

STORIES of New Jersey

mill. He remembers the days when ships of 200 to 1,000 tons were built along Dennis Creek. At that time most of the men in this neighborhood were seafarers. Between voyages young Gandy used to mine the cedar logs and help to cut them into boards and shingles.

It is said by some people that shingles made from these cedar logs will last for 100 years, although Mr. Gandy does not claim a longer life for them than 60 or 65 years. One of the customers of the Dennisville sawmill was a water tank builder. One day he told Mr. Gandy that he would buy no more of his material, because it was too good. "Tanks built of your cedar last a lifetime," he said "and I never get repeat orders. I can build a tank of soft Southern pine and in a few years my customer will need another tank." The tank builder never bought another foot of cedar.

The cedar wood is used in boatbuilding, although it is not tough enough for the hulls of large ships. It is used for the center boards of boats and for parts of motor boats, and other small craft.

The men who go out into the swamps to mine the submerged cedar are called "swampers." Armed with "progues," which are iron rods about 12 feet long pointed at one end with a ring or loop at the other, the swampers poke around in the deep muck until they strike a sound log. With his progue the swamper finds out just how the log lies, then he and his helpers shovel off the muck until the log is in view.

With log saws, very much like those used to cut ice from lakes and rivers, the logs are cut into lengths of six feet each. While the men are cutting the logs into the required lengths the water flows into the hole made by taking off the muck. In many instances the water will be deep enough to allow the sawed-off section to float to the surface. This, of course, is a help to the swamper, for then all he has to do is attach a rope to the section, place a couple of skids under it and haul it to solid footing.

When the logs do not float to the surface the swampers are obliged to fasten a rope or chain around the section, pull it to the surface, and then lift it with skids and man power.

In the last few years tractors, or perhaps an old automobile engine, or, if conditions permit, a truck is used to haul the logs out after they are cut. The logs are dragged to a point where the ground is solid enough to enable them to be loaded on trucks and hauled to the sawmill.

They have to lie in the sun for some time to dry out. Then the outside slabs are cut off, sometimes thin, sometimes thick, according to the quality of the log. The balance of the log is cut into strips for the manufacture of shingles. Some of the board



Trucks Carry the Logs to the Mill