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Errors and omissions:

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Gehlbach, J., Gabriola's wharves—[Northumberland Channel](#), *SHALE* 27, pp.5–17, December 2013.

Gehlbach, J., Gabriola's wharves—[The Maples and Degnen Bay](#), *SHALE* 27, pp.18–27, December 2013.

Gehlbach, J., Gabriola's wharves—[Silva Bay](#), *SHALE* 27, pp.28–36, December 2013.

Gehlbach, J., Gabriola's wharves—[the North Shore](#), *SHALE* 27, pp.37–45, December 2013.

Gehlbach, J., Gabriola's wharves—[Descanso Bay](#), *SHALE* 27, pp.46–56, December 2013.

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More wharves in Silva Bay

by Phyllis Reeve

[EDITOR: *This contribution was prompted by Phyllis's observation that SHALE 27, which was devoted to Jenni Gehlbach's wonderful series of histories of the wharves on Gabriola, hadn't mentioned the wharf at the Silva Bay Inn (the Boatel). At Jenni's behest, Phyllis kindly volunteered to plug the gap.*]

Silva Bay Inn—the Boatel

The most northern of the three marinas in Silva Bay^{1 2 3 4} on the eastern shore of Gabriola has gone by several names: Halverson's, the Silva Bay Boatel and Store, and most recently, the Silva Bay Inn. The north end of the bay is too shallow to accommodate large vessels—the Silva Bay Inn's 2014 website mentions a limit on transient moorage to one vessel of 25 ft, with a 3 ft draft—but shoreline access was always adequate for runabouts and modest working and leisure boats, and ideal for dragging logs ashore.

The Boatel's story begins in the 1920s with the Silva family and especially with Abraham (Abe) Crocker, husband of John Silva's daughter Louise. A busy man whose name appears frequently among the builders of Gabriola, Crocker logged, beachcombed, and constructed. It was he, together with Robert Law, Alex Law, and Ed Silva, who built the East Gabriola School. For these activities, he required a sawmill. At the time

of the 1921 census, Crocker's occupation was logging, and the sawmill belonged to Yoshimatsu Shinde⁵ who leased the land from John Silva. Any wharf would have been a makeshift affair to serve the needs at hand.

After Shinde's sawmill burned down in 1925, he left Gabriola to work as a fisherman. Abe Crocker and his family carried on until 1954 when he sold the property to Gordon and Elsie Burt, and George and Evelyn Stewart, who gave it the form and character still recognized by islanders and boaters today.

Gordon Burt and George Stewart set up a small marine repair and boat-building facility with a tide grid and a ways (marine railway) for hauling boats out of the water. They built a waterfront store,⁶ and, as Fred Withey told *SHALE* in 2010, they "lured" Henry Halverson's business away from his larger neighbouring shipyard.

Near the roadside, on the slope overlooking the bay, the owners built a motel-type tourist accommodation—the Silva Bay Boatel⁷ and Store. A laundromat on the waterfront

¹ Jenni Gehlbach, *Gabriola's wharves—Silva Bay*, *SHALE* 27, pp.28–36, December 2013.

² Phyllis Reeve, *Page's marina—sixty years ago*, *SHALE* 6, pp.17–21, April 2003.

³ Jenni Gehlbach, *Withey's shipyard in Silva Bay*, *SHALE* 22, pp.3–24, January 2010.

⁴ Phyllis & Ted Reeve, *Page's on Silva Bay—Memories of Fifty Years 1943–1993*, self-published, Sixtieth Anniversary Printing, 2003.

⁵ Phyllis Reeve, *Japanese-Canadians in Silva Bay*, *SHALE* 25, pp.3–8, March 2011.

⁶ Not the first store in the bay. There had been a store run by Louis Silva in the 1930s. It was bought by Norman Sear in 1938 and was part of a house close to what is now the parking lot of the Silva Bay Pub, Restaurant, & Liquor store. The Silva's building was taken down in the 1960s. There's a picture of it on the Gabriola Museum's History website.

⁷ The word "boatel" (various spellings), a hotel at a marina (cf. motel, a hotel on a motorway), was not in any dictionary before the early 1950s, so it may have been their own independent invention.



The Silva Bay Inn with its dockside store and kayak-rentals shop. Recently completely renovated by the new owners, but with all the old buildings built by Burt and Stewart in the 1950s retained.

Courtesy Robert Rooks and Marlana Smith

provided another service for tourists and islanders.

Dennis Hoy, later a neighbour, recalls: “Our family first came to Silva Bay in our father’s boat in the early 1950s. We moored the boat at Halverson’s wharf. This wharf was a popular place to moor because there was the store, a gas pump—the old type with the glass top—for boats and cars.”

Long lasting friendships grew among the Burt children, Norman, Roger, Dennis and Janice; Gail and Terry Page, whose parents Jack and Joan and uncle Les operated Page’s Marina at the south end of the Bay; Wayne Stewart, son of George and Evelyn; Fred and Diane Withey of Withey’s Shipyard; Louise Crocker’s nephews Carl and Leo Nelson; and Gordon and Ken McDonald from down the road.

When Henry Halverson and his wife Jaunite (Nita) retired, they sold their business to Thomas and Irene Heddle, whose current claim to fame must be as parents of Judy Preston, photographer, graphic designer, and publisher of the *Gabriola Directory*.

Despite the change in ownership, the Heddles retained the name “Halverson’s”

for their store. When Tommy Heddle died in 1970, the business changed hands once again.

During the next decade, Janet Nootka owned and operated the Boatel and Store,

changing little, but keeping the business going until she sold it to Leo and Audrey Leloup and their partners Leo’s sister, Thelma, and her husband Doug McLelland from Richmond.

Leo and Audrey planned to complete the motel units and refurbish all the buildings. But after circumstances compelled them to buy out Thelma and Doug’s share, tight finances prevented the realization of their dreams. Still, during their years in Silva Bay, they provided a friendly haven and



Cartoon drawn by Tom Heddle, one-time owner of the Boatel Store business, for the first edition of the Gabriola newspaper SANDSTONE NEWS in March 1967.



Google Earth

convenient facilities to small boats and south-end residents. Audrey kept the coffee urn going, and Leo chatted while he crafted fishing lures.

When Leo became ill, Audrey's sister, Iris Henderson, came to help, and stayed on after his death. The "Two Ladies" at the little store were known up and down the coast.

In 2004, Audrey sold the property to Marlana Smith and Robert Rooks, and the Boatel became the Silva Bay Inn, with completely renovated accommodation, store, and state-of-the-art new docks. At the time of writing, the store is closed, but several small retailers and services are on site, the wharves at the north end of Silva Bay are very much alive with 1600 feet of moorage space for small boats, and hospitality continues at the meeting of North and South Roads.

The Hoy private dock

The narrow property between the Silva Bay Inn and Silva Bay Resort and Marina belonged to Clair Musclo, a fisherman who lived on the west side of the log church, across from the entrance to the Inn. Dennis Hoy's parents purchased the property around 1963, but never built on it.

After his father's death in 1970, his mother kept the land until 1976 when Dennis bought it from her, and built a

house with a beautiful view and an impressive private wharf.

The Hardman private dock

When Les Page sold the Resort and Marina to the Reeve family in 1987, he retained the adjoining acreage. After trying unhappily for several years to live away from the island, he and Joan returned in the early 1990s, building a house and a wharf large enough for his fishing boat and at least one other vessel.

The property now belongs to Richard and Colleen Hardman, and the wharf is frequently visited by their sailing friends from south of the border.

Acknowledgements

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