

Sam Stoddard founded his own mill in 1903. In 1905 he made the first timber sale on the newly created Henry's Lake Forest Reserve, later to become the Targhee, named after an Indian Chief. Mr. Stoddard disposed of his mill in 1908 to enter the U.S. Forest Service and remained until his retirement.

Lumber from West Camas Creek was hauled over Porcupine Pass, then known as the "Divide", to Spencer for shipment by rail. After the mill was moved to Camas Creek, the timber was hauled over much the same route as the present Kilgore-Spencer highway. Although much of the lumber was used locally, heavy shipments went to Idaho Falls, Blackfoot and Pocatello. Production included great piles of railroad ties.

Interesting remnants of the old Stoddard sawmill locations on the Targhee National Forest are found east of Spencer near the summit of the Monida Pass of the Continental Divide. Settings were constructed of sturdy logs afixed with square spikes and wooden pegs or dowels. When these weren't sufficient, angle irons were made by the blacksmiths.

That the pioneers had a point must be conceded for the nails are still as good as ever except for a coating of rust. The dowels remain in place even though the logs have long since rotted away. This is because the glue is a preservative. A wooden brake lever, picked up at one of the settings on Dairy or Mill Creek, had a shoe or used belting. The same implement devised "on location" these days would be much more apt to have a shoe cut from a blown out car tire.

And that leaves the men who were builders of a score of years before the turn of the century not so unwrong as the present generation would, without proper investigation, contend.

Stoddard's Mill was moved in 1909 to the lower Hotel Creek near the present Yale-Kilgore road. Three years later the mill was shifted to Upper Hotel Creek where parts of the original buildings still stand. Tom Stoddard and James Stoddard bought the mill from their father in 1913 and in 1914 skidded it to Mill Creek and the timber was shipped to Trude Siding where a small mill and planing mill had been located. Rough cut was hauled by horse and wagon to the McCrea Ranch by way of the bridge across the north fork of the Snake River.