

JACK LESLIE OF CLAM BAY

In 1953 69-year old Jack Leslie retired to his small cabin at Clam Bay (just NW of Blubber Bay) to begin two major projects - penning his autobiography and building sailing ship models recalling images from his adventurous past.

In 1898, leaving school at 13, young Jack suffered through British Royal Navy training on the *Warspite* docked at Woolwich, England. The harsh discipline and overt cruelty led to his desertion in Halifax in 1904.

Luckily the chronicle of his adventures has survived in *The Fanny Adams* - the 171 page handwritten account of his life travelling the world at the turn of the century. Jack entrusted his memoirs to his friend, Marilyn (Johnson) Lister - a young Blubber Bay school teacher who would visit Jack for afternoon tea and colourful tales of the sea.

Thanks to Marilyn for keeping the manuscript safe and donating it to the Heritage Society. Many thanks to Brenda Rairie for her tremendous effort in tracking down, collating, editing and typing to make the transcript of *The Fanny Adams* part of the museum's collection.

However, the most impressive remembrance of Jack Leslie has to be his model sailing ship collection. It is rumoured that Jack constructed at least 40 models using a variety of locally-available materials: driftwood for hulls, broomsticks for masts, thread spools for capstans, sewing pins for nails, etc.

Thanks to Brenda and Dave Rairie, ten of Jack's ships have been painstakingly cleaned and refurbished and are now proudly on display at the Texada Museum in an elegant cabinet crafted by Dave. Featured are the infamous *HMS Bounty* and *Treasure Island's Hispaniola* which won first and second prizes at the PNE in 1961. One marvels at the patience and persistence needed to fashion the intricate details. Thanks also to the Martiscas for their help.



When Jack died in 1968 he left behind an impressive legacy. The ship display (with a copy of *The Fanny Adams*) is now a special feature of our museum. Perhaps we will be fortunate to locate other Jack Leslie models to add to the collection in the future.