

## WOODHEAD BROTHERS LOGGING - A FAMILY AFFAIR

It was more than a nature walk that drew the young sisters Margaret and Vida Shairp down the 5-mile forested trail from Van Anda to visit a Crescent Bay logging site. They were fascinated by the spring-board and crosscut saw activity but even more by the loggers themselves - the shirtless, sweating Woodhead brothers, Kirby and Cecil.

The sisters eventually married the two brothers (Kirby-Margaret, Cecil-Vida) and Woodhead Brothers Logging became a true family affair.

Twenty-five years earlier (1914) the Woodhead parents, Willis and Alice, had established a market farm on 85 acres at Crescent Bay. Their sons worked at Blubber Bay's Pacific Lime Company until the 1938 strike when they were blacklisted for providing eggs and milk to striking miners. They decided to try logging to help make ends meet.

Although they feared getting into debt, by 1942 their little company was successful in replacing their work horse with a Cat and a donkey engine. Working together the brothers and sisters proved to be an efficient team.

Kirby was the master mechanic. He manned the donkey engine and repaired the equipment. Margaret recalled (in a 2003 interview with Ted Ross) that their living room floor was often covered with machine parts awaiting cleaning.

Although he feared heights, Cecil climbed the spar trees but was happier setting chokers at ground level. Margaret was the whistle-punk while Vida became "camp cook." Later, Margaret drove the truck (the second woman on Texada to get a licence) and risked chilly spills as she worked on the log booms, often at night when the tides were best.

Logs were hauled by tractor and truck to Maple Bay where the booms awaited a tow. It is reported that the brothers "never drank on the job" but enjoyed Crown Royal to celebrate success when the tug took away the booms. (photo: Left to Right - Cecil, Phil, Kirby with tug operators).

The third brother, Phil ("Lumpy") along with wife, Frieda, also operated their own small logging company, Frigid Aqua, for 30 years.

Woodhead Brothers Logging folded in 1976 but the name remains today in "Woodhead Farms" where Willis's great-grandson Brad and wife, Dawn, continue to offer produce from their 109-year old family homestead.



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