

British Columbia



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ENCOUNTERS WITH THE BULL OF THE WOODS Part Two of Two by Bill McGhee

The next incident with Gordon involved the log raft which he invented to replace Davis Rafts before they were completely superseded by log barges. A post-war increase in Port Alice mill production required a concomitant increase in local log production. In the interim, before local log production could meet mill requirements, lumber logs were shipped out by barge and Davis Raft and pulp logs were imported by the same means plus a few Gibson Rafts from Chamiss Bay.

By the time the first Gibson Raft arrived, the Port Alice crew were proficient at breaking down water-logged hemlock Davis Rafts from Seymour Inlet, most of which had to be pulled apart. There was always plenty of time to remove the top wires from these Davis Rafts before there was any log movement.

Not so with Gibson Rafts which, built on a removable bottom, were wrapped with wire rope like a fat cigar. By the time our crew learned to remove these wires safely, we had raised Gordon's ire by drowning a few beyond recovery. Needless to say, I had some explaining to do and it was not pleasant being chewed out by Gordon Gibson.



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However, the next incident restored our relationship and illustrates his basic kindness. As revealed in his book ("Bull of the Woods"), he had an uncanny ability to overcome natural disasters which have always plagued loggers operating on the west coast of Vancouver Island. His arrival on the scene of one of our near disasters, quelled my panic one blustery winter morning as we prepared to go to work in the booming ground.

During the previous night, due to a combination of a gale-force southeaster, an extremely high tide and a river swollen by heavy rains, forty 8-section booms stored at the head of Neroutsos Inlet had broken their shore lines and, unbeknownst to us, drifted in one large raft past the mill and down the inlet.

Our first inkling of disaster was at 8:00 AM the next morning when the tug **Tahsis Chief** appeared with Gordon at the bow calmly enquiring "Did you folks lose some logs last night?"

Unable to see the storage area at the head of the inlet from our location, we couldn't answer his question. Chomping on his ever-present stogie he said "Well it looks like half your storage ground is hung up on Dog Island* three miles down the inlet, but the booms aren't broken up. Send your tugs down and we'll give you a hand to tow them back."

With the extra towing power of the **Tahsis Chief**, our two tugs -- the **Granby** and the **Armoco** -- soon had all the booms back secure in the storage grounds.

My next encounter with Gordon Gibson was one of the most challenging of my forestry career. Following completion of negotiations, Tree Farm Licence No. 6 became operational on January 1, 1951 and I was made TFL Forester.

My first and immediate task was to prepare a 3-year cutting plan for 1951 - 1953, including the company operation at Holberg, Bill Moore's operation at Winter Harbour and Gibson's operation at Jeune Landing. The manager there referred me to Gordon himself as the source for the information I required.

Knowing Gordon's well-publicized hostile opinion of TFL's and his penchant for running a logging operation with a minimum of detailed planning, I arranged, with some trepidation, to meet him at Jeune Landing to discuss the required cutting plan.

I vividly recall the morning we met, and the picture on the cover of his book "Bull of the Woods" portrays the exact scene as I entered the Jeune Landing office -- Gordon in woods attire, chewing his cigar and looking kind of mean. He attacked.

*Frigon Island

"What's all this nonsense about a 3-year logging plan?" he asked. I explained the requirements of the TFL agreement and the urgency of my task. I think the tirade that followed was moderated somewhat by our previous acquaintance, or it could have been that my father was manager of the Port Alice mill and a sometime drinking companion of Gordon. In any event, as a young forester responsible for a completely new job, I was not about to argue with an old pro like Gordon. So I didn't say anything.

I breathed a sigh of relief when he finished by saying "Well, I guess you have a job to do. Go and see Alf Buckland, our logging engineer, and he'll give you what you need."

When I saw Alf later, I found that the old devil had already told him I was coming and to cooperate with me.

My last meeting with Gordon in 1969 occurred at his Maui Lu resort in Hawaii, where my first glimpse of him was quite uncharacteristic of the typical caulk-boot logger that I knew.

Dressed in knee-length, ragged-edged, denim cut-offs, nothing more, he was tinkering around with an old, doorless and roofless Mustang car. If my memory serves me correctly it bore the licence plate "NWT 1" as a reminder of Gordon's stint in the Northwest Territories.

Knowing I was a golfer, he pointed with pride to his 6-hole golf course, and I thought "how typical of Gordon to make do with a 6-hole course when he didn't have enough land for more."

However, it was an episode on the wharf at the nearby fishing village of Maalea that put this final encounter back into a familiar perspective. Out for a morning stroll, I was loafing around the Maalea dock when a tall lady wearing dark sunglasses, obviously en route to a dress-up occasion, walked onto the wharf to stand and look disinterestedly at the marine view.

With a faint spark of recognition, I approached her and said "Excuse me, aren't you Pat Carney?"

"Why, yes," she replied, removing her glasses, "don't I know you?"

"Yes, we've met," I answered, introducing myself. "When you were writing on forestry for the **Vancouver Sun**. You look upset, can I help you?"

"Thank you," she replied, "but help is on the way. I'm staying at Gordon Gibson's Maui Lu resort. I rented one of his cars this morning to drive to Lahaina to a reception. I had a flat tire about a mile from here. When I went to change it there was no spare."

Then, with her characteristic bluntness, Miss Carney said "That God-damned Gordon Gibson, he runs Maui Lu just like he used to run Jeune Landing!"

EX-FOREST SERVICE VESSEL SQUADRON NEWS
by Bill Young

Rendezvous '93

The annual gathering of the squadron took place at Maple Bay on the July 3-4 weekend. Boats in attendance included **Arbutus II**, **Kwaietek** (ex-B.C. Forester), **Black Raven II**, **Cottonwood II**, **Dean Ranger**, **Elva R**, **Forest Ranger II**, **Forest Surveyor**, **Kinbasket Forest**, **Lillian D**, **Maple II**, **Nesika**, **Northern Cross**, **Oak II**, **Oliver Clark II**, **Sea Ox** (ex-Forest Cruiser) and the **Silver Fir**. The owners of the **Oliver Clark** and the **Beatrice R** attended but without their boats. The **Alpine Fir II** was being worked on in the adjoining shipyard.

A formal resolution was passed at the annual meeting confirming that the squadron archives will be housed at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. A Trust Committee of four was appointed to oversee the collection and management of the archival material. Ken Morley and Tom Edwards were appointed to represent ex-Forest Service personnel, while Bill Young was appointed to represent the Forest History Association of B.C.

The highlight of the annual meeting was Mike Coney's donation of manuscripts, work papers and photographs for deposit in the squadron's archives. Mike is, of course the author of "Forest Ranger, Ahoy!", which remains the main reference book for information on the Forest Service fleet.

Archival progress

If you have photographs of Forest Service vessels and are wondering what to do with them, we have a solution for you. Arrangements have now been finalised to receive, catalogue and store pertinent photographs in the Vancouver Maritime Museum. The following are a few guidelines for your information:

- 1) you have three options and your covering letter should indicate your choice of
 - donation of photographs
 - long term loan of photographs
 - you retain the photographs but supply a listing and description of those which you have in your possession
- 2) photographs should be numbered on the back using a soft pencil (e.g. 2B) and submitted along with an accompanying listing and descriptions tied to the photograph numbers
- 3) the description should include as much detail as possible (e.g. the name of the vessel, locale, year the photo was taken, names of people shown, etc.)

- 4) where convenient, photographs can be submitted in an album. When this is done, the album will be returned as a specific unit referenced to the name of the donor.
- 5) while physical artifacts will be welcomed at a later date, the current request is primarily for photographs. Notwithstanding this, however, old logbooks, personal reminiscences, narratives would also be gratefully accepted.

Finally, all items pertaining to ex-Forest Service vessels will be catalogued and stored by the museum and will be used in future displays, research and the like. Your photographs, suitably referenced and described, should be sent to Ken Morley at:

Mr. K.A. Morley
3470 Yellow Point Road
R.R. # 3
Ladysmith, B.C. V0R 2E0

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REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Alternative Service Workers

A researcher is interested in obtaining information on the Alternative Service Workers who worked on forestry projects during World War II, especially the projects, their locations and the B.C. Forest Service's evaluations of the workers and their work.

Please contact Mr. A.J. Klassen at 1941 Valencia Court, Clearbrook, B.C. V2T 4M1. Telephone 854-5210.

The Ship Thermopylae

The Maritime Museum of British Columbia has a special interest in the **Thermopylae** as she sailed from Victoria and Vancouver between 1890 and 1894, carrying timber to the Far East and returning with rice.

There is an interesting photograph in the provincial archives which shows her loading a 24" square timber 100' long at the Brunette Sawmill wharf in Sapperton, near New Westminster.

The date of the photograph is not precisely known and neither is it known how much archival material might exist which describes the **Thermopylae's** activities and shipments.

If anyone has information regarding the **Thermopylae** please contact George Gibb, Research Volunteer, Maritime Museum of B.C. Society, 28 Bastion Square, Victoria, B.C. V8W 1H9. Telephone 385-4222.

Donkeys and tower skidders

For the past few years a number of forest history buffs have been tracking down surviving steam donkeys along the west coast. So far they have located over 100 between Nome, Alaska and Long Beach, California. In addition to surviving donkeys, they are also searching out records and information about the builders.

The remaining records of the Washington Iron Works (1917-1970) and Willamette Iron & Steel Works (1901-1930) have been located and copied. If anyone else is interested in these manufacturers the group would be glad to assist.

One of the special projects concerns the Lidgerwood tower skidders which were built in Tacoma, Washington between 1922 and 1937. Two of these machines were used at Franklin River on Vancouver Island by Bloedel, Stewart and Welch until about 1955. Any information on these machines would be a great help to the project.

Please contact John Taubeneck at 2830 N.W. 56th Street, Suite 306, Seattle, Washington 98107-4205, U.S.A.

Red Morrison

"Red" Morrison was born in 1885 and in 1902 served as a winter watchman at Dirty Face Jones' camp at Elk Bay, on Vancouver Island. He hand logged at Jedway, on the Queen Charlottes just after the turn of the century. He also logged with a crew of ten for the Seaford mill on the Queen Charlottes - supposedly the first logging venture there.

He was a high lead foreman in 1929 and and the famed logger's poet, Robert E. Swanson, worked for him then. According to Mr. Swanson, Red Morrison had three children - two boys (Willie and Walter) and a girl. Red's real first name may have been Henry.

Anyone with information on "Red" (Henry?) Morrison is invited to contact Mr. Donald Ream, Jr., 9128 North Tacoma Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46240-1330, U.S.A.

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DAVID DOUGLAS SOCIETY

The 1993 annual meeting and banquet of the David Douglas Society will be held in Seattle, Washington on December 6, 1993. For information please contact Bill Young at 6401 Conconi Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 5Z7.

FOREST HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF B.C. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1993 Annual General Meeting of the FHABC was held on Saturday, June 12th at the B.C Forest Museum, just north of Duncan. After a brief business meeting a lunch was served and historical videos shown. A tour of the museum and grounds followed, ably conducted by Kris Andersen of their staff. The weather cooperated fully and everyone enjoyed the day.

The 1993 - 1994 following were duly elected for executive duties: President - Bob DeBoo*, Past President - Bill Backman*, Treasurer - Edo Nyland, Editor - John Parminter, Directors - George Brandak*, Don Grant*, Terry Honer, Clay Perry, Harry Smith, Jack Robinson and Bill Young*.

* appointed in 1992 for a two-year term, all others were either reappointed or appointed for the first time.

NEWS

Kaatza Historical Society

The Kaatza Historical Society has received a \$2,400 commitment from the Community Archives Assistance Program to assist with the cataloguing and preventive conservation of the Caycuse Division business records of the Fletcher Challenge company.

In making the announcement, Cowichan-Ladysmith MLA Jan Pullinger said "preserving and providing a catalogue for these business records gives all British Columbians access to the heritage of our province. The initiative shown by this group in helping preserve this valuable resource is appreciated."

"These forest industry operational records and business correspondence span four and one-half decades of operations in one of the most active logging areas of the province. The collection is important because of the comprehensive nature of the records which provide the researcher with a wealth of information about changes in technology and social patterns in the post-war era. It is only through collections such as this that the history of the industry can be fully appreciated" said Pullinger.

The Community Archives Assistance Program targets projects associated with the establishment and development of community archives throughout the province. It provides up to one-half of a project's non-capital costs to a maximum of \$10,000. Applications are considered by a five-member grants review committee which makes recommendations to the Minister of Government Services twice a year.

Adapted from the **Cowichan News Leader**, September 1, 1993. Provided by FHABC member Barry Volkers of Lake Cowichan.

West Kootenay Forest History Project

The West Kootenay Forest History Project, based out of the Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society (KMAHS) in Nelson, continues to make progress. A Green Gold grant of \$4600 was obtained in May from the Canadian Forest Service and the B.C. Ministry of Forests. The funds are being used to transcribe and edit interviews conducted as part of the oral history program. Volunteer labour as well as administrative and technical support are provided by the KMAHS. Interviews from the first phase of the program should be available in published form by the end of the year. Peter Chapman conducted three oral history workshops during the summer at Kaslo, Nelson and South Slocan to train interviewers.

Other activities included a survey of the B.C. Forest Service launch **Amabilis** by Len McCann, curator emeritus at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Formerly used by B.C. Forest Service staff to access forest lands along roadless portions of Kootenay Lake, the launch is now resting on temporary cribbing behind the museum. Initial impressions are that the boat can be restored and preserved.

For the past four summers the KMAHS has been compiling an annotated forest history index to turn-of-the-century regional newspapers. The work was continued this summer by Eleanor Stacey, who completed indexing up to mid-1910. She is now attending Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick.

Further information on the West Kootenay Forest History Project may be obtained from Peter Chapman, Project Manager, Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society, 402 Anderson Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 3Y3. Phone 352-9813.

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This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. It is distributed at no charge to members of the Association, libraries, archives and museums. Items on forest history topics, descriptions of current projects, requests for information, book reviews, letters, comments and suggestions are welcomed. Please submit newsletter material and send changes of address to the editor: Mr. John Parminter, # 1 - 949 Pemberton Road, Victoria, B.C. V8S 3R5. (595-0374)

Membership in the Association is \$7.00 yearly, or \$30 for five years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Mr. Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4E8. (656-9276) The President, Dr. Bob DeBoo, can be reached c/o Pacific Forestry Centre, Canadian Forest Service, 506 West Burnside Road, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1M5 (363-0751).