

CHARLIE KLEIN (1892 - 1960)

One colourful character in Texada's history was logger Charlie Klein. Margaret Woodhead saw him as a "Bull of the Woods" man. At 6 feet tall and powerfully-built, Charlie was renowned for being able to lift a full drum of gasoline onto a truck.

Noted as one of the "finest axemen around these parts" Charlie would test the sharpness of his axe on his arm hairs before making his undercuts which turned out as smooth as if planed.

The Klein family (children of German immigrants) purchased an 80-acre property in Pender Harbour allowing their 9 children to farm and later subdivide. In 1913 their sons (Klein Brothers Logging Company) started logging on the coast with teams of powerful Clydesdale horses (one weighing over a ton) dragging the logs to the beach on greased skids.

Kleins' horse logging came to Texada in the 1930's when they moved operations to Mouat Bay. Charlie built bunkhouses and sank the CP steamship *Princess Beatrice* to use as a breakwater.

In winter Charlie would tend traplines, camping on beaches along Sabine Channel. He thought nothing of rowing to "Kleindale" (Pender Harbour) to cut firewood for his mom. Once he rowed to the hospital at Garden Bay to get treatment for a nasty thumb wound delivered by a dying raccoon.

"Charlie loved his horses," remarked Texada pioneer Joe Pillat. In fact, he had no appreciation for anything "mechanical."

Once at the Mouat Bay site brother Pete attempted to show Charlie how to operate a cat. When it was time to stop Charlie panicked and started pulling all the levers, shouting "Whoa!" The cat crashed through the walls of two bunkhouses finally stopping just short of the water!

Despite appearances Charlie had another side. He planted pansies. He wrote humorous songs and poems and was a great storyteller. In retirement he enjoyed pub nights and was a hit with the ladies.

Charlie transferred his Texada properties to his son, Victor, who continued to live on the island. The logging operations were sold to Oke Nyvall and partners.

It is fitting that Charlie's gravesite at the Kleindale cemetery had to be expanded by dynamite to accommodate this "larger than life" character.



Klein Logging (from Ray Phillips *The Little Green Valley*)