

WELCOME TO “PL” AT BLUBBER BAY

As the ferry *Tachek* approached Blubber Bay wharf in August, 1977, a tall stone column engraved with the letters “PL” welcomed us to Texada for the first time. How did they know we were coming? (LOL)

It was soon apparent that “PL” referred not to the new teacher (myself) but to Pacific Lime Company which had managed the Blubber Bay limestone quarries (and the entire townsite) for over 45 years.

Some time after the company took over the quarry in 1910 two masonry stone pillars, one on either side of the dock, were erected to greet arrivals. (photo)

Shining like two bright eyes atop the columns, the large round lights mounted on iron supports would have been a welcome harbour beacon on dark nights.

It is reported that one morning an agitated Chinese worker rushed into the office. Pointing to the dock he exclaimed, “One eye. One eye!!” Sure enough one of the light fixtures was out.

Both pillars remained until 1955 when more space was needed to accommodate traffic from the new 5-car ferry, the *Atrevida*. One column was demolished.

It was rumoured that a bottle of good whiskey was enshrined in the base of each column during construction. However, long-time resident Ben Nicholas reported that “the keen-eyed demolition crew didn’t even find an empty - not surprising, knowing the masonry crew involved!”

In 2000 when BC Ferries expanded their parking area the remaining column had to be moved. The stones were numbered, disassembled and the pillar was rebuilt uphill.



Ashgrove Cement Company and Texada Heritage Society added a plaque to honour the contributions of men and women “of diverse cultural backgrounds who built the logging and limestone industries on Texada.”

As far as the whiskey is concerned, Ted Thomson, manager of Ashgrove in 2000, reports that none was found in the base of the second column either.

Was this yet another old “Texada Tall Tale?”

Peter Lock

Texada Island Heritage Society