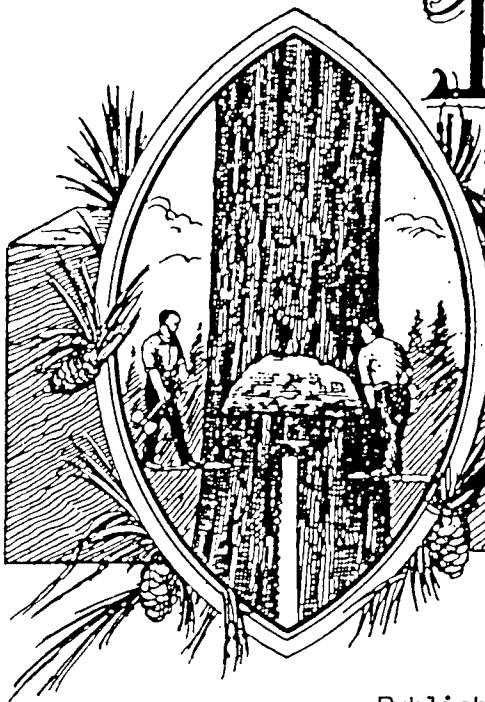


# British Columbia



## FOREST HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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February, 1984

### FOREST SERVICE DEDICATES COWICHAN LAKE COOKHOUSE AS HERITAGE BUILDING

On June 25th, 1983 approximately 75 people gathered in the cookhouse of the Ministry of Forests' Research Station at Cowichan Lake. They were there to attend a dedication ceremony which would declare the old cookhouse a Forest Service heritage building. The cookhouse has earned this honour through continuous operation since the mid-1930's. The closing of many logging camp cookhouses on Vancouver Island in recent years has left the Forest Service cookhouse at Cowichan Lake a lone survivor of its kind.

For the festive occasion the cookhouse building had been given a facelift in the form of a new shake roof, as well as new paint inside and out. Some useful equipment from company cookhouses of the past had been donated, and the walls in the dining area were decorated with old photographs showing cookhouse scenes from bygone days.

History shows that a research station had been in operation on the shore of Cowichan Lake for five years when, during the depression in 1934, the Forest Service established a camp for young men as part of a relief program. This program, called "Young Men's Training; Forestry Plan," provided jobs for approximately 75 men at a time. During their first summer they built a cookhouse and some cabins to sleep in. Detailed accounts of all expenses incurred during the construction of these buildings reveals interesting information about material costs in those days.

Later, when war broke out, the place was converted to a conscientious objectors camp. These people were the main users of the camp until 1942 when snag fallers and tree planters moved in. This marked the start of an extensive reforestation program which would continue in the area for the next 25 years. During that time major sections of land such as Skutz Falls,

Cowichan, Robertson River, Sutton Creek, and Hillcrest Co. lands were reforested. The camp and cookhouse were the centre for the work crews of this program. In 1956, to keep up with the times, the aging cookhouse facility was rebuilt on its present site.

In 1970 the Forest Service planting program in the area was completed. Since this time the camp and cookhouse have been managed by Research Branch and are used mainly as a training centre for the Ministry of Forests and other government departments.

Attending the dedication ceremony were representatives from the Ministry of Forests, headed by the Chief Forester Bill Young, who unveiled a bronze plaque. In addition, most forest companies with Vancouver Island interests were represented by their Chief Foresters. Present also were spokesmen for the Forest History Association of B.C. as well as other local groups. Finally, there were a number of invited people who had been involved with the development of this camp or had worked there during its early years.

It is certain that the camp and cookhouse have been the focal point at the Research Station by providing services to workers not only in reforestation and research but also in other fields of forestry which can be carried out with the station as a base.

Provided by Ingemar Karlsson, Cowichan Lake Research Station, Ministry of Forests and a FHABC member.

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#### ORAL HISTORY AND FOREST HISTORY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The first-hand knowledge of British Columbians about forestry and the forest industry is of great value in the discovery of the province's forest history. Through oral history techniques much of this knowledge can become available to the public.

Oral history is a method of gathering and preserving the spoken word. It usually takes the form of a tape-recorded interview with a knowledgeable person. Recollections thus recorded add to the written and photographic record and enlarge our understanding of the past.

Once the decision to use oral history methods is made many questions arise. Who should I interview? How do I record the interview? What should I do with the material when it has been recorded?

A good starting point in planning an oral history project, small or large, would be to consult one of the general works listed below. In addition, the Sound and Moving Images Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia can offer invaluable assistance. This division houses a large collection of recorded interviews, many of which deal with aspects of forest history. Its staff can offer guidance, especially at the early stages of oral history investigations when proper planning and training are important.

Deciding who to interview is an important beginning step. Names will often come forward quickly through informal networks of friends, professional organizations, trade unions, and companies. It is also important to advertise an oral history project publicly so that you don't miss those who may have fallen out of touch.

The choice of how to record the interview is also important. Cassette tape recorders are commonly used. When possible, get together with the person you intend to interview before you bring along the tape recorder. Such a meeting will help to set your subject at ease and allow him or her the opportunity to express any questions or reservations. The tape recording should be made with as much clarity as possible.

Thought should be given at the outset to what will be done with the original material you collect. People who grant interviews may be very concerned about what will happen to the tapes. You should be able to address such questions clearly as a tape recording of an interview about forest history in British Columbia is an important document. Some people may decline requests for interviews from others interested in forest history because "I've done that already." Give thought to preserving tapes in a manner that is useful to others.

This has been a very brief introduction to oral history and forest history in B.C. For more information on undertaking an oral history project the following references are suggested:

A Guide to Aural History Research. Sound and Moving Images  
Division, Provincial Archives of B.C. (1976)

The Tape Recorded Interview. Edward D. Ives (Knoxville: University of  
Tennessee Press) 1980.

Oral History for the Local Historical Society. Willa K. Baum (Nashville:  
American Association for State and Local History) 1971.

And as an example of the use of oral history in British Columbia forest history:

First Growth: The Story of British Columbia Forest Products Ltd. Sue  
Baptie (Vancouver: J.J. Douglas) 1975.

The Sound and Moving Images Division of the Provincial Archives of B.C. can be contacted at:

Sound and Moving Images Division  
Provincial Archives of B.C.  
Legislative Buildings  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8V 1X4

Provided by FHABC member Peter W. Chapman of Waterloo, Ontario. Mr. Chapman edited two oral histories for the Sound Heritage series of the Provincial Archives of B.C.: "Navigating the Coast: A History of the Union Steamship Company" and "Where the Lardeau River flows."

## ANNOUNCEMENT

The second annual general meeting of the Forest History Association of British Columbia will take place on Saturday May 12, 1984 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM in Campbell River. Details will be forthcoming in the next newsletter along with a reservation form for the luncheon and a form for payment of dues for fiscal year 1984-1985. Please plan to attend and mark the date on your calendar now.

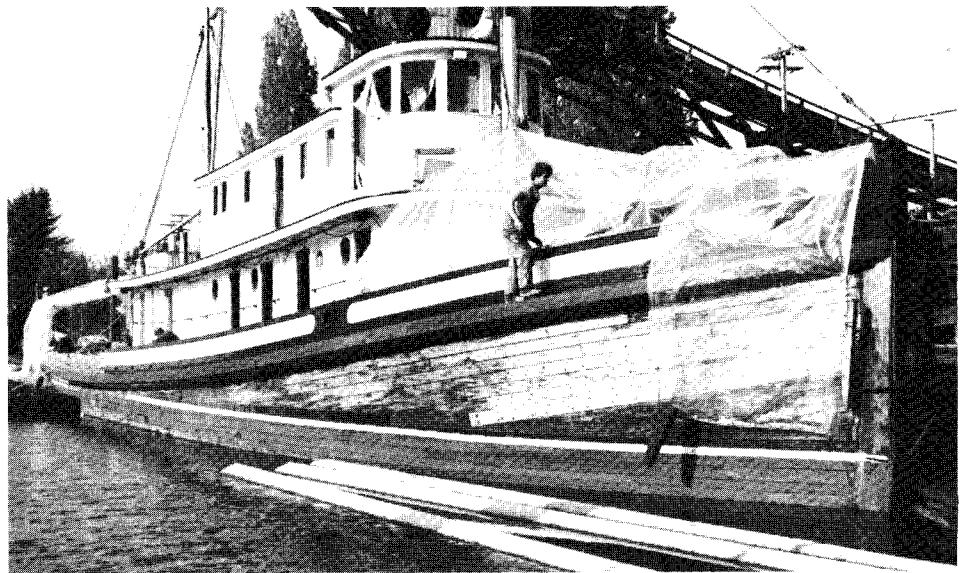
## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Davis, Richard C. (editor) 1983. Encyclopedia of American forest and conservation history. Macmillan Publishing Co., New York. Vols. 1 & 2, 871 p. total.

Marchak, Patricia. 1983. Green gold: the forest industry in British Columbia. University of British Columbia Press, 330-6344 Memorial Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W5. 480 p. \$45.00

Richmond, Hector Allan. 1983. Forever green, the story of one of Canada's foremost foresters. Oolichan Books, Lantzville, B.C. 203 p. \$9.95

Swift, Jamie. 1983. Out and run: the assault on Canada's forests. Between the Lines, 427 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario. 283 p. \$22.95 hard., \$12.95 paper.



From "Canfor News"  
December 1983 issue.  
Vol. 11 No. 6

### They're sprucing up a piece of seagoing history

**Vancouver** — Moored behind Eburne's No. 3 mill the past few months, the oldest tugboat on Canada's west coast has been getting a new lease on life. The Ivanhoe was built in 1907 at False Creek and spent most of her long and distinguished career towing logs for Kingcome Navigation until being retired in 1971. She was known as BC's busiest and most reliable towboat in her day. Now a group of people including Eburne maintenance manager Bill Hamilton have formed a heritage foundation to restore the wooden-hulled Ivanhoe to her formerly handsome state. Canfor contributed the worksite, which is quiet and fully serviced with power, water and air hoses. The governments of Canada and BC and a long list of companies and individuals have supported the project, which should be completed by the new year. After that, says Bill, the refurbished tug will be expected to support herself through charters and tours, and will be quartered part of the time as a "live exhibit" at BC's new Maritime Museum.

# A true bull story

## A believe-it-or-not incident with a team of oxen retold by logger Joe Thomson

A Joe Thomson Story as told by W. W. Baikie

ALONG about 1903-4 the Taylor Milling Co. were logging at Fanny Bay and most of the local loggers of that time worked there.

Archie Prichard from Comox was running the camp. Joe Thomson was swamping and Bob Surgenor and Jimmy Gilmore were the fallers and Archie Prichard was doing his own Bull skinning.

They used a skidroad and a two team of oxen. Anyway, they got in their first boom section of choice fir and a little tug hooked onto the boom and headed for the mill at Victoria. The route was straight down the coast line which we know now to be an impossible one. A southeaster came up when they were off Qualicum Beach and the logs were blown in on the beach. The whole logging crew was dispatched to Qualicum to round up these logs again.

Joe says there never was a stranger looking caravan. The two team of oxen hitched to the wagon, which was loaded with hay, grub, blankets, tents, because they were going to camp on the job. Behind the wagon they hooked on a stone boat with the cook stove, buckets, dishes, and the chinese cook.

They made out fine till they came to a wooden bridge, white with frost, over a stream and "Old Brandy", the head bull, refused to cross the bridge. After trying every trick in the book someone had to go all the way back to Fanny Bay to get Dave Cowie and his team of horses. When the horses arrived, they

actually slid those Bulls one by one across the bridge on their behinds.

The whole safari had to be hooked up again and proceeded on to Qualicum. The beach combing turned out to be a complete failure. They worried those logs into the water with the Bulls. But it was wintertime and the wind would come up every night and blow them back up on the beach again.

After wearing the bark off the logs, using up all the hay and grub, and with the men on the verge of rebellion with working and sleeping in wet clothes (even the cook chased Jimmy Gilmore up the beach with the butcher knife), they finally called the whole thing off and went back to Fanny Bay to log some new logs.

Okay, you wise guys. What happened to the logs?

Well, Percy Smith and Fairbairn from Denman Island took a beach combing contract to pick up the logs the next summer, a more sensible time to beach-comb.

How did they get those Bulls back over the bridge?

Well, believe it or not, those critters were so darn fed up they swam back to Fanny Bay.

And if you want this story told to you first hand take Joe for a ride past Qualicum sometime and he'll tell it to you with all the appropriate language. And Joe says if you don't believe him, ask Bob Surgenor who is still living at Grantham because he was there. Bob might also tell you what he did with the maul after he got through dogging up the turn.

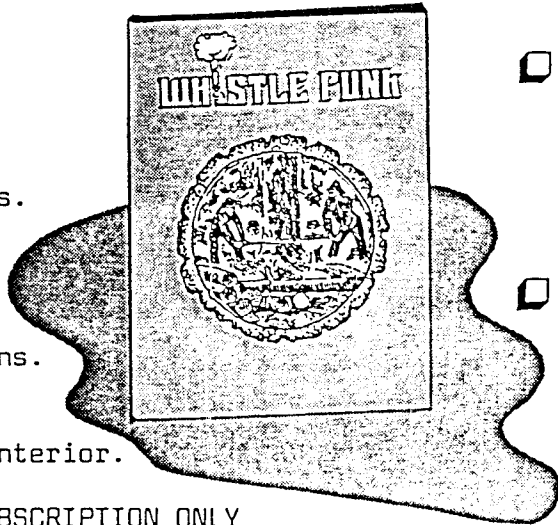
NEW B.C. FOREST HISTORY MAGAZINE ANNOUNCED

# NEW!

## B.C. Forest History Magazine

-quarterly-

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- \*camps, then and now.
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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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