

# HEMLOCK, *Tsuga Canadensis*

Updated to June 9, 2013

This is a folder of the Rib Lake Historical Society, LLC, prepared by its manager, Robert P. Rusch. Eastern hemlock, with yellow birch, was the dominant tree species in the virgin forests of Rib Lake, Wisconsin. The founder of Rib Lake, J.J. Kennedy, built what became the nation's then largest hemlock manufacturing sawmill. Hemlock provided the tannic acid that permitted the Rib Lake Tannery to flourish from 1892-1922. These are some of the reasons for the creation of this folder.

The manager intends to devote a chapter to "hemlock" in the to be written "A Diamond in the Rough; A History of Rib Lake by One Who Loves Her." The material within this folder will provide source material and references.

SPECIAL NOTE TO ONLINE READERS: Feel free to submit additions, corrections and comments: Robert P. Rusch, N8643 CTH C, Rib Lake, WI 54470, 715-427-3444, [rprusch@newnorth.net](mailto:rprusch@newnorth.net), [www.riblakehistory.com](http://www.riblakehistory.com).



17089D Landowner Everett A. Rusch stands next to a young hemlock tree, *tsuga canadensis*, the source of thousands of cords of tanbark shipped to the United States Leather Co. tannery at Rib Lake, WI, on the ice road which ran through the "cut" where he stands. The "cut" was a portion of the 8 mile long steam hauler ice road connecting the tannery to Rib Lake Lumber Co. Camp 9 in Price County. Photograph taken 5-1-2013 on SE SW 18-33-3E, Town of Rib Lake by R.P. Rusch.



17089C Everett A. Rusch stands in front of a 4' deep excavation dug c. 1910 to allow steam haulers to pass through his property, SE SW 18-33-3E, Town of Rib Lake, and avoid a small hill; this was a part of a major steam hauler ice road between the Rib Lake Lumber Co. sawmill and Camp 9 in Price County, over which the steam haulers pulled up to 13 sleighs loaded with logs & tanbark until its final run in March, 1922.  
Photo by R.P. Rusch 5-1-2013.

| Date of Document | Source Name      | Quote or summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| 6/1/1876         |                  | HEMLOCK BARK---“Those who are desirous of getting out tanners’ bark, and delivering it to the railroad, can learn particulars in regard to price, terms, etc. by inquiring of Ogden and Adams or W. E. Lockerby. A. J. VAN EPPS | <p>This is the first comment with the News that a market existed for hemlock bark.</p> <p>The June 8 edition of the News under Chelsea News reports: “Hemlock bark is now the shipping product here. William Seeger [a Medford merchant] is loading [rail] road cars for points south every day. Contracts for considerable quantities have been made by Messrs. Kinney, Jones and other with the “Milwaukee Leather Co.” of Milwaukee and several gangs are now peeling or getting ready to do so. The trade in this material promises to get good this season. At no point on the line of the railroad are there such facilities for an extensive trade in hemlock bark.”</p> <p>TAYLOR COUNTY WAS HEMLOCK HEAVEN; hemlock bark was peeled by the Rib Lake Lumber Company and shipped by rail to Milwaukee tanneries as late as the 1940’s. RPR</p> <p>THIS IS THE VERY FIRSTCOMMENT PLACED HERE THROUGH COPY AND PASTE THROUGH THE DEFT FINGERS AND QUICK MIND OF CINDY SOMMER ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON, FEB. 12, 2012. THANK YOU CINDY.</p> |
| 6/11/1881        | TC STAR AND NEWS | TANBARK -- Hemlock bark will be shipped from every station on the [railroad] line the coming summer.                                                                                                                            | There was already a market for hemlock bark. A Medford store offered to buy it for \$7.00 a cord in trade. Much of this “tanbark” went by rail to Milwaukee, which had several large tanneries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 7/30/1881        | TC STAR AND      | RAILROAD TIES 14 CENTS -- 10,000 railroad cross ties wanted by J. B. Thompson                                                                                                                                                   | Surprisingly, hemlock was a preferred species.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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|            | NEWS             | of the village [Medford], for which 14 cents will be paid. They are to be of hemlock or rock elm and to be delivered on the right of way anywhere between Dorchester and Westboro.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2/5/1887   |                  | <p>HEMLOCK -- Isaac Gay [of Westboro] has contracted with the Chicago Lumber Company of Omaha, Nebraska, through their agent, Mr. Firkus, to furnish 50 [railroad] car loads of sawed hemlock ties at 22 cents apiece.</p> <p>He has also taken a contract of another company (we could not learn its name) to furnish 50 at 22 ½ cents apiece. Ike is bound to get there if stick-to-it-ive-ness will do it.</p>     | <p>Isaac Gay operated a small sawmill 1 mile east of Westboro on the SW SW 5 33 2E according to Bob Lucia.</p> <p>Note that hemlock was being used for railroad ties. Normally hardwood was used because of its strength.</p> <p>There are now three sawmills in or near Westboro... The oldest is the John Duncan mill, originally the Duncan, Taylor &amp; Ritchie. The second constructed is on Silver Creek and owned by C. C. Palmer; the Star &amp; News just reported that a siding from the Wisconsin Central Railroad is about to be built to the mill; in 1902 it would become the Westboro Lumber Co. Finally, Isaac "Ike" Gay has his small mill east of town. It was one mile south of the county line, on the east side of Lucia Road at "Gaytown."</p> |
| 11/26/1887 |                  | HEMLOCK -- N.B. Holway, of La Crosse, and James Hewitt of Neillsville, spent the first 3 days of the weeks in Medford and vicinity. They were arranging to buy logs to be put in the Black River and run to La Cross where the first named gentleman owns a large saw mill. He has contracted FOR A LARGE AMOUNT OF HEMLOCK, and left a man here, named Marcus Sievers, to look after his interests. (emphasis added) | <p>The Black River flows from Medford to the Mississippi River which it joins just north of La Crosse.</p> <p>Here is a purchase of hemlock that has already been felled and stripped of its tanbark.</p> <p>In all probability, the tanbark had been purchased by the Nystrum tannery in Medford; it was operating at the time and had been running for the past 3 years.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 2/13/1892  | TC STAR AND NEWS | .....[Taylor County} has 3 large tanneries so placed, at different parts of the county that all the hemlock bark can be delivered to them and capable of consuming from 20 to 40 though cords per year, for which a fair price is paid in cash.                                                                                                                                                                       | The 3 tanneries then operating were at Medford, Perkinstown and Rib Lake.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|           |                  | TAYLOR COUNTY IS THE CENTER OF THE HEAVIEST HEMLOCK TIMBER IN THE NORTHWEST. HEMLOCK LUMBER IS WORKING ITS WAY INTO THE MARKET, AND EVEN NOW IT PAYS TO LOG IT.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 2/25/1893 | Ditto            | <p>A year ago owners of large tracts of hemlock timber did not consider their property of very great value, and offers were made to sell one tract in Taylor County of about 20,000 for \$1 per acre</p> <p>During the past year, however, lumbermen have been turning their eyes to hemlock stumpage, as that lumber has become an important factor in the western lumber world.</p> <p>The result is that nearly every owner of hemlock lands has been inspired with the idea that he had struck a gold mine and, although all land owners who are not lumbermen are willing to sell, they are pulling the price way out of sight. The tract referred to above that was offered for \$1 per acre, is not held at \$5.00.</p> | <p>The John Duncan Lumber Co. of Westboro just announced this winter would be the last it would log pine; the company's pine had all been cut. The editor of the Star and News opined that the company could continue operations if sawed hardwood and hemlock.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2/25/1893 | TC STAR AND NEWS | <p>The Wisconsin Central Railroad lands in Taylor County have been withdrawn from the market for the present and none will be sold until a new examination has been made.</p> <p>This examination will include a careful examination of all timber, PARTICULARLY HEMLOCK, AS WELL AS A MORE CAREFUL REPORT ON SOIL.</p> <p>Then, when the data has been secured upon which to base a scale of prices, the lands will be returned to the market.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>The Wisconsin Central Railroad received as a land grant from the US Government every other section of land for 18 miles on either side of its track. This was an inducement and reward for constructing its railroad.</p> <p>As a result of this land grant, the Wisconsin Central owned a huge swath of land throughout the eastern portion of Taylor County as well as the other counties it ran from Neenah, Outagamie County until the end of track in Ashland, Ashland County, Wisconsin.</p> <p>Not only was the end of pine logging being experienced in Taylor County, but 3 new tanneries had been constructed by the Shaw family. The tanneries in Medford, Perkinstown and Rib Lake were hungry for immense quantities of hemlock bark. Anyone looking at these tanneries could tell the Shaw's were successful businessmen and that they were here to stay. This meant</p> |

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|           |                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | a long time demand for hemlock bark, and, consequently, for hemlock lands                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 6/10/1893 | TC STAR AND NEWS | <p>NEW TANNERY AT PHILLIPS</p> <p>Herb Drake went up to Phillips this week to superintend construction of the new tannery to be built in that place by Mr. Fayette Shaw. The new tannery will be about the same size as the three in this [Taylor] county and will be run in the name of William F. Kimball, who is the Co. in the firm name of T., F. M. &amp; F. D. Shaw &amp; Co.</p> <p>The City of Phillips donated the site.</p> | <p>Kimball was a son-in-law to the family patriarch, Fayette M. Shaw.</p> <p>The initials in the firm name stood for three persons. T for Thaxter Shaw. F.M. for Fred M. Shaw. F. D. for Fayette Delos Shaw, a son of the patriarch and the sole owner of the Rib Lake tannery. Thaxter was the father of Fred M. Shaw or the grandfather of Fayette Delos Shaw.</p> <p>When Fayette Delos Shaw died in 1941 he was living with a daughter in Phillips, Wisconsin, and he was buried there.</p> <p>The June 10, 1893 edition of the Taylor County Star &amp; News reported: FAYETTE DELOS SHAW and IDA AUGUSTA KRAUTH were made one flesh according to the laws of God and the state...at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Fayette Shaw, in this city [Medford] by the Rev. While, a Universalist pastor from Chicago.</p> <p>The groom is a member of the firm of T., F. M., &amp; F. D. Shaw &amp; Co. The new Mrs. Shaw has been a teacher for two years in our city [Medford] school and is a general favorite among Medford's your society...</p> |
| 6/10/1893 | TC STAR & NEWS   | <p>J. J. KENNEDY</p> <p><i>The Minnesota Lumberman</i> [a magazine] thus speaks of J. J. Kennedy, the man who does the heaviest lumbering business in Taylor County today, and who does not fall far below the largest lumbering firms in North Wisconsin:</p>                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>This highly complimentary article confirms Kennedy's close business relationship with Curtis Brothers &amp; Co. The Curtis firm owned the sawmill until 1893 when Curtis sold to J. J.</p> <p>Note the text: "...his mill at Rib Lake turned out</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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|  |  | <p>J. J. Kennedy of Rib Lake, Wis., is one of the pioneer lumbermen of the Badger State. He has been in the lumber business since his youth, and has grown up with it in every detail, and at his pleasant home at Rib Lake, has one of the finest manufacturing plants in this section.</p> <p>He spent his early years in New York state where he contracted for telegraph poles for the Western Union Telegraph Company. Mr. Kennedy came west and settled at Spencer, Wisconsin, over twenty years ago remaining there some five years, lumbering for himself. Finally he gave up the operating of his saw mill at Spencer, and cut logs on contract for mill men.</p> <p>While in the logging business, Mr. Kennedy met the Curtis Brothers of Clinton, Iowa, and Mr. J. E. Carpenter, the head of the company, and took a contract to cut logs for them near Ogema, Wisconsin. Some three years later Curtis Brothers &amp; Co. purchased a tract of central Wisconsin pine, bearing some 250,000,000 feet in central Wisconsin, and Mr. Kennedy took the contract for cutting it for Curtis Brothers &amp; Co.</p> <p>For the past twelve years he has been engaged in this work, his mill at Rib Lake turning out some 22,000,000 feet of pine, 15,000,000 feet of hemlock and 20,000,000 shingles.</p> <p>The mill consists of two De Groat, Giddings &amp; Lewis bands [band saws], an Allis rotary and Egan band resaw, Perkins ten blocks and a hand saw shingle mill. The plant is located six miles from Chelsea on the Ashland branch of the Wisconsin Central road, which is about 10 miles in length. There is about two miles of track in the yard, which gives them the best possible facilities for loading as a track runs at the rear of each [lumber] pile.</p> <p>The cut runs well to uppers (sic), as the mill is located in the heart of one of the finest bodies of pine and hemlock in the northwest. The company now has in pile at this place about 15,000,000 feet of pine, 8,000,000 feet of hemlock and 10,000,000 shingles. During the time Mr. Kennedy has been cutting for Curtis Brothers &amp; Co. he has picked up considerable pine here and there throughout the state, and has before</p> | <p>22,000,000 feet of PINE, [AND] 15,000,000 FEET OF hemlock...” This is a major revelation. While most saw mill owners refused to cut hemlock until the very last of their pine was cut, Kennedy saw the realities of limited amounts of pine and almost limitless amounts of hemlock; his solution: simultaneously cut both!. Kennedy early on made the transition to hemlock—a transition that some lumbermen refused to make and most lumbermen resisted. Note, for example, 2/4/1893 TC STAR AND NEWS re John Duncan of Westboro: “John Duncan is cutting his LAST pine this winter, about 6,000,000. THE MILL MAY!!! RUN ON HARDWOOD OR HEMLOCK AFTER THIS YEAR, BUT THE PINE IS ALL GONE.” (emphasis added)</p> |
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|           |                                     | him a supply for his mill for a number of years to come.                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1889-1890 | “Commemorative Biographical Record” | ALBERT A. GEARHART Arrived in Chelsea, Wis., in 1883....from 1889 to 1899 operated a sawmill there (Chelsea) IN WHICH HE PRODUCED THE FIRST HEMLOCK LUMBER ON THE LINE OF THE WISCONSIN CENTRAL RAILROAD. | <p>This does not tell us when Gearhart began cutting hemlock lumber except for a ten year time frame.</p> <p>JJK MAY HAVE BEAT GEARHART. Nota bene: 8/3/1889 Star News:</p> <p>“J. J. Kennedy of Rib Lake is beginning to emancipate himself from the pine slavery, and is now prepared to appreciate the excellence of hemlock and other N. Wis. Timbers.</p> <p>There was a time when a Wis. Lumberman was timber blind to everything but pine, Mr. Kennedy says he believes there is more money in the hemlock, tamarack and hardwoods of N. Wis. Than there ever was in pine and he also says that this belief is gaining ground.</p> <p>He is right, of course, and the time is coming, and coming right soon, when a man who has a good crop of timber on his land, even if it is not pine, will have an investment that will pay better than bonds.”</p> <p>Read the TC Star and News accounts c 1892. John Duncan of Westboro has one more season of pine to mill and then he is forced to go to hemlock.</p> <p>NOTE THE TC STAR AND NEWS C. 1892 REPORT THAT JJK HAS CUT 22,000,000 FEET OF PINE AND 15,000,000 FEET OF HEMLOCK. [JJK DID NOT WAIT TO CUT HEMLOCK ONLY AFTER</p> |



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| 4/4/1896  | Wisconsin Central Railroad Land Handbook republished in Taylor County Star & News | <p>The astonishing thing about Taylor County (and this may be said of the other counties we have written about) Is that it is only within the last few years that the strength of the hemlock lands and the general fertility of the timber lands have come to be appreciated....</p> <p>TAYLOR COUNTY IS KNOWN AS THE GREAT HEMLOCK COUNTY OF THE STATE. Nowhere else in the state can so much hemlock of so fine a quality be found; and every acre of these hemlock lands in the county is fertile and capable of producing fine crops of all the small grains, as well as the very best of the root crops...</p> <p>Every farmer in Taylor County secures ready cash market for every log of hemlock lumber and every cord of bark, as well as for all the hemlock ties he can furnish... (emphasis added)</p> | A professional forester told me that Taylor County is unique in the State of Wisconsin for the quality of hemlock reproduction; he believed the well drain, loam soils explained our current good, natural reproduction of hemlock. |
| 9/4/1897  | TC STAR & NEWS                                                                    | <p>A [railroad] car load of water mains for the Perkinstown water works arrived Thursday And are now being hauled to that HEMLOCK METROPOLIS in the wilderness. The work of digging the trenched is about completed, and now that the piping has arrived the system will be completed in short time, and Perkinstown will be the FIRST VILLAGE IN THE COUNTY TO HAVE A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF WATER WORKS.</p> <p>Power will be supplied by the tannery, and the running expenses of the plant will be scarcely nothing. Thus, the taxpayers of that village will be benefitted in more ways than one. They will henceforth be able to get their property insured at reasonable rates, besides the many conveniences the works afford. (emphasis added)</p>                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 10/9/1897 | TC STAR & NEWS                                                                    | <p>J. B. Ramsey and M. V. Falconer have contracted with the Pulp Wood Supply Co., of the Fox River valley, to supply that concern with 10,000 cords of hemlock pulp wood. THIS...IS THE FIRST INSTANCE IN WHICH HEMLOCK HAS BEEN BOUGHT FOR THIS PURPOSE IN TAYLOR COUNTY and will afford our farmers an opportunity of disposing of their small hemlock at a fair profit instead of burning it up.</p> <p>The 10,000 cords are all to be delivered this coming winter. All the hemlock to be used for this purpose must be peeled, sound and reasonably free from knots, and ranging in size from 5 to 16 inches in diameter.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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|           |                | This will certainly prove a golden opportunity to our farmers. (emphasis added)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1/1/1898  | TC STAR & NEWS | W. H. Taylor of Westboro has a contract with the Valley Lumber Company of Eau Claire to put into Silver Creek about 2,000,000 feet of hemlock. The contract price is very favorable to the logger and should prove a profitable venture.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Here is Taylor County hemlock river driven to the City of Eau Claire for sawing.<br>I assume the bark went to Shaw's Rib Lake tannery or John Duncan's Westboro tannery then under construction.                        |
| 1/22/1898 | TC STAR & NEWS | <b>CAPITAL LUMBER CO. BUYS CHELSEA SAW MILL</b><br>"Capital Lumber Co.'s sawmill [at Chelsea] is now running full blast. IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THERE IS A BETTER EQUIPPED MILL IN THE STATE FOR SAWING OF HEMLOCK LOGS."<br>"Among the arrivals [in Chelsea] this week were: A. E. Proudfit, F. W. Shepherd and L. [Louis] A. Rousseau, capitalists from Madison [Wisconsin]. The two former are interested in the Capital Lumber Company and came to inspect the [Chelsea] plant. They were much surprised at the many improvements made at the mill including a dry kiln cable of preparing green lumber for market in 3 days."<br>"A little snow would be of great value in the hauling of logs by settlers. Still, logs are coming in quite lively, and if all indications do not go astray, we will see a stock of 8 to 10 million feet of HEMLOCK logs by spring." (emphasis added) | Capital Lumber had bought the sawmill one quarter south of "downtown" Chelsea on the east side of Wisconsin Central's railroad tracks. It had long been operated by Abram Taylor.                                       |
| 2/2/1898  | TC STAR & NEWS | The Milwaukee Sentinel published a report of the State Forestry Commission showing the approximate amount of standing timber in the several counties of Northern Wisconsin.<br>It credited Taylor County with having 200,000,000 feet of pine. 950,000,000 feet of HEMLOCK, and 950,000,000 feet of hardwood timber, which shows that there are still several trees to be cut in this county. (emphasis added)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2/2/1894  | TC STAR & NEWS | [Advertisement]<br><b>WANTED</b><br>3,999 cords of tan bark at Stetsonville [Wisconsin] this coming winter and 2240 lbs. is a cord. Good weight guaranteed,<br>/s/ H. G. Amberson<br>Stetsonville, Wis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | There was no tannery in Stetsonville and the closest was 5 miles away in Medford. This tan bark would be shipped out via the Wisconsin Central Railroad.<br>This ad was aimed at farmers who had hemlock on their land. |
| 2/19/1898 | TC STAR & NEWS | A RECORD WAS DOUBTLESS CREATED AT Charles Squires Camp on Thursday last in the line of hemlock log hauling.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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|           |                | <p>Eight [sleigh] loads were hauled to the [Black] river, a distance of about 7 miles, the aggregate scale of which were 52,000 feet, or an average of 6,500 feet per load. THIS IS A REMARKABLE FEAT IN HEMLOCK and the loads contained about 125 logs each. (emphasis added)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 8/12/1899 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>WOOL STORERS' DISEASE</b><br/> An Ashland, [Wisconsin], special to the Milwaukee Sentinel says: "An Italian laborer at the Shaw tannery at Mellen was brought here today suffering from an unusual malady, from which doctors say there is no hope of recovery.<br/> His disease is a common one in Asiatic countries, but rarely occurs here. At the Shaw tannery hides imported direct from China are being used, and the disease was contracted in handling them.<br/> In Europe and Asia it is called "wool storers' disease, and is prevalent among men handling cattle. It is a microscopic germ that enters the skin and continues through the whole system.<br/> The poison itself is called "anthrox" (sic) and is confined in the earlier stages of development to the cuticle. It is of a burning nature. This is the sixth case that has been brought here the disease being contracted in each instance from handling these foreign hides."</p> | <p>I surmise the disease was anthrax.</p> <p>Earlier reports showed hides were imported from South America and Australia. This is the first mention that Shaw imported from China as well.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 10/7/1899 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>HEMLOCK RAILROAD TIES</b></p> <p>A. Gearhart is now in the employ of the Wisconsin Central Railway Company as tie inspector and general all around hustler for business. Mr. Gearhart is a first class man, and his well-known integrity will act as a guarantee to the people of this section of Wisconsin that they receive a fair estimate for their ties. By the way, prices are considerable better this than usual, being as follows:</p> <p>White oak No. 1.....50 cents<br/> White oak No 2.....30 cents<br/> Hemlock, tamarack or cedar.....23 cents<br/> No 2 Hemlock, tamarack or cedar.10c<br/> Rock elm.....25 cents</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>Albert A. Gearhart was a son of C. H. Gearhart, who came to Chelsea in 1874 and was the first supervisor of the Town of Chelsea.</p> <p>While railroad ties can and were sawn at sawmills, many were hewn by hand by skillful use of a broad axe; this meant that a farmer or settler could himself make railroad ties and get in on these good prices.</p> <p>Before making a tie, the hewer could strip the hemlock for tan bark. The Shaw Co. was at the time offering \$3.50 per cord for tanbark delivered to its Medford tannery.</p> |

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|            |                | At these prices an experienced tie maker can make more money than a distinguished country newspaper man.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 11/1/1899  | TC STAR & NEWS | WANTED Anyone wishing to sell Pine or Hemlock logs delivered in the Black River for the coming winter will do well by seeing or writing A. S. Armstrong, Hemlock, Wis., before selling them elsewhere.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Hemlock was a tiny town adjacent to Hemlock Dam, a site about 5 miles north of Neillsville on the Black River. Driving hemlock logs down the Black River was still frequent; the Medford Manufacturing Co. was in the process of a mammoth increase in power and capacity at its Medford mill and gearing up to exclusively cut hemlock and hardwood. The same company rebuilt the Whittlesey dam on the Black River in 1899 to facilitate hemlock log drives.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 11/18/1899 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>MEDFORD SAWMILL GREATLY IMPROVED -- Had anyone ventured to predict 20 years ago that such improvements as are now being made by the Medford Manufacturing Co. in its saw mill property would be done at this late day, their mental equilibrium would have been questioned. <u>Pine, which was then the only timber worth cutting, has about all disappeared, and perhaps a hundred million feet of hemlock and many millions of hardwood logs have also been either run down the Black River or sawed into lumber. And to think that now we were about to have the best saw mill in the history of Medford,</u> with more than double the power and capacity of the old McCartney mill, would indeed have seemed incredible 20 years ago.</p> <p>But such is the case. A large force of masons and assistants have been at work for some time building an engine and boiler room of stone and mortar, the dimensions of which are 54 by 56 feet, and the stone walls are to be 14 feet high. This will house the largest and most powerful [steam] engine ever brought to Taylor County, being rated at 250 horse power, and a battery of four mammoth boilers. The old 50-horse power outfit, if placed beside the new, would resemble a play thing in comparison. The interior of the entire saw mill will be remodeled and improved with the addition of better and larger machinery to harmonize with the increased power.</p> <p>The annual output of lumber will be increased by millions of feet annually for several years to come, consisting of hemlock and hardwood, and an era of prosperity in this</p> | <p>The improved Medford mill cut its last log in 1922; it closed when its timber was exhausted.</p> <p>The reconstruction of the Whittlesey dam on the Black River allowed the Medford mill to continue logs drives to its mill.</p> <p>But the major improvement in log transport to the Medford mill took place later; it was the construction of logging railroad owned and operated by the Medford saw mill. That railroad track ran northward from the mill parallel with the Wisconsin Central. Just north of Allman Street, the logging line turned westward and eventually ran within 3 miles of Perkinstown.</p> <p>The reconstruction of the Medford dam on the Black River permitted the mill to create a flowage that was used as its mill pond. Logs brought by rail to the mill were dumped into the pond and stored there until needed. Logs were pulled one-at-a-time from the mill pond by the "bull chain" into the saw mill.</p> |

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|            |                | <p>industry is before us greater than ever before.</p> <p>The <u>new dam at Whittlesey has been completed</u> and it is a model of its kind in every respect. The old dam at the saw mill in this city was removed entirely and a new one, constructed according to the latest approved models, has taken its place.</p> <p>The new mill manager, Mr. L. [Lee] W. Gibson, means to do business, and evidently does not believe in doing it in a “one horse” way.</p> | <p>In 2012 the Medford municipal dam stands on the site of the mill dam.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3/3/1900   | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>L. [Lee] W. Gibson and W. N. Killen, of the Medford Manufacturing Company, attended the meeting of the Northwestern Hemlock Timber Manufacturers’ Association held at Milwaukee this week.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>The Northern Hardwood &amp; Hemlock Manufacturers’ Association lasted until c. 1982. Darrell Dammof Stetsonville was its last president. Robert P. Rusch of Rib Lake was its last attorney.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10/20/1900 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>EFFECTIVE DATE FOR UNITED STATES LEATHER CO. TO TAKE POSSESSION OF RIB LAKE, MEDFORD, PERKINSTOWN, PRENTICE, PHILLIPS AND MELLEN TANNERIES FROM F. M., T. &amp; F.D. SHAW CO.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>TC Star &amp; News articles make no mention whether purchase included John Duncan’s Westboro tannery.</p> <p>Nota bene; RIB Lake Historical Society possesses “Bark Ledger – U. S. L. Co.” A company book keeper made detailed notes of bark purchases from 1900-03 from villages along Wisconsin Central mainline, giving name of teamster delivering bark, the amount, the rate of pay [it varied from \$4.00 per cord paid to August Neumann of Whittlesey to \$5.25 paid to J. W. Gray at Westboro], the number of railroad car into which the bark was loaded, the amount and date of payment.</p> <p>Representative pages will be scanned into the Photo &amp; Document Collection as image 15985.</p> <p>There is no mention of Rib Lake or likely Rib Lake teamsters within the “Bark Ledger” but for two purchases of less than two cords of bark from “Lou [Louis] Kennedy.” The 1880 Census shows Louis residing in Spencer, Wis. Which was the then home of J. J. and Angus Kennedy. Louis’ residence and work place in 1900 is unknown as of 7/5/2012.</p> |

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| 2/23/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>“TAYLOR COUNTY THE GEM, Its Climate, Soil, Products and Industries.”</p> <p>TANNERIES The second largest industry [in Taylor County next to lumbering] is that of leather making. Three large establishments, one each at Medford, Rib Lake and Westboro, are in constant operation and afford employment to a large number of men the year around.</p> <p>Tanneries also furnish a ready market for a vast quantity of hemlock bark. Formerly known as the Shaw tanneries, they are now operated by the United States Leather Company.</p> | <p>The Star &amp; News article reporting the purchase of the Saw tanneries by the United States Leather Company also reported that the buyer would close the Shaw tannery at Perkinstown.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4/13/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>We learn that the U. S. Leather Co. will peel about 35,000 cords of bark for its tanneries in north Wisconsin, and will take 25,000 cords from private parties.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>In September, 1900, the United States Leather Company bought the tanneries at Medford, Perkinstown, Rib Lake, Westboro, Prentice, Phillips and Mellen, Wisconsin. It immediately closed the one at Perkinstown.</p> <p>In keeping with the practice of its predecessor Shaw Company, it intended to operate “bark camps” to fell hemlock trees and peel tan bark; this article projects that such company crews would generate 10,000 cords.</p> <p>Another 25,000 cords would be bought from “private parties” falling into the following categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Jobbers. Jobbers were independent companies or persons contracting to cut hemlock which the United States Leather Co. owned or had stumpage rights to for a predetermined payment.</li> <li>b. Other Companies. This category included companies like W. A. Osburn, I/k/a Rib Lake Lumber Co. or Heidrick &amp; Matson at Westboro or John S. Davis at Phillips.</li> <li>c. Farmers and settlers usually cutting on their own land.</li> <li>d. Other-private entrepreneurs; often a one man operation.</li> <li>e. Hybrid. Shaw or U.S. Leather sometimes sold its timberlands or timber (stumpage) reserving the</li> </ol> |

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|            |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>right onto itself or its assignee to cut and peel the tanbark.</p> <p>The Rib Lake Historical Society has in its possession the “Bark Ledger” of the United States Leather Company for 1900 and following years identifying sources and details of tanbark purchases.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 4/13/1901  | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>CITY OF MEDFORD BONUS BOND</b></p> <p>At a meeting of the City of Medford city council, Attorney Thextor called up the matter of the bonus bond running to the Shaw tannery company. The Shaw’s having sold to the U. S. Leather company, the bond is technically non-enforceable.</p> <p>[Councilman] Wehman thought that all right to collect on the bond was lost. Wesle thought that the City was under a moral obligation to pay. He moved that if the Shaw’s gave a suitable guarantee bond that the U. S. Leather Co. would carry out the contract for the four remaining years, the City pay the remainder of the bonus.</p> <p>The vote was a tie, Smith, Wesle and Boeckler voting yes, The mayor gave the casting vote (sic) in favor of the motion.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>As an inducement to get the F. M., T. &amp; F.D. Shaw Co. to build a tannery in the City of Medford, the City had entered it an agreement to pay Shaw a sum of money if the tannery were built and remained in operation and met other conditions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 4/27/1901  | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>THE ENTIRE WESTBORO TANNERY COMPLEX BUT FOR THE BARK PILES BURNS ON APRIL 23.</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>See Newspaper Notes for the article. The U.S. Leather Co. was its owner.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 12/13/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>PINE AND HEMLOCK - RISING PRICE FOR ONE AND THREATENED CORNER OF THE OTHER</b> -- The price list committee of the Mississippi Valley Lumbermen’s Association at Minneapolis, the other day, agreed to advance the price of lumber from 50 cents to \$3 a thousand [board feet], according to grade. The committee says the immense demand is responsible for this action.</p> <p>Altoona, Penn., correspondents say that interests closely identified with those of John A. Dubois, the Pennsylvania lumber king, are backing of a project having for its aim the cornering of the hemlock market. Twenty million dollars are said to be at the disposal of the combination.</p> <p>Mr. Dubois has sent representatives to half a dozen states and their work has been done so quietly that its nature and intent were not revealed until the “corner” had been practically affected. Hemlock is \$14 to \$15 [per 1,000 board feet], but it is thought</p> | <p>The State of Pennsylvania had large hemlock forests; in fact, its official state tree is the hemlock.</p> <p>The existence of a “price list committee” reminds me of the days the Wisconsin State Bar had its “Uniform Fee Schedule.” When I was admitted to the Wisconsin Bar in 1972, the admittees were furnished a copy of the Schedule; it prescribed the “recommended” minimum charge for common tasks a general practitioner would likely encounter.</p> |

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|           |                | <p>the scramble for it that will now ensue will bring the price up to \$19 or \$20. The latter figure is the one fixed by the combination for letting go of their vast accumulations.</p> <p>A Milwaukee lumberman interested in hemlock, says the [Milwaukee] Sentinel, scoffs at the report that a corner had been formed in that lumber. He says: "if Pennsylvania men have really tried to perfect such a corner, they have [not] reckoned with their host. Wisconsin has a practically unlimited amount of hemlock, which is in so many hands that to combine the producers would be impracticable."</p> <p>"The Pennsylvania hemlock supply is annually less, and it is only a question of time when Wisconsin and other Northwestern states will be called upon to furnish a large part of the Easterners' supply. At present, much [hemlock] cut in Wisconsin is going East, and Wisconsin can break the corner, if such a plan is really being considered."</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 7/6/1902  | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>"Wedding Bells"</p> <p>Wednesday was, barring the heat, an ideal day, and enable Mr. and Mrs. Thaxter Shaw to carry out their plans for the entertainment of the friends, whom they had invited to be present at the marriage of their daughter, Miss Letitia Weiler Shaw, to Mr. Theodore Owen Withee of Lacrosse...</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>This article provides the proof supporting my conclusion that the close, successful symbiotic business relationship between J. J. Kennedy and the Shaw tanneries included personal friendship.</p> <p>The invited guests attending the wedding reception included Mr. &amp; Mrs. John J. and Flora Kennedy, their son Donald and an unidentified daughter, "Miss Kennedy." Donald Kennedy was listed among the "attendant ushers."</p> |
| 8/10/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>The Northwestern Hemlock Manufacturers Association of which F. W. Shephard of Chelsea, Wisconsin, is secretary, met in Milwaukee Monday, and advanced the price of hemlock lumber 50 cents per thousand.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>F. W. Shephard with L. A. Rousseau owned and operated the Chelsea saw mill. It had long ago switched to sawing the abundant hemlock of Taylor County.</p> <p>By modern standards the price increase approved by the association was blatant price fixing. President McKinley was in power and Teddy Roosevelt a powerless vice-president.</p>                                                                                          |
| 10/5/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>Fred M. Shaw, now traveling salesman for the United States Leather Company, with headquarters in Chicago, shook hands with his many Medford friends this week...</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>Fred M Shaw of Boston, father of Fayette Delos Shaw, founder of the Shaw tannery in Rib Lake, with the rest of Shaw Company, sold out to United States Leather Co. in September, 1900; The sale included the Shaw</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



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|            |                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | tanneries at Medford, Perkinstown, Rib Lake, Westboro, Prentice, Phillips and Mellen.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10/19/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>LAST OF SHAW LEATHER</b></p> <p>The last of the Shaw leather was tanned at the Medford tannery last week, and that institution is now in full control of the U. S. Leather Co. The change caused a layoff of about 4 days for a portion of the men, those in the finishing department, owing to the fact that the same length of time elapse between the last batches of Shaw hides and the first of the new company's.</p> <p>The last shipment of Shaw leather was made about one week ago, which terminated the interests of T., F. M. &amp; F. D. Shaw &amp; Co. [Thaxter, Fayette M and Fayette Delos Shaw] in this city as a corporation.</p> <p>The only member of the old firm who will remain here is Mr. Thaxter Shaw, who has been retained by the trust as superintendent of this tannery. Mr. F. D. Shaw is closing out his interests here as rapidly as possible and expects to depart with Mrs. Shaw and their little daughter for Boston in a week or so.</p> | Note the description of the United States Leather Co. as a "trust." That is a story unto itself.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10/26/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>RIB LAKE TANNERY AT CAPACITY</b></p> <p>William Hess and his men have to hustle to supply the demand for ground bark, and this means the tannery is running almost to its full capacity.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | The first step in extracting tannic acid from tanbark at the tannery was to grind it.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11/2/1901  | TC STAR & NEWS | <p><b>FAYETTE DELOS SHAW LEAVES MEDFORD</b></p> <p>Mr. and Mrs. F. Delos Shaw departed Wednesday last for Boston, their future home. In their departure Medford sustained a loss in the ranks of its citizens that will be felt for a long time. During their long residence here they had become a part of then social and business life of the city, and their presence will be sincerely missed by a large number of warm personal friends who will join with us in wishing them long years of health, happiness and success in their new home.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>I was impressed that Delos was active in the Medford baseball team; by all accounts he was a good pitcher.</p> <p>Title to the real estate, and, therefore the tannery later built upon it, was conveyed to Fayette Delos Shaw by J. J. Kennedy in 1891 for the Rib Lake tannery site. The same deed required the grantee to construct and operate a tannery. You can see the deed in the Document &amp; Photo Collection at <a href="http://www.riblakehistory.com">www.riblakehistory.com</a>.</p> <p>At the time of his death, about 1940, Delos was residing in Phillips, Wisconsin, with a married daughter.</p> |
| 11/15/1901 | TC STAR & NEWS | <p>"Medford and Taylor County. Most Prosperous and Promising City on Wisconsin Central Railroad. Best Inducement in the State for Farmers and Manufacturers."</p> <p>G. E. Vandercook, staff correspondent of the Milwaukee/Sentinel, visited Medford lately and made the subjoined portraiture of present conditions...</p> <p><b>TANNERIES</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | At the time of U. S. Leather Co. purchase of the Shaw tanneries, it announced that it would immediately close the tannery at Perkinstown. Since then, nothing in the Star & News indicates that it continues to operate. I believe the claim that the tannery at Perkinstown is still                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|  | <p>Owing to the scarcity of hemlock in the East about twelve years ago, the attention of T., F. M. &amp; F. D. Shaw &amp; Company, one of the largest tannery concerns in Maine, was turned to this section of Wisconsin, and, as a result, Medford secured the location of one of the largest sole leather tanneries in the world. Other tanneries were subsequently established, but the original commencement of the industry was here [Medford].</p> <p>A transfer of the property was made to the United States Leather Co., and at present large tanneries are located here [Medford], Perkinstown [?] Rib Lake, Prentice, Phillips, Mellen, Stanley and Wausau.</p> <p>The importance of this industry to Northern Wisconsin can be seen when it is stated that the consumption of hemlock bark amounts to 80,000 cords annually, requiring an expenditure of between \$400,000 and \$500,000 for this item alone.</p> <p>The combined capacity of the tanneries at present is about 4,000 sides per day; Between 700 and 800 men are employed in the tanneries, not including the large number required in other lines of work in and about the tanneries. The supply of bark is said to be adequate for many years to come, and the company is making many purchases of land to secure bark for future years.</p> <p>The location of the tanneries caused the upbuilding of the lumber industry and the mills of this county are at present profitably employed in sawing hemlock. Among the principal manufacturing enterprises of this nature are the Medford Manufacturing Co., Joseph Gibson Co. at Perkinstown, Heidrick-Matson Co. at Westboro, Ellingson Bros, Albert La Berge at Stetsonville, and F.N. Norton at Olson.</p> <p>At Chelsea... is located the plant of the Rosseau-Shepard Co., ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL HEMLOCK MANUFACTURING CONCERNS OF THE STATE. Probably no better illustrations of the value of the industry can be given than to state that the pine around Chelsea has been cut for many years, and this firm has been able to build up one of the largest trades in hemlock in the state, in a field that had been abandoned by other lumbermen. Their mills and factories not only turn out lumber in the rough but make inside finishing material from hemlock. (emphasis added)</p> <p><b>PRINCIPAL TOWNS,</b></p> <p>The principal town in Taylor County, excepting Medford, is Rib Lake on a branch of the Wisconsin Central running out of Chelsea. The town originally was located by</p> | <p>operating to be inaccurate. RPR</p> <p>G. E. Vandercook totally failed to note the pioneering role of J. J. Kennedy in using and promoting the use of hemlock lumber.</p> <p>The same edition of the Star &amp; News reported: "W. G. Hinman of Marshfield, representing the Standard Lumber Company of Dubuque, Iowa, is looking after three [logging] camps of his company on the east fork of the Little Black River. They will put out about 7,000,000 feet of hemlock" [for a river drive to Dubuque.]</p> |
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|            |                | <p>J.J. Kennedy, one of the pioneer lumbermen in this part of Wisconsin. Some months ago he disposed of his interests to the Osborn (sic; should read Osburn) Lumber Cop., but still retains management of the business. Without exception, the Rib Lake plant has been one of the largest influences in the development of the county...</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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