



Published by the Forest History Association of British Columbia

No. 88

Victoria, British Columbia

July 2010

<http://fhabc.org/>

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Time Flies! Welcome to a much delayed issue of the Forest History Association of BC Newsletter. The months following last September's Forest History's conference have been very challenging for me. I was overwhelmed with personal issues, a move, teaching assistant positions, the intense demands of academic coursework, and the ever-present nagging of my Masters Thesis. Unfortunately I had to prioritize, and my volunteer activities suffered. Well, that's the dog ate my homework excuse, but it was a very big dog! Another course-related essay is busy scratching at the door; so before I let it in, here is your newsletter. To help make up for the errant months, this edition is a double issue.

We start off with September's Conference—a well-rounded excursion through Northern British Columbia's forest history. The conference tackled everything from old logging equipment to traditional ecological knowledge, plus a gloriously golden autumn tour of the Aleza Lake Research Forest and some of the Upper Fraser communities. The FHABC owes a **great debt of gratitude** to **Ramona Rose** and **Erica Fernandez** of the UNBC Archives, **Mike Jull**, **Melanie Karjala**, and **Kathleen Olson** of the Aleza Lake Research Forest, **Ranjit Gill**, **James Tirrul-Jones**, and **Leah Giffiths** of the Prince George Railway & Forestry Museum, and **Barb Coupé** and **Kelsey Wiebe** (both MA students at UNBC)—**PLUS** all the **presenters**, **moderators**, **UNBC's Conference & Events Services staff**, and the **community of Willow River**.

Here's my highlight of the conference: we having our picnic lunch while sitting in a clearing at the Aleza Lake Research Forest. The day was autumn warm with amber gold cottonwoods and aspens framing a deep blue sky. Mike Jull began to talk about the young man's work/youth camp that was running during the Depression right where we were munching sandwiches and crunching apples. A voice suddenly piped up from halfway down the circle and said, "Yeah, I know; I was there! **Mr. George Dashwood**, our oldest participant of the tour, was beaming with the memories. Talk about history made real! Thank you Mr. Dashwood for coming along for the ride

If you wish to listen to David Brownstein's interviews with Mr. Dashwood, you will find them on the NiCHE website—<http://niche-canada.org/node/9093>—at a page entitled: "Oral History: George Dashwood. 'You wouldn't been any closer if you were gonna kiss a girl!'" In order to access them you will have to register with NiCHE (it's free) and then email David for a password. Thanks David for posting these conversations.

Also Friday's luncheon address at the conference, by **Mel McConaghy**, is included in the newsletter. His talk was accompanied by a slide show, and together they gave us a sense of times gone by. Look up Mel's website for more stories: <http://www.melmcconaghy.com/>. Much appreciation to Mel for permitting the FHABC to print out his presentation for the membership.



CONFERENCE SYNOPSIS.

Forest History Association of British Columbia. Exploring Our Roots: Forest History in Our Communities: Thursday, September 17 – Saturday September 19, 2009.

At the end of September 2009, the Forest History Association of BC organized a very successful annual meeting. What follows is taken from the online synopsis of the conference. For those of you with internet access, click on the following link—<http://www.niche-canada.org/fhabc09>—and then click on “Conference Synopsis” under “Reflections” (right hand side of the page). On that site, you will find pictures of the various field trips and sessions described below. Thanks to the conference organizers for compiling this detailed account and to **David Brownstein** and **Adam Crymble** of NiCHE for posting the synopsis on the web.

Thursday, 17 September 2009

Tour of the Upper Fraser Valley and the Aleza Lake Research Forest.

Participants attended a highly informative tour along the famous ‘East Line’ between Willow River and Hansard, through the Upper Fraser Valley profiling the history of the region over the past century. The tour was led by **Mike Jull**, MF, RPF and Manager of the Aleza Lake Research Forest, and **Dr. Greg Halseth**, Professor of Geography at University of Northern British Columbia. The tour highlighted the interconnected evolution of forestry, research, transportation systems, communities, and land use. Of special note was **Mr. George Dashwood** who shared his stories of working in the area during the 1930s as a twenty-something.

Friday, 18 September 2009

Annual General Meeting, Lunch, and Guided Tour (Prince George Railway and Forestry Museum)

The Annual General Meeting of the Forest History Association of BC was followed by a catered lunch and slide show narrated by local storyteller **Mel McConaghy** (see below for the transcript of Mel's talk). Participants were then given a tour of the Prince George Railway and Forestry Museum's forestry exhibit in the temporary exhibits gallery, and an introduction to more than sixty artefact items of rolling stock, nine historical buildings, and smaller artefacts.

“How to Conduct an Oral History Interview” Workshop (Geoffrey R. Weller Library, UNBC)

Dr. Theresa Healy, Regional Manager for Healthy Community Development with Northern Health, Adjunct Professor with UNBC, and founding member of the Prince George Oral History Group led an informative and interactive session on the methods and techniques of conducting oral histories.

Conference Banquet (Bentley Centre, UNBC)

Film Presentation: **Mr. Harry Miller**, retired employee of Northwood Pulp & Timber Ltd., narrated the silent short film, *The Eagle Lake Sawmill* (Wally West Productions, 1963) which was donated to the Northern BC Archives at UNBC by Northwood. The film depicted the entire process of sawmill operations at Eagle Lake, from the harvesting of trees to the finished lumber products.

Keynote Presentation: Mr. Harry Gairns, former President and Manager of Industrial Forestry Service Limited (1969-1992).

Mr. Harry Gairns gave the banquet's keynote presentation on the history of forestry in the central and northern interior of BC in the 1950s and 1960s. He recounted stories and characters associated with the forest industry, the technology, the policies, and the general trends of forestry throughout the period. Mr. Gairns focused throughout his talk on developments in transportation, from horse logging to dirt bikes and early snowmobiles. The centrality of water was similarly a key theme: he recounted towing logs in lakes and rivers, and emphasized the contemporary belief that a mill was nothing without a lake or a pond out of which to run a jackladder. Camp life was described in lively detail: the resourcefulness of early foresters and industrialists was demonstrated by accounts of winter camping and the year-round lack of communication. Mill owners and workers alike dealt with other challenges and disasters such as fires. During this period, many operations consisted of portable mills and mills owned by seasonal migrants, who contributed to the dynamism of industry in the region. In particular, the evolution of forestry policies was illustrated by the changes in the measurement and scaling of trees. The Cariboo Section of the Canadian Institute of Forestry was remembered for both its innovation and its systematic rigor: in hosting meetings and conferences, the group was instrumental in the introduction of both pulp mills and reforestation. Early on, the region had the foresight to promote a sustainable industry.

Saturday, 19 September 2009—Conference Sessions, UNBC

1) Keynote Address by Dr. Mike Apsey

Dr. Mike Apsey graduated from UBC in forestry. His career started out with the Council of Forest Industries (COFI). After serving for a number of years as Deputy Minister of Forests, he joined COFI as President and CEO and became the lead man in a series of battles with the USA during the timber wars. Following retirement, Dr. Apsey continues to be active in forestry through his involvement in numerous national and international business, academic, research, environmental, and service organizations and initiatives. He was appointed Member of the Order of Canada in 2002, and became an Honorary Doctor of Laws at the University of British Columbia in 2009.

In his keynote address, Dr. Apsey attempted to answer the question: "Why is forest history important?" The history of forests, he argued, is critical in shaping our understanding and guiding our decisions. He summarized the mandates of the BC Forest Service Centenary Society and the Forest History Association of British Columbia. As President of the BC Forest Service Centenary Society, Dr. Apsey explained that the planning process for celebrations of the Forest Service's hundredth anniversary in 2012 is well underway. The Society has launched an interactive website and plans to publish both a book and a DVD. Theme papers, artefacts, and oral histories will all be collected. Sponsorship is currently being solicited, and displays and presentations have been made to raise awareness of this centenary. Various events including informal group parties and formal dinners will be held in 2012, and trees will be planted to make the celebrations carbon neutral. Overall, this centenary will generate interest in the past and present roles of the BC Forest Service and the forest sector; Dr. Apsey states that it will "celebrate past accomplishments and inspire optimism for the future." (See website link on page 16).

2) Looking to the Past to Inform the Future? Forest History within a Contemporary Context

Panel discussion moderated by **Dr. Mike Apsey**,

Dr. Greg Halseth is a professor in the Geography program at the University of Northern British Columbia, where he is also the Canada Research Chair in Rural and Small Town Studies, and the Acting Director of UNBC's Community Development Institute. His research examines rural and small town community development, and the community strategies for coping with social and economic change, all with a focus upon Northern BC's resource-based towns.

Dr. Halseth outlined some of the findings of the Upper Fraser Historical Geography Project. He recounts the general trends and recovery of the history of communities in the Upper Fraser area through photographs, company records, and oral histories. He argues that the area is a 'critical location' in the history of forestry, the economy, and the province, and explains that recapturing the histories of the people and communities tied to the regional forest industry is thus of intrinsic value. Innovation, he says, emerged in small industry in small communities as a response to external pressure. Studying the area's history, then, provides insight into the future of forestry: remembering what has been tried and how small industry has adapted will allow us to better face today's challenges.

Dr. Darwyn Coxson is a professor in the Ecosystem, Science, and Management program. His research examines the impact of forest harvesting practices on the conservation biology of canopy lichen communities, and the landscape-level distribution of rare and endangered plant communities.

Dr. Coxson discussed the history of how we think about the forest. In exploring the gaps in our knowledge and communication of information about the forest, he traced the various attitudes, perspectives, and terms relating to forestry in BC, Canada, and the world. He outlined how these views have been ensconced in forest practice and policy, and noted in particular how the paradigm of agriculture was applied to the forests. He emphasized the need to understand forests and climates on a small scale in order to address climate change and move into the future.

Mr. Russ Clinton has forty years' experience in the BC forest industry. For over twenty years, he was the Vice President of West Fraser Timber. He also served as a member of the Interim Governing Council at UNBC.

Mr. Clinton explored Fraser Lake Sawmills as a case study which illustrates larger forestry trends in product change, transportation, and the international market. He talked about his personal history with Fraser Lake Sawmills, as well as his predictions for the future. When he arrived at Fraser Lake in the 1960s, some of the old-timers still remembered hacking ties for the railway. Transportation of resources had shifted from horses and rivers to arch trucks. When the Fraser Lake Mill was purchased by West Fraser, Mr. Clinton recalled its rapid turn around into a profitable and efficient mill. Increasingly, he noted, the British Columbian and Canadian forest industries are faced with international competition for access to capital from nations. In order to continue using our productive forest base and our expertise, Mr. Clinton argued, BC and Canada will simply have to respond to current and future challenges with dynamism, as we have in the past.

Dr. Lorne Hammond is the Curator of History at the Royal British Columbia Museum Corporation, where he works with collections and exhibits. He was a sawmill worker at BC Forests Products Youbou Mill, where he earned a lumber grading, tallymans, and A1, and an A-level industrial first aid ticket many years ago. His academic qualifications include a doctorate on the emergence of the forest industry on the Ottawa Valley and its social and economic dimensions, including banking. He has been active in forest and environmental history, and most recently in assisting the Canada-US Fulbright Program. His current BC research is on the historical impact of changing energy systems.

Dr. Hammond discussed the promises and challenges of the preservation of forest history. He stated the need to 'plan a future for the past,' and encouraged everyone to work from within communities to gather, record, and properly store forest history. He outlined the resources and support available for forest historians at the BC Archives. Interestingly, he observed that a young, mature tree lasts longer than the average company in the sector, describing archives as a 'collective memory' that should thus be utilized and supported. When faced with the changing environment, forest historians should 'think outside of the box, using new technologies to better convey the diversity of forest history. The future of the forests, he stated, will be best approached by studying historical examples of disaster and unsustainability, as well as trends outside of forestry that impacted its history.

3) Applying Traditional Knowledge to Future Initiatives: First Nations Historical and Future Relationships with the Forests

Panel discussion moderated by **Melanie Karjala**, Programs Coordinator, Aleza Lake Research Forest Society

Dr. Pamela Wright is an associate professor at UNBC in the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management program, and she's also Chair of the Outdoor Recreational Tourism Management and Geography programs. Her research interests are sustainable forest management and monitoring, conservation design and planning, and aboriginal tourism. For the last five years, she's been working with Tl'azt'en First Nation on a number of related research initiatives, capacity building, training, and workshops, and, most notably, the joint Tl'azt'en Nation/UNBC research project, which is the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project.

Dr. Wright discussed the Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project between the Tl'azt'en Nation and UNBC. She outlined the different approaches to research taken to lead to a better understanding of traditional uses of forests. Co-research--determined, performed, and shared equally--is seen as a way to integrate Western and traditional knowledge systems together in order to best manage the forest. Despite geographical and cultural challenges, much Tl'azt'en traditional ecological knowledge was recorded for perpetuity through the traditional ecological knowledge research stream and the science and environmental education stream. The development of a community-based environmental monitoring system is an excellent example: the research project used photographs and direct participation out on the land, as well as oral history, and is being made accessible in both publications (academic journal articles, books) and videos.

Dr. Antonia Mills was adopted by the Beaver Indians in 1964. She has her PhD from Harvard in Anthropology and Child Development. She was hired by the Gitksan- Wet'suwet'en Tribal Council to work on their Delgamuukw land claims court case, and is the author of "Eagle Down is Our Law: Wet'suwet'en Law, Peace, and Land Claims". Mills is co-editor of "Amerindian Rebirth: Reincarnation Beliefs Among North American Indians and Inuit", and editor of "Hang On To These Words: Johnny David's Delgamuukw Evidence", published in 2005.

Dr. Mills discussed Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en attitudes toward forestry, specifically their rejection of clear-cutting. Historically, First Nations have been involved in the logging of their territories, but when clear-cut logging was introduced in Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en territories, they protested, which, along with other their other land rights claims, led to the landmark case Delgamuukw vs. the Queen. According to Dr. Mills, clear-cutting concerns Indigenous People because of its impact on all aspects of the environment. Hwagwis, the Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en worldview in which all aspects of the environment are alive and need to be respected, is violated by indiscriminate clear-cut logging, leading these people to speak up for the land they have been stewards of since time immemorial.

Ms. Karyn Sharp is Dene from Northern Saskatchewan. She is a Lecturer in First Nations Studies at UNBC and is currently completing her PhD at Simon Fraser University in Archaeology. She earned her BA from Radford University, and her MA from the University of Utah. Her current research interests include First Nations resource planning, traditional environmental knowledge, traditional subsistence in the modern world, and land use studies.

Ms. Sharp discussed the history of traditional environmental knowledge and explored how its principles and methodologies might be made use of in the related field of forest history. Indigenous peoples' evolving knowledge of their local environments provides an important template for forest management, as do their adaptations to and oral transmission of such knowledge. Local, sustainable, small-scale models of aboriginal land management should be extended to forestry, although there are difficulties in adapting the principles of traditional environmental knowledge to modern business

practices. Still, the promise of such a framework is demonstrated by specific Dakeh examples of forest management, including the keyoh, culturally modified trees, and controlled burns.

4) Forestry History in Our Communities: Robson Valley and Prince George

Panel discussion moderated by **Melanie Karjala**

Mrs. Marilyn Wheeler is a McBride historian, researcher, and health activist. In 1955 Marilyn Wheeler came to Canada from England for two years to teach in Saskatchewan – and never went back. She and her husband moved to McBride in the Robson Valley and since then Marilyn has taught school from kindergarten to grade twelve, farmed, raised a family, and become a writer. Ms. Wheeler was elected for many years to the Robson Valley Regional District and several health and hospital boards; was appointed a justice of the peace, and has been involved in many local organizations including the local museum society, farmers' institute, public library and health association. Ms. Wheeler's book "The Robson Valley Story: a century of dreams" was first published in 1979 and has since been updated and re-published in 2008.

In her presentation, Ms. Wheeler discussed the history of the railway and early settlement in the Robson Valley area from the turn of the twentieth century to the present. After situating the area geographically, she described the trajectory of logging in the area, from tie cutting and pole logging for the railway to small scale, local mills and eventually to big industry. In the course of this history, she talked about the geographic and communicative challenges of building the railway and communities, fire, and the cyclical markets of the lumber industry. Today, she sees the renewed interest in 'little specialty mills' as a recognition of the past and a way into the future.

Dr. Valerie Giles is a history enthusiast who has had extensive experience conducting historical research, and is the author of various historical papers, an annotated bibliography, reports, and books. She has a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Simon Fraser University, and in 1994, she graduated from the University of British Columbia, with a PhD in Policy Studies. She currently resides in Prince George, and has served as a sessional instructor in the Master of Education program at UNBC, teaching the history of curriculum development in Canada.

Dr. Giles situated forest history in the twentieth century in a provincial context. She estimates that, in the early twentieth century, there was somewhere around six hundred sawmill companies in the area surrounding Prince George. Though a local pulp industry was considered as early as 1921, the famous \$200 Industrial Forest Services Report concluding that a pulp mill using industrial wastewood was viable, was not commissioned by Minister Ray Williston until the end of the 1950s. As a result of this report, both Northwood Pulp Mill and Prince George Pulp and Paper Mill were built by 1964. Technological and research innovations across the province paralleled the consolidation of small companies in the late 1960s and the corresponding decline in market prices. Most of those involved in forestry who she quotes recalled a resourcefulness that was necessary, given the remote and occasionally harsh conditions, but also exciting and character forming.

5) Exploring Our Roots: Forest History Research Methodology

Panel discussion moderated by **Dr. Ted Binnema**, UNBC History Program

Dr. Tracey Summerville is an Assistant Professor in the Political Science department at the University of Northern British Columbia. She earned her PhD at Laval University. She has published various papers on natural resources and on the environment particularly, as they relate to sustainability. She also serves as a member of the BC Studies editorial board, and is past president of the British Columbia Political Studies Association.

Dr. Summerville outlined the methodology and approaches of the Upper Fraser Historical Geography Project, on which she worked with Dr. Greg Halseth, Dr. Gail Fondahl, Dr. Aileen Espiritu, and Mr. Kent Sedgwick. The announcement of the closure of the Upper Fraser community propelled the

group to collect the stories of the sawmill communities along the Upper Fraser. Though she was interested especially in forest policy, the research team was fascinated by the story of technology and change in these industries and communities. Through open houses, oral histories, and photographs, goals and content of the project were determined through the communities themselves. Maps and collective histories were created by the communities, but within an academic framework. The project itself is ongoing.

Mr. Mike Jull is a registered professional forester who has been working in the interior of British Columbia in public, private, and university sectors for over twenty-five years. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in forest resource management from University of British Columbia and has a Master's degree in silviculture. His interests in long-term silviculture research led him to the north in 1990 and became manager the Aleza Lake Research Forest in 2001. He has been here ever since.

As a historian of the Aleza Lake Research Forest, Mr. Jull attempts to understand the broad connections between ecological and historical narratives. The 9,000 hectare Research Forest was established in 1924 to look into sustainable forest practices in the sub- boreal spruce zone where logging had already occurred. The records are typically administrative and organizational, but also include reports, photographs, maps, and timber sale documents. Significantly, they allow for the creation of a history of the landscape and emphasize the importance of geographical context. In the future, Mr. Jull plans to continue collecting oral histories and to use these to understand the interactions between communities, First Nations, and the Research Forest.

Ms. Barb Coupé has a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of British Columbia. She has been a registered professional forester since 1980; owns a consulting firm, Arboreal Communications Services, and is the editor of the Forest History Association of British Columbia newsletter. She is now a Master's student at the University of Northern British Columbia in Interdisciplinary Studies, taking all kinds of interdisciplinary approaches to her research.

Ms. Coupé outlined the forest legacies left by Dr. Vladimir Josef Krajina. She described the story of his life, from his precocious academic career in Czechoslovakia through his contributions to the Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification. She related that his experience in the Czech underground resistance during World War II, and then as an elected official in the Czech opposition, uniquely prepared him to resist conventional forestry policies in BC and to link ecosystems to forest management. Ultimately, his development of an ecosystem classification based on biology, geology, and climate allowed forestry to become more sustainable. As a professor at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Krajina influenced generations of foresters, many of whom Ms. Coupé has interviewed.

6) From Exploration to Development: Bringing Forest History Forward

Panel discussion moderated by **Dr. Ted Binnema**

Mr. Stan Chester, RPF (retired) and president of the Forest History Association of British Columbia since 1999, graduated from UBC with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 1956. Mr. Chester joined the Protection Division of the BC Forest Service after graduation and then the Federal Fire Research Branch in Ottawa. In 1966 he returned to British Columbia joining the Englewood Logging Division of Canadian Forest Product as a Fire Control Officer. He then moved to the CFP Vancouver Office in 1976 where he worked until he retired in 1997.

Mr. Chester spoke of the pivotal nature of forestry in the development of British Columbia. As a result, preserving the documentary, oral, and photographic records is crucial in present and future understanding of the culture, economy, ecology, and policy. The anomalous growth in the industry in the past sixty years must be remembered through the location and recording of oral histories, the preservation of artifacts, and through the support and patronage of local museums and archives. The internet and computers should be used as tools to become active in local forest history organizations

and projects, but they should not become substitutes for paper records. In the end, the quality of our collective memory of the forests will depend on the individual.

Ms. Emily Jane Davis is a PhD candidate in UBC's Geography department. Her research is a comparative project about the multiple changes and challenges that forested landscapes and communities in interior BC and eastern Oregon are experiencing. She has also served as the inaugural coordinator for NiCHE's Forest History group, and thereby met and learnt from forest history enthusiasts across BC.

Ms. Davis discussed the role of remembering and preserving historical records in today's data-rich age. Though we are inundated daily with information through the internet and digital networks like the Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE), the very abundance challenges the historical practice of close readings, offering instead a constant stream of new sources and new ways of conducting research. Comprehensiveness, then, threatens to replace expertise in the face of an essentially unknown audience. Despite these challenges and ever shifting measures, however, Ms. Davis argues that we should continue to save and collect, ultimately using the digital world as but one of many tools for communication. People and the relationships between them thus become the most important resources in the preservation and maintenance of vitality in forest history.

(You can download Emily Jane's talk at the NiCHE site referred to above: [Preserving History in a Digital Age](#)).

Dr. Anne Marie Goodfellow is the network manager for THEN-HiER (The History Education Network). She has a PhD in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia. She has managed a number of projects related to social studies teaching and the curriculum, and has written several publications on the topic. Her research interests include early relations between colonists and Indigenous People in North America, and the history and consequences of the language contact on this continent.

Dr. Goodfellow overviewed The History Education Network, THEN-HiER, a collaborative network bringing together historians and history educators across Canada. She explained in detail THEN-HiER's interactive website (www.thenhier.ca), discussing how becoming a member will benefit forest historians. The website collects and presents research and resources, offers sources of funding, and displays curriculum and policy documents, organized by region. Dr. Goodfellow encouraged members of the Forest History Association to post resources on the website which educators might make use of in those sections of educational curriculum that leave space for forest history.



CONFERENCE LUNCHEON SPEECH ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2009

by Mel McConaghy

When I was told the theme for this convention was the Social Impact of Sawmilling and Logging in our communities and not the Economic Impact. I thought if it hadn't been for the money, who would have ever wanted lived in places like Aleza Lake or Penny, Snow Shoe, Newlands, or any of the small mill communities along the east line. It was the mills and logging that created an impact socially. Mills meant work and pay checks so the people went to these small, some times isolated communities. There they got a job; the single men lived in bunkhouses and ate in the cook houses. Married men with families rented a company house or built a home for their families. Single men met and married girls in the community and started families.

In a lot of these communities, the only means to the outside world was to catch the passenger train or the local that ran from Prince George to McBride twice a week. It had a passenger car as well as a

freight car. Big Bruce Douglas was the conductor on this local for years and was almost legendary for his feats of strength and his good nature. He knew almost every one who rode his train by their first name and always had a smile and a pleasant greeting for them. The people loved him. He would lift crates or anything else that had to be unloaded, out of the freight car, onto the platform or on to the ground to the amazement of everyone watching.

These people built community halls. The men would decide they needed a base ball diamond so they would build one. The women would form woman's groups and would have meetings and teas; they would chip in and cater dinners for the dances. They would have card and book clubs; they would have a community with spirit that over the years would bind them together. Of course these communities were made up of people and people, being people, wouldn't always agree and had their little power struggles and squabbles, but they did learn to co-exist and to compromise.

I lived and worked in one of these communities in the 1950's called Aleza Lake. By the time my mother moved the family from Prince George, the town was already in its decline; a fate that was happening to all the mill towns along the East line. It was like a cancer creeping ever so slowly along over the next 60 years. This cancer was called progress.

During the late twenty's early thirties there were two sawmills in Aleza Lake that supported a hotel with a bar and two pool halls for recreation as well as the stores. In the early fifties, when we lived in the community, there were still about 15 families living there and a store. Most of the men living there at that time, worked three miles east at the S.B. Trick Saw Mill or in their bush operations, that were still operating or another seven mile east, at Upper Fraser Saw Mill.

One or another community would have a dance on a Saturday night and a ball tournament on Sunday. A good part of a community would pack up some picnic lunches, their children, and their ball team and dance half the night away, then play ball on Sunday. The families would camp out or stay with friends; the single men would sleep in their cars. This was the 1950s remember, and these were all tough, hard working men, so there would be liquor involved.

I remember a dance at Aleza Lake, when Big Ike Jensen and Russell Rolander were having a drink out side the hall. It seemed Russell thought the dance was getting a little boring so he said to Ike, "Here take my bottle into the hall and I'll come in and accuse you of stealing it; we'll get a little fight going and create a little excitement." Ike agreed and took Russell's bottle into the hall and started passing it around. Russell had got delayed in a conversation, outside the hall and by the time he came in the bottle was almost half gone so he said to Ike, "Ike you Big S.O.B, you stole my Whiskey." Big Ike looked up at him with his big good natured grin and said, "Is this yours Russell, I'm sorry," and handed the bottle to him. Russell looked like he was going to cry as he whimpered, to ever one's delight. "No Ike, we're supposed to fight, ---don't you remember."

After the ball game, there would be a picnic, and there would be a lot of good natured kidding between the teams about who won, but no one really cared, because every one was having a good time. Life in the communities of the bigger mills was a lot more civilized, especially when the town was built near the mill site. Giscome, Upper Fraser and Sinclair Mills residents had the luxury of electrical power and in some cases running water.

In our case, at Aleza Lake, the water was running in a creek that crossed the road in front of our house, between the road and the railway tracks. It was the job of us boys to pack the water from the creek up to the house, and on wash days or bath days that constituted a lot off trips with a water pail in each hand. Our homes were lit by kerosene or naptha lamps. We won't get into the joys of the outdoor toilets, especially on a -30 degree night. But we were working and were getting a pay check, our stomachs were full, and we were warm from the heat of the wood burning kitchen stove and the little oil burning heater that sat in the living room.

As far as fuel for the little oil burning heater was concerned, it wasn't a problem. The fuel truck that came out from the Esso agency in Giscome would fill our 45 gallon drum, and then we packed it into the house, twice a day or when ever it was required, in a two gallon pail and fill the tank on the back of the heater.

Fire wood for the kitchen stove was another matter. We boys would spend our evenings and a good part of a couple of weekends in the fall, cutting dry snags out in the bush behind the house. Then we would borrow one of our neighbours', the Vanderrites', horses and skid the snags in, then buck them to length, split and pile them in the lean-to beside the shed out back.

Our mother had been widowed twice and was raising four of us boys by herself, and was as tough as any foreman I ever had working in the bush; she had to be with the four of us boys to control. My older brother Jim and I were working at Tricks Saw mill, about four miles east of our place and the two younger boys were going to school in the little one room school in the village.

One day when Jim and I came home after work, there was a big cow moose pacing up and down, in front of the house on the road looking mad as hell. At first she wasn't going to let us into the driveway, and when we finally did get into it, we had to run for the door. Mom told us the cow had a calf that was trapped in the creek and couldn't get out because of all the willows over hanging it. We didn't want to be held hostage in our own home, so we decided that Bud and Bruce, the other two boys and me would distract the cow while Jim made a dash to the creek to rescue the calf. Well, I'm here to tell you it worked, but not without a lot of tense moments, especially for Jim who had the cow between himself and the safety of the house.

Although at the time there was no such thing as computers, television or electricity at Aleza Lake, we still never seemed to get bored, and all of us boys grew up knowing what it meant to be responsible and have good work ethics. When we had time, we would play ball, went hunting, or swimming in the summer. In the winter, we could always shovel snow or visit the neighbours, play cards and have coffee. And of course there were the teenaged daughters of some of the residents that could keep a young teenaged man's mind occupied.

On the weekends, we would venture into Prince George. Sometimes this was no easy task in the spring and fall when the road was breaking up. When we finally got there, we would do a little shopping, a little socializing, and of course a little partying.

Some nights at home we would just sit around the living room and watch the radio or read or talk and on a night like this, or any other night, if you happened to be outside our home you would hear a lot of laughter coming from inside.

When you have a widow with four sons living in a four-room house, there isn't a lot of privacy. Because I liked to read, I used to go out and read in the outhouse for a little privacy. One day my older brother, Jim, had to go to the toilet, and instead of shouting at me to get the hell out of there, he got the 22-caliber rifle and shot through the roof. After that I spent many an uneasy hour in the outhouse reading with one eye on my book and the other eye peeking out through a knot hole at the house. Oh, by the way none of us ever got shot.

But alas, progress started rearing its head, the road, or Giscome Highway as it was called—although it was just a dirt road—improved. Travel to and from Prince George became faster.

Over the years as the big mills and logging started to get more efficient and needed more wood, so they started buying up some of the smaller mills and shutting them down. The people living in the smaller communities lost their jobs and had to move to the bigger communities or to Town, as everyone called Prince George at the time, although it was fast becoming a city. Then Prince George exploded! The big companies moved into the lumber industry and there were only two big mills left on the East line,

Giscome and Upper Fraser, but they would be doomed in the face of Progress along with their communities.

The Community Halls have gone; never again will the sound of the music and laughter from one of these halls be heard on a Saturday night. Never again will the cheers when some hit a home run be heard on one of the overgrown ball fields. There are a few people left in some of these communities, mostly older people who have spent a good part of their lives working and raising their families in these places—people who are happy with the peace and quiet and the memories.

These places will be remembered for the people they produced: people like the author—Jack Boudreau and the radio personality, for whom part of the Prince George Library was dedicated,—Bob Harkens, and many other people from these communities who have all contributed to our history.

If you talk to an old-timer in Prince George today, they might tell you about growing up in one of the communities along the East Line, and they will smile as they reminisce. The community spirit, the way of life they led, and their work ethics have made them better citizens, and this has been passed on to their families.

I'm now 73 years old and I'm a product of the past and one of these communities and I enjoy their history. But like a lot of old men, I look around and think, is all this progress we are witnessing for the better and what social impact has the Sawmilling and Logging Industry made on our community, Prince George.

I know one thing for sure, without the Forest Industry, Prince George might still be a fur trading post on the banks of the Fraser River and without it we wouldn't have the history we are now celebrating, here today.



BELETED "IN MEMORIAM": GEORGE EDWARD MATHESON JULY 21, 1931-FEBRUARY 24, 2009

George was a veteran storyteller and enthusiastic citizen of the Okanagan, and according to the *Vernon Morning Star*, "was most anxious that its rich history be preserved." He was the owner of Kettle Valley Publishing and author of 3 books: *The Vaders' Caboose*, *Cacuts in your Shorts*, and *Hogs and Cabbagers*. The *Morning Star* also stated that much of his work "was innovative, unheralded, and ahead of its time." At the FHABC's AGM in Kamloops in 2007, George volunteered to work on an Interior Museums Forest History Archive. In 2009, he distributed a report to interested parties around the province that summarized the needs and wishes regarding forest history. The FHABC would like to extend sincere condolences to his partner, Valerie Humphreys. To read more on this remarkable man, go to ABC Bookworld's site: http://www.abcbookworld.com/view_author.php?id=1253.



A LOOK BACK AT FHABC HISTORY

As we were working on the conference, one of the organizers asked: "Why is the Association called the Forest History Association of BC and not the BC Forest History Association?" She had inadvertently used the latter name in one of the information sheets. Good question, and one that was originally answered back in April 1992 by John Parminter. His answer bears repeating:

The FHABC was formed in 1982 as the BCFHA; the first committee consisted of Bill Young, Chief Forester, Dr. Jack Thirgood (UBC's Faculty of Forestry), Gerry Burch (BC Forest Products), Clay Perry (IWA), and John Parminster (BC Forest Service). As John wrote in 1992:

At the first executive meeting, ... a change in the name from "BC Forest History Association" to the "Forest History Association" was approved. This became necessary as permission from the Provincial Secretary was required before any company of association beginning with the words "British Columbia" could be registered. The use of "Forest History" as the start of the name was simpler as this required only the permission of the provincial Chief Forester. Since he was one of the founding fathers of the association, we had no trouble in getting his endorsement.



BOOKS, LINKS, and SUCH

The Green Chain: Nothing is Ever Clear Cut by Mark Leirin-Young, published by Heritage House 2009

The Green Chain looks at the past, present and future of forestry through interviews with environmentalists, loggers, scientists and others. Raw log exports, environmental devastation, making a living . . . all are discussed in this exploration of the problems

Mark discusses the topic with 22 eloquent, knowledgeable and passionate people, including:

- ForestEthics and PowerUP Canada founder Tzeporah Berman;
- activist Severn Cullis-Suzuki;
- author John Vaillant (*The Golden Spruce*);
- former Greenpeace executive and Greenspirit founder Dr. Patrick Moore;
- poet laureate and former logger George Bowering;
- Forest Products Association of Canada president and CEO Avrim Lazar;
- union spokesman Wade Fisher;
- documentary filmmaker Velcrow Ripper (*Fierce Light*).

The book is based on the "mockumentary" of the same name. (*Editor—I have seen this film and highly recommend it; Mark has produced a remarkably balanced work. Each of the characters avows that he or she loves trees, albeit from a different perspective*).

For more information: see Mark's website: <http://www.thegreenchain.com/>.

One Hundred Rings and Counting: Forestry Education and Forestry in Toronto and Canada, 1907-2007 by Mark Kuhlberg; University of Toronto Press; 2009.

According to the University of Toronto Press website, while this book focuses on Forestry education at the U of T., it also traces the development of conservationism in Canada (<http://www.utppublishing.com/product.php?productid=2402&cat=0&page=1>).

Mountain Timber: The Comox Logging Company in the Vancouver Island Mountains by Richard Somerset Mackie; Sono Nis Press, 2009

From ABC Bookworld: "In this sequel to his best-selling *Island Timber*, Richard Somerset Mackie follows the Comox Logging Company from 1926 to 1946 as it moves from the logged-over Comox Valley to the challenging terrain of the Vancouver Island Mountains. A stunning visual feast, this is

social history and logging history at its best. "For more information: see the Sono Nis Press website: <http://www.sononis.com/book145.stm> and page 28 of *ABC Bookworld* Winter 2009-2010: at http://www.abcbokworld.com/newspaper_files/newspaper_2009_4.pdf.

Good Timber: Songs and Stories of the Western Logger

For those of you who are in (or visiting) the Victoria area this multimedia show at the Royal B.C. Museum runs from July 2 to August 28. According to the *Province* newspaper this show is a musical revue "celebrating the gold age of logging in BC" and was inspired by the logging camp poetry of Robert E. Swanson.

Tickets start at \$15.00, show runs Monday through Saturday at 8 pm. For more details check out the June 20th story in the *Province* (<http://www.theprovince.com/entertainment/Lumberjack+lore+limelight+Royal+Museum/3178185/story.html>) or contact the Royal BC Museum.

Logging by Rail: The British Columbia Story by Robert D. Turner; Sono Nis Press, 1990

Fourth printing! An insightful history and a sweeping portrait of railroad logging in British Columbia. The book begins with the small rail logging operations of the 1880's and continues through the height of the steam era, two world wars, the Depression, the change to truck logging and the last steam and dieselized logging lines. Stunning photos, specialized steam equipment, maps, plans, interviews and a carefully researched text highlight this favourite. Winner of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association Book Award. 500 photos including many in colour. (<http://www.sononis.com/book018.stm>).

For an article on railway logging see the Campbell River Museum webpage entitled "Railway Logging and a Fascination with Trains" at <http://crmuseum.ezabu.com/2010/02/04/railway-logging-might-be-in-the-past-but-not-the-fascination-with-trains/>.

"Some factors affecting the commercial value of spruce wood" a 1920 MA thesis by Irene Mounce; found on UBC's First 100 Theses website: https://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/2429/8513/1/ubc_1920_a8_m8_s6.pdf.

The Exploration Place Museum in Prince George has a number of forestry-related online exhibits including Forest Branch Letters, Northwood documents, and the Blake Dickens Forestry Collection.

Check these collections out at:

http://www.openingnewcaledonia.ca/pls/cats_web/WEB_EXHIBITIONS.show_exhibition?WEID=58&LANG=EN

A snapshot of early Forest Service communications can be found here:

http://www.openingnewcaledonia.ca/pls/cats_web/WEB_EXHIBITIONS.show_item?ITEM_ID=701&LANG=EN&PAGENUM=1. Be sure to click on Accession: 2003.70.6 for a humorous story of a boast and an axe; Accession: 2003.70.6 for two Timber Cruiser poems; Accession: 2003.70.19 for a parody composed by C.D. Orchard, and many more items.

The NiCHE site (<http://www.niche-canada.org/foresthstory>) has some interesting tidbits:

Some thoughts on the changing role of photographs as a source of historical information.

Submitted by David Brownstein on May 4, 2010:

Jill Delaney, Photo Archivist with Library and Archives Canada, shares some thoughts in a recently posted interview. You can find the complete text in the Forest History Methods section, which is located at <http://www.niche-canada.org/foresthstory/methods>. This site also contains information on Oral Histories, Reconstruction Techniques and Forest/Soil history, and the Northern BC Archives at UNBC,

“Hewers of Wood: Canadian Biomass Energy in the Age of Coal” an audio of a presentation given by Josh MacFadyen at the American Society of Environmental History Conference. Portland, Oregon. March, 2010 : <http://www.niche-canada.org/node/9140>.



NOTICE: MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE

The FHABC has reluctantly decided that an increase in membership dues is necessary. At the AGM in September, the new rates were approved as follows:

\$15.00 per year

\$40.00 per 3 years



EMAILS PLEASE

Have you noticed all the links listed in this newsletter? So much information is available online these days. While the newsletter will continue to bring you original stories, we are increasingly tapping into internet sources of information. In that vein and to help us reduce costs, **we are requesting that members have their newsletters delivered by email**. That being said, we recognize that some members may not be connected to the internet. Rest assured that we will continue to offer a hardcopy of the newsletter, but please consider receiving your copy in via email if at all possible. Thanks so much.



NIMPKISH WIND

by Dr. Jack Ker

And now for a real treat: the following anecdote is courtesy of Dr. Jack Ker (former assistant professor in the Faculty of Forestry at UBC) from the days he worked on the Coast (Thurston Bay and Alert Bay) as a forest ranger from 1941 – 1945. He is in process of integrating his reminiscences with excerpts from the *Encyclopaedia of British Columbia* (edited by Daniel Francis) and *Voices from the Sound: Chronicles of Clayoquot Sound and Tofino 1899 – 1929* (by Margaret Horsefield). Once this project is complete, he will distribute it to his children and to appropriate archives. The FHABC is delighted to be included on that list and looks forward to more stories coming our way. Thanks so much, Dr. Ker!

A Nimpkish wind was a very strong wind that blew from the southwest into the V-shaped harbour at Alert Bay from out of the Nimpkish Valley. It occurred when the prevailing wind in Broughton and Johnstone straits were changing from southeast to northwest, coincident with a very sharp drop in barometric pressure, from the normal 30.30 inches of mercury to less than 29".

I can best illustrate this phenomenon by recounting the following experience.

After taking the forest ranger launch Wells Gray to Vancouver for its annual overhaul one winter, I and my launch engineer, Bill Money, were returning to Alert Bay. We over-nighted at Thurston Bay, site of the

former Forest Service marine station, on Sonora Island, and then headed up Johnstone Strait. The ship's barometer read 30.30" when we left Thurston Bay, but by the time we passed Yorke Island and checked with the army patrol there, we noticed that the barometer had dropped precipitously to a reading of 28.80"! Bill and I looked at one another and said "We had better head for Telegraph Cove; Alert Bay will be no place to lie tonight!" While Alert Bay was wide open to the south-westerly Nimpkish winds, Telegraph Cove was situated in a tiny niche on the northeastern shore of Vancouver Island with high treed hills on either side and with a narrow entrance facing north. So we tied up in Telegraph Cove and listened to the gale howling overhead! The next morning the wind had blown itself out and the sun was shining brightly. But as we crossed the strait and entered Alert Bay we saw an assortment of fish-boats that had been wrecked on the shore, and in the middle of the bay was a Forest Service launch. It was the M/V Nesika, the launch of the Forest Ranger at Port Hardy! So we went alongside the Nesika, and a bleary-eyed launch engineer greeted us warmly.

We tied up at the forestry float in Alert Bay, then invited the engineer of the Nesika aboard the Wells Gray. Over a cup of coffee, he told us how he came to be out in the middle of the bay. His boss, Forest Ranger Paul Johnson, had been feeling unwell so had decided to go down to Vancouver to see a doctor. He and his engineer had brought the Nesika to Alert Bay so that Paul could catch the south-bound steamer there. But the engineer had no experience in running the launch by himself. He knew how to start and maintain the engine but little else!

The Nesika had been tied up at the Hospital dock. Big seine-boats had tied alongside, abreast, and their crews had headed for a beer parlour. When the storm erupted, the wind had shifted from the southeast to the south-west. It was then hitting the vessels tied on the outside of the dock broadside, and the vessels were rolling at their berths. The engineer of the Nesika knew that he must get away from the dock or his launch would be battered; the teak rubbing-strips on its sides were in danger of being torn off. In desperation, the engineer started the engine, then grabbed a fire-axe and cut the ropes holding both his vessel and the seiners beside his launch, somehow disengaging his launch from the vessels tied outside of the Nesika.

He then steered the Nesika out into the bay, keeping her bow into the wind. First he disengaged the stem anchor and dropped it into the bay, then managed to get the bow anchor loose and dropped it in as well, so as to keep the bow of the launch pointed into the wind. But he still feared that the anchors might drag and that the launch would land up on the beach like so many others! So he kept the engine running all night to make sure that he was not beached!

No wonder he was glad to see us the next morning after that ordeal! He was so shaken by it that he slept that night on our launch, with both boats safely tied up at the Forestry float. In retrospect, he would have been safer if his ranger, Paul Johnson, had tied the Nesika at the Forestry float that night, for float had been erected straight out from the shore—his launch would have been facing directly into the wind and the seas when the storm hit. However, his decision to get away from the Hospital dock and use his engine to keep the Nesika under power was undoubtedly a wise decision on his part.



FHABC Business
by Stan Chester, President

1. Alan Orr-Ewing book

The draft copy of the book is now in the editing phase. The book traces Alan's leadership role in developing the forest genetics, tree selection, tree breeding, and nursery and stock handling practices in forest reforestation in BC and clearly establishes Alan's place as "The Father of Reforestation in BC."

2. Expansion of the Forest History Association of BC in the Interior

Following the AGM last September, we have been working with members in Prince George to create a stronger forest history presence in that part of the province. Progress is slow but we are hopeful that a Chapter or similar structure will develop there in the near future. Please contact us if you can help out.

3. Corporate Histories.

The rapid growth of the BC forest industry over the last 60 years created many forest companies whose stories need to be told. Mike Apsey and other members of the FHABC are encouraging company founders and senior executives to “tell their company stories”. To date, we are having some success, although we know that the task will never be finished.

4. Company Records and Histories

With the drastic changes in recent years in the forest industry with company amalgamations, company down sizing, and companies going out of business or failing, there is a significant loss of company records, histories and stories. The FHABC is working with as many people as possible to remind them that these records are valuable and should be stored or archived so that this information will not be lost.

5. Book Prizes—Association of BC Forest Professionals

At the 2010 ABCFP AGM in Kelowna, the FHABC was pleased continue its annual practice of awarding book prizes to the top three students of the ABCFP Policy exam. Well done, students!

6. 100th Anniversary-BC Forest Service in 2012—BC Forest Service Centenary Society

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the BC Forest Service in 2012, the BCFS plans to publish a book and DVD, prepare commemorative artefacts, and hold or sponsor many local, regional or provincial events. FHABC executive member, Mike Apsey is president of the Centenary Society and is looking for any and all contributions. In addition, other members of the FHABC are assisting as required. Check out the BC Forest Service Centenary Society's website at <http://www.bcfs100.ca/bscripts/index.asp>.

7. Call for Volunteers

We are looking for your help and input on these or any other forest history projects. Plus please consider volunteering for the FHABC executive. Contact any of the executive if you can help out. Thank you.



This newsletter is the official publication of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. Please submit newsletter material and send changes of address to the Editor: Barbara Coupé, 1067 Heritage Crescent, Prince George B.C. V2M 6X2; Phone: (250) 562-1051; E-mail: bjcoupe@telus.net.

Membership is \$15 yearly or \$40 for three years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Art Walker, 564 Oliver Street, Victoria B.C. V8S 4W3; Phone: (250) 598-4455; E-mail: jaws564@telus.net.

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Website: <http://fhabc.org/>

Back issues (courtesy of the MoFR library):

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/Library/lib_Forest_History_Newsletter.htm