

## Enright / Lahey's Beaudesert Mill

### *Location*

On the western side of the Mount Lindsay highway on the northern outskirts of Beaudesert. GPS 27 deg 58 min 41 sec S 152 deg 59 min 28 sec E.

### *Recommended Heritage Boundaries*

The outer extremities of the main sawmill building which was originally Lahey's Beaudesert Sawmill.

### *History*

Isaiah Lahey managed the new Beaudesert Mill and the firm became Lahey Brothers Extended, its partners, J.W., I. D. and T.G. all being natives of Ireland who had emigrated to Australia in 1862. The Laheys bought a Fowler steam traction engine to haul logs to the mill; its nick-name of Laheys' Folly tells of its success. The mill being beside the railway with its own siding on the outskirts of Beaudesert, the output was efficiently railed to market. The siding was also a regular stopping place for passengers for more than 50 years. The construction of the Beaudesert Tramway in 1904 by the local Shire Council provided an effective means of the mill tapping most of the country south to the border. The Shire's own locomotive was specially allowed along the government railway to take logs directly to Lahey's mill.

The mill burnt down in 1919 and David with his eldest son Percy designed the new mill and supervised its building. Lahey's Beaudesert Limited was registered on 15 April 1924 with Isaiah (retired) and his sons Archibald and Harold as shareholders. The mill was sold to Pattersons of Toowong in 1948 and six years later to the Enrights, its current owners. Enrights, who had earlier purchased Charlie Ward's sawmill in William Street, Beaudesert, closed the William Street mill in 1962. They state that despite the fire, the building now housing the mill, which has been substantially modernised, is the shed for Lahey's original mill, constructed with roof trusses of hoop pine and joined with 25 millimetre dowel and glued. The mill is electrically powered, steam operation having ended in 1948.<sup>1</sup>

The mill was substantially enlarged in 1906, Lahey Brothers and Nicklin then being the proprietors.<sup>2</sup>

The mill is still operating, Enright's having substantially raised productivity in 1985 with the installation of a \$250,000 Canadian log sizing carriage, log feed works, log turner and log

decker. Installation was handled by Jim Woods replacing an 18 year old sawbench.<sup>3</sup>

Despite Laheys' dominance, there were many other sawmills. Josias Hancock operated at Beaudesert and Darlington in the late 1890s, and Campbell and Sons at Beaudesert in 1915 and by 1918 Raymond and Hossack of Brisbane and from 1929 the Queensland Forest Service had a Beaudesert mill.

There were mills at Jelbyn. Laheys leased the Kerry mill from Mrs Smales in the 1890s<sup>4</sup> and Hancock and Gore also milled at Kerry. Josias Hancock, also trading as Hancock Brothers, operated a mill at Darlington as well as Dugandan (later Cossacks) and Beaudesert, from around 1896. It was beside the Albert River near the Darlington State School, but although the site is identifiable, no remains are visible.<sup>5</sup> Later operated by Hancock and Gore, it was listed until 1908.

### *Site Description and Condition*

Enright's Beaudesert Sawmill is an operating sawmill and is in a well-maintained condition. According to a sign the roof trusses date from 1888 and are still sound. The remainder of the building and its contents are presumably from later dates, particularly the modern Canadian log handling equipment. The additions to the main sawmill shed reflect a gradual process of change to meet need.

### *Assessment of Significance*

As an operating sawmill, the site does not appear to have any machinery that can be regarded as original. The superseded equipment used to create a historical display is all far removed from its original site. One significant feature, if the assertion on the display is correct, lies in the main sawmill shed which is said to be the original sawmill shed with roof trusses of hoop pine held together with one inch dowel and glued. Even if the building only dates from 1919, there has been sawmilling on the site for more than a century. The sawmill was strategically located near the terminus of the first branch line to tap a large timber area soon after its construction, and played a major part in the history of this area of Queensland (criterion a). The operation has survived by modernisation, changing from rail to road transport and improved productivity.

### *Recommendations*

The presentation of the site seems to indicate a recognition of the significance of the site, one of a small number in which sawmilling has continued for more than a hundred years. It may be possible to record the heritage significance of the sawmill building without impairing commercial operations.

### *References*

1. Shirley Lahey, p. 17; W.F. Morrison, Volume 2, unpagged; sign outside historical display in 1997; *Queenslander* 7 June 1919 p. 28.
2. File in Railway Correspondence, A/12338, QSA.
3. *Beautesert Times* 9 October 1985, cutting Beautesert Library.
4. Shirley Lahey, p. 8.
5. *Pictorial History of the Upper Albert River*, pp. 14-6.

## Enright's formerly Lahey's Mill, Beaudesert

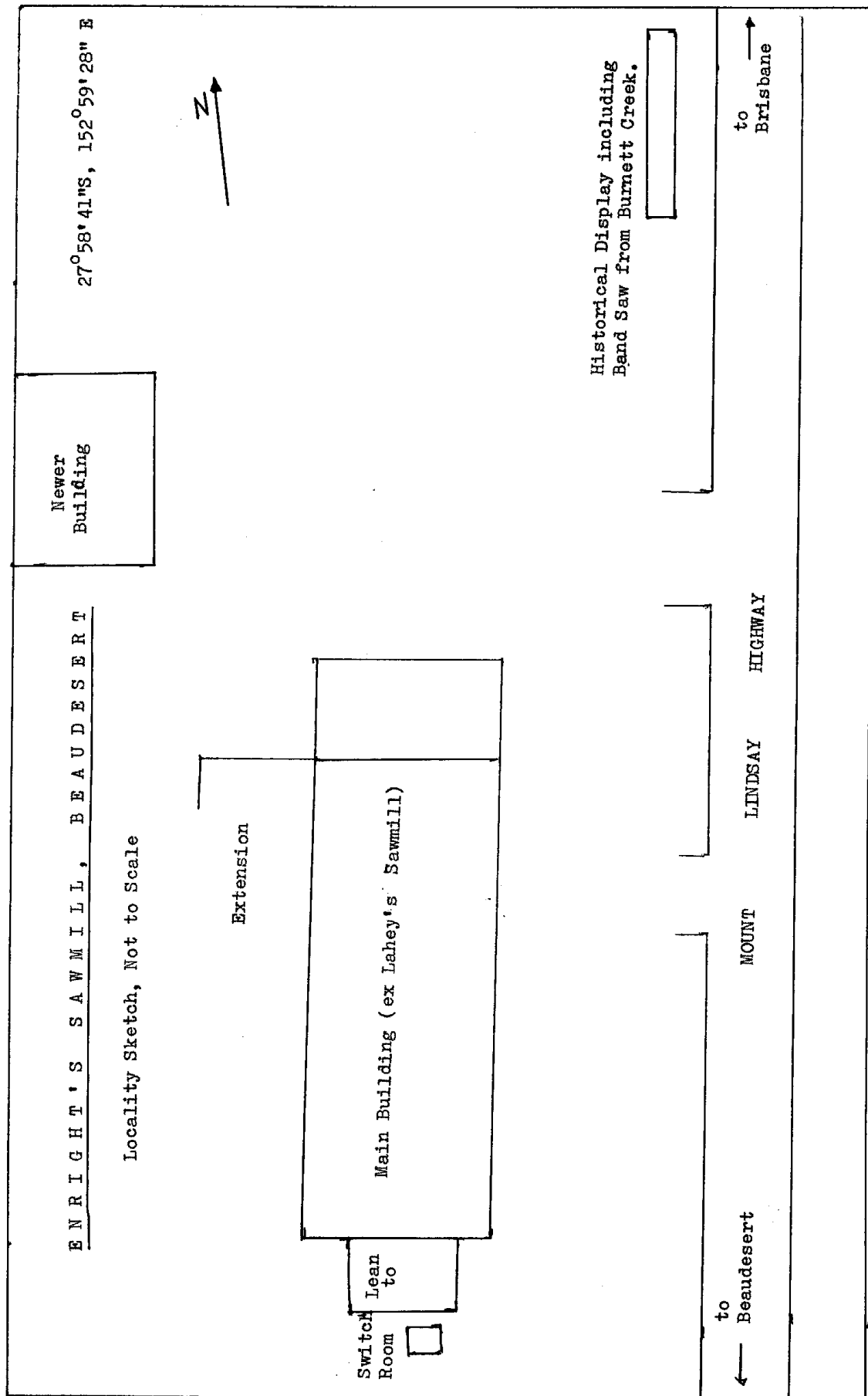


General view of main shed of sawmill from entrance

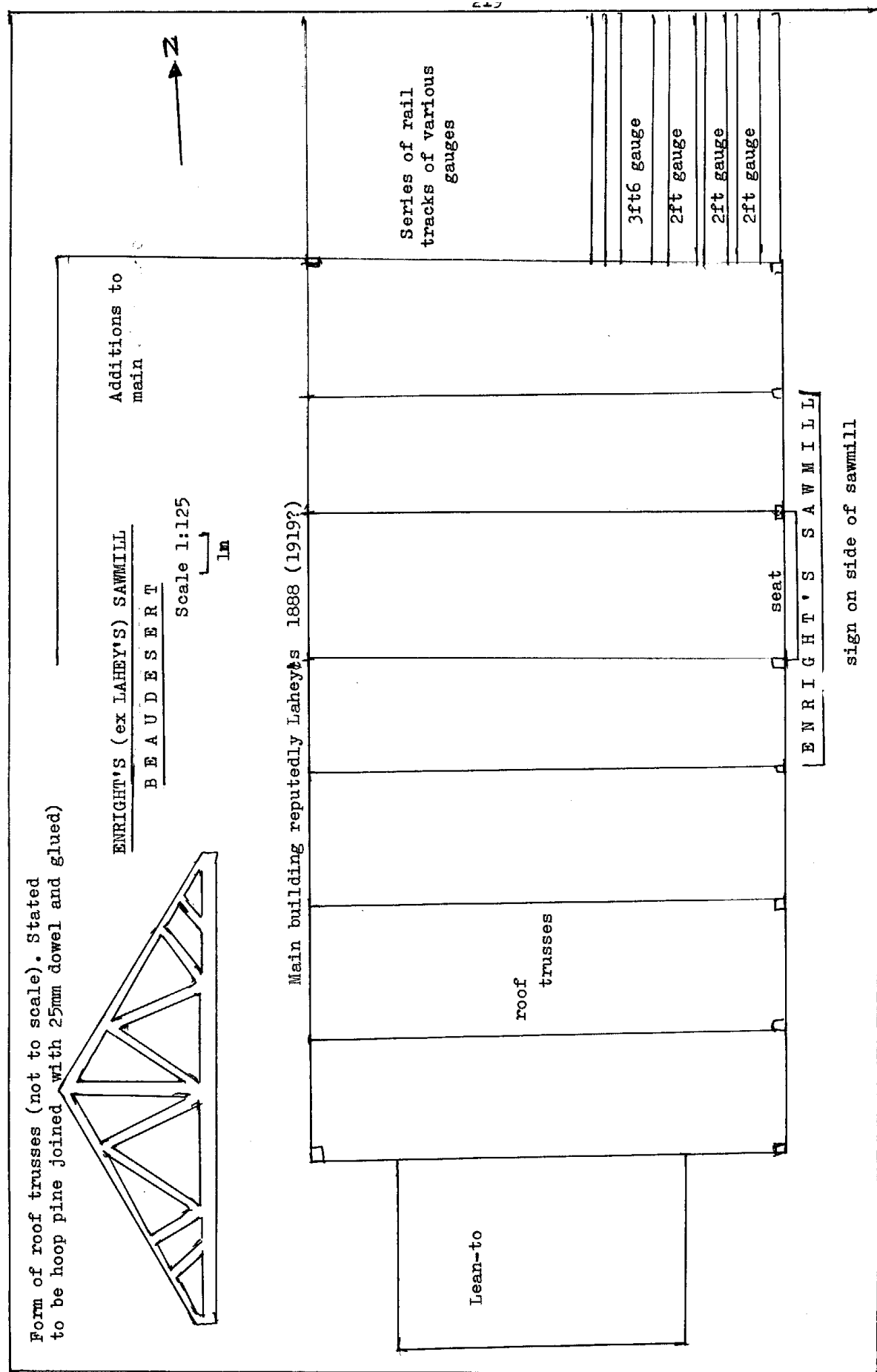


View of main shed of sawmill from southern end

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## **Grandchester Sawmill**

### *Location*

Ipswich Street, Grandchester. Global Coordinates  
27°40'0" S, 152°28'12" E.

### *Recommended Heritage Boundaries*

The site is already heritage listed.

### *History*

The Gillam family established the Grandchester sawmill in 1940, a gabled structure with mono pitched roof extension at one end, the sawn timber roof structure supported on round timber posts. The mill is powered by locomotive boiler from Walkers-built C17 No. 922 and steam engine imported by Nestle Company in 1910 for their Toogoolawah factory, later used at the Lowood butter factory. The sawmill is driven by belt and pulley system. Prior to the C17 boiler, the mill was powered by one from a D8 1/2 class locomotive used on the two foot gauge Innisfail Tramway. The steam engine was known as "Old Reliable".<sup>1</sup> The mill is still operating, being a small operation cutting crating timber mainly.

### *Site Description and Condition*

The sawmill is maintained in operating condition by the owners.

### *Assessment of Significance*

The site is already on the National Estate Register and is added here for completeness.

### *Recommendations*

None.

### *References*

1. Alfredson, p. 66; *Grandchester State School Centenary 1878-1978*, p. 69.

## Hancock's Townson Mill

### *Location*

The sawmill and village complex is located at the present end of the road up Laidley Creek Valley, past Townson, and through the gates leading to the Crosby property on which the mill is located on the road formerly leading to the mill and across Mistake Mountains and Great Divide to Allora. GPS of mill 27°54'43" S 152°22'14" E.

### *Recommended Heritage Boundaries*

The recommended heritage boundaries extend three metres from the edge of the sawmill structure and its rails and drainage system. The boundaries do not include the other buildings and ruins because of their degraded state.

### *History*

Sawmilling in the headwaters of Laidley Creek and Mistake Mountains dates from the 1880s.

After Alfred Doorey selected land at Main Camp Creek on 7 October 1879, he started by pit sawing. He soon built a steam sawmill on the selection, bringing timber to it down from the plateau by a chute. The mill was substantial and powered by two portable steam engines. It had a vertical saw frame to cut cedar, main saw bench, two circular saw benches and smaller saws.

The chute was 1300 feet long, the course made straight by blasting and pick work. At the bottom was soil to minimise damage to the logs as they speared down. A wire rope was installed with braking power provided by a second rope being used to drag another log from the stockpile to the head of the chute. Bullock teams hauled logs from the foot of the chute to the mill. Doorey was killed in June 1881, hit by rock dislodged by descending cedar logs. Horatio John Hodges took over the timber yard in Laidley and in 1885 developed it, assisted by James Walton (or Fleischmann?) into a sawmill. The old chute including old wire rope is overgrown. The chute timbers have long been destroyed by bushfire.<sup>1</sup>

Filshie and Broadfoot of Toowoomba built a sawmill at Townson at the head of Laidley Creek in early 1897 and used a bullock team to haul timber on the Mistake Plateau and from their mill to Laidley. The mill closed in 1902.<sup>2</sup>

There was no logging from 1902 until 1938 when Hansen and Bambling began hauling hoop pine to

Hancock's mill in Ipswich, using the chute. In the early 1940s Linn tractor(s) were introduced hauling down the steep mountain roads, one now being preserved at Laidley Pioneer Village. Cliff Francis worked with Linn tractors for many years, a task requiring special skills keeping the vehicle under control. Hancocks erected a sawmill in early 1940s near the site of the original Broadfoot mill at the head of Laidley Creek, trucking the output to Mulgowie. The mill closed in the credit squeeze and building slump in the early 1960s. Electricity had been connected to the mill in 1960 replacing steam operation. There were barracks and 14 houses provided by Hancocks.<sup>3</sup>

### *Site Description and Condition*

The main sawmill shed is in fair condition, a result of its lack of maintenance since closure. The manager's house is in fairly good condition and the barracks in fair condition. Other buildings are in various stages of ruin or demolition. Only the band saw, log carriage and its tracks remain of the sawmilling equipment. The shed is used for farm storage and by cattle.

### *Assessment of Significance*

The whole site is an example of a mid 20th century isolated sawmilling community and has value of such communities (criterion d). Surviving evidence of such communities is rare (criterion b). The site is also associated with an important sawmilling family, Hancock (criterion h). Unfortunately the decaying and degraded state of the site makes it rather unlikely that the site reaches significance on any single criterion. Its most important attribute is its band saw, in situ, which is rare (criterion b), hence the proposed heritage boundaries only include this structure.

### *Recommendations*

The whole site provides evidence of an important and fairly isolated sawmilling communities. A large number of elements are present but except for the band saw, all the components are considerably degraded and in disrepair. If the site meet heritage criterion then major work is recommended to stabilise and retard decay. If it does not, detailed recording is recommended before the site passes into oblivion.

### **References**

1. W.R.E. Blake, p. 40; Kevin Ahearn, *From Crosscut to Chainsaw* pp. 114-127; MC 21 June 1881 p. 2.
2. W.R.E. Blake p. 40.
3. W.R.E. Blake pp. 41-42.

## **Hancock's Townson Sawmill**

General view of  
sawmill shed  
from east



View of sawmill  
shed from west



View of three  
fibro sawmill  
worker houses  
(two more  
obscured)



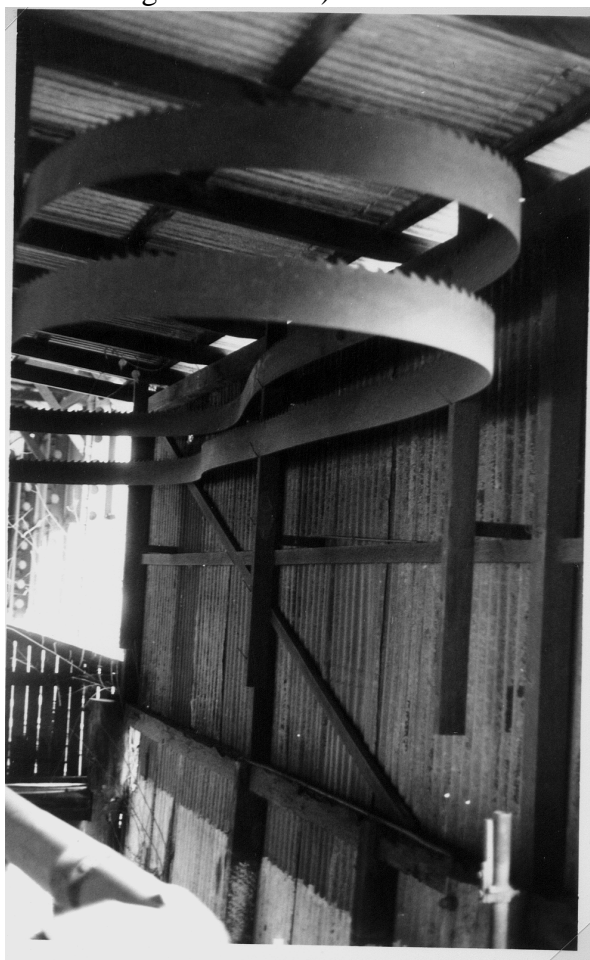
## Hancock's Townson Sawmill



View of log carriage for band saw from western end  
(shows non-flanged wheels; double-flanged other side)



View of Band Saw



View of Band Saw Blades  
stored below sawmill shed roof

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