

History of Logging Railroads

The lines that interconnected and moved the lumber from camps to mills.

Florence County

1) Quinnesec Logging Co. This company was a contractor for the Menominee River Lumber Co. of Menominee Michigan. It began constructing a 15-mile narrow gauge on Nov 1, 1891 that started at a landing on the Menominee River in Aurora Township, just across from Iron Mountain. The line extended southwesterly into the south central region of the county, and also north central Marinette County. Quinnesec's headquarters camp and 2 stall engine house were located in section 33 of town 38N R18E. Even though it was never a common carrier it was listed by the Wisconsin Railroad Commission as having 14 miles of track in 1900. All logs were dumped off rail cars into the Menominee River and floated to their final destination. Operations ended in early 1903. The track was removed in May of that year.

2) Wm Holmes and Sons. The history of this line is very complex and the whole thing is contained in a couple of different spots. Holmes began construction in 1894 of a line that extended northwesterly from a landing on the Menominee River at Miscauno Island. (sec 36 tn 36N R21E) The line crossed the Milwaukee at Holmes Jct about 3 miles south of Pembine, and crossed the SOO about 3 miles west of Pembine. The main line crossed the D&W at Constine, on the Florence-Marinette County line, and ended near Lund Lake in south central Florence Co. Holmes' line connected with the Dunbar & Wausaukee at Constine and had trackage rights south through Dunbar to reach stands of timber along the D&W. Around 1898 the portion of the main line west of sec 24 of Tn 37N R19E was abandoned and removed. This included the connection to the D&W and trackage rights on its lines. In 1900 a large branch was built southwest from that point (sec 24) to log off a large swath of land between Dunbar and Goodman. Headquarters for the road was located at Walton in sec 24 of Tn 37N R19E. Holmes never owned a sawmill and was only a logging contractor for the N. Ludington Co. Logs were dumped into the Menominee River and floated to mills in Menominee and Marinette. Holmes & Son was also a common carrier railroad. It interchanged cars of forest products with the MILW at Holmes Jct. On June 11, 1904 the line was sold to the Wisconsin & Michigan Railroad. (see Marinette County for history of the W&M.) In 1905 the W&M reconstructed the main to Constine in order to gain a connection with the Dunbar & Wausaukee. The W&M went bankrupt in 1918 and this line (except the 6 miles or so closest to the Menominee River) was sold to the Sawyer-Goodman Lumber Company.

(see Sawyer-Goodman Lumber Company entry for details.)

3) Sawyer-Goodman Lumber Company. This company had a mill located in Menominee Michigan and had extensive trackage throughout the area. Operations began in 1909 concurrent with those of the Goodman Lumber Company. (see Goodman Lumber Company entry for information.) One operation was on a spur that extended north from the SOO main about two miles east of Goodman. Also there was a spur that ran easterly off the MILW about 3.5 miles north of Amberg. Sawyer-Goodman also operated several spurs running both east and west off of the MILW about 2 miles north of Pembine. Sawyer-Goodman's operating headquarters was at Wrenn on the Wisconsin & Michigan, (former Holmes & Son) in section 11 of Tn 37N R19E and this was the focal point of Sawyer-Goodman's main operations. From 1909 until 1919 S-G built several spurs along the W&M line. In 1919 Sawyer-Goodman purchased the former Holmes & Son line outright from the Wisconsin & Michigan Railroad which was bankrupt at the time. The portion of the line east of Holmes Jct was abandoned in 1920, while the remainder of the line remained in service until 1926. It seems that equipment floated freely between the Sawyer-Goodman and Goodman Lumber Companies. After S-G ended operations its equipment seems to have all went to its neighbor.

4) Goodman Lumber Company. In 1909 Goodman Lumber Company began operations out of its namesake town of Goodman. This company had very extensive operations in Forest, Florence, and Marinette Counties, not including those of the affiliated Sawyer-Goodman Lumber Company. It seems that early operations were conducted south of Goodman. In the early 20's a line was constructed that extended north into the north central area of Florence County. This was the last line operated by Goodman. Operations were discontinued in 1939 after Goodman Lumber tried unsuccessfully to coordinate railroad operations with selective cut logging.

5) Sever Anderson Logging Co (See Forest County page)

6) Connor Land & Lumber Company (for both Lindel's Spur and Newald operations see Forest County page.)

7) Tipler-Grossman Lumber Company In 1916 this company built a line extending southeasterly from Tipler into the east central portion of the county near Lost and Grub Hoe Lakes. Tipler-Grossman was succeeded by the Tipler Lumber Co and later by the Patten Paper Co. In October of 1928 the sawmill at Tipler was closed, and railroad operations were transferred to Patten's Upper Michigan holdings.

8) Von Platen-Fox Lumber Company. The Company's mill was located in Iron

Mountain Mich, but it had extensive timber holdings and rail lines in Northwestern Florence County. In 1912 the Godfrey Von Platen Lumber Co built its first line extending northeasterly from a connection with the C&NW about one mile south of Tipler. This line was about 5 miles long. The company operated a small chunk of trackage around Duck Lake in the far northwestern corner of the county as well. In about 1920 operations were shifted to Mc Govern Spur on the C&NW about 5 miles west of the station of Stager. A line was constructed south across the state line into the north central portion of the county. Somewhere along the way the company became the Von Platen-Fox Lumber Co. Operations on this line continued until 1928. Von Platen-Fox had other operations in Upper Michigan which remained in service until 1936.

9) Menominee Bay Shore Lumber Company. This company based in Wabeno operated a logging railroad there until 1930. (see Forest County page Wabeno Otter Lake & Eastern RR entry.) In that year operations were moved north to Quinlan spur located on the CNW about 2 miles south of Long Lake. A railroad was constructed east and north from here into the Halsey and Fay Lakes area. Operations ended in 1937. This line was one of the last railroads constructed in the area and came at the end of the logging railroad era.

10) **Dunbar & Wausaukee Railroad.** This line was built and operated by the Girard Lumber Company of Dunbar. Operations began in 1892. The line extending south from Dunbar that connected at Girard Junction with the MILW (about 10 miles northwest of Wausaukee) was a common carrier line with daily mixed train service. It gave Girard Lbr a second outlet for its products as well as hauling passengers. The original reason for construction of the line is that Girard Lumber Company felt that the SOO Line wasn't giving good service. The D&W's original line ran under the SOO a couple of miles east of town to avoid a grade crossing. Later when relations with the SOO were patched up a grade crossing was laid and the original line was abandoned. Several private logging lines were constructed north and northwest out of Dunbar, and also off of the main line south of town. The longest one, ending on the Florence-Forest County line about 5 miles northwest of Armstrong Creek, was some 30 miles in length. After 1903 the Wisconsin & Northwestern (see Marinette County page) connected with the D&W main at Phillipsburg (part of the W&NW main was constructed on grades of what had been earlier D&W spurs) about a mile north of Girard Jct. W&NW had trackage rights on the line between those two points. J.W. Wells who owned the W&NW was also president of the D&W so relations between the two lines were always close. At one time during a rate war J.W. Wells had logs from the W&NW shipped to his mill in Menominee Mich shipped north on the D&W and then on the Wis & Mich in order to avoid the Milwaukee. The D&W ceased to exist as a common carrier in 1918. The section of the line the the Wisconsin & Northwestern had trackage rights on became a portion of that road.