

**Article 27**

**excerpts from "Man Along the Shore":**

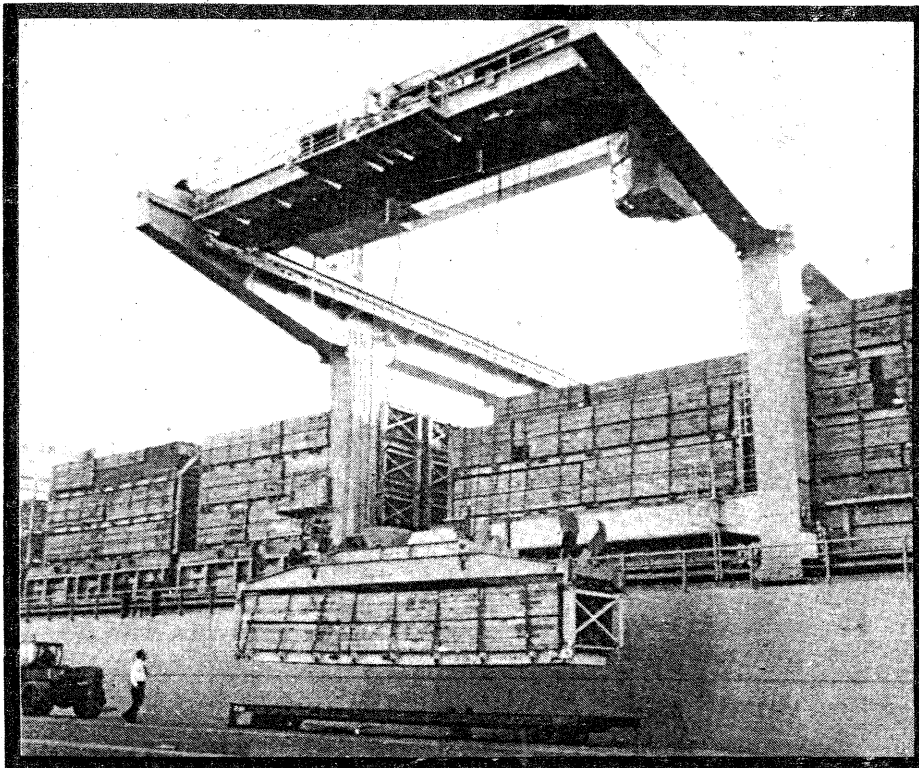
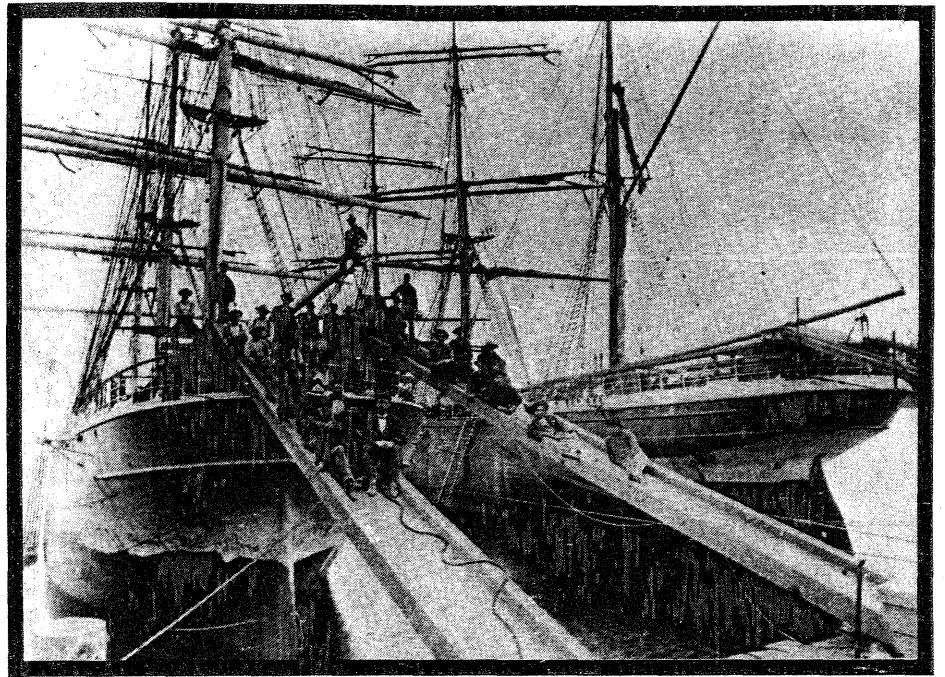
**The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront**  
**-- as Told by Longshoremen themselves**

**by**  
**Herb Mills**

# "MAN ALONG THE SHORE"!

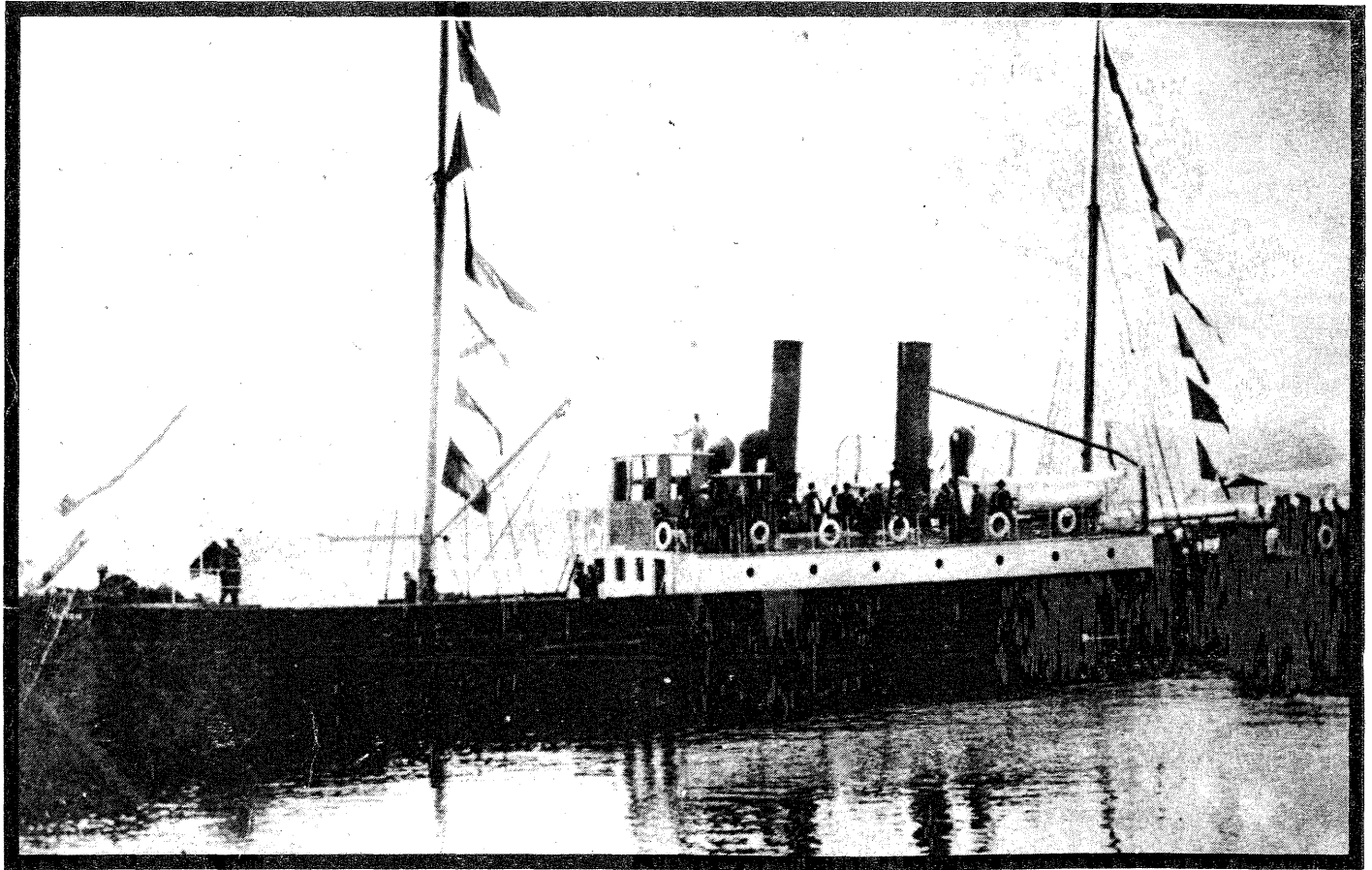
## *The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront*

Chemainus 1897. Sailing vessel "SENATOR" on the left and "EATON HALL" on the right. Notice chutes rigged over the sterns.

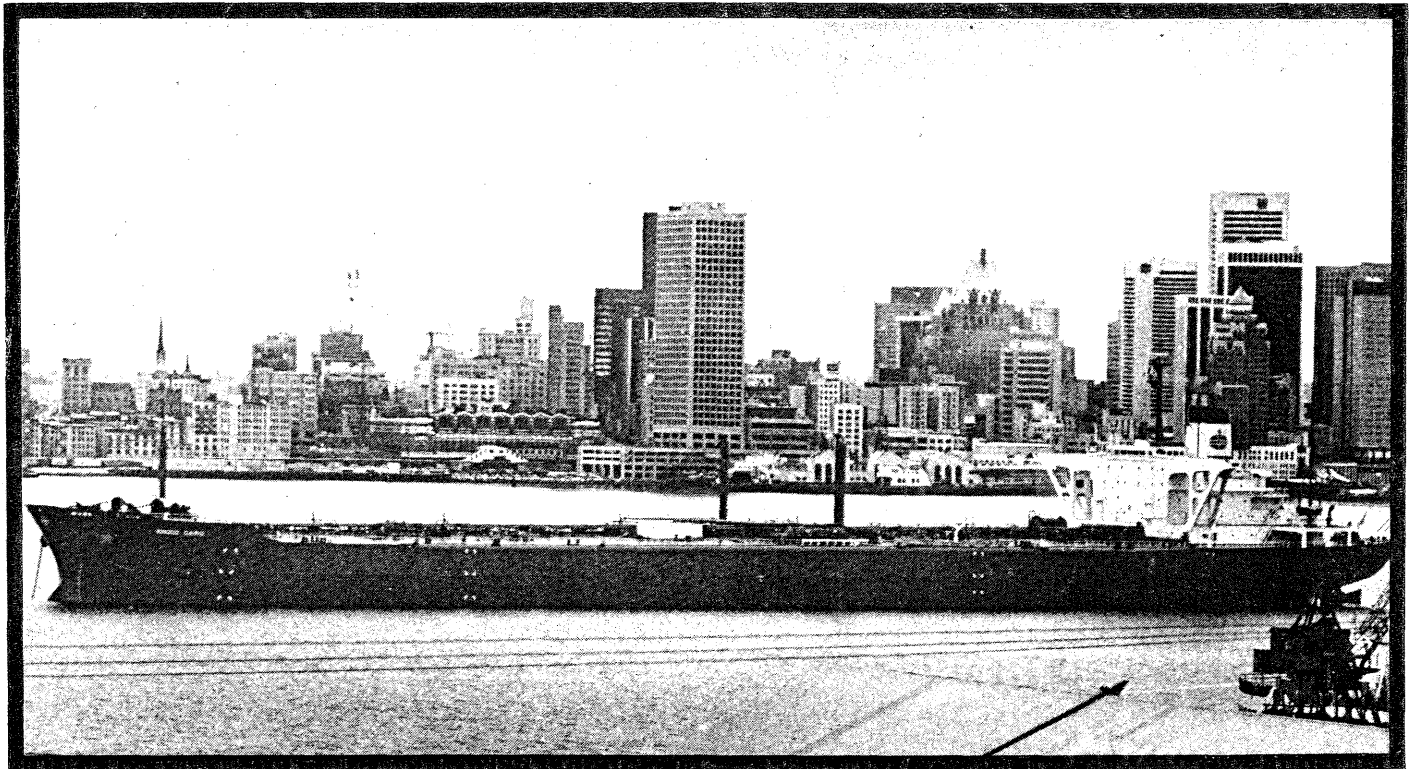


*As told  
by  
Longshoremen  
Themselves*

Loading lumber today.



SS "CUTCH" arriving in Vancouver from Bombay in 1890. —Courtesy Vancouver City Archives



The AMOCO CAIRO loading wheat in Vancouver Harbour for Bangladesh, March, 1975. Capacity 128,000 long tons — the equivalent of 2135 box cars or 1423 hopper cars. Length 919 feet, beam 175 feet, deadweight 153,375 tons. —Photo John Denniston

This excellent "story of the Vancouver waterfront" was conceived and produced and thereafter published and copywrited by ILWU LOCAL 500 PENSIONERS in 1975 -- 1685 Franklin, Vancouver 6, B.C. It was printed at College Printers - 2015 West 12th Avenue - Vancouver, B.C. But see the following web site entry:

**Goggle - Local 500 ILWU - p. 1;**

ILWU Local 19 Casuals - Reading List

ILWU Local 500. **Man Along The Shore! The Story of the Vancouver Waterfront.** ILWU Local 500 Pensioners, 1975. The only book about the ILWU longshore experience in Canada, told plainly and effectively through interviews. Out of print (NOTE - HM).

For these several reasons, however, the Preface, Glossary, Table of Contents, and the Introduction of this enterprise will now follow.

## Preface

This book was produced by the cooperative effort of a group of retired longshoremen.

It started in 1973 when a Committee, made up of members of ILWU Local 500 Pensioners, applied for and received a grant from New Horizons, an agency of the federal Minister of Health and Welfare, the Right Honorable Marc Lalond, which provides grants to pensioners groups for projects of use to the community.

The Committee then set about interviewing and taping retired longshoremen and others connected with the waterfront, and gathering historical data on the port and the union. The interviews had to be transcribed and typed and this laborious task was performed by one of the Committee members.

In May, 1974, a consultant and writer was engaged to assist in writing up historical events not fully covered by the interviews and to assist in compiling the material into a form suitable for a book.

As each of the four parts of the book was prepared, a Committee member again came to the rescue performing the time-consuming task of typing each part on stencils, over 300 pages in all.

The Committee then discussed each part, deciding what should be deleted, what added, what changed. Beginning in May, 1974, and continuing through to the completion of the book in Feb. 1975, weekly meetings were held, sometimes two meetings a week.

All work performed by Committee members was voluntary, without remuneration. The grant paid for the expenses incurred in the preparation of the book, plus the services of the writer and consultant, and the publication of the book.

The Committee members are:

Harold Deppiesse  
Roy Elliott  
Sam Engler, chairman  
Joe Gallagher  
Watson Jones  
Charlie King  
William Laurillard  
Martin Nelson  
Albert Stock  
Tom Taylor  
Alex Will (deceased)

(Consultant and writer — Ben Swankey)

We would like to thank Local 500, ILWU for the use of its hall for our many Committee meetings. We would like to thank it as well as the Canadian Area, ILWU, for the use of their mimeographing and xeroxing facilities.

Our thanks also to Vancouver Archives for assisting in the selection of photos for this book.

Craig Pritchett, Canadian Area director of the ILWU; Roy Smith, president, Local 500; and Emil Bjarnason, director, Trade Union Research Bureau, took time to read the manuscript and to offer comments, for which we extend our appreciation.

In a work of this kind, performed by a Committee none of whom are writers and involving such a mass of detail, some mistakes are inevitable. For these we apologize in advance, with the hope that they will be of a minor nature and not the cause of embarrassment to anyone.

This book does not purport to be, nor was it intended to be, either a history of the Vancouver Waterfront or of Unions among longshoremen. It is what it says it is — a story of the Vancouver Waterfront based on the recollections of a selected group of longshoremen and others associated with the Waterfront. The views expressed by those interviewed are their own personal views and not necessarily those of the Committee sponsoring the book. The information contained in this story, other than the statements of those interviewed, was researched by members of the Committee from sources available to them, and endorsed by majority vote, more often than not unanimous.

It goes without saying that many of the men who have made outstanding contributions to both the Union and the Waterfront are not mentioned in this story. The nature of this book precluded any such full coverage. We are confident that when the Union does write its own official history, due recognition will be given to all concerned.

## **Glossary**

<b>BABY SQUARES</b>	6"x6" or 4"x4" lumber any length
<b>BLOCK STOW</b>	cargo stowed at one end of the hatch — not all over
<b>BOOM MEN</b>	men working on the boom when loading logs from the water
<b>BOAT DECK</b>	the deck where the life boats are kept
<b>BULK HEAD</b>	an upright partition separating compartments on a vessel
<b>BULK LOADERS</b>	ships without decks
<b>BULL LINE</b>	a long wire used for moving cargo
<b>BULLION SLINGS</b>	slings made of wire and rope used for loading lead or zinc
<b>CAT WALK</b>	a plank walk with rails built on deck loads
<b>CANT HOOK</b>	same as a peavy but without the spike
<b>CANNARY</b>	now called a pull through — 1/2" steel rod 6' long with a small hook on one end, used for pulling slings under loads of lumber or heavy cases
<b>CHAINS</b>	used for slinging steel beams
<b>CONTAINER HEAD</b>	a piece of equipment placed on strads or cranes for lifting containers
<b>DERRICK OR BOOM</b>	a long spar rigged from the base of the mast. The midship derrick is always over the hatch and the yard derrick is over the ship's side either on shore or off shore
<b>DONKEY</b>	a portable auxiliary engine
<b>DONOVAN BLOCK</b>	a block larger than a snatch block allowing a "C" hook or shackle to pass through it
<b>DUMMY ROLLER</b>	3" to 6" roller and 1' to 6' in length — used for moving timbers and cases
<b>DUNNAGE</b>	ship lap used to protect the cargo
<b>DUTCH FLIP</b>	a term used when turning a bale over your knee for stowing
<b>END DOG</b>	a small hook on the end of a bull line used for stowing logs
<b>FOUR WHEEL DOLLY</b>	a vehicle used for moving cargo
<b>FLETCHERS</b>	6" lumber any length or width
<b>GANTRY CRANE</b>	a crane moving on rails for handling cargo
<b>GIN BLOCK</b>	a block hung from the top or head of the derrick for the wire or runner to pass through
<b>GANT LINE</b>	a rope hung from the derrick head used for hanging tents
<b>GUN TACKLE</b>	double blocks, hung from the derricks — used for heavy lifts
<b>GUY</b>	rope or wire used to steady the derricks
<b>HATCH OR HOLD</b>	where the cargo is stowed — each hatch or hold may have one or more tween decks
<b>HAND TRUCK</b>	2 wheeled truck used for sacks or cases
<b>HATCH TENDER</b>	the man on the hatch who gives signals to the winch drivers. The gang leader
<b>HEEL BLOCK</b>	a grooved pulley in a frame at the heel of the derrick through which the wire runs to the winch
<b>HI BALLERS</b>	a hard working gang of men
<b>JACOBS LADDER</b>	a rope ladder with wooden steps
<b>LAZY GUY</b>	a rope guy on the off side of the derrick to keep it from swinging

<b>ORLOP DECK</b>	the deck between the lower tween deck and the lower hold
<b>PAPER TRUCK</b>	a 3 wheeled truck used for rolls of paper
<b>PARBUCKLE</b>	a purchase used in loading heavy logs
<b>PEAVY</b>	a long hard wood handle with a spike and hook on one end
<b>PENDANT</b>	a wire hung from a block or hook
<b>PALLET</b>	a board for handling cargo — usually used with a fork lift
<b>PICAROON</b>	an axe handle with a pick on the end — used mostly for ties
<b>PIKE POLE</b>	a long handled pole — 12 to 14 feet with a spike and small hook on the end and used for handling logs in the water
<b>PREVENTOR</b>	a wire guy from the head of the derrick to the ships deck to hold the derrick steady when lifting a load
<b>ROBOT</b>	a device with a large platform used in loading or discharging palletized loads
<b>SAVEALL</b>	a rope net hung from the ships side to the dock
<b>SCHOONER GUY</b>	a rope rigged between two derricks to keep them from swinging
<b>SEA "C" HOOK</b>	a piece of 1/2" round steel in the shape of a C and used to join runners or bull lines when they are put around loads, logs or heavy cases
<b>SIDE RUNNER</b>	the man in charge of one side of the hatch when stowing cargo
<b>STANCHIONS</b>	steel posts to support the tween decks — there are also wooden stanchions placed on the side of the deck when loading logs or lumber on deck
<b>STIFF ARM DERRICK</b>	one in which the boom goes up and down but does not swing
<b>STRAD</b>	a large machine for moving containers
<b>SLINGMEN</b>	men on the dock or scow who sling or unslung loads
<b>SLINGS</b>	wire or rope used for lifting or lowering cargo
<b>SHACKLE</b>	a device used for making something fast such as joining runners or fastening guys to ring bolts.
<b>SPUD</b>	a peavy handle with one end wedge shaped
<b>SPREADERS</b>	a device used for lifting cargo — many kinds such as ring board, pallet board, car, plywood, beams, barrel and container
<b>TARPS</b>	a canvas or poly covering for cargo or hatches
<b>TENT</b>	a device made of poly or canvas and hung over the hatch to protect the cargo from rain when working
<b>TIMBER DOLLY</b>	a roller 8 to 10 inches round with a small platform on it and used for timbers and cases
<b>TWEEN DECK</b>	deck between the main deck and lower hold
<b>TURN BUCKLE</b>	a device used for securing cargo
<b>TOWMOTOR</b>	manufacturer's name for a fork lift
<b>WINCHES</b>	a machine for lifting cargo in and out of the ship — single winch, one man drives the winch. Double winch, one man drives both winches. Winches can be steam, electric, friction or hydraulic
<b>WALKING BOARDS</b>	plywood boards laid on cargo to provide an even footing to walk and truck cargo on
<b>NET SLINGS</b>	rope woven in the form of a net for loading cargo
<b>CANVAS SLINGS</b>	similar to net slings but made of canvas

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## Introduction

This is the story of the Vancouver Waterfront — the ships, the docks, the men.

It is not primarily a history of the companies — stevedoring, shipping and railways — that operate on the waterfront. Nor is it primarily a record of historical events, of dates and places. It includes some of these but it is much more.

It is primarily a story of the men who worked on the waterfront, who they were, where they come from, the lives they led, the conditions under which they laboured and the struggles in which they engaged to establish good working conditions on the docks. It is a story of people, of working people, of longshoremen as told by themselves.

Our theme is that labour is the source of all wealth, that everything that we enjoy in the world today is the result of the physical and/or mental labour. The movement of goods from the source of production to the consumer is an essential part of the process of production and distribution of wealth. In this, longshoremen play an important part.

Our theme, too, is that the real makers of history are the people, ordinary people who work for a living. This is not to negate the important role of leaders, of captains of industry, of political leaders, of labour leaders, of scientists and inventors. But leaders are great or otherwise only to the extent to which their actions and guidance coincide with the forward movement of progress and the best interests of the people. In the final analysis it is the actions of ordinary people in the process of production, in the building of industries and cities, in the social and political movements, in war and peace that make history.

The story of the people on the waterfront of necessity includes their efforts to establish trade unions to defend and promote their interests, and of the efforts of the employers to defeat these attempts. It is a story of strikes lost and won, beginning with a waterfront local of the Knights of Labour in 1888, continuing with the International Longshoremen's Association until it was broken in 1923, the company unions which followed, the unsuccessful strike of 1935, again company unions, until at last the successful sweep of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union beginning in the 1940's. These long and bitter struggles involved many hardships and sacrifices, dismissals from the job for union activity, black lists and prison terms. Always the central question was how to bring together the diverse sections of longshoremen, how to establish that

unity of mind and action which alone could successfully challenge the arbitrary rule of the waterfront employers and make life a little better and more secure for waterfront workers.

The story of the people on the waterfront includes the stories of many colorful characters, of union leaders and rank and file members, of superintendents and foremen and of the many waterfront gangs.

It is a story of incoming cargo handled on the Vancouver waterfront — tea from India, silk from China, machinery from the British Isles, sugar from Latin America, radios and cars from Japan, rum from the West Indies; and of exports — lumber, logs, pulp and paper and ore concentrates from B.C., coal from Alberta, wheat from Saskatchewan.

It is a story of the changes that have taken place in the ways in which cargo was handled, from the back-breaking days of 250 pound sacks, wheelbarrows, and hand trucks, when hooks, shovels, strong backs and iron muscles were the main tools, through to the introduction of conveyor belts, fork lift trucks, dollies and today's huge container handling cranes.

It is the story of ships that sailed our Inlet, the great many-masted schooners with their billowing sails, the steamships, the steam schooners which combined features of both, the CPR's famous Empress line and today's diversified ships handling everything from general to bulk cargo and containers.

And it is a story of the growth of the Port of Vancouver from the days of Moodyville on the North Shore and of Hastings Mill at the foot of Dunlevy Avenue to the great port it is today, handling some 43 million tons of cargo in 1973, making it number one on the West Coast of North America.

Finally, the purpose of this book is to show how much more difficult longshoring was in the "good old days" when union organization was non-existent, weak or temporary and how the coming of the union changed life for the better. Every improvement had to be fought for and the union was the vehicle responsible for progressive changes. The young longshoremen in the industry today who have inherited the benefits fought for by their fathers and predecessors will, we hope, learn that the road we travelled was rough, that the gains of today cannot be taken for granted, that the price of continued progress is an ever stronger and united union.