

Exhibit highlights local lumber era

BY MARGARET THOMPSON
Special to the Record-Eagle

Do you know what a cant hook is? Does a scaling stick remove the scales from a fish? What's a jam pike?

The answers to these questions can be found at the Grand Traverse Heritage Center in Traverse City, where an exhibit of northwest lower Michigan's logging era tells the story of a thriving industry that existed long before cherries and fudge took center stage.

Dan Truckey, executive director of the Heritage Center, said agriculture and tourism here owe their existence to logging.

"Without logging, the area wouldn't have grown," he said. "Lumbering cleared the way for settlers who planted crops. Before long, visitors became aware of the natural beauty of this area and started returning as tourists and summer residents."

Henry Boardman, an early tourist, financed and built the first sawmill in the Grand Traverse area in the

1840s. It was located along what is now called the Boardman River, near Wadsworth Street in downtown Traverse City. Boardman's son, Horrace, ran the mill for his father.

Author and historian Larry Wakefield said the elder Boardman didn't approve of the way his son ran the business.

"One day, Henry showed up at the mill and all the workers were sitting around playing cards," Wakefield said. "He asked his son why nobody was working. Horrace said it was a slow day, so he told the men to take it easy. Henry didn't approve so he sold the mill."

The mill was purchased by Perry Hannah, a Chicago businessman whose company, Hannah-Lay, built other local mills and established lumbercamps that enabled them to harvest nearly half a billion board feet of virgin white pine between 1851 and 1875.

In addition to the Heritage Center's exhibit of lumbering implements and pictori-

al reflections, a half-hour video titled "Fallen Timbers: A History of Logging In Michigan" is available for individual or group viewing.

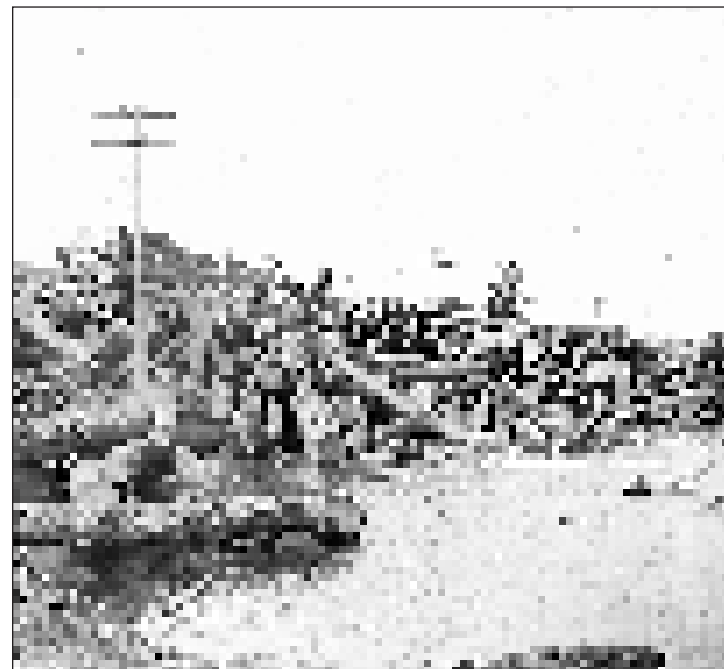
The video takes the viewer on a journey through the lumbering era in northwestern lower Michigan. The late George Ferrer, a pioneer in the early 20th century movement to better manage America's forests, worked in a lumbercamp as a young man. His recollections of that time were recorded on film prior to his death in 1985 and are included in the video.

Ferrer's words give the viewer a glimpse into the lives of the men who lived in the lumbercamps and worked in the woods.

Wakefield said the life of a lumberjack was filled with hard work.

"It was dangerous, too," he said. "Injuries were quite common and they didn't have unions, workers compensation or pension benefits, either. If a lumberjack

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Grand Traverse Heritage Center photos

Above: Logs were dumped off a flat car and into the Boardman River near Traverse City. Below: They are loaded with a steam loader.



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