

TEXADA'S SOUTH END - PART ONE

Two hours down a steep, rough road lies the often-overlooked south end of Texada which has an interesting history of its own.

Blasted by winter storms, this remote area was homesteaded in the early 1900's by a Mr George Whitacker and a Mr Fulton. Remains of Whitacker's fences and wood-lined irrigation ditches have been discovered by Jimmy Dougan, current resident.

Dougan and sister, Nancy Dougan Bennett, have recently shared with the Texada Heritage Society their memories of growing up at the "other end".

Jimmy has explored the south end extensively. The old mine shafts, blacksmith forge, anvil, and box of dynamite he's discovered are evidence of early prospectors working the area before 1900.

Around that time the extensive, colourful marble deposits at *Henderson Bay* were quarried by an Andy Henderson and used in building the Victoria Legislature buildings and Vancouver's Carnegie Library.

In 1941 when Jimmy's family moved into *Anderson Bay* the abandoned quarry and narrow-gauge railroad with carts used to transport rock slabs were still evident.

Dougan and Sons Logging of Cobble Hill (founded by grandfather Abraham) started to log the area. They built a large camp of about a dozen buildings with quarters for 15 Chinese fallers, a log dump and booming grounds (photo).

Two years later a slash fire quickened by a sudden southeast wind created a "...raging inferno [which] took everything," writes Dougan.

Although all their equipment and production were destroyed the company downsized but survived to join with their relatives, Cox Brothers Logging of Cowichan, to establish a second camp nearby.

In 1953 Jimmy's and Nancy's dad, Charlie, roughed out and flattened an airstrip which welcomed the first airplane to ever land on Texada - a Cessna two-seater piloted by Harry McCracken. The airstrip provided unprecedented access to the "outside world" for the small community. (More on life in the camps next month)

When logging ended in 1959 the community at Anderson Bay dwindled over time but, ten years later, Jimmy Dougan returned to his "special, lonely, enchanted" south end and still lives today in nearby Whitacker Cove.



Thanks to Jimmy and Nancy for sharing their memories.