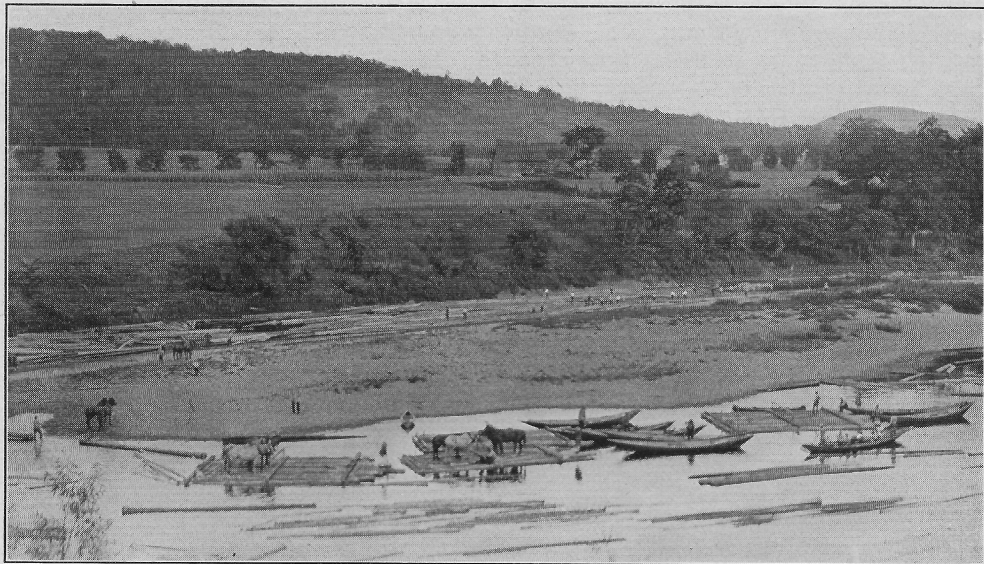


**Cleaning up the Rear of a Connecticut River Log Drive.**

Men and horses are at work all about, at this confluence of the White and Connecticut Rivers. Not a stick of timber remains above the steel bridge.

# When the Log Drive Reaches Town

By CHAS. R. CUMMINGS



Main expeditionary force of a Connecticut River Log Drive, removing stranded logs.

ONE of the things sure to arrest the attention of native or traveler in the Connecticut Valley is the passage of the annual log drive. . . Sometimes the presence of the knight of the river is first made known to busy villagers by the marks of his hob-nailed shoes as the concrete softens under the summer sun. At other times one or more of the big teams loaded with supplies, hawsers or tentage, passing down a village street or along a country road, attests the nearness of the drive or preparations for controlling the movement of the great mass of floating timber. Booms are constructed and men stationed at points up and down the river, for many miles, while the logs are coming down, to prevent the formation of jams which would endanger bridges and dams, as well as obstruct the channel.

If you are going up or down the valley by train or auto during the summer season you may see in the still water above some large dam what is accorded one of the most interesting of sights—miles of spruce logs solidly packed from shore to shore—or you may catch sight of the river-drivers in their piratical looking craft, rowing or poling about, or get a glimpse of white

tents ashore where the “cookee” may be busy with pots, kettles and pans, not forgetting the “bean-hole,” where the best beans in the world are baked overnight, a la fireless cooker, by a lining of red-hot stones in a hole in the ground.

But perhaps you are passing over a bridge or along some cliff below which the river-drivers are at work. I guarantee you will not get away soon. There isn't a better magnet in the world for riveting the attention of small or grown boys (or girls) than the operations of these same river-drivers. They dash across stream by running from log to log, as they go floating down—jumping off each *just in time*, at a speed regulated by the size of the log and how soon it will be immersed under their weight. They select a log for passage down stream and ride it deftly, spinning it rapidly, perhaps, under their feet. They single out the vital point in a jam and concentrate there in force, prying, pushing, dynamiting if need be, until the key log is removed and the whole mass goes free. They stand far out on the apex of dams, where big sticks of spruce rear and swing and plunge, watchful and active, day and night. They push their big boats through

the tightest places, and steer them over falls and rapids where every other craft is surely overturned. Theirs is perhaps the most dangerous of occupations, yet they brave danger daily, with supreme indifference. They are picked men, cool, sturdy and big-hearted, as many a canoeist or camp visitor can testify.

After a while word comes that "the rear" is only so many miles up stream. And what does that mean? That most of the men, twenty or thirty horses, and a whole flotilla of boats and big rafts are keeping company along, a few miles a day, removing every last stranded log from meadows and islands and dry channels where they may have been borne far inland in some period of high water. This is called "cleaning up the rear."

Here they come—a raft piled high with bags of grain, bales of hay and barrels of flour, anticipating the next stop. Here is a boatload of as choice split hardwood as ever entered your kitchen. Here are the rafts with eight horses each, as sleek and calmly contemplative as if securely stabled ashore. Here is a boat containing a forge and anvil—a smithy afloat. Here is a long raft, doubled back against itself, which, when opened out, is used to sweep logs out of eddies. There is the bosses' canoe, and the boss himself, with a brass-knobbed pike-pole as insignia of office, and here, prime producer of centralized interest, is the wainigan, or "Mary Ann," the house on a scow, floating culinary department, set about with barrels, boxes, mixing pans, flag-pole and gang-plank.

Here is, coincidentally, a place where logs are to be cleared, and a stop for second breakfast (the lumber-jack has four meals a day). The rafts are stopped quite a good way off shore, and the pairs of horses step right off without urging, the driver striding along behind them, hip-deep. They

make a quick hitch on a stranded log, —drag it well into mid-stream and start back for another, the horses turning and traveling on the stony bottom of the dark stream as unconcernedly as in a field furrow. The crews have scattered and are at work on the last small jams or cutting the booms loose—not a stick is left behind as they pass. A thin trail of smoke drifts from the blacksmith's forge as he turns the blower and beats away at a red-hot shoe.



Waiting while the log crews clear the channel.

An intimate view of the manner in which the thirty or more horses used in cleaning up the rear of the log drive are moved along down stream as the work progresses. The rafts are taken apart in passing dams or difficult rapids. The "Mary Ann," as the floating cook-house of this particular drive is called, is always an object of great interest.

The 1914 drive of the Connecticut River Lumber Co. was a record one, comprising about sixty million feet, worth a million dollars as it lay in the river. Nearly two hundred men were employed on the drive, which was several weeks passing a given point. The logs come from the headwaters of the Connecticut river. The larger ones are used by the lumber mills at Northampton, Mass., the remainder for pulp.

A large quantity of food has been carried ashore by the white aproned cooks of the Mary Ann and as the last logs are sent down stream the signal is given that breakfast is ready. The horses spring back up on the rafts from the deep water side with a quick dexterity that challenges description, the long boats, loaded with rivermen, come swiftly from all directions. All hands gather on the gravelly beach, take their food and stand around while eating it. In a very short time the meal is over and preparations are immediately resumed for the trip down river.

The photographer, who has hung around

the bridge from 5.30 to 9.00, afraid to run home to breakfast for fear he would lose some favorable formation, makes the last of fourteen snaps as the fleet casts loose and passes under—and he is not the only observer, I can tell you. Adown the winding channel they pass, dexterously avoiding all the sand-bars and hidden rocks, known to most of these river pilots from so many years of experience, and now—look!—they have raised the stars and stripes to the masthead of the blue-walled Mary Ann as she floats away in the sunshine, with the smoke lazily drifting from her kitchen funnel. Life on the river! What a picture.