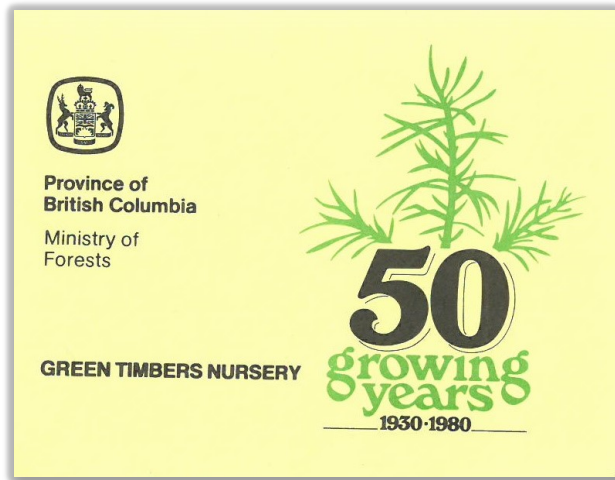


Planting the First Tree

March 15, 1930

Green Timbers Nursery, Surrey



On March 15, 1930 Delta MLA James W, Berry planted the first tree at the newly established (1929) Green Timbers Nursery in Surrey, BC marking the beginning of the province's reforestation and nursery program.

Twenty-two VIPs, a who's who in local, provincial, federal politics and forestry circles came from around the province each planting a tree in an area 100 feet by 100 feet, 11 rows of 11 trees.

The Green Timbers Inaugural Plantation was listed on the Canadian Register of Historic Places in March 2005.

The Green Timbers Inaugural Plantation is valued as the first reforestation project in British Columbia. Over 2,000 hectares of towering old growth trees once lined the Old Yale Wagon Road (now the Fraser Highway). This was the last virgin forest that remained along the Pacific Highway that stretched from San Diego, California to Surrey, British Columbia. Before the felling of the final tree, the British Columbia Forest service promised to set aside a fourteen-hectare reserve for replanting and this became the site of British Columbia's first production forest nursery, supplying seedlings for distribution throughout the Province. The reforestation began with an Inaugural Ceremony on March 15, 1930, which was aimed at attracting public attention to the planting scheme. The Inaugural Plantation was the site of this initial planting and twenty-six selected foresters, politicians, newspapermen, farmers and businessmen sponsored the planting of the original 121 seedlings.

The Green Timbers Inaugural Plantation is valued for the twenty-seven trees from the initial planting that survive at the site. They are significant for their maturity and height and as an indication of the original form of the forest.

The Green Timbers Inaugural Plantation is also significant as a pioneering initiative in the scientific study of forestry in British Columbia. In 1930, Green Timbers was established as a Provincial Forest Reserve, with a forestry training school and major tree nursery. Trees were carefully monitored and this information was used to increase the survival and growth of saplings planted throughout the Province, indicative of the importance of silviculture to the ongoing maintenance of British Columbia forests.

Today, including the Ministry of Forests area, the Green Timbers forest covers a total of 560 acres. It is a mix of the remnants of reforestation and natural regrowth. As a natural heritage, it is potentially one of the most spectacular urban forests in Canada.



Appearance of the Pacific Highway Before Logging

Bisected by the Pacific Highway, Green Timbers once belonged to a forest of giant trees which spread over 5,000 acres. This large tract of land was originally owned by the province and transferred to the Dominion of Canada as part of the railway belt when B.C. entered Confederation.

Originally the Yale Wagon Road to the interior, it was built by a company of Royal Engineers in 1875. In 1923 it was renamed the Pacific Highway when Surrey was linked by road to Blaine in Washington State.

People travelled from afar to view the 200' tall trees that lined the Pacific Highway. After completion, it became famous as the only remaining stretch of old-growth forest all the way from San Diego to Vancouver. As early as 1860, attempts were made to have the area designated for park purposes. Nevertheless, all 5,000 acres were clear-cut. The last giant trees were felled in 1930 despite a campaign to save them.

Attempts were made to negotiate a land transfer with lumberman Malcom Briggs King, partner with Bruce Mackenzie Farris in the King-Farris Lumber Company who had purchased the timber rights. Unfortunately, the Province was unable to justify paying King's demands for compensation, and thus it was logged for their sawmill (King Lumber Mill) in Newton.

PLANTING

Inaugural Planting



R1008

R1008

Wilkinson, Mar. 15, '30

J.W. Berry, M.L.A., Planting the First Tree

SPENCER

BARR

HARBORD

BERRY

CHRISTMAS

MANSON

CAVERHILL

ST-CLAIR

WALMSLEY



R1016

R1016

Wilkinson, Mar. 15, '30.

Captain Michael Manson, M.L.A.

R1008 J.W. Berry, M.L.A. Planting the First Tree

Col. Nelson Spencer—MLA for Vancouver City.

Percy M. Barr—Head, Research Division (BCFS).

Victor Harbord-Harbord—Reporter, The Province Newspaper.

J.W. Berry— MLA for Delta.

Ethel Christmas—local representative.

Capt. Alexander Malcom (Michael) Manson— MLA for Omineca (Prince George-Mackenzie).

Peter Z. Caverhill—Chief Forester, Province of BC.

Robert (Bob) C. St. Clair—Regional Forester, Vancouver District (BCFS).

Ed Walmsley— Crown Timber Agent, Dominion Forest Branch.

R1016 Captain Michael Manson, M.L.A.

Capt. Alexander Malcom (Michael) Manson— MLA for Omineca (Prince George-Mackenzie).



R1010

R1010

Col. Nelson Spencer Wilkinson, Mar.15, '30

R1010

Ethel Christmas—local representative, who was active in Cloverdale and area farm fairs.

Col. Nelson Spencer—MLA for Vancouver City.

Sources:

1. The Giant Killers: Forestry, Conservation and Recreation in the Green Timbers Forest, Surrey, British Columbia to 1930. David J. Sandquist. August 2000.
2. The Green Timbers Plantations—A British Columbia Heritage, British Columbia Forest History Newsletter. Forest History Association of British Columbia. March 1988.
3. Green Timbers Inaugural Plantation. The Canadian Register of Historic Places. historicplaces.ca
4. 2021..005.001, Photo Album, Nursery Operations (Green Timbers), BC Forest Service Collection, BC Forest Discovery Centre.