(MORE) TEXADA HISTORICAL FUN FACTS

DID YOU KNOW …..

The first forest fire lookout station in Canada (1924) was atop Mount Pocahontas. Jim McKimmie unloaded his horse cart and carried supplies up the rocky trail to the cabin, quite a feat for someone who had lost a leg in an industrial accident!

Texada's first "water taxi" (1903) was the *Wood Nymph,* a steam-driven vessel operated by an Englishman named Walter Pinnock (Steamboat Bob). It was not unusual for Walter to pull up on beaches mid-voyage to collect enough driftwood fuel to complete the trip!

The huge bulk ore carrier *MV Texada* was specially built in 1966 at the Yokohama ship yards to transport Texada's iron ore shipments to steel mills in Japan. It carried the largest cargo ever to be loaded at a BC port at that time.

Getting to Gillies Bay was not easy in the past. Travelling on the rough trail from Van Anda (later, a wagon road) took most of the day. Years later steamship travellers arrived at a simple float anchored in the bay, followed by a rowboat ride ashore. Disembarking was not a pleasant event in stormy weather!

In the 1960's much of Van Anda was perpetually covered in fine white dust. The "Whiterock Mill" across from the government wharf was the culprit. The historic smelter site (1898 - 1919) had become a crushing plant producing rock for stucco.

Rail lines on Texada were once a common thing. Marble Bay tramway (1/2 km to Sturt Bay) rivalled Cornell Mines' 2 km rail line from Emily Lake to the Van Anda dock. BC Cement later installed almost 5 km of rail line at its Blubber Bay operations. In the 1950's Texada Mines used an extensive underground rail network as well.

Everyone woke up to a surprise one morning in December, 1956, when they discovered that Texada Mines' 500-foot wharf and loading dock were missing! The pilings rested on slippery tailings mixed with clay and the tidal pressure of a 60mph gale was enough to push it under in the night.

Peter Lock

Texada Island Heritage Society