

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

## *Valuing History Enough to Save It*

STEVEN ANDERSON

In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught.

—*Babu Dioum Senegal*

One of the most rewarding aspects of work at the Forest History Society is the preservation of valuable records in forest and conservation history; records that will be used by present and future generations. Saving such records is usually a “behind the scenes” effort, generally invisible until used in some significant way to shape research or the development of rational public policy. It is also one of the most important reasons that so many support the Society.

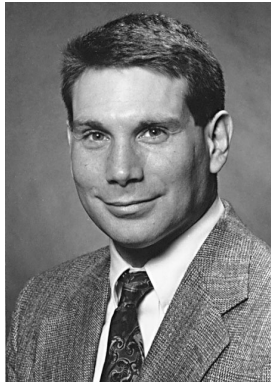
Two recent additions to the Alvin J. Huss Archives at the Forest History Society headquarters have interesting stories.

### **OUT OF THE FIRE AND TO THE SOCIETY**

Recently, the Society accepted records of Vernon Bronson from Martha Bronson of Junction City, Oregon. The collection primarily consists of the records of the Tree Farm Management Service (TFMS), originally incorporated in 1941 as Willamette Valley Tree Farms. TFMS provided a cadre of forestry experts that member companies could utilize to investigate possibilities and engage in forest management activities. Vernon Bronson joined the TFMS in 1945 after working for Booth-Kelly Lumber Company and then serving in the Army’s Mountain Corps. He became the Chief Forester of TFMS in 1951.

The founding members of the organization included Snellstrom Lumber Company, Booth-Kelly Lumber Company, C.D. Johnson Lumber Corporation, Row River Lumber Company, and Lewis Lumber Company. Later, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company and others joined the consortium. Much of the work that was performed included fire protection, inventory, seed source planning, and forest management plans.

Martha Bronson indicated that there had been a fire in their home where the records had been kept. Some burned and the remaining records accepted by FHS showed heavy smoke damage. The family was grateful that the remaining records would now be protected into the future. The reason, though, that this collection came to be conserved was a phone call from FHS member Bob Kintigh, a friend of the Bronson family from Springfield, Oregon who recognized the value of the collection and called the Society.



### **MAIL TAKES 93 YEARS TO REACH FHS**

On October 11, 1910, while onboard the ship *New Amsterdam* en route to Europe, Alfred “Charlie” Cunningham wrote a letter to his sister, Kate, in Michigan describing the good time that he and about 20 fellow students from the Biltmore Forest School had performing the school songs at a concert the evening before.

From this point on the story is rather sketchy and we have to make some assumptions. Charlie Cunningham did not become a forester, but rather went into the printing business and moved to Denver, Colorado. The Biltmore

Forest School ceased to exist in 1913 and its director, Dr. Carl Alwin Schenck moved back to his native Germany. But Cunningham continued to keep in touch with his former professor at least until the 1930s. His sister gave him back his shipboard letter and he put it with some treasured correspondence from Dr. Schenck.

In 2002 it came into the hands of a gentleman in Colorado Springs who put the collection up for auction on E-Bay. There it attracted the attention of F. van Tuikwerd, a scholar in Arnhem, The Netherlands, working on a history of the Holland America shipping line. He was intrigued because the description noted that a few of the pieces of correspondence were written on Holland American Line stationery. After transcribing the handwritten portion of the materials, Mr. van Tuikwerd tried to learn more about young Charlie Cunningham. An Internet search for “Biltmore Forest School” landed him on the new site “Birthplace of American Forestry” ([www.lib.ncsu.edu/archives/forestry/](http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/archives/forestry/)) created jointly by the Forest History Society, North Carolina State University, and The Biltmore Company. He contacted the FHS librarian for help and offered to donate the materials to FHS as an appropriate repository.

So the letters have traveled from mid-Atlantic to Michigan, to Colorado, to The Netherlands, and finally to North Carolina, arriving safe and sound and full of life after a journey of 93 years.

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A love of history and understanding its value is something that can be taught. We appreciate all the efforts of our members and others in helping us to preserve the documents that illuminate relationships of people and forests over time. They provide insights that can enable us to ask better questions and make the best decisions now and in the future.

Please contact Cheryl Oakes, librarian and archivist at the Forest History Society, if you have collections that should find their way to an official repository.