

The First 100 Years



A twin of the wood burner shown on facing page, the locomotive pictured above has pulled thousands of visitors over the G.W.R. (Gerry Wellburn Railroad) at Deerholme. The Wellburn collection of old logging locies, including the 1906 Shay pictured below, is now being installed in the Cowichan Forest Museum.



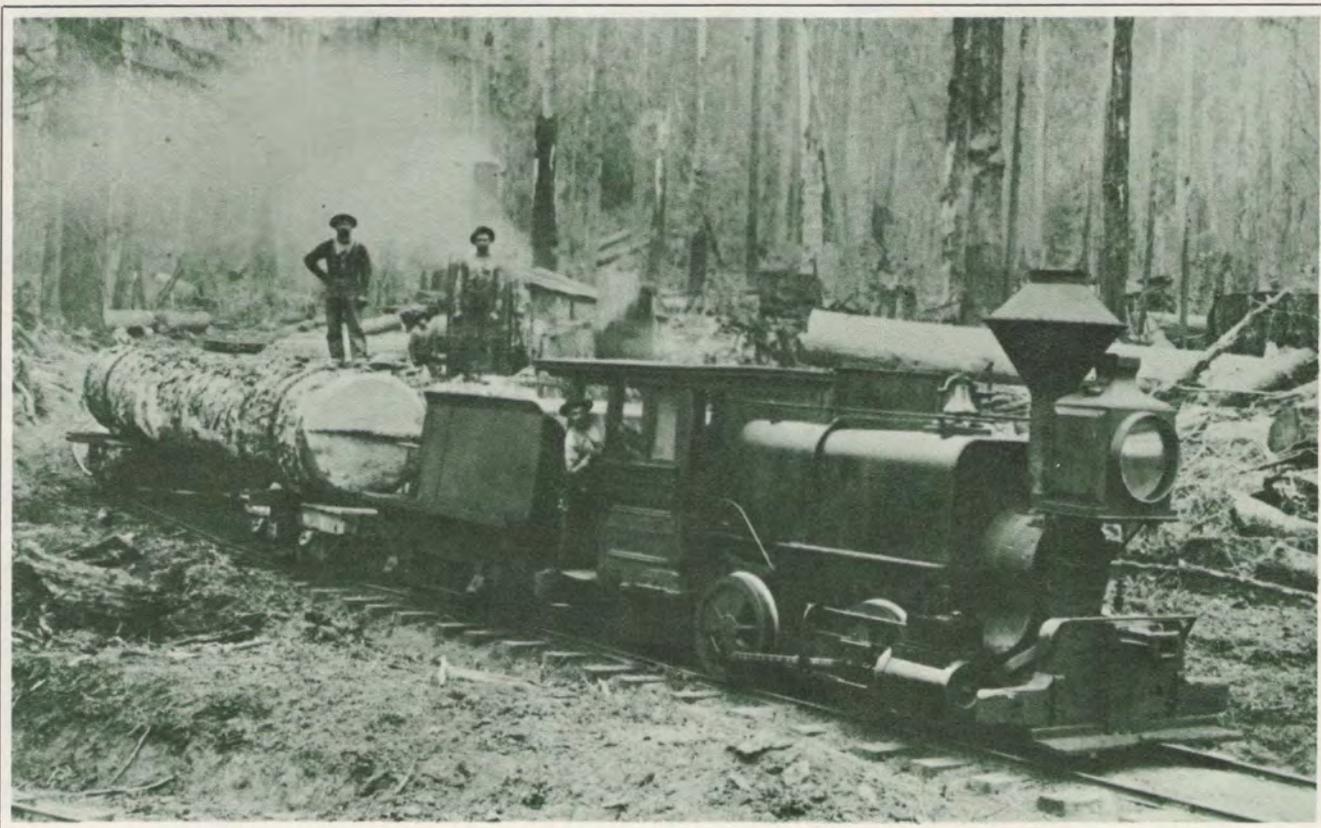
Cowichan Valley communities will soon be ready to unveil a forest museum that will be the envy of lumbering towns throughout North America.

In a forest setting overlooking beautiful Somenos Lake near Duncan, a hundred years of logging history will be on permanent display. In addition to historical documents and photographs, the museum will present a physical record of logging ranging from cedar planks split by Indian builders and mementos of oxen logging days to a unique collection of logging locomotives. Nearly a mile of narrow gauge railroad built on yellow cedar ties will take visitors on a special train tour of the wooded museum site, chosen for its natural beauty and the large number of West Coast forest species thriving within its borders.

The project will be financed by the municipalities of Duncan and North Cowichan, the Village of Lake Cowichan, and the Cowichan Valley Forest Museum Society formed by leading citizens in the area. MacMillan, Bloedel and Powell River Limited recently joined the ranks of the founders with a contribution of \$25,000 towards completion of this important educational undertaking.

The museum is being built around the extensive collection gathered by Gerald E. Wellburn over many years of active participation in the logging industry.

"Gerry" Wellburn, after an apprenticeship which ranged from fireman of a C.P.R. locomotive to Superintendent of a pair of sawmills, started his own small tie-mill in the Shawnigan Lake area in the late twenties. He built this



Stronger than horses, faster than oxen, the logging locomotive was a great advance in the forest industry of the early 1900's.

enterprise up to a modern truck logging and sawmill operation which he ultimately sold to his chief customer, H. R. MacMillan Export Company, retaining management of what became the Shawnigan Lake Logging Division until his retirement in 1962.

A pioneer in truck logging techniques Gerry was not surprised to see even the largest operators switching from railroad to truck road logging as it became necessary to go higher and deeper into B.C.'s forested hills for timber. But he was astonished to discover in the fifties that logging locies large and small were being scrapped with little thought given to their historical value and interest for future generations.

Already a collector of note, having acquired many rare documents relating to the history of British Columbia, Gerry decided to collect logging locomotives too before they became entirely extinct.

The history of "Old One Spot", a

42 ton Shay Locomotive originally bought by Bloedel, Stewart and Welch in 1911, is a typical case outlined in collector Wellburn's scrap-book from which the following notes have been condensed.

The One Spot worked her early years at Myrtle Point, near Powell River, and was shipped to a new Bloedel operation at Menzies Bay, north of Campbell River, in 1928. Between 1928 and 1934, when she was shipped to Great Central Lake operations, it is estimated that there were about 100 locomotives of her type operating in west coast woods.

In 1953 she was finally sold by MacMillan & Bloedel for logging service in the Philippines.

In February of that year she arrived clean and shining at the C.P.R. dock. Here, in the C.P.R. yards, she was fired up with cordwood and her boiler and running gear tested before her scheduled departure. But export regulations prevented her sailing.

Poor old One Spot. Her boiler and gear as sound as ever, she was retired to a waterfront siding at Chemainus where her paint gradually peeled and she turned red with rust. She was slated to go to Japan in a shipload of scrap iron.

At this point Gerry Wellburn bought her as it seemed that all the old logging locomotives on Vancouver Island were about to be scrapped with no plans by anyone to save even one.

With her "Gay Nineties" mark of the wood burner—the old balloon smokestack, One Spot is a fine example of the famous "Shay" most popular of the geared logging locomotives.

Lovingly restored, Old One Spot will be one of the several locies in the Wellburn collection that will capture the imagination and interest of thousands of school children and adults who will be visiting the Cowichan Museum to see a living account of 100 years of B.C.'s forest industry.