

## FOREWORD

This saga of the life and times of Clyde P. Fickes is a stirring story of the early-day workings of the U.S. Forest Service and its strong-hearted men and women who pioneered the way. He writes an interesting story of his experiences, work and associates while making a career in forestry over a span of about 37 years. The Forest Service was in its early, formative period in 1907. It was under the strong and courageous leadership of the great conservationist and forester, Gifford Pinchot, and the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt himself was an ardent conservationist and a great leader. He was in the forefront, fighting for those measures he considered good for his country and its people.

Mr. Fickes' interest in the conservation of the Nation's forest resources and the welfare of the agency administering the National Forests has never lagged. He writes a vivid story of the conditions under which foresters and their families lived and worked during those days of early development. He describes how forest officers performed their work, the means through which they carried out their tasks and the obstacles they had to overcome. Mr. Fickes reveals much information about the early day handicaps, unknown to the present generation of foresters in National Forest administration. He tells of the almost total lack of roads, communication facilities, living quarters and fire protection facilities. He reveals the obstacles and difficulties in bringing those facilities to fruition. He points up the gradual and slow improvement. Except for statutory salaries, funding was nearly nonexistent. Rangers performed most of the work personally, however rough and hard. This they did, with no means of transportation other than pack and saddle horses, travelling over poor to nonexistent trails to get from here to there. And, too, in those early times the Ranger furnished his own horses and rigging.

It is particularly interesting to learn of the living conditions endured by those early day men and their families, as revealed by Mr. Fickes. Indeed, they lived and performed their work under very primitive conditions compared to present-day facilities. Their timber management work, except for trespass, was light. Often, they fought their forest fires singlehandedly. Range management work was heavy, controversial, and important. This was due to the fact that stockmen and ranchers had long enjoyed free run of the public domain at no cost to the users. The correction of range misuse required men of stature, firmness, fairness, diplomacy, and determination. Clyde Fickes and many of his associates possessed those characteristics. To them we owe much credit for shaping National Forest administration out of the raw. It is a pleasure to know that Clyde Fickes survived the obstacles and served to take an important role in the modernization of the many methods and facilities so greatly needed to get the job done.

Fickes' story is one of human interest. It will prove enjoyable reading for the old timers and some not so elderly. It brings back memories of incidents long since forgotten. And, too, it will be of interest to our present generation of Forest officers as a means of acquainting them with what has gone before.

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