



## MICHIGAN'S WHITE PINE ERA

According to one lumberman who lived through Michigan's logging era, "there is no other tree in the world which has so much romance...as the white pine." He was correct.

It was the white pine that made Michigan the nation's leading lumber-producing state from 1860-1910. The state's biggest white pines were called cork pine. These trees were 300 years old and grew to stand 200 feet tall. Today, a few remaining cork pine trees are at Hartwick Pines State Park near Grayling and at Estivant Pines Nature Sanctuary near Copper Harbor. The rest were all cut down.

During Michigan's logging era, thousands of men, better known as shanty boys, cut down the dense forests that covered the state. Other men, called lumber barons, made great fortunes by operating companies that cut the trees. The logs were transported to sawmills, cut into lumber "boards" and shipped all across the Midwest.

White pine was easy to move because it floated. Loggers floated the logs to sawmills in towns at the mouths of the state's rivers. Two of Michigan's greatest sawmills were Muskegon at the mouth of the Muskegon River and Saginaw at the mouth of the Saginaw River. In 1873, more than 1,600 Michigan sawmills cut millions of logs into boards.

By the early years of the twentieth century, most of Michigan's great pine forests had been cut. The areas where the forest once stood were called cutover lands. Cutover lands were desolate and created problems like fires and erosion. During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) planted tens of millions of trees on the cutover lands. These newly planted forests became Michigan's state and federal forests.

Today, about half of Michigan is covered in forest. That's about 19.3 million acres.