

In November, at the opening session of the Society of American Forester's centennial convention, Harold K. (Pete) Steen will receive the Sir William Schlich Memorial Award for the year 2000. The award recognizes broad and outstanding contributions to the field of forestry with emphasis on, but not limited to, policy and national or international activities. No more appropriate time than the turn of the century could have been found to recognize Steen's contributions to the profession and his achievements in preserving forest and conservation history. In keeping with his efforts aimed at helping us to interpret current events in a historical context, he submitted this explanation of how the SAF Schlich Award was initiated.

THE FIRST AMERICAN FORESTRY AWARD

BY HAROLD K. STEEN

On January 29, 1935, the Society of American Foresters conferred its Sir William Schlich Memorial Award upon President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This was the Society's first award, and it was named for a German who had worked for the British in India. At first glance this seems the long way around for an American award, but a closer look shows that it fits together.

German-born and educated forester William Schlich spent nineteen years in India, working for the British to develop forest management and education programs. He was instrumental in the establishment of the *Indian Forester* in 1874 and the school at Dehra Dun in 1877. He was named inspector general of Forests for India, in 1883, succeeding his mentor Detrich Brandis. In 1885, at age 45, Schlich moved to England to be professor of forestry at the Royal Indian Engineering College at Coopers Hill, and he became a British subject the following year. In 1905, he moved the program to Oxford University, where it remains. Schlich was knighted in 1909, becoming Knight commander of the Indian Empire. He retired from Oxford in 1920.

Among his many achievements was the five-volume *Manual of Forestry* published serially in three editions beginning in 1889. The first two volumes treated

silviculture, and the others were on forest management, forest protection, and forest utilization. The works fairly represent the state of the forestry art at the beginning of the twentieth century and became a standard for students. A Yale Forest School song of the time tells us, "Our notes are thick with old Bill Schlich."

Gifford Pinchot's diaries show that he visited Schlich whenever he passed through England; the first meeting in 1889 when the young American was enroute to France to begin his study of forestry. During that meeting, Schlich presented Pinchot with the just-published volume 1 of his *Manual*. Later, Pinchot would review several subsequent volumes for garden and forest, published by Harvard's Arnold Arboretum. During their visit, Schlich advised him "to strike for reservation of national Forests", because Arbor days and similar ceremonies were "not of any practical use."

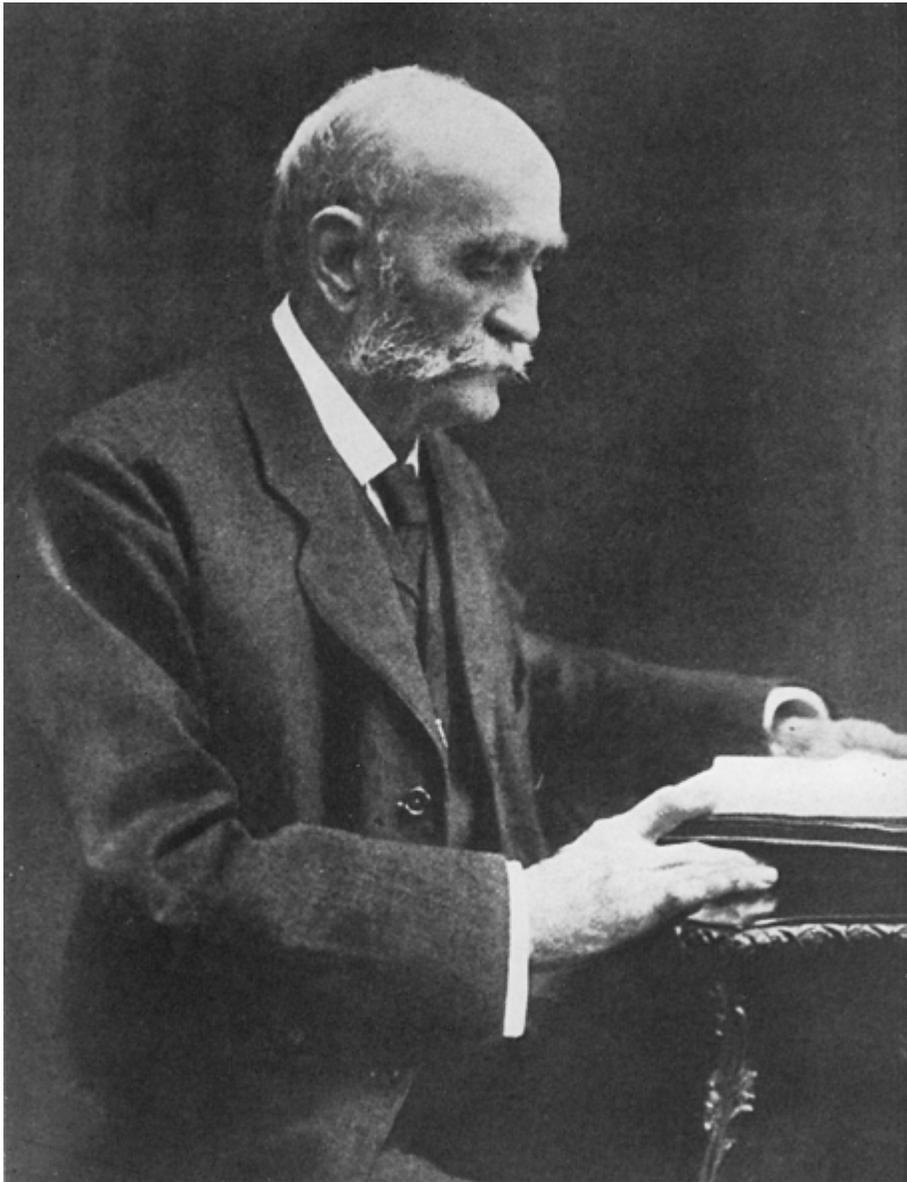
Schlich died in 1925, and the Oxford Forestry School sponsored a campaign to create a fitting memorial. The Society of American Foresters contributed \$100, and others throughout the English-speaking forestry world added to the total. The first Sir William Schlich Memorial Award was presented to Australia in 1929, the second to New Zealand in 1930, the third to India in 1931, and the fourth

to the United States in 1932. In each case, it was up to the recipient country to select its most deserving individual or institution that had contributed to the general advancement of forestry.

In the U.S., SAF president Christopher Grainger saw the Schlich Award as a "God-given opportunity for us to create an annual award which could do much to stimulate achievement and to recognize it adequately on behalf of the profession." The Society used its *Journal of Forestry* to invite nominations, and the tally showed that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot, and Earle Clapp—architect of the Forest Service Research program—to be the top candidates. The SAF Council easily selected the President to be the winner. At the same time, FDR was to be made an honorary member of the Society of American Foresters.

It took a year and a half to design the award, but by the end of 1934, the SAF was ready. Forest Service Chief Ferdinand Silcox contacted the White House to get on the President's calendar. The official SAF statement dated January 29 stated that "the profession of forestry through the Society of American Foresters giving international recognition to your interest and effective work in forest conservation."

The foresters could not resist, however, including in their formal statement that



Sir William Schlich, a mentor and colleague of Gifford Pinchot, produced the five-volume Manual of Forestry in 1889, considered the state of the art of forestry at the time. Pinchot would receive the SAF Schlich Award in 1940.

the Civilian Conservation Corps should be returned to its original state whereby appointments would be based upon "merit and efficiency," instead of "political sponsorship." The president's response ignored the allegation, instead referring to forestry as a "profession which has always been imbued with an intense sense of spirit of public service." Then the president responded in kind by lecturing, "A forest is not solely so many thousand board feet of lumber to be logged when market conditions make it profitable. It is an integral part of our natural land covering, and the most potent factor in maintaining nature's delicate balance in the organic and inorganic worlds." The foresters, then as now,

labored to avoid "politics," but then as now found themselves in the middle of it.

The Sir William Schlich Memorial award given to the president was a bronze medallion signed by Paul Nelson of the Yale School of Design. The foresters assured the president that although the award had British origins, the piece was of American design and manufacture. It is available for inspection at the Roosevelt presidential library in Hyde Park, New York.

Harold K. Steen is retired, having served 28 years in various capacities with the Forest History Society.

WINNERS OF THE SCHLICH MEMORIAL AWARD

- 1935 Franklin D. Roosevelt
- 1940 Gifford Pinchot
- 1944 Henry S. Graves
- 1946 William B. Greeley
- 1948 Herman S. Chapman
- 1950 Ralph Hosmer
- 1952 Elwood Wilson
- 1954 Tom Gill
- 1956 Samuel T. Dana
- 1958 B. Frank Heintzleman
- 1960 Clyde S. Martin
- 1962 Richard E. McArdle
- 1964 Henry Schmitz
- 1966 George A. Garratt
- 1968 Charles A. Connaughton
- 1970 Philip R. Wheeler
- 1972 Richard J. Preston
- 1974 DeWitt Nelson
- 1976 Kenneth P. Davis
- 1978 William E. Towell
- 1980 Emmanuel Fritz
- 1982 Philip A. Briegleb
- 1984 John R. McGuire
- 1986 Murlyn B. Dickerman
- 1988 Bruce John Zobel
- 1990 Stanley L. Krugman
- 1992 John A. Zivnuska
- 1994 Robert E. Buckman
- 1996 No recipient
- 1998 No recipient
- 2000 Harold K. Steen