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TALES FROM THE WEST COAST OF VANCOUVER ISLAND
by Jack Ker

It was 1941 and just as we arrived in Quatsino Sound on one visit on the *MV Tamarack*, we received a radio message from the District Forester in Vancouver. It read "Would it be convenient for you to meet George Melrose (then the Assistant Chief Forester in Victoria) in Tofino next week?" As we had just come north from Tofino and I had several inspections to carry out in Quatsino Sound, I replied, truthfully, that it would NOT be convenient. Imagine the peremptory command I received the next day, ordering me to proceed immediately to meet Melrose in Tofino a few days later! Needless to say, this was a topic for discussion with my superiors in Vancouver that fall.

We met the Assistant Chief Forester in Tofino as arranged by the Vancouver office. Except for the disruption it created in my itinerary, the visit of George Melrose was a very entertaining break in our routine. Sitting on the deck after supper, we could see smoke rising from a nearby island. "Did you issue a permit for that property?" asked George, to which I replied in the affirmative. He and I decided to launch the dinghy and visit the island that evening.



Recycled paper

We landed at a little float and walked in the direction of the smoke. We were met by a little man wearing rubber boots but with bare feet. The soles of the boots had worn out! He greeted us pleasantly and explained that he was making way for the rabbits. Apparently he was a remittance man from England and quite "over the hill."

His house, near the crest of the little island, was about 20 feet square but three stories high, the top being a platform from which he could survey his surroundings. Near the float was a tree, leaning over the water, with boards nailed on to the bole so he could climb up into the branches. Perhaps he had used this as a lookout before building one on the roof of his house.

Years later, while passing a real estate office on Howe Street in Vancouver, I noticed in the window a photo and advertisement for this property: "Buy your own island estate on Vancouver Island's West Coast." Presumably the little remittance man had passed away.

From Tofino we crossed Clayoquot Sound and headed northwest. As we approached the open Pacific the weather turned menacing. Not wishing to confront the storm that was brewing, we turned into Shelter Bay, a well-protected harbour, as its name implies, and tied up for the night, toward the outer end of a long series of floats. A number of Alaskan trawlers had anchored in the bay, seeking shelter from the impending storm. After supper my skipper, Ira Stoddart, offer to take George in the dinghy to visit some of these trawlers.

They were royally entertained by the skippers of the ships they visited, so were gone for some time. When they returned it was pitch dark and pouring with rain, with the wind roaring overhead. I grabbed a flashlight and helped them skid the dinghy along the slippery float, for many more fishboats had come in and tied up alongside.

When we came to an angle in the floats, with George in the bow and Ira and me on either side of the dinghy, George did not see the bend in time and ended up in the water. He grabbed his pipe in midair but forgot about his glasses. Surfacing, he still had the pipe in one hand but his glasses were gone! As he had not brought a spare pair he was as blind as a bat for the rest of the trip. But George was good company and we thoroughly enjoyed his visit, though it caused us some conniptions to start with.

In the summer of 1945, with two assistants, my job with the B.C. Forest Service was to establish forest plots on the west coast of Vancouver Island. One of the study areas lay on the north side of Nitinat Lake, not far from where the tidal Clo-oose River empties into the Pacific Ocean.

Only two white people then resided at Clo-oose, the B.C. Telephone Co. lineman and his wife, who was the Postmistress. Their house, facing the ocean, was on a stretch of land that separated Nitinat Lake from the Pacific Ocean. A wooden boardwalk, about a metre wide, paralleled the beach, bounded on both sides by a dense growth of salal.

The Postmistress had a small vegetable garden some distance from the house. One day, while walking along the boardwalk to her garden, she saw a black bear coming in her direction. Uncertain what to do, she stopped and watched the bear approach her, then pressed herself backwards into the salal bushes to let the animal pass. It brushed past her, giving no indication that she even existed!

Her husband, the lineman, had an even more traumatic experience to relate.

One rainy night, with a storm raging, he heard dull explosions up along the shore. Repeatedly he rang up the lighthouse at Carmanah Point, but there was no answer. So he donned his wet weather gear and with his dog and flashlight he set out to investigate.

Nearing Carmanah lighthouse, he encountered a Russian ship that had run aground. Drenched survivors were wandering around on shore. He asked an officer why they had not sought help from the nearby lighthouse. He was told that they had found a lighthouse but it was deserted.

This he could not understand, so with the officer he continued along the trail to the lighthouse, where they were met by the lighthouse keeper and his staff, who were just emerging from the woods. They had seen the distress signals sent up by the ship when it grounded but had fled into the woods, fearing a Japanese invasion.

At the lighthouse they established telephone contact with Cape Beale and Port Alberni and arranged for soldiers from a coastal defence unit to walk the trail south to Carmanah to help the survivors bring any possessions they had salvaged to the mouth of the Alberni Canal, from whence they would be taken by the ferry *Uchuck* to Port Alberni.

But en route the Canadians secreted some of the Russians' belongings along the trail. When the Russian officers found out they were greatly annoyed and one was heard to shout "If this had happened in Russia those men would be shot!"

It appears that the Russian freighter was one of three that had sailed from Vladivostok for Puget Sound. But on approaching the Strait of Juan de Fuca they couldn't pick up any navigational signals on either the Canadian or U.S. sides of the border. All lights had been doused as a result of the wartime alert. Only one of those three vessels arrived safely in port, the third drifted south and was wrecked on the rocky Oregon coast.

Years later I attended a forestry conference in Vancouver and when I mentioned this episode to a forest engineer he said he remembered that night. He and his brother had been running survey lines a short distance inland from Carmanah Point. They heard the distress rockets and saw lights in the sky. Fearing that one of the rockets might come down on their camp, they moved it underneath a large western redcedar windfall, where they spent the night.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Drushka, Ken. 2003. Canada's forests – a history. Forest History Society Issues Series, Forest History Society, Durham, North Carolina and McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston. ISBN 0-7735-2660-7. viii + 97 p., 17 photos, 15 figures. \$7.95 US + \$3.00 handling from the Forest History Society
<http://www.lib.duke.edu/forest/Publications/canforests.html>
 or \$12.95 CDN + charges from Chapters/Indigo <http://www.chapters.indigo.ca/>

“Canada's Forests” is the first book to provide an overall description of Canada's forests, their historical uses, and their current condition. The ten forest regions of Canada are examined, looking at how the human use of these forests has changed from the end of the last glacial period (10,000 years ago) to the present time.

Ken Drushka analyses the changes in human attitudes towards the forests, detailing the rise of the late nineteenth-century conservation movement and its subsequent decline after World War I, the interplay between industry and government in the development of policy, the adoption of sustained yield policies after World War II, and the recent adoption of sustainable forest management in response to environmental concerns. Drushka argues that, despite the centuries of use, the Canadian forest retains a good deal of its vitality and integrity.

Simpson, Sharron J. 2003. Boards, boxes, and bins: Stanley M. Simpson and the Okanagan lumber industry. 170 p., 140 photos, 20 illustrations. ISBN 0-9688435-1-4. Manhattan Beach Publishing, 1850 Abbott St, Kelowna BC V1Y 1B5. Can be ordered through Mosaic Books in Kelowna (phone 1-800-663-1225) for \$29.99 or through the publisher.

Overview: 600 million wooden fruit and vegetable boxes were manufactured in the Okanagan Valley during the first half of the 20th century, and the S.M. Simpson Ltd. sawmill and box factory in Kelowna made the overwhelming majority. As the community grew over the next four decades, the company struggled against considerable odds, near-bankruptcy, devastating fires, clashes with B.C.'s most powerful labour union, and the cyclical nature of the lumber business.

The company was headed by Stan Simpson who left rural Ontario before the first World War and homesteaded on the Prairies before settling in the Okanagan Valley. From his one-man carpentry shop, Stan created the company which became the largest year-round employer in the area. “Boards, boxes, and bins” is the story of Stan Simpson's successes and failures, and it explores his role in shaping both the forest industry in the B.C. Interior and the city of Kelowna into what it is today.



B.C. FOREST SERVICE RANGER SCHOOL GRADUATES
by the late Geoff Bate

This is the fifth and last in a series that identifies the graduates of the Forest Service Ranger School. The first classes from 1946 to 1966 were listed in newsletters 67, August 2002; 69, February 2003; 70, May 2003 and 72, November 2003.

Source: Forest History Association of B.C. archives.

Series 9 (continued)
Advanced Class # 14: 1966

E.A. Bouchard	G.F. Hawkey	J. Koleman	W.O. Neros
R.A. Campbell	V.H. Hernandez	H. Miscovich	O. Parsey
E.M. Foulds	P.O. Holitzki	I.A. Morrison	F.L. Roe
W.E. Hall	B.D. Horning	D.J. Neal	F. Vincen
E. Hardwick	W.O. Johnston	C.L. Nelson	D.R. Wood

Advanced Class # 15: 1967 - 68

Dean: L.W. Lehrle Asst. Dean: A.J. Kirk Instructor: W.W. Smith

R.J. Reeves	T.A. Walker	D.R. Proctor	H.W. Wassick
M.F. Wilkinson	C.R. Johnson	H.J.L. Anderson	S.E. Anderson
J.L. Younghusband	G.W. Erickson	D.S. Campbell	G.H. Nichols
R.N. Keep	D.H. Blackstock	B.L. Custance	K.E. Arnett
D.G. Rankin	J.B. Mountain	A.C. Joyce	F.A. Folliet

Advanced Class # 16: 1970 - 71

Dean: L.W. Lehrle Asst. Dean: A.J. Kirk Instructor: W.W. Smith

W.J. Woodward	W.B. Holloway	M. Lister	W. Hendy
S.B.R. Hoddinott	W.J. Brinnen	B.V. Hansen	C.R. Moore
S.J. Rankin	L.D. Brown	A.R.R. Krane	J. Wlasuk
D.C. Cumming	D.F. Hendren	T.J. Hambrook	R.D. Edward
W.T.S. Jackson	H.A. Flogam	R.G. Miller	J.E. England
S. Melinichuk	J.M. Haley	J.P. Dunlop	T.H. Walker

Advanced Class # 17: 1972 - 73

Dean: C.J. Highsted Asst. Dean: J.D. Bailey Asst. Dean: J.H. Carradice

W.S. Pearson	G.B. Kirke	L.D. Haggard	L.G. Russell
G.W. Prest	M.T. Lindberg	K.S. Braithwaite	A.A. Simon
C.D. Willson	J.A. Reid	H.J.B. Freeman	J.R. Hall
D.H. Thompson	D. Jensen	R.N. Mould	J.G. Hart
R.W. Lancour	K.E.G. Pratt	W.V. Vohradsky	D.J. Eastman
D.W. Hutcheson	J.A.W. Garlinge	G. Murdock	G.I. Bowie

In the fall of 1974 new training courses were introduced, known as Unit 4. They replaced the advanced or Ranger School Courses and constituted a completely new program which prepared people not only for the Ranger position but also higher level positions in any part of the Forest Service. While tinkering constantly took place with the advanced course curriculum, Unit 4 courses officially recognized the contents of those provided by the province's technical schools and therefore did not duplicate the material.

Unit 4 Class # 1: September – December 1974

Dean: C.J. Highsted Asst. Dean: J.H. Carradice Instructor: J.B. Cawston

A. Kowalski	J.D. Hedberg	D.M. Fennell	D.A. Hargreaves
P.A. Pasechnik	T.J. Milne	R.L. Hanson	K.G. Burnett
R.L. Chard	H.W. Hewlett	P.G. Falk	R.A. Bensen
H.A. Spence	J.D. Sherb	J. Delay	G.B. Gunn
R.W. Bradley	R.A. Whyte	E.G. Cunliff	N.C. Toney
A. Aalgard	T.H. Hamilton	T. Blom	D.S. Beinder

Unit 4 Class # 2: March – June 1975

Dean: C.J. Highsted Asst. Dean: J.H. Carradice Instructor: J.B. Cawston

W. Langlois	T. Watson	G.J. Munro	J. Kouwenhoven
T. Wells	H. Hahn	H. Doberstein	M.G. Ambach
R. McDiarmid	G. Langevin	R. Greenfield	O. Erickson
T. Lacey	L.E. Hunter	J. Brinkac	W.C. Schmidt
W. Sinnemann	M. Heagy	F.L. Turner	S. Armitage
M. Hudock	E. Haupt	E.J. Beadle	T.J. Wardrop

Unit 4 Class # 3: September – December 1975

Dean: J.H. Carradice Asst. Dean: J.B. Cawston

T.B. Halpin	R. Hughes	Ken Blom	G.L. Bond
J.S. Griffen	W.F. Davidson	L. Elchuk	W.W. Thomson
C.M. Moore	C.J. Effa	B.K. Lodge	L.N. McClinton
R.A. Knotts	B.A. Read	P.W. Dean	L.E. Anderson
M.L. Wallace	K.W. Pendergast	Keith Blom	A.H. McConnachie
G.T. Keir	J.A. Murdock	N.J. Walsh	D.N. Robertson

Unit 4 Class # 4: March – June 1976

Dean: J.H. Carradice Asst. Dean: J.B. Cawston

J.T. Nash	D.E. Swaffield	E.W. Hayward	S.D. Lowrey
L.G. Hall	E.A. Arkell	G. Krotz	D.W. Langridge
W.R. Quanstrom	R.W. Baerg	C.C. Martins	R.G. Hudson
J.A. Kirby	K.J. Merry	D.R. Sluggett	R.W. Augustin
R.P. Mumford	R.J. Beasley	D.B. Asher	F.R. Grant
R.J. Bradley	R.G. Pederson	H. Neighbor	M.R. Dodge

Unit 4 Class # 5: September – December 1976
 Dean: J.H. Carradice Asst. Dean: J.B. Cawston

O.M.N. Inglis	M.P.A. Fourbister	D.J. Munn	R.J. Reimer
W.R. Tymchuk	W.J. Lamont	R.S. Townsend	D.B. Carpenter
L.P. Scott	H.L. Elias	R.G. Clark	M.F. Breisch
M. Tanner	G.W. Cooper	R.F. Perry	J. Vandenberg
R.G. Richards	G. Stahl	D.R. Fitchett	R.A. Beals
J.D. Crover	J.E. Langridge	R.J. Wilson	W.A. Bridgman

Unit 4 Class # 6: March – June 1977
 Dean: J.H. Carradice Asst. Dean: J.B. Cawston

R.P. Roswell	R.J. Thornton	G.D. Castonguay	J.E. Tigchelaar
L.P.C. Custer	E. Silkens	J.T.A. Gray	C.H. Hayhurst
N.E.T. Weldon	P. Harper	W. McCulloch	J.F. Mehain
R.W. Paterson	A.B. Hunter	D.E. Tippie	B.C. Cox
G.W. Ward	S.A. Pereverzoff	G.W. Chapman	
G.W. Moseley	R.L. Wood	E.F. MacDermid	

Unit 4 Class # 7: March – June 1978
 Dean: J.H. Carradice Asst Dean: J.B. Cawston Instructor: R.W. McDaniel

R. Clevette	J.A. Cantlon	W.D. Harvie	W. Bridgman
D.B. Ashton	W.C. Penner	W.M. Skaalid	N.D de Wynter
W.W. Quinn	D.V. Fellman	C.A. Hewson	R.C. Gay
L.J. Zacher	G.L. Wilson	F.G. Ullmann	D.W. Donaldson
S. Strechlniuk	K.J. Bartlett	P. Larsen	J.D. Gooding
J. Murphy	J.W. McCracken (Water Rights Branch)		
R.E. Potter (Lands Branch)	D. Turner (Fish and Wildlife Branch)		

Unit 4 courses were expanded to include staff from the Ministry of Environment. This was due to the need to frequently consider multiple resource values in the forests and therefore field staff had to work closely together on resource issues.

The next Unit 4 class was slated to commence in the fall of 1979. However, the Forest Service was undergoing a massive reorganization by this time. The decision was made to create a new position called a District Manager, to be in charge of one or more merged Ranger Districts and have greater power and responsibility. The position of Ranger would be done away with. Training of forestry staff would henceforth be left up to the technical schools and universities. While staff and students were not aware of it at the time, the Unit 4, Class 7 was the last of the many Ranger School classes that initially commenced in 1946.



GEOFF BATE PASSES

Former FHABC President and member of the current Executive, Geoff Bate passed away on January 10, 2004 at the Saanich Peninsula Hospital. Born on June 24, 1933 at Penticton, Geoff was the eldest of four children born to Lois (Blaine) and Vincent Bate. They lived in the Oliver area until Vincent died in an accident in 1938. Lois moved her family from Oliver to Nelson, where she became reacquainted with a school friend, Victor Madge. They were married in Rock Creek in 1939 and purchased a cattle ranch on Myers Creek, south of Kettle Valley.

After working part time for the Forest Service during the summer months, Geoff joined the B.C. Forest Service on a permanent basis in 1952. He worked in many aspects of forestry including silviculture stand examiner, cruising supervisor, air operations and held the positions of Assistant and Deputy Ranger, Ranger and Ranger Supervisor. He served in many parts of the province including both the East and West Kootenays, Smithers, Prince George, Fort St. John, Vancouver and Victoria. He was also acting principal at the Forest Service Training School. In 1978 Geoff earned a diploma in Public Administration from the University of Victoria.

His last position was as manager of wildland fire management for the Protection Branch. He retired in 1987, having worked for over 35 years for the Forest Service. Geoff then spent 10 productive years consulting for both the public and private sectors and teaching courses in fire management. Geoff was also a past member of the Canadian Institute of Forestry, a member of the executive of the Trafalgar/Pro Patria Royal Canadian Legion and a strong supporter of the principles of the Masonic Lodge AF & AM.

Geoff published two books on the history of the Rock Creek country and was an avid golfer, curler, photographer, birder, hiker, traveller and reader. Geoff brought his enthusiasm and organizational skills to the Forest History Association of B.C. and accomplished much for us over the years. He will be sadly missed by the Executive and membership.



This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. Please submit newsletter material and send changes of address to the Editor: John Parminter, # 3 – 130 Niagara Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1E9. Phone (250) 384-5642 home or (250) 356-6810 office. E-mail: jvparminter@telus.net

Membership in the association is \$10 yearly, or \$45 for five years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, BC V8L 4E8. Phone (250) 656-9276. E-mail: edonon@islandnet.com

The President: Stan Chester, can be reached at 5686 Keith Road, West Vancouver, BC V7W 2N5. Phone (604) 921-9880. E-mail: stanchester@shaw.ca