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LUMBERING ON THE ST. JOHN RIVER, PAST AND PRESENT

By J. Fraser Gregory, President of Murray and Gregory Ltd.

(Continued)

As the drives get further down river more logs are found stranded along the shores and logs of other operators mixed with theirs, and horses are put to work hauling them into the water again, commonly called sacking. As every crew is working independently, the marks on the logs are watched carefully by the men and boss to see that only the logs belonging to themselves are handled.

Often one crew would overtake another on the river, when an effort might be made by the crew catching up to drive through, or possibly the crews might join forces and bring the two drives along together, the expenses being shared by the operators in what they might consider a fair proportion.

At Grand Falls all the boats and equipment had to be transferred from the upper to the lower basin. It was perhaps the first chance the men had to get rum since they had gone into the woods in the fall, and there were many sharks about ready to take their money. No wonder there were many wild times at the Falls when the drives were coming out. Every boss was thankful when he got his crew started below the Falls and away from further temptation.

Day after day the drive continued, the water always getting lower, the days hotter, and the sack heavier—men getting footsore or worn out and obliged to quit, when they would fasten a couple of logs together into a catamaran and on it float down the river, navigating it as best they could to Fredericton or their homes. Between the first and middle of June the drive would get into the boom, a weary party, a mere remnant of the crew that had broken the landings but triumphant, for they had not hung up.

At Fredericton the bars and lumbermen's boarding-house keepers stood ready to fleece them, and many of them were soon parted from their hard earned money. The first boom was situated where the Glazier boom is to day at what was then called the "Short Ferry". In the earliest times there were no booms, but boats manned by expert river men watched the river day and night from Cliffs Point above Fredericton to Short Ferry below, and towed into safety any spars or timber that might be floating down. An Act to incorporate the Fredericton Boom Co. was passed on the 13th of April, 1844, in the seventh year of Queen Victoria's reign.

The incorporators were—John Glazier, Stephen Glazier, James Taylor, William J. Bedell, Jacob McKean, Isaac Kilburn, Duncan Glazier and Spafford Barker. The objects as expressed were: picking up, securing and rafting timber, logs, masts, spars, and other lumber. The capital of the Company was \$8,000. There was a double liability clause in the charter and the rate fixed for rafting logs in the charter was two shilling and six pence per thousand. As first constructed there were no jam piers in the boom, but small sunken piers with chains and buoys attached to which the log boom was fastened.

This style of boom continued until 1863 when the first jam piers were built, the old method not having proved secure with the increased quantity of lumber.

The second boom to be built was the Sterling, then the Gill, and last of all in 1868 the Douglas boom above Fredericton. There were no sheer booms. Ordinary chain boom was used to sheer the logs as far as possible, the open gaps being watched by boats.

A few years before the incorporation of the Boom Co., the Glaziers undertook the securing and booming of the lumber on the river, but they got into financial difficulties and just previous to the formation of the company it was being done by John and Isaac Burpee.

Before following the lumber further, I will describe the method of logging and stream driving as conducted to day with the improvements we have over our predecessors.

In 1876 Levi H. Pond, an American from Michigan, came to Fredericton to demonstrate to the lumber a shear boom that he recently invented, and that was being used in his native State, with the expectation of selling his rights. The purpose of the boom is to direct the run of logs in a river so as to always keep them in the channel, and to prevent them piling up on bars, heads of islands, rocks, etc., also to direct their flow into booms; and adjustable, so that the river can be quickly opened to allow the passage of all kind of craft and promptly closed again.

The lumbermen of the day realized that if he could do all he said his invention was most valuable and would be the means of saving much money and time in stream driving and the securing of the lumber. A trial boom was built and experimented within the river and proved every claim that was made for it. Immediately a company was formed to build and operate shear booms on the river paying the inventor a royalty on every thousand of lumber that ran past them. The Fredericton Boom Co. agreed to pay the inventor a royalty for their use and this

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company continued until the patents expired. Mr. Pond made his home on the river until his death, a few years ago, and was continuously a contractor in connection with driving or the operation of his booms. This is in short the history of Pond's Patent Shear Boom, the best invention ever produced to assist in stream driving, and now used in every country. It is hard to describe this boom so that you will understand it, but I will try:

First let me say that the principle is exactly the same as that whereby a sailing vessel tacks or beats to windward. Instead of the wind, we have the water of the stream constantly flowing in one direction; instead of the sail, we have the rudders of the boom adjustable as the sails of the boat. We call them fins. Now the object of the boom is to direct the course of the logs in the stream. To accomplish this we have extended out from the shore, in a slanting position down river, a boom along which logs can slide as they strike it, flowing promiscuously down the stream, to the end of it, thus being carried across the river to clear an obstruction such as a rock or an island. How to keep the outer end of the boom in the desired position in the river without the aid of anchors or lines is the trick. To do it a string of logs is made the ends lapping over each other shingle fashion, so that a surface without obstruction is presented to the floating logs, the first boom log is made fast to the shore by a chain the string logs are toggled with chains and on the down river side at each toggle a half log or deal is hitched in at one end. This is called the fin, and by setting the whole number at the same angle to each boom log holding it in place by a stout spar each acts as a sail in the water and each does its share toward shoving the outer end of the boom up river as desired. The boom resembles a lot of letters "A", strung together by one side.

(To be continued)



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DATED this 1st December, 1921.
LOUIS E. YOUNG,
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