Online Forest History Bibliography
Did you know that the FHABC maintains a searchable database of publications related to B.C.’s forest history? To access it, just point your browser to https://fhabc.org/bibliography/ and click on the Zotero link. You can search for material by title, creator or year. A unique feature is that the database also contains 361 obituaries of foresters, forestry technicians, timber cruisers, loggers and mill owners.

The Forest History Society, based in North Carolina, also maintains a searchable database at http://prestohost26.inmagic.com/Presto/home/home.aspx. It contains 1434 references to British Columbia forestry. Deep thanks from the FHABC to John Parminter for creating this invaluable database, and for adding to it.

Stan Chester Oral History Interview.
Back in 2009, David Brownstein sat down with FHABC past-president Stan Chester and they recorded an oral history interview. That recording is now available to all members via our webpage.

Just point your browser to https://fhabc.org/oral-history/ and scroll down the page to take a listen.
Are you interested in undertaking any oral history interviews of your own? Please get in touch as we are keen to expand our collection. We are always looking for both interviewers and interviewees!

Upcoming Events

2019

Summer Logger Sports!
Scotch Creek June 29; Powell River July 13-14
Bowen Island July 27-28; Squamish Aug 1 -5
Lac La Biche Aug 3; Campbell River Aug 9-11
Septembers: Duncan September 7
Port Alberni Sep 8

Sept 27-29: FHABC Annual General Meeting to be held in Kamloops. Plan as of late May:
- Meet and greet Friday evening, Sep 27.
- AGM Saturday Morning, Sep 28.
- program tour Saturday afternoon.
(Kamloops Fire Centre, if available)
Duncan September 7
Port Alberni Sep 8

Upcoming Events

From the President
By Richard Dominy
A lot of emphasis since the last issue has been on catching up on administrative Association tasks such as the conversion of the website to WordPress, conforming to the new “Society Act” requirements and conducting the annual financial review.

Our searchable online bibliography has been converted to Zotero thanks to John Parminter. (read more on page 12).
Thank you to Katherine Spencer for presenting our book prize to the ABCFP Valiakatarov at the Feb 2019 convention. (read more on page 9).
Congratulations to Eric Anderson on his new position as a Squamish municipal councillor! Subsequently, Eric has less time to dedicate to the newsletter and I am happy to report Dave Florence is taking the newsletter editor’s hat.

Gerry Burch – a Founding Member of our Association - has been named “Distinguished Alumnus of the Year” by UBC. Plans are proceeding on the development of our AGM 2019 – to be held in Kamloops 27-29 September this year. More on page 12 in Upcoming Events.

Social Media: We are investigating our social media presence and shortly we will be able to report on our connections to the members and the rest of the world!

Summer-Fall Issue

Forest History Collaboration Report: Aleza Lake Research Forest and UNBC Archives
By Michael Jull Msc, RFP, Manager, Aleza Lake Research Forest

We are happy to report on several inter-connected forest history initiatives currently ongoing in the Prince George-Upper Fraser areas of the BC Central Interior. These include projects at the Northern BC Archives (located at the University of Northern BC), and at the Aleza Lake Research Forest (or ALRF), a UNBC research forest. The ALRF covers 9,000 ha of moist upland sub-boreal forest about 60 km NE of Prince George. The research forest encompasses the area formerly occupied by the Aleza Lake Forest Experiment Station, which was operated by the BC Forest Service (BCFS) between 1924 and 1963.

At the ALRF, we are looking forward to our centenary milestone year of 2024, representing 100 years since the founding of the Aleza Lake Forest Experiment Station in 1924 by Dr. Percy Barr of the BC Dept. of Lands. We are working to document and consolidate the history of this storied area.

Recent digitization of Aleza historical materials, and extension accomplishments by the UNBC Archives, described in more detail in the companion article in this newsletter by Kim Stathers, are now being complemented by the hiring of Forest History and Cultural Heritage student assistant and UNBC graduate, Melanie Bellwood, from May to August 2019. This internship position is being supported by the Aleza Lake Research Forest Society and a private donor. 80% of Melanies work will be focused at UNBC Archives and 20% in the field at the ALRF.

Historical field areas being examined this summer include sections of the forest trail system still visible on the Aleza forest; we suspect that these were constructed by the Depression-era Young Mens Forestry Training Plan program back in the late 1930’s. Also, Melanie will be working with Kim to develop a forest history interpretive exhibit, to be installed at the new Aleza Field Education Centre (https://www.aleza.ca/).

In 2015-16, ALRF Manager Mike Jull and FHABC member Barb Coupe assisted UNBC Archives in the collation and description of forestry materials donated by Harry Coates. (Continued on page 2)
Archives work on the Aleza Lake Research Forest records
(By Kim Stathers, MAS, MLIS, Archivist | Librarian; Northern BC Archives & Special Collections, UNBC).

The historical records of the Aleza Lake Research Forest are now fully digitized and freely available online. The Northern BC Archives, located at the University of Northern British Columbia, holds the original Aleza Lake Research Forest (ALRF) archival material, which consists of records created between 1913 and 2001 by the Research Branch of the BC Ministry of Forests. These records were transferred to the archives in 2006 from the Ministry with the goal of increasing access to historical scientific data for the ALRF Society and other researchers interested in forest history. In 2019 we were able to further increase access by digitizing this important resource thanks to external funding support from a private foundation.

The digitized records encompass textual, cartographic and photographic materials documenting BC’s earliest and longest-running experimental research forest. With its experimental plots existing from the 1920s, these records provide a wealth of data for the study of forest practices in BC.

The collection can be viewed here: https://search.nbca.unbc.ca/index.php/aleza-lake-research-forest-fonds

Browse digitized photographs: https://bit.ly/2aOLfFY

2007.1.25.6.12 - District Officers meeting at Aleza Lake experimental Station held in 1928 - courtesy UNBC archives

Archival donation: Canadian Forest History Preservation Project.

By David Brownstein

Eugene Jobagy of Duncan, BC, has donated a mid-1970s Audio Visual program on the Nahanni National Park Reserve to the Northwestern Territories Archives. The AV program was created with the help of some of Eugene’s colleagues at the University of Alberta, with funding from the then National and Provincial Parks Association (now the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society).

Shown to visitors of the park, the AV program consisted of two slide projectors and an audio tape. The two projectors were set up, side by side, and focused on the same image area. The image overlap and the variable projector brightness was used to create a variety of effects. Sequence programming was done by Eugene Jobagy. Thanks to Erika Reinhardt, Senior Archivist, Library and Archives Canada; also Erin Suliak, Territorial Archivist, and Leslie Gordon, Senior Archivist, both of the NWT Archives. All helped to find a home for this material.

Do you know of some valuable forest history material in danger of loss or destruction? Please get in touch and we would be glad to help you find a loving archival home.

The Career of Dave Wallinger, RPF

By Mike Meagher and Bruce Devitt

Dave Wallinger, RPF (Ret.) passed away August 24, 2018, in his 89th year.

From his youth in Cranbrook to his retirement in Victoria Dave was focused on regeneration of forest areas by running planting crews, organizing cone-collection or snag-falling crews, or training local BC Forest Service (BCFS) Ranger or District personnel in current skills and techniques.

His first exposure to forestry was as a Boy Scout to visit the BCFS “Eager” fire lookout in Cranbrook. At 16 he worked on a railway track gang for Bloedel Stewart and Welch’s Camp B at Franklin River – until a strike down the operation.

His first exposure to his future path developed in 1953 when he joined a BCFS Reforestation (“RN”) Division crew in the east Kootenay area that exposed him to the “nuts and bolts” of regeneration programs: “regen” surveys, cone-collection reconnaissance and planting. Following graduation from UBCC’s Forestry program the next year Dave joined the RN Division at Cranbrook to begin full-time work to restore the east Kootenay Valley to its status as a major area of grassland forests. As well as the foregoing list of activities he added site preparation: clearing areas of invasive trees and brush to ease planting the trees grown locally at the Wycliffe Nursery on the Saint Mary’s River. Also, directed by the Division’s Victoria superiors, he established trials to test the effects of seedling age, stock type (transplanted vs. undisturbed seedlings) with various local tree species. This period involved collaboration with US Forest Service personnel in Idaho and Montana, including brood-caging machinery to speed site preparation for ponderosa pine plantations. Machine planting had been developed by the US collaborators, resulting in their machinery gravitating north, where Dave found it very suitable on clean and low-slope sites.

Also, following a visit by USFS Geneticists Dick Bingham and Dr. Ray Hoff, Dave organised a set of plantations to test the blister-rust resistance of tested Idaho white pine vs. BC’s rust (Cronartium ribicola) population. Those results helped advance BC’s program to restore white pine to the status of a viable selection for suitable sites.

When the Provincial regeneration program was to expand beyond the lower Mainland, Dave was charged with developing contacts throughout the Interior. Bruce Devitt, also with the RN Division in Victoria, accompanied Dave when visiting Ranger District staff to introduce Interior workers to the aspects of planning for and conducting reforestation programs in their jurisdictions.

Dave was charged with establishing trial/demo plantations in each Forest District using suitable species from local seed collections in that District (later “Region”). Also, small demonstration trial nurseries were established in suitable Interior sites in which seedlings could be “hardened off” for overwintering pre planting the following spring.

As the planting program increased, Dave was transferred to Victoria to coordinate planting programs, especially as the planting was done increasingly by private contractors. This required a comprehensive and reliable record system. Pete Robson joined Dave to develop that system, which recorded, eg., geographical and biological attributes, plant species, seed origin, stock type, planting year, etc. – all part of the record system preceding computeraised files.

Earlier, in the spring of 1957, Dave was sent to Victoria to begin a program of managed-stand seed production, which had been recommended by Dr. Alan Orr-Ewing of the BCFS Research Branch as a first step in producing higher-potential seedlings for the Coastal Douglas-fir planting program.

Young and accessible natural stands of good health and form were to be selected, the poorer-formed stems to be removed and the remainder fertilised and spaced to stimulate seed-crop development. Two assistants, recent UBC Forestry graduates, were hired: Bruce Devitt, with whom Dave had worked in the summer of 1951, and Mike Meagher. They studied inventory maps and inspected promising stands on lower Vancouver Island. Two such “SPAs” (seed-production areas) were selected and treated as directed. Following a dry year, which can induce cone buds for the following year, good conditions for pollination: dry and warm weather, and sufficient rain to sustain the developing cones and seeds, results

Membership: New or lapsed members? $15.00 annually, or three years for $40.00. To correspond by mail:

Forest History Association of B.C.
1288 Santa Maria Place
Victoria BC, Canada V8Z 6S5
Email: info@fhabc.org Website: fhabc.org

Please help the FHABC modernize our communications. If you are holding a paper copy of the newsletter, please update your email address.

Even better … please opt for the online version and permit us to not mail you the black & white print version. Why?

1. Underlined text links you to extra online information on the website version.
2. The online version is in colour. (Costs to produce physical copies and send them out in the post are rising fast. Even if you still want to receive the B&W paper version, having your email address makes it easier to send out important announcements in between issues.)

So, please send us an email at info@fhabc.org, and state your preferences for newsletter delivery:

Online in colour, or paper in B&W by mail.

Those members whose membership expired this year on December 31st will be receiving an update reminder electronically or included in their next newsletter.

The FHABC Board is considering an adjustment to membership fees such that those wishing to receive a mailed version of the newsletter will pay a larger fee than those opting for the email version.

We regret to note that Dave Wallinger, RPF (Ret.) passed away last year, shortly after publication of the article he wrote in the May 2018 issue of the FHABC Newsletter entitled “Start of Reforestation in the Interior”. Dave had also contributed to our newsletter on other occasions, such as in issue 66, 2002. His family obituary appeared in the Victoria Times Colonist. Two RFP friends and colleagues, FHABC Director Mike Meagher and Bruce Devitt, wrote the following obit which outlines Dave’s career as a forestier.

(Continued on page 11)
The crash of B.C.'s first wildfire patrol plane

By John Parminter who is a former Newsletter editor, active story contributor, and keeper of our searchable bibliography

Most of us grew up during a time when aircraft were easily available and the mindset was to buy and sell, and machine manufacturers, not only British, were in the business of selling new machines and providing maintenance. Airports were general aviation airports, where aircraft were maintained by the aircraft owner, pilots were paid by the hour, and aircraft were flown and maintained. In the early aviation age the opposite situation existed as many aircraft were custom designs – possibly somewhat experimental – and made in limited numbers. Design deficiencies, poor construction and human error the aircraft often had short lives, along with many of their pilots.

Nevertheless, progress was made in determining the need, one of which was fire forest fire detection. In 1915 the first successful air patrols for wildfire detection were carried out in Wisconsin. As a result, interest in this new technology arose elsewhere in the United States and Canada. The B.C. Minister of Lands, T.D. Pattullo, was inspired by a conversation he had with an air intelligence expert who flew over the city of Vancouver, in view of the crowd back and received suggestions that “…life away from the war zone exists as many aircraft were custom designed, such as a Grumman Goose amphibian plane – first flown in 1937 and still used today – has a wingspan of 14.9 m, two 340 kV (450 hp) engines, a cruising speed of 308 km/h, a climbing rate of 3360 m in ten minutes and a range of 1030 km.

Initial test flights of the H-2 were carried out in late August by Flight Commander Capt. W.H. Mackenzie of the Royal Air Force (RAF). He said it was a really excellent machine that could fly itself. Without hesitation the B.C. Forest Branch signed a one-year lease with an option to purchase. Unfortunately their hopes proved to be too optimistic. While on another test flight above Vancouver, in view of thousands of spectators, the H-2 crashed and was utterly destroyed on September 4, 1918. The pilot on the ill-fated flight was 23-year-old Flight Lieut. Victor A. Bishop, a Vancouver resident on leave from his duties as a flight instructor at the RAF base in Southampton, England. A veteran of many crossings of the English Channel while ferrying new aircraft to Paris, as well as battles at Vanny Ridge and the Somme, Bishop wasn’t expecting trouble in the peaceful skies above Vancouver.

Ascending at 3:00 pm from Coal Harbour, Bishop flew over the city, Burrard Inlet and English Bay. While over False Creek at an altitude of 365 m, the engine started to misfire. Bishop considered heading for English Bay, then decided in favour of Coal Harbour. Before getting over the water the engine stopped altogether and the aircraft, at the wrong altitude and lacking enough speed to manoeuvre, went into a spiral nose dive.

Bishop looked down to see where he was going to hit and braced himself. The plane crashed into a house at 755 Butte Street, at the corner with Alberni Street, in the South End of Vancouver. Flight Lieut. Bishop managed, more by good luck than anything else, to crash into the roof. A crowd of onlookers and souvenir hunters soon arrived on the scene, along with police and fire departments. The owner of the house, Dr. J.C. Farish, was nearby and quickly reached the crash site. He rendered assistance to the slightly wounded pilot and accompanied him to the hospital.

Dr. Farish’s home suffered structural damage as a result of the heavy engine bursting through the roof and lodging on the attic staircase. Bishop suffered some facial cuts, a slight injury to his back and likely one to his pride as well. While recuperating in the hospital he said “…this is the first fall I have ever had, and I am free to say that it was a miraculous escape.” He was anxious to get back to France as quickly as possible, as he observed that “…life away from the war zone has too many risks.”

The Hoffar brothers arrived swiftly and took charge of the wreckage. The authorities kept the crowd back and received suggestions such that pieces of the wrecked plane should be sold to pay for Flight Lieut. Bishop’s hospitalization. Ironically, T.D. Pattullo was on a long distance trip to England at the time which drove decision making or policy. I stressed that as a collective group our story can only be heard and more importantly understood with a strong commitment to keeping current records, so we have a history to refer to. Additionally, I referred to the general demographics of the room and how much history each member themselves contained and to please share their story and the story of their communities.

To conclude, I suggested everyone purchase a FHABC membership and learn more about how they can keep up on the exciting activities of the association and find ways to contribute.

Report on a presentation at ABCFP Kamloops, Feb 5/6 2019

By Kat Spencer, FHABC Director

As a young member of the Forest History Association of British Columbia and inductee transferring forester to BC, it was an honor and a privilege to present the valientictory book award to the top ABCFP RPF and RFT inductees of 2018. The lucky recipients of "The History of Forestry in Canada" by Gilbert Paille were Carl-Evan Jefferies, RPF and Adam Flintoft, RFT (Sadly, Adam was unable to attend).

Prior to presenting the award I did an online and social media search for this member to find out more on his history. Carl-Evan is an avid fisherman and as such had a strong understanding of hydrology and our watersheds. I was able to meet with Carl-Evan prior to the awards and find out more about his history in forestry, family connections, motivations for pursuing a career in forestry and goals for his career. Hearing a young inductee describe the impact of previous forestry management paradigms and how his generation of foresters are prepared to handle it was enlightening.

While presenting the award I was able to speak to the 500+ ABCFP AGM attendees about the history in the room and the need we have to document and record this history. I spoke to the passion of the professionals and how with each rationale written and decision implemented we create a historic pattern on the land. Documenting these and creating a living legacy of the work foresters do allow future generations to have a full understanding of past paradigms and the science at the time which drove decision making or policy. I stressed that as a collective group our story can only be heard and more importantly understood with a strong commitment to keeping current records, so we have a history to refer to. Additionally, I referred to the general demographics of the room and how much history each member themselves contained and to please share their story and the story of their communities.

To conclude, I suggested everyone purchase a FHABC membership and learn more about how they can keep up on the exciting activities of the association and find ways to contribute.
James Shand, Canadian Chain Saw Inventor

By Eric Andersen, who is a Director, former Newsletter editor, active article contributor, and Squamish district councillor

The world’s first portable power chain saw was invented by James Shand (1861-1950), a millwright from Dauphin, Manitoba. Shand applied for patent and received it July 15, 1918. (See Shand’s patent drawings below.)

In 1976, artifacts relating to James Shand’s invention came to the British Columbia Provincial Museum. Museum Assistant Curator Jim Wardrop wrote in an article, “British Columbia’s Experience with Early Chain Saws”, partly based on interviews and research assisted by the Shand family:

“The idea came to him while he was fencing his quarter-section of land and discovered that the barbed wire, drawn by horses, had sawn through a seven-inch oak post. Working in his shop and using his son’s bicycle chain with cutting teeth inserted, Shand produced two working models. Shand used one saw for a short time while in the employ of Manitoba Bridge and Iron Works and in 1919 he took both working models to British Columbia, hoping to spark interest in chain saw production.”

Shand allowed his patent to expire in 1930, however. It was not until labour shortages of the later war years that there was real demand for a power chain saw.

Shand did spend the latter part of his life in B.C., in Kelowna working at a sawmill and then at Nainaimo.

In a March 1939 interview at Kelowna, Shand related, “I have been in and around sawmills since [1870s]. We cut the first circular saw lumber west of Winnipeg in the winter of 1871, just after the first Riel rebellion in 1870.” James Shand had only good wishes for his successors: “I had the pleasure of holding one end of the Stihl saw which was demonstrated by Donald Smith [later of Industrial Engineering Ltd. (I.E.L.)] of Vancouver in Kelowna last summer, and am in hopes that Mr. Smith will make a saw that will down the world.”

In a Nainaimo Free Press interview shortly before his passing in 1950, Shand lamented, “My trouble is that I have never had a month’s schooling in my life.”

Son Dave Shand always shared his father’s interest in the invention and joined the staff of the I.E.L. firm which manufactured and developed improvements to the Pioneer Chain Saw over many years.

While operating McIntyre & Shand, Pioneer distributors in Nainaimo, Dave Shand and his partner dreamed up and promoted the idea of the newly organized local D.V.A. Vocational Training School training veterans in chain saw operation and repairs. They donated 2 saw models for stripping and assembly. Graduates were hired by logging camps, or else

phone call from Victoria to an office in the Pacific Building in downtown Vancouver earlier that afternoon. The biplane flew by and Patullo heard the noise of the engine until it faltered and the aircraft began its untimely and final descent.

Patullo expressed regret over the loss of the plane, cancellation of the aerial forest fire patrol program and demise of a proposed provincial air service. He said the government would make good the cost of the plane to the Hoffars and pay for repairs to Dr. Farish’s house. Given the many uses for aircraft when not needed for fire patrols, the Department of Lands planned to have a new aircraft constructed as soon as possible. But for unknown reasons this was not done.

The first aerial discovery of a wildfire in Canada was made by an air crew in Quebec on July 7, 1919. In B.C. a forest fire was first detected from the air in late September 1919. The aircraft, a Curtiss JN4 “Canuck” named Pathfinder No. 2, was flying over Vancouver Island when the pilot spotted a mass of smoke. He circled to assess the fire and determine its location, then landed at Duncan in a report to the B.C. Forest Branch which undertook fire suppression action.

The Hoffar brothers tried their luck in the latter part of his life in B.C., dreaming up and promoted the idea of the world’s first portable power chain saw. The Hoffar firm (then called Hoffar-Beeching) and aircraft production resumed, hopefully with fewer incidents.

The widespread use of B.C.’s forests, the damage caused by wildfires and the relative inefficiency of ground- and water-based patrols combined to favour further developments in the use of aircraft in forest fire detection and suppression. In July 1922 the B.C. Forest Branch’s employee newsletter, Root and Branch, noted receipt of a proposal for a waterbomber which in retrospect was not overly fanciful:

A correspondent suggests ‘...huge aeroplanes, capable of lifting seven or eight tons, with a speed of seventy miles per hour, and equipped with water tanks below the fuselage. These tanks to be capable of holding five tons of water. In case of fire, all that would be necessary would be to start the plane, fly over the area, open your floodgates – the fire would be no more!’

Unfortunately for those who, by this time, are seeing the end of pick and shovel work, the writer admits that ‘it would be impossible to use this method in case of a very fierce fire and a high wind.’ So, when it comes down to the real rub, we shall still need the pick and shovel – to say nothing of the ill of ‘pump!’

Airplanes were occasionally used in B.C. during the late 1920s for fire patrols and spraying insecticides. But the promise which aviation held was not fulfilled until much later. In recent decades technological advances resulted in purpose-built aircraft such as the Canadair CL215/415 and Air Tractor AT802. Other fire-fighting planes came from Conair Aerial Firefighting’s conversions of the DeHavilland Tracker, Lockheed L188 Electra and Convair 580. In addition, Conair uses the R4R5 and Bombardier Q400MR as air tankers.

Between 2013 and 2017, Coulson Aviation of Port Alberni purchased four C-130 Hercules and six Boeing 737-300 aircraft for use as air tankers. Their fourth C-130 Hercules conversion is underway in Mesa, Arizona. The 737-300s are being converted in Spokane, Washington and Port Alberni. On November 22, 2018, Coulson’s plane number 137 became the first Boeing 737 to work as an air tanker on an ongoing wildfire (in New South Wales, Australia). It carries 18,000 litres of water or retardant and can drop 10,000 litres in a second.

Times have certainly changed since the Hoffar brothers struggled to get airborne and stay that way. They would be amazed to see multi-engined jet aircraft such as the Douglas DC-10 and Boeing 747 working as air tankers. Then again, most of us are probably amazed just to say nothing of the ill of ‘pump!’
A HISTORY OF SETTLEMENT AND LOGGING AT QUATSONI, BC

By Don Avis, who is a long-time FHABC member, has logged in the Quatsino area where he continues to own 320 acres of Managed Forest, mostly 30 – 35 year old hemlock and alder. With FHABC edits by David Morgan.

Quatsino is a settlement on northern Vancouver Island on the north shore of Quatsino Sound accessible from Coal Harbour by a 20 minute water taxi ride. The area has a moist climate, mild winters and rich forests of hemlock, balsam, spruce, cedar and fir. In the early 1890s, the government of British Columbia wanted to develop remote coastal areas and offered land for Crown Grants. The British Columbia Colony Act offered free land to groups of 30 or more settlers. Homesteaders could purchase lands for one dollar in exchange for living on the land for five years and improving it by a value of five dollars per acre. The government pledged to supply schools, roads and services.

The British Columbia government marketed the colony scheme by distributing maps and brochures through their exhibit at the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, marking the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus’s landing in America. The Exposition was a tremendous success and attracted 20 million visitors.

A group of American settlers of mainly Norwegian descent, including the brothers Charles and Christian Nordstrom, learned of the land grants from the Exposition. Christian Nordstrom attended the Exposition as part of Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show and later told his brother of the opportunity. Charles Nordstrom was an early homesteader in the Red River Valley near Fargo, North Dakota. Christian Nordstrom homesteaded in Mandan, North Dakota, in the Missouri River Valley where Lewis and Clark spent their first winter on their expedition to the West Coast in 1804-1805. There is a brief history of Christian Nordstrom’s exploits in the “History of the Quatsino Colony” written by his son George Nordstrom.

In 1894, Christian Nordstrom organized a group of settlers, but less than the required 30, to settle a colony under the Colony Act but none-the-less headed for BC. Later, following further research and discussion with the provincial government, represented by Colonel James Baker, Minister of Immigration, the group decided to settle in the Quatsino area. Over 30 parcels were surveyed and made available. In 1895 the two brothers and their families took up quarter sections in the west end of Quatsino and started clearing the land to build their colony. They had expected more settlers in 1896. However, interest dampened due to the threat of war between the United States during the Alaska Boundary Dispute.

The parcels were spread over about five miles of south facing waterbody. As part of the settlement agreement, the province was to provide roads throughout the colony. In 1895, a public wharf was constructed. In 1898, the community requested, among other items that: the government provide funds to build a wagon trail through the colony; funding for a road from Coal Harbour to Hardy Bay be transferred to Quatsino; and, a Mr. Varney the road foreman, who was also known as Lord Henry Varney of Mable River, be replaced by someone elected by the colonists as he was deemed utterly incapable.

Charles and Christian Nordstrom received their Crown Grants in 1901 after fulfilling their obligation and paying one dollar. The Crown Grant was a title in fee simple, subject to certain terms and provisions included in the Grant. One provision allowed the government the right to a portion of up to 1/20th the Crown Grant for road right of way.

Early logging in Quatsino was to clear the land and to provide logs and wood to construct local buildings. The large timber was difficult to handle. When clearing land, the saying was “it takes the tree to burn out the stump.” The forest was more an obstacle than a resource. At the time there was no way to get Quatsino logs to markets outside of Quatsino Sound.

In the early 1900s timber speculators charted timber licences. Between 1905 and 1907 they had become a very popular form of tenure for independent loggers and there was a frenzy of timber staking in the province. The granting of timber licenses was suspended in 1907 in the run up to the 1910 Fulton Royal Commission. Also, in anticipation of a pulp mill, pulp tenures were acquired. In 1908, a saw mill was constructed in the west entrance to Quatsino Narrows. The saw mill provided materials to build the pulp mill in Port Alice. The pulp mill (Whalen Brothers, then B.C. Pulp and Paper Ltd.) commenced production in 1918. With completion of the two mills, the forest industry had finally arrived in Quatsino.

In 1908 a severe windstorm blew down hundreds of thousands of acres on northern Vancouver Island. This blowdown produced hemlock and balsam dominated stands which are prominent today in logging plans. George Nordstrom referred to a severe windstorm in 1901 in his “History of Quatsino Colony”. A severe windstorm in 1908 was described in the “Quatsino Chronical” by Gwen Hansen but unfortunately the specific date was not provided.

A faller in Port Alice told me that the 1908 blowdown was not in fact a blowdown at all. He promoted a theory that the blowdown was the result of the Tunguska blast in Siberia, thought to be an asteroid or meteorite air burst. I have been unable to identify the date of the 1908 blowdown. The date of the Tunguska event was June 30, 1908 while the windy period in Quatsino is usually between October and April. The Tunguska Blast is a fantastic story but probably not the cause of the northern Vancouver Island’s blowdown.

It didn’t take long for Quatsino’s Crown Grants to change hands and be subdivided. The waterfront access grants were subdivided into various smaller lots. All the lots had the same provisions for the original Crown Grants and the Colony Agreement. Plus, new titles contained a variety of trail locations and gazetted roads and trails (constructed or not). This created a patchwork of titles with differing subjects and descriptions of roads and access which would become a source of dispute between the various landowners.

The Crown Grant of Charles Nordstrom changed and altered many times over the years. It passed to his son Philip in 1909, then to FIA Green and thence Christian Jacobson in 1910. It was subdivided in 1913 and a group including BC Land Surveyors F. Swanell, Richard Bishop and Vilhelm Schjelderup were registered as owners. In 1925 and 1929, Quatsino farmers Peter Jorgensen Obling and Alfred Wakefield purchased the subdivided lots. In 1955, as a precursor to some logging, the titles were acquired by Jeptha Hole, a logger and member of a long-time Quatsino Sound family still involved in the towing and transportation business today. In 1960, Jeptha Hole sold his private lands to MacMillan Bloedel and Powell River Ltd.

END OF PART ONE. Part 2, the final Part, will appear in Issue #103, October 2019

A barge with two steam donkeys arrives at the Quatsino government wharf with Quatsino Strait in the background. The CPR west-coast ship Princess Maquinna is waiting to dock. The photo is some date after 1913. Photographer: Ben Leeson. Vancouver Public Library, with permission [Keyword 13971].

(Continued on page 7)