

LOG DRIVES AND SHAY LOCOMOTIVES

or

LOG DRIVES AND LOG TRAINS

or

PIKE POLES AND SHAY LOCOMOTIVES

History of Logging in the Upper Greenbrier Valley of West Virginia 1870 - 1930

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this website is to relate the history of the initial commercial logging of the Upper Greenbrier Valley section of West Virginia, which took place between 1870 and 1930.

The Greenbrier River rises in two forks in northern Pocahontas County and flows to a junction with the New River, draining most of Pocahontas County and a sizable portion of Greenbrier and Summers Counties. The distance from the junction of the forks at Durbin to the New River, at Hinton, is 162 miles. The author is defining the Upper Greenbrier Valley as that section of the river's watershed above Ronceverte, in Greenbrier county, and including all of Pocahontas County. Geographically, to include all of Pocahontas County is not correct, but historically it completes the story the author is hoping to relate.

Included is history of pre-1870 logging, although much of this material is sketchy. Post-1930 logging history is included as it naturally flows in the text, but except to complete the story of the Cass operation, the history of this period is left to another writer.

When the author first began collecting information on the history of the Upper Greenbrier Valley logging (over 50 years ago), the goal was the publishing of a book on the topic. However, as the years have gone by the amount of material collected has become too vast for one book, particularly once the many photographs available are included with the text. I briefly thought of perhaps putting out three books, but gave this idea up before long. Hopefully, the use of a website will make the results of my many hours of research and on ground exploration available to the not-that-many people in the world who are also interested in this topic. (Maybe someone will steal the material from the website and reduce it to book size. However, I do not want to see the result.)

As you read through the material, a great many blank spots will be found where the research is not complete. Also, there are numerous notes to myself on things I need to check in various record books and in the major newspaper source, *The Pocahontas Times*.

A major purpose in putting this material in a location where it will hopefully be available to other people with an interest in the history of logging in West Virginia is getting additional information on the logging in the Upper Greenbrier Valley, answers to some of the obvious questions, and corrections to any of the mistakes I have made.

An area that needs work is the locations of the very numerous small sawmills. So many lumbermen had mills they moved from site to site as they acquired different tracts of lumber. Too much time has passed and anyone with a personal knowledge of many of these mills have passed on. But hopefully some of you remember a location on the family farm that your grandfather pointed out to you as the site of so-and-so's mill.

As this material first goes on the web, there are but very few illustrations. But, never fear, they will be added as soon as possible.

Footnote abbreviations:

GCCC - Greenbrier County Circuit Court
GCDB - Greenbrier County Deed Book
GCTDB - Greenbrier County Trust Deed Book
GI - *Greenbrier Independent*
HCDB - Highland County, Virginia, Deed Book
MCDB - Monroe County Deed Book
MM - *Marlinton Messenger*
OVC - "other valuable consideration" (found in deeds)
PCCC - Pocahontas County Circuit Court
PCDB - Pocahontas County Deed Book
PCTDB - Pocahontas County Trust Deed Book
PI - *Pocahontas Independent*
PT - *The Pocahontas Times*
RCCC - Randolph County Circuit Court
RCDB - Randolph County Deed Book
RN - *Republican News*
WVN - *West Virginia News*

The following books are sources in several chapters and are without author after the first listing in a footnote:

Climax, An Unusual Steam Locomotive by Thomas Taber and Walter Casler
Forestry and Wood Industries by Angolo B. Brooks
Historical Sketches of Pocahontas County by William T. Price
Logging South Cheat by George Deike
Shay Logging Locomotives at Cass, West Virginia by Philip Bagdon
Shay - The Supplement by Thomas Lawson
The Durbin Route by William McNeel
The Shay Locomotive, Titan of the Timber by Michael Koch

On Beyond Leatherbark by Roy Clarkson

In the text, cities, towns, counties, and other geographic locations without a state reference are in West Virginia. Major out-of-state cities such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, are also not given a state reference. West Virginia governing bodies referred to in the text as "county courts" are today named "county commissions."