

**EARLY DAYS  
IN THE FOREST SERVICE**  
*Volume 3*



Cinnamon Ranger Station, Gallatin National Forest 1922.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE**

NORTHERN REGION

MISSOULA, MONTANA

**EARLY DAYS IN THE FOREST SERVICE**  
**Volume 3**

**Compiled and Edited by**  
Jessie Thompson

**1962**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE**  
Northern Region  
Missoula, Montana

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Cover

Cover Photo: Cinnamon Ranger Station, Gallatin National Forest, 1922.

Foreword by Boyd L. Rasmussen

## Stories By:

Eva Ammen (Retired 1933)  
"A Librarian's Report"

Albert N. Cockrell (Retired 1957)

Albert E. Cole (Retired 1935)

Albert J. Cramer (Retired 1955)  
"Highlights of Employment with Forest Service," 1918-1955

E.H. "Smokey" Cunningham

L.W. Sevling  
"Quotes from Custer National Forest Files"

Walter A. Donaldson (Retired 1944)

Lloyd V. Donally  
"Tree Planting Experience on the St. Joe National Forest"

G.M. DeJarnette (Retired 1962)

Lewis E. Ewan (Retired 1950)

Eugene R. Grush (Retired 1952)  
"Just Reminiscences"

Ralph L. Hand (Retired 1955)

Dean R. Harrington (Retired 1945)  
"The Beginning of The U.S. Forest Service, as Harrington Remembers It"

George S. Haynes (Retired 1951)

David Lake (Retired 1940)  
"Early Day Sawmilling in the Snowy Mountains"

Lewon L. Lake (Retired 1940)  
"Hot Telephone Jobs"

Fred J. Neitzling  
"Early History of the Flathead National Forest"

David S. Olson (Retired 1944)  
"Fords Come Into the National Forests"

Charlie E. Powell (Retired 1955)

John F. Preston  
"Early Days in the Forest Service"

Earl D. Sandvig (Retired 1959)  
"Chips From the Years of Service in Region 1 (R-1)"

Charles S. Shaw  
"Early Flathead Forest"

Ralph S. Space  
"The 1919 Fires on the Clearwater National Forest"

Edward G. Stahl

L.M. "Locke" Stewart

Hollis Stritch

Clarence C. Strong (Retired 1957)  
"Some Highlights of my Forestry Career"

K.D. Swan (Retired 1957)  
"Reminiscences of the Dakota National Forest"

J.C. Urquhart (Retired 1957)  
"Firefighting Experiences"

Mark O. Watkins (Retired 1955)

Clarence Westcott

Harold T. Wicklund  
"The Bosworth Trencher"

K. Wolfe

George R. Wolstad

Index *(omitted from the online edition)*

## LIST OF FIGURES

---

1. Members of Regional Office Staff, 1913
2. Headquarters for Middle Fork Ranger District, April 1911
3. Cartoons
4. Timber Marking Group on Mill Creek, 1906, Absaroka Division Yellowstone Forest Reserve
5. Cartoons
6. Ranger Meeting, 1907, Deadwood, South Dakota
7. St. Joe Ranger Station Following Forest Fire of August 20, 1910
8. Crew of CCC Boys Planting Trees along Butler Creek, 1938
9. Cartoons
10. Sylvanite Ranger Station, Kootenai National Forest, A Few Years After 1910 Fire
11. Sylvanite Ranger Station, Kootenai National Forest, August 1923. Area behind building was burned over in the 1910 fire
12. Sylvanite Ranger Station in 1958
13. Iris' Lookout on Bonita Ranger District, Lolo National Forest
14. Old Gold Peak Lookout Tower on the Missoula National Forest (Now Lolo National Forest), August 22, 1920, the day the tower was condemned
15. Cartoons
16. Visitors at Remount Depot, 1937
17. Trail Rider Party in Sun River Primitive Area, 1935, Under Chinese Wall, Lewis & Clark National Forest
18. L.L. Lake Working on a Black Bear Rug
19. Early Day View of Savenac and New Seedbeds
20. Savenac Nursery, 1941

21. Cartoons
22. Cartoons
23. Note Written by Sutliff, August 1911
24. Clarence Sutliff and Pilot Dick Johnson Two Weeks Following Plane Crash
25. Forest Supervisors at Meeting in Missoula, January 1942
26. Kaniksu National Forest: Largest Load of Logs Ever Hauled in the West with Two Horse Team and Sleigh, January 21, 1922, Priest River, Idaho
27. Cartoons
28. Cedar Tree 17.4 Feet in Diameter in Clearwater Country (1953)
29. Mules Leaving the Remount Depot for a Fire, 1917
30. Cartoons
31. Wallace, Idaho, after 1910 Fire
32. Hall's Sawmill, Sioux National Forest, Custer County, Montana November 22, 1907
33. Trail Creek Sawmill, Gallatin National Forest, 1902
34. Cartoons
35. Cartoons
36. Western Larch and Western Yellow Pine Forest Reclaiming A Homestead, September 1930, Kootenai National Forest



# FOREWORD

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November 20, 1962

## THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTHERN REGION:

This is the third volume of the Northern Region's "Early Days in the Forest Service" series. The first volume was prepared 18 years ago under the direction of Regional Forester Evan W. Kelley.

Too often much of the colorful and meaningful history of the Forest Service is lost from the formal, statistical, day-to-day reports required of the Region's routine business.

It is fortunate that these pioneering veterans of public service have written of their experiences in the constantly changing pattern of public resource management. From such accounts those with responsibilities for continuing this stewardship can better appreciate the dedication, hardship and obstacles involved in the hard-won progress.

In this tradition, today's Forest Service must meet tomorrow's demands and challenges. Future generations depend on perpetuating this unselfish dedication to resource management. The debt to these pioneering efforts can only be met by rendering a similar service in the next 50 years.

Resource management cannot be static. What is achieved tomorrow must be built on the achievements of these workers in the "Early Days in the Forest Service."

This volume contains personal histories that touch on a wide variety of Forest Service activities: communications, firefighting, grazing, timber harvests, early use of cars by the Forest Service, etc.

Through hardship, privation, and dedication to service, spelled out in these pages, modern day Forest Service workers cannot overlook or avoid the rich heritage purchased by these men and women of principle and character.

Sincerely yours,

BOYD L. RASMUSSEN  
Regional Forester

## **A LIBRARIAN'S REPORT**

**By Eva Amen  
(Retired 1933)**

When my sister\* and I came out to Missoula, Montana, in December 1908, having obtained jobs in District 1 of the U. S. Forest Service, everything was new and interesting to us. We had never been West before, and we were intrigued by the primitiveness of the town and the simplicity of conditions. The fact that the streets were mostly unpaved and, in the part of town where we were located, ran water ankle-deep in the spring, disturbed us not at all. The site of our location was just about where the Federal Building now stands.

When the Missoula River rose in its might and washed out the wobbly little footbridge connecting the north and south sections of the town, interest rose to a high pitch in "Silviculture," which overlooked the river, and the entire office force rushed to the windows to view the catastrophe - planks of the bridge turning over and over, driven downstream by the angry waters.

My sister, who was a good stenographer and typist, was well-placed at once, but I, who was a typist only, was sent to what was then called "Maintenance," where I was found not to have sufficient speed for an office receiving the overflow from all the other offices. So I was adrift. But shortly I went on trial to Silviculture where I remained until the District decided to establish a technical library. I was put in charge and as I had had a little experience in library work in my first job in the War Department, I was much pleased. I was accustomed to the handling of books and I enjoyed them.

There was a collection of books on forestry and allied subjects in a dark closet, and these I brought out into the light of day and went to work. Several of the books I found were the property of various forests of which District 1 was headquarters; these I segregated and returned where they belonged. For those left over there was already a catalogue, but in such a confused condition as to be practically useless. This I was able to remedy and I arranged the volumes on shelves available to me and, with the catalogue neatly disposed in cartons (temporarily), I surveyed my achievement with pride. Thus a library was started (a sub-office under Silviculture). From then on the library and I advanced together. I held the post until my retirement many years later. Indeed, we all advanced the town, for it now had a consultative body along forestry lines.

It was in those early years that the Savenac Nursery was established. In the course of time it developed, if I am not mistaken, into the largest nursery of its kind in the World.

Because of a slight knowledge of French possessed by me I was detailed, together with one of the Service men, to accompany to Savenac the Secretary of Agriculture of Brazil, a visitor to the District. It was a delightful detail. The Secretary understood English, but he told me that when he was called upon to speak it he became horribly confused and was hopelessly at sea. But between French and English we managed very comfortably.

During World War I we paraded for the honor of the flag and many members of the Service held rummage sales to raise money for the cause; one, notably, organized by my sister and her chief, realized the very substantial sum of a thousand dollars:

Years before, the District instituted annual get-togethers which never lacked originality. I shall record only one such occasion when, as usual, we were present. It was bruited about mysteriously some time before the date of the party that a very lovely lady - a stranger - would be with us. Of course, great curiosity was aroused, but nothing could be learned as to who the lady was nor where she was to come from.

When the long-expected evening arrived and we were all assembled waiting, the lady was escorted in to the elevator by an attentive bodyguard and ushered into our presence. A gleeful shout of welcome met her. The lady was a fine, upstanding young mare.

\*Miss Mathilde Ammen (now deceased)



Members of 1913 District Office staff. 1. P.S. Gray; 2. C.L. Smith; 3. John J. Quinn; 4. R.J. Moore; 5. J.P. Boyd; 6. W.H. Henderson; 7. F.F. Plummer; 8. F.A. Silcox; 9. Henry Farquhar; 10. J.A. Urbanowitz; 11. R.H. Rutledge; 12. C.O. Wilhite; 13. Joe Streit; 14. Joe Halm; 15. Henry J. Weil; 16. Charles Skeels; 17. G.I. Porter; 18. George Lautz; 19. Elmer Johnson; 20. F.E. Thieme; 21. Myrtle Grace; 22. Mathilde Anunen; 23. L.I. Brower; 24. M.A. Hofstetter; 25. F.E. Paulsen; 26. Charles Farmer; 27. O.M. Wold; 28. Frank Cool; 29. J.F. Preston; 30. L. Padgett; 31. E. Byberg; 32. Vina Sadler; 33. Lucy Likes; 34. Dorothy Davis; 35. I.L. Lambrecht; 36. F.M. Watts; 37. Erma Davis; 38. B.M. Yates; 39. H.M. West; 40. Eva Arrunen



**By Albert N. Cochrell  
(Retired 1957)**

This little story might well be entitled "Early Day Safety." In the spring of 1917, the late Clyde D. Blake, Ranger, Fish Lake District, (Clearwater) and a portion of his crew were camped at the mouth of Lake Creek. On Sunday morning, Clyde announced that he had a little job to do and asked if I would mind coming along to help. On the way down the trail he explained that when the trail crew finished work in the fall of 1915, they had thrown up a small cabin and stored tools, camp equipment and some dynamite there. It wasn't safe to leave old powder around like that and our mission was to destroy it.

When we arrived at the cache some three miles below camp on the North Fork, (the present road probably passes over or near the spot), it was found that there was one full 50-pound box of powder and another partial box which was well deteriorated. After some discussion, the only way we could figure out how to destroy the stuff was to blow it up, but the question was, would it still blow? Anyway, we had to try, so we gingerly carried the full box out to the edge of the small clearing and placed it on some rocks. Next came the partially filled box, and it was handled even more carefully, as it could be seen, and placed on top of the other box. Another question arose; would one blasting cap touch off such old stuff? Probably not, so we tied six caps together with string and placed a good, long fuse in one of them. (I still don't know if that was any better than just one cap.) Next the caps were properly placed and some damp earth was piled over the bomb. There were still some misgivings about an explosion but the fuse was lighted, and we took off up the trail to a safe vantage point and waited for results.

This was before the days of block-buster bombs, but that boom must have equaled one, at least. We were almost afraid to go back to see what happened but did, and can truthfully report that all the powder exploded. There was a sizeable hole in the ground and the cabin, while still standing, was in a sad state. The door was blown off the hinges and lay out in the yard, the chinking was all gone from two sides, and the shakes on the one side of the roof stood up like the tail feathers of an old hen headed south in a strong north wind. Some patching was needed so the cabin could serve as protection for the other equipment and after that was completed we slipped back into camp and gave no one any explanation of our Sunday activities.

In all of Clyde's later work in safety, both region wide and on several different forests, I doubt if he ever advocated that particular method of destroying powder.

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The expression that "he can't tell a horse from a mule," is heard frequently in reference to a city-bred junior Forester in these times. There was a time when even a packer couldn't tell one horse from another. Here is a story which happened in 1913.

John W. Long, the ranger for the Chamberlain Meadow District of the Clearwater assembled his crew of 5 men at Pierce about July 15 for the trip into the district. The date was late because the water had been too high earlier for fording the North Fork at the Bungalow. There was a wagon road of sorts from Pierce to the old Oxford Mine but for the crew it was a pack and saddle horse

chance all the way. Among the pack was a long-legged, lean buckskin that didn't seem able to pack much more than a couple of bed rolls.

The first night's camp was at Elk Creek Meadows, near where the Oxford Ranger Station was later located. The following morning the stock was wrangled and the number of horses and cross-buck saddles came out even. There was a buckskin horse in the string although he appeared to have fattened up considerably during the night on the lush grass. The remainder of the trip down the Orogrande and over the old Pot Mountain trail was made with only the usual mishaps and slowed up somewhat as we opened the trail while traveling.

Some two or three weeks later a messenger came through with word that the buckskin horse originally in the string had been misplaced at the first night's camp and replaced by another from the string of a fishing party camped nearby. The packer was William Zumwalt of Grangeville, but everyone in the crew felt some guilt. The days of hanging horse thieves was past but the Supervisor, Chas Fisher, bought the fisherman's horse to avoid further complications.

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I have always liked the beaver story that was told by George McKinnon, a trail foreman employed on the Clearwater from about 1919 to 1925. He was later a camp foreman for Potlatch Forests, Inc.

George was a native of Nova Scotia and had a cabin on the North Fork not far below the mouth of Salmon Creek, in township 41, Range 6 E. (This may be the cabin which was taken over by the Ridge Runner many years later.) He trapped in season and ran cedar rafts to Lewiston and other points on the Snake River for sale to ranchers and others in the area.

One fall as he traveled a trap line up Isabella Creek, George noticed a colony of beaver had moved in and were busy working on a dam. The next spring high water took the dam out and they had to start all over again. The following spring the same thing took place and then there was a time when there were no beaver around. George naturally assumed they had given up and moved on, so he was very much surprised one spring to find the dam in place and all intact in spite of the high water. Being curious, he looked around and discovered a gray, wizened old stranger that the rest of the colony had gone way over on the St. Joe to get to come and supervise the construction of the dam that remained in place for many years.

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### **NEW ENGLAND TIMBER SALVAGE\***

\*This was a talk prepared by Mr. Cochrell and delivered to the HooHoo Club in Missoula in the Spring of 1939. The salvage project was still under way at that time, and doubtless a report made following its completion would contain additional interesting information.

On September 21, 1938, following several days of rain, a wind too big for that small country hit New England and flattened a goodly percentage of the timber there. Other property damage was

also severe, caused not only by the wind, but floods, and in some cases, fire, which followed. The maximum wind velocity at Boston was said to be 102 miles per hour.

The timber damage occurred in spots which varied in size from a few trees to several thousand acres. Damage was unusually severe along the shores of water bodies, although not confined there by any means. By far the greater portion of down timber was uprooted rather than broken off, the soft ground perhaps being responsible for this. White pine stands were the hardest hit, but only because they were greater in extent and no species escaped. The size of the timber made no difference and many of the worst damage stands were of pole size or smaller.

The volume of storm-damaged timber has been variously estimated from four billion down to a present figure of about one billion, 300 million feet of salvageable material. New Hampshire, with which I am most familiar, had about 600 million.

It is next to impossible to make any reasonable estimate of the amount of timber down on any particular tract unless one knew what was there before the blow. Estimates were usually very vague and were based on hopes or on the volume on which taxes had been paid. When volumes were discussed even our old friend, Jim Girard, would just look confused and shake his head.

With conditions as they were, it was obvious that a coordinated salvage program was necessary. Existing local facilities could not hope to take care of more than 30 percent of the storm-damaged timber. It became apparent that some outside assistance was necessary if this timber was to be salvaged. The Federal Government was asked to take a hand, and the Northeastern Timber Salvage Administration came into being. Whether or not it is what was wanted, I cannot say, but judging from remarks overheard over a period of several months, and bills introduced in Congress, I doubt it.

Several Federal agencies were involved, with the Surplus Commodities Corporation as the parent organization. They operated on money borrowed from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation; and the Northeastern Timber Salvage Administration, with Chief Forester F. A. Silcox as director, was responsible for carrying on the work. The Disaster Loan Corporation had a finger in the pie somewhere, but I could never learn just where. The financial end of the deal was strictly a business one, with the funds to be repaid in full, plus interest.

(Region One participated in this project through the detail of a number of men, among them A. N. Cochrell, Virgil Moody, William Guernsey, Fred Neitzling, R. L. (Roy) Space (now deceased), Ray Armstrong and George Stoltz. Carl Xrueger, then in R-2, also was detailed there.)

The organization was rather complicated since, in addition to salvage, fire hazard reduction work was involved and financed from an entirely different source. The central office was in Boston, with a state director located in each affected state. The states were further broken down into districts in charge of a supervisor, and this is where the actual salvage job started.

The first step in the program was the purchase of logs delivered at designated storage sites. No logging was being done by the Administration. Water storage was utilized wherever possible for

white pine and spruce logs. Dry storage sites were used for all other species and also for white pine and spruce where water was not available.

The selection of sites was of first importance and led to many difficulties. Every timber owner wanted a site on his lot. Suitable sites were not always available where most needed and many desirable ones could not be obtained for one reason or another. We worked to a minimum of one-million feet for each site with a maximum hauling distance often miles. Before final approval could be given to any location, it was necessary to get a formal lease on any lands to be used.

In New Hampshire all bodies of water ten acres or over in size were under the jurisdiction of the State, and it was necessary to obtain clearance from the Public Service Commission and the Public Health Department if drinking water was involved in any way.

The Administration paid nothing for leases and in only a few cases did the landowners donate the use outright. When payment was demanded the towns sometimes took care of it, but usually the timber sellers formed an association and levied a small assessment per M to meet the cost. Land ownership was a troublesome problem. There were a great many undivided estates with the administrator long since discharged and the heirs widely scattered. Then again a man may have owned a lot but knew only vaguely, if at all, where the boundary lines were. It was an almost hopeless task to run down anything in those records that dated back 150 to 175 years.

With the sites established, we were ready to purchase logs for delivery to the receiving points. In the beginning the seller had to place his logs either in the water or on the ice, and in the case of dry sites, in decks. The pressure became too strong to continue this practice, and on January 13, 1939, the Administration took over this expense.

The following log grading rules and prices were established:

- a. Northern white pine; 3 grades - prices-\$12 - \$14 - \$16.
- b. New England spruce; 1 grade and 1 price - \$14.
- c. Eastern hemlock; 1 grade and 1 price - \$12.
- d. Norway pine; 3 grades and 3 prices - \$12 - \$14 - \$16.
- e. Hardwood; 3 grades and 3 prices - \$12 - \$16 - \$22. Beech-white ash and paper birch carried a price \$2 lower per M. Species purchased were yellow birch, sugar maple, red and white oak, yellow poplar, basswood, black cherry, paper birch and white ash. Later black birch and butternut were added. Soft maple and elm were accepted, but only as Grade 3.
- f. Pulpwood - prices ranged from \$8 - \$11.50 per cord, peeled, and from \$7 - \$9.50, rough. There were only nine receiving stations established for pulpwood, but provision was made for delivery on truck roads at the above price, less trucking costs.

The International Rule was used for all scaling. There were various rules in use locally, such as the Scribner Decimal C; Saco River; Holland or Maine; Blodgett; and the Humphrey or Vermont. Logically, only one could be used so the International was selected as being the best adapted.

Before logs could be delivered each seller was required to sign a timber Purchase Agreement. This was a participating contract which provided for immediate payment of 80 percent of the scheduled prices to the seller. Upon completion of the project he could get all, a part, or none of the remainder depending upon the financial success of the venture. On January 20, 1939, the percentage of immediate payment was raised to 90 percent. The scale for each individual was turned in each week and payment was usually forthcoming in about two weeks.

Now that they had the logs something had to be done with them, and that was the second step in the program. It was hoped that most of the water-stored logs could be sold to existing mills, and that white ash could be sold in the log.

The dry-stored logs had to be sawed into lumber early in the summer of 1939. This put the Administration squarely into the sawmill business, but so far only on a contract basis. Milling contracts and specifications were so rigid that mill owners were hesitant about entering into agreements, although some were willing to give it a try.

Where permanent mills were suitably located and contracts could be arranged, log-receiving stations were established there. At other sites portable mills were arranged for and the contractors in each case took care of all expense from the time the trucks were unloaded to the finished lumber piles.

New Hampshire had the greatest volume of storm-damaged timber and in progress was up among the leaders. Data, however, showed that up to February 15, with 40 percent of the available time gone, only 10 percent of the timber had been delivered. Subsequently there was a material increase in deliveries, and for one district the figures showed that with 50 percent of the time gone, 34 percent of the purchases had been made. Maine, with a relatively small amount of timber, was the only state which, at that rate, would be cleaned up by the July 1, 1939, deadline.

The reasons for lack of adequate progress were slowness in establishing storage sites; suspicion on the part of the natives that a representative of the Government could be there for no good purpose; loss of time while they tried to find a Santa Claus in the set-up somewhere; their habit of resting all winter and wanting nothing to interfere; selfishness on the part of the recreationists in that they were opposed to the storage of logs in many ponds and in many cases even objected to the noise of a mill or the sight of a pile of sawdust; difficulty of financing the operation. This applied particularly to the smaller owners. Our slowness in making payments for logs was of no help in this.

Then, too, time was wasted while we became accustomed to each other's language. Logging terms were entirely different, i.e., all timber both standing and down was "lumber;" they didn't skid logs - they "twitched" them; they didn't use a dray or a go-devil - they used a "scoot;" they

were "lumber surveyors" in place of log scalers, and they "measured boards" rather than graded lumber; they used "choppers" in place of sawyers.

Progress was impeded also because of shortage of men experienced in woods work. Teams too were in short supply, and tractors were practically unknown. The sight of oxen working in the woods was not uncommon. There were very few trucks, except the small farm type and these were mostly short-wheel base. They had no modern equipment for handling logs. Everything was done by the main-strength-and-awkwardness method. As far as logging was concerned, they weren't living in the horse-and-buggy days - they hadn't progressed even that far.

Charles Jack, Forester for Potlatch Forests, Inc., had this to say about the salvage project: "Probably the most disturbing factor in the whole situation is that the Federal Government may be forced into the retail lumber business. I do feel, however, that this salvage timber, if manufactured into boards and placed on the market, will have very little effect on our Idaho white pine, due to the short lengths; and the low grades which will be produced."



Picture taken at the Old No. 1 Dwelling on the Middle Fork, which was headquarters for the Middle Fork District. April 1911.

1, Ed Thenon 2. Lou Fitting 3. S. Radcliff 4. W.B. Willey 5. McGee 6. F.A. Silcox 7. Agnew 8. Ashley Roche 9. Adolph Wehcit 10. Frank Tompkins 11. James S. Garrison 12. Rene McPherson 13. Johnny Durant 14. Frank Rogers 15. Roy Monroe 16. Major Fenn 17. Frank Smith

**By Albert E. Cole**  
**(Retired 1935)**

In February of 1916, after having been out of the Forest Service for over five years, I took the ranger examination in Anaconda under Supervisor L.C. Stockdale. In April of that year I was given a temporary appointment as a forest employee and went up toward the head of Mill Creek, south and west of Anaconda, to assist a ranger named Robert Henley in scaling stulls and measuring converter poles, mine props and lagging that the Forest Service was selling to the Anaconda Company (known then as the Anaconda Copper Mining Company).

This material was badly deteriorating from smelter fumes; trees were dying. Sulphur fumes were killing the timber and arsenic fumes were killing livestock in the Deer Lodge Valley, in Mill Creek, and over the divide into the Big Hole watershed. The cut was a clean one and thus the timber did not need to be marked.

I worked on this sale until the first of July that year, when I was sent to the Fleecer timber sale on the head of Divide Creek in the vicinity of Feely Station on the Union Pacific Railroad. This sale was administered by William Latne. I had left my wife in Butte, Montana, with my son, as a second child was soon to arrive, and he was born in October. In December I brought my family out to the sale area and we were housed in a very small two-room cabin which had no plumbing, no water in the house, and the room we used for a kitchen-living room was so small that my wife said she could stand in the center and reach anywhere to get whatever utensil she happened to need.

That was one of the coldest and stormiest winters I had ever seen in Montana, and I had lived here since my birth in 1880, except for three years and about nine months spent in the armed services of the U.S. Two years of this time - 1902-03 - I was in primitive Alaska where, although the temperature dropped to 73° below zero, it did not seem any worse than on that Fleecer sale; in fact we marked timber on snowshoes (the web kind) from about the first of November until after the first of June.

I think that our baby contracted rickets, a bone disease, in that little cabin because of his confinement and lack of sunshine, and we were put to considerable trouble and expense for medical attention. This is mentioned just to show the conditions we were faced with in those early days.

In April 1917, Mr. Latne was transferred to the Supervisor's Office in Anaconda and I was promoted to take charge of the sale. Mr. John B. Taylor had come on the sale as a supervisor for the company doing the cutting. In the spring of 1917 Mr. Taylor enlisted in the Army (Forest Engineers) and went to France. More about him later.

On the first of July 1917, I was transferred to the Dry Cottonwood district as ranger and moved there with my family. This ranger station building I had helped W. J. Derrick, when he was District Ranger there, build in February 1907. In explanation, I had been a Ranger and forestguard from 1905 to January 1, 1911, when I was furloughed from a district on Dry Creek in

the Big Belt Mountains on account of a shortage of funds. I secured other work and did not go back in the Forest Service until later on.

The building on the Dry Cottonwood district was a very good four-room log structure with a good stone-constructed cellar and a fine spring, the water from which was piped into the kitchen. We were very happy here and hoped that we would be left for a long time. I particularly liked the district as I had become acquainted with it when I worked with Ranger Derrick in 1906-07.

My work here was mostly routine, with quite heavy grazing use, there being three sheep outfits and four or five cattle and horse outfits, but the majority of the latter were small. The commercial timber sales were quite numerous as the people who lived in Browns Gulch and Flume Gulch, which was over the divide from Dry Cottonwood, were engaged in cutting mining timbers and wood which they sold in Butte to the mines and to private customers. The fire menace was quite low, and I had only small Class A fires to contend with.

On March 27, 1919, I received a telephone call from Supervisor Z.C. Stockdale to meet him and Assistant Supervisor W.W. Weber at Gregson Springs. On my arrival at the springs they informed me that I was to accompany them to the High Rye Ranger Station about five miles from the springs. I was not informed as to why I was included in this trip. We stayed at the High Rye station all night. This station was occupied by a man named Murray Skillman. I was finally informed that Skillman could not stay there any longer as he was too old to get an appointment as Ranger. He had been in the Service before and had resigned. He had tried to take the examination again but was ruled out because of his age.

They asked me how I would like to transfer there, and I told them that I did not wish to leave the Dry Cottonwood district. They told me that the Dry Cottonwood was to be consolidated with the Race Track district and that the manger on the Race Track side would handle the whole thing. As he was an older man in the Service than I was, this change would have to be made. The High Rye dwelling was a very poor one, but Supervisor Stockdale promised me that a new building would be erected soon; however, that never developed. That same year the supervisor's headquarters was moved from Anaconda to Butte and Stockdale was transferred to the Regional Office. I have never seen him since.

My wife fought bedbugs and mountain rats almost continually during the time we were at the High Rye station, and finally succeeded in destroying the bugs but we never did get rid of the rats. We understood that the High Rye building had been an office of the Champion Mine Company, a great distance away from where it was when we occupied it. It had an attic that was inaccessible from the rooms, but the mountain rats took up residence there and made much noise, especially at night. It sounded like they were dragging chains back and forth, but where they got any chains is still a mystery. The outside of the dwelling was covered with weather-boards which had become loose, and one night we were awakened by a loud clatter. I went to the window, looked out, and saw a huge porcupine gnawing on the boards. It was bright moonlight. I secured a long willow and started to give the porky a good whipping.



He ran out across the bridge of the little stream with me after him. I must say that I was wearing a short nightshirt and that was all. My wife often said she would have liked a moving picture of that episode.

The High Rye was a very small district with about three bands of sheep and a small number of cattle. Only three or four permittees ran cattle on this district, the largest outfit being the Higginson and Semmers Ranch situated within the forest boundary.

The year 1919, however, was a very hard one for me, as I had to have all my teeth removed the last days of May and was hospitalized for nine days with hemorrhages from my gums. This weakened me very badly, and to top that, when we could get back to the Ranger Station both my wife and I came down with influenza and were very sick. The result was that I did not get back to work until the last part of June.

I rode my saddle horse down to Gregson, a distance of about five miles, to get mail and discovered a fire south of there. I rounded up two men and we worked on the fire all that afternoon and night and got a trench around it. As neither of the men could stay on the fire to watch it and I was completely worn out, I returned to the Ranger Station to rest and to put my wife at ease, as I knew she would be very much worried because I had not returned.

Very early the next morning I rode back to the fire. It had jumped the line in one or two places. I returned to Gregson and tried to get help. There was none available. I phoned Supervisor Weber, who said that he could not get me any help until the next day. I returned to the fire but was so weak I could not accomplish much. I watched the fire and succeeded in keeping it fairly well under control. Before noon the next day a man came from Butte and said he was the foreman of a crew that was coming later. He went on up to the fire and I stayed at Gregson Springs until the late afternoon train came with the crew. I took the crew up to the fire and then went home to bed. The next day the crew got the fire out and returned to Butte. This fire was only about five acres in size, but it was just the beginning of a very severe fire season. I had one fire after another until a heavy snow early in October put an end to the worst fire season in nine years over the entire Northwest.

My wife tried to move to Anaconda the fall of 1919, but owing to a shortage of coal there she had to come back to High Rye. The winter of 1919-20 was a severe one, especially during October, November, and December, and parts of January and February. Between supervising a small commercial timber sale and preparing enough wood to keep us warm, I was fairly busy. I had to cut down a number of large Douglas-fir trees that had been killed by smelter fumes from the A.C.M. smelter in Anaconda. Temperatures hovered around 45° to 50° below zero, and the snow was 3-1/2 to 4 feet deep all over the district. My timber sale work was performed on web snowshoes, but I was used to that from the Fleece sale in 1917.

I think that Mr. Fay G. Clark took over the supervisor's position on the Deerlodge Forest early in 1920.

We were on the High Rye district until the spring of 1922, when I was assigned to the Big Hole district as Ranger. Owing to having to purchase most of my supplies in Anaconda, 25 miles from

the Big Hole station, I bought a Ford car as it would help also in the administration of the district, which was quite a large one. Since there was practically no activity on this district in the winter after the close of the grazing and fire seasons, I had my headquarters in Anaconda from December 1 to May 15 or 20, or as soon as I could get out to the Ranger Station on Seymour Creek, about four or five miles from Fish Trap, which at that time was a post office.

One incident comes to mind which relates to the first summer on the Big Hole district. My family always came out to the Arcola Ranger Station as soon as school was out. They had been there for about two months or so when we made one of our trips to Anaconda for supplies. We left Anaconda late in the afternoon on a hot August day, and it looked like we might have a thunderstorm that evening. My wife urged me to stay in town that night and go out early the next morning, but as I wished to make a field trip the next day I persuaded her to start back to the station that afternoon. As we crossed the Continental Divide at the head of a fork of Mill Creek, we ran into a severe thunderstorm which settled into a heavy rain and got worse as we drove on. We came to a very steep pitch, and I told my wife to keep the engine running while I got out to put on the tire chains. However, the engine died and I could not get it started again. I had to leave the family in the car and walk to the Home Ranch, operated by the A.C.M. Company, a distance of about three miles. There I got a man and team and returned to the car, hooked the car to the wagon and was towed to the ranch. As it was during the haying season all the bunkhouses and the main ranch house were full: We had to sit up all night, my wife holding the younger boy on her lap and I holding the older one. We sat in the kitchen so kept warm by the kitchen stove.

In the morning one of the hay crew who had had quite a lot of experience with Model T Fords, told me that probably the coils in our car had become wet. I dried them out thoroughly in the kitchen-stove oven and we got the car started and drove on to the Ranger Station. I got a "panning" from the Mrs. for not taking her advice. These coils had an important function in regard to the ignition system of the car and when they got wet or very damp they shorted the whole electric system. That was one of the "pleasures" of driving a Model T Ford.

Another incident at the Arcola Ranger Station occurred one time when I was away on a field trip. My wife and the two boys were at the station and she was working in the kitchen when she heard a slight scratching sound. She thought it was caused by a mouse or a mountain rat, but looked up to see a large snake crawling along the top of the door frame between the kitchen and living room. She called to the oldest boy to close the door and went out to find something to cope with His Snakeship. The only thing she could find was a digging bar, but she took that and knocked the snake down. It crawled under a cupboard and coiled, but she killed it with the bar, took it outside and hung it on a ladder that was leaning against the house. Fortunately, the snake was not a poisonous one, but she did not know that. She did not panic as some women would have, her whole thought being to protect the boys and herself. This was the largest watersnake I have ever seen.

Herb Schwan, a student from the forestry school of the University of Montana at Missoula, was my assistant during the summer of 1922. He was a very good and efficient helper, could use a transit and was a great help to me as he was the author of the first grazing management plan that had ever been drawn up for that District. He had a very harrowing experience while examining the heavily timbered country at the head of Seymour Creek. A severe lightning storm came up

and he got off his horse to take shelter in a dense jackpine grove. His horse broke away and ran out through the brush and trees, tore the saddle bags off and lost the compass, camera and all of Schwan's films and other Forest Service property. Herb caught his horse but was unable to recover the lost property.

The same John B. Taylor mentioned earlier as being the company foreman on the Fleecer timber sale in 1917, who went to war with the Forest Engineers, and who was a graduate of the University of Montana forestry school, came to the Deerlodge Forest as supervisor, vice Fay Clark who had resigned to take other work. I had become well acquainted with John and was very glad he was to be my chief.

My first job on the Arcola District was to encourage the formation of a livestock association, which was accomplished almost immediately after I assumed charge of the District. The cattlemen were anxious to form such an association, but had been under the impression that the Forest Service would not cooperate.

In the fall of 1923 I was transferred to the Boulder Ranger District with headquarters in Basin, about 36 miles west of Butte. I arrived in October and was quite disappointed with the Ranger Station dwelling and with the poor school there. My wife refused to live at the Ranger Station, so I rented a house in town. I learned in November that the Deerlodge Ranger District was to be vacated by L. D. Williamson, whom I had worked with in 1906-07; and who was moving to Libby, Montana. A Joe Callahan was to be transferred from the Gallatin Forest to the Deerlodge, but after he had looked things over there he said he would rather have the Boulder District, probably on account of having to pay rent in Deer Lodge. It had been the policy of the Regional Office that only one transfer per year of an individual would be authorized, but Supervisor Taylor received permission to let me go to Deer Lodge, and I have lived here since that time.

I arrived on the Deerlodge District on a cold day of December 10, 1923, and found that Charley Joy was in charge, although he was in the field when I arrived.

We were very glad to come to Deer Lodge as both the elementary and high schools were very fine and the teachers excellent; in fact, this has always been the case. My headquarters was the seat of Powell County, and we were fortunate in renting a fine six-room dwelling which we afterward purchased. There were five old Ranger District headquarters cabins that I used for stopping places.

"Chick" Joy was transferred to the Madison Forest as a District Ranger in March of 1924, and Bill Blackman, who was my forest guard and general assistant during my last year on the Big Hole District, and who had passed the Ranger examination, was assigned to the Deerlodge District as my assistant. Bill was with me all of 1924 and until July 1, 1925, when he was transferred to the Boulder Ranger District with his headquarters at the old Bernice Ranger Station. He resigned later and is now foreman of a gas construction crew for the Montana Power Company in Butte. Bill was raised in a Ranger Station in northern Idaho and was a good trail and fire foreman.

My next assistant was Conway McAtee who had been raised on a sheep ranch in the Madison Valley. He was a valuable assistant in the grazing end of the work, as he had had experience with both sheep and cattle and knew the kind of forage suitable for each. However, he was just a temporary man and there were no funds to keep him on during the winter. He managed to get work the winter of 1926-27, and returned to work for me during the field season of 1927. He took the Ranger examination that fall and received a grade above 90. However, as he did not serve in the armed forces during World War I, owing to the fact that, as a foreman on his father's ranch, he was engaged in producing both meat and wool as well as other products, he was refused an appointment as Ranger, and the Forest Service lost a man who would have been a topnotch forest officer.

The only good assistant I had during the next year or so was a man named Vern Runyan, who had taken some forestry work at the University of Idaho at Moscow. He was with me in 1928 and part of 1929, when he was transferred to the Boulder District and sent to an isolated Ranger headquarters on the Upper Boulder River. He resigned that fall and later left the state.

From July 1, 1929, until I retired July 1, 1935, I had no regular assistants - only per diem guards and such men as I could pick up for smokechasers - as it became impracticable to break in green men who had had no training nor experience in Forest Service work. By the time a green man was broken in, the field season was over and he had to seek other employment and did not come back the next year.

John B. Taylor was transferred to the Regional Office at Missoula, and then to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and R.T. Ferguson was supervisor until I retired. C.A. Joy was made assistant supervisor a year or so before I retired.

The fire season of 1934 was the worst I had experienced since I assumed charge of the Deerlodge Ranger District, and I guess that helped to pull my health down. Also my district was greatly enlarged during the years from 1930 to 1935, and I contracted a bad stomach ulcer. I also had to take several long, hard horseback trips during 1934, one in June through a heavy snowstorm when the ulcer was very bad. The largest fire was on Rose Mountain in the vicinity of Gold Creek Lakes, and I was unable to keep warm at night and could not sleep during the ten days that I was on that fire. I had returned home, took a bath and got a small amount of rest when I had to go out on another fire on the old Deer Lodge Farms, as the Farms had a contract for fire suppression with the Deerlodge Forest.

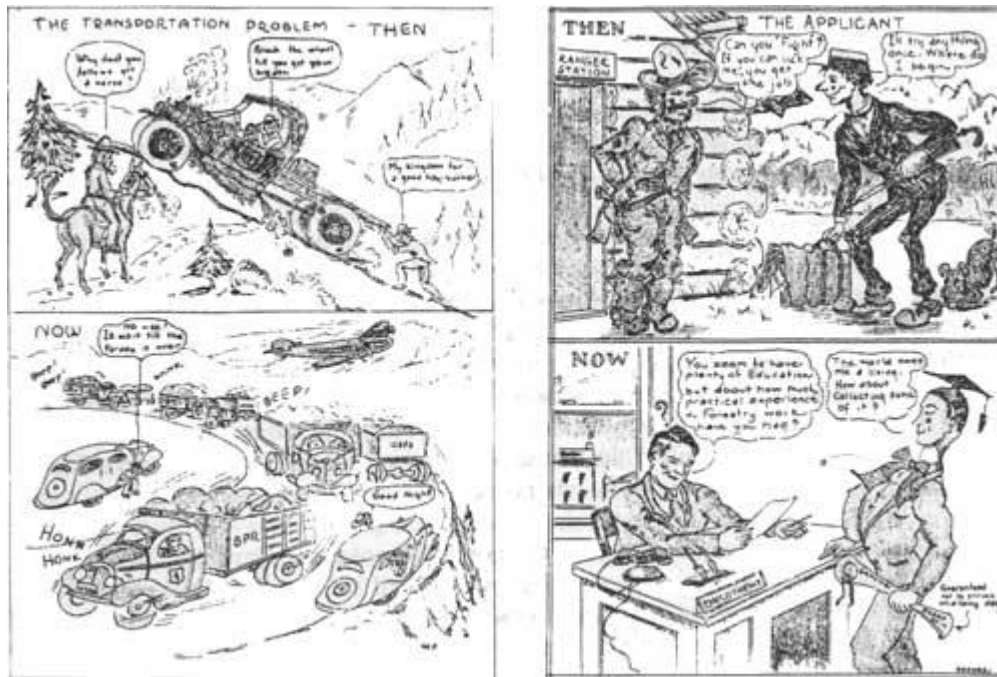
I went through a medical clinic in Butte in December 1934, and on the strength of the physician's report to Forest Supervisor Ferguson, steps were taken to have me retired, which I was on July 1, 1935. I wish to mention some of the Forest Supervisors and assistants that I worked under: John B. Taylor, who is retired and lives in Missoula. I will always thank him for getting me transferred to Deer Lodge, which I have enjoyed as home ever since. Charley Joy, my good friend, and one of the best fellows I was ever on a field trip with. He had the distinction of serving in several Regional Offices and wound up as chief of Range Management in the Washington office. He retired recently and will live in California.

R.T. Ferguson was instrumental in getting me retired when I was about "all in." Fergie has passed away since. And there was W.J. Derrick under whom I worked in 1906, in company with Earl H. Clapp and Mallory N. Stickney. Mr. Clapp wound up in the Washington office. I don't know what became of Stickney. Derrick was supervisor of the old Madison, and later of the Custer Forest. Walt died in California the summer of 1958. And there were others I haven't mentioned.

After I retired I was appointed as Police Judge here in Deer Lodge, and was reelected until I had served nearly eleven years, when I refused to run again. I also served during World War II as chairman of the Ration Board here in Powell County.

On August 12, 1959, my wife and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary.

As Alex Dreyer, the columnist, says: "That's all for this time."



**A FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF MY EMPLOYMENT WITH  
THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE 1918-1955**

**By Albert J. (Bert) Cramer  
(Retired 1955)**

I was born and raised on my father's homestead on the west shore of Flathead Lake and received my grade and high school education in the public schools of Flathead Lake and Sanders Counties, Montana. I graduated from high school in the spring of 1918. Immediately after graduation my younger brother Art and I went to Missoula and volunteered enlistment in the U.S. Marine Corps. Art passed the physical and was sworn in and left immediately for Mare Island training camp, leaving me behind because I had failed to pass the rigid eye test required. This was a great disappointment to both of us because our parents had talked me into staying in school until Art became 18 on June 5, 1918, so we could enlist in some branch of the military service together. However, I was accepted for enlistment in the Students Army Training Corps a few days later and assigned to the University of Montana unit at Missoula.

While I was in the "Trick Army," as we called it, I met up with Chic Joy, Monk DeJarnette, Ralph Crowell and a number of other young bucks who later entered the Forest Service and who are now retired or about to retire. We talked about what we were going to do if and when we got out of Uncle Sam's Army. That is where I first became interested in forestry as a profession. Our Army barracks was just a stone's throw from the little old "shack" at the Montana Forest School. It was here that I first met Dorr Skeels, Charlie Farmer, Tom Spaulding, Peg Lansing, Dick Fenska and other early day Montana Forest School professors who taught Army courses and who built up my first interest in "Forestry" as a college education.

My first job with the Forest Service was immediately after my release from the Army in late November 1918. I hired out as a tree planter and was shipped to Sildax, Montana (on the Coeur d'Alene branch of Nez Perce) where Ranger Frank Haun and foreman Alex ("Cockeye") Donally had a tree-planting job in progress. It snowed about a foot a day or two after I landed on this job but that didn't stop Ranger Haun from getting the trees planted that had been assigned to his district. After trying the snow planting, all but about 10 of the 50 man crew quit within a day. I just happened to be too broke to quit any job at that time so I stuck the job out, being rewarded by free transportation back to Missoula at the termination of the planting job. I was paid off in cash at Missoula by Fiscal Agent Urbanowitz whom many of the old timers remember.

In January 1919 I enrolled as a regular student in the Forest School at the University of Montana and continued my educational efforts there each school year until 1922, accepting Forest Service temporary employment each summer. My first summer was spent as a scaler on the Bitterroot Forest where W.W. White and C.N. Stickney were supervisors and Bill Gee was the District Ranger I worked for.

Although 1919 was a bad fire year in District 1, it just happened that I didn't get in on much firefighting that year. My next summer (1920) was spent on the Flathead Forest where I served as a scaler, timber marker, and fire guard. My bosses during that season were Clyde Webb, Al Rossman and District Ranger Ansley Hutchinson.

While working as Commissary Clerk at the old Hungry Horse Ranger Station, during the latter part of the 1920 season, I met Supervisor Joe Warner and Deputy Supervisors Charles Hash, K. Wolfe, Eldon Vyrick and, last but not least, "Smokey," the "bull-of-the-woods" packer, and Ruby, the lady packer. Ruby was an ex-doctor's dude wife from the East who fell in love with the big out-of-doors and bought and operated a 30-horse pack string between Coram and Big Prairie at that time. "Smokey" was the "Paul Bunyan he-man" type who packed and otherwise looked after the 30 head of pack horses owned by Ruby. Smokey, Ruby and their horses spent several winters at Big Prairie during and just prior to the early twenties. Ruby later became the wife of Ranger Ray Quiman who was District Ranger at Big Prairie at that time.

Joe Warner probably never knew how near he came to getting shot by Smokey on a number of occasions. You see, that big "bull of the woods" got heap mad over Joe meeting Ruby at Hungry Horse and escorting her to Coram a time or two - on official business, of course. Ruby's pack string was being hired by the Forest Service for seasonal South Fork main string packing, but Smokey just couldn't understand that official business idea - or could he? In September 1920 I shot my first grizzly. It happened on Devils Cork Screw Creek on the South Fork. I shot him in the belly with a "38" Colt; a kid's trick; bear got heap mad, started tearing down and busting up the timber. He never found me and I never found him. I never had any desire to shoot another grizzly even though I had numerous chances.

I spent the summer of 1921 on the Moose Creek District of old Selway. Frank Jefferson was supervisor, Jack Parsell the District Ranger and Stanley McKenzie the district packer. I cut and skidded the timber for the first tower on sixty-two mountains and helped build the Parsell honeymoon log cabin at Moose Creek Ranger Station that summer. Jack broke his new bride in right that summer, cooking for the gang, tending telephone, milking the cow, etc., as all good Ranger wives did in the good old days.

In September, W.C. "Cap" Evans and I hiked out to Hamilton via Elk Summit and Blodgett Canyon. Spent one short night (on the floor) at the old Elk Summit Station. Floor space was the best that Ranger Bill Bell had to offer. However, we were thankful to have even a roof over our heads since it rained and snowed like hell every hour of that two-day and two-night trip. By cabin talk at Elk Summit, Cap and I learned that Bill Bell was very mad at Regional Forester Fred Morrell; and when Bill Bell got mad, he got mad all over. It seemed that Bill had loaned Fred a saddle horse belonging to Bill's sister. The horse had just been returned to Elk Summit that evening and was somewhat spur marked. No doubt a lazy pony and Fred was in a hurry, hence a lot of urging was necessary. When Cap and I got our last pay checks we got mad too. We had been allowed only two days' travel time for the trip from Moose Creek to Hamilton while the Idaho ("native son") boys who walked out to Kooskia got either 3 or 4 days' travel time. In other words, there was discrimination in favor of the Idaho boys. Only natural, I guess, but a boy just doesn't like or forget that sort of treatment. It should not be practiced.

During the school year of 1922 I married Johanna Guettler of Missoula and at the end of the winter quarter of school I accepted a probational appointment as Surveyor Draftsman (\$1220 per annum) with headquarters at Missoula. I was just three months from graduation. I planned on going back to finish within the next year or two but never made it to this day. Just had to keep my nose on the grindstone, it seemed. During the field season of 1922 I helped Harold

Townsend, Dick Hilleary and Jack Ray revise and improve the drainage map of the Kootenai. Art Baum was the boss on the Kootenai at that time. Bob Byers, who was the Ranger at Rexford, had his eye on that cute little gal in the Supervisor's Office (Adelaide Erdman) but still didn't convince her that she should change her name to Adelaide Byers until some time later. Spent the winter of 1922-23 in the district engineer's office in Missoula, completing the office end of the Kootenai mapping job. Took the Forest Assistant and Forest Ranger Civil Service examination during the calendar year 1922. Got a grade of 65 in the Forest Assistant exam and 95 in the Forest Ranger examination.

On April 23, 1923, I accepted a \$1220-per-annum probational appointment as Forest Ranger and was assigned to the Wolf Creek District of the Blackfoot Forest with summer headquarters at Fairview Ranger Station, and winter headquarters at Kalispell. I loaded my young wife, Jo, my young son, Albert, and our dog, Dewey, into a second-hand Model T and headed for Fairview Ranger Station, located on Wolf Creek 60 miles by dirt road west of Kalispell. Les Vinal was supervisor and Charles Hash, deputy supervisor of the Blackfoot at that time. A two-room log cabin, located on the bank of Wolf Creek, served as living quarters, office, warehouse, etc. This is where my good wife served her apprenticeship as cook, clerk, telephone operator, and fire dispatcher, in which capacity she was privileged to serve, without pay, over the next eight years on four different Ranger Districts. Two more sons, Bob and John, arrived while we were assigned to the Wolf Creek District.

In the fall of 1925 I received a promotion to the Fortine Ranger District, which was the top-rated district of the Blackfoot Forest at that time. My new salary, as I recall, was \$1800 per annum. I herded my milk cow about 40 miles over the Wolf Creek-Fortine divide by trail to my new headquarters at Ant Flat Ranger Station, where I replaced I.R. "Jinks" Jensen as District Ranger. It was here that I became quite closely associated with Fred Herring, who at that time was serving in semi-retirement as Assistant Ranger of the Fortine District. Fred was one of the truly and colorful old timers who had a hand in making early-day Forest Service history in the Flathead locality. Fred was a ranch hand in the Dakotas in the pioneer days for Teddy Roosevelt, and served with Teddy during the Spanish-American War in his Rough Rider Brigade. I have been told that one of the early-day supervisors at Kalispell "tied the can" to Fred over a drinking party. Theodore Roosevelt was President at the time. I guess Fred wrote Teddy advising him of his predicament. The Forest Supervisor got a letter from "the boss" stating briefly, "Put Fred Herring back to work." Fred was back on the job without loss of pay, as soon as they could find him, and stayed until his official retirement in 1927.

During July, August and September of 1926 I got my eye teeth cut in big crew firefighting. Jim Ryan and Ray Fitting were my supervisor and deputy at that time. The Forest Service never had two better firefighters than those two old timers. Believe me, we had some good old lumberjack crews who knew how to handle the crosscut saw, double-bitted ax, and hodag, and we also had some good old lumberjack foremen who could get the jobs done even though it all had to be done the hard way. I was just a kid in my twenties, with practically no big fire experience, when the big Stryker fire broke on my district and spread to a 10-mile length and three-mile maximum width the first day (July 31). Believe me, I had gained a lot of big-fire experience by the time I awakened one morning in September with about one foot of snow on top of my bed on the headwaters of Shorty Creek, where I was heading up a 300-man crew on the head end of the



Stryker fire, with no method of getting messages to or from the outside world except by foot or horseback. My alternate, J.E. "Slim" Cluzen, (retired 1957), had a 50-man lumberjack crew on that fire within about one hour after an 11 a.m. discovery, but couldn't hold it. That was exceptionally quick and heavy manning in those days. My opinion is that present-day bulldozer and airplane bombing could have caught that fire at five acres or less and saved thousands of blackened acres. However, I would not want to back that opinion with more than 50-50 odds.

Following the season of 1926 I had the honor of serving as a guinea pig on what I believe was the first detailed and exacting work plans preparation job done in District One of the Forest Service. Earl Loveridge from the Washington Office and my supervisor, Jim Ryan, spent ten straight days or so at my district headquarters analyzing my calendar year 1926 diaries and writing up detailed work plans for the ensuing year. I recall that my diaries disclosed I worked better than 10 hours a day and Sundays throughout the 1926 field season. I also vividly recall what a nightmare the 1927 season turned out to be, with me duty bound to make an honest effort to live up to and carry through with all the detailed daily trip and work scheduled which had been guessed at and written up several months before the field season began.

Looking back on all my experience with Forest Service work and trip plans, I don't believe that I am wrong in saying that work plans have been responsible for many gray hairs and thousands of ulcers. Sound and timely planning has a great deal of merit and value, but, in my opinion, the Forest Service has wasted a hell of a lot of man-hours and burdened a lot of good men with worthless and useless paper planning, and useless records, just to satisfy the desires of some crackpot plans expert somewhere up the line. Back in the good old days, forest officers were rugged individuals, who were handed a job, "lock stock and barrel," and then held responsible for accomplishments. We had the old Use Book and one small manual of laws and regulations in which one could find most answers that were worth while. In late years the forest officer has become so burdened with volume on top of volume of rules, regulations, work plans, instructions, etc., etc., that he becomes office bound and confused. Too many higher-ups trying to justify their existence make it hell for the underdog and discourage strong leadership. The Forest Service would get along better and accomplish more on-the-job results if it would dispense with a lot of pencil pushing positions all along the line from the Chiefs office down to the District Rangers and put that money into allotments for on-the-job accomplishments.

During a number of years prior to the time I took over the Fortine Ranger District, considerable trouble was experienced with incendiarism in the Pinkham Ridge and Pinkham Creek locality which is along the western boundary of the Fortine District. This situation became so serious that armed guards were placed in the area throughout one season. This was just prior to the time that I took over this district. One day in 1927 my alternate ("Slim" Cluzen) and a crew extinguished a small fire which was obviously of incendiary origin. This fire was on or near the homestead of one of the old Pinkham Ridge ringleaders - a man reputed to have several notches on the stock of his gun for men he killed before he came to Montana from West Virginia. The next day I was all set for more fires in the same locality. Sure enough, about noon a couple more smokers showed. Cluzen and I both went to these fires with a crew. It was obviously another incendiary attempt. After we controlled the fires, Cluzen and I went to the home of Frank Moore, who was our prime suspect. I left Cluzen on guard at the edge of the clearing surrounding the house. I proceeded to the house and knocked on the door. All was perfectly quiet; there was no response to my knocks.

Finally I opened the door. A strong moonshine odor came from the room. I observed a moonshine still operating in that room. I stepped to the door of a second room and observed Frank Moore lying on his bed dead drunk from his brew.

Cluzen and I shut off the burner under the still, loaded Frank Moore in my car and took him to Eureka, intending to arraign him before a court on a charge of incendiarism. All we could get out of him was the occasional remark, "To hell with the fires." Upon our arrival in Eureka our prisoner was still too drunk to be taken before a court so we put him in the city jail over night to sober up. The next day, Frank Moore pleaded guilty as charged and the court assessed the customary fine. The prisoner pulled a roll of bills from his pocket that would choke an ox and paid his fine. I then asked Mr. Moore if he wanted a ride back home since Cluzen and I were going that way. To my surprise, the old, hard-boiled hillbilly accepted my offer. Enroute home he asked what I had done about the still that I had found in his house. I told him that we had shut off the burner when we left the house the afternoon before and that I intended to forget all about the moonshine business as long as he confined his operations to his own property. I had no more fire-brig trouble while on the Fortine District. In fact, Frank Moore did blacksmithing for me and became quite friendly after this set to. I understand he went to the state penitentiary some years later for butchering a beef that didn't belong to him. My motto: "Mind your own business." I could have reported that still to liquor-law enforcement officers, but I didn't. I was not obligated in any way to report stills on private property.

During the winter of 1926-27, Ranger L.E. "Les" Eddy, Deputy Game Warden Archie O'Claire and I made a snowshoe trip into the Frozen Lake-Wigwam country along the Canadian line in the large primitive area north of Fortine and Eureka, Montana. A report had come through the Queen's office in England to the U.S.A. to the effect that some Canadian halfbreeds were conducting extensive beaver-trapping operations on both sides of the International border. We were warned that these trappers were dangerous men. It turned extremely cold the next day after we took off from Ant Flat Ranger Station on snowshoes, armed with rifles and about 3 days' light provisions, two small tarps and one blanket. We spent about ten days on that trip. The thermometer dropped to 50° below zero and stayed around that figure throughout the trip. It was luck that we had plenty of salt along because it was salt and the rabbits and birds that we could kill each day that pulled us through. We stayed the first night out in an old cabin, the most miserable night of the ten spent on the trip. We came home with our belts tightened up considerably but feeling like a million dollars. The only fresh tracks, big game or human, that we observed on the entire trip were those of a big grizzly bear that was traveling in or on 12 feet of snow without snowshoes. Game Warden O'Claire called this sort of trip and results "a water haul."

I was transferred to the Plains District of the Cabinet Forest in the fall of 1928, and then to the Noxon District when Ben Saint "bunched it" in the spring of 1929. Ray Fitting was the supervisor of the Cabinet at that time. I recall only two rather exciting experiences while on the Cabinet. One was when a big mother black bear made for me and I killed her with one bullet from my "22" Colt placed accidentally in her right eyebrow. My little dog had run her cubs up a tree. The mother bear jumped on my dog and I very foolishly tried to help the dog. The bear was about 10 feet from me and coming right at me when I pulled the trigger. Very much to my surprise she fell dead on the first shot. I have had several bear, including grizzly, stand me off

and try to bluff me but that is the only one that ever made for me, and it was very clear that she meant business.

On another occasion I was down along the Clark Fork River between Noxon and Heron checking on reports that Jap extra-gang men were doing a lot of fishing. They were all aliens and the local folks wanted me to stop this fishing. When I sneaked out to the river banks I could see at least 20 Japs, all fishing. One fellow was right down under the bank on which I was standing. I went down and proceeded to arrest him. While trying to convince this Jap that I was placing him under arrest I could see the other fishermen dropping their poles and disappearing in the brush. As my victim and I got back up to the railroad tracks all those 20 Japs who had been fishing surrounded me and my prisoner and started talking Jap to beat hell. They sounded very threatening and convincing. About the time I could feel numerous knives tickling my back, another Jap came running up the track. He spoke good English. I told him that I had arrested this one man for fishing and that I wanted to take him to Thompson Falls to the court. He told me he was a foreman and that he would see that this man was available if I would come to the extra-gang cars about 7:00 a.m. the next morning. I was there the next morning at the appointed time but could not identify either the foreman I had talked to or the fellow I had arrested. Just another "water haul." I have often thought how lucky I probably was that I was not armed with a gun when I went out that evening to check on the fishing by the Jap extra gang. I may have tried to use the gun and someone would most likely have gotten hurt, so it was best the way it worked out.

I have my diaries back to 1931 only, so am not sure of the year, but believe it was during August 1930 that I had a string of fires set along the country road leading from Heron toward the Idaho divide trail up Jack's Gulch. It just happened that I was at the Noxon station when this report came in so I went to the fires with all available men. Upon arrival it was immediately evident that they were deliberately set by someone. I followed tracks from one fire to the next, and next, etc.

The tracks finally led out into the dusty county road and up the road toward Jack's Gulch. At the end of the county road the same fresh tracks continued on up the Jack's Gulch trail. I called Supervisor Fitting from an emergency telephone at the end of the Jack's Gulch road and advised him of my intentions to follow those tracks which I believed were those of an incendiary. I suggested he call the Coeur d'Alene supervisor, advise him of my suspicions and intentions and ask him to send someone out from Magee Ranger Station to intercept the suspect, or at least meet and help me in what I was attempting to accomplish.

After phoning Fitting I took off up the Jack's Gulch trail in high gear. I followed the suspect's tracks about 12 miles across the Montana-Idaho divide and down to within a couple hundred yards of a cabin on Independence Creek, known as the Planting Warehouse. At that point the tracks left the trail. I checked the cabin and all trails leading out from the cabin. I found no further tracks. The cabin was locked and all shutters were in place on the windows. It was about midnight by then so I decided to spend the rest of the night in the cabin and continue my search for the suspect in daylight.

I unlocked the cabin and found and lit a couple of candles. I then noticed something in one of the bunks which resembled a man's body covered with blankets. I pulled the blankets back and, low

and behold, there was a wide-awake man staring at me in the dim candlelight. It sort of startled me because I had checked for signs of anyone's forcibly entering the cabin and found nothing to indicate that this was the case. I asked the stranger if he had any objection to my occupying the cabin with him for the balance of the night and he said, "Sure, that will be o.k." I did not identify myself or question the stranger that night concerning how he got into the cabin, who he was, what he was doing in the locality, etc. I ate a bite, rolled into the top bunk above the suspect, and pretended to sleep, but I was actually just waiting for daylight. By this time I was sure I had a "firebug" on my hands and was determined that he was not going to be permitted to set more fires, regardless of what I had to do to restrain him.

About 3:00 a.m. I heard horse hooves pounding the turf near the cabin, and in just a jiffy Deputy Supervisor Ashley Roach came to the door, flashed a light on me and said, "Is that you Cramer - did you find the firebug?!" I jumped out of bed without answering the question, went outside and held a brief, whispered conference with Ashley, followed by another secret conference somewhat later. We decided to arrest the stranger and, providing he did not resist, I would take him back across the Montana-Idaho Divide which was by far the shortest distance to road and car transportation.

After a breakfast of short rations we placed the stranger under arrest. Upon searching him we found nothing in his pockets except a small bar of soap, some matches, a short fish line, and one fishhook. The man denied setting any fires, and claimed to be a mining engineer prospecting for minerals. I hiked the man ahead of me back to my car at Jack's Gulch where I telephoned Supervisor Fitting, and he in turn consulted Attorney Charles Brothers at Missoula for instructions. Mr. Brothers advised that we erred in bringing the man out of the state in which we had arrested him. Fitting and I said we would take him back into Idaho by car. Mr. Brothers said, "You can't do that, it would be illegal, you will just have to turn him loose." We told Mr. Brothers that, legal or not legal, we were not going to turn him loose and were taking him back into Idaho.

I then proceeded by car to Heron where Fitting met me, another secret conference was held and it was decided I should head for Coeur d'Alene with my prisoner. Upon arrival in Coeur d'Alene the prisoner was arraigned before a U.S. Commissioner and officially charged with willful setting of fires. A short time later a sanity hearing was held in a Federal Court at Coeur d'Alene and the man was placed in a Federal asylum where he spent the rest of his life, I believe. The end of another firebug's career.

This case was a good example of how a forest officer can get up against making vital and important decisions in the backwoods. We made the mistake of illegally taking this man across a state line while he was under arrest and before he was arraigned in court. There could be no question but that getting a firebug out of the woods and keeping him out was morally right, so the thing to do was to take him back into Idaho and worry later about the legality of our actions. Our legal errors were never brought up or questioned either by the defendant or the prosecuting attorneys.

I was transferred to the Pend Oreille Forest in North Idaho on April 4, 1931, and was assigned to the Sandpoint Ranger District. Ray Fitting was the supervisor and Albert Cochrell the deputy

supervisor. The fire season of 1931 was a nightmare. I started fighting fire on my own district in May, and was called to the Deer Creek fire north of Bonners Ferry, Idaho, on July 26. On our way to this fire we could observe the cauliflower top on the fire, indicating it was going places. I was in charge of various sectors of the Deer Creek fire; there were some good and a lot of bad results. Hundreds of miles of fire line were built, hundreds of miles of line lost, and at least some incendiarism to contend with, including the initial setting of this fire. I was finally released from this fire on August 15 by Supervisor Clyde Webb of the Kootenai Forest. He brought Ranger Bert Bealey to my camp near Pete Creek Meadows on the Kootenai Forest and placed him in charge. That camp was near where the fire crossed the Canadian line and continued on into Canada, at least 30 miles airline from where the fire started.

I will never forget one night during this 20-day fire assignment. I had about 300 men camped in a big meadow. The fire seemed to be coming in on us from all sides, which was unusual. I am sure there were firebugs working that night. I fed the entire crew before dark and put all men back out on the fire line again because it seemed that we were going to have to fight to save our camp. About midnight a tall white pine snag struck one of my men squarely on the head, bursting his head in two pieces and literally driving him endwise into the ground. I pulled the entire crew into camp and told them to hit the hay. I found a bedroll and just passed out. The next thing I knew Regional Forester Evan Kelley was shaking me and peering down into my face. It was daylight. As soon as he got me fully awake, he said, "What the hell is wrong - kill one man and order 500 to replace him." The Major then informed me that the sight of this dead man when they carried him into camp the night before had apparently caused my timekeeper to blow his top, resulting in his jumping in a car and driving to Bonners Ferry and ordering 500 men and equipment for my sector of the fire. The Regional Forester just happened to be in the Sandpoint office when this order came in and thought he had better come out and see what was going on. As it turned out we didn't need or get the 500 men the next morning, but I will agree that it looked like we would need a thousand men when the firebugs were working the evening before.

The afternoon of August 3, 1931, Supervisor Jim Ryan called and wanted help on the big Freeman Lake fire which was going hog-wild. That fire had started near Freeman Lake and traveled several miles that afternoon to a point where it was threatening to destroy the Priest River Experiment Station by that first evening. This fire fooled everyone by spotting across wide ravines, burning a number of ranch homes and other buildings which were normally considered fireproofed by their surroundings. I picked up a 30" x 8" x 2" thick cedar shake about 6 miles from where it was known to have been torn from the roof of a barn that burned. That scorched shake had actually been torn from the roof and thrown that distance by the force of the heat and wind during the time the fire was making its big run that first afternoon.

I learned a lesson the first day on this fire which I have never forgotten. My 50-man crew and I became trapped by a blowup behind us. A big, mouthy strawboss that I had immediately started to try to outrun the blowup and take my crew with him. I knocked a handle out of a grubhoe, stood my ground in front of this strawboss and the crew and threatened to crown the first man who tried to pass me. In just a minute or two this strawboss and the crew saw what would happen to them if they did not obey my orders. I took the crew into a nearby crowned-out area where it was still hot and smokey but safe, and no injuries resulted. Experience paid off again.

The evening of August 25, 1931, I got called to the big McPherson fire that was coming off the Magee District of the Coeur d'Alene and onto the Noxon District of the Cabinet. George Duvendack was District Ranger at Noxon. Assistant Regional Forester Glen Smith was placed in charge of the Cabinet end of the fire. It was on this fire that I first met Axel Lindh and a number of other Region Six overhead. I was released from the McPherson fire on September 5, and the next day another bad railroad fire broke out near Sandpoint.

I will never forget the close call about 50 men had on that fire. This crew had established a line across a canyon at the head of the fire and were holding it. Supervisor Ray Fitting was watching the fire from the window of the Supervisor's Office in Sandpoint. About noon he became convinced that the fire was getting set for a big blowup that afternoon. He sent a messenger with orders to pull all men off the front or north end of the fire and be prepared for blowup conditions that afternoon. The orders to pull all men out of the canyon at the north end reached the foreman and sector boss of the canyon crew just in time. They abandoned the line and rushed down the canyon to the shore of Lake Pend Oreille where they waded out into the lake as far as possible and put fires out on the shirts of one another, with the flames from the fire burning the green leaves off the cottonwoods almost over their heads. There can be no question but that years of experience and mature judgment paid big dividends on that occasion.

The mature judgment gained by the old timers through years of experience has been a blessing to the Forest Service over the years. The young foresters of today who are taking over from the old timers must not overlook the extreme importance of developing men along these lines, and seeing that at least one of them keeps in close touch with big fire situations at all times. All of us who have fought a lot of big fires have had numerous close calls. Experience, mature judgment and foresight have saved human lives hundreds of times. I repeat, keep a generous supply of that sort of fire overhead developed and on the job at all times. With modern fire weather forecasting and communications, which we did not have even 25 years back, there is no excuse for not recognizing blowup conditions and taking action which will prevent disasters such as the Mann Gulch fire where 13 smokejumpers perished.

During August 1932 I had three fires reported in the Carywood locality. I went to the fires with three men, suspecting there was something wrong about three fires showing all at the same time. Upon arrival at the first fire I found fresh tracks nearby. The footprints had easily identifiable print patterns customarily found on rubber-soled shoes. By taking lots of time I was able to follow the tracks from the first to the second and on to the third fire. From the third fire the tracks led westerly across a 40-acre brush flat and out across a plowed field directly to a farmhouse. By the time I reached the house I had firmly made-up my mind that if I found a man with those easily-identifiable soles on his shoes I had my "firebug." By the time I reached the house I was getting mad; I had had so much trouble with this sort of fire and so little success in getting confessions because of handling the suspects with kid gloves. I was also disgusted with how the attorneys would prosecute only lead-pipe-cinch cases, with the consequence that Uncle Sam was stuck for all costs on numerous fires of this sort.

As I approached the house I noticed many tracks of the type I was looking for in the dust around and near the house. The man who responded to my knock on the door was wearing a new looking pair of tennis shoes of the type suspected. I informed the man of the fires and he

pretended to know nothing about any fire in that locality. I decided I might have to get rough with this fellow, and since I didn't want to have both him and his wife to handle I invited him to go with me to a point behind his barn from where I could show him the smoker. He fell for my suggestion. On our way to the barn I observed that the tracks the suspect was making were identical to tracks I had trailed from all three fires. I was really getting mad and determined. When my suspect again denied any knowledge of the fires I just couldn't keep my hands off him any longer. I grabbed him right by the shirt front with my left hand, and with my right fist clenched and drawn back ready to strike I told him a lot of things in a very short time. I don't know what all I said but it must have been convincing, because within a half minute or less this full grown man of 50 years started to cry like a child. He confessed that he had set all three fires that morning in hopes that they would spread over all of his and adjoining range which was brushed up quite badly.

I took the man to the fires and had him tell his fire-setting story to my crew and then had him sign a written confession with the crew as witnesses. About 15 days later the District Judge at Sandpoint gave this man the minimum sentence of 60 days in jail. The judge then gave the confessed "firebug" and a number of his neighbors who had been character witnesses at the hearing, a good, sound 10-minute fire lecture. At the conclusion of the lecture the judge suspended the sentence and told the farmer to go home to his family. This farmer shook my hand, and with tears streaming down his cheeks thanked me for what he called "extremely fair treatment," and assured me that I would have no more trouble with him. I had no more fire-setting trouble in that locality.

In August 1934, I was called to the big Pete King fire on the old Selway Forest. I was told that an airplane would pick me up at Sandpoint. Even though I had fought a lot of fire at home that season, I was thrilled when the call came because it involved my first airplane ride. I traveled in style to that fire in an open cockpit plane. I put in the next four weeks fighting fire on a number of different sections, winding up the season at the Falls camp on the Selway River on September 7, when the first general rain finally cut loose.

I will never forget how sick I was when I was released from that fire assignment. The stomach trouble, which most all of us had when we left that fire, was traced to the fact that the fire got so big that nearly everyone had to live, eat, sleep and work inside the burned area and drink the fire ash and lye-impregnated water, not for a few days, but for several weeks. I never fully recovered from this sickness and finally on January 9, 1935, I submitted to surgery in a Spokane hospital for stricture of the esophagus. My doctor blamed my throat trouble to irritation started in the esophagus by the fire ashes swallowed and lye-impregnated water drunk while fighting fires during the 1934 season. I was hospitalized 20 days, using all my 15 days sick and 15 days annual leave, before I was able to get back on the job. I paid all the doctor and hospital bills and am still living with an abnormal and bothersome esophagus.

I suggested to my Supervisor that this should be a compensation case but he was unable to convince the higher ups that it would be approved, so the matter was dropped. I will always feel that this was an injustice to me that would not be dealt out to a forest officer today. The Forest Service has become more considerate and humane in recent years. I have heard old timers say

many times that the Forest Service was more considerate of its horses and mules than of its personnel in years past.

This reminds me of another incident along this same line. During one summer season while I was District Ranger at Sandpoint, Idaho, one of my smokechasers almost drowned. Alternate Ranger Donald R. Nelson and Headquarters Smokechaser David Harris, after coming in from a dirty fire, decided to take a swim in the Clark Fork River after supper one evening. After washing their bodies at the water's edge near the old wagon bridge, both of them dived into the river and swam in approximately the center of the river channel. Both were expert swimmers. The river is close to 500 feet wide at that point. All of a sudden Don heard Dave call for help. Don looked around just in time to see Dave go out of sight with his arms spread wide apart as if in cramps. Don swam to where he estimated was the spot where he saw Dave go down and dived several times looking for Dave. Finally Don became completely exhausted and had to swim to shore to keep from going down himself. Don spent a minute or so on the river bank beating his arms across his chest and otherwise exercising, and dived back into the river. He swam to where he believed he had seen Dave go down and began diving and looking for Dave again. Finally, by sheer luck, he located Dave lying on the bottom of the river. Don swam back to the river bank with Dave in tow. Dave's body was turning black and very rigid by that time. Don had recently taken Forest Service first-aid training and lost no time in starting artificial respiration. Don says that after what seemed to be fifteen to thirty minutes Dave's body began to limber and soften up and he finally regained consciousness. Dave spent the next couple of days in bed but fully recovered within a few days.

I have repeated the facts concerning this near serious accident as related to me by Don and Dave the day following the incident. Knowing these two men as well as I do and also the river and water conditions under which this rescue was made, I wish to say that Donald R. Nelson performed a Herculean and heroic task in locating the body of David Harris on the bottom of the river and in getting Dave to the river bank. Dave Harris can thank his lucky stars that a young "bull-of-the-woods" like Don Nelson was near him and saw him go down. There is not one man in a hundred who would have had the physical ability to make this rescue, to say nothing of the guts and whatever else it took to accomplish this job. Dave Harris can also be thankful that Don understood how to administer artificial respiration; otherwise it would have been taps for Dave.

I reported this near serious accident to the Forest Supervisor. So far as I know, to this date nothing further was done toward giving Don Nelson some sort of official recognition of this heroic deed. I wonder if it is too late still to do something along that line. It is my understanding that medals are given for heroic deeds of this sort. If that is correct I believe Don Nelson is entitled to be awarded a medal. Don Nelson is at the present time a successful rancher living near Plains, Montana. David Harris, a World War One veteran, and father of a large family, lives on his homestead near Clark Fork, Idaho, I believe.

I was promoted to Chief Ranger on December 1, 1936, and assigned to the Supervisor's staff of the Lewis and Clark Forest. R.T. "Fergie" Ferguson was just replacing Bill Willey as Supervisor at Great Falls, and Adolph "Wee" Weholt was Deputy Supervisor. I was placed in charge of fire control improvements and wildlife management. It was here that I met old time District Rangers Dave Lake, Emory Wilson, Stacy Eckert, Lester McLean, Walt Streeter, Lawrence Howard, and



Tom Wiles. A fine bunch of fellows, all from the old school. Fred Kennedy replaced Weholt and George Duvendack moved to the Choteau District within the next couple of years. They were young sprouts like myself at that time.

The season of 1936, when almost the entire Little Rockies Division burned, demonstrated that eastern forests will burn. This was true of the 1940 season also. I wish to say that I was on a big percentage of the large fires of Region 1 from 1919 to 1955, and none of them burned more fiercely or were more dangerous than the Hungry Horse and Teton River fires on the Lewis and Clark in 1940. The 1936 Little Rockies fire was another example of a very dangerous and rapid-spreading fire. Don't ever underestimate the potentialities of eastern Montana fires in bad years.

In the spring of 1941 I was promoted to the position of Regional Law Enforcement Officer and transferred to Missoula. I enjoyed this work, and in my opinion, accomplished a great deal of good, sound law enforcement work during the next ten years. I could write a book recording interesting and worthwhile law enforcement accomplishments during that period. However, this write-up is already getting too long so I will close this period mentioning a couple other incidents.

While in Virginia City one day I met and shook hands with a sheriff whose name I can not recall at this time. He asked me if I was a brother of an Art Cramer who back in the 20's was Ranger at Ennis. I told him Art was my kid brother. The sheriff shook my hand again and said, "I want to tell you Cramer, that brother of yours had the most guts of any man I have ever known." He then recited the circumstances of how Art had called him one day to report that a sheepherder on one of the Forest Service sheep allotments had gone nuts and had run the owners of the sheep off with a rifle, threatening to shoot anyone who tried to come near his sheep wagon or bother his sheep. Art asked the sheriff to go with him and arrest this crazy man and put him where he belonged. The sheriff accompanied Art to the sheepherder's camp. They were both armed with rifles. As they came within sight and rifle range of the camp it was agreed that one should stay by the car and the other walk up to the herder's wagon and make the arrest.

Although it was actually the duty of the sheriff to make this arrest, Art volunteered and insisted it was his duty to approach the herder and disarm him. The sheriff covered the herder with his rifle, with the car as a shield, while Art approached the sheep wagon. The herder aimed his gun at Art as he approached and shouted numerous threats, but Art just kept on walking straight toward the herder while trying to reason with him. The sheriff said he didn't know how he kept from shooting the herder to save Art's life because the herder kept shouting threats and aiming the rifle right at Art's guts. Art finally grabbed the rifle right out of the herder's hands.

If Art were alive I feel sure he would object to my putting this in writing. However, I believe episodes of this sort are worth recording and I doubt if this one has been. I believe all who worked with Art over the years realize that he had guts and also lots of what it took to get the job done. Also, even some of the higher-ups with whom Art tangled at times, will have to agree that Art's work saved a lot of topsoil for future generations in both Region 1 and Region 2. It is too bad that he could not have lived to enjoy a few years in retirement and do a little writing about his experiences and the pursuit of his ideals.

On September 19, 1951, I got notice from my boss in Missoula that the Chiefs office was insisting upon termination of my official position as Investigator and offering me a transfer back to administrative work in Region 1. This notice fell on me like a bomb out of a clear sky. I was 52 years of age and had planned to stay in Forest Service investigative and law enforcement work for probably another 10 years, and then retire as a Federal Law Enforcement Officer under an August 25, 1949, amendment to the Federal Retirement Act (5-USC-691-Par. d). This would have been far more to my advantage than retiring as a regular forest officer. I was thus forced to make an almost over-night decision as to whether to accept a transfer back to an administrative position, thereby losing the special law enforcement officer retirement rights I had accumulated, or to apply for immediate retirement on the basis of a law enforcement officer. The advantages of retiring as a law enforcement officer wherein, with 30 years' service at age 50, full-pay credits applied, were very obvious so I decided to apply for retirement rather than accept a transfer to an administrative position on some Region 1 forest.

Finally, on October 3, after a great deal of work and wonderful support from all fellow workers and bosses in Region 1, my retirement application went to the Chiefs office, supported by volumes of statements, etc., etc. Finally on October 18, after numerous wires, telephone calls, etc., between the Regional Forester's office and the Chiefs office, I was given notice that my retirement application had been disapproved and immediate transfer to the supervisor's staff of the Coeur d'Alene was the only way out. I reluctantly agreed to this transfer with the definite understanding that the transfer was not to jeopardize my rights to retire at some future date on the basis of my service as a law enforcement officer.

On December 6, 1951, I loaded my wife and 30 years' gatherings into my car and headed for the Coeur d'Alene Forest, where I served as fire, lands, range and wildlife staff officer until my official retirement at age 56 on May 31, 1955. Before applying for retirement in 1955, I asked a U.S. Senator to check into and ascertain why my 1951 application for retirement as a Federal law enforcement officer was not approved. After several months' investigation the Senator came up with the answer that my 1951 application was not approved by the Civil Service Commission because it came to them without the approval of the Chiefs office of the U.S. Forest Service. I don't mind saying that this information, cut me deeply and made me mad enough to head straight for Washington, D.C. and twist a few noses.

I greatly appreciated how wonderfully my coworkers in Region 1, who had just heard knowledge of the facts, had gotten behind and approved and pushed my application for retirement as a law enforcement officer. It was hard to realize that the "big shots" in our Washington office would absolutely disregard regional recommendations and disapprove my application, thereby beating me out of approximately \$100 per month retirement pay which I was honestly entitled to for the rest of my life. I have my ideas but will probably never know just why the Chiefs office insisted upon terminating the position of Investigator in Region 1 in 1951. Could it be that I shot too straight and refused to pass up or wink at facts in certain fire cases to which I was assigned to get and record the facts but was later called off for some unknown reason? I realize now that I made a serious mistake by agreeing to accept a transfer back to administrative work in 1951, thereby relinquishing the retirement rights which I had accumulated while working as a law enforcement officer.

I have all my diaries for the last 25 years of my 36 years' service. I have recorded a few highlights of my 25 years as an administrative officer. The many interesting and unique experiences during the ten years I was assigned as regional law enforcement officer for Region 1 would make this write-up too long, so that will have to be another story someday.

In closing, I wish to pay tribute to the hundreds of wonderful Forest Service men and women with whom I have worked and associated down through the years. Most of them have by now retired and many have passed to their reward. Even though I have voiced criticism, registered complaints and made suggestions for improvements, I realize fully that the Forest Service is in good hands. My wife and I have no regrets that we were for many years members of this fine organization. We point with pride to Forest Service accomplishments over the years with full confidence that the good work will continue.



Timber-marking group on Cooper Sale on Mill Creek, Yellowstone Forest Reserve, Absaroka Division, 1906.

1. Cal West, Ranger 2. Allen, a visitor 3. Yerkes, Ranger 4. John Keach, Forest Assistant 5. E.C. Russell, Forest Supervisor 6. Bert P. Kirtland, Forest Assistant 7. Gifford Pinchot, Forester (Chief) 8. Harry Kaufman, Ranger 9. Thos. H. Sherrard, Asst. Forester 10. \_\_\_\_\_ Ramsey 11. \_\_\_\_\_ Coley, Laborer

**By E.H. ("Smokey") Cunningham  
(Custer National Forest)**

In August 1934 three CCC camps were established in southeastern Montana and one in South Dakota. The three in Montana were at Ekalaka (one), and Ashland (two), and that in South Dakota was at Camp Crook in the Long Pines. They were created because of the crop failures in eastern Montana and the western Dakotas resulting from the drought. The boys were recruited from these areas, and I believe they were some of the best CCC boys in the organization. There were very few "gold-brickers," they knew how to work and most of them were willing to do their share. I worked in all these camps.

When these camps started we were building the Fifteen Mile road at Ashland. We had an Austin patrol, a "40" Cletrac dozer, and a "35" Allis Chalmers crawler tractor. We rented work horses from the ranchers and built roads and reservoirs with team and Fresno. It would seem awfully slow now to move dirt that way, but we got a lot of stock-water dams and roads built. Most of the boys were pretty good with horses.

The two camps at Ashland were there a little over a year. They built about 200 miles of range fences, 100 miles of road, about 50 reservoirs, and developed around 200 stock-water springs. They also built about 100 miles of telephone line from Lame Deer to Fort Howes and to White Tail station. This line was so well built that the Bell Telephone Company bought it and is still using it, with very few changes. These camps also did a lot of thinning and pruning of timber, got out thousands of fence posts and telephone poles, and peeled and treated them. This was a winter project.

The Camp Crook and Ekalaka camps were there about two years. Their work was about the same as that at Ashland, except there was no power equipment the first year and all the work was done with team and Fresno. They built about 150 miles of road, 40 stock-water dams, 200 miles of range fence, and developed about 150 stock-water springs. Their winter work was mostly thinning and pruning timber, getting out fence posts and telephone poles and peeling and treating them. They also made a deer count in the Long Pines in the spring of 1936. I don't remember what the count was but it was very low, I believe. There were only 16 whitetail counted, and now there are thousands of them. The Montana Fish and Game Department are doing all they can to hold them down but are having a hard time "holding their own."

Each camp had about 200 boys; the Army kept 40 or 50 around camp for their work. A lot more would have been accomplished if the Army had eased up on their restrictions and let the Forest Service hire their own overhead instead of having to use the political appointees assigned to them as crew foremen. One of the camps I was in was sent two construction foremen. One had been a railroad conductor most of his life. The other had been a school teacher and had also worked in a post office. One of them asked me what I did, and I told him I was a dozer operator. A few days later I was coming down the road with the little cat and ripper and he looked it over and said, "That dozer is quite a machine." I told him that wasn't the dozer. Within the next few days I passed him with the patrol grader, which he thought must be the dozer. I told him it wasn't, and he wouldn't believe anything I told him after that and thought I was kidding him all the time.

The superintendent took one of these men out with some CCC boys to build a reservoir. He showed him where to set camp, then took him over a hill about one-quarter mile and told him to cut poles for a corral. He left him there and returned to the main camp, but the man was lost and the boys had to go find him.

This same foreman had been told how to build a dam, but he got mixed up and started putting the core up and down the creek instead of across it. One of his crew was an L.E.M. (local experience man), who had quite a time getting him to change it.

Another political appointee was an engineer. The engineer in the other camp was told to keep an eye on him and check his work, so he would call him up and ask how he was doing. He got the same answer every time: "Right on the button." A lot of his work had to be done over.

In January 1936 I was transferred to Camp Crook, S.D., from Ashland. I had a Model A coupe, hooked a trailer on behind and took off with my wife and daughter from Miles City for Camp Crook, a distance of 150 miles. The weather was very cold and there was a lot of snow, and it took us two days to make the trip. Between Buffalo and Camp Crook the snow was so deep you couldn't see the fence posts. There was just a narrow trail through that the snow plow had made. I dumped my family off at Camp Crook and went out to a spike camp that was set up for the road crew. There were about 40 boys in this camp, living in tents, but they were all happy and contented.

The first night there I thought I would get acquainted with the boys so I went into the tent next to mine. It was called the L.E.M. tent. They were talking about life in the penitentiary. They were a pretty rough-looking bunch. One had been sent up for stealing a cow, another for horse stealing, and I don't remember what the others had done, but they turned out to be some of the best men I had.

A few days after I got there we received a call to head for the main camp with our two dozers. There were only two men in camp who knew anything about operating a dozer. I took along three men for each dozer, and two trucks. It was 47° below zero when we left camp and the wind was blowing. Five to ten minutes was as long as a man could stay with a machine due to snow being thrown back in the operator's face. We got to main camp and found they were out of coal. The Army had failed to lay in enough coal for winter. We plowed out to a strip mine about 20 miles with a bunch of trucks and started mining coal. The temperature was holding from 45-50° below zero, and it stayed there for about two weeks, the wind blowing all the time. We would plow out to the mine, wait until the trucks were loaded, then plow back to camp. We would get word that the roads were open to Camp Crook, so we would take the dozers and trucks and head for town for supplies. I thought I had moved to the end of the world. This was not long after Admiral Byrd had set up camp at the South Pole, so someone hung a sign at Camp Crook, reading, "The Little South Pole," and I think it was just about as bad.

Camp Crook had the distinction in 1936 of being the coldest, the hottest, and the driest in the state of South Dakota. We had only a little over four inches of moisture that year - all snow, no rain all summer.

I meet some of the CCC boys often. One owns a hardware store, another is a dirt-moving contractor and operates a sawmill in Ekalaka, but most of them went back to the farms and ranches. They do not regret the time they put in the CCC. I believe it was good training for the boys. They learned discipline and how to be on their own, and some of them learned a trade. I personally would like to see them back. They did a lot of good for themselves and for the country.

After the CCC we had E.R.A, made up of local farmers and ranchers. We didn't get the work done with them that we did with the CCC. We were always short of money for supplies. We would have 40 or 50 men working through the winter, but as soon as spring came they would all go home to put in their crops. They would be back with us in the fall after harvest. It was quite a job to find work for 40 or 50 men in the hills when the snow was hip deep.

## QUOTES FROM THE CUSTER FOREST FILES by L.W. Shevling

The following is from historical data prepared by L.W. Shevling, who was appointed forest guard September 1, 1905:

During the month of September 1886, both the West and East Short Pines were burned over, destroying 90 percent of the reproduction and the larger part of the young timber, doing but little damage to the mature timber. On July 5, 1905, the Short Pines were made into national forest. In 1902 forest fires burned uninterrupted in the Long Pines covering most of the hills; no effort was made to extinguish them, but rain finally did the work. September 24, 1906, the Long Pines became a forest reserve.

Taken from THE RANGE GAZETTE, Camp Crook, South Dakota, and Ranger Shevling's writings:

May 8, 1908 .... The office of the Long Pines National Forest was completely destroyed by fire. May 14, 1908.... Forest fires burned over a stretch of ground 10 miles long and 22 miles wide, covering over 10,000 acres. It was out of control from Friday night until Sunday morning. All the women and men in the vicinity who were able turned out to help. Nearly all the timber burned. This fire was the young growth of trees that had come up since the fire of 1886.

In July 1908, national forests started paying 25 percent of gross proceeds derived from national forest proceeds, such as timber and grazing. The total amount to go to the three states ...Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota ...was \$447,063.79 Montana - \$75,807.79; Wyoming - \$41,402.38; and South Dakota \$8,456.60. Prior to this year it was 10 percent.

In the fall of 1908, the forest office was in the W.B. Padden residence which burned; the office was moved to the hospital and later the same year to Shunign's store which burned at a time when a large forest fire was burning in the Long Pines. All the supervisor's records and equipment were destroyed; the forest offices were then established in the old post office building.

W.H. Benton, construction engineer from the Washington office, came to Camp Crook and drew up plans for a Government-owned supervisor's office, and by a special appropriation of \$1100, this building was constructed during the fall and early winter of 1909. In the erection of this building, Camp Crook has the proud distinction of having the first building erected in the United States solely for Forest Service office purposes. The building is 24 x 28 ft.; all rooms are commodious and well lighted and were planned for the future as well as the present needs.

October 1909.... A Civil Service examination was held for Forest Ranger by Supervisor Ballinger. There were 5 applicants. The first day written tests, including land survey, estimating and scaling timber and the livestock business. The second day was taken up

with field tests which included riding and packing horses, pacing, and estimating contents of an irregular field after pacing around the area. The five taking the examination were the Rangers of the Sioux National Forest.

From THE RANGE GAZETTE:

Washington, January 8, 1910 ... Forester Pinchot Fired ... His Official Doom Sealed Last Saturday by Order of President Taft.

November 26, 1925 ... Harding County will receive \$990.19 as its share of National Forest receipts from the Custer National Forest for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1925. Including this amount, the county will have received from this source since the creation of the Custer National Forest a total of \$9,108.70. It was created July 2, 1905.

August 6, 1917 ... The Dakota National Forest in North Dakota has been abolished by proclamation of President Wilson. This area comprised of 22 sections of land was administered by the Sioux National Forest at Camp Crook, S. Dak. Land is restored to settlement and open to homestead.

January 23, 1913 ... Forest Assistant K.D. Swan left before the holidays for a visit to his former home near Boston, returned Tuesday with his bride, having been married only a short time ago. Mr. and Mrs. Swan will make their home in the cottage near the forest office.

(Note: This is the same K.D. Swan who was forest photographer in Region One until his retirement.)

March 16, 1913 ... K.D. Swan transferred to Clearwater National Forest.

June 26, 1913 ... Alex MacNab, Forest Ranger of the Long Pines and Miss Ruth James leave, for Bowman, N. Dak., where Saturday they will be married.

(Note: Mr. and Mrs. MacNab are both alive and reside on a small ranch in the Ekalaka Hills. A story they tell about Alex: He is a Scotchman; they wanted him to take a transfer and he didn't want it so they told him it was a transfer or else. He said, "Be jasis, it will be or else then.")

July 15, 1920 ... Wolf drive next Sunday in Long Pine Hills. A day of real sport in prospect for all who take part in big hunt for gray marauders next Sunday, July 15. The start will be at 5:00 o'clock in the morning from the McClary Ranger Station, and everybody is urged to be present at the station on or before that hour. Gray wolves have become a serious menace to the livestock industry in the hills. It is known there are at least six old wolves which frequent the south end of the Long Pines, besides a litter or two of pups which will in time be committing depredations. Six head of yearling cattle are known to have been pulled down by the wolves last week, and the situation has become so serious that strenuous measures are called for. Everybody in this region of the



country who owns a good saddle horse is invited to participate in this big drive. A large number of riders are needed in order to make the hunt a success; the more riders the better chance there will be for accomplishing something. It promises to be a day of real sport in the Long Pines.

From Ranger Shevling's writings:

The Sioux National Forest was created by Presidential Proclamation July 2, 1908. They are Slim Buttes, North and South Cave Hills, East and West Short Pines, Long Pines, Ekalaka Hills and Chalk Buttes, small isolated pieces of timber land, about 200-thousand acres scattered over Eastern Montana and Northwestern South Dakota. Captain Seth Bullock was appointed Supervisor. Rangers, or Forest Guards as they were called at that time, were L.W. Shevling, A.F. McDuffie, C.A. Ballinger, S.J. Emswiler, and E.R. Clark, and were part of Region 2 with the Regional Office in the Black Hills. In September 1908 they became a part of Region 1. In November 1908, the Dakota National Forest was created. It was in the Little Missouri breaks of North Dakota. In the spring of 1917 the Dakota Forest was abandoned. The rest of it is now one Ranger District under a Ranger, an assistant Ranger, and an alternate Ranger, headquartered in Camp Crook.

In May 1918, the Sioux National Forest and the Custer National Forest of Ashland were consolidated and the Supervisor's Office was in Miles City with J.C. Whitham as Supervisor.

The personnel of the Custer National Forest - December 1921: J.C. Whitham, Supervisor; W.E. Lockhart, Deputy Supervisor; E.W. Hartwell, Forest Examiner; Elsie M. Ruppert, Chief Clerk; and Mary E. McClain, stenographer, all in Miles City. Rangers: Glenn L. Dodge, Whitetail; Warren Akers, Twenty Mile; R.B. Rolfs, Otter Creek (now Ft. Howes); Glenn Flathers, Poker Jim; J.O. Thompson, Ekalaka; J.N. Templer, Long Pines; L.W. Shevling, Short Pines; M.G. Harvey, Slim Buttes; and O.E. York, Cave Hills.

In 1932 the Custer and Beartooth were consolidated and the Supervisor's Office was located in Billings, W.J. Derrick, Supervisor.



**By Walter A. Donaldson  
(Retired 1944)**

In January 1897, news came via Western Union to Custer, South Dakota, and other Black Hills towns, that President Grover Cleveland had signed a proclamation "reserving all public lands containing timber which was more valuable for timber than for other purposes." These were to be known as Government Timber Reservations, under the administration of the General Land Office, Department of the Interior.

About June that year, a Mr. Greene, Special agent for the General Land Office, arrived in Custer. He hired a livery team and driver at \$3.00 per day, and visited several sawmills in that vicinity, interviewing the operators relative to their land holdings and the timber they were cutting. About twelve sawmills operated in that area then, and after Mr. Greene had sized up all of them he started doing business. The operators who would sign up for a sale of 100 M ft. B.M. kept on operating. After the first 100 M ft. was paid for, cut and released, the operator was required to put up another \$100 in cash and went on cutting timber. No record was ever found, however, that showed more than one \$100 payment by the sawmill man to the Government.

My father, I.M. Donaldson, was hired at \$75 per month from the summer of 1897 to January 1, 1898, to scale logs at the largest mill. At that time timbermen all used the old Doyle scale rule, six feet long, with a hand-hold on one end and a steel hook on the other for hooking at bark-edge. There was no such thing as the Decimal C at that time. Logs were marked with a crayon only, so my father took an old four-pound, single-jack (a one-man rock-drilling hammer) to the blacksmith and had him make a "US" on one face for stamping the scaled logs. I think this hammer was one of the first, if not the first, to be used on a Government timber sale.

I used to help my father stamp the logs, but the hammer was heavy for me to handle and my father would take over when I tired. I was then fourteen years old. I delivered groceries evenings after school and on Saturdays with a one-horse delivery wagon. The store was owned by my father and operated for him by my uncle. My wages were \$5.00 a month. Saturday, when my deliveries were finished, I would drive to the sawmill to bring my father home for the weekend.

It was my delight to mark down the figures in the scale book when father called them off to me. He also showed me some things about the use of the scale rule on logs. Many of them scaled from 200 to 400 ft. B.M. I believe some forestry fever got into my system from this experience, to crop out later.

Early in August of 1897, a forest ("timber") fire was reported by one of the range riders. Special Agent Greene hired a man and seven boys to report at the livery stable the next morning to go to the fire. I was among this crew. We had been promised \$1.00 per 12-hour day and that was big pay for the "Roaring '90's," so we were all "Johnny-at-the-rat-hole" the next morning at 6:30. The man in charge of our crew chopped down some saplings, trimmed off the limbs, leaving a "brush" at the top, and each boy was given one with which to beat out the blaze. On returning to the livery stable that night, each of us signed a little blue slip and was given a silver dollar by Mr. Greene for our day's work. I afterward learned that the blue slip was a subvoucher for an expense

account, and that the Government was allowing 20 cents an hour for firefighting. Six days later the rains came, ending our firefighting job as well as part of Mr. Greene's income!

Mr. Greene left Custer, S.D., late in June 1898, bag and baggage, for parts unknown. He was replaced by a fine gentleman named Hamaker from Indiana. Mr. Hamaker appointed three more men who had been recommended to him by reliable local businessmen. These appointees were James McFadden, J. Freeman Smith, and Cicero Graham. Under Mr. Hamaker, most timber trespasses were settled, and the U.S. Treasury thereafter received all the money due it for timber sold in that vicinity.

Seth Bullock was U.S. Marshall for Dakota Territory, with headquarters at Deadwood, and an oldtime friend and range-riding and hunting partner of "Teddy" Roosevelt. He was also a personal friend of Mr. Pinchot, and was appointed the first Supervisor of the Black Hills Forest Reserve early in 1905.

One of the range riders on the Pactola District - Pitts, by name - sent in his diary at the end of the month, which read in part about as follows: "Rode up Rapid Creek to sawmill; found everything all right there; caught mess of trout on way back to camp. Started work 8:00 a.m., rode 8 miles; quit work at 5:30 p.m." Bullock read the diary and immediately wrote the range rider: "On (date) your diary shows, 'Rode to sawmill, etc.' On this date there was a considerable fire two miles west of the sawmill on Rapid Creek. Why did you not go another two miles and put out the fire?" Pitts replied: "I had been to a dance in Pactola the night before and had I gone any farther it would have interfered with my afternoon nap." Bullock then wrote Pitts: "Your resignation will be expected by return mail." Resignation submitted.

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Gifford Pinchot was appointed Chief Forester by James Wilson, Under Secretary of Agriculture in 1905, when the Forest Reserves were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. From 1897 to 1905 the Reserves had been administered by Special Agents from General Land Office personnel. The Secretary of the Interior made these political appointments.

Following his appointment, Mr. Pinchot made a hurried inspection of the Black Hills, as well as the forests in western Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. On his return to Washington he started plans for reorganization under Civil Service rules. Some of the Interior Department's political appointees whose consciences wouldn't permit a good night's sleep saw the handwriting on the wall and resigned. However, there were some good men on the job who stayed, took the Civil Service examination and received appointments.

Richard P. Imes, a native of the area, was the first forest assistant (technical forester) to be assigned to the Black Hills under the Pinchot administration. He finished his forestry schooling in Michigan, and passed the examination for forest assistant in the spring of 1905. The Washington Office started sending out technical dope from Mr. Pinchot's office, some of which, presumably, was composed by Forest Assistant H.C. Neal, a forestry graduate from Yale. He was, it seemed, author of a letter directed to Supervisor Bullock which stated that the

Washington Office desired a full report on the extent and nature of the bug infestation then current in ponderosa (yellow) pine in the Black Hills by the beetle technically known as *Dendroctonus Ponderosa*. Mr. Neal was rather fond of throwing around as many technical terms as possible, with which Bullock was unfamiliar.

Bullock read the letter over a couple of times and then handed it to Forest Assistant Imes, saying, "Dick, what in h— does this mean?" Imes told him, whereupon Bullock jumped from his chair and left the office. He returned in about half an hour and penned a letter to the Washington Office, which read about as follows: "My dear Gifford: Your letter of (date) received and contents noted. Out here we call a tree a tree and a bug a bug, and I have a very good boy here, Dick Imes, who knows more about technical forestry now than I ever will know. Please accept my resignation, to take effect as soon as you can get someone to take over ..." Shortly following, J. Freeman Smith, head Ranger from Custer, was called to Deadwood to take over as acting Supervisor, and Bullock was reappointed as United States Marshall.

When Smith was appointed acting Supervisor, he hired me to look after his 40 head of cattle, along with 21 head of my own, on Government range near Custer. This same arrangement continued in 1906, when he agreed to pay me \$60 per month for the season. I was also to put out or report any timber fires I saw, and to make notes of anyone who wanted timber for fuel or building material so that a free-use permit could be issued. He furnished me with a nickel-plated badge about two and one-half inches in diameter, with this wording, as near as I can remember, circling the edge: "United States Department of the Interior, Timber Reserve Service." Across the middle of the badge were the words, "Range Rider." I soon learned to wear this badge under my vest instead of outside, as it made a very prominent target. I had no knowledge whatever about any forest regulations, never having seen the Use Book or knowing even that one existed.

In February 1906, Mr. Smith posted a notice in the Custer Post Office, stating that a Civil Service examination for assistant Forest Ranger would be held at Hill City, S.D., early in March. He interviewed several young fellows and took applications for admittance to the exam. Fourteen applied, including myself. The salary of assistant Ranger would be \$900 per annum, and as I had not done too well on the little stump ranch I had been farming, this salary looked like a fortune to me.

This group met at the Harney Peak Hotel in Hill City on a March morning. The package of examination papers was opened in our presence so we could see that there had been no finagling of any kind. The written portion of the exam took all of the first day. I felt sorry for two or three of these young men, as they seemed to get stage fright or something and just could not think of anything to write. When time was called, one of them handed in his paper with nothing on it but his name and address, and Mr. Imes showed him where to put that.

The second morning we went to a timbered area near Hill City for our field test. Each of us was given a blank map sheet and a plainly marked section corner as a starting point. We were to locate and describe all four corners of a designated forty acres, make a map showing the topography and the approximate amount in board feet of all timber of the area. I was fortunate in having had some experience in dragging chain for a good mineral surveyor, and was quite

accurate in pacing distances. He had also shown me how to read a compass, which also helped me considerably in my mapping.

This work consumed the forenoon, and after lunch we were assigned a tree to chop down, trim off the limbs, pile the brush, chop notches to indicate the proper log lengths, and give an estimate of the number of board feet it contained. My previous experience with my father helped me in this operation. Next we had to saddle and bridle a horse, mount and ride him fifty yards at a walk, trot him another fifty yards, and lope him back to the starting point. We were timed, and rated on efficiency. All made good scores on this, having practically been raised on horses.

Then came the packing test. Strewn around on the ground was the "outfit." It consisted of a sawbuck pack saddle, blankets, ropes, bedroll, grub, pots and pans, dishes, shovel, axe, teepee, dutch oven, gun, duffel bag, and a gentle horse; also three 6' x 6' canvas pack covers (manties) for cargoing all that "junk." Here the fun started. Imes, Peltz, Shoemaker and I were the only ones who had ever seen a horse packed, to say nothing of ever having tried to pack one, so Imes held us back until last and let the other boys figure it out as best they could. For the horse's safety, the boys were coached in getting the pack saddle on the horse right-end-to.

Some of the boys put the bedroll on first and started to pile stuff on that, then the teepee, and then began to rope it on. It was a real circus. None of them knew how to use the standard pack cinch. Some of them tied all they could get to stick on with the sling ropes, threw the teepee over the top and put on the "Oregon wind," which is to throw the rope over the top and then under, and tie a slip knot. From there on it was "round and round" until the rope was used, and then tic the end. When the horse was walked around, things began to fall off, and when the horse was trotted around a circle, nothing remained on him but the saddle, teepee and a bunch of tangled ropes. A few of the fellows made the pack stick on the horse by much weaving of rope and all kinds of knots, but did not rate very high on their papers.

The marksmanship test, using pistol and rifle, was given next, and all made good scores because we had been handling rifles since we were big enough to shoulder a gun. After the exam was completed, Mr. Imes gave us a talk on forestry practices, including watershed protection, forest fire prevention and suppression, and public relations, which was very interesting to us.

Of the fourteen who took the examination, those who passed were William Wiehe, Theodore Shoemaker (not the same man by this name who later came to Region 1, and retired some years ago from the Division of Fire Control), Frank S. Thompson, Standish Smith, Ed Clark, and "Yours truly." Bob Peltz missed passing by two points, but on Supervisor Smith's recommendation, the Civil Service Commission passed him because of his previous experience. A timber sale had been made in the fall of 1905 to the McLaughlin Tie and Timber Company for 50 million feet of western yellow pine, "insect-infested, standing and down, as designated by the forest officer in charge." Peltz was sent to the Beasant Ranger Station with Ed Hamilton and Imes to work on this sale. The Company's sawmill was located at Nahant, S.D., on the CB & Q Railroad. The stumpage price was \$1.00 per M ft. B.M. for dead, standing and down, and \$2.00 per M for any infested green timber which might be marked for cutting by the forest officer in charge.

A few old buildings and some twenty acres of pasture had been appropriated by Hamilton and Neal and set aside as the Beasant Ranger Station. The buildings consisted of one 12' x 24' log house, one 10' x 14' log chicken house, one log barn, and a good pole corral. There was a fine mountain spring near the house, into which the boys had sunk a 50-gallon oak barrel for a water supply. These buildings were on Government land that had been surveyed and reported to Washington, D.C., for approval as an administrative site. They had been repaired and were being used by Hamilton and the other men working with him on the sale.

Those who had passed the examination were notified to report for duty on November 1, 1906. My wife and I had been married just a year when we started on the 60-mile trip to our new location, the Beasant Ranger Station. Our household effects, loaded on my nearly new Mitchell lumber wagon, consisted of a Monarch range with copper reservoir, dining table, four dining chairs, a rocking chair, one oak bedstead, mattress and springs, a dresser with mirror, a trunk of clothing, a box of kitchen utensils, a barrel of dishes packed in clothing, a roll of bedding, one fair-sized box of grub, two sacks of spuds, and two sacks of oats for the team. We drove into town for the night where my wife stayed with her parents and I stayed with mine.

The temperature was just above zero, with snow threatening, when we left at 8:30 the next morning, I dressed in an old "sourdough" (a long sheepskin-lined coat), and my wife in a coonskin overcoat. My father loaned us an old Indian-tanned buffalo robe to put over our laps, so we were well protected from the weather. Our first ten miles the traveling was fairly good, but after that the road got progressively worse, and about 10:00 a.m. snow began to fall. By noon there was about eight inches and the wind was blowing. We were passing the ranch of a German family when the man came out to the road and invited us to come in for dinner and get warm. He put the team in the barn and fed them. We reached the Charles and Toby Vonderlehr ranch after twelve miles of travel that afternoon and were put up there for the night. Here we received the same hospitable treatment that had been accorded us at noontime.

About fifteen inches of snow had fallen by the next morning, and we encountered some difficult drifts in our fifteen miles of travel that day. We stopped at the Tony Matt ranch on Castle Creek during the day, and went on to Reynolds Prairie where we spent the night at the Reynolds' ranch. We got started soon after daylight the next morning, and arrived at the Beasant Ranger Station after dark. Snow was up to the horses' bellies at the Ranger Station.

Several of us helped Thompson and Wiehe lay up the square of a cabin at Railhead, where they could live near the job, and we had a "housewarming" Thanksgiving Day, with venison in place of turkey.

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Completing the boundary posting on the western portion of the McLaughlin Company sale and cruising and marking for cutting all insect-infested timber, was no small job with three to five feet of snow on the ground. We were all equipped with snowshoes or skis. Bobsleds with nine foot bunks were used, and some tremendous loads were hauled. "Snap" teams helped to break sleigh roads in the woods to assist in getting the loads out to the main roads. At the landings where logs were loaded onto cars there was a crosshaul jammer powered by a 1500-pound

skidding horse and a driver. This old "pony" and some of the other skidding horses were so well trained they scarcely needed a driver. In addition, there was a "top-loader" and two hookers who set the hooks in the ends of the logs. This made up the loading crew at each of the five landings. Ten to fifteen loads per day were hauled to the mill.

The small village of Nahant was headquarters for the big mill. Six miles west was Camp One where the cutting and hauling had started and was two-thirds completed. At Camp Two, eleven miles west of Nahant and three miles east of Beasant Ranger Station, full-scale logging was being done. A railroad siding for loading logs existed here.

Camp Two was operated by a man named Skinner - a stable boss who had charge of caring for the work horses. His wife operated the boarding house under a contract with the Company. Skinner had quite a large family - a girl about fifteen years old, and five other children ranging down to a toddler. Mrs. Skinner had a great curiosity as to what was going on up and down the line, and as we had telephone connections from headquarters to all camps, Mrs. Skinner spent some of her time at the phone "rubbering." Whenever the telephone would ring, the receiver at Camp Two came down and we could hear the elder girl banging the pans and dishes around, the baby crying, dogs barking, the middle-sized kids fighting, and we knew Camp Two was listening in.

The senior McLaughlin had two sons, Ray and Ed, and a son-in-law, with the Company. Pat Flynn, the son-in-law, was quite a joker, and one day he framed up with Ray to call from Camp Three on some pretext or other, and this is about the way the story goes:

Ray: Hello, Pat, how's everything going down there?

Pat: Oh, about as usual but rather cold. Oh, yes, by the way, did you hear about the bad accident at Camp Two?

Ray: No, what was it?

Pat: Well, when you rang me up a while ago, Mrs. Skinner at Camp Two ran over her baby and tromped it to death trying to get to the phone in time to hear the conversation.

The receiver at Camp Two went up with a bang, and only some of the men would answer the phone at Camp Two for nearly a month. My wife heard the foregoing conversation over the phone, but there was no noise at the Ranger Station to give her away when she rubbered, so she got away with it; however, she was mighty careful after that when she listened in.

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I received word in late February 1907 that I was to be transferred to the Hill City Ranger District, to be stationed at the old Jackson ranch some fifteen miles west of Hill City. I was to be responsible for supervision and administration of the Fred Beaman timber sale operation, and rehabilitation of the improvements of the Ranger Station. I was to report March 1, and would be given an allotment of \$50 with which to buy material to repair the house there.

My wife and I were very happy about our transfer back to what we considered God's country after the winter we had experienced in the deep snow. Peltz also was happy about it as it would permit him to get married immediately and bring his bride to the Beasant Station, where he was to take charge.

Mr. Beaman had agreed to furnish me accommodations at the sawmill camp until I had the house at the Jackson ranch habitable, when my wife was to join me. I reached the Beaman sawmill in time for supper February 28, having ridden my horse to my new station. When daylight came the next morning, things did not look so hot to me. There were only two white men in camp, other than the Beaman family. The others were Negroes, most of them ex-soldiers from the Ninth Cavalry (all colored) at Fort Robinson near Crawford, Nebraska. They had been in the employ of Beaman for a long time on wild-hay-cutting contracts, putting up hay for the Ninth Cavalry at Fort Robinson. The Beamans furnished me board and room so I would not have to eat or sleep with the colored people, which was quite agreeable to me.

In a short time I had made the house habitable and my wife's father brought her to our new home and helped me build a brick chimney and do a lot of carpentry work; he was a professional carpenter. He also helped me repair fences and build some new fence around sixty acres of good meadowland, thirty acres of tillable farm land and thirty acres of horse pasture. Then he borrowed a disk harrow and a drag harrow and walking plow, and cultivated the farm land, disked the meadow and made the ground ready for planting. Supervisor Smith had allotted me \$30 for feed for my saddle horses, with which I purchased half a ton of seed barley for \$8.00, 500 lb. of seed oats for \$4.00, and 100 lb. of mountain timothy and Alsike clover mixed, for \$10.00.

While we had been at the Beasant Station the men paid Mrs. Donaldson 25 cents per meal for their board, and we were able to deposit \$50 of my monthly \$75 salary in the bank, giving us a little money to go on when we moved to the Jackson Ranch Ranger Station (later named Medicine Mountain Ranger Station by Mr. Imes, this name being given because of a highly mineralized spring in the side of Medicine Mountain just west of the Ranger Station).

My nearest point of communication was Oreville, S.D., on the CB & Q Railroad, nine miles southeast of the Ranger Station, and consisted of a railroad section house, siding, post office, small store, and sawmill. The only trail to Oreville was one I routed and blazed. I traveled this trail to get my mail and on one trip received a letter informing me that the Beaver Creek Cattle Company had a grazing permit in that area for 100 head of cows with calves, and instructing me to inspect conditions and report. I learned that this Company had about 400 head of steers in addition to the 100 head of cattle grazing in the area. I had very little knowledge of the grazing regulations up to then, as my principal experience had been in timber sale work; however, my judgment told me that a permit for 100 head of cattle did not permit 500 head to graze on the forest.

On my way home, I encountered cattle branded "M-W" most everywhere, so I set up camp near Bull Springs. I decided to ride about three miles to Antelope Springs to look things over in that part of the country. On my way I smelled wood smoke and rode over a little rise in the ground to see a log cabin with smoke coming out of the stovepipe. I decided to see if I could have dinner



with whoever was there. As was my custom, I stopped at a respectful distance to let my presence be known. When I "halooed," the door opened part way and I was looking at an old black felt hat with a lot of black whiskers under it and a pair of beady eyes. This character asked me what the h— I wanted, and I told him I would like a drink of water. About that time he caught sight of my Forest Service badge and said, "So you're the d— S-of-a-B who has been running my cattle off the hill, are you?" He reached behind the doorjamb and came out with a carbine of some kind, and let drive with a shot near my horse's feet. This kicked up gravel onto the horse's belly and he "blew his top" and tried to unload me. Every time I thought I had him stopped from bucking, the "bastard" would cut loose with another slug and start my bronc to bucking again. He fired three shots, but not at me. Those guys don't miss at that range; most of them can knock a coyote over at a hundred yards, running.

Next day I rode to Oreville and reported to Supervisor Smith by phone. Two days later, Smith, U.S. Marshall Seth Bullock, the sheriff of Weston County, the manager of the M-W cattle outfit, and I left camp for the old cabin where "my friend" had been. We found nothing but a couple of dirty old "soogans," dirty dishes, and a bunch of black whiskers mixed with "Monkey Ward" catalog, where the guy had come out of the brush and left the country. The manager of the cattle company disclaimed any knowledge of the fellow so we could do nothing about the shooting. The Company agreed upon a settlement of \$1.00 per head for trespass of the 400 head of steers.

The Forest Service had its first Ranger meeting ever to be held in the Black Hills the latter part of March 1907. I still have a large photograph of the group attending that meeting. Much information and knowledge was obtained at this meeting which was to benefit all of us later on.

The entertainment committee had made arrangements for a banquet at the Franklin Hotel, with all viands, beer and cigars to be furnished by the hotel for \$1.50 per head. The banquet lasted until about 11:30 P.M., and we were trying to sing "Sweet Adeline," "Clementine," and "Auld Lang Sync," and not doing bad at that, when Art Lynn proposed a period of fifteen minutes for toasts before adjournment. One which received a big hand was the following, composed and delivered by H.C. Neal:

Here's to the Bug Dendroctenus,  
Who lives on the bark of the pine.  
He likes to eat pitch,  
The son-of-a-b——,  
And is harder to kill than a lion.

Motion to adjourn was unanimously approved, with the stipulation that those who cared to would take in the town. Most of us did so, visiting China Town, Mike Russel's "1876" Bar and Casino on Main Street, Patsy Carr's "1878" Saloon and Dancehall on Placer Street, and a few other intervening points of interest. Nowadays you seldom if ever meet a police force as congenial, and with the old pioneer spirit, as that we encountered that night in Deadwood. They very obligingly and gently escorted several of the boys to their private rooms at the Franklin Hotel instead of to the brig, and gave several others of us some fatherly advice, which we accepted with many thanks.

About the first of May following the Ranger meeting, we all received a circular letter signed by Mr. Pinchot and approved by Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson, regarding a new regulation which prohibited "the drinking of any intoxicating liquors in public," and advising us as to our personal conduct. As a result of that regulation we never got quite so wild at any of our succeeding Ranger meetings.

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In the spring of 1907, many applications were being made for forest homesteads under the Act of June 11, 1906. Paul D. Kelleeter was sent out from Washington, D.C., to make examinations and reports on these applications for entry.

About August that year, Mr: L.F. Kneipp, General Inspector, came to the Black Hills to make a thorough inspection. I was in the field when he and Ranger Shoemaker arrived at my station. The next morning they saw the cattle that Supervisor Smith and I were running on Willow Creek, and made a count of them and of the brands - "JFS" and "WAD." I was in the woods hammering the good old "US" on cordwood piles for all I was worth when I heard someone yell, "Hi, there, Ranger." Looking around, I saw Shoemaker and Kneipp sitting on their horses and each leading a packhorse. They both had big grins on their faces and nearly a week's growth of beard.

We sat on a log and had a smoke and a chat, and then rode to camp where we had supper at the sawmill boarding house. After setting up Shoemaker's and Kneipp's tepees for the night, we sat down to a business session relative to the work on my District, and regulations, laws, etc., for my enlightenment. Mr. Kneipp had his "Little Black Book" and brought up the subject of grazing and the matter of my cattle and those belonging to Supervisor Smith. I explained the situation, and he told me that a forest officer or other Federal employee was not permitted to own or have any interest whatever in any business affecting the use of the National Forest resources. Also, that within a reasonable time I would be required to choose between the cattle business and the Forest Service job. I agreed to sell my cattle at the earliest date I could locate a buyer, and he told me that if I could dispose of them not later than September 30, he could report me "in the clear," and this I did.

Mr. Smith had previously sold his cattle but the purchaser had let them continue to run on the range where they were located, but we both had to pay for a full season's grazing permit. No trespass case was instituted against us. Later on, when I became more familiar with the regulations governing the uses of the National Forests, I realized how fairly Mr. Kneipp had treated me, and it was a lesson I never forgot.

When I was transferred to Hill City to succeed Art Lynn, the \$100 a year increase really pepped me up. Art Lynn had been the only Ranger who was using a typewriter, and when he transferred from Hill City to Deadwood he soled me his typewriter since there was a clerk-typist (male) and a later model typewriter in the Deadwood office. I paid him \$20 in two monthly installments (which was no bargain at that) for the old beat-up Remington "invisible" (it printed from underneath and the roller had to be turned back to see what had been written). Due to my inexperience with typing and my innumerable errors, I nearly wore out the hinges on the roller in order to produce a legible letter or report.

I worried through the winter with this old wreck, and in the spring traded it in on an old used No. 3 Oliver, paying the salesman, in addition, ten dollars "cash on the barrelhead." In the fall the typewriter salesman returned and, feeling rather prosperous by then, I bought a new \$90 No. 5 Oliver for my old No. 3 and \$60, to be paid in twelve monthly payments of five dollars each. I had made all but three payments on the new typewriter when the Forest Service started furnishing the Rangers with No. 5 Olivers. The Supervisor made a deal with the Oliver agent to list my typewriter as one purchased on the Government contract and refund me my purchase price, partially due, I imagine, to the fact that I had "pioneered" the use of a typewriter on a Ranger District.

In 1909 the supervisor's office sent me out one of those old crank-type magneto wall telephones. With the help of a burro he borrowed, my brother-in-law, Gus Reder, and I strung wire to hook us up with the Keystone and Custer Ranger Districts, Hill City, and most of the northern Hills country. After completing this job, Gus constructed a lookout table while I prepared a map of the entire forest to mount on the table. Taking Harney Peak as the center, I made a circle twelve inches in diameter, drew in the four cardinal points of the compass, and spaced off the circle into degrees between all the four points. When this map was properly oriented and thumbtacked down, the alidade could be sighted in on a smoke, and a lookout who was familiar with the country could turn in a very accurate location of most any fire, although the distance had to be estimated.

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The middle of July 1910, the CB&Q Railroad sent out their track inspection engine and a combination coach to check the tracks from Edgement, S.D., to Deadwood, and a twenty-five mile branch line from Hill City to Keystone. If anything looked bad they could stop and make a close check. Out of Hill City the railroad made a long "S" curve of about two miles to get on top out of the valley toward Keystone. There was very little inflammable material in the valley and they made it to the top without any trouble, but their cinder tray began to fill up and the fireman lowered the screen so he could get a better draft. By so doing, about a six-inch space was left between the firebox and the ash tray; the cinders heaped up in the pan and sifted out onto the railroad track, starting some small fires along the right of way.

Some farmers along the railroad extinguished some of the fires and then reported the fires to me. I arranged for firefighters and then took off for the fires. When I arrived I found twelve small fires, some of which the farmers, their wives and children had taken care of by carrying water in buckets and beating out the flames with burlap sacks. I heard the whistle of the inspection train on its way back from Keystone to Hill City. As it came around a curve I could see a stream of sparks coming out from under the firebox like a blow torch. I rode over to the track and tried to flag them down, but they just tooted their whistle and waved, and gave 'er the "Casey Jones" and out of sight, still pouring out the cinders.

Now, I'm telling you! If you ever saw a mad Ranger there was one heading for Hill City on a d—good horse. I made it to the depot within about five minutes after the train pulled in, and found four "big shots" from the train talking to the agent. I was wearing my "Pine Tree" badge in plain view, but introduced myself and informed them under what authority I was acting and that they

were under arrest by the Federal Government for "knowingly and carelessly setting fires to private as well as Government property."

The division superintendent was a big, burley Irishman and inclined to get tough; however, I am part Irish myself, and instructed them to pull the fire from their engine, spot the engine on the siding and not move it until it was released by the Government. The division superintendent wired Omaha for legal advice and requested an attorney to come at once by special conveyance. In the meantime the deputy sheriff, at my request, came to the depot to my assistance. I wired Supervisor Kelleter of the action I had taken. He arrived on the passenger train late that afternoon.

In all, 47 fires were started that day by the inspection engine, as witnessed by ranchers along the way. This case was finally settled in Federal Court in Deadwood, with the railroad company paying all costs and a heavy fine for damages. They were served with an injunction prohibiting them from using that type of locomotive, were required to put spark arresters on the smokestacks of their engines, and a few other restrictions were imposed on them.

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In June 1912, as all my immediate relatives were then in Idaho, I guess I was somewhat homesick and asked Supervisor Imes if I could transfer out there. He gave me permission to write the Forest Service for a transfer. William G. Weigle, then Supervisor of the Coeur d'Alene, wrote me that several local men had priority for jobs and that he would be obligated to hire them in preference to men from other localities. I thought it over, and after receiving some letters from "Mama," decided to go out there anyway, so I submitted my resignation effective June 30.

Mrs. Donaldson and I arrived in Coeur d'Alene shortly after the Fourth of July. I was fortunate in getting work at the Blackwell Lumber Company sawmill on the slab-sorting elevator, which I soon learned was no "kid's job."

Supervisor Imes had given me a very good "To-Whom-it-May-Concern" letter, and with this in hand I visited the Forest Service office, hoping to meet Mr. Weigle. However, I found Acting Supervisor Roscoe Haines in charge, with Joe B. Halm, Deputy Supervisor, and Forest Assistant William W. Morris also there. Mr. Haines asked me several questions regarding my past experience in firefighting, tree planting, etc., and then called Mr. Morris into his office to explain details of the planting operation.

Haines said they could use me at the Prichard Ranger Station in connection with the planting job on Lost Creek about ten miles above the station. My wife and I were very happy at my good fortune in getting back into the Forest Service so soon. I drew my time at the Blackwell mill office, receiving a check for \$24.00 for one week's work.

I was to leave the following morning by boat (the "Flier") for Harrison. The memories of my first trip up beautiful Coeur d'Alene Lake in the early morning will always remain with me. Several deer at the water's edge watched us go by, and in one shady inlet we saw a mother bear with two

cubs. From Harrison I went by train to Prichard, arriving about 4:00 p.m., and called at the Backman Inn to inquire about how to get to the Ranger Station.

Mrs. Backman was a friendly, good-natured person. She invited me in and when I told her I was to be stationed at the Ranger Station, she refused to accept payment for my lunch, saying that they never charged the "local Ranger" in cases of that kind. I told her my wife was in Coeur d'Alene but planned to come to the Ranger Station a little later. She asked if Mrs. Donaldson could sew, and when I replied that she was an expert dressmaker, Mrs. Backman asked me to have my wife come up and stay at the Inn, saying that she would pay her for the sewing, and that she could help with the meals and housework for her board and room, which she did.

Mrs. Backman operated the Inn with the help of her son, George Purdin, and his wife. He ran a pack string for the Forest Service in the summer and trapped during the winter, frequently there would be a dozen or more men on their way out from work and some coming in, making quite a crowd to feed. The charge was 35 cents per meal or three for one dollar; and fifty cents per night for use of the bunkhouse nearby.

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Morris, Halm and I went up the river to Big Creek and to Lost Creek to look over the tree-planting site and get the lay of the country, maps of which Morris had made for use on the planting job. When I returned to the Ranger Station several days later, I received a telephone call from the Ranger - I believe it was Phil Neff - at the station some ten miles southeast between Prichard and Enaville. He told me that the rest of my pack string had been brought from Kellogg, Idaho, to his station by Howard Drake, who was running a pack string to the lookouts in the Wallace-Burke and Mulelan area. Ranger Neff had picked out his ten head of horses, Drake had done likewise, and my string was what was left. Six of these horses I could not complain about but the seventh was sure a "lemon" if ever there was one in a pack string. She apparently was a replacement for one of the string that had died during the winter. She weighed 1500 pounds, had long, overgrown hoofs, one hip "knocked down," was blind in one eye, and balky besides.

I told Neff that I couldn't see where she was a pack horse, and he advised me to take her over to Prichard and let Haines take the responsibility for that, so I started out with all seven head. This big mare would not lead well and the other horses were too light to drag her, so I tried riding her and leading the others. She could hardly stand up on level ground, and when there was a small pole or a rock in the trail, she would stumble over it and nearly spill me off.

Because of our slow rate of progress, I was beginning to think I might have to camp out that night. I had made about one and a half miles the first hour and was becoming desperate, having used up all my "muleskinner" vocabulary, when I came upon a man cutting hay with a scythe and loading it onto a "go-devil" to skid to his hayshed for the winter. He was driving a large bay gelding - about the size of my overgrown "pack horse" - and a small, bald-faced mare. Many gunny sacks were being used to pad her collar, and all new holes had been punched in the harness to make it small enough to stay on this little mare.

I visited a little while with this settler and was eyeing his little mare as he was watching the big mare in my pack string. Pretty soon he asked me if I was expecting to pack the big mare, and I told him I was not sure about that yet. He then called my attention to the little mare and said she was an experienced pack animal and "how would I trade?" I looked her over, found her perfectly sound and bearing pack-saddle marks on her back. We traded mares and halters, and as I rode the little mare around the bend I could see the man still fitting his harness to the big mare. During my three months' tour of duty at Prichard, I never saw the man again.

Later on when I had everything in full swing on the planting job, Supervisor Haines came out with Morris to look things over. Haines was very familiar with all the pack horses as he had to inspect them every season and make a report on their condition in case any of them needed to be replaced. He asked me where I got the little mare with the "blaze-face." I told him the story, and he sort of laughed and said, "Where did you get the authority to dispose of Government property?" I said, "Roscoe, there was not another damn thing I could do under the circumstances." He then said he would go by the stumprancher's place and get a bill of sale from him, and would put the "US" brand on the mare in the fall when they took the horses out for the winter. He told me not to brag, however, about my horse-trading ability, and later mentioned to me that he thought I had "skinned" the stump-rancher badly, as he had seen the big mare when he went to get the bill of sale.

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The plan was to plant white pine on the north slopes and in the bottoms, ponderosa pine on the south slopes, and Douglas-fir in a small, flat area on Lost Creek east of camp. The area had been heavily burned over in 1910, leaving no trace of any previous Government surveys. It was necessary therefore to locate a section corner in a patch of green timber some one and one-half miles west and run a line into our planting area, establish a point on the boundary, build and mark a cairn and run a traverse around the planted area after the planting was done. To this job I assigned two of the forestry students.

These boys did an excellent job until they came to a cedar swamp near the planting area boundary. As they approached a cedar snag they heard a rustling in the underbrush and caught a glimpse of a cub bear going into the hollow roots of their "marker" tree. One of them got a stick and poked up inside the tree where he could feel the cub, which scrambled farther up inside the tree. They decided to try to capture the cub, but, as a precautionary measure, cut and trimmed several strong clubs to have handy in case the old bear returned. When they could not get the cub to come out by poking him with a stick, one of the boys picked up a heavy limb and pounded on the tree above where the cub was located. This seemed to be accomplishing the desired results as they could hear the cub approaching the opening. While one of the boys pounded on the upper end of the tree the other stood by with a club. Pretty soon the cub made a dash for the brush, and it was such a surprise that all the guy with the club could do was hit the cub on the rump, which only made him run faster. A few seconds later, they heard more scratching in the tree and decided there was another cub in there. Their efforts to capture him met with success when one of the boys who had played football at Moscow volunteered to "make a tackle" on the bear. He got down on his knees in front of the hole and spread his coat across his knees. When the cub

emerged with a dash, he hit the coat between the "tackle's" knees and was trapped. With their belts and heavy twine the boys succeeded in getting the cub wrapped up and into camp.

It was very fortunate for them that the old bear did not return; however, she probably was a young mother and had not learned how to count to two yet, so just took the other cub and left the country. The boys tried to feed the little fellow they had captured, but he would not eat and since he was rather puny anyway, I talked them into taking him back the next day, and turning him loose to take his chances.

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On one 160-acre section of the planting area, we broadcast-sowed with so-called "whirl-wind" seeders - a machine with a seed container carried in front of the man and supported by straps over his shoulders. It was operated by a crank which rotated a set of blades, scattering the seeds on a strip about thirty feet wide.

As I write this, July 20, 1960, I realize it has been forty-eight years since this planting job was done. There should be several sizable trees in that area which were planted in 1912. I have never had the pleasure of returning to that area and seeing conditions there.

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We returned to Coeur d'Alene on November 1. I expected to be out of a job on November 15, when I had completed a contour map and other details concerning the summer's work. However, Mr. Haines called Supervisor Tom Spaulding at St. Maries, Idaho, and was told that I could be used on map work under Forest Assistant Fay G. Clark, who had been out with a crew of M.S.U. students all summer on timber reconnaissance in the Fishhook drainage near Avery, Idaho.

The winter of 1912-13 was spent in the St. Maries office on compilation of reconnaissance data and preparing a map of the Fishhook drainage, showing topography, timber stand types, etc. On January 1, 1913, due to action by Supervisor Spaulding, I was reinstated to the position of Forest Ranger at \$1200 per annum.

I was assigned to string telephone "tree line" up the Fishhook trail to the lookout at Big Baldy and the packer's headquarters at "49" Meadows, where the horses were kept and from where fire lookout camps were supplied.

We were at the completed end of the line at noon on June 10, 1913, and were eating our lunch when the buzzer on the field set sounded. Ranger Daughs was calling to say he had a telegram for me and that it was very important that I come down to the Ranger Station at once, which I did. The message was from Silcox, and read about as follows: "Report Supervisor Leavitt, Great Falls, at once. Ranger meeting June 13. Permanent. Expenses authorized."

I arrived in Great Falls by train about noon, Sunday, June 12, 1913. The Ranger meeting lasted all the next week. At its conclusion, Supervisor Scott Leavitt instructed me to accompany Ranger Morgan to the Belt Creek Ranger Station, thence via Neihart and Kings Hill over the Little Belt

Mountains to White Sulphur Springs and the Four Mile Ranger Station ten miles east of White Sulphur Springs. However, due to reports that the Neihart road was washed badly, I took the train to White Sulphur Springs, following a roundabout course.

Supervisor Leavitt had assured me that an allotment would be made after July 1 to complete the house in good shape at the Four Mile Station. My first job was to install the two outside doors and eight windows, after which I hauled out the Government property and records and a good cookstove which the Forest Service had purchased, also a heating stove, stove-pipe, etc. Mrs. Donaldson joined me at the station late in June. She and I fenced forty acres of bottom land that summer, and part of another forty acres the next spring for extra pasture.

In the spring of 1914, applications for grazing permits were received, and this was my first season to contact stockmen for this purpose.

The winter of 1913-14 was really tough, with temperatures from December to March dropping to 50° below zero at times. We had lots of snow and wind, making it difficult to get to White Sulphur Springs with the team and buggy for supplies. My wife bought a small "wearer" pig late in the summer which we butchered just before Thanksgiving for part of our winter's meat. She also bought two dozen hens which we kept in the old log cabin that we heated with an old stove all winter so that the hens would be comfortable and furnish us a few eggs. Our nearest neighbor, about half a mile from the Ranger Station, loaned us a cow so we had plenty of fresh milk.

There was a fine stand of pole timber about a mile south of the station. Our near neighbor, William Reed, loaned me a bobsled, and I cut and hauled 125 telephone poles 26 feet long, to build a telephone line from the Ranger Station to the Dogie Ranch five miles to the north, where it would connect with another rural line and would give me connections with White Sulphur Springs, John Bonham's Ranger Station at Martinsdale, the Sheep Creek Ranger Station, and Lew Nforan's Ranger Station at Belt Creek. Supervisor Leavitt authorized me to hire a fire guard on June 1, and the guard and I constructed the five miles of telephone line in June, before the fire season started.

On the Castle Mountain District there were seven bands of sheep (1500 ewes plus lambs), about 1200 head of cattle and about 300 head of range horses. The Sheep Creek District was much larger and grazed fourteen bands of sheep, five of which lapped over onto Ranger Morgan's district about fifty percent of the three months' high-country grazing season. Each band consisted of 1500 ewes and their lambs. On the lower grazing areas of the Sheep Creek district there were 2250 head of permitted cattle and 300 head of horses.

Ranger Bonham's district, which adjoined mine on the east, grazed about the same number as my district. Ranger Guy Meyers' district, joining mine on the north and northeast, grazed about the same number as mine; and Lew Morgan's district carried much less livestock due to the fact that there was not as much open grazing land but ran heavier on the timber sale work, as the Neihart mines and several sawmills purchase a considerable amount of timber.

These four Ranger Districts joined corners at Kings Hill, where there was a Forest Service lookout cabin, horse corral and small barn. When we made our monthly grazing inspections, we



would meet at the Kings Hill camp with our pack horses and inspect the higher sheep ranges, using Kings Hill camp as headquarters.

Morgan, Myers and I each had a pair of good Airedale bear dogs, and on our final grazing inspection in September we would take the dogs and make about a three-day bear hunt, which was sometimes very exciting and usually netted us three or four good, fat bears to take home for meat and lard. Sometimes in the spring, before the livestock was taken into the mountains, we would meet at Kings Hill and exterminate several stock-killing bears. The bear very often made it next to impossible to keep cattle on their allotted range since, once they were attacked by bears, they refused to stay in the mountains even for shade, fresh feed, water and salt. A mother bear with two yearlings would sometimes get into a band of sheep on their bedground on a moonlight night and kill as many as 75 to 100 sheep and lambs, "just for the fun of it," it seemed.

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The next several years was not spent in the Forest Service, but was in close cooperation therewith most of the time, except for the years 1918-1921, when I filed on and proved up on a June 11 homestead on the North Fork on the Musselshell River eighteen miles northwest of Martinsdale, Montana.

When World War One was declared, I went to Butte, Montana, and signed up with the Spruce Division, which was composed of practically all forestry men, to go to Alaska to assist in the production of spruce for the Government shipyards. However, I was caught in the flu epidemic and was incapacitated for Army Service, as I nearly died during the winter of 1917-18, and the next spring went to my homestead.

I made final proof on my homestead in 1920, the papers for which had to be approved by the Forest Service. When Supervisor Leavitt noted that I had proved up on my place, he wrote me that there would be an examination for the position of Ranger in October 1920, and said if I was interested I had better take this exam. I did so and passed.

The latter part of May 1921, the Regional Office at Missoula wrote me that there was an opening for a Ranger of a district just east of Glacier Park, on the Lewis and Clark Forest. The letter was addressed to me at White Sulphur Springs, Montana, but was missent to White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, and it did not reach me until the Fourth of July. After I finally received it, I wired the Regional Office that I would accept the job if it was still open. They replied, saying that job had been filled but that there might soon be a place open on the Madison Forest which I could have if I wanted it. I accepted this offer, and reported to Supervisor W.J. Derrick at Sheridan, Montana. He sent me to West Yellowstone to relieve Ranger George E. Martin, who was being promoted to the position of deputy supervisor on the Absaroka Forest at Livingston.

I was Ranger at West Yellowstone until June 30, 1925, when I resigned to take a job as deputy sheriff of Gallatin County, at West Yellowstone. I held this job until the next election when "politics changed" and the sheriff and I were both out of a job.

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I left West Yellowstone in the fall of 1927 to spend the winter in the Black Hills with my parents, two sisters and only brother. While at Custer that winter I met an old acquaintance who was then district leader in southeastern Wyoming for the U.S. Biological Survey. He asked me to take a job with them as a Government hunter on predatory animal and rodent control. I accepted and made a good showing in my work, receiving a promotion and increase in salary; but in 1931, when the depression hit the stockmen, they could not afford to contribute to the cooperative fund and during April and May, out of 36 field men, 32 were laid off for lack of funds.

Final payment on a new Chrysler coupe I had bought the previous fall had to be made out of my last salary check, which found me rather financially embarrassed and "out on a limb," as it were. I settled up my affairs, sold my saddle horses, and visited for a couple of weeks with my folks at Custer before heading back to Montana.

There was no work to be had in Montana, so I went on to Spokane, Washington, and finally connected up with a cooperative deal between the State and U.S. Biological Survey on predatory animal and rodent control. I was in this job during 1932, in Kootenai and Bonner Counties, and in 1933 was assigned to rodent control at the Priest River Experiment Station, exterminating Columbia ground squirrels, and pocket gophers. This work was under the direction of Owen W. Morris of Lewiston, Idaho, and John B. Thompson, Superintendent of the Priest River Experiment Station. Thirty CCC enrollees were used on this work, and were assigned to me from a camp being set up at the mouth of Big Creek, about one mile south of the experiment station.

In the fall of 1933 I was sent to Bonners Ferry to trap predatory animals from Sandpoint to the Canadian line. I was also trapping beaver for the State on a 50-50 basis. By the middle of December about thirty inches of heavy snow had fallen at Bonners Ferry and in the surrounding country. This was followed by a chinook and heavy rains, flooding the area where my beaver traps were set, and I never did recover them.

In June 1934, I was assigned to the Pullman-Moscow Soil Erosion Experimental Area - some 50,000 acres of farm land - on rodent extermination work, and again CCC labor was used. When this work ended late in September, I was assigned twenty-five LEM's (local experience men) to cut and haul 300 cords of wood for fuel to heat the CCC camp at Moscow during the winter.

In 1935 I was allotted 50 CCC's to use on rodent-control work. We covered the entire 50,000-acre project, making close to a ninety percent kill of ground squirrels, as compared to about a seventy-five percent kill on 45,000 acres of the project in 1934. This work was discontinued in 1936, except for that done by individual farmers who were provided the poison grain at a very low cost.

I assisted in construction of the first Soil Conservation Camp (SCS-I-1) in 1934, and worked out of that camp for six years when I was transferred to Weiser, Idaho, to help build a new camp there in 1939. I spent two years there and then returned to Moscow for another year, until 1942, when the CCC's were called in the Army and the CCC camps were all disbanded.

While on annual (terminal) leave, my wife and I went to Coeur d'Alene to contact the Forest Service relative to a job. There I saw Howard Drake, the logging engineer with whom I had

become acquainted on the Coeur d'Alene in 1912, and met Supervisor Clarence O. Strong and also William W. Larsen, who had taken my place at West Yellowstone when I resigned there in 1925.

It was agreed that I should report for work at the expiration of my leave on June 30, 1942, when I would be assigned to scale long logs at the Blue Creek landing for the Ohio Match Company, who were cutting several million feet of white pine way back on the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. Virgil Moody was the Ranger in charge of the Ohio Match Company sale, and as senior scaler I worked under him, as did William H. Pruitt, another experienced scaler. Part of our job was to break in the new men who were hired. Two of the young leads we were training that summer were Terry Payne and Edward Slusher. By this time the Army was taking men right and left, and both Payne and Slusher left that summer for military service. Slusher had become a very good scaler and had been assigned to a Russelele and Pugh sale on LaTour Creek where John Stroble was gyppo logging the area. When Slusher left I was sent to do the scaling at this camp. At Christmas time the logging operations shut down for the winter and I was put on furlough for three months.

When Paul McGrew, Area Conservationist for eastern Washington, learned that I was on furlough from the Forest Service until April 10, he hired me to relieve Engineer Joe Blue at Colvilele, as Blue was leaving for military service. My work that winter consisted mainly of hydraulic engineering problems, such as water table measurements and records, cooperation with the U.S. Weather Bureau in recording streamflow, monthly reports on snowfall, etc. The Colvilele district had a very serious drainage problem as the Colevillee River flooded the valley on both sides from Addy, Washington to Kettle Falls. There were many low places where the peat subsoil had burned out and left depressions of from five or six acres to as much as sixty acres, from which there was no outlet for natural drainage. I used dynamite by the propagation method for blasting out drainage ditches, and accomplished the drainage of something over 300 acres which otherwise could not have been farmed the following summer season.

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On April 10, 1943, I reported back to the Forest Service at Coeur d'Alene, and was assigned to another Russell and Pugh sale on Beauty Creek drainage. I had good quarters in the old Beauty Creek CCC camp, part of which was occupied by a gyppo outfit logging for Russell and Pugh and bossed by a man named Bob Woods. Mr. Woods and his wife owned a sizable tract of land near Clarkia, Idaho, on which there was a large amount of merchantable timber. Woods had logged off his timber as well as some purchased from the Forest Service, but had made no attempt at brush disposal on either his own or national forest land. The Ranger made a report on the sale and Woods was required to pile and burn the brush on Government land. The State Fire Protective Association pronounced his private-land slash a menace to the forests, and made him burn his brush. This entire deal cost Woods considerable money. He was always "ferninst the Government" after that deal, and the men he hired were generally about his type - very much "to the left," I would say. I always had difficulty in getting complete compliance with the terms of the timber sale contract from Woods and his men; however, Supervisor Strong, Bill Larsen and Logging Engineer Drake gave me their full support, and eventually very good compliance was secured.

The contract required that all logs be scaled in the woods before being hauled to the landing, where they were dumped from the trucks into the lake. Woods had one logging truck driver who had driven logging trucks in the woods at Green River, Wyoming. He was so crooked he could not holed a job there anymore, so had come to Coeur d'Alene and hired out to Russell and Pugh. He was a good driver and could manage some terrific loads of logs, but otherwise, he was "just simply nasty" for me to get along with on the sale area.

I had to drive from five to seven miles up the hill to work every day. One morning I stopped to talk to one of the loggers who was skidding logs, and while there I heard a logging truck coming down the hill. It was "Jackson Hole Monty" with a good, big load of nice logs. I flagged him down to examine the logs, as I knew he would try to pull something if he thought he could get away with it. Sure enough, the logs had been loaded from a deck where the jammer was skidding in fresh logs, and to save moving the jammer to load Monty's truck with scaled logs, he had been loaded up with the unscaled logs just skidded in.

Monty did not like being stopped, and was very disagreeable while I was scaling his load. I had them all scaled and was putting the "US" stamp on the rear end of the load while standing on a long log near the top some twelve feet high, when Monty started the truck. This threw me off balance and I had to jump down on the hard road, which gave me an awful jolt. I could feel something like a knife cutting into my groins and abdomen. I sat on a log by the roadside for a while, and when the pain eased up a little I went on up the road and tried to scale some more logs. But I got sicker all the time and could not stoop over, so told another truck driver that I was going to camp and for him to stop there when he came down with his load and I would scale the logs there.

I had to drive about five miles downhill to camp and nearly ran off the road several times, as I was very dizzy and sick. I drove the last two miles with the car in low gear, traveling about six or seven miles an hour. When I reached camp, my wife came out to see why I had returned so early. When she opened the car door I fell to the ground and passed out. She got help from the camp cookhouse and I was put to bed. From there on I only know what they told me afterward.

This all happened the day before Thanksgiving, 1943. I was taken to Dr. Barclay's Hospital at Coeur d'Alene, where I was "hanging bar my eyebrows" between life and death for over a week. Dr. Barclay notified the Coeur d'Alene Forest office and several of the personnel came to see me and gave blood for transfusions, so I got some real forestry blood in my veins that time, eh? I was so far gone I did not recognize any of these visitors.

On January 20, 1944, I was moved to Spokane to be with my daughter, who was a registered nurse. I gradually recovered and the last week in April went back to Coeur d'Alene to see about returning to work, but Mr. Strong told me I would have to have a certificate from the doctor regarding the condition of my health before they could put me back to work. The doctor said "nix," so that was "it" for me. I have been retired now for nearly seventeen years, and have never been as well as I was before this sickness.

I look back over my years in the Service with many fond memories of the fine group of men, with very few exceptions, whom I have met and associated with, and hope to greet many of them

by means of this narrative, if not in person. The years of our lives go swiftly by and, from where I sit, the sun is approaching the western horizon and I can see the Everlasting Twilight. The Old Man with the whiskers and scythe is standing in the shadows, just waiting for my number to come up, when I will be on my way to the place where Forest Rangers will no longer fight forest fires.



Ranger Meeting at Deadwood, S.D., March 1907. Front Row, left to right, 1, Unknown; 2. Fred Shields; 3, Theo. Shoemaker; 4, Joseph Conlon; 5. Ed Clark; Frank T. "Cap" Smith; 7. Louis Knowles; 8. Clyde Leavitt; 9. William Wiehe; Middle Row, left to right, 1. McDuffy; 2. George Smith; 3, Frank Thompson; 4. William Poe; 5. Robert Peltz; 6. John Murdock; 7, Carl Peterson; 8. W. A..Donaldson; 9. James Corner; 10. C. A. Ballinger; 11, Leo F. Kneippe; 12. H. C, Neal; 13. Ed M. Hamilton; Back Row, left to right, 1, McNabb; 2. William F. Hill; 3. Butterfield; 4. Dave Hilton; 5. Julius Gundlach; 6. George F. Pollack; 7. W. J. Hall; 8. A. L. Lynn; 9. Standish Smith; 10. Homer Reed; 11. James Dougherty.

## **MY EXPERIENCE ON REFORESTATION (TREE PLANTING) ALL ON THE ST. JOE NATIONAL FOREST**

**By Lloyd V. Donally  
(St. Joe National Forest)**

At the age of 29, I decided I wanted to work for the Forest Service, and applied for employment on the St. Joe National Forest. On May 26, 1927, I received notice to report for work on a tree planting project.

Another fellow and I boarded a C.M.St.P. & P. Railroad passenger train at Superior, Montana, destination Herrick, Idaho. On May 28, 1927, we were assigned work planting trees, mostly white pine, on the Middle Fork of Big Creek. The job location was 15 miles by trail from Herrick. Our salary was \$0.53-1/8 per hour less \$0.40 per meal. All supplies, camp equipment, and seedlings were brought in by mules. Quarters for the men were in brown-colored army pyramid tents; 6 to 8 men to a tent. Bunks were made by using two 6-inch poles or split cedar placed on the ground about 30 inches apart and filled with straw. Blankets and a tarp furnished — no pillows or hand towels those days! The work was hard; the food delicious with all you wanted to eat. On June 20 the spring tree planting was finished and I was assigned to district work.

(In the fall of 1926 an epidemic of spinal meningitis had hit the camp on Big Creek. Two men died. Then the men slept on the ground with whatever they could find to put under them boughs, ferns, grass, etc. It was decided this was not good healthwise and in 1927 bunks were made, as previously described.)

On September 7, 1927, I was assigned to help set up camp on Slate Creek, 15 miles from Avery, for the fall tree planting of white and yellow pine. The planting lasted until October 21 when winter weather set in. My job at this camp was supplying by mule pack, trees and water to the crews. There were no trails in the planting area and in some places there were so many windfalls and such thick brush the mule would get tangled up and fall down with his legs up in the air. The crews were chiefly men hired out of Spokane. It seemed a crew would be working, another crew coming, and still yet another one leaving, most of the time. The men were offered 25¢ a day bonus, plus board and railroad fare, if they would stay until the job was completed. Not many stayed. The disadvantage of planting in the fall is that so much time is lost due to rain. I remember that fall, during the latter part of September and the first part of October, it rained and snowed for ten days straight. Free board was declared in order to hold the crew so they would finish the job.

On May 17, 1928, I arrived at the tree-planting camp on the North Fork of the St. Joe River above Avery on Ramsey Creek. We started planting on the 18th and by the 30th we had to give up as the weather was so hot and dry that when a hole was dug the dust would fly up in your face. When this happens it is too dry for little trees to grow. My salary on this job was \$4.50 per 8-hour day, less \$1.20 per day for board.

I wasn't assigned to tree planting again until April 13, 1930, on the North Fork of the St. Joe River, north of Railroad Creek. I was on this job until May 5th when I was called for district work.

On September 27, 1930, I was placed as foreman of a 14-man planting crew on Slate Creek. My salary was \$110.00 per month and board. The crew was chiefly Forest Service men with a few locally hired men. This job closed down when winter weather set in on October 17.

On April 27, 1931, I was assigned as camp foreman in charge of a 40-man planting crew on the North Fork of the St. Joe River on Rougin Creek. The camp closed May 15.

Again on September 17, 1931, I was placed in charge of a 40-man planting crew as camp foreman on Slate Creek near Slate Creek Ranger Station. My salary rate was \$125.00 per month including board. Crews were comprised of Forest Service employees and locals. Men were arriving as some were leaving. Tree planting is rough, hard work; climbing steep hills over windfalls and through thick brush. Very little level ground is involved. Men were expected to plan 1200 trees per 8-hour day. I believe I sent more men down the road talking to themselves who were unable to meet this quota than on any Forest Service job I was ever on. Anyone who ever worked under my supervision on tree planting never forgot how I routed them over the hills.

From April 25, 1932 to May 26, 1932, I was camp foreman in charge of a 48-man planting crew on the East Fork of Big Creek. Crews were made up of Forest Service employees and locals. Bunks at this time were made from split dead cedar and a tick filled with straw for a mattress.

From May 5, 1933, to June 4, 1933, I was camp foreman of a 50-man planting crew near Early Creek on the Middle Fork of Big Creek. Salary rates were going up. On this job I received \$155.00 per month gross.

From September 12, 1933, to November 10, 1933, I was general camp foreman (Civil Service) of a 65-man camp planting trees near Flume Creek on Slate Creek. Here we had four crews requiring one foreman for each. This was during the depression days and the men were paid National Relief Association (NRA) wages.

Men stayed on the job as jobs were scarce. At that time I was receiving a salary of \$3,000.00 per year. My! I thought that was a lot of money; and thought to myself that this was more money than I would ever make again.

From April 10, 1934, to May 26, 1934, again I was assigned to a 60-man planting camp near Horseshoe Creek on Slate Creek. Here again the men stayed on the job. These men were from all walks of life; railroad men, lumbermen, farmers, etc., going to work wherever they could get a chance. Planting camps were becoming more modern. Folding canvas cots with a pad 4" thick for a mattress were now regular camp equipment. Kapoks with 2 blankets were now issued instead of just blankets.

From April 1, 1935 to June 4, 1935, I was general foreman of five foreman and 65 CCC boys planting trees on Avery Creek and the North Fork of the St. Joe River about 5 miles above

Avery. The average number of trees planted per day dropped considerably when CCC crews were used. The daily average planting was only 400 to 600 trees per man. At that time my salary was \$1.20 per hour.

On October 11, 1935, I was placed as Forest Service foreman of a 75-man Emergency Relief Association (ERA) camp at Collins, Idaho. Our work was hazard reduction and tree planting. Crews were worked planting trees in the fall of 1935 and the spring of 1936. My work ended here the 5th of May, 1936.

From May 10, 1936, to June 15, 1936, I supervised a Forest Service planting camp on the head of Setzer Creek, and the crew of 60 were all CCC boys. To this day I have never seen boys who could stow away food as they did. At meal time everything was cleaned up. The cook couldn't seem to put out enough food. One morning at breakfast a boy ate 32 hotcakes! Another ate 28! These hotcakes were ordinary size, 6" to 7" in diameter. This is not an exaggeration — I was there. It apparently did not bother them as they immediately went to work. After being there about two weeks these same boys couldn't eat over 6 hotcakes and then they wondered how they had gotten away with 32. Sometimes some of these boys would lie down on the job and would not plant correctly. I would say to them, "You either keep up your end of the work, plant the tree correctly, or go back to the main CCC camp." With such good food as an incentive, they would pitch in and do their part rather than go back to the main CCC camp.

Again from October 15, 1936, to June 13, 1937, I was in charge of a 90-man Forest Service ERA camp at Collies. As in 1935 and 1936, these men were from almost every profession and/or vocation. They were now on relief and allowed to work a limited number of hours a month. Many men with very good past experience worked at whatever they were called to do. There were cooks, carpenters, mechanics, plumbers, truckdrivers, and many more. Some of these men were used planting trees in the fall of 1935.

In the spring of 1936 all ERA crews and CCC boys from Clarkia were put to work planting trees on ground that had been prepared and burned over during the winter and early spring. These plantations were at Collins, on Nat Brown Creek, and southwest of Bovill. Ray Fitting won a box of cigars from Elers Koch on a wager that when the first examination of these plantations was made they would show survival — and they did: My salary while on the ERA project was \$1860.00 per annum.

From May 1, 1940, to June 10, 1940, I was with a 10-man CCC crew. We planted trees on Beaver Creek on the Red Ives District. This crew was the poorest tree-planting crew I have ever supervised. For some reason they were not interested in what they were doing and about 60% of the trees were not planted correctly.

From October 1, 1940, to November 30, 1940, I supervised three 10-man crews of CCC boys, planting trees on Marble Creek, Secs. 20 and 21, T 44 N, R 3, E. B. M. I also supervised as foreman the same set-up in this area the spring of 1941, April 2 through May 31.

From April 10, 1942, to May 30, 1942, I supervised two 12-man CCC crews planting trees on Charlie Creek north of Baldy Mountain. These crews were fairly good tree planters but of all the



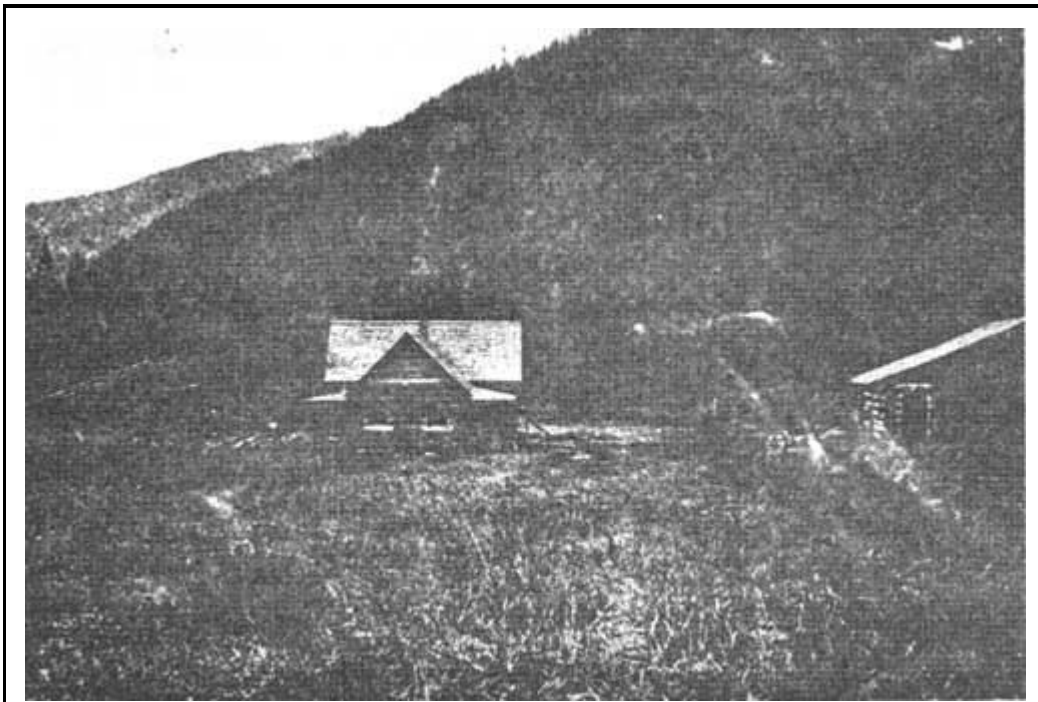
CCC boys I worked with, these possessed a real streak of orneriness. They would steal, lie, were destructive, and out for a fight. Later I learned some of them were former jailbirds from back East.

I was with a small Forest Service crew planting trees on Marble Creek near the mouth of Daveggio Creek from April 20, 1944, until May 8, 1944.

From May 1, 1948, to May 20, 1948, I supervised a forest crew planting trees at St. Joe City near Bond Creek.

Outside of a few replanting jobs on Willow Creek, Ramskill Creek, and Bechtel Creek, this concludes my planting experience.

Today, Dent, Ames, and Early Creek Plantations, near Bronson Meadows on the Middle Fork of Big Creek, and Mowat Creek Plantation on East Fork of Big Creek, are recognized as some of the finest white pine stands on the forest.



St. Joe Ranger Station after new house was built following forest fire of August 20, 1910.  
(Taken October 1910)



Crew CCC planting ponderosa pine on cut-over and slash-burned lands along Butler Creek.  
Trees were grown in the Savenac Nursery. Lolo National Forest, May 1938.

**By G.M. DeJarnette  
(Retired 1962)**

These reminiscences aren't much different from any that another Forest Service fellow could write. My career in the Forest Service started as a forest assistant on the old Pend Oreille Forest in northern Idaho in 1921. On August first I reported to Joe Fitzwater at Sandpoint. Since the appointment papers clutched in my hand said Sandpoint was to be my headquarters, I asked Joe where I might find a room. "You won't need a room " he replied; "you are leaving town at 10 a.m. If you've got a trunk you can leave it here in the storeroom."

I stored the trunk, loaded my old No. 2 Duluth packsack with socks, underwear, a couple of shirts, my tin pants and boots and a few toilet articles, and asked, "Where do I go?" "Well," he said, "I guess I'll send you to Copeland. Frank Casler has some fires and there's a telephone line to build, and he can use you on some timber cruising for a sale. When you get that done, Bill Blackman over at Snyder can use some help. He has a telephone line to build and some special use surveys to run out, and some brush to burn this fall. After that we will see." So I scattered.

I next saw Sandpoint and my trunk about Thanksgiving. I got a room but the trunk wasn't to be unpacked before "Monk" and his packsack took off for the Falls District to help Larry Dunn. At that time the Pend Oreille and Kaniksu were administered as separate units but under one supervisor. That was a World War I economy move - economy of both manpower and money. After doing some odd chores for Dunn, I got home for Christmas at Missoula, but no sooner back than my pack and I hit the Falls again. I shoveled snow off buildings, marked and scaled timber on the old Dalkena Lumber Company sale, ran out June 11 homestead lines on snowshoes, took care of the pack and saddle stock at the old Gleason Station, and saw my trunk again about March.

So it went until the forests were divided again on January 1, 1924. I was assigned as timber staffman on the Pend Oreille. I began to see my trunk more frequently then. There was a chance to see more of the Sandpoint "schoolmarms" trio, and one of them put the noose on me in 1925.

That's the way most of us were broken into the Forest Service in those days. For my part, I wouldn't part with a day of it. Some say we were just custodians. True, we did a lot of custodial work, and much development work. But we did a lot of management and silvicultural work, too, under the guidance of old masters like Joe Fitzwater, Elers Koch, W.W. White, Clyde Webb, and Phil Neff. And we shouldn't forget C.E. "Skip" Knouf, who was one of the toughest and best timber sale inspectors and check scalers in the business. On the "communications improvement" side was old R.B. (Ringin' Bell) Adams, who gave me so much hell for the way I built my first telephone line that I sure learned how to build 'em "neat and pretty" but quick. He was the first man I ever heard predict the radio for our communication, and that was almost before "radio was."

So, we have come a long way - from packsacks to overnight bags; from grounded lines to "ultra high;" from calked shoes to "ground-rubbin" Chevrolets; from cutting and burning bug trees to fighting bugs with 'copters and chemicals. We have gone from pulling bushes to high powered antibiotics for blister rust. We now use almost as much paper to hire and fire a man as we once

did to write a year's reports. We now plan and replan, where we used to get out and do the job. But, withal, we have made wonderful progress: I am proud to have had a part in it all.

This may sound like a "swan song." It isn't, quite, but what I treasure and will continue to treasure most in looking back over the years are the memories of the fine people there have been to work with. I have had the inspiration, encouragement, and friendship of some of the finest men and women to be found anywhere. They have been that, and they are that. Our technological advancement has been beyond the fondest dreams of the early foresters who laid the foundation for what we are today in the field of forestry. The men and women of the Forest Service have made it great and, God willing, they will keep it great.

**By Lewis E. Ewan  
(Retired 1950)**

In July 1929 I was detailed to Missoula for fire duty. The first fire I was on was one on the West Fork of the Bitterroot River. We had five camps which were first located a short distance below the Aleta Ranger Station and later, as fire conditions changed to a point a short distance above this station. That district was then under one of the Ranger Tennants. I can't remember which one. (It was Ray Tennant —Ed.) His brother (Earl) was then a Ranger on the Lolo Forest.

This fire was started by a coal or wood-burner shovel owned by the Missoula Mercantile Company, and which was being moved from a few miles above Aleta to someplace down the Bitterroot River near Darby. The Forest Service had assigned a guard to follow the engine during the move. This engine started 12 fires which were all put out by the fire guard. The thirteenth fire got away from him.

Phil \_\_\_\_\_, an Assistant Regional Forester in charge of roads and trails, as well as I remember, was assigned to this fire. (This may have been Phil Neff, Regional Logging Engineer— Ed.) I was sent out with him and a good many men. After three days we had it pretty well down and Phil and I, and trucks of men, went down the road to Hamilton. A few men were left on patrol. Phil was sure the fire was safe, but recommended to Supervisor Lowell that he placed me in charge of it, which he did. I then returned to the fire and worked on it, but it soon became bad again. I would get it down pretty well when all of a sudden it would blow up again, somewhere along the line in the general location of where a certain crew strawboss was working. I detailed an Indian from one crew (I've forgotten his name but we called him "Chief") to spy on that section of the line. He soon brought me the information that he was sure one man, he thought it was the crew leader, was setting fires ahead. I sent that boss and all his crew down the road, with Ranger Tennant's approval, and they were fired. We soon had the fire down to an eight-man patrol crew, and Mr. Lowell transferred me to the Lost Horse Creek fire west of Darby.

I became acquainted with Than Wilkerson and, if I remember right, seven of his brothers, while I was in that locality that summer.



**JUST REMINISCENCES**  
**By Eugene (Gene) R. Grush**  
**(Retired 1952)**

In the early spring of 1910 I decided to take Horace Greeley's advice and go West, so I left Pittsburgh and worked my way across the country, arriving in Spokane in August. Men were being hired to fight fires, so I decided to take that on. A crew of us was sent to Troy, Montana. We arrived there early in the morning, had breakfast at the old Doonan Hotel which at that time included a bar, and some of the boys got pretty well tuned-up.

A wagon pulled up to the hotel partly loaded with grub, and we added our bedrolls to the load. When we got down to the ferry on the Kootenai, the wagon and some of the men were part way across the river. A well liquored Irishman named Kelly, anxious to get to the fire apparently, stripped off and jumped in the river with the intention of swimming across. We fished him out and dressed him. At O'Brien Springs the cook prepared a lunch for us of bacon, eggs, fried spuds, bread, and coffee. I can still smell the aroma of that bacon and coffee.

We made camp that night at the spring on the east side of Yaak Falls. Next day part of the crew was sent up to the Bob Holmes homestead camp about three miles above the town of Sylvanite which had just been completely burned out. The Forest Service had built a bridge across the Yaak at the falls that spring. The fire was closing in on us so the team and wagon were moved across the river "just in case."

One of my duties was to keep the fire crew supplied with water. Water bags were either nonexistent or we didn't rate any as I was given a 12 quart pail and a tin cup for this duty. When we were trying to head the fire off up Arbo Creek I had to go down a very steep side hill to the creek. Before I got very far up from the creek the contents of the pail included not only water but twigs and leaves from the thick brush through which I traveled. I dumped it, refilled the bucket, tied my red bandanna over the top and returned to camp with clean water.

When the rains came and doused the fire we moved down to Charlie Dennis' homestead below Kilbrennan Lake (Charlie was Ranger of the Troy District at that time). We were assigned to build trail up O'Brien Creek and got quite a little way before the fire money was cut off. We were paid in cash at Troy - no checks at that time.

Three of us had been traveling from Edgemont, South Dakota, when we hired out in Spokane. The other two had been taken up to the camp on the Bob Holmes homestead. I waited a couple of days for them but when they didn't show up I took my bedroll and a little grub and started out to find them. On arriving at Sylvanite I found the town had been completely leveled by the fire, except for one hotel. Later oldtimers told me that when the town was going full tilt, about 1896, there were about a thousand people there and dance halls, saloons, a post office, stores, and the best hotel in Flathead County. It was a part of Flathead County at that time. The two-story hotel that survived the fire was located along Fourth-of-July Creek. I had been told that the only reason it was still standing was because a lot of liquor was stored therein and the boys fought like hell to save it. Of course the ground was a bit swampy back of the hotel.

When I arrived at the upper camp I found that one of my chums had left some time previously and the other was going to trap that winter with a chap he had met on the fire. The next morning I started hiking back to Troy. On the way down I met an old fellow, Harry Higgins, who had squatted on the land at the old Half-Way House (the present Buckhorn Lodge). He talked me into staying with him that winter. I trapped part of the winter then went to work for Johnny Ehlers who held a water right on the Yaak Falls. He had dreams of generating enough power to run the mine at Sylvanite and for other uses. Higgins and I had an argument and parted company. I kicked the pack rats out of an old prospector's cabin about a half mile below the falls and moved in. I started clearing a place for a power house a short distance below the falls. One day I returned to Higgins' place to get my axe and some of the meat I had left there. I loaded half a deer in a pack sack that I had made from a gunny sack and started back, deciding that the "going" would be a little better on the river. This proved to be a poor decision when the ice broke and I found myself sitting in water up to my shoulders. I removed my snowshoes and the pack sack from my back and got out of the hole, but had to go back in the water to fish out my axe.

While clearing for the power house, every time I sank the axe into a tree my head seemed to jump into the air, caused no doubt by a back tooth that had been giving me trouble. I no longer had access to the cotton and carbolic acid that Higgins, while I was with him, had let me use to pack the cavity and relieve the pain. So I decided to eliminate the tooth, with a ten-inch file and four-pound single-bitted axe to serve me in this operation. I placed the end of the file against the tooth and took a swipe at it with the axe, missing the file and batting myself on the side of the jaw. After repeating this operation several times with the same result, I took off for Leonia, Idaho, twelve miles away, to get some acid. When I found that the acid no longer gave me relief, I caught the train to Troy to call on old Dad Woods who, I had heard, pulled a tooth now and then.

It was late when I arrived. Dad wanted me to wait until morning as they had only coal-oil lamps. When I told him I had to leave on the 4:00 a.m. train he asked Josh Inman, his bartender, to get the lantern. Dad fished out some kind of pliers and picked out the tooth he thought should be pulled. I told him, "No, it's the one behind that one." The one he wanted to pull had a large filling in it which no doubt looked like a hole to him. We finally compromised. He said, "OK, we will pull that one and I will keep on pulling till we get the right one." Lucky for me the first tooth pulled was the right one.

In the spring Les Vinal (later supervisor of the Kootenai) brought a group of students up, most of them equipped with six-shooters and cameras. They lined up on the bridge and took pictures of the falls. That summer and the next, eastern white pine and red oak were planted at Sylvanite Ranger Station. The white pine are now beautiful, thrifty trees. The cayuses browsed on the red oak. Jack Baldwin saved five of them by moving them to the back of the dwelling where his wife kept them watered with her dishwater, and they are now beautiful trees. The largest one is taller than the dwelling.

The Yaak Falls power didn't materialize so I pulled out for Manitoba where I worked in the harvest fields until October, then returned to Pittsburgh, entered business college and worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad. This was in 1913, and the railroad company assigned me to work in connection with the Ohio Valley flood where I was paid straight time (24 hours a day). I then

returned west, where I had wanted to be all the time, and went first to Night Hawk, Washington, to trap. I wound up back on the Yaak where the winter of 1914 was spent trapping. The next spring I built a two-story log cabin for a homesteader and filed on a homestead myself before leaving for the Palouse country to make some money to support my homestead.

In the fall I arrived in Spokane with \$90, bought a little black mare and buggy I saw parked outside a saloon with a sign reading "For Sale \$40.00." I bought my winter's supply of grub and headed back for the Yaak, a five-day trip. One night during a hard rain I was bedded down under the buggy when an automobile went by. I said to myself, "One day I will have one of those things."

Jack Baldwin, later Ranger at Sylvanite and still later in charge of the Engineering Shop in Spokane, had just homesteaded. I helped build a log house for him. Later that winter I helped Hi Crum build a log house on his homestead, which we started in 23-below-zero weather.

I worked on fires for the Forest Service, cleared land, and in August 1916 went to Canada and enlisted in the Army, returning from overseas in the fall of 1919. I made cedar posts that winter and went to work for the Forest Service the next spring maintaining telephone line. While I was away the Forest Service or B.P.R. had built a road from Sylvanite up the Yaak to where the radar station is now - about 18 miles. This was quite an improvement from the old trail I had hiked and snowshoed over a number of times.

John Brobst, L. Dooley, and I moved the telephone line over from the trail to the new road. We used some new wire from half-mile rolls. Jack Baldwin and Johnny would put them on a reel on the back of the wagon and drive up the road stringing the wire out, after which they would hook the end of the wire to the axle and go up the road again, as Jack said, "to take out the slack." I was doing the climbing. One day I had taken the wire across my arms and started up an old burnt fit, a remnant of the 1917 fire. It was on a curve and leaning toward the road. I got up about ten feet and, luckily, wasn't using my belt when they took the slack out. It threw me clear across the road. I was plenty mad and started up the road with blood in my eye. I had gone quite a little way when I realized I still had the climbers on. By that time I had cooled off, had a good laugh and went back to work. Later I was up a tree, had the insulator fastened to my belt, and Jack was under the tree telling me how they used to do it when he worked for the telephone company back in Kansas City. The insulator pulled loose and conked Jack on the head. Jack's hair was rather thin so I imagine it didn't feel so good. I am sure he thought I did it on purpose to get even with him for yanking me out of the tree.

Just before the 4th of July we put a young, newly married couple on Mt. Henry. During the summer a lightning storm came up one night and knocked them out of their tent, or so they said. She had a rather bad burn and had to eat standing up for awhile. Anyway, they said they'd had enough, and we had to replace them.

Fourth of July night when we got back from the lookout the road crew had completed the right of way to the lower ford and were throwing a party. The settlers were invited, and danced in the old schoolhouse. It was quite a party, lasting most of the night.



From the basin on to Rexford over the Dodge Creek summit the county had built a wagon road, which amounted to only a double trail. Some brave soul, not a native, decided to make the trip through with a car. The boys dragged the car through the river at the lower ford with a team and he took off. Later we heard that after prying out rocks and cutting off stumps in the road, what remained of the car, arrived in Rexford behind a team of horses. That was the first car to make a trip up the Yaak and through to Rexford.

After maintaining the telephone line to Mt. Henry and Baldy from our two tent lookouts, I spent the rest of the summer as smokechaser at Long Meadows. We had a number of fires, the largest on the West Fork. Hiked in with my fire pack about 15 miles, bedded down that night at Pete Creek Meadows and the mosquitoes had a field day. I built three smudges in an effort to get some sleep, but they crept in under the smoke and gave me the works.

For a number of years I had seasonal work with the Forest Service. In 1922 I was on final surveys. They were trying to wind up the homestead business. During the off season I worked on various things - clearing land on my homestead, prospecting, logging, helping in the Yaak log drive, doing assessment work. In the winter of '23 I took care of a herd of cattle and horses for a rancher who had moved out for the winter. It was a cold winter with the temperature dropping as low as 52 below.

In the spring of 1924 we were taking the drive out and when about a mile above the falls the water dropped, causing a large jam in the canyon below the falls. Weyerhauser's men were having plenty of trouble too skidding logs off the bars in the Kootenai with teams. Later I blasted the key rocks out from under the jams above the falls and also blasted the jam in the canyon. In blasting a ledge out that stuck up at the head of the falls, the logs were battered up pretty badly. I had to shinny out on a pole to get at it and it was a ticklish job to keep from going over the falls. The next year Weyerhauser took the drive out in good water. That was the last drive on the Yaak. This timber was all logged by homesteaders from their own lands and went to the Bonners Ferry mill.

We now had a mail route up the river, 44 miles from Troy, with the Yaak Post Office at the end of the route. By changing teams at Sylvanite the mailman made the round trip in two days. I kept one team at Sylvanite. The winter of '24 the freight business got too heavy for his once-a-week trip, so I hauled freight for him from Troy to Sylvanite, a two-day trip. He took it on from there, another two-day trip.

During the winter we had a very warm spell, then the thermometer dropped way below zero in a few hours. Sap must have been in the trees as it killed a lot of fruit trees and turned the needles yellow on many evergreens, most of which survived however.

I believe it was in '25 that we had a lot of fires, the largest on 17 Mile Creek. The coming of snow finished it. Late that fall we built a lookout house on Roderick Mountain and had lots of snow and wind during construction.

Activity during 1926-27-28 was pretty much routine; maintenance, construction, telephone lines, trails, roads and buildings, and some fires.

In the fall of 1928 I loaded the family and a camping outfit in the car (a 1926 Chevrolet touring car) and started on a trip that took us to the Coast, down to California and Mexico, across to Florida through the Southern States, up the East Coast to Canada, and back across the northern tier of states, a total of 12,000 miles. We arrived home in April. It was a nice trip and quite educational for our two children, although at times they were rather trying. Once in Arizona I stopped the car to get something to work them over with, but the best I could find was cactus and I had no gloves. I had my tire chains along "just in case," but the only place they were needed was in coming through from Noxon to Troy via Bull Lake. We encountered quite a lot of road construction on the trip and still had gobs of red clay of the South and gumbo of the Dakotas under the car when we arrived home. When we got back in Montana the water tasted so good we stopped and drank our fill at every creek and spring. We also commented that this was the only state where they surfaced the roads with boulders.

In 1929 we had quite a few fires. A big one in 1931 started on Deer Creek in Idaho on a Sunday morning. By that night it was burning on Baldy Ridge. That fire occupied me the rest of the summer. Of course we had help from other forests and from the Regional Office - Frank Jefferson, Lloyd Hornby, Hartley Calkins, and F.K. Stewart. On the Montana side we had 31 camps on the fire and 1500 men, with crews coming and going, and 300 head of pack stock. Quite a few of these were "knotheads" that had just been rounded up from the range. The packers had to break them but "knew their stuff."

At that time we had only a one-way road into the Yaak, with a few turnouts. We had a man at Tepee Springs and another at the Sylvanite Ranger Station. In this nine-mile stretch the vans and buses couldn't pass. Some of the drivers on the buses and vans were quite angry as they had scraped their rigs on the cliffs at the falls. On one occasion, instead of the grub we ordered for the fire, Spokane sent us a large vanload of mixed vegetables, salad variety. They must have been overstocked on these. An odd thing about that fire was that every Sunday from somewhere inside the line, fire would be thrown quite a distance outside, causing us to lose considerable trench. Art Greeley traversed the fire line. We had 90 miles in held line in Montana; I don't remember how much they had in Idaho. By the time the fire was out our road was beaten to pieces. I broke five springs on my Model A that summer.

Later came the CCC's and a 200-man camp for us. These boys rebuilt our road and surfaced it with crushed rock, for which we were all grateful. They did a lot of good work - built a steel bridge across the Yaak below Sylvanite, several steel bridges across the creeks, some side roads and trails, and worked on fires and in other places where we could use them. First we had a camp of L.E.M.'s (local men) who were fine, then a camp of Jewish boys from New York. Later on farm boys from Ohio and the mountains of Tennessee arrived. There were many amusing incidents, but that's another story.

Next came the E.R.A., and we fell heir to a crew of transients from another county or forest. They were not too satisfactory, but we did get some road right of way cleared. When the money ran out we sent them back to where they came from, but it seemed they weren't wanted there either, since more money was allotted us and the crew returned. Along the way they had got hold of some "joy juice" and when we opened the endgate of the truck some of them rolled out on the

ground. We finally got them tucked in for the night. The next morning they craved tomato juice, and the cook had to run them out of the kitchen with a cleaver.

Then came the N.R.A., and we were allotted some money to build a combination building and a five-stall machine shed. Sylvanite Ranger Station was beginning to look up. Quite a bit different from when I first saw it in 1910. After the 1910 fire the Forest Service had built a general-purpose building out of rough lumber, for which they had traded stumpage to the sawmill at Sylvanite. The mill had been hauled in from Troy to Sylvanite via Kilbrennan Lake and Yaak Falls with a four-horse team the winter of 1910. The boiler was the big load. The road crew had left a couple of shacks in 1917 which were converted into a cookhouse, warehouse and office. Previous to this time the Sylvanite district had taken in part of the old Troy district, extending from Kootenai Falls to the Idaho line and north to Baldy Ridge. We had ten lookouts and many miles of trail and telephone line.

An odd thing is that sometimes you can have a lot of lightning going to the ground and get very few fires, but in 1940 it seemed that every strike started a fire. We had 44, some of them pretty good size. That year we had outside help which we greatly appreciated. I.V. Anderson from the Regional Office came to the Ranger Station and among other things commented that he had been on a lot of fires but that this was the first time he had been given a whole drainage to take care of. Upper Ford district had assigned him the Spread Creek drainage. Our district wasn't bad off compared to the Raven district which got 100 fires out of that first two-day storm. This was the first year we used planes. A fire outfit was dropped on Yaak Mountain for us, but the water was missing from that load.

In the fall of 1942 I was mapping and classifying private land for fire protection. One evening I received a call from the Supervisor's Office instructing me to leave the next day for the Guayule Rubber Project in California. I went to Spokane where I was to meet two other boys and drive to California. Something didn't mesh so we took the train to Missoula, picked up a car there and proceeded to Salinas. On arrival, Major Kelley, who was in charge of the project, showed us the nursery and the processing plant. It was very enlightening and instructive. We went from Salinas to Indio where a nursery was being established. Major Kelley had told us that our operations would compare somewhat with those on a big fire. We worked ten hours a day, seven days a week. The temperature rose to 100 in the shade every day - quite a contrast to the cool days we had left at home that October. We had a motley crew of laborers because the armed services had taken so many men. Our needs were filled from skid row in Los Angeles.

About Christmas time the wind took over and covered our little guayule plants with sand. We rustled all the push brooms we could get in Indio and put the crews to work uncovering the plants. A 1000-man camp was set up which proved of great help. I believe this was the largest nursery with overhead sprinkling system that had ever been established. We had about 80 miles of various-sized pipe in the system.

About the first of January I was sent to El Paso to help Ed Mackay with a nursery located in New Mexico a short distance out of El Paso. I headed for home at the end of my six-month detail. When I left El Paso the railroad station was packed; many were boys in uniform. The weather was hot and sticky. I awoke early the next morning, raised the shade of my berth and looked out

to see a stream of water rushing over the rocks, green grass just peeking out from under the snow, and evergreens, and realized with a feeling of pleasure that I was back in Montana. It was my birthday and I thought, "What a nice present."

In 1944 Karl Klehm and I, while on a district inspection trip that took us to the sheep camp on Buckhorn Ridge, spent the night at the head of Red Top Creek. The third day while traveling up the Cool Creek ridge we encountered two bear about three miles from our destination of Roderick Lookout. These 300-pounders looked as though they disputed our right to pass as they stood up on their hind legs and appeared very belligerent. Karl kicked his horse, yelled and went after them. One of them broke over the ridge, but the other acted as though he were going to take Karl on. Karl was only a few feet from him when the bear decided discretion was the better part of valor and took off down the other side of the ridge. Karl rode back and asked what kind of bear they were and I told him they were silver-tip grizzlies. He said, "Maybe I shouldn't have done that."

In early April of 1945 a 50-man crew of Mexican Nationals arrived to work on blister rust. We still had a lot of snow and they were not dressed for the type of weather we were having. Harold Zwang and a representative of Montgomery Ward came up and took orders for rubbers and warm clothing for them. They were assigned to pruning our white pine plantation, burning brush, road work, etc., until the snow melted and they could work on blister rust. They were good workers.

The next few years we were busy with timber sales, grazing permits, improvements, blister rust, beetles, etc. It was pretty nice having the blister rust crews handy when we were hit with a bunch of fires. Region 1 had recognized the value of planes for fire suppression and under the direction of Regional Forester Kelley had inaugurated and developed the smokejumper program. We made very good use of the smokejumpers, also the drops of camps and equipment.

The work load on the district has increased greatly due to blowdown and invasion of the spruce bark beetle. Thousands of trees were killed by the beetles. Many miles of road have been built to most parts of the district to salvage the millions of board feet of lumber in these dead trees. It is now possible to go by car in short order to most parts of the district where it used to take us a couple of days to make the trip.

Many changes and improvements have taken place. The radar station was built near the Yaak Post Office (incidentally, the post office was closed and the mail route extended up the river). The Air Force rebuilt the Yaak road by contract and have improved and maintained it since that time with the cooperation and help of the Forest Service. We now have a very fine road.

Homesteaders no longer are seen with their pack strings of cayuses on their way to Leonia (this town no longer exists) for their year's supply of grub; just cars, trucks, logging trucks and, yes, jets overhead. Many of the old timers have slipped over the Great Divide to the Happy Hunting Grounds and are no doubt swapping yarns about "the good old days."



Sylvanite Ranger Station a few years after the 1910 fire, Kootenai National Forest. J.K. John Brobst in picture.



Sylvanite Ranger Station, Kootenai National Forest, August 1923. Area behind building was burned over during 1910 fire.



Sylvanite Ranger Station, Kootenai National Forest, 1958.

## **THE FIRST TEN YEARS WERE THE TOUGHEST**

**By Ralph L. Hand  
(Retired 1955)**

If in order to qualify as an oldtimer in the Northern Rocky Mountain Region, it is necessary to have toughed it out through the critical fire seasons of 1910 and 1919, I'm afraid I can't make the grade.

I believe it was during the former year that, as a schoolboy in southwestern New York State, I first got smoke in my eyes and ashes in my hair from hardwood slash fires. I remember too that for a time we were pretty badly smoked up from the big Michigan and Minnesota fires and I expect it was just about then that I first began to think of the Forest Service as a possible career.

This was before the Weeks Law had been passed and there wasn't an acre of national forest land within many miles of my home, so the idea was still rather vague when, in 1915, I attended a summer forestry camp in the Adirondacks. This camp was in conjunction with the regular summer camp that was attended by all second-year students of the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, but it was open to practically anyone who was interested in forestry.

Henry H. (Hal) Tryon, whom the students often referred to as "The Harvard-educated lumberjack," was in charge of our group. Others whom I remember well include Dean Hugh Potter Baker; his brother, J. Fred Baker, who taught Silviculture; Dr. Chas. C. Adams, who later directed the Roosevelt Wildlife Experiment Station for many years; Wm. L. Bray, the ecologist; and a professor of botany named Harry Brown.

That summer at Cranberry Lake convinced me that I was on the right track, but after many talks with students and instructors. I was equally convinced that there was little chance in that part of the country for the kind of employment I was looking for.

For the next couple of years I worked at various jobs including tree surgery on Long Island, cutting saw logs and chemical wood at a Pennsylvania lumber camp, ice harvesting on Chautauqua Lake and all sorts of furniture factory work from the lumber yard to the finishing floor. Then came World War One and a hitch in the Army with a little more than a year overseas, and so just about the time that the 1919 fire season was well under way, I was a footloose "G.I." with an Army discharge and what was left of a \$60 bonus in my pocket - looking for a job. It was not until the fall of 1920, having in the meantime wangled a \$150 scholarship at the University of Idaho and a one-cent-per-mile landlooker's ticket on the Canadian Pacific Railroad, that I headed for the Northwest.

At the time I entered, in late October, the Forest School staff at Moscow consisted of Dean Francis G. Miller, Henry H. (Heinie) Schmitz, and C. Edward (Eddie) Behre. In addition to the regular instructors we had special lecturers from the Forest Service. One of the first and best-remembered was Howard Flint, at that time an inspector in the District (Regional) Office at Missoula. Then there was a quartet of Supervisors, Joe Fitzwater from the Kaniksu, C.K. (Mac) McHarg from the Coeur d'Alene, Jonn B. Taylor from the Deerlodge and Guy B. Mains from

one of the south Idaho forests - I think it was the Boise. I remember Supervisor Mains as a somewhat stocky individual with bristly, black whiskers; he reminded me of pictures I had seen of General U.S. Grant. When one of the local students asked him if he had ever worked on a north Idaho forest, he said, "Yes," and then added, "If the reproduction on my face had been as heavy as it is now, I'd still be hanging out there in the brush." Evidently he preferred the open range and yellow pine of the Intermountain Region to the brushy jungles of the Idaho Panhandle.

Among my fellow students who later followed Forest Service careers were Ray Ferguson, Albert Cochrell, Fred Shaner, Howard Higgins and Frank Folsom. I believe Albert was a Ranger at the time, but had taken a furlough to attend school for a year.

In the spring of 1921, I was offered a seasonal job on the St. Joe, and since I wasn't to report at Avery until June 16, I had a few weeks in which to replenish my now badly depleted funds. Among other jobs, I buried a dead horse, whitewashed the interior of a cow barn, packed trees at the University arboretum, addressed envelopes and hoed a huge field of cantaloupes and watermelons. The latter job was at Lewiston Orchards where the University maintained an experimental farm, and while there I managed to take a couple of days off to visit an Army buddy who had recently started practicing dentistry at Grangeville.

That long train ride over the prairie and across the high wooden trestles, is one that I won't soon forget - especially the return trip. I was accompanied by a Grangeville attorney whom I had met through my friend the dentist. I have long since forgotten his name, but I can still remember some of the things he told me about Idaho County; he was literally loaded with information and not a bit backward about passing it on to a comparative stranger.

On arriving at Lewiston, we ran smack into some sort of convention and the Bollinger Hotel was full (the Lewis and Clark hadn't yet been built). My companion must have used his influence with the management for they set up two cots behind a screen on the second floor corridor and that's where we slept - at least it's where we spent the night. When some barbershop quartet wasn't howling in doleful tones through the wide-open transom, or a staggering drunk trying to find his room by pounding on each door successively, my roommate was regaling me with statistics about the vastness and eminence of Idaho County which I learned was larger than the state of Connecticut. I learned, too, that it contained enough merchantable timber to build a five-room house for each family in New York City, and cattle enough to keep them supplied with meat through a hard winter. Furthermore, its fabulous Camas Prairie produced sufficient wheat to sustain all the flour mills of Kansas, while the gold that had been taken out of Florence, Elk City, and the Buffalo Hump would have paid off the national debt in 1917.

If some of these statements are a little bit debatable, blame me, not the lawyer. After all, this was almost forty years ago and my memory isn't perfect.

## 1921

I reported to Joe Mahoney at the Avery Ranger Station on the morning of June 16. Joe was the Ranger who handled the dispatching, bossed the packers and functioned generally as manager of the Avery Supply Base.



The St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene had recently been combined into a single administrative unit under Supervisor McHarg, whose headquarters were in the town of Coeur d'Alene. Ashley Roche, his deputy, remained at Avery where he was nominally in charge of the Main division with its four Ranger Districts. Clyde Blake was in charge of the Avery District, Franklin Girard had Roundtop, Allen Space, Quarles Peak, and Charles Bradner was the new Ranger at Pole Mountain. The Palouse District, separated from the others by a wide area under jurisdiction of the Coeur d'Alene Timber Protective Association, was handled by Billy Daug, who functioned pretty much as a "little supervisor" on that isolated unit.

The main Division at that time was really a backwoods forest; there wasn't a foot of road within the entire three-quarter-million acres except within the town of Avery, a division point of the Milwaukee Railroad. As I recall, there was just one powered vehicle in town a light truck that was used to haul groceries and other merchandise from the freight depot to the general store. It had been shipped in on a flat car.

I had been assigned as lookout at Pole Mountain, but the first job that I did for the Forest Service was to help old "Dad" Propst clean out the Avery sewer system. It always became plugged after the spring rains and it had become sort of a tradition that all newcomers take a whirl at the disagreeable task. The college student, the seasoned lumberjack and the drifter who had just dropped off from a boxcar - each took his turn and was judged according to whether he rolled up his sleeves or turned up his nose. Over a year later I was told that I had been recommended for a Ranger appointment, at least partly because I had been one of those who placed personal squeamishness subordinate to the importance of getting a dirty but necessary job done. As a matter of fact, I wasn't conscious of trying to "butter up" anybody; it was the way I had been raised, or perhaps the credit should go to my New England ancestors.

Following the Avery episode, the next thing I remember with any degree of clarity is of shoveling through snowdrifts east of Bearskull, to get the pack trains around Hoodoo Ridge. There was quite a gang of us seasonal employees, headed for our stations on the Roundtop and Pole Mountain Districts.

As backwoods cabins go, the Bearskull bunkhouse was larger than most, as befitted an important pack station, and it contained three or four double-deck bunks made of lodgepole saplings and split cedar puncheon. These had all been pre-empted by the time our gang arrived and even floor space was at a premium. The weather was nasty, and several inches of wet snow covered the ground. I had dumped my packsack and blankets in a vacant spot, only to come back later and find that they had been kicked into a corner and a big coil of telephone wire now occupied the spot where I had intended to bed down. I was down on the floor struggling with that heavy coil and wondering what to do with it when a hard-looking individual who had spoken little up to then, came to my rescue. "If you'll kick that wire over here," he said, giving me a somewhat supercilious look, "I'll roll it outside for you, unless you want to use it for bed springs." That was my introduction to Ashley Roche.

Among the four or five packers who were awaiting the snow removal was one named Joe, who, despite the bad weather, elected to sleep outside. I learned later that he never slept indoors; rain or shine, he spread his blankets where he could hear the musical tinkle of the horse bells. Joe

claimed he was so used to listening to them that he always awoke when he couldn't hear them any more. Then he would shoulder his bedroll and follow the mule tracks until he was sure the stock was on good grass. By morning Joe might be miles from camp, but at least he had the biggest half of the wrangling job behind him.

It was about the Fourth of July when we finally completed our share of the main-line maintenance work and arrived at our summer headquarters the Pole Mountain Ranger Station. My partner was a Texan named Frank Moore who had worked seasonally on the St. Joe since 1914. With us were two brothers, Slim and Tige Frantz, who were to occupy the Mallard Lake camp some ten or twelve miles beyond our station.

For the first week or so, we were all busy constructing camp, for, though this was the Ranger Station, there were no buildings except a small, practically windowless log structure supposed to be a tool cache. Frank was a genius when it came to making a comfortable, even luxurious camp, with nothing but a few handtools and what the Lord had provided in the way of native material. We had two tents and a fly, and of course there was no cedar at that 6500 foot elevation, but we split shakes and puncheon from lodgepole pine with a froe (shake-splitter) that Frank had made out of a broken brush-hook. We walled up the sides of the kitchen fly, made shelves, cupboards and racks for utensils, floored the tents, and even made lockers for our personal gear.

The smaller of the tents was to be the Ranger's office, and though Frank was rather scornful, he spared no effort in making a neat shelf for the manual and files and a stand for the old Oliver typewriter. But he just couldn't help comparing it with the office of one of Brad's predecessors. It had consisted of one wooden box to sit on, another to serve as a desk, and two large spikes driven into a post that formed part of the tent frame. Incoming mail was pegged to spike number one until action had been taken or the Ranger had decided to ignore it. Then it was transferred to spike number two which never became filled because its contents - always dealt from the bottom - as used to kindle the fire each morning.

We had just about completed our camp when Brad arrived with a wooden mapboard and alidade, an iron telephone that weighed ninety pounds, and a set of lookout instructions that had been prepared in the office at Coeur d'Alene the preceding winter. Brad carried the telephone and alidade in a packsack, while I struggled along with a quarter-mile coil of wire over my shoulder and the mapboard under my arm, up the steep trail to the lookout.

We fastened the phone to a broken-topped snag, made the proper connections, and strung out the wire to establish a ground at a small lake below the lookout. Then we nailed the mapboard to a stump with a twenty-penny spike; Brad handed me the alidade and the instructions, shook hands and was gone. I saw him only once afterward until the Pole Mountain District had been blanketed under a foot of snow in early September.

The instructions which Brad had handed me in a somewhat offhand manner, consisted of two or three mimeographed pages and a couple of blueprints. One was of a standard garbage pit, the other a simple but adequate toilet. Since Frank and I had completed the latter to a considerably higher standard than required, we ignored the directions and eventually the chipmunks chewed up part of the pamphlet. It ended up, finally, alongside an outdated saddle catalogue on the wall

of that ornate structure that we had built. Ours had four walls, a roof, a door and a ventilator, while the plan had called for nothing but a shallow trench and two forked stakes, spanned by a stout pole.

The summer of 1921 turned out to be an easy fire season, but I didn't get bored for lack of things to do. As soon as the main camp was completed, I began making daily trips to the lookout, leaving after an early breakfast and returning in the evening. There was a lot of snagging to be done to increase visibility, and there was no shelter of any kind on the mountain top. I set up a pole frame and roofed it with fir boughs as a shelter from the blistering sun, but a few days after its completion it served another purpose.

There was an invasion of flying ants - one of the worst I have ever seen - and since these insects always congregate on the highest point, I ducked under my new shelter. The ruse appeared to work at first, then the ants began to filter through the loosely woven boughs; at first a few at a time, then by the quart and finally by the bucketful. They crawled down my neck and up my sleeves and pant legs until, in desperation, I dashed into a fir thicket, ripped off my clothes and shook them out. One good thing about flying ants - they don't last long. A breeze came up and in a few minutes they were gone from the mountain top.

Brad arrived on the heels of the first fall snowstorm and we closed up and packed out a few days later. After a short but highly successful fishing trip on the upper St. Joe, I went to Pendleton to take in the famous roundup, then back to school again. Later in the fall I took and passed the Ranger examination at Orofino. As I recall, it was practically an all-day session, presided over by Lloyd Hornby, Supervisor of the Clearwater Forest. Before the following spring I had accepted an appointment to the assistant Ranger position at Roundtop.

## 1922

At the close of this, my second and final year at Moscow, I packed my belongings, took the train to Avery and reported to Frank Girard whom I had met briefly the previous summer. Most of the townspeople and everyone in the Forest Service who knew him, always referred to him as "The Judge."

The St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene were still combined as a single unit under Supervisor McHarg, but when the fire situation became serious, Mac went up to Avery and remained there until the break came in late August. Roche was still deputy and the Ranger force remained unchanged except for the Pole Mountain District. Bradner had been transferred to the Coeur d'Alene as a scaler and a new Ranger, Tony Yack, had been assigned in his place.

According to the record, 1922 was not listed among the historic fire seasons, but on the St. Joe it was really tough. More than one-third of the 44,000 acres of burn chalked up to the Region that year occurred on the Joe, and that doesn't tell the whole story. Most of our 16,000 acres was divided between two fires, Marble Creek and Foehl Creek, the latter just a rough little 6,000-acre smudge - the kind we used to "herd around" with a few small crews until the snow finally put it out; in other words, a back-country fire.

Marble Creek was an entirely different proposition. We had inherited the hot end of a 30,000 acre blaze that started on Association land, crossed the main drainage, swept up the east side and threatened what was then the largest remaining stand of virgin white pine in the United States. Both of the big fires and about forty others of various sizes were credited to the Roundtop District.

The town of St. Maries - referred to by all oldtime loggers as "The Maries," was the center of a region that had sent millions of feet of white pine to the mills and was still going strong. There was no national forest installation there, but it contained the headquarters of the association with which we had a telephone connection by way of Fishhook Peak and Marble Mountain. Although I never saw Warden Billy Ross until some years later, I figure that we developed a speaking - or rather, a shouting - acquaintance that summer. That line wasn't in very good shape to begin with, and since a lot of it was inside the firelines, it frequently went dead; then we had to talk through a series of relays by way of Avery, Wallace, and Coeur d'Alene.

While the Foehl Creek fire didn't make headlines for burned area, it held the spotlight in the local news for another reason. That country was pretty rugged, which may account for the fact that it produced at least one fatality and more injuries than all the other St. Joe fires put together. I recall that at one time there were ten firefighting casualties, mostly from Foehl Creek, in the St. Maries Hospital, not to mention the many "camp cripples" including one with a severed toe. It became known as a hoodoo fire and we had trouble recruiting anybody but seasoned lumberjacks, once the word leaked out that Foehl Creek was the destination.

I remember one time when I helped packer "Summy" Stonebraker change a load to a fresh mule so he could complete the trip to Avery that day. The load was the cargoed body of a firefighter who had been killed by a falling snag the day before, and while we hadn't planned it that way, we did have quite a crew of spectators. There were about twenty-five of them, resting at the station before starting out on the second lap which would take them to the fire camp. The victim was a rather tall man and one of his feet stuck out through a rip in the pack mantle. I noticed some of the men talking to one another in low tones, and agitated looks on a few faces, but thought little of it until time for them to start up the trail. When the foreman counted noses, nearly half of his crew was missing; they had headed back toward town and so far as I know, didn't even stop at Avery to ask for travel pay which they wouldn't have gotten anyway.

Roundtop was at least ten airline miles from the front of the Marble Creek fire, but when it made its biggest run, the ground at the station was white with ashes and I picked up charred twigs as big around as a lead pencil and over a foot long. Some of them were just scorched a little, indicating that they had been blown ahead of the fire by the terrific wind that it had generated.

When I started out on the Roundtop assignment, I wasn't fully aware of just what my job was to be, but I soon found out. Although my title was assistant Ranger, I discovered that the actual work consisted of cooking, housekeeping, assisting two lumberjacks who were building a log cabin (spare time, of course), and dispatching. It was well along in August, the cabin work was at a standstill and I was preparing meals for firefighting crews almost daily when relief finally came. A cook who could also handle routine dispatching, arrived on the scene and Girard and I took off for the Marble Creek fire which had made another run in the head of Homestead Creek.

It was sure a relief to get away from that grind. Frank and I camped that night on the shore of a little lake below Breezy Point and spent the following day scouting the unmanned portion of the fire. After that, I was in and out of the Ranger Station until about the first of September, when Frank sent me to Jug Camp with a pack load of supplies for the smokechaser and instructions to visit the Foehl Creek fire and bring back a report on its condition. It started to rain before I arrived at the camp and turned to snow during the night; next morning my horses were standing knee deep in snow on the lee side of the cabin. The fire season was over.

During those weeks that I spent running back and forth between the telephone switchboard and the cook stove, a lot of visitors had passed through the station. One or two packers came by almost daily and there were few nights that I didn't share my bed with one of them or with some forest officer detailed to one of the fires or on an inspection trip. Among those I remember best were Herb Stone, who later became head man at the Winter Range at Perma; George Decker, one of the Decker brothers of packsaddle fame; Tom Crossley from the Nezperce; Jack Thompson, then a Ranger on the Custer; D.L. Beatty from the District (Regional) Office; Jim Girard, Frank's older brother; and Mel Bradner, who was later Director of the Northern Rocky Mountain Experiment Station.

Among the packers who came pretty regularly, was one known as Rocky Mountain Pete, a name he had acquired while serving as a packer and guide in one of the western National Parks. Pete was a big, goodnatured, happy-go-lucky Dutchman with an ironic sense of humor and a vocabulary that was a curious mixture of cowboy lingo and drawing-room English. Earlier that year, before the fire season was well under way, Pete had packed upriver to where a trail crew was blasting through some heavy rock. The powderman, though an expert in his line, was one of the most peculiar-looking physical specimens it is possible to imagine, and Pete's reaction upon first seeing him was characteristic.

Dynamite Smith was a string bean of a man, about six-feet-one and 125 pounds, with a long, skinny neck and an Adam's apple that stuck out like the drawbar on a freight car. He walked with a stumbling stride, his long arms hanging loosely at his sides and his big, bony hands flapping alongside his knees like shirttails on a windswept clothesline. When Pete saw this apparition shambling up the trail toward the cook tent, he stared in openmouthed wonder for what seemed like a full minute, then in a stage whisper, he remarked, "What a magnificent physique!"

Another week at Roundtop, then I said goodbye to Girard and headed for the Coeur d'Alene where I had been assigned to a timber-cruising and mapping crew. The next time I saw "The Judge" - years later - he had left the Service and was running for Secretary of State on a ticket headed by Ben Ross, Democratic candidate for Governor of Idaho.

After a combined train, stage, boat and calked-boot trip that took up the better part of two days, I reported at Big Creek to Red Stewart who was in charge of the mapping crew. Frank Tobey headed up the cruising end of the job and other members of the combined crews were Tom Watkins, Roger Billings, two Michigan State boys named Putnam and Mitchell, an Irishman whom we called "Jiggs," and Dave Robertson, a character whose exploits are still legendary on the Coeur d'Alene. A latecomer to the outfit was a young fellow named A.A. Brown; we called

him "Brownie." I'm sure none of us surmised that at some future date he would hold the top fire control position in the U.S. Forest Service.

Red Stewart took me out for a few days to teach me the use of the compass and Abney level and the intricacies of mapmaking. He knew the location of every chute, flume and skidroad in the country and he knew how to utilize them in making it back to camp in record time. His favorite stunt was to find the head of one of those V-shaped wooden flumes, climb aboard and run all the way to the bottom. It might be a mile long but he never slackened his pace. The technique was to maintain your equilibrium by alternately hopping back and forth from one side to the other. It required a good sense of balance as well as sharp calks and there was always enough water running through the flume to make a misstep interesting if not disastrous. Red claimed that it was just a matter of practice but I think Dave Robertson had a better answer. He said that in Red's case it was simply centrifugal force combined with a low center of gravity. Anyway, all I got out of it was a wornout pair of loggers and a Charley horse which Dave diagnosed as "Coeur d'Alene knee."

We wound up the job in early November, spent a week compiling data, followed by a shindig at the Prichard Ranger Station, then reported to the Supervisor's office at Coeur d'Alene. I parted company with Red in Spokane a few days later, then headed east for the holidays.

### 1923

A day or two before Christmas, I received a wire from Missoula, offering me an appointment as Forest Ranger on the Selway Forest. I was to report to Supervisor Frank Jefferson at Kooskia, Idaho, on January 1. The wire was signed by G.I. Porter.

I reported as directed and took the oath of office next day in Major Frank A. Fenn's little printing office where he published the once-a-week "Kooskia Mountaineer." The Major had retired from the Forest Service a few years before, and besides running the newspaper, was engaged in the practice of law with his son, Lloyd.

Besides Jeff, the Selway field force consisted of Deputy Supervisor Francis Carrol, Fire Assistant Charlie MacGregor, another staffman, Fred McKibbin, and five District Rangers. They were Jack Parsell (Middlefork), C.S. (Red) Crocker (Selway), Al Kolmorgan (Lochsa), Bert Kauffman (Moose Creek), and Albert Campbell (Meadow Creek). The sixth district, Bear Creek was to be handled for the summer by Floyd Cossitt, who was then attending the University. Kolmorgan resigned a short time after I arrived and I was assigned the Lochsa District. Two more appointments were made early in the spring Ray Ferguson took over the Smith Creek cedar sales and John Rice who had formerly been Ranger at Meadow Creek, was reappointed and placed in charge of the Pete King warehouse and supply base.

My first assignment was to join Parsell and Campbell at Pete King, where a series of winter jobs had been lined up. The first one was to move a two-story log building from one end of the flat to the other, to make room for the construction of a new warehouse and commissary building. This we did with a homemade stump-puller and a team of pack mules.

Our first big mistake was to attempt to do the whole job from a single setup. That building was heavy and we were moving it on skids with one set of blocks; the stress on that long length of cable must have been terrific. The mules, though gentle, weren't exactly draft animals and Campbell, who took on the job of mule skinner, had plenty of trouble.

It would take two or three complete revolutions of that long sweep before the tension was taken up and even then, at the start, we had to use jackscrews at the back of the building. After the cable was tight as a fiddlestring we would apply the jacks, and when the pressure was strong enough the building would surge forward several feet in one sudden jerk.

It so happened that a big gray tomcat was lying asleep on a window ledge at the back of the cabin when it made its first forward surge. Old Tom had been a fixture at the station for some time, having been brought there with the idea that he would keep the woodmice out of the building, but it didn't work out that way. Tom preferred to do his hunting outdoors, so the mice moved inside where they could enjoy greater security as well as better rations. The nearest Tom ever came to sharing a human habitation was when he took those daily snoozes on the window ledge and there he was, a picture of peace and tranquility, when the jolt came.

Did you ever have a house pulled out from under you unexpectedly? That's what happened to Tom. He rose in the air as though sprung from a trap; his tail grew three sizes bigger around and he let out a yowl that must have been heard at the Lowell Post Office, a mile away. Then he lit out in a beeline in the general direction of the Pacific coast. He didn't show up again for several days and I don't believe he ever resumed those window ledge naps on the sunny side of the cabin.

As the distance lessened, the cable became correspondingly shorter and the movement less jerky, until finally it had gotten down to a slow, steady motion; but then we developed other troubles. That stump-puller was old and the cogs were badly worn. Occasionally they wouldn't hold and when it came time to rest the mules, Jack and I would have to brace ourselves against the end of the sweep while Al unhitched the team and got out of the way. Then we would let it unwind and start from scratch again.

We were almost finished, with only a short distance to go, when a storm came up and we had several inches of wet, slushy snow. We could hold that sweep against a pretty severe strain on bare ground and with a good foothold, but now it was different. Once again it became necessary to unhitch, and when our feet commenced to slip we yelled at Al to hurry because we couldn't hold much longer. Just as he got the team in the clear, we had to duck and that long sweep unwound like a suddenly released watch spring, but while the mules were out of range, Al had miscalculated his own position, The butt end of the sweep caught him square in the seat of his pants and with arms and legs spread wide, he went round and round like the button on a woodshed door. Finally, losing his balance, he was dumped off in the snow, minus part of his overalls which had become attached to a sliver in the sweep. Jack and I lay flat in that wet snow and laughed until we were weak; it was one of the funniest sights I ever saw. I think even Al appreciated it when he looked up and saw the seat of his pants waving like a flag at the end of that pole.

Our next job was a short one, but it provided enough thrills to more than make up for its brevity. A new steel bridge had just been completed and the old ferry that had served for crossing the Lochsa during the past years was now of no further use. It was beached on the opposite side of the river and our job was to bring it across so we could salvage the blocks and cable before cutting it loose.

It didn't take long to cut some stout poles and pry the big raft loose from the rocks on which it was grounded. Then it was just a matter of winding up the windlass until the ferry was canted at the proper angle into the current; there were a few creaks and groans from the rusty sheaves and we were off.

I suppose we should have anticipated what might happen, since the river was at an extremely high stage for so early in the year; trees, logs and debris were coming down with the floodwaters at frequent intervals. We were a little past the center of the stream when suddenly we saw a big cedar - roots, top and all - coming right for us. There was nothing anyone could do, and when the tree hit us its weight, combined with the force of the current, snapped the heavy rope just above the drum. This caused the ferry to swing straight with the current and at the same time it nosed under; we had to grab the guard rails and hang on for dear life to keep from being swept overboard. Our old dog Ben didn't have a chance and in less time than it takes to tell it, he had disappeared around a bend in the river, struggling for all he was worth.

As we hung there with the water well above our knees, debating whether to try and swim for it or climb up the lead cable and "coon" our way to shore, the matter was taken completely out of our hands. Another tree bore down on us from dead ahead; if we were helpless before, we were doubly helpless now - however, it proved to be the best thing that could have happened. Somehow, the roots of the oncoming tree tangled and locked with the one that was fast to our bow in such a way as to swing the whole mass, including the ferry, at an angle with the current. We were moving again, without guidance, but in the right direction.

That should have been the end of the story, but fate had evidently decided that we had another thrill coming. Just as we touched shore and were about to congratulate ourselves, there was a muffled explosion, followed by a shower of dirt, rocks and chunks of rotten wood. One rock the size of a football slammed onto the deck and a piece of stump about as big as a fence rail splashed in the water alongside. The river bank at this point is high, and it was impossible for the two ranchers who were blasting stumps to see either the ferry landing or the river channel. Of course they didn't know that the ferry was in use or that anyone was near, but barring a few minor bruises, nobody was injured and even old Ben showed up later, tired and wet, but apparently unharmed.

Early in March it was decided that someone should check on the trappers that were operating under special-use permit from three Forest Service cabins in the back country. Since two of the cabins were on my district - one, the Ranger Station - I, naturally was elected. Andy Hjort, the local game warden was to accompany me, but shortly before the planned takeoff, Andy came down with the flu, so Bert Kauffman went instead. Bert was familiar with upper Pete King and Canyon Creeks, which were on our route, otherwise, neither of us had ever been in that country before.



We strapped on our snowshoes at the Pete King loading platform and for about two weeks they became as much a part of our daily apparel as anything we wore. The Canyon Creek Station, about twenty miles out, was supposed to be well stocked with grub, so we took only a good one-day ration; it could be stretched a little, we thought, if necessary.

Twenty miles is an easy day when snow conditions are just right, but we found it two of the toughest days either of us had ever put in. The snow was so wet and slushy that it oozed over the tops of our webs and we had to lift pounds of it each time we raised our feet. It was after dark when we reached the Cedars Cabin - a little past the halfway point and we wouldn't have found it at all but for Bert; he was still in familiar territory. It was just a little trapper's shack, unfurnished and seldom used, but we had hopes of finding a smokechaser ration or two, for our grub was nearly gone.

Yes, we found the cabin, but it was a sorry mess; sometime before, a huge cedar tree had fallen across it, smashed in the roof and now occupied most of the interior. We had to crawl in on our hands and knees, but at least it provided some shelter. Our luck wasn't all bad, for we did find a couple of chocolate bars with the corners gnawed off by woodmice, a little sack of rice, similarly violated by hungry rodents, and a quarter-pound package of tea.

We toughed it out that night and it really wasn't too bad. By morning it had tightened up some and the shoeing was better; we had only seven or eight miles to go and were thinking about that nice warm cabin at Canyon Creek, a good bed and lots of grub. It's a good thing we felt that way, for we needed that shot of optimism later in the day when the snow softened up again.

We arrived at what was to have been our first day's destination only to find that something was terribly wrong. The cabin was supposed to be occupied by one of the trappers, but he was not there. He was supposed to have packed in his own supplies and to have left intact a sizeable, well-balanced ration of Government grub that had been stored the previous fall. It was gone too. A window was broken, the stove was rusty, there was no firewood, and the half-dozen blankets were damp, musty and full of mouse holes.

There was nearly a full can of baking powder, but after scraping the bottom of the flour bin and separating its meager contents from you know what, we managed to make one small batch of biscuits, without salt or shortening; there wasn't even a bacon rind. The remainder of the supplies consisted of about twenty pounds of rice and a whole shelf full of tea. And that night a real blizzard hit us.

For two whole days, the wind howled, the snow came down, and all we could do was just sit there and wish we were somewhere else.

Two days we sat and chewed the fat  
While outside the snow piled deep.  
Two nights we lay on the musty hay -  
'Till we'd shivered ourselves to sleep.  
First we'd rustle some wood and stoke up the fire  
Then we'd thaw out a bucket of ice

And cook up a ration of rice and tea;  
Next time it was tea and rice.

By the morning of the third day the blizzard had subsided, but now there was three or four feet of new, fluffy snow on the ground. We didn't mind it at first; it was light and feathery and though we sank almost to our hips, we could kick our snowshoes through it without much effort. But after hours of that endless wallowing, our leg muscles began to protest and we were glad to make camp on the lee side of Middle Butte, which meant another supper and breakfast of rice and tea without benefit of salt or anything else.

When we arrived at the Boulder Creek Ranger Station, which was to be my summer headquarters, it was like heaven after what we had been through. The trapper who had that cabin under permit was energetic and intelligent, and everything there was in good order. He had an excellent catch - his estimate of the value was over two thousand dollars, a lot of money in those days. He had even spent some of the long winter evenings whittling out furniture from split cedar, using a draw-knife and a hand plane. A desk and chair that he made adorned my office for several years afterward; but it was his fried ham, potatoes and sourdough bread that really hit the spot; that and coffee. If he'd given us tea we would have thrown it and him out the window.

The remainder of the trip was uneventful, and on the whole, it really wasn't bad except for that restricted diet. But for a long time after ward, whenever I saw the sign of a Chinese restaurant, I had an almost uncontrollable urge to cross the street and pass by on the other side.

The fire season of 1923 was mild and without incident and late in October we packed out for the winter.

## 1924

This was the year of the early spring; a dry March and April and no rainfall of consequence until early June. We had packed in over miles of hard-packed snow along the Lochsa-Fish Creek Divide, but when we reached the river our horses were kicking dust out of the trail. We started the season with a build-up that the oldtimers said resembled 1910 and 1919; then, just when we needed it most, the heavens opened up and we experienced drenching rains.

I remember first, the Willow Creek fire. A two-man crew had started cutting out the trail and hanging the telephone line from Fish Butte and I was about to start another small crew up Sherman Creek when the call came. A fire had been sighted in the heavy cedar bottoms of Willow Creek and one of the maintenance men had headed for it, while his companion had hurriedly spliced the line together so he could call us. After getting in touch with Pete King and ordering all the men they could spare, we headed for the fire, but it was too late.

We gained a little headway at first, but there were just too many snags afire - big cedar shells, some of them six feet or more in diameter. About noon one of the biggest of them crashed down and the whole hillside exploded. Up the ridge it went, fanning out along the dry southwest slope, snapping and popping like a bunch of giant firecrackers, as only cedar fires can. It couldn't go far, hemmed in as it was by a snowline, but by nightfall it had covered a couple of hundred acres.

Within this area were hundreds of big cedars afire in the roots, many of them in the butts and some in the tops from which they showered firebrands far up the slope.

That night we had a regular cloudburst. Ed Pell, the foreman, who had been dispatched from Pete King with a six or seven-man crew, got caught in the downpour a few miles below the fire. They avoided the worst of it by taking refuge in the hollows of some of the biggest cedars, but still they were drenched when they arrived early next morning.

After that, the fire was pretty quiet and we went to work with the conviction that with continued wet weather - always predicted for that time of year - we could control it without further reinforcements, and we did. But a controlled fire in early June is a lot different from one controlled in the normal midsummer fire season. Anyhow, I turned the fire over to Ed and his crew and sent the others back to their maintenance jobs; those trails had to be opened and the lines hung before we got into some real trouble.

We soon found that we had an unusual problem. The rains continued at frequent intervals and were just heavy enough to deaden the fire and make it impossible to find the snags that were still burning. After a day or two of sunshine, with an afternoon breeze, we could count those smoking chimneys by the hundreds; and this situation occurred time after time. Meanwhile, the snowline was receding and fire danger increasing with the advancing season.

There was one man in the crew - he happened to be the cook - who had logged on the coast and knew something about springboards, so I ordered the longest saws in stock and got him to show us how to get above the swell on those bug "churn-butts." That helped some; we did make better progress, but it was still far too slow, so we tried another scheme.

I had heard about using dynamite to blow down timber in advance of a running fire, but never as a mop-up tool on one that was just smouldering and that tied up only a few men. Yet, it seemed that this might be the answer, so I ordered a ton of it. The next thing was to get it to the fire.

The best route was up a fairly open ridge to a point above the fire, then down a spur ridge to a low saddle about two hundred yards above our campsite in the creek bottom. The problem was all in that last two hundred yards. The route had been blazed out to the saddle and a sign had been put up for the benefit of the packers. Marked with lumberman's keel, it read, "Unload here and back-pack to creek bottom;" but "Pop" Flynn, the first packer in, failed to see the sign or, more likely, just ignored it. A firefighter who went in with him said those mules sat down on their hind quarters like tired jackrabbits and slid to the creek bottom.

It was much too steep for them to come out the same way, so we had to build a shotgun trail down the creek; but a precedent had been established and all the loaded strings continued to come in over the "otter slide," as we called it. Furthermore, there wasn't a single mishap on that route, while the empty strings going down the creek chalked up plenty of minor accidents.

It was still a long, difficult job and we used up that ton of powder and two or three more stringloads before I felt it was safe to pull out the crew. I wouldn't have done it even then, but for the fact that the Fish Butte lookout could see every foot of the burn, and I sent him down at least

twice to knock over another of those big cedars that had belatedly smoked up too close to the fireline for safety. And of course the fire wasn't out even then. The game warden made a snowshoe trip through that country the following winter and swore that he saw at least a dozen smokes coming out of Willow Creek, and I never doubted his word. In fact, I firmly believe that a fire which occurred there early the next summer - pegged as a lightning strike because nobody would believe otherwise - was in reality started when one of those big cedars that had caught fire a year earlier, finally gave up the ghost and toppled to the ground.

After those June rains we had a short, hot summer and a few narrow squeaks, but no real trouble. Then came an early break with more heavy rains shortly after the middle of August, followed by a dry fall and another workout. Again, we packed out in late October, and for the remainder of the year I was assigned to the Agricultural Census, one of the most unusual and interesting, but at times exasperating jobs that I ever tackled.

There were three or four of us, all Rangers, assigned to a large area of agricultural land that lay to the west of the forest boundary. It was our job to visit each ranch owner or tenant and help him fill out a questionnaire. As I remember, the form contained about a hundred questions and, in view of travel conditions at that time of year, we considered ourselves lucky if we averaged three or four contacts a day. Roads were all but impassable - even the rural mail carriers resorted to pack horses in some areas, so we traveled by saddle horse and spent the nights wherever we could find someone who would take us in.

I drew the block that extended between the South and Middle Forks of the Clearwater - a sort of wedge-shaped area between the two rivers with the forest boundary forming the third side of the triangle. It contained the little settlements of Clearwater, Battle Ridge, Clear Creek, Tahoe, Red Fir, and Big Cedar; also the area between Kooskia and Harpster. Within this unit there were a good many homesteaders, quite a few Nezperce Indians who were living on their original allotments, most of the local moonshiners, including a few who were believed to be fugitives from justice, and an assortment of ranchers and would-be ranchers, ranging from the moderately successful to some who barely existed on a few acres of partially cleared stump land.

As might be expected, I put up with some unusual, not to say unconventional, situations. I believe it was about the second night on the job that I stayed with an old man who lived alone on a small, rather rundown place. The old fellow was nearly stone deaf and partially blind, but he appeared to be happy on his little "ranch" with an old, bony horse, a collie dog, a few cows and some chickens. He had convinced me that the next place was an hour's ride away, difficult to find even in the daytime, and it was already dusk. So I shared his one-room cabin and we slept together in the biggest bed that I have ever seen. He had evidently made it himself and it contained a corn-husk mattress that was equally oversize. When old Joe blew out the kerosene lamp and I rolled over on my side, it felt as though someone had jabbed me with the small end of a baseball bat. Evidently most of the stalks and at least a few cobs had been included with the husks; I'm not even certain that some corn hadn't been left on the cobs.

Five minutes after Joe had doused the light, he was snoring like a steam locomotive and aside from a few brief lapses, I believe he kept it up all night. Meanwhile, I rolled and squirmed and tried to find a spot where some solid object wasn't gouging me in the side or back. When I finally

did find a position that was relatively comfortable, I was partly outside the covers and when the cold night air began to penetrate, I had to crawl back in and resume my battle with the cornstalks.

Then there was one night when I shared a two-room cabin with a family of twelve, consisting of a man and wife, their nine children and an aged grandfather. The kids ranged in age from a fourteen-year-old chip off-the-old-block, down to a tiny sliver of something less than a year. The baby spent a good part of the evening asleep in the double bed that Grampa and I occupied later, and I suppose I should have anticipated the situation. The mattress was one of those dished-in affairs where all drainage is toward the center and I practically splashed when I hit that hollow. Grampa didn't seem to mind it at all.

The first of the Indian ranches that I tackled was not far from the town of Stites, and the place looked fairly prosperous. The house was neat appearing and had been recently painted, but when I knocked on the door, a young Indian woman directed me to a tepee that had been set up in the back yard; so I opened the flap and entered. There, squatted on the ground, was an old Indian whetting away on the biggest, longest bladed knife I have ever seen. He grunted and motioned for me to sit down on a wooden bunk - the only piece of furniture in sight - and I did so, but I couldn't keep my eyes off of that big knife, which he continued to whet. I wasn't really worried; there was something about his looks - something beyond the inscrutability of the typical "blanket Indian" - that put me at ease. I thought, "Probably he can't understand a word of English, but that doesn't mean that he's going to start carving up on me." He just didn't look like he felt that way. If I had only known then what I learned later: That long hair, buckskin moccasins and a poker face might conceal a Carlyle graduate or a delegate to the National Indian Congress. He could easily have been either one, or both. "Well," I thought, "It's worth a try anyhow;" so I stated as simply and plainly as possible, just why I was there and what I wanted. He looked at me intently for a long time, then in a guttural monotone with pauses between syllables, proceeded to give me all the information I asked for, but he never stopped whetting that knife.

I think maybe the other Rangers were a little bit sorry for me when I drew that particular area with its peculiar problems, and I know that I had a few qualms myself. However, when we compared notes after the detail was completed, I found that I had missed some of the problems that the others had encountered. I had not once been threatened with violence nor ordered off the place and I didn't have to make a single deadhead ride to town because nobody would put me up for the night. I don't believe this was due to any particular technique on my part, but rather to a condition that exists in those regions that are not far removed from a frontier status. The struggling homesteader on a "forty" of partly cleared pine land is likely to have more consideration for the traveling stranger than is the prosperous wheat grower on a thousand-acre ranch. Out of something over a hundred interviews, I found only two individuals who really posed a problem, and two or three more who might be classed as uncooperative. My experience with one of the former illustrates the attitude that was characteristic of both groups.

I had been warned that Mr. D. would be a tough customer. He had immigrated to Idaho from one of the Southeastern States and was regarded by his neighbors as a lone wolf, unfriendly, suspicious and independent. When I explained my mission he clamped his jaw like a bulldog and informed me that no Gov'ment man was going to get any information out of him. He, along with a surprising number of others - most of whom were otherwise reasonable and cooperative -

believed that a declaration of their acreage, livestock ownership and crop production figures might result in an increase in their taxes. For this and other reasons, I explained that his taxes were a State and local problem, while this was a Federal project and that the information was used for compiling statistics. Furthermore, I told him that we were sworn not to show it to anyone and that the forms were mailed directly to Washington, D.C.

The one sour note was my mention of Washington. If we hadn't been outdoors he would have hit the ceiling (this was one of the few places where I wasn't invited in the house). "Hell and damnation," he roared, "If it ever gets in the hands of them blankety blank Republicans my taxes will go up. I don't trust that blankety-blank Coolidge any more than I trust old so-and-so (he named one of his neighbors on an adjoining ranch), and he's feeding up some of my hay right now."

I still had one ace left. In case of a direct refusal, we had been instructed to report the matter to the county sheriff who would take legal action. While Mr. D. apparently had little respect for Gov'ment men in general, the word sheriff seemed to have a quieting effect; no doubt he had clashed with the law before. Reluctantly, he gave me the information, but I have a suspicion that his figures were kept purposely low - the tax bugaboo was still uppermost in his mind.

And so the job was finally completed, though a little behind schedule. I think I learned quite a bit about human nature on that assignment. The people who lived in those communities were, for the most part, a rough, rugged, independent lot; but they were openhearted and hospitable. If ever I missed a meal, it was entirely my own fault, and I never left a place after a meal or an overnight stop with the feeling that I had been unwelcome.

## 1925

I have seen drier summers, but the fire season of 1925 was an unforgettable one on the Selway. Our burned area was remarkably low; in fact, the record was so good that nobody believed we had done anything out of the ordinary. The final score was, in round figures, 250 fires with a total burn of 250 acres and not a single man-caused fire. Most of these fires were handled by our regular organization which couldn't have exceeded 150 men. "Red" Crocker of the Selway District had the biggest one - a little over a hundred acres - and one of mine was the runner-up at something less than 50. To the north of us some forests were in real trouble; the Kaniksu chalked up a terrific burn and I believe the Pend Orielle, Kootenai, and Flathead were pretty hard hit too.

I know that a real search of the records for that year would reveal a considerable number of smokechaser epics, but I'm going to cite only one or two. There was Billy Keeley (I don't think I've spelled his name correctly, but that's the way he pronounced it), who put in nearly a solid month chasing one fire after another without an opportunity to sleep in a civilized bed, take a real bath or even change his shirt. After twenty-some-odd days, Billy had been released and was headed downriver for a rest when the supervisor came along in his car. Not knowing of Billy's activities during the previous weeks, he hauled the weary smokechaser to a trail intersection and started him out afoot for a fire that had just been discovered and was still unmanned. That night after another tough day, Billy fell asleep on the fireline from pure exhaustion, and didn't wake up until the ground fire had crept up and burned both of his shoes.

The Clearwater Forest was having just about as tough a time as we, and my neighbor to the north, Ranger Buckingham, needed help on a nasty cedar-bottom fire in the Weitas drainage. We were busy, but still on top of the situation at the moment, so I took a six-man trail crew and went over to help him. Buck agreed to release my men as soon as he felt reasonably safe, and I headed back for the Lochsa just in time to see the smoke boil up from a new fire on my own district.

It was on the river slope below Castle Butte and when I got there it had covered about thirty acres, but was being hit hard by a handful of smokechasers, reinforced by a small survey crew. The main front of the fire had run out of heavy fuel and it looked like, with a little luck, we could handle it with the present force, but I remained that night and planned to stay through the next day; it wasn't licked yet by any means.

Early the next morning I saw "Pop" Flynn coming down the ridge, horseback, from the direction of Castle Butte, threading his way among the windfalls. He had been intercepted at the lookout by a telephone message from Fire Assistant Crete (Jim) Urquhart and asked to deliver the message to me. I learned that shortly after I had left for the Weitas, a local dry-lightning storm had added to the load, and as of the previous evening there were only three men left on deck in my entire district. Then, to cap the climax, one of the three - the Fish Butte lookout - reported a new fire, evidently a "sleeper," low down in No-See-Um Creek. There was nothing else to do, so Crete sent all three to the fire; the lookout man, my assistant who was acting as dispatcher at the station, and a packer who had just returned from supplying a fire camp on an adjoining district. There was no help to be had from outside because everyone else was in as bad or worse shape than we; so Crete made a thirty-mile night ride to hold down the Lochsa Station until I could return.

I knew what a mess of fuel No-See-Um Creek was, so I hit for there first. On the way I fell into a piece of luck; my six-man crew had been released from the Weitas and I overtook them on the trail. With these reinforcements I hit the new fire shortly after noon. We found about two-and-a-half acres of fire and three very tired men. They had fought the fire most of the night and throughout the forenoon and were worn out - and they hadn't quit yet. They had had no sleep, nothing to eat except what they could grab from their smokechaser rations on the run, and they were half sick from drinking water that was foul with silt and ashes; but the fire was still holding.

It was right down in the bottom of a narrow draw, where it forked in two directions, and the mass of charred, smoldering logs and crowned out brush bore evidence of the fight they had put up. Fortunately, there was a tiny trickle of water and this had been dammed in a couple of places for use in cooling down hot spots, which kept it so roily that it was scarcely fit to drink.

In terms of present day standards, that fire would have been hit with at least ten smokejumpers and probably some special equipment, but nobody had told those boys that the job was impossible, so they didn't give up. I sized up the situation and decided that with our present force we should have no further trouble. Except for one corner, it was pretty well corralled, so I released the three and they immediately flopped to the ground. After a brief rest and a bite to eat, they headed for the station and I followed them an hour or two later after making sure that the fire was safe and that the six-man crew could finish the job.

That night the lookout, a high school boy and a star on the basketball team, fought fire in his sleep. Just as I was about to drop off, he would yell, "Grab that water bucket," or, "She's started up the ridge again!" The other two were dead to the world and I think all three of them slept around the clock.

Well, that incident was just one example of what must have occurred dozens of times on the Selway alone. Multiply that by the number of forests that had similar problems, and it may convey some idea of what really happened in a moderately bad year on those forests that managed to keep out of the newspaper headlines.

## 1926

On the whole, this was a bad fire year - one of the worst among those that didn't quite get into the headliner column. Again the Kaniksu took a severe beating and I believe the region chalked up the biggest burned area since 1919, but again, the Selway was lucky. We had a drier summer and a more extensive burn than in the previous year, but lightning storms were fewer and showers well spaced and in the right places at the right time.

This was especially true with regard to the Lochsa District, and since I can recall nothing of special interest on the fire front, it might be a good time to relate a few other incidents that were spread over an indefinite period of years.

When I accepted my first Ranger appointment, one of the requirements of the job was to furnish a saddle horse, riding outfit and bedroll. My first saddle horse was a big, bald-faced sorrel, a little on the clumsy side but a good walker. He had only one real defect - he could not swim. I discovered that fact the hard way while driving a bunch of loose stock across the river.

We used a ferry during the real high water; however, there was an intermediate stage when it was too deep to ford but too shallow for the ferry, which would hang up on the rocks. During this period, which might last several weeks, we swam the mules and took the saddles and cargoes across on a light raft which was attached to the ferry cable by a "snatch block."

At the first crossing, I noticed that Baldy was reluctant to enter the water, but when he saw that all the other mules and horses were going to leave him behind, and encouraged by a kick from my spurs, he plunged in. All was well until the water was up to his middle, then things happened so fast that I had only a vague idea of details at the time. Suddenly he reared up on his hind legs as though attempting to clear the river in a single leap; then, just as suddenly, horse and rider were completely submerged. We came up sputtering and spouting water like surfacing whales only to repeat the performance again; then we were struggling up among the boulders on the opposite bank. Why I stayed with him, I'll never know and it's even more remarkable that Baldy never lost his footing. Not long afterwards I watched him cross without a rider and got a better idea of his technique. He was all right as long as he could keep his feet on the bottom, but when it appeared that he might get his nose wet, he reverted to a series of kangaroo hops; what might have happened in real deep water is anybody's guess.



Baldy finally did learn to swim, after a fashion, but he must have had a deep-seated dread of the water, for he always fought it. A year or two later I sold him to an acquaintance who wanted a horse for light ranch work, and purchased a little cayuse mare that had belonged to a Nezperce Indian.

Blackie was a good little mare, most of the time, but once a month the old biological urge would get the upper hand and then she seemed to lose all sense of responsibility. One day she might be grazing contentedly with the rest of the stock and the next day she was gone. Then someone would call from the Kooskia office to let me know that Blackie was at the Yates ranch up on Winona Prairie where she had wintered previously, and some sixty-odd miles from where she should have been.

When Blackie took off on one of her periodic pilgrimages, neither high water, snowbanks, drift fences nor hobbles could stop her. In her attitude toward the water she was just the opposite of Baldy and I swam her across the Lochsa at many a difficult crossing with perfect confidence. But one spring we got a bunch of young mules as district replacements, and when a few of them started following Blackie instead of the regular bell mare, something had to be done. So I let her go for the price of her last winter's pasture bill which wasn't much less than the amount I had paid for her in the first place.

My third attempt at getting a saddle horse that would meet the requirements of a back country district was somewhat different. On the advice of one of my co-workers, I decided to put some real money into a young horse of good breeding, so I spent nearly a month's salary on a four year-old, and that was one of the smartest things I ever did.

Mike was a combination of what was supposed to be good and bad in a mountain saddle horse. He had a beautiful head, strong, clean limbs and a deep chest, but he was long bodied and rangy - just the opposite, so I was told, of the short-coupled animal that is essential for sustained mountain travel. He was sired by "Whiskey King," a well known track thoroughbred in his day, out of a cayuse mare. One of the local ranchers, a horseman of reputation, had acquired the stallion which he bred to a succession of mares, producing some outstanding colts. Many of them were mean but tough, and once in awhile he got one with a good disposition; then he had a real saddle horse and Mike was one of them. The only trouble I ever had with him was due to a common equine characteristic - one that closely parallels an equally common human trait just pure lonesomeness. Mike wasn't especially gregarious, only social minded. He could be satisfied for a week with one mean mule for a companion, but with only humans to fraternize with, he was as lonely as a professional gambler at a Methodist picnic.

Mike was gaited but, what is rare in a gaited horse, he had a flatfooted walk that ate up the miles on those up and down trails. He was hot-blooded but gentle; quick to shy at an unknown object but easy to control once he knew the score, and I never knew him to kick, strike or buck. No, I'll have to retract the last part of that statement; according to the record, he did buck just once. It happened this way:

George was a young, unmarried assistant Ranger and he liked the back country, but, like Mike, he too was social-minded. Those long summers in the wilderness without benefit of feminine

companionship - not even a long-range view of one of the fair sex - were about all that he could take with equanimity. Come fall and the first letup from the shackles of a North Idaho fire season, and George was ready to invent almost any kind of excuse to get out of the woods even for a day.

On this particular occasion George had been forced to leave his saddle horse up Boulder Creek, having encountered a heavy blowdown from a recent windstorm. I had an assignment for him in upper Fish Creek - a long trip, impractical as a hiking chance - so I loaned him the use of Mike. I heard the story later, partly from George and partly from another employee whom he met at the Fish Creek Camp.

The camp was in a large, treeless meadow and as George rode up to the tent, a band of sheep entered the opposite end of the clearing. Perhaps it was the sudden appearance of the blating woolies, or it might have been the herder's dog that startled Mike. Anyhow, he unlimbered that long body of his and George went up in the air and came down head first on the only obstacle in the entire meadow - a large log that had been dragged in for firewood. Furthermore, George swears that there was only one knot in the log and his head came in contact with that knot.

Now, the rest of the story comes from the second source, but George never denied nor did he confirm it. According to the witness, George slowly raised up on one elbow, wiped the blood from his face, felt the lump on his head and soliloquized thus; "Let's see," he said, groggily, "This is Friday. I can make it to Pete King by nightfall; catch the morning stage downriver, get Doc to patch up my head and take in the Saturday night dance at Kamiah!" Then he slumped over and lay in a half stupefied condition while his companion administered first aid, assisted by the shepherd.

I don't suppose I'll ever know how much of this story is valid and how much fiction, but I do know that George's activities during the next few days were closely in line with the schedule that he supposedly planned in that brief period of semi-consciousness. Furthermore, he was back at the Ranger Station Monday morning, his head swathed in bandages, but ready and "rarin' to go."

Mike didn't seem to be any the worse for his part in the escapade, but I sure would liked to have heard his version. I wish I knew whether George put him up to it or not. I got Mike when he was four years old, kept him until he was fourteen, and in all that time never once did he buck with me nor with anyone else, so far as I know, except on that one occasion.

## 1927

Before I start talking about the 1927 field season, I want to mention a few things that are a little out of line with the rest of the narrative, but inseparable in my memories from the other events of the year. Major Fenn died that year - I don't recall the date, but I do remember him as a friend and advisor during those early years on the Selway. One of my first winter details to the Supervisor's Office was to write a series of short articles on fire prevention for the local newspaper of which Major Fenn was publisher and editor. It was my first attempt at that kind of job and I wasn't too sure of myself, but later my confidence got a real boost when one of my

contributions showed up on the editorial page, with some favorable comments by the Major himself.

I remember two events during those early winters in Kooskia which are closely connected with Major Fenn. I mention them here because they involve a couple of the real oldtimers of Region One. First, was a party in honor of S.I. (Rene) MacPherson, a ranger who retired about the time that I came to the Selway. The other was a reunion between Major Fenn and Bob Snyder, an oldtime Clearwater Ranger who had served with him in the Philippines. Bob came up to Kooskia from Orofino, with some of the other Clearwater Rangers and as I remember the occasion, it was sort of an impromptu affair, organized on the spur of the moment.

Major Fenn's wife, whom everybody called "Grandma Fenn," was equally active in the social affairs of the community during those years. As a sixteen-year-old girl, she had come to Mount Idaho from Portland to visit an uncle, just in time to get caught in the Nezperce Indian War. It was said that at the battle for Mount Idaho she moulded bullets for the defenders - a detachment of the Idaho Militia in which Major Fenn was then a first lieutenant. They were married about a year later. Grandma Fenn outlived her husband by nearly thirty years and died at the home of a daughter at Walla Walla, a few years ago, at the age of ninety-five.

The 1927 fire season was just the reverse of the previous year. Regionally, it was one of the easiest seasons on record and it wasn't really bad on the Selway. However, instead of getting the breaks, our luck seemed to have run out. Ray Ferguson who had taken over the Middlefork District when Parsell resigned to take up ranching, joined me in the doubtful honor of producing the region's biggest fire that year. I don't remember whether it started on his district or mine, but we both took action and it was eventually stopped at less than a thousand acres.

That was the year too, that we started and completed the trail through the Black Canyon of the Lochsa. Hitherto, we had packed in over the high trail via Deadman Hill and Middle Butte - a two-day trip; now the distance was reduced to 16 miles and virtually a water grade.

Now, a word about some of those winter details. One of the commonest and one that I rarely escaped, was to travel around giving talks and showing slide pictures at the various schools of the community. The only vehicle the Selway owned was an old Reo truck and we used it occasionally; but more often we traveled by saddle horse, sending the projector and slides ahead by a local stage.

I remember one time when Fergy, George Case and I used the truck for a winter trip to the town of Nezperce. After getting stuck a couple of times, we borrowed some planks at a ranch house, bridged the ditch, and took off across country. Eventually we got back to the road but then we got stuck again. Finally, we hired a rancher and his team to go along with us and pull us out whenever we got stuck; I think he charged us \$5.00.

Another time Supervisor K. Wolfe went along with Fergy and me on a trip to one of the ridge schools. We were carrying a portable generator to provide lights (rural electrification was still quite a few years in the future). It had worked fine up to then, but on the first pull of the string something happened. There were springs, cogs, pieces of wire, and I don't remember what else

scattered all over the floor. There were plenty of suggestions but nobody was able to do anything and neither did anybody appear much concerned. Supervisor Wolfe made a short speech and a few of the local people contributed to the impromptu program, but I don't believe that anyone felt cheated, and I am sure that the prestige of the Forest Service remained as secure as it had been before.

Sometimes when I think of those early years on the Lochsa, it's hard to realize how isolated we were from outside contacts. I had now rounded out five years on that district, with an average of six to seven months in the field, plus an occasional winter trip, and in all that time I had had just two visits from the supervisor. As for District (Regional) Office men, they were scarcer than grizzly bears or wolverines. Howard Flint did make one short trip with the supervisor and they spent a couple of nights at my station, but so far as I can remember there were only two other Forest Service men, not attached to the Selway, who partook of Lochsa Station overnight hospitality during that five-year period. One was Bob Marshall who stopped over while on an unofficial hiking trip from Priest River to Missoula, and the other was Earl Sandvig. I believe Sandy had been looking over scene sheep range in the general vicinity and dropped in to spend the night. I met Harry Gisborne for the first time during that period too; he was installing some weather instruments at Pete King.

There were a few others who managed to get as far from civilization as the Supervisors Office at Kooskia. R. B. Adams put on a three - or four day telephone school which we all attended, and C. E. (Skip) Knouf was there for a short time. Shelley Schoonover spent at least a week in connection with some kind of an audit, but I remember him best as a saxophone player. And that just about finishes the list. But there is an incident connected with Schoonover's visit that I want to relate.

It was on a Sunday and the weather was fine, so Supervisor Frank Jefferson decided to take Shelley for a ride up to Number One Ranger Station on the Middlefork. Jeff invited me to go along and another guest was a young schoolteacher who was staying at the Jefferson's home at the time. He was a Russian with a long, almost unpronounceable name which we had shortened to "Sary." Now Jeff had just purchased a new car - I don't remember the make; Sary had a new suit and I was wearing a new hat. While it was a beautiful day, the road, as always except in midsummer, was full of ruts, pitch holes and mud puddles. Jeff's method of driving was to hit those puddles so hard that most of the muddy water went over the top of the car instead of against the windshield. Shelley was in front with Jeff, while Sary and I shared the back seat. When Jeff slammed into one of those pitch holes he bit his cigarette in two and the live end flew over the back of the seat. We couldn't find it right away, but in about a minute we began to smell something burning. Between Jeff's concern for the cushions of his new car and Sary's for his new suit, I had forgotten all about my hat until I began to feel a peculiar, warm sensation near the top of my head. Sure enough, the cigarette had lodged in the crease of my hat and by the time we had discovered it, the hat was well ventilated and my hair had started to singe.

One of the last events of the 1927 field season was the driving of the "golden spike" at the completion of the new trail through the Black Canyon. Just a few days earlier some of the boys from my crew had pulled off a midnight raid on Fergy's crew that was working at the lower end of the project. Since our crew had been supplied via the long trail over the top, we were still

subsisting on canned goods while the lower crew had fresh meat, vegetables and fruit in season. Our boys got away with a watermelon and a whole case of cantaloupes. The Lochsa had at last become a civilized district.

### >1928

I started out the new year with a winter detail at O'Hara Ranger Station to help "Red" Crocker build a two-story log commissary building. The third member of the crew was Fred Shaner, and later Roy Lewis joined us for a time.

It began as a training project; Clyde Blake came up from the Nezperce to spend a few days showing us the mysteries of the Swede cabin scribe. Afterward we served as instructors to the rest of the Selway and most of the Clearwater Rangers. They came in groups of two or more and usually remained just long enough to make at least one blunder. I'll bet Crocker could look at that building today - if it's still standing - and point out each ill-fitting corner or other evidence of poor workmanship, including the dovetail that I put in backwards. Furthermore, I believe he could name the person responsible for each bungle.

That summer was much drier than the previous year but this time old Lady Luck had the Lochsa under her wing. Not having my usual quota of smokechaser trips, I didn't get on a fire until early September and that was to help Stanley McKenzie, Fergy's alternate, put the finishing touches on a hundred-acre fire on the Middlefork District. There were about 75 men on that little smudge, at least half of them smokechasers who had been pulled off from their back-country stations following an early snowstorm. With a crew like that, firefighting can be almost a pleasure.

An incident that happened later that fall calls to mind the Boulder Creek Canyon, a little mouse-colored mule named Useless, and one of the worst scares I ever got in my life.

There I was, hanging out over an almost perpendicular granite cliff, my left hand frozen in the half-inch swing rope while I groped with the other in an attempt to find something that I could grasp; even a fingerhold would have been encouraging. The other end of the rope was wrapped once around a cargoed pack and fastened securely to the saddle fork. The saddle was cinched to that little mule that we called Useless because she was both mean and unpredictable.

She was prancing around at the outer edge of the trail, kicking dust into my eyes and threatening at any moment to join me in a plunge over that precipice. I took a fresh hold on the rope with my right hand, partly to relieve the aching left which was skinned and bleeding, and glanced over my shoulder and down. About forty feet below, the cliff ended in an expanse of rock slide - big, jagged rocks that continued on down to the canyon bottom.

I had spent most of that day and the previous one rounding up some twenty-odd head of pack stock that were scattered from the Boulder Creek meadows to Eagle Mountain and Two Lakes. I had driven them to the Horse Camp, dismantled and loaded the camp equipment on three mules and leading them, with the rest of the stock loose ahead, I was headed for the Ranger Station. It had been a long day and though I had started at daybreak and eaten a cold lunch in the saddle, it

was approaching dusk when I hit the roughest part of the canyon, about three miles from the river. That's when I noticed that Useless' pack was beginning to slip.

I could easily visualize what might happen if that little renegade got the pack under her belly, so at the first wide place in the trail I dismounted and started to straighten the load. I had loosened the nearside pack and was about to adjust it when something startled Useless. She swung around just enough to throw me off the trail and if I hadn't held tight to that swing rope I would have landed in a mass of boulders 40 feet below.

As I hung there, trying to blink the dust out of my smarting eyes, all I could think of was why hadn't it been one of the other mules like old Dan or Kangaroo. I wouldn't have hesitated to crawl right up under their bellies if necessary, to get back on the trail. But with Useless, it appeared to be a choice of getting kicked in the head or ending up in that rock pile with a bunch of broken bones at best. Anyhow, something had to be done soon, for my hands were tiring rapidly and the dust-laden sweat was running into my eyes until I was nearly blinded.

I began to talk to that little mule. Trying to make my voice sound convincing, I employed every word of mule language in my limited vocabulary. It did seem as though that little outlaw sensed the urgency in my tone; at least she quieted down a little and sidestepped back a foot or two from the edge of the trail. Cautiously, a few inches at a time, I hitched my way up the rope, hand over hand, talking all the while. After what seemed an age I was able to brace my elbows on the edge of the tread and relieve some of the strain; then I let loose of the rope, hoping that the little mule would step forward out of my way so I could climb back up on the trail. I hoped too that the sidepack which had remained in place due to my weight on the rope, wouldn't drop the minute she moved. I was lucky in both respects.

A few yards ahead, the cliff ended and just beyond was a little coulee with enough level ground so that some of the loose mules were bunched up and grazing. That gave me the opportunity to catch Useless and I soon had her reloaded and we were on our way. By that time it was pitch dark, but an hour later the trip was done.

If that was my worst scare, the runner-up was brought about by an incident that occurred several years earlier, and since I can't peg it to the exact date, I'll throw it in here.

Those directly involved besides myself, were a trail worker who had epileptic fits, a little strawberry-roan mare and a clown of a mule named Charlie Chaplin. For the stage setting, take a small section of the Lochsa Canyon during a stormy night; throw in a box of blasting caps for dramatic effect, and you have all the ingredients necessary for a near tragedy. Here's how it happened.

In the 1920's seasonal employees were frequently allowed and sometimes encouraged to pasture their personally owned saddle horses free, on Government range, in exchange for a verbal agreement covering occasional use. One case of that kind concerned a little roan mare who had become somewhat of a pet about the Ranger Station. She wasn't much bigger than a Mexican burro and even appeared to have some of the characteristics of one. Instead of feeding up on the

good bunchgrass ridges, she preferred picking away at little clumps of grass along the river bank, and she was seldom out of sight of the station.

During the period that the little mare was with us, a trail construction crew was working up Fish Creek some five or six miles away. In this crew was a young man - I'll call him Joe, though that wasn't his real name - who we discovered was subject to epilepsy in a rather violent form. Joe was a likeable kid and a good worker, but one day he had one of his "spells" and pitched off the trail in a steep place. By a near miracle he wasn't badly hurt, but when George, the foreman, told me about it, I agreed that Joe would have to go. Of course we couldn't send him out alone, so I decided to make a quick trip to the trail camp and bring Joe and his personal belongings to the station. Next day he could accompany a packer who was due for a trip to Pete King to get his string shod.

My saddle horse was with the other stock, several miles up the ridge, so to save time, I caught up and saddled the little roan who, as usual, was close to the station. There was a mule at the corral and I was soon on my way. When I arrived at the camp, the men were just about to have supper and it was well past sunset when we started out; furthermore, a storm was coming up. Just as we were leaving, George handed me a box of blasting caps; they had finished the rock work and those caps were surplus - it would be better to store them at the station where we had a good powder house. I put the box in my canvas carrying case and strapped it to the mule which was loaded with Joe's duffel bag and some surplus equipment that George no longer needed.

Just as we crossed Fish Creek, less than two miles from our destination, the storm hit us. Joe was afoot and just ahead of me - George and I had decided that he would be safer that way - and I cautioned him about not getting too far ahead, as he was a good hiker. When we started up the switchback trail toward Zion Point, the wind advanced to a gale and snags began to fall above and below the trail.

Suddenly the little mare made a wild plunge. I managed to stick on, but in the urge to make time I had been literally dragging Charlie along, with the lead rope under my thigh and doubled back so I could retain a firm hold. The rope slipped through my hand just as Charlie went over backwards off from one of those switchbacks. I heard him crashing through the brush and down logs, expecting each second to hear the explosion when those number eight caps came up against a snag or some other hard object. It was almost pitch dark by now and I began to cuss myself for having left my flashlight in the carrying case, along with those caps. Anyhow, there was no explosion and now I realized what had happened. We were on the other side of a big windfall that had gone down across the trail, probably only minutes before, and I remembered that the owner of the little mare had told me once that she would jump over anything she could get her chin over. He might have added that she wasn't in the habit of consulting her rider in advance.

I shouted to Joe, to find out if he was all right, but he must have been beyond range, or couldn't hear me above the noise of the storm; so I turned my attention to Charlie Chaplin. The wind had begun to subside but I couldn't see a thing in that inky darkness. Finally, after groping around in the brush for awhile, my eyes became somewhat accustomed to it and there about twenty feet away and looking a bit dejected, stood Charlie. His packs were askew but the carrying case was still intact and it didn't take me long to get that flashlight. After straightening the packs I

managed to work Charlie up around the windfall and back down to the trail and shortly afterward I arrived at the station. Joe was there, thoroughly rested and relaxed.

Joe was a good kid; I wish we could have kept him. The little mare was all right too. There had been an obstacle in her way and she had taken it in her customary manner. I never lost confidence in Charlie either; several years later he packed a live cub bear in a wooden crate for thirty miles without mishap. Only I was the dumb one, first for not switching that flashlight to my pants pocket before we started out and second for forgetting what the little mare's owner had told me about her ability as a high jumper.

## 1929

My final year on the Selway was one that I will not soon forget; particularly that night. I think it was the last of July when K. Wolfe, George Case and I watched the big lightning storm. It had started early in the evening and grew more violent as it plastered the north side of the Lochsa.

By eleven o'clock we had been in touch with all the lookouts and everything was under control; everything that is, except for one strike down in Bald Mountain Creek. Harry Chenoweth, the Castle Butte smokechaser took off shortly before midnight to a fire that he had just reported; but on the way, he ran into another one that nobody had seen. It was lying low, no smoke, but in another hour or two it might be the one that would blow the lid. So Harry stopped to knock it down, just as I would have done, and when the other one blew up, that was it:

We had already started reinforcements; a three-man maintenance crew from the Lolo trail and Jim Adcock's seven or eight-man crew from Gold Meadows. Both crews were hours away.

That was the start of the Bald Mountain Fire - one of the "monsters," as Major Kelley called them - that helped to place 1929 among the historic fire seasons. I believe it was the Major's first field season at the helm of Region One and he sure got a warm reception. Elsewhere throughout the region the story was much the same. I believe the Half Moon Fire on the Flathead was the largest, then came Bald Mountain and after that, I don't know how many others, any one of which would equal or exceed the entire regional burn in a normal year.

When I arrived just before daylight, I found between eight and ten acres of fire that was just too active for that time of day when any self-respecting fire should be quiet. This wasn't a self respecting fire at least it wasn't quiet. Both crews were on the line, having traveled most of the night, and considering the circumstances, they had accomplished quite a lot. Even in that dry year I think we could have held it, but for an unpredictable shift in the wind direction.

After that it was just a matter of too little and too late. With dozens of big fires threatening huge bodies of commercial timber from the Clearwater to the Canadian border, what could the Selway back country expect? So we sweated it out and took what we could get, and as I think back on those days I'm surprised that we got as much as we did.

The new Black Canyon trail helped us a lot but, even so, the transportation problem was one of our biggest headaches. One man was given the job of rounding up pack stock and hiring packers.



He combed the country from the Salmon River to the Clearwater, picking up a few head here and a few there, until he had a full string; then he would hire a stump ranch kid and turn him loose. It seems incredible, but within a couple of weeks we had more than twenty strings on the main haul out of Pete King.

That Black Canyon run was a special problem; there were only a couple of places in the entire twelve-mile stretch from the end of the road to Beaver Flat, where two strings could pass one another. George Case, who was handling the transportation, had organized it on the order of a railroad schedule. Downriver packers with empty strings were instructed to go to a certain point and remain until a certain number of upriver strings had passed, then proceed to the next meeting place and repeat the performance. One miscount or an upset schedule might tie up a dozen strings for hours and delay the supplies to half that many fire camps.

After a couple of days I hiked to the Ranger Station for a supply of clothing and other essentials that would be needed for an all-summer campaign; then back to the fire which I didn't leave again until the end of September, two months later.

The first run had taken out most of Bald Mountain Creek, and a day or two later the fire jumped the river and ran to the top of the ridge on the other side. Then it made its wildest run astride the river and about eighteen miles in one afternoon. By now, both the Clearwater and Lolo Forests had joined the Selway in what Ed Mackay called "The retreat of the Lochsa."

During the first week I lost one fire camp - everything in it was burned to a crisp - had another camp surrounded, and we saved it only by packing it into the burn after cooling down the fire edge with pumps. On at least two occasions we thought we had lost men, but they showed up later a little bit singed in some cases but otherwise unharmed. I'll never forget the time one of our cooks turned up after he and several others had fled from the camp that was burned. He had lost all his personal belongings, and some of his hair, but he still hung onto a pot of stew that he had been preparing for the next meal.

Within the next several weeks I had put in eight camps and had a sector estimated at thirty-five miles long; and that was scarcely a third of the total fire perimeter. The only forest officer in that 35-mile stretch besides myself was A.G. Nord, a Supervisor who had been detailed from Region 4. He fell and sprained his ankle the first day, but refused to stay in camp. I helped him bandage it and he whittled out a cane with which he hobbled over the fireline. When the grade got too steep he would get down and crawl on his hands and knees. Each night he would soak his ankle and after a few days he was able to get around pretty well.

I think perhaps the best way to describe that sixty-day struggle is to relate a few incidents in the order in which they occurred; first, the initial blow-up when we lost the camp. We knew it was gone, but the subsequent arrival of a 25-man crew expecting a hot supper and beds, added to the problem. I am certain that those men were skeptical when we told them the camp had burned, but when I offered to take one of them in and show him, as soon as it had cooled down enough, there were no takers.

I had sent a messenger downriver with orders to rush the supplies, but there was just a chance that we could salvage something from the camp, so Jim Adcock and I started out in the cool of the evening. It was ticklish going because the ashes were still hot and snags were falling continually. Without the slightest warning one of those tall spike-tops would suddenly crash to the ground. I remember watching one that broke about half way up, turned completely upside down and seemed to quiver for a second or two as it bored into the ground.

Yes, we found what had been the camp. There was an indentation in the foot-deep ashes at each spot where somebody's bed had been and a pile of charred remains and exploded tin cans was all that was left of the kitchen. Two string loads of grub - hardly off the mules when the blowup came - was our main concern because of those hungry firefighters that we had left a couple of miles away.

The first thing we noticed was what looked like a pile of charcoal where three or four sacks of potatoes had been. By digging down into the center of the pile we found a few of the larger ones that had baked cores about the size of walnuts, but most of them were charred clear through. We ate a few of those unburned centers but decided against bringing any of them out; there wouldn't have been enough in the whole pile to satisfy one hungry man. There had been two cases of eggs and the eggs were still there but the cases were gone.

I remember reading one of those "Liars' Club" stories about a sack of flour that had been nailed to the wall of a cabin. When the wind came up, it blew the sack away and left the flour fastened to the wall. I never believed that, but I can vouch for something almost as curious. When that camp of ours burned, the fire went through it so fast and hot that it burned the crates, separators and excelsior packing, leaving the eggs intact and standing there, all glued together in their original rectangular form. Many of them weren't even cracked, yet they were baked so hard that we couldn't find anything edible in the whole mess.

The following day we had reorganized and were camped at the mouth of Buck Creek (it's called Holly Creek now), but that night we had another upset. Now, a down-canyon draft at night is a normal thing and we were prepared for that, but not for what happened. The fire south of the river had run to the ridgetop the afternoon before, and with the evening shift in wind direction, the whole wall of flame came alive and started moving downriver. Meanwhile, the north side became active and we were hemmed in and outflanked on both sides.

We got a pump set up, and were able to hold the campsite while we packed everything into the burned area, but it was a "close one." I don't think I ever saw a bunch of men work harder, but the fire had closed in behind us just as we grabbed the last few loads. I can still see big Bill MacPherson, a veteran of the 1910 fire, with the pump on his back and a coil of hose under each arm, galloping across that little flat and jumping logs like a mule deer.

We had barely gotten safely into the burn when the wind increased to gale proportions. The ash laden ground was churned up by a series of whirlwinds and we had to crouch down behind rocks, logs or whatever shelter we could find with our backs to the wind and our hats over our faces. The wall of fire was now directly across the river and we could feel the scorching heat, but when

a sudden swirl of wind would lower the temperature for an instant, I would sneak a look at that moving wall of flame - it sure was impressive.

Snags were falling constantly, some of the heavily leaning ones crashing across to our side of the river, but most of them toppled downstream with the terrific wind, and sleep that night was practically impossible. As for breakfast next morning, it was a gritty mess, but we were all alive and the camp was intact, though covered with ashes.

Shortly after daylight, with one of the foremen, I started down the river. After a few miles of dodging the hot spots and the snags that were still falling, we came to the edge of the fire which, in the cool of the morning, was now quietly burning back into itself. Just before we emerged into the clear air, we met a messenger who had been sent to find out what had happened to us. The smoke had completely enveloped the Lochsa Station and Pete King and had rolled into Kooskia, sixty miles away.

I sent the messenger back with instructions to have a new camp placed on the river at Bald Mountain Creek; then we returned to the men. We would have to cargo our camp outfit for the packers to bring out of the burn, then we would start all over again. Anyhow, we would now be a few miles closer to our base of supplies.

We were more successful from the new camp, and in a day or two had several miles of held line on both sides of the river, but now, others were having trouble. We had just had supper a few nights later when Elers Koch and a crew of firefighters straggled into our camp. Just one good look and it wasn't necessary to ask them what had happened. Another of those unpredictable runs had forced them into the burn through which they had made it to the river. Their line had been to the northeast of us and roughly parallel to the Lolo Trail. We heard a few days later that the entire sector had been lost.

It was years later - the last time I talked with Elers and only a few days before his death - that he told me what had actually happened. Some misguided individual with too much authority for his limited experience - Koch didn't mention his name and I wouldn't repeat it anyway - had accused the crew foreman of cowardice when he decided to take his men out of a blind draw that appeared to him to be a death trap. Koch agreed with the foreman and they led the men to safety through the burn. The character who had tried to get them to stay, escaped himself, but decided to part company with the others before they reached our camp. As it turned out, even if their line had held, it would have been useless as well as foolhardy to remain. The whole sector was lost and their position would have been similar to ours at Buck Creek, but they would have had no river to protect them.

The first of the ridge camps on the south side of the Lochsa was on Dutch Ridge; it was known as the "Hot-shot camp" - I don't remember why. What I do remember about that camp is a cook whom I called "Old Apricots" because he reminded me of one with a similar nickname whom I had met on the St. Joe some years earlier. Perhaps a better reason is because it sounded less disrespectful than the one given him by some members of the crew; it was "Old Sour-puss."

Old Apricots was an oldtimer but he was also a combination of a chronic grouch and a confirmed pessimist. He not only believed the world owed him a living; he was convinced that he wasn't going to enjoy it anyway. I admit that I had the old fellow pegged as a troublemaker and would have jumped at almost any excuse to fire him if cooks hadn't been so hard to replace, especially in that back country with a two or three-day hike involved. I make this statement with utmost humility, for when the chips were down, Old Apricots delivered the goods far beyond the expectations of the wildest optimist among us.

We were just putting in the Dutch Ridge camp and Old Apricots had arrived along with a new crew and well ahead of the packers. When I explained to him that the supplies and camp equipment were coming via the Boulder Creek trail and should arrive soon, he gave me a look that would have curdled milk fresh out of the cow, and proceeded to put me wise. He knew that "dispatchers always delayed the calls; clerks always messed up the orders, and even if this didn't happen, the packer would probably get lost or deliver his load to the wrong camp." How nearly right he was!

When the packers finally arrived and I had counted the mule loads, I began to share some of Old Apricots' misgivings. I recalled the time that we got a whole stringload of oats and hay when there wasn't a bed in camp; and another time it was gas and oil for the pumps that didn't arrive until the following day. Well, this time it was different; we had plenty of beds and tools and one stringload of grub, but no camp equipment.

Now, this situation wouldn't have been serious under present conditions, with bakers' bread, lunchmeat, individual-sized cans and ready-prepared food that can be heated over an open fire. We had flour in fifty-pound sacks, baking powder in one-pound packages, whole hams and slabs of bacon, sacks of potatoes, vegetables and fruit in family-size cans, and everything else in proportion. To wrestle with this half-ton of food, Old Apricots had one can opener that he carried in his pocket, and some of us had jackknives.

At times like this, it is often easier to take some sort of action, even if its value is questionable, than to just sit still and let the events unravel by themselves. I decided to climb to the top of the ridge which wasn't much over a mile away; if the missing packer was on his way, he would probably be traveling with a "palouser" and I should be able to see the light in the gathering darkness. If not, there was nothing to lose. I was gone about an hour - results negative. When I got back I found that a transformation had taken place; there wasn't an idle man in camp.

The first thing Old Apricots had done after setting a bunch of youngsters to work whittling out forks from willow switches, was to start opening gallon cans of fruit and tomatoes. He invited everybody to help himself, and when the fruit was gone, he poured the remaining juice into smaller cans that he had opened and dumped into the big ones as their contents were lowered. While the men drank the juice from the small cans, Old Apricots rinsed out the large containers, filled them with spring water and a generous helping of coffee and put them on the fire. Using a pair of pliers that he had borrowed from one of the packers, he flattened other cans and shaped them into makeshift frying pans by pounding them with a rock. He had set others to work peeling spuds and slicing ham, and soon these were frying over the open fire. Meanwhile he had constructed a sort of haywire reflector from a couple of gallon containers in which he baked

biscuits that he had mixed up in the top of the flour sack. This is an old trick and I had seen it done many times, but never before nor since, for so large and hungry a crew or with such professional skill and ultimate success.

It was after midnight when I finally rolled into my blankets; everything was quiet in camp except for the usual snores. Once in awhile a snag inside the fireline would crash to the ground and now and then a thicket of spruce would crown out with a roar and a shower of sparks. When that happened, some of the kids would raise up on their elbows and look sort of scared, while the lumberjacks and the Trent Avenue firefighters snored on. Tomorrow might bring new problems, but that night I slept in peace.

The lost pack string arrived next morning; everything was again in order and Old Apricots was as grouchy as before, but he was in the clear with me. He could gripe to his heart's content.

My next camp was at Gold Meadows and it brings to mind "Old Granny," the mule-chasing bear. Old Granny was a rather small, scrubby looking brown she-bear with twin cubs, one a dark cinnamon, the other a pale buckskin color. They were regular patrons of the Gold Meadows garbage pit. Since this camp served as a supply base for a couple of other camps, it was a common occurrence for one or more pack strings to spend the night there. The garbage pit, which Old Granny regarded as her personal property, was at the edge of a big meadow and it was not at all unusual for a mule to wander over in that direction. Old Granny regarded the mules as interlopers, and right from the start she had the situation under control. If a mule failed to leave when she entered the clearing, she would run toward him, making low snuffy sounds and wrinkling her nose. To the mules she was just another dog and their reactions were the same as when our old Ben heeled them down across the station flat if they got too close to the buildings. Some of them might kick at her once or twice, but there was only one mule who ever disputed her authority.

Old Milt was a big gray mule with a mean eye and a mind of his own. The first time Old Granny tried to put the Indian sign on him he kicked at her; then instead of galloping down the meadow he just took two or three jumps, turned, stretched out his neck, bared his teeth and came at her. The old lady almost fell over backwards in her attempt to stop; then she wheeled and tore out of there with the big mule right on her tail.

This happened several times until finally Old Granny apparently decided she had taken enough. When the mule turned, she hesitated and continued to sniffle and wrinkle her nose, and she didn't run. The mule on the other hand, wasn't quite so sure of himself and instead of charging, he sidled off, but continued to face his adversary, giving no ground. Old Granny decided to call his bluff and charged with all of her old force and authority. Down the meadow went Milt as though in fear of his life until the bear, deciding perhaps that she was getting too far from her cubs and the protection of the woods, hesitated and turned to look back. That was the gray mule's cue and he reversed and took after Granny with all of the old dash and vigor; but when the bear reached the garbage pit she refused to run farther. After that it was an armed truce. Milt wouldn't leave the premises but continued to graze, keeping an eye on Old Granny, while she in turn, settled down among the tin cans and potato peelings, but with an unobstructed view of the big gray mule.

I can think of nothing especially interesting about the next camp except that it was composed entirely of Nezperce Indians who had been hired through the Lapwai Agency. Their foreman was a Swiss shepherd who had been signed up in Spokane as a strawboss, having had one previous season on the firelines. Appropriately enough, this camp was located at a place called Indian Meadows.

The last two camps, Flytrap Ridge and Sponge Creek, were thrown in to connect with the Lolo crews working down from near Jerry Johnson Bar. The final incident that seems worth recounting had no particular connection with either camp, but it illustrates what can happen to a "controlled" fire, late in the season, in one of those years when the rains fail to come.

I think it was near the twentieth of September and we had had no rain except a tiny drizzle early in the month; it lasted less than half an hour. However, cold, frosty nights and shorter days had helped a lot and we had miles of apparently dead line behind us. On this particular day I had been over a long stretch, making certain that everything was secure. Even this late in the fall, manpower was at a premium, and in some cases a single patrolman might be responsible for several miles of line that was dormant but not dead.

I saw the smoke long before I had arrived at the point of break-away, and guessed what had happened. At this point the fireline had been tied into a chain of wet meadows that were dotted with clumps of alpine fir. The grass had been green when the line was built, but now it was frostkilled and dry. It might have been a wind-blown ember that started it anyhow, those meadows were now the scene of a regular prairie fire. The humidity must have been low for that time of year because those fir thickets were crowning out continuously and starting more grass fires ahead of the main run.

I had found a lone patrolman doing what little he could and we fought fire together the remainder of the day; there wasn't another man within a two-hour hike in either direction. We couldn't accomplish much and that evening I hiked to the nearest fire camp and arranged to have a crew of men and a pump hit the fire the next morning.

I left the Bald Mountain fire on the last day of September and we pulled the last of our camps a few days later.

And that's my story of the 1929 fire season and the Bald Mountain fire as seen from the Selway side. It's only a small part of the entire story; on the Selway alone, there must have been a dozen other fires that ranged from a few hundred to several thousand acres each. As for Bald Mountain, I'm sure Jim Diehl and Paul Gerrard could tell a lot about the Clearwater line which extended from No-See-Um Meadows to somewhere east of Indian Post Office and Ed Mackay should have the best story of all. He faced the head of it during some of its fiercest runs. And I know there were a lot of others who took a major part in the campaign; but somehow we didn't seem to find the time to visit around much that summer.

After Lewis and Clark Highway is completed - and it shouldn't be long now - I'm going down through that Lochsa Canyon once again and see how many of the old landmarks I can recognize. No doubt it'll seem strange to drive in a couple of hours, the distance that we used to think of in

terms of days or even weeks. It was slow going in that roadless and practically trail-less river bottom, but there was one time when we really made speed. I'll bet that sprint of ours at the mouth of Buck Creek when the fire closed in behind us, established a record that will never be beaten until the first car rolls through on the finished highway.

### 1930

During the winter of 1929-30 I was offered and accepted a transfer to the Roundtop District of the St. Joe - the same District where I had served as assistant Ranger seven years earlier. The Joe and Coeur d'Alene were now separate units and a forest headquarters had been established in St. Maries several years before. The Coeur d'Alene Association under Warden Billy Ross was still functioning, and Avery was still the dispatching center for the Main Division which now had five instead of four Districts. Eldon Myrick was Supervisor and his assistants were Bill Hillman and Frank Foltz.

In the seven years that had elapsed since I had left Roundtop in 1922, many changes had taken place. The two-room cabin that we had constructed that year was now just a guard station, the District headquarters having been moved to Twin Creek, formerly called Spokane Meadows. Except for Billy Daugs who still ran the Palouse District, there had been a complete turnover in the St. Joe Ranger force. Furthermore, I could find only one familiar face among the Roundtop seasonal employees; that was old Gust Miller. I can't think of old Gust without recalling the story of his experience with a porcupine and since it was during that summer that he told me about it, I'll include it here.

It happened late in the season and following a summer that had produced a poor huckleberry crop. This fact is significant because it can make inveterate camp robbers out of otherwise law abiding bears, and that year was no exception. Gust had an old forty-some-odd Colt six-shooter and he slept with it close at hand and with an ear cocked for the first sound of Bruin on a ham and bacon raid.

Before retiring, he had set three or four candles at the corner of a small table near the head of his bunk, and just before blowing out the light, he had removed his false teeth and placed them beside the candles as was his usual custom. Sometime during the night, Gust was aroused by a noise outside the cabin. It sounded like a bear at the screened meat cooler which was located under the eaves of the cabin porch, so he grabbed his gun and dashed for the door. He threw it open and took one step - one too many, it proved, for his bare toes came in contact with a large porcupine that had already turned in retreat.

Now, Gust had a strong Dutch accent which made him difficult to understand, but his ability at pantomime more than made up for his lack of coherence. In relating his encounter with the porcupine, Gust limped across the room, wooling his wavy gray hair with both hands and all but spilling tears down the front of his bib overalls, until I could almost feel the pain in my own toes.

I have never had occasion to remove porcupine quills from any part of my anatomy, but I have helped extract them from a few impetuous dogs, and I know that it is a slow and painful job. With the aid of a pair of pliers, Gust went to work, and for the next half hour he was busy. As the

last dwindling candle began to flicker, Gust jerked out the last quill, swabbed his aching toes with iodine and rolled into bed. On awakening next morning, from force of habit he reached for his false teeth. All he could find was a solid mass of congealed candle wax that had hardened on the table top, and somewhere within that mass was all that remained of his dentures.

Gust's experience reminds me of another incident with a similar buildup, but with entirely different results. It happened to old man Smith, one of my trail foremen who also happened to be a veteran of the Nezperce Indian uprising and an ex-member of the Idaho Legislature. He too had bear troubles, owned a six-gun and slept with one ear cocked for the sound of Bruin on the rampage. Only this time it was a bear.

It was a dark night in one of the Selway trail camps and Smith was sleeping in a small tent that adjoined the kitchen and dining fly. When he heard the rattle of pans and the grunts, growls and miscellaneous noises that usually accompany one of those raids, the old man grabbed his gun and rushed outside. In the dim light he could just make out the form of a bear, at which he cut loose with a couple of quick shots; then, when he heard the sound of an animal shuffling off into the brush, he ran out farther in the hope of getting another shot.

But there was one thing that Smith didn't know. Actually, there were two bears and one of his shots had dropped one of them squarely in front of the tent. One more step and Smith's bare foot came down on the warm and still quivering carcass of the hapless victim.

The little boy who sat down on the hornet was slow compared to old man Smith when it came to a vertical evacuation of the immediate premises. According to the way I heard it, he tore down the tent fly, upset the stove and broke a table leg in his hasty retreat.

There was nothing spectacular in the way of fire action on the St. Joe in 1930, so far as I can recall though it was definitely not an easy season. I remember one incident, however, that was at least a little out of the ordinary.

The old pack bridge at Avery had outlived its usefulness and a new bridge was constructed to take its place, and also to tie in with a road project across the river. When it came time to remove the cables from the old structure, there were some complications because they were suspended directly over the Milwaukee Railroad transmission line. All necessary precautions were believed to have been taken but something went amiss; a clamp pulled loose and the cable came down across the power line and likewise across the telephone line that served the Roundtop and Pole Mountain districts.

Of course the power was shut off immediately, but not until after the damage had been done. At the time it happened, Frank Foltz and a Regional Office man - I'm not sure, but I think it was Frank Cool were riding along the trail over in the Fishhook Basin country. When the jolt came, Foltz had just raised the telephone wire so his companion could ride under a low span. Suddenly his horse went down as though it had been clubbed between the eyes. Frank said he didn't get too bad a shock himself, but the horse must have taken all there was.



I was at one of the lookout stations when the line went dead, and being unable to raise anybody by telephone or find out what the matter was, I headed for Twin Creek Ranger Station. When I got there, I found the dispatcher down on the floor with a telephone kit and some wire, making emergency repairs to the switchboard, which had been completely wrecked. He did it too, and we had service over the entire system by nightfall, but if an electrician had seen that installation he would have died of heart failure.

### 1931

This was the last of the real tough years that I weathered as a Ranger. 1929 had given me a longer siege on the fireline and it was plenty dry, but I believe 1931 was worse. This appraisal of course is based on my personal experience, which was purely local and may not have held true for the region as a whole.

The St. Joe was pretty lucky and we kept our noses clean until near mid-August then the Midget and Fishhook fires blew up. Neither was on my district. We were in pretty good shape at the time, so the supervisor asked me to go down and help Ranger Wolfard Renshaw (now a supervisor in Region 8) who had his hands full.

I was assigned to the Fishhook fire - the smaller of the two - but with all the earmarks of a bad one. Long afterward, in the Regional Office, I ran across a batch of longhand notes that had evidently been written at the fire desk during that period. One of them was worded something like this: "When I heard about the Fishhook fire the short hair on the back of my neck began to curl."

I got a late start and it was about midnight when I arrived at the fire. Sometime earlier a packstring loaded with bedding had rolled into the creek and what had been salvaged was still too wet to sleep in so Renshaw and I found a warm spot in the ashes and toughed out the rest of the night.

We didn't accomplish much the next day except to secure one of the flanks. Luckily there was no wind and although we had a lot of loose line, it was just a normal uphill run with the topography in our favor; most of the spread was to the south and west. Howard Flint arrived during the day and we met that evening near the head of the fire. It was past suppertime but we decided to climb to a nearby open ridge where we could get a birds-eye view of the situation.

Before we got to the ridge-top we were aware that a lightning storm was in progress to the south of us, and I began to wonder what was happening back on the Roundtop district. From the point of the ridge we could count more than a dozen smokes ranging over a wide area between Marble Mountain and the Little North Fork of the Clearwater. Even as we watched, another strike came down just under Fishhook Peak and it was one of those instantaneous flareups. At seven o'clock in the evening and with no wind to speak of, fires should be relatively quiet, but this one took off with a running start. It was in dense mature timber, but that fire was crowning out in huge puffs within a matter of minutes, and before we left the ridge it had covered an estimated five or six acres. I know that I was worried and probably showed it; my inclination was to get back to my own district, but Howard convinced me that it would not be wise to ask for a release that night.

Next morning things looked brighter. It just wasn't one of those bad burning days - you could feel the difference in humidity. Furthermore, we got some new reinforcements, including one of the Coeur d'Alene's crack fire crews and some additional overhead. I had no trouble getting released that afternoon.

Back at Twin Creek I got a detailed report of the entire district situation and was really surprised to learn that we were still on top. That fire that Flint and I had watched from the ridgetop was the largest of a considerable number, and it had been reported as controlled that morning at about ten acres. There were at least a half-dozen more in the Class B category, but all appeared to be holding, though there were several from which there had been no direct reports. It seemed almost too good to be true.

But here again, as on the Selway in 1925, there was a story of pluck and tenacity combined with good judgment that seldom makes the headlines. This was several years before the hard-hitting, so-called ten o'clock control policy was adopted and, while there had been some stepup in the decisiveness of fire action, the tendency was still to pour the man-power to the big ones and let the little ones take care of themselves. Furthermore, there were no CCC crews nor other alphabetical agencies to call on; it was just a case of scraping the barrel.

Charley Scribner was acting as dispatcher at Avery that summer and when he got word that Roundtop was in trouble, he called the local deputy sheriff and together they went down to the railroad yards. They combed the jungles and shook down the empty box cars until they had rounded up some 30 or 40 transients who reluctantly accepted an invitation to fight fire in preference to a one-way ticket out on the first side-door Pullman.

The next, and possibly a tougher problem was transportation. One of the district pack strings was tied up on the Fishhook fire and the other at Midget Creek. The remaining district stock consisted of one big plow horse that we had been using to skid telephone poles, a crippled mule that was just getting over a bad wire cut, and four small burros that had provided transportation for a "gypsy" trail survey crew. The packer was a young fellow who had served as combination cook and packer with the survey crew; he was the only person on the district with patience enough to get along with those funny little animals - I mean the burros, not the surveyors.

Well, there's no use going into details - it would take too long - but I want to say right here that two Ranger alternates named Lloyd Donally and Howard Coon, four small-crew foremen who had cut their eye teeth on fire assignments, a dozen lookouts and smokechasers, maybe 20 crewmen, a draft horse, a crippled mule and four burros, kept one Ranger District from disaster at a critical time during one of the worst fire seasons on record. Yes, and I mustn't forget the transients either; they got plenty of action and they produced better than we had a right to expect.

I wouldn't attempt to guess how much revenue the Forest Service has taken in from timber that might have gone up in smoke if someone had slipped that night; nor the value of the timber products that have since then been marketed from upper Fishhook and the Little North Fork. I do know that the story might have been far different if just one of those fires hadn't been stopped.

As soon as I had gotten settled, I started out to make the rounds and see what needed to be done on those fires that had not yet been reported as definitely under control. I had covered a couple of them by saddle horse and was on my way afoot to a group of the less accessible ones when I ran into something that made a forest fire seem cool in comparison.

I was climbing a steep, snag-infested slope, and as I stooped to duck under a windfall I shoved my arm right into a large yellowjackets' nest. I had to get out of there in a hurry, so I rolled off from the comb of that ridge and dove downhill, followed by a swarm of those whining little devils. I slid, stumbled, rolled and crawled until I hit a little alder patch and a big mud puddle.

I had lost my hat, torn my shirt and broken my glasses on my way down, and a dozen or more of those yellowjackets were still stabbing away inside my shirt collar or buzzing around my head, but when I landed in that mud hole I forgot everything else; it turned out to be a bear wallow, and there was a bear in it! I have always been nearsighted, and without my glasses close objects appear magnified; when that bear rose up on his hind-quarters he looked ten feet tall!

The bear was as startled as I and it didn't take him long to get out of there, so now I began to take stock of my predicament. I had succeeded in getting rid of my striped enemies and fortunately, stings and bites don't swell up on me as badly as on some people, but now I began to feel sick. Nineteen separate stings - the number was verified after I got back to the station - can contain more poison, I have been told, than a good-sized rattlesnake bite, though I didn't know it at the time.

I had heard that mud was good for bee stings and since there was plenty of it, I smeared it liberally over my face, neck, shoulder and upper arm, where most of the stings were located; I must have looked like a Zulu warrior.

For an hour or more I lay at that bear wallow and was about as sick as I have ever been in my life; then I managed to crawl another two or three hundred yards to the creek bottom. I took a big drink of creek water and then lay still for another hour or two, after which I managed to make it the rest of the way to the trail. It was after dark when I finally stumbled and staggered up to the Ranger Station, and it was several days before I began to feel like myself again.

The fellow who said, "It's the little things that hurt the most," might have been thinking about yellowjackets, but anyhow, in my case it could have been worse. What if the situation had been reversed and I had made that plunge down the mountainside to get away from a bear, only to wind up in a yellowjackets' nest?

## **1932**

The year 1932 marks the end of an era for the St. Joe. Until then it had been a backwoods forest where the mule was king, packers were privileged characters and roads were something we heard about but seldom saw, at least between May and October. That year the road out of Avery and up Kelly Creek finally broke through to Roundtop, while another branch was slowly but surely boring eastward toward Bearskull and the Pole Mountain country.

Another event of 1932 was the dissolution of the Coeur d'Alene Timber Protective Association and the creation of two new Ranger Districts Clarkia and Calder. Dean Harrington was transferred from the Coeur d'Alene Forest to take over Clarkia, and as I recall the fire season that year, his district got the brunt of it. Actually, we were all fairly busy; it wasn't an easy season, just seemed so in contrast to the previous year.

This too was my last field season as a District Ranger. I retained the title for another year, but 1933 ushered in the CCC and I was detached from district work to serve as superintendent of one of the St. Joe's several camps.

In this record of my early years in the Service, I have tried to bridge a gap that seems to exist between the real pioneer days and a later period that, through force of circumstances, brought about its own publicity.

We have read many sagas about those pioneer Rangers; stories that date from the old "Land Office days" through the period that followed the exodus from Washington, and ending with the 1919 fire season. Those oldtimers traveled for the most part alone or in pairs. They got involved with outlaws, wild animals, range wars, claim-jumpers, and a lot of other things. I knew a few of them well and I do not belittle their accomplishments, nor would I detract from the glamor of their stories.

Then, there seems to have been a rather long period during which the Forest Service just plodded along without fear, favor or notoriety, until the dramatic changes of the "air age" brought a deluge of publicity. For a time, you couldn't pick up a newspaper or magazine without reading something about the smokejumpers or some other phase of aerial activity.

Again I want to say that I do not begrudge the notoriety, nor do I think the credit was undeserved. If anyone wants to challenge my statement that the smokejumper squads of 1941 and 1942 were the toughest, smartest and best firefighters the Region had ever seen up to that date, I'll listen to him, but he'll have to prove his point.

All I am concerned about is to give credit to those forgotten men of the Service; the ones we called the Regulars - the seasonal force that backed up the Rangers during that in-between period when the skidroad firefighter was on his way out, and modern techniques hadn't yet been developed. For a very modest wage and a short, unpredictable season, they did their jobs and were the backbone of the fire-control forces. When they succeeded - and they did at least ninety percent of the time it was taken for granted, and when the odds against them were just too great, it was the size of the disaster, not their efforts to prevent it, that made the headlines.

No, things weren't always easy in the 1920's and early thirties. We put up with a lot of inconveniences and not a few hardships - but we had a lot of fun, too, and I wouldn't trade the experiences of those years for anything in the world. Yes, those first ten years were the toughest, but in some respects, they were the best in my entire Forest Service career.



Old Gold Peak Tower on day it was condemned — August 22, 1920. This tower originally was built by one man without assistance. Missoula (now Lolo) N. F.



Iris Lookout, Bonita District, Lolo N. F., before new lookout was built about 1930.

# **THE BEGINNING OF THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE AS I REMEMBER**

**IT**

**By Dean R. Harrington  
(Retired 1945)**

**1907**

My father, Lewis C. Harrington, who is still living, was among the first to be appointed forest guard in 1907, along with many others, among them Louis Fitting, Ray R. Fitting, J. L. Gross, Lew Brundige, Tom Crossley, and George Trenary. The first forest guard (or Forest Ranger) examination was held in the town of Kooskia, Idaho. It was a field affair and the requirements were:

- 1st: To supply three head of horses and complete equipment and tools to work with in the building of trails, cabins, etc.
- 2nd: To pace around and give the acreage of a triangular tract of land that was staked off. It was a small tract - as I recall, about 3-1/2 acres.
- 3rd: A packer test. Requirements consisted of being able to properly place on their packstock an assortment of equipment consisting of a barrel, tools, bedding, tent, and complete outfit to be able to get along in the mountains.
- 4th: To tie a diamond hitch which, of course, was a "must."

I don't recall that anyone failed the examination. This new organization of forest guards caused so much excitement that most of the town folks turned out to watch the new appointees go through their paces.

Major Frank A. Fenn, who was Supervisor on the Bitterroot-Idaho National Forest, and whom the entire community admired and loved, conducted the affair. The rate of pay wasn't very high, \$75.00 per month, they to board themselves and furnish their own horses, tools, tents, etc., but the challenge of the new organization made it all worthwhile.

My father was slightly handicapped, as he had three teenage boys to leave behind. However, he managed to have a small house built for us in East Kooskia, where we could batch and go to school. It was located about one-half block from Major Frank A. Fenn's home and Mrs. Fenn was a wonderful person. She and the Major kept a pretty close watch over us. Mrs. Fenn would often bring us a homemade cake and also made arrangements for us to attend Sunday school. We were always there! She also would arrange for one of us to walk to town with her daughter Ilene when Ilene took her music lessons. There was about one-half mile of wooded area to walk through and we did enjoy this assignment.

The Major was kind to us but he was also very strict, and as he was on the school board, when we played hooky from school and were sent to the Major, we remembered it. There would be no more nonsense for a long time.

About 1908 or 1909 things began to pick up around the small town of Kooskia, Idaho. Two railroad companies, namely the N.P. and the O. R. & N., each decided to run a survey up the Middle Fork and then up the Lochsa to Montana. It was here I began to get acquainted with the forest, and to some extent the Forest Reserve as it was called then. I obtained a job with the N.P. Company surveyors at Camp One. My first assignment was axeman, which consisted of cleaning brush ahead of the transit man, at \$45.00 per month. After a short while I was promoted to rear flagman, which was certainly much easier work. One time they ran out of flat-headed tacks to drive in the hubs and they used hobnails. It certainly was difficult to hold the rod on them. Then I nodded for the topography man for a few weeks. It was also my job, after a full day's work in the field, to boat the supplies, the mail, and any overhead across the river to Camp One. As the river rose to flood stage it became very swift and difficult to manage the boat.

One Saturday several of the survey men wanted to go to town, some twelve miles away. We decided to build a cedar raft and ride the river instead of walking. Eight of us worked together, built the raft, jumped on and took off down the swift water. Si Lawrence, a Nez Pence Indian, handled the rear paddle and I handled the front. Things went fine until we reached Maggie Bend. There the raft started to fall apart. Luckily, we had a rope tied around the center of the raft as it was the front, or my end, that came apart first. We managed to land the thing about three miles above town and walked in the rest of the way. Some of the men related our experience to the foreman on our return to camp and that put a stop to any more such doings. A short time later the topography man, with whom I worked, wanted to cross the river from where we finished our day's work and walk back to camp on the pack trail. He thought this would be much easier than going back over the survey line or footpath. We selected a piece of driftwood, made a paddle and pushed a log out into deep water. When we hit the swift water the log rolled us off, so we paddled and swam but kept our log and made the opposite shore, dripping and cold. The field records were soaked and in bad shape. That was the last time we tried this type of shortcut.

When the snow was pretty well out of the high country, the N.P. decided to put in five camps. Their idea was to bring in the equipment and supplies for these camps by boat, so they sent for several rather large boats from the coast. I am sure, by the looks of these boats, that they weren't properly made for the rough, swift waters of the Clearwater River. The N.P. was going to tow the boats by man power, ten to twelve men per boat and one man with a long pole to keep them out in the stream. This idea ended in disaster at the mouth of Bear Creek, or the start of Black Canyon on the Lochsa River. Here, after many difficulties, they swamped their boats and lost all the food, but by quick work were able to save most of the camp equipment. Now plans were changed. They decided to put the camps in by use of pack trains. The O. R. & N. didn't try the boat business. They were using packstock from the start and had most of the available local packers working for them.

Finally the N.P. hired Macky Williams and a second man named McDaniels, both packers, from Grangeville. At this point, I was selected to carry messages, commissary supplies and mail to the camps as I had three head of horses. I was also to take men into the different camps and bring those out who wanted to quit. The packing idea was fine, but there were very few trails into the country. The old Lolo trail was used first, but it was mainly along the divide, so to get down into the river elk trails were brushed out and the camps put in. These trails were not much more than footpaths and the Forest Service did not have men or money available for trail cutting. The

railroad companies put in their own trail crews and cut a trail up the river. It was a shotgun trail for sure. It would go along the river once in a while, then climb out and over several high mountains.

It was soon apparent both companies were pushing hard to be first to complete and obtain the right of way. They became very uncooperative with each other and the battle of "first-come, first-served" was on. If the O. R. & N. had built a trail or bridge they wouldn't let the N.P. use it, or at least they would try hard to prevent the use. It became so bad they would camp a man and his tent on the bridge and wouldn't let a pack train cross unless it belonged to the company that had built the bridge. Result: Two bridges on each creek that needed them.

Then the O. R. & N. hired a man with a pack horse to get ahead of any N.P. train and delay them by stopping in a place where they couldn't get past. Some days no progress was made at all. At one place, I remember well, they had built a trail over a sheer rock ledge by using short drill steel and leaving the steel in the holes, then laying a log on these and building a trail. The N.P. pack strings made it over this trail going upriver, but on the return trip the trail had been dynamited into the river.

I was with the N.P. pack train on this trip. George Trenary, a forest guard, was also with us. We had to build some steep trail around the point and then by putting a rope on each animal and attaching it to the saddle we took a dally on a tree and slid them back to the trail one by one.

A half mile farther we came upon the character who had done the dynamiting. George Trenary immediately put him under arrest. We gave him the name of "Johnny-Behind-the-Rock." After he was under arrest he wouldn't walk, so we had to furnish a saddle horse for him. He had several other names given him by the packers, which I won't mention here. This arrest, at last, put a stop to the trouble of being blocked on the trail.

The beef that was supplied to the survey camps was taken in on the hoof, butchered as needed, and distributed by the butcher to the camps.

I believe every kind of packing known to man was used by different outfits that summer. The general procedure was two men to a pack train, the head packer heading the bell mare. All the horses were turned loose and the man in the rear tried to keep the string moving, which was a hard job. If a horse in the center decided to take time out to graze, he would throw a rock and holler until his voice played out. W.E. Perry, who had two or three pack strings working, furnished BB guns for his rear packers. Then if a horse stopped to graze they would give him the buckshot treatment. The Rinshaw-Linder string was different. They had a well-trained stock dog and would send him up to heel a horse that would stop to graze. The Macky Williams and McDaniel strings were mostly led, turning them loose only where danger existed to rolling the string. There were many horses crippled or rolled during the summer, due to the dangerous trails and difficult work.

W. E. Perry tried burro packing. He bought a full string of burros, and of his packers I well remember Art Smith. He later packed many years for the Forest Service and is now buried at the mouth of Packsaddle Creek, just a short distance above Avery, Idaho, on the St. Joe Forest. This



burro packing was short-lived. I think they made only about two round trips and were out of burros. The story was that the burros got "mountain fever" and died, or the packers had to kill them. At any rate you could see saddles and burros all along the trail.

The saddles used were mostly the old sawbuck type. However, there were also the old Spanish type and the McDaniel's halfbreed packsaddle. McDaniels had taken the trees from the old sawbuck saddles and used horseshoes for the forks. They were made very similar to our present day saddle. This was the only outfit that cargoes the load in side packs and used the box hitch and no-top packs. The Decker Brothers later copied this type of saddle and claimed the name of the Decker Pack Saddle, which is used in Region One. However, great improvement was made in the tree and pack saddles throughout, but I think large credit should go to Oll Robinette, a blacksmith at Kooskia, Idaho. He devised the new tree from cottonwood which, I believe, is still used. Also, he made up the saddle forks from round iron. A harness shop in Stites, Idaho, turned out the halfbreed covers and the other leather work. Mr. Robinette later worked for the Forest Service, making saddles and shoeing pack stock.

Following this season and the 1910 fire season, packing became quite an industry. Lumber companies and the Forest Service contracted much of their packing to private packers and a big changeover was made from horses to mules. The Decker Brothers went into the business in a big way and the Stonebracker boys from Stites and Orofino, Idaho, got into the game. Methods of packing changed and the strings were led and handled by one man.

The railroad survey was completed by early fall and the camps packed out. As I remember, the N. P. completed the job first; however, they did have an advantage, as they were running location line only and were using the old Milwaukee Railroad preliminary to tie to. The O. R. & N. were running both preliminary and location. After all that had happened, nothing was ever done about building the railroad on this route.

My last assignment for the N.P. was to take my helper, Si Lawrence, and saddle horses for a party of six, with a full camp outfit and go in over the Lolo trail to Bald Mountain; then drop down to the Lochsa River and meet the railroad overhead who were coming through on an inspection trip from the Montana side. We made our trip on schedule and met the party where the river trail forded the river. The ford was full of large boulders and one of the inspection party was about midstream when his mount stumbled and the rider slid off over the horse's head. The water was swift and drifted the man downstream away from his mount.

He finally got his arms around a big rock and held on until my Indian helper rode out, gave him a rope and towed him to shore. These men, as I recall, were out from St. Paul, Minnesota. I have always thought they were more on a lark than an inspection trip, but "I could be wrong." After all, I was just a guide.

## 1914

The fall of this year I returned to the Selway Forest, this time hiring out as a firefighter for the Forest Service at Kooskia, Idaho. Fourteen miles from Kooskia, at the old No. One Station, the road ended and from there we hiked to the fire. We went by way of Pete King, Rocky Ridge,

Bald Mountain, then down the Lochsa River. We forded the river and climbed almost to the top of the divide on the opposite side, arriving at the fire six days' travel time later. The fire wasn't too large, perhaps forty acres in size, but not burning too briskly. It didn't take long to put a control line around it with just the small crew at hand, but we stayed to let the fire completely burn out. Part of the fire crew was taken off the fire line and used to improve the pack trail and cut some badly needed new trail.

This was a late fall fire and we stayed too long, getting caught in a heavy snowstorm. Snow fell a full two feet, yet we stayed, waiting for the pack string and orders to go out. When the Decker Brothers pack string arrived we broke camp, but they didn't have pack stock enough to carry everything. So most of the food supplies were left behind.

The first day packing out we made it to the Lochsa River by noon. Here I asked the fire foreman if I could leave the outfit and go down the river as I knew the surrounding country and the old survey trails. We were pretty well out of the snow down on the river. His answer was "No," that he wanted to keep the crew together and go out by the Lolo Trail route. We made Bald Mountain in the afternoon, arriving about dark. Climbing up we hit snow again and the wind was blowing hard. All the bedding was wet by this time. We did manage to get some food cooked, using the small lookout station on Bald Mountain. The cooks were inside and they passed the food out the window to the crew. There was a small log cabin down a bit from the mountain top and this is where the crew was to put in the night. There wasn't room in this cabin to make down any beds, so we took some shakes off the roof to let the smoke out and built a fire on the earth floor in the center of the cabin. We dried out as best we could, sitting up until daylight.

We went back up to the lookout for breakfast. The cooks made up a small lunch for us to carry. This was the second night the pack stock were tied up to prevent their leaving. I could see this was going to be a slow, hard trip and a wet one, as the storm was still bad and a strong wind blowing. The trees all looked lopsided as the snow stuck to them on only one side.

Having received a negative answer from the foreman before about leaving, I conveniently forgot to ask him anything more, and after breakfast a young fellow, Pete Grant, from Nez Perce, Idaho, and I left the crew and struck off on our own. We walked from Bald Mountain to Rocky Ridge that day. The snow was knee-deep all the way. We made it to a cabin on the North Fork of the Clearwater side of Rocky Ridge just as it was getting dark. Here we found two men who agreed to let us stay the night. They also fed us, for which we were thankful. They didn't have any extra bedding but they were drying out some extra tents and flies, so we used these and they did break down and give us one double blanket from their bed. We slept on the floor. It was hard but we slept sound. The next morning we had breakfast and got a small lunch from these men and left. We walked from Rocky Ridge to the mouth of Pete King Creek and on to the Lochsa River that day. We found a forest pack camp at Fish Creek Meadows. They had a lot of food and gave us a good dinner. We stayed this night with Lew McNair at his cabin at the mouth of Pete King Creek. The next day we arrived at my father's cabin which was twelve miles from Kooskia. Here we rested and waited for three days until arrival of the fire crew and pack string we had left at Bald Mountain. Knowing the country, I have always felt it would have been much easier to have made the direct descent down the river.

## 1917

My next experience was on the Nezperce Forest in the summer of 1917. The Forest Service was sending out a crew from Kooskia to a fire on Coolwater Ridge. I signed up as a firefighter. We had a fire foreman by the name of Engle and were to report to the Forest Ranger at O'Hara Ranger Station. I believe his name was Howell. It took two days' travel time to arrive at the fire on the Selway River side of Coolwater Ridge. It was approximately 50 acres in size but not burning too briskly. The fire camp was established above the fire on a steep hillside. We worked two or three days on the head end of the fire and were making slow progress toward control.

Two men in our crew decided to quit on the fourth day and left by going down to the Selway River, instead of going out over the pack trail. About two hours after they left the fire camp, three new fires showed up below the one we were working on. These fires spread quite rapidly and soon went around and over part of our fire lines. I was asked by the fire foreman to scout the fire and make a map as I traveled around the edge.

I tried traveling around the outside of the fire for two or three hours and soon found this a dangerous assignment. I was chased out a few times and my map was becoming worthless as the fire progressed. Finally I went up to a high point where I could see out over the fire and mapped it from there, returning to the fire camp about dark. I could see the foreman was very worried and concerned, with the fire still progressing. We had supper and all went to bed, but you could hear the fire below camp, especially when a tree would crown out with a terrific roaring sound.

About 2:00 a.m. the fire foreman came to my bed and talked to me in whispered tones. He told me he was going to bury the camp at daylight and take the crew out to the Coolwater Lookout Station on the divide. This he did by digging a hole and putting in all the camp equipment, food supplies and tools. Everything except enough shovels to put dirt on top, all the men were empty handed as we left for the divide.

There was a telephone at the lookout and the foreman called the Ranger at O'Hara Station, who instructed him to take the men and tools down a ridge along the pack trail, start making a new firebreak along the ridge top, and that he would send in another camp outfit. This was when the foreman had to tell him he had buried all the tools along with the camp. Here is where I thought the telephone lines would be the next to burn from the hot words that went back and forth over it. The Ranger finally told the foreman to take his own packsack and come on down as he was through, and to leave the crew at the guard station.

A few minutes later the phone rang again and the Ranger asked for me. He wanted to know if there was a possible chance of going back to the fire camp and at least salvage the fire tools. I told him I thought there was. He told me to go to a grazing permittee cow camp, get this man and his pack stock and make an effort at least to get the tools out, as he was strapped for tools short of ordering from Spokane. I found the man and his stock and together we managed to get the entire camp packed out that day as the fire had not yet reached the camp. The Ranger showed up in the afternoon. Very quickly a new fire camp was established and a new foreman put in charge.

The Ranger asked me if I would be willing to go to the Falls Station on the Selway River, as his man there had injured his leg and was sent out to town. I was somewhat reluctant to take this job and I told him I would prefer to stay on the fire as I thought the fire wages were more attractive. He eased my concern by saying he would pay me the fire scale and the same amount of time I would get if I were to stay on the fire, since he was going to pay me out of fire funds. So I accepted and returned with him to the O'Hara Station. The next day I hiked upriver to the Falls Station where I finished out the season.

This was the most lonesome job I ever had in the Service. My duties were to check in three times a day on the phone, cook for the packers or firefighters when they came along, patrol about four miles each way from the station and keep the loose rock picked up out of the trail. While there was a cabin here, there was no cookstove, so I had to cook on an open fire.

The cabin was of log construction, well built, and had a wooden floor, but the packrats had taken over and at night it was extremely difficult to sleep. I began a scheme to exterminate the rats. I plugged all the holes in the floor but one. Over this one I constructed a trap door and tied a rope so I could close it from my bed. This worked fine. I could trap them inside the cabin and then get up and with a club for a weapon I would chase them until I could corner and kill them. I remember getting 34 of them before things quieted down. I guess all forest personnel have had some experience with rats but this was the worst I had seen.

Trout fishing was the best here. We carried water from the river just below the falls. I kept the fly rod at the end of the trail and any time I wanted fish I made a few casts and took them back fresh. The fish were so plentiful that it didn't take much time.

As the season came to an end with the first fall rains, I was told to put the camp in order and come out. On my way to Kooskia, at the forks of the Selway and Lochsa Rivers, I found a cedar-pole river drive in progress. I think this was the first and only cedar-pole drive ever made down the Clearwater River. I contacted the foreman and asked for a job. He asked if I'd had any experience on river drives and I answered "No," but that I had worked in the woods and small sawmill operations and thought I could work on the rear as I knew how to handle a peavey. To my surprise he told me I could go to work. I went on to town to purchase a new pair of calked shoes and returned to an experience I will never forget.

The crew was made up of men of experience on river drives - from Marble Creek on the St. Joe Forest and from the Priest River area. They were rough, quick and fast on foot. The foreman was "Black Dunk" McDonald. He put me on the rear crew which was helping to get all the poles back into the river that had lodged on the bank, rocks, or islands. The cook tent was on a large raft and followed the drive, each day tying up at night. They fed five-times a day and good food. It was hard work and dangerous as the poles would jam up, backing the water up, and the pressure would cause some of the poles to jump a considerable distance and start the dam again.

I think the foreman, McDonald, must have been in partners with the employment agency in Spokane, because he kept three crews - one coming, one going, and one working - with the exception of what he called the White-Water men. These were the boys out in front who tried to keep the poles from jamming up. The foreman's usual procedure in firing men was to single out

one man, right after breakfast, and tell him he could go down. Then he would ask, "Do you have a partner?" If the answer was yes, he would say, "Get him and he can go with you." If the answer was no, he would say, "Just wait a minute and I will get you one." He always sent them down in pairs. How he let me stay with the drive to the finish I'll never know. I always felt my turn would be next, but I stayed until the drive reached Kooskia. It took 40 days to drive 24 miles and the water was very cold when we finished.

We lost our cook raft, or "wanagan" as it was called, at the Three Devil Rapids. We broke a jam there and the water went down so fast it left the raft high and dry on the bank. The crew was unable to get it back into the river. Here again, the pack stock was used to move the cook outfit and camp. To my knowledge these were the only Forest Service poles taken out of this drainage by this method and I am sure the cost, plus the breakage, made this method prohibitive. Considerable cedar posts and shingle bolts were rafted down this stream, but only in high water.

### 1919

The next time I came back to the Nezperce Forest was after my hitch in France in World War One. I left Grangeville in May 1918 and returned in June 1919. I headed for the Salmon River country and landed a job with the John Day cattle ranch, helping to put the stock on summer pasture on forest range at the head of Slate Creek and in the John Day Mountain area.

Then I borrowed a partly broken, good saddle horse, and went back to Camas Prairie near Grangeville. I was to have the use of the horse for the breaking of him, provided I would come back in the fall and help gather the beef. I harvested near Grangeville, sewing sacks on a stationary threshing machine. When we finished I rode into Grangeville. Here I met Macky Williams, the man who had packed on the railroad survey. He said he was glad to see me back and informed me the Forest Service wanted him to furnish them a string of mules and packer for a fire job on the South Fork of the Clearwater River, at the Castle Creek Ranger Station.

I took the job, hiring out myself and the saddle horse. He told me the Service was having considerable fire trouble in the Elk City area, where he had his best stock working. We rounded up what mules he had left. They were mostly work mules and a pretty hard-looking outfit, but we got nine head together and loaded out at Mt. Idaho, a short distance from Grangeville. I told Mr. Williams I thought some of the stock were in poor shape for a heavy pack job. His reply was just to get them on the payroll. I packed the fire camp and supplies to the job. Here, again, I met Forest Ranger Thomas Crossley. I hadn't seen him since 1907.

This fire was in an open yellow pine area and not too hard to put under control or to stop the ground spread; however, the crew remained for a long time letting the fire burn itself out. I had a two-day pack trip for supplies and it seemed this crew was always out of foodstuff. The firefighters were mostly local stump ranchers and I have always thought they, or at least part of them, got all their winter's food supply from this fire job. I could be wrong, but if not, they certainly were good, healthy eaters.

The fire foreman was Jeston McCarthy. When the job was over he returned to Grangeville with me and the pack string. When we went to the Supervisor's Office to get our fire timeslips taken

care of, the supervisor asked McCarthy how he was able to get in so much time, as his slips showed from 20 to 22 hours for each day's work. He snapped back with, "By God, I was timekeeper, that's why!" I didn't have any trouble with the supervisor, as my time was by the day scale.

I left there the next day with the idea of a short visit with my father. He lived 12 miles above Kooskia, Idaho, on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater River and some 36-mile ride which I could make in one day. On my way out of Kooskia I met a sheepman named McKenzie. He told me he had a band of sheep on Coolwater Ridge, between the Lochsa and Selway Rivers and asked if I would like to take a few days and help him trail them out to the railroad at Kooskia. He would ship them from there to Condon, Oregon, the home ranch. I agreed to help him and the salary would be \$5.00 per day. I told him I would visit at my father's, take another look at the country where I had fought fire several years before, and would be up to the sheep camp the next day.

I reported as promised, but found they couldn't trail out as the railroad couldn't deliver the sheep cars yet. It turned out to be a mighty long wait. A full 30 days later, when the cars finally arrived at Kooskia, we came in with the sheep.

They had a herder and a camp tender on the job, so there wasn't much for me to do. I did help build a counting pen, or corral, and every other day I would ride down to the post office at Lowell to get the mail and check on the car outlook. One day, after we had counted the sheep, the owner said there were 18 head short and that they must be back along the ridgetop. He wanted the camp tender and me to ride back and see if we could find them. He suggested I take one of their horses to ride and let my horse have a rest. Well, I didn't tumble that they were playing a trick on me so I caught the horse and saddled up. The camp tender said I wouldn't need a bridle as this horse performed better with a hackamore, and I took him at his word. When I put my foot in the stirrup to mount, I suddenly knew I had been tricked. I was able to stay on, but this horse sure knew how to buck. We wound up, down off the ridgetop in a bunch of alder brush. I called back for them to bring the axe down and swamp us out and we would put on the rest of the show. When we got the horse out I rode him a few miles back up the trail. Naturally we found no sheep and the camp tender finally confessed they weren't really short any sheep, they just wanted to see some fun. They had bought this horse near Pendleton, Oregon. He wasn't supposed to be good enough to keep in a bucking string, but he certainly was good enough to make you ride to stay on top.

We finally received word that the sheep cars were available, and it took but a few days to trail out. After the sheep were loaded they begged me to come along, with an offer of year-round work at \$125.00 per month. I would have gone but I didn't own the horse I had and had promised to come back to the Salmon River.

### 1922-1924

I stayed on the Salmon River with the cow outfit until 1922. Then I moved to Coeur d'Alene and worked in a logging camp. In 1924 I made application to pack for the Coeur d'Alene Forest. There I packed for two years, 1924 and 1925. I took the Ranger exam in 1925. It didn't appear there was much chance for me, but I liked the packing job fine. We had good stock and fine

people to work for, but the job was seasonal and that year it was hard to find work in the wintertime.

In 1926 I was offered a trail foreman's job for Ranger Helmers, out of Prichard, at \$125.00 per month. This was a good job; we were using a small crew and a plow unit. During the summer a large fire got going on the Magee district. Supervisor McHarg sent word for me to bring my packsack and report to him in Coeur d'Alene, which I did. He told me he wanted me to take over the Magee district and he would try to get my appointment through, but he couldn't promise anything for sure. With a short briefing on the condition of the fire, the number of men on it, who was in charge, the danger spots, etc., I told my family goodbye and was on my way to Magee Ranger Station.

I recall telling McHarg the fire was quite large for quick control unless we got a good break in the weather. He said to do the best we could. On arrival I found things pretty well organized; but on the second day we had a high wind and a fire blowup in Independence Creek. One camp was abandoned. The next morning I had men and equipment scattered from the fire to the Ranger Station. Someone must have been awfully hungry because they had carried a slab of bacon from the fire camp some seven miles and it was hanging on the barn door. All the men soon gathered together and a new camp was put in. In due time this fire was brought under control, and mopped up to the point of safety. Then we packed our equipment out and returned it to the Spokane warehouse. My appointment came through on August 24, 1926.

I remember a fire camp cook on this job, who kept ordering a keg of dill pickles. I checked invoices and found we had been sending in plenty of pickles, yet each day the order came in for a keg of dill pickles. So on my next trip to the fire camp I checked through the camp food supplies and found plenty of canned dill pickles. I asked the cook, a Mr. White, why the continuous order for a keg of pickles. He said, "I don't want the d---ed pickles, I want the keg." Evidently he wanted to make up a batch of home brew.

I was happy to become a part of such a fine organization as existed on the Coeur d'Alene Forest. The years went by fast. We were busy with improvement work - new lookout towers, trails, roads, telephone lines, and plantings. We also had a new project, the white pine beetle infestation. We also had our share of fires each year. However, it was all interesting.

In the fall of 1927, Supervisor McHarg called to tell me that Mr. Winton of the Winton Lumber Co., his two daughters and son, were coming over to Magee on a pleasure and fishing trip. The fishing was excellent in this area at that time. When they arrived about 3:00 p.m. we greeted them and asked them to have cake and coffee, after their nine-mile ride on horseback. They made their plans for the following day's fishing. We put them up at the station and in due time had our evening meal. The two girls occupied a small tent I had erected for my family when they had a chance to visit the station during the summer. Their horses, as well as ours, were turned out to graze. One horse was kept in the barn.

About dark it started to rain lightly, but all were soon bedded down for the night. Everything was quiet until 9:30 or 10:00 p.m. when we heard one of the girls screaming. The other daughter came running into the station asking for Mr. Winton, and stated she thought her sister was having

an attack of appendicitis. We were all up within a few minutes and soon Mr. Winton came back from a quick talk with the girl. He asked me if we had the man power on hand to carry the girl on a stretcher to the end of the road, some nine miles. I told him I had only a very few available, but we could take her out on a stretcher between two saddle horses.

Mr. Winton quickly contacted his doctor in Coeur d'Alene, ordering him to come to the end of the road by car, and from there by foot until he met us on the pack trail. He thought they might have to operate on our way out at a tent camp we had set up on a road project. We phoned ahead to the camp for them to get water heated, etc.

Since all our stock except the one horse were out in the open meadowland, I asked my packer to try and bring them in. The night was pitch dark. It was difficult to tell how many horses and which ones he was able to get into the corral. Luckily he managed to have two horses in the bunch that we could use on this kind of job, and by the time the packer had rounded up the horses, we had made a stretcher. Assistant Supervisor Sanderson was also there and he and I got the stretcher rigged up and made a short trial run to see if it would work, and more important, to see if the horses were willing to work in it.

Then we loaded the girl onto the stretcher and took two extra men with us, each carrying a gas lantern. We made fair time. The only thing that really slowed us up was the rest of the Winton family, wanting us to stop so they could check on the patient, give her a kiss and reassurance.

When we met the doctor he delayed us only a few minutes while he gave the girl a quick exam and a shot to ease her pain. He told Mr. Winton it would be much better to take the girl on to the hospital rather than to think of treatment out in the mountains. We had no trouble on the trail. On switchbacks we had two men take the rear end of the stretcher until we were all the way around, then the stretcher was given back to the rear rider again. We made the end of the trail about daylight. The girl was loaded into the ambulance and they headed for the hospital, then we returned to the Magee Station. Miss Winton reached the hospital and the operation was a success. The fishing trip was a failure, but all were happy.

We finally had the road built through to the Magee Ranger Station. This was a big help from the standpoint of bringing in district supplies, but it also brought many fishermen, campers, etc., which gave us some trouble from the danger of campfires, smokers, etc. We had been fairly free of these worries before and, of course, in due time it depleted the good fishing, which was the best I had seen anywhere.

Although 1929 was a dry year we didn't have too much trouble. We had a few fires and were able to handle them quite well. I had one in Spruce Creek on the head of the Coeur d'Alene River that caused some alarm. It was 40 acres in size when controlled. I had put all available men at my command on this fire and by evening of the first day we had it under control. In the afternoon a plane flew over the fire and the observer thought one side of it wasn't yet under control. That night I received some 28 men I hadn't ordered. They reached my small fire camp about midnight. I asked the foreman of these men why they had come. He told me Major Kelley was in Coeur d'Alene and he and the supervisor thought we needed help.



While the fire was quite safe at this time and I was sure I could mop it up with the crew I had on the job, I still had the new crew bed down and we would see how things were at daylight. By morning the fire was almost out, but I kept the new crew and gave my men the morning off to rest up. I took the fresh crew out and we did a real good job of clean-up on the fire. We even cut down some green trees that were inside the fireline, limbed them and burned the brush. By night we had the fire area clean and safe. The next morning I let the new crew go.

Since this fire was class C size, it would require an inspection from the Regional Office. Mr. Shoemaker and I made this examination some ten days later. He wrote an elaborate report, all the time questioning me quite a lot about cutting down the trees and burning the brush, and why I didn't turn the crew back without putting them on the fire since we had it under control when they had arrived. Finally I told him that since the men had been sent to me with the idea of making sure of control of this fire, I felt it would be better for me, and also the fire, to make darn sure it was out and cleaned up. It's very difficult in my opinion to make a good analysis on a dead fire.

Things went along fine for the next few years. I enjoyed my work and I enjoyed all the force on the Coeur d'Alene Forest. I had bought a home in Coeur d'Alene and had begun to feel that we were getting some place.

### **1931**

While 1931 wasn't considered a bad fire year, we did have some hot, dry weather the last of August and the first of September. A small cloud drifted over my district, we heard the thunder and saw the forked bolt of lightning come to the ground. It set two fires about 8 miles apart. The lookouts called in within a few minutes. There was no rain and both fires started to spread fast.

I started seven men and a plow unit to one, and two smokechasers and a trail crew to the other. Then I rode horseback to the one where I had sent the plow unit. I reached it in short order. It was rapidly spreading in a 1926 burn, due to heavy fireweed and downed timber. We were making good headway with the plow unit until afternoon, then we got some whirlwinds which caused it to jump our lines in all directions. I had a portable phone so called the station and ordered 40 men. We were able to cut the spread on the head end of the fire with the few men at hand and the plow unit. At dusk the 40 men ordered arrived and we were able that evening to work down both sides, and the fire was dying down. With the coolness of the night I was sure we would gain control by early morning.

Just about dusk I lost a man from a falling snag. This, of course, was a sad affair. I had talked to him about 10 minutes before and warned him of the snag that was leaning toward where he was working. He told me he was aware of it and had a large, green Douglas-fir with a forked top that he could get behind if the snag fell. It did fall and came down in the forks of this green tree, but the top of the snag broke and fell endways, pinning him beneath it. We made a stretcher and started out with him but he lived only a few minutes.

About 9:00 p.m. I rode up to Hamilton Mountain Lookout where I could get a look at the second fire and have good telephone communication. I could see from the fire's behavior that the crew

wasn't making any headway toward its control. I called the station and learned from my alternate that my conclusions were correct. He told me they were sending 75 men and Ranger Bishop from Coeur d'Alene. I thought they should have more men and asked him to get the supervisor, Mr. Simpson, on the line. I told Mr. Simpson that from what I could see I thought it would be wise to call out the Ohio Match Company men and send at least 125 of them. This fire wasn't slowing down. It was in a 1910 burn and the debris and windfalls were heavy, with lots of standing dry timber. This fire was on a ridgetop, with steep side slopes. You could see what was happening. As soon as a snag would burn off it would slide down the mountain, scattering fire all the way.

Supervisor Simpson firmly told me he thought the crew being sent was adequate to handle the fire. I added that since my fire was in fair shape I would like to turn it over to Hank Ogston, a scaler, and go over on the other fire myself. He objected to this, saying I had the worst fire of the two as they had scouted them by plane that afternoon and for me to go back to the fire and make sure it didn't get out of control, which I did. Two days later the fire I was on was almost out. I contacted the supervisor again. The McPherson fire was still spreading fast. This time he agreed that I could go over on that fire as crew foreman and take the Ohio Match crew with me. I was to report to Mr. Sanderson, Assistant Supervisor, who was in charge.

Two days later this fire jumped the Coeur d'Alene River and made a run of eight miles in seven minutes. I was camped on the river, and when I saw what had happened I pulled all my crew down to the river. I sent 10 men to try to save our camp by use of a Pacific Marine pump. I told them to get all the bedding, tools, etc., under the kitchen fly and to keep it wet. I left my crew on a large island in the river and told them to stay there. I waded down the river and the only air you could get to breathe was down about 6 inches from the water. There were trees and large embers falling all around and it was hot. By throwing water on your back or ducking down in the river you could stay cool for a short period but within a few minutes your clothes would be dry again.

I was also worried for the safety of Howard Flint and his small crew that had been sent to handle a small spot fire that had shown up earlier, as he was now in the direct path of the fire. I had sent a reliable man to warn him of the danger but I had not heard from them. I finally made it to our campsite by staying in the river. Here I found that the men were doing a fine job of keeping things wet with the pump. The cook was standing out in the river, waist deep. He was holding a slab of bacon in his hand and asked me where we would go from there. I remarked we weren't going any place at the present time.

The fire was just like a cyclone. Large trees and snags would twist off and were carried into the air. Others were uprooted. The green cottonwoods at our camp were catching on fire from the extreme heat. The gas tank on our pump was so hot that the gas was squirting out the air vent. We held a dishpan over it to prevent sparks falling on it. It was an extremely difficult task to fill the gas tank; however, we managed to keep the pump running and saved our entire camp.

When evening came and things quieted down, I got my crew and tools together again, except for two men who had left. Later I found they had made the Ranger Station at Magee and had spread an alarm that I had been burned up along with several others. About dark Howard Flint and his

crew came in. He had seen what was happening and had pulled down to the river also. He had with him the lad I had sent to warn him.

We put in the night here and the next morning the pack trail had cooled down enough that we were able to get the pack string through and move to the McPherson ranch. Here we planned a new attack. Several crews had been sent in from the Montana side. I heard later that some of those men had a narrow escape as they were caught in the run of the fire. The next day Frank Jefferson arrived at the head of the fire and on the downriver side. I had the upriver side and was able to drive a line some 5 miles up the edge of the fire. This line we were able to hold. I believe it was on the second or third day I got word from Jefferson by messenger to pull 50 men from my crew which I had out on the fireline and bring them to his camp, crossing through the fire. My men didn't like the idea, because all their personal belongings were back at the fire camp. But finally I got them to consent, with the promise that I would make sure we would be able to save their possessions.

We finally wound up this fire with some 1200 men on the job. I was told later that several decadent hemlock trees burned throughout the winter and were cut down and put out the next June.

During the winter we held a postmortem on this fire in the forest headquarters at Coeur d'Alene. The Regional Office boys were there Kelley, Jefferson, Stockdale and others. The question often came up as to what else could have been done to prevent the spread of this fire. I don't remember what the final answer was, but I have always thought we might have prevented it if adequate man power of seasoned men had been dispatched in the first days. It was stressed by the Regional Office that we make an effort to adequately man all fires and that it was cheaper and better to have too much help than not enough. After this I followed that procedure and found it worked out to my advantage. As I look back now, I feel that we should have planned a controlled burn, when conditions were favorable, on some of those old 1910 burned areas, then cleaned them up and planted them; but here, again, man power and money were lacking.

During my first winter on the Coeur d'Alene I was working in what we called the "bullpen." This was a large room in the Supervisor's Headquarters where scalers and Rangers from outlying districts had space during the winter months. As I recall, I was working on my District Ranger filing case. All the other men ordinarily occupying this room were on leave or out for the day, except a timber salesman by the name of Johnson. "White-Pine Johnson" he was called by all. He was checking scale books and was in charge of the Ohio Match sale on the Little Northfork of the Coeur d'Alene River. He laid his scale book down upon his desk and said, "Young man, you are working too hard." I stopped and looked at him questioningly. Then he said, "I want to give you some advice on how to get along in the Forest Service." I said, "Fine." Then he began by saying, "You must keep your head cool, your feet warm, your eyes open, your mouth shut and learn how to spell the word approximately." I laughed at the time, but later found out that he was so right.

## 1932

In the spring of 1932 I was transferred to the St. Joe Forest. I was somewhat saddened when I heard the news. I liked the Coeur d'Alene, my work and the personnel, and had bought my home here. But I took the assignment and moved my family to St. Maries, Idaho. Here I met another fine group of men. Paul Whalen was Supervisor, Frank Foltz, Assistant Supervisor, and Bill Daughs, W.W. Renshaw, Chas Scribner, Walt Botts, and Al Williams as Rangers. I can't remember all the office force, but I do remember Mr. Hellman was there and he was a big help to me in getting started. My assignment was on the Clarkia district. This was a new district made up mainly from the Potlatch Lumber Company Fire Protective Association area.

The Forest Service was to take over the Association - lock, stock and barrel - which included pack stock, tools, cars, trucks, and furnishing the Potlatch Lumber Company with fire protection for payment of 15 cents per acre by the Association. Fire protection had been costing them some 22 cents per acre for the years before. This looked like a losing proposition, and since you can't contract the Government into a deal like this it was undertaken on a trial basis, with a provision that if we ran out of money we would call a meeting and find out where we would go from there. We also had a deal whereby if the Potlatch Lumber Company would clear up the back taxes and deed all cut-over lands to the Service, thus bringing the forest ownership up to 55% or better, we would further reduce the fire protection cost to the Association.

The first year was a trying one; however, the Potlatch people were very good to us. They let us have their headquarters building at Clarkia for a summer station. I tried to contact the men from the fire protection association to get my guard force lined up. I was able to get some of them for trail crew work; their packer and a few others would be on telephone line work. No one wanted to take on any lookout work. I found out the reason. I wanted to place them on top of the lookout point, one man to the station. This hadn't been the practice under the Association, so I had to import some men. I was able to get three who had worked for me on the Coeur d'Alene. Well, this caused a fuss, as we were in the depression and someone started the rumor that the three men were Canadians. I knew better and didn't pay much attention. The boys had been born and raised down in the Clearwater country, and had worked on the Selway and Coeur d'Alene Forests. True, their father and mother had moved to Canada and the boys had wintered there as they couldn't find work here. I didn't let this political move bother me. I had the three working on early spring trail and telephone maintenance.

Major Kelley came in to my station late one day. We visited for a while, had supper, and about 8:00 p.m. the three men came into the station. He asked who they were and why they were so late coming from work. I explained I had them on telephone maintenance work and they had decided to finish the job to Elk Mountain lookout that day rather than kill another day on it. They also had brought in a lot of poor connections they had taken out of the line, just to show me the manner in which the line had been maintained in previous years. I wondered how the line could have been used at all. Then Major Kelley said to me, "You keep those men working and I will answer any of the political squawks from now on."

We finished the first season without much trouble from lightning fires, but we had several man caused, including campers, sheepmen, lumbering and debris burning, winding up the season in

late September with four class "C" fires at the same time. I was able to man these fast and gained quick control. As I recall, we had \$1500 left in our protection money at the end of the season, which the Association gave to the Service.

The next year we took the job for 7-1/2 cents per acre. The last I heard we were doing the job for 4-1/2 cents. It's probably less by now.

### 1933

In 1933 we got the CCC and WPA, or ERA. Anyway, we had to have two packers for each string, two cooks for each job, putting to work everyone who was available. We were swamped getting out plans for roads, telephone lines, towers, snagging job's and all other types of forest projects. Some of the CCC camps went on blister rust work. Everyone was scratching the bottom of the barrel for overhead.

Along with the rush of things, we got a new supervisor, Ray Fitting. Supervisor Whalen was transferred East. Assistant Supervisor Frank Foltz asked to be transferred. Renshaw was sent back to the Avery district from the Supervisor's Office. We were really "all shook up."

I didn't worry too much since I had known Mr. Fitting since my early school days and was sure I could please him. At least I could try.

I got a CCC camp stationed at Clarkia. We used the town buildings, as this had been a lumbering town. It was vacant now due to the fact that all logging in this area had shut down. We were to build a road from Gold Center, above Clarkia, to connect with a road being built from Ranger Ralph Hand's district at Round Top. This road would follow the divide between the Little Northfork of the Clearwater River and the St. Joe River. Another camp of CCC was at Emida. This camp would work partly on my district and partly on Ranger Daugh's district, called the Palouse district. Blister rust drew a large quota of the CCC for summer work. The blister rust also maintained a headquarters at the Ranger Station or the old Rutledge Headquarters, with Neil Fullerton in charge.

We got things fairly well lined up and the camps in, with some projects going. The blister rust was to put in three spike camps in Emerald Creek which was some three miles from our headquarters, across country, but to be able to put them in they had to truck all supplies down the St. Maries River to the town of Fernwood across the river, then truck back up the other side, a round trip of 24 miles. Neil Fullerton found an old logging road that was usable except for two small, steep pitches, which would take about one day's work with a dozer to eliminate. This would save a lot of time, plus wear and tear on trucks, by cutting the distance down to about a 12-mile round trip.

I had a dozer and an operator not in use, since my clearing crew wasn't far enough out to permit blasting, and besides my powder had not arrived. We decided to take the dozer and clean out the road to Emerald Creek. We just got nicely under way and who should come up but Supervisor Fitting. He heard the dozer working as he drove up the highway, so he went in to see that the deal was. He talked to the dozer operator and his helper, but didn't stop them. Then he drove

direct to the Ranger Station. I was out in the woods that day so he didn't find me. Neil wasn't so lucky. Fitting was really mad and gave Neil a real going over, then he went to my office and gave my alternate "Hail Columbia" and left me a four-page memo. I won't write the words he used, but he also said to get that dozer back on the approved road job by tomorrow and "I don't mean maybe." When I returned that evening I could see something had happened by the look, not only on Neil's face, but also my alternate's. They told me the sad news and showed me the memo. I read it over and said, "If we have to move it back by tomorrow we'd better put on a night shift and finish the job." Which we did. The next day the dozer was back on the approved job.

Mr. Phil Neff from the Regional Office arrived the next day. He had an assignment with the blister rust I told Phil the spot we were in and showed him the memo from Fitting. We went over the road the next day. He said he would handle this situation as Koch, Kelley and Fitting were coming up to look over the blister rust setup. He took them all over the new road and I had to go with them. When he got to the point where we had used the dozer, he stopped and we all got out. Phil said, "Now here is a really good piece of work. It will save many miles of useless travel during our rust program over the next few years." Everyone agreed. But the top remark of the day came from Mr. Fitting who casually remarked, "That is the reason I had this job completed first."

I have always thought Supervisor Fitting could see the advantage of this road from the start, but I think he was put out because we hadn't presented the thing to him in such a way that he could take action to have it done.

The CCC program was a blessing to the Forest Service. At last the time had come when we had manpower and equipment to work with. At first, of course, roads had high priority, but other needed improvements such as lookout towers, telephone lines, blister rust and timber-stand improvements, planting and many others were sandwiched into our construction programs and we had a vast supply of trained young men for use in fire suppression.

Some of our projects on the St. Joe Forest, like most other forests in this area, had to close down during the winter months. But we had five camps on the St. Joe River where road building could be carried on during winter weather. So we moved most all our men to this area. The fall of 1933 was very wet. The main body of men on my district were sent to the winter camps early, leaving me a small crew to put in drainage culverts on the Clarkia-to-Roundtop road.

When we were ready to transfer these camps, the Army decided to truck the men to St. Maries and then send them up the St. Joe River on the train. I talked to the camp commander and asked him not to send the truck drivers with the first consignment of men as I would need them to bring the trucks back from the depot in St. Maries. He agreed to leave them. But on the day they were to leave the truck drivers, he came over to the Ranger Station and informed me he had transferred them all, that they had been instructed to leave the trucks at the depot and board the train, and the Forest Service would have to figure out how to get the trucks back.

Well, I called Supervisor Fitting and explained the deal. He told me to keep the trucks in Clarkia if that was the way the Army felt and let them walk to St. Maries. I went over to our CCC camp

and had a talk with the Captain. I asked him why he hadn't kept the truck drivers as agreed to previously. He said this was an Army order and he had to have the trucks at St. Maries, and we would have to find drivers to bring them back. I told him the trucks were not moving under those conditions and they would remain where they were until he changed the orders. After the air cleared and the camp commander put in a call to Supervisor Fitting, he agreed to leave the truck drivers for me. I went along to St. Maries to make sure he carried out this promise, and he did.

During the winter we had a forest training program for the CCC camps. I was assigned the five winter camps. This program was designed mostly for on-the-job training; however, many other subjects about our natural resources, timber, watersheds and wildlife were worked in. I am sure a lot rubbed off on at least some of these boys. The World War I Veterans Camp wasn't very interested as most of them were hard-rock miners from Butte, Montana. Since then I have met many men in other walks of life who are proud to have been in the CCC, and I think today we need some such opportunity for our young boys. They need an opportunity to become better acquainted with Mother Nature, and learn to appreciate the many things she has to offer. The Forest Service has many jobs that need doing.

During the winter of 1933, in late December, we were on the receiving end of a high wind and a warm, heavy rain that lasted several days. The St. Joe and St. Maries Rivers were soon in flood stage. The St. Joe flooded out many small farms, drowned many livestock, and washed out the Milwaukee Railroad above Avery. One train went into the river. I was then at the Avery Ranger Station. We had plenty of trouble saving the barn at the station as it was built on a fill section with a small creek going under it via a culvert. So much debris was washed down that it was difficult to keep the headgate or grill open. The river caused one CCC camp to flood also. I helped get the passengers, mail and luggage to Avery from the train that went into the river. They made up another train at Avery and I rode this to St. Maries. We made it fine until we got to the flats above St. Maries. Here the water was some three feet deep over the tracks. One man waded ahead of the engine to see if the track was washed out. The water drowned out the fire in the firebox. A log drifted under a box car that had the baggage in it. This was uncoupled and left there. We finally made St. Maries at 1:30 a.m. on Christmas Day, wet, hungry and tired.

The day after Christmas, the Army officers arrived in St. Maries from Fort Wright. They had chartered a boat at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, had made it this far and planned to go on up the St. Joe River, but this was impossible. The river was so high they couldn't get under the railroad bridge. The river was also full of drifting timbers and other debris. The Army was excited and concerned about the CCC boys and their food supplies, and was making this trial run to see if supplies could be delivered by use of a boat.

They came to the forest headquarters at St. Maries - I don't remember where Supervisor Fitting was that day. But, anyway, I talked to them and explained we would have to wait until the water went down sufficiently to let the railroad repair their tracks. They all thought this would take too long and there was still a possibility that the railroad bridge across the St. Joe River might go out. They asked if it would be possible for the Forest Service to pack into the camps, using our pack stock. I told them this would be impossible because all the lowlands were flooded and the high country was covered with deep snow. I suggested we wait a few days because the weather at this time of year would likely turn cold and stop the heavy runoff. I also explained that the men had

some rations in each camp and also some at the Avery Ranger Station. I knew the boys wouldn't starve for a few days. I told them they could fly in and drop anything that would be needed for an emergency. Also, I told them if worse came to worse they could have the foreman take these men out by walking them across the divide to Wallace. All the Army would have to do would be to give the word and those young men would be over the hill in no time. Their final decision was to wait a few days, and as it happened it really was only a few days till the Milwaukee Railroad was back in business and things began to settle down to normal.

## 1935

The winter of 1935 was one of extremely heavy snowfall on the St. Joe. I remember we had a game count going and it was ideal for this as game was concentrated on winter ranges. Just before Christmas a heavy, wet snow and blizzard hit the area and a Northwest Airlines plane crashed on the St. Joe. I was instructed by the Supervisor to take a small group of men and make a search for this plane. With me were several other forest officers - Neil Fullerton, Elmer Marks, Walt Bott, Chas Scribner, and a few temporary men, including Dave Brown who was a radio operator; also a group of Spokane men who were good on skis.

The best information we had was from the Army. From Fort George Wright they had searched the day following the accident and thought they had spotted the plane at the head of Big Creek near Cemetery Ridge, where several men lost their lives in the 1910 fire. We also knew the plane had been over the town of Elk River during the night. They were burning an old lumber yard there and the plane had circled there for several minutes. The telephone operator had reported this to Spokane and the control tower, had contacted the plane and instructed Mr. Livermore, the pilot, to fly west and come into Spokane on the Pasco beam.

We also had a report from Clarkia that the plane had been heard going toward Elk River and also that it had been heard returning. I had a man on game count in Marble Creek who had heard the plane flying over and back. We had a spike camp working on road construction near Calder on the St. Joe River. They were working a night shift with the aid of heavy flood lights. The men here had heard the plane which came down into the canyon fairly low and departed toward Big Creek at about 2:00 a.m. The control tower had contacted the plane at about this same time and was informed by the pilot that he had picked up a leg of the Pasco beam. This was the last that was heard from them.

With this information we got our outfit together, good bedding, camp outfit, and personal belongings. I hired a packer by the name of Noel Farrel, and a local cook. We packed into the forks of Big Creek. There was a log cabin here about 18 x 24 in size which we used as a base camp to work from. The Army search plane that thought they had spotted the crashed plane gave the approximate location as being in Sec. 36, T47N, R3E. So our first search was made in this area. We combed or stripped this section, with no results. The weather remained cold, with much snow and high winds causing heavy drifting. It was so cold that icicles would form on your hair at the back of your neck; also on your whiskers where your breath would freeze visibly. It was almost zero for several days and visibility consisted of a small circle of about 50-foot radius. Ranger Chas. Scribner was sent to Spokane to accompany any search plane and drop us any



information at Cemetery Ridge lookout if by chance the weather cleared so plane reconnaissance was possible. Meantime the ground search continued.

We spent Christmas Day searching, and Christmas Night we decorated a small spruce tree at our cabin by removing the labels from empty cans and hanging them on the branches. The packer hung his silver-mounted spurs and bridle and other makeshift decorations on the tree and it was real pretty by the light of our huge outside warming fire.

The first day the weather cleared the plane was located by Ranger Marks in Sec. 23, T47N, R3E at about 5500' elevation, almost at the top of the ridge. The plane had sheared off several snags. It was covered with about 18 inches of snow and was badly burned. The bodies of the pilot, Livermore, and his co-pilot, Haide, were above the plane and not badly burned. We left things as they were and returned to camp where we radioed in the information and made arrangements to return the following day and remove the bodies and mail. A United States postal inspector arrived at camp.

In the dark, early the next morning, I took the postal inspector by horseback to the end of the trail, where the snow was so deep we couldn't use the horses. We tied them at this point and took to the "bear-paws." We had a steep climb to the top of the ridge and some 5 miles to snowshoe. This gentleman had never had on a pair of "Bear-paws" in his life, but he was game.

We reached the plane somewhat later than the rest of the crew. We had orders not to remove anything from within the plane, as an investigative team was on the way in from Wallace, Idaho; also the deputy sheriff and coroner would reach there by noon. But the postal inspector who was with me gave us permission to search for any mail outside the plane. We uncovered seven sacks of mail and other parcel post packages that were thrown clear of the plane. We also uncovered the bodies of the pilot and co-pilot. They had been thrown through the windshield of the plane, as the nose section of the plane had broken and doubled back under the plane. Both were thrown out with such force that the seats they were strapped to had torn off and come out with them. Haide's body was some 16 feet above the plane, and Livermore's was about eight feet in front of the plane and behind a tree that had come in with the force of the plane. I was told later that they hit the mountain top at about 200 miles per hour.

We got things pretty well together, but we couldn't move the bodies until the coroner arrived. We waited. No one had arrived by noon. We radioed in for permission to move the bodies but were instructed to wait until 2:30 p.m., then if no one arrived, to move them out.

I was anxious and so were the rest of the crew to get off the mountain before dark: We were ill equipped to put in a night here and we had a heavy load to take out with us. Besides, I had this inspector who was slow on showshoes, and it was cold with the snow drifting badly. Close to 2:30 p.m. the deputy sheriff and the coroner did arrive. When they got within talking distance one of them greeted us with, "Who the h-- gave you permission to do any digging around this plane?" The swearing continued. I was certainly taken by surprise, but I held my temper, which was warming me up even in below-zero weather. I finally said, "If you want to know who gave us the authority to do what we have accomplished here, you go up there and talk to that man by the fire." We had a fire going and a piece of canvas for a windbreak built for the postal inspector,

"But first," I said, "I hope you will take time to pronounce these men dead and give us permission to load them on the toboggan as we want to get moving." They did so and my crew wasted no time getting started for camp. Then they talked to the inspector and he brought them down to earth in a few short but to the point words on what Uncle Sam could do about the mail.

I got my pack and, with the postal inspector, started for our base camp. We made the end of the trail where we had left our saddle horses. My man was "all in." I didn't think he would make the last mile as it was down hill and steep. He was falling often from stepping on his snowshoes. I helped him all I could. We left the bodies of the men at the end of the trail for the night. When we reached the horses and I got him aboard, I began leading his horse. We had only started when he said he couldn't ride due to cramps in his legs. I knew he wasn't in any condition to walk farther, so I told him he would just have to ride.

When I got him to camp I took him into the cabin, let him sit down on my bed while I unlaced his boots, and he fell over and was sound asleep before I could get his shoes off. I was afraid he would have a heart attack.

The next morning I returned with my packer to get the two bodies which we loaded on one mule and returned to camp, loaded the camp outfit and left for Calder, Idaho.

The inspector was pretty sore and stiff so I started him down the trail ahead and told him to take his time and he would soon limber up. I also told him if he found he couldn't walk, we would soon be along and he could ride a horse. He said he would prefer to walk. I received a nice letter from him later thanking me for my patience and help.

We got the bodies of the pilot and co-pilot to the railroad depot and shipped them to Spokane. I was glad this assignment was over. I never did hear the final answer to the cause of this accident as determined by the inspection team. The last I heard was that they thought the pilot had circled the town of Elk River so long that his compass was 80 degrees off. They also thought Livermore may have decided to return and get on the Wallace beam; however, I think the compass was off and he thought he was on the Pasco beam. I will never know how he missed all the high mountain tops on his trip from Wallace to Elk River and back.

## 1937

My last two years on the St. Joe were full of surprises and were somewhat hectic at times. My district at Clarkia was turned over to my alternate of one season, Art Greeley. I was moved to the Supervisor's Office, assigned to fire control and some phases of the improvement program, which were not clearly defined. We had all new Rangers on the forest except Chas Scribner and Edd R. Helmers, although Helmers was new here. He had been on the Coeur d'Alene for several past years.

We had several forest timber stand improvement programs going, which consisted of snagging and preparing burned areas for future plantings. These areas were to be reburned under a controlled burning program. This controlled burning was rather new to most of us, which resulted in not too good practice in laying out the areas. I mentioned several times to the

supervisor that we should consider how we were to control these planned burning jobs. I was told in each case that if we couldn't handle a fire when we had man power at hand and could pick our time to burn, then we were poorly trained in firefighting.

While we experienced no serious trouble in our planned burning projects on the Joe, I do feel control of these projects would have been much easier had we been more careful in laying out our control lines. To obtain a good, clean burn it is necessary to do the job in extremely dry weather; therefore, good control plans should always be used. I used several different methods. One burn was a small area near Boville, Idaho. We burned this area at night. I set the center of the area first. When this fire got going in good shape, it created a draft from all sides then we fired from the control lines, or outside area. This turned out perfect and a good burn was accomplished.

Another area was near Emida, Idaho. This was a large area taking in almost all the Charley Creek drainage. Here I first burned from the control line on the top side of the fire area at night when the natural draft is downhill, letting these fires back down into the slash area and giving us a wider control line. The next day we burned from the creek with good success.

Another area near Boville contained heavy snags in not-too-steep country, but it involved careful control methods due to the railroad and some private land along one side. The supervisor and I looked the area over and decided on the date to burn, the number of men required, tools, etc. I was to remain at the area, look it over and plan how I would do the job. The supervisor returned to St. Maries and was to have the agreed-upon number of men and equipment on hand at 10:00 a.m. the following day. When the crew arrived we had only half that number. I asked the CCC Superintendent how come the shortage in manpower. He said that he had all the men that he had been instructed to bring. Fortunately I hadn't yet set this fire as I was somewhat doubtful about the control even with a full crew. I put these men to work, touching up a few weak spots in our control lines, then I drove to St. Maries in the afternoon and contacted the supervisor in his office. He was surprised to see me, or at least he acted like he was. He asked how the burning was going. I told him it wasn't going and it wasn't going to go as far as I was concerned unless I could get the manpower that we had decided upon. The next day I had a full crew and I could have used a few more. This was a hard fire to handle. Monk DeJarnette was on this fire with me and he got smoked up so bad he couldn't see to drive his car the next day. On control burn jobs it is safer to have too many men than not enough.

Perhaps most forest personnel have had some experience with bear in connection with their work. I have had several but would like to mention one that occurred while I was burning road right-of-way debris on the Round Top district of the St. Joe. During late June or the first part of July, I was to perform a general inspection on fire prevention and control on the Round Top district. The supervisor asked me to check the work of a crew that he had clearing a road right-of-way from Breezy Point to Marble Mountain lookout, a distance of some eight miles. He said he and Fred Thieme had instructed this crew to windrow the debris from the clearing in the center of the right-of-way, and burning was to be done in the fall. Construction of the road was to follow the next spring or summer.

I spent a day or so on this job. There was considerable heavy timber involved - hemlock, spruce, fir and some pine. The crew was falling this timber up and down the roadway, leaving it in tree length and only trimming off the top branches. Some of the timber was held off the ground by the lower branches, leaving lots of air pockets. The job looked good when the top branches were limbed off and piled on top of the timber; but from the burning standpoint, I didn't think the timber would dry out enough to burn in one short session. To burn it green would require piling it more compactly. But I didn't change any instructions to the crew.

Upon my return to the supervisor's office, I contacted Ray Fitting and told him I thought we should change the instructions to the crew and have the timber sawed up and the debris put in more compact piles, otherwise it wouldn't burn. I told him the crew was making good progress as far as slashing out the roadway was concerned. Well, I guess I said the wrong thing. He looked over his glasses at me and said for me not to worry about the burning job, that it would burn all right. So I passed it from my mind.

That fall, in late September, Ray came to my desk, looked over the top of his glasses and said he would like to talk to me in his office. I went with him and out of a blue sky he said, "I want you to go to Round Top and burn that right-of-way debris." I was somewhat surprised, but said, "Fine. I'll use the clearing crew that is on the job, I suppose." He said, "No, I don't want to stop the clearing crew and that is what I wanted to talk to you about. You don't need a crew at all. You go up there, wait until it rains about two inches then set that debris at the Breezy Point lookout end, and it will burn just like lighting a twine string at one end and it will burn clean. But be sure to wait until there has been sufficient rain to prevent any ground spread and I don't want any scorching of the roadside timber.

At this point in our conversation, I asked about some help to do this job. He informed me I wouldn't need any help and shouldn't have any trouble if I followed his instructions. I was extremely doubtful and more than a little worried.

The next morning I rounded up my field clothes, sleeping bag, burning torch, gas, etc., and I stopped by the office. The supervisor took one look at me and asked where I was going. I said, "To Round Top and do that burning job." He warned me again not to burn until there was sufficient moisture to prevent any ground spread.

The next day about two inches of light snow fell. I figured this would stop any sparks and also prevent any spread. I started burning and the first half or three-quarters of a mile the brush had been piled and the burning here went just fine. I wasn't having any trouble and I completed this stretch the first day. The next morning I hit the green timber and the windrow brush would not burn. I tried all day with no luck. As far as I could see I was just making a mess of the job. The piled branches would burn off the top, then I had these big full-length trees remaining, only blackened; I couldn't get the things to burn.

I finally decided to telephone the supervisor. I told him that this just wasn't going to burn and if he wanted it done this fall he would have to put a crew on and repile the entire job. He said it must be burned as construction was to follow the next spring and if I needed a crew why didn't I

put one on, but not to interfere with the present clearing crew, as he wanted to push the clearing as far as possible.

I got the Ranger to pack in a camp, tools, and food. I went to Wallace, Idaho, rounded up a few men and a cook, and got back on the job. We set up camp at a small spring along the pack trail. There was a small log cabin there with a porch on it but no door, so we hung a piece of canvas for a door. This cabin was used for our cookhouse; two tents were put up in front of the cabin for sleeping quarters. After we had been here a few days we began to have trouble from the bears. They had taken a ham and our bacon from the porch of the cabin during the night.

I told the cook to move the bacon inside the cabin where he slept. He had a folding canvas cot that he made up at night, then he would take it down during the day as we were crowded for space at mealtime.

The first night he moved the smoked meat inside, sliced a large breadpan of bacon for breakfast and had it on the worktable just above his bed. In the middle of the night I heard the cook hollering, "Hey, that bear is in here!" It sounded like he was a long way off. I found out later he was inside his sleeping bag with as much of it pulled up over his head as possible. I quickly jumped up, and so did my neighbor in the next bunk. He had a flashlight and I had a 12-gauge shotgun loaded with bird shot.

We went to the door of the cabin, pulled the canvas back and flashed the light on a huge black bear standing with his hind feet on the cook's cot, eating the bacon from the work table. He got down when the light hit him and started toward us and the door. My partner put out the light, pulled the canvas around himself, and I stepped back under the porch. The bear came outside and started down the path toward the spring. We shined the light on him again when he was about eight feet away and I let him have the bird shot. We went back to bed. The next morning we looked down the trail and there the bear lay dead. The charge had hit him in the flank and killed him instantly. We had bear meat for several days for those who cared for it. Our packer wanted the hide. This bear, I am sure, would have weighed 250 lbs. The cook said he was larger than that.

I finished up this burning job in about three weeks. We had no rain, but it snowed at different times. We had to repile the entire job and saw the trees into short logs that could be managed by hand. The burning never got out of the right-of-way and there was no scorched timber along the road.

When I got back to St. Maries and got cleaned up after a month of dirty work on this job, I went to the office and told the supervisor the job was completed. He said, "I thought you must have taken up a homestead up there." He thought the cost of burning was too high so he charged most of it to clearing costs. I still think the method would work in pole-sized stands of timber, but not in large timber.

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I have always been proud that I had the privilege of joining the Service and working with a lot of fine people. There were a lot of hardships in the beginning; a lot of learning we had to do, and through it all the Forest Service emerged as a fine, efficient organization.

There are many grand memories for all men connected with the Service. The span of fifty years is incomparable: from riding horseback to fight fire, to dropping smokejumpers from planes.



**By George S. Haynes  
(Retired 1951)**

I went to work in Region 1, on the Coeur d'Alene Forest, about May 1, 1923. I had worked several years in Region 2. The late Theodore Shoemaker hired me as forest guard the spring of 1916 when he was supervisor of the Pike Forest in Colorado. He assigned me to John H. Patterson, Forest Ranger at Colorado Springs. Mr. Patterson was a remarkable man with the qualifications needed to be a good Ranger. I mention these two men because they gave me my first training in Forest Service work, policies and regulations. Their enthusiasm for their work and their high standards of service had a lasting influence on me during my thirty-five years with the Forest Service.

Charles K. McHarg was supervisor of the Coeur d'Alene and St. Joe Forests with headquarters in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. James F. Brooks was assistant supervisor on the Coeur d'Alene Forest.

The late Philip Neff was logging engineer. I was assigned to the Little North Fork Ranger District. This was a valuable white pine district with large timber sales which were handled by project sales men who were under the supervision of the logging engineer. There was lots of Northern Pacific land grant patented land and quite a number of timber homestead patents.

The Rose Lake Lumber Company, which became the Winton Lumber Company in 1924, were driving their logs to Coeur d'Alene Lake. They purchased the Northern Pacific patented land and timber about this time. The Ohio Match Company were getting prepared to log the Burnt Cabin drainage by railroad. Only white pine was considered merchantable at this time. Mixed species were used for camp and improvement construction.

The Ranger Station was at Honeysuckle which was located near where Skookum Creek empties into the Little North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. This is about a mile below where the Deception Creek Experiment Station is located. The Rose Lake Lumber Company had a camp and a warehouse across the creek from the Ranger Station. There was a one-track road with turnouts from Wolf Lodge to Honeysuckle. This road was built by the Forest Service and the Rose Lake Lumber Company. Much of the grade was eleven percent. The Rose Lake had a tote road to Camp 6 on Lieberg Creek, a distance of nine miles. The Forest Service had a good pack trail from Camp 6 to the Magee Ranger Station. The Magee Ranger District supplies were packed from Honeysuckle, a distance of seventeen miles. There were a few primitive trails which had been built by the Forest Service, homesteaders, prospectors and loggers.

There was a two-room log cabin and a small log toolshed at Honeysuckle. Water was carried from Skookum Creek. When Camp 10 was built a mile and a half up Skookum Creek, we dug a well with a pick and shovel near the cabin. Instead of the old oaken buckets, two five-gallon, gasoline cans were used to bring the water up. This well was replaced by a gravity system in 1930; \$328.00 was allotted for this project. This was all spent for water pipe. The labor was all contributed time. There were four lookout points which had telephone connections (grounded tree line). Chilco Mountain had a cabin. The other three points, Spades Mountain, Lookout Ridge, and Monument Mountain had no improvements. A shake barn at Horseheaven was used as a fireman station.

The crew consisted of Ranger alternate and station fireman at Honeysuckle, a smokechaser at Horseheaven, a lookout on Chilco Mountain, a lookout-smokechaser on Spades Mountain, a lookout smokechaser on Lookout Ridge, a lookout smokechaser on Monument Mountain, a ten-man trail construction crew, and usually two or three men on telephone maintenance or construction. The telephone and trail men were the second line of defense on fire suppression. The smokechaser pack weighed thirty-four pounds without drinking water or blanket. The rations were supposed to last three days. Travel time was two or three miles per hour on trails, and about one mile per hour through brush or reproduction. After the first four or five miles, the weight of the fire pack seemed to increase. If fire conditions became severe, two or three emergency men might be added. A forest pack string would pack the season's supplies to the lookout points about the middle of June.

Most of the Ranger's time was spent in the "brush," training and inspecting on the job, "ramrodding" the trail and telephone maintenance and construction, chasing smokes, packing and doing anything that needed to be done. The alternate's work was about the same as the Ranger's. During the fire season, it was considered a good practice for either the Ranger or alternate to be at the Ranger Station to do the fire dispatching and to take immediate action on all fires. Getting good, quick action on all fires was imperative to prevent large fires. This required good, experienced men on lookout points and a communication system that worked at all times. The lookout-fireman positions required men with special qualifications who were willing to work twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. There was no overtime paid or compensatory time allowed. Getting and keeping these men for the field season of four to six months was probably the most important job that the Ranger had.

Cooperation was a must in all National Forest activities but especially in fire prevention and suppression. The timber sale men, slash disposal crews, research, blister rust, insect control, and logging crews worked on fire suppression when their help was needed.

There were three main sources of fire on this District: lightning, logging operations, and campers. Lightning caused the most fires and usually required the most travel time. Slash on the logging areas was the fastest burning and the most hazardous. It was impossible to keep all the slash disposed of currently. The Ohio Match Company were cutting about 18 million feet and the Wintons about 40 million feet per year, in many different drainages. Safe spring burning was almost impossible because of hangover fires in the deep duff. Some falls were too dry to burn until late in the season, other falls were too wet. Consequently, there often was much old and green slash that was a potential threat through the fire season. There was lots of girdled hemlock on many of the old sale areas.

Many of the Winton men had been through the bad Minnesota forest fires where there had been so much loss of life and property. They were very strict about smoking in the woods when the fire season was bad. The timber sales contracts and other agreements with the Forest Service required a fire patrolman on each sale area during the bad fire periods.

If a patrolman turned a man in for smoking in the woods, he might be fired or warned once; the next time, he was paid off. Many men chewed tobacco or used snuff during the fire season.



The Forest Service handled the slash from the logging on the Winton private land under a co-op agreement at a rate of from forty to sixty cents per thousand, about like the states handle private slash now. In heavy stands, the cut was often over 40 thousand feet per acre. This would often cost the Wintons over \$20.00 per acre. They traded many cut-over sections to the Forest Service for around \$1.00 per acre. Much of this land had 10 or 15 thousand board feet of mixed species per acre on it. As there was no market for mixed, the Wintons only logged white pine. They considered it good business to dispose of the cut-over land because of the fire responsibility, taxes and other costs. However, they felt that after they paid so much for slash disposal, they should have received more per acre for their cut-over land that had such good stands of mixed timber.

Phil ("Bronc") McManamin was their woods boss, Wm. Keeler their woods superintendent, and Walter Rosenberry their general manager over all their woods and sawmill operations. These men were high-quality citizens, good timber men and wonderful cooperators. "Bronc" always rode a good horse in the woods operation and between camps. He was really a mounted patrolman always on the alert for any kind of fire cause or danger. The best recreation camp areas along the river were on Winton land. They did not object to the public building camp fires on their land if care was used and safe fire requirements met. The same applied to the huckleberry pickers. There is no way of estimating the value of the help this company and their employees gave to fire prevention and suppression during the eleven years that I was Ranger on this district. During the twenties, this district and most of the forest was closed to public travel when the fire season was serious. After more roads were built, making transportation faster and easier, the closing regulation was used very little except in certain areas of high hazard.

A good trail was built up the river a few miles in 1923. Many good pack trails were built during the next five years. A road was pioneered into Magee the fall of 1927 and finished in 1928. Improvement money was very limited prior to 1932. Telephone lines and lookout stations were given first priority with this money. Much of the labor was done by contributed time when the weather and fire conditions permitted. A cupola log cabin was built on Monument Mt. in 1924. A similar cupola log cabin was built on Lookout Ridge in 1926. A 50' lookout tower was built on Spades Mt. in 1926 and a fireman cabin for living quarters for the lookout in 1928. It took six seasons to get these improvements. Almost all the labor was done by contributed time. These improvements were of much importance to the fire protection of this Ranger District and adjacent Ranger Districts. A 30' tower with a 14' x 14' lookout house was built on Jacknife Peak in 1931. The same season, a frame fireman cabin was built at Horseheaven. A 30' tower with a 14' x 14' lookout house was built on Bumblebee Peak in 1932. The same size tower and lookout house was built on Wall Peak in 1933. A log fireman cabin was built on Tepee Summit in 1933.

From 1923 to 1932, the following improvements were built at the Ranger Station. The amount of money allotted for them is also shown. All the labor was contributed except a small amount on the garage. Most of the work was done after the field season. Much of the lumber was not planed and was salvaged from the old Winton flumes, abandoned scaler cabins, and other buildings.

<u>Year Built</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Money Allotted</u>	<u>Material Purchased</u>
1923	Log warehouse	\$100.00	nails, cement, shingles
1926	Root cellar	\$125.00	cement, shingles, nails
1927	Bunkhouse	\$150.00	cement, shingles, nails, siding, windows, paint
1929	Barn	\$100.00	nails, lumber
1930	Water system	\$328.00	water pipe
1932	Garage	\$340.00	all new material

The fire story on this district for these eleven years is the story of handling small fires under tough pre-road conditions. It will require another article to tell it.

The old days were a challenge to all the Forest Service personnel from the Chief to the newest employee. The future has just as large and important challenges in growing a sustained yield of timber and administering the best possible multiple-use program.

### **An Attack on the *Dendroctonus Monticolae* - Spring of 1930**

This historical item is being written approximately twenty-nine years and seven months after the reports were sent in and the equipment, commissary and supplies accounted for June 30, 1930.

This attack applies to the Little River District of the Coeur d'Alene National Forest. This district was deceased in 1934. Prior to its passing, it had been active in "White Pine doings." Even before the Coeur d'Alene Forest was created, the *Dendroctonus Monticolae* (Mountain Pine Beetle), prospectors, trappers, homesteaders, fishermen, the Northern Pacific Railway and various logging companies had shown a deep interest in this area, especially in the valuable stands of white pine timber.

The Ranger Station at this time was located on the Little North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River near the mouth of Skookum Creek. It was called Honeysuckle.

The "bugs" had been living on the best of white pine for many years. James C. Evendon and his crew had been checking on them for a number of years. Their surveys showed something needed to be done or the bugs would get most of the white pine before the loggers could harvest their share of these valuable trees.

Mr. Evenden and Charles K. McHarg, Forest Supervisor, had recommended that government funds be made available for control measures to decrease the number of active bugs on the Coeur d'Alene. In this, they had the support of Evan W. Kelley, Regional Forester, and Elers Koch of Timber Management, and \$150,000 was allotted for this work, which had to be completed before June 30, 1930.

Clyde S. Webb, who had been in charge of the insect control project on the Beaverhead and Bitterroot Forests in 1929, was assigned to take charge of this insect control job. About the first

of March, Webb arrived in Coeur d'Alene. He and Evenden immediately got their heads together and decided to throw everything (and everybody) into this attack on the Mountain Pine Beetle.

Evenden and his men had made a fairly intensive field survey of the infestation the fall of 1929. They had the heavily infested areas mapped and camp sites shown. Control work was to be done on four Ranger Districts. The other district headquarters were Carter, Pritchard and Magee.

The snow was still deep, especially on the north slopes and high ridges, and had to be plowed for eight miles to get into Honeysuckle. Considerable road maintenance would be necessary to get trucks into Magee. These back stations were not usually opened up until about the middle of May. This would be too late to complete the work before the last of June. This meant that we would be "crowding" the snow on these areas most of the time.

The Winton Lumber Company log drive was on. They were taking men and supplies to the pack station on the Wolf Lodge Road. The men would walk the rest of the way, and supplies were taken on by pack string. The snow was from six to eight feet deep over the summit and in other places. Frank Hicks ran the stage that took the men. On March 12, I went on this stage, then walked to Honeysuckle and on down the river to Winton Camp 14. The snow at the lower elevations was from two to four feet deep. The next day, I looked over road and telephone lines to below the Lieberg Dam. It would take at least ten days and maybe three weeks of thawing weather before the road could be opened up so that equipment, hay, grain, food and men could be brought in by truck. March 14, I returned to Coeur d'Alene.

The etomological part of the job presented a variety of conditions in the different areas. Jim Evenden had Tom Terrell, Archie Gibson, Henry Rust, and probably others who worked on the technical problems, and who helped in training of spotting crews and doing inspection and checking.

Howard Drake, Tom Crossley, Dan Maryott and others of the Coeur d'Alene timbermen spent most of their time on this control project, at least until it got well under way. Webb brought a number of experienced bug men with him. It was necessary to get quite a few camp bosses, chief spotters, crew foremen, packers and cooks from other forests. A certain amount of training was a must. This could not be done in a large group because the men were being put to work whenever there was camp room, and camp facilities were limited and scattered.

There were many problems to solve in getting a good, effective control job done between the going off of the snow and June 30th. One objective was to install every camp as early as possible. The snow conditions made opening up to the trails and repairing the telephone lines difficult until the snow had gone down to about eighteen or twenty inches in depth. On some camp sites, it was necessary to shovel out the snow before the tents could be put up.

On March 31, I went to Honeysuckle to open up the Ranger Station and to get storage space ready for the equipment, food supplies, hay and grain that would be coming in as soon as the road was plowed through. Stanley Sanderson, Assistant Supervisor, was supervising the opening of the road to Honeysuckle and to Magee - snow plowing into Honeysuckle and heavy

maintenance on the road to Magee. Tom Crossley came in to check the snow conditions and to help get the work started. Phil Clack helped here for some time too.

On April 1st, Jimmie McIntyre, of the Winton Lumber Company, Crossley, Les Gossage, and I went to Leiberg Creek to look over an infested area along the river. The Winton rear of the log drive was still upriver. The Wintons agreed to take all the infested trees that they could handlog into the river before the rear of the drive was past this area. Gossage did the spotting ahead of the sawyers and supervised the slash disposal. These were the only sawlogs salvaged on this district of all the trees cut and treated in 1930.

The road was opened April 3rd. The trucks came in with the first loads April 4th. John F. Shields arrived April 5th to handle the headquarters clerk job. He was probably the busiest man on the district with equipment and supplies coming in by truck and going out by pack string, orders from the camps coming in, reports to make and many other things to supervise and do.

The pack stock came in April 7th. On April 8th, the Cathcart camp was packed in. John T. Horner was in charge of this camp. Ed Sathers was in charge of the crew working on bugs in the area around Honeysuckle. The camp at the mouth of Tom Lavin Creek was packed in April 16th. Joe B. Gotz was in charge of this camp. It was necessary to shovel out about 18 inches of snow before putting up the tents. Floyd M. Cossitt and I looked over part of this area. We found many bug trees, some with fully developed bugs, others where the bugs appeared to have emerged the previous fall, others were just in the larvae stage. There seemed to be all stages and conditions of bugs. A distress call was telephoned in to Jim Evenden. He arrived the next day to look the situation over. He was surprised to find the pack trail so muddy and the bugs in so many stages of development, with two feet of snow on the ground in many places and the calendar reading April 18th. His official opinion was "The situation is abnormal as there should not be any mature bugs so early in the season." The fall before had been warm and sunshiny. It was assumed that the weather conditions had developed them prematurely. We were very glad to get Jim's help in solving this problem and many others.

The Cascade Creek camp was put in about April 20th. Snow had to be shoveled before some of the tents could be put up. Floyd M. Cossitt was in charge of this camp. The Iron Creek and Barney Creek camps were put in about the first of May. Glen Dodge was in charge of one of these camps, and James Sabin the other. These two areas did not have as many infested ties as the survey showed. All the other areas overran the survey estimate. One of these camps was moved to three miles above the Tom Lavin camp about the first of June.

All of these camp bosses were extra-good men. However, the days were not long enough for them to do all the work necessary. It took lots of early and late effort for them to keep the work going satisfactorily. Training and supervising of the field work was a full-time job for a twenty-five man camp or larger. The office work was a must as the progress and cost records had to be sent in daily. Each camp had a commissary which added to the office part of the job. Some of the camps did not have telephone connections to start with.

Some of the chief spotters were extra good; others had trouble in determining bug trees. Some had difficulty in making dependable maps. To start with, it seemed almost impossible to get a

satisfactory job of spotting done. Bug trees were missed, old trees were tagged, trees were not located correctly on the maps. Sometimes it was difficult to get extra copies of the maps for the treating crews. Spotting was done in strips across the sections; some corners and lines were hard to find. Some land was not surveyed. When it was raining or snowing, it was impossible to do a good job of spotting. On stormy days, the spotting crews should have been put on treating work. It was necessary to have the spotting well ahead of the treating crews as the treating was done by drainages.

The spotting work needed good woodsmen who could travel through the brush and timber and be able to look around at the same time. It seemed impossible to hire enough men of this type. The treating required good axemen and sawyers who could fall the bug trees without hanging them up. Where the bug trees were scattered, it took a smokechaser type of man to find them easily and quickly. Where there were many men and boys around Coeur d'Alene who needed employment, many of them could not "cut the mustard." It seemed as if there were always cooks coming and going. Some quit, others were fired. Some of the treating was contracted to gyppos. This worked well with the best gyppos but was very unsatisfactory with the others. About the second week in June, the treating was nearing completion in most of the areas except the head of the river where there was still some snow.

Keeping the camps supplied with grub, mail and commissary was supposed to be a weekly pack string trip but often extra trips had to be made. The accounting for all the equipment was a big job. The regular district work was crowding in before the bug work was completed. The future bug jobs were not so large and not so high pressure. Their problems seemed to be about the normal run of district work.

The control of insect epidemics, tree diseases and fire are always expensive. Where preventive measures can be used, they are usually more practical than later control. The amount and value of timber lost through bug control treatment and the cost of the treatment was of considerable concern to me in 1930. The expense of growing timber to maturity, the taxes paid by private owners, the cost and work of fire protection; planting and other expenses justify the salvage of bug attacked trees under normal "bug" conditions. With the coming of more intensive forest management, it should be possible to harvest many bug attacked trees before the emergence of the new adults. Where this is practical, it will help prevent epidemics. Good forest management must solve the insect problems to keep ahead of the bugs.

### **C.C.C. Tree Planting 1934**

Elers Koch and many others were interested in getting the C.C.C. enrollees working on tree planting as reforestation was one of the big objectives of the C.C.C. program. A good, fairly large area close to established C.C.C. camps was needed for a trial run. Up to this time, there had been no large C.C.C. tree planting projects in this region.

The Coeur d'Alene Forest had an area of about 1800 acres close to two camps that was picked for this project. This area was north of Brett Creek on the west side of the Coeur d'Alene River in Sections 7 and 18, T. 52 N., R. 3 E. and Section 12, T. 52 N., R.2 E., B.M. Part of this area had

been burned over in 1919, the rest had been logged soon after. All of the area had burned over real hot in the large McPherson Fire of 1931. It was an ideal chance.

There was a C.C.C. blister rust camp at Nowhere Creek, F-155, and another, F-153, at Rock City. The blister rust work would be through for the season by the middle of September. Usually this would be a good time to start fall planting. These camps were being transferred to California for the winter. Most of the camps going to California were moving the last of September. Arrangements were made to hold these two camps until the last of October for this planting job and for road construction.

Elers Koch and Charles D. Simpson, Forest Supervisor, were especially interested in getting a good planting job done by the enrollees. Paul E. Nelson and I were assigned to this project to train the foremen and enrollees in good planning practices, to inspect the work, iron out the problems that would come up with the camp commanders and camp superintendents and "ramrod" the job through. It was planned to use ten fifteen-man crews, five from each camp. Everything was lined up to go as soon as it rained enough so that a satisfactory job could be done.

The first trees were gotten September 21st when about half an inch of rain fell. More rain was needed on most of the area but the weather stayed dry until October 17. Two crews were kept planting on the north slopes and moist sites. The crews were changed so that all foremen and enrollees who were to work on planting would have training and experience when more rain came. Many of the best enrollees went home the last of September when their time was up. Many of the replacements did not have woods experience and were not accustomed to hiking.

As time went by and it stayed dry, everybody became concerned about not being able to plant as planned. On October 16th, Elers Koch and C.C. Strong came over to size up the situation. It was decided to try to plant all the trees that had been lifted at the nursery, if possible. This was a big order as the camp commanders were getting ready to move. By this time, they had lost any interest that they may have had in the planting project. They were opposed to the boys working in bad weather as they did not want to take any sick boys to California!

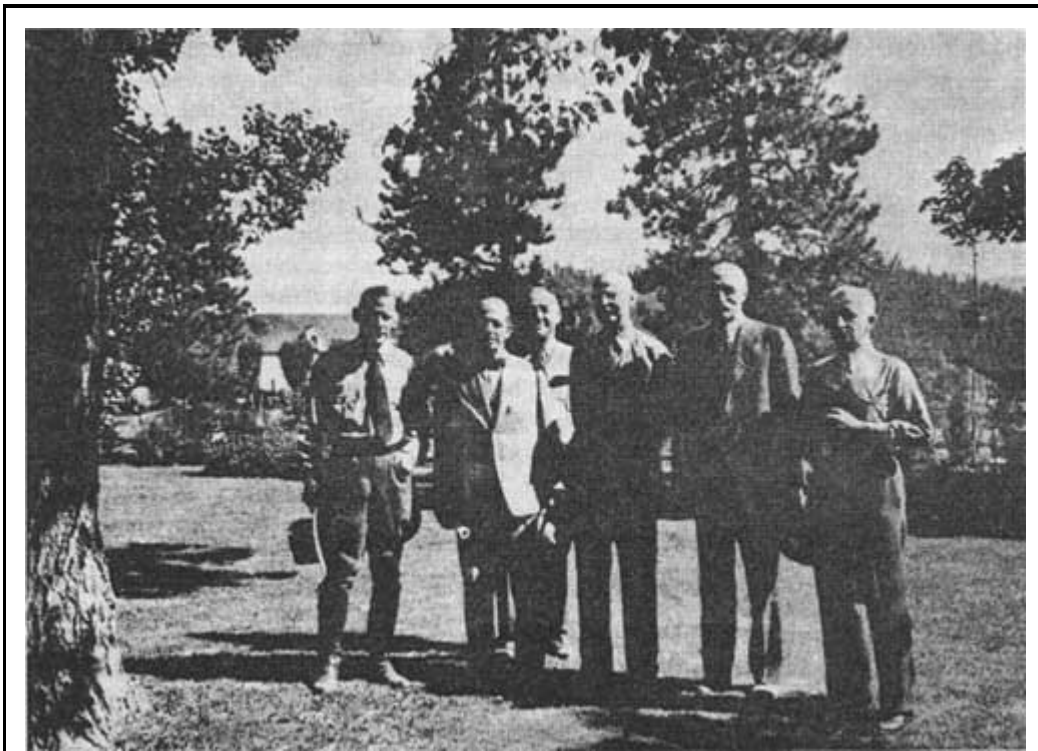
It rained and snowed October 17 and 18. Planting was done on the 19, 20, and 22. However, we were able to get only three crews from each camp. More rain and snow came on the 23, 24, and 25. The camp commanders and others were putting the pressure on to call the planting off. Simpson and I wanted to "hang tough" until the end. October 26 the weather cleared. Nelson and I were at F-155 but the camp commander, doctor and superintendent had decided the planting was over. They refused to let us have any crews. I went to F-153 and talked the situation over with the camp commander and the superintendent. They agreed to let us have as many men as they could for the next four days. With the getting of four crews from F-153, we finally put enough pressure on the commander of F-155 to get three crews from this camp. All the trees which were lifted for this project were planted by the evening of October 29. If the rains had come in September, I am sure that all this area would have been planted as planned.

The following paragraph is a summary of accomplishments on this job:

276,300 of 2-2 white pine were planted on 406 acres, 680 per acre, spaced 8' x 8'. 74,000 of 2-0 ponderosa pine were planted on 109 acres, 680 per acre, spaced 8' x 8'. White pine costs: trees \$5.56, planting \$6.36, other \$1.28, total per acre \$13.20. Ponderosa pine costs: trees \$1.46, planting \$6.35, other \$1.25, total per acre \$9.06. The wages per man day for the enrollees was estimated at \$2.00. The effective planting time per day was about 5-1/2 hours. The average number of trees planted per man day 385.

For the amount of planting accomplished, this 515 acres probably represents more "pressure" than any plantation in this region. While this project did not measure up to expectations, it showed that with training and supervision most of the C.C.C. enrollees were capable of doing satisfactory planting.

K.D. Swan, the regional photographer, took a number of pictures of the different enrollee crews planting trees on this area. Some of these pictures were used in C.C.C. pamphlets and bulletins. Most of the enrollees liked the tree-planting work.



A visit to the Remount Depot — 1937. Left to right: Elers Koch, Henry S. Graves, Meyer H. Wolff, H.A. Smith, Gifford Pinchot, Evan W. Kelley.

## **EARLY DAY SAWMILLING IN THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS**

**By David Lake  
(Retired 1940)**

It was in May 1902, having spent the previous winter in the East, I had a few months before returning to the Snowy Mountain region to start over again, and as yet I had landed no permanent job. One day I ran across a friend named Tom Cameron who said he also had no job, and had decided to ride over to the Elliott ranch at the east end of the Little Snowies. Being footloose, I decided to go along.

We made the old Stone house that night, and the owners, two old Portuguese named Joe and Antone Bettencort, who ran a bunch of sheep, had just started lambing and needed help. So we spent the next two weeks, which was mostly rainy, in helping them out.

Here I learned of a sawmill just starting up in the Little Snowies, at the Block Cabin Spring in Sec. 21, T 12 N, R 21 E. (The so-called Block Cabin was built many years ago at the best spring in the Little Snowies, and was used by early day hunters. A cabin for the party and a stable for their horses were built with the early day loopholes for protection against Indians. There was evidently some truth in this, since I picked up at the spring two empty copper shells, size .577 caliber. This size was not common with American hunters, but was used quite extensively by English sportsmen, both in America and Africa. I still have these shells. At the time we were there the buildings were badly tumbled down, but enough remained for a fair identification of their former use.)

According to the report, they were short-handed at the sawmill. There being a prospect for a summer's job, I decided to ride over and take a look. Never having been in that region before, I had no idea where to look. But I soon found the trail where they had cut their way through the young growth to reach the log site. The mill was an old one, and owned by a young man by the name of Ed Fowler. He had a homestead on Beaver Creek, and had bought the mill to do custom sawing to make a living while getting started on the homestead. The mill had a 42-inch saw, and was powered by an old 20-horse portable engine. It was old enough to have been freighted in the early days for use in the old mining camps.

I landed a job off-bearing, at \$40.00 per month, which meant taking away the slabs and lumber as they fell from the saw and placing them in piles for later disposal. We cut on an average of 6 to 8 thousand feet per day, so off-bearing was no small job.

Here I should state that this setting of logs was cut from land that later became National Forest, Sec. 28-29, T 12 N, R 21 E. A large portion of the Little Snowies was burned off about 20 or 25 years previous and a very dense stand of young growth yellow pine was then coming in. It was then 3 to 6 feet in height. At the present time it is around 30 feet in height and very dense.

We finished this job of around 150,000 feet with only one incident worth relating. We ran out of food supply and had to shut the mill down while the boss, Ed Fowler, drove to Lewistown - about 40 miles distant - for supplies. We boys who had saddle horses put in the time hunting, so when Fowler returned with his supplies we had plenty of fresh meat to go with them. A few days



later the game warden came along, and being a long distance between eating places, he was asked to stay for dinner. Our cook didn't know what to do about the venison, but Fowler told him serve it up as usual and call it beef, which he did, and the game warden ate his share; and if he knew the difference, he never let on. But we were all quite uneasy for awhile.

Ed Fowler had a father-in-law who had a freight team, so when we were finished with a job he was brought in to move the outfit to our next job, about 25 miles away and over some very difficult roads. We had one terrible hill to take the outfit down, about one-half mile in length, very steep and sliding. We spent several days with pick and shovel lowering the upper wheel track. Instead of using the eight-horse freight team to take it down, Fowler had a nearby homesteader, Angus Cameron, who had a fine team of large horses, haul the engine down the hill. He placed a board over the smokestack hole and rode it down. We had to depend on the handbrake, as a rough lock would have ruined the wheel. All would be well if the lower wheels could be kept in the rut, but if one of them should get over the bank it would be goodbye engine, as it would go rolling down to the bottom of the coulee 100 yards below. But nothing happened and we made it safely down. We brought this same outfit down the same hill the next year and thought nothing of it.

After plowing our way through a couple of recently planted fields of grain; against the owner's threats of everything he could think of, we arrived at the next setting. We made two settings that summer on the East Fork of Spring Creek, sawing around 150,000 feet, and then moved on around the north side of the Snowies, through the Judith Gap country, and on to Timber Creek - the South Snowies. Here two local ranchers, Fred Irish and Jim Woodhouse, had gotten out about 100,000 feet of logs, partly fire-killed and partly green timber. We landed the mill here about November 20th and completed the sawing just before Christmas.

The Jaw Bone Railroad, then building from Harlowton to Lewistown, had by this time become an assured fact, and a man one day appeared and stated that he wanted to contract for a quantity of bridge timber. So Woodhouse and Irish contracted with him to furnish the bridge timbers for the road.

Most of the mill crew went home for the holidays, but another lad and I, having no home to go to, decided to stay on the job and cut logs. We finished the cutting by February, and the sawing again started with the weather well below zero.

By this time I had been promoted to engineer, which meant that I had to get up at 5 o'clock and fire up, and again the last thing at night put in a good fire and fix things safe against freezing. The logs were quite large and very long, and by this time were well buried in fresh snow. It would often require from four to six horses to bring some of the logs to the mill. It was really tough going. We had cut about 100,000 feet of logs, all into bridge timbers making them unfit for any other use. And then Irish kicked out and refused to start delivery.

Delivery meant hauling the timber from 25 to 50 miles with horses, and Irish didn't have either teams or wagons for the job. But without delivery, no expenses could be met, So Fowler one day rode horseback to Lewistown and filed a labor lien on all the lumber. Settlement was finally effected and another party took the contract of delivering the timbers to the railroad right-of-way

- from Harlowton to Lewistown. And at this date I am quite certain that I am the only man living who had a hand in sawing and delivering the timber for the Jaw Bone Railroad.

In the spring of 1903 another mill set up about a mile from us on the West Fork of Blake Creek, Sec. 20, T 11 N, R 17 E. The locality is still called Tie Camp Coulee. The mill was owned by Frank McCullum, and he had taken a tie contract. He had plenty of good tie timber available and a good outfit, but he was not getting anyplace with his sawing. He asked Fowler to come over and take a look at this outfit. So Fowler and I rode over one day, and we soon found his trouble. His saw pulley was too large, which ran his saw too slow. There were no sawmill supplies nearer than Billings or Great Falls. Then a thought struck me. Wm. Stranahan, the man I had formerly worked for, had two pulleys and, one of them was the right size, I was sure he would loan one. I offered to go over and see, providing McCullum would furnish a man in my place. He furnished a team and buckboard and I drove over to Careless Creek. I soon found I could get the loan of the pulley and that it was the right size, 16-inch, while the McCullum pulley was 22 inches. As soon as the change was made, they began to really make ties.

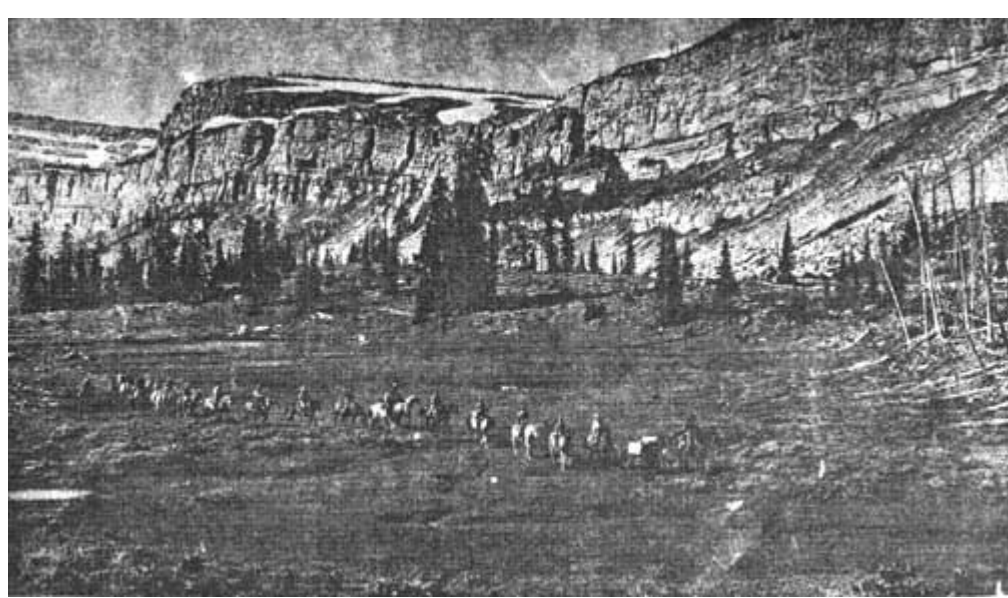
The summer of 1903 found us on the North Fork of Flat Willow Creek, and also again in the east end of the Little Snowies where we sawed out a setting of logs for the Willow Creek Sheep Company, or the Elliott Brothers. The timber was all from homestead owners. Eventually, that fall, we moved to the head of Beaver Creek where we all had homesteads.

During the winter we all got out enough logs to build our cabins and get ourselves started with our improvements. The spring of 1904 ended my work with the mill. Fowler sold the whole outfit to someone on the north side of the Little Belts, and later - a lot later - I found the last location of the mill. It was dismantled and taken up the North Antelope Canyon. They did a lot of work in this narrow canyon to widen it enough to get the engine through, and then up over a jumbled mess of large, house-size rocks, to get it on good going. The mill was set up in Sec. 1, T 11 N, R 13 E. Some lumber was made, but the mill did not stay there long. It was thought by many that the creation of the Forest scared them off.

About 1903 two boys, Bert MaHaney and Jim Pratt, both local residents on the North Snowies, put a mill in the Cottonwood Canyon and started to work on the fine stand of lodgepole pine. They made a good setup, building several good cabins, a shed over the mill, and a 300-yard log chute, and were going along in fine shape. They had a planer and were able to make various kinds of finishing lumber. They did their logging and sawing in the summer and hauled the lumber to Lewistown by wagon or sled. As this was before the railroad, they had a good market. Lewistown was building and lumber was in good demand. Finally a report was received that the Snowy Mountains was made a National Forest and that all trespassing mills would be confiscated and the owners fined. So this mill was pulled out and the owners never returned. They left quite a lot of lumber and a lot of logs behind. The old log chute is still visible.

In this connection I might add that the stand of lodgepole is still uncut, waiting for someone brave enough to build about six miles of road to reach it with trucks. This very probably is the best stand of lodgepole in the country. There are several million feet and the trees will run from one-and-one-half feet D.B.H. to two-and-one-half feet, and five to six logs to the tree. In my opinion, a good stand of accessible timber.

Sometime in the early thirties, my Supervisor, W.B. Willey, and Mr. W.W. White came down to visit me. Mr. White wanted to find an old cutting where he could make some growth studies. I told him I knew of a place and I also knew the age of the cutting, as I cut the trees myself. I took them to our old 1903 logging site.



1935 trail rider party in Sun River Primitive Area under the Chinese Wall. Lewis and Clark National Forest.

## **HOT TELEPHONE JOBS**

**By Leon L. Lake**

**(Retired 1951)**

"We'll hook bleeders onto our two Montana Power lines which parallel that 110,000 voltage transmission line between Kings Hill and Two Dot, and you boys will place your two copper-clad wires on the opposite side of the four-pin crossarms. Now, as soon as your two wires are stretched in for tying down you will immediately ground each wire at the beginning and end of stretching spans."

"Now our two metallic wires carry 4,000 volts of induction from the high line and even with bleeders attached to our wires, you had best avoid coming in contact with those lines if you wish to keep out of trouble. However, in case you should contact one or both of our wires, you'll probably get knocked off the pole and you may get badly burned," so said Mr. Fritz, Montana Power patrolman in his final briefing at Kings Hill just prior to our first day's work on a thirty mile telephone project in the fall of 1926. Needless to say that it looked like a ticklish and hazardous job to a bunch of us Rangers on the old Jefferson Forest (now Lewis and Clark).

In the earlier days of the Forest Service there was never sufficient money appropriated to accomplish urgent jobs; therefore, quite often Rangers were detailed from a forest to make up a crew for telephone construction, road and trail work, insect control, tree planting, or new Ranger Station buildings. Timber cruising was often done by Rangers' crews.

Our crew on this specific telephone job consisted of all the old Jefferson Rangers, as follows: R.E. Dickinson, Foreman; Jack DeGroat, Bob Gray, all now deceased; D.C. Morrison Sr., Stacey Eckert and myself. Mr. Fritz (I do not remember his first name) was assigned by Montana Power to keep us in line about getting careless; also, to hook transformers as bleeders on their two wires as a safety precaution. DeGroat, Morrison and Eckert were the linemen while Bob Gray and I strung wire and insulators and Dickinson did the hauling of telephone supplies and supervised the job.

This Montana Power line paralleled the high line, with about thirty-five feet between; it crossed canyons and went over rough country. I would hook on to the ends of two copper wires and start down into a canyon. I also carried a pack of insulators, two for each pole. After going about one fourth mile, Bob Gray would hook onto the same wires and give me a lift. On one particular occasion we had to go up the other side of the canyon in order to connect up with the other wires. This meant heavy pulling and we had to get right down and grab logs, rocks, and what-not to obtain enough slack to connect up with sleeves. In so doing, I pulled one wire to the top of the crossarms on a couple of poles, one wire going over the top next to one of Montana Power's lines. Fortunately it did not contact their line, or it is possible this story would not have been written.

When about half done with the project, Morrison came down with a bad case of hemorrhoids and was unable to climb so I was assigned to hanging wires over crossarms. Quite often temporary ties were used to hold the wires down in low places, also over high places. This expedited

stretching spans for the linemen. Bob Gray and Dickinson did the stringing of wire and distribution of insulators from then on.

As soon as our two lines were stretched, leaving proper slack between pole spans, ground wires were connected in order that the linemen might work between grounds for better safety precaution. Many a time as I carried two wires up a pole I could feel little red-hot needles sticking through my skin. It gave one a jittery feeling and this induction was much worse on wet days.

Dickinson moved our camp as the work progressed. We also had a cook and good grub and that meant half the battle.

While the poles were quite uniform in height, they were hard as flint from having been treated with arsenic preservative. Hooks just simply would not penetrate more than 1/4 to 1/2 inch. All in all, this was not a kid's job by any means, but as time went on we all became more confident. It took over 30 days to complete the job in late October and were we glad to see the end at the Musselshell Ranger Station, at which place John P. Bonham resided.

Back up on Kings Hill, Mr. Fritz had told us that our No. 10 copperclad would not stand the winter strain and, sure enough, before spring it went out. About 5 miles of this line had to be replaced with No. 8 copper and this ended the trouble for a long time.

In the spring of 1927 another telephone crew was assembled at the Belt Creek Ranger Station with the following Rangers participating: R.E. Dickinson, Foreman, Jack DeGroat, Stacey Eckert, David Lake and myself. Dickinson briefed us as follows: "Boys, we are instructed to string and stretch two No. 12 galvanized iron wires on Mountain States poles from this Belt Creek Ranger Station to Neihart, a distance of about 10 miles. We are going to dismantle the old line on the opposite side of the canyon and transfer it over to Mountain States poles. Now, their poles are graded from a 25' standard to 45' and 55' in order to hold their lines on uniform grade. We will use the only open two outside pins. As we approach the Neihart Mines we will cross a medium hot transmission line. You have all been through telephone schools, now watch your step."

Well, the toughest part of this job was climbing those high poles and reaching those two outside pins. Jack DeGroat and Eckert started out as linemen until Eckert hit some high poles, and right then he "flunked out" as a climber. Then DeGroat came down with lumbago. I gave him hot towel and analgesic balm treatments and they brought him out of it, so he and I finished the climber's job.

There were times when up on a 45' pole I could look down over a cliff and see just where one would land and stay put if he indulged in anything but extreme caution. Knowing this I slammed my spurs in a little deeper and strained all the harder to reach those outside pins and make the proper ties. I am only 5'7" and oftentimes my safety belt and spurs would be only 12" apart on the pole. One had occasion to remember all his safety rules on this job, but, glory be, we finished the project without any accidents.

After being transferred to the Philipsburg and Boulder Districts of the Deerlodge Forest, and later on over to the Kootenai Forest, I fell heir to a good many other telephone jobs, each one having its own peculiar characteristics, comprised of lookout installations, Ranger Station wiring, as well as switchboards, and I enjoyed the work.

Now the times have changed to a point whereby a Ranger has access to radio, microwave, and walkie-talkies for communication. Telephone lines are almost a thing of the past so I guess after all is said and done, I was born too soon.

### **Horse Roundup Days on the Old Jefferson Forest**

In the fall of 1928, after the big horse roundup was over, we found it necessary to transfer the remaining 60 head of unredeemed "broomtails" to a new pasture that had been leased until time for the drive to Martinsdale where the sale would be held.

Clarence Settles, now deceased, my wife and I formulated a plan to drive this bunch of cayuses about two miles across the open range; my wife would stay with her horse near the gate of the new pasture where she could head off the horses from going around the fence. Well, Settles opened up the gate to take the lead in trying to keep the wild bunch from splitting off from the others, he having the fastest saddle horse, and I was to whip up the drags at the tail end.

We started out and it went fairly well for about 200 yards, but for the life of me I could not whip up those drags with the lead; as a result the wild bunch split up in three groups. Settles kept in the lead of about 30 head of the wild horses while I let the drags go and took after the middle bunch of "broomtails" that were plenty fast for my horse. Well, sir, the last I saw of Settles and his bunch they were going over a hill "hell bent for breakfast."

My bunch took off down a timbered coulee but by riding like hell and cutting around a neck of timber I finally succeeded in heading them off and back around to the new pasture gate where my wife helped cut them into the field. My saddle horse was spent so I grabbed the other one and started back after the drags, and by the time they were rounded up and in the pasture here came Settles with his 30 head of wild mares and mustangs. He had run them until they were winded and into a rimrock where he quickly cut into the lead, and back they came as if it was a made-to-order movie, and through the gate they went. His saddle horse was about done and my two horses were already spent. This all happened within about one hour and I can truthfully say that it was about the fastest ride I ever had in my whole life. While those wild horses were getting away I had visions of losing the whole works, and what with a horse sale advertised thirty days hence at Martinsdale, it certainly looked as if I was going to be on the spot for sure.

This wild ride to change horse pastures all came about as a result of the new Regulation T-12, and it is believed this was the first horse roundup ever staged in Region 1. I was assigned to the Castle Mts. district on the old Jefferson Forest, on which a considerable number of wild horses were grazing in trespass yearlong. Adolph Weholt came down from Great Falls to help get everything under way for the roundup.

Clarence Settles, an old horse wrangler who had oodles of experience with wild horses in the early days and who was still quite active at the age of 70, had been hired to assist.

We leased an abandoned ranch inside the Forest for our headquarters and started to work gathering a total of 185 head of horses, of which forty or more were rounded up the second and third time after being redeemed by their owners. The District contained a number of unfenced privately owned sections, besides several thousand acres of patented mining claims on which we could not legally touch any trespass horses. It was, therefore, a ticklish job, moreover one had to know land lines in a fairly accurate manner.

As soon as a bunch of horses were gathered we had to work them over in a stock corral, taking descriptions of each horse, recording brands, etc. Oftentimes we had to front-foot and throw a number of them. They were then hog-tied and brands were sheared. Here at this ranch we had no chutes so old-time methods had to be used.

Each day I worked up cost keeping records of all expenses, since invariably after being notified, owners would appear to redeem their horses. If prices became too high a few owners would leave their horses until day of sale, hoping to buy them back at reduced bids. One owner left about 30 head this way.

One day in November, Settles went home to vote at White Sulphur Springs, as I had already done. Adolph Weholt was left in charge of the horses, but the next morning he found 20 head missing. He immediately came over to the Four Mile Ranger Station and asked if we had seen any horse thieves. Settles said in riding over that at about two miles distant he could see someone driving a bunch of horses, but did not know who it was.

We soon discovered that the Charley Smith and Sons horses were missing and it began to look as if we might be in for some severe trouble. For over 10 years the Forest Service had been having grazing trespass troubles with Charley Smith, trespass case after case, which finally resulted in an injunction taken against Smith in Federal Court and a lien filed against his land. After one year the lien and judgment had to be satisfied, resulting in the U.S. Marshall serving papers on Charley Smith, and he was ordered to vacate the land. However, he was still residing upon the land at the time the horses were stolen out of the pasture by his sons. In fact, I believe Smith still had a year to redeem his land.

Adolph Weholt returned to Four Mile Ranger Station on his way to Great Falls, and upon arriving he phoned me to go up and take those Smith horses back to our impounding pasture. I refused to do so without written instructions, believing that it would now have to come about from Federal Court. It ran along another week or so and Supervisor W.B. Willey (now deceased) called up and demanded that I go and get those Smith horses. I refused again for the same reason, asking him to get a writ of replevin out of Federal Court. He stated that this would take quite awhile and as the date of the sale was drawing near, we should try and get those horses as soon as possible and for me to watch those special-use pastures fenced in with the Smith land which I promised to do. However, those horses never got off the Smith land. With the thought in mind of trying to avoid a gun battle with Smith and his sons, I figured it out that we could not legally take those horses without some writ out of Federal Court.

Finally Glenn Smith of R-1 Range Management dropped into the Supervisor's Office at Great Falls. Mr. Willey called up at once and asked me to contact the Smiths and see if they would pay the redemption fees on their horses up to the date they were taken out illegally. This took quite a lot of maneuvering but it was finally accomplished without further drastic action.

It might be of interest to add that upon instructions from Supervisor Willey we wore guns while conducting this roundup. It seems that down in Colorado some Rangers had been shot and killed by angry stockmen while handling trespass horses rounded up under the new Regulation T-12; therefore the wearing of a six-gun saved a lot of heated arguments.

The horse sale was set for December 4, 1928, as I remember it, to be held in the stockyards at Martinsdale, Montana. The time was drawing near for the overland drive, a distance of about 25 miles. I hired two cowboys to assist Ranger John P. Bonham (now 92 years of age, at White Sulphur Springs), Clarence Settles and myself. We had several miles of open range to cross before coming to the county road. Settles and Bonham took the lead, one cowboy on each flank, and I brought up the rear. In this way we could hold down the wild bunch and keep up the drags. In fact, in this manner these 60 head of horses could have been trailed to any place in the State. I have known Settles to bring in 10 or 15 head of wild horses all alone without losing any of them, and right here I want to say that I learned a lot about handling wild horses which came in handy later on. As soon as we struck good fenced lanes the two cowboys, whose names I do not remember, were dropped off and we went on to Martinsdale without any hair-raising mishaps.

The next day a bad snowstorm set in so we bought a load of hay and fed the horses. Several of them with blotched brands had been advertised "Looks like this —;" therefore, in order to give a clear bill of sale we found it necessary to catch and throw a few in order to clip the brands once more. Bonham and Settles did the front-footing, the former seldom missing a throw and almost invariably catching both front feet, while Settles usually came up with one foot. However, he was slightly handicapped, having lost several fingers from taking dallies around the horn of the saddle. I had thought that I was pretty good with a rope, but both of these boys had me beat a mile.

The weather dawned fair and chilly for the big horse sale in the stockyards at Martinsdale before a crowd of more than 500 people. It seems that this roundup and horse sale had gotten into Associated Press news, hence a number of out-of-county horsemen were there, including representatives of Hanson Packing Company of Butte; also my brother, now ex-ranger David Lake of Judith Gap, who's still living. W.B. Willey, Forest Supervisor of the old Jefferson was auctioneer, and I acted as clerk and secretary of the auction. Several stock inspectors, state senators and influential stockmen were present. Mr. Willey announced the number of minutes left in which to redeem horses prior to start of sale. One was redeemed at a price of about \$30.00, as I remember it.

The stock inspectors tried to start trouble by saying that the sale and roundup was illegal; furthermore, that anyone buying horses would have to stand an inspection at each county line, horses corralled, brands inspected, etc., before proceeding. Of course they were invoking a state law to this effect, but trying to make it as burdensome as possible. To offset such arguments, one horse owner had brought in another 20 head of wild horses for the sale. We already had about 30



head of his horses and it now looked like we were going to have a good sale. I still wore my six gun under my coat since feeling was at a high pitch. As time wore on everything calmed down when they saw we meant business.

Mr. Willey sold a few of the best and most desirable horses to local buyers and then knocked off that bunch of 30 wild ones to Hanson Packing Co. (I do not remember the price paid but they were cheap.) After our horses were sold, Mr. Willey sold the 20 head run in by a local horseman and they went to Hanson Packing Co. We heard that two big, rangy sorrels were broken stock so that was announced and they were bid in by Hanson Packing Co. for about \$30.00 each. Later on I learned that Hanson Packing Co. resold them to another party who hitched them up together, but they ran away, smashed up everything in general, and broke one fellow's leg. "Unbroken outlaws," did you say?

After the sale I had a big job making out bills of sale, collecting sale receipts, and making out letters of transmittal until the wee hours of the morning. The next day was Sunday but I converted \$600.00 in bank drafts and cashier's checks made payable to the District Fiscal Agent. I already had more than \$400.00 in redemption fees at the Four Mile Ranger Station which had been converted into bank drafts. In summing up the sale costs and redemption receipts, this was one sale that paid out.

Settles hired out to Hanson Packing Co. and went on the overland drive with their horses to Jefferson Island, where they had a pasture. Upon his return he related how one big roan had gone through the ice in crossing the Jefferson River but, would you believe it, I picked up that same big roan the following fall in another roundup.

At a stock association meeting held at Martinsdale the following winter one local irate stockman, who was also a state senator, got up and ridiculed our way of conducting horse roundups, accused me of taking horses out of privately owned fenced lands inside and outside the Forest, all of which was not true, and finally got an item in the Helena Record Herald that I was a horse thief and rustler; furthermore, that in the early days men like me would be shot and left to die with their boots on.

Such a statement in the press, made me a little hostile and really raised my ire, but nevertheless, each fall and spring, I went ahead and rounded up more trespass horses and even caught some more owned by the same radical stockman, one of which was loco and which I was unable to corral. Later on it was taken with others to a sale at White Sulphur Springs, cut out from sale and driven with others back to its owner. That fall I ran into this locoed horse on the range and it came right for my horse, hell bent for trouble. I unlimbered my rifle and shot him, but this and other incidents would make a separate story.

In the spring of 1930 I was transferred to Philipsburg, later on to the Boulder District of the Deerlodge Forest and from there to the Kootenai Forest on the Warland District where at each place more horse roundups were organized; also a few minor roundups were conducted on the Deer Lodge District, Deerlodge Forest, from where I retired on June 1, 1951, and quit the game.

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In my thirty-four years of experience in the Forest Service it became a second habit of packing my six-shooter along with other camp supplies, when going out on field trips. In the early days in the 1900's and twenties I found a six-shooter excellent company when dealing with tough customers or in law enforcement cases; in fact right up in the 1940's I expected to have to defend both my assistant and myself from a demented prospector who threatened to kill a Williams and Pauly herder but that story will be related later on.

On my first district in the North Snowies of the old Jefferson Forest I had called a deputy game warden at Lewistown to help me on a game investigation case. He came out and we rode about 12 miles and stayed all night at a ranch. The next day we started out again and on the way he asked me if I had a gun. I told him no. The people we were going to investigate were tough homesteaders living on the edge of the Little Snowies where it had been reported to me that they had been killing antelope and deer for commercial purposes. Their name was Zumwalt. Oral Zumwalt, the big rodeo producer who furnishes all the stock for Montana rodeos, was a little fellow at that time. When deputy warden Jim Weaver, now deceased, found out that I did not have a gun along, he refused to go any further and promised to send me a gun as soon as he reached Lewistown. I was cautioned by him to never do any investigating of fish and game cases without having a gun along, for some of these nesters could be plenty tough.

At other times it was specifically stressed by sheriffs and other law enforcement officers (not Forest Service) that in no case should one try to search a person or premises without a gun on his person, because someday it might come in handy.

In view of the above advice, greater protection from obnoxious moose and bear, and self protection, in case of getting hung up in a stirrup when riding broncs out in the great alone, it became a habit to see that my six-shooter was always in my chaps pocket as I started out on a field trip. It was also a must on horse roundups.

The present day Ranger personnel may feel that toting a gun along was all uncalled-for, but in the early days settlers were not very enthused about the Forest Service in general; in fact widows trying to carry on after their husband's death or others who were just plain tough and hard to get along with presented real problems. I had dealings with one or two such women who would just as soon shoot you as not. A former Lincoln County sheriff, now deceased, once told us at a law enforcement meeting that when one ran up against a tough female character who threatened to kill you, "Just treat her like you would a man."

On all horse roundups conducted in the Castle Mountains District of the old Jefferson Forest, Philipsburg, Boulder and Deer Lodge Districts of the Deerlodge Forest we carried guns and the owners of impounded stock had a tendency to soften up or reduce the abusive language just because we were armed. I doubt if the present day "scooter type" of Rangers and personnel will ever need to tote a gun. Times have changed and people are no longer belligerent toward the Forest Service policies and personnel.

When I had the Philipsburg District, Deer Lodge Forest, a tough character by the name of Jimmie Young lived on the old Page homestead on the East Fork of Rock Creek, where the East Fork Reservoir or Lake now exists. The Georgetown Stock Association kept complaining about

his cattle and horses running in trespass on the Georgetown range. I went after Mr. Young, but he would not keep them off. If I remember correctly, he finally got involved in a trespass case which made him mad. One day he and I met in Philipsburg and I tried to reason with him, but to no avail. He finally threatened to kill me if I ever went out on the East Fork country. Now I never did pose as a "trigger happy" Ranger, but wasn't easily bluffed. Young made the statement that it would be easy to mistake me for a deer and to keep away from his country. Well, it meant hurling a challenge at me so I quietly told him that if he felt that way he had better do a good job with the first shot; furthermore, I always carried a gun and knew how to use it. I made many a trip over in his locality after this incident, and nothing ever happened - and he kept his stock off the range.

Over on the Boulder District we had been having a lot of trouble with the John Rofthus trespass horses on the Elkhorn range. The Elkhorn Stock Association was kicking about his horses out there winter and summer. I had been trying to get him to take care of them, but due to so many intermingled patented mining claims it was a difficult problem to handle.

One day in the spring I made a hurried trip over to the Elkhorn with my horse and trailer. I unloaded my saddle horse at the mouth of Sour Dough Creek and rode across Rofthus' fenced mining land and found the gate open on the northwest side. Apparently it had been open for a long time, and I found his horses out on the range off from all patented mining claims. The District had been advertised for horse roundups. It would have been a "cinch" to pick up those horses with two men but with one alone they would drift right back down the hill and into the fenced land, and if I was ever caught taking them out of private property, well, that might mean plenty of trouble; therefore, I figured to go down and get a rider to help me.

Sourdough Creek is below the old mining town of Elkhorn but somehow the grapevine gets around and as I approached the trailer there was John Rofthus waiting for me on his horse. I started to dismount but in doing so I noticed Mr. Rofthus uncoiling a twenty-foot blacksnake whip and stretch it out full length. I mounted my saddle horse again and passed the time of day with Rofthus and with this I opened up my coat so that he could see that I was armed. He took one look at it and then recoiled his whip and we discussed the horse trespass problem. He made apologies about the gate being open and promised to go and get his horses. I warned him that if I ever caught them on the range again they would be rounded up and held for costs. I never had any more trouble from him hereafter.

On my first district in the Snowy Mountains it had been rumored that poachers were hunting in the Snowy Mt. Game Preserve, the Forest boundary being the line. This had been going on for some time, but I did not have the time to continually run down game-trespass cases, although at that time it was a major part of our duties.

The open hunting season was in effect and a heavy snowfall arrived in October. I rode over to Rock Creek from the Rogers Ranger Station, mainly on game patrol. Upon arriving at an abandoned ranch on Rock Creek, I found where some hunters had dragged down some deer out of Greenpole Canyon and loaded them on to a wagon and pulled out. I backtracked them to above the Forest boundary for about one mile and found where they had killed and dressed them out. I circled back to the boundary line and made absolutely sure that no other hunters were

involved and then went back down the canyon. I approached an open meadow where the canyon forked, and decided to ride around the edge of the timber and make sure that no hunters had come in from any other source. About half-way around a rifle shot whined over my head, then another, and another. I jumped off and pulled my rifle out of its scabbard and was in the mood to return the shots as I could see two hunters standing down at the lower edge of the park about 300 yards away. I suddenly changed my mind, mounted my horse, and rode down on them in zig-zag fashion with my rifle on the ready. I hailed those fellows none too courteously, asked for their licenses, and found out they had just come in to the old abandoned ranch soon after I had left there. In due time I dropped in to their camp and learned that they had passed a wagon as they were coming up, but did not know the hunters nor see any game. The cookstove was still warm when they arrived.

By riding several miles I dropped in on the owner of the abandoned ranch. It was now about midnight, and here I stayed all night. This man happened to be over at the place when two hunters from Moore, Montana, came in with camping equipment and asked to stay there. He knew one man's name and that was enough. The next day I rode home to the Rogers Ranger Station and grabbed my "jalopy" and hit for Lewistown where the local game warden was contacted. We went over to Moore and contacted the fellows, who both owned up to killing a nice buck apiece and camping at the old ranch already mentioned. We obtained warrants of arrest and went back and served them, confiscated their bucks and took them to Lewistown for a hearing. They pleaded guilty and took the rap for \$50.00 each, the judge revoking their licenses, and the game warden confiscating their game and guns.

While on the Boulder District I had numerous experiences dealing with miners, incendiary fires, game trespass cases, special-use permittees, and homesteaders. In fact, I really liked law enforcement activities. One day the supervisor at Butte called and asked me if I would investigate and make a report on the FitzWilliams homestead located in the head of the Boulder on Indian Creek. Ranger Sam Harris could not cross the continental divide to get there on account of the snow on the divide. Within a few days I went up there and covered the claim in full. It was partially fenced, with a poor shack that was uninhabitable, and no cultivation. I was forced to make an adverse report from the findings.

However, soon after we were all called to a Ranger meeting in Butte. "Chick" Joy was supervisor. It was necessary to see Mr. FitzWilliams so I got a hold of Ranger Sam Harris and we went down to see our party who lived on South Arizona Street in Butte. We found the place, went upstairs and rapped on the door. A heavy-set, middle-aged lady came to the door. We asked for Mr. FitzWilliams, and she said he was not at home in very unfriendly tones. However, as she spoke he had driven up, so she said, "There he is," and pointed.

Harris and I went back down the stairs, introduced ourselves, and he took us into his secondhand store, locked the door on the inside, and asked us what we wanted. Well, it was up to me to do the questioning, so I began to ask him about his residence on the claim, improvements, cultivation, etc. While we were discussing these matters, his wife yelled out at him, "Supper is ready. Come and get it, you SOB." Well, we decided to take leave and as the old boy took the key from his pocket, unlocked the door, and let us out, we breathed a big sigh of relief.

Later on, FitzWilliams called at my residence in Basin and tried to bargain with me about the adverse claims report. Failing in that, he spoke about hunters mistaking Forest Officers for deer in the hunting season and that it could happen to me. I told him I wasn't scared and later on went hunting near his locality. He hired an attorney to fight his case but at the hearing he never showed up and the case went by default in favor of the Forest Service.

Over on the Kootenai Forest we had a tough female character to deal with. She lived at the mouth of Dunn Creek just off the Kootenai River. She was reported to have been married four or five times, and it was alleged she had killed one husband, one or two had died mysteriously, and another had fled. She was an early day barroom type who, in her younger days, lived at Jennings, the lower port for steamboats that plied the Kootenai River from some point in Canada. These steamboats carried gold ore and other commodities for reloading on Great Northern freight cars at Jennings. No use in saying that this was a wild town in the early days. Our female character was given the nickname of "Dunn Creek Nell" and it still sticks with her. At last reports, she was still alive and living at Libby, Montana.

"Dunn Creek Nell" hated Forest Officers or any others whom she considered prowlers around her abode. She had a homestead way up Dunn Creek and reached by trail until a logging road tapped that locality. However, she lived on an old cabin at the mouth of Dunn Creek. She wanted a special-use permit for this cabin so went to the Supervisor's Office at Libby to find out about it. She always carried a big long sixshooter. She got the office force into a near panic the way she yelled and talked with profane language. The outcome of it all was that I had to go down there and check things over. She was not at home, but by running out lines we found her cabin to be on patented private land and she was so advised later on.

One day "Jack" Lilliveg, assistant supervisor of the Kootenai, was riding down Dunn Creek on his way to the Warland Ranger Station. The trail led fairly close to "Dunn Creek Nell's" cabin. All at once he looked up and saw a female character behind a stump with a gun leveled at him. She said to him (Jack's own story), "Don't you come any closer or I'll bore you center." Well, Jack being very coolheaded, told her who he was and where he was going, but it didn't make any difference. So he began to talk to her about guns and asked her what kind of a gun it was, advancing a little as he talked. He told her she ought to be more careful about pointing loaded guns at people, because she might accidentally kill someone. By this time he was getting rather close. He suddenly asked to see her gun as he thought perhaps he may have one like it. She gave him the gun, he looked it over, threw the shells out on the ground, mounted his horse, and told her that she would find her gun on yon stump and rode off. However, Jack went on to say that she had him guessing for a little bit.

Another episode that seemed funny to the perpetrators. Her last husband was a docile little man who was unable to hold his own or even dare to talk back to her. One day he was in a Libby barbershop getting a haircut. The barber told him that he should not take everything laying down, but to stand up to her and show her he was a man. Apparently he had been telling his troubles to the barber, who was trying to get him out of the doghouse.

They had finally convinced the husband that he should talk right up to her. Well, in stepped "Dunn Creek Nell" (I do not recall her real name) and she told her husband to do certain things

and get to going. At that he stepped right up to her and said, "You are no longer going to boss me around as you have done. I'll get those things when I get ready." The story goes that she told him, "You dirty little cur, what are you up to?" and hauled off and knocked him down flat.

In 1941 and 1942 the J. Neils Lumber Company logged off Dunn Creek and built logging roads all over. They bought the timber from "Dunn Creek Nell's" homestead, part of which had been deeded to another party. The Forest Service had decided to maintain the main logging road up Dunn Creek which passed through her homestead under a reserved right-of-way. This road was under the Forest Service Road Engineering System, but "Dunn Creek Nell" had put a fence across the road and defied anyone to go beyond at the cost of getting shot.

The Supervisor's Office threw the whole case into my lap for straightening out. Karl Klehm was Supervisor and George Duvendack an assistant Supervisor, and neither one would have anything to do with it. I was told to get some action, as the road maintenance men would soon be assigned to the Warland District.

It was in September that Frank Bolles, my dispatcher and I went down to Dunn Creek to map private timber lands in cooperation with the State and also to contact "Dunn Creek Nell" about the fence. I asked Bolles to go with me that morning, but he flatly refused, so I went up to her cabin alone to shoot troubles with her. I knocked on the door, she opened it, and immediately dashed for her 30'06 rifle, threw a shell into the chamber, and laid it across the table. I asked her why the rifle, and she said that she was always prepared for action. I opened up my coat and made the statement that I always went armed also. We discussed the fence across the road, and she cussed and raved about the J. Neils Lumber Company and what thieves they were along with the forest officers who all robbed, poor widow women. Then she quoted excerpts from the Bible to prove her points. I also asked her if "someone should smite thee on one cheek, thou shalt turn the other." She cussed and said that she didn't believe in that G.D. stuff. I tried to reason with her to no avail. Finally I asked her to take a ride with me up to the homestead where we could discuss the problem on the ground. She decided to do this and took her dog and gun along. When we came to the fence she swore she would shoot the first man that tried to cross over and up the road. I tried to convince her that the Government had a road right-of-way through her homestead. I had previously checked the road to see if it followed the right-of-way survey. Well, as a last resort, I said to her now if we should have to go through here to a fire we will tear this fence down and go to the fire. She said if I catch you doing that I'll shoot every last man and roll them over the bank. "All right," I said, "if we come through here we will be armed and it might be too bad for you, but on the otherhand, if a fire is burning on your own land on which you have been paying fire protection fees knowing we cannot go further than this fence, we'll just let it burn until it reaches Forest land."

She thought a minute, and said, "Let's tear the G.D. fence out." I asked her if she meant it and she said, "Yes." We tore out the fence, and she promised no more trouble. After this she took me down to her homestead where one of her babies was buried. She became real chummy on the way back and, while I wanted to get away, she took me into her house and showed me her artistic quilts, her box of self-made poems which bordered on to the wild happenings at Jennings and steamboats. I finally got away from her, and that was the last of the troubles with "Dunn Creek Nell."

The last incident of what could have been serious trouble occurred in 1946, as I remember it, on the Deer Lodge District of the Deerlodge Forest. An old prospector by the name of Graupner lived on Pikes Peak Creek. He had numerous mining claims located up and down the creek and even high on the mountains. He lived alone and kept everyone from going up above his place. The road up there wasn't much better than a trail or better for a jeep. Up above his place a band of sheep were routed in each summer on a deferred and rotation plan of use. The unit had about ten days feed with a water project lower on the mountain. Rangers in the past had plenty of trouble with Graupner so they built a fence below the troughs to keep the sheep off from a ditch line lower down. Each year the Williams and Pauly outfit was blackmailed into paying money to Graupner before the sheep went on this particular unit of feed. He finally kept raising his price and threatened to kill their herder and camp tender if he didn't come across.

Graupner's last letter was turned over to me since Mr. Pauly emphatically stated that unless something was done the sheep would not go on to that unit of feed. This would shorten the season causing the sheep to go off early. Mr. Pauly said he was tired of paying blackmail money for something the old prospector did not own. (None of his claims were patented.)

Now to go through the regular channels of solving this problem would have taken a long time, possibly into Federal court, and that could have taken several years.

It had finally come to a showdown. One day in August, my assistant, Douglas C. Morrison Jr. (now in charge of wildlife in the Regional Office at Prescott, Arizona), and I took our horses and went down to Pikes Peak Creek and camped. We had surveys to make for posting water appropriation notices on our range water projects. We rode up to the Graupner country, posted a notice on the spring, checked on his ditch which he claimed the sheep polluted so that he was unable to use the water for domestic purposes. We found the ditch ended under the ridge and the water ran out into the windfalls.

Graupner was on the roof of his cabin as we approached. He usually would come out of his cabin with a rifle in his hand and always acted as if he might take a shot at you. We passed the time of day with him and asked if he would come down as we wanted to talk to him. He finally came down and in a better spirit than usual. I opened up the matter about his ditch line, the sheep grazing that unit, and the fence and watering problem, as they all affected him. We asked him where he got his water supply and he pointed to Pikes Peak Creek so Doug went down and got a drink and put two bottles of beer in the water.

Graupner pointed out a few of his claim lines, springs appropriated, and we looked at his ores. Doug went after the beer (I had always known a prospector's failing) and we offered him a bottle. I asked him if we would repair the fence under the water troughs would he leave the sheep and the herder alone? He said yes, if they would keep the sheep off from his ditch line. I offered him the job of repairing the fence as it was down in bad shape. He refused the job: I asked him would he sign a contract about the whole deal I had made. He said yes, so I wrote it up, he signed it, and Morrison signed as a witness.

Now we went up there expecting trouble and we were "loaded for bear." Doug wore his gun in a holster on the outside and mine was in my chaps pocket under the flap. Graupner saw Doug's

gun and started to make a grab for it and Doug not knowing what else to do let him take it out of the holster. As I saw this play, I quietly dropped my hand to the handle of my gun whereupon Graupner said I have a gun just like this one and in the house he went and soon returned with it. He and Doug compared guns and the situation looked even worse. Finally, our business done, I said to Doug, "Let's go, it looks like rain." I mounted my horse and rode off about fifty feet and waited for Doug. He took the sign and as he passed by I yelled, "Kick that horse in the slats and let's get out of here" as we waved back towards our demented man Graupner.

After this incident, I cautioned Doug to never let anyone take a gun from his holster; better yet, take it out, extract the shells, and hand it over to the party to see. If Graupner had been in a vicious state of mind we might have had plenty of trouble. Afterwards he came in my office to chat with me. In all probability he had gone into the Supervisor's Office at Butte and related his troubles. Suffice it to say that I never had any more trouble with friend Graupner, now deceased.

In summing up-these incidents connected with Forest Service activities, I do not wish to appear as a "hard-boiled" gun-toting ex-Ranger. Neither do I wish to recommend the same procedure for present-day Rangers. Practically all the old tough characters have either become incapacitated or have died off leaving a better quality of citizens to deal with. However, in the course of events, it seemed to be my lot to come in contact with the tough cases; furthermore, I do not remember one such case that was ever appealed to a higher office.



L. L. Lake working on a black bear rug. "Taxidermy and photography are my hobbies."



## **SOME EARLY HISTORY OF THE FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST**

**By Fred J. Neitzling  
(Supervisor, Flathead N.F.)**

On June 1, 1901, Gust Moser at Ovando, Montana, received his appointment as Forest Supervisor of the northern division of the then Lewis and Clark Forest Reserve through J.B. Collins, Forest Superintendent, Missoula, Montana, Department of Interior, General Land Office.

One of the most colorful Rangers appointed for seasonal work that year was William H. Morrison, better known locally as "Slippery Bill." He provided his own headquarters at Summit, Montana, and was responsible for the Middle Fork of Flathead River drainage.

In those days the supervisor made wet impression copies of all letters in a 500-page thin paper book. A few of these books have been preserved. Entries show such names as Tom Donaher, an early Ranger (Danaher Meadows) who homesteaded about 20 miles above Big Prairie and grazed 400 cattle in the upper South Fork. Other Rangers' names and their assigned districts include A.R. Babcock (Babcock Creek), B.B. Holland (Holland Lake), and J.B. Seeley (Seeley Lake).

Forest Ranger Moser commented in his letter of May 1, 1901, to Superintendent Collins. "In making this list and selections, I have been careful to submit only such names as I know will make first class Rangers." Included is the name of W.H. Morrison - 17th on a list of 23 men recommended for 21 appointments.

Grace Hansen wrote a "History of Flathead County - Great Northern Landmarks." She states:

Long before the railroad came to Montana a man named William H. Morrison held a squatter's right to a small piece of land at the Summit. When he heard that the Great Northern was extending its tracks through the Marias Pass, he installed a rosewood bar in his shack and was soon doing a flourishing business. The construction crews moved; but "Slippery Bill," as he was known, remained.

Bill was about Sly when he died but before his death, he gave his small piece of land as a site for the obelisk in memory of Theodore Roosevelt. This monument, we hope, will be a landmark for many years to come, but we also hope that someone will keep alive the memory of the man who felt it an honor to give the government the land on which his shack was built, as a site for the memorial honoring the father of modern reforestation.

Bill acquired "squatter's rights" to 160 acres of land at Summit. In the early '30's he donated this land to the Forest Service. Near the Roosevelt Memorial a large native boulder now carries a bronze plaque commemorating Mr. Morrison. He acquired the nickname "Slippery Bill" as a result of his astuteness in about 1890 during a poker game in a railroad construction camp at McCartyville - now a flag station called Fielding on the Great Northern Railway in the Middle Fork of Flathead River country. Bill won heavily and in the late hours of the game it appeared unwise to leave with so much money, knowing he might be followed by his gambling associates and robbed of his winnings on his way home. Pocketing most of his money and leaving a small

sum at his place at the card table, he excused himself, saying he would return in a few minutes. Once outside the room, he hurried away and didn't return, thus earning the title "Slippery Bill."

Morrison Creek and Slippery Bill Mountain, a few miles south of Summit on the Flathead National Forest, are two features named after this early Forest Service pioneer.

Another incident attributed to Morrison is that quite late in his life, while at Summit, the trainmen would thoughtfully give him a daily newspaper and chat with him. He was a tall, stately old man with a long white beard and he became well-known as a rustic philosopher. On the depot platform passengers would promenade while the train made a 10-minute stop to take on water and undergo routine inspection. An eastern woman approached old Bill and inquired, "How do people make a living in this unpleasant, wind-swept, God-forsaken place?" Bill replied, "Lady, most of us make a comfortable living by minding our own business."

## **FORDS COME INTO THE NATIONAL FORESTS**

**By David S. Olson  
(Retired 1944)**

Recently I stayed overnight at Savenac Nursery. For a long time I lay awake listening to the constant hum of cars and trucks on nearby Highway 10. I thought of all the cars I had seen parked at the bunkhouse and the quick exodus of the men immediately after supper to see a movie in Wallace, only a 45-minute drive. I recalled the cars I had seen recently at lookout stations and remote blister rust camps, and the fleet of trucks and cars at each Ranger Station. Then I turned time back forty-some years when I was stationed at this spot. For a few moments my mind dwelt upon the quiet nights, the serenity of simple living, streams full of trout and a stimulating job unfettered by the complexities and frustrations in a big organization. But soon this nostalgia was crowded aside as humorous incidents associated with the coming of the auto tumbled into my memory.

I got my first car, a used Model T roadster in 1916. The Mullan Trail (later to become Highway 10) was barely passable from Savenac to Missoula. From Savenac west was no-man's land as far as car travel was concerned. To make the 90-mile trip to Missoula I would first spend a day overhauling the car - new clutch bands, brake bands, valve grinding, etc. Loaded with three or four extra casings, an extra spring and commutator, repair kits and every conceivable tool - oh, yes, and carbide for the lamps - I'd start out at daybreak and if lucky, make Missoula by midnight.

The first car purchased by the Forest Service for Region One was a Model T touring car for the Ranger of the Ekalaka division of the Custer. This was about 1917. Shortly thereafter Savenac Nursery purchased a Model T, one-ton truck. This was of the vintage with the solid rubber tires on the rear wheel. It took me two days to drive the new truck from Missoula to Savenac. The most difficult section of the road was a place called Nigger Hills, near Alberton. This stretch was a series of short, steep, roller-coaster-like pitches strewn with boulders and rock outcroppings that defied modern transportation. It must have been here that the 24 boxes of Macintosh apples in the truck changed from solids to liquid.

About this time the Mullan Trail was opened to Wallace. This was accomplished by some county patch work and, at least in one case, by contributed help of local people. The final stretch blocking through passage to Wallace was made a public event. With picks, shovels and wheelbarrows (and free beer furnished by local saloonkeepers), residents of Saltese and Taft scratched several miles of road across the hillsides to forge the final link for car travel from Missoula to Wallace.

To publicize the opening of the road now designated the Yellowstone Trail, a Missoula man named Beck raced against time from Missoula to Wallace. Preceding the day of this event, notices were sent out to the inhabitants along the route to fill chuck holes, remove serious obstructions and keep their livestock off the road. We cheered as Beck went thundering by the nursery in a cloud of dust at 30 miles an hour.

Painted yellow bands on poles and fence posts were the first highway markers for the Yellowstone Trail. They served only to locate the route like tree blazes in the woods. It wasn't long before the first roadside advertisement appeared. This was in the form of a directional sign shaped like a hand with the index finger pointing the way of the route. These signs contained mileage information to the next town and warnings, such as "sharp curve," "railroad crossing" and "steep grade." I recall one of these signs that I liked. It read "Step on the gas for the next half mile." The only hint of advertising on these signs was the name "Dolbys." No one knew who or what "Dolby" was until he reached Spokane. There in the window of a men's clothing store was a large replica of the highway sign with the words, "Safe at Dolbys."

After the opening of the road, autos appeared in ever-increasing numbers. The route went through the nursery so we saw them all. In those days a large percentage of the tourists stopped to look over the nursery. There were, of course, no established campgrounds or motels and many were the requests to permit them to camp within our fenced enclosures. They were scared of wild animals. Many stopped to drink and fill their canteens with the tepid water from the surface sprinkling pipes. They were familiar with tap water but were hesitant to use clear, cool water from the streams along the route.

Ranger Frank Haun bought a new Model T about every two years. It was fascinating to watch him get into his car. Frank was a big man with an unusually large paunch. To get behind the steering wheel, he had to cinch up his belt. That made a deep groove for the rim of the steering wheel to travel in. He took great pride in each new car that he purchased and kept it clean and shiny until fire season. Then it really took a beating; axes, shovels and saws were tossed on the back seat and firefighters crammed the frail running boards. From then on deterioration was rapid. A Model T didn't last long on those roads - at about 4500 miles they were ready for a trade-in. Tires costing \$30.00 apiece (3-1/2 x 30) would last no more than 3,000 miles. We bought four-inch-wide leather bands, studded with steel discs, to slip over the casing as a means of prolonging their life, but the sidewalls continued to blow out. There were no garages or auto mechanics to help in our troubles. The spark coils seemed to give the most trouble. It became pretty exasperating cranking the car when things were not working right. I recall coming home one evening and seeing our local station agent's car stalled in the middle of the road. He was off to one side throwing rocks at it.

A Ford was responsible for a mystery on the St. Joe Forest that puzzled the Forest Service for several years. A messy log deck was developing along the old Emida road and no one seemed to know who was doing the logging. When the case was broken, the local Ranger was found to be the culprit. Ranger Bill Dawes, of the Palouse District, was one of the early recipients of an official car. He often traveled the Princeton-to-St. Maries road where he had to negotiate the steep Emida Hill. The brakes on his Ford would not hold going down this hill so before making the descent he would stop and fell a tree, cut out a section, and chain it to the rear of his car. Dragging this down the hill relieved his brakes. At the bottom of the hill he unhooked the log and rolled it to one side.

We gave a lot of our time helping the early tourists. It seemed to be expected of us at Savenac since we represented the Government. I usually allowed an extra two hours on my travel schedule going east over Camel's Hump, or west over Ford Hill, to help clear the stalled traffic.

These were big hurdles for a Model T. The Fords overheated on the long pulls and unless the gas tank was near full a Ford would stall on steep pitches because the gas feed to the carburetor depended upon gravity flow. When one car stalled it usually held up a line of cars from both directions because there were few turnouts on the mountainous roads in those days. Sometimes those traffic jams were pretty difficult to untangle.

The so-called tourists of this early period were largely local travelers and people on the move to new locations. Many were farmers driven from eastern Montana and North Dakota by the severe 1917 drought. With the improvement of road conditions and the sprouting of gas stations and garages in the small towns along the way, came the sight-seeing tourists. My first realization of this change came one day when I was walking along the road toward the nursery. A large black sedan drew up from behind and stopped. A liveried chauffeur asked if I wanted a ride. I thanked him and said I'd stand on the running board since I had only a short way to go. Looking into the car, I saw two elderly ladies sitting in rocking chairs. They smiled and one of them said they were seeing the wild West for the first time.

### **Uncle Sam's Biggest Nursery**

On a honeymoon trip by horseback, Elers Koch spotted a small clearing abandoned by a German homesteader named Savennac\* that impressed him as an ideal site for a small tree nursery to serve the needs of his forest. That was the beginning of Savenac Nursery.

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\*This spelling may be incorrect but it was not Savenac, as the name of the nursery is spelled.

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Seed beds were prepared on this small patch in 1908. Three similar nurseries were under development in the Region at this time; Trapper Creek to serve the Bitterroot; Camp Crook, South Dakota, to serve the Dakota National Forest; and the Boulder Nursery for the Helena. These small nurseries were operated by District Rangers and called Ranger nurseries. The disastrous fires of 1910 changed all this. Now a tremendous job of reforesting the 1910 burns faced the Region. Savenac Nursery was wiped out by these fires before the first crop of seedlings was ready for planting but it was decided to rebuild and enlarge this nursery to serve all the western forests of the Region and particularly the planting needs on the three million acres burned over in 1910. The Boulder Nursery continued operations until 1916; the other two nurseries were abandoned earlier.

Land clearing of the 31 acres of benchland along Savenac Creek started immediately. By 1915 it was fully stocked with about 10 million trees of various age classes and ready to maintain an annual output of three million trees. It had become the largest tree nursery in the Forest Service.

During this early period of development, Savenac Nursery remained under the administration of the Lolo Forest. Supervisor Koch spent much of his time directing the work, with Ranger Frank Haun and Assistant Ranger Will Simons supervising operations. Research to aid in developing nursery practices was being carried on at the Priest River Experiment Station. H.H. Farquhar was chief of planting.

Since the nursery was now serving many forests of the Region and the work there was looked upon as highly specialized, it was decided in late 1914 to place it under the direct supervision of the Regional Office. In the spring of 1915 it assumed this new status and I was offered the job as nurseryman, at a salary of \$1,100 per annum. At the same time E.C. Rogers was transferred from the Priest River Experiment Station to Savenac to continue research on the propagation of planting stock for this region. Rogers wanted to carry his nursery studies into the field for final determination of results and for this purpose established what we called the Wallace Experimental Area, about three miles south of Wallace on Placer Creek. Today this is an interesting study area.

If ever a guy was plopped squarely in the middle of things to work his way out, that was me when I landed at Savenac March 1, 1915, fresh out of school. I think the biggest break I got that difficult first year was an unseasonably early spring. We were able to put the plow in the ground the day I arrived and there were no setbacks due to unfavorable weather that year.

Of course, there was no clerk at the nursery and I was completely ignorant of fiscal and administrative procedures so I soon encountered trouble. In those days we hired and fired at will. Most of the 40-man crew consisted of transients "riding the rails" and dropping off at Haugan for a short period of work at the nursery. When they quit or were fired, I paid them with personal checks and obtained "cash receipts" for the payments. These receipts were then submitted on expense accounts for reimbursement. Thus, it seemed, my slim capital would serve as a revolving fund and take care of the situation ad infinitum. That is, I thought I could send in my expense account and have the expense check back in a day or two for deposit. Hah! I didn't know how many errors the fiscal office could find in an expense account. As a result, the three saloonkeepers in Haugan were soon waving fists full of checks in my face - checks that had been returned for lack of sufficient funds. I knew nothing of the \$50.00 limit on purchases without bids until the fiscal agent began firing back the vouchers. Nor did I know that laborers for the Federal Government could not be paid on a piece-rate basis such as we were using on some of the nursery operations for speeding up performance. I was told to adjust the men's earnings to an hourly basis on the payrolls and this resulted in some fantastic rates, such as 28-39/61 cents an hour. Incidentally, the base rate of pay for labor was 25 cents an hour plus board, which cost the Government about 25 cents per meal.

The total planting allotment for Region One was about \$40,000 at this time. This was enough to pay all the costs related to producing the stock and planting about 4,000 acres annually. At Savenac, every effort was concentrated in producing as much good stock as possible on the 31 acres at the lowest possible cost. Development work went into research, devising new methods and equipment, and time studies to improve efficiency in nursery operations. Buildings and grounds lacked much to be desired and our standard equipment and watering systems were "haywire." We got along somehow.

In a few years the work at this hustling young nursery was getting some attention from the outside. Research was paying dividends in reduced losses and high-quality stock. Cost of tree production was the lowest in the Service. Some of the new developments in methods and equipment were aimed at meeting problems peculiar to the Region but found wider application and were adopted elsewhere. For example, the cylindrical burlap-covered tree bale was

developed for pack mule transportation. In those days, nearly all tree shipments left Savenac by railroad express. From the nearest railroad point the trees were taken by pack train to the planting camps. The dead weight of the wooden crates formerly used was about equal to the weight of the trees. Material used for the bales was much cheaper and its weight only a few pounds, and this cut transportation costs just about in half. The bale is in general use today even though transportation of trees from the nurseries to the planting sites is largely by truck.

Another change made in these early days that was receiving wide acceptance was the use of shingle tow (the shreddy sawdust from shingle mills) instead of sphagnum moss for packing material to keep the roots of the seedlings moist en transit. Shingle tow was available at a local mill for the cost of hauling, whereas sphagnum moss cost \$20.00 per ton plus freight from Wisconsin. In addition, the moss had to be fumigated when it reached Savenac to avoid the danger of introducing the eastern larch saw fly to this region. The bales of moss were placed in a tent and subjected to potassium cyanide fumes for 24 hours. A guard was stationed outside the tent during this period so no one would accidentally stick his head in the "gas chamber." Today, nurseries all over the country use shingle tow in preference to sphagnum moss when they can obtain it at competitive costs.

We were beginning to have visitors. Foresters from here and abroad were calling at the nursery to see our operations and tourists were stopping in increasing numbers. E. E. Carter, Chief of Timber Management in the Washington Office, was showing unusual interest in developments at Savenac and talking about them to other Regions. Savenac Nursery was beginning to ride the crest.

E. F. White, who had succeeded Farquhar as Chief of Planting about the time I took over the nursery, now saw a chance to go after the other phase of developments for Savenac - improvements in buildings, grounds, and other major facilities for operating the nursery. He brought Regional Forester Silcox out to the nursery and convinced him that Savenac should be made a showplace for the Region. Silcox was enthusiastic and immediately sent an engineer to the nursery to develop a 20-year improvement plan including detailed design and specifications. The plan provided facilities for regional meetings - especially during the winter - as well as improvements for the operation of the nursery. We had no idea where the money would come from for these improvements but it developed that by having the plan, money came from an unexpected source. Carter, in Washington, saw to it that unexpended planting balances in other Regions were transferred to Savenac. These balances were never available until about June 1, so for three years there were hectic times during June to make the most of these windfalls. The original 20-year plan was completed in three years. Today that would be simple with the many servicing divisions in the Region, but we had to do our own purchasing and our own construction work. For example, I had never laid a brick but I learned and by the time I left the Region I had built 16 chimneys and a stone fireplace for the Forest Service. Our greatest obstacle at this time was the \$650.00 statutory limitation placed on all Forest Service buildings. There was no limit to water systems, septic tanks and the like, but building costs were thus limited, including the cost of labor.

In 1920 I was promoted to chief of planting. Instead of moving to Missoula, I transferred the planting office to Savenac. Savenac was now a little community of residences and yearlong

inhabitants. The building limitation had been increased to about \$2,000.00 per structure, so we were able to erect several nice cottages for the increased personnel. G. Willard Jones succeeded me as nurseryman, W.G. Wahlenberg handled research (after the death of C.E. Rogers), C.E. Knutson did the planting survey work, and we had a clerk. Frank Haun remained as Ranger for the Savenac District until his retirement 20 years later.

When Koch was placed in charge of Timber Management, he insisted I move the planting office back to Missoula. I did this, reluctantly, in 1927. Wahlenberg left about this time to work at the Eddy Tree Breeding Institute, now the Forest Genetics Laboratory at Susanville. Up to this time planting and nursery research had been financed and directed by the planting office. That work was now turned over to the Experiment Station in Missoula. With a big boom in planting work getting under way in the new Region 9, Jones was transferred there to develop the large Rhinelander Nursery in 1931. Bill Apgar replaced him at Savenac and remained there until 1933 when he transferred to radio development work in the Regional Office. Knutson also transferred to Region 9 in 1931 as Ranger on the Huron Forest. Jess Fox followed Apgar at Savenac. I left the Region for the Shelterbelt Project in 1934. Of all the men I have named in this sketch of Savenac Nursery only Apgar, Wahlenberg and I are alive today.

There is another chapter to Savenac's history - from the CCC days to the present. That is for someone else to write. I wasn't there.

### **Summer Work**

To forestry students at the University of Nebraska it was especially important that they acquire woods experience during their summer vacations. Usually we went West, although I did spend my first summer mapping and cruising in virgin hardwood forests in southeastern Kentucky for a privately owned company.

I came to District (Region) One, first in 1913 with three other students to work as summer guard for Ranger Elmer Findell on the Seeley Lake District. After getting instructions from Supervisor Rutledge Parker in Missoula, we boarded a train for Drummond. From there we went by stage (wagon) to Seeley Lake via Helmville and Ovando. The trip required two full days of travel; today it can be made in less than two hours.

We covered most of the District that summer, on boundary surveys, trail work and telephone line construction. I learned to use the axe, saw, canthook, and climbers, and to throw the diamond hitch. I had trouble with the canthook at first. A lumberjack in our crew suggested perhaps a chew of his "snoose" would help. I fell for the suggestion and in a moment became dizzy. I took the canthook and got a good bite on a log, wrapped my arms around the handle and let the rest of the world whiz by.

This was wild and beautiful country in 1913. There were few human inhabitants; no summer homes. There were no fires that summer so we were free Sundays to fish the lakes and we fished them all.



On the way out, we hiked to Bonner and rode the electric interurban to Missoula. Hearing that men were wanted at Savenac Nursery, we hopped a train and put in two weeks' work before going back to school. At Savenac I met Elers Koch, Roy Phillips and Frank Haun, men who a few years later were to become my close associates.

Western Montana had gotten in my blood, so I was back for the summer of 1914, working as guard for Roy Phillips, Ranger of the Superior District. Wages were \$50.00 a month and from this I furnished my own grub. Mainly, I was lookout on Illinois Peak that summer but, in addition, I gathered a lot of odd assignments. One morning Phillips said, "Dave, we'll either have to build a new barn or dig out the manure." So I lowered the floor about two feet. I also dug half a mile of ditch for the water pipe to the Ranger Station.

The lookout tower on Illinois Peak was a rickety affair with an open platform on top. The map and alidade were covered with a sheet of canvas when not in use. The telephone was at the cabin, half a mile away. Neither tower nor cabin had lightning protection, and the cabin had a corrugated iron roof. Cranking the phone or picking up the receiver to talk to the Ranger during an electrical storm was about as hazardous as reaching for a rattlesnake in a gunny sack. During the early part of the fire season, I made observations from the lookout at regular periods. Between observations I built a mile of trail and a foot bridge, sharpened fire tools and cooked. My cabin was at the main crossing into the St. Joe and Clearwater countries. Packers supplying camps, particularly the large U.S.G.S. survey camps, used my station as an overnight stop. I was the cook. In those days the only things we got in cans were tomatoes and condensed milk. The rest of the food was dry - dried fruit, powdered eggs, beans, rice, bacon, etc. Since I had to furnish my own grub, the packers repaid me by dropping off a slab of bacon, a sack of flour or some other item of food. I finished the summer with twice as much food as my original purchase. I "sold" this to an acquaintance in Superior, but he never paid me.

Occasionally Phillips would release me on Saturday afternoons to come down to the dance at Superior. I'd hike 26 miles to town, dance all night and hike back to the lookout Sunday morning. Today I wouldn't cross the street for a dance.

In late summer visibility became poor from many fires and I was instructed to patrol the ridge on horseback 10 miles east one day and 10 miles west of the lookout the next. Later, as the haze became denser, I prowled around in the upper drainages seeking suspected smokes, sometimes sleeping out, with my horse tied to a near-by tree. One afternoon while patrolling the ridge I was knocked out by lightning. I was riding serenely along and the next thing I knew I was struggling to get up, the air was acrid with fumes, the horse stood near by. This experience left one profound thought - you'll never know when lightning hits you.

Later I was called from my lookout duties to fight fire. We had a bad one on Dry Creek that kept us busy for a week. At the close of the fire season, I was sent back to my lookout cabin to meet a bunch of firefighters coming out of the Clearwater. When I arrived at the cabin there was three feet of snow and it was snowing so hard one could see but a short distance. I made gallons of mulligan, soup and coffee. Every half hour I would go outside and fire several shots. About three in the afternoon the firefighters began to arrive and a sorry looking bunch they were, mostly "boxcar bums," shod in worn-out oxfords, clad in thin civilian suits. When they reached the snow

they had lost the trail and were scattered all over the mountainside. We hollered and fired more shots to direct them to the cabin. Finally all but one were accounted for. I went out in search and found him lying in the snow. He had reached that point of numbness where he only wanted to be left to sleep. After much prodding, I got him up and carried him piggyback to the cabin.

After the men were fed and partially dried out - and had smoked all my cigarettes - I helped them wrap strips of burlap around their feet and legs. Then evergreen boughs were tied to their feet to serve as snowshoes, and they were sent on their way down the ridge to bare ground and civilization.

My last assignment on the District that summer was to take a mineral examiner from Missoula into the back country to inspect some mining claims. We went in with our two saddle horses and a pack mule to carry camp equipment and supplies. The last night out our saddle horses left camp and went down the trail. Luckily, we still had the mule which had been hobbled. The mineral examiner said he would go down the trail and finish his work while I packed the mule. That was some job. Now I had two saddles and a pair of bridles to add to the already overloaded mule. But worst of all the tent was frozen. Rain had fallen during the night and frozen toward morning. Folding that tent was like bending sheet iron. When I finally got the mule packed all that showed of it was the face and four feet. Thus we started down the trail. When I reached the mining claim there was a note on a tree stating the mineral examiner had finished and gone on ahead. At a meadow farther down the trail was another note stating he had caught up with the horses and gone ahead to catch a train for Missoula. Since he failed to tie up the horses they had moved on and I found them 20 miles later quietly cropping grass at the Ranger Station.

Again I went to Savenac Nursery to work several weeks before returning to school. This time Jim Brooks and I were used on time studies being made of the transplanting operation. Some members\* of the Regional Office had become interested in the principles of scientific management as practiced in the Franklin auto factories at that time. Savenac Nursery seemed to be a good place to apply these principles. As a result of the time studies that fall Savenac developed a transplanting operation that was by far the cheapest in the United States. In a two-hour period, Jim Brooks and I, as a team, transplanted 9,000 seedlings, a record that still stands. It probably was my interest in these studies that was instrumental in my being offered the job as nurseryman the following year.

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\*Regional Forester F.A. Silcox, Assistant Regional Foresters Dave Mason and Roy Headley and Chief of Planting H.H. Farquhar.

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Stopping off at Missoula enroute to school, I learned that a Ranger's examination was to be given the following day so I decided to take it "just for the heck of it." Elers Koch gave the examination. Fourteen took it, among them Jim Bosworth and Tom Crossley. I don't remember what subjects were covered in the written portion of the exam but I do recall some of the field tests. After identifying some range plants and scaling logs, we went out to Koch's home on Beckwith Avenue. From his barn north to the river was prairie. First we took turn; to run traverse with compass, around a staked area, and pace the distance. Then each took his turn at packing a

horse. The final test was to saddle a horse and ride as hard as it would go across the prairie toward town. A cockle burr was placed under the saddle blanket to liven things up a bit.

### **Tales from the Past**

Joe Halm was leading a string of pack horses up the North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. It was one of those matchless Indian summer days. The warm afternoon sun tempered the crisp air just enough to remove the autumn chill. Frequently, Joe turned in the saddle to observe with deep contentment the silent forest of tall white pines, the yellow and gold of aspen and larch foliage splashed on the green timbered slopes, the clear stream along the trail. Again his glance rested on the pack horses trailing behind. Joe counted one, two, three, four, five, six. Now he recalled the Ranger's admonition that morning as he led the horses out of the corral, "Take good care of my horses, Joe, and be sure to bring all seven of them back." Again Joe counted the horses; there were only six. He must have lost one. Perhaps the laggard would catch up with the rest of the string, so for a while Joe waited. Then he grew impatient. He turned the pack string around and started back. As he retraced mile after mile, with no sign of the missing horse, hope dwindled.

By midnight he had returned to the Ranger Station. The commotion of getting the horses back in the corral had aroused the Ranger who came out with a lantern, and much cussing, "What the blankety-blank goes on out here? Joe, what in the world! I figured you were camped for the night at least 20 miles up the trail." Joe looked down from his saddle and wearily said, "I lost one of your horses. Did it show up here?" The Ranger counted the horses and shook his head, "They are all here all seven of them." Joe pointed to the pack horses, "Nope, only six." The Ranger turned in disgust and sauntered toward the cabin shaking his head. At the door he turned and called back, "Joe, how about counting the one you're sitting on?"

(Maybe it wasn't Joe, but that's the way I heard it. - D.S.O.)

It was midwinter and I was bound for the Falls Ranger Station. There had been a heavy snowfall during the night so I had difficulty getting someone at Priest River to take me up to the station. Finally a garage man consented to try it with his new snowmobile. This was a Studebaker touring car with sled runners made of 2 x 12-inch planking substituted for the front wheels. The rear wheels were well wrapped with logging chain. We made fair progress as long as the steering sled could be kept in the ruts of the partially broken road, but once the heavy runners sliced into deep snow it was impossible to steer the darn thing. Then we had to back out like a switch engine to the main line. About four miles out of town we got hopelessly stuck and broke down trying to get out.

I changed to my field clothes in the snow and started walking. Later, a rancher in his sleigh drew up to me and offered a lift. We chatted, and among other things the rancher asked if I knew Dr. Wier — forest pathologist for Region One at that time. I said that I did and planned to see him in a few days.

"Well," the rancher said, "Dr. Wier had his camp on my ranch last summer and I used to watch him collect those orange toadstools growing on tree trunks and put them in jars of alcohol. It was

none of my business, so I didn't ask any questions. When you see Doc, tell him I've tried about everything but that's the damndest hooch I ever tasted."

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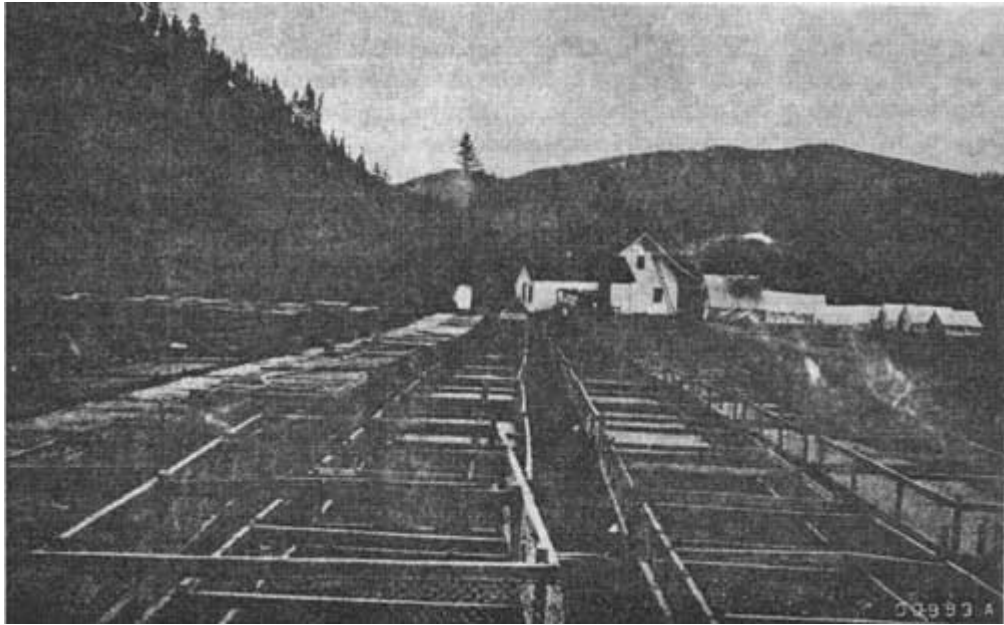
Today there is little left to identify this last stop on Highway 10 and the Northern Pacific branch line going west before reaching the summit at Lookout Pass. But at one time it represented quite a community. It was the site of the construction camp for the Milwaukee Railroad when in 1908 and 1909 that road was boring its way through the Bitterroots under the Montana-Idaho divide. Many stories have come from this construction camp. This one deals with the origin of its name - Taft.

Our president at the time, William Howard Taft, was on a western tour. Going up the St. Regis valley bound for Wallace he was reminded of the new transcontinental line being constructed by the Milwaukee Railroad and the rip-roaring construction camp ahead. The President asked to have his special train stopped at the camp. As the train slowed to a halt, workers, barkeepers, and girls poured from shacks and tents to learn about the special train. From the observation platform, President Taft motioned for all to gather around him. Then he scolded them. He told them their lawlessness had made this place notorious over the breadth of the land. It was a disgrace to the country, a dirty smudge on these fair United States. He demanded they do something about it. They did. As the train departed they gave three rousing cheers, and named the place in his honor.

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In 1908 the U.S. Forest Service was just getting organized. There were few men in the field to manage the millions of acres set aside as National Forests in the rugged West of those days. The problems encountered were, to say the least, different, and sometimes as difficult for the bosses near the Great White Father in Washington to solve, as for the young upstarts who encountered them.

A young forester newly assigned to a vast wilderness through which a transcontinental railroad was being constructed learned that some women had moved in close to a large construction camp and were occupying National Forest land. He asked them to vacate. They told him to "go to hell." Then he wired his chief "Undesirable prostitutes occupying Federal land. Please advise." He received this reply: "Get desirable ones."



Early day view of Savenac Nursery and new seed beds.



Savenac Nursery, 1941.

**By Charlie E. Powell**  
**(Retired 1955)**

A few months after my 18th birthday, I wrote a letter to W.W. White, then supervisor of the Bitterroot, asking him for a job. In a few days he sent a reply saying the Ranger would call on me. The next day Ranger Winthrop H. Young drove up to our ranch on Sweathouse Creek west of Victor and said he needed a man to go up Big Creek and put out a fire. I asked him how long the fire had been burning and he said he was not sure but knew it was burning three days before. I then asked him of the location and he said it was up the creek about ten miles above the mouth of the canyon, but didn't know how large it was. I agreed to take the job, gathered up some tools and a camping outfit and left by saddle horse and one pack animal. (I was already a past master at throwing a full diamond hitch.)

Arriving at the fire late that evening, I found it to be burning in the only cedar swamp in the drainage, and covered about an acre. It was not spreading but, brother, was that duff deep! I got a good trench around it at the end of 3 days, and left. The fire was far from being out, but I later learned that the trench I had dug kept the fire contained.

After leaving the fire on Big Creek, I rode to the Butterfly Ranger Station on Willow Creek, about 10 miles east of Corvallis. There I learned the fire guard on that side of the valley had to be hospitalized for an appendectomy, and I was to take his place. Ranger Young then presented me with the large-size Forest Service badge and admonished me to wear it with pride and dignity, which I did, on a belt loop. I sure puffed up then, and thought I was equal to any Texan.

After being there a few days, a fire broke out on the Burnt Fork, which developed into a "honey." We rustled up a pack string of half-broken broomtails and with 35 or 40 men, headed for the fire. On our way to the fire some "windbag" from California kept next to Ranger Young and fed him a big "line" about his experience on large fires in California. We set up camp in Skalkaho Basin and put the men to building a fireline about a mile from the fire. They cut a swath through the green timber about 50 feet in width and a trench about 6 feet wide. Ranger Young put the "Native Son" in charge and then left for the Ranger Station. Since I was the smokechaser, I did not put in much time on the fireline, but did some looking around as the country was new to me. I did, however, notice that the fire was not burning very fast toward the fireline, so I thought it would be better to take the crew and work up against the fire. I told the foreman to get ready to hit the fire close up next morning, and he told me that he was in charge and would do as he pleased. Not knowing just what I could do but that something had to be done, I asked him, "You know that trail you came in on from the Ranger Station?" He said, "Yes." I said, "It's still there and you take it in the morning." He asked me where I got the authority to fire him, and I pointed to my badge and said, "That's it." He left next morning. What he may have told Ranger Young in unbeknown to me, but in a few days M.N. Stickney showed up and seemed to be satisfied with the progress we were making. When he left he handed me a note which instructed me to go ahead with the fire, and when we had it under control, to construct a trail down Burnt Fork Creek under my supervision and to take orders from no one but him, and signed M.N. Stickney.

As most fires of that size were generally made safe by snow, this was no exception, and the crew was sent home, but I thought a pack string would be sent in to pack the camp out. I sure got

fooled that time; instead, I was given 5 head of horses, two of which were a team of draft horses owned by the Forest Service, and instructed to pack the camp out to Butterfly Ranger Station by myself. I sure goofed that time, should have left the "Native Son" on the fire as boss. I would go out to the Station one day, back the next, make up my packs and then do it all over again. There happened to be two bad bog holes in the Willow Creek trail, and it never failed that those two damn big Titanics would get down in the bog holes and I would have to remove their packs, help them out by giving them a pull with my saddle horse, then lug those packs out of the loblolly and pack them up again.

I never will forget the last trip out with that camp. As usual both of the draft horses got down, and after getting them out I would load one and send him down the trail and then proceed to put the pack on the other. When I caught up with the others I discovered the draft horse was missing, so back I went up the trail looking for the missing horse when I thought I heard some kind of a groan, and looking down below the trail, there it was flat on his back with all four feet in the air, lodged against a big boulder. I was almost tempted to use my sixshooter.

On this fire we had a cook by the name of Tom Sherrill. At that time (1917) I think Sherrill may have been 60 or 65 years of age, but anyway, he was a member of the Bitterroot Volunteers at the Big Hole Battle. (Should the readers happen to visit that Battlefield they will see two pits with markers showing Tom Sherrill was "here" and his brother Bunch Sherrill was "there.") Well, Tom told me the whole story and there I sat with a pencil and diary book in my pocket, and never had enough brains to write down what he told me. I must have been more interested in the live ones than the dead at that time.

The next year (1918) I was located on the west side of the valley and had my camp at the mouth of the canyon on Mill Creek. The Selway was having some trouble with fires in Idaho and most of the supplies were being packed in from Hamilton, through Blodgett Creek. Ranger Young sent 3 of us up Blodgett Creek to construct a bridge as the ford had a big bog hole on both sides of the creek and pack stock could no longer get through. There was a fire crew camped at the old Blodgett Creek Ranger Station at the end of the road, waiting for us to finish the bridge. Working with us was a fellow whose voice over the phone sounded just like a girl's. He was given the nickname of "Sister." Finally we finished with the bridge and that night went into Hamilton. We met some forest officer from the District Office (I don't recall his name) who was pleased to learn that the bridge was open to travel, but said we would have to get that girl out of camp. I said we had no girl in camp, and he said we did. I asked him what made him think so, and he said some girl named McKay had answered the phone. I said, "Oh, that's Sister." He said, "Oh, you have your sister up there with you." Then I told him that the fellow's voice sounded like a girl's over the phone. About that time Sister showed up, and after hearing his voice, we were forgiven.

Jack Fitting was, or at least I thought he was, Ranger at Elk Summit at that time, and made quite a few trips with his packer (Frank Freeman) into Hamilton for supplies. I believe Jack had a cast iron stomach. They used to camp at the first meadow below the pass on the Blodgett Creek side, and would leave their camp intact and go on to Hamilton. Then on their way back, they would camp there again, thereby saving one camp erection. Jack would leave partially filled cans of

food on the table for two or three days in summer heat, and then would eat that stuff, yet some people even today believe that whiskey is harmful to humans.

In 1919, I thought I preferred to work in a wilder area, so I hired out to Ranger James D. Vance, with headquarters at the Allen Ranch on the Nez Perce Fork of the Bitterroot. Jim was a fine man to work with, and he also had the touch of Midas. That summer he had about 20 head of his own horses packing to fires. He leased the Allen Ranch and the packers put up the hay which was sold to the Forest Service. Then he brought up a small herd of beef and put them on the meadows, we packers did the butchering, and the meat went to the fire camps. He had one small string of 5 horses that carried nothing but fresh meat and traveled at night to keep the meat out of the heat. My partner and I had a string of 24 horses and 2 mules that summer. The mules belonged to the Forest Service.

Fires broke out down on the Selway between Indian and White Cap Creeks rather early. As a matter of fact, there was still some snow on the Nez Perce Pass. Vance had a 12 or 15-man trail crew on Watch Tower Creek that he wished to move to the fire on Snake Creek on the Selway. He sent three pack strings of about 25 head each from Allen Station, with a crew of firefighters, to Watch Tower Creek where we picked up the supplies and trail crew and headed for the fire. Dick Vance, a brother of Jim, said he was acquainted with the country and trail, so Jim sent him ahead. When we reached the divide at the head of Watch Tower Creek we had to travel over three feet of hard-packed snow which obliterated all signs of the trail, but was hard enough to support the stock. I asked Dick where the trail went from there and he said it dropped right into the head of Cooper Creek. It didn't look good to me but he claimed to know the trail, so down we went. We did not have to go far until we found he did not know what he was talking about, and did we have a time getting that mess of horses out of there. I told Dick there could be but one way to go and that would be to follow the main divide south until we reached the Cooper-Schofield Creeks divide. Well, we did and we soon picked up the trail, but darkness overtook us and we had to make a dry camp. That really wasn't nice either, with 75 head of pack stock without feed or water and a crew of men with very little water. The next morning we started down the trail for Cooper's Flat at the confluence of Canyon and White Cap Creeks. When we reached Canyon Creek the horses, being crazy for water, really created a problem to get them out on the flat away from it before they foundered themselves. We finally managed to get them away from the water before they got too much, but when we got them out on the flat, about 75% of them started to bucking, and with them being so gaunt because of the lack of feed and water, most of the saddles were rather loose. We finally got their packs off - that is, those that did not unpack themselves. As I recall, we had 50 or 60 men with us enroute to the fire and they were just about as gaunt and sullen as the pack animals when we reached Cooper's Flat.

A cook from the trail camp, by the name of Barr, was, I believe, the best camp cook I ever saw before or since. He came from Ten Sleep, Wyoming and said he used to cook for a cow outfit. After that bucking spree I don't believe it was much over an hour until the crew was eating, and he made all his bread in a reflector. This cook was always talking about his twin brother, which I took with a grain of salt, as he was kind of fickle with the truth. One morning we left him at the fire camp on the river just at daybreak, and late that afternoon here he was cooking at a fire camp on Boulder Creek on the Montana side. When I saw him, I asked him where in hell did he pass



us. He looked kind of bewildered and did not say anything, and then it dawned on me that he was a twin of the cook at Snake Creek.

Later on we packed to a fire on Sabe Creek, which has a long, 3-day trip one way. On our first trip into the Sabe Creek fire with the crew, we had a dope addict for a cook. He sure could hike when he was "high," but while taking a bath in Sheephead Creek he lost his dope or else he lost it on the trail. We camped that night at the Indian Graves, and the next morning he did get breakfast, but when we reached Kit Carson, he said he could not go on, so we went off and left him. There we were, my partner and I with a pack string of 26 horses, a 45-man crew, no cook, and no bread. The packing, the cooking, and making biscuits for 45 men with reflectors was not much fun, but we kept on. At the Upper Selway crossing we phoned back and requisitioned a cook, who showed up at Sabe Creek in a day or so after we reached the fire. After that we just had to pack from the Upper Crossing to the fire as another string packed the supplies from Allen Station to the river and dumped it there for us.

After the Sabe Creek fire was in the mop-up stage, Ranger Vance phoned us to go to Steep Hill near the Blue Joint-Storm Creeks divide and move a fire camp, as the trail to the north was cut off by fire. When we reached the bald knob at the top of Steep Hill, we noticed a heavy column of smoke boiling up from the foot of Steep Hill. I told my partner that if he would hold the stock I would ride down and see what was going on. I rode but a short distance when I met Lee Bass, the foreman, coming up the hill with his crew. Lee said their camp had burned, and nothing was saved but the tools they had with them. (Bass was at that time living in Stevensville and ran a taxidermy shop, and still lives there but is retired.) Well, we all went back to the bald knob and prevented the fire from sweeping over the grassland, but it did burn completely around us. That night a heavy snowstorm hit, and there sure was misery walking around there the next morning. About 40 men and no breakfast, but we packers did have enough coffee to give each man a weak brew. My Partner and I were more fortunate as we had our bed, and we let the men use saddle blankets and pack covers that night. My partner was quite a poet, and could build one on a moment's notice. That night he forgot to put his boots under cover, and the next morning when he slipped his boots on he found them half full of snow. He sat there with a blank stare for awhile and then said, "Oh God, I howled no louder since the day I was born, when I ran my foot off down that boot, that cold and bleak September morn." This, I think, was about September 21, 1919, when we got about 14 inches of snow.

All the time I spent in the hills, I ran into but two grizzlies, rather I saw but two. In the fall of 1924, after the protection force was off fire protection, I received a call from Supervisor Lowell saying a fire was reported near the lake on the head of Mill Creek. The call from Lowell came just about quitting time and it was up to me to go to the fire. I had a 3-man trail crew working on Blodgett Creek, so I decided that I would take a few iron rations and go to their camp and then the next morning I would take them with me to the fire on Mill Creek. This was in the month of October and the moon was almost full which made it nice for night traveling. After hiking up the trail a couple of miles, I came to a short, steep pitch, and being somewhat winded when I reached the top, I stopped and looked up. There it stood, not over 20 feet ahead of me, its fur having a silver cast in the bright moonlight. There stood a pillar nearly 10 feet high and glistening like an icicle. I froze, and felt as cold as it looked. I didn't make a sound because I couldn't, but I did turn off the trail, walked down and waded the creek and then went on my way up the creek, really

afraid to look back. I doubt that I even rested until I reached the camp, which was about 10 miles up the creek.

For some reason unbeknown to me, Supervisor Lowell would always start a field trip about Thursday, and it would generally run until a week from the following Tuesday. They always took in two Sundays. I recall one trip that started at the Black Bear Ranger Station on Skalkaho Creek, took up the South Fork to Congdon Peak, then we went north along the Sapphire Range to the Miller Creek Ranger Station, and back over the cross-country trail to Ambrose Ranger Station. There he had someone meet him with a car and I rode on to Victor with the stock. One Sunday while on this trip we ran into some women having a picnic on Miller Creek. John asked me if I ever talked to campers on my travels, and I told him I did, but that I never barged in on picnickers unless they invited me to get down and have a bite. He said that it was good public relations to visit with such groups. He then proceeded to show me the proper technique, rode up near their table, removed his hat and asked, "How is every little thing around here?" One of the young women said, "There aren't any "little things" around here." We rode off, me chewing my tongue and Lowell frowning to beat hell.

Well, time moved on and so did I landing on the Kootenai. Frank Jefferson was supervisor when I took over the Swamp Creek District. That dwelling really was something, a log building with two rooms upstairs and two down. We had water on the back porch which ran when the creek did not freeze dry. It was in the \$700.00 cost class, not the \$24,000.00 like they build now. We had a Ranger meeting that spring at Schrieber Lake, in a ranch house. The Rangers attending that meeting were Bob Byers, Mac Gregg, Howard Matthews, L.D. Williamson, Dewey Sousley, Charlie Fenn, E.A. Woods, Ralph Fields, and myself; Jefferson and Pink Dwinelle from the Supervisor's Office, and Roy Phillips from the District Office. (It hadn't yet become the Regional Office.) Phillips was to teach us how to plow and grade a trail. It rained and snowed every day of the meeting, which was in early May. E.A. Woods got us all together and away from the ears of the brass and said, "Fellows, this is it." We all wanted to know what he meant by "This is it," and he said as long as Jeff was supervisor of the Kootenai, we would be expected to hit the ball no matter how bad the weather was.

Well, I believed Woods, and that winter Jeff had me construct a telephone line from the old Geiger ranch to Wolf Creek and to Fisher Mountain. I had Harvey Sheely and Bill Williams on the job. We had a team and sleigh for transportation which meant that we had to camp on the job. We camped in a tent at Tepee Creek and Squaw Creek and from McKillop on down we used abandoned cabins. While at Squaw Creek the weather turned cold, -30, -35, and down to 38 degrees below zero. We kept telephone communication with the Ranger Station and Libby as we went along. One night Jeff called and asked me where I was as he could not hear me too well. I told him I was at Squaw Creek. He said, "What in hell are you doing there?" I told him we were building telephone line and all we had to do was to make a motion at a limb and it would break off. He said, "God, man, no one expects you to work out in this kind of weather." So I found that Jeff was not quite as tough as Woods said he was. Whenever Jeff got a bunch of Rangers in the Supervisor's Office to do some winter paper work, he would get us all together and tell us he would give us one day to get through BS-ing and then get to work. At that time the Supervisor's Office force consisted of Jefferson, Dwinelle, Billings, Bob Strong, Klehm, Miss Erdman (now Mrs. Byers), Miss Neuman, and 3 scalers - John Baird, Fred Gravlin and Edd Henrichs.

One time Jefferson wrote each one of us Rangers a memorandum telling us of our shortcomings. Of course, we all got together and were crying on each other's shoulders about what he accused us of doing or not doing. We all had some faults. I remember he said Bob Byers should be a - little more careful about his working hours. At that time Bob was courting and had to travel by train as Adelaide lived in Libby and the train's schedule did not agree with Bob's working hours. Anyhow, we all were giving Jeff hell when in walked Charlie Fenn. We asked Fenn what Jeff had to say about him, and Fenn said, "Damn him, he said I was a little careless about the truth." That tickled the rest of us so much that we forgot about our grievances.

At the time I went to Rexford there was still a little trouble on Pinkham Creek with the "Ridge Runners." I thought that if I could figure out who molded the "bullets" I might be able to get around him and stop the incendiaryism that flared up now and then.

One day I went up Pinkham Creek and stopped at the Old Boy's place. He was quite suspicious of me and asked me what I wanted. I told him that I just wanted to get away from that damn telephone for a spell and take my mind off of fire. He said to come in and sit in the shade. About that time a flock of big Plymouth Rock chickens came around the corner of the house. I said to Mrs. Doe, "You sure have a lot of nice chickens." She said she had so many - some 50 or 60. I said to her, "It's a wonder you don't cut one's head off once in a while." The Old Boy said, "Sis, why don't you cook this man a chicken." She said, "Pa, do you know who he reminds me of?" Pa said, "No, who?" She said, "That preacher we used to have on Spring Creek in West Virginia." The Old Boy said, "Huh, he was a mean --- -- - ----." I spoke up and said, "For all you know I might be one also."

Another Pinkham Cricker asked me to dinner one day. He had raised a large family, and during our conversation at the table I asked him about his family. He said he had 12 kids besides Homer, and he didn't count him. I asked, "How come you don't count Homer?" The Old Man said, "Because he's a damn Brush Colt."

I wasn't only a Ranger on that District, but everything from a deacon to a Dorothy Dix. Sometimes when they saw me coming they would dash out and want me to get them something in town and bring it back the next time I came up. I picked up shoes, overalls, baby nipples, tobacco, and paid their express bills. One day a fellow came out and said his daughter was about to marry a good for nothing and wanted to know what to do. I told him I didn't know what he could do. He asked me what I would do if it was my daughter, and I told him I would make her a widow. He said he didn't mind so much about her marrying the guy only he was just a little worried thinking she might be marrying her half-brother.

Boy, oh boy, if I could only write, Peyton Place would be wiped off the shelves.



## **EARLY DAYS IN THE FOREST SERVICE**

**By John F. Preston**

The reason for my early interest in forestry is still very clear in my mind. About 1900, the "Youths' Companion" was an influential family magazine and was a regular visitor in our home. The "Youths' Companion" published a story with Gifford Pinchot's picture, telling about his appointment to head the Bureau of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture and something about what forestry involved. That decided me to study forestry.

I was raised in a prairie country and was accustomed to working on a farm, but the appeal of the forest, even though I knew little about it except through reading, was too strong to resist. I went to the University of Michigan in the fall of 1901, expecting to get preliminary training and then transfer to Yale University for the professional training, but before that happened Filibert Roth started a forestry school at Ann Arbor and was later ably assisted by Walter Mulford, so I stayed through to 1907.

My first employment in the Forest Service was during the summer of 1906 as a student assistant at \$25 a month. I joined a party in the Ozarks of southern Missouri under the leadership of Sam J. Record. The crew consisted of myself and one other boy whose name I have unfortunately forgotten. (Francis M. Patton of Virginia) We callipered thick stands of scrub oak until we were dizzy counting. I don't know how many stand tables we made, but the greater part of the summer was devoted to nothing else, unless I might mention a losing fight with red bugs or "chiggers."

### **1907**

In the spring of 1907, I became a full fledged forest assistant at a salary of \$1,000 per year. I reported to Washington during June of that year and with a number of other new entrants into the Forest Service, was given some brief preliminary training. I remember meeting Charlie Judd at that time and was with him perhaps ten days or two weeks, and while I have known of his work and followed his career since then, chance never brought us together again. I read of his death only a few months ago. Sam Record again guided my first forestry efforts in the Forest Service. A tree study of western red cedar was started under his direction. I was one of several young foresters who were assigned to different parts of the range of this tree. My territory was the State of Washington with the exception of the northeast corner. It was later reduced to the Cascade Mountains, but it was still a rather large territory to cover within a limited time of a few months and expect to come out with an estimate of volume and a report of the dendrological and silvicultural characteristics of the species. It was one of those "wild goose chases" which fortunately the Forest Service realized after a period of about two months and stopped the work.

I remember old Major Sheller (D.B. Sheller) at Wenatchee, Washington, who was the first Forest Supervisor whom I met. He, with three or four Rangers was trying to administer a territory of several million acres, which, I believe, was known as the Yakima Division of the Washington National Forest. Major Sheller was much interested in my assignment, and incidentally, he tried to get some advice from me. "Ah," he said, "so you came from Washington? I would like to show you a letter which I have just received from Washington signed by Mr. W.T. Cox. Do you know him?" The letter was a request for a revision of the timber estimates on the several million

acres of National Forest under his supervision. "Mr. Cox must know," he continued, "that I cannot go out and cruise the timber myself, and that my force of Rangers is too small to expect very much help from that source. So, how can I revise the estimates, what would you advise?" I hesitated, so he continued. "I am going into a trance. I shall shut my eyes and think deeply of the changes which might have taken place in timber volumes during the six months since I made the former estimate. When I come out of the trance, I shall make a few slight changes in the figures and send a revised tabulation to Mr. Cox. Do you think that will satisfy Mr. Cox?" I told him that I felt sure that his proposed procedure would be entirely acceptable, and so far as I ever heard, it was.

He gave me some fatherly advice. He told me frankly that, in his opinion, I was on a wild goose chase, and advised me to choose summer resorts and places of interest as my stopping places through the Cascade Mountains. Said he, "You can get just as much information about western red cedar from the places which are interesting to see and where the hotel accommodations are good as you can from some place where you have to sleep under a spruce tree." I followed his advice. I did, however, cross the Cascade Mountains twice, once on foot along the right-of-way of the Milwaukee Railroad then being built through Snoqualmie Pass; and the second time, with a pack horse outfit up the Natches River and into western Washington at the back end of Mount Rainier Park. Incidentally, I took time to see if there was any western red cedar in Mount Rainier Park. I found myself, during the latter days of August, 1907, at the little town of Sumas in western Washington, on the Canadian line, where Burt Kirkland was acting Forest Supervisor. At this point I received a wire from Mr. Record which was one of very few communications I had had from him since leaving Wenatchee, to the effect that I was to close up shop, make out a report, and be prepared for further assignment. I did this (in a voluminous report) and received a wire shortly afterward to report to Supervisor Todd, Neihart, Montana, for timber sale work. I arrived in Neihart, Montana, the latter part of September 1907, and there followed a series of events and experiences some of which are, I think, well worth recounting.

The branch train from Great Falls arrived at Neihart, Montana, after dark, which in the fall of the year meant about six o'clock. Neihart proved to be a silver mining town with a population capacity of 3,000 to 5,000 people, but with an actual population at that time of perhaps 50. Montana had a great many silver towns in a similar or worse condition than Neihart, - plenty of mines, abundance of ore, ample refining machinery, homes, schools, stores, all of the physical structure of civilization. One serious defect in the man-made economy had caused life to dim and all but go out; the price of silver (undoubtedly caused by over production) was insufficient to allow the mining industry to operate and all was silent and ghostly where once had been noise and intense activity. The something which gave the life impetus to this physical hulk of civilization was gone and only the corpse remained.

Men built this town, but they seemed to be utterly unable to keep the breath of life in it. Perhaps we know as little about life and death in the field of economics as we do in biology. There was a great deal of Neihart, physically speaking; it stretched along the canyon for about three miles and was never more than 1/4 mile wide at any point. With the collapse of the mining industry, the population had dwindled to about what could be supported by the business of raising cattle and sheep, the production and shipment of smelter poles and a little summer tourist trade.

I sought the one little hotel and boarding house in the town and was content to look up the Forest Supervisor on the following morning. The train stayed all night in Neihart and returned to Great Falls the next morning, leaving about 8 o'clock. I found the Supervisor's Office about a mile up the canyon from the little hotel, located in a private residence. I remember the train was pulling out as I walked up the street.

Upon arriving at the office, I found that I was a little in advance of the office hours and had to wait for the arrival of the clerk. I introduced myself and found there was no one in the office except the clerk and she informed me that the Supervisor, Mr. Todd, was on the train leaving town that morning bound for a two-week's elk hunting trip in the Sun River. I inquired if he had left any instructions for me. There were none although we found a telegram on his desk from Washington informing him that I was reporting to him on this date for timber sale work. I searched the files to try and find where the timber sales business was located, because the young lady who was acting as clerk could give me very little help.

Fortunately, about the middle of the afternoon, Ranger Guy Myers rode into town over the divide from the Judith River, saddle horse and pack horse. The pack horse was carrying a deer. Myers had a little timber business and he invited me to return with him. He helped me to get a saddle horse and before 10 o'clock that night I was over on the middle fork of the Judith River at a little cabin that measured about 12 x 18, camping with Guy Myers.

The next two or three days we cruised and marked timber for a little sawmill and made up a contract on the proper forms ready for the Supervisor's signature. The limit on sales without advertisement was \$100, but this sale came well within that limit. The telephone line had just been completed from Neihart to the Judith River. About the third day a telephone call came from Neihart from George Cecil, telling me to return to Neihart. Cecil was one of the inspectors working under Mr E.A. Sherman's direction out of Missoula, Montana. As I recall, Mr. Sherman, as Chief Inspector, had a force consisting of G.H. Cecil, F.A. Silcox, R.Y. Stuart and Paul G. Redington and I think C.H. Adams was one of the inspectors. Cecil told me upon my arrival at Neihart that he had been sent there to fire Todd, and that he would like me to stay in town and help him gather the evidence. This I did, with the result that when Supervisor Todd returned from his hunting trip he had a telegram from Washington suspending him and appointing Cecil acting Supervisor. The suspension was properly followed up and Mr. Todd was either dismissed or forced to resign. This incident proved valuable to me, since it established my confidence in the civil service system and proved that drastic personnel action could be taken when necessary.

Later I had a great deal of experience in handling personnel under civil service rules and never once failed to get action when the written evidence supported the recommendation.

The real need for immediate help in the timber business was found to be on the Snowy Mountains. The office at Neihart had two National Forests under its direction - the Little Belt National Forest, which was the country immediately surrounding Neihart, and the Snowy Mountain National Forest.

**1908**

The early part of 1908 was spent on the Little Belts and Snowies as already described. Then about April 15 I was transferred to northern Idaho. Newport, Washington, was the headquarters of the Priest River National Forest, afterwards known as the Kaniksu. Rudo Fromme, a graduate of the Yale Forest School, was the Forest Supervisor in charge. Northern Idaho was a wonderful place in 1908 - a veritable paradise of woods and lakes. That was before too much of the country had been laid waste by logging and fires. The Priest River Valley from the Great Northern Railroad to its northern extremity at the Canadian line was a dense, mostly mature forest of white pine, hemlock and white fir. The road from Priest River to Priest Lake was nothing but a winding trail through the woods, and the old stage coach operated from one chuck hole to the next. The distance was about 25 miles, and it was a long, hard day's trip.

Timber sales had already begun in the Priest River Valley and the Forest Service was struggling even then with the problem of whether or not the cut-over land should be opened to settlement or should be retained for timber growth. In the years which followed, this problem was one of the most urgent. Soils men, timber men, and farmers struggled over it and in the end the farmers, as usually happens, won the battle. A great deal of that heavy timber land was opened to settlement under the Act of June 11, 1906. I have not been back in that country in recent years, but I am sure it was a mistake to try to make farms out of land like that. The cost of clearing was too high and the chances for a livelihood from the products of the soil after clearing were too slim. It was wonderful timber producing land, but poor farm land.

I was married in June 1908, and after helping Fromme with timber sale business, I returned to Great Falls August 1, 1908. Again the assignment was in connection with the sale of smelter poles in the Little Belt Mountains and to the Little Rockies Division. The Little Rockies is an outlying island of forest-covered mountains adjoining the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation in northcentral Montana. It is now part of the Lewis and Clark National Forest, with headquarters at Great Falls. I spent three weeks working with Ranger Hart on the timber problems of these mountains. The period was from August 20 to September 7.

In the fall of 1908, I had a three months' assignment in Washington, in what was known as the "Bull Pen." It was a big room in the Atlantic Building where a dozen or more raw recruits like myself were assigned desks; current correspondence was shoved at us with instructions to prepare letters in reply. There was a room full of stenographers next door and there was no way to get letters written except to go in there to dictate amid the hammering of a dozen or more typewriters. Mr. Pinchot's rules, or somebody's, required that the letters be dictated. Some were short and some were long. Some were made for the signature of the man in charge of timber sales, which might have been Homans or Clapp or Carter; or they might be for the signature of Cox or Cooper or Spring or Sterling or W.L. Hall or for the signature of the Chief himself. If they were the Chief's letters, they had to run the gauntlet and be initialed by each and every man between the poor fellow in the "Bull Pen" and G.P. himself. Usually, each man who initialed required some changes in the letter, and it was indeed a feat long to be remembered if a letter could be sent through for the Chief's signature without change. I never had that experience. I don't know whether anybody else ever did or not, but I doubt it.

In the fall of 1908, the inspection system was changed to field administration. Heretofore, the administrative line had been direct from the Supervisor to Washington. Field Districts (later



called Regions) were instituted. District One took in the Montana-north Idaho country, and I was assigned to this District with headquarters at Missoula. Bill Greeley was the District Forester, with Gus Silcox as associate. Bert Cooper was in charge of the timber, (I have forgotten whether it was called silviculture or management at that time). Dave Mason was his first assistant; Joe Warner, Joe Fitzwater and I were traveling representatives. Dick Rutledge was there in charge of lands, and C.H. Adams (locally known as "Cow-Horse Adams") was in charge of grazing. I soon realized that I was in a traveling job. Arriving in Missoula on December 13, I was sent almost immediately to the Pryor Mountains in Montana east of Red Lodge, with instructions to straighten out "Old Man" Town who was complaining about poor treatment in connection with his sales of timber in the National Forest. A part of my job was to make a timber management plan for the Pryor Mountains. I am not sure but that I made a record on that trip; between December 15 and Christmas morning when I returned to Missoula, I visited the Pryor Mountains, which was an outlying range of mountains adjoining the Crow Indian Reservation consisting of about 6 or 8 townships. There were some rough estimates of the timber in existence and I made some more, and during that 10-day period, timber sale difficulties were straightened out, and I returned to Missoula with a management plan for the Pryor Mountains timber which met all the needs for a good many years thereafter; perhaps it is even effective today.

### **1909-1910**

The office of timber management or Silviculture to which I was attached, was organized on the basis of Cooper and Mason in charge, and Warner, Fitzwater, and I as traveling representatives. I was assigned to the forests of eastern Montana. My job was to look after the timber sales, particularly from the standpoint of the silvicultural systems and to see that the marking was brought up to standard. In practice I also had the job of running out sale boundaries, appraising the stumpage, and drawing up sale contracts.

The middle part of January, I reported to Mr. V. Giffert Lantry, Supervisor of the Absaroka National Forest at Livingston who had requested some timber sale assistance. Livingston and the surrounding country in January of any year is not likely to be a very delightful place to do field work. This particular January I remember very vividly because of the penetrating cold. The particular sale which I was called upon to visit was located on the north end of the Crazy Mountains division which was about 40 or 50 miles due north of Livingston. After a few preliminary discussions with, Mr. Lantry I went to the town of Big Timber, took stage north, and walked 12 miles to Ranger Durgan's camp, then by saddle horse to the north end. The temperature during those two or three days' travel was at least 40° below zero. Most of my route lay along exposed ranges but fortunately a part of the way I traveled through the timber. I alternated between walking and riding and thus succeeded in keeping up circulation so that no part of me froze completely. In due time I arrived at the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, got in touch with the Ranger, and together we rode some 5 or 6 miles up the canyon to the sale area. The Supervisor had been making 100-dollar sales to local sawmill men operating under the name of Mosback and Eicke. The snow was about four feet deep on the sale area. The sawmill was a little one-horse portable affair which would cut, when pushed, perhaps 3,000 feet in 10 hours. The camp was one of those combinations where one-half of the building was devoted to housing of the horses and the other half a combination bunkhouse and cookhouse. The door, I remember, was so small that one had to bend almost double, before entering. When I found what the

proposition was, my egotism, if I had any, was rapidly deflated. What Mosback and Eicke wanted was another 50,000-foot sale, which at the appraised stumpage price of \$3.00 made it an advertised sale. The Supervisor had no Rangers sufficiently experienced to handle even so simple a proposition. My job was to lay out the sale boundaries, mark the timber, make out the sale contract, or rather the application, and then return to Livingston and help the Supervisor fix up the necessary papers for advertisement and arrange, as a rule, for the privilege of "advance cutting" since logging must proceed. All of this was a very simple process. I remember the sale application read something like this: "We, Peter Mosback and Peter Eicke, partners, doing business under the firm name and style of Mosback and Eicke, hereby apply for the privilege of cutting 50,000 feet of standing timber, alive and dead, etc." All of this expedition to the sale area and return to Livingston required something like about 10 days. The next two weeks were spent on the Little Belts again (part of the Jefferson National Forest, later the Lewis and Clark) mostly marking timber on existing sales. This was interesting and worthwhile work. The Rangers of those days knew only a little about what forestry was all about, but they were anxious to learn. I worked with several different men. The temperature continued cold, but the woods is the best place in the world to work in the wintertime. No biting wind can penetrate the shelter of the trees and bodily activity keeps up the circulation. If one is properly dressed, there is no time of year so suitable as the winter for such activities of the forester as cruising, running lines, or marking timber for removal. Many years later I cruised timber in northern Canada during midwinter on four or more feet of snow when the temperature must have been at least 30° below for weeks at a time. All of the necessary activities of running lines, locating corners, and keeping notes were successfully carried on. Tent camps pitched on top of the snow are quite comfortable. Much of the brush and windfall is covered by the snow and there are no insect pests. Dog teams are very useful in moving camp on the snow, but even if such luxury is not available, there are many advantages of winter work for foresters.

Upon my return to Livingston I found a letter from Missoula asking me to report to the Supervisor of the Helena National Forest for assistance with a timber sale on the Big Belt Division. My assignment, as contemplated, was to be for several months. I went to Helena and interviewed Supervisor Dwight Bushnell. The purchaser was a mining company which was cutting mining timbers; the Ranger was having difficulty making the company live up to the timber sale regulations. The company had refused to pile brush or to comply with the utilization requirements and were pretty slow in making their payments. Bushnell wanted me to go to the Big Belt, live in a tent on the sale area, take charge of the sale and see that the mining company complied with the Government regulations. Several months' assignment on a policemen's job, on work which could and should have been done by the local Ranger, was about the last straw. I told Mr. Bushnell that I wanted to consult with my superior officers in Missoula before accepting the assignment. I got on the train and went to Missoula and expressed myself rather forcibly to Mr. Cooper. This was about February 15. Mr. Cooper was, fortunately, sympathetic and after a conference with Mr. Greeley, I was assigned to the Bitterroot with headquarters at Missoula. The next several months I worked under the direction of W.W. White on various assignments, and the most important of which was the old A.C.M. Lick Creek sale on the Bitterroot. During this assignment I lived in a scaler's cabin with my wife and had some very interesting and exciting experiences.

My notes show that we left Missoula March 21 and returned on April 7, an absence of a little over two weeks, but at the time and in retrospect the days spent on this assignment assumed much larger significance than the calendar limitations would seem to account for. In the first place, it was a camping trip to the woods, and such trips had been all too few so far; we took our camp outfit and food supplies with us. In the second place, the work was pleasant and worthwhile and we met and enjoyed many interesting people.

When the train left Missoula on Sunday afternoon bound for Hamilton, we were surprised to find that our party, in addition to myself and wife, consisted of Bert Cooper representing Silviculture at Missoula, E.E. "Nick" Carter representing the same office in Washington, and G.B. MacDonald then in charge of planting at Missoula, later and for years identified with the forest school at Ames, Iowa.

Hamilton boasted of only one hotel, the Ravalli, which was really first class; it was full, and it looked for a time as though we might have to get out our camp beds. Finally the manager turned over a child's bed to the one lady of our party and the men slept in a room above an adjoining saloon. We dined that evening in splendor or rather amidst splendor. Our woods clothes very ill-fitted the grand furniture and decorations and white table linen of the dining room in the Ravalli; we felt more at ease a little later, however, when a serious attempt to order a grand dinner from the imposing menu card disclosed the fact that there was nothing left but veal stew, potatoes, and boiled onions. The difficulties and the incongruity of our situation finally broke down all formalities; the whole party became well acquainted and were highly entertained.

Next morning (very early) the whole party left on the A.C.M. logging train, bag, baggage, and passengers, on the empty flat cars which were enroute to camp to be loaded with logs, - western yellow pine. As an observation car, a "flat" can hardly be improved upon; there was plenty of scenery - the sunrise and the fading starlight, snow and frost on pine and fir and the grand spectacle of distant snow-covered mountains. No one became seasick with the swaying motion of the cars on the uncertain roadbed, and we arrived at the company's camp about 10 a.m. That was the end of our transportation; the government cabin (and timber) was about 2 miles further, but we had lots of help with the baggage.

Mr. and Mrs. White were at the cabin when we arrived. Claget Sanders was there too; he was the scaler; we became better acquainted with him later. He could tell many a weird tale of his experiences in the mountains. Just a short mile or so from that very cabin he had (two years before) stumbled upon the skeleton of a man and alongside him a note book which told of his last days alone in the woods with a broken hip. The victim was within sight of ranch houses below him; he could see the lights at night, but he couldn't get word of his plight and he died a slow lingering death as attested by his daily entries until oblivion captured one more human being from life's stage.

Our visitors left next morning, but life presented never a dull moment at the Lick Creek cabin. There was the daily occupation of marking trees for cutting and studying the new system of logging being tried out on the company land and proposed for use on the National Forest. C.H. Gregory, the big Forest Service lumberman, and Earl Tanner, then a Ranger but afterwards a lumberman, spent several days with us. Lumberjacks came and went and soon the sounds of

"Timber!" rang out in the woods all around the cabin. The very first night, with not less than seven people sleeping in the bunks and on the floor of the small cabin, Mr. White became exasperated with the ravages of a pack rat and, in the middle of the night, blazed away at him with his sixshooter. As I remember now, he failed to hit the rat, but did succeed in rousing all the sleepers.

During part of this time I was in charge of this timber sale and it happened that during this period the company started donkey logging. The equipment had been set up, the company given permission to try the equipment, but without commitment by the Forest Service as to the conditions under which it would be permitted. The decision depended upon the amount of damage which the ground skidding of logs would entail. The company had previously been using donkey logging on their own lands and I had watched the results without being able to visualize how the method could be applied on the National Forest without ruining the growing stock which was being left. The machines were set up, the fallers went through the woods falling the trees; the system to be used was the dragging in of entire trees; limbing or bucking to be done at the landing. As the ranking officer in charge, I decided that limbing and bucking must be done in the woods before skidding. I reported to the logging superintendent (Mr. Blackmore) whom I found at the landing where the logs were being loaded on cars. I introduced myself, explained my responsibility and gave him my decision. Unfortunately, we had never previously met, and he sized me up as a young upstart who probably could be bluffed; he very coolly informed me that I would have to go to Hamilton and take up such matters with the main office, that he was there to carry out the logging as planned, not to change it. This had me stumped, but I recovered quickly and informed Mr. Blackmore that I was not going to Hamilton, that I was giving my instructions to him, and that tomorrow morning I would stop operations and seize all the logs if he failed to follow instructions. I had talked pretty big, but I was worried; that afternoon I walked 10 miles to get to a telephone to inform Supervisor White of the crisis which had been reached on the sale area. Fortunately, Mr. White backed me up. I returned to the cabin and waited with considerable anxiety to see what would happen. I did not then fully appreciate the power of the Federal Government. At daybreak next morning the fallers went through the woods and proceeded to limb the trees and buck them into log lengths. Evidently the logging superintendent had also telephoned to his superiors. Anyway, after that the logging proceeded without serious friction.

Toward the end of my assignment to the Bitterroot, which was along in June 1909, I learned that I had been acting in the capacity of deputy Forest Supervisor but I had not known it and so far as I was able to learn, Supervisor White also did not know it. Incidentally, I have never worked under more pleasant conditions than I encountered during the three or four months' assignment on the Bitterroot and never worked under a better Supervisor than W.W. White.

In June 1909, I was sent to Red Lodge, Montana, as Supervisor to the Beartooth National Forest which included the rough high-mountain country northeast of the Yellowstone Park and the outlying Pryor Mountains for which I had already made a timber management plan in December 1908. I succeeded Mr. E.C. Russell who was a very lovable gentleman, a pioneer cowman who was very popular with the local people. While the timber buyers and the stockmen would do business with the new supervisor, they absolutely shunned all social-contacts. My wife, therefore, found Red Lodge a rather difficult place to live. At that time it had a population of

about 5,500 people of which perhaps 5,000 were coal miners and people directly connected with the coal mining business. I received the princely salary as Forest Supervisor of \$1200 per annum. The Government did not pay the expenses of transferring household goods from Missoula to Red Lodge and in order to carry on my work I had to buy a saddle horse and a pack horse. As a matter of fact, I bought two saddle horses so that my wife could travel with me since social life in Red Lodge seemed to leave us rather isolated. We had many delightful trips through the beautiful Beartooth Mountain country.

I found that the problem of handling the range was largely a problem of handling the owners of the stock and this, plus the supervision of timber sales where mining timbers were the chief product, plus fire protection; was the job of National Forest administration on the Beartooth. Sheep ranged in the summertime on the high plateaus. The plateaus were at an elevation of 9500 to a little over 10,000 feet. The grazing season was supposed to be from July 1 to September 30, but the sheep could rarely go in earlier than July 10 and often had to come out by the middle of September.

The trail to Cook City from Red Lodge led up the main canyon of Rock Creek, which was a box canyon practically to its head; the trail then zigzagged up through the rocks to the top of the plateau, across by Mirror Lake into Wyoming and then up a tributary of the Shoshone River to the town of Cook City at the extreme northeast corner of Yellowstone Park. This trail and all of its windings became very familiar, it was usually a two-days' trip from Red Lodge to Cook City and over part of the distance the going was so treacherous that the horses were led as much as they were ridden. I mention this because years afterward in Pennsylvania I picked up a magazine in a dentist's office and as I idly fingered through the pages I saw an advertisement for a dude ranch on Rock Creek on the main Red Lodge-Cook City highway. I could hardly believe that a highway would be built over such a route, but I have learned that it is a fact. Such a highway must be cut out of solid rock for a good part of the distance; it traverses an area which could only be traveled (without very expensive snow removal) for a period of about two months out of the 12, or in most favorable seasons, not more than three months. The road must have cost at least a million dollars. It is undoubtedly a beautiful scenic highway and I understand that it is one of the most popular entrances to the Yellowstone National Park, but one wonders why so costly a road with such a limited period of use should be built. I hope, someday, to take a ride over this highway.

Passing over most of the events which altogether form a very happy chapter in my life, we come to the summer of 1910 when the sky was filled with smoke from the fires which increased in intensity in western Montana and Idaho. I must recite one experience in firefighting on the Beartooth. I remember during July the smoke was so dense in Red Lodge that frequently we could hardly see across the street. But the Beartooth escaped until on August 21 some careless camper up the west fork of Rock Creek let his fire get away. In a few hours we had fire from the creek almost to the top of the mountain. The next few days was a period of excitement and intense activity. I have forgotten how many men we finally put on this fire, but I think it was about 50. I can't say that the organization was very good or that the technique of firefighting was all that it should have been. I remember mostly the difficulties which surrounded firefighting activities of that period. I know that we did not have the fire under complete control when the fight ended on August 24 when about 6 inches of snow covered the fire. Then our difficulties

really began. The firefighters had to be paid and there were no facilities for meeting such an emergency, at least on an eastern Montana Forest. Payrolls could be made out and sent to Missoula and checks would come back to the firefighters but a large number of firefighters demanded cash and the cash had to be advanced by the Supervisor. I threw into it what cash I could muster, added to it what I could borrow from the bank, borrowed about \$200 from Sam Dana, who happened to visit my headquarters about that time, and finally paid off all of those firefighters. I suspect a good many of them never did 15 cents worth of work, but our time records were not the best and in order to avoid trouble and perhaps personal injury, we gave a good many of them the benefit of the doubt and paid them for firefighting when we were almost certain they had been loafing on the job. Later the firefighting was organized so that such difficulties were not encountered and Supervisors were not called upon to advance the money. But in 1910 I know that my experience on the Beartooth was repeated on many National Forests further west where the problem of firefighting was multiplied manyfold.

While on the Beartooth I was visited by C.H. Adams, in charge of grazing at Missoula; Wallace Perrine, his assistant; R.Y. Stuart, who was then in Washington; S.T. Dana, also from Washington; R.H. Rutledge, in charge of lands at Missoula; and Mr. Greeley.

On the forest as a part of my staff were Lee Stratton, afterwards a fiscal agent at Ogden; D.R. Brewster., later nationally known as a consulting forester; and my staff of Rangers, chief among whom were H.B. "Doc" Yerkes; Daly Johnson; the two Abbots, one of whom, Arthur Abbot, was later Forest Supervisor on the Helena and Cabinet; Hosea Parker, Charley Jordan, and Frank Clark. Daly Johnson had a famous little sorrel mare which was capable of doing stunts which I have never seen before nor since. Upon one occasion I was riding with him through the timber up the west fork of Rock Creek. A storm had blown a tree across the trail which came just below the horse's withers. I was in the lead and guided my horse up the mountain side to get past the obstruction. Daly got off his horse, stepped under the tree, said some magic words to his sorrel mare who got down on her knees and crawled under that tree. I have never seen that done by any other horse even in a circus.

Frank Clark and Hosea Parker originated, I think, one famous story. They were on a camping trip and neither one liked to cook so they made an agreement by which they flipped a coin to see who took the job of cooking while the other wrangled the horses. The agreement was that when the other one first complained about the cooking, jobs were to be exchanged. Hosea Parker was the first cook and on the very first morning Frank Clark stuck his fork into the hot cakes and found that raw dough oozed out from the center. He said, "My God, Hosea, what do you mean by, by - - (he remembered just in time, and continued), "giving me cream puffs for breakfast?" Needless to say Hosea continued as cook. I have heard that story several times since, told by foresters associated with old District One and I think it originated on the Beartooth.

One other story from the Beartooth. We had a famous expedition with Wallace Perrine to look up new range. We had quite an outfit of saddle horses and pack horses. Incidentally, on our trip we decided that we wanted to see the famous grasshopper glacier which occupied the upper slopes of a 12,000-foot mountain. According to legend, verified by reliable reports from many people, the ice of the glacier was filled with frozen grasshoppers. The theory was that a flight of grasshoppers had gotten caught and millions of them frozen into the ice. I wanted to see this

glacier. The nearest approach was by means of Goose Lake. Our party arrived at Goose Lake about noon on a summer day. We threw the packs off our horses and started to get together a lunch and were then going to prepare camp to stay over night, intending to get an early start on foot next morning so as to see the glacier and return to the camp in a day's time. We looked about for firewood and found that we were above the timber line. There was nothing which could be used for fuel except the wooden posts which had been packed in, and which marked the corners of mining claims. Obviously we could not burn these so rather than face the discomforts of an over night camp without a fire, we decided not to see the glacier; we dropped down to lower country and camped, and solaced ourselves with some good trout fishing. I never did see the grasshopper glacier.

On this trip I took my father-in-law along; he wanted to be taken into country never before trod by white men. I doubt that we did that, but that mountain country was so rough and primitive that the imprint of either white or red man was very faint. We discovered, to our sorrow, that we had a balky pack horse, - Charley Jordan's old Plenticose, a large powerful black gelding. He only balked when the climbing was really tough. About 3:00 o'clock one afternoon, we were pushing our horses to get to the top of the next ridge before a threatening storm broke. Our route was through fire killed standing pole timber and we were sideswiping the hill in order to lessen the grade; there was no trail. At one point the horses had to take a steep pitch in order to reach the top of a big rock which marked a steep drop below. All of our horses made the climb (it was not really very bad) except old Plenticose, who balked. He pulled back and before we realized what was happening, he rolled end over end down the mountain and landed against a tree 50 yards below. We thought Plenticose has reached his Waterloo. We removed his pack and got him to his feet and, to our surprise, found that a few cuts and bruises were his only injuries. We put the pack right back on him and tried to lead him up past that rock with the added inducement of a big club and strong language. Plenticose was, however, determined and apparently had decided not to carry that load over that rock. He again balked and again rolled down the mountain about the same distance.

Only our extreme need for his services prevented us from dispatching him then and there. What we actually did was to put his pack on our saddle horse and lead him to the top of the ridge without a load, under which conditions he offered no objections to the trail. At the top of the ridge we again packed him and had no further trouble, but after that we tried to avoid difficult climbs. That night we camped in a big meadow. We hobbled several of the horses, including old Plenticose; next morning the horses were gone; we trailed them back to our previous camp over the route we had followed. Even when hobbled, that balky pack animal was willing to travel that uncertain trail to familiar and, perhaps, more palatable grass. Such are some of the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of horse flesh which add spice to the tale that is told, but discomforts of a mountain trip, which are not at all appreciated at the time.

In November 1910, I was transferred to Kalispell, Montana, as Supervisor of the Blackfeet National Forest. My salary was increased in connection with this move from \$1200 to \$1500 and the Government had meanwhile arranged to pay the expenses of moving household furniture. This was about the time when the Forest Service was being put on what was known as the "statutory roll." Previous to this time salaries were notified by Congress but the "statutory roll" involved a limitation by Congress on the salaries to be attached to certain specified positions. I

remember that the charge was accepted by the Forest Service with fear and misgiving, but the change improved my personal fortunes very materially because before I arrived at my new station in Kalispell the "statutory" salary of the Forest Supervisor's position at Kalispell had been fixed at \$2000. I was, therefore, almost overcome by the sudden change.

Early in 1910, a Supervisor's meeting was held at Missoula. Gathered at the meeting was a mixture of the old and new regime. There were young foresters who had gone through forest schools and had been made Forest Supervisors, but there was a good sprinkling of oldtimers who were more or less hold-overs from the land office days. Such men as Haines from the Blackfeet, V. Giffert Lantry from the Absaroka, and Ballinger from those wild hills in South Dakota and extreme eastern Montana, the Slim Buttes, the Ekalaka, the Short Pines known as the Sioux National Forest. The meeting, which was held amidst howling blizzards which bore down upon us from Hellgate Canyon, was highly successful. I remember a rump session in which V. Giffert Lantry was the chief speaker. The subject of discussion was the necessity for a raise in salaries for Supervisors. Lantry and a number of others were in the habit of reinforcing their courage by frequent resort to strong drink. After a heated discussion at this rump session Lantry proposed that they go to Mr. Greeley and make a proposition to him to this effect: Mr. Greeley could either arrange for an increase in salaries or "use his influence to take the tax off of liquor." Needless to say, such a proposition was never made to Mr. Greeley. The rump session and all its good intentions died when the influence of the courage-giving liquor died out the morning after. I find in my notes that James T. Jardine talked at this meeting about the new system of "blanket herding of sheep." Afterwards, at a Ranger meeting at Hunters Hot Springs in eastern Montana April 1910, he talked on the same subject.

I must tell one more tale dating from this period. As a traveling timberman in 1908, I had gotten acquainted with the Ranger in charge of a district on the Absaroka south of Big Timber. He was a big, easygoing, slow talking Missourian, Bill Yates. I knew that Bill was not too conscientious in the performance of his duties. While I was Supervisor at Red Lodge, I met Bill one day at Big Timber and found out that he was staying in town most of the time. His station was 20 miles south and officially his job was at the station. "Bill," I said, "what are you going to do when the Supervisor comes around and asks to see your diary?" Bill replied without hesitation, "It's a darn poor Ranger who can't lose his diary."

## 1911

The job on the Blackfeet National Forest where I stayed from November 1910 to July 1, 1911, was to pick up the threads of administration and reestablish the business of the National Forest after the holocaust of the 1910 fires. Fires had burned thousands of square miles on the Blackfeet Forest, largely in inaccessible places, but not wholly. Large areas in the upper north fork country and in the Stillwater country had been laid waste. Even as late as February 1911, I found on the Stillwater burn, snags still smoking, sticking up through 5 feet of snow.

There were three famous characters on the Blackfeet National Forest: Bob McLaughlin, who was my deputy Supervisor, who succeeded me as Forest Supervisor and was afterwards state forester of Montana; Fred Herring, who was a Ranger at the Ant Hill Ranger Station along the Fortine River. He had been a Rough Rider with Theodore Roosevelt in the Cuban Campaign. He was a



friend and intense admirer of Roosevelt, and, incidentally, his wife was an excellent cook; this was fortunate, because Herring's station was an important stopping place. The third was Bill (W.C.) McCormick who was Ranger (or was it guard?) on the North Fork of the Flathead during the 1910 fires. His system of firefighting in 1910 was to put out all the fires that he could by himself or with the few guards assigned to his district and then when the fires got too big, ride to Belton, which was the nearest telephone and source of supplies, some 40 miles away, for help, gather a crew and equipment together, go back over the trail and to the fires. It is no wonder that the 1910 fires spread all over the country.

I went up the North Fork of the Flathead River during the winter of 1911. The entrance was through Glacier Park which had only that year been separated from the Blackfoot National Forest. The road ran from Belton on the Great Northern Railroad up past Lake McDonald over the hills and into the North Fork of the Flathead about halfway up; that is halfway from the Columbia Falls to the Canadian boundary. A farm settlement of pioneers had grown up on the Big Prairie up near the Canadian line. These settlers grew hay and vegetables and ran a little stock and somehow eked out an existence. There were, perhaps a dozen or 20 of them. When I went up the road horseback with Ranger McCormick the snow was perhaps two feet deep along the road. At one point we encountered a place where the snow was badly disturbed and a log which had evidently been across the road was lying in the timber alongside. The condition of the log and the unusual disturbance of the snow attracted my attention and I asked for an explanation. McCormick told me a story which I have often repeated as an example of lack of cooperation in the backwoods. The first settler who came out after a storm for mail and supplies found a tree across the road too large to allow his team and sleigh to pass so he got out, cut the log out of the tree and rolled it to one side, but after he had passed on his return trip with his load of supplies, he rolled the log back across the road. Each succeeding settler who passed this point rolled the log out and back again so as to give his neighbors no advantage of his activity. The Ranger had finally rolled the log so far into the woods that it could not be rolled back.

There was timber business on the Blackfoot as the National Forest was supplying logs to a bit mill in the Fortine Valley and there was some local grazing but the big job was organizing a fire protective system, building telephone lines and trails. I made one trip with Bob McLaughlin on skis up through the Stillwater burn where we encountered the burning snag which I previously mentioned. That was the first and only extended trip I ever made on skis and we almost didn't come out alive, but that is another story.

Along in May the snow was beginning to go off in the southern portions of the Blackfoot Forest and it was important that routes for new trails be located, so Bob McLaughlin and I started out with two saddle horses and two pack horses, intent upon reconnoitering the country preliminary to the building of trails and the locating of fire lookouts and telephone lines. Bob was a constant pipe smoker and he enjoyed smoking as much as anyone I ever knew. We packed our horses in the outskirts of Kalispell. It was the first trip of the season and the horses were not easy to pack. We struggled with the job but finally all was in order. We climbed into our saddles and started down the road. I lighted my pipe, intent upon the full enjoyment of the expedition, soon forgetting the annoying details of getting stubborn pack horses properly loaded. I noticed that Bob was not smoking. I advised him to light up and only then did I realize the difficult circumstances in which I was placed. He informed me that he had quit smoking. I knew I was in

for it them. All went well until the middle of the second afternoon. We encountered windfall. We were attempting to keep along the ridge. It was a case of jumping windfall after windfall, leading pack horse and saddle horse. Bob was supposed to know the country and he was taking the lead. Night finally overtook us and in spite of my supplications that we drop the ridge, he insisted that we must push forward. Finally I took my two horses and dropped down the ridge in spite of advice to the contrary. Bob soon joined me and we camped that night in a spruce thicket, tying our horses to trees and giving them only a handfull of oats which we fortunately had with us.

Next morning we had to wait several hours while our horses fed on a grassy knoll so that when dusk again overtook us on the third day we had only reached the Stillwater River; we had intended to be far beyond it. Again we met difficulties because Bob was rather inflexible, to say the least, and he was the guide. The Stillwater River at this point is a slow, sluggish stream, perhaps 20 or 30 feet wide, with steep sloping mud banks and swimming water in the middle. It was obviously a difficult stream to cross so I inquired if there was not a bridge. Bob admitted that there was a bridge 3 miles below but insisted that we must cross here. He undertook to make the first crossing. The front feet of his horse entered the water but slipped on the mud banks, the horse reared, plunged, the pack horse pulled back, broke loose and ran off through the willow brush. We chased the pack horse and finally got him in tow once more. This time I took the lead; my horses were perhaps a little gentler than his. I coaxed my saddle horse into the stream and succeeded in leading the pack horse in. We swam across and all was well until the farther bank was reached; my horse could not get up. It fell in the attempt. I dismounted, unfastened the cinch buckle which, fortunately, was used to fasten the cinch to the saddle, heaved the saddle over the horse's head and on to the bank, but in doing so dropped the bridle of my saddle horse and the lead rope of the pack horse and before I knew it both of them had returned to the farther bank. I was left on one side with a saddle and Bob had himself and four horses on the opposite bank. I can tell the remaining part of the story in much shorter time than it actually took to negotiate that crossing, but finally we got all four horses across the stream, but in doing so both riders were wet from head to foot, the pack horses had succeeded in getting most of the packs wet and on top of that, rain was steadily adding to our misery. Our next objective was a Ranger cabin about 3 miles up the trail and we made for it as fast as we could. There was nobody at the cabin since it was occupied only in the summertime, but fortunately there was a settler just below whose light burned invitingly in the darkness which surrounded us. We stopped at this ranchhouse and found that it was occupied by Mr. C.R. Likens, a Missourian who had migrated to Montana. He was a hospitable soul and invited us in and we most gladly accepted his invitation. He proceeded to prepare for us one of the most welcome feasts which I have ever enjoyed. He had a warm house and after dinner he brought out a whole rack full of pipes and plenty of tobacco. He apologized that he didn't have cigars to offer us, but I assured him that that was not at all necessary. At this point, I turned to Bob and said, "Bob, you either take one of these pipes and start smoking or this is the end of our journey; we are starting back to town in the morning." I am sure it was not my admonition so much as it was Bob's desire to smoke which won the day, but he did light up and I can assure you that the trip thence forward was altogether successful where it otherwise would have been a dismal failure. Such are some of the hazards of travel in the mountains without smoking tobacco.

There must be an end to this recitation. My assignment to the Blackfeet ended on July 1 and therefore I could not have made very much impression either for good or ill on its administration.

My notes indicate that at a meeting in Kalispell on May 11, 1911, the Northern Montana Forestry Association was founded. Bob McLaughlin and R.H. Rutledge were present at the meeting and Bob was the real motive force. Greeley had gone to Washington to take charge of timber management and Gus Silcox was installed as District Forester. Bert Cooper had left in the meantime and Dave Mason was running timber management. A vacancy existed in the position of assistant District Forester in charge of operations which was the job of fire protection, improvements and control of finances on the National Forests. I took up these new duties on July 15 and moved my family, consisting now of a wife and a young baby, to Missoula.

Of the events at Missoula during the balance of 1911, only one is perhaps worth recording as out of the ordinary. That was the organization of a section of the Society of American Foresters at Missoula on December 11. It was organized as the Missoula Section and now is known as the Northern Rocky Mountain Section. It was always been a source of pride to me that I can class myself as one of the charter members of one of the first of the organized sections of the Society.

## 1912

During the week of January 22, a Supervisors' meeting was held at Missoula which was probably the most important to that section of the Forest Service of any meeting before or since, since the whole fire protective and allotment system was worked over and important policies decided which had a far-reaching effect upon the administration of the National Forests. I shall not dwell upon the more or less prosaic matters of administration, although their effect was greater than was the incident which I am going to tell.

Among other things discussed was the problem of controlling insect infestations in the timber - bugs, mostly *Dendroctonus Monticola*. Infestations had appeared in Idaho in the white pine on the Kootenai and in various places in Lodgepole, and considerable sums (that is for that day) had been spent following the technical directions of representatives of the Bureau of Entomology. Local concentrations had been assaulted by cutting and peeling infested trees. There were many other spots of infestation which it seemed impossible to reach. The question was whether or not expenditure of money on these relatively few concentration points could have any lasting effect upon the progress of the infestations. There were laymen's arguments for and against, and highly technical dissertations from the trained entomologists supporting the idea of continuing expenditures. It was late in the day of a strenuous session. Everybody was tired but intensely interested in the decision about to be made. Dorr Skeels, the Supervisor of the Kootenai National Forest, arose and was recognized by the chairman. He said, "Gentlemen, I - I - I want to ask you this question: if - if a town, a whole town, was in - infested by rats, you - you wouldn't try to stop the - rats by - by - putting a gold plug in one rat hole, would you?" That ended the discussion and relieved the tension; the meeting was adjourned.

## 1914

From 1911 to 1914, fire seasons in Montana and Idaho were not particularly severe. The 1910 lesson was, however, a very severe one and very remarkable progress was made in developing lookouts, trails, telephone lines, emergency rations, purchase of pack animals and in developing fire equipment ready for shipment at a moments'notice. Very great progress too had been made

under Mr. Silcox's leadership in developing the morals and a degree of efficiency of which the organization was very properly proud. Later developments showed that there were very many holes in the organization and very many deficiencies, some of which were realized at the time, but still the statement can be made that, compared with the pioneer days of 1910, the 1914 fire season opened with a greatly improved organization and facilities for handling the fire situation.

I had one memorable trip during the month of July 1914, which is worth recording. I was Chief of Operations, which included supervision of the fire protective organization. F.A. Silcox was the District Forester. We decided to go out and build fires to see whether or not the lookouts could pick them up, in an effort to put the organization on its toes. We did this without warning, going out alone, carrying our food and blankets on our backs, going through country largely without trails. I remember we camped two nights on the Missoula Forest and four nights on the Lolo. Those were so strenuous that we then decided to make a picnic out of it and went to an accessible spot on the Cabinet in Silcox's automobile, taking our families along. In all, we started four or five test fires which were, in effect, large-sized camp fires built close enough to streams where we knew we could keep them from spreading. After getting a good fire started, we created what we thought were enormous volumes of smoke by adding green coniferous brush, keeping each fire going for three or four hours. Out of four or five such test fires started, only one was picked up by a lookout. Various explanations were offered for the failure to pick up the smokes. In some cases the lookouts were not on the job, because the fire danger did not seem to be imminent, but in most cases, we concluded that our best efforts to make a large volume of smoke failed in carrying the smoke to a sufficient altitude to be seen by the lookouts over the intervening ridges. It is probable that such test fires are ineffective except where the line of vision is direct from the lookout to the point of origin of the fire.

The following is quoted from my diary of July 15, 1914, Lolo Forest: "We continued south up mountain towards divide between Nine Mile Creek and the Missoula River. Reached top about 10:30 a.m., about three hours climb through brush and windfall, no trail. Found trail on top after an hour's struggle through brush. Followed trail in wrong direction about two miles before we got straightened out. Backtracked and traveled along trail for 5 or 6 miles. Camped at L.L. Maurers' trapper cabin and slept with the pack rats."

At the end of July 1914, the fires were on us in earnest, and all the rest of the season our energies were devoted to the job of firefighting. My first big fire that season was on Big River on the Flathead National Forest. The fight lasted about three weeks from the latter part of July to about the middle of August. I remember the World War broke out during the time that I was fighting that fire. I was on an inspection trip, riding down the ridge above Big River towards the Great Northern Railroad, traveling with one of the Rangers from the Flathead. About 4:00 o'clock we saw a tremendous smoke rising from Big River, at a point which seemed to be 10 or 12 miles distant, near the route which we had covered early that morning. We had not camped and had had no camp fire, so there was no possible doubt of our entire innocence in the starting of the fire. Realizing that the fire was too large for two men to handle, we continued to the railroad and by means of the Great Northern telephone, which the company permitted us to use, the firefighting machine was geared up and started to work. We had lots of talent on that fire - Dick Rutledge was in Kalispell and he came up on a night train with 50 men, beds, equipment, and food. We camped out in the brush along the middle fork of the Flathead River at the mouth of

Big River. Dave Mason arrived from some point before morning, and set up headquarters in a boxcar on the Great Northern siding. At daybreak, Rutledge and I with 50 men and a pack outfit, started up Big River to the fire. We arrived at the scene shortly before noon, set up a camp about three-quarters of a mile below the fire, had lunch, and then began the attack. Rutledge was an old hand at firefighting. I had had no experience at that time, except the little gained on the Beartooth in the 1910 fires, and a few slight contacts with fires during the intervening years. My job was scouting the fire, but the first day I stayed on the line. Gene Jacroux, an experienced 1910 firefighter, who was a Ranger on the Flathead at that time, was Rutledge's right-hand man. I remember the crew of 50 men was divided into two gangs; Rutledge took one and Jacroux took the other. They spread out along the line of fire which was the flat spruce woods immediately along the creek where we first encountered the blaze. Rutledge took his men, assigned them the tools and went through the ritual which was afterwards all too familiar, "Axes in the lead, cross cut saws follow up, grub hoes next, follow up with the shovels." All went well until about four in the afternoon after the crew had been working about three hours. A considerable line had been built. The wind came up and the fire crowned in the spruce trees and blew fire in a dozen places across the line. There is probably no forest type in which fire is more difficult to control than in a dense stand of spruce. The crew scattered and worked on the spot fires with a sufficient number to guard each spot. The rest of the crew continued to build line. Again the wind blew the fire across the trail. Rutledge said, "Come on boys, we will go to camp." I was astonished. It seemed to me almost like treason, but, of course, I said nothing. Rutledge went to camp with his 25 men. He sent a messenger to Jacroux advising him to do likewise, but Gene had a different philosophy. He continued to fight, with the result that he came into camp at dark with his crew exhausted and with the fire line in no better shape than when Rutledge left it about 4:30. Meanwhile, Rutledge's crew had been fed and allowed to rest. A night crew was organized for patrol of the line which had been built. By the next morning, all of the line was in very good shape and ready for a back fire. Meanwhile, Mason was rustling pack animals from Glacier Park and from other places, and a steady stream of supplies and men came to our camp, until at the end of a week's time, we probably had 150 or 200 men on the fire.

As a scout I followed the course of the fire up the mountain. I remember I reported to Rutledge that there was only one place on the divide where the fire might possibly get across, and that was covered with bear grass, so that I thought there was little chance that the fire could cross, but it did a few days later, go over that divide through the saddle, through that green bear grass, as though it were tinder, and spotted fires in the next drainage. So camp had to be put over there, and a trail cut to the camp site to get men and supplies in.

I remember one amusing incident. I forgot to mention Jack Clack, deputy supervisor on the Flathead, who was in our camp part of the time. He was looking after the cooks. The camp equipment included camp stoves of light sheet tin, but the grub handed out to the crew was not the best. The cook explained his deficiencies by saying that he was a Dutch oven cook. He didn't know how to cook with these stoves, so Jack went to the telephone (temporary emergency telephone line had been built from the railroad to our camp) and called Mason at the railroad and ordered Dutch ovens. The next afternoon I was standing at the camp when the pack train arrived. The Dutch ovens were unloaded and lined up on the ground. The cook watched the unloading.

He said to Clack, "What are those damn pots for?" "Those pots," said Clack, "are your Dutch ovens." Without a word, the cook reported to the timekeeper, got his time and went down the trail.

By the end of the three weeks, the Big River fire was under control. An immense body of spruce timber had been saved. The cost, as I remember it, was large, probably \$50,000, but none of us had any doubt but that the expenditure was worthwhile. A patrol crew was left until the fall rains ended the fire season, and thus the Big River fire became a matter of history.

There were other fires that season in which I had a part, particularly the Elk Summit fire on the Selaway. I wound up the season in charge of 85 men in the back country of the Selway. On the morning of the 8th of September, we found about four inches of snow all over our fire. Our job for the next two days, until we could get the crew out, was to keep the men warm, as the ordinary blankets were insufficient for the cold temperatures which were encountered with the advent of the snow. We had some big tents, but an inadequate supply of stoves for heating purposes. We did have some metal washtubs, however, so we turned the washtubs upside-down, cut holes in the bottoms, connected them with stovepipes and the combination made a very adequate, if awkward type of Sibley stove, but we kept the men warm until we could get them out to the railroad which was about 25 miles distant down Blodget Canyon to Hamilton, Montana.

### **1915 - 1916**

My notes show that June 17, 1915, was the day of my transfer from Operations to Silviculture. In other words, I was no longer directly concerned with allotments, fire protection, improvements, and personnel, but more concerned with timber sales, scaling, contracts, and similar matters concerning the timber business. Dave Mason had undertaken the job of making a study of the lumber industry in the Inland Empire, which was one of the big undertakings of the Forest Service of that period. Activity in Silviculture of those days seems to have been divided between marking rules, research, timber appraisals, and firefighting. The preparation of white pine marking rules was the big problem during these two years. Prominent in my notes of those more or less directly connected with the problem were Girard, Swartz, Billings, Carl Stevens, Dahlgren, "Skip" Knouf, Don Bruce, Fritz. Fulloway, Harry Baker, Kittredge, McHarg, Koch, Wolff, Fitzwater, Forsythe, Silcox, who took an active part, and from Washington, Greeley, R. Y. Stuart, and E.E. Carter.

There were many visits to the woods and many an argument in the woods. Upon some occasions, they assumed the proportions of "visitations" rather than visits. Upon the occasion of one such "visitation" to the Coeur d'Alene, Meyer Wolff, in order to help settle some argument, was busy using an increment borer on a white pine tree on a sale area then active. A number of lumberjacks stopped their work and watched him. They had never before seen such a curious tool. One of them finally motioned to Dahlgren, who stepped over to be interviewed, and the following conversation took place:

Lumberjack: "What is Mr. Wolff doing to that tree?"

Dahlgren: "Do you know about these bugs which kill the pine trees, these bark beetles?"

Lumberjack: "Yes." (Rather doubtfully.)

Dahlgren: "He is boring for one of those bark beetles."

Lumberjack, after thinking over the matter for some time: "What does he do with the bugs after he gets them?"

Dahlgren: "He wraps them up, puts them in a box, and mails them to Washington."

Lumberjack: "And what does Washington do with them?"

Dahlgren: "It kills them."

This story is apropos of many another thing which gets sent to Washington and is there killed.

The final chapter (at least for that stage) of the marking rules seems to have been reached on October 2 and 3, 1916, since my diary contains the following note: "Final draft marking rules with Silcox, Carter, Wolff, and McHarg."

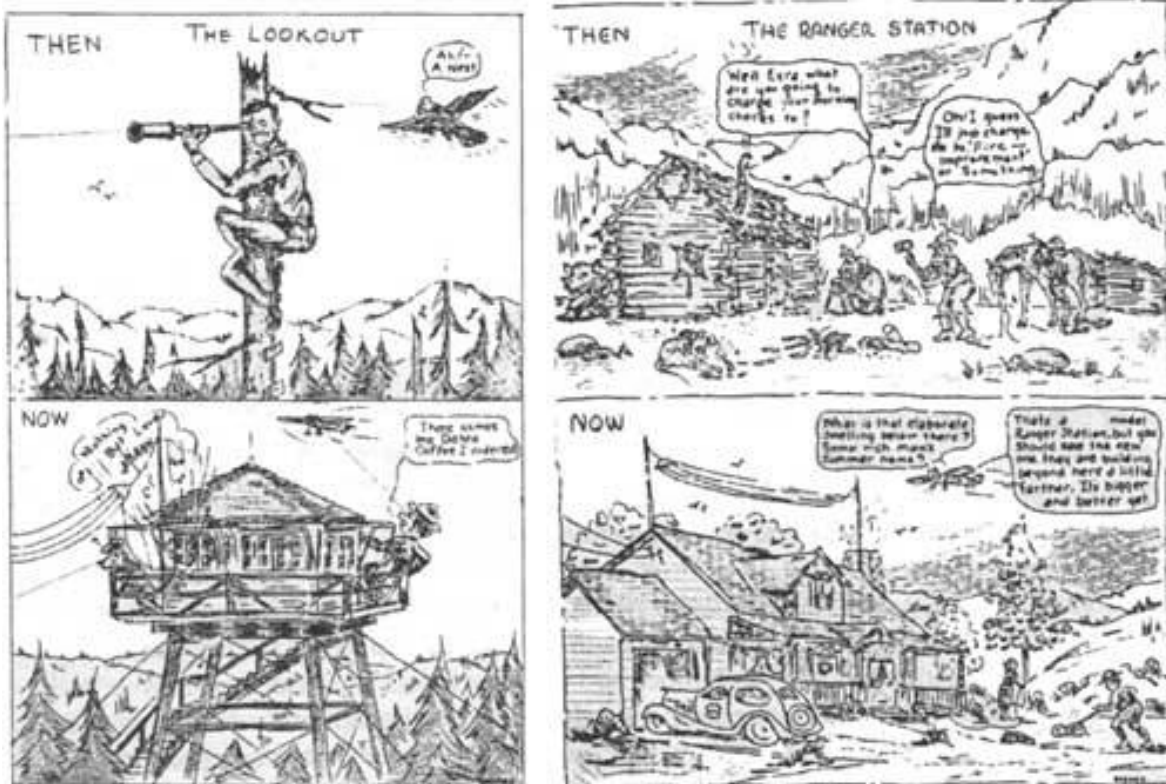
### **1917 - 1920**

This was the war period which was an anxious and difficult time. In the Montana-Idaho country, activities largely consisted of firefighting, which seemed to be more and more becoming a regular summer activity which consumed nearly all of everybody's time, various details connected with the war and with growing I.W.W. troubles. I remember that Silcox was particularly interested in the struggle between the I.W.W.'s and the loggers, and devoted a great deal of study and thought to the problem. In 1917 he left the Montana-Idaho country, intending to go to France, but after he got to Washington, he was sidetracked, because of his interest in the labor problems, to handle labor for the government in the shipyards in Seattle.

R.H. Rutledge took hold of the Forest Service in the Montana-Idaho country, as acting District Forester. The problem of firefighting seems to be more prominent in my memory during this period than other activities. Every summer a great many men came to District One from other assignments in the Forest Service, to help fight the fires - that is, to actually take charge of fire crews and to help in a supervisory capacity. John MacLaren was one of the visitors who came so often that we came to know him well and considered him a part of the regular establishment. I remember one summer, he was at "The Bungalow" on the Clearwater trying to get crews sent to the various fires. I was on the same Forest, but out nearer headquarters. One night, a particularly bad "dry" lightning storm hit. Next morning reports came to us of more and more fires sighted from the lookouts. Most of the country apparently could be reached only from "The Bungalow," and then only by first cutting trails if any fire crew was to be sent in. I called up MacLaren and gave him the report of the fires within his territorial jurisdiction. "I will put pins in my map," he said, "but you have given me too many already. I am afraid we can never reach them." As a matter of fact, however, he did get men to nearly all of those fires and put them out, but there was always one which seemed to get away in spite of best efforts. That one did tremendous damage.

In June 1920, I left the Montana-Idaho country in a transfer to Silviculture in Washington, and this is a good place to bring these recollections to a close, because Washington is an entirely different place and the Washington job is entirely different from the field. It doesn't have the glamor and doesn't seem to create the enthusiasm so prominent in the field - at least in those days.

I have failed to mention many famous characters who are prominent in my memory and are often mentioned in my notes - such men as Major Frank Fenn who was one of Idaho's pioneers - an Indian fighter, a forester and a gentleman of renown. I hope somebody will provide a fitting tribute and picture of Major Fenn. Then there was Roscoe Haines, supervisor, logger, and generalissimo; R. B. Adams who fixed the telephones; Frank Bonner and George Lautz, famous engineers; G.I. Porter, C.N. Whitney, Rutledge Parker, Glen Smith and many others whom I could mention, and about whom I could recite experiences and tell stories, but this essay must close and so I will forego the pleasure.





**"CHIPS" FROM THE YEARS OF SERVICE IN R-1**  
**By Earl D. ("Sandy") Sandvig**  
**(Retired 1959)**

I thought I had a great idea when I started this narrative. My years in Region One (1922-44) took me into all the Forests of the Region. My original plan was to describe some incident that had happened to me on each Forest. It sounded good, but my skill in weaving my way through the several Forests of the Region became hopelessly enmeshed in a flood of words. If you have persistence enough to read the next several pages, you will understand my dilemma.

**The Helena, 1922-24**

During summer vacation of my junior year in school I needed a job. To reach that objective, I spent a great deal of my time knocking at the office doors of Glen Smith and Leon Hurtt. Finally, to get rid of the annoyance, I was hired as a temporary field assistant and assigned to a party making a range survey on the Helena.

It was a beautiful June day as "Chick" Joy and I stepped off the train at Townsend. There we made contact with a team of mules plus a two-seated surrey. It had seen better days and carried fancier company, but it was loaded with grub. Included with the camp gear was a cook. He was slightly indisposed from liquid refreshment but that didn't bother us, or the mules either. Russ Beeson was our chief of party. Russ' kindly disposition, even temper and persistence coaxed those mules to haul us via Radersburg to the Eagle Creek guard station. There we were joined by Dave Poshusta from Ames, Iowa. Dave didn't like mules or pack stock either, and our cook was too elderly and too valuable a crew member to be exposed to those mules. The camp moving fell to Russ and me, as "Chick" had left us for the wilds of the Gallatin after our initial training period in range survey was finished.

It was a wonderful summer. Our cook proved to be a top-rated chef who could perform miracles as a culinary artist with an old tin campstove. He baked buns for our lunches, served pies and cakes and lots of substantial grub. We were livin' high on the hog, for that guy could take a can of salmon and fix it up to make you think you were eating lobster thermidor. He was the best, but when the ice began to freeze on the water bucket late in August his rheumatism, his thirst and his accumulated checks just naturally won over the gracious and tender treatment we accorded him after many a rough mile of mountain travel. Horrors. I have forgotten his name, but the demonstration of his artistry on a tin campstove permanently resides in my memory tank.

The summer passed quickly. We "tally-whacked" our way across the famed Crow Creek allotment, Slim Sam Basin and a lot of other places that haven't stuck in my memory as firmly as the artistry of our cook. Anyhow, late September and October found Russ Beeson and me "tally-whacking" our way across the Dry Range near the post office of Lingshire. We finally gave up "counting the grass" after about a foot of snow fell. We had long since parted company with the mules and the two-seated surrey in favor of a pack outfit. I went back to get more knowledge and a degree in forestry, and Russ started the tedious winter job of planimetering the acreage of the types we had drawn on our maps.

On June 1, 1923, I returned to the Helena, this time under probationary appointment as a grazing assistant. I was given the job of field party chief. Art Cramer, "Colonel" Canfield, Bert Cary, Bill McGinnies and Herb Schwan composed the crew. Labor Day found us camped on Hope Gulch above Marysville, Montana. A number of old sourdough prospectors lived along the creek. One of them frequently visited our camp, especially around suppertime. He liked our grub. I don't remember whether we kept meal records those days or not. Anyhow, we fed him quite regularly and in turn he regaled us with the stories of the big nuggets that had been found in Hope and other gulches in the vicinity. Those nuggets finally got to be the size of lard buckets and it was distracting. The crew's attention had changed from grass to gold nuggets.

Marysville was our supply and mail delivery point. The Drumlumon mine was operating. As I rode past it on the way back to camp the idea struck me that it would be good to get some ore samples and test our prospector friend's knowledge of gold-bearing rock. The superintendent of the mine cooperated and gave me several pieces of ore that had shown an assay of \$1,800 a ton. Luckily, before I reached camp, I met Art Cramer at work mapping his assignment for the day. The sight of his map sheet gave me the idea to start the legend of the lost mine of Hope Gulch. I gave Art the ore samples, and he in turn visited the old prospector that afternoon to show him the samples and inquire if they were any good.

Art played his role perfectly. The old man got out his magnifying glass. His hand shook a bit over what he saw. Next he took a sample and crushed it with his mortar and pestle. Then he put the ore in a gold pan. As he panned, the glitter of gold reflected in the excited movements of the old man. Sure enough, a big gold discovery had occurred. "Where was it?" That was an easy question to answer. Art pulled out one of his map sheets, sketched in the drainage, ridge lines and other features that were easily identifiable, placed an "X" on the map as the point of discovery, and handed it to our raconteur of glittering gold nuggets.

The next day we moved camp and lost contact with our friend. He was an old man then but we probably lengthened his life by ten years in creating a new hope for him in Hope Gulch. Perhaps the search for the lost mine in Hope Gulch still goes on. A very accurate map, with one exception, must be in the possession of some sourdough.

### **The Lolo - St. Joe - Clearwater - Selway - Bitterroot - Kaniksu 1925-26**

Sheep from along the Snake River in Oregon and Washington, and the Columbia River basin too, were finding lush grazing on the fireweed, hollyhock and other plants following the large fires of 1910 and 1919. About 100,000 sheep were shipped each year to rail points tributary to the western group of Forests. The operations were profitable, resulting in keen demand for everything that could be used as range.

Alva Simpson was initially assigned to making a horseback reconnaissance and estimate of the range suitable for sheep. There were no precedents to follow except the actual use of the sheepmen. A rough calculation could be made of usable area, the amount of burned-over area it contained, and the on-the-ground observations of the kind and volume of sheep feed it supported. Alva had purchased and used a saddle and a packhorse in 1924, which were assigned to me in 1925. I started on the Lolo and worked country out of Superior in late June and early July. Snow

was leaving the high country and lots of sheep were on the driveways headed for the back country. There were no roads on the St. Joe River above Avery nor on the Clearwater above the Bungalow.

Shortly after the 4th of July, Glen Smith decided to make a trip with me into the Five Lakes Buttes country and on to Fly Camp in the Clearwater Forest. Each of us had a saddle and packhorse with plenty of grub, fishing tackle and the usual gear for camping. We saw lots of sheep and sheep range. We cooked fish over our campfire every night. It required no effort to catch a mess of fish. Travel was slow, as few of the trails had been opened up and logs were across them everywhere. We chopped and then we made high-jumpers out of our horses. Everything was just lovely except the logs and the damned insects that kept biting, buzzing, chewing, and stinging both if us and the horses until we were bleeding, scratched, tired and irritable.

At long last we reached the trunk trail leading to Fly Camp. It was a delight to be alive again. We were swinging along at a four-mile-an-hour clip, there were numerous fresh saw cuts in the logs along the trail, and we had visions of the comforts of Fly Camp within an hour or two, when smack, crash, right ahead of us a big tree, four feet in diameter, settled its bulk right across the trail. It was too big to jump and too big for two tired travelers to chew through with our axes. Windfalls combined with steep topography wouldn't let us get around that monster. Our horses sensed our despair by letting their heads droop like they had given up, too. There was some daylight, in fact about 4 feet, under that log where it lay across the trail. If we could increase that daylight in its vertical dimension to about 6 feet maybe we could tunnel under that thing and lead our horses through. Yep, we unpacked and unsaddled and dug a tunnel under that rascal.

Nightfall found us at Fly Camp. They had get floors, tables, and outdoor plumbing. It was just like walking into the plush Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Waikiki, to us.

### **1926 - Big Creek Fire - Kaniksu**

Many Region One people will remember the fire season of 1926. Coolin, Idaho, Priest Lake, Upper Priest Lake and the Big Creek fire on the Kaniksu were frequent destinations for "detailers" to the fires.

My initial assignment was to the Green Bonnet fire. Twenty-five men and Joe Gumar took care of that one in about ten days. Next was Big Creek above the Upper Lake. Duff Jefferson was fire boss. Our crews came out of Spokane. Each day the fire went into the crowns. We had no accurate idea of the location of the perimeter of the fire, except the small sector that we were able to hold nearest our camp. Spot fires seemed to be burning all around us. Smoke, dense timber and brush cut visibility down to an almost useless distance. We found spot fires by smell or sound. About two miles from camp and toward the Sullivan Lake-Priest Lake divide we found an 80-acre fire burning that, if not controlled, would soon nullify anything we did on the main fire. We had cut a trail to that spot but our trail did a lot of twisting, winding and ridge-topping. Briefly, it was poorly located. After several trips over it, late one afternoon I decided to short-cut the route back to camp. I carried the latest maps of the area but no compass. At what I thought to

be the proper point, I dived off into the Devil's Club that comprised a good part of the understory in the green timber, and by dead reckoning followed my nose in the general direction of camp.

An hour's travel didn't bring me out at camp or anything that I could recognize. I had left the Devil's Club but was in an old burn that had grown a healthy crop-of ceanothus. The sun had sunk behind a ridge but it was still daylight. I consulted my map but it didn't give me any information as to where camp was or the spot fire I had left. The only direction I was sure of was straight up. I climbed up on a ridge in the hopes that I could recover my sense of direction or see a landmark I could recognize. Trees obscured my view. The best way to solve that problem was to find a tree I could climb. There were several with limbs close to the ground. The first climb resulted in no visibility when I reached the top, but it showed me several other promising-looking candidates to climb.

After several exercises in climbing trees with no profitable results, I reached the firm conclusion that I was completely and irreparably lost. I still possessed that one direction - straight up - and since straight down was the opposite direction and would take me off the ridgetop, I decided to join company with the Devil's Club again. It grew best along stream bottoms. I was worrying about several things, too. First, the boys at camp would be mighty apprehensive if I didn't show up within a reasonable time; second, I was embarrassed at the idea of losing my directions; third, I didn't know for sure whether I was still on the Priest Lake side of the divide or had crossed over into the Sullivan Lake drainage. If I was on the Sullivan Lake side it might take me a couple of days to get out. That would be real bad, for everybody would be alerted then. The one thing I was certain of was that I could get out on my own power. All that I had to do was to keep going downstream.

I was taking long, easy strides downstream, when right in front of me an iron peg appeared - a section corner! That established my location, the rest was easy. I got back to camp before too much anxiety had built up over my absence. And in answer to questions, I had just put in an extra long day scouting for more spot fires.

It's 11:00 p.m. Honolulu time, and while the "chip pile" is growing slowly, if you are as tired of reading this as you ought to be, we will both agree to stop at this point.

Hour \_\_\_\_\_ M. Date \_\_\_\_\_, 1939

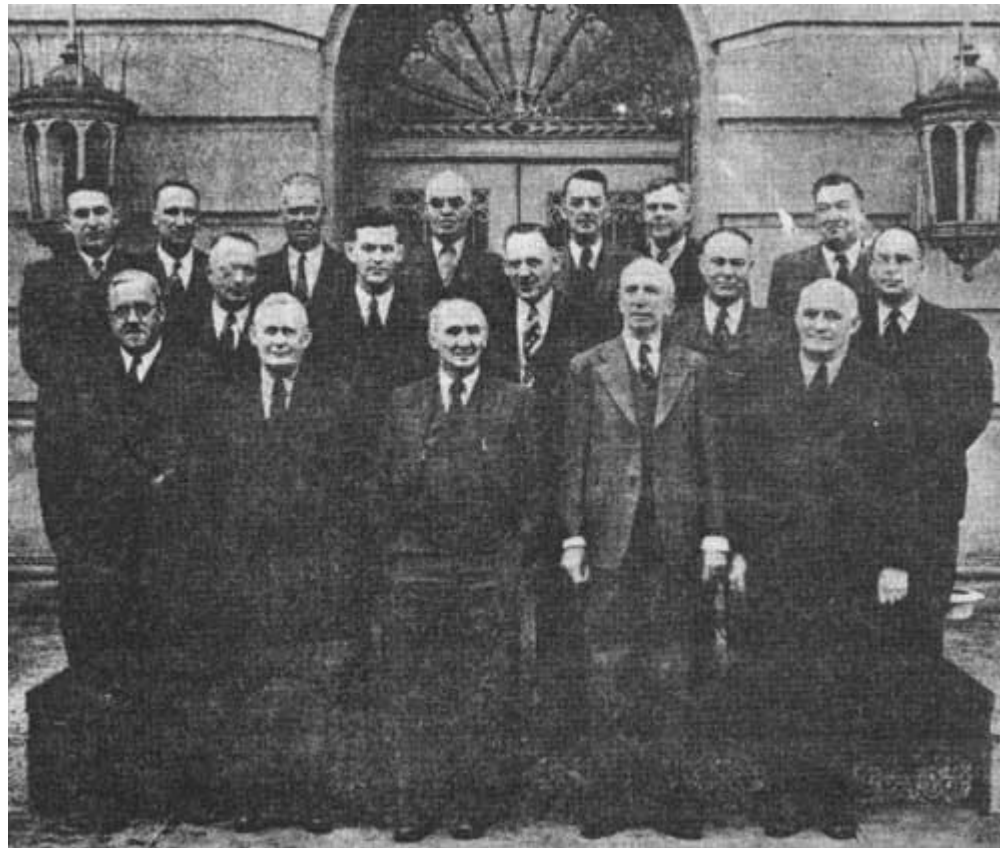
Go straight  
down rockslide  
towards creek

and pick up  
blazes &  
broken trees  
300 yds to Dick

Note written by Sutliff, found stuck on a  
twig along the trail up Roaring Lion  
Creek, Bitterroot Forest — August 1939.



Clarence Sutliff and Pilot Dick Johnson two weeks following the plane crash.



**Forest Supervisors — January 1942 (In meeting at Missoula, Montana)**

Left to Right: Back row: K.A. Klehm (Kootenai), J.C. Urquhart (Flathead), Ray R. Fitting (St. Joe), E.H. Myrick (Lolo), R.T. Ferguson (Lewis and Clark), G.M. Brandborg (Bitterroot), R.A. Phillips (Nezperce).

Middle row: C.S. Crocker (Cabinet), C.C. Strong (Coeur d'Alene), P.E. Melis (Clearwater), J.E. Ryan (Kaniksu), A.N. Cochrell (Helena).

Front row: A.H. Abbott (Gallatin), W.B. Willey (Beaverhead), J.N. Templer (Deerlodge), W.J. Derrick (Custer), G.E. Martin (Absaroka).

## **EARLY FLATHEAD FOREST**

**By Charles S. Shaw  
(Flathead N.F.)**

No story of the early Flathead would be complete that didn't include Frank Liebig.

Frank received his training as a forester in Germany and came to the Flathead area around the turn of the century. His first Ranger District assignment contained one million acres. It was the approximate area which is now Glacier National Park. This was in 1901. He was the first Ranger appointed to this area. He went to the Flathead National Forest after it was created and worked in various Ranger Districts and in the Supervisor's Office until his retirement in 1935.

Frank had two specific hobbies - taxidermy and botany. His private collection of mounted birds and animals was given to Glacier National Park by the family after his death and these are now on display at the Park Headquarters at West Glacier, Montana. He left behind several large herbariums. His work on plant collection and identification was a great contribution and will have its influence for a long time to come.

His personal herbarium was given to the Montana State University at Missoula. Mr. Liebig passed away in Kalispell in 1950.

### **History of Airplane Use on the Flathead Forest**

The use of air travel for administration and fire control has become commonplace during the past few years. The use of aircraft for scouting fires on the Flathead dates back to the large fires in 1929. In one particular instance in 1929, Regional Fire Chief Howard Flint, piloted by Nick Mamer of Spokane, flew over the Sullivan Creek fire on the South Fork. Howard could see that the Spotted Bear Ranger Station was in the path of the fire and in grave danger. He wrote a message on a Forest Service form 877 and dropped it at the station. The message was to Charlie Hash, Flathead Fire Control staff officer, and said in part, "Save Spotted Bear Ranger Station at any cost." Hash pulled 500 firefighters into the station, sat up 20 Pacific Marine pumps and the station was saved. This fire burned for 101 days.

The first fire camp was dropped on the Flathead in Bunker Creek in 1939. The first smokejumpers (13) were dropped in Dean Creek in 1941.

The first patrol plane for aerial observation on the Flathead was stationed at Spotted Bear in 1946. The first use of a helicopter for fire control and administration was in 1957 on the Flathead Forest at Spotted Bear. The first year borate was used was in 1958. On the Frozen Lake fire one of the largest number of smokejumpers ever sent to one fire, that of Kah Mountain, was in 1947 when 75 of them were dropped.

The only fatality from airplane crashes to date on the Flathead Forest of forest personnel was that of Gene Guininga who was killed when the patrol plane crashed in the Mission Wild Area, September 11, 1955.

## Flathead Forest

Like on most forests with large areas of back country, the early Rangers of the Flathead spent considerable time in the back country on snowshoes.

Until about 1940 all Rangers considered these trips as part of their winter assignments. These trips of from two weeks to one-month duration were made usually by Rangers traveling in pairs; occasionally there were three in the party. In many cases provisions and bedding had to be carried and they camped where night overtook them. The purpose was a general forest reconnaissance with special attention to wildlife observations.

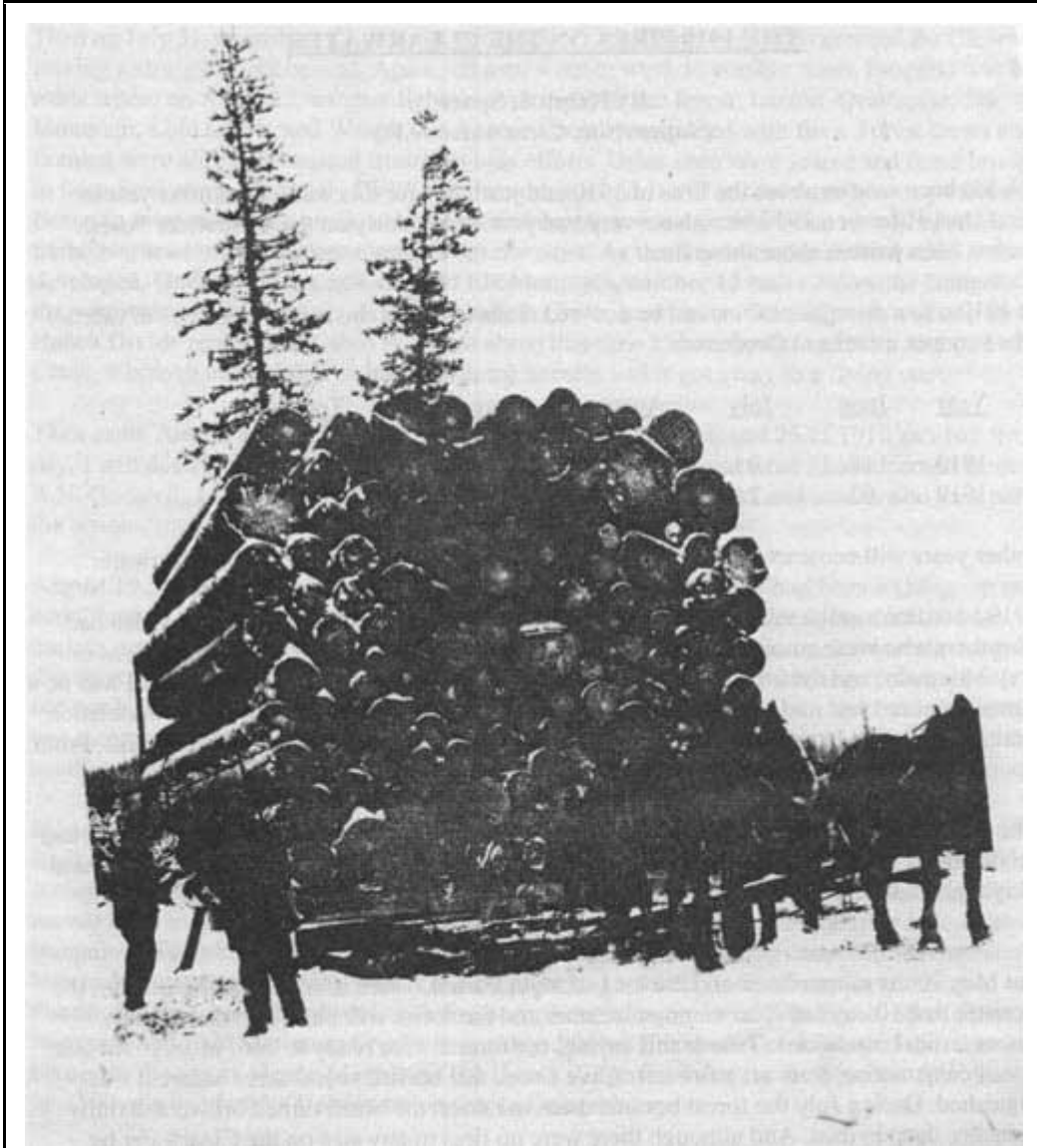
Sometimes Rangers were stationed in the back country in pairs all winter, being separated from their families for six months at a time. Some of the early Rangers making these trips and meeting nature in the raw, who are still living, are Henry Thol, F.H. Neitzling, Tom Wiles, Roy and Ansley Hutchinson, Al Austin, and Charlie Shaw, just to mention a few.

These men have had many unusual experiences, many of which will never be recorded. Hardships as well as dangers from snowslides, rafting rivers and crossing on treacherous ice were taken in stride. Henry Thol and Roy Hutchinson could tell of the time their raft upset in the fast waters of the South Fork and they lost all their equipment and nearly their lives. Charlie Shaw rarely speaks of how, in 1937, he was caught in a snowslide in the Pentagon Creek area, was carried down the mountain side, and at one time during the descent was far below the surface of the snow, but came to rest unharmed at the bottom of the canyon.

One unusual event that is recorded is that of a trip made by Al Austin, Ansley and Roy Hutchinson into the Upper South Fork in February 1924. They came upon and entered an unlocked trapper's cabin in Youngs Creek where they found the trapper, Robert Marshall, dead. Death was from a self-inflicted gunshot wound about two weeks previously. After some debate it was decided to fashion a toboggan and take the body to the coroner at Ovando. This they did. It was over a mountain trail for a distance of thirty-five miles.

In 1925 Supervisor Hornby decided to experiment with the use of dog teams in the back country. The harness was purchased and the dogs were trained by Henry Thol, Big Prairie Ranger. The lead dog was Henry's German shepherd, named Horst. The first trip was made by Henry Thol, Roy Hutchinson and M.B. Mendenhall, and traversed the full length of the South Fork of the Flathead. The dogs were used on three different trips. They did not prove successful on sidehill trails in rough terrain.





Kaniksi N.F. Largest load of logs ever hauled in the West with two-horse team and sleigh, 144 logs, scaling over 22 M feet brought over ice roads January 21, 1922, at Dalkena Lumber Co. Camp #3, Priest River, Idaho.

## THE 1919 FIRES ON THE CLEARWATER

By Ralph S. Space  
(Supervisor, Clearwater N.F.)

Much has been written about the fires of 1910 and justly so, for this was a disastrous year in Region One. However, 1919 was also a very bad year, particularly on the Clearwater Forest. Little has been written about these fires.

That 1919 was a drought year cannot be doubted. Take a look at the record of inches of rainfall for the summer months at Orofino:

<u>Year</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>Total</u>
1910	.18	.05	.02	1.06	1.31
1919	.07	.21	.19	.30	.77

No other years will come even close to these records as a drought season on the Clearwater.

In 1919 I became a smokechaser for the Clearwater Timber Protective Association. I also had two brothers who were smokechasing on the Clearwater National Forest. One of them was on Scurvy Mountain, and the other on Hemlock Butte. During the early part of the season I was on a trail maintenance crew and traveled over many of the trails and visited many of the Association lookouts. During the latter part of July and all of August I smokechased out of Bertha Hill. From this point I had a ringside seat from which to view what was going to happen.

Unlike 1910, the year 1919 had early markings of a bad year. Winter precipitation was light and largely came as rain. What snow we did have fell mostly in March. This snow did not pack and quickly melted, so that by early May the snow was gone except on the higher ridges and mountains.

About May 20 the rains ceased and the long drought started. There is an old saying used on the Clearwater that 10 days of clear summer weather and the forest will burn, and that 20 days produces critical conditions. True to this saying, the forests were ready to burn in June. A blast by a trail construction crew set a fire near Cave Creek that burned several acres before it was extinguished. During July the forest became drier and drier, the brush turned brown and trails were inches deep in dust. And although there were no fires of any size on the Clearwater by 1919, according to Lookout John Austin's diary, visibility was becoming very poor due to smoke.

On July 21 the first lightning storm came and with it a large number of fires. All hands turned to fighting fires. Most fires were held to small acreages but one on Larson Creek, one on Lolo Creek and one on Fish Creek of the old Selway got under way. However, an all-out effort that exhausted men, mules and supplies, brought all these fires except the one on Fish Creek under control.

Then on July 31 a number of lightning storms (four, according to Austin) crossed the Clearwater leaving a string of fires behind. Again, all men went to work to combat them. Progress was being

made when, on August 3, another lightning storm raked the forest. Larson, Deadhorse, Elk Mountain, Lolo Creek, and Weitas Creek were liberally sprinkled with fires. Forest crews and firemen were all but exhausted from previous efforts. Other men were scarce and those brought in from Spokane were mostly IWW's and wouldn't work. Butte miners were not very effective. Bringing in enough pack stock, equipment and supplies was a problem due to lack of roads and trails. Overhead in significant numbers did not exist. As the days went by several main fires developed. One was on the east slope of Elk Mountain, another 12 miles below the Bungalow on the southeast side of the river, one on Elizabeth Creek, another on Goose Creek, and one on Hunch Divide now called Cabin Point. At about this time a shepherd started a fire on Bell Creek, a branch of the Lolo, to burn out some hornets and it got away to a flying start.

Then came August 19, 1919. This day ranks with August 21, 22, and 23 of 1910 as a bad fire day. I will describe what I saw from Bertha Hill. To this I will add what I have learned from A.N. Cochrell, J.C. Urquhart, John Austin's diary, from my brothers and others who took part in the action.

August 19 dawned clear and hot but I immediately noticed that there had been a change in smoke conditions. It had been so smokey that trying to observe from the tower at Bertha Hill was useless, since visibility was reduced to less than one-quarter mile. The smoke was almost gone that morning, and what little was left was fast disappearing. Soon a wind began to stir, but it did not reach the strength of the winds of 1910. The humidity must have been low but, of course, no one measured it. The air became so clear that I could see every major fire in the country as far south as the Lochsa River.

By nine o'clock every major fire had broken loose and had started to roll up huge columns of smoke which resembled thunderheads. I timed the Twelve Mile fire as it climbed Pot Mountain. It required just a few minutes over one hour, an airline distance of about five miles. This fire also moved upriver where it joined the Elk Mountain fire, backing down into the river below the Bungalow. Together they swept upriver to Trail Creek before evening came. The fire around Hemlock Butte spread across Weitas and by night had crossed Cook Mountain and burned out Fourth-of-July Creek. The Fish Creek fire burned out a large part of Fish Creek, all of Sherman, Noseum and Bald Mountain Creeks in one day. Fire on Elizabeth Creek jumped the river and burned to the top of Moose Mountain. The Goose Ridge fire swept to the Montana line, burning up 1500 of a band of 3000 sheep belonging to Quissenberry.

After this holocaust, a conference was held to decide what to do. It was hopeless, with such meager forces, to try to build a line around so many large fires. The only thing that could be done was to save any drainages that were threatened but not burned. A fireline was built across the lower end of Orogrande and some other lines on the west side of the Lolo fire and a few other places, but no effort was made to bring the total fire under control. In fact, no one knew just where the edges of these fires were because the smoke, which had lifted on the 19th, settled again and was so thick that visibility became almost zero and remained that way until the rains of August 31-September 1 came.

Strangely enough, these fires spread very little after August 19. In some places they had run into the 1910 burned area which slowed progress, and apparently there was a favorable change in humidity.

The 1919 fires on the Clearwater were almost entirely in merchantable sized timber. The Weitas which previously had an immense stand of timber was a blackened waste. So were Larson Creek, Fourth-of-July Creek, and the North Fork Canyon from Moscow Bar to Cold Springs Creek. Clarke, an oldtime smokechaser stationed at the Bungalow, expressed well the feelings of everyone when asked if it looked pretty tough around the Bungalow, replied, "Yes, sir, it just makes me sick." It is fortunate that there were no fatalities in such a situation. There were a number of close calls and harrowing experiences.

Jim Girard was in charge of the Twelve Mile fire. His suppression efforts were meeting with little success so he decided to walk to the Bungalow - the nearest telephone - to see if he could rustle more men and equipment. At about Cave Creek he became aware that the fire he had left was spreading rapidly and was coming up the river behind him. He increased his pace but it soon became apparent that he was losing ground. He reached a point about 5 miles below the Bungalow Station where the trail ran back into and out of a draw. The distance by trail was about one-fourth mile whereas along the river it was less than half of that. Jim decided to follow the river bank and cut across this loop. The going was so rough that he would not save any time but he preferred to stay close to the river. This was a fortunate decision, for here the fire overtook him with all its fury. He knew he was in a tough spot so he wrote his will and cached it under some rocks at the waters' edge. By wading back and forth across the river and taking frequent dips below its surface he managed to come through alive.

Two packers, Charles Kelly and Lawrence Howard, were coming down the river toward the Bungalow. They met the fire head-on with no warning that they were anywhere near it. They immediately took to a small island below the mouth of the Weitas with their strings. An old Indian and his grandson of about 12 years who had been fishing in that locality joined them on the island as did a cub bear and several deer. They spent the night there and emerged safely, although one of the greatest concerns was that the Indian boy would get hurt by the cub which he insisted on trying to capture. These packers had two mules ahead of them which proceeded on toward the Bungalow after the strings had gone to the island. The next morning the packers started cutting their way through the fire-felled trees toward the Bungalow and found the two pack animals standing in a trail in a small open spot that didn't burn - the only unburned spot for miles in any direction. The men at Cook Mountain Ranger Station, after a desperate battle, saved the cabin.

At Elizabeth Creek the fire broke loose and jumped the river. Urquhart was on the north side. He got the crew on that side out of the way. To reach the crew on the south side he went down the river wading in the water most of the way. He almost suffocated. When he came out of the fire he had breathed so much smoke that he passed out for a short time. When he came to, he found himself lying in the water at the mouth of Elizabeth Creek.

At Hemlock Butte a small group of men, including one of my brothers, was warned that they were to get out of the way the best they could. They decided to leave the lookout and take refuge

in a small meadow with a creek running through it at the head of Hemlock, then called Beaver Creek. The fire surrounded them and they fought for their lives. They came through, but one of the members, Richards, went insane. He was taken to the hospital, and for a time he recovered. But this condition returned several years later and he was confined to a mental hospital. When the group returned to the lookout point they found the cabin unburned.

A.H. (Pete) Ott, a foreman, and Tom Hamilton, a cook, were located at the Bungalow. Pete had been foreman on a trail upriver, but with his crew fighting fire he was a sort of dispatcher for men and supplies at the Bungalow. About one o'clock he and the cook were alone. Pete thought the fire, which he could see dimly through the smoke, was moving toward them and called Tom to the door and asked him what he thought of the looks of things. Tom said, "Heck, I'm cooking on a hotter fire than that," and went back to his duties.

After about one hour a raging inferno came around the first bend down the river. Pete and Tom hastily grabbed a few belongings and fled up the Orogrande toward the Oxford Ranger Station. Tom being the oldest and slowest went ahead, with Pete following close behind. Pete maintained a close watch over his shoulder until he saw the fire cross the trail behind them near the 2-mile board. They then felt safe and stopped to catch their breath. Pete asked, "What time was it when we left?" Tom replied, "It was just 2 o'clock; I had just put the cinnamon rolls in the oven and looked at the clock." Pete pulled out his watch and it showed three minutes past two. If their timing was correct, this was pretty fair speed for a 70-year old.

### **The End of the Pinkham Rebellion**

Much of the action connected with what was known years ago in the Forest Service as the Pinkham Rebellion took place before I came to the old Blackfeet Forest. Such men as Bill Larsen, Karl Klehm, and Bob Byers were more directly connected with this action than I was. However, I came to the old Blackfeet Forest in 1925 and got in on the later stages. It is this part of the Pinkham Rebellion that I will describe. Perhaps someone else will cover the earlier stages.

The Pinkham Creek country and some of the Tobacco River valley just over the Pinkham Divide was settled by a group of squatters from West Virginia in about 1909. For some reason these people took to setting incendiary fires, just why is not certain; some believed it was because they had quarreled with the Forest Service over their right to homestead the lands, others said it was a habit they brought with them from West Virginia, and still others felt that they wished to steal food from fire camps or to make work. At any rate, this fire-setting had been going on for years when I came to the Blackfeet Forest in 1925. I took the Fortune District over in 1928. This same year Charlie Powell was assigned to the Rexford District on the Kootenai, which included Pinkham Creek. Pinkham Ridge, where most fires were sent, was the boundary between the two Districts.

Shortly after I arrived on the District Mr. P.J. O'Brien, in charge of law enforcement in Region One, paid me a call. He spent a day going over the Pinkham case with me. From him I received a complete history of happenings up to that time and a list of all the West Virginians in the locality, including those most under suspicion. Mr. O'Brien also cautioned me against doing anything of a violent nature or which might, lead to violence. He condemned the armed guard

that was placed in the Pinkham Creek country a few years before. He hoped that we might, through education, get the Pinkhamites to change their ways or catch one of the culprits and get a conviction. He had no suggestions on how to go about catching an incendiary. His was an attitude of appeasement.

During the following year, 1929, there were many large fires. If anyone had the desire to get work on a fire all he had to do was sign up at the nearest Ranger Station. During this year I met with Charlie Powell several times and discussed the problem. We made friends in our communities and through them learned something about the thinking that was going on in the incendiary camp.

We found that the armed guard of 1924 had created a healthy respect for the Forest Service. The Pinkhamites realized that the Forest Service meant business and was prepared to back the law with something besides words if necessary. Their respect for the Forest Service went farther than this. Such was the shooting ability of the men in the armed guard that the Pinkhamites also had a respect or even fear of the men in the Forest Service. Heretofore, they had believed they could out-shoot any forest officers, but they had seen these men put on some shooting exhibitions that were almost beyond belief. As an example, while some of the Pinkhamites were in their camp, one of these armed guards, William Hillis, threw a stick into the air, shot it in two, and then shot one of the pieces in two before it reached the ground.

Charlie and I decided to capitalize on the ground that had been gained. We let it be known that we would stand for no monkey business. We would arrest anyone we caught setting a fire and would meet force with force. To continue the respect of the Pinkhamites for the shooting ability of forest officers, I joined the Rifle Club at Eureka and ran up some pretty good scores. I also attended turkey shoots and on several occasions took away a lion's share of the winnings.

Another rather humorous event added to my reputation as a good shot. One day at the station two of the local people - one of whom, though not a Pinkhamite according to our roster, but nevertheless in close connection with them - dropped in to see if there was any work to be had on fires. They fell into conversation with my dispatcher and were soon talking about shooting and then about my shooting ability. One of the visitors remarked that I sure could shoot with a rifle but that I carried only a pistol in the woods and anyone knew that a pistol was effective only at a range of a few feet. My dispatcher admitted that their statement was generally true, but he then picked up a Prince Albert tobacco can, set it on a post about 50 feet away and asked me to show them I could knock it off. Well, hitting a tobacco can at 50 feet isn't anything unusual, so I said I would shoot at the rose on Prince Albert's coat - a mere speck at 50 feet. After I shot, the dispatcher picked up the can and, much to his delight and the surprise of everyone, including myself, I had hit the rose dead center.

In July 1930, two incendiary fires were set on the north end of Pinkham Ridge but on the Tobacco River side. These fires were in logging slash but were quickly suppressed. The man who set them was on horseback and, so far as I could determine, never got off his horse. I found some horsehair scraped off on the brush that showed that the horse was gray colored. I tracked the horse to Eureka but could follow it no farther. Later we learned that the incendiary

borrowed this gray horse from one of his relatives in Eureka. Travel had been at night, so inquiry of local people produced no results. Charlie Powell and I got ready for more trouble.

Three or four days later five more fires were set northeast of Eureka. These were also in slash and set late in the evening. We quickly brought them under control. When daylight came I looked for tracks and found calked shoe prints. I first tried to track these in the direction the man was traveling but he followed a dry creek bed and I lost the track. I next backtracked the man. This led me to a road. Here the calked shoe tracks ended but there were other shoe prints up the road which ended at that point. I followed these prints down the road until I came to a ranch. Here I inquired about anyone they might have seen. The rancher informed me that he had seen Andy Stacy walking up the road about 6 p.m., and that he had a pair of calked shoes with the strings tied together thrown over his shoulder.

The next evening Charlie Powell had seven incendiary fires on the ridge south of Pinkham Creek. In his investigation he found that a speeder patrolman had given Stacy a ride from this locality to Eureka at about the time the fires were discovered. We reported our findings to our supervisors and P.J. O'Brien came to see what could be done. He reviewed the evidence and decided that Stacy should be arrested. We obtained a warrant, but since Stacy had no home it was rather uncertain how he could be located. However, I knew a pool hall operator in Eureka who was friendly to the Forest Service but whose place was a hangout for men of Stacy's type. I consulted this man, who told me where I might find Stacy. I arrested Stacy and we took him to Libby where, upon questioning by the prosecuting attorney, he admitted his guilt. He received a five-year sentence.

While this shook the Pinkhamites and no doubt had a beneficial effect, it did not stop the fires. In 1931, an incendiary fire on Edna Creek burned about 1500 acres; several others were set but were stopped at Class A or B size. I was not so fortunate in obtaining a confession, although I tracked one of these men right to his house. He maintained that a man had come to his house the day before but that he did not know him. The case was dropped because of insufficient evidence.

In 1932 Rolf Fremming took over the Fortune District and I became assistant Supervisor of the Blackfoot Forest at Kalispell. That summer the Pinkhamites planned to set a string of fires from Edna to Pinkham Creek. Charlie Powell, through some of his secret friends, learned of the plot and we set a trap. Their plan was to have one of their party drive them up Edna Creek and drop them off. They would then set fires over the divide while the car went around and picked them up on the other side. We planned to let them get into Edna Creek and then close the roads so they couldn't get out. We organized a night watch to detect the fires and a crew to suppress them.

There is no doubt that they planned such action. They even drove up Edna Creek and looked the ground over and set some rotten logs afire to see how fast they would burn, but put them out. Unfortunately, it rained, which on August 10 is so unusual that it almost looked as though the fates had conspired against us.

In the spring of 1933, Supervisors Webb and Nagel, Rangers Powell and Fremming and assistant Supervisors Dwinells and I held a meeting at Ant Flat. We reviewed past action and discussed plans for 1933. It was decided to continue the get-tough policy of the past, even though this

policy was now condemned in the Regional Office. We also decided to plant a spy in the midst of the Pinkhamintes. Supervisor Bill Nagel proposed to get a man from the Bitterroot whom he had known while assistant Supervisor there. We also decided that those present were to be the only ones to know about this man. We were sure the Regional Office would veto any such action. We also agreed that I would be the only man who would have any contacts with this man.

Nagel's man took the job and came to Kalispell where I met him and gave him a list of the Pinkhamintes and instructions. He was to report to me by mail once a week, addressing the letter to my residence but mailing it at some point other than Eureka or Rexford. Usually his letters were mailed directly on the mail train.

This man was a real actor. He equipped himself with an old beaten-up car and a tin-can cooking outfit and proceeded to Eureka. There he rented a shack of a house and started making contacts. Soon he was going on fishing trips with the Pinkhamintes, joined in cussing and discussing the Forest Service, and if there had been any such ceremony I am sure he would have been adopted into the tribe. His only trouble came from the local constable who wanted to know what he was doing there and who hinted that he must be living as a criminal since he had no visible means of support. The type of company he kept certainly was no recommendation. The reply was that he just liked to fish and have a good time.

Information on the Pinkhamintes came weekly. I learned one of them had just-stolen a horse in Canada; another had deserted from the Navy and recently came to Pinkham Creek to hide out; others bootlegged from Canada; some had stills, etc. This information I passed on to the proper authorities. The sheriff called on one of the Pinkhamintes to get a stolen horse and serve a warrant. The Navy picked up its deserter and the prohibition agents made some lucky hits on rum runners or just happened to stumble onto stills.

The Pinkhamintes knew something was wrong and suspected that someone was informing the Forest Service, but they didn't know who. They turned to blaming each other and a family row soon developed. They couldn't get along with each other or trust each other enough to organize a firestarting spree. Family suspicions and hatreds were so great and the penalties of their misdeeds so severe that many of them moved out of the community. Strangely enough the spy was never suspected. At the end of the fire season he quietly returned to the Bitterroot. Before he left he stopped at Kalispell to talk to me. He predicted that the Pinkhamintes were so disorganized and scattered that never again would we be bothered by incendiary fires from that source. His prediction came true.

### **The Northern Pacific Lawsuit**

In 1864 the United States Congress decided that a railroad should be constructed from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Coast, which resulted in the chartering of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Under this charter the N.P. was to be granted every odd section on a strip 40 miles on each side of the center line of the railroad. However, should it be found that these lands were within Indian reservations, mineral in character or occupied by homesteaders, then the Company could select a unoccupied lands on an additional strip 20 miles wide on either side of the railroad.



The railroad was built and most of the land selected before the National Forests came into existence. Even after the forests were created, nothing happened until 1917 for the reason that up to this time the Land Office had held that the National Forests were not subject to lieu selection; that is, the N.P. could not select lands in the National Forests outside the primary or 80-mile strip in lieu of lands lost due to homesteads, mineral classification or Indian reservations.

In 1917 the N.P. applied for a lieu selection on the Gallatin Forest and through error the Department of the Interior granted patent. When the Forest Service called the attention of the Department of the Interior to the error the Northern Pacific was requested to quit claim the lands back to the United States. This the N.P. refused to do. A suit was then started by the United States to force the return of these lands to the U.S. This case reached the Supreme Court in 1922. The decision was that the National Forests were subject to lieu selection to the extent the N.P.'s claims could not be satisfied by public domain lands. Since practically all public domain lands were gone this meant National Forest lands.

Here the case could have ended and the N.P. gone ahead with their selections had it not been for E.A. Sherman, once Supervisor of the Bitterroot Forest and at that time in charge of the Division of Lands in the Chief's office. Mr. Sherman knew something about the operation of the N.P. land grant and directed a study of the grant and how it was administered. This study was headed by Mr. Cousins who was a very energetic and smart attorney. He soon produced evidence that the N.P. had used some means of selecting lieu lands that were very questionable from a legal standpoint, if not actually fraudulent. When word of what was going on came to the attention of Congress, a committee was appointed to hold hearings and investigations. These hearings were held in 1924 and 1925. The Congressional Record containing the testimony covered several volumes.

In 1929 Congress passed a resolution, the most important parts of which were: First, the United States would not permit further alienation of the National Forests by such a large lieu selection; second, permission was given to the N.P. to sue the United States for any damages that the N.P. believed it had suffered by such action.

Court action started almost immediately, resulting in a tremendous job. At that time it was stated that the N.P. lawsuit was the largest civil case to enter the U.S. courts. It may have been and may still be, but it would depend on whether the claims of the N.P. or the appraisal of damages by the U.S. were used.

For a short time Meyer H. Wolff, Chief of the Division of Lands in Missoula, handled the work for Region One. But so much work was involved that Howard Flint, who had been in charge of Fire Control (not a division then), took the job. Mr. Leaphart handled the legal work for Region One.

The case was so big and complicated, and so likely to go to the Supreme Court, that the Department of Justice, the N.P. and the courts agreed to split it into three parts. The first part was to deal with the N.P.'s right to select further lands; i.e., whether or not they had claim against the U.S. Second, if the N.P. had a claim then what lands did they have a right to select. The third part

was that if the N.P. had a right to claim certain lands how much was the Company damaged by being denied that right.

In the trial of the first part, the U.S. charged the N.P. with fraud. An attempt was made to show that much low-value land in the primary grant was classified as mineral when such was not the case, just so lieu lands of higher value could be selected. This part was tried in the Federal District Court and appealed to the Supreme Court. The final decision was that there may have been fraud but, even so, the U.S. through its agents was a party to the fraud. It was accordingly decided that the N.P. had a claim.

As soon as it was decided that the N.P. had a claim, it selected its lands. Every forest in Region One except the Nezperce was involved. A large acreage in Region 6 was also included and a few sections of the Shoshone Forest in Region 2. As I recall, about 870,000 acres were in Region One.

Following this decision and selection of lands - in 1933 or 1934 - the U.S. started work on both parts two and three. A new organization took place in the Department of Justice. Mr. Danby took the lead in Washington, D.C., but he also hired two local attorneys to work with the Forest Service. Mr. Norman Littell of Seattle, now in Washington, D.C., headed the Forest Service contacts, but Walter Pope of Missoula (now a judge in the appellate court) was the R - 1 contact. Howard Flint continued to handle the case for Region One of the Forest Service until his death in 1935, and I took his place in 1936.

About 40 points were involved in the second phase of the N P. lawsuit covering the problem of what land it had a right to select. I do not recall all of them nor would I bore you with these details. Some of them, such as the Tacoma overlap, were not in Region One and others involved only small tracts of land. On one point the N.P. admitted it was in error. The two main points in Region One were what were known as substitution of base and the agricultural point. In the substitution of base the N.P. proposed to change the base lands for which they had already received lieu land patents. This would give them the right to select additional lands. They contended that they had the right to do this up to the time all lands were selected and the contract with the U.S. terminated. The U.S. contended that once patent was issued that part of the deal was complete. The courts, clear to the top, agreed with the N.P.

Another point arose over the wording in the Act regarding selection of lieu lands, wherein it stated that in lieu of lands classified as mineral in the primary grant the N.P. could select unclaimed and unallocated agricultural lands. The U.S. contended that this meant farm lands or lands capable of being farmed. The N.P. claimed that was Congress' way in 1864 of designating other than mineral lands. The district court agreed with the N.P., but when the Supreme Court reviewed the case it stated that although it was difficult to say what Congress in 1864 meant by such wording it was quite clear that had it meant some thing other than agricultural it would have used "nonmineral" or some other term. They, therefore, agreed that the N.P. had the right to select only agricultural lands. This decision was reached in 1939.

This was a decided victory for the U.S. The N.P. had patented and sold several hundred thousand acres in error. It then looked as though the suit could wind up with the N.P. owing the U.S. a

sizeable sum. It also meant that both sides would have to examine all the lands received in error and establish a value on them. This was a long, detailed job that would probably take several years to accomplish.

About this time Congress passed what was known as the Transportation Act. This Act made it possible to terminate the provision in the land grant that the railroad would haul Government passengers and supplies at a 50% rate; but it also provided that any company applying for such relief would have to drop all claims against the U.S. The N.P. took advantage of this Act and the N.P. lawsuit which started in 1917 came to an end in 1941.

### **Some Long Hikes**

In the early days of the Forest Service, which would include from its start up to about 1930, there were few trails. Even when there were trails, horse feed was scarce, so rather than take a horse along and be burdened with its care most travelers went by foot. It is only natural that with all this hiking some fast and long-distance walkers would be developed. Hikes of 30 miles in one day over the mountainous trails were not unusual and occasionally someone would beat that by 10 or more miles.

There are three hikes that have become something of a legend on the Clearwater country. I will relate these stories, not because I happen to be one of the participants but because they illustrate the way men of the Clearwater worked and lived at that time.

Henry Knight's Hike. Henry Knight was raised at Pierce, Idaho. He grew up in that locality and became an expert woodsman. He also developed into a powerful hiker. He started working for the Forest Service in about 1912.

In 1915, Knight was stationed at Mallard Peak when he received a message that his stepfather had been accidentally killed. He sent a message out to have a car at Headquarters, Idaho, to pick him up the next day. He immediately took off afoot. He didn't even have as much as a lunch with him, nor a light to assist him while traveling at night.

The route he followed was out over the Nub to the North Fork. He waded or swam the river and climbed to Sheep Mountain. From Sheep Mountain he took the trail that went to Deadhorse and from there to Headquarters. He stopped at Sheep Mountain just long enough to eat a hastily prepared meal - the only food he had during the entire trip - but he did not sleep.

He made this hike in about 24 hours. Part of the way, particularly from the Nub to Sheep Mountain, there was no trail, and travel was hampered by darkness, with no light to guide him.

The total distance traveled was about 42 miles. But this mileage included dropping into the North Fork of the Clearwater canyon and climbing out again. The elevation of the Clearwater River where he crossed is about 1800 feet and Sheep Mountain is about 6500. This was a remarkable feat of endurance and woodsmanship. Even among the good hikers of that day, it was considered almost unbelievable.

Henry Thompson's Hike. Henry Thompson worked out of Pierce cruising timber and fighting fire. He had followed this type of work, which required much hiking, for at least ten years.

During the summer of 1920, Henry was stationed at Boehl's Cabin. When the season ended he started for his home at Pierce, leaving Boehl's Cabin early in the morning and arriving at Headquarters for supper. He really intended to stay at Headquarters for the night. But after he had eaten supper one of his friends, who had not made the hike from Boehl's, suggested that they go on to Pierce. Henry then hiked with him to Pierce, arriving sometime late in the evening.

Total distance hiked was 45 miles. A peculiar thing about this long hike is that it was made as a regular course of events. There was no compelling reason why Henry had to make the whole trip in one day, nor did he set out to make a name for himself. In fact, when he started out he had no intention of traveling the whole distance.

My Own Hike. This story of one of my own hikes became somewhat famous. This fame was partly earned but somewhat overrated. How well earned you may judge.

I was raised on a ranch and started hiking early by walking one and one-quarter miles to school and back each day. Then I became a smokechaser in 1919 and a cruiser in 1923. In 1924 I was cruising and mapping on the Lochsa District and had been hiking all summer. I was in the best of condition.

In September 1924, my crew and I arrived at the Boulder Creek Ranger Station. We were through for the summer and planned to go to Pete King the next day. I planned to enter college at Moscow and barely had time to get there on the opening date. This was about the middle of September. Everyone had considered the fire season closed. The stock had all been taken out, and Ranger Hand was getting ready to close the station for the winter.

That evening, Ranger Hand received a telephone call from the Supervisor's Office. Some Lolo packer had gone to Grave's Peak and reported a fire southeast of McConnell Mountain. It was suggested that Ranger Hand ask me to go with him to suppress this fire. Hand knew my plans for returning to college so he reluctantly asked if I would go with him. I consented but stated that we were going to have to travel fast. We left Boulder Creek the next morning with fire packs on our backs. The fire packs at that time weighed about 35 pounds each. We arrived at Fish Lake in mid-afternoon. I would have gone on but Hand was too tired. That afternoon I walked down to the lower end of the lake and caught a mess of fish and looked at the moose. The distance traveled that day was 20 miles.

The next day we set out early for McConnell Mountain where we got a location on the fire. It was across a branch of West Moose Creek. This stream is not named on the map but heads in Chain Meadows. We went on to the fire, cutting across country. We built a line around the fire and felled all the snags. The fire was not out but it was nearly so. Furthermore, the sky showed signs of an approaching storm and the air had the feel of winter, so we headed back to McConnell Mountain where we arrived after dark. We had only a canteen of water so I took the man-pack bag and went for water while Hand cooked supper. Distance traveled about 23 miles with packs and 13 of this without trail.

The next morning I left my pack and headed for Boulder Creek Ranger Station. Hand decided to make the trip in two days, stopping one day at Fish Lake. It soon began to rain and then turned to snow. I had brought no coat along. I stopped at Fish Lake cabin where I made a poncho by slitting a seam in a manta I found there, and sticking my head through the hole. I arrived at Boulder thoroughly soaked and spent the remainder of the day drying my clothes. Distance hiked, 27 miles.

The next day I left Boulder Ranger Station carrying my duffle which weighed about 20 pounds and arrived at Pete King at 2:30 p.m. The trail, at that time, went up over McLendon Butte and Middle Butte and back to the Lochsa at the mouth of Deadman Creek. When I arrived at Pete King, John (Cap) Rice looked at me in surprise and asked, "Where did you come from?" I said, "Boulder Ranger Station." But he wouldn't believe me so he went to the phone and called Boulder Ranger Station and asked what time I had left there. The reply was, "About 8 o'clock." Cap cried "Holy Smoke, he's here now."

Actually, I walked the 31 miles from Boulder to Pete King in 72 hours, but according to the figures Cap had, I had made it in 62 hours. I tried to put him straight but he stuck to his figures and told the story to all would-be hikers. Total miles for 4 days, 101. Miles without trails, 13. Miles with pack, 71. In addition, I spent 3 hours fighting fire.



**By Edward G. Stahl\***

\*Stahl was well-known to many in the Forest Service, although he did not stay in the organization, having resigned in 1911, according to this narrative. He passed away about 1957. The Kaniksu and Kootenai furnished this material, which Mr. Stahl sent to them in 1953.

I was among the group at Kalispell, Montana, that took the first Civil Service examination there for Forest Ranger, in 1905. My rating placed me at the top of the eligible list, and early the following spring I received appointment as Forest Ranger, assigned to work under the direction of Fred Harrig at Ant Flat.

Fred Herrig was a veteran of the Spanish-American War and served with Roosevelt's Rough Riders. He was the largest man in the regiment. He had punched cows for Teddy on the Little Missouri. When Roosevelt was organizing the Rough Riders, Fred was packing ore in British Columbia and Roosevelt wired him from San Antonio, Texas, to come down and join them.

In Roosevelt's book, "The Rough Riders," mention is made of Herrig several times. He was brevetted second lieutenant for special services for tracking some mules loaded with machine guns that got away during a skirmish. Several full-blood Indians had given up the job, and Fred tracked the mules into Spanish territory and recovered them and the guns. He was from Alsace Lorraine, very dark and wore handlebar mustache, giving him a villainous look. Roosevelt was making a tour of the West one time when he saw Fred in the audience. Roosevelt motioned him to come up on the platform. Fred said before he got nicely started, two plainclothesmen had him by the collar.

With Byron Henning, we cut trail the spring of 1906 up the Stillwater Valley. It rained continuously. Fred told me that the year before, he sent in his monthly diary with a lot of daily records reading, "Rain, stayed in camp." His next check was quite a bit short and it never rained so hard again!

We camped at Fish Lake. I packed my horse in and walked while Fred and Byron Henning rode. We planned to go to Ant Flat for the weekend, but I was handicapped with a mean horse and no riding saddle. I rigged up a bridle with small rope, but got bucked off at the first attempt. Fred said, "Eddie, you might as well stay in camp. You're crazy as hell to try to ride that horse bareback." A school ma'am boarded at Fred's place and I had a date to take her to a dance at Gateway, so I felt honorbound to get to Ant Flat in time. I cinched a lash rope around the horse for a handhold and blindfolded him. When Fred pulled the blind, I whacked the horse over the ears with my hat and arrived at the station far ahead of the other two.

The old stage road led through a narrow pass at the summit near Stryker. The canyon was so narrow that at turnout places there were signs reading, "Stop and holler," as warning for freighters to wait to pass. Fred used to go to sleep while riding his horse and would wake up saying, "Dot was a great improvement." One dark night he woke up sitting on the solid rock road in the canyon, which was not much of an improvement, and he had to walk home. He rode a big snorty black and the horse may have been spooked by a bear.

The big dance of the year was the Mulligan Ball held at Gateway by the Order of the Sons of Rest. Mulligan was made in a washboiler, and it was rumored that Old Crow whiskey was one of the ingredients. The ball was held in an abandoned honky-tonk building, a relic of the boom days of 1900 when, at the end of each dance, the call was "Promenade to the bar," where the bartender served drinks and passed a 15-cent check to the lady to put in her stocking as commission. Today there is not enough left of Gateway to call it a ghost town. Although it is on the U.S.-Canadian boundary, there is no custom office there. The railroad that was built in 1900 is torn up and the line is blocked off with page-wire fence.

In the early days, until about 1904, before Ant Flat was designated as a Ranger Station it was a regular camping ground for freighters and cattle drivers. The owner of adjoining land fenced it, although it was still public domain. About 1901, I was helping an Irishman named Riley with his wife and grown daughters, drive his cattle north from the Flathead Valley to Rexford. We were caught in a late spring snowstorm and put the cattle in the pasture at Ant Flat, and got in an old cabin for shelter.

Louis Ladue, the neighbor, rode up and started to drive the cattle out. Riley tried to get his rifle, but it was under some household effects in the wagon. Considerable confusion followed as the girls and I tried to drive the cattle the opposite way, with one of the girls crying and Mrs. Riley calling, "Mr. Ladue, will you listen to me a moment?" He paused long enough for Riley to slip up and get the horse by the bridle and belabor Ladue and the horse with his cane. As Ladue galloped away, he shouted, "You no man, big man, use club, call man name like dat."

Riley dug out his rifle, went down to the south gate and lay in wait behind a big, pine tree for Ladue's return. Mrs. Riley asked me to go and coax him back. I was reluctant, but she said, "You can do more with him than anyone else." I soon had him laughing and we returned to the cabin.

Ladue went home and had taken his rifle down off the rack when his wife and some freighters prevailed on him to listen to reason. The result might have been tragic if he and Riley had met while still under the urge of the heat of anger.

Ant Flat was withdrawn from entry about 1903, and Fred Herrig built a Ranger cabin there.

After returning to Fish Lake, an incident occurred of which Fred and I were not very proud. We considered ourselves woodsmen, but ate herbs that were poisonous. Byron Henning said it was wild rhubarb and good to eat. Fred and I ate some, and by the time we reached camp were pretty sick. I rode four miles to Stryker to get help for Fred. The woman railway agent thought I was drunk and directed me to the section house. A railway agent called "Doc" was there on his fishing vacation. I passed out, and he told me later that he gave me strychnine to keep up my heart action, and was mighty worried. Henning helped Fred down on a gentle horse, and the agent flagged the fast train that took us to Eureka. A pill peddler gave us some dope and we returned to work the next day. I threw my medicine away but Fred used his and for a week could not speak above a whisper. We had all the symptoms of poisoning, with spasms, constricted chest and throat. A sample of the plant was sent to the U.S. botanist, and he reported that it sometimes killed cattle and sheep, but we were the first men who were fools enough to eat it.

On June 15, I received orders from Supervisor Haines to transfer to Indian Creek in the North Fork District by way of Kalispell. The trip covered about 120 miles with saddle horse and pack horse. Mr. Haines traveled with me from Kalispell. The South Fork of the Flathead was in flood, and we swam the horses across from a rowboat.

I cut trail far a while along the north shore of Lake McDonald. Charlie Russell, the cowboy artist, had a summer home nearby. (He died in 1926, and although he never had any training, his last picture sold for \$30,000.) Four years later, in 1910, this District, a ram pasture of about 1600 square miles - including the main range of the Rockies from the Great Northern Railway to the Canadian line was designated as Glacier National Park.

In the '90's there was a tote road through the canyon for railroad construction. One hill on solid rock was so steep wagons were snubbed down with a rope. The snubbing stump could still be seen with deep spiral grooves cut into it by the rope. The stump was later cut off and set up at Columbia Falls as an historical exhibit. Today there is a good auto road through the canyon.

In the horse-and-buggy days, the livery barn was a hangout for town loafers and stockmen. They got quite a kick out of hokey-pokeying a man's horse to make him buck. I believe the proper name for the stuff is hydrogen sulphide. It evaporates quickly and smells like rotten cabbage. A small application on a horse above the tail will do the business, but sometimes it takes quite a while to take effect. The suspense makes it more interesting. I have known a horse to walk a block before he broke in two and put the Indian in the dust.

At Kalispell, Frank Adaman at the livery barn, offered to buy my horse. He said, "He looks pretty snorty to me, but throw a saddle on him and ride him, and if he's gentle I'll give you \$20.00 for him." I was riding with a rawhide hackamore, and as neck-reined the horse around a buggy he started to buck and bawl, scattering the foot traffic and nearly running down a woman with a baby buggy. When I rode back, Adaman remarked, "You're a hell of a man to try and sell a horse like that and call him gentle." I knew the horse had been doped. I sought some hokey-pokey and distributed it to the young fellows with instructions to hokey-pokey Adaman's horse. This was my first experience with it, but years later I learned first-hand more about it when I broke a bottle in my hip pocket. However, that incident is classed as my most embarrassing moment, and I don't care to go into detail about it here.

I sold my horse, and returning to Indian Creek, stopped over with Long Jeff at Logging Creek. He was a fine, kindly old man, and although well past 70 was still guiding hunting parties. He was six feet four. His full name was Thomas Jefferson, and he was a direct descendant of Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States. He loaned me a pack horse, also a four-year-old stallion too gentle for him. In the '90's Jeff and three other men located some coal claims near the Flathead and sold out for \$50,000.

I crossed the river to the west side at Henshaw Ford, now Pole Bridge, and traveled for about a week to learn the country. There was no road there at the time and it was a beautiful country, with meadows and parks near the river, and deer, moose, bear and other game plentiful, as well as trout in the streams. I camped at Hay Creek and was bothered by some Government pack mules left there by Chapman who had made a geological survey of the country. They wandered



at large all summer and were wintered by Long Jeff. At night they fought my horses until the pack horse broke loose. The next day I tracked them ten miles north, only to learn they had crossed the river at the Henshaw Ford.

I had to pack my equipment on the saddle horse. At the ford I made a raft, chased the stallion in and threw rocks at him, then put off on the raft. He did not follow the ford and could not get up the opposite bank. I was forced downstream by the current and when I landed the horse had started back. I jumped into water up to my waist to catch him, and had a hard time getting him up the bank. Later Theodore Christensen and I cut trail up the South Fork of Coal Creek to the summit of the Whitefish Range.

A friend of mine, Tom Monroe, lost his life in a snowslide near this trail above Cyclone Flat. His partner, Faldy Neitzling, got clear and traveled 65 miles to Columbia Falls and return for help. However, Tom's body was not found until July. A snowslide as it roars down the mountain, makes a clean sweep, carrying trees and rocks to be left in a great pile of debris at the terminal. Snow is so deep at the foot of the slide that it often remains through the summer. Uncle Jeff told me he got snowbound at Canyon Creek once in October with a pack string, and eventually had to shoot the horses rather than have them suffer from starvation.

I was laid off October 1st and met a party from Eureka and joined them hunting goat at Bowman Lake. We had an early snowstorm and crossed the range to Eureka via Yakinikak and Grave Creek. This trail traverses the locale described by Ernest Thompson Seton in his story, "Krag, the Kootenay Ram."

My vacation at Eureka had just ended on January 1, 1907, when I received instructions to report for duty to David Kinney at Libby, Montana, Supervisor for the Kootenai National Forest. (Glen Smith, Roscoe Haines, and I.)

We built a Ranger cabin near Pipe Creek, twelve miles north of Libby, that winter. Bill Doak, our neighbor, had been purser on a steamboat that plied the Kootenai River between Jennings, Montana, and Fort Steele, British Columbia, in the late '90's. It takes some stretch of the imagination to believe a steamboat could navigate the Kootenai. Two steamboats were wrecked on the same day in the rocky canyon north of Jennings. Boat traffic was discontinued about 1901.

In the spring I was sent to Gateway to cut trail across the Purcell Range, to the Yaak River via Dodge Creek. I bought two matched black ponies and packed to the base of Yaak-Mountain, crossing the Kootenai on Mills' Ferry, located in British Columbia.

A Frenchman named Solo Joe was placering near the summit of the Purcell Range. He warned me that if I ever ran across a trapper named Olson in the Yaak River District to mistake him for a mountain lion and shoot him. If I had followed Joe's advice it would have saved a lot of misery. But I never saw Olson. He was crazy. "Dingle on the bean," Joe said. Olson had once set a bear trap in the trail for Joe. A year later Ranger Raymond wrote the Supervisor at Libby to have an officer pick up Olson as he was dangerous. The Supervisor, a new man from the east, kidded Raymond for being afraid of Olson but took no action. Two of Raymond's laborers on tail work,

upon going to their homestead for the weekend, met Olson coming out the door. He said he had called to borrow some soda, but he had put strychnine in the sourdough can. One man died that night but the other one survived. Their names were Todd and Hensley. Raymond took Olson in and he was placed in an asylum, where he later died.

It was a lonely job cutting trail until a man named Cody was sent up to help me. He was the best all-round woodsman, packer and horseman I ever met. He had two half-broke horses loaned to him to break for their use. He did not agree on the route I picked for the trail so I told him he could move over to the western slope and cut trail where and how he chose, which he did. We met on weekends to go for supplies.

One night Charlie Andrews, on border patrol for the Immigration Service, camped with me. He noted some verse I was writing and remarked, "The man is crazy from being alone. He is writing poetry." It was pretty crude, entitled "A Ranger's Lament," but it served to get me a promotion and transfer to a better district. I mailed this verse to Acting Supervisor Glen Smith:

I'm on my way, Glen, on my way,  
To pitch my tent by close of day,  
Where Dodge Creek springs 'mid shadows strange  
From a narrow pass in the Purcell Range.

The simple life may look good to folks  
Who live in the city and know it from books,  
Just now with me it's beginning to pall  
For it's lonely here when the shadows fall.

So I'll sit by the campfire's gleam alone,  
And hark to the swaying trees' low moan,  
Then count the days, about ten more  
When I'll hike for the Kootenay's eastern shore.

But before I can go, - Alas! — Alack!  
I must plod up the hump with a heavy pack,  
Pitch my tent in the canyon deep,  
And flop in a bed where the spiders creep.

I long for a day with Billie and Van,  
Susan and Babe and the rest of the clan;  
For the cheerful notes of a ragtime song,  
Or to waltz with a maid 'mid the whirling throng.

Then back to the woods again wouldn't tire;  
Camp grub cooked by the open fire,  
With big dutch oven and frying pan,  
Blackened kettles and sourdough can.

It got so lonely my dog couldn't stand it. He went down to the Kootenai River and howled 'til the ferryman from Gateway came over and took him across to town. When a man's dog shows up at the settlement without his master, the settlers in the valley assume, and often correctly, that it is an indication of tragedy. Jack Barnaby lost his life in a snowslide, and when his dog came out, a posse went to look for him. A man named Matty lost his life on Kishanehin Creek and a bear devoured him. His dog came out to Big Prairie, the first indication of tragedy. The mystery of Matty's death was never fully solved. Late in the spring, when his dog showed up at Big Prairie, several of Matty's friends went up to his trapper cabin to investigate. They found the door latched, a large hole in the roof and, upon opening the door, found bones scattered over the floor - all that remained of Matty. They found considerable blood stains on the bunk, also an automatic .45 pistol set near the cabin for a bear. By the signs they found, they decided he had shot himself accidentally and died on the bunk. When the weather got warm, the bear, attracted by the smell, had torn a hole in the roof to get in and devour him.

When my dog showed up at the river, Mother Milks pestered her man until he got Harvey Young to join him and come up to my camp. Perhaps they were disappointed to find me swinging a mattock on the trail but I was thankful to know that someone took an interest in my welfare.

I almost forgot to tell you about my dog. He was a mongrel, part terrier with long hair, and I called him "Tommy Whiskers." I taught him several tricks. He would sit up, balance a pine cone on his nose and at the count of three, flip his nose sideways and catch it. He didn't like to swim the rivers and soon learned to get up behind me on the horse. He was more than just a pet. He could tree a mountain lion or nip a bear on the stern end until it would sit up and roar. He stayed away from skunk and porky. I taught him to smoke a pipe by first putting sugar on the stem. A dog as well as a man can learn one trick too many, and when I moved into town, he got some costly ideas. I didn't mind taking him to the barber shop once a month to get his moustache waxed and his beard trimmed Van Dyke, but when he wanted high priced cigars, I had to draw the line and broke him of the smoking habit by giving him Peerless tobacco.

Soon after I mailed my verse to Glen Smith, I received instructions to proceed to a new district north of Bonners Ferry, Idaho. The Supervisor, Dave Kinney, advised me that there would be considerable business there, with grazing permits and timber sales to look after. I lost no time packing and headed for the river.

Molly Sullivan, daughter of a homesteader on the west bank of the Kootenai helped me swim the horses across at Rexford. There was only a sketchy trail downriver near the foot of the mountains and I traveled on the railroad right-of-way at times. At Stone Hill where I camped the first night, a down freight killed my pack horse. I felt pretty bad about it, as the horse was a pet and only three years old. It meant that I had to walk 35 miles to Jennings and lead the saddle horse. I shipped my equipment from Jennings to Libby, and bought a horse at Libby.

From there on it was tough going along the north side of the Kootenai. Part of the trail above the falls was over solid rock and narrow ledges. More than one prospector had lost a horse there that slipped off the trail and rolled down into the river below the falls. The second night I stopped with Jake Lang on the Montana-Idaho line. Half his land was in Idaho, yet until the State line was marked, he paid his taxes at Kalispell, Montana.

Arriving in the Moyie District, I boarded with an Indian who had a white wife. His hair hung in braids over his shoulders and he had me cut it for him. If I'd had a little more barber business like that I would soon have had enough hair to make a saddle blanket!

Later I built a Ranger cabin in the Moyie Valley near Snyder Post Office. Artman Snyder was Ranger of the Moyie District when I arrived there. Snyder Post Office was named after him. He was a big, raw-boned fellow, and had prospected from Mexico to Alaska. He had a voice like a foghorn and told some pretty far-fetched yarns of his experiences, in very serious manner, and seemed peeved if we doubted them. He said when he went to the Klondike via Edmonton he lived twelve days on tallow candle and porcupine, then cut his dog's tail off, made soup of it and fed the bone to the dog. Very generous. (It helped the dog make both ends meet.)

He gave me the recipe for cooking porcupine: "You should not skin it but should pluck it like a goose - wrap it in an old blanket and throw it on a pack horse for about three days' travel. When you remove the blanket the quills will come with it. Burn the blanket and at the same time you can singe the pinfeathers off the porky. Draw it and cover with a two-inch layer of damp clay. Bake three hours in a pit in the ashes."

Two brothers lived at Round Prairie who had a lot of trouble with the neighbors. I was warned not to go near them as they had declared an open season on Forest Rangers. However, I got along very well with them. One brother we called Whispering Jake. There was something wrong with his epiglottis and he would whisper for a while then without warning his voice would break into a roar. He didn't have very good control and did not seem to know when he would whisper or when he would roar, so it was disconcerting, to state it mildly, to converse with him at short range. He seemed to take a fancy to me and after I was transferred to the office at Sandpoint, he would call in to see me. With a hand on my knee and his face close to mine, he would tell me of his battle with Pig-Eye Johnson. When Jake would break into a roar, the Supervisor, with a broad grin, would cast a sky glance my way. A good executive would know how to get rid of Jake, but I was too good-natured to offend him. I would excuse myself, go into the drafting room and stay until he had left.

In the spring of 1908, Robert McLaughlin was sent to the Moyie District on special duty to survey Ranger Stations and classify homestead lands. I traveled with him as sort of Boy Scout and Man Friday. We were kindred spirits in that we both had a perverted sense of humor. (I mean what we considered funny might not seem funny to you.) Bill Nye best illustrates the idea when he tells of Peck's bad boy, laughing at a funeral - until his dad knocked hell out of him and convinced him it wasn't funny. We didn't make it pay as Bill Nye did, but carried on for our own amusement. I never saw another man enjoy a joke or gag so much as did Robert McLaughlin. He was short and heavy-set, with clear blue eyes and a square, jutting jaw. When telling a yarn, he was very serious and seldom smiled, but the next day on the trail would laugh heartily. We led a hobo life traveling afoot, by speeder or in a boxcar. Sometimes at night we camped out but more often stopped at settlers' cabins.

We stopped one night at the hotel at Eastport. At breakfast, Robert gave the girl his order for "two eggs, one cooked on one side and one on the other." She came back several times to get the

order straight and he pretended to get sore. When we were out on the trail, he laughed heartily and said, "The poor girl did not know on which side to cook which egg."

We were surveying a Ranger Station near Meadow Creek when he awoke me early one morning, saying, "We have a cougar treed." There was a big forked tree near camp with a small dead cedar lodged in the forks. We all wore calked boots and he had walked up the leaning dead cedar to the forks and poked my clothes far out on the upper end with a pole. They figured I would have to chop the big tree down to get my clothes but I got them without chopping. I climbed to the forks, retrieved the clothes with a long pole with a nail in the end as a hook.

Robert studied law at night (when he wasn't thinking of nonsense) and was later appointed Montana State Forester. We moved westward to classify lands along the foothills south of Port Hill.

The Great Northern Railroad had a branch line from Bonners Ferry to Creston, British Columbia. I read someplace of a slow train that was easy to overtake but hard to meet. It was likely a reference to the Kootenai Valley Branch line. The train ran tri-weekly, went north on Monday and tried all the rest of the week to get back. But on the day that Robert and I rode the train, the schedule was reversed. About ten miles north of Bonners Ferry we were stopped by a mud slide that covered the rails. The train crew and some passengers proceeded to clear the rails. Robert and I decided that walking was easier than shoveling. We walked ahead to Copeland, then on to Port Hill, and still no train in sight.

This story illustrates the train crew's idea of a time schedule. A traveling man said the train was stopped on the main line and while he walked the aisle and gnawed his fingernails, the train crew sauntered up the open hillside, each man carrying heavy twine to snare gophers. They got one cent bounty for each tail.

There was a bad fire that summer, near the headwaters of Meadow Creek, so McLaughlin had to carry on alone while I fought forest fire. We packed equipment and grub to the top of Queen Mountain with horses, then back-packed by manpower, three miles to the fire front. An old Hudson Bay trapper cooked over campfire for thirty men. He used fifty pounds of flour per day for making bannocks.

Our camp was located in an alder swamp for protection and we dug several shallow holes for water. The cook called my attention to the red squirrels. They carried the large white-pine cones and put them in the water holes. After the cones were soaked they would take them away. I don't know why the squirrels did this, perhaps to get the seeds out more readily.

A little black bear, his feet singed in the forest fire, hung around camp and would take bannock from the cook's hand.

Later in the summer, Art Snyder and Glen Smith took a short cut across the hills from Snyder Ranger Station to Bonners Ferry. They were both big men, each about six feet tall, but there the similarity ended. Art was spare of frame, rugged, with dark features, lined and browned from life in the open, while Glen Smith was of florid complexion and inclined to carry surplus weight.

They carried no lunch and from running and battling mosquitoes, they developed an enormous hunger. The first settler's place they reached was George Fry's but no one was home. They found a lard pail full of separated cream in the spring and drank the works. After running downhill for some time Art Snyder stopped and remarked, "I believe my stomach is a solid lump of butter." He turned pale, sat down on a log, and made a noise that sounded like 'New York.' After he had coughed up considerable buttermilk they resumed their journey. Mrs. Fry told me she met them on the road and when she refused their offer to pay for the cream, she had no idea they had consumed it all.

The duties of a Forest Ranger were many and varied, so the work was interesting and never onerous. One assignment the writer disliked was reporting on the validity of homestead claims within the National Forest. A Forest Ranger was authorized to take affidavits and administer oaths, as an agent of the General Land Office, in the prosecution of fraudulent claims. Forest Rangers in Idaho also acted as deputy state game wardens. His activities were sometimes spiced with adventure not connected with his regular duties.

One instance I recall. On the day before Christmas, Bonita Jorgensen, the sectionman's daughter, called at the Snyder Ranger Station. She was crying and said her father and brother had gone over the mountain hunting on the day before and had not returned. I made up an emergency pack and started. The weather was stormy. The thermometer registered twenty degrees below zero. I found their tracks on the mountaintop, but soon lost them in the drifted snow and got no answer to my shots. I weathered the storm that night in the burned-out base of a big cedar.

The next day about noon I found them. They had traveled in a circle and were getting panicky. However, when I found them they were taking a straight course by sighting the trees and would have got out. They were blackened from campfire smoke and were hungry, but we soon had hot coffee and lunch. We reached the section house in time for a belated but welcome Christmas, and a thankful one.

On July 4th, 1908, occurred the most embarrassing incident of my career. After all these years I can tell about it, and admit that it was also amusing. At Bonners Ferry there was a July 4th celebration - a big parade, horse racing and a bucking-horse contest. A young fellow claimed to be a bronc rider but when the bucking-horse contest was on he put up an alibi. He was Officer of the Day and rode a big gray horse. I had a bottle of hokey-pokey. A friend borrowed it and in full view of the audience in the grandstand ran up and sprinkled some of the stuff on the horse's rump. The horse walked some distance, twisted his tail, then proceeded to buck halfway round the race track. The rider was grounded in six jumps.

That evening I escorted a young lady to her home across the river. The river bank was dyked with sandbags for flood control and the trail was narrow. I was rather bashful, in fact I am yet, and to give the girl more room on the trail I stepped on the side of the sandbags. My feet slipped from under me and I fell on the bottle of hokey-pokey in my hip pocket. It broke. There was enough hokey-pokey in that bottle to sent twenty horses bucking. I didn't buck, I stampeded and lit waist deep in the muddy waters of the Kootenai. As I climbed up the bank a woman came along. She thought I was crazy, and maybe I was. The aftereffects lasted for some time, and as we crossed the bridge I would bound into the air and run at intervals.

So I learned about hokey-pokey but must admit that a horse does not have the same chance to jump in the river on such short notice.

Changes in National Forest boundaries placed the Moyie District in the Pend 'Oreille National Forest, so in the reshuffle, I was located in the Pend 'Oreille Forest instead of the Kootenai Forest. My superior officer by the change was J.E. Barton, with headquarters at Sandpoint, Idaho.

About January 1, 1909, I was transferred to the main office at Sandpoint and assigned to a District bordering Lake Pend 'Oreille. This lake is the answer to a fisherman's prayer, accessible by highway and railroad. It is forty-three miles long and its greatest depth is 1,150 feet, giving the impression that it lies in the crater of an extinct volcano. (It is a glacial-formed basin.)

Lake Pend 'Oreille has produced three world's record rainbow trout, the largest 37 pounds. Fourteen varieties of game fish are found in its waters. Mountains rise abruptly from the eastern lakeshore, and in 1909 there was no road or trail to Lakeview near the southern end of the lake; therefore, in order to take horses to Lakeview we had to ship them by steamboat from Sandpoint.

Jack Barton, the Supervisor, decided we should build a pack trail from Lakeview to Clark Fork, following closely the summit of the Coeur d'Alene Range, most of the way. In March 1909, I made a preliminary cruise over the proposed route to learn if it was feasible. The weather was bright and cold. From the summit I had the exalted impression that I was standing astride the backbone of the world as I gazed at a panorama, spread like a map for a radius of forty miles; Lake Pend 'Oreille, dotted with green islands, to the west, northward, smoke rising lazily from the big mill at Ponderay; in the far distance, Chimney Rock and Roman Nose Mountain were visible in the Selkirk Range; and far below to the east meandered the timbered valley of the North Fork River.

On the summit the snow lay six feet deep. I almost walked over the top of a trapper's camp before I noticed it. It was made of poles that leaned against a supporting ridge pole to form an inverted V-shaped shelter. Near the peak was a small opening through which lynx tracks led in and out. I shouted at the entrance but apparently nobody was home. On top of the crusted snow, near a shattered tree, a chipmunk was lying curled up in a little furry ball, frozen solid. A winter storm had crashed his tree home and he would never awaken from his winter sleep.

The historic site of Fort Kullyspell is located near the lake, east of the summit.

Although I had never been to Clark Fork or in this locality before, I completed the journey in a long day, reaching Clark Fork at 10:00 p.m. (about thirty miles).

The following summer we completed the pack trail and I note, by a late map, that there is now a scenic highway along this route.

Where the writer plodded along at a modest two-miles-per-hour to explore the wilderness, the Forest Ranger today bounces along in a jeep, exerting a minimum of energy to step on the gas or tramp on the brake.

During the summer of 1909, a resurvey was made of National Forest boundaries to compile information and make recommendations for advisable changes in boundaries.

The Pend 'Oreille Forest was comprised of four separate parcels of land. I asked to be assigned to the roughest and wildest section of the survey. Barton said I was welcome since no one else wanted it. My assignment comprised a wilderness area west of the Montana state line and located between the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads. It included a section of the Cabinet Range. We cruised and mapped an area seven miles wide.

Ranger Literhiser from Clark Fork was detailed to pack for me and do photography for the report. Near Grouse Creek, after we had checked the map, I instructed Literhiser where to meet me with a pack horse in two days. The map showed a trail to the rendezvous. There may have been a trail long in the past but the route now proved impassable. I did not see Literhiser again for five days.

I camped the first night in a trapper's cabin. The next day I had a miserable time trying to reason with a black bear with her two cubs. The cubs scurried up a tree and mama bear reared up and took a peek around the tree at me. I moved behind a big tree and started to back away. She rushed at me, threatening by short, jerky jumps when she was close, with upper lip curled back showing her teeth. I will admit that I was scared but she was wild enough that she would not jump on me so long as I stood my ground. After a short interval she went back to the cubs. I picked up a dead stick and when she charged again I could argue a little better by waving the stick in her face, and she finally gave up the bluff. I firmly believe she would have knocked me over if I had run.

Literhiser did not show up at the appointed place. That night was the only time I ever felt nervous in the woods. I was tired and hungry, also soaked from falling into a swamp hole. I would awaken from the chill when my fire went out, and when I scouted for wood in the dark, I imagined there was a bear behind every tree.

The following day I reached a logging road, and as I limped along a horse ran up from behind and walked beside me. North Idaho is hell for mosquitoes and we carried yards of cheesecloth for protection. I tore this into strips to use for rope and rode the horse to the Great Northern Railroad at Elmira. There was a store at Elmira where I could get some grub, but no hotel, so I rolled into the manger in a deserted barn for the night.

Walking east along the railroad for a few miles I stopped to visit some very good friends named McArthur who operated a small sawmill at McArthur Siding. They had a little girl who owned an assortment of pets - two spotted fawns, a baby angora goat and an old crippled dog that followed the fawns all day to look after them.

From McArthur's I journeyed south across a low divide to the headwaters of the North Fork of Grouse Creek. There I called on a squatter named Berg who claimed to have on his homestead the biggest cedar in the State of Idaho. It would be impossible to check his claim, but the cedar measured thirty-eight feet in circumference. All these big cedars are churn-butted and hollow. I have often considered using one as a trapper den by chopping a hole through the outer shell for a



door. Art Snyder told me this was done in the Moyie District. As winter progressed and snow got deeper, the trapper chopped a new door at snow level and built a platform floor. It was a winter of heavy snowfall so he moved the floor up at intervals and chopped a new door to match the snow level. Came a chinook one night and he looked out the next morning to find himself four stories above the ground and no fire escape! Art didn't say how he got down.

On the return journey from Berg's place I made a side trip to examine an abandoned mine. The tunnel walls were lined with mica that sparkled brightly in the light of my candle. Mica today is heat treated to form insulation and plaster aggregate known as "Zonolite."

The abandoned cabins were infested with pack rats. I made a mental note to return soon with my dog 'Whiskers' and a six-shooter for some sport-shooting rats.

Pack rats are nocturnal and very destructive. They will ruin a saddle or riding boots in a night. They make a tapping noise that is reported to be done with their tails but I learned from observation that the tapping noise is done with their front feet when they are disturbed.

Billy Schell, a Forest Ranger, showed me two bottles of ink eradicator that were carried up a stairway by a pack rat. They were found in the rat's cache of souvenirs in the garret.

They are noisy. A rat in the loft taps a signal. His long-nosed, bewhiskered friend down below jumps in a battered pan and does a jig, slows down long enough to tap a message to his mischievous friend above who answers by rolling tin cans down the stairway!

The sun was low when I resumed my way over the mountain so I made a Palouser. It is a lantern made with a candle and a tin can and gets its name from the harvest fields of the Palouse country where the harvest hand has a steady job and doesn't need a bed, so trades it off for a lantern. A Palouser can be made from an empty lard pail or tomato can. The candle flame will continue to burn even in a high wind. It is a wise plan always to carry one or two candles in the pack on wilderness journeys. One match will light the candle, you then have continuous heat and flame to start the campfire. It serves for a lantern, which may save you an all-night delay in the woods.

With the aid of the Palouser I followed a dim trail back to McArthur in the darkness. I was behind schedule on the boundary survey and the next day met Literhiser also a party at Naples that had cruised west from the Montana state line to meet me, so my field work was completed there; a reconnaissance and field notes for a report on eighty miles of National Forest boundary.

As we walked up to the little store run by Louie Popp, a man tall and large of girth came out to meet us. I thought he was a forestry official when he shook hands all round. He introduced himself as Fred Schade of the Schade Brewing Company of Spokane. He was on the road promoting sales, and Popp had a package license to sell beer by the bottle.

We had to wait for a train and Schade declared that Naples was the most desolate, deserted village he had seen in all his travels. He kept Louie's boy busy lugging beer up from the basement and said to me, "Man, oh man, you look hungry. If there is anything to eat here that you want, just order it on me." We were a rough and ragged bunch, with staggled pants, ravelled

to the knees, features scarred from the ravages of mosquitoes, each of us with a week-old beard. We certainly enjoyed the celebration as a finale to a job well done.

Prior to 1910, the Pend 'Oreille National Forest did not have Government owned pack horses, although each Ranger kept a saddle horse and pack horse for personal use.

Ranger Findell, on the Coeur d'Alene Forest, demonstrated the advantages of private business acumen over Government business procedure. He was instructed to rent some pack horses, the Government to pay fifty cents per day rent. However, he bought the horses by an agreement to pay \$15.00 per month for each horse until paid for. He then told the Supervisor, "The Government is renting these horses but I own them." However, the Government acquired ownership with the money allotted for rent.

Horses were scarce in North Idaho so when we received an appropriation to buy pack horses, I was authorized to go to Thompson Falls, Montana, to purchase them. I checked my saddle and went by train to that village.

On this trip I met some interesting characters. One old horse-trader (after selling the horse to me) said, "Now this horse has only two faults. He's hard to catch and no good after you catch him." By the time I reached Sandpoint the horse had but one fault. I tied a large steel nut securely to the horse's foretop. When the horse ran the nut would bounce against his skull, the faster he ran the harder the bounce, so he soon learned to slow down to avoid punishment. This treatment followed, upon catching him, with a reward of sugar or grain did the business.

My next call was at a Negro's place. He was known as Nigger Bill and was renowned as the first man to bulldog a steer and hold it down with his teeth by a hold on the nose. He tried to sell me a three-gaited horse (start, stumble, and fall) but we couldn't deal.

At the end of the road down the south side of the river, there was fine range in the foothills where a man named Yoakum was raising mules. I preferred to buy mules but the young mules for sale were unbroke. However, he had for sale a beautiful pinto mare that ran with the wild bunch. She was four years old and sound. He claimed she had been rough broke the year before and offered to ride her for me. She threw herself over backward when he cinched the saddle. I told Yoakum I would get fired if I returned with an outlaw mare. Yoakum was sixty years old and no doubt had been a bronco buster, and a good one, but he was now too old for this business. I decided to buy the mare if she was bridewise, so I offered to try her. She fell over backward again when I mounted. I figured something was wrong with the reverse gear, so I passed Yoakum a two-hander and advised him to apply it where it would do the most good as soon as I put my foot in the stirrup. This treatment, followed by a judicious prod of the spurs, proved there was nothing wrong with the reverse gear. She started in high and for several jumps I was busy hunting for the jughandle, only to scratch her ears as I went over her head. Perseverance finally won. Yoakum rode with me that day and the pinto soon proved to be the gentlest horse of the lot.

I had to cross the Thompson River to return to Sandpoint. At that time there was no highway. This was in July and the river was at flood stage, too high in fact to operate the ferry safely. Nevertheless, the ferryman, after the promise of a tip, offered to take me and the six horses

across, but when we went down to cross the river next morning, the ferry had been sunk by a drifting tree.

The ferryman related to me the story of a tragedy that occurred there in 1884, during construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad, when four packers and twelve mules were carried over the falls. The ferry cable broke while they were crossing. They hadn't a chance to survive but the villagers, running along the bank helpless to aid, watched the packers cut the lash ropes and unpack the mules before the ferry gained speed and up-ended, dumping its live cargo into the turmoil of the angry waters where they disappeared from view. One sturdy mule survived to swim ashore. The others, men and mules, perished. (I later found this version to be incorrect - three mules and three men (of six) had survived.)

I often wonder what could have been the thoughts of these men while they were carried down the raging torrent to certain death within an interval of minutes. During the last minutes of life allotted to them, instead of praying and making futile cries for help, they unpacked the mules to give them a chance, even though a slim one. They did their work to the last. The kindest words I can find to say for them are these: "It is pleasant to dream of eternity but for an honest man it is enough to have lived his life, doing his work."

After hearing the tragic story of the packers, I felt relieved to find the ferry out of commission. I decided to take the horses across on the Belknap Railroad Bridge (later condemned and wrecked). I got a young man to help me by paying his expenses enroute. The railway agent advised me about train schedules and suggested crossing early in the morning.

The bridge was 140 feet above the river. Along the outer edge there was a narrow walk. We removed the saddles and carried them across as a precaution in case a horse fell overboard. All went well until the last horse, a stubborn old goat, refused to go on the walk. I blindfolded him, led the pinto back for company, then lowered the blind to uncover one eye next the bridge and started the pinto. The old horse followed across the bridge.

The Swede sectionboss arrived just as we led the last horse off the bridge. He said, "You can't cross on das har bridge." I retorted, "You should have come here earlier. We have them all across."

We trailed the horses about ninety miles to Sandpoint without further incident but, sad to relate, two horses perished in the terrible fires that devastated North Idaho one month later.

Although forty years have passed since the time of the great forest fires in North Idaho the date is not easily forgotten.

On August 20, 1910, a forest fire raced unchecked for one hundred miles in two days, to devastate one million acres of wilderness in the Idaho Panhandle and northwestern Montana. Eighty-seven persons perished in the flames and countless numbers of forest creatures were destroyed.

If you could see a little black bear clinging, high in a blazing tree and crying like a frightened child you could perceive on a very small scale what happened to the forest creatures.

At twelve o'clock noon on August 10, 1910, Supervisor J.E. Barton at Sandpoint, Idaho, received a telegram from Fire Guard William Brashear at Cabinet: "Send a man to relieve me, fires out of control, men should be withdrawn to safety." Brashear was in charge of several firefighting crews located south of Cabinet near the northern foothills of the Bitterroot Range. He had been a logging contractor with a background of experience that well qualified him for the job ahead.

Since this was before the time of autos and good roads, no action could be taken until the train went east at 5:00 p.m. Supervisor Barton asked me to go to Cabinet and take charge, since I was deputy Supervisor at the time. But before I left we received a second wire, this time from Brashear's cook: "Brashear and ten men trapped in the fire, all assumed to be dead."

John Keefe, Forest Ranger from Clark Fork, met me at Cabinet. We proceeded to the fire front, now within one mile of Cabinet. John was a tall, lanky lad of twenty from the Idaho State School of Forestry. He was quite an athlete and held the track record for his college.

We learned that Brashear, after sending the wire, decided that immediate action was urgent since the wind had increased to a gale. He returned to camp, turned his horse over to the cook with instructions to warn distant crews. Brashear then hurried up the mountainside on foot to warn an isolated crew of ten men.

The cook and about thirty men who were working east of Brashear's party reached Cabinet safely after a mad race ahead of the flames. They had met a boy taking lunches on a pack horse to Brashear's party, threw the boy on the pack horse, and turned him about to lead the race toward Cabinet. None of the men who had been in the big stampede would return to the fire front with Keefe and me, but we got six Finlanders who lived in the vicinity to volunteer.

We selected the intersection of two skid roads as a strategic location to try and check the fire. It had spent some of its force and slowed down at nightfall. I was acquainted with this locality and knew that one skid road led to the firefighters' camp.

It was 2:00 a.m. when Keefe and I decided we could venture through the fire front in a race to the trapped men although the fire was still dangerous, burning intermittently through the tree tops. I had left an automatic pistol on the skid road with the Finns. Days later it was found with the breech clip blown out, cocked and locked solid, a souvenir of the fire. One man asked us to watch for his abandoned suit case. All that remained of it was the metal rim.

We would run awhile, then lie down at intervals to get fresh air. Continued exertion in the smoke and heat will cause a person to faint. We passed a dead porcupine in the road as we traversed a blackened area of death and destruction where no living animal or bird remained. I was reminded of a vast graveyard. The small fires flickering dimly in the darkness high in the blackened snags could be candles burning for the dead.

Upon reaching the spring near where the camp was located we shouted until our parched throats were hoarse but got no reply. Then we climbed out of the burned timber upon the ridge to the clearing. There in the darkness we saw the huddled forms. We thought they were all dead, but to our relief we found they were sleeping the sleep of exhaustion after their ordeal. Some had their heads covered with the charred remnants of coats and blankets.

Brashear's dog lay dead in the clearing. Two men crazed with fear had bolted and perished in the flames.

The race with the fire had been hopeless and Brashear had led the men to the clearing, warning each man to soak his bedding in the spring and lie down under the wet covering. He knew this was their best chance to survive. Brashear was the only man to soak his blanket at the spring. Nothing could live at the spring since it was in a ravine in the timber. The spring was boiled dry when Keefe and I reached it.

Brashear had made a futile attempt to stop the two men who ran off. The rest of the crew were about to panic and run when he knocked a man down with a mattock handle and threatened to brain the first man to try and run. They lay down, heads toward the wind, as the fire raged past on each side of the clearing, flames hundreds of feet high fanned by a tornado wind so violent that the flames flattened out ahead, swooping to earth in great darting curves, truly a veritable red demon from hell.

At daybreak we found the charred bodies of the two men. Brashear's eyesight was temporarily impaired. Several men were sent to the hospital for minor burns.

John Keefe remained to guide the men out by the best route while I returned in haste to Cabinet to reorganize the firefighting. This was quite a problem since tools, supplies and records had been destroyed in the fire.

This fire before being checked burned to the outskirts of Cabinet and fired the timbers in the railroad tunnel nearby.

The Forest Supervisor of the Coeur d'Alene Forest had lost all contact with a large party of firefighters located about seventy miles north of Wallace, Idaho. This area was accessible from Cabinet by a journey south of about twenty-five miles across the summit of the Bitterroot Range. I was delegated to go and investigate their fate.

A husky young graduate from Michigan University, named Gillis, accompanied me on this trip. We were about to start when a woman came to our camp asking for help. Her husband, during a drunken spree, had beaten up the family and smashed the furniture. We went to her home but the place was deserted. The doors were open and a little old pack pony had wandered into the house. We found him with his nose in the flour barrel. He was brown color and looked comical with his face decorated with flour. We appropriated the horse and a pack saddle, then with a light pack we started for the North Fork.

We stopped that night at a sheep camp just over the summit of the range. There was no trail beyond so we left the porgy there. As we descended into the valley we both suffered violent headaches from smoke. We were approaching the northern limit of a fire that had burned an area forty miles wide and seventy miles in length.

We found the abandoned campsite of the missing men and tracked them westward until we were assured that they had safely crossed the Coeur d'Alene Range to Lake Pend 'Oreille. We were not acquainted with this area and did not carry enough food for such an extended journey. As darkness overtook us on the mountainside we stopped, made two fires and lay down between them. I had shot a blue grouse on the way. We cooked it on sharpened sticks and picked the bones clean. At first dawn, we went on, picked up the pony and returned to Cabinet.

By the time we had returned to Cabinet, the great fire was declared a National emergency. All efforts were directed to the protection of homes, towns and private property. Guards were placed at the entrance to mountain valleys and no unauthorized persons were allowed to pass.

After organizing the firefighting at Cabinet, I joined a party of forty laborers who were enroute from Spokane by train and guided them to a fire near Noxon, Montana. Men worked in relays all night, shoveling dirt to check the flames, and saved a homesteader's buildings. His pasture fence had burned down and the calf was removed into the house.

I carried a small canvas tarp and got a little sleep that night for the first time in over fifty hours. This fire was in the Cabinet National Forest.

I returned to Cabinet to find a desperate appeal for help from a settler located across the Clark Fork River. I summoned the faithful Finns and started but the boat was on the wrong side of the river. The Finns carried a cedar telephone pole to the river for me and riding astride the pole I paddled across and got the boat. My feet and legs in the water acted as a stabilizer to keep the log from rolling.

The Cabinet Gorge is now a noted scenic attraction where the river is compressed to rush through a rock crevice so narrow that the river virtually runs on edge. It was here at the mouth of the gorge in a big eddy that I crossed the river.

We found the settler in desperate straits. The Finns worked all night and checked the advancing flames.

The greatest loss of life occurred on the Coeur d'Alene Forest to the south near Wallace, Idaho.

You may wonder what methods are used to check a forest fire. A forest fire usually slows down at night to travel on the ground. Our greatest efforts were made from 3:00 a.m. until noon. A scout goes ahead, marking the route for the fireline, followed by axemen who clear the way for men with mattocks and shovels. These men dig off all rubbish and leaf mold to form a shallow trench. When the fire is checked at the trench some standing snags with fire in the tops remain. These are called sparkers and are felled.

Firefighting methods are greatly improved today by the use of bulldozers, portable pumps and parachute jumpers. The greatest advance has been in fire prevention, catching them at the start, benefited by an improved network of trails and telephone lines and by use of lookouts, radio, and parachute jumpers.

The destruction of animal life in the forest fires, as noted by the writer, is not pleasant to contemplate. The clowning bear, the chattering squirrel, even the fleet-footed deer, all suffer death in the forest fire. The animals that escaped the flames and were seen near our camp were dazed. Squirrels and chipmunks could be picked up, deer fed near the camp.

Today, even with the improved methods of firefighting, a Forest Ranger carries a heavy load of responsibility for the safety of his men. Danger is ever present. Under certain conditions a small fire, started in a mountain valley, builds up pressure and explodes, just as the fire in your furnace or stove sometimes backfires with a minor explosion. The surrounding mountainsides are ablaze from bottom to top in an interval of minutes and a man located above the initial blaze is doomed. During the second stage the heat develops air currents which may be augmented by high winds to fan the fire into a racing, raging monster beyond control.

When nature goes on the rampage, man's efforts are futile. I recall the legend of the young man who, while writing his Civil Service examination for Forest Ranger, came to this question, "What would you do in case of a crown fire and a head wind?" His answer: "I would run like hell and pray for rain." Right.

(Note: The fire near Cabinet has been described by Elers Koch as the Dry Creek fire. After so many years, man's memory is not always reliable, but the spring was not in the clearing at the campground; rather it was in the nearby timbered ravine. It may be there now, but was boiled dry by the fire. — EGS)

Late in September, 1910, in company with a trapper named Parker, I journeyed north from the headwaters of Smith Creek, thence down Smith Creek to the Kootenai River near Port Hill. This trip was over the most rugged, trackless terrain I have ever seen. It was made in order to get information for intelligent estimates for costs of proposed improvements for the ensuing fiscal year.

We carried five days' grub; bacon, flour, coffee, and sugar. Starting from Parker's trapper cabin on Pack River, we climbed to the summit of the Selkirk Range the first day and camped at a shallow lake. It was located on a plateau that resembled a landscaped park. The lake, crystal clear, had a bottom of solid rock. Chimney Rock, a granite spire towering five hundred feet from the top of a nearby peak, loomed up as a guiding landmark. Although Chimney Rock was a freak of nature, visible for many miles, few persons had reached its base. (A hotel keeper from Hope, Idaho, while prospecting, left his name and address in a tin can at its base. There was also a note in the can saying that whoever found the note would be rewarded with a quart of whiskey. A year later a prospector presented the note and received the reward.)

North of the lake we traversed a terrain of great broken slabs and blocks of granite. It was here that Parker nearly lost his life the previous fall. He and my brother were hunting bear and had

separated. A large slab of granite tipped up with Parker's weight on the projecting end, to wedge his crossed legs between two rocks. He was trapped as securely as a bear in a steel trap, for he could not get a handhold on the rock and lift the great weight to free himself. My brother was within calling distance and with great difficulty released him.

A storm of swirling snow came up just as we approached the rim of a precipice. We looked down upon a small lake one thousand feet below, located at the base of a great cirque, an amphitheatre of solid rock. The descent to the lake was too perilous so we camped without water in a recess of a great overhanging rock.

I don't know why it is so but I sleep best when lulled by the moan and screech of the storm, perhaps because of contrast. The safety and security in the shelter of the rocky cave emphasized the feeling of comfort as we camped on the top of the range at six-thousand-foot elevation.

It was here that my brother, Arthur, wandered off the route, just a year before, when he attempted to journey across the range to Port Hill. We profited by his experience for he made a sketch map for me, with landmarks noted, as far as the lake. He made his way down to the lake, over an incline so steep that at times he had to pass his dog down from ledge to ledge by the tail. He was always careless about carrying enough grub, and this trip was no exception. He claimed that he didn't miss any meals, but he was twenty-four hours late for supper when he reached Priest Lake. He returned to the railroad and went to Port Hill by train.

The next day we had a belated breakfast at a little stream located in a deep canyon. The descent to the stream was so steep over smooth, rounded granite that we loosed our packs and let them roll down, in order to have more freedom for a safe descent.

Climbing out of the canyon we crossed a mountaintop and descended the north slope to the source of Smith Creek. The character of the country changed. We passed through a timbered valley in buck brush, so dense that we waded down the creek at times for respite.

When we stopped to have mid-day lunch, Parker, in an urgent voice, said, "Look quick." A coyote faced us from the opposite creek bank, so close Parker could discern its wrinkled nose as it sniffed the air to get our scent. Parker was tugging at his .22 pistol when the coyote turned to run. I carried a .38 Smith and Wesson in a spring holster and fired, making a perfect score. The coyote dropped dead on the gravel. The lethal bullet did not mark the hide.

Parker was a congenial partner for a wilderness trip. He did not like to cook but cut firewood and made a comfortable mattress of balsam boughs for our bed while I cooked supper that night. We reached a trapper's camp known as "The Dirt Oven" the next day. We were thankful to finally reach a pack trail. Our journey onward was downgrade on a fair trail to Smith Creek Ranger Station near the Kootenai River.

On this trip we did not see much game. Parker killed a blue grouse and a fool hen with his .22 that served as meat for the pot. A whistler or hairy marmot eluded him by ducking into a hole. The marmot's habitat is at high elevations and its period of hibernation lasts nearly seven months. Small bands of woodland caribou are native to North Idaho, but we did not see any.



Dwight Crittenden was the Ranger in charge at Smith Creek Ranger Station. He was about thirty years old, six feet tall, with wavy hair flecked with grey. He had a friendly and quiet manner and was a wonderful singer. (He and his wife had traveled extensively in Europe and the United States with a company of musical troupers. He left the Forest Service to go to Hollywood where he starred in silent pictures but had to quit the pictures after being afflicted with "kleig" eyes. I looked him up in 1922. At that time he was Deputy Marshal in Los Angeles, but was later shot and killed by a Negro bootlegger.) We helped him trail some horses to Bonners Ferry, crossing the Kootenai on a big raft that we propelled with sweep oars.

Sturgeon run up the Kootenai to the falls and attain great size. A settler, located near the ferry, had a novel way of fishing for them. He put out a baited setline attached to a cowbell located near the house. When the cowbell rang the whole family ran down to the river bank to haul in the sturgeon.

Parker and I parted company at Naples. I stopped there to visit Ranger C.E. Middleton, a man I feel proud to have known and to mention here. We were kindred spirits, both gun cranks. Middleton was the best amateur shot with pistol and rifle that I ever knew. He was about twenty five years old and looked more like a dude than a cedar savage. His looks were deceiving. He was born and raised in the Southwest, had prospected in Old Mexico, and he rode the range in New Mexico and Texas. His regular features were marred by a great scar across his forehead, curving downward into an eyebrow, the result of a knifing by two Mexican youths.

My visit with Middleton terminated my last journey in the mountains of Idaho. On January 1, 1911, I resigned from the Forest Service to go to British Columbia and to journey in the State of Matrimony.

In conclusion, in order to bring this narrative up to date I must revise my version of my most embarrassing experience. By a remarkable coincidence it has to do with a bottle, but not a bottle of hokey-pokey.

On Saturday nights I attend the old-time dance at the Crystal Garden ballroom in Victoria. At my age I need something to fortify me. Although the doctor advised taking it every twenty minutes, I don't do that. On Saturday I buy a mickey of gin, and cut it in half with ginger ale. At 8:30 p.m. I take a big snort and replace the bottle to my hip pocket. At intermission, with some friendly help, the mickey is finished.

On this night in particular, I was waltzing with my lady friend (not to the Tennessee Waltz; it was faster - the Viennese waltz), when I heard a dull boom and felt a blow on the hip: I thought I was shot. The mickey had exploded in my hip pocket, and I was not even half shot! In my most courtly manner I apologized to the lady for leaving so abruptly, then slipped out the side door, mounted my Crap-Shooters' Special, and rattled and rolled for home.



Cedar tree measuring 17.4 feet in diameter (about 53 feet around in Clearwater country.  
(1953)

**By L.M. (Locke) Stewart  
(Division of Fire Control)**

The 1919 fire season was a rough one. It could have been even worse but for the virtual barriers still in many areas where 1910 burned clean. A volume could be filled with the feats of Phillips, Urquhart and many like them in their stubborn efforts to be everywhere and to do everything needed. Roy and Crete had Ranger Districts adjoining along the Idaho-Montana State line where I rode daily patrol after the smoke blanket became so thick that observation from Illinois Peak was useless. From nearby I watched one fire crown across the line into Montana in less than 60 minutes after it broke away near the mouth of Long Creek, six miles in Idaho. In its run two bands of sheep were caught and destroyed, almost 4,000 head. The herders and their horses and dogs outran the fire. Then came the long wait, two to four days to get weary, foot-sore men on the line - and the endless streamers of dust as the horse and his long-eared, intelligent working partner pounded the trails moving in supplies.

A few days later, with smoke thicker than ever, a fresh column appeared to be rising from a spruce basin in the head of Trout Creek, only two miles and in direct visibility from my route under normal conditions. Checking before going to a telephone to report, I found that a lightning fire had burned about ten acres in heavy fuels. It obviously had been burning in the spruce bottom for several days, spreading slowly, probably started by the same storm that had set the Long Creek fire. This was a costly fire discovery for me - I lost a fine horse. When a galeforce gust threw the top of a big spruce snag at us, I deserted him for the shelter of a windfall.

That fall, until snow drove us out, I doubled as packer and cook (?) for a crew appraising the loss in the huge Cold Creek fire near St. Regis. This fire had been started by the Milwaukee Railroad. Later the solicitors suggested that the proposed damage suit would be confusing - the U.S. had taken over railroads during World War I and was still operating them when the fire started.

The three Stewart boys had a distinct backwoods flavor, the result of growing up on a Western Montana homestead without benefit of feminine influence. We tended to duck for cover when strangers were sighted and if they proved to be female, were likely not to show at all. Our housekeeping was purely functional and cooking likewise, but we were at home in the mountains, no strangers to labor and better than green hands with stock, guns, traps and hand tools. So it followed that the local Ranger, Roy Phillips, would hire us as youngsters during the manpower shortage of World War I. In early June 1918, Roy took me on as a Forest Guard, age 15. I failed to survive a reduction at the beginning of the new fiscal year and hired on for the balance of the summer to tend camp (pack) and occasionally herd for a Washington sheep outfit trailing to summer range in the head of the North Fork of the Clearwater in Idaho.

I hired out to Roy again the following spring, \$80 per month with my horse. Wages were high in 1919 - firefighters made 55¢ per hour. I think that if my account has any significance it must derive from what may be record tenure of direct and primary concern with Region One's fire protection job. Thus I will dwell thereon; few of us can resist an invitation to reminisce. If the prospect is boring this is the spot from which to skip:

The scars of 1910 were still quite fresh; dead trees mostly still standing and deep ashes still in place in many of the quiet basins along the Montana-Idaho divide. The lush growth of weeds and low browse in years following the big fire led to an annual invasion of out-of-state sheep taking advantage of mountain range unmatched for topping lambs. In 1919 the Lolo alone wrote permits for 48,000 sheep; thereafter falling snags and heavy brush gradually reduced the volume and availability of suitable feed. Big game, excepting bear, were relatively scarce in most areas, whether sheeped or not. Elk were almost nonexistent along the Clark Fork except for the recent plants on Petty Creek and near Keystone, west of Superior.

Forest officers were adept at getting good returns for the few dollars they had to work with. They were generally first-class firefighters but incurable optimists about fire; perhaps they had to be to persist against the odds facing them. There was much experimenting with tool modifications - or combinations such as a detachable shovel handle, the opposite end of which fitted the eye of a grubhoe and a number of versions of the axe-hoe which finally shook down to the tool given Pulaski's name. One such tool went together with a key and matching slot. It was less offensive to an axeman than the pulaski but required too much care.

Most of the men available locally for fire crews were skilled with hand tools and had a good appetite for labor. Individual production was relatively high, even by the IWW. The IWW were gaining a bad name in the convulsions accompanying progress toward improved employment and living conditions in the woods and mill camps, long overdue. There were few fixed detectors, none with living quarters on the point; most of the sketchy detection effort was in patrols by horse and hand-powered railway speeder. There were many "fire caches" of hand tools and standard lists to guide procurement of food supplies or camp equipment but no preassembled units of either.

There were frequent instances of initial attack action which would make creditable statistics today. For example, Phillips and his Maxwell picked five of us up one July evening in 1917. We bounced some 20 miles and hiked 6 miles in the dark by the dubious light of Roy's palouser to hit a lightning fire. It had spread to about 5 acres by the time we reached it, hot line on all sides. By daylight the fire was well under control, the full perimeter trenched and cool, by virtue of a mixture of tactics: direct attack where appropriate, parallel construction where the fire was backing downwind or downslope and indirect line held by burning out the more difficult sections. But it was a different story when fires escaped the men quickly available or, due to inaccessibility or inadequate organization, were already of project size when reached. Then there was often a woeful lag before crew action, accompanied by an understandable tendency, engendered by penny-pinching and staggering logistic problems, to settle down to extended defensive campaigns. Neither the public nor the Service was ready to spend the dollars required for positive action. To gain time for line construction and burning out with small crews, the fire boss often resorted to extensive use of indirect lines far removed from the fire front - an impressive tactic when successful but disastrous when saddled with poor luck or wrong judgment.

In Region (then District) One, as recalled, 1920 was an amiable sort of season when good fire records could be made without undue effort. There was high incidence of lightning fires but only average burning conditions and the organization was generally alert and potent after the 1919

shakedown. Phillips, now Assistant Supervisor, had organized the "Lolo Emergency Crew," an early, if not the first "Hot Shot" fire crew. In the spring we planted trees, piled slash, built trail and constructed a fireline around several sections of the Big Creek sale cutting area. This was scheduled as a prescribed burn but was never burned, to my knowledge. Fire season came and we were on call to serve as a unit or as individual smokechasers or overhead where needed. We actually were used quite freely. The initial travel from our base at Haugan was usually on the N.P. or Milwaukee tracks - by train, special engine, or railroad "speeder." We sometimes went the hard way. I remember that three of us hiked overnight from the St. Regis River over Wards Peak and some eight miles onto the St. Joe to reach a fire which that forest could not readily man.

It is interesting to note that at this time the region was trying out a modified zone organization. The Missoula (broken up in 1930), Bitternot and Lolo Forests made up the "Missoula Unit." A.M. Baum was Lolo Supervisor.

In the early twenties I put in 4 seasons for Ed Mackay as "clerk," "bull smokechaser" and packer. In the wintertime I usually hit the logging camps, including 2 winters packing 11-head mule strings, moving supplies into the white pine flume camps which were then flourishing in the St. Joe River country.

Ed was Ranger of the combined Powell and Lolo Districts, and Bill Bell of Elk Summit. Between them they had 5 and 6 regular strings. End of road was at the Mud Creek station, above Lolo Hot Springs and headquarters of the Lolo Ranger District. This was the heyday of the pack mule he even dominated the improvement program with large (10 to 15-man) trail crews blasting out high-standard trails on excellent location but getting low mileage. Dynamite came to Mud Creek by Model T truck and you hauled it to Powell by the stringload, usually with the blasting caps rolled in a slicker behind your riding saddle - shades of Seth Jackson!! The style of packsaddle still standard had evolved and had been named after Decker Brothers, who had strings on the Joe. They no doubt contributed to its development.

The skilled trail men were fine firefighters. Lookouts were widely scattered, 3 on the big Powell District. L-6 (cupola) type lookout structures were being placed and the lookout man moved up on top of the hill under a lightning-protection cage of 6-gauge iron wire. In 1922 we strung No. 9 iron telephone wire down the Lochsa and up Jerry Johnson Ridge to Indian Post Office. The post office had previously communicated by heliograph via Beaver Ridge, if at all.

Group training of summer guards began to be standard practice. The Stonebridge folding lantern was replacing the palouser which had a bad habit of dropping its candle at the wrong time. Along came R- 1 smokechaser rations - the first ones had dehydrated spuds and carrots which required hours of soaking to soften to cookability, and also fat bacon which was itself inedible but provided grease for frying fool hen or rabbit. The Kimmel campstove had been around for several years but now teamed up in fine preasssembled outfits with mess gear, tools, camp equipment and bed rolls. The latter consisted of three thinnesses of OD blanket rolled inside a WWI shelterhalf and were soon to be discarded in favor of the kapok roll. Happy day!

1925 through 1928 were not generally bad fire years in the Region but provided high spots; 1925 and '26 were both quite rough on some forests, and particularly the Kaniksu which really took a beating. These two years were characterized by exceptionally violent lightning storms in northern Idaho and western Montana. Construction of fire protection roads and trails was stepped up considerably. Interest in use of aircraft was growing steadily, with Howard Flint very active. Early in 1927 I had been given a C.S. appointment, one of the last from the old Ranger examination which had deteriorated since the shoot, chop, pack and ride days.

1929 was a tough, violent season over much of the Region and would not stay down - we were digging fire from under November snows. R- 1 was on the receiving end of fire details in those days and many officers from Regions 2 and 3 were glad to head for home that fall after weeks of steady firefighting - no overtime pay, not even compensatory time.

This was the year of the great Bald Mountain fire which tied up unprecedented numbers of men and pack animals in an all-out effort at wilderness firefighting on massive scale. Also the year of Major Kelley's coming to R-1 and the slogan "leave a black line behind you," backed by sound reasoning but often ineptly applied. And, for at least one Ranger, the warning that the "first period control" objective was about to become standard for all fires in the Region. This warning came when, on returning to base camp after going around an 1800-acre fire, I had word to call the Major. "Ranger Stewart, how many men do you need to control that fire by 10:00 a.m. tomorrow?" Impracticable perhaps in that particular instance but a concept that has done much for fire control in the Region. A few years previously, fire inspectors had been concentrating on suspected "over-manning" - it now became proper to inquire deeply into "extra-period" fires.

Following 1929 we were straining to build the roads long and narrow; to make every construction dollar count toward improved accessibility. Coupled with the relief programs which followed the 1929 crash this urge to open up country pushed low-standard mule trails everywhere. We also mapped an unbelievable mileage, of "truck trails" taking wheeled transport where we had not dreamed of it 10 years before. The bulldozer, crude at first, helped greatly and later became an important fire tool. Hundreds of lookout structures went up, tied to Ranger Stations by thousands of miles of telephone wire. Horse-powered plow units, now forgotten, were highly effective on many fires. The CCC crews turned out to be fine fire help, surprising some of us.

About 1930 Howard Flint had initiated Region-wide systematic analysis of the fire load and planning of the required organization. It was largely a desk production, done personally by the District Rangers, and the district plans tended to reflect too patently the experience and effort of individual Rangers. But this "Adequate Fire Control Plan" was a big step, well charted, and gave impetus and rough pattern to the better-financed planning program which followed, led by Hornby. For the west side of the Region, presuppression plans were well formed by 1935. In 1937 following the big fires of 1936, planning emphasis, some money and some Rangers, including myself, went to the east side as staffmen to help strengthen fire planning and organization.

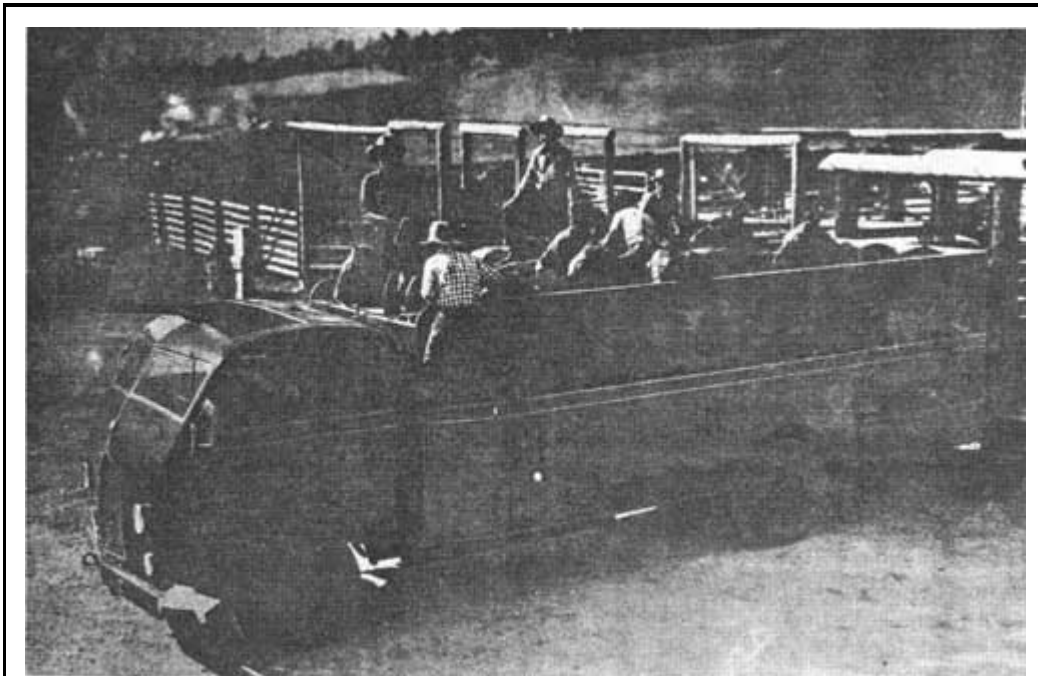
Activated when the 1929 fires red-lined the need, the Region One remount depot near Nine Mile had become an effective unit. By 1936 delivery of fire supplies by parachute and free-fall was

developing fast. This method threatened to outmode the mule for quick delivery; now it has done just that - may the smoke never again become too thick. Also by 1936 we were coming to depend upon the airplane to scout fires and to ferry men between airfields. The Region had built a few landing strips in and near the primitive areas. They were, and still are, decidedly primitive too but these strips effected major changes in back-country logistics. Fire control and the related improvements still occupied the major part of our time and effort.

1926, '29, '31, '34. (ouch!), '36, '39. '40. Each different and each plenty rough. Rough and hot enough to temper and put a keen edge on the Region's fire team at its all-time high for depth of trained crewmen, skilled technicians and experienced, able leaders. It would be unrealistic to fail to recognize the tremendous firefighting capability existing here in 1940.

World War II manpower shortages undoubtedly accelerated the expansion of smokejumping with a new concept of mobile striking force. World War II probably also speeded conversion of the Region's strong fixed-detector system to a combination "air-ground" system which makes heavy use of airplanes to supplement a skeleton lookout coverage. Post-war timber access roads have marvelously improved accessibility.

History may repeat with seasons of sustained critical conditions resulting in heavy losses in R-1. We do not yet have the means to prevent dangerous starts nor halt the first run of those fires that "light a-running," eager to get moving. But the Region will give a good account if the continued reduction in average annual burn does not drag organization too low, and especially if July will continue to bring those good rains which we denounce every Fourth.



Mules leaving the Remount Depot for a fire (about 1937).

**By Hollis Stritch  
(Division of Engineering)**

Not long ago I happened to unearth two early day reports which interested me, mainly because they were written before my time. The first report was dated 1913. It was by E.R. Johnson, Surveyor-Draftsman, who had made a reconnaissance survey up the Coeur d'Alene River from Prichard to "The Forks" (now called Deep Creek), a distance of 26 miles. He had made the trip in November of that year.

Johnson recommended building a wagon road upriver from Prichard, following the east bank. His report explains the necessity for a road: there was a large volume of timber in the region tributary to the river, and several companies were logging in the area, floating their logs downriver to Coeur d'Alene Lake. The loggers had been having difficulties in supplying their camps. There was a good Forest Service trail up the river, but it was not being used by the companies for packing their supplies, for the reason that the cost of packing was greater than the cost of boating. But boating was difficult and expensive. Several experiments had been tried with power boats, but had not been successful for the river was swift, narrow, and in places so shallow that boats could not make headway. Also, the boats were endangered by sawlogs floating down the river.

The report gave me some estimated costs: at that time the cost of boating freight upriver from Prichard 20 miles was 2-1/2 cents per pound, or \$50 per ton. If a wagon road was constructed, he estimated that a four-horse team would be able to make the round trip in two days, hauling at least two tons one way. The charges for such a trip would be not more than \$15 per day; the cost per pound would be 3/4 cent, or \$15 per ton.

If a good wagon road was built, he believed the lumber companies would be willing to pay an additional 25 cent per thousand board feet for stumpage, at which rate in several seasons the road would pay for itself.

At that time (1913) the Rose Lake Lumber Company had a freight road from Lakeview over the divide to "The Forks," thus the new road would connect Prichard to points on Pend Oreille Lake.

The report indicated that, aside from the value a road would have to the lumber companies, mining companies and homesteaders, the Coeur d'Alene River was considered a scenic river and would offer excellent opportunities for automobile trips and camping, hunting and fishing.

Johnson said that several classes of road could be constructed. The cheapest would be to follow along the bottom land and cross the river frequently by means of fords. However, there would be about three months in the spring during high water when such a road could not be used, and during the summer log jams might block the fords. Also, a road on bottom land would be soft, and only small loads would be hauled.

The road he proposed to build would be a permanent wagon road. It would be on the east side of the river for the entire distance. It would be mainly on water grade, above high water, and would be mostly sidehill construction. He planned to build it 14 feet wide on flat ground, 12 feet wide



on sidehills, and 10 feet wide in rock cuts. This would require a cleared strip 30 feet wide. Grades would be less than 8 per-cent. Johnson estimated that the road would be about 26 miles in length and would cost approximately \$50,000.

The second report was dated 1929. It was by H.A. Calkins, Location Engineer, pertaining to a railroad location survey which he had made that year. Apparently a logging railroad had been built upriver from Prichard six miles to Big Creek. Calkins began his survey at the end of the existing railroad, and carried it upriver as far as the mouth of Flat Creek, 10.2 miles. The map of the survey showed that it crossed the river five times (it is obvious that the railroad requirements for grade and alignment would not permit following the east bank of the river, as Johnson had planned). Calkins estimated that the railroad would be 10.2 miles in length and would cost \$103,000.

The party organization for the survey consisted of:

H.A. Calkins, Location Engineer  
Howard Drake, Logging Engineer  
J.B. Yule, Instrument Man  
R.P. Hilleary, Instrument Man  
Elmer Swan, Rodman  
Dave Robertson, Chainman  
Henry Kottkey, Stake Artist  
Ed Ring, Axeman  
Arthur Toney, Axeman  
Roy Houghtaling, Cook

As I have said, these events were before my time. But in later years I worked for Hartley Calkins, and became acquainted with Howard Drake, Jim Yule, Dick Hilleary, Elmer Swan and Davey Robertson. And I listened to their stories about the survey up the Coeur d'Alene River. Calkins used to tell about an old codger who had a homestead up above Prichard. It seems the old fellow had found a survey monument of some kind. It was an iron pipe with a brass cap. Apparently he had been trying for a long time to remove the brass cap, thinking that there might be some documents inside the pipe. Calkins was interested, in case the monument might be useful in making his survey. He asked, "What was stamped on the brass cap?" The old fellow replied, "I don't rightly know the figgers, but I believe there was a seven in it, according to th' THEOLOGICAL SURVEY."



## **SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF MY FORESTRY CAREER**

**By Clarence C. Strong  
(Retired 1957)**

I was born at Arago, Oregon (Coos County) September 7, 1895. In the fall of 1903, I moved with my family from Bandon, Oregon, to Portland, Oregon, by wagon and on to Hood River, Oregon, from Portland by boat. We moved to Washougal, Washington, in 1908. I graduated from high school and entered the army on April 10, 1917; went overseas with the 162nd U.S. Infantry in December 1917; worked on a French forest for three months during the winter of 1918 while my unit was in quarantine. It was at that time that my interest in forestry was kindled.

In the fall of 1919, I entered Oregon State College. I stayed out a few short periods to bolster my finances and graduated in June 1924 with a degree in forestry; minored in forest products with the expectation of a career in logging or lumbering. However, jobs were scarce at that time in that field, so I accepted a job as laborer with the Office of Blister Rust Control, Bureau of Plant Industry, in North Idaho.

During college years I worked parts of two years with the Northwestern Lumber Company in the Gray's Harbor area; one period in the mill at Hoquiam, and the other as assistant to the logging engineer in their woods operations near Copalis Beach. One summer vacation was spent in the lumber-grading department of the Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company at Bend, Oregon.

June 16, 1924, the first day of my forestry career with the U.S. Government, found Percy Melis and me at Coolin, Idaho, helping to load Sam Byer's barge with summer equipment and supplies for use in the Upper Priest River drainage, scene of the first real ribes-eradication program ever conducted in the Inland Empire. As we rode up the lake that afternoon and through the thoroughfare connecting Upper and Lower Priest Lake by moonlight, it seemed to us there couldn't be a more beautiful spot in all creation. No fires had scarred the lake shore, and logging had not progressed to the lake yet except for small, isolated pole operations. Only two years later, however, I was to see a great and disastrous fire sweep seven miles of the west shore and much of the back country. It was a sad day. Fortunately, however, planting, natural regenerating, hazard-reduction programs and good protection have converted most of that great devastated area to beautiful young forests.

We tied the barge to a dock at the upper end of Upper Priest Lake at midnight. Dog-tired and ready for sleep, we pulled off our shoes and rolled up in some canvas on the beach and fell asleep. But it was not for long. The beach pebbles made a poor mattress. Catnaps were of such short duration that we stuck a pole in the sand in the direction of the moon so that we could tell if it changed position between catnaps.

Four o'clock came after an eternity of catnaps. During breakfast, neighbors arrived to see the strange goings on. There was Pete Chase, miner, summertime guard for the Forest Service, and wintertime moonshiner when he wasn't in jail at Sandpoint. From Navigation across the lake came "Cougar" Gus Johnson. Many times during succeeding years we were to see "Cougar" scrawled across sawed log ends along trails and high-up on buckskin snags in the most remote parts of the Upper Priest country. Down the Priest River trail came an old recluse whom we later

tabbed "Huckleberry Finn" because he was a Finlander who made most of his cash income by picking and selling huckleberries. These, and another old backwoodsman whose name has slipped my memory, were to be our nearest neighbors that first year in the forests of North Idaho.

That morning Percy and I shouldered our 50-lb. packs, and with a couple of tools apiece, started up the Priest River trail for our campsite, 12 miles away. Later that day others followed. Among our tools was a "froe." In our western Oregon stump-farm boyhood days, Melis and I had each rived many cedar shakes and boards. By the time the pack string arrived with equipment and supplies, we had cleared the campsite on the banks of Upper Priest River, and had split enough cedar shakes and boards for camp-building purposes. After a two-week training period we were promoted to crew foremen. We jokingly surmised the promotion was likely due to our adeptness in riving shakes.

That was my introduction to my professional forestry career - and I wouldn't have changed it.

In 1925 I was campboss of a 30-man ribes-eradication camp at Cedar Creek, about eight miles above Upper Priest Lake, and a side camp at McLean Mine near Continental Mountain. Among our visitors that summer was Regional Forester Fred Morrell. He learned that I had broken the stem of my pipe while arranging a bough bed for him. Before leaving camp he fished a good pipe from his pack and presented it to me. This and several other thoughtful acts on his part in later years left me always with a warm spot in my heart for him.

Forest fires that year served as a good training assignment for 1926 and the scorching fire years that followed during the next decade. Among other things, we learned that fires in the high country often burned downhill at night about as fast as they ran uphill in the daytime. One such fire gave me as bad a scare as I had in my entire career. I had taken one man with me. We had to travel through a dense spruce and alpine fir forest for about seven miles, arriving near the fire about 11:00 p.m., but the smoke had settled over the entire basin. After gridding the area for two hours we gave up trying to locate the fire till daybreak. We pulled off our shoes and rolled up in the two blankets we had and went to sleep. We were awakened a short time later by a deafening roar and looked up to see a crown fire racing downhill over our heads behind a stiff downhill wind. We grabbed our shoes, tools, and blankets and made a downhill run that probably set a record. We soon outdistanced the fire and about a quarter of a mile down, came to a small stream where we decided to make our stand. However, the fire quieted down before it reached us. Reinforcements arrived that morning, for which we were most thankful. But, we both will long remember that experience.

Another such fire was in the Lion's Head country. My ten-man crew arrived on the scene and found Ray Coster and three other men struggling with a 40-acre fire in dense lodgepole timber on a high and steep slope facing Two Mount Creek. The fire had repeatedly gone over their line on the downside. And it did the same every night for the next three nights. B.A. Anderson arrived with ten more men the fourth day. We got a good line around the downside and by putting our entire crew on for night duty were able to hold our ground. Warren V. Benedict was in my crew on that occasion. We were all so exhausted by the time we had that fire under control that we could barely muster enough strength to drag ourselves back to camp.

In 1926 I had charge of three ribes-eradication camp on the Kaniksu. Two of them were on Lamb Creek, and the third on Bimarch Creek. B.A. Anderson, Bill Guernsey, and George Luke, mathematics professor at the University of Idaho, were campbosses. All the oldtimers will remember the blistering electrical storm that hit the Kaniksu and several other forests the night of July 11. I recall that I was out all night organizing crews for daybreak smokechasing assignments. At almost any time during the entire night I could have read by the light from the lightning flashes. It was the longest continuous lightning storm I ever experienced. It didn't let up till long after daylight, and there wasn't a drop of rain. When daylight came we had already dispatched Anderson's crew to Bismark Ranger Station for duty in that area, and Guernsey's crew to Beaver Creek for duty in the Upper Priest River area. It was six weeks later when Guernsey and his crew returned.

When daylight came there were smokes curling upward in every direction one looked. I guessed there were forty fires on the Lamb Creek drainage alone. There were so many that we gridded portions of the drainage that first day, making each fire safe until we could get them all under control and mop them up later. How many fires we put out remains a mystery. We never had time to make any reports till five weeks later. The fourth day after the storm, Ranger Bealey called from Coolin and asked me to take one man and go into after a fire that had been reported there. We started at noon to hike the fifteen miles. About two hours later a strong wind came up, and within a few minutes reached a velocity of about thirty miles per hour. Within an hour we saw a mushroom of smoke rising over Bismark Mountain, still about seven miles ahead. We knew we were too late for that one, but decided to go on and investigate. When we broke over Bismark nearly all the Mush Creek drainage was a raging inferno. By the time we arrived back at camp the next day, that and other fires in Granite and Calispel Creeks had gutted most of the Calispel Creek drainage and a part of the Granite area. The smoke pall was so heavy that we never saw the sun again till rains came around the 20th of August.

Every bad fire year thereafter saw blister rust crews on the fireline much of the season.

Each year after 1926 saw rapid expansion of the ribes-eradication program. There were five camps on the Honeysuckle District of the Coeur d'Alene forest in 1927. From 1928 on there were crews in all our white pine forests and those of the timber protective associations. In 1933 and 1934 there were approximately 5,000 regular and relief workers engaged on the ribes-eradication program in the Inland Empire. In addition, a large part or all of the crews in more than 40 CCC camps were engaged in blister rust control work during 1933 and 1934.

By 1935 the Inland Empire blister rust control organization had amassed extensive experience in training overhead and in recruiting and managing thousands of workers engaged in ribes eradication programs. We had taken an active part in fire-control operations under Forest Service direction and had been a big factor in helping five timber protective associations during several historically bad fire years. In these years the foundation was laid for the very close coordination and cooperation that prevailed from the late twenties between these organizations. When the CCC program started in 1933 it was a simple matter to effect a workable agreement between the Division of Blister Rust Control and the U.S. Forest Service, setting up the responsibilities of each organization pertaining to the entire ribes-eradication project.

The Forest Service assigned Phil Neff and the B.R.C. assigned me to work as a team in heading up the entire program of ribes-eradication. Working with Phil was a great privilege and pleasure for me. I do not recall even one major problem for which we did not quickly find an amicable solution. The work on each white pine National Forest, including adjoining timber protective association lands, was headed by a team consisting of one forest officer assigned by the respective Forest, and one project supervisor assigned by the Division of B.R.C. Together we recruited and trained overhead for the regular, relief, and CCC crews engaged on ribes eradication. The CCC part of the program alone necessitated the recruiting and training of approximately 40 camp superintendents and 200 foremen.

The very depth of the great depression was in 1933, and few logging crews were in operation. Most of the logging superintendents normally employed in the white pine area were temporarily out of work. We naturally turned to them for most of the needed overhead. I have long believed that no forest protection operation was ever headed by more able men than these former loggers. What a job they did! And, what a pleasure it was to work with them. Some of these men have since passed on, some have retired, but a few are still holding key jobs with the logging and milling industry today.

Before leaving the blister rust control part of my career, I want to touch briefly on one of the most difficult problems with which we had to contend, especially in the early years of blister rust control work. No white pine blister rust was then known to be present in Inland Empire white pine stands south of the Canadian border. Most of our overhead and all the other workers had never seen any blister rust, either on ribes (the alternate host) or white pine. They had to accept the prediction of the widespread infection that future years confirmed and the necessity for control work strictly on faith in those who headed up the work.

Stephen Wyckoff, Sam Detwiler and other B.R.C. leaders took care of the problem by sending their staff leaders on "show-me" or educational details to infection centers in British Columbia and the New England States, where this disease was already in the serious-damage stage. Regional Forester Kelley, Elers Koch, Lyle Watts and other Forest Service leader made it their business to see and study the disease in these same infection areas. Many forestry leaders of the country and many industry leaders did likewise. It was my pleasure and privilege to accompany several such groups through the infection areas of British Columbia. One such group included Ovid Butler, Executive Secretary of the American Forestry Association.

In later years, after the disease spread rapidly through the white pine stands of the Inland Empire, this problem eased. In fact, the rapid intensification of the disease caused many to have doubts if control of blister rust was economically feasible. Wiser heads prevailed in the intervening years. Improved silvicultural practices that resulted from the experience of trying to control white pine blister rust had pretty well vindicated the judgment of these forestry leaders.

As would be expected, there was considerable lack of public understanding of the nature of white pine blister rust. Each year we would receive requests from residents of the Spokane area to examine trees to see if they might have blister rust. Invariably, of course we found the cause to be dwarf-mistletoe, bark beetles or some other local pest never blister rust. On one occasion we

were quite amused to receive an inquiry as to whether that person's children might "catch" blister rust.

Then, there were always those who were ready to condemn public programs of whatever nature. The blister rust program was not spared. One summer we carried out a rather large spraying program in the St. Joe and Clearwater areas, testing the feasibility of chemicals to kill streamtype ribes. We used sodium chlorate with sodium chloride as a hygorscopic agent. The following winter was most severe throughout the Inland Empire, and there was a tragic loss of deer and elk in Idaho and Montana. Someone spread the rumor that the chemical we applied the previous summer was the cause. Preposterous as the story was, it gained a lot of headway and there was considerable criticism of the spraying program.

I had always had a major interest in tree propagation and forest planting. At our home in Spokane I maintained a hobby nursery. Unfortunately, my wife, Marie, had to do much of the work on it because I was away most of each summer. Among the species we grew were Kentucky coffee trees and sugar pine, both grown from seed. I gave several coffee trees to Bob Weidman who planted them at the Priest River Experiment Station. The climate proved adverse for them and they did not survive. Eight years after I planted 150 sugar pine seeds we still had two trees from them growing in our yard when we moved to Missoula in 1934. One of them was over six feet in height.

This interest in planting led me to apply for the planting position in Region One when Dave Olson left for the Shelterbelt Project in 1934. In September I was offered the job, which I immediately accepted. Thus was started the second phase of my forestry career. We in the Division of B.R.C. had worked so closely with personnel of the Regional Office and the western forests of the Region, that it seemed much like a move within the official family for me. However, my work in the planting division of Timber Management was to be short-lived, for in March of the following spring I accepted the job as chief of the Division of Operation, replacing L.C. Stockdale who had just been transferred to Washington.

During the brief interval on the planting job, I did have the satisfaction of preparing a plan and recommendations, under the direction of Elers Koch, for the expansion of Savenac Nursery, which plan was approved by Chief Silcox.

In 1935 the Division of Operation was responsible for a variety of activities which have since been assigned to other divisions or liquidated, as in the case of the CCC program. Fire Control, State & Private Forestry, improvement maintenance, and the recruiting and training phases of Personnel Management, were the activities later transferred. Naturally, it appeared to be a formidable assignment - and it was. There was so much for me to learn and in those days little available time for learning. It was for me a case of learning, with the tide of events crowding out time for reflection and study. Despite the best efforts of an able group of people making up the Division of Operation, many of us found ourselves working full days on Saturdays, several nights a week, many Sundays, and also many holidays. I recall that for three years in a row, Bill Hillman, Thad Lowary and I worked straight through the 4th of July holidays to get the allotments out to the Forests.

Interesting and challenging as were the nearly six years in the Regional Office, I developed an increasing desire to have the experience of serving on a Forest. I had not had that opportunity, and in the later stage of my service in the Division of Operation, I confided that desire to Regional Forester Evan Kelley. I think it must have struck a sympathetic response because, in 1940, when C.D. Simpson was transferred to Region 6, I was offered the Supervisorship of the Coeur d'Alene Forest and accepted.

One of the most satisfying aspects of the work in the Division of Operation was the close contact with Forest staffs and Rangers in the field of personnel development, and in financing and business relationships. To know each one personally and be able to call nearly all of them by their first names, was one of the highlights of that experience. Most of them I worked with at one time or another on the fireline, and the others on inspection trips. The toughest part of the whole assignment was reduction of manpower that was necessary with the curtailment of the CCC program. Termination of the employment of many able employees at a time when other employment was hard to secure, was about as agonizing at the time as to see some of the fine timber areas swept by fire, such as the Little Rockies were in 1936.

Daring blister rust control days our activities required personal knowledge of almost every drainage of the Coeur d'Alene Forest. I had worked in one capacity or another with all the staffmen and Rangers. Hence, it was like going home to be assigned there.

There are two features about my experience on the Coeur d'Alene on which I will comment. The period was February 1940 to May 1946, during the Second World War. The first was the variety of labor that was used at that time. One group was the Italian internees. At one time we had about 100 of them. They piled and burned brush; did timber-stand improvement work; constructed roads and bridges; and did fire suppression work, largely. Another group was the Mexican farm workers, during periods when they were not needed in the beet fields of Montana. The first group of Mexicans arrived simultaneously with one of those early spring snowstorms, and altogether it was not a pleasant experience. The Mexicans did much the same type of work as the Italian internees. Of course, the language barrier was one of the most difficult problems with which our field Supervisors had to contend. But the difficulties were overcome, and it was just another example of great flexibility and adaptability that has always characterized the U.S. Forest Service.

German prisoners of war, stationed at Farragut, were called on for fire suppression work on one or more occasions during the late stages of the war. Often times we had soldiers and sailors on fire-suppression jobs from nearby military training centers. And, as a cooperative undertaking, two emergency air strips were constructed on the Forest by aviation engineer units in training at bases near Spokane.

The use of 16- and 17-year-old boys on blister rust control work during the wartime period when the employment age limit was relaxed, constituted another interesting experiment. The first year this class of labor was used, we required acceptable proof that the applicant's age was 16 or over - either a birth certificate or an affidavit from a parent or guardian. During the training period it became evident that many were under age. In checking birth records, we found more than 50 who did not qualify and, of course, had to release them. One was only 13. Needless to say, there



were many red faces from that experiment. Some of those released had done excellent work, incidentally.

The other important event that deserves comment was the beginning of work to learn the identity or cause of the death of so many pole-sized white pine trees at several locations on the Coeur d'Alene and Kaniksu Forests. The first work was done in the Cedars and Fourth-of-July Creek drainages during the summer of 1941, in cooperation with the School of Forestry of the University of Idaho. The losses had grown progressively more alarming, and I was convinced we could no longer delay efforts to learn the cause. The Regional Office concurred, and the project was started under the direction of Dr. John Ehrlich, with a graduate student named Baker in direct charge of the work. We furnished equipment and the necessary labor. That was the beginning of study on the malady that was later named "pole blight," since only pole-sized trees were attacked. Incidentally, Baker, who had to enter military service soon thereafter, lost his life in the Pacific Theater. His tragic death cut short the career of one who I felt would have gone far in the field of forest pathology. There were many amusing episodes in my forestry career. One that occurred along in the late war period is worth mentioning. While traveling down the east shore of Coeur d'Alene Lake one August day, I stopped to chat with a farmer who was just starting the mowing of a field of hay. He was an oldtimer in the area. The hay was overripe. This farmer told a sorry story of his attempts to get help for haying through the employment office in Coeur d'Alene. He also said he was in poor health and feared he would have to sell off his cattle if he couldn't get his hay harvested. There were several fields. This was on a Thursday, and I told him who I was and that if he would cut what he could between then and Saturday, I would bring out a crew of volunteers the following Sunday and stack what he had cut. He gladly accepted the offer. We went out and put the hay in on Sunday - about ten tons or more - and refused any pay. On Tuesday I saw in the paper that this man had been picked up drunk on Monday. We didn't think too much of that, but a few days later saw where he had been arrested again for drunkenness. We then inquired and found the man was a perennial drunk. So ended that wartime good turn.

June 1946 found me back in the Regional Office in charge of the Division of State & Private Forestry. Although Idaho, Montana, and Washington had maintained state forestry departments for many years, one of them carried on a strong, vigorous forestry program, as was envisioned by the framers of the cooperative legislation authorizing the several programs administered by the Forest Service, through which the Federal Government cooperated financially with the states. The next eight years brought steady expansion and strengthening in each state department of forestry. I left the Forest Service in 1954 with the satisfaction of knowing that many of our objectives aimed at strengthening state action in the field of state responsibilities in the forestry field had been accomplished or satisfactorily advanced.

In August 1954, I left Region One on a forestry venture which I supposed would close my forestry career with the Government. That was to serve as a forestry advisor on the foreign aid program of the U.S. Government in Afghanistan. There was not one professionally trained forester among the 12 million Afghans. Nor was there any literature or textbooks bearing even remotely on the practice of forestry in Afghanistan or its border areas. Now, fortunately, there are at least two young Afghans with degrees in forestry conferred by fully accredited American Forestry Schools, after completion of the required study. I had the pleasure of working with both

as counterparts, while on the foreign assignment, and the degree work has come since. I was thus in on the formation of the first forestry program in Afghanistan, as well as having a hand in the training of its first professional foresters. Naturally, I will follow with interest the progress of forestry in that remote country.

Upon return to Region One in January 1956, I was asked to undertake a special analysis of first, the slash treatment program on the Region One Forests; and second, success of securing adequate stocking to desired species on recent cutover areas on the same areas where the slash treatment program was under study. It was the most satisfying way to close out an interesting forestry career. The guides worked out during that study, and later modified as found necessary, are in wide use today (three years later).

When I retired on September 30, 1957, it was with a feeling of satisfaction for having the opportunity to take a hand in so many worth-while and interesting forestry undertakings, and one of gratitude for having had the pleasure of working with so many able and devoted foresters. And, my fervent wish is that those who follow may end their professional forestry careers with the same degree of satisfaction that has been mine.



Wallace, Idaho, after the 1910 fire. On this terrace at Wallace every house was burned — about 200 in all.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE DAKOTA NATIONAL FOREST

By K. D. Swan  
(Retired 1947)

Automobiles were not in general use for prairie travel when I first rode out to the Dakota Forest from Bowman, North Dakota, in the latter part of April, 1912. Horses were considered a most dependable means of transportation, and forest officers thought nothing of making daily rides of fifty miles or more in the performance of their official duties. To an eastern-bred boy, recently graduated from the Harvard Forest School, this means of getting around seemed fascinating indeed, and it was with elation that I learned the Supervisor had left his saddle horse in a livery barn in Bowman for me to ride out to the Ranger Station. Later I was to ride from there to Camp Crook, the headquarters town of the old Sioux National Forest, from which the Dakota Forest was administered. I became well acquainted later with this Supervisor, Charles Ballinger, a kindly and able man who had the love and loyalty of those with whom he worked.

Spring had touched the prairies as I rode north from Bowman on that bright April morning. There was a shimmer of green on the rolling hills, and shrubs and trees showed signs of leafing out along the coulees. It was an era of homesteading. Many fields had been fenced and planted to grain or flax. I noticed the homes that these newcomers had built some of them made of sod, others covered with tarpaper. I soon learned to detect the pungent smell of burning lignite coal, a fuel which did much to make the settlement of this prairie country possible. I remember seeing a homesteader digging coal from a bank near a coulee bottom. We had a little talk before I rode on.

Before leaving the Regional Office in Missoula (then called the District Office), I was given rather complete instructions as to what my duties would be as Forest Assistant on the Sioux and Dakota Forests. I was to become thoroughly acquainted with the far-flung divisions of the Sioux the Long Pines, the Short Pines, the Ekalaka, the Cave Hills, and the Slim Buttes, for the purpose of preparing a silvical report and an economic plan for the best use of their resources. My duties on the Dakota Forest would deal primarily with planting projects. I was to assist the Ranger in expanding the forest nursery and selecting suitable sites for planting the young trees. I had gained considerable experience the previous fall on planting projects in the Big Snowies of central Montana, and R.Y. Stuart, then Chief of Silviculture in District One felt that this experience might prove helpful in getting a planting program under way on the Dakota and Sioux Forests.

The Logging Camp Ranger Station was on Deep Creek, a tributary of the Little Missouri River. One saw it first from the head of a broad swale which led down from the higher prairie. It seemed an oasis among scoria buttes and badland bluffs on which were growing scattered ponderosa pines and junipers. There was a long one-room building, with a screened-in porch the entire length of the south side, and a substantial gambrel roof barn across the yard at the rear. The small nursery was near the creek south and west of the buildings. This nursery was irrigated by water pumped from the creek, which, as I remember, never ran dry. Green ash and other small trees grew along the stream and provided welcome shade on hot days.

Ralph Sheriff was Ranger in charge at the station. My first meeting with him came as I entered the building and found him taking a siesta on the bed, surrounded by several cats. Ralph was a

graduate of the University of Illinois and had come to the western Dakotas with one of his college chums named Haines. The boys had worked for some time building sod houses for homesteaders in the country around Lemmon and Hettinger, and then decided to take the Civil Service examination for the position of Forest Ranger in the United States Forest Service. Both passed. Haines was appointed to help Supervisor Ballinger in the Camp Crook office of the Sioux - Sheriff got the job on the Dakota.

Sheriff was a very capable man; practical and able to do many things well. He was good at handling men and was well liked by all that worked with him. In dress he was quite unconventional, but he was a man of cleanly habits. He was always smiling and nothing ever disturbed him much - a good quality for a forest officer in those days. He was of medium height and rather stocky.

Work in the nursery was in full swing shortly after my arrival. Seedlings of ponderosa pine had to be transplanted from the beds where they had been grown from seed to other beds where they would be evenly spaced and have room to develop until they were three or four years old and ready to be set out in the field. A device known as the Yale planting board was used for transplanting. This consisted of a narrow board with notches in which the seedlings were placed so that the roots extended beyond the edge of the board. Another board of corresponding size was hinged so that it could be closed down on the crowns of the seedlings. When lifted, the evenly spaced seedlings were held securely in place with their roots hanging down so that they could be placed in a trench made ready for them. After the earth was firmed around them, the planting board was opened and removed for another loading of seedlings. The roots of coniferous species are very easily damaged by exposure to drying wind or sunlight and must be kept in the shade during the transplanting operations. For this purpose a rough booth was constructed of canvas tarps.

Homesteaders, known locally as "honyocks," (meaning of term obscure), jumped at the chance to pick up some badly needed cash by working in the nursery. There were several young couples whom I remember well, although I cannot recall all their names. One tall boy, Harry Roberts, was at the time courting the girl he afterwards married. I also remember Joe Miller, and his sister Marjorie, who later became Mrs. Ralph Sheriff. Several older folks also took part.

Travel home at night for most of these people was impossible, so they camped at the nursery. Well do I remember the happy evenings spent around the campfire exchanging stories or listening to music played on the violin and guitar by two of the talented persons of our little group.

After transplanting was finished, considerable field planting was done on various areas in the vicinity of the Ranger Station. I believe one of these areas was on Sand Creek. Planting was done by two-man crews. One man would dig a hole with a mattock; the other would place the seedling and press the dirt firmly around the roots. Many of the seedlings were set in the loose soil on the slopes of the scoria buttes. Rattlesnakes were a menace, and one had to be on constant alert when planting in these locations.

Much of the stock set out in these operations came from the Savenac Nursery in the Lolo Forest of western Montana. It was shipped by rail to Bowman in bales protected by burlap and transported to the Ranger Station by wagon. It is believed that a good deal of this stock was from seed collected in the Black Hills (*Pinus ponderosa*, var. *scopulorum*). Eventually, young trees from the Dakota nursery would be used for planting, but at this time no stock of the right age was available from this source.

We felt at the time that the best planting sites were on slopes where some tree growth was already established rather than on areas which were more or less flat and where the seedlings would have strong competition from the prairie grass. I believe that where planting was done on grassy land, the trees were set in furrows made by a sod-breaking plow. In the more rolling terrain where pines of considerable age and size were growing were sites which seemed well adapted for successful planting. There were north slopes which were partially protected from the hot sun and also from the drying winds that swept across the prairie from the south and west. The soil in these locations was more or less loose and seemed capable of soaking up moisture readily. Here, in contrast to the heavily sodded areas, there would be much less grass competition. Whether or not our surmises were correct, I do not know. Studies were never carried to completion, to my knowledge.

Although the time I spent on the Dakota National Forest totaled no more than a few weeks, I grew to love this part of the Little Missouri valley and could well understand the fascination the region held for Theodore Roosevelt when in the eighties he ranched in the vicinity. Near the Ranger Station there was a high point overlooking the river where I often rode of an evening. Here the river made a great bend, and across the valley rose what I think were called the Tepee Buttes. I particularly recall going there one hot evening when the moon was full. That night I had for company Ethel Sheriff, Ralph's sister, an Illinois school teacher out "West" on a visit. Dismounting to enjoy the view, we sat down. There grows in that part of the country a certain species of prickly pear cactus. Oldtimers are well acquainted with it. My companion was not. She did, however, overcome this deficiency immediately!

On Sundays Sheriff would often hitch up the team and we would go on exploring trips to far parts of the forest. Perhaps the most interesting feature we visited was a burning coal mine. Here a bed of lignite coal was burning below the surface of the ground and through fissures we could see the subterranean fire which had already eaten away the fuel under a considerable area, causing the ground to slump as it progressed. How long this coal had been burning, or what touched off the fire was a matter of speculation. The best guess seemed to be that lightning was the cause, but how long ago the strike came nobody that I talked with knew. That the red scoria buttes throughout the badlands are the result of prehistoric fires which cooked overlying beds of clay into a natural brick, seems to be the opinion of the best geologists.

Growing in the vicinity of this burning coal mine are many slender juniper trees which attract attention by their beautiful form. Neither Sheriff or I could account for these trees, but in 1946 when I made another trip to the locality I got the explanation from William Hanson who at the time was majoring in Botany at the University of Montana. He told me that, according to Professor O.A. Stevens of the North Dakota State College at Fargo, they are a hybrid, *Juniperus*

scopulorum columnaris. The original study and classification was made by Dr. Fassatt, a leading taxonomist at the University of Wisconsin.

Sheriff and I often called at the Hanson Ranch, or Logging Camp Ranch, a beautiful spread in the Little Missouri bottoms. At this point ties which had been cut for the Northern Pacific R.R., then building, were dumped in the river to be floated down to Medora. I believe many of these ties must have been cut in the Long Pine Hills. There is a Tie Creek rising in these hills just west of Camp Crook. Possibly some of the ties were also cut from the breaks and swales near the ranch. The operation was not successful, as the ties got hung up in the shallows along the river and the cost of salvage was prohibitive. The name Logging Camp is all that remains as a reminder of this episode.

Other bits of history connected with the Logging Camp Ranch are interesting. We were told that the last mountain sheep in North Dakota was shot from the yard. It was standing on a butte in plain sight from the house. The house itself was hauled overland in two sections from Dickinson by a man of Russian extraction. The move was costly and the man never recovered from the financial loss, so it is said.

The Hansons were good neighbors and always ready to lend a hand where help was needed. Western hospitality in its best tradition reigned at the ranch. To me, these friends exemplified the finest spirit of the true Western pioneer, and contact with them went a long way in helping me, a city-bred bray, to become oriented to a new way of life.

My first visit to the Dakota ended with the conclusion of the spring planting season early in June. On my way to Camp Crook I stopped for a few days in the Cave Hills, meeting the Ranger, Dave McGill, and talking over plans for making a plane table map of his district later in the summer.

Sometime in August, I returned to the Dakota to talk over plans for nursery expansion and to look for new planting sites. It was hot. Day time temperatures above 100 degrees were not unusual. On such days it was pleasant to shade up under the green ash trees out by the creek, or cool off in a small pond Sheriff had made by damming the creek near the station. When making all-day rides in such weather each carried for lunch a size 2-1/2 can of tomatoes tied in a slicker behind the saddle. The contents of the cans would of course be lukewarm, but it would at least quench our thirst as we sat in the shade of a pine or juniper. There were often terrific thunderstorms in the late afternoon of these hot days.

Sheriff had designed the Ranger Station to suit his fancy, and I always felt it was admirably suited to the needs at that time. As mentioned before, it had one room with a screened-in porch on the south. This room would measure, as I best recall, about 35 by 15 feet. In one end was a cook stove. There was also a coal burning heater. Ralph mined and hauled his own coal - the lignite variety - from a "mine" some miles east of the station. This coal, as it was dug had a considerable moisture content, and slacked badly when exposed to the heat of summer.

It also had a high ash content. Some said it should be called "lignite" for one lugged ashes all night. There was an abundance of pine and juniper available for kindling.

A rough table, bentwood chairs of Government issue, several iron cots, an Oliver typewriter, and a filing cabinet for official correspondence were disposed in a rather haphazard manner in the emptiness of this large room. Water was brought from the creek in pails, which stood on a stand in the culinary end of the room.

Ralph was a good cook and I was not wholly without experience along that line. I remember that on several occasions we feasted on delicious roast pork which came from a nearby ranch. There were always potatoes to be had,, but most of the other vegetables came from cans. It goes without saying that sourdough hotcakes and biscuits were a staple of diet.

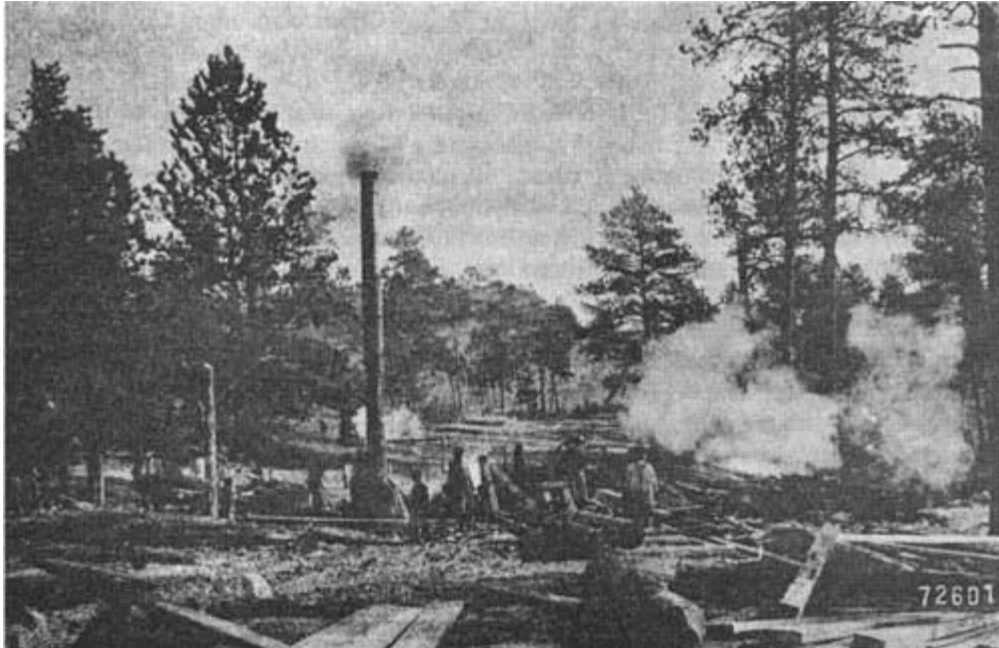
The Ranger Station was often used for community gatherings. I shall never forget a dance that was staged during my August visit. Late in the afternoon Sheriff and I hitched up the team and drove to a ranch ten or twelve miles away where we picked up a small organ which was always available for affairs of this nature. Guests from all directions began to arrive at the station about dark. Some were on horseback, some rode in buggies or wagons. It was before the days of baby sitters. All the babies and children came with their parents.

Stout hands moved the stove out into the yard and put the other furnishings on the porch. The organ was moved in and a chair placed for a fiddler who showed up from somewhere. Children were eventually put to bed on the cots out on the porch or in the wagon boxes. Riding stock was unsaddled and tied about the yard or turned into the corral out by the barn. Teams were unhitched and given hay to munch during the long wait. The moon was near full, making it almost as light outside as it was inside the station. The crowded room would not accommodate all the dancers at one time which made for a lot of social activity in the yard where little groups stood around and discussed the coming presidential election, the hay crop, and neighborhood matters in general. Just after midnight, lunch was served by the women. Coffee was made on the stove to which a couple of lengths of stovepipe had been attached. I remember well the picture made by the sparks and billows of black smoke from fat pine surging upwards in the moonlight. All in all, it was a night one could not easily forget.

As dawn reddened the east, some of the women got breakfast, frying bacon, eggs and potatoes which, with bread and coffee, would fortify the men and boys who had to return to a day's work in the hayfields. And so they rode away, this group of friendly people, each feeling, I am sure, a little happier and thankful for this social contact with good neighbors.

Things seemed lonesome at the Station after they were gone. Some of the men had put the stove back before leaving, but Ralph and I cooked no meals that day. We went out to the barn and slept until afternoon!

I made one more trip to the Dakota. It was in December, just as I was leaving for a trip to Boston on my annual leave. I turned my horse out to winter pasture at the station, caught a ride back to Bowman, and boarded a train for Chicago.



Sioux N.F., Custer County, Montana — November 22, 1907 — Hall's Sawmill operating under payment in connection with sale. Note no spark arrester on stack.



Trail Creek Sawmill and pipe conveying the water to wheel. Gallatin N.F. — 1902.



## **FIREFIGHTING EXPERIENCES**

**By J.C. Urquhart  
(Retired 1957)**

During the fall of 1914 I was serving as a waterbuck for a threshing machine near Nez Perce, Idaho. During the last half of August we could see columns of smoke rising from the mountains to the north and northeast. There was much talk among the threshing crew of the fires in the mountains and the demand for men to fight fire on the "Forest Reserve."

When we finished threshing the last of August I returned the four-horse team to the owner and next morning walked to Greer where I had heard one could get a job as a firefighter. That afternoon Forest Supervisor Charles Fisher reached Greer on a saddle horse. He told me if I wanted a job to fall in with the gang that would get off the train and go to a fire camp as directed. The train arrived moments later and about 75 men got off. Fisher herded the crew to the back of the depot, pointed to the old Greer grade and told us to start walking. He said cars might meet us at the top of the hill but if there were no cars to keep on hiking. There was one chap in the crew I knew, a man from Julietta. He was sober. We started up the hill together. When we reached the top of the hill there were no firefighters or cars in sight. We kept on hiking. We were finally picked-up by an Abbott automobile and I had my first car ride. Next morning we rode from Weippe to Pierce and were told to proceed on foot to a fire camp near the Oxford Mine. Next day we walked over the top of Elk Mountain and down to the North Fork of the Clearwater to a point likely near the mouth of Morgans Gulch. We passed two other fires and fire camps enroute. During the next five days I learned something about firefighting. A snowstorm the night of September 7th put an end to the job. After we had dried out clothes and bedding, we walked to Oxford Camp. Next morning we were told to walk to Pierce, a distance of 15 miles, where we would be met by cars and taken to the railroad. We reached Pierce at noon. There were no cars and as nearly as could be determined none were planned for. I walked another twelve miles to Weippe alone that afternoon where I was paid, then caught a ride on a freight wagon to the Parker ranch. It had required 2-1/2 days to travel from Greer to the fire.

I preferred firefighting to harvesting. The hills appealed to me. I decided to seek employment with the Forest Service the following summer. The spring of 1915 I was hired for trail construction work by John W. Long, Ranger at Oxford Ranger Station. We were assigned to build a trail around the north side of Pot Mountain to open up a fine stand of white pine. The foreman was John (Slim) Snyder, an experienced trail foreman, capable woodsman and a good hand with men. The lookout on Pot Mountain was the Ranger's half-brother; the smokechaser, Bert Mosley, was the Ranger's brother-in-law. Bert was a husky, bow-legged ex-cowpuncher and freighter. He wasn't fond of walking.

About the middle of August Bert arrived in our camp, located about 12 miles north of Pot Mountain, at breakfast time carrying a fire pack. A fire had been discovered from Pot Mountain and reported to be on Twin Creeks. Supervisor Willey had directed Mosley to proceed to the fire, picking me up enroute. We were told to take three days' grub to be sure we had enough and if we ran out we were to go to Bertha Hill, a point manned by the Clearwater Timber Company.

We took off down the divide between Rock and Lightning Creeks. Shortly after leaving camp we found a hole in the timber through which we could see the fire. It seemed a long way off to me.

Negotiating the steep-sided, chisel-bottomed, brushy North Fork Canyon without a trail was good experience for men not used to a backpack. We waded around or climbed over the cliffs in Moscow Bar Canyon and elsewhere, depending upon depth and current of the river. When we reached Twin Creeks we could see no evidence of a fire. I volunteered to climb the ridge below lower Twin Creek and take a look. I could find no fire in Twin Creeks. Looking back at Pot Mountain I was convinced that the fire we had seen from the vicinity of the trail camp was downriver and well beyond Twin Creeks. I returned to the river and reported my conclusions to Bert.

The next morning, our third day out, we arrived at the mouth of Isabella Creek. At first we could see no smoke. Later we discovered that a large white cloud north of us was smoke. Our problem of finding the fire was over. All that remained to do was go to it and put it out. We traveled up Isabella Creek for a distance, then took what seemed a direct route to the fire. (With more experience I'm sure we would have chosen a better route.) We were soon in a single burn on a steep slope with many standing dead trees and snags, a tangle of windfall on the ground and brush and reproduction so thick that we had to part it and push through to make slow progress. We reached a point near the bottom of the fire at dusk, excavated places to sleep and made a dry camp. After sweating profusely all day we soon exhausted our water supply and before morning drank what canned milk we had left. Thirst, the crash of falling timber and the roar of the fire kept us awake much of the night. On the morning of the fourth day after finding water and having breakfast we started trenching the fire. We had probably built more than 100 yards of trench along the lower side of the fire when two burning trees slid over the trench. Soon there was about an equal amount of fire on both sides of our line. We saw that two men almost out of grub were inadequate for the job. I volunteered to go around the fire and estimate the size in order to provide a more comprehensive report. After traveling about an hour I reached a point where a fair idea of the size of the fire and the nature of the terrain could be obtained.

I "guesstimated" it might take several hours of hard travel to go around the blaze (the drifting smoke probably caused me to overestimate). I went back and reported to Bert and we discussed what to do. The idea of going to Bertha Hill didn't appeal to us. It was so far from home base. We were not greatly concerned about a food supply. Pulling trout out of the North Fork at that time was simple and in an old shack at Twin Creek we had spotted an old tobacco bucket almost full of red beans. However, it occurred to us that after so long other men might have been sent to this fire. We decided to explore that possibility. We went to a point south of the fire where the roar of burning timber was not a factor, climbed to the top of a big rock that put us above the brush and reproduction, and gave a concerted yell. We were surprised by a distinct answer a short distance below us. I scrambled down through the brush and soon met John Collins who operated a small ranch on Quartz Creek near Pierce, did some prospecting and promoting. He owned the Oxford Mine. Collins had two itinerant firefighters with him. He had traveled by trail from Pierce to the mouth of Beaver Creek with pack and saddle stock, then worked the stock downriver to a point opposite the mouth of Isabella Creek. Collins seemed surprised to see me and stated that Ranger Durant from Chamberlain Meadows was on the ridge above. He had been calling to him for four hours. It seems he and Durant had been lost together and he knew

Durant's call. We were soon joined by Ranger Durant, Leo Schroeder, now a retired citrus fruit grower, and Harry Knight who later became a notorious bad man. Knight was finally killed in Butte by law men after he had put 3 or 4 notches on his gun. The Durant party had traveled from Chamberlain Meadows Ranger Station to Mallard Lake with stock. Both the Durant party and Collins were better supplied with food than we were, fortunately. We all proceeded to a drainage bottom covered with large green cedars where Knight prepared the first real meal Bert and I had eaten for four days.

The following day we all traveled together to the mouth of Isabella Creek by a circuitous route in order to get an idea of a possible route for a trail to the fire. We tapped Collins' food cache for supplies for our return trip and spent the next two days going back to Pot Mountain. Or, the return trip we avoided Moscow Bar Canyon by leaving the river at Quartz Creek and going up Moscow Bar Ridge. We traveled the six days to and from the fire without the benefit of a trail. Very little training was given lookouts and smokechasers at that time, but we acquired a lot of experience the hard way that proved valuable in later years.

After Ranger Durant and Collins met at the fire there was much discussion of the problem presented by the fire. It was a difficult one from the standpoint of fuels, terrain and accessibility. Durant decided that he should hike to a point on the Little North Fork where there was a telephone and call the Supervisor regarding a crew, packstock, supplies, etc. Collins felt that the best plan would be to equip one man with a torch and instruct him to set fire to the entire single-burn jungle and then go home. He argued that in any event snow would put the fire out and his plan would insure a good cleanup. Durant's idea prevailed. It was reported that \$10,000.00 was spent on the fire before snow ended the battle. Collins probably had the germ of a good (but very unconventional) idea. During the next thirty years thousands of acres, largely consisting of single burns with large volumes of dead, dry fuels, went up in smoke despite our best obstructionist activities. Not only was much learned about fighting fire during those years but some learned when to bury a camp and run. Examples of some of the larger hazard reduction fires are the Bald Mountain and Pete King fires that burned out almost forty miles of the Lochsa Canyon, and the more spectacular Larsen Creek fire that swept over about 20 miles of the canyon of the North Fork of the Clearwater in one day while Jim Girard and others looked on from their partially submerged positions in the river.

Examination of many fine, clean stands of timber indicates that this process had been going on for many years before Teddy started setting aside the tag ends of America's forests for the public.

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After one year's experience with a trail crew and two years' experience as a smokechaser I took the Ranger's examination and on April 1, 1918, became a Forest Ranger assigned to the Cook Mountain District of the Clearwater.

Since the river was too high to ford at the mouth of Fourth-of-July Creek until sometime in July, it was necessary to pack from the Musselshell Ranger Station by way of the Lolo Trail to Indian Grave then along a ridgetop trail to Cook Mountain Ranger Station. We had second-rate pack horses that were soft and weak, and sawbuck saddles a haywire outfit.

The snow was still deep on some exposures in the green timber and on north slopes. The pack horses soon learned that they were more comfortable lying in the snow than struggling through it. I had a crew of five men - none with more than limited experience - and we were all new to the District.

About the middle of July dry lightning storms started a number of fires in the Oxford, Cook Mountain and some other Districts. It was not explosively dry but fires would spread on south exposures and in the large single burns. The Oxford District, west of mine, was one of the most accessible on the forest. There was no point in sending men and supplies past fires there to those in the Cook Mountain area. The result was that I had a half-dozen class C fires going before I could get the firefighters and supplies. A crew with Howard Drake in charge was finally obtained for the largest blaze of around 400-500 acres at Camp George. Howard had had considerable fire experience and I had my best opportunity so far to learn something about organizing and handling crews on fires.

After the Camp George fire was manned another crew that was headed for the District with a forest officer from another Region in charge, built a coffee fire at the mouth of Fourth-of-July Creek. That night smoke was reported pouring from the canyon. The campfire had come to life and a fire was burning over a portion of the Cook Mountain trail. The new crew and men from other fires, including Howard Drake, went to the fire. After the trenching work was in progress the crew struck. Radical elements in the IWW organization were quite active at that time. The crew demanded that we agree to give them fourteen hours' pay for twelve hours' work. The alternative was that they would leave the job which would mean that the Cook Mountain District would be cut off from supplies. The Lolo Trail route seemed impossible with the urgent need for pack-stock that prevailed. Howard and I discussed the matter and if my memory serves me rightly we agreed to their proposal, crowded the work as much as possible and replaced the entire crew at the first opportunity. This was my first but not my last trouble with the "wobblier."

After most of the Cook Mountain fires had been manned I decided that a fire at the north edge of Sherman Saddle on the Lolo Trail should be investigated. It had been sending up a column of smoke for several days. I left Cook Mountain very early one morning with a husky lunch and strolled across the Weitas Canyon to the fire, went around it and back to Cook Mountain by evening. There was a shotgun trail from Cook Mountain to the confluence of Windy Creek with the Weitas. While working my way through the brush and windfalls around the fire I met a grizzled character who looked as sweat-stained and hot as I felt. It was Jim Girard. He had walked from a fire near Rocky Ridge that morning to see what was going on.

We found a spot where we could see a lot of country and the smoke from a lot of fires, some of which were unmanned, and sat down to cool off and discuss the general situation. We decided that more trails and more men on the ground before fires started would be essential if fires were to be controlled at reasonable cost. The idea of hiring emergency guards or men paid from fire funds was now to come into the picture in a way that proved a bit controversial at times and to use or not to use this means of manning often spelled success or failure.

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The spring of 1919 I was assigned to the Chamberlain Meadows District of the Clearwater. At that time we packed into Chamberlain Ranger Station each spring from the Oxford. Snow often caused much difficulty along about twenty-two miles of high ridge trail. Summer supplies for Chamberlain were packed from Superior, Montana, which required a four-day round trip. I started to the District about June 15 with a packer and crew of six men, none of whom had ever seen the District. It was my first trip into the area, also.

We were instructed to go to Chamberlain Ranger Station and then to the river crossing at the mouth of Lake Creek, and build a bridge across the river in order that the acting Ranger assigned to the Fish Lake District could cross safely. This Ranger and crew were to start for their District a week behind us. I was a bit apprehensive about that assignment. Neither the Supervisor, his assistant, nor I had seen the bridge site. I suspected that the bridge required might be quite an undertaking for a green Ranger and a crew of young fellows, none of whom had had bridge construction experience. Tools needed were supposed to be cached at the site in a hollow cedar. We went to the river crossing, sized up the ford, rode across and camped on the Fish Lake District. I felt relieved.

We discovered that the tool cache had probably been robbed after it was placed. Many items listed were gone.

We had seen no clouds for many days and the weather was unusually warm. It was felt that we should return to Chamberlain Ranger Station and make all possible speed preparing for the fire season.

The small, rude shack that served as a tool cache at Chamberlain was almost empty. The reasons for this I discovered later. The Ranger who was assigned to the District the year before had spent the last of the field season in jail and had been fired by the Supervisor when he was released. An irresponsible packer assigned to bring in the various camps had thrown much of the equipment over the hill.

The Ranger had been jailed because he had held up an outgoing packer at gunpoint and demanded that the packer produce a keg of whiskey that the Ranger thought he had stolen, or else \$50.00 cash. Not having the whiskey he wrote a check, then proceeded to Superior and swore out a warrant for the Ranger's arrest. A local prospector told me later that he had stolen the whiskey late at night and had worn a pair of the packer's rubbers found on the Ranger Station porch while he searched for the cache.

We celebrated the 4th of July on our first fire, which required all hands. Early in August dry lightning storms started a number of fires on the west side of the Clearwater Forest and other Forests west of us. After that the employment of emergency guards was authorized and a number were placed. This proved to be very worth while.

By about the middle of August the smoke and atmospheric conditions were such that the sun was invisible. Lookouts were of no value. Men were assigned to patrols. The lookout on Moose Mountain reported that someone was blasting directly across the river from the Moose Mountain

lookout. Nothing could be seen because of smoke. It seemed unlikely that anyone would be blasting in that area so I sent a smokechaser, Jennings McKeen (deceased), to investigate.

McKeen reported a fire about a half-mile long and a quarter-mile wide below the mouth of Elizabeth Creek in steep, precipitous country. The area was not accessible by trail, but we were able to reach a point about one-third of a mile above the mouth of Elizabeth with pack stock, and a camp was established on the east side of the river. Firefighters walked in from Superior in three days. Effective work below the fire along the river was impossible due to rolling rocks and sliding timber. A heavy patrol was placed on the river in an attempt to prevent the fire from spreading to the east side where it might run to the top of Moose Mountain and possibly spread into heavily timbered Moose basin. A crew started trenching the north side of the fire. I returned to Chamberlain Ranger Station the morning of August 18th.

On the morning of the 19th I returned to the Elizabeth Creek fire. A strong wind was blowing from the west. While traveling down Elizabeth Creek I met McKeen. He told me the fire had jumped the river and was spreading too fast for control. The river crew had panicked. Some had gone to camp while others were being held at the mouth of Elizabeth Creek. We hurried to the river. Obviously, control was out of the question. Furthermore, that narrow, heavily timbered canyon seemed a poor place to be until the wind died down. We gathered what men were left and as many tools as possible and went to camp. Camp was in an uproar. The crew and cooks were about to flee. We persuaded them to help dismantle the camp and move supplies and equipment to the water's edge. I intended to take the crew out upriver and call the Supervisor's Office and Acting Ranger McCarthy at Fish Lake, from an emergency phone about 4 mile above camp (we were short of emergency wire). I asked McKeen to go back to Elizabeth Creek and instruct the crew trenching the north side of the fire to go to Chamberlain Ranger Station. After a look down the canyon McKeen stated that he might not be able to reach Elizabeth Creek. The fire was now burning on both sides of the river above the mouth of Elizabeth Creek making it necessary for anyone to travel in the river with fire on both sides. I told McKeen to take the crew from camp and I would go after the other crew.

Before reaching the point where I must pass between the fire on both sides of the river I saw black, gaseous smoke explode into flame a couple of hundred feet above the river. Swirling flames were sometimes whipped almost to the top of the water. I had not previously appreciated what wind could do to a fire in a narrow, heavily timbered canyon. Traveling in the river was slow. I had previously been in races that I wanted to win, but none seemed as urgent as this one. I felt at times as though my lungs would burst. The length of the really rough going must have been short but it seemed long at the time. I finally reached the mouth of Elizabeth Creek, waded out of the river, noted that the bottom of Elizabeth Creek canyon was almost free of fire, gulped a breath of cool, fresh air and realized that I had reached a point of safety. The next thing I knew I was laying on my stomach on the rocks. I didn't know how long I'd been there. The crew, led by a capable local foreman, was found and instructed to go to Chamberlain Ranger Station.

My trip downriver through the fire had brought about a realization of two things which I had not previously appreciated. People who die in forest fires probably suffocate before the flames reach them. Also, a man inescapably trapped in a forest fire probably would not perish as a result of suffocation or flames if he had a gun at hand. Suffocation can be extremely uncomfortable.

When I topped out on the ridge south of the fly camp that afternoon (August 19, 1919) a tremendous volume of smoke was pouring out of the North Fork Canyon (the canyon burned from Larsen Creek to Fourth-of-July Creek - a distance of twenty miles - that day). It was disconcerting also to see a brand-new fire in my District blowing up near the head of the North Fork River. An abandoned campfire a short distance below the mouth of Niagra Gulch was heading for Montana. I asked Ranger Roy Phillips at Superior to stop the head of the new fire when the wind died down. This he did.

Our telephone communication with the Supervisor's Office was knocked out by the North Fork Canyon fire and remained so for several weeks as nearly as I can recall. The possibility of supplies from the west was also cut off. The new fire threatened our trail to Superior. I wired the Supervisor through Superior for authority to work with the Regional Office direct since I had telephone communication with them. He approved.

About half of the crew that had been taken off the Elizabeth Creek fire wanted to change their occupation. The other half was placed on the new fire. I asked Glen Smith, who was handling the fire desk in the Regional Office, for men, supplies and equipment for the new fire. He was reluctant to approve sending the number of men called for because of the outstanding need in so many places. When he understood the situation, he agreed to send the men. He also sent two Rangers from the Beartooth Forest, a luxury I had not asked for.

After we had trenched and mopped up a short section of line along the west end of the new fire we learned that there were 1500 live sheep, two shepherders and a camptender within the perimeter of the fire. The rather helpless camptender claimed that the sheep could not be moved. It seemed essential that they be moved if they were to be saved. I sent two prospectors, who were serving as fire foremen, and a few firefighters to the sheep camp with instructions to bring the sheep and their herders out over the cold fire line. These foremen didn't know about sheep but a few hours later the job was done. The camptender indicated later that the methods used by the foremen were quite unconventional. It seemed that pieces of alder had been used to stimulate all concerned. Two bands of sheep of 1500 head each owned by Wisenberry of Yakima had been in the path of the fire. About half of the number were shaded up in alder thickets and were saved.

During the winter of 1919-1920, indoor firefighting was strenuous. The gradual process of progress in fire control was evident.

The fall of 1921 I was assigned to the Oxford District of the Clearwater. It had been decided to establish District headquarters at the Bungalow instead of the Oxford and development had begun. A building to house supplies had been almost completed. There was no dwelling. That was to be constructed after the commissary, tool cache, bunkhouse and barn had been provided.

During the summer of 1922 we lived in a tent, with a fly over the dining room, on a spot excavated west of Orogrande Creek. Water was carried from a spring which also served as an icebox. It was hot in this black, 1919 burn and, when the wind would blow, dirt and ashes would sail into the living quarters.

Money for forest improvements was now much more plentiful. There were several trail and telephone construction crews. The trail below the Bungalow was originally intended to serve for motorcycle use. The first seventeen miles or so constructed had cuts, fills, a half-tunnel and a tunnel. A thirty man crew was being used which required considerable overhead. A timekeeper kept a record of yardage-moved cost, etc. The trail was reported to be costing \$3,000 per mile. Following the 1919 fires Supervisor R.A. Hamilton (deceased) wrote an article for the regional bulletin in which he criticized the expenditure of so much money on so little trail while the country burned partly because of inaccessibility. The original survey for the project was abandoned and construction on a less pretentious scale started. T.N.T. made available by the War Department for freight charges only helped to speed the job.

By the fall of 1922 a bunkhouse and tool cache had been completed and we moved into the bunkhouse. A road was completed to the Bungalow and we acquired a sawmill. Sawed 8" x 10" building timbers were substituted for hewed logs. That winter we stayed at the Bungalow until February. A 54-mile round trip on snowshoes was required to send out and get mail at Pierce. I would take two days for the trip out and if snow had not fallen could make the return trip in one day.

George McKinnon (deceased) and I spent our time working on buildings and hand-logging building timbers off the sidehills on snowshoes. The first building constructed of sawed timbers did not seem sufficiently rustic to fit the environment so we split and hand-shaved shingles to cover it up. There was a split decision relative to the wisdom of this.

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The most spectacular fire I have ever witnessed was the Heavens Peak fire in Glacier Park that swept across the scenery from Heavens Peak eastward to Sherborne Lake. This fire, started several days before the blow-up, was regarded as controlled and was being patrolled largely by a CCC crew.

I was Supervisor of the Flathead and was in the office one Sunday afternoon in August when reports were coming in of several fires in the Park. One was reported to be spreading badly. Although it was very dry the Flathead had no fires at that time. I called Superintendent Scoyen to inquire about his problem and offer assistance if it was needed. He asked that I "come and take a look." He stated that the Heavens Peak fire had jumped McDonald Creek and was becoming very troublesome. He remarked that I need only be gone a few hours. I had a complete outfit of fire clothes in a Government car.

When we reached the fire it had not only jumped McDonald Creek but had crossed the lower switchback on Going-to-the-Sun highway and was roaring up the mountain toward the Continental Divide and the so-called Garden Wall. Under some conditions the Continental Divide area, with its minimum of fuels, might have served as a fire barrier. With low humidity, high temperature, a driving wind and a very steep slope it did not serve that purpose.

It was very evident that this fire would require manpower, equipment, and supplies in far greater amount than that at hand. Superintendent Scoyen asked me to help with problems of supply and



organization. Because of the difficult terrain there was an outstanding need for experienced men to supplement the CCC crews.

Flathead Forest and Regional Office personnel rustled overhead, firefighters and supplies.

Monday was spent organizing suppression work and scouting. Late Monday evening I made my way along the road to the landscaped turn on the lower switchback on the Going-to-the-Sun highway to size up the situation. It was necessary to stay close to the high bank on this trip in order that rolling rocks and sliding timber would go overhead in the darkness. The fire had quieted down nicely by 10 p.m. About two-and-one-half hours later Scoyen roused me and stated that the fire was running down Swift Current Canyon east of the Continental Divide like a race horse. He wanted me to help organize to meet the new development. That ended the possibility of rest and sleep that night. We went to Park headquarters and prepared an order for overhead, firefighters, and supplies and phoned the order to someone in Missoula. Capable, experienced overhead was needed badly. We asked that four forest officers be landed at the Belton airport as soon after daylight as possible. Scoyen went to Many Glacier. Shortly after daylight a plane with I.V. Anderson, Jim Bosworth, Carl Siria and Clarence Sutliff landed at Belton. Jim and Clarence were asked to help on the west side and I.V., Carl, and I went to Many Glacier.

There was a seventy acre spot fire on the south side of Sherborne Lake. The museum at Many Glacier and some other minor structures had burned. About half the cabins in the circle camp had burned. The campground was black. The bottom of Swift Current Creek was littered with dead trout. We met Scoyen. There were tears in his eyes when he said, "The most beautiful spot in North America burned to a cinder."

A crew was placed on the Sherborne Lake spot fire with Carl Siria in charge. The rest of the men available were used that day to save everything that was still green around Many Glacier. Preparations were made for the days to come when more resources would be available. There was no means of communication from Many Glacier. I found the nearest telephone near Babb at the home of an Indian Service employee. The Regional Office was asked to send radios and operators by the fastest means.

This was done. Somewhat to my surprise the "M" sets, I believe, afforded good communication between Many Glacier and Missoula. Our order for firefighters, supplies and equipment was largely filled in Spokane and a special train with, I believe, Albert Cochrell in charge, arrived at Glacier Park station that night.

On Tuesday night Park officials requested that the Forest Service overhead take over completely on the east side on Wednesday in order that they might rest. This was done. Wednesday Casey Streed and I scouted the north flank of the fire to determine the location and number of camps needed.

By Wednesday night there were many firefighters. Equipment and supplies were ample. Also, Park officials from several Parks had arrived. Some help and equipment had been sent from Waterton Park in Canada. That night rain fell on the entire area. The rain wasn't heavy enough to

put the fire out completely but it materially reduced the amount of work needed to end the battle and eliminated the danger of disastrous spread for a few days.

The situation of Thursday seemed to afford an excellent opportunity for others to get some valuable experience on a big fire. Local Park officials had had a day's rest and fresh Forest Service and Park men had arrived. I proposed going home. Superintendent Scoyen asked that I help reorganize the west side to fit the current situation. I agreed and went back to the west end. By the time we had rounded up overhead from the various camps and threshed out our problem with Forest Service and Park officials, including one Park fire control specialist from Washington, it was past midnight. As nearly as I can recall about thirty forest officers were left on the fire after the reorganization. I reached home about 2:30 a.m. on Thursday. I had had a total of less than ten hours' sleep since departing from Kalispell and was more fatigued, both physically and mentally, than I have been before or since.

I had been keyed up, perhaps because I felt some of the pressure that was borne by Superintendent Scoyen. The public was concerned about this spectacular fire in a national park. Scoyen was in constant touch with Senator Wheeler, who was in Washington. Possibly the Senator was a bit concerned about his summer home.

After sleeping the clock around I went to the Temple Tea Room in Kalispell for lunch and sat down at the round table where some business and professional men often gather to eat and discuss various national and other problems. I was quizzed about the fire and was rather noncommittal. When I didn't respond to some of the questions, they proceeded to discuss the fire partly, I think, for my benefit. I was amazed at the comprehensive and accurate knowledge concerning the whole fire operation possessed by that group. How they obtained their information I never learned. I had seen none of them around the fire nor had I heard of any of them being there. One lawyer was quite insistent that a way be found to prevent destruction of such valuable resources. When men have to be roped onto the topography to dig sparks out of cracks in the rocks, fire control can be quite difficult when humidity is low and the wind is high.

I have written primarily about my experiences in the control of fires. This is largely due to the fact that fires, with their potential for cost, damage, unpredictableness and a certain amount of danger, constituted the outstanding challenge with which I have ever been confronted. There was a time when I actually enjoyed the fire boss job on a goodsized fire. One thing impressed upon me early in my career was that official rank may not be a criterion of competence in fire control work. A forest officer, in the back country especially, with one or several fires throwing smoke to the heavens and meager resources for control, usually found that the supervision, guidance, help, etc., so lavishly supplied in connection with various other minor and major matters was completely lacking.

With relatively few exceptions I found the men and women in the Forest Service to be a square shooting, dedicated, generally capable group of people with whom it was a pleasure to be associated.



**By Mark O. Watkins**  
**(Retired 1955)**

It was in June of 1912 that I had my first contact with the U.S. Forest Service. I was eighteen years old at the time. A friend of the same age, Jack Smith, joined me in a trip into the forest where timber damaged in the 1910 fire was being harvested before it became bug infested. We thought that work might be obtained at one of the logging camps so we left Spokane and went up into Idaho, at Squaw Bay (now Bay View). We crossed Lake Pend 'Oreille by steamer to Lakeview and then walked about twenty miles into the camps which were located along the Little North Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River.

South out of Lakeview up Gold Creek the road was fair for the first six miles to the Webber Mine, then we crossed the summit to the Independence Creek drainage and followed a tote road that was used by the logging camps for hauling in supplies. This road was full of stumps cut off just so the wagon axles would clear. It followed down Independence Creek and forded the creek a dozen times or more before reaching the junction with the Little North Fork. We had to wade through the fords which were two or three feet deep in some places. It took us a day and a half to walk from Lakeview to the Little North Fork where we found the logging camps strung along the river at intervals of a mile or two apart. The first camp we hit was run by "Slick Jack" Cox and his brother. We hit them up for work and were hired, Jack Smith as a chute greaser and I as bull cook.

Most of the timber being harvested was located up on the mountains along the south side of the river and back in the side draws. The easiest and most economical way to get the logs down to the river was by building chutes down the mountainside in which to slide the logs by letting gravity do the work. These chutes were made by mounting two logs side by side on cross timbers and the proper slope was maintained by building cribbing under the low places; the inner side of the chute logs were hewed into a "V" shape with a broadaxe. To prevent the logs from jumping out of the chute on the curves the outer side of curves were built up two or three logs high. It was necessary to grease the sides of the chute, especially on the curves, to keep friction from slowing down the logs' speed, also the chute would last longer if it was greased. Jack Smith had to walk along the chute carrying a bucket of grease, which he applied to the sides of the chute with a wooden paddle. The job was not difficult but the greaser had to keep alert as the logs traveled at high speed and would sometimes jump the chute on the curves.

The title of "bull cook" was misleading, for the job consisted of being sort of a handy man around camp. As I recall, my duties were to keep plenty of firewood in the cookhouse and the bunkhouses, keep the bunkhouses and the stable clean, carry water from the river, and take the lunch by packhorse up the mountain to the woods crew. There was a gentle old packhorse and a sawbuck pack saddle with a wooden case on each side. These cases would hold three five-gallon kerosene cans on each side. The cook would have a hot lunch packed in the kerosene cans each day at about 10:30 and I would pack the lunch up to the woods crew and build a fire to keep it warm until noon, then load up the dirty dishes and return to camp after lunch.

Lumberjacks were a rough crew. They would spend most of the year in the woods doing hard work, some would work on the drive down the river in the spring, then they would go on a big

spree until their money was gone and in a few weeks would be back in camp to repeat the cycle. Working conditions were different then. They worked a ten-hour day and traveled to and from work on their own time. The sawyers worked in two-man teams and kept their own tools sharp; they used 5-1/2 and 6-foot crosscut saws. The swampers were axemen and brushed out the trails on which the logs were dragged down to the chutes. As the ground was often quite steep the trails were made with curves in them so that several logs dogged together and pulled by a team of horses down the trail would not slide into the horses on the steep places. There were dog setters who would carry a heavy hammer and a bunch of dogs to fasten the logs together for skidding down the trails. The dogs were hooks with points about three or four inches long; two such hooks were fastened together by a short length of log chain. The dog-setter would drive one hook into the side of a log right near the end and the other hook into the next log. Several logs would be fastened together in this manner. The teamster driving a team of horses hitched to a skidding tong or maybe a length of logging chain would hook onto the downhill end and drag the logs to the chute. There were men with canthooks and peavies who would roll the logs onto the chute to begin their journey down to the river. At the river there were other men and teams to deck the logs in great piles along the edge of the river to await the drive down to Lake Coeur d'Alene the next spring when high water came. To help out in getting the decks of logs started downriver in the spring, the loggers had built a dam up Independence Creek to hold back a head of water; when the drive was ready to start this dam was blown out and the water released would get the drive under way.

The Forest Service had a scaler shack near the Cox Brothers camp. The Ranger for the District was Howard Drake with whom I became quite well acquainted in later years, and who lives only three blocks from my home in Coeur d'Alene at the present time.

Mr. Magee was living up the Little North Fork near the present location of Magee Ranger Station. Before the logging operations had started this was a remote and isolated area. This was probably the reason Magee was living there. The story about him was that he had come into this country to escape the law in Tennessee, where he had been mixed up in a feud and had killed a man. I do not know if this story is true or not.

Living conditions in the logging camps were rather primitive. Most of the buildings were constructed with log walls about four feet high and large wall tents mounted atop these walls. There was a combination cook and mess house and two bunkhouses built with tent tops. The office building and the stable were built entirely of logs with shake roofs. The stable was rather large for there were several skidding teams as well as a four-horse team for hauling supplies. There was a row of double-width and double-decked bunks along both sides of the bunkhouses. The bunks were made of small logs or poles flattened on the top side with a broadaxe and then covered with about six inches of straw, with side boards to keep the straw on the bunks. This was all the camp furnished in the way of a bed. Each man had to furnish his own bedding. There were long benches down the center between the bunks, also a table and a large drum stove at one end. Haywire had been strung from one side of the bunkhouse to the other above the stove as a place to hang clothing to dry. There were about twenty-five or thirty men in each bunkhouse and when those wires were filled with lumberjacks' sox and underwear the place needed ventilation.

A lumberjack will put up with most anything except poor food. In order to hold their crew the Cox Brothers furnished good food and plenty of it. The cook was an expert camp cook and not only set a good table of meat and vegetables but was a good baker as well. All the supplies came down Lake Pend Oreille from Sandpoint to Lakeview by steam and into camp over the tote road. This trip took three days and during the hot summer the meat was sometimes past its prime when it arrived at camp. This was the only drawback to the food situation and could not be helped.

The country along the river was beautiful and the fishing was the best I have ever seen. The fishing was so good that I have been told there were places along Independence Creek where the only way you could bait your hook was to get behind a tree so the fish could not see you or they would take the bait before you could get it on your hook. My friend Jack and I did not have much time to fish because of working ten or more hours each day and six days a week. Sunday was the time for washing clothes and bathing in the river as there was no bathhouse. Jack liked the life so well that he stayed on at camp and went down with the drive the next spring and followed this work for several years. I did not care to become a lumberjack so when it got too frosty in the fall, I headed for Spokane and home.

It was twenty-three years before I again came in contact with the Forest Service. During those years I had served in France during World War I, had worked at several different jobs, and had become a married man. In 1934 I saw a notice of a Civil Service examination for a storekeeper so applied and took the examination. I received an appointment on May 1, 1935, at the Forest Service Warehouse in Spokane.

In the fall of 1935 Howard Flint spent some time in Spokane conducting experiments in dropping supplies from airplanes, with the idea of supplying firefighters in this manner. This was the first attempt by the Forest Service to do any such thing. As part of my duties I helped pack the supplies that were being dropped in the experiment.

Most of the supplies were dropped by free fall without parachutes. We packed various kinds of canned goods by insulating each can with wood excelsior and then wrapping the whole package in several layers of kapok pads from condemned sleeping bags. This was then wrapped in manties and secured well with rope. Howard Flint would take these packs out to Felts Field where pilot Nick Mater would take him up to make the drops from various heights. The bundles would then be returned to the warehouse where we would unpack them and examine the contents for damage. It was surprising how well most of the canned goods would come through. Shovel and axe handles would often break. Crosscut saws were lashed to strips of plywood and would come through all right if they did not light on one end. We even packaged a Hammerlund Radio for dropping by making a heavy crate and suspending the radio in the center lashed to a kind of track in such a way that the radio could move only up and down the track and with this movement snubbed with rubber shock cord. In order to hold the crate upright we used a piece of burlap about six feet square attached to the top of the crate as a parachute. It also helped retard the speed of the drop. Water containers for drinking water were made rather like an aerial bomb of fairly heavy metal, and dropped. Some of the drops were quite successful and others were not. This experiment was a forerunner of the present practice of airlifting supplies to firefighters. As I recall, the free-fall method was not used much.

Shortly after the above experiments, in the next year or two, O.C. Bradeen of Procurement & Supply was able to get parachutes from the armed services that had been condemned as unfit for human use. Most of these parachutes were just overage and in perfect shape for our purpose. Thereafter rapid progress was made in dropping supplies from the air. As most of the drops were made in timbered country many of the parachutes were damaged by hanging up in trees and snags. Bradeen then developed a repair department at the Spokane Warehouse and as fast as parachutes were returned from fire drops they were repaired and repacked ready for use again.

After spending six years at the Spokane Warehouse I was transferred to Procurement & Supply in the Regional Office at Missoula. The next year I was sent to the Nezperce at Grangeville in the fiscal and accounting section. In 1949 I went to the Lewis & Clark at Great Falls, and in 1952 to the Coeur d'Alene where I retired in 1955.

Among the Forest Service personnel with whom my wife and I came in contact are many lasting friendships. Most of my work was enjoyable and memories of our years in the Forest Service are pleasant.



**By Clarence Westcott  
(Division of Engineering)**

I had my first taste of the Forest Service in 1929 on the Some Creek and Holbrook Creek fires on the Big Prairie District of the Flathead N.F.

I was the "chief engineer" of a pack train made up of nine half-broken saddle horses furnished by Dude Heath from the Flathead Indian Reservation. We were packing out of the old Holland Lake Station and up over the old Gordon trail (trail has since been relocated).

Hartley Calkins from the Division of Engineering was the fire boss of the crew that I took in and I was hired by Tom Wiles, the Condon District Ranger. If that wasn't an introduction to an outfit that would turn back the weak ones, I'll buy you a tall cool one.

But like a lot of us not-too-late ones, as I start to reminisce about things that happened or things that didn't but could have, I have a tendency to get off the track of what I really started out to do. What I began to say was that I claim to have installed the first radio network on lookouts in Region One in connection with air detection and suppression. This was known as the Continental Area, composed of portions of the Flathead, Lewis and Clark, Helena and Lolo Forests, covering the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area.

The party was made up of two packers, Bill Bell and Lee Cahoon, a photographer, Phil Stanley, whose job was to take panorama photos from each lookout, "Hank" LaFaver, who was in charge of R-1 communications at that time, and myself. All the staple foods, bedrolls, personal belongings, tools, and 30 M-C radio equipment were packed on the mules; the SPF type radios, batteries, fresh grub and mail were to be dropped by Johnson Flying Service airplanes.

"Big Hand" was the dude on this trip, since it was to be his first extended pack trip into the back country. He came through in good shape and some of his future exploits proved him to be a very apt student.

The following data is taken from my official diary of the trip:

Tuesday, June 19. Monture Ranger Station to North Fork cabin. 21 miles. High water today. Hank's legs got sore, porcupines and pack rats in cabin.

Wednesday, June 20. Installed radios type T, model D and SPF #10009 #13 on Fall point.

Thursday, June 21. Returned to Falls point and finished panorama photos and radio operating instructions to lookout. This station is to be control point for area.

Friday, June 22. North Fork Cabin, Basin Creek. Hank and I went fishing. First fish feed of the trip.

Saturday, June 23. Installed radio SX #7 and SPF #14 on Sentinel Lookout. Radio contact with Falls point and Missoula.



Sunday, June 24. Returned to Sentinel and finished photos. Monday, June 25. Basin Creek - Big Prairie.

Tuesday, June 26. Install SXA & SX #2 and SPF #17 on Kedd Mountain. Excellent drop by Bob Johnson today. Made radio contact with all stations.

Wednesday, June 27. Bad weather, layed over at Big Prairie.

Thursday, June 28. Bad weather, layed over at Big Prairie.

Friday, June 29. Big Prairie, Salmon Forks.

Saturday, June 30. Installed radio type SJ #10 and SPF #21 on Mud Lake Lookout, made radio contact with all stations.

Sunday, July 1. Returned to Mud Lake and finished panorama photos.

Monday, July 2. Salmon Forks, Brushey Park. Hank's legs not so sore today.

Tuesday, July 3. Installed radios type SX #8 and SPF #19 on Bungalow Lookout, went on to Pentagon Cabin. Plane dropped fresh steak today.

Wednesday, July 4. Pentagon Cabin, Shaffer Ranger Station.

Thursday, July 5. Layed over, bad weather.

Friday, July 6. Installed radios type SX #9 and SPF #109 on Red Plume Lookout, radio contact with all stations.

Saturday, July 7. Shaffer Ranger Station to Grizzly Park, long day, bad trails, lots of snow.

Sunday, July 8. Grizzly Park, West Fork Cabin.

Monday, July 9. Installed radios type SV and SPF #22 on Mt. Wright.

Tuesday, July 10. West Fork Cabin, Gates Park. Long day.

Wednesday, July 11. Gates Park, Pretty Prairie.

Thursday, July 12. Pretty Prairie, Prairie Point.

Friday, July 13. Installed radios on Prairie Reef and contacted all stations. Last of installation and all stations working, job completed.

Saturday, July 14. Layed over, Pretty Prairie, awaiting trucks to arrive Benchmark.

Sunday, July 15. Layed over Pretty Prairie.

Monday, July 16. Pretty Prairie, Benchmark, trucks arrived tonight.

Tuesday, July 17. Benchmark, Missoula, arrived.

I went to the Lincoln Ranger Station on July 23 and made the radio installation on Stonewall Lookout, which finished the net.

I made approximately the same trip the next year except I went alone with a saddle horse and two mules, starting on June 20.



Western larch and western yellow pine forest reclaiming a homestead. Kootenai National Forest, September 1930.

**THE BOSWORTH TRENCHER**  
**By Harold T. Wicklund**  
**(Missoula Equipment Development Center)**  
**(Division of Fire Control)**

A pioneer is sometimes described as one who goes before to set the way for others to follow. He is usually a man of strong convictions and vivid imagination and willing to oppose the customs and thinking of the general run of people. Many will oppose him, some will follow until they find that the going is not as smooth as they thought, then return to the old ways. A few will become as enthusiastic as he is and will follow to the end the way he has set.

Such a pioneer was Jim Bosworth. At a time when manpower was both plentiful and economical, and handwork supplemented by horse-drawn plows the accepted method of controlling fires; he set a way which was far beyond the horizons of his contemporaries.

On March 10, 1934, he wrote this letter to the Regional Forester:

Attached is a rough sketch of a wild theoretical idea of mine of a power trench building machine, that I have had in mind for the past three years, which I think might work out to be a very practical piece of machinery by considerable experimenting. (I find no trace of this sketch. — H.T.W.)

My theory of the idea is a small compact air-cooled motor of six or eight horsepower, connected to the drive wheel by a transmission and worm or chain-drive that would give a speed of 2-1/2 miles per hour (in high gear) and 1/2 to 3/4 miles per hour in low gear. On the opposite side of the motor would be another transmission forward, reverse and neutral gears, being geared so that the attached brush would run at a speed of from 1000 to 2000 revolutions per minute. The size, shape and speed of this brush is to be determined by experimentation. It is assumed that a flexible steel wire, about No. 9 or No. 12, would answer the purpose of teeth or bristles. A universal joint between the transmission and brush would allow movement of one end of the brush right or left, depending on the width of the trench desired. Attached to the brace on the rear end would be a third wheel arranged to help support the weight and steer it. A gas throttle arrangement could be placed on the handle to work on the same principle as a motorcycle throttle. On the other handle, I believe a clutch arrangement could be worked out so that the machine could be stopped or started at any time without stopping the engine or brush or allow more time to dig the trench deeper in certain places if needed.

The brush to be housed in to keep rocks and debris from hitting the operator and the frame made of some light but strong material. It should be made to come apart in pieces that one man could carry so it could be back-packed off trails to the fire.

In discussing this idea with men familiar with trench construction in this locality, one of the points brought up was that with the drive wheel arrangement, it would not get grip enough on the ground to pull the machine on steep side hills. This could be overcome by a cat tread arrangement. Another point was that the revolving brush would pull the

machine around in a circle; however, with the speed of the brush at 1000 to 2000 revolutions-per-minute, I do not believe this would happen.

One of the main objections is in running it parallel with a steep sidehill the front end would have a tendency to slide down. This could probably be overcome by hooking a chain or rope into the side of the machine and having one or two men hold it up.

I have never seen anything like it and the whole idea is based on theory, but considering the slowness and cost of trench construction, I believe we are justified in experimenting in some kind of a machine along this line and this may lead to a start and I am forwarding the idea to you for whatever action you may desire to take.

As a means of eliminating some of the heavy costs in maintaining plow horses in serviceable condition, as well as lowering the transportation costs, this idea may be worthy of serious consideration.

Whether or not he agreed with their opinions, Jim drew strength from controversial discourse with his associates. By the forceful manner of presenting his convictions, he was able to lead many of them beyond their original horizons and into the land of his visions.

This was the beginning of the Bosworth development program which was to gain momentum for six years and then taper off into disuse.

In the early '30's, Mark Forrest was in Research and Development for Engineering. He and Jim made up a test machine by mounting a brush arrangement on the end of a Wolff saw blade for observation only. From this experience, Mark constructed a small machine using a 2-horsepower engine and wire brushes, then later, steel springs. In use, this had to be carried by two men.

In the meantime, Jim had changed his plans somewhat and sent some new designs to George Duncan. Mark Forrest had left the service and was replaced by Gordon Conrad.

Here is a part of a memo by George Duncan which is not dated but must have been in 1937:

#### Description

Bendix 2.6 horsepower, 2-cycle engine, brush attachment in front, two handles, and single wheel, wheel barrow style, weight 70 pounds.

#### Progress

Difficulty in finding suitable power unit and brushes. Machine tried August 16. A line 160 feet long, 10 inches wide through small brush, grass and pine duff and gravelly soil was dug in 6 minutes or about 25 chains-per-hour. The brushes broke up badly after 15 minutes running.

There is no doubt but that the Bosworth Trencher will work out as an efficient firefighting tool.

Later this trencher was taken to the fire on which Lloyd Hornby had a fatal heart attack but it was not used.

Fire Control, the Washington Office, and Engineering and Operation of R- 1, were now all getting into the picture, realizing that the Bosworth Trencher had great possibilities. A thorough search was made of the market in an effort to obtain an engine of suitable horsepower and weight ratio. The nearest they could come to it was a Reed-Prentice engine used on the Wolff chain saw. There were three of these saws in the Region. Any brushes or springs they were able to get would not stand up with use, but about this time Conrad came up with an idea of using the hammer mill principle on the trencher.

Gordon Conrad, Ed Peterson and Earl Duvall, who now had the responsibility of development, mounted a Reed-Prentice engine in a wheelbarrow-type frame with a motorcycle wheel in front. Through two sets of bevel gears they drove a horizontal shaft on which they mounted two hubs with nine swinging hammers on each one. These were revolved at 800 revolutions per minute and were adjustable to throw material forward at 45 degrees either side from the line of travel.

This was the best machine yet, and, in fact, the first one to stand up under continuous use. It created a lot of enthusiasm toward further development.

February 8, 1938, George Duncan left Missoula with this machine, going first to R-3 where he demonstrated the trencher on two forests, then to R-8 where he made 10 more demonstrational tests. Duncan's report and those from various forests where he had demonstrated were very good. In the South, they mention several times of trenching more than one chain per minute. This must have been in sandy soil with no large roots. A few broken hammers were the only trouble experienced.

In the search for an engine, they found that no more Reed-Prentice engines could be had at a reasonable price but at this time the Bendix people came out with a 2-cylinder, 5-horsepower, 2-cycle engine with a vertical crankshaft weighing 41 pounds. One of these was purchased and a lightweight trencher made up using it with the same arrangement of swinging hammers as on the Reed-Prentice machine.

This is where I entered into the Bosworth Trencher development program. It came about this way. I was called into the shops from my work in the field with the Lolo Forest and put in charge of the machine shop. About this time Earl Duvall, who had been doing the actual construction of the trenchers, transferred out of the Service. Bill Grose then took over the machine shop and I devoted most of my time to development, testing, demonstrating and training for the next several years.

The first machine I built turned out to be a dismal failure. Someone promoted the idea of using a heavy 12-horsepower motorcycle engine. Conrad did the best he could in designing, and I did the best I could in constructing this trencher, but it was so heavy and awkward that even Paul

Bunyan couldn't have handled it. With all its power, the trenching unit did no better work than the old one had done.

The next development was redesigning the Reed-Prentice model, making it a lot lighter and easier to handle and demountable for packing.

The first time we used this machine was to help the Missoula District build a fire guardline on Mount Sentinel. Then it was given a number of hours testing and was demonstrated at a regional fire school.

On August 16, I went with Clarence Sutliff, Fire Control, R-1; Roy Headley, Fire Chief, Washington Office; and John Kinney, Operation, R-4, on a trip to demonstrate this trencher on two Forests of R-1 and three in R-4. Mr. Headley had shown interest in the trencher through his letters, but was also somewhat skeptical. In a letter of July 27, 1937, he said:

It would be easy to let our interest in the engine driven tools lead us to step over horse-and-plow dollars in our search for mechanical engineering dimes. The horse-and-plow needs development, to be sure, but the need is for management and human engineering development rather than mechanical engineering.

Now for the first time he was seeing one in operation.

On the Coolwater Ridge in the Nezperce Forest where we had kept up with a 25-man clearing crew trenching in heavy brush and roots, then worked with no clearing except the removal of logs, he was astonished and said, "I have always been in favor of the horse-and-plow unit above anything else but now I will admit that this trencher will do more than any horse-and-plow unit."

On the way to the station, he accepted the trencher as a part of the Fire Control family and officially agreed to the name Bosworth Trencher in recognition of Jim's contribution of the original idea.

The Sunday before Labor Day I took the trencher to a fire on the Kaniksu Forest. The next day we were on the fireline 12 hours doing all the trenching behind two 25-men C.C.C. clearing crews. We could trench a lot faster than they could clear. I estimated that we worked between three and four hours out of the twelve; the rest of the time we spent waiting on the clearing crews.

There had been steady if slow progress, and now we had a machine which it seemed would be acceptable after a few changes were made. Samples were made and tested and it was agreed that no further changes were indicated. We then constructed three trenchers with Reed-Prentice engines and five with Bendix engines. Six of these machines, two Reed-Prentice and four Bendix models, were shipped to R-8 in the early part of December.

A letter from Roy Headley December 22, 1938, gave a firm order for 30 to 34 trenchers to be paid for with money from the Washington Office, hoping they would cost no more than \$350

each. They were to be distributed four each to Regions 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, and three each to Regions 2 and 3.

By December 29 all instructions had been given to construct 40 Bendix model Bosworth Trenchers to be completed and ready for delivery by March 31. Early in January our drawings and specifications were completed, parts were being ordered and construction begun. I was given the responsibility of constructing these machines, with the facilities of the shop to be used as needed. I used the interchangeable-parts, assembly line method of manufacturing. Jigs, fixtures, and mandrels were made for shaping, forming, machining and assembling all parts or sections. After all parts were made and sections welded, the machines were assembled.

We completed the assembly and testing of these trenchers about the first of May. The original allotment estimated the cost at \$350 but we had made them for \$265. With the balance on hand, parts were purchased and 15 more machines were built.

Trenchers were shipped to eight Regions and to eight Forests in R-1. I spent a month demonstrating and training on these Forests where I contacted most of the overhead from the Ranger Districts and Forests. The two trenchers used in this demonstration were operated about 30 hours each. Some mechanical and structural failures were encountered but most of them were corrected later. I wrote a report about these mechanical problems which was published in Fire Control Notes of January 1940.

The machines did very good work and were well received by most personnel and highly praised by some. Good reports came to Fire Control about this demonstration and training trip.

I set up a fire unit of two trenchers, necessary accessories and a standby crew. We were on six fires that summer and did very good work on some of them but had some mechanical trouble on others.

During these 4 years, from the first model to the mass production of 60 machines, a small group of dedicated men carried most of the burden of research, designing, testing, demonstrating, improving and putting this machine into fire-suppression planning. They, too, were pioneers and willing to devote time and talent toward the development and promotion of the trencher solely for the benefit of the Service.

While most men are loyal to the Service, it seems that there are always a few whose only thought is selfishly of their own status. We had some of this type and while they had considerable ability and aided in the trencher development, their adverse influence prompted by selfishness and petty jealousies were mostly responsible for the final decline of this program.

Using a summary of the complaints reported by many users, we carried out an experimental modification project to correct the defects which caused the troubles. Most of the difficulties were with the engines which had been designed for propelling small boats where power requirements were constant. The most serious of these was the destruction of the bronze connecting rods at high engine speeds, usually caused by lifting the hammers out of the trench with engine at full throttle. We remedied this by designing a loose-needle roller bearing

connecting rod with a removable cap. This was radically different from anything in use at that time and was considered by some engineers as not usable, but test proved its worthiness. Engines equipped with these rods could be operated for long periods of time at extremely high speeds without any damage. At present all better-grade, high-speed 2-cycle engines are using this type of connecting rod bearing.

A list of the necessary modifications was made and approved. A bid was let and a purchase order issued for 125 connecting rods.

Here is a part of a letter sent to all Regions:

The Bendix motors on Bosworth Trenchers have been developing numerous failures due mostly to being unable to control the speed when not working, poor lubrication and poor bearings.

The Washington Office has allotted this Region funds to do the following jobs on the machines owned by all Regions:

1. Substitute pin (needle roller) bearing connecting rods for the factory installed bronze rods.
2. Drill crankshaft to permit free passage and equalization of fuel to both cylinders. This also facilitates lubrication.
3. Install new air cleaner.
4. Install speed control (governor).

Each of these changes considerably increases the effective power output and length of life of these motors.

Jim had been assigned to engineering equipment development for several months and was largely responsible for these improvements. But, here again, his pioneer visions had advanced beyond those of his associates. They followed him for a while, but when he was again transferred to a forest a few who had been opposing him and thought that his popularity might thwart their plans of advancement, went to work with adverse influence to convince those in charge that the connecting rods were not needed and that it would be a waste of money to buy them. The purchase order for these rods was cancelled and only the other modifications were made on the engines.

This engine-driven tool should now have been ready to step over Roy Headley's horse-and-plow units with dollars of its own instead of dimes. Creative engineering had brought it a long way but the management and human engineering necessary to consolidate the gains were not given to it. The engines had been improved. With proper management and good training, they produced some good results. The only complaints were about minor troubles which could and should have



been corrected locally, and many were of the same old trouble - overheating and connecting-rod failures.

The machines were used very little in 1941 and then came the war! Some of us were far from the timbered forests and those who were left at home, for one reason or another, did not use the Bosworths.

Many changes had been made in the personnel of the Forests when I returned to Fire Control in 1945. There was also a change in the attitude toward the trenching units. There was no evidence of the type of enthusiasm that had prevailed during the period of development. Training demonstrations were given but we didn't get any of them out on fires. Within two years most of the Bosworths were declared surplus and sold.

I could easily write a volume about Jim, his trenching machine and his inventive activity in general. I knew him for years, have discussed his qualities with many of his friends and was closely associated with him for several months while he was doing research development work for Engineering. Using a fund of logical thinking, together with his creative imagination, he presented many constructive ideas which were innovations, but practical. They were not always accepted and sometimes were met with opposition, but they were not lost for they set a way for someone else to follow.

A short review of the life span of the trencher shows that Jim had spent three years perfecting the idea before formally presenting it to the Service. In three more years it was accepted. During one additional year it was received with an enthusiasm which flared up and expanded for two years, then died out. Within two more years, or eleven years from its inception, it was rejected. The economy of such a machine was the motive of its origin. The good showing of the earlier machines interested many administrators enough to encourage its development. A few dedicated people boosted it to a place where it was recognized as an outstanding invention capable of economy and production beyond any earlier anticipation. Engineers were available with ability to overcome any mechanical failures. The origin was human, the success mechanical, and the failure human.

Jim, the pioneer, had rolled back the horizons and set a new way which many followed as long as the way was easy to travel and they could feel themselves included in the glory of success. But they failed to help the dedicated few when troubles were encountered. Good management of a strong organization with continuous development, training and application to its use could have kept this machine going.

Looking back over these 29 years, we can see that Jim's visionary thinking was many years beyond that of the average forest officer. The course he opened for us is still visible. Several half-hearted attempts have been made to follow it, but lack of interest of those who should be the most interested turns the travelers back. It is not as rough as it looks. Some day, probably soon, we will be permitted to travel it again, and somewhere along the way we will pause long enough to erect a memorial to Jim Bosworth.

**By K. Wolfe  
(Retired)**

It was 1919. World War I was over and many of us had just gotten back to our Forest Service jobs at the beginning of a fire season long to be remembered. On the Flathead, to which I was assigned, fires in the Upper Swan were running out of control early in June. By the time they were headed, lightning was working on the South Fork and on Big River. As a result we were trying to fight dozens of Class C fires scattered over 2-million acres of about as inaccessible country as the Forest Service had anywhere. The battle continued throughout July and August with practically no letup. Finally in early September the rains we had been praying for came.

In 1919 there was no road up the South Fork of the Flathead. It was 90 miles from Coram to Big Prairie Ranger Station - a five day trip for pack strings. Firefighters going to the White River fire took five to six days to make the hike and most of them were completely worn out when they got there.

As I remember it, the Flathead spent about a quarter of a million dollars fighting fire - and that was real money in 1919. The acreage burned I don't remember, but it too was a regrettably large figure. Smoke was so thick at times that it was impossible to see any distance at all. In fact, it took Ranger Henry Thol and me two days to locate a newly reported fire which quite evidently had been burning for days and was over a thousand acres in size when we finally found it.

J.D. Warner was Supervisor and Lloyd Hornby Assistant. Others whose names are familiar to many in the Region were Clyde Webb, Charlie Hash, Jim Ready, Jim Bosworth, Harold Redlingshafer, Henry Thol, Tom Wiles, Ed Adams, and Eldon Myrick.

Experiences long to be remembered were more or less common and if the gang mentioned in the foregoing could be gotten together the stories they would tell would be something. The one I remember most clearly didn't happen until all the fires were out and we were about ready to close up the South Fork for the winter.

There was snow not only in the high country, but in some that wasn't so high. Hunting season was about over, but one party had been delayed because of the sickness of a past-middle-age member. They finally succeeded in getting him to the Spotted Bear Ranger Station where they left him while the other members of the party went for help. It soon became evident that we had a very sick man on our hands and plans were started to get him out as soon as possible. He, too, realized the seriousness of his condition and asked us to write out a will for him. (I never heard that the will was challenged so presume we produced a legally acceptable instrument.)

There were about a half-dozen of us in the party which Ranger Thol led down the trail that late October morning. We had rigged up a travois on which to carry the sick man. Where the going was good we used packhorses on both front and back, and where it was extremely poor we had to use manpower on both ends. Most of the time, however, we could use a horse in front. That is what we were doing when in passing through a freshly burned area the trail over a burned-out root gave way and the horse rolled down the hill. It was not too steep a slope so we were able to stop our patient after he had tumbled about thirty or forty feet. He didn't appear to be much

worse off than he had been so we went on our way. However, we had learned that extreme care was essential so we proceeded even slower than before.

We had planned to make the cabin at Elk Park Guard Station for the night, but darkness caught us long before we reached it so we stopped at Dry Park. There was no cabin there and we had nothing but bedrolls with us, so we really camped out - with nothing to eat and only water to drink. It goes without saying that we headed on down the trail at daybreak. That day we made Elk Park where we were met by a doctor who had been sent in to meet us.

Unfortunately, this isn't a story with a happy ending - which perhaps is the reason I remember it. Our patient died that night, and the next day we discarded the travois and let the lead packhorse carry the load all by itself to the road at Coram.

The field part of the 1919 fire season was over!

**By George R. Wolstad  
(Division of Range Management)**

Twenty-one years ago - in August 1939 - the following note was found stuck on a twig along the trail up Roaring Lion Creek on the Bitterroot Forest. The handwriting is Clarence Sutliff's; somewhat shaky, as he was in pretty bad shape.

After crashing with Dick Johnson while scouting the Roaring Lion fire by plane, he had crawled across the canyon to the trail, back-blazing with a jackknife as he went. He had first gotten Dick out of the plane and dragged him a safe distance in case the plane should burn.

I was in the range survey crew camped at the West Fork Ranger Station. "Reg" DeNio was chief-of-party. Other members of the crew were Rolf Jorgensen, Fred Haller, John Venrick and Eugene Larsen. Our cook was Mike Maier from Plains. We were called to go on the fire and joined firefighters enroute from Hamilton. We traveled at night.

Part way up the trail we met a CCC boy on the run. He and another lad had come down the trail and found Clarence. The other CCC boy stayed with Clarence. We pushed on ahead of the main crew. I stayed with Clarence and the others helped bring Dick to the trail. More help arrived and Dick was carried out, but Clarence "came to" sufficiently to ride a horse out. This in itself took a lot of "guts," as he was pretty badly shaken up and had several broken ribs.

This was my first major fire, and I believe the first time I met Clayton Crocker, who was fire boss. We were given the job of setting up the fire camp as soon as we arrived at the site, so that Mike could get a meal ready for firefighters coming off the line. The assurance given us that we could get some rest after camp was set up didn't work out, since no sooner had we finished this job than we were dispatched over the main ridge to the south to combat spot fires. Thus, a second night passed without sleep for us. The beds dropped to us for the third night looked awfully good as they tumbled out of the plane.

That was a memorable summer. Long hours on the job, in addition to the time spent on the Roaring Lion and other fires, brought my timeslip for August to 326 hours. No overtime in those days: And no regrets, either!

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To supplement the information provided by George Wolstad in his foregoing account of the Roaring Lion fire, the following is quoted from a memorandum prepared in April 1940 by Clayton Crocker, Fire Inspector:

Roaring Lion Canyon, the site of the accident, well deserves its name. It is a ditch, some 11 miles long and a mile deep. The canyon walls are jagged, granite cliffs, extending from the narrow canyon floor to bristling crags a mile high. The gradient of the canyon bottom is so steep that the creek is one cataract from end to end. At intervals the canyon narrows between precipitous walls, forming gateways perhaps a thousand feet deep and a little wider. It was just above such a gateway that Sutliff had selected the new camp site.

Upon approaching the site and flying between the rock walls to avoid the smoke column which roofed the canyon, Dick Johnson, star pilot of the Forest Patrol, and Clarence Sutliff in charge of Fire Control of the Bitterroot Forest, found that the fire had moved down canyon and was crowning furiously. Flames and billowing smoke and gases filled the valley amphitheater where the camp site was located. Fire shut off the upper canyon, forcing the plane to turn quickly for a retreat. At that moment the ship was in one of those canyon gateways - a narrow, or in terms of sea navigation, a strait. The ship was banked steeply to miss the near canyon wall and the fire. It had some 500 to 1,000 feet of air between its wheels and the tree tops. Horizontal space for the turn was ample but none to spare. Full power on the 330-horse-motor had many times before taken this ship out of such predicaments. When the turn was half completed and the ship had reached a point nearest the fire, a terrific rush of downdraft struck the ship pushing it straight down with four times the speed of an elevator. So great was this crushing influence that downward movement nearly equaled forward speed. As the plane settled, its circular course brought it nearer the steeply-rising canyon slope.

The downdraft was caused by two influences. The canyon gateway terminated on each side in a high peak, beyond which lay deep saddles. These saddles acted as sheers or funnels through which poured the prevailing wind, cooled by its movement over the high Bitterroots and rushing to lower elevations. The second influence was the terrific updraft caused by the inferno on the canyon floor. As the fire boosted millions of cubic yards of hot air skyward, more air was sucked downward through the saddles in ridges alongside and ahead. Combined, these made a downdraft seldom witnessed by man.

The moment the ship was engulfed in this earthward current, the pilot shouted to Sutliff to move back to help lower the tail. Fractions of a second later, as wings and treetops raced closer together, Dick called, "We're gonna' hit!" Sutliff braced himself for the shock by jerking himself between two bundles of sleeping bags. A tip of a tree snapped like a rifle shot as the right wing met its first obstacle. Then a higher tree at the top of a rockslide caught the same wing. Dick had reached for the switch - all went black as he touched the key. The shock of the heavy wing against the solid tree trunk threw his head against the side of the ship and he was "out."

The wing was sheared. The heavy ship plummeted forward at 100 miles an hour, spinning clockwise like a rifle bullet. Its nose plowed into the pile of boulders which made up the hillside. The impact telescoped the ship from nose to behind the pilot's compartment. The spinning motion added a twist which, under momentum of the heavily-loaded cargo compartment, wrenched the forepart of the ship one-halfway around. Pieces of motor, cowling, and even the tail settled over an area of half an acre. The twisted mass of wreckage rolled down the boulder slide until the stub of the left wing caught in a crevice and held.

Underneath a pile of beds, canned food, and tools, Sutliff opened his eyes and wondered what had happened. Consciousness returned and gradually he rationalized that he was imprisoned inside a steel cage, dripping with gasoline immediately in front of a running crown fire. Escape from this prison was difficult. The ship was crushed and upside down

- his right foot pinned, and his whole body numbed. After a struggle the foot was loosened, badly damaged and nearly useless. At this point he could hear gasoline gurgling from mashed tanks. Oil dripping on the hot motor sizzled and crackled and the rolling billows of black smoke overhead, coupled with reflections of the fire, threw flickering shadows through the ripped cabin. It all spelled "fire." At any moment a spark from the crown fire or a burst of flame from the hot motor might ignite the gasoline drenched wreckage.

There was no hole through which to escape. With bare hands and whatever implements were handy, he tore a hole through the ship's side and wormed his way out - dropping onto a mass of boulders. Outside the sight was more hideous - the fire was coming fast. Foot travel at best would be slow through the cliffs to the canyon bottom, some distance below. If he reached the bottom before the fire did, he would have to outrun the blaze down a trail that is barely passable, as it winds its way among the boulders. Escape from the scene did not enter into his thinking, although he realized the full danger in delaying departure from the wreckage. His concern was for Dick.

Working forward to the front of the ship and peering through a maze of tangled steel, fabric, and machinery, he saw Dick, unconscious or dead, hanging head down with blood streaming from face and body. Further investigation proved he was still alive, but so imprisoned and crushed amidst the snarl of wreckage that extraction seemed impossible. He hung upside down with feet fouled by heavy steel controls, the roof of the ship caved in against him, the dash shoved back, and the cargo shifted forward to pin his whole body in a vise-like grip. His head was several feet above the boulders. If released from the grip of the wreckage, he would drop headfirst and further injury was certain. To an excitable individual the predicament would have appeared hopeless - not to Sutliff. He grasped a jagged slab from a boulder and began pounding, twisting, bending, and tearing a hole through the framework. Almost frantically with the crudest of primitive instruments, he tore away the best and toughest steel that man has devised. Each time he swung his rock hammer, a splash of blood, like paint from a dripping brush, splattered the wreckage. Cuts on his arms were running red streams to his finger tips. He found difficulty too in bracing himself for a solid blow or heavy lift on the leg that had been damaged in the crash. Eventually, after minutes which must have seemed hours, a hole was mangled through the mess and the pilot was ready to be freed from the strangle hold of the wreck. Sutliff had salvaged a sleeping pocket (bed) from the cargo and spread this over the boulders to soften the blow when Dick dropped. He pried loose the last bar and Dick fell. The shock of the fall partly brought him to consciousness; this added to Sutliff's hopes.

Dick weighed 165 pounds, Clarence 135, but somehow Clarence tugged, lifted, dragged, and rolled him into and out of the pits and over the giant boulders to the foot of the hill. Sometimes they rolled and bounced together. Sometimes Dick was hoisted bodily out of these rugged pits. At the foot of the hill Clarence found an open spot surrounded by dense, but moist green brush on three sides and the rock cliffs on the other. It seemed the safest spot in sight from the standpoint of fire. Further advance toward the "shotgun" trail on the opposite hillside was shut off by a jungle of tangled spruce reproduction, willow, and down timber. Night was falling, and darkness would make further travel almost

impossible for a man physically sound. Therefore, Clarence propped Dick against a big rock and crawled back to the wreck, dug a radio set out of the junk heap and vainly tried to contact the world outside. Failing in this, he returned to Dick and finding him still alive, set out for help.

With a jackknife in a bleeding hand, he started blazing a line from Dick's location to the trail. Scrambling through the brush thickets, under and over logs, he whittled marks to guide rescuers to the unconscious pilot: Crawling over rocks and snarls of brush, he reached the trail. Exhausted by extreme physical activity, and weakened by loss of blood, he dropped down for a moment's rest before starting the four-mile hike down the trail. He had barely laid down when he heard voices. These came nearer, and he called. Two CCC enrollees appeared. They had gone A.W.O.L. from the camp at the highway, and had gone up the canyon for pictures. Now they were fleeing, ahead of the fire.

Clarence ascertained that one had studied first-aid. Showing him the marks on the bushes, he sent him to care for Dick. This was not easy. The boy was reluctant to enter the jungle of fuel in the path of the fire. Neither did he relish the idea of going alone to a dead, or worse, a dying man in the darkness. However, he went under the persuasion and demands of Sutliff. Next, Clarence wrote a note describing the location where Dick could be found, asked that a horse be started for himself, if possible, to get over the treacherous trail, and ordered a stretcher, doctors, and men to get Dick. He dispatched the boy down the trail, cautioning him to go slowly and take no chances of injuring himself, and thereby delaying action.

This exhibition of cool-headed action undoubtedly is a mark of more than average ability to act and use judgment in an emergency. He took no chance on verbal messages. He distrusted human action in exciting circumstances. Also, he portrayed the true foremanship in forcing the boys to do his will against their fears and inclinations. Had he done less or otherwise, Dick, our star pioneer of the air in fire work, would not have lived. Sutliff could have saved himself, no doubt, without aid, had he not spent his strength and lost his blood in getting Dick away from the gasoline-drenched wreck which was so near the spark and flame of a raging forest fire.

As it developed, the CCC boy followed the knife marks through the timber and found Dick still spurting blood and unconscious, but alive. He applied pressure bandages and stopped the bleeding. The other boy delivered the note, and help arrived with a stretcher during the night. Clarence staggered down the trail a short distance, but found the going too difficult. His injured ankle was swollen stiff and his wiry legs no longer responded to the demands of his nervous energies. The loss of blood and effects of shock were taking hold. He made a few more notes of instruction in his notebook and lay down for a rest. The rescue party arrived during the night, and after giving complete instructions for Dick's removal, he consented to ride the horse to the "outside." Clarence did not know until the following day that the wind currents suddenly shifted after the crash, retarding the fire in its down canyon run to the extent that it did not reach the plane wreckage.

As a happy ending, Dick was flying supplies to firefighters within a month following the crash, and, in the co-pilot's seat as observer, was none other than Clarence Sutliff. "It's all a part of the job," Clarence states. He doesn't mention the spatters of blood left on each of the jackknife blazes he whittled to save Dick's life. That is outside the general conception of "the job."