Oral History Interview
With

Walter J. Damtoft

Asheville, North Carolina
February 14-15, 1959

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Forest History Foundation, Inc.

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Walter J. Damtoft

Session I

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Elwood R. Maunder: Now, Dammy, we like to start by finding out some background information on the man we are interviewing. Where were you born and raised?

Walter J. Damtoft: I was born in Southport, Connecticut in 1890. My parents were both born in Denmark. I attended Prospect Street Grammar School in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and I graduated from the Bridgeport high school in 1907. I then entered the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University and received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy in 1910. I went from there to the Yale forest school where I received my master of Forestry degree in 1911.

ERM: What made you become interested in forestry?

WJD: I got steered into forestry because my interest had been attracted by the activities of Bill Sheppard who was a friend of my father. Bill's father-in-law and my father were together a great deal, and they often talked about the interesting profession that Bill had entered. Naturally, my father talked to me about it. I had planned to go into engineering, but I got some literature about forestry and concluded it was a profession in which one could get a great deal of satisfaction out of public service, as well as having pleasant activities.

ERM: Where was Bill Sheppard employed in forestry?

WJD: Bill was with the Pennsylvania Railroad at the time that my interest was attracted. By the way, he just died within the last few weeks.

ERM: Who among your teachers at Yale impressed you the most?

WJD: Do you mean from the standpoint of knowledge of forestry?

ERM: No, I'm thinking more specifically of someone who might have had a profound influence on your life as a whole.

WJD: Well, I think I'd say H. H. [Herman Haupt] Chapman.

ERM: Did you go on some of Chapman's field trips?

WJD: Oh, yes, I went on some around in New Haven and down in Milford, Pennsylvania. I attended summer school two summers at Milford on the estate of Gifford Pinchot, where the Yale forest school went for many years for their fieldwork.

ERM: Did you ever come down to the South with Chappy?

WJD: We ended up a course by camping near Trinity, Texas on lands of the Thompson Lumber Company. We spent some three or four months there, and we certainly got a taste of southern forestry.

ERM: How do you mean that?

WJD: We provided tasty morsels, I should say, for the many varmints in the Houston area. I think every kind of annoying insect is there, plus rattlesnakes, coral snakes, cottonmouth water moccasins, centipedes, and scorpions. We had no way of cooling off any of our food. We were completely handicapped in every way. I think I dropped down to about ninety-eight pounds, but it was a good experience. It was the kind of thing that Chappy delighted in because he said, "Well, if you can't take it, you'd better get out of the profession."

ERM: He was quite a dynamic fellow, wasn't he?

WJD: Oh, he certainly was!

ERM: How would you characterize him as a teacher?

WJD: I'd say that he was impressive. He was very forceful in his presentation. By the same token, that might be a criticism of him. Maybe he was a little bit too dogmatic. But there never was a dull moment when Chappy was around.

When we were in Texas, we had about forty people, all told, and we would break down into crews of two most of the time, and that meant there were twenty different crews scattered over a pretty wide area. It seemed that he was able to contact practically every one of them every day we were out. He was very vigorous.

ERM: How did all this fieldwork on the part of college classes influence the lumber people in the area? Did it stir their interest in forestry to any considerable extent?

WJD: I don't know. I think it did the Thompson brothers, but whether it extended beyond that is questionable.

ERM: Of course, there was some influence felt at Urania, Louisiana with the Hardtners, I presume, and with Crossett up in Arkansas.

WJD: Oh yes, and there undoubtedly was some influence with our camping there at Trinity because it attracted a great deal of attention with the alert among the local citizens. They were interested in what we were doing and often would come out to the camp to learn more about our work. Of course, we got a good many laughs from local people. We told them that there were worthwhile facts in forestry. They thought most of it was very interesting, but entirely impractical. They thought we were a bunch of dreamers.

ERM: Do you recall with fond memory any of your other professors who had a profound influence on your life?

WJD: Well, there was R. C. Bryant by virtue of his personality. There was also Henry S. Graves, who was at Yale for only a short time during my attendance at the school. He left to take over the position of chief forester when Pinchot was dismissed.

ERM: Now, you were in school at the time of the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy. Think back, if you will, and try to recall what your feeling was at that particular time regarding this controversy. How did the boys in forestry feel about this? Whose side were they on?

WJD: They were on Pinchot's side. It might have been by virtue of the fact that we heard Ballinger cussed out a good deal by the faculty and others, so our views may have been prejudiced by the adverse things we heard about Ballinger.

ERM: In other words, most of the professors expressed a pro-Pinchot point of view.

WJD: Yes. You see, I don't think that the students got a real understanding of the situation.

ERM: Did most of you forestry students plan to go into the U. S. Forest Service upon your graduation?

WJD: Well, yes, that was all that most of us thought about. Not only because we thought we'd like it, but also because the field outside of public service was very limited. There were some state foresters, but not very many. And then there was the big entrance salary of one hundred dollars a month in the Forest Service, if you passed the Civil Service exam.

ERM: You mentioned earlier that forestry attracted you and other young fellows like you because there was an element of idealism of public service involved. Wasn't this a part, then, of this whole Pinchot-Ballinger picture? Didn't you, as future foresters, feel a kind of loyalty to the service that you were ultimately going into?

WJD: That's right. You said it much better than I could, but that was it. And then there were other personal reasons. A very close friend in school had a sister who was married to Overton Price. You remember it was felt that Overton Price's activities were as much responsible for the break as anything.

ERM: Yes, I do. I remember, too, that there was a great deal of wonderment over his death. Did Overton Price feel he was personally responsible?

WJD: That's my recollection, that he felt he was responsible for a lot of it.

ERM: Why was that?

WJD: I can't recall, but that is in some of the history which has been recorded. I found it in my library here the last few years. I wouldn't attempt to go into detail now; I couldn't.

ERM: At the same time that you were in school at Yale, Dammy, the Biltmore Forest School right here in Asheville, or nearby in Biltmore, was flourishing; and old Dr. [Carl Alwin] Schenck was putting his boys through their paces. You came into association with Schenck and some of his friends and students later on in your career, and you became one of several honorary Biltmorians, is that correct?

WJD: Yes. I received the degree called Bachelor of Biltmore Forestry and Fellow of the Biltmore Union. I refer to this as a complimentary degree because I actually did no academic work at Biltmore.

ERM: What did you do in 1911 after you received your master's degree in forestry from Yale?

WJD: I went into the United States Forest Service, and my first assignment was in Colorado. I've been reminded of it many times this winter because when I hear the weather report, the announcer often says, "And the coldest spot was Fraser, Colorado." Well, that's where I was. There and Steamboat Springs.

ERM: What was your assignment out there?

WJD: The first assignment was rough. We did very extensive reconnaissance of timber on the west slopes of the middle park. This reconnaissance was for purposes of locating the boundaries of spruce and making an estimate of the quantity. We'd get on a high place, make a sight over that bunch of spruce which showed up so prominently, and then take another sight – triangulate. That was on the Routt

National Forest. Then in the early fall I was transferred to the Arapaho National Forest, which had its headquarters at Fraser. There I had charge of a seed extractory, extracting lodgepole pine seed. It was largely experimental, but we did quite a volume of business.

Just before that assignment I was with a crew that was making a study on the rate of growth of lodgepole pine and constructing volume tables. I can remember getting in under lodgepole pine butts and looking at the rings through a magnifying glass and putting a pin every ten rings. There wasn't room for the pins because it was very slow growth. That made a very great impression on me, and I have thought of it many times down here in the South where we sometimes have a growth ring of half an inch or an inch.

ERM: Climate makes a world of difference, doesn't it?

WJD: It certainly does.

ERM: How long were you out there in the West?

WJD: Oh, not long. I remember going over the Continental Divide at Corona on the Fourth of July and it was snowing. A little mountain railroad later built a tunnel through that came out at Fraser, but back then we had to go over the top at Corona. I stayed there until February or March of 1912, and then I returned east. I had to have a hernia operation, and as soon as I recovered from that, I got assigned to the Appalachians where I've been ever since.

ERM: Was your assignment to a station here at Asheville?

WJD: Well, no. That was during the early days of the acquisition of lands under the Weeks Law, and I joined a party on the Shenandoah purchase area—as they called it—at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

ERM: Were you mapping areas to be taken into the national forests?

WJD: Yes. We were evaluating those areas that had formal proposal for sale. Then I was transferred to the Smoky Mountain purchase area, which later became the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, with headquarters at Townsend, Tennessee, a sawmill town.

ERM: What was the procedure that you followed in making these appraisals?

WJD: Oh, classified types. We had what we called the cove type which, of course, was the fastest growing timber; then we had the lower-slope type, the upper-slope type, and the ridge. They were determined by the average length of the trees.

Cove type was an average length of three logs; lower-slope type, as I recall it, was an average length of two logs, and the upper slope was one log. The ridge was no commercial material at all.

ERM: How many feet was an average-length log?

WJD: Sixteen feet. It was kind of a crude thing, but it served very well.

ERM: Was this one that had been worked out by the Service itself?

WJD: Yes. William L. Hall was in charge; William Ashe was next to Hall, I believe.

ERM: And you knew both of these men personally, didn't you?

WJD: Oh, yes, very well.

ERM: Both these men were real pioneers in the whole field of forestry. Ashe, I understand, was more of a botanist than he was a forester.

WJD: Yes, he was a peculiar combination. He was a scientist tremendously interested in botany, but he was also a trader. That's an unusual combination. He loved to match wits with the businessmen owners of these big tracts of land. He was full of sarcasm. I had never seen a combination like that before—a research scientist being crazy about trading. He was just like the mountain trader; he could hold his own. He did a good job for Uncle Sam. We felt there were some instances, though, where he let some boundaries, which we should have had, get by because of a dispute over an extra ten or fifteen cents an acre. But he and Hall were both very conscientious public servants and very capable ones.

ERM: What sort of man was Billy Hall in those days?

WJD: He looked very dignified to me. I was quite young, only twenty-one years old, when I first went into the Service. He was a good administrator.

ERM: You worked under Hall most of the time you were in the Service, and that work was all concentrated on carrying out the purposes of the Weeks Act.

WJD: Yes.

ERM: You were in that work here in this area and on the Pisgah National Forest, weren't you?

WJD: Well, I'll tell you what happened. I mentioned that I was assigned to the Smoky Mountain purchase area of Townsend, Tennessee. That was in 1912. Verne

Rhoades was in charge of the area. The supervisor designation hadn't been established at that time, so the Forest Service appointed a chief in charge of the Smoky Mountain area. Then Verne Rhoades came over here to Ashville and left me as acting area chief until 1915.

During that time I was developing the forest in a very limited way because we had very limited funds. I established one fire tower, and I well remember how we made it. A couple of men and I were up on the ridge, and we cut saplings and built a tower that way. It wasn't a very fine-looking job, but it served. Of course, we smile when we think of that now, the way money has been spent on those things.

ERM: How much of a budget did you have then to do your job as chief of this area?

WJD: Oh, it was very limited. I don't suppose we spent $5,000 in a year.

ERM: How big an area were you responsible for?

WJD: Well, Little River Lumber Company's holdings were about 80,000 acres, and they held all of this tract in their possession. They had offered it for sale to the government under the Weeks Law. It was one of their earliest offerings. The government attorneys immediately delved into the titles and found them very complicated, and it finally developed that it would be a bad policy to continue to attempt to clear them up. There were a lot of "sleeping dogs" that would have been awakened, and it wouldn't have been fair to the Little River Lumber Company to subject them to this. We withdrew in 1915, I think it was. This was the Smoky Mountain area. You see, we had the Shenandoah area and the White Top area in southern Virginia; the Unaka area at Johnson City and the Smoky Mountain area at Townsend, both in Tennessee; and we had the Cherokee area out of Blue Ridge, Georgia. They weren't dignified by the name "forest," and that was perfectly proper because there hadn't been any forest established.

ERM: But you were investigating the titles to these lands in the prospect that the government might purchase them, and you also were trying to do a management job while this was in the process.

WJD: That's right. Of course, I had nothing to do with the titles. I was the forester on the job to protect what might be considered a government option on this property. Normally when negotiations reached the stage that these had, it was a foregone conclusion that the land was going to be acquired. It was just a matter of going through title examination and survey.

ERM: Did the government ultimately purchase this property?

WJD: No, it was dropped. Then the Smoky Mountain park movement developed about 1925, and that land is not part of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

ERM: It was first considered for purchase as part of a national forest, but that was abandoned; and later it became part of the national park, is that correct?

WJD: Yes.

ERM: Evidently there were no legal problems in making it a part of the national park.

WJD: Well, of course, that was a new day. The titles to these mountain lands have been very complicated, but most of them have been worked out now.

ERM: In other words, the “sleeping dogs” had been permanently put to sleep by the time the National Park Service got into the act.

WJD: Let me put it this way: When the government attorneys began to delve into the history of the titles, they found one complication after another. They concluded that they couldn’t go ahead and acquire it without advertising the whole thing to the world and listing all the possible defendants. They didn’t think that would be fair to the Little River Lumber Company because it would just open up the thing, and it might go on for years, and while it was going on the Little River Lumber Company would gain an uncertain status. Of course, the government couldn’t pay for it until final approval of the titles.

ERM: Had these conditions changed considerably later on?

WJD: Oh, yes. The situation over in Townsend, Tennessee was a great new field for lawyers. There were many, many title cases. Now you rarely hear of a title case. There hasn’t been a big title controversy for quite some time. Up until fifteen or twenty years ago all of the southern Appalachians was a great field for lawyers because surveys and titles were so complicated.

ERM: Was that because there had been so many small landowners?

WJD: Well, these lands had been originally obtained by land grants, and often you’d find as many as seven overlapping.

ERM: How long did you work with the Forest Service in this region?

WJD: I left Little River in the latter part of 1915 and was assigned to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, where I remained until the end of that year.

ERM: Did you do the same kind of work there?

WJD: Same kind of acquisition work, yes. Then I received an assignment to the Mt. Mitchell area, which is just north of us here. That was being administered from Asheville with Verne Rhoades as supervisor. You see, the government had acquired the Vanderbilt lands, which are now Pisgah National Forest, so they had to get ready then to designate the administrator as supervisor. I was still over there looking after the purchase of little 100-acre and 200-acre tracts.

ERM: You were sort of blocking up an area?

WJD: Yes. And at the same time I was administrative assistant to Verne Rhoades in what forestry we were able to apply then.

ERM: How big a staff did you and Verne have at that time?

WJD: We had a secretary, guards, and rangers. The office just consisted of Verne Rhoades and his secretary and me. I think I used the same secretary. Then we probably had half a dozen to a dozen guards and rangers out in the field.

ERM: Where did you recruit the rangers?

WJD: Well, we got them locally.

ERM: You just hired people who had some woods sense?

WJD: In the Appalachians there was, on the whole, no interest in forestry. In fact, there was some opposition to it, and common superstitions were that if you didn't have forest fires, you'd have epidemics of typhoid fever and be overrun by snakes and all that. But there is always a certain percentage of intelligent people, and we were able to get hold of some very fine characters. There are two or three of the old Pisgah rangers still alive. They all came out when Dr. Schenck was here, and it was really a thrill to see the kick they got out of meeting the Old Man again.

ERM: Did they have a real affection for him?

WJD: Oh, yes.

ERM: I've heard some stories told that he didn't quite get on with the mountain people too well.

WJD: It's quite true. He was reported to have become aggravated by the frankness, and probably rudeness, of a mountaineer that he was talking to out in Pennsylvania County. The mountaineer just bobbed right up, took Schenck's hat off, and threw it on the ground and stomped on it and Schenck said "For poor people you are the damndest independent people I've ever seen!"

ERM: He didn’t understand the American at all. He looked upon them, I suppose, in the same way he would a German peasant.

WJD: Oh, yes. But with all of that he had a number of folks who were very much attached to him.

ERM: Now, you worked closely with Verne Rhoades. He was a Biltmore man, wasn’t he?

WJD: Yes. He graduated from Biltmore and was a very good forester. He should have more recognition than he is receiving. He established the policy of the administration of this area on good, sound ground. It was not easy because there was a lot of antagonism, particularly when hunting and fishing regulations were required. Verne was a very kind-natured man, but he was a man of decision; and he had to arrest a number of the old mountaineers for trespassing, particularly in fishing and hunting because part of the forest was made a wildlife area. Let’s see, it wasn’t a designated wildlife area as we know them now, but it involved the control of game and fish.

ERM: Did Verne Rhoades spend almost all of his career right here in one area?

WJD: Well, he was one of the early inspectors to select an area in which the purchases should be carried out. He was right next to William L. Hall at the very start of the application of the Weeks Law. There were maybe half a dozen men of Verne’s caliber because it wasn’t too easy to find anyone who knew something about the Appalachians to begin with and who could outline these areas where forests should be established. Verne became familiar with this area here by virtue of his having attended Biltmore school. That, along with his ability, prompted the Forest Service to make him the first supervisor. And, as I say, he established policies and carried them out, and I don’t know that he made an enemy in the whole area. He just had the personality that people liked. I followed his footsteps in many portions of this area here, and for many years the first thing they’d ask me was, “Do you know Mr. Rhoades? He’s a find man, ain’t he?”

ERM: You really needed to know the people here and their way of thinking in order to accomplish anything with them, didn’t you?

WJD: Yes. Unless you understood them, you were just out of luck. A mountaineer just has respect for a man being a man, not for the clothes he wears and what he represents.

ERM: Rhoades really did a great job of setting up the pattern for the whole program, did he not?

WJD: Yes, and he introduced the Forest Service to this area in the most favorable aspect.

ERM: When did you leave the Forest Service to work in the field of industrial forestry?

WJD: I started in industrial forestry on January 1, 1920.

ERM: What had you done between 1915 and 1920?

WJD: I was still in the Forest Service.

ERM: Were you involved in World War I in any way?

WJD: No. That's kind of an interesting story. I don't know if you ever heard of Graham County—it's the most westerly of our counties. Up until a few years ago, you might say it was almost inaccessible. The road leading in from Topton across the gap was just full of boulders and rocks. There was no telegraph, no telephone. It was a very isolated area and had beautiful timber. There was a big boundary that was held by the Whiting Manufacturing Company, and they had issued bonds which were held by the investment registry in England. Mingled with that area were some scattered small tracts, known as homestead lands, which had been turned over to the government by a man who had a high position in the Post Office Department. I don't know if he was ever convicted of it, but this man was suspected of embezzlement, and he worked it out by turning over to the government these land titles he had in Graham County. Anyway, the powers-that-be in Washington thought it very important to acquire those lands, and they assigned me to take charge of the examination of the surveys. I remember the letter of assignment because this was considered the most important acquisition job that the Forest Service had undertaken. I went over to Graham County in 1916.

When war was declared, I like everyone else, immediately began to figure out what I should do; and I wrote to a friend, Eugene Lindsey, who was also a forester. He wrote back, explaining what to do to get into officer's training camp at Fort Meyers. I made some move in that direction and was told not to get excited. I had to clear it with the government, and they put me in a deferred classification. The secretary of war—Baker, I think it was—told me to just "hold my horses" because he felt that this Graham County timber would be needed for war purposes, and I would be needed here because I knew more about the timber than anybody else. It went on for a while, and I didn't feel like I was making much of a contribution, so I undertook to resign from the Forest Service. I got a seven-page letter back from Will Hall, which I still have, pointing out that the thing for me to do was to keep cool and stay with the job and when they needed me, they'd let me know.

ERM: They obviously considered this land acquisition work very high priority.

WJD: Yes, but I don't know what made them consider it of sufficient value to recommend that I stay on and finish the job of estimating. I never understood that.

ERM: Perhaps there was something involving the war effort itself?

WJD: No, it was just material. This forest was all virgin timber—40,000 acres of it. I was released from my deferment a week before the Armistice.

ERM: Tell me, Dammy, how did you actually go about making the survey to purchase this very important land in Graham County?

WJD: We worked in two-man crews, and the number of those crews in the camp varied. We generally had five or six two-man crews that stripped the area, ran lines every ten chains, and counted the trees for the total width of one chain. This got us a 10 percent estimate.

ERM: In other words, you ran parallel lines, and every ten chains you'd take a measurement?

WJD: No. That's the way it is done now. We would run lines, and we would estimate to half a chain on each side, the full length of one. We mapped, too, as we went along. We had a wonderful map developed of Graham County in great detail. Of course, that isn't so important now because they've got the aerial maps, but I think it was about as detailed a map that was made under those conditions as has been made in the East.

ERM: This whole field of mapping and cruising timber has gone through quite an evolution in the time you've been a forester down here, hasn't it?

WJD: Well, you see, there's no need now for establishment of camps. You can get almost anywhere within walking distance of your objective by car, and in many instances you can get right to any of them if you have a Jeep.

ERM: But in those days you were really out in the bush, weren't you?

WJD: Oh, my goodness, yes! Sometimes we even had to pack out our supplies on horseback.

ERM: How long were you actually out in the field making that survey?

WJD: Oh, we did it in two spells of several months each. I suppose it took about a year total. There were intermissions.

ERM: How much money do you think it cost the government to make a survey in those days?

WJD: It's been said that if all the money that had been spent on surveys, timber estimates, and titles in Graham County were put together, whoever owned the land would be very quick to grab the money and give the government the land. There was an awful lot of money spent over there. That was beautiful timber.

When I left there, I was in kind of a bad mood. I had had a little dissension in the camp which I had never had before. A good friend of mine started it, and he apologized for it afterwards. But one night I walked twenty-five miles over to Andrews after dark and in a bad mood. The next morning I took the train from Andrews into Asheville, and I encountered Charlie Badgett who had been superintendent of the logging operations at the Little River Lumber Company. He had left a couple of years or so before that and was running the woods operations for Champion. I went and sat with him and he asked, "Did Verne Rhoades show you the letter I wrote requesting suggestions for a forester for Champion?" I asked him a few questions about it, and he said, "Well, you wouldn't be interested, would you? I thought you were dedicated to public service. I thought you had practically transferred your title over to the Forest Service forever." I said, "No, I might be interested." Well, that was December 1, 1919 when we discussed it, and the result was that I went to work for Champion Fibre Company on January 1, 1920.

ERM: Were there other professional foresters working for companies in this area at that time?

WJD: Not steadily, no. Paul Gearhart had done some work around. He was a Biltmore man. And there were several others who worked as sort of part-time consultant foresters.

ERM: For what companies did they work?

WJD: One of them did a little work for Champion. Not strictly forestry work, something to do with wood buying, I think. And then there was some fellow who was connected for a short time with what we called the Willits Boundary that was owned by the Blackwood Lumber Company. And, of course, before Vanderbilt transferred the Pisgah forest lands to the Forest Service, he had foresters. There were just a few.

ERM: Your employment by Champion was really the first full-time, professional forester in the industry in the South, is that right?

WJD: That's right. Now, I've questioned that and asked folks to make sure of it, but everybody I've talked to who knows the South says that that's true. I thought that Garrison down at Great Southern Lumber Company in Louisiana was of an earlier vintage, but somebody checked on that, and evidently he wasn't.

ERM: I think Frank Heyward probably has a note on that in his *History of Industrial Forestry in the South*. Tell me, what were the terms of your employment with Champion? Do you remember the conditions on which you came to the company?

WJD: Yes. I had been with the Forest Service nine years, and I was receiving a salary of $2,200 a year. I had risen pretty rapidly; I started in for $50 a month.

ERM: And were you married at this time?

WJD: Yes. Well, I had been married. My first wife died in the great flu epidemic in 1918. I was not married at the time I joined Champion but was married two years after that in 1922. Well, I could read extracts from a diary I have here of the past forty years.

ERM: You have kept a diary?

WJD: Yes. Like almost all Forest Service men I got into the habit. And I have found it almost a necessity because in the early days with Champion I was in the courtroom a good deal, and I had never been in a courthouse before. We were trading in timber, and I had two occasions when the diary was a lifesaver in court.

There was a fellow who purchased some lands from us in Cherokee County and "creamed it," as we called it. He took all the high-valued species and all the readily accessible species near the water, and then claimed that we deceived him on the estimate. I referred to my diary, and I found in the notation of when I'd met him in our lawyer's office over here in Asheville that one of the things that I'd said to him was, "You go out and look for yourself. We don't pretend to guarantee any estimates. You know timber better than we do. You let me know and I'll let our man out there know and he will meet you." And he went out and looked over the timber. There were a whole series of references to that particular transaction. It impressed the judge, I know, because he commented on it in summarizing the case. Judgment was returned in our favor.

ERM: Now, getting back again to the terms of your employment with Champion, you told me what you were earning salary-wise from the Forest Service. How much of a gain did you make when you came to Champion?

WJD: I made a gain from $2,200 to $2,400 a year, with the understanding that if everything was satisfactory, it would be increased in a short time, which it was, to $3,000.

ERM: Did you get any residence with this?

WJD: No.

ERM: Had you been furnished a house with the Forest Service job?

WJD: No. I provided my own house. I had never been headquartered at a government station.

ERM: What did your work as forester for Champion consist of in the beginning?

WJD: The most important thing was just what I had been doing with the government—going out and making reports on lands, not necessarily for the purchase of the lands in fee, but in many cases the purchase of the stumpage. And then I also did some railroad location on big jobs and generally advised with regard to cutting practices.

ERM: Who was your boss?

WJD: Charlie Badgett.

ERM: How close were you to top management of the company?

WJD: Right from the beginning I had many direct contacts with Mr. [Reuben] Robertson. He was interested in forestry. I've had a number of citations and been recognized several times for professional accomplishment when it was merely the reflected glory of R. B. Robertson (wife says I shouldn't say that, but it's true). You know the difference between having at the head of a big operation a man of vision and having just some fellow who's a good trader.

ERM: Mr. R. B. Robertson was a man who really saw the importance of forestry.

WJD: Yes. The surprising thing in that day and time (now that's almost forty years ago) was to find a man who understood a report made according to Forest Service standards. He knew what I was talking about when I said cove land, slope land, or ridge land.

ERM: How did he know about such things as that? That was Forest Service terminology.

WJD: Yes, well, he didn't know the exact terms until I explained them to him, but he knew mountains so well that he could immediately visualize what I was talking about.

ERM: He was interested enough to take time to inquire.

WJD: That's right.

ERM: Did he take time to go out into the woods with you?

WJD: Yes. Just a few times, but they were memorable trips.

ERM: Was this operation both paper and lumber that you were involved in there?

WJD: For a time it was. The company had a sawmill up at Smokemont, up on Okonelauftee River. The closed that down in 1928 at the request of the Park Service people, so as not to complicate the situation, and it was a very generous illustration of his cooperation. He didn't tell them that he could close down indefinitely, but he would hold off as long as he could so that there wouldn't be any further damage to the land that became the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

ERM: I'm not quite sure I understand that, Dammy. What was the problem in connection with the acquisition of forest lands which Champion owned and which were sought by the National Park Service?

WJD: Well, when the national park movement was first launched, Champion took the position that the objectives could be better obtained through Forest Service administration. Champion tried to steer the interest in that direction, but very quickly saw that it could not because of the emotional appeal that a national park has. Some of the proponents made one big mistake, in my opinion, which accounted for all of the disputes we had over price. After having won over the people to the project, which was not hard to do, they intimated that this land could be bought for two, four, six, eight, and ten dollars an acre. Now, this was beautiful virgin timber. When we really got down to brass tacks and negotiating, some of them recognized that we were quite fair in our position because our land was worth a whole lot more than these cutover lands that had gone in under the Weeks Law. But they were in a bad way to save face. Here they had told the people that the land for a national park could be bought for this low price, and now they come out and voluntarily agree to pay thirty-three dollars an acre for it.

ERM: What people do you mean when you say, "They told the people"?

WJD: The public. The newspapers were full of it. I have file after file on it. Oh, it was a hot issue!

ERM: And what was Mr. Robertson's attitude in regard to this?

WJD: His attitude was to cooperative with them wherever he could and never to lose sight of the fact that we were custodians of the property of the stockholders and couldn't give it away.

ERM: Did you finally get your price for it?

WJD: It turned out very well. We had hearings before a commission in Tennessee and the commission established the value of, I think, $3 million for the Tennessee side, which would mean that if the same method was employed on the North Carolina side, it would run about $5 million.

Shortly after the decision of the commission, we arranged for a meeting in Washington, and I've forgotten who was present there (I have it in the files), but there were representatives of the Tennessee Park Commission, the North Carolina Park Commission, the National Park Service, and Champion. Champion was represented by Mr. Robertson and Mr. Logan Thompson, who was then president of the company, and John W. Davis, and one or two others, and myself. We got together pretty quickly after we assembled there and agreed on a price. The Champion group was all in one room and the park group in another room, and a very good diplomat. I don't know who it was now, went back and forth. And we got $3 million. Now, we could have gotten a great deal more than that if we had continued through the courts. But that would have meant a delay which was bound to follow such a procedure and keep us up in the air all the time, and we had to consider public relations. So we agreed to less than we all felt could have been obtained if we just fought to the bitter end.

ERM: What do you think could have been obtained?

WJD: Well, I'd think $5 million.

ERM: In other words, you sacrificed quite a substantial amount for the sake of keeping a better public relations and avoiding the inconvenience of delay.

WJD: Yes. Of course, $3 million was $3 million then, too. In our particular situation at the moment we needed a little cash, and we built a new paper machine with part of that money.

ERM: That was in what year, Dammy?

WJD: 1930, I believe. My memory has not served me very well this afternoon, so check those things.

ERM: Now let's go back again to these first days of industrial forestry in the South. Looking back over this period, what do you see as being the principal factor or factors which brought about the development of industrial forestry in this area?

WJD: The same that accounts for the development of it in other areas of the United States. We have been trying to impress the people for many years that timberlands are valuable and that they can be a continuing source of income. There have been many instances lately, since we embarked on a big acquisition program, where we figured we were overly successful. That's one satisfaction we get out of paying these high prices. (Laughter)

ERM: But that, in essence, was the key to the whole thing.

WJD: Oh, I think so. There've been state agencies, such as extension service and forest service, which over the last many years have done a good job of educating people on the value of forestry. Then I think that the industry and agencies like AFPI [American Forest Products Industries] have done a good job.

ERM: Of course, that's been in much more recent years. I think 1941 was the beginning of AFPI. But there was quire a long period of twenty years before 1940 in which some industrial forestry was beginning to develop. You began working for industry in 1920.

WJD: Yes. It was very simple, but it was a start.

ERM: What other companies began to develop in the field of industrial forestry?

WJD: Well, you know Great Southern down there in Bogalusa [Louisiana] and Crossett in Arkansas were among the first. I'm in danger now of leaving out some really important company. But in the South the consciousness of the real value of timber came with the expansion of the pulp and paper industry.

ERM: Now, that didn't really develop until the 1930s, did it?

WJD: That's right, about the 1930s.

ERM: During the 1920s when you were first beginning as a forester for Champion, your paper operations were principally in the North, were they not?

WJD: That's right, in Hamilton, Ohio. We had no pulp mill there.

ERM: What was the source of pulp for the Ohio mills at that time? Were they getting it from their own locale?

WJD: They were getting it from our plant here, and there were times when they imported pulp from Norway and perhaps some from Russia. All the imported pulp was in small quantities.

ERM: Was the Hamilton operation getting a lot of pulp slabs and leftovers from the lumber operations here?

WJD: No, only pulp was shipped to them from here. There were no facilities for making pulp in Hamilton, Ohio, and they don't have any there now. It's a paper mill. Oh, I think they have the newsprint wastepaper mill which makes a little pulp.

ERM: But you made the pulp here and shipped it up there?

WJD: Yes. We had excess production here.

Let's see, there was something I was going to mention in connection with your question as to when the prices started going up and why. Oh, yes. I have a letter somewhere from Matt Rue of Benedict and Rue. I think Rue had some forestry training; he was in Washington working for the revenue department, I think Meyers of Bristol & Meyers was a friend of Rue. He furnished the money, and Rue furnished the information and some money, and they bought quite a bit of land down around Brunswick, Georgia. I had gotten pretty well acquainted with Matt Rue, and so Matt wrote me a very appealing letter, referring to the fact that they had an awful burden on these lands down around Brunswick and couldn't I think of any way that he could dispose of them? Why couldn't Champion give them a big pulpwood contract? He realized it was far away, but maybe we could compensate by a little stumpage or something. Boy, if they didn't make a pretty penny out of that! That was in the 1920s, and Rue was just worried to death about how he was going to get rid of all that timber. Of course, the value of that timber went up, and he's a millionaire now.

ERM: It seems to me that this revolution in southern pulpwood came along as the result of a number of factors. One was that the value of stumpage went up, but even before then there had to be some steps taken which proved that the value in stumpage was there. Now, what were these steps? Was there any research that made these lands more obviously valuable as sources of raw materials?

WJD: No, I think it was the competition and evidences of competition. You see, for a long time when I was with Champion, we had no competition on wood. Now we're getting wood from areas where, in some instances, there are as many as eight or ten other companies competing.

ERM: But back in those early days there was no competition?

WJD: No. Wages were low then, you know, and everything was low.

ERM: What influence did the discovery that southern pine could be used as a source of wood pulp for making paper have on the value of timber in the South?

WJD: Well, that contributed, I suppose. There was a lot of publicity given to it.

ERM: Wasn't the development of the paper box industry an awfully important part of this?

WJD: Oh, yes. There was a wider acceptance of paper as a container. You see, the per capita consumption of paper has gone up terrifically in the last ten years. I haven't seen a recent figure; the last I saw was 456 pounds per person. That's terrific, you know. And it is going up all the time.

In 1939 there was the first evidence that there was going to be an expansion. That's when we were in New York at a meeting called for some other purpose, and just got to discussing it around in the hotel room there and somebody said, "Well, boys, it looks like there's going to be quite a development in the South, so let's make sure now that we start out on the right foot." And we called for a meeting down at New Orleans to discuss the matter. And out of that meeting developed the Southern Pulpwood Conservation Association.

ERM: And what motivated the organization of this group? You say it got its stimulus at a meeting of the American Pulpwood Association in New York?

WJD: I don't know if it was a full meeting or not. It was a meeting of the directors or something connected with the pulpwood association.

ERM: This came along in 1939 when Earle H. Clapp was acting chief of the Forest Service. As I recall, Clapp was very dedicated to the idea of forest management controlled by government.

WJD: Yes.

ERM: Did this threat of regulation have an influence on bringing the men of the industry together at that time for the purpose of setting up this organization?

WJD: Well, I wouldn't know how to answer that. That may have been a factor, but it was not the most important one. The group that met there were folks who knew the South well and knew what the situation was. We realized that if we didn't establish a program as an industry at the outset, as the years went by it would be more and more difficult, and the land would be that much more damaged.

ERM: In other words, to a large extent you were seeking to set up an organization by which you could overcome some of the difficulties that a lack of public education produced at that time.

WJD: That's right.

ERM: Was one of your purposes in setting up this conservation association to educate the people of the South against the use of fire?

WJD: Oh, yes. Fire prevention was a major factor in any conservation program.

ERM: How serious was the problem of fire on Champion timberlands at that time?

WJD: I can only talk from the experience in this area. The highway that runs from here out to Canton and then on through to Murphy, North Carolina goes right through the mountains and down the Nantahala Gorge. It wasn't many years ago that in driving from here to Murphy when we had a long dry spell, you'd see fires on both sides of the highway upon the mountains. You'd expect to see three, four, five of what we called wild fires that had gotten out of control, if anybody had even tried to control them. And now we still have dry spells, terrific ones as you know, but for the last four or five years, we haven't had a single wild fire. Actually, we've had very few fires at all, relatively speaking. We have just about 300,000 acres now in the southern area in the pine, and we had fire on less than 100 acres last year. So the attitude of the people here in the mountains has changed very considerably. I think that's probably true down in the Piedmont, too.

ERM: Is this something that you ascribe principally to the work of the Southern Pulpwood Conservation Association?

WJD: Oh, no. It's a combination of the Forest Service and the state foresters and SPCA. We recognized at the outset that we couldn't accomplish what we had in mind without cooperation. We have been very particular not to have people cussing out the Forest Service on everything they propose. We have been concerned lest somebody in the organization would find fault with anything suggested by the Forest Service. You know, the curious thing is that individuals who have been in the Forest Service for a long time and get out into private forestry become very antagonistic toward the Forest Service. I think part of it is due to the fact that they're trying to make a favorable impression with the top man from the industry.

ERM: Do you think that some men might have had a grudge against the Forest Service for some reason or another?

WJD: Yes. I don't know of any case where that definitely could be, but I do remember one fellow who didn't think the Forest Service could do anything right.

ERM: Who was that?

WJD: I've forgotten his name, but he used to live here in Asheville. He's been in Kentucky now for years in the lumber business. I was at the meeting in Washington, I think it was, of the trustees of AFPI, and he came in a little late. We were discussing some Forest Service policy that had just been announced and were rather critical of it. He sat there for a while and didn't have the benefit of having heard it from the beginning. Well, he blurted out, "What are you doing? Discussing something that the Forest Service has proposed?" I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "you can register me against it. Goddamn it, they can't do anything right." And he didn't even know what the proposal was! There were quite a few persons like that.

ERM: What kind of budget and staff did you have when you began with Champion Paper and Fibre Company? How many people did you have working with you?

WJD: I had two men who were with me from the beginning and remained with me a long time. One of them is still with Champion. They were good woodsmen. They had been trained by contact with Forest Service activities and by employment with the Forest Service. One of them was the best woodsman that I ever encountered.

ERM: Who was that?

WJD: Roy Jolley, from north Georgia. He didn't have the benefit of more than fourth grade in education. It seemed to me he was uncanny. He'd be out on a survey looking for a corner tree, and half a dozen other men would pass by a tree and Roy would say, "Where are you going? Here's the tree." He'd come back and outline it to you, and you could go back five or ten years later and he'd go to that very tree. Remarkable! He fitted the situation exactly because he was a boy who was bright although he had no school education. He recognized the threat to the forest if we weren't careful with it.

Then there was Tilman Lovin who was reared out in Graham County. He's still living although he must be getting close to eighty. He was a man with a world of common sense. A man with very little schooling, but he had a very alert mind that absorbed the principles of surveying—at least the simple surveying we had to do—and the use of the Abney level and things of that sort.

Of course, we had caretakers scattered over the western Carolinas. People in areas with good views agreed to respond if a fire started. We had lots of little sales and with every sale, of course, we'd have the purchaser commit himself to fight fire. We'd also had an assistant forester for a while. He was a fellow by the name of Goodrich. He went from us to be assistant state forester in Delaware and is still there.

ERM: How did your program of forestry in the company grow? How were you able to make progress from year to year?

WJD: Well, simply being ready when economic conditions permitted to further and further intensify forestry.

ERM: Did you put in an annual request to the company for money?

WJD: No. We didn't have any formal budget for a number of years. Our expenditures were not great. All that information is in an article that appeared in the *Forestry Almanac*.[*]

ERM: You say you always had good communications with top management, especially with Mr. Reuben Robertson, Sr., and this, of course, makes a world of difference in any developing program.

WJD: I should say so!

ERM: Because then you can get action and get it fast.

WJD: That's what I meant when I said that I received several citations for achievements which came about entirely because of the belief that R. B. Robertson had in forestry.

ERM: What other key men have there been in this organization who have had a profound impact on the forestry program of the company?

WJD: We had a new setup a number of years ago when we began to go into a really big acquisition program. We established headquarters in Newberry, South Carolina and started working out there. Herschel Keener, our wood procurement man, became very interested in it. He had no formal education in forestry, but he was a very bright and alert individual. At first, he was opposed to forestry, but when he got going in it, he went to town and worked harder than a professional forester. I think that happens quite frequently.

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[*] *Forestry Almanac* compiled and edited by the American Tree Association (Baltimore: American Tree Association and the Waverly Press, 1929), pp. 105-108.

Session II

February 15, 1959
Asheville, North Carolina

ERM: Dammy, I visited with your old boss, Mr. Reuben B. Robertson, this morning, and we had a nice talk about some of Champion's history and about the beginnings of forestry down here. Can you tell something about the controversy that existed over the development of the newsprint industry in the South and the debate that was staged by Dr. Charles H. Herty and Royal S. Kellogg?

WJD: Practically everyone knows of Dr. Herty and the work that he did in the laboratory in Savannah. He was interested in promoting the manufacture of pulp from pine, and he was advocating the use of it for newsprint. Finally, his work received the attention of the established newsprint industry in New England and struck Royal S. Kellogg, who was secretary of the Newsprint Service Bureau, rather forcibly. I don't know how it happened, but someone had arranged that both Royal Kellogg and Dr. Herty be present at the meeting of the Society of American Foresters, which was held in Atlanta in 1936. Dr. Herty was on the program and he made a speech in which he pointed out the possibility of using southern pine for newsprint. Of course, the idea was received enthusiastically by all the southerners present because they realized that there were great quantities of pine in the South. Royal Kellogg tried to discourage Dr. Herty as much as he could and finally, in desperation, Mr. Kellogg said, "You go ahead and develop the newsprint industry and you'll lose your shirts." Whereupon, Dr. Herty jumped to the Platform and said, "Well, I'm not greatly disturbed by the prophesy of Mr. Kellogg because we have no shirts to lose!" And that was the end of the debate.

ERM: Dr. Herty seems to have been a man who was very much concerned about the economic position of the South.

WJD: That's right.

ERM: Was he trying to restore it to a more prosperous economic level?

WJD: The South as a whole has been pretty grateful to Dr. Herty. He was a one-man chamber of commerce, I'd say, to the South. He was responsible for the development of the newsprint industry, and he was entirely responsible for the development of the processing of yellow pine to make satisfactory bleached pulp for newsprint.

ERM: I understand from talking with Mr. Robertson that a bleached kraft process had been developed as early as ten or more years before by Champion.

WJD: That's right, and I believe I told you in connection with the discussion we had on the national parks that the establishment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park developed while these experiments or research projects were under way at Champion.

ERM: Were these experiments stimulated to considerable extent by the possibility that you would be losing your spruce lands to the national park?

WJD: That's correct.

ERM: When was that?

WJD: 1923 or 1925, along in there, when the movement for the park was first suggested. We were really concerned because it was essential then to have some long-fiber woods, such as spruce and hemlock, available, and the only ones we had in this area were going to become part of a national park. Our concern over what was going to happen when we were finally deprived of those lands was very acute, and it served to speed up the research activities.

ERM: At what point in this period of time did Champion realize from experimentations they carried out that good white paper could be made from species other than spruce and hemlock?

WJD: Well, I think that came shortly before or shortly after the actual transfer of the lands to the park commission in 1930. I could be wrong in the statement that it was not perfected until then, but I think that's when it was.

ERM: What kind of experiments did Champion conduct?

WJD: The real project was the development of a method of bleaching the yellow pine pulp to a high degree of whiteness without losing strength.

ERM: And this came along before Dr. Herty's similar experiments?

WJD: Yes. Champion, I presume, is as much responsible, if not more, for the perfection of the process. That doesn't detract anything from Dr. Herty's achievements at all.

ERM: No, not a bit. His was in the field of newsprint.

WJD: He did develop the newsprint idea, and then he did so much to promote interest in the South that he occasionally accepted some credit there of which he was not entirely due. However, no one was inclined to criticize him.

ERM: In the 1920s, Dammy, there was a series of studies made on the national level on the condition of forestry in the United States. I think you will probably remember them. The Senate conducted a couple of these with Senator Charles McNary as the principal spokesman and leader, and then the U. S. Chamber of Commerce had at that time a committee on natural resources which made a study all over the country. Do you recall these particular hearings and studies that were made? Did you have any part in any of these?

WJD: I remember very distinctly the Senate Select Committee on Reforestation which conducted hearings in all the major timber regions in the country. The last hearings were held here in Asheville at the grove Park Inn with Senator McNary presiding. Genial old Senator [Duncan U.] Fletcher from Florida was one of the members of the committee, as was Senator [George H.] Moses, I believe, who was quite a prominent senator, and three or four others. Mr. Robertson was one of the slated witnesses; I was also among those. We were requested in advance to be ready to testify, and we had quite an interesting session. The senators were tired and rather touchy because they had been to every other section of the country, and I guess there was a lot of repetition. We had some amusing experiences.

ERM: Do you recall some of the interesting sidelights on the hearings?

WJD: Yes. One of them was when Mr. Robertson was called upon. As he started down the aisle, he shuffled a sheaf of papers that he had, and Senator McNary said, “Are you going to read all of that to us? Have we got to sit and listen to that? Looks like it’s right voluminous!” Mr. Robertson said, “Not as voluminous as it appears; I have large handwriting!”

I also recall the request that was made of me when I took the stand. As I was taking the stand, the chairman said, “Now, who are you and what’s your background?” I said, “Well, I’m a forester employed by a pulp and paper industry, the Champion Fibre Company which is at Canton, about twenty miles from here.” About that point the chairman wrapped his knuckles on the table and said, “Here, here, we’ve got to sit here and listen to who you are, haven’t you got anything to offer?” I said, “Well, I beg your pardon, senator, but you requested my background. I’ll cease if you are annoyed.”

ERM: Can you recall any other incident concerning the hearings?

WJD: The testimony which Mr. Andrew Genett offered was somewhat confusing to one of the members of the committee, and he interrupted Mr. Genett with a question or two. Mr. Genett expressed regret that he didn’t make himself clear and he said, “I think I can throw some light on that tomorrow after I refer to some memoranda or other material I have in my office.” So Genett did refer to the information he had at the office. The next day when they asked if there was any further testimony anybody wished to offer, whether they had been assigned as witnesses or not, Mr. Genett got up and started down the aisle and said, "Senator, I'm prepared to give you some figures now in support of what I said yesterday." Whereupon the senator pounded on the table and said, "We heard from you yesterday, didn't we? Sit down! Sit down!"

ERM: Do you recall some of the other studies that were made at that time?

WJD: There was the chamber of commerce study, but I don't recall much about that. Then there was another congressional committee which held hearings at Jacksonville, Florida. I don't recall the year, but that was later on.

ERM: Was that in connection with the McSweeney-McNary law?

WJD: No. I don't know what prompted that. I have a transcript of some of the testimony that was offered there. I think Frank Heyward was one of the principal witnesses.

ERM: That was not the same committee, was it?

WJD: No, no. This was several years afterwards. There's one amusing incident in connection with that meeting. One the second or third day it was arranged to take the members of the committee into the field and show them the different pine stands and the hardwood bottoms and so forth. They had stopped at one place to look about, and one of the members of the committee saw an intelligent-looking man who was seedy in his dress. The committee member thought it would be interesting to find out what the opinion of that little fellow was because they had had the testimonies from owners of large areas, so he opened up a conversation with him. After he finished with it he talked to a friend of mine who was there and said, "I've just been getting this fellow's viewpoint. We've had enough testimony from the big fellows, now I'm interested in fellows like this. Do you know who he is?" My friend said, "Yes," and told his name. The committee member said, "What does he do?" Well, "my friend said, "he owns about 75,000 acres of land."

ERM: Going back to the 1920s again, it seems that this was a period when forestry was in a state of change. Some of the old antagonisms of the past were beginning to fade away and there seemed to be a greater harmony growing between foresters in the public realm and foresters and others in the private realm. To what extent do you believe that change was established by these hearings that were carried out during the twenties? Did these hearings enable people to see each other's point of view a bit more?

WJD: I never thought of it as really having any influence on the controversial issues.

ERM: What influence did the Clarke-McNary Act have on this?

WJD: The Clarke-McNary Act in its setup of fire protection money and cooperation had a very definite effect.

ERM: What was the attitude of companies like Champion in regard to the application for and use of Clarke-McNary money in your own states?

WJD: We were in favor of that.

ERM: And did you press for it?

WJD: Yes. We cooperated to just as great an extent as we could.

ERM: Did you carry on any lobbying activities during this time for other legislation like Clarke-McNary?

WJD: I don't know exactly how to answer that. We kept up very closely with any legislation and we did lobbying for legislation that we thought was beneficial and would promote conservation.

ERM: Was this lobbying done at both the state and national levels?

WJD: Yes.

ERM: Did you have full-time people employed to do that work or did you depend on your trade association?

WJD: We worked with the American Paper and Pulp Association and with the American Pulpwood Association and with the North Carolina Forestry Association and any group activity that we thought needed assistance.[*] And, of course, we opposed legislation which was unsound. I remember the best illustration of unsound legislation as a bill that was introduced in North Carolina (and it has been introduced in other states) to limit the cutting of trees to a diameter class, generally ten inches. Very simplified forestry. It was legislation we had to fight, of course.

ERM: Was there any tendency on the part of legislators to try to hold down the size of land purchases?

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[*] The American Paper and Pulp Association has been incorporated into what is now the American Paper Institute, Inc.

WJD: I don't know whether you can call it an issue, but that didn't arise until just a few years ago. The last four years there have been bills introduced in some of the states directed at penalizing large holdings. The SPCA foresaw that it might develop into a pretty extensive movement and has been getting out material to demonstrate to the public that in place of its being a disadvantage, it's an advantage. At first glance I can see that a person might get alarmed if he sees one county with as much as 75 or 90 percent of the land going into ownership by the pulp and paper companies. But the advantages have been marshalled and set forth in literature and we are going to have it, I suppose, from now on. We have this matter before us almost constantly when the legislatures of the southern states are in session.

ERM: And you anticipate that this is going to be a continuing controversy?

WJD: I wouldn't want to make that prophecy, but it will probably continue for some time until people accept it and recognize that it's beneficial rather than harmful to the economy.

ERM: Now, in this period of the 1920s a great deal was happening in the way of forestry legislation, both at the state level and local level—most of it very forward looking and dealing rather forcefully with the problems of fire and forestry research. What do you recognize as being the moving spirit behind this legislation? Was there any one man or group of men or group of individuals or organizations which, in your mind, stand out as being primarily responsible for this legislation? I'm thinking of the Clarke-McNary Act, the McSweeney-McNary Act, and legislation of that kind.

WJD: Of course, the American Forestry Association is responsible for more sound legislation in the field of conservation than any other group that I know of, and it's a very old organization. We celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Association just a few years ago. Suggestions have come out of industry, but I don't know what individuals to name. There is no one outstanding crusader like Gifford Pinchot.

ERM: In other words, it has been in your estimation more a product of group activity than of leadership by any one or any small group of individuals.

WJD: You expressed my sentiments exactly.

ERM: Who among the men who have been active here in the South do you consider to be the real leaders of southern forestry? I know we've heard a great deal about men like Austin Cary, H. H. Chapman, W. W. Ashe, R. D. Forbes, and Cap Eldredge.

WJD: You're going way back to 1920.

ERM: Yes, but most of these men overlapped and were both before and after 1920. A good many of them reached on into the 1930s and some of them worked into the 1940s. Cap Eldredge, for example, goes back almost to the beginning and has been in it for nearly fifty years.

WJD: Well, there are quite a number who have been leaders in the same sense that Cap Eldredge was. I wouldn't want to list them offhand; I'd like to think that over, because there is no one single man or two who stands out a little and is talked about like Gifford Pinchot.

ERM: Pinchot, you say, was in a category by himself in forestry?

WJD: I suppose the time of his activity had a great deal to do with it, but I presume there are more laymen who have heard of Gifford Pinchot in connection with forestry than any other man.

ERM: How would you rate some of the other chief foresters of the U. S. Forest Service? Henry S. Graves and William B. Greeley, for example.

WJD: Greeley—I don't think there's any question but that he is the outstanding man in American forestry, if not the world. He was a remarkable person. He never lost his balance; he never got panicky about forestry.

ERM: How would you compare his leadership in this field with that of Pinchot?

WJD: Greeley was far ahead of Pinchot in his comprehension of what was involved in forestry and in his anticipation of future forestry needs and developments. I think that Bill Greeley was definitely the most outstanding man in the field of forest conservation. He wasn't in the crusader class with Gifford Pinchot, but he was a very keen and intelligent spokesman for forestry.