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## *International Log Builders' Association Foundations*

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As the only remaining founder of Canadian Log Builders' Association, I don't expect I'll get much contradiction of my memory of those first couple of years. We quickly evolved into the Canadian –American association and then to today's name, the International Log builders' Association. For the purposes of this talk, I will use the present name and the abbreviation, ILBA.

I had acquired my passion for log buildings as a kid growing up in the Yukon in the 1950' where I often stumbled across trappers' and prospectors' cabins while tending my trap line. In the Fall of 1968 I became colleagues with two guys who were having their log houses built by two different old boys, trained in Europe. I visited their sites and immediately fell in love. On one of the sites I met a Swede-Finn by the name of Uno Beck and he gave me a rough-hewn apprenticeship in hand-scribed long log construction—a technique I had never seen before or even heard of. We worked together, hand-logging, shake bolt harvesting, roofing and house building and so when the time came to build my own first house in Langley British Columbia, it naturally had to be logs.

There was so much interest in log buildings in those waning hippy back to the land days, that I quit my day job as a high school teacher and established myself as a professional log builder. Visiting my brother in the interior of BC, I met a friend of his who was intrigued by my new found career and asked me if I had read the book, Building With Logs by B. Allan Mackie. I had never heard of Mackie but I dropped into a local book store and found a copy of his how-to book. The book reinforced much of what I had learned at the feet of Old Beck as well as some of my own development on the job, working alone. I began a correspondence with Mary Mackie and this led to a brief visit in 1974 with the Mackies' at the site of the B. Allan Mackie School of Log Building about 45 minutes west of Prince George, BC. I took one of my labourers, Fergus O'Connor with me. At the time, Allan was teaching log building for the local college and had engaged Ed Campbell

and Art Long to be the instructors at his newly established log building school. A current student, Bernie LeGault was visiting one evening and that is the evening it all started.

As us five men and Mary Mackie were sitting around the blazing fire of the field stone fireplace in the Mackie log house, Mary suddenly said, "We need to establish a professional association of log builders." We thought this was a great idea even though there were probably only about a dozen builders in all of Canada known to us. We toasted this new association with generous libations of Canadian Club whisky in Mary's Old Country Roses Royal Doulton tea cups. We elected Ed Campbell as our first president and appointed Bernie LeGault as our first secretary and even rented office space in Prince George from whence Bernie could process application forms. And thus we became the founding fathers and one mother of the first log building association. Mary Mackie, Allan, Mackie, Ed Campbell, Vic Janzen, Art Long, Fergus O'Connor and Bernie LeGault.

Today (2020) we have lost Mary, Allan, Art and Fergus. I remain the only somewhat active member of the fraternity.

Our first AGM took place at the log building school and our second and third ones took place at my farm in Langley and again in Columbia Valley. To give you a concept of the evolution of the ILBA let me tell you about convention site, accommodations and dining. Hosting the second AGM at my farm, I had my wife, Claudia and her mother make chicken borascht out of a half-dozen spent laying hens we had in stock. The gang raved about this meal. I think it was in the year 2000 we gathered at the Chateau Montebello in Quebec, the largest log building in the world.

Vic Janzen