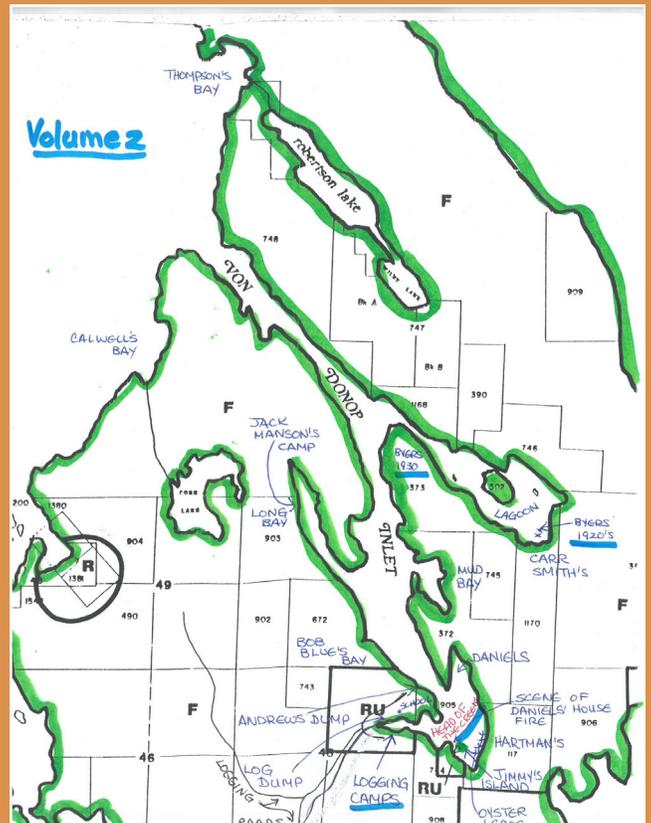


# Von Donop Creek Volume Two

Byers  
Mckenzie  
Herrewig



Cortes Island Museum and Archives



MUSEUM & ARCHIVES  
reflect imagine celebrate

# Von Donop Creek

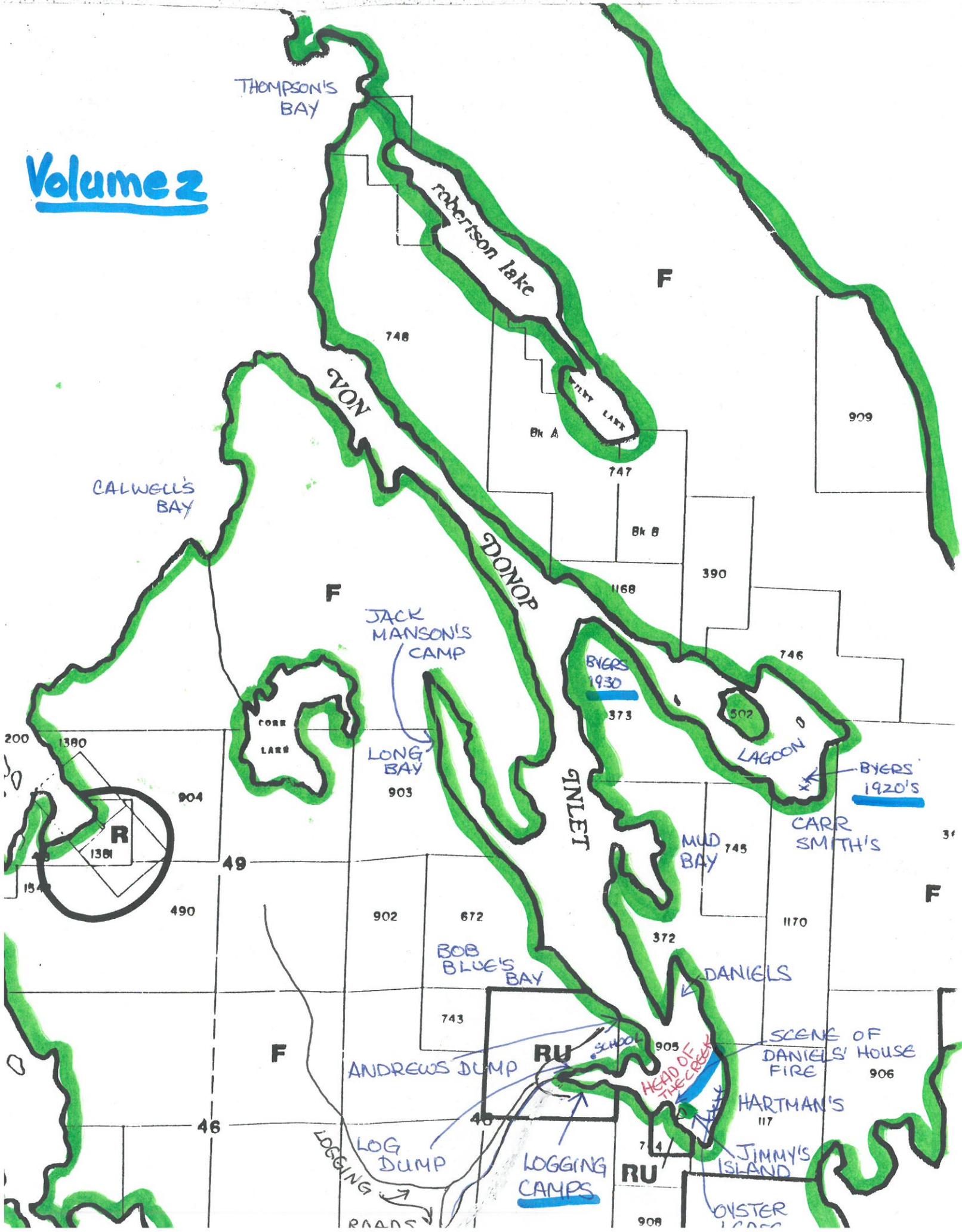
## Volume II

Byers

Mckenzie

Herrewig

# Volume 2



## **The Von Donop Creek Story**

### **Volume 2:**

The Head of the Creek  
Logging Camps

With thanks to the following people who shared their photos and stories:

Etta and Clarence Byers  
Amy (Byers) McKenzie  
Violet Herrewig  
Terry Herrewig  
Elaine McKenzie  
Doreen Thompson  
Diane Hentschel



ELMER, MAY, ANDY, BRUCE AND SHIRLEY, 1950'S.



KIDS IN THE CREEK



JULY 1 PICNIC - SMELT BAY  
EVA FREEMAN SETS OUT TO  
WIN THE LOG BUCKING CONTEST.



Etta + Clarence Byers. Spring 2001.



1942 - VISITORS AT THE BYERS' HOME  
 ARTHUR HAYES, DAUGHTER NERINE,  
 FLO MCKAY, GRANDDAUGHTER IRENE BYERS  
 GWEN CAMPBELL, FRASER CAMPBELL,  
 MARY HAYES, CLARENCE BYERS.



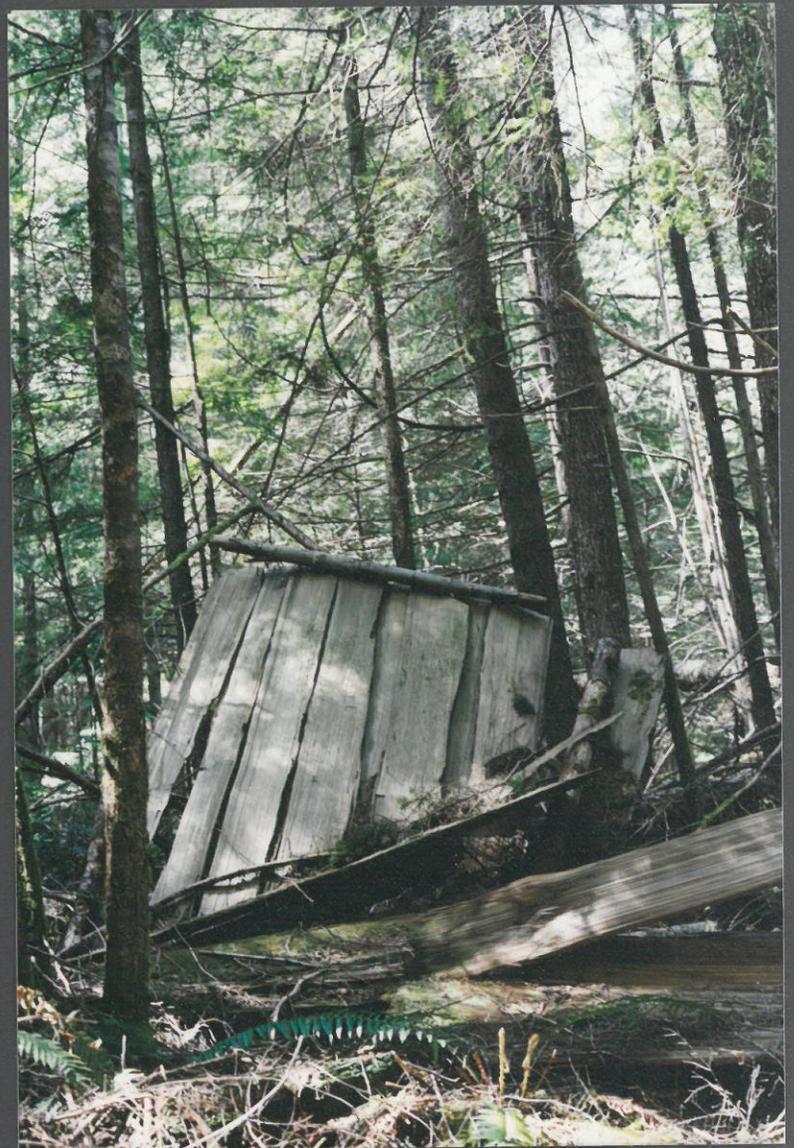
FATHER'S DAY, 1941 BACK: SCOTTY MCKENZIE, CLARENCE BYERS,  
 HENRY BYERS, KEN HANSEN. SEATED: ERVIE + FLO MCKAY (HOLDING  
 IRENE BYERS) RUTH BYERS (JUDY HANSEN) HAZEL HANSEN,  
 AMY MCKENZIE



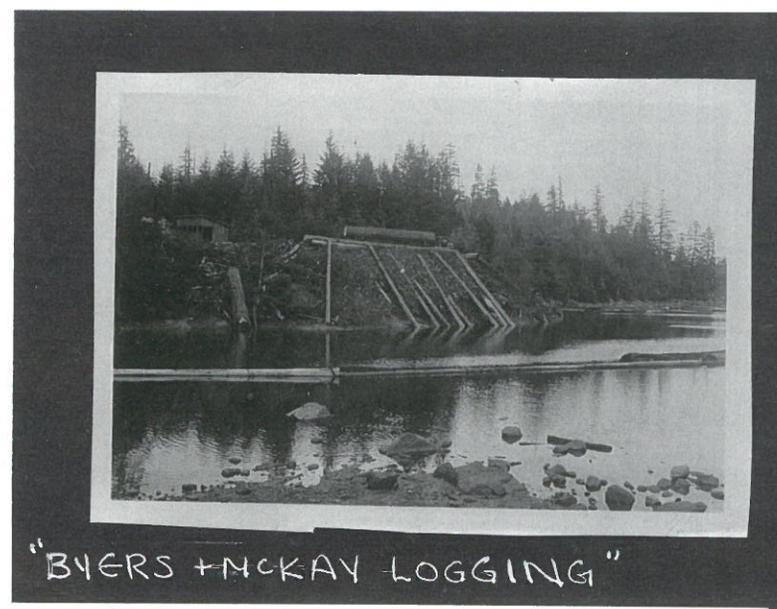
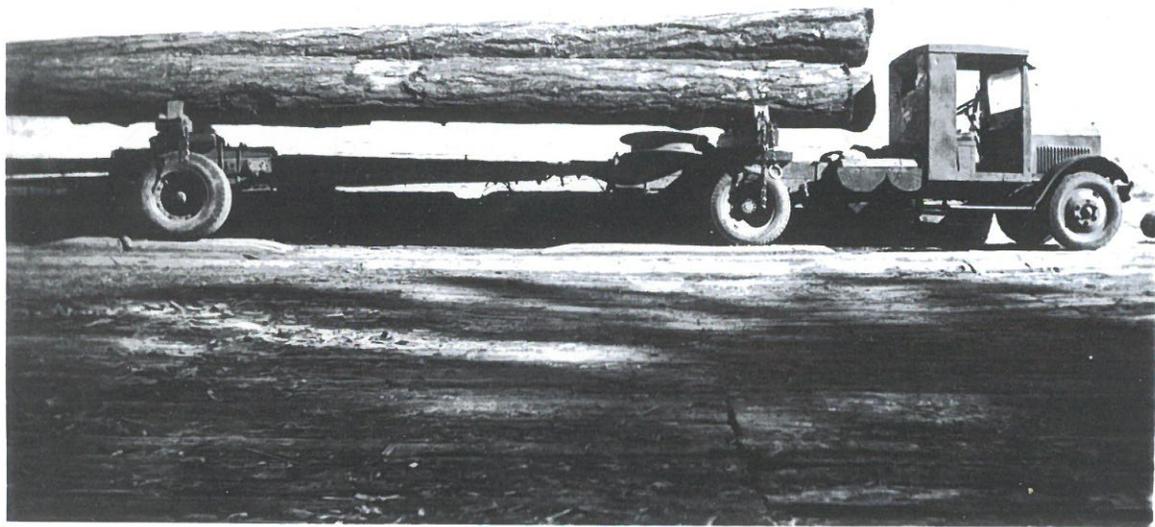
DIANNE HENTSCHEL STANDS BESIDE  
STUMP OF CEDAR TREE LOGGED OFF OF  
CARR SMITH'S PLACE, VON DONOP LAGOON,  
BY BYERS' LOGGING IN THE 1920'S.

- SPRING 2001 -



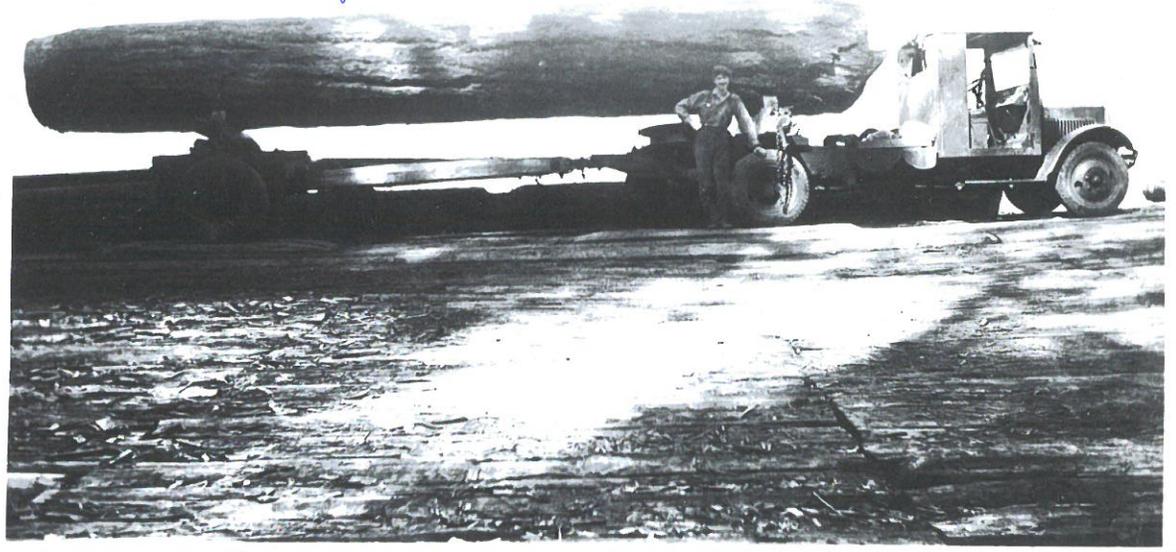


2001 - CARR SMITH'S  
HOUSE IS GONE, BITS OF SNAKE  
FENCE, A ROW OF TREES PLANTED  
ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE YARD  
AND A BROKEN-DOWN OUTHOUSE  
REMAIN.



"BYERS + MCKAY LOGGING"

At Seaford ↑  
↓





IRENE BYERS WITH  
BABY, MAY LARSON  
1942



LOUISE BYERS WITH COUSIN,  
ELAINE MCKENZIE  
1945



IRENE BYERS  
JUDY HANSEN  
LORRAINE  
BYERS  
1942



ETTA BYERS HOLDS  
BABY, LORRAINE, 1941



date: c. 1943

col. May Ellingsen

Taken in Von Donop Creek. Note the rack for filing saws in the background.

Standing: Eva and George Freeman

Back row seated: Wilfred Freeman holding Bruce Ellingsen and Sharon Herrewig on his knees, Clarence Byers holding his daughter Lorraine.

Front row seated: Elmer Ellingsen holding daughter Shirley, May Ellingsen holding son Andy, Irene Byers beside her mother Etta Byers holding her infant daughter Louise.



Mary Aldrich visiting  
grandson Clarence Byers &  
family. Von Donop 1942



Bill Sheepwash with  
Irene and Lorraine Byers  
1944



①

① BILL SHEEPWASH + FAMILY c. 1940.  
BILL PRE-EMPTED NE 1/4 SEC 45  
IN 1911. MCKAY + BYERS LOGGED IT  
AND BUILT THE LOG DUMP IN THE LATE  
THIRTIES/FORTIES.

② THE SHEEPWASH CABIN, 2001.

②





BIERS + MCKAY LOG DUMP  
SPRING 2001

B + MCK FORE 'N' AFT  
BRIDGE, SPRING 2001.

**An Interview With Clarence and Etta (McKay) Byers of Topcliff Road on Quadra Island, as told to Doreen Thompson and Dianne Hentschel, February 13, 2001.**

Both Clarence and Etta grew up on Cortes Island. Clarence remembers the very early days:

My dad, Henry Byers, his brother Andrew, and George Palmer were logging in the head of Von Donop Lagoon, on Carr Smith's place in 1925 or 26. That was when I was pretty young. They were logging huge old growth cedar. There used to be a beautiful trail through there to the bay on the Squirrel Cove side. The family was living up above Squirrel Cove where Hartman's lived later. (Now known as Stichville). My dad had the lumber for that cut down at Blubber Bay, built the road up to the housesite with a team of horses, then hauled the lumber up. George Ewart from Squirrel Cove store was a carpenter. He helped build the house. It burned down many years later when someone from that Blue Light Marina deal was living there. Dad and Uncle Andy had a camp building out in the lagoon that they'd got from Castle Falls in Teakerne Arm. My uncle got another little place for a cookhouse and eventually we all moved down there. That would be when I was about 12, around 1929 or 30 maybe.

Dave Logan's cabin was just across the lagoon behind the little island. After my dad and my uncle got through logging Carr Smith's place they went over there and logged the hillside behind Dave's place. I remember they sat the donkey on the little island out front and pulled the trees from up behind Logan's out into the lagoon. Missed his house. Logan had an oyster lease in there, those little native oysters. They were only about the size of a fifty cent piece.

Then there was Jack Harwood up along the trail to Wiley Lake. He was a bit eccentric, kind of a studious man, I think. You ever hear of squaring a circle? That was what he spent his time trying to do, he figured he pretty near had it. He had an ox and he was logging cedar poles. I can remember him bringing the poles down with the ox. He eventually shipped the old ox down to Vancouver for beef. That would be about 1925-26 when he was logging the poles in there.

The Blacks were out in the bay outside the lagoon. He was quite the old guy. Had a long beard. Their son was a forest ranger at Powell River. He wanted them to sell the timber on the place but they chose not to and a lot of people figured they just starved to death there. They were buried on the place. I remember old Mr. Black used to come through the lagoon in his rowboat on his way to the Squirrel Cove trail once in awhile.

He must have been there about a year while they logged in a little bay close by. (Then they moved out of the creek and went around to Cortes Bay).

(Etta tells most of the story of their life together in Von Donop Creek from 1939 to 45. Clarence adds details about the logging operation.)

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, our five families each with their own house on a float strung out one behind the other, were towed by the tug "Cheerful" from Seaford to Von Donop Creek in preparation for opening a new logging claim. Our float had the logging truck, a 1930 Hayes Anderson, and the converted steam donkey on it as well as the house. It was just a little house but it had a nice kitchen and a pantry that I ended up turning into a nursery, a bedroom off the living room. We paid \$65.00 for it. We got it from Squirrel Cove where it was up behind Middleton's machine shop and we got Billy Mitchell to move it down onto a float and tow it down to Seaford. He charged us \$25.00. In the other houses were Clarence's mom and dad, Henry and Ruth Byers; his sister, Amy and her husband, Scotty (Robert) McKenzie; my parents, Ervin and Florence McKay; my sister, Hazel, and her husband, Ken Hansen. It was a family affair.

Actually Ken didn't leave Seaford with the rest of us. We were down there at eight o'clock in the morning, ready to go and waiting for him. The tug was ready to go. When he didn't show up we had to leave without him. We were way up by Joyce Point when he caught up with us in a speed boat loaded to the gunwales with island produce. Ken had been out collecting sacks of spuds, carrots and farm vegetables from Uncle Johnny (Manson) and Bill Illman because he was sure we'd all starve without a garden in Von Donop Creek. We got into the Creek about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

We'd been logging in Seaford, had started horse logging and graduated to become the first truck logging show on Cortes Island. Clarence's dad, his Uncle Andrew, Clarence and my dad. When we left there Uncle Andrew had decided he was going to farm his meadow up at the top of the hill along towards Blind Creek (Cortes Bay). Now we were about to start truck logging in VDC where the roads would have to be built before we could start. The grades in Von Donop would be much better than they'd been in Seaford where the roads were so darn steep you'd wonder how they'd ever get that truck loaded with huge logs down the hill or back up. They had to plank the hill and wrap the planks with old cable for traction. Von Donop with its gradual grades all the way back to Barrett's (Blue Jay) Lake would be a piece of cake.

The day after our arrival each house was towed up into the small bay at the head of the creek where the waterfall is. Once they were in position the donkey was used to pull them off the floats and the house fronts, which were out over the water, were jacked up until they were level and propped with pilings, their backs resting on dry land. Hazel and Ken's house was up close to the waterfall. My mom's house was next to them. Amy and Scotty and Clarence's folks were a short distance away out along the shore. I wanted sunshine. We'd been at Seaford and it got no sunshine all winter. We opted for a flat spot on the sunny side of the bay—about where the school was in later years. We had to run our galvanised water pipe across the mudflat to the creek. We planted clover in a vain



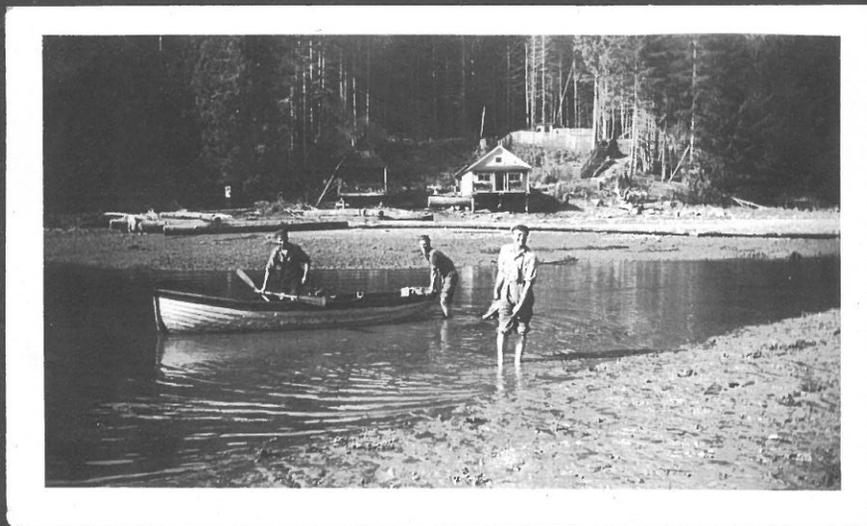
①

① BAG BOOM, FROM  
ETTA + CLARENCE  
BYER'S HOME c 1941



②

② ART HAYES,  
EVA FREEMAN,  
CLARENCE + HENRY  
BYERS, FRANK  
LARSEN, GEO. FRGEMAN,  
RUTH BYERS WITH  
GRAND-BABY LOUISE  
BYERS, MAY LARSON  
1943



③

③ KEN HANSEN, ROY DRURY, CLARENCE BYERS, HENRY +  
RUTH BYERS HOME IN BACKGROUND.

attempt to establish a lawn on solid clay. Wilf and May happened to come down from Long Bay to play cards. I said to May "What do you think of my lawn out there?" "What lawn," she said, "I didn't see any lawn." There were just a few whiskers of green.

That reminds me of a game. Nellie (Smith) Jeffery was up from her place staying for awhile and she and Clarence remembered this game they played as schoolchildren in Seaford. I'm a doubting Thomas so I didn't think it would work but I played along. It went like this. They'd hide something out in the yard. I'd be blindfolded and then they would hold their hands around my waist. They'd have to join. Then they told me to start walking, said I'd know when I came to whatever it was that they had hidden. This is crazy, I thought. I'd walk a bit then falter, then push on. All of a sudden I come to a place where I couldn't go any farther. Something was making me stop and sure enough, that's where the darn thing was hid.

The kids were pretty little all the time we were in there. They played at the usual kid things. We had a fenced backyard for them and they had good imaginations. I took them to Vancouver one time and we rode on the old streetcars. When we got home, one day I was doing the dishes and I looked out on the back porch and here was the two of them, Lorraine and Irene sitting on the back step side by side. They had bags with them. They were waiting for the streetcar.

High tide came up pretty well under the house. Louise loved the ducks. She'd pull herself up at the window and she'd watch those ducks, so excited she was. "Uppacumma duckies, Mom," she'd exclaim. "Downa go, Mom". She'd carry on like that for an hour.

We built a chicken house up behind the place and a garden over toward the log dump, which was built a little farther into the head of the bay across from the other houses.

We had a cow for awhile. Scotty would milk in the morning and I milked at night. Scotty took a notion that I wasn't giving her enough to eat and he'd throw more hay in and I'd go milk her and she'd have it all down as a bed. She was wasting it so I wouldn't feed her. So we had quite a thing going on there although we never spoke about it.

McKays and Byers made a garden closer to the log dump, by Sheepwash's cabin. They had better soil than we did, a wet spot with black loamy soil. Ours was dry.

Bill Sheepwash owned all of that property. He had pre-empted it in 1911 and built a small log cabin. He wired one wall of that cabin and studied wireless operating. He later became a wireless operator on the "Empress of Canada". He and his wife Gertie and their only child Beverley came up every summer to spend a holiday with us. He enjoyed roaming around his place, a change of pace from Vancouver.

When we were first in Von Donop we were, as Ken had feared, quite isolated from the rest of the world; but being young it all fitted into our daily living. The men were busy building logging roads, the log dump and a massive bridge across the creek above the waterfall. Since we had no roads out, we went by boat to Redonda Bay, a Union Steamship port-of-call, for groceries, and mail. We ordered enough groceries to last for several months, sent up from Malkins in Vancouver. Malkins would send the grocery bill to our log broker in Vancouver and it would be paid when the next boom sold. It was no small feat to manhandle 100-pound sacks of flour and sugar, 60-pound pails of shortening and cases of canned goods from the dock to the boat, enough to supply five families. There were 48 cans to the case of canned milk in those days. Fresh meat had to be canned. It was the only way we could keep it. Butter came in big squares, probably 50 pounds. We kept a lot of stuff in the root house.

We didn't do much hunting but we did fish. And we dug clams way down at the mouth of the lagoon. Clarence's mom and mine both liked their clams.

We had a freak run of anchovies one time. Oh my. There were fish as far as you could see. Well, Mom and I were going to get some of them. How were we going to get 'em? We needed a net. So we went out in the woods and we got a limber fir pole and bent the top around and tied it and then hung a curtain on it. We had ourselves a dip net. So out we go in this little skiff, one rowing and one dipping. We finally got some fish. There's always a way.

The Home Oil scow used to come right into the float where we boomed and we'd have our drums out there—20 or 30 of them. They'd fill them all up and send the bill to the broker, Kerr and Dumaresq. They were honest people.

Socialising in the Creek often meant an evening of singing old songs accompanied by Henry Byers on his guitar. It was a banjo but he played it like a guitar. We listened to the top ten songs on the Saturday night hit Parade on the radio, visited with the folks in our own camp and with Wilf and May Freeman and the rest of the folks out in Long Bay. One winter there was six inches of ice all over the Creek and it was too cold to work so Clarence and Ken Hansen headed out over the ice to visit at Long Bay, dragging our wooden rowboat along behind them in case they broke through.

Scotty was our high rigger. They all took turns doing all of the jobs. There were five men. Clarence drove the truck most of the time. My dad was chokerman. But like I said, all of them could and did do all of the jobs. Alf Layton would come in to help with the falling. You know what his breakfast was? A package of Cornflakes, 6 boiled eggs and a loaf of bread. And he said he never knew what it was to feel full. He was a big man. Ken ran the donkey. Henry was on the rigging. That was before the days of having a whistle and a whistle punk. We just hollered. And we were real careful. We weren't in a big hurry, couldn't afford to be with lives at

stake.

We didn't need a bag boom below the dump. The bay was narrow so we just hung a few sticks across it and the flow from the creek would float the logs down there and keep them bunched up. It was real handy when we were booming. We'd have a boom made up in no time. We usually made 5 or 6 section booms.

In those days I think it cost us about five dollars a thousand, before things like the fuel bill were considered, to sell a boom. Stumpage was about \$2.00, then there were royalties—about a dollar something, towing about a dollar a thousand and then the broker's fee. We were getting \$10 a thousand for #3, \$15 for #2. #1 peelers were \$20 a thousand but we never had any of that. In those days #1 was clear, straight, big—not like the stuff that passed for #1 in later years. We had some big timber in there but no #1.

The first bit of road we built, across the bridge and over to our first spar tree behind Sheepwash's cabin was about a mile long. When we finished with that area we started moving back up along the creek that runs out of Blue Jay lake, rigging spar trees as we went. Donkey logging to the trees and hauling down to the beach with the truck. We logged Goat Mountain. On the lakeside—the part you can see from Henry Vershuur's place today, we put the logs into the lake and floated them down to the creek outlet to a spar tree there and hauled them out. We put all of those fore and aft bridges in up that way, towards the Barrett place and out the other way around the back of Goat Mountain.

Eventually our truck roads connected with the government road through Carrington Lagoon out past Barrett's. With a land-link in place we switched our mail and store accounts from Redonda Bay to Whaletown. When that road went through people who lived along it would wait for Clarence to go through on mail day and give him their mail or store lists, or catch a ride with him. Peter Police, Mr. and Mrs. Sowery, Pop Olmstead, Mr. Bursey and his children who were in the old Borden place; and a friend, Mr. Flannigan, who stayed with them. And sometimes Aggie Helwig who lived closer to the store. Our vehicle was a model T Ford. It travelled in the ruts left by the truck, and straddled the fore and aft bridges. The Reeds were the storekeepers in Whaletown then. One day Clarence handed them Peter Police's order. Mrs. Reed filled it then said, "Peter wants bottle caps, malt and sugar but he doesn't mention yeast; I'll put some in anyway. You tell him that if he doesn't want it I'll take it back." Peter heard the story, rolled his big round eyes and said, "God bless that lady, she is a Saint". Peter was famous for his moonshine still.

I remember one night Ken Hansen had been in to Whaletown and stopped by Peter Police's place on the way home. Here was Hazel waiting supper for him and in he comes, more than a few belts of Peter's brew under his belt, dragging a dead goose by the neck along behind him. Ken was forever late for dinner. He was a workaholic. We'd come in for supper after work. Ken, he'd head out to the dragsaw at the booming ground and cut up a wood log while Hazel waited dinner.

The Woods lived near a swamp up behind Goat mountain, not far from our road out to Whaletown. They walked out of their place in the late twenties and left everything in the house. We always heard that they left a note saying anyone who found it and needed a place to live, was welcome to stay there. "Just leave it as you found it". They had a bit of a water wheel in the creek. The house later burned down. Where the family went is a mystery. They never came back.

The whole camp relied on our boat to get them out—to the hospital for instance. There were never any logging related accidents but Scotty almost cut his thumb off chopping wood and had to be taken to Lund where he could be sent to Powell River hospital by taxi. Dad had kidney stones and went out the same way. Another time Alf Layton, who lived out along the beach by what is now referred to as Jimmy's Island, came banging on the bedroom window at the 3 o'clock in the morning because his wife was very ill so it was up to Clarence to get them out of there.

Wild animals? There were mink. They were about the worst. They'd take the little ducklings. A mother would start out with a dozen and she'd be lucky if she had one left in the end. One time a mink got into our chicken house and killed some of the chickens. I found his trail; he was going in through a little space under a loose shake. I set a trap and he still got in. Then I was told to put a few ferns over it and sure enough I caught it right away. I was up there clubbing this thing to kill it and Irene, who was just a little thing, was standing by the fence watching me. I'd been reading Thornton W. Burgess books to the kids. She said, "Why are you spanking Johnny Mink, Mommy?" Didn't make me feel too good. But you have to have seen what a mink can do in a chicken pen to understand my frustration. I kept hitting it over the head but it wouldn't die. Later I was told that I should have hit it over the ear. Anyway, I did finally finish it off and Clarence took it over to Flannigan at the old Borden place. He was a trapper so he skinned it out and got \$12.00 for that skin.

We never saw cougars or wolves, didn't have to worry about the kids being outside. Of course, in our day, there was a bounty on cougars. Every once in a long time one would swim across Lewis Channel and head for Uncle Johnny's sheep down at Manson's Landing. Right away Uncle John would call Cougar Smith and he wouldn't be there a day but he'd get that cougar.

There were wolves on the island when Grandpa and Uncle John first went there but I guess they put poison out. Uncle John often told us that the last wolf that they saw he trapped at the ditch where we lived. (By Gunflint Lake).

Our three girls were born while we were in Von Donop. With the first one the doctor said I had to be in Powell river a month ahead of time. The Union boat was "scheduled" to be at Squirrel Cove at 5 o'clock in the morning so we got up around 3 o'clock, rowed across VDC to the Squirrel Cove trail, hiked for 15 minutes to the bay on the other side, got into another rowboat and headed for the wharf at

Squirrel Cove. As we rounded the point we saw the Union boat at the wharf—and heard it blow it's whistle to LEAVE. Well ahead of schedule. We were still a good distance away so I hollered as loud as I could, "Wait for me." The good captain heard my call and searched the water with his light, then waited about 15 minutes while we kept rowing to meet him. They took me aboard through the freight loading gate.

It's a good thing that boat waited. When I got to Powell River the doctor sent me to the emergency room with a serious kidney problem. I got lots of water to drink and a great big pill to take but no food. The aunt with whom I was staying was so upset that she sent a telegram to Clarence, "Baby to arrive soon, come at once." Telegrams in those days were sent to Ewart's store at Squirrel Cove. This one arrived towards evening and the storekeeper wasn't about to deliver it to Von Donop right away. But Uncle Andy Byers was passing through on his way out to the Creek for a visit and took it along. When Clarence got that unsigned message he thought it was from the hospital. His brother-in-law, Frank Larsen, was visiting and had a speed boat over at Squirrel Cove. They immediately set out for Lund in a howling south-easter. They had to go into Okeover Arm where the Lund taxi had a phone and call for a cab. It was a miracle that they made it. The head of VDC was so sheltered that we never really knew when there was a storm blowing outside.

In the meantime the baby (Irene) had arrived. It was New Year's Eve. She was a month early. Auntie Floss put a message out over the radio broadcast "Good Evening" that made announcements for people all along the coast. They always gave the schedule for "the good ship Maquinna" that travelled up and down the West Coast. She never thought they'd already be on their way in a storm like that. They never got the message of course.

Clarence landed in the hospital about one o'clock in the morning and the nurse said, "Your husband is here." I argued with her, "No, he couldn't possible be here, it's not my husband." So she said she'd told him I was fine and he could go get some sleep and come back in the morning.

Our second child, Lorraine, arrived without incident. Again at Powell River Hospital.

The third, Louise, was a different story. This time Clarence got a telegram saying to come at once...but be prepared to find your wife gone, she has serious poisoning. I was slipping into unconsciousness. By some miracle of chance Dr. Lyons had received his first shipment of a wonder drug that was being used in the war. It was 1943, all the sulphur was being used on the European Front. He used it on me. I survived. Dr. Lyons was astonished and relieved. I was the first patient he had used it on.

After six years of a very busy and eventful life in VDC it was time for us to make a move, think about school for our growing girls. On October 1, 1945, we headed off to Courtenay. Mike and Violet Herrewig and their three school-age kids--Sharon, Gail and Terry

moved in to take our place. Mike became the new truck driver. McKays moved back to their farm on Gunflint Lake at Manson's Landing. Ken and Hazel went to Manson's too.

Jack and Jean McKenzie and their five kids—Anita, Tom, John, Marilyn and Connie also moved in when we left. Scotty and Amy had built a new house by then and the McKenzies moved into the one they had vacated. Amy and Scotty were the only one of the original five families that stayed on.

When we moved to Courtenay we were shocked to find that the price of groceries in the stores was so much higher than we had been paying through the wholesale company in Vancouver. We missed the camaraderie and the sense of community that we had enjoyed in Von Donop Creek and on the rest of Cortes Island.

Gypso loggers were the backbone of the industry. There were big outfits around like Merrill and Ring in Ramsay Arm. They had bigger crews and more machinery. But you know, they used to say that the small loggers on the coast, and there were hundreds of them, put in more timber (combined) than the big companies.



Florence + Ervin McKay visiting  
with granddaughters Irene and  
Lorraine Byers 1942



Amy (Byers) McKenzie, holding a  
Cortes Island barnacle cluster.  
-Spring 2001-



Violet Herrewig, Spring  
2001



AMY CLARENCE  
+ ETTA BYERS.



THE POINT AT THE MOUTH OF  
THE LAGOON WHERE WE MOVED  
WITH DAISY THE COW  
(1994)

**AN INTERVIEW WITH VIOLET HERREWIG AND AMY McKENZIE  
AS TOLD TO DOREEN THOMPSON AND DIANNE HENTSCHEL, FEBRUARY 2001**

Amy (Byers) McKenzie remembers the very early days (1920s):

Carr Smith and Tom Marflett were up at the head of Von Donop lagoon when dad and Uncle Andy were logging in there back in the late twenties. I was just a kid then. Well, they got a notion to raise rabbits so they got a bunch of chinchilla rabbits. The fur on them was a light grey. They built a pen and buried the wire down deep so the rabbits couldn't dig out. I remember Tom came down to the house and brought a rabbit he'd skinned. I looked at that rabbit and it looked like a cat to me, I've never been able to eat rabbit! Anyway, they discovered that raising rabbits wasn't going to make them any money so that didn't last long.

Tom did all the work around there, and Carr took all the credit. They had a big garden just above the creek, flat as a plate with a ditch all along the side the top side. There wasn't a rock in it. Tom was growing raspberries there, yellow raspberries. We had never seen yellow raspberries. He'd bring some of his produce to my mother when we lived there at the camp.

The two of them were logging cedar in there. Big cedar trees. The biggest cedar trees I ever saw. A lot of them were hollow in the middle and when they fell they would break apart lengthwise. They boomed those pieces, big as logs anyway, and they were never culled out when the boom got to town. That was beautiful cedar. Those cedars were eight or nine feet across.

Years later Scotty and I had been to Vancouver and were coming back on the same Union boat as Carr Smith. He was acting his "big shot" part, all dressed up, giving the waiter a big tip so he'd stand right behind him. That was Carr Smith...putting on the dog.

When we moved out to the point at the mouth of the lagoon with Daisy the cow, old George McGee used to come along about once a year to codfish. He came around from the reserve at Squirrel Cove by boat. I remember he came ashore and mom asked him "Where's your wife?" "Out in the boat," George says. So Mom says "Let's go out and visit her." We rowed out to see his "Squaw" as he called her. We were sitting there having a visit, and old George says to Mom, "You like fish?" Mom assured him that we liked fish. "Well," he says, "I go, I bring fish. Cultis potlatch." That meant he didn't want anything back for the fish. Pretty soon he came along, he was shorter than I am (about 5 feet), and he had this codfish held way up. It was so big its tail was dragging on the ground. We sure enjoyed it.

Some days we'd be out trolling, Mom and I and maybe my brother Clarence, in the rowboat, and old George would be out fishing too. It used to be really good fishing out around the mouth of the lagoon. "You catching any, George?" we'd call. He wouldn't say a word, he wouldn't talk to us as long as he was fishing. Then he'd pull the line in, empty, and exclaim, "No cultis."

George had his own way of expressing himself. Numbers didn't seem to mean much to him. I remember once he was asked who was the oldest, himself or old Pielie? "When I was a little boy, Pielie was a man." That told us that not only was Pielie older, he was quite a bit older. The number of years didn't matter. George was a pretty old man at the time, hard to tell just how old. He used to complain about "the young Indians....no good...just sit around and drink....lazy. Not like we were, we had to work when we were young." And by all accounts he had been a hard working man. He and his wife still went up Toba picking those little wild blackberries. They'd pick lard pails full and only get 25 cents for them.

My dad used to get a great kick out of teasing old George, who was quite a storyteller himself. He'd tell George about a big sandstorm that blew waves up so high that a codfish came right down the chimney and landed on the stove in the frying pan. You could see George didn't believe a word of it but he loved those stories. George was a good old Indian, we looked forward to his visits, though we didn't really like his method of spearing codfish as they guarded their eggs in the shallow water near the mouth of the lagoon.

Violet recalled: George used to like to visit with Uncle Johnny (Manson) because he could talk Chinook.

Amy: Dave Logan, I remember stories about him. He had an oyster lease in the lagoon, that was before we went in there. Those little native oysters. We used to go over there and get them. They were pretty small, mostly shell. Mom gave me the job of opening them, I can remember getting fed up because it took so many to get a meal.

The biggest Dungeness crabs I ever saw came out of that lagoon. We'd go in there with one of those big copper boilers and fill it up in half an hour. George Palmer had lent us an old Peterborough canoe and we'd go in there in that and catch those big crabs. They were twice the size of the ones you'd see in the supermarkets these days.

A few tourists were coming in even in those days. Logan's oyster lease was marked on charts and they'd want to know where it was. I used to listen to them oohing and ahing over the rocks and saying what a pretty place this was. I couldn't figure it out. It all looked just the same to me. I looked at it every day. When I got older I knew what they meant. As a kid it was just there. It was where I lived and taken for granted.

Dave was interested in dancing. He was told that he could go down to Vancouver to one of those dance schools and they'd teach him how to dance. Well, he went down there and at that time the Chicken Scratch was all the rage. That's what they taught him. When he came back he would go to dances and no matter what music was playing, he did the Chicken Scratch. He Chicken Scratched his way through everything from waltzes and foxtrots to schottisches and polkas. All night long, with anybody he could get onto the floor.



BACK OF PHOTO READS:  
"COUGAR SHOT BY HENRY HERREWIG  
WITH O'FALLEN, COUGAR HUNTER, IN  
AREA OF VON DONOP CREEK ..... FIRST  
LOCATED BACK OF GORGE HARBOUR  
BUT IT WOULDN'T TREE"

1925 OR 26



ALF + LOLLIE LAYTON  
WITH ANNA MANSON  
1920'S ?

Amy continues, telling about the next time she lived in Von Donop. By then she had grown up, met and married Scotty McKenzie:

The camp up at the head came later. Our families arrived there in 1939....my folks, Clarence and Etta and her folks, and Hazel and Ken Hansen. We were the first camp at the head of Von Donop, there were no roads into the timber, the men had to build them before they could even start logging so they told us that if we wanted a garden we'd have to make it ourselves. Mrs. McKay and I and Mom took the old crosscut saw and a froe out in the woods and found a dry cedar windfall. We cut it in about six foot lengths and split it open with a wedge and an axe or a sledge hammer then into sections the right size for pickets. We split the pickets from the chunks with the froe and a wooden mallet. 6 foot pickets sharpened on one end, nailed to cedar rails between cedar fence posts was what everyone used for garden fences. We had to keep the deer out.

We picked a nice wet spot over by the Sheepwash cabin and put our garden in. Mrs. McKay and I gardened together. The rest each had their own area to work in, except Etta, her garden was a little farther along, closer to her house. We grew peas and beefsteak tomatoes, corn, cabbages. Lots of vegetables. We used starfish for fertilizer, a starfish under every potato we planted. Or dig a trench, fill it up with starfish covered with a little dirt, then put the potatoes in and fill that trench with the dirt from the next one. We planted the potatoes at the same time as we dug the garden. Years later, when I lived in Whaletown, old Joe Gregson saw me planting potatoes and advised me that I'd never get any spuds planting them that way. When it came time to dig them they'd grown big beyond my expectations. I called Joe over and I said "Come here, Joe, there's something I want to show you." So I dug up some of those potatoes and he looked at them and said "They're too big, nobody wants potatoes that big."

My mom and dad had chickens in a picket-fenced yard above our houses. I ordered 25 chicks from Vancouver and raised them by hand until they were big enough to go into the chicken yard, and put them up there too. Et and Clare had a cow for awhile when Louise and Elaine were small. So we did have some chicken and cow manure for the garden as well as the starfish.

One time somebody came in to visit and wanted a feed of clams. It was winter so the tide was only out in the middle of the night. Mrs. McKay was always game for anything. "I'll go, you come with me Amy?" she said. Knowing that I'd be glad to. We went all the way down to the mouth of the lagoon in the visitor's boat, about two miles. We were out on the beach and I felt pretty cold so I asked Mrs. McKay if she was cold. "No," she said, "I'm not too bad." But I was just shivering. Really cold. When I got up the next morning and went to wash my face, I looked in the mirror and you couldn't have put a pin between the measles.

Amy and Violet collaborated on describing the change that occurred in 1945: Camp life changed. Mike Herrewig bought out Clarence and Henry Byers, and Ken Hansen. Mike and Scotty then formed M&H Logging. The Byers and Hansen families left the Creek. Henry and Ruth stayed a short while then moved to their property in Whaletown. Scotty and Mike towed the Herrewig's house, a good-sized shop and a small cabin that also belonged to them up from Whaletown. After a couple of uncomfortable days spent on the



E.M & H LOGGING



VH

The Booming Ground.



sloping beach, they were ready to move ashore on their newly-prepared home<sup>site</sup>~~like~~ next to Sheepwash Creek at the head of the bay.

M & H was still a truck and donkey logging outfit. The logging area now had roads off the original roads in behind Goat mountain. Jack McKenzie (no relation to Scotty) who had lost his fishboat and almost his life off Quadra Island, was living in Gorge Harbour and looking for work. Knowing of Jack's legendary strength and sense of humour, Mike and Scotty were only too glad to hire him. (Five children to contribute to the school was also welcome). Amy and Scotty were building a new house at that time. Jack and Jean and their family lived in Jimmy Layton's place for awhile, then moved into Amy and Scotty's original home.

Early in 1946 May and Elmer Ellingsen and their three children moved down from Phillip's Arm when Elmer bought in as the third partner in the company, now called E, M & H Logging.

Vi relates a story of trial, error and subterfuge with a happy ending: With 12 children in camp, schooling became a problem. May and Elmer kindly turned their living room into a schoolroom for the first school. Mike and I hired a young woman to look after Gail and Terry, who were still under school age, and I became a teacher again. We did not have the nine school-age children required by the district to open a regular school, and never intended to keep the school forever in the Ellingsen's living room. What we had was an interim solution. We tried several things...hiring Rankin Robertson to come in from Whaletown to take the children out to school there, then importing the Warhurst child from a logging camp in Coulter Bay or Carrington Lagoon. The length and condition of the road to Whaletown -impassable in winter--made that solution unworkable. When Rankin could get through, days of travel and school were too long for young children.

Next we hired Gladys Ballantyne of Whaletown, she had a teaching certificate. The men fixed up the old Sheepwash log cabin, which had stood abandoned for many years, as a teacherage. They towed an old blacksmith shop down from Ramsay Arm for a school.

Finally in 1948 we had enough children to apply to open a 'qualified' school. This feat was accomplished by having my youngest daughter, Gail, celebrate two birthdays in one year. A new building came along which "qualified", towed in on a float from Manson's and set up on the shore across from camp; I went back to teaching again. The nine students enrolled were: Shirley, Bruce and Andy Ellingsen; Anita, Tommy and Johnny McKenzie; Sharon and Gail Herrewig, and Elaine McKenzie. Nine students, seven grades.

The school itself was pretty primitive. The only blackboard was the Ellingsen's 2 foot square play blackboard. The walls had no insulation so we all wore makinaws on cold days. The Board of School District 72 eventually sent more blackboards, desks and supplies. Primitive conditions, however, did not hinder the learning process. Our little school topped all the others when it came to district tests.

When the School Inspector came in to check out this new addition to his district, Bob Langdon flew him in and landed at the boat float out in the bay. Anyone who flew in with Bob in his BC Airlines Seabee landed out there and had to walk the boomsticks to get ashore. Seventeen boomsticks. He stood on the float and surveyed the situation. He said he was quite horrified to think of the children living in such a hazardous environment. There was the schoolhouse right at the edge of the beach, practically hanging out over the water. No fences. No play yard. Dangerous. He was ready to condemn it as an unsafe place for children. As he stood there screwing up his courage to navigate the “boomstick” path to shore, the children came running out on the sticks to meet him. One of the girls was carrying baby Connie on her hip. As dangerous as it seemed to him, he had to admit the children were in their element.

Amy interjected: Just like the scenery of our childhood, as adults we didn't even think about the boomsticks. They were our path to the boats at the float, to the plane when it came in, to deep swimming water. Lashed end to by-passed end, a standing boom is steadier in the water than a string of sticks chained together. Either way we walked them. The kids had to learn to walk them, they had to learn to swim before they could go out there on their own. Fact of camp life.

I remember one time we had visitors who stayed late into the evening. When it became clear that they would be staying over night, I grabbed the flashlight and walked out the seventeen sticks to the boat, loaded up with spare blankets and, flashlight in hand, packed them back to the house. We did what we had to do...another fact of camp life.

As were the outhouses. Scotty built the smallest outhouse in the camp. The men practically had to take off their pants outside before they backed into it. There certainly wasn't room to turn around. He wasn't wasting any lumber on that project. I remember Poppa McKenzie, Jack's dad and a pretty husky man, walked past it and looked back in amazement. “THREE shakes,” he said, that's the ROOF.”

Vi completes the school story: Two years later (1950) I gave up teaching and the District sent us Bev Horrex (later Mathews). Bev was somewhat dismayed to find herself in such an isolated place but soon fit into the community.

Camp life, Vi and Amy agreed, was a lot of fun...and a lot of hard work too. The kids in camp depended upon the outdoors for much of their play. There was no structured playground. The school sat on a site barely big enough for the building; beach in front, a steep wooded bank behind.

Violet continued with life on the home front: We all worked together—the men in the woods, the women at home.. When we ordered a side of beef from Swift's we'd all gather at Amy's house for meat cutting sessions. May was really good with a meat saw. Amy was good at telling us which cuts were the best. We'd divide up the meat --each take our share home—to can (meatballs, meat patties, stew meat, spaghetti sauce, chili, and the likes) or to freeze. We had propane or kerosene fridges and could freeze a bit of it. We always

(N.B.—This report refers to the work of this teacher in this situation only.)

Inspector's name H.D. Stafford Date June 9th, 1950.  
School Von Donop Creek No. of divisions 1 Municipality \_\_\_\_\_  
(High, Superior, Junior High, Elementary.)  
Teacher V.M. Horrewig (née \_\_\_\_\_) Degree \_\_\_\_\_  
Mrs. Mrs. 20223  
Address Squirrel Cove, B.C. Certificate E.B. Salary \$2,120.00  
Training Normal School, Vancouver Date of appointment to this school 1948  
Further professional training \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous school Manson's Landing from Sept 1936 to June 1937 Years of experience 4yr. 8mths

Enrolment of school: Grade I. 1; II. 2; III. 1; IV. 1; V. 2; VI. 2; VII. \_\_\_\_\_;  
VIII. \_\_\_\_\_; IX. \_\_\_\_\_; X. \_\_\_\_\_; XI. \_\_\_\_\_; XII. \_\_\_\_\_; XIII. \_\_\_\_\_; Total 9

The Inspector will report on the following major headings, including in his remarks such of the minor items as he deems desirable or necessary.

#### BUILDINGS.

State of Repair.  
Auditorium, Gymnasium, Shops, Kitchens,  
Cafeteria, Outbuildings.  
Sanitation:  
Janitor, Floors, Cleanliness;  
Heating, Lighting, Ventilation;  
Water-supply, Wash-room, Toilets.  
Suggestions and Recommendations.

#### EQUIPMENT.

Chairs and Desks.  
Storage and Filing Facilities.  
Blackboards, Maps, Globes.  
Library:  
(a.) Recreational and Reference Books;  
(b.) Supplementary Readers.  
Provision for Dramatics.  
Class-room Supplies.  
Science Equipment.  
Special Equipment for:  
Typing, Manual Arts, Home Economics,  
Agriculture.  
Visual and Auditory Aids.  
School-lunch Equipment.  
First-aid Equipment.  
Fire-protection.  
Suggestions and Recommendations.

#### GROUNDS.

Size and Suitability.  
Beautification.  
Playground Equipment.  
School Garden.  
Garden Equipment.  
Suggestions and Recommendations.

#### THE CLASS-ROOM.

Neatness, Attractiveness, Size.  
Cleanliness, Lighting, Heating, Ventilation.  
Blackboards; Seating Arrangements.  
Facilities for Displays.  
Centres of Interest, such as Science Corner,  
Library Corner.

#### ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT.

Office Management; Files.  
Time-tables, Records, and Reports.  
Testing and Examination Procedures.  
Classification of Pupils.  
Use of Records in Pupil Guidance and  
Classification.  
Management of School and Disciplinary  
Problems.  
Prevention and Correction of Pupil  
Maladjustments:  
(a.) Educational;  
(b.) Emotional and Social;  
(c.) Physical Disabilities.  
Parent-Teacher Consultations.  
Pupil Participation in Class-room Duties.  
Co-curricular Activities; Student Organizations.  
School-Community Relationships.  
Use of Library.  
Health Programme; Organization School  
Lunches.  
Out-of-class Supervision:  
Playgrounds, basements, corridors, toilets,  
buses.  
Handling of Absenteeism and Tardiness.  
Fire Drills.

The Von Donop Creek school building is a small structure approximately 12ft x 19ft in size and temporary use was authorized pending a decision as to whether the school would continue in operation for a period of years.

The population of the school has increased and there will be an additional two pupils this fall, with a reasonable probability of the school being required for several years.

In view of this situation, the admittedly inadequacy of the building and the hazard to life which exists, I condemn this building as unfit for further use as a school. Further I would recommend the construction of a portable type of building for use at this centre.

I examined the exercises done by the pupils, interviewed pupils, and studied exhibits on display in the small room.

It is with pleasure that I commend the pupils for the excellence of their work and the teacher for her leadership during the past difficult years.

With the opening of a new school it is important to ensure that all text books, reference material and teaching supplies will be available on time.

*H. D. Stafford*  
Inspector of Schools

ordered groceries and meat in bulk from suppliers in Vancouver who shipped to Whaletown (at first) or Squirrel Cove (when we got a road out that way).

Almost everything we did was done in a big way.. I never made less than twelve loaves of bread. My sister from Vancouver was visiting once, and wondered, as I mixed cup after cup of flour into my bread dough, why I would make so much at once. I said to her, "Wait and see." When I put it in the oven and the smell started to permeate the air, all twelve kids in the Creek arrived at my door, and in no time two or three loaves of bread were gone. The kids did that with everybody's house. They felt just as comfortable in a neighbour's house as they did in their own.

Amy recalled: I remember making raised doughnuts and hardly beginning to fry them, the smell wafting out the window, when Elaine came in from outside and said, "Jack wants to know who you are making those doughnuts for." So it wasn't always just the kids who knew what was cooking and lined up for the finished product.

It was the kids, though, who were always the first to clue into the fact that Elmer was playing his accordion in the evening. They picked up on the sound of his foot thumping the floor before any of the adults did. "Uncle Elmer is playing the accordion!" they'd announce. We spent many an evening listening to Elmer practice for a dance, or play for the sheer pleasure of it.

Violet remembers: We still had the garden, divided up in sections so that each of us had a part. I remember that we got chicken manure from Whaletown for fertilizer. I sent some of the soil to Victoria to be tested and got a letter back saying soil like that wouldn't grow anything. It must have been all that fertilizer we put into it that made our gardens grow. I know that was the only place I ever had telephone peas that grew right up the supports and arched over the top so I could walk between the rows underneath them We fertilized with starfish too. I didn't like having to put starfish under the potatoes. I always wondered if they were still alive.

I had a gas washing machine and electricity generated by a small motor in the shop (the camp would later acquire a large generator to serve Elmer, Scotty and Mike's houses.) These engines had all the vagaries of most motors and I was no mechanic, my knowledge running pretty well to 'start' and 'stop'. This added to Mike's after-work chores. I remember once getting the light plant started by fitting the handle to the flywheel and cranking mightily. Unfortunately, the motor started suddenly, not allowing me enough time to snatch the handle off. I retreated hastily behind the shop door, crouching there, awaiting the inevitable. Sure enough. The handle worked loose, flew with great force into the air, hit a rafter, jarred something that fell with a resounding crash...but, to my relief, did no serious harm. That evening I related my hazardous adventure to Mike, only to be greeted with a roar of laughter as he imagined the scene.

Once when the men were short a whistlepunk they recruited me, the school teacher, to blow whistles for a couple of days (school

closed, to the kids' delight). They said I did a fine job. I thought they did too, all that rough work and they behaved like gentlemen because a woman was on the scene. I note that it didn't take them long to replace me with Billy Martin, a sturdy 14 or 15 year old. Believe me, I was glad to return to teaching.

The 1946 earthquake which shook the west coast, sank the end of Rebecca Spit on Quadra Island and cracked the earth open in an orchard on Read Island, was felt in Von Donop:

Vi recalls: Most of the adults, including Mike and I, had gone to a dance at Manson's, The Ellingsen's hadn't moved into camp yet but Elmer had come down from Phillips Arm to play for that dance and was staying in our upstairs bedroom. We had just got home the long way-- by boat to Whaletown, by car through Carrington Bay. There was no road out to Squirrel Cove until the next year when Elmer pushed one through with his cat. Whaletown Road only went to the Gorge. The sun had long since risen by the time we got back to the Creek. We'd gone to bed and been joined by Gail and Terry who were just little then. We were not yet asleep when the house began to shake. We grabbed the kids and stood in doorways. There was a strange roaring sound, gas lamps hanging from the ceiling swung back and forth. A piling fell from under the house. It's a good thing there were lots of them under there. Elmer came downstairs and told us the shaking had been nothing to get excited about. But when we went upstairs we found he'd put his head through the screen at the window to find out what was going on outside.. The tide was in and the water did strange things, Elmer later described it as looking like a tub of water that you'd kicked on its side. All the waves were dancing toward the middle of the bay. On a calm morning.

Bill McPherson's brother had walked home from the dance, I can't remember where he lived. Someplace outside Von Donop. Somewhere along the trail he decided he'd have a little sleep in the woods. Well, he said he came to and all the trees were flopping around and ground was shaking. "From that moment," he said, "I swore off liquor." Until he heard that it was only an earthquake.

Amy recalled: We'd been to the dance. Mom and Dad had kept Elaine for me, I'd gone over to get her when the shaking started. We were in Mom's house, it was on pilings, you know. And it just shook that house. "Oh, oh!" mom exclaimed "earthquake." Her kitchen lamp was swinging from its hook in the ceiling. We headed outside. It was worse out there. The ground was moving under our feet. It was a horrible feeling. The lamp kept swinging for a long time after it was over.

Both Vi and Amy remembered stories told by people who were out in boats when the earthquake hit. The motors raced as the shock sent a swell they couldn't see through the water. Most people thought something had gone wrong with their engines.

Vi and Amy went on to recount stories of social life in the Creek. Amy began: Von Donop Creek was known for its parties. A party

could start from nothing. Maybe a tugboat captain coming ashore, invited to stop for a drink...by evening it was a party. Elmer was always available with his accordion. I remember I met a public health nurse in Campbell River one time and she said, "You know, I was told if I ever had a chance to go to a party in Von Donop Creek not to miss it." Public health nurses flew in to the schools several times a year. We could be in Vancouver at the Truck Loggers' Convention and meet people from away up the coast and they'd say, "We've heard about your parties."

Vi continued: Once I made a big crockful of grape wine. I don't know what went wrong but it was so dry it tasted almost like vinegar. I was going to throw it out when Scotty happened along. "Don't do that," he exclaimed, "We can distil it." Scotty's dad had been a brewmaster back in Scotland so he knew something about making moonshine. Scotty and Mike set their new project up in our shop. They commandeered my big pressure cooker, a lot of copper tubing and other things beyond my comprehension and set up a still. The double-distilled product they brewed was dubbed "Snag". Added to orange juice or mixer it made a good drink, a good STRONG drink.

Amy added: We'd go to the dances at Manson's Landing and take this stuff with us. Jack McKenzie was so proud of it that he had to show folks how "pure" it was. We'd be outside the hall, that's where people drank in those days (NEVER inside) and we'd see these little blue fires glowing in the dark. Jack was showing how the Snag would burn. Scotty and Mike decided it was becoming too well known and gave up their new hobby.

Vi says: It was fun while it lasted. We used to play Canasta all night long and drink snag. There were always a few hangovers in camp the next morning. However, my poor pressure cooker was never the same. Every time I heated it, it gave evidence.

Amy ends: Jack wanted to take over the brewing. So off went the still. Then Scotty and Mike found he had it set up right beside the path where everyone who came into the creek would see it – so they made him give it up.

Amy and Vi recalled: Then there were the people who really didn't understand camp life. I remember an insurance salesman who came in and stayed for two or three days. He loved to sit and visit. In order to get our work done and still maintain a level of courtesy we found polite ways of passing him from one household to another. When he was about to leave he commented, "I think I'll bring my wife up here. She is always so busy. This is a wonderful place where you women don't have anything to do."

We saw some of the worst winters. Vi remembers a particularly bad one, logging was shut down, snow was four feet deep:

Mike and Jack arrived at my kitchen door with a sheet of plywood. They were going to build a toboggan—in my kitchen. It was too



1. MAY + ELMER KINDLY TURNED THEIR LIVING ROOM INTO A SCHOOL FOR THE FIRST SCHOOL - NEXT, THE MEN FIXED UP THE OLD SHEEPWASH CABIN (NO PICTURES)

2... TOWED AN OLD BLACKSMITH SHOP DOWN FROM RAMSAY ARM FOR THE THIRD SCHOOL

3. THE LAST VONDONOP SCHOOL CAME FROM MANSON'S LANDING WHERE IT HAD BEEN A TEACHERAGE.





①



②

VONDONOP CREEK LOGGERS :

① AS BUSINESS MEN - HEADING TO VANCOUVER  
ELMER ELLINGSEN - MIKE HERREWIG -  
SCOTTY MCKENZIE

② AS HUSBANDS & FATHERS - HEADING OFF  
TO SQUIRREL COVE FOR MAIL AND  
GROCERIES.

ELMER ELLINGSEN,  
+ SCOTTY MCKENZIE



MIKE + VI HERREWIG  
SHARON, GAIL  
AND TERRY

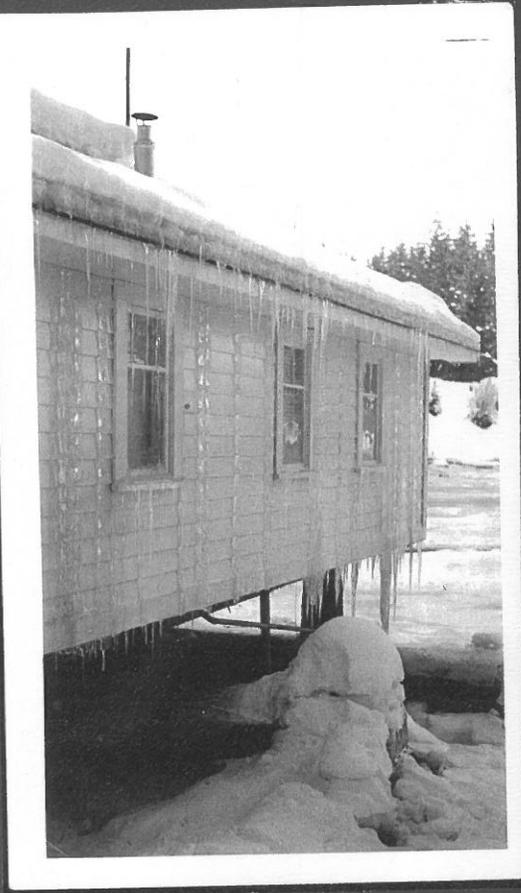
cold outside. They did cut the plywood to the right width in the shop, then, indoors, they proceeded to finish it. They filled the copper boiler with water, heated it to a full rolling boil on the kitchen stove and added all of my heaviest bath towels. The hot wet towels, wrung out and wrapped around the end of the plywood, became their "steamer" for creating the curved nose of the toboggan. I vacated the kitchen, unsure of whether or not I really wanted to know what was going on in there. When I returned it was built, the mess cleaned up and the waxing of the bottom about to begin.

While the construction was in progress, Elmer had taken his cat and cleared a toboggan track on the slope of the road behind the camp...with a curve at the bottom to keep the kids from landing on the beach, or in the water. We all gathered to witness the first trip. Elmer, the cat driver, became Elmer the toboggan driver. As many of the biggest kids as would fit were loaded aboard with him. The cat track was a lot wider than the toboggan. With a little push from behind the newly waxed toboggan started straight down the centre of the track, picked up speed and began to slew wildly back and forth, racing up the snowbank on one side, slipping down to sail across the track and up the snowbank on the other side, gaining speed. Elmer yarded fiercely on the guide ropes to keep it from flying right over the snowbanks. The kids hung on for dear life and cheered all the way to the bottom. While mothers looked on with trepidation, the younger children roared with laughter. The ride ended when all aboard were spilled off into the snowbank at the bottom of the run. The rest of the kids were anxious for their turn. The men, not so anxious to be drivers, shortened up the track.

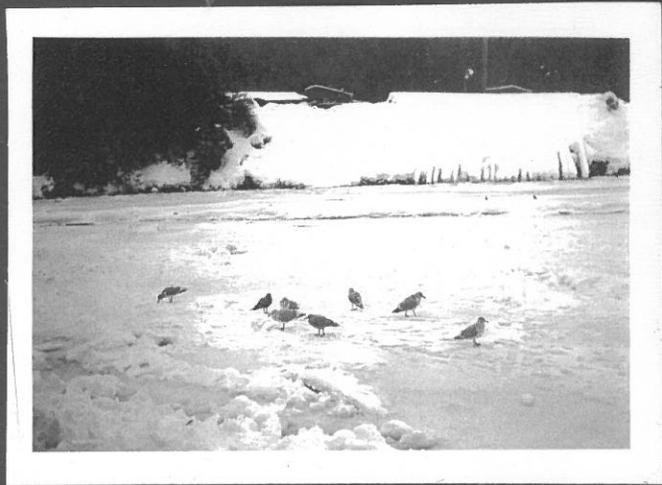
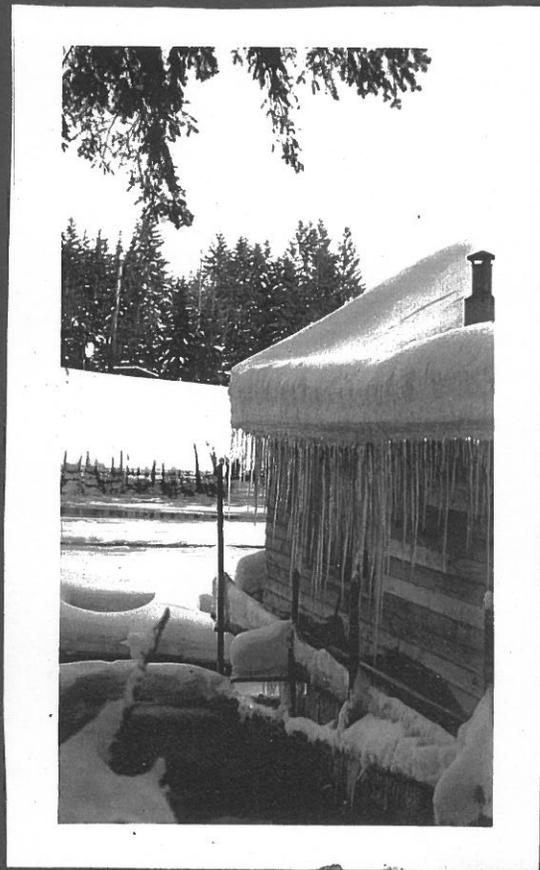
There was a lot more snow in those years than there is now. When the men couldn't log they had other work to do clearing paths and roads, often shovelling snow off roofs, clearing floats and boats. The toboggan was helpful on walking trips to Squirrel Cove for mail and groceries. One winter Elmer and Mike used the cat to plow the road out and down to Sauterhaug's at the head of the Gorge where they received a hearty welcome.

Then there was the year we all ordered skis. Jack and Jean were the only real skiers but that didn't deter the rest of us. There were many spills and lots of laughter.

The year of the big freeze-up the temperature dropped to -4 degrees Fahrenheit. Mike had to go to Vancouver to have his appendix removed just before the cold hit. Huge icicles hung from eaves to ground on every house. We had to leave our taps running to keep the waterlines from freezing up. One night Scotty came over and said, "Leave your tap wide open tonight and if the water stops, no matter what time, come and get me so I can cut off the line. We can't have any more burst pipes. We haven't got any to replace them." Sure enough, although I had left the tap full open, silence awakened me at 3am.—no sound of running water. Wishing Mike were home so I wouldn't have to bother anyone, I quickly got into warm clothes and ran over to Scotty's. He rushed out at once, up the creek to "break" the line. Even with the pipe running full bore it was slowing down, freezing as it ran. He had to pull the pipe out of the creek so we were without running water until the cold snap came to an end.



WINTER AT THE  
HEAD OF THE CREEK  
1949



"HUGE ICICLES  
HUNG FROM  
THE EAVES  
TO THE  
GROUND ON  
EVERY HOUSE"



Then came the year of the killer whales about 1949 as both Vi and Amy remember it: Five black fish (that's what everyone on the coast called killer whales in those days) got into the lagoon. Four adults and a little one. They came in a thigh tide and when it went out they couldn't find their way out again. Even when the tide came back in they stayed in there. People heard about it and some went in there and shot at them. Between all the shooting and the lack of food they died, and one by one they drifted out.

Scotty took Bruce and Elaine out there to see one that had drifted onto the beach outside the lagoon. Mike was really interested in them and he wrote to the Fisheries but they ignored the letter. Didn't even come over to have a look. At that time Fisheries was supposed to be interested in Blackfish and in having a sanctuary for them where they wouldn't be shot at. Fishermen were known to shoot at them all along the coast. They thought they were eating all the salmon.

Vi and Amy agreed: The kids in Von Donop Creek had a special relationship. You know they still love to get together. Sure, like other kids they had their fights but they got over it. Kids don't know they are fighting. We just let them go to it as long as they didn't go too far. If they started getting sticks and stones we went and separated them, but mostly we just let them fight their battles out because that's the way they got along. They straightened it out and the next thing they were playing together. That's one thing that a lot of people in Campbell River couldn't understand. How that many people in camp could still be friends. "Well," we said, "we didn't take up the kid's battles." That will spoil friendships for sure. Two days after the kids had a fight, they wouldn't remember what it was about.

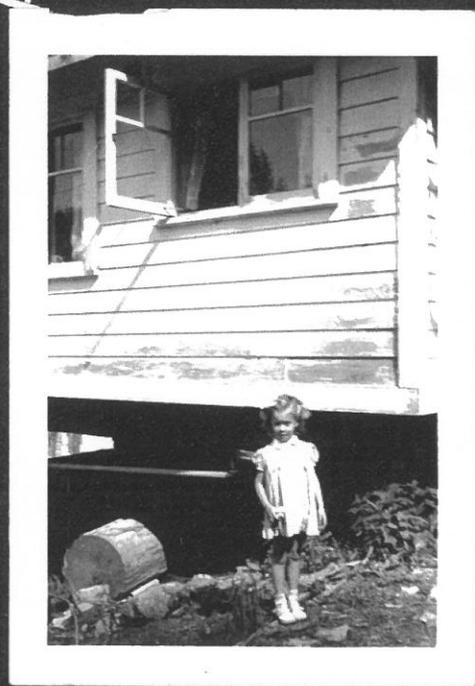
Violet recalls: Johnny McKenzie and Terry were best friends and they both loved to fish. They decided they were going up to the second falls, about a mile up the road towards Barrett's Lake, to fish. Without telling anyone about it. When we missed them we questioned the other kids and found out what was going on. Scotty and Mike followed their barefoot prints on the dusty logging road up to the falls and found them.

Amy says: We didn't worry too much about the kids unless one of them went missing. They usually played together and looked out for each other. Marilyn, Gail and Elaine were about the same age and great buddies. One day I noticed Elaine was missing and I asked Marilyn where she was. "Oh, she's up the creek picking berries," Marilyn told me. Well that creek had pretty deep pools so off along the creek I went calling her. The water was running so I couldn't hear much and when I found her she was happily eating berries and every time I called she was answering in the normal tone of a small child's voice, "I'm here." That whisper did not carry over the sound of the creek.

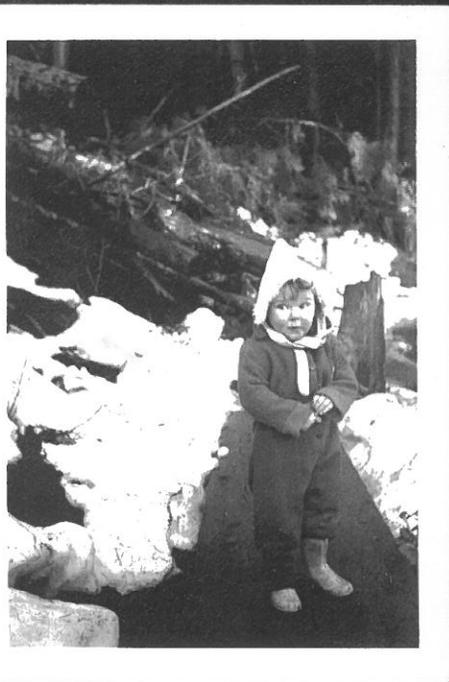
Violet adds: The creek, of course, was a favourite haunt for the kids. There wasn't much of it before the first waterfall which is really quite close to the beach. Dog salmon would come in there to spawn in the fall, and Terry always liked to 'help' the fish up the creek. The tide would be out and the fish would be trying to make their way up the shallow part of the creek on the mudflat. He'd be there



SHIRLEY ELLINGSEN



ELAINE MCKENZIE



CONNIE MCKENZIE

SOME OF THE KIDS IN CAMP

trying to catch the fish and then he'd carry them up to the top of the slope and put them in deeper water. This one time I looked out and there he was down on the mudflat, he had hold of a fish by one end and a mink had hold of the other end. Each was pulling. Needless to say, Terry won out. He "rescued" his salmon.

Terry loved that beach. He'd spend hours out there rolling rocks and catching crabs which he put in his pockets. I was teaching school then and we had a young woman staying with us to help with the kids. No way would she touch Terry's pants. I'd check his pockets and maybe hang his pants over a kitchen chair to dry the dampness out of them. We had lino and we'd hear click, click, click over the lino and one of us would have to get up and catch one of Terry's crabs that I'd missed and put it back out on the beach.

Amy relates: Anywhere Scotty said he was going Elaine said she was going too. He was going to go fishing up at Wiley Lake so she was going too, then Bruce Ellingsen heard about it and he wanted to go too. So I went as well. We rowed down to where the trail went up from Black's Bay then walked up to the lake. We got up there and Scotty left me with the kids on this big float someone had built to put a cat on. That was the darndest float, it was huge. So I got positioned between these two kids and spent my day baiting their hooks. I didn't catch any fish because the kids were catching them before they got to me. They had a wonderful time.

We took the kids up to Barrett's Lake to go skating in the winter. We didn't go up there much in the summer. They swam in the saltwater. They wore shoes to protect their feet from the barnacles. I remember seeing Tommy running along this log with one running shoe and one gumboot on. He couldn't swim then, but he learned to. They'd run along the log with one running shoe and one gumboot on. He couldn't swim then, but he learned to. They'd run along the log and jump in, so they learned to swim. Watching the kids in the water was always a job of one or another of the moms.

Vi interjects: Remember the Underwear Soup? Jack wore long underwear and to wash it, Jean would put the old copper boiler on the stove and heat it up, then put the underwear in. The kids couldn't get over this and wanted to know what it was so she said, "Oh, I'm making underwear soup." So for a long time the kids talked about Jean's underwear soup a little dubiously.

And the huckleberry story. One fine June day I watched the kids march past my door, each eating huckleberries from a branch they'd snapped off of the bushes along the trail. I wondered how long there would BE bushes when the branch-snapping seemed to be a daily occurrence. I thought "If this keeps up there are not going to be any berries for pies and jelly." So I stepped outside and called, to my everlasting shame (since they won't let me forget it), "Don't you know it's against the law to break branches from huckleberry bushes?" They stopped and looked at me startled, "Really...." "Oh, yes, I think it's a \$500 fine." That ended the huckleberry branch breaking.

Vi tells of a medical emergency: In spite of the dangers in any logging operation we didn't have work-related accidents that required

medical help. We did have a couple of incidents where kids were hurt or sick. Bruce got his arm caught in the wringer, Terry had croup. He was about three years old, choking and unable to breathe. We knew we needed help. Scotty went out to Squirrel Cove and called Dr. Murphy who told him we should keep steaming Terry with the kettle on the gas stove until he got there in Bob Langdon's Seabee. Dr. Murphy decided Terry had to go to Lourdes hospital in Campbell River so of course I went with him. In spite of being sick Terry was quite excited by the plane ride. Looking down at islands in the water below he asked Bob, "Is this as high as you can go?" "You want to go higher?" said Bob. And he pulled the stick back and we went straight up. Terry was delighted but I wasn't. Bob was full of tricks like that. "Little thrills," he called them.

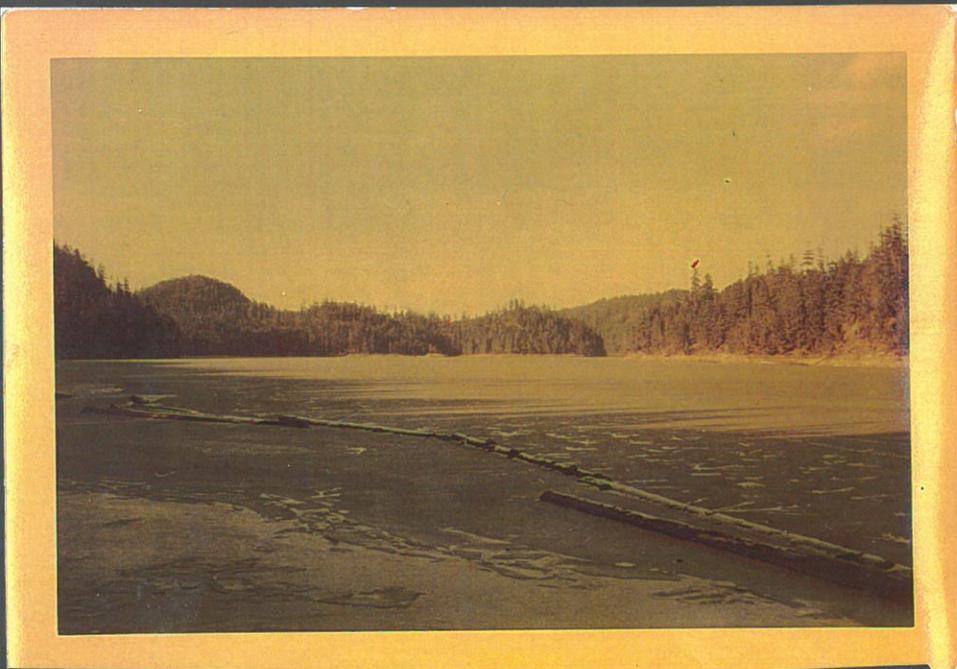
Violet remembers: The Claytons were living out along the shore, across from the lagoon mouth and logging over in Black's Bay. Truck logging. Archie and his brother, Harry. They were both slow and deliberate in their manner of speech. A story of a spat between them was often told. Harry was the donkey engineer. Archie was the truck driver. They had a big log that Harry was trying, without much success, to put on the truck. After several failed attempts Archie was beginning to get impatient. "The....idea....of....it,....Harry, he said, "is...to...put...the...log...on...the...truck." Harry slowly replied, "That's...what...I'm...endeavouring....to...do,...Archie." End of spat. They went about their business and eventually got the log on the truck and down to the log dump.

Archie loved to entertain the children and tell them stories. When we were in the car driving anywhere he would have a captive audience. The poor old Model A, we were usually heaped up to the top with all the kids and their stuff. I remember him telling the story about Scotty's boat and Mike's boat. Two seagulls were betting as to which boat was the faster. The story ends up with Archie saying one seagull said, "I'll put EVERYTHING I've got on Mike's boat." The kids picked up on that right away. They thought it was hilarious.

Both Vi and Amy told stories about the Truckloggers' Convention. We went to Vancouver for the annual Truckloggers' Association Convention. It was the one time of the year that we got to put our formal wear on. It meant a shopping trip in Vancouver to get ourselves dressed up in the latest evening fashions for the big night of dancing which was the highlight of the week. Dal Richards and his band with Lorraine McAlister singing. It was quite an event, held in the Hotel Vancouver ballroom.

The men got to talk to all the equipment salesmen and get a look at all the stuff they could have to work with -- if they could afford it. It was their chance to swap stories with loggers from up and down the coast, meet newcomers and greet familiar faces from past conventions.

Scotty left one of the evening entertainments early one night...he'd had a little too much to drink and decided to head back to his room



WINTER OUT PAST THE  
STANDING BOOM  
HALF TIDE BETWEEN  
THE CAMP + THE SCHOOL  
SWIMMING NEAR THE  
LOG DUMP -  
ELAINE MCK, AND  
GAIL HERREWIG

M+H LOG DUMP  
SUMMER  
AND  
WINTER



T.H.

in the Georgia Hotel right across the street. There was a policeman outside the Vancouver Hotel and Scotty asked him to show him where the Georgia Hotel was. Of course it was right across the street so the policeman said, "I'll take you there." And he did, right into the lobby. Scotty got into the elevator and later told us, "Gosh, I came up in that darn elevator with a fellow who sure looked familiar." Then he realized he'd been looking in the elevator mirror.

Of course the whole camp was down there. City people got a kick out of us running from one room to another, borrowing this or that.

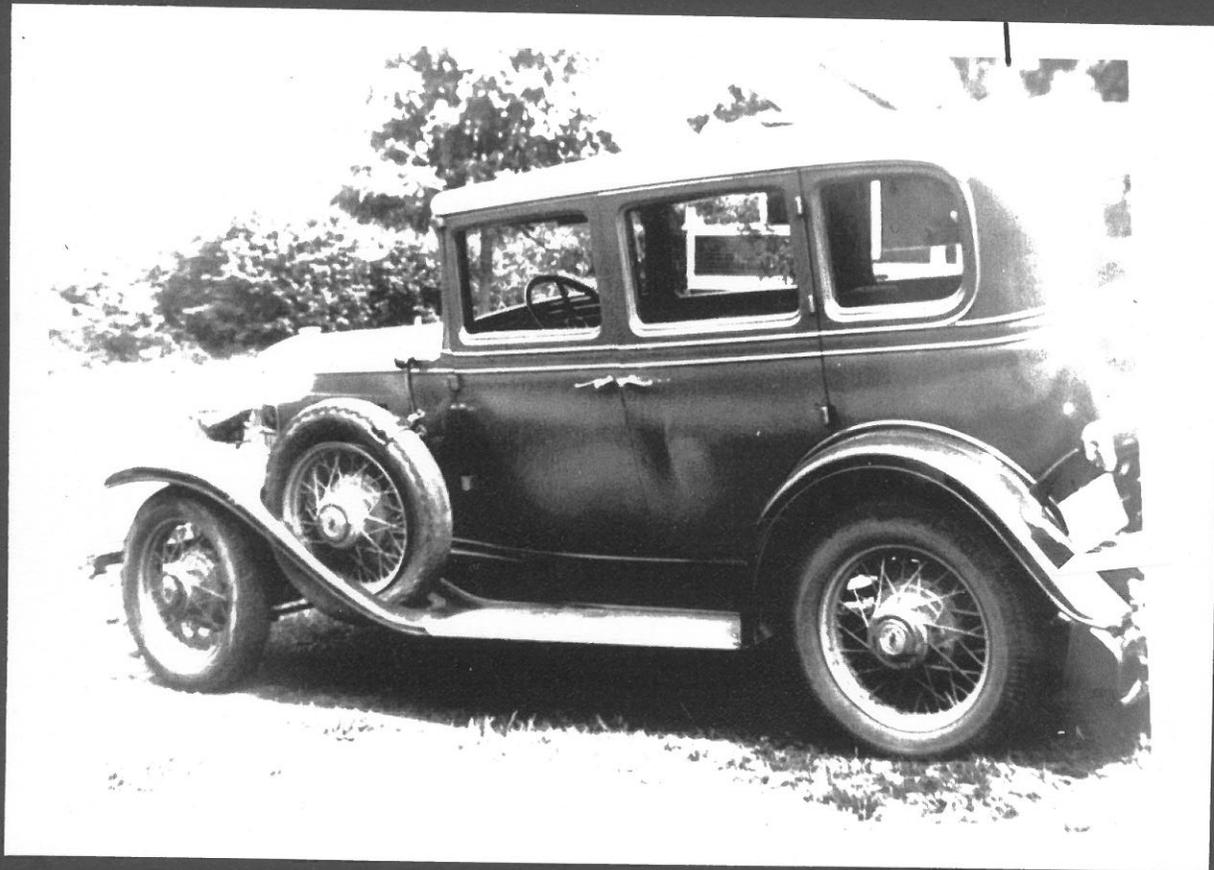
Ed Keate, our log broker in Vancouver, brought a gut bucket. A galvanized wash tub turned upside down, with a string attached to a stick fastened to the side of it. You could play it like a base and bang it like a drum at the same time. One of the fellows took it down into the courtyard and played it, he was rather quickly requested to quit and return to his room.

Living in Von Donop Creek meant a lot of hard work with few of the conveniences we have today. The men logged all day and "monkey-wrenched" in the evenings and on weekends to keep the equipment going. There were some very big logs on that claim, two or three often made a truckload. Elmer was hook-tender; Jack was chokerman; Scotty was donkey engineer; Mike was the truck driver. Mike and Elmer were also cat skimmers when needed. All could fill in to fight hang-ups, load the truck at the spar tree and work on the boom.

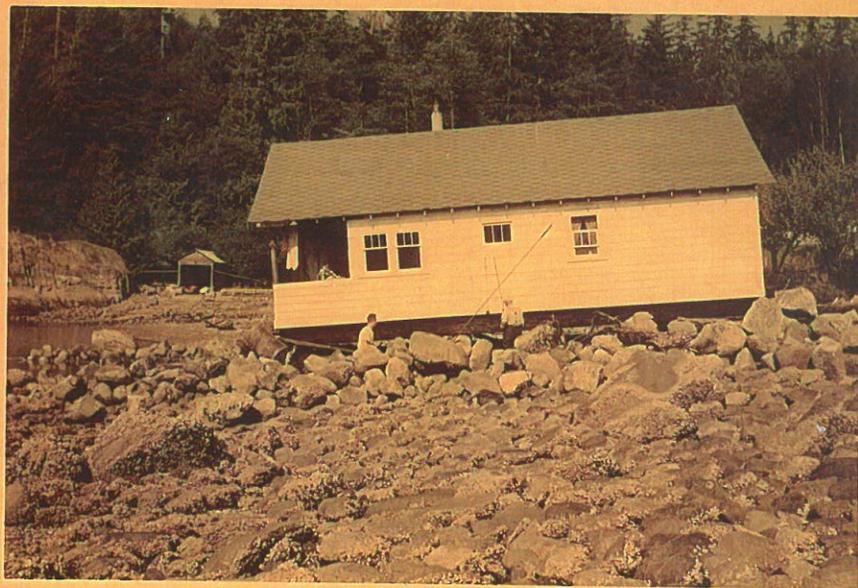
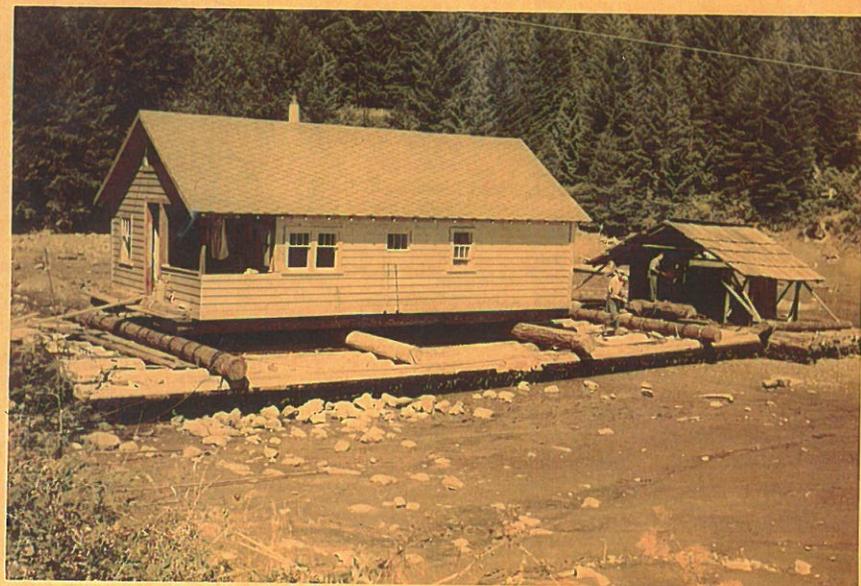
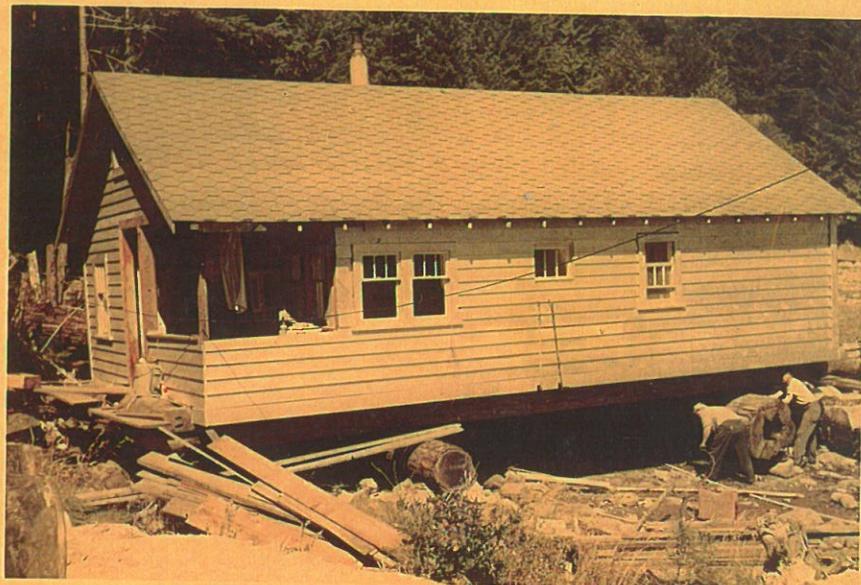
Mike dumped the logs off the truck into the water. He always claimed this and the truck driving were the most nerve-wracking part of the job. He had to watch out for kids as he approached camp. They could be playing anywhere -- on the road, in the clay under the dump. He always checked that clay bank under the dump. The kids had been told and told not to play there, but often were.

Logging wasn't a quick way to get rich. Or even a slow one. I remember Mike and I celebrating the first time we had enough money to pay our income tax all at one time. We usually paid it off by degrees.

Both Vi and Amy agreed. The most memorable thing about living in Von Donop Creek is the camaraderie. The sense of community, the trust we had in one another. It was a "together" kind of place.



ARCHIE LOVED TO ENTERTAIN THE CHILDREN AND TELL THEM STORIES. WHEN WE WERE IN THE CAR DRIVING ANYWHERE HE HAD A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE. THE POOR OLD MODEL A, WE WERE USUALLY HEAPED TO THE TOP WITH ALL THE KIDS AND THEIR STUFF.



SCOTTY + AMY MCKENZIES HOUSE BEING MOVED ONTO A FLOAT IN  
VONDONOP, AND UP THE BEACH IN WHALE TOWN, 1952.



TRUCK LOGGERS CONVENTION 1955: KEN HANSEN, WOMAN, HARRY HUCK,  
 LORRAINE McALLISTER (SINGER), ELTON ANDERSON, MARGARET (HUCK) MANN, STAN  
 ANDERSON, PAT ANDREWS, MIKE HERREWIG, SCOTTY McKENZIE, WOMAN, HAZEL  
 HANSEN, WOMAN, PEGGY (MUNRO) ANDERSON, DOT ANDREWS, VI HERREWIG, AMY MCK,  
ED KEATE (BROKER)?, WOMAN, DAL RICHARDS (BAND) MAN, WOMAN AT END

**Amy McKenzie's daughter, Elaine, who was ten years old when the McKenzie's moved from Von Donop to Whaletown in 1953 as told to Doreen Thompson:**

Some of my fondest memories of Von Donop Creek are sliding down the snow-covered hill on pieces of cardboard or whatever else we could find. Skating on the frozen saltwater in the bay or up at Barrett's Lake. First with bobskates, later with my first pair of figure skates.

Swimming in the warm water of the bay in summer. Playing on the beach and getting stuck in the clay below the log dump, losing our boots there. Being told not to do it again, only to wait until our mothers' backs were turned and going right back..

Fishing in the waterfall with poles made from alder branches, string lines and a pin for a hook. We didn't catch many fish but it was a lot of fun.

Picking purple violets on the point we called Purple Violet Island. Picking huckleberries along the road behind camp and being told not to break the branches. The Forestry would fine us five hundred dollars, Violet said. We stopped breaking off the branches.



Terry Herrewig, Spring  
2001

**An Interview With Terry Herrewig, son of Mike and Violet Herrewig  
As told to Dianne Hentschel, April 2001**

My recollection of Von Donop Creek must start about 1948. I was born in '44, the second youngest child in camp. Only Connie McKenzie was younger. Looking at your photograph of the camp, I see Jack and Jean McKenzie's house on the far left, then May and Elmer Ellingsens'—the same house that they have on Hague Lake today— then Scotty and Amy McKenzie's, followed by the little house that was originally brought in for my grandmother. Johnny (Jack) Manson lived in it for awhile after her time there. The last one, next to the creek, is our house. Dad sold it to Pat and Dot Andrews when we moved out of Von Donop. It burned down a few years later.

Jack Manson was a character. "Cutta, cutta, cutta" Jack. I'll always remember his Eagle Brand sweetened condensed canned milk. It was a real treat if he gave us kids a spoonful of that. Then there was his tomato soup in the frying pan.

One of my first recollections is of my dad taking me to Doug and Ilsa Forests' home at the head of the dock in Squirrel Cove--changing my diaper or something beneath a laundry-laden clothes rack.

One thing that really strikes me about life in Von Donop Creek is that I didn't know my Dad ever swore until one day when I happened to be out in the woods with him. When the men came home from work they left their bad language in the woods. Swearing in front of women and kids just wasn't done.

Families were knit into the business in gyppo logging operations, just as the business was part of family life. The men often spent summer evenings booming logs, weekends or shutdowns monkey wrenching machinery. Yet they were home for lunch, just a short walk from the workplace, or in along the boomsticks. Everybody contributed. The women gardened and cooked, kept the fire burning. Men who understood and liked mechanics did the monkey wrenching, others who were skilled in operating machinery did things like run the donkey.

Dad drove the truck and Scotty ran the donkey. I remember when I was walking home at noon one day and he picked me up in the truck. I was thrilled when he took me back up into the woods with him, rather than home for lunch. I got to see what went on up there, how my dad worked. I felt I was part of the business. That's what I mean by the two things being woven together. Everyone in the camp was part of both the family and the working life of our community.

The logging truck shed was near the dump. Maintenance was done there. There was a pit dug in the dirt floor for doing oil changes and repairs under the truck. There was a bit of a maintenance shed there too. One of the things in that shed was a hand-turned

grindstone with a water bath for sharpening axes.

One of my favourite summer recreations as a kid was breaking jackpots in front of the dump. This was in the days of flat booms, the logs weren't bundled on the truck. The tide would often be out when they were dumped, creating 'jackpots', like pile of giant pick-up-sticks. When the jackpots floated us kids would go out there and see if we could get a log rolling and break the jackpots up. I don't remember being able to swim when we were doing that. Playing in or on the water was a big part of every summer. There was probably a mother watching us, but I'm sure that if we hadn't watched out for each other one of us would have drowned.

Even though we had our differences, kids watched out for each other. I have a recollection of Bruce and Andy and I walking across a log over the creek. I fell off and caught myself hanging upside down in the water. I remember my life flashing by, short as it had been, before Bruce grabbed me and snatched me back to safety.

The still. I remember some of the kids dragging part of it out of the woods--rescuing a copper tubing cooling coil out of the inside. Uncle Jack McKenzie muttered something about the cops and we soon took it back in the bush where it belonged. The still produced something our parents called 'snag'. It would burn when you touched it with a match.

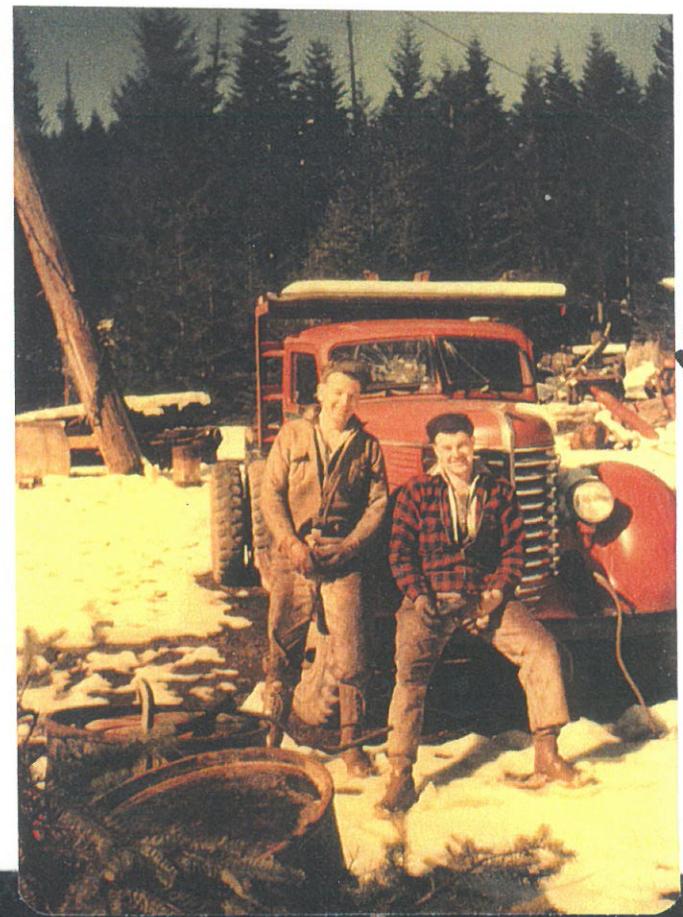
I also remember the snow, lots of snow. The cars were all snowed in. One winter the men built a toboggan. I remember it being used to bring groceries home from Squirrel Cove store. It was a long walk out there, with steep hills going out and coming back. Cold mornings. I remember cold mornings before the wood stove really got going.

The creek. (Von Donop Inlet was called Von Donop Creek by the residents of that time. There was also a small creek feeding into the inlet). Fishing in the creek was my pastime--fishing for trout below the waterfall in the creek behind the house. Hours and hours of my childhood were spent fishing in that creek. The creek was more than a place to fish, it was a place to pick berries and to assist the dog salmon that came up in the fall. The waterfall is close to the beach. One year some of us kids decided we should help the fish get past it. Clutching slippery, writhing dog salmon, we made our way up past the falls and deposited them back into the creek. The fact that they might be spawning below the falls and that our assistance wasn't needed at all, never entered our heads.

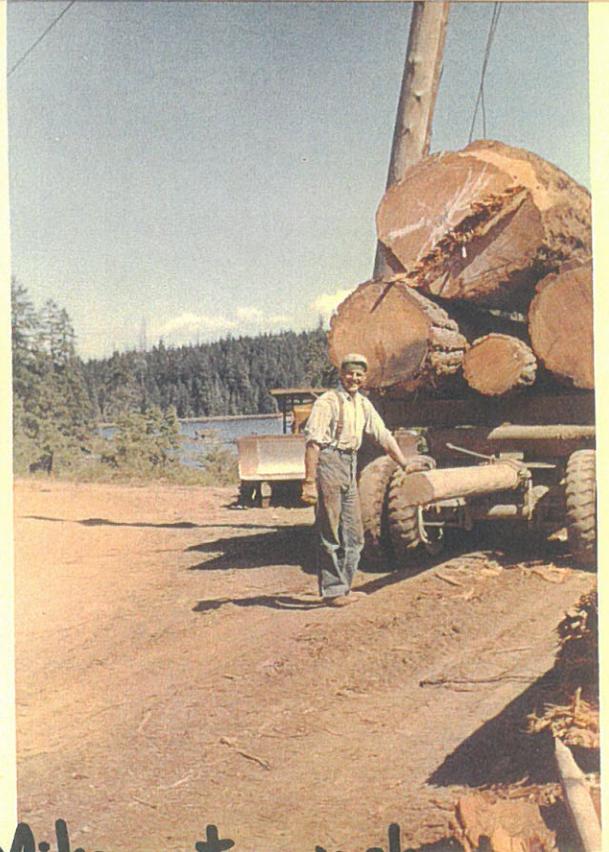
Play equipment. We had swings between trees. The McKenzie kids had monkey bars, but most of our time was spent playing in nature. Fishing, swimming, visiting 'purple violet island' (which was really a point not an island), skating on Barrett's Lake in winter, these were our pastimes.

Food. I haven't forgotten the powdered milk. Before we had a fridge, when we got fresh milk it was kept in a little 'hut' on the creek where the running water would keep it cool. Mom and all of the women canned a lot of food from the garden and meat that was

Look at the pay load on the "Diamond T."



Mike and Elmer  
take a  
breather.



Photos  
from  
Vi Herrewig's  
album.



Elmer and  
May Ellingsen  
with Andy  
Bruce and  
Shirley.

Mike at work.

bought by the side.

Going to 'boat day' at Squirrel Cove was a big deal for kids. It could mean a bottle of pop or a chocolate bar from the store. Even better, a camp order of groceries, or a bicycle might land on the dock from the Union Steamship.

Fuel came in by boat, in 45 gallon drums off-loaded onto a float that the men would pike-pole to shore. They used the old '60' cat to haul the drum off the flat and up in behind the log dump. When the old '60' wasn't being used for road building she was used as a dump machine for unloading the logging truck.

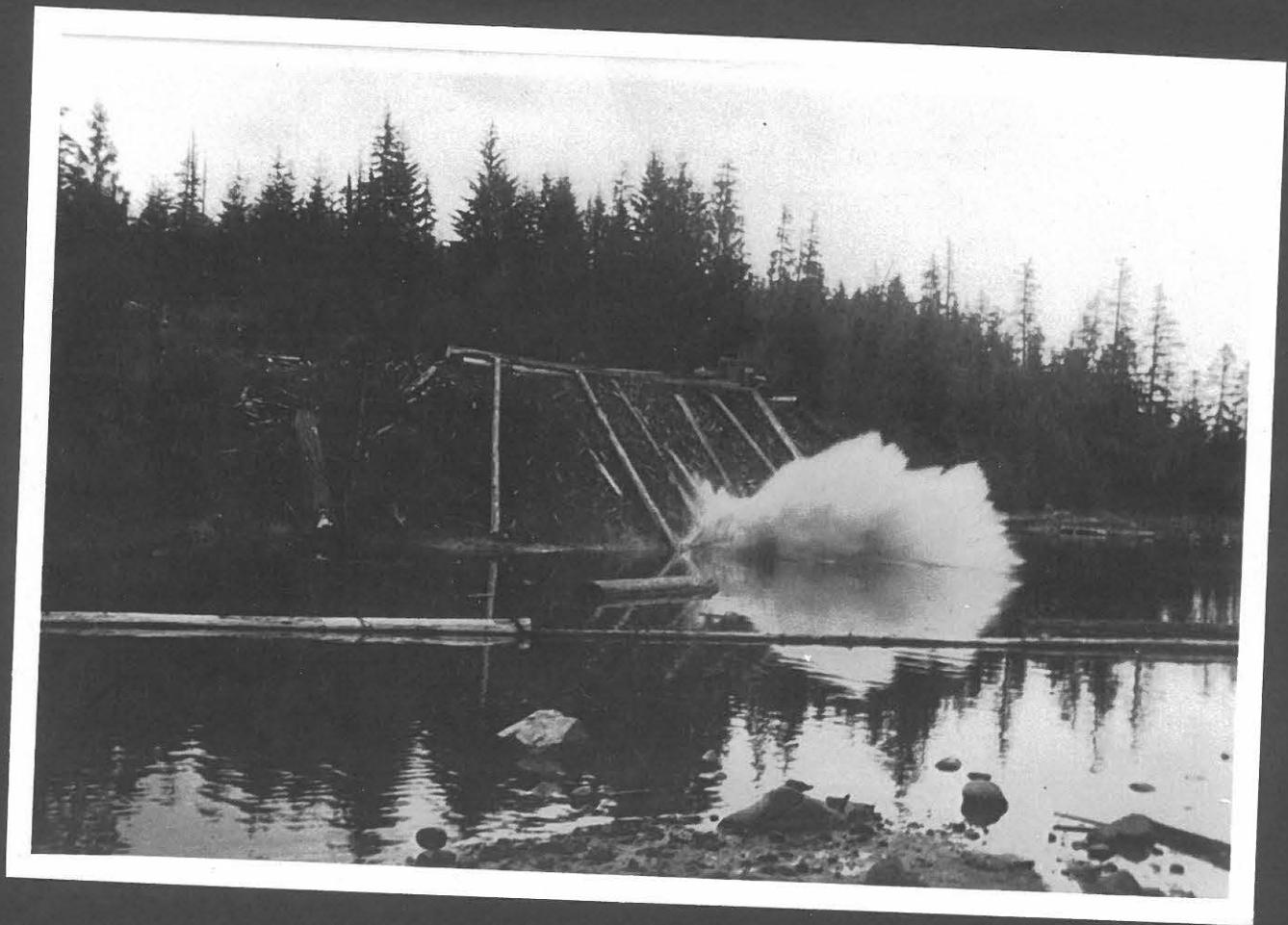
After the family moved out of the Creek and the camp closed down Dad and Scotty would drive in there to work. Eventually they moved a bunkhouse out to the north side of the mouth of the Creek and logged there for several years. We were living at Manson's then, Scotty was in Whaletown. They bought Linkletter's outfit, with a cat and arch for the rugged terrain that would not permit truck logging. It came with timer rights in Toba and Bute so they spent their last logging years in the inlets. In the late sixties they sold M and H to Bay Lumber who bought it more for the timber quota than for the equipment.

I was in about grade 10 in '59 or '60 when Dad and Scotty had the camp at the mouth of the creek. You could still buy a commercial fishing licence for a dollar. I went over there one summer, put a couple of poles on a plywood boat and went commercial fishing. I sold the fish at the scow in Whaletown, probably for about 25 cents a pound. I remember getting a few one and two dollar bills for all my fish.

The day of the gyppo logger was coming to a close. It was becoming too expensive, timber was farther back from the shore, or higher up the hillsides. Extensive road building through miles of forest or switch backing up sidehills was required before logging could even begin on a new claim. Government regulations were becoming more stringent. Stumpage and operating costs were increasing faster than the value of the logs. My family encouraged me to go into something else.

Tom and John McKenzie and I have talked about what growing up in the Von Donop Creek Logging community has meant to us over the years. None of the children from there ever ended up in jail or anything even close to it. There were values that were instilled in us just by being there surrounded by hardworking people who respected each other.

Several years after the camp was gone, Bruce Ellingsen and I went out there in his old Model A. A camping trip back to the past, back to our shared passion of fishing in the Creek.





the end