

Massive Longleaf Pine Trees Were Cut by Hand Axes or Two-Man Saws and Pulled From the Site by Mules or Oxen

(bolded words in text indicate key words and concepts)

Student Information:

Old longleaf pine trees produce beautiful lumber, highly valued for its strength, straightness, and resistance to rotting. Some have even called longleaf pine “one of the finest timber trees the world has ever known”. By the turn of the 20th century, most longleaf pine forests were being heavily logged to supply timber for a growing nation.

Teacher Information:

At the turn of the twentieth century, much of the longleaf pine forest (also called yellow pine) was being logged. Massive longleaf pine trees were felled with hand **axes** or two-man **cross-cut saws** and skidded by draft animals to a more efficient transportation source (like a stream or a rail line). Oxen were the most preferred draft animals because their initial cost was low, they required little attention, they could live on rough, coarse food and because of their cloven hoofs did not mire in boggy conditions. Except in wet, marshy country, mules could also have been used to haul logs. Mules were faster than oxen, could withstand warm weather conditions, were less excitable and required much less care than horses. Despite horses being more quick, active and intelligent than both mules and oxen they required considerably higher upfront costs and higher level of care. Also horses are tall animals making it difficult for the **teamster** to see trouble spots in the forest. This generally meant horses were not preferred in **logging** operations, though they were occasionally used.

Although two-man cross crews were slow to adopt them in the late 1800's. One reason for the slow transition was the opposition by skilled axemen. These men were considered the aristocrats of laborers and took great pride in their trade. The crosscut saw required much less skill than the axe. But, so long as kerosene was liberally applied to the saw blade to prevent it from bogging down in the sticky **resin** of the longleaf pine tree, productivity was much higher using the saw rather than the axe. The more difficult, unpleasant work (like a **swamper** or a **road monkey**) was often left to the unskilled workers. cut saws were more efficient than hand axes, many logging

In the longleaf region, displaced farmers and **sharecroppers** replaced the picturesque lumberjack of the northwoods. Afro-Americans were segregated in their eating and sleeping arrangements and seldom were allowed to hold the jobs requiring the most skill. Except for the few Caucasians with a specialized skill, however, both races worked very long, hard hours for the same uniform, low pay. Some loggers were employees of the logging company and others were self-employed and hired for a specific project (called **jobbers**).

If a company was logging extensive areas that took a significant time to cut, then they usually established camps for their workers. Work days were long and when the loggers had to stay in these camps, these were usually too busy to see their families-- except on Sundays.

Being a forest worker was fairly hazardous work. Although there was always the chance that a man could get cut with an ax or saw, the greatest danger came from falling trees. The hazard came particularly from limbs that would break off and hurtle through space unpredictably when a felled tree hit the ground.

Key Words and Concepts: axe, crosscutsaw, jobber, logging, resin, road monkey, sharecropper, swamper, teamster.