

# Forest History Today

**SPRUCE PRODUCTION DIVISION - U.S. SIGNAL CORPS**



**LOYAL LEGION OF LOGGERS AND LUMBERMEN**

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Now We Begin*

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STEVEN ANDERSON

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By the time this issue is published, the staff of the Forest History Society will have finished moving into our new library, archives, and headquarters. Our relocation marks the accomplishment of the Society's highest strategic priority as set by its board of directors in 2010. It is the result of excellent dynamics and collaboration between staff, the board, and our fundraising advisers, moss+ross, LLC, which helped keep us on point and avoid the pitfalls of many capital campaigns.

The building itself is a beautiful and inviting structure. Our site planner, Coulter, Jewell, Thames, Inc., and our architect, DTW Architects & Planners, Inc., began assisting us as soon as we started to evaluate options for new space. C. T. Wilson Construction Company was exemplary at all stages of work and was careful of our new neighbors during the construction process. These partners also helped us secure more than \$300,000 in donated building materials from the forest industry and arranged for them to be delivered to the site in a timely fashion, a significant accomplishment in itself.

We will celebrate the Society's new facility on May 3, 2019, with a grand opening: a tour, ribbon cutting, and reception. Credit for the new building belongs to all of our donors, friends, members, leaders, staff, and those who came before us: their efforts put the Society in a position to envision and pursue such a consequential goal.

During the next year and beyond, we will begin a push to recognize our many donors of financial gifts and building materials. Special thanks go to our Campaign Cabinet, a steady and evolving group of board members who helped lead the way, including Hayes Brown, Doug Decker, Kent Gilges, Peter Madden, Scott McCampbell, Rob Olszewski, Peter Stein, Rick Titcomb, Larry Tombaugh, and Chris Zinkhan, and co-chairs L. Michael Kelly and Ned Phares. Charley Tarver and Mark Wilde served as honorary chairs of the campaign.

The upcoming celebration will commemorate the completion of this foundation for the Society's programs, yet this end is also a beginning. The building process has helped us see new opportunities and renewed our commitment to further the preservation and use of forest history. Like other milestones in the Society's history, it has strengthened our relationships and reminded us not to be content with having realized our intention.



In our new building, we can begin afresh to collect, preserve, and share forest history. The Society is now reviewing our strategic initiatives to ensure that our programs take full advantage of the new space. We will seek input from leaders, staff, and members, as well as those outside the organization, to determine the highest priorities for future efforts and strengthen our ability to accomplish them.

One immediate priority will be to help companies, organizations, and individuals make maximum use of the expanded space in the Alvin J. Huss Archives, one of the main reasons for the new building. The new building has about 7,500 linear feet—almost one-and-a-half miles of archival storage—half of which is open for new records. The Society

can now take on collections of almost any magnitude, and our intention is to make this known and save more forest history. The first collection received in the new building was a group of records of the Oregon-American Lumber Company. Operating from 1922 to 1957, the company is a prime example of the history of lumbering in the region. Thanks to Ed Kamholz and Doug Decker for being forest history heroes by making sure these important documents reached a safe repository. I invite you to contact us if you know of a collection of records, large or small, that is at risk.

Other priorities may include live-streaming events from the Lynn W. Day Education Center, engaging the local community in new Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Library and meeting spaces, expanding our oral history program, accelerating the digitization of Forest History Society collections, strengthening our digital archiving capability, adding to our growing presentation of physical and digital exhibits, and exploring innovative and strategic collaborations. If you have ideas, don't wait to be asked. Please send them along. Although our physical address has changed (to 2925 Academy Road, Durham, NC 27705), our email addresses and phone numbers remain the same.

The future is bright for the Forest History Society. We are in an enviable position in relation to many nonprofits. We have a 73-year history of strong programming to achieve our mission, we own our own facilities, we have an endowment, and our knowledgeable staff members love nothing more than to help people find the information they need. With your renewed and energetic support, current and future generations will benefit from the history we save today. Thanks for sharing the journey. □

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ON THE COVERS

*Front:* Recruiting ad for the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen. Gerald W. Williams Collection, Oregon State University Special Collections and Archives Research Center.

*Back:* Forest bathing in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. Photo by James G. Lewis

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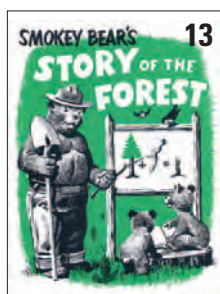
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# EDITOR'S NOTE

by James G. Lewis

When I came onboard at the Forest History Society in 2003, I was asked to write the companion book to the film *The Greatest Good*, which was being prepared for the U.S. Forest Service's centennial in 2005. While reading in the secondary literature, I kept coming across mention of a historian named Gerald Williams. (In all, he would publish more than 75 books, chapters, book reviews, articles, and conference papers, one of which is reprinted in this issue.) I wouldn't meet this Gerald fellow until the following year. It turned out that he was not "Gerald" but Jerry, and he was as easygoing and approachable in person as he was on paper. Then the national historian for the Forest Service, Jerry more than loved his job; in fact, I don't think he ever regarded it as a job. He loved history, particularly but not exclusively that of the Forest Service. One only has to look at the breadth and diversity of his collection at Oregon State University's library to see that. But his passion for preserving Forest Service history was legendary.

Perhaps more than collecting and preserving history, Jerry loved *sharing* history. When I needed photos for my book, he'd quickly send images from his own pictorial history of the agency to use. We still hadn't met; I made these requests by email or phone. It was not until Jerry visited FHS that I gained a greater understanding of what made him tick. He'd periodically make the four-hour drive from DC to Durham with a carload of boxes filled with documents, binders, and folders to add to the U.S. Forest Service History Reference Collection at the Forest History Society. When our librarian told me that Jerry had been "Dumpster diving" again, I thought she was speaking metaphorically—that he'd simply gone around to various offices and picked up boxes. Jerry gently set me straight. With a self-effacing chuckle, he told me about literally going to the Dumpster on numerous occasions and retrieving boxes. What some in the agency considered unimportant he believed held value for historians—if not immediately, then at some later point. I couldn't tell you how many times he ferried archival records to our library before moving back to Oregon after retiring in 2005.

Indeed, those records are an important part of Jerry's legacy from his time as national Forest Service historian. And yet, there is almost nothing about him in the reference collection—which in many ways fits with his character. When in January I learned of his passing, I went to the biographical files, expecting to find a thick folder overflowing with details about his career. What I found was a single piece of paper, a letter, probably from the early 1990s, from the director of the Public Affairs Office in the Washington Office (WO) to the regional forester of the Pacific Northwest. At the time, Jerry worked for the Planning and

Environmental Affairs (Strategic Planning) office in Portland. The letter informed the recipient that Jerry was receiving a nominal cash award from the WO history unit—"a small amount," the director noted, given all the extra time he had contributed to preserving and interpreting agency history. "The history task is dependent on employees who do special services such as this, because there is no history function area or budget beyond the one-person staff in the WO Public Affairs Office." The commendation read, in part:



*The award recognizes Jerry Williams for helping to tell our story to the public, an especially important job in recent years; special services that range from the curation of agency records and artifacts, to the authoring of numerous papers and publications, to that of public speaking at gatherings of employees and the public ... This vital role may not be recognized by others, but we certainly appreciate it.*

That was all, but it captured Jerry's work on behalf of the Forest Service's history program.

After he retired, Jerry happily continued responding to queries. (That's him on the left with me at the 2012 Forest Service Retirees Reunion.) But he was more than just the man with the answers, more than a prolific chronicler of Forest Service history. In addition to being a scholar, he was true gentleman. And a gentle man. And it is those latter two attributes that I'll miss most about him. This issue is dedicated to Jerry, and in appreciation for all he did.

...

Jerry's reprinted article about the Spruce Production Division is in a special section about World War I created to mark the centennial of the end of "the war to end all wars." I'd like to thank Byron Pearson for inviting me join him in writing about the 20th Forest Engineers. I could not find information about the authors of the other two reprinted articles to include. My apologies to them.

Char Miller and I would like to thank the University of Pittsburgh Press for permission to reprint our chapter on the U.S. Forest Service and herbicides. I'd like to thank Ten Speed Press for allowing us to publish the excerpt from Julia Plevin's book *The Healing Magic of Forest Bathing*; the Association of Consulting Foresters for permitting the reprint of their 70th anniversary timeline; and Alexander Poole for allowing an adaptation of his Harold Pinkett article. Whitney Forman-Cook, communications director for the National Association of State Foresters, gave me the initial draft of the article on Smokey Bear to work up as I saw fit and—graciously—the byline. Only you, Whitney. As always, thanks to the FHS staff for their contributions, Sally Atwater for her editing prowess, Kathy Hart at Zubigraphics for her stellar design work, and Dianne Timblin for her patience with all things FHS. □

*The U.S. Forest Service's history of herbicide and pesticide use is one that is both instructive and full of contradictions. Tasked with providing timber for the post-World War II housing boom, the agency embraced the use of chemicals to improve timber growth. However, a public that wanted timber objected to the use of those same chemicals. And even as it defoliated and burned forests in Vietnam, the U.S. Forest Service participated in projects designed to regenerate that embattled country's forests. Both at home and abroad, then, the Forest Service found itself waging a battle for hearts and minds—one that continues still.*

# VAST, INCREDIBLE DAMAGE

## HERBICIDES AND THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE

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**T**he Douglas-fir tussock moth (*Orgyia pseudotsugata*) caterpillar is small in size, with brightly colored tufts of black hair projecting from the head and rear of its body. However diminutive and decorative, this caterpillar's fierce appetite—especially during outbreaks in the late spring and early summer—

can quickly defoliate individual trees and collectively damage large swaths of that arboreal species whose name it bears. Its capacity to chew through forests gained notoriety in the 1960s and 1970s, so much so that in 1965 the U.S. Forest Service sprayed DDT mixed with fuel oil over 66,000 infected acres in the Pacific Northwest. After conducting posttreatment analysis, agency scientists proclaimed the aerial assault a complete success, achieving “a tussock moth kill ranging from ninety to one hundred percent, with an overall average of ninety-eight per cent.”<sup>1</sup>

Less than a decade later, an even larger outbreak blew up along the Washington, Oregon, and Idaho borders, which overflights estimated had damaged upward of 500,000 acres. Although the Forest Service, along with state, tribal, and private landowners,

wanted to replicate the successful control-and-eradication operations that had occurred in the mid-1960s, there was a catch. In the interim, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) had appeared, and her revelations of the devastating impact that indiscriminate use of DDT—what she decried as “a bright new toy”—was having on wooded, riparian, and marine habitats, and the animals that inhabited them, had led to closer scrutiny of the insecticide and related chemicals.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, DDT had been banned in the United States, complicating the Forest Service's managerial response to the 1973 outbreak. As then regional forester Ted Schlapfer later recalled: “We were really caught between a rock and a hard place, knowing that the only way we could positively control [the tussock moth] was to use DDT.”<sup>3</sup>

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BY JAMES G. LEWIS AND CHAR MILLER



Adult male of Douglas-fir tussock moth (*Orgyia pseudotsugata*). This species of moth was responsible for numerous outbreaks in the Pacific Northwest in the postwar years, which the U.S. Forest Service and other federal and state agencies attempted to control with aerial spraying.

A legal loophole opened up just such an opportunity. DDT could still be deployed if the relevant agencies and entities determined that its use constituted a national emergency. Together, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Land Management joined the Oregon State Forester's Office and the Oregon State University School of Forestry in petitioning the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an exemption. Although the EPA initially denied their request, in 1974, after evidence that the tussock moth defoliation now sprawled across 1.2 million acres and in response to what historian Harold K. Steen has described as "unprecedented political pressure," a reluctant EPA granted the petitioners one-time use of the chemical that summer. The operation was only partly successful, as the outbreak may have already run its course. Yet the massive scale of the operation—it was the largest aerial spraying of DDT ever undertaken in the United States—also caused considerable concern within the Forest Service. "One of the real positive things that came out of [it]," remembered Schlapfer, was the conclusion that agency leaders reached: "We don't want to do this again. We have got to find alternative solutions to controlling [the] tussock moth." Shortly thereafter, researchers identified a nontoxic way to disseminate *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a biological agent that infects the tussock moth with a virus. The 1974 aerial spraying was the last time that DDT was applied in American forests.<sup>4</sup>

That happy outcome and the implication that policymaking, and the scientific expertise on which it depends, could come to know its limits; that postmortem analyses could lead to better

science more carefully applied; and that its better application could lead to less environmentally damaging results is only part of the story surrounding the Forest Service's overdependence on herbicides, pesticides, and insecticides in the post-World War II era. In addition to the internal debates surrounding the use of DDT, outside forces exerted considerable pressure on the agency to halt its use of these toxic chemicals. Communities in and around national forests—particularly in Northern California and the Pacific Northwest—pushed back against the Forest Service's aerial campaigns. So did workers' organizations seeking to protect their members' health and laboring conditions, who did so by challenging agency science. An emboldened, post-*Silent Spring* environmental movement went to court, filing lawsuits in defense of endangered species, biodiversity, and water quality. Rather than simply demonstrating the limitations of the technological fix to land management dilemmas, then, the tussock moth incidents of the 1960s and 1970s are a reminder of the degree to which the Forest Service—the single largest agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, at the time employing upward of 35,000 people—dominated land management decisions at the federal level. That dominance helps explain why the Forest Service, and its peer agencies, routinely utilized chemicals whose impact on environmental and public health had not been fully assessed or completely understood—a process that has continued into the twenty-first century.

#### LIMITATIONS OF A CAN-DO AGENCY

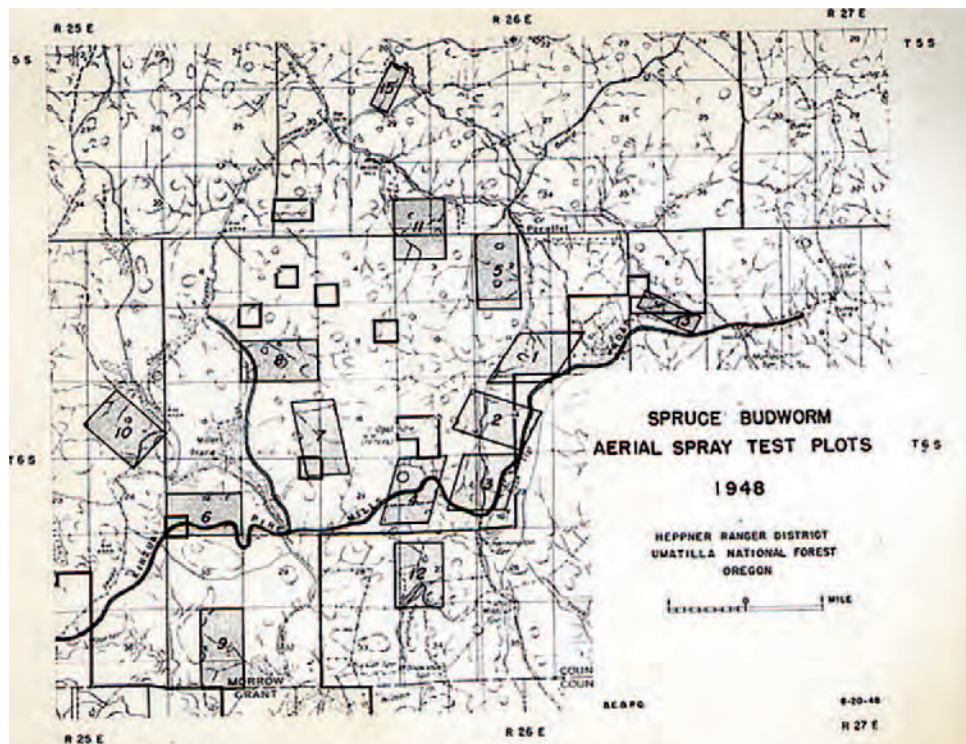
The Forest Service's ready use of chemicals in the mid-twentieth century depended in good part on its leadership's firm belief that empirical science and rational planning had been the keys to its ability to resolve many of conservation's gravest problems. Chief Ferdinand Silcox's apparent success in suppressing forest fires in the 1930s gave an inkling of what could be accomplished if the Forest Service applied the right mix of personnel, technology, research, and budget. The same outcome seemed to have been true during the post-World War II era. As the Eisenhower administration came to a close, the Forest Service was reaching its peak in power and prestige, and was the undisputed leader of American conservation.<sup>5</sup> Its centrality was largely attributable to the agency's robust timber program. Because private industry had logged out most of its holdings by the end of the war, it turned to the national forests for timber to meet the burgeoning peacetime demand for lumber. The Forest Service willingly obliged in what it perceived to be a win-win situation. Through its ever-increasing timber yields, the Forest Service was making tangible contributions to the growing U.S. economy amid the Cold War—no small incentive for ambitious employees of the goal-oriented agency. In the age of Sputnik, scientific achievement mixed with a can-do attitude made the Forest Service a model agency. Its managerial strategy, former chief Michael Dombeck (1996–2001) declared, was reactive: "If commercially valuable timber was inaccessible, build a road. If a harvested forest on south-facing slopes resisted regeneration, terrace the mountainside. If soil fertility was lacking, fertilize the area. If pests or fire threatened forest stands, apply pesticides and marshal all hands to combat fire. If people grew unhappy with the site of large clearcuts, leave 'beauty strips' of trees along roadways to block timber harvest units from view."<sup>6</sup>

But when it came to timber, the postwar agency was also proactive. The Forest Service had dispelled the long-standing fear of a timber famine. *Timber Resources for America's Future*, which the agency had published in 1958, revealed that for the first time, timber

growth on all lands—public and private—was exceeding the annual cut.<sup>7</sup> One reason for this was the agency’s fire-suppression campaign: since the 1930s, the amount of acreage lost each year to fire had steadily dropped. In the 1960s, the average annual acreage burned was 4.6 million acres, down from a high of 39.1 million acres thirty years earlier. More importantly, the national forests had become the nation’s lumberyard. The amount of timber sold from national forest lands nearly quadrupled from 1950 to 1960 (3,434,114 MBF to 12,167,180 MBF), and the harvest rate in that same time span nearly tripled (3,501,568 MBF to 9,366,897 MBF).<sup>8</sup> Higher sale and harvest rates meant more money coming in to the federal treasury’s coffers. And that was good for Forest Service careers; those who made their timber targets could expect to be promoted. But the higher rates also gave birth to what historian Paul W. Hirt has dubbed a “conspiracy of optimism”—the belief that the Forest Service could deliver timber at the levels Congress demanded now and well into the future.<sup>9</sup> The goals could be achieved through intensive timber management techniques that included clearcutting and artificial regeneration supplemented and complemented by an accelerating application of herbicides.

The agency’s continued emphasis on timber management, however, left it blind to ecological considerations and social concerns; it turned a deaf ear to rising public criticism on issues such as the impact of chemicals on human and animal populations as well as the public’s changing values that favored recreation over resource extraction. One source of the agency’s problems was that it suffered from groupthink. In 1960 Herbert Kaufman published a probing study of the Forest Service employees’ administrative behavior. He sought to understand how field personnel operating within the agency’s decentralized system, which allowed the lowest-ranking officers to make decisions without consulting superior officers, functioned at such a high level. Kaufman found that the agency recruited men with similar technical knowledge and practical skills who also had the will to conform and carry out what he called “the preformed decisions” of their superiors, which could be found in the ranger’s bible, the Forest Service Manual. The agency designed the manual to do most of the thinking for its line officers, and the text laid out in full detail how to reach decisions on everything from “free-use permits to huge sales of timber, from burning permits to fighting large fires, from requisitioning office supplies to maintaining discipline.”<sup>10</sup> The manual and the agency culture it nurtured and legitimized ensured a standard way of handling most situations or problems.

Adding to the self-scrutiny was the requirement that each ranger had to keep a diary and file multiple reports each year that would eventually reveal any deviation from accepted policy. Because personnel were rotated every two to three years, supervisors would be able to spot any inconsistencies in staff behavior



To assess the effectiveness of aerial spraying of herbicides over extensive forested acreage, the U.S. Forest Service established a series of test plots on the Umatilla National Forest in Oregon and Washington.

or action that might be noted in their personnel record. In such an atmosphere, a forester who questioned operations might be labeled a troublemaker and place his career at risk. By handling personnel this way, the Forest Service, Kaufman asserted, “enjoyed a substantial degree of success in producing field behavior consistent with headquarters’ directives and suggestions.”<sup>11</sup>

This insularity was one reason why the agency proved particularly prickly about external criticism. In the mid-1960s, a seasoned forester told newly hired foresters: “We must have enough guts to stand up and tell the public how their land should be managed. As professional foresters, we know what’s best for the land.”<sup>12</sup> This assertion of expertise—which, as Kaufman indicated, was the result of the professionalizing nature of these employees’ education and their adherence to the agency’s internal mind-set—proved problematic. For as Rachel Carson had demonstrated, what the federal government had assured the public was better for humanity was not necessarily better for the environment or the species that depended on it.

In 1962 Carson, a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, published *Silent Spring*. Her book was a powerful indictment of the use of toxic chemical pesticides, primarily DDT, due to their poisonous impact on the food chain and the magnified threat this posed for human populations. She was highly critical of governmental agencies such as the Forest Service for their failure to test chemicals in biotic settings. In 1958, in Wyoming’s Bridger National Forest, the Forest Service had taken a “shotgun approach to nature,” she wrote, spraying upward of ten thousand acres of sage in response to “the pressure from cattlemen for more grasslands.”<sup>13</sup> The intended target died, but so did “the green, life-giving ribbon of willows that traced its way across these plains” and the trout, beaver, and moose that had lived within this ecosystem’s embrace.<sup>14</sup> A shocked Supreme Court justice-cum-conservationist, William



Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), which closely analyzed the deleterious impact that DDT and other chemicals had on all life, profoundly influenced American environmental culture and politics and disrupted the once unquestioned deference to scientific expertise.

O. Douglas, visited the area one year later and was appalled by what he saw, writing that “the damage is vast, incredible, awful.” Visiting again a year after that, Douglas saw “more depredation by government.”<sup>15</sup> Although the agency justified its decision based on the “improvement” it would bring to the range, Carson countered that its actions here and elsewhere were ripping apart “the whole closely knit fabric of life.”<sup>16</sup> Her arguments, observes historian Stephen Fox, drew on the insights of ecologist Charles Elton, and with him she “argued that diversity was the key to biological health. It was imperiled by the human conceit that sorted out wild species according to their human uses and eliminated the ‘bad’ ones.”<sup>17</sup>

Carson's book triggered a national controversy. Pesticide manufacturers and large agricultural organizations threatened lawsuits and attacked Carson's credibility; so did the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>18</sup> Overlooked in the furor was Carson's call for research to determine how to use pesticides safely and to find alternate techniques for pest control; she had not urged the abandonment of pest control. Instead of following her suggestions, however, many in the timber and agricultural industries, along with the Forest Service, spent the next twenty years and countless resources arguing that they could not carry out their work without the chemicals they had on hand.<sup>19</sup>

By the early 1960s, for example, the Forest Service was annually conducting aerial spraying of DDT on more than one million acres of national forest lands to generate ever-higher timber yields.

By the end of that decade, scientists inside and outside the agency determined that herbicides were adversely affecting wildlife and habitat. Instead of changing course or exploring alternative herbicides, however, Forest Service leaders responded to the perceived threat of Carson's work by launching an “information and education” program engineered out of its Washington office. Its publication, “The Forest Service in a Changing Conservation Climate” (1966), attempted to counter *Silent Spring* on several different fronts. The booklet's goal was to educate the public: “We need the understanding and support that comes from an informed public,” Chief Ed Cliff declares in the text's epigraph. “[Our story] must be told and retold so that people everywhere will recognize and comprehend the forest patterns they see in America today.”<sup>20</sup> Among the twenty-nine “problems” listed in the booklet is one titled “Use of Pesticides in Forestry.” Strikingly, the word “herbicides” appears only once in the relevant text:

*Judicious use of pesticides and herbicides is necessary to control several important forest pests. In fact, pesticides are the only known effective method of control for several destructive forest insects and diseases. Many persons and several organized groups, believing that all pesticides are dangerous to wildlife and to people, oppose their use under any circumstances. The Forest Service, working in close cooperation with several other agencies..., is engaged in a widespread program to insure safe and effective use of pesticides. This program includes intensified research, detailed screening, controlled field testing, careful planning of action programs, and critical evaluation of the results and consequences.*

The “objective,” the agency declared, was to “develop public confidence in Forest Service decisions to use pesticides, emphasizing our equal concern that pesticides will always be used under safe, scientific, and carefully controlled conditions.”<sup>21</sup>

The agency's literary efforts did not match *Silent Spring's* reach, but in retrospect that mismatch in influence is less important than the Forest Service's effort to blunt criticism of its default use of pesticides and herbicides. Those who continued to oppose its actions were dismissed as being “ignorant or acting on ‘misinformation,’” a dismissiveness demonstrating the agency's (almost willful) remaining out of touch.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, many agency foresters even advocated managing the land more intensively to achieve what they called “full utilization.” Hoping to pull his colleagues back from this high-stakes gamble of defying the public interest, Charles Connaughton, who served as the regional forester for three regions from 1951 to 1971, urged his peers to take seriously the growing gap between what foresters did and public perceptions of why they did what they did when managing the national forests. In a 1966 article in the *Journal of Forestry*, he noted that the “toughest problem facing the forestry profession today results from a major segment of the public not realizing commercial forest lands can be managed without destroying their utility and appearance. Consequently, much of the public lacks confidence in foresters as stewards of the land.” He encouraged his fellow professionals to adopt management objectives and techniques that “result in acceptable conditions on the land that the public can and should be shown.”<sup>23</sup> Four years later, fellow regional forester Neal Rahm, in a letter to the journal's editor, reinforced Connaughton's point: although confident in foresters' ability to do the job, he too wondered why they failed to prioritize educating the public, suggesting that



this failure was because “we lack the will!”<sup>24</sup> Their urgings were too little, too late.

That their pleadings fell on deaf ears is a reminder, environmental historian Thomas Dunlap has noted, that “*Silent Spring* marked a watershed, as the private, scientific debate became a public, political issue.”<sup>25</sup> In short order, Congress passed the Clean Air Act (1963) and the Water Quality Act (1965), which since have been amended, updated, and extended. Along with the Wilderness Act (1964) and a host of other new environmental regulations protecting endangered species and requiring public participation in land management planning, these legislative initiatives, and related concerns over quality-of-life issues, helped usher in the modern environmental movement.<sup>26</sup> In one sense, the movement argued that the human species no longer stood apart from the rest of the natural world. Yet, paradoxically, human survival was of growing concern. The threat of nuclear war, along with the use of chemicals to control nature domestically and abroad, when combined with photographs of Earth taken from space were reminders that despite humanity’s impressive technological achievements, life on this blue planet seemed increasingly fragile.

This sense of fragility came coupled with a growing disillusionment with government policies that deepened as a result of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal. Swept up in this culture of distrust was the concept of scientific land management and managerial expertise—the once-unquestioned foundation of the Forest Service’s mission. Historian Paul W. Hirt observed: “The same deference for scientists that contributed to public acceptance of intensive management for maximum production in the 1950s now contributed to widespread questioning of the faith in technological fixes and a growing skepticism” toward the Forest Service.<sup>27</sup> An agency that long had thought of itself as heroic now was perceived to be villainous.

## VIETNAM AND THE HERBICIDE WARS

This perception was bound up with the Forest Service’s ready deployment of herbicides. In limited use before World War II, chemical pesticide usage on the national forests accelerated in 1947, when Congress passed the Forest Pest Control Act. This legislation charged the Forest Service with preventing, controlling, or eradicating destructive pests on private and public forests. Industrial foresters and the Forest Service considered insecticides necessary to protect timber and range animals from harmful insects. Herbicides provided an efficient way to foster regeneration of economically desirable trees by killing undesirable ones, maintaining fuel breaks, and destroying noxious weeds. The agency’s confidence in the findings of its researchers underscored its faith that it could effectively handle land management problems and control outcomes. Although Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* had inspired further studies that showed how insect populations adapted to the chemicals and how pesticides killed beneficial parasites and predators along with the targeted insects, that research persuaded many Forest Service entomologists that “one hundred percent control or eradication of an insect was neither necessary nor practical to prevent economic loss.” That finding notwithstanding, the agency persisted in its use of chemicals.<sup>28</sup> The continued reliance on such chemicals troubled some of its field scientists and also the EPA; the latter accused the Forest Service of conducting inadequate research on the impact of herbicidal spraying.<sup>29</sup>

After the EPA banned DDT in 1972, the Forest Service turned to other toxins—Malathion, Zectran, Sevin-4-Oil, and Orthene—

that had not specifically been banned. Another herbicide of choice was 2,4,5-Trichlorophenol (or 2,4,5-T). The U.S. Army had developed it during World War II and then afterward released the formula for domestic use as a weed and brush killer. Beginning in the late 1940s, the Forest Service began using 2,4,5-T on American hardwoods to clear weeds from around shade-intolerant softwood stands. Twenty years later, the military launched widespread, aerial application of a mixture of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (or 2,4-D), called Agent Orange, over Vietnam to defoliate the hardwood jungle canopy and deny the enemy safe haven.<sup>30</sup> The levels of its application were extreme: the U.S. Air Force saturated the land, using twenty-seven times more herbicide per area unit than the Forest Service was spraying stateside for weed control. By 1966 studies had revealed that Agent Orange’s primary active ingredient, TCDD, or dioxin, caused birth defects in laboratory animals and was suspected of causing illnesses, birth defects, and miscarriages in humans. Domestic scientists protested the use of these poisons in Vietnam as early as 1964, and their challenge accelerated across that decade.<sup>31</sup> The federal government soon imposed restrictions on its use at home, such as banning it for household use and on food crops intended for human consumption.

Curiously, public and private foresters were exempt from these restrictions, so although antiwar protesters succeeded in 1970 in getting the military to stop using Agent Orange in Vietnam, aerial spraying of toxic herbicides in national forests continued. The Forest Service operated under the assumption that a chemical registered for use with the federal government did not have any significant adverse effects on the environment. But it had not conducted any risk analysis on the health effects of these and related chemicals, and therefore had not considered the need for alternatives, including manual or mechanical brush removal or hand spraying.<sup>32</sup>

Debate over the continued use of 2,4,5-T and Silvex (2,4,5-TP), another dioxin-containing herbicide, quickly became a national issue. A teacher in Alsea, Oregon, for example, did preliminary research that seemed to link the Forest Service’s aerial spraying of 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP on the nearby Siuslaw National Forest with local women’s miscarriages. A pair of EPA-sponsored studies appeared to confirm that significantly higher percentages of miscarriages had occurred following the spraying of these toxins.<sup>33</sup> On April 27, 1978, at a public forum on the use of herbicides on public lands, Assistant Agriculture Secretary M. Rupert Cutler announced that until the EPA finished its latest study, he would oversee all Forest Service decisions to use these sprays. That same day, Forest Service chief John McGuire issued a directive authorizing herbicide use only after all other alternatives had been considered. His failure to ban the chemicals sparked what one historian has called the “herbicide wars.”<sup>34</sup>

Although Assistant Secretary Cutler cast doubt on the causal connection between the use of defoliants in the Vietnam War and their domestic application—“because of the more concentrated and volatile ingredients used in ‘Agent Orange,’ the Vietnam experience is not comparable to the current use of herbicides in the United States”—he knew the connection was on people’s minds. As he noted at a joint EPA/Forest Service symposium: “Part of today’s concerns about the use of herbicides on the environment and human health grew out of a 1969 charge that an increase in human birth defects in Vietnam was caused by ‘Agent Orange,’” which was ramified when complaints “at home from people who lived near treated forest areas began to receive wide attention in the news.”<sup>35</sup>



*This B-18, one of many military surplus airplanes that federal agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service deployed in their aerial spraying campaigns after World War II, is laying down herbicides to control a spruce budworm outbreak on the Boise National Forest (Idaho), July 22, 1955.*

This issue would have received a lot more attention had Americans known the extent to which the Forest Service was involved in the war in Southeast Asia. What is known is that the agency, as historians Ronald B. Hartzler and David A. Clary observe, “conducted important programs in support of both civilian and military interests in forest management, fire control and employment, and defoliation.”<sup>36</sup> Its personnel were also involved in tactical, strategic, and logistical decisions that they carried out on their own or in coordination with the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the U.S. Agency for International Development; even years later, then chief Ed Cliff refused to speak on the record about these aspects of the Forest Service in Vietnam, because he believed the missions were still classified.<sup>37</sup>

One such cooperative venture involved testing whether the armed forces could integrate the use of herbicides and forest fires to degrade the environment and thus erode the enemy’s capabilities. From 1965 to 1967, Forest Service scientists from the Montana and California fire research laboratories were in Vietnam advising on various projects, including Operation Ranch Hand. This operation, which began in 1962 and ended in 1971, involved the aerial spraying of Agent Orange and other defoliants to open up the hardwood jungle canopy to expose enemy movements. Poor initial test results were no deterrent. The Military Assistance

Command, Vietnam ordered additional spraying using formulas with increased levels of dioxin. The military command then expanded its list of targets to include food crops, both to starve the enemy and to drive the South Vietnamese off the land and into internment camps.<sup>38</sup> The deleterious impact led Ranch Hand team members in Vietnam to modify Smokey Bear’s motto on a Forest Service poster to read: “Only you can prevent a forest.” That the Forest Service became involved in efforts to destroy forests is one of several ironies, not the least of which was that the Forest Service had for several years advised and assisted the South Vietnamese in the development of their lumber industry.<sup>39</sup>

Forest Service fire researchers also worked on Operations Sherwood Forest and Pink Rose, which involved chemically defoliating the jungle to create dry fuel and then dropping incendiary weapons, such as magnesium firebombs, to ignite an inferno. Sherwood Forest launched in January 1965 with the intensive bombing of Boi Loi Woods, a dense forest twenty-six miles northwest of Saigon that the U.S. military believed served as an enemy stronghold. Over a two-day period, military aircraft dropped eight hundred tons of bombs before a squadron of C-123s began dispensing 78,800 gallons of herbicide over the next twenty-nine days. Forty days later, after the canopy had fallen and the vegetation had dried, bombers dropped diesel fuel and incendiaries. The rising heat from the fires, however, triggered a rainstorm that

doused the flames. The quick return of the Viet Cong—the South Vietnamese communists fighting the South Vietnamese government forces and U.S. forces—to the area soon thereafter indicated that chemical agents alone would not deny them permanent use of the Boi Loi Woods.<sup>40</sup> The official U.S. Air Force historian of Operation Ranch Hand, of which the Sherwood Forest was a part, noted that the ecological conditions made it “almost impossible to set a self-sustaining forest fire in the jungles of South Vietnam.”<sup>41</sup>

That failure did not stop the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency from contracting with the Forest Service again to explore additional ways that forest fires could become part of the military’s arsenal. Enter Operation Pink Rose, which began in May 1966 and ended a year later. Its planners decided to defoliate the targeted areas in War Zones C, D, and the so-called Iron Zone—Viet Cong strongholds in and around Saigon—and do so three times over the course of a year before attempting to ignite the desiccated vegetation with incendiary bombs.<sup>42</sup> The military had high hopes for Pink Rose and even sent up a planeload of journalists to watch the burn experiments. Results, however, were similar to Sherwood Forest—the heat created rain clouds that extinguished the fires. The military discontinued the firestorm experiments, which one government official later admitted was a “nutty” idea to begin with.<sup>43</sup> Yet defoliation operations to expose communication and travel routes the Viet Cong employed continued in South Vietnam and then expanded into Laos in December 1965 before spreading into North Vietnam in the summer of 1966.<sup>44</sup>

Even as it defoliated and burned forests, the U.S. Forest Service participated in projects designed to regenerate Vietnam’s forested domain. In January 1967, as fighting in Vietnam escalated, the Forest Service dispatched a seven-person team of foresters to help the U.S. Agency for International Development conduct forestry operations in South Vietnam. The loan of the foresters came after Chief Ed Cliff and other forestry experts visited Vietnam in 1966 at the request of the secretary of Agriculture to study the lumber supply situation. After examining the situation, Cliff agreed to supply Forest Service personnel to help increase local production of lumber and plywood, and tapped Jay H. Cravens, a forester with nearly twenty years of experience, to lead the Forest Service team.<sup>45</sup> Planners hoped that locals would become economically self-sufficient and not side with the Viet Cong—yet another attempt to win the hearts and minds of this embattled people. Whatever the results of that effort, when Cravens arrived in Vietnam in late February 1967, Operation Pink Rose was in full swing, and immediately he was called on to provide

technical expertise to the military’s deployment of toxic chemicals. Their use was so pervasive throughout the country that Cravens, who visited all forty-four provinces of South Vietnam, later recalled that the country reeked of herbicide.<sup>46</sup>

Not everyone in the Forest Service supported the strategy of using chemicals to incinerate the jungle. William “Bud” Moore, who had grown up in and spent most of his career in western Montana, was serving as national deputy director of fire control at the time of the Sherwood Forest and Pink Rose operations. He was in the process of reevaluating the Forest Service’s overall approach to land management, a reevaluation that found its source in his witnessing the deadly downstream consequences of a 1956 Forest Service DDT spraying operation in the Bitterroot Mountains. A decade later, he was privately questioning the agency’s use of herbicides and clearcutting to meet required harvest levels; he also privately questioned the negative impacts of its fire-suppression policies.<sup>47</sup> In the midst of this reflective process, Moore was offered the opportunity to go to Vietnam to contribute to the agency’s fire research experiments in Southeast Asia. He declined. A combat veteran in the Pacific Theater during World War II, he had seen what military firepower could do to a tropical landscape. “I didn’t have any heart for blowing up the forest, you

*The challenges and controversies surrounding Operation Ranch Hand defoliation missions in Vietnam impelled team members to alter Smokey Bear’s motto on a Forest Service poster.*



COURTESY OF RANCH HAND ASSOCIATION VIETNAM COLLECTION, THE VIETNAM CENTER AND ARCHIVE, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

know, [or] the people over there,” Moore told an interviewer. “I just didn’t have it. So I told them, no, I’m not going to put my name in . . . I can fight a war if I’m cornered but I don’t want to ruin a country or a lot of their important places.”<sup>48</sup>

Environmental activists, labor organizers, community officials, and scientists did not want the Forest Service to ruin the Pacific Northwest, either. Many of them felt that that would be the end result of the agency’s repeated use of herbicides and pesticides in its land management operations in the region during the 1970s and 1980s, anxiety that was compounded by the fact that the Bureau of Land Management and state forestry departments were following suit. That these agencies were spraying many of the same chemical agents that had been used in Vietnam—such as 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D, and 2,4,5-TP—in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California lent credence to the fears that the Forest Service was bringing the war home.

Certainly, the Pacific Northwest seemed like a battleground, given that environmental groups such as the Sierra Club, workers organizations like the collaborative known as the Hoedads (a progressive reforestation-workers cooperative), and at-risk mothers, among others, protested nearly every announcement of an upcoming aerial-spraying project. With reason. A number of serious, if accidental, incidents of wind drift of aerial-sprayed herbicides destroyed agricultural crops, settled over human habitations, and damaged riparian habitats. One of the most egregious was an early 1970s herbicide spill in the Alsea River watershed in the Siuslaw National Forest in Oregon; it may have resulted from Forest Service contractors brush-spraying 2,4,5-T upstream of the Alsea State Fish Hatchery. Whatever the cause, hatchery officials there suddenly noticed a dramatic fish die-off. Water sampling indicated that the “percentage of 2,4,5-T in the hatchery was the equivalent of about a 55-gallon drum of the stuff being dumped directly in the hatchery.”<sup>49</sup> This incident, combined with wind-drift killing of resident-owned gardens as well as flocks of domesticated ducks, geese, and chickens, led Carol Van Strum, who lived within the Alsea watershed, to form Citizens Against Toxic Sprays, a grassroots organization devoted to banning the use of herbicides on public lands. It joined with the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, the Oregon Environmental Council, and the Hoedads to sue to halt federal and state land management agencies’ use of dioxin-laced herbicides and pesticides.

To build these legal cases, the Hoedads in particular developed alternative scientific evidence—what is now called citizen science—to challenge the (usually) uncritical acceptance of chemical applications that the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and state forestry officials favored. The Hoedads established the Herbicide Study Committee, which boned up on herbicide research, assessed the economic value of the use of chemicals, and conducted field analyses of the efficacy of aerial spraying versus manual clearing of brush. The results led the committee to “question the whole array of confident statistics which are the very underpinnings of justification for aerial herbicide use.”<sup>50</sup> The pressure grew to such an extent that Wendell Jones, former timber manager of Forest Service’s Region 6, pushed back against the regional office’s decision to start an herbicide program on the Mount Hood National Forest, writing later: “My position is that herbicides were very necessary in the management of the Siuslaw, and to a lesser extent the Siskiyou and Umpqua” National Forests. But he was convinced that an herbicide program on the Mount Hood National Forest “would

be met with rigorous opposition by the Portland area enviros, and we didn’t need to do that and jeopardize the use of herbicides on these other forests. I was able to get the [regional office] folks to back off using that argument.”<sup>51</sup>

However politically savvy his plea, Jones admitted, too, that by not deploying herbicides on the Mount Hood National Forest, the agency learned an important lesson in local ecology. “In later years the Ceanothus brush, that we were being pushed to treat to release young DF [Douglas-fir] trees, turned out to be protective cover for the increased elk herds who were turning to DF as a source of food in the winter.”<sup>52</sup> Had land managers been willing to incorporate a wider managerial focus that included not just the production of timber but also the maintenance of biodiversity and other nonextractive resources—as their many critics had pressed for in the court of public opinion and the court of law—they might have avoided a number of bitter battles that ended in defeat. In 1983, responding to scientific research and public pressure, the EPA issued its final decision to stop the use of herbicides containing dioxin. In the Forest Service’s Region 5 (California) and Region 6 (Oregon and Washington), where debate over pesticides had raged the loudest, the agency and the Bureau of Land Management continued to use other herbicides until March 1984. Then, at that time, an Oregon judicial ruling stated that a government body that used herbicides must fully consider potential human health problems associated with its operations, and that all potential risks associated with their use must be incorporated in the planning process under the National Environmental Policy Act.<sup>53</sup> The two federal land management agencies immediately suspended the use of herbicides on federal lands in Oregon; shortly thereafter, regional forester Zane Grey Smith Jr. also issued a moratorium in California on herbicides. Within five years, those who once had been eager to spray had reached a different conclusion about their once default position. “I don’t foresee ever having to use chemical herbicides on this forest again,” Siuslaw reforestation expert Tom Turpin observed in 1989. “We have proved that we can manage without chemicals, and we’ve seen that what we are doing now works better and is less expensive,” a realization that Region 6 spokesman Michael Ferris seconded: “We don’t want to go back to doing business as usual . . . We were wrong to use chemicals the way we did.”<sup>54</sup>

The fights over herbicide use in the 1970s and 1980s forced the Forest Service and others to reconsider their approach to plant and pest control. Where once cost-effectiveness and resource extraction were the main criteria the Forest Service employed for whether to use such chemicals, internal disagreements and external pressure had forced it to weigh and evaluate herbicide-free strategies up front. Manual and mechanical cutting, along with controlled burns, are among the tools that land managers began to adopt as part of an integrated pest-management approach. Currently, where pesticides—whether sprayed from the ground or air—appear to be the best option, their use is tightly regulated and monitored, and must cover a much smaller area, a sharp contrast to the one-time, indiscriminate application of these toxins over tens of thousands of acres.<sup>55</sup>

This shift in the Forest Service’s approach became the anvil on which the Skykomish Valley Environmental and Economic Alliance (SVENA) hammered state and private timberland managers in the state of Washington. In late December 2015, and in language reminiscent of that which Forest Service critics employed four decades earlier, SVENA, which represents an array of grassroots

organizations, residents, and businesses in the Sultan-Startup area forty miles east of Seattle, decried a troubling incident of aerial spraying on private forestlands. “There was no advance warning to the residents of this area for this huge spraying operation in our watershed,” SVENA alleged. “Local citizens were horrified and upset when they observed for hours a helicopter with toxic clouds around it. This neighborhood has numerous homes, families, children, businesses, farms and organic farms, gardens and orchards. The residents are very concerned about their well water. There are many private wells in this area and most of them are shallow.”<sup>56</sup> Because, as the organization observed, no “company or government agency performed follow-up testing or monitoring for possible drift or contamination of non-targeted properties and resources, such as air, surface water and well water,” there could be no accountability for any damage to life or property.<sup>57</sup> This need not have happened. After all, SVENA observed, the “United States Forest Service has managed to conduct successful commercial forestry in the Mount Baker–Snoqualmie National Forest for a great many years without using chemical pesticides (herbicides or insecticides). We strongly suggest that private and state timberlands in WA could be managed in the same way, without the aerial application of chemical pesticides.”<sup>58</sup> What SVENA demanded was that the state’s Forest Practices Board align its practices with federal land managers to “protect Washington’s citizens from pesticides applied to forestlands, and monitor the effects of these chemicals on the ground.”<sup>59</sup>

Fittingly, SVENA’s analysis suggests just how far the Forest Service had come since 1965, when it unleashed chemical warfare on the Douglas-fir tussock moth. Yet SVENA’s concerns and those of its peers in the West also indicate that the struggle “to be free from chemical trespass” persists.<sup>60</sup> □

James G. Lewis is the editor of *Lands Worth Saving: The Weeks Act of 1911, the National Forests, and the Enduring Value of Public Investment* (Forest History Society, 2018). One of Char Miller’s most recent books is *Where There’s Smoke: The Environmental Science, Public Policy, and Politics of Marijuana* (University Press of Kansas, 2018). He is the W. M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis at Pomona College and a frequent contributor to *Forest History Today*. Both have served as associate editors of the *Journal of Forestry*. “Vast, Incredible Damage: Herbicides and the U.S. Forest Service” by James G. Lewis and Char Miller is reprinted from *Inevitably Toxic: Historical Perspectives on Contamination, Exposure, and Expertise*, edited by Brinda Sarathy, Vivien Hamilton, and Janet Farrell Brodie, with permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press, © 2018.

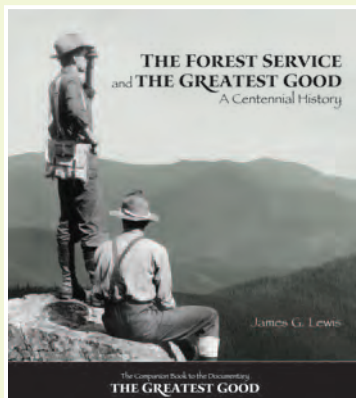
## NOTES

1. Gerald W. Williams, *The U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest: A History* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2009), 234.
2. Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 69.
3. Williams, *U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest*, 234.
4. Harold K. Steen, *The Chiefs Remember: The Forest Service, 1952–2001* (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 2004), 35–36.
5. Paul W. Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism: Management of National Forests since World War Two* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 82–131; James G. Lewis, *The Forest Service and the Greatest Good: A Centennial History* (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 2005), 136–62; Harold K. Steen, *The Forest Service: A History*. 2nd ed. (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 1976, 2005), 246–77.

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7. U.S. Forest Service, *Timber Resources for America’s Future*. Forest Resource Report No. 14 (Washington, DC: U.S. Forest Service, 1958), 26–88.
8. “FY 1905–2015 National Summary Cut and Sold Data and Graphs, USDA Forest Service,” [http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/documents/sold-harvest/documents/1905-2015\\_Natl\\_Summary\\_Graph.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/documents/sold-harvest/documents/1905-2015_Natl_Summary_Graph.pdf), 1. Lumber volume is measured in board feet, which is a board twelve inches wide, twelve inches long, and one inch thick. MBF is 1,000 board feet. The M is the Roman numeral for one thousand.
9. Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism*, xxxii.
10. Herbert Kaufman, *The Forest Ranger: A Study in Administrative Behavior* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press for Resources for the Future, 1960), 153, 96, 161; for an analysis of how groupthink shaped other federal policymaking, see Lynn Eden, *Whole World on Fire: Organizations, Knowledge, and Nuclear Weapons Devastation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), and Jacob Darwin Hamblin, *Arming Mother Nature: The Birth of Catastrophic Environmentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).
11. Kaufman, *Forest Ranger*, x.
12. R. W. Behan, “The Myth of the Omnipotent Forester,” *Journal of Forestry* 64, no. 6 (June 1966): 398.
13. Carson, *Silent Spring*, 67–68.
14. Carson, *Silent Spring*, 67–68.
15. William O. Douglas, *My Wilderness: East to Katahdin* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), 53. He recounts his visit to the area and the impact of the spraying program under the Forest Service’s “multiple use” policy in chapter 2, “Wind River Mountains.” Carson misquotes him as saying the “vast, incredible damage.” Carson, *Silent Spring*, 68.
16. Carson, *Silent Spring*, 67–68.
17. Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 297.
18. Linda J. Lear, “Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*,” *Environmental History Review* 17 (Summer 1993): 23–48.
19. Lewis, *Forest Service and the Greatest Good*, 148.
20. “Forest Service in a Changing Conservation Climate: I and E Approaches to Organizational and Public Needs, 1966” (Washington, DC: U.S. Forest Service, [1966?]), 1.
21. “Forest Service in a Changing Conservation Climate,” 27.
22. David A. Clary, *Timber and the Forest Service* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986), 185.
23. Charles Connaughton, “Forestry’s Toughest Problem,” *Journal of Forestry* 64, no. 7 (July 1966): 446.
24. Neal M. Rahm, “Education and the Environment,” *Journal of Forestry* 68, no. 5 (May 1970): 257.
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26. Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955–1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–40.
27. Hirt, *Conspiracy of Optimism*, 219.
28. Donna M. Paananen, Richard F. Fowler, and Louis F. Wilson, “The Aerial War against Eastern Region Forest Insects, 1921–86,” *Journal of Forest History* 85, no. 10 (October 1987): 185.
29. Edwin L. Johnson, “Keynote Address,” in *Symposium on the Use of Herbicides in Forestry [Proceedings]* (Washington, DC: Department of Agriculture, Office of the Secretary, 1978), 13–17, passim. The symposium was held by the Forest Service and the EPA in response to the criticism and lawsuits over the Forest Service’s use of herbicides, particularly those containing 2,4,5-T and 2,4,5-TP. By the late 1980s, some field scientists in the Forest Service, known as “ologists,” were disenchanted enough with the Forest Service’s timber program that they formed the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (later shortened to FSEEE). As an internal counter to agency groupthink and whistleblowers, FSEEE challenged agency leadership’s continued emphasis on timber production at the expense of other ecological values and launched lawsuits to stop timber sales and other management decisions that it believed violated federal laws, threatened biodiversity, or despoiled wilderness. Hirt, *Conspiracy of Optimism*, 283–85; and Lewis, *Forest Service and the Greatest Good*, 204–5.
30. Lewis, *Forest Service and the Greatest Good*, 188.

31. Dunlap, *DDT*, 177–231.
32. John Fedkiw, *Managing Multiple Uses on National Forests* (Washington, DC: U.S. Forest Service, 1998), 165.
33. William Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940–2000* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 199–200.
34. Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict*, 199–200.
35. M. Rupert Cutler, “Keynote Address,” in *Symposium on the Use of Herbicides in Forestry [Proceedings]* (Washington, DC: Department of Agriculture, Office of the Secretary, 1978), 11. The symposium was so unusual that a representative from both the EPA and the Department of Agriculture each gave a keynote address.
36. Ronald B. Hartzler, and David A. Clary, *Half a Century in Forest Conservation: A Biography and Oral History of Edward P. Cliff* (Washington, DC: U.S. Forest Service, 1981), 29.
37. Hartzler and Clary, *Half a Century in Forest Conservation*, 29. For more on the Forest Service and international forestry, see Terry West, “USDA Forest Service Involvement in Post–World War II International Forestry,” in *Changing Tropical Forests: Historical Perspectives on Today’s Challenges in Central and South America*, ed. by Harold K. Steen and Richard P. Tucker (Durham, NC: Forest History Society, 1992), 277–91.
38. Paul Frederick Cecil, *Herbicide Warfare: The Ranch Hand Project in Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1986), 29–35. The chemicals Agent Orange and Agent White received their names from the markings on their barrels. They had been developed to retard the growth of broad-leaved weeds and for the defoliation of crops such as cotton so that mechanical pickers could work more efficiently, but the concentration levels used in Southeast Asia ensured maximum and prolonged effect on a broad range of jungle vegetation. Agent Blue was more effective on food crops but only in dry weather because it was water-soluble. Other agents included Green, Pink, and Purple, which were used between 1962 and 1964 before being replaced by Orange, Blue, and White. For more on this, see Cecil, *Herbicide Warfare*, 225–32, and William A. Buckingham Jr., *Operation Ranch Hand: The Air Force and Herbicides in Southeast Asia, 1961–1971* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, U.S. Air Force, 1982), 195–202.
39. Lewis, *Forest Service and the Greatest Good*, 193–94; and Edwin A. Martini, *Agent Orange: History, Science, and the Politics of Uncertainty* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 47. Two assistance programs had been proposed in 1954. One was a loan program for purchasing equipment and the other was a reforestation and soil erosion control to stabilize sand dunes on the coast. Rufus H. Page, *Forest Industries of the Republic of Vietnam* (Washington, DC: U.S. Forest Service, 1967), 42.
40. Cecil, *Herbicide Warfare*, 57–58; Buckingham, *Operation Ranch Hand*, 109–12.
41. Buckingham, *Operation Ranch Hand*, 112; Martini, *Agent Orange*, 46.
42. Cecil, *Herbicide Warfare*, 77–78.
43. “U.S. Admits Move to Burn Forests,” *New York Times*, July 22, 1972, 5.
44. Jay H. Cravens, *A Well Worn Path* (Huntington, WV: University Editions, 1994), 324; Buckingham, *Operation Ranch Hand*, 127; Robert Reinhold, “A Modest Proposal—‘Sherwood Forest,’” *New York Times*, July 23, 1972, E2.
45. Hartzler, *Half a Century in Forest Conservation*, 263.
46. Barry R. Flamm and Jay H. Cravens, “Effects of War Damage on the Forest Resources of South Vietnam,” *Journal of Forestry* 69, no. 11 (November 1971): 789; Jay H. Cravens, interview with James G. Lewis, June 23, 2005, Forest History Society.
47. At the time he was asked to go to Vietnam, Moore was thinking about land management in holistic terms and called for “ecologically enlightened change” in the Forest Service’s wildfire policy. In 1972 he led a Forest Service team that conducted a pilot study on wildfires in federally designated wilderness areas. See Diane Smith, “From Research to Policy: The White Cap Wilderness Fires Study,” *Forest History Today* (Spring/Fall 2014), 6. The National Park Service changed its wildfire policy in 1968.
48. James G. Lewis, “Thinking Like a File Cabinet: Eco-cruising in the Bitterroots with Bud Moore,” in *The Land Speaks: New Voices at the Intersection of Oral and Environmental History*, ed. by Debbie Lee and Kathryn Newfont (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 244. See also Moore’s memoir, *The Lochsa Story: Land Ethics in the Bitterroot Mountains* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 1996), 341–52.
49. Williams, *U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest*, 277–80.
50. Erik Loomis, *Empire of Timber: Labor Unions and the Pacific Northwest Forests* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 177–78.
51. Loomis, *Empire of Timber*, 170–80; Jones quoted in Williams, *U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest*, 280.
52. Jones quoted in Williams, *U.S. Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest*, 280.
53. Gary L. Larsen, “Herbicides, the Forest Service, and NEPA,” *EPA Journal* 14, no. 1 (January 1988): 38.
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57. “Letter of Protest for Toxic Spray.”
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59. “Letter of Protest for Toxic Spray.”
60. “Letter of Protest for Toxic Spray.” Similar protests erupted in Oregon in 2014: Rebecca Clarren, “Timberland Herbicide Spraying Sickens a Community,” *High Country News*, November 10, 2014, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/46.19/timberland-herbicide-spraying-sickens-a-community>.

## The Forest Service and the Greatest Good: A Centennial History



by James G. Lewis

*The Forest Service and the Greatest Good* takes an in-depth look at the Forest Service’s conservation efforts over the last one hundred years. Jeffrey K. Stine of the Smithsonian Institution says, “It is a work of real clarity and substance that both reinforces *The Greatest Good* documentary film and extends its arguments and coverage.”



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*The Smokey Bear Wildfire Prevention campaign is the longest-running public service campaign in U.S. history. Since 1944, the iconic symbol of conservation and protection of America's forests has taught millions about their role in preventing wildfires. With Smokey and the campaign hitting a major milestone in 2019, we look back over his productive career.*

# SMOKEY BEAR

## FROM IDEA TO ICON

**S**mokey Bear's story begins with World War II. In spring 1942, a few months after Japanese planes had attacked Pearl Harbor, an enemy submarine fired shells that exploded near an oil field close to the Los Padres National Forest. U.S. Forest Service personnel feared that future attacks could ignite forest fires

and cause disastrous loss of life and destruction of property. Although the Forest Service and other federal agencies had been trying to educate people about the dangers of forest fires since Theodore Roosevelt was president, the enemy's success in attacking the U.S. mainland, however limited the damage, gave protection of the nation's lumber supply new importance.

The demands of war limited the number of firefighters, leaving communities to deal with wildfires as best they could. Prevention became crucial. To help, the U.S. Forest Service organized the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention (CFFP) program with the National Association of State Foresters and the War Advertising Council (which became the Advertising Council after the war ended). The program's purpose: to inform the public about how forest fires could undermine the war effort.

The CFFP strategy included distributing posters and postcards with frank imagery and blunt slogans, such as "Forest Fires Aid the Enemy" and "Our Carelessness, Their Secret Weapon," that were clearly aimed at adults. It wanted to reach a younger audience as well, however. In 1943, the program secured permission to use Disney's newest animated character to get the message out. In the climactic scene of the film *Bambi*, an unattended campfire spreads to the woods and forces the titular buck and his friends and family to flee ahead of the raging forest fire. Though the film had not done well at the box office upon release in 1942, nonetheless the CFFP must have concluded that a cartoon character people

knew by name would resonate with audiences of all ages.

With *Bambi*'s one-year loan period coming to an end in 1944, the CFFP set about creating its own fire prevention mascot. It obviously could not use a deer again. One poster issued during this time showed three nondescript bears gathered around a tree with a fire prevention sign tacked to it; another had alarmed squirrels in the style of *Bambi*'s artwork reacting to a fire not visible to the viewer. After some debate, campaign's developers settled on a bear. Bears, it was decided, were familiar to people no matter where they lived because of their presence in zoos and circuses, the many children's stories about them, and the popularity of stuffed bear toys. Furthermore, a bear could stand erect like a human and look capable of fighting a fire using a shovel or bucket. Lastly, a bear would command respect because of its size and intimidating physical presence. As for what to call him, the bear's creators were inspired by a heroic New York City fireman named Joseph "Smokey Joe" Martin.<sup>1</sup>

The Forest Service authorized the creation of Smokey Bear on August 9, 1944, a date now celebrated as Smokey's "birthday." Artist Albert Staehle delivered his final rendition of Smokey Bear on October 10 of that year, complete with his trademark campaign hat and jeans. Three years later, Smokey's slogan—"Remember ...only YOU can prevent forest fires"—made its debut. It proved so effective that in later years, just the image of Smokey's face with the words "Remember" or "Only you" conveyed the message.

BY JAMES G. LEWIS



The use of squirrels in this c. 1944–45 poster reflected the appeal of using forest animals to convey a fire prevention message.

Stahle is credited with drawing the first Smokey image, which looks more realistic than those that followed. Smokey's fearsome teeth soon disappeared and his claws softened into fingers with which to point. James Hansen made him appear more "adult, rotund, and drawn in caricature." Rudolph "Rudy" Wendelin served as Smokey Bear's official artist from 1946 until his retirement in 1973. He added Smokey's name to his hat and belt buckle and made him look more human.<sup>2</sup> Wendelin also created the statuette used for the various Smokey awards given for fire prevention service at national, regional, and state levels. In addition, he mentored several other artists who worked on the bear, ensuring that Smokey would have a fairly consistent look.

### SMOKEY COMES TO LIFE

In spring 1950, a wildfire broke out in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico. The first crew to respond discovered a growing wildfire sweeping the ground between the trees, driven by a strong wind. Soon, about 30 firefighters were caught directly in its path, along with a lone bear cub, which took refuge in a tree. The crew survived the blaze by lying face down on a rockslide for more than an hour as the fire burned past them. The cub survived, too, but with badly burned paws and hind legs. The crew brought him back to fire camp. Ray Bell, of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, took him to a veterinarian and then to his home to care for him.



This is the first Smokey poster issued. In Albert Staehle's early drafts of Smokey, the bear did not wear jeans.

News about the little bear spread nationwide in no time, as did photos of the cub with Bell's young daughter, Judy, in front of a Smokey poster. Within a few weeks, state and federal officials had secured a home for the cub at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. As the living symbol of Smokey Bear, the cub received numerous gifts and so many letters he was eventually given his own zip code. Upon his death in 1976, he was buried at the Smokey Bear Historical Park in Capitan, New Mexico, where visitors can pay tribute and learn more about Smokey's origins.

Smokey has come to life in other ways. In the 1950s, he appeared in innumerable children's books and coloring books published to convey his message. Children who wrote to Smokey received a Junior Ranger kit, complete with a badge shaped like the Forest Service shield but with Smokey's face embossed on it. As his popularity continued to grow over the next decade, he got his own television special, an animated Saturday morning cartoon series, and a balloon in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. Costumed versions of Smokey—some of them homemade before standardized ones were developed—have appeared in parades large and small since at least the early 1950s, most recently in the 2019 Tournament of Roses parade.

In 1952, singer Eddy Arnold recorded "Smokey the Bear." The song further bolstered the popularity of Smokey but also created confusion about his official name: songwriters Steve Nelson and Jack Rollins had added "the" only to keep the song's rhythm. The same year the song was recorded, increasing commercial interest





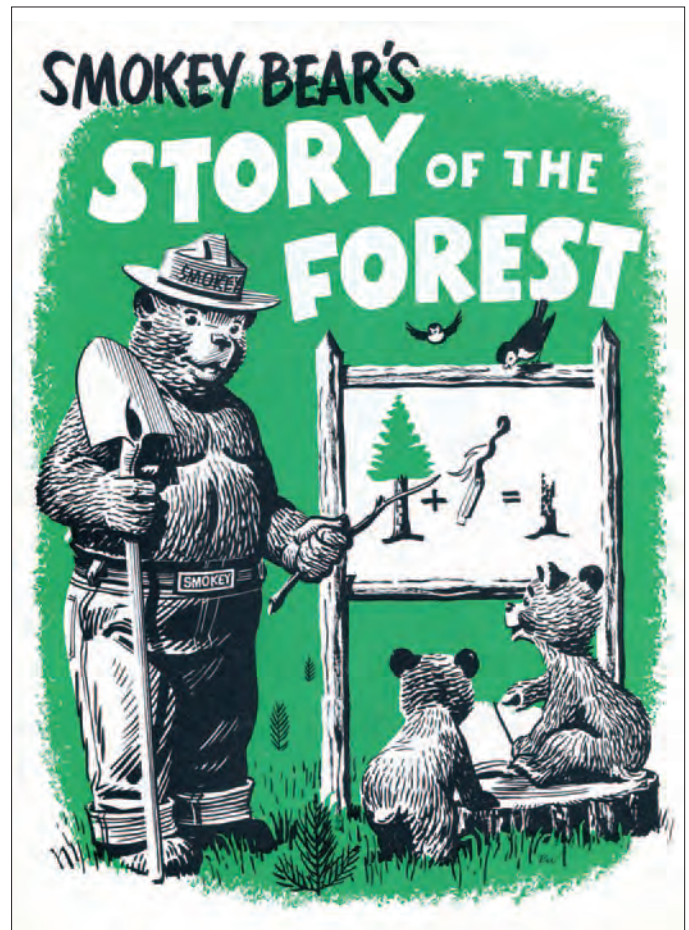
Russ Wetzel, a cartoonist by training, produced this version of Smokey in 1947, which the CFFP determined was not serious enough to match the message.

prompted Congress to remove Smokey's image from the public domain and require a license to create Smokey products. Fees and royalties collected go into an account for fire prevention education. President Dwight Eisenhower, who signed the bill, received one of the first Smokey Bear toys to give to his grandson.

### SMOKEY'S ENDURING MESSAGE

Over the decades, Smokey's fire prevention message has reached millions of people. As wildfires grew in size and frequency during the 1980s and 1990s, however, debates arose as to what that message should be. The general public was hearing conflicting messages. Forest researchers and ecologists wanted to create awareness that not all fires were bad, and in fact, some forest ecosystems needed fire to thrive, if not survive. The CFFP wanted people to understand that wildfires posed a danger to other areas, such as grasslands. So after more than half a century of warning about the danger of forest fires, in 2001, Smokey's message was changed to "Only you can prevent wildfires."<sup>3</sup>

The CFFP has also updated Smokey's personality. Over the decades, he has increasingly shown a softer side, becoming less of a scold and more of a supportive friend. In addition to making parade appearances, Smokey has appeared with popular stars and athletes, in person or in public service announcements (PSAs), often putting his large furry arm around the celebrity's shoulder in a gesture of friendship. Posters in the 1960s and 1970s showed him in the woods with children, relaxing in his ranger cabin, or



Under "Rudy" Wendelin's direction, Smokey assumed his more humanoid form, as seen on the cover of this 1968 coloring book.

surrounded by vulnerable woodland creatures, further hinting that he was a bear everyone could get along with. In 2013, the CFFP released PSAs depicting Smokey giving out hugs to startled human visitors in the forest who had demonstrated they knew how to avoid causing wildfires. Popular phrases have been adapted for use in messaging. In 2010, for example, Smokey encouraged young adults to "Get your Smokey on"—to be more like him and speak up if they saw someone acting carelessly. At about the same time, a CGI version of Smokey made its debut, as did a mobile app to provide critical information about wildfire prevention, including a step-by-step guide to safely building and extinguishing campfires, as well as a map of current wildfires across America.<sup>4</sup>

But because humans still cause nearly ninety percent of wildfires nationwide, Smokey's message enjoining Americans to prevent wildfires remains relevant—and for the most part effective. Recent surveys conducted by the Ad Council reveal that Smokey's image is recognized by eight of ten Americans.<sup>5</sup> That shows how well the CFFP and Smokey have kept up with a changing culture. The Smokey Bear website offers information about fire science and ecology, fire prevention, educational materials for schoolchildren, and Smokey's history. In addition to radio and television PSAs and educational materials in English and Spanish, the Smokey campaign pursues an integrated communications strategy that incorporates social media to target young adults. Smokey and his Forest Service team post photos and tweets and live-stream events like his birthday parties. The CFFP worked with Snapchat



Smokey has appeared in countless parades to promote his message. To help mark his 75th birthday, he rode with (l-r) U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Regional Forester Randy Moore, NASF President and Missouri State Forester Lisa Allen, Ad Council VP of Campaign Development Amy Gibson-Grant, and U.S. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen on the “Smokey Wagon” built specifically for the 2019 Tournament of Roses parade. He made his first appearance in that parade in 1959.

in 2017 to develop a Smokey photo custom lens so that users could see themselves as Smokey, with his ears, snout, and hat. In April 2019, an animated Smokey emoji was released, with celebrities Stephen Colbert, Jeff Foxworthy, and Al Roker providing his voice. To capitalize on the attention generated by the 75th anniversary of his creation, the CFFP launched SmokeyBear75th.org to help people find Smokey birthday events near them.

That Smokey is turning 75 is, perhaps, a bittersweet occasion. His popularity is as high as ever, and the attention he will draw over the next year may even increase that, which means more people will hear his message. But as long as humans are the main cause of wildfires, Smokey Bear will continue celebrating birthdays. □

*James Lewis is the editor of Forest History Today, and the proud owner of two Smokey Bear t-shirts. He wishes to thank Whitney Forman-Cook, communications director for the National Association of State Foresters, for her assistance with the article.*

## NOTES

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2. “Smokey’s 21, Minus Teeth—Portly but Still Busiest,” *Reno Evening Gazette*, March 25, 1963.
3. The message that grasslands can burn is not new. In the 1950s, the CFFP produced posters with a painting of cowboys watching over their grazing cattle that warned of preventing range fires, with Smokey’s face in the bottom border.
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*Forest bathing, or shinrin-yoku, can be defined as immersing oneself in a forest to mindfully engage with the surroundings in order to awaken the senses. Although the term was first coined in Japan in 1982, forest bathing can trace its roots back several centuries to other mindful activities also developed in Japan. The practice has well-documented health benefits and consequently has caught on around the world as an antidote to the stresses and anxieties found in the modern industrialized world.*

# FROM HAIKU TO SHINRIN-YOKU

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF FOREST BATHING

Forest bathing is based on the Japanese term *shinrin-yoku* (森林浴), which was coined by Tomohide Akiyama of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries in 1982, in part as a way beyond logging to garner value from the forest. In Japanese, the term comprises three kanji characters—the first

character is composed of three trees and means “forest,” the second character is two trees and refers to the interconnectedness of the forest, and the third character connotes the luxury of being fully engulfed in the abundance that surrounds you.

The essence of forest bathing, however, goes back a lot further than when the term was coined. As evidenced in haiku poems about nature and with the concept of *wabi-sabi*—the beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete—much of traditional Japanese culture is based in a deep understanding of and connection to nature. Ikebana, the Japanese art of arranging flowers, for example, dates back to the sixth century; it focuses on a personal and direct relationship with nature. According to one of Japan’s most influential modern ikebana practitioners, artist Toshiro Kawase, ikebana helps one realize that “the whole universe is contained within a single flower.”<sup>1</sup>

The ancient people of Japan honored sacred spirits that they recognized in nature, manifesting in mountains, rocks, rivers, and trees. Shugend Buddhist priests, or Yamabushi, are mystics and warriors whose origins go back to at least the eighth century. These

hermitic seekers live in the mountains, pursuing spiritual powers gained through asceticism. Their traditional role was to help guide people to one’s true nature and to teach discipline and warrior ways. Yamabushi believe that the highest truth exists in nature. Shugend is a path to help people strip away excess, to understand themselves better through immersion in the power and strength of the natural world. Everything in nature is considered sacred and healing—be it a stone or a river—and practitioners use rituals to honor each of the elements: earth, air, water, and fire.

What religious ascetics have intrinsically known for two thousand years, modern researchers have confirmed with science and data. Japanese forestry administrator Tomohide Akiyama was aware of the pioneering studies of the immune-boosting effects of phytoncides, essential oils exuded by certain trees and plants, when he first proposed forest bathing in 1982. Since then, much research has focused on the stress-busting and mood-enhancing benefits of exposure to phytoncides in nature....

BY JULIA PLEVIN



*Forest bathing is about the journey, not the destination, and about being mindfully engaged while in the woods.*



## FOREST BATHING AND MODERN LIFE

We're living in a pivotal moment in human history when the spiritual and the scientific worlds are merging. We're beginning to understand what happens on both a physical and subatomic level as we engage with nature. It's been scientifically shown that spending time immersed in nature reduces stress, lowers heart rate, lowers cortisol levels, decreases inflammation, boosts the immune system, improves mood, increases the ability to focus, jump-starts creativity, increases energy levels, and makes us more generous and compassionate.<sup>2</sup>

In a study spanning visitors to twenty-four forests, Japanese researchers showed that when people strolled through a forested area, their levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, plummeted almost 16 percent more than when they walked in an urban environment.<sup>3</sup> The effects were quickly apparent: within minutes of beginning a walk in the woods, the subjects' blood pressures showed improvement. Results like these led Dr. Qing Li to declare "forest medicine" a new medical science that "could let you know how to be more active, more relaxed, and healthier with reduced stress and reduced risk of lifestyle-related disease and cancer by visiting forests."<sup>4</sup>

In forest therapy programs in Japan, groups are led through immersive nature walks, where they are invited to slow down and rediscover the world around them. They may be invited to smell fragrant leaves or listen to stories of where beloved foods, such as chestnuts, come from. There are breaks for healing bento lunches, meditation, and soaking in the negative ions from nearby waterfalls. These programs may also include nature yoga, wood-working, and soba noodle-making. Such courses are offered across the country, often in small towns accessible by high-speed rail. The Japanese version of forest bathing blurs the line between ecotourism and nature-focused healing.

With this influx of evidence on the health benefits of being in nature, the practice of forest bathing has begun to spread to other parts of the world, including Korea, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States. Forest bathing is the antidote to modern life. This practice may have started in Japan, but it's evolving into a new way of living, which is actually the original way of living—in right relationship with the earth. □

*Julia Plevin is the founder of the popular Forest Bathing Club (more than 1,000 members), and has more than a decade of experience guiding groups of people into the forest to practice shinrin-yoku. This excerpt is from her book The Healing Magic of Forest Bathing: Finding Calm, Creativity, and Connection in the Natural World (Ten Speed Press, 2019), and is reproduced here with permission of the publisher.*

## NOTES

1. Deborah Needleman, "The Rise of Modern Ikebana," *New York Times* (November 6, 2017), [www.nytimes.com/2017/11/06/t-magazine/ikebana-japanese-flower-art.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/06/t-magazine/ikebana-japanese-flower-art.html).
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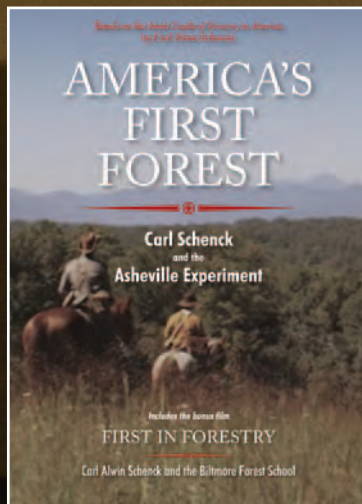


“I soon realized that German forestry was as impossible of success in the United States as was Indian or Swedish forestry. A brand-new sort of forestry was needed.”

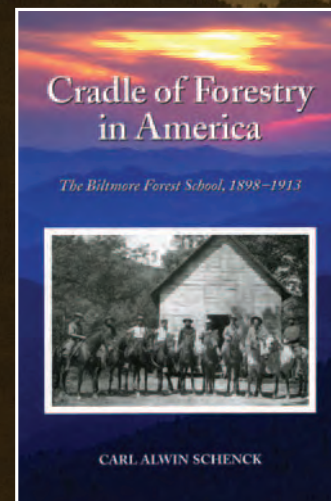
# AMERICA'S FIRST FOREST

## Carl Schenck & the Asheville Experiment

In 1895, at the magnificent Biltmore Estate nestled in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, German forester Carl Alwin Schenck began restoring the land using the “new” science of forestry. Then he established the Biltmore Forest School, the nation's first. Using a log cabin for their school house and George Vanderbilt's Pisgah Forest as their outdoor classroom, Schenck taught “his boys” how to manage a forest—and demonstrated how America could conserve *all* its forests. Based on Schenck's memoir *Cradle of Forestry in America*, the Emmy Award-winning documentary film *America's First Forest* tells the story of the birth of the American conservation movement through the efforts of one of its founders. The DVD includes this film and the 28-minute featurette *First in Forestry: Carl Alwin Schenck and the Biltmore Forest School*, adapted from *America's First Forest* and is ideal for classroom use.



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Look for *America's First Forest* on public television stations around the country.



In 2018, the Association for Consulting Foresters celebrated its 70th anniversary. The timeline that follows was prepared by Association of Consulting Foresters Executive Director Lynn Wilson as part of that celebration.

# MARKING A MILESTONE

**THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING FORESTERS  
CELEBRATES 70 YEARS**

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**T**he Association of Consulting Foresters of America, Inc. (ACF) was founded in 1948 to advance the professionalism, ethics, and interests of professional foresters whose primary work was consulting to the public. The ACF is the only national association for consulting foresters.

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In the spring of 1948, Alex Setser, a consulting forester from Tennessee, began polling all of the consulting foresters in the United States, concerned with networking and sharing of ideas within the profession. He realized that an organization was needed to represent these consultants and allow them to acquaint themselves with their colleagues, protect the field by establishing uniform standards, disseminate new practices, and provide foresters, as well as their clients, with a means of locating consulting foresters of proven reputation. In December 1948, an organizational meeting was held in Boston, and five foresters joined to create the Association of Consulting Foresters of America. These men, who later became the association's founding members, were Halsey Hicks, Robert Moore, Clinton Peltier, Ed Stuart, and J. Atwood Whitman.

The ACF was originally conceived as a division of the Society of American Foresters, but members opted to form a separate entity. The organization was founded on the principles of maintaining and enforcing ethical standards in

forestry, increasing legislative activity, providing information, primarily through its *Consultant* monthly journal, and promoting the use of expertise in the management of forestry resources through continuing education offerings. The association later stated its purpose in its constitution, bylaws, and its code of ethics. The ACF requirement that all of its members have a forestry degree from an approved college or university, at least five years of practical experience in forest management and administration, and at least one year's experience as a forestry consultant was altered in 2011 to allow students and recent graduates and in 2016 to allow affiliate members to join. As of 2017, ACF boasted more than 715 members. The ACF is divided into twenty-four regional chapters and is headquartered in Williamsburg, Virginia.

The records of ACF are housed and maintained by the Forest History Society. They were received from the Association of Consulting Foresters of America on May 1999 (arranged by Harry Murphy) and February 2002 (donated by Keville Larson). □

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**BY AMANDA ROSS | TIMELINE BY LYNN WILSON**

Membership dues are doubled to \$100 in April to support the Washington office. Art Ennis is hired for \$150 per month and the use of a leased car. The office is a sublet space from the American National Metric Council. Art spent \$6,000 of his own money because ACF needed a computer, and while paid for two days a week, he worked nearly full time.

**1983**

At the annual meeting, \$9,000 is raised to fund representation on the Hill and plans for a Washington, D.C., office are formed.

**1979**

The ACF Code of Ethics passes the first revision since 1949.

**1976**

ACF membership count reaches 180 with an annual income of \$6,000. Ed Stuart continues to serve as executive director.

**1973**

The U.S. Forest Service finances the states providing one-on-one services to landowners from state employees. One state marked as high as a million board feet every 30 days. ACF members go to Congress to testify before the Appropriations Committee to request that the situation be corrected.

**1972**

Specialization Directory is compiled and begins production on an annual basis. ACF Member Eley Frazer and Bill Greaves of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) agree that the consulting forester would negate the need of a staff forester for TVA. ACF/TVA Project is conceived of and carried out.

**1969**

President Bill Schofield focuses on the need for continuing education. Course 1 of what became the Practicing Foresters Institute (PFI) is held at the University of Georgia in 1968. ACF is first in developing continuing educational programs, including ethics.

**1966-**

**1983-1990**

ACF's Objectives and Code of Ethics are revised and policy and position statements clarified. Membership rules are changed to provide for Candidate and Retired Members and employees of firms. The Practicing Foresters Institute is established on January 1, 1984.



## THE ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING FORESTERS

# CELEBRATES

Jack Winn is elected the first ACF Distinguished Forester.

**1993**

Legislative Committee Chairman Harry Murphy arranges a tax symposium sponsored by PFIT and Auburn University in cooperation with ACF to recommend changes in federal taxation. Dues are now \$250.

**1995**

**1996**

ACF keeps pace with advancing technology by launching a web page on the "World Wide Web."

**1998**

Lynn Wilson is hired to run the ACF national office.

**1999**

The North Carolina Society of Consulting Foresters by an overwhelming majority votes to affiliate with the North Carolina Chapter of ACF. ACF sponsors a congressional staff seminar with the School of Forestry at Auburn University to provide information about the federal tax impact on private non-industrial forest landowners. Full and Retired Members total increases to 466.

**2001**

The Kentucky Association of Consulting Foresters invites Lynn Wilson, Rick Burgeson, and Less Ott to address its membership on the feasibility of becoming an ACF chapter. In February of the following year, the groups merge. Members total 638.

**2003**

The Michigan Association of Consulting Foresters merges with the Michigan ACF Chapter.

**2004**

ACF enters a Memorandum of Understanding with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service to streamline members' certification as third-party technical service providers. The West Virginia Chapter wins the first Chapter of the Year Award.







# WORLD WAR I & FOREST HISTORY

*TO COMMEMORATE  
THE CENTENNIAL  
OF THE END OF WORLD WAR I,  
WE OFFER FOUR ARTICLES  
THAT LOOK AT THE WAR  
THROUGH THE LENS OF FOREST HISTORY.*

*Opposite page:*

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*A German sniper hid in this tree to protect himself while shooting at French troops in the Aisne sector.  
A French soldier poses where his enemy had once stood. (From "France at War," American Forestry, April 1918)*

*The work of the American Expeditionary Force's forest engineers proved critical to the Allied effort in France. Celebrated in their day for the heroic task of supplying lumber for U.S. troops, today they are little more than a footnote in forest history. But the authors believe that what the forest engineers experienced and learned during World War I deserves re-examination, and end this summary history by proposing some questions for historians to consider.*

# “WE ARE HELL ON CUTTING DOWN TREES”

## UNEXPLORED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FOREST ENGINEERS’ EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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**I**n 1978, historian David Clary wrote that “regrettably, there has been no major study of the forestry units of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War One.”<sup>1</sup> Forty years after his short piece was published in the *Journal of Forest History*, his call has remained unanswered. Despite the emergence of environmental history

as a major field of historical inquiry and the publication of many important works on forestry, not even an article-length academic study of the AEF Forestry Division—officially designated the 20th Engineers—has appeared.

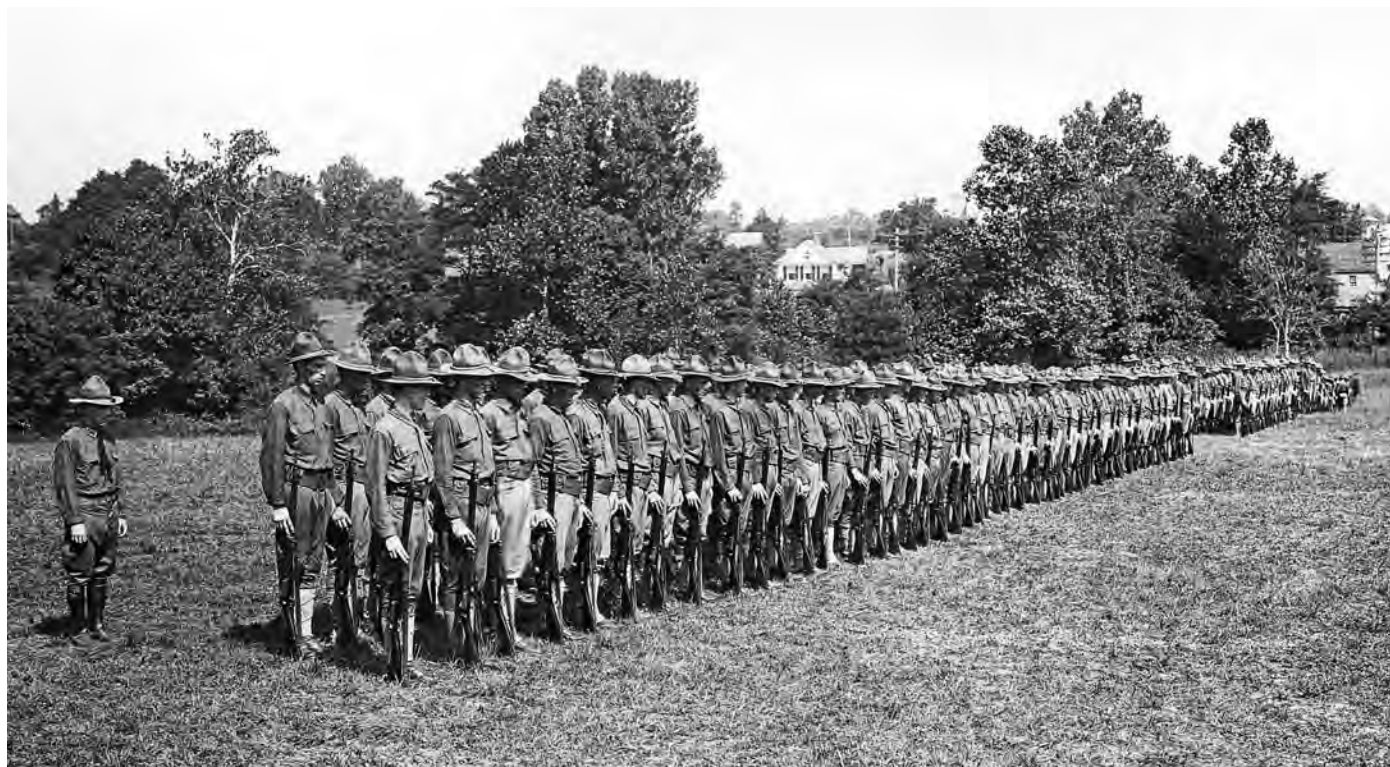
A thorough treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this brief article. The purpose here is to give a brief narrative of the 20th Engineers from their formation in 1917 to their demobilization in 1919, introduce to readers several notable people who organized it, and then pose questions about possible influences of the 20th Engineers’ wartime experiences on postwar American forestry practices and the forest environment that today’s historians might consider.

### WOOD GOES TO WAR

In August 1914, as European nations took up arms, the United States was neutral. But myriad factors, including Germany’s renewed use of unrestricted submarine warfare against neutral shipping, President Woodrow Wilson’s perceptions of America’s role in the postwar world, and the shocking Zimmermann Telegram, propelled the United States into the war on April 6, 1917. American soldiers entered combat in great numbers only in late May 1918, thirteen months after war was declared and only six months before the armistice ended it. More than two million American troops served in AEF units on the Western Front in France. They fought in places such as Chateau Thierry, Belleau

---

BY BYRON E. PEARSON AND JAMES G. LEWIS



Not all officers of the Tenth and Twentieth Engineers came from the U.S. Forest Service. First Lieutenant John G. Kelley, of the Booth-Kelley Lumber Company, at the far right, came from private industry. The men are shown during basic training at the campus of American University in Washington, D.C., before shipping out.

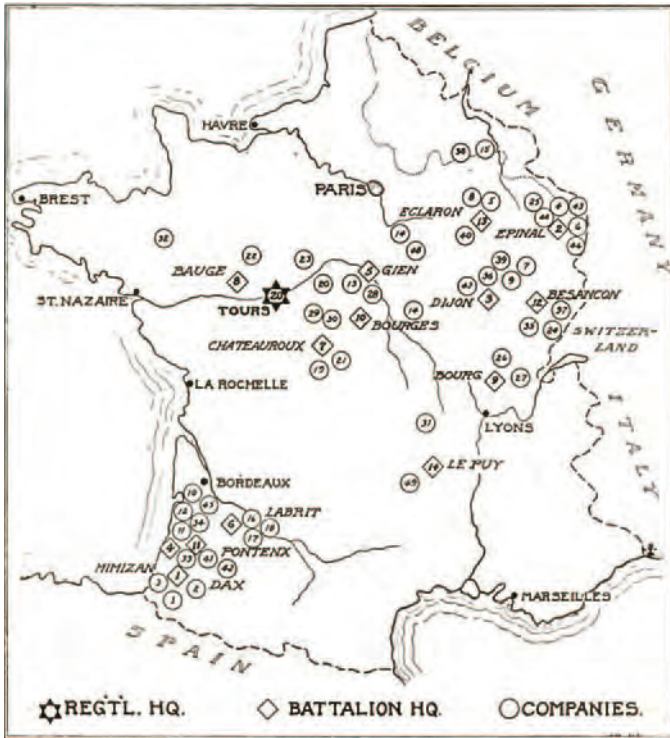
Wood, San Michael, and the Meuse-Argonne and have deservedly attained fame in American military history. Approximately 116,700 American men died overseas.

In World War I, arguably the first war between industrialized societies, victory in the field depended on two things: the capacity to replace human losses and the ability to keep armed forces supplied with materiel.<sup>2</sup> And supplying materiel was inseparably linked to the production of and access to wood, a challenge perhaps as old as organized warfare itself. U.S. merchant ships brought food and supplies, including munitions—millions of shells—packed in wooden boxes. They tied up at wooden docks, and their cargo was stored in wooden warehouses. Wooden boxcars transported soldiers on railroads made from millions of wooden ties that crossed chasms on wooden trestle bridges. Trucks negotiated the notorious French mud on wooden roads. In camp, soldiers slept in wooden barracks and ate in wooden mess halls while seated on wooden benches. At the front, soldiers fired rifles with wooden stocks, drank from wooden casks, and burned enormous quantities of fuelwood to keep warm during the cold French winters. Troops protected their lines with tens of thousands of miles of barbed wire held in place with wooden stakes, lined 400 miles of trenches with wooden wall supports, covered the mud with wooden planks, took shelter in bunkers protected with wooden beams and roofs, and dug hundreds of miles of wood-framed tunnels under enemy lines. Meanwhile their officers communicated via telephone and telegraph lines supported by tens of thousands of wooden poles, and fledgling air corps pilots reconnoitered enemy positions and engaged in dramatic aerial combat in airplanes constructed largely of wood and fabric.

### WOODSMEN GO TO WAR

The U.S. Army was ill prepared to enter the maelstrom in April 1917: its peacetime force of about 153,000 had to be expanded into an army of several million men. And so it was with the forestry regiments as well. None existed at the outbreak of the war. Given the amount of wood needed by the Americans troops, and the threat to trans-Atlantic transport posed by German submarines, shipments from the United States had to be supplemented by local supplies. Like their Canadian counterparts, who had entered the war a year earlier, American troops would have to rely on wood production from French forests. Immediately after the U.S. declaration of war, the British and French urged the United States to form a forestry regiment to assist in the production of wood for their use at the front.<sup>3</sup> Government officials responded quickly, and by July 1917, Henry Graves, chief of the U.S. Forest Service, had been commissioned as a major (and was soon promoted to lieutenant colonel). Soon thereafter, Graves arrived in France, along with several other Forest Service men who had traded Forest Service uniforms for military ones, to begin preparations for logging and lumber production.

In an article published a few months later, Graves greatly understated the challenges, perhaps to assuage concerns on the home front. Facing almost inconceivable logistical problems, Graves and his staff, augmented in August 1917 by still more Forest Service leaders, including his associate forester, William B. Greeley, organized transport, contracted with French foresters and timberland owners, and prepared for the daunting task of supplying lumber for the Americans.<sup>4</sup> The arguments over prices and access between the Americans and their French hosts became heated at times. Greeley vented in his diary a month after arriving, “Hell was popping in office this morning over misinformation on lumber



This map of France shows the location of the regiment's various units at the time of the armistice. The dotted line near the Belgian border shows the frontline as of about July 1918, before the Allies pushed the Germans back.

shipments given us by French and the attitude of Gen'l. Petain toward refusal of all American requisitions." This, a day after complaining about their "apparent double-dealing" over lumber.<sup>5</sup>

Major Barrington Moore, who accompanied Graves to France, gave this blunt assessment after the war: "Everything was done under the utmost tension and still not rapidly enough." To his dismay, he confronted inadequate docking space that required "miles and miles" of new wharves, and he was appalled that the French had agreed to contribute (and charge for) the standing timber only—they offered no labor or infrastructure, and no logging railroads existed.<sup>6</sup> The French objected to American plans to practice clearcutting and insisted on the use of French selection harvesting methods in both government and private forests.

But for the willingness of the superbly organized Canadian Forestry Corps, which had begun operations the summer before, to assist their American counterparts in everything from establishing liaisons with the French to allowing the Americans use of Canadian sawmills until their own arrived, it is questionable whether the AEF's Forestry Division could have organized itself quickly enough to have made a meaningful contribution to the war effort in 1918. General John "Blackjack" Pershing, the commander of the AEF, frantically cabled his superiors in July 1917 that if the problem of wood supply was not solved immediately, disaster would be the result. With the Allied armies tottering from manpower shortages and about to absorb what would be the last great German offensive of the war, Pershing nonetheless demanded that the transportation of fighting men be halted until an adequate force of "forest soldiers" had been sent to initiate a crash program of lumber harvesting and production. Lumberjacks, engineers, and unskilled laborers were all part of this initial requisition.<sup>7</sup> Washington complied. In the end, the Forestry Division had to be self-sufficient in every way.

## "THE LARGEST REGIMENT IN THE WORLD"

Back in the United States, the call went out for volunteers from the ranks of experienced lumbermen to join what eventually came to be called "the largest regiment in the world." In response to the initial British and French requests for 1,000 men each, the regiment was initially formed as the 10th Engineers and first mustered at American University in Washington, D.C. The commanders of the AEF soon recognized that the need for lumber would require a substantially larger unit, and the regiment was expanded. The first men landed in La Havre on October 7, 1917, and were immediately transported via rail for thirty-six hours nonstop—forty men per boxcar with no toilet facilities—to Nevers in central France to set up their first camp.<sup>8</sup> By November 1, all 7,500 men of the 10th Engineers had arrived. Deployed throughout France, after building lumber camps essentially from the ground up, the 10th Engineers produced its first lumber on November 25 near Levier, using a small borrowed French sawmill. The first American mill began producing two days later near Mortumier.<sup>9</sup>

As American mills came on line, the first detachments of another forestry regiment, the 20th Engineers, began arriving in France on November 25, 1917. The speed with which the foresters of the AEF began to produce lumber almost defies comprehension. Beginning with two mills in November 1917, the 10th and 20th Engineers brought an average of ten new sawmills into production every month. Fifty-nine mills were in operation by the time the German army's last great offensive was halted at Chateau Thierry at the end of May 1918, and eighty-one by the time the Allies' final attack began in October 1918.<sup>10</sup> Anticipating an even greater need for wood production, the two forestry units were combined into the 20th Engineers that same month. Plans were under way to recruit additional men to bring the total to more than 42,000 by July 1919. At the time of the armistice, the 20th Engineers numbered 30,145 enlisted men and 514 officers.<sup>11</sup> It was the largest division-sized military unit in the world.

The 20th Engineers' production numbers are staggering. In just over one year of production it rendered 218,211,000 board feet of finished lumber for docks, buildings, roads, bombproofing, and tunnel supports; 3,051,187 standard-gauge railroad ties and 954,667 narrow-gauge railroad ties; 39,095 pilings for wharves and docks; 340,000 cords of fuelwood; enough poles to string 1,984 miles of telephone and telegraph wire; and 1,926,603 pieces of "miscellaneous round products."<sup>12</sup> It was a very close-run affair, however. Had the war continued for another year, the 20th Engineers would have had to begin logging in steep mountain terrain and producing lumber from inferior stands of trees, and demand for lumber might have outstripped supply. Greeley and other high-ranking officers viewed with trepidation their orders to procure more lumber from the declining supply of easily accessible standing timber; they argued that wartime demand could not be met without importing lumber from the United States, and they expressed relief when the armistice rendered these concerns moot.

The esprit de corps of the Forest Engineers rivaled that of any fighting unit in the AEF. Recruiting posters set the expectations, proclaiming that the volunteers were "first in emergencies." After the war, not surprisingly, officers writing of their units' morale contended that it was only the knowledge of the great and necessary service they were providing to the fighting men at the front that kept many of them from leaving their units and joining in the fight themselves. Graves once overheard a man mutter, "We're



After arriving in France, the men rode for thirty-six hours straight on a train, with forty men to a boxcar and no toilet facilities. Forest engineer George Kephart took this photograph of the men disembarking after riding from Le Havre to Nevers, on October 29, 1917.

not much on drill but we are hell on cutting down trees.” A Forestry Division veteran submitted the following doggerel to the *Stars and Stripes* ten years later:

*I surely ain't much of a soldier  
Er else they wuld give me a gun  
Instead of an axe an a crosscut  
Fer fightin against the durn Hun ...*

*And yit I just cain't help a-thinkin  
Of what in the devil we'd do  
With nothing but crosscuts and axes  
If ever them Botches got through.<sup>13</sup>*

Yet at times the men expressed their willingness to fight, something supporters of the forest industry emphasized after the war. “Every one of the more than 18,000 who were in the regiment at the time the armistice was signed had been anxious to get to the front,” wrote Percival Sheldon Ridsdale, editor of *American Forestry* magazine.<sup>14</sup>

Patriotism and can-do optimism were measured not in the number of enemy killed or captured or a successful advance into enemy territory, but by how many board feet a mill could produce and how quickly it could resume production after being moved. Competitions between units resulted in some truly extraordinary feats. One sawmill halted production, moved twenty-five miles, and resumed sawing within forty-seven hours. In another instance a 20,000-foot mill—machinery designed to produce 20,000 board feet of lumber during a ten-hour shift—used three crews to cut in one twenty-four-hour period 177,486 board feet of lumber, almost nineteen times its designed production capacity.<sup>15</sup>

When the Army medical staff admonished the Forestry Division’s commanders that they were working their men too

hard, these hardened lumberjacks and millworkers scoffed—and worked harder still.<sup>16</sup> The production figures bear this out. At the beginning of 1918, the AEF had set a production quota of ten million board feet per month. By November, the Forestry Division’s eighty-one sawmills were producing more than two million board feet of lumber *per day*. “Here comes the knockout,” proclaimed one contemporary cartoon of an angry Uncle Sam striding across the Atlantic carrying a spruce club; another showed lumberjacks hacking away at a tree that resembled German Kaiser Wilhelm II.

But despite their status as noncombatants, there were casualties. Several died of spinal meningitis on the 10th Engineers’ voyage overseas in September of 1917, and 150 had to be left behind in quarantine in Glasgow. Sawmills a few miles from the front came under artillery bombardments, and several men working behind the lines were shot by German snipers during the battle of the Meuse-Argonne in October and November 1918. In February 1918, 230 American troops, including 95 men of the 10th Engineers, died when a German submarine torpedoed their transport ship, the *Tuscania*, off the coast of Ireland.<sup>17</sup> And of course there was the largely unrecorded wastage of men crushed by falling timber, maimed by whirring steel blades six feet in diameter, or injured by other causes. Altogether, approximately 375 men of the 20th Engineers perished during World War I—not including those who died during the great influenza epidemic on their way back to the United States.<sup>18</sup>

One little known fact about the Forestry Division is that African Americans served in it at a time when the U.S. Army was ostensibly segregated and African American troops usually worked as laborers in rear areas—the 369th Harlem Hellfighters being a notable exception. Incorporated into the Forestry Division as Service Auxiliaries, African Americans were mostly relegated into labor units and fuelwood-cutting companies. “But several sawmill crews



This fuelwood crew was from Company A with the 503rd Engineers, photographed in Mortumier.

composed largely or entirely of black soldiers made exceedingly creditable records,” wrote Greeley in a forestry magazine shortly after the war.<sup>19</sup> He also wrote to a nongovernment agency that was assisting returning lumbermen with finding jobs that 800 African American “Engineer Service Troops which have been employed upon forestry operations” would need jobs after the war, too.<sup>20</sup>

### THE POSTWAR YEARS

Demobilization came swiftly after the November 1918 armistice. All members of the former 10th Engineers had embarked for the United States by February 1919. The rest of the 20th Engineers remained behind to shut down milling operations, remove equipment, clean up logging and milling sites and camps, and settle accounts with French authorities. The last AEF lumber was milled in May 1919, and the troops of the 20th Engineers were all back home by the end of that July.<sup>21</sup> Their duty done “over there,” it was time to come back to the United States and reenter society “over here.” Career opportunities for many were promising: the lumbering industry launched a campaign to attract unit veterans by promising them employment on their return.<sup>22</sup> However, the economic depression that hit the domestic lumber market after 1926 may have altered many veterans’ plans.

Of the thousands who had served, only a handful were in a position to apply what they had learned in France to their own nation’s forests. Some veterans of the 20th Engineers, including Greeley and Graves, reflected on their interactions with French foresters and their forestry techniques. After returning to the United States in mid-1918 to resume leadership of the Forest Service, Graves wrote that the French harvesting methods used by the AEF were “finer and more careful than those of America.”<sup>23</sup> Captain Ralph Faulkner argued that American foresters needed to learn “a lesson from France” and cited an instance of how early-nineteenth-century French forestry officials had reseeded sandy

wastes near Bordeaux and transformed them into immense and profitable forests. Taking American policymakers to task, he suggested these reforestation methods be used because they represent a “sane forest policy.”<sup>24</sup>

Greeley contributed a chapter about the American war effort to a 550-page treatise on the superiority of French forestry published by Theodore Woolsey, who also served as a major in the 20th Engineers, in 1920, the year Greeley succeeded Graves as chief forester. In his *Studies in French Forestry*, Woolsey documented French forestry laws and practices, including those dealing with forest fires. In France’s Mediterranean provinces, which Woolsey said were similar to “our Southwest” because of the dry conditions in the summer, “surface burning” (what is today called prescribed burning) “is expressly forbidden.” Further, “An incendiary fire in a forest is punishable by imprisonment at forced labor for life,” Woolsey recorded, “a distinction which well illustrates the French viewpoint toward forest conservation.” However, he did offer that the penal code was “more terrifying on the statute books than in actual enforcement.” As for logging, the government did not dictate how a private landowner should cut timber, he noted, but it did hold the owner responsible “for not destroying his forest or converting the land to other uses without prior warrant from the State.”<sup>25</sup>

In his memoirs written thirty years later, Greeley echoed Woolsey, saying the French approach to logging was comparatively conservative and regimented. Recalling his dealings with the French during his military service, he recalled: “We had many arguments with the French foresters over cutting requirements and I found myself on the other side of the table from similar controversies with loggers back home. The Frenchmen were understanding and realistic—and mighty good woodsmen.”

Understandably so. France had limited land and limited timber supplies, and strict management of such a vital resource was necessary to ensure future timber supplies. The profligate ways of the Americans, who were so accustomed to clearcutting their





Unlike French landowners, who were not told how to cut their timber by the government, the Americans had to follow French dictates and cut trees as close to the ground as possible in order to get the most amount of wood. The Americans were used to cutting at a more comfortable height.

way through a forest, were not welcomed. Recalled Greeley, “A grizzled *conservateur* said with a fatherly smile, to a bunch of impatient Americans: ‘Our forests have fought several wars before this one.’” When it came to “issues between their established regime of timber culture and exigencies of Allied manpower or speed in getting wood to the front, the forest always won out.”<sup>26</sup> The French, it seemed, put sustainability ahead of short-term profit.

The wartime experience changed many foresters’ outlook. Before the war, Forest Service leaders criticized the lumber industry for its rapacious attitude towards forests and many both inside and outside the agency called for regulating cutting on private land. But after the war, according to historian David Clary, attitudes toward industry softened. The nation and Congress both having turned more conservative after the war, passing strict logging statutes was unrealistic. Lumbermen were not necessarily to blame for all of the industry’s problems, as some asserted, and in fact needed assistance. “Greeley,” notes Clary, “was a pragmatic man, inclined to attempt only the possible.”<sup>27</sup> What did seem possible and worth pursuing in the 1920s was for the Forest Service to work more closely with states and private industry, particularly to eliminate forest fires. Thus Chief Graves and his hand-picked successor Greeley favored federal-state-private cooperation for fire protection. The futility of that effort would not become evident for several decades.

### A FEW QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Forest Service historian Harold Steen wrote in 1976 that the Forest Engineers’ overseas exploits constituted “a colorful episode but [one that] adds little to the history of the Forest Service.”<sup>28</sup> However, the second and third chief foresters of the United States—Henry Graves and William Greeley respectively—both commanded the 20th Engineers, and many other Forest Service officials—including Greeley’s Forest Service successor Robert Y.

Stuart—served under them during the war. Given their stated admiration of French forestry policies and regulations, the same ones laid out by Woolsey and Faulkner, a closer examination of the development of postwar Forest Service policies, especially those governing fire control and techniques for preventing fires, merits a reconsideration.

Greeley, Stuart, and a few others who served in the 20th Engineers had also served on the front lines of the August 1910 fires, which burned three million acres in Montana and Idaho over a three-day period. The devastating yet galvanizing event, in which more than 80 firefighters died, prompted Forest Service leaders to claim that had they had enough men and tools, disaster could have been averted. Under Graves, and subsequently Greeley and Stuart, the agency embraced a policy of all-out fire suppression—a policy that contributed to the buildup of fuel loads, altered ecosystems, and left many forests in poor health. Though the policy ended in the early 1970s, in many ways it was too late, and more than a century later, the nation is still living with the consequences. Legacy aside, does the interaction between American and French foresters represent a missed opportunity to have embraced long-term sustainability of America’s national forests and to lessen the likelihood of catastrophic fires? Did forestry leaders’ faith in mechanization and technology, employed to success in defeating the German enemy, influence their thinking about fighting wildfires in any way? In short, what could Forest Service leaders have learned in France about fire management that they could have employed at home?

Other questions for further research arise as well. How seriously did U.S. Forest Service officials consider adopting and applying French silvicultural practices after the war, and why did they decide to either adopt or reject them? Could the French codes regarding forest and timber management have been transplanted to the United States to great effect on private lands?



The Mortumier sawmill in action. The mill was north of Gien in central France, a safe distance from the fighting.

Some foresters visited the battlefields. What effect did that have? Did they see parallels between the blasted landscapes in France and the clearcut forests and fire-ravaged lands of home? The 1920s saw a boom in recreational use of national forests. Did the war experience influence thinking about the role of forests as places to visit for psychological refuge?

What opportunities were there for African Americans who served in the division and worked in the mills? How much intermingling occurred between white and black units? Did they share camps or barracks? Do the answers change or reinforce our perceptions of segregation in the armed forces during World War I as a whole? What happened once these African Americans returned to the United States? Could they find jobs in the mills and woods?

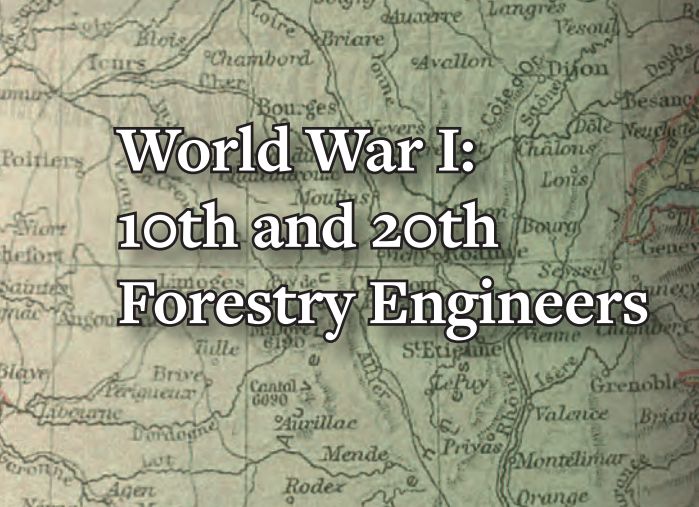
Thinking more broadly, what became of the enlisted men and lower-ranking officers of the 20th Engineers who returned to the Forest Service and private industry after the war? Did any practice different forest management techniques? Did they leave behind diaries and other primary sources that would shed light on their experiences?

Perhaps Harold Steen is correct in asserting that the Forestry Division's wartime experiences had little influence on the subsequent history and policy of the Forest Service. But until this topic is more fully explored, we cannot definitively say. □

Byron Pearson is a professor of history at West Texas A&M University. His second book, *Saving Grand Canyon: Dams, Deals, and a Nobel Myth*, is to be published in fall 2019 by the University of Nevada Press. James G. Lewis is author of *The Forest Service and the Greatest Good: A Centennial History* (Forest History Society, 2005). Many of the sources cited herein may be found in the Forest History Society's "World War I: 10th and 20th Forestry Engineers" digital exhibit at: <https://foresthistor.org/digital-collections/world-war-10th-20th-forestry-engineers>.

## NOTES

1. David A. Clary, "The Woodsmen of the AEF, A Bibliographical Note," *Journal of Forest History* (October 1978): 185.
2. Military historians generally cite the American Civil War as the first industrialized war, but the industrial capacity of the North was so overwhelming that only one side might be considered mechanized.
3. John Guthrie said that the New England Sawmill Units—lumberjacks dispatched from six New England states who contracted individually with Britain to harvest wood in Scotland and France—sailed for there in May 1917, one month after the United States declared war. This was before the British and French requests for the United States to form their own units. See John Guthrie et al., "The Carpathians: Tenth Engineers (Forestry) A.E.F.—1917–1919, Roster and Historical Sketch," Washington, DC (May 1940), 3. There is also a reference to the units in the official regimental history of the 20th Engineers, but that account has them entering service after the British and French appeal. "The New England Sawmill Units in Scotland," in Perez Simmons and Alfred H. Davies, ed., *Twentieth Engineers, France, 1917–1918–1919* (Portland, OR: Twentieth Engineers Publishing Assn. [1920?]), no page numbering.
4. Henry S. Graves, "Graves Describes Work of Forest Regiments," *The Timberman*, April 1918, 36.
5. George T. Morgan Jr., "A Forester at War—Excerpts from the Diaries of Colonel William B. Greeley, 1917–1919," *Forest History* 4, no. 3/4 (Winter 1961): 6.
6. Barrington Moore, "French Forests in the War," *American Forestry*, June 1919, 1113–15, 1119–20.
7. Moore, "French Forests in the War," 1113–15, 1119–20.
8. Percival Sheldon Ridsdale, "How the American Army Got Its Wood," *American Forester*, June 1919, 1147.
9. Henry Graves, "The Forest Engineers," *American Forestry*, June 1919, 1109.
10. "20th Engineers (Forestry) Record of Development and Production," *American Forestry*, June 1919, 1111.
11. Guthrie et al., "The Carpathians," 6.
12. *Organization of the Services of Supply: American Expeditionary Forces*, Monograph 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1922), 49, 84.
13. *Stars and Stripes*, July 26, 1928.
14. Ridsdale, "How the American Army Got Its Wood," 1140. The Forestry Division used mills of 5,000-, 10,000-, and 20,000-foot capacity.
15. Ridsdale, "How the American Army Got Its Wood," 1141.
16. James A. Woodruff, "General Order #3, An Appreciation: To the Officers and Men of the Twentieth Engineers and Attached Service Troops," December 1918.
17. Guthrie et al., "The Carpathians," 4; Ridsdale, "How the American Army Got Its Wood," 1144.
18. "In Memoriam," in Simmons and Davies, *Twentieth Engineers, France*.
19. William Greeley, "The American Lumberjack in France," *American Forestry*, June 1919, 1094.
20. The quote is from a letter from Greeley to Percival S. Ridsdale, the *American Forestry* editor and treasurer of the Welfare Fund for Lumbermen and Foresters in War Service, in "Jobs for Returning Lumbermen and Foresters," *American Forestry*, June 1919, 1159.
21. "Timeline of Events," <https://foresthistor.org/digital-collections/world-war-10th-20th-forestry-engineers/>.
22. "Jobs for Returning Lumbermen and Foresters," 1159.
23. Graves, "Graves Describes Work of Forest Regiments," 36.
24. Ralph Faulkner, "A Lesson from France," *American Forestry*, June 1919, 1155–57.
25. Theodore S. Woolsey, *Studies in French Forestry* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1920), 4–5.
26. William B. Greeley, *Forests and Men* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1951), 91.
27. David A. Clary, *Timber and the Forest Service* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 70–71.
28. Harold K. Steen, *The U.S. Forest Service: A History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 142.



# World War I: 10th and 20th Forestry Engineers



**JOIN THE  
Largest Regiment  
in the World**

**THE TWENTIETH ENGINEERS WILL BE THE WORLD'S LARGEST REGIMENT—7500 men will fill its ranks. There will be ten battalions of 750 men each. Each battalion will be divided into three companies of 250 men each. All but 3000 have already been recruited—3000 skilled workmen and lumbermen are needed at once.**

Your work in this Regiment will be in France. There will be no duty. The Regiment will go across to soon as it is fully organized and equipped.

On the other side your Regiment will back up every activity of the Army Engineers at the Front. You will help convert the French forests into railroad ties (round and square), bridge timbers, piles, telephone poles, trench planks, pit props, lumber for construction, hospital, incense, charcoal, etc.

**You are needed NOW!**

**YOU NEED NO MILITARY TRAINING**  
Previous military training or experience is not necessary. (Often work or sales work in the lumber field will be no qualification either for officers, non-commissioned officers, or privates.)

This is no "fit-or-not" job. Skilled men are needed—men who know how to work without supervision.

Here are some of the most men who are needed:

<b>FOR WOODS WORK</b>	Logging Foremen
Woods Filers	Millmen
Top Leaders	Choppers
Wagoners	Skiddermen
Blacksmiths	Camp Drivers
Overseers	Engine Drivers
Tractor Drivers	Repair Men
Stationary Engineers	Stationary Foremen
Log Builders	The Handmen
Pole and Piling Men	Charred Foremen
Cooks	Woods Laborers
Woods Surveyors	
<b>FOR LOGGING RAILROADS</b>	Laborers
Truck Drivers	Truck Men
Locomotive Engi-	Locomotive Foremen
neers	Mechanics
Insulators	Wire (Cables and
<b>FOR SAWMILLS</b>	Truck Men
Sawmill Foremen	Stationary Foremen
Operating Mill-	Wagoners
wrights	Truck Drivers
Boys	Overseers
Carpenter Men	Stationary Foremen
Millwrights	Wagoners
Engineers	Truck Drivers
Stationary Engineers	Overseers
Wagoners	Truck Drivers
Operators	Stationary Foremen
Cooks	Wagoners
Construction Mill-	Truck Drivers
wrights	

(This space is donated to the Chief of Engineers, Washington, D. C., by the Stimson Mill Co., Ballard Station, Seattle, Wash.)

**To cut down the enemy, they didn't use a gun. They used an axe.**

When the U.S. entered World War I, Gen. John Pershing quickly realized that his troops required an uninterrupted supply of lumber to defeat Germany, and that wood couldn't come from America. Within months, thousands of foresters, loggers, and sawmill workers had joined the U.S. Army's Forestry Engineers and were working in the French countryside, cutting wood at an unbelievable pace. The "forest soldiers" may not have fired a shot at the enemy, but as one of the men proudly proclaimed, they were "hell on cutting down trees."

Many of the men began recording their experiences with pen and camera from the moment they signed up. They returned home with diaries and photo albums, most of which have remained unseen by the public for decades. Now these exceptional forest history documents are just a mouse click away. On our website you'll find photo galleries, a timeline of events, links to books and correspondence, and so much more—as only the Forest History Society can present them.

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- An overview of their mobilization and work
- Information on recruitment efforts
- Accounts of deployment and service
- Personal accounts of soldiers and commanding officers
- A special issue of *American Forestry* magazine dedicated to the forest engineers



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*The Western Front had an enormous impact on France's forests during the war because much of it was located within its borders, and because the Allies drew heavily upon French forests for their wood supply. But the war's impact lingered in the years following, too.*

# THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I

## ON FRENCH TIMBER RESOURCES

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**W**hat the strategists of World War I had foreseen as a short war of movement bogged down on the Western Front into a war of attrition. By the end of the first year, the trenches of both sides formed a grinding machine with a maw 350 miles wide, which devoured, in addition to

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millions of men, trainload upon trainload of wood needed to build defenses, to shelter and warm troops, and to repair transportation systems. Until the last months of the war, the Western Front lurched back and forth in a narrow zone, most of which lay in northern France. This ensured that France, of all the combatants, would pay the heaviest price in forest resources. The needs of her war industries and of new military construction at a distance from the battlefield compounded the crisis.

In 1920 France's national forest service (l'Administration Générale des Eaux et Forêts) issued a report dealing with the impact of the recent war upon public and private forests. Although statistical in nature, the report pointed out that many significant aspects of wartime cutting operations needed extensive explanation and that some defied quantification.

In the combat zone and in those territories that had fallen under German military occupation, the waste of war was most pronounced. According to official French sources, 350,000 hectares of forests had been either totally destroyed or their growing stock so depleted that no sawtimber could be expected for sixty years. In the first postwar years the annual loss of production from the combat zone and occupied territory would be 400,000 cubic meters

of sawtimber and 600,000 meters of firewood, the total representing 3.95 percent of the entire prewar production of France.

The official statistics for the actual battle areas should be accepted with some caution. In these zones rouges devastation was real, but reports of it tended to be exaggerated for the benefit of French legislators disposed to vote extra credits for reforestation in those areas. Such expenditures, they incorrectly assumed, would eventually be covered by German reparations. Some of the money officially earmarked for the zones rouges was actually diverted to forest investment on public lands elsewhere.

Some 90 percent of French forest land remained behind the Allied lines and outside the battle zone. Here the uneven geographical distribution of cutting and the hurried logging procedures were of greater significance than the actual volume of wood that passed through the sawmills or went to the front as roundwood. About one-third of those forests were managed by l'Administration Générale des Eaux et Forêts, and, for them, reliable statistics are available. The 36.2 million cubic meters of wood actually cut on Administration lands from 1914 through 1918 was only about 2.5 million cubic meters more than would have been harvested under normal, peacetime conditions. At the

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BY JOHN R. JEANNENEY

end of the war, cutting on those lands as a whole anticipated the sustained-yield rate by less than a year.

The main explanation for this seemingly moderate depletion was that relatively little cutting took place outside the combat zone during the first two years of the war. The necessary manpower was unavailable, and France subsisted on imports and upon her existing stockpile of forest products. Cutting did increase to almost normal levels in 1916 and became very heavy in the last two years of the war, especially when the Allied forestry units went to work. Extensive as cutting was in 1917 and 1918, the impact was softened by the fact that it drew upon reserves that had accumulated over the three previous years.

In 1917 and 1918 the real bottleneck hindering wood supply was not production but rail transportation. Naturally, emergency cutting, ahead of the normal rotation, occurred most often in the *conservations* (management regions) closer to the front. This was to disrupt local forest economies in postwar years.

Much less is known about the fate of forests in private hands. Obviously, the generally high level of timber prices, even though controlled after September 1916, was a strong inducement to sell. Allied forestry units worked in timber on public as well as private lands, but their activities were only part of the total picture. It does appear that growing-stock depletion in private forests was more serious than in the public sector. The 1921 report of l'Administration Générale des Eaux de Forêts did offer a prediction of how much total production from all French forests, public and private, would be reduced as a consequence of the war. Hardwood production was expected to decline by only 270,000 cubic meters, although the higher grades of walnut used in rifle stocks and airplane propellers would be in short supply. Poplar, which was grown in plantations or along highways, was placed by the French in a special category. Because of the ease of exploitation, almost all poplars of usable size had been cut during the war, ensuring that the volume harvested in postwar years would initially drop by 90 percent but would return nearly to normal after five years.

Postwar shortages were expected to be most serious in the softwoods, especially spruce and fir. Because of France's soils, climates, and management policies, those were the species in shortest supply even under normal conditions. The Administration predicted that French spruce and fir production would initially fall from 1.2 million cubic meters to 670,000 cubic meters.

Impossible to measure but, according to the Administration, even more serious than the depletion of standing timber were wastes resulting from the pressure of circumstance: inadequate forest management and hasty, sometimes careless, logging. Trees were cut at the ages of optimum growth, and young trees were smashed unnecessarily. Skilled French forest personnel were in short supply, and, from the French viewpoint, Allied manpower did not completely solve the problem. As Theodore Woolsey, an American forester who served with the Forest Engineers, described in *Studies in French Forestry* (1920), early contact between French forest officials and the American forestry regiments was far from ideal. Timber was a cheap commodity in the United States but an expensive one in France. At first American logging practices



*Devastation was widespread along the Western Front. This was the largest remaining tree in the former "no-man's-land" near Richécourt, Meuse, in November 1918.*

reflected this difference, but most of the disputes were resolved and an effective working relationship emerged.

The cost of neglecting forest investments during the war was also disastrous. Forest roads had not been maintained, and expensive repairs were now required. Replanting had been postponed too long, and often site conditions had deteriorated. The dry summer of 1921 made matters worse by destroying many of the post-war plantations.

On a national level, the losses of growing stock and the heavy costs of overdue investment could be covered over a period of years, even though there were to be no reimbursements through German reparations. And from a French point of view, the reacquisition of Alsace and Lorraine, rich in softwoods, was a positive gain.

But the hardships of the timber industry were not evenly distributed. Sawmill operators and their employees were usually dependent upon a regular supply of local wood. Interruptions of this supply, caused by wartime overcutting, could be individually disastrous, especially when coupled with the collapse of timber prices in 1920–1921. On balance, it can be said that World War I severely disrupted, but did not paralyze, French forest production. □

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*Established in 1916 at the height of the war in Europe and just a year before America's entry into it, the National Park Service found its purpose and even existence during the war called into question. When the war ended, the Park Service's deft leadership had prevailed over those demanding access to park resources, leaving the Service arguably in a better position than before the war.*

# THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

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**I**n April 1917, when the United States entered World War I, the National Park Service was an eight-month-old infant bureau tending a fragile collection of national parks and monuments. Given the demands and circumstances of the war, neither the agency nor its park system appeared sure to survive the next few

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years. Congress had established the Park Service to keep the nation's scenic, natural, and historic parklands—which most Americans had never seen—"unimpaired for future generations." That was a stricter and more esoteric conservation philosophy than the country had previously endorsed. The parks and monuments encompassed 5 million acres reputedly rich in minerals, timber, grazing land, and game—all resources that wartime America desperately needed. The Park Service had no money and no personnel to protect park resources, and in 1917 Congress might have found an appeal for their protection unpatriotic. In short, an untested organization was holding essential resources for what, in a wartime context, appeared to be nonessential purposes.

But the National Park Service survived the war, winning respectable appropriations and managing with available manpower until veterans could become park rangers. That the parklands

were so well defended against wartime demands was the remarkable achievement of two men who grasped a unique opportunity to establish conservation principles and precedents that would serve the parks well in the future. What they did might not have been as dramatically effective in peacetime.

Stephen T. Mather and Horace M. Albright, director and assistant director, respectively, virtually were the National Park Service during most of the war. Except for a half dozen appointees of their own, the remainder of their field and Washington staffs were holdovers from the days of the Interior Department's desultory supervision of the parks. Both men had served apprenticeships in the department; having witnessed the unintentional neglect that the parks suffered, they had lobbied for the establishment of a separate, professional bureau to administer an integrated national park system. They were energetic, politically shrewd,

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BY MARCELLA M. SHERFY



*Paradise Inn in Mt. Rainier National Park opened in July of 1917, just four months after the United States entered the war. New roads, newly affordable automobiles, and the patriotic “See America First” campaign had helped to draw visitors to national parks after 1914 in increasingly larger numbers.*

widely recognized spokesmen for park values. Their abilities and accomplishments made them immediate and durable heroes of the organization. The establishment of the National Park Service in 1916 and the successful defense of the parks during the war years can fairly be attributed to their magnetism, skill, and determination.

Long before the war burst upon them, Mather and Albright had learned to marshal public support and its resulting political strength during crises. They relied on a wide circle of friends in Congress, the professions, and the press—persons who had worked with them to establish the Park Service. They took advantage of the war to build a larger, different clientele—park visitors. Since the traveling public could not vacation in Europe after 1914, Mather and Albright urged them to “see America first”—to visit America’s own national parks instead. That sales pitch appeared in every press notice and article that the two men sponsored; by the spring of 1917, they announced that visitations to the parks were increasing in spite of the war. Visitor statistics supported a critical political argument: national parks were not idle luxuries, but important sources of public recreation.

In fact, the park men knew that they had enough popular and political support to approach Congress for appropriations, even

during the “preparedness” days that preceded the declaration of war. Albright, who was acting director during the Park Service’s organizational period, appeared before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Sundry Civil Appropriations in January 1917, seeking money for the 1917–18 fiscal year. The legislators, especially the traditional skeptics of the park idea, questioned him sharply on several issues, but none suggested that the wartime economy could not or should not support national parks. Twenty-seven-year-old Albright emerged from the hearings with a half million dollars. Indeed, on April 17, shortly after Congress declared war, he secured a deficiency appropriation for operating funds until the new fiscal year began on July 1. Although the amount was not large, the money Congress granted represented more than the token support anticipated.

Positions and the men to fill them did not come as easily as dollars. Even if Congress had authorized new positions for the parks, the men required to staff them were committed to Europe. So the Park Service made do with the staff it had inherited, minus some draftees. Many national monuments remained unmanned, and major national parks had skeleton crews of civilians or soldiers. The army had managed several parks since 1886, when civilian administrations had proven unable to protect Yellowstone from



*Horace Albright and Stephen Mather (right), seen here in 1924, were challenged by, and yet benefitted from, the war. They successfully fended off attempts to allow natural resource extraction inside the parks during the war. After the war, returning veterans made good rangers and superintendents.*

poachers and vandals. The military had saved the parks from what might have been serious damage, and it had even undertaken the development of high-quality touring roads and public facilities. But Mather and Albright now wanted rangers who could educate and assist as well as police the public. The army obviously wanted out, too. The transfer of the parks to civilian control occurred in every park except Yellowstone, where congressional whim kept troops through the war. But no park had a staff sufficient to provide the professional public service and protection that Mather and Albright envisioned.

In the end, ironically, the war gave Mather and Albright the kind of people they wanted. Many returning veterans had seen too much of the world to go straight home to take up ordinary business. Accustomed to the disciplines of a uniformed life, they were physically fit, self-reliant, inventive, and in search of the adventure that service in the parks could offer. Many had, as well, the compassion, the gift for public speaking, and the interest in the natural sciences that distinguished Mather and Albright's ideal of the perfect park ranger. After the armistice, the two men lost little time in recruiting rangers and superintendents from among the war veterans.

The greatest threat to the parks during the war was the nation's determined search for food and fuel. Although in reality the park boundaries did not encompass very much public land, they enclosed the only natural resources on federal property that had been permanently "locked up" by Congress. The always-debatable policy of preservation became almost impossible to defend when every backyard sprouted into a victory garden and ships were being built, it was rumored, from trees in which the birds still nested. Not surprisingly, Herbert Hoover's Food Administration demanded grazing permits and access to park fish and game.

Western cattle and sheep graziers, many of whom had never accepted their loss of access to parkland, joined in the clamor. Western newspapers carped about the foolishness of preserving beauty at the expense of food. Fuel shortages, although less critical than those of food, also brought demands for park minerals and timber. Even Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, not wanting his department to appear unpatriotic, urged that park resources be made available for the cause.

Mather and Albright resisted those demands with their usual blend of political skill, compromise, and adherence to principle. They granted token grazing permits to park neighbors who did not intend to use the privilege very much. They persuaded Secretary Lane to modify his stand. They directed longtime park supporters (groups like the Sierra Club and the American Civic Association and such indi-

viduals as Gilbert H. Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society and E. O. McCormick of the Southern Pacific Railroad) to court unsympathetic congressmen. They made it known that western lobbyists were often less interested in the national need than in recovering their access to the national parks. They even persuaded officials of the Food Administration to acknowledge that fish, game, and pasturage in the parks were not sufficiently abundant to warrant their sacrifice. Despite a few compromises, park resources and the principles undergirding their preservation survived the war intact.

In that sense alone, World War I may have benefited the National Park Service, the park system, and the national park idea. Even in times of peace, little of America's land is safe from the demands of progress. The idea that wild, beautiful, dramatic, or historic landscapes have a public value exceeding that derived from practical, consumptive use has never been accepted universally, much less by those whose interests have been immediately affected. Mather and Albright, pragmatists and visionaries at the same time, realized that park resources, the essential integrity of parkland, and, most importantly, the national park idea would never be safe if they surrendered to wartime pressures. So they stood firm in their position that parks should not become commodities of war, and they held their ground until the crisis passed. The national park idea emerged from the trial of wartime with the strength and authority to triumph over the more subtle, but perhaps more serious, challenges of peacetime. □

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*The introduction of the airplane as a military weapon transformed how wars were fought. The preferred wood for airplane construction during World War I was spruce, the best of which could only be found in the Pacific Northwest of the United States. Meeting the wartime demand for spruce transformed the region's lumber industry, in part by bringing labor and ownership together in an unprecedented way.*

# THE SPRUCE PRODUCTION DIVISION

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**A**fter several years of trying to stay out of the war in Europe, on April 6, 1917, the United States became involved in the “War to End All Wars,” which we now call World War I. The Spruce Production Division presents an anomaly unique in the annals of American history. This home-front division was

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part of the U.S. Army Signal Corps’ massive commitment to supply high-quality spruce wood for the production of Allied combat airplanes and fir for ships.

The ever-widening European war saw the introduction of a great many new weapon systems by the various warring countries. Tanks, poison gas, and submarines were successfully tested and used with great devastating power by the major opponents. One of the most daring weapon systems was the use of the new and practically untried airplane. New airplanes were designed with ever-increasing engine size, speed, carrying capacity, maneuverability, and operating altitude. They also constructed and tested airplanes with several styles of wings, including monoplanes, variations on the standard biplanes, and even triplanes. Internally, the airplanes were made from spruce wood, especially the wing spars and fuselage frames. In addition, spruce was used for laminating the wooden airplane propellers.

## **THE U.S. CONTRIBUTION AT HOME**

The declaration of war by the U.S. led the president to establish a large army to fight across the sea. The easiest method to enlarge the small standing army was to institute a draft system. Men were also encouraged to enlist in special military units, such as the 10th and 20th Forestry Engineers and the Army and Marine flying divisions. These forestry and flying units were sent to Europe to provide needed wood for the allied armies (trenches and railroads) and fly those magnificent, but deadly, flying machines.

In spite of some heavily forested areas in Europe, the warring European allies could not supply enough high-quality wood for the thousands of new airplanes that they were constructing. Because of the large standing volume of wood in the Pacific Northwest, the United States began to increase its production of airplane-quality wood. At the beginning of the war, large quantities of old-growth, evergreen trees were found in the Pacific Northwest. As early as 1916, the Pacific Northwest was the primary supplier

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**BY GERALD W. WILLIAMS**



Living, or splitting, spruce in Warren Spruce Company, Raymond, Washington, June 1918.

of aircraft-quality wood to Great Britain, France, and Italy. These three countries requested, in order of preference, the following wood species: 1) Western Sitka spruce and cedar; 2) New England and Southern spruce; 3) Douglas-fir and other substitutes.

The most important of the numerous tree species for airplane construction was the Sitka spruce. General Brice P. Disque best stated the reasons for preferring the Northwest variety of spruce: Sitka spruce, generally found in scattering clumps of trees in the forest of the Pacific Northwest, proved to be the best of all woods for airplane construction. It qualified better than any other wood in a combination of the necessary qualities of lightness, strength, resiliency, long and tough fibre and would not splinter when struck by a rifle bullet.<sup>1</sup>

Sitka spruce is native along the coasts of Northern California, Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and Alaska. Soon after the beginning of the war, it became evident that Washington and Oregon “had a virtual monopoly of the world’s supply of this suddenly invaluable resource.”<sup>2</sup> Yet the Northwest lumber mills were unable to cut and saw enough spruce wood for the demands of the Allies, who requested a monthly production quota of 10 million board feet by October 1917. The inability of the Northwest mills to produce the required spruce wood was, in part, caused by a general woods labor strike. In this case, the lumber, logging, and sawmill divisions of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), also called the “Wobblies,” and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) struck the lumber companies on July 16, 1917. The unions were not totally responsible for the decrease in lumber

production. The decline was also caused by the mill owners, some of whom held back available wood supplies in order to increase the product prices and profits. “Neither lumberman nor worker, AFL or IWW, had clean hands.”<sup>3</sup>

The unions were primarily striking for an eight-hour working day, better working/living conditions, and recognition of the union. Summer was the usual time of year when loggers “make hay,” that is, they harvest the most trees, process them into lumber, and extend their operations deeper into the virgin forests for operations during the winter and spring. As a result of the summer strike, the production of spruce wood in 1917 was about 3 million board feet. Only about ten percent (300,000 bd. ft.) of the spruce was of aircraft quality.<sup>4</sup>

Soon after the U.S. entered the war, former Captain Brice Disque volunteered to return to active duty, hoping for an infantry command in Europe. On May 7, 1917, he was summoned to Washington, D.C., to confer with General Pershing and chief-of-staff General James G. Harbord. They were able to convince Disque to remain a civilian, yet they assigned him to special, secret duty in order to study the labor unrest in the Pacific Northwest. Although Disque was crest-fallen not to have been given an overseas command, he had the understanding that if the labor and lumber production problem would resolve itself, he could then be allowed to join the war effort in Europe.

Within a few months of study, Disque found that the labor-management impasse was not getting any better. By the autumn of 1917, he came to believe that resolving the lumber situation was crucial to the defeat of the Central Powers. The unofficial *History of Spruce Production Division* stated that:

*No one realized, no one even dreamed that before this single item [aircraft-quality spruce wood] could be procured, an army must be sent to make war in the virgin forests, a vast industrial machine must be built up, and a great story of pluck and grit, of daring initiative and patient resourcefulness must be carved out.*<sup>5</sup>

## FORMATION OF THE SPRUCE PRODUCTION DIVISION

After Disque’s secret study and reports of the lumber situation in the Pacific Northwest, the U.S. Army Signal Corps became involved in resolving the labor-management question. Simply stated, he recommended that an army of soldiers be placed in the woods in order to speed the production of an adequate spruce supply for the allies. The woods soldiers were to remain neutral, neither favoring the lumber owners nor the unions, at times overseeing sawmills against the threat or reality of industrial sabotage by unions), while mostly building railroads, cutting trees, and sawing the logs into lumber.

On September 29, 1917, Brice P. Disque was reinstated into the Army as a Lt. Colonel. He proceeded to Portland, Oregon, and met for the first time with several of the parties involved in the labor-management problem. On November 6th, newly promoted Colonel Disque was given the command of a new military unit to be called the Spruce Production Division for the production of spruce lumber for airplane construction and Douglas-fir lumber for ship construction. Yet it took another month of behind-the-scenes efforts to fully establish and staff the Division. Thus, in November 1917, the U.S. Army Signal Corps

*stepped into the Northwest’s labor picture because no other agency on any level of government seemed to be arriving at a solution*



GERALD W. WILLIAMS COLLECTION, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY, ITEM NUMBER: WILLIAMSG:SPRUCE PRENTISS 131

*Although the dining facilities may not have been fancy, there was always plenty to eat, as can be seen above in the soldiers' mess at Camp 7-H, at Molock Creek, Oregon. Below, the main "street" at Camp 2F near Waldport, Oregon, at dusk.*



GERALD W. WILLIAMS COLLECTION, ITEM NUMBER: WILLIAMSG: SPRUCE PRENTISS 184

*quickly enough. In order to achieve the soldier's goal of increased timber production, the Army ... brought a kind of Progressivism in khaki to the tall timberlands of the Pacific Coast.*<sup>6</sup>

Headquarters for the Spruce Production Division was at the Yeon Building in downtown Portland, Oregon. Across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington, was Vancouver Barracks, which was the main operational center for receiving, training, and disbursing spruce soldiers. In early 1918, the Vancouver Barracks became the location of the major Spruce Production Division spruce sawmill called the Cut-Up Plant, which was constructed and operated by spruce soldier labor.

There were scores of spruce soldier camps scattered throughout the Pacific Northwest. Many of the camps were in association with or adjacent to existing lumber company camps, while a number of spruce tent camps were constructed close to Army railroad projects, especially in mid-to-late 1918. The camps at the private logging and mill sites came under the requirements specified by the U.S. Army.

Basically, each camp was to have standard sleeping facilities, latrines, bathing and messing (eating) facilities, and recreation rooms. If the existing private camps did not have the proper facilities, the Spruce soldiers would build their own structures. Generally, the troops were to be sent in groups of 25 or larger and the camps had to be of adequate size to accommodate all the spruce soldiers. Lloyd Lamb, a former Spruce Division soldier, described a typical spruce tent camp:

*It was a ... square tent, with a ... three-foot railing around and [a tent canvas] that came right over the railing and down ... It kept out all the wind and came up to a point ... with a hole in the top so you could put in a pipe for the stove you see.... There wasn't much danger of fire, and anyway ... you're there all the time except when you go to work. So you can watch it pretty close. Then those camps were every two miles apart, with about two hundred men in each camp ... It varied a little bit, but not very much.*<sup>7</sup>

Inspectors were sent to each of the camps to investigate the facilities and require appropriate actions if the camps were below standards. Life in bunk house camps was somewhat different, as described by Private Arthur C. Newby, with the 430th Spruce Squadron at Camp B, Snoqualmie Falls, Washington:

*We have an excellent camp here, which is clean and sanitary. We live in bunk houses built on car trucks, about sixty feet long and divided into three rooms each. There are ten men to each room. We have all the modern luxuries—steam heat, electric lights, hot and cold water, and last but by no means least, we have the very best eats on earth. They give us all we want and 'variety' is the password.*<sup>8</sup>

Initially, Colonel Disque had a great concern about the recruitment of soldiers into the Spruce Division. Many thousands of men had enlisted to fight the "Huns," while others were being drafted into the infantry. In addition, during the summer and fall of 1917, the Army was recruiting experienced woodsmen, including men with the Forest Service, into the newly formed 10th Forestry Regiment. After a series of struggles with the Army, Colonel Disque was able to stop the active recruitment of experienced lumbermen

into Forestry Engineer regiments.<sup>9</sup> This enabled the newly formed Spruce Production Division to proceed to recruit or reassign several thousand experienced woodsmen for work in the woods of the Pacific Northwest. Private Arthur Newby, a former U.S. Forest Service employee, described his joining the Spruce Production Division:

*When the War Department called for volunteers to go into the forests of Oregon and Washington and cut timber for aeroplanes, I thought that my experience might be worth something, and so I transferred from the Coast Artillery into the Spruce Division, and here I am. There are about fifty boys here, a fine bunch, and they sure are cutting timber like real loggers.... We are all satisfied, and we are glad to be here doing what we can to beat Fritz—and we will.*<sup>10</sup>

Initially, the Division only took those soldiers who were "men above draft age and not over 40 years of age and of good logging or lumbering experience."<sup>11</sup> By the summer of 1918, the soldiers could not enlist or be inducted into the Division if they were in draft status Class 1, unless they were rated as limited or special class service. Yet the Division could also take those who were in Classes 2, 3, or 4, if they were in good enough physical condition to be assigned to manual logging or railroad construction duty. In some cases, the men were classed down because they could not read or write, but the Division encouraged a number of the soldiers to improve themselves through schooling at nearby towns.

In September 1917, the Division manpower strength was authorized to be 10,317 soldiers, including both commissioned officers and enlisted men. On May 23, 1918, a new authorization was given to increase the personnel to 28,825 men, which it achieved.

## UNION AND MILL OWNER REACTIONS

The Spruce Production Division tended to place the soldiers in the hands of the Northwest lumber producers. Colonel Disque thought that by placing these men in the lumber camps, he would achieve several objectives. As the primary need was to increase the production of aircraft-quality lumber, the soldiers would have several beneficial effects: Reduce the amount of union sabotage and violence, protect the industrial base, protect the forests from fire, fill the supply gaps of lumber workers who had gone off to war, and increase production of spruce to pre-1917 levels.

However noble the thoughts were for the soldiers in the woods, the reality was that the unions and the lumbermen were initially against the Division. The unions felt that the Army, and thus the government, were in essence strikebreakers, while the lumbermen believed that the Army would impose too many restrictions on the production and prices of lumber. Colonel Disque, with his propensity for organizational genius and good expert advice, listened with great interest to the different sides of the argument, then presented his thoughts of using the Army in the woods.

Initially, everyone was shocked that the Army would be used for the direct production of lumber, but by a careful and skillful strategy, Disque was able to use the principle of loyalty to the United States and the necessity of drastic actions in the war emergency to overcome any opposition. Although it was "touch and go" for the first few months, the opposition eventually crumbled and in most cases actively supported the spruce production effort.

Colonel Disque proposed that the Spruce Production Division would be helpful to both owners and laborers. For the lumber owners and operators, the soldiers were to be used to protect and log the forests, protect the mills from the unions, operate the machinery, and supplement the manpower in the mills. For the unions, the soldiers were to obtain better working and living conditions, an eight-hour work day, stable wages between companies and areas, and more favorable status.

Advantages gained from the Army by the mill owners included a stable labor pool, extra experienced workers for their operations, and an extension of their logging operations. The unions gained the following advantages: Soldiers who worked at private companies would receive a new standard woods-worker wage rather than Army pay; the pay was to be made by the companies rather than the government; and inspections and cleanup of working and living conditions would be made by the Army. Simply stated, the Spruce Production Division, besides working to increase the production of airplane quality wood, ended up restructuring the Pacific Northwest lumber industry. This immense war effort had many lasting effects in labor-management relations for the next two decades.<sup>12</sup>

### FOUNDING OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF LOGGERS AND LUMBERMEN

The idea for a unique, patriotic, government labor union—comprised of civilians, military, and management—to counteract the IWW sprang from the minds of Colonel Brice P. Disque and Carleton H. Parker. The latter was an employee of the University of Washington who also worked as an examiner for a federal agency known as the Cantonments Adjustments Commission. Together, Parker and Disque incorporated the ideals of union and management cooperation and negotiation. Hyman noted that

*Parker and Disque envisaged organizing all the entrepreneurs and workmen of the entire region into an association for patriotic purposes, which would be affiliated with the Army division of uniformed wood-cutters. By mixing soldiers and civilian loggers ... the commander might construct an arbitration mechanism within the division and the affiliated civilian organization that would outlast the war and bring industrial peace to the embattled Northwest.<sup>13</sup>*

On October 18, 1917, in the office of the president of the University of Washington, the major ideals for an actual union were worked out. The proposed union was to be entitled the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen (LLLL), or simply the 4Ls. The name met with Disque's approval because it did not use the term union in its title, and it implied an affiliation between both the workers/loggers and the owners/lumbermen. The new "union" met with disapproval from both sides of the labor-management spectrum, but within six months, the persuasive abilities of Colonel Disque and new converts among both labor and management led



*"Spruce for the air, fir for the sea" concisely expressed the purpose of the Spruce Production Division.*

to almost all the owners and over 100,000 woods workers joining the Legion. The 4Ls outlasted the Division by 20 years, eventually dying in the Great Depression and the New Deal of President Roosevelt.

### GETTING THE SPRUCE OUT

Physically getting the spruce out to the sawmills presented an array of problems. Generally limited to a relatively narrow fringe of Pacific Northwest coastal land, much of the spruce habitat was in the remotest, most inaccessible portion of the country. Often the trees were found in great canyons and ravines, amid steep, rock-hard slopes with impenetrable underbrush. Moreover, much of the spruce country received an annual rainfall that averaged 135 inches (11 feet). In addition to the aspects of topography and climate, was the very nature of the spruce stands. Typically, when the spruce trees were found, they were mixed with other evergreen species. An average stand of stalwart giants was not over twenty percent of all the timber. The relatively small demand for spruce wood before the war provided little incentive for developing an exclusive spruce industry. Most of the spruce lumber produced previous to the war was as a by-product of clearcut logging of the more desirable evergreen species, such as Douglas-fir and cedar.<sup>14</sup>

Owing to the sheer size of the large old-growth spruce trees, the impeding conditions of its habitat, and the heavy, immediate demand for aircraft-quality spruce lumber, the Spruce Production Division had to initiate a series of new methods for extraction and transportation of the precious logs. One of these methods was to split (rive) lengthwise the fallen spruce into smaller, more manageable pieces for easier transportation. The riving process reduced the log to about one-sixth of its original size. The resulting pieces were then hauled from the forests by trucks or teams on wooden plank (corduroy) roads to existing highways and railways for shipment to the sawmills. The Spruce Division's use of trucks and cars was the first large-scale use of motor vehicles in the Pacific Northwest. "The giant fleet of motors ... carried all the supplies to the soldiers at the lumber camps, transported heavy machinery to new camps and hastened from place to place in a never ending round of duties ... The emerging fleet of express cars... were Ford motor cars. The spruce division had 105 of these cars in their service for light duty. ... Ambulances, motor driven, of course, played almost as active a part in bringing quick [sic] attention to the workers as they did on the battlefields."<sup>15</sup> Lloyd Lamb, a former spruce soldier, described the building of a plank road:

*The main thing was, was we had to build the road for the trucks first. Now the roads, comprised of two planks wide on each side with a piece going across underneath because a lot of this ground was soft and it was new ground ... all new ground ... and all of it was soft.*<sup>16</sup>

The Division also initiated selective logging of the scattered spruce trees. Colonel Disque believed that this method seemed the only practical way of securing great quantities of high-grade spruce in the largely inaccessible stands.<sup>17</sup>

Ultimately the Division came to believe that many of the transportation problems from the woods to the mills could be solved by the construction of an elaborate system of railroads. The development of railroads enabled whole logs to be transported from the woods to the sawmills. As originally conceived, the railroad construction program called for the completion of thirteen railroads in Washington and Oregon, totaling 173 miles of main line and 181 miles of tributary lines or spurs.<sup>18</sup> Seven of these railroads were planned for western Washington and six for coastal Oregon.

The U.S. Army intended most of these railroads to be temporary structures. In some instances, to minimize cost and construction time, sections of railroad were built entirely on logs, piles, or stringers supported by log cribbing. Railroad No. 1 on the Olympic Peninsula, now on the Olympic National Park, was the longest of all the spruce railroads. During the summer of 1918, at the height of railway construction, ten thousand spruce soldiers were working on the various railroads in the two states.

### **SPRUCE RAILROAD NO. 1**

Claims that the Olympic Peninsula contained "one of the greatest stands of virgin timber in the United States" were substantiated by a Forest Service inventory of Sitka spruce stumpage.<sup>19</sup> While the Allies' demands for aircraft-quality spruce steadily increased, the Spruce Production Division under Colonel Disque's leadership, took steps to penetrate the vast and wild spruce belt in Clallam County. The building of a railroad seemed the only way to open this great spruce reserve on the north Olympic Peninsula. This

area of land covered some 300 square miles and contained nearly six billion board feet of standing timber.

In May 1918, a cost-plus contract was awarded to the New York-based Siems, Carey-H. S. Kerbaugh Corporation. The contract called for the delivery of 250 million board feet of spruce fitches (22-foot lengths of delimbed spruce) by November 1919. Accomplishing this Herculean feat would require building 175 miles of railroad and two sawmills, capable of daily producing a combined total of 250 million board feet of milled lumber. The actual logging operation required some twenty camps and a working force of 6,000 men. This contract with Siems, Carey-H. S. Kerbaugh made the Clallam County operation the largest single spruce production effort of the war.<sup>20</sup>

The Spruce Division played a vitally important role in the contract specifications, established regulations for working conditions, furnished supervisory leadership, provided medical facilities, and supplied the subcontractors with some 3,600 spruce soldiers. Spruce soldiers, although generally inexperienced in the field of construction work, completed much of the clearing, grubbing, and grading of the roadbed for the subcontractors. The spruce soldiers also laid almost all of the steel track.

More than \$10,500,000 was expended, to not only purchase the machinery and supplies, but to buy expertise and experience. Under ordinary circumstances a project of such magnitude would require from one to two years, yet Spruce Railroad No. 1 was rushed to completion within six months. The speed with which the Spruce Railroad No. 1 was constructed awed both builders and onlookers alike. At the eve of the project, construction and lumber experts unanimously agreed that to complete such a task in such a short time was bordering on the absurd, even with the best organizational and financial backing that the Army could muster.

What the Spruce Production Division in its Clallam County operation did not succeed in doing, because it never had a chance, was to produce spruce. With 36 miles of main line completed, 70 miles of logging railroad graded, the Port Angeles mill 70 percent completed, machinery en route to the Lake Pleasant mill site, and 150 million board feet of logs in various stages from standing to mill, all activity abruptly ceased. Not a single spruce log passed over Spruce Division Railroad No. 1 during World War I.

### **ASSESSING THE SPRUCE PRODUCTION DIVISION**

The Spruce Production Division's felling of spruce trees was discontinued on November 12, one day after the armistice was signed.

Construction work in nearly all contingents of the spruce operations ended immediately. The movement of spruce soldiers from the far-flung corners of the Pacific Northwest began in December, although some men remained behind to complete special projects. Spruce squadrons were sent to Vancouver Barracks for discharge. Equipment and machinery at all locations were removed and taken to Vancouver Barracks for later sale.

Throughout Washington and Oregon procedures went into effect to demobilize the Division and sell off the government equipment and structures. Only a few officers remained behind to facilitate the liquidation of government property. Vancouver Barracks was flooded with prodigious amounts of machinery, equipment, and tools. Equipment valued at over \$12 million was sold at the largest advertised sale of government property since the sale of Panama Canal equipment.<sup>21</sup>

The year after hostilities ended, a hardbound history of the Division entitled *History of Spruce Production Division, United States*



GERALD W. WILLIAMS COLLECTION, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY; ITEM NUMBER: WILLIAMSG: SPRUCE\_SOLDIERS\_STUMP

The spruce trees being harvested were quite large. To cut the trees, the lumberjacks would stand on springboards inserted into the notches on the stump below the men.

Army and United States Spruce Production Corporation was printed. In his later history of the Loyal Legion, Harold Hyman noted that it was “not a government publication. Mostly the handiwork of then Major Cuthbert Stearns, it was assembled by Legion personnel in 1919 as a defense against congressional criticism [and a Congressional inquiry]”<sup>22</sup> that sprang up in the midst of and following the demobilization of the Spruce Production Division. “Congressional investigations broadcast allegations that unscrupulous entrepreneurs had garnered extraordinary profits from the nation’s needs.”<sup>23</sup> For months following the closing down of spruce operations, Disque, now a general, and others of the Division answered to charges that the million dollars spent to obtain the lumber was unnecessarily extravagant and wasteful of taxpayers’ money. Especially under fire was the \$4 million spent on the Clallam County Railroad No. 1. There were also charges that Disque showed favoritism toward both the Siems, Carey-H. S. Kerbaugh Corporation and the Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul Railroad.<sup>24</sup> In time most of the charges brought against Disque proved to be farcical and based on personal prejudice and vendettas.<sup>25</sup>

Though its life span was brief, the Spruce Production Division made many positive contributions. In all aspects of the Pacific Northwest spruce operations, the U.S. Army Signal Corps Spruce Production Division performed impressively. The operation took place at a time of great national duress, when the labor force was stretched thin due to heightened war activity at home and abroad, and the lumber industry was struggling to recover from one of the most unsettling labor-management conflicts in U.S. history. Confronted with some of the most rugged country in the Pacific Northwest, trees of immense proportions, choking vegetation,

relentless rains, and a time schedule that few believed could be met, the Spruce Production Division succeeded in providing millions of board feet of needed wood for the war effort.

Operating for only fifteen months, its accomplishments were considerable. The Division accomplished exactly what it set out to do—to increase the production of aircraft-quality spruce lumber. According to some estimates, the production of aircraft lumber increased 2,000 percent in a little more than a year.<sup>26</sup> Between November 1917 and October 1918, spruce production jumped from 2,887,623 to 22,145,823 board feet monthly. For the same twelve-month period, a total of 143,008,961 board feet of spruce was shipped from the Northwest forests, including two small units from Alaska and California. The total spruce lumber was produced from the following states:

Washington	88,471,594 board feet
Oregon	53,718,591 board feet
Alaska	589,236 board feet
California	229,540 board feet
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143,008,961 board feet<sup>27</sup></b>

To accomplish this feat, the Division left its mark on the land by constructing around 60 temporary military camps, scores of roads and bridges, and 13 railroads with some 130 miles of track.<sup>28</sup> It was proclaimed the most ambitious railroad project ever attempted in the Pacific Northwest. Never before were “so many miles of railroads conceived, located, surveyed, cleared, graded, constructed, and completed all within one season.”<sup>29</sup> According to the Loyal Legion’s monthly bulletin: “It will be years, perhaps,

before the record achieved by the Spruce Production Division in building railroads under adverse conditions is equaled.”<sup>30</sup>

## POSTSCRIPT

After the last spruce soldier was discharged from duty in the Spruce Production Division, the full impact of the operation was expressed in many subtle but significant ways in Washington and Oregon. The permanent rail lines opened more than one billion board feet of spruce, and many more billions of board feet of other evergreen species to future development.<sup>31</sup> There was a lasting effect on the lumber industry and lumber production. Although membership in the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen declined after 1919, its constitution, by-laws, code of practice, and working methods continued as the controlling factor in the lumber industry in the Pacific Northwest until the Great Depression. Nearly fifteen years after the close of World War I, one writer observed, “the basis of operation which General Disque set up for emergency purposes developed into the classic agency of labor relations in the American industrial field.”<sup>32</sup>

The war brought about a new appreciation of the value of the nation’s forest and forest products. The increased availability of spruce from the Northwest forests, and wartime technological developments in the aircraft industry, stirred new interest in potential military and civilian uses of the airplane. The Boeing Company, headquartered in Seattle, as well as airplane manufacturers in the Midwest and East, took measured steps to enter the commercial aircraft field. Prophetically, the December 1918 issue of *The Timberman* observed: “It is only 20 years since the automobile industry began its magical development. The future may hold in store a parallel in the upbuilding of commercial airplanes.”<sup>33</sup> Little did they know how much Boeing would be a major leader in this future scenario.

This brief overview of the Spruce Production Division concludes with a statement about the massive homefront effort fought by 30,000 spruce soldiers in the evergreen forests of the Pacific Northwest:

*Such, then, is the story of the Spruce Production Division. It is a war story without the horror of devastated cities and of torn and bloodied men, and without the glamour that goes with victorious achievement upon the field of honor. And yet—this Northwest woods has become a field of honor; without the heroics, but not without the heroic.... There is the thrill of achievement; of men battling with Nature, with Nature’s forces, and Nature’s seeming whimsicalities. They fought, these lumberjacks in khaki.*<sup>34</sup> □

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# Biographical Portrait

## HAROLD T. PINKETT

### (1914–2001)

By Alexander Poole

In June 25, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802: it proscribed discrimination in national defense industry employment and set up the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices to monitor compliance. The committee broke new ground for African Americans in defense work, including at the National Archives.<sup>1</sup>

The next spring, Archivist of the United States Solon J. Buck reported that African Americans comprised more than 15 percent of National Archives employees. "It is our intention to continue to hire Negroes for custodial positions," Buck explained to the committee, "and to appoint them to high positions by promotion and from the outside in steadily increasing numbers ... consonant with our policy of getting the best employees available for all types of positions regardless of race or color."<sup>2</sup> He then mentioned the appointment of an African American, Harold Thomas Pinkett, to a beginning professional position, the first such appointment ever made by the archives. Pinkett began work on April 16, 1942, the eightieth anniversary of the District of Columbia's abolition of slavery.

Harold Pinkett's life enables an examination of two broader themes. Pinkett's life speaks to current diversity and inclusivity conversations in two ways. First, it illuminates the history of racial and ethnic diversity and inclusivity in the archival profession, particularly at the National Archives and in the Society of American Archivists. Archivists such as Harold Pinkett began to fight for diversity and inclusivity in the profession's early years. Second, Pinkett's story shows the long-standing investment of African American archivists in increasing racial and ethnic diversity and inclusivity in collections and documentation. Pinkett



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proselytized for the maximum feasible use of records in the writing of history, especially in documenting the history of underrepresented people, and his own writings reflected this investment. Pinkett's legacy as an exemplar of service and scholarship to the archival profession is substantial, if underappreciated.

#### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Free Pinketts lived in Maryland as early as 1820; they included Pinkett's great-grandfather, Denard Pinkett. A free laborer, Pinkett worked on William Records Byrd's farm in Somerset County and married Byrd's slave, Mary. Their marriage produced twelve children, all of whom were slaves under a 1681 Maryland law (slave status flowed from the mother). Among those twelve children was Adam Pinkett, Harold's grandfather.

Adam Pinkett served in the Union Army as part of the 9th Regiment, U.S.

Colored Infantry, Company G, between November 1863 and November 1866. Postbellum, Adam Pinkett became an artisan (basket-weaver). Though as of 1880 he could neither read nor write, over the next two decades, he improved his socioeconomic status. By the turn of the century, not only was he literate (unlike 43 percent of African Americans), but he owned land and a house. A founding member of his local Methodist Episcopal church, Pinkett was soon licensed by the church to serve as a pastor in the district. Pinkett's example of social mobility inspired his grandson as well as his grandson's parents, Reverend Levin Wilson Pinkett and Catherine Pinkett. Levin was ambitious: he advanced to local pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church. His position gave the family a parsonage rent free, and church members contributed to the family's modest larder. His son would remain closely affiliated with the church throughout his life.

Harold Pinkett was born on April 14, 1914, in the agrarian community of Salisbury, located in the southeastern part of Maryland. Levin and Catherine Pinkett urged their children to improve themselves, namely through education. Education constituted a crucial route into the middle class, even more salient in many cases than occupation or income.<sup>3</sup> Harold devoured Horatio Alger's books and embraced the work ethic they promulgated. (Pinkett's maternal grandmother, a laundress, also touted the Protestant ethic.) Neither Pinkett's work ethic nor his commitment to self-education and personal accomplishment ever flagged. "With diligence I have often been able, in a paraphrase of Samuel Johnson, 'to improve the golden moment of opportunity and catch the good within my reach,'" he reflected.<sup>4</sup>

The black press, notably the *Baltimore Afro-American*, played an important role in the Pinkett household.<sup>5</sup> The paper, which covered the black community as the *Baltimore Sun* did not, pushed for civil rights and presented models of successful professional African Americans such as doctors and teachers.<sup>6</sup> One of the newsboys for the *Afro-American*, Pinkett also maintained a small distribution of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's *Crisis*, a publication for which he later wrote. Edited by W. E. B. Du Bois between 1910 and 1934, the *Crisis* lobbied strenuously for African Americans to receive equal protection under the law and full citizenship, namely the right to vote, to own property, and to move freely. Like the *Afro-American*, the *Crisis* profiled successful African Americans to inspire younger generations.<sup>7</sup>

Pinkett embraced Du Bois's contention that human reason could vanquish racism. Du Bois, the first African American to earn a PhD from Harvard University, asserted, "My long-term remedy was truth: carefully gathered scientific proof that neither color nor race determined the limits of a man's capacity or desert."<sup>8</sup> Du Bois lauded the helpfulness, fortitude, resilience, and ambition of college-educated African Americans, the "Talented Tenth." This group was the core of a growing and respectable black middle class, and Pinkett joined it with alacrity.<sup>9</sup> Overall, late nineteenth-century black leaders enshrined respectability, thrift, morality, sexual continence, and the Protestant work ethic.<sup>10</sup>

At age sixteen, Pinkett matriculated at Morgan College. Established in 1867 as the Centenary Biblical Institute by a biracial group, Morgan College trained men for the ministry. Later, the institution prepared both men and women (the latter were first admitted in 1875) for teaching. A Methodist institution, it was Maryland's sole liberal arts college. Educational opportunities such as those offered at Morgan provided both social mobility and prestige to African Americans. The curriculum focused on thrift, piety, character, and responsibility and greatly impacted Pinkett.<sup>11</sup>

A Maryland state scholarship paid Pinkett's yearly tuition; he paid for his board by waiting tables at an Ocean City, Maryland, hotel each summer. Black fraternities were an important vehicle for social mobility, and Pinkett pledged Omega Psi Phi at Morgan. Founded at Howard University in 1911, the fraternity enshrined

manhood, scholarship, perseverance, and uplift. Pinkett was also elected to Zeta Sigma Pi, a national social science honor society, and subsequently to Alpha Kappa Mu, a general scholarship honor society. He graduated in 1935 as valedictorian with highest honors.<sup>12</sup>

The next seven years would see him interspersing graduate training and professional employment, namely teaching. The Great Depression ensured that financial concerns loomed large in Pinkett's early career. First, he looked toward graduate education in history. The University of Maryland remained segregated, so Pinkett capitalized on a state-provided scholarship to begin graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania that fall. Living in Philadelphia with relatives to save money, Pinkett worked for the New Deal's National Youth Administration as a social investigator for the Public Defender's Office. He ferreted out information on accused persons' social backgrounds as well as on the circumstances for which they were tried. He thereby earned an extra \$30 per month while attending to his studies.

After only a year, though, he accepted a position teaching high school Latin in Baltimore, which he held for the next year and a half. The challenging experience shored up Pinkett's ambition to become a college professor. He returned to the University of Pennsylvania and completed his master's degree in 1938. But again financial needs obtruded: Pinkett secured a one-year appointment at Livingstone College, in Salisbury, North Carolina. At the end of his time there, Pinkett matriculated at Columbia University.

Even as he pursued his studies, Pinkett remained focused on his career opportunities. Notably, in the spring of 1940 he sat for the junior professional assistant Civil Service exam.<sup>13</sup> Though titled "Archivist, P-2 to P-6," the exam called for fluency in history and social science, a sufficient incentive for Pinkett. He scored an 85.90 (out of 100) on the exam. Pinkett, however, still hoped to complete his doctorate in history and enter the professoriate.

After a year at Columbia, however, financial concerns once more pushed him into the workforce. Pinkett joined the faculty at a junior college, the Baptist-affiliated Florida Normal College in St. Augustine, where he taught history, government, and geography between September of 1940 and January of 1941. More important, near the end of his tenure at Florida Normal,

Pinkett published his first scholarly article in the *Journal of Negro History*. This represented the start of a long and fruitful relationship with the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), led by Carter G. Woodson (1875–1950), a Virginia native who had earned a PhD in history from Harvard University. Woodson founded the ASNLH in 1915, the *Journal of Negro History* in 1916, the Associated Publishers, Inc., in 1920, "Negro History Week" (the precursor of Black History Month) in 1926, and the *Negro History Bulletin* in 1937. The association sought systematically and scientifically to analyze African American history. "The achievements of the Negro properly set forth will crown him as a factor in early human progress and a maker of modern civilization," Woodson insisted.<sup>14</sup> Pinkett agreed.

Impressed by Woodson's rigorous scholarly standards, Pinkett also admired the senior scholar's professional and personal efforts on behalf of African American historiography. In no small measure due to Woodson's intrepid efforts, African American history reached a new, if still modest, peak of production by the mid-1930s.<sup>15</sup> Identifying and accessing scholarly materials was part and parcel of that upsurge: bibliographies, microfilm, and surveys remained in short supply.<sup>16</sup> To this end, helping to provide a documentary foundation for African American history, Woodson began depositing his collection of sources on African Americans at the Library of Congress in 1929. The library held only scattered materials on African Americans at the time; it lacked a classification system even for those. Woodson contributed 5,000 manuscripts by 1941.

Also seeking to consolidate African American documentation efforts, Woodson reached out to the National Archives. At Woodson's request, James R. Mock addressed the 1937 annual meeting of the ASNLH. Documents related to African Americans "honeycomb[ed]" the archives' holdings.<sup>17</sup> Such factual records represented the seed of objective history, history that not only would demonstrate African Americans' contributions to American society, but also rebut tendentious and indeed racist accounts. Like Woodson, Pinkett underlined the importance of scientific and objective African American historiography based on documentary evidence. "The exacting and scientific writer of history," Pinkett maintained, "must approach his task not unlike Robert Browning's



Pinkett served on the Forest History Society board of directors for two decades and was the organization's president between 1976 and 1978. He was the first African American to occupy any of these positions. While serving as president he presented a "resolution of respect and affection" to Elwood R. "Woody" Maunder when he retired in 1978 as the Society's second executive director.

Grammian who declared: 'Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text/Still there the comment/Let me know all!'"<sup>18</sup> Pinkett advocated critical scrutiny and revisionism. "In a democratic society there should be no right to use authority to distort the truth," he insisted.<sup>19</sup>

Yet many white historians betrayed their training when it came to African American history.<sup>20</sup> Exacerbating the situation, as Pinkett noted in the NAACP's *Crisis*, "Information concerning Negro accomplishments has often been fragmentary and inaccurate because Negroes or other persons failed to write about them or because pertinent written materials were not preserved. . . . This situation has helped create the notion that Negroes have contributed little or nothing to civilization." But historical writing could bring forth African Americans' contributions and introduce "a new day of truth and justice."<sup>21</sup> Woodson and other supporters of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and Culture played a key role in this revisionism.

The same year he made his debut in *The Journal of Negro History*, Pinkett returned to the faculty at Livingstone.

There he reconnected with Lucille Cannady, eight years his junior and an aspiring teacher hailing from Sanford, North Carolina. She and Pinkett were married in the spring of 1943. Like Harold, Lucille enjoyed a long and successful tenure in the federal government's employ. She worked at the Department of Labor for thirty-three years and attained the rank of GS-14, the same as her husband.

In early 1942, however, the National Archives contacted Pinkett. Though Pinkett had at best a tenuous grasp of archival work, the National Archives paid better than Livingstone, and Pinkett sought a steady middle-class income and job security.

Pinkett realized his appointment at the National Archives constituted "a bit of Negro history."<sup>22</sup> "I am pleased to have introduced 'affirmative action' into the professional ranks of the National Archives," Pinkett noted.<sup>23</sup> Yet perhaps some ambivalence lingered: "Many years later," he reflected, "I learned that my appointment . . . was probably helped if not actually caused by pressure being brought on federal agencies . . . to employ more qualified blacks for professional posi-

tions."<sup>24</sup> Pinkett assumed his duties on April 16, 1942.

### THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND UNCLE SAM

Still a segregated city in 1942, Washington, D.C., certainly tested Pinkett's resolve, as did the National Archives. The National Archives Act of 1934 formalized the archives' mission, which granted Americans unprecedented access to their government's records. Records preservation and administration seemed at last on a sound—putatively scientific—basis. The archives accepted its first motley groups of records in 1935. Pinkett observed of these documents:

*They included memorials and petitions sent to Congress by ordinary citizens, as well as messages sent to that body by presidents; memorandums of obscure bureau clerks and reports of departmental heads; case files relating to pension claims of veterans and battle reports of the Civil War; court papers with depositions of forgotten persons and decisions of famous jurists; routine weather*

reports and studies of earthquakes; and maps of city squares and charts of vast sections of the public domain.<sup>25</sup>

Understandably apprehensive upon his arrival in the nation's "boom town no. 1," Pinkett noticed that he was the only African American performing clerical or professional work; other black employees served as laborers, messengers, elevator operators, and custodians.<sup>26</sup> Not coincidentally, southerners such as the first archivist of the United States, historian R. D. W. Connor, dominated the National Archives. In 1935, the North Carolinian had rebuffed President Roosevelt's request to hire a black professional, even as a cosmetic measure.

Pinkett referred to Connor's tenure as the "Era of the Confederate Archives."<sup>27</sup> "The South is in the saddle," he noted.<sup>28</sup> Though many of Pinkett's fellow employees saw him as "something of a curiosity," he never discerned open resentment.<sup>29</sup> After all, he portended no great influx of African Americans into the National Archives professional ranks. Only Roland McConnell and Dwight Hillis Wilson (both in 1943) followed Pinkett into the professional ranks and both were only temporary wartime employees.<sup>30</sup>

Pinkett's initial tasks involved "examining permit records in a series of steel trays and recording for labeling purposes the inclusive numbers for each group of records in each tray."<sup>31</sup> This drudgework surprised him, since the civil service exam had demanded considerable acumen. Nonetheless, he felt sanguine about his professional prospects.<sup>32</sup>

In May of 1943, an opportunity opened for a beginning professional in the Division of Agriculture Archives under T. R. Schellenberg. Chief of the Division of the Agriculture Department Archives, Schellenberg had joined the National Archives staff in 1935 as a member of the first generation of employees. Looking ahead to his interview with Schellenberg, Pinkett "wondered whether Mr. Schellenberg knew that I was colored."<sup>33</sup> But his candidacy proved successful; Pinkett beat out the other (white) candidates. He exulted, "There were really some sparks of democracy here in Washington."<sup>34</sup>

Working for Schellenberg fit Pinkett's intellectual proclivities: he was interested in pursuing an agricultural topic (the role of African Americans in the populist movement of the late nineteenth century) in his

dissertation. Propitiously, Pinkett first prepared a descriptive inventory of the records of the United States Forest Service, which comprised more than 1,400 cubic feet, to facilitate their research use. Gifford Pinchot loomed large in these records. Pinkett soon realized that little scholarly attention had been devoted to Pinchot's professional training and early work as the first professionally trained forester in the United States. Hence Pinkett stumbled upon the seed of his dissertation.

Overall, Pinkett's early work under Schellenberg involved basic arrangement, description, and reference. He developed finding aids for complex record groups and helped government officials and researchers find data on agricultural topics. Pinkett's work soon earned him a promotion to archivist, a position he held between 1942 and 1948.

As part of his socialization into the profession, in late 1943 Pinkett joined the Society of American Archivists (established in 1936). This was a logical decision, as 83 of the Society's 226 founding members worked at the National Archives. Indeed, such East Coast-based white males steered the SAA until the 1960s.<sup>35</sup> Pinkett shared much with them—except for his skin color. Nonetheless, Pinkett maintained a lengthy and rewarding relationship with the society. He was named an SAA Fellow (1962), was appointed editor of the organization's journal, *The American Archivist* (1968–1971), and was elected to SAA Council (1971–1972).

Professional concerns were the least of Pinkett's worries by late 1943, however: that December he received his draft notice. "This is certainly the most fateful greeting that I have ever received," he wrote in his diary.<sup>36</sup> "Apparently nothing to do about it except accept its possible consequences with as much calmness and resignation as circumstance will permit."<sup>37</sup> Pinkett was one of more than one million African Americans to serve with distinction even as they realized, as Pinkett put it, "The Southern Negro doesn't even have *promises* of better things after the war."<sup>38</sup>

Inducted December 9, 1943, Pinkett served in Maryland, Massachusetts, France, Belgium, the Philippines, and Japan in both teaching and administrative positions. He felt terribly ill-prepared, however, for some of his duties. He noted in his diary, "First experience drilling a squad. I suspect with no little dread that I shall have more of this and other military duties for which I have no effective training and certainly no

taste."<sup>39</sup> A few months later, he elaborated, "Most of my military training so far has been by means of motion pictures."<sup>40</sup> Along these lines, Pinkett wrote flippantly to his colleagues at the National Archives, "Perhaps you have heard that the occupation of archivist is virtually unknown to Army occupational analysts. They have trouble with spelling it to say nothing of their difficulty in giving it a 'job description.'"<sup>41</sup> T. R. Schellenberg quipped in turn, "Your 'soldiering' activities in the Special Training Unit ought to be as interesting as writing a report on the Forest Service records in the National Archives."<sup>42</sup>

Pinkett achieved the rank of technical sergeant in the Army Signal Corps and earned the standard recognitions for capable service: the Good Conduct Medal; the American Theater Ribbon; the European, African, Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon; the Atlantic-Pacific Theater Ribbon; the Army Occupation Medal (Japan); and the World War II Victory Ribbon.

Racism in the segregated army impinged upon Pinkett's service. Indeed, long before he was drafted, he had applied for an associate archivist position with the War Production Board. "The inevitable question arises in my mind: will a Negro's application receive equal consideration with those of white applicants?" he noted in his diary.<sup>43</sup> Four months later, he jotted resignedly, "War Production Board replied to my application . . . stating that there were no vacancies in my field. I wonder."<sup>44</sup> Pinkett declined officer's training; African American officers were usually earmarked to lead combat infantry positions, and Pinkett had no wish to risk life and limb.

During his wartime service, Pinkett wrote for both academic and popular consumption, as he had done since the late 1930s. He wrote on race and war, on the media's depiction of African Americans, on segregation, and, in numerous reviews, on the practice of history. Always his writing prized objective facts, very much in the Woodsonian spirit. In these writings, Pinkett homed in on the imperative of democratic opportunity. No fact about African Americans' achievements seemed to escape his notice. He even enthused to the *Evening Star* over the results of a high school American history quiz given in the District of Columbia school system that showed equality of opportunity paid off.<sup>45</sup>

Building on his relationship with Woodson's ASNLH, Pinkett began reviewing books for the *Journal of Negro History* in

1941. (He served as the head of the Bibliography section from 1954 to 1959.) His reviews often addressed race and ethnicity and framed them in the larger scope of American democracy. For instance, in an early review, Pinkett praised the editors of a collection of historical documents for situating African Americans in the mainstream of American life and history.<sup>46</sup> Such works gave African Americans their just due.

Pinkett similarly praised liberal journalist Carey McWilliams's *Brothers under the Skin* for reminding readers of "unfinished tasks" of American democracy.<sup>47</sup> Race hatred, Pinkett pointed out in another review, vitiated the promise of American democracy not only for African Americans, but also for other marginalized groups such as Ozarks, Mexicans, and Italians.<sup>48</sup> Interracial understanding, Pinkett opined, was the panacea.

Through his writings and through his service in the Second World War, Pinkett demonstrated his commitment to color-blind democracy. Like millions of other African American citizens, moreover, he demanded the extension of equal citizenship to all Americans.

## POSTWAR WORK AND SCHOLARSHIP

Mustered out in the spring of 1946, Pinkett rejoined the National Archives in June. "New duties at Archives keep me busier," he jotted in his diary. "Work now includes reference service, analysis and description, packing and shelving, and records accessioning."<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, upon his return, Pinkett discerned a broadened mission at the National Archives fostered by the Disposal Act of 1943. The institution shifted toward records management and assisting government agencies in scheduling their records to help preserve those of permanent value.

Serving the government, scholars, and the public, the institution took responsibility as well for presidential libraries, for federal records centers, for an expanded Federal Register program, and for a national historical publications program. The *Saturday Evening Post* noted of the National Archives, "Uncle Sam's Strange Filing Case," "Virtually everything except a corpse has ... shown up among the untold tons of records, documents, and exhibits deposited in the largest filing cabinet on earth."<sup>50</sup>

The archives' increasingly expansive purview stemmed largely from its sub-

sumption under the umbrella of a new agency, the General Services Administration (GSA), on July 1, 1949. The GSA assumed legislative liaison, and legal, personnel, and procurement responsibilities. Four major divisions—the National Archives, the Roosevelt Library, the Federal Register Division, and the newly minted Records Management Division—came under the auspices of the Office of the Archivist. Like many of his colleagues, Pinkett evinced concern over this loss of independence. Staff members feared the onerous responsibilities of records management would supplant archival work. On the other hand, reorganization potentially augured more staff, better funding, and more space.

After World War Two, personnel at the National Archives followed the argument laid out by Pinkett in his *Crisis* article and suggested by James R. Mock even earlier. Pinkett was pleased to see the *Journal of Negro History* presenting more articles rooted in materials from the National Archives.<sup>51</sup> National Archives professionals launched efforts to publicize documentary resources for African American history. In 1947, under the auspices of the Committee on Negro Studies of the American Council of Learned Societies, Paul Lewinson compiled "A Guide to Documents in the National Archives for Negro Studies." Though underused, National Archives records dealing with African Americans could be found in nearly any record group.<sup>52</sup> Unlike American society, materials in the archives on African Americans were not segregated from materials on whites; paradoxically, this militated against locating and accessing such records.

Roland C. McConnell, by then a professor of history at Morgan College, characterized Lewinson's compilation as a key bibliographical contribution. Not only did the guide focus on African Americans, but it focused on the National Archives. Jibing with the beliefs of archivist-scholars such as Pinkett, the guide situated African Americans in the broader sweep of national history.<sup>53</sup> McConnell also unpacked the effective sequel to Lewinson's guide, Elaine C. Bennett's "Calendar of Negro-Related Documents in the Records of the Committee for Congested Production Areas in the National Archives." The work, McConnell noted approvingly, presented a template for other recordkeeping agencies.<sup>54</sup>

His promotion of Lewinson's and Bennett's work aside, McConnell relied upon his own work in the War Records Branch in the National Archives on which to base a 1948 article illuminating the previously unknown role of an African American soldier in the Custer expedition. In the end, McConnell's piece represented an opening wedge in reconsidering the role of African Americans in westward expansion—just the sort of corrective to conventional historiography Pinkett favored.<sup>55</sup>

Also mirroring the approach taken by Pinkett in the *Crisis*, McConnell underlined the need to ferret out and exploit untapped sources. Revisionist history, he lamented, lagged because of historians' neglect of records at the National Archives. Only the use of records at the National Archives could confer scientific and objective legitimacy on African American history.<sup>56</sup>

In keeping with his long-standing aspirations, Pinkett began doctoral work at American University in 1948. Lucille encouraged his efforts; he noted that she "did not wish to see me assume the posture of a contented and uninspired government employee with veterans preference."<sup>57</sup> He concentrated on Gifford Pinchot's early career, a topic that flowed from his early professional responsibilities with the Forest Service records. In 1953, he completed his PhD in history and archival administration. The University of Illinois Press later published his dissertation, "Gifford Pinchot and the Early Conservation Movement in the United States," as *Gifford Pinchot: Private and Public Forester*; it earned the Agricultural History Society's 1967 book of the year award. By dint of his work on Pinchot, Pinkett picked up further scholarly and professional legitimacy.

In the late 1940s, Pinkett published two articles based upon his daily duties at the National Archives: one centered on his preliminary inventory of the records of the Forest Service and the other on his preliminary inventory of records of the Civilian Conservation Corps.<sup>58</sup> He also continued to review books for the *Journal of Negro History*. For instance, Pinkett lauded Shirley Graham's biography of Frederick Douglass, who emerged as "a far-sighted humanitarian interested in the uplift of all men, regardless of color, race, or nationality."<sup>59</sup> This review won the Bancroft History Prize (best book review) from the ASNLH.

In his other reviews in this era, Pinkett continued to affirm his faith in facts and

human reason to promote interracial understanding: each book represented “another voice which may help to banish misunderstanding among more people and arouse more of them from appalling apathy toward a serious condition.”<sup>60</sup>

Consonant with his daily work, much of Pinkett’s scholarship moved toward local and national agricultural history. First, he wrote about his home state’s John Stuart Skinner, a “forgotten patriot” who first published Francis Scott Key’s “Star-Spangled Banner” and subsequently launched the first American agricultural periodical.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, he stressed the importance of Maryland in providing foodstuffs for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.<sup>62</sup> He also underscored the development of the District of Columbia’s agricultural societies in the Early Republic, which testified to agriculture’s foundational importance to the national economy.<sup>63</sup> In the middle of the 1950s, finally, Pinkett published his first pieces in *Agricultural History* (on the federal government’s role in fostering crop industry) and in *The American Archivist* (on late-nineteenth-century federal recordkeeping practices).<sup>64</sup> He would return time and again to these broad areas in his scholarship.

Besides his work on agricultural history, Pinkett continued reviewing books for *The Journal of Negro History*. For example, Pinkett extolled *Problems in American History*, especially its revisionist interpretations of the Civil War and Reconstruction. He also praised Harold E. Evans for showing how interactions among Native Americans, Europeans, blacks, and the environment illuminated the history of the Western Hemisphere.<sup>65</sup> As Woodson and others argued, blacks had imprinted the New World from its inception; their manifold contributions merited appreciation.

Even as he continued his varied scholarship, Pinkett kept up his diligent professional work. As a supervisory archivist between 1948 and 1959, he authored six National Archives Preliminary Inventories: numbers 37 (Records of the Office for Agricultural War Relations, 1952), 38 (Records of the Weather Bureau [Climatological and Hydrological Records], 1952), 51 (Records of the Office of Labor [War Food Administration], 1953), 66 (Records of the Bureau of Plant Industry, Soils, and Agricultural Engineering, 1954), 94 (Records of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, 1956), and 106 (Records of the Bureau of Animal Industry,

1958). Such records’ value for social and economic history seemed substantial, especially given the federal government’s twentieth-century involvement with social welfare and business regulation. Pinkett also recognized the possible research uses of new types of sources such as oral histories and motion pictures.<sup>66</sup>

Complementing his preliminary inventories, Pinkett also provided much reference service, perhaps the most engaging and intellectually challenging of his professional duties. By fiscal year 1952, the entire National Archives staff devoted approximately half its time to reference. Between 1950 and 1959, in fact, the number of reference services the National Archives provided nearly doubled. Pinkett quipped, “There is a growing indication among some researchers to think of the agency as a kind of heaven to which all good records go.”<sup>67</sup>

Pinkett engaged in numerous types of such service in the 1950s: federal units’ administrative organization, supervision, and business management; agricultural research and informational programs; federal programs for agricultural credit, marketing, and regulation; rights of government and citizens; federal property management, physiography, and aid for roads, conservation, and production-adjustment programs. Pinkett assisted scholars such as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (the New Deal); Merle Curti (U.S. technical assistance to foreign governments); Samuel P. Hays, Donald C. Swain, and Roderick Nash (federal conservation programs); Gilbert C. Fite (farm programs); James Harvey Young (food and drug regulations); and Rexford G. Tugwell (public administration). Researchers, Pinkett recalled, “Never ceased to wonder how we could find our way around in masses of material ... they readily recognized ... that there was really no substitute for the existence of a knowledgeable archivist.”<sup>68</sup> And Pinkett had surely become one by the 1950s, as his career progression indicates.

In 1959, Pinkett successfully applied for the position of Chief, Agriculture and General Services Branch. As senior records appraisal specialist, Pinkett reported to Oliver W. Holmes, who had joined the National Archives in 1936 and who had earned a doctorate in history from Columbia University. Between 1959 and 1962, Pinkett supervised the entirety of the branch’s archival and administrative operations. His duties included appraising

records being considered for transfer to the National Archives and reviewing records schedules commonly used by federal government agencies. Pinkett thereby played a pivotal role in determining the survival or disposal of federal government records. Complementing his appraisal duties, he advised government officials and scholars alike on their research problems and archival methods. This work earned him a Commendable Service Award in 1964.

Meanwhile, Pinkett’s scholarly productivity increased. He focused his work on forestry and agricultural history in the late 1950s and early 1960s, writing articles on the Forest Service and on the United States Department of Agriculture for *The American Archivist*, on early forester Treadwell Cleveland Jr. for *Forest History*, on the federal government’s aid to American agriculture since the Department of Agriculture’s founding for the *American Historical Review*, and on the reform efforts of the Keep Commission for the *Journal of American History*.<sup>69</sup>

Pinkett’s scholarship soon embraced appraisal, consonant with his new responsibilities as senior records appraisal specialist under Lewis J. Darter beginning in 1962. Pinkett helped government agencies develop and implement records disposition plans; he also appraised records for their research and for their continuing value. Once again building on his professional responsibilities, he wrote articles on preserving federal correspondence (*The American Archivist*) and on preserving policy, procedural, organizational, and reportorial documents (*Agricultural History*).<sup>70</sup>

In a 1967 article, Pinkett revisited recordkeeping as the foundation for African American history. Records dealing with the American population at large, with the study or protection or both of minorities, with racial issues, with African American rights, and with notable African Americans—all these Pinkett underlined as crucial documentary resources. He highlighted prosaic economic and social records, particularly those generated by numerous New Deal agencies such as the Farm Security Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the National Recovery Administration. These sources merited far greater use by historians.<sup>71</sup>

Such records remained challenging to access, much less to use, however. A lack of detailed finding aids or specialized knowledge of government functions could militate against access; researchers might

also need the counsel of veteran archivists. Nonetheless, Pinkett underlined an “archival frontier” ripe for scholarly exploration.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the late 1960s saw an unprecedented flowering of interest in African American history from mainstream white historians. African American history was increasingly considered a vital part of American history writ large, just as Pinkett and McConnell, among others, had long insisted.

The promotional structure of the National Archives piqued Pinkett’s ire by the middle of the 1960s. As the first generation (including former supervisors such as T. R. Schellenberg) retired, Pinkett felt passed over for promotion. Capitalizing on Executive Order 11246 (1965) that stipulated federal equal employment opportunity, Pinkett turned to the White House. E. Franklin Jameson of the National Democratic Committee took Pinkett’s concerns to Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey. Though conceding the impossibility of proving racism in Pinkett’s case, Jameson pointed out that other employees had been promoted faster even though they lacked PhDs. “Had [Pinkett] been other than Negro,” Jameson asserted, “he would have been promoted faster.”<sup>73</sup>

Promoted nonetheless in 1968, Pinkett served as divisional deputy director under Meyer Fishbein, who had beaten out Pinkett to replace Lewis Darter. He undertook familiar work: implementing the overall appraisal agenda of the archives and working with academic researchers regarding appraisal decisions. Also in 1968, Pinkett assumed editorial duties for *The American Archivist*. Though at first he saw the editorship as a consolation prize for the Fishbein decision, Pinkett ultimately found the post rewarding, particularly because it involved him in high-level SAA affairs. Of his new position he jested, “It leaves little time for retention planning, special studies, machine readable records, etc. What a pity!”<sup>74</sup>

As editor, Pinkett explicitly invited historians’ contributions, as many remained unaware of key archival sources.<sup>75</sup> He practiced what he preached, too, as a 1970 article on Forest Service records and historical research suggested.<sup>76</sup> “I would never have been content ... to have simply been a servant of scholars in the Archives,” he later asserted.<sup>77</sup> Also promoting the archives-history nexus, Pinkett served as a member of the editorial board of the new *Prologue: Journal of the National Archives* between



FOREST HISTORY SOCIETY — HAROLD PINKETT FOLDER

*Be it forest or agricultural history, the work of an archivist, or the history of African Americans, Pinkett’s “writing prized objective facts, very much in the Woodsonian spirit.”*

1970 and 1972. In line with this commitment, he subsequently contributed articles on conservation and on federal records and accountability to it.<sup>78</sup> In a final measure to encourage archivist-historian collaboration, Pinkett served as codirector of the National Archives Conference on Research in the Administration of Public Policy, in November 1970. He received a Commendable Service Award for this work; he also edited the conference proceedings along with Frank Evans.<sup>79</sup>

### THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND THE SAA IN THE 1970s

The National Archives’ holdings mushroomed still more in the 1970s. Hence, the institution tried to control its holdings bibliographically and to collaborate with other repositories.<sup>80</sup> Still another reorganization ensued, and, in 1971, Pinkett took up leadership duties of a newly created unit, the Natural Resources Records Branch. Pinkett felt some disappointment over this turn of events; he characterized his new position as a transfer, not a promotion. James B. Rhoads placated Pinkett, “Your entire career has been marked by diligence, and devotion to duty, and the pursuit and achievement of excellence in the public service.”<sup>81</sup> Pinkett responded more measuredly: “This expression and my election to membership on the SAA Council have revived my faith in the belief that diligence, devotion to duty, and the pursuit of excellence tend to win recognition. I must

say frankly that my faith in this has been shaken from time to time.”<sup>82</sup>

Though Pinkett’s transfer made him the highest-ranking African American in the General Services Administration, his colleague Renee Jaussaud maintained, “I felt he was being used by the General Services Administration as their poster boy... ‘Look how good we’ve been and what we’ve done. And that’s it. We don’t have to do anything else.’”<sup>83</sup>

In his new post, Pinkett supervised fifteen professionals. His branch provided reference and descriptive services for sixty-five record groups comprising 200,000 cubic feet of materials, one of the largest accumulations of records at the archives. It included the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, the General Services Administration, the Federal Power Commission, New Deal conservation and public works, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the government of Washington, D.C. Pinkett earned a second Commendable Service Award (1970) and a Council on Library Resources grant (1972–1973) to compare public archival institutions located in the United States, Canada, and England.

By the early 1970s, interest in African American history seemed to burgeon at the National Archives as in the academy. Pinkett observed this not only through his scholarship, but also by serving as a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of Negro History* (1971–1979). He also presented papers at two 1973 conferences on historical research held at Howard University. In both



*Forest History Society board of directors' meetings typically included a field trip to a historic site, such as this one to Bennett Place in Durham, North Carolina, site of the largest surrender of the American Civil War.*

papers, Pinkett stressed the unprecedented bulk of federal government records created in the twentieth century concerning African Americans. He characterized not only the National Archives, but also United States presidential libraries and the Library of Congress as loci for research in African American history both in issuing correctives to familiar interpretations and in delving into new topics.<sup>84</sup> To this end, he encouraged scholars to explore sources ranging from legislative records to judicial proceedings, executive correspondence to petitions and memorials.<sup>85</sup> Despite his efforts in these areas, Pinkett issued a caveat: "I have never professed any special expertise in black history except I have a certain natural knowledge of black history, having been born black."<sup>86</sup>

As scholars increasingly recognized the central role of African Americans in the United States' history and culture, so too did the civil rights movement gain momentum. For his part, Pinkett fell on the "diplomatic end of the spectrum" when it came to civil rights: not of a confrontational disposition, he harbored "no fantasies about liberating the race."<sup>87</sup> In other words, Pinkett was not a member of the "Indignant Generation," those African American intellectuals born in the 1930s and 1940s who eschewed mainstream white culture.<sup>88</sup> Harold Pinkett's was a "quiet fire."<sup>89</sup> Pinkett shared the goals of younger civil rights advocates; he merely adopted different means. Example

and exhortation rather than direct action were his methods of choice.

Pinkett thought black professionals instrumental in cultivating racial pride; he thereby played an important role in the long civil rights movement.<sup>90</sup> Middle-class blacks such as Pinkett foregrounded legal means in attacking educational discrimination and disfranchisement.<sup>91</sup> For instance, Pinkett thought the NAACP key in the United States' "truly genuine social revolution" in race relations.<sup>92</sup> Interracial from its inception, national in its scope, and middle class in its orientation, the NAACP publicized racial injustice and racist stereotypes, mobilized public opinion and lobbied Congress, and took racial injustice to the courts. In particular, it fought against lynching, disfranchisement, discrimination in federal programs, segregated public transport, housing, and education.<sup>93</sup>

Pinkett also supported middle-class philanthropies such as the Urban League and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).<sup>94</sup> Like the NAACP, these racial advancement organizations pressed to ameliorate social and economic problems by insisting upon the color-blind enforcement of constitutional rights. They were pragmatic, assimilationist, conciliatory, respectable, and moderate. Overall, equitable educational opportunities proved of particular interest to Pinkett. For many blacks, particularly those in the middle class, integrated education seemed the surest route to racial equality.<sup>95</sup>

Pinkett's freedom struggle contributions emerged not only from his writing, but also from his professional and personal example. Pinkett's mentee, archivist and historian Thomas C. Battle insisted, "People hear you better when you whisper than when you scream."<sup>96</sup> Pinkett's integration of the Sir Walter Raleigh Hotel at the Society of American Archivists' annual meeting in 1963 was a case in point.

Raleigh, North Carolina, was a bastion of segregation; Pinkett feared the host hotel would refuse him. But the head of the SAA's Arrangements Committee, H. G. Jones of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, assured Pinkett that he would be served. Indeed, Pinkett's arrival seemed surprisingly anticlimactic. When Pinkett presented his written reservation at the hotel, the desk clerk said, "Dr. Pinkett, we were expecting you" and gave him a room—at the front of the building, no less. Several hotel employees implied that Pinkett was breaking new ground; they seemingly fawned over him. Pinkett recognized the importance of his stay, however undramatic, insofar as it occurred a year before the passage of the Civil Rights Act.<sup>97</sup>

In line with his scholarship on black archives and his personal example in the civil rights movement, Pinkett was deeply involved in the social concerns pervading the Society of American Archivists in the late 1960s and 1970s. The retirements of those of the first generation such as Robert Bahmer, Philip Hamer, Dallas Irvine, G. Philip Bauer, T. R. Schellenberg, and Wayne C. Grover indicated the end of National Archives dominance by those who had joined the institution in the 1930s.<sup>98</sup> It seemed a time of intense reflectiveness, claimed Pinkett's onetime supervisor Herman Kahn, who served as SAA president (1969–1970). Many younger members viewed SAA as sexist, elitist, and homogeneous; they lobbied for diversity in the profession as well as in collections.<sup>99</sup> This found expression in the Committee for the 1970s, which formed in 1970.

The Committee for the 1970s report advocated for a more representative group of officers by considering age, sex, geography, nationality, ethnicity, and race. The report also plugged SAA members' engagement with racial justice, equal employment, and equal access to research materials. Finally, the report recommended the establishment of a standing committee



on minority groups.<sup>100</sup> In short, it offered an incipient blueprint for activism.

Over the next decade, Pinkett remained active in SAA matters, serving on the Nominating Committee (1973–74), the Urban Archives Committee (as chair) (1975–76), the Awards Committee (as chair) (1977–78), and the American Historical Association–Organization of American Historians–SAA Joint Committee (1977–1980). He wrote still more for *Agricultural History* and the *Journal of Forest History* and reviewed monographs for *Forest History* and its successor, the *Journal of Forest History*, *The American Archivist*, and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*.<sup>101</sup> Always Pinkett underscored each author's use of source materials and their success in writing objective historiography.

Active as ever in professional historical associations, Pinkett served on the Agricultural History Society's Executive Committee (1972–1975) and the organization's editorial board (1977–1979). Similarly active in the Forest History Society, Pinkett was on the board of directors for two decades (1971–1991) and was the organization's president between 1976 and 1978. He was the first African American to occupy any of these positions. Pinkett felt great pride in earning prestige in the historical as well as the archival profession: archivists rarely presided over historical associations, and historians often saw archivists as mere servants of scholarship.<sup>102</sup> Rounding out his professional and scholarly efforts, Pinkett taught at Howard University (1970–1976) and American University (1976–1977). During his tenure at Howard, Pinkett offered the university's first course on archival administration.

Though he pulled back from the National Archives after his retirement in 1979, Pinkett kept busy in the archives world. He helped Howard University establish its University Archives in 1980 and subsequently worked as an archival consultant for middle-class African American organizations such as the National Business League (1981, 1983), the United Negro College Fund (1982, 1984), the National Urban League (1982), The Links, Inc. (1986), and the NAACP (1986–1987). He also worked with Cheyney University.<sup>103</sup> Finally, he contributed to *The American Archivist* and to the *American Library Association World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*.<sup>104</sup>

Again a member of the Agricultural History Society's Executive Committee

(1983–1986), Pinkett presided over the society in 1982–1983. He also contributed four articles to the AHS's journal, *Agricultural History*, in the first half of the 1980s: one on forestry in America, one on farm woodland, one on American rural society and its relationship to the federal government, and one on the Soil Conservation Service.<sup>105</sup> Pinkett continued to write book reviews for various professional journals as well, addressing the United States lumber industry in *Western Historical Quarterly*, American forestry in the *Journal of American History*, the archives of the Hampton Institute in *The American Archivist*, Theodore Roosevelt's conservation efforts in the *Journal of Forest History*, and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in the *Public Historian*.<sup>106</sup>

Still unearthing sources for African American history, in a survey he conducted in the 1980s, Pinkett found materials in fifty-three repositories (in twenty-four states and Washington, D.C.).<sup>107</sup> Opportunities for scholarship proliferated with the preservation of African American records on religion, fraternities, sororities, secret orders, benevolent societies, black educational institutions, black professionals, black women, and ordinary people.<sup>108</sup> On a similar note, Pinkett lauded Debra Newman Ham's *Black History: A Guide to Civilian Records in the National Archives* as among the most useful finding aids ever developed by a National Archives employee.<sup>109</sup>

He remained deeply invested in other work, for instance as a consultant for Atlanta University (1992) and the Eugene and Agnes Meyer Foundation (1993–1994). He wrote two short monographs as well, one on the history of his church, John Wesley African Methodist Zion (1989), and one on conservationists who belonged to the Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C. (1990).<sup>110</sup>

In retirement, then, Pinkett maintained his scholarly productivity, publicized more sources for African American history, and contributed to the development of archival programs at African American institutions. He also continued to serve as an inspiration and role model for younger generations of archivists of color.

### PINKETT'S LEGACY

Over the course of his career, Pinkett argued strenuously for more minority representation at the National Archives, in the Society of American Archivists, and in the profession at large. The civil rights move-

ment of the 1960s in particular stimulated the National Archives to effect special recruiting efforts; before then, the profession included fewer than a dozen professional archivists of color.<sup>111</sup> Exacerbating this shortage, few African Americans gravitated toward the archival profession, preferring apparently more prestigious and potentially more lucrative positions, namely those in academia.<sup>112</sup> Pinkett lamented the glacial pace of professional diversification, particularly as more opportunities became available to African Americans and other minorities.<sup>113</sup>

In the 1970s, Pinkett mentored a new generation of African American archivist-scholars, many of whom he met through Howard University: Thomas C. Battle, Clifford L. Muse, Michael R. Winston, Debra Newman (later Ham), and Wilda Logan. Pinkett struck Battle, who he met in 1973, as a "man of substance."<sup>114</sup> Like Pinkett, Battle pledged himself to "the difficult task of educating much of America to the 'true' history of America."<sup>115</sup> Muse joined the National Archives staff as a technician who trained in the Natural Resources Branch where he met Pinkett. Muse also studied under Pinkett at American University. He characterized Pinkett as a "consummate professional" who had a knack for storytelling as well as an excellent sense of humor. Pinkett imbued Muse with a greater appreciation of the nexus between archives and history.<sup>116</sup> Winston, then director of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, met Pinkett in the early 1970s when Howard University appointed Pinkett an adjunct professor. Winston described Pinkett as a "very courtly gentleman" who was an encouraging presence to the staff.<sup>117</sup> In 1981, on Pinkett's recommendation, Winston hired Muse as Howard's first university archivist. Finally, Wilda Logan characterized Pinkett as a sober gentleman and a consummate professional.<sup>118</sup>

As an elder statesman, Pinkett encouraged still more archivists of color. Having met Pinkett in the early 1990s, Louis E. Jones subsequently wrote of the importance of Pinkett and other older archivists of color in paving the way for younger generations.<sup>119</sup> Karen L. Jefferson similarly reported to Pinkett, "I am meeting (and sometimes mentoring) a number of new young African American archivists.... Hopefully we will continue to enter the doors of opportunity you helped open for us during your many years of service."<sup>120</sup>

The inaugural winner (1993) of the Minority Award, Kathryn Neal, hailed Pinkett's example: upon her election to the SAA Nominating Committee, Neal wrote, "If not for your pioneering efforts, it might not have been possible. I hope that I can well serve ... the legacy of African American archivists."<sup>121</sup> It was fitting that the Minority Student Award was renamed to honor Pinkett in 1999.<sup>122</sup>

Harold Pinkett passed away in the spring of 2001. At the AACR Archives and Archivists of Color Roundtable Business Meeting in late August of that year, attendees observed a moment of silence. As Rosalye Settles put it, "Lets [sic] each of us do what we can to build upon the legacy of Dr. Pinkett and the goals of the Roundtable."<sup>123</sup> At the meeting, Wilda Logan called Pinkett symbolically "the Martin Luther King Jr. of archivists."<sup>124</sup>

African American archivist-scholars influenced by Pinkett also weighed in on his personal and professional legacy. Pinkett was "a ground-breaker," noted Louis Jones.<sup>125</sup> Wilda Logan elaborated: "He opened the door for African American archival professionals and said 'yes it can be done' ... people of color can be in senior management positions and make sound decisions and we can write and we can publish and we can participate in professional conferences and we can be professional in all areas."<sup>126</sup> Thomas Battle reflected, "I like to think that those of us who came along after would make him proud."<sup>127</sup>

Not only did Pinkett himself break ground, but he encouraged others to follow. Louis Jones reflected, "The field is still lily-white, but ... there's a certain level of openness. Diversity has been a big issue for upwards of a dozen years."<sup>128</sup> "When we started we could go to SAA functions and fit in a taxicab; now we need a bus," Battle chuckled.<sup>129</sup>

Perhaps Maynard Brichford, SAA president in 1979–1980, said it best. He commended Pinkett, "You have set a high standard for your colleagues, and have improved each activity in which you have served the Society. Your hashmarks are exceeded by your oak leaf clusters for contributions to archival practice, administrative history and agricultural history. As an archivist, a scholar and a gentleman, you have been an example for us all."<sup>130</sup> □

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Informatics. He offers his sincere thanks to Thomas C. Battle, Deborah Newman Ham, Douglas Helms, Renee Jaussaud, Louis E. Jones, Robert Kvasnicka, Diana Lachatanere, Wilda Logan, Clifford L. Muse, and Michael R. Winston for so generously sharing their recollections and reflections on Dr. Pinkett. A longer version of this article was first published in *The American Archivist* 80, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2017): 296–335.

## NOTES

1. The FEPC's contributions ultimately proved more symbolic than actual: the organization received modest authority, few personnel, and scanty funds. See Louis C. Kesselman, "The Fair Employment Practices Commission Movement in Perspective," *Journal of Negro History* 31 (January 1946): 38. Of 8,000 complaints to the FEPC, in fact, two-thirds were dismissed. Nonetheless, historian David Kennedy deemed the FEPC's creation a "crucial pivot" in African American history. See *Freedom from Fear: The American People in War and Depression, 1919–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 768.
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4. Harold T. Pinkett, "Reflections on an Archival Career," unpublished manuscript (1989), copy received by Alex H. Poole from Louis C. Jones.
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# FOREST HISTORY

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## SOCIETY

*We would like to thank the following companies for their in-kind donations of materials for our new home!*

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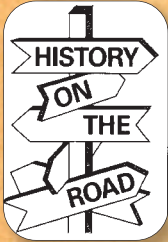


JAMES G. LEWIS

# HISTORY ON THE ROAD

THE FOREST HISTORY SOCIETY

By Steven Anderson



Originally established as the Forest Products History Foundation in 1946, the Forest History Society (FHS) is the only international organization solely dedicated to preserving the

documents of forest history and helping people use them. FHS has preserved diaries, correspondence, manuscripts, music, maps, photographs, film, and much more from businesses, governments, and individuals. Generations of students, scholars, landowners, journalists, and many others have relied on FHS for historical records, but also for insight and inspiration as they explore the relationship of humans and forests through time, on topics from wood and paper products to wilderness and nature philosophy and ethics. Their work, in turn, enhances the public's understanding of the rich story of conservation.

As the only specialized library and archive focused on forest history around the globe, the Forest History Society is the best place to begin any research endeavor on this subject. Now that has been made even easier. In January 2019, FHS moved to its new headquarters, located on an 8.6-acre wooded tract of land in Durham, North Carolina.

The Alvin J. Huss Archival Collection includes the records of the American Tree Farm System, the Society of American Foresters, the National Forest Products Association, the International Society of Tropical Foresters, the Weyerhaeuser Company, and American Forests—the oldest citizen's conservation group in the United States, with records dating back to 1875. FHS maintains a collection of more than 30,000 photographs, lantern slides, and films of diverse activities like early lumbering techniques, foresters at work, and policy makers in debate. In addition, the Society's acclaimed oral history program has produced more than 300 interviews

that capture the personal perspective and experiences of public and private forestry leaders.

Housing more than 11,000 volumes, including one book published 400 years ago, the Society's Carl A. Weyerhaeuser

Library includes journals, historic pamphlets, newsletters, corporate reports, and other literature spanning a broad range of topics. Scholars can browse the open stacks in the library, which can result in discoveries that may lead their research in new



*The new headquarters of the Forest History Society.*

directions. The Society's grant program helps support travel for researchers to work onsite, allowing them access to its wide-ranging resources all in one place. For those who cannot travel to FHS, the staff fields inquiries from scholars and researchers worldwide.

In 1984, the Forest History Society moved cross country and into a 5,000-square-foot insurance building in Durham, North Carolina—the Society's first home of its own. After expanding and remodeling it to serve as a library and archive, FHS's visionary leaders and supporters had done all they could to prepare the organization for the next 30 years. Less than twenty years later, though, space was

at a premium and off-site storage had to be rented to hold the growing collections. The ensuing years further highlighted the vulnerability of the Society's irreplaceable resources and the critical need for new facilities.

Thirty-five years after moving from California, FHS has moved into its new headquarters, a facility specifically built as a library and archive that triples the original's square footage and allows room for future expansion. As the Forest History Society's extensive collections continue to grow each year, the new facility will aid in making all its resources broadly accessible through digitization and web-based outreach as well as pro-

vide proper conditions for housing them. The new location, with close proximity to three major research universities, will substantially increase the Society's visibility and accessibility within the local and regional community. The Lynn W. Day Education Center offers meeting space for the local community, but with the ability to live-stream presentations to a global audience. In short, this generation's leaders and supporters have done all they could to prepare the organization for the next 30 years and beyond. □

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*Steven Anderson is president and CEO of the Forest History Society.*



JAMES G. LEWIS



*The new FHS building incorporates several wood species throughout, even in the exhibit hall. The majority of the wood was donated by companies from around the United States.*



*Donated materials also include large etched glass panels that provide a quiet reading nook in the library.*



## BOOKS OF INTEREST

by Eben Lehman and James G. Lewis

The influential American conservationist Gifford Pinchot began his career as the forester for George Vanderbilt's Biltmore estate, where in the early 1890s Pinchot formulated the first large-scale forest management plan in the United States. His successor, Carl Schenk, opened the country's first forestry school there in 1898. But the forest history legacy is only part of the narrative in *The Last Castle: The Epic Story of Love, Loss, and American Royalty in the Nation's Largest Home* (Touchstone, 2017). Denise Kiernan tells the larger-than-life story of three generations of the Vanderbilt family and their lavish home in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. The youngest son of one of the richest men in the country, Vanderbilt could afford to collect art and rare books, travel extensively, and think pensively. On a visit to the growing city of Asheville in 1888, he fell in love with the view of Mount Pisgah and decided to build a home from which he could gaze upon it. He

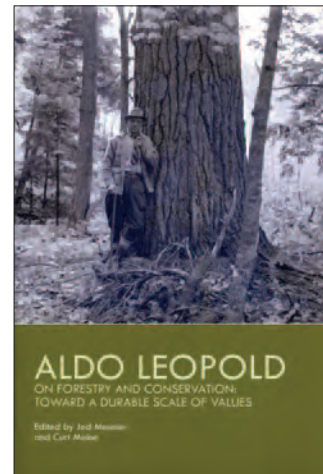


would eventually come to own the mountain and the land surrounding it. He commissioned Richard Morris Hunt, the foremost architect of the Gilded Age, to design a mansion that ultimately exceeded 170,000 square feet of floor space. Desiring that the surrounding land, which eventually totaled 125,000 acres, match the splendor of the residence, Vanderbilt tapped another family friend, the renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted,

for his expertise. Olmsted gave Vanderbilt the parklike setting around the mansion he wanted, but he also gave the young man a greater purpose: to turn large portions of the estate into a demonstration forest that would show Americans how a managed forest could provide a steady profit from timber and many other benefits as well. Kiernan weaves together a tale of the home and its occupants and colorful visitors, the influence of George and Edith Vanderbilt on the city of Asheville, and the constant struggle—inherited along with the estate by their daughter Cornelia and her children—to hold on to the property as operating expenses and taxes piled up. Although Biltmore has been a popular tourist destination since the family first admitted paying visitors in 1930, it didn't turn its first profit until 1968, which is where Kiernan ends the story. Now the estate's many businesses (which include tours of the house and gardens, a winery, a dairy, a farm, and two hotels) demonstrate how to operate on an environmentally sustainable basis. By doing so, the family continues to write new chapters in the history of this celebrated home. (JL)

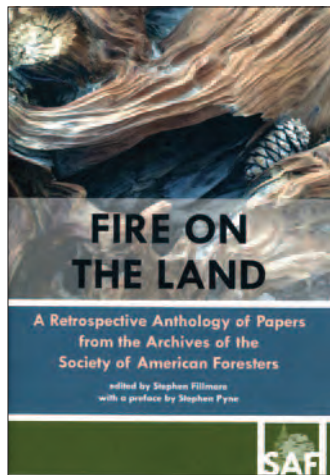
The Society of American Foresters has recently published three edited volumes drawn from its own archives and publications. Each book covers a topic of interest to professional foresters and others, and each could be adopted into college or professional training courses.

*Aldo Leopold on Forestry and Conservation: Toward a Durable Scale of Values* (2018) is a collection of selected writings by the titular forester and conservationist. It is edited by Jed Meunier, an ecologist and research scientist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources studying forest and fire ecology, and Curt Meine, senior fellow for the Center for Humans & Nature and the Aldo Leopold Foundation. Meine, Leopold's preeminent biographer, had previously edited the definitive collection of Leopold's writings, *Aldo Leopold: A Sand County Almanac & Other Essays on Ecology and Conservation* (2013)



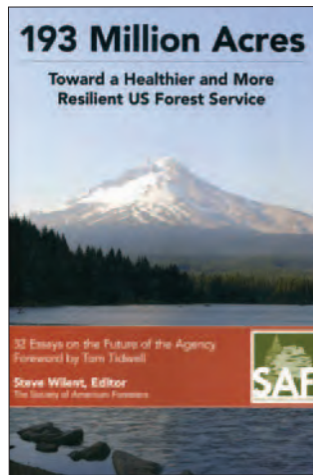
for the Library of America. Unlike that 800-plus-page publication, which includes Leopold's writings on game management and wilderness and his most famous book, this collection focuses on his forestry and forest conservation writings. Meunier and Meine have done readers a great service by returning Leopold to the forest, if you will, giving both practitioners and historians access to his more relatable (and useful) writings. For those not familiar with Leopold, the book's introduction lays out the intellectual and professional paths he took, from working in the American Southwest for the U.S. Forest Service through his career teaching game management and restoring land in Wisconsin. The book is broken into two sections, with each entry containing a brief introductory note to contextualize it. The first section contains twenty-two articles, reviews, and reports Leopold published in the *Journal of Forestry* between 1918 and 1946. The second includes articles published elsewhere along with unpublished essays and letters. One can follow the evolution of his thoughts on forestry and conservation and see how he came to form his "land ethic" philosophy. The helpful bibliography lists all the works Leopold published on forestry both in the *Journal of Forestry* and elsewhere, and those published about Leopold and forestry.

*Fire on the Land: A Retrospective Anthology of Selected Papers from the Archives of*



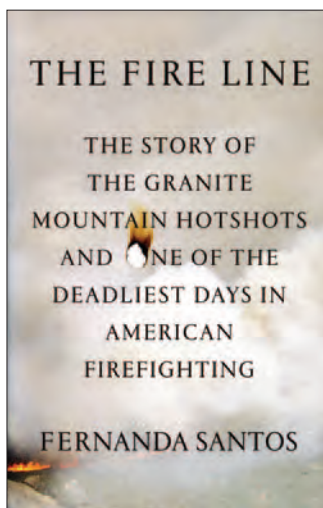
*the Society of American Foresters* (2017), edited by Stephen Fillmore, with a preface by historian Stephen Pyne that summarizes America's wildfire history, draws nearly all twenty-five of its chapters from the *Journal of Forestry*. Fillmore has chosen "seminal papers," which nonforesters may find fairly technical. They are grouped into five sections—"Wildfire Policy," "Fire Control to Fire Management," "Fuels Management," "Fire Education, Training, and Research Needs," and "The Utilization of Fire"—each introduced by a subject matter expert who offers a historical overview and summary of the articles contained within. The anthology provides a good historical overview of wildfire science and policy as these topics have been presented to professional foresters over the past 110 years, demonstrating how history can inform present work.

Fire is just one of the six subjects of *193 Million Acres: Toward a Healthier and More Resilient US Forest Service* (2018). The others are leadership and management challenges, the legal and regulatory framework, discrimination and sexual harassment, the agency's legacy, and its future. The thirty-two essays in this collection are not primarily research-oriented articles; rather, most are position papers drawn from a variety of sources, including blogs and regional newspapers, and written by an impressive lineup of people, including journalists, historians, conservationists, and former Forest Service employees. Steve Wilent, who is editor of the Society of American Foresters' monthly newspaper, *The Forestry Source*, notes in the book's introduction that contributors wrote not to disparage the Forest Service but to offer constructive criticism that might aid its leadership in the coming years. In light of the recent news about discrimination and sexual



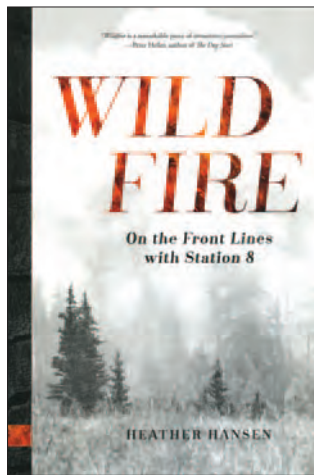
harassment in the agency, the inclusion of a section on this topic can be seen as a potentially helpful step. Over the past several years, that issue and wildfires have arguably had the greatest effect on the agency's ability to manage those 193 million acres. (JL)

On a hot dry day in June 2013, the twenty members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots were transported from their base in Prescott, Arizona, to the nearby town of Yarnell. The crew immediately got to work on the routine task of cutting a fire line to halt an advancing blaze. In an instant things took a tragic turn. A thunderstorm blew in from the north, with tremendous wind gusts pushing the fire to groundspeeds of fifteen miles per hour. By that evening nineteen members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots crew had perished in the fire—the greatest single loss of firefighters in more than a century. Fernanda Santos tells the crew's story in *The Fire Line: The Story of the Granite Mountain Hotshots and One of the Deadliest Days in American Firefighting*



(Flatiron Books, 2016). The reader gets to know each of the men from the Granite Mountain Hotshots before accompanying the crew as they battle the Yarnell Hill Fire. The gripping narrative follows the team as they fight to reestablish control of the growing fire, ultimately revealing that miscommunications resulted in needless death. A bureau chief for the *New York Times*, Santos brings a reporter's attention to detail and in-depth research to her book. She drew on hundreds of hours of interviews with the firefighters' families, co-workers, and state and federal officials. Understanding the Yarnell Hill wildfire events is even more important in light of what has occurred since that fire. The continued ex-urban growth and development in fire-prone areas around the country, along with climate change, mean that wildfires are routinely reaching levels of destruction not seen in this country since the introduction of modern firefighting techniques in the mid-twentieth century. Death counts once unimaginable now occur with increasing regularity. Incidents like the 2018 Camp Fire in northern California, the deadliest wildfire in more than a century, are becoming normal. Understanding and learning from these catastrophes may help us better face future wildfires and the resulting losses. (EL)

The Granite Mountain Hotshots are just one of many elite firefighting crews that have recently been established by municipalities to fight fires in the wildland-urban interface. Heather Hansen embedded for more than a year with a wildland fire division of Boulder, Colorado. The result is *Wild Fire: On the Front Lines with Station 8* (Mountaineers Books, 2018). Boulder, where development continues making deeper incursions into natural areas, offers an excellent case study to examine local firefighting practices and broader fire policy debates. Hansen does that and much more, discussing the past, present, and future of fire science in the greater American West. She places the work of the Station 8 team in a broad historical context of the U.S. Forest Service's firefighting policy and practices over the past century. Hansen opens with a detailed look at the daily lives of Station 8's team, sharing what goes into their training to maintain firefighter readiness. The last third of the book is where the reader sees that training put into action through a gripping day-by-day narrative of the crew's efforts to control



the Cold Springs Fire in July 2016, near Nederland, Colorado. It's a fascinating ground-level view of the work of wildland firefighters as they create a temporary command center, order air attacks, dig fire lines, battle a growing blaze through the night, and conduct mop-up work in the fire's aftermath. Hansen's and Santos's books provide new insights into the challenging work of wildland firefighters in the American West. (EL)

"Most Americans have a fondness for the log cabin, but not many understand why," writes Andrew Belonsky. *The Log Cabin: An Illustrated History* (Countryman Press, 2018) details how this simple wood structure became a uniquely American symbol, ingrained in our national psyche and identity. Belonsky explores the log cabin in American life, from the early seventeenth century through the present, looking at the log cabin's origins in the United States, America's love affair with the cabin as seen through art and literature, and the cabin in modern times and how it perpetuates misconceptions about American history. Belonsky delves into topics like the myth surrounding Abraham Lincoln's birth cabin



and the various hucksters who profited off this legend following his assassination, and the cultural influence of Disney's *Davy Crockett* television program in the 1950s and the frontier motif on a generation of American children. The use of the log cabin to promote classic American rags-to-riches tales is explored, as are the ongoing appeal of vacationing in log cabin-themed resorts and hotels and the use of log cabins in branding and advertising. Even the log cabin as a setting in horror films comes under examination. More complicated topics and themes include the log cabin as a symbol of colonization and the role of cabins in the destruction, dislocation, and attempted assimilation of Native Americans. In Belonsky's hands, the cultural history of the log cabin is a lens through which to view the entirety of the history of the United States, warts and all. And as he unpacks its many myths, the cabin becomes an avatar for the American experience itself. "It's a prism that reflects and refracts the American story," he writes. Filled with historical photos and illustrations (some provided by the Forest History Society), the book serves as a surprisingly entertaining view of an overlooked yet important American icon. (EL)

Fires have burned on Earth for hundreds of millions of years, and it is that lengthy, or deep, history that Andrew C. Scott examines in *Burning Planet: The Story of Fire Through Time* (Oxford University Press, 2018). An emeritus professor of geology in the Department of Earth Sciences at Royal Holloway University of London, Scott has studied fire, and its crucial role in evolution and ecology, from a geologic perspective for more than 40 years. Fire shaped the planet in many ways long before the earliest human-fire interactions. For a deeper understanding of fire's ecological effects, he sought to study fossil charcoal, which holds the key to determining where and when fires occurred and also provide information on the interaction of fire and vegetation, climate conditions, postfire erosion, and much more. His passion for an otherwise obscure topic makes for a compelling read (a glossary of geology terms is provided for newcomers to the subject). The book concludes with a chapter looking to the future, discussing the increase in destructive wildfires and the growing threats of climate change and invasive plants. How we use climate and vegetation models to plan for the future will be crucial,



as will applying lessons from history. It's no overstatement to say that adapting our fire policies and learning to live with fire will be essential to our survival. (EL)

Hadley B. Roberts's *Preserve the Best and Conserve the Rest: Memoirs of a US Forest Service Wildlife Biologist* (self-published, 2016), and Linda Strader's *Summers of Fire: A Memoir of Adventure, Love and Courage* (Bedazzled Ink Publishing, 2018) are just two of the recent spate of memoirs published by former federal land-management agency employees. Roberts was born and raised in New York City, but as a child he fell in love with wildlife and wilderness. In the late 1950s he defied his Gotham-centric parents' wishes by becoming a wildlife biologist, then worked for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for a few years and the U.S. Forest Service for three decades. Over the course of his career, he writes, he was a staunch defender of wildlife who viewed himself as a team player, except that he was on the "wildlife team," which frequently put him at odds with the "Forest Service team"—those whom he believed wanted to advance their



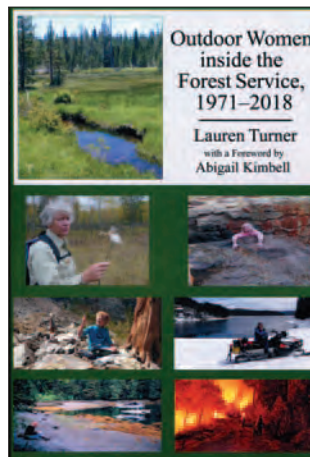


careers by embracing industrial forestry at the height of the agency's timber-harvesting program in the 1960s and 1970s. His breezy memoir offers some insider perspective on what the Forest Service was like when timber management and logging topped the agency's priority list, and the lengths to which some went to keep it there. About a year before retiring from the Salmon National Forest in 1983, he and a local environmental group to which he belonged challenged possibly illegal plans to build a logging road for a timber sale that would adversely affect a wilderness area. He continued fighting after retirement, finally prevailing a few years later.

*Summers of Fire* captures the brief fire-fighting career of a pioneer in the profession. Linda Strader was twenty years old when in 1976 she became one of the first women hired on a Forest Service fire crew, a career that ended in 1982 when an injury forced her to resign. Strader is an excellent memoirist, conveying equally well her harrowing experiences fighting fires in the woods in Arizona and elsewhere and the sexual harassment and discrimination in the fire camps and offices of the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Her attempts to advance her career were undermined or thwarted at nearly every turn by those who believed women did not belong in firefighting. She left the agency, married a member of her original crew, and became a landscape architect. But the challenge of pleasing a resentful husband while having a career took its toll; it took her years to find a sense of purpose and resilience, as well as the courage alluded to in the subtitle. Although it might be easy to characterize the book as being for women because of its inspirational message about trying to make it in "a man's world," men would greatly benefit from reading it, too, if only

to learn that it takes more courage to fight for respect and dignity than it does to fight a wall of flames. (JL)

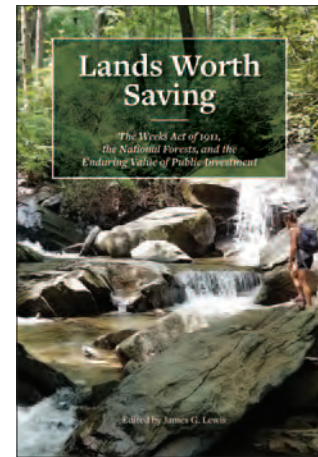
Though not everyone is willing to put in the time to write a memoir, many people in U.S. land-management agencies nonetheless have careers and experiences worth sharing. Lauren Turner, a former career U.S. Forest Service employee, has done a great service for historians and others interested in the history of women in the Forest Service by interviewing 41 women who worked outdoor jobs at some point in their careers at every level of the agency. She asked each woman the same core questions, which they answered either by email or in telephone conversations. Instead of reprinting edited transcripts, Turner wove the answers into biographical sketches in which each woman's personality comes through, making *Outdoor Women Inside the Forest Service, 1971–2018* (McDonald & Woodward Publishing, 2018) an engaging and revelatory book. The chapters follow



the agency's basic organizational chart, grouping the careers of technicians, district-level natural resource professionals, forest-level natural resource professionals, and so forth, up through the line officers. In her concluding chapter, "Retrospective and Prospect," Turner recaps the history these women lived through and made, using their own words. She then summarizes the pros and cons of working for the Forest Service from the perspective of the women interviewed, offering some hints as to why working for the agency may not be an attractive career option for many of today's young women. Turner more explicitly discusses the issues facing the agency today, such as sexual harassment, declining budgets, and institutionalized racial and gender bias, and their effects on women in

the agency—and on the agency itself. And yet the majority of the women interviewed expressed support for those contemplating a career with the agency because of their deeply held belief in its mission. (JL)

In 1911, Congress passed the Weeks Act, one of the most transformative conservation laws in U.S. history. The law had two purposes: to give the federal government a way to establish national forests throughout the Appalachian Mountains, and to create a cooperative framework through which the Forest Service, the states, and private landowners could fight forest fires. In its more than one hundred years, the Weeks Act has enabled the agency to restore more than 24 million acres around the country, mostly through the purchase of heavily logged private lands. Its cooperative framework is used today for combating climate change, protecting endangered species, and even managing urban forests. Today, with America's forests again under threat from invasive species, wildfires, and



anticonservationists, the Weeks Act and the lands it has saved face an uncertain future. *Lands Worth Saving: The Weeks Act of 1911, the National Forests, and the Enduring Value of Public Investment* (Forest History Society, 2018), edited by James Lewis, editor of this magazine, updates articles first published in the magazine *Forest History Today* in 2011. Leading historians, conservationists, and legal experts explore and reflect on the history, benefits, and future of natural resource management under the law. By examining what the Weeks Act has done for America and the challenges conservationists still face, this book might help us better understand what is at stake for the nation's public and private forests in the century to come. (JL) □

## New from the Forest History Society

### Lands Worth Saving

by James G. Lewis

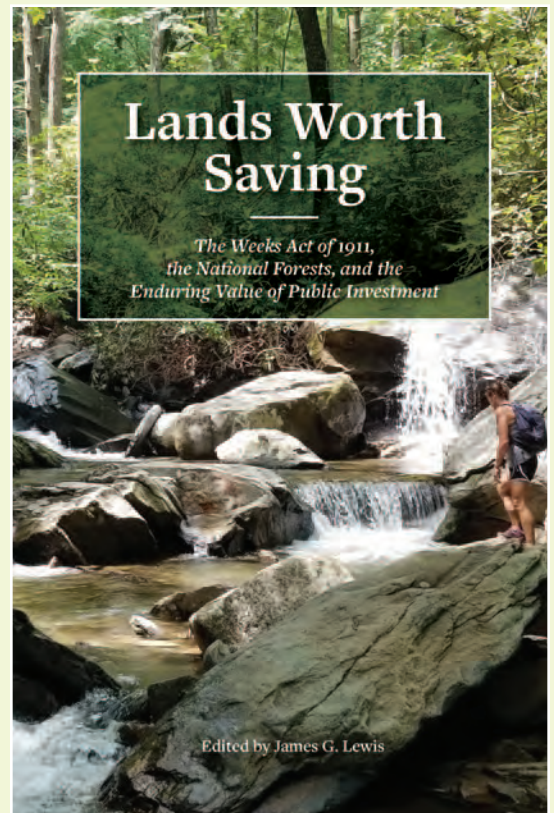
As a new century unfolds, catastrophic wildfires and destructive pests and diseases ravage forests across the country. The U.S. Forest Service lacks proper funding to conduct needed projects. Conservation groups petition the president and a divided Congress to protect the nation's remaining forests from further harm before it's too late. The year is 1911.

Twenty years earlier, a law establishing national forests in the West had failed to protect any lands in the East. From the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi River, forests were rapidly falling to wildfires and the axe, leaving behind fields of tree stumps and rivers choked from erosion. Some saw such lands as disposable. But conservationists saw potential. If safeguarded and reforested by the government, these places could offer timber, water, and recreation for all. They were lands worth saving.

In 1911, Congress passed the Weeks Act, one of the most transformative conservation laws in U.S. history. Designed to establish national forests in the East, the Weeks Act has helped restore more than 24 million acres around the country. The law also provided a cooperative agreement between the Forest Service, the states, and private landowners to fight forest fires. This framework is also used today for combating climate change, protecting endangered species, and managing urban forests.

Today, with America's forests again under threat, the Weeks Act and the lands it has saved face an uncertain future. In this collection, drawn from the pages of the magazine *Forest History Today* and newly updated, leading historians, conservationists, and legal experts explore the history, impact, and future of natural resource management under the law. By examining what the Weeks Act has done for America, they can help us better understand what's at stake for the nation's public and private forests in the century to come.

James G. Lewis is the author of *The Forest Service and the Greatest Good: A Centennial History* and has served as editor of *Forest History Today* since 2007.



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**Appalachian Society of American Foresters:** 3 boxes of organization records.

**Chappell, Nick:** 82 books on forestry, forest management, forestry education, and other topics related to forest history. Publication dates range from 1907 to 1999. Includes a copy of *The Biltmore Story* personally inscribed by author Carl A. Schenck.

**Coufal, James:** 29 books related to forestry and the environment.

**Gunderson, Dave:** 1] *Two in the Far North* by Margaret E. Murie; 2] *Wonderlandscape* by John Clayton.

**Heister, Carla:** 2 bound volumes: United States Geological Survey's 19th Annual Report, and 21st Annual Report Part V: Forest Reserves.

**Inland, Rich:** Two boxes of books and U.S. Forest Service publications.

**Krupp, Louis:** "The Story of Forests," a Keep Oregon Green booklet.

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**Mullins, Curt:** 1 Blu-Ray disc: *The Breaks: Centuries of Struggle* documentary film

**Mutel, Connie:** 58 glass lantern slides of lumbering, log processing, mill workings, etc., in the Midwest (in lockbox); 1 undated article "Lecture on the Manufacture of Pulp and Paper, Natural Resources Intelligence Services."

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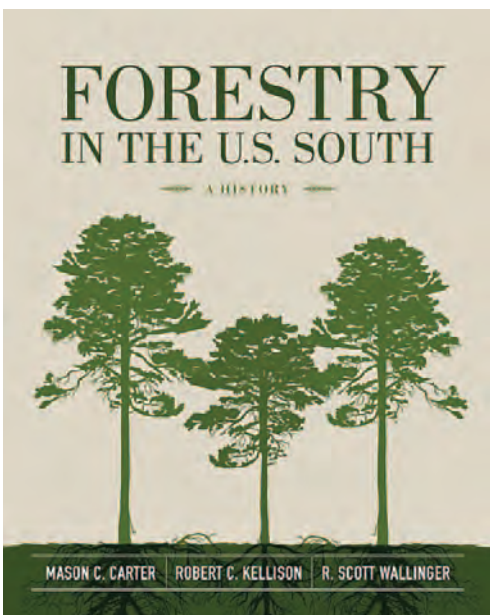
**Rust, Carl W.:** 2 films: *Operation Helping Hand* and *Bikecentennial*. 16mm, 1960s/70s conservation films.

**Shea, John:** 1 CD-ROM of historic photos: "Images of the Past: Potlatch Corporation Historical Photographs."

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### Other Publications

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### Digital Media Available from FHS

*America's First Forest: Carl Schenck and the Asheville Experiment* (55 min.);  
*First in Forestry: Carl Alwin Schenck and the Biltmore Forest School*

(28 min.), \$24.95

*The Greatest Good: A Forest Service Centennial Film* (2005), \$18.00 (DVD)

*The Greatest Good film soundtrack* (2005), \$15.00 (Audio CD)

*Timber on the Move: A History of Log-Moving Technology* (1981), \$20.00 (DVD)

*Up in Flames: A History of Fire Fighting in the Forest* (1984), \$20.00 (DVD)

For a list of oral history interviews available for purchase, visit:

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# FOREST HISTORY

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