



Sawdust Empire: The Texas Lumber Industry, 1830-1940

Robert S. Maxwell, Robert D. Baker

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This first comprehensive story of logging, lumbering, and forest conservation in Texas records the industry's history from the earliest days of the Republic, when a few isolated operations provided for local needs, through the first four decades of the twentieth century. Supplemented by over one hundred photographs, many never before published, the text re-creates Texas' heyday as one of the nation's leading timber producers. At that time, the forested area equaled the state of Indiana. In the words of one visitor, the forest was "like a vast wave that has rolled in upon a level beach . . . creeping forward, thinning out, and finally disappearing, except where, along a river course, it pushes far inland."

The industry's most significant growth occurred between the end of Reconstruction and the beginnings of World War II, when entrepreneurs from the North, the South, and the East ventured into the vast stands of virgin timber in the Texas Piney Woods. These pioneers, attracted by the great potential fortunes to be made, provided the capital, expertise, and energy that introduced large mills and railroads to Texas lumbering and developed markets for their products—not only in Houston, Dallas, and other Texas cities but also across the United States and throughout the world.

Various lumber companies, logging and mill operations, company towns, and the genesis of forest conservation are all featured in the text and illustrations. This account will appeal to historians, conservationists, and general readers interested in the Texas lumber industry and in Texas economic history.

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