

# A Step Into History

## 'Wrong Way John and the Aguasabon Log-Drive'

by PAUL BARRY  
A few years ago, an interviewer spoke with the late Willie Hein-

richs about the early years in the local area. The conversation was recorded on tape and

later a written transcript was made. Preceded by a brief introduction, the following

small segment of that oral history is written just the way that Mr. Heinrichs said it.

The following story is entertaining but it also holds within it several historical facts that are appropriately revealed

in one individual's personal recollection of a seemingly insignificant event in his life.

Before the pulp mill was constructed in Terrace Bay, there was no town and no real highway east of Schreiber,

but each summer pulp logs were brought down from Long Lake to Lake Superior via the Augasabon River. At the mouth of the river the logs were tied into large rafts and from there towed either to the Slate Islands or to Jackfish Bay, and then, loaded onto lake-freighters for export to Wisconsin, U.S.A.

log jam, anything like that, I took the men back and forth to clear the jams. Sometimes they had to be dynamited. Sometimes they had to be pulled out. As long as you found the right start - the right key-log, you know, then, you didn't have too much trouble."

Many French-Canadians worked on the drives. "I worked mostly with the French-Canadians, because they were terrific woodsmen. You just can't beat them. There are no better. Oh, there are the Finns and the Swedes, too, but the French-Canadians, they are good."

From 1938 to 1946, the summer log-drives attracted workers to three river camps along the Aguasabon: one located near the Falls, another called, The Rapids Camp, located about fifteen miles up-river, and a third called, The Upper Camp, or Camp Three, located about thirty miles up-river. A simple foot-trail connected the camps. The Pulpwood Supply Company, a consortium of American for-

He chuckled when he recalled a story about Wrong-Way John, the bullcook at the Rapids Camp. "We didn't have him for very long. We only had him two weeks but there, there was

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Willy Heinrichs in his sixteen-foot square stern canoe.



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This appears to be a shot of the Falls Camp and is entitled "The camps at Black C.P.R.". Can anyone help to identify the site? It looks like the site of today's Aguasabon Trailer Park.

est companies, ran the operation.

something wrong with him. So, he decided to quit.

Of course, today the logs travel no farther than the hydro dam which was installed on the Aguasabon in the late 1940's. Also, the foot-trail has since been superseded by a network of gravel roads over which a year-round traffic of large trucks now carries pulpwood to the modern Kimberly-Clark pulp mill.

"But I wasn't able to take him downstream because we were running wood and I wasn't, I couldn't run the boat. So, he didn't want to stay any longer. He decided to walk down. He had to walk down fifteen miles to the railroad, to Black Siding."

In the Old Days, Willy Heinrichs worked on the log-drives as assistant to Malcolm Spidell, the River Boss. Mainly, he provided a courier service with a 16-foot square-stern canoe. "If there was a river jam, a

"So he left early in the morning, after breakfast. He was gone. "It was evening, in the evening, and I was still waiting for the wood to stop running so I could go downstream. But the winds were good

continued on page 13



These two photos [above and below] are scenes at one or another of the three river camps. Can anyone say which camp? Can anyone help name the people in the bottom photo?



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