A LOG DRIVE TO WILLIAMSPORT IN 1868

By Samuel A. King*

Men who earn their livelihood with hardship and daring are seldom regarded as heroes in their own lifetime. They perform their labors as a matter of fact with forbearance and good humor. They philosophically consider their lot as an inevitable part of living. Only after science and technology have made the task simple and hazardless can posterity admire and laud their Herculean efforts.

Such was the case of the cowboys who made the “long drive” from Texas to Abilene or Dodge City in the days of the old Southwest. Such were also the log drivers in northern Pennsylvania several generations ago. There was much in common between the work of these two widely separated groups. Both were responsible for the safe delivery of branded property over long distances that required weeks and even months to perform. Both were subjected to theft along the way: the cattlemen from rustlers and the loggers from “Algerines.” Both drives were perilous and exhausting, demanding physical endurance and spiritual fortitude. Both provided for feeding their hands along the way: the cattle drive with a chuck wagon and the river drive with an ark. Both ended their journey with a bacchanalian celebration in a railroad stockyard or a down-river community where the men were paid.

Though the cowboys have been celebrated in song, legend, and drama, the Pennsylvania loggers have been nearly forgotten. This is the saga of one such drive that was made in the spring of 1868. More than 200,000 logs were brought to the boom in Williamsport from the headwaters of Sinnemahoning Creek, an affluent of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. The men who managed this joint enterprise were John DuBois and Hiram Woodward. This occasion was not their first together, nor their last. Nor does this drive differ markedly from others that were made either to Williamsport or to Lock Haven from 1850 to 1909.

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The DuBois-Woodward drive, however, was typical of these springtime events in the pine forests of Pennsylvania before the advent of the narrow-gauge railroads. To contract for the transportation of eighteen different brands of logs over a hundred miles of flood-swollen waters, with all the risks of adverse weather and unforeseen difficulties, was not a light-hearted undertaking. From tattered ledgers, kept in the flowing script of bookkeepers in camps, aboard arks, and in screeching sawmills, can be reconstructed the fascinating episodes in this annual pilgrimage.¹ The details, as they unfold, will intensify our admiration for the resourcefulness and skill required to perform this task with only the aid of muscular brawn and hydrodynamic forces.

Snow lay deep on the crest of the Alleghenies that winter of 1867-1868, deeper than old-timers could remember for many years.² Lumbermen in Clearfield, Elk, and Cameron counties were pleased that the heavy logs skidded easily over iced slides to landings along the silent streams.

Atop the divide where the waters of the Ohio and Susquehanna basins part in opposite directions, jobbers for John DuBois toiled on the headwaters of the Bennetts Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek. Some of the virgin trees they felled were owned by John DuBois and grew on the steep slopes of Heath Run and the ravines of Grapevine and Hoyt branches. Some were purchased from farmers in “Hickory Kingdom,” a backwoods settlement on the summit that was named for the Democratic sentiments of these Jacksonian supporters.³ These emigrants from New York state were rapidly becoming skilled woodsmen, since DuBois and Woodward had introduced a new industry into this solitary wilderness.

Standing in the Conway cemetery today, where many of these same loggers are now resting, we view with admiration the majestic ranks of mountains extending for miles in every direction.

¹The DuBois lumbering records are incomplete because they were partly destroyed by vandals who broke into the Green Glen Lodge. Some of the ledgers are now in the possession of John E. DuBois, Jr., and the rest are in the barber shop of James F. Beach, both of DuBois, Pa. The Woodward records have disappeared entirely and the family has no knowledge of their fate.
²Harrisburg Patriot and Union, March 18, 1868, quoting the Williamsport Daily Gazette, n.d.
A typical pioneer farm in Hickory Kingdom at the time when Herman S. MacMinn accompanied the engineering corps of the Winslow Colliery Railroad.

Several miles eastward, beyond the plunging depths of Heath Run and its network of tributaries, will be noted the protruding elevation of "Gobbler's Knob." On the flank of this eminence, "woodhicks" were at work in Bark Camp Hollow on a warrant owned by John DuBois. Between the two slashings lay the frozen waters of Bennetts Branch which similarly had its beginnings on the divide near Hickory Kingdom. Two miles farther downstream, at the thriving hamlet of Penfield, Hiram Woodward was cutting timber for the Reading, Fisher and Company with a contract to deliver the logs into the Williamsport boom.

This mountainous area, from the summit at Hickory Kingdom to Penfield, still possessed most of the characteristics of a frontier land, such as one might have found in the western territories at that time. Most of the buildings were made of logs, rail fences were universal, roads were mere tracks through the woods, wolves

1 *Caldwell’s Atlas of Clearfield County*: 1878, 102-103. DuBois owned three warrants in this vicinity: 437 acres in No. 3601 (Hickory Kingdom), 900 acres in No. 3600 (Heath Run), and 683 acres in No. 3578 (Bark Camp).

2 *Commemorative Biographical Record of Central Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1898), 668-669.
and panthers commonly disturbed sleepers at night, and the geography was imperfectly understood.6

Yet this forlorn spot in the mountains had already attracted the attention of railroad builders in rival corporations who wished to control the “low grade” crossing of the divide. Surveys had already been made for the Winslow Colliery Railroad, which was planned as a transcontinental link for a broad-gauge line across the United States.7 Another corps of engineers appeared on the summit, March 24, 1868, only five days after the DuBois-Woodward drive had started. Directed by Franklin Wright, they surveyed down Bennetts Branch in complete disregard of the earlier work. This action led to litigation between the Allegheny Valley Railroad and the Winslow Colliery Railroad, with a final verdict favoring the former concern. Before the year 1868 was ended, contractors for both railroads were advertising for men to work on sections in Bennetts Valley.8

Regardless of which side might win the contest for the summit, John DuBois knew that he must soon relocate his headquarters west of the divide to develop his extensive holdings in that quarter. For this reason, he was somewhat in haste to complete the cutting of his timber along the waterways that flowed to Williamsport, and to his two mills on the outskirts of that city.

As one of the wealthiest lumbermen of the West Branch, John DuBois had started the practice of driving logs when he helped to organize the Susquehanna Boom Company. Major James H. Perkins, who had come from Maine to Philadelphia where he prospered in business, had suggested the idea of a boom in the river when he purchased the “Big Water Mill” in 1846.9 He soon convinced John and Matthias DuBois that free-floating logs, if branded to preserve legal ownership, could be driven to Williamsport much more cheaply than they could get there by the traditional practice of rafting hand-hewn timber. When the company was incorporated on March 26, 1846, the DuBois brothers sub-

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6 See map of Clearfield County published by A. Pomeroy of Philadelphia in 1866. Bark Camp Run is confused with Bennetts Branch.
7 MacMinn, H. S., “Comprehensive History Covering This Section,” DuBois Morning Courier, serial published irregularly through the spring and summer of 1916.
8 Williamsport Lycoming Daily Gazette, December 28, 1868.
9 McGINNIS, John F., History of Lycoming County (Chicago, 1892), 353.
scribed to fifty per cent of the capital stock of $100,000. A partner, Elias S. Lowe, also purchased five shares for $5,000, thus giving the DuBois-Lowe firm a controlling interest.  

Several years elapsed before the boom was finally built in the eddy west of Williamsport, known as Long Reach. Log piers, cribbed and filled with boulders, were erected on the river bottom during periods of low water. These artificial islands, spaced fifty feet apart, were placed in a line down the middle of the river. The north side was left open for navigation while the south was for catching and holding logs. Floating timbers, coupled to the piers, acted like a fence to keep the sawlogs confined in the boom until they could be sorted out by "boom-rats" and distributed to the different mill ponds.

Floating logs at first met with considerable opposition. Raftsmen feared for the future of their occupation and mistakenly believed the logs would force them out of the river. Small lumbermen, who owned water-powered mills with up-and-down saws, also resented the intrusion of Williamsport capitalists into the upriver timberlands.

When Hiram Woodward first came from Luzerne County to Penfield to work as a jobber for Reading, Fisher and Company, he and John DuBois cleared the Bennetts Branch of obstructions and in 1855 made the first drive from that stream to Williamsport. In later years DuBois boasted that two veteran loggers from the state of Maine had failed to get their logs out that spring because they did not peel them. He also claimed to have made this drive to Williamsport in nine days, a personal record that was never excelled.

On this and other early drives, the partners braved the passionate objections of the valley folk. Woodward later recalled that they were arrested fourteen times in one day by local officials who were friendly with the raftsmen. At Caledonia a strong

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10 Biographical sketch of John DuBois in Caldwell's Atlas of Clearfield: 1878, most of which was taken from his lips and later corrected.
12 Linn, John Blair, History of Centre and Clinton Counties, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1883), 93
13 Commemorative Biographical Record.
14 Caldwell's Atlas.
cable was stretched across the water to stop them. When the shanty raft on which they were accompanying the drive neared the danger spot, John DuBois waited posed with an axe to cut the barrier in two. As the raft slid under the cable, DuBois swung and missed! Quickly he leaped over the rope, turned and luckily severed it before the shanty, with women and children inside, was swept overboard. The practice of driving spikes into saw-logs to ruin saw blades was eventually suppressed by stern measures. Finally, legal steps were taken by the loggers to defeat the raftsmen but not before a shooting episode on Clearfield Creek resulted in the wounding of several drivers. Though the two antagonists continued to work side by side until the last trees were felled, they learned to respect each other and to share the waterways peaceably.

John DuBois had purchased 30,000 acres of timberland in Clearfield County following an ostensible “hunting trip” to Boone’s Mountain in the summer of 1842. His holdings were poorly distributed for convenient operations because part lay on the eastern slope and part on the western slope of the divide. Some of his lands located along the Penfield pike were so inaccessible to his other lands that he traded four warrants with Reading-Fisher for a similar number in the northwestern corner of the county.

John DuBois represented the ambitious and self-made businessman of his age, unwilling to tolerate waste and inefficiency, impatient with tradition, inventing countless new tools and processes for lumbering, and risking expansion even in his declining years. Never popular with his Williamsport competitors, hard-headed and somewhat tight-fisted, he relished the “dog-eat-dog” competition of the Victorian age. He maintained a reputation for fairness but not for favors; he upheld the letter of his business obligations and expected others to do the same. His relentless energy, his systematic thinking and his unfettered self-confidence and initiative were maintained to his deathbed, although he ex-

pressed regrets for his bachelorhood and late in life permitted
himself to become a church member.10

His partner in the Bennetts Valley drives was Hiram Wood-
ward, who had studied at Wyoming Seminary before devoting his
life to the woods.20 Short of stature, strong of physique, Wood-
ward was famed throughout the northwoods as a champion wres-
tler.21 On one occasion, according to a kinsman, he interrupted his
noon meal long enough to defeat a challenger from the Clarion
River. Another time he saved John DuBois' life at Keating.
"Algerines" or log rustlers were stealing from the Reading-Fisher
firm when they were detected by DuBois. "You damn rascals," he
shouted as he approached them. "What are you doing here?" One
of the Algerines raised his pike to knock DuBois into the
swift river when Woodward dashed up and flattened the culprit
with his brawny fist.22 To manage a log drive with a payroll of
sixty to one hundred men was a risky obligation, but the partner-
ship of the wealthy lumberman and the hard-hitting jobber made
an ideal combination for this epic venture.

All recollections of Camp DuBois have passed away. On
Pomeroy's map of Clearfield County in 1866 a group of buildings
belonging to "J. DuBois" is shown on the fertile flats about a half-
mile east of Bark Camp Hollow and a mile above Penfield. Two
dams are also indicated, the lower one being larger than the upper
one and apparently supplying power for a sawmill which is also
marked with the DuBois name. According to a report made by
railroad engineers, the lower one was called the "DuBois dam
below Bundy's," five miles east of the summit.22 Apparently Du-
Bois had leased the mill to Bundys because he purchased lumber
from them for the construction of his ark in 1868. A mile farther
up the valley was located the "upper camp" near the mouth of
Heath Run. "Tyler's dam" was situated about midway between the
two camps. Both were probably used to provide "splashes" to
float logs down the shallow creek.

10 Obituary in DuBois Weekly Express, May 6, 1886; also the recollec-
tions of Bion Butler in the DuBois Courier, October 2, 1923.
20 Commemorative Biographical Record, 668.
21 Interview with Dalton Woodward, Penfield, Pa.
22 Aldrich, Lewis C., Memorial History of Clearfield County (Syracuse,
N. Y., 1887), 558.
If these camps were like others of that day the buildings were made of logs chinked with slabs and plastered inside and out with clay. Some camps had only one structure, the loft being used as a dormitory and the downstairs being divided into a lobby and cookroom. Others, like Camp DuBois, had separate buildings for eating, sleeping, and business. A commissary was also maintained at Camp DuBois where sales were credited to the accounts of the employees and neighboring farmers who shopped here. All logging camps needed blacksmith shops and stables. Judging from the quantity of ox shoes and horseshoes on the stocking account, we may assume that both animals were used in equal number that winter.

Many of the woodhicks who worked at a distance from the camp would never see it in daylight, and for them the picture would be one of dim kerosene lamps and lanterns flickering in a world of shadows. Breakfast and supper would be eaten by lamp-light, axes ground, horses fed and curried, and the evening pipe smoked in darkness.

William F. Johnson, a former resident of Williamsport and one of John DuBois' right-hand men, was in charge of the bookkeeping. Johnson was a loyal servant, a man of trust, who could scale timber or boss a crew of men on occasion. When he opened the camp on August 14, 1867, he brought along his daughter Martha, or "Mattie" as he chose to call her, to cook for the few hands who were preparing for the cutting season. Logging did not begin until after the heavy frosts of late September when the pine bark became loose enough to peel. Both pine and hemlock logs were peeled to make them smooth enough to float over obstructions in the water and to prevent the bark from discoloring the wood. Early in September his wife, Mrs. Catherine Johnson, and his daughter Kate arrived to supplement the cooking staff at Camp DuBois. As long as Mrs. Johnson was in charge, she was paid $4 a week and her daughters each received $3 as helpers.

The food at Camp DuBois, as compared with other years, was

26 Ibid.
27 Huntley, G. W., op. cit., 259.
28 DuBois Camp and Ark Ledger.
varied and wholesome but not fancy. According to the stocking account of 1866, the amount of food consumed was prodigious and of good quality. Among the items listed are to be found Rio coffee, tea at $1.10 a pound, New Orleans molasses, mackerel, trout, dried apples, firkens of butter, cabbage, beans, bacon, salt pork, cheese, beets, potatoes, onions, and crackers. Many of the provisions were purchased locally from farmers in Hickory Kingdom and Penfield. Other supplies were bought from the general stores of Joseph Wilhelm, or Coryell and Bates, in St. Marys. A few items were shipped by rail from Erie by Haverstick, Vincent and Co., and were received in St. Marys by E. M. Armstrong as an agent. George Brown was on the road all winter driving the “tote wagon” the twenty miles between camp and St. Marys.

Venison also appeared frequently on the camp table. Records show that Bill Long, “King Hunter of the Alleghenies,” provided fresh venison during the winter months. Bill was a colorful character who had learned his skills as a professional hunter from the Senecas and had served as a guide for John DuBois when he first cruised the timber of Clearfield County. One local historian remembered Bill Long stopping at his farm in Hickory Kingdom for a drink of water a year or two before this time. He displayed the scalps of several wolf pups and vowed he would no more kill the parents of these pups than a farmer would kill his milk cow, because he expected to collect bounties from the same den for years to come.

Probably the gray-haired hunter watched with a heavy heart as the giant trees, many of which were growing in the days of William Penn, were felled and peeled. Whether the “woods bosses” hired axemen or sawyers to topple the trees is another unsolved problem. In general, pines were chopped down with double-bitted axes at this early date and the practice of using two-man saws was introduced later. Sketches made by Herman S. MacMinn, who was with the survey party of the Winslow Colliery...
Railroad, suggest that saws were used, because he drew stumps with flat tops. On the other hand, most of the men who worked for Woodward and DuBois were Pennsylvanians and would be more accustomed to working with axes. The stocking account, dated November 13, 1866, listed one dozen Mann axes but no saws. There is even the possibility that axes were used for softwoods and saws for hardwoods, or some combination of the two.

The actual cutting of the timber was performed by jobbers who agreed to cut, peel, and deliver into the slide a minimum and a maximum amount of board feet at a fixed price per thousand. For instance, if the trees were owned by John DuBois, the usual contract was $2.25 per thousand. If the logs were to be pulled to the creek or banked at a landing, additional fees were paid. For the farmers in Hickory Kingdom who cut and peeled their own timber and stacked it at a landing, the usual price was $8 per thousand for pine and $3.50 for hemlock. A typical jobbing contract of this period is the following document:

Agreement made this second day of August, 1869, between B. S. and O. H. Emery of the first part and S. John, Jones and Moore of the second part as follows:

The said parties of the first part agree to cut, peel and put afloat into Trout Run all the merchantable white pine timber of the size of twelve inches and over at the top end now standing on Warrants No. 5007 and 5004 in the Township of Benezette, Elk County, Pa., and to put the same in each year in such quantities as the said parties of the second part may direct not exceeding, however, five millions in any one year and not less than two millions in any one year—and to have this quantity as so directed put in and afloat in said Trout Run in time for the spring freshets of each year succeeding the date hereof—The said logs are to be cut equal in workmanship to the logs heretofore cut on the same lots by Monroe Moore—that is, all bad crooks, shakes and rots are to be cut off, and nothing put in, so far as practicable to do so, but sound and merchantable timber—and the tops and butts in all cases to be sawed off, where it is practicable to do so.

In consideration whereof the said parties of the second

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Ibid.
part agree to pay the said parties of the first part four dollars and fifty cents per thousand board measure, and to pay the same as far as it shall be earned. It is provided that in case the said parties of the second part shall be ejected from the premises, or their title to the same shall prove defective. Then this agreement shall cease and determine.

B. S. and O. H. Emery (seal)
S. John Jones & Moore (seal)

The woods bosses during the winter of 1867-1868 were Albert Newell, Charles Louger, Charles Robacker, Richard Gates, Sam Conway, Jake Place, Isaac Schofield, and E. C. Washburn.

Only a few trees felled were hemlock and poplar; the great majority were white pine reaching heights up to 150 feet and producing logs that averaged 24 inches in diameter. A few large logs scaled 39 to 41 inches, but most were smaller. Because these tall trees were subject to much shaking by the wind, the butt end of the log was often cracked or checked. Hence, it was the practice in these early years to throw away from five to eight feet of the butt log because it was unsound.

The slides in Heath Run and Bark Camp Hollow were built of two hardwood logs laid side-by-side on cross-members and hewn out inside to form a V-shaped trough. Slides extended for miles back into the woods, turning and bending with the terrain to the landings at the creek. An early surveyor recalled how the crews would roll the logs from skidways into the slides with cant hooks. As fast as the “sticks” were put in, a teamster with a pair of grabs would pull them out of the way. When a “trail” was assembled, that is as many logs as the team could pull, the driver would sink his grabs into the last log, which was usually a large one, and would drive away with the string. Good horses were needed to start the trail because a long steady pull was necessary until all the logs had bumped together. Once the trail was underway, the

Loaned to the author by Gladys Jones, Benezette, Pa.
Scale Books.
Ibid. Larger size trees were often diseased and the stumps remaining today are usually misleading.
Tankm, R. D., op. cit., 169-176, for the best technical description of building a slide to be found in print.
Kirk, George C., Pioneer History of Brady Township (DuBois, 1929), 34.
horses were not required to exert much effort because the slide was iced with water. If any sharp hills existed on the slide, the teamster would reach down and pull a ring in the grabs, thus freeing the trail and allowing it to descend with the speed of gravity. The noise of this bumping could be heard for several miles on a cool, clear day.

Four hundred feet below the tops of the mountains, landings were constructed along the banks of Bennetts Branch in a way that would permit the logs to float away when the splash dams were opened. Whenever possible, logs were neatly stacked on skidways to allow the entire pile to roll into the water. Existing records do not suggest that “rough-and-tumble” landings were made this winter. Only when warm weather forced lumbermen to skid logs at night were “rough-and-tumble” landings necessary.40

Two days of rain finally broke an ice gorge at Curwensville on March 14 and the waterways were opened for the first time since late autumn.41 At Harrisburg the river rose seventeen and a half feet above pool level, only five feet below the St. Patrick’s Day flood of 1865.42 At Williamsport, the “boom was hung” from the piers after the disappearance of the ice, thus permitting the driving of logs. When this information reached Camp DuBois on March 19, Sandy Hanson as foreman of the drive gave the signal to open the splash dams and break the DuBois landings.43 More than 13,000 logs, measuring 4,076,000 feet, were pushed into the foaming torrent. Soon the glacier of logs jammed in the narrow streambed and a whole day was required to untangle the sticks.

Meanwhile, John DuBois had dispatched a rider to other camps downstream to advise them to break their landings, too. Out of Mountain Run, between Bark Camp and Penfield, tumbled 550,000 feet of pine from L. Jamison’s to join the river drive.44 By the evening of March 20, the men were near enough to Penfield to eat their supper at the Woodward Camp. The next two days were spent by Woodward with his crew on his own landings. From one spot at the Hewitt and Bliss place and another across the creek from Horning’s tenant house his men rolled over 40,000 logs.

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40 Tonkin, R. D., op. cit., 190.
41 Clearfield Raftsmen’s Journal, March 18, 1868.
42 Harrisburg Patriot and Union, March 18, 1868.
43 DuBois Camp and Ark Ledger.
44 Ibid.
A LOG DRIVE TO WILLIAMSPORT IN 1868

Log Drive, 1868
Dubois-Woodward
Route Of The

Loch Saughenman
Williamport

Lock

Tarentum Shores
Desert

Down Dubois

The

West Branch Of

The

Emersonington
Reno

Darlington

B.R.

St. Marys
measuring 12,244,000 feet, into several splashes from the dams. By this time the logs of D. B. Taylor containing 348,000 feet had joined the others.

Over a hundred men and eight teams were now busily hauling logs from shoals and islands into the main current. Every log had brand marks on the ends to determine ownership after they became mixed with the rest. Branding was usually done at the foot of the slide with a tool resembling a small sledge hammer, but DuBois required his logs be marked before they were put into the slide. If the brander failed to strike every log four to six times on both ends he was customarily penalized by the loss of a day’s pay for every unmarked stick. These marks were registered in the courthouse at Williamsport and constituted legal title in case of a law suit. The DuBois branding hammer imprinted a bull’s-eye of two rings, and the Woodward brand was a broad axe with the letter “W” inside.

The logs at Penfield rode high in the water, the back scale of the previous year’s cutting being evident from the fact that it was drier and floated higher. Three lengths of logs were cut—twelve, fourteen and sixteen feet, with an extra two inches being added to compensate for “brooming” when the butts became damaged on the slide or in the river. Since the DuBois logs averaged four per thousand feet, scaled with the Scribner rule, this was considered exceptionally good timber.

Early in February, J. H. Kooker with a crew of carpenters had begun to build a flat-bottomed ark at Penfield. Though no description remains today, the typical Bennetts Branch ark of later years was twenty feet wide and sixty feet long, similar in appearance to a houseboat. A curved roof projected beyond each end, like an antique streetcar, to form a sheltered entrance and a platform for the steersman. Two oars, fore and aft, were pivoted from a framework that extended out and over the water. Inside, half the space was used for sleeping and the other half for cooking and eating.

46 The Clearfield County Historical Society’s museum in the Mossop Building, Clearfield, Pa., has an excellent collection of marking hammers that were collected by “Babe” Lamb of Penfield.
47 Tonkin, J. D., op. cit., 81.
48 Tonkin, R. D., op. cit., 179.
49 In the winter of 1864-1865, 13,207 logs averaged 290 board feet.
50 Huntley, G. W., op. cit., 243.
Double bunks in three tiers were crowded together as closely as those on a troop transport. Since many of the drivers slept with their boots on, fearing their feet might swell at night, the only concession to comfort was either an old quilt or an army blanket over loose straw. Mrs. Johnson and her daughters fired up the new stove range, costing $51.00, and unpacked utensils and tinware used to feed over fifty drivers four times a day. Abe Minich cast off the lines and launched the ark after the rear of the drive had passed Penfield.

Tyler's Flats, three miles farther, had long been a beehive of activity where men and horses were frantically breaking the landings of over two million feet. These logs, cut by David Tyler and branded with his name in capital letters, were contracted by John DuBois. A cold snap toward the end of this week made the work more difficult. Ice formed along the edges of the stream and the men were often required to wade into the frigid water up to their arm-pits. When the ark arrived here on March 27, seven men decided to quit and drew their wages. Hiram Woodward broke Webb's landing near the Elk County line, and the logs of Brown, Earley, and Company bobbed out of Cherry Run at the present village of Force.

As the water fell below rafting stage, the ark lingered in the Slab Town dam near Weedville. Sixty-four men were needed up Kersey Run to help E. B. England and A. Pardee, who were falling behind schedule, bring down three million more feet. Logs continued to join the main drive: 3,600,000 feet belonging to Bowman Perkins, 657,000 to John S. Fisher, and 927,000 to Finney and Barrows. While the drive was "hung up" at Slab Town, John DuBois made a hurried trip to St. Marys to obtain more cash. His checks on this drive were written on the West Branch Bank of Williamsport and were all for $400, apparently an amount that was secretly known only by the cashier in Williamsport. A charge of one per cent was made in St. Marys for cashing checks.

Three inches of snow fell Saturday, April 4, and the air con-

26 DuBois Camp and Ark Ledger: 1868.
24 Ibid.
20 DuBois Camp and Ark Ledger: 1868.
continued cold over the weekend. On Monday most of the snow melted but on Tuesday four more inches came down and quickly thawed. As the level of the water rose again the drive moved to Lindemuth’s dam at Caledonia where ninety-four wet and ravenous drivers were fed at Joseph Miliner’s. Seven inches more snow on Thursday soon disappeared and the Bennetts Branch was running “bank full.”

William Dunn of Caledonia, meanwhile, added 260,000 feet to the growing number of logs. From Laurel Run, with all the fury of runaway horses, came 18,000 logs or 5,466,000 feet from the Peck and Barnard lands. In later years a logger recalled that the force of this water was so great that the men quit the river when the Laurel Run logs zoomed into Bennetts Branch and some of the sticks shot across to dry ground on the other side.

Lindemuth’s dam was the main splash on the hundred-mile trip to Williamsport before the construction of the Corporation Dam at Doctor’s Rock in 1871. An artificial flood crest carried the logs to Driftwood where they reached the deeper waters of the Sinnemahoning. Some of the logs, when put afloat, would go all the way unimpeded to the boom but most of them would lodge on bars and islands along the way. Drives were organized into three divisions. First came the teamsters to haul the logs into the water when they were stranded too far for the drivers to move. Next came the main crew of loggers with pikes and cant-hooks to “sack the rear.” These men, working from daylight till dark, walked the river banks and shoved or rolled the grounded logs into the water. Sometimes a reluctant log could be turned cross-wise to the current and made to float in this way. Bateaux or sharp-proved boats were used to transport the men from bank to bank or across side-streams too deep to wade. Finally, the third division consisted of the ark and flat boats or rafts for the horses.

Aboard the ark was a little commissary at which the men might purchase articles of clothing and tobacco, charging them to their accounts. Vast quantities of “navy plug” were chewed on this drive, and blue soldier’s trousers and gloves are frequent items.

24 Clearfield Raftsmen’s Journal, April 8, 1868.
25 Ibid., April 15, 1868.
26 Testimony of a retired woodsman, James Nolan of DuBois, Pa., now deceased.
27 Huntley, G. W., op. cit., 471.
28 Ibid., 241-242.
in the old ledger. Judging from the large sale of rubber boots, we may assume that the log drivers did not wear the calked leather boots of a later period.

At Benezette, the blacksmith Tim Gulfory worked long hours to shoe the horses and repair hand pikes. The Widow Winslow furnished lodging for some of the men and Mrs. Ogle sold hay to feed the teams. Here two horse flats, built by M. J. Bishop, were added to the water caravan. Down the foaming splashes of Trout Run tumbled another 4,351,000 feet cut for St. John and Rothrock Co. and for St. John, Jones and Moore.

The river was now a solid mass of moving logs. Everyone in the valley turned out to witness the annual pageant. Though these folk had seen this sight many times before, they never failed to respond to the thrill and excitement of the spring event. Many of them walked miles to Dent’s Run to see the log jam and the expert loggers under the supervision of J. F. King working to find the key.

After all the logs had left Lindemuth’s dam, John DuBois saddled his black mare and rode off to Driftwood for more cash to buy provisions. Everywhere along the route food was purchased from the inhabitants: David Horning provided 150 cabbages at eight cents a head, Thomas Hewitt forty-five bushels of corn and a barrel of sauerkraut, and “Cracker” Hicks a barrel of flour and another of pork. Most of the supplies were procured from St. Marys although some were ordered from W. K. Ramsey in Williamsport, Perkins in Sinnemahoning and C. C. McClelland at Round Island.

The drive had developed the speed of a horse race as the logs were swept along by the mounting flood. Four men were sent up Mix Run, future birthplace of the movie star Tom Mix, to help Brown and Early bring down three hundred thousand feet of pine.

Knowing that everything was well taken care of, John DuBois decided to attend to other business matters in Williamsport. He was fifty-nine years old at this time, and could confidently rely on his partner to bring the drive safely into the boom. Turning

20 A reporter at Benezette “shed a tear . . . to think how many dollars grew on these hills for strangers.” DuBois Express, March 21, 1890.


66 “Life History of Tom Mix as Told by His Mother,” The DuBois Courier, June 13, 1923.
his mare over to Martin Tyler, who afterwards bought her, he boarded the Philadelphia and Erie train at Sinnemahoning. His saddle was traded to Perkins at this place for groceries.

At Driftwood, where the two main branches of the Sinnemahoning converge, sixteen men were discharged on April 19 because the deeper water required less labor. There seems to have been no time for celebrating at the saloons of Driftwood because only a few hands requested cash on their accounts. When the drive reached the village of Sinnemahoning, only two miles downstream, the last logs joined the drive. Barrow and Bickford's brand, an ampersand in a circle, had been stamped on 810,000 feet of logs cut in the valley of First Fork. As the river widened the men had less trouble keeping the timber moving. At Keating, which the men pronounced "Kat-ing," the Sinnemahoning drive tangled into the rear of the West Branch drive under the supervision of Emery. When the leading logs drifted into the other drive on April 24, the two crews doubtless worked together as was done in future years. Nothing is contained in the ark ledger to describe the next week, in which the combined drives passed Westport, Renovo, and North Bend. Rafts also floated through the drive in increasing numbers but many of them, estimated at between four to five hundred, were still expected at Harrisburg on April 24.

Tragedy befell the Woodward-DuBois drive when two men working between the mouth of Tangascootac Creek and Farrandsville found themselves without the assistance of the bateaux. Henry Wesser, a young man about twenty-one years of age, was helping another logger on a gravel bar. After they had finished, the two got astride a large log and attempted to make their way to shore. They proceeded safely enough until they got into deep water where their pikes were not long enough to reach the bottom. As they both leaned over to propel their clumsy craft, the log turned and threw them into the water. Young Wesser could not swim and soon sank out of sight. When his body was recovered

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61 Ibid.
62 Atwood Barrows and Dudley Blanchard claim to have driven the first logs down West Branch to the mill in Lock Haven, 1850. *Commemorative Biographical Record*, 565.
64 Ibid., May 22, 1868, quoting the Lock Haven *Clinton Republican*; also the *Raftsmen's Journal*, May 27, 1868. His death occurred on Friday, May 1.
about three-quarters of an hour later, it was quite cold and all efforts to restore him were unsuccessful. From papers found in his wallet, it was learned that he was a member of the Roaring Creek Lodge of Good Templars at Dunning, Luzerne County. Since there was a chapter of this order in Lock Haven, the members attended his funeral and buried him in the Old Cemetery there. John DuBois personally paid for the funeral expenses and gave the deceased's wages for thirty-five and a half days to his brother Jacob, who was also employed on the drive.65

Some of the men had already arrived in Lock Haven before the accident. They had anticipated this event for weeks before and were in a holiday mood from their prolonged continence. Their morale had considerably lifted as they neared the rivermen's Babylon, since they expected to renew acquaintances with John Barleycorn and some popular Jezebel.66 Though they were shaggy and muddy, footsore and bruised, they were still ready for a night of uninhibited merrymaking. On April 28 and 29, twenty-six of the old hands asked for cash, ranging from five to twenty dollars to take the "night off."67 There is no record of how many eventually awoke in the Lock Haven jail.68

Meanwhile, the logs were guided past the West Branch boom. This line of cribs, extending three miles west of town, was large enough to impound upwards of 100,000,000 feet of timber.69 To keep the Williamsport logs from entering the Lock Haven boom, sheer poles fended them into the navigable side of the river and caused them to float past. Gliding along as if on an invisible conveyor, they moved past the large sawmills that lined the banks and slipped under the towpath bridge on the state dam. Here mules and horses pulled boats from West Branch canal across the river to the Bald Eagle canal by walking along the breast of the dam.70 When the ark finally reached the chute, the tow bridge was raised to allow the vessel to pass.

65 DuBois Camp and Ark Ledger: 1868.
68 Merritts, Ray E., Chief of Police, City of Lock Haven, September 29, 1961.
69 Maynard, D. S., Historical View of Clinton County (Lock Haven, 1875), 55.
70 Linn, John B., op. cit., 525.
The men who were "rolling the rear" experienced extra difficulty when a large number of logs became stranded on a bar not far from Jersey Shore. Thirteen men and two teams were left behind to remove them. Since fewer men were needed, thirty were paid off on May 7 and 8 at the rate of $4 per day for forty-two days. Tickets were also purchased for most of them on the P. & E. Railroad to Sinnemahoning at the price of $2.80 each.

There still remained much work to be done: looking up the drift logs, bringing in the rear, and sorting. For W. M. Lloyd, head bookkeeper in Williamsport, the drive would not be officially ended until early autumn. There were past accounts to settle, bills to collect and others to pay, wages to be computed, and cash settlements made with the homeward-bound drivers. About the middle of May, the last loggers were discharged. Generally these men had followed the drive from the beginning. Sandy Hanson, foreman, was paid for sixty-two and a half days, W. F. Johnson for fifty-two, and Abe Minich for fifty and a half days on the ark plus five more tending splashes. George Arick was paid for thirty-two days driving and eighteen days on the horse flats. Twenty others were also given settlements. Two loggers, James Cassidy and Pat Flynn, were schooled in the DuBois-Woodward drive for future greatness as boss drivers on the West Branch where they contracted for years to handle much larger operations than this one in 1868. Eight regular teamsters, in addition to two more who had worked a short time at the conclusion of the drive, were also dismissed. Since the ark and the horse flats were not returned upstream to Camp DuBois, because low water made the effort a virtual impossibility, the teamsters proceeded slowly homeward with their animals.

A total of 44,430,000 board feet of timber was brought to Williamsport in this combined drive from Bennetts Valley. These figures represent more than one-fourth of the amount that was charged boomage that year, not including the cubic footage that was rafted at the same time.²¹ If the white pine of Clearfield County averaged twenty thousand board feet per acre, as estimated by George C. Kirk, a pioneer scaler, then the Woodward-

DuBois drive consumed the virgin growth on 2,221 acres of Sinnemahoning mountain land.72

Jobbers and lumbermen whose logs were safely in the boom were billed according to the distance their logs had traveled. For instance, D. B. Taylor and L. Jamison paid one dollar per thousand for logs brought from the vicinity of Penfield. From Trout, Dents, Hicks, and Mix Runs, the charge was forty cents. Barrows and Bickford, who came the shortest distance, paid twenty-five cents for logs received at Sinnemahoning. Though the partners expected to make no profit from the back-breaking undertaking, they had the pleasant satisfaction of moving their own timber for twenty-five cents per thousand.72 Or, to express the benefits in another way, Hiram Woodward saved $9,183.00 on the delivery of his own logs to Reading-Fisher and John DuBois a smaller sum.74

Heavy rains about the middle of May caused another flood on the West Branch that almost undid all the efforts of Woodward and DuBois. The rapid rise of water threatened the safety of over two million dollars worth of lumber in the boom. Company officials were especially worried about the sheer boom, six miles above the city at Linden, that contained upwards of 55,000,000 feet.75 Though the main boom could withstand a depth of fifteen or sixteen feet, the sheer boom was built for only ten feet of water. On May 18, about a third of the sheer boom broke under the force of the surging current and spilled between twelve and fifteen million feet into the river. The main boom became so packed that it was considered to be safer than before. As the logs streamed past the city, residents in boats, rafts and other craft, including two steamboats, salvaged as many of the logs as possible and secured them in an eddy between the railroad and city bridges on the south side of the river.76 Thousands more drifted away, some to be caught by rivermen between Northumberland and the Maryland border for fifty cents each, and the rest to be taken up at Havre de Grace or in Chesapeake Bay.77

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72 Pentz, W. C., op. cit., 194.
73 Computations on a loose scrap of paper in the DuBois Camp and Ark Ledger: 1868.
74 Some of the DuBois jobbers had contracts to deliver logs to the boom and were charged with the rest.
75 Williamsport Lycoming Daily Gazette, May 18 and 19, 1868.
76 Harrisburg Patriot and Union, May 20, 1868, quoting the Williamsport Standard, May 19, 1868.
77 Harrisburg Daily Telegraph, April 4, 1867, on recent legislation.
When the Susquehanna boom broke for the first time in 1860, John DuBois had 4,500,000 feet that drifted away. He purchased fourteen million feet of additional logs that had been lost by owners in Lock Haven and built a sawmill at Havre de Grace. When the boom broke again in the fall of 1861 and spilled more logs in the spring of 1865, he was again able to acquire stray timber at substantial discounts. Thus he could recover the run-away logs of 1868 at a profit to himself.

John DuBois and his brother Matthias had built DuBoistown on a tract of 490 acres along the south shore of the West Branch opposite Williamsport. Here they constructed a large steam gang mill in 1856 with a daily output of 90,000 feet. An ingenious wire suspension bridge conveyed their finished lumber across the river to the canal and provided a foot bridge for the inhabitants of the new suburb. This structure was washed away by the St. Patrick's Day flood of 1865 that either destroyed or damaged every bridge between Farrandsville and Northumberland.

Matthias, who was the financier of the family, died unexpectedly at an early age leaving his brother John, who was more practical-minded, to handle an irresponsible partner. When the liabilities of the firm reached $96,000 before DuBois became aware of them, the partnership was dissolved. DuBois paid Lowe $6,000 for his share in the business and assumed the settlement of all outstanding debts. He hastily sold much of his real estate, the Lycoming mill, and all of the boom stock to satisfy the creditors. Only the Boom mill at Williamsport and the Havre de Grace mill were retained. With capital assets left from the reorganization, he purchased the Perkins mill for $21,000 from his old friend who had erected this first steam sawmill in DuBoistown eleven years before.

For five years thereafter, the operation of the DuBois mills was on a limited scale. Undaunted by this setback, he constructed a larger mill in DuBoistown and dismantled the Boom mill. Together with company houses for the hands, the “New Stone Mill” and harbor for logs below the main boom were said to have cost

59 Megginness, J. F., op. cit., 525.
60 Ibid.
61 Caldwell's Atlas. Since this is the DuBois version of the story, it is apparently prejudiced against Lowe.
To stock over eight million feet of logs for this new enterprise was the main reason why DuBois had expanded his cutting program in the winter of 1867-68.

Both of the DuBois mills in Williamsport were idle when the drive was completed. Seventy-two men went back to work at the Perkins Mill on May 14, but the New Stone Mill, which consumed over a million feet monthly, was not started until June. It was the practice for DuBois to run his mills only about six or seven months of the year. What these employees did for a living during the slack season is interesting to speculate on, because only a few of them were engaged on the drive.

Most of the lumber sawed at the New Mill was 4" x 4" size which was piled in the board yard to dry. Some was cut for railroads and other individuals as “bill stuff,” that is, according to desired dimensions. Lath and peach slats were also produced. At this time about half the lumber shipped from Williamsport was sent on the canal and the other half on the railroads.

W. F. Johnson and his family returned to St. Marys by train and again assumed charge of the accounts at Camp DuBois. On July 3, he acknowledged receipt of the supplies from the ark. Those drive goods which were shipped back consisted of four axes, 47 handspikes, 47 blankets, one cook stove, nine bed ticks, and a new chain. Johnson later informed DuBois that the back-scale was 557,468 feet or more than two thousand logs that still lay in the woods or along the slide. These would be included in next year’s drive.

Ordinarily the “woodhicks” who had taken part in this epic would face a dull summer of picking berries, digging ginseng, or laboring on a farm until the frosts of September would send the crews back into camp for another season. Such was not the case in 1868 because both the Winslow Colliery Railroad and the Allegheny Valley Railroad were pushing their claims to the “low grade” line. Advertisements throughout the year pled for men. Sev-

\textsuperscript{82} Caldwell’s Atlas.  
\textsuperscript{83} Mill Payroll Book: 1867-69.  
\textsuperscript{84} Mill Production Ledger: 1867-71.  
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{86} Lycoming Daily Gazette, May 19, 1868.  
\textsuperscript{87} Copy of a letter from Johnson to DuBois found in ledgers.  
\textsuperscript{88} Copy of a letter, dated July 8, 1868, from Johnson to DuBois.
eral hundred were employed by Col. G. A. Worth in building section five at Mix Run from March, 1868, to November, 1869. Preliminary cutting and grubbing on the right-of-way for the Winslow Colliery Railroad was completed this year between the summit and Driftwood. But once the smell of pine, the thrill of the outdoors, and the camaraderie of camp life had gotten into a man's blood, the allurement of a "good winter's work" on the railroads was easily ignored.

59 Commemorative Biographical Record, 640.