



Aldridge Sawmill – The Story in Numbers

Deep within the pine forests of East Texas, a few ruined buildings are all that remain of what was once Aldridge, a bustling sawmill and neatly laid-out company town much like many other early lumber factories in the east Texas Piney Woods.

An estimated 615 sawmills were operating in Texas in 1910. The impact of this activity was dramatic. Approximately 18 million acres worth of "Pineywoods" timber was cut during the 50 years between 1880 and 1930 and most of the pristine pine forests were cut out within a few decades.

Visit the Aldridge exhibit at <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/aldridge/index.html> and learn more about the Aldridge Sawmill story by answering the following questions.

1. Hal Aldridge began building the Aldridge sawmill in 1903, completing construction in 1905. Before the sawmill burnt to the ground in 1911, it was producing 75,000 board feet of lumber daily. How many board feet of lumber could the sawmill produce in a 5 day week?

- a. 37,500
- b. 375,000
- c. 3,750,000

2. If the Aldridge sawmill operated 261 days a year, how many board feet of lumber could it produce in a year?

- a. 19,575,000
- b. 195,750
- c. 195,750,000

A board foot of lumber equals 144 cubic inches of wood. A 1" X 6" X 24' board would equal a board foot, as would a 2" x 12" x 6' board, etc.

Lumber planks are loaded into boxcars for distribution in this 1907 scene at the Diboll mill. Photo courtesy of The History Center, Diboll.

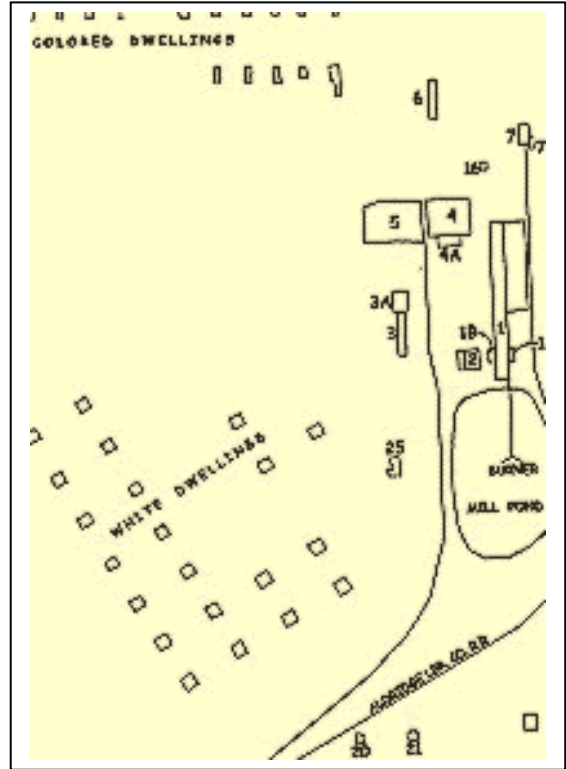


3. By 1912, the burned sawmill had been rebuilt. In a short time it was producing 125,000 board feet of lumber a day. Compared to the sawmill that burned, how many more board feet of lumber was the new sawmill producing daily?

- a. 25,000
- b. 200,000
- c. 50,000

4. On a 1911 map of the Aldridge community, there were 3 areas for “white” residents and three areas for “colored” residents. It is believed that each house in both areas had 4 rooms and every 2 houses shared a well. If there were 20 houses per area, how many houses were there in the entire Aldridge community?

- a. 136
- b. 98
- c. 120



5. By 1913, between 1000 and 1500 people lived in 200 company houses in the Aldridge community. What was the mean (average) number of people living at Aldridge?

- a. 2600
- b. 1250
- c. 500

*A family poses on the front porch of their company house in a milltown.
Photo courtesy Stephen F. Austin State University, Forest History Collections.*

6. The "punch out" tokens seen here were paid to Aldridge employees and could be redeemed in the Aldridge store for a 10% to 20% discount on merchandise. If an employee used a 20% token to purchase groceries costing \$5.86, how much discount would he receive?

- a. \$ 2.90
- b. \$.58
- c. \$1.17

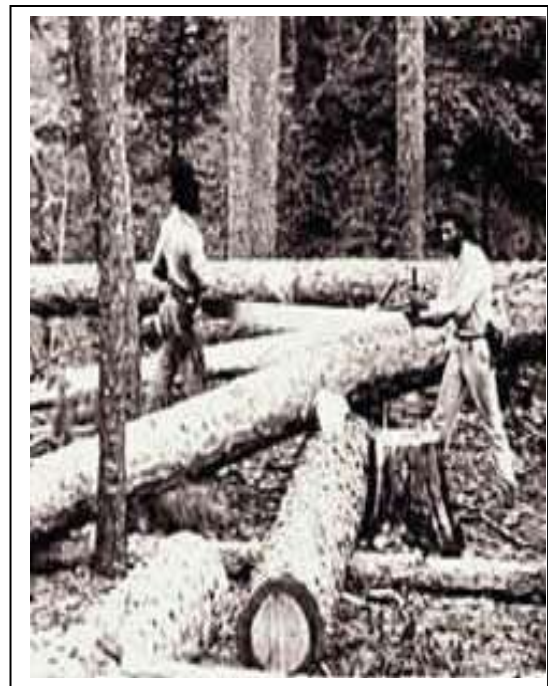


7. Using his 20% discount token, how much would he have to pay for his groceries?

- a. \$5.66
- b. \$4.69
- c. \$2.76

8. Approximately 18 million acres worth of Pineywoods timber was cut during the "Bonanza" period between 1880 and 1930, an amount estimated to be the equivalent of 59 billion board feet of lumber. What was the mean number of board feet of lumber cut per year during the "Bonanza" period?

- a. 11,800,000
- b. 118,000
- c. 1,180,000,000



Photo, circa early 1900s, courtesy of Center for American History, UT-Austin.



9. In 1919, a third and final fire ended business at the Aldridge saw mill. In 1941, the U.S. Forest Service started replanting pine trees in the area next to Aldridge sawmill, and continued planting until 1984. How long did it take the Forest Service to replant the Aldridge area?

- a. 43 years
- b. 22 years
- c. 65 years

10. Today, four species of pine timber found in East Texas are harvested commercially: longleaf pine, shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, and slash pine. Of these, the first three are native species. Shortleaf, or yellow pine, currently covers 30,000 square miles of Texas forest. If the entire state of Texas covers 267,000 square miles, approximately what percent of the state is covered in yellow pine?

- a. 8%
- b. 22%
- c. 11%

Transporting both logs and timber workers from forests to milltowns, trains and forest trams were a vital connection for the logging business in East Texas. Photo courtesy of The History Center, Diboll.

