

# Thompson Docks



Trains hauled logs over 5 miles, up to 6 trips a day and dumped them in the mill ponds.

The Thompson Railroad Line served the mill owned by the Delta Lumber Company beginning with a terminal located at Indian River. In the early logging days, softwoods floated down the river to this terminal to be loaded onto flat cars. After the turn of the century, loggers began cutting the hardwood forests and the railroad extended its lines 20 miles north. Oxen were used to haul timber from the forest to clearings, where the wood was then transferred to horse drawn sleighs and taken to the trains.



A logging team.

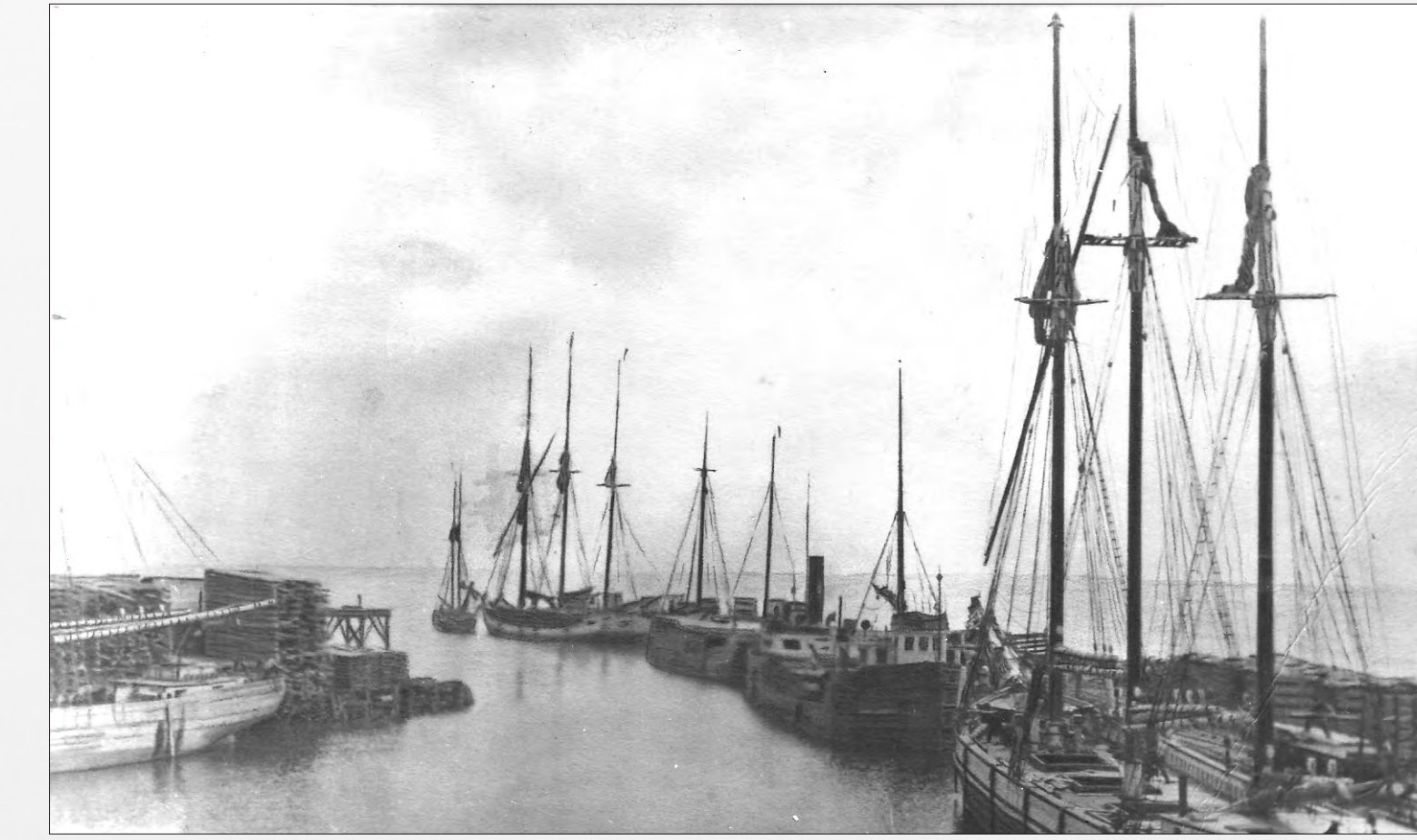


The Delta Lumber Company created a pond of several acres into which logs were stored prior to being milled. The pond could hold at least 8 million board feet worth of logs and was also utilized as a safe haven for boats during bad weather.

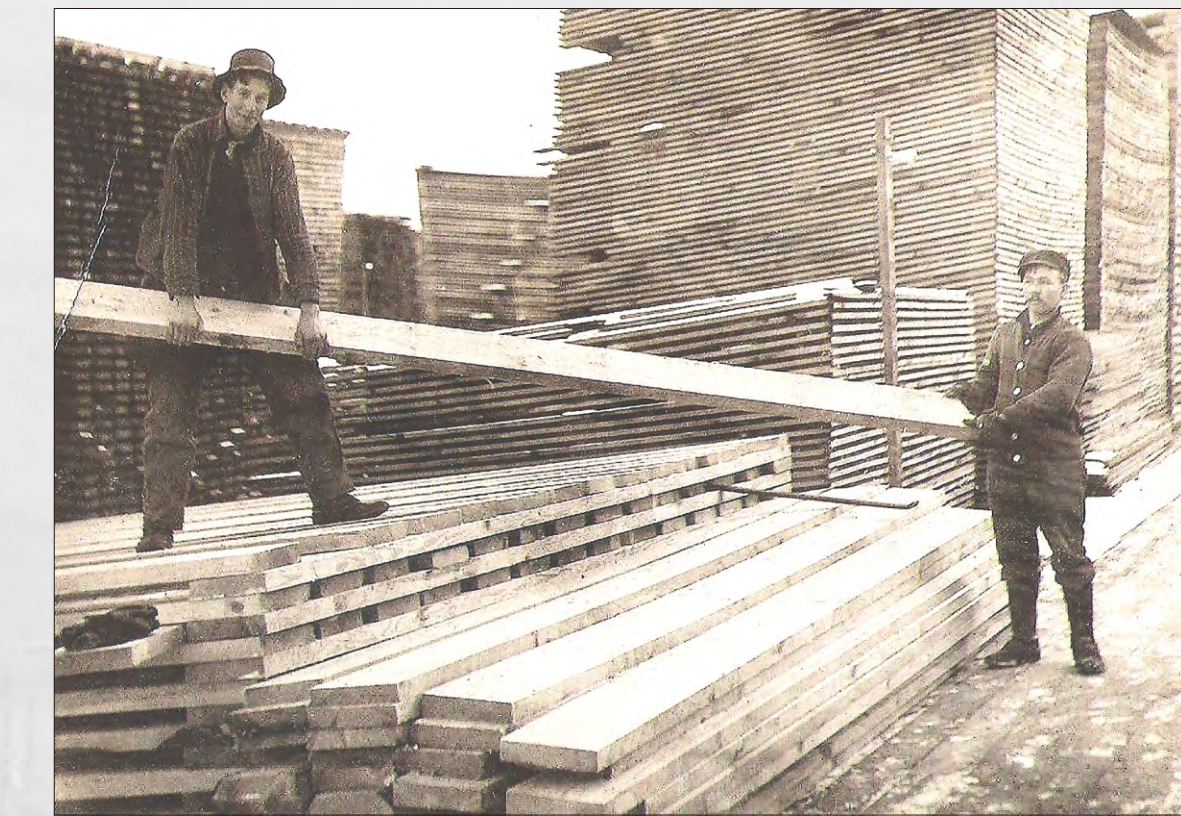


The docks at Thompson as they appeared in the 1800's. The schooner on the left was tentatively identified as the Rouse Simmons.

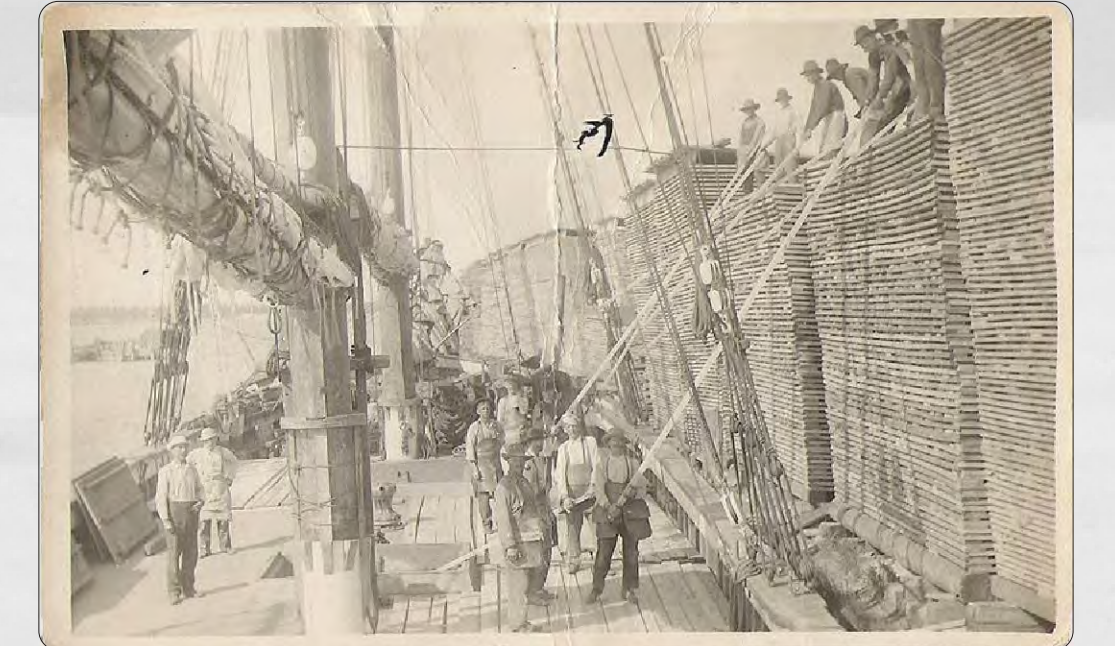
When the train arrived, the logs were unloaded into the mill ponds. These ponds were surrounded by the docks which extended out into lake to a depth of 16 feet. The timber was then milled and stacked to dry on the docks. The scrap wood, or slabs, were cut into smaller lengths and hauled into nearby Manistique.



Lumber "hookers".



The lumber was stacked to allow air drying. The top layer was placed at a slant for protection from the weather.



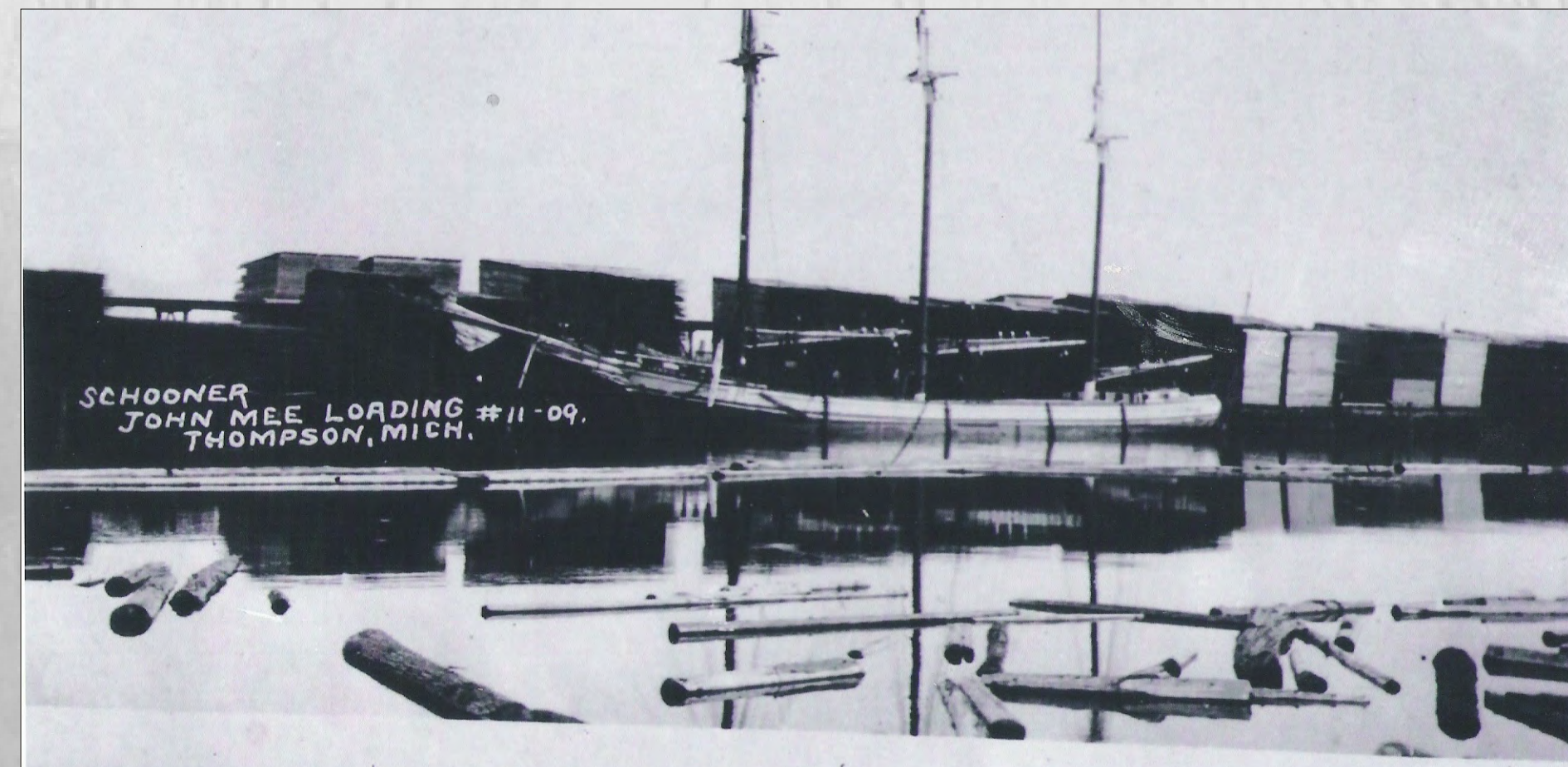
The men, standing on top of the lumber piles, pass the boards to the crew on the deck of the schooners. The lumber was then transferred into the holds. Note the open hatches.



More ships.



Ships in Thompson Harbor waiting to be loaded.



The mill pond.

Once the lumber was dried, crews would load the schooners with lumber to be shipped all over the Great Lakes region. These lumber "hookers", as they were called, were designed for shoal water operation since many mill ports were relatively shallow. Also important to the economy of the region was commercial fishing. Family owned fishing vessels also used the Thompson docks as their home port.



The "Dorothy" at Thompson Harbor 1914. This fishing tug was owned and operated by the Sellman Family.