



## Forest Timeline Newsletter

### "Sowing the Seeds" of a New Book Project

Andrew W. Bell, a post-doctoral fellow at SciencesPo, Center for History in Paris, France, explored the FHS Archives in his research on the postwar seeding program of Douglas fir trees after World War I. He made use of an Alfred D. Bell Jr. Travel Fellowship to conduct the research. (Andrew is no relation to Alfred.)

After the war, Douglas fir stands in Europe were practically nonexistent; today they cover more than 800,000 hectares, making it the second most common non-native tree species on the continent. Andrew hopes to understand and document the motivation behind the seeding program from an economic and ecological viewpoint that takes the environmental impact into consideration.

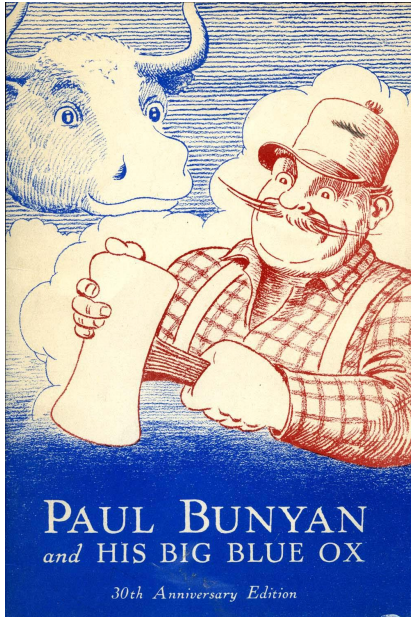


Andrew also conducted research on the role of forestry in the First World War and its aftermath more broadly. He expects that his research at FHS will “mark an early step toward the completion of my book project, tentatively titled, “Sowing the Seeds of American Influence: The Reconstruction and Reforestation of Europe after WWI.”

After spending a week at FHS, Andrew had this to say, “I found one-of-a-kind documents here that I never expected to uncover. Some of these records could have easily been destroyed postwar, but someone had the forethought to save them from destruction. I am amazed at what I found here. An endless source of primary documents collected in one place is beyond what I imagined.”

Andrew received his PhD from Boston University in May of 2020, wryly noting: “I don’t recommend defending a dissertation during a pandemic.”

## New in the FHS Exhibit Hall: "Paul Bunyan: An American Folklore Legend"



The L. Michael and Karen Kelly Exhibit Hall has a new exhibition. "Paul Bunyan: An American Folklore Legend" looks at the mythical logger Paul Bunyan in some of his many iterations. To build the exhibit, the FHS staff drew from the archival collections of William B. Laughead and Rudolph "Rudy" Wendelin, the Red River Lumber Company, and various holdings of the Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Library and Alvin J. Huss Archives. The paintings in this exhibit were permanently donated to FHS by Roseburg Forest Products of Eugene, Oregon.

The first known reference of Paul Bunyan in print appeared in 1893, while the earliest recorded story of Paul Bunyan appeared in the *Duluth News Tribune* in 1904. But the character would enter the public eye through the efforts of William B. Laughead, a former lumberjack and amateur artist turned advertising man. As advertising manager for Red River Lumber from 1914 to 1946, Laughead would use the character to sell western pine products to eastern buyers. In doing so, he transformed the character from one created for entertaining rugged lumberjacks in logging camps into one suitable for children's stories at bedtime. The exhibit explores the impact of Laughead's work, which first caught the public's attention in 1922; how Paul Bunyan has been used by others for commercial purposes like tourism; and how, in the last decade, others have adapted and changed the story and characters to reach new and different audiences.

We hope if you are in the Durham area that you'll make time to take in the new exhibit.





## Remembering Harold "Pete" Steen (1935–2022)

The Forest History Society is sad to report the passing of Harold K. "Pete" Steen, a former executive director of FHS. Pete died in January 2022 at his home in Arizona. He served as FHS's third Executive Director from 1978 to 1997.

Pete earned a bachelor's degree in forestry from the University of Washington in 1957 and worked

several years for the U.S. Forest Service before obtaining a PhD in history from the University of Washington in 1969. He joined the staff of the Forest History Society in 1969 as associate director for research and library services.



During his tenure as executive director, Steen conducted numerous oral history interviews, wrote and provided editorial direction for the Society's growing body of publications, and expanded the Society's archival holdings while building important ties with the U.S. Forest Service, forestry organizations, conservation groups, and corporations.

Pete led the Society into the computer age, overseeing the conversion of the Society's two primary reference sources into database format—its bibliography and Guide to Archival Collections. He directed the Society's 1984 move to Durham, North Carolina, and established an affiliation with Duke University, where he served as an adjunct professor until 1999. Before retiring in 1997 from FHS, Pete negotiated a partnership with the American Society for Environmental History, with whom FHS began co-publishing the quarterly journal *Environmental History* in 1996. The Society's "Issues Series" publications and "If Trees Could Talk" middle school environmental education curriculum also began under his direction.

In retirement Pete continued to work for the Society while pursuing other projects and teaching at various universities. He was the recipient of several distinguished service awards, including the Society of American Foresters' 2000 Sir William Schlich Memorial Award.

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## ***New on Peeling Back the Bark***

### **"Wood in the Space Age: Forest Products at the 1962 Seattle World's Fair"**

On April 21, 1962, the Century 21 Exposition (better known as the Seattle World's Fair) opened to the public. The Seattle World's Fair

is best remembered for the Space Needle, which became an enduring Seattle landmark, as well as the still-operating monorail line. A forgotten aspect of the fair, though, is just how prominently wood products were utilized and featured throughout the exposition.



In addition to the use of wood by the architects of many of the fair's buildings, multiple exhibits specifically highlighted forest products and the importance of our forest resources. These included the Home of Living Light, the Home of the Immediate Future, the Forest Industries Theater, as well as the Society of American Foresters area. Various photographs and materials from the FHS Archives document these exhibits, and the overall use and promotion of wood at the fair.

[Read the Blog Post](#)

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## **The "Ace Photographer" and Paul Bunyan: Berenice Abbott's Red River Lumber Company Photos**

In February 1944 a photograph exhibition opened at a San Francisco gallery, featuring a new set of images by the talented American photographer Berenice Abbott (1898-1991). The location where she had shot was a radical departure for the photographer known for working in New York and Paris: a lumber mill in Westwood, a small town in northern California.



When Abbott arrived in 1943, Red River Lumber Company had several thousand employees and a handful of offices around California. Bringing her unique artistic eye to the industrial landscape, she took striking shots of the lumber mills, lumber yards, logging operations, and heavy machinery, and of some of the company's workers. In a letter sent the following year, advertising

manager William Laughead (the subject of a new exhibit at FHS) was clearly impressed: “Last summer we engaged Berenice Abbott, one of America’s ace photographers... Our object in engaging a photographer of Miss Abbott’s caliber was to get better art than the regular commercial shots.” You can see some of those photos in the blog post. Be sure to follow the links to the photo gallery from there.

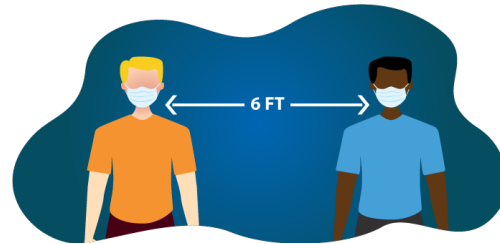


[Read the Blog Post](#)

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## COVID-19 Update: FHS Open for Research

FHS headquarters is now open to individuals who wish to visit the library and archives. If you need travel funding assistance, please explore the [Alfred D. Bell Jr. Travel Grant](#) on our website or [email](#) FHS Archivist Eben Lehman for more information. The grant supports travel and lodging expenses incurred by researchers conducting in-depth studies at the Society's [Alvin J. Huss Archives](#) and [Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Library](#).



We are open Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you wish to visit, please call in advance at 919-682-9319 to learn more. As always, if you have a research question, you can [email](#) the library staff. Sorry, we are not yet open to groups.

