

## Historical Marker - L415 - Saginaw Valley Lumbering Era / Saginaw Valley Lumbering Era (Marker ID#:L415)



NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

### Front - Title/Description

#### *Saginaw Valley Lumbering Era*

The Saginaw River Watershed has been crucial in the development of Michigan. In the 1830s when white settlers moved into the area, they discovered the rich timberlands and hundreds of miles of rivers, providing an excellent base for lumbering, which soon thrived in the area. In 1834 Gardner and Ephraim Williams opened the first steam mill at the foot of Mackinaw Street in Saginaw. By 1854 the Saginaw Valley had become the leading producer of lumber in the state, a distinction it held for the next forty years. In 1869 the watershed area alone was earning seven million dollars yearly from lumbering, and Michigan was producing more lumber than any other state.

#### **Significant Date:**

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

**Registry Year:** 1975    **Erected Date:** 1976

### Marker Location

**Address:** 111 South Michigan

**City:** Saginaw

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Saginaw

**Township:**

**Lat:** 43.41725800 / **Long:** -83.96487600

**Web URL:**

### Back - Title/Description

#### *Saginaw Valley Lumbering Era*

This extraordinary output was possible because of a carefully organized process, which was constantly improved through invention and imagination. Cooperative boom companies were formed to collect the logs and float them downstream to the mouth of the tributaries. Using company marks, the logs were separated at this point into floating booms, and then formed into rafts, held together by rope and wedge-shaped oak pins. The Saginaw was one of the few rivers to use wooden pins extensively. The greatest impact on production, however, was made by saws. A series of refinements in blades and the introduction of gang saws increased capacity so dramatically that in one year, 1882, the Saginaw yielded one billion board feet of lumber. By the 1890s the loggers had depleted their raw material and much of mid-Michigan was cutover, barren land. The Saginaw lumbering era had come to an