

Sawmills in Trinity Area



- **Frank Hall (1880-1885)**

Historical Development: Frank Hall, according to the history of Trinity, Texas, owned a mill "a few after Mr. Carter." The Carter referred to is W.T. Carter, the son of John Joseph Carter, both of whom had operated a mill about four and a half miles north of Riverside for almost fifteen years, about 1866 to 1881. Hall, then, would have been running his sawmill some time during the years of 1875 to 1885.

- **George Gibson (1883)**

Production: rough lumber

Historical Development: Flora Bowles, in A History of Trinity County, Texas, reports that George Gibson owned a sawmill on Salt Creek near White Rock Creek.

Associated Railroads: International & Great Northern

- **Grayburg Lumber Company (1926-1943)**

Production: rough lumber

Historical Development: The Lufkin Daily News reported in 1943 that the Grayburg Lumber Company had been organized in 1926 with S.B. Crawford as manager.

Size of Company Town at peak: 856 in 1905, 3000 in 1928.

Associated Railroads: International & great Northern; Missouri, Kansas, & Texas.

- **J.F. Vickers (1928)**

Location: Trinity; north 3rd street and Missouri Pacific tracks

Production: rough lumber

Capacity Comments: 20,000 feet daily

Type of Mill: Pine and Hardwoods

Equipment: Circular sawmill, planing mill, dry kilns

Size of Company Town at Peak: 3000 in 1928; 2036 in 1934.

Associated Railroads: International & Great Northern (Missouri, Kansas, & Texas)

Historical Development: The J.F. Vickers mill plant near Trinity appeared in the Southern Lumberman's 1928 directory of sawmills. Vickers, according to Houston County records, also ran a mill in Houston County in 1932.

- **J.H. Marsh (1962)**

Historical Development: The Gulf Coast Lumberman reported in May, 1962, that Trinity Development Corporation sold eight acres near Trinity to J.H. Marsh. Marsh planned to build a sawmill at the site, which had originally been the old Thompson-Tucker sawmill area located about a mile north of Trinity. Marsh had owned sawmills earlier at Hampton, in Tyler County, and Moscow, in Polk County.

- **J.N. Crawford Lumber Company (?-1934)**

Production: rough lumber

Type of Mill: Yellow Pine lumber

Size of Company Town at Peak: 3000 in 1928; 2036 in 1934

Associated Railroads: International & great Northern (Missouri, Kansas, & Texas)

Historical Development: J.N. Crawford Lumber Company was manufacturing yellow pine lumber at Trinity in 1934.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

I don't know who compiles all of the information on the Lumber Mills in Trinity but it might be of interest to note that the J.N. Crawford Lumber Co. was operating in Trinity well before the 1934 date listed. My father, Joe W. Baker and several of his brothers worked for Mr. Crawford at a mill on the other side of the Trinity River before he moved the operation to Trinity. That move would have taken place probably in 1930 or early 1931. There was a community of houses, on the mill property which rented to employees and there was a boarding house. My parents moved into one of them when they were married in 1931. I was born in that house as was younger sister and a brother (who has returned to live in Trinity). At Crawford's there was also a "company store" where all sorts of things were sold, food, clothing, kerosene, gasoline, etc. In addition to the sawmill there was also a log pond, a planer mill and a dry kiln as well as

storage for lumber until it was hauled away on lumber trucks. The mill was in operation until the mid to late 1940s and the store and Mr. Crawford's office remained open several years into the 1950s. Frances Baker Haworth

- **John B. Peyton (1905-1907)**

Type of Mill: Yellow Pine planed lumber and general store

Size of Company Town at Peak: 856 in 1905

Associated Railroad: International & Great Northern (Missouri, Kansas, & Texas)

Historical Development: John B. Peyton was listed in the Reference Book of the Lumbermen's Credit Association, January 1905 at Trinity as a planing mill and general store owner. He and Mrs. McDuffy had earlier owned a mill at McDuffy's (McDuffie's) Station, which they had sold to Peter Josserand by 1893.

- **Louisiana-Pacific Corp. (1973-1996)**

Capacity Comments: Nine million board feet in 1973

Type of Mill: Lumber, chips, fuel, and fence pickets

Power Source: Electric

Equipment: Sawmill with an ester gang

Associated Railroads: Missouri Pacific

Historical Development: The Texas Forest Service reported in 1974 that Louisiana-Pacific had acquired the Altamil, Inc. sawmill at Trinity/ The company, with twenty-five employees, had been producing about nine million square feet annually. In 1974, Louisiana-Pacific's Trinity operation was briefly mentioned in the Gulf Coast Lumberman's article of the exchange between Louisiana-Pacific and Champion International, the Corrigan operation for several of Champions, located in Montana, Wyoming, and California. The 1975 edition of million board feet of lumber in 1973. By 1987, Louisiana-Pacific also had a sawmill complex at Trinity, with Bill Sanders supervising pine lumber production. By 1990, only one plant was listed in the trade journals.

- **Milton R. Friday (1957)**

Location: Friday

Type of Mill: pine lumber

Historical Development: Nelson Samson included the sawmill service of Milton R. Friday at Friday in the 1957 edition of his work.

- **Sabine Lumber Remanufacturing Company (1928)**

Mill Type: planer only

Type of Mill: Boxes and crates

Mill Pond: Yes

Size of Company at Peak: 856 in 1905, 3000 in 1928

Associated Railroad: International & Great Northern

Historical Development: The Sabine Lumber Company, a holding operation of the Thompson Brothers and other lumber companies and facilities in East Texas, opened a box and crate factory at Trinity in 1928.

- **Southland Paper Mills, Rock Creek Lumber, Sabine Lumber, Thompson Brothers. (1910-1955)**

Location: Sequoyah Community (northwest Trinity on 19, just west of Mill Pond)

Comments: The company town in 1910 consisted of at least 131 tenant houses, an ice plant, and a hotel. Bowels wrote: "Sawmilling was the mainstay of the economy" providing "...a Company Store where a full line of general merchandise was available on credit to the employees. Mill 'checks' were a form of local currency... minted from aluminum in coins with value similar to silver coins and were accepted at the Company Store at their designated value... accepted at most stores in town at a 10% reduction in value...In the depth of the depression, there were times when the mill did not have the cash on hand to make the exchange. A small group of company houses was available to employees for low rentals. A foreman's house, for instance, rented for \$11.50 per month with running water and electricity. Law enforcement was handled by the "quarter boss". All medical problems were taken care of in the home or in the office. There were no hospitals in the area."

- **Vinson Lumber Company (1957)**

Production: rough lumber

Mill Type: Pine sawmill

Historical Development: The Sawmill operation of the Vinson Lumber Company at Trinity in 1957 was listed in the Directory of Wood-Using and Related Industries in East Texas.

- **W.A. Bell (1907)**

Type of Mill: Manufactured lumber

Size of Company at Peak: 856 in 1905

Associated Railroads: International & Great Northern (Missouri, Kansas, & Texas)

Historical Development: W.A. Bell was listed in the Reference Book of the Lumbermen's Credit Association, January 1907 at Trinity as a manufacturer of lumber.

- **West Lumber Company (1887-1918)**

Location: Saron community on highway 94

Capacity Comments: Initially, 60,000 board feet daily. 1903 and after 75,000 feet daily.

Type of Mill: Produced all grades of finished and unfinished lumber and timbers

Power source: 275-horsepower steam engine

Equipment: Single circular, 1887 to 1903. Single band and pony rig, 1903-1918. A complete lumber facility, including saw mill proper, dry kilns, and planning mill.

Mill Pond: Yes

City/Town: Saron

Company Town: Yes

Size of Company at Peak: 1000 in 1905

Associated Railroads: Trinity & Sabine Railway (Missouri, Kansas, & Texas). Connected with International & Great Northern at Trinity, Tram road.

Historical Development: The Trinity & Sabine Railroad built through Saron, ten miles west of Trinity. Colonel A.T. Anderson, William Cameron, and F.S. Ulmer (also spelled "Elmer") built the Saron lumber facility sometime between 1883 and 1886. The firm, known as the Anderson and Cameron Lumber Company, changed to Cameron and Company when Cameron purchased the interests of his former business associates in May, 1898. The first mill began operations in 1887. Equipment included a single circular saw mill, dry kilns, and a planing mill. The sawmill could cut 60,000 board feet a day at peak capacity. Destroyed by fire on April 22, 1903, the mill was rebuilt. A single band and a pony rig had a capacity of 75,000 feet daily. It began operating in December, 1903. With the exhaustion of timber resources, the mill closed on December 31, 1917. The property was leased to the West Lumber Company in January, 1918. The post office was not discontinued, however, until 1929 when the population had decline to 100. By 1905, the Cameron and Company at Saron had seventeen miles of tram road, thirty-five logging cars, three locomotives, two dry kilns, two artificial ponds (one of which was reported as eleven acres and twenty feet in depth), 125 houses, and 400 men on the payroll. The company also provided some artificial lighting to the town, and planted Sycamore trees on the sides of the streets to aid in decoration. The light plant powered 385 incandescent and 25 arc lamps.