BOOKS OF INTEREST

By Michele A. Justice

The Langdale family of Valdosta, Georgia, has been deeply involved in the naval stores industry of the southern United States since John Wesley Langdale first developed an interest in turpentining during the 1890s. In the twentieth century “Judge” Harley Langdale, Sr., (1888–1972) and his sons Harley, Jr., John Wesley, and William Pope expanded the family’s role in the industry by forming the Langdale Company. Judge Harley and His Boys: The Langdale Story (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2002; cloth $35.00) by historian John E. Lancaster is an exhaustive genealogical history of the Langdale family that focuses on the family’s role in the southern forest products industry over the past century. “Judge” Harley was a lawyer by trade but maintained close connections with the naval stores industry by organizing the American Turpentine Farmers Association cooperative in the 1930s and lobbying Congress on behalf of the industry. Detailing the educational backgrounds, career paths, and civic leadership of the Langdales, Lancaster’s book reveals the importance of family ties to the continuing success of both large and small dynastic forest industry enterprises in the United States. Numerous illustrations, detailed appendices on the Langdale ancestral line, a bibliography, and an index complement the thoroughly researched text in this book. Oral history interviews with the Langdale sons conducted in 1991 by former Forest History Society president Harold K. “Pete” Steen further highlight the family’s saga and are available for purchase from the Forest History Society.

Scientists know today that wildfires play an important role in the ecology of forest ecosystems, but until recent times foresters around the world devoted tremendous amounts of time, energy, and financial resources to forest fire control and prevention. Quebec history consultant Patrick Blanchet documents in his book Forest Fires: The Story of a War (Montreal, Quebec: Cantos International Publishing, 2003; paper $39.95 CDN) the history of such efforts in Quebec, Canada, from 1869 to 1972. Based largely on unpublished archival materials and first-hand recollections related to the author through extensive interviews, the book covers such topics as fire detection, fire fighting technology, the establishment and work of the Quebec Forest Protection Service, and legislation enacted to protect forests from fires. Supplemented with historical illustrations and comprehensive notes, this detailed examination of Canada’s century-long war to protect forests highlights the influence of technology and science on the evolution of forest fire management in the Province of Quebec.

John Bartram (1699–1777) and his son William (1739–1823) were two early botanical explorers of the southeastern United States who greatly influenced the practice of natural history in British America. The new book John and William Bartram: Travelers in Early America (Flagler Beach, Fla.: Ocean Publishing, 2004; cloth $19.95, paper $14.95) by author Sandra Wallus Sammons is a concise biography of the naturalists that highlights the explorers’ experiences while on botanical collecting trips across the South, especially in Florida. The book is a slim volume containing a detailed overview of the personal and professional lives of the Bartrams throughout much of the eighteenth century. Written in a clear style and format and featuring illustrations, a map, notes, and an index, this short but informative work provides historical insight into the lives of two adventurers whose boundless curiosity and hunger for knowledge shaped the world’s understanding of the bountiful natural resources of colonial America.

In his new book The Forest for the Trees: How Humans Shaped the North Woods (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004; cloth $32.95), freelance writer Jeff Forester explores the ecological history of the forested region of northern Minnesota known today as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. The author describes in detail the conflicting land uses, conservation battles, and wildfires that have all played a significant role in shaping the development, management, and preservation of the area’s Winton watershed through the present time. Focusing on human land use impacts during the nine-
teenth and twentieth centuries, the work discusses such topics as Native American forest use, lumbering, forest conservation, forest management policy, fire management, and wilderness preservation. The author concludes by asserting that in the future, land managers should replace rigid ideas about sustained yield, multiple use, and wilderness preservation with the more flexible management strategies of ecosystem management and restoration ecology in order to best cope with environmental change and maintain biological diversity. Illustrations, notes, a bibliography, and an index supplement the text.

Politics, Pollution, and Pandas: An Environmental Memoir (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2003; cloth $28.00) is a new autobiography by Russell Train (1920– ) describing his lifelong involvement with wildlife conservation and environmental politics, policy, and regulation in the United States. A major player in national and international conservation politics since the 1950s, Train impacted American conservation policy in numerous ways, both directly and indirectly, while serving as a tax court judge, president of the Conservation Foundation, undersecretary of the Department of the Interior, the first chair of President Nixon’s Council on Environmental Quality, the second administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and president of the World Wildlife Fund in the United States. The book is filled with insightful discussions about wildlife conservation, pollution control, the environmental policies of numerous presidential administrations, environmental laws and legislation, and national as well as global environmental politics. Colorful anecdotes, illustrations, notes, and an index support the recollections of this highly influential American conservationist. Former Forest History Society president Harold K. “Pete” Steen’s 1993 oral history interview with Train covers many of the same issues discussed in this autobiography and is available for purchase from the Society.

Lumber baron John Joyce (1799–1881), his son David Joyce (1825–1894), and his grandson William Joyce (1860–1909) were the driving forces behind the establishment and development of a family-owned enterprise with core sawmilling, logging, and log transportation operations in the Bigfork Valley region of Itasca County, Minnesota. In Timber Connections: The Joyce Lumber Story (Grand Rapids, Minn.: Bluewaters Press, 2003; cloth $39.95, paper $29.95, plus $3.50 shipping/handling) authors Susan Hawkinson and Warren Jewett examine the history of the Joyce family’s involvement with the American lumber trade over five generations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Discussing to a lesser degree the family’s business holdings in Iowa, Wisconsin, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, this 335-page book evaluates the impact of the family’s struggles and accomplishments on the lumber and logging railroad transportation industries in both the Midwest and the South through the 1950s. The authors used several photographs from the Forest History Society Photograph Collection along with other images and maps to illustrate their work and included notes, a glossary, a bibliography, and an index to create this in-depth study of a pioneering American lumbering family.

Freelance writer and photographer Lawrence S. Earley studies three centuries of human and forest ecology in the longleaf pine ecosystem of the southern United States in his book Looking for Longleaf: The Fall and Rise of an American Forest (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004; cloth $27.50). Interviews with foresters, ecologists, botanists, and landowners informed this history of forest use and biological diversity in longleaf pine forests ranging from Virginia to Texas. The book examines such varied topics as the ecology and health of longleaf pine forests; their importance to the turpentine and naval stores industries of the American South; and changing forest policies aimed at management for grazing, lumbering, ecological restoration, and other land uses. Reviewing the impact of human actions on this unique ecosystem from the eighteenth century through the present, Earley argues for the conservation of longleaf pine forests and recognition of their special management demands.

In the United States many twentieth-century foresters began their careers as members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the Great Depression, performing such varied tasks as trail blazing in parks, constructing campground buildings, building dams, and clearing brush from wooded areas. Workers usually lived in remote camps across the nation and had limited contact with the outside world. Newspapers, therefore, played a primary role in maintaining morale and keeping the CCCs informed about local, national, and world events. In his new book The CCC
The CCC Chronicles: Camp Newspapers of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1942 (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004; paper $45.00), historian Alfred Emile Cornebise explains how newspapers were created and distributed in CCC camps, who wrote for them, and the variety of information contained in the publications. Focusing his study especially on the history of the production of the CCC newspaper Happy Days, Cornebise asserts that journalism significantly impacted the lives of Corps members by encouraging them to voice opinions, instructing them in their duties, and promoting the ideals of President Franklin Roosevelt’s (1882–1945) New Deal program. The CCC Chronicles takes a novel approach to the study of the Corps and includes illustrations, notes, a selected bibliography, and an index.

Sustainability is a topic that has for some time been considered an admirable goal by foresters but which has only recently come to dominate forest management philosophy on a national and international level. The essays included in the book Two Paths Toward Sustainable Forests: Public Values in Canada and the United States (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2003; paper $34.95) compare the challenges to sustainable forestry experienced by the two North American nations during the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries. Edited by Bruce A. Shindler, Thomas M. Beckley, and Mary Carmel Finley, the work includes papers addressing the influence of public opinion and societal values on the evolution of forest policy on either side of the shared border. Sociologists, researchers, foresters, economists, political scientists, geographers, and scholars from related fields contributed to this interdisciplinary study. One of the essays incorporates a broad historical outlook spanning ten centuries, while the other papers focus on contemporary political and policy struggles experienced by the public and private forestry sectors in the neighboring countries. Including tables, notes, and an index, Two Paths Toward Sustainable Forests discusses the social, economic, and political aspects of sustainable forestry that have recently impacted and continue to shape the development of forest management policy in the United States and Canada in the new millennium.

Paul A. Johnsgard has written a new, easy-to-use reference guide describing the flora and fauna native to the Great Plains region of the United States in the early nineteenth century. Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains: A Natural History (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003; paper $14.95) discusses the botanical and zoological findings of the 1804–1806 exploratory expedition led by Meriwether Lewis (1774–1809) and William Clark (1770–1838) at the behest of President Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826). The book is illustrated with the author’s own drawings of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and plants that members of the Lewis and Clark expedition reportedly encountered. Examining the ecological significance of such species to the local ecosystem of the time, Lewis and Clark on the Great Plains provides an assessment of the legacy of the expedition’s findings for biological science and discusses the current status of wildlife living in Great Plains habitats today. This relatively short publication of approximately 150 pages is packed with detailed natural history information supported by maps, references, an index, and a guide to present-day sites of botanical and zoological interest associated with the expedition. Readers interested in the plant and animal ecology of the nation’s Bread Basket, both past and present, will find something of interest in this slim book.

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