That's The Way It Was . . .
The First 75 Years

Department of Forestry
1914 – 1989
75
Years Of Service
Virginia Division of Forestry
Virginia Forest Service

That's The Way It Was. . .The First 75 Years

This book is a collection of stories, yarns, and history contributed by DOF people across the State. The personal reminisces are introduced in each chapter by a brief review of the Department of Forestry formal history as compiled by Seth G. Hobart, George W. Dean and Edwin E. Rodger. Thanks to them and to all the contributors who helped on the book, and especially Robert L. Dunn for his help editing the formal history sections.

Compiled by James E. Cook
Deputy State Forester
1989

75 YEARS OF VIRGINIA FOR

1914 - The Beginning: Office of the State Forester is created.

1915 - The first State Forester Chapin Jones is appointed.

1916 - 1st Nursery at U.Va. Lambeth Field

1917 - 1st Fire Tower at Big Stone Gap

1919 - The first State Forest, Gallion SF.

1921 - CFW system established.

1921 - 1st printing of "Common Forest Trees of Virginia."

1926 - State divided into 4 Administrative Regions: Tidewater, Piedmont, Northwest and Southwest.

1929 - Nursery moved to Scott Stadium and then to present Shop area.

1933 - Fred Pederson appointed State Forester.

1933 - Fire Trail system begun by CCC's.

1940 - Brush Burning Law passed.

1942 - Present Region 1 and 2 established from Tidewater.

1944 - George Dean appointed State Forester.

1944 - Regions 3, 5, 7 and 8 established.

1945 - 1st tractors acquired.

1945 - First full time CFW's.

1945 - Scott County came under wildfire protection, and for the first time the entire state was protected.

1945 - The Office of Chief Mechanic was established; Oscar Bellomy appointed.

1945 - 1st tractors acquired.

1946 - Forestry Service to Landowners Act passed.

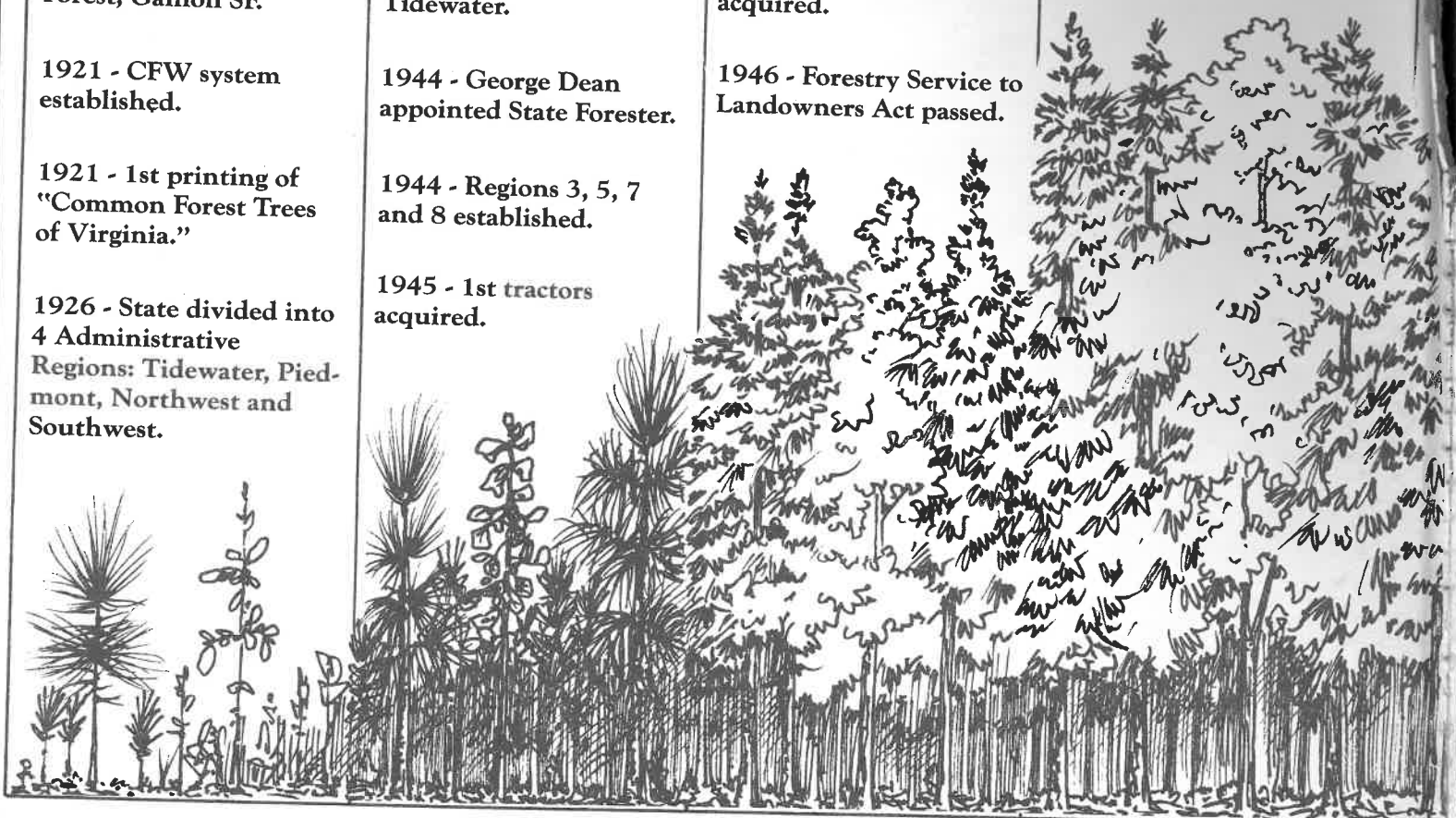
1946 - Region 9 established.

1950 - Seed Tree Law enacted.

1952 - Insects and Disease Branch established.

1952 - New Kent Nursery established.

1955 - The title "Division of Forestry" is official



ESTRY - THE HIGHLIGHTS

1955 - Research Branch established.

1966 - Augusta Nursery established.

1967 - 1st official uniforms.

1970 - Reforestation of Timerlands Act.

1973 - Wally Custard appointed State Forester.

1975 - "Bart" Bartholomew first Deputy State Forester.

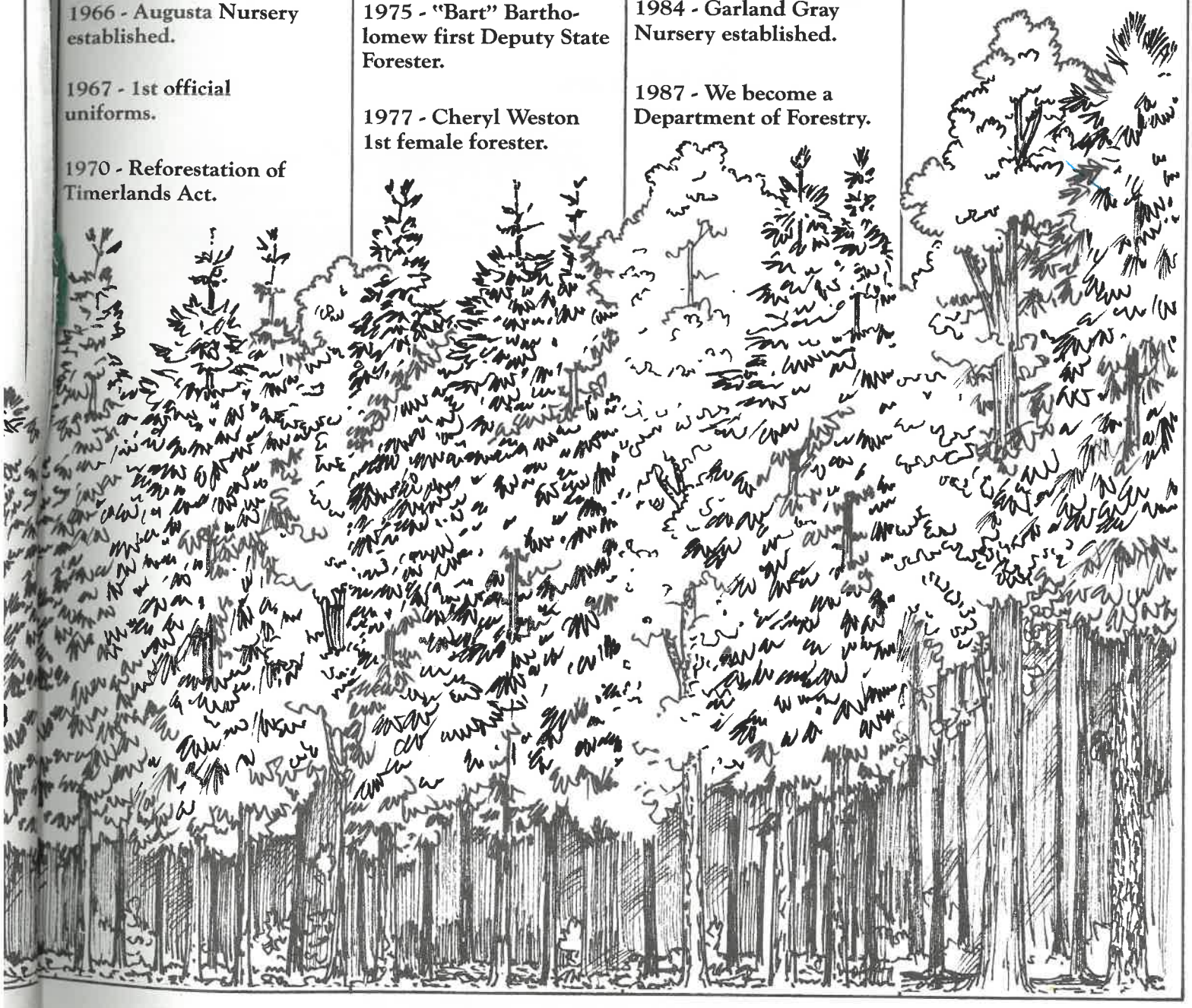
1977 - Cheryl Weston 1st female forester.

1983 - Jim Garner appointed State Forester.

1984 - Garland Gray Nursery established.

1987 - We become a Department of Forestry.

1989 - Approval to acquire first DOF aircraft.



Foreword

The Department of Forestry is more than equipment, tools and "personnel." It is people, men and women, who through their very humanness make us more as a whole than we could be as individuals. We are people, rural and urban, strong and weak, aggressive and gentle. We breathe life into what would otherwise be an impersonal organization. The Department is a feeling, a passion, if you will, of those who have served during "trying" times of long days and nights, few resources and little help. We've endured the hardships, persevered and accomplished more in 75 years than most would ever expect!

Our organization has matured, but only in years—our hearts and minds are still young.

Most of us remember the endless days and nights on fires, where we felt lucky if we could snatch a few winks on the tool box of a pickup or the bed of a transport truck. We remember the 100+ degrees days with a drip torch and the early mornings aerial spraying. We remember the long hours working up payrolls, reports and operating the radios while the field troops were "on the line." We remember the C-rations, Beanie Weenies, and too little water. It was all part of becoming a part of the family.

When all is said and done, it has been a good 75 years! The war stories will continue to be recounted by the old. . . the new folks will earn their own. They will move us into the 21st century and the outfit will be the better for it!

On to the next 75 years. . .

James W. Garner
State Forester

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Dedication

This is dedicated to all the "Old Timers" of the outfit regardless of how long they have worked, but especially to Bob Dunn, John Graff, Bill Pierce, Oscar Bellomy, Leroy Collins, John Heltzel, Bessie Hurtt, George Dean and Cal Pennock who have devoted about forty years each to the Department. Also, to all the "Old Timers" of the future I offer these words:

"After quite a few years with the Department of Forestry, I have seen many changes in personnel, equipment, policy, etc. Many come and go.

We disagree and fuss about many things, but when there is a real problem you could not find a better group of people anywhere. Everybody pulls together to get the job done — no matter what it is. This includes many people who are only part-time, such as local wardens, tractor operators, tower operators and concerned citizens. We are the best at what we do. . .

I know with the changing times, personnel, equipment, etc. things will continue as well or better than they have been in the past."

H. M. "Buck" Jones

THE EARLY TIMES

Robert L. Dunn, Regional Forester

Coppice forestry was practiced during the reign of Charlegmane and known of during Roman times.

The Romans put in roads and opened the forests to prevent ambushes. The forest advanced with the Roman retreat in the sixth century. Land reclamation became one of the duties of Monastic life. The church owned one-third of France by the eighth century. Such was nearly the case in England. By 1200 forest revenue was 25 percent of the French government's income. Few of us today realize the immense powers the Church had. The church influence held in France until 1789 and in England until Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in the early 1500's.

What does this have to do with Virginia — not much, but it does show us that the forests were exploited from the start of man's intrusion and development. One other footnote to history shows that the American revolution was successful due to the poor condition of British ships. French oak was better and the English could not break through the French blockade to supply troops and supplies.

We read of accounts of the early settlers at Jamestown seeing vast forests of oak and pine. Land clearing was the norm and with the loss of slave labor after the civil war many farms in Virginia and the South reverted to the pioneer pines. Thus the vast pineries of the South were born.

The first forest industry figures were from 1839 when $500,000 was realized. This figure by 1859 had increased to $2.2 million annually. We reached our peak in 1909 with about 2.2 billion board feet a year, a figure that we approximate today. Perhaps this drop gave rise to our first state forester.

It should be noted that in 1817 James Madison wrote "Prudence will no longer delay to economize what remains of woodland; to foster the second growths where taking place in convenient spots; and to commence, where necessary, plantations of the trees recommended by their utility and quickness of growth."

On the following pages unless it is a special interest names will not be mentioned. Also titles will be as of now: Districts — Regions, DF's, RF's et cetera.

1914-1919

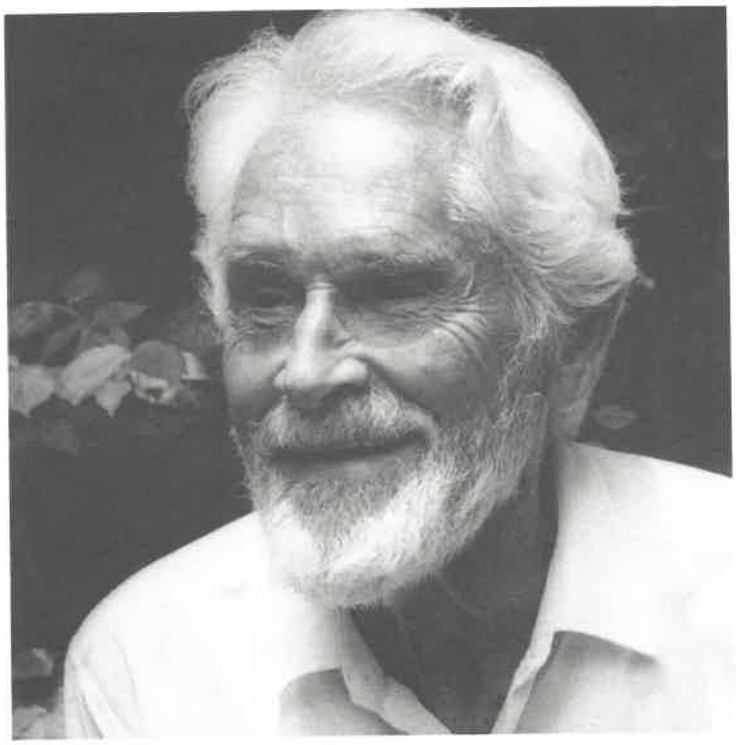
Tom Gathright was a landowner from Bath County. He owned thousands of acres of land in Bath and Alleghany Counties. He is generally credited with spearheading sentiment for a Forestry Department.

Finally in 1914 under Governor Henry Stuart the office of State Forester was established. It was an arm of the state Geology Commission.

The duties were all-encompassing and included teaching forestry at the University of Virginia, plus an annual report to the Commission. The University paid one-half of his salary.

This explains the reason our headquarters are in Charlottesville. These teaching duties continued until 1928 when we were divorced from the University.

The Geologic Commission appointed Chapin Jones as the first State Forester and he officially took office on March 1, 1915.



The First State Forester — Chapin Jones

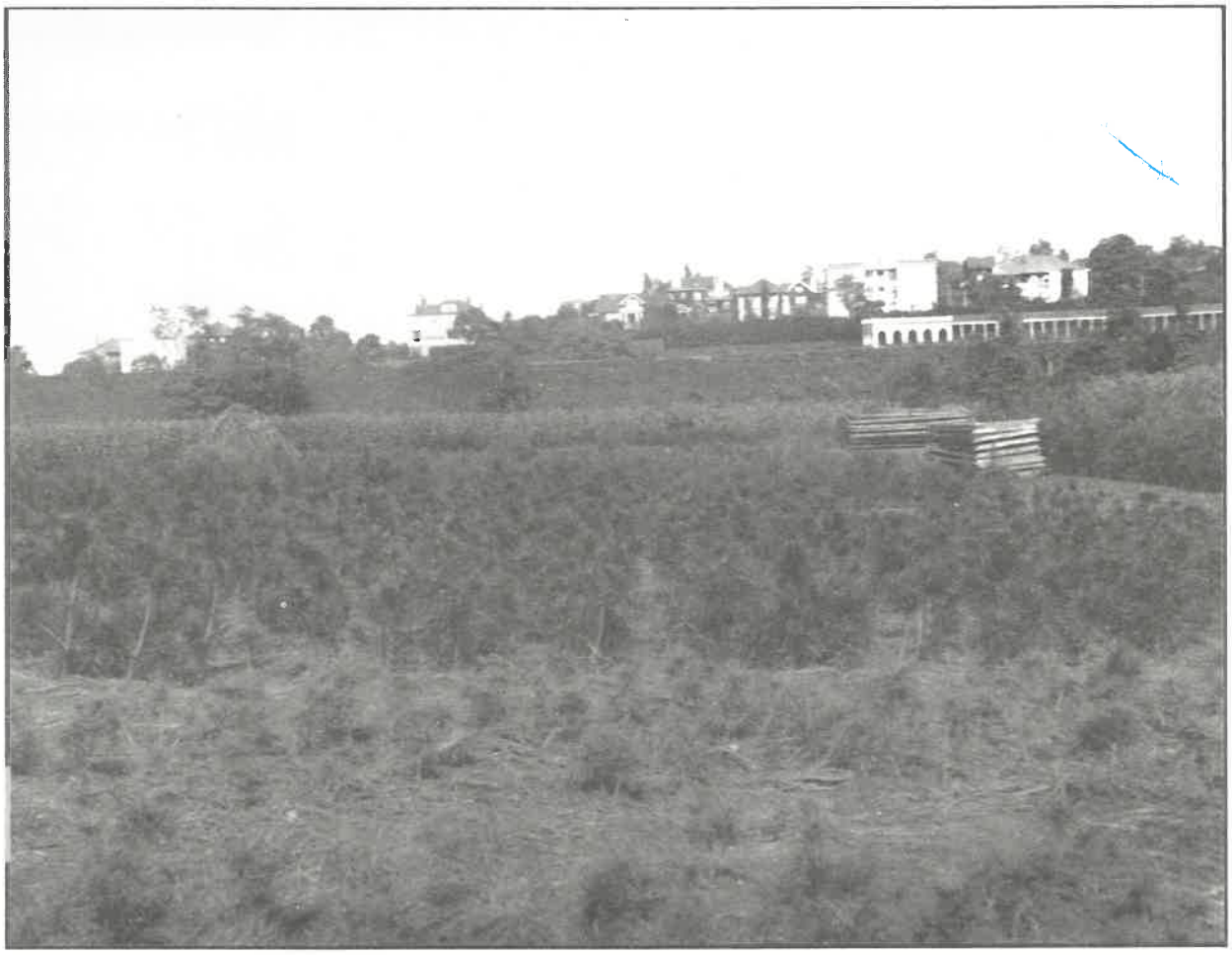
Mr. Jones was not only the State Forester. He was the whole outfit. He had a series of five posters printed on cloth for outdoor use and on paper for indoors. Twenty thousand were printed and distributed, and thus began our sign program.

The Weeks Law provided $2000 for patrolmen and watchmen. This work was started in Smyth, Grayson, and Washington counties and fire lines were constructed on Iroc Mountain.

County cooperation was offered and 1916 saw counties in what are now Regions 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7 having patrolmen. It is interesting to note that their charge was to furnish their own horse and buggy and to patrol constantly in dangerous times putting up posters and explaining laws.

Nineteen wardens were appointed and seventeen of them were in what is now Region 7 and two in R-6. These wardens agreed to fight fire without pay since the law permitted payment but no appropriation was made.

The General Assembly of 1916 must have liked the work because they gave $10,000 to continue it. The University of Virginia supplied office space and the first nursery site at Lambeth Field. Mr. J.P. Taylor of Orange gave $500 to start this first DOF nursery.



Nursery Site at Lambeth Field

Two assistants were hired and several large coal companies entered into cooperative fire control. The first DOF fire tower was erected on Little Stone Mountain near Big Stone Gap and another was built by a mining company to protect its property in Bland County.

Fire Tower on Little Stone Mountain

Wilbur O'Bryne was appointed as an assistant State Forester in 1919 and later became head of extension forestry at Virginia Tech.

Our first State Forest, the Gallion, was acquired in 1919 by the will of E. D. Gallion — 580 acres in Prince Edward County.

We Did Our Best. .

Did you know that beginning in 1916 we picked Japanese red pine cones for planting for three years and planted and shipped them for shortleaf pine because the foresters thought they were shortleaf trees?

One experiment we tried with the idea of not using mulch or shade, was to mix white pine and locust seed and plant in early spring. Can you imagine the size of two year old locust?

Oscar R. Bellomy
Automotive Maintenance
Supervisor, Headquarters
Retired

1920-1929

During this period decentralization was considered. A plan for seven regions was put forth and in the fall of 1921, two were set up, one at Bristol and one at Petersburg. Fred Pederson was at Bristol.

Thirty-eight counties contributed $6,036 and were placed under protection. District wardens were discontinued and the Chief Forest Warden became our main cog.

The first printing of **Common Forest Trees of Virginia** *was made.*

The Clarke-McNary Act was passed and we got the first money July 1, 1925. Fifty-three counties were under protection. This was voluntary and ranged from $74 in Clarke County to $400 in Wise.

The 1926-27 Assembly increased our budget by 50 percent, to $30,000 and four Regions were set up: Tidewater, Piedmont, Northwest, and Southwest. The office at Petersburg was moved to Richmond. Piedmont and Northwest were at Charlottesville and Southwest still at Bristol. Bill Stoneburner was RF for Northwest, and Seth Hobart was RF for the Southwest.

Fire protection now covered over nine million acres. The first steel fire tower, an 80-foot aeromotor was erected in Spotsylvania County in February 1928. The Nursery was moved to what is now Scott Stadium and increased to 250,000 capacity. Later, to make room for Scott Stadium we had to quickly move the Nursery. The new site, with a goal of 400,000 seedlings, was where the mechanic shop is now located.

George Dean was appointed as the Regional Forester for Tidewater January 1, 1929 and the DOF had 2376 forest wardens in place.

Early Nursery Operations

In 1927 the nursery tool inventory was three hoes, two long-handle shovels, two spades, three garden rakes, two hammers, one saw, two graduated glass tubes used to measure seed for each 4-foot row, and also four Yale planting boards used for transplanting seedlings. All work was by hand and no other tools were needed for this two-man operation.

The twelve-foot long seedbeds were planted in the fall, as we believe then that seed should be planted when they fall from the trees. A leaf mulch was used over winter and removed in the spring. The beds were hand weeded in the summer with the help of two school boys. All lifting and shipping was done in the spring, this left some areas with a cover crop.

After the nursery moved from Lambeth Field, 100-foot beds were used, whereas previously they had been 12 feet long. Horses were used for plowing and making beds. During the previous winter we made an eight row seeder from an old grain drill. With this machine we could plant and mulch eight to ten beds per day. The beds were shaded with a cloth cover four by twelve feet giving half shade. No water was used. The nursery was again moved to Route 29 South. With city water available a sprinkling system was installed and the number of beds increased. Part-time help was used for the first time other than school boys. However, money soon ran out and most of the help was lost. There was also a shortage of white pine seed and to overcome this it was decided to save all white pine seed for transplanting. With no additional help, the office secretaries, Bessie Hurtt, Helen Wingfield and Anita Glass worked about two weeks putting seedlings in the Yale planting boards. This was a wet, muddy job on some cold, windy days, but even under these conditions they never complained.

Oscar R. Bellomy
Automotive Maintenance
Supervisor, Headquarters
Retired

Nursery on Route 29 South

1930-1939

The year 1930 was disaster! It was the worst draught in Virginia history and fire season lasted from January to November 1930. As an example, a fire in Dismal Swamp started on October 4 and crews were still on it in December. It burned 10,600 acres.

Dismal Swamp Fire

The appropriation for July 1, 1930 — June 30, 1931 was exhausted by October and work continued on a deficit authorized by the Governor.

State Forester Jones appointed a visual aids person. He was given a panel truck, a 110-volt generator, a movie projector, and films. He took this menagerie all over the state.

Hunter Garth was appointed as Chief Warden in Albemarle County in 1930.

The counties were plain broke by now, and we had advanced money for fire fighters. We were left holding the bag. These accounts were cancelled by legislative action.

On January 1, 1931, Henry Hodge came on board as a supervising forest warden for six counties in R-5 and R-7 with his location in Clifton Forge.

By 1932 we were in better shape and paid off the deficit of $40,000. We didn't have to, but it was a moral debt. It took several bienniums but we did it!

Political problems in 1932 resulted in the demotion of Chapin Jones and the appointment of Fred Pederson as State Forester on January 1, 1933.

1933 — CCC camps — unlimited men. At one time there were 35 in the state. Normal complement — 200 men. They were a mixed blessing. The warden organization fell apart became "Let the CCC boys fight the fires" was the attitude.

At the end of 1939 we were starting to wean ourselves from the CCC and get our own organization going. The war in Europe was starting. We produced ***one million seedlings.***

Fred Pederson

The Great Dismal Swamp

Over the years, the Great Dismal Swamp has provided some tall tales of folklore from hunters, loggers, explorers, escaped convicts, lovers and forest fire fighters. For the newcomers to the Department of Forestry, the Dismal Swamp is located in the cities of Chesapeake and Suffolk. At one time, before agriculture took its toll, the Swamp consisted of approximately 100,000 acres in Virginia and 200,000 acres in North Carolina. Most of this total area is covered with peat, which is partly decayed organic matter and will burn like coal once it is ignited. Peat has been measured to a depth of **18** to **20** feet at different locations in the Swamp.

Usually when a person thinks of fires in the Dismal Swamp, they remember all the times they spent pulling winch cable from being stuck with their tractor in some peat or muck hole with water about one-half inch below the surface. After a few minutes of spinning the tracks, the entire area begins to look like the dead sea with only the antenna of the tractor showing above the water line.

Fire Weather Predication (or Things Haven't Changed Much!)

'F-Control-Weather Data:" That is the old file designation for everything pertaining to forest fire weather.

We have lived through several radical changes in forest fire weather concepts—and here I must inject a personal matter—in 1935 I was an assistant ranger on the Chippewa National Forest in northern Minnesota. At that time the Forest Service was having a complete overhaul of all aspects of fire control. Each forest experiment station was ordered to come up with a system of measuring forest fire weather. My boss, an old 1910 model ranger, told me to work on it. He said that whenever you see a half dozen or so Indians hopping around the ranger station there was a sure sign of fire weather — they wanted a job fighting fires to earn a few dollars.

The Lake States Forest Experiment Station people came around with the complete official outfit — a thermometer, an anemometer, a sling psychrometer, a rain gauge, appropriate forms and a circular cardboard slide rule that ended up giving the usual low, moderate, high and extreme index. As I endeavored to interpret all of this to our fellows I was appalled to find that many of the foresters had no concept of relative humidity! At the New York State College of Forestry our fire control course was mostly a course in meteorology, so I had some understanding of the meaning of some of these weather attributes. Frankly, we could still rely on the Indians.

Back to the Chippewa for a moment. One Sunday morning I was on duty at the ranger station which was in the Supervisor's office, where we had the telephone switchboard. We had had a rain breaking a bit of a drought. This was after we had all of the elaborate instruments. I told the supervisor that "Cut Foot Sioux" District reported that it rained pitchforks. Bena District said it rained like hell. Dora Lake District reported that it rained cats and dogs, etc. The supervisor blew his stack and ordered me to tell them all to get out of bed and go out and measure the rain. Luckily I had measured ours at .1 inch. This was all over 50 years ago. Have times really changed?

C.C. Steirly
Regional Forester
R-1 (Retired)

1940-1949

July 1940, George Dean was promoted and transferred to Headquarters as Associate Forester in charge of management activities. Joe Hayes was put in charge of the Cumberland State Forest.

The General Assembly in 1942 increased our money to $135,000 and this, plus federal funds, put us in pretty good shape. July 1, 1942 George Dean became our first Chief of Forest Protection. Seth Hobart moved to become Chief of Management and John Heltzel replaced him as R.F. at Bristol. Tidewater was divided to form R-1 and R-2 and Charley Steirly became the Regional Forester in R-1. January 1, 1944 saw Region 7 established with counties from R-5 and R-3.

Mr. Pederson died in June 1944, and George Dean became the third State Forester on August 21, 1944. Hunter Garth replaced Dean. A central shop was established and Oscar Bellomy was made the Chief mechanic on June 2, 1945. ***The first three full-time CFW's were appointed.***

January 1, 1945 saw all counties organized when Scott County came in.

George Dean

Charley Steirly

Hunter Garth

Seth Hobart

An important event was the adoption of the brush burning law in 1940 as a county option. The 1¢-an-acre forest tax was passed in 1944 and in early 1946, R-9 was formed from R-2 with 9 counties.

To meet a shortfall in funds, Senator Garland Gray in 1948 proposed a forest products tax. It passed and our budget needs were met.

Nursery production was limited and production was moved to New Kent and seedlings produced in 1952.

The Assembly in 1946 passed the Forest Services to Landowners Act and by 1948 we had 24 foresters, of this group Cal Pennock and Bob Dunn are the only two left.

Bob Dunn

Cal Pennock

In 1946, Mr. Iobst was the District Forester in Region 7. We had some bad fires during that period and timber management with individual landowners was just getting started. I remember one day, Bob Slocum was over to work with Fritz. They had gone to examine or mark a tract of timber in Augusta County. During the middle of the morning they came back to the office, Mr. Slocum was almost carrying Mr. Iobst. Something had gone wrong with his back and Bob Slocum said he found Mr. Iobst "making finger prints in his Biltmore Stick." He was in terrible pain. Mr. Slocum went back to Charlottesville and Mr. Iobst and I struggled up to the doctor's office for a small measure of relief. I'm sure we made quite a picture but everything turned out all right — no permanent injury.

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester
R-7

It happened back in about 1949. I had come to the Forest Service about six months prior to D. F. Berlin Eye passing away. Julian Thomas, the Chief Forest Warden of Albemarle County, was named a pallbearer for Mr. Eye's funeral. I became Chief Forest Warden for the day and was given Julian's truck, which had a county radio set. I was not used to a radio and wasn't too knowledgeable about how it worked. When I got my first call, the Sheriff's Office stated, "Albemarle 2 go to a fire near Ivy." I said, "10-7" the call signal for "signing off," and proceeded to go to the fire. I thought "10-7" meant OK! Along the route, it was reported again that I should be responding to the fire. I said "10-7". I am! I arrived at the fire and said "10-7, I am here." The fellow said, "You'd better stay on the air, we may have some more." I said, "Ok, 10-7" I entered the woods and held the fire to just half acre and I thought I done a pretty good job and went "10-7" trying to go "10-8", of course. The man said that we been trying to get you. We have other fires and to proceed to others. The next fire has burned 20 acres of broom sage and right in the middle of that 20 acres were a couple of old snags that were left burning. Dallas Wilfong, then District Forester, returned from the funeral and went up to look at the fire. I was sent to get the power wagon from Charlottesville and returned to put out the snags that were burning in the center of the 20-acre burn. That was my first lesson in mop-up.

To add a little more to the story, Mr. Berlin Eye had a daughter named Helen. We had a young forester who just came in from New York named Fred Trew, and he married Helen in the next couple years. That kept the Berlin Eye family within the Division. Mr. Eye also had a son named Bruce, who went on to become an arson investigator. Incidentally, Fred Trew left the Department later on and became a member of Westvaco, which is still very closely associated with the Department of Forestry.

Milton A. Morris
Investigator

Close Knit Family

The Department has always been a close knit family. Back in '48, '49 and '50 we used to do a lot of marking timber. I recall an incident in Amherst County when we spent a week in a motel, no air conditioning, no TVs, no fans and we slept together. My bed partner was Scotty Blain, a young forester, who had since retired and Dallas Wilfong and another person used the other bed. I said we slept, according to Scotty, I may have slept, snored and kicked so that he doesn't ever recall sleeping. In his words, it was the worse week that he has ever spent in his life. And he just made that statement a few years ago along about the time he retired.

Who Needs ITC?

My story begins in the mid-1940's when Governor Darden arranged for the Virginia Forestry Service to come to Richmond and present a program. This program would be presented to selected members of the General Assembly along with land and lumber company executives. Mr. Steirly and others on a program committee decided to have three speakers give speeches on each of the three levels: county, district and state. Now, there would be no problem in securing speakers from the district and state levels, but where on earth would they find a chief forest warden to give a speech to this group? In those days, most chief wardens were just plain dirt farmers with no formal education.

Mr. Steirly suggested that just maybe the old chief warden in Dinwiddie County, having the gift of gab, might go and speak. The committee agreed for Mr. Steirly to go and try to talk Willie Branch into speaking. In those days when the District Forester came to visit the Chief Warden, the kitchen was where they would go over fire reports, etc. Also, with Mr. Steirly, a big pot of coffee was most necessary.

We were taking a break and John pointed to about a 4" sapling and said "Bill, what is that?" Bill got up, walked to the tree, ran his hand along the bark and said, "Anyone knows what that is. That's a black gum." The small white ash cringed, P. R. nearly fell off a rock, and to this day, I still get a rise out of Bill just by saying, "Anyone knows what this is."

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

The expression "Mac and Ike and I" was well-known in District 7 in the early years. After I moved to Woodstock to handle the north end, commonly, even then, called Region 10, getting help for marking was a chore. The south end had plenty to do and Tom Elliott, now District Forester, sort of left it up to me, in a very nice way, to sink or swim. Due to a bad fire problem we did have a full-time CFW in Page County. All other counties had part-time CFWs who were given varying numbers of hours for their fire work. We did, however, have a pretty nearly unlimited number of hours for management.

So, I trained Ike Ryman, CFW of Page County, and W. C. McDonald in Shenandoah County, to mark timber. Please remember we were marking with axes then. Each tree got a blaze cut at DBH and a blaze below stump height. This bottom blaze was then hit with the back of the axe, on which VDF had welded a stamp. Fun?? You don't know what fun is until you try to get a blaze down to the wood with a 1½-pound hatchet on a 24-inch hickory with bark the toughness of armor plate! Couple this with about 6" of snow on the ground, the wind howling, and the tally man yelling "check tree" after you've marked that dude, climbed out of the area and were 100 feet away!!

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

P.R. and The Eastern Shore

Having taken part in some of the early PR brainstorming, including the infamous Camp Peary 1949 "think tank", complete with parental guidance from Washington, the most memorable forest fire prevention program I had occasion to be a part of was attempting to instill the fire message to a few of the 8,000 migrants that flowed through the Eastern Shore of Virginia beginning in April and continuing to mid November. These people traveled in families and carried their own few essential household items including doors, windows and screens. They were the captives of a leader or "boss" who required a certain portion of their meager daily earnings, and their life span was very limited due to their lifestyle. These families followed the truck crop industry from Florida to Maine - lived in shacks, cooked outdoors, many slept in the woods and their bathroom facilities were normally the woods. Education was very little, if any, therefore we had no problems of having a captive audience for night movies. Of course, the Eastern Shore of Virginia cannot be outranked by any other community for the summer mosquito population - outdoor movie screens were plastered with these pests after the first showing.

The drink of the day for many of these people was the cheapest wine available or a few 10-cent cans of Sterno squeezed through a couple slices of bread or if none of this was available on Sundays, a bottle or two or Aqua-Velva shaving lotion sufficed. Murder in the labor camps or in the fields was very common and little or no mention was ever noted in the local papers. Each labor camp had a foreman, usually a large-bellied, cigar-smoking individual that was always heavily armed and not hesitant to use his artillery if needed. Such was the beginning of R-8's fire prevention program in a labor camp on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

R. L. Woodling
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Equal Justice

When I first started with the Forest Service the chief wardens were all part-time. The chief warden in Pulaski County was a Mr. Akers.

One morning in early March, Mr. Akers was called to a fire. Before arriving at the first one he saw smoke from another, so he placed men on the first one and went on the the second. Both were small and soon under control. The first was caused by a man burning brush, the second was caused by a different individual, also burning brush. Mr. Akers served the necessary papers and returned home.

The day of the trial the judge called the first man up and asked him if he was guilty or not guilty. The man answered that in one way he was not. The judge looked at him for a second and asked what he meant by such a statement.

His answer was, "I burned the brush early while it was damp and there was just some coals on fire. I got my garden hose to water it out, when a whirl wind got in those coals and ashes and carried them out in some dry grass and started a fire. My garden hose was not long enough and it got away from me."

The judge studied a second and then said, "it looks like that was an act of God so I am going to let you go this time but don't let it happen again."

The judge then called the second man up and said, "you are charged with the same thing what do you have to say?" His answer was, "Capt. your honor, I guess I had a whirl wind-s too." After a short pause the judge answered, "I let the other man go so I guess I will have to let you off also."

Two cases lost in about fifteen minutes.

Corbett L. Boone
Fire Chief, R-5
Retired

Largest Fire

I believe the biggest fire in the recorded history of the Virginia Forest Service, Virginia Division of Forestry and Virginia Department of Forestry was the big Sussex fire of April 5, 1943. It burned 12,555 acres in about six hours, sweeping eight miles across the county and coming to an end in the swampy region near the Sussex 4-H Center on the Southampton line.

The fire started in the cook shanty of a stave mill on Highway 40. The shanty caught fire from an over-heated cook stove and rapidly spread through pine tops over to Highway 40 which it crossed. Things were very dry and that afternoon the winds were about 40 miles per hour.

This fire occurred at a bad time. That afternoon they were having former Senator Garland Gray's mother's funeral. The Gray Lumber Company mill was shut down and most of the Forest Wardens were at the funeral. Mr. Dole the Sussex CFW was in the tower, the operator being sick.

When the fire jumped Highway 40, after burning up thousands of dollars worth of curing pine lumber, it hit an extensive area of 40-year old growing pine. There was nothing that could be done. A number of hunt clubs went out and back fired all along both flanks thus adding to the chaos. Two men simply couldn't stop them. There were a number of CCC roads in the area but the fire just zoomed across them. Late in the evening a few Southampton wardens were able to get the fire under control in a swampy area.

A few days later Mr. Dean, the Associate State Forester, came down and we mapped it in using the old 1918 topographic sheet (luckily it was an old one-inch-to-the-mile sheet). We figured that at least 6,000 acres were due to unnecessary back firing by the hunt clubs! We were in the old district office way into the night trying to estimate the damages. We used different methods, Mr. Dean using one he had learned at Yale and I using one I had learned at Syracuse. We both came within a few thousand dollars of each other and split the difference.

We were weeks getting the fire report corrected as a number of people made claims for having "helped" fight it.

We could never prove responsibility for the fire and the stave mill claimed to be a subsidiary of U.S. Steel in Pittsburgh, etc. Gray and Camp Mfg. Company lawyers worked on it, but then the end for me came when I was mercifully inducted into the U.S. Army. During the fruitless negotiations of the lawyers I was on my way to Camp Wheeler, Georgia to be an Infantry replacement in Italy.

Now, we should take warning from this - when it hasn't rained for days in March and April, and the wind is high, the humidity low and having pine wood it can happen again.

For a few years it was possible for my successor to write news items about the destruction of timber and wildlife. Actually the fire, causing terrific hardwood sprouting, made it an ideal habitat for deer. You can't win all of them!

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Now, I have a humorous one, humorous in retrospect. Many years ago, before many of you readers were wearing diapers, District One included Isle of Wight County. At the time, we sent a bunch of those purple cardboard newspaper notes and asked to get them with their fire prevention message in the paper. Charlie Darden the CFW of Isle of Wight, a lovable character, said he knew the editor of the weekly at Smithfield.

The editor was at first rather jovial. Then he found out that it wasn't a paid ad and said, "alright I'll show you how hard these are", and took us in a back room. A hired man melted up a batch of lead (type metal in the paper world). They put the mold in a frame and poured the hot lead on it. It came out with a big bubble in the middle. The editor said "well, we will try again," and the hired man, pouring a lot of hot lead on the floor, filled the mold. When the Editor went to release it he burned his finger and he let out an expletive that Charlie and I understood. This time it worked and the Editor said, "if I was getting paid for this with an ad it would be different, but I will publish it."

On our way back to Isle of Wight, Charlie said, "let's not take another of those damned things to that guy."

Thank God I'm retired.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Equipment Inventory

I suppose some of the younger personnel might have noted little oval-shaped stamps on some of the older office furniture or equipment. These little blue items having the state seal and a larger number were asset numbers. In 1942 someone in Richmond had the idea that old state property worth $10.00 or more should have a asset number affixed to it and a record of it forwarded to the Archives in Richmond.

So, one day in the mail we received a big box of asset numbers and a number of forms. I think we had about two months in which to complete that task. Around the two-room District office it was easy for the secretary (at $80.00 per month) to put them on what we had in the office—an old typewriter from a CCC camp, an adding machine from the same source (hand operated such as are found in old grocery stores), a desk for the District Forester, one file cabinet, a typist desk, three chairs, a supply cabinet and a costumer (for the uninitiated we found that the costumer was just a hat and coat rack). The only instrument we had then was an Abney hand level to use in forest road drainage and to help the CFW in draining land. I had asked for this and surprisingly enough received it. The only compass was my own from forestry college summer camp back in 1932.

When it came to the other assets we found that the only thing over $10.00 value in the several hundred local Forest Warden's tool boxes was the back pump. So, we asked the CFW to go around and put asset numbers on the back pumps. Of course, a form had to be filled out for each. When one was "messed up" another form had to be made out for the ruined number. The process sounded easy—one soaked the number in a tomato can of water (furnished by the CFW) and slid the transfer off onto the item. A lot of them were "messed up"—CFW's in those days were part time at $4.00 a day plus 5 cents mileage.

Anyway we got the job done and it gave the CFW a good chance after spring fire season to contact the LFW, often picking up many fire reports the LFW had failed to send in. People are still looking for the 25 cents per hour for fighting fires that the LFW forgot to send in.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

I happened to visit Seward Forest down in Brunswick County, a 3600 acre well-managed forest Professor Alfred Akerman, who had been a District Forester with the eastern district of the Virginia Forest Service. Since the Seward Forest belonged to the University of Virginia, Akerman had to put asset numbers on the property. That outfit included four logging mules. He told me all he could do was put the asset number on the right front foot of each mule.

We had our problems too, for the CFW of Greensville County had pasted his numbers on the lids of the back pumper-in those days, as now I suppose, we often cannibalized condemned back pumps. The lid was the last thing that would wear out—a problem for the bureaucrats in Richmond when top number 2348 no longer existed on a $10.00 asset but had been placed on a tank number 3722 that had been—well you know . . .

Now, 44 years later, I wonder if all those numbers in the Richmond Archives have ever been looked at? So, when you look at the old office furniture and see the little blue ovals you will realize the problems we had at the end of the 1942 fire season.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Forestry Skills - Useful Everywhere!

Back in World War II (when most of our personnel were wearing diapers) I was in Infantry soldier in a replacement camp in Trescary (that's a state in Italy in case you are ignorant of geography). The Colonel had ordered a demonstration of mortar fire on a broad mountain side. A burned out German tank was the target. Several shells hit fairly close to it. Then they fired a white phosphorus shell - which was very stupid for the whole mountain was covered with about a three-foot high growth of vegetation. In moments the shell had started a brush fire spreading rapidly.

At the base of the mountain there was a good stream and nearby were hundreds of those heavy cardboard cylinders that mortar shells were packaged in. About 100 of us were ordered to fill these with water, go up the mountain, throw the water on the fire and return for a refill. We looked like a bunch of ants going up and coming back, and the fire was still raging.

I told the captain that fighting forest fires was one of my tasks in civilian life with the USFS and VFS. I said what we should do would be to get our trenching tool, dig a line and fire back. He said "it would take a commissioned officer to make that decision." So I ended up as one of the ants, and the fire raged. On one flank it hit an olive orchard and went out, and on the other it burned down into a stream. About 300 acres had been burned and I hope the Judge Advocate

General's Department compensated the owner for his loss, because this could lead to serious erosion, something Italy does not need. We returned to our tents exhausted and, having missed supper call, were given C rations. I saw the humor of it all and decided I would never try to tell the Army how to do anything.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

1950-1959

In 1949, Ed Rodger became Chief of I & E and in 1950, we built the Waverly office followed in the next two years by offices in Regions 4, 5, 7, and 9. By 1951, we had 36 foresters.

In 1951 John Heltzel became Chief of Reforestation. No new Regions were added but two were moved. R-2 headquarters was changed to Sandston and R-6 to Abingdon.

Cal Morris

John Heltzel

Ed Rodger

The Headquarters office was completed and in use in October of 1952.

1950 also saw the enactment of the Seed Tree Law. Governor Stanley in 1954 appointed a study commission to see what was needed to provide an adequate timber resource. They made eleven recommendations, many of them applicable today. Ten of them were adopted in greater or lesser measure. They furthered the cause of forestry.

The Title, Virginia Forest Service, was without sanction of law. In fact, in 1948, Section 10-8.1 designated us as the Division of Forestry. We "painfully" offically changed to this in July of 1955.

Insects and Disease became a branch position in 1952 and in 1955, Cal Morris became its second chief. Also in 1955, Ray Marler was put in charge of the newly created post on forest research. In 1954 we were deeded all of the land utilization forests that had been under a 99 year lease since 1939.

We had a D-7 tractor and Mathis plow in the Dismal in the 40's and a few D-2's and D-4's. Then we added the John Deere 444's in the flatlands and 1010's in the mountains. By 1961, we had 41 tractors in the state.

Radios came in 1955 and by 1960, we had 75 full time C.F.W's, were producing 32 million seedlings and had 68 service foresters, for a total of 93 professional foresters.

We have been having personnel camps which began in 1946 and were now on a three-year rotation.

Edward "Smokey" Morris with Tractor Plow

Buster Remembers

In about 1957 -

Charles "Buster" Forbes was a relative newcomer to the Division, but he had been on board long enough to know that every time a fire burned in a certain area, Raymond Hostetter had a standing lunch date. One day a brush fire was reported in the area, and Raymond said, "Come on, Buster, let's go." Buster hesitated and said, "Every time we go there, you have lunch with your wife's people, and I have to wait the truck!" Raymond finally persuaded Buster to go. Sure enough, Raymond was invited to lunch with his in-laws. While Buster was patiently waiting in the truck, a man came out of the house next door and started burning at 1 p.m.—violating the 4 p.m. fire law. Buster warned the man that he was breaking the law, but the warning went unheeded. Buster saw the man's name on his mailbox and wrote a summons. About that time Raymond finished lunch and came bouncing out of the house. Buster asked Raymond if he would like to serve the summons on the guy next door. Raymond exclaimed, "Lord, no, Buster, that's my brother-in-law! If I do that, I'll never get nothing to eat." That was Buster's very first law enforcement duty!

About the worst fire season Buster remembers had some unusual happenings. The hotel at Natural Bridge burned down. And, there were four or five fires reported on the same day just below Clifton Forge. The Division and U. S. Forest Service were working hard. Buster arrived near one of the fire scenes to find that a boy had ridden a horse across a train trestle and all four of the horse's legs had fallen through the ties. Buster had never been faced with a situation like that before, so his imagination had to take over. He called a wrecker in hopes that the horse could be lifted. A few minutes later, Mr. Samples of the C & O Railroad, came to the scene and announced that trains would be coming from both directions in about 15 minutes! The horse had to be moved FAST! A call to the District Office was useless - everyone there had their hands full with other fires and could offer no suggestions. Of course, people were excited and interested in seeing how the problem would be solved or how the horse got stuck in the first place. One such person came screeching to the scene in a pick-up truck and knocked down the telephone box—so there went the connection to the C & O office. Meanwhile, the trains were still approaching. About 200 people had gathered at the area when Mr. Nicely, the local undertaker, arrived. He told Buster the boy with the horse was his grandson. Being a grandparent must hold special powers—Heaven only knows how it happened, but Mr. Nicely "talked" to the horse and coaxed one leg up on the trestle; then another; then another; until finally, the horse was free

Another boy involved with that fire belonged to the KVG team. He reported early in the day, and Buster found him around 10 p.m. on top of the mountain completely worn out. Buster carried the boy off the mountain, reaching the bottom around 3 a.m. It was later discovered that the determined young man had a wooden leg.

Remember the bloodhound in Page County? Buster was sent to Page to help investigate a fire. Ray Huffman confidently told Buster that Hobo, the dog, would nab the suspects in no time. Buster, grinning, said, "Yeah, I know." Hobo, the detective, was stretched out in the shade scratching fleas!

One day Earl Jachot and Buster were collecting fire suppression costs. The next one to be collected was $17 on a 1½-acre fire. Earl and Buster approached a house with a bannisterless porch. Apparently, the neighbor women had gotten together for a social, because laughing and talking could be heard. Buster knocked on the door and asked to speak to the man-of-the-house. The lady said her husband was away looking for a job. Buster explained that he needed $17 to pay for the fire damage. Finally, after a lot of talk, the woman said she didn't have any money but she did have something she could offer-about that time, Earl fell off the porch! Cautiously, Buster asked, "Lady, what do you mean?" She explained she had chickens, geese and ducks to barter with. Buster agreed to 18 chickens and ducks in exchange for the $17. Another instance of bartering found Buster with a buggy in exchange for $19. He took the wheels off the buggy, plopped it on his truck, and drove to a local dealer. He tripled his money on that deal!

A curious kind of fire was set several times and no one could figure out what substance was used to start them. At each fire there would be something round stuffed under a log. When the object was touched, it just fell apart. Finally, it was discovered that a 12-year-old boy, who sold "Grit" newspapers, was rolling up a paper and setting it on fire. The boy was talked to by Buster and the Sheriff but never would confess. The fires continued, and one day the Sheriff got the boy in his car and *really* talked to him. The boy started crying and explained his actions. The sheriff told Buster he would let the boy think for a while in jail—just overnight. Well, time went on and the fires stopped. Eventually, everyone geared up for the Fall Fair-Buster and Smokey Bear too. During the Fair, Buster was invited to lunch by the Sheriff. They were discussing several topics, and the Sheriff asked Buster when did he want that 12-year-old boy released from jail. Buster nearly fell over! That child had been in jail from April until August, instead of just overnight! Of course, Buster went to get the boy immediately (poor thing was white as chalk). Buster said if that happened today some Warden and Sheriff would be hanging from an oak tree!

One incident that involved Buster should have involved Cree Tyree, but didn't. Cree worked the Bath County area, while Buster had Alleghany County. Cree was employed with Forestry for about 27 years and never once wrote a summons. One spring day, trouble was brewing (as usual) near Uncle Tom's Cabin, on the Bath County line. Cree was no where to be found, so Buster was called to the rescue. A man was illegally burning in Bath County. (The man lived about a half-mile down the road in Alleghany County.) Since Cree wasn't there, Buster gave the man a summons. On the day of the hearing, the Judge said, "Buster, you can't give that man a summons." After hearing arguments from Buster and Raymond Hostetter, the man was fined $10 plus court costs. Being a little disgruntled, the man decided he didn't like the 4 p.m. burning law. He was going to challenge it in court.

A month or so later, about 300 people gathered at the Alleghany Court House to hear the proceedings. Ed Rodger had instructed Buster to get some well-to-do, educated people to attend. Buster recruited some heavy-weights from the Covington paper mill and others to support him. Things got prettyhot during the hearing, and Buster was nicknamed "Gestapo" for supposedly trying to run over everybody in the county. But, Buster's supporters stepped in; the fire law was read; and the date Alleghany County adopted the fire law was put in the official recordings. One of Buster's influential lady supporters spoke up, "All of you have heard this now, and that's it. Let's adjourn and go home." And that ended that! The thing that has always puzzled Buster is, the fire was in Bath County, but the hearing was held in Alleghany County. Later on, the Judge asked Buster if he was a law enforcement officer and, of course, Buster said "Yes." The Judge then asked if Buster had ever been sworn in, and Buster said, "No." Fact is, Buster never even had a badge until uniforms were passed out in 1971. (He started working in May 1956 and retired December 1973). But he had delivered many, many summonses—and never lost a one in court!

Because of someone's misfortune, Buster ended up being applauded. Another Division employee found himself in trouble with the law and the Division. Buster was later given the position and knowing that the Division had suffered due to negative publicity, Buster thought long and hard about how he could clear the image. He started working with area schools and showing movies to people in the more rural areas. Buster says now, "I just worked myself to death to get that bad taste away from us." Well, all that hard work and dedication paid off-sort of. Although he didn't know why, in 1959, Buster was escorted to Richmond. There he was presented the prestigious Chief Forest Warden Award by Bill Cooper, Director of the Virginia Forestry Association. Buster was thrilled to be honored in such a nice way-receiving a plaque and having his name in the VFA Magazine, newspapers, etc. But, at that same time, he made more enemies than he cared for. Several people thought the reason he was awarded the honor was because he "knew" someone at the Covington paper mill. What a pity.

Buster says he, "loved and lived" forestry work. But it did get a little frustrating at times. He has been called out of Sunday church services on several occasions to answer fire calls. Buster says he can't figure out how Alan Craft gets to sing on Sunday; he had to do his singing on the fireline. And, oh, those Christmas dinners he missed! But, there was one time he was determined to finish his Christmas dinner. Buster and his wife, Inez, were visiting her parents and were ready to sit down to a table full of Christmas goodies when the Bath County Sheriff knocked on the door for Buster (Bath County AGAIN—where in the world is Cree Tyree?) Buster told Sheriff he'd be along *after* he finished dinner. After a while, he and Inez jumped in the car and found the fire—a big old tree that was half-way in the river. Buster found Andy Huffman and two Game Commission guys bird hunting near the fire. Buster explained that *this* fire was Andy's responsiblity. Nothin' doing! Andy was bird hunting and didn't intend to fight a fire. Buster told Andy he was going home to get his summons book, and that fire had better be out by the time he got back or Andy would be looking at a summons for failure to assist a forest warden. Since the tree was half-way in the river anyway, all Andy had to do was saw it down. And, that's exactly what he did by the time Buster came back with his book!

Innovative and Irritating-Habitually on Christmas Eve, a certain person in Alleghany County would violate the fire law and Buster would be called. Just before he retired, Buster told the man he was just gonna have to quit burning on Christmas Eve. The man exclaimed, "it's the only time of year I have some help!"

Uniforms were issued for the first time in 1971-72 and were passed out at Emory and Henry College. During sessions at Emory and Henry, the guys would stay in the girls' dorm. Without fail, somehow, someway, ladies lingerie would end up in the guy's suitcases. In one instance, a guy lost his wife—she actually left him, but eventually returned. Another guy was nearly clobbered to death by his wife, and even poor Buster came home with a suitcase full of frilliess!!

Buster remembers a time that he and several others traveled to Portsmouth to work on a fire tower. Toward the end of the week, everybody was running out of cash, so Buster decided to pay for a meal using his check book. The waitress said checks were not accepted. Buster leaned over to the lady and pointed to an emblem over the door and asked who did it belong to. The lady said, "The owner." Buster said, "I'd like to talk to him." After a few minutes of conversation, the owner told the waitress to not only accept Buster's check, but to see that he had everything he needed. Turned out the owner was a Shriner—just like Buster.

During a Portsmouth visit, the guys decided to take a boat ride on Lake Drummond. Most of them had never been on the Lake before. Buster said bears were roaming around every place and snakes were dropping off tree limbs into the boat. He got fussed at for killing cotton-mouth moccasins with the boat paddle! During the trip, they came across a troop of Boy Scouts who offered them coffee. The boys said they got the water to make the coffee from the Lake, which looked like coffee itself-thick and black. Buster remembers that the water was so calm it looked like a mirror until a storm brewed, then waves on the Lake were as high as a house!

Ed Rodger requested that Buster catch snakes to put on exhibit at the Fair. Ed sent two long "snake catchers" that a blacksmith made. Buster was working on a grading project where snakes were plentiful (killing about 8-10 rattlesnakes each day). One of the guys asked Buster if he would pull the rattlers off one of the snakes; he wanted to give them to his grandson. Somebody had cut the head off of a great big ol' rattler, so Buster stepped on it-confident in his L. L. Bean boots. He bent down to get the rattlers and that snake jerked from under his boots hitting him on the arm. Next thing Buster remembers is lying in about 3 inches of dust flat on his back! He immediately wrote Ed a letter requesting to be removed from the snake-catching detail.

Rita Moore
from interviews with Mr. & Mrs. Forbes
in 1987

Catch That Truck!

In the early days there was a lot to be desired equipment-wise. When the men would leave the office in the morning, you weren't at all certain their vehicles would get them back. One day Bob Dunn and John Rasmussen were out marking timber. They had parked the truck on a dirt road near the tract. At the close of the day, Bob finished first and went to the truck to wait for John. When Bob saw John coming, he crouched down in the truck, released the brake and the truck started rolling down a little hill. John looked up, saw the truck rolling slowly, and took off running as hard as he could to overtake it and get inside to stop it. Bob let him run quite a way before he sat up in the seat enough for John to see that someone was guiding the truck!

It Pays to Check Things Out

The fire had burned in Nelson County along in 1959. It had burned for a couple days. Eventually, Dallas Wilfong took me and decided to check and help out what we could after two days of the fire. It was late in the evening and we packed up with light and food to go up on line on the mountain side to relieve some of the fighters. We walked probably for an hour and a half and finally reached what we thought was near the top of the fire having seen on one on the fireline which was mostly suppressed at that time. As we reached the top of the fireline it began to rain and the fire of course was put out rather quickly around along the line. Smoke came up, dense smoke, steam, whatever, and the darkness closed in almost at the same time. From deciding then to try to return to our vehicles located an hour and a half or two away we proceed down the mountain around and through the fire area. Wilfong was in front with his headlamp very dim and very poor visibility, probably two to three feet was the extent of it. Dallas stopped for a minute said "wait" and scratched around, picking up a rock; he reached over and tossed it. Several seconds later it hit the bottom. He said, "I just wanted to check on that, thought we were on the verge of a cliff and now I know." It pays to check thing out.

Milton Morris
Investigator

Early Marking

Region 7 was marking 6-7 million board feet a year - 3-3½ million in the north end. This was done when the average per day was about 26 MBF per marker. Axes remember-not two squirts of paint from a 10-25-foot distance! This translates to 115 man-days of marking at 26M per day and marking 3 million. We usually marked more than the 3 million and on any job of less that 50,000, if you used a tally man, you were a sissy!

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

Keep in Touch . . .

Mobile Radios-what's that? On bad fire days you came out of the woods at noon and telephoned the fire tower. If the weather was really bad, you stayed out of the woods in the afternoon, at the tower, or someplace close to a phone.

More Timber Marking

No story of the old days would be complete without a few tales of Horse Mountain in Alleghany County. The Nettleton's owned somewhere betweeen 4-5,000 acres on this horrendous pile of rocks. There was some very good timber there on portions of this land.

We would stay at the old Collins Motel in Covington where the railroad yard was just across the street. If you were unlucky enough to get a front room, sleep was impossible.

I'm not sure why I was always invited to these soirees. I guess it was just "misery loves company."

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

Horse Mountain - One Last Time

One area was a long hollow that we would run one line down, eat lunch, and then a line back, and that was the day. Another area was right on top of the mountain with 30-50″ tulip poplar. You could mark all day and never touch the ground, just jumping from rock to rock.

The last parcel that I remember, we marked one winter. We had about six inches of snow with a hard crust. We had a new forester from New York State, John Kinghorn. We had marking guns then, but John eschewed straps and used baler twine. He also wore a knee-length overcoat, carried lunch for a week that consisted of hard-boiled eggs and cucumbers, and took a bath once a month if he needed it or not. He would leave his lunch on the tract, thank goodness, and of course, in the winter it would freeze. To see him gnawing on a frozen cucumber was a sight to remember.

Anyway, we were marking along a gorge above a stream one day when John slipped on the crusted snow. He went down, started sliding, and went over the rim. We all hurried as best we could to the edge, looked down, and there was John in the middle of the creek. He sat up, got up, still had his paint gun; crawled out, worked his way up to us, said a few words and went back to marking. The temperature had to be about 10^{0}, but we finished that line and went back to the hotel. We weren't sure if John was tough or dumb. We realized later that he was not dumb.

R.L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

Thirty some years ago my father was made a LFW in Roanoke County. At that time, there were only a couple of fire departments in Roanoke County. Many nights CFW A. B. Hoback would call in the middle of the night saying that he needed help. Upon arriving at the fire scene, usually way off the road, A.B. and C.L. Boone, VDF Fire Chief, would be the only ones there. In most cases, they would have a line around the fire. A.B. could rake line about as fast as today's tractor can plow. One of the things I remember most about A.B. was when time came to paint tower tops, he was chief painter. We would take out two windows, lay a board across inside the tower, then tying a rope around his waist, he would go up on top and paint. It made no difference as to the height, 60 or 125 feet. A.B. would trust me to hold the rope inside the tower. It always seemed that I was more excited about the whole episode than he was. He never slipped or asked if I was holding the rope. I guess that was just trust.

R. J. Garman
Forestry Technician
R-5

Anyone who has ever fought fire knows that it is important to get to the scene as soon as possible. If you're waiting for help, it always seems to take twice as long to get there as you think it should. Such was the case one spring day in 1957 when Carl Dalton was new to the job as CFW in Franklin County. He was called to a fire on Chestnut Mountain by Gordon Tyree, who had just retired as CFW. Carl told him that he would be there as soon as he got his boots on. When Carl arrived on the scene, Gordon's greeting was, "Half of Franklin County burned up while you were puttin' your boots on!"

James N. Ebbert
Area Forester, R-5

Towers, Fires and Other Moments

The North Mountain fire tower and cabin were built in the early fifties. Tom Elliott ran the show and was helped by the men in the area including the writer. Charley Taylor and A.B. Hoback from Region 5 were the high men. It was a long hike to the tower. The road was impossible. We got the material up there with an old surplus Army weapons carrier. We drove that thing loaded with steel, cement, etc., where a normal person couldn't walk. We also built the phone line.

Getting a towerman was not easy, but we finally found a local to do it. Harry Moore was something. He lived with his mother in a place that made the tower cabin look like the Biltmore Estate. He would pack in food and water and would stay till it gave out and then call the Chief Forest Warden to bring him more. Needless to say, we had very few Ph.D.'s for towermen.

I was never in favor of Harry due to a previous experience, but he did the job for quite a few years. We finally got a fairly decent road up to the tower after Harry quit, and a lady was the operator until the tower was no longer used.

Don't all stories start with "It was a dark and dreary night?" Not this one. It was the day before Thanksgiving 1950. Tom Rosenberger, the Chief Warden of Frederick County, was an avid hunter. He called me on a Tuesday night and asked if I would come up and cover for him while he went hunting. These were all part-time chiefs, so what are you going to do?

It was a dry and windy day; and sure enough, shortly after one o'clock, there was a fire on Great North Mountain. From the start, it was bad. I called Gretchen, Tom's wife, and told her where the fire was and went on. Men were scarce, and so I went out and called for 25 KVG boys, then with about six men headed for the fire. At about four, I went back down to see about the KVG. No boys, but a game warden was there. He told me that hunters started the fire and hunters would put it out. He had sent the KVG boys back. So after I had told the game warden that he should take care of game and I would handle fires, we parted company.

Harry Moore the old tower operator appeared on the scene (drunk!) and soon thereafter so did Tom. We decided that food was needed, and I agreed to get it. Harry then said that he knew of a road up the back side of the mountain. So-o-o-o I took Harry and we left, stopped in Gore for food, and went around the back of the mountain. When Harry took me up through the Boy Scout Camp, I knew I was in trouble. I had texed this 800 acres, and there was no road. About this time Harry said he must have been wrong, but we could see the fire, so off we went. After about 200 yards, Harry developed back trouble. No amount of threats or pleadings worked. He went back to the truck. I pressed on with two bags of food and a bag of oranges that I tied to my belt, across Pinnacle Ridge, Bear Den Ridge, and finally to the top-scrub oak you had to crawl through, plus rocks and smoke. I finally met Tom and the crew. We got the fire under control and came on out at about 7 a.m. Thanksgiving day.

I asked Tom to take me to my truck. He did, and as soon as we drove up, I saw that I had a flat tire. We fixed that. When I finally opened the door, there was Harry sound asleep across the seat. I was in a real good mood; otherwise, I'd have killed him. I grabbed him by the collar and the belt and literally threw him out on the ground, got in and started to drive away. Tom had stopped a 100 feet or so down the road; when I drove up, he came back and asked where Harry was. I very kindly informed him that Harry wanted to walk home (about 10 miles). About that time Harry came up, wanted to know why I was mad, and started to get in my truck. I very sweetly told him if he so much as tried to put his gluteus maximus in that vehicle, he would have a new part in his hair and would gum his food till eternity. I took off, and Tom brought Harry back. I have never figured out how he could have stayed drunk for about 14 hours! I did get a little even because, when Tom's heater warmed his vehicle, Harry got sick and barfed all over his fairly new Oldsmobile. So now you know why I did not want Harry Moore as a towerman. That's the way it was a lot of years ago. I have mellowed greatly over the years.

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

It Gets Lonely

Back in 1956 this young fireman returned from service on leave and wasn't able to see any of his friends so he went out and set three fires for which he was apprehended. He did so in order to see some of his friends while he was at home off duty. This occurred in Stafford County.

Page County

After a series of fires in the Island Ford section of the county, Tom Elliott was up there talking to people. One of the men told Tom to talk to his wife. She told Tom to talk to Pete Morris, a local ne'er-do-well. "Where do I find him?" asked Tom. "Well, the last time I saw him he was down yonder in the ditch." Sure enough, there lay Pete sleeping it off. Tom called the Sheriff; and he sent out Deputy Raines, a big, tough old deputy who, if asked about Miranda, would have probably thought it was Mexican food. He came out and literally threw Pete in the back of his car. When Tom asked him what he would charge him with, he replied, "Drunk in public and you're the public." They took him to jail, woke him up, and he confessed to setting the fires. He was sent to Marion for a few years.

No Page County fire story would be complete without some mention of Glenwood Cubbage. Glenny was a boy from the hollows who lived with his mother and regarded work as something to stay as far away from as possible and fire as fascinating. Glenny would try to set a steel bar on fire if he could.

The year 1956 was dry, and Tom Elliott and Ray Huffman were investigating a fire in Cubbage Hollow on the 17th of July. They met three boys in the hollow, and they told of seeing Glenwood who said the Blue Ridge would light up that night. They went looking for Glenwood; but in the meantime, Glenny had gone to Frank Cubbage's place to set his stable on fire. To Glenny's sorrow, Frank came home and caught him.

He literally almost beat him to death. Tom and the Sheriff went to pick him up; and we surmise that, to get out of the County, Glenny confessed to setting the mountain. The trial took place, and Glenny got three years in the pen.

There is no way of knowing how many fires he and his cousin set; but about ten or so years ago, Glenny got drunk and ended up on the N & W tracks. A train hit him; he did recover but is housebound. This just proves the old saying that you can't hurt a drunk.

Rockbridge Boys

Back in the early fifties, there were a series of fires on Plank Road in Rockbridge County. At one of these fires, the Chief Warden, Bill Knick, stopped a gasoline truck to see if he had seen anything. The driver had seen two men, and he gave a description of them and their car. The description was relayed to the State Police. They finally found the car with a flat tire and the men near Troutville. When Tom Elliott came to the Sheriff's office, the Sheriff met him, handed him two confessions, and said, "I guess this is what you are looking for." It was.

R. L. Dunn
Regional Forester, R-7

More Dismal Swamp

The Swamp has been the scene of some of the largest forest fires in eastern Virginia over the years. These fires are also some of the most difficult to control and extinguish. The usual method of controlling these fires is by plowing a line around the fires and then setting up water pumps along a ditch or canal (if you have a ditch or canal) to drown the burning peat. Depending on the size of the fire and the area in which it is burning, control time may take from a few days to several weeks. It's not unusual for a two acre peat fire to require three or four days to extinguish. Extinguish means when you can no longer see any peat smoke come from the burned area.

Usually on the large Swamp fires, the initial attack crew works around the clock (24 hours) without relief, until the fire control organization can get organized to bring in outside help from other regions throughout the State. This, of course, means that the fire fighters are usually completely exhausted and working on memory and instinct until fresh troops arrive.

An example of the above situation involves one of the Division's supervisors, Leroy Collins. After many long and hot hours at night on a Swamp fire, an exhausted Collins saw a large steel tower directly in front of the R-7 tractor which was being used to plow a line around the fire. Responding to an emergency situation to avoid certain disaster, Leroy leaped on the moving tractor and told the driver to stop before he ran into the tower that was right in front of the tractor. The driver managed to stop the tractor before colliding with the tower and then asked Leroy where the tower was. As it turned out, there was no steel tower. Leroy, along with many others, had spent too many hours on the fire line without relief. As for myself, when I see things that aren't there, I try to make it food, since it is also in short supply on all Swamp fires.

W. L. "Bill" Pierce
Regional Forester, R-8

Early Radios

In 1950, the first shortwave radios were placed in four of our vehicles and these proved to be so useful for communications during bad fire weather that several more car units were purchased later that year. We needed a radio station on a high point as the car and truck radios failed to carry over our higher mountains. Early in 1951 a 60-watt transmitter and suitable receiver was purchased for the Hazel Mountain tower which is located on the Russell-Dickenson County line near Dante. This station gives us good coverage in most counties. The main draw-back with this set up is the fact that the towerman has to write each message and then relay it on to the other person.

D. M. Waite
District Forester

Many of the tower operators of old were poorly educated but eloquent in their own manner. Here are two poems, one by a lookout and another by the CFW's wife—who had fire season problems of her own!

Lookout Blues

Oh, Lordy, I've got those lookout watchman's blues.
It's way up on the mountain so high;
Lordy, Lordy, you get so lonesome you could cry.
You sit and watch the birds and bees as they go
sailing by;
Oh, you sit there with the blues up in that old tower
where smoke, smoke is all of the news.
Lordy, I know I've got the lookout watchman's blues.

You've got the State Forester and the District
Forester, too;
You've got the fire chief and his deputy, too;

And you've still got the county warden and all of
his locals, too.
All of these are waiting on you.
It's take bearings here and bearings there;
You take your readings with the best of care;
You save a tree here and you save a few there;
As we have careless people everywhere.

Oh, Mr. Sportsman, take this from me
Stomp out your cigarettes and save the life of a tree;
And in so doing you will save the life of the birds and
the game, too
That furnishes so much pleasure for me and you
So let us protect mother earth the best we can
If it wasn't for her production there would be no birds,
beast or man.
So please help protect her the best you can
So she can produce better for beast and man, as all our
wealth comes from the land.

So Mr. Farmer, let me put this in your head
Please don't clean your land; leave a little for the birds
and beasts if it so falls and there will be a feast
for you and me when the shooting starts this fall.

Oh, Mr. Preacherman, take this from me.
The gamblers' cards were once a tree
And your Holy Bible was once a tree
So, Preacherman, when you take the stand
Please ask all of your good people to help protect our land.

R. L. Anderson, Towerman
Buchanan High Knob

CFW Wife Blues

So Anderson's got the lookout duty blues,
What about the wives of the chief wardens and his crews?
I haven't talked with the wives of these other employees,
But if the life they lead is as mine, it's certainly more
than a breeze.

Yes, it's fire season and the telephone is ringing at the
break of dawn,
Off Mr. Warden goes with a crew, hoping the fire hasn't been
burning too long.
Soon the sun is shining and boy, are those woods ever getting dry—
Here I'm busy at home getting my housework done and hoping
with a sigh,
That the ringing telephone is not another fire.

Answering the call I recognize the voice of the man at the tower,
Getting the bearings and the location of the smoke down clear,
I call all the locals until the bottom of the list is near
Before I hear a reply that "I'm on my way",
Which gives me a chance to start on my own work for the day.

Now I've got my cooking, cleaning, and baby to tend—
Not mentioning the washing, ironing, and odd jobs of which
there is no end.
Yet I must answer the 'phone, call after call, and do what I
can,
Hoping the little I do will help "Keep Virginia Green" as is
planned.
Now getting down to the towerman crying, "lookout blues",
You, at least, get paid for the time that you lose.

Mrs. Frank Allio

The Bridge, We Crossed It, Then It was Gone

I went to Pulaski one morning to check on some things with Mack Baker, the chief warden. When I arrived Mack informed me he had talked with the caretaker at the Boy Scout Camp in Max Mountain. There had been a bad storm the night before and the road and some of the bridges had probably washed out, so Mack wanted to check on that first.

We drove up Max Creek crossing some four or five bridges, then checked all the roads. We found some damage but nothing serious that we could see. We stopped and talked with the caretaker at the camp. Then proceeded on out.

As we crossed the last bridge coming out, the truck seemed to bounce as if he had hit a rock or something as he come off the dirt road. Mack wanted to know if I saw what he hit, I told him the road was smooth. There was nothing for him to hit. He stopped and we went back to see what was going on. Can you imagine how we felt to see the bridge we had just crossed in the creek with the water running over it instead of under it!

God sure takes care of people back in those mountains and are we thankful, for we almost landed in that creek with that bridge.

Corbett Boone
Fire Chief, R-5
Retired

On Journalism

Years ago, we in the Districts, were continually badgered into turning out news items in the many county weekly newspapers in the District. Each county usually had one of these papers.

On rainy days I used to make the young foresters write news items when there was no other paper work to do. The boys probably thought I was a Simon Legree (or words that are unprintable in these pages), but after a struggle they would turn out a news item. One young fellow wrote one that I had to really edit or practically rewrite it. I sent it in under his name and he got back a memo from Ed Rodger praising him as if he was a professional reporter! This of course went to the young forester's head.

We had problems in getting the items published in some counties. We were then required to go with the CFW to each paper every six months—a real chore.

In Southampton practically nothing had been published, and at that time was one of the worst fire counties in the state. I asked the editor why nothing was published and here we were right in the midst of fire season. He said, "because I have a large waste basket, good day gentlemen." We crawled out of there like puppy dogs with our tails between our legs. The CFW said, let's go over to Union Camp for a visit. There we told "Cotton" Johnson, Chief of Woodlands, about the incident. He chewed on his cigar, pressed a button and a clerk came in. He told her to find out from accounts how much they spent a year on stationery, etc. with that newspaper. The answer came back, something like $18,000 a year. He then phoned the editor and told him they could transfer the Union Camp account to Norfolk where he was *sure* they would print our forest fire items! Henceforth, all DOF articles were printed.

Outdoor Movies

Back in the fifties someone had the bright idea that we should get out and show night movies at various hamlets and county stores throughout the District. In time we had to send in a plan for the summertime activity.

The CFW would tack up posters in an area advertising the free movie, giving the time, date, place, etc.

Then someone from Waverly would come down, wait for it to get dark and proceed to show the movie to fifteen or twenty people who had showed up. Afterwards we would fold up the screen etc., and drive 40 to 60 miles back to Waverly—and be at the office at 8 a.m. the next morning. Anyway it was part of the job of forest fire prevention and the beginning of forest management.

A typical situation would be this. You were set up in the front yard of a county store with maybe 20 or so people gathered (that was before many people had TV). Having waited until it was dark enough you would proceed to show the movie hoping that there would be no breakdown. Then a couple of people would go to the store and get Cokes out of the Coke machine. The power would start up in the machine and reduce the power to our projector—so the movie would dissolve into slow motion and the talking part would be an inaudible mumble, until the Coke machine went off. While putting away the screen and projector you had a chance to say something about fire prevention and urge the people to request a TEX. Then, the long drive home wondering what you had accomplished.

I am a veteran of scores of these things in all seven counties of the old District One. One incident stands out in my memory—the "free picture show" was way down in the Greensville County low grounds. They were having a serious drought then and I thought the fire prevention message might be quite appropriate. Well, I ate supper at a cheap restaurant in Emporia and had indigestion the rest of the evening. I had to kill time for an hour or so until it was dark enough (this was in early July). About fifteen people had come to the free show and just as I set up, the most violent rain you could imagine, descended upon me and everyone scurried to their cars. One farmer remained to help me dismantle the outfit. He said "well we missed the picture, but if you were the cause of the rain we are glad you came down here, we need that rain.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

1960-1969

The first county office building was built in 1960 on the Eastern Shore followed by eleven more in the 60's.

I mentioned 68 Service Foresters. We needed them. We were in A.C.P., F.I.P., PL 566, Potomac flood control and so on. Sounds easy compared to today. Charlie Witter was moved to supervise these watershed projects in 1958.

We got an I & E shop and an illustrator and were now building our own exhibits.

Charlie Witter

Early Forestry Exhibit

Numerous legislation was passed in this period, but nothing of note.

We purchased the Augusta nursery in 1966. Wayne McBee, was appointed Superintendent. Cold storage facilities were established. The Hockley Tract, 319 acres near West Point, was acquired to progeny test our "super trees" and the Charlottesville nursery was closed.

The Lesesne State Forest was given to us, 431.9 acres.

Seth Hobart retired and in 1962, Wally Custard was promoted as Chief of Management, Cal Pennock as Assistant.

Nothing Was Thrown Away

Mrs. Forbes said that when Buster retired he was requested to turn in all of his uniforms. A list was sent from the Regional Office showing an inventory of the pieces and parts of uniforms that were issued to Buster. According to the list, Buster received 32 pairs of pants! Mrs. Forbes says Buster never owned 32 pairs of pants in his life! And what would he do with 'em if he did??

Buster was the first guy to get trees planted at Dabney Lancaster Community College. He helped plant 50,000—and they still look great today!

Rita Moore
Personnel Assistant
Headquarters

Blow-Up

Some of the greater stories concerning fire control experiences by Virginia Department of Forestry personnel have originated in the Great Dismal Swamp within Virginia. There has probably been more movement of personnel to Region 8 during these prolonged Swamp fires, which allowed our people from various sections of the state to relate experiences each night. Some of these stories became quite interesting after being told a half-dozen times. Of course, these are all true!? The following incidents are true and witnesses will testify on my behalf, I think.

About 8:45 a.m. on April 15, 1967, Bill Pierce, then Region 8 Fire Chief, received a call from the Wallaceton Tower, located in former Norfolk County (now City of Chesapeake), stating there was smoke three miles north of the North Carolina-Virginia line in the Great Dismal Swamp. The fire was on the west side of the Dismal Swamp canal so the only quick way into the fire was to drive approximately forty-five miles around the Swamp to get to an area only two miles west of US 17. The canal prevented movement of personnel and equipment to the area.

Even though Pierce and his small crew almost had the fire controlled, Lester Kennedy and I were waiting for our heavy crawler tractor to arrive at the scene when the fire "blew up"! Winds suddenly created by the fire reached 75+ mph and tree branches and other debris two or more inches in diameter were swirled into the terrific updraft. Fire brands were landing on the opposite side of a canal we had planned to use as a fire break and in a matter of a few seconds everything seemed to explode. Kennedy ran south for his vehicle and I took off north. We weren't in any danger for we had a good deep canal to jump into—our main concern was Pierce and his crew. While all of this was occurring Pierce was still working on the back side of the fire not realizing the fire was long-gone and heading for the Dismal Swamp canal, US 17 and the Wallaceton Tower. Kennedy and I actually experienced the creation of a "blow up" fire—the noise of the highly inflammable waxy vegetation, pond pine and switch cane exploding was awesome. I finally made contact with the tower and had the lady operator abandon her position. Pierce still couldn't believe what had happened. Fire brands had touched off spot fires 1¼ miles to the northwest plus to the east of US 17 and the Dismal Swamp canal. Our local fire departments by then had been alerted and had practically formed a human defense chain east of US 17 stamping out or wetting down small spots.

It didn't take long for the head of the fire to burn down, so the normal problem of recruiting manpower, transporting them across a canal to protect the flanks, etc., began. By the end of this fire we has as 450 men for each of the first three days, and over 150 per day until day ten. Most of these were Marines and sailors awaiting orders at the Naval Operating Base in Norfolk. Fifteen to twenty regulars from other VDF districts moved in to take over as fire crew chiefs for a couple of weeks. It wasn't until early July that we had sufficient rain to drown out the 1,000 or more acres of burning

peat so the fire could be called "controlled". This ended as being a 1,650-acre fire. Many acts of heroism were noted, injuries were only minor, valuable experience was gained, new equipment ideas were born and put into use and I, the author of this account, remember the following details as vividly as if they took place yesterday, not 20 years earlier.

R. H. Woodling
Regional Forester
Retired

On A Wing and A Prayer

About 1 p.m. on the fire day, no one actually knew where the swamp fire had gone or could go if weather patterns were to change. The late Bill Cross was assigned as dispatcher at the office and chief procurement officer. Bill Cross had the knack of knowing where to get hard-to-find items and get to the right people for action., About 1 p.m. I wanted a helicopter and I wanted one fast! I wanted to be picked up at a definite Swamp crossroad where vegetation was thought to be low enough to not endanger the helicopter blades. Bill contacted the Duty Officer at the 5th Coast Guard Headquarters in Portsmouth and, just by chance, one of their largest helicopters had become airborne at the Elizabeth City Air Base and they welcomed our request for assistance. This was real movie firefighting now! Within minutes this giant was hovering over my position and was gently lowering itself for the Fire Boss to get aboard and assess the situation. At about the 100-foot level the chopper suddenly went skyward, stopped at about 1000 feet, and came down again. This time when it reached 100 feet, a small wire basket suspended from a thread-size cable came toward me. I thought, "What the hell have I gotten myself into now—is my insurance paid up—did I bring clean shorts with me—did I say goodbye to my wife this morning—this is my mother's birthday," etc., etc. The basket touched the ground, I placed one foot in the basket, grabbed the thread holding the basket and away I went—one foot in and one foot out! The problem then was that the plane went straight up to the 1000-foot level before they started reeling in the basket! As soon as I was pulled in to the chopper bay, I noticed the altimeter and it *did* read 1000. My senses responded quickly though, and my requests during the 15-minute or so flight were carried out immediately. When I asked to be returned to the pickup site, I was told to get back in that basket, knowing they would descend 100 feet before gently moving me out of the plane. As I calmly sat in the basket getting some plans glued together, the man holding the cable and basket put his foot against the basket and shoved me out into spaced without any warning. Scared—I don't remember, but I vowed never to have surprises such as this. Here I was again—1000 feet in the air in a damned basket. The plane lowered to about 100 feet; I stood up; put one foot out of the basket, fully expecting to tippy-toe away from that ventilated casket, when the plane suddenly surged skyward. This time I recovered my senses at about 500 feet, standing in that wire cage holding on to that thread! The pilot slowly descended again, I sat down as the basket touched ground, became a ball and rolled out. After this experience, I had no problem whatsoever staying awake for the next 72 hours along with Bill Pierce, Les Kennedy and former employee Chuck Roddatz.

R. H. Woodling
Regional Forester,
Retired

Super-Human Strength

This story deals with people performing acts of super-human strength under very dangerous situations. This occurred during the Labor Day period of 1967 or 1968, about five miles east of the City of Suffolk in the northern section of the Dismal Swamp along the Norfolk and Western Railroad main line. Most of the traffic on this railroad transports loaded coal cars to the Lambert's Point docks in Norfolk for export, and then moves endless empty coal cars back to the mine fields. On this particular evening we worked late on a 60-acre shallow peat fire pumping water about 5000 feet from a canal to the fire area. About 7 p.m. the various crews were moving out of the Swamp when one vehicle suddenly died. As I remember, some of the people from out of the district on this fire were Bob Seiler, Leroy Woodson, Joel Artman, Leroy Collins and Sid Jones. Radio messages prompted all other vehicles to stop and attempt to turn around. Roads in the Dismal Swamp were not engineered for any turning around except at intersections. Lester Kennedy was leading the procession of vehicles as he was driving along the north side of the N&W tracks. This narrow road not only had the tracks on the south side, but a very wide, deep ditch on the north so turning space was at a minimum. Kennedy radioed that he would return to the stricken vehicle. As he backed to turn around, his rear bumper slipped over the head of a rail spike. Large, loose crushed stone easily spun away as the wheels turned so Kennedy's vehicle became a part of the N&W Railroad. His truck carried 120 gallons of water and two tool boxes full of various hand tools, plus full 5-gallon backpack pumps. On top of this, there was no room under the rear axle for a jack. As luck would have it, someone noticed a single bright beam of light appearing to the east indicating a 250-car empty coal train pulled by three or four diesel engines was bearing down on us! Actually, we had no place to go but to the deep ditch with the hope that no derailment would occur. If it did, a part of VDF was going to be buried under tons of empty coal cars. There was no time to drain 120 gallons of water out of a tank or toss out several hundred pounds of tools—something had to happen! Even a miracle! Robert Seiler yelled for everyone to get hold of some metal and pull their guts out. These men actually lifted the rear end of this loaded ¾-ton truck along with the *rail spike.* I don't remember if anyone calculated the weight lifted that night, but it was proof of what a person can do under severe stress. Ironically, the vehicle that had suddenly died had been started and was proceeding toward us unaware of the situation we were experiencing. Upon inspecting the situation the following morning, there was no way the bumper of the pickup truck could get caught under the head of a railroad spike, and there was no way the truck could be picked up by a group of humans plus pulling the spike—but it did happen.

R.H. Woodling
Region 8
Retired

It's Hard to Say Good-Bye

There are many happy memories—good and bad times. I remember how I went to the restroom and cried most of the morning when I learned that Ed Rodger was being transferred to Charlottesville; when Raymond Hostetter used to sleep on the office floor when fires were raging and his back was giving him trouble; all the arguments (friendly) that Raymond and Cree Tyree used to have; how happy I was when Tom Elliott came to District 7 as District Forester. I am thinking back over thirty-four and a half years so you know that I feel fortunate to have been associated with so many fine people.

Often I have wished that I had kept a diary. Mr. Dean should be very proud of our organization. The men who were in Charlottesville surely molded a fine group of people into a first-rate service—Mr. Garth, Mr. Stoneburner, Bessie Hurtt, Mrs. Ullom, Daisy Cheavacci, John Heltzel, Mr. Bellomy, Bud Shelton and so many others. The Charlottesville clerks had the "patience of Job". I will forget some of the names, but will never forget the people.

Bessie Donald
Retired
District 7 Clerk
(Deceased)

Here Comes the Bear!

In the late 50's and early '60's getting large crews together for pulpwood marking jobs was in vogue. On one occasion a crew of six or eight from Richmond descended en masse to mark a large tract near L. B. "Buster" Hill's farm in King William County. Buster was CFW at the time. Buster was a "horse" of a man and delivered a jovial "pat on the back" that would normally render one breathless for five or ten minutes. Former District Forester Bob Slocum honored the field forces by agreeing to help on this day.

Imagine, if you will, a *hot*, mid-August day with temperatures well into the 90's, humidity 90% plus, no wind, and a dense loblolly pine stand with a thick understory of honeysuckle, poison ivy and hardwood brush. Things were moving along as well as could be expected when all of a sudden, Buster gave out a roaring, booming holler. Thrashing, crashing, dead limbs snapping and falling, Buster rushed toward Slocum. Slocum, in complete confusion, replied with a voice several octaves higher than normal, "What?" "What?" Within seconds, Buster and Slocum were headed toward the next man in line—Gene Augsburger, who in turn, screams, "What?" "What?"

By this time, the whole crew is aware that Buster had managed to disrupt a large hornet's nest and people, paint guns, and clothes were in complete disarray. It was amazing and amusing to note how *THE BEAR* (Buster Hill) cleared the understory from his brother's pine woods.

Gene Augsburger
Regional Forester
Region 2

Sneakly Snake

Bill Roller, then with the Waverly District and now with the Division of Mined Land Reclamation, was marking pulpwood with a large crew on the Cofer Saunders tract in Southampton County in the 1960's. As luck would have it, Bill was the first man on the line when we walked around a tree to squirt the butt mark. There, much to his chagrin and much too close for comfort, were two copperhead snakes as Bill said, "Romantically occupied." Needless to say, it was go or get off the pot! So, Bill painted not only the two snakes, but also both of his own shoes and half-way up one leg! For the rest of the morning, you could trace Bill and the two snakes for hundreds of feet through that swampy wooded area near Zuni.

Michael T. Griffin
Regional Forester
R-3

What Trailer?

Tom Jones, County Forester for years in Campbell County, worked out of the Salem District Office for a while. Seems as though Tom was on a marking crew in Giles County with a group of fellows, and they were on their way to the Salem Office. Somehow the trailer that Tom was pulling became detached, and went off the side of a steep road. Tom assessed the situation and called Salem on the radio. Following is a fairly good account of the conversation:

Tom: "Salem 3 - Bravo to Salem, Jim (Hinkle) the paint trailer came loose on Rt. 100 and went into the woods."

Jim: "Well, Tom, just put the paint boxes on your truck and hook the trailer back up and pull it back to Salem."

Long, *long* pause

Tom: "Jim, there AIN'T no paint trailer!"

Michael Griffin
Regional Forester
R-3

"The Whole World's Listening"

Back in the days when the Division of Forestry had only one radio system statewide, Frank Hancock, former Technician for Chesterfield County, and myself were working together during a spring fire day. As luck would have it, and unknown to Frank and me, my radio set had shorted out and locked my transmitter. As Frank and I merrily chased smoke and looked for fire violations, we shared "stories," talked about the boss and all those good things. All of a sudden a Chesterfield County patrolman came rushing up behind us with lights flashing and horn blowing. As we pulled to the side of the road, he called out "do you guys know your mike button is on?" As we checked out the radio, we found the mike was okay, but the transmit light was on. With sinking heart and mounting fear, we made a point not say another word!

The next day I sheepishly put an ear out to see if our "earthy" conversations had been heard. Sure enough, they had! I was informed that we were coming in well enough to be understood but that District Forester Slocum couldn't figure out who was talking. The story goes that Slocum was in a purple rage and wanted to get his hands on the throats of those clowns transmitting all that stuff on Channel 2. As you can see, he never found out!

Gene Augsburger
Regional Forester
R-2

Indecision

Phil Grimm showed up on a 850-acre fire in Amherst County. Milton Morris was line boss for a certain part of the line. A pickup truck showed up about the same time as Grimm. The truck was carrying 11 men appearing to be farmers. On their truck door was painted "Thoroughgood Farm". Morris thought that since Phil had not worked on a fire for some time, this would be a good hand crew.

So, "Grimm Crew" was placed high up on the mountain by a truck trail and assigned a duty to work toward the bottom. Morris returned to fire headquarters and picked up another crew to assign to the area adjacent to Grimm. These were "Miller School Boys" — also a great crew. Things were looking up. The fire was slowing down as it was getting late in the evening. Morris took his crew to the same area where he had let Grimm off. Grimm's crew was still at the "let off place." One crewman yelled to Morris, "I ain't got no bounce" (that's what it sounded like). Questioned more, it was determined he was explaining that he "had no balance." He had looked over the edge of a cliff and almost toppled over, so he returned to the truck. Morris checked further down the fire line to learn that only Grimm was raking. The remainder of his crew had laid down along the fire line. To make a long story short, it was learned that Thoroughgood Farm was a detention center for alcoholics! Needless to say, the crew was gathered up and taken off the mountain.

Milton Morris
Investigator

The Mighty Hunters

I remember Jim Garner visiting one time for a trip to Falkland Farm to duck hunt. I was up above him when I heard a shot so I walked down to see what Jim had bagged. I saw the top of Jim's hat, his gun above his head, and saw his head appear as he climbed out the creek and headed for the car. Well, he pulled his socks off and I have never in my life seen such a foot!! I still don't know how he fell in the water, but Jim got his duck and took falling in the creek pretty good.

Tim Wilborn
Forestry Technician
R-4

New Foresters, or Why Management Chiefs Got Ulcers

I remember a time when Jim Garner was a relatively new management chief in Farmville Region under John Jackson. Jim had five new employees, one of whom was Jim Cook and the others were Paul Toth, Dick Mueller, Phillip Wert and Maurice Tipton. We were traveling one morning going on a training trip and Jim crawled into the back seat. Dick Mueller was driving the old black 1955 Ford. It was during the summertime and quite hot, all the windows were down, and that old Ford was rolling along on a two-lane highway. We went beneath an underpass under a railroad and the road couldn't have been more than the minimum width. For traffic to go through it normally required one vehicle to stop while traffic from the other side went through, and take turns. On this particular morning, we were headed through this tunnel with Dick Mueller driving. We was a wild-eyed sort of fella! We went through this thing with all of us yelling and screaming to stop. A tractor-trailer was coming from the opposite direction, and someway Dick went under the underpass at the same time the tractor-trailer did and nobody touched! But, as sure as the world, if we had had a wax job on that car that morning, we would have hit the truck or wall!!

We had a fellow by the name of Wayne Divis that was somewhat of a character and a very good forester in Cumberland County. Wayne, who was working Amelia County as well as Cumberland, picked up Chief Warden Harry Midkiff in his pickup truck to examine a tract. Wayne drove his truck up the side of a road bank to scare Harry, got the pickup truck up where it was darned-near ready to turn over and got scared himself! They got out and actually chained the truck down so it wouldn't slide off sideways or roll over the bank. They slowly but surely got turned around so they could get out.

And there was the instance where Wayne parked his truck at home to eat lunch and returned to discover it had rolled down his driveway, backwards, made a 90° turn, rolled across Route 460 and came to a stop in a restaurant parking lot! It didn't get a scratch and Wayne learned to use his emergency brake.

Be Careful What You Ask For . . .

Jim Garner had a new forester in Appomattox County by the name of Warren Taylor who was working with Dave Smith, CFW. They had a bad fire and Warren, being the new kid on the block, kept hollering to Farmville for a tractor. After he would call in and ask for a tractor, Dave, in turn, would come right back in a few minutes and say "Disregard on that tractor. We don't need it." After about the third time of asking for it, Warren called back and said "Is that tractor on the way?" District Forester John Jackson said "Negative. Request cancelled again." Then Dave came back on the radio and said "Warren, I'll talk with you in just a few minutes." Anyway, they got their act together and

decided they wouldn't use a tractor. This was on a pretty good size fire, 90 acres or so! It wasn't too long after that that Warren had a *very* big fire and since he couldn't get the tractor the first time, he wouldn't call for it the second time. Everybody was asking him (you could hear it all over the District on the radio) if he could use a tractor, and his reply was "Negative. We don't need a tractor, we'll handle by hand." By golly, that's what he did! That was back in the days when we only had three tractors in the entire ten-county district.

Another memory that comes to mind is that of Jim Garner and his reputation as a prescribed burner. He felt that if it didn't get out at least once, you didn't get a good burn; in other words, he wanted dry conditions! In this particular case, there was a long, narrow burn—not too many acres, but long lines—in Appomattox County. All the young troops showed up to help with the prescribed burn, and they were waiting and watching the weather and doing all the other things that one does to get ready. Garner jumped out of his car, grabbed a drip torch and said "Come on, let's go." He took off down the line and set the whole thing—they ended up fighting fire all afternoon!

Jim Cook
Deputy State Forester

April 1963 — An Account

It was predicted that 1963 would be a bad year. Sun spots and the eleven-year cycle had run true for the past thirty years. Rainfall in January had been short, February about normal, March, as usual, was an erratic month with normal or better precipitation followed by winds that rapidly dried forest fuels. In Amherst, substantial rain fell on five days, well-distributed over the first 28 days of the month. March 28 recorded .26 inch, and was the last appreciable rainfall until April 28. The number of fires up until April 1 was pretty close to normal. I can recall commenting that this certainly wasn't the "blow up" year that the old timers had predicted.

April 3rd:

The fire danger built up rapidly, however, during the first few days of April. On April 3 a record high temperature of 90°, which stands to this day, was recorded in Lynchburg. On the same day about 10 a.m. in the southern tip of Nelson County a fire started at the edge of a 10-15-year-old stand of Virginia pine. Winds were calm but the fire spread rapidly into the pines and blew up. I arrived and found a crown fire with flames leaping well above the young pines. Luck was with me for as I was scouting the head, a big TD 18 International tractor with a 10-12-foot blade came crashing through the woods. Hey! Over here, I motioned. Cut this thing off fast. In a few minutes the tractor, which was operated by a local forest warden, cut a line the width of a logging road right in front of the fire which was only a little over an acre in size. Well, that line never even slowed the fire down. Two more similar attempts also failed, so it was obvious that a direct attack would not work. The fire was heading toward a county road so the tractor was directed to work the flanks. I went to the road, put the Gladstone Fire Department and all available Indian tanks patrolling the east side of the road, and I back-fired the west side. There was a momentary big blow, but then the fire fell meekly to the ground and was contained at about six acres. About that time the Virginia Division of Forestry tractor came rolling in and the driver said "Sorry, I'm late. I drove right by the fire and never saw it." Oh, boy!!

April 4th:

The next morning at about 5:30, I was awakened by a roar that I soon figured out to be the wind howling through the trees around the house. I tried to get back to sleep, but couldn't. About 6:00, I could stand it no longer so I got up and turned on the radio. The first words I heard were "Amherst County Chief Forest Warden Elbert Maddox says that the forest fire danger is extremely high today," etc., etc.

It didn't take long for the action to start on April 4, 1963. About 9:00 a.m. a fire was reported in southern Nelson County. It was contained at two acres by two county roads, prompt action and a little luck. As the day progressed the wind got even worse and the humidity plummeted. By late morning fires were popping up in other counties and about that time a smoke was detected along the C&O railroad in southwestern Amherst County. Starting at the foot of Rocky Row Mountain, it made a rapid run and was a major fire in no time. Most of it was on the George Washington National Forest, so the USFS handled it and we did not get involved.

By afternoon, there were a number of 100-acre plus fires going in District 3 and numerous fires going in much of the state. About 6:00 p.m., a fire was reported in southern Amherst County, which was rapidly plowed and contained at ten acres. By the end of this day, the Amherst and Nelson area had been lucky - 2 fires, 12 acres. The George Washington National Forest, however, was not so lucky. They lost 1300 acres. Several days later District Forester Dallas Wilfong commented, "On April 4th if there was a spark anywhere, it got out." CFW Elbert Maddox made a statement that he would soon regret. Feeling somewhat cheated by the fact that all the big fires occurred outside the Amherst-Nelson area, he asked Wilfong if he could be sent to the next big fire in the District so he could see how it was run.

For the next 16 days there was little or no rain in the southern half of District 3, and the fire danger continued to grow.

April 20th:

Saturday, April 20, 1963, started out as a perfect spring day. I decided to walk to the office to sign some letters and do a few other odds and ends that I was unable to complete on Friday. Walking by a Norway maple, I noted that it was in full leaf, a sure sign that fire season was on its way out. I also noted that not a leaf was moving—the wind was calm.

I had been in the office about 20 minutes when the phone rang about 8:30 a.m. "There is a fire on the Hesson property near Gladstone," the voice said, "Come quick." OK! Called CFW Maddox, "Elbert, get the tractor on the road to Gladstone. I'll meet you there." Then, I felt stupid. There I was at the office with no truck! Ran home, got truck, drinking water, etc., told the family goodbye—it may be a long day. Little did I know that I would see them very little for the whole week.

Arriving on the fire shortly before 9:00 a.m. we found the Gladstone Fire Department, a local fire warden and about half a dozen men already working on it. Tractor was unloaded and a direct attack ordered. No problem. By 10:00 a.m., a good line was around it and we felt pretty secure. Called into the District Office in Charlottesville and said "John, (Shavis) we are 9-3 and about 10 acres." Shavis then said, "That's good. I don't know how you did it, as dry as it is and the way the wind's blowing." Swift: "Is the wind blowing up there?" Shavis: "It's a gale." Swift: "We don't have much wind down here." Shavis: "Well, get prepared, there must be a front coming through.

At that very moment, the first gust hit us. I sat in the truck for a minute or two hoping that it was really not happening. But the west wind kept pushing the tree tops farther and farther to the east. Yes, it was happening — 20-30 miles per hour and maybe more. Damn! The weatherman didn't say anything about this. "Elbert! The wind is getting up; we will have to secure this fire better than it is now."

A fellow ran up to me, all out of breath, "Hey, Swift. There is another fire about a mile down the road." Great! How big? "It just started behind the Litchford house." OK, but this fire started behind the Litchford house. "Yeah, this is another member of the same family!" Great, again.

Something had to be done fast, so I split our forces. A local forest warden and small crew would stay to patrol the first fire and Maddox and myself, and our tractor.

Arriving at the second fire somewhere between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m., we found a little over an acre burning hot and erratic Two tractors plowed and pushed around and around the fire. The fire department pumped load after load of water. Others pumped Indian tank after Indian tank of water on spots. The fire could not be controlled, but was still only about two acres in size!

At 12:30 p.m. the situation worsened. The Amherst tower reported a smoke rising fast in the New Glasgow area. Fire number three had just started. "Elbert, take our tractor to New Glasgow and try to get something going. I'll stay here and work on this fire." OK. Amherst 50 leaves.

Returning back to Fire #2 someone announced that we were out of water—we had pumped the well dry at the house. A heavy column of smoke started coming up from the south flank. Running to this area, I found the local forest warden whom I had left in charge at Fire #1. "Frank, what are you doing here? How is the first fire?" Frank: "Oh, that fire got away from us and we couldn't handle it, so we came over here to help you! No one was on Fire #1 and it had just jumped Route 60! That's real great. "What's happening here?" Frank: "We just backfired the small broomstraw field along this trail." "Frank! That trail isn't even two feet wide—it will never hold." Frank: "Well, we had to try something." "Get the Tyree's tractor in here and widen this trail." Frank: "Can't. It just broke down." The situation was getting out of hand!

"Look! Over there—it must be another fire!" Turning quickly, I looked to the north and saw big balls of black, ugly smoke rolling rapidly along the tree tops. Good gosh, that looks terrible. Run to the truck for the radio (no portables in those days) and called the towers: How many fires do we have going now?" Answer: three. "But, there must be more. I see heavy smoke near Gladstone." "Oh, that's the new Gladstone fire and its really rolling."

At this point the situation was hopeless—three big fires and no help!

I proceeded carefully down the road with my lights on; I almost ran into a local logger with a beautiful JD tractor on his truck. "Can I help?" he asked. "Put a line around all these houses on the road all the way to Route 60 and tell the people we recommend that they get out." Charley Jordon saved all the houses that afternoon and the only loss was a few old sheds.

Proceeding down the road again, I was waved down by a woman who was pulling out of her driveway. The old Rambler station wagon was crammed full of kids, clothes and household goods. In tears, she asked, "Where can I go? Can you save my house?" I told her to go to the Gladstone School and that a dozer was putting lines around all the houses.

Pulling out of Route 622 and going east on Route 60, I soon found where Fire #1 had jumped Route 60 and was heading toward the James River. Well, at least the river should stop it. At the edge of the fire I noticed an elderly gentleman with a pail of water and a dipper, calmly putting water on his mailbox post to keep it from burning up.

Arriving at Gladstone Elementary School sometime after 2:00 p.m., I found it was already opened up and a number of people had gathered there. Headquarters was set up and arrangements made for food and drinks. Time went by with organizational activities. Still no help from Charlottesville. Called District Office and asked when assistance would arrive at Gladstone fire. "It's on the way" someone said. GOOD!

Heading toward Route 60 and Gladstone I soon saw a green pickup. Stopping in the middle of the road, Milton Morris hops out ready for combat and says, "Where is the head of this fire now?" Looking to the west into a sea of smoke, I said, "Somewhere up on the side of that hill." "OK," he said, "I'll scout it out and we'll stop it along this road going up the hill." Milton disappeared into the smoke. A few minutes later, two explosions were heard and Milton came running back. "Let's get the hell out of here, the fire just got some propane tanks up there!"

About this time I got my first break. A truck with a tractor rolled into Headquarters and out jumped a fellow who said, "I'm LFW Charles Carter from Buckingham. I have a tractor and I know how to use it." Charles was promptly given a small crew and put on the north flank with instructions to put a line all the way to the river. I finally felt that some real control was started.

I can't remember the exact time of day, but it was somewhere between mid-afternoon and evening that a runner came up to me and said the fire had jumped the James River. I immediately reported this to Charlottesville by radio. The conversation was heard by Maynard Stoddard in Farmville and for the next hour the radio belonged to Maynard.

More time went by and still no VDF help had arrived. Frequent calls to Charlottesville gave me the same answer. So and so was dispatched hours ago—should be there by now. It was after dark when Charlie Witter pulled in with a stake body truck full of University of Virginia boys. As they had proceeded down Route 29 from Charlottesville, they watched the red-orange glow in the sky get larger and larger. Turning east on Route 60 in Amherst, they could see more glows on the horizon. As they got closer to Gladstone, the glows must have looked menacing because when they pulled into fire headquarters no one seemed very eager to get off the truck. Charlie said, "Let's eat first." That must have been what they wanted to hear, for the boys jumped off the truck and darted into the school for sandwiches and drinks.

After eating, Charlie and crew were dispatched to the west sector to dig in a hand line. The fire, at this time, had three main sectors. A north flank, south flank and west flank. Charles Carter was on the north flank and I could see by the dimming glow that he was controlling it. The south flank contained all volunteers with no good sector boss and seemed to be pretty wild. Charlie Witter slowly made the glow at the west flank start getting smaller.

Things were beginning to look better. The head of the fire was across the river and half of District 4 was working on it. Charles came back to fire headquarters and said that he had put a line to the river and it was holding. Charles said he heard that the head was now in his home territory, so he was going back across the river to help.

The radio was a constant chatter day and night. Trying to get a message through was frustrating. You would wait and wait for a break and then when none occurred, you would pick up the microphone and start talking, hoping that your transmission would overpower whoever else was talking at that time. It was, of course, good entertainment to listen to the radio when you had a chance. It was during one of these moments of leisure sometime after dark that I heard Madison 3 (Bill Foley) say he was with the tractor and bringing a line down the mountain. It was on Channel One and sounded near by. So, I called Bill and asked where he was. He said he was on the fire near Woods Mill in Nelson County. This was the first I had heard about Fire #4, and it had probably been going for a number of hours.

Sometime later in the night, I heard that Fire #2 had burned to about a quarter-of-a-mile of the rear of Fire #1. I went to the old Gladstone dump and was walking a line when I ran into Elvin Frame. I can't remember when Elvin arrived in the area, but anyway he was there and had just lost a fine gold pocket watch. He was quite concerned, so I suggested that he be sure to come back here in the morning and look for it. Later I learned that he did come back and found the watch hanging on a twig along the fire line.

Somewhere around 2 or 3 a.m., Milton Morris came to headquarters and notified me that Bud Shelton, and I believe some other VDF people, was on his fire and nearly had a line around it. He suggested that I go home for a few hours and he would take over fire headquarters and make it a joint headquarters for both fires.

April 21:

Sunday, April 21, 1963 was a bright, sunny day with less wind but the humidity went down to 11 percent. After a few hours sleep, I was on the road again heading towards fire headquarters at Gladstone. From the radio traffic and the column of smoke, I could tell that the New Glasgow fire was out and running again bright and early. About a mile from Gladstone, I saw John Heltzel standing by his car. He said he had been sent there to take over as Fire Boss for the day. I told him that headquarters was down the road in the school.

All day Sunday was spent patrolling, mopping up and trying to keep both Gladstone fires from getting away. There were some break-overs and we lost a little more acreage. There were also spot fires that we suspect were set by someone wanting to keep the excitement going. Bill Clarke was in a plane and spotted many of these fires.

April 22nd:

Monday was more of the same, but by evening all fires were pretty well under control.

A few scattered thunderstorms went through the area during the night. But, Tuesday, April 23, dawned bright, clear and calm. Checking the fire scene, we found, much to our delight, that the storm had gone right over the New Glasgow fire, one of the Gladstone fires and all but the south end of the second Gladstone fire. It was, therefore, time to start tallying our weekend losses. Losses were determined as follows: Gladstone #1 – 450 acres in Nelson County and some acreage in Buckingham (can't remember exact number); Gladstone #2 – 350 acres; New Glasgow #3 – 2,000 acres; Woods Mill #4 – 150 acres.

April 23rd:

On the 23rd, I headed toward Gladstone Fire #1 to start sketching it on the aerial photo. It was about noon when I started walking the fire line from Route 60 to the James River sketching as I went. When I arrived at the River, I found where Charles Carter had nose-dived down the steep bank with his tractor. While along the river bank, I maneuvered to try and see where the fire had jumped and hit the Buckingham side. At this very moment I became aware of a roaring noise. What is it? Is it the river? No, it isn't the river. I looked up on the ridge behind me and was shocked.

The trees were violently whipping back and forth. Good gosh, another front! I ran all the way back to the truck and switched on the radio. The towers were already screaming the bad news, "Big smoke near Galts Mill." Call to Amherst 2 (Maddox). "Are you en route?" "10-4." "Ok, I'll pick up a load of KVG boys and be along as soon as I can." Pulling onto the high school parking lot about 1:30 p.m., the tower called again. Another smoke building fast near Elon. Great! Call to Amherst 2: "Have you gotten to the Galts Mill fire yet?" "I'm almost to it and it really *looks bad.*" "We have another fire near Elon, I'll go to it, OK?"

Just south of Amherst with a load of KVG boys, I caught my first glimspe of the Galts Mill Fire. "Looks bad" was an understatement. Going for only about a half to three-quarters of an hour, it already looked like a mushrooming atomic bomb blast. The wind was 40 or 50 miles per hour now, and I believe, peaked at 55 mph during the afternoon. We could get no planes in the air because of the high winds.

Arriving at the Elon fire, I could see that the fire was crowning through everthing it came to. It's going to be a long day, boys! The KVG crew looked at the fire, got thirsty, and promptly drank a whole gallon of water—every drop I had.

Before I could really collect my thoughts about this fire, the tower sounded off again. Another fire at Monroe. Looking in that direction, we could easily see the first big rolls of smoke starting up from that one.

Things were again getting rapidly out-of-hand. Three fires going—better get some tractors and people on the road. Monroe fire needs a fire boss. (Bill Clarke eventually got that job.)

Scouting my fire, I finally got around in front of it just in time to see it go through a pulpwood-size stand of Virginia pine. Fire exploded through the crowns and was at least a hundred feet in front of the ground fire. Fire brands were blowing everywhere to the front. But, I was lucky—there were big fields in front of it which caught the head.

Setting up my headquarters in a local resident's back yard near the front of the fire, we set out to work on the flanks. A local tractor was put to work and later Bill Sheads arrived with a brand new VDF John Deere.

About 3:30 p.m. another fire started at Winesap and headed toward a subdivision and the Holiday Inn where all the traffic problems were.

By this time the whole southern half of Amherst County was a sea of smoke and we could not determine the exact location of this fire. We sent people out to hunt for it, but they never found it and the tower could not tell one fire from the other. John Jackson, who was at the Oak Dale Church headquarters, kept asking me to keep hunting for it. We finally gave up and never did get on that fire until it was under control.

Someting between mid- and late-afternoon the Galts Mill fire, which was by far the largest, jumped the James River and made a run in Appomattox County. District 4 was waiting for it this time, but I think it still got one or two hundred acres.

Around 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., my fire (Elon) was pretty well controlled. Volunteers by the dozens came and stomped it out. Thinking that our tractor and services might be needed elsewhere, we headed east down Route 130 toward the Monroe fire. Going about three miles we flagged down a lovely young girl carrying a box. She said she was a Sweet Briar College student and they were delivering food to the firefighters, but she could not find the Elon fire. "Won't you please eat some of these sandwiches?" Bill and I were starved, so we took two or three each and pointed the way to Elon.

We had just started eating when out of a sideroad came a whole convoy of National Guard troops. The officer in charge came over and asked directions to the Elon fire. I pointed the way and asked, "Where did you guys come from?" "The Lynchburg Guard has been activated to help fight the fire," he said. "We have just controlled the Winesap fire and now we are supposed to go to Elon." He got back into his jeep and off they went. Well, Bill, we just learned something. The Guard is helping, and we now know the location of the other fire—Winesap.

Proceeding to the Monore fire, we helped there for several hours and then were notified by someone that our tractor was not needed at Galts Mill. Arriving in Amherst the transport all of a sudden quit. The motor froze and would not turn over. A call to Charlottesville brought a mechanic to our assistance. He could not get it going either and we later found out that sugar had been put in the gas tank.

April 24th:

The next day, April 24, it was all over except for patrol and mop-up. The wind was light and the humidity up. Losses were totaled: The five day tally was well over 4,000 acres.

John Swift
Area Forester
R-3

Salem District

My first few years with the Division were on the road maintenance crew. Wes Henderson was foreman and, being a foreman in the CCC that built those roads, he knew a lot about road maintenance. We worked all the fire trails in the Salem district and some in Abingdon and Staunton districts as well as Charlottesville. We always started the motor grader during the first of April and finished the week before hunting season.

In winter we would work in D-5. At that time, we were doing a number of big marking jobs. These marking jobs would involve the entire district personnel. Perhaps the largest job was on the Roanoke City watershed. About 12 to 15 people from the districts joined our forces for at least a month. It was my job to keep the paint mixed.

Jim Hinkle - A Good Man

Jim Hinkle, D-5 Management Chief, was a person like we need more of, however, he was the only one. Jim could keep more people out of trouble and get more work done than anyone. Jim had a way of chewing you out and you enjoyed it! On one occasion when we finished the task, he was overheard to say, "Now, damn you, buy me a cup of coffee." The recipient said he would have bought the coffee if he'd had to borrow the money.

There was a time when we had three Jim's in D-5. They were Big Jim, Slim Jim, and Fat Jim. Perhaps Hinkle trained as many, if not more, foresters than any other management chief in Virginia. In the early 60's, foresters were coming and going fast. Some of these included people who are still with the Division. All who knew Jim had a great liking for him and his wit. He never got in a hurry. He arrived at a fire one time and said, "Let's get a drink and ride around for a while and see where the fire is." After about an hour of riding around, looking, and asking questions, the fire was easy to control.

R. J. Garman
Forestry Technician
R-5

Every Way But Loose!

Carl was scouting for the fire plow, which was driven by former Salem District Fire Chief Charlie Taylor on a night fire when someone tapped him on the shoulder. It was the KVG crew leader, whose crew had been patrolling and mopping up behind the tractor. "That man's turned the tractor over back yonder," he told Carl. "Is he hurt?" asked Carl. Carl knew that Charlie was okay when the crew leader replied, "I don't reckon. He's out cussin' a sailor!!"

Carl Dalton, CFW
Franklin County

Personnel Camp

My first experience of a personnel meeting was one hot week at Camp Pendelton. My back has been out of whack ever since! The cots were as sway back as a hammock with a board on each side. By Friday all food had a fishy taste. But we had fun. At nights we went to Virginia Beach and had to be back and in the cot by 11:00 p.m. The fun was to see Milton Morris puff that cigar and smoke Uncle George, as he did a breath check as we got off the truck at camp. When we all returned home, Ex-Lax was the most wanted item.

Al Settle, CFW
Culpeper County
Retired

My most exciting experience was on a marking job in Madison Couty on a rocky, steep cliff. Bud Kidwell was on my right about 100 feet above me on top of a rocky ledge hollering "sneaky snake" every step. About this time, I was walking cautiously by some large rocks about shoulder high when a rattler warned me to move out—that I did—after jumping (Bud said) about ten feet down the mountain with a paint gun on my back. There was only one way to stop and that was to run into a tree and hold onto it. What an experience! It's fun if you don't get hurt.

Al Settle, CFW
Culpeper County
Retired

What Was That File Number, Again?

One Sunday near the end of spring fire season the forester on fire duty at the office, a terribly boring ordeal that we had all been through, decided to do some paper work and needed a certain management form. He looked through the form cabinet, which was Greek to him, and finally found the form, in what was to him, an obscure part of the file. The secretaries had arranged them in order of subject; first the fire forms, then the management forms, then the administration forms, etc. Just like the keys on a typewriter are not in ABC order the girls had put the forms in logical position for use. The forester thought they ought to be in 1, 2, 3 order and changed all of the drawers accordingly.

Monday the secretaries almost fell off their chairs when they found what had been done. I had to issue an edict that the forester would not tamper with the files etc., without adult supervision—meaning the secretaries.

There is an old saying "fools go where angels dare not tread."

C. C. Sterily
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Fire Prevention on the Eastern Shore

Soon after taking over as District Forester in Portsmouth in early 1964, I met with Karl Kappes at our Eastern Shore office to travel on to a labor camp just south of the Maryland line and make the necessary contacts and get the blessing of the camp foreman for this feature attraction. Kappes was a master in the public relations field and many of the VDF personnel of that time were sent to the Shore to view some of Kappes methods of PR delivery. We knocked at the foreman's shack and some person yelled for us to come in—Karl explained our porpose of visit and we were then advised to go into the next room to talk with the "BOSS". It so happened the "BOSS" was laid flat out on a bunk, his hugh belly facing the ceiling and a loaded sawed-off double-barreled shotgun was teetering on the top of his belly. Karl and I eyeballed each other and who made the first sound, I do not recall, but this huge form suddenly sat up and we were looking into the ends of two 12-gauge shotgun barrels that were only inches away from our noses. If there were ever two statues in the VDF, Kappes and I have the honor of this achievement. In no uncertain terms we were told to never enter that room again without a formal announcement unless we wanted to get our GD brains and guts blown all over Accomac County—and we think he meant it!

After everyone regained their partial senses the necesssary arrangements were made for the night movie program. However, it was at this time without question, decided that if anyone wanted another night movie shown on the Eastern Shore of Virginia labor camps they would do it—not Karl Kappes or Dick Woodling!

R. L. Woodling
Regional Forester
Retired

Playing Cupid

Several years ago when the fire tower system was active, H.C. Kiser took a newly-hired single forester by the name of Rodney Keenon to the Hayters Knob tower to install the radio. H.C., being the good soul he is, said to me that if I was interested in getting to know the tower operator, who was also single, to give him a wink.

The temperature was quite cold as we went up into the tower and everyone had on coats. Once in the tower the sun had warmed up the cabin considerably so the coats came off. Much to my surprise the lady was packing a .45 and I learned that she was a dead shot. Needless to day, there was no wink that morning.

Rodney Keenon
Area Forester, R-6

Training Grounds

The Dismal Swamp is not only a great training ground for forest fire fighters but for truck drivers as well. A fire was reported one morning along the Portsmouth ditch, which runs from the Norfolk and Western Railway to Lake Drummond in the middle of the Swamp. The Portsmouth ditch is about 20 yards wide and has a dirt road that runs for several miles on its east side. The road dead ends about three miles short of Lake Drummond.

After receiving the fire call, one of our leading fire fighters jumped into the 5-ton diesel truck and took off in a cloud of dust with the TD-15 tractor. After driving for several miles along the ditch, our hero finally reached the end of the road and still had not found the fire. Further investigation of the fire by air revealed that it was on the west of the ditch and, of course, the tractor plow unit was on the east side and still two miles from the fire. The road along the ditch was only wide enough for a vehicle and certainly not wide enough to turn around a 45-foot tractor-trailer truck loaded with a TD-15 tractor.

Several years before the fire, a wooden bridge was built across the ditch for use in the logging operation. This bridge represented the only hope for our driver to get his equipment out of the Swamp without having to back his truck for about four miles. Even getting the truck to the bridge represented quite a challenge as it was at least a mile away. The tractor-trailer unit would then have to be jack-knifed across the narrow bridge before it could be turned around. What made this an even greater challenge was the driver was all by himself back there in the Swamp.

After several minutes of thinking our hero climbed into the cab of his rig and started the long, tedious process of backing his vehicle along the narrow dirt road. With the Portsmouth ditch to his right, and big trees along the road to his left, it was much like backing the truck from Portsmouth to Norfolk through the tunnel.

After a couple of hours of starting, stopping, backing, and fighting the wheel, the tractor unit was finally jack-knifed across the bridge and turned around for return to the office.

Heroic feats, such as this, however, do have their rewards. Having demonstrated his driving and backing skills, our hero was elected by popular vote to be the Regional Driver Training Instructor.

W. L. Pierce
Regional Forester, R-8

Researcher Dierauf came to Louisa to read some "Honeysuckle Plots." Forester Scheurenbrand was happy to be host to Mr. Dierauf and companion, Mr. Mihalic.

Tom was his usual happy self, but Greg was doing some mild griping. Scheurenbrand missed any hints about what was coming.

Tom said that he was going to put on his "iron pants." This should have been a warning, but went unnoticed.

Off we went to the plots. These plots would have made even "Brer' Rabbit" shudder, but courageously we followed Tom's directions and started to "read."

Anytime a mild whimper of pain would escape, Tom would mention something about "fieldmen" and "administrator-trainees." After a few centuries the plots were finished and Tom drove off into the sunset back to Charlottesville.

After pondering the afternoon's events, Scheurenbrand has made a few conclusions:

> It's great to work with Ray, and/or, Tom. It's educational and entertaining. However, to really enjoy a day's work with the researchers, you need: very heavy brush pants, plenty of "Ticks-Off", your own fresh water, and in the winter, many extra layers of clothing and insulated boots comfort-tested to 30 below zero.
>
> What it boiled down to is when you work with the Headquarters 8 boys, put everthing you own into your truck because you will probably need some part of it.

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

It Wasn't Our Dog

Howard Scheurenbrand, once years ago, got involved in a criminal manhunt with the law enforcement officers in Louisa County. As the manhunt was being organized, Forester Scheurenbrand went to the ASCS office and obtained the most up-to-date photos of the area in which the criminal was known to be.

The State Police immediately checked out the most likely places where a person would try to hide. Then the trailing dog was turned loose. The dog trailed the man and, by reading the trail on the photo, it was fairly evident that the man had hid in an abandoned house about ¾ of a mile from any road.

At the time of capture, Scheurenbrand and two deputies who had been with the dog were checking another location.

One humorous event in the tragedy came when the dog lost the trail. The handler circled the area and the dog appeared to pick up the trail.

The dog ran right up to Scheurenbrand and stuck its nose on Howard's leg.

Have you ever seen a petrified Forester?

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

Another One Bites the Dust

The arsonist that gave the Louisians a fit in February 1968 was finally tried and convicted of the offenses.

He was convicted of setting seven fires and received two years for each offense. This was all suspended except for the period he had already been confined.

The trial lasted two days and the prosecuting and defending lawyers talked long and loud. After the lawyers' summations, the Judge said that they had taught him some new things about the law that he didn't know.

Some of the comments made by the lawyers and Judge follows:

Defense lawyer: "This boy has a cloak of innocence about him that Aristotle Onnasis couldn't buy."

Judge, after pronouncing sentence: "You realize that your probation period is five years. During this period you will not go to any fires, be around any fires, in fact, you better be careful how you light your cigarettes.

"Many people will not be happy with my sentence. If you go on some of these people's land, they may take a gun to you. If they shoot you, they will be tried in my court and I'll tend to be very lenient with them. No one likes an arsonist."

J.B. Vaughan
CFW, R-3
Retired

In 1962 or 63 we were on a large marking job in Nelson County when Berkley Morgan, past warden of Fluvanna County, came upon a pile of material in a trail. He said "Withers come here." Withers Whitehead, Warden Nelson County. Berkley asked Withers what it was, Withers looked at the material and then to Berkley said, "Berkley that's bear dung but it's two days old." Berkley was quick to reply. Come on Withers lets go, that's close enough for me.

Gene Rumsey
Forestry Technician
R-9

"I Seized the Opportunity"

The Greensville paper had seldom printed any of our items. I thought about how I could work on this one. The opportunity presented itself when we started the two-way radio system and I had to electrify the towers. Now, the North Brunswick tower was to be a relay. The tower was only a mile over into Brunswick and was managed by the Greensville CFW.

I had to get three bids from electrical contractors. I could have done that in the yellow pages of the Emporia telephone book. However, as Ed Rodger would say "I seized the opportunity" and went to the editor asking to see a copy of last week's paper. I told him I had seen ads in there but hadn't made any notes. New, telling a county editor that you noticed an ad in his paper makes him perk up. I scribbled down the ads and then the editor asked me what it was all about. I explained the fire tower radio and how it would be used for quick action on forest fires in Greensville County and how the forester making timberland examinations, marking timber etc., could contact the tower to check on the fire situation, etc. The editor said, "Hey, write me an article on this fire tower business, and write me one on the forest management business (we had sent in at least a dozen articles on the management program—apparently all of them had hit his wastebasket). After that everything we sent in was published. That was what we call a District 1 I&E masterstroke.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Fire Weather Prediction

Now to back here. We started off with the usual instruments plus the weather stick for determining the fuel moisture—a sophisticated refinement. The USFS had worked out a useful slide rule affair and sooner or later all of us appreciated the relative meaning of low, moderate, high and extreme. Somewhere I had seen a movie on British Columbia and in it a ranger put up a star with different colored points. The uppermost colored point meant the hazard for that day. So, I had J. B. Jarratt, our very able technician, make a five-point star, using the tin top of an old condemned warden tool box. So, we ended up with a star for green, yellow, orange and red, leaving the other point blank. I didn't know how to make a four pointed star—as Davison said, our ignorance is immense.

Everyone understood the meaning of the star. Red meant it was extreme and we needed to get the personnel ready to go, etc. On orange the CFW knew enough to keep in contact with the office and so on—in the meantime the DF was having ulcers.

The the authorities changed everything introducing all sorts of mathematics, etc., and they came up with something that very few understood. There was one more change that almost went as one was to change the fuel charts, one used as the seasons changed. In the Spring, for example, this was done when white oak leaves were as big as squirrel ears. At that point I asked for a pair of official squirrel ears. This met with a negative response.

Actually, an old forest warden in Southampton County told me that whenever a farmer is plowing and it raises dust you are likely to have forest fires. I then suggested that the state rent an acre of farm land near Waverly and hire a farmer to go out and plow a bit. This of course went over like a lead balloon.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

Opportunities

Years ago Ed Rodger dug up a slogan "Weak men wait for opportunities; strong men make them." This went on for a season. I asked the local Roman Catholic priest, a friend of mine, to translate this in Latin. So "Infirmui opportunitate expectat; eadem firmui creat." This became the District One motto.

Some years ago when Wally Custard, then Management Chief, and Richard Haussman, a Federal inspector from the Region Seven office, were in the District. We were riding around in Sussex County looking at various thinnings, seed tree operations, etc. Finally, I was wracking my brain to think of something else to show them. We were on a back road in mostly company land, when we had tire trouble. At last we got the tire fixed, when all of a sudden an odd-looking airplane came over us at very low altitude. I casually said, "Say, would you fellows like to see an airplane drop pine seeding." It was the first one in the state and I knew that Union Camp was starting to seed its Tract 98, a few miles down the road.

We arrived at the area and watched the plane sail back and forth dropping coated pine seeds like so many raindrops. Both of my guests were busy making entries in their notebooks. Haussman collected a few of the seeds to take back to Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. I acted as though these things happened every day in District One—I had seized an opportunity to show off District One. Just to be more casual I said, "Say, I have another thinning to show you between here and Waverly."

The company had put down two pounds of seed per acre. Years later the seedlings were as thick as the hair on a dog's back.

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

One day I was riding around in Surry County with Wally Custard, then Management Chief. We were stopped along the road by a prominent Surry County landowner for whom we had done many thinnings, markings and measurements, seed tree jobs, etc. I had no chance to introduce Wally to him when he said "Charlie I wish you would drop by soon and look over that stand of pine on the road and tell me what I've got. I think I should sell it now." He said I could do this when I was up that way looking for eagles' nests, which probably suggested to Wally that I spent most of my time looking for eagles' nests.

I told the landowner I couldn't do it even though he had expressed great confidence in my ability to do it. I told him the State Forester simply wouldn't allow it. He said, "Oh, hell he would never know about it." As we drove off I told Wally "I wouldn't take twenty bucks for this in front of you. It just goes to show how a young forester, whose ego had been aroused, can fall into a trap."

C. C. Sterily
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

1970-1979

The R.T. Act flew, Thank you, Mr. Dean. The bill flew through the House and Senate with not one dissenting vote. A first in the country.

Ray Marler resigned and Tom Dierauf became Chief of Research, Jim Garner his assistant. July 1, 1973, Mr. Dean retired and Wally Custard became the fourth State Forester. In 1975 Bartholomew became the first Deputy State Forester. Pennock succeeded Wally. Graff took over as Fire Chief, and Garner moved over to become Assistant Chief of Forest Management. Olinger became Assistant Branch Chief to Dierauf. Cook became RF in R-4 in 1974.

Wally Custard

"Bart" Bartholomew

Urban foresters were established and a utilization forester was added. Chuck Stanley, who had followed Joe Hays as superintendent of the State Forests, came to Charlottesville as forestry planner in 1979 and Jim Bowen replaced Chuck as superintendent.

July of 1977 was a landmark. Cheryl Weston became our first female forester, R-9. Numerous women followed and our first female technician came to R-8.

Wally was high on education, involvement, and training. He brought in M.B.O. and assigned many special projects.

Regional boundaries were again changed to conform to planning districts. This in 1972.

We were into R.C.F.P. and started the "chicken dinner circuit" on Clean Air and Water. We were able to convince the feds that we could do it. Smoke management and voluntary BMP's were in order. What goes around, comes around, doesn't it?

Jim Cook

Harold Olinger

John Graff

Another snake story involves one of the first (then) District 5 fishing trips to Smith Mountain Lake. It seems as though the fellows were ready to "let loose" after a rather long fire and planting season, and about 15 people had signed up to go fishing. Two pontoon boats were rented at Carl Dalton's friend's marina, and sure enough most everyone showed up at 7 o'clock that cool, May morning. During the day, only certain types of refreshments were consumed, certain types of stories were told, and absolutely no fish were caught. Sometime in mid-afternoon, Richard Inge threw the anchor to his pontoon about 25 feet onto an island, which made for a good tale in itself. (By the way, the anchor rope was not attached, and the boat did not stop like Rich thought it would. He almost fell overboard trying to get the anchor back.)

Later on, Wayne Strader decided to catch a water snake and pitch it on the other boat. Never in their lives have eight people occupied so little space on one boat! Everyone on the receiving boat moved to the "starboard forecastle" and nearly fell into the lake causing man-overboard drills to flash before some of us.

Usually a good bet would be on Charlie Yopp to catch the biggest fish, which would earn him a little bit of "side bet" money. Charlie always brought along a two-pound carp which, sometime during the day, he would put on his hook and throw overboard, only to "catch it again." Never could figure out how could be so sneaky with that same fish, year after year.

R. J. Garman
Forestry Technician
R-5

Left Again

It was in 1971, the fire started about 12:30 p.m. John Swift answered the call. When John arrived, it was determined the fire was in the National Forest. Larry Cabell and Milton Morris were investigating a fire about ten miles away. The radio chatter picked up as the fire began to grow. Cabell and Morris decided to go to the fire, but first got a tractor. The Amherst tractor was the closest. Discussion continued as to how to handle the thing.

Would Larry let Wydner bring the tractor and stay on the fire? No, fire day too bad to leave the County. Would Larry let Wydner take the car that he and Morris were riding in and return to Amherst, or would Morris take tractor on to fire and Cabell take Wydner back to Amherst then return to the fire in his own car? See how complicated things work! Well, it proves if you can't work things out, they will do it for you.

These decisions were not completed when the Cabell car met Wydner's transport on Rt. 151 about five miles from the fire. Wydner jumped out and said, "She's not running too good, better keep it revved up." Morris jumped into the transport and headed towards the fire. Cabell began to change clothes on the side of the road. Wydner got into Cabell's car and proceeded to go back to Amherst. Cabell began to yell to Wydner and got him stopped. Wydner thought Cabell was going to ride with Morris. You know what Morris thought as Cabell explained it later—he didn't think. He made a decision but forgot to tell anybody!

Early Aerial Support

Nelson County has been very fortunate in that a private helicopter service located in the County is capable of doing water drops for fire suppression purposes. The bucket being used was purchased by the Wintergreen Development Corporation. Early-going radio communications had to be done through the County Sheriff's Department frequency.

Jimmy Stevens, owner and operator of the helicopter, has, from the onset, been excellent at "putting the water on it" when making his drops as one such drop proved.

On a steep mountain fire in Nelson County the helicopter was called in for assistance. The forester and a crew of men had gone to the top of the rise to start their control efforts. The CFW remained at the fire headquarters with a county radio in order to communicate with the helicopter. Being able to dip out of a lake within sight of the fire made the entire operation quite impressive. The forester would advise the CFW where he would like the drop made and the CFW would relay this to the helicopter. Everything was progressing well with the fire quickly being controlled.

On the last drop to be made the forester was asked, "Where do you want it?" He replied that there was a pile of burning debris he would like to have it dropped on. The pilot was unclear as to the location, so the forester replied "Look for the man in the yellow fire shirt and drop on me." The CFW relayed the message to the helicopter with a slight smile on his face. The drop was made—and there followed some unintelligible radio traffic from the forester!

For many years Nelson County had its own (you-can-always-count-on-me) fire setter. This gentleman was always good for at least a half-dozen fires any time of the year.

Upon becoming CFW in Nelson, I was advised by the retiring CFW never to confront this gentleman without having a Deputy Sheriff along. Starting work in January, this gentleman wasted no time in making my acquaintance. In February, he set his first fire of my career. A Deputy and I responded, the fire was controlled, cost collected, and I decided this wasn't too bad after all.

Over the years I came to like the old fellow and even stopped calling the Sheriff's Department for assistance. Many stories could be told about these fires, but one stands out beyond all the rest.

One Sunday afternoon a call was received that a fire had been set by the gentleman in question. Upon arriving on the scene, I found that the fire had been controlled by the volunteer fire department. However, the affected landowner was far from happy. He wanted something done once and for all. While this conversation was taking place, I noticed our fire setter sitting in a chair on top of a hill looking over the fire area. After assuring the landowner something would be done, I proceeded up the hill to talk with my friend.

If only every fire setter could be caught this easily! There he was sitting in a folding chair with at least eight feet of chain wrapped around his legs and chair with a padlock hooked in the chain. He readily admitted that he was guilty of setting the fire, at which time I placed him under arrest. Now, to remove him from the chair to the Sheriff's Department. Out of his pocket he produced a ring of keys numbering at least fifty. One by one each key was tried until the lock was opened.

Upon arriving at the Sheriff's Department, a statement was taken as to why he set the fire. "I saw a bear enter the woods and wanted to get his hide. I set the fire to run him out, so I could kill him with my hatchet."

After spending several days in jail, he was tried and convicted. He was sentenced to six months probation with good behavior.

Two days after his probation was over he set his next fire. Sad to say, before this case could be cleared up the old gentleman passed away. A lot of fires stopped, but still I'll always have fond memories of this man and my experiences with him.

Eddie L. Embrey
Forestry Technician, R-3

It's not the Size of the Gun . . .

Jim Cook and I had the pleasure to go duck hunting. Well, Jim had a small gun, a 20- or 16-gauge, so I laughed at him and teased him about his small gun. All Jim would say was, "We'll see." Jim shot so many ducks he had to get me to retrieve them for him. I tried to get away from him, but every time I moved, he moved. Jim will not let me forget that trip! Now when he wants to go hunting, he always tells me, "Tim, I'll carry my 410-gauge" and I haven't been with him since.

Tim Wilborn
Forestry Technician
R-4

Flickey Flame

John Cleaton, Frank Wynn, and myself had a school program to put on at Rosa Elementary School. The program was named "Smokey and Flickey the Flame." John was to do the talking, Frank was Smokey, and I was Flickey. I liked to worry John and Smokey, so John told Smokey that we were going to get him. The program started and Flickey came out. Smokey came out to help John. Smokey had a paddle in his hand loaded with a cap that would go off when the paddle hit. Old Flickey was still cutting up, so John and Smokey started after Flickey. There was no stage at the school, so we put the program on in the hall which was just like ice. Smokey started after Flickey and because the floor was so slick, he couldn't get to him. John had to catch Smokey by the arm to keep him from falling and finally got the paddle from Smokey and hit Flickey on the backside for the cap to go off, and old Flickey had to go. The crowd really loved it!

Tim Wilborn
Forestry Technician
R-4

You Gotta' be Fast

Jim Cook was helping Dave Smith and Wayne Bowman prescribe burn on a tract in Appomattox County. Wayne asked Jim to light the line while he and Dave went inside the line and had other men watch it. Jim asked him how long he should move, and Dave said "Well, move right along. But, we'll be inside so you have to watch out that you don't out-run us." Jim did. He kept seeing smoke come up from the middle of the burn. As fast as he moved, the smoke stayed ahead of him. Finally, he was darned-near running and finally got a long, long line lit out and was totally exhausted. He walked over to see how in the heck they had moved through there so quickly, and it turned out that Dave Smith had gotten on the back of a pickup truck and was lighting it as the pickup truck traveled down a logging road right in the middle of the burn. Of course, Jim couldn't see the truck—all he could see was the smoke and was trying to keep up with the pickup truck!

Chargeable?

Barry Crawford replaced A. B. Hoback as CFW in Roanoke County. Barry's first day as CFW almost ended his career with DOF. On this day he was helping R. J. Garman move the trucks out of the stalls so we could sweep. Barry pushed up one door and, unbeknown to him, the door bounced back down a little and when he pulled the truck in, he removed the bottom panel. Knowing this was it, Barry said he would just quit rather than tell Art Jolly! R. J. broke the news to Art and everything came out fine.

R. J. Garman
Forestry Technician
R-5

Expert Bridge Builder

On another occasion, Barry went with R. J., C. L. Boone, and Sammy Taylor to replace the bridge in Bland County. It was decided if we drilled the decking, it would take less pounding on the spikes. After drilling a few holes in the oak decking, R. J. flipped the reverse switch and handed Barry the drill. As he tried to bore a hole he only got a little smoke (no shavings). Taking the drill back and secretly flipping the reverse switch more holes were successfully drilled. At this point the procedure was started over. After about the third try, Barry figured the drill was running backwards. The laughs began as Barry changed sides of the drill, turned the drill one-half turn and finally crossed his legs. He knew it was running backwards but nothing changed directions. Later on Sammy said, "Barry, if you had been drilling from the bottom it would have been right." Barry, after studying a little said, "Yep."

R. J. Garman
Forestry Technician
R-5

It Got the Job Done

When I transferred from R-6 to R-5 I had a few animals, a goat, and some chickens. The State paid for my moving and the movers took all but the animals. They even loaded about a cord of firewood although they asked me, while they were loading it, if there were any trees in Floyd County. I asked Mr. Ohlson if I could haul the animals in my Division truck. He gave the okay. I hid six chickens in each tool box but I couldn't hide the goat. Jack Clayman wanted to cut holes in a Smokey Hat and call him Smokey the Goat. I rode into Floyd with a goat in the truck and chickens in the tool boxes!

Barter

I also recall a CFW in Buchanan County who was investigating a fire in a remote hollow (aren't they all that way in Buchanan County?). Preston Deaver approached a home with women of questionable repute and found that they were responsible for the fire. After explaining the law and suppression costs, the women asked Preston if he would rather have a "donation"! Preston backed out rather quickly and insisted on cash!

How Big Was That Fire?

I recall a large fire about 200+ acres (though Mr. Ohlson decided we were in error and the acreage was only 198. I think this was due to the fact that he had to submit an explanatory note to the State Forester about why the fire got that big.) I had a KVG crew and was attacking the head early in the fire's development. This was the first year for helicopter work (1978). The helicopter was called and began dipping out of the North Fork Holston River. He brought the first load, I directed him, and he dropped the load. I'll never forget the effect that water had on us. We were hot and tired and what a refreshing drench. Of course, it did a good job on the fire but it helped us far more.

The same company, but a different pilot, took me through two apple trees and came up with grass and weeds on the boom while spraying. Mario said he wanted to "touch up some spots!"

Dennis Anderson
Area Forester, R-5

Severt's Humor

John Severt has inspected for White Pine Blister Rust here, and the first time he came to Floyd (my second year with the Department), we were checking some different tracts. As we passed a ground hog hole, John, in his nonchalant voice, pointed to a white pine seedling the ground hog had sharpened his teeth on and said. "the Pales Weevils are sure bad here." I believed him for a while!

Dennis Anderson
Area Forester, R-5

The Paper Work Never Ends

Some years ago CFW Clarke of Brunswick County radioed in asking for some Form 18's immediately. The two secretaries started to fill their order for the afternoon's mail but couldn't find a Form 18. They researched the form file and then came to me in dispair. They didn't want to admit to a CFW that they didn't know their forms. All I could do, to maintain my position as administration head of the District, was to say "it must be between 17 and 19". Actually I had never heard of the Form 18 but didn't want to admit it. Knowing that the secretaries would lose face if they asked the CFW the name of the form, I took the bull by the form and radioed Clarke asking about the form he wanted. He said "the fire report Form 1B, when I didn't have my glasses on I thought the B was an 8."

C. C. Steirly
Regional Forester, R-1
Retired

We Do It All

Floyd Hostetter, retired Chief Forest Warden in Rockbridge County, designed and built a nice pole-equipment shed in Lexington in 1979. A name plate (by Virginia Department of Highways) was placed on the door-"The Hostetter Building". Floyd and his father, P. R. Hostetter, helped to promote forest fire prevention and greatly reduced the number of fires in Rockbridge County. P. R. Hostetter was involved in constructing many look-out towers in western Virginia in the 1940's. Floyd helped on several county forestry office buildings over the State.

Donald G. Drake
Area Forester, R-7

Mt. Falls Park Fire, Frederick County

Friday, April 14, 1978, started out as a normal day in the office during planting season. I had seedlings piled all over the front lawn waiting for landowners to pick them up. Noon finally arrived and most of the seedlings were gone, and I was getting ready for a late lunch. I was starting to get a little worried about the possibility of fires. The temperature was now in the mid-80's and the wind was variable and gusting to 30 mph. Although I was unaware of it at the time, the humidity had dropped to 13%.

I was just getting ready to leave the office and return the seedlings to Winchester Cold Storage across town, when I heard an alarm for North Mountain Volunteer Fire Company. The alarm came in at 12:40 p.m. for a shed on fire in Mt. Falls Park. I was familiar with that area and guessed the fire would spread to woodland. I unloaded the seedlings and started for Mt. Falls Park.

As I crossed Little North Mountain, between Winchester and the reported fire, I could see a column of white smoke rising from the subdivision. The fire company arrived at the scene at about this time and reported the fire spreading to woodland. I arrived on the scene at 12:55 p.m. to find that, not only was the fire spreading, but was moving so fast that I couldn't run as fast as it was speading. I returned to my truck and started calling for help from Staunton and other fire companies. I was not calm at this point as I had seen the fire spread 20 yards and set fire to two summer homes in less than three minutes.

The Dispatcher for the day was on his very first day on the job! He became excited and began sending every fire company in the county. As the fire continued to spread and jump roads, with no sign of additional help, the fire chief to North Mountain Fire Company and myself called for even more help. The first additional firefighters began arriving at about 1:20 p.m. to discover about 20 acres burning and six houses on fire. Firefighters and fire apparatus were now being dispatched from all companies in Frederick County, Winchester, Clarke County, Warren County, and Shenandoah County. Additional help was being dispatched from Berkeley and Hardy Counties in West Virginia along with 50 members of the James Wood High School KVG crews. The DOF fire plow and the County Forester, Gerald Crowell; the Clarke County CFW, Tom Helper; and the District fire chief, John Rasmussen were also on the way.

All of the additional help had arrived by 3 p.m. along with reporters of two newspapers and crews from two radio stations. The county Sheriff's Department was providing traffic control and Winchester Rescue Squad was providing first aid. Church groups set up a lunchroom in a nearby community center, and food was being donated by stores and groups from all over the area.

The fire continued to spread in two directions at a rapid speed. It traveled north with the wind and uphill at a right angle to the wind direction forming two head fires. Not only did this cause problems but, because of poor communications and the lack of a correct map of the subdivision, the fire fighting efforts were hampered.

The fire eventually burned 170 acres of wooded subdivision destroying eight summer homes, three mobile homes, thirteen utility sheds, four tent platforms and one screen house. One cabin and two mobile homes were damaged.

Approximately four hundred firefighters from twenty fire companies and KVG crews were used on the fire from the initial attack until the fire was proclaimed out three days later.

The investigation found that a landowner on the corner of Remington and Panther Drive had been burning a pile of junk mail in front of his house, and the fire spread across his leaf-covered lawn to his shed. Ironically, his house was undamaged while most of his nearest neighbors' homes were destroyed.

Fred Burlingame
CFW, R-7

Tractors, Cables and Peat

One particular fire in Chesapeake was approximately 200 yards east of Highway 17 and about the only way it could have started was by someone dropping a cigarette from an airplane flying over the area. Clayton Brown and Bill Pierce responded to the fire with the TD-15 tractor. The only place we could find to unload the tractor was at a road intersection about half a mile south of the fire and we had to run it in the woods parallel to Highway 17, to get to the fire. This area was completely covered with deep dry peat and when dry, peat is very loose and light. Running the tractor through this area was much like running it through a field of flour about 10 feet deep. Just the weight of the TD-15 in this loose dry peat caused us to get stuck several times and we pulled a lot of cable before we finally arrived at the fire.

The fire apparently had smoldered and burned for several days before being reported, as it had burned about 15 acres when we arrived. The area looked like a gigantic brush pile as the roots had burned off all the hardwood trees and they had fallen over. After much sweat and toil we finally plowed a fire line around the area and patted ourselves on the back for being stuck only four time while plowing the line.

With our mission accomplished we headed the TD-15 back toward Highway 17. We were with in 25 yards of Highway 17 when the tractor started sinking deeper and deeper into the loose peat. Efforts to back up and turn in another direction only made matters worse. After pulling several 12- and 14-inch trees out of the ground with the winch cable, we had finally gotten the tractor buried to the point that the top of the track was at ground level. As the tractor was being winched backwards it was also digging a canal in the loose peat that resembled a miniature Panama Canal. When the cable on the TD-15 finally broke, we were within 15 to 20 yards of Highway 17. It was decided that another tractor was needed if we were ever going to get out of the peat hole. (During the staff conference we discussed filling out an LPV Form 26 and forgetting the tractor, but decided Headquarters probably wouldn't approve it).

We made a radio call to the office for the other tractor, and while waiting for it to arrive, we voted 2 to 0 that the Dismal Swamp should be within the city limits of Charlottesville. In looking over our situation, the decision was made to winch the TD-15 from the front as the rear pull hook was buried in the muck. We realized that the other tractor would get stuck if we attempted to winch from the rear. Being close to Highway 17 didn't give us much room to pull forward, and the effort was made, but to no avail. The smaller tractor could not pull the larger tractor free from what looked to be its final resting place. At this point, the other tractor was within 5 yards of Highway 17 and pulling on a slight incline, so that the front of the tractor would raise off the ground when pressure was applied to the cable.

Once again it was decision time. When caught between a rock and a hard place a person is willing to try most anything. Our last desperate hope was to station the other tractor across Highway 17 where there was a slight decline from the shoulder of the road. This of course meant that we would have to put our winch cable across Highway 17 and block off all north and south traffic. By this time, it was late in the afternoon and all the Carolinians working in the Hampton Roads area were heading back to Carolina. As usual, they were in a hurry to get home and breathe some of that clean pure air. At this point, Highway 17 is as straight as an arrow for about 15 miles and is about par for this road, most of the drivers were stretching the speed limit by about 10 miles per hour.

After finally getting all traffic to come to a screeching halt, we drove the tractor across Highway 17 and stationed it so the rear end was a high as possible to give us more pulling power. The winch cable was pulled across the highway and hooked around the C-frame of the TD-15. With a total of three men to perform this operation, the two tractor drivers got on their machines to get mission *Hope* underway, while the third man stationed himself in the middle of the highway hoping to keep the cars from trying to run through our winch cable. With the wire cable stretched to the breaking point, the TD-15 finally began to inch its way forward up on the edge of Highway 17. *Mission Impossible* had been accomplished.

To the people sitting in the long line of traffic with their head hanging out of the windows staring in disbelief, they were probably witnessing an historic event. More than likely, this was the first time a major U.S. Highway had ever been blocked off to all traffic by a winch cable pulling a stuck tractor out a peat hole.

Bill Pierce
Regional Forester, R-8

First Spray-Burn?

In 1970, one of the first jobs I inherited as County Forester for the Saluda area was a 97-acre piece of cutover in Lower King & Queen. The area had been picked over during the previous three years with an awful lot of culls and small residuals left. There were scattered patches of fuel but not nearly enough to consider prescribed burning. The landowner was not interested in drum chopping or bulldozing.

Question, what to do? Like most young foresters, I showed the tract to my Assistant District Forester, Roland Geddes. After looking around, Roland suggested we try something different. His suggestion was that we aerially spray the tract with 2,4,5-T used to create fuel and follow with a prescribed burn. I was more than a little skeptical, but we did it. Two months later we ran a few torches through the middle, rung it and watched it blow up. The whole thing was over in an hour and a half with excellent results.

To my knowledge this was the first spray burn ever conducted in the State of Virginia.

William L. Saunders
Regional Forester, R-9

Turkey Lore

One spring day in the mid-seventies, Chuck Stanley invited Ed Robertson and me to go turkey hunting with him at his favorite spot not far from the State Forest Headquarters. He went into a lot of hoopla about how he had heard no less than three gobblers from one place every time he had been that year (I don't know why he hadn't killed any!). To the best of my recollection it was still fairly early in the season with chilly, clear, calm mornings. Ed and I agreed to take Chuck up on his offer and go the next day. At the crack of day we patiently waited for the old Toms to sound off down on the low grounds in front of us. We waited and waited but still no sound from the birds. Of course, the ribbing had started by then, so in frustration Chuck let out several good owl hoots to try to get them to sound off, but that didn't work. So, after about an hour we finally left for better hunting grounds with Chuck still swearing that he had heard these gobblers up until this particular morning. As far as I know he never killed one that year at that location either.

Bob Turney
Forestry Technician
State Forest

Friendly Great Danes

After being hired by the Department, one of my family's first visits was with Chuck and JoAnne Stanley at their house at the Cumberland Forest Headquarters. We arrived after dark and my wife, Alice, was leaning into the back door getting our infant son out of the car.

Well, Chuck had neglected to tell me he had a 150-pound Great Dane (named George), who was quite friendly and curious too! George happened to slip up behind Alice to check out what she was trying to remove from the car.

Now you can imagine how frightened George, I, and the baby got when she screamed after he stuck his head under her arm. Fortunately, Chuck and JoAnne were coming down the sidewalk by then, reassuring us that George was o.k. and wouldn't hurt anybody—what a relief!

Bob Turney
Forestry Technician
State Forest

Where Do Bees Land—Anywhere They Want!

About 10 years ago, in late spring or early summer, the nursery had a large hand weeding crew. We used a yellow school bus to haul the crews around

One day in late morning, getting close to lunch time, a large cloud of honey bees flew over the field, spotting the yellow school bus. Being warm weather, most of the windows of the bus were opened. I don't know what attracted the bees to the bus, but they covered the roof and many of them decided inside the bus was the place to be. You might say they owned that bus for about two days. I had a rush job trying to get about 20 people out of the field with a fleet of pickup trucks.

Donald Hixon
Forestry Technician
New Kent Forestry Center

Barefoot Boy

Forester Scheurenbrand returned to a prescribed burn about 8:15 p.m. to check the lines and determine how successful the burn was.

No trouble was expected because three foresters had separately patrolled the line and found it safe. The landowner was to make checks after the Virginia Department of Forestry personnel left.

Scheurenbrand met the landowner driving hastily down the road. Brakes locked, gravel flew, and the landowner yelled, "The fire's escaped, the fire's escaped."

Scheurenbrand drove to the escape, approximately ¼ acre mostly burned out, and prepared to suppress the remaining fire.

Have you ever fought fire in bare feet and swim shorts? You can really tell when there's no hot spots in the leaf litter.

Shortly before dark, after Scheurenbrand had gone, the landowner met a local warden who had come to check around the fire. The LFW came to the fire on a bicycle, you guessed it, *barefooted.*

The next morning the landowner met CFW Vaughan. He looked down at Joe's feet and said, "I'm glad somebody with the "Forestry" wears shoes."

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

Visions

—Forester Scheurenbrand stuck in mud above both knees holding the radio and fuel can out of the ooze, on a 600-acre fire. (This spot was close to a ridge top.)

—Watching a KVG member light a cigarette in very heavy smoke and then ask himself out loud, "Why did I light this?"

—Watching the expression on a railroad man's face when his boss told him to have a complete fire report to him within two days. (The fire wasn't 9-3 at the time.)

—Listening to the comments of a man whose gloves just rolled 75 feet back down the mountain.

—Watching TV and seeing who gets all the credit for putting out forest fires. (That could make a person bitter.)

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

Burglar Alarm

The Louisa Office boasts a security system unlike any other in the State.

One very cold day in mid-November of 1971, CFW Vaughan and Forester Scheurenbrand were beckoned by a Mr. Moss to come to his trailer, which adjoins the DOF land and sits to the rear of the sub-district office.

The Moss's trailer had a heating problem. No heat. Mr. Moss, now nearly 78, asked Joe and Howard to fix the heat. They did and out of gratitude the Moss's keep a seemingly unending surveillance on the office. When the outside light burns out either Joe or Howard get a call (any hour of the night) relaying that the bulb is out.

One morning, Mr. Moss met Scheurenbrand at the back door.

Moss: "You had a prowler last night. Tried the gas house door, office doors and windows."

Scheurenbrand: "Did you call the police?"

Moss: "No, I shot him. I slipped out the door, fixed him in my sight and hollered, 'Get away from here.' He took off arunnin' and I busted him in the britches when he passed the fire tower (about 20 yards from shooting point). Boy, did he holler."

This scene has repeated itself six more times since then.

Mr. Moss shoots a 410-gauge shotgun. He shot the first 3 prowlers with 2½" #6 shot but decided it wasn't potent enough. He then switched to 3-inch shells with #4 shot. The last four prowlers have been nailed with this shot. The sixth prowler had stolen some tomatoes from Mr. Moss's garden and placed them on the tower steps. He then tried to break into the smoke house.

Moss said, "That really made me mad! I slipped out and busted him as he went back for the tomatoes and once more just before he got to the woods."

"Sounded like a bull crashing through the woods. Kept hollerin', 'Don't shoot again, don't shoot again."

Moss doesn't discriminate. He shoots everyone alike. To date, seven men have felt his sting!

Moss always hollers to get them running and lets them get to the fire tower or gas house before he shoots. Says he doesn't want to hurt anyone real bad.

Scheurenbrand feels pretty sure that Moss has not ever seriously hurt anyone but that the prowlers' style of sitting has been affected for a few days.

The only drawback to this system is having to go to the office after dark. Scheurenbrand flashes his headlights, parks under the light, and gives a big wave so as not to become the recipient of a load of #4's under the fire tower.

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

We Put Up With a Lot . . .

The Louisa County men ran into some very unfriendly people this year while writing summonses or collecting suppression costs. After Scheurenbrand had written one man a summons and was preparing to leave the property, the irritate landowner was seen to be loading an automatic shotgun. Keeping his cool, in the tradition of "Fonz", he continued to back off the property slowly. It is better to be shot than to be uncool. CFW Vaughan, while trying to give a man change after collecting suppression costs, was told to "frame it" or to buy dog food.

A few other landowners gave the Forester and Chief Warden good cussings out. We were glad to see it rain. (5/3/76)

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

Blue Paint "Blues"

While shaking up a one-gallon can of blue marking paint, CFW Boston accidentally (accidentally???) dropped the can into the five-gallon mixing bucket.

A huge splash of blue paint erupted from the mixing can and the majority of it landed upon Forester Kidwell.

The remainder of the crew became mildly hysterical at the sight of Bud with paint dripping off his nose, with blue hair, etc. Songs were offered to the victim to console him: "Blue Suede Shoes", "Blue Moon", "My Blue Heaven", "Rhapsody in Blue", etc.

Kidwell could not get all of the paint cleaned off, so he resembled an Arapaho warrior.

Dogs bared their fangs, growled and would not go near him; horses bolted from the fields and drivers of passing vehicles had to decide whether to speed on by or "circle the wagons."

Since all of this took place in Louisa, Forester Scheurenbrand asked if this was normal procedure for marking in Orange County. He was answered with a snarl.

Kidwell was last seen that day heading west, CFW Boston sitting on the tool box on back of the truck.

It Happens . . .

Forester Scheurenbrand arrived on a newly marked pulpwood thinning that the cutters had just started. Something is very wrong: "Ah, yes," the cutters are cutting the marked trees. Yes, you guessed it. The stand was marked to leave.

The landowner got confused and told the pulpwood people to cut the marked trees.

Little Arsonist

At a recent fire investigation, a second grader admitted setting the woods on fire. CFW J.B. Vaughan asked the little feller:

"Didn't you see the Smokey bear program?" The little guy replied, "O yeah, dats when he tried to hug and kiss the teacher."

You Can't Please Them All

Scene: Forester had been out showing chopper operator the lines on an 80-acre parcel of brushland. After alternately almost being hit by pushed over trees and raked by briars he returned to the office.

The phone rang and a demanding-voiced woman informed Scheurenbrand that she would like to meet him that afternoon (Friday) between 4:30 and 6:00, whenever she was finished shopping. He informed her that he had made arrangements to map an area that afternoon.

Woman: (annoyed voice) "Well, you can do that some other day, can't you?"

Forester: "I suppose so. I'll contact the other man and cancel the mapping."

Woman: "Someone has cut down all the trees on the front of my land near the road and I want you to tell me how much the cut trees are worth."

Forester: "I'm sorry -------"

Woman: "I bet you can't tell me what they are worth, can you? Can you tell me how much wood is there so I can get someone else to tell me how much its worth."

Forester: "No, 'mam, State Policy ------."

Woman: (Very snotty) "Tell me, what can you do, if anything?"

Forester: (Blowing cool) "We do a lot of forestry work."

Forester (politely) told the nice lady "goodbye."

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

Smokey Wins Again

One day, Maynard Stoddard was here, and told a marvelous story about a float the Department once had which featured Smokey in a boxing ring with boxing gloves, fighting a cigarette. The cigarette had a man inside, and the costume was inflexible, covering the person from over his head to his ankles. The float hit a bump, and the "cigarette" fell over. Of course, with no bending joints other than his ankles the person in the cigarette could not regain his feet, and spent the entire parade rolling around on the float. Maynard said that was one time Smokey really K.O.'d his opponent.

1980-1989

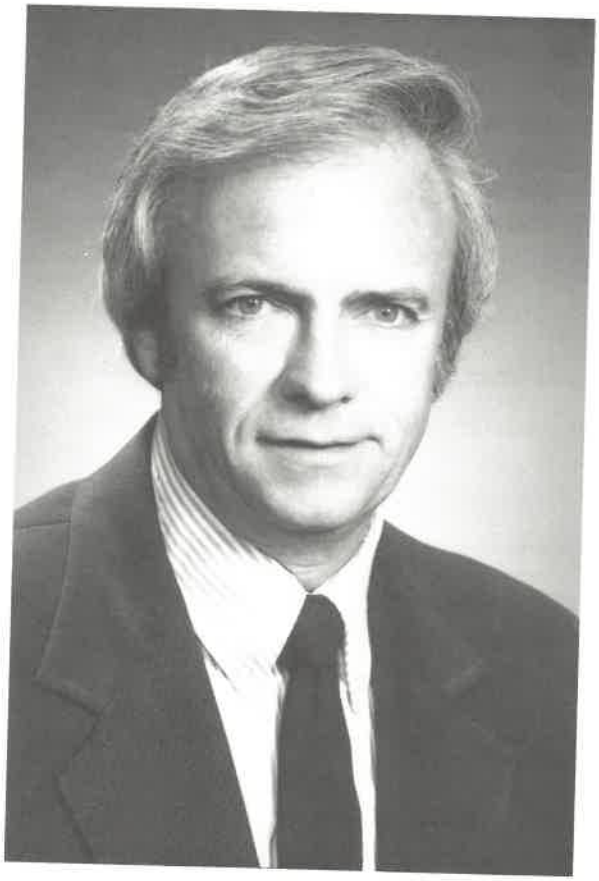
Nineteen eighty—another first for us. The first female CFW in Tazewell county.

The State Forester abolished the branch of Reforestation and Communication. John Heltzel became Chief of Administrative Services and Jim Copony became Communications Officer.

In 1981 Deputy State Forester Bartholomew retired and Jim Garner was appointed Deputy State Forester on 10/1/81. John Heltzel retired on 7/1/82 and Chuck Stanley moved to his position of Administrative Officer.

Disaster struck with the economy on a downturn. The reduction of $3.4 million in the 82-84 budget left us facing the loss of 50 people. The governor and the General Assembly finally agreed to fund 25 of these positions for one year. Twenty-five werelost, but 12 were retained through attrition. During the 1983 Assembly, Custard and Garner were able to get funding for 22 of the 25 temporarily funded positions. This meant that we lost another 3, and were down to 340 positions.

Wally Custard led us through some of our most trying times and retired with 37 years of service on June 30, 1983. On July 1, 1983 James W. Garner became our fifth State Forester.



Jim Garner

Chuck Stanley

Jim hit the gound running and in a period of just a few years he had appointed seven new Regional Foresters, a Deputy, and new Administrative Officer, and 2 Branch Chiefs. We also now have a hydrologist, a head of nurseries, and a fire investigator.

We have gone through our early logger meetings to meet water quality standards, these in the early 80's. We are doing it again. Now though, we will have results or regulations.

SAU's for people involvement were held all over the state. The forest products tax was doubled to provide more RT money and aerial detection went statewide. Helicopter contracts were let, fire line blowers came to most counties, ATV's are in the Regions and helicopter burning is being done. The new Garland Gray Forestry Center is producing pines. We have a super trees nursery in Georgia and most of the Regional offices have been remodeled.

Through a kinder legislation, we are getting more positions, we hit our 114,000-acre goal in tree planting and are still moving, and now, urban foresters.

I said the State Forester hit the ground running, didn't I? We also gained a Department status!

The Division was always good to the clerks. When we went to a training meeting, they always assigned one of the Charlottesville staff to sort of look after us. Two of the men later became State Foresters—Wally Custard and Jim Garner. Once we were attending a training meeting in Richmond and it was the end of the first day. Mollie Rupe, one of the Sandston clerks, became ill. She kept thinking she would be better, but the pain became quite severe. The girls were checking on Mollie constantly. Finally, it was decided that we should tell Mr. Garner. In almost no time, Mollie, another lady and I were on our way to the hospital with Jim Garner in full command. We waited at the hospital until the wee hours of the morning when the doctor dismissed Mollie and advised that she be taken home. By this time, Shirley Clarke, also a Sandston clerk, was at the hospital and all of us took Mollie to her home in Sandston. I am sure it was not part of Jim Garner's itinerary to be riding up and down the streets of Richmond at two o'clock in the morning with three women. After that episode, I predicted that one day Jim Garner would become State Forester. I think I told him, but he doesn't remember it. Oh yes, he does remember - I've reminded him!

Bessie McDonald, Secretary
Retired, R-7
Deceased

The Beachmaster

In late spring of 1986, a lightning fire started in Goodwin Island, located about one mile offshore of Dandy, Virginia, in the Chesapeake Bay. This Island is surrounded by salt marshes and tidal mud flats for one-half mile or more. For all practical purposes, it is inaccessible except to small pleasure boats. Having been through an extremenly dry spring, the orgininal fire made its run. However, even dying down from about 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., the duff would flare up and send smoke and ash inland. After a week of this, the locals on the mainland started to complain: "do something". Our first thought was to get Fort Eustis to airlift a crawler tractor to the Island. They said they could do the job for us, but we would have to sling our tractor beneath their helicopter. Visions of dropping a JD450 in the midddle of Interstate 64 on a Sunday afternoon left us with too many reservations.

The next suggestion titillated the old Navy man in me. The U.S. Transportation Corps has LARC landing craft at Fort Story. Our contact said these craft were the Army's true success story—guaranteed to go anywhere, do anything. This sounded great! So CFW Bill Apperson, Technician Buck Jones and Forester Dennis Gaston, took a Department of Forestry convoy of two tractors to Fort Story. Meanwhile "Beachmaster" Augsburger headed to Dandy to scout the area, consult with the locals and select a good beachhead. The trip from Fort Story took five hours; just a little too long—they missed high tide! "Not to worry", I'm advised, "these babies can go anywhere." By this time I see the first LARC stop, belch large columns of diesel smoke, and the huge tires begin bringing up the bottom of the tidal mud flat. Before long all I can see is just the top of the eight-foot tires—the water depth is one-and-one-half feet! I thought to myself, "he's in BIG trouble!" But, no, they're in even bigger trouble, for the companion LARC, which is trying to pull the first craft out, has also gotten mired to the top of the tires.

For the rest of the afternoon, these two crafts looked like dinosaurs frolicking in a prehistoric swamp. As the day wore on, I could see my vision of grandeur fast disappearing. No officer's cap, pipe and sunglasses for me to make a triumphant assault on the beach at Goodwin Island! By the end of the day, the Island had finally burned itself out and the troops returned home as the sun set in the West.

Gene Augsburger
Regional Forester, R-2

Monasco Fiasco

During the week before April 4, 1983, the wind had blown extremely hard. On Saturday, we had an inch of rain, which I thought would relieve the fire danger some. But, what did I know? I had only been here one fire season.

Sunday morning came with sunshine and more wind. I decided to go on to Church thinking the one inch of rain would hold for a while. At 11 a.m. just as preaching services were about to start, a lady behind me leaned up and said, "I guess you're glad it rained yesterday." At the same time, my brother-in-law came in and gave me a note, "Fire at Parr's Store, Wingina." As Eddie Embrey would say, "Just one of many." The Parr Store fire was small and was controlled by the tractor and volunteer fire department people. I took the transport back to Lovingston for fuel.

As I was fueling up, Lou Southard called again. "Nelson 3 to Nelson 2, Nelson 3 to Nelson 2. Frank, we have a fire on Eagle Mountain. Help! Bring the tractor." "10-4, Lou." The fire had almost reached the top of the ridge when I arrived. I unloaded the 450 and Billy Hill (one of our tractor operators) proceeded to plow a line down the left flank. I was firing a line as firemen watched the line. A hand crew had the downhill side right flank controlled. The only way for the 450 to get out was to cross a small creek and head for the road. WRONG! The 450 started up the creek and began to slowly sink. We tried everthing to free the tractor. Finally, we called for the 450 out of Charlottesville to help pull Nelson 450 out. Guess what? There was a fire on Monasco Mountain, which could be seen from Buckingham. Remember, we have a 450 stuck and still sinking. The Charlottesville tractor arrives, but is unable to budge our 450. We then call for another 450 with a winch to pull the tractor out, which by now has tracks under the mud and is still sinking. The Charlottesville 450, Eddie Embrey and myself head to Monasco. This fire has been going on for about 45 minutes before we start organizing crews to walk in. The Monasco fire was started by 175,000-volt lines being blown together by the wind. Large balls of fire were falling down under the line as we were building the fire lines. Lou had told Eddie and I to take the 450 up the west side of Monasco along an abandoned state road, then go along the ridge to the fire. It was about 5:00 p.m. when Eddie and I left the transport, walking the 450 to the fire. We got to the top of the mountain and couldn't even smell the smoke or see the fire. Eddie keeps going on the 450 because it is too rocky to use. Two hours later he is on the east side of me on Route 722 where you can see the whole fire. I walked for 45 minutes over three ridges to finally get to the fire. Remember, Lou said this is the closest way in and, he's "Fire Boss." Everyone else has gone to Route 722 and is on the fire already.

Well, we finally get a hand on the fire so we take a break. Lou called and said he is sending food to us. He said there is a "road" in the hollow just south of the fire. I sent one man to pick up the food on the "road." He comes back and said there is only a creek and a beaver dam down there. I relayed to Lou what we found. He said, "Oh, I'm two ridges over too far." Eddie had brought in a crew up the east side so now the fire was contained—9 *p.m.* Lou calls back and said there will be food coming up the hollow so bring the crews out to get it.

Have you ever had an onion sandwich? That's what my first sandwich tasted like. The sandwiches looked like a bear had gotten to them first. Briars and trees had almost totally destroyed the "food". I got another sandwich, which is bologna. As I opened a Coke while holding my mouthwatering sandwich, the drink foamed all over the only food I've had all day.

We finally made it out at about 11 p.m. to find this gawd-awful looking stuff all over the side of Lou's truck. I asked Lou what it was. "Oh, that was beef stew we had out here. I spilled half of a five-gallon crock pot all over the side and top of my truck." He eats beef stew and we have onion sandwiches and foaming drinks. As the man said, "Just one of many!"

Frank Wood
CFW, R-3

Longest Sentence

I guess most of you have heard about the case in Amherst County in 1983. The one that seemed to have the most impact involved a couple of fellows, one being a policeman and one an ex-fireman we had caught six years prior to that setting fires. On this occasion, the policeman drove the car and the ex-fireman set eight fires one day. The ex-fireman was tried with a jury in Amherst County Circuit Court and given three years per fire and ended up with twenty-four years for setting fires. This is the most, I believe, that has been given in the state of Virginia that I can recall in the last thirty years. The Policeman, of course, turned states evidence and ended up with fifteen years.

Milton Morris
Investigator

New Program

In 1980 we started the aerial release program again with Roundup after losing 2,4,5-T. Our first county of this first aerial use of Roundup operationally was Campbell. Gary Bradshaw was a new County Forester and I was a new Assistant District Forester. We were both apprehensive about the spraying. We had several false starts in which no one else showed up to begin as planned.

Finally, Wayne Booth spoke up, "Look Hoss, I don't know what all the worrying is about. Why, when this show finally gets on the road, there will be at least a half-dozen people here telling us every move to make!"

Well, sure enough, when it all finally came together, we had the following present: Assistant Forest Management Chief, a chemical company representative, the helicopter company president, sales manager for the helicopter company, and a Forest Technician.

Greg Winston
Regional Forester, R-4

Bobby Atkins and Company

In early August, 1986, I appeared before the Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors to present my first annual report to this elected body. All went well with a number of excellent questions after my talk. Finally, when the members of the Board indicated they had no further comments, the Chairman said he had one final statement. This really piqued my interest as he had already made a number of well-founded observations about forestry in the county. The Chairman proceeded to say he liked the Roy Clark poster we put out, but took considerable exception with the bear used in the picture. This flustered me, as I knew we had a special suit for this series of posters. The entire Board seemed to sense my consternation. Then, they all broke out into laughter as the Chairman finished his statement. "What I mean is," he continued, "you picked the ugliest man in Lunenburg County to play the bear!" Of course, they all knew Chief Forest Warden Bobby Atkins, who was sitting behind me, had been playing Smokey. Bobby laughed along with the joke too, especially since it turned out to be more on me than him.

The point of this story is nothing particularly historical, but illustrates much of our history. Through the years our clients, if you will, have generally been the salt of the earth—like these Board members. As an organization and as individuals, we are fortunate to be able to live and work with and among such fine people.

Greg Winston
Regional Forester, R-4

Unplanned Excitement

Miniature leaves signalled the beginning of the end of the 1985 spring fire season in Campbell County. Veteran fire tower operator Francis Bailey searched the horizon for a distant smoke plume.

John Graff, Chief of Fire Management, had scheduled the day with photographer Don Rutledge, who was in hopes of selling a worldwide pictorial article on our fire tower operation. It was another warm, beautiful spring day although somewhat breezy. Being on the tail-end of spring fire season, I wondered if we would have to relate past history to justify our "outdated" use of the fire tower.

Short of the western horizon, a white cloud began to ascend from the tree line. Recounting the experiences of fire tower operators, Chief Forest Warden Wayne Booth agreed with Francis that the expert lookout knows enough not to make a quick judgement when distinguishing between a lime spread and smoke. With a few deductions, this cloud was indeed smoke, if only a right-of-way burning. At least, this photo journalist would get an idea of what a tower operator does.

Meanwhile. . . .

Driving down the side of the Southern Railway tracks, I remember thinking that three miles would be a long way to back a tandem truck with a loaded tractor. I had made the tactical error of stopping by and driving the fire plow unit instead of insisting on a part-time operator. The escaped right-of-way burn was less than three acres, but the height of the tree scorch was an attention-getter. John Graff and Don Rutledge had remained at the tower and now John was assisting Francis in reporting two fires that popped up suspiciously close to each other. Forester Don Yancey was on his way from our fire and Technician Bob Frey was en route from Appomattox County. I wondered if the show had been designed for Mr. Rutledge's coverage. I couldn't believe that this flurry was for real and that they were being spotted first by the fire tower with no reports through the Campbell County Dispatcher. Needing 20 minutes to finish up and having two fires to respond to, an additional tractor was requested from Appomattox County. We could certainly finish up and be on the other fire before an outside tractor could be called in.

Oh yes, I didn't have to back up three miles. With absolute trust in Wayne Booth, I kept on trucking down the track—everything was coming together. We were an active, well-oiled, fire-fighting machine! Detecting, responding, and precisely deploying men and equipment with no wasted effort or lost time of wheel-spinning—what a show! As if these were not enough, our fire detection flight was now in the air and reporting the situation on the going fires as well as giving the "all clear" signal for the rest of the District.

It was about noon and hot. Running in third gear on top of the railroad ballast, a kind of loss of power, slow-up and then go again pattern developed in the power train of the International transport. I was driving and I could see myself parked along the tracks for the rest of the afternoon! A District Forester's job is to coordinate several fires or overhead on a large fire. It is considered less than ideal for one to be the tractor driver! Vapor locking was diagnosed and after an unsuccessful attempt to remedy the situation, I found myself racing to the fire scene down Route 29, lights flashing—in second gear.

The tractor, transport, and I finally did arrive at one of the fires. We were a little behind Wayne Bowman's tractor from Appomattox. Keith Phillips, part-time tractor operator, was waiting to take over the tractor operation. The fire was approximately seven acres in size and appeared fairly routine. However, on several occasions, the wind would shift, and on portions of the plowed line not burned out, the fire would tend to sweep across. There were some scattered 50-60-foot white pines that "torched out" near the head of the fire. However, after several attempts the most hazardous portions of the head fire were successfully contained.

John Graff and Don Rutledge soon showed up for a few photographs. I was sorry they missed the white pine "torch out". I have yet to see any of the pictures that Mr. Rutledge took, but I thought this little account would be good to have if they ever appear.

Bill Braford
District Forester, R-4

A Stressful Profession

Early on the morning of April 12, 1982, I received a call from the Giles County Sheriff's Office reporting a smoke on Peters Mountain near Kimballton. I knew the area right well as I have hunted several times in this vicinity. After seeing where the smoke was rising, I got the Sheriff's Office Dispatcher to notify the U. S. Forest Service at the Blacksburg Rangers Office of this fire. Both national forest and privately-owned land make up this area.

When leaving the State Route, I turned onto a woods road that led toward the area where the smoke was rising. I met a young man, Tim Wilson, walking on the woods road. I asked him a few questions about the fire and took him with me. His vehicle had slid off the road and he was walking out to get help when I met him.

We parked the truck at a wide area beside the road, leaving the road open for other vehicles. After getting some tools out and leaving them in sight for other people who might come to assist with the fire, we each took a fire rake and started toward the fire.

After walking about 100 yards, I realized that I failed to get the county portable radio that is on a frequency with the Sheriff's Office. I turned and went back for the radio. (The previous July, I presented a request to the Board of Supervisors for this portable radio which I received in February. Part of my plea was once I left the truck, I had no communication with the County Dispatcher. In case of an emergency, I would have to walk back to the truck to get help. Little did I know that the first emergency was going to be me.)

After walking down the road for quite some distance, we turned off on a trail along a branch leading up a very steep, rocky slope. We walked what seemed about a half-mile before reaching the fire.

At this time, the fire was small, being less than two acres. It was burning slowly as there was very little wind and the night dampness had not completely dried away. We proceeded to the head of the fire, raking a line and cutting it off. Then we started building lines down each flank. Tim had no previous firefighting experience, so I took the left flank which was burning the hottest and had more smoke and heat.

About two-thirds way down the flank, I saw Steve Vinson, Giles County Game Warden, coming to assist. After talking with Steve, I asked him to check on Tim, who was working on the right flank. I was feeling alright when Steve left and continued building the fire line down the flank to where the fire was beginning to back down the slope.

All of a sudden, I became nauseated and sat down. While I was sick, Tim came to me and said that Steve wanted me to come to the other flank and help as they were having difficulty controlling the fire. I gave Tim my fire rake, told him I was sick and sent him back to help Steve.

As time progressed, my sickness got worse so I radioed the Sheriff's Office and requested the Rescue Squad. The Dispatcher could not receive me because of the terrain. A person, with a scanner in his home, telephoned the Dispatcher relaying the message. Not long after this, I began to have chest pains which felt like an elephant was standing on my chest. At this time, I called the Dispatcher again and told him to make it a 10-33 chest pains. Again, this message could not be received by the Dispatcher and a Pearisburg policeman relayed the message. I did not lose consciousness. As the fire came closer to me, I slid down the steep slope. Some distance below me was a small stream of water and I was fairly convinced that I could make myself safe from the fire until help arrived.

A Forest Service person was sent to try to locate me. Somehow he was unable to find me. By this time, a helicopter, which had been dispatched to make water drops on the fire, was asked to see if he could spot me. Locating me, he hovered overhead to direct the rescue crew. Steve and Tim came back to me a few minutes before Pat West with the Giles County Rescue Squad arrived.

After others arrived, including rescue and Forest Service personnel, the difficult task of carrying me out on a backboard over steep, rocky terrain and through thick undergrowth began. I personally felt sorry for the crew as they carefully inched their way down the mountain.

Upon arriving at the ambulance, a Cardiac Technician, started an intravenous line on me. We went by ambulance about a mile to where the helicopter was waiting to fly me to the Montgomery County Hospital. At 1:00 p.m.—six minutes after lift-off—we were at the hospital.

With the diagnosis of an acute MI, heart attack, I was taken from the Emergency Room to the Coronary Care Unit. Mike Griffin, District Forester, Region 5, receiving word of my condition, reached the hospital within minutes of my arrival. He remained with my family until my condition stabilized.

I was in the Coronary Care Unit for three days, then transferred to the step-down unit for 11 additional days. With good medical care and cardiac rehabilitation at Virginia Tech, I returned to light duty in July.

I have deep appreciation for the Giles County Rescue Squad, Forest Service personnel, helicopter crew and Steve Vinson for their contributions in the splendid and rapid rescue of moving me to the hospital. Also to the doctors, nurses, and others who aided in my recovery and my fellow workers who kept the work going until I was able again to do it.

G. B. McDonald, Jr.
CFW, R-5

ITC

Everyone has heard stories about ITC training, but Barry probably holds the record for taking the most information. Six weeks were spent by Barry getting speeches from everyone he knew. Only Barry knows how many prepared speeches will fit into a large attache!

R. J. Garman
Forestry Technician, R-5

Training Does the Job

One situation I experienced during the 1986 spring fire season occurred in the Hardy section of Franklin County on Smith Mountain Lake. Burnt Chimney Volunteer Fire Department had controlled the fire, so I began my investigation

I asked the suspect if he knew anything about the fire and he said he knew nothing. I happened to think of what I heard Milton Morris tell us when I attended Law Enforcement Training at Wakefield a few months earlier. I told the suspect I was going to talk to his neighbors and if they saw him burning, in addition to the 10-62(b) violation, I was going to add the charge of giving false information to a Law Enforcement Officer. Then I left.

I talked to four different people and no one could identify the person that was burning. So, I returned to the suspect's home with nothing but Milton's bluff. After walking up to him, the first thing I said was, "I will ask you one more time if you know anything of this fire." Immediately he confessed!

If it hadn't been for the Law Enforcement Training, I would not have heard Milton tell of this kind of experience.

Kenny Campbell
CFW, R-5

An Important Role

I've been working with the Department for one year on October 1, and many interesting experiences have happened to me in this short period.

Two weeks after I came to work everyone decided to take off! Well, everyone but Ralph Brubaker and myself. About mid-day, I received a telephone call from the Sheriff's Department that there was a fire in Giles County. My mind went blank. I asked myself the question, "what do I do now?" Everyone had assured me that this was a slack time for fires and for me not to worry. Having very little knowledge about fire procedures, I felt a little panicky inside. But, I reasoned that surely there was someone out there who could help put this fire out. I picked up the radio microphone and called Giles 2 with no response. I called Montgomery County and no one answered. Well, by now I was really scared. Another call came from the Sheriff's Department asking if anyone had been notified of the fire. I assured them that I was doing my best to get help. They informed me that the McCoy Fire Department was having a hard time locating the fire. All they could tell me was that the fire was spotted from the Mountain Lake area near McCoy. It was very rocky and steep. I had to locate the Chief Forest Warden in Giles County, so I called G. B. McDonald's home and his wife told me she would have to go up in the mountain to get G. B., and that it would take about 20 or 30 minutes. About a half-hour later, and two more telephone calls from the Sheriff's Department, I had a couple of people on the fire. Ralph came up to the front office to help me. He is our mechanic who became Assistant Dispatcher and, boy, was I glad! We had to get fire crews and all kinds of other help. The fire was put out in a couple of days.

By the end of the first two weeks I was wondering what I was getting myself into. Since everything worked out okay, I decided to stay on a little while longer!

Sandra Stump
Secretary, R-5

The "Green Bomb"

I was doing just fine until I found out that I had to drive my boss's car to Charlottesville. Mr. Burchinal told me that I could drive his car to Headquarters to meet Rita. We were going to a training class in Richmond that afternoon. Not only was I scared of driving the "green bomb", but I was especially frightened of starting over Afton Mountain in a blinding snowstorm. With fear and a prayer in my heart, I trudged forward. I was assured that the car was checked over and ready for any trip.

Everything was going okay until I reached the top of Afton Mountain. I heard a strange noise from underneath the car. I calmly said to myself, "it's alright—it's just a build-up of snow and ice." Sure it was! I pulled in front of Headquarters, put the car in park and proceeded to get out. About that time I heard a thud. I got out and stepped back only to find that the muffler had fallen off the car.

The first person I saw when I got inside was none other than Jim Cook. I politely told him that I would appreciate it if he would get my boss a new car. He told me that the car used to be his and he thought it was a pretty good one. I smiled at him, asked him to go outside and look under the car, and come back and say that. Well, he did. When he came back into the building, I thought he would never stop laughing. He told me that Leroy Collins would fix the car for me. I called Mr. Burchinal and told him that I really appreciated the broken car that he gave me to drive to Charlottesville. He laughed and agreed that it was quite unusual for such a thing like that to happen—especially to a new employee. When I got back from Richmond, the car was fixed and loaded with supplies for Region—thanks to Leroy.

Sandra Stump
Secretary, R-5

A Bad Fire Year in Buchanan County

Fire fighting Buchanan County style can sometimes get just plum out-of-hand! Dave Tolliver, CFW, and Rodney Keenon, Forester, had thought the spring of '85 was a bad year having 50 fires with a loss of 679 acres. Well, 1986 came in with a bang. So far, we've had 59 fires with a loss of 3052 acres and the Fall is still to come.

Everything broke loose about the last week in March and continued right on until the second week in May. But we got excellent assistance from throughout the state with 19 people serving their time in Buchanan County. Several times we had as many as four fires going at once with over 1152 acres involved. I am sure everyone will remember the long hours at night on the fire line, particularly when you were not sure if you were in Kentucky, West Virginia or Virginia.

There were many events to recall such as the late night Pizza Party, Joel Artman taking the giant leap for the Department downhill, chasing suspects into Kentucky, the phone call at 6 a.m. reporting four arson sets. In any event, there certainly will be many fond memories of the Spring of '86 in Buchanan County.

Rodney Keenon
Area Forester, R-6

One experience that I will probably never forget is a fire that occurred in Pea Patch in Buchanan County in the Spring of 1980 under the supervision of CFW James McClanahan. The wind was blowing very hard and the humidity was very low. We got the call about 2 p.m. We worked hard and fast trying to put in fire lines to stop the fire. I was a newcomer to fighting fires. Just when you would think you had the fire out, spot fires would crop up again. I thought someone was coming along behind us starting the fires again. We battled the fires for 12 hours before we finally got it under control at about 2 a.m. The people of Pea Patch were very grateful for our efforts to save their property, showing their appreciation by bringing food and water. This was probably the worst fire I have ever been on. I guess the people of Pea Patch and their kindness and appreciation of our job was probably a large factor in my decision to pursue a career in forestry.

Jim R. Steele
CFW, R-6

This fire was in Home Creek in Buchanan County. I was then working as a forest warden. Curtis Sparks and I were putting in a right flank with the assistance of the three McClanahan brothers when we heard a leaf blower running on the other side of the mountain. I noticed they weren't putting in their fire lines like we were. The McClanahan boys started hollering across the hollow at them to bring a line off the mountain to meet the line that we were putting in at the bottom. They were trying to blow the fire out with the blower. Finally, the McClanahan boys got mad and started cursing and calling them names. I heard a voice come back and I told the McClanahan boys to quiet down for it sounded like someone I knew. They said they didn't give a damn who it was because they sure in hell didn't know how to put in a fire line! A few minutes went by and a man came to us with a blower on his back and said, "It sure is hard to get help these days. I picked up two Mountain Mission boys and neither one of them has fire experience." These words were spoken by Gene Ohlson, Regional Forester, one year prior to his retirement.

Jim Steele
CFW, R-6

There was a fire in Vansant in Buchanan County. We had gotten a late call on this fire and it had spread all over the place. We had fought this fire for 14 straight hours. We were tired, hungry and had tired feet. This story involves a transfer of a Chief Forest Warden from another part of the state, that has had few forest fires, to Buchanan County. I asked this chief for food and something to drink for the fire fighters. We still ask Dwight Stallard, "How do you feed 15 hungry men with one short loaf of bread, one pack of cheese, one pack of bologna, no mayonnaise, no mustard and 12 cans of pop?"

Jim Steele
CFW, R-6

On The Fire Line

As we all know, firefighting can be hazardous to your health. The injury can be physical but other times the only injury is to our pride. Several years ago while fighting fire in Buchanan County just such an accident happened to Randall Parris. Late one evening, while raking fire line, Randall was leading the Pack down the mountain. As it so happened, the line came out in an old gentleman's yard. He had just recently moved the Johnny House and the old pit had begun to grass over with a succulent stand of new grass. Well, naturally Randall headed for the green grass in order to tie in his line. Well, as fate would have it, he stepped into the not too solid old pit. He sank in to the boot top in some of Buchanan County's finest. The sad part of it was he had on a new pair of boots. Randall's only comment concerned the long drive home.

In the summer of 1980 the Division hired the first female Chief Forest Warden, Betty Hunter. During the interview there was considerable concern about the possibility of late night fires and the hazards of a woman being out alone. Betty was assured that Tazewell County was a moderate fire county with only about 25 fires per year. The year 1980 proved to be about average with only 10 fires in the fall.

In 1981 things really got rolling. Betty had 12 false alarms and 66 fires that burned a total of 691 acres. Betty did an outstanding job spending several nights on the fire line. Betty resigned in 1983 only because she had gotten married and her husband was working in Bristol, Tennessee.

Rodney Keenon
Area Forester, R-6

Jim Steele (Tazewell CFW) was waiting for a phone call from a local T.V. station telling him where to meet them. The T.V. station was going to cover one of Jim's projects. While Jim was out of the office Dave Tolliver (Buchanan CFW) called Jim's answering machine pretending to be the T.V. station. Dave said he was sorry, but they couldn't provide a T.V. camera crew, but a high school student would show up to take snapshots.

Later, with Rodney Keenon (Tazewell Forester) present, Jim played the message back. Needless to say, he was extremely upset and ranted and raved a few minutes before he figured out is was Dave's voice. Then he had a few unprintable things to say about Dave's ancestors.

H.F. Jones
Forestry Technician, R-6

The Mt. Saint Frederick Fire

Halloween of 1983 started with the most publicized fire in Frederick County's history. An alarm was turned in by someone returning from work at 12:30 a.m. They were about 3/4 mile from the fire scene and reported a glow in the sky near Mr. Williams. Round Hill Volunteer Fire Company was dispatched and, soon after arriving at the fire scene and pumping a tank of water on the fire (to no avail) the OIC knew he had problems. Within minutes pagers and alarms were being sounded all over the area. I was dispatched to the scene at this time. My first reaction was that it was a mistake to be sending me on a fire with a steady drizzle falling. I couldn't understand why the Virginia Department of Forestry should be involved with a few tires on fire.

The early morning hours of October 31, 1983, will be remembered as the start of The Great Tire Fire, the "Tarr Farr," Mt. Saint Williams, or Mt. Saint Frederick. The fire was started by an unknown arsonist using ten gallons of gas. The few tires that were initially involved soon spread to cover the pile of seven to nine million tires. The fire by this time was melting the tires and causing the by-products to flow in flaming streams down the pile toward a pond and small stream. Thick, dark smoke was climbing 4500 feet into the air in a column 400 feet wide.

The dawn brought the situation into perspective. We had a fire line through the wooded area along two sides of the fire and had burned out this area. We know the forest was safe for now. The major concerns now were to keep buildings at the edge of the pile from igniting and to check the flow of oil from the pile.

The scene was getting to look like a hill of excited ants. The people involved now included firefighters from all 10 county companies, three of the four Winchester City companies, all of the members of the Board of Supervisors, newspaper and radio reporters, workers from several county government branches, and the Department of Forestry. By noon the Red Cross was serving meals, the Officer of Emergency Services had brought in a mobile office, the Water Control Board was checking the stream, the Air Pollution Control Board was checking the air quality, telephone lines were being installed, and the electric company was adding more lines.

The number of agencies involved continued to grow throughout the day. Darkness brought with it a change of wind direction and made necessary a relocation of the command post. Command was moved about 3/4 mile away to an open field. This became the city called "Tireville."

The Environmental Protection Agency came in the third day of the fire and took command. The Coast Guard unit that takes care of hazardous material disposal joined the forces the fourth day. Tireville eventually grew to involve over 40 government agencies and private companies. It had two streets and street lighting, 18 telephone lines, a cafeteria, four office trailers, a media trailer, supply trailer, fuel and gas tanks, police and security forces, first aid station, helicopter landing pad, and firefighting crews.

The Department of Forestry was involved from October 31, 1983, through February 2, 1984. We provided forest protection, transportation of materials and personnel, construction of catch basins, wrecker service for stuck vehicles, messenger service, knowledge of the area, and any other duty asked of us.

The "Tarr Farr" became not only National news but International. Phone calls came in almost daily from foreign correspondents.

The fire was finally proclaimed out on July 6, 1984. It had burned for 10 months and one week. It had cost $1.7 million in Federal money and $10,000 in County money. The oil produced by the melt down of the tires amounted to 690,000 gallons.

Fred Burlingame
CFW, R-7

ITC and Good Times

In January of 1980, a group of us arrived at Massanetta Springs for our ITC training. I was rooming with Wayne Garman on the second floor of the three-story dormitory.

After supper on the third day, I returned to my room to prepare my talk for the next day. A few minutes later Clayton Brown walked in. After exchanging greetings, he complained about the heat and went over and turned it down. Then he turned around and asked whose stuff was on the bed. I told him it was mine. Then he asked whose radio was on the dressser. I told him that it was mine. Then he wanted to know J.B.'s whereabouts. I replied that I hadn't seen him since supper but that John Cleaton was back in the adjoining room. Clayton walked through the bathroom to check out John. He spoke to John and returned to my room. I noticed his head was hanging a little low. Walter, he said, you must think I'm crazy. I told him I was beginning to wonder a little. He went on to explain the obvious—he thought he was in his room (his was actually on the third floor). I told him it was an easy mistake to make and we both had a good laugh.

The next morning everyone asked me if I had a good night's sleep outside and offered me a room for that night, since Clayton had tried to put me out. Anyway this was a good break from some hard work during the week.

Walter Hart
Forestry Technician, R-9

An Imposing Figure

This occurred in the Waverly Region in the summer of 1985. A number of us from the Waverly Region were helping on a prescribed burn near Brink in Greensville County. Among those present on the burn were Paul Trianosky, Horace Mitchell, Will Warekois, Ed Jarratt, Fred Turck, Jim Blackwell and I believe Bruce Edwards from Brunswick County.

The burn was going fairly well and we were getting a pretty good burn over the cutover tract. There were some rather steep hills and gullies and a lot of brush and large laps on the tract. We all noticed a rather menacing black cloud approaching from the west. However, in the middle of a burn what can you do but continue? The cloud quickly approached and it soon became apparent that we were in for a downpour. Soon the wind picked up and began to blow rather hard, accompanied by a moderate amount of lightning and thunder. Fred Turck attempted to call Ed Jarratt down to pick us up with his truck. There was an old logging road across the drain from where we were located. Either weak batteries, the wet conditions, or some unknown reason disrupted communications between Fred's portable and Ed's truck radio. To attempt better radio contact, Fred crawled up on a high stump and held the radio up high above his head. I won't soon forget the sight of Fred Turck, and imposing figure, high on a stump holding up his radio in the pouring down rain and lightning, and yelling "10-27 Ed, 10-27!" Fred finally got a portion of his message through to Ed and crawled down off the stump.

Mighty Mouse

On a Sunday afternoon in early May, 1986, I responded to a reported fire in the eastern part of the county. Upon arrival, I found about a half-acre fire which the Volunteer Fire Department had just about controlled. The fire had obviously started from a pile of burning brush. The brush was in the middle of an old gravel pit that had been leveled. When questioned how the fire got started, the owner indicated that he had lit the pile. He told me that when the pile got to burning well, a mouse ran out with his hair on fire and ignited some dry leaves that were 40 to 50 feet from the pile. Danny Roberts and I concluded that (a) this was a long-haired mouse (b) the mouse is destined for the Olympics or (c) the owner spins a tall tale.

Dean P. Cumbia
Area Forester, R-9

On Blowing Beaver Dams

I had the opportunity yesterday to work with the Game Commission and Department of Highways people in blowing up a beaver dam and hut on Bear Creek on the Cumberland State Forest. It was being blown because the dam had backed the creek up over approximately 200 acres of private ownership land and had also flooded about 30 acres on the State Forest, which wasn't too bad due to our multiple use concepts.

We let the Game Commission know about the problem and they located the three men with the Department of Highways & Transportation and set the "big day."

We met at the Cumberland Forest Headquarters, five of us, and proceeded to the site. After driving the vehicles to the Willis River we had to transport all the equipment, boots, cameras, tamping bar, plunger, 200 feet of wire, flashlight battery, dynamite (50 sticks), caps and exploding rope by johnboat to within about 300 feet of the dam. We then had to carry everything to the dam and set it up.

When the first three men got to the dam, low and behold, Mr. Beaver was sitting there. They got to watch him for several minutes before he decided he should leave. He apparently had been adding to the dam, because there was new mud packed up on the pond side of it. The dam was about 25 feet long and probably 6 feet hight, with the base being pretty close to 15 feet.

The procudure for setting the charges was to punch a hole 4 to 5 feet deep, wrap and tape the explosive cord to three sticks of dynamite, stick that into the hole, then go on to the next holes doing the same thing with the explosive cord connecting all the charges. After the final charge was set a "cap" was taped to the end of the explosive cord and wired to the detonating wire, which had been strung through the woods to a safe area about 200 feet away from the dam.

Now the excitement had really built up and I asked if I could be the one to push the plunger to set off the charges. The head man with the dynamite team said I could, but warned me that the plunger didn't work like the one on the old cowboy movies. It was much harder to push.

After wiring the plunger and asking the other men if they were ready, he gave the command, "FIRE IN THE HOLE!" With that I pushed with all my might, imagining what nine sticks of dynamite must sound like going off. I'm sure my teeth were gritted and my face all scrunched up. NOTHING HAPPENED! After redoing the wires on the plunger and making two more attempts, the stuff still didn't blow up. The man in charge said he thought that dumb plunger was bad anyhow, and that's why he brought the battery. So he connected one wire to the battery, held the other wire in his hand, asked if everyone was ready, hollered "FIRE IN THE HOLE" and touched the wire to the other terminal on the battery, setting off a tremendous explosion causing water, mud, and sticks to fly everywhere. Before we could go 50 feet to look at the destruction, we could hear what sounded like Niagara Falls. It was unreal to see all that water going out that one hole.

We blew the dam twice more that day to get what was left on either side of the Creek.

Bob Turney
Forestry Technician
State Forest

New I & E Chief

Following Ed Rodger's retirement as Chief of Information and Education, State Forester Jim Garner began interviewing for the vacant position. Over a period of several weeks, we at Headquarters noted the arrival and departure of dozens of applicants, interviewing for the job. One scraggly-looking character I passed by, as he stood loitering in the hallway, reading the bulletin board. Dressed in a leather jacket, sorely in need of a haircut, I suppose he was awaiting his interview with the State Forester. As I went by, he spoke: "Hi, Leo, good to see you." I went on, thinking, "who the heck is he?" Not wishing to snub the man entirely, I turned and said to the poor bloke: "I'm sorry, but I don't know who you are." Well, he introduced himself, I promptly forgot his name, and then went back to work.

A week went by, and the State Forester called Annette Robertson, Smokey Morris and myself (the entire I&E staff) into his office to announce his selection of the new I&E Chief. When he told us that his choice was to be Lewis F. Southard, a silence filled the room. I spoke first: "What is a Lewis F. Southard?" Well, Jim explained to us that Lou had been the County Forester in Nelson County, and went on to enumerate his many qualifications.

Some time after that, I was over in the I&E Shop and received a phone message to come by Ed Rodger's old office. The new I&E Chief wished to meet me. Walking into the new Chief's office, I first noticed the leather jacket hanging on the coat rack. Then I noticed the long-haired scraggly, figure behind the desk. He arose, met my astonished gaze with his steel-grey eyes, leaned forward and barked: "Do you know who I am, now?!"

Moral to the story: The person you choose to snub one day, may just turn out to be your next boss.

Leo Napoleon
Illustrator

HOW NOT TO ENTERTAIN AN ACTING STATE FORESTER

The summer of '85 and Bob Dunn, Regional Forester from Staunton, is in Charlottesville serving as acting State Forester while Jim Garner is away.

Bob is a serious golfer, and a good one. How serious? Walking off the 18th green at Birdwood, having beaten "The Boss" by knocking in a 12-foot putt on the last hole, I remark, ". . . and what do you say to that?!"

"Only one thing to say, Leo," remarks Bob. "Pack your bags, I'm transferring you to Grundy, Virginia."

"I think I'd rather die," says I.

"A good choice, if one had to choose between the two," says Harold Olinger, Bob's golf partner.

Leo Napoleon
Illustrator

Region 7—Arson Fires

Starting in mid-December of 1980 in Amherst and Rockbridge Counties, around the Buena Vista area, we experienced a series of arson fires. These arson fires continued through January 1981, when five Rockbridge County residents were apprehended in a dragnet operation in conjunction with the State Police, Rockbridge County Sheriff's Department, and the Department of Forestry. Prior to their apprehension, a long and tedious investigation developed in conjunction with the State Police arson investigator and the Department of Forestry.

A total of 121 fires were reported as a result of some action of this group. The fires, started in Amherst County, continued to be set in Rockbridge County; and then on one particular weekend on a Sunday, two of the defendants took a trip from Buena Vista through Rockbridge County and started setting fires at Goshen Pass, going through Bath County and continuing through Bath County on the west side into Highland County to visit friends. After their visit was completed, they continued on the route through Highland County back through Augusta County, and back through Buena Vista. During the total trip of approximately 250 miles, *they set 38 fires* starting at Goshen Pass through Rockbridge, Bath, and Highland Counties. During their visit with their friends in Highland County, they traveled through West Viginia and the Franklin area; and although the fires are not reported as part of this 38; some fires were set in the Franklin area; and it's highly suspected that these two defendants also set those. This information was gained from the Franklin Fire Department and did not enter into the court cases of these defendants.

The fires were set by a fire cracker device known as "jumping jacks" or "sizzlers". They were thrown from the vehicle as they were driving along, some from the passenger's side and some from the driver's side, but mostly from the passenger's side of the car. Of the 38 fires, most were rather small and were caught and suppressed rather quickly by local fire companies. I do not have the weather factors for the particular time of the year, but there was little or no snow during that particular winter; and most of the fires burned in small spots along the way in grass. Several woods fires were reported that developed into about 10 to 15 acres.

These five defendants were all charged with felonies which is most important in this type of situation, since the courts felt very strongly in the sentencing of these defendants. All of the defendants caught in the four counties were sentenced to at least 10 years to run concurrently. One defendant was sentenced to 12 years in jail on twelve counts of arson in one county where a jury heard the case. All other cases were plea-bargained in the other counties.

During the investigation, it was most important to find positive evidence and physical evidence as to what started the fires. "Jumping jacks", which were found in many locations, did not completely burn up in the burned area. Each fire was located and plotted on a map for each county so they could be readily identified in court. All evidence and confessions obtained from the defendants were all gained legally by their being notified of their rights before each time. Also, pictures were taken and used in court most effectively. One of the defendants mentioned the fact that he threw so many jumping jacks from his vehicle that he lost count, and fortunately a lot of them did not start fires. One of the reasons one of the defendants gave for starting these fires was *it was mostly for fun*; and during the investigation, it was determined that they did know what was going on but they didn't know the implications in the long run.

John A. Rasmussen
District Forester, R-7
Deceased

Buchanan County in the Spring

The first thing I want to do is impress that there is no attempt to make light of any other state or their Forestry Agency. With this in mind there are two stories I will relate.

On a cool April morning James McClanahan, David Tolliver and Rodney Keenon were walking lines on fires which happened on the previous day. None of the fires were major or large in size, but with humidity under 20%, patrolling the lines was necessary. I checked one and met James to check one on Mill Creek next to the Hurley community. When we walked to the top of the ridge there was smoke rising to our west in the edge of Kentucky. We finished checking our lines and mopping up our fire and then went two ridges over into Cedar Creek, Kentucky. When we arrived on the ridge top we were glad to see men from the Kentucky Division of Forestry already on the scene. They had a pick-up crew and a full-time man leading the attack and we had eight well trained fire fighters plus James and myself.

Let me tell you now James McClanahan is the best at mountain fires as anyone I've worked with. He is not given much to words or flattery and it pays to listen to what he says. On this occasion the Kentucky man asked for advice and James obliged with straight talk.

We were standing on the ridge planning the attack when the Kentucky man asked what we were going to do? James told him "since all of the fire is in Kentucky we are going to try and keep it that way. We will take a line from this ridge top and tie into Cedar Creek somewhere and keep this fire of yours out of Virginia." Then the Kentucky man made his mistake. He asked James what he would do if James was him. James calmly replied, "well, if I was you I'd go home and see this fire on TV on the six o'clock news, because you couldn't rake a line around the Kentucky side if you were raking 24 hours a day 7 days a week for a month. Besides that, I've seen your lines and the damn thing wouldn't hold if you did get one around it."

We were successful in keeping it out of Virginia but it burned nine more days in Kentucky. I didn't know the other man's name nor did I see him again to see if he took James' advice, but after looking at one black ridge top behind another for miles, I assumed he did.

Unidentified

Another story has to do with James and the West Virginia Division of Forestry. James, Rodney Keenon, and myself were working a fire in the head of Guess Fork on the state line fire trail between Virginia and West Virginia. One night in April 1986 we had about 150 acres burning and sent crews down each flank as we were going to backfire the road to control the head. The flank crews had been gone for some time when we saw headlights coming around the fire trail. A truck pulled up and the chief of McDowell County, a new employee, and the superintendent of Panther State Forest got out of the truck. We talked shop for a while; long hours, days without a day off, and how tired we were. Looking over into West Virginia there was a fire going that made our 150 acres seem small, we even felt blessed that ours was only as big as it was. To make all this seem in proportion it happened on a Monday night. The new McDowell chief said; "well I was pretty tired for a while but I'm rested now. I played golf Saturday and Sunday, you know I had the whole weekend off." James looked at our small fire as compared to theirs and said, "I can tell some of you hadn't been around in a few days."

The Guess Fork fire on the Virginia side ended up burning 1000 acres and that was still small compared to theirs.

Like I said, these stories are not to downgrade other states or their employees but more to show what kind of people we have in ours. There is one lesson in this; if you come in contact with a knowledgeable soft-spoken person, *pay attention you might learn something.*

Unidentified

Caught With His Pants Down

Forester Scheurenbrand recently literally caught a "burner" with his pants down.

A "well-oiled" beer drinker decided to burn off a fence row after soaking up some suds. As usual, a gust of wind blew the fire into the adjoining pasture and up over the hill it went.

When H.S. arrived he noticed "our hero" beating on the fire with what appeared to be a burlap bag. He also appeared to be in Bermuda shorts. Scheurenbrand wondered why anyone with such skinny legs and knobby knees would be in shorts.

After the fire was almost controlled "our hero" came over to Howard fully dressed, well almost fully. His trousers had been burned off, one leg to the knee, the other halfway to the knee.

It was extremely hard to keep from laughing at the man and his story. After the fire escaped, he had tried to stamp it out. His trousers, being polyester, caught fire and he had to remove them, post haste! He was lucky, he could have been injured!

H. Scheurenbrand
Area Forester, R-3

Our Kind of Folks

In June 1985, at Personnel Camp in Lynchburg, VA, I had been employed by VDF for only three months. I knew no one but my fellow State Forest Folks. I became acquainted with Cathy Crump and Carolyn Morris, R-4, but was still in a state of insecurity.

One evening, on our way to the campus dining room for a late dinner, the three of us were caught in a sudden, very heavy rainstorm. A few other VDF'ers were also thoroughly soaked by the surprise storm and arrived at the dining room shaking the rain from themselves like cats.

As we lined up to select our dinners the power went off. The heavy rain clouds, coupled with the power failure, made for a very dark dining room. The staff scurried about, placing candles in the center of a few tables for the last of the evening's diners. Cathy, Carolyn and I brought our trays to a table at the end of the room and were soon joined by a very wet Warden from northern Virginia.

I do not remember his name, but I will always remember how delightful he made that otherwise miserable dinner for me. We were feeling very disappointed that the storm would ruin our planned outdoor activities, and were also feeling much less than "at our best" with soaked hair and clothes. He brought a wonderful humor to the occasion and before long we were all laughing and enjoying our private "candlelight dinner" in the dark.

The feeling of friendship, support, and humor he brought to that dinner was very important to me as a new employee. Up to that evening I had felt like an outsider, lost in a sea of unfamiliar faces in forestry uniforms, and was trying very hard to fit all the pieces of this organization into an understandable whole. His spirit and friendliness made me feel for the first time that I was accepted, and indeed, a part of the Virginia Division of Forestry.

Helena Kolar
OSS, State Forest

The Sussex Adventure . . . (Oh' Whatta Trip!)

The Headquarters and Region 3 secretaries, including the Fiscal Department, eagerly anticipated their field trip to Sussex Forestry Center. For about a month there was a hum of conversation regarding the trip. You know, such things as what clothes to take, how many blankets did Mr. Shelton order, were we really going to have shrimp to eat, where in the world is Sussex. . . finally, the big day arrived!

The twelve blue-jeaned secretaries boarded two vans on Thursday, September 26, 1985. There was Cal Pennock, Sylvia Jones, Betty Hicks, Barbara Crowder, Loma Jean Lambert and Amy Lawrence in one; Harold Olinger, Betty Barker, Mary Mead, Rita Moore, Lynne Herring, Donna Hoy, Bonnie Hurtt, and Stacey Miller in the other. An unwelcome lady was to meet us at Sussex. Her name was Gloria.

As you can imagine, all the world's problems were solved by the time the vans reached Richmond for a lunch stop. The crisp Fall weather made thinking so easy! After a delightful lunch at Red Lobster and going through a stream of toll booths, Gloria made her presence known. That lady started dumping rain. Yes, Gloria was a hurricane.

The secretaries and drivers had heard weather reports before leaving Charlottesville that Gloria was forcing the evacuation of parts of Tidewater. Did a little thing like 150 mph winds stop those brave souls? No way. They were Sussex bound!

After passing the city billboards, then peanut fields, the secretaries finally caught a glimpse of the nursery. The rain-soaked vans made their way down the country road to the encampment. Bud Shelton and J. B. Jarratt greeted everyone with a hearty hello and a big smile. With assistance from Rosa, they had prepared a beautiful table of refreshments. After some leg-stretching and a look around the cabin, Dwight Stallard and Vanessa Blick appeared.

Despite the pouring rain and continued "bad weather" reports on T.V., a tour was demanded. Bud led the way in his jeep with the vans in tow.

From a secretary's point of view, letters and reports are typed, bills are paid, and phone calls are made concerning the operation and maintenance of Department offices, but it's an added chapter when you can see the actual construction and seedlings growing in the field. Things suddenly begin to make sense! Bud exhibited great patience with the barrage of questions thrown at him.

The Office Building was the first stop. It was interesting to see the insulation being put in place and being able to assist by pushing the scaffolding for the guys. Nothing like "hands-on" experience!

The size of the Grading Station is monstrous. But as secretaries know, when you have a built-in swimming pool, you need plenty of room for lounge chairs! Bud said that *foresters* refer to the swimming pool as a "seedling dipping vat".

At the Storage Building, everyone piled out of the vehicles and showed vast curiosity toward the building supplies. Here, the secretaries found out the cost of some of the materials, how skylights are installed, how a bucket-truck smashes fingers, and how the big, steel structures are put in place. One curious person asked Bud how many sheets of siding were in a package. She was encouraged to count! She did—54 per pack. With the threat of the hurricane in the back of the secretaries' minds, the stability of the Storage Building was questioned. Looking on the bright side, the secretaries assured Bud that when his building was flying through the air it would probably help him clear the adjacent stand of trees!

One of the most delightful stops was a tour of Dwight Stallard's newly-constructed home. Everyone placed their order with Bud for a new house. But, what's a new house without a WATERBED! Maybe Dwight will lead assistance with that one.

The caravan continued on to the seedbed area. Between the white irrigation pipes, rows of tiny seedlings were reaching for the sky. "Ohhh, aren't they cute" came the first comment. (That statement alone separates the secretaries from the foresters!) After everyone agreed that "yes, they are adorable," the chauffeurs about top-clipping, number of acres planted, the irrigation system, cover crops, pollution, and numerous other aspects of an orchard.

Upon conclusion of the tour, the vans waddled through mud puddles back to the cabin. But questions were still rampant. Like, in the irrigation system, how does the water get from the Nottoway River all the way to the seedbeds? So, through the pouring rain and chilly breeze, everyone gathered around the pump for a demonstration. After an explanation of how the motors are turned on and the pump starts forcing water through the pipes, one enterprising lady said, "Oh, just like siphoning gas from your car!" Of course, most girls wanted to see the system in action, so back to the vans, and the seedbeds.

Back at the cabin, the girls were instructed to find a roosting place in the two house trailers parked near the cabin. It was about this time that the secretaries were beginning to question the hospitality of Bud, because all T.V. weather reports had said, "If you live in a mobile home GET OUT". But, after assurances from Bud that the trailers were well anchored, gear was stowed.

Before dinner, the television was closely monitored for weather updates and education programs. Just before "Divorce Court", Vanessa asked if anyone would like to ride with her into Courtland. There were two volunteers. They had an interesting discussion of how the terrain differs between Charlotttesville and Sussex—flat and sandy compared to mountainous. Vanessa had never seen the mountains until Personnel Camp in Lynchburg. One of the visitors had never seen a pumpkin patch or peanuts growing in a field. Vanessa was explaining how peanuts grow, pointed out a peanut harvester and then slowed down the car. Very seriously, she said "that's a squirrel, ever seen one of those?" "Yes" to squirrels, "No" to store and bank windows being boarded and taped in preparation for Gloria. Driving throuth Courtland and seeing masking tape and hammers in action was a real experience. Thanks, Vanessa. Downtown Courtland was great!

Later, a promised delicious shrimp and pork dinner was served on the screened-in porch overlooking the "rising" river. The view was beautiful and the white tablecloths and candles added a special touch. Conversation was varied. Everything from job descriptions, beaver dams, and nail polish was discussed.

After a bucket was placed in the hall to catch rain dripping from the ceiling, everyone either retired to the T.V. room, looked at a nice collection of arrowheads, or peeled apples in the kitchen. Finally, the busy day had come to an end and it was bedtime.

The secretaries scurried through the rain to the trailers. All but two, that is. Those two stayed in the cabin with the leaky ceiling.

Everyone was soon tucked snugly in their beds. There wasn't a sound to be heard. No cars passing, no dogs barking, nobody's blaring radio, sirens . . . nothing but the rapping of rain. Who can sleep with all that quiet???? Not even a street light!! Gee. It was reported that one trailer maintained a night-lite—the 60 watt type. Remember the old saying "You can take the boy out of the country, but . . . " How true. The "city" wouldn't leave some of these girls!!

As the night wore on, the rain got heavier and the wind got stronger. Some slept, some didn't. Some counted sheep, some sheep blew away. At 4:05 a.m. the electricity blew away. The rest of the morning, as you can imagine, was a cornucopia of activity.

The two secretaries and tour guides lodged in the cabin were kept busy trying not to drown. Rumor has it that they raided the kitchen for pots and pans to catch the stream. Wonder how many holes *are* in that ceiling??

The trailer occupants experienced a case of short-sheeting, a roving Smokey Bear cap, dreams of Indians and other savage things, a sleep talker (who's Rocky??), and a couple who gave a new title to an old song. Barbara Mandrell's "Sleeping Single in a Double Bed" became "Sleeping Double in a Single Bed!" One of the trailers was positioned with a tree at the helm. Now, how much sleep can one get with tree branches scraping a metal roof? And having a very active imagination is no asset in that situation. There were "voices" near the tree and images of roots! One girl just couldn't take the scraping anymore. Wrapped in a blanket, she found a spare, sheetless box-spring, plopped in the middle of the floor, fell on it and hoped for the best. Another occupant felt a breeze all night and thought it was the hurricane's wind coming through the thin wall. She later discovered a hole had been meticulously cut to unveil a pipe right at face level! Bud couldn't explain that one.

Throughout the night, people were awake. Almost everyone knew by 4:30 a.m. that the electricty had gone off at 4:05 a.m. The highlight came around 7:00 when the travel alarms went off. Time to rise and shine! HA!!

Candles were lit and a few flashlights were shining. The wind and rain had stopped and shout of "Glory be, Gloria's gone!" could be heard. With no lights or water, getting dressed was a cinch. No showers, no make-up, no beauty queens?

Everyone stumbled to the cabin to learn the morning's agenda. Plans were: if you liked Corn Flakes, you were in luck. Otherwise, later we'd go to the Waverly Dairy Queen for breakfast. Since no one was going any place soon, some of the ladies stayed outside in the fresh air and watched Bud and Company start the back-up generator. Larry Moody came over to take a measurement of the rain guage. Little did he know that his rainwater would be confiscated to use with Crest! Also, one of the ladies was so desperate to use her Crest she went to the back of the ole' John to confiscate water. Larry started out with a reading of over seven inches.

At last, the Sussex Forestry Center tour was over. Thank-you's and goodbyes were extended and the vans were reloaded. Everyone agreed that the trip to Sussex was truly unforgettable!

The Waverly Dairy Queen and the Best Peanut Shop will probably never forget the morning they were invaded by 14 bedraggled looking DOF people with food on their minds! The lady in the doll-house sized Peanut Shop casually greeted everyone with a smile and an invitation to browse. Browse, nothing, she was looking at real peanut lovers! She peered out the door and saw more and more people coming from the vans and said, "Oh my, let me go get my cash box!" She probably took the rest of the day off!

Another interesting point of the trip was a visit to the Waverly Regional Office. We were greeted by Crockett Morris, Bonnie Braun and Sam Bailey, and given a grand tour of their newly-renovated building. (Looked terrific!) Noting the absence of Gail and Nancy, we were told that poor Gail was up all night comforting her children during the storm. We could all relate and sympathize with her. However, Nancy was another story! She had traveled to *Charlottesville* to avoid the wrath of Gloria!

The trip home was pretty quiet. Fatique has overcome. Or should I say "delirium" had overcome. "Mr. Peanut, don't forget to take your Pennocks" was one of the final comments as we reached Headquarters!

All in all, the trip was educational and very much worthwhile. The amount of work that had been done at Sussex was very impressive, and that's to secretaries who have no experience in land clearing or building. To people with knowledge of what it takes to accomplish so much in so little time, they surely must be in awe of the handul of DOF employees who did just that.

On behalf of the Headquarters and Region 3 secretaries and Fiscal Department, a giant-sized "THANK YOU" was extended to Bud, J. B., Rosa, Vanessa, Dwight, Larry, and all others at Sussex who made our trip so much fun. Of course, Mr. Pennock and Mr. Olinger, the chauffeurs, did a great job too. And, despite the weather reports, "Gloria" just added to the adventure. Maybe we can do it again sometime, but I think it would be safe to say that Gloria *is not invited.*

Rita Moorer
Amy Lawrence
Loma Jean Lambert
Secretaries,
Headquarters

To Collect A Gypsy Moth

After 2 years of typing epistles and reports on the gypsy moth and its devasting effects; I decided I'd like to see for myself just what these little buggers were up to.

I asked Tim Tigner to let me know when he was going to check out one of his spots because I'd like to seem them in action.

On a nice day in late June, Tim approached me and told me the following Monday he'd be going up to the Shenandoah National Park and wanted to know if I'd like to accompany him. Well, petite little Amy Lawrence wanted to see what the critters looked like too, and requested to join us.

On Monday morning we met Tim at the warehouse and began our sojourn. We stopped at one spot that Tim wanted to check up on a little mountain and while he and Amy made their ascent further up the mountain, I took a seat on a park bench. I decided I needed a little rest more than seeing that spot.

When Amyu and Tim returned, we rode a little further checking out the sites, entirely awed by the devastation we were seeing. All this time, Tim is filling us in on their activities and we're getting more and more anxious for a close up.

We finally reached our destination and had a quick bag lunch. Amy and I, excited at the prospect of finally seeing this little enemy causing such a ruckus, tumbled out of the car.

All the way up the small incline we laughed and joked and occasionally stopped and perked an ear to listen to the rainfall. All this time of course, Tim was walking around with a closed expression and a devilish gleam in his eye. And, if any of you, like us, don't know that it wasn't rainfall we were hearing, let someone else tell you why Tim was reacting that way. I'll give you a little hint, it was a beautiful, sunny day.

We walked along at a leisurely pace trying to take in all Tim was telling us about the infamous gypsy moth. Little did we know he was about to pop the big question.

A little further up the hill we picked our way through trees and shrubs and found ouselves in the midst of a gypsy moth commune. There, Tim let us have it! "Ladies", he said, as he handed us our little white containers, "How'd you like to collect some larvae?"

Well, Amy's eyes grew big as saucers as she turned several shades of green, but being the good little trooper she was, she did her duty. Me? Well, growing up in a neighborhood where you either learned to kick and hit a ball as good or better than the next guy, or be left out; and h ad to contend with two brothers who were always putting creepy, crawly things in her room, well I did okay too.

We parted ways, and every once in a while as we moved from tree to tree, we could hear this little voice going uuuuhhhh. UGH! But, she bravely continued her duty. After all, it was all in a day's work.

Finally, Tim decided we'd collected enough of the little critters and we started for home. Amy and I tired, and feeling like something was crawling all over us, couldn't wait to get home to a hot shower.

Our trip was an adventure that, at least I'm glad I didn't miss (not that I'd want to repeat it any time soon), but I bet you won't ever get Amy to go again. All she'll say is "All I could see was those big eyes staring up at me. Uuuuuuuh!"

Sharon Hall
OSS, I & E & Pest
Management,
Headquarters

THE FUTURE

The State Forester has made it plain that we will be involved—aggressively and assertively. I am not going to try to cover all he said, but I refer you to the Fall issue of Virginia Forests.

To use an old expression—we are to lead, follow, or get the H out of the way.

We are be a dynamic forward-looking organization. There is an adage—"if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Wrong! That is conventional thinking, that is not what the State Forester wants.

Green trucks weren't broke—white trucks are better; DF's in Regional offices weren't broke—detached ones are better. Division of Forestry wasn't broke—Department of Forestry is better.

The public is aware of what is going on—they see dirty streams, muddy roads, smoke, aerial spraying, and clear cuts. In many cases, they don't like it.

The bobtail truck is gone, Peterbilts and Kenworths are here. Skid trails will no longer be tolerated through streams. Change is here. We had better be ready.

Decisions on forestry are being made by M.B.A.'s, attorneys, economists, and lawyers. We had better be there.

The 50's saw conservation, the 60's a period of reaction, the 70's awareness, the 80's have been a pivotal decade between the old conservationist and the new activist. The 90's are going to be a period of performance. We will have over six million people who want food and fiber as long as it is grown and harvested where they can't see it.

We will not be passive and custodial. We will be active and dynamic. The Department of Forestry is people, pride, and performance.

1914 1989
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
75 Years of Service

People . . Pride . . Performance

Cal Morris *Wally Custard*

Bessie Donald

Roland Geddes *Red Brooks*

Dallas Wilfong

Buddy Eppard

J. B. Jarratt

Bud Kidwell

Bessie Hurdt

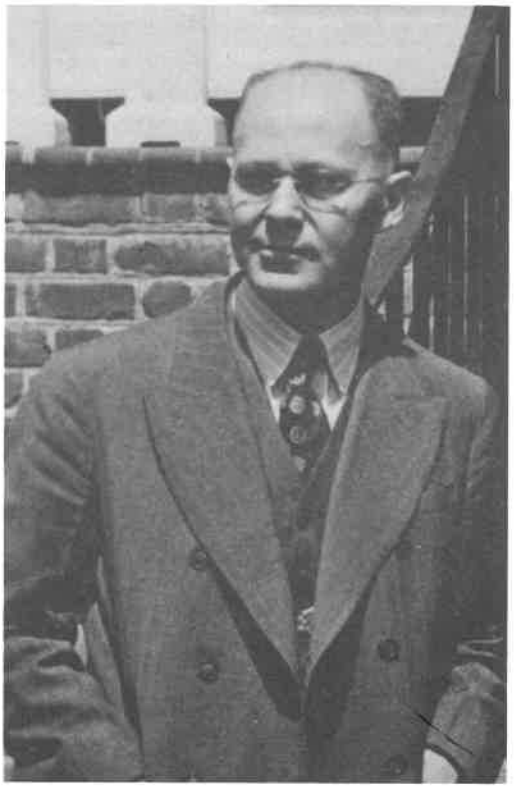
"Ducky" Childress

Floyd Hostetter
Ivan Coffelt
Bud Shelton
Melford Perkins

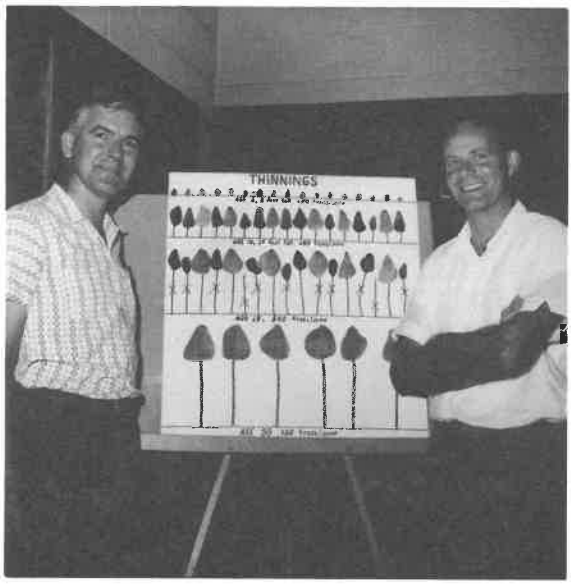
Don Drake

Marjorie Norford
Jeanette Dowell
Margaret West

Hannah, the 1st Tracking Dog



Fred Pederson

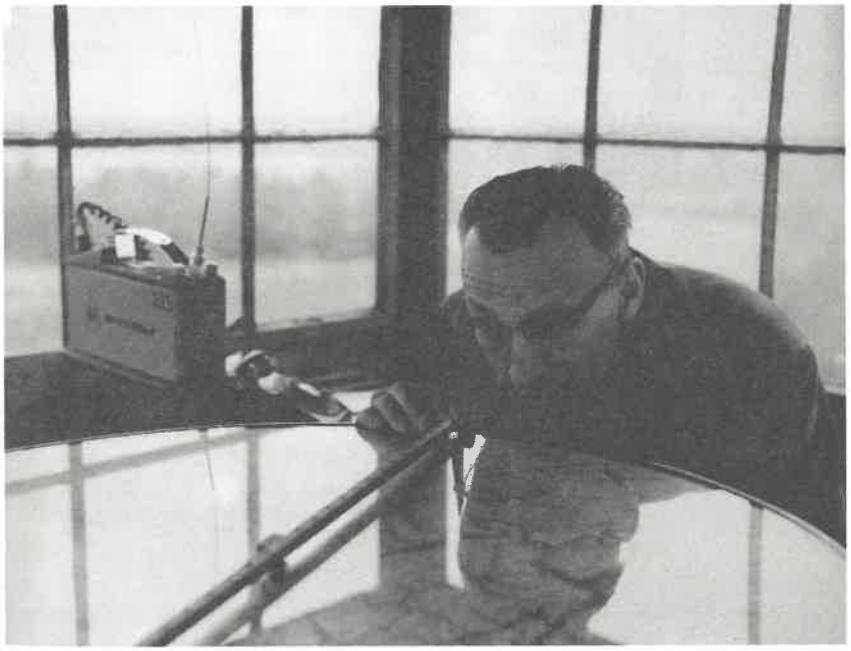


Cal Pennock *Tom Dierauf*

Smokey Bear & Friends

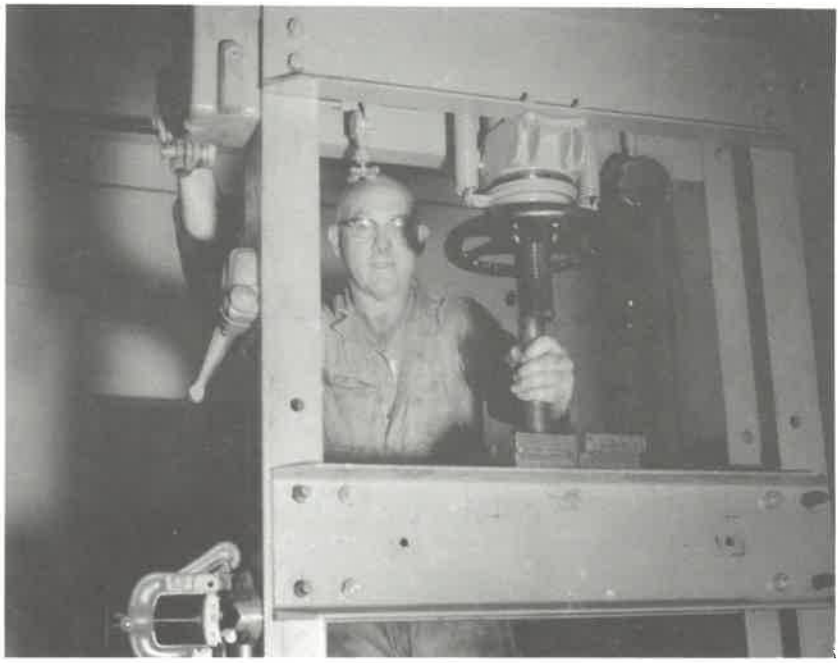
Bert Broyles *Bill Haag*

Dot Fidler



John Rasmussen

Leroy Collins



Oscar Bellomy

Donna Hoy *Anne Irving*

John Graff

Tom Dierauf *Jim Garner*

1st Smokey Bear with George Dean

Charlie Witter *Wally Custard*

Robert Seiler

Camp Holiday Lake

Back Row — Hunter Garth, Joe Kemper, Oscar Bellomy, Randolph Bibb, Bill Sheads, Joe Vaughan, Raymond Johnson, John Jackson
Third Row — George Dean, Scottie Blain, Bill Vernam
Second Row — Bud Shelton, Bill Clark, Maynard Stoddard
First Row — Francis Boggs, Charlie Witter, Ed Furlow, McRae Carpenter, Henry Bashore
Front Row — John Shavis, Mac Moncure, Mac McCarthy

Back Row — Fred Lewis, Bart Bartholomew, Chet Litten, Tom Dierauf, Seth Hobart, Roland Geddes, Ray Marler, Jim Garner, Bill Gurrant, Tom Brooks, Leroy Woodson, Carl Brooks
Front Row — Dick Woodling, Chuck Stanley, John Graff, Henry Bashore, Stan Ryan, Bill King, Bill Pierce

Back Row — Tom Hunter, Bob Holmes, Frank Goin
Third Row — Bill Newman, Dave Smith, Charlie Marshall, Gene Hood, Bill Haag, Don Morton, Homer Smith, Sidney Jones
Second Row — Ed Robertson, Joe Hayes, Chris Dortch, Bert Broyles, Roscoe Ramsey, Melvin Driggs, Jack Dowdy, Don Drake, John Jackson, Bill Ball
First Row — Maynard Stoddard, Bob Brierly, Bill Hubble, Annie Davis, Ethel Cook, Morris Walden, Cliff Franklin, Chuck Stanley

Wally Custard, Edward Morris, Bart Bartholomew, George Dean, Ed Rodger, Maynard Stoddard, Smokey Bear