



Published by the Forest History Association of British Columbia

No. 93/94

Victoria, British Columbia

Fall 2011/Spring 2012

Website: <http://fhabc.org/>

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Once again, the newsletter has been delayed. On-going thesis obligations, an operation, a new house, and extensive renovations have proved to be serious distractions. Unfortunately my Forest History files languished away in boxes for months. But now that my office is fully functional and the boxes unpacked, it is time once more for Forest History. To make up for my tardiness, this issue is a double one. Our main article takes us on a tour of BC's fire lookouts courtesy of John Parminter's memories of vismapping in the summer of 1975. Thanks also to David Brownstein for bringing us up to speed on the Forest History Project and for passing on Jeff Slack's note about an online video on Whistler Forest History. Plus, much gratitude to Gerhard Eichel for sharing his memories of working in the Upper Fraser area northeast of Prince George. Sadly, we must also bid farewell to forestry industry icon/philanthropist Ike Barber. But first, we start off with last fall's AGM.



MINUTES OF THE FHABC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

by Stan Chester

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the Forest History Association of British Columbia was held at the Best Western Hotel in Vernon, BC on Saturday, October 1, 2011. The meeting started at 9:30 AM with 12 members and guests present. For those who arrived early on Friday, there was an informal get together in the evening. The congenial tone of the evening carried over into the following day's business meeting, field trip, and speeches.

After welcoming remarks, introductions, and confirmation of a quorum, reports were given by the Newsletter Editor (given by Stan Chester for Barb Coupé), Treasurer (Art Walker) and the President (Stan Chester). In summary, the newsletter is always looking for articles, local forestry notes and news of significant forestry events. Eventually we would like to include photographs alongside our forest history stories, songs and poems, etc. Financially, the FHABC is in good condition; and the Association is making good progress in working on its planned projects. No elections were undertaken this year because all of our directors were

elected in 2010 to two-year terms.

Mike Apsey reviewed the planned events for the BCFS 100th Centenary in 2012. Highlights include a book on the history of the BC Forest Service, a video, and a web site featuring theme papers, photographs, short stories, etc. The Centenary Committee also plans to have local events and displays. The FHABC hopes to have its 2012 AGM in conjunction with a centenary event somewhere on southern Vancouver Island.

We were fortunate in obtaining a \$10,000 grant from the Canadian Forest Service to fund forest history projects. Our proposed projects are:

- Aleza Lake Research Forest Oral History collection
- Revisions to our web site and Newsletter
- Cataloguing of the Hartnell collection of pictures and documents pertaining to two early sawmills on the Coast of British Columbia.

Progress on these projects is as follows:

- A group in Prince George have started have started to work on the Aleza Lake oral history project
- The updating of the website is just about finished at the end of the year (www.fhabc.org)
- The Hartnell project is in its early stages but we hope we can make significant progress in 2012.
- Revisions to the Newsletter will be started as soon as our editor is free from the demands of her thesis at UNBC

George Nagle offered to work on a history of Vancouver's forest consulting firms that were prominent in the international forest consulting field in the 60s and 70s. Such a history would fill a significant gap in the knowledge of the role that these firms played working on forestry projects all over the world. We look forward to working with George in recording and recognizing the stories and role that these firms and people played in the development of forestry projects in many overseas countries.

After lunch, we toured the Kalamalka Tree Improvement Centre. It was reassuring that the core work in genetics and tree improvement is continuing despite changes in personnel.

After dinner at the hotel, our guest speaker Robert Dale, a long term resident of Enderby, gave us a very interesting talk on logging and saw milling in the North Okanagan in the "good old days." His slides and photographs of rivers filled with logs, six- foot cedar logs and very large saw mills kept us engaged. His talk was made extra special because he experienced firsthand so many of the events he was describing. Rob's presentation was boosted by the Curator of the Enderby Museum and her husband who added special details and comments to Rob's words. A fine time was had by all.



JUST LOOKING AROUND

by John Parminter

Over a span of seven decades, the BC Forest Service (BCFS) constructed and staffed nearly 300 fire lookouts. They were located based on the values at risk, the likelihood of serious wildfire starts and the probability of fire detection by other means. As a result, lookouts could be very close to civilization or so remote that civilization would become a distant memory after a couple of months on the job. Some lookout

persons preferred it that way.

Lookout buildings varied and included stonework structures at ground level, shorter towers designed to be lived in, and tall towers with a separate dwelling at ground level. The highest ones were on bare mountain peaks above 2400 m, the lowest just 100 m above the high tide line on a rocky Gulf Island. Amenities ranged from propane-powered appliances and Coleman lanterns to full electrical service. In the far north, a lookout could consist of a small Boler travel trailer helicoptered in and out of the wilds for the fire season.

Many lookouts were classed as “primary” and likely to be staffed for longer periods than “secondary” lookouts used only during times of high or extreme fire danger. Each lookout site was chosen based on a rigorous process whereby two or three potential locations were compared against each other. They could be different points on the same mountain or on separate but nearby mountains. Criteria included the view from each site, means of access (road and/or trail versus helicopter), the type of building(s) required, communication method (telephone line or radio), and availability of water for the lookout person through the summer.

After being nominated by Forest District staff, a potential lookout site was assessed by the Protection Division of the BCFS in Victoria. Most of the fieldwork was carried out by two summer students who constituted the Visibility Mapping and Lookout Photography Crew. Visibility mapping (“vismapping” for short) involved sketching the seen area from each potential lookout site to a distance of 32 km (20 miles) all around. This was done by sighting through an alidade (from an old artillery gunsight) placed over a 1:250 000 topographic map mounted on a plane table to assess what portion of the topography was either directly visible or indirect and just hidden from view. Additionally, a small-scale contour map of the potential site was created by pacing and profiling in order to properly locate a lookout of the required height to see the close-in terrain.

Lookout photography refers to the taking and retaking of a set of large-format film images from existing lookouts to capture views in the eight cardinal directions: N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W and NW. The resulting 20 x 32 cm (7½ x 12¾”) black and white prints were bound and kept in the lookout and at the Ranger Station to aid in communicating the details of fire locations using visual references. The photos were also used to orient the fire finder—a rotatable sighting device mounted over a map located in the centre of the lookout building. A grid superimposed on each photo print indicated the compass bearing from 0 to 360 degrees and vertical angle from +10 to -15 degrees from the horizontal.

This photography program began in 1936 and continued to 1980. Some lookouts had four or five sets of images taken at different intervals during that time period, forming a valuable visual record of landscape change. Rephotography was necessary after appreciable changes in vegetative cover occurred due to wildfires or logging, replacement of the lookout with a higher tower, or improvement of the view brought about by clearing trees from the summit. Although most lookouts had from 1 to 3 photo sets, some had none at all.

The methodology for taking the photographs—using a surveyor’s transit and an interchangeable camera—was designed and implemented by Col. Gerald S. Andrews, a forester who later became the Surveyor General of BC. A suitable camera was initially borrowed from another agency until one specially built by the National Research Council in Ottawa was obtained in the summer of 1945. Its construction was delayed due to similar orders by the military, and it was not used until 1946 because of wartime BCFS staff shortages.¹

Col. Andrews may also have been involved with establishing the visibility mapping procedures, which were

¹ For more information see: Nodwell, R.A. and R.C. Burstow. 1946. “A survey camera to fit a Berger transit.” *Canadian Journal of Research* 24f(3):191-192. [doi:10.1139/cjr46f-022]

first used in 1939. During the program's heyday in the late 1940s and early 1950s, there was more than one visibility mapping crew, and a separate team looked after the lookout photography work. During 1947, two crews vismapped 67 potential lookout sites in the southern Kamloops Forest District while another crew took photos from 13 lookouts in the Kamloops and Nelson Forest Districts. In 1950, three crews vismapped 127 sites all over the province while a fourth crew took photos from 23 lookouts in southern BC. From 1953 onwards, both vismapping and lookout photography functions were carried out by the same crew when the workload was less. Little or no vismapping was carried out in the early 1970s due to an ongoing provincial fire detection analysis project.

I am fortunate to have been the visibility mapping portion of the crew hired in 1975, one of the last years of the program. We travelled from Vancouver Island to Atlin and back again, accomplishing as much as we could with a weather-dependent job. Never before or since have I been allowed to avoid working in the bush merely because of cloudy weather, let alone due to rain. Even so, when our office work was all caught up, things could get tedious and inefficient waiting for sunshine and good visibility. So we kept an eye on the provincial picture and stood ready, willing to cut our losses and head out to chase after better weather elsewhere.

I reported to the Protection Division in Victoria on May 1 and met my crewmate, Bill Clifford, and Rick Townsend, our supervisor. Bill was enrolled in the Honours Forest Biology and Forestry program at UBC, while I had just graduated with my BSF degree. After two days of orientation and classroom instruction, Bill and I relocated to Duncan to continue our training on Mount Prevost, a former lookout site just above the town. We then trained and practiced at Stamp Falls Lookout near Port Alberni and at Little Mountain Lookout near Parksville.

Early on in our training, it became evident that I had problems with the finer aspects of the surveyor's transit and contour mapping of the peak. And because Bill wasn't totally comfortable with the visibility mapping, the division of labour fell into place. I would map the seen area of a potential lookout site while Bill made a detailed contour map. When visiting established lookouts, Bill would set up the transit, orient it, replace the telescopic sight with the camera, and then take two panoramas (one with panchromatic, the other with infrared film) of eight black and white photos each. Once declared competent at our respective responsibilities, we gathered up our remaining field gear and supplies at headquarters and headed for the Interior after Queen Victoria Day.

The first stop, Ford Mountain Lookout above the Chilliwack River, had good views up and down the valley, across to Slesse Mountain and of Welch Peak on the end of the Cheam Peak chain—so close that it seemed to loom right over us. Bill perched on the roof to take the photos while I practised vismapping from the helicopter pad. There was still quite a bit of snow on the ground, and the wooden cistern in the basement of the lookout contained a solid block of ice the size of a VW Beetle. Next came Agate Lookout, southeast of Princeton. The weather cooperated long enough for photography on the second day, and then we returned to the Ranger Station for directions to our next destination—Thynne Lookout, also known as Livingstone, near Brookmere on the Kettle Valley Railway.

Mount Thynne peaked at 2022 m elevation in one of those spots where weather systems burst through from the Coast to the Interior. The lookout building was established in 1942 and was the first to have been prefabricated elsewhere, transported to the site and then reassembled. The design work was done by Robert G. McKee who was then the Assistant District Forester for the Kamloops Forest District (and later the Deputy Minister of Forests from 1958 to 1964). This approach greatly reduced the cost of materiel transport, which was done with pack-trains of horses.

Equipped with a map, an earlier lookout photo set, and two pairs of snowshoes, we drove up the access road to Thynne until we were blocked by a metre of snow. Since the weather was not conducive to photography, we decided to just hike to the lookout and check on its condition. Because the snow was hard-packed, we were able to use the snowshoes to shield our faces from the snow and ice pellets being propelled at high speed by a fierce wind. I even took off one pair of my woollen work socks and used them as mittens. My beard grew an icy coat.

We struggled into the lookout building to find some shelter from the cold weather. Fortunately not all of the building's sides were piled high with snow, but the door was out of plumb and wouldn't close properly. We secured it with some rope when we left. Thanks to an intermittent whiteout, finding our way back was challenging, but eventually we found the truck and arrived back in Princeton at 7 pm. The snow followed us a few hours later.

We drove to Kelowna the next day. After taking Sunday off, we reported to the Kelowna Ranger Station only to be told that the road to our next stop—Little White Lookout—was snowed under and helicopter time was out of the question. So it was off to the Vernon Ranger District and Tuktakamin Lookout, above Falkland. After three days of driving up and waiting around on that mountain, we got the photos done. Some snow fell on the second day, but it was nothing like Thynne had been.

The Ranger at Lumby managed to find some money for a helicopter trip to our first vismapping objective—an unnamed peak in the Monashee Mountains north of Sugar Mountain. We reported to the Vernon airport the next morning, loaded our gear on a Bell 47G and then took off eastward over Lumby, Mabel Lake, and Sugar Lake. The summit of our peak was a mix of rock and snow, and the latter became softer as the day progressed. Right after the chopper departed, I realized I had left the large wooden tripod for the plane table back in the truck. Guess I was distracted by the thrill of my first helicopter ride! Fortunately near the highest point there was a huge nearly flat-topped boulder, so I put the plane table on it and manoeuvred around while sighting and sketching.

The next day, Bill and I relocated to Sicamous, and I transferred the seen area sketch from the paper topographic map to a mylar overlay. That overlay would be placed upon the existing one for the lookout on Sugar Mountain and a decision made as to whether or not Sugar Lookout should be maintained or shut down in favour of a new one on the peak we had visited. Because this peak lacked an official name, we called it "Spice." On June 2, the staff at the Sicamous Ranger Station informed us that the road to Queest Lookout was also still snowed under. But we satisfied our curiosity by driving to the 8 km point where we became high-centred. Photography was definitely off. After a bit of excavating, we went back to the motel for our gear and then off to Revelstoke to take photos at Sproat Lookout, at the head of Upper Arrow Lake. The next three days had inclement weather so we did office work and then took a busman's holiday in Mount Revelstoke National Park—hiking to the old lookout on Mount Revelstoke.

We needed two helicopter trips to Sproat Lookout to get good enough weather for the photos. Our next aerial adventure took place above the reservoir formed by the Mica Dam, farther up the Columbia River. The pondage was still being cleared in advance of flooding and that meant slashburning. The local Ranger District built a lookout high up on the west flank of Mount Cummins, with views up the Columbia and Canoe Rivers as well as across their confluence. Since it was an unsanctioned "instant" lookout, we had to do both the visibility mapping and lookout photography on the first visit. Fortunately, Okanagan Helicopters was relocating a Bell 206 to Mica Creek and offered us a free ride from Revelstoke.

The next morning, we flew over to Mount Cummins in order to locate a topographic survey cairn and the

lookout building lower down. Then Bill and I were dropped off at another cairn on the end of Fred Laing Ridge near the dam, about 13 km to the west. Bill had to set up the transit and sight on one or more distant cairns, lock in the known survey bearings, and then sight on the lookout. When we relocated to the lookout, we would use a backshot on the cairn we came from to orient the transit for the photographs. The cairns were fairly easy to spot on the high points, but the lookout evaded us. We were oriented alright but still needed a foreshot on the lookout building. The helicopter was down by the dam with the meter running, and we were all getting anxious. Because the sides of the lookout building were white and the roof was flat, it blended right into the snowy slope behind. The pilot flew up to our location after 20 minutes. I explained our predicament and got the binoculars. He flew to the lookout and then circled it but we lost sight of him en route.

When the helicopter returned, I was taken to the lookout where I unloaded our equipment, camping gear, and food. Then I waited. And waited some more. After a while, the helicopter approached from the direction of Fred Laing Ridge. When it got very close, I saw Bill in the front passenger's seat and thought, "He's done it." But then the helicopter turned around and went back. He hadn't done it; he was having another look at the building and its situation. I wandered around, pondering our predicament, and came across a piece of discarded sheet metal about the size of a topographic map. I wondered if I could reflect enough sunshine off the metal to be seen through the transit's telescope over 13 kilometers away.

I stood at the midway point of the lookout building and oriented the sheet metal to reflect the sun in Bill's direction. Then I moved the sheet back and forth repeatedly for some time. We only had one radio so I couldn't communicate with Bill, but eventually I heard, and then saw, the chopper coming. This time it landed. Bill exited and said the sun bouncing off the metal was like a flashlight blinking on and off, and he knew it was me. Phase One was complete. I clambered on to the roof and started vismapping. At least I had remembered to bring the tripod this time.

For our troubles we were treated to a nice sunset but had to endure a cold night. The lookout wasn't finished yet so we had to rough it a bit. But at least we were indoors. I completed vismapping the next day and had fun sorting out ridges behind ridges behind ridges up the Columbia Valley, just short of the limit of the required mapping distance. Bill took the lookout photos before smoke from slashburning in the pondage area seriously reduced visibility on the valley floor. The helicopter came for us at 4:30 pm, and a BCFS student crew member kindly drove us back to Revelstoke from Mica Creek. Two days later we settled into 100 Mile House and then Williams Lake for our next assignments.

Four days and three trips up Timothy Lookout were required to finish those photos. While cooling our heels, we fashioned a piece of scrap sheet metal into a reflector because we had more survey cairns to locate later on. Before leaving Williams Lake, we visited DeSous Lookout near Springhouse and Smokey Lookout north of Williams Lake to sort out problems with their fire finders. After adjusting the one on Smokey by two degrees, everything was alright. The lookoutman there knew Bill's father from a stint on Moore Lookout, east of Kelowna, and had been stationed on Mount Prevost for many years. He offered us orange juice. Expecting something vile made from powder, I hesitated but said "Yes, please" to be polite. He then hauled out a big bag of oranges and made fresh-squeezed juice!

Our next port of call was Likely where we stayed in a fire suppression camp. The first day at Warren Lookout at the western end of Quesnel Lake consisted of clouds and a thunderstorm. The lookoutman described how sparks ran down the guylines and jumped into the grass after the tower was struck by lightning. But it was safer to be inside than outside. On his last day on the job during one fire season, he managed to shoot a moose from the lookout catwalk. When the crew took him down off the mountain, he had to convince them to detour and help retrieve his recently-acquired winter food supply from a nearby wetland.

The next day after a successful photo shoot, we headed for Prince George and then down to Valemount. Foster Lookout, up the Canoe River from Cummins Lookout, was due for its first visit as well. During three days in a row of poor weather, we did office work in between hikes in Mount Robson Provincial Park and up the Swift Lookout road above Valemount.

Fortunately, July 1 dawned clear, and so we were off by helicopter with all our gear and two radios this time. After checking out the topographic survey cairns on Mount Lempriere and by Foster Creek, we crossed over the Mica Dam's reservoir to Foster Lookout. The living quarters building was on a side hill just at the treeline and had a significant forward lean due to snow creep. The structure was dishevelled inside and littered with mouse droppings so we decided to sleep outdoors that night, preferring snow to plywood this time. The lookout point itself was just a protuberance of bedrock about 200 m higher up the steep slope. Maybe the lookoutman carried a folding lawn chair up there while on duty. But what the site lacked in amenities it made up for by fabulous views, especially of the jagged mountains immediately to the east and south.

Bill flew back to the Foster Creek survey cairn and set up his equipment while I did likewise on the bedrock knob. When he was ready, Bill radioed me and I flashed the sheet metal reflector to enable the foreshot. The helicopter pilot was initially sceptical of this operation but saw the results for himself. Bill returned to my location, did the backshot, and took the photos while I vismapped. After dinner, we set up camp under some trees, sleeping on canvas tarps. Fortunately there were few biting insects, and the weather was clear.

The next morning, we found some tracks in the snow that didn't belong to either of us. A grizzly had passed by, heading north. As long as it kept going we were happy. I continued vismapping while Bill profiled the lookout point and then climbed the peak behind us. It was sunny and very warm for a change, and the horseflies were bothersome. We checked in with the Valemount Ranger Station via radio and listened to chatter concerning an ongoing wildfire up near the head of the reservoir. When the helicopter arrived, we bade farewell to the "Foster observation point." Calling it a lookout would have been overly generous. No doubt the snow creep did in the living quarters within a year or two.

Then we were back to Prince George to deal with a couple of sites. Averil Lookout, near Summit Lake, required its first set of photos. We flew there and then to Coffeepot Mountain to look for a topographic survey marker. It refused to be found so we went to nearby Kerry Lookout to determine if we could see Averil. It was possible, and since we knew the bearing from Kerry to Averil, a backshot from Averil to Kerry was all that was needed to orient Averil. Back to Averil for the afternoon, where Bill set up and took the photos. When the helicopter returned and landed, the downwash tipped over one of our packsacks and set free the sheet metal reflector. It went airborne and was struck by one of the main rotor blades. The pilot shut down the engine and inspected the damage. He said the helicopter was still airworthy, but he'd be cautious on the return trip. We were mortified but were told that rotor strikes are common. The mechanics would simply replace the blade the next day.

On July 8 we headed north to Fort Nelson. After checking into a motel at Hudson Hope, we had dinner and drove to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam, paying a visit to nearby Bullhead Lookout. The road there was easy, the views from the tower were good, and the lookout residence was a nice log cabin. There was even a vegetable garden. Very civilized indeed.

The Alaska Highway was unlike any road I'd driven before. The country had a different feel to it, and we never knew what was around the next bend. It could be a wandering bear, a convoy of recreational vehicles from the Lower 48, or a flatbed in the ditch with a D8 Cat nearby—sprung from its moorings and upside down

on top of some crushed lodgepole pines. In Fort Nelson, which is at Km 483, we tracked down Ranger Pat Griffiths. Like the DeSous lookoutman, Pat was an old acquaintance of Bill's father and told us about an impending canoe trip on the Thelon River, which drains into the northwest part of Hudson Bay. I decided that Fort Nelson wasn't so northerly after all.

But our destination was much closer—Prophet Lookout, just off the Alaska Highway at Km 341. We headed back south. Prophet wasn't high in elevation but had good views all around, especially northwest towards the Rocky Mountain foothills. The photos had been taken in 1963, but for some reason the bearings weren't trusted and so we had to start from scratch. This meant something new—a night-time shot on the North Star due to the absence of topographic survey cairns within visual range.

Given the time of year and the latitude, we had to wait until 12:30 am to see the stars. There was still blue sky at 1:30 am. Unfortunately, high cloud ruled out a good shot so we watched a lightning storm heading our way from the north for a while and then turned in for the night. At 5:30 am the inside of the lookout building was illuminated by a white-hot light, there was a deafening boom, the door blew open, and rain came streaming inside. We were pretty sure the lookout had been struck by lightning. As per what we'd been told by the lookoutman on Mount Warren, we later checked around the base of the building's guylines for scorched grass but didn't find any such evidence.

We explored the local countryside the next day, and Bill took a dip in the swift Minaker River, with a rope securing him to the bank. After nightfall, he took a successful shot on the North Star, around 1:30 am. We needed a reference object to hold a bearing from the transit on the lookout catwalk, and this posed a minor dilemma. We decided to sight on the small hyphen in the middle of the rear license plate of our truck which was parked a short distance away, illuminating it with a flashlight. Given the absence of a suitable landscape feature that was visible both night and day, this procedure worked alright. But of course, we couldn't move the truck until we'd taken the photos!

Good thing we had enough food because naturally the next day was cloudy. We did office work, carrying out the complex calculations to convert the shot on the North Star into a compass bearing (all based on sidereal time and the vagaries of the Earth's rotation). There were thunderstorms all around, and then the weather cleared up. While standing on the catwalk in the afternoon, I heard a subtle buzzing sound. I initially attributed it to a cloud of mosquitoes. But upon closer inspection, I realized that there was no such cloud. The sound was emanating from the lightning rod on the metal chimney. Perhaps the earth was giving some of that thunderstorm energy back to the sky through the lookout.

On day four of our stay at Prophet Lookout, we finished the photo panorama then loaded up the truck and headed north back to Fort Nelson. The photos turned out well enough but the bearings were off yet again because we forgot to factor in the daylight saving time offset. Maybe Prophet was jinxed. In any case, that was the last photo set taken there.

Although we were supposed to go to Nelson Forks Lookout, at the junction of the Fort Nelson and Liard rivers, the weather wasn't cooperating and the helicopter we would use was already booked for the next day. So we headed to Watson Lake, Yukon with our final destination being Atlin, BC—just a bit south of sixty. We arrived in Atlin on July 16 only to find the motel was filled to capacity. Fortunately there was an Inventory Division tent camp just out of town, and they were kind enough to let us bunk in. I knew some of the crew members from UBC, and at least one was a member of my graduating class.

The next day, we called on the Assistant Ranger. We found him on the floor, wrestling with a large Saint

Bernard dog, trying to convince the canine to swallow some medication. It wasn't immediately obvious which one of them was winning. We obtained access details for Monarch Mountain and Mount Munro, our two local vismapping assignments which were both fairly close to town.

The steep lower slopes of Mount Munro were clothed with a thick cover of bog birch and willows that were over our heads. It was tough slogging in places, but we made it to the peak. I vismapped from 12:30 to 6:30 pm, taking occasional breaks to warm up by Bill's campfire. We found a good game trail on the way down so the descent was easier. Altogether, we covered 22 km on foot. Access up Monarch Mountain was via a long-established trail, and we spent the next two days working at the proposed lookout site there. Treeline at that latitude is around 1200 m so once above the shrubs it was fairly easy going. After one more trip up Mount Munro to check out a patrol point, we were done.

After using up our few days of accumulated overtime on a short sightseeing trip to Skagway Alaska via the White Pass & Yukon Route Railway, we disembarked at Carcross, walked a bit out of town, and began hitchhiking to Atlin. There wasn't much traffic, but we were soon given a lift by a young fellow who looked like he came from a long line of sourdoughs. You could see the ground through several holes in the floor of his old 4x4 pickup which kept jumping out of third gear. But it was better than walking. Suddenly he stomped on the brake pedal, pointed to a steep goat track on the left, and said, "This is where I leave the main road." Our next lift came along in the form of a purple school bus that had been converted to a motorhome. The owners were from Fort Nelson so we told them of our adventure on Prophet Lookout.

The last ride was courtesy of a couple from Williams Lake who were undecided about their destination that evening. We sang the praises of Atlin in order to convince them to turn south at the next junction. It worked. He was a management forester with the BCFS and when we told him what we were doing that summer, he said, "I've heard of you guys." Hopefully he hadn't heard anything derogatory, or that we were semi-AWOL at the time. Soon after our return, the Assistant Ranger informed us that "Victoria was looking for you." He told them we were "in the field" which apparently worked well enough.

Sunday, August 3 found us on the road again—destination Teslin, Yukon—farther east down the Alaska Highway. The next day we hiked up Mount Hazel from a service road at Km 1230, at first through an old burn full of windfall and then on easier talus and open ridges. We began work after lunch, and I had to map in sections as rain clouds moving through the field of view reduced visibility. Starting our descent at 8:00 pm, we reached the truck two hours later. Thankfully there was still enough daylight because a CN microwave tower technician had locked the gate he promised us he would leave open. We had to partially dismantle and then reassemble the gate to just to get out.

Next we headed to Lower Post to get our mail and then carried on to Watson Lake to cash our expense cheques. Although the bank was closed for lunch, we spotted another BC government truck in the parking lot. Noticing a canoe on the roof, we asked the two occupants about their work. They answered, "We're with the Provincial Museum and are hiking and canoeing around northern BC, describing plant communities and collecting specimens." "Sounds pretty good" was our response. They eyed our BCFS truck, and we volunteered that we were driving, hiking, or helicoptering up mountain peaks to visit existing or select new fire lookout sites. "Sounds pretty good" was their response. It was Dr. Christopher Brayshaw, the Curator of Botany and his field assistant.

Our next home was a forest inventory camp at French Creek, down the Stewart-Cassiar Highway. From there, we had two vismapping assignments on unnamed mountains that looked over Boya Lake to the Horse Ranch Range. The first location took only three hours, but the second was nearly twice as long due to there

being two mapping points. We pondered the possibility that we had been the first people to hike up those summits. The next day, Sunday, we went on an excursion to check out nearby Last Lookout. It consisted of a recliner-rocker chair perched on a small rocky ridge. Guess it qualified only as a “tertiary” (or lower) lookout, because it never made it into the records. Nice view though.

Relocating back to Watson Lake, we helicoptered southeast over the Liard River to Tatisno Mountain. Despite arriving early at 8:30 am, we were faced with a huge task: three peaks and a patrol point to assess. It was clear that we needed to change our pickup time from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. So we set up the single sideband radio, which meant stringing a long wire antenna among some shrubs, and attempted to raise the Lower Post Ranger Station. We received no response from them, but the Prince Rupert Forest District office answered, clear as a bell in spite of the considerable distance. Apparently Lower Post’s radio setup was being repaired, and so our request was passed along by telephone. Vismapping and peak profiling were a bit complex, but we finished up just as the light started to fade.

On August 14 we flew to an unnamed mountain along the lower Kechika River near Aeroplane Lake. Because the high point was forested, the field staff from Lower Post had felled many trees but had left three close together to form a rough tower about seven metres tall in the centre of each of two clearings—one intended to be the main lookout site and the other a patrol point. Large branches were nailed to the trunks to form a ladder, and a small platform, complete with knee-high railings, was at the top. We named the site “Babel.”

The platform at the proposed lookout site was just big enough to sit on so I criss-crossed my utility rope back and forth many times to support the plane table at eye level. After vismapping from the north to the southwest, I attached the closed tripod to the plane table and then tied it to the top of one of the three tree trunks. That setup was still awkward but more stable. Bill left for the patrol point tower. When I finished vismapping, I lowered my gear to the ground and also headed for the patrol point.

Somehow I became disoriented after crossing a wetland along the route and climbed a tree to get my bearings. That didn’t work out because of poor visibility through the canopy. So knowing that the helicopter was due to arrive soon, I decided to stay put. After a while, it approached, landed briefly, and lifted off again. The pilot had taken Bill on board then gone up to circle around and look for me. At that point, I was running through the trees and brush, heading for the source of the sound which had identified the landing site. I burst into it 180 degrees from where I thought I was. They saw me immediately, and then took me and my gear aboard. We headed for Watson Lake.

When we checked in at the Lower Post Ranger Station, I confessed to losing my way and being unable to vismap from the patrol point. The two staff members who had constructed both the temporary towers said, “Oh yeah, we were always getting turned around up there. It all looks the same.” I didn’t feel quite so bad. Two days later, I stayed found on a hill about 45 km south of Lower Post long enough to finish vismapping. Then we hit the road again, destination the Dease Lake fire suppression camp.

By this date—August 17—we were running out of time given that it would take a few days to drive back to Victoria. There was only one helicopter at Dease Lake, so we had to fit our work into the pilot’s schedule. Our first objective was Mount McLeod, just northwest of town. Unfortunately we had to contend with fog and rain later in the day, and I couldn’t see well enough to map more than 60% of the compass. We intended to return but never did.

However we were successful along the upper Stikine River even though the rain descended just 45 minutes

after the valley fog had lifted. After a day of office work due to more rain, we were treated to a free helicopter ride to and from Telegraph Creek. Fire protection staff from the Prince Rupert Forest District headquarters were delivering a short course on fire suppression for the locals that included teaching helicopter ingress, egress, and flight safety procedures. The pilot took two people at a time on a short aerial circuit from the Assistant Ranger Station on the road to Glenora. Bill and I walked around and checked out Telegraph Creek in its splendid isolation.

On the way there, we had flown by the Grand Canyon of the Stikine, Days Ranch, and the village of Tahltan. The return trip to Dease Lake was via Mess Creek, the lava flows north of Mount Edziza, and a cinder cone named Eve Cone. We put down briefly in Etzerza Crater for a short walk on the lava in what looked more like an alien landscape. That was our last helicopter ride of the summer and probably the most interesting one

More rain kept us from going back to Mount McLeod so we departed on Saturday, August 22. Heading south on the Stewart–Cassiar Highway, we enjoyed the scenery and saw Irving and Bell lookouts far above us. We marvelled at the Bear River Pass glacier and overnighted in Stewart, whose setting was reminiscent of Skagway.

As we made our way back to Victoria, we detoured from Highway 16 to visit a fellow Protection Division colleague stationed at Hicks Hill Lookout near Fraser Lake. He had been field testing an early version of an electronic lightning detection system that had been deployed at Hicks Hill and several other lookouts in the area. The system showed some promise, but it would be another five years before a reliable and accurate system became available. At that point, the death knell was sounded for many lookouts established primarily to detect lightning-caused fires.

After a stop in Prince George, we travelled through Cariboo country then to Vancouver via Lillooet, Pemberton and Squamish. It rained so hard in places that several months' worth of accumulated dirt washed right off the truck. For once, we were happy to see the precipitation. Back in Victoria, we were debriefed by Rick Townsend and others from the Protection Division. In September, Rick and Bob Fielder, a veteran lookout photographer, would take advantage of two weeks of sunny weather and return to finish off our unfinished assignments in the Dease Lake area. Bill and I felt we did the best we could and were grateful for the opportunity to have seen so much beautiful country.

I returned to UBC a year later and studied fire history and fire ecology. In 1980 I was hired full-time by the Protection Division, now called Protection Branch due to the reorganization of 1978, and sent north to investigate post-wildfire vegetation succession. After two summers in Fort Nelson, Watson Lake, Atlin and Dease Lake and many field plots later, I concluded that most of our northern forests are not only killed by but are also born of fire. Aggressive fire suppression is warranted only where human and resource values demand it. In the space of five years, attitudes had changed to recognize the natural role of fire and only a few new lookouts were established in the north as a consequence of our survey work in 1975.

In 2003, while employed by the Research Branch of the BCFS, I helped organize the transfer of the lookout photo negatives to the provincial archives. There are 523 sets of eight images each, constituting a valuable record of what was seen from many lookouts over the decades. They've been scanned and converted to digital form, something Col. Andrews probably never envisioned. While some lookout buildings still remain, most are just memories now.



CANADIAN FOREST HISTORY PRESERVATION PROJECT UPDATE

by David Brownstein

The Project facilitated the donation of two British Columbia forest inventory maps, owned previously by Don McLaurin of Whistler, to the Chilliwack Museum and Archives. Mr McLaurin had saved the maps many years ago while working for the BC Forest Service. John Hammons, of the Whistler Forest History Project, assisted in the donation, and he writes, "We have really come to appreciate how little has been done to preserve historical materials such as old forest cover maps. And once they are lost, they are lost for good. What a good initiative!"

The unique maps, created in 1941 by H.M. Pogue for the BC Department of Lands and Forests, were quite detailed for their time, and were assembled using some of the first aerial photos acquired by the BC Forest Service. They were part of a set of maps done for three adjacent areas in the lower mainland: "Harrison Drainage," "North Shore" and "Fraser South", early in the Second World War. The three sets of maps were described in the 1940 Forest Branch Report (Harrison Drainage) and the 1942 Forest Branch Report (North Shore and Fraser South).

Shannon Bettles, Heritage Records Manager, Chilliwack Museum and Archives, tells us that they have in their holdings both objects and archival records relating to logging, sawmills, and forestry. "We have maps of forest stands, blueprints of lands and forests, topographical maps, records from the Orion Bowman Sawmill, photographs of logging activity, sketches, and timber berth maps for example. The map recently received from Don McLaurin will be of particular interest to our researchers studying forestry practices in the Chilliwack River Valley. It complements our other forestry maps, such as the 1940 'North Shore Forest Cover Series' from the BC Forest Service."

A collaborative effort between the Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE), the Forest History Society, and the Canadian Forest Service, the Cdn Forest History Preservation Project helps match repositories and collection donors. It includes a survey and assessment of Canadian archival repositories, and their ability and willingness to preserve collections of forest history. The survey has so far been completed in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, with remaining provinces/territories yet to come.

For more information, please view our project brochure and forward it to anyone who might know of a collection in need of archival protection.

English version: http://www.foresthistory.org/research/Canadian_archives_brochure.pdf >

French version: http://www.foresthistory.org/Research/Canadian_archives_Fr.pdf >



WHISTLER FOREST HISTORY VIDEO ONLINE.

by Jeff Slack (courtesy of David Brownstein)

Over the last century, wildfires, industrial forestry, and urbanization have all contributed to major environmental change around Whistler, British Columbia. Using forestry maps and other archival documents,

the Whistler Forest History Project, in partnership with the Whistler Museum and the Forest History Association of British Columbia, has produced an extensive GIS-based database of historical forest disturbances, encompassing the Whistler Valley's transformation from an isolated mountain outpost to a world-renowned ski resort and Olympic host city. This video provides an overview of the mapping project, offering a comprehensive and compelling visual record of these landscape changes up to the present day, as well as key insights into the increasingly forgotten and often misunderstood role played by the forestry industry throughout Whistler's history. You can view this video online at <http://youtu.be/vaoNej22TAE>.



EX-FOREST SERVICE VESSEL SQUADRON RENDEZVOUS 2011

According to *The Anchor Watch Newsletter* of September 4, the Squadron held its 2011 Rendezvous at the Britannia Heritage Shipyard in Steveston over the BC Day long weekend. Nine vessels attended including the Syrene 1, the Cherry, the Dean Ranger, the Forest Ranger II, the Maple, the Oak II, the Sitka Spruce, the Tamarack, and the White Birch. Guests included 92-year-old Tommy Edwards, former Superintendent of the Forest Service Marine Station and the FHABC's own Mike Apsey. During the AGM, the Squadron discussed participating with BCFS Centenary events. At the time of writing the FHABC newsletter, the Centenary website lists a tentative event scheduled for Aug. 4-5 in the Victoria Inner Harbour. Check the Calendar of Events on the website for updates: <http://www.bcfs100.ca/bscripts/calendar.asp>.



REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON THE STOLTZE LOGGING COMPANY

The FHABC has been asked to forward a request to our members for any information on the Stoltze Logging Co. Fred Brache is trying to put a history together and has shared the following background:

Stoltze Manufacturing Co. Ltd. operated a shingle mill under that name at Stave River (Ruskin) from 1913 until the early 1930s (H.A [Henry] Stoltze and A.H. [Arthur] Stoltze). About 1935, Arthur's son, Virgil Stoltze, became a partner of Weaver Lake Logging (Harrison). Virgil and father Arthur created Stoltze Logging Co. and absorbed Weaver Lake Logging. Stoltze Logging (Virgil Stoltze) moved to Squamish in or about 1938. Stoltze Logging then mover to Cowichan River area (Stolz Pool) about 1942. BC Archives holds a few images of their operation in 1944. Virgil Stoltze continued logging continued on Vancouver Island but there seems to be no information about that anywhere.

Please contact Fred at braches@me.com if you can help him in his search. Thanks so much.



BC FOREST SERVICE CENTENARY

The BC Forest Centenary is in full swing. As indicated by an official News Release from the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-

[2013/2012FOR0018-000198.pdf](#)), the BCFS celebrated 100 years on February 27, 2012. A ceremony, held at the Rotunda of Parliament Buildings, marked the signing of the first Forest Act by then Minister of Lands, the Honourable William Ross. Attendees at the event included Nancy Southam, the granddaughter of H.R. MacMillan who was the first Chief Forester of the BCFS in 1912 and some current and former ministry employees, many dressed in old Forest Service uniforms from the 1950's, 60's and 70's. You can catch a short YouTube video of the event at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYpKhIvCNTY&feature=plcp>.

The Centenary Committee has many events planned throughout the province. Please check out the Calendar of Events at <http://www.bcfs100.ca/bcripts/calendar.asp>. And then while you are at the website, take a gander through the timelines and stories. Here you will find much of BC's forestry heritage to contemplate upon and to learn about. Plus check out the BCFS Centenary's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/BCFS-Centenary/314510618593180>.



FROM THE PEN OF GERHARD H. EICHEL

[Editor's note: Gerhard was kind enough to respond to my plea for stories. Here is an excerpt from his submission—a small slice of time when logging ruled the Upper Fraser. Thanks Gerhard!]

In late summer of 1955, Percy S. Church, proprietor of Church Sawmill in Willow River east of Prince George, drove into our Inventory base camp at the Willow River Bridge southeast of Prince George. He asked if anyone would be interested in a job of the resident forester of his just-awarded TFL, unaware that only the party chief and I were qualified. At the end of my fourth field season in Inventory, I felt the need to learn more about the sale of Crown timber and the lumber trade and decided to take the job. With the help of a colleague and his pickup, I moved my possessions into the house being provided by Percy and started on a very steep learning curve.

At that time, there was a string of mills all along the CN line like pearls on a thread. Going east from Prince George, there was a mill at Shelley and then came Willow River with three mills: Church, Geddes, and McDermid & Lofting. After that came Giscome with Eagle Lake sawmill (which also had a dairy farm), then S.B Trick in Aleza Lake, and the mill in Upper Fraser. At Hansard, the track crossed the river and on the other side were Penny and Sinclair Mills. The road connecting them was not always passable with long stretches during breakup covered with planks. All the mills cut a supply of road planks from balsam fir.

The most reliable transportation was the train service. The only phone was the CN track phone with about 35 parties. All the mills sold their lumber over that line so there were no secrets unless you used the mail. Some tried radio-telephones but that was mostly hit and miss. For an emergency, people quickly cleared the line all right, but with no medical help anywhere, the well-trained industrial first aid attendant was often the best service. As long as there was open water, a float plan could operate anywhere on the river (that is if a plane was available).

Percy took me to see his project. We first got a fellow in Hansard to take us by river boat to the mill site situated on a large bank above the McGregor River. Then we took the reaction ferry across the river to see the road being constructed through a recently clearcut timber sale to the edge of the standing timber. My job was to locate the road from the mill site. The road got built, and the mill site cleared but then winter shut down all work. I went back trying to produce a new map from a set of air photos Percy had flown of the TFL.

I was also asked to help in the sales office preparing the papers for the rail shipments and learned a lot about the commerce. Then came 1958 and a collapse of the market, a long IWA strike, and lots of fires. I got laid off and ended my career at Church sawmills.



BOOKS

Eating Dirt: Deep Forests, Big Timber, and Life with the Tree-Planting Tribe by Charlotte Gill

Charlotte has crafted an eloquent creative nonfiction account of tree planting that is not to be missed. According to the publisher, Greystone Books, she “offers up a slice of tree-planting life in all of its soggy, gritty exuberance, while questioning the ability of conifer plantations to replace original forests that evolved over millennia into complex ecosystems. She looks at logging’s environmental impact and its boom-and-bust history, and touches on the versatility of wood, from which we have devised countless creations as diverse as textiles and airplane parts” (<http://www.dmpibooks.com/book/eating-dirt>). The book has won multiple awards, the latest being the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize. [Editor’s note: after “inhaling” this book, I went out and bought 3 more copies for friends!]

Mnemonic: A Book of Trees by Theresa Kishkan; Publisher: Goose Lane Editions

This book was also on the shortlist for the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize. Described as a memoir, the book “intertwines the mysteries of trees with the defining moments in the life of the novelist and essayist For Kishkan, trees are memory markers of life, and in this book she explores the presence of trees in nature, in culture, and in her personal history” (<http://www.gooselane.com/books.php?ean=9780864926517>).



IN MEMORIAM

The FHABC extends its deepest sympathies to the families, friends, and colleagues of the following people:

Ike Barber (born 1923, died April 13, 2012)—philanthropist, entrepreneur, and icon of BC’s Forest Industry. Here was a man dedicated to BC and its people. Described as an ardent supporter of education, he donated to universities across the province—the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at UBC, the Enhanced Forestry Laboratory at the UNBC, and the Irving K. Barber British Columbia Centre at Thompson Rivers University (to name a few of his legacies). For more complete information on Ike’s life and his deep generosity, please check out the following web pages:

- <http://www.theprovince.com/Irving+Barber+visionary+philanthropist+dies/6468822/story.html>
- <http://newsroom.blog.mytru.ca/2012/04/18/barberpasses89/>
- <http://foresttalk.com/index.php/2012/04/16/remembering-irving-k-ike-barber/>
- <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/2012/04/16/ubc-remembers-alumnus-forester-and-philanthropist-dr-irving-k-barber-oc-obc-1923-2012/>
- <http://www.nelsonstar.com/news/147641605.html>

Allan Charles Schutz (born April 11, 1923, died May 8, 2011). A RCAF navigator, UBC graduate, and BCFS alumnus, Allen was described as a “dedicated birdwatcher, naturalist, conservationist, photographer and

painter” as well as an “avid adventurer” “loved life and lived it to the fullest.” His full obituary can be found at http://classifieds.canada.com/vancouver/archives/results.aspx?cls_id=37913&keyoper=ANY&keywords=&startday=3&startmonth=5&startyear=2011&endday=21&endmonth=5&endyear=2011&pn=3.



REQUESTS

STORIES: The Newsletter needs your reminiscences/anecdotes and is always thirsty for more forestry-related tales. Whether they are prose or poetry, all contributions are welcome. Most importantly, these stories can be as varied as the profession itself. Note that there is one requirement. **Please ensure that your submissions are typed, not hand-written.** This will save me much time and frustration in trying to decipher an author’s handwriting. Thanks.



EDITOR’S FINAL THOUGHTS

Picture this. The year is 1918, or maybe 1920. North Vancouver still has farms and big cedars. The young girl wading into Lynn Creek lives on one of those farms and wanders around those big cedars. This summer afternoon, she and her friends and siblings have completed all their chores. Time for a little fun. They wait at water’s edge. The creek is slow and lazy here—this is not the Lynn Creek of the Canyon—and they know that the shingle bolts are on their way. Time to catch a ride. Pie-shaped lengths of cedar hewn from the old trees growing upstream make perfect rides. So they each clamber aboard, stretch out, press their cheeks into wood, and inhale the scent of cedar and river bank. Their drift downstream will be short; they will disembark far before the ocean and run laughing home. But the memories will last a life time. Such are the stories told to me by a very young 103-year-old named Bea Dezell; they are snapshots of years long passed. Ninety-plus years—a rotation age for some.



This newsletter is the official publication of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. Please submit newsletter material and send changes of address to the Editor: Barbara Coupé, 4824 Wade Place, Prince George B.C. V2M 6C8 Phone: (250) 562-1051; E-mail: bjcoupe@telus.net.

Membership is \$15 yearly or \$40 for three years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Art Walker, 564 Oliver Street, Victoria B.C. V8S 4W3; Phone: (250) 598-4455; E-mail: aws564@telus.net. **NOTE:** Cheques **must** be made out to **The Forest History Association of B.C.** NOT the FHABC, Forest History Association, etc.

FHABC President Stan Chester can be reached at 5686 Keith Road, West Vancouver B.C. V7W 2N5; Phone (604) 921-9880; E-mail: stanchester@shaw.ca

Back issues (courtesy of the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resources [MFLN] library): http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/Library/lib_Forest_History_Newsletter.htm. (Issues 40-84 are available at the MFLN Library website; #21-84 on the FHABC website, <http://fhabc.org/>).