

from Mr. Tarrant, in charge of the Chapman & Thorpe mill, about this gang-edger, and had begun to get them out for the Michigan mills; and then the Stearns Company of Erie, Penn., got track of it and began to make a gang edger, each edger somewhat different from the other. But the main thing was a collar, or sleeve, that one or more saws could be put onto that could move on a feather or key in the mandrel or arbor of the edger when the edger was in motion. That they could not get by. That was absolutely essential, hence Folsom thought he had the first right, and the contention resulted in lawyers from Muskegon and Erie being sent here to take my depositions, as to when I made the first edger, when I made the one brought here, how long I had been using it, etc. That gang-edger had very little resemblance to the gang-edgers of the present time, but the great essential was the sleeve that could move with saws on it when the arbor was in motion. If I had been wise enough, or had acted upon advice received and obtained a patent, it would have been worth to me anywhere from fifteen to twenty or thirty millions of dollars.

AN EAU CLAIRE BREEZE

In the last year I was with Gilmore & Co. Mr. Dole, who was with Hamilton Brothers, fancied he wanted to go into business for himself and talked to me a good deal about it, and one day he said he was going to take a trip to the Mississippi river and see what was doing in lumbering. He went to St. Paul and met parties who had heard something about a boom in Eau Claire, and who gave him the name of the man who was booming the town, Adin Randall, and advised him to work his way back east through this country, which he would have to do by stage from St. Paul, through the woods to Menomonie, and from Menomonie here, the stage coming here once or twice a week. Mr. Randall persuaded Mr. Dole that this was one of the best towns for lumbering in this or any other country and showed him a little portable mill he had down near the canal.

The talk impressed him so favorably that he took an option on the mill and a mill-site and came back to Ottawa and reported to me what he had found. I again had the western fever and decided I would investigate, and on the strength of Mr. Dole's report, and the fact of his having an option on a portable mill, I arranged to come out here. That was in the winter of 1856 or 1857. Mr. Kennedy was, I thought, a good millwright, working for the Gilmore Co. on a small salary—less than I thought he earned—and I told him I would try to find somebody to take his place at the Blaunch mills if he wanted to come here and look over this place with me; and I thought it could be done in about three weeks, or perhaps a little longer. He was anxious to do it, and I got a man to take his place and gave Mr. Gilmore notice that I would want to leave in about three months to go into business for myself. I had agreed with Gilmore & Co. to give three months notice if I desired to leave them at any time. Mr. Kennedy knew a handy man he thought he would like to have with him if he was coming here to build a mill, and the man could pay his own fare and take the chance of finding a job, so we arranged to leave for Eau Claire very soon. We were able to reach a point eight miles east of Portage by rail, by coming around by way of Ogdensburg to Watertown, N. Y. When we reached the end of the road we hired a man and team to bring us to Eau Claire. That was in February. Mr. Randall was able to make us believe this was one of the best points in the world for a saw mill, that there was an endless amount of pine timber above here, on the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers, and that we were soon to have a dam across the river at the Dells that would make Eau Claire one of the best manufacturing towns in this country. We found a good many transients here, and a small hotel known as the Eau Claire House, where it was necessary to have a bed on the floor, on a straw tick, the first night. After another day, looking around, I went with Mr. Randall to see some of the timber on the Eau Claire, where he and some others had a

logging camp. We struck a pretty good looking lot of timber, which they reported as the poorest timber there was, and he said if I could take the time to go up the Chippewa and see some of the big pine trees I would not want to do any more lumbering in Canada; but I saw enough to satisfy me that there was opportunity to do something for myself, instead of working for a salary, and decided to leave Mr. Kennedy here to run the little mill and arrange for some timber, which he found near the mouth of Yellow river, for the frame for our new saw mill. I remained here four or five days. Mr. Kidder was preaching in a little board house, and was then preparing to go east, expecting to return in the spring with his family. I learned that another minister by the name of McNair had also arranged to come here and build a church, so that things were looking rather promising. I left here with the understanding that I would return as soon as my time was out with Gilmore & Co. But before my time was up with them David Gilmore, whose headquarters were in Quebec, and who usually went to the old country to arrange for the vessels they wanted to bring into Quebec to carry out their lumber and square timber, was stricken with paralysis, or apoplexy, on a train near Rutland, Vt. I had started up the mills at the Gattineau and Allan Gilmore got word by telegram, by way of Ottawa, that David had died in Rutland. Mr. Gilmore sent his nephew, who was in his office more as an errand boy than for anything else, on horse-back to the mills, with a letter asking me to come at once. I drove in and found Mr. Gilmore in his rooms over the big store, on a lounge very much broken up. He told me his trouble, and said "the chances are that I will have to go to the old country to make arrangements for our fleet, as there is no one else who can go, now that David is dead; and in case I go abroad I want you to remain and take charge, do everything pertaining to the work at the Gattineau and help Mr. Cunningham in regard to our square-timber operations, until my return, and it will probably take about three months."

They held a meeting right away and decided that Mr. Gilmore must go abroad and arrange for their fleet, and where they were to go. They used to send a good many vessels to Cuba and different South American points and had them at their command when they needed them for any of the numerous places where they had interests. Of course the only thing I could do was to assure him I would remain. I had told him what my plans were about coming here and going into business, and he said if I would remain there, and if Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Dole would take hold of the business I had planned, he would be glad to furnish me whatever money I wanted to put in here, at a low rate of interest, which I could pay out of my salary as I was able; but Mr. Dole had not made arrangements to leave his place, and didn't feel equal to the undertaking, and Mr. Kennedy I knew would not undertake to handle the thing here alone, so I had to decline the offer. But I remained with the Gilmores and made myself useful to them and their business until Allen Gilmore's return, and then I went to Glen Falls, N. Y., before starting back this way and secured a man to take my place with them; but within six months the man found he was not able to do what was required of him and gave it up. When I went to Glens Falls, I took your mother with me to see her relatives and friends there.

IN EAU CLAIRE TO REMAIN

I knew quite intimately, in Ottawa, a young man, Mr. Playter who was in a drug store, and I was satisfied he would be the kind of man we would need in Eau Claire to start out with as bookkeeper. He was delighted with the opportunity and left Ottawa for Chicago at the same time we left Ottawa for Glens Falls. I arranged to meet him at the old Sherman House, Chicago, on a certain day. We had a girl who had been with us some time of whom your mother thought a good deal, and she wanted to bring her with us, and the girl wanted to come. It was arranged that she would go to Chicago with Mr. Playter