

**EARLY DAYS  
IN THE FOREST SERVICE**

*Volume 2*



Northern Region Fire Warehouse Missoula, Montana 1922

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

NORTHERN REGION

MISSOULA, MONTANA

**EARLY DAYS IN THE FOREST SERVICE**  
**Volume 2**

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Jessie Thompson

**1955**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**FOREST SERVICE**  
Northern Region  
Missoula, Montana

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October 1955

## **A TRIP DOWN THE FLATHEAD**

**By Jack Clack  
(Retired 1933)**

During March 1917, after being tied down in the office all winter, Supervisor Page Bunker proposed that we take a snowshoe trip to Spotted Bear to see what things looked like along the river. I had made two pack frames during the winter, one for him and one for myself, and he was anxious to try them out. When we made up our packs for the trip we found that we had 62 pounds each. In addition, I had to carry a complete lineman's outfit so we could repair the telephone line as we went along, thereby keeping in touch with the office.

After starting, we found that we could not travel after 2:00 p.m. as the snow got too soft and was also granulated, which made it worse. So, it was breakfast at 5:00 a.m., get started at 6:00, and travel until 2:00 p.m. What with hard going and repairing telephone line, we only made about ten miles a day.

When we reached Spotted Bear we found that the granulated snow had worn our snowshoes so it was doubtful if they would last the return trip. The river was clear of ice so we decided to build a raft and go down the river. We cut a couple of dry spruce trees along the bank of the river and built a raft twenty feet long and 4-1/2 feet wide. We sawed in the crosspieces, fastened them with 60 spikes and wrapped them with 119 wire so there was no danger of the raft coming apart. We built a deck about the center of the raft and lashed our packs and other equipment on it with rope.

We pushed off early one morning, with two poles and two paddles for steering purposes. We got along fine the first ten miles when in an eddy under a cliff we ran into a log which reached clear across the river and was about a foot above the water. The water was comparatively still, so we got down on our knees and started to work the raft along the log toward the small end where we could cut it off and get around it. We had not got far along the log when the eddy started to boil and the raft ducked down, went under the log and came up on the other side. When this happened I went over the log and caught it as it came up. I looked around and found that Bunker had not made it. He was lying on his back under the log. He had his arms over the log but he could not get his feet down because of the boiling eddy. I got the raft to shore as quickly as I could, but when I had done this and looked back I saw the eddy was quiet again. Bunker had got his feet down, crawled on top of the log and was working his way to the opposite shore where the log rested on a large rock at the cliff.

I pushed the raft off again and crossed the river, which took me another quarter mile down stream. I waited awhile for Bunker to show up but he did not, so I walked back to see what was the trouble. I found him marooned on the rock at the foot of a cliff about 30 feet high with a pool of water about 50 feet wide on three sides of him. I had to return to the raft, get a rope, climb to the top of the cliff, throw the end of the rope to him and let him climb out.

We got back to the raft and made Riverside Park that evening, having come about 30 miles. We made an early start the next morning and got along fine until we reached the lower canyon where

the Hungry Horse Dam is now. Here we decided that we had better line the raft through. I would stay behind with the rope and Bunker would keep the raft offshore with a pole. Everything went well until we got in a side channel, where the only outlet was a narrow opening in the rocks with a large rock in the center, making it too narrow to get the raft through. During our efforts to get the raft back upstream, the current got the best of us, took the raft across the outlet and set it up on edge against the rock in the center. We tried to pry it loose with poles. We got it started but it fell over upside down. We managed to get it into the main stream and down a short distance to a small backwater where we could work. With the aid of some poles and rocks we pried the raft up and over. Our dunnage was wet but safe, so we decided to ride the rest of the way. We got through the Devil's Elbow without trouble and tied up where the foot of Main Street, Columbia Falls, would be if it extended to the river. We wrung the water out of our blankets, put our packs on our backs and hiked to the depot at Columbia Falls, where we caught a train to Kalispell, having made the trip from Spotted Bear to Kalispell in two days.

October 1955

## **BATTLE OF BELTON**

**By Jack Clack  
(Retired 1933)**

When the Lewis & Clark Forest Reserve was created, the township south of Belton, or West Glacier, was unsurveyed; therefore, when it was later surveyed, sec. 36 which bordered Belton on the south did not become a school section. This, however, did not stop the State of Montana in the spring of 1909 from selling 40 acres of said sec. 36 to the Great Northern Railway Company for the purpose of building chalets thereon. When Supervisor (Page S.) Bunker of the Flathead National Forest, of which the area was a part, heard of the sale, he at once wrote the District Office in Missoula, told them of the deal and asked for an allotment to fence the area as evidence of the Government's claim to ownership. This was granted, and I took a crew to Belton and fenced the tract. About this time a suit was started in the Federal Court to determine the ownership. We stationed a fire guard at the spring on the tract during the summer of 1909. Everything ran smoothly until fall.

During August I was at Coram locating a trail which a crew was building from Coram to Hungry Horse. Bunker left Kalispell by train to go to Essex. During the wait between trains at Columbia Falls he bought a copy of The Spokesman Review, and in it saw an article which said that the Governor of Montana was sending a company of militia to Belton to take possession of sec. 36 and hold it in the name of the State of Montana. Jack Kruse, Ranger at Coram, happened to be in the depot at this time, so Bunker wrote a note to me and gave it to Kruse to deliver. The note read: "Col. Falls - 9/27/9. Clack: Take Kruse to Belton tonight and the trail crew on No. 4 tomorrow. Rustle all the pick handles, firearms and ammunition available and use every man to see that no unauthorized person enters the enclosure at Belton. Use force if necessary but do not shoot unless you have to. Move all night if necessary. Am going to Essex after Bradley and McNary. Make this stick.— Bunker."

I knew that the only train which would bring passengers from Helena would be the Burlington, which reached Belton about 11:00 p.m., so Kruse and I had supper before we left. When we reached the fire guard's tent at Belton we found him lying on the cot dead drunk, so far gone that we could not waken him. Kruse and I therefore had to meet the train alone. Shortly before train time we parked ourselves back of a pile of logs just inside the gate which gave entry to the tract and from which we had a good view of the depot and platform about 100 yards distant. When the train stopped the first two men who got off were in soldier uniforms. "Well," I thought, "here they come," but no more men in uniform followed. In fact, the only other passengers to get off were Bradley and McNary. When the train pulled out the two soldiers went across the track to the Dow Hotel. When Bradley came over I asked him if there were any more soldiers on the train and he said no. I then went over to the hotel to find out who the two were. I learned they were a Lieutenant of the regular Army and his dog robber, who were going through the newly created Glacier Park. As there would be no more trains until the next day, we went to the tent and turned in. We met the first train the next day, but the only passenger to get off was Bunker, and he told me that he had wired the Governor from Essex, asking if he intended to try and take possession

of the tract by force or await action of the court. The Governor wired back that he would wait action by the court. The court decided in favor of the Government.

Thus ended the Battle of Belton.



Jack Clark, center, then deputy supervisor, on the trail up the South Fork on the Flathead River. Flathead National Forest, 1915.

## **FOREST RANGER 1907**

**By Clyde P. Fickes  
(Retired 1948)**

Early in November of 1905, my cousin and I made a back-pack trip up the South Fork of the Flathead, looking for trap line prospects. We camped one night at Fish Lake and woke up in the morning to find about 18 inches of fresh snow and more coming down steadily. It looked like a good idea to take off for the lower country, which we did. At Beaver Park on the river we found a small tent standing and decided to occupy it for the night. Along about 9 p.m., having built up a good fire and lain down to try to sleep, we heard bells, yelling and horse noises. It turned out to be the Forest Ranger, Dan Sullivan, and his assistant, Frank Opalka, with a string of pack horses, bringing out the camps used during the summer. They were wet, cold and plenty tired and pleased to find a warm fire and some supper prospects. Also, Sullivan was suffering with an ulcerated tooth that was giving him plenty of grief. The next morning we helped to pack up and traveled with them down the trail to the railroad.

That was my first contact with forest rangers and their work, and the impressions received caused me to apply for work on the old Lewis & Clark National Forest in the spring of 1907. Appointed a Forest Guard on July 1 at \$60 per month and supplying myself and two horses, I was assigned to a survey party on Swan River with D. C. Harrison of Washington, D.C. as Chief of party, and Forest Rangers Jack Clack and Ernest Bond, as well as a cook. On July 23 and 24, I took the Forest Ranger examination at Kalispell and was directed to go to the Hanan Gulch Ranger Station on the North Fork of Sun River. It has always been my impression that I was not a very promising candidate for ranger to A. C. McCain, Acting Supervisor, while Supervisor Page S. Bunker was on detail to Washington, D.C. so he figured, "I'll give this kid an assignment that he won't want to accept, or else he will never get to Sun River and we will be well rid of him."

They gave me a badge, a USE BOOK and a GREEN BOOK and told me "When you get to Hanan you can take charge of the Sun River District." That's how I became a forest ranger in 1907.

Well, I fooled McCain by making my way to Hanan Gulch on the North Fork of Sun River. Leaving Kalispell on July 26th, with saddle and pack horse, we traveled eastward along the Great Northern Railroad which was about the only feasible way in those days to get from Kalispell to Sun River. Swam the South Fork which was high, and camped the first night at the old Fitzpatrick homestead about where the present highway bridge is located.

Most of the trail followed the old tote road used in building the railroad, and there were places where the trail lay between the iron rails which made travel by horse a little hazardous at times. Arrived at the Lubec Ranger Station on the 30th, and leaving there on August 1st rode south along the foothills, arriving at Hanan on the 5th. According to my diary I had traveled some 190 miles in ten days to reach my post of duty. Several years ago I drove approximately the same route in a little over four hours.

At Hanan I found Ranger Henry Waldref in charge and the two cabins comprising the living quarters occupied by the A. C. McCain family of five. There were several acres of timothy meadow at the station and Waldref was putting up the hay, a job which I helped him finish during the next three days. Henry gave me a general outline of the conditions on the district as he understood them and some idea of what the job load was, although that expression was unheard of by either of us at that time. (His home was at Lincoln where he had a prospect that he worked winters since his appointment was only for the summer months. He had a black saddle horse and a span of bay mares, one with foal at side, that were the fattest pieces of horse flesh I believe I ever saw. And if one of them raised so much as one wet hair on the trail, he would stop until it had dried.)

The business of the district, which included all the forest from Deep Creek on the north to Ford Creek on the south, included 10 or 12 grazing permits for cattle on the upper North Fork, Beaver Creek, Woods Creek, Ford and Willow Creeks and along the boundary south of the North Fork. Also there were a few free use permits for wood on Willow Creek. A typical entry in my diary for August 13th reads: "Rode up Beaver Creek road to Willow Creek, crossed over to Ford Creek. and then rode NE to Witmers ranch. Range along Beaver Creek getting short. Posted 4 fire warnings on Beaver Creek. No fires. 8 to 5."

\* \* \*

As a fledgling forest ranger on Sun River in the old Lewis & Clark National Forest, I had many interesting experiences. One of the most interesting was my first ranger meeting, held at the mouth of White River on the South Fork of the Flathead River from October 14 to 18 inclusive, in 1907.

On September 30th, notice was received from Supervisor Page S. Bunker at Kalispell that the meeting would be held. The supervisor had just returned from a six-months' detail to the Washington office and I guess he wanted to find out if his rangers could get around in the mountains satisfactorily.

E. A. Woods, who was the ranger on the old Dearborn District, was in town at the same time I was and we agreed that, in company with Waldref and Guards Nixon and Converse, we would assemble at the mouth of the West Fork of the South Fork of the North Fork of Sun River and all trail over the Continental Divide together. Nixon had been over the route with a hunting party and was to be the guide. I call it a "route" advisedly, because there was no such thing as a located trail except along the main river. The appointed day of meeting was October 8th, but due to an unforeseen circumstance I could not get there. A. C. McCain had been appointed supervisor of the Custer and I had agreed to see that his outfit was shipped to him. Lincoln Hoy, the ranger from the old Teton District rode into Hanan on October 3rd with Mac's saddle and pack horses which had been at Lubec. Hoy prevailed upon me, when he learned of the ranger meeting, to wait for him while he went home and got his outfit for the trail.

We left Hanan the morning of the 9th and camped at the beaver dams on the West Fork. The others had not waited for us so it was a case of finding our own trail over the divide. My diary for the 10th reads, "moved up West Fork Trail, camped on top the divide under the cliffs.

Jumped about 5 miles of logs. Bum trail." I was riding the best mountain horse I think it was ever my pleasure to fork. A gray mare, 3/4 Arabian, 8 years old, that I bought from McCain, who had acquired her from Gus Mosier (once a supervisor) of Ovando, via a poker game, so I heard. Sure footed as a goat, never excited, could jump any log she could put her nose on and, best of all, was never known to leave her rider afoot. The next day we pulled down to the mouth of White River to be the first arrivals at the meeting site. Woods and the others had stopped on the head of the river to try to get some meat, which they didn't.

Jack Clack wrote a good account of this meeting for the Regional News several years ago. Insofar as I can remember, those present included Supervisor Bunker, Inspector D. C. Harrison of Washington, D.C., Rangers Bond, J. Clack, Sullivan, Dean, Woods, Tom Spaulding, Waldref, Guards P. Clack, Hale, Converse, Nixon, Fickes and several others.

\* \* \*

Like all its successors, the ranger meeting on White River was mostly talk. We also did a ranger station survey under the direction of Harrison and on the third day all moved down the river to Black Bear where a new cabin was being built for the ranger headquarters.

Snow was beginning to cover the high country so those from the east side - some nine of us - pulled out for home. No one wanted to buck the logs on the West Fork so we went up to the Danaher Ranch and crossed through Scapegoat Pass and some 16 or 18 inches of snow.

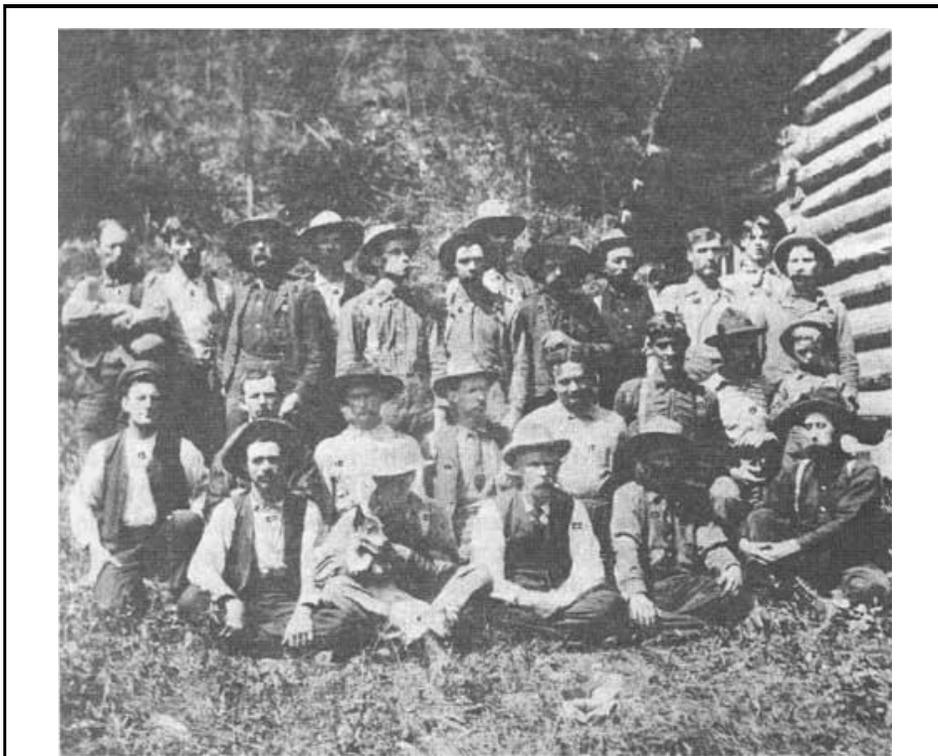
The White River meeting was where I first met Tom Spaulding, who was later to be Dean of the Montana Forest School. Tom accompanied me to Hanan, as he had been sent from the District Inspector's office in Missoula to examine some June 11 claims and survey several administrative sites on Sun River and Dupuyer Creek. Tom was my first contact with anyone who even pretended that he knew something about forestry. He introduced me to Swappach and Pinchot's Primer of Forestry, books which I later acquired and read, or shall I say, devoured.

We arrived at Hanan on October 23rd, and during the next two weeks we surveyed administrative sites at Pretty Prairie and Palmers Flat, also June 11 claims at Big George Flat and Beaver Creek. Nixon, Converse and Waldref made up the survey party. Tom hired a team and light wagon from Nixon and we left Augusta on November 10th and drove to Dupuyer, camping at the Ranger Dick Dean ranch about 3 miles west of town on the 12th. Horses got away and I spent the next three days hunting them. On the 16th and 18th we surveyed a June 11 claim for a man named Riley. It was cold and windy and almost impossible to set up a compass or hold a chain without breaking it. On the 19th I put Tom on the train at Conrad and returned to Augusta and Hanan on the 22nd.

On November 6th I received a notice from the Civil Service Commission that I had passed the ranger examination and was eligible for appointment. On July 1 I had been appointed a forest guard at \$720.00 per annum, promoted to \$900.00 on August 1, appointed an assistant forest ranger November 11 at \$900.00 and on January 1, 1908, promoted to deputy forest ranger at \$1,000.00

By this time I had acquired five head of horses with necessary riding and pack equipment, some furniture and kitchen tools. The Hanan Ranger Station consisted of an old log cabin 16 by 20, and dirt roof, a 14 by 16 hewed log with box corners, cabin, barn, corral, hay meadow and pasture, all taken over from a former homesteader or squatter named Jim Hanan who allegedly operated a station on the old Oregon-Montana horse rustling trail. Hanan Gulch was ideal for such a purpose because a short stretch of fence sealed the gulch up to make a tight horse pasture from which there was no escape. For a ranger station no more isolated or lonesome spot could be found anywhere. Visitors were practically unheard of for months at a time. About all I had to do was rustle enough wood to keep warm, throw out a little hay for the horses on a stormy day and ride 25 miles to Augusta every two weeks to get mail and supplies.

So went the life of a forest ranger in 1907-08.



First Prefire Ranger Meeting, Bitterroot—Idaho National Forest. Major Frank Fenn, Supervisor. 1907.

Standing, from left to right: 1. Summer Rackliff; 2. W. Grant Litchfield; 3. Edward Clark; 4. Squires; 5. Patrick Kelly; 6. Squires; 7. Lew Brundige; 8. Louis Fitting; 9. Edward Thenon; 10. Lew Harrington; 11. Ray R. Fitting; 12. John Kirchner.

Kneeling, from left to right: 13. John Durant; 14. Bert Cressler; 15. James Garrison; 16. J. Arthur Brown; 17. George Trenary; 18. Jesse L. Gross; 19. Gardner I. Porter; Mascot?

Sitting, from left to right: 20. Alva Cox; 21. Thomas Crossley; (Ring's dog) 22. Major Frank A. Fenn; 23. John Chamberlin; 24. Shelton I. (Rene) McPherson.

October 1955

## **TRANSPORTATION, THEN AND NOW**

**By Leon C. Hurtt  
(Retired 1951)**

From shank's mare with a back pack, to saddle and pack horse, wagon or buckboard, then to automobile and finally to airplane, all happened during the first half century of Forest Service existence — greater changes than in all of previous history. To keep abreast, the Forest Service also changed. With two Wisconsin State rangers, I traveled to my first forest fire with a back pack in 1910 when a smoky haze was drifting in from R-1 fires. My pack contained 2 blankets, flour, bacon, raisins, tea, a can of tomatoes (the emptied can served as a tea pot) and a small frying pan, file, etc. The shovel was strapped on behind but I carried the axe in my hand. In later years we often used back packs to inaccessible side camps in the west. However, saddle and pack horses were more common when wagons were not usable.

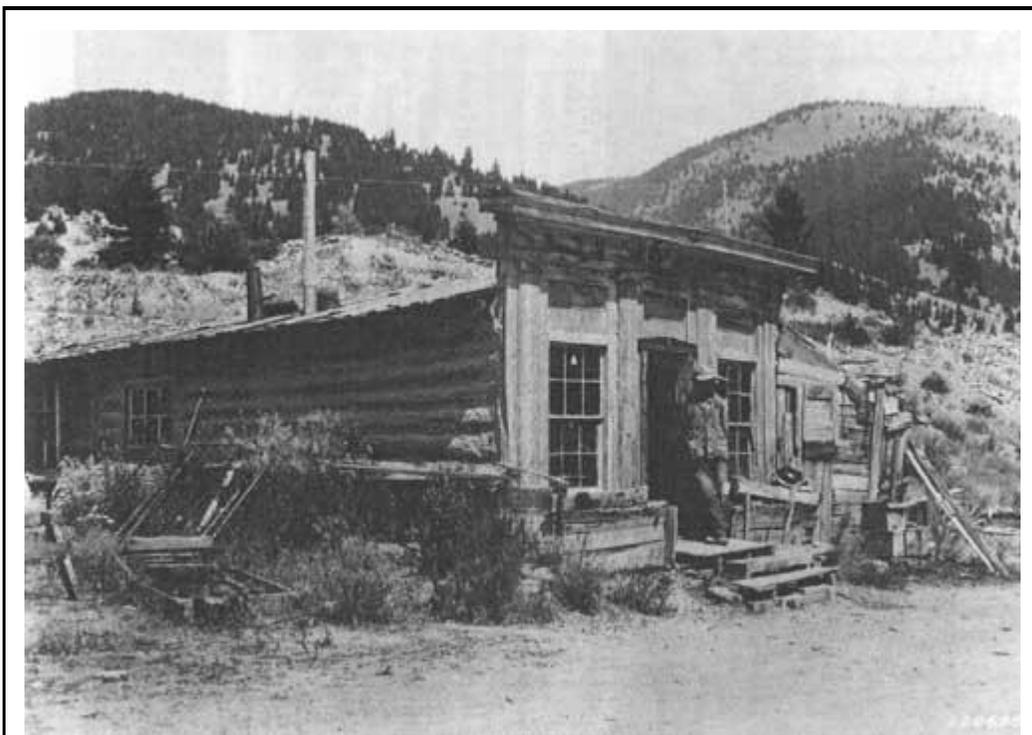
R. T. Ferguson (Fergy) was perhaps the first supervisor in R-1 to use his auto for official travel on the old Beartooth. Anyway, I made my first official trip by auto with him. Maybe it was 1917 or '18 that he and I rolled gaily out of Billings over a narrow, crooked, dirt road. At Belfry we bought gas at a blacksmith shop. The blacksmith asked if we were going through Red Lodge and if so, could we take a lady passenger that far.

Fergy was young, handsome and as always, too chivalrous to fail a lady in need of a lift. After considerable delay, the lady appeared with her belongings - four small children, 3 or 4 suitcases, some boxes, various toys, a bird-cage, and a baby carriage! With real ingenuity we packed this assorted cargo into the back seat, lashed the baby carriage on behind and started for Red Lodge. About half way up a long steep hill the very garrulous lady informed us that she was running away and that her husband would be wild when he got home and found her gone. Fergy then began glancing frequently over his shoulder and opened the throttle wide. Finally we reached the top of the long hill before the old Franklin caught fire. From there we were able to largely coast into Red Lodge. As luck would have it, Ranger Baum and his assistant strolled up as we were unloading the family and impedimenta. With a wink, Baum remarked to no one in particular that he had always understood that the supervisor was a single man. Fergy ignored this with dignity and a flushed face. If the irate husband did pursue us, the Franklin won by enough margin to avoid tragedy on my first official trip by auto. Since then I have steamed up many hills from the Nezperce to the Custer in a Model T — sometimes backing up the steep ones so the gas would feed.

My first trip by plane came as the fire season closed in September of 1924 or '25. Fire Chief Howard Flint sent the obsolete old De Haviland plane to Grangeville to take the Nezperce and Selway staffs up to test us on locating fires from a plane. I made the first hop without incident to Red River and back in about an hour's flying time, a trip that usually took 2 days by truck. I noted the speed indicator up to 125 miles per hour as we came in to land! Brandborg's hop circled out over the Seven Devils to frighten and scatter widely a bunch of Hibbs' fat steers being driven to market from their isolated Snake River range. They had never before heard a gasoline engine. On Clyde Blake's trip, the pilot treated him to a surprise loop-the-loop over Grangeville.

Clyde was a little green around the gills when they landed. Jim Urquhart took the last trip of the day and narrowly escaped disaster because the pilot, flying down the Selway River under low clouds with a small gas supply, failed to take the left turn toward Camas Prairie where the Selway and Lochsa joined. After he had followed up the Lochsa rugged canyon for several miles, Jim made him understand that he must turn back and follow down the Middle Fork to reach Grangeville. We lined up car lights to illuminate the landing place in a stubble field and were almost as much relieved to see the pair down safely as were Jim and Priestly, the pilot. (Priestly was killed a few days later at an air show in Spokane.) Since then planes and autos have become indispensable to the Forest Service.

I don't know of any constructive forestry work that can be done by modern supersonic planes or rockets, but I suspect that they can be used by an enemy to set destructive fires.



Old store building of Diamond City, Confederate Gulch, Helena National Forest. 1927.



LIBBY - TROY ROAD in Montana, Kootenai National Forest, 1915. Typical rock excavation on improvement.



Gates Park Ranger Station, Lewis & Clark National Forest.

January 1955

## **EARLY DAY EXPERIENCES**

**By David Lake  
(Retired 1940)**

I well remember the year of creation of the National Forests—1905. The only reason I did not get started with the Service at that time was that I was then homesteading and wanted to try my luck at farming; also, I had to make final proof on my homestead and could not handle two jobs at once, so I waited awhile.

In 1915 I was appointed as administrative guard for the North Snowies and was requested to pick up the office equipment at the Rodgers Ranger Station, a distance of about 10 miles from my place. (The ranger was being transferred and had left everything behind.) Well, to make it short, I did so, and then decided to write the forest ranger at Judith Gap regarding the matter. In the outfit there was an old Oliver typewriter. The first one I had ever seen. I put in two sheets and wrote a full page letter, listing all the property. It took about one-half day, and then I found that I had put the carbon wrong side up. This was my first error.

My next error was as follows. I made an S-22 timber sale of 200 lodgepole pine poles and failed to mark them. And before they were cut I was appointed as forest ranger and had moved away to the South Belts, a new district. I turned everything over to my brother, Leon L. Lake, who was appointed as guard in my place. When the time came to close this sale, he inspected the cutting area, found that the cutting was done on private land, and so reported it. I was then asked why I had sold timber from private land and why I did not mark the timber. That took a lot of explaining, and I thought I was finished before I had gotten started. I was learning the hard way.

In the late 20's we were rebuilding telephone line on Belt Creek, near Neihart. We were putting the Forest Service wire on high poles 20 to 45 feet, with long crossarms. The boys were all taking turns in climbing and tying in. One ranger, name not given, had, as was his habit, been doing a lot of talking, expounding his knowledge and ability, including telephone construction. When his turn came to go up he stepped up to the pole, a 45-footer, looked up, hesitated a bit and finally said, "Boys, I am a married man with a family of kids; I'll be damned if I'll climb it."

Sometime during the 20's one of my sheep permittees who had been running sheep on the top of the Belt mountains, had been having trouble with bears, so finally the local Deputy Game Warden decided to go with him and kill the bear. They arrived at the camp and went out together to look for the bear. The sheep owner said to the Game Warden, "I will go around this small canyon, and you stay here and watch. Should he move out on the hillside you can't fail to see him."

The day was warm, and the Game Warden, after looking for a long time, began to feel sleepy, so he sat down behind a log and went to sleep. He did not know how long he had slept, but when he woke up, he got up and made some noise, and what should jump up from the other side of the log, but the bear he was looking for. His gun was at some distance leaning against a tree, and the bear left there fast.

Again in the 20's, the Winnecook Ranch Company was running sheep in the Big Snowies. They had a camp tender named Sam, who was packing supplies from the Blake Creek Ranger Station over the summit. In his pack string he had one that would not stand for shoeing behind. I arrived at the station one day just as Sam was getting his outfit ready to go up the mountain. Sam said, "I wish I could put shoes on that mule, as I am afraid he won't stand the trip without them." I was fairly handy at shoeing horses and told Sam that I would be glad to help shoe the mule. But we would have to throw him, as he was a vicious kicker and we did not want to get hurt. We put ropes on him and after a lot of trouble got him down, but he still kicked and struggled. But finally I started to work on his feet, and pretty soon Sam said, "What's wrong with this damn mule, I don't like the way he looks, he rolls his eyes so funny." I took a look, and said, "Hell, that mule is dead, he has broken his neck in his struggles." We had started to take the ropes off when we saw a car coming through the lower gate. We straightened up to meet the new arrivals, the manager of the Winnecook Ranch Company, Elwyn Dole, and the owner, Stillman Berry. They came up all smiles, shook hands and said, "Guess you are shoeing the fractious mule." "Yes," I said, "We were trying, but the damn mule is dead." At that their smiles turned into frowns. "Well", I said, "since the mule is dead, we can't do any more, and I am past due on Timber Creek to scale logs. I'll have to go. You boys will have to drag the mule out and bury him." So the manager and the owner of the Winnecook Ranch Company, the largest outfit in this part of the state, had to dig a hole and bury the mule.

One night, November 18th, at midnight, I got a phone call from my per diem guard at the Rodgers Ranger Station, saying they had a bad fire on the head of the Middle Fork of Spring Creek, and would I come over. So I gassed up the old Model A and started for the fire. I arrived around 3:00 a.m. The cold wind was blowing about 40 miles per hour. They had around 10 men on the fire who were all about to freeze to death. There were snow patches all around and the fire would run where there was enough grass or other fuel. We spent the balance of the night shoveling snow on the fireline and finally got it under control. The snow saved us that night.

October 1955

## **THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN FIRE OF 1900**

**By David Lake  
(Retired 1940)**

In order to better understand the conditions then existing, I will first explain how I came to be in the Snowy Mountains at the time of the fire.

For the three years previous I had been working for the 79 Ranch, officially known as the Montana Cattle Company. They had four ranches - one located on the White Beaver Creek near the Yellowstone, one on Painted Robe Creek, one on Big Coulee and one on the Musselshell near the present town of Barber. In the fall of 1899 I was working on the Musselshell Ranch. Since this was before railroads, everything used in this country was brought in by freight teams from Billings, and as I had been working for the 79 on and off for the past three years, I had not only learned the country but also how to handle four-and six-horse teams. The Company was planning on doing some bridge building, and as there was a small sawmill on Careless Creek on the south side of the Snowy Mountains some 30 miles distant, I was sent up to the sawmill to get the timber. During November and December I made three trips to this mill, bringing down the required amount of lumber. When the hauling was completed, since I was the youngest man at the Ranch in terms of service, I was one of the group that was laid off. Knowing that this was to happen, I had arranged for a job at the mill when I made my last trip up there for the Ranch.

Prior to coming to Montana, I had put in one winter in the lumber woods in northern Michigan, and I was glad to get a job in the woods again. The owner of the mill, W. S. Stranahan, was also a rancher and an old timer there. He had built this mill, a water power affair, and did his logging during the winter, hauling logs to the mill on sleds. He sawed the logs into lumber in the spring while there was plenty of water. He had built a small pond on the hillside, filling it by means of a ditch from Careless Creek. At his mill he had built a 40-foot pen stock with a flume extending to the pond. He would fill the pond and saw lumber as long as the water lasted. As a rule he could run about two hours, then close the gates and pile the lumber while the pond was filling. Lumber was in good demand as this was the only mill in that locality.

During the winter of 1899-1900, we cut and hauled to the mill around 100,000 feet of logs. We had an average snowfall that winter and good sledding all the way to the mill, a distance of about four miles.

The spring turned out to be dry. Little moisture in April and May and almost none in June. It therefore became apparent that there would be a shortage of water for sawing, so after spending a short time putting in some crop, Mr. Stranahan decided to outfit a freight team and send one man out with it hauling wool, and that he and I would do what we could at the mill. So, the ranch was stripped of wagons, teams, harness and saddles. One light team was kept at home, together with one light buckboard, and I, of course, had my own horse and saddle. The man sent out with the freight team to haul wool had a wife and daughter on the ranch, and they remained while he was away. Mr. Stranahan was not married at this time.

We sawed a little lumber, put up a little hay and did what else we could. The weather got hot, the grass dried up and everything had a bad look. It was about July 12 that we saw the first smoke. It seemed to be about northwest of the ranch, somewhere west of Timber Creek, approximately sec. 20, T. 11 N., R. 18 E., and like all unattended fires it burned up big some days and would then go down. Being far away we paid little attention to it. My boss, Stranahan, said that since he seemed to be in no danger he didn't aim to spend any time on it.

During a trip I made to the Halbert ranch, I met Ralph Skellen who had just come from Timber Creek. He had been working for the Halbert brothers, but that winter he and another man named William Williamson, had been getting out a setting of logs in Timber Creek. Skellen said they had been trying to save their logs, but that they had lost about one-half of their cutting. I was never able to learn just where the fire did actually start or what started it. For several days we had an east wind, just hard enough to move the fire westward. As long as it moved westward no one gave it any concern. (Many years later I found it did go west as far as Blake Creek - sec. 6 and 7, T. 11 N., R. 18 E.)

On or about July 15 a black smoke was seen on the Timber Creek ridge about sec. 20, T. 11 N., R. 18 E., and it came over the ridge and burned down the hillsides, threatening the Weber homestead on Little Careless Creek. Stranahan then decided we had better do something, so we started to the fire, leaving the ranch about 3:00 p.m. We both had a horse to ride, one man saddle (mine), and one side saddle. I took the side saddle. And here allow me to suggest to anyone similarly situated -- walk, in preference to any side saddle.

Each of us carried an axe and shovel. Bill, my boss, lined right out and I had to follow. At long last we arrived at the fire. We fought it until dark, saved the Weber homestead, and as it seemed to be dying somewhat we went home. The next day we filled the pond and again started to make some lumber. As I recall, we continued sawing for two more days, when the black smoke showed up. The wind by now had changed to the west, and the fire was at the head of the West Fork of Little Careless Creek, about sec. 16, T. 11 N., R. 18 E.

Bill now began to be worried. He saw that if the wind held he would soon be in danger. So, back we went. This time he took the little team and buckboard. I took my own saddle horse, rode over and got Len Weber, and the three of us started backfiring up a coulee (later called the Franklin Coulee). We first unhooked the team and turned the horses loose, leaving the buckboard. We worked until about 12 midnight backfiring, whipping out the east side and allowing it to burn westward. The main fire was getting close by now. We could see and hear it up on the bench to the west. (Here I want to note that we backfired that night as long as the grass would burn. This was on July 17. Later on this area was part of my ranger district. I watched it carefully and during the 20 years that I had charge of it, never again did I see the grass dry enough to burn on that date. This gives one an idea of how dry it was in 1900.)

At midnight we went to the Weber place and tried to get some sleep. By the next morning a 40-mile wind had come up, blowing straight from the southwest, and the day was one of the hottest I have seen in this country. We went up the coulee to see the effects of our backfiring. We didn't get far before we determined that it was of no value. The fire went over it and beyond. The benches were very thickly timbered, running heavy to Douglas-fir. Flames were shooting

hundreds of feet in the air and the black smoke was reaching thousands of feet. While we were watching, the fireline grew to about three miles in length, and in a few minutes the line was way ahead. I saw one place where the fire jumped at least a mile and spread from there. Those big fires would actually explode. Lew Weber, who is still living and is at present a neighbor of mine here in Harlowton, had a piece of land nearby with a haystack and cabin on it. The fire was falling all over it. We found a spring and carried water, and as fire fell on the haystack we would put water on it. Within an hour the worst was over and the fire had gone on east and north. The few men who had assembled then began to scatter out, going east and keeping as close to the south edge of the fire as possible. Stranahan and another man nearly got trapped and had to run for it — and just did make it. I kept a little further down and came out at the top of the grade that led down onto the Stranahan ranch. Other than burning the fences, the ranch had suffered but little. By this time the sun had gone under the smoke cloud and it became so dark that traveling was very unsafe. The two women at the ranch had become frightened and moved all their belongings out in the center of the garden. They figured the ranch was doomed. The mountains were no longer visible, and while the fire could plainly be heard, we could not see it. The thousands of big fires exploding sounded like a great battle.

By noon the worst seemed to be over, and when darkness fell the smoke had blown away somewhat. Thousands of fires were to be seen on the mountain sides, one of the greatest sights ever witnessed. Another lad and I watched it until long after midnight. A light rain came in the latter part of the night, so in the morning there was nothing to be seen but smokes everywhere.

The Swimming Woman portion of the mountains had burned in 1885 and left a sharp fire line from the top of the mountain running south to the edge of the timber on the bench. So, when our fire reached the old burn it died out. This old burn being only 15 years old had not gone down enough to burn readily. So ended the first fire; the next was to come two weeks later.

The names that I remember of those men who attended the fire were;

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year Settled</u>
William S. Stranahan	1884
Tom Halbert	1883
Bill Halbert	1883
Ed Marsing	1880
Ed Taylor	1890's
Charles Ayers	Recent settler
Lew Weber	1890
Troy Porter	1895
Joe Healy	Native (half-breed)
David Lake	1899

The fire in Timber Creek Canyon and Careless Creek Canyon continued to burn slowly, creeping up each side of the canyon, some days burning up quite big and then dying down. It could easily

have been controlled, but as we had no leaders nothing was done about it. Both canyons contained heavy stands of mature Douglas-fir sawtimber.

Careless Creek Canyon contained about three sections. Well, things went along in this manner for about two weeks, or until August 8. Weather was still very hot and dry, and on this day we had a hard south wind and about noon someone at the ranch looked up and said, "Boys, the canyons are going up." These canyons opened up to the south and the wind had a good sweep.

Within an hour the whole canyon was like a furnace, the flames shooting to the top of the mountains and a huge column of smoke rising thousands of feet and drifting off to the east. The heaviest volume of fire lasted for about two hours, and then began to die down.

Careless Creek Canyon burned out completely. Something happened in Timber Creek, as only a portion burned, leaving around 15 million feet of mature Douglas-fir which is still green, and still being sold. And 20 years later (1920) it became my job to start the sale of this timber.

On the mountainsides where the fire was the hottest, the soil burned off completely, and practically no reproduction has ever started. On the benches and in the canyon bottoms where some soil was left, a good stand of young timber is now growing.

During the years of 1910 and 1912 the Forest Service did considerable planting on the South Snowies burned areas, most of which was successful. In 1920 or 1922 I made the last and final progress reports on these plantations.

There were several old-time settlers at the Stranahan sawmill on the day of the Canyon fire, and I am giving their names as a matter of record:

William S. Stranahan

P. J. Noule

W. A. Hedges

Tom Halbert

David Lake

I am sure that I am the only one now living.



Sheep on their way to summer range, grazing at the ghost town of Independence, near the head of Boulder River, Absaroka National Forest, 1936, now the Gallatin National Forest.

October 1955

## **RECOLLECTIONS**

**By Roy A. Phillips  
(Retired 1951)**

To record experience factually over a period of 41 years is a big job and one that can well be approached with some measure of humility and trepidation. For anyone who put forth an honest effort to do his work conscientiously and well, the early years of the Forest Service represented a very grueling and at times an exceedingly discouraging life, requiring courage, patience, and fortitude in an exceptional measure. It was a lonesome life, and to work alone under severe physical and many times mental handicap was a part of the daily routine. As few trails and almost no roads existed, it was necessary to work a way through heavily timbered, rugged mountain terrain for days on end to gain a familiarity with the territory for which responsible.

A fire guard in those days often had to patrol areas the size of present-day ranger districts, and the task of getting around over his district represented days of severe physical effort. No lookouts existed and the patrolman viewed his area from high vantage points as he traveled around on his beat. If he sighted a fire he went to it and if true to his trust, stayed with it until it was out, with the hope uppermost in his mind that nothing would happen elsewhere until he again got back into circulation. Sometimes with hands and feet blistered and even his body galled by sweat he kept on day by day with little to eat and almost no sleep.

Although I had worked and held down a man's job from the age of 13, at the age of 20 the life was so hard that I often thought of going back to a job where, as a rule, they worked only from daylight until dark. I well remember what Ranger Frank Haun, my first boss, used to say when someone became dissatisfied and wanted to quit, "Well, you hired out to be a tough man, didn't you? Then what are you beefing about; who the hell wants to be a quitter!" This thought braced me many times in later years and I would grit my teeth, cinch up my belt and keep on going.

To be resourceful and self-reliant and overcome obstacles no matter how overpowering they might seem was another trait essential in an early day ranger. For example, when a forest fire broke out in the vicinity of Taft, Montana, Frank could not get anyone to turn out to fight the fire so he went up on the mountain back of the town and put in a fireline exposing the town to the fire, with the intention of stopping the fire after it had consumed the town. When the local people saw what was going on they turned out with a will and helped subdue the flames.

Another time a couple of hombres with bad reputations decided to file a squatters claim on a bar having agricultural possibilities and Frank took me along to help move them off. They were busy building a cabin and scarcely paused to talk to us, but told us in no uncertain terms to get the hell off their land before they put us off. Frank sat down on their coats, which at the time I thought was strange, and after we had talked and argued with these fellows for a couple of hours their activity on the cabin gradually ceased, and finally one said, "You win," and to his partner, "These persistent s-of-b's won't leave us alone; let's go," and picked up their coats under which were two 45 colts. Frank had suspected this so sat down on their coats to make sure. The exploits, of Frank Haun would fill a volume. He was one of the colorful early day rangers. I was fortunate indeed to

serve as his assistant for about two years and consequently got some very good training that was of great value many times in later life.

The patience, fortitude and will power to overcome human and physical obstacles, a la Frank Haun, was indeed necessary in the repertoire of an early day ranger. In those days the public was very antagonistic toward, the Forest Service, since it was generally believed by those with whom we came in contact that with the creation of the national reserves, resources that were heretofore free to the public had been locked up from entry and exploitation. I learned that to mingle with these people and to avoid heated arguments would almost always get the desired result, and that once you gained their respect and confidence you could get them to do anything within reason. Therefore, over the nearly 30 years that I was a supervisor, I tried to instill within the rangers under my direction the lessons taught me by Ranger Frank Haun. As a result, very few complaint cases ever got past us and those so settled, with few exceptions, will ever become known to a higher authority.

In the early days of the Forest Service a great deal of weight was given to the way a man did his job and of his standing in the community. In late years, however, it does not seem that this is always true, but that if a man stirs up a lot of trouble and even if his morals are a little out of line, he is considered as a go-getter and shoved up above more deserving men and the condition of the resources for which he is responsible has not, to my observation, been given very much consideration.

Rangers and supervisors have become office bound and paperwork drudges. As foresters they are getting farther and farther away from the trees, and consequently, very far away from the people they serve. It seems to me that effort in recent years has been concentrated on people living away from the forest in an effort to educate the public as a whole, mainly to financial needs. The reaction by permittees and forest users generally has not been too good, and there has been some pointed criticism of show-me trips even by some of the people who have been taken on these trips. I do not make a point of this to discourage the present I&E programs, but wish to emphasize the need to get back down to earth, practice forestry on the ground, and deal more closely with the forest users as a class.

That I ever made the grade as a Forest Service employee was due to the fact that I served under such men as Frank Haun, Elers Koch, Glen Smith and Fred Morrell. Perhaps I should mention Major Kelley but he came along after the time I had emerged from the quenching bath and was by then pretty much tempered metal as far as the final stages of development are concerned.

Elers Koch, my first supervisor, while a hard taskmaster, was a fair man and delegated authority to a greater degree than any of my other Forest Service bosses. As long as you redeemed this responsibility you were O.K., but God help you if you didn't. Once I reproached him for not having been on my ranger district for two years. His reply was that he considered that I had been doing a good job other wise he would have been around. One night we were sitting around a campfire and his conscience probably bothered him as he told me that I had been offered charge of the Savenac Nursery the year before but that he had turned it down as he didn't think I would want it. He said that when a ranger was doing a good job that he should not be moved, and I don't believe he ever recommended a man for promotion or transfer unless he felt that he would

lose him anyway. Three times when I worked under him I got a promotion only when I expected to resign. However, I never enjoyed working under a man as much as I did for Elers. Only on two occasions did he seem critical of my efforts:

When I took over the Superior and Iron Mountain Ranger Districts in 1914, a pretty bad fire year, a fire occurred on Seigel Creek. Koch sent me to suppress this fire. It was across a corner of the Ninemile District over on the St. Regis District. We could only get within 4-hours hike of the fire with a packstring so it was necessary to spend 8 or 9 hours a day in travel. The crew was played out and all but 3 men were quitting. I told them if they would stay until we got a line around the fire I would give them travel time out. This they did but the fire was largely in slide rock, a severe fire day came on and the fire blew out of a snag over the line and we lost it after almost superhuman effort to hold it. We then built a trail to the fire with a new crew. I don't think Elers ever quite forgave me for letting this fire get away. He felt that I should have somehow held the first crew.

That same year a fire broke out on Landowner Mountain while we were fighting the Seigel Creek fire and spread to about 200 acres before we got men on it. I went to this fire with 10 men. We hiked in from Superior and carried the tools. Three head of horses packed all the other supplies, provisions and camp equipment. The fire was controlled with this 10-man crew, and 2 men were left to mop it up at the end of a week. No more grub or supplies were needed. The success of this venture probably means that the Trout Creek drainage was saved from being burned out as 1914 was a bad fire year. The Diamond Match Company is now logging the timber that might have burned.

An incident occurred in connection with this fire that is worthy of note. The crew, to a man, was outstanding. As much as a quarter of a mile of the fire boundary was given to individual men to control, and as I recollect there was no lost line although bad burning conditions existed. When we got back to Superior I could not satisfy myself to let this crew go, so made a deal with them to stick around and I would feed them and they would get paid only while on a fire. This went on for a week or more while several small fires up and down the valley were put out. One day Koch came out and seeing that this crew seemed to be under my supervision wanted to know "how come." When I explained the arrangement he was pretty angry and made me lay them off. Three days later a fire broke out that required 200 men to control. I always felt this would not have been necessary had my trusty standby crew been available. I believe this to be the first crew employed under similar circumstances.

The year 1914 was a historic year for the Lolo Forest as lookout stations were first established then. The only equipment was a map mounted on what is known as a Koch board, as he designed it. Dave Olson, later Chief of Planting in Region 1, was the first lookout man on Illinois Peak. An incident of interest that year was the checking of lookouts by setting test fires. F. A. Silcox and R. Y. Stuart, I believe, set such a fire on Eddy Creek, a distance of over 20 miles from Illinois Peak. When they returned to Missoula they wanted to know if this fire was sighted and if not, why. As I had a horse patrolman in that locality I checked with him at the first opportunity. He informed me that he had ridden up Eddy Creek on the morning the fire was set and saw 2 men engaged in watching the fire but as they had a good trench around it he decided they knew their business and rode on. The fire, he said, was making a lot of smoke but lay close to the

ground and did not rise above the tree tops. I reported this fact to the supervisor but heard nothing more about it.

Another time that Elers Koch was provoked with me was when he and Jim Girard planned a trip to look over the timber on Upper Trout Creek. At that time, I had the supervision of 20 bands of sheep ranging in Clearwater, St. Joe and Lolo areas and got so tangled up with routing these sheep out from the embarkation point that I could not go with Jim and Elers. I did meet them at the train with saddlehorses and pack outfit and directed them out of town. However, they had bad luck and dumped the pack horse in Trout Creek and lost so much time that they had to camp as a place known as the Pump, not a very good camp spot. Jim went after water and fell off an old flume throwing his shoulder out of joint. Elers came into town next morning on the dead run on my saddle horse. The horse was a dark bay but he looked like a gray from sweat and foam. We got the local doctor and a bottle of whiskey and started up Trout Creek. After we left an old man took my horse out and walked him around until he cooled off, and probably saved me a good horse. When we got to the Pump, the doctor threw Jim's shoulder back in joint and we handed him the whiskey. He took a good swing, put the bottle in his pocket and started off down the trail. Some years afterward Jim walked up to Mrs. Phillips at a dance and said, "Are you Mrs. Roy Phillips? Well, I am old Jim Girard. Roy saved my life with a bottle of whiskey one time."

I worked with Jim on several occasions and learned quite a bit about timber.

The last time I worked with him we cruised 20 million feet of timber in Ninemile in two days. The timber was sold to the A.C.M. Company and cut out remarkably close to the estimate, I was told.

Probably more humorous stories could be-told about Glen Smith than any other man who ever worked in Region 1. When I went to the Nezperce as supervisor in 1928, there was a rush of grazing complaint cases in the making. I told Glen that I thought most of the trouble was due to the permittees going over the ranger's head with their grievances. I suggested that we let the ranger sit pretty much as a judge, present each case, and give the decision that he thought was just and proper. The ranger was briefed in advance of the conference. I can see Ranger O.V. Clover yet as he sweated it out in each case. We, of course, supported his decision which in each instance was the proper one. After that I do not recollect that Clover let very much get past him.

We had a lot of trouble with a sheepman by the name of Cleveland, and Glen and I went over to Snake River to adjudicate the case. He refused to handle his sheep so as to prevent damage to the range. In spite of the fact that he had previously been cut from three bands to two he still persisted in poor handling of the stock. We sat in the 100 degree shade at Pittsburg Landing, and argued all day. Every time we had about reached an agreement he would blow up and a fresh start would be made. Finally, we had to stay over night, and he put us upstairs on a bed with no mattress and one thin cotton blanket. Next morning Glen had the print of coil spring all over his back and I suppose I did, too. (Glen then told me about a trip he had made on the Custer with J. C. Whitham when they had spent all day lifting the front end of Whitham's Ford out of the road ruts and he had the word FORD burned on his back at the end of the day.) After futile argument most of the day, we pulled out, apparently defeated in reaching any agreement. However, within

the next few weeks Cleveland sold out, so our troubles were ended. I suppose he was as much discouraged as we were.

Perhaps to those who went through the 1910 fire season that experience is the highlight of their Forest Service experience. It was so to me, and I had had very little training and experience along that line, other than that I had handled small crews of men since I was 15 years old. When I went in to see Elers Koch about a job, he blinked a few times and said I could have a job at \$75 a month if I would provide two horses and equipment. I would, of course, have to subsist myself. I went to work on a timber survey crew April 4, and about June 1 at the Savenac Nursery. I helped put in the first seedbed there. We also did some experimental planting with corn planters and in seed spots.

After June 15 the fire situation became critical and Haun sent me to a flag-stop called Borax on the Coeur d'Alene branch of the Northern Pacific Railroad for fire patrol duty. The job consisted of patrolling the territory from Saltese to the Montana-Idaho state line and particularly the Northern Pacific and Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroads. As coal was the fuel used by all locomotives and the rights-of-way were highly inflammable, the job was not an easy one. I had no previous training whatever in fighting forest fires and only instructions from Ranger Haun to put out any fires that might occur on my district. Also, none of the railroad section crews, of which there were three on my district, had fire training; so, as fires occurred, I proceeded to train them on the job. About the only directive given me by Haun was that results were all that he was after, and that the guard the previous year had not gotten them so he had had to fire him.

Many and varied were the experiences of that 1910 season, performed at first on foot and later on a railroad speeder. The crucial test perhaps came on the first fire, a 10-acre blaze near Drexel on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad on a hot June afternoon. Seeing it was beyond one-man stage I went to the nearest section gang and got them into action. These men were Bulgarians under an elderly Irish foreman. The crew was recently from the old country and could speak very little if any English. The foreman turned the crew over to me and immediately found a spot in the shade. Two big black fellows, the cream of the crew, had selected the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. I gave Abe my axe, informed him that he was the crew boss and that the job was to trench the fire. He sure "poured it on" to the other Bulgarians. We got in front of the fire and tried to stop the forward run, which was bad tactics as it repeatedly jumped over our heads, when we would back up and make a fresh start.

At sundown we were still frantically battling the fire, which had not gained appreciably in size but had caused a lot of sweat and blisters. About that time Ranger Haun appeared on the scene, having seen the smoke from down the river. When he observed how worn out we were, he suspended operations for the day, took me back to Saltese with him and the next morning detailed Ranger Jack Breen to assist me. With the Bulgarians again on the job we quickly got the fire corralled and Breen gave me some valuable pointers in fire fighting.

This section gang, as well as the others, became efficient fire fighting units, as circumstances required that I train them since I could not hope to do the job alone. One of the crews, however, persisted in burning tie piles and caused me considerable trouble. One day one of these fires occurred just west of Saltese on the edge of town. Thinking to give old Tom a lesson, I trenched

the upstream spread of the fire and left the town end untended. As there was a slough on one side and the railroad track on the other, there seemed only a remote possibility of the fire spreading except in the one direction. This it did, and by late afternoon had spread into the limits of Saltese and burned one building. This made a "good Indian" of Tom Hanlon and years afterward, when he had a section on my old ranger district, he would go long distances from the railroad to put out lightning fires and never charged the Forest Service one red cent for his services.

Some 30 fires along the two railroads were suppressed during the summer and none of these fires exceeded 10 acres in size. Many and varied were the experiences in that connection but success was dictated entirely by force of circumstances. When I left my cabin there was no certainty that I would return that night or perhaps for several days. Hoboes cleaned me out of most of my worldly possessions so I boarded up the windows and put a sign on the door, "Look out for the gun." This was a bluff but it worked. When lumberman John Baird and Ranger Charles Vealey later came into camp enroute with a fire crew for the Bullion fire on the Coeur d'Alene Forest, they got a long pole and shoved the door open after unlocking the Forest Service padlock.

A lightning fire occurred on Denna Mora Creek and Guard L. H. Foote was given charge. It burned an area of about 40 acres and Harvey Polleys, of the Polleys Lumber Company of Missoula, was killed on that fire by a falling snag. I reached the fire at about the time this happened and assisted in removing the body. At that time Polleys had started operation on Randolph Creek and had purchased the timber in the upper St. Regis drainage. This was the timber we had cruised that spring in six feet of snow.

As Elers Koch has written up my experience in connection with the big blow of August 1920 and 1921 there is no need to recount that here. I consider this experience as a red-letter event in my Forest Service career, and with a sincere feeling of humility have been a little proud of the fact that I was able to stand the acid test at a time when close to 100 lives had to depend on what I might decide. While I have had many close shaves on the fireline and have had occasion at times to deal with panicked men, I am glad to say that I never lost a man, as the result of my decisions, and have always kept foremost in mind the need for safety on the fireline.

The year 1910 was pretty much a one-man show and that will be as I will always remember it. Foresters as a class had very little if any training as firefighters. Trails were few and those that did exist had been blazed out by trappers, prospectors, miners, and others having some interest or investment in forested areas. Discovering of fires was the result of patrols, often seen only after fires had burned several days and columns of smoke had drifted high into the sky. Patrolmen tried to make some high point immediately after lightning storms but this often meant fighting dense brush up a steep mountain for hours at a time. Often when men reached a fire they were too worn out to fight it and had no food supplies or effective tools to work with.

Ranger Bill McCormick told of going to a fire on the old Blackfeet Forest. The whole mountainside was ablaze. There was an old ranger with long gray whiskers on the fire. He didn't seem to be very much concerned with anything at all so Bill finally said, "What are we going to do?" The old man answered, "We, h—I, this is my fire; go find one of your own."

George Ring, Supervisor of the Nezperce, was on a large fire all alone. When a board of review asked George what he did to get this fire under control, he answered, "Nothing, I went looking for a fire my size."

George was truly one of the pioneer rangers. He first worked in 1897, under the old political appointment system. His supervisor ran a saloon in Grangeville. It was his daily custom to go out on the porch of the saloon, where he could see the mountain back of Grangeville, and then go back into the saloon and write in his diary, "Viewed the forest today." All the rangers had ranches or other occupations and spent very little time out on the forest.

George said that his first summer was spent in a camp where he thought the forest should be, but when the boundary was surveyed he found that he ate on the forest and slept off of it, as the boundary line established a year later ran right through the camp. George worked at the job and familiarized himself with the forest. He was the only man on the forest who survived an inspection by a Washington Office inspector. When I went to the Nezperce in 1928, I found old boundary notices posted by George Ring in 1908. In all the early day photographs George is characterized by a derby hat and a big chaw of tobacco that bulged out a cheek.

Following 1910, I look at all accomplishment as pretty much a matter of teamwork and the inspirational ability of men in getting the most out of others was for many years the criterion of ability to advance in the Service. Men who were individual workers or who would not cooperate as members of a team just didn't get anywhere. It was surely and simply the survival of the fittest, and there was no such thing as trying to find a place for the square pegs that happened to be in round holes.

Through the years, there are some accomplishments for which I feel I can claim individual credit: An all-time record in the cost of planting trees and in the development of the present Region 1 planting tool. I did not invent the tool, but did take it on after it had been turned down by tree planters elsewhere, and perfected the design and planting techniques in the use of the tool.

Likewise, after D. L. Beatty had given up in despair over getting his trail grader in use as trail construction equipment, I demonstrated that it could be used to advantage on practically all trail construction projects at a great saving in trail construction costs in comparison with hand labor.

I organized the first fire overhead unit in 1920, and successfully demonstrated the efficiency of this unit in manning large fires.

I also organized and successfully used plow units on large fires, and in 1931, established a record of 30 miles of firelines constructed and held by plow crews.

I designed and equipped the first Region 1 tractor with bumper for clearing road right-of-way. With this equipment we constructed the motorway from the Red River Ranger Station to Green Mountain Lookout at a cost of \$512 per mile, which is believed to be a record for road construction cost.

In 1934, with ERA and NIRA crews and one CC camp, constructed 200 miles of forest protection roads. This was accomplished in the face of a bad fire year, and we detailed many men to the Selway Forest which had tremendous fire losses. Although these fires burned next door, as it was, Nezperce losses were small. As I recollect, the largest fire was about 200 acres.

There are many other accomplishments that I sponsored and carried out, but the foregoing were examples of projects that were initiated where the most opposition was encountered in developing and putting across to a successful conclusion. For that reason perhaps they register most forcibly as something to be proud of.

All through the years it has been apparent to me that to meet any material measure of success a man must have the cooperation and support of the men under him. I started to hold down a man's job at 13 years of age and by the time I reached 15 I was made a boss over other men. It requires considerable tact and pretty sound judgment to issue orders to men old enough to be your father, and men must, above all, have confidence in you to carry out orders and do the job well. Teamwork and competitive spirit go hand in hand, and this I have tried to instill in the various organizations with which I have worked.

Furthermore, I have tried always to give a full measure of credit to the individual, even though it was necessary for me to set up the play and back it up to the finish. When a chance for promotion came to a man I have always supported it if worthy, and have never withheld support because he was in a key position and hard to replace. Always I have insisted on men assuming much responsibility and tried to train them in the essential qualifications of the next step up the ladder. And I have never recommended transfer or promotion for people merely to get rid of them. Loyalty to the organization and a keen sense of stewardship for the resources with which entrusted has been the goal for which to strive. Perhaps the tendency to be outspoken may at times have spoiled the chances for advancement in the organization, but it has been my experience that constructive criticism is good for the soul, and the individual as well, and I encouraged the people in my charge to criticize if it proved to be of a constructive nature.

My 41 years of service are full of pleasant memories, and the only regret perhaps is that, at the zenith of ability and knowledge, I should be put on the shelf. The only redeeming feature is that it gives the younger men in the organization a chance to step up. However, the top men do not always follow the rule of voluntary retirement. Often those who seek to stay on are the least essential, and the man who does not train someone to take over the responsibilities of his job at any time is not a good organizer. After all, those who demonstrate the quality of leadership which sparks an organization, and by precept and example blaze the way for the followers, are the ones who gain the greatest accomplishment and the utmost in public respect and appreciation.

You have asked me not to be overly modest in recording personal experiences, and I have tried not to be so. However, this is the first time I have brought much of this together in any sort of chronological order and the fact that I am now retired eliminates the chance of any repercussions as they may affect anyone. You are entirely welcome to use any of this that may seem appropriate.

Throughout my career I have endeavored to be a loyal and conscientious member of the organization, and while I may have had differences of opinion and even heated arguments with the boss, I have always fallen in line and tried to do a good job of following out orders when they were given as a definite commitment as opposed to my personal views.

Finally, it would be amiss if I did not in some measure pay tribute to the many fine men and women with whom it has been my privilege to associate down through the years, and I realize fully that the destiny of the Forest Service is in good hands; also, that I will have no occasion to regret that I was once a part of this truly fine outfit.



Forest Supervisors Meeting, Missoula, Montana, March 1925.

Back row, from left to right: W. M. Nagel, M. F. Wolff, C. D. Simpson, K. Wolfe, R. T. Ferguson, Theodore Shoemaker, John W. Lowell, R. A. Phillips, Paul Redington, Lloyd Hornby, Dr. Carl Schenck, F. J. Jefferson, C. K. McHarg, W. J. Derrick, Glen A. Smith, J. C. Whitham, J. E. Ryan.

Middle row, from left to right: John Somers, John B. Taylor, Paul Al Wohien, E. H. Myrick, A. H. Abbott, Elers Koch, G. E. Martin, Alva Simpson.

Front row, from left to right: W. B. Willey, Arthur H. Baum, Burr Clark, W. W. White, Ernest T. Wolf, Howard Flint, Fred Morrell.

January 1955

## **THE MAJOR AND THE MINER**

**By G. I. Porter  
(Retired 1942)**

The Major: Frank A. Fenn, of blessed memory.

The Miner: Read on!

Major Fenn was Superintendent of Forest Resources in that part of Idaho in which this scene was located.

Forest Reserves and the Bureau of Forestry, and the officials thereof, were not popular in those days and those places. Many residents, particularly small stockowners, miners, and others whose activities had not been restricted in relation to the cutting of timber, grazing of livestock and location of land, considered the new regulations as infringements upon their liberties and, the pursuit of profits, and bitterly resented any interference therewith.

The results of one controversy, however, were beneficial to ranchers' interests, and did much to bring about a better understanding of the principles and policies of the new administration of the public lands.

A mining company, of which the Miner was resident manager, had located under the mining laws, several hundred acres of meadowland, as placer mining claims, and two dredges of rather primitive design (although up to date at that time) had been erected on the meadows. Both had failed to make a profit, and were left to the mercy of the elements. The first, brought by pack animals over the old Nezperce Trail in 1893, was a total loss. The other, constructed in 1899, had the benefit of wagon road transportation, and was of later model, but not more successful in bringing up paydirt from bedrock than the first.

The company, however, with the hope that time would develop better methods of gold saving, made the effort to protect its long-range interests by applying for patent to several 160-acre tracts of the meadow.

For a number of years prior to and during the operations of the mining company, several farmers had been cropping the land. Hay was the principal crop, for which there was a good market. They operated on sufferance of the mining company, which claimed surface - as well as mining - rights to the land. Since withdrawal of the lands from settlement, about 1897, the farmers had not been able to establish any rights to the land as agricultural land, but in the hope that future legislation would correct the existing laws, entered protest against issuing patent to the mining company.

The decision of the General Land Office of the Department of the Interior hinged upon the relative value of the claims as mineral or agricultural in value. Local administrators of the Forest Reserve took the part of the farmers, and the fun began. The case was decided in favor of the

company in the local office of the Register and Receiver in Lewiston, Idaho, but upon appeal to the Commissioner of the General Land Office this decision was reversed, pending final proof by contending parties of the primary value of the land.

Here is where the Major stepped into the picture, having been a side line observer, but with his own ideas on the subject up to this time. The company, having protected its rights by performing the required "assessment work" on the claims, prepared to continue this work in the spring of 1901. Men and a steam engine and pump started digging to try to locate the pay channel in the meadow. The Major was preparing to do the same sort of work to prove or disprove the mineral values, and here was his chance to achieve results at a minimum cost to the Bureau of Forestry.

Bureau funds were low, and such investigation to a point of definite decision as to value was impossible with funds and manpower available. So, what to do?

The Major and the Miner already were good friends. They combined forces. The Major supplied manpower to equal that of the Miner, and had the benefit of the power and pump. It is impossible to dig to bedrock at a depth of ten or twelve feet or more without a pump to keep the water down. During that summer they worked together, and determined, to the satisfaction of both, that gold-bearing gravel profitable to work did not exist.

The company abandoned its claims, application for patent was denied, the farmers gloated and the Miner lost his job. Later, the meadow was settled under the Forest Homestead Act of June 11, 1906, the Miner being one of the settlers, and later receiving title to his homestead claim.

A sidelight: The local ranger, a bitter enemy of the Miner, threatened state's prison to the Miner, holding that the Miner's sworn statement as to the mineral value of the land when applying for patent, and his sworn statement as to the agricultural value when applying for homestead constituted justification for prosecution for perjury. But the ranger lost his job, through political action, the Miner took it over several years later (through Civil Service examination) and the Major and the Miner remained good friends forever after.

And in after years the Major took great pleasure in relating the story of the only instance in his long official career in which one whose activities were under investigation assisted the investigating officer in proving the case to his own disadvantage.

The Major: Major Frank A. Fenn - may he rest in peace.

The Miner: Your relator.

January 1955

## **THE RANGER'S WIFE**

**By G. I. Porter**  
**(Retired 1942)**

From some stories and from other sources, and particularly from my own experience, I have gained some knowledge of the part played by the wife of the early forest ranger. Many such wives made history, many more by their courage, initiative and steadfastness enabled the ranger-husband to achieve a measure of fame they could not have accomplished alone.

Unlike the modern housing conditions available to field men, the wife was often (most often) required to inhabit a decrepit, inadequately furnished remote cabin or shack, lacking in all facilities of sanitation and convenience; frequently located on side roads, unpaved-mud, ruts, dust, snow-year-round conditions, all nonconducive to neighborly or social contacts, miles from town; no telephone, no motorcar, no radio, no anything to take the curse off loneliness and household cares.

Alone, or with only the children for company, while husband-ranger was away on his travels through the remote portions of his district, sometimes for weeks without means of communication with home. All this, with the further hazards to him due to bad winds, waters, an occasional bad actor of a horse, more unusual (but still to be considered) - bad men. This for the ranger.

For his wife, the uncertainty as to his safety, the ever-dreaded illness or accident to the children, the labor incident to procuring water from perhaps a distant well or stream, the handling of wood and building of fires, the care of horses and perhaps a cow. Another worry was the absence of medical facilities; sometimes even of neighbors. Also to vex the wife, the long-range shopping by catalog, the dearth of culinary accessories, the shortage of supplies, sometimes through carelessness in laying in long-term supplies. But above all, the anxiety about her husband away from home for how long or to what distant places.

Like Gilbert and Sullivan's constabulary in the "Pirates of Penzance" her lot was "not a happy one." Such, in the early years of the century, was the life of one wife - that of the narrator. Some wives had a happier lot, some a worse, but all were pioneers in a life that has continued to become easier and more liveable. Sometimes she took over the duties of the ranger in his absence. She hired and fed fire fighters and other employees, routed these to their jobs and stations, and, after telephones became available, transmitted orders and messages. In fact, when the ranger was absent the wife acted as unpaid, able assistant and was often required to assume responsibilities and act with initiative and discretion. Tell me, what other helpmate of a worker with the responsibilities of a ranger, inadequately (at that time) remunerated, could or would assume or accomplish such duties? But they did all this, and more.

More power to the ranger's wife!



Mr. and Mrs. Louis W. Shevling on the doorstep of the Valley Creek Ranger Station at Harding, South Dakota. This building was originally a log henhouse which Mr. Shevling converted into an office when he was first appointed guard on the Short-Pine Division of the old Sioux Forest. Custer National Forest. 1938.

January 1955

## REMINISCENCES OF G. I. PORTER

By G. I. Porter  
(Retired 1942)

Naturally, one who lived in this Northwest prior to the establishment of any of the forest reserves, and took some part in the early activities of the Bureau of Forestry, from the outside, and the Forest Service from the inside, is certain to have had some experiences and observed events which remain in his memory — some pleasurable and some painful, and some unsuited to publication.

As a prospector and miner in the territory now covered by the Nezperce National Forest, I, together with others of my ilk, was resentful of the restrictions imposed upon us by the regulations of the new Bureau of Forestry. We had been accustomed to locating any character of land under our interpretation of the mining laws, cutting timber at will, without reference to the good of the forest, or viewing without alarm the frequent fires destroying timber, watershed cover and range.

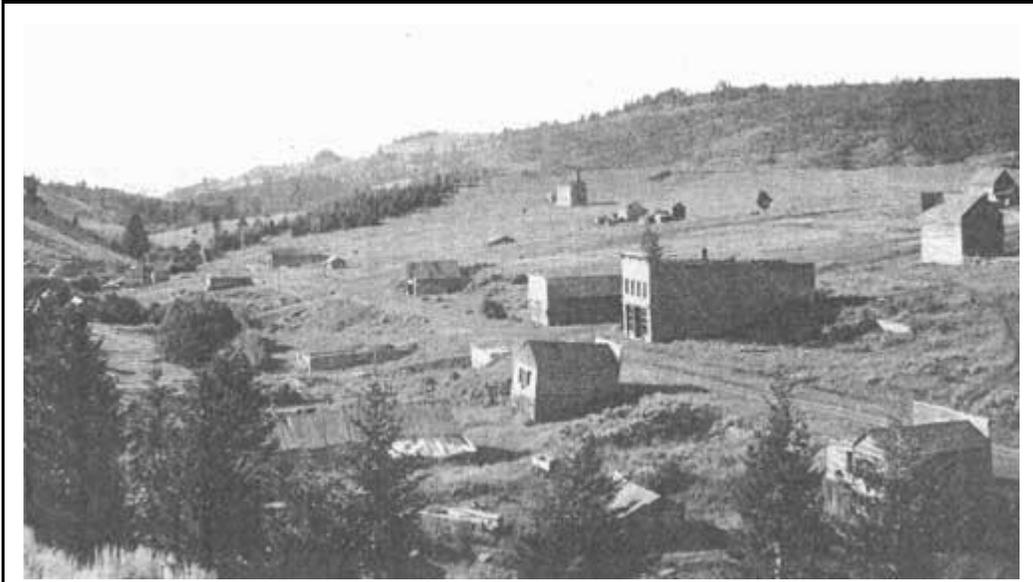
Our intolerance (as I did not see it then in the nineties) was not mitigated by the character of administration of the lands withdrawn. Some — not all, be it noted, — of the higher officials were totally unacquainted with the land and the inhabitants thereof, and some of the local officials were more interested in padding their expense accounts than in the proper performance of their duties.

The records of those early days are full of instances of arbitrary actions on the part of such officials. Further, some of the minor employees detailed for local administrative duties were politically appointed, without reference to fitness or knowledge of the land or the people.

To instance one such event: In 1900 a company which had been operating for several years, had been accustomed to cutting timber for buildings, flumes, etc., without restriction. All lumber used prior to 1900 had been obtained from timber cut before 1891 and therefore was not cut in trespass. By 1900 the flumes were damaged, and it became necessary to cut 100,000 feet b.m. of lumber. Application was made through the local supervisor for this lumber. The mine manager accompanied the supervisor in a casual preliminary inspection of the area from which other timber had been cut, and the official submitted the application with his recommendation. I still wonder what his recommendation recommended, since the application was denied in Washington, the reason given: the stumpage value would not cover the cost of surveying and administering the sale. The mining company went out of business, thus depriving the community of benefits accruing from employment of a number of men. "I vas dere, Sharlie." I was the manager.

This long-winded dissertation may be indicative of the attitude of the "old timer" toward the early trials of the forest officers, which attitude, in time, and through the efforts of the Forest Service, was changed - first, to tolerance, and then to intelligent acceptance and cooperation.

I trust that my belief that I may have had some small influence in that change of attitude is not entirely unfounded. I entered the Service on May 1, 1901, under John Barton, Supervisor, who was immediately replaced by Major Fenn, and for 35 years I was happily associated with the finest lot of fellows one could possibly meet, the finest, I believe, in any of the Government services.



Abandoned silver mining town of Castle, Montana. Deserted after silver depreciation of 1893. Lewis & Clark National Forest. 1927.

October 1955

**RECOLLECTIONS**  
**By Charlie E. Powell**  
**(Retired 1955)**

I was employed on the Bitterroot Forest in 1911. In August of that year a band of sheep burned in the Burnt Fork fire as I recall, some 800 or 900 head. In October of that year, while working on Big Creek, we put our pack stock above the Narrows and erected a barricade across the trail. One of the horses tried to get around this barrier, slipped on the sloping bedrock, slid about 100 feet and fell off a cliff 50 or 60 feet into a deep pool in the creek below. We had quite a time getting him out. Except for a few scratches and being almost chilled to death after 12 hours in the water, the animal was O.K.

The "boys" on the old Selway were having some trouble with fire on Rhoda Creek in the late summer of 1918, and the Elk Summit-Blodgett Creek trail was in heavy use. The trail on the Montana side at Blodgett Pass was dangerous and a few pack horses had been killed by falling off of it. Three of us were sent by Ranger W. H. Young to improve the trail. We spent several weeks, as I remember, drilling rock by hand steel and blasting to widen the trail. One day I told the foreman I could hear cattle bawling. He said, "Boy, I think it's time you were going to town or the next thing you will be hearing bell birds. If you said you heard elephants trumpeting I would just as leave believe you." Nevertheless, I still maintained I could hear the cattle. A short time later we looked up the mountain to see a herd of cattle winding their way down the trail. I later learned that the owners had taken some 180 or so head up the Selway River to summer, and having no feed to return on, they decided that since cattle were bringing a little better price in Montana and they would have fresh feed to trail through, the cattle would be driven out on the Blodgett Creek trail. They were owned by Swingler and Cox.

In September 1918, I met a prospector, Old Billie Evans, on the trail. He told me that he burned upper Blodgett Creek in 1881 because "there were too damn many windfalls" for his pack stock to get through.

In August 1919, I noticed the sourdough batter that a Frenchman then living on the South Fork of the Bitterroot was mixing up, was full of vinegar flies. I told him he was getting too "toney" for me. He said, "How's that?" I told him because he was putting currants in the sourdough batter. He replied, "Hell, he not currants, that's them damn little flees." I did not eat hotcakes that day.

Also in August of that year, Ranger Jim Vance showed me the graves of the Rombo party that had been killed by Indians. This was on Ronibo Creek, and I doubt if this spot has been marked.

In October 1919, I noticed a party of Indians camped at Fales Flat on the West Fork, now called Nezperce Fork. This was the last time I ever saw them "boxing" yellow pine either to use for medicine or to eat. There is still evidence of this on the "cat-faced" trunks.

That same month, while hunting for a pack string on the headwaters of Schofield Creek, Nezperce Forest (now Bitterroot), I ran across a platform made of poles and about 15 feet high.

On top lay a human skeleton. I got out of there and never returned. No one would believe me, and I had no desire to go back to prove what I had seen.

Christmas Eve, 1919, while descending the slope on the Montana side of Blodgett Pass, I heard what I thought to be thunder. Looking back over my shoulder, I could see the whole mountain moving down. Running as fast as I could on snowshoes, I just managed to reach the old-growth timber when the slide passed. It had gained such momentum by the time it reached the creek that it went up the other side enough to set the south side in motion, which resulted in two slides piling up snow estimated to be 80 feet deep.

In August 1924 I spent 12 hours putting a ring around a two-acre fire on the divide between Skalkaho and Sleeping Child Creeks - with nothing to eat during that time. The forest officer who was to send aid and grub forgot.

December 16, 1924 at 4:00 p.m., farmers were still plowing fields in the Bitterroot Valley. At 10:00 p.m., a northeaster hit and temperatures dropped well below zero. At that time the Bitterroot Forest's pack stock was wintering on Piquett Creek. When the storm hit, the stock began to drift. The ranger who was looking after the stock that winter hunted for several days, but was unable to locate them. The supervisor, becoming somewhat alarmed, rounded up all of us younger rangers to go locate the stock.

The next morning we split up in three groups. About 3:00 p.m. the clouds parted just, for a second, and I happened to be looking the right way to spy them atop Piquett Mountain. The next morning we all took off at 4:00 a.m. to get the stock off the mountain. I don't remember just how long the stock had been there, but I do remember that everything, including bear grass had been eaten and they had even started on each other's Manes and tails. We had to beat them with clubs to get them to go down the mountain through the deep snow. We kept changing the leader and just literally poured the animals straight down the mountain over logs and rocks, and were successful in getting them to lower elevation and feed.

In August 1931, had a fire camp on the U.S. side of the line about five miles west of Gateway. The Canadian boys were camped just across the line from us. We had to haul water for our camp and they did likewise. A hot fire was burning further up the draw. A few days later the Canadians had to move because of water coming down the gulch, and later on water flowed into Montana. The ash from the burn seemed to puddle the stream bed.

In September 1944 fire burned out most of Conrad Creek on the St. Joe. A man by the name of Magers told me that his father had moved to Conrad Creek in 1896 and the creek dried up every summer. Since 1945 it has been running water.



Stockade used in defense against Indians, Big Hole Basin, Montana. Beaverhead National Forest, 1920.

October 1955

## **FIGHTING FOREST FIRES - THEN AND NOW**

**By Theodore Shoemaker  
(Retired 1938)**

Another of those dry lightning storms that regularly visit the forested sections of Montana and Idaho in July and August was in progress. This one was of the cloud-to-ground variety that means trouble in such dry seasons as this had been.

From the big west window of my home, set up a notch above the other homes in the neighborhood, I was observing the display and counting the seconds after the most vivid flashes before the thunder reached me. By this means I could approximate the location of the so-called hot strikes, and from my knowledge of the fuels in the various drainages I was getting a picture of the likelihood of fires spreading rapidly to large size.

Following the usual course, this storm was coming up out of the Lochsa across the Bitterroot Range and on toward Missoula, supervisor's headquarters of the Lolo Forest, one part of which was being threatened. The supervisor and his assistants would be on the alert. Doubtless they had already called the rangers on the districts outside the path of the storm to stand ready on short notice to go to the aid of their comrades, and had sent word around to the various places where idle men congregate telling them that fire fighters might be needed.

Smokejumpers, and the planes and pilots to carry them on their missions, would have been designated and standing ready to take off upon receipt of the dispatcher's orders. In short, readiness in all its many details would have been achieved and translated into action with speed and precision when the time came.

Although miles away, I had the equivalent of a ring-side seat at one of nature's spectacular shows — a veritable deluge of lightning strikes, with an almost complete lack of rain to counteract the destruction they presaged. So far as I know, no other place in the world is subjected to an intensity of fire-setting lightning strikes that even approaches the visitations which come to scourge the mountainous regions of Montana and Idaho almost every summer. It is not uncommon for a single storm to set a hundred fires, and in one series of storms more than 500 fires were set within a period. That is where the smokejumpers save the day, unless too many of their limited number are already out on fires or wind and low visibility make it too hazardous to drop them.

But, to come back to this storm which was steadily approaching. Suddenly there came a flash that added brilliance to the full light of day, and there was no doubt about this strike going to the ground, or about its nearness, for I distinctly felt the jar. It hit in the dense stand of timber that covers the whole broad slope leading up toward Lolo Peak, so there was small chance that it would not start a fire, and if it did it would be a miracle if it did not go into the crowns and start traveling before men could get to it. It seemed that nature was all out of miracles just then, for smoke soon began showing about the forest canopy, and some 20 minutes later a column of black smoke began billowing upward — a sure sign of a crown fire.

This would be on Ranger Bill's district. I knew Bill very well and could guess how he would handle the situation. At the first reports from his lookouts pinpointing the location of the fire he would check these against his fuel-type maps and take into account the rated fire danger and the direction and velocity of the wind. This would tell him that fast action was called for. He would immediately order eight or more smokejumpers. Later when the fire began to crown he would give his dispatcher complete instructions about ordering fire fighters, equipment and pack strings, and about rallying resident cooperators and sawmill and logging crews. This done, he would set out for the fire himself.

He would drive, and fast, to the intersection with whatever trail leads nearest the fire. There he would doubtless find some of his cooperators, and would assign one of them to stay there to direct all traffic en route to the fire. With the others he would hike up this trail to the point best suited for a takeoff to the fire. There he would set up a roadblock — rather, a trail block — and immediately set to work clearing a pack trail to the fire. Other local men and logging crews would soon join them, after which Bill would have all he could do to scout for location and blaze the way ahead of them, for they would be both willing and chock-full of know-how.

At the fire, having approached it from the windward or safe side, a camp site would be selected and a small, select crew put to work clearing, constructing tables out of poles, and digging latrines and garbage pits. The rest of the men would join the smokejumpers, already on the job, and build fireline to safeguard the camp and facilitate stringing out the fire fighters when they arrived. By means of his walky-talky radio Bill would know about when to expect them, also, how fast the fire would be traveling, it having been scouted by plane soon after it began to crown.

Of course, Bill would have an objective and a plan for reaching it. He would know if at all possible that he must cut off the head of the fire by noon of the following day to prevent another run in the afternoon. He would have estimated how far the fire would travel before the cool night air forced it down out of the crowns, limiting its advance during the night to a few yards. A plane would scout the fire again near sundown and report directly to him how far the fire had traveled and its behavior. This would enable him to check on his manpower needs and revise his orders should that seem advisable.

The first fire fighters would reach the fire before dark and work throughout the night building lines, flanking the fire on either side all the way to its head, provided Bill could get as many men as he ordered and his estimate of the length of line and the output per man-hour were correct. He would have ordered additional men to go to work at daylight to cut off the head of the fire and put out the spot fires. These men would have to be flown in to Missoula from Spokane, Butte and, Great Falls, but should arrive in time for his purpose.

This storm, this fire, and the action so far, are hypothetical. They are, nevertheless, typical in all respects and have been described in detail in order to picture the lightning fire problem facing the men of the Forest Service in this region and show how they would solve it; also, and mainly, to list the facilities now available compared with those at the command of the men who bore the brunt of the fight 1 or even 20 years ago. Let us then leave this fire, typical though it be, and go

back to the very beginning, when there were none of those facilities, and, try to trace the progress from 1905 to the present time.

This can best be done by giving an account of a few actual fires, and dramatizing somewhat the seasons of outstanding fire danger that serve as milestones by which to measure the progress that has been made. Except for the first fire I shall describe, what follows relates to Region 1 of the Forest Service which includes all of Montana, Idaho north of the Salmon River, and the northeast corner of Washington. Each of the other nine regions presents problems of its own in relation to fire control, and it appears safe to assume those regions have all made satisfactory progress toward their goals in the prevention and suppression of fires.

The first fire I had anything to do with I had to take charge of. I was alone at the time as acting supervisor of two Colorado forests, and there was not another forest officer within a day's ride to call on for help. Before I knew there was a fire it was throwing a column of smoke hundreds of feet up in the air. There were no lookouts or cooperators to report fires in those days (1908). When a man casually called from my office door to ask whether I knew I had a fire, and I went to look, dozens of the townfolk were out gazing at the spectacle but not one had thought to come and report it. Indeed, why should they, when no one had ever tried to put one out before?

There was literally nothing to work with — no knowledge of fire behavior; no training in the techniques of fire fighting; no record of sources of manpower or of means of transporting men and equipment to the fire; no sawmill or logging crews and no cooperators among local residents ready to drop their work and rush to the scene; no fuel type maps or weather forecasts to tell how far the fire might spread or how difficult line building might be; no equipment or even hand tools; and, of course, no smokejumpers, for it was nearly 30 years before this revolutionary method of getting men to fires in a hurry was even being considered.

To appreciate the difficulties of the situation facing me then, and similar situations confronting many others in those early years, one must remember that there were no planes or trucks or even cars for fast travel and transportation. There were but few miles of trails, low-standard ones at that, and almost no roads in the forested country. There was no such thing as radio, and telephone connections with people in the rural districts who might have been willing to help were almost entirely lacking.

There are many other ways in which those early rangers were shortchanged, but enough have been mentioned to form a basis for comparison with the problem of fire control as it is being met by present-day rangers. That great progress has been made is evident, outstandingly so in detection by lookouts and air patrol in communication by telephone and two-way portable radio for communicating from field to headquarters or to lookouts and patrol planes; in special equipment such as hand tools, power saws, self-powered trench diggers, bulldozers and portable power pumps; in ready-packed and cargoed rations, beds, tools and mess equipment in convenient shape for packing on mules or dropping by parachute; and most important of all, in the training of the field-going and ranger headquarters personnel in everything that enters into doing a bang up job on every fire, little or big.

Of course, all this tremendous advance was not made at once, but has been attained by slow, painful and costly steps; slow because men had to learn by trial and error and because they lacked both funds and knowledge of what must be done; painful because of the mistakes and heartbreaks involved in the handling of fires that got away; costly because of the millions spent in fighting fires and in the damage to timber, watershed, wildlife and esthetic values.

In retracing these steps, we come first to the awful holocaust of August 1910 that snuffed out the lives of more than 80 fire fighters and laid waste to half a million acres of timber.

This was not just a single fire at its beginning, but a sudden breaking away of many fires that had been burning for days. Men were on these fires or cutting their way to them when a gale of tornado-like force struck and sent them roaring and spotting ahead, fanning sparks into blazes and blazes into crown fires that joined other fires to form an almost solid front as it crossed the Bitterroot Mountains into Montana. It consisted of over-heated air that swept up from the desert-like plains of central Washington and was almost entirely lacking in humidity. It was unforeseen because the weather-forecasting system that plays such a vital part in present-day fire fighting was not then in force.

On it swept, its progress greatly accelerated by burning fagots hurtling from exposed ridgetops out across intervening canyons to set new fires. These in turn quickly became crown fires that swept up to the next ridge-tops to repeat the process. Entire wooded slopes and the headwaters of many branches of the Clearwater, St. Joe and Coeur d'Alene Rivers were blackened.

Where the wind got a clear sweep, it pushed fingers out ahead of the main fire. One of these pointed toward the city of Missoula and came near enough to shower its streets with ashes and burned-out embers. Missoula is about 100 miles, air line, east of Wallace, Idaho, which being hemmed in between very steep, heavily wooded slopes, caught fire and suffered heavy damage.

It is but natural to ask why this happened and to wonder whether it will ever happen again. This resolves itself into many specific questions, among which the one that bears most directly on the subject of progress in fire control is this: Why were so many fires still burning several days after the storm which set them? Before answering this question, let us try to frame a question so comprehensive that a single answer will cover its many elements, at least in a general way.

Why did those men have to die, literally burned at the stake, and all that valuable timber have to go up in smoke? The answer is that our Government waited too long before putting the forest lands of the West under protection. It waited too long because of the apathy or unawareness of the Members of Congress and of the people at large. The people of the West were too busy getting title to the land and exploiting the timber and other resources, and the people of the East were too far away to care.

To an extent and in a very general way this answers the specific question as to why so many fires were still burning when the gale hit, but because of its bearing on the progress that has been made toward adequate fire control, this question should be answered in more detail.

At that time few lookout stations had been established, due to lack of funds and time for building the trails and telephone lines to connect them, hence some fires doubtless had not even been discovered, and certainly others had not been discovered until they had spread to large size. Some of the known fires were remote from trails and the crews sent to them had to fight their way through thick timber and undergrowth with their tools, food and beds on their backs. This meant delay.

Few men had had experience in fighting fires up to that time, and doubtless poor strategy and techniques accounted for delay in gaining control in some cases. Fighting forest fires is a science, and there had not been time enough to develop it when these men were confronted with the problem of where to begin and what kind of line it takes to hold fire from crossing it. They would, in most instances, have arrived at the fire nearly tired out, the less hardy ones exhausted even, with food not well adapted to the purpose and insufficient in quantity, and the location of water and a safe place to camp unknown to them. With a hundred or more fires widely distributed, it is not hard to explain why many of them would still be burning for days after the storm struck.

Other factors, chiefly that of morale of the men so hastily gathered, had their effect on the output of the line built and held. The fact that fires were destroying the forest meant little or nothing to most people in those days. There had always been fires and always would be, they thought. Anyway, it was just a job to most of them, and unless there was the best of leadership — foreman who knew how to handle men — they would not deliver even a reasonable amount of fireline.

Regardless of the reasons, the fact that many fires were burning when the wind hit was the crux of the situation. Winds do not start fires, they only make them spread faster, and in case of forest fires they spread is often augmented greatly when flames reach the crowns where the wind has a clear sweep.

The lesson taught is that any time fires are burning out of control they are a hazard. In terms of action, this means simply that men must get to fires in the shortest possible time and put them dead out as quickly as possible. Back of that, of course, are many things — prompt discovery and fast travel and transportation of equipment; preparedness in all its details; and most important of all, men with the determination and know-how to make every fire a dead fire in the shortest possible time.

That was 1910. This is more than 40 years later, so we must push along to the next milestone by which to gage the progress from that time to the present. But, first a few lines about the men who, from day to day, came straggling in out of the blackened waste, weak and emaciated from lack of food, feet burned and skin blistered, clothing in shreds, and faces bewhiskered and begrimed to the point of making them unrecognizable. The strong helped the weak up the steep slopes, over the down logs and through the roughest spots, but even they were scratched, bruised and limping at the finish.

With each new arrival came renewed hope for those still missing, but finally all hope had to be abandoned, and in its stead the most grueling task of all was faced - the search for and recovery of the bodies of those who perished.

Bodies were found widely separated: one here, two or three there, several close together elsewhere. Mostly they were along trails which they vainly hoped would lead them to safety, or in the beds of streams where they had submerged their bodies as the only chance of survival, only to be suffocated or scalded in the sizzling water as the burning embers dropped in around them.

Heroically and methodically, the search went on until all were accounted for. But not all could be identified and some were not claimed by anyone, since they were transients with no next of kin known. It is gratifying to know that a small plot of ground was set aside for the burial of all the men whose relatives preferred it, as well as the unidentified, in the cemetery at St. Maries, Idaho. It was appropriately monumented and is scrupulously tended as a mark of respect to the men who, in life, essayed to save the forest from destruction by fire but were themselves destroyed by it.

Among the bodies recovered were those of 5 men taken from the shallow tunnel into which the heroic Ranger Pulaski took his crew of 140 men as the only chance of survival. The tunnel's entrance was at the bottom of a canyon whose slopes on either side were very steep and heavily wooded. As the fire passed over, great trees, uprooted or broken off by the gale, tumbled or slid down, creating a veritable furnace around the mouth of the tunnel that exhausted all the oxygen. As breathing became difficult, the men instinctively fought to get out. That would have meant certain death, but Pulaski held them back at gunpoint and commanded them to lie down and suck air from the damp floor of the tunnel. Finally, quiet reigned and Pulaski lay down in the most exposed position, the last he remembered until several hours later when the fire had pretty well burned itself out. He was awakened by men crawling out over his body and heard one of them say, "Too damned bad, the ranger is dead."

As might be guessed, all the men became unconscious. All regained consciousness but 5, and after all efforts to revive them failed and it became light enough to see to find his way, Pulaski led and helped the others down over or under the charred timbers and around the boulders that had tumbled down to obstruct the trail. At last they reached Wallace, and to its citizens who knew their approximate whereabouts and had given up all hope of their escape, it was like seeing them rise from the dead. Pulaski nearly lost his sight from exposure to the heat and glare as he stood guard at the mouth of that tunnel, and carried other ill effects to the day of his death.

The next yard stick by which progress toward adequate fire control can be measured is provided by the near-rainless summers of 1917 and 1919, but preliminary to any discussion of them it is necessary to explain how the awful 1910 fires were put out. It certainly was not by anything men did, or could have done. Those fires were stopped dead in their tracks by a change in the weather as sudden as was that which started them on the rampage. It rained for days, and although the break came some 10 days earlier than normal, the fuels never became dry enough to let them start up again. As a consequence, little was learned about the strategy and technique of fighting fires in times of high fire danger.

Likewise, little was learned from the intervening years, 1911 to 1916, because burning conditions never became dangerous; hence, the critical season of 1917 presented the first real test of men's ability to cope with such situations as periodically occur here. The result was far from satisfactory, in that some fires burned out of control for days and the costs and damages were too great to be tolerated.

The same was true of 1919, largely because there had not been time or money enough to put into practice the lessons learned in 1911. It is true that many lookouts had been established and many miles of trails built since 1910, but these facilities were still vastly inadequate for insuring prompt discovery and early arrival at all fires. Again costs and damages were insufferable, and no small part of this was due to failure to apply correct methods to the job of building and holding firelines against any unpredicted worsening of burning conditions.

As money was made available and knowledge of what was needed grew, these weaknesses were remedied. Nevertheless, in 1925, when a heavy concentration of lightning fires occurred in the Idaho forests, it was necessary for men and pack stock to trek as long as three days over steep rocky, dusty trails in going to their aid. Had the present system of roads, built largely by the CCC boys during the depression, been in existence then, those men, pack mules and all necessary equipment could have been whisked over to those fires in six hours. Moreover, the men would have arrived fresh and ready for long hours of hard work, instead of in such footsore and exhausted condition that they were only 50 percent effective at the start.

Next came the disastrous season of 1926, when lightning in successive blasts set more than 100 fires on the Kaniksu Forest alone. Men and equipment were rushed to the scene, but several of the fires got badly out of hand and burned for days, proving that many of the essentials for successfully dealing with such situations were still lacking. Aside from the woeful lack of roads and trails, there was a lack of plans prepared in advance for dispatching experienced smokechasers from nearby forests, with the result that an unusually large percentage of the fires spread to large size before men got to them. This in turn overtaxed the available manpower and overhead. Above all, 1926 showed that not enough emphasis had been placed on training men in the techniques of fire fighting. The fight lasted for days, and again the costs and damages were intolerable from the standpoint of utilizing the timber instead of allowing it to burn up.

Efforts to remedy the deficiencies shown by the 1926 fires were earnestly pursued, but the tremendous acreage burned in the Half Moon, Lochsa and other fires in 1929, and in the Pete King fire in 1934, showed there was still a long way to go.

Space does not permit describing these fires in detail. Suffice to say that the Half-Moon Fire was carried in from outside the Flathead Forest, in a gale similar to that of 1910, and traveled clear across the forest and into Glacier Park where it did much damage to scenic values around the West Entrance and along the shores of Lake McDonald. It traveled more than 30 miles in runs on 2 successive days and crossed 3 mountain ranges and the Flathead River. It took nearly 100 miles of fireline to corral it, and required about 1,000 men a week to bring it entirely under control. Forest officers for overhead were flown in from the other regions, some as far away as Arizona and New Mexico. It was a costly fire from all standpoints.

The Pete King Fire was started by lightning in July, burned over the major portion of the lower Lochsa and Selway River drainages, and was never fully controlled until the autumn rains came to aid the weary men at a task that had proved too much for them during the weeks of severe burning conditions. At its height nearly 5,000 men, mostly CCC boys, were on the job, and overhead was drawn from other forests, other regions, and even from the Washington office to help plan the action and handle the crews on the line.

It was only logical that by common consent these men decided to take a new look at the entire fire problem and setup in Region 1. When a fire spreads to such large size, it becomes several fires so far as decisions as to strategy and line construction are concerned, consequently, the men carried away from this fire and into a subsequent meeting widely divergent notions of what went wrong with the overall action. There was agreement, however, that the fundamental remedy lay in getting to all fires in time with enough men, properly equipped and well handled, to control them before they spread to large proportions.

This sounds simple, but its accomplishment involves many things, chief of which is an ever-vigilant alertness to any buildup of the danger of fires spreading rapidly, as determined by the measured dryness of fuels, air humidity, and the day-to-day weather forecasts; readiness in all respects for shifting men and equipment to areas of heavy lightning fire concentrations to relieve the overload; and most important of all, a rigid program of training of all field-going and ranger headquarters personnel.

Much of this training can be done in advance of the fire season in groups before the lookouts, smokechasers and maintenance crews go on the job, but unless that is followed by the most thorough checkup of performance right on the job, weak links are nearly sure to develop and give way at an inopportune time with the result of another disastrous fire.

Every man responsible for initiating action on a spreading fire must do a first-class job of sizing up the manpower requirements for controlling it before noon the next day. He must take into account the length of line to be built and the output per man hour in the kind of timber and ground cover at that particular place, and he must make an accurate estimate of the time of arrival of the men. Other factors too numerous to mention must enter into his calculations, and when he arrives at the final figure he will be well advised to apply a safety factor, for the difference between a few too many men and not quite enough men may mean the difference between a fire brought under control quickly at small cost and little damage as against another Pete King fire.

The preceding formula for guaranteeing that there shall never again be such disastrous fires as those heretofore described takes full advantage of hindsight. For just such a program was launched in Region 1 in 1935 and has been rigidly followed ever since. That it has been effective is indicated by the statistics covering the area burned, suppression costs, and damages since 1935 as compared with the preceding 6 years.

Here are the figures:

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>6 yr total</u>	<u>6 year average</u>	<u>18 year total</u>	<u>1935-52 average</u>
Acres burned	326,000	348,000	894,000	149,000	259,000	14,400
Damage (est.)	\$2,160,000	462,000	4,672,000	778,000	1,486,000	82,600
Fighting	\$1,458,000	1,216,000	4,906,000	778,000	1,486,000	409,000

Note: All the above figures in round numbers.

The above comparison should take into account the greatly increased costs of everything that enters into fire fighting in the last 12 of the 18-year period; also, in the basis for estimating damages, inasmuch as stumpage values have quadrupled since World War II. These facts make the comparison still more favorable as to the quality of performance during the 18 year period as a whole.

There is a noticeable tendency to attribute the better showing of the last 18 years largely to comparatively less severe burning conditions. But, while that accounts for it in part, it must be recalled that 1936 was the worst in that respect ever experienced on some of the forests east of the Continental Divide, and also because of a long history of few fires and little damage there, preparedness to cope with the 1936 situation was inadequate. It should be remembered also that 1940 had more fires in the region as a whole than 1929 and 1934 put together or almost 3 times the yearly average that occurred prior to 1935. In 3 other seasons, 1946-47-49, the number of fires far exceeded the average for the 6-year period of 1929-34 inclusive. The number of fires is in itself an indication of both the dryness of fuels and the concentrations of lightning fires, and, therefore, is an important factor in gaging the quality of performance.

There is also a tendency to credit the better showing of the last 18 years to the smokejumpers, but while they deserve much credit it must be remembered that during the first 9 years of that period they were not in the picture; yet, the area burned in the 2 critical years of 1936 and 1940 was less than one-sixth of that burned in the 2 critical years of 1929 and 1934, while the cost of fire fighting was almost a million dollars less than for the 2 earlier years.

It is only natural for the lay mind to overrate the relative importance of the smokejumpers in the overall job of fire control. When initiated, this daring and spectacular innovation appealed to the imagination and was made the subject of rather widespread publicity in the press and over the radio.

They are a vital factor now, and will become increasingly so in the future and, while it is scarcely possible to pay too great a tribute to these hardy young chaps and the men who train them and the pilots who fly them, it is well to recognize the practical limitations of this method of getting on top of a heavy concentration of lightning fires such as are common here.

In the first place, there are not enough of them and this makes it necessary to send ground forces to their fires both as a safety measure and to relieve them at the earliest possible time so they can get back to their base and be ready to go again. In the second place, most fires can be reached quickly enough for safe handling by ground forces at a small fraction of the cost, and cost is a consideration that must not be overlooked. Thirdly, there is an element of uncertainty as to whether many of the jumpers may be out of reach just when a deluge of lightning fires hit a particular district. For while they are regularly headquartered at Missoula, they serve all the western regions, which spreads the 150 men in the unit altogether too thin at times — too thin even for Region 1 alone, as was demonstrated in the critical season of 1953.

As a report on progress in fire control, from a state of total unpreparedness at the beginning to a state of adequate preparedness now, little more need be said. But what of the future? Lightning will continue to strike. People in ever-increasing numbers will continue to go into the forests with their matches and cigarettes and cooking fires; and some of them, in spite of all that can be done to warn them of the danger and try to teach them how to avoid starting a fire, will not learn how or will not take the trouble to make sure they will not be offenders.

In short, so long as our forests last we shall have fires to fight. And just that long must we have men, trained to a high degree of efficiency, armed with the most up-to-date equipment, alert and ever-ready to get to fires at the earliest possible moment and do the right thing in the right way when they get there. This costs real money, but as shown by the statistics quoted above, it is cheaper by half at the time, and surely it is cheaper a hundred-fold in the long run.

October 1955

**MEMORIES**  
**By Theodore Shoemaker**  
**(Retired 1938)**

Beaver Ridge Fire — Lolo National Forest, Idaho, August 1931. I took 100 men as reinforcements, carrying tools, by trail, 11 miles and a 3,000-foot climb; then down through the burn to bottom of fire on steep mountain side; "cooled" our way to the outside of burn; built a mile of line; went back inside the burn to an alder swamp that men had cleared ready to set up kitchen when the pack strings arrived (only possible campsite). No food, no beds; instead, a note from the ranger: "Both strings rolled, scattering cargos all down the mountainside. Some horses killed or maimed and one packer injured. No relief till 2:00 tomorrow. Carry on till then."

Questions: How did those tired, hungry and begrimed men react to this situation? Should the man who had gotten them into it be allowed to go on living? Answer: The fire was controlled next day before the food arrived, and the man who might have been made to face a firing squad is writing this "short-short" 23 years later.

Sheep Mountain Fire — Clearwater National Forest, Idaho, July 1925. I took 30 men with a pack string carrying beds only and hiked 60 miles in 3 days, over trails that were hot and dusty much of the way and rocky and steep the rest. Men had been hastily picked up from the streets and pool halls in Missoula, Montana. I met them at the N P. Depot about 3:00 p.m., and took them by train and trucks to the end of the road up Cedar Creek. Here arrangements had been made to feed the men supper and breakfast and provide each with a "sacked lunch" to eat on the trail to Chamberlain Meadows where they would be given the same treatment the second night. The third night we were to reach a fire on the North Fork of the Clearwater River, but didn't due to change of orders sent to us from Wallow Mountain Lookout late in the afternoon.

Men were, with few exceptions, soft; some poorly shod, having been furnished new shoes to break in that had not been well fitted in the rush to get the men to the train in time. They began to have blisters soon after we started the first day, and in spite of all the bandages, tape and chiropody we could bring to their aid at Chamberlain that night, it is true to say that several men virtually limped their way to the fire.

Change of plans took us to a packer's camp and corral on the river where food and mess equipment were to have been delivered, but were not, so we went supperless to bed and hit the trail at day break for a 7 mile hike to the Canyon Ranger Station for breakfast. Two of the men who made that last stretch barefoot had to be left there, while the others hiked on downriver, crossed on a flimsy raft and climbed up 2,000 feet in about 4 miles of trail, finally to reach the fire.

It was then late afternoon and the men were fed and directed to find places to bed down. A camp had been established near the trail by a small crew already on this fire, and our pack string with beds had arrived ahead of us.

I met Renshaw, who was in charge, and went around the fire to plan the action. With 10 men to work through the night, and the rest with Renshaw's crew to come on at daylight, it looked as though we could put that fire under control and be ready to move on to the really bad fire a few miles further around the mountain. This we did, cutting trail to the big fire, where we took over a dangerous sector above the fire, cleared and fire proofed camp and controlled the fire in two days. We then hiked out over the top of Sheep Mountain down to and forded the river stripped naked and on to Bungalow Ranger Station at dark, had supper and on by trucks to Orofino.

This entire trip of 10 days replete with incidents depicting human behavior under trying circumstances; how men respond to leadership and sympathetic treatment, adjust themselves to each other's widely varying personalities, and develop a spirit of helpfulness and camaraderie that goes far toward restoring one's respect for that element of society we are in the habit of dubbing "down-and-outers." In this crew were two Negroes, old Sam Lundy, a Spanish War veteran, and his stalwart son, Bud. Not once did I detect any sign of race prejudice, whereas on different occasions I noticed marks of special respect for Old Sam shown by younger whites when he became noticeably weary or seemed a bit slow in the kitchen, to which I assigned him, partly because of his years and partly because of his having been an army cook.

On the long pull up out of Cedar Creek the first morning, I taught the men how to regulate their breathing to keep from becoming winded, and how to smoke safely only when seated with their feet in the dust of the trail where they would drop their matches and butts and grind them into the dirt with their heels. They took to these examples of my interest in their comfort very well, and it furnished them a sound basis for "sizing up" the boss on what I am sure, for most of them, was to be the great adventure of their lives.

This was probably the longest trek fire fighters were ever asked to make to get to the job. Such a venture will likely never be repeated. Few of these lightning-caused fires will reach crew-size because, within an hour or two, men will be on them by truck from one of the networks of roads built since then, or smokejumpers will come winging and swinging their way down from above to land nearby, and these men will apply a degree of expertness in stopping the spread of fires that was not known 30 years ago. Progress in all angles of fire control have truly been outstanding, but that is too broad a topic to be more than hinted at here for purposes of comparison of then and now.



Fish Creek Ranger Station, Nezperce National Forest. 1925.



Big Creek Ranger Station, Gallatin National Forest. 1925.

October 1955

## MUSSELHELL REMINISCENCES

By **K. D. Swan**  
(Retired 1941)

The year was 1913. District One of the Forest Service had tightened its belt and gone to work with renewed vigor after the great fires of 1910 which took such a heavy toll of human lives and timber in the Northwest. Fire killed trees were being salvaged. Foresters were busy with planting projects which would help reforest the burns. New ideas in forest fire control were being worked out. We were just beginning to hear of the Pulaski, the Koch tool, the Jack Clack pack frame — gadgets which were to become standard equipment in the district.

And with all this activity came a growing awareness of the timber resources of the forests, and a realization that as more accessible stands were depleted in providing for the expanding economy of the Northwest, reservoirs of potential lumber farther back in the hills would be drawn on.

Just where were these stands, and how much timber did they contain that could be made accessible to the logger? Silcox, Stuart, Mason and others were seeking data to answer these questions. And so were launched a series of timber reconnaissance projects which, in the passing years, have become almost fabulous in the annals of the region. One tries to imagine how much material connected with these jobs has gone into the files of the regional office — material gathered with blood and sweat (a timber cruiser had to be too tough for tears), but imagination fails. Though the notes and maps have passed into oblivion via the closed files, it is safe to say that the homely details of those jobs still live in the memories of the men who took part in them. I was one of those men.

One of the important jobs planned at that time was a reconnaissance of the Musselshell watershed of the Clearwater Forest in Idaho. Here was one of the finest mature stands of virgin white pine on national forest.

Intermixed was much western red cedar, Douglas fir, grand fir and western larch. It was a stand ripe for cutting — a stand which would prove very saleable in the opinion of those who were acquainted with it.

I remember well my first impressions of this magnificent forest as I first saw it after sundown in early March: the tall, straight pines reaching toward the sky, still flushed with sunset colors, the cedar trunks massive in the gathering darkness. It was with a feeling of awe, mixed with a pleasant expectancy, that I realized I was to live in this forest environment for the next several months.

Men assigned to the job were told to report in Orofino, the forest headquarters. It was on the board sidewalk that fringed the muddy main street that I first met a member of the Musselshell crew. He was Eldon Myrick, fresh from the forestry school at Moscow. We had a brief talk concerning what might lie ahead in the months to come, and then went over to the supervisor's

office where we had more talk with Charlie Fisher, the supervisor. Through the years Eldon Myrick has retained that cordiality which I so well remember from the day of our first encounter.

Transportation, especially in winter, from Orofino to the Musselshell Ranger Station, was in those days tedious to say the least. One took the afternoon train to Greer, where lodging was had in the hotel, a venerable structure even in those days. Next morning began the long ascent up the Greer grade in a horse-drawn vehicle known as the "stage," but better described as a cross between a surrey and a mountain wagon. From the comparatively low elevation at the river where snow seldom came, the climb was made to the more wintery climate of the Weippe Prairie. At Fraser, reached about dinner time, passengers were transferred to a sled. Over the prairie, through the little hamlet of Weippe, and so into the long aisles of snow-filled woods beyond. Brown's Creek the way led, until about an hour after sundown the lights of the Musselshell Ranger Station twinkled from the meadow. Today one makes the trip from Orofino by car in not much over an hour!

It was in the big room on the second floor of the Musselshell Station amid a reek of Bull Durham and drying clothes that I first met chief of party Fred Mason and was introduced to other members of the crew — Shaw, Miller, Richardson, Parker. Myrick was also there.

Fred Mason, stocky, taciturn, but friendly, was brother to Dave Mason of the district office. Not given to frivolity or boisterous talk, he kept his mind strictly on the work in hand winning the respect and confidence of his men because of fair dealing and avoidance of playing favorites. His was a tough job and he did it well.

In a few days Lloyd Fenn and Alfred Hastings came in from the field. Fenn left for other work after a brief period, but Hastings stayed with the crew as assistant to Mason. Later a boy named Miles joined us - Clark Miles, who later worked for many years in Region Four. In about a month Jim Yule was assigned to our project as camp draftsman. This, I believe, accounts for all members of the Musselshell crew.

An engineer named Buckner, assisted by Fenn and Hastings, had run a traverse around the exterior boundaries of the area to be cruised. This control line was marked by blazes on the trees. Inasmuch as the traverse was run when the snow was deep, these blazes were left far above the ground when the snow melted and were sometimes hard to find. A liberal outpouring of uncomplimentary remarks directed at the control crew resulted when a cruising party overlooked the blazed line and found itself far out of bounds in the adjoining watershed.

The country close to the ranger station was used as a training ground for the crew - very few of the men had had any previous experience in this sort of work. Until the first part of May, snowshoes or "webs", were a must for getting around, and learning to manage this footgear was an important item in the training of some of the men who were not used to winter travel in the woods. This presented no problem at all to me as I had been on many snowshoeing trips to the woods of northern New England in my school years.

The tailless "bearpaw" shoe was the favorite type, although a few including myself, preferred the conventional Canadian shoe. Some made their own webs, using pliable cedar limbs for the

frames and rawhide "filling" for the mesh. As spring advanced bringing warmer weather, the snow became soft and mushy before noon making snowshoe travel arduous and at times just about impossible later in the day. We went to work at daylight so as to "catch the crust" which had formed during the night.

The method used in cruising was simple enough, but much practice was required to gain a reasonable amount of accuracy in results. Mapping was done with a small Forest Service box compass, an aneroid barometer, and a pair of legs trained in the art of "pacing" for distance. Biltmore sticks were used by the timber estimators. Trees within a distance of one-half chain of the line were tallied. There is considerable variation in barometric pressure throughout the day, and readings from an aneroid barometer to determine elevations are useless unless allowance is made for this variation. Therefore, a barometer was kept in camp and readings taken at stated intervals throughout the day. This data was used by the mappers to correct readings taken along their lines during the day.

In about two weeks the crew had worked the country which could be reached easily from the ranger station and all hands moved to some old cabins belonging to the Musselshell Mining Company on Gold Creek. On the move each man carried his own bedroll in which were wrapped such belongings and extra clothes as he felt he would need. Grub was supplied to this camp, and several subsequent ones by packers who used packboards and toboggans. Our diet was mostly ham, bacon, dried beans, evaporated potatoes, prunes, cheese, baking powder bread, coffee with evaporated apples and cranberries and a cheap grade of chocolate for luxuries.

Conversation of an evening would invariably drift into a discussion of grub and the prospects of getting more palatable meals when packhorses could be used to supply the camps. We later found to our disgust that with the exception of fresh potatoes and a meager supply of canned tomatoes and corn there was little improvement in food when the trails were open. I doubt if a crew would stay on the job today with a cookhouse as poorly supplied as was ours at that time.

This paucity of cuisine led to some queer situations. One morning the cook reported that there had been a raid on the chocolate which was stored in the cabin loft. Before going to work chief of party Mason called the crew together into solemn conclave and announced that there would be no more chocolate for lunches for a week, and there wasn't!

This, of course, brought down the ire of the crew on the cook, a rather naive individual who was out of his element among such a bunch of ruffians as we believed ourselves to be. Two of the men spent one evening whetting an enormous butcher knife which they found in an old meat house at the camp, meanwhile making remarks in a low tone of voice as to what was going to happen to a certain cook. The cook quit as soon as another man could be found to take his place. The new man's name was Wilson - he stayed with us until the end of the job.

Spring brought a few warm, sunny days, but also long periods of cloudy weather with much rain and snow. Easter Sunday found us camped at a cabin on Eldorado Creek, and a more dismal place would be hard to imagine. The cabin itself was still buried in snowdrifts. It was too small to be used for anything but a cookhouse. Sleeping tents for the crew were set up nearby, and a huge fire kept burning constantly for warmth and drying out clothes. This fire eventually melted

through five feet of snow until it at last rested on the ground. Then a base of green logs was built so as to bring it up to the level of the hard packed snow around the tents.

But at last came longer periods of sunny weather and the snow rapidly disappeared from the steaming woods. By mid-May much of the work could be done without snowshoes. Our first comfortable camp was at the Day Cabin.

This structure, built by a miming concern, was nicely located in a dry, sunny situation, and was far more spacious than the hovel on Eldorado Creek which we had just left. Several of the men slept in the loft inside, several others including myself, jungled out in small tents, improvised from tarpaulins. A tent in front of the cabin provided dining quarters and extra room for storing supplies. A galvanized washtub filled with water heated over an open fire gave us a chance to bathe, as well as to wash our clothes. It was here that Charlie Farmer appeared on the scene. Charlie was assistant to the Chief of Engineering in the district office, and was in charge of the preparation of maps. Genial and friendly, a ready talker with a fund of stories, a prankster par excellence, inventive, a man with real ability who took unusual problems as a challenge - Charlie was one of the most talented and likeable men with whom I made friends in my early days with the Service. Charlie's appearance in camp was always the signal for an open season of practical jokes. This visit was no exception.

Jim Yule was well established in the routine of camp draftsman and Charlie spent some time in checking methods of correlating topographic sketches turned in by the mappers, and placing such data on the base map. Finding things in satisfactory shape, Charlie was left more or less free to play a few practical jokes of a minor nature - just what they were I do not remember, but at any rate they were such as to call for retaliation, and they touched off one of the most amusing episodes of the entire job.

It was a balmy spring evening with the moon near full. We had spent an hour or so swapping yarns around the sheet iron stove in the cabin before turning in. Charlie was to sleep in one of the cabin bunks reserved for visiting guests. The cook made some preparations for breakfast and then left the cabin to go to his sleeping quarters.

When it was certain that all inside the cabin were sound asleep, which must have been a half hour or so later, two figures emerged from the shadows into the moonlight. One carried a flat rock, the other some fir boughs. The latter went inside the cabin and stuffed the boughs in the stove. When it was certain a good rousing fire was kindled the other man climbed on the cabin roof and put the rock over the stove pipe. Then the cabin door was wired shut from the outside.

It was only a matter of minutes before there were signs of life inside the cabin. Smoke was pouring out from beneath each shake, which made a weird sight in the moonlight. Coughing and sputtering mixed with intemperate language and pounding on the closed door created pandemonium. The tumult attracted all who were sleeping outside the cabin. The climax occurred when someone inside had the presence of mind to take out one of the small windows through which the men made their escape one by one.

While camped at the Day Cabin two of the men - I think they were Shaw and Miller - killed a bear, which provided fresh meat to vary the ham-bacon diet. We had it fried, boiled, in stew, and ground to hamburger. We had it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Never did any of us care if we ever ate bear meat again.

Those who know of the strong resemblance between the bones of the front leg and paw of the bear and the skeleton of the human arm and hand will appreciate the effect that was achieved by nailing this skeletal appendage of bruin over the cabin door as a hint of what would occur to a certain ranger should he appear in camp! This ranger was supposed to be the man responsible for the quality of the grub furnished us. We later learned the supervisor's office and not the ranger was to blame. But anyway, word of our doings reached the ranger via the grapevine and when he was forced to visit camp he brought the supervisor as bodyguard. Over the same grapevine came the report of his remarks on getting safely back to the ranger station:

"They're a tough lot those boys, a bunch of young cutthroats. They say they'd kill a man if they caught him alone, and by Gawd I think they would!" Poor old Bob Snyder, kindly and loveable, a man who tried to do his job as he saw it. May we be forgiven for the rough time we gave him in those far-off years!

There is much more of an amusing nature that could be told, incidents that will come to mind as one reads this brief narrative - the evening song fests, the terrifying groans of the boss as he struggled with a nightmare, the no-see-ums and the mosquitoes that came in due season, the evening expeditions after venison, the side camp excursions to remote areas, walking the footlogs over swift water, and bucking the wet brush after a rain. There were few, if any dull moments that I can recall!

Early summer found us working in the Mud Creek drainage, the most southerly part of the Musselshell area. Here the topography was not as diversified as farther north; there was much comparatively level country and few land marks. Mapping became more of a problem due to the inefficiency of aneroid barometers in measuring slight changes of elevation. Then, too, the fluctuations of pressure because of thunderstorms every afternoon made it still more difficult to determine elevation with even a fair degree of accuracy.

To correct a series of readings taken in the field by a check on the curve made from the camp barometer was a tedious job. We often talked among ourselves of better methods of mapping, and sure enough a better method was being devised, although we did not know about it at the time. The very next year the steel tape and Abney level were tried out and found to be practical and to give far better results than were obtained under the old system.

Probably no man on the job played a more important part than Jim Yule in his role of camp draftsman. His was the job of taking the sketches turned in daily by the mappers and fitting them together to form a topographic map with contours -- streams and ridges in proper position. A man of infinite patience and great resourcefulness to whom regular hours of work meant nothing, Jim made a notable contribution to the success of the Musselshell job. It is pleasant to think that those days when he burned the midnight candles over some mappers' notes, in an effort to make

contours jibe, marked the beginning of a career which has been of inestimable value to the Forest Service in its program of formulating better methods of mapping the national forests.

The job came to an end the last of September. Before the windup, I had been assigned to a reconnaissance crew on Cedar and Cougar Creeks of the Coeur d'Alene Forest as camp draftsman. With the completion of this project late in the fall my timber cruising experience ended and I began a seven - year period in the Missoula office of Engineering as a topographic draftsman, an assignment which brought me great satisfaction.

Over forty years have passed since we cruised the Musselshell. With the lapse of time memories of the hardships of that pioneering job have lost their sharp edge. We remember instead those things which made living in the Idaho woods a priceless experience to all of us - things we shall never forget; the murmur of the wind in the treetops breaking the stillness of the forest, sunlight filtering into the dim aisles among the trees, the full moon casting patterns on the winter whiteness about our camp, powdery snow cascading from some overloaded forest veteran, a water ouzel singing above the sound of rushing water, the pungent smell of ceanothus on a warm hillside, lush fern gardens among giant cedars. Yes, these are things we would not forget - ever!



Landing on Priest River, the end of the sleigh haul. Logs were driven in the spring to the mill. Kaniksu National Forest. 1923.

October 1955

## REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS IN THE FOREST SERVICE

By Ryle Teed  
(Retired)

I reported for duty in the Forest Service on July 1, 1911. This was at the Gleason Ranger Station on the Kaniksu National Forest in extreme northern Idaho. I came as a student assistant from the University of Idaho, being a charter enrollee of the School of Forestry organized in the fall of 1909.

Gleason Ranger Station, God knows why, was named for a filthy old hermit who was shackled up a couple or three miles away. The district ranger was Martin Murray, who had a jug cached in a hollow log not far from the station. Allie, his wife, was a strict one. If she'd known where the jug was, it would have been smashed right now. I was not reporting to Murray though, but to Forest Assistant Meyer H. Wolff who had a reconnaissance and stem analysis crew camped there. Wolff's assistant was Forest Assistant Arnold Benson. Dr. Charles H. Stattuck, head of the school at the University of Idaho was also there, temporarily and heading up the stem analysis job.

The stem analysis job went like this: We would find us a good western white pine (there were plenty within range of the station), fall it, swamp it, buck it up into 16-foot logs, horse the logs apart from each other and make a ring count with measurements. The mosquitoes were hell. The procedure was: Count ten rings, dot; count ten rings, dot. Actually, it was a tough guy who could count ten rings without stopping to bat at the mosquitoes, in spite of the fact that we covered up much of our exposed areas, like wrists with paper stuck on with balsam pitch.

The Gleason Station was in dense and utterly primitive forest. Allie Murray had a brother, Archie Newcomb, who, with his wife and two kids, lived within a mile of the station. We used to marvel at those kids. I'd say the boy was maybe seven and the girl five. They went anywhere and everywhere in that dense forest without fear, or even attention. They would show up out of the brush around the station from any direction, except by the road, and take off again the same way. When we were on stem analysis, maybe a mile or so away, we would hear their incessant chatter and here they would come, to hang around a bit before starting out again.

We wound up the season at the Pelke Ranger Station, an undeveloped station, named for Al Pelke, a real old time trapper who was then living at Coolin on Priest Lake. One of Al's tiny trapper cabins still stood and in front of it was a cedar with a big blaze on it. In the blaze was carved a cross. After Al's pardner was killed by Indians the Fathers told Al to carve the cross there and that the Indians would not bother him, and that is the way it worked out.

Now this brings us, with some more generalizations and introduction of a few more characters.

## THE WRECK OF FIREFLY

In 1911 the headquarters of the Kaniksu Forest were in Newport, Washington, but in those days the essentials of a supervisor's office could be hauled in a lumber wagon, so that is just what was done each summer. The office was loaded up and hauled to Coolin, Idaho. Coolin was a city of maybe fifteen year-round residents, two summer hotels (one of logs), a tiny general store, but located at the foot of Priest Lake, a beautiful lake in beautiful and untouched mountains and forests. The lower lake was some eighteen miles of navigable water, then came the Thoroughfare, sometimes navigable, and then the upper lake, another four miles and extending nearly to the Canadian line. In all this extensive drainage there were at this time only two yearlong residents on the lake north of Coolin. These were the Sniders, about six miles up the west shore, and Sam Byers, the District Ranger at Byers Ranger Station on the Thoroughfare. There were no settlers anywhere on the east side. At that time there were no recent burns and no logging. There were a few, four or five only, summer residents, and occasional campers.

The forest office was a two-story, board-and-bat shack on the lake shore, with a dock and boathouse. The pride of the forest was the Firefly, a 2 foot launch which was good for about ten knots when running free. With the available waterway the trails naturally radiated from the lake. The pack train would come down to the shore, telephone the office, and the Firefly, with the barge lashed alongside, would go pick up the horses and either bring them to Coolin or move them to their next point of departure.

The prize seasonal job on the forest was that of "Commodore," the operator of the launch. This was, you might say, a job in name only, for the Supervisor, Willis N. Millar, practically always went along on trips, and when he was along he always handled the boat from the bow controls. There were also controls, including a steering wheel, alongside the engine.

Now it so happened that the day we of the reconnaissance crew reached Coolin to be disbanded for the season, Commodore Paul Clemmens, also from University of Idaho, quit. Mr. Millar asked me whether I would take the job. Now I was raised in the Snake River desert south of Boise and the Firefly was probably the first launch I had ever seen, but since the question of qualifications was not raised I jumped at the job. It was a wonderful job, although a busy one. We had no hours, often were out at 5 a.m., and might cast off again right after supper. The pack train was going hither and yon, bringing in equipment for the season. Rangers were doing the same. We were running taxi service for a Mr. Lantham of the Department, who was doing soil survey work out from the lake on foot. Millar practically always came with me, regardless of the hour. And then it happened: It was getting pretty close to suppertime of a perfect fall day when Willis (Millar) came down to the launch. He said Clarence Swim (ranger from the Sullivan Lake District on the Washington side) had just pulled in at Sniders (about six miles up the lake), and that we would go up and get him. We were just lashing the barge alongside when someone called from the office that Lantham was ready to be picked up at the Outlet, which was a short run of less than a mile. So Willis said we would get him first and then go for Swim after supper, and we did.

It wasn't far from dark when we got to Snider's, where Swim and his five horses and their loads were hungrily awaiting us. We had a cistern pump on the foredeck of the barge. We tested this

and there seemed to be no water in the barge, and we were in a hurry, so we got the horses on board and in the well deck which was down about to the waterline. The packs and saddles we piled on the bow and stern decks which were about a foot higher. I believe there were five horses, with three tied to the rail on the Firefly side, and two on the far side. We pushed off and started down the lake. There was still some light. Anyway, soon little plumes of fog began to rise from the lake the first ones a foot or three or four feet high. It was a queer and beautiful effect, but they were coming thicker and taller, until they had us fenced in and we couldn't tell where we were going. We had about five miles to go and, with the loaded barge, were making maybe two knots. There was an acetylene searchlight mounted on the canopy top, but it didn't help a bit. We left it lit but turned it backward out of the way. There was a marine box compass and we broke it out, but it turned out to have a floating dial, which was so confusing to us, all experienced compassmen, that we didn't fool with it.

The fog wasn't very deep and much of the time we could see straight up and hold some kind of a course by the stars. Millar was at the bow controls and I was at the engine controls near the stern. Whichever one could see at the moment would take over.

Now there were some light rushes in Priest Lake at a few points. One of the places was along a bad stretch of shore, precipitous and rocky, right across the lower end of the lake from Coolin, our destination. All of a sudden we were in rushes. It looked like we were going ashore right now. Willis, who had the wheel at the moment, threw the wheel hard over and we started a sharp but slow and cumbrous swing.

Just then Swim yelled, "The barge is sinking. The horses are climbing in the launch," and they sure enough were. Millar yelled, "Cut 'er adrift. Untie the horses."

Suiting action to the word, Millar jumped onto the sinking barge, then about up to the horses' bellies in water and started cutting then loose. Swim cut the bowline and I cut the stern line. We got Millar off the barge and it, the horses and the packs were lost in the fog. We couldn't pick it up with the searchlight, but knowing that we were close to shore, we left the light directed ahead.

We weren't left long to wonder whether the horses would succeed in getting ashore or would swim aimlessly in the fog and drown. Very quickly we heard the bell of the bell mare and knew she, at least, had made it. We eased the engine in gear and she stalled. The reason: We had a tent in the propeller. We worked it out of the prop and got it aboard — that much salvaged anyhow. And to Swim's lament that there went his new \$30 saddle, we started the engine, began a slow swing which we hoped would head us toward Coolin, and swept our searchlight right across the open door of our own boathouse. "And so to bed," as Dr. Pepy says, but with a five o'clock date for the next morning to run down the barge, which was all wood and wouldn't stay sunk, once it had dumped its load.

The morning broke clear, but no barge anywhere in sight, so we manned the Firefly, Millar taking her out from his place in the bow. I was in my usual place alongside the engine, idly looking down through the the clear water. Suddenly I saw a pack saddle on the lake bottom. I yelled, and Millar said, "Mark something on the shore, and I will, too. And I did and he did, but that's all the good it did us for each of us had noted only one thing, instead of two, in line to give

us an intersection. Well, we cruised around for a while, even ran out and in the boathouse, but no luck so we went to breakfast. After breakfast we roused out all hands, including Miss Jackson, the summer stenographer, whom Meyer Wolff was ardently pursuing and eventually captured, and perhaps Earle Clapp, already a big shot in the Service, who was at the lake for quite a spell, and maybe Nelson A. Brown, the Deputy Supervisor, although I believe he had already gone to his teaching job in the East. With six or eight rowboats out we still weren't finding the spot and so decided to cross section that part of the lake with floats and go at it systematically.

Meyer Wolff was dumping Tye Baking Powder at the corner of the office so we could use the cans for floats when Al Pelke, the old-timer trapper previously mentioned, came down to the shore, stood in the back of his canoe and paddled right to the spot where I had yelled and there was the stuff, scattered over an area of an acre or so and in 16 feet of water. Al was high on the ridge back of Coolin when my yell ca to him in the still, clean air, and he naturally did what Willis and I failed to do. He picked him plenty of line markers.

We recovered everything except Swim's new \$30 saddle, and spent a lot of time looking for it. The barge had headed up the lake. One of the severed hawsers had left a trail on the lake bottom until the water got too deep. That afternoon when Walter Slee, a parapalegic who made a trip around the lake with his steamer every day, got in, he reported that he had seem the barge in Soldier Bay. As I recall it, this was about 2-1/2 miles, and quite a trip for a waterlogged barge to make overnight. We went up and got the barge. And here, in the well deck which was awash with water, was Swim's saddle. Incidentally, the tracks showed that the horses took the shortest possible course from where they were dumped to the shore, clearly indicating that when it came to navigating in the fog, all our technical training, experience and instruments were nothing compared to a little horsesense.

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An incident which shows the primitiveness of the Kaniksu in 1911-1912:

Toward the end of the 1911 season Mike Ne was handling the pack train. He needed a horseman assistant for a trip where we were doing some impossible packing, so I was chosen. At this time there were just two settlers in the vast country from Priest Lake west to the divide. One was a Swedish family, name forgotten, but I believe it was Swanson. The other was Mr. and Mrs. Tony Lemly. Mrs. Lemly was quite a character, which is beside the point. The point is, Mike and I stayed there overnight and then went on. This was probably late September.

In 1912 I was on the Kaniksu again, but in a different capacity. I was now under appointment and working out of the district (now regional) office. I had picked up Mike in Spokane as assistant. Eventually we got around to Lemly's. Mrs. Lemly led us straight to the bed we had occupied the year before and showed us Mike's necktie hanging on the head of the bed. We were the first people she had seen, other than Tony, since we had been there with the pack train the fall before. Tony had been out as far as Snider's once.

Mrs. Lemly told us why her elderberry wine was good while Mrs. Snider's was, according to her standards, no good. She wormed her berries while Mrs. Snider did not. Now you can have all of

my elderberry wine either wormed or wormy, but just in case someone is interested in the technique this is the way Mrs. Tony described it: It seems that elderberries are infested with tiny white worms which most of us never notice and here's the way to get them, if you want them. Put the berries in a big kettle and let them slowly come to a simmer. There will be a quarter inch of white scum on the top of the water and that is worms. Skim 'em off. It's as simple as that, although it seems to me this just impoverishes the wine.

During the 1912 season Mike and I had occasion to board with the Swedish family for a while. The meals were a bit limited, and identical. They consisted of boiled potatoes — no butter or anything — and corned bear meat. Now I have no squeamishness about bear meat, although I have never eaten any that was any good. But this at Swanson's was much worse.

We paid 25 cents each for those meals and I reckon that money was the first those poor people had seen in a long time. This was long before per diem and we supported our expense accounts with subvouchers. I fixed up a subvoucher for my meals and lodgings for Mrs. Swanson and asked her to sign it. She did and then seemed a bit embarrassed and uncertain. I asked what was the trouble and she indicated the line following the signature:

\_\_\_\_\_ Title. She apologetically admitted, "We have no title. We're just common people."

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I do not know whatever became of Mike (Albert H.) Nee. He was quite a character himself. He was listed as a District Ranger on the Gallatin for years but has been missing from the directory for a long time.

The summer guard at Priest Lake was Fred Greene. I picked up a number of important points concerning nature and forestry from him. For instance:

That a forest guard should grease his shoestrings, carry a canteen, and smoke Westover (a plug smoking tobacco of that day). Then he always has something to do.

That Squaw Fish are so called because they give up so easily when you catch them.

That forked logs in the drive are called "schoolm'ams" because they won't roll over when you ride them.

That to make fireline coffee you take a cup of coffee to a cup of water, boil till it will float a wedge, strain it through a ladder, and eat it with a fork.

Unfortunately, Fred wasn't to spend much more time educating young foresters. He had a stump ranch adjoining Lemly's. He and Tony didn't see just eye to eye about some trifle and he was too slow on the draw. The result was Tony left that part of the country, but not soon enough, he had to accept a contract do to Walla Walla on a rather confining job.

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The real cut-up of that country was Ralph Sparks, the cook. We had to watch that guy all the time. Not that all his tricks were bad. One day in huckleberry season two cruising crews of us played hooky just to see if the berries on Old Baldy were as grand as we had heard, and darned if we didn't run into Benny (Arnold Benson) up there. Well, the berries were even better wonderful—so we filled every container we had, or could improvise, and took them to camp. We wouldn't have dared take any in if we hadn't run into Benny. The next night when we went into supper here was a whole huckleberry pie on each of our plates. I know I polished mine off.

One time we needed a bench mark in a valley for aneroid control. The nearest BM was on a mountain plenty far away. Benny decided to go get it. As I had had a couple years in the Reclamation Service between high school and college I was the logical candidate for rodman and was elected. We would have to make the trip on foot, carrying the surveying equipment, plus bedding, plus food. It wasn't killing but it was fairly tough and we couldn't take any surplus dried stuff except one can of tomatoes. With Sparks' shenanigans in mind we stopped out of sight of camp and looked into our packs. Sure enough Benny had two nice sticks of firewood and I had a five-pound rock that I wouldn't really need. Those articles were just smokescreen, though. When we reached the point of desperation where we opened the tomatoes it was pumpkin.

Another time I took a string of horses into a camp where Ralph was cooking for one of the "squirrel camps." I dropped some of the string and was going on with the rest to the next camp. As all the horses would be needed for packing, I was riding a pack saddle, and on a horse that I couldn't trust -- that's why I was riding him. I had thrown some canvas alforjas across the saddle, but you can't be comfortable on a pack saddle. After I left Sparks' camp the saddle was even worse, and then remembered. Two nice pine knots from the woodpile worked under my alforjas cushion.

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Yes, I know. "Squirrel camp" sounds like maybe a field party, for a nuthouse. That wasn't it, though. The year 1911 was a wonderful seed year and the Service really stocked up on western white pine seed. Several camps were organized and worked the area between Priest Lake and the Pend d'Oreille River. All available labor from the forest and farm communities was used, and in addition many laborers from the Spokane market—and they weren't all woodsmen. The camps were squirrel camps because the principal method of gathering was to prowl more or less aimlessly through the woods watching for squirrels. The squirrels would lead you to their caches, which you would rob, not without objection from the rightful owners. The cones were sacked and stood along the trail for pickup by the pack trains which were covering the country being worked. I believe the pickers were paid \$1.50 per sack. The payoff was finding all the pickers at the end of the day. Some were lost nearly every day and had to be rounded up. Most of the nonwoodsmen would lose their heads and then trails and telephone lines meant nothing to them whatever. A pair of them actually waded across Priest River, although they couldn't help knowing that they were all camped west of the river.

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Getting lost in the forest is nothing to look forward to. Lone wolfing as much as I did on boundaries, classification, appraisal work, etc., I was lost a number of times. I was never panicked at all, though, and so always got out with nothing worse than temporary discomfort. Some do not do so well. I remember one fellow in Montana. This was on the West Fork of the Flathead in 1914. The country was then utterly primitive. We were camped at Lion Creek. There were several cruising teams of us. One pair, who represented the State of Montana, were what you might call town woodsmen. I mean they knew their stuff reasonably well and were competent but they were Butte boys and their personal lives centered in Butte. Well, one night they didn't get in, and didn't get in. We finally decided they had got lost but that was nothing to worry about. The weather was fine and they would straggle in the next morning. As it turned out, though, they had separated.

The cruiser had found a cabin and holed up for the night. The compassman, who was 6 feet 4 inches, had just torn through the brush harder and faster as night approached — a long process up there against the Canadian line in midsummer. We had 3 or 4 tents in a clearing not 50 feet from the trail.

Also, we had a brisk fire in the open and were gathered around it. It was just beginning to get fairly along toward dark, possibly nine o'clock when we saw Murph coming up the trail with huge and frantic strides, his eyes as big as saucers. Naturally we said nothing as he approached until it was obvious that he wasn't going to stop at all, but to tear right on, practically through the camp. Then we tried to holler him down, but without any more impression on him than our blazing fire had made. Looked like we would have to shoot him to stop him. Some of the boys ran him down and brought him in. That man was a wreck and he hadn't been lost over five hours.

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On our field trips from school we sometimes used a canvas-bound, pocket— test Woodsman's Handbook. On the Kaniksu I was gratified to meet the old grizzly bear who wrote it. Afterward I was associated with him for a few years in Region 6. I never got to know Austin Carey particularly, though, and doubt if there were many who did. However, one story lingers on: In those days, and perhaps yet, Washington, D.C. girls who wanted jobs in Washington had to establish residence in some state to make the apportioned roll. The western states were the ones with frequent vacancies, so many girls came west for the specific purpose of qualifying and returning in the Departmental service. Two such girls came to Seattle in the summer of 1914. One got a job downtown and, before her year was up was married, as frequently happened, and swapped her interest in Civil Service for domestic service. The other got a temporary job on the Snoqualmie Forest. She didn't get married but by the time she was qualified for the exam she wouldn't have gone back to Washington if she could have had it all, so she took the Field exam instead of the Departmental - and accepted an appointment in Alaska. She went to the Snoqualmie office to tell the crowd "Goodbye." When, in the supervisor's office, she offered her hand to Smitty (Stanton G. Smith), the supervisor, a handsome young devil with a sharp glint in his eye. He said, "Don't think you are going to get off that easy." He grabs her and is kissing her with mucho gusto when Austin Carey walks in. Austin doesn't say a word. He just glares, gives with one of his snorts and strides through a succession of three empty rooms. In the far back room Andrew G. Jackson, afterward the first Public Relations man in Region 6, had just caught

and was similarly treating the attractive and provocative Miss Ferbrush when Austin broke in there. "Looks like a good forest. Guess I'll stay here," he said.

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**LAND EXCHANGE** I am the only veteran of the first big land exchanges, in fact, the only forester who was shifted from region to region on these jobs. The basic idea was to clarify the State's title to school sections unsurveyed at time of withdrawal of the forests, and to consolidate their holdings. Special laws were required and these were on the basis of equal areas and equal values. The pilot exchange was with South Dakota. It was small, around 20,000 acres, I believe, and was cleaned up in 1910. I had nothing to do with this exchange.

In the spring of 1912 I visited the office of the Boise Forest to see whether Supervisor Emil Grandjean could keep me occupied pending appointment. He introduced me to Charles L. (Deaf Charlie) Smith, who had been a trouble-shooting supervisor on a number of Region forests but was now detailed to organize an exchange with the State of Idaho. I was the first man hired for the job, on a 6-months' Timber Estimator appointment, the only one retained after the end of the season, and did not get away from land exchange work until the fall of 1927.

In those early years the lumbermen did not regard our professional attainments very seriously, and so our reconnaissance methods were not used. With the exception of myself all the fieldmen were regular commercial cruisers and compassmen and each used whatever cruising method he preferred. The general difference from our method was that in all cases a two chain strip was tallied and usually the average tree method used. Notes were usually posted at each tally (5 chains) only. All employees were investigated, and approved, by both sides. These conditions, established on the Idaho exchange, or possibly the South Dakota exchange, held also for the Montana, Washington and Oregon exchanges which came along in that order.

One of the candidates on the Idaho job, a charming chap named Ben McConnell, was looked at very much askance by the Forest Service selection board, for reasons of suspected instability of character. However, he was the son of Idaho's first Governor, one of his sisters was married to Ben Bush, the State Forester, with whom we were working, and another was married to a young Boise attorney by the name of William E. Borah, even then in his second term in the U.S. Senate. With these factors properly weighed Ben qualified with a high score. In the final analysis it developed that Ben had us all sunk for the superb quality of his reports and maps. They should have been good. He had borrowed the forest's extensive reconnaissance report and worked his reports up from that in the backroom of a saloon at Kooskia, Idaho. As a generalization: The fieldwork on these early exchanges suffered seriously, so far as any individual tract was concerned, from the lack of time and money available. Practically all the school sections were still unsurveyed, and were sometimes 25 or 50 miles from a survey. Nothing less than an official GLO survey could say where a section might fall. The plan used was to take the projection as shown on forest maps and locate the individual sections from cultural, drainage, or topographic features as shown on the best maps available. A thoroughly unsatisfactory system to all of us, but one presumed to average up over the job as a whole.

The Idaho exchange was pushed through to completion in 1912. Since two Regions (1 and 3) were involved, it was handled directly from Washington for the most part. Associate Forester Bertie Potter made it his baby and Charlie Smith, in charge, corresponded directly with Washington. Quincy Craft, Fiscal Agent at Ogden, handled the funds. Both regions naturally took quite an interest in the project, and in the final phases we saw quite a bit of E. A. Sherman, then District Forester of Region 4, Ferdie Silcox, District Forester of Region 1, Ovid Butler, Chief of Silviculture at Ogden, and of both Mr. Graves and Mr. Potter. In fact, Bertie stayed a week or more and dug right in on compilations and tabulations with the rest of us in preparing the proclamation winding up the job.

By the time the Idaho exchange was out of the way the Montana exchange was authorized. This was handled in the same manner as the Idaho job. Charlie Smith was in charge, but now entirely under the regional forester. Through the accident of being the only other career forester attached to the project, I was after only six months on permanent appointment, in effect, assistant to Smith - a job a deputy supervisor should have had. I did handle a field party both years in Montana, however. In 1913 we cleaned up the state base sections on all forests. I cruised out some tag ends on the Missoula Forest in December in 12-below-zero weather. In 1914 I ramrodded a party which cruised out the selection area on the West Fork of the Flathead River in the Flathead Forest. This was fairly remote at that time. To reach it we traveled by Model T stage from Kalispell to Big Fork, some 20 miles. Then 8 miles by lumber wagon to the foot of Swan Lake, 7 miles up the lake by boat, then 20 miles or so by pack train. I went in in April and came out in October. But it wasn't bad. We had mail every week or so. A few sessions like that would do wonders for some of these modern J.F. sissies who cry if they have to stay out over the weekend.

Smith and I did not see the Montana exchange through. Having finished the fieldwork in 1914 we were sent on to Region 6 in the spring of 1915 and got the Washington exchange under way. Charlie Smith was soon withdrawn for a detail over around Yellowstone National Park and another Smith — Stanton G. (Smitty) — Supervisor of the Snoqualmie National Forest at Seattle, replaced him. Smitty did not give up his supervisorship, however, but commuted between Portland and Seattle, so I was "acting" much of the time and did no detailed fieldwork. This exchange, which was a big job, was caught by World War I, and by changing state administrations, and dragged for many years. I do not know whether it is all cleaned up yet. Before the Washington exchange was out of the way we organized a similar but relatively small one with Oregon. A primary objective of both the Washington and the Oregon exchanges was to provide state forests contiguous to the forest schools. I do not now recall the acreages involved in these early exchanges, but it seems to me that Idaho's was around 100,000 acres, Montana's 250,000 acres, Washington's over 600,000 acres. These early exchanges at least cleared the air of the notion of "equal area and equal value" and built toward the more practicable policies of equal value and of timber for land.

As private exchange legislation became available and policies began to shape up we came to feel in Lands that it was time for a handbook. Since we conceded that we in Region 6 were way out ahead in exchange activity it looked to us like our job. Therefore, C. J. Buck, then Chief of Lands, wrote an outline. I wrote the bulk of the text, with help from him and from his secretary, Althea Wheeler, while George Drake, recently president of SAF, helped with the timber appraisal section. We sent it in. Leon F. Kneipp wrote us that our handbook was received with

three rousing cheers - that it was exactly what was needed. In due course came back the official text. We examined it with interest. There wasn't a line or a paragraph that we could recognize.

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Some of the later land exchange acts permitted us to take over isolated tracts of public land within what had been set up as our ultimate boundaries. These were generally small tracts, 40 acres to 120 acres. It was usually my job to examine these tracts and report them. As they were widely scattered I worked them alone - a job I always liked. One year I had a bunch of these tracts to pick up contiguous to the south unit of the Umatilla National Forest in eastern Oregon. Associate forester E. A. Sherman was in the region and wanted to see how we were handling that work so he came over there from Portland with C. J. Buck and joined Johnnie Erwin, the supervisor, and me in the field. We had occasion to stay at Heppner one night, a small town off the beaten track. C. J., who had been on a trip to Alaska with Sherman, had filled Johnnie and me up on what a terrible snorer E.A.S. was, and how sensitive he was about it. He was sure sorry for anyone who got stuck to bunk with Mr. Sherman, as might be necessary in that small town hotel. Johnnie, Sherman, and I went to the hotel to register, while C. J. proceeded with bedding down his Franklin — a meticulous process. Johnnie and I were each looking to doublecross the other, or better yet, C. J., when the clerk asked us how we wanted to double up. Sherman took the play right away from us. "I don't know about you boys," he said, "but as for me, I always say I'll sleep with no man, and with damn few women."

I had some scattered tracts to examine on the Lostine drainage of the old Wallowa Forest in extreme eastern Oregon. I got some dope on lines and corners from a rancher who had a ranch right where the Lostine comes out of the mountains. The river spread out a bit here with quite an area of gravel bars with stringers of willow. His horses, including a white bell mare, grazed over this land. A couple of months after I left came the deer season. Some railroad men from LaGrande were camped there on the Lostine, with the rancher's permission. One evening he thought he would visit them so he hops on this mare and hazes her over to their camp. As he rides into camp one of the hunters shoots him dead, off this white mare with a bell on her. No, I presume nothing happened to the hunter. He didn't mean to. He was drunk.

A hunter above Sunset Falls on the Columbia Forest tied his horse and to protect the horse spread his red jacket over the saddle, then circled through the forest. When he got back the horse had been shot dead. Maybe he shot it himself, I don't know.

So many hunting fatalities I have been in on one hunter will say, "You go up this ridge and I'll go up that one and we will meet in yon pass." And the one who gets there first sits down and wait and then when the other one comes bursting out of the brush he up and shoots him.

Sam Ward, an amigo of mine on the Gila Forest, was sitting down sounding a turkey call when a kid from Las Cruces shot him right through his red cap. The kids, there were three of them, took a look at him and hightailed for home - no report.

I have never understood why people who have conclusively demonstrated their incompetence to handle firearms, or cars, are not grounded for life — not as punishment, but just for the protection of the rest of us.

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Among the early foresters in Region 6 were the Allen brothers, G. F. and E. T. E. T. (I never heard another name for him) was one of only two forest officers who addressed my class at Idaho. He was the black sheep of his scholarly Harvard faculty family. As I recall it, he did not even finish grade school but ran off to the South Sea Islands. Of course, he didn't ever amount to anything. He was only the first - no, I guess second - district forester. I think C. S. Chapman was the original one. E. T. is credited with having designed the pine tree badge. By the time I got out to Region 6 in 1915, E. T. had already gone to a job with the Western Lumbermen's Association at just twice the salary the forester was to receive for many years to come. G. S. was supervisor of the old Rainier Forest with headquarters at Tacoma.

One night C. J. Buck and I, seeing a light in his window, went up to Allen's office. In the course of the evening he told a story which impressed me:

George Griffith, the silver-tongued orator of Region 6 and an excellent man in PR, was then forest clerk on the Rainier - but that wasn't where his heart was as Allen told it. George, who was spending entirely too much time away from his desk and on his real love, took advantage of a time when he could sign as "acting" to instruct each ranger to submit an essay on how the forest officer could best advance public relations. It was the height of the field season and an inopportune time for writing compositions, but eventually all the rangers came through, with the exception of John Kirkpatrick of the Randle District. John, the father of Dahi Kirkpatrick, now chief of TM in Region 3, seemingly was unimpressed. George waited until again he was "acting" and then he put a sharp prod to John. He got results. John replied to this general effect:

"In my opinion, the best way for a forest officer to promote public relations would be for the forest clerk to quit gallivanting around and clear the 5A (now 10314) vouchers for payment. Everybody is complaining."

I was in the Missoula office two years, 1913 and 1914. Missoula is said to be in "banana belt" of Montana since it seldom drops below 20 degrees below zero, night and day. It seemed pretty tough for me, raised in the Boise Valley, which is exceptionally mild for that latitude. When my transfer to Region 6 (Portland) was requested, I was glad of the chance to get away from Montana's winters. The fellows in Missoula, though, all thought that I was crazy to go. Two adverse factors developed:

1. Everybody in Portland wore derbies - all colors - because it rained all the time and the derby was the only hat which would take it. This was not true. The derby was still extant in 1915, but there were no more of them worn in Portland than elsewhere.
2. All the parkings in Portland were occupied by huge piles of cordwood. This was essentially true. All through the dry summer the wood haulers would be delivering 14-foot second growth

fir, much of which would now go for good, grade lumber. These piles, often 8 and 10 feet high, would season until along toward the rainy season, then portable wood saws would come along and saw them in the street. Then the stove wood went to the basements. The firewood sellers would stencil their names repeatedly on the ends of the stacked cordwood. One of the best known companies was "Neer and Farr."

The one forest officer to address us at Idaho, other than E. T. Allen, was Bill Weigle, then supervisor of the Coeur d'Alene Forest, but soon to go to Alaska. Bill was in Alaska many years but eventually came back to Seattle. As he told it himself, he wasn't entirely happy in Seattle for the reason that he had been a big frog in a small puddle in Alaska, and in Seattle he found that he was a very small frog in a big puddle.

Bill was, and no doubt still is, a pretty keen investor and he was better off than the run of us. One year he brought a brand new Buick sedan to supervisor's meeting, while most of us were still driving Model T touring cars. Naturally he was proud of it and kept it immaculate. On a field trip Cy Billings, the rough-hewn old supervisor of the Wallowa Forest was riding in the front seat with Bill. He knew how Bill hated smoking so in deference he confined himself to a big mouthful of "Horseshoe." He held it as long as he could, but when he reached the limit he had to let fly - out the window. Only trouble was, the glass was up. Cy just wasn't used to cars with glass windows, and spotlessly clean ones at that.

Bill, now up in the eighties, is living in Pasadena. I believe the next time I am in Los Angeles I'll go see him - just to see what a really old forester looks like.

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Amy Jane McGuire, long since transferred to her Unitarian heaven, was quite a figure in the old days in the Portland office. She would get in the elevator and say, "Central, please," or board the streetcar and say, "Fourth floor, please." There were always new "Amy Jane" stories, and they were always true. You don't have to believe this one, but it is true, and typical: There was a long-carriage typewriter on an ordinary typewriter stand against the wall in the room occupied by Mineral Examiner M. W. H. Woodward and myself. Amy came in with some odd job which she put in the machine. Then she sat down in the chair which was out maybe 3 feet from the table. She looked rather bewilderedly at the machine, which she could not reach, and then the solution came to her. She got up and moved the stand out to the chair, typed the job, moved the stand back to the wall and went back to her own branch.

In our offices in the old Beck Block (prior to 1919) there was a room clear around the corridors to the right. This room was about the size of the average office, but different: There were closed booths with swinging doors along one wall and open booths, very shallow, along the opposite wall. It was known as Frank Law's library. One morning Adam Wright was standing in one of the shallow booths contemplating the wall immediately ahead of his nose when he heard a gasp behind him. Here stood Amy Jane, right in the middle of the room, hands clasped on her chest and a definitely stricken look. Adam turned back to his own project to give her a chance to escape. To his amazement she waited for him and went out with him. She said, "Isn't that the queerest thing? You know, I did that once before, too."

In the early twenties I was driving a Model T with a factory built "sportster" body. As the new building was down by the river and I went right through town; I seldom rode alone. Somebody always wanted to go to "Olds 'n Kings." One evening it was a very young girl from Amy's office. She was telling me how specifically Amy had warned her against accepting any rides in autos with men whether she knew them or not. This rather amused the girl because those were just the rides she was rather inclined to accept. Now it so happened that the very next night when I got in my car alongside the lower park block I saw Amy Jane heading toward town on the diagonal path through the block. Also, for once, I was alone. I wanted to see just what kind of a rebuff she would dish out so I timed myself to reach the far corner just as she did, and invited her to climb in. Much to my surprise she did and, from her manifest pleasure, it was obvious that she had had a few rides in automobiles. As we approached "Olds 'n Kings," the usual destination, I asked, "Where would you like to get out, Miss McGuire?" Her reply floored me: "You just go wherever you want to, Mr. Teed, and I'll walk back." I didn't though. It would have looked bad in my personnel record. But she was having so much fun that I did take her the long way around.

Along in those same early twenties the Portland Journal had a girl reporter named Henrietta McCoughan (pronounced McCoin), who was nuts about nature and specialized in that field. She did much valuable work for us in the way of publicity in those days when our recreational policies were incubating. Naturally, Lands was her hangout and she depended on Woodward, Fred Cleator, and me for photographic instruction. One time C. J. Buck and Fred Cleator had her up to Eagle Creek camp on the Columbia River highway. As anyone knows who has been there, this exceptionally beautiful gorge is practically always deep-shaded and very damp. It is never comfortably warm. As C. J. told the story the next day: They had a fire, against the chill, and they and Albert Weisindanger, the ranger, were standing with their backs to it when a caliber .22 cartridge in the fire exploded shooting a fragment of the copper shell into the southern exposure of the gal reporter. This, according to C. J., raised the delicate question whether she should continue to suffer or should submit to assistance for an operation she could not perform alone. Now, as was typical of C. J., he left this story hanging up in the air right there, and would tell us no more. Within the last 4 or 5 years Reader's Digest had a story about a rather famous editor and his newspaper of Anchorage, Alaska, and doggone if his sidekick these last many years isn't Henrietta! She is now a full-fledged sourdough. I wrote her a letter and asked her what was the end of that story. She ethphatically denied the whole thing, while recalling those old times and C. J. and Fred, and Albert. Only one thing - she doesn't recall me at all. That's not so strange, though. I never did take her on a field trip.

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Albert Weisendanger, for many years the ranger at Eagle Creek on the Mt. Hood Forest, unquestionably had a wider acquaintance and more influential friends than anyone else in the district. He was a natural at PR work as he was a gifted entertainer - especially for school kids, as well as a truly enthusiastic salesman of forestry and protection. Albert had already been promoted from messenger to mail clerk when I reached Region 6 in 1915. According to the story then extant, this is how Albert got his first appointment: Always aggressive when as a school kid he was called for an interview by Charley Flory, then chief of Operation. Albert did the interviewing. He learned that he was No. 3 on the eligible list and that he would be reached for appointment only in case both Nos. 1 and 2 turned the job down. Then he got the names and

addresses of Nos. 1 and 2. He sought out No. 1 and convinced him that he would be crazy to quit school for a mere messenger job, which probably would peter out in a short time anyhow. Then he hunted up No. 2, but he couldn't talk No. 2 out of accepting the job so he beat the whey out of him, won the argument that way, became the No. 1 eligible by elimination, got the appointment and embarked on a long and valuable career in forestry.

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By 1927 a health condition in my family made it imperative that I give up the long periods away from home, so with the greatest professional reluctance but with gratitude to C. J. Buck, Chris Gran and A.O. Waha for making it possible, I crossed that great abyss which separates the forester from the clerk and became administrative assistant on the Columbia National Forest at Vancouver, Washington. There, chair borne, I sat out the New Deal and the multiple alphabetical agencies.

The CCC would be a book in itself, but I will leave someone else to write it. How we missed the boat at first, figuring that it would only last 6 months, when it lasted as many years! One thing which particularly amused us was the embarrassment which the D.D. qualification for facilitating personnel evidently caused Washington, and how it eventually stumbled upon the clumsy substitute: "Departmental Designee" to justify the initials.

In southwest Washington we had a representative, Martin Johnson, who took the "deserving Democrat" requirement in his stride. He just put anybody on his list who sent him a postcard. We had from his list the longtime Washington district highway superintendent who was a bred-in-the-bone Republican and no small figure in the party; also, several good men from the Portland territory who didn't even reside in Washington.

In the fall of 1942 the regional office contacted me. Would I be willing to go to Salinas, California, on the huge Guayule Project. I told them no, that that was a better place for the young guys, if it was alright with the regional office, and it was. I was 55 years old and had over 30 years' service. We owned our home in Vancouver, had lived there 15 years, and expected to retire there in a few more years. Then, the day before Christmas, Arnold Standing, Chief Personnel, called me and told me that I was being transferred to the Guayule Project, not in California, but to El Paso, Texas, and that I was leaving the day after Christmas. Some notice, huh, for a 2,000-mile permanent transfer. Well, I left, but, of course, I couldn't do a thing about the family.

Months later, when my wife had disposed of the place and was ready to move, I told her just not to have a concern about the household goods. The Government would pay the costs and the Mayflower boys would take care of everything. They did alright - even to about a hundred empty mayonnaise jars, several outdated mail order catalogs, and a considerable assortment of Model T parts the kids had dragged in over the years. My personal share of the cost was \$333. That hurt. But, I thought that the payoff came several months later when Fiscal Agent Edd billed me for an additional \$9.99 tax.

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In my observation, Guayule - the emergency rubber project - was a proven success and reflected great credit on Evan Kelley, Paul Roberts and the many others who gave of themselves on a war emergency basis. However, by mid-1944 it was obvious that the banker-farmers of Kern County, California, and the synthetic rubber interests had us licked politically. I found, though, that after two years in the southwest I had become a sun worshipper and had no desire to follow my "line of retreat" back to the west side of Region 6. Region 3 was willing to absorb me so I put in my final stretch on the Gila National Forest in southwestern New Mexico, with headquarters at Silver City.

In the spring of 1952, after several years of prodding by the Regional Retirement Board, I finally sent in my application for retirement, dated for May 31, the day following my 65th birthday.

Shortly after my application went in, Eddie Tucker, the supervisor, came to my office with that little smile of his which showed that he had been in the cream again, or was headed that way. He had a letter in his hand. The regional office, it seemed, wanted rough drafts for three letters, one each for the signature of the regional forester, the forester, and the secretary. I could read it in his face - it was his sense of the fitness of things that I, who had prepared so many of these sets, should prepare this last set as well. I thought it, was a good touch, too. "Sure I'll write 'em I told him. And I called in Mayme Duncan, who did the "confidentials," and dictated one with a warm personal touch for Otto Lindh, the regional forester with whom I had long been associated in Region 6, and one with a friendly but less intimate tone for Lyle Watts, the forester who knew me only casually in Region 6 where he had been regional forester, and one on a basis of formal cordiality for the secretary, whom ever he might be. In due course, I received a farewell letter from the regional forester, one from the forester, and one from the secretary, and each was word for word as suggested. The copies went to my personnel folder, and after 41 years, 4 months and 15 days, another folder went to the closed files.

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No account of the early days of Region 1 is complete without a chapter devoted to the Ammen sisters - Eva and Matilda. They were the daughters of an admiral, back in the days when admirals were very rare. They came out with the district organizations in 1908. Eva was librarian and Matilda was in the steno pool. I knew them only slightly during my two years in Lands, Region 1.

In the spring of 1915 the girls bought them a place. Matilda was working with me at the time. We were writing "Secretary letters withdrawing June 11 listings." Soon after the girls bought the place they began receiving seed packages in the mail, and they were big; pounds, half pounds, quarter pounds — even of fine seeds like carrots — all kinds of vegetables and flowers. Ranch-raised, myself, it staggered me to think of these frail spinsters with all this gardening to do. Finally, I asked Miss Ammen how much acreage they had. They just had one city lot with a house on it.

These girls seemed awfully old to me when I knew them in 1915, and I was 28. On my first visit to the Albuquerque regional office in 1915 Mrs. Dick Hillery asked me whether I knew them. I replied that I did, but that they must be long since dead. But no. Retired, of course, they had built

themselves a picturesque house on the mountain overlooking Santa Fe where they were busily engaged in the translation of ancient Spanish documents; also, the Government had taken them on a trip to Mare Island to christen a destroyer honoring their dad.

Another of the old Region 1 small fry was John Quinn, the peppery mail clerk. John was a New York foundling and a confirmed bachelor. One time I went down to the stockroom and asked John for a couple of No. 2 pencils. He threw up his hands and yelled, "J—— C— ! How the h— would I have a No. 2 pencil in the house, and school starting Monday?" I had no kids at this time, myself.

I ran into John many years later when stationed at Vancouver. He had finally been hooked, married a widow with children. He was custodian for the B.P.R. at Vancouver. He was found on the floor of the office one morning with a fractured skull. He did not regain consciousness. Apparently he had fallen from a high stepladder while changing a ceiling light.

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It was my fortune to know most of the Fenn family who had a considerable part in the early days of forestry in Utah, Idaho, and Montana. Major Fenn was supervisor of the Boise in my high school years. The older girl, Rhoda, was a classmate. Lloyd, past high school age, did some coaching in track work. At University of Idaho, Lloyd and I were charter members of the first forestry class, organized in 1909. Arlene, another daughter, was also a classmate there. Afterward either Rhoda or Arlene married George Ring, then supervisor of one of the North Idaho forests. While I was in Lands, Region 1, Dick Rutledge went to Ogden as regional forester and Major Fenn came in as Chief of Lands. Lloyd was there for a while, too; he was then under a ranger appointment. We had him coloring land classification maps. He had a lot of timber type areas colored bright red before we discovered it was all the same to Lloyd. Lloyd soon left the Service for a career as editor and school principal at Kooskia, Idaho.

Homer Fenn was Chief of Grazing while I was in Region 4. This was in 1912. I saw quite a bit of him at Boise. He had a famous saddle, made to his order by Frazier at Pueblo. Homer felt that, since he was in Grazing, it would be a good touch to have cattle and sheep included in the stamping design so he wrote Frazier and suggested a sheep for one stirrup fender and a cow for the other. We were rather delicate in those days and he didn't like to dictate a coarse word like "bull." He got a cow alright, a dairy cow, right side, with her hind leg back in milking position. This was a big hit with the stockmen. Homer left the Service early to become a sheepman.



Adams Ranger Station, Nezperce National Forest. 1925.

October 1955

**SOME INCIDENTS OCCURRING DURING MY EMPLOYMENT WITH  
THE U. S. FOREST SERVICE, 1913 - 1949**

**By C. S. Webb  
(Retired 1914)**

This writeup endeavors to record some of the early day conditions existing in Region 1 when and after I joined the Forest Service; also, some of my personal experiences throughout the years, and a few involving associates in the service.

After high school I attended and graduated from a school of business administration in Pennsylvania, following a 2-year course. I had worked for logging contractors as office man and as log scaler during vacations while at school. After finishing school I worked during 1909 for a logger. During 1910 and part of 1911 I was employed by a railroad as assistant to the depot agent. Here I was engaged as shipping clerk, manifest writer, telegraph operator and ticket salesman.

About that time many people were migrating to the Northwest. Deciding to give it a try, I landed at Spokane, Washington, October 20, 1911. After resting up and seeing a couple of football games, I went to Elk River, Idaho, where Weyerhaeusers were building a large sawmill and the town of Elk River. Not finding anyone in dire need of a business administrator, yet pressed by the necessity of having a job, employment was gained with a building contractor. He had a contract to build row upon row of workmen's homes, a schoolhouse and other buildings essential to conducting the town's affairs. He had quite a crew, well organized, and we averaged putting up 3 houses per day, all of pretty green lumber. We laid hard maple flooring in the 6-room schoolhouse, and I recall that a few of us, using broken glass, scraped the whole floor. No sanders were available to us in those days.

The Elk River sawmill was up and had sawed and piled a few hundred thousand feet. The yards, planer, kilns, etc., were under construction. This plant and town stood virtually in a hole cut out of the dense forest cover of mature white pine, which surrounded the entire town, extending as far as one could see, and even beyond.

With the houses completed, the company had on March 1, 1912, imported 100 Bulgarians to perform the excavation and dirt-moving work in building the mill yards. No power shovels either. I was offered the timekeeper's job on this crew. Each man was asked his name, then we hung a numbered dog tag on him and identified him thereafter by his number. The Bulgarians were paid \$1.15 a day. I drew \$2 a day for 10 hours. When this job was finished in June, 1912, the Bulgarians left to build railroads in the woods, and I shook the dust of Elk River, Idaho, from my feet. Thus, I helped to build Elk River, a lumbering manufacturing town which became a ghost town some 25 years later.

I then entered the employ of the Milwaukee Land Company, subsidiary of the Milwaukee Railroad. They operated a large lumber plant at St. Joe, Idaho. Here I first came in contact with Ed Holcomb, then supervisor of the St. Joe, and Deputy Supervisor W. B. Willey, both now

deceased. Having learned that the Forest Service was selling large volumes of white pine, as a salvage of the 1910 fires, to all lumber mills on the St. Joe River, I called on Ed Holcomb and was offered a job as a log scaler. Ed said that while I might be a pretty fair scaler, there were some skills practiced by the Forest Service with which I might not be familiar. He assigned me to work with Ed Smith, a veteran scaler, at the camps of Mr. Bronson, a contractor on Big Creek out of Herrick, Idaho. Bronson was logging for the Milwaukee Lumber Company, St. Maries, a Fred Herrick-owned outfit, having a railroad extending 16 miles up main Big Creek with a branch into East Fork of Big Creek. So began my initial employment with the Forest Service.

\* \* 1913 \* \*

The 1910 fires burned large areas of the St. Joe, Coeur d'Alene and Cabinet Forests. By now logging was brisk in these areas. The Wintons built a mill at Rose Lake, Idaho, and started cutting on Independence Creek in 1911, driving the logs all the way to Rose Lake. Herrick built the Milwaukee Lumber Company mill at St. Maries in 1911, and St. Maries Lumber Company -- a Michigan concern — built one there in 1912. This is the present Pugh Mill. Coeur d'Alene had the Coeur d'Alene Mill Company, Largey Estate interests, the Stack Gibbs Lumber Company — presently Browns Mill — and the William and David Dollar interests. McGoldrick Lumber Company was established at Spokane, the Export Lumber Company and Grant Lumber Company were at Harrison, and I believe Russell and Pugh were there. The Mann Lumber Company had a large mill at the west end of St. Regis cutoff.

Timber in the white pine belt swept by 1910 fires was mostly large old growth, quite sound, choice white pine. Logging was somewhat difficult, with big horses furnishing the skidding power. Horse skidding, chutes, flumes, railroads and river-driving were the means of transportation. There were no "cats," no trucks. Sleigh haul was employed a lot on Priest River, Pack River and the Kootenai. Big river drives were the order of the day each spring on the Kootenai, Pack, Priest, Coeur d'Alene and St. Joe Rivers. The "river pigs" had considerable leeway in moving about. The Milwaukee Road had been completed through St. Maries in 1910, so by 1913 the plants there that were logging by rail hauled their logs clear to the mill by rail. Milwaukee trains at that time did not run through Spokane. Early in 1915 the Union Station at Spokane was completed and the Milwaukee started routing its passenger trains through that city.

I went to work with Mr. Smith on June 21, 1913, at Branson's camp on Big Creek. We scaled the logs — two tiers of short logs — after they were loaded on cars. By this time deterioration of sapwood had rendered most of it unmerchantable. The timber over large areas had blown down flat on the ground under pressure of the heavy winds ahead of the 1910 holocaust. The timber therefore was not burned, nor checked to any appreciable extent. Some sapwood had blued but was firm. But, most of the logs were scaled inside the sapwood. Nothing smaller than about 14 inches at the top end was removed. We scaled out many trainloads of short logs which, even under these conditions, averaged 6 logs per thousand feet. It was choice white pine, running a high percent of clear, selects and shop. Stumpage prices - \$2 per BMM.

But, this bonanza was to be short-lived. By the end of 1915, the removal of 1910 burned timber, except for cedar, came to an end. At this time (1913) I was paid \$1,020 per annum. I boarded

myself. Supervisor Holcomb drew \$1,680 and Assistant Supervisor Willey was in the \$1,440 bracket. These two boys held college degrees in forestry, but I had to make it the hard way.

However, everyone in the organization was kind and would give a fellow worker all the help possible. Associations were congenial, and hopes for the better in material conditions induced us to hang on. The aims and policies of the Service were, even then, on a high moral plane.

The Forest Service in 1913 had one characteristic which it still possesses - it could never get a man placed where it wanted or needed him. And, I think that was good. Fresh challenges developed the fellows, most of whom were natives and, like myself, had no formal forestry education.

After about 8 weeks with Smith on Big Creek, word came to me to report at McGoldrick's camp on Slate Creek to take over the scaling there. Of course, Slate Creek was only a few miles over the hill from our location in Upper Big Creek. But, we had no map, and I hadn't the least idea as to the location of Slate Creek. Smith advised that I go to Wallace, but we had no map and I hadn't the least ideas as to the location of Slate Creek. Smith advised that I go and proceed from there. On a Friday p.m., early in August, I rode to Herrick on the log train with all my worldly possessions, including the bedroll. There I took the train to St. Maries. From Herrick I could have walked by trail to McGoldrick's camp in one day. Saturday morning I took the boat "Flyer" out of St. Maries and went to Harrison where a connection on the O.W.R. & N. Railway conveyed me to Wallace for the second overnight stop.

At that time, I recall that the railroad up the South Fork of Coeur d' Alene from Kingston to Wallace passed through a dense stand of very large cedar. All the flat land along the river bottom had escaped the 1910 fire and supported a beautiful stand of clear cedar type, old growth and big. Now it is covered with mine tailings, but a few years ago (1948) quite a few of the large cedar stumps were still in evidence.

At Wallace this Saturday night (early August 1913), I met a man I had known at St. Joe - quite a character by the name of Joe Bush. He told me McGoldricks had a wagon road into camp on Slate Creek. He advised me to hire a livery team and on Sunday he would drive me to the camp. I got the team, and the next day we headed up Placer Creek. We reached the summit along in the afternoon, where we overtook a 4-horse tote team headed for camp with a load of hay. I climbed on with the driver and went into camp. Joe Bush returned to Wallace with the livery team. I never saw Joe again.

Here at McGoldrick's I looked up the foreman, a Frenchman whose name I don't recall. (The Government scaler had quit and pulled out a few days earlier.) He was logging by trail chutes into two ponds behind small dams. From these, one on Dam Creek and one on Flume Creek, he would each day open the gates and flume the logs into Slate Creek. A larger dam on Slate Creek would periodically splash the logs down Slate Creek, where they went into the St. Joe River and were driven and towed to the Spokane mill. Roy Lammers was walking boss over McGoldrick's various woods operations.

The foreman said that when the scaler left, all the scaled logs were flumed out and the others held in the two ponds awaiting my arrival. I took him at his word, proceeded to scale up on the water a mass of logs packed tight in each pond. I worked from daylight to dark for 3 days to catch up. Then I had it nice for about 5 weeks.

Word came in for me to go to the Bogle and Callahan operation on Little North Fork. I studied over an old St. Joe map in camp and talked with the foreman who knew the location of Bogle operation. I figured I could walk it cross-country through the woods in one day. My relief had come in one evening, so the next morning I rode the tote wagon back to the divide at the head of Placer Creek. In those days the Forest Service gave one a scale rule, scale book, stamp hammer and crayon. The rest — board, lodging, laundry, etc. — was up to the employee.

Upon alighting from the tote wagon, I hung my bedroll on one shoulder, my pack-sack on the other, and started out through the woods along the divide between Slate Creek and Little North Fork. Had a good big lunch in the packsack. It was quite a long way, but about 4:00 p.m. I reached a point where I could look down into the Little North Fork and see cutting operations and chutes at quite a distance. Then I headed straight downhill for the end of the steep log chute. I followed the chute to the creek and found the camp close by. Here the logs were loaded on cars, but I was informed the scaling was done at Bogle Spur, which was 9 miles down the logging railroad where the loaded cars were placed on a siding for freighting to the Milwaukee Road.

I got my supper at this camp, picked up my packsack and bedroll, and walked the 9 miles to Bogle Spur, getting in there just before dark. This was the middle of September 1913. Here I met Claget Sanders, who was stationed at Falcon Ranger Station and under whose supervision I was to work the rest of the season, scaling logs on cars with Dallas Galloway. This outfit was putting out 28 to 30 cars a day, which called for a fast-moving scaling team because the logs had to be scaled quickly after each train came in, 2 or 3 times daily. Sanders, retired in 1928 for disability, resided in California until his death late in 1954. Galloway left the Service for years, but later returned to the St. Joe to work as a guard, cook, etc., in a temporary capacity. He may still be around Calder, Idaho.

By the first of November 1913, this outfit closed down for the winter and I was furloughed. In October I had taken a Civil Service examination for scaler. When laid off, I returned to the Milwaukee Land Company and went to work.

\* \* 1914 \* \*

Early in April a wire from Ed Holcomb requested that I report for duty April 15. I did so, and was assigned on the Bogle Spur scaling job again until the first of November. I had been appointed from the register and that fall was transferred to the Kaniksu for the winter, having been instructed to go to Falk's Ranch on the East Side road. There I met Dean Gregory for the first time. Dean and I roomed and boarded at Falk's. We scaled about two million feet of white pine in large decks along the banks of Priest River where, the following spring, it was rolled in and driven to Beardmore's mill at Priest River village.

On completion of that job, I was instructed to go to Dalkena Lumber Company No. 3 on Cottonwood Creek, as a scaler, for the winter. I walked it via old Camp One, crossing from the East Side road on the Whitetail Butte tote road. When I reached the river the boat was on the opposite side, and I skipped across on the logs then floating in the river.

What impressed me most on this trip was the unbroken stretch of forest which I passed through. From a short distance out of the town of Priest River (the Italian settlement) clear through to my destination on Cottonwood Creek, there was one vast expanse of white pine forest. Now and then the log house and barn of a homesteader would be seen in a small, natural meadow. Around the Whitetail Butte area were a few sections of dense lodgepole type. Otherwise, I passed through a solid uncut stand of old growth white pine type, unmarred by any fires of note. Associated with the predominant pine were large, mature larch and fir trees, occasionally a spruce, and cedar poles in abundance.

It is safe to say that on Priest River there were millions of straight, sound cedar poles 30 to 90 feet in length. Many of the Northwest cedar companies took poles from here. At that time the Forest Service was following the theory that much of this land would, after removal of timber, be listed for homestead entry. This same theory was held for the relatively level area immediately above Swan Lake on the Flathead. As a result, the practice was to cut all timber 12 inches d.b.h. and over, and all cedar poles, and make a broadcast burn of the slash. After burning, when the stony soil was exposed, there was no desire to homestead it. The land that was homesteaded was taken up for the timber values thereon.

Up here on the Kaniksu, logs and poles were skidded up to sleigh roads, and many were decked on the roads from October till the time of heavier snowfall and freezing weather. Sleigh roads were cleared before snowfall, and the little grading necessary was done mostly by hand. When heavy snowfall and cold weather set in, teams and sleighs were employed to keep the snow packed down, thus, smoothing and evening up the road surface. Water tanks on sleighs sprinkled the roads at night, and "rutters" built on sleighs were run in this slush, forming ruts which froze and served as grooves in which loaded sleigh runners could follow.

These roads were located on a favorable grade to the river landing. Water grade was most desirable, but if they had to go down a hill from one bench to another there was no hesitancy in doing so. During hauling season the ruts were sanded on the steeper sections to slow up the sleighs and avoid crowding the horse team too hard. Any load that the team and a booster team could start at the woods loading point could be taken into the river landing without trouble. The sleighs running in the ruts were easily steered and there were no adverse grades on these roads.

The logs were sometimes loaded on sleighs with a team in crosshaul, using a decking chain to roll the log up skids, but ordinarily a horse jammer was used. With this device, and using a well-trained team in crosshaul as the motive power, the logs were hoisted rapidly. The crew consisted of a taildown man, two hookers, top loader and the crosshaul teamster. Big loads were hauled, and there was rivalry between camps for the biggest load of the winter.

The Dalkena Company had a hard-bitten old German, a real character, as a foreman at Camp Two. His name was John Speck. Not far away the Humbird Lumber Company, with mills at

Sandpoint and Kootenai, had a tough old-time foreman called Moonlight Joe. The moniker was credited to Joe's slave-driving tactics, it having been claimed that he worked his men such long days they often left and returned to camp by moonlight. Great rivalry existed between John Speck and Moonlight Joe O'Meara for the biggest sleighload of the season. Loads of 22 and 23 MBM of short logs were not uncommon, but one time Joe selected logs figured out to best fit a 14-foot bunk, set them aside, and build up a load of 28 MBM, which he landed at the river, beating John's record for this winter of 1914-15.

\* \* 1915 \* \*

Sleigh roads broke up about the 15th of March 1915, on the Kaniksu. I had been at Camp Three all winter and John Speck was foreman at Camp Two. Speck put in an enormous landing on the river in Camp Two territory, designed to employ 12-horse teams and one steam donkey to work skidding direct to this landing. His objective was to grab a lot of logs off the area within three-eighths mile of the river and get them into the water before time for the river drive to start. I was assigned to scale this landing for a period of about 20 days. Donkey logs came in tree length and were bucked on the landing. Speck furnished a man to wield the stamp for me if I would scale the input. Many days I scaled and recorded 2,000 to 2,200 short longs in a 10-hour period. After supper I would add up the 20 to 22 pages of figures. So, truly, I could not have been in a worse spot had I been serving on Moonlight Joe's setup. At least, so it seemed to me.

Early in April, this job done, I went to the camp of the Fidelity Lumber Company, whose mill at Newport was later acquired and now is operated by the Diamond Match Company. This camp was at Pine Creek near Falls Ranger Station. The white pine and cedar poles were of finest quality. Large, select white pine butt cuts usually had to be short — that is, 12 feet long — so they could be moved with horse teams. I recall scaling a 12-foot butt log of white pine, 1,142 feet BM, without a defect in it. During this winter's work, I was responsible to Al Feary, who was the ranger in charge of timber sales. Mallory Stickney, Meyer Wolff's successor on the Kaniksu, was supervisor, and Fred Forsythe was deputy supervisor.

About the first of May, 1915, I returned to the St. Joe and was again assigned to the Bogle and Callahan job, where Oscar Hopkins had become successor to Bogle and Callahan and was running a one-camp show to clean up the fire kill sale made to St. Maries Lumber Company in 1912. In the fall of 1915, I again went to the Kaniksu and back to the job at Dalkena Camp Three. By now Stickney had left the Service to engage in cranberry culture in Massachusetts; Forsythe was supervisor; Feary the deputy; and Toots McEwan was my boss.

\* \* 1916 \* \*

After finishing the winter at Priest River, I returned to the St. Joe and was assigned to the Gregory operation at Adair on Loop Creek. Here a large flume carried the logs from the woods to the Milwaukee Railroad. Cutting of fire kill had ceased; most of the logs now were green or partially so.

In June 1916, District Timber Sale Inspector C. E. (Skip) Knouf, came to Adair with Roscoe Haines, who shortly before had succeeded Ed Holcomb as supervisor of the St. Joe. Holcomb

had resigned to take up a dairy business on the coast in Washington. They offered me a job as forest officer in charge of all timber sale activities on the St. Joe, with headquarters at Avery. This was acceptable and I took my wife of one year and rode to Avery on the C. H. St. P. & P. Railroad.

At this time F. A. Silcox was district forester. John Preston was assistant in charge of silviculture (Timber Management) in the Missoula office. C. Lee Baker was an assistant in his office. Dick Rutledge, now retired and living in Billings, was then Chief of Operation. J. A. Urbanowicz, who soon after this was convicted of absconding with or misappropriating federal funds to his own use, was district fiscal agent.

Up to this time no living quarters were furnished for anyone except the district rangers. Their quarters were pretty rough, usually of log construction without any modern conveniences. Stations such as Avery, on a road or railroad, were usually fixed up well enough for a man to keep a wife and family there if they were willing to rough it. The back country stations usually consisted of a hut and a bunkhouse, both small of logs, which would provide shelter for the ranger and a small crew. At these stations women were taboo. If a ranger was married, his family stayed behind in town during the summer. In winter he might sometimes be home, but usually not for very long. Most rangers were paid \$1,100 per annum, but a few of the older ones were getting \$1,200. Most of them had to furnish one to three equipped saddle and packhorses.

In 1916 there wasn't a road on the St. Joe above St. Joe, Idaho, and the one from that town down to St. Maries was a very rough wagon road. Main transportation was by river to St. Joe and by rail to all points above that town.

Avery then was a distribution center for supplying six other ranger districts. Several strings of 10 animals each were maintained at Avery for packing the supplies and equipment out to these districts. The Calder and Clarkia Districts had not yet been established, but the Palouse District (Princeton) was in operation. Seldom did anyone from the supervisor's office visit it.

If and when a ranger station dwelling was authorized, the district office would allot the forest \$600, which usually was credited to the district ranger with instructions to go ahead and build a dwelling. Usually quite a lot of contributed time was provided him and the carpentry and other workmanship was a bit on the rough side. Even so, it was sometimes surprising how much the \$600 produced.

At Avery I needed a place to live. Haines sent up enough lumber to build two tent frames having 4-foot walls. He provided a 14 x 16 tent and fly for living quarters and a 10 x 12 with fly for the culinary department. We had a wood-burning heating stove in the big tent and a little wood-burning cook stove in the other. The tents were set on one platform, end to end, with a breezeway between - and, believe me, it was breezy - the whole thing. We carried our water from a pump about 50 yards distant, and took our baths in an oversized galvanized washtub. A couple of gasoline lanterns provided good light. Such were the conditions that young brides put up with in Forest Service work in 1916 and earlier, and even much later in some places.

We lived in a small tarpaper-covered shack at Bogle Spur; in a two room rough-board shack at Adair; and now in two tents at Avery, with water at some distance from the shacks in every instance. Our boys and girls today wouldn't do it, and I doubt if they could, since never having experienced such conditions, it seems doubtful if they would be able to manage it. But, the advancements and improvements made since those days certainly have increased efficiency immensely and have made for a comfort we had not known up to this time.

The Forest Service was a pretty small outfit in 1916 and for some time thereafter. I recall a detail to Timber Management in 1911 when the complete district office, except for the fiscal agent, had its quarters in the old federal building over the present post office space at Missoula. The aims, objectives and purposes were few in comparison to those of recent years. Principally, the job was visualized to be, (a) manage and conserve the timber and range resource, (b) protect timber and range from fire, and (c) get listed and patented all lands which were classified as agricultural in character. Water resources, erosion control, training programs, personnel management, recreational use, information and education, road construction, and many other present-day concerns were never mentioned in those days. There were no motor vehicle accidents to investigate and report on. Yes, life was simple.

My assignments to logging camps were over. In 1916 and 1917 we sold green white pine from sec. 20 just above Skookiim Canyon on Turner Creek and Turner Flat, and along the mouth of Bird Creek to St. Maries Lumber Company. The stumpage rate for white pine was \$3.50 cents for mixed timber and 50 cents for slash disposal. It was logged by George Ripley. He had a trail chute in Turner Creek. His logs were driven to St. Maries. His hay, oats, equipment and supplies were packed in from Avery. I marked all this timber for cutting without ever having had any instruction or training whatsoever. The results no doubt testified to that.

In 1917 Ripley moved to Flat Creek on the St. Maries River where he was the first man in North Idaho to use caterpillars (Holts) for skidding. Baird and Harper at Warland, Montana, started to use them soon after, but not until about 1921 or 1922.

In the fall of 1918, I was transferred to Kalispell. Here I succeeded Howard Flint in charge of timber management. Howard was transferred to the Kaniksu as supervisor. We rented a house in Kalispell which had hot and cold running water and a bath, the first innovation of this sort we had been able to land after about 3 years of marriage. This was a pretty delightful setup and we stayed there for 5 years.

\* \* 1919 \* \*

This was a bad fire year. I was assigned for the fire season to the Essex District, Flathead, where 14 crew-sized fires occurred. The district extended from Paoli to the Summit on the south side of the river. No roads, no pack trails, no pack or saddle stock, no lookouts, no telephones, and no men, except one at the station at Essex. We could pick up a few men at Essex, but for the most part, when firefighters were needed they were ordered by wire from Kalispell.

I recall one small fire of about 40 acres some 2 miles up Essex Creek. An old foot trail paralleled the creek. We got a crew from Kalispell, among it several husky high school boys. The crew of

25 men walked in, each carrying his bedroll and fire tool. Three boys were selected as back packers. The food was all cooked at Essex by Mrs. Frank Liebig, and each meal packed in on time to the firefighters on the line. This was about a 2-mile jaunt. We had two crew fires on Bear Creek above Java. Each time we had to wheel our 25-man outfits (two of them), including tools, mess and bedding, on a push car for a distance of about 400 yards from the station up to the Great Northern depot. Large mallet engines were in use out of Essex as pushers on freight trains as far as Summit. At the depot we would pile our outfit and food supplies, purchased at Essex, up on the engine pilot and tender, and in the caboose. At the point nearest the fire the train was stopped and we unloaded.

Sometimes we moved the camp by back pack down only to the creek. Other times we packed it a mile back from the railroad for setting up. When ready to move out, we would flag a helper engine running light on its way back down the hill, pile on our equipment, climb in the caboose and return to Essex. The division superintendent at Whitefish had instructed the roadmaster and train crews to help us out and they were very cooperative and cheerful about it.

Our only means of travel through the district, other than on foot, was by gas speeder which we had permission to operate over this main line. With the numerous curves, tunnels and snowsheds on the line, this speeder travel was indeed hazardous. Scheduled trains could be figured out pretty well, but there were the helper engines and an occasional special which at times caught us pretty short. Several times, to my knowledge, only quick, cool headed action in getting that speeder off the track averted an accident and possible disaster. As I recall, no accident ever occurred, and Forest Service men were using speeders a great deal from the Summit to Eureka.

During the summer of 1919 there was a large fire on White River, tributary of the South Fork. Men were walked in from Holland Lake - two or three hundred of them. All supplies and equipment were packed by animals from Coram. It took a pack string 7 days to make a round trip. Needless to say, this was another of those earlier-day lost causes. A road was started up the South Fork in 1921, and I believe completed to Spotted Bear in 1923.

In 1919, and for some years before, the Kalispell Lumber Company operated a band mill by the railroad on Dickey Creek. They decked logs on Dickey Creek and by use of splash dams, drove the logs down this small creek to their mill. Frank Liebig (retired in 1935 and died in 1950) was in charge of this sale. He had a few large decks to scale that fall, and I went along one morning to assist him. Previously, Frank had set a medium-sized bear trap under one of the log piles, expecting to get a small black bear which had been hanging around there. He hadn't told me of the trap, but he was carrying a small single-shot .22 rifle. As we came up fairly close to the log deck, a huge grizzly came rearing and screaming out from under the deck. The trap was holding the bear but didn't appear too secure. Frank pulled up his gun. I said, "Don't shoot him with that thing, Frank; if the trap doesn't hold, he will get you." But, Frank pulled the trigger and the grizzly dropped stone dead. Frank had done that before, knew the exact spot in the ear to place his shot and that was what he did. We skinned the bear and Frank had another trophy.

As I recall, it was this year that Ray Woesner, timber salesman on the Blackfeet was in a cruising party on the North Fork of the Flathead, and while running stripline, came suddenly upon a large female bear with two cubs. The bear came after Ray and he turned and ran down the hill, the

bear after him. Soon he came to an old, dry buckskin (tree without any bark left on it), which had fallen and lodged at about a 30 degree angle into a larger fir. Having good calks on his boots, Ray ran up the buckskin and didn't stop until he was about 20 feet off the ground up in the fir tree. The bear stopped at the base and sat down a few minutes. Soon she left and whipped the cubs back away from the tree.

Ray then came down, the bear returned and Ray shinned up the tree again. This was repeated a second time, and then the bear laid down close under the tree. It was getting late, and if Ray didn't get out of there soon, darkness would be upon him before he could reach camp. Thus, he conceived the idea of smoking her out. He gathered and rolled a large ball of dry tree moss and lichen, struck a match to it and tossed it down alongside the bear. Soon the duff and litter started burning rather briskly, and the bear got up and ambled over the hill. Ray didn't come in for supper, and by dark the other fellows were getting worried. They took lanterns and started to look for him. They met him a short distance from camp. He told of his experience, and said he was a little late because when the bear left and he came out of the tree he had an incipient forest fire to put out and nothing to work with except his Jacob staff and jackknife.

\* \* 1924 \* \*

By now I was on the Coeur d'Alene as logging engineer, succeeding Phil Neff who had transferred to the district office. McHarg was supervisor, Ashley Roche, deputy supervisor with the Coeur d'Alene and St. Joe administered as one unit by McHarg. My work covered the timber management activities of both forests. I bring in this year only to brag about one good job accomplished. During my spare time I camped over in Fourth-of-July Canyon and examined all the lands in there (several thousand acres of cut-over and young growth), owned by the Winton Lumber Company. McHarg and I worked up a deal with Winton's and traded some timber for these lands, getting them for \$1.51 per acre. The last time I was in there, I looked the area over rather extensively, and really felt proud of one job I had had a part in doing for Uncle Sam.

\* \* 1928 \* \*

By now I was in Timber Management with Koch, working as district timber sale inspector, having taken up this work in 1926. In the spring of 1926 and 1927 the district had small appropriations for insect control in the Big Hole of the Beaverhead. The first large special appropriation (\$100,000 for Big Hole insect control) came to the district in the spring of 1928. District Forester Fred Morrell, Elers Koch and Jim Evenden agreed that the district would be under the scrutiny of Congress in the expenditure of this huge sum of money. Morrell emphasized that it behooved the district to get a dollar's worth for every dollar spent.

The Big Hole, due to poor roads and no snow removal, was a tough country to invade before late spring. We had to go in from Divide. The road by Crystal Springs to Divide was graveled; but from Divide to Wisdom and all roads throughout the Big Hole Basin were dirt. The only good time to travel then was when they were hard-frozen, or along in August. But, this insect control job had to be completed between the times snow depth would permit starting and insect emergence necessitated completion. The work period was about May 1 to July 1.

After some discussion as to who would be put in charge of the operation on the ground. (I had heard it would be Phil Neff), Koch informed me in March that it was to be my job and to start making plans and get going. (I thought then and still do that it was through the sinister influence of Neff that I drew that one.)

On the 20th of March, with Tom Crossley (retired) and a Model T pickup with Ruckstell gear, a start was made for Wisdom. It took Tom and me two days to make the trip. We set about getting acquainted, determining the best location for campsites, and how best to get to them. We rented a small space for office and headquarters, enlisted Bob Strong's services to keep track of accounts, rented a barn for a storeroom, and ordered 14 complete camp units, including all equipment but no food supplies. We let a contract to have all our stuff hauled from Missoula and Butte to Wisdom.

The Beaverhead ranger (Ramsey) at Wisdom had an old army truck (Pierce Arrow) with hard-rubber tires. He also had a one-ton Dodge truck purchased the previous year from insect funds. These were useless to us now, but did do much service later on after some of the roads dried out. We hired a 4-horse team and 3 or 4 men and started moving the camps out and setting them up. The earlier ones were hauled out on sleighs. Wagons were later used part way and equipment transferred to sleighs to complete the trips.

As we got camps set up and snow depth would permit, we were provided with forest officers from various places in District 1 and other districts, and organized and trained spotting crews so as to complete spotting well ahead of treating. Red Stewart, Monk DeJarnette, Tom and Harvey Terrill, and others of the then younger group led these spotting crews.

Art Keyes, the local blacksmith, who later applied his trade in the Forest Service at CCC camps, had two fine well-bred and well-broken saddle horses. In hauling out camps on sleighs, I led the way to each campsite, using the Model T as far as it could go, then riding the sleigh - going on foot part of the time to select the route when we reached the end of established roads. Keyes kept insisting I use his saddle horses, since they needed to be worked. He didn't want any pay for them. Finally, one day I decided to ride his bay, a splendid animal; but before doing so, I drew up a contract and hired the horse. Art didn't want that, but after I told him the facts of life, as far as I was concerned, he signed the contract.

We were going far out that day to a location about 15 miles southeast of Wisdom. As we crossed the long, open route of no road, through sagebrush, I headed the horse on a straight line for the mouth of the creek in which the camp was to be set up. The 4 horse sleigh team was following about 100 yards behind, with some 8 inches of snow on the ground. The saddle horse was going along at a brisk walk when suddenly he seemed to drop right out from under me. He knew he was in a bad fix, and began to whinny. He had stepped into a bottomless boghole which was camouflaged with thin ice and coated with snow, and thus blended in with the surrounding area. I dismounted in a hurry and hung on to the long reins. The horse floundered and struggled, but kept sinking more and more. I stood on firm ground and tugged to hold his head up until the team arrived. The teamster unhooked his lead team, slipped a big rope through the pommel of the saddle and tied it securely to the saddle. Then he hitched the lead team on and hauled the bewildered saddle horse out of the hole. Fortunately, the latigo and other saddle rigging held in

lifting the horse out. He was a sight, with layers of slick, black mud all over him. We used wads of hay to wipe him off, put a blanket on him and walked him around for a time. He apparently wasn't injured. After a while I mounted and rode him the rest of the day.

On this job Jim Evenden provided the technical assistance and advice, and training of spotters. He inspected the treating work regularly. Phil Neff assisted me in the over-all supervision. Treating was largely by cutting infested trees, skidding with one horse into log piles, and burning the piles - practically all lodgepole pine. Joe Kircher inspected us for the Washington office, and Senator Burton K. Wheeler paid a visit as a representative of the Congress. Both gave us a clean bill. We operated 14 camps of about 25 men each, using about 40 single skidding horses, a pack - string and the 2 old trucks. When the project was about half done, I got a new Ford pickup - the first Model A in the region.

Joe Kircher arrived one evening from Missoula, driving a Dodge. Since I was unable to accompany him the following day, I detailed someone else to go with him to a camp which I considered the easiest to reach. That evening I met Joe at the office and inquired as to how he had made out. "Not very good," said he. "How far did you get?" I asked. "Oh, just about one and one-half miles to that first gate. We got stuck there in a mudhole and just got the darn car out about an hour ago," said Joe. But the next day Joe and I took the Model A and made the rounds successfully.

We treated about 96,000 trees at an over-all cost of about \$1.05 per tree. But, due to an extensive infestation to the south on the Salmon Forest, our work on the Beaverhead proved of little benefit. Large insect control projects handled on the Kootenai in the spring of 1929 and on the Coeur d'Alene in 1930 were very effective.

\* \* 1929 \* \*

This was a bad fire year. It was my misfortune to draw four camps on one side of the Sullivan Creek fire on the South Fork. I arrived there August 13. It was a whale of a big fire by then. Supervisor Lloyd Hornby (now deceased) was on the fireline at the head of Soldier Creek when I arrived. He left a few minutes later and I did not see him again until my arrival in Kalispell, fresh off the fire, on October 3. That was one of those summers when day after day conditions were explosive, the least spark touching off an inferno in a matter of minutes. It was while I was on this fire that the Teakettle Mountain blaze started, burning everything up both sides of the Middle Fork as far as Nyack.

I had some good men as foremen, such as Jim Hellman and Jim Yule, both now retired, and forest officers from other regions and localities. I don't recall all their names offhand. Once a week we would get a hell-twister and no humidity. August 23 and 30 were our worst days - banner burning days. The fire was so big and the firefighters so scarce that we never could get lines closed between "blowup" days. Charlie Hash, Assistant Supervisor, (killed by lightning in 1932), was on the upriver side with 3 or 4 camps in Tin Creek. We were on the downriver side. Strategy was to keep the fire from going upriver and burning out the whole South Fork drainage; so the upriver side had preference in drawing available firefighters; hence, we on the north side could never get sufficient men to do the job quickly enough. The occurrence of the Teakettle

Mountain and other large fires also drained the manpower supply. There were no power saws, bulldozers, trenchers or other mechanical devices, other than Pacific Marine pumps. The job had to be done with men and hodags.

By August 30, the fire was determined to reverse itself and go downriver. That morning we started a fresh crew of 15 men, just shipped in from Butte, on the job of trying to stop the fire from crossing back over Soldier Creek and going down river. This trouble spot was about two miles up Soldier Creek. John Spencer from Region 4 had a crew further down the creek and close to the river, trying to restrain the spread in that area. At noon he sent a messenger saying that everything was O.K. on this sector and looked pretty safe. At 1:00 p.m. a messenger came, much out of breath, with a note from Spencer to the effect that the fire had broken away from him and looked bad. The crew on our sector had its hands full too at the time.

From where we were I could see that Spencer's sector had blown up to a major conflagration. I hurried down there to determine what our course of action should be. Upon arrival, I found Spencer's crew had been chased out and were busy setting their camp out on an island to save it from burning. The crew I had left was in a pocket, fire on two sides, burn on one side and green forest on the fourth side. They were in danger, except that a way through the previous day's burn to the river was available.

I hurried back to this crew to find that they were fast losing their hold on parts of the upper sector; in fact, the fire had crossed their line in several places. But, since the lower sector was lost, there was little point in trying to save this one. The foreman was instructed to take his crew and their tools and go through the previous day's burn to the river, which at this time was not difficult to wade at a point just above a good sized island. I kept six men and we packed up two pumps and about 1,600 feet of hose we had been using, and placed them in a safe place in the old burn. When we came out a half hour later, the foremen and both crews were at camp. We setup the camp on the east side of the river.

The cook and two or three other camp men had become frightened and headed down the road. I knew if they stayed on the road they were safe.

After awhile they arrived at Elk Park, the cook carrying a bar of soap which he had picked up as he left camp. After resetting our camp and assuring them it was safe to return, all came back. There were about 100 men in camp, and I assumed that all had gotten out safely, since each foreman had stated he brought in all his men and the fleeing cooks had returned.

The next day, however, the timekeeper, who was a theological student and a bright chap, told me one man was missing. I recognized his name as a fellow who had been working on the pump and hose crew. I hadn't held him back to assist in moving equipment into the burned area because he acted rather queer and seemed weak, or badly frightened. He had been sent out with the foreman. The foreman said he counted at the river and all men were present as they went into the river to wade across. Some of the crew said that the missing man had been uncommunicative, that they thought he was frightened, and that after arrival at camp he kept on going down the road. A check revealed that he had not been seen below. A search was made of the river for three miles

below the crossing. A six-man crew systematically grid-ironed the earlier burned area that these men had traveled through, all to no avail.

The island in the river supported dense patches of willow, and men had been sent to search there. On the third day, with the reorganized crews out on the new, and what was to prove the final control lines, I decided to devote the day to searching the river, as there was still no trace of the missing man. I started at the crossing above the island. From the river bank I could see a small patch of white in the dense willows on the island. I waded over to investigate, and found the man, dead. He apparently had broken rank as the crew was crossing the stream and went out on the island. The undertaker-coroner from Kalispell came in for the body.

This man had been living in Butte with his parents. As soon as he was discovered missing, we had checked to see if he had returned home. When he was found and his parents advised, they told us he had been subject to heart disease, and consequently hadn't worked much in late years; also, that they had prevailed on him not to go out on a fire crew. I was much chagrined over the several days' delay in finding the body.

\* \* 1931 \* \*

By now I was on the Kootenai as supervisor, following a short hitch on the Coeur d'Alene. I succeeded Frank Jefferson (now deceased), who had moved in to the regional office. Conditions at all stations here were very primitive. There was no map of the forest other than a very inaccurate old drainage map; and no roads except a very poor one up the Yaak and on over the divide coming out at Rexford. Only a half-dozen improved lookout points existed, and consequently little telephone line. My hope was to improve some of these conditions, but that was not to be in 1931.

On July 9, a fire got away from a Kaniksu crew down toward Moyie, and did it blow up and race! By 6:00 p.m., it had burned across the heads of North and South Meadow Creeks and into Spread Creek over a wide front. That fire, under a strong wind, traveled a straight-line distance of 14 miles before we could get a man on it. Bert Bealey, ranger at Upper Ford, and now at Coram, was the first to arrive, with 6 men and a 25-man outfit. Later we had up to 1,400 men on this fire and were bothered frequently with fires occurring on other parts of the forest. All of us fought fire exclusively from July 9 to September 7, when a light rain came. One man was lost this year in an F.F. crew as a result of heart failure. I don't recall any accidents or a single injury.

In the fall of 1932 a little relief money was provided through the Hoover Program, and Bud Daugherty (now at Kalispell), with a small crew built a road up Pipe Creek nearly to Turner Station.

In 1933, we were allotted 4 CC camps, and in 1931 the 4 CC camps returned and sufficient Dev-Nira and Imp-Nira funds were allotted to hire 200 men all season. In these two years, we built many miles of low-standard road, new towers and houses on dozens of lookouts, and telephone lines to serve them. A good start was made on a topographic map of the forest, and we built all the ranger stations as they stand today, except the Libby Station and the residence structures at Sylvanite, Warland and Rexford. The latter three were remodeled. The airfields at Troy and

Libby were also constructed during those years. Times were hard, men plentiful, and the local populace was very appreciative of the employment provided by the Forest Service.

It was in 1932 that Charlie Powell, ranger at Rexford, overheard a conversation at a trail camp between two Pinkham Ridgers, indicating that the Ridge-runners planned some incendiarism. He promptly reported this to me. The Ridge-runners were a rather canny clan who migrated from the mountains of West Virginia and Kentucky years earlier and took homesteads on Pinkham Creek and Pinkham Ridge. Their chief pursuits were stealing tie timber and moonshining, but occasionally they would set a few fires, "just for the hell of it - to bother the 'Govment' men," and also to provide a few days' work. A bad epidemic of these fires was experienced in 1922.

Their planning in 1932 was to make lots of work. Bill Nagel, supervisor of the Blackfeet, and I hired an undercover man to go to Eureka to loiter and fish and get in with the Ridgers. He took an old Ford, rambled around the country, got acquainted with all of them, and finally joined their planning discussions after being accepted into their confidence. They completed their plans and set a date (August 22) for setting a string of fires from Edna Creek on the Blackfeet clear through to Sutton Creek on the Kootenai. A man was appointed to go into each drainage and the approximate spot was prescribed where he would set his fire. The complete plan, which was pretty thorough, was reported by our man directly to Nagel at Kalispell. This man was always around Eureka in the daytime, and whenever he had anything to report he drove into Kalispell during the night and was back before morning. We never phoned or wrote to him, nor did he to us. He was an ex-forest officer known to Nagel and me as a fully reliable man.

The day before the scheduled setting of the fires, we had two or three men in the vicinity of where each fire was to be started and quite a few others at anticipated places of travel by the Ridgers in or out of the woods. Our men met several of the Ridgers, who appeared very surprised to see someone. Our fellows saw others they did not meet, and likely our men were seen, too. We had hoped to catch at least one or two Ridgers in the act, but not a fire was set. Our undercover man was out on the fire-setting expedition with one of the Ridgers and joined in their talks after they returned to Eureka. They had tumbled immediately to the fact that we had gotten wind of their plans, since everywhere they went they encountered someone. But, they never suspected our undercover man, and to this day, old timers there are wondering how we got next to their plan. I have never heard since of any attempts at incendiaries in that area. Previously, there had been several outbreaks, and one man served time in Deer Lodge for setting a fire on Pinkham Ridge.

\* \* \* \* \*

The spring of 1936 I transferred to the regional office and served there in various capacities, first under Major Kelley and later under Pete Hanson, until I retired on June 30, 1949. The years 1936 to 1938 were mostly devoted to appraisal work on the N.P. Land Grant case.

The Forest Service was five years old when I had the privilege of joining with a lot of good people in its work. Now as I have written the foregoing in 1955, the Service is celebrating its 50th year of service to the public. It has always been a good, efficient organization.



Unloading from eight-wheel trucks. Neils Lumber Company, Libby, Montana, Kootenai National Forest, 1921.

October 1955

**RAFTING THE FLATHEAD**  
**By Wallace W. (alias Duckie or Wally) Weber**  
**(Retired 1949)**

In March 1915, while forest assistant on the Flathead National Forest in Montana, I had an experience I'll never forget - and one that, I daresay, Fred Mason of Ogden, recently retired lumberman of Region 4, remembers even more vividly.

A. O. Benson (recently deceased), H. J. Grossman, now living in Portland, I believe; Rex Brownlee, whom I've lost track of; Fred and I were sent up the South Fork of the Flathead River to cruise a few odd pieces of timber that the 1914 reconnaissance crew hadn't had time to cover. We snowshoed in, dragging supplies, equipment, etc., on toboggans up to Riverside Camp, which consisted of a fairly large log cabin some 8 or 10 miles above Hungry Horse Ranger Station, located a mile or two north of the new Hungry Horse Dam. The snowshoeing was good for the most part, and the cruising went along quite smoothly, though I recall we had some interesting times crossing the river in the course of our daily tasks. As we neared the end of the job we began to consider the trip back to Coram, where the South Fork joins the main river. Somehow (it couldn't have been because we were lazy) we didn't relish the idea of dragging those toboggans and equipment back over the snow again, and with that wonderful bit of water right at our front door it seemed utterly ridiculous not to use it; besides, someone in the bunch had heard that Jack Clack had rafted the South Fork once upon a time. So we decided to build two log rafts, one a comparatively light one that could be maneuvered fairly easily, the other longer and heavier to carry all our personal belongings, equipment, etc.

We drew lots for crafts, Fred and Gross getting the light raft, which was used as a pilot, while Benson and I undertook to guide the heavier, more cumbersome carrier. The river was high, but not quite at flood stage, as we left in high spirits, in the bright, warm sunshine of a fine March (or early April) morning, gleefully figuring we'd be in Coram in a few hours and feeling sorry for Rex who was snowshoeing out because he couldn't swim. You see how prudent and careful we were! I don't know just how fast we traveled, but the current was strong and we moved along at a right smart pace, enjoying the scenery and the excitement immensely, getting a bang out of the frequent stretches of white water that carried us at high speed. The first untoward event occurred when Fred and Gross let their light craft crowd the north bank too closely at a bend in the river, and ran up on an inclined rock ledge that extended down into the stream, tilting their raft so much that Gross fell off and got a good ducking. However, he climbed back on, removed and rung out his wet clothes, and put them back on to dry in the warm sunshine. Ben and I were able to pole our raft away from the ledge, but Gross felt pretty bad because he ruined his film and camera which was to record the voyage.

A few miles farther on Ben and I, in taking a left hand fork on signal from our pilots, to avoid rapids, found ourselves sliding up a big inclined rock right in the middle of our narrow channel. Pry as we might with our poles we couldn't get that darned raft off the rock. For one thing, the strong current kept pushing the raft forward. Finally Fred and Gross, when we failed to show up, tied up their raft and walked back to see what had happened to us. With their help from shore,

using ropes, and with Ben and me standing waist deep in the swift current, we managed to tug and pull that behemoth back off the rock and proceeded blissfully on our way.

All this, and a peculiar eddy we got into and had difficulty getting out of, consumed considerable time, so it was afternoon (we had leisurely eaten some sandwiches en route) when we got to Hungry Horse Canyon, which we knew about vaguely, but which really meant nothing to us. Here the river narrowed to (as I remember) about 30 or 140 feet at the upper end, running between almost precipitous banks. Going through the upper stretch of the canyon, Fred and Gross were 100 yards or so ahead of us, moving comparatively slow in the deeper water. We heard a dull roar from downstream, but assumed it was only a few more rapids ahead - and white water was just adventuresome. But, suddenly we saw the boys jump around excitedly on their raft, which then was picking up speed again, and finally Gross made a leap for the south bank, toward which they had drifted. Fortunately he had the pole in his hands when he jumped it caught in the snow on the bank, and he was able to drag himself out of the water. The last we saw of Fred he appeared to be diving off the front of the raft just a fraction of a second before it went over the 8 to 10-foot waterfall. Believe me, Ben and I lost no time in tying up our craft on the south bank, and walking down to the falls, where we joined Gross.

As we peered fearfully down the very narrow canyon ahead, where in places the water was arched over completely with a bridge of ice, we could see no sign of Fred. Perilously we crawled down the south bank about a quarter of a mile (at least it seemed that far) to an eddy at the end of the canyon and there, to our great joy and amazement, was Fred, one arm over one of the logs of his wrecked raft, cheerfully calling out that he was O.K. A tossed rope, and Fred soon joined us. The rest of the tale is prosaic, but it was arduous. The first important thing seemed to be to get Fred into some dry clothes (Gross was wet, too, of course), but there wasn't much to give him. All our duffle got wet, when we were hung up on that rock because the rear end of the tilted raft was under water. However, we ferried over to the north bank, finally found a small, fairly level spot on the hillside, built a hell roaring fire and spent half the night drying our blankets and clothes. Fred seemed none the worse for his involuntary swim, but neither he nor the rest of us could figure how he ever managed to navigate that gorge safely, with logs from his raft banging about, big boulders sticking their ugly heads above the foaming waters, and the river boiling. He said all he did was drift with the current, and let nature take its course.

To make a long story short, we performed a Herculean task the next morning, snowshoeing out of there with our packs on our backs - no trail, of course - and over some exceedingly rough country. We simply took off downstream, figuring it was too much of a climb to get to the trail north of us. I don't remember whether we were right or not in that calculation.

Rex got to Coram before we did — and did he give us the horselaugh! "Glad you fellows had such an easy, comfortable voyage down the South Fork," he said.



Cinnamon Ranger Station, Gallatin National Forest. 1922.

October 1955

## **WILLIAM G. WEIGLE REMINISCES**

**By William G. Weigle**

The new Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was under construction through the St. Joe Forest in 1909. There were seven tunnels on the forest, one of which was over two miles long. This gives some idea of the number of men employed, and also the number of saloons and other unlawful dives, all on the national forest without permit.

The forester sent me an order to clean out these saloons. I sent three rangers to these places to notify the owners that we were requested to close their places and that they would have to go along to Wallace to appear before the district attorney. When the ranger informed me that all but two agreed to comply, I told him that I would be over in the morning. It was 22 miles from Wallace to Grand Forks where the men were located and by trail the entire way through heavy timber. I first went to the sheriff and got two pair of handcuffs and a deputy sheriff's commission. I had a good saddle horse so I started about 10:00 p.m. and reached Grand Forks shortly after daylight. After breakfast we called on the nine men who were supposed to return to Wallace and the two who previously had said they would not go but who now agreed to go. The rangers and the men had to walk three miles to the Northern Pacific Railroad at Taft to catch the train to Wallace. I reached Wallace before they did. The men appeared before the district attorney and instead of finding them guilty he turned them all loose. I rearrested them and took them to Moscow where the court was in session. They were all found guilty and fined for running a saloon on the national forest without a license and were ordered to close up.