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## Historical Harvest Local Logging



The rivers and forests that you enjoy here at the Nature Center were important sources of income for Midland County residents 130 years ago. We often associate logging with Northern Michigan, but logging is a significant part of this land's history.

By the mid-1870's there were 13 sawmills and 16 shingle mills in Midland County. The county's 309 miles of rivers and streams as well as logging railroads helped move billions of board feet of lumber to mills throughout the Saginaw Valley.

After the land was logged, it was often sold as farmland. Unfortunately many families learned that it could not sustain long-term crop production. There were several small family farms on current Nature Center lands.

As you stand looking at the Pine and Chippewa Rivers, imagine what they would have looked like with logs piled high on the bank, waiting for the spring thaw to take them to the mill.



## Mill Matters

Products made in Midland County saw mills included boards, barrels, shingles, fence posts, planks, wooden crates, and lath (wood strips for wall construction).



Scraps left over from board production were sometimes used to power the evaporation process used to make salt from brine.

The largest Midland County mill, Larkin and Patrick, was located where the Farmer's Market is now. This mill produced 6 million board feet of lumber in 1884 alone.

A board foot is the unit used to measure lumber. It is 1' x 1' square by 1" thick.



**Visit the Information Desk for program information.**

This inSTALLation is available online at [www.chippewanaturecenter.org](http://www.chippewanaturecenter.org) under the Naturalist Section.