

cle prepared for the Souvenir by Mrs. Lillian Battershell, who has access to records that will bring the work up to the minute and keep intact historic data fated to become tradition to the next generation.

RAFTING ON THE 'SOCK

If, in the years from the early forties to the late eighties, the generations who lived by the lumbering industry in Hillsgrove, found that a little money went a long way, they learned by strenuous experience that they had to go a long way for a little money and this was particularly true of rafting. Following, or more literally speaking, leading the log from its parent stump in the forest via ox-team to oldstyle watermills, the slow grind into lumber hauling six or seven miles by wagon or sed to the landing along the 'Sock where the banks were flat and the stream deep and still enough to make rafting possible. The strength and skill required to construct, to launch and float to market, totalled into the sum of hard work and risk to life and limb, that made the brief thrill of running the raft down stream, and the slow sale of lumber at from three to four dollars per thousand feet, after it was carried by hand off the raft and piled upon the bank, seems like mighty small compensation for the time and effort expended. Considering the usual raft, containing forty thousand feet, sold for from one hundred twenty dollars to one hundred fifty dollars, it is easy to see why men with teams worked for two dollars per day, often less, from daylight 'til dark. It is equally easy to see why the workingman and his team were frequently deprived of their pay.

The lumber industry created numerous fortunes among dealers and speculators in Willamsport, but no Hillsgrove operator ever found himself in this fortunate class, yet, there remains memories, that give to this crude enterprise a romance that the oldtimers, who gave their youthful ambitions to their arduous calling would not exchange for the present day derricks, winches, trucks and the hundred-and-one labor-saving me-

chanical devices propelled by gasoline or electricity, that has transformed the laborer into an engineer and the mechanic into a machinist.

Of the many men who floated lumber down the 'Sock, scarcely ten could answer to roll-call today, and all of them have passed the three score and ten milestone in life's journey. Guided by the memory gems contributed by Jud, John and Sumner Rogers, Ed and Sam McBride, Welda Sadler, John Yaw, and the spiritual messages of those whose rafts have floated from the stream of time out upon the broad ocean of eternity we attempt to tell the story of a lost art, knowing that our effort must seem weak and futile to men, whose age and experience could give life and color to a word-picture of adventures doomed to be lost to future generations.

Let us start in February, in the soft snow and slush along the flat at School House Point, to lay the flats three twenty-four foot peeled chestnut poles for runners, upon which eighteen-foot planks are laid crosswise and pegged with short wooden pins for which holes had to be bored through the planks into the poles,—some job. The flat completed a course of planks is laid on it lengthwise and the flat pushed with prys and peevies (to you, my high school friend, levers) into the stream and snubbed fast to trees and stumps with ropes, then foot-work, carrying lumber from the piles on shore to the flats in the stream, laying each course alternately crosswise and lengthwise, boring holes every six feet with a three-foot auger, driven by a cross-hand back-breaking pull, (no motor-driven contraption for the oldtimers) three-foot pins driven down through the courses. Lumber piled and made fast to the center of the raft. The oars built of poles five inches through where the blade, a plank six feet long and twelve inches broad, was fixed, and tapering to two inches where the sweep was grasped by the pilots, and oar set at the apex of a "V", or angle, formed by the joining of two timbers six feet by six feet, long enough to project out from the raft, fore and aft eight feet, a slot in the