

British Columbia



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WHAT IS A FOREST?

By Frank A. Waugh

It would be an easy matter -- more easy than profitable -- to trace the history of forestry through early times, and especially through Roman law, to the present time. For us the main interest lies in English common law and in the usage of the mother tongue in respect to forests. In this field a few authoritative citations will be worth while. Let the first be from Townley, a recent English writer on forestry. He says:

"But the etymology of the word Forest has no connection with woods or woodland; it means a waste or large open space. The legal definition of a forest which prevailed from pre-Norman days until the days of Charles II is, according to Manwood's Laws of the Forest, first published in 1598:

'A certain territorie of woody grounds and fruitfull pasture, priviledged for wild beastts and foules of Forest Chase and Warren to rest and abide in, in the safe protection of the King, for his princely delight and pleasure, which territorie of ground, so priviledged, is meered and bounded with irremouable markes, meres, and boundaries, wether knowen by matter of record or else by prescription.'

This work by Manwood I have not seen, but I have noted another interesting extract from it in Gilpin, as follows:

"In those days it was a matter of little ceremony either to make or to enlarge a forest. Thus saith the law:

'It is allowed to our sovereign lord the king, in respect of his continual care and labour for the preservation of the whole realm, among other privileges, this prerogative, -- to have his places of recreation and pastime wheresoever he will appoint. For as it is at the liberty and pleasure of his grace to reserve the wild beasts and the game to himself for his only delight and pleasure, so he may also, at his will and pleasure, make a forest for them to abide in.'

One of the most illuminating discussions of early forest law in England is given by Cox, from whom one is tempted to make extended extracts. Here is one paragraph:

"(William) the Conqueror acquired, by right of conquest, not only the demesne lands of the Confessor and of the nobles who had opposed him, but also all the rights of the chase over great woodland or open stretches of both cultivated and uncultivated ground, where royal hunting rights had previously been exercised by Saxon or Danish kings. With William and his immediate successors the chase was a passion, and hence a code of singularly harsh and burdensome 'forest' laws soon came into operation. The Conqueror took advantage of the autocratic position secured to him and his followers by their military success, to carry out 'afforestation' not only over the restricted areas that had been the hunting grounds of his predecessors on the throne, but over almost all the old folkland that remained unenclosed. The term 'forest,' that had been long in like use on parts of the Continent, was then introduced into England, and made to embrace vast districts, which included woodlands and wild wastes of moor, as well as patches of cultivated land. Within these afforested tracts, he decreed that the right of hunting was vested solely in the Crown, and could only be exercised by the king, or by those who were specially privileged under however monstrous and harsh in operation, possessed a rough logical basis. It was argued that all such animals were bona vacantia, or ownerless property, and hence pertained to the king; that hunting was essentially the pastime or 'game' of kings; and that therefore the right of exercising the chase, or taking all kinds of beasts of venery, belonged solely to the king."

The old English idea of the forest is summed up in the following definition:

"Perhaps the following definition is as accurate a one as can be given in a few words, or what used to be understood by the English term 'forest' in Norman, Plantagenet, and early Tudor days. A forest was a portion of territory consisting of extensive waste lands, and including a certain amount of both woodland and pasture, circumscribed by defined metes and bounds, within which the right of hunting was reserved exclusively to the king, and which was subject to a special code of laws administered by local as well as central ministers."

These citations might be multiplied into the hundreds. Without exception all examinations of the records will show that the early idea of a forest was that of a game cover, a place where wild game was harbored, especially for the recreation of royal sportsmen. In short recreation is the very oldest forest utility and historically the only one.

In this country the lay members have been trying with great earnestness and futility to draw a distinction between forests and parks on precisely this line. That is, the common newspaper mind has been trying to think of a forest as a stand of timber destined for lumber and of a park as a tract used for recreation. The most serious difficulty with these definitions lies in the fact that enormous areas of woodland are used for both purposes. Also both definitions go to pieces when examined in the light of historic usage.

Extracted from the Journal of Forestry, March 1922.
Vol. XX, No. 3, pp. 209-214.

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FOREST HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF B.C. ACTIVITIES AND OTHER NEWS

A letter was received from the Mayor of the District of Surrey, Robert J. Bose, thanking the FHABC for its brief entitled "Future Land Use Options for the Green Timbers Area."

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On April 12, 1988 the President participated on a panel at the Northern Mixedwood Symposium. The title of the presentation was: "A History of Policies and Progress in the Utilization of Deciduous Species in British Columbia's Northern Interior."

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The FHABC's Letter to the editor concerning the heritage value of B.C.'s first forest plantation was printed on April 25, 1988 in the Vancouver Sun.

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During National Forestry Week, from May 2-7, 1988, the newsletter editor (John Parminter) and the Treasurer (Edo Nyland) organized and maintained a forest history and parks display in one of Victoria's shopping malls as part of a larger display.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
By W. (Bill) Young

Forest History Appreciation

It is obvious to me that British Columbians are becoming increasingly interested in hearing and learning more of the province's forest history. Most importantly, it is this appreciation of roots, traditions, and history of forest activities in British Columbia that can nurture a sense of pride in those involved in the forest sector and in all British Columbians. While we must continuously strive to make advances in all aspects of forest management and activities, how can we plan the future without fully understanding and building on the past?

Newsletter

Over the past months the Editor and I have attempted to solicit newsletter contributions from FHABC members. The result has generally been lots of promises but little action! If the FHABC is to be successful, members must become more active. Each member has some story that should be recorded and such "forest history vignettes" should be sent directly to the Editor.

The length of each vignette should be 500-700 words in length but longer articles are also welcome and could readily be divided into two or more parts for publication. Look for these vignettes in future issues:

- the discovery of the "Golden Spruce" of the Queen Charlotte Islands
- the first forest fertilization project
- the beginning of the B.C. Forest Service Ranger School
at Green Timbers, Surrey in 1946
- the Moneta affair
- the 1947 Mesachie Lake cruising school
- the logging railway at Eagle Lake
- a posting to Lower Post, B.C.

Public Speaking Opportunities

I'm convinced that we can readily increase the numerous opportunities available to address groups and organizations on the forest history theme. While I have a small collection, I believe that our association needs a modest forest history slide library. Presentations on forest history can be either exceedingly dull or exceedingly interesting. The use of pertinent slides can usually tip the balance in the latter direction. Any suggestions?

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REFORESTATION - THE FIRST DAY
By W. (Bill) Young

In the last FHABC newsletter I wrote about the first man-made forest in British Columbia, the Green Timbers plantation. Now, I'd like to tell you a little about the first day of that historic reforestation project on March 15, 1930.

On that date, a group of dignitaries gathered at Green Timbers to witness the planting of the first trees in B.C.'s first reforestation project. It was decided that those who wished could plant one or more trees to commemorate that day. In all, some 121 trees were planted by the dignitaries present. Surprisingly, this special and historic area, along with the surviving dominant trees, remains intact - some sixty years later.

Let's turn back the pages of time to March 15, 1930 and see who was involved:

Trees # 6-11: planted by Mr. M. Manson, MLA. He was the Conservative member representing the Mackenzie electoral district. The March 16, 1930 edition of the Vancouver Daily Province reported that "Mr. Manson made a speech in Chinook telling of the importance to B.C. of the establishment of the plantation."

Tree # 2: planted by Mr. J.W. Berry, MLA. John Walter Berry was the Conservative member representing the Delta electoral district.

Tree # 25: planted by Mrs. J.W. Berry.

Trees # 20, 21, & 30: planted by Colonel N. Spencer, MLA. He was one of the Conservative members representing the city of Vancouver.

Trees # 3 and 38: planted by Mr. V. Harbord Harbord, representing the Vancouver Daily Province.

Trees # 23, 24, 44, 45, 66, 67, 88, & 89: planted by Mr. Peter Z. Caverhill. He was Chief Forester of the B.C. Forest Branch from 1920 until his untimely death on December 8, 1935.

Trees # 4, 19, 26, 41, 48, 63, & 70: planted by Mr. R.C. Sinclair, a member of the B.C. Forest Branch. He retired some two decades later as Assistant Chief Forester of British Columbia. His career included appointments as District Forester in the Prince Rupert and Vancouver forest districts.

Trees # 16 & 29: planted by Mr. Charles Wilkinson, Secretary-Manager of the Canadian Forestry Association of British Columbia.

Trees # 37, 53, 57 & 77: planted by Mr. A.E. Pickford, who was superintendent of the Green Timbers forest nursery which was established in 1930.

Trees # 51, 59, 78, and 80: planted by Mr. Percy M. Barr. He was a growth and yield researcher in the B.C. Forest Branch's fledgling research section. In 1932 he left B.C. to join the staff at the University of California and went on to become a highly-decorated veteran of World War II.

Trees # 60 & 61: planted by Mrs. Kathryn Barr.

Trees # 90 & 91: planted by Mr. Lawrence Barr, presumably a relative of Percy and Kathryn Barr.

Trees # 34 & 54: planted by Mr. Robert W. Aylett. An employee of the Forest Branch, he retired some 20 years later as ranger in the Sechelt Ranger District.

Trees # 13, 32 & 55: planted by Mr. F.M. Worthing, representing the Dominion Department of the Interior.

Trees # 49 & 71: planted by Mr. E. Walmsley. The former tree was for D. Roy Cameron and the latter for E.H. Finlayson, both of the Dominion Department of the Interior.

There were others involved in the ceremony. Some planted trees while others were named in the planting of trees. Can any readers identify the following?:

F.J. MacKenzie, T.G. Martin, E. Adams, Mrs. A.J. Christmas, G.T. Browne, E. Walmsley, J.W. Martin, Roy A. Gibson, and W.W. Cory.

Traversed by the Pacific Highway, the original Green Timbers forest was billed as the only virgin forest along 1,700 miles of highway between San Diego and Vancouver. As could be expected, there was intense controversy when the area was logged during the latter 1920's. However, I am sure that the atmosphere was positive on that historic March 15, 1930 date when those present could envision a new man-made forest that was destined to become a major esthetic and heritage asset on the lower coast.

A WINTER'S TALE

Fifty years ago the Executive of the B.C. Forest Branch was concerned about staff morale. Witness this June 12, 1935 letter sent to the Chief Forester by A.E. Parlow, District Forester at Prince Rupert.

"The building which we occupy jointly with the Public Works at Burns Lake is raised on piling about nine feet off the ground. The large open basement makes the offices too cold with any degree of comfort or efficiency during the winter. I have been in (Ranger) Wilson's office on a winter day when the ink did not thaw out sufficiently to use until nearly 11 o'clock in spite of a hot fire in the heater.

It is suggested that the foundations be straightened and strengthened and the basement walls lined inside and outside with rough lumber and filled with sawdust. If this is done, the Public Works plan to build a suitable furnace out of a oil drum and the offices should be very comfortable. They estimate the cost at \$600.00 of which they ask us to bear half. I would appreciate it if you will take this matter up with the Public Works and see if some arrangement can be made whereby these repairs and alterations can be completed before next fall."

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This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia and is distributed quarterly 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 \$5.00 yearly. Should you wish to join or obtain further information please write to the Treasurer: Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4E8. The President, Bill Young, can be reached at 6401 Conconi Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 5Z7.

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE FOREST HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Date: June 11, 1988 (Saturday)

Place: Lorax Forestry School at Green Timbers
9800 140th Street, Surrey, B.C.

Schedule:

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| 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM | - | Executive Meeting |
| 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM | - | Annual General Meeting |
| 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM | - | Light lunch and showing of
historic forestry films |
| 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM | - | A series of short tours:
1) Commemorative plantations
(established March 15, 1930)
2) Arboretum (established 1930)
3) Forest nursery (established 1930)
4) Forestry school (established 1946) |

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NOTE:

In order to arrange for the luncheon catering, please advise if you will attend. Spouses and guests are more than welcome. A nominal charge for the lunch is expected. Please contact one of the following:

Vancouver	Bill Backman	732-3075
Victoria	Bill Young	652-3002
	John Parminter	Office: 387-8736 Home: 381-7698

Or notify by mail to:

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