

# British Columbia



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## SCHMOZZLES, STEAMBOATS AND SAWMILLS

The story of the first steam sawmill in the Kootenays is part of an unbelievable promotion that seemed doomed from the start. William Adolph Baillie-Grohman was an aristocrat who spent his early life in his parents' Austrian castle and their English and Irish country homes. But it was in British Columbia in the 1880's that he had his great dream - to "reclaim" the Kootenay bottomlands by diverting the Kootenay River into Columbia Lake near Canal Flats. (The community of Canal Flats was named after the Baillie-Grohman canal.) Following a series of legal entanglements, the Provincial government finally granted approval to construct the diversion canal on the proviso that a series of locks be incorporated to prevent downstream flooding of settlers' homesteads.

To construct the locks and buildings Baillie-Grohman needed a sawmill. Bad luck continued to dog this project as the sawmill arrived months overdue in Golden in August of 1887 via the newly constructed Canadian Pacific Railway. By now the river was at its lowest level and the one riverboat available could not navigate the upper reaches of the river.

But Canadian enterprise came to the rescue. A square-ended barge used in the railway construction days and an old boiler that once formed part of a Manitoba steam plough were found. With the addition of parts and pieces from the sawmill, a unique steamer was patched together. She was christened the "CLINE."

The dismantled sawmill was loaded on the CLINE and the 5,000 pound sawmill boiler was placed on a barge to be towed behind on the 100 mile trip from Golden to the south end of Columbia Lake.

It must have been a humorous sight as the CLINE was almost as broad as it was long and spent as much time tackling the river broadside as it did bow first. Adding to the comedy was the fact that the good ship's Manitoba boiler

was built to burn coal. With no coal available steam could not be generated unless fuelwood was cut up into small pieces and soaked in coal oil before being burned.

It seems that the CLINE spent more time grounded on mud bars than it did in clear sailing and, time after time, the dismantled sawmill machinery had to be unloaded on shore before she could be pried free.

It took 23 days of blood, sweat, and tears to travel that 100 miles from Golden before the sawmill arrived at its destination. How does this canal story end? Well, the sawmill was erected and proceeded to cut timbers and lumber for the locks. The locks and canal were largely completed. However, over-runs, legal suits, and counter-suits again plagued the unfortunate Baillie-Grohman and the project ground to an inglorious halt.

But the next time you're in the East Kootenays you might remember the tortuous journey of the Kootenay's first steam sawmill to Canal Flats and the great dream that died.

#### THE COLONIAL ERA - A SAWMILL IN STANLEY PARK?

The year was 1865 and the two isolated British colonies (Vancouver Island and British Columbia) were in the midst of a recession. Both were anxiously seeking settlers and industry to bolster sagging coffers.

It was in this atmosphere that Edward Stamp made his May 17, 1865 proposal to New Westminster, capital of the Colony of British Columbia:

"...I have found a suitable site on the Reserve just within the first Narrows Burrard Inlet on which I wish to build the Sawmill, and the difficulty I apprehended in getting a supply of fresh water for the boilers is removed by the discovery of a lake on the same reserve of sufficient capacity to supply our wants."

Edward Stamp had chosen a site adjacent to Lumberman's Arch in Stanley Park and the fresh water mentioned in his letter was probably Beaver Lake.

Indications are that the colonial authorities in New Westminster readily approved the location of the sawmill and were prepared to sell 100 acres for the sawmill site (at \$1.00 per acre) and grant timber cutting rights throughout Burrard Inlet shores, including Stanley Park. In fact, the only reservation recorded was the reserving of Prospect Point as a site for a fort.

But on July 18, 1865, Stamp wrote to New Westminster with a problem:

"...we have come in contact with obstacles of so serious a nature that may compell us to abandon that perticular (sic) site on which we have already gone to a considerable expence (sic) but it is better we should sacrifice the money already spent - - "

Stamp requested a new site and began construction of his new sawmill that year - on Burrard Inlet at the foot of Dunlevy Street.

While no mention was made of the specific "obstacles" encountered by Stamp, it is believed that the First Narrows rip tides were the problem. But for that, present day Stanley Park may have become the future City of Vancouver's first industrial park.

The above two items contributed by W. Young, FHABC member.

### LOGGING WITH BULLS

The first logging was done by our pioneer loggers by means of pulling the logs from the woods, down a skid road using oxen or bulls for power.

Let us study this old picture. It is a turn of logs arriving at the rollway at the seashore. If you look back at the far end of the turn, you can see the skid road. If it was a standard skid road the skids would be 9' long and 9' apart, peeled, and dug into the ground to keep them from rolling. The skids would be flattened slightly where the log was to slide on, and at a consistent grade.

Now let us study the crew. First we have the hook tender, the boss who makes all the decisions - the size of the turn, the time to go or stop, etc. Then the skid greaser with his can and swab, to apply the grease or dogfish oil to the skids ahead of the turn, as they go down the skid road. He also has the maul and Gilchrist Jack which is usually carried on the pig, which is not in sight, as it is usually dogged to the last log of the turn. Then we have the all important man on the crew, the Bull Puncher, or Bull Whacker, or Bull Skinner. This character has to have an outstanding disposition of being able to herd these bulls into some sort of coordination such that they pull together. Now anyone that has worked on a farm with horses and cows knows that an animal can be taught to come and go, and becomes a creature of habit. For instance, cows can be taught to come into a large stable and enter their own stall. Now this Bull Skinner has probably handled, fed, and talked to these bulls from the start. He has them all named, and they know him, and they know what he is trying to do. The leading Yolk knows enough to keep on the skid road and start moving when they are yelled at. The stern wheelers have been taught to make a special effort to get the first log in motion. In the meantime, the skinner has been straining his vocal chords with great threats of profanity, and to back this up and to get their individual attention he has a slim pole with a barb on the end with which he gives an indifferent animal a poke in the rump. All the skinner is asking and demanding is "start moving ahead."

These animals are well fed and heavy, weighing 1500 to 1800 pounds. The yolk that lays across the back of their necks is carved out of wood and designed to fit two animals - smoothed and shaped to fit the slope of their necks. Holes are bored through the yolk and pins of wood go down each side of the bull's neck to hold the yolk in place. A chain or cable is hooked onto each yolk as it goes down the line, so when the animal moves ahead he is actually pushing rather than pulling. Each animal is pinned to his partner and has only one way to go, and that is ahead. The lead yolk determine the direction and keep on the road. The skid greaser is just ahead of them, and the bulls are trained to move ahead when he does.

The following yolks are pulled into line as they are shackled to the line running back to the turn of the logs. The bull puncher will be at them to see that they are pulling or pushing their share, and the rear yolk are bringing up the rear after doing the all important task of starting the first log in motion. The bull puncher is naming, yelling and cursing, and whooping it up similar to a caller at a square dance.

On a downhill grade, as skid roads are usually laid out, once the turn is started it does not require too much power to keep the logs moving and the

bulls know that when they reach the landing they have a rest and get a chance to chew their cud and snooze a bit while the logs are jacked over the rollway. The bulls have the instinct or ability to count the trips. Say the outfit is making six trips a day, they know that when the third trip to the beach comes they will get fed, have a drink and a chance to chew their cud and they look forward to it. The same after the third trip in the afternoon - they head off to the stable and get fed again so the skinner does not have much trouble getting them to move ahead on the last trip of the day. They are well fed animals as you can see by the old pictures and, after all, their main interest in life (having been fixed at an early age) is getting enough to eat.

We can say that logging with bulls was a very primitive way of moving logs and only one step ahead of using manpower which King Solomon used in the building of his Temple. The first logging on record dates back to Biblical times. Quoting from the Bible, 1 Kings, Chapter 5, vs. 7,8, and 9:

- "7. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.
8. And Hiram sent to Solomon saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.
9. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea; and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and I will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household."

Expressing this in logging terms: Hiram contracted to supply Solomon with fir and cedar timbers for the construction of his temple. How he moved these logs out of the woods it does not say, or if they hewed the timbers in the woods and then moved them, we can only guess at the means - there was no shortage of manpower as they speak of men in the thousands.

In another part of the Bible, they speak of having three crews, perhaps it was the same system adapted by the old logging bosses in the Union Steamship days, where they had one crew coming, one crew working, and the third crew catching the next boat to Vancouver.

The coastal Indians of course used manpower, and also some sort of a skid road with saplings for skids to move their logs which they made into canoes and long houses. They didn't use bulls that's for sure and I've never heard of them using whales. They probably hand logged by felling the trees and sliding them into the water.

As one who has had some experience in driving horses on a skid road, and knowing that it takes some knowledge and know how to get a team of horses to take an honest pull, I have great respect and praise for these old pioneers who logged with bulls.

I knew a lot of teamsters who worked for the K & K Pole Co., and to the last man they knew their business, were good to their horses but were only good for a month or two and then had to have their binge. Bull skimmers I believe had the same reputation and I don't wonder.

If they had any trouble when they arrived at the Pearly Gates I am sure St. Peter, or whoever was on duty, would make allowances for all the cussing they were compelled to use in logging with bulls.

FORESTRY-RELATED THESES TO 1974

The following is a listing of forestry-related theses and essays with historical interests covering the period up to 1974 which was largely compiled by Frances Woodward of the Special Collections division at the UBC Library. The majority of them are from UBC and are available in the library system there - either at Special Collections or the various specialty libraries on the campus. A list of those written since 1974 will be included in the next newsletter, thus enabling any from the spring of 1984 to be included.

- Anderson, Clifford Houlton. 1971. Collective bargaining under a compulsory conciliation system in the British Columbia coast forest industry, 1947-1968. M.A. Thesis in Economics, UBC. 143 pp., illus.
- Anderson, D.E. 1944. The growth of organized labour in the lumbering industry of British Columbia. B.A. Essay in Political Science, UBC. 172 pp.
- Ellison, Thomas Duncan. 1962. The historical development of the forest policy of the government of the province of British Columbia as seen in the Statutes. B.A. Essay in Political Science, UBC. 98 pp.
- Flynn, James E. 1942. Early lumbering on Burrard Inlet, 1862-1891. B.A.Sc. Essay, UBC. 48 pp.
- Francis, Robert John. 1961. An analysis of British Columbia lumber shipments 1947-1957. M.A. Thesis, UBC. 190 pp., illus.
- George, Christopher Brock. 1974. Political interpretations of Canada's National Parks policy. M.F. Thesis, UBC. xi + 111 pp.
- Hague, John B. 1965. Vertical integration in the pulp and paper industry of British Columbia. B.A. Essay in Economics, UBC. 131 pp., illus.
- Hardwick, Walter Gordon. 1962. The forest industry of coastal British Columbia: a geographic study of place and circulation. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Minnesota, Minneapolis. 91 pp., illus.
- Jones, John Russell. 1969. Taxes on timber in British Columbia. B.S.F. Thesis, UBC. 274 pp., illus.
- Kidd, George Pirkis. 1940. An analysis of forest taxation in British Columbia. M.A. Thesis in Economics, UBC. 86 pp., illus.
- Kilbank, Alfred Cyril. 1947. The economic basis of collective bargaining in the lumbering industry of British Columbia. B.A. Essay in Economics, UBC. 151 pp., illus.
- Lawrence, Joseph Collins. 1957. Markets and capital: a history of the lumber industry of British Columbia, 1778-1952. M.A. Thesis in History, UBC. 208 pp., illus.
- Lotzkar, Joseph. 1950. Seasonal variations in British Columbia coastal lumber industry with particular regard to labour matters. B.A. Essay in Geography, UBC. 82 pp., illus.

- McLeod, Martin Robin. 1971. The degree of economic concentration in the British Columbia forest industry. B.S.F. Thesis, UBC. 174 pp.
- Mainguy, James W. 1941. Workers in the logging industry of British Columbia. B.A. Essay in Economics, UBC. 62 pp.
- Matheson, Chester Richards. 1942. Log towing in British Columbia. B.A.Sc. Essay, UBC. vii + 141 pp.
- Mitchell, William Bruce. 1967. The water component of the industrial location problem: British Columbia's pulp and paper industry. M.A. Thesis in Geography, UBC. 115 pp., illus.
- Mullins, Doreen Katherin. 1967. Changes in location and structure in the forest industry of north central British Columbia: 1909-1966. M.A. Thesis in Geography, UBC. 131 pp., illus.
- Munro, Gordon R. 1956. The history of the British Columbia lumber trade, 1920-1945. B.A. Essay in Economics, UBC. 143 pp.
- Oswald, David Laurence. 1971. The evolution of land tenure in British Columbia with respect to forest land tenure. B.S.F. Thesis, UBC. 71 pp.
- Smythe, Limen Towers. 1937. The Lumber and Sawmill Worker's Union in British Columbia. M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Washington, Seattle. 73 pp., illus.
- Tobin, Brian. 1930. The pulp and paper industry of British Columbia. B.A. Essay in Economics, UBC. 75 pp.
- Tuomala, Maurice Frederick. 1960. The evolution of logging on the Pacific Coast. B.Sc. Essay in Forestry, UBC. 71 pp., illus.
- Yano, Hiroshi. 1963. An analysis of the past developments and present status of the use of the power saw for felling and bucking. B.Sc. Essay in Forestry, UBC. 36 pp., illus.
- Yerburgh, Richard Eustre Marryat. 1931. An economic history of forestry in British Columbia. M.A. Thesis in Economics, UBC. 120 pp., illus.

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This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia and is distributed thrice yearly at no charge to members of the Association, libraries, and to certain institutions. Items on forest history topics, descriptions of current projects, requests for information, book reviews, letters, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Please address all correspondence including changes of address to the Editor: John Parminter, c/o Protection Branch, Ministry of Forests, 1450 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3E7.

Membership in the Association is \$5.00 yearly. Should you wish to join or obtain further information please write to the Treasurer: Mr. Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4E8