

STREAMLINING OF POTLATCH PLANT CONTINUES IN PLANER

New Machines Give Quick, Easy Change For Various Setups

By BOB OLIN

The second major step in the "streamlining" of the Potlatch lumber plant was the reconstruction of the planing mill.

About 1925 this planing mill had been changed over from an old steam-engine-lineshaft drive to individual electric motors for each machine.

Many other improvements were made at that time. Later, a new high-speed Stetson-Ross "30" shop and matcher machine was added. This machine was—and still remains—one of the largest planers ever constructed. In fact, the largest machine ever con-

structed is simply a more powerful model of this same machine.

In more recent years, a high-speed Woods matcher was transferred from the Lewiston plant to Potlatch. Thus, the Potlatch planing mill consisted of nine older belt-driven slow-speed machines, and two modern high-speed, direct driven machines. As would be expected under such a plan, the bulk of the work was done on these two machines, while the older machines were left to do the small and unusual items that were in the orders. The old machines had to be retained for these small items were just as essential as the larger ones, and there were no high-speed machines built that could be changed rapidly from one set-up to the next without a great deal of lost time.

New Principle Adopted

Recently, the Stetson-Ross company has designed a planer that operates on

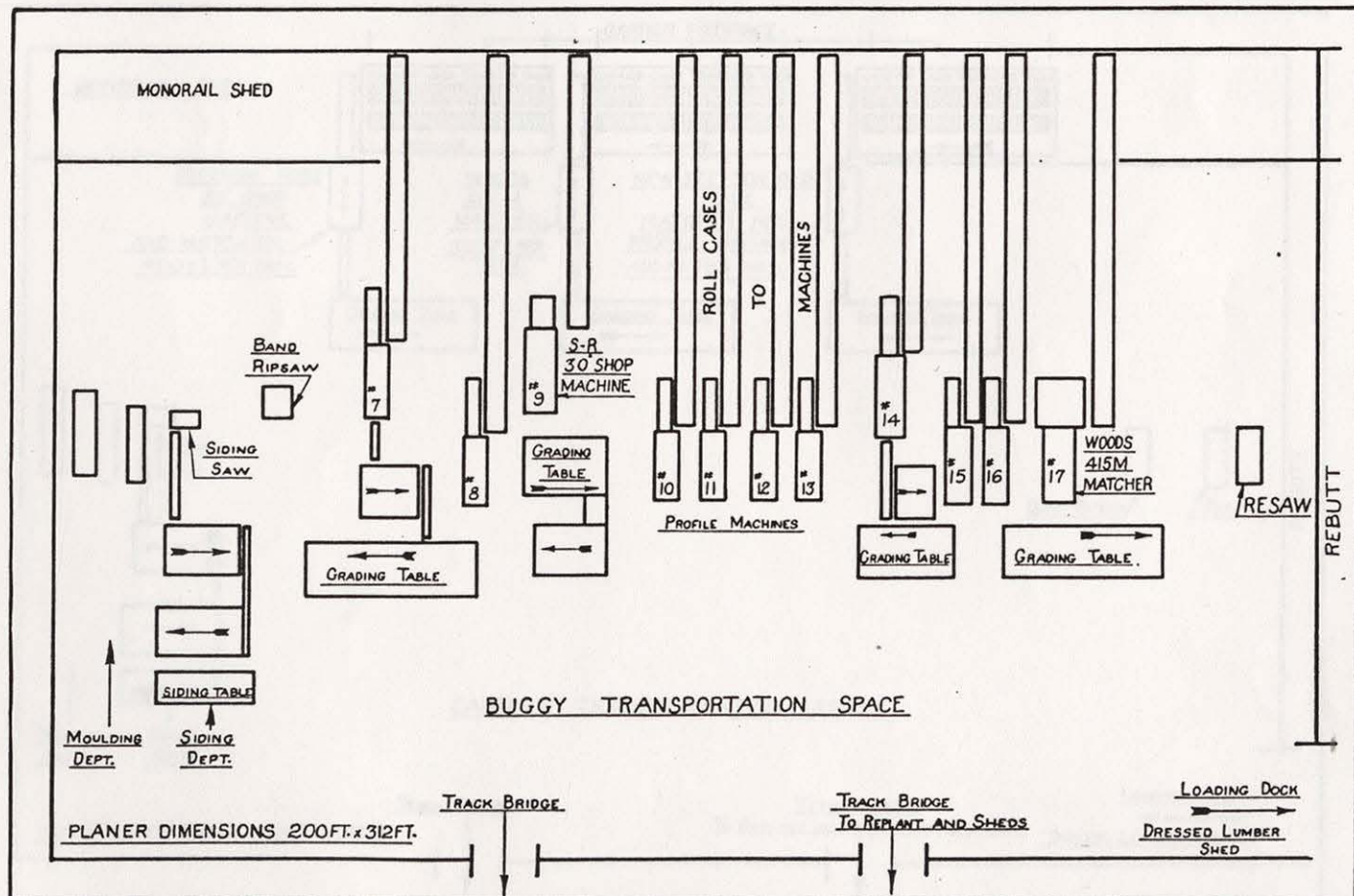
a new principle and could be changed from one set-up to the next very rapidly. This machine could do the ordinary matching work and carried profile heads as well that could be changed and set up in a matter of a very few minutes.

This was the missing link that was necessary for the complete modernization of the Potlatch planing mill. By purchasing this new machine, Potlatch would have three high speed machines, one for shop work, one for profile, and all three could serve as matchers. Small profile items would be run out on the moulding machines. Therefore, by putting on two shifts three machines could produce as much as the old set-up of eleven planers on one shift.

Other advantages evolved at once from this plan. By cutting out the old

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WHAT THE OLD PLANING MILL AT POTLATCH LOOKED LIKE



A plan of the former Potlatch planing mill showing the machines and their auxiliaries crowded closely together. The tangled maize of blowpipes cannot be indicated on this small drawing.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM REVOLUTIONIZED FOR FINISHERS

Here's More About Potlatch Streamlining

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planers and their forest of blow-pipes and relocating the high-speed machines, it was possible to open up a floor space twice as great as before. This gave the elbow room required for carriers to be used for dock transportation. By making the proper arrangements on the incoming side, the rough loads could be brought in directly from the yards and set in position to be taken to the planer without further handling, by means of large yard carriers. Thus, the transportation of lumber was greatly simplified. This can be seen easily by following a load from the pile in the yard to the box car.

Formerly, the lumber piler took the load from the pile and set it on a car.

Locomotives transported it to the planing mill, where monorails picked it up and set it on the roll cases leading to the planer. Passing through the planer, the lumber was then graded and put on dock buggies. Electric tractors took the buggy load to the rebutt for trimming—and finally to the cars. There were hundreds of yard cars and dock buggies required, which had to be maintained, as well as the locomotives and tractors.

Transportation Simplified

Now, on the "streamlined" plan, the load is taken from the pile by a lift truck and set on bunks. The carrier picks up the load and whisks it away to a load transfer table at each planer, which also acts as a load storage for five loads. Passing through the planer, the lumber is graded, sorted, and reloaded on dock carrier bunks. Dock carriers pick the loads from the grad-

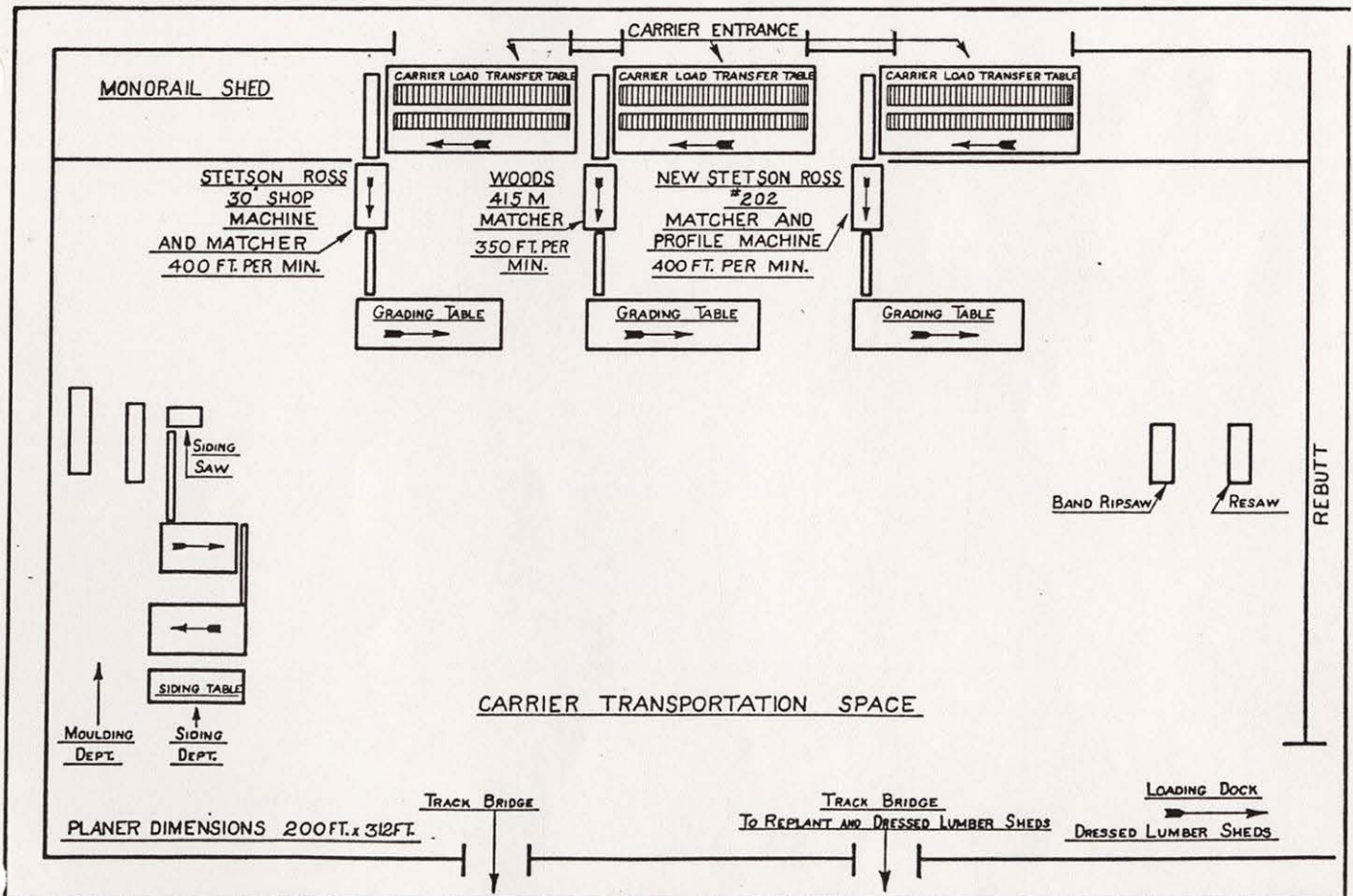
ing table, take them to the rebutt and on to the car. The transportation equipment is only two yard carriers and two dock carriers and maintenance on such equipment is principally one of servicing.

This revolutionary design of a planing mill carries many very interesting features that were necessary to keep up the high speed production that the machines were capable of doing. Loads had to be set on transfer chains quickly and easily by carriers. The load transfer table and the hoist had to be so rapid that loads could be run in, tilted, hoisted and fed into the planer without missing a single board. The loads being taken out from the grader tables had to move with equal speed or the machine would be stopped.

A modern shaving collecting system was necessary to remove the shavings

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WHAT THE NEW PLANING MILL AT POTLATCH LOOKS LIKE



And this is the plan of the new streamlined planing mill at Potlatch showing the three machines on the compact, convenient and efficient plan for high production of a high grade lumber.