Forest History Association of BC (FHABC)

Publishers Note: (June 1, 2021)

FHABC is pleased to publish this edition of memoirs by Mike Meagher. More may be added in the future.

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Issue 110, June 2021 "*GONE "Buggy' in the Cariboo and then Travels Afar*" (Recollections from 1956-1957 in the Interior, Toronto and Europe)

Previous editions of Mike's memoirs were published here:

Issue #108 Dec 2020 *"From Wet to Dry"* (Recollections from 1954/55 on the coast)

Issue #104 Dec 2019 *"Leaving a Mark",* (Recollections from 1951-1952 in the Interior)

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GONE "Buggy' in the Cariboo and then Travels Afar

By Mike Meagher RPF (ret) A follow-up to Mike's earlier pieces in Issues #104 and #108 . This segment has two parts. In Part 1, Mike describes his final summer before completing his BSF degree working in the Interior. In Part 2, he describes his travels afar first to Toronto for his M.SCF. Studies, and then to Europe. The full article can be found on our website here.

Abstract

Part 1— Buggy in the Caribou

The March-April 2018 issue of the **"BC Forest Professional"** contained an article by Tim Ebata, RPF, and Lorraine MacLauchlan, Ph.D., RPF, RP Bio, of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development titled "**The Douglas-fir Beetle Dilemma**" that was focused on a serious outbreak of beetle parasitism in the Cariboo and Thompson-Okanagan areas forests. Also, it was highly reminiscent of my "Buggy" summer prior to graduating from UBC.

Five summers after High School graduation spent among trees as future lumber or pulp and contemplating 1956, my last summer and chance to broaden my experience before completing my BSF degree, I decided it would be a good time to find a more "biological" summer of work. Luckily, I landed a job with the Federal Government's Insect and Disease Program. After attending the obligatory two-week UBC Forestry field camp near Haney, I arrived mid-May at the Program's Office in Vernon for introduction to the crew. Dr. Les McMullan was in charge, assisted by Michael Atkins, a Medical student at UBC.

Mike goes on to describe his work and life in the Caribou that summer.

Part Two — Travels afar

My interest in "biology" and serendipity led to a more interesting life: after four years in reforestation work with the BC Forest Service, I trekked east for post-graduate M.SCF. studies in Toronto. After reading articles re forest soils and tree growth, several from Danish publications, and lacking a job in BC, I considered a personal "Forestry" tour in northern Europe with the purpose of comparing my experience with big forests in large expanses with their contrasts to much smaller expanses under high population pressures. Luckily, I was much assisted by a Danish U. of T. Professor on my Master's Committee and his contacts, who were major helpers by arranging my next contact person, and travel advice.

Mike goes on to describe his travels in Europe

The full article can be read here.

Scene of Mike and local Danish Forestry Officer Joergen Christian Nielsen admiring their work of "heeled-in" Larch (Larix decidua) and Japanese larch (L. japonica) families at one of three test sites to identify which seed parents to use in future plantations. Photo by Henning Jensen with whom he traveled from Aarhus to the northern tip and back to south of Copenhagen to establish the test, then other actions regarding genetic studies of interest to Denmark's Genetic program.

Chez Mike — June to September 1956

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Five summers after High School graduation spent among trees as future lumber or pulp and contemplating my last summer and chance to broaden my experience before completing my BSF degree, I decided it would be a good time to find a more "biological" summer of work. Luckily, I landed a job with the Federal Government's Insect and Disease Program. After attending the obligatory two-week UBC Forestry field camp near Haney, I arrived mid-May at the Program's Office in Vernon for introduction to the crew. Dr. Les McMullan was in charge, assisted by Michael Atkins, a Medical student at UBC.

Our residence was at Trinity Valley Station -- a set of cabins and a laboratory east of Vernon and north of Lumby. One first-year UBC Forestry student in the crew was John Harris, deeply interested in insects – to the extent that his free days and evenings were often punctuated by periods of wild thrashing of the Station's grounds, waving his butterfly net in a feverish attempt to capture nearly anything in flight. The most-obvious result was a large cloud of dust that drove others away in any dust-free direction. John's interest did not diminish through his three remaining UBC years, leading him to a regular position with subsequent summers' Insect crews and finally a Ph.D., qualifying him to become a Scientist in Victoria's Pacific Forestry Centre until retirement in 1992.

After a few weeks of training in the life cycle from egg to adult of the Douglas-fir beetle (***Dendroctonus pseudotsuga)*** in preparation for my posting as their "Man in Lac la Hache", where I would spend most of the summer documenting attacked Douglas-fir, their degree of attack, plus the extent of larvae or pupae developing in order to estimate the following summer's attack potential it was time to trek north.

Les and I packed my belongings and necessary equipment and drove to ***the "Lac"*** where I was introduced to the local grocery store and an arrangement was made for me to charge for food and other supplies as needed, then payment via mailed invoices to Vernon. One night in a/the local motel and we moved on to the north end of the Lake where a perch for my tent on a bench above the creek was invaded; no sign of competing ownership to satisfy – courtesy of Les's previous work in the area. A day assembling the tent's floor, walls and erecting the roof poles, pulling the 10-by 12-foot canvas over the aluminum frame and attaching the canvas walls and tying down the canvas roof fly sheet, plus adding bed, chairs and small table and I was *"**home**"*. Also, a pit for food scraps and bodily functions was created, along with the necessary "perch bar" over the pit – the bar's species and strength considered carefully. Tested and passed the challenge after supper. NB: **No "Safety Committee"** in those days! My "**security"** was at the sawmill about a half mile along the road south along the Lake's west shore, to which I could retreat if help was needed. My daily security routine, if heading to the woods to collect data, was to check in and out at the sawmill.

The next day we ventured south and west to reach a stand of attacked trees that Les and a Federal Insect Ranger had judged as suitable for sampling in 1955. The stand consisted of mature Douglas-fir overstorey sharing the site with aspen, some lodgepole pine and light underbrush, plus dryland grasses. Our routine was to select a suitable tree – showing signs of attack from its reddish and failing foliage, and fairly clean understorey -- so that the stem could fall and remain whole. Once felled, the stem was measured for dbh (diameter at breast height), length and examined for signs of stem rot, then bucked into bolts of equal length for insect presence. Data of length and basal diameter were collected, then the bark was removed and examined for: number and length in the phloem of vertical, adult-chewed, channels, number of egg clusters laid along both sides of those channels in an altering pattern, the number of lateral, larval channels per egg cluster, number of pupal nests per egg cluster, and – finally – the number of escape holes due to departing adults. Patience and concentration needed, making for

sedentary periods of concentration per stem block. Two lessons were learned quickly: "*Doug fir"* bark's inner layer includes fine cells that dry to become fine needles that find any exposed flesh, then set up home-keeping and creating a rash worthy of a serious mini invader. Gloves and full-length sleeves seriously recommended. Some good news: in a fire pit the bark can burn like coal for hours, emitting little smoke and inducing marshmallow roasts. Mosquitos plentiful; no comment needed.

Les departed for Vernon, leaving me with my truck, tent, tools and a clear view of the local landscape and a reminder of the wisdom of being cautious traveling on bad roads, but also the need to protect the data derived until mailing it to the office. No photocopying option then; we trusted fully in the Postal Service. Even though the stands selected were fully mature, their health likely was affected 6 years earlier by the very dry summer of 1951. A more-recent strain was the sharp and deep freeze of November, 1955, when a mild fall was ended suddenly by the swift intrusion of an Arctic cold wave that drove MAXIMAL temperatures for November 9th as low as 13 degrees below zero overnight and remained similarly cold for seven days. Even UBC's playing fields were frozen rock-hard for days afterward. The "chill" reached as far south as mid-Oregon, where it caused stem damage – or even mortality – to 50-year-old planted Douglas-firs in a long-standing trial of seed-source influences on growth and resilience from central Washington State to southern Oregon. The effects of that event were evident to us at Spring Camp in the loss of tops by native Douglas-firs in a stand sired by local trees in the 1910s. The frozen tops were stressed at average canopy level where they often broke by the inevitable heavy snowfall that drove out the Arctic air, resulting in a litter of fallen tops to scramble over in our mapping and inventory exercise. It still seems incredible to realize that such a cold outbreak was too great a challenge for even the tallest trees after several less stressful tests left them unscarred!

Les left the next day, leaving me to my chores and "my beetles". The wisdom of having packed some tree bolts to the camp meant I could spend rainy days in my tent, enjoying the relief at not having to challenge the silt-based road and its many deep and slippery puddles. Also, my popular perch provided a clear look at the highway's traffic to/from Williams Lake and points north. That view led to an unplanned introduction to local cultures and events. About 2 weeks before July first, a slow-moving "parade" of First Nations humanity appeared on a northward trek to Williams Lake to participate in the annual **July First Stampede.** Vehicles included horse-drawn wagons bearing women, young children and older men, were accompanied by walkers, horse riders and "outlier" dogs. Some mornings I saw people emerge from a small cabin beside the bush road below me, gather all possessions and "trek" mates and resume the trip. I peeked into the cabin to see: only a few simple plank beds, straw mattresses and no windows; enough space and furniture for a one-night break for the trek. Two-three weeks later the trek reversed, heading south to arrive at homes and a garden ready for harvest, plus harvesting fish from local streams and the Fraser River for drying and storing for the winter's meals.

The other culture – the "***original settlers"*** from the Cariboo trail creation to assist the gold seekers of the 19th century – provided a different scene of life via cattle raising, gardening and logging for house creation and firewood. I was welcomed by the local softball team, but could not join them for the Williams Lake July first tournament due to a break to report my progress to Vernon. But I was taken to the local racetrack for a night of motor racing around a dirt track. All machines dated from decades prior and notably scarred; also, dusty air guaranteed. My first such event; the second: many years later!

Regarding "other culture": I experienced a modern version on my return trip from Vernon when I pulled into a gas/snack station beside the Highway near 70-Mile House. The gas jockey strolled over and asked:

"*Suh, Do ya wahnt premium oaah reglah?"*

I replied "*Premium",* resulting in

"*Wud ya maaahnd goin' to thu uthuah aahhland? This here's just reglah."*

A man from WELL south of any trace of Yankee influence. Seems he followed a buddy who followed a young lady who… Is a Klondike gold rush fan still enamoured of the chance to strike it rich? Not discussed.

The wooded countryside I sampled was fairly open, allowing native animals to roam unimpeded to browse and bed overnight, or resting to chew. Alone in the woods and deep in bark examination one day, I heard an unfamiliar sound and looked up to see a moose mother and calf not far away. I dived behind the nearest tree stem and held my breath until I could sneak a peek at the pair. No problem; they had serious chewing in mind, allowing us to part on good terms. A less-impressive animal provided the most impressive demonstration of nature in action: a dragonfly perched on my knee while I concentrated on evidence-gathering. Swivelling the head in several directions at once, the "*d fly"* leapt up and came down with a deerfly (or Moosefly) in its claws. Quick motions severed the wings, legs and head, leaving the torso. Devoured swiftly, then no time passed before more head-swivelling produced another deer fly – like the first, nearly as bulky in the torso as the feaster. I was impressed: two meals in succession, each about the relative size of a Cocker spaniel if an average man had been the *"diner".* No butterflies I have seen since have matched that performance!

By now confident that I was in a fairly secure locality with few of the "locals" interested in my prospects as a

meal, I was secure in my sleeping bag at home, reading by the Coleman propane lamp when a cougar burst through the tent's zippered door and approached. "***I'm DEAD****",* I thought while looking fruitlessly for some defensive tool. None in reach! I had begun to contemplate my funeral when I realized it was the blond and **very friendly** Golden retriever from the sawmill out on his nightly patrol of the neighbourhood, though not of my address prior to then.

One departure from "*Mike and his bolts"* was a day devoted to documenting beetle presence and impact on the trees over a 10-acre stand to provide data to assist in estimating the beetle's impact via aerial photos. All available Insect Rangers in their areas of summer work assembled in Williams Lake, then proceeded to the site – in the process passing through a very small Native village, causing the little children to scurry into their homes to avoid any threat we might represent. Settler- original occupant relations were a basic concern throughout the region then – since improved somewhat.

At the gathering point, we were divided into 3-person teams to progress in a continuous line across the area. I was the compass man for our trio while my Rangers scanned each Douglas-fir tree for vigour and signs of beetle entry holes, dead branches, etc. Dinner back at Williams Lake was convivial evening, then back to my perch above the highway. That gave me a chance to contemplate the fickleness of fate that led to a meeting with a Ranger in whose home in Nelson I and my brother had spent 10 years, ending in 1946. As all did, he and I had introduced ourselves before leaving the muster point that morning; he as "*Dave Ruppel".* When *"Ruppel"* hit the air my ears perked up to the max, since it was not a common name. He showed no sign of alert over my name, so I assumed he was not my former housemate, since I knew only *"Harry Ruppel."* He and younger brother *"Bud"* (actually Iverson Ruppel) had left for the War; Dave returned, Bud did not after being shot down over Germany – his father's homeland. I stored the puzzle of the *"wrong Ruppel"* for years – until my family was visiting Nelson and was able to ask Dave's sister if there was ANY WAY that Dave was really *"Harry".* He was! Seems he used *"Harry"* by choice, but his legal name started with *"David."* Small world!

Nearly 30 years later I moved to the Pacific Forestry Centre to join a program of developing genetically-resistant western white pine vs. the introduced pathogen ***Cronartium ribicola*** *– the "****white pine blister rust"*** --that had devastated that valuable species from reforestation programs since its unplanned introduction to BC in the early 1910s. I found that Dave Ruppel was in charge of the Insectary! I introduced myself, generating a mild welcome, then back to work! Dave was not a demonstrative man, like his Dad, who was a steady force for good who left Germany over his objections to the Kaiser's aims and aggressive behaviour. Dave's and my Nelson home sat beside a home that was home to a family of 5 daughters and one son from Sweden. One of those ladies was the mother of my first and longest "best friend", resulting in many hours in the influence of Swedish food, words and accents. Dave also. By the 1990s one of the Swedish ladies and husband had moved to Victoria, leading to frequent teas and dinners in our home.

One of the dinners included Dave and his wife. BIG hugs and MANY smiles at the sight of the "*Svenska flikan"* [Swedish girl], plus catch-up stories during the evening. Dave's younger brother *"Bud",* whose name is carved into a stone memorial of War casualties outside Nelson City Hall, plus is the name of a mountain overlooking Kootenay Lake some miles east of Nelson, was remembered fondly. His plane was shot down over Germany – his Father's homeland -- a too-common and cruel irony during World War 2.

Part 2—Travels Afar

My interest in "biology" and serendipity led to a more interesting life: after four years in reforestation work with the BC Forest Service, I trekked east for post-graduate M.ScF. studies in Toronto. After reading articles regarding forest soils and tree growth, several from Danish publications, and lacking a job in BC, I considered a personal "Forestry" tour in northern Europe to compare my experience with big forests in large expanses with their much smaller expanses under high population pressures. Luckily, I was much assisted by a Danish U. of T. Professor on my Master's Committee and his contacts, who were major helpers by arranging my next contact person, and travel advice.

My route to my "*Forestry/Culture"* tour was via the ocean liner France II from New York to Southampton, then up to London, where an Italian Architect I met at *"our table"* (of miscellaneous youngish passengers) were assembled. He and another Architect were on a business trip to persuade British Architects to adopt their plan to make quick-assembly homes from full-fledged kits. *"****Pan Abodes****"* comes to mind now; no name was mentioned then. He and I booked a room for the days he stayed in England before moving to Italy and a similar promotional event. I moved into a room near High Park and waited out the winter cold, helped by a *"fire"* [electric heater fed by a coin meter]

for news from Toronto regarding plans to move to Denmark. Days passed, prompting a visit to the BC Lumber Manufacturers office to offer my help with their Annual Report to Vancouver. No such luck, but the Manager knew of a company in Farnborough using BC wood to make garden sheds, gazebos and lawn furniture that might be a help. DID! A Monday morning train ride to the local stations where I was to be met by a Company rep. sounded good.

Arrival as planned; Company rep.? None in sight. Station Master allowed me to ring the Company; No plans for a ride on his book, but he relented. Chauffeur driving Bentley did the job. Office Manager not in sight in office, but he took my word re a job offer, so I began to change into winter work clothes for immediate action when/if someone approved my plan.

From late January to early April I worked in the most disorganized system of transferring logs or woody pieces- some western hemlock, etc. from BC cut as beams to various sizes slated for parts of the target structure. The headsaw was the only one fed by live rollers; all others entailed a pick-up man wrestling the piece back to the intake side via a dead roller. Adding to the situation was the lack of easy transfer of pieces to the appropriate saw was the absence of a logical orientation of the saw blades: NOT in line with the next saw, but ACROSS the line, requiring much wrestling of pieces to conform to the next saw! When the sawline was not busy I scoped other areas re function and equipment, or swept up pieces and sawdust – to the mystification of some of the crew. They found waiting for the next piece more logical.

After my plans for visiting Denmark arrived I notified the sawmill that I would leave the following week, resulting in an invitation from the Manager to drop by his office for a chat. Very pleasant, even when I was asked regarding my impressions of his plant. Delicacy required, maybe found just enough, since he wished me well.

An overnight boat from Harwich to the Danish west coast at Esbjerg and train to Copenhagen and I was in Hans Christian Andersen's homeland. The train ride allowed me to scope the Danish countryside: rolling land of farms and wooded patches fit my expectations well. Also, I could utilize my "considerable" advantage re pronunciation of village names derived from hours of studying my Scandinavian Phrase Book purchased in London vs. what I heard from the Conductor as each stop was announced. All well until I saw "**Midlefart.**" NO association between the sign and my brain. A defining feature of Danish is the near-abandonment of consonants, preferring to merge them into the nearest vowel – or even create a new vowel for greater community bonding. YEARS of practice – to great amusement among the local audience – a required to approach "passable" status. Arrival by evening and a ***MIssionshotel"*** [mainly for sailors of any country] room near the main train station and I was ready for the *"**Forestry**"* tour to begin. As directed, I caught a train north to Rungsted, the stop nearest to Hoersholm, the site of the Danish Tree Improvement Station, where I would be able to learn the status, plans and results of decades of genetic improvement in both native and foreign species. My new chauffer, Henning Jensen was a young Forester, who spoke good English, after some years in English-speaking lands – Vancouver among them – while his father worked for the East Asiatic Company. A pleasant introduction to the staff and scientists present and a (non-typical) Danish lunch to review the plans for my visits to various parts of the land – not all involving genetics -- plus a short walkabout and I went back to Copenhagen to board an overnight boat to Aarhus, the second-largest city in Denmark, on the Jutland peninsula to the west. There I would be able to learn of the Municipal Forests' mission and management – living with the forester's family near the local Summer Castle. *"FAIRYTALE"* – anyone? Sociability was the standard theme to maintain forests appealing to the eye and serving the publics' wishes. Some logging occurred, but in modest patch sizes and of low damage to soils. Most regeneration was by on-site seed fall, but maintaining walk and bike paths clear. Notably, the Municipal Forester adored grand fir (A. grandis) from Washington State, stating he ***"had never seen such growth by any other species."***

My first impression of Denmark's forests, the smallest country on my list, was of a typical southern Ontario

Scene of Mike and local Danish Forestry Officer Joergen Christian Nielsen admiring their work of "heeled-in" Larch (Larix decidua) and Japanese larch (L. japonica) families at one of three test sites to identify which seed parents to use in future plantations. Photo by Henning Jensen with whom he traveled from Aarhus to the northern tip and back to south of Copenhagen to establish the test, then other actions regarding genetic studies of interest to Denmark's Genetic program.

scene of gentle terrain hosting hardwoods among farms and small towns. All tree species: beech, oaks, maples, ashes, etc. were prominent, though fewer species per genus. Whereas Ontario contained several maples, more oaks, especially "*Red"* oaks, where none were indigenous to Denmark, birches, conifers, etc. North American conifers, especially Douglas-fir and Grand fir, were present in both plantations and parks as "specimen trees." Excursions by European Foresters to evaluate the benefits of importing trees from North America had begun decades earlier, resulting in a number of exporters of species found by earlier trials to be suited to different localities. Douglas-fir was a favourite on suitable sites from Denmark to southern Germany, resulting in a collector shipping boxes of seed from Salmon Arm to various forests during several years, until the recipient's trees reached the stage of producing cones, permitting the landowners to harvest seeds as needed. Sitka spruce was also known and used in Denmark's west shore to stabilize sand dunes – thriving on almost soil-less mounds of white sand in the lee of shifting dunes, created decades earlier by overcutting the native pines for heat and buildings. Too late for some villages buried by the drifts. The process continues, even smothering a church! Lodgepole pine was known and favoured in Sweden for plantations of better-formed stems, the native species *"Scots"* pine (Pinus sylvestris) having been cut selectively for generations, resulting in deformed stems and lumber of poor quality.

Due to the high population pressures, park trees were valued highly, leading to cultural actions meant to save them for decades. A small clearcut in a mature beech stand in an Aarhus park exposed their sensitive bark to sunscald, which would have opened the stem to pathogens without protective action. Solution: the upper stems were painted in bright white plaster on the southern and western sides, deflecting the heat and allowing the bark to build thicker layers for protection.

On to Sweden for the next phase; immediate relief re pronunciations: real words delivered with precision, vs. the Danish slurs. Arrived in Stockholm for the "***MedSommar nat****" [Midsummer Night]* celebration, where I reunited with a New Zealand Architect I met on the England-Denmark boat. All-night dancing and singing. Bed pre-sunrise not allowed to justify a variety of snacks to accompany a larger variety of alcoholic treats.

My local Forestry host was located in Uppsala, meaning a short train ride and participation in a graduating celebration by a Forester's class. The mid-June sunset was more imaginary than real, encouraging plenty of splashes into the lake, followed by huddling around the fire. Also singing from the "***Skogies Sang Bog****"* {Swedish Foresters' Song Book}. After a few of theirs was selected, I was invited to participate. My "best" option was *"**The Frozen Logger",*** which I had learned during my Toronto studies. Laughter indicated approval – also I have a copy of the "Skogies" book in my collection. At their request, I wrote the words, maybe leading to inclusion in their books' next version.

The following day I and Tore Arnborg, head of the Swedish Forest Genetics program, drove north to visit several sites to be part of an international conference of Forest Genetics the following year. One photo of an established pine seed orchard in the Proceedings publication I recognized as one I took by scrambling up the stem and draping an arm around a branch for steadiness. We stopped at 64 degrees north, the location of the University of Umeaa ("*oomayoe")* where a local colleague and fellow event participant lived. Mats Hagner was my age and a pleasant colleague – whom I met at conferences in Canada more than once. The return trip to Uppsala consumed a full night – not really dark at those latitudes in July.

An overnight train ride and I was in Scandinavian nation #3 and welcomed to Norway (Norge); also "real words" vs. Danish. Visited the Forest Experiment Station outside Oslo for further hospitality and discussions regarding private and public forest management for different purposes – much like all the Scandinavian countries, where most lands are privately owned.

An overnight sail southward (on an outside bench in my sleeping bag) and I returned to Aarhus for a quick visit (laundry included) and south to Germany. Managed to swallow worries of post-World War 2 animosity and impressed by the sight of factories buzzing with workers before 7 am! The Marshall Plan was really paying off.

I met my best friend from Nelson and travelled from Hamburg via rail and Rhein River steamer to his Canadian Military camp in Zweibrueken, then east to Frankfurt. The Rhein portion involved a cruise up the gorge and past Medieval castles [correct; "***Castles on the Rhein****"* of several fables] each of which earned its title by charging safe passage to all shipping – or ELSE! Apparently, each castle spawned a church, perhaps to seek forgiveness for the obligatory transaction for passage. During a later visit, I learned that biking along the River's trail was free.

No forestry connection, so I visited the Zoo, which was world-famous before the War, but destroyed by bombing and land combat when the animals were not

returned to cages, but into open "wells" to provide a more sympathetic impression. All but one species was able to ponder our values from the unobstructed sky; western North American cougars were caged per the Guide book's information: No matter what "Well' they tried, cougars could jump and crawl high enough to escape! While entering the streetcar – crowded with bodies faces to backs – I let one pace empty to reduce breathing used air when some powerful force propelled me up to occupy my allotted space. When I could turn to find the motor all I could see was a VERY short and stout hausfrau who had used a shoulder to elevate my rump to the "next level." Nurenburg (could NOT resist!). All quiet on that front.

The next forestry visit was with a local Forester in Altdorf, a small city east of Frankfurt. He and his family were gracious hosts, especially the young son who asked me "*From which land do you come?" "Canada"* prompted a follow-up: *"Ach zo, ist das ein grosse oder klein Land?"* Answer: *"Grosse, zo grosse."* Conclusion: *"Ach zo, kleine."* Then Dad asked if the boy knew other lands. Translated reply: *"Ja, poppa, I know France, Austria, Switzerland, Frankfurt, Nurenberg and …Altdorf."*

South to Switzerland, where I was to meet the local Municipal Forester at his office outside the city for breakfast. Rainy morning ignored put me at his office by the slotted time – to his surprise -- vs. rain. As during other visits, the hospitality was generous and the customary willingness to discuss forestry for dense populations and several benefits of their actions were shared warmly and with detail.

Another train north down the Rhein to forestry sites in the Black Forest, the first stop led to my most compelling sight when the host/chauffeur appeared: a large and tall man fully clothed in a German Forester's attire: green felt cap and bristle-brush hide "flower", green felt coat and pants over knee-high stockings, then sturdy brown hunting boots. "Herr Graf von Walwitz" was my host's assistant heel-clicking companion. My modest "Canadian traveller" attire was no match for such compelling duds. I learned later that he had to be a post-war emigree from his traditional lands east of the Rheinland and more exposures to local forest management in the mountains to the east and views of Salmon Arm Douglas-fir. It had been introduced many years before and was still managed for its high-quality wood, as mentioned earlier.

While on this leg I received an offer of a job in Toronto's Forestry Faculty to Lecture in Dendrology and assist in Silviculture, plus contribute to the new Shade Tree Research Lab. -- under the direction of my Danish MScF. Advisor! No need for even a pause to think.

Facing my return to Toronto that shortened my trip, and strolling through a City park in Nancy, home of the French Forestry School, I was accosted by a booming, familiar voice: "***Mike Meagher, I presume!"*** Bob Van den Driessche, whom I had introduced to some of the basic jobs in BC forestry work – packing bags of Douglas-fir cones to the truck during a "mast" year for transfer to the extractor in Duncan prior to Bob's transfer to the Research Division – and brother Mike were en route to Switzerland to meet a young British lady with whom Bob had connected during his Ph.D. studies in Wales. It was Bob who had suggested my move to Toronto, and now was learning of my pending move back to "his/my" Master's home! When next we met – some years later in Victoria – Bob and Pauline were married and parents of two children – as were we.

The following year a planned reunion with Henning Jensen Henning had come after he had realized that his interest in pursuing forest genetics in diminutive and crowded Denmark with few forests of substantial size was not likely to result in a permanent job, so – capitalizing on the family's contact with the East Asiatic Company, for which his father still worked – a move west to BC could open a door. I found him a bed with my landlady so that we could buy a used car and visit the Forestry Faculty re my work, then we departed for Ottawa and a visit with Dr. Carl Heimburger, a well-known plant geneticist of Russian extraction and winner of the Tsar's Gold Medal in Forestry years earlier -- then to Denmark and further genetics training -- for an assessment of B.C.'s genetics possibilities. We travelled in separate vehicles, met and enjoyed a half-day meeting with "Dr. Carl" before Henning left for his week-long trip to Vancouver in his capacious Dodge station wagon. I told him to expect a less-demanding trip than he planned since his estimate was based on customary speeds in Denmark, not found across most of his route between Sault St. Marie and Calgary. Happily, having covered that route on my way east 3 years earlier, I was right.

His major mentor in Vancouver was Sven Rasmussen, a Danish Forester active in pursuing a genetics program for Tahsis Company, aided by the plan for support of such efforts via drawdowns in stumpage funds from Provincial lands, provided established standards were met. While in Vancouver, Henning met a widow in the company's office, leading to their wedding in 1966 and their move to Gold River, where his job was based on TFL 19. The lands are a combination of open coast in Tahsis Inlet and adjacent inlets, inland and warmer lands along the Gold River

valley paralleling the Coast, and higher-elevations featuring Abies lasiocarpa and "Yellow cedar" (Chamaecyparis nootkatensis). Also, Henning established a local seed orchard to provide seed for the Company's reforestation obligation and a "clone bank" of grafted trees from each species in the Company's program.

Soon, it became obvious that the high elevation of the orchard was too cool to stimulate seed cones in quantity, so Sven decided to follow the advice of Alan Orr-Ewing, the BC Forest Service's geneticist, who had to approve such steps in the company plans to qualify for stumpage "offsets" that could pay for the program, and move operations to warmer climates. Sven's choice was a small farm in the Saanich Peninsula with clear evidence of regular and heavy "flowering" by Douglas-fir in that locality. Henning was soon occupied in moving down grafted trees of Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce and western Hemlock – to create the first three-species seed orchard in B.C. As would be the pattern for other local seed orchards, he developed a "pollen lab" in which to extract pollen from branches on his trees to pollinate bagged seed cones at the appropriate time to maximize their seed potential, as well as "genetic gain".

Henning's new locality had already been complemented by a seed-orchard complex purchased by Pacific Logging Company – a subsidiary of Canadian Pacific Railroad Company – and was soon mirrored by the BC Forest Service on a site selected by Jenji Konishi from a parcel of Crown Land featuring similar gentle and cultivated land and regular "flowering" on nearby conifers. Its first "Manager": Mike Meagher, newly-crowned "Seed Orchard Forester" in the Silviculture Branch in June 1972.

After several years serving Tahsis Company, 1990 saw Henning and family move into the Seed Orchard Forester post in Duncan and a simultaneous/ serendipitous introduction to one of his ship and train mates from Europe became the meeting with my future Danish wife in Toronto's Union Station! She is still "*my current wife",* after having been alerted to my existence by her childhood friend and daughter of my first tour's host: the local Danish Municipal Forester.

Both the "Forestry" and the "Cultural" aspects of my tour REALLY paid off! Small country; BIG impact!

Clear? evidence of the "**Buggy"** summer's and serendipity's influences on my life!

Regarding "**Buggy** summer": the "Forest Insect Survey" "Important Insects" "Douglas-fir beetle" section for the "Province of British Columbia 1956" (page 81) contains:

"There was a decline in the Douglas-fir beetle population by the spring of 1956. At least some of the reduction was attributed to increased mortality of over-wintering stages. In the region around Lac la Hache, the number of beetles was reduced to one-third of the 1955 population level."

The ***"increased mortality of over-wintering stages.."*** comports to the 1955 November freeze described above**.**

My eyes had no idea how lucky they were, relieved from staring at more and more-loaded galleries, pupal nests and escape holes they encountered.

The "…***moving finger of fate..."*** *comes to mind.*
In retrospect, I can only imagine how "the Gods must be protecting fools" applies to my memorable tour among remarkably kind professionals and agencies who proved prepared to welcome and assist a young nonentity as a guest and equal in respect for forests and foresters and their future.

Fortunately, I had the chance to reply in kind and organize a tour of western Canada for a German colleague and compatriots whom I met in Toronto the year after my odyssey during his tour of logging and milling agencies. We and our wives are friends to this date.

Reference:

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. FOREST INSECT SURVEY. 1956

G. T. Silver and D. A. Ross. Forest Biology Laboratory, Forest Zoology Unit, Victoria and Vernon, B.C.

pp. 79 – 86.