

OLD-TIME LOGGING ON TEXADA

The story of early logging on Texada is the story of coastal BC.

Initially hand-loggers with only an axe, a “hand fiddle” (crosscut saw), Gilchrist jack and the Law of Gravity tackled Texada’s steep slopes. Logs were manoeuvred downhill to the chuck with great effort.

Later teams of horses or oxen hauled logs over pig fat greased skid roads to chutes which plunged the logs down to the booming area below.

Bill Young remembered, as a boy, watching the Sumner brothers operating near Van Anda. He eagerly awaited the huge watery explosion when an extra-speedy log would overshoot the outside boomsticks and careen wildly into the ocean.

At that time Chinese crews were logging and cutting 4-foot blocks of cordwood by hand to fuel mine and sawmill boilers as well as the ever-hungry limekilns.

When “Steamboat Bob” retired his steam tug, *Wood Nymph*, Bill Young and Bill Kirkness rivalled for the business of towing log booms to the sawmills.

The Van Anda sawmill had operated for 20 years in Cumberland before it was dismantled in 1899 and shipped to Texada along with George McLeod who reconstructed it for the Carter brothers at the mouth of the creek.

Over the years improvements in technology led to more efficiency. Donkey engines replaced horse teams and the A-frame-mounted, gas-powered dragsaw made cutting blocks easier.

In 1910 Walter Planta and Jack Abercrombie logged the Lagoon using oxen but graduated to rubber-wheeled wagons on a tote road when they took over the Little brothers’ operations in 1927.



Logging started in Gillies Bay in the early 1900’s and, by 1920, the Alberta Logging Company was the largest on the island. A steam donkey dragged logs down a trough formed by laying three logs alongside each other. The sets of three were butted end-to-end creating a skid road more than half a mile long!

The Klein brothers were still using horses in 1923 near Pocahontas Bay. Their huge Clydesdales (largest weighed 2400 lb) were famous as was the legendary strength of Charlie Klein himself.

Chainsaws, bulldozers and truck hauling changed the style of logging in later years.

Today old springboard notches cut high in mossy stumps remind us of the early days.