

British Columbia



Published by the Forest History Association of British Columbia

No. Three Victoria, British Columbia November, 1982

THE COLONY OF VANCOUVER ISLAND - CUTTING PERMITS, SCALING, STUMPAGE, AND TRESPASS

On January 13, 1849, the Colony of Vancouver's Island (original spelling) was created by royal charter. The responsibility to establish the colony was assigned to the Hudson's Bay Company by a charter of grant which, in return, granted the Company certain exclusive rights for a ten year period.

The concept that British settlers were entitled to a voice in their own Government was first legally embodied in the charter of the Virginia Company and lead to the summoning of the Virginia House in 1619 - the first representative assembly of British subjects outside the mother country. This pattern of government in the colonies continued to evolve throughout the intervening two hundred years and on March 11, 1850, Governor Blanshard of the Colony of Vancouver's Island read his commission including his authorization to appoint a Council and with its "advice and consent" exact legislation for the new colony. Almost immediately thereafter, the Governor advised the secretary of state for the colonies in London: "As no settlers have at present arrived, I have considered that it is unnecessary as yet to nominate a council...."

In due course, a Council was appointed and held its first meeting on August 30, 1851 in Victoria. Meetings were anything but regular with only two held in the next year. Most of the early legislation seemed primarily concerned with revenues derived from liquor sales.

The meeting of the Council on September 23, 1853 was the first to discuss and establish any regulations on forestry. The following is the exact wording in this Province and I find the phraseology remarkably similar to the current Forest Act, indeed the phraseology used seems to resemble that used in all subsequent forest legislation in British Columbia.

(cont'd reverse)

Friday, the 23rd day of September, 1853:

"The Council next proceeded to establish regulations concerning the cutting and removal of timber from the public lands and it was resolved that:

- 1st That the Collector of the Customs be empowered to issue Permits for cutting timber on the public lands, and to levy a Duty of tenpence per load of 50 Cubic feet on all timber cut thereon.
- 2nd That no timber be cut on public lands without a Permit under a Penalty of £10 and the forfeiture of said Timber.
- 3rd That no person not being a subject of Her Majesty the Queen and a resident of Vancouver Island, shall cut timber on the public lands under a Penalty not exceeding £20.
- 4th That all persons cutting Timber on the public lands shall make a true and correct return of the same to the Collector of Customs, who may cause such timber to be remeasured, at the cost, of the persons claiming the same, should he see cause to doubt the correctness of said returns.

That the Collector shall charge a fee of one Pound Sterling, on every Timber licence which shall be issued by him."

Contributed by W. Young, Ministry of Forests, Victoria.

[Part One of Three on 'Colonial Legislatures of B.C. and their Forest Legislation (1851-1871)']

ooOoo

LOGGING NOTES

"Loggers generally will learn with much interest that the remains of the first steam logging engine ever used in British Columbia are still extant - a pair of big iron wheels that lie by the side of the road just where First avenue, in Kitsilano suburb, Vancouver, intersects the Point Grey road. It was a traction engine used for hauling logs out of the bush. The wheels are 5 feet 4 inches in diameter and 15 inches on the face of tire, which is 'tapped' or threaded for the screwing in of spikes to take a grip on the ground. No doubt it was an event of supreme importance when the engine of which these wheels formed a part, moved grandly if slowly along the rough trail leading to the forest primeval under its own steam."

From the Western Lumberman, June 1910 (Vol. 7, No. 6, p.25)

ooOoo

EARLY LOGGING DAYS ON DENMAN ISLAND

The first logging on Denman Island was done about 1876 by George Edwards, an early settler, and Joe Rodella, an English-speaking Italian. Rodella was known around Comox as a trader and a storekeeper. These two did some logging with oxen (bulls) on Beadnell Creek. It is not known if they built a skid road, handlogged, or just rolled the logs into the creek, nor what they did with the logs. Pidcock had a sawmill on the Courtenay River about that time and my guess is that they towed the logs to Comox and exchanged the logs for lumber as some of the early settlers were building houses on Denman and Rodella was supplying the lumber.

My grandfather Thomas Piercy came to Denman in 1876 and settled on the west side of the island. He apparently was too busy clearing land and planting his famous Gravenstein Orchard to start logging for his first twenty years on the island. However, in the late 1890's he and his six nearly full-grown boys decided to get into the logging business in addition to farming. The west side of Denman had a high bank running along most of the shoreline which made it difficult to build a skid road down to the beach. Therefore he and his sons started horse logging at Buckley Bay and Fanny Bay. A picture taken around 1901 shows Tom with two of his sons, Joe Thomson, and some Fanny Bay settlers logging with a four horse team at Buckley Bay. About that time he set up a logging camp on Abe McLaughlin's property and logged into Fanny Bay.

Tom Piercy died in 1904 but four of his sons had a go at horse logging on Denman Island. I remember when my uncles Wes and Jim built a skid road on the road allowance paralleling the government road from the cemetery down past our home to Isbister Beach. This was in 1908 or 1909 - Jim drove the four horse team. My uncle Harve had a horse logging show on the east side of Denman Island about 1911 or 1912. Jim and Wes logged Russels place about 1916 and Vogel horse-logged some piling at about the same time.

Other horse loggers in those early days on Denman Island included Bill Day and his brothers. Jack Scott logged with oxen on Hornby Island before coming to Denman where they used horses. George Doane and Jack Martin both horse logged above Beadnells. They used a substantial chute from the high bank right into the deep water. They had a system of hooking onto the third or fourth log back and bumping the logs ahead into the chute. Doane had another show at Henry Bay where an old teamster named Frank Stewert drove an eight horse team. Stewert settled on Denman and we went to school with his kids.

Howard McFarlan brought the first steam donkey to Denman in 1906. He logged with the donkey at Henry Bay and roaded the logs down the skid road to the beach with a six horse team.

As far back as I can remember my dad William Baikie was always logging with his two horse team. His neighbours Jack Scott and Tom and Jack Chalmers worked with him. Between the four of them they had four forties all within a mile and a half from the beach and well timbered with medium-sized fir. An ideal show for horse logging.

The secret of skid roading is to have a general downhill but not too much or the logs will run out of control. The first step is to pick your road and grade it. Then you go back into the woods and pick out suitably sized fir

trees that will make skids. You fall them, drag them full length over the entire distance of your skid road, and then you buck them into nine foot lengths. The skids are to be dug in nine feet apart so you should have enough material. You might have to trade some skids around to get the thicker skids in the lower areas and the smaller skids on the knolls. A nine foot pole or stick can be used to space the skids. The distance between the skids being nine feet, a logger walking down a skid road steps high every third step. When he walks down the street in Vancouver you can tell he's an old skid road logger when you see him stepping high every third step.

The skids had to be peeled or flattened a bit where the logs run. They had to be dug in to hold their place and be on a grade. To accomplish this you strung out your crew, each man with his shovel along the grade, each man to a skid. Then you all stand your shovels upright and look along the tops of the shovels and if they are all the same height you all dig your skids into the required level. If your shovel was too high or too low you made an allowance for the adjustment required. When the skids are in place you can look along their tops and make further adjustments. If you had a curve in your road the skids had to be higher on the inside of the curve (the opposite to a banked highway of today) otherwise the logs being pulled one behind the other would tend to slide or roll off on the lower side. When you have an uphill grade on your road the turn must be broken - taking one or two logs at a time up the hill and making them up again on the flat or on a downhill grade.

Getting back to the actual logging, after each log was bucked it had to have a snipe chopped onto the end that was to ride up onto the skids, and a ride made on it the full length of the log. A ride can be described by comparing one particular side of the log to the running part of a sleigh runner. The ride is made by barking a strip along the log and removing any knots or bumps and in some cases hewing a flat running surface. Those old horse loggers used to say 'There is only one ride on a log', and a greenhorn would be up to his ears in trouble if he didn't find it. Some logs hooking would have to be dogged up tight to a sturdy log to keep it on its ride.

A turn for a single team would be two or three ordinary sized logs. To start a turn you would dog together say three logs (having them tight up to one another but leaving a foot or two slack in the one log) so when the chain tightened up the first log would jerk the second log into motion which would do likewise for the third log, and so on. If your team was stopped for some reason with all the chains taught an ordinary sized man could give a yank on the tight chain and the logs would pull together again and the team would then start pulling as before.

Contributed by W. Baikie, FHABC member, Campbell River.
(Part One of Three on 'Early Logging Days on Denman Island')

LOGGING MUSEUM UNDERWAY AT SILVER LAKE

The first phase of a logging and forestry museum at the Silver Lake Forest Resource Education Centre near Peachland got underway in early September. The museum is being built by the Canadian Forestry Association of British Columbia. Regional Manager for the CFA, Chic Gray, said "The museum will highlight logging methods from the horse logging area to the present." Displays will be indoors and out, and will include forest protection equipment, artifacts, and pictures. The outside machinery displays will be housed in shed type buildings and will be open to the public.

Committee chairman Bob Lind of Princeton said "Silver Lake is a natural location for a forestry museum.... We plan to set up displays that will show what old blacksmith shops looked like, a typical fire lookout tower complete with radio, fire finder, etc."

Artifacts will be accepted on an 'on loan' basis and will have signs noting who owns it. A museum is an ongoing project, and at the present time the committee is collecting equipment from throughout the area. At the recent B.C. Independent Logging Association convention in Vernon a 1932 crawler tractor was donated along with a number of old hand tools, a vintage two-man chain saw, and a fire pump.

This will be the only logging museum of its type in the Interior and the directors are excited about the response already received. Committee members looking for artifacts to be donated or loaned to the museum are Neil Hallisey, Kelowna; Frank Pearce and Al McDonald, Penticton; Bill Coulter, Armstrong; Ralph Johnston, Kamloops; and Bob Lind, Princeton. Donated material need not be in working order but should be complete. The committee can arrange for transportation to move large items. The public is encouraged to donate old logging and forestry artifacts, be they large or small, and may phone the Canadian Forestry Association office in Kelowna at 860-6410 for information, or write them at 2417 Highway 97 North, Kelowna, B.C. V1X 4J2.

(Adapted from 'The Progress', Rutland, B.C. - September 8, 1982 issue)

oo0oo

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

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

oo0oo