

The groundwork is laid



Stanton W. Mead (seated on right) met with this group of forestry experts in 1930 to determine how he could best insure a future supply of pulpwood for Consolidated paper mills. With information obtained from this meeting, the company embarked on a forestry program that today includes 290,000 acres of forest land in the Lake States.

In the spring of 1930, Stanton Mead went to Minneapolis to an American Forestry Association meeting to get information about forestry.

Mead talked with many people, but he was particularly impressed with a fellow named Emmett Hurst, one of the first foresters in the Lake States region. Hurst had graduated from Syracuse University with a forestry degree in 1923. He'd worked with the U.S. Forest Service for a couple years, and for the four years prior to the Minneapolis meeting had been wood supervisor for an Upper Michigan paper mill.

There was very little actual forest management in those days. Hurst's duties were mostly cruising, mapping, and scaling. To him, the forestry program Stanton spoke of was exciting.

A few months after the Minneapolis meeting, Stanton Mead called several experts in the field of forestry to the Mead Fishing Camp near Markton, Wisconsin; men like Raphael Zon of the U.S. Forest Experiment Station in Minnesota, and E.W. Tinker, the National Forest regional director. He wanted to determine from these men what methods would best insure a future supply of pulpwood for Consolidated's mills.

The experts agreed that purchase of second growth forest land was the best bet at the time, but exactly how to manage it for the future was debatable. During the three-day meeting there were many suggestions, but the soundest advice seemed to come from Zon, a veteran of 30 years with the U.S. Forest Service.

The accepted logging practice in those days was clear-cutting. Not the patch or strip cutting used today, but the removal of all trees, often for miles at a time. In the wake of such logging were tall heaps of slash which remained a fire hazard for years.

Zon advocated partial cutting instead — the removal of the mature trees only — "the 25% that represented 75% of the stand's value." This would ensure future supplies. Or at least, Zon said, do the clear-cutting in strips or patches, piling the slash in the middle. Adjacent stands of uncut trees could then aid in reseeding the clear-cut area and could themselves be removed as the cutover area reached seeding age.

As far as replanting seedlings on deserted fields or burned-over land, Zon felt it would be "pretty risky." Better to "sweeten" thinner areas in existing forests.



In 1931 Consolidated began planting seedlings on the burned-over land. It was all done by hand in those days, so the planting season often extended late into the year. In 1933 this crew from the Argonne area was still planting trees in November — with snow on the ground.

Emmett Hurst, Consolidated's first forester, poses beside a burned-out stump. The barren, treeless land on which he stands was characteristic of much of the Midwest in the 1930's.

In September, with this advice still fresh in his mind, Stanton Mead wrote Emmett Hurst and offered him charge of a new forestry program. In October, the company's first forester arrived in Wisconsin Rapids.

One of Hurst's initial duties was starting a nursery. Ironically, it was begun on the same deserted farm north of Biron that George W. Mead and Lyman Beeman had experimented on seven years earlier. Stanton Mead recalls he didn't have the heart to tell his father that those seedlings they'd planted had been mistakenly cut as a "scraggly fire hazard."

In addition to the Biron Nursery, Hurst planted spruce seedlings on 360 acres of cut-over land near the Mead Fishing Camp. It had been agreed upon at the meeting there that the camp was as good a place as

any to start. The seedlings he planted came from Zon in Minnesota.

But there were many setbacks for the budding forestry program.

When Stanton and George Mead drove up to the camp to see how the seedlings were doing the following spring, there weren't any to be found. The rabbits and deer had eaten every last one of them during the previous winter. "Looks pretty hopeless to plant little trees," George remarked to Stanton as they drove home.

When the Great Depression began, company land buying came to a standstill, and so did the forestry program. In fact, Hurst recalled years later, he took a cut in salary, and for a while was put in charge of company-owned farmland south of Wisconsin Rapids. But at least he had a job.

To benefit another generation

Then, in 1932, the company started selective logging of hemlock in Langlade County. By 1935 seedlings from the Biron nursery were being planted in Forest County and we were supplying the Forest Service's Civilian Conservation Corps with seedlings for planting in the national forests of Wisconsin.

A nursery was begun to supply the seedlings desperately needed for replanting the forests. Left, Orrie Reed was the first foreman of the Biron Nursery, begun in 1931. Below, the Summit Lake Landing in the winter of 1935. Such landings were set up as a central gathering place for pulpwood before shipment south to Consolidated paper mills.



In the 1940's, 120,000 acres were acquired and named the Oneida, Loretta-Draper, and Forest County Blocks. During that time aerial photography, mapping, and inventory of all company land was completed.

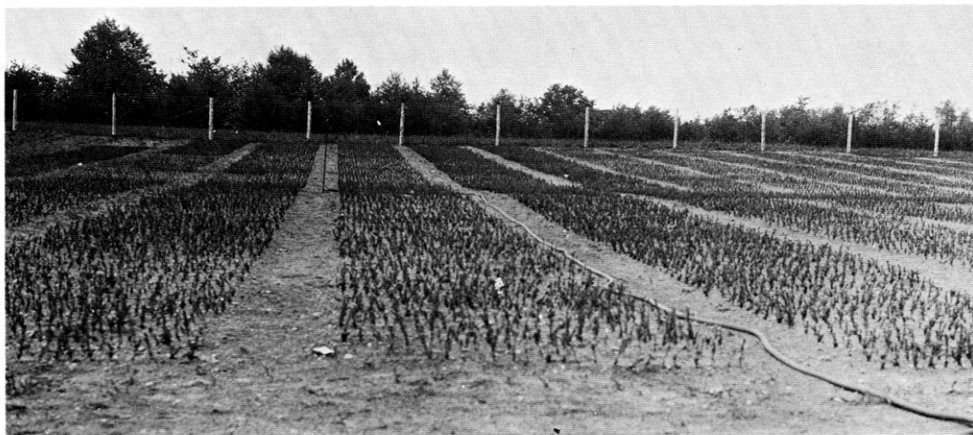
In 1951 the Biron Nursery was moved to Monico, which placed it within 100 miles of most company-owned forest land in the Lake States. By the mid-fifty's Consolidated owned more than 200,000 acres in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, and employed 15 professional foresters.

In 1968 the "sweetening" of the thin areas in our forests that Zon had recom-

mended in 1930 was completed to the point that Monico Nursery was deemed unnecessary and was closed the following year.

In 1968 the first commercial cutting of trees that we'd planted ourselves took place, and that same year Stanton Mead and Emmett Hurst, the two men most responsible for it, retired.

Today, both men continue to watch the progress of the forestry program that they began almost a half century ago. And both men are proof of the observation made by Cicero in 194 B.C., that "He plants trees to benefit another generation."



With the Great Depression of the 1930's, Consolidated's tree planting program slowed, and the Biron Nursery, left, instead supplied the Civilian Conservation Corps with the seedlings for planting on National Forests. Below, the condition of much of the land Consolidated acquired during the 1940's. In the foreground are remnants of a few trees which fell victim to the forest fires so rampant during that period. In the background a Consolidated planting crew is "sweetening" the forest with pine seedlings.

