

(June 2021)

Logging and an Epidemic Combine on Denman Island in July of 1927

by Graham Brazier

Disclaimer: The article that appears below was not motivated by the loaded logging truck that immediately preceded me and was the last vehicle to be loaded on the 11:45 sailing from Denman West on Thursday May 20, however, it provided me with an extra hour and the opportunity to reflect on life on Denman Island: past and present.

I found the article that follows fascinating for so many reasons that it is reproduced in full below. It originally appeared, ninety four years ago, on page 1 of the ***Courtenay Free Press*** , on July 28, 1927

Denman Island

“The farmers of the island are all busy getting in their oat hay, which is a bountiful crop; the last few days have been very hot and has made the hay quickly.

The fishermen at Yellow Rock and at Hornby Island are not doing very well this week. They did very well about a week ago and expect another run of fish with [the] next new moon.

Loggers are Busy

The Henry Bay Logging Company is running full blast since they put in a railway. They employ about 60 men and their output is about 75,000 feet per day. They are considering putting their caterpillar tractor to work again which will give employment to a number of men.

The Denman Island Logging Company is logging again after a shutdown of several weeks. They have a good system of logging, having dammed up a swamp in their timber limits into which they log and float their logs down to the side of the swamp nearest the beach. From there they fore-and-aft to the salt chuck.

The Denman Island Logging Company have sold all their cedar logs which they had in the salt water.

Mr. Bert Higgins is logging now with two trucks and doing fine. He has employed Francis Graham to run his donkey engine and has contracted the booming of the logs to Mr. Carfrae. Mr. Higgins went to Vancouver on business.

Mr. Harvey Piercy will shortly resume logging after a shut-down to put in his hay.

Mrs. Thomas Isbister is visiting friends in Victoria and at Cowichan Lake.

Mr. Geo. Dalziel and his daughter Muriel had as their guests this week Miss Scott, Miss Meadows, Mr. Thornberry and the new Cow-Tester for Comox district; also Mr. and Mrs. Morton, of Vancouver.

There has been an epidemic of measles which attacked [sic] some of our best known families. Some of them were quite ill but are now recovering from its ill effects.

Mrs. P. Doheny and family are spending their holiday at Baikie's Beach which is becoming a popular holiday resort with its good swimming beach and good spring water.

Mr. Albert Graham is kept busy these days ferrying cars across Baynes Sound; in fact he is kept so busy that he has to engage Mr. Jas. Street to help him.

Two of our most popular young ladies, Miss Alma Scott and Miss May Pickles, intend next month to take a trip along the west coast of Vancouver Island. The writer envies them their trip which will be most enjoyable this time of year.

The long looked for wharf gang has arrived to fix up the wharf. It is about six months since we had the the C.P.R. boats call on account of not being able to tie up. The money to fix this wharf was available months ago but owing to Mr. A.W. Neill's absence in the Old Country no action was taken until his return to Ottawa. Mr. Neill was also the means of having a ferry slip built at Buckley Bay which is a good thing for the settlers of Denman Island and the travelling public. "

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