

Life in a Lumber Camp

See a lesson plan related to this material on the [Wisconsin Historical Society website](http://www.wisconsinhistoricalsociety.org).



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Song – “The Shantyman’s Life”

All you jolly fellows, come listen to my song; It's all about the pinery boys and how they got along. They're the jolliest lot of fellows, so merrily and fine, They will spend the pleasant winter months in cutting down the pine.

Some would leave their friends and homes, and others they love dear, And into the lonesome pine woods their pathway they do steer. Into the lonesome pine woods all winter to remain, A'waiting for the springtime to return again.

Springtime comes, oh, glad will be its day! Some return to home and friends, while others go astray. The sawyers and the choppers, they lay their timber low. The swampers and the teamsters they haul it to and fro.

Next comes the loaders before the break of day. Load up your sleighs, five thousand feet to the river, haste away. Noon time rolls around, our foremen loudly screams, "Lay down your tools, me boys, and we'll haste to pork and beans." We arrive at the shanty, the splashing then begins, The banging of the water pails, the rattling of the tins. In the middle of the splashing, our cook for dinner does cry. We all arise and go, for we hate to lose our pie.

Dinner being over, we into our shanty go. We all fill up our pipes and smoke 'til everything looks blue. "It's time for the wood, me boys," our foreman he does say. We all gather up our hats and caps, to the woods we haste away.

We all go with a welcome heart and a well contented mind For the winter winds blow cold among the waving pines. The ringing of saws and axes until the sun goes down. "Lay down your tools, me boys, for the shanties we are bound."

We arrive at the shanties with cold and wet feet, Take off our overboots and packs, the supper we must eat. Supper being ready, we all arise and go For it ain't the style of lumberjack to lose his hash, you know. At three o'clock in the morning, our bold cook loudly shouts, "Roll out, roll out, you teamsters, it time that you are out." The teamsters they get up in a fright and manful wail: "Where is my boots? Oh, where's my pack? My rubbers have gone astray. "They other men they then get up, their packs they cannot find And they lay it to the teamsters, and they curse them 'til they're blind.

Springtime comes, Oh, glad will be the day! Lay down your tools, me boys, and we'll haste to break away. The floating ice is over, and business now destroyed. And all the able-bodied men are wanted on the Pelican drive.

With jam-pikes and peaveys those able men do go Up all those wild and dreary streams to risk their lives you know. On cold and frosty mornings they shiver with the cold, So much ice upon their jam-pikes, they scarcely them can hold.

Now whenever you hear those verses, believe them to be true. For if you doubt one word of them, just ask Bob Munson's crew. It was in Bob Munson's shanties where they were sung with glee And the ending of my song is signed with C, D, F, and G.

See more classroom materials and lesson plans on the [Wisconsin Historical Society website](http://www.wisconsinhistoricalsociety.org).