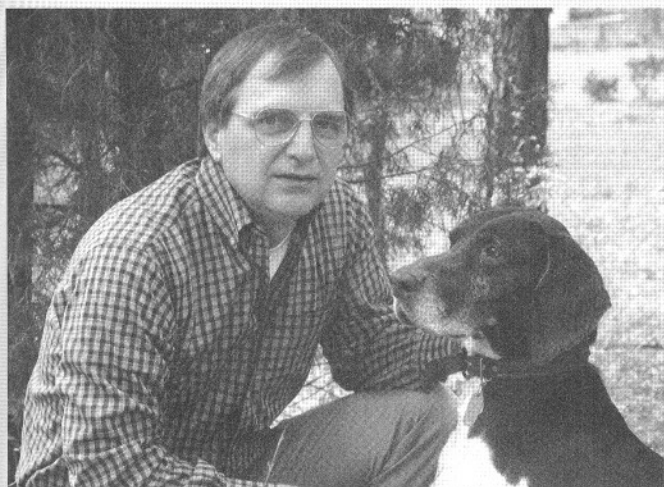


ANNUAL REPORT 1997



From the Chairman

by Eugene S. Robbins

This is my last letter as Board chairman. It has been an interesting time to be leading this fine organization. We have been changing the organization from one of a scholarly orientation to one which maintains its high scholarship standard while offering products to readers whose interest is in more popular history. We have recognized a need to contribute on these two fronts as our financial support has been changing.

Through our strategic planning process we looked at our purpose and the environment in which we find ourselves. Our annual support comes from two sources; endowment and memberships. Our endowment is strong and growing, but our membership revenues are flat. We recognized that scholarly memberships alone would not allow us to make the contribution to forest and environmental education that our facilities and staff can offer. In addition, grants and contracts can take a highlighted role in supporting our outreach efforts. We want to make sure that our organization can make contributions that members will support long term.

Our plan is working. The Issue Series continues to address key items of interest to our supporters and others. The titles keep rolling out each year. We are now into our fourth title and are securing funding for the next issue which will be on wetlands. Our most successful title to date is *American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery*, by Douglas MacCleery. Because of the excellence of this publication, the Society has recently received funding from the Laird Norton Endowment Foundation for the development of a companion teacher's handbook. Our most recent publication, *America's Fires: Management in Wildlands and Forests* by Stephen Pyne, is receiving exciting support and was

given top billing in an unofficial Society of American Foresters e-mail survey seeking members' recommendations of books for summer reading.

The annual publication, *Forest History Today*, has generated a lot of interest as its popular history articles have ranged from land ethics to logging camp life. It is easy and entertaining reading. Meanwhile our scholarly publication, *Environmental History*, continues to gather recognition in the forest and environmental history community. Readership, submissions, and article quality continue to make this publication a significant academic contribution.

Our library and archives programs continue to contribute through the fine work of our Durham staff. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated staff supporting the organization. The education program is still in the development stage and will offer a significant challenge to the Board and staff as we define and develop our niche.

A significant administrative change took place in 1997. The Society's long time executive and president, Pete Steen, retired in fine form at our Grey Towers Board meeting. What a wonderful setting for the transition meeting to take place, the home of Gifford Pinchot. The Grey Towers staff made our stay a moving experience, beginning with the opening presentation about the Pinchot family and the mansion tour to the moving performance of *Gifford Pinchot from the Other Side* by Gary Hines. For more on Pete's marvelous contributions to the Society see the article in this issue. Following an appropriate roast and a small retort from Pete the reins were ceremoniously turned over to our new president, Dr. Steven Anderson. See the president's message which introduces Steve to the membership.

The Board is excited about Steve's potential as the organization builds on the excellent legacy that Pete has given us. Steve will be meeting the membership and developing programs to meet our strategic planning goals as he settles into the new duties. I hope you will have a chance to meet Steve as he moves about the country contacting our many supporters. He is a fine addition to our organization. I hope you will catch his enthusiasm and search for ways you can widen your contribution to the growth of the Society.

Finally, I will be moving on from the position of chairman of your Board. It has been a pleasure to serve the Forest History Society and I hope that in some way I have helped establish a firm foundation on which the Society can continue to build in the coming years. I know I have gained much from the experience. This is a fine Board and wonderful organization. I leave with many interesting friendships, and I have a much broader appreciation for the history of man's interaction with the forests. I thank the Durham staff and all who have served on the Board during my tenure as president and chairman; you have made me proud to have been associated with the Society.

