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**THE DE DIETRICH/TREW FAMILY IN NORTH AMERICA
by D. Michael Trew**

In August of 1906 my grandfather, Baron Charles Frederic de Dietrich died and left five daughters, one of whom was my mother, Amelie Anne. The Barons de Dietrich lived in Alsace-Lorraine and owned several large factories and forests, and although under German domination from 1870 to 1918, the de Dietrich were fiercely French. Amelie Anne attended an agricultural college in England and had a college friend, Nellie Trew. Her brother Michael became my father.

Amelie Anne and Michael married and lived in the home my mother had established in Virginia, where she had emigrated in 1909. In May of 1911 my brother Teddy was born. In mid-1912 they decided to move west, and because my dad had been to the West Coast on an RCMP mission, they moved to Victoria. I was born there in 1913.



Recycled paper

In 1915, while my Dad was assigned as Timber Controller for the export of Sitka spruce lumber to Britain for warplanes, we lived in the sawmill town of Port Alberni, where my sister Jacky was born. Sister Joey was born in May 1918, on our return to Victoria - where we lived in various homes and on a farm until January 1922. With Alsace being again French, my mother wanted to return and my Dad wanted to visit his aging mother in London. So we took the train to Halifax and sailed to Southampton.

After two weeks in London we went on to Alsace. We arrived at the end of January, on my ninth birthday, and settled in a 19-room ex-papermill mansion called La Papeterie near Reichshoffen, one of several historical villages in a now-French enclave along the German border. It was Barons de Dietrich country, where five large DD factories and some three square miles of DD forests employed much of the local population, who promptly started doffing hats at our passing carriage, even when it was just one of us children.

We were strange foreigners from America who spoke English but also a degree of French with an "interesting" accent since my mother and Aunt Marguerite, who had lived with us in B.C., spoke French to we children as much as possible. My Dad, in good British tradition, unfortunately had never tried to learn French. However, his children gained even more prestige when we acted as interpreters – especially because after a year at the village school we also spoke Alsacien, known as Elsässerditsch (a dialectal variant of German), which remained the local language for decades after the 1918 liberation of Alsace.

The Trews baffled the local population because we were not used to "being special," not even my mother, who, after 12 years of "pioneer living close to poverty" in North America, was more democratic than even the de Dietrich tradition of remaining close to "our people and fellow Alsaciens" who had suffered 50 years of German domination. We baffled them even more and were all the more accepted when my father started a poultry farm. He did most of the work himself, with the children helping where we could and when at home. But Ted and I were soon sent off to Paris to continue our education. He became an electrical engineer and I became a forester, despite several attempts to steer me towards engineering and a vocation in DD Company administration.

By the spring of 1931 our chickens were nearly wiped out by Newcastle's disease (which spread through the soil) and this forced my parents to find a farm elsewhere, far removed from Alsace. So we moved to near the Pyrenees mountains in southern France. But my father's health was failing and six months later it was decided that I should go back to B.C. and try to prepare the way for the family to return there so my Dad could again "function in an English-speaking world."

I was chosen to lead because Ted was near graduating as an engineer and had the opportunity for employment with de Dietrich Company. I still required two more years of forestry, and on hearing of our difficulties in France, our cousins in Virginia offered to help me gain entrance to a forestry school where they could "be family" during the two years I was "on my way home" to far-off British Columbia. I was accepted at Pennsylvania State Forestry College and graduated in 1935, after spending many holidays in Fairfax, Virginia where my mother's home still stood on a hill nearby.

On July 9, 1935 at 6:00 AM, with only a hand bag as luggage, I started hitchhiking and “riding the rails” across North America to accomplish what I had promised my Dad to do – prepare the way for the family’s return to our homeland. I learned a lot about the Depression that had hit America in 1929, on that journey with desperate men on the move, seeking jobs wherever rumours drew them. I learned the techniques of hitchhiking long distances and also how to avoid the “yard bulls” while riding the rods (freight trains) across the prairies of the Midwest and part way into the Rockies, where it became quicker to hitchhike when the train zigzagged its way up the mountain.

But from Spokane on traffic was too much north-south to make headway towards the West Coast, especially since the Grand Coulee Dam was being built. So with my last few dollars I rode the bus to Vancouver, B.C. where a small capital of \$300 would be available, which my dad had managed to rake up from some property he had once owned in partnership.

I had been traveling for 10 days steady, sleeping out wherever I could. Though those \$300 were a fortune they were a large part of what would be needed by the family once they reached the East Coast to start across the continent to B.C. So I promptly continued to Victoria where a school chum’s family (the Reeds) quickly helped me find work looking after a small berry farm, just out of town.

That job lasted to early September when I learned that a logging camp up the coast near Port Alberni was re-opening after being shut down for 4 years. So on October 9th I headed down the Alberni Canal with the first “working crew” to Camp 6 of the Alberni Pacific Lumber (APL) Company. It was a steam donkey and rail haul operation and we were a mottled crew, hired to do any work required – from reactivating the camp to fixing the six miles of track to the booming grounds at the beach. I did many jobs, but gradually moved up to speeder man, taking the loggers, who were beginning to fell and yard the logs out, to railcars 2 miles further up the track. I also had to bring up supplies from the beach.

In early February of 1936 I became a whistle punk, the signalman between the steam donkey down at the tracks and the chokermen strapping the logs to a skyline cable for yarding out. The three chokermen were often beyond sight of the donkey operator and careless signalling could get a man killed by the huge logs yarded on the skyline cable system. But on February 17th I received a telegram asking me to return home because Dad was seriously ill.

The company did all they could to get me on my way and promised me a job any time I returned, and the (by then) 70-man crew gave me money and warmer travel clothes to face the very cold weather prevailing back East. I traveled south to Seattle and across the U.S. by bus for six days to New York and then by the *SS Manhattan* to Le Havre, France. I reached Toulouse and the family by March 5th after two weeks of steady travel. Dad was in bed with TB and passed away April 3, 1938.

It was hard to accept that I had been so close to helping him back to Canada, which would have been in July, when Ted was to graduate. But we proceeded to continue planning that return, with Teddy giving up joining de Dietrich Co. The family sold the farm and moved to Paris to get passports and book passage, while I went to England to visit Dad's family. Unfortunately Teddy, being born in Virginia, was considered American and Mum was still French, so visas for Canada were delayed. It was decided that I would proceed to Montreal with Jacky and Joey (all Canadian-born) and buy a car and wait for Ted and Mum. They arrived a month later on September 14th.

I had bought a 1934 Graham Page for \$450 and we left the next day for B.C., travelling nearly straight through, via Toronto and Sarnia and then along the same route on which I had hitchhiked and rod-the-rods 2 1/2 years earlier, from Pennsylvania. We drove to Victoria, where we agreed to live. I left the family with Ted and went on to Port Alberni and the promised job – again with the APL Company. There I was assigned to a timber cruising crew north of Port Alberni. For his part, Ted soon got a job on James Island, close to Victoria, and we started building a capital and future back in our homeland.

Up Island, heavy snows were making my bushwork job less and less productive and so by the end of January I returned to Victoria. In February I bought a house on Sunset Avenue, a few blocks away from where Joey and I were born. We lived there for the next 12 years, while the war came and went in Europe. Teddy joined the RAF in 1940 and then the RCAF as ground crew, specialized in radar equipment. I eventually joined a newly-created B.C. Forest Service "Air Surveys, Forest Inventory and Mapping Section" in Victoria.

Just before the 1939 – 1945 war my aunt Marguerite de Dietrich joined us, and Jacky, who had married George Enoch in 1938, returned home with first daughter Lynn when George joined up and was sent to Ottawa. For her part, though physically handicapped by our grandfather's genetic "small person" physical heritage, Joey got a secretarial job and helped me keep the home going.

I was often out on field work, but the Trews again had a base in Canada to which we all contributed in our own way until gradually time took its toll. I hadn't quite managed to carry out the whole promise to bring the entire family back to B.C., but our father came back in spirit. The rest of the history of the lives, successes and failures of the Family Trew to this date is another story that may or may not be told.

For my part, I subsequently worked for the Parks Division of the B.C. Forest Service, followed that with International aid projects, then forest management and farm woodlot projects all over B.C. and finally I did some consulting work before I retired in Victoria.



FOREST HISTORY AND THE FOREST SERVICE RANGER SCHOOL by Geoff Bate

Even though fishing and mining were the mainstay of B.C.'s economy after the fur trade the harvesting of wood products was important as far back as the Hudson Bay Company era. In 1848 a sawmill was established at Millstream, near Victoria, and shipments to San Francisco started in 1849. As demand for mine props, railroad ties and lumber increased people logged to meet those needs. There were log drives on many Interior rivers prior to the end of the 19th century.

In 1865 the Colonial Government of Vancouver Island passed the *Land Ordinance Act*. This act provided for temporary tenures which allowed companies to harvest timber from government (Crown) lands but the act also provided that the land would revert to the Crown when the permit or license expired. This law remained in place as Vancouver Island and British Columbia amalgamated in 1866 and when B.C. joined Canada in 1871. Through the *British North America Act* the right to administer natural resources fell to the provinces. In a nutshell, this is why 95% of the forest land in B.C. is owned by the government, a relatively unique situation compared to other parts of the forested world. It follows that there has always been a need to have government employees in the field to ensure that the acts and regulations are complied with in accordance with the laws of the day.

By 1907 the B.C. government was heavily dependent on the forest for revenue. That year over 40% of the provincial budget was derived from stumpage and/or royalty as a result of logging. Many types of tenure were initiated by government in order that timber might be extracted. It was at this time that another concern was expressed by citizens and politicians alike - how to cope with unwanted wildfires.

The Fulton Royal Commission of 1910 resulted in the first *Forest Act* in 1912. This legislation provided the legal basis for the establishment of Forest and Ranger districts. A District Forester was appointed to supervise the work in each Forest District and Forest Rangers were appointed as senior supervisors of each Ranger District. Among other things the District Forester and his staff allocated timber to applicants and the Forest Ranger saw to it that the timber was harvested in accordance with the conditions of the license. Among other duties, Forest Rangers were also responsible to ensure that all wildfires in their district were suppressed. Men "of good character" were appointed as Forest Rangers.

B.C. was divided into 11 Forest Districts commencing on April 1, 1913. These were soon amalgamated to 5. Existing records indicate that rangers were appointed in the Fort George District in 1913, Kamloops in 1916, Vancouver in 1918 and Nelson and Prince Rupert districts in 1919. Up to this time each Forest District was divided into divisions but the titles of those responsible for these divisions is obscure.

From 1912 until 1945 B.C. underwent tremendous change due to two world wars and the Depression. Throughout this time, ranger districts were added or amalgamated because of increased or decreased forest activity and as funds were available.

By 1945 the forest industry was the primary economic driver. However, forest administration was not consistent. As well, forest management, silviculture and other forestry related subjects were recognized as a more complex science. And, as the population increased and industry expanded, wildfires became an ever-increasing concern. Expansion of the forest industry was expected to continue. This would lead to a serious shortfall in capable, well-trained Forest Service employees to cope with the demands of industry at the regional and field level. Plans were made at the University of British Columbia to dramatically increase the enrolment of foresters to meet the needs of both the Forest Service and forest industry. As well, to meet technical, administrative and field supervisory needs a campus was created at Green Timbers, Surrey, B.C. It was named the Forest Service Ranger School.

The Ranger School Program consisted of 9 months of training over two winters. Most courses, to some extent, covered material taught at forestry faculties at university plus the principles of forest management, administration and an in-depth examination of wildfire suppression skills. The goal was to produce a competent field manager, knowledgeable in forestry and supervisory matters. The school achieved this goal and accomplished another that may have not have been anticipated. Having Ranger trainees located in a residential setting, in most cases away from their wives and families - living, training and recreating together - provided the basis for life-long friendships. This, indirectly, lead to a tremendous *esprit de corps* within the Forest Service.

The role of the Ranger School changed dramatically through the years. Technical schools throughout the province made forestry part of their curriculum. The need to train ranger staff diminished. The campus was re-named the Forest Service Training School in the 1970s as classes and programs were re-aligned to meet current needs. The school continued to provide a wide range of forestry, management and relevant courses targeted to specific groups. Then, in 1981, those in charge of the Forest Service determined that the school no longer served any useful purpose. It was closed and turned over to the private sector.

Through the years, people attending or visiting the school discovered, in the hallway adjacent to the class rooms, a series of photographs of all graduates of the Ranger School classes. When the training school was disbanded I was concerned that these pictures would be lost. However, with the assistance of Doug Adderley, working for the Information Branch, and Tom Walker, District Manager in Duncan and affiliated with the Forest Discovery Centre, these priceless pictures were saved and are now stored at the Centre.

Recently I visited the Discovery Centre to undertake some research. I discovered that these old photos, still in their original frames, are not properly catalogued and should be stored in a more suitable manner.

As approved by the Executive of FHABC, some FHABC members will, over the next year, under the guidance of the Director of the Centre, catalogue the pictures and provide more appropriate storage, in accordance with the recommended practices of the Conservator at the B.C. provincial archives.

In the meantime, it is my intention to publish a list of all graduates of the 9-month Ranger School course in the FHABC newsletter. These names will be published as space is available. The first two graduating classes are provided in this issue.

The majority of the personnel that attended the first classes were already appointed to the position of Ranger. When they graduated, in anticipation of future needs, additional staff were trained and a list of qualified personnel was established to compete for vacant Ranger or equivalent positions as they became available. Entrance to the school was competitive. Successful candidates were recommended by their supervisors, had to pass a written exam and finally, were interviewed by the Dean of the school.

In 1979 the Forest Service underwent massive re-organization. New Forest Districts, under the supervision of a District Manager, were created. The position of Ranger was dropped. This organization provided additional powers and responsibility closer to the field level. Since then, wildfire suppression has been re-allocated to a separate agency within the Forest Service. Both these administrative changes have led to greater efficiencies. However, in making these changes, the common bond that formed the backbone of the old Forest Service is gone forever.

Class of 1946

Dean: R.D. Greggor

Assistant Dean: J. A. Pedley

F.H. Nelson	P. Neil	L.A. Willington	C.L. Botham
R.C. Hewlet	W.E. Jansen	C.L. French	H.G. Mayson
J. Applewaite	F.G. Hesketh	J.A. Willan	J.H. Holmberg
N.B. Scott	C.S. Frampton	L. VanTine	A.J. Kirk
S.T. Strimbolt	E.L. Scott	W.D. Haggard	

Class of 1947

N. Threatful	H. Barker	A.F.W. Ginnever	J.O. Noble
H.V. Hopkins	A.W. Campbell	L.E. Stilwell	K.A. McKenzie
C.L. Gibson	L.A. Chase	I.B. Johnson	J.S. Macalister
C.R. Tippie	D.P. Fraser	W.A. McCabe	A.F. Specht
R.V. Williams	H.L. Couling	H. Steveson	J.F. Killough

Sources: *British Columbia, A History* - Margaret A. Ormsby

Witch Hunt in the B.C. Woods - A.B. Robinson

Historical Administration and Personnel Tables, 1913 – 1981,
Ministry of Forests

Forest History Association of B C – archives

With thanks to Jack Carradice for input.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FHABC

Date: Saturday, September 21, 2002

Place: Kilby Store and Farm, Harrison Mills, B.C.

Directions: approximately 30 minutes east of Mission on Highway #7 driving towards Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs. Turn RIGHT just after crossing the Harrison River Bridge and follow the signs.

Program: 11:00 AM	Brief business meeting
12:00 Noon	Lunch at the cafe located on the farm. Menu - soup and sandwiches, pastries etc. The lunch is for your account.
1:00 PM	A short talk by A. McCombs on forest and logging history in the Harrison Lake area.
1:30 PM	Tour of store and farm site. Also, there may be some active helicopter logging visible from the road if we are lucky.
3:00 PM	Start for home. We will try to get people from Vancouver Island on the 5:00 PM ferry.

Transportation: Stan Chester has room for 6 people and will meet the ferry arriving at Tsawwassen at approximately 8:45 AM. Hopefully, others will be able to offer rides as well.

Please advise John Parminter of your attendance and ride requirements ASAP.

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