

British Columbia



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BRITISH COLUMBIA MINISTRY OF FORESTS PROJECT 87

Encouraged by the approach of its 75th anniversary in 1987, the Ministry of Forests recently began a long-term project to research its history as a basis for celebrations in 1987. It was dubbed Project 87, and the project staff has been hard at work since the spring of 1981 in planning, researching, uncovering dusty old photographs, cleaning artifacts and putting files in order to assist with planning for the 75th anniversary.

The project team consists of a curator, an archivist, and a theme writer - each with specialized responsibilities. The curator, Mike Vandelaar, sorted, cleaned, and packed away some 1,000 artifacts in proper museum storage an orderly, well-catalogued, museum-calibre collection. The archivist, Michael Halleran, tackled an equally awesome collection of files, letters, photographs, and other archival material that also required sorting and cataloguing.

Once the initial collection of archival material was put in order and transferred to the Provincial Archives of B.C., the project archivist began an assessment of all the records in the Ministry, selecting from them those which should be included in the archival collection. He has been working closely with Provincial Archives officer Reuben Ware. Together they have initiated a long-term province-wide assessment and inventory of Ministry records.

The theme writer, Christine McKnight, has been using much of the material collected by the project team, along with interviews and library information, as the basis for the preparation of a series of theme papers examining the growth and development of various branches of the Ministry. She has also developed a skeletal outline of the history of the Ministry.

Plans for the future include an aural history program to complement the other ongoing research. Additional work on the photo collection will also provide more details on the activities of the Forest Service over the last sixty or so years.

Project 87 is coordinated through the Information Services Branch by the Public Affairs Manager, Doug Adderley. For further information contact Doug at 387-5985 or call the Project 87 office at 387-3360. The mailing address is: Project 87, c/o Ministry of Forests, 1450 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3E7.

BIG TREE SEARCH

This is a retirement project which has been going on for five years. It is world-wide in scope, at least to the extent of those countries that do or did possess giant trees. However, to keep the investigation within bounds I have had to put some limits on what constitutes a giant tree. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, we have several species which qualify. Paramount is the Douglas-fir, not for massiveness, nor even for girth, but for height. Only two other trees in the world are its peers in this feature - the coast redwood and the Australian mountain ash (Eucalyptus regnans).

Truth to tell, the maximum height attainable by Douglas-fir has been most difficult to ascertain. In early times, when there were some giants of the species left, few height measurements were made and if they were, they were not officially recorded. After I had gathered this information from the literature there remained the task of separating fact from fancy. A screening method was adopted and requisites established. First, who measured the tree? He need not have been an official forester but information as to the person's competency is desirable. Second, how was the measurement made; next, the location; date measured; history of the tree; etc. If all requirements are satisfied in detail then the probability is that there was such a tree. This is of course no guarantee, but if I find a similar tree elsewhere and well documented, the chances are strong that I am not dealing with fabrications. In this activity one cannot personally verify the measurements as you are 80 years too late.

The number of times a tree is described in the literature may not mean a thing even though the reports are consistent. Many writers have a penchant for quoting figures without questioning them and so the information is passed on. The dimensions of the famous (or infamous) Cary Fir, the monster tree that was supposedly felled near Vancouver in 1895, can be found quoted scores of times as bona fide, but try to pin down its history. For instance, where exactly was this tree located? I have turned up five places and the authors in each instance aver it was there. How was it handled after milling and who milled it? No one knows. In fact I accumulated over 80 reports on the tree and the only consistent items were its proportions.

I shall appreciate receiving items concerning big trees of the world. It doesn't matter if the details are incomplete - ferreting them out is the name of the game. Before closing, a call for help - it would be helpful to know just what sort of bole taper is possessed by large Douglas-firs. The data on this is skimpy. In rare instances someone did go along the trunk of a giant felled specimen and measure its circumference here and there. Some light is thrown on this question through minute examination of photographs of the topping of Douglas-fir spar trees. Quite a few such photos exist as this phase of highrigging bore the stamp of glamour. Still, the information is indeed limited and more would be appreciated. So please let me hear from the silvics specialists as to just what the taper of the giant Douglas-fir is, especially the upper portion (above 200 feet) for trees which have not been subjected to a great deal of wind.

Please contact Dr. A.C. Carder, 4950 Thunderbird Place, Victoria, B.C.
V8Y 2A1.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Union Lumber Company, Ltd. of Louisiana was incorporated and domiciled in New Orleans on August 10, 1899. It acquired timberland in Oregon and British Columbia as early as 1910. On December 31, 1921 its assets included:

Oregon pine lands	\$640,162.24
Vancouver pine lands	153,504.44
New Orleans real estate	3,411.71

The company apparently held these lands until 1931.

I would like to know specifically:

- 1) when and from whom did they acquire their holdings in British Columbia?
- 2) when and to whom did they sell their B.C. holdings?

Any help or suggestions will be appreciated.

Please contact Mr. Clark Forrest, Jr., Route 2, Box 397, Holden, Louisiana 70744, U.S.A.

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As the topic for a graduating thesis in forestry at the University of British Columbia I have chosen the career of Ernest C. Manning (1890 - 1941), Chief Forester of the British Columbia Forest Service from 1936 to 1941. Manning's advocacy of the development of provincial parks and the promotion of sound forestry practices are of special interest. Material on Manning, suggestions, and advice would be most welcome.

Please contact Mr. Bill Young, # 1104 - 3707 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1W6.

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OTHER NEWS

Logging Museum Under Development in Prince George

The new Prince George Museum has allocated both inside and outside display space for the logging and sawmilling industry. Bill Jones, Special Projects Manager for the city and the driving force behind the new museum is looking for anything from the period 1915 to 1930. Old time sheets, contracts, or cutting permits would be of particular interest.

An example of a few items already donated are a mill fly wheel and 40' sawmill from Eagle Lake; the last four 20x20 30' fir cants from Eagle Lake; a 5' diameter by 16' fir log from Shelly; a Martin Kane steam engine; an old donkey engine; a gas engine for driving a small mill; and an old logging sleigh.

If you would like to donate some article of interest to this project please call the British Columbia Independent Logging Association office at 3851 18th Avenue, Prince George, B.C. V2N 1B1. Phone 562-3368 or 563-6751. (from "Interlog" April-May 1981)

RECENT B.C. FORESTRY PUBLICATIONS

Bernsohn, Ken. 1981. Cutting up the north: the history of the forest industry in the northern interior. Hancock House, North Vancouver, B.C. 191 p.

Gibson, Gordon. 1980. Bull of the woods, the Gordon Gibson story. Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, B.C. 310 p.

Olsen, W.H. 1981. Water over the wheel. Chemainus - Crofton and District Chamber of Commerce, Evergreen Press Ltd. 169 p.

(Reviewers please volunteer!)

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FOREST HISTORY QUIZ

Q: In what way were three of the four Royal Commissions on forestry in B.C. connected with the Klondike Gold Rush?

A: The Klondike attracted Martin Allerdale Grainger to B.C. - he was Secretary to the "Fulton Royal Commission" on forestry in 1909-1910 and was reportedly the author of the first Forest Act. He later became Chief Forester. William Sloan, a merchant from Nanaimo, held an interest in claim "Fifteen" on Eldorado Creek and became a cabinet minister in the B.C. government after returning from the Yukon. His son, Gordon McG. Sloan, became Chief Justice of the province and conducted the second and third Royal Commissions on forestry in 1943-1945 and 1955-1956 respectively.

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a means of keeping interested persons informed and up to date; to publish items of historical interest; to provide notice of upcoming functions; and to generally popularize the realm of forest history in the province. Submissions of the following nature are welcome:

- items on forest history topics and descriptions of current projects
- requests for information
- book reviews, letters, comments, and suggestions

Publication is expected to be twice or thrice yearly, depending upon the number and type of submissions. Please address all correspondence including mailing list corrections to the editor: John Parminter, c/o Protection Branch, Ministry of Forests, 1450 Government Street, Victoria, British Columbia V8W 3E7.