

British Columbia



Published by the Forest History Association of British Columbia

No. Fourteen Victoria, British Columbia April, 1987

RECONNAISSANCE IN SOUTH CASSIAR - 1913

By A.M.O. GOLD

Introduction

In accordance with instructions, I left Victoria on the 9th of May to accompany Mr. Swannell on his survey of the South Cassiar District, and to report on forest conditions in the area to be covered by his survey.

I arrived in Fort St. James on the 27th May and we arranged for pack horses, boats and provisions. We were delayed at Fort St. James a couple of days by the Indians, who refused to go up the lakes.

The party, consisting of 7 men, managed to get off on the 30th May with two boats hired from the Hudson Bay Company at Fort St. James and a collapsible canvas-boat brought up by Mr. Swannell.

Mr. Swannell had to fill in some gaps on his last year's survey, at Trembleur Lake and we stopped at the old Steamboat Landing on this Lake for a few days, during which time I did some cruising up to Flemming Lake, but the time allowed me there was too short to permit of any thorough investigation and I can only say about the country in the vicinity of these lakes that it is fairly flat, possesses good soil suitable for agricultural purposes, and that the southern side of Trembleur Lake is well timbered, while the northern side is practically burned. The timber on the southern side averages up to 6000 ft. B.M. to the acre, but a party of Indians and a prospector whom I met, reported that further back from the lake there were several sq. miles of land covered with big timber averaging up to 20,000 ft B.M. to the acre. I am, however, unable to place any reliance upon the statement of these people, as I did not in my later work find any case of land in this district so heavily timbered.

After we left Trembleur Lake we met at the outlet of Tatchi River, Forest Guard Frank Stephens, who in response to a wire from me to the Chief Forester had obtained permission from the District Forester at Ft. George, Mr. Marvin, to assist us for 4 or 5 weeks, pending the arrival of our two packers and pack horses over the Manson Creek trail.

We now proceeded to Tacla Lakes, where I separated from Mr. Swannell. While he triangulated the Northern Arm of Tacla Lake, I went up the North-Western Arm of the Lake, along with my assistant Mr. Kastberg and Mr. Stephens and began cruising and contour mapping of the country in the neighbourhood of the lake, as no forest report of this country existed, as it was surveyed by Mr. Swannell last year before J.B. Mitchell's arrival.

Commencing at Bivouac Creek I continued northwards and after 3 weeks work came back to the Narrows, where I took up the work on the northwestern Arm of the Lake. I worked north from the point where Mr. J.B. Mitchell in 1912 had started to work southwards and eastwards.

On the 8th July we rejoined Mr. Swannell's party and Mr. Stephens left for Fort St. James.

I should like to say here that Mr. Stephens, who is an excellent woodsman, had done us great service.

Mr. Swannell and I then traversed the trail from Tacla Lake to Babine Lake and, on our return to Tacla Lake, 6 of our pack horses had arrived, 1 pack horse having died on the way.

After giving the horses a couple of days rest, we started along the Fall River trail to Old Hogem, but the trail, owing to windfalls and mudholes, was in so bad a condition that when we came to Diver Lake, we were able to clear but two miles a day, and we had to abandon this trip. Mr. Swannell now took over the traversing of the trail and with his assistant, Mr. Copley, proceeded to Old Hogem, while I, with the rest of the party and the horses went back to the Old Landing on Tacla Lake from which point I proceeded over the Tom Creek trail, making a traverse as we went along.

On the 3rd of July our party met Mr. Swannell again at Silver Lake and from where, I returned to Tacla Lake to finish my work there, while Mr. Swannell continued the traverse to Manson Creek.

Upon Mr. Swannell's return to Tacla Lake, I was through with my work in the country tributary to the lake and as Mr. Copley had finished the triangulation of the lake the whole party now proceeded along the Driftwood River on the so called Ingenika Trail to the Omineca River, and from there over the mounted Police trail to Ft. Grahame, where we arrived on the 16th September, having traversed the trail all the way from Tacla Lake.

The trip from Tacla Lake to Ft. Grahame took 35 days, averaging 4 1/2 miles a day. This slow progress was caused by our having only 6 packhorses, an unavoidable deficiency as we had tried to get more but none was available.

The shortage of horses compelled us to make double trips the whole way. Our difficulty in this respect had however a compensating advantage. Every second day when the horses went back for the provision, we had ample time to climb the mountain, triangulate and sketch the country as well as cruise and estimate the timber.

A traverse has been made of the trail from West Landing Tacla Lake to Babine Lake, 32 miles from East Landing Tacla Lake to Old Hogem 38 miles, from Old Landing Tacla Lake to the Manson Creek trail 18 miles and from Bulkley House Tacla Lake to Ft. Graham 155 miles. Altogether 278 miles of trail were traversed.

In most places the trails were in a very poor condition, making it necessary to clear them from windfalls, bridge the creeks and corduroy the crossings of the swamps. At Ft. Graham, owing to the deficiency of horses which rendered impossible a double trip back to Ft. St. James before the winter set in, I left Mr. Swannell, who took the horses to Ft. St. James over the Mesilinka River trail and Manson Creek Trail, while I and my assistant went down the Finlay River and up the Parsnip and Pack River via McLeod Lake to Ft. St. James, where we arrived the 15th October after a 4 1/2 months stay in the woods.

It was my intention to work in the valleys of the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers, but in Ft. Graham I was informed by Mr. Ross, Hudson Bay Co. Manager, that Forest ranger Townsend of Ft. George had been working there all summer, consequently I did not work in these valleys which I may mention at this point, contain some of the finest country in the interior of B.C. The land in Finlay Valley is especially good and the area which is about 3 - 5 miles wide and 300 miles long is suitable for agricultural purposes. It is level and the soil is of a very good quality, consisting of a silty loam. The few white people living there informed me that night frost occurred but did not do much harm. Mr. Ross, manager of the H.B. Co. at Ft. Graham, and Mr. Hammit, manager of H.B. Co. at Ft. McLeod showed me some vegetables which in my opinion would take the first prize anywhere.

The Parsnip Valley is not so wide nor so level as the Finlay Valley and the soil does not appear to be of so good a quality. Both the valleys are heavily timbered in patches, as large areas have been burned, but are fairly well covered with a vigorous 60 - 70 year old growth, consisting mostly of spruce and poplar suitable for tie timber and pulpwood. The Finlay River is navigable for 65 miles from its junction with the Parsnip. At this 65 mile point there is a canyon with some large boulders and if these boulders were blown up the river would be navigable for about 200 miles more. With a little clearing of the Parsnip and the Pack River, navigation would be possible via McLeod Lake to Giscombe Portage.

The boundary lines of the different forest types are found by intersection from two or more known points, the contour lines by aneroid barometer and by sketching. The figures regarding the quantity of timber were obtained by taking sample acres in strips from the valley bottom to the line of tree growth and considering the large area covered, are as accurate as time would allow, sample lots of the different forest types being taken throughout the country. The quantity of timber and the forest conditions of the country in the interior of the area explored were obtained partly from local information derived from prospectors and Indians, and partly from my own observations from the various mountain tops.

It would have been very interesting and quite worth while taking a trip into this interior country, which appears to be heavily timbered, but time did not permit. The Fall was approaching and with the snow coming on in October and feed getting scarcer for the horses we considered it prudent to make our way to Ft. St. James where as formerly stated, we arrived on 15th October. Mr. Swannell arrived with the horses a few days later.

The above was extracted from a report found in the Ministry of Forests and Lands Library in Victoria. The spelling and grammar have not been altered. It appears that Mr. Gold and others like him were sent forth to ascertain the general nature and timber resources of various parts of B.C. soon after the B.C. Forest Branch was established in 1912.

The report totals 86 pages and describes also access and communication; topography; mountain ranges and passes; valleys; waterways, including the suitability of rivers for navigation and log-driving; climate; conditions of settlement; merchantable timber; burned over land; and plans for forest protection in the area (two alternatives) involving the location of fire wardens, patrol routes, lookout sites, and phone line construction.

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Gillis, R. Peter and Thomas Roach. 1986. Lost initiatives: Canada's forest industries, forest policy and forest conservation. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut. \$39.95 (US)
- Perrault, E.G. 1985. Wood and water - the story of Seaboard Lumber and Shipping. Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., Vancouver, B.C. 320 p. \$24.95 (CDN)
- Richmond, Hector A. 1986. Forest entomology: from pack horse to helicopter. Pest Management Report Number 8. Ministry of Forests and Lands, Victoria, B.C. 44 p. (available at no charge from Dr. R.F. DeBoo, Manager, Pest Management Section, Protection Branch, Ministry of Forests and Lands, 1450 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3E7).

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FORESTRY-RELATED THESES AND ESSAYS - ADDITIONS

Further to the lists published previously, in Newsletters Numbers 8 (April, 1984) and 9 (November, 1984), here are some additional theses:

- Booth, Janet Katharine. 1985. The life and times of Martin Grainger. B.S.F. Thesis, Faculty of Forestry, U.B.C. v + 62 p.
- Cairney, Daniel William. 1935. The effect of some economic disturbances on the lumber trade of Washington and British Columbia. M.Sc. in Forestry, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.
- Cranston, Robert Brooks. 1952. The forests and forest industries of British Columbia. M.F. Thesis, College of Forestry, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

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COTTA'S PREFACE

If the inhabitants of Germany should leave their country it would be all grown up with woods within a century. Since there would be nobody to use them, the soil would be enriched and the woods would not only increase in size, but in productive power. If, however, the people returned again and made just as large drafts as before for wood, litter and pasturage, the woodlands, even with the best forest management, would again not only be reduced in size, but also become less fertile.

Forests form and thrive best where there are no people - and hence no forestry, and those are perfectly justified who say: Formerly we had no forestry science and enough wood; now we have that science, but no wood.

One could say with the same justice: Those people are healthier who do not need a physician than those who do. But it would not follow that the physicians are to be blamed for the diseases. There would be no physicians if there were no diseases, and no forestry science without deficiency in wood supplies. This science is only a child of necessity or need, and need is therefore its natural concomitant; hence the phrase should be: We have now a forestry science because we have a dearth of wood.

Forestry, however, does not offer any nostrums and can do nothing against the course of nature. The celebrated physician Verdey said: "The good physician lets people die; the poor one kills them." With the same right one can say the good forester allows the most perfect forests to become less so; the poor one spoils them. That is to say, just as the good physician cannot hinder that men die because that is the course of nature, so the best forester cannot hinder that the forests, which came to us from past times, become less now they are being utilized.

Germany formerly contained immense, perfect, most fertile forests. But the large forests have become small, the fertile have become sterile. Each generation of man has seen a smaller generation of wood. Here and there we admire still the giant oaks and firs, which grew up without any care, while we are perfectly persuaded that we shall never in the same places be able, with any art or care, to reproduce similar trees. The grandsons of those giant trees show the signs of threatening death before they have attained one quarter of the volume which the old ones contained, and no art nor science can produce on the forest soil which has become less fertile, such forests as are here and there still being cut down.

The good forester, then, also, allows the forest to become less, but only where it cannot be helped; the poor forester, on the other hand, spoils them everywhere.

Without utilization, the forest soil improves constantly; if used in orderly manner it remains in a natural equilibrium; if used faultily it becomes poorer. The good forester takes the highest yield from the forest without deteriorating the soil, the poor one neither obtains this yield nor preserves the fertility of the soil.

It is hardly credible how much one can benefit or damage by the kind of management; the true forestry science contains, therefore, much more than those think, who know only its generalities.

Thirty years ago, I prided myself on knowing forestry science well. Had I not grown up with it and in addition had learned it in the universities! Since then I have not lacked the opportunity for increasing my knowledge in many directions, but during this long period I have come to see very clearly how little I know of the depths of the science, and to learn that this science has by no means reached that point which many believe to have been passed.

Many perhaps may be in the condition in which I was thirty years ago; may they in the same manner be cured of their conceit! Forestry is based on the knowledge of nature; the deeper we penetrate its secrets, the deeper the depths before us. What the light of an oil lamp makes visible is easily overlooked; many more things we can see by torch light, but infinitely more in the sun light. The lighter it grows around us, the more unknown things become apparent, and it is a sure sign of shallowness, if anybody believes he knows it all.

Our foresters can still be divided into empiricists and scientists, rarely are both united.

What the former considers sufficient in a forest management is easily learned, and the systematic teachings of the other are soon memorized. But in practice the art of the first stands to a thorough forestry science in the same relation as the quack medicine to the true pharmacopia; and the other often does not know the forest for the many trees. Things look very differently in the forest from what they do in books; the learned man stands therefore, frequently, left by his learning and at the same time without the bold decision of the empiricist.

Three principal causes exist why forestry is still so backward; first, the long time which wood needs for its development; second, the great variety of sites on which it grows; thirdly, the fact that the forester who practices much writes but little, and he who writes much practices but little.

The long development period causes that something is considered good and prescribed as such which is good only for a time, and later becomes detrimental to the forest management. The second fact causes that what many declare good or bad, proves, good or bad only in certain places. The third fact brings it about that that the best experiences die with the man who made them, and that many entirely one-sided experiences are copied by the merely literary forester so often that they finally stand as articles of faith which nobody dares to gainsay, no matter how one-sided or in error they may be.

Heinrich Cotta, Forester

Tharandt, December 21, 1816

Preface from "Anweisung zum Waldbau" first published in 1817.

This version was published in the first issue of Forestry Quarterly, dated October 1902 and issued by the Society of American Foresters. The thoughts and observations are as valid today as they were in 1817 and 1902 - for any forested nation.

REPORT ON THIRD GENERAL MEETING

The third general meeting of the Forest History Association of B.C. was held on Saturday April 12, 1986 at the University Research Forest, Maple Ridge, B.C. The group met at 11:30 AM at the gates and made its way to the Loon Lake camp for a lunch served at noon.

The general meeting followed with:

- approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
- the President's report
- the Treasurer's report
- the Newsletter Editor's report
- an excellent presentation of the history of the UBC Research Forest by Peter Saunders (Silviculturist) and Don Munro (Director)
- the Nominations Committee report and election of officers
- discussion of
 - recent forest history work in B.C. and acquisitions of the Special Collections Division, UBC Library
 - forest history museum development work at Powell River
 - the upcoming Forest History Society symposium in October 1986

Directors appointed for a two year term were:

John Cuthbert	Victoria
Pit Desjardins	Vancouver
Doug Little	Prince George
John Murray	Cranbrook
Edo Nyland	Victoria
John Parminter	Victoria
Clay Perry	Vancouver
Jack Thirgood	Vancouver

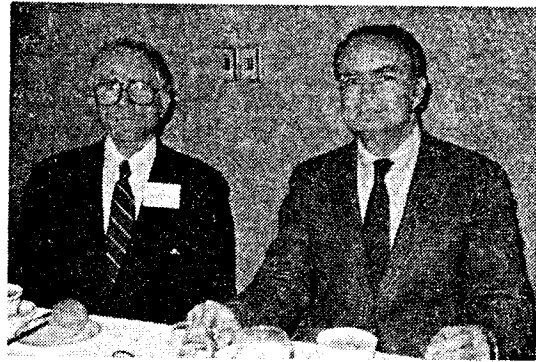
Directors appointed for a one year term were:

Bill Backman	Vancouver
Wallace Baikie	Campbell River
George Brandak	Vancouver
Gerry Burch	Vancouver
Jim Collins	Vancouver
Tom Wright	Vancouver
Bill Young	Victoria

FHS Annual Meeting and Conference in Vancouver

The "Forests and the 49th Parallel" conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, ran from Wednesday afternoon, 8 October 1986, through noon on the following Saturday. It was cosponsored by the Forest History Society and the Canadian Studies Program at Duke University. In addition to hearing two dozen thoughtful papers and several panels comparing the forest history of the United States and Canada, participants attended a Canadian Studies reception and an FHS luncheon that featured a talk by former EPA administrator **William D. Ruckelshaus**.

At the FHS Awards Banquet, **Arthur R. M. Lower** of Kingston, Ontario, was named Fellow "for his many years of outstanding, sustained contributions to research, writing, and teaching relating to forest history." Among his many works are *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada* (1936), *The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest* (1938), and *Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the Timber Trade, 1763-1867* (1973). The Hidy and Blegen awards, for the best articles on forest and conservation history in the *Journal of Forest History* and any other journal in 1985, were also formally announced: as reported in the fall *Cruiser*, **Richard White** was recognized for an article in the *Pacific Historical Review* and **Richard A. Baker** for his article in *JFH*. Following the awards, FHS vice president **Herbert I. Winer** offered "Some Suggestions for Forest Historians."



FHS president Richard G. Lillard and former EPA administrator William D. Ruckelshaus, who was a featured luncheon speaker during the Vancouver conference.

The annual business meeting followed the conference and included committee reports, a spirited debate over administrative policies, and a status report on the archival addition to Durham headquarters. Following adjournment, the group hiked from Hotel Georgia to the British Columbian Pavilion at Expo '86 for a reception hosted by Weyerhaeuser Canada.



Marion Salinger, of the Canadian Studies Program at Duke University, and Graeme Wynn, FHS Board member and geography professor at the University of British Columbia, outside the conference room at Hotel Georgia in Vancouver.

Reprinted from "The Cruiser" - Newsletter of the Forest History Society, Durham, North Carolina. Winter 1986-87. Vol. 9 No. 4 p.1

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This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia and is distributed 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 and Lands, 1450 Government Street, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3E7.

Membership in the Association is \$4.00 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