

# British Columbia



Published by the Forest History Association of British Columbia

No. Thirty-three

Victoria, British Columbia

September 1992

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF B.C. FORESTRY BY AN IMMIGRANT  
by Philip G. Haddock  
Part One of Two

As a departure from the usual emphasis on engineering, timber cruising, logging and sawmilling, my story will inevitably deal more with my special interests which concerned forest geography, ecology and silviculture. I think I first heard about B.C. forests and forestry from the late Dr. Percy M. Barr, whose role in B.C. forestry and forestry education has probably not been given the attention it deserves. However, a greater influence in my eventual coming to B.C. was my friendship with the late George S. Allen (Dean of UBC Forestry from 1953 to 1961) at Berkeley in the late 1930s. More on that later.

But, as background, I should refer to my first contact with the late Dr. Percy M. Barr (1897-1960). He was born in Watertown, Connecticut on July 22, 1897 but attended high school in British Columbia. World War I intervened before he got to university. He served in the Canadian Infantry from 1915 to the beginning of 1918, and saw action in France and Belgium. He then transferred to the Royal Air Force, becoming a pilot and Second Lieutenant. He began his interest in forestry with summer work with the B.C. Forest Branch in 1919, later graduating with a B.A.Sc. in forest engineering in 1924.



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Between 1925 and 1932, he was involved with problems of natural regeneration of interior spruce for the B.C. Forest Branch, centered at Aleza Lake, east of Prince George. During this period he had the able assistance of Dr. Braham Griffith. This research at Aleza Lake by Barr and Griffith resulted in Barr's Ph.D. thesis at Yale and was published as Bulletin No. 26 of the Yale University School of Forestry, entitled "The Effect of Soil Moisture on the Establishment of Spruce Reproduction in British Columbia."

Around 1930, both Dr. Barr and Dr. Griffith were involved with the development of the Green Timbers Nursery and the initial Douglas-fir plantation, the origin of which was recently celebrated. In 1927, Dr. Barr was put in charge of research for the B.C. Forest Branch. In 1932 he began his long career at the University of California, teaching forest mensuration and management. It was there that I first became acquainted with him.

During this period, Dr. Barr served as an advisor to Dean Finlayson of the UBC Faculty of Applied Science and to the President, regarding the development of forestry education at UBC. In 1945 he was awarded an honorary Sc.D. degree by UBC. In the Forestry School at the University of California, Berkeley, he rose to the rank of Full Professor in 1947. During World War II he attained the rank of Colonel in the U.S. Army Air Force in Air Intelligence. He served in North Africa and Italy, where I met him in Bari in 1944.

Dr. Barr returned to U.C. Forestry after the war and taught there until his death in 1960. In a biographical sketch published in "Forestry Education at U.C. -- The First 50 Years" (1965, Berkeley), it is stated: "To his associates and to his students, he contributed much in understanding of forestry, in approaches to organizing tasks, and in encouragement in the development of individual abilities." I certainly agree with this appraisal.

In the summer of 1936, before I returned to U.C. Berkeley to undertake graduate work, having spent two years with the U.S. Forest Service in the California mountains following my B.Sc. in Forestry at U.C. in 1934, I served as a field assistant for Dr. Barr at the university's school forest. This was a tract of some 1 200 hectares located in the mixed conifer forests of the Sierra Nevada between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe. It had been donated by the Michigan-California Lumber Company of Camino, Eldorado County, California, and named Blodgett Forest for one of the company's principals. It was largely cut over, but consisted of high quality land, and put under the direction of Dr. Barr, who established it over the years as a model school forest.

During that summer of 1936 I heard much about the great province of British Columbia, listening to stories and hearing romantic and exotic place names such as Mt. Robson, Cowichan Lake, Comox, The Forbidden Plateau, Squamish, Kamloops, the Cariboo and Peace River country. Also, later, I met a number of foresters from B.C. who knew Dr. Barr, some of whom studied at Berkeley.

In addition to the late George Allen, these included the late Finlay McKinnon, Ian MacQueen and George Stoodly. Subsequently, as an assistant to Dr. Barr in Berkeley, I noted photos in his office of the World War I planes he had flown, and of a faculty group from the Yale University School of Forestry which included Professor Toumey, Barr's major professor for his Ph.D.

Eventually, in the late 1930s, George Allen and his wife, Dorothy, came to Berkeley, where George, perhaps at Barr's suggestion, began his Ph.D. studies in plant physiology under the same program as mine. We became good friends, studying for examinations together in courses such as plant anatomy, cytology, and plant biochemistry. From him I heard much more about B.C. and his work with the biology of Douglas-fir, which led to his classic work co-authored by J.P. Owen, "The Life History of Douglas-fir" (Ottawa, 1972). George's scholarship and research were outstanding and at U.C. he was elected to the prestigious honour society Phi Beta Kappa. George and I kept in touch over the years and our friendship later resulted in my coming to B.C., for better or worse (next issue).

After entering civilian life following World War II, I served as an Assistant Professor of Forest Botany, teaching plant physiology to forestry students at the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, from 1946 to 1947. Then, jumping at the chance to get back to the west coast, I accepted an appointment as Assistant Professor in the College of Forestry at the University of Washington in Seattle, where I was responsible for both forest ecology and all the silviculture instruction. The next year, I was joined there by Dr. S.P. Gessell, a fellow graduate student from U.C. Berkeley, who initiated his outstandingly successful program at the U. of W. in forest soil science.

While at the U. of W. in Seattle I continued to hear much more about the land to the north in B.C. As a greenhorn to the Pacific Northwest I was ribbed by students and colleagues alike for my expressed skepticism as to the wisdom of the universal prescription, at the time, of "clear cut and burn" for all logging in forests of western Washington. During my stay in Seattle (from 1947 to 1953) I met a number of foresters from B.C., either as students or as visitors. These included Wally Hughes, John Livland, Bob Schultz, Larry Irving, Jack Bakewell, Roger Manning and others.

A fellow professor at the college was James Campbell Hay Robertson, a native of Scotland who had first come to B.C. in the 1920s and to UBC, but soon transferred to the U. of W. as a student and then, some years later, was appointed as Professor of Forest Management. He also had stories about B.C. and knew many people there. Also, I met the late Professor A.B. Recknagel of New York, formerly a Professor of Forestry at Cornell University and then a consultant for the St. Regis Company, and sometimes Visiting Professor at UBC.

Our first meeting was at a joint Canadian Institute of Forestry Vancouver Section and Society of American Foresters meeting in Bellingham, Washington, circa 1949. At the meeting there were a number of faculty and students from UBC, including Tom Wright, who held forth about the super Douglas-fir which grew in the Nimpkish Valley of Vancouver Island. At this meeting, Professor Recknagel said that he felt that sustained yield forestry was now assured in B.C. because of the heavy financial investments required for the then booming pulp mill industrial developments underway in the province. I am pretty sure that we heard about the recent Sloan Royal Commission and the introduction of Forest Management Licences as a new form of tenure.

In the summer of either 1949 or 1950, when I was an instructor at the University's Pack Forest, I again met Professor Recknagel when he kindly invited me to accompany him and others on his tour-of-inspection of lands purchased by St. Regis from Tom Murray, a Washington State logger who was famous for his "selective logging" of old growth Douglas-fir stands during the Depression. Praised by some and condemned by many as high grading, it was a way of making money when hemlock and other species were virtually unmerchantable and only high quality, old growth Douglas-fir could be logged at a profit. That style of harvesting was written up by Burt Kirkland and Axel Brandstrom, economists for the U.S. Forest Service, in the classic bulletin of considerable interest entitled "Selective Timber Management in the Douglas-fir Region" (1936, Washington, D.C.).

The field trip was by logging railroad into the foothills of the Cascades, southeast of Mineral, Washington, near Mt. Rainier, with silviculturists Leo Isaac and Phil Briegleb of the U.S. Forest Service, and Tom Murray, Jr. However, we never did find the old F.S. plots we were looking for, but had a good discussion regardless. I donated a slide of the group, taken on the trip, to the Forest History Department of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association in Portland, Oregon.

During my stay in Seattle, I once received a letter from the late Alan Moss, RPF, then forester at Kelowna for the Simpson Company and for many years the forester-in-charge of planning for and managing TFL 9 on Bear Creek, west of Kelowna across Okanagan Lake. He enquired of me, as the U. of W. silviculture staff member, about his regeneration problems in the Engelmann Spruce - Subalpine Fir zone. I had to tell him I knew practically nothing that could help him and, at that time, interior spruce was not a significant forest type in Washington state, and that I had no experience in spruce silviculture!

After I moved to B.C., Alan and I became very good friends and he was always most helpful in organizing field excursions on TFL 9 and in evening discussions in connection with the UBC Forestry fall field trips I organized in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the early 1950s, lodgepole pine was a very significant component of TFL 9 but was not even in the Allowable Annual Cut due to its then-believed unmerchantability. But that is another story!

### **Forest History Association of B.C. Annual General Meeting**

The 1992 Annual General Meeting of the FHABC was held on June 13 at Maple Ridge. Unfortunately, torrential rains "washed out" the planned field trip to the UBC Research Forest. However, Don Munro and Gerry Burch came to the rescue with an excellent tour of the local museum - with special emphasis on the area's early railroads (including logging railroads).

At the business meeting the 1992 - 1993 Executive were duly elected: President - Bill Backman, Past President - Bill Young, Vice-President - Bob DeBoo, Treasurer - Edo Nyland, Editor - John Parminter, Directors - Harry Smith, Don Grant, Clay Perry, George Brandak, John Little, John Murray and Terry Honer.

### **Over Eighty Years of Resolutions**

The Archival Committee of the Canadian Institute of Forestry has classified and indexed all the resolutions passed at CIF (and predecessor CSFE) annual meetings over the past 81 years. These have been classified under more than fifty subject headings.

### **Former Forest Service Launches**

Have you ever wondered what became of the many former Forest Service launches that were sold to private owners some years ago? Well, FHABC member Carl Highsted reports that many of the proud owners, both Canadian and American, have formed an informal association and meet periodically to swap stories and show off their vessels. The latest rendezvous was at Madeira Park (Pender Harbour) from June 26 to 28, 1992.

Negotiations are underway with the Maritime Museum in Vancouver to enable storage there of archival material relating to the launches. It is proposed that such material be gathered, catalogued, kept and made accessible to researchers at the Maritime Museum - under the guidance of several Trustees. The Trustees will be former Ranger District or Forest Service Maintenance Depot staff. An annual display of the working history of the launches, complete with some boats in attendance, is hoped for.

### **Cowichan Lake Research Station**

With this issue of the newsletter is enclosed a copy of FHABC member Ralph Schmidt's review of the history of the Cowichan Lake Research Station. This history was co-published by the FHABC and the Research Branch of the Ministry of Forests. The association intends to pursue additional opportunities to co-publish pertinent items on B.C.'s forest history.

### **In Memoriam - Gerry Wellburn**

British Columbia lost it's premier forest historian when Gerry Wellburn passed away earlier this year at the age of 92. Gerry was a Charter Member of the FHABC and was appointed Honorary President at our Annual General Meeting in Duncan in 1983.

### **Terry Honer Wins Twice**

FHABC Director Terry Honer was recognized this year by the Canadian Standards Association for his leadership in developing minimum standards for the measurement of primary roundwood products.

At this year's All Sooke Day - the annual celebration at Sooke - Terry entered a contest to estimate of the age of a tree section on display. It turns out he was only two years off the mark. The official count was 635 years and so Terry's guess of 637 years entitled him to split the \$200 first prize with another contestant who was also just two years off the pith.

### **David Douglas Society**

The 1992 Annual Meeting and Banquet of the David Douglas Society of Western North America will be held on December 7, 1992 in Portland, Oregon in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association. For information contact Bill Young at 6401 Conconi Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 5Z7 (652-3002).

### **Request for Information**

Mr. George L. Cornwall writes for information on the Kingcome River area. Mr. Cornwall was a member of a land survey party in the area in 1926 and is writing of his experiences during that time. He is particularly interested in information pertaining to the survey itself, logging history, the Union Steamship Company, the Halliday and Lansdowne families and the native settlement - all pertaining to the Kingcome River area.

If you have any information please write directly to:

Mr. George L. Cornwall  
P.O. Box 11  
Torrance  
Ontario  
POC 1M0

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Number 113 (Alco 2-8-2)

In June of this year I travelled to Woss, B.C. to present one of the FHABC's 1991 Awards of Merit to a representative group of men who were responsible for restoring Canfor's last active steam locomotive. Number 113, a 135-ton Alco Rod Engine (2-8-2) was used in the company's logging operation until 1966 and then for special occasions until 1976 when it was retired. In June of 1988 restoration began and Number 113 was made operational in time for Canfor's 50th anniversary picnic.

Number 113 has had a varied career. It was built in 1920 for the Portland, Astoria and Pacific operation. Later it became Number 6 at Port Alberni's Alberni Pacific operation. Under MacMillan ownership it later became Number 1055 in the Chemainus area until the Alco was purchased by Canfor in 1953.

Once the largest logging locomotive in B.C., that honour was eventually relinquished to another Canfor steam locomotive - Number 111, a Baldwin 2-6-6-2.

All those involved in the restoration of Number 113 as an operational steam locomotive are to be congratulated.

W. Young

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**The Crash of the B.C. Forester**

During the summer of 1946, a Forest Service inventory crew headed by George Silburn was conducting the second year of a four-year assignment to inventory, for the first time, the timber stands on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Other members of the crew were Gerry Burch - Assistant Party Chief, Hugh Lyons - Cruiser, Dave Hanson - Cruiser, Sig Techy - Compassman, Stan Gustavson - Compassman, Bob Breadon - Compassman, Don Cruikshank - Cook and Lew Green - Skipper/Engineer.

The area covered that summer went from the Alberni Inlet to the Hesquiat Peninsula, and the entire crew lived on the the launch the **B.C. Forester**.

In July of that year, we had returned from a ten-day fly camping trip up the Moyeha Valley, and when the boat picked us up we noticed the Chief of the Economics Division (to whom the survey group reported), Fin McKinnon, was aboard for his annual inspection. We were then told that we were going to Tofino for the night to take on fuel and supplies.

It was well recognized that Tofino was a difficult harbour for docking larger boats due to the strong tides and back eddies. The tide was running strong this particular day, but we had faith in our skipper/engineer as he approached the floating dock. Mr. McKinnon was watching from the aft deck. I was on the bow deck ready to throw the rope to the people on the dock. It was obvious the tide was worrying Lew, and to counteract it he must have felt that increased speed was warranted, at least up to the dock, and then he hoped to sharply reverse the engines for a "textbook" landing.

When it was obvious that the **B.C. Forester** was about to crash into a row of pilings, I tried to cushion the blow with a tire we used as a bumper. It might as well have been a marshmallow. The front starboard area was crushed in and, as the planks fell away, there was Sig Techy in the buff having a shower in the lower living quarters.

Sig took it with his usual good humour. "Hand me that towel," he said. "It's breezy in here."

There was no danger of sinking, but we all looked at Fin McKinnon to see his reaction. Naturally he was shocked, but he recovered enough to take off into the pilot house to blast George and the skipper. We had a new skipper in a few days, and meanwhile we were sent out for another ten-day fly camp while the boat was being repaired.

Gerry Burch

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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)  
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