

British Columbia



Published by the Forest History Association of British Columbia

No. Thirty-four

Victoria, British Columbia

January 1993

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

Because of my interest and teaching responsibilities at Seattle in forest ecology, I had a copy of "Forest Site Types of the Pacific Northwest" (B.C. Forest Service Technical Publication T.30, 1942 by R.H. [Dick] Spilsbury and D.S. Smith). This landmark publication was based on work which preceded the more extensive studies over the years of B.C. plant associations and forest ecosystems undertaken by Dr. Vladimir Krajina and his students after 1949.

Sometime around 1950, Dick Spilsbury, by then chief of research for the B.C. Forest Service in Victoria, upon my invitation, gave a lecture about his site-type studies to one of my classes at the U. of W. His co-author, the late Douglas Smith, had gone to U.C. Berkeley several years earlier for graduate study. That was about 1945, I believe, because when I visited the forestry school there just after the end of World War II the staff were still in shock from his very recent and tragic drowning in the treacherous surf of Stinson Beach, near San Francisco.



Before coming to British Columbia to live in 1953, I had never seen any of the province except Victoria and Butchart Gardens, until a trip in about 1950 to Green Timbers and Vancouver with a Pacific Northwest forest nursery organisation. We stayed at the Ranger School and toured the Green Timbers nursery when Tom Wells was in charge. All the stock grown was bare root and practically of that was Douglas-fir. I recall meeting several other B.C.F.S. foresters of the Reforestation Division, including Harold MacWilliams and Jack Long.

Several stories about Tom Wells may be of interest, obtained on my UBC student field trips in the fifties. Although research by George Allen had clearly demonstrated the advantages of seed stratification in improving the viability, vigour and uniformity of seed germination in Douglas-fir, Tom Wells refused to use stratified seed. He was of the firm opinion that the prompt and uniform germination of stratified seed predisposed the germinants to catastrophic losses should damping-off infections strike at a critical time. He preferred to use unstratified seeds which, with a longer period of germination, provided some early or late germinants which could escape or survive damping-off infections! Tom's word was law, so I do not know when seed stratification became standard practice in sowing seed beds in B.C.

Later on, a graduate student of Dr. Charley Rowles in Soil Science at UBC helped to develop a soil fertilisation regime to correct a nutritional problem partly due to mulching beds with high carbohydrate rice hulls from a cleaning plant in New Westminster. It was even rumoured that, in general, the minor weed problem which Tom had in his nursery, and of which he was quite proud, could have been due to a generally low soil nitrogen level!

His view of the practice of seed stratification reminds me of the probably apochryphal story of the early-day practice of what became the Roche seed extractory of Lulu Island. Seed purchasers from Europe who ordered Douglas-fir seed from B.C., without knowing which provenance to choose or to order, were provided with a seed mix of different provenances which was highly likely to provide them with at least a few trees that might survive in their locality.

Just before moving to Vancouver from Seattle to assume my job at UBC in the summer of 1953, I attended a joint field trip with the Vancouver Section of the CIF and the Puget Sound Section of the SAF. From Loon Lake in the new UBC Research Forest at Haney, the excursions included one by Dr. Griffith, regarding his series of soil moisture studies. Dr. Vladimir Krajina also conducted a tour and expounded on his ecological ideas and forest association and ecosystem studies. He very much impressed Mr. Ed Heacox, a forest management executive with the Weyerhaeuser Co. in Tacoma, Washington. Mr. Heacox later invited Dr. Krajina to visit some of the Weyerhaeuser Co. forest land holdings in Oregon and Washington with some of their forestry staff.

At this time (1953), the infamous 10 acre "hemlock-mistletoe" area at the southeast end of Loon Lake, adjacent to the camp, had just been clearcut, with the exception of a monumental western redcedar which blew down a few years later. This rather unique little pocket at the toe of a northeastern slope had apparently escaped the fire of 1860 which covered a large portion of the Research Forest. As suggested by the name, it consisted largely of mistletoe-infected western hemlock, large western redcedar and several mature amabilis firs. In the understory were regeneration of amabilis fir and western hemlock along with the associated vegetation found on such a wet soil.

According to my informants, the decision to clearcut this tract was made by gung-ho Douglas-fir enthusiasts against the protests of certain ecologists. It is an indication of the state of appreciation of forest ecology and of the requirements for Douglas-fir in that climatic zone that repeated efforts to slashburn and plant Douglas-fir met with abject failure.

In addition to visiting Loon Lake, the joint field trippers also visited one of the operations of Canadian Forest Products Ltd. in the Harrison Lake region. This was under the guidance of Tom Wright, then that company's chief forester. My major recollection of the excursion was viewing their pioneering practice of placing steel bands around large and valuable western redcedars before felling in order to reduce breakage.

In 1953, UBC Forestry Dean Lowell Besley resigned and George Allen was appointed. Upon Allen's first inquiry, I had declined interest in moving to UBC from the University of Washington. However, I had not shaken the local forestry world by my talents and, although I had tenure, I was still an Assistant Professor. To boot, my favourite U.S. politician, Adlai Stevenson, had just been defeated by Eisenhower and, worst of all, it was during the shameful McCarthy era. So, on the second try by Dean Allen, I decided to accept his offer of an Associate Professorship to help at UBC in the field of silviculture. With my wife Sheila and young daughter Janet, along with younger sons Perry, Phil and Chris, we moved to Vancouver in the summer of 1953.

In hindsight, I probably should have had my head examined to have even considered making such a move at that time, considering how little I knew of B.C., the Canadian government, the forests and foresters of the province and the knowledge and attitudes of the population toward silviculture. Of course, I was greatly impressed with the obvious vastness of the forest resources, the variety of forest types, great scenery, diverse topography and flora and fauna. But I was naive, to say the least, to think I could expect to have any appreciable effect on forestry practices. From the point of view of promoting ecologically sound forestry, coming from the Pacific Northwest to B.C. was a little like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. How I managed to survive I'll never know.

Forest History Projects Underway

West Kootenay Forest History Project

A group in the West Kootenays met during the summer to initiate a project to help preserve and interpret the region's forest history. The Kootenay Museum Association and Historical Society has agreed to host the project and plans are underway for tape recording interviews with forest pioneers as well as cataloguing regional forest history records.

For more information contact Peter Chapman, West Kootenay Forest History Project, Nelson City Museum, 401 Anderson Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 3Y3.

People of the Forest Industry: Tracing the Experience of Natives and Immigrants

The British Columbia Forest Museum in Duncan is developing an exhibition and book on the people of the forest industry. The purpose of this project is to expose as many people as possible to the ethnic diversity of the forest industry. Few B.C. residents are aware of the origins of the communities in which they live or of the ethnicity of the forest industry.

Phase one of the project involves the research and planning necessary to undertake a travelling exhibition and accompanying book. Phase two will involve the production and touring of the exhibition and publication of the book.

The exhibition is specifically intended to reach smaller communities which are often not visited by travelling exhibitions. The book is to provide a more permanent product from the research and development of the exhibition.

The work for phase one will take place from April 1993 to March of 1994. The second phase will last from April of 1994 to at least 1996. Financial support is expected through the Museums Assistance Program and Multiculturalism Canada. The B.C. Forest Museum will be using the Loggers Memorial Fund to support the project as well as seeking further support.

Finances

The annual audit of the FHABC Treasurer's financial statement and records took place in September of 1992. The auditors (Director R. DeBoo and Member V.G. Bate) found all to be in satisfactory order. Their report complimented the Treasurer for the orderly manner in which his records are maintained and presented.

Forestry Shorties.....



Jack Fleetwood - Memories of my Father

George Herbert (Bertie) Fleetwood, my father, was born in England on July 4, 1880. He grew up in Liverpool, the son of Dr. William John Fleetwood, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps. As a young man he apprenticed to the timber merchants Thomas Rimner and Sons to learn buying, selling and appraising timber.

During this period of his life (1901-1905), he saw the great timbers from Chemainus being received on the docks there. These measured 24 x 24 or 36 x 36 inches by 40 feet in length. He marvelled at their size and purity (no knots or blemishes).

Not long after that, he was encouraged to leave England. It seems Dad had some "girl trouble," cause enough in those days for his father to offer a quarterly stipend to take up permanent residence in a far-off "colony." So at age 25 he became one of British Columbia's famous remittance men.

He chose farming with his uncle Joe Binger near Kelowna as his first endeavour in B.C. After a short return trip to England in 1907, to find that both he and the old country had changed, and after an altercation with Uncle Joe in 1911, he followed friends to Vancouver Island. He found the comfortable and prospering small community of Cowichan Station and settled there, specialising in chickens. He married Edith Batchelor in 1913.

So, with his stipend, income from farming, as operator of the egg pool and later (in 1916) as manager of H. Ballard's store, Dad was able to raise a family and play an important role in this small community. Incidentally, from 1908 to 1919, the Cowichan District was known as the "Egg Basket of Canada."

In 1923, I started school and Dad became Secretary-Treasurer of the school board. He stayed in the grocery business until 1936. I quit my work in the woods to take over his job. After that, Dad continued market gardening and his community services. During the war he served with the Pacific Coast Rangers, a home defence militia unit. After a very long and productive life, he died on April 19, 1961.

So you see, not all residents nor all island communities were directly tied to timber harvesting. Since the first settler in 1862, the Cowichan District attracted people with stipends and the land was suitable for profitable farming. Mining and sawmilling came later - in the 1880s. But that's another story.

Forestry Shortie No. 7

Jack Fleetwood is an FHABC member and lives at Cowichan Station. For many years he was involved in logging and mining there. He served as a senior scaler with MacMillan-Bloedel's Shawnigan Division from 1956 to 1972. He is an avid historian, linguist and writer. He has been contributing to the **Cowichan Leader**, the district's oldest paper, for 65 years.

In 1958, he and his wife, Mabel, provided the land for Bright Angel Provincial Park. It was so named for his own guardian angel who, over the years, got Jack "out of many tight places."

Bob DeBoo

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Review

The Kitimat Provincial Forest - Its Past, Present and Possible Futures

by Robert J. Wilson

This eighty page report was prepared by Mr. Wilson as part of the requirements for registration in the Association of B.C. Professional Foresters. The primary purpose of the report is to compile the history of the Kitimat Provincial Forest. In addition, the author has offered some pertinent recommendations as future management options.

While some attention is given to describing the physical attributes, natural resources and human settlement of the area, the primary focus is on "the politics of forestry" during the 1900s. Of particular interest is following the history of some seventy-nine Special Timber Licences that had been awarded in the Kitimat Valley by 1908. The program of accelerated logging of this private timber and the follow-up major reforestation program is covered in detail. Public hearings in the 1960s and 1980s which addressed the future resource use and land use options for the valley are described.

The forest history of the Kitimat Valley is complex and often controversial, with its wide array of forest tenures and varied public interests. The report is well-written and recommended to anyone with a specific interest in the Kitimat Valley or a general interest in the province's forest history.

W. Young

Ex-Forest Service Vessel Squadron News

The latest rendezvous was held at Madeira Park (Pender Harbour) from June 26 to 28, 1992. Now the pictures are in the albums and the memories are sifting themselves out. Our main sense of those two days continues to be that it was a surprisingly warm and congenial time shared by people who had never met before, and of how much we enjoyed getting to know the people behind the boats.

It has taken some time to find a satisfactory basis for the relation of the ex-Forest Service personnel to the archive and the museum. The basis is as follows - the Vancouver Maritime Museum will act as custodian and also register and catalogue all items donated or loaned to the Forest Service Vessel collection. This will include records, working documents, logs, other material and photographs.

Three current, or ex-Forest Service, employees - one each from the Maintenance Depot, the Ranger complement and the Staff and Engineering side will be joint trustees. They will function as the centres of communication with the people who have the body of material which is needed, and they will provide a guarantee that some enterprising boat owners of a later date will not simply say "thank you very much" and proceed to scoff the goodies for their private collection.

Ken Morley, FHABC member and ex-Forest Service employee, is now retired and living north of Yellow Point on Vancouver Island. He has agreed to become a Trustee for the collection. Ken was at the rendezvous in June on his way back from the interior. He skippered several of the boats during his time on the coast and is keen to aid the effort to preserve their stories.

Tommy Edwards, retired Superintendent of the Forest Service Maintenance Depot, has agreed to be another of the Trustees as well as to be the subject of oral history interviews in order to get his forty years of work with the boats down on tape.

This arrangement has answered any reservations which I encountered thus far, but it will take a few months before we will have anything of substance to show for our efforts. The Vancouver Maritime Museum has kindly reduced our first year affiliation fee by 50% to \$180.00. This leaves us with a small reserve to handle expenses.

We are still formulating our methods and procedures with the Vancouver Maritime Museum and Forest Service personnel but in general these will provide for material to be in the collection as a donation or as a loan. There can also be a record of the location of other material not in the collection but available on request.

As far as news of the vessels is concerned, Harold and Joyce Campbell have sold **Forest Ranger II** to Douglas and Ingrid Mitchell, who will keep the boat berthed at the Van Isle Marina in Sidney.

The list of ex-Forest Service boats still afloat has now reached thirty. The level of detail about each one varies, and is sometimes minimal, but when we can do so an updated list will be produced for the current owners. The **Alpine Fir II**, **Salt Mist** and **Wells Gray** were up for sale last fall.

Norman Wright, On **Nesika**
Box 2490, Sidney, B.C. V8L 3Z4

News

Allan Klenman, FHABC member and axe collector extraordinaire, is the subject of an article in the February 1993 issue of **Harrowsmith** magazine. It provides excellent insight into the axe industry as well as Allan's interests in and expertise on the subject.

The next FHABC annual general meeting is slated for Saturday, June 12th at the Forest Museum in Duncan. Details will come in a later issue of the newsletter.

During the 1980s two publications came out of the Pacific Northwest - **Tall Timber** and **Donkey Doctor**. These dealt with logging museums, historical societies, equipment preservation, logging camps and information required by model railroad enthusiasts. Early in 1993 these will come back to life as a new quarterly publication entitled **Tall Timber - Short Lines**.

A one-year subscription will be \$16.00 in U.S. funds. For further information contact WMS-II Marketing, 4928 North Frace Street, Tacoma, Washington 98407-1318.

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

Membership in the Association is \$7.00 yearly, or \$30 for five years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Mr. Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4E8. (656-9276)
The President, Mr. Bill Backman, can be reached at 3943 Parkway Drive, Vancouver, B.C. V6L 3C9. (732-3075)