

## [Page 6 - In the North River Lumber Woods](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 7](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1974/3/1

wasn't much money with the amount of land controlled. I don't think there was too much made there anyhow, until Barnjum sold to the Oxford Paper Company, He sold for a million and a half. The Oxford Paper Company came to Murray in 1916. I worked there 9 years • 1923 to 1931. 1923 was the biggest year they cut while I was there. They cut 45,000 cords of wood • 700 men in there, I think one year before that they cut 58,000 cordSo Then it got smaller • 25 to 35,000, Today they're cutting more than they were then, because they've got machines to do the work of a hundred men. The machine just goes into the woods and snips it off like a pair of scissors, whole tree • strips it down, cuts it in 8 foot sections and piles it on itself • and once it gets 8 to 10 cords it comes out and loads it on a truckp There's only 3 or 4 men in? volved . But in 1923 it was 45,000 cords. And the next year they drove her down the river. It was a whole year's oeration. They got it to the boom and it was taken to the mill and the slasher saw cut the 4 feet to 2. The bark was taken off m the rossmg mill. According to the lease, the wood was supposed to be manufactured before it left the country. And that's what covered the letter of the lease. You know, this wood was manufactured, that the bark was taken off. It was Very near the borderline but they got away with it. They loaded the wood on chutes like you load coal. They never stowed the wood in the boats; they just run it. When it came to the deckload they boarded the stanchions right up almost solid and the wood just poured right in. They used to just what they called trim it just like coal. And all the wood from Cape Breton went to Portland, Maine. Oxford stopped here because of the depression, the thirties. And part of the trouble was union. They used to ship it in through Port? land, There was a strike. So they just closed the pier, let it rot. At the mill the average pay was two and a half a day for a 10 hour day. The tote team, the drivers, they got from 40 to 45 dollars a month. The cooks got 90 a month. The foreman got a hundred. The blacksmiths were 85 I believe. But the rest of it was practically all on piecework. They cut rough wood • to cut and pile on what they called yards • they got two and a half a cord. The yard was right near where the wood is. The landing is where you take the wood to the riverbank previous to the drive. They worked 4 to a crew, and the company supplied a teamster. Two men cut in the woods and the other two piled in the yards and sawed the wood up • and between the woods and the yard the teamster hauled the wood in long lengths. Then it would have to be wintertime when the snow was on to get from the yard to the landing. Then when the spring break came they drove it down the river. A Neighborhood Store in a Beautiful Village Neil's Harbour CO-OP We Specialize in Camping Equipment and Clothing of All Kinds as well as Hardware, Plumbing and Electrical Supplies Reuben McEvoy's General Store Ltd. INGONISH BEACH Open all year at the entrance to the beautiful Cape Breton Highlands National Park Capt Breton's Magazine/6 The Bean Sprout Traditional Foods Ltd ISBSBarrington St'Halifax,N.S.(902)423-8630 J A Pine Seafood Restaurant 7 Days a Week / 7 AM to 11 PM The Skye Restaurant ' Fully Licensed and Air Conditioned ANOTHER PINE FISKE MOIEL