

These pages are a collection of memories from Don Lovett in 2001, Rev George Edwards Notes in 1975 & 76 and several un-named sources. They come from before the 2009 fires and they need fact checking.

General Timber Facts:

Cross Cut Saw was called a 'Peg and Rake'.

The fallers used to scarf to the centre with an axe because the saws were not long enough.

The Fallers went high up the tree on the boards to get away from the lower sap wood, which was not suitable and a waste.

A Brief History

The Timber Industry played little part in the early development of the region because it was well nigh impossible to transport the timber to marketable centres. Splitting of palings (mostly 5 and 6 foot lengths) was the main occupation of the early timber workers. These were taken as far a field as Melbourne and Echuca. Mountain Ash was ideal for paling splitting.

Sawyers were in the district to supply timber for local buildings and roadworks. William Iram was at Fisher's Creek (now Narbethong) in 1866 and John MacDonald lived on his own land in Marysville in 1866.¹

In 1908 Robert Percival Paulson, David Miller Grierson and Thomas Jewry, splitters, lived on Mt Bismark, Marysville.

The first known sawmill in the district was Knott's at Dom Dom around 1909. Sawmiller James Alexander Marchbank and millhand, William Rae lived on the Black Spur in 1912. Knott's was sold to Messrs Marchbank and Stock about 1916. Harry Oxley snr became involved with this mill.¹

In 1920 Nobel-Anderson and Herman started their saw mills.

1934 saw three mills started up - Menze, Padgett and Little Wonder.

What about Anderson No 1 and Feiglins ?

The fires of 1939 devastated the forest around Marysville. In 1940 a year after the fires the Australian Paper Mills moved into the area to salvage what was left of the partially burnt forest saw logs. Lloyd Gould was employed by APM to pull the logs down the mountain by horse to a petrol driven docking saw where the logs were cut into six foot lengths, loaded on trucks and taken to Healesville railway.²

Other sawmills sprang up in 1940 to work the damaged timber. They included - J Sund, Victor Yelland, Diver, Don Lovett and Flatman

1907 - Forest Act Passed

¹ Rev George Edwards rough notes pg 7

Following a Royal Commission on Forests, which sat from 1897-1901, a Forests Act was passed (Vic Govt) which established a Department of Forests in Victoria. The Royal Commission revealed huge waste in the timber industry and ineffective management of the huge forest resource.

1918 - Forest Commission of Victoria was formed

Forest Commission Of Victoria was formed and was given greater independence from other arms of government through the establishment of a fixed Forest Fund, which ensured that a substantial amount of forest revenue was used for the improvement and management of the forest resource.

During WWII the Timorese refugees in Marysville cut all the timber behind Granton on Mount Gordon. The timber was cut for firewood and sent to the Middle East for POW camps. Don Lovett worked as a faller with them. The logs were cut 15 inches in diameter and 20 to 30 feet long.

There was a loading gantry on the top of Mount Gordon to load timber brought out on a tram line by horses from Anderson's No 1 and No 2 Mills, but mainly Anderson's no 1 Mill to start with. Don Lovett 2001.

William Cook & Co had a mill on the right hand side of the Marysville Narbethong Road, in the cleared paddock on the right as you leave Marysville. It was listed in the Sands & McDougall's Directory from 1962 to 1966. In 2001 it was leased from DNRE by Lloyd Gould. Did Lloyd buy Cook's Mill. Don Lovett 2001

Narbethong Saw Mills

Timms had a small mill behind the Narbethong Hotel.

Pagett owned a small mill behind the Narbehong Roadhouse. (Alternate statement : Pagett's mill at the top of the Black Range at Buxton.) He was taken over by Robinson. Robinson came from Erica where his sawmill was burnt out. Robinson was burnt out again in the 1939. He moved the mill down to the flat country.

In 1941 Percy Barton was delivering goods to 11 mills in the Marysville area including Robinsons. No matter when he arrived at Robinson's Mill with goods, an exact time schedule was impossible. Percy always found food and a warm drink left at the depot for leaving the goods. Travelling was tough then, over logs and under logs, etc.

Jack Elliot in c1925 ran a small mill on what is now Dickinson's place (year 2001) on the left of the Marysville-Narbethong Road.

Raine & Radcliffe c1943 ran a small mill up behind Elliot's Mill on what is now Dickinson's place.

Ernie Peak had Sawmill in Narbethong from 1942. He was living in Buxton 1962-64. Ernie married Louise Paton. The family was associated with the Black Spur Hotel. Mrs Slater bought it in 1939 and was helped by her daughter Mrs Paton. In 1942 daughter Lou, Mrs Ernie Peak ran it. The Ballroom cost \$800 to build.

Thistledale (Thisdale) Guest House was located over the road from Narbethong Farm on the left handside of the Maroondah Highway travelling towards Melbourne, where all the old pine trees are in the driveway. Leo O'Grady operated his riding school - Black Spur Trail Rides in 2001 from this property. The Guest House catered for mill workers and was burnt down in the 1939 fires.

June Keenan nee Melrose first ran the mill workers' boarding house on the main road by the Mill in 1945. It later became the Road House. Several two storey homes were built nearby.

1949 June Mercia Keenan lived in Murrindindi Rd, Narbethong. By 1954 she has moved out of the district with John Peter Patrick Keenan, sawmiller to Blackwood, Victoria.

The first experimental stretch of bitumen in Victoria was in the region of the Black Spur Cafe and Motel. Roy Ross 26 Aug 1976 in Rev George Edward's notes.

Cambarville Saw Mill

Alexander Cameron started the Cambarville Saw Mill at Narbethong with Frederick Barton. The name is Cam from Cameron and bar from Barton. They moved the mill to the Cumberland in 1939. Alexander had a daughter Donna Margaret who married Les Jens and died in January 2002.

Cambarville Saw Mill was located near the corner of the Marysville Road and the Maroondah Highway. It was owned by Nichols Brothers when Don Lovett was a small lad. (1920s).

At Cambarville was Anderson's Mill - Edward, Ned Anderson from Monbulk, not the Marysville Andersons of Anderson's Mills No 1&2. The mill was located about a mile down the road, between the VicRoads compound and little Herb's house. The young Ron Anderson later bought the Cambarville Mill at Narbethong.

Mick Halliday was a boss at Cambarville. Hanna Durst, who lives at Cambarville in 2002 has photos of the Bush Crews.

Marysville Buxton Road

William, Bill Elliot had a sawmill in the area of where he lived. He lived where the small group of trees are at the far end of the flat below the house on stilts - the house next after the quarry on the left side of the Buxton road. (Lloyd Gould's farmhouse marks the site of William Elliot's house)

The **Little Wonder Mill** was at Ditta and Ena Jurgens property on Buxton road. Maryton Park in 2001.

McPherson's Mill was behind 'Moondai' on the Buxton road.

Bromfields Mill Dan Gould found a trestle bridge, 3 chains long when working on the Black Range - west of Buxton. Came on 'formation' of ground and then the bridge. Would it be Bromfield's Mill.

The Timber industry in 1956

In 1956 there are 14 mills in operation in the area, handling 24,000,000 super feet yearly with an annual turnover of approximately 1,200,000 pounds (\$2,400,000).

E J Anderson
Bassett
Cambarville
Cook
Feiglin
Little Mill
Lovett

Miller
Narbethong
Radcliffe
Robinson
Stenco
Sund
Vic Oak

Over 300 men are employed at these mills, providing a livelihood for about 1,000 people. Only the pick of the trees were selected at first, and to-day the position has arisen whereby fellers and truck hauliers are obliged to work at ever increasing distances from the mill. The Forestry Commission, of which there is a station in Marysville, closely supervises all timber getting.

Some millers are a little gloomy as to the future of the timber industry in this district but Cr F Barton who operates a large mill at Cambarville believes that the passed over "Rubbish" (as he terms it) will be in demand at the new "Masonite" Works at Eildon, while in areas already milled new forests are coming on. The disastrous bush fires of 1939 which almost engulfed the township of Marysville did untold damage to the district's forests. ³

J T Taylor lived in Marysville 1962-66. Taylor's Mill was in Wilkes Creek, where Dickinson's are now (1975), the mill had a train line and steam engine (possibly a diesel loco) had a very audible whistle.

Don Frood Lovett 1914-2001

Don was born in Camperdown in 1914 to William Thomas and Ellen Cooper nee Donald. He came with his parents and siblings, Tom and Jean to "Brockelsby" in Granton in 1921, where other siblings were born. Lovett's old house 'Brocklesby' had hand made bricks, made on the property from clay dug from the property. Don Lovett 2001.

When Don left the Narbethong school at the age of 15, the school council was short of a committee member and they asked Don to join the committee. He was a Narbethong School Committee member until the school closed in 1986.

In 1940 Don married Greta Brownell nee Kyle and they had eight children - Margaret, Robert Stuart, Ian, Donald William, Graham, Judith, Colin and Peter.

Don bought the farm (60 acres) across the road from 'Brockelsby' and it was here that he he ran a sawmill with his father and brother-in-law Herb Pritchett. Don was still listed as a millworker in the 1980 Electoral roll.

Don worked with the Timorese refugees on Mount Gordan during WWII. Felling for firewood to go to the Middle East POW camps.

Don was involved with the Scouts all of his life and was still looking after the hall until his death. He was a foundation member of the Marysville Saddle Tramps horse riding club and was made a Life Member. He also belonged to the Lions Club, Fire Brigade, Marysville Fishing Club, Narbethong Hall (involved with its establishment) and Marysville and District Historical Society.

Notes taken of a conversation with Don Lovett in 2001.

Narbethong Race Course was located over the hill on the left handside of Maroondah highway travelling towards Melbourne - in a cleared padock which belonged to Roaches, across the road from Narbethong Farm.

John aka Jack Humphrey Elliot, born in 1888 in Marysville, son of Humphrey Elliot and Margaret nee Armstrong. In 1912 he lived on the Black Spur as a mill hand. He was also a builder and plumber and built the Marysville Post Office across the road from the Australian Hotel in 1914. He was owner of the Dickinson property on the Buxton Road.

Joseph Dion lived on Black Spur in 1908 and was a millhand.

Tom King had a mill near Fernshaw. The timber was transported by horse and dray to the Granton Sawmill Seasoning Works in Don Rd, Healesville next to Graceburn Creek. Ken Morath was the manager. King's horse stables were near "Yambacona" on the old Fernshaw road. The old forge that Denis Wills now has (2004) came from Kings Mill near Fernshaw. The forge went to Maroondah Dam while it was being built, where Robert Carter was the Mechanical Engineer, who got it when the dam was completed. It then passed to Ted Carter, Bob's son then to Janet Wills nee Carter, Ted's daughter.

Langer was logging on Claire Keppel's family property in 1942 when Maurice Keppel was married. He gave Maurice a slab of timber for a mantle piece. It was green and later cracked and warped.

¹ Butlers Woods Point Directory 1866.

² From Tirra Lirra Magazine, Vol2, No 1, Spring 1991.

³ Sands & McDougall Directories