

technology, and leadership in civic projects. Soon afterward, such lumbermen as [John Martin Thompson \(/handbook/online/articles/fth43\)](/handbook/online/articles/fth43), [Joseph H. Kurth, Sr \(/handbook/online/articles/fku03\)](/handbook/online/articles/fku03)., [Thomas L. L. Temple \(/handbook/online/articles/fte09\)](/handbook/online/articles/fte09), W. T. Carter, and W. T. Joyce built complete sawmill plants, supported by thousands of acres of virgin pinelands purchased at bargain prices, and established themselves as major manufacturers. [John Henry Kirby \(/handbook/online/articles/fki33\)](/handbook/online/articles/fki33), an East Texas farm boy, rose to become the largest lumber manufacturer in Texas by combining some fourteen sawmills into the Kirby Lumber Company in 1901. He also organized the Houston Oil Company to hold the mineral, timber, and surface rights to a million acres in Southeast Texas. So widespread were his activities that the press referred to him as "Prince of the Pines." His name became known throughout the nation, and he held a number of important industry and government positions.

For the Texas worker the early lumber industry was one of long hours, low pay, and frequent accidents. The United States census bureau listed logging and sawmilling as among the most hazardous of occupations. Until 1913, when the Texas legislature established a workmen's compensation system, any payment for job-related injuries depended on the personal policy of the mill owner or a successful suit in the courts. Hours of labor averaged eleven a day until about 1900, ten until World War I, and nine until [World War II \(/handbook/online/articles/npwnj\)](/handbook/online/articles/npwnj). Employers classed most of their workers as common laborers and paid wages averaging \$1.50 to \$2.50 per day from around 1900 until the early 1920s. Only a few skilled employees-sawyers, edgermen, trimmers, planers, and saw filers at the mill, and fallers, scalers, loaders, skidder operators and railroad personnel in the woods-earned more than common laborers' wages.

Though their grievances were obvious and their wage scale below that of other industries, lumber workers failed repeatedly to organize effective unions to bargain collectively for their advancement. This was partly due to disunity within the work force. Skilled and unskilled workers failed to cooperate, and racial tensions divided