

**Donations Welcome!** FHABC is registered with [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org) and [GivingTuesday.ca](http://GivingTuesday.ca) for donations to fund our projects. “Giving Tuesday” is an initiative that encourages folks to follow-up Black Friday and Cyber Monday with a donation to various causes around the world. Our 2020 “Giving Tuesday” project is to select some forest history records, oral histories, videos, and images that are currently in various archives in BC, and prepare digitized versions for access online by the general public.



- Some highlights from the AGM held via Zoom sessions Sep 25-29, with the supplementary program hosted by a Prince George team:
- 10 AM Saturday: Minutes, Treasure report approved as presented.
  - Newsletter review:
    - The fixed-date, quarterly publication schedule was supported
    - The book section is considered important
    - The needed readership count will be achieved by delivering the Newsletter via a link rather than as an attachment
    - More shorter articles, including abstracts with a link to fuller documents on our website was recommended
    - Suggested: an article on important BC naturalist Freeman King
  - Task Force: a team will undertake an abbreviated strategic planning process to consider the following, and report to the Board within six months:
    - Review and restate Organizational Objectives
    - Create a Vision Statement
    - Define our Goals
    - Consider how to increase membership
    - Estimate the funds needed to support a larger membership
    - Analyze revenues and create a workplan to meet our needs, including the concept of Bronze, Silver, and Gold sponsors.
  - Election of Directors: The Board size was increased to permit up to 13 Directors, of which 11 were elected, all by acclamation. Outgoing Director David Morgan was thanked for his service, and new Directors David Lang and Mark Clark were welcomed. The full list of Directors and Officer appointments is on page 3.
  - Other topics. We will:
    - Continue the expansion of our Social Media presence (You Tube, etc)
    - Consider a logo change to one that meets current electronic standards
    - Continue initiatives that have resulted in our growing membership
    - Continue outreach efforts such as improvement of display material, and providing speakers to associated events.
  - Zoom sessions Sunday: Northern BC Forest History Archives; Central BC Railway and Forestry Museum Video and Q&A; and “Turning old data into big data: a spatiotemporal history of ecosystem services in British Columbia from 1918 to present.”
  - Zoom Session Tuesday, Sept. 29: Barkerville and the Gold Rush: An Original People’s Perspective.

## Upcoming Events

Jan 13-15 [TLA Convention cancelled](#). Detail coming about the Virtual AGM etc.

Feb 3-5 ABCFP **Virtual** Conference, AGM etc. Details coming.

Jun 3-5 [BC Historical Federation](#) Virtual Conference with Surrey Historical Society.

[The Treefrog News](#) event listings.

## Next Issue: Mar 2021

- More of the Burch and International series’
  - - Your Story?
  - Contact us at [newsletter.editor@fhabc.org](mailto:newsletter.editor@fhabc.org)
- Website: [fhabc.org](http://fhabc.org)

## FHABC has some good news!

We have been awarded \$1500 from the UBC Partnership Recognition Fund to help digitize some oral history tapes. Our UBC partner is Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSC).

Between 1997 and 2003, Gerry Burch conducted and recorded about 100 interviews of significant people in the forest industry and government. These tapes are held at RBSC, but in analog form have limited utility. Our project will make these tapes more accessible. In addition to digitizing about 60 of the tapes, a smaller number will have a transcript produced.

In addition to ensuring that the recordings will survive normal degradation of cassettes, one intended use of the recordings is to conduct a series of virtual gatherings on Zoom when members and the invited public will listen to a recording, and then participate in a discussion.

Thanks to Claire Williams for leading this project. Further reports will be forthcoming in the newsletter when implementation details are developed.



## Issue #108

Dec 2020

look for #109 Mar2021  
Ideas deadline Jan 15

Website:

[fhabc.org](http://fhabc.org)

## From the Editor

By Dave Florence [newsletter.editor@fhabc.org](mailto:newsletter.editor@fhabc.org)

We have quite a variety of articles for our readers this month.

Leading off is an example of the challenges faced by those in the forest products industry in the early 20th century, *H.H. Spicer, Shingle King*.

Then our Burch series continues with an anecdote about reforestation in the Mackenzie Timber Supply Area.

We continue with an RPF’s recollection from early days, then a tribute to a giant of the forest history community: Peter Murphy.

The story of the Culliton Brother has a well-illustrated expanded section which is one click away for online readers. Similarly, the story of the creation of Woss Heritage Park has a copy of the interpretive panels available online.

We plan to provide more of these one-page articles, with expanded sections offered on our website.

Next is Part 2 of the story about early days at the Forestry Department at Malaspina College.

Our Book and Media reports are on page 3, and FHABC administrative matters are on page 16.

On behalf of the Newsletter Committee and the entire Board of Directors at FHABC, let me offer all our readers our wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

British Columbia



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[Back-issue Link](#)

## Winter Issue

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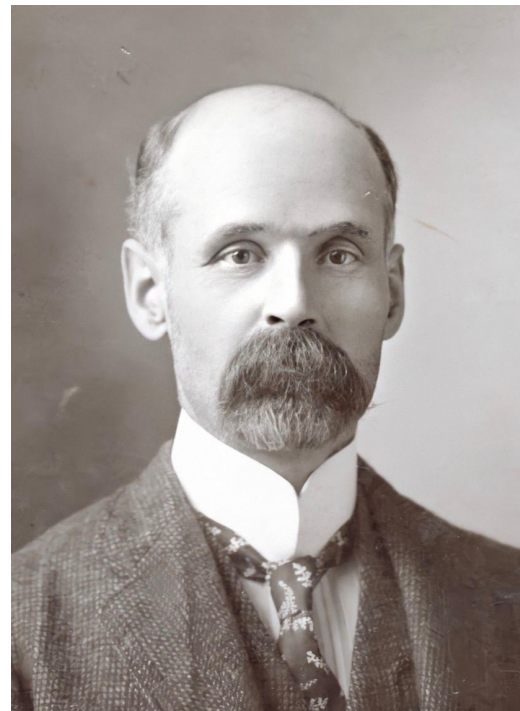
## H.H. Spicer: BC’s Shingle King...for a time

By Jeff Sheldrake, great grandson of H. H. Spicer, and FHABC member from Victoria, BC. Jeff’s related interests include family history research, heritage conservation and the history of BC. Jeff is a volunteer Director with the Victoria Heritage Foundation, and works for the Province of BC in Natural Resource Operations.

*The story of H. H. Spicer is like many of Vancouver’s independent pioneer entrepreneurs. In the 1880s, the new city on Canada’s west coast was an irresistible attraction, but the opportunity was not without its challenges, and in the end, many moved on.*

Henry Havelock Spicer arrived in the new city of Vancouver in 1888. He was born in Nova Scotia, where he was part of a large extended family with deep and well-established roots in that Province. The Spicers had emerged as shipbuilders, sea captains, and merchant mariners on the Bay of Fundy. Unfortunately for Spicer, he was an orphan in the family, and from the age of six had been raised by aunts and uncles.

In the 1881 Census, he identified himself as a “seaman”, but this would not be his calling, and by 1885 he was in Kansas City, Missouri studying bookkeeping. Perhaps he saw a future for himself in the business side of shipbuilding, but a short time later he had moved on again. This time to Michigan and to work for the Diamond Match Company. Surrounded by vast white pine forests,



Henry Havelock Spicer  
1858-1933 (family collection)

Henry learned the business foundations of turning timber into a high-demand wood product.

From these beginnings, it was natural that Spicer would be drawn to seek opportunities from big forests close to the sea. In the spring of 1888, Spicer

(Continued on page 8)



## An Interesting Eulogy for Tom Milner

By Gerry Burch, RPF (Ret) . In August 2020, Gerry shared with FHABC an email sent by Tom Jones, RPF (Ret), a fellow member of a group of retired BCFP foresters and engineers who keep in contact with each other. Tom Jones' email told an interesting anecdote about the late Tom Milner during his time as Logging Manager with BCFP at Mackenzie, BC. To put Tom Jones' anecdote in context, Gerry provided some background of those times in the 1970-1980s when BC was not replanting as fast as it was cutting. Here are both Gerry's background notes and Tom Jones' "Interesting Eulogy".

To understand the background to this article, some history of the origin of forest development in Northern BC is necessary.

In 1964, a coastal BC forest company (BC Forest Products Ltd.) was granted cutting rights in the newly-created Sustained Yield Unit (Finlay SYU), in return for a commitment by the company to build a pulp mill, three supporting sawmills, and to create a new town (Mackenzie).

For the next ten years, infrastructure development was in full swing and timber harvesting increased with demand from the sawmills. A set of stumpage rates was set for the first 15 years, which ended in 1979. During this period, all road construction and forestry costs incurred by BCFP were not offset by the incurred stumpage. As a result, the company relied on natural regeneration of the harvested sites. Also, the BC Forest Service supply of seedlings to this area lagged behind the expanding harvesting activity.

Soon, the pulp mill was in operation. With the sawmill log demand at capacity, and with the harvested areas being taken over by brush, the need for artificial regeneration (planted seedlings) was evident.

Naturally, the company transferred some knowledgeable employees, including foresters, to this new acquisition; two of these were Tom Milner (forest engineer) and Tom Jones (forester). There was one company policy on the coastal operations that these foresters were determined to transfer to this new,

and formerly, unharvested area, and that was to achieve successful regeneration on each logged area as soon as possible after logging. Regrettably, Tom Milner died this past June, and among the many emails sent in remembrance from his fellow company foresters, was the following one from Tom Jones!

### AN INTERESTING EULOGY

By Tom Jones, edited by Gerry Burch

I have fond memories of Tom at Mackenzie. He was a strong advocate of forestry. The company was harvesting about 5000 hectares (ha) a year, but, only planting about 3000 ha; (1500 ha planting at 1000 trees per ha and 1500 ha pine natural regeneration through drag scarification.) The only seedlings produced at that time were by the BC Forest Service which declined to allocate us more seedlings.

At this time, Tom Milner, who was now the Logging Manager, organized an executive tour of the Mackenzie operations, which included the President (Ken Benson), and Executive VP (George Flater). The tour was partly by helicopter and by land. All of the successes were shown, as well as the "warts". After witnessing the openings not reforested, Benson firmly stated that the division was not to create any more unstocked lands. When he was told that seedling allocations were controlled by the MOF, he reiterated his statement by adding "no matter at what cost". Tom and I discussed options later, and the most feasible one was to contract with the Weyerhaeuser nursery to grow one



Tom Milner RPF (Ret)  
Sep 14, 1943 - June 8, 2020

million seedlings, at our cost.

Tom continued to press our case with the BC Forest Service, and when they discovered that BCFP, a limited company, was investing their money in reforestation on a public tenure, due to the lack of BCFS support, they capitulated, by paying for the seedlings and increasing the annual allocation from 1.5 million to 4 million seedlings.

Tom will never know it, but, it was probably one of his most significant forestry achievements!

A Memorable Eulogy!



(Continued from page 14)  
Malaspina College

of biosolids to approximately 50 ha annually – the rate of the application being controlled by the nitrogen content of the biosolids.

A number of Lantzville residents were vocal in their alarm, fearing leachate and/or run-off from the biosolid application would get into the aquifer which fed the town's drinking water. Our own monitoring showed that the runoff and movement of material off-site were negligible to none but their consternation was only finally allayed when a professional hydrologist assured the residents that their aquifer was perfectly safe. The annual application of NRD's biosolids got underway in 2003.

During the first phase of a multi-year contract, the tipping fees the NRD paid to Malaspina were \$60/ton in addition to \$30,000 for research. The college took 10% of the gross contract funds, Science and Technology took 5% of the remaining funds and paid for a fulltime WL staff position, two summer students and new equipment for the Forestry Dept. plus 3 annual student awards of \$2,500. Monitoring of the research plots was contracted to Brian Danjou of the Ministry of Forests. He was able to show that the effects of fertilization on a ten-year-old plantation produced a Site Index of approximately 37. There was no doubt as to the effectiveness of biosolids as a forest fertilizer.

The Woodlot had become a proud adjunct to the Department and something of a cash cow for the University. The benefits that had accrued may be summarized as follows:

1. The proximity of the woodlot to the campus meant that faculty could easily use it for three-hour field classes, from air-photo orientation to topographic mapping, silvicultural surveys on cut blocks, soil surveys, etc.



Aero-sprayer Applying Biosolid

2. Summer employment for students plus funding assistance for field trips and awards.

3. The gross revenue from the AAC and biosolid contract fees was in the neighbourhood of \$900,000 per annum from which the university bursars took a generous amount.

4. As the years passed the results of adaptive management became apparent and the history of what had worked or not worked was a valuable demonstration for students of the results of previous management decisions. Micro-management included successful commercial thinning of second-growth Douglas-fir, conversion of Shore pine stands to thrifty Douglas-fir plantations, aerial pruning of cut block edges carried out by a helicopter company from Parksville and planting of alder in root-rot-infected areas.

5. Field days for groups such as the South Island Woodlot Association were not infrequent. The biosolids project, its infrastructure and results, were always of particular interest.

But it was not to last. Without discussion or consultation with Faculty or Advisory Committee, then-president Dr Ralph Nilson and the University Board of Governors declined to renew

the lease of the woodlot's private lands with Timber West. Despite entreaties from numerous forestry notables to review this decision, the response was a blunt refusal and so the benefits listed above of such a valuable asset ceased to exist, the area of the woodlot had been reduced by some 70 per cent. The licence of WL020, Crown Lands only, still resides with the University but the day-to-day management has been

handed over to Timber West. These decisions were a huge disappointment to all who were involved in acquiring and managing this woodlot.

Fortunately, the Forestry Department continues and goes from strength to strength, moving with the times and in some ways ahead of the curve. In the few decades of its existence, the changes in the instruction of students have been momentous: from slide-rules to calculators, from textbooks to i-pads, from field notebooks to handheld data tablets, from topographic mapping to Lidar, from stereoscopy to GIS mapping and extensive use of satellite imagery. But the basics of Forestry in BC, the ecosystems and ever-changing politics, remain to be discovered by current and future classes.

Enrolment in the programme remains at 100% and employment for not only graduates but also first-year summer students is almost guaranteed. The VIU Forestry Department is firmly established in the 21st century.



*Editorial correction: In an early version of Newsletter 107, in Part 1 of this story, page 13; Tim Sheldon was listed as "Assistant" Deputy Minister of Forests. In fact, he was Deputy Minister under several governments.*



(Continued from page 13)  
1987, 300 hectares on the foothills of Mount Benson were offered as WL020. With good second-growth Douglas-fir and proximity to town competition for the license was fierce. One of the requirements for qualification was the amount of private land that would be added to the Crown land to complete the licence. Malaspina had none, but since long-term leased land was acceptable, Fred negotiated with Gerry Burch and Jack Toovey of B.C.F.P., soon to be TimberWest Ltd., to lease to the College some of the company's holdings in the Lantzville Foothills and adjacent to this Crown Parcel. Having 1,000 hectares on a fifteen-year lease was the clinching point for Malaspina's bid and WL020 was awarded to Malaspina in 1987 with the proviso that the Woodlot would be managed by the Forestry Department.

Paul Lucas, (affectionately known as Pl), himself a graduate of the Programme, had been hired previously as part-time Department Technician but with the need for field staff, his position was fleshed out with the addition of work on the WL while I assumed the position of Woodlands Manager, part-time, in addition to teaching my courses in Forest Measurements.



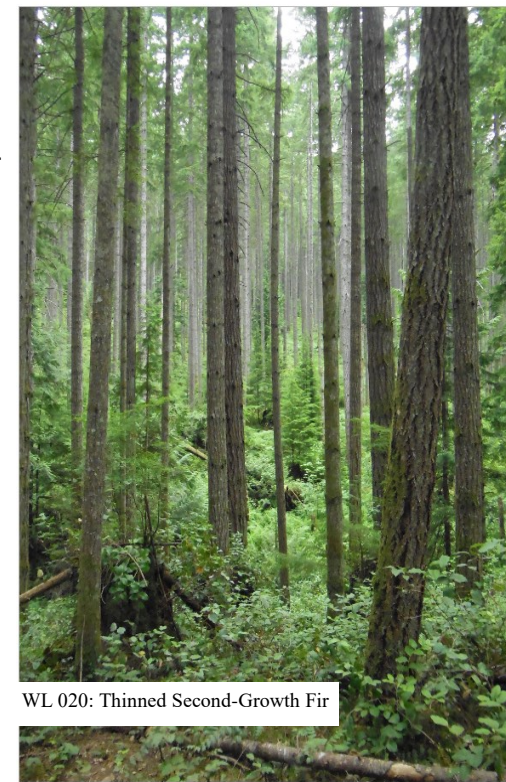
Student cruisers in Pacific Rim National Park

Student involvement in the operation of the WL was an important management objective made in our application, but it was not to be. The student cruise of the first cut-block was rejected because, given the class-time allotted, the cruise took too much time. Similarly, planting projects, which barely met Ministry standards, were cut. Students from the Vocational Division's Heavy Equipment programmes were given the chance at road building, installation of culverts, etc. Although mainly satisfactory, again because of the allotment of their class times, the work took far too long. It was clear that students and class time could not supply operational requirements, so some work had to be offered to local contractors.

Paul was a master at securing Forest Resource Development Agreement grants and subsequently Forest Renewal BC funds with which students could be hired for contracts outside of class time, i.e. weekends, or for the duration of the summer, with small crews and close supervision. The first was an inventory cruise of the private lands, the results from which, combined with the Ministry's data for the Crown Lands, gave us the AAC for the Woodlot as a single unit. In 1990 three summer students were hired and supervised by Paul while they juvenile-spaced 60 ha of an immature FPI stand on the Private lands.

Subsequent FRBC funds were silvicultural contracts on the Crown Lands. Work included first-lift pruning, hand fertilization on 60 ha of second-growth Douglas-fir, and white pine blister-rust reduction pruning. These contracts, carried out by the whole of the second-year class, outside class times, funded the students for their overseas trips.

The Lantzville Foothills, where the Private lands of the WL were situated, consisted of a variety of topography, from rolling rock out-crops, sharp gullies and benchlands with shallow to bedrock soils. Forest cover varied from stands of poor Shore pine to reasonable second-growth Douglas-fir in the better sites, with mixtures of Shore pine and Douglas-fir between.



WL 020: Thinned Second-Growth Fir

The average Site Index was estimated to be around 13.

**Biosolids.** In 1991 Paul attended a conference held in Nanaimo and hosted by the then Greater Vancouver Regional District to review the promising results, presented by Dr Hamish Kimmins, of a UBC research project using treated sewage as a forest fertilizer. The GVRD was looking for a location with suitably-poor Douglas-fir sites for an industrial-scale application, on a one-year trial, of what was to become known as biosolids. WL020 offered suitable sites on the Private Lands. GVRD would be responsible for transportation of biosolids from the lower mainland, storage and application of biosolids and Malaspina was to receive \$80,000 from GVRD for public relations, site monitoring, locating application trails and establishment of several permanent sample plots, plus funding of two summer students for sample-plot monitoring.

The increased growth response was apparent in the first year and in 2001 led Malaspina to bid on, and win the right to access biosolids from Nanaimo Regional District. This multi-year contract entailed applying 5,000 tons

## Membership: New or lapsed member?

\$20.00 annually, or three years for \$50.00

### To join, or renew Membership by email and e-transfer:

- 1 Print a membership form from the website, complete, scan and email it to us at [info@fhabc.org](mailto:info@fhabc.org)
- 2 Send an electronic fund transfer of your dues (\$20/year, or \$50 for 3 years) to [treasurer@fhabc.org](mailto:treasurer@fhabc.org)

### To join, renew, or correspond by mail:

Forest History Association of B.C.  
427 Walker Avenue  
Ladysmith, BC V9G 1V7  
Print a membership form from the website, complete, scan and mail, along with your cheque made payable to "Forest History Association of BC".

## Printed Newsletters

We send the download-link by email to members of both the regular-page and tabloid versions of the current Newsletter, and invite those who want a printed version to make their own arrangements. Some prefer the 8.5"x11" version on a home printer; some prefer to take the tabloid 11"x17" version to Staples or other sources of tabloid printing and make it booklet-style. Some choose black and white, some print it in colour.

## Evans Lake Forest Education Centre

Celebrating 60 years!



Since 1960, [Evans Lake Forest Education Centre](#), north of Squamish, B.C., has been providing forest and outdoor education to over a hundred thousand children and youth from all over the world. They are conducting a '[60 Years of Evans Lake](#)' fundraiser to cover revenue losses last season due to COVID-19.

## FHABC Newsletter Team

**Editor:** Dave Florence **Reviewers:** John Parminter, Mike Meagher, Eric Andersen, David Brownstein  
**Submissions??: Yes, Please!**  
**email us at** [newsletter.editor@fhabc.org](mailto:newsletter.editor@fhabc.org)

<b>2020/21 FHABC officers:</b> President, Richard Dominy Vice Pres., Eric Andersen Secretary, Dave Lang Treasurer, TBA (Pres. acting)	<b>Eight Directors at large:</b> Katherine Spencer Mark Clark Sarah Giesbrecht Dave Florence Terry Simmons Mike Meagher Ira Sutherland Claire Williams
<b>Webmaster:</b> David Brownstein	

## Book and Media Reports

... selected from our [Facebook Group Page](#)



FHABC director Eric Andersen and others shared several links :

[Balloon Logging in North Vancouver in the 60s](#)

To make the Royal BC Museum's collections and archives more accessible, the B.C. government will build [a new collections and research building in Colwood](#).

We received updates on the products featuring the art of [Len Whalen](#), and a book soon to be released: [Rangitans: Life on the edge](#)

Canada's first Helicopter Rescue, Sep 23, 1950, was featured in a [Facebook post](#) and can be found on our [website here](#)

Frequent posts continue on the Facebook page of Brenda McCorquodale, [Undiscovered Coast: History of Northern Vancouver Island](#) Posts normally include an interesting photo with interpretation. See also material [on her Blog](#)

An extended look at historic Wardner and the massive Crows Nest Pass Lumber Company's operation at Wardner, BC starting in 1898 on the [Lost Kootenays Facebook page](#)

## Book Reports [BC Books](#) [Ormsby Review](#)

Cornwall, Claudia. *British Columbia in Flames*. Harbour Publishing, 2020. [Review: BC Books](#)

R. Brian McDaniel. *Ocean Falls: After the Whistle. Recollections and Reflections of Life in a Coastal Company Town*. Victoria: Printorium Print Works, 2018 [Review: Ormsby](#)

Rustad, Harley. *Big Lonely Doug: The Story of One of Canada's Last Great Trees*. Toronto, Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 2018. [Review: Ormsby](#)

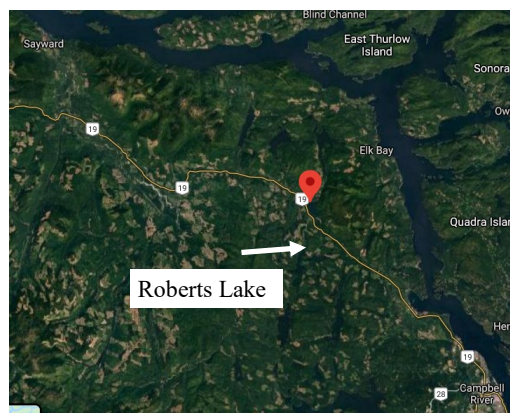




## From Dry to Wet

By Mike Meagher RPF (Ret.), and FHABC Board Member. *Recollections from 1954/55 by a young UBC forestry student gaining experience in the coastal forests of BC. A follow-up to Mike's earlier piece in Issue #104*

After spending most of my youth in Interior areas with “dry” climates and after my first year in UBC's BSF Class, I landed a job for the summer of 1954 with the B.C. Forest Service (BCFS) Surveys and Inventory Division, based at Roberts Lake north of Campbell River. “Wet!” Coastal



trees! At last!

Base Camp was a campground site and small restaurant by the lake, offering a few canoes for evenings, if available. Our “Camp” was based on tents on wooden floors to provide dry boots and clean feet during the wet summer. Only the hardiest tolerated the cold lake waters for a swim/bath. Once, after a spell of cold and wet weather, Doug Fligg, our Crew Chief, assisted by Scott Finding, prevailed on our landlord to rent us a cabin and heat the water for a communal shower.

The work area represented “Classic” Coastal Douglas-fir forests resulting from past wildfires or natural replacement after decay, windthrow or insect predations created openings for the shade-intolerant “Dougies” in a climate wetter than in the Okanagan Valley. Most work was land-based, with some help from the BCFS “Navy” as required. Much of the area was on a partial and undulating plateau, and into part of the Vancouver Island mountain chain splitting the terrain into east-facing vs. west-facing areas, with most of the lakes in the eastern portion.

The crew was a collection from different sources, experiences and futures. The one with the most experience was from Manitoba; a pair of brothers from Victoria, Gavin and Art Hyslop, were between university years; Wilf Hurd, a young boy from Langford, was well-prepared for all necessary hikes via membership in the Rocky Mountain Rangers; and also Roger Hooten Fox, who arrived somewhat later from a different survey party after awaking to find himself floating on his air mattress when the tide rose to flood his former beach site after he could not locate a better site. His boots did not float, so he was delayed before being sent to our crew. The last crewman was Bill Graham, an agriculture student from Guelph, Ontario, following his desire to see BC's “BIG TREES”.

Work included a Volume and Decay (V&D) component, with a basic crew which went to stands selected from aerial photos by Doug to document the sizes and health of all trees in a designated plot size. That entailed recording the species, diameter at breast height (DBH) and height of each tree, plus flaws that could indicate wounds or decay. Then each tree was felled and its age on the stump, ages from stump to the top, top diameter of each log, and degree and extent of any physical flaws were recorded. That was when “Mr. Ontario” shone, since he was dying to swing a “REAL” faller's axe, and anything else he could lift, which was plenty of the toolbox's contents.

Most of my time was spent tramping across the area burned in the 1938 Bloedel (sometimes called the Sayward) Fire<sup>1</sup>, which began in logging slash about 20 km south of our area, and burned almost to Courtenay. It burned from early July to mid-August in a bad fire year. Some of the burned land had been replanted, but most remained growing a few naturally-sown

seedlings and lots of brush, or appeared barren after the severe heat “cooked” the ground.

We collected data on the regeneration success by following survey lines usually 10 chains apart and recording any seedlings from commercially-valuable species in a plot mostly below 10 feet in diameter. Then “on to the next” until we ran into timber or a planted area. Later, I learned from Alf Bamford, Forester in the BCFS' Reforestation Division, that they spaced “strips” a mile apart when the land was obviously too barren to need a more intense assessment. Ironically, stricter slash regulations, such as felling standing trees or burning slash to reduce fire hazard on logged areas in the Vancouver Forest District, had been made law in the January preceding the Bloedel fire.<sup>(1)</sup>

For more efficient use of time and fuel, I and a small crew were housed with a BCFS Reforestation Division crew in a former logging camp near Brewster Lake some miles from our base. It included men in a “Snag-falling” crew with whom I would work starting after graduation 3 years later. Most of the access roads were converted railway grades built in the “glory days” of railroad logging over the favourable terrain. Many failing bridges were replaced by crude tracks to culverts that might be in need of some ‘cat work. None in sight? “Keep calm and carry on” from the London Blitz was the motto. Got stuck only once when I turned too early on a tight corner and creased the side of the truck's box on a protruding log. An hour with an axe and I could squeeze by. The only danger I can recall involved a – I presume – curious cougar that I FELT, due to a tingle in my spine, followed me along one of the former railway grades that was fairly overgrown. I was covering a small sector of our area, so I sent the

(Continued on page 5)

## Forestry at Malaspina College — The first thirty years (Part 2)

By David Smith RPF (Ret), who spent most of his career with Malaspina Community College (later to become Vancouver Island University) in the forestry programme. Part 1 in Issue 107 described the programme from its beginnings to the end of the century. Part 2 features the inception of logger sports, and the integration of Woodlot 020 and biosolids into the programme. Photos courtesy of VIU Archives or the author's personal collection.

In the mid-'70's Intercollegiate Logger Sports were an annual event among the four forestry programmes. Although we never won, when held in Vancouver a night in downtown followed by a midnight trip home on the CPR ferry was the high spot of the day for some. Also in the early days the Vocational School, now amalgamated with Malaspina, still offered a course in high-lead logging so class time was appropriated for our students to set chokers, layout cables and witness towering-up and towering-down in Crown Zellerbach's Nanaimo Lakes Division.

In the mid-'80's Fred and Harold's positions were taken over by Michel Vallée and Barry Ostrand respectively. Buff went to Malaysia for a year of professional development and was ably replaced by Cathy Hopkins.

The late '80s saw the first of what were to become annual intercollegiate student exchanges with institutions having equivalent forestry programmes across Canada: Sir Sanford Flemming in Ontario, Yukon College in Whitehorse, John Abbot College Montreal.

In the early '90s, Michel and Barry were the faculty responsible for the annual Interior field trips. On one such trip, they hatched a plan to replace this field trip with an international tour. The first was to Tampere Polytechnique in Finland. Several of such tours succeeded and eventually resulted in a five-year Canada-EU student-faculty Academic Mobility grant in collaboration with two other Canadian Schools, and three in the EU: University of Cumbria England, Tampere Polytechnique in Finland and Lycée Forestière de Meymac in France. A second such Mobility Grant saw trips to Romania, Hungary, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Italy. Such trips have continued to be a feature of our programme well into the twenty-first century with des-

tinations as far-flung as New Zealand, Mexico and Austria.

The notability of The Department was to be enhanced by Barry, who taught a course at Tampere and went on to deliver a paper at a conference in St. Petersburg, and Michel, who became President of the CIF in 2012, received several other CIF awards as well as being awarded Silviculturist of the Year by the Coastal Silviculture Committee in 2016.

In 1988 Malaspina Community College became a University-College and was able to access degree programmes from B.C.'s universities. In 2008 the U-C, by Provincial fiat, became Vancouver Island University (V.I.U.), able to grant its own degree programme. From that time on all teaching staff on campuses would be titled “Professors” – too late for early Forestry instructors to enjoy such an honorific.

A faculty shuffle in 1990 saw Doug Corrin hired to the Department to teach Computer Applications amongst other courses, and was charged with writing student tutorials for GIS. His management skills were soon noted by the Administration & for a time he was seconded to the position of Assistant to the Dean of the Science & Technology Area then Assistant V.P. (Academic), then Dean of S & T. Never losing touch with Forestry, he has been instrumental in directing the Department into the electronic age.



1981: Student Loggers Sports at BCIT

Tom Hedekar arrived on campus in 1995 from College of New Caledonia and took on the role of Manager of BC Forestry Continuing Studies Network – Coastal Division, which later changed to Malaspina Forestry Extension Programme.

The Department's course on Fire Management had always been seen as problematical to teach since few faculty had the necessary background experience, but Tom had taught it at the College of New Caledonia. Fortunately, an opening became available for him in 2002 to join the Department and take on this course. His guest speakers included Dr. Brad Hawkes from the Pacific Forest Centre and Eric Meyer the Fire Weather Specialist from MoF in Victoria. Each class always got a tour of the Martin Mars water bombers at their base on Sproat Lake, Port Alberni.

**Woodlot 020.** Agricultural woodlots had been a feature of B.C.'s forest landscape prior to the 1980s when the Forests Ministry introduced a new tenure, that of the Woodlot Licence – allocating previously-unalienated small parcels of Crown Land to individuals or specified groups or institutions. In

(Continued on page 14)  
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# Woss Heritage Park Project

By Dave Florence Editor, FHABC Newsletter, living in Powell River. The story idea was suggested by Gerry Burch.

In November 2017, Western Forest Products (WFP), operator of the Englewood Railway since acquiring Canadian Forest Products in 2006, announced the [permanent closure of the railway](#), which had been shut down since a tragic accident April 20, 2017 that took the lives of three workers. Logs are now moved by logging trucks on the adjacent roads. WFP reported that it was the need to reduce operating costs, not the accident, that led to the closure. Operating in the Nimpkish Valley for 100 years, since 1917, the railway was considered to be the last railway in North America dedicated to hauling logs.

Planning had begun in 2012 for Woss Heritage Park. WFP moved Steam locomotive #113, a 135-ton Alco 2-8-2 rod engine, to the site in 2014, and the viewing platform was added in 2016.

As part of a total community effort, WFP led a [community consultation](#) in 2018 to determine the next steps to record the complete history of the logging railway. The Regional District of Mount Waddington (RDMW), the

'Namgis First Nation, WFP and other community partners participated. Pat English, RDMW's Woss Heritage Park Project Manager, successfully secured funding to implement the next phase, which included the Gazebo (photo right, opened in May 2019).

Approval of funding was undoubtedly facilitated by an excellent [Statement of Significance](#) for the Heritage Park which was prepared in 2015 after a community consultation and contains the conceptual vision and details of the park and locomotive #113.

To complete the phase planned in 2018, WFP is painting, donating and moving to the Park engine #303, a General Motors Electro-Motive Division SW1200 diesel switcher locomotive, which was obtained for the railway in the late 1950s and operated until recently. A caboose is also being donated. If funding from the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program is approved, expected in March 2021, the Park additions will include a viewing platform for diesel #303 and caboose, washrooms, interpretive panels, more signage and trail improvements that

will connect the site to other Nimpkish Valley trails.

Copies of the interpretive panels in the Gazebo and at the #113 viewing platform have been presented in a [companion file on our website](#). Many thanks to RDMW for providing these images for viewing by our readers.

(Download Alert-Very large file: 35Megs. And, the pdf file has odd-sized widths; readers will have to adjust the "zoom" several times to get a readable view of



the various panels.)

The [companion file](#) includes:

- an illustrated timeline of forest history in the Nimpkish Valley,
- a 'Namgis First Nation traditional territory display,
- a commemoration of all lives lost in the forests of the Nimpkish Valley and across BC,
- the Locomotive #113 interpretive panel,
- the report from the *Port Hardy Eagle* about the Gazebo dedication held in May 2019, and
- this newsletter piece.

A book about the Railway has been published: Macham, R. S. and Atkinson, M. E. (2018) [Last of the railway loggers](#). Misery Creek Bookworks.

A 10 minute 2019 video of the Gazebo can be [played from here](#)



(Continued from page 4)

rest of the crew to the large sector while I pretended to be Tarzan, or some other mythical figure at home in Nature. The "Feeling" persisted for several minutes, then ceased. WHEW! My post-graduation job as a "Forester-in-Training" with BCFS' Reforestation Division included a return to the Sayward Forest to resume regeneration assessment and mapping, then planning the planting area –based again in the same snag-falling camp.

Our 1954 work from the ocean required the presence of the BCFS "Navy" to permit day-only access to



Forest Surveyor  
Rob McLaren Collection

selected areas. It arrived as the *Forest Surveyor*, captained by an elderly "salt" and staffed by a cook. "Cookie" was a major change from the usual cooks on the Coast. Alec was from a Russian-speaking settlement in northern Alberta now facing the ocean for the first time, and seriously gullible. He produced good, and varied, meals from mainly cans and pasta – not as popular then as now. Also refreshing drinks, usually orange, from frozen or bagged substances.

His lemon pie was a favourite – REALLY good. One was asked re orange pie, to be met with a puzzled expression: "orange pie?" "SURE, orange pie. Have you never heard of orange pie?" was the response. Next night: orange pie on the table. Good, too. No further abuse of his innocence – until one day. Alec was fascinated by the islands of kelp drifting on the calm waters, but could not trust us to have told the truth regarding their plant/animal status. Not

long after our party was waiting on a beach at the end of the day with several kelp plants stranded there that we collected as whips, etc. – until one bright spark suggested we surprise Alec with a "snake" – eyes cut out and a bit of antennae from shortened "leaves", long tail. Those boarding our taxi home first started the tension buildup by alerting Alec about the "snake's size and vicious character", raising his voice's pitch and volume. More tension as more men arrived and the size of the "snake" increased. The last shuttle boat bore the instigator – Bob Jones, the supervising Forester, who retired as Projects Forester in the Silviculture Branch, formerly Reforestation Division, tasked with monitoring our procedures and standards – holding the "snake" by the neck and underwater to disguise it better. Seeing that, Alec began backing away in discomfort until one of our gang – and his "friend" — grabbed the animal and thrust it toward Alec, who threw up his hands and ran along the deck and down below to his galley. Soon, he was fully engaged in his dinner preparations when one of the crew fed the "snake" down to where it was suspended close to Alec's head. Another scream when Alec confronted the evil being and another noisy retreat. He still served dinner; "Good, too". A few evenings later I found Alec with a pail full of stones that he threw at a floating collection of kelp to drive them away from his porthole at night. Pretty sure the orange pie interceded against any further thoughts of teasing Alec.

A few lessons while living on the boat: reading tide tables for fun, fishermen pursuing schools of Orcas to kill them after eating "their" fish, the development of the regular cloud bank in late day, then their disappearance during the morning. Also, the impacts of tidal changes and levels of danger for small boats, such as we took to reach the shore and face a wall of salal. NOT my new friend,

but reading tidal tables was useful years later. One April evening, when anchored in Brown's Bay, we saw a Navy vessel, the HMCS *Ontario*, sailing north and sporting an unusual flag: the English Royal banner, indicating that Prince Philip was on board on his way to declare the Kitimat smelter officially open. Happily, he did come safely through Seymour Narrows due to careful attention to the tide tables. This was the (in)famous site of Ripple Rock and its dangerous swirls and whirlpools - destroyed 4 years later by the "largest "non-



Moment of explosion—[Wikipedia commons](#)

nuclear explosion in history" of April 5, 1958 in an excavated chamber filled to the ceiling with explosives.

On the subject of visiting evaluators: I had been with a crew collecting data on a high-elevation stand of timber – yellow cedar and amabilis fir notable dominants – on McCreight Mountain — early enough in the spring to be working on a thick snowpack. Later we returned to satisfy Rob Malcolm, the evaluator from Surveys HQ, who inspected it during summer. Quite a contrast: where the snow had been deep and firm, allowing easy movement, we were challenged by the underbrush of huckleberry and salal that had been freed by the snow. More than just the vegetation, the labels on each tree were well above our heads – even farther above Rob's head, since he was much shorter than most of the crew. A good lesson on habitat factors and seasonality in mobility challenges.

By the end of summer I had confronted some new species, such as

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Sitka spruce, mountain hemlock, amabilis fir, vine and bigleaf maple, even Garry oak and arbutus near Courtenay en route to Roberts Lake. “wet” natives all, apart from the last two tree species where the mountains to the west created a local rain-shadow near Courtenay – maybe with some help from sympathetic residents.

My most quixotic recollection is that of “Mr. Guelph” (Bill Graham), working feverishly to return life to an abandoned faller’s axehead left driven into the top of a stump to rust. Bill removed it and filled his spare time filing off the rust and sharpening the blade to make his V&D work a LOT easier. The great day came when he took on the biggest and knottiest hemlock in the plot. One mighty swing and ... the metal curled in surrender! Laughter? “I forget”. BUT ... Bill bought a new version, complete with handle, strapped it to his suitcase and set course eastward, still vowing to demonstrate it to “Aggie” friends. Years later, he sent me an email message of inquiry about my status as the Mike Meagher of 1954 renown, (or some such error). Still full of energy and optimism, though I did NOT raise the topic of falling/felling” axes. Bill returned to the BCFS the following three summers, famous axe in hand, to work as a part-time logger, stem cutter and cedar pole debarker. Less remarkable was the difficulty for one of the crew, in his third summer on a V&D crew, enroute to his future career as a Civil Engineer, to remember the main bearings after raising his gaze from a hand compass. Luckily, he did not set the bearing for “home” at the end of the workday in the woods. Usually, it was “downhill to the road” in that area – and most of the Coastal woods.

Another “wet” year in 1955, when I was hired by the Powell River Company to do both regeneration and some engineering work during my summer holiday. Geoff Marples was our Chief, joined by Walter Mauch, a Forester imported from Switzerland, and a marked contrast to Geoff, who topped six feet in height, legs to

match, while Walter was a head shorter. Their work together in the woods could cause some challenges to the other when either slashed out any trail needed for weeks. Long legs usually prevailed, but low overhead pruning negated those legs uncomfortably. UBC students were myself and George Richards from the east Kootenay valley, and of comparable height. Happily, we cut no trails.

Our summer started with an overnight sailing from Vancouver to Minstrel Island and a bed in the Minstrel Hotel with its “Ladies and Escorts” room that served several of the surrounding settlements. Our water taxi was the



regular source of mail, freight and employees in the fiords and smaller inlets supporting small settlements accessible by water only. Our arrival was memorable: A small 1930s truck outfitted with a rear deck loaded with beer cases headed for the bar in the hotel, then passed back over the same bar and onto the steamer for the enjoyment of the passengers headed farther up-coast. Not all bottles remained for later consumption. A wide and deep layer of empties below the bridge to the hotel shone upward to the sun. No recycling in those days.

We spent the night to allow our local water taxi to convey us to our destination, Turnour Island, the next day. While there we were to measure young western hemlock trees in a spacing trial, then fell some of them in most plots, according to the thinning regimes planned. As that was the first such trial with hemlock I found it interesting. Also interesting was the view of natural life as seen from the porch of our cabin – a family home abandoned but maintained by the PR Company for local forestry activities. One memorable scene

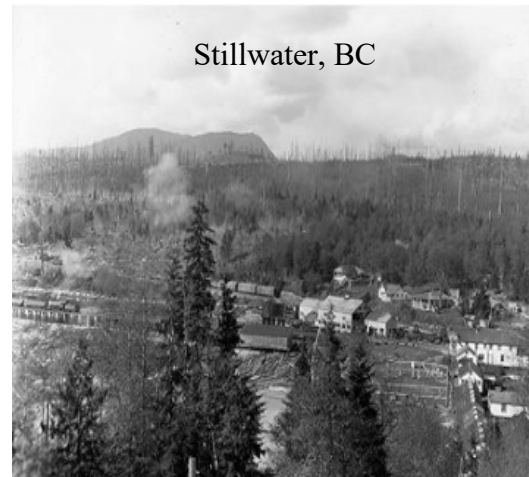
crossed my gaze while munching my lunch: salmon were swarming around and over a rock shelf just below the surface when a Bald eagle that I had been watching dropped from his tree and dived into the buffet. It struggled with its catch, flapping wings wildly, then disappeared. “Hmmm,” I thought, “Might be goodbye Baldie. Should not have selected a submarine.” About 5 seconds later a figure broke the surface, still flapping desperately and struggled to gain airtime, returned to the perch tree and shook all possible feathers vigorously. No salmon, befitting his – doubtless – red face.

“Job done” on the thinning trial, we boated home (Vancouver) on the same “taxi”, had a few days off, then boarded the same ship for the trip to Powell River and work in the Stillwater Division for the remainder of the summer. It was a well-established camp, with resident families and separate cabins for Engineering, Forestry, Kitchen staff, etc. Maybe to reduce worries and unpleasant interactions among the “Classes”, given that Forestry did not rank as high as the Fallers, who had



With permission, Raesidecartoon.com

Stillwater, BC



## CULLITON BROS — PACIFIC NORTHWEST RAILWAY TRESTLE BUILDERS

By Eric Andersen, FHABC Vice President. A summary of a 9-page article available [on our website](#)

All around the Pacific Northwest between the 1880s and 1920s impressive timber trestle and bridge structures were built for railways – especially logging railways.

As we contemplate the photographic record of these feats of engineering skill and extraordinary labour, we might ask, “Who built these structures?”

It seems that mountain railway timber trestles and bridges were often built by specialized contracting firms, whose names have been largely forgotten.

Ken Drushka’s book *Working in the Woods* records the information that Merrill & Ring’s Squamish division trestle bridges were built by Sam and Bill Culliton – a very rare mention. A creek along the PGE/ BC Rail line is named after the Cullitons.

Who were the Cullitons?

The clues and sources available are diverse and scattered. Yet we can begin to put together some picture of the Cullitons and their unique railway logging era enterprise.

Six Culliton brothers – John, James, Charles, Thomas, Samuel and William – came out of Ontario and engaged themselves in railway trestle and bridge construction careers. They were each settled in Spokane, Washington by the early 1900s.

The timing was good for the Cullitons’ arrival from the east – busy years for railway construction, mining and timber industries throughout the Pacific Northwest. They found work in senior supervisory or skilled tradesman positions in various railway construction projects in Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana.

The brothers launched the Culliton Brothers Contracting Company sometime before 1910.

Although over the next four decades the company would continue to have headquarters in Spokane, a very substantial amount of their business came in projects on the Canadian side of the border. In 1914, a Vancouver B.C. office was established, and two of the brothers would reside here for several years.

From 1910 to 1913 Culliton Bros. would work on the E&N Railway, as well as for Alberta Central Railway. During 1914-15 they built all PGE Railway trestle bridges between Cheakamus Canyon and Clinton.

In 1916, Culliton Bros. began a long association with the Merrill & Ring company, with a contract for trestle bridge construction in its Pysht River valley railway logging operation on Olympic Peninsula. Later, they would undertake trestle and bridge work for Merrill & Ring’s Theodosia River (1923-24) and Squamish operations (1927-28).

Construction of 18 trestles along the Copper Mountain spur of the Kettle Valley Railway was a substantial contract for the Cullitons during 1919-1920.

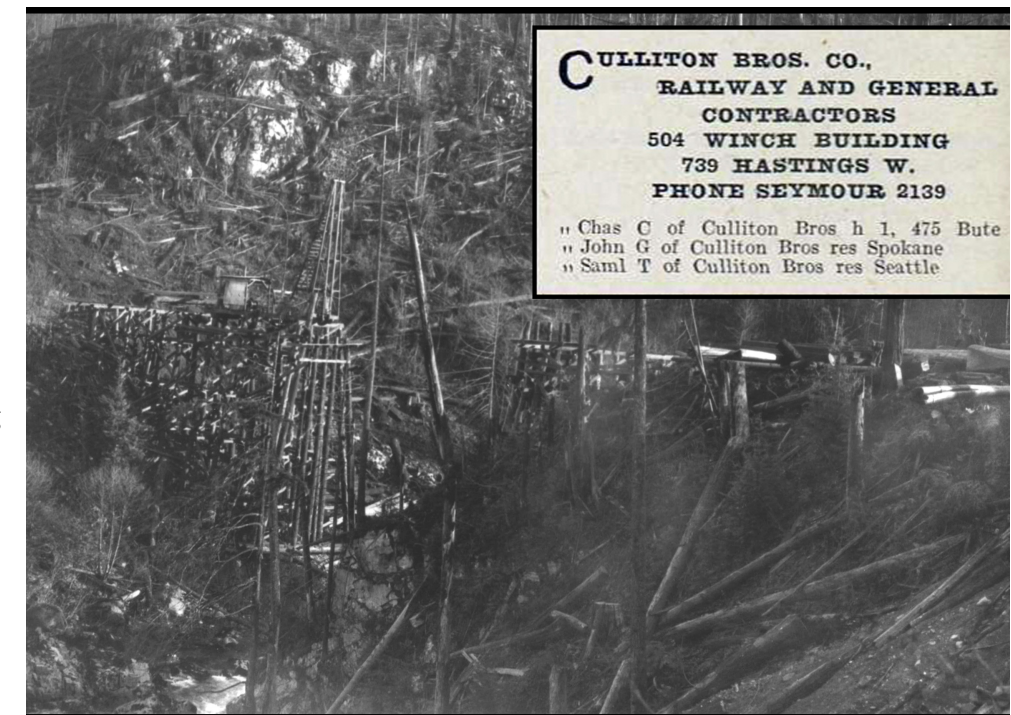
The PGE Ry was a repeat customer for the bridge construction services in 1919, as was the E&N Ry in 1923-24 for Port Alberni line trestle replacement work.

Culliton Bros. built all the trestle bridges on the Campbell River Timber Company’s twenty-five mile rail line completed in 1929.

The company continued railway construction contracting work well into the 1940s, until the retirement of the two youngest brothers, Sam and Bill Culliton.

The story of the Culliton brothers, railway timber trestle and bridge building specialists, is an interesting cross-border chapter in the history of the railway and resource industries of the Pacific Northwest deserving further attention.

[Read the full article](#)



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“Chas C of Culliton Bros h 1, 475 Bute  
“John G of Culliton Bros res Spokane  
“Saml T of Culliton Bros res Seattle



## A Tribute to Peter J. Murphy (1930-2020) Forester, Naturalist, Educator

By Kat Spencer, FHABC Director. *The forest history, naturalist and forestry education community across Canada mourn the passing of Peter Murphy, who received his PhD. mid-career at UBC in 1985. At U. of A. he taught forest policy, fire management and forest history. He was active with the Alberta Forest History Association and well known to the other Canadian forest history organizations through his presentations and publications. Tributes that covers details his career can be read in the [St. Albert Today](#) and in the [U. of A. Quad](#). We chose to print Kat Spencer's personal recollections below.*

I was blessed to have met Dr. Peter Murphy and become inspired like so many who have had the privilege. Peter was a passionate and smart man like no other. There are many obituaries available remembering the remarkable life and impact Peter had on the world. I would like to share with the Forest History Association of BC one small story of how Peter was an inspiration, leader, and mentor for me.

When I moved to Alberta in 2011, I was determined to revive logger sports in the province but had no idea how. Unknowingly, I was told to attend the Forest History Association of Alberta AGM. At the AGM I was privileged enough to hear Dr. Peter Murphy speak and was instantly inspired, like so many others that had crossed his path.

We first bonded over being alumni of UNB. I then told Peter about my passion and vision for logger sports in Alberta. I described how I had community support from volunteers in a town near him but the residences of this town saw their history in farming and not forestry. Peter told me about his story with the Grey Nuns White Spruce Park in St Albert. This small park represents what used to be a much larger vibrant forest in the St Albert area, full of rich history, interesting ecosystems, and maybe a very important lesson for me. As Peter and I talked I felt as if he was taking me back in time with his immense knowledge and passion for forest history. He challenged me to ask myself and the community “but,

what was here before the fields?” From that brief conversation, Peter and I embarked on our own small mission to show the community of Morinville, Alberta their forest history. Peter provided me with books and articles, but most of all he made me feel excited about the past of the land we lived on. Peter and I spent a few evenings perusing through the Morinville Museum’s archives, hearing comments from one of the staff that there was a strong farming history in Morninville ‘we are a prairie community.’ We both got a chuckle knowing that soon they would see the forests through the fields.

After about 2 months of research, and waiting until the next town council meeting, I determinedly strung together the early history of Morinville’s settlement and what was on the landscape prior to that. We found images of log decks and registered mills in the area. We found connections to historic homes that still existed and most likely contained a part of their forest history. The night before the town council meeting I practiced my presentation to Peter over the phone, his support was tireless.

At that town council meeting, I watched as the councillors and community members opened their eyes wide with amazement and excitement revealing a whole other chapter of their history they had overlooked. With a huge amount of praise from the Mayor and councillors we were allowed to create a



permanent logger sports site in Morinville. What Peter helped me do was expand this community’s connection to its past and realize that in all of us there is a connection to our forest history.

Following this Peter and I teamed up on various exciting projects analyzing historic springboard pockets for Jasper National Park, and teaching and demonstrating logger sports to Junior Forest Rangers across Alberta.

Peter had an ability to find the roots of forest history inside of us all. His legacy shows the impact outreach and education on forestry history can have on individuals, communities, provinces and across our country. Peter embodied all things forestry and his legacy as a forester and forest historian will forever be esteemed and remembered.



(Continued from page 6)  
their own cabins. Work entailed regeneration surveys, laying out falling areas, mapping roads returned to use after some years, etc. No vehicles were wasted on us; we rode the crummy each way each day. Little conversation.

Some weeks after our arrival, and several days of high temperatures, the fire danger rose dramatically. An early shift schedule was adopted to reduce the probability of fire breaking out among the cold-decked logs, “hot” hauling cables or slash on the hills. Now the “wake-up” blew at 4 am, breakfast immediately (while making our lunch) and crummies leaving at 5 for start-up at 6. Predictably(?) the first day started with a downpour, leaving us seeking shelter under logs, since our plan had been to lay out a road in the timber, where the shade and clouds made using a staff compass impossible. Days of harsh sun later and we longed for the rain. Luckily, the local lake was clean and warmed by the sun – at least in the top 6 inches.

Working near the active settings was rare, but it provided one memorable glimpse into life in the raw. From our spot on a hillside in a clearcut area we heard a primal scream, followed by two flashes of action through a narrow belt of sunlight illuminating the woods below us; a baby deer and a longer body - a cougar - in pursuit. Also, a larger figure as last chaser: the mother deer snorting to scare away the “cat”. The screaming stopped, leaving only the mother’s “voice”. We shouted and ran downhill to locate the wee one and “save it”. Not a chance; all we saw was a few disturbed spots and blood drops along a game trail starting at the base of a young cedar tree that bore claw marks to a perchable branch. All over in less than 10 seconds.

Real fun some days later when we worked in timber near an active “show” being monitored by a group of Whiskey jacks (now called the Grey jay – NO romance in that ornithologist’s soul) that also scoped us

out. When the “break” whistle sounded, the jays came from all directions and were all over the loggers’ open lunch pails. But our winged friends favoured us by their curiosity and interest in our menu. We began flicking tidbits their way, encouraging them closer. As usual in animal packs, one or two were more daring and better fed. Dropping food closer to us was not a challenge, even when holding a bit in a hand, but looking away was appreciated. Finally, George Richards decided a real challenge was needed, so he held a piece of bread crust while the bird pried at it; no food, so Mr. Jay landed and walked the length of George’s arm and pecked harder. No food, resulting in Mr. Jay turning to look steadily at George, then peck his hand 3 times. Food dropped, but did not hit the ground before Jay had it and fled to a perch – and stared back at George triumphantly!

Jay 1, George 0.

Pranks were a regular facet of life in “the camps”. One camp member was the young son of a Powell River employee, apparently sent to camp for experience with the source of his Dad’s income and social status. His position was Whistle Punk – the one who held the trigger on the whistle to command the yarding machine to move logs hitched to the cable from the pile at the spar tree to the road-side’s truck landing. The Punk must sit in a safe place that is visible to both ends of the yarding path and sound the whistle when signaled by the Rigging Slinger,<sup>(2)</sup> the setting’s boss during active loading. Whistling was a responsible job, but pretty boring. Not to everyone’s tempo. The Slinger inaugurated the neophyte to his task by commanding him to “grease the wire” and “wipe off the excess grease” of the vital rubber-wrapped cable. As the wire was long, heavy and draped over some serious slash, it was a day’s work, even if completed early. Job done and reported again for duty before the kid learned he had been “Punked”. Not forgotten when said whistle artist left for school, and not before leaving a length of greasy cable under his boss’s pillow, wrapped in a message

“Be sure to wipe off the excess grease.”

Again, while in the process of living with my eyes open, I learned some things about our forests. The Stillwater Division’s low-elevation areas had been logged several years before I arrived, leaving areas covered in native species exhibiting adaptive strategies. Stands of red alder on moist sites being replaced by cedar understoreys, bigleaf maple holding their own on moist, but well-drained sites until ...

Douglas-fir needed an opening to the sky in the canopy early in its life to succeed, unlike native yew which could thrive under a “serious” overstorey. Road culvert sites needing careful scrutiny regarding signs of heavy rainfall before selecting the best location. Blowdowns if a fire-break was not wide enough, logs piled in a gully and damming the water until ... All available to be a lesson if eyes are connected to the brain. One such lesson reached my brain only a few years ago when I approached Port Renfrew from Sooke and realized the conifers remaining standing, that I thought were grand fir, were in fact amabilis fir, usually found at higher elevations and tolerant of snow pack weeks after any lesser species. There is a similar stand near the junction of Highway 4 and the Tofino/Ucluelet option – practically sea level! Quite a testament to the effect of the ocean on habitat. Luckily, many more impressions have been gained and filed for future reference.

Not content to thrive further in the “wet” Coastal forests, I returned to thrive in more “dry” stands in 1956 for my final UBC summer – chasing beetles in the Cariboo.

References:

<sup>(1)</sup> Data from John Parminter, RPF, Ret. See the Bloedel Fire story in Issue 106

<sup>(2)</sup> With help from Bruce Devitt RPF, Ret.





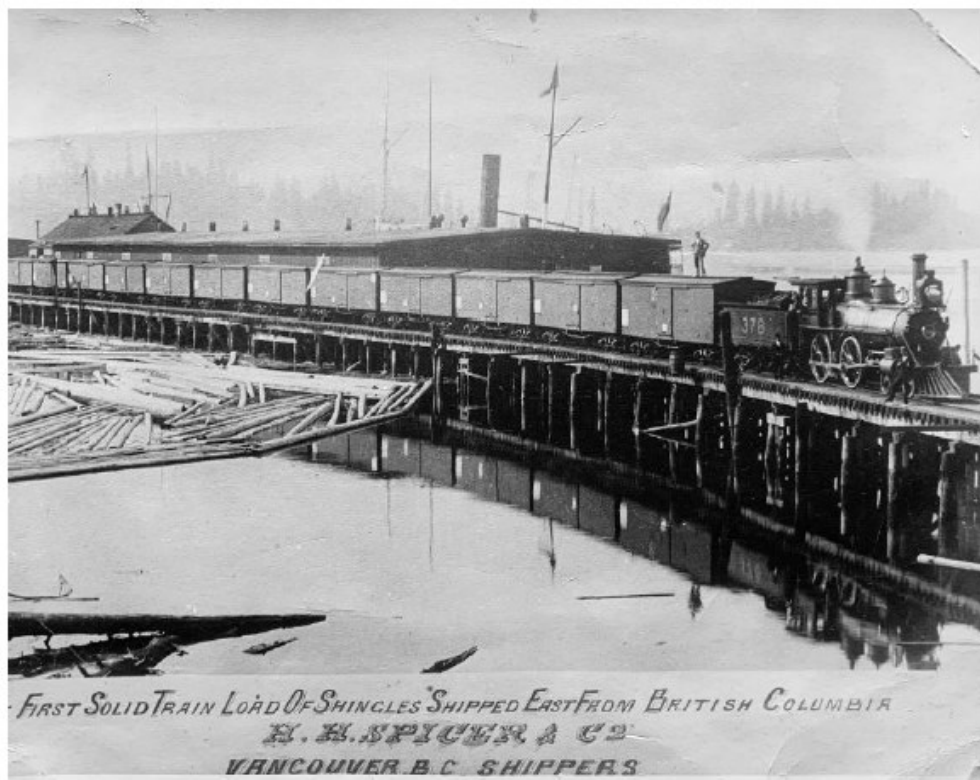
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arrives in Vancouver, and is soon the general manager and bookkeeper of a small shingle mill on the south side of False Creek. He is working for G.F. Slater and leading the company's growth by marketing shingles to other parts of western Canada.

Interviewed in a local newspaper, Spicer declares that Slater's mill produces 75,000 red cedar shingles per day from its portable floating mill, and the company plans to double that production with the purchase of a machine like those used in Michigan. The expanded mill would soon move to the north side of False Creek, where it will be moored at the new wharf in front of Cassady's Sash and Door Factory.

For the next few years, Spicer continues to expand Slater's mill operations, travelling to the east to secure orders by demonstrating the superiority of British Columbia red cedar shingles. In a six-month period during this time, the mill shipped over 40 rail carloads to eastern markets. By 1892, the mill has moved onshore with 187 feet of water frontage and access to the CPR rail siding, and now it's Spicer's mill.

The north shore of False Creek at the foot of Cambie St. had become an important manufacturing district. Spicer's neighbours included Cassady's Sash and Door factory, and F.W. Hart's furniture factory. The City of Vancouver recognized the importance of these businesses and the potential liability facing the city should a fire break out. The city made special arrangements to expand its fire protection services, adding new piping, hydrants, and equipment to protect these establishments.

Spicer's mill location may have been an important factor in his personal life as well. Not long after establishing himself as the mill's owner, he married Anna Matilda Hart, the younger sister of his business



Spicer and his first solid train load of shingles (family collection)

neighbour, F.W. Hart. The wedding was Vancouver's social event of the season in October 1893; Spicer and his wife would have five children. Spicer's success came about just as a period of economic depression began to sweep across North America. By the middle of the decade, a considerable number of local businesses had folded, and their owners had moved away from Vancouver. Spicer's brother-in-law, F.W. Hart, himself a pioneer entrepreneur of the city, sold his properties, businesses and inventory and left town.

In the shingle business, there was much competition for the markets in the east, and there was no offshore demand for the product. BC cedar shingles were well known as a superior product to the eastern pine shingles, but marketing and shipping



Spicer (left) at the Big Tree, in Stanley Park

costs made it difficult to penetrate those markets.

BC shingle producers organized into a combine and asked Spicer to lead their marketing efforts and advocate for relief on costs. In 1892, he called on the CPR to lower freight rates for shingle shipments from the west coast and he travelled east to set up a marketing agent. In January 1894, Victoria's *Daily British Colonist* noted:

*H. H. Spicer, British Columbia's shingle king, left to-day for Winnipeg, Toronto, and Montreal for the purpose of testing the market with a view of relieving British Columbia of the big surplus stock.*

That trip must have been successful, as later that year The *Canada Lumberman* reported that Spicer's agent had "already placed about 23,000,000 of these shingles in Ontario this season." A photograph from this time shows Spicer standing proudly on a train in Vancouver. The caption on the photo declares "The first solid trainload of shingles shipped east from British Columbia.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)  
*H.H. Spicer & Co. Vancouver B.C. Shippers".*

It was around this time that Spicer made a play to control his supply of cedar. He leased an area in North Vancouver from the Moodyville Company. From 1895-1897, Spicer constructed several flumes and tote roads to carry shingle bolts and logs down to Burrard Inlet from his camp in Lynn Valley.

Several local histories describe how the flumes were marvels of construction, suspended on trestles above the forest floor. Here also, Spicer may have called upon what he had learned from his shipbuilding cousins, when selecting and bringing out nearly 150 spars for sailing ships arriving in Vancouver for refit and repair.

During this time of expansion for Spicer, and despite the earlier intentions of the City of Vancouver, a fire, that started in Cassady's factory, spread to Spicer's mill. The impact to his operations was significant since insurance covered less than half his losses.

In the year that followed, while rebuilding from the fire, Spicer



10 men on a Stump: Spicer and his crew in North Vancouver (family collection)



Spicer's Lynn Valley camp, North Vancouver (family collection)

experienced financial difficulties. This may have been what prompted the 1897 sale of his North Vancouver interests to James McNair. McNair's company, the Hastings Shingle Manufacturing Company, had emerged as one of the largest shingle operations in the region, and the mantle of "shingle king" soon shifted to him. Spicer's operations survived this period and emerged with a new name (Spicer Shingle Mill Co.) listed in a BC register of businesses that same year.

Spicer's business continued with reasonable success into the new century. He provided well for his young family and built new homes in Vancouver's early years. However, over the coming decade, the pressures from increasing costs and competition for markets outside of BC became more acute.

Spicer was among a group of shingle and lumber manufacturers that met with the provincial government in December 1900 to petition for relief on stumpage rates for products shipped out of BC. The following year, he testified at a Royal Commission on immigration, in which he cited labour costs as an issue for his industry. The federal government was considering limits on Chinese immigration, and in what we might consider a strange twist for the times, Spicer was an advocate for increased Chinese immigration. However, the rationale behind what seemed to be a progressive position became clear

when he spoke to the commission. Spicer stated that his business could be more competitive with Chinese labour because he was able to pay them less than white workers. Fair-wage practices still had a long way to come.

During the first decade of the 20th century, the forest industry in BC saw increasing centralization of operations and

capital investment from outside the region. This had a significant impact on the independent forest industry operators trying to stay competitive as new and better-equipped mills came online.

In 1901, another fire razed the Spicer mill. Spicer again rebuilt with the help of insurance, but it was another cost to overcome. In 1903, Spicer sold a majority interest in his company to J.G. Woods. Spicer would stay on as the secretary and manager of Woods and Spicer Ltd.

1907 and 1908 would see Spicer recovering from two more mill fires, and by 1911 his Vancouver business had collapsed. Selling what little was left, he moved his family to Chilliwack, in the Fraser Valley where he purchased 72 acres of farmland. Here, through another difficult economic time, made worse by a world war and a global flu pandemic, he did his best to run a family farm business of hay, dairy, and turnips. In 1919, looking for more stability and less hard labour in his elder years, he headed to Alberta to work as a manager for a chain of small-town lumberyards.

In 1923, H.H. Spicer retired to Duchess, Alberta, where he spent the last years of his life serving as the town's postmaster and Magistrate and becoming an avid gardener. He died in 1933 at the age of 75.