



Interview

James "Jim" D Clark

Woodlands Manager

Interviewed by
Peter J. Murphy



Part of the Forest History Program Interview Series

June 12 1997

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fRI *Research*
Informing Land & Resource Management



About the Forest History Program at fRI Research

fRI Research, originally the Foothills Model Forest, has been conducting research in sustainable land and forest management in Alberta since 1992. The positive impacts from the application of this research (e.g. Grizzly bears, watershed, forest history) to improving forest management and resource sustainability can be seen across Western Canada and beyond. The Forest History Program began in 1996 when Pete Murphy, Bob Stevenson and Bob Udell began a project to record the natural and management history of its Hinton Forest. This project soon expanded to add more reports and to encompass the entire model-forest land base. The program has produced a series of seven books and e-books including an Ecotour, an Ecotour App for west central Alberta, one DVD project and a series of reports about the evolution of adaptive forest management in the West Central region of Alberta.

Learn more at fhp.fRIresearch.ca

The Forest History Program Interview Series

Between 1997 and 2000, the Forest History Program conducted 33 interviews with various people who played important roles in, or were connected otherwise with the development of the remarkable forest management operation at the Hinton Forest of Weldwood of Canada. These were background information that would be used in a series of books and reports that would follow, all initiated by one book project linked to Weldwood’s 40th anniversary celebrations in Hinton in 1997. Some of these interviews are posted to the fRI Research website for general reading, others are available only with permission for research purposes. All interviews were professionally edited to retain content but improve clarity but preserve content.

Dr. Peter Murphy—Interviewer

Interviewer Dr. Peter Murphy is Professor Emeritus in Forestry at the University of Alberta, where he taught and conducted research in forest policy and forest fire management from 1973 to 1995, during which time he also held positions of Chair of Forest Science and Associate Dean for Forestry in the Faculty of Agriculture & Forestry. During his time at the University he was active in promoting the study of forest history and its importance as guidance for the advancement of forest science today. As part of this he initiated and conducted a number of important interviews with key players in Alberta’s forest history, most notably Des Crossley—Hinton’s first Chief Forester—and his counterpart in the Alberta Forest Service, Reg Loomis who together established the foundation of Alberta’s forest management agreement system. Dr. Murphy is the Chair of the Forest History Association of Alberta, and has been a member of the Forest History Program team at fRI Research since the program began in 1996, where he has authored and co-authored a number of books and reports.

Interview Date: June 12 1997



FORWARD

This interview with Jim Clark was conducted by Peter Murphy in 1997. It provides perspective and clarifies points made in Jim Clark's memoir, *Forester*, with names thinly disguised or not disguised at all. This memoir, edited to focus on the Hinton story, is also available from the Adaptive Forest Management/History Program at fRI Research.

Jim Clark was born and raised in Nanaimo, British Columbia. He studied forestry at the University of British Columbia, graduating in 1949. That year, he was one of eight UBC graduates hired by Eric Huestis to work for the Alberta Forest Service. These included Bob Steele, Stan Hughes, Victor Heath, Charlie Jackson, Owen Bradwell, John Hogan and Trevor Charles. In 1951 he became assistant superintendent of the Rocky/Clearwater Forest Reserve. He then went to Kamloops, B.C. where he served with the BC Forest Service for three years.

Jim Clark's career at Hinton started in 1955, as assistant chief forester. In 1966, he was assistant woodlands manager to Stan Hart, when he resigned to become woods manager for the new pulpmill being developed in Prince Albert Saskatchewan by Parsons and Whittemore. When Stan Hart left Hinton in 1968 to return to a St. Regis operation in Maine, Jim Clark was hired back to replace him as woodlands manager, where he remained until he retired in 1985.

Among his other accomplishments, he served terms as president of the Canadian Institute of Forestry (CIF), as well as the Alberta Forest Products Association (AFPA). He is also credited with providing the inspiration as well as the organizational resources to design and implement a forestry/wildlife program at the Hinton forest, the first such industrial program in Alberta.

Jim Clark died on August 13, 2007. This interview by Pete Murphy was conducted to clarify and expand on aspects of Jim Clark's memoir *Forester* in which he alludes to many of the events described in this interview.



INTERVIEW

June 12, 1997

Murphy

This is an interview with Jim Clark at his home in Hinton on June 12, 1997. Good morning, Jim, and thanks very much for accommodating me. What would be interesting to begin the interview would be to get some personal background about you—things that conditioned you towards forestry. It would be interesting to hear about where you were raised, where you went to school, the people and events that suggested that you should take forestry, and how you pursued your career through university.

Clark

OK, Peter. I'll start off by telling you I was born in Nanaimo, British Columbia on Vancouver Island in 1924, and I went to school in Nanaimo at St. Anne's Academy, through my high school years into around 1939 or 1940. At that time, on I went into the University of British Columbia (UBC) at Vancouver and took a degree in forestry and graduated in 1949. That's a nutshell perspective of me living and growing up in British Columbia.



Jim Clark (3rd from left, front row) as a member of St. Anne's Cadets, Nanaimo (date unknown)

But my leaning toward forestry came about because I took summer jobs at a place called Youbou on Vancouver Island on Cowichan Lake because I needed to make money during the summer months to continue my education at UBC. It was my Uncle Bill, who I lived with three summers in a row at Youbou while working in the BC Forest Products (BCFP) sawmill there, that led me into forestry. It was his exhorting me to go to university and take forestry simply because we were surrounded by forest at that location on Vancouver Island. We were working the sawmill with the timber of British Columbia and converting it into lumber, timber, chips, and sawdust. So I did. I went into forestry, and, as I said, I graduated in '49.

Eric Huestis had interviewed a number of prospective graduates at UBC in 1949 for jobs in Alberta on graduation. He gave offers of jobs to eight people from my class who graduated in 1949, some of whom were



Bob Steele, Stan Hughes, Victor Heath, Charlie Jackson, Owen Bradwell, Jim Clark. Also John Hogan and Trev Charles—(but not for long, as they went federal).

Murphy Was Bill Bloomberg one?

Clark Bloomberg was already here in 1949 when we arrived. He was doing a lot of cruising surveys in the Dutch Creek-Racehorse Creek area in southern Alberta when we arrived. I left here in 1952, and I don't know what Bloomberg did but he ended up in Victoria at the Pacific Forestry Research Centre on Burnside Street.

Murphy He went back and got a Ph.D. in Forest Pathology, I gather. John Hogan was another one.

Clark Hogan was another man in our class also one of those that was offered a job and came. All of the chaps that I've enumerated, I think it can be said, had successful careers. Many of them are still alive, and we visit each other. Thank God we're sensible enough to do it, because it's important.

Murphy My recollection of 1949—that's the year I started at the University of New Brunswick (UNB)—was that there was a pretty good demand for foresters at that time. What convinced you as a native British Columbian to forsake other jobs and come here to Alberta?

Clark Simply because the offer that Huestis made to me, to all of us, was quite intriguing in the way he handled himself. He had a notice on one of the bulletin boards in the UBC administrative complex of a meeting on a certain lunch hour at UBC. At the meeting, he made a pitch about Alberta—Alberta's forest and Alberta's needs for foresters. He told an intriguing story—it was much of the allure associated with Hollywood movies—you know, riding a horse through the mountains, seeing big grizzly bears, miles and miles of untouched timber, and so it went. And he offered us all \$266 a month as a salary to start employment in Alberta, and we all took the offer. We all arrived around May. Bob Steele, John Hogan I believe, and some of the others were assigned to the forest inventory program that was being initiated in the province here under Reg Loomis. So those chaps assigned to the 1949 to 1952 or 1953 forest inventory all went down to Toronto under the Photographic Surveys Corporation.

Vic Heath and I were sent all around the province to look at the administrative setup of the Alberta Forest Service (AFS), and we were obligated to make a report to Huestis on our impressions of the organization; the restructuring of district headquarters, or regional, forest headquarters, and the ranger headquarters assigned to the region.

In the course of our travels, which lasted from about May until the beginning of November, we met a man named Delahay, and he also turned out to be a forest consultant hired by Eric Huestis to do a study of the administrative setup of the Alberta Forest Service and to make a report to Huestis for improvements, changes, etc. The interesting thing was he had a good bottle of scotch one night, and we drank it, all three of us, and we made a pledge that we were going to keep in touch, as we saw each other travelling around the province to compare notes, which we also did. We made our report and Delahay made his, and, strangely enough, apparently they were very much alike—I don't know why, but they were. It was a funny, funny feeling to start a job in the new province with a watchdog sort of chasing you around, up your bum or up your tail or something. We had a few laughs at it.

Murphy Was that report put into effect? Did it have an influence?



- Clark** I don't think we saw any big changes to be made. You know, there was a lot of logic in the way it was structured with headquarters in Grande Prairie, Peace River, Whitecourt, Edson, etc. It seemed to be very logical, and we didn't have a great deal to hammer about. One of the criticisms was we thought the action on forest fires was too slow.
- Murphy** Interesting comment, yes.
- Clark** It was true because we ran into forest fires up the Athabasca River from Whitecourt, and they had to get there by boat, if you can believe it, and that took a lot of time because you couldn't ferry much equipment by boat. We talked about airplanes because there were lakes in there, and Jack Janssen was in charge of protection at the time, and he wasn't much in favour of airplanes. That was the one thing that struck us as peculiar—the slowness or lack of dedication to smash at the fires in a big hurry. Other than that, we didn't see a great deal of change that we recommended.
- Murphy** Among your papers to which you referred, do you have a copy of that report?
- Clark** No, I don't. So anyway, Vic Heath became, as I remember it, the first director of the forestry school at Kananaskis. I helped him at the beginning. I went down there for two months, I believe—my wife and I were down there in 1950 or thereabouts.
- Murphy** 1951.
- Clark** 1951 maybe. We lived and worked in pretty rustic conditions, even in terms of educational facilities, but it was a beginning. I left Vic and I went back to Rocky Mountain House, where I had been assigned as assistant superintendent of the Rocky/Clearwater forest reserve. I had a condition. The first boss I had there was Herb Hall—that's enough said. The second boss I had there was a guy named Ted Keats. He was an alcoholic, and it was his personality and his imbibing that got me irritated to the point that I decided to quit and take a job in British Columbia. I had talked to Eric Huestis about the situation. I told him I was going to resign because of the situation. He asked me not to resign and he would find me a different job. We agreed on a one-month period, in which he would do that, create that action. It never happened, so I just resigned and left Alberta and went to Kamloops, BC where I worked with the BC Forest Service for three years—1952–1955.
- Murphy** Could I just get you to sketch briefly what the nature of your work was in Kamloops?
- Clark** I was the district silviculturalist in Kamloops and district, which meant that I was responsible for looking at all applications for timber disposition in the Kamloops district, which went from Williams Lake in the north to Osoyoos on the border of the United States in the south, and east to Revelstoke and west as far as Cache Creek and some of the Fraser drainage. It kept me busy. I also had two marking crews who were employed steadily on marking timber for cutting. We marked timber in the various timber types in the Kamloops district, particularly in the yellow pine/Douglas fir dry belt association, because there was a need for control in the yellow pine harvest to leave seed trees adequately spaced for regeneration, and the Douglas fir was about the same. In the white spruce types in the highland country, we did some marking, but there was a thinning marking more than a selection marking for improved growth. That's pretty well it.
- It was an interesting job. It was an interesting aspect of, in reflection, what we're hearing about today about selection cutting. I mean, selection cutting went on in the Kamloops and the Prince George area for years and



years and years. Unfortunately, in the Prince George area, they had a catastrophic experience in that the white spruce types up there were subject to blow down, and, in spite of all the careful marking for cutting and the harvest, there were horrendous areas of blow-down that required a program of salvage logging. We didn't experience the same thing in Kamloops. It's just a reflection of what we're talking about today, and we've forgotten all about history.

One day in June of 1955, I got a phone call from Des Crossley, from Calgary or Hinton, asking me if I would consider coming to work for this new company at Hinton, Alberta called Northwestern Pulp and Power Limited, made up of two partners—North Canadian Oils in Calgary and St. Regis Corporation in New York. He invited me to come up and see the place and talk to him about it. Well, I had been here in 1949 with Charlie Jackson—here in Hinton, down at Brule, down to Mountain Park, in Cadomin, and those places—as an employee of the Alberta Forest Service, so I knew what I was coming to. But I had paid no attention really to what Hinton was all about, and it was so little that I forgot all about it. So it was a coincidence that he should call because I had some work to do at Valemount on marking on approval of some timber harvest.

I made an arrangement that I would take my car as far as Valemount because there was no road beyond Valemount at that time. I left my vehicle there and took a train up here to Hinton, met Des, and discussed what the job was all about. The job that I would be assigned was assistant chief forester, which I didn't know what that meant and neither did Des at the time, even though he was the chief forester. I said I would go back to Kamloops and talk it over with my family and see what we would do. So, in August, we did do something by coming to work here in Hinton, Alberta.

Murphy What date did you arrive?

Clark August, 1955.

Murphy One of the things that we're interested in Jim, is what Des told you. What did he tell you about the job? What was it that excited him about it?

Clark He was excited because St. Regis and North Canadian had finally come to an agreement and had had this area audited in terms of the possibility of a pulpmill. The dedication for that pulpmill was at Edson originally. But when they got thinking about Edson, the subject of water supply came up and how they had just taken for granted that there was adequate supply of water in the McLeod River, which was true in the spring flush but wasn't true in the months of July or August, or even in the winter months. And so they studied what limited records they had on the water supply in the McLeod and had to make a decision to change the location of the pulpmill to some other location than Edson, which upset the people in Edson, naturally.

There was a minister from Edson, Norman Willmore, who was dedicated to his constituents, and they showed their liking for him in many ways. He was a good guy. He just had a weakness, but he was a good guy. So they had to change it (the pulpmill site) to another location and the closest location that they could find with any sense to it, vis a vis having a railroad, highway, water and a townsite, was here in Hinton, and so they located here. That was the decision. It wasn't long before it was a fracas with Edson. Every time an employee went to Edson, they didn't fare very well.

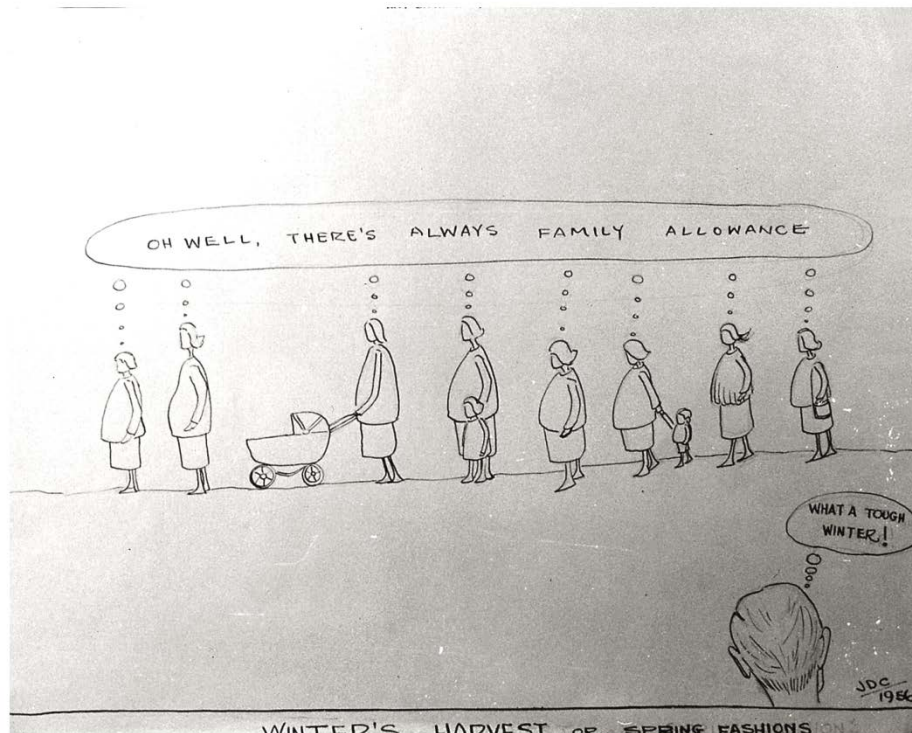
But this is what Des told me: that he had been hired on the promise and premise that he would have a free hand to practise forest management within the scope of the Forest Management Agreement (FMA), which was



signed in 1954. Des, in his astute way of doing things, had read that thing to the point that he had practically eaten the agreement and knew it fairly well, within his ability to understand it. I mean, there were clauses in there that didn't make any sense—like what a "sawlog tree" was. That thing went on for years before there was a study done on it. Des asked me to do it because I was a superintendent in the south district and Larry Kennedy—later director of silviculture for Alberta (ed.) — was assigned to me for one or two months. So we did a study on it and got the surprise of our life—it was one hell of a big tree, and there weren't many of them that existed. So the government withdrew that clause. But these are the things that were in the agreement.

Des was enthusiastic because the New York corporate employees had made him feel good about the opportunity. They were new to the forests of Alberta, so they had to rely on somebody. They had offered it to Reg Loomis, and Reg had declined it. He just didn't like working for industry—nothing wrong with that.

Des told me as much as he could—accommodation was the big feature in everybody's mind because the company had bought this group of little summer cottages down here on Dorin's ranch, which is down here—I'm sitting on part of it—and that's where we were going to live. Well, they weren't winterized cabins. So the company was going to do all the good things. Pete Hart was the communicator of company policy, when he would come up here about every two weeks. He was from New York. And he, of course, couldn't do all the things he told us they were going to do because they had never told him to do them—he'd made them up. In other words, the company was going to build houses and rent them to the employees at very reasonable prices, and they'd be up in no time flat. So we lived through a winter of agony and perseverance—one of the coldest winters anybody had experienced in Alberta—in those cabins. The propane wouldn't flow, wouldn't go to gas, so we had no heat—just imagine it. And there were pregnant women—I did cartoons of them as they multiplied—we had to have something to laugh at.



WINTER'S HARVEST OR SPRING FASHIONS ON
Jim Clark's cartoon of the pregnant wives 1955–1956.



So everybody got the surprise of their life when what people thought they were going to get weren't quite the same as what they actually got. The company paid for all the propane we used, thank God for that, because we used lots of it. But these are stupid little things. But when the water froze up and the sewer froze up, they weren't stupid little things, they were major things.

Murphy

But you coped.

Clark

People had to travel all the way from Jasper to work here during construction because of the accommodation here. They had a construction camp that partly froze up over there—house trailers and what not. So that was a tough deal. It wasn't a problem of practising forest management, practising management planning—it was the practice of survival that took up most of our time. And then forest fires started in 1956 and that took up an awful lot of one year—from May until the end of September—and people did nothing else but fight fire.

Murphy

I'll be coming to some of these things as we go along, to ask you more about. But I'm interested, too, in your impression when you first arrived. An interesting comment was that Des wasn't really quite sure what your job would be. But what did it turn out to be? What was your main mandate?

Clark

Our main mandate was handling the personnel assigned to cruising, determining road locations, helping Philip Gimbarzevsky on photography, and laying down mapping and what not. It was a case of people doing anything that was assigned to them.



NWP&P Timber Cruisers, late 1950s. L_R: Bob MacKellar, Ken Casey, John Miller, Oswald Hansen, Jim Clark (Jim Clark Collection)

Murphy

But who decided? First of all you had to ...

Clark

I was in charge of most of the guys, like on cruising and road location.

Murphy

But before that someone had to decide where the first cutting was going to take place so you could ...



Clark Well, that was a very simple one. It was Camp 1 simply because it was just off the highway, and there was a lake there, a water supply, so that was going to be camp number one.

Murphy Were you involved in that decision?

Clark Sure, and so was Crossley, except he never paddled a canoe across Brule Lake every day to cruise timber, but we did. I went across lots of days, but the cruising crew would all go across. And why? Because it was easier to get into some of the timber via the lake than it was the highway.

Murphy Oh I see, you could drive to Brule and then ...

Clark Drive to Brule, there's the timber there, and we have to define where the sand dunes end because we can't cut in among the sand dunes, otherwise the sand is going to keep encroaching. We didn't have aerial photography at the time, except some old stuff from the Forest Service. Those are the kinds of decisions that were made. We're going to cruise the whole Camp 1 compartment. I think we called it McLeod 1. All those niceties, the beautiful maps and the age class colouring, that came later.

Then we had another problem that none of us knew we had. Des and I were coming back from a government meeting one day, and we were talking in the car about how the crews are doing in the burn area in the Gregg River. None of us knew why we were cruising timber in the burned timber area in the Gregg River. There was thirty-two square miles of it, but Gordon McNabb had wanted it cruised to know how much was in the green patches. It didn't make any sense to us, but we were cruising, and I had Bob MacKellar in charge of it down there, and I would go down once a week or something like that. And it wasn't easy to get to the Gregg. You'd four-wheel drive down seismic lines and anything else you could find. So nobody went in there casually—they went in under great difficulty and effort.

So Des and I were coming back from Edmonton one day and I asked, "How's the cruise going in the Gregg River?" He said, "I don't know right now, but I was down there last week—it's going pretty good. But you know, the guys are asking a lot of questions—why are they doing it to start with? There's a hell of a lot of burned stuff that we're cruising and mapping. There's a bit of green stuff, and maybe that's where we're putting our emphasis." And I said, "You know, Bob has told me he has seen Albert Eisenberg down there with his assistant blazing trees for roads, and obviously something's going to happen, but nobody has told us that we're going to put a major road down in there." "Oh, that's funny," he replied.

Well, we just got home, and here Des was phoning my house before I even got there. I dropped him off at his house, and then I went to my place at the Pan-abode Apartments, and my wife said, "Des just phoned and he wants you to phone him right back." I had just left him. So I phoned him, and he said "We've got a big surprise—we've got a meeting on Monday morning because Gordon McNabb just got fired." "What?" "Yeah, while you and I were in Edmonton, Pete Hart came up here and fired McNabb because McNabb had been buying cats through his brother and building roads that we don't need. So we have a meeting on Monday."

Murphy Who selected McNabb in the first place?

Clark Pete Hart, as I understand it. You see, St. Regis had a logging operation at Godbout in Quebec, so Pete Hart actually lived at Godbout and honchoed that operation for a number of years. I think Stan Hart grew up there—



for part of the time anyway—and that's how Stan's got dual citizenship. It was Pete Hart that got a hold of Gordon, and he worked for Marathon Corporation on the north shore of Lake Superior.

Murphy It was interesting then that while you were cruising timber for Camp 1, for example, and Des presumably was chief forester, there was not a close relationship between the two about where the next patch of timber was going to come from.

Clark Well, we were waiting. We didn't even have an allowable annual cut (AAC). We didn't know how much we were allowed to cut. I mean, if you look at the original FMA, you won't find a figure in there, I don't think. Maybe it is. I've got a copy somewhere. But it was Eric Huestis who set the initial cut. We sat in a meeting one day, Crossley and myself, and it might have been this meeting that I just talking about coming back from. But anyway, we had to get into well, how much can we cut? How are we going to manage this area?

We had had some ideas about working circles, and so we had discussed it, and a lot of people got into it, like Frank Leduc from the St. Regis division in Deferiet, New York. We had an outline of a map from the Forest Service, but we didn't know how we were going to split it up until we started looking at the logic of the geography of the area. The river seemed to be a divider right through the FMA. We had the north and we had the south—that was going to be the McLeod, but it couldn't be all one working circle south of the river—it was pretty big. We thought maybe we should put a line down here, north and south. And this is how we felt our way. There was nothing prescribed by the government.

At the same time we were looking after the interests of St. Regis, so we would divide it up how we thought it was best to harvest and sustain an average haul distance, among other things. They were rolling kind of discussions—one thing leads to another, and to another, and to another.

Then we had those LTBs—the licensed timber berths of the sawmillers—and we were up in the Berland and thinking what the hell are we going to do with them? We had some just north of Edson, some more down near the Embarras River. We had to contend with all of these things and still try and put together into something logical. Philip Gimbarzevsky was in charge of the photography and making the maps. They weren't made by photographic surveys, or anybody else. I give Gimbarzevsky kudos because he did a hell of a good job.

Murphy You made your own maps...

Clark Yes sir, and all the interpretations. Every photograph had to be forest-type interpreted and that information transferred to the maps. So those things took our time, too. And then the fire protection thing came into it. After the 1956 experience we'd had, we had one hell of a big meeting with the government.

Murphy Jim, I'd like to talk to you more about that. Maybe at this point we could go to the book¹. Tom Lewko was the first employee at Hinton and had previously been with North Canadian Oil at Robb.

Clark Bryan Mountain Coal was the name of the coal mine that North Canadian owned at Robb, and Tom worked as a clerk down there. When North Canadian got into this development, they suggested to Tom maybe he'd like a promotion, or whatever you call it, and he came to Hinton—and he was the first employee.

¹ Editor's note. The book being discussed is Jim Clark's 1994 memoir, *Forester*.



- Murphy** The next one you mentioned was Bob Ruben who was the son of Frank.
- Clark** And he was a vice-president of North Canadian Oil.
- Murphy** And he played an active role then in the early days?
- Clark** Very much so, Bob did. Frank was the silent one, working in the background, but he was the guy that put the whole thing together with St. Regis.
- Murphy** And you describe in your story how that came to be. Then you talk about driving into the community with Lewko...
- Clark** From the railway station at Entrance.
- Murphy** At Entrance? Was there not a station at Hinton then?
- Clark** There was a station, but they wouldn't stop here because it was not a divisional point, so we had to go down to Entrance and get everybody off the train.
- Murphy** Do you remember when the train began to stop here? It must have been shortly after, with the traffic that was generated.
- Clark** I would say almost two years—about the time that they started to ship out pulp, because then they had the railway by the balls.
- Murphy** Yes, 1957, then. OK so as you say in your story, Lewko's driving you in, and he said the motel on the left was Johnson's. Is that Johnson's Motel?
- Clark** It's still there.
- Murphy** Now the two-story old building on the right is Slagg's?
- Clark** Skogg's—a big fat man. And steep stairs up to it and he stood up on top—he looked like a mountain.
- Murphy** That was his grocery store, so you had to climb up the stairs to buy groceries. That would be unhandy.
- Clark** I don't know why it was built so high except maybe to get a basement.
- Murphy** And then Ray was Ray Fuller of Esso?
- Clark** Still alive, I believe.
- Murphy** And then you write, "Gordon told me this is your cabin"—that would be Gordon McNabb, then. He would have been already here.
- Clark** Oh yeah, Gordon was here. No, Tom told me.
- Murphy** Yeah. "'This is home', Tom announced, as he drove left and stopped in front of a small white clapboard cabin." Yes, but it was Gordon McNabb that had told him.
- Clark** Yes.



- Murphy** So McNabb must have been here pretty darn quick.
- Clark** He was here quick. He was here quick as Crossley, with his big black Cadillac. How did you like the story of Charlie St. Denis? I mean when St. Denis came out of the cabin and his overboots were embedded in the ice on the floor when the basin overflowed and he fell on his ass. What a character. And he actually went all the way back to Godbout. But he came back again, too. But that morning, I'll never forget him standing out there and the light above shining down on him like this saint, or an aura, you know. And is he mad! With his hat on!
- Murphy** Then it refers to a fellow named Glenn who said that your furniture should be there in a day or two.
- Clark** Oh, Glenn—he was the fellow who moved us from Kamloops. This was a trucker. And we found out it didn't come because they shipped it to Vancouver. We made money out of that deal because the delay required us to get by with whatever we could buy, and we put our claim in, which we were allowed to do. I think we got \$200 or something like that, and we were smiling.
- Murphy** Then "the Chief Forester DIC"—"Ivan" of course is Desmond Ivan Crossley.
- Clark** That's right. Any time you see that name, Ivan.
- Murphy** And old Steve was going to bring you your cots.
- Clark** Steve was just a handyman, considered by most to be a nobody, but he was a saint. He did anything anybody asked him around the place. And a friend of McNabb's.
- Murphy** It sounds like the first crew were all friends.
- Clark** They were all McNabb's.
- Murphy** Then you talk about Nick in the cabin behind you.
- Clark** That was Tomkiw. You know Tomkiw.
- Murphy** Yes, and he became your Camp 1 contractor.
- Clark** Yes, and then Camp 27.
- Murphy** I wish we had more time to talk about Nick—he has an interesting background.
- Clark** He was a contractor. He was the man that walked across Siberia, or travelled it by rail, as a political prisoner, and when he got to Baikal where the gulag was, they found they had the wrong man and he had to get on a train and go all the way back. This was a time when the railway ran on wood. It would stop every 100 miles, and men would walk into the bush from either side wherever there was wood, cut it, pack it down to the railway, fill up the fuel bin and go for another 100 miles. He spent a whole year doing it.
- Murphy** But what a relief to come back.
- Clark** Yes, he said it was like a miracle. I sat on the steps talking to Nick one night, the first night I ever met him. He had liver cooking in the stove in his cabin. We sat there and smoked his cigarettes, and he talked and talked and talked about him being a white Russian, and a no-good bastard, and how he went all the way across Siberia for



the cause of Russia and got there and when they found out they had the wrong guy, they sent him back. He said, "Yeah, I know all about cutting wood." There's a story in itself.

Murphy Then you talked about your flight out of Jasper Park airstrip for reconnaissance.

Clark We hired a Beaver for a week. We stayed at Jasper. Every morning, we'd go down to the airstrip, we'd run up and down the strip with the jeep, chasing the elk off, and then we'd take off. This was in September, I believe. We'd take off every morning, and we'd fly the FMA.

Clark Was that '55 or '56? Had to be '55.

Murphy That same fall.

Clark Because '56 in the fall we were still fighting fires.

Murphy I was going to ask, too, whether you had photographs, black and white photos.

Clark We had photographs, but they were the original photographs that the '49 inventory was based on.

Murphy I was thinking of pictures that you would have taken of the Beaver or the people involved in that.

Clark No, never took any. I didn't. Philip might have—he was the photographer when it came to the company, but I didn't have any photographs.

Murphy Where's Phil now?

Clark He's dead. He died falling down the basement stairs and broke his back. The medics put him in a plane to fly him to Vancouver, but he didn't make it. Sad.

Murphy We'll resume with the text, Jim. In here, you talked about the first flight you took in the fall of 1955 from the airstrip in Jasper. I wondered, after having done that, what your impression was of the forest, this area that you had to manage.

Clark We were highly impressed with the forest. We had different eyes. Des had a different perception than I had. I had a different perception than Philip had. But, in general, we all had the same perception that it was one hell of a good forest for what it was intended for, and that was a pulpwood forest. It was never intended for a sawlog forest. St. Regis never said, "We want to have a sawmill." By the way, Champion never wanted to have a sawmill either. Because Jack Wright and I had a man named Whitey Heist, and he visited us once a year. We took him to the bush out north of Edson to an area where we had done some thinning of regen areas. Whitey—he's retired from Champion now—but he said to Jack and I, "Look you two guys Champion's not in the business of sawmills. We're not milling in sawlogs, so Jack don't talk to me about managing for sawlogs. We want pulpwood, and we want quality pulpwood." And you know, it was like a lecture, and that impressed Jack and I. But today, look at the size of the sawmill they've got. It just contradicts exactly what this guy was telling us.

Murphy But had you and Jack been advocating for a sawmill? Did you recognize the sawmill potential?

Clark No. Donovan Ross was the guy who advocated the sawmill and Ivan Sutherland jumped when Donovan Ross, said, "You should have a sawmill instead of wasting those big sawlogs." And Donovan really impressed Sutherland, so he told me, "Now you go down to Tacoma and you talk to Bill Hazelton because he's the boss



down in Tacoma, and we want a sawmill." So I went down to Tacoma, and I talked to Bill Hazelton and he said, "Get your sawmill—put it in your capital budget." And a year later, Sutherland sent me to New York to talk to him about the same thing, and I'll tell you Hazelton wasn't very happy. He said, "You came to Tacoma a year ago to see me about this. I told you to go ahead, now what's the matter with that asshole boss you've got up there? Can't he listen?" I said, "Look, he sent me down here to promote it with you again." "Well," he said, "you're wasting the company's money." He was mad. Not at me. They never wanted sawmills. Let me tell you something about this company.

Murphy This is Champion, now.

Clark No, this is not Champion, this is Northwestern Pulp and Power that became Champion eventually. We made more profit with this company when we did nothing but produce pulpwood and used pulpwood, and bought some chips. We made big bucks, big profit, and I don't think you'd be trying to put that in your report because somebody's going to say to you, "Who gave you the privilege to put that in the report?" But it's an observation I make because I can understand the economics of running a business to the degree that if I can make more profit making handkerchiefs than I can automobiles, I'm going to make handkerchiefs.

Murphy Could you give me an estimate of a time when the mill began to generate revenue? It was a long time, I think. Us on the outside thought you were having difficulties.

Clark Yes, we were. You couldn't get this thing working properly. They had Tom Easley as the original manager. They made a mistake; they brought a man who got his experience managing a flourmill to manage a pulpmill. This was no fault of Tom Easley's; it was the fault of St. Regis, who thought management was a cut-and-dried profession. You manage, you see that everybody is hired to do the job and that they're adequately paid, but not overpaid, and we make a profit. And if we don't make a profit you're answerable, etc.

Well, Tom Easley didn't know a thing about pulpmills, not a thing. He saw what was happening at the pulpmill and the complexity of it, and he turned to Pete Hart and told Pete, "I'm going to resign because I'm the wrong man for this job." Flour is an easy thing to make. You just put the wheat in, and you just grind it and out comes the flour—I don't know where the husks go. So he was an honorable guy and he quit.

And that's when Harry Collinge became the manager. Easley quit before the mill started. It was getting close to start up—February of 1957—but he quit. He just knew he wasn't the right guy. And Harry Collinge became the manager at start up, which was February 1957.

I didn't associate myself much with the mill—we had no need to for quite a while. But when they started up, they had all kinds of plugs in the pipes that liquid couldn't go through. I mean, somebody had left a barrier plug in a pipe and never taken it out, and so these kinds of things showed up. Other people had left scrap metal, and it had piled up in some bend in the pipes and that wouldn't allow fluids to flow. And they had to find, isolate, extract, and repair all of these goofy things. But it was a pretty loose construction. I mean there were guys throwing plywood sheets over the fence at night by the hundreds. Houses in Hinton were built with material that came out of that compound. Nobody cared. Unless you've got security, you get those things happening. But poor Harry, he was a genius to get the thing going, in a way. He was a magnificent choice.

I don't think they made any money for—after they started up—two or three years. Somebody might say ten years, I don't know.



- Murphy** The other question on the forest inventory was the inadequacy of the Forest Service inventory. Could you generalize about that?
- Clark** Yes, this came up through Philip's studies, and his work on the new mapping. We discovered it when we were checking some of the maps of the Forest Service, originals from '49 to '52 or whatever. We would go out and find survey pins and say, "OK, there should be a type for such and such down this line here of half a mile or something like that." When we checked, we would often find there was no such type down there. So that was the beginning of our doubt about interpretation, which in turn led to doubt about the volume estimates, and so on. We therefore proved to Philip that we desperately needed a good mapping job and an inventory. That inventory came about when they sent John Miller—St. Regis did—from Florida, and he put in the permanent sample plots, or the CFI (continuous forest inventory), the 3,000 plots. That was almost a policy, a mandate of St. Regis, because they had that same inventory in all their holdings in Florida, in Bangor, Maine, and so on.
- So John's job was to come up here and establish the system. And I think when John left, Jack Wright took over for him on that. John either went back to St. Regis, or he took a good job with IBM. He eventually ended up with IBM. He's a hell of a good guy.
- Murphy** Did you ever come to the point where you could compare the Forest Survey estimate of volume on the whole area with your own?
- Clark** No, we never did try that. We didn't try that because of the meeting we had. I said we needed to establish an allowable cut, and Eric Huestis said, "Well, let's say 350,000 cords for a start." Everybody agreed so that's what we used for years and years. And it was only when we had redone the whole inventory that we came up with figures by working circle—or it might have been down to compartments—indicated a figure of 375,000 cords—although it struck me as more cords (85 solid cubic feet/cord). The government accepted it, and have accepted the revised estimates, as far as I know, to this day.
- Murphy** Going back to the text of yours, Jim, you mentioned among your flying years you flew over a sawmill north of Brule Lake that was probably Albert's. Do you know who Albert was?
- Clark** Albert Garneau. That's an interesting place, you know. If you go back up Solomon Creek and around that area, the old roads of Albert Garneau are still there. It's all grown up now, all regenerated—but you can still follow them. Albert Garneau's sawmill was near Swan Landing.
- Murphy** At Brule Lake, along the track?
- Clark** There's a road right down to the tracks, and it goes right through Swan Landing. Kennedy—he worked for Bill Nigro—he lived at Swan Landing, too. There was at one time two sawmills down there.
- Murphy** You mentioned the pilot's name was Jim. You were flying off the airstrip in Jasper and your pilot Jim would make swoops over the strip to move the elk back.
- Clark** I only knew him by "Jim" because of an association. When he told me his name was also Jim, I said to him, "I had a pilot many times in Kamloops named Jim Marshall who flew Beaver number one." The guy laughed and said, "I know him."
- Murphy** Then you're back in Hinton, and you were talking about the highway sign with "Monty's" in black printing.



- Clark** Montemurro! Monty Montemurro from Barrhead. Everybody called him "Monty." He built the first theatre—remember the Quonset hut theatre? Everybody called him "Manure."
- Murphy** Then you talked about the St. Regis company fellow. He was talking about the letter of understanding with the company and his initials were "WRA."
- Clark** Bill—William R. Adams. Bill Adams. You met him I'm sure.
- Murphy** I have met him. And he was president of St. Regis?
- Clark** That's right. Big jolly man, good looking guy.
- Murphy** Then in October of 1955 you were working on your accommodations and you refer to Phil, who would be Phil Gimbarzevsky.
- Clark** They were putting porches up, right?
- Murphy** Yes, and Stan Hart, Robin Huth, and the Duke.
- Clark** Frank Leduc, from Deferiet, New York.
- Murphy** He was a St. Regis fellow then?
- Clark** Yes, my height, dark haired.
- Murphy** Then you were talking about Roy trying to get his small jeep ...
- Clark** Roy Morton. He worked for H.A. Simons.
- Murphy** Then you write about "the group of five of us saw Charlie, our boss from accounting."
- Clark** Charlie St. Denis.
- Murphy** Oh, he's the fellow whose boots had frozen to the floor.
- Clark** You know what he did once? Charlie St. Denis, Guy Dempsey, and I went to Jasper to get our liquor supply for Christmas 1955. And it was a beautiful day when we drove up to Jasper with hardly any snow. So we stopped at Jasper Lake there, not a breath of wind or anything, and we drank the whole liquor supply. So the next day we had to go back to Jasper and get some more liquor.
- Murphy** That was the next question—Guy Dempsey.
- Clark** I think he's still alive, in Edmonton.
- Murphy** He'd be worth checking with. "The Vice President of Corporate Woodlands from New York." You refer to him by title but not by name.
- Clark** It's Pete Hart. Oh, wait a minute. How did I say that?
- Murphy** "Valley townsite was under construction. Houses offered for purchase were for those being promoted verbally by our visiting vice-president." It would have to be Hart—he was the guy you were talking about before.



- Clark** About houses? Yes, Pete Hart. But don't forget Paul Dunn—ring a bell? Missoula? Paul Dunn was really their corporate chief forester. Somewhere I have a picture of Paul Dunn. He came up here once, spent about a week with us. I think he stayed at Jasper Park Lodge. He was a fine guy. He wasn't interested in sticking his nose into everybody's business, as much as he was just "show me, just take me out." And we took him out to different places where there were decent roads, and he would want to stand and talk about this and talk about that.
- Murphy** All right, the doctor. You're talking about the Hinton trots.
- Clark** Oh, the doctor and the trots. Doctor—what was his name? Is that what you want?
- Murphy** Yes.
- Clark** Thomas, I think.
- Murphy** OK, not one of the ones I knew, then. He must have been an earlier one.
- Clark** Oh, he was short, wild hair; he had the most beautiful receptionist—every guy in town fell in love with her. And the company hired her as their industrial nurse. He had a grand piano in his cabin, and he did as many examinations on the stool or on the top of the piano, as he did anywhere else. He was a godsend, really. But he wasn't here very long.
- Murphy** Then Spike—was that Dexter Champion?
- Clark** Dexter, yes.
- Murphy** And you talked about a warehouse man dispensing equipment. Was he anyone we knew?
- Clark** Norman Willmore's cousin. He wasn't very effective, but he was a cousin of Willmore, enough said. He was in charge of all the fire equipment.
- Murphy** Then the man from Plaster Rock, New Brunswick is Bob MacKellar?
- Clark** MacKellar, yes. Still alive.
- Murphy** Yes, and he feels very good about his time here.
- Clark** Well, Bob was a good guy.
- Murphy** Jim, 1956 was a pivotal time with the fires. It was a difficult time for you; it was a difficult time for the Forest Service, but it led to some good in the long run. But you were here, and I'd like to get your impressions of what was going on and what you saw happening.
- Clark** 1956 was a unique year because a major fire started south of here in the Gregg Valley. It was attributed for start up to the oil people. There were seismic operations going on down there, and the Forest Service said the operators probably started the fire. It was spotted from one of the towers, either the Yellowhead or the Athabasca lookout. The one problem in the Gregg was the access—there were no roads into the Gregg from the Hinton area, only from the Cadomin area built by a logger/sawmiller in that area.
- The fire occupied a lot of the time of St. Regis and Northwestern Pulp and Power employees, because we were the logical people to fight it, having the FMA.



Dexter Champion spent his time on that fire from, I would say, May until the end of September. I took a birthday cake to him on July 1st by helicopter, and he worked out of a headquarters in the Gregg cabin. Equipment and food got in there by bulldozers pushing down timber and going down seismic lines pulling sloops behind them. Helicopters were also taking in food.

I built the first airstrip in Hinton right where the Town of Hinton office, curling rink and recreation complex sit today, with a grader. It was so flat I just took a grader, and he went down and made an airstrip. Piper Cubs were flying in there, Cessna's were flying in there, helicopters were landing there. I think we had one or two helicopters.

The whole thing about '56 was chaos. There were fires started in the Gregg, there was a fire north of Edson, there was a fire south of Edson on the McLeod River. Where else? Oh, north across the river out of the Edson district, but into the Whitecourt district, there was one across the river.

There was a man named Mike Reap. A little incident comes to mind about him. Mike Reap was the ranger for the North Edson Forest District, we'll call it, just south of the Athabasca. Mike Reap, I remember, made a statement when somebody said to him, "When are you going to hit that fire across the river before it gets over here?" And he said, "I'm sitting here waiting till it attacks us on this side of the river—that's when we'll smash it." That fire came across the river, and Mike Reap ran, and everybody else ran with him, because of the high conditions of fuel, temperature, dryness and spontaneity of ignition. Mike Reap got the surprise of his life. But all of us got our surprises, hither and yon at different times.

The Alberta Forest Service at the time was not well-organized to fight fire. I think Jack Janssen was the forest protection officer for the province, and he retired about this time, and we hired him as a purchase wood supervisor. Frank Platt took over the forest protection job from him, I think. Frank Platt was a very capable man, but hot-headed and never liked to be wrong, which is normal to most human beings. Anyway, the spontaneity of things that were happening and the involvement of people was what created chaos, I think. Edson, for instance, was drawing on equipment from us, and I took a guy named Leo Leivo, an accountant here, down to Edson with me. We stayed above the Switzer Drug Store in a suite, or whatever it was. Leo kept charge of all the equipment we allocated to the Forest Service. When it came back, he kept track of it as "in" inventory. But as far as planning and actioning for fire suppression, there was an awful lot of chaos. A lot of animosity built up because people weren't being fed that were out on the fire line—they were starving to death, forgotten almost.

All kinds of things were happening, and it's a multiplicity of all those happenings created the situation where Northwestern Pulp and Power began to be very concerned about their future in Hinton, Alberta. We didn't want a repeat of 1956. And so Des got everybody that was involved with fire suppression back that year to write their impressions of what was right, what was wrong, what they did, what wasn't done, and he didn't care how they submitted it, they just had to sign it so he identified who wrote it. We took that and massaged the thing into a composite of happenings. And how many times they emulated or copied the situation came up in different submissions by different staff people. You couldn't doubt it. I mean, Joe Blow, Bob MacKellar and Philip Gimbarzevsky, the three of them have the same reactions, the same observations. So we put that thing together, submitted it to the government, and said that we want a meeting on this situation. Huestis agreed we needed a meeting. We had that meeting, and Huestis really was the hero of the day.

Murphy

Who from your company went in?



- Clark** Des and myself. I don't think Harry Collinge went. I think Stan Hart, Philip Gimbarzevsky, Phil Appleby and Ken Williams—it's hard to remember. I gave Bob Udell a photo of the group who went.
- We went to the meeting, and Huestis was the one who really brought it to a culmination by saying, "This report helps me to get more funding for the Forest Service. I need this. I've got to sell this now to the government, but it's the truth, and we're going to use this to get more money for fire protection." Frank Platt was very defensive about what happened or what didn't happen—of the report—but after he cooled down when Huestis said what he said, that there was a dire reason for the report. Huestis got the money, too, because ours wasn't a lone happening in Alberta at that time. You wrote us a whole big book on fires, and it documents the situation of occurrence, but it also documents attitudes that you read between the lines.
- Murphy** There were changes made in response to that.
- Clark** Oh yes, yes, yes. The changes were made in all kinds of things. The changes were made in staffing in Edmonton, the detection system that they established in the province, and computerizing the whole thing. Look at the work at the forestry school here, the technology school. It spread throughout the whole Forest Service and also improved morale after that, by the way.
- Murphy** When the first agreement was signed—back to the time of the agreement—I understand that there was no requirement for the company to be involved in forest protection.
- Clark** We got a forest protection agreement as an appendix to the agreement later on, limiting the company's liability.
- Murphy** The gist of that one was that if you contributed yourselves to developing a fire...
- Clark** Oh yes. We had to prepare a fire plan, have fire equipment, and communications, and, if all this was done, our liability was nil, or close to nil, unless we started the fire ourselves. This fire agreement became an adjunct to the FMA agreement. From this, all the subsequent FMA holders also got fire agreements as part and parcel of their FMA agreements, almost.
- Murphy** I think you were the first, but you did make a positive response to develop an initial attack capability.
- Clark** Everything. I remember the great big board we had there all listing equipment, personnel, where it was. And we worked hard at it too.
- Murphy** And then you had someone in charge of fire...
- Clark** We had someone in charge, and it also got people attuned to fire protection. When the fire hazard got high, people were out on the road, even on the weekends. You used the company car, with your radio on, to go fishing, and it worked. It worked because we spotted a lot of lightning strikes that way. Johnny Welechuk is a prime example of the most highly intense, stressed guy in the company. He's our safety supervisor. I remember him reporting a lightning strike one day—I happened to be out. "Holy Christ, there's one right beside me, almost blasted me off the road," and this is coming over the radio. And you thank God somebody's out there— "Where is it John? That's important." "Oh, Chri Chri Chri Chri ... where is it, where is it, it's where am I?" and he's talking over the radio like this, you see. You knew people were out there looking, but they were encouraged at that time. And this came from guys like Adrien Provencher and Des. I don't know what it's like today—I couldn't comment.



Murphy You referred to Big Emma—that's Emma Nickerson?

Clark Nickerson, yes. What a girl. What a husband.

Murphy Oh, she was married, was she?

Clark Oh, yeah. Little wee fellow like me. Slim, yapper.

Murphy And you referred to a local music group. Did it have a name? Were there people in that we should know?

Clark Oh God, they were good. Jim Walker—he went to Malakwa. Malakwa is a sawmill near Salmon Arm, BC. They had about three or four musicians. Played wonderful music. He was an accountant.

Murphy Then you made a reference in 1957 to four yarders that you'd had for logging. Two Timberline and two Skagit yarders with yarding towers. The question is: were you experimenting a lot in those early days trying different ways to bring in the wood?

Clark McNabb claimed he used these in Marathon in Ontario, that they cut eight-foot wood and ricked it, and then they'd put a choker around a rick of wood and ground skid it. Maybe if it lifted a little bit, fine, but they didn't really lift it because they dragged it across the ground. But they had the choker around it, and that's how they yarded wood into the road from Marathon. McNabb said it worked, so we got four yarders—two Skagits and two Timberlines—and they went to Camp 1. And they were on the first road west of the camp going to the west paralleling the lake there, towards the Overlander Lodge, and they were a complete failure. We did it exactly like they said, but the ricks would fall apart. They'd twist on a stump or they'd twist on anything, and the next thing you knew, here's an empty choker coming in. And this went on and on and on. Therefore somebody said, "Let's try it with tree length." Anything—McNabb was losing face. Then he got fired.

End of Interview.