

# Marker 48 Brewing Centralia Logger

Weeki Wachee, FL  
marker48.com



If asked to reflect on America's logging and lumber booms, most Americans would tell stories about the Northeast, Midwest, and Western regions of the country, but very few would share tales from Florida. Nevertheless, a little-known early 20th century logging boom in Hernando County, FL was sparked by settlers who relocated from some already-depleted areas of Wisconsin and Connecticut. They appropriately named their settlement Wiscon and in 1910 opened a sawmill that would grow to be the largest in the South and, eventually, one of the biggest in American history. As time went by, a town grew around the mill and the settlers decided to name it after Centralia, WI, a lumbering town located in the heart of the state. Centralia, WI, now a part of the village of Port Edwards, is still in existence, but Centralia, FL, located about 50 miles north of Tampa, would only survive for about 12 years. Gone but not forgotten, the town is remembered in the name of Marker 48 Brewing's American lager: Centralia Logger.

Centralia, FL was located just north of the present-day town of Weeki Wachee Springs, and particularly just north of Tooke Lake. The area is now filled with residential communities, businesses and beachgoers but there are still indicators of a town gone-by. The names "Centralia" and "Wiscon" can be found here and there, a large wooded nature preserve called the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area separates the region from the Gulf of Mexico, and a few remnants of the boom town-turned-ghost town remain, such as railroad ties, building foundations, rusted-out gates, and pots and pans. Marker 48 Brewing is, of course, close by as well.

Of the many types of trees found in the area, pine and cypress were of the highest demand. The pine trees were often as thick as three feet in diameter and were especially popular for shipbuilders. They were tall, straight, sturdy and of the highest quality found anywhere in America, but it was the cypress trees that were the true marvel. Cypress trees grow well in the swampy, water-logged soils of central Florida and they are known for their beauty as well as their propensity to grow in large groups. Some of Florida's cypress trees can

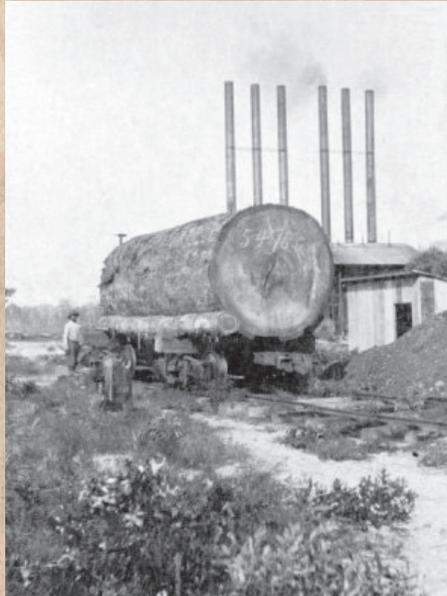
even grow as tall as 150 feet and over 12 feet in diameter. Cypress trees flourish all across the Southern coastline and they are perhaps best known by canoers, kayakers and boaters who often navigate through their hanging branches.

In Centralia, the roads were covered with sand and cypress bark while the sidewalks were made from slabs of cypress wood. At its peak, Centralia had as many as 2,000 residents (more than three times larger than the nearby county seat of Brooksville), a non-denominational church, a schoolhouse, a movie theater, a general store, a restaurant and a collection of homes. A small railway was built through the area with a terminus in the town and it was connected to the Tampa Northern Railway which provided access to the cities of Brooksville and Tampa, as well as to the Gulf of Mexico, and ultimately to the entire world.

The largest-ever cypress tree to pass through the sawmill was never officially measured for size but it can be easily estimated at over 10 feet in diameter. One single cut from this tree, roughly 30 feet long, was sawed into 5,476 board feet of lumber. (That's about 1,000 eight-foot-long 2" x 4"s.) Four large steam boilers powered the winches and chains that pulled the massive logs out of a pond and into Centralia's sawmill where they were then cut into finished boards using a double bandsaw system. Provided that there was enough demand, the mill was capable of turning out an astonishing 100,000 board feet of lumber per day, far more than most other American sawmills. During a time when cars, planes and modern logging machinery were in their infancy, the production output from Centralia was simply remarkable. But, like much of America, highly-efficient logging left the region clear-cut and bare, and after the last of the trees were cut and stacked, the lumberjacks left town. Soon after, those logs were cut, the mill closed down and Centralia quickly faded away.

While the short-lived boom may have provided a windfall for some, it also undoubtedly destroyed a piece of Florida's legendary natural beauty. The area still sees thousands of tourists pass through every day but almost none of them (or even the local residents) have any idea that Centralia ever existed. In an ironic twist, if the region still stood as it did before the lumber boom, it's likely that tourists would now be visiting for an entirely different reason. Apparently, it was once so beautiful that, according to Marker 48 Brewing founder Maurice Ryman, "had it never been logged, it would probably be a National Park today."

From the Brewer: Centralia Logger is a delicious American style Light Lager brewed with the Florida heat in mind to be refreshing and thirst quenching. Named after an old logging town located near Marker 48 Brewing, the town of Centralia was once a thriving metropolis in the heart of Florida known for logging massive Cypress trees known to be the size of the giant redwood and sequoia trees of California. ABV 4.2%, IBU 12  
Maurice and Tina Ryman - Founders



This cut from a cypress tree provided 5,476 board feet of lumber, enough to build an entire modern-day house.

