

VILLAGE FACES 78 factory workers, 1910. Man far right of the second row is James G. Wark, who had charge of the mill in the summer and scoured the countryside for available timber in the winter.

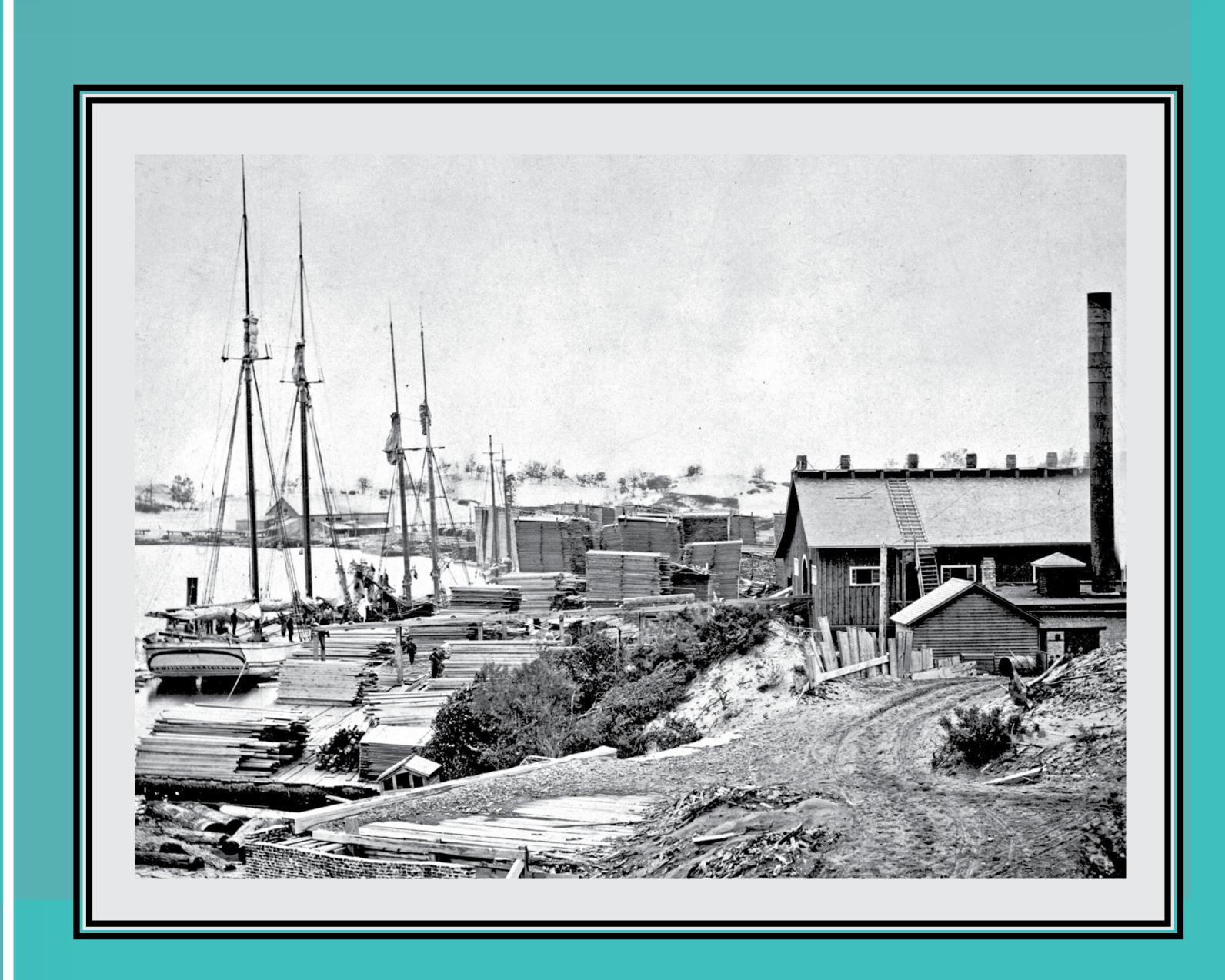
VILLAGE WORK

EARLY SAWMILL SHENANIGANS

Sawmills were important early industries, and there were times the area's rootin' tootin' image was well earned. Henry Hudson Hutchins tells the story of one sawmill incident in the 1850s:

"A lumber dealer from Chicago visited the Singapore saw mill and one of the mill hands took occasion to impose upon him repeatedly. Finally another burley young fellow, Hank Elliot, asked the dealer why he didn't thrash the tough. The dealer said he wanted to, but he didn't think himself man enough to accomplish it. After some talk it was arranged that the next time the fellow should carry his amusement, Hank would take it up and thrash the mill hand, and the next time he went to Chicago, the dealer would bring Hank a gallon of whiskey.

When the mill hand renewed his antics and Hank suggested that he had carried that kind of treatment far enough, the two went out doors to settle it. It was a very even match, but finally Hank got in a knockout blow. True to his word the Chicago gentleman brought the whiskey and managed to turn it over to Hank. After a while Hank and the fellow he had whipped were discovered off behind a slab pile, both very drunk, with the jug of whiskey between them."



IN 1869 two sawmills operated at Singapore, a company town at the bend of the Kalamazoo River before Lake Michigan. By 1875 there was little timber left in the area and the large mill, at right, was dismantled and moved to St. Ignace. Many of the buildings were moved into Saugatuck, or the lumber used in other projects.