

THE ELANDRA POINT SAWMILL

About 1869-70 McGhie, Luya, Goodchap and Woodburn, some miners from Gympie, spent a considerable amount of money in starting a sawmill at Elandra Point on Lake Cootharaba - later known as Mill Point. The sawn timber from this mill was loaded on to pontoons and towed down the river by the flat bottomed paddle wheel steamers "Black Swan" and "Elandra" to Colloy on the north bank of the Noosa River opposite Munna Point. From here it was loaded on to the S.S. "Culgoa" and taken to South Brisbane. The Culgoa, which made three trips to Brisbane every fortnight and carried about 11,000 m. of timber on each trip, was wrecked in 1891. At this time, over 150 men were employed as timber cutters in the dense scrub areas of Cootharaba and Kin Kin.

The following description of the Elandra Point Sawmill was written by Governor Normanby in 1872:-

"On entering the works, we found the machinery covered by a shed 120 feet long by 33 feet wide, containing circular saws and travelling benches of the latest make and largest capacity, and a vertical saw frame capable of taking logs 4 feet 6 inches in diameter, one of the finest in the colony, the iron work weighing over 20 tons; this is attached ingenious machinery by which logs of the largest size can be drawn directly out of the water and up to a platform level with the vertical saw, this saving time and labour considerably.

The machinery is driven by a 25 horsepower engine supplied by two boilers 20 feet and 13 feet 6 inches in diameter respectively. At the rear are Blacksmiths' and Carpenters' Shops, and every appliance for executing repairs and requirements rendered necessary by its long distance from any other means of assistance. To the rear of the mill we found a regular township of workmen's houses and others directly and indirectly connected with the establishment, a good store, well supplied, and a butcher's shop, and there seemed to be nothing wanting to complete the comfort of all connected with establishment."