
Tumult on the Mountains is a portrayal of the lumbering activities in West Virginia from its small beginnings to the first years of the present century — when the heavy cutting reached its peak. Because of the rough country, logging and lumbering took a different form in West Virginia than in Maine and the Great Lakes states. Likewise, when the big timber was cut, the soil was denuded more than in Michigan and Wisconsin, although the "cut fast and get out" procedure was generally followed.

The first 100 pages give us in considerable detail such items as the names, locations and dates of saw mills using band saws — the amount of lumber cut and other items which are of important historical significance. The means used for transporting logs is also discussed, and of particular importance is the method of skidding logs down the steep slopes by means of "log slides."

Life in the woods was more typical of logging operations than some phases of West Virginia logging procedures. However, the growth and disappearance of boom towns was more like the mining towns of Colorado, than logging operations in other parts of the United States.

The reader is sorry when the discussion of the subject ends. However, the following 250 pages contain a collection of full-page pictures of logging operations, which could not have been presented as completely in any other manner.

The volume is a veritable treasure chest of detailed material put on record in a way that gives a correct and clear picture of logging in West Virginia mountains.

While the main emphasis of the book is concerned with the details of the work of the men, the boom towns, the methods, tools and machinery of logging, there is more recorded in the 257 pictures included.

In addition to the excellent historical material and pictures there is the admonition that by what men have done we learn what men can do. The old method of "cut fast and get out" brought a short term of prosperity, and a long time period of poverty and want, the effects of which still are evident.

Fortunately, timber is America's great renewable resource, which if allowed to revive, with only a little aid and protection by man, will
repeat for our great-grandchildren what had been provided by nature for our great-grandparents.

This book is a valuable historical collection which provides source material for much further and more detailed study and research.

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This book raises a purely academic yet very important question — if only because it illustrates the common phenomenon of human folly. There never was any valid reason why England and France should not have peopled and managed North America to the profit of all concerned, even the Indians. Human material available was competent enough. Leadership was present in such men as Samuel de Champlain and John Smith. The expansion of Europe in the Western Hemisphere already was in the hands of representatives of the heirs of Alfred the Great and Charlemagne. Why not? Despite all the contention, all the conflict, that is the way it worked out. The Pilgrims and the Huguenots, in 1781, bore away the victory.

But here again we have the duty to ask ourselves: What reason was there for not anticipating the inevitable? If we have sense enough to cooperate in the end, why do we lack intelligence enough to work together to the same purpose in the beginning? The answer is: Everything is an adventurous experiment. Columbus and Frontenac, Henry Hudson and Peter Stuyvesant, De Soto and Walter Raleigh, the Jesuit Fathers and John Wesley, LaSalle and William Penn, Count Zinzendorf and the Muhlenbergs: Who else are they if not Europeans taking chances, desperate chances? Since fate was to merge them in a single inclusive folk-movement, one vast and long-continued migration, despite their differences, why could it not have been visioned efficiently enough to make the fighting unnecessary?

The explanation is the natural tendency of people to pull apart as well as to pull together. We humans are compact of minus values almost as much as of plus values. This book proves it.