

The Nauticapedia



The Virtual Maritime Museum of Western North America

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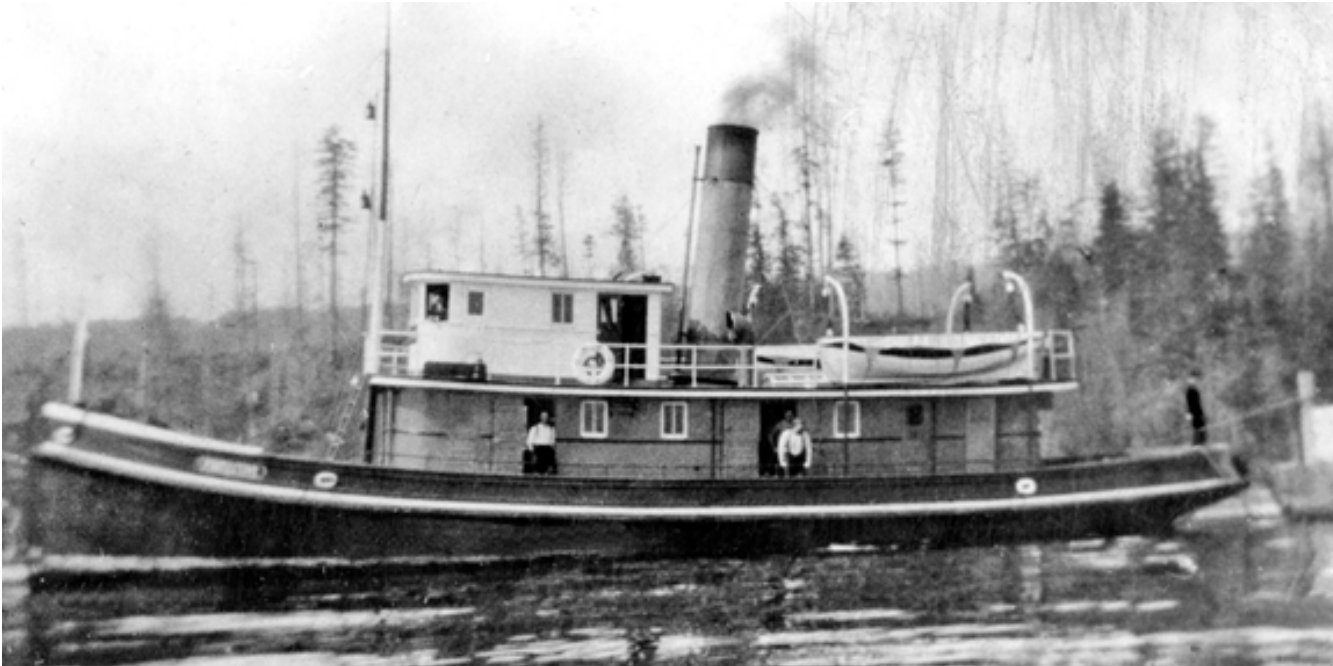
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Tugs and Barges To and From Jordan River BC

by Arnie Campbell 2015



The tug *Nidge* Running from Victoria to Jordan River BC c1908. (*Photo from the Sooke Historical Society #700*)

Did you know that tugs and barges transported just about everything to and from Jordan River before the road from Otter Point was completed in 1912?

The decade from 1905 to 1915 was one of tremendous economic energy and development in this area.

Examples were:

The large railway logging and sawmill ventures of the Jordan River Logging Company and others (1906–1915);
The construction of the flow line (1911–1914) which brought water from Sooke Lake to Greater Victoria;
The construction of the BC Electric Company's Jordan River hydro-electricity project (1909–1911) by Vancouver Island Power Company which would bring a new source of electricity to Greater Victoria.
The construction of the road from Otter Point to Jordan River (1912).

Tugs were a part of this era too. There was the tug *Nidge*, owned by the Vancouver Island Power Company and used to carry passengers and deliver barges of construction materials during the construction of the power house, dam, flumes and other infrastructure needed for the BC Electric Company's Jordan River hydroelectricity project. The *Nidge* was built in Vancouver in 1906, 58 gt, 64 feet long and powered by a 16 horsepower engine. She had various owners, in addition to the V. I. Power Co., including Ross & Howard Iron Works Co. Ltd. of Vancouver (1906 & 1910), and the Ladysmith Lumber Company, (1907). She ran aground on December 17, 1912 off of Macauley Point (Esquimalt) and then wrecked by winter heavy seas.

An earlier logging enterprise brought the tugs *Beaver* and *Mystery* to the area. The *Beaver* was built in 1892 in Ballard, Washington and was purchased in Seattle by the Jordan River Logging Company in 1907. It was a 51 feet long vessel powered by a 16 horsepower engine and had a gross weight of 38 tons. In June of that year the *Victoria Daily Colonist* newspaper reported that the tug left Victoria towing a barge laden with cargo of hardware, rails and other cargo destined for a new logging camp at Jordan River. The newspaper account went on to report that, "The company has a large wharf near the mouth of Jordan River and proposes to build a logging railway running in for 2 miles. A large camp will shortly be established employing 150–240 loggers. Locomotives will be sent from Seattle, shortly for use on the line." The *Beaver* was later owned by Albert Berquist of Sidney BC (1909–1911), the Bulman Lumber Company of Victoria (1911–1918), Maritime Fisheries of Vancouver (1919) and Georgia Strait Towing (1920–1925).

Not as much is known about the tug *Mystery*. According to an October 23rd, 1907 story in the *Victoria Daily Colonist* she was chartered by the Jordan River Logging Company to bring a boom of 250,000 bdf of logs from Jordan River to Victoria. The story also mentions that the tug towed large log booms to Sooke during a time when the company's mill at Jordan River was over–milling and wanted to store the best of their logs until the market improved.

To quote from this article please cite:

Campbell, Arnie (2015) Tugs and Barges To and From Jordan River BC.
Nauticapedia.ca 2015. <http://nauticapedia.ca/Gallery/Nidge.php>

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Site News: December 31st, 2022

The vessel database has been updated and is now holding 85,846 vessel histories (with 14,690 images and 9,685 records of ship wrecks and disasters). The mariner biography database has also been updated and now contains 58,491 entries (with 3,970 images).

The Nauticapedia is celebrating its 50th Anniversary since it's inception in 1973 on 3x5 inch file cards. It has expanded and enlarged in those ensuing years.

My special thanks to our volunteer IT advisor, John Eyre, who has modernized and simplified the update process for the databases into semi-automated processes. His participation has been vital to keeping the Nauticapedia available to our netizens.

Also my special thanks to our volunteer, John Spivey of Irvine CA USA, who has proofread thousands of Nauticapedia vessel histories and provided input to improve more than 2,000 entries. His attention to detail has been a huge unexpected bonus in improving and updating vessel content.

Thanks to the hundreds of individuals who sent me additional information, images, updates and corrections – I rely entirely on publicly available information. This input has enriched the entries beyond description.

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