

British Columbia



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THE COLONY OF VANCOUVER ISLAND - TIMBER ALLOCATION POLICY

While a Council was appointed in August 1851 to enact legislation in the Colony of Vancouver's Island (original spelling), no attempt was made to establish a Legislature elected wholly, or in part, by the settlers themselves. No doubt, one of the prime reasons for the delay was the fact that there were only forty-three persons in the Colony with the property qualifications that enabled them to vote.

Elections were finally held in 1856 culminating in the Opening of the House of Assembly for the Colony of Vancouver's Island on August 12, 1856.

The following are excerpts from Governor Douglas' address to the Assembly:

"The history and actual position of this Colony are marked by many other remarkable circumstances. Remote from every other British settlement, with its commerce trammelled and met by restrictive duties, on every side, its trade and resources remain undeveloped.

"Self supporting and defraying all the expenses of its own Government, it presents a striking contrast to every other Colony in the British Empire, and like the native pines of its storm beaten promontories it has acquired a slow but hardy growth."

Governor Douglas' reference to the undeveloped resources did not translate into any discussion of the timber resources until October, 1862:

Friday, the 31st day of October, 1862:

"Dr. Tolmie gave notice of the following resolution.

"That in consideration of the extensive forests of valuable timber growing on Vancouver Island, of the safe commodious and easily accessible harbours contiguous thereto, and of the general ignorance prevailing abroad of this attractive field for the investment of Capital in Saw-Mills - Be it resolved that His Excellency the Governor be respectfully solicited by proclamation to order that grants of timbered land be made to parties establishing Saw-Mills thereon."

Wednesday, the 19th day of November, 1862:

"The consideration of Dr. Tolmie's resolution with reference to the extensive forests of timber on Vancouver Island and grants of land being made to parties establishing saw mills thereon was brought on.

"Resolution referred to Committee of the Whole."

Wednesday, the 26th day of November, 1862:

"With reference to Dr. Tolmie's Resolution the Committee agreed That in consideration of the extensive forests of valuable timber growing on Vancouver Island and of the safe commodious and easily accessible harbours contiguous to these, and of the general ignorance prevailing abroad of the existence of this attractive field for the investment of capital in Saw Mills - Be it resolved that His Excellency the Governor be respectfully solicited by Proclamation to order that licences be granted to parties establishing Saw Mills in Vancouver Island to cut timber on unsold and unpre-empted land."

(Comment: We have seen the first legislative steps to develop a policy for the allocation of British Columbia's timber resources in a fair and equitable manner - a challenge faced by all Provincial Governments to the present day.)

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

[Part Three of Three on 'Colonial Legislatures of British Columbia and their Forest Legislation (1851-1871)]

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EARLY LOGGING DAYS ON DENMAN ISLAND

Back to horse logging again. In laying out a show the roads have to be arranged so the trees are felled and the logs bucked and then placed on the skid road with the minimum amount of work. Sometimes a tree can be felled closely paralleling the road such that when bucked, sniped, and a ride put on

them they can be rolled easily onto the skid road. Other times a short spur can be swamped out and hand skids used. It was a man-sized job to handle these hand skids. They were five or six inches thick peeled pole 15 or 20 feet long (similar to the Scottish caber) and used as rollers or skids. Old Jack Scott the hooktender was noted for his ability to handle and place these poles so when the rigging was set the team went ahead and the log would slide or roll right onto the skid road.

While the trip was away to the beach the fallers, hooker, and the swamper would be busy getting the next logs ready. They usually did not fall ahead but would work on one tree at a time and swamp out so the team had room to manoeuvre.

Men learn from experience. They say a logger is the most ingenious and practical of any worker. Sometimes they have to learn the hard way such as when my Dad built what was to be a rollway. There was a 60 or 70 foot high bank about 150 feet back from high tide. He had it figured that in placing boom stick sized skids six or eight feet apart along this high bank and out towards the beach, adding other skids across a little flat distance where the slope became steeper, the logs would gain enough momentum on the steep part to carry themselves all the way to the beach. However, he overlooked one principle - the taper of the log.

That one miscalculation came near to terminating the career of the Baikie family as loggers before it got well started. No way would that rollway work. The butt end of the log would gain so much on the small end before it even got across the rollway that the log would drop down between the rollway skids. My Dad being a young Orkney Islander and a bit determined and bull headed fought that haywire rollway all one season. Nearly every day after hours he would be down there with his team fighting logs out of that rollway. He nearly gave up and quit logging. He finally went back along the high bank about 1500 feet and built a sidehill road down the hill to the dump. The hill was too steep for skids so he just dragged the logs on the ground and onto the skids again at the bottom. This system worked a lot better and he carried on there until he finished the obtainable timber. They used Gilchrist jacks at the dump to roll the logs from the sloping skid road down the short rollway onto the beach and on the water when the tide was in.

The rigging used in the woods was block and tackles and manila rope - wire rope came in later. Logs had to be rolled or dragged and it was up to the hooktender to set the rigging to his advantage. They used Luffs and Whips and other combination block and tackle holds as the occasion warranted.

Several years later (1922 I think - after I had been working for Comox Logging) I took some time off to help my Dad log a small claim he had on the west side of Denman. He had paid \$800 for a team of Clydesdale horses - a fine looking team but they had been badly spoiled as far as taking a good pull was concerned. It being my first experience logging with horses we had quite a time breaking in. My Dad and I had spent six weeks with mattock and shovel digging out that road - work which could now be done in a day with a bulldozer. We built the skidroad and started to log, this is how I became familiar with how to log with horses. We did all the things and used all tools, equipment, and rigging that my Dad had learned to use 20 odd years prior.

My Dad used to say that all we had to do to make her pay was to get 1000 feet a day per man and 2000 feet for the horses. I doubt if they can do that well today. In 1922 logs were selling for \$12 a thousand and wages were \$4 per day. I went back working for Comox Logging when the claim was finished. In 1934 when my brothers and I had finished our shinglebolting on the B.S. & W. show at Union Bay and were given the fir to log we borrowed our Dad's team of horses and tried a little skidroad logging. The skidroad was already in as we had been using sleighs to haul the shingle bolts out to the steel. Again we found out the hard way as our Dad did when he tried to use the rollway - we found out that in no way can you load a log on a shingle bolt sleigh. In the first place the sleigh won't stay put and besides with it being swampy and brushy ground we couldn't take the team off the grade to get where they could roll the log onto the sleigh. The last straw that terminated this experience was the horses getting loose and running down the track and onto a trestle. One of them managed to break a leg and thus ended the horse logging.

Actually this was a blessing in disguise. Having a logging show with no equipment to log with, we had to venture into going into debt. We acquired an old 9 by 10 steam donkey set of drums. Roy Davis rustled us a truck engine and Edwards put it all together and we had a gas donkey for \$500. We extended the steel into the timber and we were logging. We already had the old "Humdergen" - this contraption came with the shingle bolt contract. Originally built and used to haul logs by Hilton and Bambrick who had a short railroad show at Little River, Lloyd Ryan resurrected it and brought it to Union Bay to haul shingle bolts. The Humdergen was composed of two sets of boxcar wheels bolted to a 10 by 20 foot timber frame with a wooden deck and a truck bunk just ahead of the rear wheels. A drive chain connected the sprockets on the wheel axles so she drove on all wheels, another sprocket and drive chain was connected to the rear end of a Fordston power unit. The trailer was another set of wheels and bunk connected to the Humdergen with a piece of railway steel. The braking system was something unique. The front wheels had a regular boxcar brake set up which the driver could control by turning the wheel and winding up a chain. Then we had a cable running all the way back to the trailer - to apply the brake on the trailer the driver had to leave his seat, cross over to the other side of the machine, and pull a big lever which had a ratchet which would hold the required tension. The whole log hauling system cost \$500.

All of this had little to do with horse skidroad logging except that if we had not gotten involved in this particular job at Union Bay (which happened to be a shingle bolt show using a skid road and horses) we might never have made a start at owning our own show, haywire as it was.

Several years ago at a Salmon Festival in Campbell River Harper, Jack, and I with the help of Horsey Calan and Norman Tipper brought in a team of heavy horses along with a driver and put on a display of horse logging. We actually built a skid road, put a ride on the logs, greased the skids, dogged them together, and pulled them down the skid road.

Contributed by W. Baikie, FHABC member, Campbell River.

(Part Three of Three on 'Early Logging Days on Denman Island')

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings and best wishes to the membership. Elsewhere you will receive notice of the details of our FIRST ANNUAL MEETING to be held in Duncan in May. We chose Duncan for these reasons - firstly because of the Forest Museum itself, which effectively depicts logging and sawmilling history; and secondly because Duncan is readily accessible from all Vancouver Island communities; and thirdly because the Vancouver Island Chamber of Commerce promised to provide good weather.

A little bit of history is in order. About a year ago on March 29, 1982 several well-known members of the forest community met in Vancouver and agreed to establish the Forest History Association of British Columbia. The primary objectives were to preserve physical items, to record the impressions of the senior members of the forest community, and to publish the British Columbia Forest History Newsletter.

Since then we have published four issues of the Newsletter, held five Executive meetings, incorporated the Association under the Societies Act, established a Manuscript Advisory Committee, held a seminar on oral history techniques, and debated the various objectives of the Association.

We have wrestled with finances - a favourite pastime of everyone these days. An affiliated group of retired Professional Foresters applied for and received a federal New Horizons grant of \$3500 to assist in taping the recollections of retired foresters and loggers. The Association of British Columbia Professional Foresters has also agreed to support this oral history project.

These funds are of course allocated to specific projects and cannot be used to finance the preparation and distribution of the Newsletter, or our administrative costs. We need your support for these two items. So your Executive urges you to renew your membership - still a nominal \$5.00. If you renew we will still send you the Newsletter - if you send more than \$5.00 we will accept that too.

On behalf of the Executive, thank you for your support and your continued interest. Our forests have provided a rich and fulfilling life for all of us. We can do our part by helping to preserve the forest history and leave an historical legacy which can inspire future generations.

Please help us in any way that you can. See you in Duncan.

Sincerely,

A.V. (Bill) Backman

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MANUSCRIPT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This Committee is composed of specialists from the fields of historical research and archives, many of whom are also members of the Forest History Association of B.C. The terms of reference of the Committee have been established as follows:

- a) to formulate recommendations relating to the collection of forest-related manuscripts for the FHABC Executive,
- b) to develop a provincial network for the collection of forest-related manuscripts,
- c) to coordinate the collection of these manuscripts and to facilitate their deposition in suitable archival institutions,
- d) to foster cooperation among archival institutions to acquire and preserve forest history materials,
- e) to encourage companies, unions, and other forest-related organizations to establish archives and records programs or to enhance ones already in operation, and
- f) to increase awareness of proper conservation practices and archival standards for the preservation of manuscripts and artifacts.

The Committee recommends that:

- established archives be relied upon for the deposition of material,
- where material will remain in a local museum or archives that a security copy be made and deposited with one of the province's major archival institutions,
- local museums and archives be encouraged to upgrade their facilities and conservation where necessary to meet professional standards,
- the Committee itself should maintain a master file of contacts of individuals, groups, and companies with manuscripts and records of interest,
- the Committee work towards the establishment of a Union List of Manuscripts and records currently held by all archives and museums in the province,
- the following categories of forest-related institutions be established for the purpose of organizing collection activities:
 - large scale forest corporations
 - smaller companies
 - sawmills
 - pulpmills
 - minor forest product producers (poles, piles, Christmas trees, etc)
 - supporting industries
 - unions related to forest industries
 - individual's and family private papers of persons participating in forest-related activities,
- the above be organized by these geographic areas: North Coast and Atlin; Central Coast; Vancouver Island; Greater Vancouver; Fraser Valley; and the Northern and Southern Interior,

- the Committee work in conjunction with the established archival institutions of the province in the acquisition, allocation, and deposition of these historical materials, and
- the FHABC Executive establish an oral history program and to apply for funds from available sources to operate it.

Further details may be obtained from the Committee chairman: Mr. Reuben Ware, Archivist - Manuscripts and Government Records Division, Provincial Archives of B.C., Legislative Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4. Phone (604) 387-6671 or 387-1801.

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OTHER NEWS

The six murals depicting historical logging scenes which now enhance downtown Chemainus will be joined this summer by several others created by well-known artists. The Chemainus Mural Festival 1983 will see 8 to 10 artists invited to put their brushes to work this July.

The community is to be involved as well, billeting the artists and attending painting demonstrations. The schedule calls for all murals to be completed by July 27, with prizes for the best three to be awarded three days later. From July 29 to 31 the visiting artists will hold an indoor exhibition and sale of their work. The festival is to officially open on July 30 with special entertainment.

(Adapted from the "Cowichan Leader" of January 6, 1983)

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With the closing of Western Forest Industries Ltd. at Honeymoon Bay on Vancouver Island a large and varied collection of historical material has been turned over to the province. The Provincial Museum received approximately 300 items ranging from a small Sumner steam engine to work clothes and a large collection of machinery catalogues, books, and pamphlets. The Provincial Archives acquired about 120 cartons of correspondence, financial statements, working papers, forestry charts and workbooks, building and machinery plans, and numerous maps.

Thanks to FHABC member B. Volkers of Lake Cowichan for the above two items.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wilmer H. Gold, well known freelance photographer, is busy writing an illustrated book on "Logging as it Was," featuring logging photos of a bygone age (1860's - 1950) as well as stories and poems relating thereto.

He travelled the length and breadth of Vancouver Island by car, camper, and boat picturing the logging shows, sawmills, and virgin forest. In search of beauty he hiked to Cape Scott, the Forbidden Plateau area, the west coast, and finally settled in the Cowichan Lake area.

Mr. Gold can be contacted at 8380 Sa-Seen-0s, Youbou, B.C. V0R 3E0. Phone (604) 745-3750.

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The Forest History Society will be hosting an international symposium on forest history this coming fall. The two day inter-congress meeting of the Forest History Group of the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) will convene in Portland, Oregon on October 18-19 in conjunction with the national convention of the Society of American Foresters (October 16-20) and the annual meeting of the Forest History Society (October 21). The IUFRO and FHS events will be held at the Western Forestry Center.

The broadly defined historical theme of sustained yield forestry will be emphasized for papers and sessions, with the symposium proceedings being published in an inexpensive format in early 1984. Sixty-two paper proposals from or concerning thirty nations are currently being screened. Following the two days of paper sessions on October 18 and 19 there will be a field trip to the Tillamook State Forest on October 20.

Proposals for papers and other inquiries should be directed to the Chairman of the Program Committee:

Dr. Harold K. Steen
Executive Director
Forest History Society
109 Coral Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060
U.S.A.

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

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

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