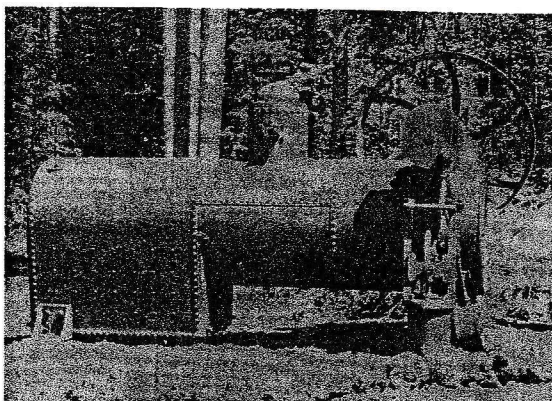




A HISTORY OF THE MITCHELL LUMBER COMPANY

AS I REMEMBER IT

BY GIB MITCHELL

Elmer Mitchell, my father wrote a brief history about the Steam Engine located at Prince and Ranger on August 21, 1984. This is a copy as he wrote it.

"This steam boiler was purchased from the Co-op Lumber Company by Walter and Henry Mitchell in 1903, and was the source of power for their lumber operation.

Walter C. Mitchell purchased Henry Mitchell's share of the mill, it then operated under the name of Walter C. Mitchell and Son's.

It was moved from Third House Flat to Bear Flat by wagon and horses.

In 1913 the operation was moved to Ireland, a place about three miles southeast of Brain Head Point. From there it was moved to Burton's Ranch, five miles northeast of Bear Flat. It was then moved to Braffits Creek, a distance of four miles.

In 1926 the lumber operation was moved to Prince & Ranger where it was in operation until 1939. This was the final resting-place of the old Steam Boiler.

This boiler was fired by wood only, which in turn generated all the power for the mill operation. Wagon and horses accomplished the transportation of this boiler from place to place over very rough terrain."

Furnished by Elmer O. Mitchell
August 21, 1984 to Robert Schlundt.

In about 1926 the Mitchell Sawmill was located where Thunder Ridge Scout Camp is now located. It was moved from there to Prince & Ranger about a mile east of Bear Flat.

PRINCE AND RANGER

My first memories of going to the sawmill, was when I was about six years old. (1935). At this time my grandfather Walter C. Mitchell owned and operated the sawmill.

My dad, Elmer Mitchell, had a white Chandler pickup in which we traveled up main canyon road to Bear Flat, and from there up a steep road to Prince and Ranger. (Named after two horses that roamed in the flat.) Most of the people now call it Steam Boiler Flat, because that is where the boiler now sits. The steam boiler furnished the power for the sawmill. There were two cabins one was a bunkhouse for the workers and the other was a cabin used for cooking the meals for the crew. Sometime those with families had a tent pitched over a tent frame in which they lived for the summer.

Uncle Ward and Aunt Itha Mortenson were married in the early thirties (1931) and spent two or three years working at the sawmill. Carlyle Mitchell and Kathleen [Stones] were married about this time also, and they spent their honeymoon in a sheep wagon and worked at the sawmill. Some of the other people I remember working there are: Oleen

Davis, Mel & Mary Robb, (Mary was a cook at this time), George and Chester Ward, Ray Mitchell, Merrill Mitchell, Ralph and Lorna Mitchell, (Aunt Lorna was one of the many good cooks that worked at the sawmill) Ken Mitchell, Joe Ward, Trent Jones, and Fosch Jones, [Aunt Sylvia's boys] Alden Robb, Darrel Booth, Pete and Pearl Stevens, Ken Mitchell, Sherwin Benson, Elmer Bettridge and others which I don't recall at this time.

Trees were felled and cut into lengths with the two-man bucksaws, (there were no power tools at this time.)

Logs were then loaded onto wagons by rolling them up two skids, and hauled to the sawmill sight to be cut into lumber. The lumber was then stacked with spacers that allowed them to dry for about two weeks. On week ends lumber was loaded onto the wagons to be hauled by teams down the steep canyon, to the lumber yard (located at 200 So. 150 E) where it was sold as rough lumber or run through the planer for a smoother surface.

The person in charge of the boiler was up at 6:00 A. M. to start a fire in the boiler so the steam pressure was built up by 8:00 A. M. so the sawing of lumber could begin. Sparks from the boiler often started small fires around the sawmill area. We children were given buckets of water to go around and put out these small flames. Often larger fires erupted during the night started by sparks we did not find during the day.

A small stream of water was used to carry away the sawdust from the sawmill. It went to a small lake that we called Sawdust Lake, where we often went swimming. The water was so cold we didn't stay in too long. There was another small lake in the Southwest part of the flat, where we would go to and catch frogs and

salamanders. We had a raft that was fun to play on.

After work the horses used for logging were hobbled and a bell was put on one of the horses and they were turned loose. Every morning they had to be rounded up. I made many trips with my dad to help find and bring them back to camp.

Al Robb tells this story. "I was sent down the road with a team and wagon to pick up a few bales of hay that had fallen off the wagon earlier in the day. I had loaded the hay and started to turn around when the team stirred up a hornets nest. By the time things had settled down, the horses (Mac and Duke) had kicked the shoes off their back feet, and their harnesses were almost off. The horses suffered multiple stings from the hornets. I was luckier, I was only stung two or three times."

After work the entertainment consisted of hiking, hunting, and playing games. We children made slingshots (a forked stick and two rubber bands). We became very good at hitting what we were aiming at. Our targets were usually chipmunks or birds. Two or three times year cattle that were on summer range were rounded up and some of the workers put on quite a rodeo. Later on in the evening on many hours were spent playing poker (penny ante). Kerosene lamps were used for lighting up the cabins at night, as there was no electricity. Quite often during the night porcupines would come to the cabin and start gnawing on the wood. Dad, (or someone) would get up grab the baseball bat, go outside, you would hear a thud and they would come back to bed.

NELLIE'S FLAT

In 1939 the sawmill was moved from this location to a place three miles East

of Cedar Breaks called Nellie's Flat. Here many changes were made in the operation of the sawmill. A diesel engine was purchased to power the mill, trucks were used to haul logs from the forest. Two-man gas powered saws were used to cut down trees and cut them into lengths. The horses were still used to drag logs to the loading area where the logs were loaded onto the trucks. An over sized wheelbarrow was used to haul sawdust from the mill. This was used until Scott Orton got his finger cut off while shoveling sawdust into the wheelbarrow. A conveyor belt was rigged up to carry the sawdust from the pit to a 1930 International dump truck purchased from Spuds Dalton. This truck was used until the sawmill was moved to town. There is still some evidence of the huge pile of sawdust that was deposited at the sawmill site. My dad (Elmer Mitchell,) had a 1939 Dodge truck, and Uncle Ralph had a 1937 Chevy Truck, which were used until about 1947. At this time Dad purchased a 1947 KB. International Truck. Uncle Ralph purchased a 1948 Chevy Cabover truck, these trucks were used until the sawmill shut down. Walter C. Mitchell died in 1949. Uncle Ralph and Elmer Mitchell resumed the operation of the mill. After five or six years most of the timber close to Nellie's Flat was used up, so it become necessary to go a little further from the mill site. Some of the places we logged from are; Sage Flat, Deer Valley, Charles Burton's property, Watson Adam's, property down the Panguitch Lake road.

With the new road up Cedar Canyon it was better to travel that way rather than used the steep Parowan canyon. The road up Parowan Canyon was a dirt road from second left hand canyon

and around Cedar Break to the U-14 Junction.

Some of the men who worked cutting trees at Nellie's Flat were Dell Clark, Veron Decker, Lyle Evans, Spencer Lemmon, Jim Benson, Garth Whitney, Jean Rollins and Joe Stubbs. Those involved in the logging were Elmer, Gib and Mel Mitchell, Sam and Dee Pritchard. The men who worked at the sawmill were Ralph, Collins, Larry and Connel Mitchell, Don Mitchell, Ivan (Cop) Johnson, Chester Ward, Joe Ward, Eugene Valentine. Milo Stones, Carroll Demille, Alma Jones, Ivan (Cop) Johnson, Berry Clark, (Berry hauled lumber to town every day for two or three years while the mill was at Nellie's Flat). Melvin Webb was also a truck driver for a short time.

This story was told about Gene Valentine: Mel Webb had to lay over one night, so Gene allowed Mel to sleep with him. During the night Mel noticed Gene's feet sticking out of bed. Mel asked him why he didn't put them under the covers. Gene answered, quite firmly, he didn't want the cold s.o.b.'s in bed with him. At night poker was still a main event for entertainment Coleman Lanterns replaced the kerosene lamps, which was a big improvement for lighting.

Other workers were Ronald Rowley, Tom Skougard, Clarence Skougard, Arlo Jensen, Ross Birch, Ray Whitney, Kent Mitchell, Jess Mickelson, Joe Mickelson, Ross Birch, Claude Whitney, Rod Lister, Donald Stubbs, Ken Simkins, Eric Clark, Robert Adams, Vern Mortensen, Wells Orton, Deloy Guymon, Tobe Guymon Robert Guymon, Woodrow Watson, Roger Batt, Frank Stevens, Beven Matheson Doug Lister, Clinton Whitney, Dwight Stones, Larry Orton, Robert Cartwright, Albert Orton, Lloyd Stubbs, Lyle Mortenson, and Milton Mortenson. Other

good cooks at the Nellie flat location were Sarah Mitchell, Marilyn Pendleton (my sister) helped my mother (Sarah) with the cooking. Clifford Mortensen, Maurine Jensen and Beatrice Hulet, Deloy Guymon's wife Ruth also worked as cooks for a short time. Cooking for a crew that size was quite a stressful job and their efforts were really appreciated. We used Buckets carry water for drinking and cooking from a small spring. The water from this spring was the coldest and best tasting water on the mountain. After work there were many chores to do such as cutting fire wood, sharpening saws, shoeing horses, feeding horses, harness repair, putting gas in trucks and other equipment, and other up keep that required attention.

There were two teams of horses used in logging. Elmer Mitchell drove one team (Queen & Coalee), Dee Pritchard drove the other team (Mac & Duke). Deloy Guymon also drove a team during this time. I was the truck driver that hauled the logs to the sawmill. One event I remember was when we were logging quite close to where they were falling trees. The tree fell the wrong way, it hit a dry tree and a six-foot section propelled about a hundred feet hitting Queen broad side. One of the limbs poked a hole in her rib cage, it took several weeks for it to heal. After that Queen would jump every time she heard a tree fall.

When Collins Mitchell and I turned eighteen we were given the responsible task of driving the truck to town loaded with lumber. It took about two hours to travel down the canyon to Cedar because of the heavy load and the down hill grade. Later on when Larry Mitchell and Mel Mitchell turned of age, they resumed this same responsibility. Horse were used until the early fifties when they were replaced by a D-2 Cat. A tractor with a forklift was bought to load the logs on the truck. One-

man chainsaws were invented about this time (early fifties) that made cutting trees much easier.

For several years Collins Mitchell and I had the opportunity to ride the workhorses from town to the sawmill site each spring. We carried a lunch, which we would usually eat by Decker Creek, at Bear Flat. We rode the horses bareback and by the time we reached our destination we had a bad case of T. B.

After work we did many things for entertainment, hunting woodchucks, pica, and other small game. Many games were played, Old Sow, Duck on the Rock, Tag. Often we went to sheep camps in the area, Norman Adams was one of the herders for his dad (Hugh L. Adams) when they had sheep and range land in Midway and surrounding area. He would cook us a sour dough and mutton supper that was really a treat.

The lodge at Cedar Breaks was in operation at this time, so we would go there at least once a week to visit the girls that were working there. Most of the girls were from Parowan, Cedar, Kanab, and other towns close by. Sometimes we would walk the three miles to Cedar Breaks. It was dark by the time we started back, and when the moon wasn't out, we often wondered if we could find our way back in the pitch-black darkness. It was at Cedar Breaks Alma Jones and Beulah Mortenson began their courtship.

Other things we did were, fishing and swimming at Navajo Lake, fishing at Ireland Creek, watch the big bucks that came out in the evenings, we would often see ten or twelve buck in a herd. You can still see a few bucks up there in the summer time.

Another interesting event happened when a Jet Fighter plane crashed about a mile from the mill site. It crashed about twenty feet off a logging road leaving a hole

about eight feet deep where the plane crashed. Parts of the plane were scattered over a wide area. The Air Force picked up the pieces they could find, but you can still find small parts if you want to look for them. Maurine Jensen was the only person that witnessed the plane as it was going down. The pilot had ejected and was later found unharmed.

Lightning storms were very intense at Nellie's Flat, often causing flash floods that rolled down the creek east of the mill site. At night the fire works from these storms were quite a display of natures best.

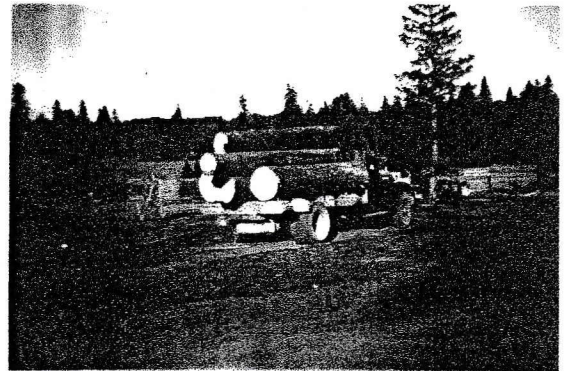
PAROWAN SITE

The sawmill site was moved from Nellie's Flat about 1960 or 61. Forest regulations were one reason. Most of the logging was done under the ledges up Second Left Hand Canyon, and Sidney Valley. Quite a few logs were taken from Pine Valley. Some of the employees were Connel Mitchell, Larry Mitchell, Frank Benson, Weyland Adams Kirk Boardman, Steven Orton, Bevan Matheson, Vergene Jones, Douglas Lister,, Robert Miller, Bill Evans, Bill Knight, Clinton Whitney, Bennion Mackekprang, Stanley Reese, Ralph Watson and many others that I cannot find out who they are.

The mill closed down about 1970

Elmer Mitchell and Ralph Mitchell reached retirement age, so they sold the mill to the Stratton Brothers. The mill is now located about a mile west of Cedar City on highway 56. It is cranked up once in a while to cut a few logs. The memories of working at the sawmill are very vivid and a very important part of my life. I am sure those that worked there enjoyed that part of their lives also.

Pictures taken between
1946 and 1951



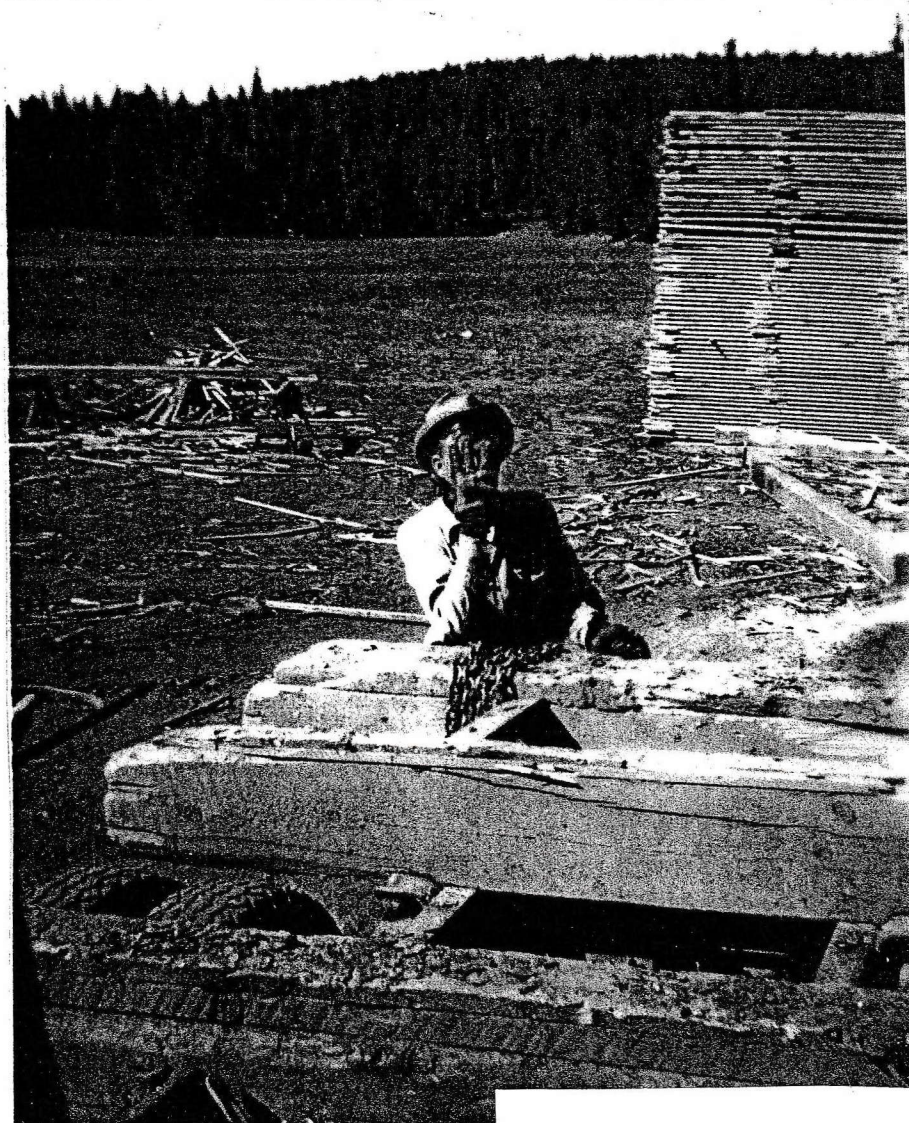
**Cop Johnson, Ralph Mitchell,
Elmer Mitchell, Collins Mitchell
Mill Site**



Joe Stubbs and Dee Pritchard
Circa 1950



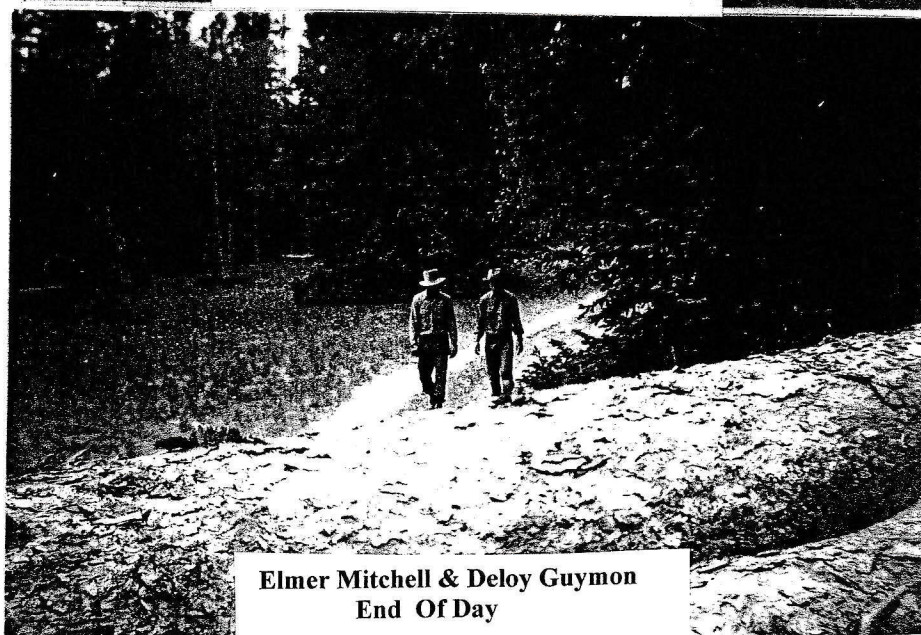
**Cop Johnson, Ralph Mitchell, Elmer Mitchell
Collins Mitchell—End Of Shift**



Collins Mitchell—Peek-A-Boo



Joe Stubbs, Alden Robb Deloy Guymon
Ralph Mitchell---TIMBER



Elmer Mitchell & Deloy Guymon
End Of Day



Deloy Guymon, George Ward, Tobe Guymon,
Ralph Mitchell---Sawmill Site



Milo Stones, Mel Mitchell---Stacking Lbr.