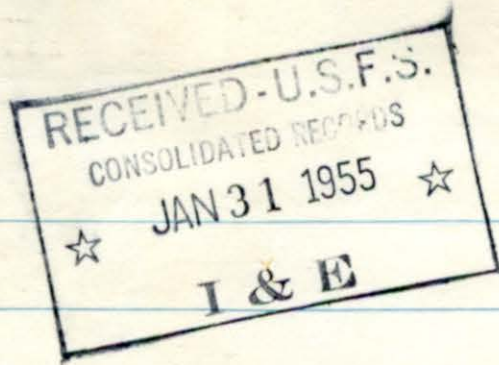


W. H. Holmes



RECEIVED

JAN 31 1955

CHIEF - I & E
W. O.

302 Forest Road
Raleigh, N.C.

Jan 28, 1955.

To Mr Richard E. McArdle, Chief
U.S. Forest Service,
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr McArdle,

In accordance with your request of
December 20 which I delayed replying
to till January 15, I am herewith sub-
-mitting some rough notes on my work
in the Service between December 1902
and the spring of 1909 when I began
service with my adopted State.

If there is any statement worthy of your
attention please feel free to use it in any
way you wish. It is not history, but most-
-ly the memory of an old man who frequent-
-ly forgets the names of his best friends.

With profound apology for this long delay
and with best wishes

Sincerely yours J. H. Holmes

January 1955.

Memo. from John S. Holmes

Having been brought up on a farm on the French Broad River in Henderson County N.C. and expecting to continue farming as my life work, I took and completed in 1886 a two year course in Agriculture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, (it was not until two years later that the State College of Agriculture was opened).

Discouraged by my experience on my father's ^{farm} and on that of an adjacent neighbor from floods and low prices, I hopefully applied in the fall of 1902 for a job with the Division of Forestry of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

Having been accepted, I was ordered to report at Beaumont, Texas on Dec 2, 1902.

It was only a short ride to Kirbyville where I joined a group of men who were busily engaged in loading a flat car with equipment & food to carry a party through a three months winter in the cut-over long-leaf pine & swamp lands between the railroad and the Sabine River.

Several camps were established on the property but we saw little of any but our own men. George Clement was in charge of our camp. I stored a tent with fetherol & Gow. I think John Keech was a member of our camp.

I soon got into trouble through the lack of a full sized axe. In trying to cut stove wood with a light, short handled axe I cut my foot & was laid up for a few days & then hunched duty before I was able to tramb the woods. Our cook there was to secure growth analysis figures of the recently cut pine stumps and stem analyses of small longleaf pine reproduction. Raffael Fox was visiting inspector for this work and I wondered rather skeptically at his division of all the younger reproduction into three age classes, 3, 7, and 11, years I think it was; as the ages of all longleaf seedlings in that region. Only later did I understand that seed production was not annual but seasonal.

Early in March 1903 we were gathered into Washington where we assisted in the tabulation of the information which had been collected in Texas.

That spring in the Capital City was one of the high points in my life. Being one of G.P.'s men & being invited to some of his Thursday - day evening gatherings - at one of which we heard & were introduced to our President Theodore Roosevelt, knowing my fellow-workers in the Atlantic Building and often attending two or three five cent movies of an evening with a fellow forester was continuously interesting and thrilling. (Washington office DC)

*It was, I think, in the summer of 1903 that I was sent in charge of mostly new men to gather stem analyses & other growth figures of our commercial Southern Hardwoods on an active lumbering operation on Big Creek in Haywood County, N.C., in the Great Smoky Mts. One disturbing incident at that camp remains very clearly in my memory. In those days

1-1903

live stock legally ranged the open woods uncontrolled and we were greatly bothered with the neighborhood cattle loitering around our camp fire and tents. One evening, in desperation, one of my men, Doc Steels, picked up the nearest missile he could lay his hands on, ^{an axe} & chucked it at the an invading cow; the aim was too good, the sinew above the hind hoof was severed & the poor cow rendered useless. I was greatly disturbed & so no doubt was Steels. Probably the Government had to pay full value for the cow.

That fall, at the age of 35 I entered the Yale School of Forestry and having spent the intervening summer in the field under the direction of the US Division of Forestry I graduated in the Class of 1905. I recall that in order to comply with the requirements of my course to carry out assigned field work I spent part of December '04 in Decatur, ^{County} Florida making a study of cedar "slats" for the making of lead pencils. Dead & down trees, often half buried in the swamp, made the best pencil wood.

As Forest Inspector, in the reorganized Forest Service, I spent most of 1906 in the South-west going from one Reservation to another in Arizona & New Mexico.

My first objective was Paradise, a small town in the Chinacahua Mountains, head quarters for miners & prospectors; it was said to have only one store but nine saloons. I was sent by the supervisor of the Chinacahua Forest Reserve to a Guard or Ranger who lived by himself near to where practically clear cutting of cedar was going on. Cut into fuel wood size the sticks were bound onto the backs of burros & packed down the steep trails to the mines & other users. I met two or three such pack trains on my way up.

I visited successively several Federal Forest Reservations & nowhere do I remember seeing any serious effort being made to retain or re-establish the forest cover, or very little to protect it.

In 1907 Bradley & I made a study of the forest conditions of eastern Kentucky. We worked separately, county by county, I taking the counties of the Big Sandy watershed & he those to the west of mine. It was a rough coal mining region & sometimes hard to get a place to spend the night. At times I would ride with a couple of loads of corn & fodder strapped to my saddle. At that time my salary was \$125⁰⁰ per month & my field expenses paid by the Forest Service would run from \$60. to \$100. per month. The report based on this study was published as part of the Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture of Kentucky at that time or soon afterwards.

In the winter of 1907-8 I was assigned to make a study of the forest conditions of Southern Mississippi in cooperation with the State Geologist, Dr. Coker.

The Mississippi Geological Survey. As a result of a partial survey a press bulletin

was prepared by me & printed by the State in which I had advised that a section of the State, formerly excellent farming land but then so seriously eroded that it had been abandoned ~~and~~ ^{and} young pine woods becoming established in many places, be devoted to the growth of timber & protected from fire. (I have no copy of this bulletin so cannot quote it.) This aroused so much opposition that proposed forest fire legislation was defeated before it was introduced carefully considered. I was to have urged a bill before the Legislature but I was called away by illness & death of my brother at Asheville on February the eighth. The cataclysm was too much for me & I lost my head & did not return to Mississippi; so far as I can recall.

Ducktown. Then there was the examination of the forest growth in the Ducktown area in Polk County, Tennessee to determine the

cause of the injury & death of much of the forest growth, over many square miles to the north & west from the smelter of the Tennessee Copper Co., nearby. I worked mostly alone on that project during August, September & October one summer (?). This was preliminary to a trial in the State court at Benton, the county seat, at which a Mr. Seymour represented the plaintiffs, who were unknown to me, and Dr. C. A. Schenck appeared for the defendant Copper Company. The Director of the Madison Laboratory, & Mrs. ——— came down but as I remember, were not called on to testify. The smelter gradually reduced its operations & then closed down, ostensibly because the copper vein gave out, but the large open area still remains. (See "North with the Spring" by ———)

John S. Holmes,
 Raleigh, N.C.
 Formerly, W.O. Surveys

P.S. I have found in an old trunk the following communications relating to my work with the Forest Service - which need not be returned:

1. Letter, Carter to Holmes Dec 28/07.
2. " , Foster to " Jan 31/08
See Telegram Subacute of 2
3. " Cridex to Holmes Feb 5, '08
4. " Foster to Holmes Feb 14, '08.
5. Tel. Cox to Holmes Feb 19, '08

J. S. Holmes.