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This sawpit was dug around 1860-65. The pit itself is still in its original condition but the bearers and log over it have recently been renewed. The saw mounted in the log is an original implement and was donated by the Plantagenet Historical Society, Mt Barker.

Pitsawing was the standard method of sawing timber in the early days of settlement in Australia. If possible, the sawyers selected a pit site that could be used more than once and pits were dug on the lower side of the trees selected for milling and then rolled down hill and over the pit. In some cases, logs were positioned over the pit by sheer manpower. It is possible that the charred stump close to the pit is that of a tree which was sawn there.

One sawyer worked on top of the log, his functions being to raise the saw after the downward stroke and place it onto a chalk line marking the proposed cut while one or sometimes two men stood beneath the log and supplied the cutting power.

It is believed that timber milled over this pit was transported to Albany by sailing boats and used in some of the early buildings. Evidently some sawyers thought it quicker and easier to sail timber from Walpole rather than build roads to millable timber in the Albany area.

The timber carrying boats were around 25 metres in length and wide of beam with shallow draft for crossing over sand bars. It is said that boats were manned by a crew of three and the trip from Walpole to Albany could take approximately twelve to fourteen hours.

The Sawpit is but one of the many attractions in the Walpole-Nornalup National Park. Details of other points of interest and facilities are available from the park rangers at Coalmine Beach and Crystal Springs.

The restoration of the Sawpit was undertaken by the National Parks Authority and the Forests Department.

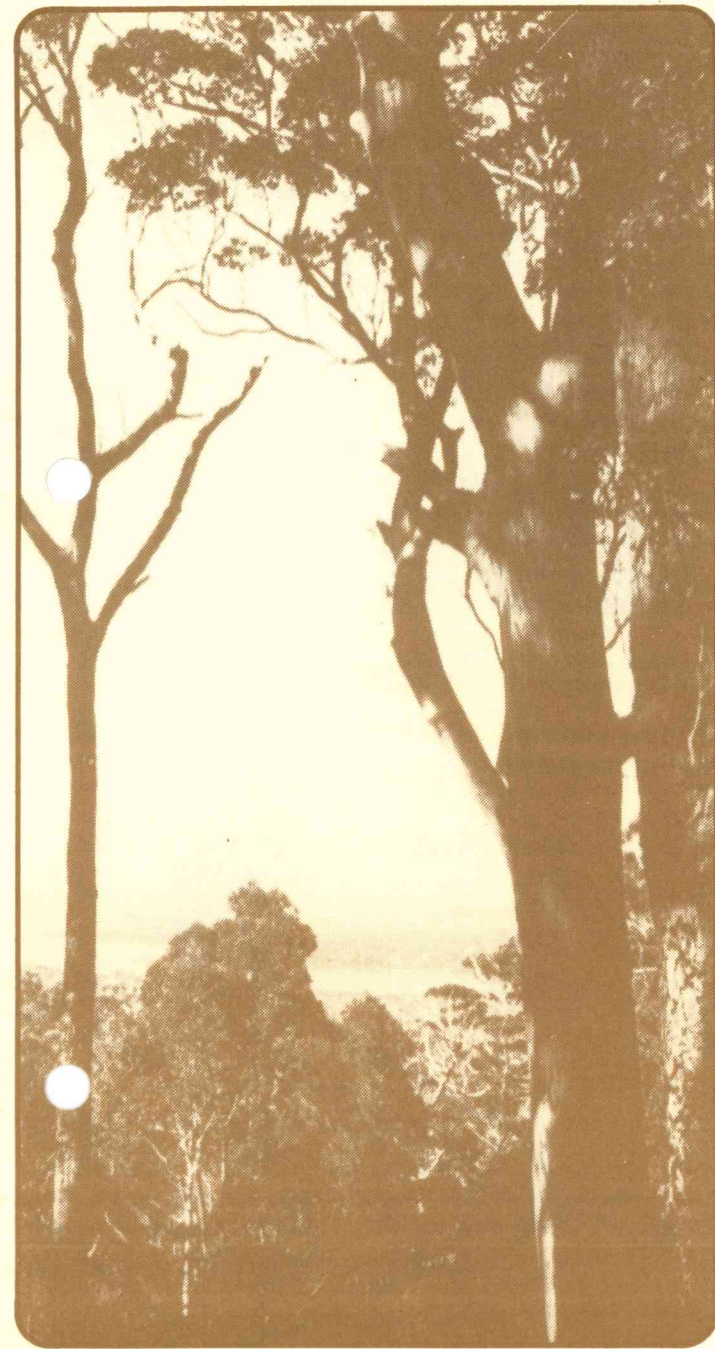
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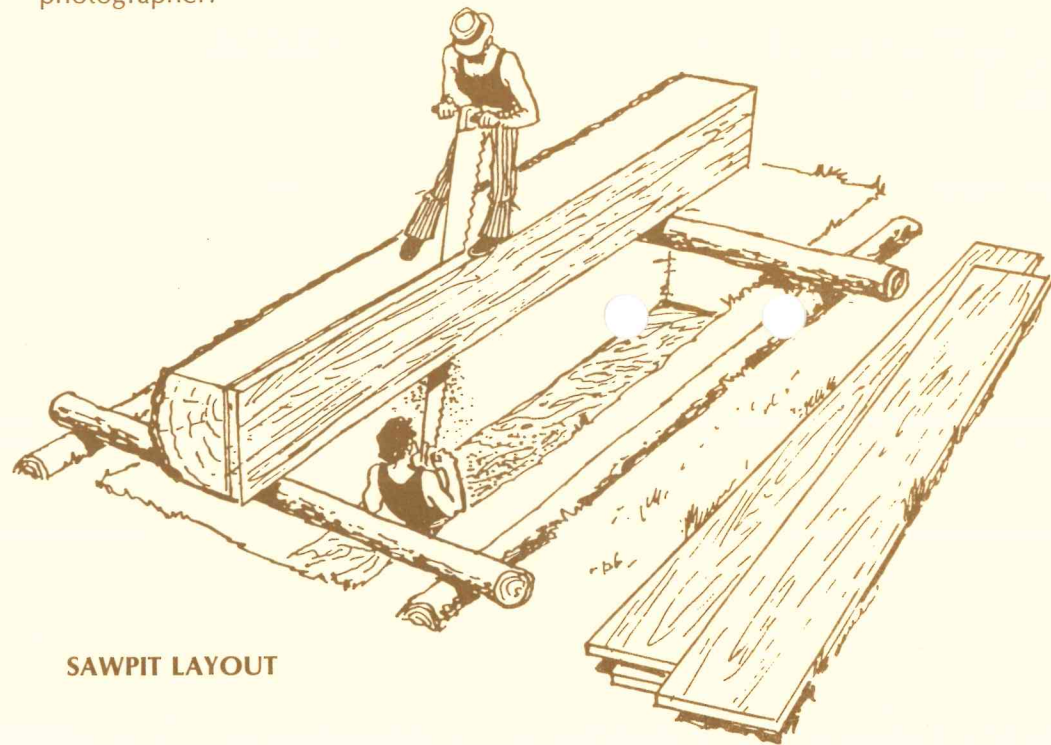
**JOHN RATE LOOKOUT WALPOLE-NORNALUP
NATIONAL PARK**

THE SAWPIT



FELLING A KARRI TREE

The two men (A) are operating a *Cross Cut Saw* (B) while the remaining men are cutting a *Scarf* (C) with *Narrow Axes* (D). The tree will fall towards the photographer!



SAWPIT LAYOUT



AN ORIGINAL SAWPIT

The two men (E and F) are operating a *Pit Saw* (G). E's job is to raise the saw while F's job is to pull the saw down on the cutting stroke.

There was some variation in the design of the saw handles. The upper handle in the photograph differs from that on the saw displayed. Both types were typical. The man (H) is holding a *Broad Axe* which was used for trimming. The log on the side of the pit (J) has been roughly trimmed with a broad axe.

Horses and drays were not used at Walpole where the sawn wood was carried by men to the boats. The presence of a horse and dray in this photograph indicates that the site was some distance from the sea.