



# NFB FILM

## STUDY GUIDE

### LOG DRIVE

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada

Black & White - 29 minutes

Suggested Uses: Social Studies classes in junior and senior high school.

### SYNOPSIS

This film shows the felling of trees; transportation of logs by horse and sled; piling logs on the ice; dynamiting ice to speed the spring break-up; journey of the logs, through lakes and rivers, through rapids and over waterfalls to the mill; arriving in June to climb on continuous belts to join an already vast mountain of logs.

### OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

During parts of the film a "logger" sings lyrics which in themselves tell the story of the log drive. A narrator takes up the main story. The vocabulary used is simple and the clarity and pacing of the commentary are excellent.

To the words of "Winter Song" we watch trees being felled in the wintry woods. Logs, piled high on one-horse sleighs, are taken over snow-filled roads to *Lac Brulé* and piled on the ice. Birds fly overhead and the river flows strong and free as we listen to "Spring Song". The narrator introduces us to *Euclid Thauvette*, boss of the log drive "Whom all respect in our village of *Notre Dame*".

At dawn the men at the camp are called to work as the soloist signs "Work Song". The ice on *Lac Brulé* is almost ready to go and *Thauvette* sends "his most experienced and reliable men" to place dynamite charges. As *Lac Brulé* is filling up with water from the melting streams the men raise the log gate of the dam they have built at one end of the lake to let some water out. There is only enough water for two hours, and twenty-five thousand logs to carry out. The men use *pike poles*, and sometimes dynamite, to break up threatened jams. At *McPherson Bend* there is a bad jam. Quickly the men close the exit from the lake and hurry to the scene by trucks, as the soloist signs the "Log Jam Song".

The logs reach *Kiamike River* and the *hydro dam*. Men work day and night, for the gates are to be open

but two weeks. The drive approaches *St. Phillippe Village*. There are rapids below *St. Phillippe* and a nasty bend where men, ready with dynamite, are stationed all the time.

The little power boat, or "*alligator*" is portaged from lake to lake and, with her *winch and cable*, unloads herself. Some men remain behind to loosen the logs left on the banks. At times they practice "*burling*". Here we enjoy first the "Log Burling Song" and then, as the logs are sent on their way, the "Pointer Song".

It is June when the drive passes the covered bridge over *Meilleur Falls* and nears *Lac Guérin* -- and the worst is over for those who have just conquered difficult rapids like the Big and Little Bulldog, the Croche, the Cochon and the Buzzsaw. At *Lac Guérin* the drive is joined by another river full of logs, the *Manjo drive*. There is very little current so the little boats string a boom of chained logs around the pulpwood, close the gap, and then hook on. They winch themselves across the lake by means of their *donkey engines* and cables strung to trees on the other side.

Now the logs float down the *Lievre River* to the mill at *Buckingham* and climb on the endless belts as the soloist sings the "End of the Drive Song". The little boats turn homeward, with an eye out for left-overs, as we hear "*Thauvette's Song*".



## SUGGESTED CLASS PREPARATION

### a) Introduction:

List on a blackboard the names and words which are italicized above. Develop the meaning of new words or ask the students to get their meaning from the pictures and narration. If the class is familiar with names in advance there will be better understanding and greater enjoyment.

For best results the directive questions should be read aloud by individual pupils.

### b) Directive Questions Answered in the film:

1. How are trees felled? Why is this operation carried on during the winter?
2. Tell how the logs are transported from the woods, and why they are piled on the ice-covered lake.
3. What must be done to start the logs moving downstream when the spring break-up comes?
4. What difficulties are encountered? How are they overcome?
5. Why are other logs added to the main drive? What kind of check do you think must be made?
6. What work is done by the little boats called "alligators"?
7. What is done about logs left along the shores of lakes and rivers?
8. How long does the drive last?
9. What happens to the logs on arrival at the mill?
10. Tell something about the social life and recreation of the loggers.

## SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Immediate discussion based on the directive questions, but not confined to them.
2. Preparation of maps showing routes of major log drives.
3. Reports on the kinds of logs used for pulpwood; on the process of making pulp and paper; and on where the paper is marketed.
4. Art work, panels and individual scenes telling the story of a log drive.
5. Writing of stories and poetry about a log drive.

## RELATED VISUAL AIDS

### Films:

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|----------------------------|------------------|
| LUMBERJACK                 | (NFB - 10 mins.) |
| PULP AND PAPER FROM CANADA | (NFB - 22 mins.) |