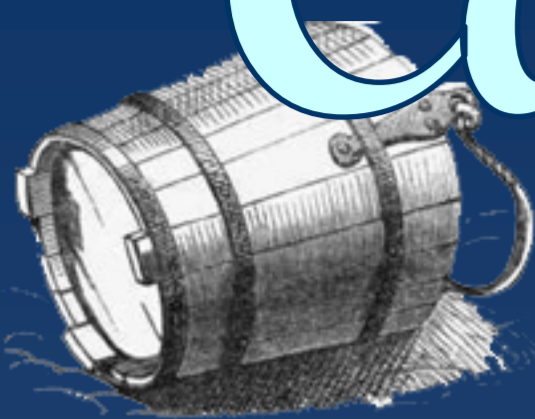
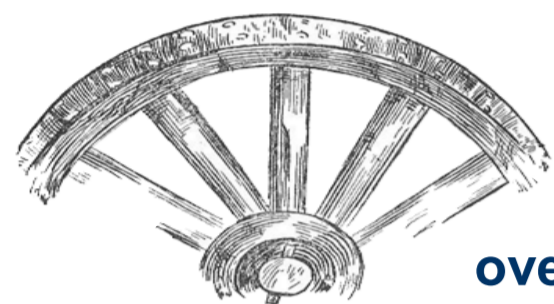


# Colonial Life and the Forest



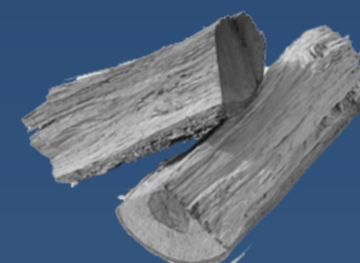
As European settlements expanded, the settler's demand for lumber increased. Wood was readily available, cheap, and easy to work.



## From Forest to Field

Settlers were first attracted to the Delaware Valley with plans of a successful fur trade but over-trapping caused the industry to collapse by the start of the 1700s. It became clear that more sustainable economic pursuits had to be encouraged to attract large numbers of colonists. This new economic foundation was based on agriculture and is still Delaware's number one industry. However, unlike the fur trade which required the maintenance of wilderness, successful agriculture demanded its destruction. Forests were cleared and marshes were drained with no restraint. Crops were planted season after season until the land was lost of its nutrients. Settlers would simply gather their possessions and move deeper into the forests in search of new land to clear.

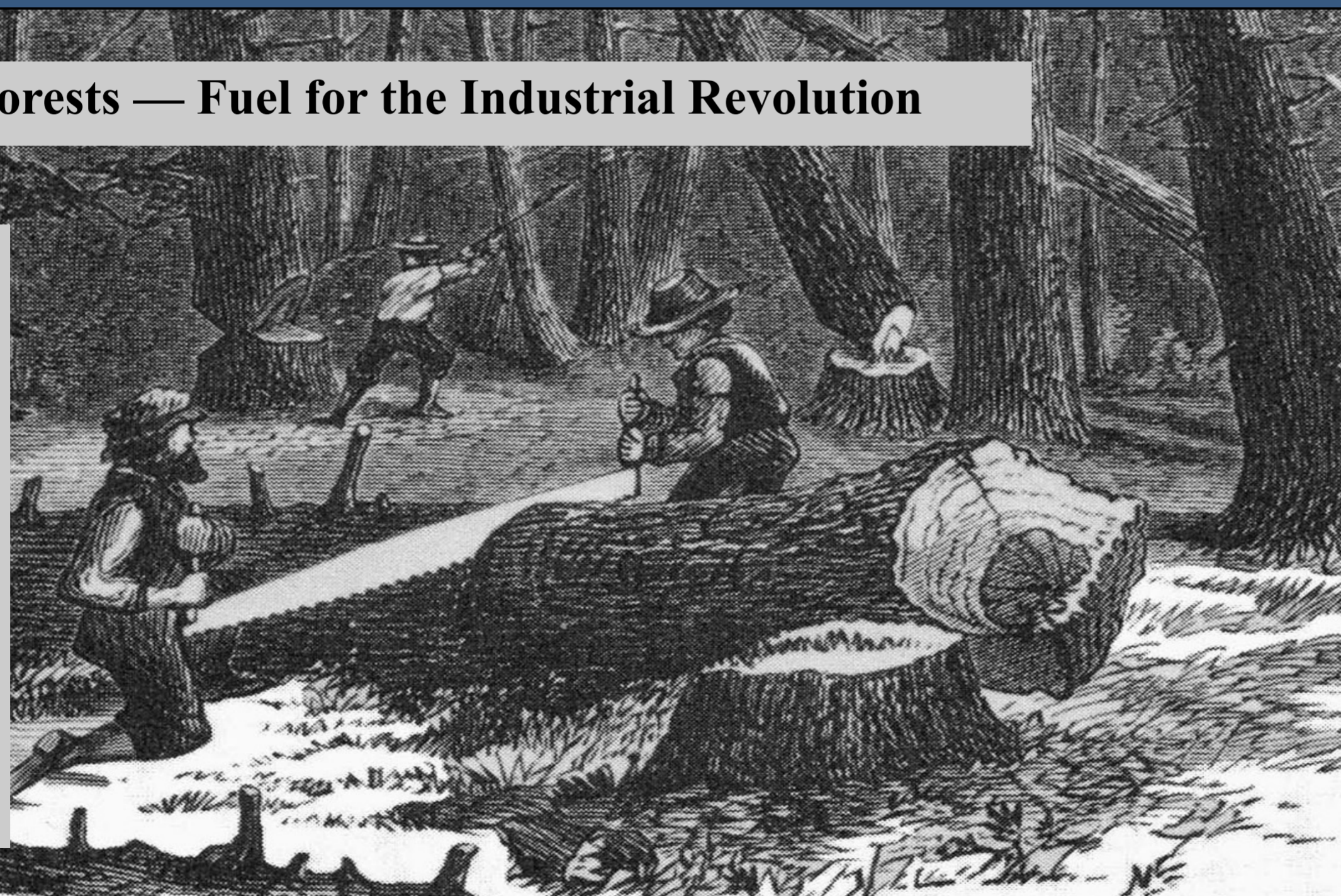
**Firewood** was in huge demand in colonial times. Cooking was done year-round on open fireplaces and they would never let their fire burn out. Log cabins were so drafty and their fireplaces were so inefficient and that an estimated 80 to 90 percent of heat produced went up the chimney. In the eighteenth century, two acres of mature timber was cut each year to fuel one family.



Lower Swedish cabin was built by Swedish settlers in 1640 in Pennsylvania. It still stands today

## Forests — Fuel for the Industrial Revolution

From 1739 until 1865, the manufacturing economy of the United States was almost entirely wood-fueled, either directly or in secondary industrial processes, such as the extraction of tannin from bark for making leather, or whole trees reduced to ashes for making potash.



**The first log cabin** was built in Delaware in 1638 when the settlers founded New Sweden. The log cabin was easy to construct and used very little materials. After trees were felled they were notched on the ends and stacked horizontally to form a one room cabin. No nails or wooden pegs were needed and clay was used to fill in cracks between logs. Almost all buildings in New Sweden were constructed of logs: barns, churches, forts, sheds and stables. In the centuries that followed, the log cabin spread out from Delaware and became a lasting symbol in American

**Wood Consumption** for heating and cooking, building timber, ship masts, barrel staves, fencing and the commercial trade in timber and forest products was so extraordinary that the colonists enacted numerous laws to control it within 50 years after arrival.

