

# Wisconsin Ox Logging



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LUMBERING IN WISCONSIN,  
HAULING LOGS WITH OXEN, ABOUT 1880

**B**efore railroads, oxen were used for skidding logs because they could tolerate rough feed and crude shelter while living and working on a diet of marsh hay and rutabagas, which grew locally. Breakage of equipment was infrequent from ox's power, as it is applied smoothly, unlike the lunging of horses. Oxen require only a yoke, horses and mules require elaborate harnesses. Sickness and injury were uncommon with oxen. Horses require hay and oats, which had to wait until the railroads arrived. A pair of oxen costs about as much as a single horse or mule. Horses replaced oxen for skidding, because they were faster, and do more work in a day. Old-timers grumbled about the replacement of oxen by horses because they could eat oxen when they were too old to work!