hour. When we got to the Haven we took the steam cars for Ferrysburg, only a short distance across the Grand River, and that was the end of the line. From here on we had to go afoot following the winding dirt road through the woods north. We carried the things we needed for the trip and my dad contracted with a fellow to bring our goods on with an ox team later. At the Muskegon River we had to ferry across because there weren't no bridge. The first night out we spent at Wheat Settlement. This was on November 13th, 1861. Wheat Settlement was in what is now Whitehall Township, and about four miles from here. The next day we went on, crossing White River at the Old Trading post. There was a bridge there; since then it has fallen away but the old pilin' is still there. The second night we arrived at the Carlton place on Carlton Creek, and the next day my Dad bought a yoke of oxen and a wagon and we journeyed on to our destination at Ferry on the north branch of White River.

Montague in 1870

Saw Many Indians

Indians, well I should say so. We saw a good many of them, an' it was quite a thrill for us

kids. No, they didn't wear feathers. By this time the younger Indians were more civilized and dressed more respectable in regular clothes or suits made of skins. Some of the older Indians still stuck to the tribal dress and wore only a loin cloth. They was all Ottawas and friendly, so when us kids found out they wouldn't hurt us we wasn't quite so nervous as at first. The road we followed was a single wagon track winding through the woods with great tall pines close on either side and the singing of the wind through the pine was another thrill I'll never forget. Yes, the road followed the old Indian trails and was crookeder than a ram's horn. If they had been like they are now we could have saved a heap of time even walkin'.

Makes First Money

"Durin' our first winter at Ferry we built a cabin and my dad was employed in the build-

A Typical Logging Scene

in' of a saw mill. In the spring Dad suggested that we plant potatoes in the three acre clearin' at our place, and we did. The place hadn't been stumped but we planted our crop and was rewarded with a hundred bushel of potatoes. These we sold to one of the lumber camps and got a dollar a bushel. That was the first money my brothers and I made in Michigan, and it sure looked like a fortune.

"The next summer me an' my brother John got the job carryin' the mail from the Carlton Place to Ferry. We made the trip afoot once a week and got a dollar a trip fer it. At that time all the mail came into the wilderness by boat from Milwaukee, and was landed at "The Mouth". That's what we called the settlement at the Old Channel. Here the mail pouches was picked up by a fellow on a pony and carried to the Carlton place where the mail for the folks around there was sorted out. We picked up the east bound mail and carried it to Ferry where it was sorted and sent on to Newaygo.

Chased by Wolves

"It was while we was carryin' the mail that we had one of the most thrillin' experiences I ever had in my life. One day we had reached a point about four miles out of Ferry and was just moseyin' along with our dog, like kids do, when we heard a howlin' in the distance. At first we didn't think anything about it and pretty soon it got louder an' instead of soundin' like one dog howlin' it sounded like a whole bunch of 'em. Even then we wouldn't have thought so much about it but our dog, that was about the fightinest critter you ever see, began to whine and stuck his tail between his legs. Then we knew there was somethin' wrong and it could be only one thing, 'wolves'! We divided up the pack of mail as quick as we could and took to our heels. After runnin' until we was just about all in we met up wtih a teamster who was haulin' supplies out to one of the camps. We told him what we suspected but he only laughed. But we got him to listen and it wan't long before he decided we was right. The sound was gittin' closer all the time. He turned the team around, licked the horses, and we lit out for Ferry. There was plenty of bumps in the road but we only hit the highest ones and my seat was for rent. Well, we got into town all right ahead of the wolves. They didn't come in close enough to the settlement for us to see them, but circled off to the north. The next day we found out we were right. One of the men who came in said he had seen the pack, and there was about fifteen of them. We kept on carryin' the mail that summer and durin' the next winter and summer. The boys that was away to the war made the job

(Continued on page 6)

MEMOIRS OF A LUMBERJACK

(Continued from page 3)

pretty tough for us. In ordinary times the load was pretty light, there bein' only what you call first class mail. What I was goin' to say was that the soldiers seemed to have gone crazy about sendin' things home to the folks. They sent books, papers, pictures and everything they see that they thought would interest the folks back home, and sometimes we had loads that wern't no picnic to carry afoot. Along towards fall my brother and I decided we would let someone else have the job. We didn't particular hanker for the climbin' through the deep drifts during the comin' winter, especially with a heavy mail pouch on our backs.

Moved To Mears

It was in the spring of 1864 that Dad decided to move down to the mouth of the river on White Lake. Then there wasn't any Whitehall or Montague. The settlement was known as Mears. We lived in a house in what is now Montague. It was not until 1867 that the settlement divided by the river became divided in opinions and took the names of Whitehall and Montague. Montague was named from Montague Ferry, one of the early settlers, and I don't know just how the name of Whitehall did come about. I have heard that it was named from two men, one by the name of White and the other named Hall. It was here that I cast my first vote, voting for U. S. S. Grant for his second term as President and for I. E. Carlton for Supervisor. He was the grandfather of Harry Carlton who used to be in the Pike Garage and John Carlton our present Village Street commissioner.

First Acquaintances

The first acquaintances we made after comin' to town was your grandfather Andrus Knudsen and his brother Even. They run a general store over on the Montague side of the river and came to this community in 1849. They had a lot of land grants from the government and owned thousands of acres of timberland. They was what you might say land poor. They had so much that they couldn't pay the taxes on it. They tried hard to save it and realized that its future value would be a lot more than it was then. One winter they logged all winter and in the spring rafted the logs into one big raft at "The Mouth," intendin' to have them towed into Chicago for sawin' into lumber. It was a beautiful calm night that the tug took them in tow and when they crossed the horizon that was the last ever seen of the men or the tug. During the night a big northwester come up and on the Lake Michigan beaches from Grand Haven to Michigan City they found logs with the Knudsen mark on them. That was the last straw for your granddad. He knew there was no chance to save the timber lands. So, hearin' about the cattle raisin' in Texas and the money there was in it they decided to go down there where possibly they could make enough to pay the taxes on the timber lands. You probably know more about the rest of it than I do. They had a ranch on the Rio Grande River; your Grandfather died down there and your grandmother was accidentally shot by a pistol that fell out of your uncle's ridin' britches when she was shakin' the dust out of them one day. She died from the effect of the bullet wound. This was the time of the last stand of the Indian Geronimo and his tribe in that section of the country. Your mother and her sister came back to Michigan with their aunt, Mrs. Lake, who was the wife of Even Knudsen, and who had married Lake after Knudsen's death some years previous. Well, to git back to White Lake. When we came to town in 1864 there was four mills, as near as I can remember. There was the Ferry-Dowling mill where the Montague canning factory now stands. The Staples and Hinchman Mill just northwest of where the Lyman T. Covell Company office now stands. A mill at 'The Mouth' and the 'Covell Bros.' mill near the Tannery. Chicago was bein' built up at that time, and as the years went by there was a big demand for lumber and other mills came into existence rapidly. Among them was the Hedges & Green mill, located at the Tom Larson dock north of the tannery; the Heald Mill at Maple Grove near the Goodrich dock; the Cook and Bell mill. D. C. Brown built a shingle mill near where the Canning factory is at Montague. The Frank White Mill was in Montague. Ferry & Dowling built a shingle mill over there that burned in less than a year. There was the New York mill, operated by Smith and Aley on the docks just south of the tannery, and the Wilcok's mill near the Irwin place. Captain Dice, a Great Lakes sailor, built a foundry and machine shop down near where Woller Brothers have their office. He made boilers and steam engines. Hagerman and Johnson built a shingle mill where the ice house now stands. Johnson later bought out Hagerman and later the mill was bought by C. E. and M. B. Covell. Fishers had a saw mill down on the dock where the Nufer mill later stood. The Norris mill stood about where Ben Dresky lives now, north of the village dock.

Recalls Harbor

In those days the only way to get the lumber out was by water, and as the mills increased the fleet of sailing vessels and steam lumber barges increased until at one time they would be lined up from the Mouth to town waiting to get into the docks for a load. The government made a survey and appropriated money for a new channel to replace the shallow winding inlet now called the Old Channel. The new harbor entrance was finished and opened in 1869. The first tug on White Lake was named "The Union" and was owned by Peter Dalton. After a fire that just about finished "The Union" she was bought by Captain and Ed Burrows who built her over and named her "The Leader". I was fireman on her one summer and one day we was chartered by A. A. Cane, who run the Cosmopolitan Hotel at "The Mouth", to go to Milwaukee to git his wife who was sick. It was a swell day and we made the run in just eleven hours from the piers to Milwaukee. The other members of the crew was Captain James Goldring, the father of James Goldring who is now mail carrier on a rural route out of Montague, and John Miller the engineer. This was about the only real seafarin' I ever did and it was without much excitement. We made the run back in about the same time in fair weather.

Move Hotel to Town

One of the biggest engineerin' events of the time was the movin' of the Cosmopolitan Hotel from The Mouth to town. Business was goin' on the bum down there on account of the town and business places bein' built up at this end of the lake. They loaded the hotel bodily, intact, onto

big litters and towed it up to Whitehall and put it where the L. D. Squiers home now stands near the village dock.

Twenty-four Places to Buy a Drink

In 1873 there was twenty-four places where a man could get a drink. I'll never forget this because it was on November 1st of that year that I got married. Mrs. Gillan's maiden name was Lucretia Barnhardt, and she had come here from Ohio. That night I had at least one drink in every one of the twenty-four places, in fact I forgot that I had a wife. During the thirteen years we lived in town I worked mostly in the mills. I learned the trade of shingle joiner and was no slouch at it as some of the old timers could tell you if there was any of them left who worked with me.

Describes Lumber Camps

In the winter of 1872 I had my first experience in a lumber camp. The inside work of a shingle joiner, that I had been doing for the past twelve years had gotten on my nerves, and I decided to get away from it for a while. I arrived at the camp near White Cloud in the early fall and found a goodly stand of timber in that section, most of it primeval, and with very little cutover areas. About the first regulation in camp is to assign your bunk and clothes hook. Most of the fellows found the spikes pounded into the wall too small to accommodate their clothes so they could spread them out to dry, and it wasn't long before I noticed some of the old timers comin' in with a crotch from a tree which they nailed up near their bunk. This gave them plenty of room for their heavy clothes. Even in those days I had heard rumors of the rough life in camp, the rough and tumble battles and the hard life in general led by a lumberjack, and I want to state right now that these stories are all bunk. The lumber camps as I saw them were composed of as clean a bunch of rugged men as you will find anywhere. The meals as a rule were good, lots of wholesome well seasoned food, and if it wasn't well cooked the grease burner soon got his walking papers and was followed by a good one.

Our meals were very much alike, that is as to quantity. Three dinners a day you would call it. Meat, potatoes, bread, butter, coffee for breakfast. This was served just before daybreak. We was supposed to strike the first blow at daylight, no matter what time it was. Dinner was served at noon with soup and beans usually added to the menu and topped off with apple pie made from dried apples. We had side dishes of corn and tomatoes, and always our coffee. Supper was at six o'clock with the usual heavy foods. Corn beef was called "red horse", barreled salt pork was dubbed "blue ruin", and we had plenty of both, but we fed good. Pine woods will make a man eat more than any other kind of timber and I wish you could have seen some of those boys mow it away.

After supper the men were usually too tired to kick up even an argument, and the evenin' was spent in readin', writin', and if there was a fiddle, guitar or banjo in camp we put in some time singin'. If the weather was fair we sometimes congregated at farm houses or at some settlement to take in an old time square dance. Being a quadrille caller, I was much in demand and took in many of the parties in the neighborhood.

Life in camp proved rather monotonous at times, the routine was the same day after day. After the first few days the thrill of the call "Timber" and the giant trees crashing through the branches of the trees got to be commonplace. The skidding of the logs to vantage points where they were loaded onto the big bob sleighs drawn by oxen or to the narrow gauge railroad to be hauled to the rollway on the river was all in a day's work. In camp, good fellowship was usually in order, but let the gang get to town with their foot on the rail at some saloon and then let some bunch from another camp make a wisecrack about one of our boys, well things were different, then. We all stuck together and then it was a free-for-all but that's another story and I'll stick to the camp now.

The only real scrap I ever saw in camp didn't last long enough to tell about it. A bunch of us started out one night after supper to go to a spellin' bee at the school house about five miles away. As we were walkin' along the loggin' road, Mike Milan began to chide me about leanin' off his girl when we got to the school house. A fellow by the name of Chittenden who was pretty much of a bully was walkin' along behind Mike and me, and he said to Mike "Supposin' John did cop your girl, would you have nerve enough to take a poke at him?" "Oh I don't know" said Mike not wantin' to start any argument, but this answer didn't satisfy Chittenden and one word led to another as he poked insultin' remarks at Mike. Finally Chittenden said, "What would you do if I copped your girl?" Mike quick as lightnin' squared around, "Want me to show you?" "Yea," says Chittenden, so Mike let him have it under the chin layin' him out cold in the road. None of us felt sorry for the meddler so we walked on leavin' him there.

Another time while in camp Mark Covell was there scalin' logs. Barney O'Connell was foreman and Mark was sweet on one of the gals that was hired to help the cook, so he used to help wipe the dishes every night. We had a big bully by the name of John White in camp. This night John horns into the cook's shanty and starts passin' remarks that weren't exactly complimentary about Mark. John wasn't any match of Mark when it came to wits and it wasn't long before John got sore and started using language that Mark calculated wasn't fit for ladies to listen to, so he let fly a plate at John. This started the rumpus an' it wasn't long before Mark had darn near cleaned out everything throwable in the way of dishes, kitchen utensils, rolling pins and pans that there was in the cook's shanty. John ended up pretty much the worse for the wear and Lyman Covell came up to camp from town a few days later and settled the dispute for good by firing John out of the camp.

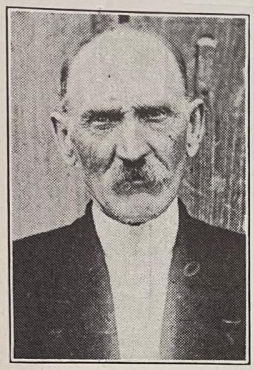
One night a bunch of us was invited over to Will Meisner's place to a dance and this was about the only time I saw a lumberjack get out of order at a dance in a home. George Cummings and two other fellows came over to the dance, George was later made sheriff of Oceana county, I was constable at the time. One of the fellows had a pint on his hip and got pretty well plastered before he got there, when he stepped up and asked Will's daughter to dance with him she refused, and this made him sore so he told her in plain English to "Go to—." Will overheard it and invited the fellow outside. It was a right good scrap and when they finished his buddies had to carry the fellow home.

(Continued in next issue)

MEMOIRS OF A LUMBERJACK

Pertaining to the Early History and Logging Era of White Lake — Part 2

As Told to Clarence E. Pitkin by John H. Gillan



JOHN H. GILLAN
Lumberjack

Did I ever get into any fights myself? Well I had a reputation for being pretty hard and I wasn't bothered much. One time when I was in a camp near New Era they sent over for me to call the dance, and my brother-in-law John Brinkley to play the fiddle, George Stansbury played second fiddle and we had what you'd call a right smart outfit. My wife went over with us, and we hadn't any more 'en finished the first quadrille when a big colored fellow that had it in for me because of an argument we'd had in one of the saloons, came up to me and said he wanted to see me outside. My wife tried to get me not to go out but I left her and followed the fellow out. He sort of turned on me just as we got out on the porch so I let him have it. He didn't bother me no more that night.

As I told you before when we all got to town it was different. I've seen the boys go to town after a winter in the woods, and after they got paid off they would have a hundred or so dollars to the good, then the big party started and it usually lasted until it was all over. When the boys got het up on a little corn they was pretty brave men and arguments would start over most anything. As a rule it was bragging about how good they thought they was.

I remember one time when my mother run a boarding house down on Lake street, just north of where the tannery now stands, that I drove her up town to do some shoppin'. We drove up to Mears Avenue and turned down Colby street to go to the store down by where the tunnel is now, where she traded. There was a big free-for-all goin' on on the main stem in front of the Foster block and Browns Saloon; Brown was a good saloon keeper. The Foster block stood next to the tunnel on the right hand side where you turn to go to Montague. The streets was so crowded that we had to hitch our horse up the street here near the drug store and walk down to the store, by that time the crowd had thinned out some but there was still fightin' goin' on. Miller Ruggles kept a drug store in the Foster block at the time.

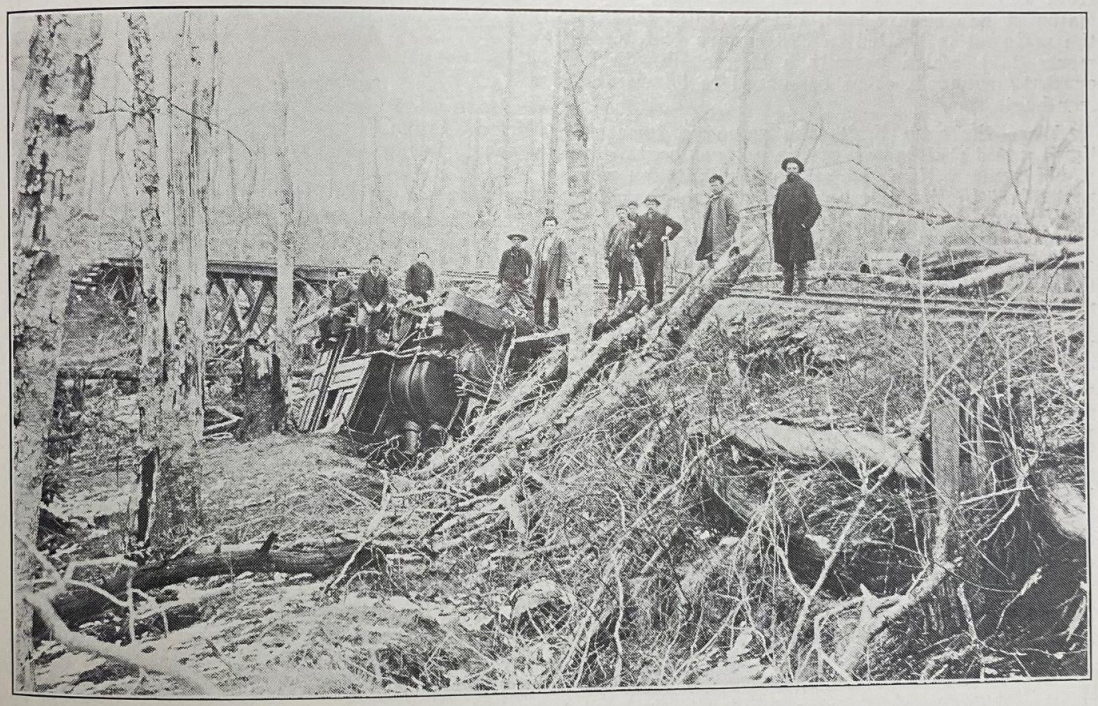
Another fracus I heard tell about but didn't actually see was the time when your uncle, Captain Even Knudsen, took the lumberjack out of Jim Foxe's place on Lake street. Jim run a saloon and a house of questionable character, and a lot of the boys used to head for there when they got likkered up. This fellow sported a shootin' iron and when he got tight thought he was in the wild and wooly west and started shootin' the lamps out, and the bottles offen' the back bars. Fred Hinman was the village marshal and Jim had sent for him to come down and get the fellow. Well, he got down there but calculated that he didn't want no holes punched in his skin and was walkin' up and down on the railroad trestle listenin' to the fireworks when Captain Knudsen came along. Captain was a little cuss about five feet tall but wasn't afraid of the devil. He had sailed the lakes for years and at that time was captain of the "M. B. Covell" a steam lumber barge that carried lumber and passengers to Chicago, and provisions and passengers from Chicago to White Lake. Well, Captain meets up with Fred and says "What y'u doin' down here, Fred?" and Fred says, "What's his name is in there shootin' up the place." "Well, why don't you go in and git him?" says Captain. "Wall," says Fred, "I ain't got no hankerin' to look like a piece of cheese." "Hell," says Captain, "If I had your authority I'd go in an' get him." "Seein' as how you're so darn brave" says Fred, "I'll give you the authority," so he pins his star on Captain and hands him his gun. Captain walked to the end of the trestle work and climbed down, crossed the street and went in, an' Fred stood there with his mouth open waitin', in about two jerks of a lamb's tail Captain comes out the front door with his man on the end of Fred's gun and turned him over to him.

Talk about your busy thoroughfare, Lake Street was it, I guess I told you before that there was twenty-four places where a fellow could buy a drink and a lot of them was on Lake Street. The places that weren't considered respectable were Jim Foxes, The Red Light and Old Mats place in Whitehall and there was Old Minns over at Montague. There was plenty of knock 'em down and drag 'em out parties in these places where some of the boys got their beauty marred by the spikes in the lumberjacks' boots, but as I have told you, you didn't see any of this in the camps.

A good dog in those days was sumpthin' to brag about. I remember one time my brother gave me a dog; he was half Bull and half Water Spaniel; he was a hairy cuss and the best fighter I ever see. I was haulin' bark for the tannery at the time, it was an eighteen mile haul and that dog always went with me, walkin' between the horses. He always minded his own business and only got into an argument when some dog trespassed too near. When I was comin' in one way I stopped at Jim Foxes to get me a pint and the dog followed me in. Jim had a big Bull dog and was always braggin' about what a scrapper he was. When he see my dog comin' into the saloon he says "Better get that dog of your'n out'a here or my dog will kill him." "Let him try it" says I "an' if he does I'll take him

out and bury him and it won't cost you a damn cent." This made Jim a little sore, so he sicked his Bull on my pup. Well, this dog of mine was a big hairy fellow and when Jim's dog come at him he grabbed him by one of the forelegs up close to the body and hung on. He must have got him in a nerve or sumpthin' because Jim's dog couldn't do a thing, an' some of the boys tried to pull them apart but they couldn't get him loose until I took hold of his jaws and got him away.

After that Jim never said no more about how his dog could fight, and the boys used to kid him about it. It wasn't long after that that I gave my dog away, he was gittin' me into too much trouble. A neighbor of mine wanted him so I let him have him, but told him he better keep the pup tied up at home or he would be gittin' in trouble. He sort of gave me the laugh and said he guessed he could take care of himself all right. It wasn't long after that that he came home from the saloon one night with two black eyes.



The Wreck in Which Seven Men Lost Their Lives

Y'u say you got a picture of the loggin' engine wreck at the Staples & Covell Camp? Well, that was the most terrible thing I ever see. That happened on April 9, 1894, and I came within a hair of being in it myself. We lived about three miles from camp and our cow got lost in the woods the day before, so I told the foreman that I was goin' to take the mornin' off to see if I could find her. I hunted most of the morning before I found her and was on my way to camp about noon. I was cuttin' through to the railroad, intendin' to walk down the track to camp and get there in time for dinner. I had reached the track and could hear the engine puffin' in the distance then I heard a crash and a sound as if she was blowin' off steam. Even then I wasn't sure what had happened but I hurried along a little faster. It wasn't long before I could hear the cries of men as if they were in pain, and all the time I could hear the steam escapin'. The wreck happened right on a curve.

On their way up to camp they had been picking up logs that had fallen off of the loads durin' the trips in the morning. They were on the home stretch, about two hundred rods from camp, and had gotten up about all the speed they could which was about twenty-five miles an hour. Roundin' the curve the engine struck a birch tree about fourteen inches through that had fallen diagonally across the track pitchin' her over on her side. All the men, nine of them, were in the engine cab with the doors closed and they would all have gotten out if a steam pipe leading to the throttle hadn't broke. They were literally cooked alive before they could climb up and get out one at a time. By the time I got there they were all out, it was the most sickening thing I have ever seen, the flesh, cooked white, was falling from their bones.

Lorin Kritchet was the first man out and he ran all the way to camp to get help. He was spittin' up flesh when he got there and makin' queer noises in an attempt to call for help but they could make out "Don't mind me, get help to the others," as he pointed down the track. Others in the wreck were Adolph Schelander, Gus Anderson, Chas. Wolf, Al Kritchet, Frank Schippe, Emery Sterns and Martin Linch. As I came around the bend I could see them, a piece of flesh as big as my hand sloughed off from Gus Andersons head and crazed by the pain he dashed his head into a stump committing suicide, I can show you that stump to-day. I helped the others as much as I could and every man of them walked to camp.

First I would assist one, then another, as they became weak from pain. By that time the chore boy and a hand from camp arrived. Word was

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MEMOIRS OF A LUMBERJACK

(Continued from page 3)

sent to the nearest telephone which was New Era, to Whitehall for a doctor but by two o'clock seven of them were dead. They had inhaled the raw escapin' steam and were cooked inside as well as outside. By three o'clock the coroner was there and an inquest was held that absolved anyone of the blame for the accident. The news of the accident spread like wild fire, and many relatives and friends of the men arrived at camp within a few hours.

Dr. L. E. Jones and Dr. Busby of Whitehall, Dr. Griffith of Shelby were the three physicians who got there to ease the sufferin'. M. B. Covell and Lyman T. Covell were among the first to arrive from town. It was found later that the throttle on the engine was closed. Had the tree fallen on the track on a straight away they would have seen it and the accident would have never happened. Men had been killed by fallin' trees, drowned in the lake and river or maimed in the saw mills, loosing fingers, arms, and legs, but this was the worst accident in the history of lumbering in Western Michigan.

You asked about the river, Clarence, well it's gettin' late an I must be goin' home and gettin' some sleep you know, I ain't as young as I used to be. Was eighty-two the first of last November. Well, river drivin' I always called that bull head work. You worked like hell from the minute you went on the job until the logs were in the boomin' company's boom. The logs accumulated durin' the winters, and none of them was brought to the mills except by river from any great distance.

After the trees was felled, topped and cut up into logs they was skidded to a loading point. We used skiddin' tongs where they was easy to get out. They were something like a pair of ice tongs that you grabbed onto the end of a log with, cattle or oxen were then hitched on and the log skidded to where you wanted it. Sometimes we used what we called "Wheels" to get the bigger ones out with, this was a contrivance of two fourteen foot wheels with an axle between. The big log was jacked up and chained to the axle and then halled out.

The logs were then loaded onto the narrow gauge railroad or slays, if we didn't happen to have a railroad handy and hauled to the bank of the river, usually some high point. This was called a rollway. We dumped the logs over the edge and they would go crashin' below until the river and bank was full of them. When the thaw come in the spring some of the hands would go onto the river and the drive started. Goin' down stream we would throw out a snag and jam the logs in the river bed so as to form a dam. Then the key logs were either pried or dynamited out and the logs would roll down the bank and into the swollen river caused by the jam or temporary dam we had formed down stream. When as many logs as possible or all of them were free and floatin', the log jam in the river would be broken, and on down the stream we rushed on the high water. Sometimes this process had to be repeated several times before the logs finally reached the boomin' grounds at the mouth of the river on White Lake.

Many lumberin' companies operated along the White River valley and it was necessary for every log to be marked on either end and sometimes a surface mark on the side. This was done with a markin' iron that looked like a sledge hammer only with a mark or initial on it. All the river drivin' was done by the Boomin' Company. When the logs finally reached the boomin' grounds the boom tenders would sort the logs into the boom of the company to which they belonged and a tug towed them away to the mill.

The river drivers only tool was a peave, somethin' like a cant hook only with a spike on the end so that it could be used to jab into a log and push. All the drivers wore spiked boots so they could jump or run from one log to the other without slippin'. What is a cant hook? Well about the best I can explain it, it is a handle of hard wood about four feet long, about a foot from the end is a heavy steel hook hinged onto the handle, on the end is a steel claw and when used on a log to roll it the handle acted as a lever, similiar to the hold on a pipe one would get with a pipe wrench, with this tool a good top loader or lumber-jack could all but make a log walk up and sit down where he wanted it.

Whitehall's First Railroad

One of the biggest events in the history of the town was the comin' of the railroad. A big mass meetin' was held in Fosters Hall and all the public spirited citizens was asked to buy a bond to help the thing along. I didn't know much about bonds and thought it was some kind of a donation but at the end of the meetin' everyone seemed to go forward like at a revival service at the Weslian Church, so I walked up with the rest and had myself put down for a fifty dollar bond. I got it sometime later and took it over to George Dowling to put in his safe with a few other papers I had there. I think it was in '72 or '73 that the construction work reached Whitehall, anyway I worked on the fill down by the trestles on Lake Street.

As soon as the track was laid to the place where the old depot used to stand at the foot of the hill by Lewises, they ran a train up to Whitehall. From then on they ran the trains up here regularly until the road was completed to Shelby. The day the first train came in everybody had to go down to the depot to take a look at it, but there wasn't any particular celebration until a few weeks later when the Railroad Company decided to show all the boys a good time that had bought bonds, so they gave a big excursion to Fruitport where some kind of a mineral spring had been discovered. The price of the excursion was a dollar a round trip and there wasn't many folks left in the town when we all managed to get on the already crowded coaches. We went down to Fruitport where we had our picnic lunches and drank plenty of water.

The road was known as the Western Michigan Railroad, two years later it went busted and was reorganized and known as the C. H. & D. P. M., and some of the boys dubbed it the "Cheap help and damn poor management road", after a while this outfit was changed over to the present Pere Marquette Railroad.

One day when I was workin' at the C. E. & M. B. Covell Shingle Mill a fellow came up to me an' says "Are you John Gillan?" and I says, "I am", then he asked me if I had a bond on the railroad and I told him I thought I had one over in George Dowling's safe, so he offered to take it off my hands at what I paid for it and I was tickled to death to get somethin' out of it as I had always calculated it was a donation, and that's about all I know about the railroad except the boys used to call the trains "The Rattler"

and the "Cannon Ball". Just the same it was the railroad that helped build this country and I kinda hate to see it peterin' out.

Last Lumbering Experience

About the last real lumberin' I did was up at Honor on the Betsy River at Frankfort. Dudley Staples was scalin' logs up there for an Englishman and he was havin' trouble gettin' the stuff out of the woods. It was all hardwood, beech and maple, and heavy stuff to handle. Dud told the fellow that he could get him a good hand that would get the stuff out in jigg time and he had him send for me. Well, we logged there all winter and got out quite a piece of stuff if I do say so myself. It was durin' Cleveland's administration.

I remember how surprised the Englishman was to see the big loads of logs we were haulin'. He had a couple of daughters and one of them had a camera. One day I come into town with an extra big load and one of the girls took a picture of it with me on top, with one leg slung over the top of the telephone wire.

What do I mean by scalin' logs? Well, to find out about how many board feet there was in a log before she was cut up we used a Doyles rule, by placin' this across the end of the log it told how many feet there was in it, fer instance, if it was 14 inches through there would be one hundred board feet in a 16 ft. log and so forth.

Well it's gettin' late an' I must be goin', but you wanted to know about that scrap up at the Ferry School that you an' Ray was talkin' about over to the barber shop the other day. It wasn't much of a shindig. A fellow by the name of Stub Jorgen was kind of a bully up in those parts and he was always lookin' for an argument. The kids was puttin' on a little play at the school that night and it was kind of a social. One of the boys in the play had a gun, so when "Stub" started gettin' fresh John Abbot took the gun an' was goin' to scare "Stub" outa the place but "Stub" wasn't to be scared and grabbed the gun away from John and plunked him over the head with it. 'Bout that time a bunch of lumberjacks gave him the bum's rush and landed him outside. Next day the Sheriff put him in the calaboose and he got a jail sentence, but nobody felt bad about it.

Starts Cattle Ranch

After the lumberin' began to go hay wire there was a heap of land around these parts for folks to settle on and start raisin' produce and kids. We had our old home up the river and I didn't care to follow the timber line north so I figured out that cattle raisin' might be a good thing to do, so me and my boys, Frank, Will and Otis took care of pasturin' cattle for C. E. and M. B. Covell on about twenty-five thousand acres of land, part of which was in Otto Township, Oceana County. We run about three hundred head of cattle most of which was raised for beef. After about four years me and the boys took the place on a fifty-fifty proposition with the Covells and made some pretty good money. We charged three dollars a season for the cattle from May 1st to November 1st, and got six dollars a head for horses. We had between thirty and forty horses a season. A lot of this land was later sold to the Fruitvale Resort Company. At the time I was runnin' it it was all fenced in an' it was some fence to patrol and keep watch of if you ask me. After most of the land was sold we didn't have much else to do so we moved to town where I have been workin' for Mr. M. B. Covell, takin' care of the furnace and lawn and doin' odd jobs around his place.

We was married fifty-seven years when Mrs. Gillan passed away on November 1st, 1930. There isn't very many of us old boys left, but I still have my health although I ain't the man I usta be. I get a lot of pleasure talkin' over the old times with the younger fellows up at the barber shop and recallin' the different places and happenings when they tell about bein' here and there when they're coon huntin'.

I'm kinda glad you're interested in all the old days an' are goin' to write it up for the Yacht Club News. I think there is probably a lot of folks that would like to know somethin' about this country before it become a summer resort, with all these good roads and automobiles that take you places in a few minutes now, that it used to take us more'n a day to git to then. Yes I enjoyed the evenin' too.

What time is it gettin' to be? Near midnight? Well, I don't mind if I do. No, no chaser, I'll take her straight. Gosh, that's betterin' the stuff we bin gettin'. Tastes like old times. Well g'd night Clarence. Thanks for showin' me the movin' pictures of the Sheldon lumber camp, also obliged for the shot of four X. Good night.