

Paul Bunyan



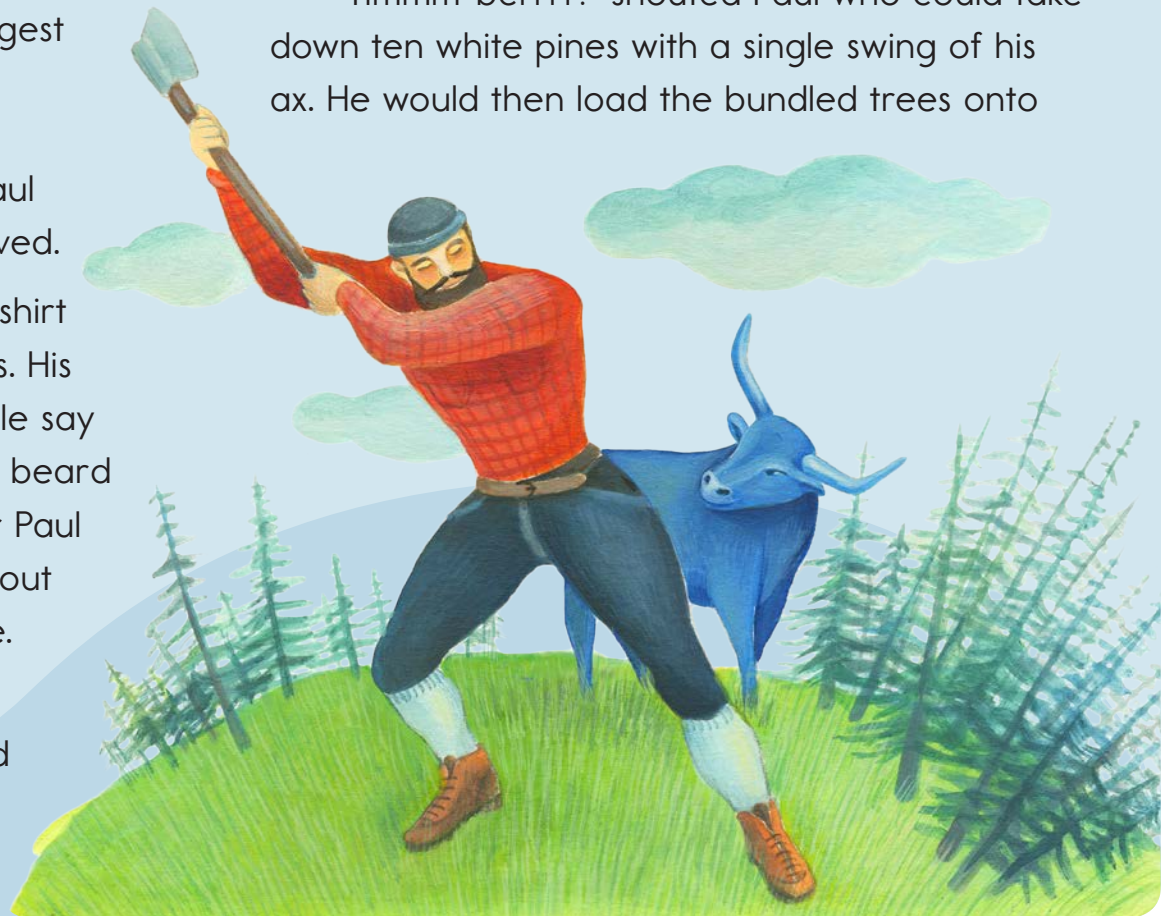
The news spread quickly. A gigantic baby boy had been born in the state of Maine. People said he weighed 50 pounds at birth and ate five dozen eggs every day. But the strangest thing about this baby was his beard! His mamma had to comb it with a pine tree every day. The name of this baby was Paul Bunyan—the greatest logger who ever lived.

Growing up, Paul was so big that his shirt buttons were made out of wagon wheels. His thick beard was like a forest. Some people say that a family of bears could sleep in that beard during the winter. When it came time for Paul to leave his home state of Maine, he set out with his pet, a huge blue-ox named Babe.

“Babe, it is time for us to explore the vast region called the North Woods,” said Paul. “We are going to invent logging!”

At that time, America was filled with forests. For miles and miles all you could see were trees as thick as a green carpet. Paul and Babe set out to clear timber along the northern border of the United States. The pioneers who were moving there needed wood to build houses, churches, and barns. Paul and Babe settled near the Big Onion River in Minnesota.

“Timmm-berrrr!” shouted Paul who could take down ten white pines with a single swing of his ax. He would then load the bundled trees onto



Babe's back. After that, he sent his timber down the Onion River to the sawmill.

"Look, Babe, this river is as crooked as a tree branch. Let's straighten it out!" said Paul. So Babe grabbed one end of the river and shook it up and down until it was a straight line.

This made Paul think about hiring more loggers to help him cut down trees. He posted advertisements all over the North Woods. Of course, all of the loggers were required to be ten feet tall. Over 1,000 men applied and Paul hired them all.

One of the first things Paul and Babe did for the new men was dig some large holes that they filled with water. This provided drinking water for everyone. Today we call those holes the Great Lakes.

One winter was especially cold for the loggers. They refer to it as the Hard Winter in the North Woods. It was so cold that the loggers' feet were frostbitten. Paul scratched his beard as he tried to think of how to overcome this problem.

"Have the men grow their beards down to the ground. Then they can knit their beards into socks for their feet. That will keep them warm," Paul told his foreman.

Today Paul and Babe have retired from the logging business. But Paul's cough still sounds like thunder. If Babe jumps up and down, an earthquake may shake the ground. Yet everyone agrees that there will never be anyone as strong or as mighty as the great Paul Bunyan.

**DID YOU
KNOW?**

The five **Great Lakes**—Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario, and Superior—contain 20% of the world's fresh water.

