

LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES: A CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE PAUL  
BUNYAN AND BLUE OX PHENOMENA OF THE NORTHWOODS

by

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B.S., Montana State University, 1995  
M.S., University of Utah, 2000

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Geography  
College of Arts and Sciences

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Manhattan, Kansas

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## **Abstract**

Landscapes express much of who we are. Our history, thoughts, and values are all interwoven into cultural landscape features. By researching the landscape similarities and dissimilarities on the regional level, geographers are able to learn more about a people's identity.

Scattered across the vast expanses of the Northwoods, residents and visitors alike are greeted by representations of a lumberjack and his blue ox. In addition to large statues of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox, festivals, sporting events, businesses, and public lands are all named in honor of the two folk giants. These features are so prevalent and well known that references to the region by those who live outside the Northwoods often begin by acknowledging the folk heroes.

This study explains the relationship between Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods region. Focusing on the area of northern Minnesota between the towns of Bemidji and Brainerd, qualitative research methods were conducted over a four-year period (2004-2007) to better understand the phenomena.

Since the 1930s, residents of the Northwoods have used Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox landscape features to celebrate symbolically the region's golden age of logging. These representations have evolved over the years to include both public and private landscape features. Given the level of permanence of many of the items as well as the authenticity, popularity, and attachment local residents express towards Paul and Babe, cultural landscape features of the lumberjack and his blue ox will continue to be seen as an integral component of the Northwoods' regional identity.

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Approved by:

Major Professor  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii
LIST OF MODELS .....	xiv
LIST OF MAPS .....	xv
DEDICATION .....	xvi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	xvii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Research Questions.....	4
Study Area.....	5
Significance of Study.....	7
Personal Interest in Paul and Babe .....	8
Chapter Outlines .....	10
CHAPTER 2: OF WOOD AND AXE .....	15
Logging .....	16
<i>Michigan</i> .....	18
<i>Wisconsin</i> .....	20
<i>Ontario</i> .....	21
<i>Minnesota</i> .....	22
Lumberjacks .....	26
<i>Issues and Concerns</i> .....	27
<i>Daily Life</i> .....	29
<i>Poem, Song, and Lore</i> .....	37
Final Thoughts.....	41
CHAPTER 3: READING THE LANDSCAPE OF LEGENDS.....	42
Region .....	44
<i>Importance of Region</i> .....	44
<i>Defining the Northwoods' Boundaries</i> .....	46
Landscape.....	51
<i>The Landscape of Folklore</i> .....	51

<i>Landscape Nuclei</i> .....	52
<i>An Idealized Past</i> .....	54
<i>Interpreting Landscape</i> .....	55
<i>Mass Media and Perception of Place</i> .....	56
Models.....	57
<i>Necessity for Ruins</i> .....	57
<i>Evolution of Tourist Areas</i> .....	59
Methods.....	60
<i>Internet Study</i> .....	61
Internet Study—Businesses.....	64
Paul Bunyan.....	65
Babe the Blue Ox .....	66
Friends of Paul Bunyan .....	67
Internet Study—Statues.....	68
Internet Study—Festivals .....	71
Internet Study—Public Features.....	73
Internet Study—Items Omitted.....	74
<i>Interviews</i> .....	78
<i>Participant Observation</i> .....	79
<i>Archival Research</i> .....	81
Final Thoughts.....	86
CHAPTER 4: LORE OF THE NORTHWOODS.....	87
Paul Bunyan: Historical Geography .....	89
<i>Early Tales</i> .....	89
<i>Who was Paul?</i> .....	91
<i>Authenticity</i> .....	94
<i>Early Sources</i> .....	97
<i>Geographical Setting</i> .....	98
<i>French-Canadian Characteristics</i> .....	101
Paul Bunyan: Diffusion.....	104
<i>Northwoods' Connection</i> .....	104

<i>Popularization of Paul Bunyan</i> .....	106
<i>North American Popularity</i> .....	112
Final Thoughts.....	113
CHAPTER 5: LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES .....	115
Restoration: Origins.....	119
<i>Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox</i> .....	119
<i>Bemidji’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox</i> .....	121
<i>Akeley’s Paul Bunyan and Hackensack’s Lucette</i> .....	123
Restoration: Evolution .....	128
<i>Paul Bunyan as a Family Attraction</i> .....	130
<i>Paul Bunyan as Photo-Op</i> .....	133
<i>Paul Bunyan as Recreation</i> .....	136
<i>Evolution Model</i> .....	140
<i>Final Thoughts on the Landscape Evolution Model</i> .....	143
Restoration: Permanence.....	144
<i>Level of Permanence: Individual</i> .....	147
<i>Level of Permanence: Community</i> .....	148
<i>Level of Permanence: Regional</i> .....	151
Restoration: Identity .....	155
<i>Celebrating Regional Identity: Paul Bunyan Days and Sweetheart Days</i> .....	158
<i>Recognizing Regional Identity: Woodtick Theater and Blue Thunder</i> .....	161
<i>Enduring Images of Regional Identity:</i> .....	163
<i>Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan and Bemidji’s “Save Babe!” Campaign</i> .....	163
<i>Widespread Regional Identity:</i> .....	166
<i>Examples from outside the Northwoods’ Major Nuclei</i> .....	166
Final Thoughts on the Era of Restoration .....	169
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	172
Summary of Findings.....	172
Limitations of the Study: Northwood’s Core vs. Periphery.....	176
Future Research and Applicability .....	179
Concluding Thoughts on a Lumberjack and His Blue Ox .....	182

CHAPTER NOTES .....	184
REFERENCES.....	191
APPENDIX 1: OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS .....	199
Appendix B .....	201
I. Respondent sheet for Demographic information.....	202
Appendix B .....	208
I. Respondent sheet for Demographic information.....	209
Sample Interview A.1 .....	214
APPENDIX 2: WOMEN OF THE WOODS.....	228
APPENDIX 3: EATING ON THE ROAD.....	230
APPENDIX 4: “THE LOST FORTY” .....	232

# LIST OF FIGURES

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Bemidji’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox . . . . .	4
1.2 Postcard: “Minnesota is...Paul Bunyan Country!”. . . . .	5
1.3 Roy and Gladys Snyder . . . . .	9
1.4 Akeley’s Paul Bunyan. . . . .	10
1.5 Minnesota Logging Camp Crew . . . . .	11
1.6 Longest Single Train of Lumber . . . . .	13
1.7 Paul Bunyan Bowling. . . . .	14

## CHAPTER 2: OF WOOD AND AXE

2.1 Early Sawmill on the Escanaba River. . . . .	19
2.2 Loading Timber on a Ship at Knife River, Minnesota . . . . .	20
2.3 Log Jam on the St. Croix River . . . . .	21
2.4 Sleighs Loaded with Goods at Thessalon, Ontario . . . . .	22
2.5 Sawmill at International Falls, Minnesota . . . . .	24
2.6 “A Glimpse Into the Future: The Last Tree” . . . . .	29
2.7 -15 Degrees in Winton, Minnesota . . . . .	33
2.8 Lumberjacks’ Bunkhouse . . . . .	35
2.9 Logging Camp . . . . .	36
2.10 Otto Walta . . . . .	39

## CHAPTER 3: READING THE LANDSCAPE OF LEGENDS

3.1 North Woods Motor Inn . . . . .	46
3.2 Northwoods Christian Assembly . . . . .	46
3.3 Grand Marais, Minnesota’s Giant Fur Trapper . . . . .	49
3.4 Thunder Bay, Ontario’s Timberland Motel & Restaurant . . . . .	50
3.5 Thunder Bay, Ontario’s “The Timbers” Restaurant . . . . .	50
3.6 Eau Claire, Wisconsin’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox. . . . .	71
3.7 St. Ignace, Michigan’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox . . . . .	71
3.8 “Babe’s Pages” . . . . .	74
3.9 Bemidji’s Curling Club . . . . .	74
3.10 Tall Timber Days T-Shirt . . . . .	75
3.11 Sweetheart Canoe Derby T-Shirt . . . . .	75
3.12 Cass Lake, Minnesota’s 371 Café . . . . .	76
3.13 New Richmond, Wisconsin’s Lumberjack Liquors . . . . .	76
3.14 Brainerd’s River Oaks Building . . . . .	76
3.15 Iron Bridge, Ontario’s Paul Bunyan Axe . . . . .	77
3.16 Paul’s Frying Pan (Paul Bunyan Logging Camp Museum) . . . . .	85

## CHAPTER 4: LORE OF THE NORTHWOODS

4.1 Bob Schaar and His Trusty Scaler Stamp. . . . .	95
4.2 Bangor, Maine’s Paul Bunyan . . . . .	99
4.3 Charles Ryan with a Photo of Pete Dick . . . . .	101
4.4 Laughead’s 1922 Depiction of Paul Bunyan . . . . .	102

4.5 W.B. Laughead . . . . .	105
4.6 Red River Lumber Company's Train with Paul Bunyan Image . . . . .	106
4.7 Laughead's 1922 <i>Paul Bunyan and His Big Blue Ox</i> . . . . .	108

## CHAPTER 5: LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES

5.1 Brainerd's 1935 Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox. . . . .	120
5.2 <i>Life Magazine</i> (Bemidji) 1 February 1937 . . . . .	122
5.3 <i>Life Magazine</i> (Bemidji) 5 February 1945 . . . . .	123
5.4 Paul's Crib in Akeley . . . . .	124
5.5 Hackensack's Lucette . . . . .	125
5.6 Sweetheart Days Parade . . . . .	126
5.7 Paul Bunyan Days Parade. . . . .	126
5.8 Brainerd's Water Tower . . . . .	127
5.9 <i>Life Magazine</i> (1949 Chicago Railroad Fair) 11 July 1949 . . . . .	130
5.10 Brainerd's Paul Bunyan . . . . .	131
5.11 Akeley's Paul Bunyan . . . . .	134
5.12 Paul's Purple Cow Under Construction . . . . .	135
5.13 Paul's Purple Cow and Babe's Cut and Curl . . . . .	135
5.14 Pequot Lakes' Water Tower . . . . .	137
5.15 Pequot Lakes' Business Signage . . . . .	138
5.16 Pine River Paul Bunyan Trail Signage . . . . .	140
5.17 Hackensack's Lucette and Paul Jr. ( <i>postcard</i> ) . . . . .	142
5.18 Paul Jr. in front of City Hall . . . . .	142
5.19 Paul and Lucette's Marriage License . . . . .	143
5.20 <i>Sports Illustrated</i> (Bemidji Curling Hopeful) February 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2006 . . . . .	146
5.21 Paul Bunyan's Cook Shanty . . . . .	147
5.22 Blue Ox Bar . . . . .	149
5.23 Blue Ox Market . . . . .	149
5.24 Paul Bunyan Park . . . . .	150
5.25 Bunyan Trails Road . . . . .	150
5.26 Paul Bunyan State Trail . . . . .	151
5.27 Paul Bunyan State Forest . . . . .	151
5.28 Sawdust Pit at Paul Bunyan Days . . . . .	158
5.29 Ice Cream Eating Contest at Paul Bunyan Days. . . . .	159
5.30 Fishing Contest at Sweetheart Days . . . . .	159
5.31 Paul's Patio at Paul Bunyan Days . . . . .	160
5.32 Bailey the Blue Ox . . . . .	161
5.33 Paul Bunyan's Keyboard (Woodtick Theater) . . . . .	162
5.34 Brainerd Blue Thunder . . . . .	163
5.35 Paul Bunyan's Footprints . . . . .	164
5.36 <i>Save Babe!</i> . . . . .	166
5.37 Nels Cramer . . . . .	169
5.38 Paul Bunyan Speaking at an Elementary School . . . . .	170

**CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

6.1 “*River Rats*” at Blind River’s Timber Village Museum . . . . . 177  
6.2 Dryden, Ontario’s “*Wabigoon Goon*” . . . . . 181  
6.3 Cass Lake, Minnesota’s “*Home of the Bigfoot Locator*”. . . . . 181  
6.4 Paul Bunyan Memorial Park . . . . . 182

**APPENDIXES**

A.1 Women in the logging camps. . . . . 228  
A.2 Paul Bunyan’s Sweetheart (book cover) . . . . . 229  
A.3 Lucette’s Pizzeria. . . . . 232  
A.4 Ann River, Minnesota Timber Sleigh . . . . . 230  
A.5 Conner “Magnus” Jackman in the Lost 40 . . . . . 231



# LIST OF TABLES

<b>CHAPTER 2: LOGGING, LORE, &amp; LANDSCAPE</b>	
2.1 Lumber Numbers for the Northwoods' Golden Age of Logging . . . . .	23
<b>CHAPTER 3: READING THE LANDSCAPE OF LEGENDS</b>	
3.1 Northwoods' Festivals Attended 2005-2007 . . . . .	80
3.2 Northwoods' Museums Investigated 2005-2007 . . . . .	83
<b>CHAPTER 4: LIFE &amp; LORE AROUND THE DEACON'S SEAT</b>	
4.1 Manufacturing Value of Various U.S. Industries 1850-1920. . . . .	88
<b>CHAPTER 5: LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES</b>	
5.1 Population of Northwoods' Communities, Counties, and Districts . . . . .	117
5.2 Yearly Gate Counts for the Paul Bunyan Center . . . . .	132
5.3 Northwoods' Regional Landscape Items . . . . .	152
5.4 Popularity of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox Business Names . . . . .	157
<b>APPENDIX 1: OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS</b>	
A.1 Key Northwoods' Community Leaders Interviewed 2004-2007. . . . .	199

## LIST OF MODELS

### CHAPTER 3: READING THE LANDSCAPE OF LEGENDS

3.1 Butler's Evolution of Tourist Areas Model . . . . .	59
---	----

### CHAPTER 5: LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES

5.1 Evolution of Paul Bunyan on the Landscape (Northwoods' Major Nucleus) . . . . .	129
5.2 Permanence on the Landscape (Northwoods' Examples) . . . . .	145

# LIST OF MAPS

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Northwoods Research Area 2004-2007 . . . . .	6
1.2 Northwoods Focus Area . . . . .	7

## CHAPTER 2: LOGGING, LORE, & LANDSCAPE

2.1 Birthplace of Northwoods' Migrants . . . . .	17
2.2 Cloquet, Minnesota 1918 Fire Season. . . . .	27
2.3 Northern Minnesota . . . . .	31

## CHAPTER 3: READING THE LANDSCAPE OF LEGENDS

3.1 Zelinsky's "Northern" Vernacular Region . . . . .	48
3.2 USFS Map of the Laurentian Mixed Forest . . . . .	48
3.3 State Originally Thought to Contain Paul Bunyan . . . . .	62
3.4 Paul Bunyan Businesses . . . . .	65
3.5 Blue Ox Businesses . . . . .	67
3.6 Friends of Paul Bunyan Businesses . . . . .	68
3.7 Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox Statues . . . . .	69
3.8 Friends of Paul Bunyan Statues . . . . .	70
3.9 Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox Festivals . . . . .	73

## CHAPTER 4: LIFE & LORE AROUND THE DEACON'S SEAT

4.1 Migration Patterns Across the North-eastern Quarter of the U.S. . . . .	100
4.4 Final Count of States with Paul and Babe . . . . .	111

## CHAPTER 5: LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES

5.1 Northwoods' Regional Paul Bunyan Landscape Features . . . . .	153
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## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Paul Bunyan Nuclei of the Northwoods . . . . .	178
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## DEDICATION



*To Roy and Gladys Snyder for their endless time and effort to build a family with love  
and maple syrup!*

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*“Paul Bunyan was born on a deacon’s bench.”  
Dunn County Historical Society*

Landscape expresses much of who we are. Our way of life, values, and beliefs work their way into what we build and how we transform the land. *Topophilia*, “the affective bond between people and place” (Tuan 1990, 4), is at the heart of cultural geographic studies and is strongest when the landscape reminds one of home and belonging. To those who study such geographies, often there exist items on the landscape offering clues that speak of a people’s history and sense of belonging.

Scattered across the landscape of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario, travelers and residents alike are greeted by folk giants of the woods. The images of Paul Bunyan and his blue ox stand silently lining business districts, parks, and lakeshores. What do they represent? How did the stories of a lumberjack and his ox become popular with the larger general public? And why did a little known folktale of the lumberjacks come to be identified with a region (and vice versa)? These are some of the questions I will be exploring as I examine the history and representation of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox on the Northwoods’ landscape.

## Introduction

In 1914, W. B. Laughead published a pamphlet for the Red River Lumber Company entitled *Introducing Mr. Paul Bunyan of Westwood, Cal.* The company was in the process of moving its logging operations from the Northwoods<sup>1</sup> to the Pacific West Coast and the pamphlet was created to “convince their customers, old and new, that the pine lumber from California would be the same kind of sort, white pine they had been

producing in Minnesota” (Hutchinson 1963, 4). Although the advertisement was largely unsuccessful (as was a 1916 second printing entitled *Tales of Paul Bunyan, Vol. II*), a third edition released in 1922, *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*, would transform Paul Bunyan from a little-known folktale figure of the woods into arguably the most popular hero of North American folklore (Gartenberg 1963; Dorson 1976; Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999).

A number of writers were inspired by Laughead’s 1922 work to contribute to the collection of Paul Bunyan books during the 1920s and 1930s. Some of Paul’s exploits were more rooted in the woods than others, but the movement to popularize the folklore giant began to take on a life of its own after the third version was released. Book publishers and newspaper writers willingly reprinted stories and advertisements related to Paul and his faithful friend, Babe (Dorson 1976).

Entrepreneurs, like many of the writers, were quick to promote Paul as well. Paul Bunyan festivals appeared in a number of regions in the United States during the 1930s, many of which featured former lumberjacks who had “worked with”<sup>2</sup> Paul Bunyan (Dorson 1976). The stories and festivals celebrating the glory years of the lumberjacks popularized Paul Bunyan to a larger public in a manner that surprised even Laughead (Hutchinson 1963). Fact and fiction were mixed as event organizers took liberties in describing upcoming festivities. The following is one such description from an unidentified source in the *Ashland Press* (Wisconsin) (23 March 1939):

“Plans for the Paul Bunyan picnic here are going rapidly forward with Paul himself heading the committee. The ‘dinner out’ will be on Sunday at the Tribovich logging camp near Sand Bay in the town of Russell about ten miles north of here (Bayfield).

On of the first big steps necessary for the picnic to go on has been taken. The dishes are washed. The scene of the great wash was on the



waterfront where Paul with one blow of his heel knocked an acre hole in the ice sheet. Several hundred fishnets were borrowed from the commercial fishermen and stretched across the opening to hold the dishes. Paul then began to take the top plates off the 290 foot stacks and chief washer Einar Miller and his helpers Harvey Gildersleeve, Brit Burtness, Skedgie Feldmeier, 'Butch' Lodie and Ole Holm who went to work.

A ton of spoons fell through the meshes and were carried out to sea, but chief cook Gus Weber said it didn't matter because the tea he is brewing for the occasion will be too thick to stir.

Russell Rowley, Paul Tribovich and Bob Feldmeier are in charge of the new Bunyan camp site and the logging roads and operations. Babe, the big blue ox, has been called in to help with the snow plowing and to pack down the snow in camp.

Mystic Knights of the Blue Ox of Superior Camp No. 7 and Mining Camp No. 14 will be present as well as Knights from throughout the Chequamegon Bay region. Johnny Inkslinger will be at the gate with a hundred foot time sheet to register them as they come."

(Dorson 1976, 297-298)

At the same time that many of the Paul Bunyan festivals began, more permanent impressions of Paul and Babe began to emerge on the landscape. The year 1937 stands out as an important date in the history of Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods. It was the year that the famous Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox statues were unveiled in Bemidji. Brainerd had created statues of both Paul and Babe two years earlier and community leaders in Bemidji wanted to stake their claim on the lumberjack and his ox. The Bemidji statues were the first permanent landscape feature of the folk giants<sup>3</sup> and have come to symbolize both the folklore and the Northwoods region (**Figure 1.1**).

The use of Paul and Babe has dramatically expanded since 1937 in the Northwoods. Paul and Babe likenesses have since been added to more than 30 states and a majority of Canadian provinces. However, the use of these folk giants has taken on a different nature within the Northwoods. Festivals and businesses that use Paul and Babe in the Northwoods are no longer strictly related to logging or forestry activities as they

are in most other states and provinces. Visitors to the Northwoods are treated to such events as Hackensack, Minnesota's Paul and Lucette's Wedding Anniversary and Annual Sweetheart Canoe Derby, Wilton, Minnesota's Paul Bunyan Sled Dog Challenge, and Bemidji, Minnesota's Paul Bunyan International Hockey Tournament. Residents of the Northwoods shop at Bemidji, Minnesota's Paul Bunyan Mall, bowl at Charlevoix, Michigan's Paul Bunyan Lanes, Minocqua, dine at Wisconsin's Paul Bunyan's Northwoods Cook Shanty, and attend school in Brainerd, Minnesota's Paul Bunyan Special Education Cooperative. I believe the popularity of Paul Bunyan and Babe to be a cultural phenomenon worthy of further exploration.



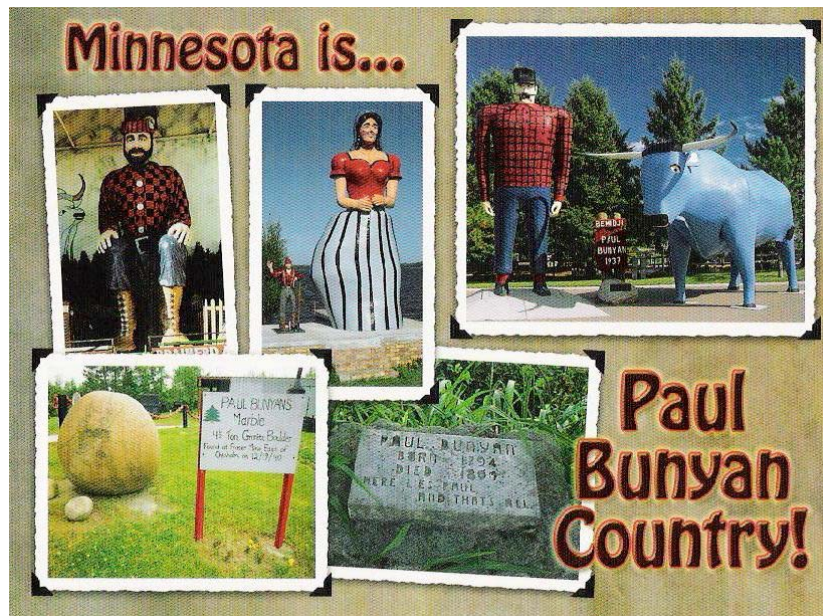
**Figure 1.1:** The famous Paul Bunyan and Babe statues of Bemidji, Minnesota. (Photo by author)

## **Research Questions**

The goal of my research is to answer the primary questions: Why is Paul Bunyan identified with the Northwoods and how has the landscape representation of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox changed over time and place? Several secondary questions will also be explored:

- 1) Historical geography of Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods:
  - ◆ Where did the Paul Bunyan folklore originate and how did they spread to the Northwoods and beyond?
  - ◆ What are the historic ties of Paul Bunyan to the Northwoods and vice versa?
  
- 2) How is J.B. Jackson’s idea of a society passing through a three-stage model: golden age, neglect, and restoration, manifested on the landscape of the Northwoods with the use of Paul Bunyan?

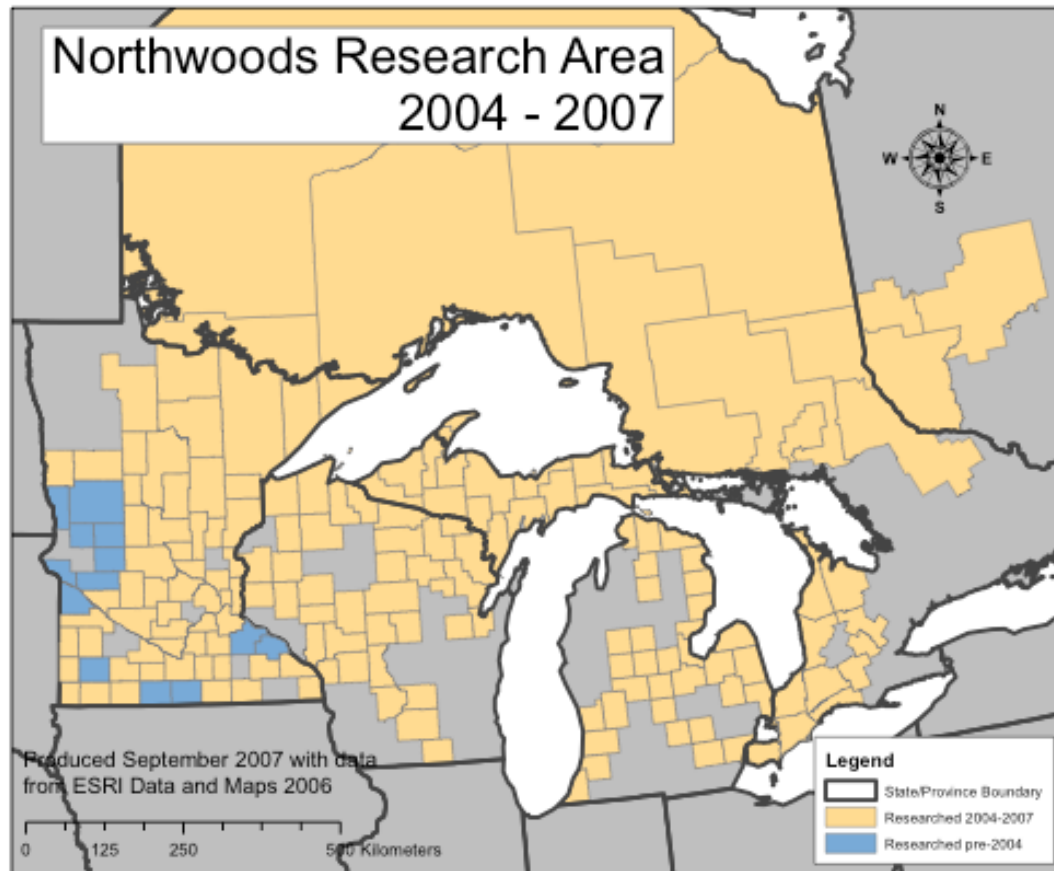
### Study Area



**Figure 1.2:** A contemporary postcard from northern Minnesota reminding visitors “Minnesota is...Paul Bunyan Country!”

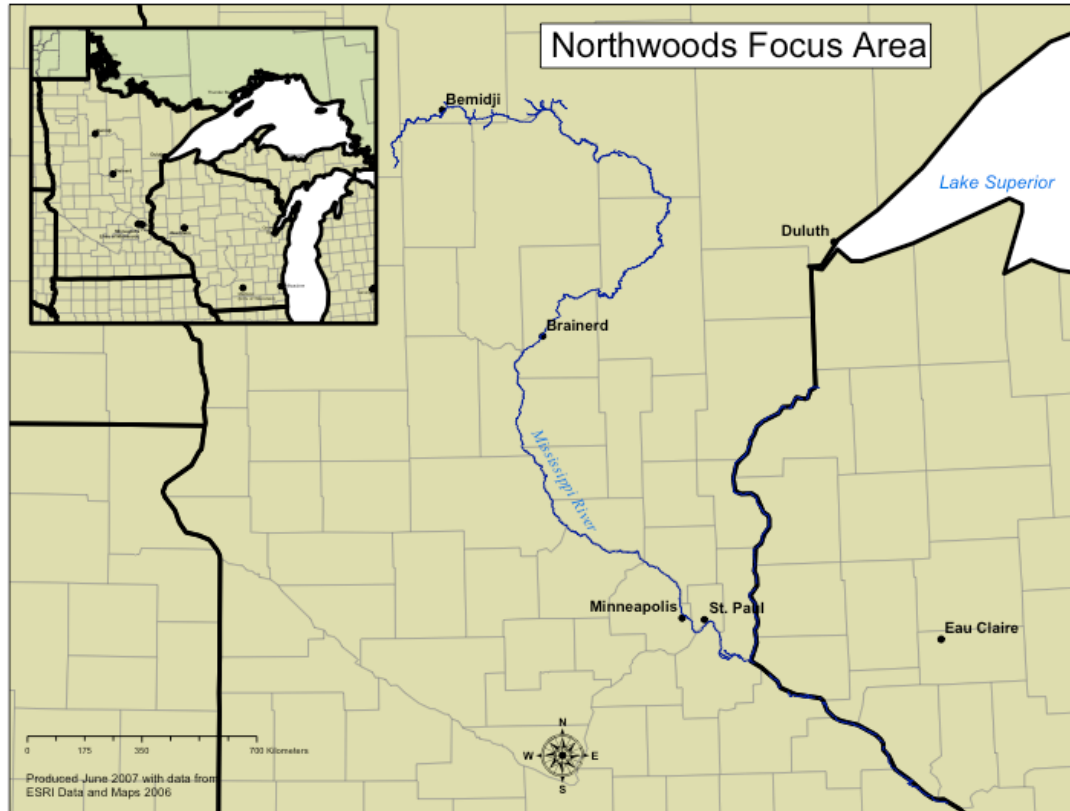
The Northwoods region of North America is the focus of my study. This borderland region is found on both sides of the United States-Canada border surrounding Lake Superior and the northern portions of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. Several trips were made to the Northwoods over the course of a four-year period (2004-2007) in search of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox landscape items (Map 1.1). Although examples from the entire region are included throughout this study, within the Northwoods, I focused on the area of northern Minnesota that lies between the towns of Bemidji and Brainerd

(including the towns of Akeley and Hackensack) because of the large number of folklore landscape features (**Map 1.2**). Visitors to the area are greeted by statues, festivals, schools, businesses, and even state lands all named in honor of Paul and Babe (**Figure 1.2**).



**Map 1.1:** Map representing Northwoods' counties (southern Ontario, United States), districts (northern Ontario), regional county municipalities (Quebec) and independent cities (Greater Sudbury, Ontario, and Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec) researched over a four-year period (2004-2007). Counties researched prior to 2004 but not revisited during this period are highlighted in blue. (Map by Thomas Vought)

This use of folklore (both in print and on the landscape) is not exempt from controversy. In the second chapter, I review some of the controversy surrounding the widespread use and evolving role of Paul Bunyan through the years. In later chapters, I will explain the historical geography of the landscape and why the area between the towns of Bemidji and Brainerd has a legitimate claim to the lumberjack folklore and how it became the cultural hearth of Paul Bunyan lands everywhere.



**Map 1.2:** Although trips were made to a number of locations throughout the Northwoods, the focus of my study was on the area between Bemidji and Brainerd, Minnesota. This was do to the large number of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox landscape features located in this area. (Map by Thomas Vought)

## Significance of Study

This geographic study is significant in that it emphasizes regional identity and community celebration. de Wit (2003, 6) writes “...to study sense of place is to examine who and what people in a place conceive themselves to be as a consequence of that place”. Allen (1990, 1) ties in the importance of sense of place with regional identity stating:

“A sense of place, a consciousness of one’s physical surroundings, is a fundamental human experience. It seems to be especially strong where people in a neighborhood, a community, a city, a region, possess a collective awareness of place and express it in their cultural forms. In the United States, this consciousness of place has most often been identified with regions...”

One of the most significant items that adds to a people's sense of belonging is folklore. Brunvand (1979, 2), a professor of folk studies, defines folklore as "the traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture", "the material that is handed on by tradition, either by word of mouth or by custom and practice" (1) and adds it represents "what people preserve in their culture by custom and word of mouth when few other means exist to preserve it" (11). As will be explained, residents of the Northwoods have taken the folklore of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox and used it to express their regional identity.

A second means residents use to express regional identity is through festival celebrations (De Bres and Davis 2001; Derrett 2003). People are most likely to celebrate what they value and cherish and, to residents of the Northwoods, Paul and Babe have come to represent the region's golden age—a period viewed from the present as having been a 'utopian society.' For most residents of the Northwoods, the region's golden age was an age of logging. The use of folklore to celebrate a region's golden age preserves part of the local culture and brings a community together in a way few other methods would.

### **Personal Interest in Paul and Babe**

There is also a personal interest in this geographic study. My maternal grandparents had worked in the logging camps of northern Minnesota during the 1930s. My grandfather was a lumberjack and my grandmother became a camp cook after they were married. As I was growing up, my grandparents would often share a personal story from their time in the woods or use an expression as when my grandfather would exclaim, "*Now we're logging!*" anytime we neared completion of a task (**Figure 1.3**).





**Figure 1.3:** Roy and Gladys Snyder circa 1940. Both my grandparents had worked in the logging camps of the northern Minnesota during the 1930s and would be much of the inspiration for my research. (Photo from author's collection)

Like many North Americans, I do not recall when I first heard of Paul Bunyan. I do, however, remember the first time I saw Paul Bunyan. My family would travel to visit family and friends in northern Minnesota nearly every summer while I was growing up and on one of our annual summer trips my mother drove a new route that took us through downtown Akeley, Minnesota, introducing my sister and me to a larger-than-life representation of Paul Bunyan (**Figure 1.4**).

Akeley's Paul Bunyan is inviting to all who pass his way. He is kneeling with his right hand cupped encouraging visitors to sit in his hand for a unique experience and photo opportunity. This was my version of Paul Bunyan: a gentle giant of the woods. However, this version of Paul Bunyan differs from the Paul Bunyan of the logging camps.



**Figure 1.4:** Akeley's Paul Bunyan. Although I don't recall the first time I heard a Paul Bunyan tale, I do recall this first encounter with the giant of the woods. (Photo from author's collection)

Paul was originally portrayed as a man of the woods, a clever lumberjack who used his wits rather than his muscle to rectify a situation (Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). Over the years, he has been transformed into a gentle giant credited with creating everything from the Great Lakes and Mississippi to the Grand Canyon and Puget Sound (Hoffmann 1999; Gier 2005). It is the later version of Paul Bunyan (as a gentle giant) that greets visitors to the Northwoods.

## Chapter Outlines

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 is broken into two major sections: logging and lumberjacks. The first section summarizes the development of the logging industry in North America and in the Northwoods (**Figure 1.5**). A summary of the logging industry in each of the Northwoods' political units is also given. Collectively,



this section provides the foundation for a discussion of the lives of lumberjacks during the region's golden age found in the second half of the chapter.



**Figure 1.5:** A northern Minnesota logging camp from around the turn of the twentieth century. Logging camps were a common sight throughout the Northwoods during the late 1800s and early 1900s. (Photo from the Minnesota Forest History Center)

The second section deals with the lumberjacks themselves: where they came from and how they lived. Interviews were conducted with some of the last remaining individuals who had lived and worked in the Northwoods' logging camps before the advent of mechanized operations.

Chapter 3 discusses the parameters used to delineate the Northwoods and the geographic literature, models, and methods used in conducting this study. The first section, Region, discusses the reasoning for identifying the Northwoods as an independent vernacular borderland region. The reason is largely linked to the physical landscape, specifically the forest cover, due to the importance of the logging industry.

The second section provides a review of the geographic literature as it relates to the cultural landscape, including the geographic origins and spread of Paul Bunyan folklore and landscape features. The literature regarding the sense of place that landscape

often evokes is discussed along with the influence of outside forces (i.e. mass media) in shaping regional perceptions of the Northwoods with locals as well as outsiders. The third section reviews the models used in my research: Jackson's (1980) Necessity for Ruins and Butler's (1980) Evolution of Tourist Areas. These models are used as frameworks for a discussion of my findings in later chapters.

The final section, Methods, explains the qualitative methods used for my study. This section is subdivided into four parts: Internet Search, Interviews, Participant Observation, and Archival Research. The Internet was used to help determine the distribution of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox landscape items. A detailed outline of the procedures used in doing this part of the study is described in this section. The findings helped in identifying important areas of concentration across North America and within the Northwoods.

Interviews were conducted as a means of understanding local perceptions of the folklore landscape. Similarly, participant observation was conducted during several festivals celebrating Paul and Babe (and Paul's sweetheart, Lucette) to better understand the significance of the folk characters within the Northwoods. Finally, a number of local museums were visited and special collections reviewed to study the evolving role of Paul Bunyan and the importance of the logging industry. Collectively, these qualitative methods were used to examine the role and significance of the logging industry and Paul Bunyan on the Northwoods' landscape.



**Figure 1.6:** Setting out on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1931, “The longest single train of lumber ever hauled by an American railroad, the Paul Bunyan Prosperity Special” (Hutchinson 1963, 11). The Red River Lumber Company’s advertising campaign using Paul Bunyan helped introduce the folklore character and his Blue Ox to a larger audience. (Photo from Hutchinson 1963)

The historical geography of Paul Bunyan is the focus of Chapter 4 and is divided into two sections. The first portion of the chapter explores the origins and authenticity of the Paul Bunyan folklore and how it spread across the North American continent (**Figure 1.6**). This segment reviews the earliest works of Paul Bunyan, how they differed from later works, and scholarly studies conducted on the folklore thus far. This review of the literature is used for a discussion of Paul’s origins and outlines key arguments for and against Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox’s roles as historical icons of the logging industry and the Northwoods. The second section examines the evolving role of Paul Bunyan in the logging industry and the Northwoods region, how the folklore was introduced to the general public, and reasons for the lumberjack’s popularity across North America. This chapter is an important link in establishing the legitimacy of the Northwoods using Paul and Babe in the celebration of the region’s golden age.

Chapter 5 discusses the origins, evolution, and permanence of Paul and Babe on the Northwoods’ landscape (**Figure 1.7**) and the legitimacy of using the folk characters to celebrate the region’s golden age. Although Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox items

are found across the North America, their usage differs significantly on the Northwoods' landscape. Why this is, how it came to be, what the permanence of these landscape features will be, and how residents of the Northwoods relate to these items are discussed in this chapter.



**Figure 1.7:** Paul Bunyan Bowling, Brainerd, Minnesota—note Paul is holding a bowling ball and Babe is eating several bowling pins. Businesses named after Paul and the Blue Ox have become common throughout the Northwoods. (Photo by author)

My research focuses on the Northwoods region with special attention given to the area between Brainerd and Bemidji, Minnesota due to the large number of landscape features found in this area. This is only the second such major geographical study of Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods' landscape. Much remains for others to explore both on the regional and international level. The final chapter, Chapter 6: Conclusion, summarizes my thoughts and findings and suggests areas that may be explored in future research endeavors.

## CHAPTER 2: OF WOOD AND AXE

*“I taught Paul Bunyan everything he knows.”  
Roy Snyder (2005)*

Forests are an integral part of the North American psyche. Williams (1989, 21) writes, “To imagine an America without its forests is to imagine another world; the forest is inextricably a part of American life, livelihood, and landscape, in the past, in the present, and almost certainly in the future”. Canadians, too, have embraced an image of a forested landscape epitomized with the selection of a maple leaf as a symbol of national unity.

The timber industry<sup>1</sup> had a tremendous impact on the two nations as they began to industrialize in the nineteenth century. As the industry moved westward across the continent it not only altered the visible physical landscape, it transformed the cultural landscape as well. Geographers have shown there is often a strong attachment between people and the physical landscape (Tuan 1990; Blake 1999). Changes to the landscape can alter our perceptions of place and belonging, and the forests of the Northwoods are no exception.

Understanding the authorship of past landscapes is important in interpreting the meaning of the present cultural landscape (Samuels 1979). Individuals, sometimes working independently, would be responsible for much of this change. Lumberjacks<sup>2</sup> cut wood that totaled in the billions of board feet and transformed a region, building towns and cities and employing thousands of workers (Williams 1989). Logging in Minnesota, the last area within the Northwoods to be cut over, peaked in 1905 and gradually began to decline thereafter according to Theodore C. Blegen (1975), former Dean of the University of Minnesota’s Graduate School. In 1914, the Red River Lumber Company,

one of the largest operations in the region, would move its operations from Akeley, Minnesota, to Westwood, California, in an action that, Robert Hanft (2003), professor of transportation, notes came to symbolize the end of the golden age of logging in the Northwoods.

The forests of the north were not the never-ending natural resource as originally believed. The era of logging in the Northwoods was coming to an end as the industry continued to migrate westward across the continent in search of new timberlands (Williams 1989). Which of the two dates more accurately reflects the end of the era, 1905 numerically or 1914 symbolically, is not important, but it does give a reference point as to when the end of the golden age began.

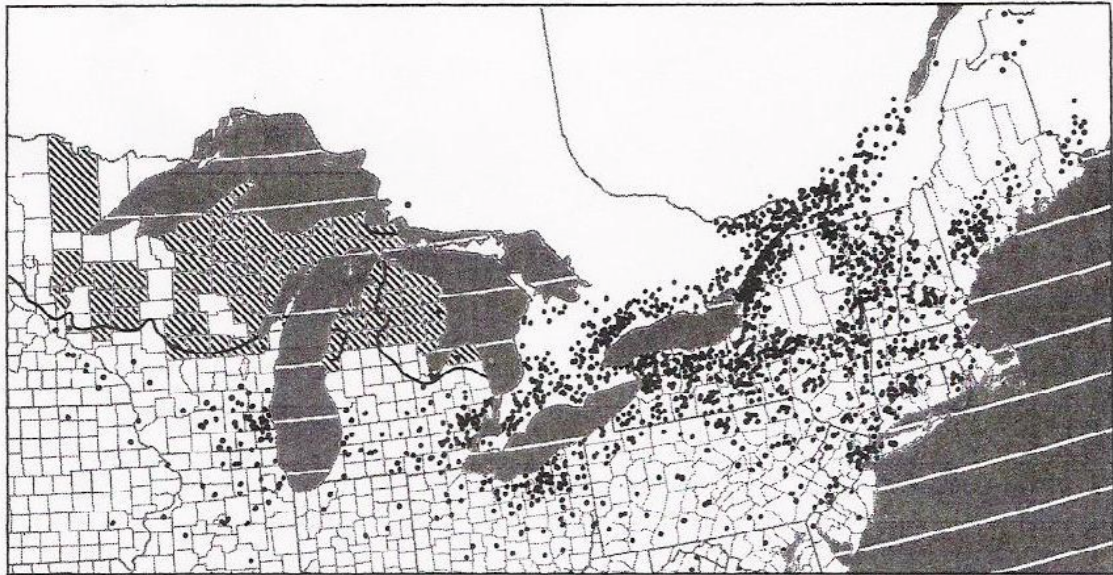
The historical geography of the Northwoods' timber industry and lumberjacks is the topic of this chapter.

## **Logging**

The American logging industry began to develop during the colonial period. Jamestown, Virginia, claims the nation's first sawmill that began processing timber<sup>3</sup> in 1625. Maine would soon follow Virginia's lead as the industry quickly developed in New England's northern stretches, supplying valuable resources for a newly industrializing nation. Berwick, Maine holds the distinction of housing the Pine Tree State's first sawmill (opening in 1631), although Bangor would later claim the title of being the nation's, as well as the world's, logging capital in the first half of the nineteenth century (Blegen 1975).

In contrast, the Canadian logging industry began later and was more closely connected to European events than to development in the New World. According to Ian

Radforth (1987), professor in the University of Toronto's History Department, much of the timber cut in New Brunswick and Upper Canada was used for England, whose Scandinavian lumber sources were cut off by Napoleonic France. The use of Canadian timber for development elsewhere remained the rule even after Confederation in 1867 (Radforth 1987).



**Map 2.1:** Map showing birthplaces for migrants of selected Northwoods' counties during the late 1800s. Hudson (1988, 407) found "many who settled the mining, lumbering, and marginal farming districts of the northern Great Lakes zone were born in the St. Lawrence Valley. The international boundary that splits this region seems to have had no differential effect on the propensity to move west to the upper Great Lakes region within the United States". Many of these same immigrants worked in the region's logging camps. (Map from Hudson 1988).

By the mid-1800s, the forested reserves of New England and northern Appalachia neared exhaustion. New sources of wood were needed and the Northwoods, which possessed large expanses of virgin forest and extensive waterways, became more accessible as the rail network expanded. Williams (1987, 193) writes, "By 1860 supremacy of production had already passed from New England to New York, and it was flowing to the Lake States. Although New York, Pennsylvania, and Maine were still important producers, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota cut the greatest volume and

value of lumber”. White pine, which had been cut earlier in Maine, was the preferred wood. Theodore Karamanski (1989, 82), history professor at Loyola University Chicago, notes, “Pine was the principal timber type exploited during the primary phase of logging.... Lumbermen from the East who immigrated to the Lake Superior country described themselves as ‘following the pine’” (Map 2.1).

In addition to the trees themselves, the terrain played a vital role in the development of the timber industry within the Northwoods region. Williams (1987, 198) writes:

“The physical environment of the Lake States was advantageous to lumbering. The relatively low and rolling terrain offered no real obstacles to movement and exploitation, the shorelines of the Great Lakes provided the means for extensive transport, and the multitude of substantial swift-flowing rivers that penetrated the very heart of each state could be used as log-driving streams and sources of power”.

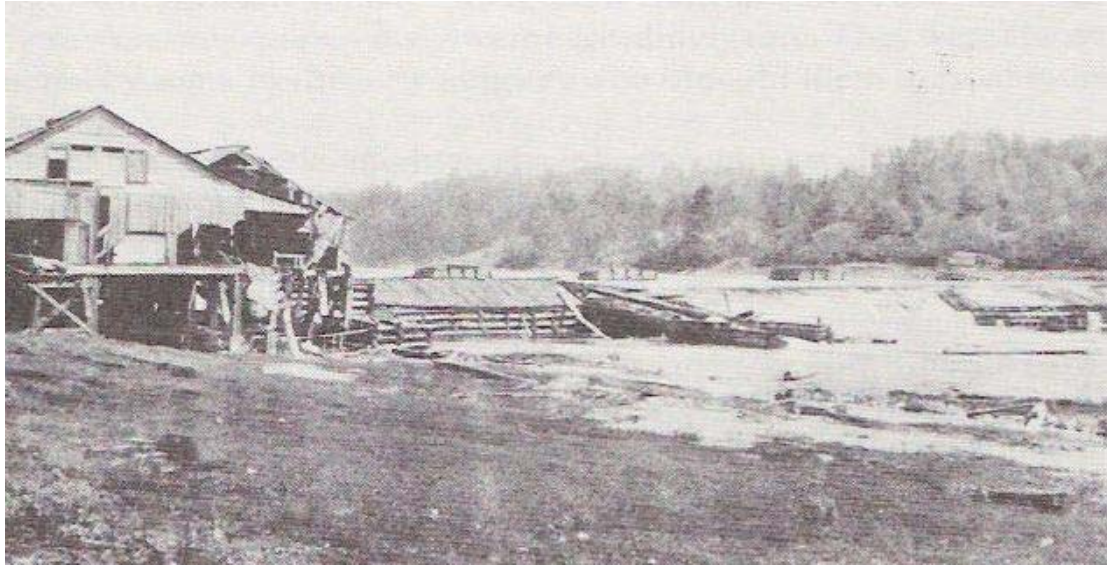
The area’s first sawmill was built and in full operation by the 1780s (Figure 2.1). Located on the Canadian side of Sault Sainte Marie, the sawmill was in operation periodically as stability and economics would allow it. A later sawmill, built in 1822, would be located near Fort Brady on the American side of the border and would be a signal of larger things to come (Karamanski 1989).

### ***Michigan***

The Upper Peninsula’s mining boom in the 1840s and 1850s, the nation’s first such mining boom, spurred a new demand for lumber. Brown (1948, 308) writes, “When mining passed its experimental period...the forests served as a source of logs for buildings and for charcoal; with the development of shaft mining, timber was required in great quantities for mine props”. The Upper Peninsula’s population skyrocketed from a mere 1,300 in 1840 to a significant 60,000 count in 1850. Detroit had been the only

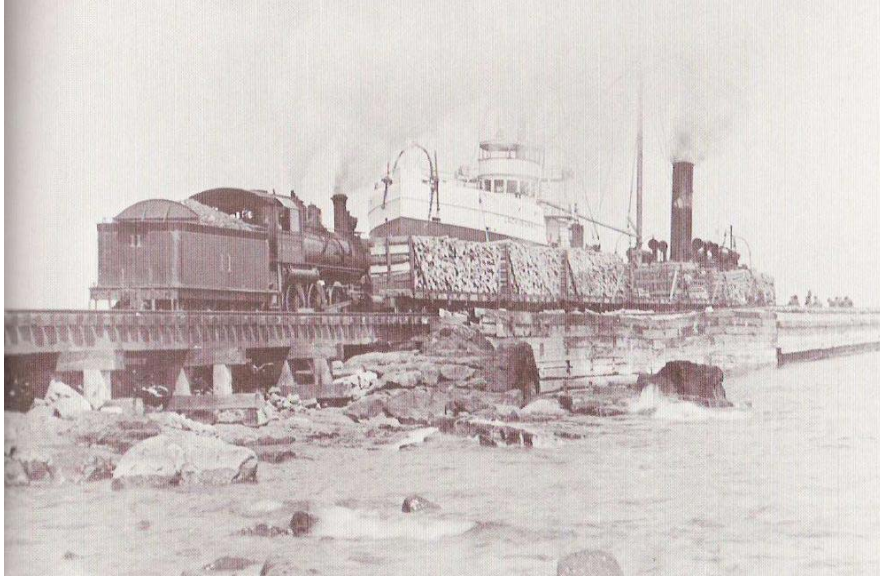


source of wood for some time, but with the copper boom lumberjacks quickly begin to look further north as much of the Lower Peninsula was thinned, if not depleted, by 1850 (Karamanski 1989).



**Figure 2.1:** An early sawmill on the Escanaba River, Michigan. Built in 1844, similar sawmills would later be scattered across the landscape of the Northwoods. (Picture from Karamanski 1989)

A logging boom soon followed the mining successes. The completion of the Soo Locks in 1855 would open the door to an industry centered around Lake Superior, that was still in the fledging stages of development, to markets in Chicago and Detroit and would later aid the development of centers as far away as Duluth (Figure 2.2). Logging would grow rapidly during the 1850s (minus a small recession mid-way through the decade) and 1860s and would peak in the 1880s. Logging camps and sawmill towns straddled the Upper Peninsula and were often found in close proximity to the mining camps (Karamanski 1989).



**Figure 2.2:** A picture from the early 1900s showing unprocessed timber being loaded onto ships in Knife River, Minnesota. The opening of the Soo Locks would have a huge impact on the logging industry allowing lumberjacks to venture into remote areas of the Northwoods. (Picture from Bacig and Thompson 1982)

### *Wisconsin*

Wisconsin would experience a logging boom that closely mirrored developments in Michigan. In 1853, the annual cut in Wisconsin was estimated at 200,000,000 board feet. In 1873, the estimate neared 1,250,000,000 board feet. According to Robert Nesbit (1973, 300-301), former professor of history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Chippewa Valley was an especially important contributor to the state's total, delivering 675,000,000 board feet of timber to the mills in 1867. One raft used to ship lumber from the Chippewa Valley in 1870 was said to have contained 2,500,000,000 board feet of lumber (Figure 2.3). Production would peak during the 1890s in Wisconsin (Nesbit 1973) before moving to new untapped areas.



**Figure 2.3:** A logjam along the St. Croix River c1886. Such logjams were a serious problem for lumberjacks as they attempted to move timber down major rivers, such as the St. Croix and Chippewa, where it was to be processed in a mill. Williams (1989, 204) writes, “...during the 1860s, the mass of logs tipped into the streams soon clogged the lower reaches of the major rivers, sometimes stretching in unbroken jams for 3 to 10 miles”. (Note the lumberjacks in the lower right-hand corner for scale.) (Picture from Ryan 1976)

### *Ontario*

Logging operations continued to migrate west and north in search of new woods to be felled. Canadian lumber operations in northern Ontario had established sawmills on the southern portions of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron’s north shore by the 1880s to take advantage of the large quantities of timber found in the area. Many American mill owners would construct *booms*, large chains of logs enclosing other free floating logs, carrying “enormous quantities of northern Ontario timber” to sawmills located on the American side of the border (Radforth 1987, 13). The large amount of Canadian timber being sent south and the tariffs assessed created some tension between the two countries towards the end of the nineteenth century. Provincial legislation would soon put an end to the exporting of unprocessed pine cut from crown land, applying pressure on American



mill operators to open operations on the Canadian side of the border and resolving much of the strife (Radforth 1987).

Ontario's logging boom would peak in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Figure 2.4). Because much of the timber was sent elsewhere to be processed, the cubic feet numbers are more representative of the amount of wood being cut. Radforth (1987, 15) notes between the years 1896-1910, "pine production in the province topped 125 million cubic feet annually".



**Figure 2.4:** A scene from Thessalon, Ontario, c1920, showing sleighs loaded with goods headed to the camps. Many of the Northwoods' logging camps were located some distance from the nearest town requiring supplies to be purchased in bulk. (Picture from Radforth 1987)

## ***Minnesota***

Minnesota's forests were especially large and initially thought to be inexhaustible. A Stillwater, Minnesota, newspaper contributor writing in 1855 about the large forested expanses of the state noted "there is no end to it, and it may never be exhausted" (Blegen 1975, 317). Such boomer optimism gave rise to large and rapid growth in the industry.

In 1876, Minnesota processed 193,000,000 feet of lumber. Lengthwise, using one-foot boards, this was enough to travel one-and-a-half times around the world. By 1882, the city of Minneapolis alone was producing 300,000,000 feet of lumber annually while Duluth added an additional 83,000,000 feet. The state would reach its logging peak in 1905. In that year *2 billion* feet would be cut—a figure more than ten times the 1876 figure (Blegen 1975) (Table 2.1).

	<b>1869</b>	<b>1879</b>	<b>1889</b>	<b>1899</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>1919</b>	<b>1929</b>	<b>1939</b>
<b>MICHIGAN</b>	2.3	4.2	5.4	3.0	1.9	0.9	0.6	0.3
<b>WISCONSIN</b>	1.1	1.5	3.2	3.4	2.0	1.1	0.8	0.3
<b>MINNESOTA</b>	0.2	0.6	1.3	2.3	1.6	0.7	0.4	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	3.6	6.3	9.9	8.7	5.5	2.7	1.7	0.7

*Note: Numbers are in billions of board feet for the given years.*

**Table 2.1:** Lumber cut for the various political entities of the Northwoods (from Williams 1989). Ontario, which cut as much as 1.5 billion board feet of timber during the late 1890s and early 1900s, is excluded from the table since much of the wood remained unprocessed timber (large booms of timber were sent to Michigan’s mills) (Radforth 1987).

Minnesota’s first sawmill was located near Fort Snelling and the Falls of St. Anthony in the 1820s. Stillwater would open a second major sawmill in 1844 and quickly became the logging center for Minnesota. Known as the “Queen of the St. Croix”, community leaders in Stillwater expected it to become the new metropolis of the Midwest. The town’s close proximity to heavily forested areas and the St. Croix River, which the loggers used to transport felled trees, fueled the rapid growth rate. In 1856, sawmills were producing 12 million feet a year. By 1874, sawmills in the area had processed three-and-a-half billion feet (Blegen 1975).

Stillwater was not the only sawmilling center to develop in Minnesota. Although not as large as Stillwater, Minnesota had two additional logging centers by the 1860s. St. Anthony Falls (later Minneapolis) developed a large production facility close to the state's original sawmill located at Fort Snelling. Winona also developed a large sawmill facility. The latter took advantage of its strategic location on the Mississippi River that gave it access to timber sent down the Chippewa River from Wisconsin and to farming markets that lie to the west (Blegen 1975) (**Figure 2.5**).

The first half of the 1860s witnessed a slight decline in overall growth of the industry. With the end of the Civil War, however, there was new growth that would be a boom to the state for years to come. The growth of the timber industry not only fueled growth in Minnesota, but also helped a recovering nation. Blegen (1975, 324) writes “after the Civil War the lumber industry took on gigantic dimensions as it supplied the needs of state and nation”.



**Figure 2.5:** International Falls, Minnesota, c1920. Landscape scenes that included sawmills were common on the Northwoods landscape—especially after the arrival of the railroad. (Picture from Ryan 1976)

Geographically the industry began to move north and northwest. Although Stillwater was still a significant player, by 1890 Minneapolis was “the premier lumber market not only of Minnesota but of the world” (Blegen 1975, 325). A key to the shift was access to the rail lines in the Twin Cities area. Harold Hagg (1972), professor of history, notes the arrival of the railroad meant a boom to many communities in the region during the 1890s. Trains allowed areas to harvest wood that lacked major waterways, providing access to a seemingly unlimited natural resource base. Previously, the northern extent of the state, lacking large rivers to transport timber, remained inaccessible to the logging industry. Although large rivers such as the Mississippi and the St. Croix stretched into the northern portions of the state, few, if any, reached very far north. Railroads would be the answer. Williams (1989, 213) writes, “In every way, the railroads and their versatile feeders caused a revolution in the movement of lumber away from the rivers. For example on the St. Croix River, formerly the epitome of the log-driving river, it is estimated that, by 1887, 270 million [board feet] passed through the boom but 550 million b.f. went by railroads” and adds, “The ideal location for a mill became a site on the bank of a log-driving stream where a railway crossed it. By the end of the (19<sup>th</sup>) century the conjunction of the two explained nearly all the larger concentrations of lumbering activities” (214).

Estimating the total mileage of track laid during the region’s golden age is difficult, if not impossible. According to Williams (1989, 212), by 1887 “there was a total of 850 miles of railroad in the three states (Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota) with an annual capacity to haul 2 billion b.f. of logs. In actual fact, much more track was laid than these mileages suggest because after the timber was cut the track was quickly removed and used again”. Even so, new centers, including Duluth, Cloquet, and Virginia, began to emerge

with the arrival of the railroad transforming the industry and changing the dynamics of the crews who would come to represent the golden era of logging (Hagg 1972, Blegen 1975).

## **Lumberjacks**

As the Northwoods began to emerge as the center for North America's lumber industry, new labor and capital were needed in order to process such a large amount of timber. Maine provided so many of the industry's workers during the peak of the Northwoods' logging operations that one Maine congressman declared in 1852 "the stalwart sons" of the state were "marching away by the scores and hundreds to the piney woods of the Northwest" (Williams 1989, 201). Hoffmann (1999, 25) describes the influence of Maine loggers on the Northwoods scene in the following terms:

"By 1847 Maine lumbermen were moving south and west, buying lands in New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and Louisiana, but, as their historian R. G. Wood concludes, 'While [they] might stop at intermediate points, it was to the Lake States that they thronged in largest numbers.' In the words of Daniel Stanchfield, a pioneer who explored Rum River in Minnesota and imported Maine woodsmen for his camps, 'Most of our Minnesota lumbermen, and many settlers in our pine regions, came from that State, and are therefore often called 'Maineites.' The methods of lumbering in the Maine woods in 1830-1850 were transferred to Wisconsin and Minnesota'."

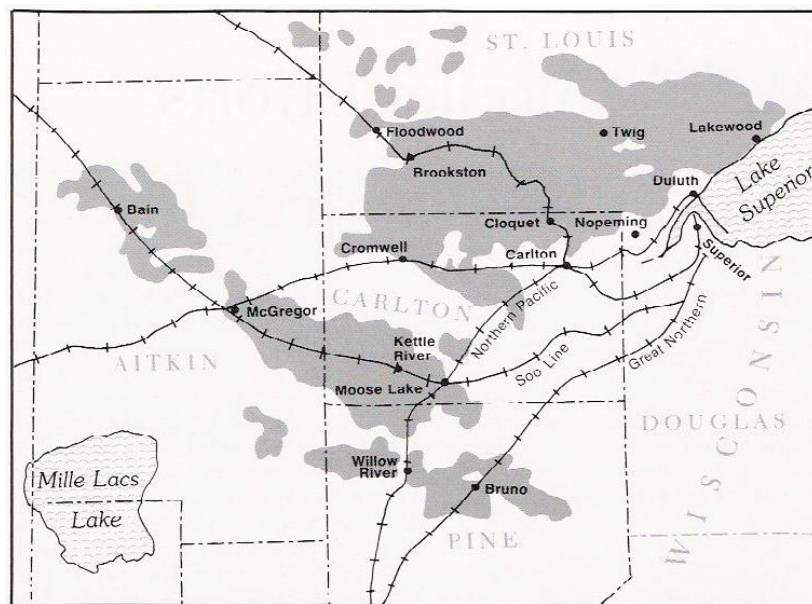
As the industry progressed and matured, Michigan would be the source of much of the capital that would flood into Minnesota during the 1880s. Individuals such as Thomas H. Shevlin, working in Minneapolis, and Henry C. Akeley, working in northern Minnesota, were among the many investors from Michigan who would dramatically transform Minnesota's scale of operation (Blegen 1975). At the time of the timber industry's peak in Michigan (1880), 234 sawmills were operating in Minnesota with a capital worth \$7,000,000. Ten years later, the state had witnessed a sizeable increase in the number of



sawmills, now numbering 317 sawmills, and a corresponding leap in the estimated capital of the industry, which was now worth approximately \$28,000,000 (Blegen 1975, 326).

### *Issues and Concerns*

Williams (1989, 216) writes, “One result of the technical improvements in lumbering...was to bring about major changes in the social and economic organization of the lumber business on a scale hitherto unknown”. Although the industry was rapidly developing with new technology being added (railroads, for example, made logging possible in new areas where large rivers did not exist (Hagg 1972)), the logging operations would remain much the same with lumberjacks living in camps and felling trees with axes and saws into the 1930s (Manske 1976; Rajala 1992). The logging industry’s boom was not without problems. Workers demanded more rights and privileges, communities found themselves at risk from logging related activities, and the forested reserves of the Northwoods were proving not to be the never-ending source of timber as first thought.



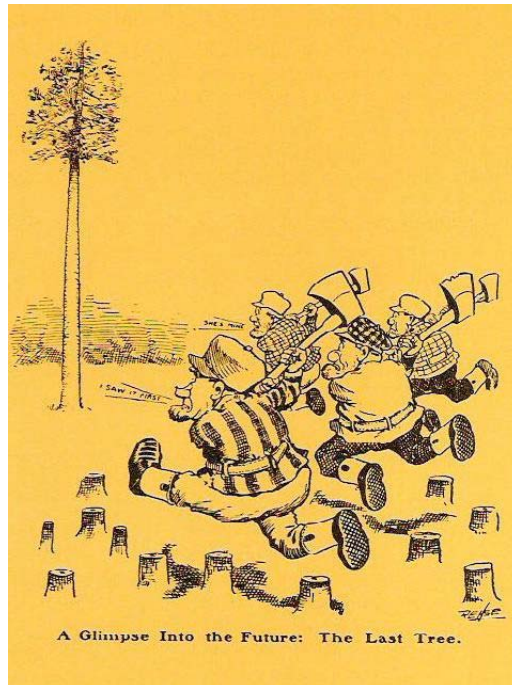
**Map 2.2:** A map showing a strong correlation between railroad lines and areas burned by forest fire during the 1918 season. Although railroads often brought jobs and development, the sparks from passing trains could ignite large fires in the slash burning much of the surrounding land...often at a great cost (Carroll and Raiter 1983). (Map from Carroll and Raiter 1983)

Logging operations were rapid and left little time for cleanup, sometimes leaving nearby communities in harm's way. Large amounts of slash would accumulate in areas that trees had been felled and posed a potential fire danger especially if weather conditions were dry. The disastrous fire in and around Cloquet, Minnesota during the summer of 1918—a fire season that proved to be costly in terms of building damage and human life—demonstrates the regional costs of the industrialization of logging (**Map 2.2**).

Although later fires in the state would be larger in terms of acreage (1931 Red Lake fire), this particular fire is remembered because of the large number of fatalities. Sparked by trains running between the area's logging operations, the fire consumed some 1,500 square miles. Thirty-six towns in all were destroyed; Cloquet with a population of 8,000 and Moose Lake with a little over 500 residents, lost the most people. Four-hundred-and-fifty-three people lost their lives to the fire, 200 in Moose Lake alone, 85 were severely burned, and 2,100 were injured, and 52,371 area residents were displaced according to Francis Carroll, professor of history, and Franklin Raiter (1983).

Finally, the large volume of lumbering taking place did not go unnoticed by the general public (**Figure 2.6**). Newspaper editorials increasingly expressed a growing view of many Minnesotans that the logging industry was too shortsighted in their operations (Searle 1971). Public outcry eventually led to proposals for lands to be set aside in an attempt to preserve the region's *pastoral ideal* (Marx 1964). Newell Searle (1971, 243) writes:

“As far back as 1891, the same year that it created Itasca State Park, the Minnesota legislature petitioned the president to set aside unsettled land on the northern boundary for a national park. Although nothing came of this request and public opposition to a park soon was evident, a park movement developed that culminated in the formation of a forest reserve that eventually became Minnesota National Forest (later Chippewa National Forest)”



**Figure 2.6:** A political cartoon from the St. Paul Press (October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1901). Minnesotans became increasingly uneasy about the rapid depletion of the state's natural resource base (Searle 1971). (Image from Searle 1971)

Although early attempts did not initially succeed, as noted above, the movement began to gather steam and became an increasingly popular demand by the public at large. By the early 1900s public sentiment was beginning to shift in favor of more restrictive, conservation-oriented policies. The days of logging companies having their way at the expense of the land and public at large were numbered (Searle 1971).

### *Daily Life*

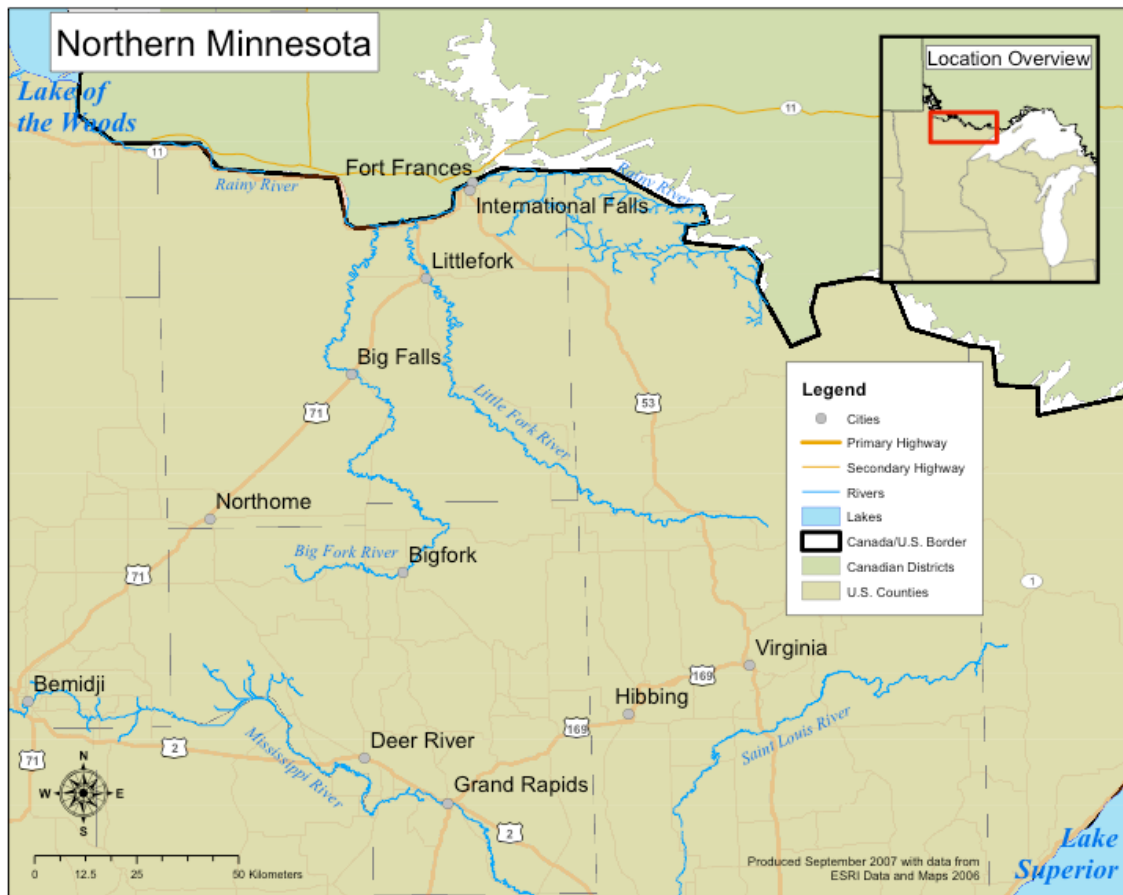
The lumberjacks had issues of their own. For many, the hard work and long hours spent in the depths of the woods would become an excuse for raucous behavior and pillaging of nearby towns on their days off. To be sure, the work was hard and dangerous. Workers had to learn to do without and to do so with little pay. Lumberjacks often found themselves in a precarious position. Many were desperate for work, but loathed the harsh conditions they were forced to endure in the logging camps according

to John Haynes (1971). Ed Erickson (2007), a retired lumberjack who remembers visiting the camps as a teenager, noted in an interview, “They (lumberjacks) were broke and had to go back to camp.”

To better understand the lumberjacks who lived and worked within the logging camps, I sought interviews with those who had worked in the camps prior to the introduction of trucks and chainsaws—the camps that most closely resembled those where the folklore of Paul Bunyan first emerged and the tales helped immortalize. These more traditional logging camps, popular throughout the region for nearly 100 years, began to disappear from the landscape during the 1920s and were all but absent by the 1930s. This era of manual labor was romanticized in the minds of many as a time when Man was more in tune with nature. In words echoing Marx’s (1964) description of the idealized pastoral ideal, Benhart Rajala (1992, 3) writes, “In this area (Minnesota north of the continental divide), virgin timber stands persist even now. Here settlement began with the traditional style of logging, and saw the transition from the struggle of men against the forest to the new era of soulless machines. With the advent of automation, the lumberjack became an endangered species. He is a Vanishing American. The way he lived and worked is a thing of the past”. As Dorothy Manske (1976, 48) (a former camp cook) explains:

“(The Northwoods) emerged in the mid-thirties into a new era. The railroad haul and the river drives had been discontinued and the industry adjusted itself to the use of gasoline and diesel trucks and caterpillars which were being rapidly adapted in both power and design to meet the needs of a new concept in logging. Timber could be cut, skidded, loaded, and hauled anywhere at anytime, all with the use of these portable marvels of machinery”.

Due to the extreme geographic isolation, many of the last of the traditional camps were found in a corner of northern Minnesota north of the continental divide (Manske 1976; Rajala 1992) (Map 2.3).



**Map 2.3:** Map showing the geographic isolation of the Bigfork area of northern Minnesota that persists even today. Whereas Bemidji, Deer River, and Grand Rapids had access to the Mississippi and Virginia and Hibbing to Lake Superior, the Big Fork and Little Fork rivers flowed north towards Hudson Bay compounding the isolation of this area. An area centered around Big Fork would be among the last of the traditional areas of logging. (Map by Thomas Vought)

Today, many residents living in the Northwoods have relatives who once worked in the woods. Bob Manske (2007), whose father, Arthur Manske, once logged in northern Minnesota, explained in an interview “Like all of them, he (Arthur Manske) made his living in the logging camps” and adds the lumberjacks “had to do wood in the winter or they starved.” However, I discovered on my trips to northern Minnesota that there are few

who recall the days of the logging camps with any accuracy. As Rajala (1992, 3) notes, “Only a few of the Old Guard remain, and these are mostly in nursing homes”. Of the nearly dozen-and-a-half individuals I questioned who had grown up in the area, nearly all remember having family, both immediate and extended, and close friends who had worked in the camps, but few were able to recall any specific details. With a somber tone, Ed Erickson (2007) explains, “We’ve lost a generation of loggers.” Fortunately, I was able to obtain a handful of extended open-ended interviews from a cross-section of the industry: lumberjacks, cooks, mill operators, and surveyors. The interviews shed new light on how challenging the work must have been, as most of it was conducted in brutal conditions with very little compensation.

Loggers would routinely work seven-day workweeks during the Minnesota’s long, bitterly cold winter season (**Figure 2.7**). The close-quarter housing was less than sanitary, food average, hours long (typically 12 or more hours a day), and pay was hardly enough to pay for goods at the local company store. Such conditions lead many to move frequently ever seeking the “greener grass.” So common was the changing of camps that the “Virginia and Rainy Lake Company employed a total of more than 22,000 men during one logging season, although it accommodated only about 2,000 workers in its camps at any one time. The turnover of workers averaged 74 a day or a completely new crew each month” (Haynes 1971, 169).



**Figure 2.7:** -15 degrees in Winton, Minnesota. Lumberjacks did most of their timber cutting during the long, cold winters since summer temperatures would turn most forested lands into muddy bogs. (Picture from Bacig and Thompson 1982)

These conditions created an atmosphere that was ripe for protest. Haynes (1971, 163) writes:

“The brawny lumberjack who tells tall tales, fells giant trees, wears checkered shirts, and loves flapjacks is familiar in American folklore. This romantic image, though based partly on fact, glosses over dark and frightful features of the lumberjack’s life that in 1917 prompted Minnesota’s sons of Paul Bunyan to down their saws and axes and walk out of their camps”.

The Industrial Workers of the World strike of 1917 temporarily crippled the logging operations for much of northern Minnesota. The strike originated with mill workers from the Virginia and Rainy Lake plant demanding a “flat 25 cents per day raise for all workers, an eight-hour Saturday night and Sunday day shift, no Sunday night work, a shift change every week, and no reprisals for union activities” (165). The demands were largely ignored

even when a Virginia mill, “the largest white pine mill in the world as well as one of the ‘most modern and complete’” (164), closed due to workers walking off the job. However, the lumberjacks’ sympathy strike would catch the industry’s attention (Haynes 1971).

Work conditions, as described, were brutal and lumber camp conditions were deplorable at best (**Figure 2.8**). Haynes (1971, 167-168) offers the following details of camp life:

“A bunkhouse 30 feet by 80 feet by 11 feet would house anywhere from 60 to 90 men in rows of double-decked wooden bunks lining each wall. Each individual bed with its mattress of loose straw slept two men. Each jack received two or three woolen blankets from the camp (sheets were unknown). The turnover was so high that four or five men might easily use the same blankets each season. Virtually all the beds, blankets, and men were infested with lice. In 1914 inspectors from the State Department of Labor and Industries observed that *‘the conditions under which the men were housed...made it impossible for men to keep their bodies free from vermin.’*

“Bunkhouses were ventilated only by doors at each end and one or two small skylights in the roof. One or perhaps two iron stoves, kept fired all night, provided heat. The poor ventilation compounded sanitary problems. The men worked 11-hour days in the cold northern Minnesota winter and generally wore two or three sets of underwear in addition to their outer garments. The combination of wet snow and hard labor soaked the jacks’ clothes every day, but the men were without washing facilities either for themselves or what they wore. Since most of them put on all the clothing they owned (one old jack observed about the typical logger: ‘When his coat is buttoned his trunk is locked’), dozens of sets of wet-from-sweat clothes hung near the stove every night to dry for the next day. The steam from the clothing joined the stench of tightly-packed, unwashed bodies in the bunkhouse, prompting one Wobbly (*popular name for a IWW member*) to comment that ‘the bunk houses in which the lumber jacks sleep are enough to gag a skunk.’...

“For all its investigations the state had no authority to improve these conditions. In its 1913-14 biennial report, Minnesota’s Department of Labor and Industries pleaded for jurisdiction. It quoted two of its inspectors who concluded after visiting a typical camp: *‘Both of us regretted that we did not have the authority to order all the men out of the camp and burn the place to the ground’*”.





**Figure 2.8:** Bunkhouse scene from the early 1900s in northern Minnesota. Clothes were hung to dry overnight creating strong smelling quarters. Coupled with brutal workweeks, such conditions led many lumberjacks to seek greener pastures in neighboring camps on a regular basis. (Picture from Bacig and Thompson 1982)

Lumberjacks soon created their own list of demands including a “\$10 per month pay increase, a nine-hour day, clean bedding and sanitary food, cleaning of bunkhouses twice a week, and no discrimination against union employees” (Haynes 1971, 169-170). On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1916, mill workers went on strike and were joined on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1917, by the men in the camps. All told, several thousand workers (lumberjacks and mill operators) went on strike. Although the movement was soon vilified by a number of local newspapers and crushed by company leaders who were authorized to deputize their men in order to disrupt IWW operations, the strike did send a strong message to lumber companies that workers would only put up with so much (Haynes 1971).



**Figure 2.9:** A typical early 20<sup>th</sup> century logging camp cabin. Notice the small window on the house in the foreground. According to Roy and Gladys Snyder, such windows were rare in the logging camps and considered a luxury (Photo from Minnesota Forest History Center website).

Conditions were somewhat improved thereafter with improvements in sanitary conditions, clean(er) blankets, and an increase in pay (Haynes 1971). However, even as late as the mid-1930s conditions were still very hard. Ed Erickson (2007), who began logging in northern Minnesota during the 1930s, explains many of the lumberjacks had no other options for work. Pay, although much appreciated during the Great Depression, was still marginal considering the work, workweeks were still long (6 ten-to-twelve hour days a week), and housing consisted of little more than a tent during the brutal winter. Roy and Gladys Snyder (2004), who were interviewed about their experiences working in the logging camps of northern Minnesota during the 1930s, remember vividly their “newlywed house” that doubled as the loggers’ mess tent (**Figure 2.9**).

In the first camp in which she worked, Gladys Snyder (2004) was the only female, but had the respect of the men. Ed Erickson (2007) recalls, “Everyone takes care of the camp cook” and Roy Snyder (2004) adds, “The lumberjacks knew that the cook was maybe

the most important guy in the camp. He kept you filled up with food, you know.” In addition to her cooking and baking duties, which took up most of her day, Gladys was also responsible for washing laundry and cleaning. Even so, Gladys (2005) remembers, “I worked for nothing. I cooked for those seven men. Never got a penny”. Instead, the only compensation was free room-and-board for her and her husband.

Bernice Schaar (2005) and Carol Gudim (2005) also recalled in their interviews lending a hand with the work being carried out in the area. Bernice would often help her husband, a county surveyor, in the woods late into the night. Bernice would snowshoe through the forest to make sure her husband had company and remained safe, she also helped scale (estimate the number of board feet) and stamp (mark the wood providing proof it had been inspected) the timber. Carol’s father, Arthur Adams, owned a mill on a Dixon Lake in northern Minnesota and made it very clear to Carol and her brother that they were not welcome at the mill while it was running (except at lunchtime, when they were allowed to blow the noontime whistle). However, at night and on the weekends Carol and her mother, Gertrude Adams, helped scale and stack the lumber (Gudim 2005). Bob Manske’s (2007) mother, Dorothy Manske, who was a camp cook, and Judy (Byers) Reed (2007) and Clara (Byers) Kiel’s (2007) mother, Julia Byers, who was also a camp cook, had similar experiences. None of the women was paid for her efforts, but much like Gladys Snyder, all were thankful for the opportunity to help with the work during the Great Depression.

### *Poem, Song, and Lore*

Even with the labor conflicts, the logging operations during the Northwood’s golden age did have a profound, often positive impact on the local economy of the region. Towns and cities that are still vibrant communities, such as Stillwater, Winona, and

Virginia, trace their roots to the golden age of logging, and thousands of lumberjacks were employed at the height of the logging operations.

These lumberjacks would write poems and songs that described the local flavor of life. One such gem tells the tale of a man wandering through the woods and sheds a romanticized light on the relationship between man and tree albeit the lumberjack was set to fell the “forest king”.

*“On its banks and right before me  
Stood a pine in stately glory.  
The forest king he seemed to be  
He was a noble Big Pine Tree” (Blegen 1975, 334)*

Some of the stories suggest a more fun-loving, playful spirit.

*“Joe on the chain-hook hung the pot,  
A bustin’ coffee-maker—  
He pulled the beans, all smokin’ hot,  
From their ground-oven baker.  
He flew and flung the biscuit round,  
To give them browner singeing,  
Turned—where he’d set the baked beans down,  
Gosh! There stood Lo, an Injun” (334).*

Still others would describe the oft forgotten reputation that many of the loggers carried with them. One such story of a man journeying into town plays up this scenario:

*“He’s a wild rip-snortin’ devil ever’ time he comes to town;  
He’s a porky, he’s a moose-cat, too busy to set down” (334).*

These “less than perfect” stories of the lumberjacks are likely a more accurate description than many would initially believe (Karamanski 1989). Ed Erickson (2007), who worked in the logging industry for nearly 50 years, remembers most lumberjacks who worked in the camps were paid once a month and could hardly wait to spend their hard-earned wages on alcohol. “Snake-rooms”, rooms where lumberjacks could sleep

off their drunkenness, were set up in many Northwoods' saloons. Thomas Whittles (1912, 8-9) writes:

“Frank necessity invented the snake-room of the lumber-town saloon...one may not eject drunken men into bitter weather and leave them to freeze. Bartenders and their helpers carry them off to the snake-room when they drop; others stagger in of their own notion and fall upon their reeking fellows. There is no arrangement of the bodies—but a squirming heap of them, from which legs and arms protrude, wherein open-mouthed bearded faces appear in a tangle of contorted limbs.”

Haynes (1971, 169) writes, “When the workers came out of the woods most townspeople avoided them. They were ‘timber beasts,’ foul men in filthy clothing who had no place in respectable society”. Gladys Snyder (2004) remembers (*and states with a slight tone of shock*) a former convict who worked the woods with her husband. Some of these figures would even become ‘legendary’ during their lifetimes with their criminal records only adding fuel to their local status and lore.



**Figure 2.10:** This photo was taken deep within the Northwoods of northern Minnesota around 1920. Pictured are Otto Walta (second from right) and four of his fellow lumberjacks. Stories of his strength would become legendary to generations of northern Minnesotans. (Karni 1967)

The story of Otto Walta exemplifies the “criminal-to-legend” transition as many of his exploits were passed down as a source of Finnish pride and strength<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2.10).

Born on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1875, in Pomarkku, Finland, he would later immigrate to northern Minnesota. “Convicted and sentenced for a minor crime, the details of which are not known” (Karni 1967, 394), Otto would become a legend in his time for his criminal background as well as his extraordinary strength. Karni (1967, 392, 394) recounts the following story:

“He was a regular Paul Bunyan. Strongest man and hardest worker who ever settled around here. He stood six-four and weighed at least two-forty. Hard as nails and tough as a bull moose. They say he could rip good-sized trees right out of the ground and carry boulders. ... They say when he was clearing his land right after he homesteaded, he didn't have a horse to pull the stumps out with—he didn't believe in working animals because he always claimed that a horse couldn't work as hard as he could anyway—and he couldn't afford to buy dynamite. But he needed something to pry up the biggest stumps with. So he walked over the the DWP tracks, about three miles across that swamp—there were no roads back there then—ripped up a rail from the tracks with his bare hands, hoisted it to his shoulder, and carried it back to his homestead across the swamp. You know the railroad rails they used in those days weighed at least eight hundred pounds. But he didn't have any trouble with it. He'd dig a hole under a stump, ram one end of the rail into it, rest his weight on the other end. Those big stumps came ripping out of the ground like potatoes. It was no effort at all for him to grub stumps. ... Well, it wasn't long before the railroad people found out who had their rail. One day about six men from the company came to get it back. ... Anyway, the railroad men asked him if he'd taken the rail. He didn't speak English, so he didn't answer, but just kept on eating his potatoes from a pot with a big brass spoon. Of course he knew what they were after. When he finished eating, he went outside with them. One of the men who spoke a little Finn asked him who helped him get the rail to the homestead. He calmly said nobody helped him. The railroad men just laughed. Nobody could carry that rail alone. Well, the big Finn spits on his hands a little, hunches over, grabs the rail in the middle, and swings her up to his shoulder. Then he ambles around the clearing a few times to demonstrate. The railroad men just shook their heads. They couldn't believe it at first. Then, after a quick confab, they left. There was no sense in trying to get the rail back. ... They usually have at least eight men handling one of those rails on a regular job. The men probably figured the old Finn needed the rail more than the company did anyway.”

## **Final Thoughts**

This discussion of the Northwoods' historical geography has laid the groundwork for an analysis of the region's residents using a folk hero of the lumberjacks to celebrate the golden age of logging. The parameters of the study area along with the models and methods used in researching this cultural phenomena are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3: READING THE LANDSCAPE OF LEGENDS

*“PAUL BUNYAN  
Master Woodsman  
North Woods  
U.S.A.”  
(Felton 1947, 287)*

How we read the landscape determines what we learn from it. There are a number of ways in which a geographer may read the lay of the land including as a *clue to culture*. Regarding this axiom, Lewis (1979, 15) writes, “The man-made landscape...provides strong evidence of the kind of people we are, and were, and are in process of becoming.” As noted, folklore is one of the most significant items adding to a people’s sense of belonging (Brunvand 1979). Studying the *folklore* landscape thus offers an in depth view of a people, their values, and sense of identity. The Northwoods’ landscape presents a unique opportunity for a cultural study of this manner.

This chapter will define the Northwoods region and illustrate the methods that were used in exploring the folklore landscape. The chapter is divided into 4 sections: *Region, Landscape, Models, and Methods*. Each section plays an important role in addressing the primary questions of my research.

*Region* addresses the location and boundaries of the Northwoods region and why it deserves to be identified as an independent cultural region on the North American landscape. The concept of *region* has long been important in geography providing a means for geographers to separate geographic areas based on similarities or dissimilarities and was named one of the 5 themes of geography by the Joint Committee on Geographic Education of the National Council for Geographic Education and the



Association of American Geographers (1984), emphasizing its role in geographic thought.

The *Landscape* section is divided into five sections: *The Landscape of Folklore*, *Landscape Nuclei*, *An Idealized Past*, *Interpreting Landscape*, and *Mass Media and Perception of Place*. The first section, *The Landscape of Folklore*, summarizes how Paul Bunyan's name and image spread across Canada and the United States as well as studies done on how the folklore, stories, and landscape features have evolved. The second section, *Landscape Nuclei*, reviews the geographic literature and methods used in determining Paul Bunyan landscape concentrations across North America. The third section, *An Idealized Past*, explains the importance of the pastoral ideal in the development of the Northwoods' golden age. The next section, *Interpreting the Landscape*, summarizes geographic works on landscape interpretation used in this study. The final section, *Mass Media and Perception of Place*, describes how media often influences perceptions of place.

*Models* are defined as “an idealized and structured representation of the real” (Gregory 2000, 508). The third section examines two separate models that provided the framework to conduct my research: *Necessity for Ruins* and *Evolution of Tourist Areas*. The first, *Necessity for Ruins*, based on Jackson's (1980) work, lays the groundwork for the importance of residents of the Northwoods celebrating their logging heritage and folklore. The second model, *Evolution of Tourist Areas*, is based on Butler's (1980) model of a festival transformation and evolution and is a basis for my discussion of the regional transformation of Paul Bunyan since the 1930s when the towns of Brainerd and

Bemidji, Minnesota, both introduced Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox features on the landscape.

Lastly, *Methods* explains the qualitative methods used to answer my research questions, given my study area and framework set by the models chosen. The *Methods* section is further broken down into 4 major categories: *Internet Search*, *Interviews*, *Participant Observation*, and *Archival Research*. The first, *Internet Search*, is based largely on Reed's (1976) phonebook study of the terms *Dixie* and *South* in the American South and Zelinsky's (1980) study of regional terms used in North American metropolitan areas. This portion of my research allows me to define the Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox regions of North America based on name usage and landscape representation of the folk giants. The second, *Interviews*, describes the groups and individuals I targeted and the style of interviews utilized. The third, *Participant Observation*, describes the festivals and events undertaken in this study. Finally, *Archival Research*, details the special collections, museums, and visitor centers reviewed in my study. By approaching my work using qualitative methods, I illustrate the setting where Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox are celebrated in the present and lay the groundwork for an examination of the historical geography of the region and a discussion of the regional use of Paul and Babe to symbolize the golden age of the Northwoods.

## **Region**

### ***Importance of Region***

Zelinsky (1980, 2) fiercely defends the value of regional studies in writing “the realization is dawning upon us that popular regions are here to stay, that they are nontrivial in a social-psychological sense, and are allied with other potentially

momentous developments”. The regional tradition has continued in geography through the years and several recent studies were reviewed and drawn upon to explain physical expanses and popular perceptions of the Northwoods. The first such regional work, Wyckoff and Dilsaver’s (1995) historical geography study of the Mountainous West, begins by defining the region along both physical and cultural characteristics. In a similar manner, I examine the overlap of the physical and vernacular boundaries of the Northwoods in the next section. The physical limits of the region are largely visible on the landscape as a change in forest cover whereas the cultural limits are largely explained by the historical geography of the Northwoods. These boundaries are used for setting the stage of my discussion of the present landscape.

A second means of examining the cultural landscape is conducted by reviewing popular media works dealing with the region both by *insiders* and *outsiders*. Hausladen’s (2002) exploration of how Americans view the West expands upon the notion of vernacular regional perceptions being strengthened by mass media portrayals in print and film. As noted throughout my study, references to the Northwoods often begin with an acknowledgement of Paul and Babe (and vice versa).

Finally, Arreola’s (2002) analysis of the Mexican-American borderland demonstrates how vernacular regions can be international in nature. There are a number of reasons to think of the Northwoods as a border region: coinage from one country is readily exchanged for face value rather than exchange rate value (both with businesses and banks), the popularity of hockey and curling on the United States side of the border (both are popular Canadian sports), residents on both sides of the border using the term “Northwoods”, radio stations reporting the weather in both Celsius and Fahrenheit,

Canada's flag flying side-by-side the American flag on the United States side of the border, and a vocabulary that often includes French expressions in predominately Anglo areas (ex: *merci* for *thank you* and *bonjour* for *hello*)<sup>1</sup>. My study of the Northwoods as a vernacular region straddling the United States-Canada northern Great Lakes frontier draws from Arreola's work as I explain how Paul and Babe landscape features, although more popular in the United States, are found on both sides of this borderland.



**Figure 3.1 & Figure 3.2:** North Woods Motor Inn of Ignace, Ontario, and Northwoods Christian Assembly of Keweenaw, Michigan. There exist a number of spellings for the cultural region of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario. My use of the spelling “Northwoods” is based strictly on personal preference. (Photos by author)

### *Defining the Northwoods' Boundaries*

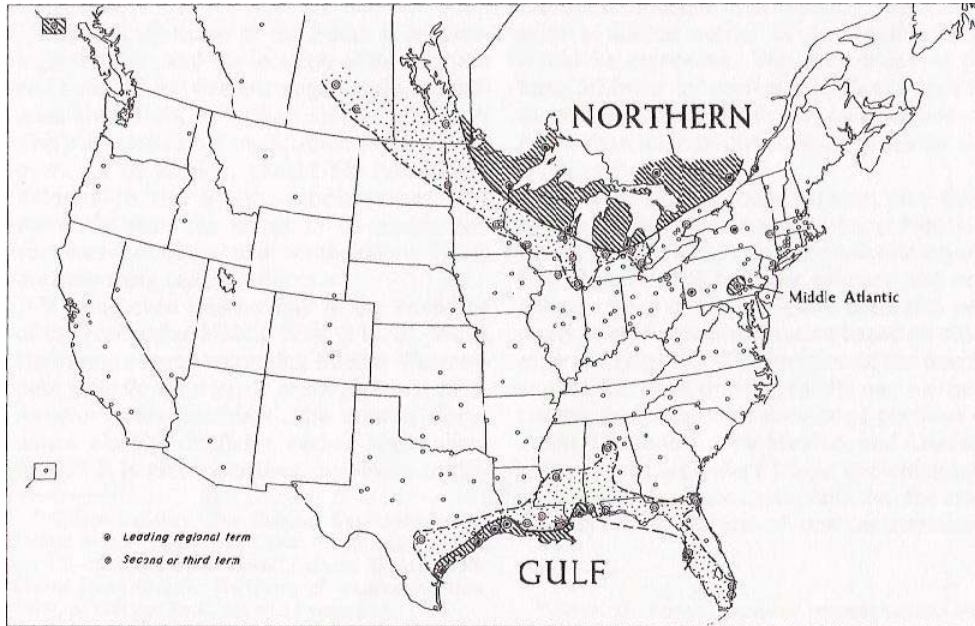
As noted, *Northwoods*, as a regional term, is in wide use throughout much of the northern portions of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario<sup>2,3</sup> and was identified by Zelinsky (1980) as one of the regional vernacular terms of North America<sup>4,5</sup>. In the past, geographers have shown that vernacular regions are often defined, in part, by the physical landscape. Hart (1972) used ‘flatness’ as one of the defining features of the Middle West. Hudson (1984) found the open expanses were of importance in identifying the Great Plains while Wyckoff and Dilsaver (1995) describe the western mountains as

essential elements (“enduring barriers” and “islands of moisture” (3)) for the Mountainous West. Similarly, the territorial edges of the Northwoods also have a strong connection to the physical lay of the land. The vernacular region (as defined by Zelinsky (1980)) largely coincides with the physical landscape of the Laurentian mixed forest. In my trips to and from the Northwoods, I have found that the physical and cultural boundaries of the region largely overlap and are easily identifiable to a geographer with references to *the Northwoods* becoming a common occurrence upon crossing into the northern mixed forest (Figures 3.1 & 3.2). The southern vernacular border in both countries is a near perfect match of the southern limits of the Laurentian mixed forest (Maps 3.1 & 3.2) and includes a small portion of extreme southeastern Manitoba where Paul Bunyan stories were told according to Fowke (1976; 1979). However, due to a lack of communities of any size in this area of Manitoba, it is largely excluded from this study. The region’s limits extend as far north as Kenora and Hearst, Ontario, and as far east as the Abitibi-Temiscamingue region of western Quebec, but exclude Canada’s capital city, Ottawa, and sister city, Gatineau, as my study of the Northwoods emphasizes the rural component of the land—a landscape component many residents of the Northwoods point to in defining their vernacular region.

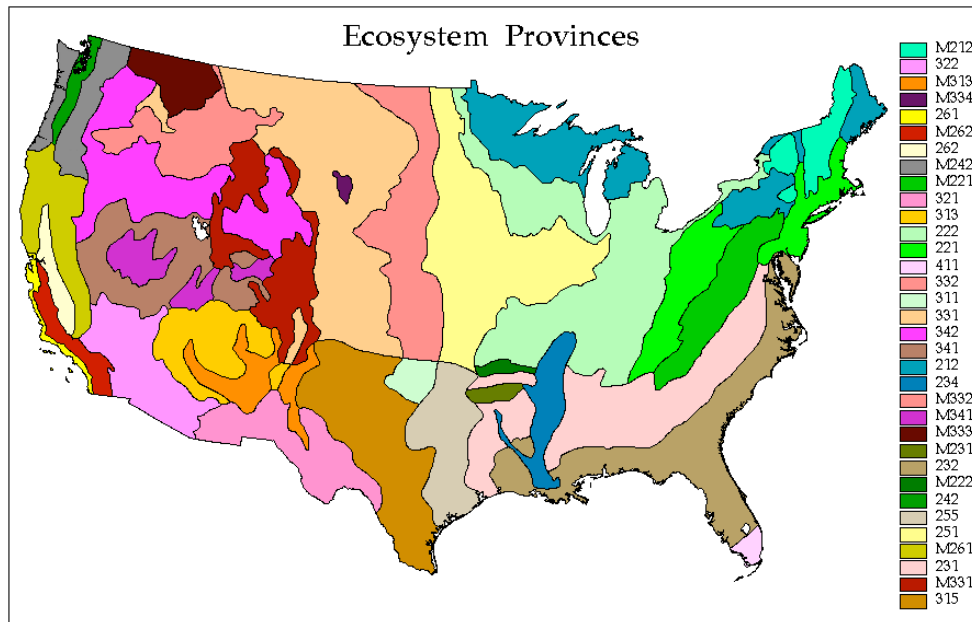
In describing the importance of logging within the Northwoods, it is important to note a handful of exceptions that exist. The exceptions can be lumped into three groups: Indian Reservations and First Nations, fur trading posts, and mining areas. Indian Reservations (United States) and First Nations (Canada) are a notable exception to the Northwoods in their absence of Paul Bunyan features from the landscape. This is most likely due to the existence of local folklore that predates the stories of the fur traders,

loggers, and other outsiders as well as a differing view of the region’s “golden age.”

Even so, logging remains an important local industry for these areas and the woods are still very much celebrated.



**Map 3.1:** The “Northern” vernacular region as defined by Zelinsky (1980, 10)



**Map 3.2:** Map showing the Laurentian mixed forest (212) (Map from United States Forest Service). There is a strong correlation between the vernacular and natural landscape maps.

Fur trading was the Northwoods' first industry and a number of towns, such as Grand Marais, Minnesota, have their roots in the fur trade, but all have long since moved on to other industries such as tourism (Figure 3.3). Some of the trading posts, such as Thunder Bay, Ontario, and the Twin Ports of Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, were able to adapt and grew into towns and cities with the logging boom.



**Figure 3.3:** A giant fur trapper decorates the landscape near Grand Marais, Minnesota. Although most of the Northwoods relied heavily on the logging industry for development, there exist a handful of exceptions. (Photo by author)

Finally, the mining communities that began to emerge during the mid-1800s form the third group and are found in Michigan's Upper Peninsula's Marquette, Memominee, and Gogebic Iron Ranges (the later extends into northern Wisconsin), and "Copper Country", Minnesota's Mesabi, Vermillion, and Cuyuna Ranges, isolated pockets scattered across northwestern Ontario, and nearly all of northeastern Ontario (extending into northern Quebec). Even though most of these areas were dependent on mining activity, some of the communities, such as Virginia, Minnesota, have strong ties to the logging industry as they were originally founded as logging camps. Mining would offset some of the losses that came at the end of the timber industry's golden age, but never



reached the employment figures nor was as universal as logging. However, the region's mining boom created high demand for new sources of wood and helped to fuel the growth of the logging industry linking the two industries during the late 1800s and early 1900s (Blegen 1975, Karamanski 1989). With all three exceptions to the region's logging heritage, numerous examples of the regional importance of the woods and the logging industry in signage and statue can still be found (Figures 3.4 & 3.5).



**Figures 3.4 & 3.5:** Timberland Motel and “The Timbers” Restaurant are both located near Thunder Bay, Ontario. Although Thunder Bay owes much of its recent growth to industries other than logging, the importance of the industry on the surrounding area is clearly stated on the landscape with numerous examples of business names referencing “timber”, “loggers”, etc. (Photos by author)

Collectively, these resource based industries created a strong sense of belonging.

Hudson (1984, 20) writes:

“Geographies of the region dwell on its ancient roads, its strong soils, the thousands of lakes, its forests, its extensive mineral base and its June-through-August growing season. All those resources and their limitations are also a background against which can be seen an interesting and unique process of human settlement. Beginning with the fur trade, and continuing through the last phase of pioneer settlement after 1900, the Upper Great Lakes region was a truly international zone developed and settled by people who produced a regional identity”.



## Landscape

### *The Landscape of Folklore*

As explained, the Red River Lumber Company is largely responsible for introducing Paul Bunyan to a much larger general audience. The company's pamphlets (1914; 1916; 1922) were important in spreading the stories (Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999) as was the company's train. The impact the company's innovative practices, such as using Paul Bunyan's image on the company's vehicles and trains, introduced Paul Bunyan to the public at large, as Hanft (2004) details in his book, *Red River: Paul Bunyan's Own Lumber Company and Its Railroads*. Hanft's claim is supported by Laughead in his interview with Hutchinson (1963) in which he talked about the promotional campaign as the train traveled cross-country.

Paul Bunyan was on his way to becoming a national folk hero. Given the popularity of Paul Bunyan across North America, it is surprising how little academic work has been devoted to lumberjack and his blue ox. Three works in particular stand out in this study: Hoffmann (1999), Gier (2005), and Borash (2003). Daniel Hoffmann's *Paul Bunyan: Last of the Frontier Demigods* (1952, 1984, and 1999 editions)<sup>1</sup> was praised by many upon its release (Fishwick 1952; Lee 1953; Dorson 1953; Boatright 1954) and is cited by many as being the quintessential Paul Bunyan study (Dorson 1976; Boyes 1986; Schiller 1998). Hoffmann answers many of the questions regarding Paul's origins, authenticity, and transformation through the years through an in depth analysis of the original folktales and early published stories.

The two most recent works: Gier (2005) and Borash (2003) are important not only because of their recent completion, but also because of their relevance to this study.

Christopher Gier, a graduate from the University of Cincinnati's Department of Anthropology, completed his work in 2005. His thesis (2005), *Paul Bunyan and the Evolution of the Tall Tale*, compares two Paul Bunyan works: one from the 1930s and the second from the 1990s. Although I may question Gier's story selection process (neither are considered monumental works (Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999)), I do agree with many of his conclusions he draws on society's changes over the 60-plus years spanning the two works.

Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox cultural landscape features have changed through the years as well (although not in a manner that parallels the changes in literature). David Borash graduated from South Dakota State University in 2003 with a Master's degree from the Department of Geography. His thesis (2003), *Paul Bunyan of Brainerd, Minnesota*, is the only work by a geographer on Paul Bunyan to date. Borash's study focuses on the local economic development over the years and how this growth in turn affected the location of Paul Bunyan's Playground (a local amusement park housing large statues of Paul and Babe).

### *Landscape Nuclei*

Although the stories of Paul Bunyan are known across North America, three regions in particular: Maine (and surrounding lands—*Atlantic* in Zelinsky's (1980) vernacular study), the Pacific West Coast, and the Northwoods, have embraced the folk hero on a different level. Landscape features and festivals celebrating the folk characters of Paul and the Blue Ox have become common (Dorson 1976; Hoffmann 1999).

Meinig's "American Wests" (1972) describes the concept of a region having multiple sub-regions and nuclei at varying levels. Meinig used population, circulation,

political areas, and culture criteria to identify four recognizable stages. This study of the Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox folklore landscape differs in that I have identified three levels of permanence of folklore landscape features across North America (with corresponding nuclei) largely based on landscape *population* criteria. The population criteria in this study include statues, business names, festivals, sports teams, and public landscape features (see **Model 5.2**).

Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox are North American folklore (Hoffman 1999, Fowke 1976, 1979). In my section on *Methods*, I describe how Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox items (businesses, statues, and festivals) were identified in a majority of states (39 of 50) and Canadian provinces<sup>2</sup>. Alderman (2003) shows how the use of a common cultural trait can differ significantly on a regional level. Even though the usage of the folk giants was nearly universal across the United States and Canada, the way in which “Paul Bunyan” or “Blue Ox” was applied varied greatly from region to region. In most regions, Paul and Babe were used for businesses directly related to the logging industry such as Paul Bunyan Tree Service of Wichita, Kansas, and Blue Ox Logcrafters of Carbondale, Colorado. However, in three regions: Maine, the Northwoods, and the Pacific West Coast, the names and images of Paul and Babe are applied to a variety of unrelated activities such as Blue Ox RV Park of Albany, Oregon; Blue Ox Saloon of Millinocket, Maine; and Paul Bunyan Board of Realtors of Cadillac, Michigan. Although there were a handful of exceptions (Las Vegas, Nevada, had an unusually high count of “Blue Ox” items that will be explained in the *Methods* section), most of these items were to be found in the three previously mentioned regions. Finally, state and national landscape features were identified and found to exist only in the Northwoods region.

The cultural nucleus of each of the three regions was identified by festival locations. There were only a handful of communities nationwide that celebrated Paul Bunyan and an even smaller number that had multiple festivals named after the folklore icons. These areas with multiple festivals made up the core areas and were: Bangor, Maine; Bemidji-Brainerd, Minnesota; and Westwood-Susanville, California<sup>3</sup>.

The distinguishing factor in determining the difference between major and minor nuclei was the use of the public landscape. Although there exist a handful of local public landscape features, such as Paul Bunyan Park in Bangor, Maine, and Paul Bunyan Logging Road in Susanville, California, the only state and national Paul and Babe public landscape items are found in northern Minnesota and include items such as Paul Bunyan State Forest, Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway, Paul Bunyan State Trail, Blue Ox ATV Trail, and Round River ATV Trail.

The origins of the Northwoods' Paul Bunyan landscape features are found in the towns of Brainerd and Bemidji, Minnesota. The two communities introduced Paul Bunyan landscape features in 1935 and 1937, respectively. Over the next 20 years, residents of the Northwoods established similar lasting images across the region. Karal Ann Marling (1984, 101), professor of art history, suggests the early Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox features were part of a national trend where largeness “demands a pause—for edification, for commerce, or for the fantastic fun of it”. The question arises, *why Paul and Babe?*

### ***An Idealized Past***

Northwoods communities were celebrating a past golden age, and, in some respects, coming to terms with the loss of the pastoral ideal. Leo Marx (1964, 3),

professor of English and American studies, writes “The pastoral ideal has been used to define the meaning of America ever since the age of discovery, and it has not yet lost its hold upon the native imagination” and adds the American public at large has “something of a yearning for a simpler, more harmonious style of life, an existence ‘closer to nature’” (6). Whether it was the loss of the forest itself, the introduction of machines that replaced hand tools, or a combination of both elements is debatable. The point here being there was a sense of loss of an ideal time that only added to a longing for the past. The landscape representations of Paul and Babe, in addition to celebrating a past golden age of cultural and economic growth, symbolically point to an age where life was allegedly simpler, more in tune with nature. The landscape representations, both past and present, are the chief concerns of this study.

### *Interpreting Landscape*

Belden Lane (1998), professor of theological and American studies, suggests *landscape*, a term referring to “the appearance of an area, the assemblage of objects used to produce that appearance, and the area itself” (Duncan 2000, 431), shapes our identity and sense of community. The interpretation of the landscape has been of major interest to cultural geographers since Sauer’s (1925) *Morphology of Landscape* (Duncan 2000). Meinig’s (1979a) classic collection of essays, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, highlighted many of the keys to a geographer’s study of the landscape.

Whether we view landscapes as cultural artifacts (Lowenthal 1979; Holdsworth 1997) or ideals (Marx 1964; Meinig 1979b)—landscape has meaning in our lives. The length of time we spend residing in a particular place can greatly influence how we interpret the land (Broadway 1989). When place becomes home, descriptions and images

of this landscape can evoke strong feelings and memories of family and past experiences (Sopher 1979; Fredericci and White 1986). Landscape representations of Paul and Babe have become commonplace in many areas of the Northwoods inevitably raising not only questions of the folklore's authenticity (Ames 1940; Dorson 1976, Brunvanvd 1978), but also the relevance on their use on the landscape (Schnell 2003).

### ***Mass Media and Perception of Place***

How mass media has influenced local and outside perceptions of the Northwoods is also important. Geographers have contributed greatly to the understanding to our understanding of how literature and folklore create and define regions and regional perceptions of identity (Shortridge 1991; Allen 1992; Blake 1995; DeLyser 2003). Descriptions of place can lead individuals to search for mythical locations created in story (DeLyser 2003) and song (Bowen 1997) while generating perceptions of regional values (Shortridge 1991) and nostalgia of home (Sopher 1979) for others.

With the folklore of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox, neither the folktales themselves nor the locations within the stories are the central focus, but rather the characters. DeLyser (2003) describes how dedicated fans visiting landmarks described in verse may half expect to meet fictional characters from the stories. This is not the case with the folklore of the Northwoods as the role of landscape and character is reversed. Individuals do not seek out the *Round River* or *Big Onion River* but instead the characters that give meaning to the land. Shortridge (1991) and Blake (1995) explain that influential fictional characters epitomizing regional values add to our regional perceptions of culture and history. Paul and the Blue Ox have become more than passive

folklore characters; they have evolved into regional icons idealizing the region's golden age, and, in part, define our perception of the Northwoods.

Past studies have suggested regional identity based upon individuals, as the Northwoods have been identified with Paul and Babe, is rare (Hale 1984; Colton 1997). Such relationships between a region and an icon inevitably leave much to the imagination. DeLyser (2001) found people are apt to fill in such gaps on the landscape with an imagined idealized past. Media in the form of magazines, books, television, movie, and song can add to the elements by which we fill in such gaps (Shortridge 1991; Blake 1995; Bowen 1997; DeLyser 2001; Borash 2003; DeLyser 2003; Kim and Richardson 2003). In addition to the popularized versions of the folktales written by Shephard (1924), Stevens (1925), Turney (1928), and Felton (1947) which introduced the folk characters to a much larger audience, everything from songs, plays, operettas, and even a Disney movie influenced the public's view of Paul and Babe and their role in logging lore and, as often was the case, their relationship with and within the Northwoods (Hoffmann 1999).

## **Models**

### ***Necessity for Ruins***

The first model used to shape my research comes from the book *The Necessity for Ruins*. In his 1980 essay, J. B. Jackson outlines the importance for society to connect to its past and suggests a three-stage model that regions travel through in order to do so: *golden age*, *neglect*, and *restoration*. The *golden age* is a time remembered for when things were at their best and grievances were minimal. The second stage, *neglect*, is one where the cultural landscape enters into a time of decline, often economic, if not utter

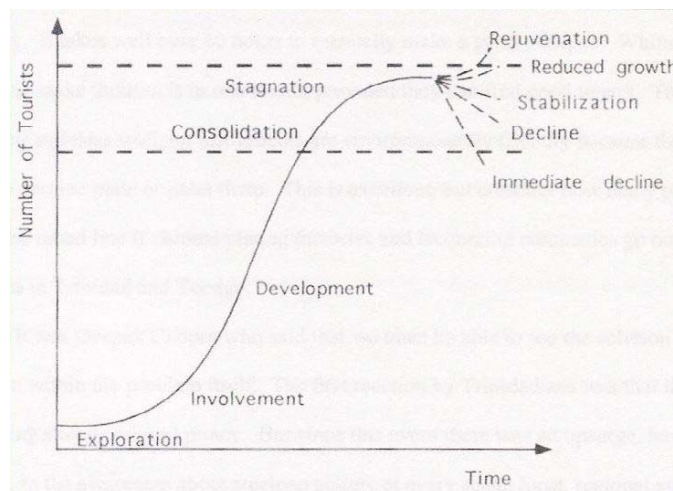
collapse. The third and final stage is one of *restoration* in which the area has moved beyond the time of decline and neglect and now yearns for the bygone era of the golden age.

Jackson (1980, 102) writes “Many of us know the joy and excitement not so much of creating the new as of redeeming what has been neglected” and adds “the landscape has to be plundered and stripped before we can restore the natural ecosystem...That is how we reproduce the cosmic scheme and correct history”. For the Northwoods, the *golden age* was a period spanning the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until early in the 20<sup>th</sup> when logging was the most important economic activity in the region. The logging began in Michigan and advanced across the wooded glaciated landscape of the northern Great Lakes settling in northern Minnesota and Ontario by the late-1800s. The Northwoods’ logging boom lasted until the onset of World War I and was followed by decades of decline and modest growth. Jackson describes how regions need a generation to have passed so the next one now looks upon the land differently from those who remember the “good ol’ days”. The *restoration* period of the Northwoods, a time when the age of neglect comes to an end and the golden age is celebrated, would come during the 1930s—sooner than would normally be expected. The significance of the Northwoods’ golden age was likely magnified by a nation (and world) that was suffering through the Great Depression with many people longing for a glimpse of history that would offer some hope for the future (Borash 2003). Regardless of the reasoning, the regional celebration of the logging era began during the 1930s and Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox would emerge as icons representing the Northwoods’ golden age.



## *Evolution of Tourist Areas*

Butler's (1980) *Evolution of Tourist Areas* model remains the standard for those examining the evolution of festivals and tourist related activities (Moore and Whitehall 2005) (**Model 3.1**). In his work, Butler describes how tourist areas move through the stages of *exploration*, *involvement*, *development*, *consolidation*, and *stagnation* before reaching a crux where the tourist area in question enters a state of *decline* or *rejuvenation*. Butler suggests "Artificial attractions...may also be able to compete effectively over long periods by adding to their attractions to keep in tune with contemporary preferences" (9-10). Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox have evolved on the Northwoods' landscape adapting as society's dynamics and preferences change. As a basis for my landscape evolution model (see **Model 5.1**), I review the introduction of major Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox features on the landscape and the times that each of the features were introduced and how they have fared through the years. This was found to be true in the Northwoods both on the localized (Borash 2003) and regional levels.



**Model 3.1:** Butler's (1980) Evolution of Tourist Areas model explaining attendance at a given event over time.

Additionally, several Paul Bunyan festivals are described as part of my analysis of the Northwoods' celebration of the region's golden age. De Bres and Davis (2001) and Derrett (2003) have shown the geographical importance of festivals on the regional level in creating a sense of place and are utilized in my analysis of regional Paul Bunyan festivals as they pertain to the region's celebration of the golden age. However, geographers have found such events are occasionally forced rather than embraced by a local population and thus raise questions of authenticity (Frenkel and Walton 2000; Schnell 2003). Whether or not these festivals (and landmarks) accurately reflect local sentiments is a question I address in this study.

## **Methods**

This section describes the qualitative methods that were used in my study of the Northwoods. Qualitative methods are defined as “a set of tools developed to pursue the epistemological mandate of the philosophies of meaning” and “have been developed through a variety of research traditions and in a range of disciplinary contexts” (Smith 2000, 660). Cary de Wit (2003, 6) states experimental studies are vital for fully experiencing sense of place which is “elemental to place identity” and adds that questions regarding sense of place can be answered through “humanistic field investigation, by studying...the personal thoughts, feelings, and images individuals associate with place”. There are a number of qualitative techniques that are both practical and useful in past geographical studies (Reed 1976; Lewis 1979; Zelinsky 1980; Hart 1995; Davis 2001; DeLyser 2001; DeLyser 2003; de Wit 2003; Goin 2003); I chose four techniques for my study of the Northwoods landscape: *Internet search, interviews, participant observation, and archival research (including folklore)*.

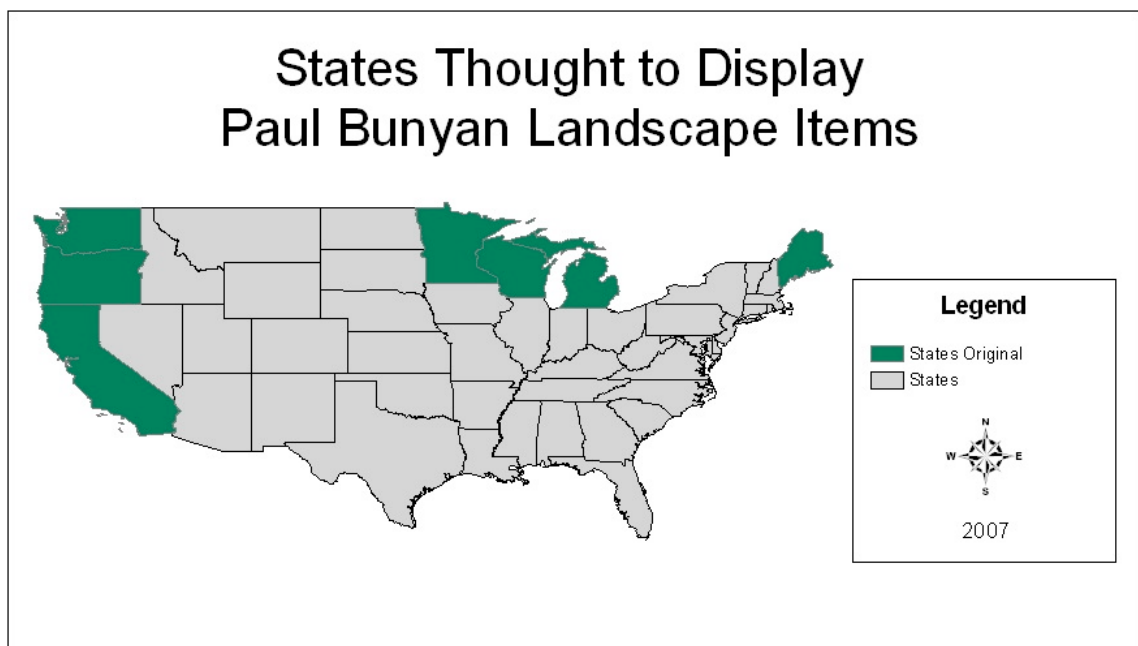
My studies were conducted utilizing the Internet and on a number of trips to the Northwoods over a four-year period (2004-2007) that relied heavily upon my upbringing and past personal experience. Internet searches proved to be valuable in seeking out key cultural features on the landscape (as well as individuals) to be visited. My pre-existing knowledge of the area based on trips to the region to visit relatives while growing up helped with the local geography. As noted, my maternal grandparents, who still live in northern Minnesota, worked in several of the logging camps during the 1930s. I remember a number of the stories they told of their time spent there and recall visiting sites where they had once lived and worked while I was growing up. This would prove useful as I related to local residents. Additionally, my own personal experience includes three summers with the United States Forest Service, three summers with the National Park Service, and a year as a wildland firefighter—all of which helped me to relate to those being interviewed as they told their stories of living and working in the woods. I attended a number of different festivals and events over the course of my study. The organization of these celebrations shed new light on my understanding of the region's logging heritage and symbolic use of Paul and Babe.

### ***Internet Study***

With the popularity of the Paul Bunyan stories across the United States (Dorson 1976; Schiller 1997; Hoffmann 1999), I was curious as to whether or not there would be regional concentrations to Paul Bunyan features on the landscape and, if so, *where?*

Before beginning the study, I did have a couple of preconceived ideas of where I would find a majority of Paul Bunyan features on the landscape based on my readings, pre-existing knowledge of Paul Bunyan statues in various states, and personal trips into

the heart of the Northwoods. Firstly, I believed that I would find concentrations of Paul Bunyan items in three regions: Maine, the Northwoods, and the Pacific West Coast<sup>1</sup>. There was the possibility of Paul Bunyan items being found in a handful of other states as well, namely New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Idaho, and Montana based on the history and development of the logging industry. I was also interested to see if the stories would surface on the landscape in Alaska as much of the nation's logging industry has moved to that state in recent years. Secondly, I assumed the greatest concentration of items would be found in the Northwoods with smaller numbers existing in the other areas (Map 3.3).



**Map 3.3:** The three regions I initially thought I would find the vast majority of Paul Bunyan items. I would soon discover this was not the case. (Map by author)

Reed's (1976) study was on the delimitation of the regional terms *South* and *Dixie* in the American South. Reed did this by calculating the ratio that these terms appeared versus the term *national* by reviewing phone books of selected cities in the region. Zelinsky (1980) expanded this idea by reviewing phone books for regional terms in all

metropolitan areas in the United States and Canada. By tallying such terms, Zelinsky was able to identify North America's vernacular regions.

My study takes advantage of technology that was not available when these earlier studies were conducted. For my study of Paul Bunyan, I used the Internet as a search tool by conducting searches for Paul Bunyan and related items. By doing this, I was able to record and map features as they appear on the landscape. There are several advantages to using the Internet for my regional study. First, changes in addresses and phone numbers are, in theory, more up-to-date. Secondly, *every* town and location is included whereas previous studies could only include selected towns or cities. Lastly, Internet searches allow similar items that may not have phone numbers, but are a vital part of the regional landscape, such as statues, to be included.

As I began work on my study, there were three major items I hoped to identify on the landscape: businesses, statues, and festivals. A fourth item, place names, streets and parks named after Paul and Babe, was researched and found to exist in three regions: Maine, Northwoods, Pacific West Coast. However, the largest concentration of such items was found to exist in the Northwoods with several state trails, a state forest, and a couple of highways named after the folk characters. By running a number of keyword searches I hoped to find a majority of the folklore legends' listings. For example, when searching for items named after Paul's faithful blue friend, I not only searched for "Babe the Blue Ox," I also attempted searches for "Babe" (which I quickly determined would be impossible to accurately identify), "Blue Ox", and "The Blue Ox" in hopes of having as many hits as possible. The study of Paul Bunyan features on the landscape may seem somewhat simplistic in nature, but I quickly learned that this was not the case.

## **Internet Study—Businesses**

This was, in theory, to be the easiest of my three areas of research. To accomplish this, I searched an online yellow pages (Switchboard) that covered the entire nation. Some of the business names had only phone numbers. In such cases, further on-line searches and phone calls were made to determine the actual location of a business. A few questionable listings (such as “Mrs. Bunyan’s Bloomers Inc.”) were also explored at this step in my research. Another issue was multiple phone number and address listings for the same business. Phone calls were again made when this problem arose to determine the correct information.

I double-checked my results with a second on-line yellow pages site (Superpages.com). Surprisingly, only about two-thirds of the results were the same. This further lengthened the data collection process, but did significantly improve the accuracy of the final results. I strongly recommend this double-checking for such studies even if it greatly increases the time spent in data collection as a necessary step.

Attempts at determining a business’s headquarters were also made so as not to duplicate data results. For example, Paul Bunyan Telephone of Bemidji, Minnesota, also owns and operates Paul Bunyan Telephone of Deer River, Minnesota, Paul Bunyan Television of Bemidji and Deer River, and Paul Bunyan Cellular of Bemidji. In such cases, the headquarters or oldest existing business location was the only address counted. Lastly, as I began to review the search results, I determined that there was a need to further breakdown business names into three sub-classifications. I decided to use “Paul Bunyan”, “Babe the Blue Ox”, and “Friends of Paul Bunyan”, for my three areas.

## *Paul Bunyan*

My search of Paul Bunyan businesses and organizations through on-line Yellow Pages included two key search terms: “Paul Bunyan” and “Bunyan’s”. A third search was attempted using “Mr. Bunyan”, to which no results appeared. It is possible that a handful of “Paul’s...” were overlooked, but great measures were taken to include as many Paul Bunyan references as possible (Map 3.4).



**Map 3.4:** Locations of business establishments named after Paul Bunyan. The nationwide results were surprising. (Map by author)

One recurring name warrants mention: Paul Bunyan Tree Service. This particular business name was a very common name with business locations ranging from Bemidji, Minnesota, to Wichita, Kansas, to Wilmington, North Carolina, to Las Vegas, Nevada. In order to determine the business headquarters, phone calls were made to a majority of Paul Bunyan Tree Service locales. Surprisingly, all Paul Bunyan Tree Services contacted were independently owned and operated. In my conversation with the owner of the Wilmington, North Carolina, Paul Bunyan Tree Service, Bob Weible (2005) had thought

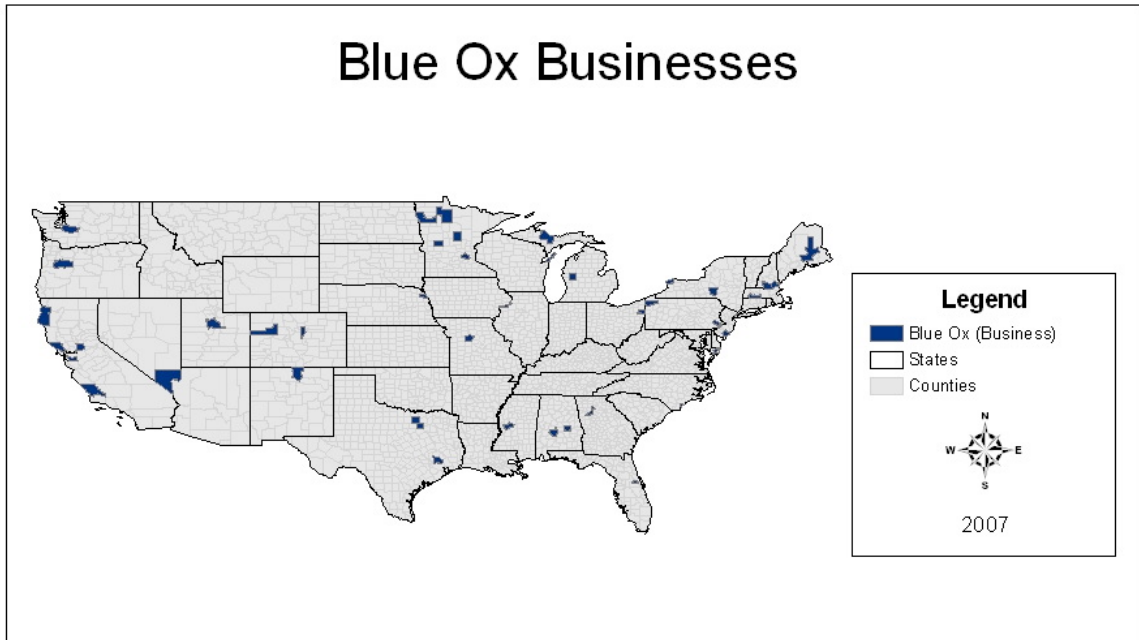
the use of Paul Bunyan in his business name would make it easier to remember and was amazed at the nationwide use of the term “Paul Bunyan.” I found Mr. Weible’s sentiments were the prevailing view of many business owners interviewed—surprise at the popular usage of the name Paul Bunyan.

### ***Babe the Blue Ox***

My online searches for businesses named after Paul’s best friend, Babe, were conducted by using several terms. “Babe the Blue Ox”, “Blue Ox”, “The Blue Ox”, and “Babe the Ox” were all used as search terms. Surprisingly, “Babe the Blue Ox” did not result in any matches. The reason(s) for this is unknown. Many of the sites, such as Blue Ox Corporation of Oxford, New York, do not include *Babe* in the company’s title, but images on the website refer to the blue ox as *Babe*.

While no matches were found for “Babe the Blue Ox,” “Blue Ox” matches nearly equaled all Paul Bunyan hits. This was a surprise as was the widespread usage of the term in some unlikely communities. The greatest single concentration of Blue Ox business names was in Las Vegas, Nevada. Several phone calls later I learned that the founder of the Blue Ox chain of taverns hales from Minnesota—a clear case of relocation diffusion. Further evidence of this is presented by reviewing a menu from the Blue Ox East Restaurant and Lounge which reveals that it was not only the Blue Ox that had carried over from North Star State, but also items named after the Minnesota Twins and Vikings.





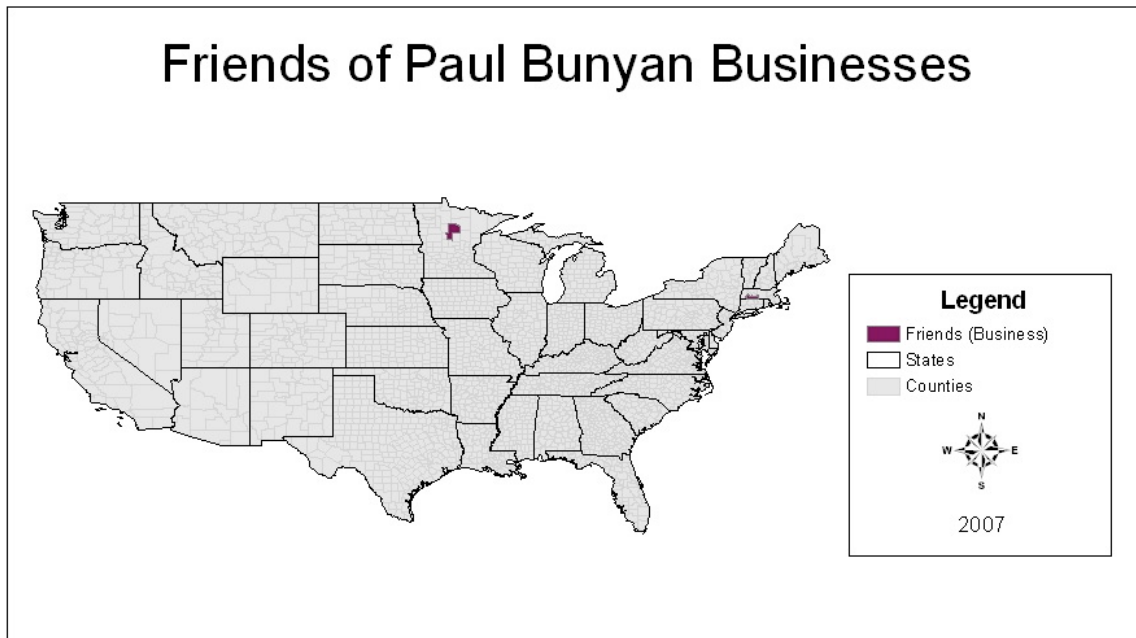
**Map 3.5:** Locations of establishments named after Babe the Blue Ox. (Map by author)

Similar to the search for Paul Bunyan items, there were some items that were possibly excluded due to an incomplete naming of the business. A search of “Babe’s...” created such a problem. Although some of the “Babe’s...” may be named for the blue giant, many were on the order of “Babes R Us.” I decided to exclude all such finds rather than search in vain for the possible one or two items that would be otherwise included.

(Map 3.5)

### *Friends of Paul Bunyan*

Babe the Blue Ox was not Paul’s only friend. There were a handful of other characters from the original stories that find their way into a number of the tales. The most notable of these (besides Babe) is Johnny Inkslinger, the company clerk. When I began my research on Babe, I was surprised at the widespread usage of the term “Blue Ox,” and thought there would likely be a need for a third category since I already knew of the existence of Lucette (Paul’s sweetheart) in Hackensack, Minnesota.



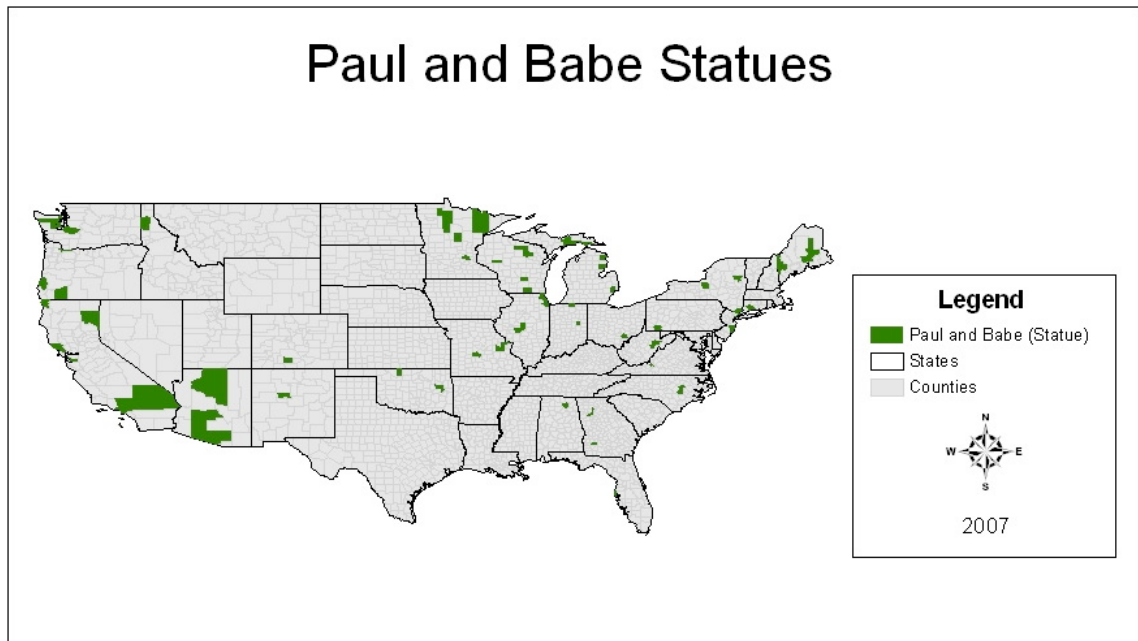
**Map 3.6:** Friends of Paul Bunyan as they appear in phone listings across the country. Initially, I had thought I would find more items related to Paul’s friends on the landscape (see also **Map 3.8**). Hackensack, Minnesota’s Lucette’s Pizza and Lucette’s Pub and Chicopee, Massachusetts’s Mrs. Bunyan’s Bloomers Inc. were the only items that turned up in my search. In a subsequent fieldtrip to the Northwoods, I discovered that at least one additional establishment had been added to the landscape: Akeley, Minnesota’s Paul’s Purple Cow (an ice-cream parlor). (Map by author)

Several searches later, I discovered that this was not to be the case. Although statues of Lucette (along with Paul Jr.) and several of Paul’s brothers exist, I was able to find only a handful of businesses named after any of Paul’s friends. Of significance were several festivals in the Hackensack area named after Lucette (the significance of which is discussed later) (**Map 3.6**).

### **Internet Study—Statues**

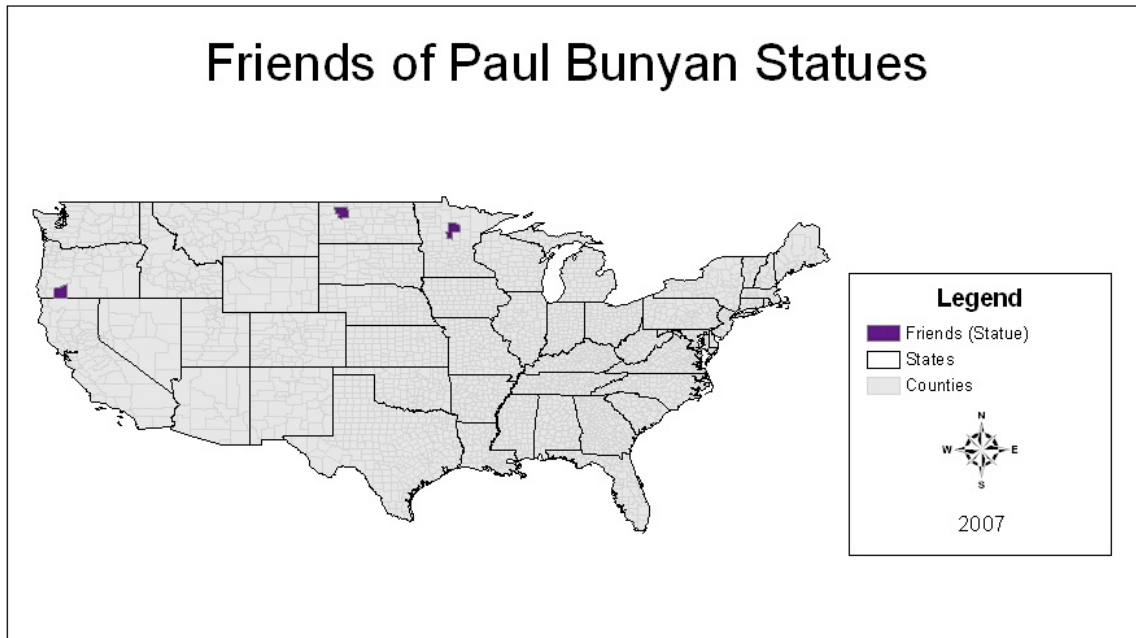
When I started my searches, I was concerned about the difficulty of finding records of Paul Bunyan statues on-line. From my previous research and journeys, I knew of several large Paul Bunyan statues that existed in Minnesota (Bemidji, Akeley, and Brainerd), Wisconsin (Eau Claire), Michigan (St. Ignace), and Maine (Bangor). After several searches, I discovered the *RoadsideAmerica.com—Guide to Uniquely Odd*

*Tourist Attractions!* There were two separate categories on this website: Muffler Man and Paul Bunyans.



**Map 3.7:** Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox statues on the landscape are found in four regions: Maine, Northwoods, Pacific West Coast, and northern Arizona. The first three can be explained by the local popularity of the folk characters while the large concentration in northern Arizona is due to the University of Northern Arizona’s mascot—the Lumberjack. (Map by author)

Not all Muffler Men are Paul Bunyans, and not all Paul Bunyans are Muffler Men. Some of the Paul Bunyans were also listed in both categories. This required me to review each statue individually to determine whether or not to count it in my final tally. Even so, it saved hours that I would have otherwise spent searching in vain for these items.



**Map 3.8:** Paul Bunyan’s friends on the landscape. Only four statues were discovered: Hackensack, Minnesota’s Lucette (Paul’s Sweetheart) and Paul Jr., New Town, North Dakota’s Earl Bunyan (Paul’s brother), and Butte Falls, Oregon’s Ralph Bunyan (Paul’s younger brother). The numbers would be significantly higher if Babe the Blue Ox was included. Babe was included with Paul because no known statues exist of Babe independent of Paul. Later studies may reveal how widespread Babe is on the landscape. (Map by author)

The review of Paul Bunyans was easy enough, but for the Muffler Men, a set of criteria needed to be established. Muffler Men are defined as being made of fiberglass, standing 6-8 meters tall, “well-chiseled facial bones, prominent brow and squarish ‘latern’ jaw...broad-shoulders” with the arms “bent at elbow, left palm faces down, right palm faces up—with an open grasp to hold an ax, muffler, golf club, etc” (RoadsideAmerica.com). To identify which Muffler Men were Paul Bunyan landscape features, I tallied statues as Paul Bunyan statues that had three of the following four items: beard, flannel, axe, and toque (a knit woolen hat). Most of the listings included pictures, others required me to make a judgment call based on the written description of the statue (Map 3.7, Figures 3.6 & 3.7).



**Figure 3.6 & Figure 3.7:** Paul and Babe as they stand greeting visitors to Eau Claire, Wisconsin’s Paul Bunyan Logging Camp Museum (above) and Paul and Babe together in St. Ignace, Michigan. Many of the statues were found on the edge of the Northwoods. (Photos by author)

Lastly, there were several statues of Paul Bunyan friends (Lucette, Paul Jr., and two brothers) that were also included in separate category (**Map 3.8**).

### **Internet Study—Festivals**

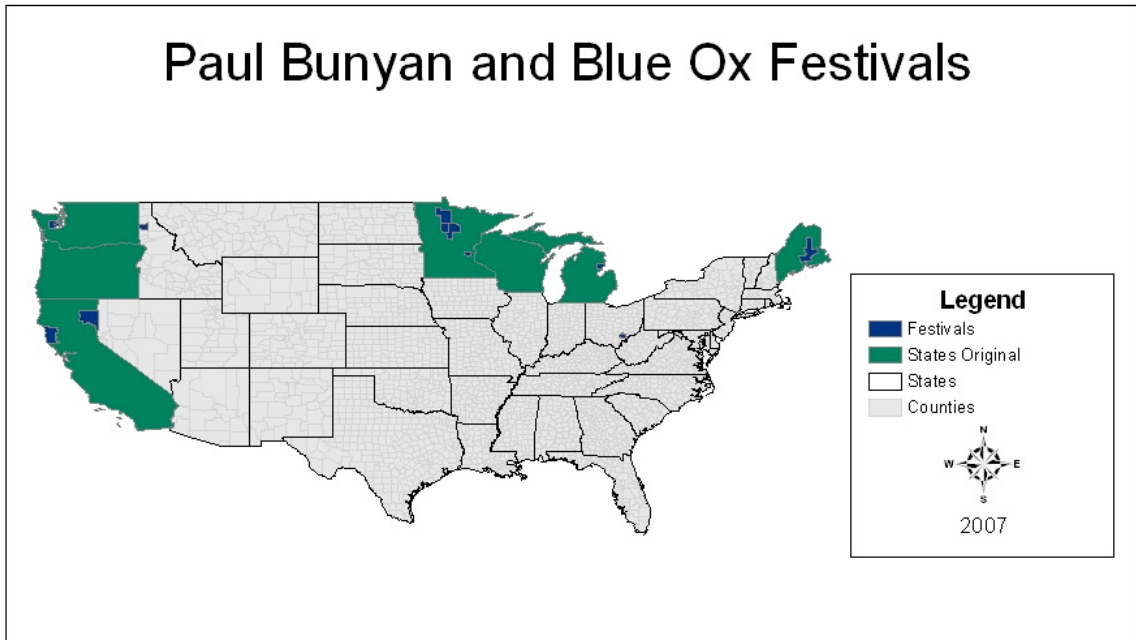
Although this was the most time consuming part of my Internet study, I do believe the most revealing results came from this search. Although businesses are named

with the sole discretion of the owner (as discussed elsewhere), and anyone can place a Paul Bunyan or Blue Ox statue on their premises (zoning ordinances taken into consideration), an entire *community* must be involved when naming a festival (Derrett 2003). For a community celebration to be successful, that is, to continue year-after-year and have the support of local residents, those naming the event would need to choose a name that the entire community would support and, more importantly, identify with. Such is the case with Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox festivals—these festivals are only found in traditional logging areas where a large segment of the community identifies with the folklore giants (**Map 3.9**).

Realizing the importance of identifying these festivals, I reviewed a number of search engines in hopes of identifying as many festivals as possible. Some of the festivals have developed websites of their own, others were referenced through state, local, and personal websites. Reviewing so many sites created a number of problems as some festivals were known by similar—or *identical*—names (“Paul Bunyan Days” of Fort Bragg, California, St. Maries, Idaho, and Akeley, Minnesota)—forcing me to further research the history of each festival referenced.

As with the businesses and statues, I established criteria for the items that were to be included in this study. First, the name of the festival needed to directly *reference* Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox. An exception was made for the Mason County (Washington) Forest Festival, which has a “Paul Bunyan Parade” included as part of the annual festivities.





**Map 3.9:** Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox festivals as they appear across the country. Only two festivals, Paul Bunyan Days of St. Maries, Idaho, and Paul Bunyan Show of Nelsonville, Ohio, were found to exist outside the states originally thought to include most Paul Bunyan items. (Map by author)

The second required criteria for a festival to be counted, was evidence of an *ongoing* celebration. In other words, the event could not be a one-time celebration and instead there needed to be information suggesting the event had been held for several consecutive years.

### **Internet Study—Public Features**

Public features were found to exist in only a handful of areas. As noted local public features were only found in Maine, the Northwoods, and Pacific West Coast regions. However, large public features on the state and national levels were found to exist only within the Northwoods region (see **Map 5.1**). These items are important because they represent a high level of acceptance and recognition and are the least likely to change in name (due, in part, to government bureaucracy).

## Internet Study—Items Omitted

Inevitably, as careful as I was, I am certain some landscape items were overlooked. Some of the business and festival names were not as detailed as they needed to be to be counted. As stated, not all “Paul”, “Ox”, and “Babe” items were reviewed. It is also possible that some businesses were not included that have titles not beginning with “Paul” or “Blue Ox”, as the case may be (*Café of the Blue Ox?*). Other items exist, but have no corresponding phone number. The Paul Bunyan Vintage Auto Club of Bemidji is an example as is the University of Buffalo (New York), which uses the “Blue Ox” as its mascot, and the Brainerd Yellow Pages, which is informally referred to as “Babe’s Pages” (Figure 3.8)



**Figures 3.8 & 3.9:** Images that proved to be troublesome: Brainerd’s Babe’s Pages and Bemidji’s Curling Club. (Images from Babe’s Pages and Bemidji Curling Club)

Also troublesome were items that used Paul Bunyan or Babe images, but did not meet the name criteria. Festivals, such as Grand Rapids, Minnesota’s, Tall Timber Days (Figure 3.10) and Hackensack, Minnesota’s, Sweetheart Days (Figure 3.11), may use an image of Paul Bunyan, but not reference the giant in the title. Other examples include Brainerd’s Blue Thunder Baseball Team and the Bemidji Curling Club (which uses



images of both Paul and Babe) (Figure 3.9). There was no accurate way of identifying all such related items across the United States since not every business or festival has a website and search engines do not readily identify such items as belonging to Paul or the Blue Ox. Therefore, all such items were excluded for the greater good of remaining consistent. Finally, there also exist businesses named “Logger’s”, “Lumberjack’s”, or any number of other titles that indirectly reference Paul or Babe. Because not all lumberjacks reference Paul Bunyan, I chose not to include these items.



**Figure 3.10 & Figure 3.11:** Tall Timber Days (Grand Rapids, Minnesota, left) and Sweetheart Canoe Derby (Hackensack, Minnesota, right) t-shirts. Note the images of Paul Bunyan in the upper right-hand corner on the Tall Timber t-shirt (left picture) and front and center with Lucette rowing a canoe on a Sweetheart Canoe Derby t-shirt. (Photos by author)

In trips to the Northwoods (2004-2007) of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, I found a handful of examples of businesses, such as LumberJack Liquors and Smoke Shop of New Richmond, Wisconsin, 371 Café of Cass Lake, Minnesota, and the River Oaks building of Brainerd, Minnesota, that have no mention of Paul Bunyan in name, but have a large image of Paul on the establishments signage (Figures 3.12, 3.13, & 3.14). As it is

impossible to account for all such signage, businesses that fell into this category were also omitted.



**Figure 3.12, Figure 3.13, & Figure 3.14:** Café 371 of Cass Lake, Minnesota, LumberJack Liquors of New Richmond, Wisconsin, and the River Oaks building of Brainerd, Minnesota. Businesses such as these were not included in the final tally of Paul Bunyan business names. (Photos by author)



A number of Paul Bunyan memorabilia exist on the landscape that were also excluded. Everything from Paul's axe, to his cradle, to his anchor, to his dog, "Sport", can be found in a number of states. Because I could not verify the listings as being

complete (as I could with the statues), all such items were excluded from mapping. On a very similar note, large signage of Paul was also excluded.



**Figure 3.15:** Paul Bunyan's axe as it was found along the highway in Iron Bridge, Ontario.

Finally, there do exist a small number of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox references north of the border in Canada. A handful of businesses along with three statues<sup>2</sup> exist north of the border. Although several hours were spent searching for Canadian references, it is very possible that much remains to be discovered. A personal trip to northern Ontario during the summer of 2005 revealed a new location for Paul and Babe in Blind River, Ontario, not mentioned in Large Canadian Roadside Attractions. Also, Paul Bunyan's axe was discovered in Iron Bridge, Ontario (**Figures 3.15**). In my data collection, I was unable to find reference anywhere to this second item. A number of similar examples likely exist in scattered locations across the Great White North.

## *Interviews*

As stated, I have made a number of trips to the Northwoods through the years and it would be easy to draw my own conclusions of the landscape. However, one must be careful not to read too much into the landscape that is created and remember to talk (and *listen*) to locals (Hart 1995). Interviews with locals were essential as my goal was to represent local rather than my personal perceptions of the landscape.

While conducting my interviews, I was careful to consider my position as an outsider and as someone conducting research (Pini 2004). As noted, I do have strong family ties to the region and could relate to much of the work described based on past work experience. I quickly learned local residents were much more willing to speak with me when I was upfront about being a student (rather than a *graduate* student) and especially when I mentioned that my mother was from the area and that my grandparents, who worked in a number of the logging camps, now live in Deer River, Minnesota, were the catalyst for this study. The latter two items would prove to be valuable introductions (or '*ins*') as I built rapport with residents before discussing local history, festivals, and/or features.

I received IRB approval to conduct open-ended interviews with those who worked within the Northwoods' timber industry during the 1930s, owners of local Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox establishments, as well as festival participants. In all, I conducted open-ended interviews ranging from 30 minutes to 3 hours in length with more than 50 individuals (**Appendix 1**). In most of my interviews, I began the conversation with several standard and follow-up questions and then listen as they explained their relationship to the Northwoods and Paul Bunyan. Many of the interviews led to conversations with other individuals who had worked the woods or were related to those who had. De Wit

(2003, 12) suggests finding a local “gatekeeper,” someone who is well known in the community and can introduce you to a number of people. My grandfather had not only worked in a number of logging camps during the 1930s, he had also run a postal route for a number of years making him an ideal “gatekeeper” to the community. Many of these introductions led to other, more distant contacts, creating a “snowball sampling”, a technique that de Wit (11) describes that “takes advantage of existing friendship, family, and professional networks to find informants”. De Wit (2003) also emphasizes the importance of remaining flexible while conducting open-ended interviews. I often blocked off an entire morning, afternoon, or evening to meet with one or two individuals, not knowing how long each interview would last or where it would lead. Although very time consuming, the open-ended format allowed greater flexibility and depth in my study of the Northwoods.

The interview process would prove essential in my analysis of the Northwoods. Some of my pre-existing perceptions, such as the importance of the region’s logging heritage, were reinforced, while others, such as Paul and Babe symbolically representing something more than the region’s golden age, were dismissed (most commented that Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox were just a fun way of representing the region’s logging era).

### ***Participant Observation***

As noted, I visited several Paul Bunyan related festivals on trips to the Northwoods. Derrett (2003), de Wit (2003), and Donovan and De Bres (2006) emphasize the importance of partaking in such events to more fully relate to the importance of such festivals to the communities being described. I found such occasions a golden

opportunity to celebrate with locals and learn more about the land they call home (as well as have some fun).

<b>FESTIVAL</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
Tall Timber Days (24 <sup>th</sup> )	Grand Rapids, MN	2005
Sweetheart Canoe Derby (9 <sup>th</sup> )	Hackensack, MN	2006
Paul Bunyan Days (58 <sup>th</sup> )	Akeley, MN	2006
Sweetheart Days (54 <sup>th</sup> )	Hackensack, MN	2006
Paul Bunyan Days (59 <sup>th</sup> )	Akeley, MN	2007
Tall Timber Days (26 <sup>th</sup> )	Grand Rapids, MN	2007

**Note:** *Years a given festival has been celebrated are given in parenthesis.*

I attended four festivals: Tall Timber Days (2005, 2007), Sweetheart Canoe Derby (2006), Paul Bunyan Days (2006, 2007), and Sweetheart Days (2006) (Table 3.1). Each festival had its own strengths and played on different community themes. Tall Timber Days (Grand Rapids, Minnesota) was the only one of the four that possessed a strong logging theme. Although much of the festival had a feel of a typical arts and crafts fair, Tall Timber Days did include such events as lumberjack comedy routines and competitions. Paul Bunyan Days (Akeley, Minnesota), while having only two marginally related logging events—a chainsaw carving demonstration and children’s sawdust pit—also had the strongest ties to the community based on the large attendance at all events. Interestingly, although well attended, neither Sweetheart Canoe Derby nor Sweetheart Days (both of Hackensack, Minnesota) held an event even remotely related to logging and yet both embraced a Paul Bunyan related theme (“Sweetheart” being a reference to the town’s giant statue of Lucette Diana Kensack, Paul’s sweetheart).

I also attended a performance at Akeley, Minnesota's Woodtick Theatre (2007) and a ballgame at Brainerd, Minnesota's Mills Field (2007). Both forms of entertainment were relevant to the study. The Woodtick Theatre is a seasonal musical theatre displaying Paul Bunyan's keyboard and drumsticks and Brainerd's baseball team, the *Blue Thunder*, uses a pitching Blue Ox for a mascot. In addition to observing the entertainment, interviews were conducted with the owners of both establishments as well as with fans at the baseball game.

Participant observation has been demonstrated to provide valuable geographic insight into the experiences of visitors at such events (Davis 2001; DeLyser 2001; DeLyser 2003; de Wit 2003; Donovan and DeBres 2006). By observing and participating in such activities, my understanding of *place*, a central geographic theme (Committee on Geographic Education of the National Council for Geographic Education and the Association of American Geographers 1984), was greatly enriched.

### ***Archival Research***

Archival research is another important component in establishing the legitimacy of Paul and Babe as folklore figures for the Northwoods and to determine their origin and spread across the continent. Arreola (1987) determined the Mexican-American cultural capital through a multi-faceted approach by using newspapers, government documents, and other written materials to provide a picture of this cultural capital. DeLyser (2003) delves even further into the archives and adds personal testimonies to describe how the pages of the novel *Ramona* has come to life for visitors in southern California. de Wit (2003) recommends using all of the previously mentioned methods to develop a fuller sense of place.

To begin with, I obtained a number of the early works on Paul Bunyan including Laughead's (1922) *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*, Stewart and Watt's (1916) "Legends of Paul Bunyan, Lumberjack", and Tabor and Thompson's (1946) "Paul Bunyan in 1910". I also reviewed a number of works that detail the spread and development of the Paul Bunyan legend including Dorson (1976), Hoffmann (1999), and Hanft (2004).

Logging museums were visited not only to strengthen my understanding of the golden age of logging, but also to note the representation of Paul and Babe in various displays (Table 3.2). All but three of the logging museums visited had some representation and/or mention of Paul Bunyan. The first exception was a logging museum located on an Indian Reservation in northern Wisconsin. As noted earlier in this chapter, Indian Reservations constitute one of the exceptions to my generalizations of the Northwoods' region, so this was somewhat expected. The second, Blind River, Ontario's Timber Village Museum, displayed statues of Paul and Babe until recently when the statues were moved to a local residence north of town. The third museum, the History Museum of Bay County, focused more on the lumber rather than the logging industry. This was to be expected given the prominence of Bay City and Saginaw as milling areas (Williams 1989).

As noted, I made a point of inquiring in regional forestry and logging centers as well as local museums and visitor centers throughout the Northwoods to add to my understanding of the Paul Bunyan phenomena. Although there exist a number of good exhibits, such as Wisconsin's Empire in Pine Museum, there are four collections that are worth noting based on references to Paul Bunyan: Grand Rapids, Minnesota's Forest



History Center; Eau Claire, Wisconsin’s Paul Bunyan Logging Camp; Ashland, Wisconsin’s Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center; and Akeley, Minnesota’s Paul’s Cabin. A fifth noteworthy collection, the University of Minnesota’s Paul Bunyan Collection of the Children’s Literature Research Collections, is also discussed.

**TABLE 3.2: NORTHWOODS’ MUSEUMS INVESTIGATED 2005-2007**

<b>LOGGING &amp; LUMBER MUSEUMS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
Tahquamenon Logging Museum*	Newberry, MI	2005
Forest History Center*	Grand Rapids, MN	2005
Timber Village Museum	Blind River, ONT	2005
Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center*	Ashland, WI	2005
Empire in Pine Lumber Museum*	Downsville, WI	2005
Paul Bunyan Logging Camp*	Eau Claire, WI	2005
Menominee Logging Camp	Keshena, WI	2005
Rhineland Logging Museum*	Rhineland, WI	2005
Paul Bunyan Museum *	Akeley, MN	2006
Paul’s Cabin*	Akeley, MN	2006
Forest History Center*	Grand Rapids, MN	2006
History Museum of Bay County	Bay City, MI	2007
<b>COMMUNITY MUSEUMS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
Lake of the Woods Museum	Kenora, ONT	2006
Crow Wing County Historical Society*	Brainerd, MN	2007
Beltrami County History Center*	Bemidji, MN	2007
Pioneer Museum*	Iroquois Falls, ONT	2007
Heritage North Bay	North Bay, ONT	2007
Owen Sound Marine and Rail Museum	Owen Sound, ONT	2007
Dynamic Earth	Sudbury, ONT	2007
<b>OTHER COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
Paul Bunyan Special Collection of the Children’s Literature Research Collection	Minneapolis, MN <i>(University of Minnesota)</i>	2006

*Museums identified with a “ \* “ reference Paul Bunyan with texts, images, or objects.*

*Museums listed as “Logging & Lumber” either focus solely on the logging or lumber industries or contain significant displays devoted to one or both of the industries.*

I have visited the Forest History Center several times in my life. The two most recent visits were made while conducting my research on Paul Bunyan. During my 2005 visit, I spent time studying the Paul Bunyan exhibit that is as much a children's area as it is a source of information on Paul Bunyan folklore. The most recent visit (2006) helped fill in gaps in my understanding of the logging industry and was made during a blacksmith demonstration. On this most recent trip, I was able to discuss a number of details of the logging camp operations while viewing displays inside the center which furthered my understanding of the original folktales (many containing jargon used by the lumberjacks).

The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center was similar to the Forest History Center in that the displays presented both history and folklore. Of special note was a display that outlines the evolving role of forests in popular European and American thought. Beginning with stories that describe forests as a forbidden, dark wood, the timeline progresses to include views of the forest as a potential resource to one of recreation. As may be expected, Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox were prominently displayed in this exhibit.

Eau Claire's Paul Bunyan Logging Camp and Akeley's Paul's Cabin were unique in that they focused on Paul Bunyan rather than the logging industry. Paul Bunyan Logging Camp passes along the folklore of Paul and Babe to future generations through a variety of clever interactive displays (**Figure 3.16**) while Paul's Cabin was of special note as it was the personal collection of Nels Carter of Akeley.



**Figure 3.16:** An employee demonstrates how cooks and cookees greased the frying pan at Paul's logging camp. Based on an early folktale, the interactive display helps pass along the folklore of Paul and Babe to future generations at Eau Claire, Wisconsin's Paul Bunyan Logging Camp. (Photo by author)

The largest single collection of Paul Bunyan memorabilia and works exists on the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities Campus. The university's library is home to the Paul Bunyan Collection of the Children's Literature Research Collections, which contained a number of rare and hard to find articles and memorabilia. I spent several days pouring over the collection during a 2006 summer visit and was able to gain valuable insight into the nature of the tales as they first began to become popularized, such as *who* was writing the stories (popular authors and poets, trade (lumber) magazines, forestry programs, etc.), *where* they were being published (although nationwide, the majority came from areas adjacent to the Northwoods), and *how* the larger general public began to embrace Paul as their own (such as with products using Paul Bunyan's name or image).

## **Final Thoughts**

The parameters of my study area have been defined and a case made for the popularity of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox landscape features within the Northwoods region by working with technology that was unavailable to Reed (1976) and Zelinsky (1980). The stage has been set for a discussion of the Northwoods' era of restoration with the qualitative methods outlined in the last section providing the evidence needed to make such a case.

## CHAPTER 4: LORE OF THE NORTHWOODS

*“WHAT! You never heard of the Round River drive? Don’t suppose you ever read about Paul Bunyan neither? And you call yourselves lumberjacks?” (James MacGillivray 1910 in Felton 1947, 335)*

The Northwoods of the Upper Great Lakes experienced a time of economic and cultural growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that largely centered on the logging industry. This era would have a profound impact on the landscape as logging camps and a number of sawmill towns spread across the region, many of which evolved into larger towns and cities. Lewis (1979, 23) notes most major cultural change of this nature “does not occur gradually, but instead in great sudden leaps”. The region’s transformation was so dramatic that it became known as *The Cutover*, “a name that suggests human hardship, the result of abusing the land” (Hudson 1984, 19).

Nationally, the impact was significant as well (**Table 4.1**). Northwoods’ lumber would be used to build rail lines in the Dakotas and Yellowstone region as well as for wagons, barrels, furniture, and freight cars—all of which would assist a growing European based population pushing further into the frontier. Cities, including Minneapolis, St. Paul, Des Moines, Kansas City, Topeka, and Omaha, were all largely built with wood coming from Minnesota’s northern expanses (Blegen 1975). The industry employed thousands while transforming the region and nation (Nesbit 1973; Blegen 1975; Radforth 1987; Karamanski 1989; Williams 1989).

**Following Page: Table 4.1:** Table 4.1 displays the manufacturing value of various industries 1850-1920. The Northwoods’ golden age of logging largely corresponds to the years given with the industry having largely moved westward across the continent by 1920. (Table 1.1 from Williams 1987, 6).

Table 1.1. *Manufacturing by major industry, 1850-1920: industries ranked according to percentage of total value of manufacturing*

Rank	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920
1	Flour & grist (14%)	Flour & grist (13.3%)	Flour & grist (10.0%)	Flour & grist (10.3%)	Flour & grist (6.2%)	Slaughter & meat pack (6.2%)	Slaughter & meat pack (6.6%)	Slaughter & meat pack (6.8%)
2	LUMBER (5.9%)	Cotton goods (5.9%)	LUMBER (5.6%)	Slaughter & meat pack (5.6%)	Slaughter & meat pack (4.6%)	Slaughter & meat pack (6.1%)	Foundry & mach. (5.9%)	Iron & steel (4.5%)
3	Cotton goods (4.3%)	LUMBER (4.3%)	Iron & steel (4.2%)	Iron & steel (5.3%)	Iron & steel (4.5%)	Foundry & mach. (4.4%)	LUMBER (4.8%)	Automobiles (3.8%)
4	Clothing (4.3%)	Leather goods (4.3%)	Clothing (4.3%)	Foundry & mach. (5.0%)	Foundry & mach. (4.4%)	LUMBER (4.4%)	Iron & steel (4.3%)	Foundry & mach. (3.1%)
5	Woolen goods (4.4%)	Woolen goods (4.4%)	Boots & shoes (4.0%)	Foundry & mach. (4.3%)	LUMBER (4.3%)	Flour & grist (4.3%)	Flour & grist (4.3%)	Cotton goods (3.4%)
6	Leather (2.3%)	Liquor (2.3%)	Woolen goods (2.7%)	Cotton goods (3.7%)	Clothing (3.9%)	Clothing (men's) (3.2%)	Printing & publ. (3.6%)	Flour & grist (3.3%)
7	Liquor (1.0%)	Slaughter & meat pack (1.0%)	Woolen goods (1.6%)	Clothing (men's) (3.6%)	Clothing (3.0%)	Printing & publ. (2.7%)	Cotton goods (3.0%)	Petroleum (2.6%)
8	Slaughter & meat pack (0.8%)	Agric. impl. (0.8%)	Carpentering (0.8%)	Boots & shoes (3.7%)	Carpentering (2.8%)	Cotton goods (2.6%)	Clothing (men's) (2.7%)	Shipbuilding (2.3%)
9	Agric. impl. (0.3%)	Paper & pulp (0.3%)	Foundry & mach. (1.1%)	Woolen goods (3.0%)	Boots & shoes (2.3%)	Carpentering (2.4%)	Boots & shoes (2.4%)	LUMBER (2.2%)
10	Paper & pulp (0.3%)	Paper & pulp (0.3%)	Sugar & molasses (2.6%)	Sugar & molasses (2.6%)	Lumber (planing, sashes, doors) (2.0%)	Woolen goods (2.3%)	Woolen goods (2.1%)	Railroad cars (2.1%)
Total value, all manuf. (\$ billion)	101	182	423	536	937	1301	2067	6241

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Manufactures, 1850-1920*.

Eventually, this golden age would come to an end in the early 1900s. The industry exhausted most of the resource, and lumber companies found new sources of wood to utilize in the Pacific Northwest. Around this time, a somewhat obscure folklore character known in a handful of the camps was introduced to a larger audience via newspapers and advertisements. Although these references to Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox were largely unnoticed in the beginning, they would eventually help define a region and an age of logging.

The chapter examines the historical geography of Paul Bunyan and his blue ox and is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the origins and authenticity of the lumberjacks' folklore. The second section focuses on the popularization, spread, and metamorphism of Paul Bunyan. Collectively, this chapter provides the background for an analysis of Paul Bunyan's role in the Northwoods' cultural landscape today.

## **Paul Bunyan: Historical Geography**

### ***Early Tales***

Like many professions, lumberjacks had their own versions of *folktales* (oral literature) (Brunvand 1978) that celebrated and preserved their way of life. Numerous examples of stories, poems, and song come out of the logging camps, but the most famous are the tales of Paul Bunyan. The stories, as Gier (2005) notes, have evolved over the years. The earliest tales of Paul Bunyan have more in common with a less than perfect lumberjack who creates havoc and problems along the way than they do with the more common image of Paul Bunyan that James Stevens (1925; 1932) and others helped create. In other words, the Paul Bunyan found in the logging folklore differed little from the common 19<sup>th</sup> century lumberjack.

Stewart and Watt (1916, 639) noted, “some of these (Paul Bunyan) stories, as must be expected of any such series, are too coarse for publication”. The following is an excerpt from Malloch’s version of “The Round River Drive” that first appeared in an April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1914, edition of *The American Lumberman* and depicts Paul as a heavy-drinking brawler:

“...you have heard of Paul? He was the king pin of ‘em all,  
The greatest logger in the land;  
He had a punch in either hand  
And licked more men and drove more miles  
And got more drunk in more new styles  
Than any other peavey prince  
Before, or then, or ever since.” (Felton 1947, 342)

In a rare, early tale, Paul is depicted as being cunning, which clashes with his good-natured demeanor common in the more popular versions:

“Discovering in the spring that he had no money on hand, Bunyan suddenly rushed into camp shouting that they had been cutting government pine and were all to be arrested. Each man thereupon seized what camp property lay nearest at hand and made off, no two men taking the same direction. Thus Bunyan cleared the camp without paying his men a cent for their labor.” (Hoffmann 1999, 45)

Finally, *The Round River Drive* was one of the more popular tales told in the camps and portrays Paul as a somewhat confused crew boss:

“With the spring came the White Water so swift that the Riverpigs didn’t dare take a drink from the river for fear it would tear their heads off. The Jam broke with a mighty roar, and Paul Bunyan started the Drive. After about three weeks he passed a camp on the right bank of the river which looked very familiar. But he was going so fast that he didn’t stop to see who was logging on his Claim. In about three weeks more he saw another camp on the right bank. That time he jumped ashore to see about it, and found that he had passed his own camp twice. You see that stream was the Round River and it just ran around and around in a circle. Then Paul saw how important it is to know Geography.” (Turney 1941)



### *Who was Paul?*

In these early tales, Paul was far from perfect as he drank, fought, cheated his men out of pay, and lost his way. Additionally, Paul did not exist as a giant of the woods (Hoffmann 1999; Hutchinson 1963) (even if he was “seven feet tall and with a stride of seven feet” (Stewart and Watt 1916, 642)), but the Blue Ox did:

*“Paul B Driving a large Bunch of logs Down the Wisconsin River When the logs Suddenly Jamed. in the Dells. The logs were piled Two Hundred feet high at the head, And were backed up for One mile up the river. Paul was at the rear of the Jam with the Blue Oxen And while he was coming to the front the Crew was trying to break the Jam but they couldent Budge it. When Paul Arrived at the Head with the ox he told them to Stand Back. He put the Ox in the old Wisc. in front of the Jam. And then Standing on the Bank Shot the Ox with a 303 Savage Rifle. The Ox thought it was flies And began to Switch his Tail. The tail commenced to go around in a circle And up Stream And do you know That Ox Switching his tail forced that Stream to flow Backwards And Eventually the Jam floated back Also. He took the ox out of the Stream. And let the Stream And logs go on their way.” (Stewart and Watt 1916, 644)*

Tabor (Tabor and Thompson 1946, 135) recalls hearing this description of the Blue Ox in 1910 while working in one of Oregon’s logging camps:

*“...when Paul decided to either move camp or haul big timber (trees 300 feet long), he would hitch the blue ox’s tugs, which were elastic, to the camp or timber and then would get Babe (the blue ox) to take three or four steps forward, each step being about 20 rods, and he would stand still, with his breast and yoke forward, his feet planted in the ground, and he would wait a second or two until the elasticity in the tugs pulled the camp or the timber up to him and then he would repeat this performance until the camp was moved.”<sup>1</sup>*

The question remains: *was there a real-life “Paul Bunyan”?* Four theories have been proposed for the origins of Paul Bunyan some of which revolve around individuals: “Paul Bunyon”, “Tit Jean”, “Fabian Joseph Fournier”, and what many, for lack of a better term, would refer to as the “deacon seat”<sup>2</sup>. Most of the individuals who have been identified as being the “real life” Paul Bunyan were known for their strength, much like

Otto Walta. Paul *Bunyon* was, according to Stevens (1925), a heroic axe-wielding figure in the 1837 Papineau Rebellion. The problem is Bunyon never existed according to Hoffmann (1999) and Max Gartenberg (1949)<sup>3</sup> who both corresponded with M. Luc Lacourcière, Directeur des Archives de Folklore, at Université Laval, Quebec. The source of the story was Z. Berneche who claimed in an interview with Stevens (1925) that his grandfather had fought alongside “ol’ Paul”. Many of the early stories begin with a quip as to how the storyteller had either worked with Paul or had a relative that had done so some years ago. This was done to lure an unsuspecting listener into believing the story had really taken place (Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). Reading the account that Stevens gives in his introduction, I found it quite obvious that Mr. Berneche had found an open ear for another one of Paul’s tales.

As noted, Gartenberg (1949) was quick to dismiss the “Bunyon” claim based upon his own archival research in Quebec, but he does accept Stevens’ (1925; 1932) claim that Paul was of French-Canadian origins. He proposes that Paul Bunyan is based on the stories of “Tit Jean” who was also known as “Bon Jean” (phonetically “Bunyan”). Hoffmann (1999) largely dismisses the connection based on a comparison of the storylines, but says nothing of the possible link to French-Canada. Many have stated that the stories were often told with Paul speaking with a French accent (Gartenberg 1949; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). When it came to drawing Paul, Laughead used as a model a French cook he had known in the woods (Hutchinson 1963). The phonetic link is credible and could be the source for the name even if the story lines remain significantly different.

A second real-life source for the Paul Bunyan folklore is found in Fabian “Joe” Fournier. Unlike Stevens’ 1925 “discovery”, Fournier did exist. Fournier emigrated from Quebec to Michigan in the late 1800s to work in the logging camps. D. Laurence Rogers (1993), a local Michigan reporter, picks up the trail of research explaining how Fournier’s story merged with those of Joe Le Mufraw and the folklore of Bon Jean from 1875-1906 creating a real life source for Paul Bunyan folklore. Rogers explains how Fournier with his large build, rare double-set of teeth, and reputation for fighting become part of local lore when he was murdered near Bay City’s infamous “Hell’s Half Mile”—an area of ill repute. However, I largely agree with professor of English Elon Kulii’s (1995, 111-112) assessment that Rogers “does succeed in giving us true pictures of the lumberjack profession, but he does not prove his main hypothesis (proving the stories of Paul Bunyan were rooted in those of Fabian ‘Joe’ Fournier)”. Furthermore, Fournier was not by any means the only lumberjack with such a reputation. Michael Karni’s (1967) account of the life and lore of Otto Walta is one such example. Additionally, I find Rogers’ argument incredibly unlikely given the geographic distribution and numerous tales of Paul Bunyan that come from this era (Stewart and Watt 1916; Tabor and Thompson 1946; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999), the length of time needed for a true oral tradition to begin (Dorson 1976; Brunvand 1979; Hoffmann 1999), and Laughead’s assessment that most of the early stories centered around the idea of Paul being *skilled* rather than having super-human strength (Hutchinson 1963). Laughead makes a strong argument for Paul using his wits instead of brute strength:

“He [Paul Bunyan] had the characteristics of a logger, and you read so many writers telling about brute strength. They didn’t work with brute strength; they worked with skill. I don’t care what kind of a job it was, a man had to know how to do it....Even if your logs are small, how much

brute strength would it take to lift a log up and put it on a sled? The chief characteristic of Paul to me was his inventiveness as a pioneer...in the old days you didn't have any machinery servicemen you could send for. If anything broke, you fixed it right now yourself...and you had to be able to think. I think this magnifying Paul into a giant as done by so many writers that never had been in the woods was maybe due to the fact that they figured that all this accomplishment was done merely by brute strength. So in order to do a bigger job, he had to be a bigger man. But somehow or other, I never conceived of a huge giant who could move oceans or mountains around. He was probably a pretty big man, but nevertheless he was a logger'" (Hutchinson 1963, 13).

The most plausible Paul Bunyan theory is that he is simply a product of the woods. There may be strains of other folklore mixed in with a heavy dose of French-Canadian flavor, such as with the name "Bunyan", but it seems unlikely that any single historical figure would have been the genesis of the stories about the legend of the woods (Hutchinson 1963; Dorson 1976; Hoffmann 1999).

### *Authenticity*

The original tales often used lumberjack jargon (such as "*peavey prince*"—a lumberjack skilled in using a peavey<sup>4</sup>—in Malloch's tale or "*Riverpigs*"—a river driver—in Turney's) and were not nearly as popular with the lumberjacks as most people are led to believe. When asked about Paul Bunyan tales, Roy and Gladys Snyder (2004), who were married in 1937, have no recollection of any of the men telling such tales in the camps they worked between Grand Rapids and Bemidji, Minnesota. This is a curious note, as 1937 is the same year that the famous Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox statues were erected in Bemidji symbolizing the importance of the folklore to the lumberjacks. In fact, in my interviews of men and women who had worked in the camps and lumber industry of northern Minnesota during the 1920s and 1930s, only Ed Erickson (2007) and Bob Schaar (2005) had any memory of hearing reference to Paul Bunyan (**Figure 4.1**).

Although Erickson's versions resemble the more popularized versions with Paul as a giant transforming the land, Schaar remembers hearing Paul Bunyan referenced in passing, much like the original tales, rather than in long narrative form, which is more common in the literature (Laughead 1922; Felton quoting Stevens 1947; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). Even so, Schaar was unable to state with any certainty whether he heard the tales prior to mass publication.



**Figure 4.1:** Picture of Bob Schaar holding his trusty scaler stamp. In nearly two dozen interviews of those who had a tie to the logging era in Minnesota (1920s and 1930s), Schaar (2005) would prove to be the only resident of the Northwoods who had heard a Paul Bunyan reference (in a more traditional form) in the woods prior to the mass popularization of the folklore. (Photo by author)

One of the first to question Paul's role in the logging camps was Carleton Ames (1940). Ames' grandfather had worked in a number of the logging camps in Minnesota and did not recall ever hearing a Paul Bunyan tale (Dorson 1976; Hoffmann 1999).

Ames maintained that Paul Bunyan was nothing short of a creative publisher's fantasy. His article, "Paul Bunyan, Myth or Hoax?", created an avalanche of responses. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* cried "The debunking of Paul Bunyan is simply too painful to be true" reflecting the region's strong attachment to the folklore (Dorson 1976, 331). The

*Bemidji Daily Pioneer* (13 April 1940) ran its own critique of Ames on the editors' page in an article titled "Yes, Carleton, there is a Paul Bunyan" representing how residents of the Northwoods had already adopted Paul and Babe as their own:

"We admit that no person may have seen Paul roll his cigars from patent tar roofing, but who has ever seen the robust Santa Claus descend through a twelve-inch chimney?"

Yes, Carleton, there is a Paul Bunyan and no amount of scoffing will ever convince the residents of logging countries that there is not. The books dealing with prowess have been among the best sellers. His statue here in Bemidji is the most photographed scene in northern Minnesota. His name will always be used as indicative of outstanding achievement in the great outdoors...

It is too bad that there is always someone who tries to debunk history, always someone who wants to take the romance out of the tales we love to tell about our great figures of history.

We are very much afraid we will have to relegate Mr. Ames...to the muckrakers who can find nothing but dirt in the lives of our past presidents.

Paul Bunyan is going to live in the memories of those who have delighted in his adventures and we hope that Bemidji will always keep him prominently in the minds of those who visit our city."

(Dorson 1976, 331-332)

The harshest criticism came from Laughead himself who warned "it was a good thing for our literature that Grandpa Ames had never found anybody that had never heard of Shakespeare" (Hutchinson 1963, 14-15).

Ames may have been the first notable critic, but he would not be the last. The most famous attack on the very nature of Paul Bunyan came from Richard Dorson (1976), a professor of history and folklore, who coined the term *fakelore*—"a synthetic product claiming to be authentic oral tradition but actually tailored for mass edification" (Brunvand 1979, 2)—to describe the popularization of Paul Bunyan tales. However, even Dorson acknowledges that although the folklore was not as popular as the public was led to believe, tales of Paul and the Blue Ox did exist in the camps. Edith Fowke

(1979), a Canadian professor of folklore and folk music, was quick to point this out in her article “In Defense of Paul Bunyan.”

### *Early Sources*

Much has been debated in terms of the popularity of Paul Bunyan prior to the publication of his exploits. Like Hoffmann (1999), Dorson (1976), and Hutchinson (1963), I too question the popularity of the stories in the logging camps. What I do not question is that the stories do have a legitimate source in the woods.

Bernice Stewart and Homer Watt (1916) are credited with the first academic work on Paul Bunyan. Their early work is an invaluable collection of tales as told by the lumberjacks of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The work is especially valuable in that it is the only such published work that predates the mass dissemination of the folklore that took place with Laughead’s 1922 publication.

A second source is Edward Tabor and professor of English Stith Thompson’s (1946) “Paul Bunyan in 1910”. Tabor and Thompson had spent the summer of that year in an Oregon logging camp and remember hearing a number of the tales of Paul and his big blue ox. The article is unique in that it contains an entry from Tabor’s diary from 1910 that speaks of the Paul Bunyan stories.

Hoffmann (1999) himself cites several sources of early Paul Bunyan tales including stories from Michigan lumberjack Perry Allen and professor of folklore, Halpert Herbert. Allen, who was recorded during the 1930s, had personal experience in the logging camps and claims to have heard the stories there first and would later develop a reputation for his colorful Paul Bunyan renditions. Herbert recorded the tales of six

former lumberjacks from New York and western Pennsylvania during the 1940s. The stories in this unpublished document were reportedly told in the camps between 1895 and 1907. He also collected a handful of stories from lumberjacks in Alberta while serving there during World War II which suggests their appeal on the Canadian side of the border as well.

Finally, in an interview with W. H. Hutchinson (1963), W. B. Laughead shares his memories of hearing Paul Bunyan tales in the woods. Laughead may be the most important link with the past and present and this interview sheds much light on the history of the woods' folklore and how his stories differ from what was told in the camps.

Regardless of the scarcity of individuals who recall hearing a Paul Bunyan reference in the woods, there is ample evidence the folklore of Paul and the Blue Ox was known in a number of the logging camps on both sides of the US-Canada border before the stories were printed (Stewart and Watt 1916; Gartenberg 1949; Fowke 1976; Fowke 1979; Hoffmann 1999). If the stories are authentic lumberjack folklore, *where did the stories originate, how did they become popular with the larger North American public, and why are they most often associated with the Northwoods?* These questions are important to address if one is to understand the role the folklore characters play in the present. The answers provide evidence of the legitimacy, or lack there of, the Northwoods has in using them as regional icons.

### ***Geographical Setting***

We will never be able to state precisely where and when the folktales originated. Regarding the settings of the tales, Stewart and Watt (1916, 642) commented “often the scene of the exploits narrated is quite fictitious, like the Round River, which is in section



thirty-seven, or the Big Onion River, three weeks this side of Quebec”. The tales often cite Paul as coming from Maine (Figure 4.2) or having worked in the Northwoods, but offer little else in the way of geographic identification other than the weather conditions, such as in the “Winter of the Blue Snow” (Laughead 1922). The following tale is an example of a lumberjack describing how cold it got in Paul’s camp:

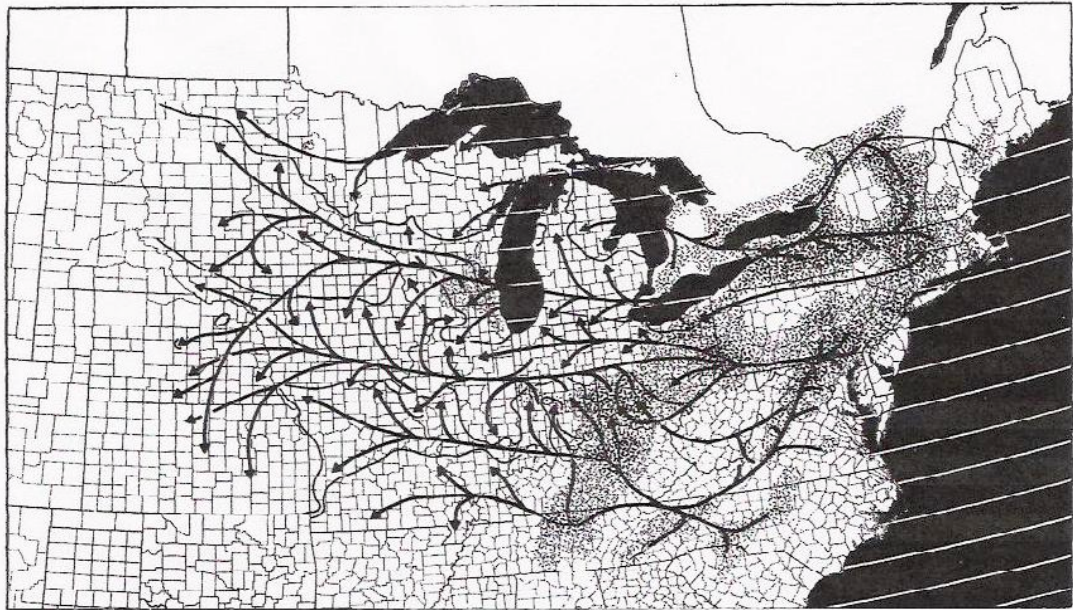
*“Well, uh, this most particular winter...we was lumberin’ here up on the Manassee, sixty-eight below zero and each degree was sixteen inches long, froze all the blazes in Paul’s lanterns. We couldn’t blow ‘em out so we hauled ‘em off and towed ‘em outdoors. In spring when it thawed up, they set the whole north of Michigan afire and burned the Saint Marie’s river in two!” (Hoffmann 1999, 54)*



**Figure 4.2:** Paul Bunyan statue in Bangor, Maine. The city is often cited as being the birthplace of Paul Bunyan in the folktales. (Photo from City of Bangor)

Although the folklore itself does not identify a specific geographic location, the recording of stories in the camps does offer some clues as to their origins. For example, Paul Bunyan is most often credited as having come from the Northeast (specifically, Maine) and often spoke French or with a heavy French-Canadian accent (Laughead 1922; Gartenberg 1949; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). We also know that the stories

were geographically dispersed by the early 1900s (prior to publication) with lumberjacks sharing the tales from New York to Oregon in the United States and New Brunswick to British Columbia in Canada (Stewart and Watt 1916; Tabor and Thompson 1946; Gartenberg 1949; Dorson 1976; Fowke 1976; Fowke 1979; Hoffmann 1999).



**Map 4.1:** Migration patterns across the north-eastern quarter of the United States during the late 1800s. Many of the lumberjacks who worked the Northwoods' logging camps followed similar paths. (Map from Hudson 1988)

Hudson (1988) and Williams (1989) both suggest that the overwhelming migration pattern for the men and women working the camps was from east to west (Map 4.1). As noted, a number of lumberjacks recall hearing the tales in the camps during the late 1800s and early 1900s from New Brunswick and New York to the Pacific West Coast (Stewart and Watt 1916; Tabor and Thompson 1946; Gartenberg 1949; Dorson 1976; Fowke 1976; Fowke 1979; Hoffmann 1999). Dorson (1976), Brunvand (1979) and Hoffmann (1999) explains oral tradition of this nature needs a number of years to develop which, based on the widespread geographical distribution of the folklore across North

America, would suggest the stories originating in the early 1800s—a time when much of the logging was centered in Maine and French Canada.

As noted, Bangor, Maine, had been the logging capital of the United States for the first half of the nineteenth century and much of the capital and many of the lumberjacks came from the East. Professor Herbert’s interviews with lumberjacks who had worked during the late 1800s and early 1900s in New York and Pennsylvania (Hoffmann 1999) and Fowke’s (1979) interview of E.A. Corbett, longtime head of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, who recalled hearing the tales in New Brunswick in the early 1900s, may provide vital links between the stories and a New England or French Canadian origin<sup>5</sup>.

### *French-Canadian Characteristics*



**Figure 4.3:** Charles Ryan holds a photograph of his grandfather, Pete Dick, who Laughead used for the general expression of Paul Bunyan (Hutchinson 1963). Although Pete Dick passed away when he was very young, Charles Ryan remembers meeting his grandfather on several occasions. “I remember stories being told when I was younger, but I didn’t realize the significance at the time” (Ryan 2007). (Photo by author).

Westward migration of the logging industry could explain the references of Paul coming from Maine, but would not necessarily explain his French accent (or use of

French). In Stevens's account of *The Winter of the Blue Snow*, Paul Bunyan speaks French upon stumbling across the Blue Ox for the first time: "'*Nom d'un nom!*'" exclaimed Paul Bunyan. '*Pauvre petite bleue bête!*'" (Stevens 1925, 21). Although not recorded in the logging camps, Stevens's account emphasizes the French-Canadian manner in which many of the tales were told (Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). Laughead thought the stories may have a French-Canadian origin as well. When he needed inspiration for a caricature, Laughead turned to familiar faces (Figures 4.3 & 4.4):

"The general expression of it was a memory of the face of a logging contractor in Minnesota, Pete Dick, one of the greatest fellows that ever lived. The moustache that stuck out sideways—I knew a loud-mouthed French cook in the camps by the name of Charlie Revoir and he had a moustache like that and I kind of stuck the two together." (Hutchinson quoting Laughead 1963, 5-6)



**Figure 4.4:** Hutchinson (1963, 6) noted that Laughead "clothed Paul in a blanket-coat, belted with a sash in the habitant fashion". (Picture from Laughead 1922)



Laughead later added:

“I’ve always had a hunch there was some Canadian source to it [Bunyan]. The oral gags had a flavor, a kind of habitant flavor to them, that without any direct evidence I thought they did come from Canada. They always had some of the Canadian’s way of telling things” (Hutchinson quoting Laughead 1963, 6).

As noted, both Gartenberg (1949) and Hoffmann (1999) suggest the name “Bunyan” may be an Anglo play on the name “Bon Jean”. This phonetic similarity with existing French-Canadian folklore coupled with the numerous references to Paul speaking French or with a French accent (Laughead 1922; Gartenberg 1949; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999), may suggest a French Canadian rather than Down Easter origin<sup>6</sup>.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Turney had originally believed there to be a Maine origin to the stories, but was unable to find anyone from Maine who knew of the tales (Gartenberg 1949)<sup>8</sup>.

Both Quebec and New Brunswick have an important logging heritage that dates back to the early 1800s (Radforth 1987), which is essential in qualifying as a potential source of the stories. Fowke’s (1979) conversation with E.A. Corbett stands out as evidence of the stories having existed in this corner of North America at an early date. By the time the logging industry had reached the Northwoods, “great numbers of both Canadians and Americans crossed each others’ borders” (Gartenberg 1949, 417). The stories could have crossed the border into Upstate New York and later spilled into Pennsylvania a few years prior to reaching the Northwoods, but it is difficult to say.

Hoffmann (1999) argues for an American origin (likely Maine) emphasizing the “humor, characterization, rhetoric, and content of the Bunyan tales” stating this is “directly descended from the older American lore of Fink, Crockett, and other heroes of our earlier frontier” (99). I lean towards a French-Canadian origin by focusing on the

manner that the tales were told as emphasized by Laughead (who had first hand experience in the woods) (Hutchinson 1963), and Gartenberg (1949), and the geographical evidence provided by Fowke (1979). However, a French Canada origin is purely speculation, as is Hoffmann's American origin, as we will never know with absolute certainty the precise location of the first Paul Bunyan tale.

## **Paul Bunyan: Diffusion**

### *Northwoods' Connection*

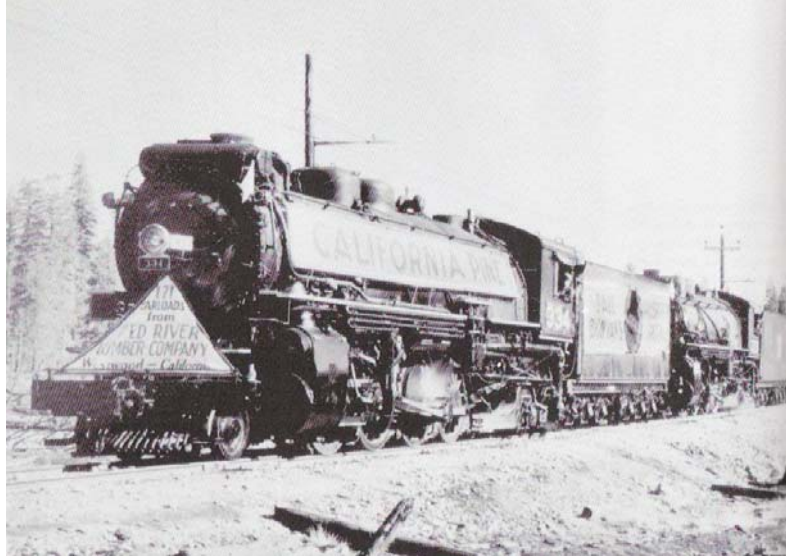
Regardless of their origin, the tales were told and recorded in many of the Northwoods' logging camps prior to popularization (Stewart and Watt 1916; Gartenberg 1949; Dorson 1951; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). Additionally, the Northwoods are home to the oldest known publications of Paul Bunyan stories (MacGillivray 1906; 1910), and, more importantly, a lumber company that would be largely responsible for transforming Paul Bunyan from a little known folk character of the lumberjacks into the best-known figure in North American folklore (Hoffmann 1999).

How the tales became popularized is a story in itself. W. B. Laughead worked as an advertiser for the Red River Lumber Company in the early 1900s and had first heard the tales of Paul and the Blue Ox when passing through some of the camps of northern Minnesota. Laughead thought the tales might be an interesting way of promoting the company's product as it began its move from Akeley, Minnesota, to Westwood, California (Hutchinson 1963) (**Figure 4.5**).



**Figure 4.5:** W.B. Laughead (1882-1958) worked for the Red River Lumber Company and had first heard Paul Bunyan tales in the logging camps of northern Minnesota. Between 1914 and 1944, the company would give away more than 100,000 pamphlets promoting the quality of the company's lumber and stories of Paul and Babe. Laughead would be largely responsible for transforming Paul Bunyan from a little known folktale of the lumberjacks into the most popular North American folklore (Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). (Picture from Hutchinson 1963)

The Red River Lumber Company's first two versions of Paul Bunyan collections were not successful by any stretch of the imagination, but a third edition would exceed all expectations. Demand for pamphlets quickly grew as parents requested them for their children and teachers for their students. The lumber itself would also help raise Paul Bunyan to a new status. The Red River Lumber Company used Paul's image as part of an ad campaign as their trains moved from the Westwood plant across the nation (**Figure 4.6**). The company ran ads in local newspapers (often with a short Paul Bunyan story) as a means of drawing attention to their product and in the process introduced Paul Bunyan to a much larger, more widespread audience. Because of the company's success in promoting the name Paul Bunyan, many customers half expected to deal with Paul when they did business with the Red River Lumber Company (Hutchinson 1963; Hanft 2004).



**Figure 4.6:** The Red River Lumber Company’s marketing helped bring Paul Bunyan to a larger North American audience. The train pictured above has a large Paul Bunyan image advertising “Paul Bunyan’s Pine”. The connection between Red River and Paul Bunyan was so strong that many customers half-expected to meet someone named “Paul Bunyan” when they did business with the company (Hutchinson 1963). (Picture from Hanft 1922)

The company chose not to copyright Paul Bunyan’s name or image and instead believed that any retelling of the stories would help promote the company (Hutchinson 1963). The decision allowed the general public to adopt Paul Bunyan’s name and image from the lumber company at will.

### *Popularization of Paul Bunyan*

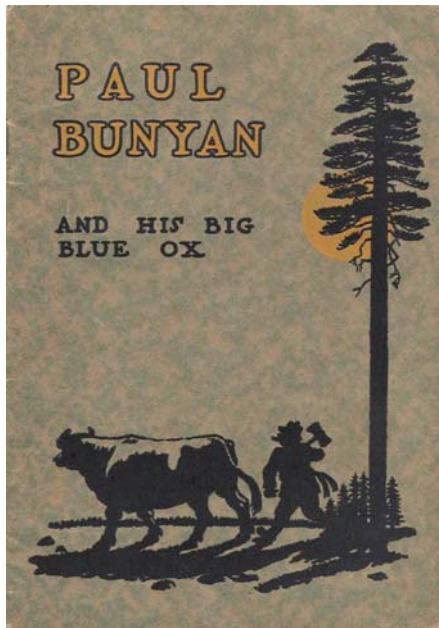
With the early-published works on Paul and Babe created by a numerous individuals, there are six essential authors of the Paul Bunyan cycle as identified by Daniel Hoffman (1999), professor of folklore, and Justin Schiller<sup>1</sup> (1998), member of the Bibliographical Society of America: James MacGillivray (1906; 1910), W.B. Laughead (1914; 1916; 1922), Esther Shephard (1924), James Stevens (1925; 1932), Ida Virginia Turney (1928), and Harold Felton (1947). Paul and the Blue Ox depictions in the early stories are important to laying the groundwork for how the stories<sup>2</sup> and the landscape have evolved through the years and how we relate the present landscape to the golden age



of logging. Also, an understanding of how these stories introduced Paul to a larger audience is important to understanding their popular appeal throughout the United States and Canada.

James MacGillivray (1906) holds the title of the earliest (known) author of a Paul Bunyan story. His<sup>3</sup> August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1906, account of the “Round River” in *The Oscoda Press* is the oldest known printed story of Paul Bunyan<sup>4</sup>. A second printing (1910) of “The Round River Drive” in the *Detroit News* was more readily recognized by the general public, but remained largely unknown outside of the local area (Hoffmann 1999).

W. B. Laughead may not have been the first, but he is widely credited with being the spark for the popularization of Paul Bunyan. As stated earlier, the company’s 1914 and 1916 editions were not overly successful. However, the 1922 edition of Paul Bunyan tales set off an explosion of works (Felton 1947; Hutchinson 1963; Dorson 1976; Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999) (**Figure 4.7**). According to Schiller (1998, 34), “Within fifteen years of his first appearance in print, Paul Bunyan grew from a vocational folk hero into a national legend, a transformation due, in large part, to Minnesota advertising man W.B. Laughead”. Laughead is not only credited with being behind the popularization of the tales, he is also credited with naming Paul’s blue ox “Babe”, providing an image of Paul Bunyan (first published image of Paul Bunyan), and creating a host of other characters that have since stuck with the stories (Hutchinson 1963).



**Figure 4.7:** *The Marvelous Exploits of Paul Bunyan*. Laughead's 1922 pamphlet for the Red River Lumber Company (cover shown here) is largely responsible for transforming Paul Bunyan into the most popular hero of North American folklore (Hoffmann 1999).

Esther Shephard (1924) is cited by many as having an important role in publishing many of the tales in “readable” form. She is often criticized for her attempts to widen the Paul Bunyan audience by changing the vocabulary and modifying the storyline to reach a larger population not familiar with the logging industry. However, many (if not all) of her stories came from lumberjacks who had heard the stories in the woods (Hutchinson 1963; Dorson 1976) and became popular versions not only with the general public, but with other authors and are thus important to note because of her influence in the modern stories development (Dorson 1976; Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999).

Regarding James Stevens (1925; 1932), Hoffmann (1999, 94) states “the Paul Bunyan most people know more closely resembles the concept of the character in Stevens’ books than it does the Bunyan of any other popularization”. Stevens’ (1925; 1932) depictions of Paul Bunyan not only helped the stories reach a larger audience, they

also influenced the Paul Bunyan we see on the landscape. As noted, in the oldest stories existing in print, the Blue Ox was larger than life in physical size, but Paul was not. Paul is described as being clever, strong, and a bit larger than the average lumberjack, but nothing close to the gigantic image that has since evolved (MacGillivray 1906; MacGillivray 1910; Laughead 1914; Laughead 1916; Laughead 1922; Tabor and Thompson 1946; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999). Stevens' Paul Bunyan is the image that comes to mind for most people familiar with the folklore<sup>5</sup> (Hoffmann 1999). Additionally, Stevens' first work (1925) is often quoted for having found the source of the Paul Bunyan tales in the Papineau Rebellion of 1837—a Lower Canadian revolt against the British treatment of French-Canadians (Hoffmann 1999; Gartenberg 1949) while a character referenced in his second (1932), Fabian “Joe” Fournier, has been cited as influencing the development of the tales and stories of Paul Bunyan (Rogers 1993).

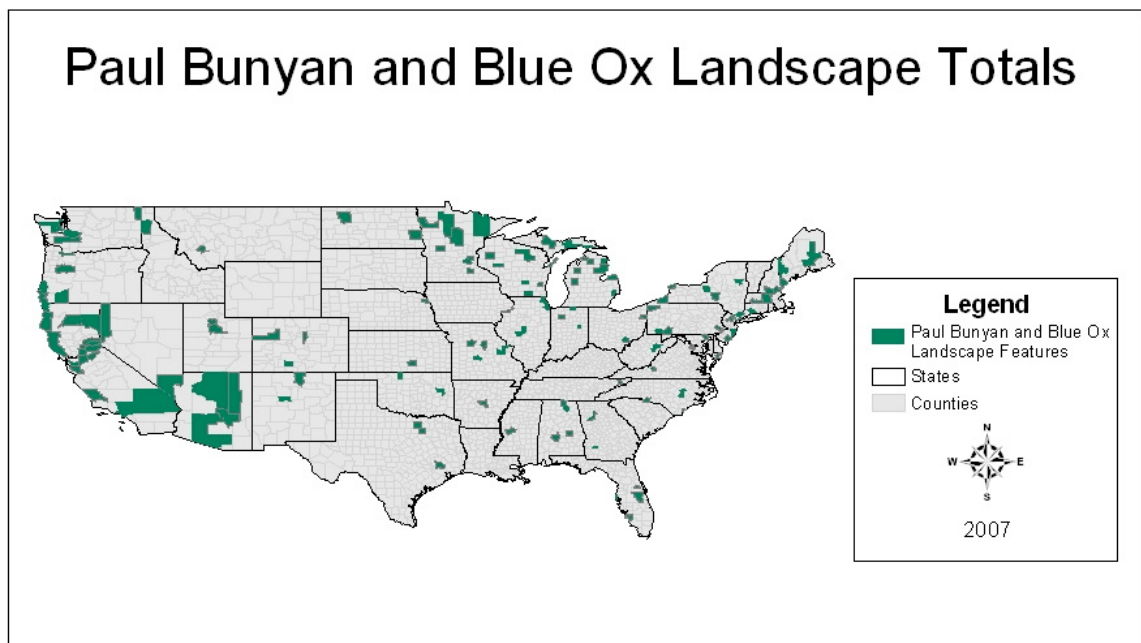
Ida Virginia Turney has three works that are worthy of note. The first (1916) is a class project for the University of Oregon's English department in which students were sent to several of logging camps to record the tales (Schiller 1998). The second, *Paul Bunyan Comes West* (1928), is a book in which “Yank” retells stories he remembers hearing in the woods. It is largely based off of the 1916 work with stories told in a “spoken English,” and is important in that it is one of the first to depict Paul in occupations other than logging (Schiller 1998). The third and final noteworthy work by Turney is an unpublished 1935 Master's thesis on Paul Bunyan from the University of California<sup>6</sup> (Hoffmann 1999).

Finally, Harold Felton's *Legends of Paul Bunyan* (1947) marks the end of the great collections (Schiller 1998). Although he has been sharply criticized for not having

published his work in a more organized manner (Dorson 1951; Hoffmann 1999), he is widely credited for having published one of the most comprehensive collections of early Paul Bunyan works (Mills 1948; Simpson, Jr. 1948; Schiller 1998). Additionally, Felton's detailed description of how the tales were shared in the camps is noteworthy. Many have noted the folklore was told by a group of lumberjacks with each person adding to the tale rather than any one individual dominating the tale (Turney 1928<sup>7</sup>; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999).

With the help of such authors as Shephard (1924), Stevens (1925; 1932), Turney (1928), and Felton (1947) the stories spread to a much larger North American audience. Paul would soon be featured in an opera (W. H. Auden and Benjamin Britten's (1941), *Paul Bunyan*), poems (Robert Frost's (1949) "Paul's Wife" and Carl Sandburg's (1936) *The People, Yes*), and movies (such as Disney's (1958) *Paul Bunyan*) all of which lent to the lore and gradually transformed Paul from a rough-necked lumberjack into a gentle giant that appealed to kids and adults alike (Hoffmann 1963; Gier 2005). The impact mass media has had on perpetuating the folklore of Paul and Babe should not be overlooked. While traveling through northern Ontario and western Quebec, I questioned several dozen individuals (both Anglo and Francophone Canadians) on whether or not they knew of the Paul Bunyan folklore and, if they had, where they had first heard the stories. All but a few had heard of Paul and the Blue Ox<sup>8</sup> and a pattern became very apparent for those who had learned of the folklore outside of school. For those who were old enough, Disney's 1958 Paul Bunyan movie was the source of learning of the folklore. Steve Robinson (2007), who was interviewed in Iroquois Falls, Ontario, referenced the Disney movie and added, "Paul would like to live up here. It's all about the

woods....When you come to the woods, that's what you expect—*rugged!*” On the other hand, those who were younger, such as Lisa Rae (2007) of Kirkland Lake, Ontario, and Kelsey Kolomeitz (2007) of Cochrane, Ontario, were much more likely to reference The Simpsons’s (2001) episode where Homer plays Paul Bunyan.



**Map 4.2:** Map showing the final tally of states containing a Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox landscape item (statue, business, festival). A majority of Canadian Provinces (6 of 10) also contains such landscape items (Superpages.com, Switchboard, Roadside America, Large Canadian Roadside Attractions). (Map by author)

Even with the popularity of the Disney (1958) movie and The Simpsons (2001) episode, most people interviewed knew of Paul Bunyan via books. The stories popularized by the likes of Laughead (1922), Shephard (1924), Stevens (1925; 1932), Turney (1928), and Felton (1947) connected with the general public in the United States and Canada in a manner that is still evident today. Lowenthal (1979, 121) wrote, “Innumerable statues of departed rulers and leaders, poets and preachers, grace places that may be half a world away from where their prototypes set foot”; such is the case with Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox. Based on the criteria for my landscape distribution study,

I discovered that Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox landscape items were found not only in states with a strong logging heritage, such as Maine, Minnesota, and Oregon, but also those without, such as Kansas, Nebraska, and North Dakota. All told, 39 of the 50 United States and 6 of the 10 Canadian Provinces currently possess some form of Paul Bunyan or Blue Ox landscape item (statue, business, festival) (Map 4.2).

### *North American Popularity*

Gier's (2005) work focuses on the transformation of Paul Bunyan once he was established as a giant of the woods, but *why was he transformed into a giant and why did he become so popular with the larger North American public, a populace that had few direct ties to the woods and logging industry?* A breakdown of the stories as provided by Hoffmann and Dorson offers clues. As noted, Hoffmann (1999) states the Paul Bunyan existing in most people's imagination is based on the lumberjack Stevens (1925; 1932) created. Hoffmann (1999, 100) writes "Stevens adapts Paul Bunyan in such a way that a national public can recognize in him things it wants to see". Dorson (1976, 6) writes the popularized stories trumpeted the "American cry of bigness, invincibility, and Manifest Destiny". Furthermore, the popularized Paul Bunyan was a larger than life representation of Zelinsky's (1972) American ideals of *mobility, mechanic, independence, and messianic*: Paul had moved from coast to coast (*mobility*), conquered nature (*mechanic*), accomplished tasks on his terms (*independence*), and was large enough to change the world (*messianic*).

Paul Bunyan stood for the best of American values. Many believed Paul Bunyan, like America, could rectify any problem through honest, hard work. As the nation suffered through the depths of the Great Depression, many Americans were looking for a

larger-than-life hero who could conquer the problems facing the nation and the Paul Bunyan who had recently been introduced to the public was a perfect fit (Hoffmann 1999, Dorson 1976). Borash (2003, 16) writes, “Paul Bunyan came to represent the most obvious facts of American life – the worship of bigness and power, the possibilities of salesmanship and promotion, a symbol of American aggressiveness, self-reliance, energy, and might”.

The transformation of Paul Bunyan from camp boss to a giant of the woods was so sudden and complete that inevitably some questioned the authenticity and use of the folklore. As noted, Ames (1940) was the first to question Paul’s authenticity, but would not be the folklore’s harshest critic. Because the stories of Paul and the Blue Ox had changed so dramatically from the original tales told in the camps, Dorson (1976) chose to label all such references to Paul Bunyan as “*fakelore*”. This term may appeal to much of the popular usage of Paul and the Blue Ox, but ignores the historical roots of the tales to the logging camps and industry as recorded by Stewart and Watt (1916), Tabor and Thompson (1946), Gartenberg (1949), Fowke (1976 and 1979), Hoffmann (1999), and even Dorson himself (1976).

### **Final Thoughts**

Paul and Babe do have a strong connection to the Northwoods even if the nature of the stories and characters that residents have embraced have changed over time (Hutchinson 1963; Dorson 1976; Hoffmann 1999; Gier 2005). The geographic, historic, and cultural ties between the Northwoods logging and Paul Bunyan are important in establishing the legitimacy and authenticity for region’s use of the folk giant on the cultural landscape. The tales, as noted, were known by many of the lumberjacks in the

camps of the Northwoods (Stewart and Watt 1916; Gartenberg 1949; Dorson 1976; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999), the oldest stories in print come from the Northwoods (MacGillivray 1906; 1910), and finally, Laughead's (1914; 1916; 1922) promotion of Paul Bunyan that introduced him to a much larger audience came from the Red River Lumber Company's Akeley, Minnesota, operation. As Borash (2003, 18) writes, the "boom time of lumbering" of the late 1800s and early 1900s would be the inspiration residents of the Northwoods would turn to "pull the region out of the Great Depression". In the next chapter, I will discuss how residents of the Northwoods have merged their logging heritage and the folklore of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox to celebrate the region's golden age.



## CHAPTER 5: LEGENDARY LANDSCAPES

*“Well, I’ve had a few heart-to-heart, man-to-man talks with natives, and they have confessed that some of the amazing stuff about Paul Bunyan that they hand out to us tourists is exaggerated. We eat it up, so they keep feeding it to us.*

*Take the tale about Paul and Babe and the 10,000 Minnesota lakes. It says that while gallivanting around the state they left huge tracks which filled up with water and formed the lakes. As a matter of fact, only 6389 of the lakes were formed in that manner. The rest are in parts of the state where Paul and Babe never set foot, and they are not genuine Paul Bunyan lakes at all. They are fakes” (Dorson 1976, 185).*

Every region experiences a golden age. Whether it be gold rush California, colonial New England, or an independent Texas, all regions have a past they can reminisce on during difficult times; a past that can be celebrated. The general public recognizes some of these golden ages more readily because of colorful stories told romanticizing these eras, often creating scenes that never existed. These stories that build up a past era can come in many forms: paintings, sculptures, film, fiction, and folklore (Meinig 1979b; Shortridge 1991; Blake 1995; Bowen 1997; DeLyser 2001; Borash 2003; DeLyser 2003; Kim and Richardson 2003).

Local variations of folklore celebrating past eras exist across much of North America. In addition to the wealth of tales known and shared by various American Indian nations, folklore has developed among a number of groups of European descent. Folklore, because of its nature, often reminds those partaking of life lessons or cultural values or even glorious events where the hero (or sometimes, *heroes*) overcomes enormous obstacles set before him or her (Dorson 1976; Brunvand 1979)<sup>1</sup>. As past studies have shown, these tales are often linked to older or more rural settlements such as

the Appalachians or Ozarks, but do not exist exclusively in such settings (Dorson 1976; Brunvand 1979; Allen 1992).

Lowenthal (1979, 103) writes, an “awareness of the past is essential to the maintenance of purpose in life. Without it we would lack all sense of continuity, all apprehension of causality, all knowledge of our own identity”. As noted, the golden age of the Northwoods was an era of logging. From the mid 1800s until the early 1900s, thousands of men<sup>1</sup> were employed by the lumber companies while thousands more found work indirectly supporting the industry as it migrated westward across the continent (Newbit 1973; Blegen 1975; Radforth 1987; Karmanski 1989; Williams 1989; Hoffmann 1999). The landscape was altered in a dramatic fashion as woods were thinned, rivers channeled or dammed, and settlements sprang up across the vast northern expanses. The thought that residents of the Northwoods would celebrate this past era is not surprising. The manner in which they do is.

Paul Bunyan has strong ties to the Northwoods region. Although not originating in the Northwoods, the stories associated with him were first published in a Michigan newspaper and first introduced to the general public by a Minnesota lumber company (Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999). Additionally, many of the tales later retold by writers would identify Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox as having journeyed to the West Coast from the northern Great Lakes region (Laughead 1922; Shephard 1924; Stevens 1925; Turney 1928; Stevens 1932). Residents of the Northwoods would later link these characters from the lumberjacks’ tales with the region’s golden age of logging to demarcate their region, strengthening their sense of regional identity.

**TABLE 5.1: POPULATION OF NORTHWOODS' COMMUNITIES, COUNTIES, AND DISTRICTS**

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>COUNTY/DISTRICT</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>% WHITE</b>	<b>% A.I.</b>
AKELEY, MN*	412	HUBBARD	18,376	96.31	2.13
ALPENA, MI	11,304	ALPENA	31,314	98.21	0.39
BEMIDJI, MN*	11,917	BELTRAMI	39,650	76.66	20.36
BLIND RIVER, ONT	3,780	ALGOMA	118,567	89.57	9.23
BRAINERD, MN*	13,178	CROW WING	55,099	97.64	0.78
EAU CLAIRE, WI	61,704	EAU CLAIRE	93,142	94.96	0.54
HACKENSACK, MN*	285	CASS	27,150	86.52	11.45
IROQUOIS FALLS, ONT	5,217	COCHRANE	85,247	89.32	9.82
IRON BRIDGE, ONT	1,696	ALGOMA	118,567	89.57	9.23
OSCODA, MI	7,248	IOSCO	27,339	96.92	0.66
PEQUOT LAKES, MN*	1,956	CROW WING	55,099	97.64	0.78
PINE RIVER, MN*	928	CASS	27,150	86.52	11.45
CANADA			31,612,897	83.2	3.4
UNITED STATES			281,421,906	74.67	0.82

*Notes: Populations figures are from Canada 2001 Census and US Census 2000 (Iron Bridge's population is for Huron Shores Township).*

*Percentages are given for districts (Canada) and counties (United States).*

*"A.I." (American Indians) refers to North American Indians (Canada) (excludes Inuit) and Native Americans (United States).*

*Communities identified with a " \* " are found within the Northwoods' core region.*

**Preceding Page: Table 5.1:** Populations for Northwoods' communities and their corresponding counties (USA) or districts (Canada) that possess prominent displays of Paul Bunyan or Paul Bunyan items (figures from US Census 2000 and Canada 2001 Census). Although most of the counties and districts are overwhelmingly white, several lying within close proximity of a First Nation (Canada) or Indian Reservation (United States), have substantial American Indian populations that are well above their respected countries average.

Communities identified with a “ \* “ are found within the Northwoods' core region. Iron Bridge's population is for Huron Shores Township.

Samuels (1979, 64) notes, “Landscapes without contexts would be like books without pages and language”. The Great Depression of the 1930s created an ideal temporal setting for local residents to use the character icons to represent logging's past glory days (Borash 2003). A generation had not yet passed since the peak of logging operations (a key in Jackson's (1980) model); with many people out of work, residents were searching for memories of better times they could embrace. The process began in Brainerd and Bemidji with a couple of festivals and two sets of statues and quickly spread to other areas of the region<sup>2</sup>. Communities such as Akeley, Hackensack, Eau Claire, Alpena, Oscoda, and Blind River would follow Brainerd and Bemidji's lead, adding their own versions of “Paul and Babe” to the mix of festivals and statues (**Table 5.1 & Model 5.1**). In addition to these festivals and statues, businesses were later named after the folk giants, collectively strengthening the local sense of place by familiarizing local residents with the golden age's icons. As will be discussed later in the chapter, the campaign was so successful that outsiders now often identify the region with the folklore and vice versa.

The historic ties of Paul and Babe to the Northwoods' golden age of logging, although important, are not enough to explain the present day popular usage of the folk giants throughout the region. The regional use of Paul and Babe has evolved through the years adapting to the needs of local residents as some features become obsolete and new

ones are created. The origins, evolution, and permanence of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox features on the Northwoods' landscape and its role in shaping regional identity are the subjects of Chapter 5: Discussion.

### **Restoration: Origins**

There exists in a northern Minnesota a friendly rivalry between two cities. The communities of Brainerd and Bemidji both have strong claims to the title of *oldest* Paul Bunyan. One possesses the oldest Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox statues while the other possesses the oldest display of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox statues. Lowenthal (1979, 121) writes that monuments and memorials “seldom point the way to historic localities or structures, but stand instead as evocative reminders of some epoch’s splendor” and adds “some structures only become monuments *after* a prolonged existence”. Such is the case with the Northwoods’ Paul and Babe landscape features: initially created for festivals celebrating the region’s golden age, neither were intended to become lasting monuments. Instead, it was only later locals began to view the landscape features as an integral part of the regional landscape. An understanding of the origins of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox landscape features is important given the influence the features had on later landscape changes throughout the Northwoods.

#### ***Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox***

Borash (2003, 20) writes, “In the summer of 1935 the Brainerd Chamber of Commerce adopted the idea of using the Paul Bunyan legend as a promotional tool and held the First Annual Paul Bunyan Exposition”. According to Borash, Art Lyonais, owner of the Crow Wing Court Cabins and the Lyonais Grocery Store, hired a local ‘artist’, who was rumored to have lived underneath a railroad bridge spanning the

Mississippi River, to build a statue of Paul Bunyan and his faithful companion, the Blue Ox. Using chicken wire and wood to create frames, the final products were cement likenesses of the two folklore characters (**Figure 5.1**).



**Figures 5.1:** The original statues of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox. The slightly larger-than-life Paul Bunyan statue<sup>3</sup> (Paul stands nearly 7 feet tall) differs from the illustrated Paul Bunyan first introduced by Laughead (1922) in that Paul has a beard rather than a mustache and looks more Germanic/Scandinavian with brown hair and blue eyes than French Canadian. Initially created for Brainerd’s First Annual Paul Bunyan Exposition, the statues were not permanent fixtures on the landscape until recently when they found a new home next to the Brainerd Chamber of Commerce in 1996. (Photo by author)

Two years later, according to local legend, a proposal was made to create larger, more permanent likenesses of Paul and Babe. The original statues were modest in size; neither being the size of the folklore characters most had come to know through the writings of individuals such as Shephard (1924), Stevens (1925; 1932), and Turney (1928). However, the Chamber of Commerce passed on the idea as it had lost money the preceding year, attempting a Second Annual Paul Bunyan Exposition (Borash 2003).

### *Bemidji's Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox*

That same year, 1937, Bemidji would unveil its own version of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox at its annual Winter Carnival. These statues, in contrast to those which appeared in Brainerd, were giants on the landscape and although Babe's likeness was originally a nomadic one (the Blue Ox was built in a manner where it could readily be carried across the state to help promote Bemidji), he<sup>4</sup> would eventually find a permanent home next to Paul in 1939 (Skime 2006). The statues were an instant success with local residents and the general public. A *Life* magazine article from 1937 helped introduce Bemidji's Paul Bunyan (and Bemidji, for that matter) to a larger audience and likely played a large role in helping the statue become a permanent fixture on the Northwoods' landscape (**Figure 5.2**).

Paul and the Blue Ox were originally created for the Winter Carnival with little thought given to having the two become permanent fixtures on the landscape. In an interview with Julie Skimes (2006), a local expert on Bemidji's Paul and Babe statues, she stated that evidence to support this theory is provided by the design and location of the statues. Skimes explained that it was unlikely that city officials would have created Paul Bunyan using cloth and chicken wire, nor would they have built a traveling version of the Blue Ox if a permanent home had been the original intent. Also, the placement of the statues along the shores of Lake Bemidji would have been an unlikely site given the threat of shore erosion. However, the instant popularity and publicity of the statues made local civic leaders reconsider their original plans. In future years, efforts were made to solidify the statues' place on the landscape by reinforcing the beachhead and planting trees to prevent erosion from scarring the two giants.



**Figures 5.2:** February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1937, *Life* magazine (21) article that introduced giant versions of Paul and Babe to a much larger audience. The man standing next to Paul for scale gave readers a visual impression of how large Paul Bunyan is. Also note the wheels under Babe. Originally, the Blue Ox was a traveling advertisement of sorts for the Bemidji area. The article may have helped the two characters from the lumberjack’s folktales become permanent features on the landscape.

Although many in the Bemidji area claim their town possesses the oldest Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox statues, the honor is Brainerd’s. However, the claim for the oldest Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox display is Bemidji’s. Brainerd’s statues were moved a number of times before finding a permanent home outside the local Chamber of Commerce building downtown (Borash 2005). Meanwhile, Bemidji’s statues became permanent fixtures on the landscape, the significance of which cannot be overstated. Borash (2003, 24) writes, “Bemidji visually put Paul Bunyan on the map”. The images of the two on a northern lakeshore were etched into the minds of many through post cards and magazine articles and would come to represent the region as a whole (Figure 5.3).





**Figures 5.3:** A second *Life* magazine article featuring the Bemidji’s Paul and Babe from February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945 (58-59). Similar to the first article published in 1937, this article includes an individual in the picture for scale, but this time he is looking up adding to Paul’s stature as a giant (the camera angle also plays a part in this). The article, a large two-page spread, was featured in a section on American folklore (which included pieces on John Henry, Johnny Appleseed, Davy Crockett, among others) includes Stevens’ (1925) account of Paul Bunyan’s origins which was later ignored by Stevens (1932) himself and dispelled by Gartenberg (1949) and Hoffmann (1999).

### *Akeley’s Paul Bunyan and Hackensack’s Lucette*

A number of Northwoods’ communities would add their own versions of Paul and Babe in next few years, under the influence of the Brainerd and Bemidji statues. The timing of these later additions is notable. Not only does it correspond to a more traditional timeline for Jackson’s (1980) era of restoration to begin, having had a generation pass whereas the original pairing may have been introduced earlier than normal due to the Great Depression, they also fit within a timeframe when a number of “giants” were added to the North American landscape (Marling 1984, RoadsideAmerica.com) and are within a few years of two later *Life* magazine articles dealing with Paul Bunyan: 1945 and 1949 respectively. The 1945 article was a large two-

page spread of the folk giants with a man in the foreground who is dwarfed in scale while admiring them (the camera angle adds additional scale to the size differential) while the 1949 article highlighted a Chicago Railroad Fair’s version of Paul Bunyan that would later entertain thousands of visitors in Brainerd. Regardless of the influences that prompted such displays, the towns of Akeley and Hackensack were soon to join in the festivities.

In 1949, Akeley would host the First Annual Paul Bunyan Days<sup>5</sup>. The event was a success and within a few years Paul’s cradle had been added as local landmark (the giant Paul Bunyan statue was added in 1984) (Akeley Chamber of Commerce) (**Figure 5.4**). One year later, a female giant was added to join Paul on the Northwoods’ landscape in Hackensack. In 1952, after entertaining name entries from around the country, Paul’s sweetheart was finally christened “Lucette Diana Kensack” at the first annual Sweetheart Days<sup>6</sup> (Hackensack Chamber of Commerce) (**Figure 5.5**).



**Figures 5.4:** Paul’s crib in Akeley, Minnesota. The crib was an early addition to the landscape (Paul Bunyan Historical Museum) and may have helped locals create a lasting impression for Paul Bunyan Days. (Photo by author)



**Figures 5.5:** Statue of Lucette in Hackensack. The statue is a prominent feature along the shoreline of Birch Lake and was christened Lucette Diana Kensack at the First Annual Sweetheart Days in 1952 (Hackensack Chamber of Commerce). (Photo by author).

Akeley's Paul Bunyan Days and Hackensack's Sweetheart Days remain popular undertakings culminating in large parades with hundreds of participants and thousands of spectators. Before each of the 2006 parades, I took time to walk past the floats and chat with parade participants as they lined up behind one another. Marching bands, local businesses, as well as public figures and entities from a number of neighboring communities were represented in the lineup. As I conversed with participants, I was surprised at the size of each of the parade lines in relation to the size of the respective community. Hackensack, a small town with the main section of town being only 5 blocks long, had parade participants lined up for *5 blocks*. Meanwhile, Akeley, a town only 6 blocks in length, had participants, including marching bands, backed up nearly *7 blocks* (Figures 5.6 & 5.7).





**Figures 5.6:** Parade in procession during the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Sweetheart Days in Hackensack. Large numbers turned out both to witness and partake in the parade. When participants lined up for the parade, the line was longer than the town itself both in Hackensack's Sweetheart Days and Akeley's Paul Bunyan Days. (Photo by author)



**Figures 5.7:** The 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Paul Bunyan Days was celebrated in 2006. Thousands of people took part in events during the 3 days of celebration. Note the float from nearby Hackensack advertising Lucette. Participants from both communities found their way into each of the parades. (Photo by author)

According to Jerry Oelschlager (2007) and Gary Vik (2007), who returned for a class reunion and were interviewed during the 2007 Paul Bunyan Days, the events are

more or less remained unchanged since the first Paul Bunyan Days in 1949 with the growth in attendance being the only difference over the years (with more families and friends choosing the celebration as an excuse to reunite). Ron Sjolin (2007), who served as Akeley's mayor for 4 years during the 1980s and was interviewed during the 2007 festival, echoes Oelschlager's and Vik's assessment and adds the only major change he recalls was the addition of Paul himself in 1984.



**Figures 5.8:** The water tower in downtown Brainerd. The unique structure dominates the landscape as the Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox statues found around the corner. Many locals claim the water tower was Paul Bunyan's golf tee (Brainerd Chamber of Commerce). (Photo by author)

The reason for the continued success of each of these festivals may be attributed, in part, to the landscape. Landmarks that were added to each of the events early on (or centered around as with Hackensack) allowed the community to rally around the features and celebrate the community's common heritage year round. As noted, Brainerd's Paul Bunyan Exposition was abandoned after only a couple of years. Although Brainerd did

have statues to go along with the 1935 event, the markers were small and not placed in a permanent setting until much later (Borash 2005). Even when searching for Brainerd's original Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox statues, it is easy to miss them as they fall in the shadow of a much larger local landmark, a downtown water tower (**Figure 5.8**).

Lowenthal (1979) notes, "Memorials designed to impress the viewer often dominate their environs" and adds often they "serve no purpose other than to remind us" of a person or event. In contrast to Brainerd's original Paul and Babe statues, Lucette is large enough to make an impression on anyone who visits Hackensack's segment of shoreline along Birch Lake and Paul's cradle has greeted visitors traveling along Minnesota State Highway 34 for years—both serve, in part, as focal points and reminders of annual community festivals.

### **Restoration: Evolution**

As explained in the previous section, Brainerd and Bemidji, Minnesota, were among the first communities to place Paul Bunyan physically on the landscape. Samuels (1979, 72) writes that over time an image may become "part of the media for the making of its likeness in the impressions of others." Beginning with these northern Minnesota statues and festivals, the use of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox in name and image (as well as character spin-offs, in the case of Hackensack) has spread to other areas of the Northwoods. Collectively, the four communities: Brainerd, Bemidji, Akeley, and Hackensack, became the cornerstone for Paul Bunyan within the Northwoods.

**Following Page: Model 5.1: Evolution of Paul Bunyan on the Landscape (Northwoods' Major Nucleus)** The model explains the changing role of major Paul Bunyan statues on the Northwoods' landscape over the past 70 years. The earliest Paul Bunyan features were associated with festivals where as later additions would be used as family attractions, photo opportunities, and promotional tools for recreation based activities.

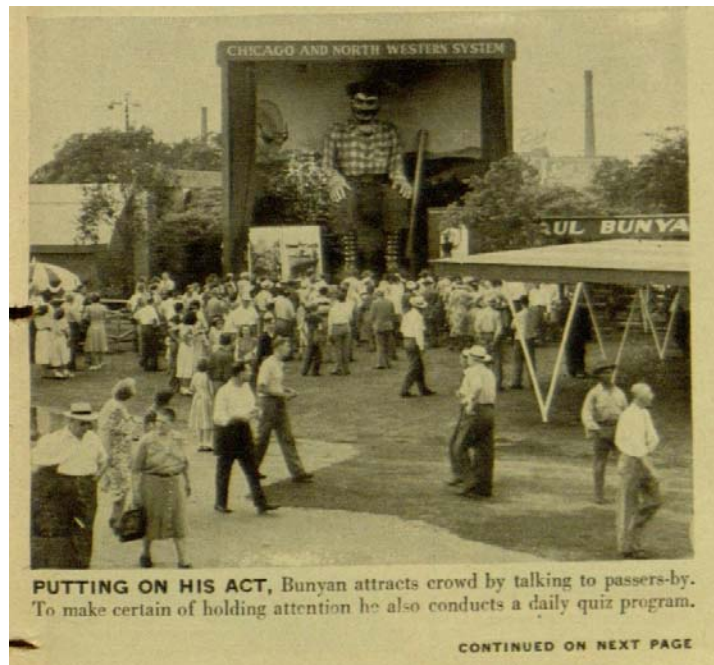
**MODEL 5.1: EVOLUTION OF PAUL BUNYAN ON THE LANDSCAPE (NORTHWOODS' MAJOR NUCLEUS)**

<b>LANDMARK (ORIGINS)</b>	<p><i>Created for the community to build a sense of place (often tied in with a festival)</i>                  Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, Brainerd, MN 1935 (removed afterwards)  <i>(Created for the First Annual Paul Bunyan Exposition)</i>                  Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, Bemidji, MN 1937                  Lucette, Hackensack, MN 1950</p>
<b>FAMILY</b>	<p><i>Created for 'family' oriented entertainment</i>                  Paul Bunyan, Paul Bunyan Playground, Brainerd, MN 1950 (relocated 2003)                  Babe the Blue Ox, Paul Bunyan Playground 1965 (relocated 2003)  <i>(Paul Bunyan Playground later known as Paul Bunyan Amusement Center and Paul Bunyan Land)</i></p>
<b>PHOTO-OP</b>	<p><i>Created to accommodate a society on the go</i>                  Paul Bunyan, Akeley, MN 1984                  Pequot Lakes Water Tower, Pequot Lakes, MN 1987</p>
<b>RECREATION</b>	<p><i>Created to attract visitors who are interested in more recreation based activities</i>                  Paul Bunyan State Trail 1988 (approved), 1992 (opened)                  Blue Ox ATV Trail 1991 (approved/opened)                  Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway 1998 (state), 2005 (national)</p>

*Note: Paul Bunyan State Forest and Paul Bunyan Expressway are excluded from this model since neither were established with the sole intent of attracting visitors or promoting regional identity. The former, established in 1935, was set aside more for conservation than recreation purposes. The later, designated in 1991, was created as a way to advertise the region to visitors traveling north for a variety of reasons.*

Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox's role in the region has not remained stationary and has instead evolved through the years. Dorson (1951) sharply criticized these changes, believing the original nature and beauty of the tales had been lost. Lowenthal (1979, 125), however, reminds us, "Every trace of the past is a testament not only to its initiators but to its inheritors, not only to the spirit of the past, but to the perspectives of the present." As will be discussed, the oldest Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox landscape features were introduced as landmarks whereas later features were added as family attractions and photo-ops and, most recently, as promotional tools for recreation based activities (Model 5.1). This ever-changing face of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox within the Northwoods' core region is the subject of this section: *Evolution*.

### *Paul Bunyan as a Family Attraction*



**Figure 5.9:** Paul Bunyan at the 1949 Chicago Railroad Fair. The enormous talking lumberjack was a popular site for thousands of fairgoers. The statue would later be moved to Brainerd, Minnesota, where it still entertains large crowds (Picture from *Life* magazine 11 July 1949, 105).



Many of the original Paul Bunyan features were added as landmarks and were linked to local festivals. Bemidji's Paul and Babe, Akeley's Paul Bunyan Cradle, and Hackensack's Lucette all fall into this category of linking landmarks with festivals. Brainerd, on the other hand, which would not find a permanent home for the original Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox statues until some years later, would be the first to add a new type of Paul Bunyan to the Northwoods' landscape. Interestingly enough, this same Paul Bunyan was also the first to become obsolete.

The most famous Paul Bunyan statue in the Brainerd area was introduced at the 1949 Chicago Railroad Fair (**Figure 5.9**). According to Borash (2003, 28), visitors "swarmed into the old World's Fair grounds to look at—and talk to—a new gimmick put together for the Chicago and North Western Railway...Paul sat on a stump in the middle of a diorama of the North Woods and greeted over a million people that summer". The statue was popular because of its enormous size (built to the scale of a 35-foot man with a reputation of being the "largest animated man ever constructed" (32)) and ability to move its arms, head, eyes, and mouth. Additionally, the lips were "rigged to react to the voice of an actor hidden behind the scenes" (29) making conversations with the folk hero a must see attraction.

As outlined by Borash (2003), John (Sherm) Levis and Roy Kuehmichel, both of Brainerd, purchased the animated Paul Bunyan and placed it at the intersection of Minnesota State Highways 210 and 371. For the next 53 years, Paul (and later Babe) entertained thousands of visitors from around the world (Borash 2003) (**Figure 5.10**). As popular as this version of Paul Bunyan was, he would ultimately become the first Paul Bunyan to be deemed obsolete.



**Figure 5.10:** Brainerd’s famous talking Paul Bunyan as it sits today entertaining visitors at Paul Bunyan Land. The enormous talking statue, thought to be the largest of its kind when it was created, has been moved twice since it was unveiled in Chicago in 1949 (Borash 2003). The most recent move was across town symbolizing that times had changed. Although not as popular as he once was, the statue still attracts thousands of visitors to the area every summer. (Photo by author)

<b>YEARLY GATE COUNTS FOR THE PAUL BUNYAN CENTER</b>			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>ATTENDANCE</b>
<b>1981</b>	<b>125, 662</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>114, 278</b>
<b>1982</b>	<b>116, 534</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>107, 254</b>
<b>1983</b>	<b>117, 063</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>97, 593</b>
<b>1984</b>	<b>116,760</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>90,954</b>
<b>1985</b>	<b>101,629</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>88,032</b>
<b>1986</b>	<b>106,963</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>86,469</b>
<b>1987</b>	<b>121,302</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>87,107</b>
<b>1988</b>	<b>118,680</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>86,228</b>
<b>1989</b>	<b>113,030</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>81,582</b>
<b>1990</b>	<b>114,895</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>80,980</b>
<b>1991</b>	<b>109,562</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>77,119</b>

**Table 5.2:** Attendance numbers for Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan Center (from Borash (2003, 57)). The table shows the overall trend of declining attendance numbers through the years with a short lived reversal during the mid 1980s. Borash explains that gate admission was changed in 1985 to allow for unlimited rides inside the park versus the previous policy of charging for each individual ride and improved attendance for several years.

Due to decreasing attendance (**Table 5.2**) and increasing property values and taxes, the amusement park was forced to make a difficult decision: close its doors permanently or relocate (possibly to another state). In an interview with Borash (2003, 55), Don McFarland, owner-operator of the Paul Bunyan Amusement Center, reflected on the situation, “The area is changing. The local family-run resorts have closed and the area is no longer attracting the numbers of vacationing families it once did”. Borash (2003, 55-56) writes:

“The Minnesota Office of Tourism recently has been meeting with resort owners to better understand why the number of small resorts is declining. Thirty years ago, there were about 2,500 resorts in Minnesota. Due to a variety of challenges faced by these businesses, fewer than half remain in business throughout the state today. The large resorts such as Madden’s Cragun’s, and Grand View have opted to attract business conventions with their large convention halls and world-class golf courses. While this brings business to the area, it is not the family business upon which the Paul Bunyan Center relies. A ‘corporate suit’ is not interested in Paul. Business people would rather spend free time on the golf course, or in the lounge at a resort”.

### ***Paul Bunyan as Photo-Op***

As family-oriented attractions waned in popularity, features more convenient for a society on the move began to emerge on the landscape. Minnesota’s most recent giant Paul Bunyan was added to the Northwoods’ landscape in 1984 in the town of Akeley. There exist similarities between Akeley’s version of the lumberjack and those found in other parts of Minnesota. For example, Akeley’s Paul Bunyan is situated alongside a major thoroughfare (Minnesota State Highway 34) and acts as a major landmark for the community, much like Bemidji’s Paul Bunyan and Babe statues. Additionally, it was originally designed to be a speaking Paul Bunyan, similar to Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan (Kramer 2006). However, the differences that exist are worth noting as well. Bemidji’s

Paul and Babe stand symbolically along a lakeshore and Brainerd's Paul and Babe promote family vacations to the Northwoods. In contrast, Akeley's Paul Bunyan takes into account today's present car culture appealing to those who are only passing through.



**Figure 5.11:** Akeley, Minnesota's Paul Bunyan is an inviting landmark. Paul is kneeling down with an open hand that acts as an irresistible attraction to many locals and visitors alike. The Paul Bunyan Historical Museum is located just behind the giant statue, further inviting visitors to spend time in the small Northwoods community. (Photo by author)

It is impossible for visitors traveling through Akeley on Minnesota State Highway 34 to miss Paul Bunyan. Bemidji's Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox are among the most photographed roadside features in America (Bemidji Chamber of Commerce) as they stand sturdily along the shores of Lake Bemidji. However, as popular as they are, they do not encourage visitors to interact with the two forest folk giants. Visitors are instead more likely to be photographed standing alongside Paul and Babe or gazing up at the two giants (as in the *Life* magazine photos from 1937 and 1945). In contrast, Akeley's Paul Bunyan creates a unique and memorable photo opportunity inviting visitors to sit in Paul's hand while a friend or family member takes a picture from across the street. Further evidence that this invitation is popular with people from all walks was

witnessed during Akeley’s Paul Bunyan Days. Those partaking in the festivities would often meet friends and family members around Paul or take a break from the summer heat sitting in Paul’s hand (Figure 5.11).



**Figure 5.12:** Paul’s Purple Cow under construction during the summer of 2006. To promote the new business, owners Don and Kathy Wicks, handed out free ice cream samples during Paul Bunyan Days Parade in Akeley—a very popular (and delicious) treat with those in attendance. (Photo by author)



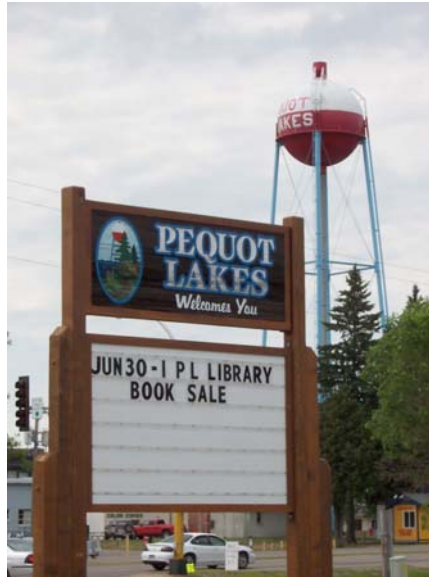
**Figure 5.13:** Paul’s Purple Cow and Babe’s Cut and Curl as they looked during the winter of 2006-2007. The businesses, located directly across the street from Paul Bunyan in Akeley, Minnesota, were both unique in name: Paul’s Purple Cow being named after a somewhat obscure character while Babe’s Cut and Curl is named “Babe” rather than the “Blue Ox”. (Photo by Don and Kathy Wicks)

Akeley's landmark has inspired local residents to embrace the folklore to a degree not found in other communities. For example, when coming up with a name for their new ice cream shop, Don and Kathy Wicks chose *Paul's Purple Cow* (Figures 5.12 & 5.13). In my conversation with the owners (2006), they explained the idea for naming their business comes from a somewhat obscure early tale in which Paul's purple cow produces ice cream. A second example is found on the outskirts of Akeley at Bunyan's Convenience Store. Nels Kramer (2007), owner of Bunyan's and a local Paul Bunyan and Red River Lumber Company expert, explained in an interview work began in 2001 on the Round River ATV<sup>1</sup> Trail in the nearby Paul Bunyan State Forest. Kramer says the idea for naming the trail "Round River" comes from the earliest known Paul Bunyan publication: *Round River* (1906). Eventually, Kramer and the Akeley Paul Bunyan Trailriders hope the 40-mile trail will expand so that every town within Hubbard County will have access to the trail (Kramer 2007)—a project that will likely strengthen the attachment of Paul Bunyan to the area.

### ***Paul Bunyan as Recreation***

As many family-based tourist attractions began to fade from the landscape, accommodating an increasingly more mobile society was the next step in the evolution of Paul Bunyan. However, as photo-ops began to appear on the landscape, a new problem arose: *How to entice visitors to stay for extended periods of time?* As noted, Akeley's Paul Bunyan Historical Museum, located just behind the town's giant Paul Bunyan kept some curious individuals around, but it did not attract large numbers of visitors to stay for extended periods of time. Promoting recreation-based tourism would be the next evolutionary step for Paul and Babe.

The first to try this next step was Pequot Lakes, Minnesota. In 1987, civic leaders in the small town decided they would attempt to attract visitors passing through the northern Minnesota community by promoting nearby recreational activities. The town's solution was unique. The town decided to create a photo-op for visitors using the popular regional icon of Paul Bunyan to advertise the nearby recreational opportunities.



**Figure 5.14:** Pequot Lakes' water tower looms large on the Northwoods' landscape. The white car at the bottom of the photo is traveling north on Minnesota State Highway 371—the Paul Bunyan Expressway. (Photo by author)

Designed and promoted as Paul Bunyan's fishing bobber (as well as hint at the size of fish one is likely to catch), Pequot Lakes' water tower has become a major landmark on the Northwoods' landscape (**Figure 5.14**). The tower advertises the town to those traveling through on Minnesota State Highway 371, known as the *Paul Bunyan Expressway*, and can easily be identified. The campaign has been so successful that a handful of local businesses have adopted the local landmark in signage and the town now promotes itself with images of the water tower (**Figure 5.15**). However, fishing is not the only recreational activity that has been linked to Paul Bunyan in Minnesota's Northwoods.





**Figure 5.15:** Pequot Lakes’ campaign to promote the town and recreation based activities has been so successful a handful of local businesses have even adopted the fishing-bobber-water-tower in business signage. (Photo by author)

Activities such as hiking, biking, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing are now associated with the area and Paul Bunyan thanks, in part, to local residents taking advantage of existing features on the landscape such as the abandoned segment of the Burlington Northern Railroad. The railroad played a significant role in the area’s history having been Minnesota’s largest logging railway at one time. As the *Pine River Journal* (20 June 1984) notes:

“The heydays of the railroads and its logging spurs, which eventually covered a 200-mile span from Brainerd to International Falls, were roughly the years of 1890 to 1915. As literally dozens of small towns and whistle stops sprang up along the way, the scope and use of the railroad increased as passenger, telegraph express and daily mail service were added and freight trains hauled every conceivable form of livestock, wood and food products and general freight north and south to proper destinations.”

During the 1970s, questions of the railway’s future arose when the company announced plans to cease operation. Burlington Northern held public hearings to discuss the impacts on local communities. As the *Pine River Journal* (20 June 1984) reported, it was time now to “seek plans and ideas for our modern time. What could be done and



who on earth would have the vision, the stamina and the ability to promote, persuade and make inspired thoughts and dreams create reality. By happy chance such a person was right here in Pine River. His name was Terry McGaughery.” In 1983, McGaughery began a campaign to convert the abandoned portion of the Burlington Northern railway running from the Brainerd-Baxter area to Lake Bemidji State Park into a regional recreation trail. McGaughery eventually took his ideas to the Pine River Chamber of Commerce who, along with the Pine River City Council, would be the “first formal bodies to author resolutions supporting the concept of converting the future abandoned railroad into a recreational trail” (Paul Bunyan State Trail).

The trail has also been a boom to area businesses with some even adopting names in recognition of the trail’s impact (such as Trails Side Inn and Trail Break Bar and Grill both of which lie adjacent to the trail in Pine River) and communities attracting people from as far away as Canada (Figure 5.16). Susan Mezzenga, Executive Director of the Nisswa Chamber of Commerce, works near the trail and witnesses people using it on a regular basis:

*“It’s a definite benefit for (Nissawa),’ Mezzenga said. It doesn’t matter what time of year, people are always stopping to have lunch, have a drink or go shopping...’Everybody says it’s an absolute boom to the area”*  
(Lake Country Echo 8 June 2006).

The campaign was so successful that a second trail running from Bemidji to International Falls would soon be connected to the Paul Bunyan State Trail. Fittingly, this second trail was christened the Blue Ox ATV Trail<sup>2</sup> and when added to the Paul Bunyan State Trail created one of the longest rails-to-trails projects in the nation at 210 miles (Paul Bunyan State Trail).



**Figure 5.16:** Pine River, Minnesota. The town promotes itself as having “A Rich Heritage” and “A Bright Future”. Note the Paul Bunyan Trail is used to promote the town’s “bright future”. (Photo by author)

In an interview with the author, Lynn Scharenbroich (2007), Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association Chairperson, explains the state scenic byway designation was for recreation, cultural, historic, and scenery reasons. But for the federal designation, the association needed to choose just one and chose *recreation*. Lynn adds, “Because the area’s recreation industry is based on logging (many logging camps became resorts), it made sense. We were able to capitalize on it.”

### ***Evolution Model***

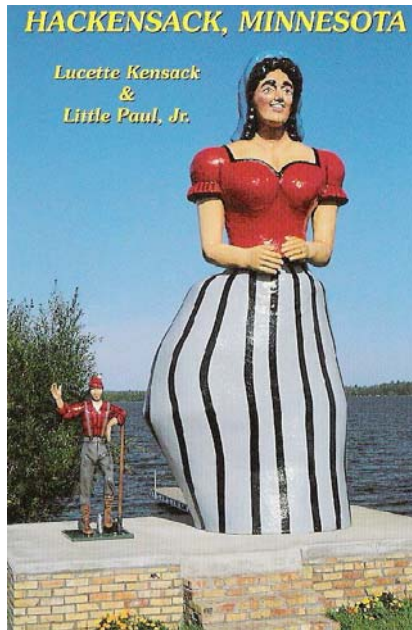
Since their introduction on the Northwoods’ landscape, the two folklore characters have transformed with the times as residents of the Northwoods created new ways in which to use the icons of the region’s golden age. This belief holds true to Butler’s (1980) model for a tourist area’s cycle of evolution. Since Paul and Babe are used for much more than tourist promotion, the model may be applied for a region as it celebrates a golden age. Without constant rejuvenation, the festivals and images created to celebrate such times will stagnate and risk declining participation and popularity that

could eventually lead to a disappearance from the landscape (see **Model 5.1**). In other words, residents must continually reinterpret the past (Lowenthal 1979) and introduce new items or events (Butler 1980) that collectively strengthen the concept of a region's golden age less it be forgotten in future years.

The model for the Northwoods' landscape has evolved from landmarks to family attractions to photo-ops to recreation based images of Paul and Babe. As noted, enduring landmarks are not always identified in the present and often need years to be identified as such (Lowenthal 1979). Larger, more durable images and figures are more likely than smaller ones to last through the years (as explained in *Restoration: Origins*). For example, as part of Brainerd's downtown beautification project during the 1970s, several items were added to the local landscape including Paul's watch and several statues. In my personal e-mail correspondence with David Borash (2007), he mentioned that the watch had been moved and is now on display at Paul Bunyan Land. Regarding the statues, Borash wrote,

“There was a statue of a bear that Paul was supposed to have wrestled as well as a giant stork that brought Paul to his parents. The stork saw its better days as it was located in the parking lot just in front of the Blue Ox Bar. Apparently it was a target for patrons who had a bit too much to drink.”

Eventually, the statues fell into disrepair and were removed from the landscape (Borash 2007).

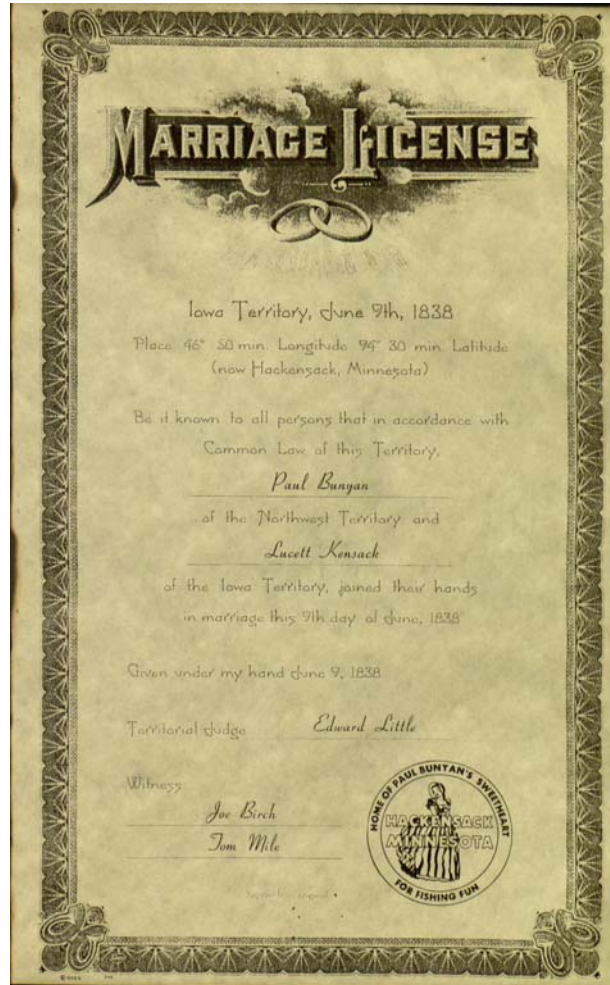


**Figures 5.17 & 5.18:** Some landscape additions are met with resistance. The addition of Paul, Jr. created a bit of a scandal since Paul and Lucette were thought only to be ‘sweethearts’ through the years. Note the wedding ring on Lucette’s left hand that was added along with a marriage license (**Figure 12**). Paul, Jr. (photo on the right), as he stands today outside Hackensack City Hall. Although most statues of Paul and Babe (and related characters) have become part of the permanent Northwoods’ landscape, Paul, Jr. would be an exception. After a brief kidnapping ordeal, it was decided to move the statue from Lucette’s side along Birch Lake’s shoreline to a less visible location in front of City Hall (Hackensack Chamber of Commerce 2006). (Photos by author)

Some landmarks are even met with resistance. In 1992, the town of Hackensack decided to add to the story of Paul and Lucette (**Figures 5.17 & 5.18**). The new figure, Little Paul Jr., created a bit of a scandal. Until that time, Paul and Lucette had been *sweethearts*. Having a child out-of-wedlock was not acceptable and so the town was forced to create a marriage license (**Figure 5.19**) and a wedding ring for Lucette. *USA Today* (25 July 2002) reported the following in regards to the scandal:

“Town promoters married her off to Paul last year after receiving periodic complaints from church women questioning the legitimacy of the relationship. And high time, too, considering a pint-sized lumberjack dubbed Paul Jr. stands by her side. Chamber of commerce director Glenn Tuma claims he found the couple’s marriage license in the basement, and *‘I decided I’m going public with this thing.’* The town celebrated Paul and Lucette’s first wedding anniversary in June. ...And while Lucette is locally revered, the boy is often reviled. At the American Legion hall, the locals nurse beers and spout opinions. *‘Lawn jockey.’ ‘Dweeb.’ ‘Birth defect.’*”

In my conversations with locals, Paul Jr. was little missed when he was ‘kidnapped’ several years ago and locals decided to use the opportunity to relocate him to a less visible location upon return (Anonymous sources 2006).



**Figure 5.19:** A copy of Paul and Lucette’s marriage license. Once Paul, Jr. emerged on the landscape, it was necessary to wed the long-term sweethearts. Copies of the marriage license are available in Hackensack’s Chamber of Commerce building. (Marriage License from the author’s collection)

### *Final Thoughts on the Landscape Evolution Model*

In summary, family attractions may have been associated with the beginnings of the family-car and baby boom generations. As cars became affordable for middle-class America and as road conditions improved to allow longer road trips and vacations, family-friendly attractions became a natural evolutionary step. The baby-boom era only

added fuel to the fire as families became larger and more mobile. Eventually, a nation on the move spent less time on family vacations and moved towards the quick and convenient. Photo opportunities became the next phase of figures on the landmark. With this new evolutionary step, a new problem arose: *how to convince visitors to spend more time in the area?* The answer, at least for the time being, is recreation-based tourism. How long this most recent evolutionary step will remain a viable part of the landscape remains to be seen. However, there are clues as to the longevity of specific features of the landscape. Restoration: *Permanence* is the topic of the next section.

### **Restoration: Permanence**

Previous studies have shown how multi-media can create images of regions within the public's imagination (Meinig 1979b; Shortridge 1991; Blake 1995; Bowen 1997; DeLyser 2001; Borash 2003; DeLyser 2003; Kim and Richardson 2003). Once several Paul Bunyan landmarks had been established, outsiders began referencing Paul Bunyan as being from the Northwoods or the Northwoods being the home of Paul Bunyan which in turn strengthened the perception that the one belonged to the other and vice versa. Today, references made to the Northwoods often begin with a reference to Paul Bunyan. Examples include articles written on sporting events set in the region (**Figure 5.20**) as well as popular movies set place in the region (i.e. *Fargo*). The later example is noteworthy in that the producers of the 1996 Oscar-nominated Best Picture felt it necessary to add a statue of Paul Bunyan as well as a Blue Ox Motel, neither of which exist, to create an accurate sense of place for Brainerd in the movie.

**Following Page: Model 5.2** Permanence on the Landscape. The model outlines the 3 different levels of permanence of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox features on the landscape with examples from the Northwoods.

**MODEL 5.2: PERMANENCE ON THE LANDSCAPE**  
*(NORTHWOODS' EXAMPLES)*

**REGIONAL**

**Public Entities (State and National)**

*(Includes items listed at other levels)*

Description: *Features that are very unlikely to change*

Location: *Found exclusively in the Northwoods*

- Paul Bunyan State Forest (MN)
- Paul Bunyan's Axe (UM vs. UW)
- Paul Bunyan Trophy (MSU vs. UM)
- Paul Bunyan State Trail (MN)
- Blue Ox Trail (MN)
- Paul Bunyan Expressway (MN)
- Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway (MN)
- Round River ATV Trail (MN)

**COMMUNITY**

**Businesses, Festivals, Sports Team, or Public Entity (Municipal)—3 of the 4 items existing**

*(Note: Businesses—multiple businesses named after Paul or Babe (or other characters) unrelated to tree service, logging, or woodwork; Festivals—festivals of 50+ years)*

Description: *Long lasting impressions that seldom change*

Location: *Examples are found in Minnesota, Maine<sup>1</sup>, and California*

- Paul Bunyan Days (MN)
- Sweetheart Days (MN)
- Brainerd Blue Thunder (MN)
- Paul Bunyan Drive (MN, ONT)
- Paul Bunyan Park (MN)

**INDIVIDUAL**

**Business, Festival, or Imagery**

Description: *Features on the landscape that can change with new ownership or waning public support*

Location: *Found in a number of states and provinces*

- Paul Bunyan's Corner Pub (WI)
- Paul Bunyan Sled Dog Challenge (MN)



**Figure 5.20:** A Sports Illustrated article highlighting a United States hopefuls in the 2002 Winter Olympics. The article reads: “LOCAL LEGEND says that Paul Bunyan was born in Bemidji, Minn., and that the state’s numerous lakes were formed in his footprints and those of his companion, Babe the Blue Ox. These days Cassie (above), 24, and Jamie Johnson, 25, two sisters from Bemidji, are leaving their marks on the curling world...” (Sports Illustrated 6 February 2006 (67)). Articles on Bemidji and Brainerd commonly reference Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox.

Even with the local popularity of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, questions regarding their place in the future of the Northwoods’ landscape remain. *What will Paul Bunyan’s role be in the future? Will Paul Bunyan be found on the landscape in the future? If so, which features are likely to be lasting images? Are there existing clues that point to what we may find in the future?* Prospects for the permanence of features on the landscape, the topic of this section, are outlined in **Model 5.2**. Within the model, businesses counted at all levels of permanence include establishments named after Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox (or other friends) that are unrelated to logging, tree service, or woodwork. Festivals included in the model need only to include the name “Paul Bunyan” or “Blue Ox” or directly celebrate one the folklore characters (or related



friends) such as with Hackensack’s Sweetheart Days. Finally, private and public landscape features are evaluated for their level of influence.

### ***Level of Permanence: Individual***

The most basic level of permanence, the *individual* level, coincides with the nodal level of influence discussed previously. Individual examples of permanence include individual businesses, festivals, and imagery (Figure 5.21). Private businesses will change hands eventually and future business owners are not obligated to retain names such as “Paul Bunyan” or “Blue Ox”. Colten (1997, 73) writes, “Business names are more ephemeral, while place names tend to be more durable.” Even so, the importance of such establishments should not be ignored as businesses and signage can often have a profound impact in shaping local perceptions of place (Weightman 1988, Colten 1997, Schnell 2003).



**Figure 5.21:** Isolated businesses, such as Minocqua, Wisconsin’s Paul Bunyan’s Northwoods Cook Shanty, are found within the individual level of permanence. Establishments, festivals, and imagery named after the folklore characters of the lumberjacks can be found in a majority of states and provinces. (Photo by author)

On a similar note, festivals can also come and go (Butler 1980), but are more likely to face the public's disapproval if a name is chosen that is not representative of the community. Smaller, non-community-wide events that cater to a specific targeted group, such as Hackensack's Sweetheart Canoe Derby or Bemidji's Paul Bunyan International Hockey Tournament<sup>2</sup>, are more likely to wane in the public's interest than larger, community-wide events, such as Hackensack's Sweetheart Days or Akeley's Paul Bunyan Days. However, targeting a smaller audience is no guarantee that a festival will not succeed and remain popular as with Wilton, Minnesota's Paul Bunyan Sled Dog Challenge, which blends two popular local identities: Paul Bunyan and sled dog racing, has endured through the years (it should be noted that the 34<sup>th</sup> annual race was held in 2007). Lastly, as noted, imagery of Paul Bunyan or Babe can be found in a number of states and provinces (usually in statue form). In my landscape study, several provinces and a majority of states contained Paul Bunyan statues (often accompanied by Babe). These features, much like businesses and festivals, can also influence local perceptions of place (Lowenthal 1979).

### ***Level of Permanence: Community***

The second level of permanence, *community*, can be found in areas with multiple-business listings for Paul Bunyan or the Blue Ox, long-established community festivals celebrating the folklore characters of the woods, local sports teams, and public entities named after one or both of the giants. When tallying communities possessing 3 of the 4 mentioned items, this level of permanence is found exclusively in the minor and major nuclei identified. Counting multiple businesses is significant since it limits the impacts of relocation diffusion. As noted, the existence of businesses named after the Blue Ox in

Las Vegas, Nevada, was caused by an individual moving from Minnesota to the desert city. Such exceptions become more rare if multiple businesses are necessary to be included at this level of permanence (Figures 5.22 & 5.23).



**Figure 5.22:** Brainerd, Minnesota's Blue Ox Bar. Within the Northwoods, such establishments are common, especially within the core region. In addition to the Blue Ox Bar, the towns of Brainerd and Baxter have a number of items named after Paul and Babe including Paul Bunyan Land, Paul Bunyan Nature Center, and Paul Bunyan Bowling. (Photo by author)



**Figure 5.23:** Private establishments, such as Akeley, Minnesota's Blue Ox Market often add to the local perceptions of place as they are highly visible. (Photo by author)

Festivals that have been celebrated for more than 50 years are also included at this level. Three festivals fall into this category: Paul Bunyan Days in Akeley, Minnesota, Paul Bunyan Days in Fort Bragg, California, and Sweetheart Days in Hackensack,

Minnesota<sup>3</sup>. Long running festivals are more likely to represent established perceptions of place than those introduced recently.



**Figures 5.24 & Figure 5.25:** Local public landscape features named after Paul and Babe, such as Bemidji, Minnesota’s Paul Bunyan Park and Nevis, Minnesota’s Bunyan Trails Road, are classified at the Community level of permanence and are found in only three regions of North America: Maine, Pacific West Coast, and Northwoods. (Photos by author)

Similar to the naming of community events discussed at the *Individual* level, local residents must also identify with the names of area sports teams if they are to be supported and succeed. Names of college, semi-professional, and professional teams that have existed include the Brainerd Blue Thunder (2005-Present—summer collegiate baseball), Minnesota Blue Ox (1994-1995, 1998-1999—inline hockey), and Bangor Blue Ox (1996-1997—semi-professional baseball). Teams, such as those listed, are likely to change every few years by the nature of their leagues. However, they do offer a glimpse of regional identity, especially if a theme is repeated. For example, as noted, the Bangor Blue Ox only played for two seasons: 1996-1997. A second team with a similar theme, the Bangor Lumberjacks, played ball during the 2003 and 2004 seasons, suggesting a strong regional sense of identity to logging themes<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, public features existing at the municipal level, such as streets or parks, are included at this level. Such landscape features are less likely to change their names than

privately owned operations, in part due to the nature of government bureaucracy (Figure 5.24 & 5.25).

### *Level of Permanence: Regional*

The third and final level of permanence, *regional*, includes state and national landscape features. This level differs from the previous, *community*, in that public Paul Bunyan features can and do exist in individual communities, but are unlikely to be present at the state or national level unless high levels of popularity and support are found with the region's residents. This level of permanence corresponds to the major nuclei level of importance with the only examples being found in the Northwoods region.



**Figures 5.26 & 5.27:** State, regional, and national landscape features named after Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox, such as Minnesota's Paul Bunyan State Trail and Paul Bunyan State Forest, are only found within the Northwoods. Such landscape features rank as the highest level of permanence. (Photos by author)

Examples of state and regional public entities named after the two folklore characters include Paul Bunyan State Forest, Paul Bunyan Expressway, Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway, Blue Ox Trail, and Paul Bunyan State Trail (Map 5.1, Figures 5.26 & 5.27, Table 5.3). All the above-mentioned landscape items are found within, or extending from, the Northwoods' major nuclei (see Map 6.1). The naming of such items within the Northwoods is fitting given the significance of Akeley's Red River Lumber Company's



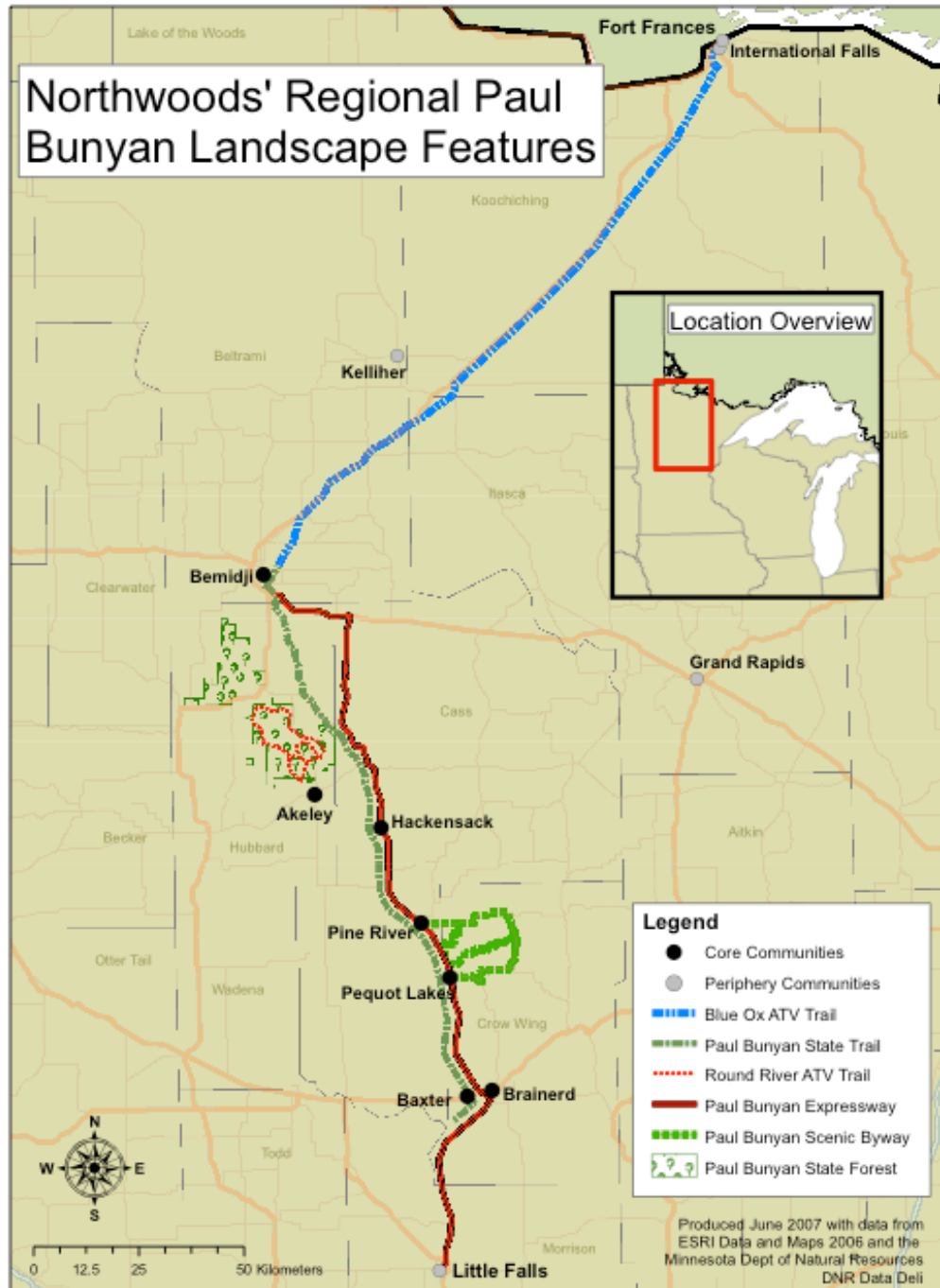
Paul Bunyan advertising campaign and Bemidji’s popular Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox statues. In an interview with the author, Terry McGaughey (2007) remembers using *Paul Bunyan* was originally a marketing ploy to “give the project an identity”, but adds “no one disputed or argued the name”. Jill McGaughey (Paul Bunyan Trail) writes that when it came to naming the state trail for her father, who had worked so hard to make a reality, there existed no name more appropriate than Paul Bunyan.

“The name chosen for the trail resonates with strong local significance. Paul Bunyan is a legendary logger who has lived in print form since the early 1900s. Both Brainerd-Baxter and Bemidji, the communities that cap the trail at the south and north ends, have well known tourist attractions with prominent Paul Bunyan themes. In each town stands a giant statue of the mighty logger. Initially, the idea of the trail seemed as much of a tall tale as Paul himself, and supporters knew it would take a Paul-sized effort to achieve it.”

**TABLE 5.3: NORTHWOODS’ REGIONAL LANDSCAPE ITEMS**

<b>LANDSCAPE ITEM</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
Paul Bunyan State Forest	1935
Paul Bunyan’s Axe <i>(University of Minnesota vs. University of Wisconsin)</i>	1948
Paul Bunyan-Governor of Michigan Trophy <i>(Michigan State University vs. University of Michigan)</i>	1953
Paul Bunyan Special Collection of the Children’s Literature Research Collection <i>(University of Minnesota)</i>	1960
Paul Bunyan State Trail	1988 (Approved) 1992 (Opened)
Blue Ox ATV Trail	1991 (Approved/Opened)
Paul Bunyan Expressway	1991
Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway	1998 (State) 2005 (National)
Round River ATV Trail <i>(Paul Bunyan State Forest)</i>	2001

**Table 5.3:** State and national landscape features<sup>5</sup> named after Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox are only found within the Northwoods. Years are listed for when each item was first introduced. The large number of items approved since the mid-1980s suggests a growing recognition in the importance of Paul and Babe to the Northwoods region.



**Map 5.1: Northwoods' Regional Paul Bunyan Landscape Features:** Map 5.1 identifies regional Paul Bunyan landscape features found near the Northwoods' major nucleus. Although Paul Bunyan landscape features were officially introduced with Paul Bunyan State Forest in 1935, the area added a number of regional landscape features in the late 1980s through the 1990s reaching a new level of prominence in 2005 when the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway was recognized as a National Scenic Byway (route overlaps the Minnesota Scenic Byway designation) (see also **Table 5.4**). (Map by Thomas Vought)

Fittingly, several major regional sporting events on the edge of the Northwoods' represent the popularity of Paul Bunyan. Michigan State University and the University of Michigan football teams have played for the Paul Bunyan Paul Bunyan-Governor of Michigan Trophy since 1953. Meanwhile, the University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin football teams have played for Paul Bunyan's Axe since 1948 with the score recorded on the axe handle and given to that year's winner (previously, they had played for the Slab of Bacon—a large piece of wood with an “M” or “W” carved into it (depending on which way you viewed it)). The Badgers proudly display the trophy at the entrance to the team's locker room as a motivational source for the players. Aubrey Pleasant (2007), a junior on the team, commented, “It's tradition. I like how you can look at it and see the history” while teammate Luke Swan (2007), a fifth year student from Fennimore, Wisconsin, added, “I went to the games as a kid...and remember players running around the field with the axe...it (the axe) definitely intensifies the rivalry.” “It's a big deal!” commented Callmer St. Jean (2007), a first year student, and added, “It represents bragging rights for a year!”

Finally, the first national feature was added to the landscape in 2005 when Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway (which has held state of Minnesota designation as a scenic byway since 1998), was dedicated as a National Scenic Byway (now *American Byway*). Lynn Scharenbroich (2007), who worked on the federal byway designation, explains that a National Scenic Byway must play a role on the local, regional, and national levels. Recognition on the local and regional levels may not come as a surprise as there are a number of examples of Paul Bunyan landscape items throughout the Northwoods.



However, recognition on the national level suggests people from outside the Northwoods also associate Paul Bunyan with the region.

Collectively, these landscape features set the Northwoods and the Northwoods' core region in a league of its own when identifying Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox regions of North America. As suggested with the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway, there is a level of recognition with the name *Paul Bunyan* on the local, regional, and national levels (Scharenbroich 2007). *But do these examples prove a strong sense of regional identity or are they a matter of forced identity?* The question of regional identity will be addressed in the next section—Restoration: *Identity*.

### **Restoration: Identity**

The forested frontier of the northern Great Lakes is part of North America's great logging heritage (Williams 1989). Examples of communities celebrating this past are found throughout the region. As discussed in the previous sections, Paul Bunyan landscape items celebrating this logging heritage first began to appear across the Northwoods during the 1930s and have continued to evolve in nature and usage up to the present and will likely continue to do so in the future. Sopher (1979, 133) writes, "land at one scale or another serves as the chosen symbol of a people's being". Today, visitors are greeted by a wide array of items named for the lumberjack and his blue ox that, more often than not, do not directly, or even indirectly, reference the logging industry. Paul and Babe have come to be identified with everything from dog sledding and hockey tournaments to bowling alleys, ice cream parlors, and beauty salons.

References to Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox have strengthened the attachment of the giants to the Northwoods with residents and visitors alike. Akeley's Paul's Purple

Cow and Round River ATV Trail epitomize this point. Both new creations emphasize the importance of Paul Bunyan folklore with local residents. In my Internet study of Paul Bunyan North American landscape items and tours through the Northwoods (2004-2007), I found no other landscape items (other than Babe the Blue Ox) that were taken from early versions of the tales and stories—a finding that furthers the belief that local residents identify with the folktales and stories of Paul Bunyan. *Neolocalism*, “a deliberate seeking out of regional lore and local attachment by residents (new and old)” (Shortridge 1996, 10), may be a factor in the explanation of at least some of the popularity of the two logging giants, but would not explain the continued popularity through the years—a popularity that has, in many ways, increased.

Colten (1997, 69) notes in his vernacular study that business names “are an accurate gauge of the informal recognition of a region” and that interval tallying of such names “traces the type of business” that chose a particular name and, more importantly, the “establishment of a place identification” (60). He also adds the rise of listings in the business directories “initially reflected the designation of commemorative structures” (60). For my study, years ending in “7” were selected to compare how the names have grown in popularity since Bemidji’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox were introduced in January of 1937—an introduction, as noted, largely popularized by a *Life* magazine article (February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1937). **Table 5.4** shows the use of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox as business names in the Bemidji and Brainerd areas (Bemidji: *Polk City Directory* 1927, 1937, 1946, 1949, 1956, 1958, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997, Brainerd: *Polk City Directory* 1927, 1937, 1946, 1949, 1957, 1967, 1977, 1987, 1997, Superpages.com, Switchboard). For the years reviewed, no businesses existed in the two communities in 1927 or 1937

that took advantage of the names even though statues of the giants existed in Brainerd and the name “Paul Bunyan” had been used for a handful of festivals in the region (Dorson 1976). Since then, however, the totals have grown steadily (with one minor exception for 1987)<sup>1</sup> with more businesses now named after the folk giants than ever before.

YEAR	BEMIDJI		BRAINERD		TOTALS
	PAUL BUNYAN	BLUE OX	PAUL BUNYAN	BLUE OX	
1927	0	0	0	0	0
1937	0	0	0	0	0
1947	2	0	2	0	4
1957	6	0	2	0	8
1967	6	1	4	0	11
1977	6	2	5	2	15
1987	6	1	4	3	14
1997	9	0	4	2	15
2007	12	0	5	1	18

**Table 5.4:** Tables for Bemidji and Brainerd, Minnesota, showing the popularity of Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox as business names. Years ending in “7” were selected to compare how the names have grown in popularity since Bemidji’s Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox were introduced in January of 1937. Data was compiled using the Polk City Directory for the given years with data from the closest years available used for years in which no directory exists (Bemidji 1946, 1949, 1956, 1958, Brainerd 1946, 1949).

Colten (1997, 56) explains, “A cluster of place names that recognize a local topographic feature or a significant individual” often represent “a shared identity”. Lynn Scharenbroich (2007) remembers that when the scenic byway group she was working with was searching for a name, *Paul Bunyan* was a natural fit since it was “assigned to a number of items in the region already”<sup>2</sup>. *But do the landscape representations of a lumberjack and his blue ox accurately reflect the sentiments of the people or are they examples of a forced identity?* Frenkel and Walton (2000) found communities that embrace a theme (often in an attempt to attract visitors to the region) sometimes do so at

the expense of local residents. Is this the case in the Northwoods? Have local leaders taken icons from the logging camps and placed them on the landscape regardless of local perceptions? Or is there evidence that representations of the folk giants accurately reflect the regional identity of general populace? This section explores the popularity of using Paul and the Blue Ox in a celebration of regional identity and the attachment residents have to related landscape items.

*Celebrating Regional Identity: Paul Bunyan Days and Sweetheart Days*



**Figures 5.28:** Children search through sawdust for coins at Paul Bunyan Days (2006) in Akeley. A logging or wood theme did not dominate the festivities, but this mattered little to locals who turned out in large numbers to celebrate the community. (Photo by author)

Two of northern Minnesota's longest running festivals, Akeley's Paul Bunyan Days and Hackensack's Sweetheart Days, remain popular community celebrations after 50 years sharing many things in common. For example, both Paul Bunyan Days and Sweetheart Days have events completely unrelated to logging, activities geared for children, and culminate in a parade. Paul Bunyan Days includes such things as an ice cream eating contest, kids' parade, and carnival rides while Sweetheart Days includes a

golf tournament, flea market, and fishing contest for kids (Figures 5.28, 5.29, & 5.30). Anne Tarantino (2007), who I interviewed during Paul Bunyan Days, described the three-day event as a classic bit of Americana: “This is like being thrown back 40 years...everybody knows everybody.” Her friend, Mary Schwartz (2007), added, “It’s all about family; I think it’s great!”



**Figures 5.29:** Children rush to sign-up for the ice cream eating contest at Paul Bunyan Days (2006) in Akeley, Minnesota. The contest was very popular with children and adults alike. Similar events without a historical tie to logging dominate Paul Bunyan Days. (Photo by author)



**Figures 5.30:** Fishing contest for children during Sweetheart Days (2006) in Hackensack, Minnesota. Although the community hosts fishing contests throughout the summer, the one during Sweetheart Days is the most popular and best attended (Hackensack Chamber of Commerce). (Photo by author)



**Figure 5.31:** Local residents and visitors alike gather at Paul’s Patio in Memorial Park near the Paul Bunyan Statue in Akeley. Those in attendance for the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Paul Bunyan Days enjoyed food, beverage, and events throughout the day and into the night. (Photo by author)

The festivals are much more than opportunities for communities to attract visitors; they exist as annual opportunities for friends and family to reconnect over the years (Figure 5.31) and strengthen a sense of belonging. As De Bres and Davis (2001, 327) explain, festivals can “perform a very useful community service, by enhancing both group and place identity”. But for the festival to be successful, it is important that the event(s) accurately reflect local perceptions. As noted, the continued popularity of a festival is often dependant, in part, on the name chosen for the event; the entire community must support and identify with such a name—an unpopular name selection or one that does not resonate with the local population will not endure. Jerry (2007) and Gary (2007) recall that the name, *Paul Bunyan Days*, was a popular choice from the onset. According to Gary, “Paul Bunyan was still a big deal in school back then.” In more than twenty interviews conducted during the 2007 Paul Bunyan Days, all who were questioned, even those who were not around for the first celebration in 1949, agreed that *Paul Bunyan* was, and is, a fitting name choice (Figure 5.32).





**Figures 5.32:** Picture from the Kiddie Parade during Paul Bunyan Days (2006). The parade had a number of entrees with prizes for the best dressed and most original. A personal favorite, “Bailey, the Blue Ox”, welcomed all and enjoyed the attention as much as the children themselves. Examples such as this exemplify the ties local residents feel towards Paul and Babe. (Photo by author)

### ***Recognizing Regional Identity: Woodtick Theater and Blue Thunder***

“The place where we live tells us who we are” (Lane 1998, 10) and we therefore relate most to those who perceive our surroundings in a similar manner as we do. When people move to a new region, they often become acutely aware of regional variations of identity. Broadway (1989, 56) explains, “if people do not feel that they are going to stay in a community for a long period of time there is little likelihood of their making an effort to develop ties to the area”. For those who plan to stay, many adopt local identities as their own.

In 1991, Mike and Cindy Chase (2007) moved from the Twin Cities to the small town of Akeley. Five years later when they bought the Woodtick Theater (a seasonal musical theatre that comes complete with a properly dressed usher), the Chases believed it was important to connect with the local population. They chose Paul Bunyan as a

means of relating to their quests, but were unsure what to expect in terms of recognition of the lumberjack. In their first season, Mike placed a giant keyboard along one of the walls in recognition of Paul Bunyan’s role in Akeley (Figure 5.33). Originally, Mike explained the reasoning for having the larger-than-life keyboard and drumsticks (which were added a couple of years later) to the audience, but he soon discovered this was unnecessary—visitors to the theatre were well aware of Paul’s role in the community. As Mike (2007) explains, “They (the audience) just understood it was Paul’s”.



**Figure 5.33:** Mike Chase, owner of the Akeley, Minnesota’s Woodtick Theater—located two blocks north of the giant statue. Mike, standing next to Paul Bunyan’s keyboard, found explaining the display to the audience was unnecessary as, “They just understood it was Paul’s” (2007). (Photo by author)

Skip Marr (2007), owner of a summer collegiate baseball team in Brainerd, moved to northern Minnesota from California shortly after buying the team in 2004 and remembers that one of his first tasks was to rename the team since the previous name, the Mighty Gulls, had not connected with locals. To start anew, he decided to run a name-entry contest in the local *Brainerd Dispatch* (newspaper) offering free tickets for life for the person entering the winning entry. Skip explains that he had no clear idea what he wanted, but “wanted something that came from the area” and adds, “Paul Bunyan was a



natural fit.” The Brainerd Blue Thunder, a team that fittingly plays in the Northwoods League, uses a pitching Blue Ox as its mascot (**Figure 5.34**). When asked about the popularity of the mascot, Skip notes that he has received nothing but positive feedback.



**Figure 5.34:** “Can you feel the Thunder?” Brainerd, Minnesota’s summer collegiate baseball team plays ball in the Northwoods League. Skip Marr (2007), owner of the Blue Thunder, notes when he was coming up with a new name for the team that he wanted “something that came from the area” and “Paul Bunyan was a natural fit.” (Image from Brainerd Blue Thunder)

The owners of Akeley’s Woodtick Theater and Brainerd’s Blue Thunder are examples of individuals, who originally came from areas outside of the Northwoods, recognizing the regional importance of Paul Bunyan and are vital in building and strengthening regional identity. Through the years, such items collectively become a part of what we most closely identify with. As will be explained, changes to what we have come to identify with can often become emotional ordeals for local residents.

### ***Enduring Images of Regional Identity:***

#### ***Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan and Bemidji’s “Save Babe!” Campaign***

Feelings of belonging can be strong and are often best reflected when changes occur to a landscape we have come to identify with. Changes to the landscape can cause memories of childhood, family, and friends to surface creating an atmosphere for emotional charged debates (Lowenthal 1979). When Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan Center announced plans to move the park’s giant statue, a feature that had become a well-known

item on the Northwoods' landscape, it created an uproar locally with newspapers and television stations from around the country reporting on the controversy (Borash 2003). In a phone interview with the director and producer of a forthcoming 2007 documentary on the Paul Bunyan phenomena of the United States and Canada, Daniel Taradash (2007) remembers the reporting of the event: "What makes a story about a small kiddy park national news? Paul Bunyan was an adopted son of Brainerd" and states local residents collectively cried out "*Paul Bunyan built this town! You just can't let him go!*" The threat of the landmark leaving the state was so important that Minnesota's governor, Tim Pawlenty, traveled to Brainerd in an attempt to keep the statues from leaving the state (*The Bemidji Pioneer* 25 June 2003, 1).



**Figure 5.35:** Brainerd's famous talking Paul Bunyan was moved in 2003 after spending 53 years at the junction of Minnesota State Highways 210 and 371. A department store now sits where the amusement park entertained thousands of visitors for over the years. Footprints in the parking lot still mark the spot where the fold giant sat indicating the local (and regional) importance Paul Bunyan has on the area. (Photo by author)

Local residents were able to breathe a sigh of relief when it was announced the statue was to remain in the area<sup>3</sup>, However, Paul's move across town was troubling and disturbing for many. Rana Nestrud (2007), who spends her summers in the Brainerd area

with her husband, Tim, and two children, Mikk and Mara, was interviewed at a Blue Thunder game and remembers the scene seemed sacrilegious, “When they moved Paul they had him laid down on a truck with a bag over his head.” Even several years after the move, local sentiments remain strong and the department store that took Paul’s place is still viewed with a suspicious eye. In recognition of the emotional ties locals had to the lumberjack, the department store memorialized Paul’s former residence with giant footprints marking the years of his display (Figure 5.35). Even so, one local resident (2007) commented, “There are people to this day that will not shop (there) because of that (the forced move).”

A couple of years later, when Babe was in need of repairs, Bemidji residents made sure the Blue Ox did not suffer a similar fate. Whether or not memories of Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan move across town played a role is a matter of speculation<sup>3</sup>, but Bemidji residents began a local campaign to “Save Babe!” (Figure 5.36). The campaign sought to raise \$100,000 in order to make needed repairs to the local landmark. In an interview with *The Bemidji Pioneer* (23 February 2005), Warren Larson, former Rotary Club president and member of the Save Babe Committee, states, “Paul and Babe has been a Bemidji icon for 70 years” and adds “People relate Paul and Babe to Bemidji, so it’s something we need to take care of.” The campaign was a success after two years of fund raising and Babe received the repairs needed in May of 2007 to preserve the landmark for future generations.



**Figures 5.36:** “*SAVE BABE!*” image that was used during a successful local campaign to raise funds to repair Bemidji’s famous statue. (Image from the Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce)

Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan and Bemidji’s Babe the Blue Ox are examples of how strong feelings of attachment can become between local residents and landmarks, especially when the landmarks are representative of the region. In the first example, feelings were most strongly expressed only when it became apparent a move was inevitable for Brainerd’s Paul Bunyan. In the second, local residents raised the needed support to preserve Bemidji’s Blue Ox for future generations. Both landmark examples are strongly embraced within the region. As Lowenthal (1979, 109) explains, “When we recognize an historical object or locale, we...celebrate its setting, herald its existence in print, protect or restore it”.

### ***Widespread Regional Identity:***

#### ***Examples from outside the Northwoods’ Major Nuclei***

Northern Minnesota is not the only location to embrace the logging era as lumberjacks (and Paul Bunyan) are still celebrated throughout the region. Festivals from Quebec to Minnesota celebrate this common heritage, with logging and lumberjack museums, festivals, and competitions. Kapuskasing, a small town in northern Ontario,

hosts the annual Lumberjack Heritage Festival—a festival that ranks as one of the 50 largest in the province (out of 3500) (Kapusksasing Lumberjack Heritage Festival). According to Emily Boulianne (2007), who works at Kapuskasing’s tourist information center, the reason for the annual festival is quite obvious to locals: “We celebrate our heritage as lumberjacks.” When asked if Paul Bunyan has a role in representing the area, Mathew Gauthier (2007), who also works at the information center, spoke up, “*Of course!* Paul Bunyan was a lumberjack!”

There are a number of examples of Paul Bunyan representing the Northwoods in addition to those found within the major nuclei. Often times, they are small and rather subtle, such as with a front yard ornaments or restaurant menu. For example, the small town of Farwell, located on Michigan’s Lower Peninsula, hosts an annual lumberjack festival during the last week of July and is home to the Rustic River and Lumberjack Café. The café’s menu offers food items such as the “Chainsaw Caesar” (salad) and “Axe Grinder” (sandwich) in addition to drinks such as “Babe’s Berry Blend” (specialty mocha) and “Paul Bunyan’s Pralines ‘n’ Cream Latte” (latte). In a conversation with the owner of the café, Matt Averill (2007), he commented that the naming of the café and items on the menu seemed a natural fit, “Lumberjacking’s pretty big around here, you know”.

Hart (1995) emphasizes the importance of talking with locals while conducting qualitative studies as they can often offer information and perspectives unknown to outsiders and would be impossible to obtain otherwise. As I drove through the Northwoods, I occasionally made random stops to inquire about local Paul Bunyan or Blue Ox landscape items. One such stop was made at Escanaba, Michigan’s 8<sup>th</sup> Street

Coffee House. Gary “Yucker” Dunlop (2007), who starred in 2001’s *Escanaba in da Moonlight* and a regular at the coffee house, was able to direct me to Paul’s slingshot located just north of town. When I asked the owner, Rob Romero, if he knew of any additional Paul Bunyan items, he told me to turn around. There, hanging on the wall, was a photo of the building from the 1930s displaying a large sign reading “Paul Bunyan’s Camp”. When I commented on the odds of stopping by a café with such a picture, Rob was not surprised. According to Rob (2007), “A lot of my customers are lumberjacks...Paul Bunyan is a recognizable part of the local lore” and added, “My grandfather used to work with him.”

Tom Cieciorca (2007), the artist in charge of repairing and restoring Ossineke, Michigan’s Paul and Babe statues, stated in an interview that he receives daily comments from people driving by and those who stop to take a picture. “A number of people yell out as they drive by ‘*Yeah, Babe!*’ or comment (when they stop) ‘He really needs it—thanks for doing this. It means a lot to us.’”

As might be expected, some of the stops during my visits were much more productive than others. When I stopped by Iroquois Falls, Ontario’s Pioneer Museum and asked Alexa Wollan (2007), a museum worker, about local Paul Bunyan or Blue Ox landscape items, she responded, “Let’s see if we have anything over here.” I immediately began to mentally prepare myself to be handed a Paul Bunyan coloring book. Similar to Pini (2004), I had begun to recognize responses that would lead to information or stories being shared that were of little use. However, much to my surprise, Wollan pulled out a file full of newspaper clippings reporting on the town’s giant Blue Ox that had been used in parades during the 1950s (and had lasted until the

1970s). A few minutes later, she shared Paul's axe that had been carried by a local volunteer alongside the Blue Ox during the parades. Wollan was a wealth of information as she explained how the town had recently considered resurrecting a new Blue Ox for the annual Christmas parade—information and insight I would have been unable to obtain had I not asked locally.

### Final Thoughts on the Era of Restoration



**Figure 5.37:** Although not included in Model 5.2, individuals play a vital role in shaping local perceptions of place. A number of individuals proved to be very knowledgeable of Paul Bunyan and how his or her community celebrated the lumberjack. Especially noteworthy are David Borash of Brainerd, who wrote his Master's Thesis on Brainerd's Paul Bunyan, and Nels Kramer (above) of Akeley, owner of Bunyan's Convenience and Paul's Cabin (a private museum dedicated to Akeley's logging and Paul Bunyan heritage)<sup>5</sup>. Both Borash and Kramer proved to be very helpful in my research of the Northwoods' landscape. (Photo by author)

From the early origins in Brainerd and Bemidji, Minnesota, Paul Bunyan and his faithful friend, Babe's role has expanded from a couple of sets of statues and festivals created to celebrate the logging era and attract visitors to more ordinary everyday items including Paul Bunyan Telephone, Blue Ox Market, and college football trophies. Collectively, these items create and, more importantly, *represent* a strong sense of regional identity based largely on a common logging heritage both past and present.

Statues, independently owned businesses, and festivals that honor the two giants of the woods will continue to change in years to come. Even so, future generations in the Northwoods are likely to continue celebrating Paul Bunyan the Blue Ox given the prominence of regional landscape features, educational signage and displays found in the area's libraries and museums (as with the University of Minnesota's Paul Bunyan Collection of the Children's Literature Research Collections and Grand Rapid, Minnesota's Forest History Center), continued importance of logging in the local economy, and local individual efforts including those of Akeley's Nels Kramer (Figure 5.37) and Bemidji's A.J. Fossen (Figure 5.38).



**Figures 5.38:** “Paul Bunyan” (Bemidji’s A.J. Fossen) shares stories from the woods with Bemidji elementary school students. Although difficult to assess the future ramifications, Paul Bunyan Logging Camp’s interactive displays, Paul Bunyan Land’s playground setting, and local visits by “Paul Bunyan” all have an impact on the next generation’s perception of Paul Bunyan and his importance to the Northwoods. (Picture on display in the Bemidji Tourist Information Center—Photo by author)

The focus of this discussion has been on the Northwoods’ major nuclei including the communities of Akeley, Bemidji, Brainerd, Hackensack, Pine River, and Pequot Lakes, but a similar examination of the importance of Paul and Babe could have also been applied to other parts of the region including Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley in Wisconsin (Williams 1989), a major logging center of historical importance, and the



towns of Osinekee and Oscoda, Michigan, the latter community holds the claim to the oldest known story of Paul Bunyan in print (Hoffmann 1999). Whether or not these or other communities will emerge as Paul Bunyan nuclei is the subject of much speculation—future research is needed.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

*“PAUL BUNYAN  
BORN 1794  
DIED 1899*

*HERE LIES PAUL, AND THAT’S ALL.”*

*Paul Bunyan’s Headstone, Paul Bunyan Memorial Park, Kelliher, Minnesota*

The Northwoods are the heart of Paul Bunyan Country. This study has shown how a little known folktale of the lumberjacks popularized by a lumber company came to represent an era and a region. The historical geographic ties between the folklore of Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods are an important reason as to why Paul and Babe have been so popular through the years. The representation on the landscape of Paul Bunyan and his Blue Ox has evolved over the past seventy years from statues, festivals, and forest related activities to schools, highways, and bowling alleys. The ever-changing faces of Paul and Babe and strong attachment to the folklore throughout the region has helped in keeping the two popular through the years and will likely perpetuate the images of the folk giants for future generations.

### Summary of Findings

The primary questions of why Paul Bunyan is identified with the Northwoods and how the representation of the lumberjack has changed through the years is addressed in Chapter 4: Lore of the Northwoods and Chapter 5: Legendary Landscapes. As discussed, Paul Bunyan is most often identified with the Northwoods due to two reasons: *historical geographic ties to the folklore* and *historical landscape representations*. The historical geographic ties to the folklore are linked both to the logging camps (where the stories were told) and to the writers and storytellers who introduced Paul and his Blue Ox to a much larger audience. As explained, the folklore never reached universal popularity

within the logging camps, raising questions of authenticity in the process (Ames 1940). However, enough documentation exists to safely state tales of Paul Bunyan were told within the Northwoods' logging camps prior to publication (Stewart and Watt 1916; Gartenberg 1949; Hutchinson 1963; Dorson 1976; Hoffmann 1999). Additionally, the first publications came from the Northwoods (1906 and 1910—both in Michigan) and first mass publication of the folktales came from a Minnesota lumber company (Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999). MacGillivray, who lived and worked in Michigan, had reported he had heard tales similar to the one he published while visiting nearby logging camps (Hoffmann 1999). Likewise, W.B. Laughead, who worked for the Red River Lumber Company, had first heard the stories while working in the Northwoods' logging camps (Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999) and is credited with first introducing the two folklore characters to a larger national audience (Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999).

The historical landscape representations of Paul and Babe can be traced back to the Northwoods' core region. The towns of Brainerd and Bemidji, Minnesota originally helped create images of the folk heroes on the land in a celebration of a past golden age. With the assistance of mass media, they have been introduced to a larger audience. Because Paul Bunyan was not copyrighted by the Red River Lumber Company (Hutchinson 1963), residents of the Northwoods were able to *take back* the lumberjack as their own during the 1930s and 1940s (see **Tables 5.3 & 5.4**). The images of Paul and Babe evolved through the years and spread to a number of communities throughout the region. Through the influence of mass media, Paul and Babe are now so commonly identified with the Northwoods that one often acknowledges the two when referencing the region.

The first secondary question addresses the historic geography of Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods and is discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The question is answered by exploring the migration of the logging industry and the lumberjacks across the continent, nature of the folktales, and locations of early recorded versions. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Maine, Quebec, and New Brunswick played pivotal roles in the development of the logging industry in North America. The logging industry would eventually migrate westward across the continent in search of virgin white pine forests, landing first in the Northwoods and later in the Pacific West Coast region (Newbit 1973; Blegen 1975; Radforth 1987; Hudson 1988; Karamanski 1989; Williams 1989; Hoffmann 1999). Lumberjacks crossed the international border on a regular basis by the time logging operations reached the Northwoods (Hudson 1988; Williams 1989) allowing technology, experiences, and stories to be shared between residents of the two countries. The style in which the folklore was shared (with Paul speaking with an accent) suggests a heavy French-Canadian influence (Laughead 1922; Tabor and Thompson 1946; Gartenberg 1949; Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999) and the locations in which early accounts were recorded shows that versions were known from coast-to-coast by the turn of the last century (Stewart and Watt 1916; Gartenberg 1949; Fowke 1976; Fowke 1979; Hoffmann 1999). Stories took on regional variations and likely influenced the overall development, however, individuals identified as being the “real life” Paul Bunyan are not creditable given the migration pattern of the lumberjacks (Hudson 1988; Williams 1989) and the time needed for such folklore to develop (Dorson 1976; Brunvand 1979; Hoffmann 1999). I have concluded the source is to be found with the French Canadians

or possibly with the Down Easters (the later being influenced by the former); the specific location of the first tales we will never know.

Although the folklore of Paul and his Blue Ox did not originate in the Northwoods, tales of the two were told and recorded in a number of the region's logging camps (Stewart and Watt 1916; Gartenberg 1949; Hutchinson 1963; Dorson 1976; Hoffmann 1999). The numerous accounts and versions of tales told and recorded in the camps suggest they had existed for some time (Dorson 1976; Brunvand 1979; Hoffmann 1999). As noted, MacGillivray (1906; 1910) is credited with the oldest known publications of Paul Bunyan while Laughead (1914; 1916; 1922) is recognized as the author who introduced him to a larger audience (Schiller 1998; Hoffmann 1999). The fact that both of these men had strong ties to the Northwoods (MacGillivray with Michigan and Laughead with Wisconsin and Minnesota) adds to the perception of Paul Bunyan belonging to the Northwoods.

Finally, the current ties of popular culture and marketing to Paul Bunyan and the Northwoods are such that acknowledging the folk giants of the woods is nearly necessary when referencing or promoting the region. As explained, articles and movies referring to the Northwoods often also refer to Paul and Babe. Local residents utilize this popularity with the general public when promoting their region going so far as to claim "Minnesota is...Paul Bunyan Country!" (see **Figure 1.2**).

The second question asked how J.B. Jackson's (1980) idea of a society passing through a three-state model is manifested on the Northwoods landscape with the use of Paul Bunyan. The history of the Northwoods' golden age of logging is described in Chapter 4: Lore of the Northwoods while the celebration of this golden age is detailed in

Chapter 5: Legendary Landscapes. The Northwoods' golden age took place during the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A brief time of neglect soon followed. The age of restoration, although a few years earlier than Jackson's (1980) model would suggest largely due to the Great Depression, would arise and continue to the present as the representation and use of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox was in a constant evolving state. Butler's (1980) model was used as a basis for a discussion of the evolving roles of Paul and Babe in the Northwoods. By continuously altering and adding to the look of the landscape, residents of the Northwoods have maintained the use and popularity of the woods' folk heroes. The present landscape is more than a simple promotional tool; it is a reflection of the regional values of Northwoods' residents.

By exploring these research questions, this study has added to the existing geographic literature on regional identity and perceptions of place. It has also added to the existing literature on the Northwoods and Paul Bunyan.

### **Limitations of the Study: Northwood's Core vs. Periphery**

The focus of my research has been on the Northwoods' core region, with its large number of landscape features depicting Paul and Babe both in name and in image. However, as shown throughout this study, a number of features exist throughout the region. The popularity of these items waxes and wanes given a specific time and place. In addition to Brainerd's Paul Bunyan and Hackensack's Paul, Jr., other examples exist of the folk giants being moved on the landscape. Hayward, Wisconsin, which hosts the Lumberjack World Championship, was also home to a Paul Bunyan restaurant located across the street from the competition until a few years ago. The business's new owners were under no obligation to retain the name and chose a different name for their

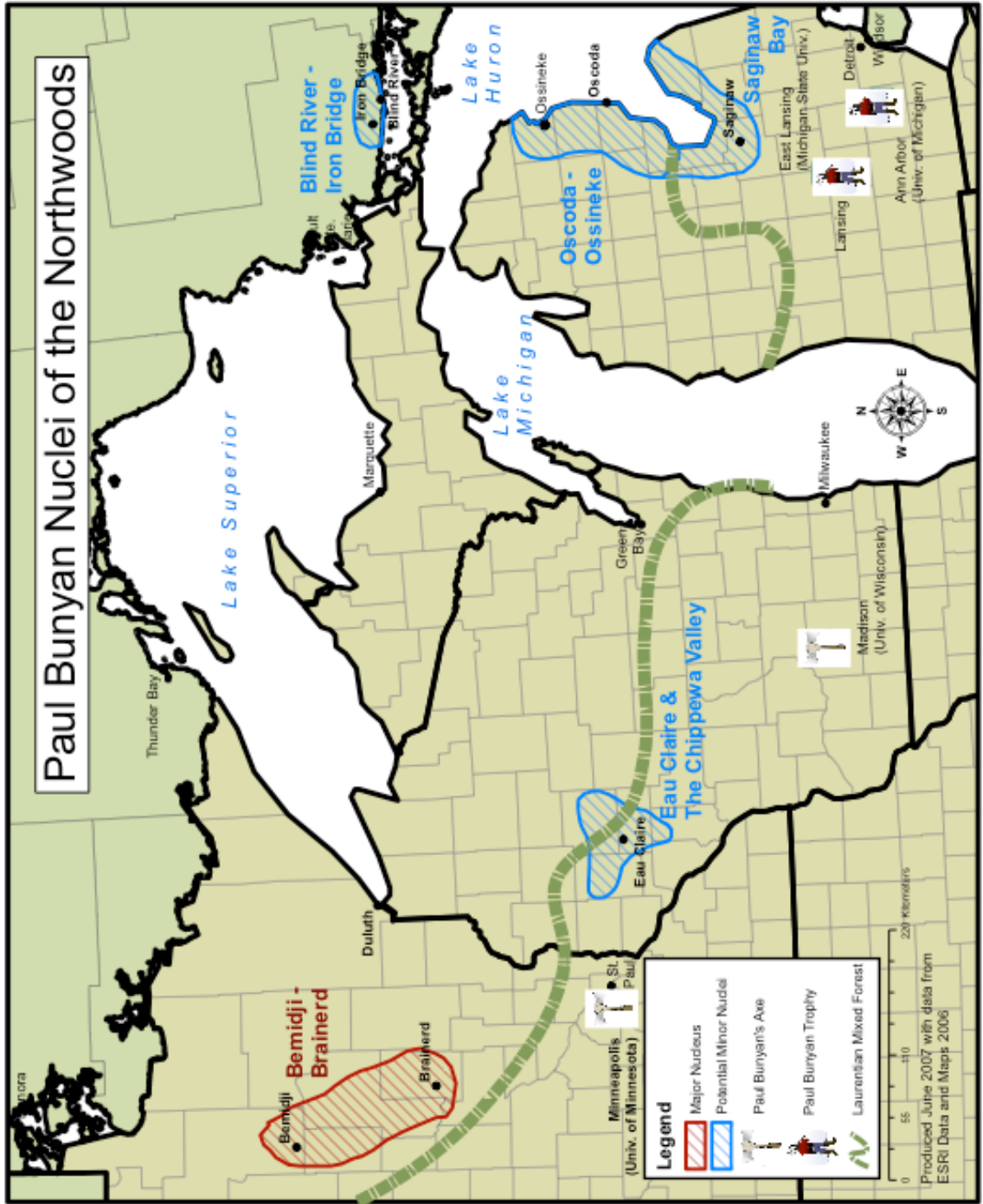
establishment. On rare occasions, Paul and Babe are seen as not being representative of a local community. Blind River, Ontario's Timber Village Museum's Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox statues had fallen into a state of disrepair by 2003. The museum, which had introduced the landscape features within a few years of the opening in 1967, decided Paul and Babe did not accurately reflect the local logging heritage and decided to have the two statues moved (Blind River Timber Village Museum) (Figure 6.1).

Thankfully, the statues have not disappeared from the landscape entirely—André Dore, a local resident, had the statues moved to his home just north of town.



**Figure 6.1:** A display of two 'river rats' working a logjam has replaced Paul and Babe outside Blind River's Timber Village Museum. Paul and Babe were relocated to a local residence north of town. (Photo by author)

Even as popularity of Paul and Babe in these areas outside the core wane, there are areas in which their legacy continues. For example, Iron Bridge, Ontario, placed Paul Bunyan's axe along Canadian Highway 17 in plain view to all who pass by around the same time the statues were removed from Blind River's Timber Village Museum (located only 20 km away from Iron Bridge). Additionally, the towns of Oscoda and Ossineke, Michigan, may be emerging as a minor nucleus within the Northwoods. Oscoda has



**Map 6.1:** Map 6.1 identifies the Paul Bunyan Nuclei within the Northwoods. In addition to the major nucleus found in northern Minnesota, 4 additional potential minor nuclei are identified as are regional university sporting events recognizing the importance of Paul Bunyan. As noted in Chapter 3, the Northwoods' vernacular region largely coincides with the southern limits of the Laurentian mixed forest. (Graphics by Jenny West, Map by Thomas Vought 2007)

recently added statues, area businesses, and a festival all in honor of the town's distinction of having published the oldest known tale of Paul Bunyan (Map 6.1).



Meanwhile, the township of Ossineke repaired and restored the township's Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox statues that were introduced in 1938.

### **Future Research and Applicability**

A great deal of the Northwoods' regional association with Paul and Babe has been discussed in this work, but there remains much to be explored. The Canadian periphery of the Northwoods presents itself as a prime future research endeavor. In my conversations with residents and museum staff on the Canadian side of the border, all but a few had heard of Paul Bunyan, but few thought of him (or the Blue Ox) as their own even though ample evidence exists to the contrary. A common response was "I think you need to go to Minnesota (or Michigan) to find Paul" (Anonymous sources 2005; 2006). Len Guelke (conversation with Karen De Bres (2007)) noted Canadians often reject items viewed as being *American* in culture therefore strengthening their own sense of identity. *Is this the case with Paul Bunyan? Do Canadians often ignore Paul and Babe because they see them as "American"?* Where one finds Paul Bunyan and Blue Ox items on the landscape and how these features play into the local sense of place would be an interesting study. Looking at the towns of Blind River and Iron Bridge seems a logical start. Another examination of Iroquois Falls, Ontario's Blue Ox statue (*will it be recreated?*) and Hearst, Ontario's giant two-man crosscut saw (*will it eventually be attributed to the lumberjack? (currently it is not) (Town of Hearst 2007)*) is also needed.

Other possibilities exist on the American side of the Northwoods. As mentioned, Ossineke and Oscoda, Michigan, may be emerging as a minor nucleus within the Northwoods. Ossineke, a small unincorporated community near Alpena, displays Paul and Babe statues that are among the oldest being introduced in 1938 and 1953

respectively. Oscoda is home to a giant Paul Bunyan statue and seems to be making a move towards celebrating Paul Bunyan more than it has in the past having hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Paul Bunyan Festival in 2006 (100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first printing); a festival, it should be noted, that includes chainsaw carving. Additionally, businesses named after Paul Bunyan are found in several neighboring counties. The Saginaw Bay area of Michigan currently does not contain any Paul Bunyan or Blue Ox landscape features. This is surprising given the influence the area had on the regional *and* national logging scene (Blegen 1975; Karamanski 1989; Hoffmann 1999). There have been suggestions for items to be added (Taradash 2007) making the thought of this area developing as an extension of the Oscoda-Ossineke nucleus or as an independent nucleus of prominence a realistic possibility. Further geographic studies are needed as the local landscape evolves in celebration of the region's golden age. On a similar note, Eau Claire and the Chippewa Valley seem poised to take advantage of the importance of logging within the area. Eau Claire's Paul Bunyan Logging Camp Museum is a well-established landmark and, along with Dunn County's Historical Society's Empire in Pine Museum located in nearby Menomonie, could potentially give birth to other landscape items such as festivals, sporting events, and businesses.

Hackensack's Lucette remains an interesting addition. Several community leaders (2006) explained to me that Lucette, rather than Paul, had been added to the local landscape since the towns of Bemidji and Brainerd already had Paul Bunyan landscape features. Wabeno, Wisconsin added *Larry the Logroller* instead of Paul Bunyan for similar reasons. *Why did Hackensack choose to add a female to the landscape in*

*celebration of a male dominated industry? Is this part of the family orientation of many local American festivals?*

The remaining two regions of North America with a strong tie to Paul Bunyan also need further inquiry. Fort Bragg, California's Paul Bunyan Days, one of the oldest festivals of its kind, is celebrated annually alongside a newer event, the Blue Ox Beer Festival, while nearby Westwood has its own Paul Bunyan Days and has held the Paul Bunyan Mountain and Blues Festival since 1988. Likewise, Bangor, Maine, recently started a Paul Bunyan Marathon as well as a Paul Bunyan Bluegrass Music Festival. How these events have shaped the sense of place in their respected communities is of interest as are local examples of embracing the folklore characters.



**Figure 6.2 & Figure 6.3:** Bigfoot sightings are not limited to the Pacific West Coast as evidenced by this statue found near Dryden, Ontario (known locally as the “Wabigoon Goon”), the sign from Cass Lake, Minnesota, which proudly proclaims (likely, jokingly) “Home of the Bigfoot Locator”, and sightings which are occasionally reported in local newspapers. Future geographic studies could reveal much on the impact such depictions and sightings have on the landscape. (Photos by author)

Finally, although Paul Bunyan is North America's most famous folklore hero, he is by no means the only one. Local folklore colors the landscape from Bigfoot in the Pacific Northwest (**Figures 6.2 & 6.3**) to Rhinelander, Wisconsin's Hodag, to Manhattan, Kansas's Johnny Kaw<sup>2</sup>. Curiously, the later two both seem to base some of their

existence on their relationship with Paul Bunyan. There exists a large painting on display in the Rhinelander Logging Museum Complex depicting Paul Bunyan, the Blue Ox, and Paul's crew at work on the edge of the woods while a Hodag lurks deep within the woods. Johnny Kaw, on the other hand, has a children's coloring book retelling the tale of Paul and Johnny rumble that lead to the Kansas River being created<sup>3</sup> (Garretson 1997). Are these exceptions to the rule? Or do other regional folklore characters look to Paul Bunyan for validation? Landscape features of folk characters exist overseas as well. For example, Nottingham, England, has a statue of Robin Hood and several festivals and businesses named after the local hero. In all likelihood, there exist many others as well. Further geographic inquiries are needed.

### **Concluding Thoughts on a Lumberjack and His Blue Ox**



**Figure 6.4:** Paul Bunyan's headstone as it appears in the small Northwoods' town of Kelliher, Minnesota, located roughly an hour north of Bemidji. Fittingly, the gravesite (a large earthen mound) is found on the south side of town in Paul Bunyan Memorial Park. (Photo by author)

The town of Kelliher, Minnesota, lies about an hour north of Bemidji. On the south end of town, a large earthen mound marks where Paul is reportedly laid to rest with

a headstone at one end that reads: “*PAUL BUNYAN, BORN 1794, DIED 1899, HERE LIES PAUL, AND THAT’S ALL.*” (Figure 6.4)

Did Paul Bunyan “really die” or has he simply moved on to new lands? I, for one, believe that he lives on in tales and stories. The residents and communities of the Northwoods continue to celebrate the region’s golden age, an age of logging and lore, with the images of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox. The representations have evolved from those found in the region’s logging camps one hundred years ago to become larger, more powerful characters more properly suited to represent an entire region. As retold in the popular 1958 Disney movie, Paul and Babe did not die; they simply moved north. As residents of the Northwoods will tell visitors: when gazing upon the northern lights, what we are really witnessing are the reflections of Paul and Babe wrestling and causing havoc on some distant, far-off land.

*Long live Paul and the Blue Ox!*

## CHAPTER NOTES

### Chapter 1: Introduction

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 3: Reading the Landscape of Legends for a discussion of *Northwoods* as a regional geographic term.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the experienced storytellers would be quick to begin with a snip of how they or someone they knew (usually a relative) had worked with Paul in the past. Often times this was to lure an unsuspecting younger logger into believing (Hutchinson 1963; Hoffmann 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Laughead remembers a number of banners and a traveling Paul Bunyan statue that were used by the Red River Logging Company at their Westwood plant during the late-1930s. Laughead could not remember the precise dates that were used (Hutchinson 1963), so Brainerd may or may not hold the actual honor of earliest landscape feature. At any rate, since none of the items were permanent, the honor for first *permanent* landscape structure goes to Bemidji.

### Chapter 2: Of Axe and Saw

#### *Logging*

<sup>1</sup> The terms *logging industry* and *timber industry* are used interchangeably throughout the paper in reference to the work done by lumberjacks in felling trees. The term *lumber industry* refers to work done to process the trees once they were cut.

<sup>2</sup> The terms “*loggers*” and “*lumberjacks*” are also used interchangeably by the author (3).

<sup>3</sup> The term “*timber*” refers to unprocessed wood where as “*lumber*” refers to wood that has been processed in a sawmill or by other similar means.

#### *Lumberjacks*

<sup>1</sup> Karni may overstate the Finnish exclusivity of the ‘Otto’ stories. In an interview with the author, Stuart Jonas (2005), a third-generation ‘Ranger’ (resident of Minnesota’s Mesabi Range) of Finnish descent, provides evidence that Otto’s legendary strength transpires ethnic lines. Jonas remembers the story of Otto’s ‘rail-work’ being passed down to him—but not by his Finn relatives. Instead, it was his grandfather (of German heritage), Roy Snyder, who passed along the local legend.

### Chapter 3: Reading the Landscape of Legends

#### *Region*

<sup>1</sup> In addition to noting the weather forecasts given in both Celsius and Fahrenheit, songs by Gordon Lightfoot were a regular feature on the airwaves of both countries. This is likely due to two factors: Lightfoot was born in a district of Ontario that is sometimes recognized as being part of Northern Ontario and his 1976 song *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, a song about the ill-fated voyage of an ore ship on Lake Superior.

<sup>2</sup> Canadians refer to the area west and north of Sudbury and North Bay, Ontario, as “northern Ontario” where as Americans often refer to it as “western Ontario”. Because the area in question lies north of the US-Canada border, I use the Canadian terminology.

<sup>3</sup> I have chosen to use the spelling “Northwoods” for the region identified, but it is by no means the only spelling. Other spellings in print include: North Woods, north woods, North woods, NorthWoods, northwoods, and north-woods (Dorson 1976). Most of these spellings have also been noted on personal visits to the region. My use of the spelling “Northwoods” is based strictly on personal preference.

<sup>4</sup> Zelinsky refers to the Northwoods region as “*Northern*” in his study of vernacular regions of North America (1980).

<sup>5</sup> Popper and Popper (1999) showed how powerful a regional geographic term, even when used metaphorically, can become in creating the term “Buffalo Commons” to describe an alternative land redistribution plan for the area of the Great Plains that has, and is, undergoing depopulation. The terminology set off a heated debate on the future of the area with sharp rebukes from a number of geographers in a *Focus* (1993) special issue. Although the term “Northwoods” is not controversial literally or metaphorically, it does describe an often-overlooked area of North America.

### ***Landscape***

<sup>1</sup> Hoffmann’s work is largely based on his 1949 Master’s thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Five of the 10 Canadian provinces were found to have Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox items when the same techniques that were used for the United States were applied to Canada. However, Rosslyn Kendrick passed along a photo of a Paul Bunyan statue in Quebec province that was increased the count of provinces with Paul Bunyan items to 6 out of 10.

<sup>3</sup> Fort Bragg, California, is an outlier to the model presented. Two festivals, Blue Ox Beer Festival and Paul Bunyan Days, are both celebrated annually in Fort Bragg. The reasoning for not labeling Fort Bragg as the secondary nucleus of the Pacific Northwest domain is that in addition to hosting the Paul Bunyan Mountain and Blues Festival, the Westwood-Susanville area has strong historic ties to Paul and Babe having been the location of the Red River Lumber Company’s western operations when the company moved from Akeley, Minnesota. It therefore seems to reason that the Westwood-Susanville area would be the source of Paul Bunyan usage in the Pacific Northwest.

### ***Methods***

<sup>1</sup> *Maine*, the *Northwoods*, and the *Pacific West Coast* are all three identified by Zelinsky (1980; 1992) as important sub-regions of the United States. In his study he refers to the three regions as *Atlantic*, *Northern*, and *Northwest* (respectively). I chose to use the term *Maine* since all references from that area of North America come from the Pine State. *Pacific West Coast* is used instead of *Northwest* to avoid any confusion since the Pacific Northwest becomes the Pacific Southwest in Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Two Paul Bunyan statues were found online while a third one, as mentioned, was found and photographed in Quebec by Rosslyn Kendrick. I first met Ms. Kendrick, a native of Quebec who now lives in Duluth, Minnesota, at Hackensack's Sweetheart Canoe Derby proving the importance of talking with locals.

#### **Chapter 4: Lore of the Northwoods**

##### ***Paul Bunyan-Historical Geography***

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the Blue Ox as "Babe" was in a portion of the article in which Tabor was attempting to recall other stories from 1910 (the Blue Ox was not named "Babe" until 1914 (Hutchinson 1963)). The portion of Tabor's journal that is published holds true to other early documentation of Paul Bunyan tales that existed in the camps with Paul's companion referred to simply as the "blue ox".

<sup>2</sup> A "*deacon seat*" is "the one ubiquitous piece of logging camp furniture. It is a bench made of halved logs, which usually runs from one end of the camp to the other" (Davis 1942, 221). On a personal trip to the Northwoods, I saw reference to a "*preacher's bench*", which referenced the same piece of furniture.

<sup>3</sup> Gartenberg's (1949) work is largely based off his 1948 Master's thesis—one of the few graduate works devoted to the study of Paul Bunyan folklore.

<sup>4</sup> A *peavey* (also known as a *cant dog*) is a long wooden pole with a lever and a spike attached to one end. A lumberjack would use a peavey for *canting* (rolling) timber.

<sup>5</sup> Stevens (1925) also claims to have found someone who had heard the stories in New Brunswick (Len Day), but the evidence is called into question because of his claim to have identified the "real-life" Paul Bunyan.

<sup>6</sup> It is important to note Gartenberg (1949) cites Holbrook (1938) as having found that few Canadians crossed over into the Maine logging camps.

<sup>7</sup> Most of the Paul Bunyan statues found on the landscape have French-Canadian characteristics (i.e. dark hair, dark eyes) even though they are often found in predominately Scandinavian and Germanic areas of North America.

<sup>8</sup> The lack of Down Easters who had heard of Paul Bunyan would not necessarily exclude Maine from consideration since the tales were never universally known throughout the camps (Hoffmann 1999). Additionally, many of Maine's lumberjacks had moved to the Northwoods (Hudson 1984, Hudson 1988, Williams 1989, Hoffmann 1999) and, given the time frame of Turney's research (late 1910s or 1920s), any remaining lumberjacks who had logged during Maine's peak years would have been very old.

##### ***Paul Bunyan-Diffusion***

<sup>1</sup> The Bibliographical Society of America awards The Justin G. Schiller Prize for Bibliographical Work on Pre-20th-Century Children's Books emphasizing his influence in such works.



<sup>2</sup> Throughout my study, *folktales* (and *tales*) refer to versions of Paul and the Blue Ox's adventures known and recorded in the logging camps while *stories* refer to those popularized in print and only loosely based on the original folklore.

<sup>3</sup> The 1906 version of the "Round River" is credited to James MacGillivray even though no author is listed. James' brother, Will McGillivray (using a different spelling), was the publisher and editor of *The Oscoda Press* and had hired James as a reporter. The article is credited to James since he eventually began working for the *Detroit News Tribune* and reprinted the story as "The Round River Drive" under his name with only minor changes four years later in 1910 (The Oscoda Press website).

<sup>4</sup> Laughead remembers reading several earlier accounts, but was not able to place the tales or date them (Hutchinson 1963). Whether these earlier accounts were MacGillivray's or possibly predate them we will never know.

<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that Esther Shephard (1924) also describe Paul as a giant. Additionally, several of Laughead's (1922) depictions of Paul Bunyan suggest he may have been a giant (although he later strongly stated that Paul was not (Hutchinson 1963)). Stevens (1925) does acknowledge he knew of earlier versions but whether or not he had been influenced by these visions of Paul is difficult to say.

<sup>6</sup> Turney (1928) used much of her published work as a basis for her work on a Master's thesis.

<sup>7</sup> Turney (1928) referred to the manner in which the tales were told as *ganglore*.

<sup>8</sup> Rejean Proulx (2007), who grew up in a French-speaking home in Iroquois Falls, Ontario, was stunned his children had not heard of Paul Bunyan and jokingly commented, "*What are they teaching you in school these days?!*"

## **Chapter 5: Legendary Landscapes**

### ***Restoration: Origins***

<sup>1</sup> The overwhelming majority of people employed by the logging and lumber industries were men, but women were often at work as well. Since women often worked without pay or formal recognition (such as Gladys Snyder who worked for her and her husband's room and board but received no pay (Snyder 2005)), such contributions are often overlooked. See Appendix 2: Women of the Northwoods for further discussion.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the early Brainerd and Bemidji Paul Bunyan festivals, Leona, Wisconsin, held the Paul Bunyan Logging Expo in 1937 (Dorson 1976). Since the event has had little lasting impact on the present Northwoods' landscape, it is excluded from further discussion.

<sup>3</sup> Brainerd's original Paul and Babe stand next to a pine tree outside the Brainerd Chamber of Commerce. It is unknown whether or not the pine tree is to be a sapling or a scaled down full-grown pine. If the later is the case, the statues are more representative

of the Paul and Babe found in the stories of Stevens (1925) and others than the ones existing in the folktales of the lumberjacks.

<sup>4</sup> The original stories leave the Blue Ox's gender up to debate. I have Don and Kathy Wicks of Nevis, Minnesota, to thank for raising that question. While discussing the name of one of their businesses, Babe's Cut and Curl, I was asked whether or not the Blue Ox was male or female. I must admit, I had not given the subject thought before that and still am not sure whether there is a definitive answer. The question is a great example of the importance of speaking with locals; sometimes it is not the answers that are given, but the questions raised that are the most valuable.

<sup>5</sup> An older Paul Bunyan Days is credited to Fort Bragg, California. The West Coast first celebrated the event in 1940. Additionally, the Paul Bunyan Show of eastern Ohio was first celebrated in the 1930s (but first assigned the name in 1957) while Paul Bunyan Days of St. Maries, Idaho, was first held in 1967.

<sup>6</sup> The name, Lucette Diana Kensack, was the winning entry of a national contest (Hackensack Chamber of Commerce)). The name has no historic ties to the original tales as most of the early written versions of the tales refer to Paul's wife without naming her (Laughead 1922, Turney 1928, Frost in Felton 1947) although Shephard (1924) identified her as "Carrie McIntie."

<sup>7</sup> A second reason for the difference in attendance between Paul Bunyan Days and Sweetheart Days is likely the days of the week each of the celebrations were held. Paul Bunyan Days is held on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday three-day spread while Sweetheart Days is held Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.

<sup>8</sup> In 2006, Paul and Lucette's Wedding Anniversary was not held during the annual Sweetheart Canoe Derby. After talking with a number of local residents, I was reassured that this was an exception to the rule and that it would return in future years. I have no reason to believe that this will not be the case although I would not be surprised if at a later date the wedding anniversary is combined with the more popular Sweetheart Days due to a common theme of "sweetheart".

### ***Restoration: Evolution***

<sup>1</sup> "ATV" refers to *all terrain vehicles*.

<sup>2</sup> There exist a number of early folk tales of Babe straightening logging roads or rivers. Fittingly, the Blue Ox Trail runs a nearly perfect straight line between Bemidji and International Falls. Whether or not state or local officials will use these stories to promote the trail in the future is unknown, but interesting thought to contemplate.

### ***Restoration: Permanence***

<sup>1</sup> An exception was made in listing Maine at the Community level of permanence since Bangor was once home to Blue Ox minor league baseball team (1996-1997). A second

minor league team, the Lumberjacks, played in the city from 2003-2004 strengthening the belief that the area maintains strong ties to the logging industry.

<sup>2</sup> Hackensack celebrated the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Sweetheart Canoe Derby in 2007 and is a well-supported event attracting competitors from the United States and Canada. Bemidji's Paul Bunyan International Hockey Tournament will be held for the 14<sup>th</sup> time in 2007. The tournament existed for 10 years (1988-1998) before disappearing in 1999 only to be resurrected in 2004. Much like the Sweetheart Canoe Derby, the hockey games attract visitors and contestants from the United States and Canada. Each of these events is likely to experience continued success since both canoeing and hockey are popular activities in the Northwoods.

<sup>3</sup> The Paul Bunyan Show of Cambridge, Ohio, is one of the oldest existing Paul Bunyan festival having been first held in 1957 (an earlier related festival existed as well) (Coulter 2007). However, no other Paul Bunyan or Blue Ox features is found in the area and is thus excluded from further discussion.

<sup>4</sup> The Bangor Lumberjacks existed as the Adirondack Lumberjacks before moving to Maine in 2003. Since the team chose not to rename itself, it suggests there was strong support for the name of the team as it existed.

<sup>5</sup> The University of Wisconsin-Madison's Wisconsin Union contains a Paul Bunyan Room with 6 large Paul Bunyan related murals that were created between 1934-1936 (Wisconsin Academy Review website). Since the murals and the room are not visible from the outside, they were excluded from Table 5.4: Northwoods' Regional Landscape Items.

### ***Restoration: Identity***

<sup>1</sup> Although the Paul Bunyan Amusement Center opened in 1950, the Polk City Directory did not list a phone number for the Amusement Center until 1977. The lack of a phone number could be due to the seasonal nature of the business.

<sup>2</sup> Lynn Scharenbroich (2007), Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association Chairperson, actually gives two reasons for choosing the name *Paul Bunyan*.

- 1) The name Paul Bunyan was already assigned to a number of landscape items in the region.
- 2) Using the name Paul Bunyan was an opportunity to utilize local "lore" and to "keep it on the fun side".

Additionally, Lynn notes there has been no opposition to the name (or the byway).

<sup>3</sup> To the relief of many area residents, the Northwoods' mainstay relocated to the other side of town in 2003 rather than choosing to move to another state or close altogether. No longer on the main-thoroughfare, attendance has not matched previous numbers, but it does continue to operate and introduce thousands of visitors to Paul Bunyan every year.

<sup>4</sup> The Bemidji Pioneer (June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003) reported a number of visitors to the region were confused as to the fate of Bemidji's Paul and Babe in the wake of Paul's move in Brainerd with questions fielded by the Bemidji Visitors and Convention Bureau and a handful of local businesses.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to owning Bunyan's Convenience and Paul's Cabin, Nels Cramer, who is a towering figure and could easily pass for Paul himself, has created a Paul Bunyan ATV park next to Bunyan's Convenience which connects to the nearby Round River ATV Trail. The ATV park was in high use when I visited on several occasions during the summer of 2006 and 2007.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

<sup>1</sup> Tom Cieciora (2007), the artist in charge of repairing Ossineke's statues of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, pointed out a couple of notable items regarding the original giant lumberjack when I met him on a research trip. First, Paul has Beachnut tobacco—an addition that would likely be excluded from a modern version of the giant (similar to Bemidji's Paul which is smoking a pipe). Second, Paul has a gold ring on his right hand. The reasoning for this second item is unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Johnny Kaw was the imagination of George Filinger, a professor of horticulture at Kansas State University. Filinger created Johnny Kaw to celebrate Manhattan, Kansas's centennial in 1955. A 30' statue depicting the wheat shocker was added to the landscape in 1966.

<sup>3</sup> The storybook has Johnny Kaw winning the fight between he and Paul (Garretson 1997). This story is obviously not historically accurate. As everyone knows, Paul had a well-established reputation as a fighter and would have easily won the match (Hoffmann 1999).

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## APPENDIX 1: OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS

Open-ended interviews were used as part of my research on the Northwoods. Over the four-years period of my research (2004-2007), I interviewed more than 50 individuals from all walks of life (lumberjacks, former mayors, business owners, chamber of commerce presidents, festival participants, etc.) in Canada and the United States. Settings for the interviews included a number of settings: nursing homes, festivals, personal residences, visitor centers, museums, and business establishments (Table A.1).

<b>TABLE A.1: KEY NORTHWOODS' COMMUNITY LEADERS INTERVIEWED 2004-2007</b>		
<b>COMMUNITY LEADER</b>	<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
David Borash <i>Master's Thesis: Paul Bunyan of Brainerd, Minnesota</i>	Brainerd, MN	2004-2007*
Nels Cramer <i>Owner of Bunyan's Convenience and Paul's Cabin Round River ATV Trail—Activist</i>	Akeley, MN	2006, 2007
Terry McGaughey <i>Paul Bunyan State Trail Association—Chairperson</i>	Brainerd, MN	2007
Skip Marr <i>Brainerd Blue Thunder—Owner</i>	Brainerd, MN	2007
Charles Ryan <i>Grandson of Pete Dick (1 of 2 people used for the basis of Laughead's (1914) original image of Paul Bunyan)</i>	Minneapolis, MN	2007
Lynn Scharenbroich <i>Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association—Chairperson</i>	Ideal Township, MN	2007
Julie Skimes <i>Bemidji Pioneer (2002) article identified her as a local Paul Bunyan expert</i>	Bemidji, MN	2006
Daniel Taradash <i>Director and producer of a forthcoming Paul Bunyan documentary</i>	Minneapolis, MN	2007

\* David Borash and I have remained in correspondence since an initial interview in 2004.

**Table A.1**—A listing of key community leaders and Paul Bunyan experts interviewed (2004-2007).

The interviews initially focused on the logging industry with later interviews exploring Paul Bunyan's role within the Northwoods. Collectively, these interviews, which lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to 3 hours, proved to be invaluable as they shed

new light on the last days of traditional logging in the Northwoods and Paul Bunyan's role throughout the region in the present (**Interview A.1**).

Questions used in my interviews as well as a sample interview are found in the following pages. The first set of questions (**Interview Questions A.1**) was used in my interviews with those who had worked in the logging and lumber industry. The second set of questions (**Interview Questions A.2**) was used in my interviews of Northwoods' residents on the importance of Paul Bunyan within the region. The sample interview (**Sample Interview A.1**) was conducted on 22 March 2005 in Deer River, Minnesota.

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Materials**

Karen DeBres  
Department of Geography  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
(785) 532-3446  
[harty@ksu.edu](mailto:harty@ksu.edu)

***I. Respondent sheet for Demographic information***

Interview Code # \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you:

\_\_\_\_\_ American Indian

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian or Pacific Islander

\_\_\_\_\_ Black

\_\_\_\_\_ Eskimo or Aleut

\_\_\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Are you of Hispanic Origin?

\_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

3. What is your sex?

\_\_\_\_\_ Female

\_\_\_\_\_ Male

4. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

\_\_\_\_\_ Some high school (did not graduate)

\_\_\_\_\_ High school (graduated)

\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Technical training

\_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D. Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional

Degree (M.D., J.D.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Some graduate work

6. How long did you work in the logging camps?

\_\_\_\_\_ Years

\_\_\_\_\_ Months

7. What years did you work in the logging camps?

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_



8. Did you have a spouse living/working in the logging camps?

\_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

9. Did you have any additional family members working in the logging camps?

\_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

10. What was your primary duty in the logging camps?

\_\_\_\_\_ Lumberjack                      \_\_\_\_\_ Skidder

\_\_\_\_\_ "Cookie"                      \_\_\_\_\_ Other

## II. Interview schedule

### A. Background questions/Career path information:

1. When did you first decide to work in the logging camps? Describe to me how you came to the occupation. What was going on in your life at this time? What were your options?

2. At which logging camps did you work at? For how long did you work in each of these camps?

### B. General work environment issues

#### Training

1. Please describe your training experience. Was there any training before you started your job such as an apprenticeship?

#### General on the job experience

2. What were your roles/duties at work? Where did you spend most of your time? Describe a typical day on the job. Were there duties you preferred? If so, why?

#### Interactions with co-workers

3. How many other men (or women) typically worked with you in the woods? Would you say that the men (or women) worked well together as a team? What about the other camps in which you have worked? Was there a difference in the camps? Did the supervisor make a difference? Were there women (or other women) present in the camps? If so, at which of the logging camps were there women (or other women)? What were their duties?

#### General satisfaction

4. For you, what was the most enjoyable aspect of your job? What aspect did you least enjoy? Would you say that co-workers, supervisors, equipment, or weather were responsible for the majority of the problems with which you had to deal with at work?

### C. Quality of life

1. During the time you worked there, did the type of housing in the logging camps change? If so, did that make your job easier? More difficult? How?

D. Closing questions

1. If you had to do it all over again, would you still choose to work in the logging camps?

2. Any other issues you'd like to talk about/add?

## APPENDIX D

### Informed Consent Statement

#### **A. General Information**

**1. Name of Researcher:** Karen DeBres, Ph.D., Department of Geography, Kansas State University

**2. Title of Study:** An Investigation into the Lives of those who Lived in the Northwoods' Logging Camps

**3. Objectives of Study:** To obtain a detailed account of the work that went on in the logging camps and how experiences varied with those who lived there.

**4. Description and purpose of procedures:** This part of the research consists of interviews with 10 individuals who lived in the logging camps during the Northwoods' Golden Age. This interview will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes and will include questions about employment history, perception of and satisfaction with the job, training experiences, coworkers, and supervisors. These interviews will be tape recorded and later transcribed. This information will be used to better understand the conditions that existed in the logging camps during the region's Golden Age.

**5. Use of results:** Data collected in this project will be used in a dissertation and published journals.

**6. The risks and discomforts are minimal. They may include:** Strictly the use of your time is required. No physical risk is involved, and your behavior or responses will not be manipulated in any way.

**7. Possible benefits to you or to others from participating in this study:** A sense of having your stories recorded as a significant part of the history of the Northwoods.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may refuse participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. All research information will be handled in the strictest confidence and your participation will not be individually identifiable in any reports if you so choose. I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the above items. If you have questions about the research that arise after this interview, please feel free to contact me at (785) 532-3446. Questions about the role of the university or your rights as a participant in this research should be directed to Rick Scheidt, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Kansas State University, (785) 532-3224.

**B. Signed Consent Portion – To be retained by respondent**

I understand the study entitled: “An Investigation into the Lives of those who Lived in the Northwoods’ Logging Camps” as explained to me on page 1 and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is completely voluntary. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence if I so choose. I understand that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for withdrawing or not participating in the study.

I would like my responses to remain confidential \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

=====  
=====

**B. Signed Consent Portion – To be retained by researcher**

I understand the study entitled: “An Investigation into the Lives of those who Lived in the Northwoods’ Logging Camps” as explained to me on page 1 and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is completely voluntary. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence if I so choose. I understand that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for withdrawing or not participating in the study.

I would like my responses to remain confidential \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Materials**

Karen DeBres  
Department of Geography  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66502  
(785) 532-3446  
[harty@ksu.edu](mailto:harty@ksu.edu)

*I. Respondent sheet for Demographic information*

Interview Code # \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you:

\_\_\_\_\_ American Indian

\_\_\_\_\_ Asian or Pacific Islander

\_\_\_\_\_ Black

\_\_\_\_\_ Eskimo or Aleut

\_\_\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify \_\_\_\_\_)

2. Are you of Hispanic Origin?

\_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

3. What is your sex?

\_\_\_\_\_ Female

\_\_\_\_\_ Male

4. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

\_\_\_\_\_ Some high school (did not graduate)

\_\_\_\_\_ High school (graduated)

\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Technical training

\_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D. Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional

Degree (M.D., J.D.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Some graduate work

6. Are you from the Northwoods?

\_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

7. How long have you lived in the Northwoods?

From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you recall hearing stories of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox while you were growing up?

\_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

9. Do you recall the first time you saw Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox on the landscape?

\_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

10. What community are you from?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How long have you lived there?

\_\_\_\_\_ Months                      \_\_\_\_\_ Years



## II. Interview schedule

### A. Background questions:

1. Do you recall what you thought when you first heard the stories of Paul Bunyan or saw him on the landscape?

2. What do you think of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox now?

### B. General community questions:

1. What community are you from?

2. Do you consider yourself a local?

3. Does your community have a prominent Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox establishment or statue?

4. Does your community celebrate Paul Bunyan or Babe the Blue Ox with a local festival or tournament?

5. Do Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox symbolically represent your community or your community's heritage? If so, how?

APPENDIX D  
Informed Consent Statement

**A. General Information**

**1. Name of Researcher:** Karen DeBres, Ph.D., Department of Geography, Kansas State University

**2. Title of Study:** An Investigation into the Cultural Significance of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox within the Northwoods

**3. Objectives of Study:** A detailed account of the role of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox on the Northwoods' landscape should add to a heightened sense of place among residents of Northwoods.

**4. Description and purpose of procedures:** This part of the research consists of interviews with 30 individuals who have experienced the Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox phenomena on the Northwoods' landscape. This interview will last approximately 15 to 30 minutes and will include questions about community history, perception of, display of Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox on the Northwoods' landscape. These interviews will be tape recorded and later transcribed. This information will be used to better understand the conditions that existed in the logging camps during the region's Golden Age.

**5. Use of results:** Data collected in this project will be used in a dissertation and published journals.

**6. The risks and discomforts are minimal. They may include:** Strictly the use of your time is required. No physical risk is involved, and your behavior or responses will not be manipulated in any way.

**7. Possible benefits to you or to others from participating in this study:** A sense of having your stories recorded as a significant part of the history of the Northwoods.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may refuse participation at any time without penalty or prejudice. All research information will be handled in the strictest confidence and your participation will not be individually identifiable in any reports if you so choose. I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the above items. If you have questions about the research that arise after this interview, please feel free to contact me at (785) 532-3446. Questions about the role of the university or your rights as a participant in this research should be directed to Rick Scheidt, Chair, Institutional Review Board, Kansas State University, (785) 532-3224.

**B. Signed Consent Portion – To be retained by respondent**

I understand the study entitled: “An Investigation into the Cultural Significance of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox within the Northwoods” as explained to me on page 1 and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is completely voluntary. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence if I so choose. I understand that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for withdrawing or not participating in the study.

I would like my responses to remain confidential \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

=====

**B. Signed Consent Portion – To be retained by researcher**

I understand the study entitled: “An Investigation into the Cultural Significance of Paul Bunyan and the Blue Ox within the Northwoods” as explained to me on page 1 and I consent to participate in the study. My participation is completely voluntary. I understand that all research information will be handled in the strictest confidence if I so choose. I understand that there is no penalty or prejudice of any kind for withdrawing or not participating in the study.

I would like my responses to remain confidential \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## Sample Interview A.1

*The following is an example of the interviews conducted during my research. This particular open-ended interview was conducted on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, in Deer River, Minnesota with Carol Gudim, Gladys Snyder, and Roy Snyder.*

\*Interviewed by John Patrick Harty, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005, Deer River, MN

\*Carol Gudim, Roy and Gladys Snyder

\*Occupation: Mill (Carol Gudim)

\*Occupation: Lumberjack (Roy Snyder)

\*Occupation: Camp Cook (Gladys Snyder)

\*ME: Ok Carol, thank you for coming here. Again, my name is John and I'll be asking you some questions here. When did you first start working for your dad? I believe yesterday you said that you had...

C: Well, sometimes during the summer, someone would want some plain lumber. My brother and I able to help because it was just carrying the boards around to the plainer. Otherwise we were never allowed around the sawmill, as kids.

ME: OK.

C: We could go blow the whistle, you know, at noon. They'd let us. But we couldn't be down there in the sawmill. That was off-limits to us, always.

\*ME: OK. How old were you when you helped the plainer?

C: I have no idea.

ME: OK. Were you like maybe 5 or 6?

C: Oh no, I must have been older than that. My brother was stronger than I was.

ME: OK, he was stronger than you. Was it just the two of you?

C: Yah, and my dad.

ME: And your dad, ok.

C: Cause you just bring the boards and shove them through the plainer and that was all, nothing dangerous about it.

GS: Who piled them?

ME: Who piled the boards?

C: My dad and my brother would stack them.

\*ME: Ok. So your brother was old enough to help out?

C: Yah. He was quite a bit older than I was.

ME: OK. Do you happen to remember how much older?

C: (nodding no)

\*ME: How many summers did you help out, help the plainer?

C: I have no idea.

ME: OK. But was it a couple of summers anyway?

C: Probably.

ME: OK. And was this during the 1930s? 1940s?

C: 30s I think.

ME: 30s you imagine...ok.

\*ME: And where was this mill located?

C: It was on the edge Dixon Lake.

ME: On the edge of Dixon Lake...Grandma or Grandpa...  
GS: That's up Big Winnie.  
ME: Big Winnie, ok.  
GS: Isn't it? It's rather close to Big Winnie.  
C: Right there on the river. Third River to Big Winnie.  
GS: Oh yes, it's on that Third River to Winnie where Jerry fishes.  
\*ME: And how many people worked at this mill? Were there a lot of people?  
C: Most of the neighbors. Yah, most of the neighbors.  
ME: Most of your neighbors.  
C: Most of the neighborhood.  
Some things on flour and eggs (tough to make out)  
ME: And were there other women at this mill? Like secretaries?  
C: No. Just a local thing.  
ME: Just a local thing, ok.  
\*GS: Who did the bookkeeping?  
C: I suppose my dad did it.  
GS: You think he did it? How about your mother?  
C: My mother scaled the logs. She could scale logs.  
GS: She scaled?! (impressed)  
C: mhmm.  
\*ME: What's scaling?  
C: Finding out how many feet in a log, after sawing, how many feet will be in a log.  
ME: Ok, so would you have a scaler determine how many...  
GS: Feet? Board feet?  
ME: ...how many ties?  
GS: Roy, you should know.  
ME: Yah.  
GS: What a scaler does. John, wants to know what a scaler does.  
RS: Well he's got this ruler, that tells you...it's got inches marked over there...  
ME: OK.  
RS: These rulers: 3 foot ruler, or probably 4 foot.  
ME: And would he measure out the length for the railroad ties?  
RS: Yah, he could. They'd take the reading off of this ruler-thing. It'd be kinda hard to explain it. It'd have fingers. Alright, you put it here, poke this...  
C: It had like a little t-square on the bottom that's what he's talking about.  
ME: OK, a t-square thing.  
RS: And if it's 6 up here there's probably 10 feet in that log. If it's logs like that (hand gesture) there's 20 feet in that. They've got marks there, how many feet.  
ME: So based on the width, you knew how long it was.  
RS: Yes!  
ME: Ok.  
RS: Yah.  
\*ME: Ok. That makes sense. And you say your mom did that (scaling).  
C: mhmm.  
ME: Ok. And...  
C: She'd mark each log.

ME: And how would she mark it?  
C: With a marking pencil, I suppose.  
ME: Marking pencil.  
C: My dad had a, for his logs he had a...like a branding iron.  
ME: I've heard of these.  
C: It would leave marks.  
ME: Ok. And that's actually what I wondering is that how she marked it or she did it with a pencil.  
C: That I don't really know.  
ME: OK. I've heard about these stamps so they could say "this is our lumber".  
C: Yah, mhmm.  
\*ME: OK. And did your family own the plant?  
C: What?  
ME: Did your family own the mill?  
C: My dad did, I guess.  
ME: Your dad did, ok.  
\*ME: And did you have other relatives working at this mill?  
C: My uncle did. I had one uncle that did.  
ME: OK. And did his wife or kids ever come to the mill to work?  
C: Oh no.  
ME: Oh no, ok.  
\*C: Kids were never allowed around the mill.  
ME: OK. Except for the two of...you and your brother  
C: We could go down, and the man that makes the boards, he would lift us up and we could blow the whistle. He would let us have a pull.  
GS: You got to pull the whistle for noon!  
C: Yah, mhmm.  
\*ME: Ok. And would you spend a lot of your time down there? Maybe playing outside the mill?  
C: We went swimming a lot.  
ME: Ok. Next to the mill?  
C: Mhmm.  
\*ME: Ok. And then, from time-to-time, your dad would say "would you help the plainer with some boards?"  
C: No. The mill wasn't running when we would do that.  
ME: Oh, ok.  
C: We used to get an order for some plain lumber, and so then we'd help do that.  
ME: Ok.  
GS: Pretty careful about keeping children away from the mill, weren't they?  
ME: I guess so.  
\*C: We could play in the sawdust pile during the summertime.  
ME: (laughter)  
GS: Oh, you could play in the sawdust.  
C: We thought it was like a mountain, you know.  
GS: Well, it was!  
ME: (laughter) Sure.

\*ME: And what...is the plainer, just for clarification, is that who cuts off the edges of the logs?

C: No. The middle part, smoothes it up.

ME: Smoothes up?

C: Mhmm.

ME: OK.

More details on the plainer (tough to make out)

Details on plaining

\*ME: So your mom would mark this off and...

GS: They really had...Roy, we used to have a lumbermen's pencil. I think we called it a lumberman's pencil. It was about that wide (gestures).

RS: Yah.

GS: And maybe that thick (gestures).

C: I suppose it was something like that.

ME: Yah, I think you can still buy those. I've seen that.

GS: Yah. I think I've got them at home.

ME: Like for construction work. A big, thick pencil. And I'm assuming it was something similar to that because it wouldn't be a normal pencil because I think that would snap.

GS: Yah, it had last.

ME: Right. OK.

GS: I don't know if you ever...you never had any of your timber stamped, did you, Roy? Wasn't it always...using somekind of pencil? I remember orange or something. If there was any marking on your timber?

(Problems with Grandpa's audio)

GS: We're talking about these marking pencils, you know.

RS: Oh.

GS: Were they black? Red? It seems to me that all of our timber logs that were marked for market were always marked with orange or red at the end, weren't they?

RS: Well, the used them for various reasons, those timber cruisers. You talked to Bob Schaars about that.

GS: Bob Schaars would really know. Because he probably did it.

RS: Yah.

\*ME: And how did the logs get to the mill? Were they shipped by river? Train?

C: From the river. My dad had a big boom.

ME: What's a boom?

C: Well, logs...(gesture)

ME: Ok, that's called a boom?

(Interruption)

ME: What was I asking? (laughter)

GS: We were just tying up the Bob Schaar...

ME: Oh! The boom! So the boom holds the logs together.

C: Mhmm. A big pen, in a circle. And then the logs would be hulled up by a big wheel. And the sawmill was right there. On tracks. And they'd go on tracks. And my uncle was a sawyer. He'd have to lay them out... how many hundred there was.

ME: Ok.

GS: And this was on Third River?  
C: No. Dixon Lake.  
GS: What?  
C: Dixon Lake.  
GS: Oh! You're on Dixon Lake.  
C: Yah, the boom was on Dixon Lake.  
GS: OK.  
ME: And so these logs was there a spike on the track that would pull them up.  
C: What did they call them? They had two poles that they used that you could...they had a certain name, now I can't remember it.  
\*ME: A long pole with a hook on it?  
C: Yah, mhmm.  
ME: What's that called Grandpa? The long pole with a hook on it? To move the logs around.  
GS: Is that a pike.  
C: Pike!  
ME: That's it! That's it. Ok. And so a couple of lumberjacks would...  
\*C: This one man would take them out of the boom and bring them up on the...  
ME: ...on this track.  
C: Mhmm.  
More on this.  
\*ME: And this is where your brother and you would sometimes come in after the mill was closed at night and your dad would say "ok, load this up and have it ready to go so they can do it quick in the morning"?  
C: No, he did that.  
ME: Oh, he did that.  
C: On the truck. Mhmm.  
ME: Oh, so you would help put it on a truck?  
C: Yah, mhmm.  
\*ME: Ok. Did you ever help put it...was there a plainer saw as well?  
C: Yah, mhmm.  
ME: Ok. Did you ever help stack for the plainer? Or just put it on the trucks?  
C: We used to a board at a time. One board at a time. Yah. You know, shove one board through and then take it away and put another one through.  
ME: Ok.  
C: We had to be very careful about adding lumber, so it wouldn't get marks on it.  
ME: Ok.  
GS: Well did you have to put strips between your piles, your tiers?  
C: Yah, mhmm.  
GS: Yah. If you don't, they won't dry.  
ME: Huh. Ok. Alright.  
GS: What did you use for strips? We used slabs.  
ME: Slabs? What is it?  
GS: A slab is what you took off the side.  
ME: OK.  
GS: To even up your board.



ME: So even the waste you were pretty much using again?  
GS: Yes. You could use that, you see.  
\*C: And for power they'd use steam. They'd burn the shavings for power.  
ME: OK. Like the sawdust or whatever else they could find and just burn it for steam?  
C Mhmm.  
ME: And that gave them power. OK.  
GS: That's interesting. Did you get that Roy?  
RS: No.  
GS: They used steam! They used steam for power at their mill.  
RS: Oh, a steam engine. That's the most powerful engine you can get! You can make it a one-horse engine or a 100-horse by lowering the lever (sound effects). Yep.  
GS: Roy thinks that's what's wrong with this country—we should go back to steam. It would be cheaper.  
RS: Sure it would be!  
Discussion on steam.  
\*ME: So did you live close to the mill?  
C: About half a mile.  
ME: Half a mile. And was there a small community close to the mill then? Like about the same distance?  
C: Well, most people lived about almost a mile or two away.  
ME: Ok, so it was easy walking distance.  
C: Mhmm. I didn't walk very far.  
\*ME: So if an order came in for the wood would the wood be moved by river? Or by train? Or by truck?  
C: By truck.  
ME: By truck.  
\*ME: And you and your brother would sometimes help out piling the wood onto the truck? Or not?  
C: No, I don't think we ever did that.  
\*ME Ok, so just stacking it so that it could dry out?  
C: Mhmm.  
\*ME: And would your mom ever help stacking?  
C: Oh, no. My mom didn't even weigh 90 pounds.  
GS: Really?!! Tiny little woman.  
ME: Huh.  
GS: But she could measure the logs.  
C: Yep.  
ME: And so were you just really strong as a little girl?  
C: I was very active, I know that. Yah  
ME: Ok. You were stacking wood and your mom couldn't cause she was so light?  
C: I was stronger than she was, I'm sure.  
ME: Ok, ok, well, that's good.  
\*ME: And was it just you and your brother? Did you have other siblings?  
C: No.  
ME: Ok, just the two of you?  
C: Mhmm.

ME: Ok.

C: Well, I was a senior in high school when my mom had my sisters. She had two families. She had us and we were all grown up then she had three little ones.

ME: Ok.

GS: So you mean there were 5?

C: Yah. Two boys and a girl.

GS: Oh, my.

Details on the kids

\*ME: And your two younger brothers and your younger sister, did they help out at the mill?

C: No. The mill burned down. Somebody set it on fire.

ME: Really?!

C: Mhmm.

ME: Wow.

More on the arson—burned twice.

ME: Do you happen to remember were you in high school when it burned down? Or were you...

C: No, I was little cause I remember my dad crying. That was SO TERRIBLE, you know, to see your dad cry.

GS: Yah. Well his whole business!

C: Yah. Mhmm.

ME: Huh.

GS: Terrible. Years of work.

ME: And was it just a couple years later after he rebuilt it that it burned down again?

C: Mhmm. I think so.

ME: Wow. And so you were still very young at that time?

C: Yah. Mhmm.

ME: And after it burned down a second time did your dad...

C: No, no, he sold it. Sold it.

ME: He sold it.

C: Whatever anybody wanted he sold it.

ME: Ok. And did someone try to build a new mill?

C: No. Not that I know of.

ME: Ok, they just left it. They bought the equipment. So what did your dad do after that?

C: Nothing.

ME: Nothing?

C: No, he was old by then.

ME: Oh.

\*ME: And as far as women, that sometimes helped, it was just you and your mom. You would help stack the wood to dry it.

C: The lumber.

ME: The lumber, to help dry it, and your mom would mark it.

C: Scale it.

ME: Scale it. Scale it...I've got to learn that term!

GS: That's the first lady scaler I've heard of!

\*C: She (Carol's mother) looked so cute in those britches and boots!  
GS: (laughter)  
ME: Britches and boots? She would wear...britches? Oh! The big puffy pants?!  
C: And boots. Yah.  
GS: (laughter)  
\*ME: Ok. And what would you wear?  
C: I suppose I just wore dresses, I guess. I think we wore dresses.  
ME: Even when you were piling?  
C: Mhmm.  
\*GS: You know, women DID NOT wear slacks.  
C: Never!  
GS: No.  
C: I had never worn them until I was married even!  
GS: No. I didn't either.  
ME: And when you were cooking?  
GS: No. Always a dress.  
ME: Ok. And these britches, if I'm understanding right, picturing them, the big puffy pants?  
GS: Yah.  
C: Yah.  
ME: Ok, so neither of you wore britches?  
GS: I didn't. I didn't. But her mother did.  
ALL: (laughter)  
ME: So your mom was liberal, maybe?  
C: Yah, I think so.  
ALL: (laughter)  
GS: 90 pound woman you know.  
\*ME: And so she'd go out there, in her britches, and mark off.  
C: (nodding yes)  
ME: Ok.  
C: Well, there'd be big piles, you know, like ten feet high, that she'd have to climb up on.  
ME: Ok, alright. Did you ever help her climb up or anything?  
C: No.  
ME: Did she ever say "I don't want to climb that high! You climb up!"?  
C: I never heard her say it.  
GS: That was her job (laughter).  
ME: That was her job! Ok.  
\*ME: And did your uncle's wife ever come and help scale or anything like that?  
C: (nodding no)  
ME: Did you have cousins? Did they have kids?  
C: Yah.  
ME: Ok. Did they ever come and help you stack the lumber?  
C: No.  
ME: Ok.  
\*GM: It was just her family operation.  
ME: Just her family's operation.

C: Well, these people that were employed at the mill would help, you know. But not just anybody. You had to be employed by my dad.

ME: And were most of the men that worked at the mill pretty friendly to you?

C: Oh yah.

ME: Was your family friends with their families as well.

C: Oh sure.

ME: So it was closely nit. It's kind of like at the logging camps where you and Cornel and...was it Julia?

GS: Yes.

ME: Ok.

\*GS: What was the name of the community or the school that you went to?

C: Pine Crest.

GS: Pine...?

ME: Crest.

GS: Pine Crest. That was the school. What about the community? Was that Dixon Lake?

C: It was called Rosy I think.

GS: Rosy?

C: Rosy.

GS: I see.

C: Our cemetary was Rosy cemetery.

GS: Rosy cemetery. Probably the community was Rosy also.

\*GS: Now these logs, before they hit the lake, did they come down Third River into that lake?

C: Yah.

GS: OK.

ME: Third River, now is that a big river up there?

C: Well, my dad had a big barge that he'd fill up with lumber and take it Nenah and sell the lumber. So the river was pretty big at that time. Now you couldn't hardly get a canoe through the River.

GS: It's so small.

ME: Huh.

C: So it must have been pretty big at that time, because the barge was quite wide, you know.

\*ME: Ok, so he would either take it by truck or by a barge to sell the lumber.

C: Mhmm. Yah.

ME: Was there a railroad station nearby?

C: We could get a train. But, oh, no, it was about 8 miles from where I was from.

ME: Is that where he would drive the truck to?

C: No.

ME: Where would he take the lumber?

C: Well, wherever it was needed. Like if someone was building a barn. They built quite a few barns. Around Rosy.

ME: Ok. So it was to the specific place that was using it, there wasn't a middle man where he'd sell the lumber?

C: Mhmm.

ME: Ok. People would come to your dad directly asking for lumber.  
\*C: Yah. He had the lumber for all the CCC camps.  
ME: Ok.  
GS: REALLY?!!  
C: Mhmm. I used to go along cause I was a teenager at the time and I liked the boys.  
ALL: (laughter)  
ME: You loved the boys then?!  
C: Oh yah.  
GS: Did you snag a CCC?  
C: No.  
GS: No.  
RS: And the WPA  
C: We delivered the lumber and I went along so I could wave.  
ALL: (laughter)  
ME: And would the CCC workers use it...  
C: I don't know about that.  
ME: ...for building?  
GS: They'd build barracks.  
ME: Barracks? Ok. Ok.  
GS: They all looked alike.  
C: Yah.  
GS: CCC camps all looked alike.  
C: And they would have equipment mounted or something.  
ME: And did you end up marrying a guy who had worked at the CCC camps?  
C: Oh, no,  
ME: Ok.  
\*ME: Were you married?  
C: Yah.  
ME: Ok. And was your husband, had he worked in a mill or a logging camp?  
C: No, I don't think so.  
ME: You don't think so. Ok. But it was quite common in this area, I believe, for people during that time to work in one for a short time?  
\*C: Now they have trucks that can do everything in one day.  
GS: You see, that's what's happened. Machines have replaced men.  
ME: Mhmm.  
C: They can cut the log down, measure it, and pile it all in the truck.  
GS: Just replaced men.  
C: Mhmm. You can do an acre in unbelievable time.  
\*ME: Ok. Grandma had brought up something about the filing. Whoever did the filing on the saw.  
GS: The filing of the saw. That was very important.  
C: Very important. My uncle could do it and my dad could do it. There was only two.  
GS: They were the only two that could handle that saw?  
C: Mhmm.  
GS: File it. Pretty important.  
ME: Did your dad ever cut himself doing this?

C: I don't think so.

ME: Ok. You don't remember anything like this? Your uncle?

C: I don't think so.

GS: They were careful.

ME: Very careful I guess. I had sharpened a number of chainsaws and criss-cut saws and you poke yourself from time-to-time. Ok.

\*ME: You had lived about half a mile from the camp, or from the mill rather, and did your family...do you remember living anywhere else during that time period?

C: Well, I was born in Minneapolis (multiple side conversations).

GS: Grandpa wants to know if Carol ever knew, or her father knew, Elbert Anderson.

But see, he was Efy, which is a long ways from Dixon Lake.

C: Yah. My aunt used to live in Efy, but I don't know.

GS: Oh. She had an aunt that lived in Efy. But that is as close.

RS: Oh, is that a right?

More on that.

\*ME: Is it (Rosy) a ghost town now?

C: There never was a town.

ME: Ok.

C: Just the post office.

ME: Just the post office.

\*C: There was a great big building and they'd have dances there.

ME: Ok.

C: And they'd stay all night and come home in the daylight.

ALL: (laughter)

C: We'd put our kids along the benches, along the wall, to go to sleep.

ME: Really?

C: Mhmm.

ME: Wow. And let the parents stay up all night?

ALL: (laughter)

C: Mhmm.

GS: Now, that's the same way when I was young and we went to the schoolhouse, or the town hall...The town hall, that's where the dances were held. And I remember a baby sleeping. It managed somehow to find a...I don't know if they built these little cupboards or what, there'd be a baby sleeping in them!

ALL: (laughter)

\*ME: And did most people in Rosy work at the mill or were they in the logging camps?

C: I don't remember. I think most men logged during the winter. If you had a couple of horses I think you did.

ME: Did your father ever do that during the winter?

C: (nodding no)

ME: And was it just during the summer primarily that your dad's mill would be open?

C: Mhmm.

ME: Did he work during the winter? Sometimes.

C: I don't know.

ME: Ok. And did you like it when your dad would ask you to help out?

C: Oh yes. Mhmm.  
ME: You thought it was pretty special?  
C: Yah. We did.  
\*ME: Ok. Well Carol, I think that's most of my questions. Do you have anything else that you can think of?  
C: Except we loved to play in the sawdust pile. It went right down to the lake, you know.  
GS: Oh! (laughter)  
C: We could go right down to the lake!  
GS: Ok, so you'd hit the lake...the water was not deep?  
C: No.  
GS: Where you hit the water, it was shallow?  
C: Sure.  
ME: Would you have your dress on when you went swimming?  
C: No, we had swimsuits.  
ALL: (laughter—except me)  
ME: Oh, you had swimsuits. Ok. I was trying to picture this.  
ALL: (laughter)  
ME: Oh boy. Well that's good.  
\*ME: Do you think your dad was ever sorry that he'd done the mill work when the mill burnt down or do you think he was pretty happy with how things turned out?  
C: I think he was pretty sad. We homesteaded two places and we lived on the one, up on the hill.  
(Something else)  
\*C: He built my mom a great big house. Five bedrooms and all stucko and she had the first bathtub and running water in the community.  
ALL: (laughter)  
C: All the ladies were so jealous because she had this bathtub that was inside and a sink in it. (something else)  
More on the house.  
\*ME: Would your dad go home for lunch?  
C: Yah. Mhmm.  
ME: Ok. Would your mom ever bring him lunch?  
C: No.  
ME: Did you ever bring him lunch?  
C: No. I walked home with him holding his hand and we'd run like the wind. Maybe he'd let me blow the whistle. But I can remember walking home with him holding his hand.  
\*ME: So would you spend most of your summertime days either playing in the sawdust or swimming right around the mill?  
C: Mhmm.  
ME: Ok.  
C: I didn't hear my mom was worried about us until she was in the nursing home and then she'd say "I saw the kids and they were out by the lake" (broken up)  
GS: Well, as long as the water was shallow. I'm sure your father wasn't worried.  
\*ME: Would your mom be at the mill most days scaling.  
C: Oh no. She'd do it before the mill started.

ME: Oh! So early in the morning!

C: Yah.

ME: Ok. And then she'd go home and do cooking for the day? Prepare meals maybe? Like lunch, I mean dinner? And supper?

C: (nodding yes)

GS: She was a busy women then.

C: But she didn't have to do that scaling during the summer.

GS: Just during the winter time.

More on that.

Stories on blueberries (highland and swamp)

ME: So, just so I have this straight, your mom would come in during the winter and do scaling then and then during the summer she pretty much was never there.

C: Mhmm.

ME: Ok. Where it was just the opposite with you, your brother, and your dad...maybe not much work during the winter, but when summer came you'd spend more time there.

C: Well, we could never be at the mill when it was running. Never.

ME: Ok. Not even playing in the sawdust?

C: Nope.

\*ME: Ok. So at most you'd go blow the whistle?

C: That was the only thing we did.

\*ME: And when they'd close down, maybe on a Sunday, you would go play on the sawdust.

C: Well that sawdust pile was there for years and years and we'd always played on it. It was always warm under there.

ME: Huh.

C: The sawdust never got cold, you know, it was always warm under there.

\*C: And so my dad sold that sawdust pile.

ME: Really?

GS: He sold it?

C: Yah. Mhmm.

GS: Who bought it?

C: I can't remember.

GS: What was it going to be used for?

C: I suppose for gardening or something, I don't know. I wasn't there when he did it.

GS: Yah.

\*ME: So the sawdust you would only play in when the mill was closed and wasn't going?

C: Mhmm.

ME: Ok.

C: We weren't allowed anywhere near the mill when it was running.

ME: Alright. Ok.

GS: Being careful.

Other stories/Logging camp in Grand Rapids

\*ME: Other than your dad and your uncle, can you think of roughly how many other men were working at the mill?

C: Oh, probably 10 or 12.

ME: 10 or 12. Ok. That's a good sized operation.



C: Mhmm.

ME: I think that's about it Carol.

C: Ok.

ME: Thank you very much.

\*ME: And at the mill did everyone speak English? Did you have any Finns who maybe struggled with English?

C: No. Not that I know of. I know my husband was Norwegian and when he started school he couldn't speak any English.

\*ME: Ok. Were there any American Indians who worked at the mill?

C: (nodding no)

ME: Ok.

\*ME: Carol, when were you born?

C: August the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1816, I think.

ME: 1816?! (laughing a bit)

C: I mean...

ME: 1916. (laughing)

C: Yah, not 18! (laughing) In Minneapolis.

\*ME: Second of all do you remember hearing Paul Bunyan stories as a kid.

C: No.

ME: Ok.

## APPENDIX 2: WOMEN OF THE WOODS

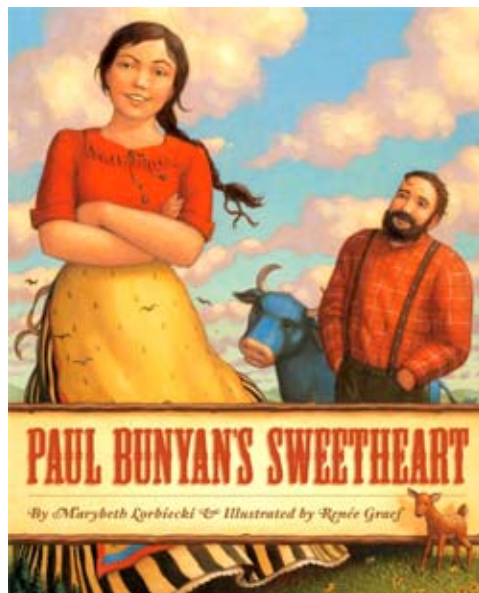
Over the course of my four years of research (2004-2007), I began to realize the contribution of women in logging and lumber activities was much more significant than I had originally believed (**Figure A.1**). Gladys Snyder (2004), Carol Gudim (2005), and Bernice Schaar (2005) all had personal experience helping with work in the region's logging camps or lumber mills while others were able to retell stories of mothers or wives contributing. Other than lumberjacking itself, the list of activities women were active was long and detailed. The role of women in the economic and cultural development of the Northwoods is a topic that is yet to be explored.



**Figure A.1:** Although not employed universally, women did make significant economic and cultural contributions to the development of the Northwoods. The photo is from 1917 and shows two women who worked in one of Beltrami County's logging camps. (Photo from Minnesota Forest History Center)

A second related topic that is yet to be explored is that of Hackensack's Lucette. Not only has the statue gone through several major facelifts since being introduced in 1950, so has the storyline of Paul's sweetheart. Marybeth Lorbiecki (2007), author of a new book on Lucette entitled: *Paul Bunyan's Sweetheart*, expanded and updated previous

stories on the Northwoods' couple. Regarding Lucette's heritage, Lorbieki (2007) explained in a personal correspondence, "I built on our regional history. Who were the women who helped build this northern country? The Ojibwa and immigrant pioneer farm women. I tried to bring out these aspects of our heritage in Lucette and our country values that have not yet been mythologized in the tall tale aspect" and adds "She also exemplifies the strength, endurance, caretaking, and appreciation of beauty that our forbearers exemplified" (Figure A.2).



**Figure A.2:** Marybeth Lorbieki's (2007) recent book entitled *Paul Bunyan's Sweetheart*. The book is noteworthy in that it includes American Indians (Lucette is part Ojibwa) and environmental issues (Lucette explains to Paul the importance of being environmentally friendly) in the story line. (Book cover shown here).

## APPENDIX 3: EATING ON THE ROAD

There exist a number of benefits to conducting research in the field. One of which is eating at local establishments. While exploring the Northwoods (2004-2007), I made a point of eating at local restaurants which displayed a Paul Bunyan theme or offered a Paul Bunyan item whenever possible. I became a fan of many of these places and ate several meals at many of them including Em’s Coffee and Deli of Akeley, Minnesota. The restaurant’s Bunyan Button Burgers were a delicious treat after a hard day of participatory research during Paul Bunyan Days. Such places were a real treat and added greatly to building a sense of place with local residents and visitors alike (**Figure A.3**).



**Figure A.3:** Cindy Paulsen, owner of Lucette’s Pizza and Pub, posing with a likeness of Lucette. The pub portion of the establishment opened for business on Valentine’s Day 2003. When asked if naming the establishment was linked to Hackensack’s centennial celebration (2003), Paulsen simply replied, “Sure.” (Picture by author)

As noted in *Restoration: Regional Identity*, many local establishments have added “Paul Bunyan” and “Babe” or “Blue Ox” items to their menus or have pictures of the folk giants on the walls. An important contribution to the Northwoods’ sense of regional

identity that would be easily overlooked if one did not take time to listen to the locals  
(Hart 1995).

## APPENDIX 4: “THE LOST FORTY”

I remember my grandfather once commenting that lumberjacks during the 1930s would have ignored the trees that now exist in northern Minnesota. At the time, I thought he was exaggerating. Many visitors to the region would agree with my assessment. As Hudson (1984, 19) writes, “Vacationers who flock there (to the Northwoods) today see little to suggest past abuse, so widespread is the reforestation and so overgrown are the fields”.



**Figure A.4:** “The Ann River Load; 31,480 board feet of pine logs hauled one mile by a four-horse hitch, Ann River Company, February 1892” (Minnesota Forest History Center website). The size of the timber cut during the late 1800s and early 1900s is noticeably larger than most of the timber cut today. (Note the lumberjacks in the lower left hand corner for scale.) (Photo from Minnesota Forest History Center)

When I began my research on the logging industry in 2004, I was awe struck by the size of the timber that had been cut one hundred years ago (**Figure A.4**). I began to realize my grandfather’s memory had been accurate. In August of 2007, I visited Minnesota’s Lost 40. The area is part of Minnesota’s Department of Natural Resources and is officially known as the *Lost 40 SNA* (Scientific and Natural Area); an area that was spared in 1882 due to a surveying error. Any question I may have had regarding the size

of the trees that existed when the loggers first traveled through the Northwoods was answered (**Figure A.5**).



**Figure A.5:** Conner “Magnus” Jackman (age 5) is dwarfed by the centuries old red pine (also known as Norway pine). Northern Minnesota’s Lost 40 is an area of 114 acres of virgin forest that was spared from the lumberjacks due to a surveying error in 1882 and gives a glimpse of what the forest originally looked like. (Picture by author)

*Soli Deo Gloria*