

# The Sawmills of Crook County<sup>1</sup>

## Barnes:

### **Charles Birdsong                      1917-1918                      location undetermined**

Have found no documentation for this sawmill and I've lost track of where I obtained the information that it existed but because of the care with which I did my research (apart from not recording my finds) I'm confident that this sawmill did exist. My source is probably the *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory* for the period.

### **R. Alex Ammons                      1906-1917                      Indian Creek**

Alex Ammons came to Crook County around 1900. By 1904, Alex was working as a bull driver for Hawkins Brothers at their mill on Duncan Creek. It was also in 1904 that Alex married Nora Birdsong. Soon after Alex married, he and Henry Birdsong (Alex's father-in-law), bought a mill that was on Wolf Creek out of Paulina. They moved it from there over to Wiley Flat (Maury Mountains) where they operated for a time. Alex bought Henry out and moved the mill to Indian Creek. By this time the Ammons family was living at Held. About 1915 (date uncertain; could have been as late as 1917) Alex sold to Todd & Hamlin.

### **Birdsong & Ammons Lumber Co. 1908-1916                      Indian Creek**

The Alex Ammons sawmill was sometimes referred to as Birdsong-Ammons. While it is true that Henry Birdsong was originally involved, he was bought out by Ammons soon after the mill was relocated from Wolf Creek (Paulina) to Indian Creek (Barnes).

### **Todd & Hamlin                      1917-1925                      Indian Creek**

Formerly Alex Ammons mill; see above. Todd & Hamlin went broke. They were providing lumber to homesteaders in that desert east of Bend. The promised water never came and the homesteaders deserted the land.

## Howard:

---

1. This list of Crook County sawmill operations was prepared for a special presentation that was made some years ago. None of the operations described in this chapter are covered elsewhere although the names do appear in the list of sawmill operations—which is a misnomer to begin with. Names of companies and/or operations appearing on "The Sawmill List" may be something other than a *sawmill*; but all were/are part of the timber industry's history. The date preceding the dash is the year an operation started. The date following the dash is the year the operation ceased.

Symbol meanings:                      < = operation probably started before date given.  
    > = operation probably started after date given.  
    ? = date in question or uncertain.

**R.E. Jones & Company                      ?1911-1918                      Location unknown.**

Apart from listings in the *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory*, only two references to this operation exist. These two references are both small advertisements for sale of the mill. These offers both appeared in June, 1910; on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. But in the *Crook County Journal* for December 22, 1910 (p. 1, c.5), appeared a story touting how the timber industry would bloom in 1911. That story contained this paragraph: "The Shipp & Perry mill, which has been purchased from the Grizley Lake Lumber company and installed on the McKay during the past two months, has already started to saw, and will turn out about 10,000 feet of lumber a day. This will all be used in the Shipp & Perry yards in this city. Besides this amount, which will total more than a million feet for the year, this firm has a contract for another million feet from the R.E. Jones & Company mill, and Demaris & Son are under contract for the delivery of 600,000 feet, which will give this firm more than two and a half million feet of lumber for the market here. Besides this, the Demaris mill cut a half million feet for the retail trade, and the Barney Brothers mill will cut a million feet during the year." Things were booming in Crook County! Documenting this operation is further complicated by the names "Ben & Watt Jones" and "Jones & Ritter Mill," both of which were geographically included in the Howard section of Crook County.

**Jim Johnson Sawmill                      1929-????                      Grubbe Place**

The equipment for this mill was originally part of the Emil Johnson sawmill on Combs Flat. From Combs Flat the equipment went to the Skip Russell sawmill at the Keystone Ranch before it was eventually moved to Ewen Johnson's ranch near Howard. Ewen's ranch was part of the old LaFollette place. Ewen bought the land from the bank. The only source I've found for this operation is my interview with Valore Grubbe whose mother married Jim Johnson, son of Ewen. How the mill became known as "Jim Johnson" rather than "Ewen Johnson" isn't remembered. Jim Johnson died in 1935 and the ranch passed from Valore Grubbe's mother, Lenora Work-Johnson, and the ranch has been called The Grubbe Place ever since. There is no record of what happened to the sawmill equipment.

**Mill Creek:**

Unless you are a student of Crook County history you may not know that the original settlement in the Ochoco-Crooked River valley was at Mill Creek. It will come as no surprise, then, when you learn that the county's first sawmill operations were here. It is generally accepted that Ike Swartz had the first "commercial" sawmill in the area and that mill operated about 1867. But pinning down these early operations is very difficult. There were several sawmills along the stream, none very large, and they moved from one location to another frequently and changed ownership with little or no notice. The basis for the information on the Mill Creek sawmills that follows comes from an article written by Blanche Hereford for the 1997 issue of *The History of Crook County, Oregon*. Blanche knows more than anyone else about the history of Mill Creek. When she and her husband bought their Mill Creek property they received an "abstract of title" which is a collection of documents showing property ownership from the time the land passed from public domain to the time the Herefords became owners. With this abstract as the starting place, Blanche did additional research and documented as well as anyone can the comings and goings of the Mill Creek sawmills. The below list relies heavily on Blanche's work.

**Al Swartz                                      1867-?                                      Mill Creek**

Al Swartz is best known as being a victim of the vigilante period of Crook County. Accounts of his death have been found but no information about his sawmill seem to exist. He appeared in a *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory* but no other reference to his sawmill activity has been found.

**Ike Swartz**

**1868 - 1876**

**Mill Creek**

In the 1969 *Prineville Centennial Literature Legends for Historical Markers* (Crook County Historical Society), we read "Historians tell us that Ike Swartz [correct spelling is SWARTZ] built the first sawmill in central Oregon up on Mill Creek in the early 1870's [it was actually in 1868]...." An undated reference called *Historical Society Field Trip Notes* states, "Three miles up Mill Creek is the site of the first SAWMILL in OCHOCO COUNTRY built by Ike Swartz [sic]. This mill, which gave Mill Creek its name, was powered by water. The mill was moved to different locations on the creek three times, and finally burned down in 1904." In additional field trip notes (*Crook County Historical Society Field Trip: Mill Creek to McKay*, published in 1978, Frances Juris wrote, "According to many, the first sawmill in the Ochoco Country was built by Ike Swartz on what was known by many old timers as the Evans Place. The mill, from which Mill Creek gets its name, was water powered, and was moved a number of times: once to a site where Schoolhouse Creek runs into Mill Creek, and another time to the site just south of the present Blanche Hereford ranch house. A number of men, over time, have been said to have had an interest in the mill: Demaris, Dougherty, Marshall, Birdsong." The date, 1904, given in the first field trip note is doubtful as Swartz did not appear in any *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory* that late.

**James Allen**

**1870-????**

**Mill Creek**

The only reference to a James Allen sawmill is contained in a October 7, 1938, U.S. Forest Service memorandum. The subject of this memorandum is "Highlights of History of Prineville." At the conclusion of the memorandum the writer lists "Highlights Of Prineville's History." In that list appears this item: "1870? Sawmill erected on Mill Creek by James Allen." The only other references to James Allen involve a "flouring mill was built by James Allen in 1875." (*Illustrated History of Central Oregon*, 1905, p. 724).

**Sam Compton**

**1876 - 1885**

**Mill Creek**

Samuel W. Compton is one of my early heros of the timber industry. At age 17, Sam left his father's home in Missouri (area now called Branson) and joined a wagon train where he took the job of bull driver to earn his transportation. Sam's father served in the Civil War and when he returned home he learned that his wife had died, probably from overwork—conditions at the Compton farm were very bad. Needing a wife, the elder Compton married his son's girlfriend. Sam could not abide this and headed west. His story is well documented and the writer has been able to interview not only Sam's daughter but also the family's genealogist.

**W.B. Marshall**

**1887-1895**

**Mill Creek**

Marshall was one of many sawmill operators on Mill Creek. This was a pen-stock water-powered mill and could only run when there was ample water in the creek. Marshall had borrowed money to build the mill and apparently in need of capital he acquired Samuel Compton as a partner. Marshall and Compton lost both land and

mill when they couldn't keep current on their note. Land and mill were sold at public auction to satisfy Marshall's note. John Combs bought it and sold land and mill to John Demaris in 1895. Soon Henry Birdsong bought in and they became partners in the mill. Which causes another name to be added to the list: Demaris-Birdsong or Birdsong-Demaris. It was difficult to know who owned a mill at any given time.

**John Demaris**

**1895 - 1904**

**Mill Creek**

May have also been known as "Demaris & Son." Demaris bought the Compton mill (above). In the following years, Henry Birdsong and Ernie McKenzie both became partners in this operation. The Demaris-McKenzie partnership lasted through several relocations of the mill, to two different places on Allen Creek and then to a spot on McKay Creek just outside the National Forest boundary. The mill had operated at this site for less than two weeks when it burned in 1904, ending the Demaris-McKenzie sawmill operation. (*Crook County Timber History; A Narrative*, Crook County Historical Society, 1997.)

**Demaris-Birdsong**

**1895- 1904**

**Mill Creek**

By this time it was very difficult to tell who was involved in the mill. Blanche Hereford wrote: "Henry Birdsong homesteaded 160 acres about 1900, and they were planning on rebuilding the mill on this 160 acres as it was covered with beautiful ponderosa pine trees. They had ordered a steam engine and were waiting for it to arrive in Shaniko when their mill burned in 1904. Dave Grimes, Claude Wright and Ed Barney hauled the new mill from Shaniko up to the Mill Creek site which was just above our place. Ed Eastman built the mill. Homer Barney was the sawyer for the new mill. A chute was built to get the logs from the top of the hill down to the pond. The whole crew was standing at the far edge of the pond to watch the first log come down. It shot off the top of the hill down the chute, planed across the pond, and wiped out one of the bunkhouses. It just missed some of the crew and their families. It was here that Jess Demaris was hit by a log from the chute. It was finally abandoned—just too steep for practical use.

"John Demaris and wife Jane traded their Mill Creek homestead to Arthur J. Decker for his ranch on McKay Creek in 1908. John and his four sons built a sawmill on McKay. Decker sold out to W.H. Barney and wife Lela in 1909. William Birdsong and wife Emma also sold their holdings on Mill Creek to W.H. Barney and Ed Barney.... All of the Barneys were loggers but they also lost the mill on a debt to Billy[W.F.] King. Art Champion ran the mill for King, then Tom and Lon Smith took over the running of the mill and finally they moved the mill to their father's timber claim at Grizzly in 1917."

**W.F. King**

**1905 - 1918**

**Mill Creek**

William (Billy) King was one of those men that had a large impact on Crook County yet little has been recorded about his activities. He came to Crook County around 1882 (at about age 20) and remained there until his death in 1962. I'm dubious about the 1918 date. King was more merchant and rancher than he was lumberman. A short history appears in *The History of Crook County, Oregon*, published by the Crook County Historical Society in 1981 (page 162); no mention of sawmill activity appears there. In *Crook County Timber History; A Narrative* (Crook County Historical Society, 1997, is found: "All of the Barneys were loggers, but they lost the mill on a debt to Billy King."

**Smith Brothers Sawmill (covered in separate chapter.)**

**Barney Sawmill**

**1939 - 1941 Mill Creek**

*Crook County Journal*, February 13, 1919. There may have been two Barney sawmills, as one is mentioned in the *Prineville Review* for September 10, 1914. Could this also have been known as "Barney Brothers" sawmill?

**Ochoco** (below Ochoco Ranger Station):

**Ben & Watt Jones**

**<1909-1920>**

**undetermined**

The source of this information was not recorded. Original notes indicate that mill was operating in 1879. Unfortunately for the writer, I did not understand the importance of keeping track of where information was found. Later in the research process this importance came to me and sources were documented. To complicate the matter of "the Jones Mill," confusions of name exist and geographic locations (Ochoco, Howard) are so close together that exact location is even more difficult.

**Jones & Ritter Sawmill**

**1908-????**

**Duncan & Ochoco Creeks**

The only mention for this operation was a short report in the November 12, 1908, issue of the *Prineville Review* (p.3, c.6) that stated that Jones and Ritter "recently purchased the sawmill operated by the Great Western Lumber Co., on Trout creek, and have moved the same 22 miles above Prineville on the Ochoco, where they own 5,000,000 feet of timber." This suggests that "Jones & Ritter" is probably either "Ben & Watt Jones" or "R.E. Jones & Company" but none of this conjecture is certain.

**Smith Brothers Sawmill (covered in separate chapter.)**

**Hawkins Brothers**

**1895-1898  
1898-1904**

**Ochoco River  
Duncan Creek**

Very little information has been uncovered about these men. In *Illustrated History of Central Oregon*, published in 1905, there is a biographical sketch of one of the brothers but no mention of the sawmill operation is given. In the December 15, 1904, issue of the *Prineville Review*, (p. 1, c. 4) there is an announcement of the forming of Grizzly Lake Lumber Company. It was stated that this new company "has absorbed the old Hawkins sawmill plant twenty miles up the Ochoco, will build an addition thereto, increasing its capacity, and add a shingle mill and planer, and will thus be able to add materially to the lumber output of the present mill. The new company's plant, it is expected, will be in operation next Tuesday." The Grizzly Lake Lumber Company was located at Lamonta and very little information has been found about it. The article identified the brothers as W.J. and J.H. Hawkins; their given names have not been determined.

## Paulina & Vicinity:

**Bear Creek Lumber Co.                      <1911>                      Humphrey Place**

O.J. Wilson, Manager. May also be known as the Fred.A. Powell sawmill or maybe "the old Taylor sawmill," which was some 18 miles east of Paulina. (Located on old Humphrey Place; now owned by Sessler.) No documentation seems to exist that gives any indication of when this mill ceased operations.

**Beaver Creek Lumber Co.                      1930-1946??                      Beaver Creek**

Much confusion surrounding this operation. Maybe built by Mark Durgan. Maybe was name used by Larry Devine, Pat Moore and Red Brawley for their mill that was located near present rodeo grounds. In the March 31, 1991 issue of *The Bulletin*, David Brawley wrote: "Between V-J Day and Sept. 26, 1946, no less than 5,599 new lumber firms opened in Oregon. Every little community had at least one sawmill, profiting from the nation's postwar housing boom.

"Paulina, for example, had the Paulina Lumber Co. on Beaver Creek and the Still-Van Mill on Roba Creek." This appeared in a special section of the newspaper called "A Place In The West," p. 62.

**Foran Sawmill                                      1948-1951>                      west of rodeo grounds**

Name may be totally incorrect (I've also been told it was called Foran & White). In September 1948, John White was noted to be loading logging trucks for the Foran Sawmill. Whether Mr. White was ever a partner in the mill is not know. Have also heard that the sawmill was built by Lister & Durgan, later bought by Larry Devine, Pat Moore, Red Brawley. May be same as Beaver Creek Lumber Company.

**Larson-Bordreau                                      1945-1947                      Sunflower Flat.**

After a lot of searching I located Silver Larson in Spokane, Washington. He failed to return my telephone calls or answer my letters. Some time later I received word that he had died. This may have been the Bernard mill, operated by Larson & Bordreau—but I'm unable to confirm this.

**Midstate Lumber & Manufacturing Co.                      (dates uncertain)                      undetermined**

**Paulina Lumber Co.                                      <1915>                      Bear Creek**

I have found nothing to support this entry beyond different individuals mentioning it. When I asked for details, no one remembered any.

**Frank Gardiner Sawmill                      1913-1916                      undetermined**

Frank Gardiner had a mill at Grizzly, later moving to Paulina but I can find no details surrounding either operation.

**Still-Van Lumber Company (covered in separate chapter.)**



for about seven years, beginning around 1880. This mill probably changed sites several times, but the only known location was near Wiley Flat." The more accurate dates shown here have been provided by Evelyn Bryant of Prineville.

<b>William McMeeken</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>Pilot Butte</b>
<b>C.R. Henry &amp; Cayton<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>1915-1918</b>	<b>Post</b>
<b>Mowery Sawmill<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>1917</b>	<b>Maury Mountain, east end</b>

Only mention was in the *Crook County Journal*, January 11, 1917, wherein it is noted that Burt Demerris [Demaris] moved the sawmill, named Mowery, to his home in Barnes because of heavy snow.

<b>Henry Lumber Company</b>	<b>1917-1918</b>	<b>Post</b>
<b>Archie Ream</b>	<b>1925-1942</b>	<b>Drake Creek</b>
	<b>1942-1951</b>	<b>West Shotgun Spring</b>

The Archie Ream sawmill operations at Post are well documented and some photographs exist. The West Shotgun Spring site is still owned by the Ream family and plenty of evidence of operations exists, although the main mill building is just rubble and the mill pond has almost completely silted in. Ream last operated here around 1954.

<b>Birdsong Portable</b>	<b>Mill 1937-1938</b>	<b>Post</b>
<b>Triangle Lumber Company</b>	<b>1945-1947</b>	<b>Lost Creek</b>
<b>The "Little Mill"</b>	<b>1947-1948</b>	<b>Lost Creek</b>
<b>Willis Spoo Lumber Co.</b>	<b>1948-1950</b>	<b>Post, Riverside Ranch</b>

*Central Oregonian*, March 18, 1948; p. 5, c. 5. In *A History of the Deschutes Country in Oregon* (Deschutes County Historical Society, 1985 p. 40) is found this: "In the middle 40's Willis Spoo (qv) moved from Camp Polk to the upper Crooked River area where he built a rather unusual mill using an upright edger in which the sawyer was also the edgerman." Willis has several operations throughout the Central Oregon area and two at Post.

<b>Carey Lumber Company</b>	<b>1953-1958</b>	<b>Post<sup>5</sup></b>
-----------------------------	------------------	-------------------------

Elton Carey originated this operation. Elton now lives in Arizona and I have communicated with him on a number of occasions. Like many of us older folks, Elton cannot remember specific dates but he did tell me that as small as his operation was he made a good living for his family. No known photographs exists and I have not been able to find the exact location of the mill site yet I have visited the general vicinity.

## Prineville & Vicinity:

<b>William McMeeken</b>	<b>1873 - 1875</b>	<b>McKay Creek</b>
-------------------------	--------------------	--------------------

3. Name may have been spelled Caton
4. Spelling is early rendition of "Maury".
5. Crooked River, just north of river and west of the highway where the highway meets river.

This man's activities are more than I can follow. I don't doubt that he had sawmills in all of the places listed but I don't seem to find how he got from one to the other.

**D.F. Powell** **1883 - 1884** **Prineville**  
**James Hamilton & Company** **1886 - 1887** **Prineville**

Only mention of this company is in an advertisement appearing in the September 19, 1885, issue of the *Ochoco Review* (p. 1, c.2). The wording of the ad itself is interesting: "PRINEVILLE PLANER, SASH & DOOR FACTORY AND LUMBER YARD, Jas. Hamilton & Co. Props. WILL KEEP CONSTANTLY on hand all kinds of building materials including Shingles, Shakes, Dressed and Rough Lumber and all styles of Moulding, which will be sold for cash only. Doors and Sash Of the regular sizes kept on hand. Orders for odd sizes filled on short notice. All kinds of turning done with neatness and dispatch. Door & window frames made to order, cheaper than the cheapest." It is very difficult to document an operation like this when you find only one reference yet it is obvious from the advertisement that the operation did exist.

**R.K. Nelson** **?-1886** **12 mi. SE of Prineville**

Sold to William McMeekin and James Page as noted in *Ochoco Review*, January 9, 1886 (and reprinted in *Prineville Review*, p. 2, c. 2, January 18, 1912). Have found no other information about this sawmill but am confident that it did exist.

**Providence Sawmill** **<1892 >** **Prineville**

*Ochoco Review*, p. 3, c. 1, May 21, 1892. "Jno. [John? J.M. for sure] Colver, who is running the Providence saw mill, was in town this week...." This is the only reference to this mill that has been found.

**Shipp & Perry Planer<sup>6</sup>** **1900 - 1919** **Prineville**

Shipp & Perry were involved in several businesses in Prineville. The U.S. Forest Service Memorandum from "Highlights of History of Prineville," dated October 7, 1938, states "This first plant was a water power outfit. In 1905, the remanufacturing plant was moved to a location east of town and steam power installed; five years later the first dry kilns were erected. Lumber was secured from several small mills located in or near the forest."

**Shipp & Perry Sawmill** **1910 -?** **McKay Creek**

Purchased from Grizzly Lake Lumber Company in 1910 and moved to McKay Creek. Have not been able to determine if the mill purchased from Grizzly Lake Lumber Company was the mill acquired from Hawkins Brothers at Ochoco. Not much more info exists on this. The sawmill was separate from the retail lumber business.

**Edward Harbin** **1903 - 1904** **Prineville**

Not sure where this entry comes from—what the source is. Only reference I find is a private e-mail dated November 22, 1999 wherein Edward Harbin is somehow associated with Sam Compton. These dates probably come from an *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory*. My good friend Don Houk, who lives and works in Japan!,

6. & lumber yard

tried to pin Harbin down and while there is plenty of evidence he was in the area Don could find nothing specific about a sawmill.

**Ochoco Milling Company                      1903 -?                      Prineville**

Interesting entry with very little information. First reference was in an article in the *Prineville Review* dated November 12, 1903, wherein it was stated that the "The Prineville Athletic Club has secured the Ochoco Milling Company's *planing mill* [emphasis added] and will fix it up for the club as soon as certain legal entanglements are unraveled. It is likely that this is accomplished as we go to press, and nothing farther lies in the way of improving the structure so as to meet the requirements of the modern club." The only other reference to this company came a few days later (December 3, 1903) and consisted of an announcement for the "regular annual meeting of the stockholders" of the company. This operation does not appear in the *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory*. Were it not for the mention of "the Ochoco Milling Company's planing mill" this operation would have been written off as a flour mill rather than a lumber mill.

**A.H. Lippman & Company                      1904 - 1940                      Prineville**

I cannot now verify the 1904 date; perhaps it came from my review of the *R.L. Polk & Company City Directory*. The first newspaper reference to the company was in the *Prineville Review* (p. 3, c. 7), July 11, 1907. That article was announcing the new planing mill and included: "installed an eight horsepower gasoline engine and planer in their mill building, the planer to be ready for business in a week. Besides this, there are to be installed shortly an edger, molding [the way they spelled it in 'them-thar' days] machine or 'sticker,' tilting table saw, rip saw and lathe, and after these a sandpapering machine. Every thing but the last named is already on the ground and has been here for two or three months." (planer & sawmill)

**Rogers-Youmans Lumber Co. 1906 - 1923                      Prineville**  
**Rogers Lumber Co.                      1906 - 1923                      Prineville**

Both of these companies are listed here because they were what amounted to timber holding companies. The first company was formed by Charles M. Youmans, the latter by A.R. Rogers. Both men were from Minnesota and both started acquiring land in Crook County in 1906. Both of these companies, in 1923, sold their timberland, some 80,000+ acres, to the newly formed Ochoco Timber Company, the forerunner of Ochoco Lumber Company.

**C.D. Calbreath                      <-1908                      Prineville**  
**Woodsawing Plant**

*Prineville Review*, p. 3, c. 3, June 11, 1908. The article indicated that H.L. Hobbs had purchased the Calbreath operation. No other mention of the Calbreath plant has been found. I did learn from my very good friend Gale Ontko, that Mr. Calbreath, was the owner of all of the property from the Ochoco Plaza west to Ochoco Creek. He built and lived in the stone house that use to sit just east of the Les Schwab Tire Center (that house is usually referred to at "The Powell Place"; J.D. Hudspeth lived there for a number of years). He was killed one day out in the pasture by his "tame" bull. A passerby noticed the bull standing over something and it turned out to be Mr. Calbreath.

**H.L. Hobbs****Woodsawing Plant****1908-?****Prineville**

*Prineville Review*, p. 3, c. 3, June 11, 1908. Hobbs bought from Calbreath. I have found nothing further on H.L. Hobbs, unless H.L. was Harold. Harold Hobbs, around 1946, owned the property bounded by Willodwale Drive and Ochoco Highway west of what use to be known as Barnes' Cabins. In 1946 Hobbs sold that property to my uncle Orrin Mills. Orrin went into partnership with my father, George Morisette, and started Prineville Millworks, a "sash and door" plant. This company had a very short life and brought to an early death because of misappropriation of company funds by my father. Had it succeeded it would have been the first "moulding plant" in the county.

**George (Skip) Russell****1914 - 1923****Keystone Ranch**

The sawmill was in operation as early as April 1914; the George Russell sawmill burned around April 23, 1914. *Prineville News*, April 23, 1914, p. 5, c. 2. (this article is not in my possession). But a later article, *Central Oregonian*, March 1, 1923, p.3, c. 3, states "The Russell sawmill on Veasie creek is again in operation..." This is confusing because interviewees indicated that when Ewin Johnson closed the mill on Combs Flat in about 1926 the equipment was moved to the Russell place.

**Demaris-McKenzie #3<sup>7</sup>****1920 - 1924****McKay Creek**

Originally known as the John Demaris sawmill on Mill Creek (1895), the operation went through several relocations and partnerships. Locations other than Mill Creek included two on Allen Creek and the final location was on McKay Creek just outside the Ochoco National Forest Boundary. The mill had operated at this site for less than two weeks when it burned in 1924, ending the Demaris-McKenzie sawmill operation. The dates, 1920-1924, represents the period, as best as I can define it, for the Demaris-McKenzie partnership.

**Ochoco Timber Company****1923 - 1945****Prineville**

Purchased approximately 80,000 acres of timberland in 1923 from Rogers and Rogers-Youmans Lumber Companies. Copies of a large number of corporate documents (annual minutes of both the board of directors and stockholders meetings) are in my possession and will be used as the source for a detailed company story—if it is ever written. Was forerunner of Ochoco Lumber Company.

**Deschutes Lumber Company 1925 -?****Lamonta Road**

Documenting this company has been complicated by the fact that there were about four companies named Deschutes Lumber Company.<sup>8</sup> In the April, 1999 issue of *Timber History News* I wrote: "Some months ago when I was browsing through the land records at the Court House I came across the name 'Deschutes Lumber Company.' I had seen the name in some early newspaper articles but did not know anything about the company. It became one of several timber companies that I was going to ignore. That decision would change.

"When I began to learn more about the Ralph L. Smith Lumber Company [Grant County, Izee] the name Deschutes Lumber Company again appeared. It also appeared when I was reading the Oregon Historical Society book *High & Mighty: Selected Sketches about the Deschutes Country*, (1981). But all I could come up with was the name.

7. Two earlier sawmills on Allen Creek, are found on one the map showing Alexander-Yawkey's forest sawmills.

8. I'm telling you this story at length so you can get a feel for how complex history becomes.

"As my quest for information continued I came across more and more references to this company. Or was it a number of companies? Turns out to be some of each. Here is a brief summary of the activities of these companies.

"First, the mystery company. On October 18, 1919, the Deschutes Lumber Company was founded in Portland, Oregon. On February 16, 1921, the corporation changed their name to Deschutes Lumber Company of Oregon. This was done after it was learned that another company was doing business under the same name. This would have been the Deschutes Lumber Company (of Minnesota); more about this company later.

"I have been unable to determine if the Deschutes Lumber Company of Oregon actually engaged in any business. This issue is open for additional investigation.

"Deschutes Lumber Company (of Minnesota—"of Minnesota" is not part of the official company name but I include it in parentheses to distinguish it from other companies of the same name) was founded on January 24, 1905, at St. Paul Minnesota. By January 2, 1906, the corporation had filed with the Oregon Secretary of State to conduct business in Oregon. S.O. Johnson was president with a listed address of McCloud, California. By late May 1925 the company was no longer doing business in Oregon.

"The name S.O. Johnson may ring a bell for some. S.O. was the father of Sam Johnson, father-in-law of Elizabeth 'Becky' Johnson. S.O. and his associates acquired tracts of timberland as Deschutes Lumber Company. Much of this land was later sold to Shevlin-Hixon who had considerable timberland holdings they acquired through either direct purchase or from other timber companies. S.O.'s son, Sam, was active in many industry activities in central Oregon and was a major force behind the formation of Warm Springs Forest Products. But for the purposes of *Green Gold*, the Deschutes Lumber Company (of Minnesota) did not long operate in Oregon.

"That brings me to the final Deschutes Lumber Company; the one that operated at Mowich, Oregon.

"The Deschutes Lumber Company (of Mowich, Oregon) was formed on March 29, 1934, by W.E. Lamm, R.G. Watt and Claude McColloch. The incorporation papers contains a very long description of the expected activities of the corporation. These folks were expecting to be deeply involved in the timber business. Mowich, for those who don't know the location, is located just over one mile south-southwest of Oregon Highway 58, about four miles northwest of the highway's junction with U.S. Highway 97 (this puts Mowich about nine miles south southwest of Crescent.

"The lumber company took its name from the Little Deschutes River which runs directly past the site. The source of the river is high in the Cascades on the eastern slopes of Mt. Thielsen. The Little Deschutes River flows north and joins the main stem of the Deschutes not far south of Sunriver.

"Deschutes Lumber Company was under the direct control of Rolland G. Watt. Wilfred E. Lamm was busy with his own Lamm Lumber Company at Modoc Point (some small distance north of Klamath Falls). Mr. Lamm was a busy man and commuted between his duties as vice president at Ochoco Lumber Company and his business at Modoc Point. Usually, he spent the week days at Ochoco and his weekends at Modoc Point."

R.G. Watt also has a position at Ochoco Lumber Company in those early days after the company was formed. This version of Deschutes Lumber Company would figure later in the activities of Ralph Smith but that is a story for the Grant County list. The Deschutes Lumber Company involving S.O. Johnson is the one that had, for some brief time, a sawmill in Crook County. Because this DLC was based out of Bend the stories about their early attempt to lease the Deschutes River will be reserved for a later time.

Because this company was such a pain in my neck to figure out I mentioned it one day to my friend Glen Comstock. Glen is a history nut like me but his focus is on



**Ochoco Box & Lumber**

**<1934 >**

**Prineville**

Formerly Davidson Brothers, then Dant & Russell, then, then Ochoco Box & Lumber, then Pine Products Corporation. No documentation of the company's operations, other than its relationship to Dant & Russell and Pine Products, has been found.

**Dant & Russell**

**1934 - 1935**

**Prineville**

This company is usually associated with either Redmond or Sisters. Their operations west of Prineville were very short in duration and the Prineville operation evolved into Pine Products Corporation.

**Tum-A-Lum Lumber Sawmill**

**1935 -?**

**Lamonta Road**

The original name of the company was Tum-A-Lumber Company. The company had retail yards around Central Oregon as early as 1915 but the Prineville sawmill operation didn't get started until sometime in 1935. The sawmill that cut Tum-A-Lum's timber may not have been owned by Tum-A-Lum at the time of the cutting; it is difficult to sort this out. The site of the cutting was the former Davidson Brothers Sawmill on Lamonta Road. It looks like the mill was owned by Dant & Russell when the Tum-A-Lum timber was milled. W.L. "Pop" Forsythe worked for Dant & Russell at the time. Very soon hereafter Forsythe and John Crawford, together with some others, joined to found Pine Products Corporation (1935). A 1919 advertisement indicates that Tum-A-Lum was the successor to Shipp & Perry (the retail lumber yard part of the company) and J.B. Shipp worked for a time for Tum-A-Lum. Tum-A-Lum Lumber Company is still owned by the descendants of John Crawford.

**Pine Products Corporation**

**1935 - 1992**

**Lamonta Road**

Telling the story of this operation has been hampered because both the Crawford and Rhoden interests are uncooperative. The company ceased operations in 1992 largely because of difficulties between the two families who were, at the time, sole owners of the company. But from the above listings you can get an idea of the almost frenetic activity at this site. In addition to what has been listed above, there were other activities nearby: sawmill, planing mill, and retail lumber yard. More about those later.

**Alexander-Yawkey/Stewart 1937 - 1961**

**McKay Road**

Original sawmill was located in the woods—three different locations. Winters proved too harsh for the projected year-round logging operations so the mill was moved into Prineville and logs were decked for winter use. A-Y, as it was commonly called, came to Prineville under a wrong assumption: logging operations could be conducted year-round. By placing their mill in the woods, company officials believed, they could work all year. Winters proved to be more harsh than anticipated and it was decided that hauling logs into Prineville was less expensive than hauling rough lumber. Walter Alexander, Cyrus Yawkey, and Alexander Stewart (oh, the confusion!) were lumbermen from Wisconsin with sawmills located throughout the country. Prior to Prineville, these men were associated with the McCloud River Lumber Company at Mt. Shasta, California. Some amusing stories exist about this company but they are based only on rumor.

**Ochoco Lumber Company**

**1938 - 2001**

**Combs Flat Road**

This company's story will be told at some time in the future by someone much more familiar with the company's history than I.

**Endicott Logging Company <1936 - 1971****Prineville**

Endicott was involved with Virgil Ammons in sawmills located on Snow Mountain, one of which burned and the other went bankrupt. The history of Endicott's logging company is long and honorable but I have uncovered very little documentary evidence about it. Martha Stranahan wrote a good story of this company in *Central Oregon Logger*, March, 1979, Volume Five, Number 37. Scott Johnson Editor and Publisher, Powell Butte, Oregon.

**Burnett Box Factory****1939 - 1984****Prineville**

Have found almost nothing about this company. Near the end of the company's life, it was owned by a former classmate of mine, Duane Mizer. While Mizer owned it there was a fire but it did very little damage to the plant. The company was bought by Lodge Industrial Lumber Company in 1984. Have found no record of Lodge's activities or when they ceased operations.

**Midstate Lumber & Manufacturing Co.****1940-????****McKay Road, Prineville**

Very difficult company to pin down. At various times, the company owned sawmills in many Central Oregon locations (Spray, Paulina, Mitchell, Prineville, etc.) but the company, as best as I can determine, was founded on deceit. Many old-timers have confirmed the rumor that top-level managers from Alexander-Yawkey Lumber Company started the company with a remanufacturing plant directly across the street from A-Y. Many of these old-timers are adamant when they report that "the best grade of lumber moved from A-Y to Midstate under the cover of darkness and was replaced by inferior lumber from Midstate. I found a man that worked at the Prineville remanufacturing plant and he confirmed that all I had been told was true, "and it's even worse than that," he said. But he would not elaborate and would not allow me to interview him.

Many of Midstate's sawmills were involved in fires. I've tried not to jump to conclusions but given the origins of the company, that is difficult. I've often wondered how A-Y owners could let lumber stealing happen. This brings up another rumor that has been confirmed by several people in a position to know: Alexander-Yawkey's Prineville plant was started not to make money but to be a tax write-off. But the plant was very successful. One year, the story goes, the company wanted to share their profits with employees and bonus checks were prepared. Just before distributing the checks someone had the good sense to check with company lawyers. The lawyers quickly put the kibosh on that plan: you issue bonus checks this year, they said, and the union will demand similar checks in the future. The checks were destroyed and the company's profits were even greater that year. Can success sometimes be more than you want? Apparently.

**Prineville Lumber Co.****1941 - 1945****Lamonta road area**

"Harold Baldwin and Alma Lippman, after the sale of the bank, started a planing mill called the Prineville Lumber Company south of Pine Products. In association with W.L. Forsythe, Howard Crawford and William B. Morse who was soon bought out with a profit of \$1,000. They operated until shortly after World War II." From interview with Bill Tackman. The company operated independently from Pine Products but I assume that in 1945 PPC became the owner. It was at this location that Paul B. Kelly built his planing mill and lumber yard.

**Evans Pine Lumber Co****1941 - 1947****Lamonta Road**



County. What I've never been able to understand is why Hudspeth bought out Lee Evans, totally dismantled two operating sawmills at the Evans site, built a new mill and at the same time was building "the mill on the hill" that became the Hudspeth Pine, Inc.; seems like duplication of effort. Hudspeth Pine, Inc. reverted to the name Hudspeth Sawmill Company when John Hudspeth "sold" the operation to his children around 1975. Hudspeth Sawmill Company had been the name of the original Hudspeth sawmill in Oregon located at Camp Watson, Wheeler County, in 1936. The stories I could tell you of the Hudspeth family's operations would make you laugh and cry. Will I tell them? I'm not sure....

**Central Oregon Pine, Inc.      1947 - 1959      Lamonta Road**

Originally Evans Pine Lumber Company, sold to the Hudspeth family in 1947. Hudspeth also bought the Barney Sawmill at the same time. The two companies were separated by a shared mill pond. Hudspeth dismantled both sawmills and built a new "all steel" mill which was operated only briefly as a Hudspeth company. It was leased to Consolidated Lumber Company of New Jersey in 1952 and sold to them in 1959. The sawmill was dismantled in 1993 but the moulding plant (originally located in Bend prior to 1950s) is still in operation.

**Still-Van Lumber Company      1947-1949      Upper Falls**

**Ochoco Cedar Corp.      1947 - 1949      McKay Creek**

Originally owned by Bart Noble. Relocated to the Richmond area and partners were taken in. "Fancy" bookkeeping on the part of one of the partners brought this company into bankruptcy.

**Clear Pine Mouldings, Inc.      1948 - Present      Prineville**

Established in 1948 by Carl Peterson. Carl's operation was based on his belief that the material Ochoco Lumber Company was burning could be used in a profitable way. He quickly proved his point. It is unclear if Carl called his company "Clear Pine Mouldings" from the beginning. Early on he met Leo Donnally of Contact Lumber Company of Portland, to whom he sold, in the beginning, all of his output. In fact, Contact wanted more product than Carl was able to manufacture. So in 1955 Carl went into partnership with Donnally and that company became known as Clear Pine Mouldings, Inc. Odd, but because of this merger of talent and resources, it is Leo Donnally who usually gets credit for "founding" Clear Pine.

In 1978 Carl sold his interests in the company to the Donnally family. But that was not the last of Carl's connection with the industry. By 1960 he was back at it, this time in Madras and that story will be told elsewhere but here is a hint: Bright Wood Corporation.

**CEC Lumber Company      <1948 - 1952      Prineville**

Commonly referred to as "Ed Barns Mill." This operation was owned by Charlie Jackson, Ed Barns, and Charlie Payne. This sawmill was located on the west end of the log pond jointly used by CEC and Lee Evans. Very little documentation seems to exist about this company. In addition to being a sawmill company, CEC was also a lumber brokerage company.

**Oregon Windor      1953 - 1958      Lamonta Road,**

North of what is Consolidated Lumber Company today. Have found no substantiation for this company. It did exist,



Muslin had two lives. "First, Matt Muslin started Muslin Studs, encouraged by Bud Shrum and several others that advertised available private logs at reasonable prices. Matt started the plant, at the current Crown Pacific location, in the mid to late 1960s or 70s. Matt went bankrupt, and the assets were sold on the courthouse steps. The only bidder that I am aware of was his brother, Steve Muslin, who re-tooled the mill to do random length. He ran the mill for a short time, then sold to Louisiana-Pacific, who in turn sold to Craig Woodward.

**Musulin Forest Products                      1970 - 1970                      Prineville**

Very little information on this operation. See "File Liens Against Musulin Mill Here," *Central Oregonian*, August 27, 1970, p. 1, c. 4. The company operated only months before they were closed down. In an article appearing in the August 27, 1970, issue of the *Central Oregonian* (p.1, c. 4), you get a glimpse of the conditions of the company: "The company, which operated primarily as a stud mill, is owned by Wood Tek, Inc. of Albany and was reportedly closed by the Internal Revenue Service for failure to make federal withholding tax payments." The plant was bought by Louisiana-Pacific on June 4, 1973, but I didn't discover that information until I came across an article in the *Central Oregonian* (p.1, c. 1) for March 1, 1983: "Louisiana-Pacific purchased the facility from Prineville Forest Products, owned by Steven and Michael Musulin, on June 4, 1973, and converted it from a stud mill into a random length (up to 16-foot cuts) mill." See "Matt Musulin Moulding Plant" entry above.

**B&S Logging    1972 - Present    Prineville**

I have found very little documentation about this company, other than their activity in softball leagues and their attempt to relocate from their current location across from Les Schwab Tire Center to the airport—which was disapproved. The principals are still handy but I haven't taken the time to try to interview them. Maybe now I will.

**Louisiana-Pacific Corp.    1973 - 1986    Prineville**

Lots of information available; not yet digested.

**Hay Timber Company    1976 - 1994    Prineville**

This was a logging company. The only documents I have are two newspaper articles, both dealing with timber sales, in which Hay Timber is mentioned.

**American Forest Products Company    1977 - 1987    Prineville**

Writing about the companies that followed COIN Millwork just isn't very interesting and I doubt that it would make interesting reading either. All the companies did the same thing: they manufactured millwork. There was nothing exceptional about them, they just plugged away. So while I've got lots of information about AFPC I'll not give it here.

**Prineville Mouldings    1979-1980    Prineville**

Short lived but based on big plans. Great plans that didn't go anywhere. Lack of success was probably a combination of poor market conditions and bad management. See below.

**Juniper Products    1979-1980    Lamonta Road**

Company was started by Gary Gumpert. Nothing much seemed to happen. Gumpert had requested a zone change and at about the same time that Trans

Coastal Lumber Co., Inc. of New Jersey announced they were going to create a wood products industrial site on 55 acres of land recently purchased [probably from Gumpert]. The firm, which owned Prineville Mouldings, Inc., has purchased Juniper Products Inc., from its previous owners, Gary and Helen Gumpert.

**D&E Wood Products                      1980 - 199?                      Prineville, Lamonta Road**

Don Smith and I have talked several times about the timber industry in Green Gold Country and Don is very knowledgeable about what the industry has experienced in the last many years. But when I try and turn the conversation to Don's own company, D&E Wood Products Company, Don changed the subject. So I'm relying on an article in the *Central Oregonian* (March 4, 1982; p. 1, c. 2) where in Don said:

"I decided we could take the material wasted at the mills and utilize it so it wouldn't be burned," Smith says.

At the same time, he was providing the Prineville area with a new business elaborating on the existing wood products industry. "There are a lot of things to do in the lumber industry today," he says.

The Prineville couple's new company, D&E Wood Products, is prospering while many of the seven local mills and moulding plants are facing a dwindling market.

Don Smith is no newcomer to the wood products industry. He worked 24 years at Ochoco Lumber Company as a mill supervisor.

"Over the years in the industry I saw things going to waste that should be used," he recounts.

"The DEQ (state Department of Environmental Quality) was always after the mills to stop burning. I felt I could take that material and make some money off of it."

What the Smiths are making money off of is rough lumber discarded by Ochoco Lumber and Consolidated Pine mills. The small company's total nine and a half employees trim the pieces of lumber into products such as door core, finger joint blocks, beehive boards and decoupage and toll painting supplies.

"A speciality wood outfit is about what it amounts to," Smith explains.

The company started two and a half years ago "on a shoestring," Ethel Smith remembers. "No one ever knows how hard it is to start a business," she says.

They started out with three employees, including Don who put in 14-hour work days and Ethel putting in 12 hours at the Lamonta Road leased building, the former location of Coin mill and Oregon Wind Door Co [both names spelled wrong]....

**Lindy Wood Products                      1983-?                      Prineville**

This seems to have been a logging company. The only documents I have are two newspaper articles, both dealing with timber sales, in which Lindy wood products is mentioned; 1983 and 1984....

**Lodge Industrial Lumber                      1983 - >                      Prineville**

Bought Burnett Box from Duane Mizer. This was a small operation, employing only nine people in 1983

**Goodman Moulding                      <1985>                      Prineville**

The only reference I've found for this company is from a birth announcement in the *Central Oregonian* (January 15, 1985).

**Pioneer Cut Stock                      1986 - Present                      Prineville**

In early 1986, the City of Prineville arranged for financing of a new moulding plant coming to town. Long term financing of \$100,000 was arranged through Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council but the City of Prineville Railway was to pro-

vide short-term financing so construction could get started. The owners, Stan Herb, Brian Davis, and John Mahoney, all Redmond businessmen, put up \$140,000 in mill equipment as collateral. The site of the plant was to be the city's industrial park where \$25,000 bought the company five acres.

This venture was not problem-free in getting started. It seems like everyone had an objection of one sort or another from the power company to private contractors who objected that public funds were being used to pay non-union wages (that was not the case, it turned out). But all hurdles were overcome and the company is still humming along.

**Prineville Sawmill Company 1986-Present** **Craig Woodward**

Formerly Louisiana-Pacific, and although Craig sold the sawmill operation to Crown Pacific, Ltd. in 1988, Prineville Sawmill Company continues as a going business engaged in activities other than sawmilling. In a January 1995 interview, Craig said, "I was logging for Louisiana-Pacific when the opportunity to buy the sawmill came up. I had to raise \$1 million for a down payment on the \$2.9 million sawmill. I was able to borrow the down payment and had two years in which to pay back the loan. I paid it back in almost half that time. I purchased the sawmill in September of 1986 and established Prineville Sawmill Company. We operated the mill two years when the Crown Pacific people came in and wanted to buy the mill.

"In October of 1988 Crown Pacific purchased my Prineville plant. It was an opportunity to sell at a profit. Although I had a twinge of regret over the decision to sell, it was the only prudent thing to do. I was operating on a shoestring. It turned out to be a wise business decision. A short time after I sold, the timber business went sour for a couple of years.

"I moved on and invested in more timberland. I felt I had more strength in timberland than in running a sawmill. Every time we sold a sawmill we bought more timberland. And so now our company, which is still Prineville Sawmill Company, is into timberland management and whole log chipping." Craig is a very busy man.

**American Moulding & Millwork** **1987 - 1994** **Prineville**

Another one of the companies that followed in the footsteps of COIN Millwork and about which I've learned nothing exceptional.

**Ranger Millworks** **1988 - 1988** **Prineville**

Very little info about this operation. First mention seem to have appeared in *Central Oregonian*, November 3, 1988, when a short article headlined "R. Millworks closes its doors" appeared. Second article appeared on November 24, 1988, with headline of "Ranger employees paid for final weeks of work." Two later articles appeared but related to the selling of the company's buildings.

**Crown-Pacific, Ltd.** **1988 - 2002** **Prineville**

As Craig Woodward noted above, Crown-Pacific bought his mill for a nice profit. There has been some controversy surrounding even the founding of Crown but I've not obtained documents outlining that controversy. Crown is a Portland firm and has bought up a lot of central Oregon timberland and businesses, mainly the old Gilchrist Lumber Company at Gilchrist. Crown has announced the closure of their Prineville plant but the plant is still in the process of shutting down. Crown has not indicated if the plant will be dismantled or not.

**American Pine Products** **1994 - Present** **Prineville**

## MARTIN GABRIO MORISETTE

The current successor of COIN Millwork. When APP bought out the former owner, the newspaper reported that it was employees, three in particular, that bought out American Moulding & Millwork. But from the June 15, 1995, American Pine Products published an announcement for their "first anniversary as a unit of Huttig Sash and Door, the largest Distributor of Moulding and Millwork in the United States." Earlier, the ad said that "American Pine Products has served this community both as a major employer of our people and as an innovative leader in wood manufacturing" for 36-years. I don't know that Leonard Wilkinson and Marvin Harris would agree to that statement. To me, it seems that American Pine Products has no more to do with its predecessors than I do. Same type of company but certainly different management. And why did they fire Dan Puckett, long-time resident of Prineville, who had worked his way to the top? Here one day, gone the next. Doesn't sound like a hometown company to me.

### FMC Logging

### <1984-1987> Prineville

Bob Fisher, Jim Maxwell, Lynn McCain, Harold Cook were the partners but I've found no documentation about the company anywhere.

Don't know anything about the below photo: where it came from, how I got it, what it represents, or anything else. But its interesting, a look at early sawmilling and I thought you might like to see it.

