

Wataugans At Work

Veteran Sawmiller Handles Logs With Vigor Of Teener

Drive east on 421, turn left onto Highway 194, and at the intersection of 194 and Howard's Creek Road, you'll find a sawmill.

If the big blade is whirring and a pile of sawdust is building up nearby, E. F. Shore is at work—sawing oak, chest-

nut, pine, maple . . . all kinds of wood.

He'll tell you he is 73 years old, but watch him hook the big logs and heft them onto the carriage. You probably will think he's much younger.

E. F. Shore buys logs and hauls them to his mill. Some-

times he does custom sawing, slicing boards of any width out of the heavy logs. This is work for winter, as well as summer. He also hauls coal, but seems to have sawmilling in his veins.

He has operated this mill at this location for 20 years. And 20 years before that he was

producing lumber at mills along the banks of Howard's Creek.

He says there are a heap of logs in Watauga County, although occasionally he gets them from surrounding counties. He pulls a lever which brings the carriage (a roller-coaster affair, mounted on

small steel rails) back to the log pile, and he grips another big log with the steel hook, rolls it onto the carriage, and locks it in place.

The big motor drones away, and when Shore pushes the lever forward, the carriage is pulled by a steel cable, and its heavy cargo loses a fourth of its bark to the 52-inch saw blade. The teeth spit out fine chips of wood, and the carriage is returned to the starting point.

The log is fed to the saw again and Raleigh Williams retrieves the bark strips and discards them on a scrap pile.

The scale is adjusted on the carriage and Shore starts the carriage rolling again. The blade grinds on and the smooth, clean lumber piles up. Oak is being sawed today. The carriage rolls back for another log.

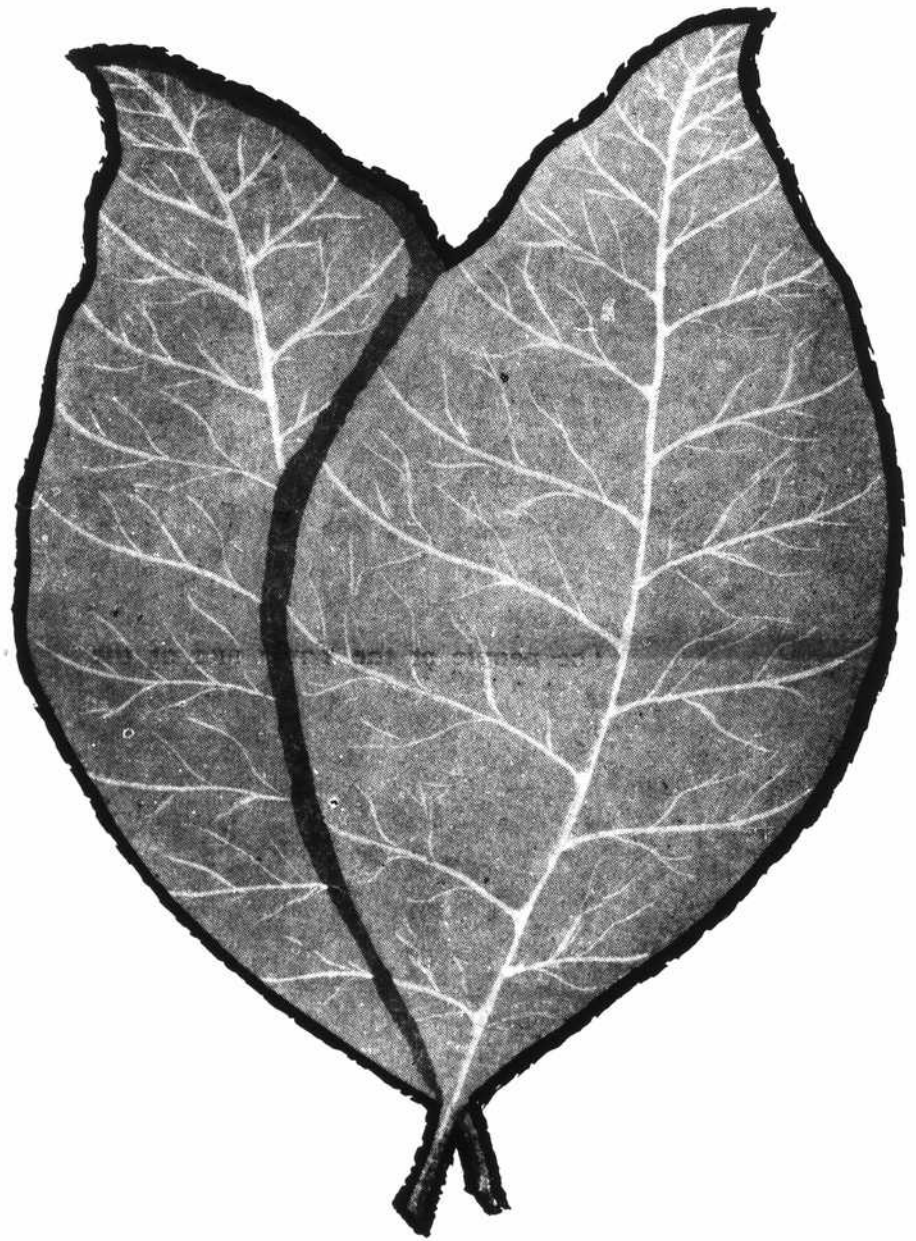


Raleigh Williams, also of Boone, leans over in the dark of the shed to retrieve cut lumber from the carriage. For several years, he has helped Shore with the sawmill. (Staff photos)



For 40 years, E. F. Shore of Boone has operated sawmills on Howard's Creek.

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