

EARLY DAYS OF LOGGING IN THE PENTICTON & PRINCETON AREA

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My father, George Broderick Sr., and I first logged in the Penticton area for the Penticton Sawmills, then owned and operated by Hugh Leir. In the Fall and Winter of 1920-21 at Glenfir, about twelve miles east of Penticton we stayed in the old railway section house. The two Grant brothers, Russell and Eric, or Ike as he was known, were the fallers. Archie Johnson, now of Midway, B.C., was the contractor and his wife did the cooking. Some evenings or on weekends we had some great games of Five Hundred.

Logs were hauled by horse-drawn sloops on the snow. Every weekend we loaded the logs out on flat cars for the mill at Penticton. Logs were all loaded by hand with canthooks and in order to avoid rolling logs up hill we loaded from high-drop skidways 12 feet above the rails to put an eight-foot load on a car. These were all short logs – eight to twenty feet. Putting about eight thousand feet on a 36-foot car, logs were loaded in two decks. As you loaded the first deck you dropped the twenty footers to the far side and on the second deck you dropped them on the near side making room so the logs would not overhang the car ends as the hand brakes must be clear – at least most of the time.

The next fall, logs were decked along the main track nearer Penticton and every few months the company, Penticton Sawmills, would hire a train crew and bring most of the mill crew as well to load these skidways out. The train crew would spot the cars at the various skidways and then pick them up when loaded. This crew would have to clear the track if a passenger or other freight train was due.

Fred DeMuth had a small sawmill at Millford, about 2 ½ miles west of Thirsk, which he brought in during the construction of the Kettle Valley Railway, to cut ties and lumber. This old mill site is at the west end of the Summerland dam and may now be partly covered with water.

In 1922, after the timber was all cut out at Millford, DeMuth moved the mill to Altamont about 2 miles west of Kirton and went into partnership with my father and I, forming the DeMuth-Broderick Lumber Company. We worked at Altamont for about two years.

In these early days we had no motive power other than horses and when they came to an adverse grade they just stopped. On a good road and for a short haul a four-horse team with sleighs on snow or ice might move two thousand feet up a four per cent grade. After going about two hundred feet you would have to stop and “wind” the horses and it would be very likely that they would not or could not start again; so, you would have to either lighten the load or get more horses.

When the timber was logged out at Altamont we dissolved partnership with DeMuth and moved to Jura, about 12 miles east of Princeton where my father and the Penticton Sawmills obtained quite a large stand of yellow (Ponderosa) pine and fir timber. Meanwhile, DeMuth

moved his mill to a site six miles north of Princeton on the One Mile Road. This he operated under the name of DeMuth Lumber Co. Fred DeMuth's son, Otto DeMuth, became a very prominent doctor – first with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, N.Y. and then in Vancouver, B.C. (NOTE: there is a hand printed and circled number one at this spot. In handwritten notes later on, it reads: Fred DeMuth was a peculiar man when it came to money. An expenditure of fifty or one hundred dollars never bothered him but he would haggle for half a day over a nickel. He built quite a substantial residence on the northeast corner of Eckhardt and Winnipeg Streets in Penticton where he spent his retirement. (This bit by Ted Logie))

Where Dad and I were logging at Jura the timber was back a few miles from the railway track and was mostly all hauled out on snow or ice roads in winter by horses with sleighs. (NOTE: in the margin are the hand printed and circled numbers 2 and 3. In handwritten notes later on, that I assume goes with this, it reads: Before we started logging at Jura it was found necessary to bring another team of horses up from Penticton and my brother George and I were given the job. Each astride a work horse we travelled from Penticton to the logging camp, a distance of well over 30 miles, in one day. Jura was a year round logging deal and by spring there would be close to a million feet on the Landings ready for the train crews to pick up.) Here we could haul up to 3 M (million) feet per load. Some of the hills were quite steep and down grade had to be sanded. We kept one or two sand men on the roads at all times. An old Southerner by the name of "Black Sam" worked for us and drove his own outfit. One snowy morning I could see that the sanders had missed some spots and I asked Sam how he came down. "Right smart!" was his answer. This was in 1926 and just about the end of hauling with horses since trucks and cats came into use then. We used a light cat for the next 2 years. In the winter we used some of the old horse sleighs and in summer we changed to steel trucks with 12-inch tires.

We had used these steel trucks when logging for the old Canyon City Lumber Company of Creston about ten years before coming to the Okanagan from the Kootenays where my father logged the townsite that is now Creston. Canyon City Lumber Co. also owned some of the big Michigan wheels and when Hugh Leir heard of these he sent my father over to Creston to get the steel trucks and two sets of the Michigan wheels – one for the Company and one for us.

These big wheels were drawn by horses and had a slip tongue arrangement working on a half moon on the axle. In the woods you drove over and straddled the load, then put the chain around the logs ahead of centre. This chain had to be placed just right from centre depending on how steep the grade of the road was. In fact, the advantage of these wheels was that not much of a road was required since they would roll over just about anything. However, the pole would whip back and forth and could kill you or the horse if you didn't stay clear; after a few hard knocks you did. The system was that you rode one of the horses and as the team and pole moved ahead, a chain on a short lever rolled the half moons and this lifted the logs either clear of the ground or let the back ends drag and act as a brake. Then on a steep pitch with the horses not pulling, the pole would slip back and the whole load would drag – sort of automatic – we had automation then too!

One of these old sets of wheels is in Princeton; the other is in Penticton and can be seen near the old Sicamous boat on Lakeshore Drive. The steel trucks with the 12" tires must have gone to the Foundry at Allenby. There are some old frames still at the Jura campsite, but the metal is gone. We used these for two years at Jura.

About 1927-28 the Penticton Sawmills began a logging operation at Myra, 50 miles east of Penticton on the Kettle Valley Railway. They encountered problems in building roads, so we used our light cat and road grader to finish the roads before the frost. Myra is in a snow belt. No one knew how deep the snow would be so we would skid and deck most of the logs in the woods in the Fall and then if the snow was too deep to permit work, we could haul from these decks. This big block of spruce is on the Kelowna water shed so the Government strictly enforced the regulation of burning all limbs and brush. That was when I first learned how to burn green brush.

The workmen sent to us by Hugh Leir were mostly "green" immigrants. They couldn't speak English; had never worked in the woods; and knew nothing about handling tools, but they were willing to try anything and were a long way from home. We spent two winters at Myra and then returned to Jura to clean up what timber was left there.

The Penticton Sawmills manufactured box shooK during the '20's and '30's. The box shooK industry must have had a very steady influence on the economy of the Okanagan Valley during these years as there was a steady market for shooK of from 25 to 30 million fbm (feet board measure also called board feet) per year.

Dad was now getting to be a little too old for woods work, but I kept on working for another ten years, hauling logs for W.A. Clarke, Penticton; DeMuth Lumber Co., Princeton; and Summerland Box Co., Summerland. Then the bull pine seemed to be getting a little heavy so I quit the logging. Every year, when spring came and I would look over at those old pine trees, I couldn't help but feel a dreadful loneliness until I became used to a new way of making a living. I bought a small orchard and also became a third-class Steam Engineer. I worked in that capacity for Summerland Box Co. and then for Trautman-Garraway Ltd. at Peachland until my retirement in 1966.

(NOTE: the rest of the article is hand written in blue ink.) The Okanagan in the early days was full of characters and quite a number seemed to gravitate to the logging camps. One that I remember real well was Robert McNaughton, or "Ten Day Bob" as he was known throughout the district. He got this name from only working ten days in any one place. At that time anyone working for over ten days for an employer was subject to a Five Dollar Pay Roll deduction for Poll Tax. Bob used to beat this, to him, improper imposition by only putting in the maximum time and then moving on to another job. He was such a good worker he was always welcome at any logging camp. He was as cranky as sin, and although he never caused any trouble, if you were smart you left him alone.

One time when he arrived at camp I asked him where he had come from. He replied, "Oh, from up the line. I know you call me "Ten Day Bob", but this time I fooled 'em; this time I only worked nine days.

Another time Bob was rolling logs on the Landing, and a new four horse teamster was coming in with his first load. Bob watched this would-be horse skinner with a most disgruntled expression on his face. He was hollering and cussing and cracking his bull whip. Bob was disgusted, "I wouldn't let that joker drive a stick in the snow for me," he said.

The top wages for a good man was forty cents an hour, a teamster had to have his team watered and fed and ready to roll by six thirty in the morning, six days a week. On level ground only one team was needed but if the terrain was hilly, and it usually was, four horses were used.

One skinner that was always welcome in camp was Theo Prest. Theo didn't work for us steady but when he did work, he was always given the meanest horses to handle, a challenge he accepted as a matter of course. Theo could handle horses. Once he was given his usual allotment of mean ones to haul logs to the Landing. He looked them over and then drawled, "Well, they may come into the Landing four abreast, but I'll guarantee they'll all be pullin'."

Theo was a past master in the ways of the bull whip. This incentive was rarely used on the horses themselves, but an efficient driver could crack the lash between the ears of any of his horses, an explosion that sounded like the detonation of a large firecracker. This soon had even the most fractious four horse team paying attention to business and pulling in unison. I have seen Theo lift the tail feathers out of a barnyard rooster at twenty-five feet leaving the bird physically unharmed, the only damage being to his dignity, and a sorely wounded pride.

Logging was an occupation that separated the men from the boys, but you didn't necessarily judge a man's ability by his size. This was proven when Max and Wes Young, two brothers from the Maritimes, arrived in camp to work for us, each just a little over five feet tall, or short, if you like. Our crew was rather skeptical as to the amount of timber they could cut, but the Young brothers soon earned the respect of all the boys when they proved that they could cut, buck and trim three sides on an average of 12 M a day, an output comparable to two well nourished Swedes and as everyone knows these gentlemen know their way around in the bush.

(NOTE: at the end of this page is written: "Ted Logie's writing". In the left margin is "P.T.O.". On the back of this page is written: 1. Ask Jack Prest's first name & where is he now? 2. Where is West Young? (To me I would like to know if they are still alive.))