
The Lure of the Forest

**Oral Histories from the
National Forests in California**

Context and compilation by
Victor Geraci, Ph.D.

July 2005
R5-FR-005
USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

Copyright: When a “source” is indicated beside photographs or graphics in this book, a copyright exists, and therefore, that item may not be used or reproduced in any manner apart from this book unless a separate approval is acquired. Any photographs or graphics that do not show a source are from the USDA Forest Service archives and are part of the public domain.

Cover photo-illustration was created from a Forest Service image of the Sierra Buttes Lookout Station, Tahoe National Forest

First published by the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region on July 1, 2005

ISBN 1-59351-430-1

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Acknowledgements

This Region Five oral history project brought together a complex working group that encompassed the diverse talents of numerous Forest Service professionals, retirees, volunteers, and University of California at Berkeley Regional Oral History Office staff and researchers. The resulting rich product of this history by committee evolved through the hard work and talents of an army of passionate believers in the Forest Service and its role in managing and preserving America's vast forests. First and foremost is a special thank you to Regional Forester Jack Blackwell and the Forest Service Regional Office for its financial and logistical support.

Forest Service staff and volunteers, as if mustering for a fire call, assembled a sizable cohort of both past and present workers that orchestrated and executed the project. They deserve a special thanks. Regional Office Program Leadership came from Linda Lux and Steve Dunsky with help from the Retiree Program Leadership of Bob Cermak and Doug Leisz. Bob Smart and Bob Harris served as the Retiree Program Coordinators and oversaw the sub-area work completed by Janet Buzzini (Northern California), Max Younkin (Southern Sierra/Fresno), Jerry Gause (Southern California), John Fiske (Bay Area), Dick Pfilf (Washington DC), Bob Smart (Central Sierra/ Sacramento), Larry Schmidt (Eastern Sierra), and Al West (Los Padres and Southern California). Interviewers for the project included Bob Cermak, Doug Leisz, John Fiske, Jerry Gause, John Grosvenor, Bob Smart, Bob Harris, Gene Murphy, Nord Whited, Janet Buzzini, Susana Luzier, Brian Payne, Steve Kirby, Del Pengilly, Glenn Gottschall, Max Younkin, Robert Van Aken, Irl Everst, Larry Hornberger, David Schreiner, Fred Kaiser and Bill Pliler, and Steve Fitch. Many thanks to Donna Dell'Ario, Mario Chocooj and Linda Nunes for pulling it all together.

At the University of California Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) director Richard Cándida Smith and Editor Shannon Page helped establish the formal cooperative working agreement. ROHO Editor Gerald Stone carefully read and grammatically corrected final drafts. I would like to give a personal thanks to ROHO Specialist Martin Meeker and Post Doctoral Fellow Eric Vettel for serving as a sounding board for much of the work I completed.

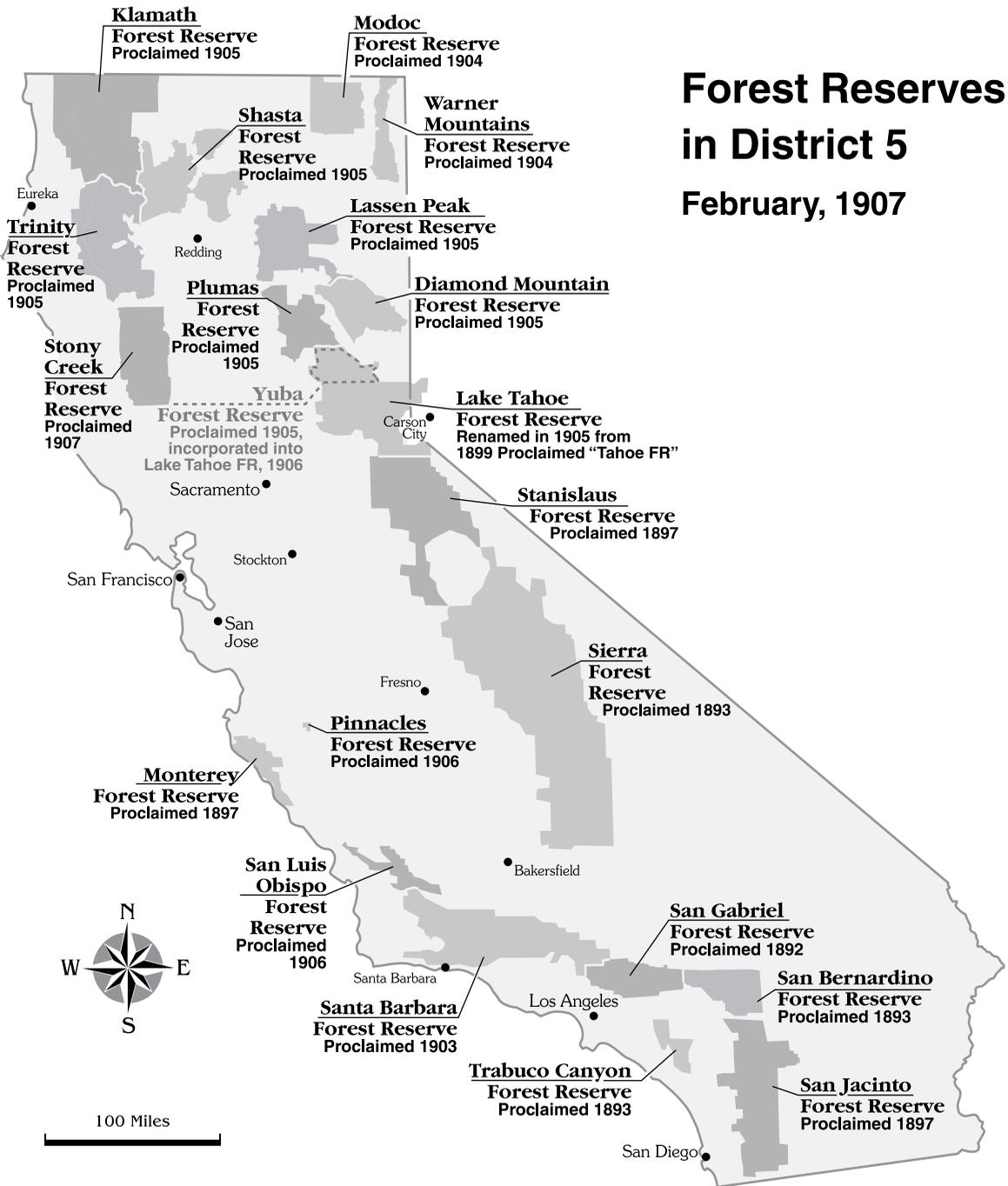
Thank You to All;

Victor W. Geraci, PhD – Project Editor

University of California, Berkeley

Regional Oral History Office

Forest Reserves in District 5 February, 1907



National Forests in Region 5 1955



Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	vii
Into the Woods	1
“Called to Service”	45
Battling “Multi-Headed Dragons”	99
The Forest Community	123
Memorable People and Events	155
Bibliography	179
Biographical Sketches: Who’s Who	183

Introduction

In preparation for the Forest Service's one-hundredth anniversary, Region Five retirees, with financial and logistical support from the Regional Forester, established an oral history committee. Committee members then conducted over fifty oral interviews from selected members of the region's past workforce. In order to publish the interviews, the committee entered into a collaborative agreement with the University of California at Berkeley's

Unknown observer
stops on a CCC-built
truck road to admire the
beauty of California's
national forests.
1935



Regional Oral History Office (ROHO). University employees then selected interview segments and lightly edited them for publication. In the following pages, the stories of these interviewees are synthesized into sections based on common recurring themes that reflect how these past employees remembered their service to the forests. From their stories and established historiographic sources, the following brief history emerged.

As America entered the twentieth century, its Progressive-era presidents, legislators, and a wealthy class - burgeoned by an expanding middle class - reacted to past centuries of blind faith that America's resources were infinite. Lessons learned from the exploitation of Eastern forests created a fear that the nation's resources just might be finite, and many Americans began to perceive that their Western forests needed protection and management. As America leapt onto the world stage, most citizens accepted the view that the nation's forests should be treated as a renewable resource for future generations.

In response, politicians set aside millions of acres of Western forests as a safeguard for the future. Those given the management responsibility quickly realized that the nation did not have the trained

personnel necessary to oversee this vast undertaking. Thus began the era of attracting people to serve the forest and the decades-long process of creating a professional workforce.

In an initial response to the problem, Gifford Pinchot's family, with a maxim of "wise use," funded the creation of a professional school of forestry at Yale University. In a short time, colleges and universities across the nation created forestry programs that struggled with what and how to teach future Forest Service employees. Subsequently, the Forest Service and the forest industry worked in a collaborative manner to assist the forestry schools in teaching students. As a result, the early Service evolved as a mix of professionals (college-educated on European forestry school models) and self-trained technicians. Both groups were generalists and learned how to perform multiple tasks while on the job and in essence created a "bootstrap" operation for the early U.S. forestry profession. Despite the rough beginnings, the ranks of trained foresters grew as private and public sector foresters worked as a team with forestry schools. The struggle to fill the ranks with more professional Forest Service employees accelerated after World War II.

These first forest employees dedicated their lives to the service in a true jack-of-all-trades story. They were generalists in a new decentralized federal bureaucracy and accepted conditions foreign to modern workers. Most learned their multitasked jobs on the ground, faced seasonal layoffs, endured numerous transfers, withstood isolation from people, received substandard housing and low pay, and most importantly, they lived on the forest where they worked. By and large, they grew accustomed to a military style (in the sense of line officers and staff) of operation with promotions from within the ranks that rewarded hard work.

As the Forest Service workforce grew in the middle of the twentieth century, the agency paralleled the social and economic philosophies found in the rest of the nation. America's and the agency's employment and management policies accommodated, to great extent, white males. In the case of the Forest Service, new employees were also chosen by their ability to personify the manly demeanor of rugged individualism, a love of nature, physical strength, and common sense. Trained on the forest, in a trial and error manner, they fought fires and floods, built roads, supervised logging, oversaw grazing permits, regulated mining, and enforced recreational permits, along with numerous other tasks. Most importantly, they viewed

themselves as the front line for the protection and conservation of one of the nation's greatest natural resources. Remarkably, in the process of doing their job, they fostered a sense of a forest community, whereby employees and their families lived on the land they protected. Foresters and their families shared the forest and accepted the hardships of life in lookout towers, camp-style workplaces, on-call hours, make-as-make-do operations, and family compound living.

Over the course of the Forest Service's first century, the agency evolved through the turmoil of World War I, the Great Depression, a Second World War, and a new "American Century" ushered in by the Cold War. The size of the force increased as the nation commandeered its forest resources into the war effort and post-war expansion. Many newly discharged veterans

Soldiers from Camp Beale having breakfast before fighting fire.



with skills learned in the military or forestry degrees funded by the GI Bill of Rights found employment in Forest Service. Despite the hiatus of depression and war, the nation as a whole continued to modernize, and urbanization brought new resource challenges to forestry. Further changes occurred as new immigrants, people of color, women, and college-educated professionals shifted the energy of the entire American workforce. During this time, the Service moved towards a corps of specialized and educated professionals, many of whom grew to expect time off, overtime, housing allotments, travel reimbursements, and, for the most part, lived away from the forest they stewarded.

Over time, new professionals slowly replaced many of the "old time" technicians and helped implement new national resource-planning

programs. As can be expected, this post-World War II transition created some tensions as new specialized employees embraced an evolving philosophy designed to save the natural environment. New national social and political demands nudged the Forest Service professionalization process toward more inclusiveness for women and minorities, competitive wages, and higher standards for work and safety conditions. Added to this was a 1960s and 1970s national paradigm shift that shook the national psyche as a new generation of baby boomers embraced a new form of environmentalism.



Wheeler Springs fire hose work.

Events such as the Agent Orange defoliation of Vietnam’s forests, the Santa Barbara Oil spill, Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* warning about the evils of DDT, President Nixon’s federal environmental plans, and land development frenzies forced this new generation to rethink stewardship of the nation’s forests and natural resources. Distrust of government and its bureaucracies, fears of corporate greed, and suspicion of professionals led and increasing number of Americans to questions both private and public management decisions and resulting environmental effects on range and forest land.

In the following interview excerpts, Region Five Forest Service veterans reflect on these changes and the ensuing struggles. In the first part, “Into the Woods,” we listen to stories that detail why both men and women joined the Forest Service and what motivated young people to dedicate their lives to stewardship of our forest resources. Part two, “Called to Service,” lays out how these Forest Service veterans recall multitasking, job mobility, promotion, and the transition from jack-of-all-trades to a more specialized profession. In part three, “Battling ‘Multi-Headed Dragons,’” participants speak about their experiences and philosophy of protection and conservation of our forest resources from fire. Their story continues in part four, “The Forest Community: Everyday Life In the Service,” as “old-timers” describe their social history and their sense of the loss of a forest community. In part five, “Memorable Events and People - Remembering the Good Times,” the narrative briefly turns to the heartwarming stories that naturally radiate from oral histories.

Into the Woods

While most of the men and women interviewed came to the Forest Service out of their love of the outdoors, it is interesting to listen to the nuanced stories (arranged here by first year of permanent Forest Service employment) of their sometimes-circuitous journeys to forest work. In the past, many came because they needed a job in hard times, or had friends or family in the service. Most had close ties to rural lifestyles and the outdoors. In recent times, there seems to have been a shift to a conscious selection of the Service's professional occupations. Bridging past and present is a love of nature that emanated from workers' rural upbringing or family ties to the service. Interestingly enough, the greatest promoter of forestry employment seems to be previous service in programs like the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) or service in the military.

Lee Berriman

Interview by
John Fiske,
June 3, 2004
(1933)

I was born in Grass Valley in 1907. The rest of my life I've spent in various parts of the state, all the way from Mt. Shasta to the Angeles. My father started working for the Forest Service when I was about two years old. He worked a little bit on the Tahoe Forest; then I know we spent two seasons, summer seasons, in the Lake Valley area at Lake Tahoe. He was District Ranger of both the Pacific District of the Eldorado and the Georgetown District of the Eldorado.

I was going to major in electrical engineering, but I had a good friend by the name of Bill Fair, and he talked me into majoring in forestry. I was sort of inclined that way, so it didn't take too much talking. Everybody's ambition or their aim when they went to Berkeley in forestry was to pass the JF, or the Junior Forester Examination, because in those days they didn't take anybody in for a career job until he passed the Junior Forester Examination.

Harry Grace

Interview by
Gene Murphy,
April 29, 2004
(1934)

I was born on December 4, 1913, in South Dakota, about twenty miles north and east of Mitchell, South Dakota. We moved to Pasadena in 1924, and I went through the city school system there and graduated from high school. I then went into Pasadena Junior College, where they had one of only two forestry classes in the United States. I had become interested in forestry long before that, as I hiked all over the Angeles Forest. I could probably say that I covered more of the Angeles Forest than 90 percent of the forest officers who worked there. I got interested in forestry, and the professor made me his assistant, for which I received twenty-five cents an hour from the department of science. Two bits an hour made quite a difference in those days. That was in 1932.

After I graduated from junior college I had several friends in the Forest

Service. Ira Roberts was the fire dispatcher on the Angeles, and his brother was his assistant. Through them I got a temporary job, which doesn't show up in any records, because I was paid out of Los Angeles County money. I think the Angeles was one of the few that had funds from the Board of Supervisors, that they used for miscellaneous employment and anything that the Forest Service couldn't afford to pay for, as we were destitute in those days. I worked two months as a relief lookout, until the money ran out. I would go around, to the around fifteen lookouts on the forest, and relieve the lookouts for a day. I got there by noon; then he left and was gone the following day, and the third day he came back at noon, and I went on to the next guy.

In 1934, I went back to junior college and worked again for the forestry department, and at the end of the school year, Virgil DeLapp called me and said he wanted me to take the guard exam. Well, the guard exam in those days was really something. It was during the Depression, and the Angeles estimated they had 10,000 applicants for one guard job on the forest. So I said sure, I was more than willing. This exam was rather interesting. First of all, they had 10,000 applicants, and they weeded them out by where they lived and what their backgrounds were. It was everything under the sun, because everybody in those days was going around trying to find a job, and they went to all the government agencies and made application. Then they gave the written examination to 200 of us. At the end of the written exam they gave an oral exam, in which we had: "Here's a bunch of fire tools; here's a fire line; what would you do with it? Which tools would you select? Select two tools." I selected a shovel and an ax and went at it. Then they had a sand table, which had a fire break and a fire positioned on it, and asked where I would build the line. When that ended, about two weeks later, I got an announcement that I had passed first in my group. I hoped that I would get a patrol job, because that was the guard's delight. But another fellow and I were selected for the one and only patrol job that was open, and the other fellow won. He was about six-foot-two, and they wanted a guy to act as sort of a law enforcement officer at the dance at Wrightwood, California. Wrightwood was on the edge of the Angeles. When I found out what it was all about, I was real happy, because I knew this fellow could do a better job of tossing guys out of a dance than I ever could. I weighed 135 pounds, and he must have weighed 200.

There were no other jobs open, but I worked for the Burbank Military Academy. My main job was herding a bunch of kids on hikes. I did that for a month, and the money ran out on that job, so an old friend of mine was working over in Bakersfield as a laborer in a dairy, and he said, "We got a job over here, if you want one. It's a dollar a day and all your meals, and you can sleep with me out in the pump house." I said, sure. A buck a day was really worth it in those days. So, I went to Bakersfield. I got up at three-thirty in the morning, walked out about half a mile to pick up sixty cows. We had 120 that were being milked, and it was a certified dairy. I talked to these cows and gathered them all up, and ran them back to the barn and hooked them up in their stanchions, and then I washed them off. Then the milkers came in and went to work. Whenever one of these cows would decide that she had to have a bowel movement, why, I was hollered for. You can understand what my name was. I ran in with a shovel, and cleaned up, and washed the cow down again. That went on for a month, every day, but I got awful sick of it after about a month. So one day I said to the boss, "I'm quitting." "Well, what are you going to do?" I said, "I got a job with the Forest Service." I lied to him. I didn't know what else to do. He said, "Oh, well, good." So I got in my car and took off to my mother's place in Pasadena, and she said, "Gosh, I'm very glad to see you. A Mr. DeLapp wants to talk to you on the telephone." So it wasn't a lie! I called Virgil DeLapp. It was ten o'clock, and he wasn't in bed yet. He said, "Yeah, I want you to go to work tomorrow morning. Can you go? They have a lookout over on the Saugus Ranger District that we just built, and we want you to take the job." So I said yes. I told my mother, and I gathered up all my stuff, some cooking utensils along with it, and at about six o'clock in the morning, I took off. I got over around San Fernando, and here's this guy on a motorcycle with a siren. He said, "Where are you going, to a fire?" I said, "No, I just got a job with the Forest Service, and I'm in a hurry to get there." "Well," he said, "it's gonna cost you ten bucks." He says, "You were going over the speed limit."

Richard Droege

Interview by
Brian Payne
July 10, 2004
(1936)

I was born in Quincy, California, in 1914, which makes me ninety years old. I went to Sacramento Junior College for two years and attempted to be an electrical engineer. I had a heck of a time with calculus. Then I worked one summer in the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] Camp, and then I went back to a job with a Forest Service crew doing a thinning operation on the Plumas. The fellows on that thing talked me into going



Monument at
"Perspiration Point,"
Acton, Angeles NF.
Many employees
learned about Forest
Service work through
the Civilian Conversation
Corps (CCC)

into forestry. So I went down to forestry school at the University of California in Berkeley, and graduated in 1936.

I was born right here in Georgetown, California, eighty-five years ago, on January 20, 1919. We lived about three blocks from where I live right now. I was raised here in Georgetown until I was in the first or second grade, when my oldest brother became eligible to go to high school. There was no high school here in Georgetown, and the family was faced with getting him a place to live in Placerville. They had the only high school in the county at that time, and the family moved over there, because we had four more boys coming along that would have to go through high school. My Dad was ill a good part of the time, and my mother had to support the family. She opened a restaurant in Placerville, an all-night restaurant, and I worked there, as well as the rest of my brothers, during the summertime. I was a twelve-hour fry cook at night. Then my mother also took a job feeding the road construction crew up at Lake Tahoe, on the Nevada side, but he went broke, and in the process so did my mother, and she lost her restaurant. It was between my freshman and sophomore year in high school, and my dad had died very shortly before that, so we had to move back to Georgetown.

The house we owned there was rented at that time, so we lived up above town, about two or three miles just below the ranger station, for about a year, before our house became vacant and we could move into our regular house in Georgetown. I was just getting ready to finish high school, and the Beebe mine had an opening on the rock crusher. I ran that crusher for all the month of June. On the fourth of July, the big electric motor that ran the crusher broke down and had to be entirely

Bob Flynn

Interview by
Gene Murphy,
May 10, 2004
(1938)

rewound, which was going to take a couple of weeks. Well, I had some days off, and I went over to Pacific House to visit the Morrises, who used to be my neighbors in Placerville. I came back home, and that night, in 1936, I got a call from Milt Morris, the District Ranger, and he asked me if I wanted to go to work for him on the trails crew. I said, sure, and I let the superintendent of the mine know that I wasn't going to come back to him, and went to work the next morning over at Pacific Ranger Station. Morris loaded me in the car with my stuff, and we went way up on the Iron Mountain Road; it used to be Snider's Cow Camp.

The next year I went back again, and worked on a trail crew. We worked a lot there on trails, and that's where we finished the year, and I was off work again. I couldn't afford to go to school, so I got a job working in the mine again back here in Georgetown. That job paid the same as the Forest Service job, four dollars a day. The next year, in early spring, I had quit my job at the mine and was waiting for the Forest Service to open up. The ranger there, Ranger Berriman, came out and asked me if I'd take over Bald Mountain Lookout. His regular lookout, Orrie Murduck, was working out on a trail somewhere prior to the season with two other guys. Spike Slattery was assistant ranger, and Spike took me up. Anyway, in the meantime, the federal government had instituted a draft, drafting people for the military. The Forest Service let them know that nobody would be unavailable for the draft. I got the call for the draft in August, the first part of August in 1941, and they got me a deferment until the end of the fire season.

We had the option, at that time, of staying in the Army as foot soldiers, or we could join the Army Air Corps. I opted to join the Army Air Corps.

When I got home I went up to Oregon State, because I wanted to finish my Forestry education with the GI Bill. I graduated from there in 1948, with a Bachelors of Science in Forestry, and I came back to the Forest Service. During the summertime, while I was going to college, I worked as a fire foreman up at Lake Tahoe. When I graduated from college the Forest Service sent me down to the Los Padres Forest as a fire control assistant.

Spike Slattery

Interview by
Gerald Gause,
June 8, 2004
(1940s)

I was born in San Francisco. My dad was a newspaper writer and a sports writer. Later we moved to Burlingame, and I enjoyed life there. Eventually we moved back to San Francisco, and I went to high school at Sacred Heart. Then I got interested in forestry through my cousin, Jack, and eventually ended up in UC Berkeley studying forestry. After I graduated, I went to work for the Biological Survey and got involved in the

Midwest, buying land for duck refuges. Eventually I transferred back to San Francisco, to the Regional Office, and got involved with the Forest Service.

I was born in Tucumcari, New Mexico, in November of 1917, which makes me eighty-six years old. I moved to California when my father was working for the Rock Island railroad in Tucumcari. I went to high school in Tulare and Riverside, and graduated in 1936. At the time I was in high school, the only thing I was really interested in was learning to fly. In that day and age, 1935 and 1936, the only way to be able to afford to learn to fly would be to go into the military. So I applied for West Point, and they sent me an example of the questions that I would be required to answer. I never was any good at math, so I decided I'd be a forester instead and forget the flying business. My father told me that was nothing but a taxi-type job, anyway. After I graduated from high school, I went to junior college in Riverside, 1936 and 1937. It was during the Depression, and I got a job at what is now UC Riverside at the Experiment Station. I raised bugs for the entomologists there so they could practice on oranges, trying to find a way to kill bugs on oranges. I graduated from Riverside Junior College and while I was there I met a professor that had worked at the University of Idaho. I had planned to go Oregon State, but he told me that Idaho was a better school. I had no intentions of going to Berkeley. I was a small-town kid, and Berkeley scared me to death. So I decided to go to the University of Idaho. I went there for three years, graduated in 1940. During one of the summers between 1937 and 1940, the university got me a job as a lookout fireman on the Lolo forest in Montana. That was my first contact with the Forest Service.

I was born at a ranch house in southern San Benito County, California, on April 9, 1915. That makes me eighty-eight years old. I was born at the Rudolph Ranch, but I always called King City my hometown. My dad was a son of a Danish emigrant to Australia; he was born near Melbourne. He and his cousin worked their way around the world on a passenger liner. He had two uncles in Watsonville, who had emigrated from Denmark, so he took a train down to Watsonville and found his uncles and they put him to work. The interesting part of it was, he made a trip to King City to see some relatives, which were close by, and the Rudolphs were one of them. He and my mother hit it off, so they got married.

My three older brothers and older sister were born in Watsonville, and in the interval, about 1910, they moved to King City, and that's when

Jim James

Interview by
Gerald Gause,
February 5, 2004
(1940)

Andrew R. Schmidt

Interview by
Nordstrom ("Nord")
Whited,
December 18, 2003,
and January 21, 2004
(1941)

the latter three were born. I spent my first twenty years out on the ranch there, going to school and high school.

My first introduction of anything that closely related to my career was one fall, working for the state Division of Forestry on a fire crew at the Pinnacles National Monument. I guess the first inklings of forestry came along about that time. I kind of enjoyed what the Park Service was doing

Eldorado NF CCC boys
on way to Muir Woods.
1935
The Great Depression
era Public Works
programs helped lure
many young men into
the Forest Service.



there at the Pinnacles National Monument. About that time, the Three Cs [CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps] program came along, and they put a camp there at Pinnacles. I joined up as a local experienced man. My next elder brother had gone to Visalia Junior College one year, so we both went over to Visalia JC. We lived with a family in Tulare. It so happened that the family had a daughter going to Cal [University of California at Berkeley], and her boyfriend was Norm Dole. He came down on their Christmas vacation, and that was my first introduction to anybody in the Forest Service. He was going to forestry school at Cal. I finished the year at Visalia JC, and as an English project I had to do a thesis on something, so I chose the shelterbelt program. The combination of doing that thesis and meeting Norm Dole lit a spark, and I wanted to be a forester. Well, after completing that year at Visalia Junior College, I applied for entrance to the University of California, Berkeley.

Some time during that summer I was accepted at UC, and I started my forestry education. I guess the course I enjoyed most at the University was a course in forest influences, which was a forerunner of forest hydrology, or watershed management. The second summer, I had a chance to join the three Cs and work with the experiment station up at McCloud, Mount Shasta. The third summer was taken up by going to the forestry field camp

at Meadow Valley on the Plumas. I graduated in 1938 with a bachelor's degree in forestry. Well, there was a break, because there were only part-time jobs, so I went back to school for a semester at Cal and took graduate courses. I spent the summer of 1938 with Oscar Evans's crews, and spent most of the time in 1939 on the Plumas. In 1940 I got a job scaling timber on the Shasta. I took the Junior Forester's exam both in 1938 and 1939, but at that time they weren't doing much hiring, so I spent the whole summer of 1940 scaling timber and doing odd jobs with Vance Brown in timber management on the Shasta. That was still a temporary job, and that spring I got a notice that I was accepted for my Junior Forester appointment. That happened in April 1941, on the Trinity National Forest in Weaverville.

My father was from England, and came across on the Lusitania before it sank. He came over in 1915 and married my mother and started a cannery in San Jose called the Barron Gray Packing Company, which is a fruit packing company. In later years it sold to Dole Hawaiian Pineapple Company, and is no longer in existence. I was born in San Jose, and attended the San Jose State Teachers College, but I didn't finish at San Jose State, and went to Fresno State, College of the Pacific, and the University of California. I attended quite a few different schools, so I'm an educated moron. My degree is actually a certificate of completion in public administration. I did have quite a bit of background in forestry and anything that ended in "ology," zoology, mineralogy, geology. I loved any of the "ologies." I started in the Forest Service in June of 1944, during World War II, and I was stationed at a place called the Goosenest Ranger District on the old Shasta Forest.

Ilived in North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Louisiana with my parents until my father died when I was 12. He died in Vidalia, Louisiana. My mother and I moved back to Memphis until my senior year in high school, when I moved back to Louisiana. I lived with friends until I graduated from high school, and then went two years to college in Baton Rouge. I came to the Forest Service in 1942, because I was working in Louisiana and I saw an ad in the school paper that they wanted summer employees in the Forest Service. I thought that sounded like a nice venture. So I hitchhiked to California and wound up in Mount Shasta. I was supposed to report to the Forest Supervisor, but about

Bruce Barron

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
July 1, 2004
(1942)

Bob Gray

Interviewed by
Susana Luzier,
August 5, 2004
(1942)

the time I was going in the door, a man came out the front door and said, "Where are you going, young man?" I said, "I'm here to report to Mr. Davis about a job." His question: "Well, can you play softball?" I said, "Yes." "Can you pitch?" I said, "A little bit." "You're supposed to come with me." So I went to the McCloud district of the Shasta National Forest. I worked one season as a lookout, and then in 1945 I became a full-time employee with the Forest Service in McCloud, as fire crew foreman and district dispatcher.

Lorraine Macebo

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 19, 2004
(1946)

I was born in Salinas; my father was in the ranching business. I was one of seven girls. At the age of eight we moved to San Luis Obispo, and I went to school there. After graduating from the community college, I went to work at a bank for a couple of years. This was like, 1941 to 1943. During that time I had made up my mind, when I was twenty-one, I would enlist in the Women's Army Corps, which I did, and was stationed in the San Francisco Bay Area.

After discharge, I had made up my mind that I did not want to do banking; it was boring to me. So I went to work at the State Division of Highways, mostly because the pay was very good at that time, for a girl. Again, I had made up my mind I would not stay in a job that I was not happy with. I didn't want just the pay; I just wanted satisfaction in the work. So after six months with the Division of Highways – they had a probation time – I decided I was not going to pursue that. I went back to the State Employment Office. They had this temporary job with the Forest Service. I said, "I didn't know there was a forest here." The person at the employment office said, "Well, I don't either, but maybe they're studying, and maybe they'll make us one." So I decided I would try that. I was interviewed by the ranger, and accepted. This was a summer job during the fire season. At that time they had very little money other than fire money. We had no timber, and recreation was a very low scale in financing at that time. This was in 1946. It was the San Luis Ranger District, and the ranger was Henry Branaugh. At that time I was hired as the clerk dispatcher with a clerk-steno rating with the US Civil Service.

Hurston Buck

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
September 25, 2004
(1947)

I was born in Eureka, California, in 1923. We had a ranch in southern Humboldt out of Fruitland. I spent most of my young life there. Then the Klamath weed [a noxious weed that makes cattle sick] proceeded to take the ranch, so Dad sold the ranch and went to work building the jetty in Eureka. Dad was an engineer. Later he applied with the Forest Service, and we moved to Weaverville. He ran . . . CCC camps on the Shasta-Trinity. My

first fire with him was the Red Cap burn. I rode along with him and we went out there. Then the next year – my Dad believed that you ought to work – he took me to fire camps with him. I worked in the kitchen – no pay, just to be there. The next year the Forest Supervisor, Gerden Ellis, saw that I was in camp. I was doing my thing, whatever it was. Gerden Ellis asked Dad, “What’s that kid working on?” He says, “Don’t worry about that kid. He’s here learning how to work.” He says, “Well, I’ve watched him, and if he’s going to work like that here, I want him on the payroll at twenty-five cents an hour.” I thought that I had just died and gone to heaven. Then I went to fires, all of them in the Trinity, in the summertime, because Dad was a service chief.

In December of 1941, I went into the service, and as my father would say, “If you’re going to go in the Navy, then you sign in the regular Navy. You don’t go in the reserve, because you’re going to make a career out of it.” So I signed in USN and went in the Navy and went through boot camp, packed parachutes at Oakland Air Force Base at the airport there in Oakland. Then I caught a ship, and went overseas making submarine nets. I figured pulling that cable and stuff was not made for this little man, so I went in the cook crew and ended up cooking. Then I signed on to a merchant ship leaving from New Zealand, and we hauled bombs, fuel and stuff from New Caledonia and the Hebrides into Guadalcanal. I got injured in Canal and then went to New Zealand and then to the San Diego Naval Hospital.

I had a friend that had a cattle ranch up north, and I went up with him for a while, and it was just too tough, and I had a relapse. I ended up in the Army Hospital in San Francisco. Then I started at the University of California, and I thought that wasn’t paying out, because it was just too confining. I thought, well, where can I get an education fast, and that was at San Francisco College of Mortuary Science. Nine-month course and you were an undertaker. So I enrolled there, and did that, and I’d say about halfway through I broke down. My mother had to come and get me and I went into the Naval Hospital, the Oakland Naval Hospital. After that I floated around for a little bit, and then I decided to go north. Heights were not a problem for me, and I was going to go up and top trees with Weyerhaeuser. I got up to northern California with my Dad, because he was in Yreka working on a road job there, and he convinced me that Weyerhaeuser wasn’t hiring in the winter, and one thing and another, but if I’d stick around he’d put me to work running

a jackhammer, drilling holes and loading dynamite. So I thought, that was better than nothing. I was out, free. Then spring came, and they were looking for a foreman in an inmate planting camp. I applied, and I got it.

Scollay Parker

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 19, 2004
(1947)

My father was a graduate of UC Berkeley, with a master's degree in entomology. Among other things, he was the first farm adviser for Ventura County, and then went from there to Riverside County. Then he left that and managed a date ranch in Indio, and then he built his own date ranch, in 1920. My parents had had enough of the desert, so they moved up here [Placerville area] and bought the ranch. That was in the fall of 1920. I was born in 1922, and worked on the ranch while I was growing up, so I was sort of next to the Forest Service in a way, the national forest, all that time. After I graduated from high school, in 1940, I enrolled at Oregon State, and I attended there until March of 1943. In September of 1942 I received

Kettle Rock Lookout,
Plumas National Forest



my draft notice. Ed Smith, the Forest Supervisor of the Eldorado, suggested that I continue my schooling and enlist in the Reserve Corps at Oregon State.

We were allowed to complete two more quarters of college, and in March of 1943 they called in the Enlisted Reserve Corps and I went to the mountain troops at Camp Hale, Colorado. After the war I went back to Oregon State and finished, and I ended up working as a scaler on the

Modoc. In the spring of 1948, I got my professional appointment. I was there at Adin for – oh, until the spring of 1949, and then I was assigned as a project sales officer on the Stanislaus, at Sonora.

Ed Grosch

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
March 9, 2004
(1949)

Igrew up in the Bay Area. My dad moved to San Francisco as a printer, and I went to high school in San Francisco, and worked as an errand boy and sales clerk in photo stores. Then I went to work for the California Department of Forestry in Sonoma County. I worked that season and I thought, well, I'd try and see if I was smart enough to go to school, so I tried the school. Then I went up to Fortuna, worked a season up there for the CDF. I tried some more schooling and found out how dumb I was, so I moved, and I worked on the ranches in Sonoma County, mostly poultry ranches, for the year that would have been 1948. But in the fall of 1948,

there was nothing around there, so I went to the middle fork of the Eel River, to a ranch called the Ham's Pack Station. The old man had hurt himself badly, and his wife and him were running a cow and hog ranch. I got a job barndogging for them, and I spent the winter there. In the meantime – I didn't know it – Mr. Ham went over and saw the District Ranger, and asked him if there was any work that I could get that coming summer. So the District Ranger, Harold B. Miller, or Dusty Miller, he called me over and asked me if I'd take an isolated-position job, and I said yes. In 1949, in the spring, he got me on as an SP-4 firefighter lookout. The first three weeks I worked on a trail crew, as we opened the trail all the way to Water Spout and down to the Flying A Ranch on the Mad River.

I was born in 1927, in a tiny place, Bennett, Missouri that only had a post office and a general store, and was inside of what was then the Clark National Forest. So I was actually born inside a national forest. I was the first son, and the second in a family of five. There were three girls and two boys. My parents were long-time residents of that part of Missouri; in fact, my grandfather was an early member of the state legislature. I went to school locally, in a one-room school for my first eight years, and then my father moved to Jefferson City for a job. I went to high school there, outside of Jefferson City, and then went into the Navy as a 17-year-old. That was helpful in two ways. One, it gave me two quarters of college, one at Northwest Missouri State University at the time; it's now Northwest Missouri University. It also gave me the GI Bill, which was helpful for me to complete my education. Then I went to the University of Missouri, starting in 1946, and graduated in 1949.

My sister married an Army soldier, who was stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and they moved to California. I had not seen her for several years, so when I graduated from college, she said, "Why don't you come to California?" I had a job in Missouri, but I decided I'd go out to California and visit her, and that's what finally led me to take a job with the Forest Service in Northern California. I wanted to stay in California for a while. I liked it, and I actually applied for one of the civil service tests, and as a result of that got a series of offers. Only one was in California, and it was with the Forest Service on the Plumas Forest. I had never been to the Plumas Forest. I had no idea of what it was like. I took a Greyhound bus up there, and we went up on the east side of

Max Peterson

Interviewed by
Brian Payne,
July 2, 2004
(1949)

the Sierras. You know, it was all sagebrush and some of the most forlorn looking country that I'd ever seen, and I thought, what in the world am I getting into? At that time, you realize, a lot of veterans had been in service and now were graduating, and so the job market was pretty plugged. In fact, in California, for example, if you wanted a state job, you had to have been a resident of the state for so many years. Only the federal government didn't have residency requirements and I had a five-point veteran's preference. I just know I got a wire or a letter, one of the two, offering me a job, which I responded to. I reported on August 8, 1949.

Douglas "Doug" Leisz

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
September 10,
September 30, and
October 12, 2004
(1950)

Doug Leisz, Forest
Supervisor, Eldorado NF.
1965

My grandfather on my dad's side had ranches in different places in California, the Trinity Alps area, and San Leandro. At that time, San Leandro was an agricultural center, not a booming metropolis the way it is today. We'd periodically get to those ranches, and that was great fun because there were lots of horses there. My grandfather had come to California in the 1870s, from Ohio, and he farmed in Tulare County. He started out in farming, and then moved to the Bay Area and developed a large market there. He had the first mechanical refrigeration at any market in the Oakland area. I



was born in Oakland, California, in 1926, and grew up in the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Area. During my growing-up years my family loved to go to the forest for vacations. We didn't have an easy time growing up, but we never knew that we were going through the severity of the Depression years except that we saw people that came to the house begging for food. Although my folks did everything they could

to help those people along, my dad's business failed, and we were really squeezed. But I never felt underprivileged at all.

We were expected to go find jobs early. At age thirteen I was working summers in the Stokely-Van Camp cannery, and I joined the union. We grew up enjoying work, because that was part of life. I was a strong participant in practically all sports: baseball, football, basketball, track, and went to Oakland High School and left Oakland High a half year early, when I was a senior. World War II was going on, and one day my math

teacher told me that I was wasting time by staying in high school, that I should immediately go on to college. So I went home and told my mom that I had been kicked out of high school, and I should go out and register at UC Berkeley. So I started UC Berkeley rather than finish my senior year in high school. I started in engineering there, and got one semester in Cal, and by then the war was going on in full force. In 1944, I volunteered and joined the Merchant Marine Cadet Corps, which would lead to an officer's qualifications in the Merchant Marine and the Navy. I was a real youngster when I went into the service. In the Merchant Marine Cadet Corps you went to an initial school for about six months, and then you immediately went on board a ship as a cadet. You were supposed to stay on the ship for about six months and when you finished your ship duty, then you went back to the academy at Long Island and got your commission both as third officer and as an ensign in the Naval Reserve. I got on board the troop ship, and because of things that happened during the war, the captain of the ship asked me to stay on the ship for over a year. Later on, when the third officer was court-martialed in Australia because of some indiscretion on his part, the captain asked me to take over as third officer. That was a fantastic experience because at that age, really, you don't hesitate to tackle anything. I had time on that ship to really think about things, as well as watch for submarines and mines, and I decided I really wanted to get into forestry when I got back after the war, so that thinking time probably led me into a change in career. I worked at the end of the war for the Merchant Marine.

My first brush with the Forest Service came in 1948, when I worked a summer for the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine. This was a survey job, and we worked in Northern California and Oregon, and developed a ten-point penalty rating system for insect potential mortality for trees. The job was to go out and survey trees and determine which insects were active and if a tree was dying. We were using aerial photos, which my college had given me some prep for, and you went into the field. One time I spent seven to ten days in the field and the only person I saw for that entire period of time was a grazing permittee. Never thought much about it until about twenty years later, and I thought, my God, if I'd had an accident in there, how would they have ever found me? Probably it would have taken the buzzards to help do it, because there weren't radios. We didn't have radios then, and you simply

said, “I’ll be in the Warner Mountains.” Well, that’s a big area. But anyway, everything worked out well, and that really gave me an introduction to the Forest Service, because I saw and got to know people on the Modoc, on the Fremont Forest in Oregon, and the Mendocino Forest. It really was a tremendous education.

We worked extraordinarily long days. At that time, like in my early Forest Service career, there was no consideration of overtime. You put in daylight to dark hours, ten or twelve hours; you did that because there was a job to do. Then, when I graduated from Cal in 1950, jobs were a little tough to find in the Forest Service; they were doing very few professional hires. I passed the exam all right, and I took an appointment as a foreman at the Mount Shasta Nursery, which was east of McCloud.

Bob Gustafson

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
August 23, 2004
(1951)

I was born and raised in Oakland, California, and lived there most of my life. I attended grammar school, junior high, and high school in Oakland. I did some work at San Jose State, and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley. When I was in high school I tried to enlist in several reserves in the Navy, and I couldn’t make it because of my eyesight. I thought that I would be drafted, and that didn’t work either. I was 4-F because of my eyesight. Yet right after the war ended, I was drafted and was sent to the Camp Beale induction center, and from there moved a whole couple of blocks to the separation center, where I worked for about fourteen months in the financial department, processing people that were being separated. I didn’t even go through basic training.

In 1942 I worked in a drugstore, which doesn’t help the job much, and in 1943 I tried to do my part for the war effort and worked in the shipyards in Oakland. Then in 1944 I decided I’d better get with it and go into forestry. So I went to the regional office to apply for a job. The regional office was on Market street at that time, and they didn’t have much. They gave me an application, and I had to go and get a release from the shipyard. They told me I could get a job as an eradicator. So at the employment office I got my release, and the guy asked me where I was going. I said, “I’m going to work for the Forest Service.” He said, “Why go all the way back to San Francisco? They’re located right here in Oakland.” Well, it wasn’t the Forest Service that was located in Oakland. It was the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, which was the overseer of the blister rust control project. So I went there, and I’m glad I did. I worked there right away as a checker for that summer, and then in

1945 I went back as a senior checker and had a small crew of checkers. Then in 1947 I was back at school again, and went to work in blister rust control as a checker foreman during summers.

In 1949 I decided I should try the Forest Service and see what they would offer and what experience I could get there. A friend of mine had been working, and thought that he could introduce me around. So during spring vacation we drove up there, and that's where I met my future brother-in-law, Ron – we didn't know we were going to be brothers-in-law at that point. I got a job there as summer recruitment crew foreman. In 1949 I was supposed to graduate from Cal, but I was missing one course, so I had to stay over and go back after the summer of 1949. I graduated in the class of February of 1950.

Forestry jobs for beginning foresters weren't available until later in the summer, so I went back to the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, and they did take me on. I started in the spring of 1950 and worked full-time through the winter with them in Berkeley, and started out in the field again in the spring of 1951. In the meantime I had taken the exam of Junior Forestry, and I was given an opportunity to go to the Eldorado. I was working on the Lassen at the time. I had a good position there with the Bureau, but it wasn't full-time. In other words, I was told that when funds ran out I would be one of the first to go. I called the regional office to find out what-all I would be doing, and of course I got the routine that as a Junior Forester I could be doing almost anything – scaling timber, marking timber, recreation, whatever was needed. That didn't appeal to me at the time, because I was enjoying what I was doing. So I called the boss, Benedict, who was the head of the California regions of Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, and he says, "Oh, yeah, Bob, we know all about that. You're going to the Eldorado and you're going to replace a guy there who has been working on blister rust, and you're going to do the delineation job that he has been doing." I did join the Forest Service as a JF in May of 1951.

I was born in Lackawanna, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, on August 11, 1924. I was the fourth of four sons, and I came before my sister, so we had five in the family. My mother died when I was about ten, and my father died when I was a senior in high school. My grandmother had come up to take care of the house after my mother died, and she wanted to go home. So after my father died, and I graduated from high

**Joseph B. "Joe"
Church**

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
January 21, 2004
(1951)

school and registered for the draft, we moved to Columbia. I started at the University of Missouri in September 1942, in chemical engineering, because that's what my father was, and I thought I'd follow that. It was a serious mistake. That was way beyond me. I was failing chemistry and mathematics, and that doesn't work. But I was saved by the draft. I got inducted into the service in April of 1943 and returned to Buffalo, because that's where the draft board was. I went into the Navy at the Sampson Naval Training Station in central New York, and then I went to Memphis, Tennessee, where I got involved in aviation ordnance training. While there, I also wound up volunteering, or was volunteered, as an air crewman. From there I went to Hollywood, Florida, for gunnery training, and then Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for introduction to airplane training. The first airplane I flew in was a Grumman TBF torpedo bomber. I went all through the training into the air group, and the pilot that I was with decided he wanted to fly fighter planes. So he transferred from torpedo bombers and went into fighter planes and transferred into another air group, and went through all the training again in Norfolk, Virginia, and took some torpedo training on the Keys of Florida. In 1945 the whole air group transferred to Corvallis, Oregon, which is where I saw trees as we flew around. The war ended while we were there.

While we were there, they sent us to a rest camp at Santiam Pass, where the Navy had taken over a ski resort. We spent a week up there. I had never seen things like that. Here were these trees that were six feet in diameter and looked like 200 feet tall, the biggest things I'd ever seen in my life. I said, gee, this looks like it might be a good life. Anyway, we transferred from there south to Santa Rosa, California, at the end of the war. The place was loaded with Navy aircraft of one type or another. Then I was transferred to what they called Fleet City, around Pleasanton. The worst place I ever was at, it was cold and foggy all winter. I froze my duff off and I had my best uniform stolen. I said, boy, I'll never come back to California again. Never, never, never. If I get the chance to get out of here, I'm going to get out of here.

In April of 1946 I got the points needed for discharge, and I went back to school in Missouri. I went to summer school just to take a couple of courses. That year Missouri began its four-year forestry school. I enjoyed that stuff up in Oregon so much, I thought, this must be a fun deal. Because I was in the military I got credit for a lot of things. In fact, I got

credit for nearly everything that I had taken in chemical engineering. The stuff that I passed, they gave me a passing grade on. The stuff that I was failing, they gave me “excused,” so I never failed anything, which was a life-saver. But I went through school there and graduated in June 1949, from Missouri, with a Bachelor of Forestry. While I was there, the last year of school at Missouri, I met Patricia Stevens and got pretty involved with her. She lived in Ann Arbor. She went back to school at the University of Michigan, so I went back to Ann Arbor. The dean up there, Samuel Dana, who was very well known in forestry circles, was not too enthused about me being there. I didn’t know what I was going to be like or anything. But the dean of the forestry school at Missouri said, “You’ll do okay.” So I started school up there, and that’s when I got involved with the junior agricultural assistant exam, and took it there.

The thing with the girl up there never lasted. It was over in three months. But I’d started school, so I decided I was going to finish it. While in school I wrote about the Jackson Lumber Harvester portable sawmill. Friends of mine who graduated from Missouri at the same time I did leased one of them around Columbia. I spent the summer and the autumn of 1950 working with them on the sawmill which gave me ground experience with a really good portable sawmill. But jeez, it was hard work. Man, everything was physical about that, everything. All of us got hurt one time or another on that thing. It was hard work, some of the hardest work I’ve ever gone through, and it was so hot in the summertime, and so humid, that we’d start at dawn and work until about two or three. By October, November, the ice storms moved in. It got so damn cold in the wintertime that we were freezing to death. It was a real experience, but it did give me the information and the photographs for when I went back to Michigan for the winter semester of 1951. I found out that if you really wanted to get that kind of thing done, you had to work on it every day. You had to do something every day because if you missed a day, you would figure, I got by with this, I can do it again. It doesn’t work that way. So I worked every day on that thing. I think the main thing about that was I probably learned about discipline. You had to discipline yourself. But I did finish up there. Got an A on the thesis and graduated in 1949, and that’s what got me my master’s degree. But I didn’t stay for graduation. I just picked up my marbles and went home.

Then I applied for a job at the Missouri Conservation Commission.

An offer came from the Forest Service, and I thought to myself, why not change, that would be a total change in life. An offer came from San Francisco. So I drove up through the Grand Tetons, Yellowstone, and all that country that I had never seen before. I wound up in Yreka, California on the weekend of the 21, 22 of July, 1951.

John “Jack” Kennedy

Interviewed by
John Fiske,
February 24, 2004
(1951)

My career, I guess, started in 1951, when I was working for the Lochsa Ranger District on the Clearwater National Forest. It was a summer job I had while I was going to college. A bunch of us came out by car, enjoyed the summer working in the forest, and then went back to the University of New Jersey, Rutgers. The second experience I had wasn't until I got out of the service and returned to college, and worked two summers in Alaska for the research center, as an assistant in research projects for the accumulation of data for seed dispersal, seed development, regeneration of the big clear-cut areas, and in watershed development. In 1958 I graduated from college and applied to the Forest Service for a permanent appointment. Unfortunately, I was denied the permanent appointment, so I got in my car and I went down to Washington, DC, and went to the personnel office and talked to the people down there and asked them a number of questions about why I wasn't qualified. I talked for quite a while with them, and when I came home, a couple of days later I got an appointment. The appointment was to California. At first we were supposed to go to the Challenge district, and so my wife and I (we had just gotten married in June), left in August and took off for California.

Richard Millar

Interviewed by
John Grosvenor,
March 23, 2004
(1951)

I was born in 1923 in San Diego, California. My mother's family was there. My dad and mother met during World War I. He was in boot camp in the Navy there, and after the war they got married and moved to Ogden, Utah. Apparently my dad was going to be coming to California to school, so my mother went home to her family to have me, and that's how I happened to be born in San Diego instead of Ogden, Utah. We lived in Grass Valley for four years, and then we moved to San Francisco. My dad was a schoolteacher there, and we ended up, after three or four years, moving to Palo Alto, where I went through all the grade schools and high school, and ended up going to San Mateo Junior College for a year and a half before I went into the service. I got out in February of 1946. After that I went to Utah State and entered forestry school there, and graduated in 1949. My first year of work for the Forest Service was in the summer of 1941, and I worked summers on the Plumas in 1941 and 1942. Then I

went into the service, and I came back and in 1948 and I worked another summer on the Plumas. When I graduated they picked me up as a fire crew foreman on a crew at Lee Summit, on the Plumas. I worked on all the districts and got my JF appointment in 1951, and then I transferred to the Klamath. I was district fire control officer on the Klamath.

I was born in 1926 in Portland, Oregon. I lived there for a few years; then we moved to Vancouver, Washington. This would have been about the time the Depression started, around 1929. My father was a salesman at that time; he sold equipment and supplies to undertakers. He had been an undertaker. About 1935 we moved to McMinnville, Oregon, a town of about 3000 in northwestern Oregon, and my father was an undertaker there until he retired in the early 1950s. I went to school there starting in the third grade, and went to grammar school and most of high school. I left high school a little early during World War II to go in the service. It was a little different circumstance in those days. Going in the service was a fairly common practice. I stayed in there for about two and a half years, until the war ended. I got out of the service in July of 1946 and started school at Linfield College in McMinnville in the fall of 1946 as a pre-forestry major. I had worked one summer during high school on a fire crew, and that got me interested in forestry. Until the war I didn't know that there were such things as forestry schools. A fellow I met on the ship coming back from overseas had gone to Oregon State, and going back, he said, "Well, if you're interested in that you should look into this." During the remainder of my service time, I contacted the Forest Service, and they gave me the same advice. If you wanted to work for them, you'd better get a college education. When I came back I went one year to Linfield, and then transferred to Oregon State. Right after the first year, my wife and I were married, in 1947, and she worked in the Registrar's Office. I went to school under the GI Bill. I worked two summers during college training for the state of Oregon for fire, one as a forest guard and the second year as a fire crew foreman.

After school we moved to Weaverville [California]. I got a job as a GS-4 fire patrol aid. At that time there were very few hires for foresters in the Forest Service. So I worked one year there as a forest guard, and then as a hotshot crew foreman, and then various jobs that winter, where they were able to keep me employed. The next spring I went back in the service, down to Camp Pendleton in Southern California, in the Marine

Lawrence Whitfield

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
August 28, 2004
(1952)

Corps. I was there about a year. I didn't go to Korea that time, because I had gone overseas in World War II. After the service I came back to Harrison Gulch, Platina, California, and I'm not sure exactly what my job title was. I started out as a GS-4, I guess as a fire patrol aide, but I worked quite a bit in timber, and I was promoted and raised to a forester. I started there in the spring of 1952 and was there about a year, and in the spring of 1953 I moved to Hayfork as a GS-6 timber management assistant, and worked on the Wildwood timber sale.

Robert "Bob" Cermak

Interviewed by
Jerry Gause,
March 30, 2004
(1953)

I was born on April 13, 1927, in San Diego, California. I was the second of six children, and my mother was from north Georgia, an old gold mining town. She grew up on a farm, moved to Atlanta, and went to night school. My dad, Frank Cermak, was born in 1894 in New York City, and was raised in Czech neighborhoods in Chicago. Dad was in the Navy. We lived in San Diego, Long Beach, and two years in Hawaii, where we were the only Caucasians in the neighborhood. Everybody else was every kind of mix you can imagine. I was a towhead, so I was the white cockroach (cockroaches were common in Hawaii). San Diego was a great place to grow up as a kid. There was no Little League coach to tell us how to play ball; we just played ball. When somebody got mad, they took the ball home and we did something else. We looked for snakes and looked for trapdoor spiders, threw dirt clods at each other, just had a wonderful time.

In 1938 one of my brother Frank's friends came by, and he had a backpack on him. So we asked where he was going. He said, "I'm going down with the Boy Scouts." So we got very interested in that, and Frank joined the Boy Scouts that year, and I did the next year, when I was twelve. We went on hikes and camps, and that's what I lived for. I didn't care about merit badges or all that other stuff. My brother Frank became an Eagle Scout, and I had a helluva time getting past first-class scout. One summer, the summer of 1941, about a dozen of us got to go to Sequoia Park and Kings Canyon Park. Frank and I decided the next summer we were going to hike the John Muir Trail. The place we liked to hike most was a mountain on the border. We hiked up there, and one day we looked over this deep canyon and we decided we'd try to go see what's down there. We hit upon a trail that led up the canyon to all of these mines. This was just living an adventure.

In 1943 I worked at Solar Aircraft in San Diego. They had a helluva time finding a good spot for me, because I was incompetent.

But they did find a place for me. High school was frenetic. It was half-day sessions, because there were twice as many kids as the school was meant to hold, with everybody moving to Southern California during the war period. I graduated in early June of 1944 at age 17, and on June 24th I joined the Navy. After [gun] fire control school in San Diego and Florida, I was sent to Newport, Rhode Island.

Okay, the war was over, and I had nowhere to go. I went to the library, and I found this book by Stuart Edward White. It was a trilogy, and two of the three stories were about the Sierra Nevada and the Sierra forest. I got to thinking about that, and I thought, you know, I think I'd like to go into forestry. I wrote to UC Berkeley. It was the only place that had a forestry school in California, and they sent me an application. I was enrolled before I ever left the Navy. I had almost four years of GI Bill, which was just a miracle.

The first two years at Berkeley in the forestry curriculum included English, chemistry, surveying, physics, all kinds of junk, which really bored me to tears. I had a job at Scott Lumber Company in Burney, California. Just running a line on a crew, and chopping brush, and running roads, and that sort of stuff. That was really a rough town, I'm telling you! You go to town, there were a couple of bars you didn't go to because the gyppo loggers liked those bars and you worked for the company, and the two didn't get together very well. Later, I went through the summer camp, almost entirely veterans and a bunch of just crazy people who made life kind of hell for some of the instructors. When we got back to school [UC-Berkeley], the camp director had each one of us in for a briefing. He said, "Well, Bob, you did a good job." But he turned the paper over, and he says, "One of the instructors said you had a tendency to fool around too much."

At any rate, I graduated in June of 1950. [Robert] "Bob" Ray, who graduated the previous year, was a friend, along with [William] "Billy" Lunsford, Jack Sweeley, Doug Leisz, Max Doner and a bunch of others. That's the largest class the university had graduated in forestry. There were a hundred of us, and I don't think half of them even started in forestry, and out of all of those I think Max Doner and I are the only ones that are still doing it. Bob Ray was working for the Bakersfield Box Company in Woodlake, California. He talked to the boss, and the boss

was going to talk to me. He had a job for me in the middle of June, just north of Porterville. They had a sawmill there, and drying yards. When I got there the boss was in the hospital with a leg operation. Nobody knew what to do with me, so they put me to work in the yard, pulling lumber off the dry chain. After I'd worked just one day, the next morning I woke up and my arms were numb up to the elbow. That was due to the neck injury that I'd had in 1942. I didn't know what was wrong. That happened every day for several weeks. I'd get up in the morning and my arms would be numb. In the middle of the summer, they sent me up to their sawmill in the Greenhorn Mountains, within the Sequoia Forest. They were cutting the timber from a cattleman's property there. The company had an old circular sawmill with a carriage that needed a block setter and then a dogger, a guy who actually set these steel spikes into the log to hold it on the carriage. My job was to manage the lumber yard, do the bookkeeping, be the relief man in the mill, and buy supplies, food for the kitchen for the whole outfit.

One day the kid from Oklahoma, who was the dogger on the carriage, didn't show up, so I got the job of being the dogger. My friend "Smoky" Pease, who I bunked with, was the block setter. My back was to the sawyer and I made a stupid mistake. We were going to turn the log down and saw one face of the log, and the idea was to turn that down and then saw the bark off and then start sawing boards. We did this with a steam-powered winch with a hook on the end. I grabbed the hook all the way around the shank and put it up into the flat face of the sawed board. My fingers were between the hook and the flat face of the board, and the sawyer started taking up the steam power on that hook, and my fingers were mashed. You couldn't hear anything in that mill, it was so noisy. Smoky saw what was happening and signaled to the sawyer, and he stopped right away. When I got my hand out from under there, the fingers were – it looked like they were about a half an inch thick. I almost lost all four of my fingers on my right hand. In the lumber industry in those days, many that you saw, particularly those that worked in plane mills or box factories, were almost always missing a finger or something. After the second year, we came out of the mill in October 1951 in a big snowstorm. 1951-1952, it was a big snow year. I had a pretty good feeling that I wasn't going to be coming back. We got down to San Diego, and I worked for lumber yards during the off season.

I decided to give the lumber industry one more try. I wrote a bunch of letters and sent them to various companies around the West Coast and

Alaska. I didn't hear from anybody but the Columbia Lumber Company in Sitka, Alaska. I said, well, I'll try that. They paid the way up, on the understanding that you had to stay a certain length of time or else pay your way back. So I got up to Seattle by train and flew to Juneau, and then from Juneau to Sitka. Well, in southeast Alaska it rains virtually all the time. I think the time I was there, there were two or three days when it was clear. They were in the throes of problems with a longshoremen's strike on the West Coast, so nothing was being imported, including food. They had this sawmill sitting on the edge of Sitka Sound, cutting as much lumber as fast as they could so they could send it up to Anchorage for government and private construction.

I had gotten a letter from the president of the company. I had the letter in my hand and I went into the office, and this sour-looking character looked at me, and he said, "Well, he's in the hospital." He said, "I can't give you a job here. I can't give you any kind of a manager's job." He said, "You'll have to work on the dock." I was back to handling lumber on the dock, only this time it was raining every day and it was a six-day-a-week, ten hours a day. I really wasn't quite prepared for that. I lived in a Sitka hotel, and I come back at the end of the day, it was like having been in a bath all day. My hands were all wrinkled, and I was cold, and I was pretty miserable. I hadn't been there very long, and Saturday came along, and it was a sunny day, and I walked into the mill to punch my timecard, and somebody had left the grease pit open, and I didn't see it because I had been working out in the sunshine and it was dark in there. I stepped right into it. I fell down and hit my right side and tore the ribs loose from my sternum. I went to see the doctor, and he just strapped me up with tape just as tight as he could, and he said I could take workman's comp, but workman's comp wouldn't pay my bills. I couldn't afford it. So I laid off on Sunday and went back to work on Monday. At any rate, it went on like this, and I never got to see the boss, and finally I decided that I was missing my girlfriend. So I quit and I went back to San Diego, where it was warm and dry. I got a job with the San Diego County surveyor as a chainman.

On August 9, 1952, the most important day of my life, Ethel and I got married.

So there we were, and I wasn't giving up on forestry just yet. I applied for the examination for forester, and I took that in the fall. In the

winter I got the notice. Ethel met me at the door in the little place we lived in, and it said I had gotten an 85, five of which was veteran's preference. Seventy was passing, so I was going to be all right. In early May, I got an offer for Region Six, it didn't say where or anything, at the tremendous salary of \$3,410 a year, and I had to pay my own way up there. Here I am, about seven or eight miles from the Mexican border, and I am so stupid that I didn't go to the local office and talk to them about jobs, or go to the regional office in San Francisco. I didn't know anything about Forest Service. So I said, "It's a job; I'll take it." They had a job for me at Tonasket [Washington], which was twenty-five miles from the Canadian border. Oh, well, I was determined to be a forester.

Robert "Bob" Irwin

Interviewed by
Glenn Gottschall,
August 12, 2004
(1953)

In 1950 I was activated in the United States Marine Corps Reserve, I went to Korea for a while and then was finally discharged in 1952. I was a combat photographer, and I thought at that time I wanted to stay in photographer, and so I had a job with Collier's magazine as an assistant photographer on the West Coast.

One day in 1953 I was doing a picture story in Yosemite, and I smelled the smoke, and I was out taking the pictures, and I drove to where this little fire was, a two- or three-acre fire, and the Park Service had it pretty well picked up by the time I got there, but I looked at that, and I looked at those guys working, and I thought, That is where I belong. And I drove back to L.A., resigned my job the next day, drove to Georgetown, without any calls or anything else, and I walked in the door, and I saw Larry Robinson, and he said, "Well, what are you doing here?" And I said, "I'm looking for a job." And he says, "Well, bless you because our tank truck operator just quit yesterday." And so I got picked up then, and I spent the next five seasons – no, '53 through '56 there at Georgetown, as tank truck operator and then as prevention patrolman for the whole district. Lots of fires and lots of off-forest fires during that period of time.

But the interesting part of this was that at the end of that 1953 season we had an end-of-fire-season party, and at the end of that party, I said to the district ranger, George Ramstad at the time, and my fire control boss, Sydney "Syd" Mannering – I said, "Well, I'll see you guys next year." And they said, "No, you won't, not unless you bring us a report card that shows you're going to college on the GI Bill." I never really wanted to go to college. All I wanted to do was fight fire, because I loved it. They said, "No, no, you get started. Use your GI Bill." And that's what I did, because they said they'd

blackball me; they'd call everybody in the region and say, "Don't hire Irwin because he isn't going to college."

And with that kind of force, I did start college. It took me six seasons to get through college. I graduated finally from Oregon State [University] in 1959. I went to junior colleges throughout California until 1956, and then I went to Oregon State. Jean and I were married by that time. Went to Oregon State, graduated in '59. In '57 and '58 I worked on the Siskiyou National Forest, Brookings, the Chetco District.

And then when I graduated, a friend of mine in college was working on the Lassen, and he said, "Hey, they're looking for another JF [junior forester]. Why don't you come down and work on the Lassen?" I drove down during Easter vacation and talked with [Veldon A.] "Bunky" Parker, the forest supervisor at the time, and he said, "Well, Bob, you've got a job." And so I was assigned to the Almanor District when we got out of school.

How I came to work for the Forest Service is rather interesting. When I finished my degree work at Syracuse, I was offered a job out in California to work on a new parallel Bay Bridge. My sister's brother-in-law was chief engineer. I took and passed the state exam, and I was on the list to be hired. When I went out to California, we found out there was an argument over the bridge, and that the mayor had different ideas about where it ought to go, so it was delayed and it never was built. In the meantime, before I took another job – we didn't know for sure whether the bridge would ever start, and my brother-in-law told me that I better not take another state job, because if I did, I would have difficulty getting back onto the bridge. I went over to the public office, and they told me about a job available at the Forest Service. So I went over and talked to Jim Byrne, who was the regional engineer, and Jim offered me a job right away. I was hired as a flood control engineer down on the Los Padres Forest. I worked for the Forest Service on the Los Padres for about a year, before a decision was made that we're not going to build the bridge.

The State Water Department – it was a new department at that time – had offered me a job. So I considered it, because actually, it was a higher grade. They gave me credit for my four years of engineering in the Army, whereas the Federal Government did not do that. So it was quite a difference in salary. But Boyd Fisher told me that he would see about getting a promotion. I thought, well, a promotion wouldn't give me much more, not nearly as much as the State would give me. But by

Mike Howlett

Interviewed by
Steve Kirby,
July 15, 2004
(1953)

that time I liked the Forest Service. I had a natural background for liking the Forest Service. My dad was an agronomy professor and had taught farm woodlot management. I had been planting trees since I was six, and I had built gully plugs, things like that. I understood what it meant to manage a forest area. My older brother had three years of forestry at Syracuse, before he got married and had to finish his degree at night school in business.

I liked working with the Forest Service. I liked the people, and I thought it was a very upstanding organization, and was doing the kinds of things that I felt were very important. So I told them that I'd think about it. We took it into the supervisor, and the supervisor says, "Well, no, we can't promote any engineers to seven. I've got rangers that are sevens, and I can't have an engineer equal to a ranger." So Boyd came back and told me, and I said, "Well, don't worry, Boyd. I got this job, and I have no particular reason to not take it." So he called up the regional office and talked to the regional engineer. Jim Byrne was regional engineer at that time, and he hired me. He came down to the Los Padres on a plane the next morning. At the end of the day I was told that I could get a promotion. From there I went to work on the Cleveland Forest, still part of my temporary job, I guess. I went to work there as a forest engineer. But actually, as you probably already know, my temporary job lasted for thirty-four years. So that's how I came to work for the Forest Service.

Bob Righetti

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 11, 2004
(1954)

I moved to Pozo, California, as a child in 1934. In the early 1940s my dad worked for the US Forest Service. During World War II they were very short of people, so we had conscientious objectors and kids from around fifteen to seventeen years of age as firefighters. In those days only the ranger and the FMO [Fire Management Officer] had automobiles. The rest of the prevention people that were in the field had horses and mules. Also at that time, with this being Highway 178, the Forest Service would burn on each side of the right-of-way on the highway to prevent fire. Since my dad was a foreman on the crew, I could go with him. That's when I learned to do firing. I learned to mop up with a back pump. I learned a lot about fire characteristics very young in my life.

Then I went in the service, and when I came out of the military I went to work for the Forest Service in March of 1952, and worked with a road crew. Since I had come out of the service from the Seabees, with a background in equipment, I would help those guys on the road who were putting in culverts and cleaning roads and slides, getting ready for fire season. Then I returned to Pozo as the TTO [Tank Truck Operator], the

driver of the Marmon Harrington engine. And on the foreman's days off I was the acting foreman. I worked that summer, and then I was laid off, and so I went to work for about a year outside the Forest Service, and then in 1954 I returned to the Forest Service. I met a local girl, and we were getting serious about getting married, and I didn't want to stay with construction or move all over the country. So I went back to work for the Forest Service. Being a veteran, I was able to get an appointment.



During World War II and the post war boom years, utilization and preservation of the nation's wood resources became paramount and drew many veterans to the ranks of the Forest Service.

I was born in 1928, on a ranch that my grandfather and grandmother homesteaded back in 1918. I went to school in a little town in Kansas, and went into the Navy in World War II and served on an aircraft carrier. I got out of the Navy in August of 1946, and came back and went to school to study mechanical engineering. I was on the GI Bill, and I think I got sixty-two dollars a month, and the government paid for my books and drafting instruments and that sort of stuff. But sixty-two dollars didn't go very far, so I was working part time in a grocery store, carrying out groceries and pushing buggies around in the parking lot. I went to classes around seven in the morning and I got off the job at ten at night. That was kind of getting to me, and one day we were doing some class work down in a bar, and we'd been drinking beer, and somebody says, "Let's go back in the service." This is just before the Korean War. So a buddy and I said, "Hey, yeah, that sounds good. We're getting tired of school anyway." So we went down and recruited ourselves to the army, and before we knew it, we were on a train headed to Arkansas. I signed up for three years in the Army and wound up serving in Alaska on the DEW [Distant Early Warning radar] line. I would spend four or five days on a hill trying to get to where the weather was clear so we could sight into the other peaks around us for triangulation. I spent several months in Alaska, and I didn't have a bath or a shave for six months out there, because you were out on these

Jim McCoy

Interviewed by
Bob Harris,
March 26, 2004
(1955)

mountains. They would bring you down off of one and put you on another one. I did one time get to jump into a stream in Alaska and wash off. It was so cold that my pores closed up and the dirt didn't come out of my pores. That was the last time I tried that.

Eventually, in November of 1950, the Korean War had just started, and we were on a boat with our rifles and our mosquito nets. We figured, well, we're headed toward Korea. Fortunately, we didn't go to Korea. We went down to California to the end of the Golden Gate Bridge, and spent a nice two months there. All I did was eat and sleep and play baseball for two months. We had a beautiful barracks. I would come down in the morning and the cook would say, "How do you like your eggs this morning?" and I would say, "Sunny-side up," and I'd get my eggs. Now, this is a different army than I'd been used to, so I was in for a surprise. It was nice after being in Alaska where we ate cold rations, and couldn't take a bath or brush your teeth or anything. I met my wife, Lillian, there in San Francisco and I started going with her, and we would meet at all the good places in San Francisco. I proposed to Lillian in San Francisco.

Then the Army sent me back to school, and I took some courses in photogrammetry, courses in advanced mathematics, and courses in surveying – these were all three-month courses, eight hours a day. I went out and bought rings there in Washington, DC, and sent my bride-to-be her ring. After I finished my school, I got a thirty-day furlough to go back and get married. A buddy – he was going to be my best man – had just bought a brand-new Hudson Hornet, which was supposed to go a hundred miles an hour. So we drove non-stop from Washington, DC, to San Francisco. One would drive and one would sleep in the back seat. And we made it non-stop from DC to San Francisco in about two days and two nights.

We got to San Francisco, and my wife and I got married in Mission Dolores, and again the Army jumped into our life. I'd been assigned to a topographical unit and I thought I'd spend the rest of my time in Washington, DC, and have my wife back there. But no, they came after me again and said, "You're going to go to Europe. You've been cleared for top secret work in Europe." I had to leave my wife in San Francisco, and I headed for Europe. I was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany. The next thing they said was, "Well, you can bring your wife over to Germany with you." They got me a nice apartment. We had a maid and a gardener and a guy that kept the fireplace going, so we were pretty much in hog heaven. My

wife said, “You’re spoiling me.” She couldn’t get used to this maid that was going to get in her way of doing things. We spent about two years in Heidelberg. In the meantime my wife became pregnant, just as we were going back to the States. Of course my poor wife was seasick all the way back across the Atlantic. I kept telling her, “It will go away,” but it never did. When we hit land in New York City we had to ride a train from New York City to San Francisco.

When we got to San Francisco I was discharged, and the next thing I had to do was get a job. So I went looking around in the paper and saw where the California Division of Highways was looking for junior civil engineers. I said, “Well, that’s all right. I think I can do all that stuff they’ve got on there.” So I went down to their main office in San Francisco, and had an interview. The guy looked at my resume and they were just as happy as clams, because they were having a hard time finding people. They hired me, and I went to work over in Walnut Creek, surveying some of the freeways that are there now. We rented a little apartment in Albany, and I commuted to Walnut Creek every day. There were several other guys that worked there, and the state furnished me a car to drive back and forth and to pick up these other fellows. I worked there as a civil engineer for almost a year.

But it was a boring job, because you just did the same thing over and over. There happened to be one guy on the crew who had worked for the Forest Service. I got talking to him, and he told me, “Well, the Forest Service – they aren’t quite as precise as the state guys. At least you won’t get bored like on this job.” He said, “Oh, it’s spicy.” And I said, “Okay.” So I went over to San Francisco to the regional office and got an application. Vern Eaton was a roads and trails guy there at that time, and he interviewed me. He said “Okay, you’ve got a job. You’ll start at the GS-7 and you’re going to go up to the Redding Work Center and go to work there. All our engineers work out of that Work Center, and they’ll detail you out to where you’ll work. You’ll get your GS-7 salary, and we pay you six dollars a day per diem, every day of the month.” I thought, “Wow, that’s pretty good.” That was what made me finally say I’d take the job, that six dollars a day per diem.

Well, I got up to the Redding Work Center and reported in to the fellow in charge there on August 23, 1953. The guy told me, “We’re going to send you to Weaverville.” I said, “Where in the world – where’s

Weaverville?” He said, “It’s just about fifty miles west of here.” I said, “Oh.” That didn’t really tell me anything, but I just nodded. He said, “There’ll be a stage in here at about three o’clock this afternoon, and you can get on that stage and it’ll take you in there. There’s a little hotel in Weaverville where you can probably get a room for the night.” I said, “Well, all right.” I’m beginning to think, I don’t like this at all. Sure enough, here comes the stage, and I’m thinking stages with horses, but I was relieved. The stage was a little pickup truck with a cab on the back of it, and it said “mail” on the side of the door. I thought, whew, there’s no horse.

We headed for Weaverville, and got in there about dark, and he dropped me off about as far away from the hotel as you could get, and I hiked up to this hotel on a dirt road. Finally I got up to where the businesses were, and I’m thinking, there is no cement in this town, because the sidewalk was made out of wood. It was like a western cow town. I got to the hotel and checked in, and the lady there says, “How long will you be here?” And I said, “Well, I don’t know, but I’ll take it for a couple nights.” I don’t remember what it was, four bucks a night or something like that, and she gives me the key and I go up to the room. I’m shaking my head and thinking I made a bad decision here. I get up in my room and I was pretty sure I had made a bad decision because there was no running water in the room. There was a pitcher of water and a great big bowl to pour the water in, and that was to wash in. I thought, where is the bathroom? So I went back down; I said, “Where is the bathroom?” “Oh, it’s down at the end of the hall. Everyone uses the same one. You’ll have to wait your turn.”

The next morning I got up, thinking, I’m going to go back to San Francisco. I thought, well, I’ll mess around here and I went down to the only bar in town. I sat down there and I bumped into a fellow and was talking to him. I said, “Do you know anything about the Forest Service?” He said, “I work for them.” I said, “You do? I hired on in San Francisco but I’m not sure I want to work for these people.” And he says, “Oh? Where are you staying?” I said, “I’m staying at the hotel.” He said, “Well, if you’re signed up, there’s a barracks down there, why don’t you come down and sleep down there and save your hotel?” I said, “Well, okay.” So I chatted with him; I thought, well, I’ll stay another night here since I’m getting free bedding. I went down and met another guy, a buddy of his called Russ William, and they looked like they were pretty happy. So I thought, well, maybe it’s not so bad. Still hadn’t reported in to their head guy. I said, “I’m

supposed to report to some guy by the name of Don Turner.” They said, “Go in that main building there and ask for him.” The next morning I went in and asked for Don Turner, and they said, “He’s back there.” I went back there and I still wasn’t sure I was going to take this job, and so I walked in and said, “Mr. Turner, I’m Jim McCoy. I’m supposed to come here to work for you, but I’m not sure I’m going to stay here. I don’t think I want to work here.” He said, “Sit down there and let me tell you about the job.” So I sat down, and he started telling me about the good things and everything. Anyway, to make a long story short, I wound up taking the job, and Don Turner was my first boss. He was a forest engineer.

I was still assigned to the Redding Work Center. He said “Why don’t you go out with Larry and Russ, and they’ll show you what to do out there on the job, and maybe that will help you make up your mind for sure.” So I said okay, and gave him my papers. I got in the carryall and the three of us headed out for a job. When we got out there we started hiking, and I’m wondering, where’s the equipment and stuff? All they had was a rag tape and a bag of stakes, and I’m thinking, boy-oh-boy, these guys do need help! So we get out there, and sure enough, Russ and Larry start dragging out this tape, and they’re dropping rocks. They’d say, “Oh, that’s forty-five feet,” and drop a rock. I’m thinking, “No plumb bobs here!” They’d drop a rock and drive a stake in the ground, and we went along like that. I thought, and we’re going to build roads from this? So anyway, I finally decided, yeah, this town looks like a good place to work; looks like it’s going to be interesting, and it’s going to be interesting helping these guys out with their problems

I was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1930. My folks emigrated from Sicily in 1920. Dad put up with the snow for many years, and finally decided in 1944 to move out to Southern California. So we traveled as a family in July of 1944 to the San Gabriel Valley, which was quite different than Buffalo. We were a family of five children. I have an older sister and an older brother; I’m the third. Then we have twin sisters as well. It was interesting growing up in the San Gabriel area. Dad was a jig and die maker with Douglas Aircraft for about thirty-five years.

So that was my interest in the outdoors, coming into the rural setting of the San Gabriel Valley. At that time a lot of orange trees were growing there, and a lot of orchards. Openness – basically with no freeways except the one from LA to Pasadena. I think, to a degree, that’s where I

**Salvatore S. "Sam"
Alfano**

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
August 24, 2004
(1956)

started to feel an interest in the outdoors. I was also involved with a group called Woodcraft Rangers, which was an outing group founded by Ernest Thompson Seton, who was one of our greatest naturalists, who wrote many books. It was a program whereby we had camps throughout Southern California: one at Lake Arrowhead, one at the Angeles National Forest, and one out here at Castaic. We did quite a bit of camping as youngsters, and that's where I got the interest to go into the field of forestry.

I went to school at El Monte High School, and from there I went to John Muir Junior College [Pasadena], which had a program attuned to the Utah State University's program in the field of forestry. I finished up there in 1954, and I was fortunately deferred from the Army while I was going to school. However, as soon as I graduated I was inducted into the Army for two years, one year in the States and one year in Germany. My field of interest in the Army was the Reconnaissance Support. We made maps from aerial photographs, and did interpretive work on photographs as well. I came out of the service in 1956, and went back to the Forest Service. Prior to my time starting with the Forest Service in a professional basis, I was working with them during the summer months as a hotshot on the Oak Grove Hotshots (1951-1952), and the following season I was a foreman on the Red Box tanker crew.

Jon Kennedy

Interviewed by
John Grosvenor,
June 15, 2004
(1956)

I was born in Denver, Colorado, and spent most my entire life, up until college, in Arvada, Colorado. My dad was in the meat-packing business, and he owned a packing house just outside of Arvada. So I grew up and went all through elementary, junior high, and high school in Arvada, Colorado. Afterwards, I attended the Colorado School of Mines, in Golden, which is only about fifteen miles away. When I was a freshman in college I was still attending church in Arvada, and was involved in Sunday school. My Sunday-school instructor was Marion Lamb, who was the road and trails branch chief for the Forest Service in Region Two in Denver. After my freshman year in college, he got me on a job working summers on a survey crew that was headquartered out at the regional office in Denver. This survey crew was kind of a hotshot group, so we'd spend two or three weeks in one place, on one forest, and then two or three or four weeks on another forest. I did this for three summers. During those three summers, I actually spent time on eleven national forests in Region Two. As a result of those three summers of temporary work, after three summers I was promoted the third summer to a GS-4 at \$2,750 a year.

I had graduated from the Colorado School of Mines in 1956, with a degree in geological engineering. My intent was to go into that kind of work, but metal production – copper and lead and zinc and related metals – is very cyclical. I graduated at a time when the bottom had dropped out of the metals market, so jobs in that industry were pretty scarce. I recall I was offered two jobs, the first of which was an offer to go to a coal-mining operation in northern British Columbia and live in a company-provided town. The other offer I received was from the City and County of Los Angeles to work on their expanding freeway system. Neither appealed to me, so I talked to Marion Lamb again, and he asked me to come to work for the Forest Service. I did that in June of 1956.



Ranger – Staff Meeting (circa 1962), San Bernardino National Forest

1st row (seated) left to right: Al Clepper, Sam S. Alfano, Lloyd Britton, Donald R. Bauer (Forest Supervisor), Bill Horn, Lou Hahn, Vern Smith, Earl Raiche

2nd row (standing) left to right: Ron McCormick, Vic DeKalb, Unknown, Ken Clark, Chuck Pickering, Unknown, Dick Johnson, Miles Gulick, Dave Tucker, Carl Hickerson, Phil Lord

George Leonard

Interviewed by
Bob Van Aken,
June 28, 2004
(1956)

I was born at Angels Camp, the home of Mark Twain's celebrated jumping frog of Calaveras County. Angels Camp is in the foothills of the Sierras, east of Stockton, California, just in the front country of the Stanislaus National Forest, in the heart of the Mother Lode gold country of California. Most of the mines there had shut down during the Depression and were not operating. As a result of the loss of the mines, it was a town with some empty stores and things, but a vibrant community. Most employment was at a cement plant and in the wood products industry in a number of sawmills up in the mountains above Angels Camp.

My early experience with forestry came about because my father was a schoolteacher. Starting in 1941, he worked each summer for the Forest Service on the Stanislaus National Forest as a recreation aide. It was a family experience. The whole family went up to the mountains, to Lake Alpine, and spent the three months of the school break there. Dad took care of about six campgrounds and all the activities in the high country there on the Calaveras District of the Stanislaus. That's where I got my first experience because, as I say, the whole family worked right along with Dad. In fact, I learned to drive a car driving the pickup between garbage cans as Dad would clean up a campground. I issued fire permits and all the things that went along with the Forest Service. In 1943, all the campgrounds were closed because of the war. Dad worked that summer as the foreman of a fire crew, and my mother cooked for the crew. Most of the work involved hand falling-snags along ridgelines. My job was to stay up on the road where the portable telephone was set up, and I'd listen to the telephone in case there was a fire call. When the crews got a tree ready to fall, they'd holler so I could come down and watch it fall. Then I could go back up and listen to the telephone.

When I was about fourteen years old we had a fire up in Lake Alpine, and I just naturally went along with Dad and helped. The next day, when the fire control officer for the district showed up, he asked me whether I'd helped. I had worked right along with the rest so he said, "Well, there's no place on the fire time slip for age, so we'll write you up a fire time slip." I got my first paycheck from the Forest Service when I was fourteen years old. So that was my introduction to forestry, where I decided I wanted to be a forester. At the time, the district ranger and several of the other people that I became acquainted with were all Oregon Staters so I went to Oregon State University to major in forestry, even though I had been

accepted at UC. Each summer I would go back to California and work. I started right out of high school, working on a fire crew. The second season, I worked the recreation job that Dad had performed. The third year, I worked as a fire prevention patrolman. The fourth year, I only worked for about three weeks for the Forest Service, because I had to take a cruise with the Naval ROTC program at school. Then what would have been the season after my senior year, I had to go back to school for an extra quarter to finish up, because of the conflicts between the Navy program and the forestry program. So in 1955 I went to the Lassen National Forest, and worked with an inmate crew out of Folsom Prison doing timber stand improvement. At least that was the intent of going up there, to get a little different experience than staying with the fire work that I'd done mostly on the Stanislaus. But it turned out that 1955 was a major fire season in California, and so we spent the bulk of the fire season on fires, rather than doing timber stand improvement work. After graduating from college, I spent a couple of years on active duty in the Navy. When I was released from the Navy, I became a Junior Forester on the Stanislaus Forest again. They didn't have funding for a full-time timber program, so I started out working with engineering crews, doing survey and road design work in the field.

I was born and grew up in the state of Wisconsin, in a small community, and started college at Wisconsin State College in Platteville, Wisconsin, in pre-forestry. Then my college was interrupted by the Korean War, and I served four years in the Navy. When I came back, I transferred from Wisconsin State College to the University of Minnesota. My first summer job occurred in 1956, in northern Minnesota, on the Superior National Forest. Then the following summer, 1957, I went to work for Timber and Western Lands, a subsidiary of the Northern Pacific Railroad which was one of those beneficiaries of odd-numbered sections of land that entitled them to build a railroad from Minnesota to Washington. They needed people to go out and inventory these timbered lands, and I was one of a group of twelve people that was lucky enough to get that kind of a job. The following summer I returned to that same assignment.

When I entered into pre-forestry at Wisconsin State College, my uncle owned a sawmill in Kalispell, Montana. He needed a forester. so I

Bob Rice

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 14, 2004
(1958)

went ahead and studied forestry, because I loved the outdoors and I figured this was my opportunity to have a career in the outdoors. The year before I graduated from the University of Minnesota, which was the fall of 1957, the sawmill burned down. So that caused me to start changing my notion on where I was going to work. One of my college classmates had just returned from working on the Inyo National Forest in Mammoth Lakes, and let me know that they were looking for a forester on the Mono Lake District of the Inyo National Forest. So I applied and took the Civil Service Test and qualified. I found out when I reported to work that this was kind of a probationary thing, and after 90 days the ranger recommended permanent status.

Bob Tyrrel

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch
September 1, 2004
(1959)

I was born in Iowa on my grandparents' farm, and lived in Iowa till about 1940. My dad worked for the Internal Revenue Service, and we were transferred to Baltimore, Maryland, where we had a nice home on the Chesapeake Bay with a big long dock. I did a lot of fishing and a lot of crabbing right outside our front door. Then December 7, 1941 happened – I was about seven years old, but I can vividly remember the spotlights in the sky going over, because they thought some Japanese subs had gone into the bay. Shortly after that, Dad moved back to Iowa with Mom and enlisted in the Navy, and was stationed at Farragut, Idaho, where we later moved. We lived in a house we called the Ice Cream Shack. Basically it had two rooms, and we could hardly move around. When I was in high school I won an art contest and received a scholarship to the Carnegie Institute, and my dad said, “Do you really want to do that the rest of your life?” I said, “Well...” He said, “Do you know, you ought to do what you enjoy.” Well, I enjoy hunting and fishing and I said, “Well, foresters. That must be all they did, was hunt and fish.” Maybe that’s how I got the interest. Now, my dad worked for the Internal Revenue Service and he didn’t enjoy his job. He looked forward to weekends, when we were fishing or hunting. He stressed the need to do something you enjoy and fortunately, I did.

I went to Iowa State College. That’s Iowa State University now. At Iowa State, you can’t get your degree unless you have some practical experience. So I got a summer job in Munsing, Michigan, at Hiawatha National Forest. I graduated in ’59. When I was at school, I wanted to be employed with the Forest Service, and I signed up for an interview. I had my suit on, a new shirt, a new tie, and I was really spruced up for this interview. The first thing he said was, “We’re not hiring anybody this year.” Well, this was

really devastating. So I walked out of that meeting and happened to run into the head of the forestry department, George Hartman, and he said, “How’d it go?” And I said, “Well, he’s not hiring anybody.” George says, “Yeah, I know.” He said, “That’s a bummer.” Well, I had received two offers, one with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Minnesota, and I had received an offer to go with the State of Wisconsin. I told Janet, “The Forest Service is not hiring, and I need to get a job, so I’ll probably take the next job offer.” A telegram came. It went to my dad’s office and dad brought it home, and he says, “Look at this.” It was a job offer for Region Nine in the Forest Service, on the Shawnee in 1959. What had happened was that George Hartman called a guy by the name of Harold Nygren, who was deputy regional forester, and he remembered me from that summer job and got me on. In fact, only two of us were hired in my class.

I was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on July 15, 1930, and grew up in a little town about twelve miles outside Swarthmore, where the prestigious Swarthmore College is located. It’s a great little Quaker town. My family wasn’t Quaker, but I remember going to the Quaker meeting house – they called it the Friends meeting house. I was a little kid, and sitting there on the hard bench for one hour, I used to squirm around and really have a problem with it, but I held up and did it. The other thing about growing up in Swarthmore is that the Quakers didn’t believe in movie theaters or movies, so I was in my teens, when I came out west for the first time, before I ever saw a movie. Well, it was a great growing up. We were on the edge of the woods, a forest, and we had creeks and we skated and we sledged, bicycled, had friends, and just had a great growing up time. After I graduated from Palo Alto High School, I went for four straight years to Willamette University in Salem, Oregon (from 1948 to 1952), and graduated there with a degree in history and political science. Then I went down to UCLA in Southern California, and majored in meteorology. I just missed getting my master’s by a couple of units. So it was sort of a jump between history and science. Even though I went to UCLA with a full scholarship, I had to work. I was doing fifteen units a semester, which was normal, but they were tough science units. I started working for two years in a Culver City hotel, near the ocean. in west Los Angeles, which is where I lived, next to Santa Monica. They had two managers, a day manager and a night manager. I went to school in the day and from 7pm to 7am I was the night manager. I slept

Gilbert Davies

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 21, 2004
(1960)

two hours every afternoon, after I got out of school, and went to work. I had to do my homework between 2 am and when the bars closed. I didn't have a car, and I took busses everywhere. But you have to remember, when you're in your early twenties you can go without sleep, and I would save up like a camel and sleep on the weekends just to catch up.

After UCLA and the hotel, I started working for Douglas Aircraft. That was a good experience, because I did a lot of different things. I worked there for five years. In 1959, I decided I wanted to do something more with my life. So I took three tests, both oral and written. There was one with IBM to become a junior executive. There was one with the State, relating to becoming a ranger in the Park Service, and there was one with the federal government. I passed all three. IBM really wanted me. They said I passed the highest of anybody who had ever passed. But the reason I didn't go into private industry was because for ten years I'd been in private industry, and I wanted to try something different. So I had a choice between the state and the federal, and the reason I chose federal was because I thought if I'm in California, I'm stuck in California. If I'm in federal, I can go anywhere I want. The ironic part of that was that I stayed in California the whole time, on two forests.

Edward R. Schneegas

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
December 18, 2003
(1960)

I was born in Arbuckle, California, in 1926. My folks actually lived in Maxwell, but the only doctor was in Arbuckle. Shortly thereafter we moved to Alturas, in Modoc County, where I went to grammar school and high school. After high school I went in the Marine Corps for two and a half years, and was discharged in 1946. Then I went to Sacramento Junior College for two years and then to Chico State University for two and a half years. I also did some graduate studies at the University of Montana in Missoula. At Chico State, I majored in botany and vertebrate zoology, with the idea of becoming a wildlife biologist, but I had a strong background in botany also.

After I left school, the first job I had was a short one on the Madeline Plains, building fences for the California Fish & Game, and then I went to a game farm down in Napa Valley for a year, and just kind of bummed around at various jobs until I landed up in Modoc County again. Between 1954 and 1961, I worked on a Devil's Garden deer herd study, which was sponsored by a cooperative effort between the Modoc Forest, the Fremont Forest, and the Oregon and California Fish & Game. I was lead man in that study, and we went into all aspects of the deer herd. We did habitat studies and range conditions, as well as studied the deer. In 1960 I was the

first wildlife biologist on the Inyo National Forest. There had not been any work done in that area when I got there. There were only about five or six wildlife biologists in the region at that time. They were scattered out quite a bit. But the things that needed to be done on the Inyo were developing management plans for special-emphasis species.

I think my father's first experience with the Forest Service was in 1937, with the big hurricane that went into New England. I was born in New Hampshire in 1941. In 1946, my father became the assistant ranger at Bonners Ferry, Idaho, in the Kaniksu National Forest. After Bonners Ferry, my dad transferred to the Nine Mile Ranger Station, which is on the Lolo [National Forest]. This was 1947. One of my real burning memories – excuse the pun – about the Forest Service and fire suppression came from that location. In order to keep the compound buildings in top-notch shape, smoke jumpers would be brought down from their base to do maintenance work. The smoke jumpers were in the process of painting our house at the time they were called to go to the Mann Gulch fire. I remember helping my mom pack up the coats and jackets that were left hanging on the ladders there at the house, where the crew went off to Mann Gulch, never to return. That whole era was very, very personal for us. In fact, that era was kind of memorialized in some ways with the *Red Skies of Montana*, which was filmed at the same time we were there. Mom and dad had a chance to walk behind the scenes, walk through the scenes where the kissing's going on. Nobody ever paid that much attention to my mom and dad, but anyhow, they're in *Red Skies of Montana*, and I had an opportunity to watch a lot of that being filmed. We moved from Nine Mile to Troy, Montana; that's all in the Kootenai National Forest. Again, my dad was the ranger there. At that point I was quite a bit older, and I was able to tote water on fires. In those days, the families participated in some minor degree in what the activities were, because you still didn't have enough people to go around.

After Troy, my dad moved to Coeur d'Alene, and he was Assistant Forest Supervisor and Timber Management Staff Officer, and I got a job on the Kootenai National Forest on the Yaak District. I was going to college then, at the University of Idaho. I started off as a civil engineer, engineering tech for the Forest Service. I enjoyed the work. At that time, we were in the process of building mainline roads, and we were laying in arterials for the forest. Because we saw those as being forest highways of

Bob Smart

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 28, 2004
(1960)

the future, whatever we did was pretty heavy-duty. The trucks that hauled on those roads were off-highway haulers with huge bunks and huge loads. I enjoyed that year, but it didn't quite seem to fit right. So the following year, I changed my major from being a civil engineer to being a forester, and the following summer, when I came back I felt much more at home. Anyhow, it just felt like I had arrived where I needed to be.

It was also that same era, I remember, that we used to have fire schools, where you'd get the latest on what was going on in the world of fire. They were saying, "Well, this year, guys, you might see some airplanes. There's some stuff going on out there that we might in fact see an airplane or two." It wasn't long after that guard school that we ended up with quite an outbreak of lightning fires. I was living at the bunkhouse, and the guy that was in the next bunk over from me ended up on a different fire than I was on, and his fire got away and it went to about eighteen acres. In the critique of that, he was chastised for not calling for the air tankers. We had to go back and scratch our heads, "Now, what is an air tanker?" This would be about 1960, '60, '61, somewhere in there. In Region One you ended up with people considered the progressives, and then you had the old guard who were still talking about the mules. You ended up trying to carry that forward, and yet people were having more and more trouble finding anybody who could even manage stock, and then you have the rival, this air tanker.

I completed my class work for my bachelor's degree in 1963, during the Vietnam War. I wanted to go in as a commissioned officer. In my junior year, I walked away from ROTC, saying that I didn't think I wanted to be in the Air Force, because they were looking for a five-year obligation. But the Army came and said, "If you fly for us, it's a three-year obligation." I said, "That's a good enough deal for me. I'll sign up with you." But I had to turn down my degree in 1963. So in 1964, when I finally got out of school, I got my bachelor's degree and my master's degree and my commission – it seemed like I was running across the stage numerous times, picking up all this stuff. But that's when I was a full-fledged, card-carrying forester, in 1963. I left the Kootenai National Forest in 1964, when it was twenty-seven below zero, and went to Fort Benning, Georgia. I had really enjoyed my experience with the Forest Service, but I think I'd really gone into the Army thinking that I wanted to be a career Army officer. They had paid for my flight school while I was in college, so I was now a card-carrying pilot. My orders read: "Go to flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama, for both fixed-

wing and rotor,” which meant I really had arrived, “And then after that your orders will take you to Germany.” Well, again, I’m talking about the era of the Vietnam War, and it was within three weeks, I think, from the time I arrived at Fort Benning, Georgia, that I learned that my orders for Germany had been cancelled, that I was assigned to Fort Benning, and they could not place me in any of the flight schools because Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara had decided that we really didn’t need any more pilots to go to Vietnam. So they reneged on me going forward to flight school, but they did allow me to revert back to a two-year obligation.

In retrospect, I guess that turned out okay, but I learned rapidly that I may have not liked the Forest Service and the way they were treating me to some degree, but the Forest Service didn’t hold a candle to what the United States Army could do to you in a very short period of time. I left Fort Benning in Christmas of 1966. During that era, my father, who had transferred to Washington, DC, was transferred to the Colville National Forest in Washington state as Forest Supervisor. The Forest Service was very, very tuned in to nepotism, and not wanting to get into that, I contacted the chief’s office, and said, “You know, I don’t want to live under the shadow of my father. I don’t want to go back to the Kootenai National Forest, because my dad is now in Region One.” The Colville was part of Region One at that time. “I need to go somewhere else.” It was almost like by return mail it was, “Yeah, we’d like to send you somewhere else. Where would you like to go?” I said, “I would really love to go to California, and I need to get some recreation experience, so that’s what I’d like.” So I got an offer, and thought by golly, the Forest Service knows how to treat me well. This is gonna be okay.

I arrived in Placerville in 1967, and the first thing they had to tell me was that, “Oh, by the way, you’re not going to the Lake Valley Ranger District. We’ve run out of money in recreation, and we’re going to have to assign you as a timber guy on the Cosumnes District of the Eldorado.” *Déjà vu* Army, almost! Here we go again! But the fact is, when we arrived in Placerville, I think it was about seventy-two degrees on a January morning, and I remember, I had left Montana at twenty-seven degrees below zero. I didn’t feel like I had too much to snivel about. It was a pretty nice place to live.

Paul Hill

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 11, 2004
(1963)

I was born in 1938, in a little farm community in Illinois, about a hundred miles west of Chicago. At the age of seven, my mother loaded myself and my two brothers, and we came to California to live with an aunt in Piedmont, in the Bay Area. We lived with her a couple of years, and then eventually moved to Berkeley, where I went through junior high and high school. When I finished high school in Berkeley I enrolled in Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, in the fall of 1956. In the spring of 1958, I was looking for a summer job. The people that owned the mercantile said they knew a fellow out at Pozo that I could talk to by the name of Bob Righetti. Bob at that time was the prevention patrolman at Pozo. I met him at the store there in Santa Margarita, and he gave me a little rundown about fighting fire and snakes and flies and bugs and heat and so forth, but if I was up to the task he would arrange an interview. So I went into San Luis Obispo, to the ranger headquarters. That was actually the San Luis District at that time; it was before it was consolidated with the Santa Maria. Jack Dillingham was the fire control officer. I had a little brief interview with Jack, and he signed me up. So my first summer job with the forest service was that June, when school was out. I was at Cerro Alto, what they called the Cerro Alto Guard Station, which was a little campground. There was a small residence and a corral and a trailer there, about halfway between Morro Bay and Atascadero, on the Los Padres. That's where I spent my first summer. We had a few local fires, went up the coast a couple of times to the Monterey District, and went out east of Pozo on a couple of fires out there, but nothing of any long duration or large acreage.

Then I went back to school, and the following summer I hired back on at Pozo. I was on the Pozo crew there, on the Marmon-Herrington tanker – I guess "engines" is the word today, but back then they were known as tankers. I spent the summer of 1959 on the Pozo crew, and then went back to school. In the summer of 1960 they assigned me as patrolman out at what they called Queen Bee, which was east of Pozo. I was a summer patrolman there at the Queen Bee. The following year, in 1961, I was at Pozo as the helitack foreman. We had a helicopter there, and there were two of us on the crew. I stayed on that in 1961 until the fall, when I was drafted into the Army. Then I went off to a couple of years in the service, did a tour of duty in Korea. When I came back in the fall of 1963 I returned to the district office and was reinstated.

I'm a third-generation Californian. I was born in San Mateo, California, and had a high school biology teacher that got me interested in forestry. Up until that time, I thought I was going to go into veterinary medicine, but he got me interested in forestry. I started looking around, with the help of my parents and a cousin who was involved in the state system of higher education, about where was the best place to get an education in forestry. At the time, Oregon State University in Corvallis was the place, so I ended up going to Oregon State from 1960 to 1964, and graduated with my bachelor's degree. Then I worked for a little over two years for the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources, in Olympia, at their Forest Land Management Center. While there I went back to school at Oregon State, under a fellowship, to get my PhD. I graduated with that in 1970, and began work with the Forest Service in November of 1969.

Ron Stewart

Interviewed by
Fred Kaiser,
July 7, 2004
(1969)



Insect control – bark peeling, Laguna area, Cleveland NF. 1933

“Called to Service”

Jack-of-All-Trades and Master of All

In this section Region Five interviewees describe the numerous tasks they undertook as part of their job. It is a story of multitasking, with a steep on-the-ground learning curve. In the pre-World War II years, forestry education programs and Junior Forester status provided a general training in forest management. During this period, the federal government was still scrambling to staff the positions necessary to complete the ever evolving mission of the Forest Service. At the same time, management policies evolved as new scientific techniques, new technology, increased environmental concerns, and the politics of government changed philosophical approaches. No program could possibly train a professional for all the job tasks that would be required in a nation filled with millions of acres of national forests with varying local needs. Foresters were being asked to sell timber, fight fires, protect watersheds, regulate grazing and deal with trespass and mining activities, build a forest infrastructure of roads and communications, design multiple use plans, protect the natural habitat, and provide recreational facilities. Many also took on administrative jobs like personnel management, fiscal, public relations, law enforcement and other activities depending on the need. Any forester could be thrown into a situation requiring them to accomplish any or all of these tasks. Only after World War II, when specialized professionals began to become available, did this “Jack-of-All-Trades and Master of All” policy begin to diminish. In the following interviews (arranged here by first year of permanent Forest Service employment) we can see the innumerable skills of individual workers and the shift to a specialized staff that was trained for and held accountable for specific tasks.

Lee Berriman

Interview by
John Fiske,
June 3, 2004
(1933)

I started working on the Sierra on a bug job, but I only worked there for a month, and then I got this offer from the Experiment Station. We relocated, and I did reconnaissance on roads that we figured were necessary for fire control. After that, the next season, we tried to find spots that were available or would make good campsites, and we worked on that for a year also. The relocation of lookouts was the result of a study. We tried to find lookouts or points, mountains, that would make better lookouts than the ones that were in there already, and maybe eliminate some of the older ones that weren't doing much good. About 1937 or 1938, I went to the Shasta Forest on the McCloud River District. I was there for a year. From there I went to the Fall River District and I was there for a year, and from there I went to the supervisor's office, working in timber management. When I went on the Fall River District, I had assignments and carried

out those assignments. Also, if I saw anything that I figured should be done, why, I let the boss know about it, and maybe I could do it. Of course we had lookouts to take care of.

I cruised timber, of course, and I did various things at Mt. Shasta. I was assigned to scale logs for different companies that were going to take in and saw up into lumber. I remember one particular job that the boss – it was a little mill, wasn't very big – jumped on me one morning and told me I was over – well, that he wasn't getting the board foot out of the timber that I marked. So I spent a day in the mill tabulating or



Ranger Lee Berriman (L) talking with men of L.A. Co. Fire Dept., on fire line in Prairie Fork Valley – Fish Fork Fire. 1953

recording each log or each piece of lumber that came out of the mill, and figured it out at the end of the day, and he was getting a seven percent overrun. I told him about it and he didn't say anything. But I told him I was going to have to scale a little closer. I cut him down to what I figured was about three percent. So his complaint was to his disadvantage.

I was assigned to the Scott River District on the Shasta Forest in '39, and I left just after the war was over. That was a very good ranger district. It had a little bit of everything, a little grazing, a little timber sales, a little recreation, and of course fire, which all of them have. I think it would have been an ideal district for training, because of the fact that it had everything just about that a person is going to be asked to do as a ranger.

From there I went up to Quincy, where we were given about six months instruction on aerial photographic interpretation. In other words,

we looked at two adjacent photos, and we could see them stereoscopically. We were typing the forest or determining the site, and whether it was brush or whatever, and putting it into a class. I went to Placerville, where they had a station, and took all the data and figured out the number of board feet in the state of California. I then went to the Sierra on the Big Creek District of the Sierra Forest. I was District Ranger there. I think that was in about 1946. There was a lot of recreation on that district. The next place I went to was the Angeles Forest. To be perfectly frank, I went there as the fire control officer, but I don't think the supervisor and I saw eye-to-eye on some of the things. So at the end of about a year there was a ranger retiring from the Saugus District, and I asked the supervisor if I could have that district, and he agreed. Then I spent about twelve years on fire on the Saugus as the District Ranger. From there I went into the supervisor's office in watershed management [1960]. I retired in 1965, after spending five years in the supervisor's office.

In those days, they more or less figured they didn't know how to train a District Ranger, at least that's the impression I got. They couldn't figure out what to train him in. On the McCloud River District I didn't get any training, really. But on the Fall River District of the Shasta, I did get a little training there, and I think it helped me later on. It was just assignment of jobs. But there was no report on how I did, or improvements, or what I could do to make things better. I think that's a very important part of training a person to do anything, is to go over it with him afterwards and tell him what was good and what was bad, and then what's good again. We used to have – every once in a while there would be a session up at Quincy. They would go up there and give us a pretty good rounded training. I remember there was one in scaling logs. There were a bunch of fellows up there from the regional office in timber management at that time. They all scaled these logs. We had them numbered. They scaled the logs and then averaged what they came up with. Everybody was getting their results, how far they missed it or how close they came. But I didn't get mine. I wondered why I didn't get it, so I went down and asked them. They didn't really say anything, as I remember, they just sort of sloughed it off. Well, it turned out that I hit the same average that they had, my figures agreed with theirs, and they never told me about that. They should have told me, I think, and let me know, and said, "Well, now, how did you get this"? or something. Because I think the supposition was that some way or other I got hold of

the answers, and they felt that it wasn't fair, so they never told me what I got. I never did learn.

There were about ten of us, all guards, went over to Mount Wilson and stayed in a tent camp all winter on top of Mount Wilson. I worked on erosion-control work. One day the boss said to me, "Harry," he said, "You're assistant foreman." I said, "What?" He said, "You're assistant foreman." I said, "That's the first time I've heard anything about it." "Oh, yeah," he said, "You've been assistant foreman all the time. You don't get any more money, forty cents an hour, but you take this truck and drive over to the Forest Service warehouse and pick us up a load of materials we need, and grub," and so forth. So I did. Then, when I found out I was assistant foreman, why, he began to give me jobs, and small groups of the guys and I would go out and work. Winter ended, and we completed the job there on Mount Wilson. I got a call from a ranger over at Glendora. He said, "I wish you'd come over and talk to me." So I went over and talked to him, a fellow by the name of Nils Peterson. He said, "You've been selected as patrolman at Crystal Lake," and I about dropped dead, I was so happy, because I had spent a lot of time at Crystal Lake as a kid, hiking around, and knew that country. He said, "You go to work the first of May, but you go to work to maintain such-and-such trails, and you can move into the guard station anytime." In 1935 I worked there all summer. I had a horse and a mule. I packed to the lookout, Mount Islip Lookout, once a week and, patrolled the park area, which was operated under a special use permit to LA County.

About the first of August, we all received word that Bill Mendenhall had been assigned to Washington office temporarily, and we were going to get a new supervisor from the Lassen. I've forgotten his name. He didn't know anything about Southern California, so he came down there, and Bill pulled out. Without his contact with the LA County Board of supervisors, all of the funding for my work disappeared. The new supervisor didn't know anything about it, so I was out of a job in about a week. That following winter, when I got laid off from fire duty, the ranger, Jack Kearn, put me in charge of painting all the toilets and doing any repair work in San Gabriel Canyon campgrounds. I got to the end of the fire season, about the fifteenth of November, and got laid off. In March of 1937, they had

Harry Grace

Interview by
Gene Murphy,
April 29, 2004
(1934)

the big flood down on the Angeles, and it really poured. Boy, it just took out everything out of the canyons. All these campgrounds I told you about – they just went down the creek, all the toilets and all the concrete tables. So I couldn't go back to San Gabriel Canyon, so they put me over to Valyermo Ranger District, where I was the fire control assistant. I got there from school, and the ranger said, "Are you going to go back to school?" And I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "I hate to have a man on this job that's only here part time." He said, "I'll pay you the same wages if you'll go to the Big Pines job and take over that job." So I did, and I became the fireman at Big Pines, the fire prevention officer in the county park, and got to know the county park people real well. That went on from '37, '38 and '39. When I came back at the end of the season, why, the ranger says, "We're gonna take the park back." It was under a special use permit from Los Angeles County. It was a big layout, and they had tried to duplicate Yellowstone. They had spent millions of dollars. So I said, "Well, okay. I don't know much about running a park." "You'll learn."

After the experience at Big Pines Park, Bill Mendenhall, who was supervisor, and the only supervisor I ever worked for on the Angeles, told me that he would get me a job as a JF, Junior Forester, as soon as I got my grade. Well, I flunked the first time, and that was the seven-hour exam. I got a grade of sixty-two on that. Then they did away with that exam and went to an intelligence exam. I sat at home and I took two weeks off, and my wife Dot just threw the book at me, and I passed. So then came Christmas time, and Bill called me and said, "I wanted to call you and tell you that you've become assistant ranger on the Mount Baldy Ranger District [effective] probably the first of March. So I said, "Okay."

So I worked up till about the first of March. Bill called me on the phone again, and he said, "Well," he said, "you can move now, but you're not going to Mt. Baldy." I said, "Well, where am I going?" He said, "You're going to Sierra Madre as the district ranger." And I about dropped dead, because anybody going from a guard into a ranger job was unheard of. So I moved down there to Sierra Madre on the Santa Anita Ranger District.

Then in 1944 I get a call from Bill. He said, "You're moving to the Eldorado as a ranger on the Lake Valley Ranger District," which was at the southeast end of Lake Tahoe. I went up to the Eldorado on the train,

and I got there, and the supervisor wasn't there; he was at a supervisor's meeting. They said, "You can't go to the ranger station anyway, because it's snowed in, so you'll work here in the supervisors office." I worked a week in the supervisor's office, and about went nuts. He, Ed Smith, showed up on Saturday, and came over to where I was staying and introduced himself and said, "Now, we can't get up to Meyers for about two weeks, but in the meantime, I want you to work with me in doing some work on water rights and water development. I said, "Okay." So I did, and then he told me the following week, "The road is open. We can get in there now." So I went up and went to the Lake Valley Ranger Station. Ed stayed a couple of days, and we went around. He introduced me to people, including Rex Quiberg, the fire control assistant, and then he disappeared. When he disappeared, he said, "I have a lot of confidence in you, but I don't want you to make a single decision on this ranger district for the first month you're here." He said, "You talk to Rex and ask Rex what he thinks about it, and if Rex says okay, go ahead." So I did. At the end of the month's time, Ed called me up. He said, "The month is over with. I talked with Rex, and he says you make all the decisions from now on." I was there two years, and learned a lot from Ed.

In 1946, after the Eldorado, I went to the Sequoia, as fire control officer. I didn't know anything about a fire control officer's job other than I'd been on a lot of fires. I worked there two years, and I liked it very much, and I wanted to stay there, but I got a call from personnel that said, "We want to send you back to the Angeles as fire control officer." I said, "Oh, is there any way I can get out of this? I've already put in a lot of years on the Angeles, and I like it up north." They said, "Well, we'll see if we can drag over somebody else." I kept dragging my feet until finally they said, "You better make up your mind, or you'll never get another appointment." That was the rumor in those days. So I said, "Okay, I'll go." So we moved back to the Angeles, and I was eight years on the Angeles as fire control officer. I was getting damned tired of it.

We lived next door to the ranger on the Plumas, Henry Kloppenberg. He was our next-door neighbor, and he had two daughters that I grew up with, too. Henry had managed to get me into the CCC Camp, and I went in as a Local Experienced Man, LEM, as they called it. We were building a road with Caterpillar tractors at that time. Then I went to work with this Forest Service crew that was doing the thinning, and

Richard Droege

Interview by
Brian Payne
July 10, 2004
(1936)

they're the ones that talked me into going to forestry school. I think it was three years in Osceola, Florida, where I was using these CCC boys to make maps. They were pretty good. We headed for California, and went to this fire replanting project with an office in Berkeley. I thought I was going to the Sierra to start working. I had gotten down to the supervisor's office there in Quincy – we weren't supposed to go to the Sierra, we were supposed to go to the Stanislaus, which is the shortest notice I've ever had.

From there I was assistant ranger on the Tuolumne District, and I somehow got back to Sonora as an assistant ranger. It was there that I got my first appointment as ranger; that was on the Bridgeport District of California [on the Toiyabe National Forest of the Intermountain Region].

Lunch in fire camp
– Fish Fork Fire,
Richard Droege, fire
control officer; Gov.
Conrad Lesarally,
governor of the Zuni
Indians many of
whom were working
on the fire; and
Brother Jonathan,
member of the
W.K.F.L. Fountain of
the World, working as
a volunteer cook
on the fire.
1953



Then I got moved to Carson City as ranger. In Carson City, on the district, we had a Conscientious Objectors Quaker bunch. We put them to work on cleaning – there was a power company had been located in the canyon, and they had gone out of business, and the thing had been knocked down. But there was a lot of used brick, and they cleaned the used bricks for us, and we hauled them into town. We were going to build a ranger station, but they determined that we shouldn't be building anything, because it was wartime.

Then I went to Susanville, to the Lassen, as their fire training officer. Then I got transferred down to the Descanso on the Cleveland National Forest. I was hoping that I would make supervisor of the Angeles, because Red Nelson and I – he was my boss – we'd had several feasts of Passover

because I'd been passed over for supervisor of the Inyo, and passed over for supervisor of something else. But I finally got on the Angeles. I only lasted on the Angeles for three years, and left there in 1959. That was the end of my California time. Then I went to Milwaukee as assistant regional forester. After Region Seven got closed down I got moved into the Washington office. I was assistant chief for fire and recreation.

I was a forest guard at Quaking Aspen in 1940, the year I got out of school. There was a CCC base camp in Springville, and I had a five-man spike camp with five CCC boys under my control, mainly to maintain the campgrounds at Quaking Aspen. I was still looking for work, because my job as a guard at Quaking Aspen was a summer job. I ended up on the Sequoia in 1941 or 1942 as a fire control assistant. In 1942 I moved to the Trinity. That's when the Trinity ran darn near to the coast, and Mendocino came up from the south. Northern Redwood Purchase Unit was in the Trinity at that time.

I went to work on the Purchase Unit, the Northern Redwood Purchase Unit, in May of 1946. It was originally designed to be the Redwood National Forest. What they did was to set up some boundaries that they wanted to include in it, and the government purchased a piece here and a piece there that was available inside those boundaries. They were authorized to purchase anything in that boundary that they could get their hands on. There was a Northern Redwood Purchase Unit and a Southern Redwood Purchase Unit. They were two separate pieces, but they were intended to be joined and make a national forest out of them, the Redwood National Forest. Well, it didn't work out. The government never came up with the money they needed. So when the Six Rivers was formed, they just forgot about the Purchase Unit, and let the Six Rivers [National Forest] own the property that they'd already acquired. It became part of the Six Rivers National Forest. I was the assistant; they called it a ranger, but it wasn't really a ranger. Vern Helen was the fellow that was my boss there. They called him a ranger, but he actually wasn't qualified that way. He was a highly developed, highly intelligent, highly trained technician, is what he really was.

In September of 1947, I was transferred to Gasquet as a fire control assistant. I went to the Angeles as assistant district ranger in May of 1949. From May of 1949 to April of 1951 I was assistant ranger to the Arroyo Seco District, until I was promoted to District Ranger on the

Jim James

Interview by
Gerald Gause,
February 5, 2004
(1940)

Cleveland. In October of 1955, I was moved to Gasquet as District Ranger. It was a higher workload job than the fire job on Escondido; all we had on Escondido was fire. I was real busy on timber sales, and I flew air attack region-wide. I don't know, I guess it was because I was stupid and liked to fly, but almost every time they had a major fire I ended up in air attack on it.

In 1964, I went to the regional office as assistant division chief, information and education. I was there from 1964 through 1968, managing the office, which is what we mostly did there, while the boss handled the public relations work. But I also flew air attack from there. They used to ship me out of there to fly air attack. While I was in that job, I also was shipped back to the Washington office to head up a study for a national air plan. I had a small committee, and we came up with some of the gossip, at least, of what turned out to be the national air plan, later. The Boise installation was a result of it, or it was a part of the result. It also coordinated the aircraft contracting, and that set up some of the regulations for what could be contracted and what couldn't be, and that sort of thing. From the regional office I went back to the Sequoia as forest supervisor in 1968, and I was there until I retired.

Andrew R. Schmidt

Interview by
Nordstrom "Nord" Whited,
December 18, 2003,
and January 21, 2004
(1941)

I started in June, and they called it quits for the season in December. Lacking anything else to do, I went back to school for a semester at Cal [University of California at Berkeley], and took the first part of a graduate course – which I didn't intend to continue anyhow, but it was something to do. I spent the summer of 1938, 1939 with Oscar Evans' [timber cruising] crews on the Plumas. But in 1940, I got a job scaling timber on the Shasta. I took the Junior Forester's exam both in 1938 and 1939, but at that time they weren't doing much hiring. That spring I got a notice that I was accepted for my Junior Forester appointment. That happened in April 1941, on the Trinity National Forest in Weaverville. I joined the navy in January of 1942, and I was called to active duty in October of '42. We left down there late August, I guess, aboard ship, and went to Honolulu and stayed there for about three weeks or so, and then got a flight into San Francisco, and I was mustered out. That was in October of '45. I've been with the Forest Service the whole time, except for the navy for three years.

In June of that year, 1945, I was under Wes Hotelling, ranger on the Lower Trinity District. Then I was the Lassen assistant ranger, and I handled special use permits and made that map of grazing allotments. In

December 1947, I was transferred to be District Ranger of the Salmon River [at Sawyers Bar] on the Klamath National Forest. I was given an RO [regional office] detail, studying the manual on range. While I was down there in San Francisco, I was given the word that I was going to be transferred to the Shasta as a staff officer in range, recreation and wildlife. We had to oversee the recreation program on Shasta Lake. That was 1950, in February 1950. I had a lot of good help and training by Walt Wetzels, who was assistant in the RO and taught me a lot of range techniques, about judging proper use. I had previously been trained by Al Cribben on how to pack mules, so I was a little bit familiar with horseback riding by that time.

After Shasta, I moved to the Eldorado National Forest in June 1954 as a timber management officer. I had contact with all the lumber companies, and I was getting the rights-of-way for most of them for our timber program and also timber sales, preparation and sales program. The sustained yield units were ongoing at the time, trying to get them established. During that time, the experiment station came out with a program, a system of unit area control, which was taking what was on the ground and applying management treatment to that unit. I think that was a forerunner of the ecosystem management. Unfortunately, the system didn't have any guidelines for application. I was instrumental in getting a systematic classification of the stands, so that you could apply silvicultural treatments like thinning or clear-cutting or thinning or selective cutting.

In February of 1959, I was promoted to Region Four as branch chief in charge of sales administration and sale preparation. I was there in Region Four for a couple of years. I hadn't had but a smattering acquaintance with lands work on my other jobs, but I think – going back to Region Four, we used to attend national timber management meetings, and I met Axel Lindh who was the regional forester in Region One, so I knew who he was, and I guess he knew who I was. In the meantime, he had become the chief of the division of lands and adjustments in the Washington office. After two years in the chief's office, as the branch chief, George James got me transferred to Region Nine as assistant regional forester in the new department of lands, minerals and soils, and watershed. So they established that division. My first job when I got there was to get the Sylvania tract, which was about 6,000 acres of primeval north woods up in Upper Michigan, on the Ottawa National Forest.

In 1970, George James got a telephone call from Region Five, wanting to know if I'd be interested in heading up the planning team at Lake Tahoe [California and Nevada]. Yes, I was interested, because I was planning to retire in the next three years, and the assignment would last about that long.

Bruce Barron

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
July 1, 2004
(1942)

In the early days in the Forest Service – I guess it's similar as it is today – budgeting for employment was a little on the rough side. The Forest Service got funds for timber, funds for timber improvements, and they got money for range management, money for roads maintenance, and fire money for repairing fire equipment. But those came in little packets of funds, and in order to keep a part-time employee on during the winter, why, you might go out and prune trees, or you might be fixing fences, or working on telephone lines. It was a very diversified background, and I think nearly all the old-time foresters went through it, even though they had their forestry degrees and they were full-time. You had to lend yourself to the problem at hand.

I think the thing that helped me the most is that I had worked in summer vacations in the early years of my college on some of the big old land grants in San Benito and Monterey counties. I worked with horses and animals, worked any kind of a farm activity, which teaches you how to run equipment, tractors, and trucks, and bulldozers, and how to work with horses. It was to my advantage to have that knowledge when I went to work for the Forest Service because it fit in. A lot of the foresters were city dudes and saddling up a horse or doing a diamond hitch on a mule was new to them. Going way back in history, you didn't require a degree. I remember guys that went down to the post office and showed that they could tie a diamond hitch on a mule, and knew which end of the ax to hold, and how to take a compass and go out in the woods and find their way back. A lot of those old-timers were perhaps some of the best of the foresters that we had, because they learned it from the ground up.

Bob Gray

Interviewed by
Susana Luzier,
August 5, 2004
(1942)

Iworked one season as a lookout, and then in 1945 I became a full-time employee with the Forest Service in McCloud, as fire crew foreman and district dispatcher. Later I worked in Mount Shasta with Merv Adams and Ralph Bangsberg as the north zone dispatcher and the assistant dispatcher on the Shasta forest. After the fire season, I continued work at the nursery with Carl Lanquist and also with Doug Leisz. At that time, the dispatcher job that I had was not year-long, so I worked at the nursery on occasion during the years at the dispatcher's office at Mount Shasta.

In 1950, I moved to Mount Shasta as the assistant dispatcher, and I worked there for a couple of years. I met lots of interesting people who really influenced my future in the Forest Service. From there I moved to Fall River Mills and my first job as a fire control officer. That was in 1954 and 1955. I was asked to move to Weaverville by Paul Stathem, who was the supervisor at that time, and I lived in Weaverville from 1956 to 1960 as a district fire control officer. After four years in Weaverville, I came back to Mount Shasta as the fire control officer, and they changed the title to the fire management officer at that time. I completed my career on the Mount Shasta ranger district over a period of eighteen years, until I retired at the end of 1976.

During my first twenty-five years with the Forest Service, I was involved in all phases of forestry and forest management, before the Forest Service became more specialized with their people. I participated in timber sales, line running, tree marking, fuel management, and all kinds of related timber activities, including reforestation, converting brush fields into timber lands, and then the actual planting. I also worked in engineering, building roads and buildings and maintenance of these structures, particularly at the Mount Shasta nursery site. Among other things, I learned to operate some fairly heavy and light equipment, bulldozers, graders, and items like that, particularly during the construction of the Mount Shasta nursery. At the nursery, it was quite a project of planting seeds, preparing sites to plant the seeds, building sprinkler systems, and all that went with the nursery work. It was hard, backbreaking work, but very rewarding in the long run. I also mentioned that I was a dispatcher at one time, before I got back into the field as a fire control officer. One of my favorite jobs during the off-season in the McCloud and Mount Shasta districts was snow surveys. For about twenty years I took snow surveys during the winter months, and I enjoyed it very much. It was a getaway from some of the other less fun-filled jobs. At Weaverville I became a packer, never a real good one, but I had a lot of experience with mules and horses in Weaverville, because we had the wilderness area to pack some trail crews in.

Irwin [husband] was determined to be a forester. He got started with the idea to be a forester in the Boy Scouts. In those years, you had to take the Junior Forester exam to get an appointment and he had a little trouble passing it for the first couple of years. That's why it was

Mary Ellen Bosworth

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
February 17, 2004
(1944)

just summer work. We made thirteen moves those first four years. In the very beginning, living on a lookout, I remember making the remark, “And is this what you went to college for?” But afterwards, later on, it turned out to be a real good outfit. Those days, lots of times when he was out on a fire, working on a district, I’d think, it sure would be nice if he went on lookout again, because he’d be home all the time. In those days, you didn’t have to have a college education to work for the Forest Service. But [Bill] Mendenhall told him it was going to be necessary in a few years. He hadn’t taken a college course in high school, so he wasn’t prepared to go to college, but he took another year of high school so he could go to college, and got his degree in forestry then at Cal [University of California], Berkeley. We both went to junior college in Pasadena, and then he went up to Berkeley, and then after the first year in Berkeley, we were married, and I helped put him through the last year. I think I did more of his work than he did.

We left Susanville in 1948, and went to Dunsmuir and stayed there until 1952. Then we went to Quincy as a staff officer in timber. He worked at that for four years, and then he was changed over to staff in grazing and wildlife for the next four years. Then he was offered a job up in Alaska as a supervisor, but we turned it down after a lot of thinking, because my parents and his parents were getting up in years, and the boys were in high school at that time, and we didn’t think it was fair to them to make a move right at that time. It turned out real well, because six weeks later he was offered the job as supervisor at Susanville. You didn’t turn down jobs very often then. We knew it was bad, but we were going to take our chances anyway. He did it for family reasons only, and he knew that it wasn’t a good idea. Both of us knew that, and we spent one horrible weekend trying to decide whether we should or not. As it turned out, it worked out fine, but we knew that he was ruining his chances of going ahead by turning it down.

Scollay Parker

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 19, 2004
(1947)

I majored in forestry at Oregon State University. I was looking for a job during the summers while I was going to school. I worked for the forest service at Lake Spring Lookout for the summer of 1941, and then the next summer I was administrative guard at Echo Lake, on the old Lake Valley District, near Tahoe. I went from there to blister rust control. When I graduated from college, in the summer of 1947, I came back home to Placerville. They were looking for a temporary suppression crew foreman at lumber yards, so I filled in there for six weeks for a fellow that had

pneumonia. Then a job opened on the Modoc and I went up to Adin as a scaler, and my career was uninterrupted from there. In the spring of 1948, I got my professional appointment. I was there at Adin until the spring of 1949, and then I was assigned as a project sales officer on the Stanislaus at Sonora. I had the sales for the West Side Lumber Company, which was an interesting operation. In 1950 I was promoted to assistant ranger on the Sonora District. William “Bill” Spargo was the ranger there. We had a one-room office in one end of the forest supervisor’s building, and no clerk. We did our own clerking, filing, and typing. Bill used the hunt-and-peck system, and I’d learned to type in school, so I was able to type at a fairly fast rate. My job was mostly fire control.

In the summer of 1953 the ranger at Groveland got into trouble, because he was trying to fondle the ladies around the station, and they didn’t like that, and neither did their husbands. They assigned me as an acting ranger there at Groveland. It was quite a change from the Sonora District. The Groveland District at that time was quite busy; the Sonora District didn’t have the activity that Groveland did. The previous ranger had spent most of his time in the office, and when he went to a project fire on his district, he wore his oxfords and didn’t get out of fire camp. I quickly got involved, helping with timber sales and administration, preparation, and did some fire control work and so forth. Then I went back, the following June, to Sonora, and in February of the following year, 1955, I was assigned to the District Ranger at Orleans District. I replaced Charlie Yates. Charlie had gotten some large timber sales, and I continued that. All of our sales were clear-cutting. I was there until May of 1959. It was the most interesting community I ever lived in. There was always something going, and usually it provided lots of excitement. While I was there, my wife came down with bad arthritis. It was hard to get domestic help there, and it was a long ways to the doctors, so the Forest Service was good enough to arrange for a transfer to the new Placerville District on the Eldorado Forest. When I came to the Placerville, as I said earlier, it was a new district. It had a fairly wide range of activities, which was good. There were 650 summer homes and a fair timber harvest, and a fire load, and grazing, and that sort of thing that made for an interesting district. When I took over the district, I had a timber management officer and a clerk, and that was all. I had some temporary summer people in the summer crew, but I was the snow

ranger and handled the special-use permits, and everything else except for the timber, which – my timber man handled most of that, although I had to help out a lot in that, too.

Max Peterson

Interviewed by
Brian Payne,
July 2, 2004
(1949)

I had a five-point veteran's preference. I don't know whether that had anything to do with it or not, but I got a wire or a letter offering me a job. I responded and reported on August 8, 1949. I worked in the morning, and in the afternoon I went with George Newhall looking at hydroelectric projects on the Plumas Forest. There were a whole bunch of hydroelectric projects on the Plumas, and they were supposed to discharge a certain amount of water, and we were checking if they were discharging the correct amount of water from the various hydroelectric plants. The fourth day was on a fire, as a maps and records person using aerial photographs and field stereoscopes. We had a book that showed different fuel types, and so you would radio in that the fire was in a certain location, burning in certain fuel types, and this book gave you the rate of spread, depending on humidity and wind, so you could get an idea where it was going to be in an hour or two hours, so that the planning people could locate where they wanted to put crews. At that time there was no aerial surveillance. There were no helicopters, and a few fixed-wings that flew for lightning fires, but no general use of aircraft for mapping or that type of thing. After I finished on that fire for two days, I walked back to the bottom of the Feather River to work again on the trail. The next week I was working at a place called Ferris Fields, where we were putting in a series of check dams to rehabilitate a mountain meadow that had been gutted by some overgrazing. We put in a whole series of check dams, with different kinds of pipes going through them, and eventually brought the meadow back to where it used to be, with the help of some prison crews.

The Plumas Forest was great for me, because I think probably it had some of the best District Rangers I'd ever seen. What impressed me too was the number of really experienced technicians. All of the fire control assistants were technicians, and they were really capable people. I have a lot of respect for these people that had been around. They knew the forest, and they knew how to get things done. From the Plumas I moved to the Cleveland Forest, in 1953 [via the Trinity National Forest]. I went down [to Redding] on a Monday and actually had bought a house on a VA loan, because I thought I was going to be in Redding. The second day I was down there, I got a call from San Francisco, saying, "Oh, we want to move

you to the Cleveland as forest engineer.” I said, “Well, my wife would certainly love to go to San Diego” – she had a sister there – ”but I just bought a house here. I’ve got to figure if I can get out of buying this house.” I talked to the people where I bought the house, and they said of course, but it would cost the \$500 earnest money, which was quite a bit of money in those days. They said, “If you provide us documentation that you’ve been transferred, we will let you out of the contract and, in fact, give you your money back, because we have a waiting list.”

That was a remarkable change, because the Cleveland was established as a watershed forest, so it was heavily involved in the whole question of management of watersheds and had a large amount of recreation, particularly in the Laguna Mountains and on Palomar Mountain. We had the big telescope at Mount Palomar – and the reason it was put there is because it was inside of a great big green area, to prevent light pollution, but that was a magnet for people, the recreation in the Laguna Mountains and Mount Palomar. Laguna Mountains had all these summer homes and campgrounds that had been built there, and of course water was in short supply. The Forest Service, with the help of the CCCs, put in a whole community water system for all of Laguna Mountains. It was a pretty tragic situation for the recreationists that were trying to use the area, so we spent a lot of time in the first year – well, all the years I was there – of trying to use fire crews to build stoves, or build a concrete base for stoves, build tables, make signs, and so on.

We had a Green Sheet that was issued at that time, which was news of the Forest Service. There was an announcement about these Harvard programs called Land Use, and one called Water Resources. Red sent a note to Sim Jarvi that said, “We’ve never been successful getting a Forest Service person in this program. Suggest that Max apply.” So he gave it to me and suggested I apply. I thought, the chance of this happening is so remote, you don’t have to worry about it. I filled out the application and sent it in. Now remember, we had four kids at this point. I filled it out, and I thought, nothing’s ever going to come of this. Well, it kept moving up the line, and I’d get notice that it had been approved by the Forest Service, had been approved by the department and all this kind of stuff, because it was a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship. Lo and behold, on the first of July we got a notice that we’d been admitted to Harvard University for the fall semester. We decided, well, this is an opportunity,

so we arranged to rent our house, and we loaded up what we needed in a trailer. We swapped a couch and chair to friends of ours for a trailer. At that time, if you had so many years' experience, plus one year of classes and a major paper, you got a master's in public administration from Harvard. I went in the fall of 1958, and graduated in the spring of 1959. Harvard asked me to stay there for an additional year to help write a "Multiple-Purpose Water Resource Management Plan." It became Senate Document 97, which was the bible for a number of years for evaluating multiple-purpose water resource projects. Then I went to Montana for a time, and then came to the chief's office and was here for five years. Then in 1966, I went back to California as regional engineer.

Ed Grosch

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
March 9, 2004
(1949)

I started at Covelo, on the Eel River, in 1949. The ranger office was fourteen miles east of town, right at the base of the mountains. The Ham ranch was across the river from the office, on the other ridge. It was a 5,500-acre cattle ranch that took hunters out to hunt deer and bear. A tiny road went over the mountain, through Black Butte Mountain and down through Alder Springs, which at that time was the Forest Supervisor's headquarters, into Willows. It had been built by the Forest Service on different projects over several years. That was the only road on the middle fork of the Eel River all the way into the headwaters of the Mad River. If you rode a horse out of the Eel River ranger station, it took you nine hours to get to the Indian Dick Guard Station, which was twenty-four miles. It took you another seven hours to get over to the Mad River. You'd better hope the river was low or the trail was open so you could get through, because if you went in early spring there were [only] two ways to get across the northern part of the middle fork. One was on a bridge that's not there anymore and the other was to ford the river. It was a suspension bridge for mules and horses, built in 1939. They set the piers in 1938, and then they built the bridge itself in 1939.

In the spring of 1949 I learned an awful lot about putting loads on, because we used an adaption of a sawbuck saddle with some of the Spanish systems on it. In other words, it had the boards and stuff to keep it out from the animal. Then I went to fire school at Alder Springs on a Sunday. We were there until Friday morning. We finished up our wildland fire training; we had lookout training first. They gave me radio communications, fire tools and then fire behavior and an actual fire to put out. We wrestled that out and cleaned up our stuff and went back to our various places. On Friday afternoon, the assistant ranger and the two other Forest Service

fire guards drove some sedans through Highway 101 to Fortuna or just south of Fortuna, and into the Mad River so that a political party would have vehicles to get home with. We came back by horse. I remember I had nine animals behind me. I was in the middle, and we rode from Mad River to Eel River in one sixteen-hour day. After fire school and jamming those cars around, we packed up the radio technician, the assistant ranger, the packer, and myself, and we went to Beaver Glade that first day. You always did all your arranging to your packs the night before, because you started loading before daylight so you could get out of the canyon before the heat. We went to Beaver Glade, which had a fenced-in little pasture where we could stay the night. It also had a telephone. The next day we went up to Hammer Horn, and Roy Pogue, the radio technician, hooked up the radios for us, because they had taken the telephone out the year before. The radios were a big square called "T" sets. They hung on the side of your mounting or your pedestal for your fire finder, and underneath they had two banks of batteries. There were two or four of those forty-five volt batteries hooked up in a certain way, so that there was a throw switch. One was for night, and one was for day. It had a speaker mounted in it with a hand microphone that you could talk over. It reached the dispatchers in Alder Springs and Willows very readily. They left me another radio in a little box, a portable radio called an "S" set. It had a forty-five volt battery, small one, and four flashlight batteries. It had a wire antenna with a weight and string that you threw over a limb or something and stretched the wire up in the air for your antenna, and then you could turn the crystal until you could get your station that you wanted to call. You had little earphones that you'd put on, and you could talk on the thing by pressing a switch on the box.

I worked till November at the Hammer Horn Lookout. The ranger asked me to stay a couple days more, another week's more, and I helped him with some roadwork. One of the road work tools we had was a Disston twin-cylinder chainsaw. The motor alone, without the transmission and bar on it, weighed eighty-five pounds. That's the first real chainsaw I saw and worked with, that big old thing. It weighed a total of a hundred-and-some-thirty pounds or more when it was fully rigged. Then in winter 1950 I went to work again on the Ham Ranch, and helped on the San Luis Ranch, and the Newhall Land and Cattle Company. That spring, the ranger hired me again to go on trail jobs and

paint the office and one of the residences.

When I first went there in 1949, the ranger asked me if I had my own sleeping bag or bedding, and I said yes, because I did. He said, “Well, if you didn’t, I could supply you with a government-issued sleeping bag, a kapok sleeping bag, but it’ll cost you fifty cents a night.” Wow! I’m getting seven dollars and eighty cents a day? Then he says, “Yeah, and when you sleep out there in the tent where it’s got the platform and a bed, that’ll be another fifty cents a night.” When we were on the trail job, I found out that because we had those folding cots under us and the goddamn tent, we were charged fifty cents a night. And that’s the truth. When they issued our badge, a silver badge and a key, you signed a property slip for those. After fire school, we got our briefcase, which contained your map, your fire reports and your pencils and things, and that was on your property record. When you got your fire tools, they put down whatever tools you took out of the warehouse. If you came back without them, well, “That’ll be a dollar and this’ll be fifty cents,” and so forth. If you tried that on our modern-day firefighters, they’d say, “Go hike.”

I knew about work diaries beforehand, because of the foreman on the trail job, but at fire school they instructed us on how to keep a diary. At the lookout, you had a regular book that was called *The Daily Log and Diary*. You logged all your radio calls and visitors, and kept track of the weather and stuff on it. But once I went on to the smoke jumper bit, you carried your little pocket notebook and a pencil, and every night you wrote in it what you started and finished. Every once in a while – it wasn’t on a regular basis – they’d call up and ask for that notebook. The administrative officer checked the daily record against what was on your payroll, because you didn’t see your payroll. You got so much a day, and that was it. Overtime didn’t come in, I think, until 1952 or 1953. Then in 1955 differential [pay] set in.

You got up at four o’clock in the morning or earlier to start. When I was helping on the Eel River ranger station with that old packer, we’d get up about three. You’d hear him at three o’clock, rattling the stove lids on the little stove we had, building a fire. He said, “Okay, hit it, Ed. You go out there and fork the hay down to those mules, and I’ll get the breakfast started.” I’d come back in, and by the time we finished eating and cleaned our dishes and stuff – we didn’t have any refrigeration or anything – why, it was time to go out and start saddling animals. He’d be gone by five-thirty, six, and so was I if I was going with him. We’d reach Osborne, which

was the first guard station at about nine o'clock, something like that, ten maybe. We'd let them drink there and rest while we changed loads around, depending on what was to be left at Osborne. Then we'd load up again and go on up the road. Maybe we'd detour to a trail crew, if it was near us. We'd get to Indian Dick's maybe four or five o'clock, unload there, take care of our animals, and then turn them out. There was a hundred-acre pasture there at Indian Dick's, and another eighty acres fenced in at another place above it. We'd turn the livestock out, and we'd take care of ourselves. Then the next day we'd do it all over again. Maybe he'd be taking trail crew stuff to them, and I might be taking stuff up to Hammer Horn, depending on what was needed.

We didn't have the kind of communications that you have to talk to your boss every day. The assistant ranger and the ranger made up a work list in the wintertime, and they had it all typed up. When I was at the lookout, there was this work list like: "Scrape the paint on the west and south side and if you have time, paint parts of it. Paint will be brought up to you in July," or whatever – never did get there till August. You had your wire brushes and your putty knives and stuff like – oh, I remember when I got to Hammer Horn, I had to fix the stairs so you could get into the darn joint. The original stairs, when I first got there with the packer, Roy, were made out of fir poles nailed together, old red fir poles, and they'd been in the weather quite a while. I was supposed to replace those. The packer brought me up some fir poles, and I sawed them up and made a ladder to get back up over the rock into the lookout. Then in 1951, the forest engineer had the forest carpenter cut and make up all of the lumber for a new catwalk, new ladder, and new banisters for the lookout. They had it all broke down, and they flew in all of the stuff and dropped it on the ridge, right south of the lookout. The only thing they didn't fly in was the long timbers – there were several of those. The old packer brought them up.

It was along 1954 that the District Ranger got me a permanent appointment. He told me, "Ed, you got a choice. Either you're going to be a packer or a mule fighter or you can be a firefighter. Which do you want?" I thought a little bit and I said, "Well, I'll take the firefighter job," because I knew that would be continuous employment. That's how I came to be a firefighter more than anything with the mules and horses, though I didn't give it up right away. In 1955, the ranger asked me to

take on the Eel River patrolman's job, more or less like a foreman of a bunch of other people scattered across the district. I spent four summers out of Indian Dick's, and in the wintertime I did whatever projects were available – you know, TSI [timber stand improvement] and the Christmas-tree work, road work, and maintenance. I also had to feed the mules and horses on their winter pasture, which is just down the hill. One winter I made fifty-seven campground tables. They brought the lumber from someplace on a contract and I hand-built them. I didn't have a radial arm saw or table saw. I drilled all the holes by hand and the rest of it. We didn't have electricity at Eel River until 1957. Well, it had a generator plant, but the generator plant only ran for a couple hours of a day or a night, whenever the ranger wanted it, but other than that, we didn't have electricity.

In twenty-three years, technicians like Hooper and Riley and Doc Harper and I always figured the Mendocino National Forest was a training national forest. Every spring we got some new Junior Foresters, anywhere from one to three on a district. We had anywhere from six to nine months to either tell them he was going to be your future boss, or he was going to be doing something else. Toby used to lay it on not just me but on his all foremen and stuff. "Write me what you think of this Junior Forester" after he'd been there three or four months, to see whether we were going to have some kind of a true forester-ranger. I remember they washed out several of them; that is, as far as becoming a line officer type of person. They went into whatever, light recreation officer or something on the district or some other job. They didn't become a District Ranger or Forest Supervisor or anything like that. We always considered the Mendocino as a training forest primarily. It was never a true destination area for tourism. It doesn't have the fantastic redwoods. It doesn't have the Lake Tahoe vistas. Deer hunting was a big part of our time when I was there. Fishing was quite a thing along those streams, especially on the Eel River.

I stayed on the Mendocino until 1972. I had, a couple of times, tried to get up to Redding or into that area to live and make my home and hadn't been successful. Well, this job came open over here [Eldorado], and I saw the announcement for it. I told Len, "Why don't I apply for that?" My legs were starting to get bad, as far as running up and down those hills with those young bucks. I was forty-six years old then, and I knew it wouldn't be long that I wouldn't be able to keep up with them. I just thought, well, I'll try it. So I applied for it. I don't know how many others were in the list.

They don't tell you that. But they told me to go over for an interview. They didn't say anything at that time whether they had selected me or not. About a week later, I found out I had been selected. They were afraid of provincialism. You didn't stay on a district too long, because you get ingrown, and I have to agree with that. I think that's part of the problem with the system today, it's ingrown. People have stayed in one area too long, or they didn't get the breadth before they got there. I don't see rangers getting that breadth of experience they used to.

They sent me to Callahan, thirteen miles south of Etna, which was a ranger district that had just come over to the Klamath from the Trinity. I was only there about six weeks, but that was probably the best introduction I could ever have had with the Forest Service. They only had money for the three pay periods. We learned about marking timber. You'd walk, and you'd measure the timber, only a certain number of trees, and then you'd come back down. Then you'd put in the cull factor and all that, and it comes down below it, so they go back up and mark a couple of more trees, and back and forth.

In September of that year I was transferred up to Fort Jones, thirty-five miles southwest of Yreka, to work on the district up there under Rex Denny, the District Ranger. Lyle Hill was the FCO [fire control officer], and Gene Newton was the GDA [General District Assistant], as they called them at that time, and a whole bunch of other nice people. I marked timber there on what they called the Section Thirteen sale. Rex helped me get established, because that was the first time I really was involved in selection marking. When the winter storms came on, instead of moving from there I was shifted into the supervisor's office, but I lived with Gene Newton and his wife, Bess, in Fort Jones, and I commuted. Gene and Bess were the ones that introduced Ginny and I in early December 1951. That worked well enough that we decided to get married the following June, and we're still married. I worked in the supervisor's office the winter of 1951 and 1952. Anything they wanted to have done, that's what I was there for. So I got a whole variety of things there. I worked on a very large forest map that Russ Bower, the supervisor, wanted. I was involved in assembling the stuff from the range. The range information came in from the field. I didn't know what I was doing, but I did it anyway. It was one of the worst snow years they'd ever had, or had in a long time, anyway, 1951-1952. Boy, it

**Joseph B. "Joe"
Church**

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
January 21, 2004
(1951)

snowed to beat the band that year. And getting over the mountains from Fort Jones to Yreka and back again was a challenge, to say the least. I went off the road twice in the car and I got pulled out by a snowplow once. That summer I was sent down to the Los Padres with Sam Hall and Bill Jones, two other foresters, for orientation and familiarization, two-week training down there, along with a whole bunch of other guys. We were all JFs (Junior Foresters) and we went on a six-month probation period from the time you started. After that, if you were suitable, you became permanent. I started out as a GS-5. I think I first started at \$2,900 a year and it went all the way up to \$3,200 a few months later, really big.

Then when spring came in 1952, I was moved to Sawyers Bar, in the Salmon River District, back out in the field. In order to get to Sawyers Bar, I had to drive by way of Happy Camp. It was about a 120-mile trip to get there down the Klamath River Road, which certainly was an interesting ride in the springtime. The river was rolling like mad, and that road was about one lane wide half the way.

I was transferred from there to the Seiad District, about fifty miles west of Yreka on the Klamath River Highway, which at that time was part of the Happy Camp District, again in timber. Shortly after, in 1953, the Seiad District was created. Jack Moore came in from the Plumas to be the District Ranger. We stayed in the barracks there, which was sort of disruptive when the crews come in later on. We were there for three years. I went to the Oak Knoll District, and I was involved in all the salvage stuff. There wasn't so much salvaging of trees as they were trying to stop the beetle attack, so they let a contract out to cut the ponderosa pine down that was infected and strip the bark off and burn it. The problem was that when everything was all set up the beetles had already gone. But, the contract was there so the guy did the job. He felled the timber, he took the bark off, piled the bark, and burned it.

At Oak Knoll, in 1958, the Forest Service came up with this large, nationwide plan to inventory recreation areas, the ORRR or whatever, Outdoor Recreation Resource Review or something like that. Had a whole booklet full of things to look for and how to record it. The ranger at Fort Jones at that time was Lou Hahn. Lou was detailed to the supervisor's office to oversee this thing for the region, for the Klamath Forest. So I was moved over to Fort Jones as the acting ranger. I spent a lot of time on that outdoor recreation review. We wound up getting all the information in okay, but I got involved in range permittees' meetings that I'd never been to before

and didn't know anything about. Then in May 1959, I was transferred to Orleans. I was a District Ranger. That was a radical change. When I got to Orleans as District Ranger, the pay was somewhere around \$6,500 or something like that, GS-11. Orleans was 90 percent timber, and there was a veneer mill. They made plywood boards. It was slide and slump country, too. It slid all the time, all around there, so there was a real problem with cut blocks that would slip. You didn't know what to do about it, so you just did the best you could. Generally the size we were limited to was somewhere around twenty acres. You laid it out and went out on the ground and you laid out the boundaries of the cut block, and when you got all that part done, you went back and cruised it. We cruised timber when it was so foggy you couldn't see the tops of the trees, and it was raining, and everybody had to do it. The District Ranger was out there cruising timber just as well as anybody else, and then they didn't get overtime. We didn't have an assistant ranger, just a resource forester or timber management officer. I guess we had three or four JFs, and the FCO was a permanent position. We had a couple of scalers that were permanents. When I first got there, we had no clerk in the wintertime, so we rotated the clerk's job around, typing and keeping track of the time on the time slips, and all that. That's where Junior Foresters got a chance to learn a little bit about stuff like that, about typing and about filling in the forms. I said, "Well, hell, you might as well learn something about this stuff, and that's one way to learn it."

George Ramstead came and said, "I got a deal for you. You owe me a bottle of whiskey for this." Russ was on leave, so he was the acting. He said, "You have been offered a transfer to the Miwok District of the Stanislaus, GS-12." I said, "Well, I'll go over and take a look." We transferred over there in January of 1966, and I was there till January 1971. It was a totally different type forest, full of timber. I was there five years. I left voluntarily, because I got tired of the District Ranger's position. What came up was a planning job on the Mendocino. I took a drop in grade from a 12 to an 11, but it was the top of the 11. We transferred to Willows, and I spent two and a half years there, the worst two years in my Forest Service life. I got to the point where I hated that job. It was a total nothing. You got nothing back, no feeling of accomplishment. I did the worst work I've ever done in my life for the Forest Service, and I thought I was going to die. If I'd stayed there

another two years, I think I would have died or gotten fired, one of the two, because it just didn't work. About 1973, Paul Miescke said, "We got a memorandum from the Plumas. It said they're looking for a guy to go in and detail there as the resource forester on the Oroville District." He said that Bill Turpin, who was the district ranger, was going on a special fire project, using irrigation pipe to shoot water up along fires. Denny Bungarz was going to become the acting ranger and was looking for somebody to fill in behind Denny. He said, "Are you interested?" I said, "I'll go over and talk with him." I knew Denny already, and I went over there and talked to him. It had a bunch of things. I said, "Sounds okay to me." So I took that, and we moved over there in early May of 1973, and it was a total change in life. Jesus! I really enjoyed that. I said, "Make me a list of stuff you want done," and he did, a long list, and I could add stuff to it. It was 90 percent field – go out at seven in the morning and come back at eight at night. I got around that whole district. It was such a change for the good. That's where I was until I retired. When I retired, I was ready to retire. I had no regrets whatsoever. I had done the stuff I had wanted to do.

Lawrence Whitfield

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
August 28, 2004
(1952)

I worked at Hayfork for about a year and a half, and we moved to Trinity Center. I was a timber assistant there, and later my job title was changed to assistant ranger. We were there for two years. In the meantime we'd acquired two children, a daughter born in 1952 and a son born in 1954. We moved from Trinity Center to Big Bar about March of 1957, and I worked there as a GS-9 assistant ranger, primarily in timber business. In January of 1958 we moved to the Sierra, where I was a ranger on the Bass Lake District. Worked at Bass Lake for three and a half years, and then moved to Fresno, where I was forest staff for fire, recreation, and lands. Later they split the fire job off and I was the staff officer for recreation and lands. Later they created the deputy supervisor's job there. I worked at that until about July of 1964, moved to the Sequoia as Forest Supervisor. I worked at the Sequoia from 1964 to 1968. At that time I transferred to the Washington office as assistant director of lands. I was responsible for purchases, exchanges, and donations. I worked at that job until sometime in 1970, early 1971. At that time I became director of legislative affairs. I worked at that for about a year and a half. When I'd been on the Sierra and Sequoia, I went to law school at night, and that's, I think, the reason I became the director of legislative affairs. I practiced law a little bit on the side in Oroville while we were over there, but then became an inactive

member of the California bar.

I think there's a good deal of sameness in the western regions. I think the east and the south certainly had a different program going there, because of what they got into, and acquiring national forest lands. Those lands had been cut over, and we started cut over lands requiring different ways of doing business. Timber grew differently. Ground's different. But I do think there's a sameness about social and professional culture changes. In my early days with the Forest Service, transfers between regions were rare, except at higher levels. You just didn't see ranger level or above people in that category move, and you do now. But we found in Region Eight quite a few people that we had known or known of in Regions One and Five that were then in the south, and that was a good effect. It tends to bring the good from other regions. Every region I was ever in thought they were the best region in the Forest Service, and every one of them had some aspects that probably warranted that. But I don't think that was bad at all. I think it was good for the organization, in the spirit of competition that was healthy.

I graduated in June of 1950, and applied for the examination for forester in the fall of 1952. In the winter, my wife Ethel met me at the door of our little place with a letter that said I had gotten an eighty-five, five of which was veteran's preference. Seventy was passing, so I was going to be all right. In early May, I got an offer to – it was one telegram with about twenty names on it – start in Region Six. It didn't say where or anything. "You want a job?" All at the tremendous salary

Robert "Bob" Cermak

Interviewed by
Jerry Gause,
March 30, 2004
(1953)

Meeting of Region 5's
Fire Control Forest Staff
Officers.
1967



of \$3,410 a year, and pay your own way up here. Here I am, about seven or eight miles from the Mexican border, and I am so stupid that I didn't go to the local forest office and talk to them about jobs, or go to the regional office in San Francisco. I didn't know anything about the Forest Service. I said, "Well, it's a job; I'll take it." I got a letter from the supervisor of the Chelan Forest, which is now the Okanogan, saying they had a job for me at Tonasket, Washington, which was twenty-five miles from the Canadian border. Oh, well. I was determined to be a forester, so I went up there. Unlike my previous welcomes, this one was with open arms. The administrative assistant told me all about the Forest Service, gave me some things to read and told me where I was going to work, and all that sort of stuff. I thought, gee whiz, these are pretty nice guys. They assigned me to Tonasket as one of the two timber sales officers. The ranger was Everett Lynch. He was an old-timer who had worked his way up to ranger, and he wanted you to work eight hours on the stump; in other words, travel time's on your own time. We were marking timber by tree measurement, which meant we had to supposedly measure every tree to determine the volume of the timber. We used a paint can, put a number on the stump and a stripe on the top to show that it was marked. We seldom actually measured a tree in the diameter unless it was over, say, about twenty-four inches, because we could estimate it with our eyes close enough, and the same thing with the form class. You had to do that that way. By memorizing the tables, I was able to cut some time off the job. There were two of us each financed for half of a year. We understood that. In the wintertime, we pruned trees, along with the rest of the crew they were trying to keep.

I asked my new ranger Pete Foiles for a transfer to Region Five, because I was afraid they were going to send me over to the west side of Region Six, into that rain country. I went to talk to the Forest supervisor. He said, "I'm going to have to get somebody from Region Five that wants to come up here, because you're an experienced TMA," [timber management assistant]. I said, "Okay." About six months later, Pete called me in and said, "There's a guy who wants to come here, and he's from the Lassen, but the job they have for you is on the Plumas at Quincy. You know where that is?" I laughed. I said, "Yeah, I know where it is. I went to summer school near there."

The first person I met at the Quincy Ranger Station was "Hal" McElroy who was the FCA [fire control assistant]. I had been there for a few minutes, and just before eight o'clock, in walks this little guy with

white hair that looked like he stepped out of the band box for the Forest Service. He had a Forest Service uniform, sharp as could be, shined shoes, hat, the whole business. He kind of took a look at us. I had these grubby old greens on. I introduced myself. P. D., or as I called him later, Pete, didn't say much; he wasn't a talkative guy. He had started in 1925, on the Stanislaus. He had worked for years in timber on the Lassen and he worked his way up to ranger. No nonsense with P. D.; you do your job, and everything is fine. So he said, "Okay, you be here Monday morning at seven o'clock. We'll go look at timber sales." I said, "Okay." I was there at seven, and he had an old dark green Jeep pickup, just spic and span. I got in the truck and we started visiting timber sales, and we did that for about ten days. After this tour of ten days or so – and I'd been through all the files, all the timber sale folders, and all the Region Five manual supplements – he said, "Okay, the job is yours." I never heard from Pete unless I had a problem that I thought needed his attention. He let me do the job, and that was it. In 1958 they made the big change, and upgraded timber management assistant to a GS-9, and fire control assistants to assistant ranger at GS-9. Hal McElroy was transferred to the La Porte District, Yuba County, and I became the assistant ranger. That summer of 1958, I also had to do the outdoor recreation review for the district. Pete Hook called me into the office in 1958 – I knew the La Porte District at Challenge was open, a GS-11 district, and he said, "You're going to Challenge." I said, "Wow." I didn't expect that, really. We had a pretty good-sized district there, about 35 million timber cut, no recreation to speak of, a lot of mining claims, a lot of timber trespass, and some unhappy people that the previous ranger, Jack Moore, had managed to cool off a little bit.

Let's go back to the middle fork of the Feather River, the Richvale Irrigation District, down in the valley. A bunch of rice farmers had filed for a permit to develop the middle fork of the Feather River for power and water. One of the first things William "Bill" Pete had me do was to go to a meeting of the state Water Rights Board, in Oroville, and support the US Department of Fish & Game in saying "no" to this project. Bechtel Engineering were the ones that were pushing the project for the irrigation district. The engineer in charge had been regional engineer for the Forest Service in the thirties. I stood up and said, "The Plumas National Forest supports the position of the Department of Fish &

Game.” Boy, this guy from Bechtel just went ballistic, “I’ll call Bill Pete [Peterson] and raise hell!” He turned red in the face. I said, “Well, go ahead and call him. He sent me down here.” He said, “What??” Okay. Then we had to prepare a report on this proposal, and the work that I had done a couple of years previously in locating all of the recreation sites was part of the report to the federal power commission. This was followed by a report to make this one of the first seven Wild and Scenic Rivers under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We were all involved in all that stuff, and it became one of the first seven.

Then in ’62 I did the district multiple-use plan. I had these special areas that the multiple-use coordinator up in the supervisor’s office said, “What are you doing with all these special areas?” I said, “Well, the Feather Falls scenic area is a special area, and so is Valley Creek,” and he said, “What’s special about it?” I said, “It’s about 350 acres of old-growth, mixed conifer, sugar pine, ponderosa pine, red fir, white fir, incense cedar, Douglas fir, and some of those trees are probably 280 feet tall.” I said, “We need to keep a sample of that.” We also had to develop a recreation plan for the South Fork Feather River project. I did that personally, partly because I wanted to, but partly because there was nobody else to do it. That plan was used as the basis to get funds from the state, \$2 million. There were 250 units up there near the community of La Porte, only six or seven miles from Little Grass Valley reservoir. People were living on Forest Service land, and had been since they’d been born in the 1800s. They had been trying to get this into private ownership for years and years, and finally Everett Jensen down in the regional office said, “Let’s try a land exchange,” so he came up and provided the help, and Gene Murphy did a lot of the work. We came up with a land exchange proposal, and Bill Pete found some land that the water district there in La Porte could buy that would serve as offered land, and this whole thing was finally completed on July 14, 1963. It was the first time that had ever been done in the Forest Service. We were quite proud of that.

I was offered a transfer to the fire control officer job on the Sequoia, and I turned it down. Bill told me that was not a good idea, and Ethel said, “You better not.” I was highly rated in just about everything, and I felt they had just taken the first job out of the box and I wasn’t going to take it, and I didn’t want to be in fire in the first place. Bill says, “Charlie Connaughton, the regional forester, is the one that makes these selections. He’s not going to be happy.” I said, “Well, I’m sorry.” So word came down from Charlie:

write him a letter and tell him why I turned the job down. It was a hard letter to write, but I did. About a year later, why, I was offered a job on the recreation, fire and lands on the Inyo, at Bishop. I accepted that. That's exactly what I wanted. Hal McIlroy was ranger there at White Mountain in Bishop, and he was concerned about all those recreation vehicles that were getting too close to the streams, and polluting the water, and making a mess everywhere. I made the rounds of the districts and took a lot of photographs, and I went back and wrote a paper called "Campground Crisis." It proposed moving a lot of the RVs away from the streams, building new campgrounds, rebuilding the ones we had, and preparing to build others in the future by planting trees.

I had been there three years, and I was enjoying the work, but I knew that I couldn't get a deputy's job in Region Five. They wouldn't give it to a guy from within the region. I was offered a deputy's job on the Black Hills Forest in South Dakota, in Region Two. Oh, God! Region Two! I mean, Black Hills? South Dakota? Where is that? I'd have to leave California. Will I ever get back? I was dithering around there, and Ethel got tired of it. She said, "What's the matter with you? Don't you have any sense of adventure? Take the job!" "Okay," I said, so I took the job. I drove there, and the Forest Supervisor was a great guy named Kenneth "Ken" Sholes. My duties were to do the inspections. He had some ideas on some different kind of multiple-use plan, which integrated everything into one product, and I was to come up with that plan. We got people producing work plans on time and budgets on time, and also got the multiple-use plan going – land-use plan is what it really was – that Ken wanted.

Then about May of 1969, I was offered the supervisor's job at Pueblo, Colorado, at Santa Isabel National Forest. Well, here was a forest that didn't have a whole lot of anything except 14,000-foot peaks. We had over twenty of those. We also had 500,000 acres of national grassland, so there was 250 miles out to Elkhart, Kansas, to the Cimarron Grassland, and it was 160 miles in the other direction to the Leadville district office. The travel time was fierce; you had to fly out to the grassland. They had just finished a reclamation project up near Leadville, and built Turquoise Lake, and put in – of all things, at 10,000 feet elevation – a sewage system and flush toilets and everything. It was one of the dumbest ideas I ever heard of, because that meant you had

to have extra personnel to take care of all this stuff. The money was gone that financed a whole bunch of engineers and landscape architects and other people, and I had to get rid of them. My first job was to pare the organization down, which was not much of a fun job, I can tell you. I didn't cut anybody off the district. We didn't have any administrative assistants. We had a two-man road crew, one engineer, one landscape architect, a couple of general staff, and me. That was it. Nonetheless, we did a lot of good things. I decided that one thing we could do is make people aware that there was a national forest there, and I started an I & E [Information and Education] program. I wrote a one-page plan. I never had done much public speaking, but I spoke to groups, sometimes two a day, usually three or four a week. One of the reasons was that this was the time when these big Spanish land grants were going into private ownership, like the Forbes Ranch, and people were cutting them up into little pieces. It was a horrible use of land. One of the counties was Custer County, 2,500 people, with just a fantastic Wet Mountain Valley, and in the background, the Sangre de Cristo Range. They had asked the state for a county plan. There were only two people in the state planning office, and they came up with a typical plan. They asked me about it and I said, "Jeez, you know, this is going to wind up with subdivisions all over the place." They said, "The other thing we could do is declare everything agricultural, which means that the planning commission" – which was the county supervisors – "has to approve any kind of construction, any new construction or reconstruction, because it's all agricultural." So we went up to Custer County, and they had a meeting with all the people they could find, probably half the people in the county. We talked about it, and there were a couple of little resorts that weren't too happy about the idea, but after it was explained to them fully, they said okay. It's still that way today; they still have a beautiful valley and beautiful peaks.

The ski area business at Vail and Aspen was going great guns. One day this guy came to the office, and he said he was from Nebraska, a friend of the secretary of agriculture, who had been a state senator in Nebraska, and he bought this land down at the base of Mount Elbert, the highest peak in Colorado. He wanted to develop a ski area. This was on the east side of the mountain, where the snow is not nearly as reliable as on the east side near Aspen. I said, "Let's talk about it." He said, "We'll talk at the hotel tonight." So I went out to his hotel, me and a staff officer and his financier.

That guy figured out within the first ten minutes that I wasn't going to go for this, but he kept telling me, "We can do this." I said, "We'll have to see whether or not this is an appropriate land use before I even issue a special use permit." The guy says, "Okay." He goes up the Arkansas Valley, up to Leadville, and every small town, he stops in and tells them what a son-of-a-bitch I am for not approving this special use permit. So I had to follow him up and talk to all of these people all the way up the valley. Then I got a letter from the chief, asking me to write a letter for the secretary saying why they shouldn't have this ski area development on the slopes of Mount Elbert. I did, and that was the last of it.

There was big stuff about having the Denver Olympics that year. The local state senator, whom I knew fairly well, called me. He said, "Bob, what do you know about the Olympics?" His name was Bob, too. I said, "I really can't say anything about the Denver Olympics because my boss is on the committee, but if you want to find out about it, why don't you call the state Division of Parks in California and ask about Squaw Valley?" He said, "Okay." He called me back about a week later. He said, "I not only talked to him about Squaw Valley," he said, "but I called Chamonix in France and one in Switzerland and they all told me the same story. They all lost a lot of money." So he and another state senator, named Richard Lamm, who later became governor – they stopped the Denver Olympics based upon what had happened elsewhere.

In 1972 we were transferred to the George Washington Forest in Virginia where we had two great years with good people and beautiful country. Then in 1974 the supervisor of the North Carolina National Forests retired, a GS-15. They asked me to take the forest. I was away from home, and I didn't get a chance to consult with Ethel. Our kids had all been to at least two high schools. Robert had been in three. Judy was in high school. Dan had just graduated. She was not really too happy, but I said, "I don't think we're going to get back to California by staying here," which is what we wanted to do eventually. So I accepted the job, which was really quite an honor for me because there was only four or five GS-15 forests in the whole United States. We had ten ranger districts, two job corps centers; we had work programs which employed probably 800 people in addition, and it was the whole state. It was so different in Region Eight, where you had a whole state. You had to take care of the congressional delegation, and the state delegation, and all the pressure

groups, and your forest. I went down there, and I decided the first thing I had to do was to know the people, because the problem was, morale was at rock bottom. People were not producing. I started hitting the roads on the forest, and I went to all ten districts and met as many people as I could. In one case this fellow whose job was running a dragline came up to me and said, “You’re the first Forest Supervisor I ever saw, and I’ve worked for the Forest Service twenty years.” I said, “It won’t be the last time that you see me.” And it wasn’t.

About then, I was asked to go to Washington on a nine-week detail. This was for the development of the Resource Planning Act, and I was representing the national forest. God,” I said, “I just got here. It’s a GS-15 forest that needs a lot of work.” They said, “Tom Nelson wants you there.” I said, “Okay, but you’re going to have to let me come home on the weekend. I’ve got to have a home life, and I’ve got to do something with this forest on the weekend.” They reluctantly agreed to that. So I flew back and forth, back on a Sunday and back home on a Monday. It took us a week or so just to get ourselves together as a team, thinking together. We came up with goals, and then we would take it to the steering committee. We had access to all of the staff in the Washington office. It worked okay for a few weeks; we’d take stuff to the steering committee, and they’d change it. We’d take it back and try to massage it some more and take it back, and they’d change it some more; they were micromanaging the whole thing. We had good language; we had done a lot of writing. But it was frustrating work, and we were in a sub-basement, all the way at the bottom of the South Building. This was the winter of 1977-1978, and we got about halfway through when the staff started to put us off. We weren’t supposed to be at steering committee meetings, but I went to one of them. Max Peterson was running the show, and they did all their blabbing. I said, “Max, I’ve got something I’d like to say.” He said, “Okay, Bob, what is it?” I said, “We were told when we came here – we left our jobs and we have work to do back where we are – that we would have first access to all the staff in the Washington Office, and we’re not getting it anymore. We’ve got work to do at home, just like they have work to do here, so we need to have that original agreement adhered to.” He said, “I’ll take care of it.”

At any rate, we finally managed to get it through, and we had to present it to the chief and his staff. Max was very disappointed in the lukewarm reception it got, and he told the chief. As a result, the chief paid us a visit

and gave us a pat on the back.

It was two and a half years, a little bit more than two and a half years, and the deputy's job came open. Actually, they were creating three deputies in Region Five. I was away on a trip, and Ethel got a phone call. It was Doug Leisz, and he said, "Ethel, how'd you like to come back to California?" She said, "Hang up. I'll pack my bags." "I'll call Bob tomorrow." So we left. [We had] a tremendous turnout of people when we left. It was hard to leave, in a lot of ways, but I was suffering from the weather and from rheumatic pains, so I needed to get out of there. I immediately met a very severe fire season. I was frankly disappointed in the way fire had gone during the time that I'd left, because it seemed to have become more centralized and depended more and more upon people appointed from the regional office for fire teams. The performance was adequate, although there were some cases where it was questionable.

My big job was to get with the other two deputies, Curt Smith and John Chaffin, and come up with a program on organizing and management for the region, which we did, based pretty much on what I did in North Carolina. Doug was fully behind it. At the first supervisors' meeting, he spoke and I spoke, and I said, "Here's what we're going to do. We're going to make work plans that are real. We are going to set goals and targets that are real. We're going to have a budget before the fiscal year begins." We also had a schedule of trips by the deputies. We made sure we visited every forest every year, sometimes two or three times a year. We had the usual management reviews. Stanley "Stan" Undi in timber management and I got together, and he said, "The worst thing we have is timber sale preparation. We're not doing the job." So we put together a team made of forest people, district people mostly. They came up with a timber sale preparation program, and we put everybody in the region through it. Two years later, in 1980, each forest had at least two years of timber sales ready to sell. They didn't have to prepare them in advance; they were done. That was one of the things that I thought was really good.

That's an example of some of the stuff. All kinds of things going on. I had a set of boxes, one for each forest and each staff group. Everyone had their plans, including me. We had memos which documented every field trip, every inspection. Everything was in the box. We knew what was

going on in Region Five, and by the time I left, I had been to every single ranger district and every other unit in the region, and I talked to I think literally thousands of people about what we should be doing, and getting their feedback on how – and they gave me some pretty strong feedback, too. So I think it worked well, and I think what it showed was the only way that you can get a very large organization to work together is to get out there in what later became known as “managing by walking around.” You have to be there, and they have to know that you know what’s going on – and appreciate their problems down at the field level.

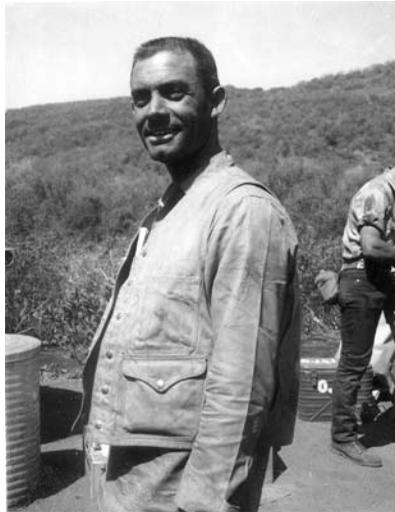
Bob Righetti

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 11, 2004
(1954)

In 1965, I became the district fire management officer on the Santa Maria ranger district. That was an interesting career, because the next year, 1966, was the Wellman fire. I had the privilege of jumping with the smoke jumpers for the first time in Southern California. They were headed for Santa Barbara, and the lead pilot had asked me if I wanted to jump with them or have them go to Santa Barbara. When I looked at the long hours that these men would travel to try to get them back into a position on the fire, I asked him if it was safe to jump them there, and they said yes, so I said, “Let’s go,” and they bailed out right over the fire. So within a matter of an hour we had them on the ground, their gear collected, and they were fighting the fire.

We were building fuel breaks, using dozers to scrape the brush off.

Bob Righetti,
Sespe Fire.
1963



Ray Dalen in Santa Barbara and I got together. I had told him that while I was separated in the early 1950s from the Forest Service, I did some work for Fish and Game, [using] a huge brush disk out in the old San Luis ranger district, and how effective it was. He said, “Well, let’s see what we can do.” Through some research I located a man by the name of Bill Twist, who was the president of Towner Disk, and asked him if he would work out a lease thing or something with a large disk, which he gratefully did. We brought it down and at that time changed the way that fuel breaks were put in. We started disking the brush because it chopped it up, put it in the soil. We didn’t have

erosion, because we still had some cover. Then other people in the forest started working with ball-and-chain crushing, and then we moved into prescribed burning.

I was asked by research in the Forest Service if I would work with research in the development of Southern California fire prescriptions. I said I would, because I had worked with the local range improvement groups when they did controlled burning. Through that and a lot of efforts and a lot of test plots, we developed the prescriptions that are used today in Southern California. We learned why fire did a lot of the things that we knew it was going to do, but we didn't know why. Through the prescriptions and through the burning program we developed some great firefighters.

Then I was asked if I would go to Marana, Arizona, and work with the national training team in the development of the logistics portion of the fire camp, fire programs, which eventually became the Incident Command System. I felt fortunate that I was elected to be the author of the service chief or logistics chief book training plan, which became the plan that people are trained with today. Through my career I was also fortunate to fly air attack on a lot of fires. I believe I was the first night air-attack boss in the nation. I still believe strongly in the night flying program. If it was set up and run properly, I think it would save the taxpayers lots of money, even today, with the way they're fighting fires. I think when these fires lay down at night and we can get retardant or water on them, and the crews first thing the next day, I think it helps us, and it gives the firefighter on the ground a safety margin to work from.

I put in a total of thirty-one years. I was on a fire team; I traveled to a lot of the major fires in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, and New Mexico, and met a lot of nice people. I ended up working as a logistics chief, and a lot of people couldn't figure why. But I felt that the need to give people what they needed to fight fire meant more than being a fire boss. They were a dime a dozen, but logistics people were a lot harder to come by. I took great pride in it, and I have a lot of letters today to show that a lot of people appreciate what I did for them. It was doing my job to help people fulfill a need and make it as comfortable as possible, so that they could put their efforts into controlling the fire.

I went to work on the old Trinity National Forest, before it became the Shasta-Trinity. We did finally start using transits and some tapes, and we actually did start making designs on paper, whereas before

Jim McCoy

Interviewed by
Bob Harris,
March 26, 2004
(1955)

it was just free location out on the hills and trial and error, and fit the curves to the ground. It's amazing, but we built some pretty good roads that way. I look back on some of them, and they weren't that bad, really. Don Turner had me transferred there in 1955, and construction started in August or September. That same year in December, we had a flood, and I can remember Shasta Lake. You could stand up there and watch it rise; it was almost like filling a bathtub. I remember watching some markings on the shore, and it was rising at about a foot an hour. Culverts were washing out all over the forest, and the road that we were building, the Gilman Road – it's just lucky we hadn't gotten too far along; otherwise we'd have lost a lot of it. I remained on the Shasta-Trinity, and Don Turner put me in charge of the survey crews. I think Larry Knudson came over, and he took over the design of the roads. At that time all of the engineers worked out of Redding, and it seems to me that we had about sixty or seventy engineers on the payroll. About that time they talked about putting engineers out on districts. Of course, we all were saying, "Oh, that will never work. That will never work." Don came to us and said, "We're going to have district engineers." So a lot of the engineers were assigned to various districts – it was about 1958 or 1959.

When this was happening, me, being a hard-headed engineer, said, "I don't want to go out on a district." Don replied, "Well, how would you like to go to Tahoe, then?" I said, "That sounds just great." So in 1959 I got transferred to Tahoe. I enjoyed my time there. I worked on some logging roads that were being put in. Ralph Malone was doing the surveying and engineering then, and he was a real sharp guy. However, as I recall, he was actually a graduate forester working as an engineer, and talking of a graduate foresters working as engineers, at one time, back in 1956, 1957, when there weren't enough assignments for a forester, and we couldn't find engineers, some of the foresters had graduated from Berkeley and Oregon, and they decided to become engineers, because they all had survey backgrounds from one of the courses they had in their forestry program.

I was assistant forest engineer, in charge of all the surveys and design and reconnaissance and for a while I had the campgrounds and some of water supply. But there wasn't enough of that at the time, and then I went into the survey program. We were building three hundred miles of road, and I walked over every mile of road with the District Ranger. When I got

there, the rangers were bad-mouthing the engineers about not being cooperative and this and that. I told Bill Peterson, "I'm going to change some things around here, and these people aren't going to get happy about it." There was sloppy construction. They weren't building roads right, and [they] were caving in, culverts were plugged. I said, "I'm going to make those guys build that road according to specifications, right down to what it says in the prospectus there." He says, "Have at her." I said, "Okay." I made some points with the ranger, and I made some good friends, I think, with some of the rangers. I tried to see their point of view, too. There was a time when the Forest Supervisor back on the Trinity, when I was there, was going to have engineers learn how to scale timber, and how to mark timber for cutting. You had to figure out the height of the tree, and the diameter, and if you cut this one or left that one. Well, I was out there. I thought, "Man, I am going to make some money." The bigger the tree, the quicker I learned to cut it. You don't do that; you're supposed to leave some for seed out there. That was what they call select cutting in those days, and I still think it was the best way to go. Because then we come clear-cutting and that sort of thing, I always frowned on that. I like the select cutting.

In 1964, floods practically washed out the national forest. At that time, I was on the Plumas. We had some big culverts that washed out, but there were some new designs that saved some of the culverts. Sort of like a snorkel on the top of the culvert, where if it plugged up at the inlet it would overflow, and there would be a top drain that would let the water come in and drop down and keep it from washing out the fill. Those that we'd put in seemed to save most of our fills in that 1964 flood. Those that didn't have them, we lost the fill, because the inlets would plug up from the trees and the debris from the logging and whatnot. In 1965, I got transferred to the regional office, into the construction group. I switched jobs eventually and got out of construction; I was in charge of recruitment and personnel. I recruited around 200 engineers while I was in that position. There were a lot of forest engineers who were active in the seventies and eighties who were probably some of the people I recruited.

After joining the Forest Service, I spent the summer of 1956 and the winter of 1957 working out of the regional office in Denver. At that time, the engineering organizations on the forests in

Jon Kennedy

Interviewed by
John Grosvenor,
June 15, 2004
(1956)

California, Colorado, and in Region Two were basically what they called zone engineers. A zone engineer would be responsible for engineering on several national forests. The region was undertaking two things at that time. One was an attempt to get graduate engineers on forest to replace technicians, who at that point in time had done a lot of the engineering work, and most of the survey work, and to break up the zone engineer idea and create engineering positions on each forest. So in the spring of 1957 I was offered the first engineering position on the Bighorn National Forest in northern Wyoming, at the ripe old age of twenty-three. I moved up there as a GS-5, and a couple of months later was promoted to GS-7, and spent four years on the Bighorn. I was promoted to GS-11 by the end of that four-year period. My supervisor, William “Bill” Augsbach, made it a point to give me a promotion as soon as I was eligible to get one. So that was the reason I had that title, “The Youngest Forest Engineer in the Forest Service.”

I’ll never forget, when I first came to California to visit the forest, on a house-hunting expedition and tour of the forest, I came through San Francisco and stopped at the regional office. Webb Kennedy was

Stanislaus Rangers and Staff, 1963.
From left:
Eugene Murphy,
Tom Beard,
Alan McCready,
Charlie Lewis,
Jon Kennedy,
Dick Wilson,
Harold Mitchell,
Oliver Sapousek,
Bill Lunsford,
Barney Sweat,
Harry Grace



regional engineer at the time. His first reaction when he saw me, “My God, they’re makin’ ‘em younger every year.” Of course, I was at the ripe old age of twenty-six. The Stanislaus was a GS-12 position, so I got another promotion at that point. I moved to the Stanislaus, and Harry Grace was

forest supervisor on the Stanislaus. Harry was a taskmaster, and you either did or you didn't meet his expectations. If you did, he was your best friend. If you didn't, you paid the price. As it turns out, one of the first things that I ran into on the Stanislaus was a problem with a bridge that had been built a few years earlier, across the Stanislaus River, over which Pickering Lumber Company at that time was hauling logs out of their property north of there. They were hauling it across this bridge that had been designed for highway loading. I subsequently told the Forest Supervisor that if we weren't careful, we were going to end up with some lawsuits and a couple of logging trucks in the river if we didn't stop that off-road hauling across that bridge, or spend money to beef up the bridge. Harry said he just couldn't believe anything like that could happen on this forest. After that time, why, I was in pretty good graces with Harry. We had the regional office bridge engineer, Neil Gilmore, come out and look at it, and he wrote a report recommending that the loads going across that bridge not exceed highway loading. The company was very upset, because they had spent thousands of dollars on reload points and heavy equipment to reload off these off-highway vehicles on to highway vehicles, so they could go on down to the mill. As a result, there was some friction generated between the company and the Forest Service, but they finally decided that off-highway was not the way to go, and they contracted with loggers and truckers to haul it all away.

I spent six years on the Stanislaus. The Stanislaus was basically a forest that was railroad logged for years and years and years, and the transportation system at that point was basically a road network that didn't come out of the forest but rather went to the railroad landings, where logs were shifted to railroad cars, and then hauled out of the forest on rail. As a result, the transportation system was very internally oriented. Cottonwood Road was the first major access point that would allow truck transport instead of going to railheads, come directly out of the forest into the mill site. It was a substantial project, with forty miles of road. We built the first twelve or fourteen while I was still there on the forest.

In 1967, I received a phone call from Harry Kevich, who was regional architect. Every time you talked to Harry you had to really strain your ears, because he talked in a very whispery kind of a way on the

telephone. He said “How would you like to come to the regional office?” I didn’t really want to come to San Francisco. “Well, I can offer you a job in San Francisco.” Sure enough, he offered me a job in San Francisco as a pre-construction engineer, GS-13, basically in charge of plans and design review of projects, assisting forests in their ongoing activities, and transportation system design. After I’d been in the regional office maybe six months, my first major project to work on was the Gasquet-Orleans Road on the Six Rivers Forest. In late 1969 I was offered the assistant regional engineer [position] in California, working for regional engineer Max Peterson. In 1976, I was offered the directorship of the data management staff in the Washington office. I was selected in 1979 to move to San Francisco as regional engineer. I stayed in the land management planning job until November of 1987.

Bob Rice

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 14, 2004
(1958)

My initial assignment in the Forest Service was in California, Region Five, on the Inyo National Forest. I had later assignments on the Stanislaus National Forest, the Eldorado National Forest, and the Superior National Forest for the second time. Then I was transferred out to Idaho, and had an opportunity to work in the Idaho Panhandle, bringing the three national forests, the Kaniksu, the Coeur d’Alene, and the St. Joe into a central forest called the Idaho Panhandle. So that’s eight forests, and the regions were Five, Nine, and One. My total Forest Service career was thirty-one years. I started on the Lee Vining Ranger District of the Inyo National Forest. My first position was called a general district assistant. I’m sure that

Bob Rice,
District Ranger,
Lake Valley District,
Eldorado NF.
1966



that’s been done away with. But essentially what that amounted to was being responsible for almost all of the district activities. The ranger station was a three-person ranger station, the ranger, myself, and the district clerk. Then we had a few summer employees to help. My salary at the time was \$3,675 a year. When you reported for work, the ranger gave you a silver Forest Service badge that said, “Forest Guard.” When you finished with your probation, you got the

standard bronze badge that we're all so familiar with.

I remember that the town of Lee Vining had a baseball team. There were fourteen members on the baseball team. Thirteen were Paiutes; I was the fourteenth. The interesting thing about serving on that team is that so many times in my career I've had to work with Native Americans. I really started to understand from them how to work with them, and I became an accepted member of their family. Another interesting part of that particular assignment was that the Lee Vining Ranger District had a large number of sheep permittees. They were all part of the Basque community out of Bakersfield, California. I had an opportunity, as you would say, quote, unquote, to "count a few sheep." My wife helped me a time or two. The period that I served on the Lee Vining Ranger District was about a little over two years. Then my ranger was transferred into the recreation staff officer position in Bishop. About that time, the National Forest Recreation Survey was front and center, and every National Forest had to do a complete inventory on potential sites for recreation development, campgrounds, summer homes, ski areas, and things of that nature. I did the National Forest Recreation Survey for the Inyo National Forest. It was a nice job, because I had a chance to visit the whole forest. In doing that inventory I became really acquainted with the Inyo. I also had an opportunity while on that assignment to work in the carbon dating of the Bristlecone pine. As the revenue of the National Forests was picking up, there was a need to find another way to try to tie the work on the ground with some type of annual work planning. About that time Region Four and Region Five started working on the Planned Program Budgeting System, PPBS. Gordon thought I might be a candidate to learn that, so he took me along on those trips. I really appreciated it, because we did go to that system, and I had a chance to learn it from the ground up. When I left that particular job, I was transferred to the Summit Ranger District on the Stanislaus National Forest as the assistant district ranger.

I was offered the District Ranger job at Lake Tahoe for the Lake Valley Ranger District. Oh, I had so many experiences there. I had just come from a district where you pretty much had to stay within the box, so there was a big shift in philosophies, because everything you do at Lake Tahoe is under the scrutiny of the public. There had been several proposals up to that point to make the Lake Tahoe Basin

a national park. Getting acquainted with all of the people, and being able to represent the Forest Service in a number of ways, was something that Doug [Leisz] encouraged me to do. He was always one that said, "Find some new ways," or, "You got to visualize," or maybe, "It's important to have a complete strategy." So with some of that expert advice in the back of my mind, I took on that job, and had a number of interesting experiences. One was the selection of that ranger district to be the training site for the 1960 Winter Olympics. That was quite an interesting time, because it was all on National Forest land. What it amounted to was taking over an old ski area on the Echo Summit Ski Area and putting in all of the facilities up there precisely as they would be when they had the Olympics in Mexico City. It was at the same elevation, which was the whole reason for doing that.

Another interesting thing that I remember is the importance of the Forest Service acquiring land on the shoreline of Lake Tahoe. A good percentage of that beach on the south end of the lake had been acquired a little earlier, but we were just now getting to the process of managing it. That's when the new collection system went in, where you had to put fifty cents or a quarter into a machine to go down and use the beach. Many of the locals were really upset with us using that approach, to charge people to use public land for recreation, but we got through it.

Also I had an opportunity there of serving on the Regional Fire Team. It was one of the earlier fire teams, region-wide fire teams that were formed. The film *Lake of Oblivion* was filmed at Lake Tahoe. You remember Corey Stuart, the ranger in the *Lassie* program? That's what that was all about. Corey Stuart was dressed up as a District Ranger for that particular film. At times, when he had a part, but was not required to use his voice, I had a chance to fill in for him.

[After stints on Superior and Idaho Panhandle National Forests] I accepted the forest supervisor position on the Inyo, and reported there in 1976. I chose the Inyo after we had a family vote; the other forest offered was in Region Nine. The family vote was three to two to go to the Inyo. I ended my stay on the Inyo, and my next trip was the Klamath National Forest, which we went to in the fall of 1981. I think one of the interesting things is the size of the Klamath. The variety of the Klamath, and the diversity of the Klamath, is something that a lot of people simply aren't aware, of unless they've been in the Forest Service. But you have rainfall

on one side of the Klamath of over thirty-five inches, and rainfall on the other side of the Klamath, on the east side, of eleven inches. So you can imagine all of the vegetation patterns that this forest had. It had everything from a forest that had no timber sales to a forest that was the largest in the region in timber sales. It took me quite a while to get reacquainted with silviculture, but it was really speeded up when all of a sudden a conflict developed in the region on the use of herbicides. I remember getting a call from the chairman of the board of supervisors saying, "Come on over and acquaint us with why you have to use herbicides." I started getting a feeling that the use of herbicides on national forests was going to be going in a different direction. The other thing that developed really early was the fact that we had the three forests that we referred to as the "golden triangle." They were called the golden triangle because we had a lot of marijuana growing. I use the term "pot growers," and I use the term "marijuana plantations." I recall one year when we finally got everybody together, the Fish and Game, and the Forest Service, and the highway patrol, and the county sheriff's department and others, kind of an agency group, and we were able to remove over 100,000 plants from the Klamath.

Prior to my assignment to Blackduck [District on the Chippewa NF, Region 9] I had mostly marked timber. But at Blackduck I was involved in all aspects of resource management. One day the ranger called me in and said "Bob, you've got a job offer to go to the supervisors' office in Cass Lake, in land acquisition." For the first time in my short career I was getting training and experience in resources other than timber, so I told the ranger "Thanks much, but no, I'm not interested." The ranger responded to the Forest Supervisor, John Von Bargen, and said "Tyrrel's not interested." And he said, "I want to know why, in writing." So Janet and I wrote out the reasons (mainly, she didn't want to live in Cass Lake and I didn't want to be in land acquisition). I explained to him that all my work experience was in timber management, and I was working for a ranger who was giving me good experience in the field. We were settled in a home, and I didn't want to take the job offer. Well, I thought my career was dead. I thought it was totally dead. He wasn't very happy. However, a few weeks later, I got my first District Ranger job.

You didn't apply for anything then. You got a call, and they would say, "We want you there." There was no applying. Eldor Krans, the

Bob Tyrrel,

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
September 1, 2004
(1959)

administrative officer for the Superior National Forest called me and said “Tyrrel, would you like to be a District Ranger?” “Well, of course I do.” He said, “I’ve been authorized to offer you the District Ranger job on the Superior National Forest, Aurora District.” It was a GS-9 district, and the supervisor was Larry Neff. The first meeting I had with him, he says, “Tyrrel, grade is determined by workload. This district doesn’t have enough workload to upgrade it to a GS-11. Your job is to get the district upgraded to an 11.” I had an assistant ranger, Nels Lee, a GDA [General District Assistant], Allen Keith, and a part-time secretary. That was the whole district staff! We worked almost every day in the field, and we were able to get it upgraded to GS-11 because of workload. During the first year, we built a new campground on Whiteface Reservoir, a beautiful big campground. It had a boat ramp, but the water wasn’t deep enough to float a boat. We solved the problem by getting a dredger, and we dredged that lake out.

Then I was offered a GS-12 ranger district at Isabella, which is really deep in the forest. We had a beautiful home. It was a government dwelling made of logs and built during the CCC’s. It was huge, with a full basement, and it cost us \$11.30 a pay period.

Then one day I got a call from the Forest Supervisor, John Wernham. He said, “I got a call from the regional office, and they want you to go to Washington, DC, and be interviewed for a Job Corps director position.” I said, “What’s that?” When I found out, I said, “Okay, I’ll go.” It was the most intimidating interview I ever had in my life. It wasn’t, “Come in, sit down, glad to see you.” You sat down, and they started to hammer you. I mean, with no smiles on their face. They would ask you all kinds of questions, and you had to be pretty fast on your feet. I remember one Job Corps candidate from Arizona – they kept after him saying, “You’re prejudiced.” He said, “I’m not prejudiced.” “Yeah, you’re prejudiced.” He said, “I’m not, either!” “Yes, you are!” And then the guy pulled out his wallet, showed a picture of his wife, who was black. So he got on. Anyway, we didn’t know if we were going to make it or not. The Chief, Edward “Ed” Cliff, invited us into his office to wait for the results. I, along with several others, was chosen to be a center director.

The next job was to locate the site for a center. Before we were interviewed, the Forest Supervisor asked his District Rangers to look around for a site for a Job Corps center. We had a nice location at Isabella,

so I had nominated it, and it just so happened that's where the center was built. It was a 224-man center, beautiful facility and the first Job Corps center in Minnesota. We had a staff of fifty-two. None of us had ever done this type of work before. The 224 corpsmen we received mostly came from the Bronx and from Kentucky. Definitely a mix of life experiences! I had two bosses, the Forest Supervisor and a person designated from the Office of Economic Opportunity. This was an interesting arrangement. The agreement at that time was that center directors would stay in the program no longer than two years because of anticipated burn-out. Ralph Mumme replaced me. After my two-year assignment, I was transferred to the supervisor's office as the I&E [Information and Education] staff officer. Then I was transferred to the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire, where I was fire, soil, watershed and I&E staff officer. I worked for a Forest Supervisor who had been there for seventeen years. As part of my duty assignment, I set up a booth at the Boston sports show to hand out some Forest Service brochures and answer questions. A guy came over to the booth and said, "Hey, is your name Tyrrel?" I said, "Yeah." He says, "You got a call." I went and got the call, and it was George James, regional forester for Region Nine. He says, "What are you doing?" I told him I was down at this sports show in Boston. He said, "Well, I had a heck of a time getting hold of you, but I want to offer you the Forest Supervisor's job on the White Mountain National Forest." He said, "But there's a little problem." He said, "The current supervisor won't make the announcement." Come to find out he had been telling everybody the recreation staff officer would be replacing him. We had a staff meeting scheduled where we were to make plans for the Forest Supervisor's retirement party. I said, "Hey, guys, something you need to know. I'm your new boss." I was thirty-six years old.

After we left the White Mountain National Forest, I was offered a job as director of planning, programming and budget in Region Six, and worked there four years. I was then asked to go to the Washington Office to be the Forest Service representative to the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, which is in the Department of Interior, to participate in writing the National Outdoor Recreation Plan. It didn't sound very exciting to me, and I really dug my feet in. But the regional forester, Ted Schlapfer, was very direct and insistent that it was something I should

do, so we did it. It didn't take me long in Washington, DC, to find out that that's not my cup of tea, so within my first ten days of my new job, I went in and visited with Zane [Smith]. I said, "Zane, I know I'm going to learn a lot here, working in the Department of Interior. But, I'm not a writer. I'm not that creative. I want you to know that if there's an opportunity to get back to the field, please keep me in mind." We finished the project, and I found it to be very interesting, particularly when you talk about cultures. The people in the Department of Interior at that time were very envious of me, because the Forest Service was able to make its decisions. I, as a Forest Supervisor, for example, could make some decisions. They had to run everything through the hierarchy in the Department of Interior. They were not decentralized at all, and that frustrated the employees a lot. We finished the outdoor recreation plan and were doing some follow-up things with it, when Zane Smith called me to the office, and said, "Bob, you know, I've been asked to be the regional forester in Region Five, and you know what? We've got a Forest Supervisor's position vacant. Are you interested?" I said, "Yes!" So that's how I got to Region Five. I went there in 1979.

Gilbert Davies

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 21, 2004
(1960)

I started working in the Forest Service in 1960, at the Shasta-Trinity. Six months later I transferred to the Klamath in Yreka, California. I started the day after Labor Day in 1960 in Redding, California, on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. My first boss was a guy by the name of Armstrong. He was an administrative officer. In those days there were basically four parts of the Forest Service; foresters, engineering, administration, and fire. My title was administrative assistant. In those days the Forest Service decided they needed more people in administration, and I was like a ninety-day wonder in the military. You'd go in there for six months, and you were supposed to come out and be all prepared. Obviously there's no way, but that was the theory behind it, so it was strictly a learning, training six months, and after that they assigned you to a forest.

There were two of us on the Klamath that were administrative assistants: Don Bachman and myself. They didn't know what to do with us, because they had never had any assistants. One day Bob came in and said, "Okay, we need to split this up. We need to assign you specifics. I don't know what you guys like or really want to do." Of course our knowledge was such that we didn't either. He said, "You decide between yourselves what you want to do." So the choice was administrative services, which

included at that time contracting, purchasing property, resources, office pool, warehouse, that type of thing, or the finance end, which was vouchers, payments, and fiscal. Don was across from me – we had our desks put together in one room. He looked at me and I looked at him. He said, “I don’t care.” I said, “I don’t care.” So we took out a quarter and we flipped it. I don’t remember who was heads or who was tails, but by a flip of a coin, it’s probably the only time it’s ever happened: our career was decided in the Forest Service. We wrote our own job descriptions. One of my first things to do in the administrative end of it was write a whole bunch of green supplements to the manual system. Then in 1961, the decision was made by higher-ups that contracting officers should be in the field. At that point they were in the regional office. Of course they needed them in the regional office, because there was a limitation on your authorization for the dollar value of the contracts. So they picked out high-volume old forests to have a contracting officer, and the Klamath was one because it was one of the highest, as well as Shasta-Trinity and others. I was chosen in the region to be the first contracting officer in the field. So that’s how it started. If you asked me my title over the years, it started out as contracting officer and supervising contracting officer. But people say, “What did you do?” I have to be honest, in the sense that my signature was over seven different titles, even though my job description was specific. As it went on, it was property management officer, contracting officer’s representative, leasing contracting officer, Privacy Act officer, Freedom of Information Act officer, and historian.

When I got to the Inyo I worked for the range & wildlife staff officer. I worked for several people there. That’s when we started developing these wildlife habitat plans, and also we started to get some money for livestock range improvement. I had the responsibility for both of those jobs. I was transferred from the Inyo to the Sequoia National Forest. My title was multiple-use staff officer, and I had responsibility for range, wildlife, watershed, and multiple-use. It was a much broader job than I formerly had, but I really enjoyed that. We did some really good things in range management. We had a lot of allotment plans that had been developed prior to my arriving, but they had never been implemented, so we started taking these plans and actually putting them into effect on the allotments. The other interesting thing on the Sequoia

Edward R. Schneegas

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
December 18, 2003
(1960)

was the Kern River golden trout. I was familiar with the golden trout over on the Inyo Forest, but no one had ever told me there were golden trout in the Kern River as well. We developed a plan with the Park Service for areas that still had the pure strains of trout. Down on the national forest we actually constructed a large waterfall. We had a trail crew go in there and blast out a waterfall to block rainbow trout from coming up the river, and then we went up to the park and the Fish & Game treated the river, and then we restocked it with the pure strains. I thought that was a real interesting program. We also had a habitat plan for each of the nine major deer herds, and for sage grouse.

I went to the regional office in San Francisco. Needless to say, that was a really rough move for me and my family. We had a hard time finding houses in the Bay Area, and had to commute over to San Francisco each day. We lived in Pleasant Hill. The transportation out there and back was difficult, and you didn't really have that close feeling of working on the ground with the resources. It was mostly a job of implementing broad programs, and coming up with different techniques for that. The biologist on the Modoc Forest discovered that there were large flats that accumulated water, but it required a dam to keep the water there late in the season. He put mounds up inside of this water for Canadian geese to nest on. The geese immediately took to it. Every island he built had a goose nesting on it. I went over to the California Waterfowl Association with this biologist and slides, and we presented it to the California Waterfowl Association. They were really enthusiastic about it. So the regional forester, Doug Leisz, and I worked up a trip, and we took seven or eight people. We flew them to Alturas, and then we got a bus and we took them out and showed them these projects on the ground. There was the president of the California Waterfowl Association, Starker Leopold, from the University of California, and it was a wonderful trip. They just said, "Go with this." I was there about four years, and then the opportunity came up in Missoula, Montana, in the Northern Region, to be the director of wildlife and fish, so I took that assignment in 1974, and we moved to Missoula.

Bob Smart

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 28, 2004
(1960)

I arrived in Placerville in 1967, and I started on the Cosumnes District. A lot of major roads were being contemplated or being built. One of the things that I really admired about what I was finding in California was that it seemed like we were concerned about recreation. In Montana, where my experience had been, there was almost no recreation and so you

basically had the forest and you had the guys that were in the logging business. Because of my experience with small log utilization, I ended up spending quite a bit of time developing the round wood program on the Eldorado. That was a program where they were trying to figure out: how might we start making products out of this smaller material? At that point, loggers, when they were removing logs in the woods, twelve inches was where the loggers wanted to stop utilizing the wood, leave twelve inches and below, which was bigger than a lot of the trees I'd ever seen harvested in Montana.

I was on the Eldorado from 1967 to 1970. I'd been in timber, and I was getting really tired of being in timber. At that time, the Forest Service had gone through a huge number of hirings, in 1966. There were a whole bunch of people who had been hired, so there were a lot of frustrations in the ranks. You hired us, and what kind of work are we doing? Some of us called ourselves the sub-professionals, because what we found ourselves doing was not very mentally challenging work. I was getting a wee bit of an attitude problem. Then one day Samuel "Sam" Hall, who was the deputy forest supervisor, came in and said, "Boy, have I got great news for you." He said, "The Forest Supervisor of the Lassen and this forest have worked out this arrangement, and you're going to go up to the Lassen National Forest, and you're going to be the timber management officer on the district." I thought, five years I spent in timber in Montana. I came to California with the idea of getting out of timber. I've been here for three years and I know if I say no to this, my career is probably over, but I want to be a broader person than just a timber person. So I ended up telling Sam, "No, I don't think I'm going to accept it." I explained to my wife the ramifications of that, and she said, "Well, whatever." So I said it. Sam, needless to say, was more than a little bit perturbed. He had three Forest Service supervisors who were involved with this, and also all those people who had been told that they were moving – it was a three-way kind of a switch thing that was going on. All of them had to back away from that. I think that I went onto that proverbial blacklist, if there ever was one. I began to look around for other work, figuring, maybe I'm not going to make it here in the Forest Service, and maybe I need to look at greener pastures. So I began to make some feelers. Well, the Army hadn't let me go completely, and I had gone down to a two-week summer camp. When I came back, the ranger

that I was working for, Robert “Bob” Cates, said, “You got a job offer on the Cleveland National Forest on the Trabuco District as a resource officer/assistant ranger.” I said, “I’ll take it. Where’s the Cleveland? And where’s Trabuco?” Because I felt, man, this is your absolute last chance, kid.

Well, it turned out to be Santa Ana was the headquarters for the Trabuco District of the Cleveland at that time, so we moved into this area of nine million people, the greater Los Angeles basin. There were two camps on the Cleveland. On the southern part of the Cleveland, you had the Descanso District and the Palomar District. San Diego was really mellow – this is 1970 to 1975. The Trabuco District of the Cleveland was immersed in the Los Angeles basin setting, so you had gang violence and turf wars being battled out on the campgrounds. I had the sad duty of having to close down three campgrounds because they were absolutely worn out and we couldn’t get people in there to provide for the public safety. I guess that was one of the beginnings of where I’m looking at law enforcement, because really I’m not a person who can write a citation very easily. I found that my leg would frequently shake when I was trying to cite somebody, but the fact is, I couldn’t see that we had much choice when people deliberately were violating whatever the standards were.

The Forest Service at that time was looking that you ought to be moving every three years. It was understood, if you’re going to be successful in the organization, you need to keep moving so you get a better breadth and experience.

Paul Hill

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 11, 2004
(1963)

I came back in the fall of 1963, and checked into the district office. I went out to Pozo, and I was on the helitack crew at Pozo. Later that fall, I was given the Avenales Station foreman job. I spent that year doing some trail work on the district with Dick Calkins. We did some trail grading with the mule, and several trail assignments. I did some winter work down on the Santa Barbara District, because at that time the districts were hard pressed in the winter for funding, so you went where the money was. If a district had some special funds or something, they tried to make sure they kept you on, so you went wherever you could have the work. In early 1964, I was contacted about going into the Job Corps. They had a Job Corps center at Alder Springs on the Mendocino. I took them up on the offer, and took off for Willows. I started there as a work leader, had a crew of corpsmen, and we did resource work building campgrounds and trail work. Then I was later promoted to work supervisor, so I had several work

leaders under me. In the third or fourth year there I became the work programs officer. Then the Job Corps underwent administration changes brought about by changes in the funding for the program, and there was a pretty large scale-back on the number of conservation camps. Alder Springs was one of those that got cut. [In 1969] I wound up with a job in the regional office in San Francisco, and I went to work in fleet management. I worked with fire management quite a bit on equipment, because the fleet manager, of course, did all of the procurement and contracts for fire engines and pumpers and that sort of thing.

I was in the Job Corps from 1965 to 1969, and then in 1969 I went to the regional office. I was an advisor to what was then the Region Five Tanker Committee. Later it was called the Region Five Equipment Committee, because they expanded into other areas of equipment besides tankers. But that's where I got involved with the equipment side of things, and working with people throughout the region, and representing fleet management in that group. I worked four years in the regional office, until 1973. At that time there was a opening at San Dimas – what was called the Equipment Development Center at that time – in a fire position. Dick Millar was now the fire director in Region Five, and he approached me about going to San Dimas and filling that position. I left the region in 1973, and went to San Dimas. At that time it was funded by the Washington office, and was considered a Washington office facility, but administratively they were still attached to the region. They were under engineering, actually, in the region, but we worked nationally for all the regions, so our projects and so forth were national in scope. We continued to have a number of Region Five projects which were special or unique to Region Five, particularly in the area of fire engines. We did a lot of development work, building prototypes, putting them out on various forests for trial use, and then eventually working up specification and drawing packages for the procurement of the engines. So the region, through their committee, helped steer what they wanted in their capability in engines, and then we provided the service of putting them together, and working closely with fleet management in Region Five.

I was actually at the development center until I retired in '92; I was there for nineteen years. It was a very diverse kind of program, so I had hands-on in a lot of different things, a lot of different problems. Having the opportunity to go to all the regions was a treat, in the sense that I got

Ron Stewart

Interviewed by
Fred Kaiser,
July 7, 2004
(1969)

to meet a lot of great people and share in a lot of experiences that I would not have otherwise had in the Forest Service.

My whole career has been sort of fortuitous. For example, when I graduated, I interviewed with the Forest Service at the Bend, Oregon, lab for silviculture. I was not offered the job, and I was just as glad because when I did go for the interview and got a chance to talk about what they were actually looking for, I didn't think I was a really good fit for it. One job posted was at Virginia Tech, and being a West Coast kid, I never wanted to go to the East Coast because it was always too crowded. That was my picture of the East Coast. So I didn't even bother to apply for that. But because my application was in, I believe that Carl Berntsen who was in the Washington office on the timber management staff, knew of a job being advertised for a position in the brush field reclamation and prevention and ecology research unit in Roseburg. I suddenly got a phone call to go down for an interview at that job. I went down and got the interview. It was in an area that my background was in, and I had worked in for the State of Washington for a couple of years. In fact, my supervisor at the State of Washington was a friend of the project leader, so we hit it off, and he offered me a job in Roseburg, and I accepted it, and I guess the rest is history.

I went back to Corvallis, Oregon, to the Forestry Sciences Lab in Corvallis, where I was project leader for what at the time was the largest silviculture timber management project in the PNW [Pacific Northwest Research Station]. I was offered an opportunity to come back to Washington, DC, in the timber management research staff in about 1977, and I came back and served on the staff there. In 1983, significant changes were going on in leadership in the PSW [Pacific Southwest Research Station] station at Berkeley. In fact, the station director and two assistant directors were leaving, and left vacancies. I applied for the position. I was a GS-14 at the time, so I had to apply for it, and I was selected as the assistant director in 1983 at PSW station at Berkeley. There, I was responsible for the Northern California units, which included the silviculture units, the old-growth, wildlife habitat unit, a watershed unit, slope stability unit, and entomology and pathology units in the Berkeley headquarters. It put me right in the middle of a lot of the big issues that were going on in California, especially old-growth habitat, and issues around use of herbicides and forest management practices

in the state. It was an exciting time; there were some really good scientists and really good efforts going on with the national forests in the state of California and with a lot of the private landowners. I had the Northern California research units, and I was the assistant director there until 1988. I became the station director when Roger Bay left. I spent from 1988 until 1990 as station director, and then in December of 1990 I was asked by the chief to become the regional forester in California, so in December of 1990 I moved across the bay to the regional office in San Francisco, and then I left to go back as associate deputy chief in research and development.

Battling “Multi-Headed Dragons”

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, foresters have taken seriously their role as stewards of America’s forestlands. They have mustered together as an army against misuses of forest resources by unscrupulous mining and logging businesses, greedy politicians, ranchers who over-graze their stock, squatters, and throngs of recreational users. They have also accepted the responsibility of battling flood, snow, pests, and drought. But foremost

Firefighters battling
the Malibu fire,
near Angeles NF.
1935



in the mind of many Forest Service employees is the man-versus-nature struggle against fire. As can be seen in the following interviews (arranged here by first year of permanent Forest Service employment) most Region Five interviewees not only have strong feelings about how forests should be managed, but define their role in the service and personal career success by how they have helped protect their charge from the ravages of fire. In the words of interviewee Bob Smart, “Fire was absolute kingpin of the hill. Everybody knew that if you were going to be successful in the Forest Service, you needed to be probably a District Ranger, and probably a fire boss. That’s one of the major reasons for success in the organization. That’s how you knew who had the salt to get the job done.”

Harry Grace

Interviewed by
Gene Murphy
April 29, 2004
(1934)

The guy that was ahead of me evidently didn’t care much about the job. After I’d been there about a month, Bill Mendenhall came up and said “I don’t know whether you know or not, but the Army is going to build a firing range and a lot of other stuff right at the edge of the forest on your district. I want you to build a fire break.” It was up these various ridges and back down in kind of a V-shape, about a mile and a half up to the top of the V and another mile and a half back down. He said, “That’s one of

the reasons I wanted you on this job, because I knew you could run this outfit and build a fire break.” He sent guys from all over the forest over to work for me. We built the fire break, got it going, and then the Army moved in. The agreement was they were not to fire any tracer bullets in this firing range. They moved in and started using the range. They had all kinds of secretive stuff. They invited guests from all the cities around to attend the opening of the firing range and the obstacle course. I said, “Now, remember, no tracer bullets.” “Oh, no, we can’t fire without tracer bullets.” I said, “Well, you signed this agreement that you wouldn’t.” “Well, who’s the Forest Service and what do they amount to?” So I went back and called Bill, and Bill said, “I’ll send the assistant supervisor over and you go down and talk to this guy.” I talked to him on the phone. He was a colonel. Bill Peterson, the assistant supervisor, came down and said, “Let’s go down and talk to this guy.” We got down there, and he said to the colonel, “We’re very glad to have the opportunity to talk to you about this. Now, the District Ranger, Harry Grace, will tell you what it’s all about.” I was a little flabbergasted, because I thought he was going to do it. Finally the colonel said, “Okay, we won’t,” and they didn’t. They were very good about it.

Bill Mendenhall was called back to Washington. Before he left, he named me acting ranger. When the fire came, about a week later, I figured, well, this’ll be another little 15,000 acres or less. It didn’t; it went in all directions. It burned into an old 1919 burn, which Bill had been fire boss on. He called me from Washington to tell me about it. I knew about it because I had a copy of the fire report right in front of me, where it burned. It just kept fooling around and fooling around. We brought in a lot of Indians from Arizona and New Mexico, and a lot of guys from a lot of other places. The man that saved me on that fire was Donald “Don” Bauer, my chief of staff. He took over, and he sat in an office at the experiment station with a blackboard with all the stuff that was going on, and a couple of telephones. When we finally ended up he couldn’t speak, he was so hoarse. He really saved the day. We had one incident where we thought a group of Zuni Indians were burned when an area re-burned on them. We went through quite an ordeal with that. When I went back to Washington in 1956 to accept a superior [service] award, “Mac” (Richard McCardle) was the chief of the Forest Service. He stuck

his hand out and said, "It's always good to shake the hand of the man who first spent a million dollars on a fire." I had a hard time living that down.

Richard Droege

Interviewed by
Brian Payne
July 10, 2004
(1936)

I'd just gone to work on the Descanso [District], in San Diego County, where we had a Marine camp on the district for training. They were useful on fires. On the first fire that we had on the district, as soon as I got there, six or seven men were burned to death. They had got into a box canyon, a steep sided canyon. The fire jumped it, and they just couldn't get out. The interesting thing was that after they got them all out, the commander of that group called me and said that they were ready to go again.

I had one of my more interesting experiences on that one. Somebody had an old plane, a two-wing thing that I could use for looking at the fire.

Tragedy on the
Inaja fire in
northeast San
Diego County,
1956



While I was doing that, something happened to the plane and he had to land, and there was of course no place to land. But there was a place out in the valley down below there, in Imperial Valley and we limped along until we got that far. I didn't get hurt at all or anything. Incidentally, in other times, I've crashed in a helicopter twice.

Jim James

Interviewed by
Gerald Gause
February 5, 2004
(1940)

While I was there, the ranger that was on the Trabuco district was not qualified as a fire boss. So whenever they had a major fire on his district, I automatically got shifted out there. I was given a bad deal on one occasion there. A Marine helicopter hit a telephone power line, and broke the power line and started a fire. It was in CDF territory. A CDF crew went

in on that fire, and one of the fellows was burned dead. He went down the hill into a gully where the fire was burning, which was not a very good idea. When I got there he was still lying down there on the ground. I had to organize that crew to get them to go back to fighting fire, which was kind of tough on me.

When I first went into the Forest Service, if a fire started, you jumped in and put it out, no matter what it was going to do or where it was going to go. Now we've got developments that are showing up inside the timbered areas or the interfaced areas, and it's made it almost impossible to do burning. You can't burn in California except for very small weather windows. I did some prescribed burning when I was on the Cleveland. I also did some on the Sequoia. Boy, it's expensive, and risky as the dickens. Wind changes on you and you've got – well, let's look at the history. I remember a fire that they had that got away from the guys up on the Klamath Forest [Bogus Fire]. God, it burned thousands of acres. There was a fire over on the Inyo when I was at Sequoia that burned several thousand acres. Somebody was trying to burn some slash or something. The only way to handle this now, as far as I'm concerned, is to get rid of this idea that we can't cut any timber, and let the timber operator go back in the woods, and plan the job and clean up after themselves and receive pay for it out of the timber sale. We got criticized, the Forest Service got criticized terribly, for spending money on timber sales. In other words, more than they took in. But we should have been spending it all. If we're going to do it now, start in now; that's the only way we're going to be able to finance it, is finance it with the timber.

I sure don't like this business of letting a forest burn. We have a fire season, and it's usually a bad one, bad conditions for fire, and unless you've got level-headed people, which we don't seem to have much of any more, they take the word from somebody that you should let the fires burn, not thinking in terms of what damage it'll do if it gets away. They let it go for too long, and then they get the big campaign fires that do a lot of damage.

In those days we didn't have air tankers. We just had regular trucks with tanks on them. Today they have a lot more mechanized help, and even the tankers have four-wheel drive. The reason we hit fires hard is that you wanted to keep them as small as possible. We'd knock them down just like we were killing a bunch of multi-headed dragons. Really sweat it out for a while. There was a lot of competition between fire crews. The first man

Andrew R. Schmidt

Interviewed by
Nordstrom "Nord"
Whited
December 18, 2003
and January 21, 2004
(1941)

Bruce Barron

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini
July 1, 2004
(1942)

on the crew would always try to get the fire out and down, so that the next tank truck, or the next crew coming in, you could always say, “Where have you been? We got it out; you might as well go home.” There was a lot of competition, friendly competition.

Forest Service Land
Weasel on Goldhill Fire
Burn. Laying hose from
fire truck to fire – L.R.
Mejia on Weasel; B.
Rennie; F.A. Thrasher;
P. Meursinge, Tanker
Operator.
1947



Bob Gray

Interviewed by
Susana Luzier,
August 5, 2004
(1942)

Here's the way it was prior to the days of air tankers, helicopters, and smoke jumpers. First, lots of hard work, using hand tools, using fire as a tool, using bulldozers, turning dirt over, throwing dirt with shovels, using water out of streams and hose lays, piling up burning material to make it burn up quicker, removing unburned fuel, building fire lines. It was tough, hard work, and it really was a demanding job, but I will say that in those days we were quite successful, mainly because of quick detection because of lookouts, and very aggressive initial action by the fire crews and anybody else who happened to be available in the office to dispatch to fires. They were all firemen when the fire whistle blew.

Several years ago I wrote a letter to the chief of the Forest Service in Washington, DC, expressing what I feel has happened in the last fifty years with the Forest Service. We were blamed for the conditions of the forests at this time, for being too efficient in putting out fires. I don't entirely agree with that concept. In my biased opinion as to why the fires nowadays, a bigger percentage of them, are getting to be major catastrophic fires, is that since the mid-'seventies, the percentage of large fires has doubled or tripled, based on number of starts. I also have some more observations about air tankers and helicopter drops. We should use them aggressively

in the early stages of a fire, at the head and on the hot flanks of the fires. Use it where they're intended to be used, to give those on the hand crews a safer and easier place to work. I feel that our air tankers are being used indiscriminately. They get more satisfaction telling how many gallons they drop on a fire than how many feet of fire line they control with the drops. Just a few things like that. Also, it seems like bulldozers are not being used effectively anymore, mainly because they cause erosion and destroy the forest. Well, those erosion spots and destruction to the forest can be remedied after the fire is over, so we should be using the bulldozers more than we do.

My first year I got off very easy on fire duty, except for doing the fire time slips. The next year we did have a couple of major fires. The first thing I knew, I was getting orders for groceries and gasoline from the fire camp, and also requests for trucks, and water tankers, and things like that. The fire was major, and they needed more equipment and supplies than was furnished automatically on a fire. That meant I slept at the office during the nighttime. There was only one person. At that time you didn't hire people on fire time [slips] to help out, other than at the actual fire. So, I had all these grocery orders. I soon learned that I should order the produce from one place and the meat from another place, and the bread and milk from special places. I enjoyed the time working there as assistant fire dispatcher. We didn't have many fires on the forest at that time, maybe only about twenty or twenty-one reportable fires. But we got a lot of work from the south zone dispatchers for crews and personnel to other fires, either on a southern forest or even northern forests. There was just Al and I.

During the Refugio Fire that burned in 1955, that burned from Gaviota Pass almost to Cachuma to San Marcos Pass, down to Highway 101 and down to the ocean, all of our critical fire people were gone on other fires. Our fire control management officer was on the Sequoia with a team. When this fire started at Refugio Summit there, in the little power house where a generator sparked, the Forest Supervisor, who was Bob Jones at the time, immediately called the region to have his fire people back. At one o'clock the district clerk at the Santa Barbara District called me and told me that they had a fire going at Santa Ynez. This was like September 2, over Labor Day, very hot and dry and subject to Santa Ana winds. She sent the hotshot crew, because at that time, the hotshot crew could not go off the forest. I dispatched whatever was left on the districts, told them to

Lorraine Macebo

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 19, 2004
(1946)

keep just one crew on. Then I called Al, the dispatcher. I had been working all day. So he came down and I went home. When I woke up the next morning, there were these tremendous clouds of smoke, and the fire had really taken off. That went on for about ten days; it was a major fire. After about three days into the fire, the supervisor, Bob Jones, finally got the fire management officer, who was Nolan O'Neal, back on the forest, and some of our crews were returned. At that time, of course, we didn't have air tankers, and helicopters were only used for scouting, so this was mostly an on-the-ground attack on the fire. During the fire we would have calls from the news media, and the dispatcher was the only one that could answer. I worked there as a dispatcher until 1963.

Scollay Parker

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 19, 2004
(1947)

I felt that when I was working for the Forest Service, it was a heck of a good outfit to work for. I took a lot of pride in it. But I think that in recent years I would try to find employment perhaps someplace else, because I think they're not doing the job that I feel they should be doing. One thing that really concerned me was the 2001 Sierra Nevada Framework. I feel it's a tragedy for the forest and people, and I think in time they're going to throw it out. I hope so, anyway. I have some reservations about the current fire management operation in the Forest Service. For instance, when we were there at Orleans about three years ago, looking around the old district, we went up to the ranger station, and the ranger was there in his office. He had a project fire going in his district, and he did have his boots on, but he explained that he didn't handle fire on the district; that was handled by other people in the supervisor's office or someplace, so he wasn't too concerned about fire. He didn't make timber sales anymore because of the Northwest Forest Plan, and the new ranger station there was like a big apartment house. We had a two-room office, which wasn't big enough, admittedly, but it kept people out in the field, because there was no room inside the building for them. I thought we got a lot done. And here's a ranger sitting here with practically nothing to do. I thought, there needs to be some changes made in the Forest Service.

When I came into the Forest Service, the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) was still active. They were done away with in the summer or maybe the spring of 1942. But that was their main fire force then, and that's why I was put on a lookout as my first job, because



Wheeler Springs fire, September 30, 1948. Sailors at fire line in Senor Canyon. Men at center are bringing in hose. Photo by U.S. Navy

there were no jobs on fire crews in those days for Forest Service people. Then in 1942, they hired young people to work in the fire crews. All levels of the Forest Service seemed to be pretty well concerned about fire suppression. District Rangers were concerned, and the people working for them, and the people in the supervisors' offices, as contrasted with today, where there's little concern in the Forest Supervisor's office about fire control, except for the fire management people.

We no longer have the militia that we had in earlier times, and I refer to the militia as those people that weren't part of the regular fire force, but were available whenever we needed them, and we used them when we got bad fire weather. They went out on patrol, or opening of hunting season, or if we broke a fire, they came out and either worked on the fire line or worked in the fire camp on various activities. But now the requirements that have been put on the Forest Service are that they have to have special fire training (which is good), but they also have to have Nomex clothing (which is all right, too). But apparently if they see a fire out in the woods, they can't work on it because even if they have had the fire training, if they don't have the Nomex clothing, they're out of line. I listened to a trail crewman call in last summer; he called in to report a small lightning fire. It was fifty feet by twenty feet; a stump was burning and it was just creeping on the ground. He said, "I've had fire training courses, but I don't have any Nomex clothing," so he couldn't fight the fire. Now, that is utterly stupid. I don't blame him, because he was probably told, "Don't you do a thing on a fire unless you have your

Nomex clothing on.” But there should be some common sense along with this fire training.

Ed Grosch

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
March 9, 2004
(1949)

In the middle of August we got a thunderstorm that came through, and I was able to spot some fires. One of them was right near the lookout. Finally the dispatcher said, “Go down there and see if you can put it out.” That was about dark. So I wandered down there with my Pulaski, shovel, and flashlight. It was about a half a mile from the house. I got to the little fire, and it was smoldering around a little piece of stump. Well, it was more than a stump; it was probably thirty feet up in the air. I put a ring around it, and then I started crawling around, digging out the duff that was on fire, because it had been wet with that particular lightning storm, and you just didn’t have that kind of flaming front. So I worked most of the night, and got it pretty well hooked up and out.

I had a pair of boots that I had paid fifty bucks for, ordinary Levi jeans, cotton khaki type shirt, because that’s what they wanted. I also had a felt hat and gloves. The only reason I had gloves was because I thought maybe I’d be involved with some kind of barbed wire or something at some point or another, or handling a lot of rock or something. The approved gear was just cotton clothes and a hat, usually a brimmed hat of some sort. Caps were frowned on, and hardhats weren’t available to us in any way, shape, or form. Gloves, if you weren’t used to working hard. You got calluses on your hands when you worked

Men working on
Mud Creek Fire



with tools to the point you didn’t need them, but that was the only safety equipment we had. They taught us, don’t carry the ax over your shoulder, carry it down, and the Pulaski, the same thing. Shovels, don’t put them on your shoulder. They

did provide scabbards for the Pulaski and the ax. The cross-cut saw – we used to take the single-jacket fire hose, when it had been broken enough, and we would cut it lengthwise, and then we’d put that over the teeth of the saw and wrap it with a cord of some kind. If we could get it, we would make rubber bands out of inner tubes from truck tires. The old rubber bands out of those were nice and stretchy and very strong compared to today’s rubber.

I was on the back edge of the light burner situation on the Mendocino. The year before I got there, they had moved in two people, one from the regional office and one from Southern California on the Upper Lake District. One was Red Anderson, and one was Doc Davis. They were to try and stop the Mendocino light burners of Lake and Mendocino County. A light burner was usually some kind of a stockman type or maybe a poacher, that in the fall would go along with a five-cent box of matches and drop matches in whatever they thought would catch fire, and ride out. Usually they would do it late in the day, knowing that maybe no lookout would see it until the next day, and they would get a burn of some kind. Usually you had your north winds in October, November on the coast country. They would burn a lot of the lighter brush. Yes, there would be trees killed, but the ones I knew about very seldom actually killed all the timber. Doc Davis, who was a very famous FMO [fire management officer] from the Cleveland Forest transferred there along with Red Anderson, who had been in the regional office. He also had extensive fire background. They lived amongst the people, and they would just stalk them in and grab them when they could. They were out there in the middle of the night, finding them and stuff like that. The last band of sheep kept on the Mendocino National Forest was in 1952, on a permit. Now, the sheep owner had private land holdings that he kept his sheep on at night – a bed ground. But he grazed into the national forest. That was the last band of sheep that were there. But on the Covelo District, on the area I worked, primarily in the middle fork of the Eel River, there were five cow permits, which entailed something like 450 to 500 cattle. It was considered Paiute forestry, where you let the fires burn so that your game and your grazing animals could get through.

Range was either stable or cutting back. We did little range improvement, including some prescribed burning. I'd have to say that most of the time we did any burning it was following thinning of stands or something, where we would create quite a lot of slash and there was concern about insect buildup in the slash, so we burned it. That was, incidentally, not greeted widely by a lot of people, who thought it would be better to let that slash deteriorate naturally, through natural decay. This was the day that people composted, and they saw that as fertilizing the forest. They thought that if we burned it, a lot of the natural things went up in smoke, so burning was not greeted by a lot of people. Of course, burning is

Max Peterson

Interviewed by
Brian Payne,
July 2, 2004
(1949)

expensive. There's quite a bit of criticism of burning and of course, once in a while a burn would get out of control.

The Cleveland Forest was a good place to make the transition to a metropolitan area and a forest that was primarily watershed and recreation and fire. I got involved in the whole question: could you change vegetation, or could you use prescribed burning or other things to reduce the advent of major fires? The idea that prescribed burn originated recently is simply not true. Prescribed burning historically originated in Region Eight, and Connaughton had a lot to do with that, because he'd come from research. But there on the Cleveland was the first place that I'd had experience with the whole idea of doing prescribed burning as a deliberate tool to try to change vegetation, to try to improve water yield, and try to include grazing and reduce fire spreading problems. This was in 1953 to 1955.

I think the Healthy Forest Initiative is absolutely necessary at this point, but I think where people are missing the point is, if you go back and look at the large fires that occurred in our history, many of them occurred prior to the establishment of the national forests, prior to establishment of the Forest Service. The 1910 burns didn't occur because we put out a lot of fires before then, and those are the largest fires on record, in most cases. The big fires in Wisconsin and Minnesota and all those fires that actually burned a bunch of people to death – those didn't occur because of a lot of organized fire protection. So the idea that most of our problems are here just because we have had organized fire suppression crews over the last fifty years is missing the point, in many cases. As a forest grows old, and is attacked by insects and disease, many trees die, and then other shade tolerant trees come up under the trees. The result is millions of acres of National Forest land with heavy fuel loads where prescribed fire is difficult, expensive, and in some cases virtually impossible. A wildfire will likely be a stand replacement fire, which is very expensive and difficult to control. That happened before the Forest Service was established, and is happening again in the 1990s.

It's true that the early efforts we made to try to remove fuels, if you go back and look at the fifties and sixties, with the use of prescribed fire, was condemned by many as trying to practice monoculture. We're were accused of trying to promote pine monoculture in such places as Eastern Oregon, by burning firs and other shade-tolerant trees that were coming up under those pine trees. But guess what, that's the fire ladder today. So the

theory that the Forest Service is so concerned with growing pine trees that we're burning areas to perpetuate the pine (which was what nature did historically), was broadly condemned as monoculture. In fact, if you look at the National Forest Management Act, there's a specific provision that talks about promoting the diversity of plant and animals, similar to those covered by the area of the plan. The thing that worries me most, after looking at California a couple of weeks ago with the National Association of Forest Service Retirees, is that there's not enough money in Fort Knox to treat all those areas, and the idea that you can treat maybe a few hundred yards around houses and somehow protect them. The vegetation is going to be back the next year, and it's going to be more flammable. It's going to be grass and shrubs, which dry out. Most of the fires run right up out of the canyons. The fire is burning upslope and preheating everything in front of it, so the only way we can be successful in reducing fires losses is by changing a lot of the forest. People think we can solve this problem by working on what's called a wildland interface. Well, if anybody knows anything about large fires, they know that doesn't work. It'll work on small fires. It doesn't mean that they shouldn't do that work around their houses, but that isn't enough.

In the summer of 1955, a really dry year, we had lightning storms that came up around Labor Day, a whole surge of dry lightning storms that swept across from the Salmon River District all the way up beyond Yreka, up on to the Oregon side. It set a whole series of fires. The Yreka District turned into the Haystack fire, which was about 80,000 acres. It was a true timber fire; it crowned in stuff that was 150 to 200 feet tall. It was impressive, to say the least. I didn't go on that fire because I was at Seiad. They were trying to hold some crews back in case they had problems elsewhere, so I never got to that fire. After it was over I went into the salvage activities. I was transferred up there along with a whole mass of people from all around Region Five to help set up the salvage sales. It was so big that they separated the timber activity off that, relieved the district of it and set up a main office to handle all the office part of the thing in Yreka, at the fire warehouse. Burnt logs, big burnt logs; we're talking ones like up to five, six feet in diameter. Beautiful, absolutely beautiful sugar pine. They were trying to decide how the heck you decide which ones to cut and which to not, because a lot of them were okay, but they got burned around the base. So the experiment

**Joseph B. "Joe"
Church**

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
January 21, 2004
(1951)

station people came in to try to help out setting out marking rules for that. Part of the equipment we used was a hatchet. You'd take a look at the tree at the base, down next to the ground, especially sugar pine, which are highly susceptible to the heat. You'd go around and you'd chop around the base where the burning had taken place, to see how much of the base of the tree at the ground line had been cooked. If it was more than 50 percent, you marked the tree. I moved there in 1956, and I was there until 1958 with salvage. There was the main salvage, and then there was the one that followed the salvage, and after that the beetles came in. They left everything they could, no matter what the condition, in many cases. They simply left what they could, and then went back and logged the other ones that the beetles got into.

Richard Millar

Interviewed by
John Grosvenor,
March 23, 2004
(1951)

There've been changes, but it always amuses me when people talk about needing to use fire and do slash disposal and cleanup and burning. When I was on the Klamath, we did a lot of burning, and we had prescribed burns; this was in 1952 and 1953. I think it's changed, and I think that's probably the biggest problem that the Forest Service has right now. This new funding that they're getting out of this program that the president has now puts a lot of money into fuel treatment and trying to reduce hazards. But the problem is almost insurmountable, the amount of acres that have to be treated. You have to train people to become experts in this area, and that takes years and years. You don't learn how to do prescribed burning and how to treat the fuels overnight. It's something that takes a lot of experience and doing. You have to do it in order to learn how to do it. They have a big problem, and a big uphill battle to accomplish the things that they need to do in that area.

When I was the director of fire, we had a research project that developed the system that the Forest Service is using now, the Incident Command System. They changed all the terminology. Instead of "fire boss," it's "incident commander." We did that in cooperation with CDF [California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention], Los Angeles County, San Diego County, and Ventura County. The county agencies and the state agencies and the Forest Service all combined to develop that program. That all was developed during the period that I was the director in fire in San Francisco, so I feel I had quite a lot to do with that, because I was part of the steering committee that discussed and steered it to what it ended up with. When you get these big fires, you don't stay in one

responsibility area, especially in Southern California. You get into state and county responsibilities, so you end up with agencies from the county and the state and other federal agencies, like BLM [Bureau of Land Management] and the National Park Service. It was felt that you had to develop a system that everybody was on the same page, using the same criteria, the same nomenclature, and everything else, and that's what was developed in the Incident Command System. As far as I know, it has worked out real well.

They had a fire down on the Colville Indian reservation near the forest boundary that we had to take action on. Everett gave me a pickup guy that had fought a little fire, and a two-man smoke-chaser pack with a crosscut saw. They were supposed to have saw oil and one day's rations, and of course, you had your hand tools and water, and also a rubber sack, back pump. We went down there by the San Poil River (a tributary of the Columbia River) in the south end of the Tonasket district. Late that afternoon, we climbed up this high ridge, and when we got to the top it was dark, so we had one of the meals. They were C-rations from World War II. The next morning we woke up early. It was daylight, and we could see the smoke from the fires on the next ridge over a deep canyon down below. We went down, and there was a big stream down at the bottom. I filled the bag up with water to take it up above. I carried the bag, because I'm supposed to be in charge, and he carried the other stuff. We got up to the first fire. Lightning had struck some high-elevation white fir, just blown it to pieces. It didn't take long to put a line around that. He said, "Hey, look up. There's another one." We got up to the other fire; it was a fire in a green ponderosa pine, and it had scattered fire around an area of about a quarter acre. We knew we had to get the tree down first, so we got the saw out, looked around for the saw oil, to keep it from binding while you're sawing. No saw oil. So we chopped an undercut in it. We started sawing a back cut, but we could only go a few strokes and then we'd get too much pitch on the blade and have to stop. He said, "Let's put the saw blade in the fire and burn the pitch off." I said, "Smart idea." So we had to do that, and eventually we got that tree down. It was really labored – I mean, it was tough. We put the fire out in the top, and then we started putting the fire out of all the dead material lying around. There were a number of stumps, and it was starting to burn down into the stump. We didn't have a radio. Everett had

Robert "Bob" Cermak

Interviewed by
Jerry Gause,
March 30, 2004
(1953)

said, “Don’t come out until the fire is dead out or you’re relieved.” I said, “Okay.” We found we only had one man-day’s rations instead of two, so we had that breakfast before we started from the first night. We didn’t have much left to eat. We kept on working, and we dug down below the surface of the ground, so we were standing down in these pits and digging out roots where the fire had gone down into the roots. A plane flew over, and neither of us was smart enough to throw some green brush on a hotspot and create some smoke. They flew over us and never saw us. So we kept on digging, and wondering – he said, “You suppose we can go back now?” I said, “No. Old Everett said to put it out or be relieved.” We kept digging, and then finally the next day we didn’t have anything to eat. We had the sugar packets and the coffee packets, so we had that. We did have water from the rubber bag to drink. It had talcum powder in it, because you put that in there to keep the rubber sides from sticking together. Anyway, we were getting kind of hungry. They finally spotted us, and they came back a little later and dropped some supplies. It was down the hill from where we were, but we went down and got it and started eating and went back to work. About an hour later a crew came in and relieved us. We’d done 95 percent, so they quickly finished it up. The crew leader said, “Why didn’t you come out?” I said, “Everett told me to put it out or get relieved.” I went back, and he said to me, “What did you learn, Bob?” I said, “To check all my stuff before I go, and when a plane flies over to throw some dead green brush on the fire to make a signal.” He said, “Okay.” Well, anyway, that was a tough way to get into the fire business.

The first thing I did when I got to Quincy was to volunteer to go to fires, all forests, anywhere, because I knew that was the way to be a ranger, and I needed the money. I wasn’t so interested in being a ranger as for the money involved. So I worked. I got called to a fire in December of 1968 on the Cleveland, out of Lake Elsinore. We started out real early in the morning from Chico, and we got down there, and we were fresh compared to what they had, so they sent us out on the line. We went down this trail that a couple of catskinners had made down into the San Mateo Canyon, the deepest part of the mountain range. There was a down-canyon wind blowing, very strong, fortunately because the fire was absolutely crazy. I mean, there were areas of twenty or thirty acres just exploding. The fire would burn, and the gases would accumulate underneath the ridge in that down-canyon wind, and the flames were actually going over the top of us

and then going back because the wind would blow them back, and then they'd explode. I thought it was Camp Pendleton having artillery practice for a while! We held the line all the way down the canyon. The next day, we came out of there. They evacuated the camp and then they came back again. The fire had jumped the river and had gone to the south. They gave me a sector right near the camp.

I looked at the smoke column to the north, and I could see that it had changed direction, so I went out into the brush and looked, and this fire was running straight up the hill. It wasn't spreading laterally at all. It was running straight at us, pretty hot. So I went down to fire camp, which wasn't very far away, to Plans, and I said, "Can you guys give me a bulldozer so I can make a line out there? We'll fire this thing out." The construction and maintenance foreman from the Cleveland was there, and he said, "No." He said, "You can't get a Cat tractor in there." I said, "I was in there. I know I can get a tractor in there. I know about tractors. I've been working with them for years." He said, "No, you can't do it." The Plans chief was reluctant to do anything about it. I said, "Well, at least get the Cats going up the road." As it came up the road, I stole two of them. I just took them and put them to work. We built the line most of the way out there, to the point where it had to be hand-lined. I had an inmate crew, and they started building a hand line down to the point where it really broke off. The zone boss came by and said, "What the hell are you doing?" I told him. He said, "Well, okay." He said, "I'll tell you what; I'll go up to the top of the hill, and I'll let you know when to pull out of there and start firing." It wasn't ten minutes, and he said, "You better get 'em outta there." So the CDF [California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention] foreman and I started out with the hand stuff, and we started running. They had already started building the secondary line right above Lake Elsinore, because they figured we were going to lose this one. That's where these Cats were going. When they found out I had a couple of Cats they got pretty irritated with me. That fire came just roaring up the hill, and our backfire met it in the middle, and a second later there was nothing there but smoke.

They let me rest the next day, and the next day they sent me down to the South Zone to a fire, and attached me to the point where we had come down the first night on these ridges. They were going to put a hose lay on there, so when they fired it out, we'd be able to catch any

slop-overs. Including the laterals, we laid 13,800 feet of hose. Twenty-five hundred feet of it was laid by helicopter. It was laid backwards, so we had to put adapters in, and every couple of hundred feet we'd have a Y or Siamese valve [to connect to lateral lines]. We had each crew member carry a length of hose as he went down. They started backfiring. They used smoke grenades, and they'd fire down in to the brush. The idea was to burn up to the line that was already built, and then the fire would be contained. The trouble was, by firing too far down the hill, the fire got too big a head start, and it burned right over the top of us, burned my eyebrows off. The crew scattered. It burned our hose in two. I shut off the Siamese valve, so we still had water, and I got the crew back together and we put a line around it. When I got back home, there was a little form that you filled out if somebody did good on a fire. I never had seen one before, but Rowdy James [the zone boss] had sent one to the Forest Supervisor, telling him that I had "done a good job on that fire." I think that had something to do with the following spring. Pete Hook called me into the office and he said – I knew the La Porte District at Challenge was open, a GS-11 district – "You're going to Challenge."

Mike Howlett

Interviewed by
Steve Kirby,
July 15, 2004
(1953)

I worked for Hamm Piles on the Cleveland Forest, and that was a real interesting experience, because Hamm had some unique ideas about forest management. I took a trip with him down to Mexico to go over what was happening in Mexico, where they had burns every year on the forest down there. They were burning off the range. We wanted to compare that, the land condition, to where we had been using fire protection. Actually, there was no comparison, because they'd lost practically all their topsoil. Even after a burn they didn't have the tremendous floods that we had, because they'd been having them all the time. It was an interesting concept to go look and see what somebody else is doing. We found that we thought we were doing it right, and I still believe that in most cases, as far as fire is concerned, we've been doing right, particularly in Southern California, where the fire/flood sequence is so well known.

I think that before we had a professional fire organization, we were a much closer unit. Everybody in the forest was part of it, and part of the team. It gave people a better understanding of what was going on out in the field, and what was happening. That got everybody together. Everybody suddenly became equal; you were working toward a single objective. It was good for forest morale. It was good for the forest. It made our people more

understanding of what was going on. It made our people much closer. You couldn't dislike anybody on a fire.

I keep abreast with firefighting today. It still disturbs me with the loss of people. We went through the safety-first program. I don't see that happening today as I think it should. I think our emphases are way overboard on safety. I guess I would say, how safe must you be? I hear the term that it's dangerous to be out there. Well, the thought of fighting a wildfire is dangerous. When I started working for the Forest Service, money was not a factor, because we were paid per annum, and they could work you in shifts of a hundred hours if they wanted. There were no days off. During summer, we were paid a piddly little amount. Then differentials came in, and in the later years overtime came in. By that time it didn't help me that much, because I was in management. You could max out real easy on a fire team, so money wasn't the issue. Today I think money's the issue, and I see that we have eighteen watch-out situations, and I think that we're over-burdening our firefighters today in protective gear and safety measures. I'm not forsaking life or safety for this; I'm saying, when I see the amount of gear that a firefighter's carrying today, versus what we carried, the only thing you could have from what we carried was the thirty-five-pound handy-talky that you had to hold to your ear, which I feel was a burden.

Today they have the GPS's, the little radios, the cell phones, such neat stuff to work with. We fought fire in Levi's, Big Mac Penney shirts, and cowboy Stetson hats, and a lot of people can laugh about that. The Stetson hat did not flame and provided a lot of protection from heat with the wide brim. You could pull it down around your head, put a handkerchief down, you had a lot of protection. The shirts and pants would not flame. They might burn a little hole in them. I look at the gear today, and it bothers me that we're putting so much on these people.

I'm proud of a lot of the things where the Forest Service has gone. I'd like to see more prescribed fire use so that we don't create the hydrophobic soil conditions that are created with these intense fires that we have. I would like to see equipment used in crushing and fuel break work. It can be done in a lot of ways, replanting on fuel breaks with different things other than flammable brush. A lot of adventures are out there yet. We just need to stick to the mission statement that we had in our manuals. If we follow those, we can move forward.

Bob Righetti

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 11, 2004
(1954)

George Leonard

Interviewed by
Bob Van Aken,
June 28, 2004
(1956)

The urban interface was always there. There were always cabins and communities that were surrounded by forest and they were very concerned. The town of Quincy was surrounded by forest. They were always concerned that a major fire would come along and wipe them out. But we didn't have the level of population that we do now, and not nearly as many houses out there. I can recall one fire down in the Feather River Canyon that started right in a community, and we spent major efforts the first twenty-four hours of that fire protecting structures that were threatened by the fire. In fact, we brought lots of urban fire trucks in to station around the individual homes. But the terminology, "urban interface," wasn't popular at that point.

Fire obviously was a major issue in Region Five, simply because every year is a bad fire season in Region Five, and we've always had the potential for large, catastrophic fires. Virtually every fire season you have that potential, at least somewhere in the region. One of the consequences is that my generation of foresters that came into the organization, and other people in the organization, we all had fire jobs. We all worked on fire. I spent the bulk of my field career in timber, and whether it was on the Stanislaus or the Plumas or the Tahoe, I played an active role in fire. I always had fire assignments, both on forest and off forest. That's a major shift that has taken place.

But by and large, in Northern California there was a relatively small permanent fire organization. It was made up with seasonals and the rest of

George Leonard (L)
discusses fire strategies.



the work force. It was pretty noticeable that you could have a significant fire on a forest, a Class D, sometimes a Class E fire, and the forest wouldn't have to go off-forest for help. The organization was there. We had KV crews and blister rust crews, and engineering

crews that were quickly integrated into the fire organization to provide the manpower. Logging crews were readily available. We could pick up all the fallers we needed. The dozers and tractors off of logging operations were readily available. They were part of the initial attack organization on the forest. So an individual forest had tremendous capability to deal with local

fires. That's one of the reasons why costs have increased. Few forests now can deal with a major fire all by themselves; they almost immediately need to reach out for help, because we've evolved to almost a separate fire organization that's not made up of the entire work force; it's made up of the fire organization. There are obviously exceptions, and there are people at the district, not in fire, that still play major fire assignments. But many, many people on the forest do not play any role in fire. That's a significant shift. I understand why that's occurred, in terms of the training that we see as essential now, but the organization lost a lot when people outside the fire organization didn't answer the fire bell.

When people talk about using prescribed burning, you're not talking about prescribed burning in the back country, you're talking about prescribed burning in people's back yards. The concerns about the risks to their homes, the impact of smoke and all is just so pervasive. You can't find significant areas in California in the forest where an activity such as prescribed burning isn't going to quickly be viewed as a threat from either direct damage, or smoke, or some other impact. Of course, you've got major tourist attractions up and down the state: Yosemite Valley, Lake Tahoe, Mammoth Mountain, Mount Lassen, Mount Shasta, and whatnot. Any kind of prescribed fire or smoke is immediately going to be viewed as impacting these critical, internationally known resources, let alone just the Class 1 air sheds that go up and down the mountain. That means, in my mind, that management of those forests is not going to be accomplished with letting fire take the role that it played when there were a few Indians running up and down the mountains there. You've got to recognize that there are millions of people using those forests every day, and you're going to have to remove that excess vegetation in some way other than by the use of fire. That's not to say that fire doesn't play some role, but playing "let's pretend that there aren't any people there," isn't the management solution.

Everybody was expected to be out there. That was an interesting part of fire – when you did have fire, you had some experienced overhead, for sure, in the Forest Service, but you relied very heavily on the ranchers of the valley, or you relied on the loggers who were in the area. You had this backbone and nucleus of Forest Service people, but you relied on others to help you with the fire suppression: "Bring your tractor, bring whatever it is, and let us get the fire out." That whole

Bob Smart

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 28, 2004
(1960)

era changed to where volunteers no longer have any role at all in fire suppression now.

One of the interesting parts that I got caught up in was prescribed burning. When I was in college, I studied James “Jim” Weaver’s work in Arizona, and was intrigued with what he had been able to do with prescribed burning in ponderosa pine. When I returned to the Eldorado in 1977, it was a place where I thought I could practice it. We did very well here, compared to other parts of this region. We were burning about 2,000 acres a year under prescribed burning conditions. But what began to happen was, people were beginning to see prescribed burning as some kind of panacea, whereas I was thinking of prescribed burning as, if you can’t do it with mechanical treatment on gentler slopes, if there’s some other way, if you can’t do it by hand or machine, then there’s a place for prescribed burning. But when you look at the windows of opportunity that we have on the Eldorado – you have a very sensitive air basin in the Lake Tahoe basin, and you have the Sacramento air basin, and both of those will not tolerate a lot of smoke going in there. The place is filled with retirement communities, and it’s filled with people who don’t want to learn about why you might want to blacken the landscape.

Ron Stewart

Interviewed by
Fred Kaiser,
July 7, 2004
(1969)

First of all, I’m a firm believer in history, and in the role it plays in shaping our own beliefs and understanding of how things operate. I had actually been involved in some firefighting as a college student, working for the State of California, and a little bit for the State of Washington. It was not a main part of my job, but I did get on a couple of fires. I, like everybody else, put them out. That was our main responsibility, and it seemed quite appropriate, given the public demand. But when I was assistant station director in Berkeley, I ran across a paper by Harry Biswell, a professor from UC, Berkeley who dealt with fire. He talked about doing a study of the University of California’s natural areas or reserves. One of them had been given to the University with the understanding it would be maintained in the way it looked when white men first saw it. So he went back and he started looking at some early settlers’ diaries, and he discovered that these were open park-like stands. When he went and looked at the current forest, conditions they were nothing like that. They were quite dense; they had a lot of understory of white fir and everything. Based on that, he began to develop an idea about the role of fire in those systems. There was an evolving philosophy about fire management, as opposed to

fire suppression. Fire management, of course, includes fire suppression, but it also included the idea of using fire to create desired conditions. That whole debate was going on during that period of time I was there, and of course continues to this day. I don't think it's been totally resolved. I think it was formulated with the idea that if we looked at the historic condition of the forest, particularly in the Sierras, which were the ones that were where the problem was most evident, we would find that fire returns anywhere from two-, to ten-, to fifteen-year intervals. We kept fires out of those areas for probably two or three or more cycles. We were beginning to see quite a buildup of fuels. Even though they were green, and most of the public liked that – I mean, all they saw was green trees – we were beginning to see the effects of some periodic droughts. I remember at one point we had about a three-year drought, and I remember a number of about five billion board feet of standing dead timber in the Sierras. At the time, we talked about trying to do a salvage program that might remove something in the neighborhood of half a billion of the five billion. It ended up being quite controversial. We did remove a fair amount of it, particularly in high-priority areas, but I don't think we even got to the 500 million. Part of that was a realization that if we removed the dead trees, we had to do something about what was left in the forest, so there was a lot of concern about fuels management and thinning of the forest, because basically one of the reasons we were seeing a lot of mortality under these drought conditions was, we were carrying too high a stocking in the forest..

The saying in Region Five is, "We'll see everybody down in Southern California for Thanksgiving," and all the years I was there, that was true. I remember spending the last week in October and first week of November on a series of fires down there in Southern California that were just absolutely incredible. We had every politician, of course, down there getting face time. Issues about air tankers and press – there's a public perception that if airplanes aren't in the air, nobody's fighting the fire, which to me always seemed to be kind of upsetting to the people on the ground who were cutting all the fire lines, and ultimately doing the containment on the fires. But in a lot of cases, when you get Santa Ana winds, which are the conditions that push these big fires in Southern California, the wind is blowing too hard to use aerial application of retardants effectively, so you pull back your aircraft, and you go in with

ground troops. In Northern California and in the Sierras, of course, we had large timber fires. Southern California, we had big brush fires. The brush fires tended to burn faster and be more dramatic, because of the population you had in Los Angeles. Remember that there are over forty congressional districts in the LA County area, so you had the impact of affecting a lot of members of Congress and their constituents. So there was always a good deal of political pressure in Southern California, sometimes perhaps at the expense of fighting fire in Northern California.

We used to always joke that no matter whose fire it was, you'd always see California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in the forefront. You would always see them on camera. They seemed to train their people how to get air time and to always be visible. They had their patches on both shoulders, so no matter which way the camera was, you could tell who they were with.

But I thought we worked very well with them. There were controversies at times. I remember CNN [Cable News Network] tried to create a controversy at a time when the state had some budget problems, and was cutting back on air tankers at a time when we had a very early season with a high fire danger. I was interviewed by CNN, and I remember making that statement, which they jumped on because it was a sound bite. We had fire conditions in May that we would normally have in August. They brought up the question of "How come the state's cutting back their resources." I was able to point out that we knew well before

Firefighter training with
a pack pump,
guard school,
Eldorado NF.
1931



that they were going to do that. We had coordinated that with them, and in fact, we were bringing in additional resources into the state, so that there would be no net loss of resources.

There was always this tension between us about who were the best firefighters. I think it made both sides work better. When you got a fire going, though, there was no question with the people working on the ground. They always worked very closely together, at least from my viewpoint. I rarely heard of any difficulties. We had cooperative agreements with them and the local fire districts. The first available resource did the initial attack, and resources came after that. We worked out later how to pay for it and all. It seemed to work reasonably well. In California, fire is such a big thing that everybody is tuned in to it, and probably some of the better firefighting forces in the world, wildland firefighting resources in the world, come out of California.

The Forest Community

Everyday Life in the Service

For older veterans of the Forest Service, and their families, some of the most compelling remembrances of long careers were their stories of “living on the forest” and the sense of a forest community of family and friends. Embedded in the stories (arranged here by first year of permanent Forest Service employment) is the chronology of changes in the service over the past century. By observing the changes over time in housing, work hours, family involvement in Dad’s job, stresses placed on wives and families by the job, and everyday rural survival, one can see how far the service has come in its professionalization process. Interviewees seemed somewhat split on whether this progress was good or bad. A few of the interviewees applauded new job amenities while bemoaning the fact that these seemed to come at the expense of the old-time forest community. Most important to this series of recollections is the fact that fewer forest professionals now lived “on” the forest.

Lee Berriman

Interviewed by
John Fiske,
June 3, 2004
(1933)

When we moved to the McCloud, we lived in two tents. But at that time they were building a setup for the McCloud River Ranger District with all new buildings. They managed to finish the assistant ranger building before the storms started, and we moved into that. But as far as – well, she [ex-wife] got a little bit tired of it, because she was raised in San Francisco. I think, as near as I could figure out, she just got up and left. We were snowed in for two weeks once and after that was over she decided she had had enough, and she left for San Francisco, and that was it. So when I went to the Fall River District, I had an assistant ranger house to live in by myself.

Local townspeople
join Forest Service
employees and CCCs
at Sims Bridge
dedication,
Shasta NF.
1934



There were a lot of things we could do. One of the things that I miss nowadays is the fact that there aren't Forest Service families like there used to be. In the older days, the thirties, there were five or six big families that were all Forest Service in Region Five. One was the White family, and I knew one of them very well, and the girl – there were four boys and a girl – married the Supervisor of the Tahoe National Forest. There was the Kloppenburg family, two boys and two girls, all Forest Service. You didn't go far in those days, so the first girl that came along that would take up with you, why, you married. One of the Kloppenburg women married Bull Durham, who worked on the Mendocino, which was originally called the California National Forest. There were many old guys like that, and many a tale was told by those kind of people. They were interesting. That was half the fun of being in the Forest Service, was knowing about these people. On the Angeles, I knew a lot of old-timers. One was Miller E. Newman, who was known as "Mill" Newman. He was an old-time guard, a wonderful guy, and he had friends from all over the country that visited him. He was the kind of guy that people just can't stay away from. When we were working in the Mount Wilson area, we'd be on the road, right on the highway, working and there'd be eight or ten of us doing jobs. People would come along and want to know something. Invariably, they stopped at Mill Newman. They'd ask him.

In 1936 Mildred came back so that we could get married. We always laughed about it, because she came by train from Southern California, and her dad said he was only buying a one-way ticket. It had to work. I went to Jacksonville and met her. I had managed to save \$500 before we got married. That was a big sum of money for us. I did have a car, but it was a used 1936 Plymouth. We had a real Forest Service wedding. I had convinced the ranger to be my best man. Then I kept trying to tell him that he was supposed to protect me and that sort of stuff. After we were married and were walking down the aisle, I could see the rest of my fire crew sitting in the back row. I could tell they had all kinds of ideas for me. The ranger handed me the keys to his car and said, "You take my car." Of course, they had all kinds of stuff tied on my car. I took his car, and we didn't have a bit of trouble. We had a Forest Service lady playing the organ. The whole thing was a Forest

Harry Grace

Interviewed by
Gene Murphy
April 29, 2004
(1934)

Richard Droege

Interviewed by
Brian Payne
July 10, 2004
(1936)

Service wedding.

At Bridgeport, we had one cattle range that had about ten or twelve permittees on it. This fellow was their rider when they'd move the cattle from here to there, so they'd have feed and all that kind of stuff. Our oldest boy was just a baby then, and we needed milk. The rider said, "Well, why don't you ask some of those cattlemen and see if there isn't somebody there that's got a cow that's got milk?" So I did, and they told me they had one. My bargain with them was, the cow would not be milked during the day, and then at night we'd take the calf off of her and I could milk her in the morning. Well, that was quite an experience, because she was a range cow. She was a white-faced cow, and wild as hell. The only way I could milk her was I had to let the calf get on one side, and then I'd kick the calf under the chin so I could pull down. We didn't get very much milk, but we got enough to take care of Roy. It was about three miles into town from the ranger station.

Jim James

Interviewed by
Gerald Gause
February 5, 2004
(1940)

During the summer between 1937 and 1940, the university got me a job as a lookout fireman on the Lolo National Forest in Montana. That was my first contact with the Forest Service. This was a one-man operation, and they stuck me on top of a peak with nothing but a tent and a firefighter post. It had lightning coverage, and was put up on poles. They left that tent there all winter so it was there when I showed up. While I was there I killed 45 pack rats in my tent. The tent wasn't rat-proof, obviously. I had a .22 pistol, and when the rats woke me up at night I'd take a flashlight,

Constructing Eddie
Gulch lookout on top
of Klamath Peak,
Klamath NF



find the rat, and shoot it. One time I opened a pan of sweet potatoes and found a .22 slug in the potatoes. It had ricocheted off a rock or something.

The summer of 1939 I spent on the Needles lookout on the Sequoia Forest. They were just building it at the time, and the CCC was still working on the catwalk – the ladder you use to get up to the lookout. It was quite a lookout that sat right on top of a rock point. I was a forest guard at Quaking Aspen the next year, 1940, the year I got out of school. There was a CCC base camp in Springville, and I had a five-man spike camp to maintain the campgrounds at Quaking Aspen. The fellows lived in the large camp in Springville, and there was a house of considerable ill repute in Springville, run by a lady. I remember that every now and then the commander, who was with the army, he'd have to go down and ransom the boots that the boys had used for – in lieu of paying their bill at the time. They'd leave their boots there so when they got paid, they'd come down and pick up their boots and pay the lady. If anything went haywire he'd have crews with no boots, so the commander, he had to go down and rescue the boots.

My wife and I got the idea that we needed goat's milk for our baby. That blasted goat had a penchant for people, and it would get away from its tether and go across the street to the bar, and the lady that owned the bar would call me on the phone and say, "Get that damned goat out of here! He's bothering my customers." Finally I gave it away to one of the natives, and that goat lived for many years without my supervision.

When we reported in Yreka, in December of 1947, George James, Forest Supervisor, came out to see that we got situated at Sawyers Bar. We had a well-constructed three-bedroom ranger house with a fireplace, there at the station. My wife Barbara was happy, but she was concerned about the fact that in the wintertime you were kind of snowed in, and our young daughter was only six months old.

In 1948 Al Crebbin, who was a staff officer in charge of range and recreation in Yreka, and I were on a pack trip up to Caribou Lake on the Salmon side of the Trinity Alps, out of Big Flat. I had a so-called bellyache, and that ended the pack trip. I returned to Sawyers Bar, and took my horse down and put her in the trailer at Cecilville, but I had to ride down from Big Flat to Cecilville. Then I transported her and myself back to Sawyers Bar. By that time I was feeling all right. Some time, maybe a month or two later, I had another attack at home. Ike Gibson, who was the dispatcher there,

Spike Slattery

Interviewed by
Gerald Gause
June 8, 2004
(1940s)

Andrew R. Schmidt

Interviewed by
Nordstrom "Nord"
Whited
December 18, 2003
and January 21, 2004
(1941)

had also been a medic in the Army, and he knew it was an appendicitis attack, so they took me over the hill in the dead of winter. We made it over the hill to Yreka, over the Salmon Mountains, and I had a good doctor, and everything went fine.

There had been a schoolhouse there, but it had been discontinued for a few years before I got there. The kids there were farmed out to relatives in other places until we got the school back. George James and I got a school started. It was mostly George James' contacts with the school superintendent at Yreka that got it going, but I did a lot of legwork out in Sawyers Bar, and Klamath, and Salmon River. I recruited a teacher. We tried to find anybody that had experience. Finally, I found somebody that had a little experience, but no credentials, so to speak. She started the school as a teacher.

Bruce Barron

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini
July 1, 2004
(1942)

The Forest Service was like a big fraternity. Our life on the ranger district during the war years had very little outside entertainment, so we made our own entertainment. We'd have progressive parties on the ranger district, with hors d'oeuvres at one house and main course at another, and dessert at another. We made our own amusement. There were a lot of fabulous people in the Forest Service, and it was a lot different than it is today. I always feel like they were brothers or members of the family, because we went through so many difficult times during the war years, and it was hard to cover fires. I know when I was on a fire, I always felt safe and secure when there was one of my buddies on the fire line, because you knew what they were going to do, and you felt safe and secure. When some of the new-timers came on it was kind of everybody for himself. It was really a wonderful experience to be familiar with a lot of the old-timers in the Forest Service.

Mary Ellen Bosworth

Interviewed by
Bob Smart
February 17, 2004
(1944)

We paid five dollars a month rent for the one-room lookout we had at Mount Islip. It was just a tower, and we'd come down at night and sleep and cook our dinner in this little one-room stone cabin with a cement floor. The cement floor was full of little holes. Irwin [husband] asked his boss, "What are all those little holes?" He said, "One of the fellows that stayed here used to sit in bed and shoot the rats." He had the nerve to tell us that. I was scared to death. There was just room for two people to sit there, that's all. It was four miles to pack in to this lookout, and they would bring groceries up once a month. Every week we would get twenty gallons of water, and there was a spring about two and a half miles away.

You could go down there and get a little extra water. We kept the water in a great big garbage can, clean garbage can, and we had to keep a chain on it with a padlock because people would hike up there and they would want a drink of water. This was all the water we had for cooking, for bathing, for cleaning dishes, and everything else. You learned to get by with twenty gallons of water a week. Looking back, we enjoyed it. We had lots of hikers that would come up to the tower and talk. I remember one time – all we had was a telephone and the Forest Service radio – we heard music coming up the trail. It was Irwin's oldest brother, and he had brought a battery-powered radio for us to use. Boy, that was wonderful. It was battery operated. No electricity. In fact, we didn't have electricity in lots of places. But you get by without it. If you don't have it, you don't miss it.

When he was transferred to Dunsmuir, Irwin was assistant ranger for about ten months. When the ranger was transferred, Irwin was made ranger, and we moved from the assistant ranger's house to the ranger's house, a beautiful big home right on the highway. The ranger station was down below and we were up on the hill. Living on a ranger district was probably the best time that we ever had. We were getting together, and everybody was in the same boat. Their husbands were gone all the time, and you couldn't go anyplace in the summer. You had to be on call all summer long. So we made the best of it, and thoroughly enjoyed being on a ranger district. We were there for four years. We got very involved in Cub Scouts while we were there. Irwin was Cub master, and I was a den mother. I was in PTA, and Irwin was in Lions Club. It was a small town, mainly a railroad town, and every year they'd have Railroad Days. People in the Forest Service went all out to make floats for that. I remember one year that Ann Erhart (Henry Earhart was an old Forest Service employee) made a Smokey Bear costume, so Dale [son – and later Chief of the Forest Service] was Little Smokey Bear, and then she made another Smokey Bear for one of the fellows that was on the fire crew, and he was Big Smokey Bear. It was really quite a float with these two Smokey Bears. We enjoyed it, and I hated to leave there after four years.

Dunsmuir was a very small town, and we knew everybody in town. Of course, some of the Forest Service wives worked downtown, but I didn't, because I had a job raising two boys, and I was too involved in Cub Scouts at the time anyway. It was a very nice little town. We had everything we needed there: grocery stores and clothing stores, and if we really had

to have something, we'd go down to Redding. It took an hour to get to Redding, but if you'd want to get furniture or something like that, why, you'd go to either Redding or Reno, Nevada. The Forest Service was really tops in Dunsmuir. They thought the Forest Service was ideal, because everybody at the ranger district took part in the community. Those were really good, enjoyable days, living on the ranger station, on the compound. That was the only time we ever lived in a compound. Then we moved to Quincy, and were there from 1952 till 1960, eight years. That was a long time to be anyplace in those days. We were involved with things in town there, too. The Forest Service was really well thought of then, in those days.

The Forest Service was just like a big family. Wherever you moved, you were never a stranger, because there were other Forest Service people there, and they took you in right away. We got together all the time. Once a month the women would get together; sometimes they'd have twenty people at the house. Of course, at Dunsmuir, at the ranger station compound, we were together all the time. Every weekend we had a party or something or other. You couldn't do anything else, because they couldn't leave. I know that one year we had so much snow in Dunsmuir that you couldn't get around unless you used snowshoes. Mel and Adeline Dimmick lived just below us, down the hill, and we lived up at the top. You couldn't go anyplace, because you didn't dare leave because of the snow, and so we played canasta. We'd pack those two little kids down to the Dimmicks on snowshoes and play canasta all the time. The one year that it snowed the hardest, I was keeping a path shoveled out, and it was getting to be pretty hard to do. The kids were little. My oldest son, Ron, said, "Mom, why don't we just walk on top of it and pack it down instead of shoveling it?" And, boy, that was the best thing that ever happened! They had more fun walking on top of it and packing it down, and I didn't have to shovel it anymore. Irwin was gone for a whole week that time. He was always gone when something like that happened. When the kids were sick, he was always gone, or when something happened at the house, he was always gone. The heaviest snowstorm, he was always gone.

During one snowstorm, the fellows decided that they would take a Forest Service pickup and go into town. So the wives all gave them a list, and I gave them my list, and we were out of toilet paper. He came home – toilet paper used to come in three rolls, and it looked like a paper towel – he came home with three rolls of paper towels instead of toilet paper.

The fellows would always go hunting every year, and they'd come home with a buck or two. Then they would cut it up themselves, down in the warehouse, and then we'd take it downtown. There was a freezer downtown, a company that had lockers for freezers. Then one time the word came out that there was a big truck accident on Highway 99. Word came out that a truck had turned over a couple of miles away. It was full of frozen chicken pies, and they were all in the water, so the driver said, "Tell everybody you know to come down and get all the chicken pies they want." We ate chicken pie till it was coming out of our ears, and so did everybody else in the station.

We moved to Sonora in 1952, into an apartment house. Joyce and I lived in the apartment until we finally rented a house. We got hold of a moving outfit to move us, and we got inmates down to help load. Well, the guy that had the moving company didn't make any money on us, because the inmates would pick up the furniture and everything and move it into the truck fast, and then when we got to the house they were there and unloaded it just as quick, and Joyce just stood in the front room and said, "That goes to this bedroom. That goes here. That goes there." One of the inmates sat down in one of my chairs and said, "Oh, Hurston, it's good to be home, even if it is your home." I'll never forget it.

I got married in October 1947, when I was at Adin. Our living accommodations were rather sparse. We had an old World War II house trailer, which was very small, and was attached to a 14-by-16 foot tent with a wood platform. Then an outhouse for a toilet, and the shower was over in the warehouse. When it got cold, I'd build a fire in the wood heater there in the warehouse. When we'd get in the shower I'd take a steel bucket and shovel out coals into the bucket and put it in there in the shower room so we could stand around after we got out of the shower. But we only had to put up with that until the following spring, and then they completed what they called a scaler house. It had been prefabricated in Mississippi, and it had no insulation. In the wintertime at Adin it was getting down to twenty-seven below, and the ice would freeze up on the inside of the windows. We used a lot of propane that winter. So I was glad to move from there to Sonora, where the climate was a little bit different.

My first Forest Service home was at Hammer Horn Lookout Station. It had been built in 1920. I had to carry my water from a spring, which was about a quarter mile away. We dug a hole and rocked up the

Hurston Buck

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
September 25, 2004
(1947)

Scollay Parker

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 19, 2004
(1947)

Ed Grosch

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
March 9, 2004
(1949)

edges, and we put a wooden lid over the top of it, and that was my drinking water and whatever water I was to use. They had an old washtub there that I could haul down, and I'd build a fire under it and get some warm water and sit myself in it to get a sponge bath once a week. They had an old wood heater in one corner, and a couple of cabinets under the windows. The stove was a two-burner kerosene stove, and there was a tin oven that you could put on top of one of the burners to bake biscuits or bread or something of that nature. There was a dishpan to wash your few dishes in, and you had some pots. Nothing fancy about the cooking gear, but it was serviceable. You slept in the tower, in an old military bunk bed with a mattress on it, and you had your blankets. Outside, there was a box that had fire tools like a shovel, a Pulaski, brush hook, ax, cross-cut saw, wedges and a hammer, and water cans. They had four five-gallon cans that were square and built to go in a rack that hung on a pack saddle. When a packer would come by, you maybe could finagle him to go down and get you a bunch of water in them. But usually I went every morning just before sunup. I'd go down to the spring with five canteens and fill those up and then bring them up for the day, and that would usually suffice me, for most of the days.

I had been told that I had to be prepared to have at least thirty days' worth of groceries with me, so I had to go into town to arrange credit with the local grocery store to buy my groceries ahead of time. Fortunately, the Ham ranch had put up hams and bacon and turkey that winter, and so I had a big ham and a big slab of bacon that they gave me, to save me buying that. I had to buy my flour and beans and whatever dried products that I could take. I forget how much I had on the food bill, but I was very fortunate, because Mr. Ham and his wife had cosigned for me at the grocery store to get my groceries. I just didn't have that much cash. From the time you're hired to the time you get your first check is four or five weeks or more. By that time, I was already out in the woods.

That time at Hammer Horn it was very interesting, because I was able to study lots of things about what was going on in nature. I had very good outdoor lessons about chipmunks, squirrels, birds, deer, bear, and all kinds of things. I had no company. I didn't see a human until about first weekend in August, because that's when the deer-hunting season opened just to the south of the lookout. Several people camped down a ways from the lookout, in a place called French Cove, and went over into Mendocino County to hunt. That's when I got my first visitors. I stayed at the Hammer

Horn Lookout through the summer, until around the tenth or twelfth of October we got a storm come in off the coast, and they declared the fire season over for the Mendocino. Then the packer came and took me out. In fact, I got three days of deer hunting just before the hunting season closed, free, gratis. No pay, of course, but I got three days off.

I worked as a secretary in New York City, in one of the skyscrapers right near the Chrysler Building. I had never been out west. I was actually born and raised in Scotland, on a farm, and that probably saved my bacon as far as living at the Laufman Ranger Station near Milford [south of Susanville]. When we drove west it was my first view of the United States, and I was awestruck at the size of it, and the different areas that we drove through, from Kansas to Colorado. It seemed like we were down at sea level one minute and 11,000 feet the next; it was unbelievable. I expected there to be a lot of trees, and when we left Reno and headed up Highway 395 there were hardly any trees to be seen, so that was a bit of a surprise. I kept thinking, we're going to the Plumas National Forest and I don't see any trees. Of course, we didn't realize that a fire had gone through there previously. As we drove up the hill to the ranger station, we came into a pocket of trees that had been saved, right around the Forest Service buildings. Then it made a little bit more sense, but until you saw those, you kept thinking, what are we here for? There are no trees to take care of.

We lived in the Forest Service compound when we first got there. A mobile home was supposed to be in place, and it hadn't arrived. So after some discussion, the clerk, who at that time was a single male, moved into the bunkhouse, and we moved into what was known as the clerk's house. The clerk's house had a front door and a back door and three rooms, and it wasn't very well insulated. The curtain stood out from the wall any time there was a little bit of a gust of wind. We had to make doors to the bathroom and the living room, which was also our bedroom because we had to sleep on a fold-out couch. I had to make those out of curtain material, and just make the best of it. It had a big old black oil stove that was a real bear to keep lit. I had to learn all the neat things about propane gas, and being able to change the tanks if Jack wasn't around, and a whole lot of things that I never had to do in Scotland because we didn't have gas there. Everything that I had learned to do was just with wood fires and Coleman lanterns or oil lamps. We had running water, but you had to prime the pump. We had kind of a makeshift plumbing system that Jack put

**Mary Kennedy
(Wife of Jack Kennedy)**

Interviewed by
John Fiske
February 24, 2004
(1951)

together a couple of times.

At one point we had gone away for the Christmas holidays to Southern California, and the ranger had very thoughtfully gone into the house and turned the water back on, and lit the oil stove. He figured that when we got home, everything would be nice and warm. When we came back it was late in the evening, maybe around midnight, because we had come up [Highway] 395 beating a snowstorm all the way up. We found out that when he had gone out, the draft from the door had blown the pilot light on the oil stove out, but the oil kept pumping out onto the floor. There was no heat, and all the pipes froze, and the toilet tank broke off the wall. So we had a real mess to clean up. I remember the large box of Tide, and a fire pumper being brought over, and a fire hose being used to hose the whole thing out. Then, of course, then we had to repaint the walls, because there was oil up the walls.

The kerosene lanterns were what I had been raised with in Scotland. We did have electricity in Milford, and we also had one of the old crank phones on the wall, which we didn't use, but at night the lookouts would call each other, and you had to sit there and listen to all the ringing that went on for all the different lines. If you got really bored, you could pick up the receiver and listen to the conversations, and actually join in if it was something that interested you. When things quieted down, and the fire danger was pretty minimal and the lookouts were getting ready to close up, they'd call each other up to say goodbye. It was kind of fun.

Most of the other families there had children when we arrived, and subsequently our daughter was born about a year after we got there. It was typical, in the sense that the people on the compound kind of became your family. I mean, our family was all back east. Most of the people that were on the compound, although their families weren't close by, they all seemed to be from California. But there was a camaraderie that sprang up, because so often the fellows would be gone from six in the morning until who knows when at night, seven, eight, depending on what they were doing, and how far out on the District they were. So the days got long, and if you only have fifteen feet square of house to take care of, it's going to get pretty boring. There was a lot of going over to somebody's house for coffee in the morning, or driving into Susanville once a week. Two or three of us would do that, and go shopping together, that kind of thing. Of course, heaven forbid that somebody would drive over the cattle guard and not tell you

they were going to town, to find out if you needed something. I mean, that was a big no-no. You went around to all the houses and you said, "I'm going to town." Of course, then you had to explain why you were going to town. So your privacy was questionable at that point. But that's okay. It was just a way of life. If people were gone on fires, of course, there was no telling when they would be back, and so you devised things to do: played games in the evening, played cards, and did things with the kids. We were pretty much self-contained, because most of us just went to Susanville once a week, and the rest of the time we were right there on the ranger station.

We had an interesting thing happen the second springtime we were there. There was a rancher who lived at the bottom of the hill. He used to drive his cattle up to pasture in the summer, and before he would do that they had rattlesnake hunts. So we woke up one morning to all these guns going off. It sounded like World War III or something. We didn't know what was happening, and of course, we had to find out from one of the other families right away. They said, "Oh, well, there must be a lot of rattlers about this year, and they're going to see what they can do about getting rid of some of the dens before they bring the cattle up through here." They said, "You need to really watch out." Well, my clothesline was just beyond the trees, and it was sort of a sandy soil, and I quickly learned to be very careful, because those rattlers would come out and curl up under the line and sun themselves. As far as our daughter was concerned – she was just beginning to walk – you had to have eyes in the back of your head. You couldn't let her out, because there was no fence. There was nothing to keep her in, and so you had to be right there with her and make sure she didn't get down there. Sometimes you got your clothes hung out, but then you couldn't take them down because of the rattlers underneath, so you had to just kind of wait it out. So it was an interesting time, very interesting time.

There was a leach line down behind our house. I had a knock on the door one day, and when I went to the door, it was the Forest Supervisor. He said, "Hello, Mary, how are you doing?" I said, "I'm fine." And he said, "Well, you know, we have a regional team coming tomorrow to inspect the station," and he said, "I'd appreciate that if you see them coming your way, just come on out with your little girl and you just start

talking and just kind of steer them on past.” He said, “We wouldn’t want them to see what’s down behind the cabin.” I said, “Oh, I’ll do my best.” I don’t recall them actually coming over to the cabin. I think they made it to the bunkhouse, but they didn’t come by, so I was spared having to put on a front as far as the leach line that was bubbling to the surface.

**Joseph B. “Joe”
Church**

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
January 21, 2004
(1951)

I was transferred to the Seiad District, about fifty miles west of Yreka on the Klamath River, which at that time was part of the Happy Camp District. I worked in timber. It was an interesting place to go to. We stayed in the barracks there, which was sort of disruptive when the crews came in. We were there for three years, and that was an adventure. We had our first kid there. My wife had cooking facilities, and we had the bedroom and all that kind of stuff. It was a barracks set up for crew, but there was no other place to go, and we didn’t have anything, so that’s where we wound up.

When we got to Miwok, it had one of its snowstorms. There was about two feet of snow on the ground, and cold as hell. The woman across the street lent us some wood, so that we could have a fire in the fireplace, and she took all the kids over to her place so that they’d be someplace warm and out of the way, so that we could take care of moving the stuff. That was a real neighborly gesture, I would say. They were that way. One time we didn’t have any wood, so the whole crew on the district went out and cut about three cords of wood for us and dropped it down in the front. You could walk down the street on Sunday, and go down and buy a dozen doughnuts and a Sunday newspaper. You could bring it back and you could eat doughnuts and read the paper. Jeez, it was really something. Not only that, we had television.

In the summer of 1955, which was a really dry year, we had all the lightning storms that came up around Labor Day. They’d had a lot of fires up to that time, but Labor Day they had a whole surge of dry lightning storms that swept all the way from the Salmon River District way up beyond Yreka. The Yreka District turned into the Haystack fire, which was about 80,000 acres. It was impressive, to say the least. But I didn’t go on that fire. They were trying to hold some crews back in case they had problems elsewhere, so I never got in that fire, but after it was over I was transferred, along with a whole mass of people from all around Region Five, to the Yreka District, to set up the salvage sales. I moved there in 1956, and I was there until 1958. We were at Oak Knoll. John Hall was the District Ranger, there and he took an old building and converted it over to

a house for us, which was really pretty nice of him. I was moved over to Fort Jones as the acting ranger, so Ginny had to go back to Fort Jones as the ranger's wife, where she'd been the ranger's daughter. That was interesting, except we didn't stay on the station. Lou and his family were there, and they occupied the house, because they were going to be there afterwards, so we rented a farmhouse a couple of miles south of town, and we lived in that, and we froze to death in that place. Man, it was cold! I was the acting ranger there from September 1958 to around May 1, 1959.

The people who lived in Orleans permanently had their own houses, but most everybody lived on the station. In 1962, when the country was in one of its economic problems, we went through what they call the APWA [Accelerated Public Works Authority] activity, which was the federal public works area. They were doling out money to try to help economically distressed places, which Humboldt County certainly was. In the process of doing that, they built four new houses on the station, which were really nice. They moved one of the warehouses around and fixed it up. It was really something. They spent a lot of money on the station, all worth every cent.

I was born in Yreka, California, and we lived at Scott Bar, where my father was the ranger. We lived there until I was four, and they moved the ranger station to Fort Jones. We lived at the ranger station until July 1940, when my father drowned. At the ranger station we had a house, and there was an office with a tool shed, and we had chickens and there was a barn. My father's horse was always there, and during the summer there would be other stock, at least a couple of mules and a couple of other horses, because everything that went up to the lookouts was packed in. While we lived there the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camps came in, and they actually built the ranger station at Fort Jones. They finished the ranger station I think in 1934, and we moved out there just before Christmas. They standardized the ranger stations. The ranger's house had two bedrooms, and there were eight of us, so they fixed a room in the woodshed for my brothers, and then the next spring they glassed in the front porch, and they slept there. They added another room to all the houses. It was big time when we moved to Fort Jones and had electricity in the house. There were lots of nice things about it. Because it was a brand-new station and they were doing the landscaping, my mother, who was really into flowers, got to landscape all around. She had a beautiful rose

Ginny Church
(Wife of Joseph B.
Church)

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
January 21, 2004
(1951)

garden. They bought the roses, but she picked them out.

I taught fourth grade in Yreka, and that's what I was doing when I met Joe. He was living with the Newtons, and I had gone to school with their kids. This Sunday afternoon they called and said, "The kids are going to be out from Happy Camp. Come to dinner." So I came to dinner and I met Joe. We were married, and went to Sawyers Bar. We lived in a tent with just bedroom facilities, and we ate with the fire control officer. Our tent was just over the fence from their house. Then we moved to Seiad, we lived in the barracks. We had our first baby there, and I went and lived with my mother in Fort Jones. We were there three years, and I was pregnant with my second child when we moved to Oak Knoll. He was born in 1956, in Yreka. All of my children were born in Yreka, but we lived in different places. Sam and John were both born while we lived at Oak Knoll. But our last child was born when we lived at Orleans. I went back and stayed with my mother and had the baby in Yreka.

It was a little community there. There was a store and a one-room school. I later taught in the school, because there were too many students for the one teacher. I had first, second, and third grades in the back room. I had three in each class, three first-graders, three second-graders and three third-graders, and we were in what was really a storeroom on the back side of the school. I finished out the year for the teacher. I had a new baby then, and my mother came and stayed with us some while I finished out that school year. Straight up from the highway there was a little store, and there was a resort and a lot more people. It was a lot bigger district. There were at least four houses plus a barracks, five houses. There was the ranger's house, there was us, there was the fire control, and there was the guy in charge of equipment. We had a compound.

There were more people at Seiad. There were three houses, so it was a small compound. We were very fortunate. Except for a couple of times, we had people that got along really well. We had some problems at Orleans a couple of times over dogs. We had a guard dog, and we had a little row with one of the neighbors over whether our dog was going to bite their dog, and that sort of thing. But most of the time we got on pretty well. We had families there, so there were things for children to do. When we got to Orleans they had a big compound and lots of children. We had four, and when we first got there, the Marriotts had four, and the Babbitts had two. When the Bunnells came, they had three. We had our own preschool, with a

lot of little boys; we had a mass of little boys.

The old compound formed a circle around this orchard, which was fruit trees – apples, cherries, plums – and that was the playground. That’s where the children played. To add to the compound, they were going to take out half of it. They had built one new house, and this new house and our house were going to get carports. The house we were in had two big redwood trees behind it, and all along one side were some big cedar trees. The cedar trees were so dense that the children could play in there on a rainy day, and we had lots of rainy days, so it was a valuable thing. Well, the people who drew up the plans planned to cut those down and put the carports there, when there was nothing on the other end of the building. The two-room office was there, but they were moving that. Their plan was to build one carport in the middle of the orchard and cut down these trees and put a carport on that end of the house. That was when I wrote my letter. They changed the plans, and they didn’t take out the orchard, and they moved the carports to the opposite ends of the buildings. We were there six years. I did a lot of substitute teaching there, because anybody else who substituted in the school had to come from Hoopa, and I was right there. We had a three-room school there and three teachers, and I substituted quite a bit. We had an Indian lady who came in and took care of my children while I taught school.

One other fun thing happened while we were there that you could do in those days. We knew the fellow who flew the regular helicopter really well, and one time, when he was down there for fire, he took everybody for a ride, flew us all around. Then they were returning the helicopter to Fort Jones, and they let me ride. He took me clear to Fort Jones in the helicopter, and landed out by the Fort Jones ranger station. He just dropped me off and flew off, so they were coming out to see why the helicopter was there. The boys could go out on the truck, which you can’t do anymore.

We really had only a couple of problems. We had one wife that just hated it. She just couldn’t cope with being out like that, and turned to alcohol because she couldn’t handle it. But for the most part, we did really well. All the contact was made through radio and at the office. We never did have a telephone in our house.

When we were on the Stanislaus it was completely different. That was the first time we lived right in town. I did a lot of teaching there,

because I was two blocks from the school, and they could call me up and I could get there. By then my kids were all in school, so I didn't have the problem of getting a babysitter. We were there five years. Our older daughter did her high-school years there, and then she married and stayed there. Then when we moved to Willows, our second son finished high school there, and the other two finished in Paradise. We were originally going to move to Oroville, because that's where the job was. I liked Willows. The only thing I didn't like about it was the heat. When I found out that there were people who worked at the Oroville office that lived in Paradise, of which there were several at that time, we decided to live in Paradise. I liked the town of Willows, but it was hot and had mosquitoes. We lived on the end of town, and one street over was a rice field. So every evening and every morning there were mosquitoes.

My mother, being on the lookout, did a neat thing. All her grandchildren, at one time or another, got to go up and spend the night with Grandma. We were just down the hill, really. But the problem was that every time we went up she had a fire. One time we just pulled in and she spotted a fire. Hank Mostovoy was telling a story about her. She was the new lookout, so he thought he'd go up and help her out. He said he went up, and he asked her, "Can I help you do this?" No, she had that under control. "How about the fire finder?" Oh, she knew how to do that. He says, "Well, the phones are a little – it's a party line." And she knew how to do that. He went back to the office and said, "Well, I think that lookout's gonna be real good." John Hall started to laugh. He said, "Don't you know who she is? She is Ranger William's wife!"

Bob Gustafson

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
August 23, 2004
(1951)

After being stationed in San Francisco, we built a cabin up on my old district at Coffee Creek, that we had started back when we were still stationed there. For four years we were paying rent at the ranger station, and I wasn't building up any equity. One of the rangers on the Weaverville District had bought a piece of property up on Coffee Creek, and the ranger had mining claims on Forest Service ground, which was pretty much a taboo. I remember that he had put it in his son's name. He was a little antsy about that, and he wanted me to buy a place next to him. So I decided, okay, I'll do it as legally as I can. I called the supervisor, and he said he saw nothing wrong with it, but to write him a memo and he would forward it to the regional forester, who was Charlie Connaughton at the time. I knew that the guy that owned the property, and told him what I was going to do, and

that I was interested in that piece of ground. That was fine except that things go awfully slow, and it was months before I got word back that it was okay to buy that ground. So I went to see this guy who owned it, who happened to be a personal friend of mine, to tell him that I was ready to buy. He was talking to another real estate client and he saw me waiting out in the driveway. He left the lady there and he came wondering what I wanted, and I told him I was ready. He said, "Oh, my God, that woman that I'm talking to wants that piece of property that I said you could have. What shall I do?" I said, "Well, that's up to you, Mark." So he went back and talked with her, and she was absolutely up the wall. "He works for the Forest Service, he can buy any piece of ground that he wants, and why does he want the one piece of ground that I love and that I want?" So Mark came back shaking his head and told me what she had said, and I said, "Mark, that's the reason that they don't want us to buy land up here. For God's sake, sell it to her." We lost that.

Then I was transferred shortly after that, and he came up with another piece of ground right on Coffee Creek that was much smaller. We were able to buy another small portion, so we ended up with a full acre and a half of forest land, which doesn't sound like much, but that's where we built our cabin. We bought the ground in December of 1962 and didn't really build until 1963 and 1964. The kids liked it up there.

When I first was courting my wife, I told her the first thing we'd live in, once I got out of school and went to work for the Forest Service, would be a tent platform. It turned out that that's what it was. We were on the Milford District, and we had two tent platforms up against each other, and that's where we lived. I think we were there a week; we had a brand-new baby that was only about six months old, and my wife had never been out in the mountains. She was born and raised in San Mateo, so this was quite an experience for her. Then after a week I got sent to a fire in Southern California, and when I got back, she says, "I'm moving." I moved her down to an apartment in Oroville. That was an interesting part of the career. As it developed, we ended up living in private rentals. Then we ended up at Challenge, and that was our first Forest Service building, which was a couple of cabins that had been pushed together and built into barracks buildings, but it was fine. It was a lot better than anything else we'd ever lived in. We progressed from

Richard Millar

Interviewed by
John Grosvenor,
March 23, 2004
(1951)

that to a trailer in Quincy. When we moved to the Klamath we had a nice two-bedroom house. Then we moved from that to a house in Adin that was a small two-bedroom.

I think one of the things that's happened with the Forest Service is that

Salyer Ranger District,
Six Rivers NF



many of their district offices have moved to town. The work stations still have residences, but many of the rangers and their staff now live in private or rentals in communities that are larger and away from the actual forest. I think part of the strength of our coming up through the organization is living on a ranger station. You get to know the assistant ranger and the fire staff and the other people, and the families pull together and have the same common experiences. I think that's not happening quite as much now, because people are living in town, and they're not in a compound where they're associating as much with each other. I guess that's one of the developments that is not as good. I guess it's access to the public, putting the ranger in closer to population centers. When I was ranger on the Sequoia, we had five residences plus a couple of trailers that some of the timber staff lived in. My wife became pretty much involved, because all the ladies would come to our house for coffee in the morning. They talked out problems and things, and became friends. As far as I know, we never had any kind of conflicts that maybe other

places did. But maybe we were lucky, I don't know.

At one time, after he [son] had gone to Utah State, where he ended up and graduated from, apparently he was finding the program pretty difficult, so he called me up, and we got to discussing. He said, "I'm not sure that I really am all that interested in becoming a forester and staying in this program to get a degree in forest management." I said, "Well, that's fine, but before you make that final decision, why don't you, after the spring quarter is over, get you a job with the Forest Service so that you can get some actual on-the-ground experience." In April he went up to the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie Forest in Region Six. The supervisor was a classmate of mine from Utah State, and I talked to him, and he said, "No problem." They put him on a sale prep crew and he worked for a couple of months. When they found out that he'd had a couple of summers with CDF on a fire crew, they wanted to put him on a hotshot crew. He says, "What about that?" I said, "Well, it's fine. I think that's a good move for you." He spent that summer traveling all over the West, fighting fire on the hotshot crew. He worked in Region One and Four, and I think he even came down to Five. After that summer's experience, he went back to school and decided that he would finish his degree.

I feel I had a very enjoyable career. I was pleased with what I was able to do, and how we raised our family. A little sidebar on that; after we moved our family to Virginia, two of our kids, Norman and Susan, had to move to a new high school in the middle of their high school career, and they felt this was a little bit difficult. Then when we moved back to California, our second son, Mitchell, had to move between his junior and senior year. He had a girlfriend that he didn't want to leave, and he was doing well in football, and his coach wanted him to stay. But I said, "No, we need you at least one more year in our family, so you're going with us." He was able to earn some money, and went back on his Easter break and spent a week back there with his girlfriend. He came back and said, "Man, what a bunch of rednecks. I'm sure glad we moved." So I think that worked out well, too. He had a year here in Alameda, and then ended up going to the University of Washington.

I worked at Weaverville for a short time, and then I worked for the forest engineer while I was waiting for fire funding. My first job was repairing the toilet facilities. We lived in a World War II trailer house that had a sink, but it didn't have any other facilities. It was parked next to

Lawrence Whitfield

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
August 28, 2004
(1952)

a CCC shower and toilet facility, which was a three-room job. The center room had benches and hooks for clothes and a fifty-gallon-barrel stove with coils in it to heat the shower water. The other room was a toilet facility, and then the third was the shower facility. So we'd go in there and start the fire and heat the water and sit there on the benches and then go take a shower in this huge room with eight or ten shower heads in it, and of course we used the toilet facilities. We also lived in what was called the office at Weaverville when I was a crew foreman. It had a toilet, and they put a stove in there, and the only running water was the toilet. It had a big kitchen sink that they got out of the CCC camp, but they never got around to plumbing it. We lived in that thing for nearly a year.

**Carol Whitfield,
(Wife of Lawrence
Whitfield)**

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
August 28, 2004
(1952)

Every place we have lived, I have made curtains for every window in the house, so that was my first chore. The interesting thing about the guard station is that when you wanted a shower in the summertime, you didn't have to heat the water. It was already warm. In the winter we had a butane heater, and the problem there is that you must remember to turn it off, or you have boiling water. It was something new. I learned a lot. It was a three-room, one after the other, real barracks. The first house we lived in was in Hayfork. That was very exciting. It had two bedrooms, a kitchen, a

Most foresters believed that Forest Service life provided a wholesome family environment.
1950s



living room, and a huge garden that the previous owners had planted.

Iwent down in August and picked up my wife Ethel at the airport in Spokane, and she had this fat little baby with her. I didn't pay much attention to him to begin with, because I wanted to see her. But I began to realize that I had a son. They had had a house for us, and in this house they had a Forest Service table, a Forest Service chair, and a lookout bed. We had a double bed, a rocker, a big print by Van Gogh, all our cooking equipment, a baby buggy, and that was our furniture. Even then, we had a hard time getting it up there, because it cost us everything we had to get it shipped. Ethel had never been in a small town in her life, and had never been out of San Diego except to go fishing or something. We had some great neighbors on one side and a ranger on the other side. She was real busy with the baby, and before long, why, she was pregnant with another baby. You know, for a young woman who had never been out of a city in her life, she did an amazing job. She learned how to cook; she made a rag rug for the front room; she covered that whole lookout bed with a cover she made. She had a sewing machine, and she was a good seamstress. She did a lot of things that made it a home instead of just a place to flop.

We had a lot of fun with our children when they were babies. I love babies. There's never another time in their life when they're so delightful. Of course, there were diapers; you had cloth diapers in those days, and I washed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of diapers. I washed the dishes every night. I helped her every way that I could. She had a couple of friends. They had a garden club a friend got her to join, so she did get some time away from the house once in a while, but it was difficult. You know, it was a tough time to work in the wintertime for me, and she was pregnant – it's almost like having triplets to have three kids in three and a half years. But we survived, and I think it was probably the most important part of our life, because as tough as it was, instead of flying apart, we just got closer together.

In May of 1956, we transferred to Region Five, and put everything we owned into the smallest U-Haul trailer you could find. We arrived in Quincy, and they had a house for us. The ranger had written me a letter. He said it had six bedrooms. I thought he must have made a mistake, you know? The Quincy Ranger Station was at the old Feather River Experiment Station, which had been closed, and it was a six-bedroom house. We pulled up into the yard there and went down to this big old

Robert "Bob" Cermak

Interviewed by
Jerry Gause,
March 30, 2000
(1953)

building. [William] “Bill” Peterson was living there, the Forest Supervisor. I knocked on the door, and this nice lady came to the door, and I told her who I was, and wondered where our house was. She says, “Well, I’m Mrs. Peterson, and your house is right there,” just above theirs. She said, “When is your van going to arrive?” I looked at her, and I said, “There it is.” She gulped a little bit. The staff house also had a lot of furniture in it. Some of that furniture, we got in the next few days to help furnish the six-bedroom house. So we had room for all the kids and then some.

Mike Howlett

Interviewed by
Steve Kirby,
July 15, 2004
(1953)

Living conditions, our housing, when I first came to the Forest Service, was left over from the CCC days, and a lot of it was pretty poor stuff. Most of it was not designed or managed for the purposes for which we were currently using it, as we changed our management of the land in those areas. But we used it. We had a lot of people living in very inadequate housing, and we still do. There's nothing to rent when you're way out in nowhere. So we're still living – not as bad – but we're still living pretty poorly in the way in which we require people to live in the forest. When I moved to this house in 1963, my youngest daughter was ten, and it was her fifth house. Moving like that costs, and they didn't even begin to give you moving costs. When I came here, I got four days travel time to move my family of four and 7,500 pounds of furniture to Washington from San Francisco. The travel expenses didn't include all the changes you have when you move into a house.

Jim McCoy

Interviewed by
Bob Harris,
March 26, 2004
(1955)

We used to camp at Seven-up Cedars and we lived in a tent, and it would snow on us. We'd be out surveying in the snow, living in a tent, and the only way you kept warm was keeping close to the stove in the middle of a tent. It was an old tent with a wood platform and a wood frame, and then the tent dropped over the thing. Once you got that fire roaring in there they were not too bad.

We lived in trailers a lot of time, or we'd pull a trailer out. We took turns cooking on these crews of four or five guys, and then took turns washing dishes. Every guy had to cook, and there were good cooks and bad cooks, and you always hated to see that bad cook's turn come up. He only had one specialty, and you knew what you were going to get, and it wasn't going to be good. We moved up a notch from that and we started hiring cooks. We went to Don Turner, the forest engineer, and said, “This is taking too much time; we're working on our own time to get our eight hours on the job, and to cook and wash dishes and all,” and blah, blah,

blah. So he took pity on us and hired a cook. We hired this cook that wasn't much better than the worst cook we had before, but at least we didn't have to wash dishes or do any of this other stuff, so we put up with it. He said he'd cooked in restaurants. We always doubted that he'd cooked anywhere.

I was in Weaverville for probably a month before I could find anyplace to live and bring my wife and baby up. Our first quarters was a little trailer about ten feet long, I think it was, and we lived in that for about two or three weeks while they were fixing this apartment up. The Forest Service was on the old compound. They had an old barracks, and Don Turner, bless his soul, talked the supervisor into letting us convert part of that old barracks into two apartments. It was really just one big room with a stove, a sink, and a refrigerator. So I went down and I brought my wife up. We had a baby boy who had just started to walk, so he was probably nine months old. We lived in this little apartment. A forester, Ted Robertson, lived on the other side of the apartment, and they had two kids. We lived there several months until we could find a place in town to rent. Weaverville just didn't have any rentals, or places for sale, or anything. Finally – my wife met a lady at church, and they were building a new house; they'd been living in a smaller house. So my wife came home, "Oh, I found us a house." Sure enough, we rented that, and we lived in that two-bedroom apartment, I believe it was, so that was not too bad.

In 1955, when the Trinity and the Shasta were merged to become the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, we were transferred to Redding, and we bought a house in Redding. In fact, we bought a brand new house right next to Don and Doris Turner. The down payment was \$300. Then in 1960, while we were on the Tahoe National Forest, my wife gave birth to a little daughter. When we transferred over to the Plumas in Quincy, the baby was about two weeks old. I took off to look for a house over in Quincy, and Nevada City, and Weaverville, and all these little towns and they did not have places to rent or buy. I'd gone down to the supervisor's office and talked to Madge, the receptionist, and she gave me this realtor's name and address. So I went out and got him. Well, the first place he showed me was so terrible that my wife probably would have left me that day if I'd ever tried to take her into that house. I said, "No, I don't want this."

He said, “Well, I’ll tell you, I’ve got one old house that you might be interested in.” It was a house that had been built back in the 1920s or 1930s, and the guy that built it owned a lumber yard there in Quincy. Later I found that practically every piece of wood in the house was select. It was an older house, and it hadn’t been cleaned too well. The realtor said, “That’s the only thing available. There’s just nothing, and there probably won’t be nothing.” And then he says, “You can buy it for a good deal.” I said, “Okay.” I called my wife and I said, “It’s not great. You really won’t like it. But it’s all we can find, and it’s either that or you stay where you’re at, and I’ll be over here.” She said, “I don’t want to do that with the baby.” So we went ahead and bought this house. I think we paid \$16,000 for it, and I had to come up with, I think, \$2000 down or something like that, and the payments were \$60 a month. The government paid our moving costs, so we hired a guy to come in and move us from Nevada City over to Quincy. When my wife got there she walked into this house, and she went over to the couch and she sat down and she started crying. I thought, “Oh, boy, you’ve done it, James.” But anyway, she said, “Well, it’s better than being over there by myself.” So here we are, and we had to get rid of all this furniture out of there first, before we could move our stuff in, and find somebody to come and get it. We got hold of a thrift store or church or something there in town, and they came and got the stuff. As it turned out, it became this nice old house. We finally got it fixed up to where it was

A sense of family is shown in this Christmas party on the Angeles Forest. Harry Grace is seated, far left. 1948



livable. We were there for five years in that house. Anyway, I had a lot of nice experiences on the Plumas.

Back in the fifties and sixties, the Forest Service was like one big family. You'd have picnics, and everybody'd take care of each other's kids, and it was like a big family. But I noticed when I left that I didn't see so much of that anymore. Everybody left at five o'clock and went their separate directions and it didn't seem they got together much. I remember on the Plumas, after five, some of you would meet down at a restaurant or a bar and grill, and have a glass of beer or whatever, and move on and go home, but you never saw much of that anymore. The five o'clock bell rang and you were gone.

When Lee and I got married in 1958 we had an interesting time. We were provided a residence on the Arroyo Seco Ranger District in Arroyo Seco Canyon. It was the first time Lee had a chance to get out in the wilds, because she was a city girl. We had to drive up the canyon to a locked gate, about a mile and a half. At that time we had a ranger station in the canyon; that was our honeymoon cottage. Our first daughter was born in Pasadena, and then we moved to Bakersfield for three years, from 1957 to 1959. Our son Mark was born in Bakersfield. Then we moved from Bakersfield as assistant district ranger to the Sequoia Forest, the Greenhorn District. Then from assistant district ranger on the Greenhorn we moved to Lake Arrowhead as district ranger, in 1962. We were there for four years. Our daughter Vicky was born at Lake Arrowhead. So we had children at all different locations where we were stationed, except here on the Los Padres. The assignment on the Arrowhead was a fantastic assignment. Our children grew up there. We lived in a forest setting, pine trees, many wild animals around, and we found that that was one of our more interesting and pleasant assignments as a family with children growing up. The children recall that, and they look back on it as very favorable times, especially Mark and Nancy, who grew up there.

My father was in a trade, so he worked weekdays from eight to six, and came home and that was the end of his job. Marrying a professional, and somebody in the Forest Service, it was a whole different ballgame. That was his life. Evenings, sometimes the weekends, job came before family, and that was an adjustment for me.

Salvatore S. "Sam" Alfano

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
August 24, 2004
(1956)

Lee Alfano (Wife of Sam Alfano)

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
August 24, 2004
(1956)

I think that Lake Arrowhead was, as Sam mentioned, the best time with the Forest Service. Our two eldest children have wonderful memories, and I do, too. I found what an extended family was like. There was always a friend. Because Lake Arrowhead was a small community, I had to learn to become a diplomat. I had to learn when to keep my mouth shut. I had to learn to keep secrets, and I had to learn to not respond sometimes to a pretty uncomfortable situation. But overall we made wonderful friendships. We have friends now that we still see that we've known for over forty years, part of this extended family.

The one thing that I think was a highlight of Sam's career was when we were living at Lake Arrowhead, we got to know a family that was not Forest Service. But he encouraged and guided their son, who just retired from the Forest Service, Tom Hutchinson. We were very lucky to go through the Forest Service at the time we did, because it was a real family organization. Family was very important and was a real part of it. I have the feeling that maybe that's changed a little. Now it's more of a job. I don't know, because I'm looking back on a very special time. I know there are many times that Sam probably wished that I wasn't around, because I'm sure I did my part in complaining. But looking back on it, we really were lucky that he had the job that he had in the time that he had it. As I say, I've got wonderful memories, and so do our two older children. Our youngest one has kind of followed in her dad's footsteps. She's a city recreation supervisor, and I hear them talking from time to time, Sam asking the questions that I would never think to ask, and giving her advice.

Bob Rice

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 14, 2004
(1958)

The other interesting part is that period of time when the Forest Service changed from the old solid green pickup to the new light green and gray truck. We were kind of proud when we got that new vehicle. That's a historical thing. The ranger station was quite isolated; in fact, it was about two miles from town on the Tioga Pass highway, going to Yosemite Park. We had heavy snows in that part of the world in the wintertime, and the only way we could get to town for groceries was to use the Forest Service Power Wagon to plow our way to town. Another fun part was the need to learn how to ski, at Mammoth Mountain. The ranger made sure that entered into my background, and that was an enjoyable time.

We learned something in the Shawnee National Forest (Southern Missouri) assignment. There was no place to rent in this town, and we ended up in a two-room suite at an old summer hotel on the banks of the Current River, owned by Robert “Bob” Carnahan, whose brother, Mel (who was governor), was killed in a plane crash in Missouri. Their father was Congressman A. S. J. Carnahan. I had breakfast with him every morning before he went out kissing babies, because I had to go in the kitchen and pack Bob’s lunch. We ate all our meals in the dining room. That was one thing, to know that, you know, somebody that illustrious is just like we are, and he puts wheat germ on his cereal, and that was it. I mean, we had a very intimate little table for breakfast.

When Bob was selected to become Job Corps center director at Isabella, we had to move out of a beautiful three-story home with our four children, five and under, into a fishing shack. This was in, March and there was five feet of snow on the ground that they had to plow out to get into that cabin. It was two rooms, and we had four babies. Because that was on the bank of the lake and the choice cabin, we had to move out in May, because it had been rented. We moved into another three-room cabin, and finally in November we got to move into a sixty-foot-long single-wide mobile home, which looked like heaven. The final move on that deal was into the Job Corps double-wide home. I’d never lived in mobile homes at all, so that was very challenging with four youngsters.

We moved from Alturas to Bishop, and housing in Bishop was just nonexistent. We bumped around a little bit, renting houses and so forth. Then finally we bought a house. That helped solve that problem. My family really liked it in Bishop; that was really a nice assignment for them. Then we moved from there to Porterville, and similarly there weren’t any houses to rent. We had to search around, and finally we bought five acres. Half of it we bought, and the other half the supervisor, Lawrence Whitfield, bought. We both bought it, and we raised a large crop of pumpkins on the property and sold them. Unfortunately, before we got the crop harvested, Whit went to Washington, DC. But it was really a nice assignment. From there, I went to the regional office in San Francisco. Needless to say, that was a really rough move for me and my family. We had a hard time finding houses in the Bay Area.

Janet Tyrrel (Wife of Bob Tyrrel)

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
September 1, 2004
(1959)

Edward R. Schneegas

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
December 18, 2003
(1960)

Bob Smart

Interviewed by
Doug Leisz,
July 28, 2004
(1960)

When I met my wife, we were at Fort Benning, Georgia. I said, “I work for the Forest Service,” and she basically said, “What?”

When I tried to explain to her what the Forest Service was, and what kind of housing we’d have, I explained to her the environment that I had come from in Montana, and talked about compound living. That you’d need to be aware what the rangers’ wives might be thinking, just as you have to when you’re on a military base; you have to be concerned about what the commanding general’s wife is thinking. You need to – not to say that they dictate something – but you better not just think you can talk about stuff casually. I described the remoteness of it and how you may buy supplies for a week or two at a time, and that there’s no place to run to. The doctor’s a long way off. So I give her all that, and then when we move to Placerville, she says, “This is pretty nice.”

One of my favorite stories is of Carl Borelli, who used to be the mayor here, and then became a supervisor in Eldorado County. When we first moved to Placerville, we ended up moving into the apartment that Carl owned. The Borellis had just built this apartment house and they knew what they needed to do. They had to have first and last month’s rent; they needed to have damage deposits; they needed to have all these things. Well, I had some money that I’d got when I checked out of the Army, and so basically I just gave Carl all the money that I had in the world, and my wife is sitting there looking at me like, “Whoa! What are we doing?” I said, “We’re going to get paid in two weeks, so we’ll be okay. We can get by for two weeks.” She said, “Yeah.” Well, I went up to the Forest Service, and they said four to six weeks minimum is what it’s going to take for your first check. So my second conversation with Carl Borelli was, “Carl, how about giving me back all that money that I gave you?” That turned out to be the basis for a fast friendship.

And then we moved to Santa Ana, in the midst of nine million people and all the services in the world. We moved from Santa Ana to Sawyers Bar, California. I went up to look at the ranger job with my wife. In order to get there – Yreka is the last big town – you go out to Etna, which was a town at that time of maybe 300 people, and then you leave any kind of pavement and go over a dirt road into Sawyers Bar. It’s well over an hour in the best of conditions – at least it was at that time – to drive from Sawyers Bar to Etna, and you went over the top of a pass that was about 6,500 feet. The compound life – and it was like everything I had described to my

wife about Montana – now came true. We were living on a compound, and there were seventy-five people in town, and most of them worked for me. We lived in the very biggest house, and she became a person of interest, for lack of a better term, as far as what she did or didn't do. It seemed to be that was good fodder for the community.

When we got there, the ranger that I was following had left there after a very difficult tour. Under direction from the Forest Supervisor, he had started a very aggressive program to deal with the miners along the Salmon River. There were people that had been peaceably living there for decades, but they were the kind of people that really didn't fit into the society very well. Some were hippies from San Francisco, for lack of a better term. They were kind of counterculture people. Some lived in communes. One big one, Black Bear, was up on a hill. So you have this very, very different group of people. The previous ranger had been told, "We need to move those people off those illegal occupancy claims," because there wasn't any mining going on to amount to a hill of beans, in many cases. The other thing that he had been given was the need to consolidate the Salmon River District with both the Scott River District and the Ukonom District. Well, Salmon River people know that they are the chosen people, and there's no way that they could live with "those" people at Ukonom or "those" people at Scott River. So he had an internal mutiny. That was a sad setting that he found himself in.

After looking at the job, I said to Dan Abraham, "I got to give you some conditions for me. One is, is if somebody's up there doing any kind of resource problem, I'll jump on him in a minute. If somebody comes in over the hill and starts to take over and tries to live on the river, I'll run them out. But if you're looking for somebody to deal with people who've lived along that river for over thirty years, it's not me. I got to tell you, I got enough priorities with number one and number two; I'll just never get to number three, to deal with those folks." Dan said that was acceptable. I said, "You know, I'm going to share that, too." And he said, "That's okay." So I ended up saying that to the folks; they used to have a lot of community meetings along the river. You'd meet in the schoolhouse and talk. I said, "This is the situation: If you're new, you'll probably be looking to see me. If you've been here for a long time and you're doing anything that's going to mess up that river, if you're putting mud in that river, if you're not following those permits that we've issued,

you can look for me to be looking at you. But if you meet those other criteria, then I'm not going to put my time in moving you." That ended up dividing the community a little bit, because it was obvious that some people were going to be my targets, and others were going to escape. I think that actually the people were pretty accepting of me. But what they didn't bother to do is tell their spouses and their kids that they were probably okay with me. So my son was whipped every day when he went to school. It was pretty common for him to come home all beat up, and from what I can figure out, it was because it was okay to beat up on the ranger's kid, because you know how much we dislike the ranger. That took a tremendous emotional toll on my wife. I think to some degree it was because the previous ranger's efforts to deal with mining issues and consolidation had alienated many of the residents and employees, so with a few exceptions most people tried to stay at arm's length away from the ranger.

I felt I had had pretty good training and was being paid to work my way through non-traditional situations. But my wife did not have the same. On most units, welcoming the wife was the "norm." There was a token of that, but the fact is that most of it was more critical: "We didn't like the last ranger and ran him out of here, and we'll run you out of here, too," was the kind of thing that was behind the scenes. It was more covert than overt in many ways, but there was enough stuff going on to say, "Hey, this is real." Anyhow, after being in there for two years, I had made it plain to Dan that "I think it's probably time for me to be moving on." When I was offered the job at Placerville, it was like, "Holy Smokes, I can't believe it"! Because when we had left here [Placerville], we left feeling, boy that's a crummy thing to do to somebody. We loved the place, and you know the Forest Service will never let you go back to the same place where you've been. We had our own expectations that we would never get a chance to do it. So when Dan offered me the job, I said, "I really don't need to go talk to the wife about it, but I will." I always do.

Paul Hill

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 11, 2004
(1963)

I went out to Pozo; I was on the helitack crew at Pozo. Then later that fall, I was given the Avenales Station foreman job. They called it the Avenales Guard Station. It was east of Pozo about ten or eleven miles, behind a locked gate, up in the headwaters of the Salinas. I lived in a small house there, built in the 1930s, with a pot-bellied stove. It was a great place. We had the district stock there, so we had horses and a mule. We had a small garage that we'd converted into a barracks, which the crew

slept in. We cooked for the crew. I think some of the most fun I had were probably times like those at Pozo. We worked hard, and we had a tendency to play hard. I think there was a lot more camaraderie, and families got together. We had a barbecue or a potluck. You know, you'd have a big safety meeting, and then the women would bring dishes and stuff. There was a lot more of what they called compound living. We used to have an end-of-the-year, a big party, which was, again, a barbecue. So from that you had what they thought of at the time as the Forest Service family. I mean, it really was.



Forester Doug Leisz
and wife Marian, with
Karyn (in mom's arms),
Cynthia (in dad's arms),
and Bruce (standing).
Paskenta District,
Mendocino NF.
1954

Memorable People and Events

Remembering the Good Times

In compiling the oral testimonies of Region Five veterans many memorable personal and situational stories are retold. In this section (arranged here by first year of permanent Forest Service employment) some of these memorable people and events are remembered.

Memorable People

**Bill Mendenhall,
as remembered by
Harry Grace**

Interviewed by
Gene Murphy,
April 29, 2004
(1934)

Bill Mendenhall (L)
checks in at the fire
communications
center, Barley Flats
fire, Angeles NF.
1936

Bill Mendenhall was a wonderful guy. He'd started out on the Angeles when he was sixteen years old, as a packer. In those days, they had the forest split up into two ranger districts, one on the east side and one on the west side. He'd been ranger at both of those for a number of years. He was well liked in Southern California. In fact, he was Mr. Forest Service. He spent most of his time working with people, and very little out in the field after he'd been there so many years. The Board of Supervisors knew him personally, and I would occasionally go to a board meeting with him. About



1963 or 1964, he had a stroke, a heart attack. We had an assistant supervisor, but I was named acting supervisor over the assistant, which didn't go over very good with the assistant.

At one time, when I first went down there, everyone in a staff position had started on the Angeles. It was really an Angeles crowd. His idea was, if I get a guy I like, I'll put him in a job that he can do, and then I expect him to stay there the rest of his life. That's what he did with George Reynolds. He didn't do it intentionally; he didn't realize he was doing that;

Los Angeles Cub
Scouts George Tyler
and James Howard
turn over some of
the bag material they
have collected to
William V. Mendenhall,
Forest Defense
Coordinator for
Southern California
and Supervisor of
Angeles NF.
1942



he just never gave it a thought. That was the way he operated in the old days. George came from Iowa State University as a guard for three years, came back as assistant ranger and then a ranger on two districts, then into the supervisor's office in charge of recreation land. He so badly wanted to go to the Inyo. He wanted to be on the Big Pine. But he would never

say anything about it. I'd say, "Well, George, go talk to Bill." I think Bill would have understood, and been sorry to see him go, but would let him go. But he never did, and he lived and died on that forest. It's unfortunate. Well, that's the way Bill operated. He was a swell guy, and I liked him a great deal, and he did a lot for me. But he had this habit that he wanted guys he knew.

Old Ed was quite a character. You know, he worked there thirty years. He was the third supervisor of the Eldorado, and he was well liked by people. When he retired, he had five parties given for him, one by the Forest Service, one by the City of Placerville, one by the cattlemen, one by the water people, and one by the loggers. Lila, his wife, said, "I got so damn tired going to parties." She was getting pretty disgusted, but that's how well people liked him. I never heard anyone ever say anything about him.

He used to – Rex Quiberg told me this, and I saw it happen a couple of times – go out in the field, and he'd see guys that worked on the road crew, or various timber crews. He'd say, "Hi, how's your wife?" Call her by name, and name off all their kids. Whenever we had a party there was always a dance. He'd dance with every gal that was there. He'd introduce you, "This is Mr. So-and-so. Her name is Such-and such, and she's got so many kids," and so forth. He knew everybody on the forest. He really was an extra-fine individual. I never heard anyone say anything bad about him.

I asked him one day – you always had to order everything through him – "How's chances of getting a trailer tape?" [Trailer tape is a surveyor's steel measuring tape.] I said, "This one we've got has been broken and mended so many times I don't think it's quite accurate, and it's got a twist in it. I'd like to get a new one." "Okay." So he orders me a new trailer tape and I get it. Shortly thereafter, he said, "Got a call from Tahoe, and they'd like to have you meet up with the ranger at the north end of the lake and meet with our joint permittee," who was a sheep man. He said, "Lay out the boundaries of his range." I said, "Okay." He said, "Take along your surveying instruments and lay it out right." So I did. I got up there and I met this ranger, whose name I won't mention. He was kind of an officious guy, and he knew everything there was to know. He was an old-timer. He said, "Now, this is the range," and we went out and hiked around it. I said, "Where are we going to lay out the line between the two forests? It runs over onto the Eldorado part and the boss wants it

**Ed Smith, as
remembered by
Harry Grace**

Interviewed by
Gene Murphy,
April 29, 2004
(1934)

mapped.” Ed Smith had told me before I went over there – he said, “Now, be careful of this guy. If you’ve got anything he wants, he’ll find out some way to steal it from you.”

So I pulled out this trailer tape. “Oh, boy! Look at that! Pretty nice.” We went in and did the surveying. Got through, about four o’clock, and he said, “Well, I’m going over to see this guy.” This guy had a bar; I knew this because he had offered us a drink. I didn’t take a drink with him, but I knew he was going back over there. He went over there, and I got my knapsack, and had to hike about a mile back to the car. I got back to the car and I started looking, and I didn’t have my trailer tape. I went back in, walked down to the area where I know I had it, because I had rolled it up there. I knew damn well he’d stolen it. I went over to this guy’s camp, and he’s sitting there. I said, “Have you seen my trailer tape?” “No, haven’t seen a thing of it.” I knew he was lying about it. I was so damn mad, I didn’t know what to do. I knew when I went back and told Ed Smith, he was going to give me the devil for trusting the guy. I got up to where our cars were parked, two pickups, and thought, that dirty so-and-so. So I pulled off his front wheel and his spare tire, and put them in the back of my pickup, drove down the road about three miles and threw them off in a ditch, and went on home and told Ed about it. He about died laughing. I never did hear anything more from that ranger. But it was one party after another. I don’t mean “party” as party goes, but one enjoyable thing after another, working with him.

The first thing Ed Smith did, which amazed and bothered me considerably, was to put every new ranger through an examination that was two weeks’ pack trip in the back country. I wasn’t worried about the pack trip, because I had worked with stock quite a bit, and Rex told me, “Now, this is what he’s going to do.” When the time came to go on the examination, he showed up with a forest engineer and a Junior Ranger, Milton “Milt” Morris. We took off down to Meek’s Bay, where we had the horses rented. He said, “Do you know how to pack?” I said, “Yes.” “Well, you pack this one and I’ll pack that one.” “Okay.” So I packed it, and everything hung on, and we started out. I said, “Ed, don’t you think we ought to lead these pack animals?” “Hell, no, who ever thought of leading a pack animal?” he said. “I never had a pack animal in all the years I worked for Forest Service that led.” I said, “Well, okay.” We went about twenty yards, and the mules took off in the brush. Well, I had a horse that was kind of spooky. It was a Forest Service horse. I shoved the spurs to her and she immediately tossed me in

the brush. Luckily, Ed and all the rest of them were up ahead, and they didn't see it. I got out of the brush, and I got my horse and gathered up the mules. Ed said, "I've never seen anything like these pack mules." I said, "I know from past experience that the mules that come from these pack stations are barn sour." He said, "What do you mean barn sour?" I said, "They don't want to leave their barn. Wait'll you get headed home. Why, they'll really take off and go home." He said, "Well, we'll lead 'em, then." So we led them.

I got out the first night, and Ed started cooking. He told old Milt Morris, "Now, you take care of the horses. Harry, you're going to do the dishes," and the engineer, whose name I can't remember – he wasn't there very long after I arrived, "He's going to do some fishing and catch us some breakfast." So he went out and fished. He didn't catch a damn thing. I helped Ed. We went out the next day and met up with a cattleman. He was a gruff old German. He had lost a cow in there; it had been in there all winter, in that high country. It had found a spring, and it just stayed right at the spring. The grass didn't freeze up much around the spring, and it had just mowed the country barren. It was skin and bones. He didn't have his cattle in there yet; he was picking them up. Well, he gave us quite a line. Ed says, "You want to watch him. He'll try to outlick you all the way along." I said, "Okay, we'll get along with him." We went on. The third day out, Ed said, "Harry, you see that country over there? What do you think of that rock-bound country?" I said, "It looks pretty nice from here." And he said, "Well, ask me a question about the land" – what do I want to call it? "Legal land descriptions." I told him, and he got the map out. I was a little bit shaky, and he said, "Harry, don't worry about things. You passed the exam. You don't need to worry, and quit shaking." So I felt better the rest of the trip. We had a real good trip.

In September of 1947, I was transferred to Gasquet as a fire control assistant. My ranger was Leo Quackenbush, who was quite a character, one of the old-style guys. There was a murder that occurred down around Willow Creek, or somewhere in that neck of the woods. The guys had disappeared. They couldn't find them. The sheriff couldn't catch up with them. But there were two men, and supposedly they knew who they were, but they didn't know where they'd gone. Well, there was a trail that takes off from Willow Creek and runs across the mountains there and into the Six Rivers. It goes past a lookout built back in the times

**Ed Smith, as
remembered by
Harry Grace**
Continued

**Leo Quackenbush,
as remembered by
Jim James**

Interviewed by
Gerald Gause,
February 5, 2004
(1940)

when the CCCs were active. They had lookouts on every high point around there. About four or five o'clock in the afternoon this lookout caught fire and burned down. It was the Camp Six lookout, the one closer to Gasquet. You could see it from there; the lookout was on fire. So Quackenbush put two and two together, and decided that these guys they were looking for had taken that trail out of Willow Creek, and had headed towards Ship Mountain. He expected them to come out on [Highway]199 and get into Oregon. He figured they'd gone by there and had accidentally set fire to the lookout. We had a five-man crew there, and he split us up; took me and two of the other guys, and had us get guns. We went right up to the trail junction where the Ship Mountain trail came out to the main divide there.

We got up to that trail junction, and it was dark, and the trail was kind of dangerous at night, so we decided to spend the night there. We camped right there at the trail juncture. When I say, "camped," all we did was lay down and go to sleep, each with our rifle. We had posted one guy and rotated lookouts, so if the bad guys came out we'd know it, because he expected them to be coming down that trail. He didn't have a whole lot of respect for those of us who were with him, because we didn't think that this was going to happen. He was the ranger, so we had to go with him. We had a kid in the bunch that was one of the fire crew, and he was watching the trail. He came rushing down to where we were bedded down for the night, which is a flat spot down a little ways from where the trail was, screaming bloody murder. He said, "They came out of there! They came out of there!" So we jumped up, grabbed our weapons, and ran up to the trail and got to looking around there. The only tracks we could find were deer tracks; a couple of deer had come down this trail. Well, we went on the next morning, spread out like a small squad. I was in the lead and the rest of the crew, stayed behind a ways in case we run into trouble. I'd get shot and that would warn them, I guess that's what the idea was. Anyway, we got all the way to Ship Mountain and never saw anybody and it turns out that there were no tracks around Ship Mountain at all. It had rained, thundered, and lightning for eleven days prior to when this happened. I think what happened – we never did know for sure – was that lightning hit the lookout and got into some wet mattresses or a wet mattress. There were some cots in there with mattresses on them. The only thing I could think of was that the wet mattress held fire for eleven days, and took off one afternoon when it dried out. Anyway, it burned the lookout flat down.

In the Forest Service, every opportunity that came along, I would hitch a flight with Calvin “Cal” Ferris who was a regional pilot. Then when we moved up to our ranch I got into flying. I legitimized myself by getting a pilot’s license. I had been flying before, but it was illegitimate, because I didn’t have a license to fly solo. But I did get a license, and as a result established an airstrip on our ranch and we had a lot of wonderful fly-ins. I knew Cal from about 1950 until he retired. In fact, I was master of ceremonies at his retirement party here in Redding.

Cal went down to Mexico to work on a screw-worm program. I think there was more than just that screw worm, which was an insect that was raising heck with cattle. I think he was also, on the sly, taking care of some problems that we were having with dope. He had his airplane shot at a good many times, and he had a real interesting career. The thing about Cal was that he told so many interesting stories that people were ready to nominate him for the highest award in the Liars’ Club. Every once in a while somebody would corroborate his story, and some of the famous people that he played golf with or knew, come to find out, why, he actually had known them. He had that kind of a personality where he could meet and greet most anybody, whether it’s the president of the United States or just the little guy on the street. Cal was a very interesting man.

When I reported for duty, the ranger sat me down at this old, old, old Underwood typewriter, where the sides were still opened, not enclosed, and helped me prepare my temporary hiring papers. Then I had to fill out a W-2 for my wages, and I had to sign a statement that I would not overthrow the government. I had to have a little health check, and I had to have my fingerprints taken. That was clipped together and sent to the supervisor’s office. This was right after the war. I remember when I ordered pencils; I would get a bundle of pencils that were half used. I also remember that I ordered paper towels for our restroom and the purchasing clerk would mail these things in envelopes that had been used two or three times. During the war they did that to save paper. So when I ordered paper towels for the restroom, I would get ten or fifteen towels at a time until I got maybe the two bunches that I’d ordered, so I decided I would not order toilet paper, because I was afraid how that would come. The job was really very, very interesting to me, because I was not acquainted with the Forest Service. Of course I thought it was like a park, but I learned quickly that it was not. I thought a watershed was a building

**“Cal” Ferris, as
remembered by
Bruce Barron**

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
July 1, 2004
(1942)

**Coworkers
and career
remembered by
Lorraine Macebo**

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 19, 2004
(1946)

up on the mountains that had a tank that collected water. I learned a lot about mapping, the vegetation, and then the uses of the forest.

The District Ranger was very dedicated to his work. He really believed in forest management. He had come from a heavy timber forest, so this was quite new to him. He didn't know the area. The fire control officer also did not know the area, so I orientated them quite a bit, having been brought up in San Luis Obispo. Incidentally, we had one phone. We did not make phone calls to the supervisor's office. If we made a long-distance call we had to record it and put the appropriation to which it would be charged, which mostly was fire. At the end of the month I had to send in the telephone report, and it would probably be two or three calls for a whole month that would be long distance-calls that had been made.

I continued to hire the rest of the summer employees. We had three tanker crews, one at Avenales, one at Cerro Alto, and a bigger one at Pozo, and several patrolmen. That generated a lot of work with all the necessary fingerprints and paper. The next big job was the payrolls. Those were done locally, at the district level. I didn't know how to do those, so Al Sheldon, who probably had worked about twenty years on the Sequoia Forest, showed me how to do payrolls, and that meant keeping the hours for each of the employees. The fire people were on different shifts, so we could have continuous coverage during the week. We also had overtime, holiday pay, annual leave or sick leave, and deductions for their Social Security. There was another one, I think it was called FICA [Federal Insurance Contribution Act], that covered them if they were injured on the forest. Then I would figure out the payrolls for each individual and take out the deductions. The people at Pozo would have lodging and meal deductions. I'd figure that out, and have a total at the end of a two-week period, so that when they were sent in they were fully completed. Later, when I was in the supervisor's office, I was told that they were so happy I did the payrolls, because nobody else did them from the district. But in addition to keeping time we had to keep a record of contributed time, how much time was spent in cleaning up the campgrounds, that would be the main thing, or working on trails. That was kept separately, to show that there was other work besides fire, and that the fire crews were kept busy when they were not on fires. The following years I was on the San Luis District, until 1954. We had several major fires, and repeated the ordering and filling of orders from the fire camp, and then all of the paperwork afterwards, the purchase orders, the payroll, the fire time slips, and so forth.

In the summer of 1954, I was offered a job as an assistant fire dispatcher in the supervisor's office. At that time they only had one fire dispatcher, and he worked seven days a week, except of course he had days off. But he had to be available all that time. In processing the papers, the regional personnel office said that we didn't have assistant dispatchers, and so I was hired as a dispatching clerk, which did not include much of a pay raise, if any. The dispatcher had been on that job for quite a few years, probably from the early '30s. He was a gentleman from Pennsylvania who had suffered from TB, and they had him work in a lookout, which helped him regain his health. But he was quite a person to work for. He did not want any help, and that's why they were getting him a clerk. Well, as it turned out, I was there a short while, and I was doing everything that he was doing, and he accepted me. When I first went there, he had the good duty of daytime, 6:00 to 6:00, and then I would come on at 6:00 in the evening until 6:00 in the morning. Except we had to have overlap because there were a lot of ongoing orders that weren't filled or coming in. So I'd go in at 5:00 o'clock. Then in the evening he would stay over until 7:00 rather than coming in at 5:00 o'clock in the evening.

Then the following year, they put in papers for me to be an assistant fire dispatcher. Again, the papers came back and said that we only put retired fire control officers or other people, that they should not be working on fire in the office, so they turned that down. The fire control officer asked the administrative officer if this was according to the manual, and he said, "Well, actually, if Lorraine would take a test – the entrance test for a fire dispatcher, and get her on the Civil Service Register, we can take her off." We did that, and since I had had some fire duty on the district and I had five points for my veteran's time, I had a score of about ninety-nine, so that went through. I enjoyed the time working there as assistant fire dispatcher. We didn't have many fires on the forest at that time, maybe only about twenty or twenty-one reportable fires. But we got a lot of work from the south zone dispatchers for crews and personnel to other fires, either on a southern forest or even northern forests. So yes, it was very, very interesting.

I worked there as a dispatcher until 1963. Al, the fire dispatcher, had retired, and I did not want to be the main dispatcher because that is not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I tried to apply for jobs

elsewhere. I was GS-7 at the time, and there just weren't any jobs – if there were, there were fifteen applicants for that in that time. But they did have vacancy notices come out from the Washington office, and had jobs all over the country. So since I couldn't get anything in California, I decided to go to the Washington office.

The first job that I applied for was in records management, so I applied for it, and was accepted. It was a secretarial job, and they just wanted to get a good secretary. After I was there for even less than a year, I knew that I couldn't just be there and handle papers and so forth, and so I started looking around. A secretarial job came up in the Division of I & E, and I thought, what the heck? At that time I came into the Washington office as an AA. But I had to go back to being a secretary for the Division of I & E. So, I took it. I worked as Clint Davis's secretary, and it was very, very interesting. He was involved with the different national organizations, like national recreation organizations, the different wildlife organizations, the different wilderness organizations. The director of I & E handled about seven branches, which included the Smokey Bear program, the audio-visual program, an editing branch, conservation education, women's activities, the media branch and the writers, and then the special projects branch. Then later on, when the Job Corps program came on, we also had a Job Corps person that handled the public relations aspects.

I was in the Washington office for five years. I enjoyed it very much, but I was still a GS-7, and I was getting on in years, and I decided I had to look toward my retirement about that time. So in working with personnel, I had to take the Forest Entrance Exam again for an AA. I didn't realize that I was already an AA at one time and I could just go back to it. Those people in personnel knew that, but they didn't tell me!

So I took the Forest Entrance Exam, along with another friend. She had asthma really bad, and she needed to move west, so we both took the test. I got a job in the San Francisco office in I&E, and she got a job at Prescott, Arizona. We traveled in her car, had a wonderful trip to the western area. In the San Francisco office I handled the information section with the public; that is, we had about four information clerks that handled people that came to the counters. Surprisingly, we had quite a few people, even though we were in the marketing section of San Francisco. That was in 1968. I worked there a couple of years, met some wonderful people.

One of the wonderful things about working in the Washington office

and then San Francisco is that I got a much broader view. In fact, when I got transferred back to San Francisco, I was amazed at how parochial the people in San Francisco were. They just were not considering any of the other regions, they were just thinking about our region. I worked doing mostly administrative work there. I did it for a couple of years, and decided, that's taking me nowhere. I'm still a seven. I read a paper where my boss, who was Grant Morris at the time, had recommended a job promotion – not job promotion, but raises in the job level positions from whatever grade the people were in to the next grade. I was not included. So I talked to personnel, and I wanted an AA job out in the field. I was then selected to go to the Stanislaus National Forest, in 1970. That was really wonderful, because it was up in the mountains with trees, a river running through it. It was at Pinecrest Lake. Of course, they had a lot of campgrounds and one of my responsibilities was to see that all the money was properly collected from all of the campgrounds.

I didn't want to leave, but I was offered a promotion, finally, from a seven to a nine, up at the Northern California Service Center, and I transferred there in July of 1972. There at Northern California Service Center they had, of course, dispatching for the Northern California – they had the smoke jumper base there, the Redding Hotshot Crew, and air units. I was there for five years, and I was eligible for retirement. So I put in for my retirement. I was fifty-five at the time, with thirty years of service.

I think one of the best things about a career in the Forest Service is the people that you met, and knew, and worked for and with. One of them that I recall, very vividly, was a guy named Jim McKnight. He was a fire control assistant on the Upper Trinity District, which was Weaverville. That was also the supervisor's office before the forests were combined. Jim was non-professional, and grew up in the Forest Service. In fact, for the first few years that I was in the Forest Service, his father worked on the Klamath as a law enforcement man. Jim was pretty much self-taught, very reliant, quite a hunter, always had some hounds, and was a good guy to work for. He had five kids, lived in a building without running water, and hauled his water. His wife was a heck of a cook. They sort of took us under their wing and made sure we got along okay in those days. When we lived in Hayfork, we got so affluent we thought we had to do something

**Jim McKnight,
as remembered by
Lawrence Whitfield**

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
August 28, 2004
(1952)

James H. McKnight,
fire control officer of the
Upper Trinity District,
boarding helicopter on
Backbone Ridge after
making a check
of fire line.
1953



for him. We bought him a young sow pig that they had for years, and raised a number of litters, and then they had a little acreage out at Weaverville. An interesting part of that scheme was, when I was in college we had a seminar. One of the things they preached to us was, you go to work for a public agency and you're going to be working with a lot of non-professionals who have a lot of skill. Don't make a big thing out of being a college boy. That was pretty darned good advice. I learned a lot from these guys, and they became life-long friends.

**Jim Reddick, as
remembered by
Jon Kennedy**

Interviewed by
John Grosvenor,
June 15, 2004
(1956)

My first boss in the Forest Service was a fellow by the name of James “Jim” Reddick. He was the head of the survey crew that worked out of the regional office. Jim had joined the Forest Service, coming from the old General Land Office, before the Forest Service began to take over some of this responsibility. He joined the General Land Office in 1909. When I worked for him he was sixty-four, sixty-five years old. Now that I'm seventy, why, you can see there's quite a lengthy history that goes back to that first assignment. He also wrote kind of an autobiography called *Forty-Seven Years in the Forest Service*. I would imagine it's still in the archives of Region Two. He was a strong influence on me to continue with the Forest Service because of his dedication and his work ethic, just his demeanor. After forty-five years with the outfit he still looked forward to coming to work every morning. So, he was one of the people that influenced me.

I started on the Summit District in 1961, and I worked there until late in 1963.

The ranger that I worked for was Tom Beard, a great teacher. One of his favorite things that he liked to do was try to get all of us foresters that worked on the district trained up to be District Rangers. He had what they called the *Potential District Ranger Handbook*. Tom wanted to be assured that when somebody left that ranger district, they had had exposure to all of the different multiple uses that you dealt with, including fire and some wilderness management. Tom would record our progress in the different multiple uses of the forest. So that's where I learned to scale, where I learned to mark timber, where I learned to do sale administration, all of those things with the timber side. I also learned how to do grazing allotments, how to do range checks, and those kinds of things. Tom was also a great fire guy. If the whistle blew, no matter what district it was on, he was in his pickup on his way. Whatever forester happened to be in the office got in that truck with him and went to the fire.

Jim McNeill was in World War I and he was in World War II, and he was injured in both wars. He was the warehouseman when I first came to the Klamath and I was his boss, just by the organization chart. He went on to be the president of the Siskiyou Historical Society. He also used to run mail, back in the teens. There are many, many stories about Jim McNeill, and some of our books tell some of his stories. In fact, when he retired, I said to him, "Jim, you have so many stories. I'm going to get you a recorder and tape, and whenever you feel like recording your story, would you send me the tape and I'll get it transcribed." So over the years, after he moved to Oregon, he sent back seventeen stories. We transcribed them, and we put them in a little publication. Several years later the Siskiyou Historical Society asked me if they could take all those stories and make a yearbook out of it, which they did. I don't remember the year, but those are Jim's stories. When I first came on board I called Jim in and said, "Jim, you're older than I am. I'm just a young punk. I know very little about the Forest Service, even though I've been in it for a half-year or more. You know a tremendous amount more than I do. However, by the luck of the draw, I'm your boss. I'll make a deal with you. If you teach me the ropes, I'm not going to get after you. I'll ask you many questions, but I'm not going to act like a boss and give you a hard time. You run your show. Physically, I'm not even here. You're at the

**Tom Beard, as
remembered by Bob
Rice**

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 14, 2004
(1958)

**Jim McNeill,
as remembered by
Gilbert Davies**

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 21, 2004
(1960)

warehouse.” He said, “That’s a deal.” We respected each other all those years until he retired.

**Lee Morford,
as remembered by
Gilbert Davies**

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 21, 2004
(1960)

Another person who I respected highly was Lee Morford. Lee was assistant fire control officer; later they called him fire management officer. He and I were involved with many fires together, where he was dispatching most of the time. I persuaded Lee to go ahead and write a history of fire in Siskiyou County, which he did. I have a book in there that he wrote and signed for me, and said, “Thanks for getting me going on this book.” It was a very successful book, and he was proud of it. He should have been. He was a historian, and he backed the museum and helped out in all the ways he could. By the way, in that museum we have the old Bosworth fire finder and the Osborne fire finder. Anyway, he helped out in that. Lee and I, in the seventies, thought we should go around and interview the old-timers in Siskiyou County. So he took fire people, and I took everybody else, and we took a recorder around and we conducted over fifty interviews. We didn’t know what we were going to do with them. I had them transcribed. They did become a book called *Memories from the Land of Siskiyou*.

**Bill Howard,
as remembered by
Gilbert Davies**

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
October 21, 2004
(1960)

Another person who I respected very much was Bill Howard. When I first knew Bill, he was the Callahan District Ranger, then he came in as a fire management officer, and then he went to the Plumas. But he was a fire boss, and he was my fire boss in team four. The fire publications that are produced by the Forest Service are basically an outline on positions and what they’re responsible for, and what they should do. Bill really didn’t pay much attention to that. He always backed you, but you had to be honest with him, which was natural, and you had to tell him what you were planning to do. He was one of these fire people who did it by instinct. He didn’t look at a book and say, “Oh, we’ve got to do this now,” and all that. He did it by instinct. He could look at a fire coming over a ridge, or he could analyze it on the map, or something. I’ve never seen him make an error. Now, maybe he did; but I have never seen him make an error. He was the most outstanding fire boss that I ever worked with.

Memorable Events

Richard Droege

Interviewed by
Brian Payne,
July 10, 2004 (1936)

Oh, we had all kinds of fun. For instance, when we were out there in the woods someplace, we found one of these great big long grubs, the white ones, and we took it back down. During dinner one night we had spaghetti, and we put the worm in the spaghetti. Then we started hollering,

"Look what's in our food here!" But the cook saw the damn thing wiggle, and of course he knew damn well it had just been put in. But we did those kinds of things.

One time, after I had been in the regional office quite a while, we were on another fire. It was night time. There was just one teeny little bit of fire going up there, and I was going to be a hero and go up and get it. So I got in the helicopter, and I think the fellow's name was Freddie Bowen, tried and he couldn't quite get it off the ground. He said, "Throw out your headlamp," and he took right off. Everybody just about died laughing at me about that.

I was flying on a fire out of Ukiah one time. The airport there was located so that you fly right down the main street of Ukiah when you take off; you always take off there from south to north. On the south end there was a motel painted white. It was pure white. There was [an air tanker] pilot that, for some reason or another, decided he had to get rid of his load. He was coming in for a landing with a load, which he shouldn't have been doing in the first place, and he suddenly decided to get rid of it. It hit that white hotel. We had to paint it, too. I was just thankful that he wasn't over the north end taking off, because he would have dumped it right on Main Street in Ukiah.

I always recall the Refugio Fire down on the Santa Barbara. We had a big helicopter at our disposal that belonged to the Coast Guard. So, we were flying low over the top of the 75,000-acre fire. I kept noticing something that looked like a canister that's used in welding, a small oxygen canister. I noticed a few of those, but they were in an area where there was no habitation, and I kept wondering how they got up there. Well, a few years later, I was reading in a military book that when the Japanese bombed America, a Japanese submarine came off of the coast there by Refugio where there's an oil refinery and a bunch of oil tanks, and lobbed I think twenty, thirty, or forty shells. They didn't hit anything, because the submarine was probably bouncing around in the waves, and they missed their targets. But it did create quite an incident. After the fire was over, I went back and read this article, and I'm sure some of those were the shells that were lobbed during World War II by the Japanese submarine.

Another fire was the Duffy fire on the old Lassen Forest, about 1949. It was a real hot fire in August. I was the service chief, responsible for setting up the fire camps, and all the firefighters were complaining about,

Jim James

Interviewed by
Gerald Gause,
February 5, 2004
(1940)

Bruce Barron

Interviewed by
Janet Buzzini,
July 1, 2004
(1942)

“What lousy grub.” We had all kinds of other fires [going on], so it was the bottom of the barrel when we got to this particular fire camp. I thought, doggone it, I’ll treat these fellows to some ice cream. So I went down to the local dairy and bought several big canisters of ice cream, and they packed these big containers with huge slabs of dry ice. When I got back to fire camp, Cal Ferris had just showed up. In the interim, there were some big cumulus clouds building up over Westwood, and they were blowing our way. Cal and I were always talking flying, and I said, “Cal, have you read about this deal where they dropped dry ice in the clouds and formed snow, ice, and rain?” I said, “I’ve got all this dry ice. Why don’t we just chop that up and go up there and drop it out of the airplane?” He thought, “That’s a good idea.” So he took the airplane up and flew through the clouds. We got right over the top of our fire and it caused hail, sleet, snow, rain, and in a half an hour it knocked that red-hot fire down to nothing. All the firefighters were jubilant, and we ate the ice cream in a snowstorm. Cal made history, because the article about this particular fire and our dry ice experiment made it into the October 1951 issue of the *Reader’s Digest*.

Lorraine Macebo

Interviewed by
David Schreiner,
August 19, 2004
(1946)

I did get involved in public programs. For example, they had Lassie come to the Washington office at the time when President Johnson was in office, and Lady Bird had the Outdoor Beautification Program. They tied that in with Lassie’s TV program. They had a program for the media at the Rose Garden of the White House office. I was able to attend that, and then had a special tour of the White House and shook Lady Bird’s hand. Then one time we had Smokey Bear come meet with Bob Bray, when they had the forest-oriented program on TV. They brought Lassie over to the office so that all the Forest Service people could meet her. Then I had a special showing with my boss, in the hotel where Lassie had her own room. Another program that my boss was working on was the old Pinchot Estate in Milford, Pennsylvania. The Pinchot family had turned over the Grey Towers to the Forest Service. It was accepted, and President Kennedy went up and made the dedication.

Another program was one dealing with the President’s office. Of course, we had to handle everything through the Secretary of Agriculture’s office. At that time, the Johnsons’ two daughters were very young, but I believe they were out of school or in college. The younger daughter was very popular, and she made good news for the newspaper. The older daughter, Linda, was not. She was reserved, and she didn’t make good copy, so they would cut her

out of pictures and so forth. The Secretary of Agriculture decided that he wanted to give her a little publicity, and came up with a program to have her visit a forest area, and he arranged for National Geographic to cover that. So we worked on that, compiling a lot of information that she would have in advance. They were going to explore the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. They had the people up there arrange for all of the equipment and camping supplies they would need. In fact, the Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman, also went along on the tour with Linda Bird. When she returned, they had a little meeting in the secretary's office to thank the people that helped arrange the program, which was my boss and myself and two or three other people, and she came. She was late, but she came, and thanked us for helping with the program.

During a 1958 fire on the Sequoia, I went down as a warehouseman. There was a one-legged fellow that had the warehouse there, and he was a raunchy sort of soul. But that's all right, we all are at one time or another. I went there, and he had a Forest Service pickup, and he had a young fellow drive it. They'd order lunches from over here, and he'd run and pick it up and come back with it. Well, that's not the way I think we do business. If I'm spending a thousand dollars on lunches, then you'd better deliver them to my doorway. So I went down there and took over, and he went home and I changed it. I told that kid, "You stay on that dock. When the lunches come, you bring one of them in to me. I'll check it and see that it's right. With food, you give me the list, and I'll check it out." Well, [expletive deleted], he came back to work on his shift and he was livid – livid – because I had changed the system. I don't care, I mean, if I'm buying lunches or going to the grocery store and buying \$5,000 worth of food, you'd damn sure better deliver it where I want it. So that same evening, time for me to go off, and I said to him, "Okay, I need to eat. Have this kid run me up to the thing and I'll get something to eat, and then he can come and pick me up." "Oh, hell, no," he says, "You take the truck. I'll hire another truck, no problem at all. He said "Take the pickup and go look around. No problem." So I go out of the mountains and I go down, and I get something to eat, and here was a theater. I thought, oh boy, maybe I'll go to the show. So I went to the show, not knowing one end of that town from another, and probably never interested in it again. I parked back of a bar, the parking lot across from the theater, and I went to the show. I came out of the show and went to get my pickup, and it

Hurston Buck

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
September 25, 2004
(1947)

was gone. Somebody stole my truck, and I had the keys. The warehouseman had sent somebody out to get my truck and he said, "Boy, you're in trouble." I said, "What for?" "For going to the bar and drinking." I said, "I went to the show." "Oh, that's not what the warehouseman says." So this all transpired. I got back to the dispatcher. They sent me over to this warehouse. "You go over there and stay until the supervisor talks to you." Okay. So naturally I went over there and stayed. It was about 10:00 or 11:00 at night. Next morning came, and nobody said a word. Noon came. Nobody said a word. Nighttime came, and I was getting damned hungry. So I went over to the dispatch office and I said to him, "I don't know what you're going to do, but I'm going to eat." "Oh, we'll give you a truck." I said, "You take that truck and you put it where the sun don't shine. I'm going to walk to town and I don't see a goddamned soul in this office that's going to take my legs out from under me." So I walked to town, and then I walked back, and into the goddamned warehouse I went again. At about seven, maybe, somebody came to the warehouse and said, "Supervisor wants to see you." Oh boy, I thought. I wonder what I can do besides Forest Service. There must be something I can do. I figured I had had it. So I went over to the supervisor's office and that damned Norm Ferrell – I'd known him since I'd been a kid – sat right there in that [expletive deleted] office, never said a [expletive deleted] word, and let that supervisor just ream me real.

Then he called the Stanislaus, and talked to the supervisor, and told him, "This drunk," and all of the trouble, and the supervisor on the Stanislaus told him over the phone, "I know that man. That's not right. If you have anything else to say about that man, I want it in writing." So I went over there and he reamed me well, and he said, "I was going to send you home, but the supervisor says you're here, keep you. You go out there and you check into the tool room." So I went out there and I checked into the tool room and I'm filling canteens. Then three or four people that I know asked, "What the hell's the matter, Buck?" "Man, I've had it. I'm probably done." They said, "Would you go to the line?" "No way in God's world would I go to the line. That supervisor will cremate me. He sent me here to the tool room and here's where I stay." "We need a line boss, Buck." That went on and I finally went to bed.

They came and woke me up and said, "Buck, we have approval for you to go to the line tonight." I said, "Who in the hell's approval did you get?" "Well, we've cleared it with everybody. Don't worry about it." So I went

to the line that night. But I tell you one thing; there ain't nobody that slept on that line that night. I tell you nobody. So anyway, got off the line and went over and sat on the Caterpillar. Everybody else was milling around. Finally the truck came along and took us into camp. They sent us home. A bunch of fellows were in the dispatcher's office in Sonora and somebody said, "Where's Buck?" "Oh, he's back here." "Supervisor wants to see you." I thought, well, that does you in, old boy. You've had the course. So I went upstairs and he said to me, "What the hell happened, Hurston?" I told him what happened. And he said, "You know, that supervisor is as dry as gunpowder. I told him if he had anything else on you I wanted it in writing, because I know it wasn't true." Because when I went to fire conferences, in Sonora and Yosemite Park, they would give me the keys, because I didn't drink.

I was about nine years old when my uncle took me to Government Flat on the Mendocino National Forest, where there was a pack station. There was a man packing pool table materials for the summer lodge of an oil magnate from Southern California. I can remember this little man. He was a small man, only five-foot-six. He had a great, big, 1,600-pound mule, and he stood the slates for a full-sized pool table up in a teepee, on boxes. He had an Indian boy helping him. He walked that mule under those two slates, and then he lashed them on. He handed the boy the lead rope, and he said, "Start walking, and don't let that mule stop until you get to Slane's Flat," which was a seventeen-mile haul. I think it was about 900 pounds worth of slate on top of this great big mule, and that boy walked it to Slane's Flat. In 1951 I went to Slane's Flat, and that pool table was still there. Yes, a beautiful lodge. Had a beautiful big kitchen, had refrigerators, stoves, and small isolated bedrooms down a long hall. It was a beautiful place. There was another one that was built just under Black Butte Mountain off in the middle of the forest, Keller's Lake. He'd built the lake out of a swamp, and then he ran his powerhouse from it, and he had a beautiful, big lodge. It was a log lodge, and it was built around a central, big, open living room, with a second story with all the bedrooms upstairs. It had everything: refrigeration, stoves, the whole works, lights – because it had a Pelton water-wheel generator system. Both of these were private holdings within the national forest. Those in-holdings were all taken up at one time, before the turn of the twentieth century, for the livestock industry, primarily for either cattle or sheep. Then, of course,

Ed Grosch

Interviewed by
Bob Smart,
March 9, 2004
(1949)

when the sheep industry went belly up right after World War I, that's when several of those properties traded hands.

I worked the summer of 1956 over at Paskenta, but I remember in the fall I went with the inmates from the inmate camp there. We had a stake-side truck that the crews used to ride in. They had benches in there, and they had a canvas cover over it. We went down there to Fresno to some fire to the east. I remember we left about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and we got down there to Fresno and the foreman wanted to check in with the supervisor's office. It was night time, and he told the crew, "Why don't you get out and stretch your legs?" So they all jumped off, and I remember several of them ran out onto this lawn area, and all of a sudden they started hollering and bawling like mad. Come to find out there was puncture-vine (*Tribulus terrestris*) all through the lawn. Oh, boy! Those poor guys. Man! Most of them still had their shoes on, but a couple of these guys that hollered, they didn't. That was my first experience with puncture-vine.

Max Peterson

Interviewed by
Brian Payne,
July 2, 2004
(1949)

The North Fork of the Feather River had both the Western Pacific Railroad, which was the lowest pass through the Sierras, and also had a major highway that went up to the Feather River. We had a railroad car that was loaded with newsprint coming up the Feather River, and it caught on fire. Well, guess what the people on the railroad did: They stopped the train and they threw that paper out of the railroad car. They didn't want it to burn up the railroad car, and there was no way to get any fire equipment in there. So they threw it out of the railroad car, and it caught the mountainside on fire. We had this fire running up the mountain, and at the bottom of this canyon, it was mostly brush, it ran up into the higher level. I was up on the top with a dozer, leading a dozer, trying to figure out a ridge to go down that we could fire out this area, which was the only way to possibly stop this fire. There was a ranch down there. I didn't want to get on the wrong side of this ranch house when we came down. We didn't want to burn this ranch house, but I couldn't figure out which one of these ridges to go down, because it was night, and we were heading down this ridge. I finally told the dozer operator, "Continue on this ridge and I'll be back." I headed down there to this house and said, "Hey, we want to get this dozer on the proper side of this house and I've tried to figure how to do this." The guy had a gasoline lantern there, so we lit this gasoline lantern, and we threw a rock over a limb on a tree, and we swung this gasoline lantern up in the tree, quite a ways up this tree. I hurried back to help the dozer. Well, Bill Peterson – he was on

any fire of any consequence on the forest – had gone out to see what was going on. He came driving in, and these people are sitting there outside the house looking around, and this lantern is about forty feet in the air. They're basically sitting there in the dark. He said, "What in the world's going on here?" This one guy reportedly said to him, "Well, some guy came down here and said there was a dozer up there and he wanted it to get on the right of the house, so he asked us to put this lantern way up here." Bill Pete said, "Who is he?" He said, "Well, I think his name was Peterson, too."

I had one little humorous incident that I remember. Charles A. "Charlie" Connaughton had what was called a regional advisory committee at that time, and he came down to the forest with the advisory committee. He went to a fire crew area, where they were making routed signs, and was explaining how important it was. You know, "This gives these people something to do, build signs; otherwise the Forest Service couldn't afford it." He took them there and he turned over a sign, and the first sign he turned over had the word "forester" misspelled. Of course, it was built on a template, so on every one of the signs – this guy had a stack of signs – the word was misspelled. Well, you can imagine Charlie Connaughton. He turned red from his chin to the top of his head. He said, "Sometimes you can't win," or something like that. Of course, the advisory council – they looked at the other signs, and they were fine – they thought that was kind of humorous, but he didn't think it was particularly humorous.

This was in the days of the Lassie program. In those days the chief's office only communicated with you by telegram. We didn't use phones much; phones were expensive. We got a telegram from the chief's office, saying that they wanted to film an event of the Lassie program on the San Bernardino Forest, and please cooperate with them. We didn't know what that meant. They showed up over there, and Forest Supervisor Sim Jarvi was gone on some trip. They said, "We need a Forest Service car with the shield on the side of it, because in this episode Lassie and Cory respond to a fire. It's got to be a wooded area, and we'd like to have an area where there's trees that have been cut." We were doing some removal of insect-infested trees around Lake Arrowhead, so that was not hard. But giving them a car was something different. We finally said, "How long are you going to use it?" "Just for one day." We said, "Okay, we'll give

you the Forest Supervisor's car. He's gone." It had a radio in it, too, which they had to have. Well, they went filming this ranger responding to this fire. He goes sailing around this road that had a bunch of dust on the outside curve, and this car careened sideways into this stack of logs and did a pretty good job of shoving in the whole right side of this car. They brought it back down, and the liaison from the Forest Service came back down there and said "How am I going to explain to the Forest Supervisor that we loaned his car out and it got stoved in?" I looked at the guy, and I finally said, "You know what? There's a Chevrolet garage about three blocks away. The next time I see that car, it should look better than when you got it." The guy said, "That makes sense to me." So they drove it down there, and when the Forest Supervisor got back he had a newly-painted car. We told him, "We have good news and bad news for you." He said, "What's the good news?" We said, "Well, the bad news is, your car got the whole right side of it caved in." He said, "What?!" And we said, "The good news is, it looks better than new." It was a 1955 Chevrolet, which was a really good car.

**Joseph B. "Joe"
Church**

Interviewed by
Bob Cermak,
January 21, 2004
(1951)

The Orleans Hotel had been flooded; it had ten feet of water. The owner finally got into the hotel and was able to clean it out, but he had no place to put the contents of the safe, so he gave it to the deputy sheriff, who didn't have any place to put it, so he brought it up to the station and gave it to us. We didn't have any place to put it, either, but that was the end of the line. Ginny and the kids and I decided, "Well, as long as we got it, we better do something about it," so we got a large bucket of water and started to wash money. I called it laundering money. We cleaned it up, and we had this money hanging everywhere we could find to dry out inside the house, and all these bills and things all the way around. I think we had fifteen \$100 bills. That's a lot of money, a mass of money. That's one of the things the kids remembered. They said, "Do you remember all that money stacked around the place?" The most they'd ever seen. Never seen anything like that in my life. When we got it all dried off, we stacked it all together and put it in the sack and put it off to the side. And then he comes up a little later with another bucket. He said, "They found some more down there, so we brought this." It was not as much, only five or six hundred dollars. Then he brought a bucket full of change, all kinds of change that came up from down there. We had all that stuff around. One of the first things that he pulled out of the safe was a watch fob about ten inches long, silver watch fob with gold nuggets hanging down. About five or six gold nuggets, so that

was probably the most precious thing. We set that off to the side, so it wouldn't get mixed up with the money. We got all that stuff cleaned up, and finally in about three weeks, Slim says, "Well, the hotel is clean, so we can take the money back." And he did. He simply took it the way it was, and no one ever said anything about the money, how much or anything. He simply said, "Thanks." And away he goes with the money.

We had another big camp out when we were putting in what's called the Hertz Mountain Road, which became the Shasta Trail. We had this cook, Phil; he cooked for us out there. He would have pancakes in the morning that were about twelve inches high, and he'd stick them in an oven. By the time we got in there to eat them, they were like rubber, and he left the syrup set out. It was always dark when we were going to breakfast, because we would get an early start because it got so hot out there, so we'd go to work at 6:00 in the morning and get off eight hours later in the afternoon. Like I say, it was dark in the morning, and the lanterns wouldn't put out much light. One morning we got up – and they had left the syrup set out on the table – these little ants had gotten in it, and I think it was Bruce Pruitt; he was eating his pancakes. He'd come in early, he'd got in first, and he'd put syrup on his pancakes. Somebody had come along with a flashlight, and he'd eaten half of these pancakes, and he'd been eating these little red ants and he didn't even know it. Finally that stopped; he didn't eat any more pancakes, and the cook finally went and found some syrup that I guess hadn't been opened.

I used to go out and inspect these roads and whatnot, and I'd stop in the survey camps to see if they were keeping them clean. This one group of kids, they were college kids that were summertime employees, and of course they were hard up for money and were trying to save up all the money they could to go back to college. I come into their trailer that we'd put out there for them. They cooked and lived in their trailer. They had decided that rice and beans would be pretty cheap stuff to eat. These kids didn't know how rice would swell up, and they had a big kettle filled with water and boiling, and poured in a whole bag. They had rice coming out on the stove, and over the top of the thing, and they had rice all over. They had thrown it out the door. It was amazing what you'd see these young kids do just to try to save a buck.

On the Plumas one year, they had a big cement boot that they passed out for the unit that had the worst safety record. I think the second year

Jim McCoy

Interviewed by
Bob Harris,
March 26, 2004
(1955)

I was there, we got that boot. Every year the forest supervisor had a big party, a Christmas party, and of course all the people from the districts and everybody is at this party. So you got ridiculed by the whole forest. We got that boot. I went up and got it – I guess Byron went up and got it. He had me come up. I thought, we're not going to get that boot again. And we went buying safety gear: steel-toed shoes, and helmets and training sessions on how to use an axe, and all that sort of thing. I think the next year we didn't come in first, as the best safety record, but we were at a disadvantage: we had 200 plus people, and the rest of the guys would only have fifteen or twenty, so our odds of having an accident were better. We came in second or third, but we never got that boot again.

Rise of the Ski Industry, remembered by Samuel S. "Sam" Alfano

Interviewed by
Larry Hornberger,
August 24, 2004
(1956)

William C. Meyer,
District Ranger,
Mt. Pinos District,
and James N. Gibson,
Recreation & Lands,
Regional Office,
reconnoitering
skiing terrain on
Mt. Pinos District,
Los Padres NF.
1946

Along with our church activities, I've been involved with the Society of American Foresters as well, and just recently got my fifty-year pin. I started out as a student there at Utah State University in 1954. So this year marked the fiftieth year with the SAF. I've been the historical chairman for the SAF for many years. At this time, helping out where I can. I did have a chance to make a presentation to the SAF at our last convention, in October, in Buffalo, New York. The subject was the Tenth Mountain Division of the US Army, and how they had trained for three years here in this country, in mountain skiing and rappelling and working on getting up



very sheer faces of slopes. Did that for three years, and then around January 1944, they were shipped over to Italy, and they were the unit that broke through the German lines in the Alpine

Mountains there, wherein the Fifth Army, and the Eighth British Army had attempted twice to break through that line, but it finally took the Tenth Mountain Division to do that, and they pushed the Germans to the river. And then in May of that year, '45, the Germans surrendered on the Italian front. It was based on the Tenth Mountain Division.

But along with that, the Tenth – 2,000 of those veterans came back to the States and became ski instructors in the ski areas throughout the United States. They in fact were the group that really became the major thrust for skiing in the United States, through their activities. Many of them started ski areas throughout the country, some here in California, some in Utah, some in Colorado, some back east, as well. As a matter of fact, our own “Slim” Davis, who was the head of the Division of Recreation early on, was a member of the Tenth Mountain Division. So that was a very interesting aspect with regard to how they fit into our outdoor recreation picture.

The thing that I enjoyed was that I was in the woods every day, but we had a lot of ticks. We'd blouse our pants and put sulfur around to keep the seed ticks and things off. I had a Jeep called the Leaping Lena, because we had a pumper in the back and it had no shocks, so I called it Leaping Lena. Every Forest Service home there had a radio in the house, because most of the fires were at night. When I would leave the woods, I would get on the radio and say, “This is Tyrrel, 10-10.” Well, you know there's no such thing as a 10-10.” Janet would hear that on the radio and would start getting the bath ready, and I'd get home and jump in the bath, and she'd pick ticks.

As a forester on the Cut Foot Sioux District, where we stayed three months, we had a government-supplied home right on Cut Foot Sioux Lake. The assistant ranger, Chuck East and I fished for walleyes right in front of the house. We also could harvest the wild rice on the lake, because we lived within the Indian reservation boundary. Harley Hamm was the District Ranger. He was an old-time ranger, and had been there for some time. From the window by his desk, you could see the high-bush cranberries. When those cranberries started to ferment, the birds would eat them and become drunk. One day Harley was sitting at his desk when a bird flew right into the window, broke it, and landed on the desk. Harley just brushed the glass off and threw the bird out the window. It was really funny.

Bob Tyrrel

Interviewed by
Steve Fitch,
September 1, 2004
(1959)

Bibliography

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Clepper, Henry Edward. *Professional Forestry in the United States*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971.
- Cox, Thomas R., Robert S. Maxwell, and Phillip Drennon Thomas. *This Well-Wooded Land: Americans and Their Forests from Colonial Times to the Present*. University of Nebraska Press, 1985.
- Fedkiw, John. *Managing Multiple Uses In National Forests, 1905-1995: A 90-year Learning Experience and It Isn't Finished Yet*. USDA Forest Service, 1999.
- Graham, Otis L., Jr. *Limited Bounty: The US Since WWII*. McGraw-Hill, 1995.
- _____, Jr. *Environmental Politics and Policy 1960s to 1990s* (Issues in Policy History, 9). Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Gray, Bob. *Forest, Fires, and Wild Things*. Naturegraph Publishers, 1997.
- Miller, Char, and Rebecca Staebler. *The Greatest Good: 100 Years of Forestry in America*. Society of American Foresters, 1999.
- Murchie, Archie. *The Free Life of a Ranger: A Forest Service Memoir*. University of Nevada, Reno, 2nd ed., 2002
- Pyne, Stephen J. *America's Fires: Management on Wildlands and Forests* (Forest History Society Issues Series). Forest History Society, 1997.
- Pyne, Stephen J., and William Cronon (Introduction). *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (Weyerhaeuser Environmental Book). University of Washington Press, 1997.
- Robbins, William G. *American Forestry: A History of National, State, and Private Cooperation*. University of Nebraska Press, 1985.
- Runte, Alfred. *Public Lands, Public Heritage: The National Forest Idea*. Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1991.
- Steen, Harold K. *The US Forest Service: A History*. University of Washington Press, 2004.
- Steinberg, Ted. *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History*. Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Williams, Gerald W. *The USDA Forest Service — The First Century*. USDA Forest Service, 2000.
- Worster, Donald. *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West*. Oxford University Press, reprint edition 1994.

Literature Mentioned In the Interviews

- Barron, Bruce. *Fabulous Memories: Short Stories That You Long Remember—A Truly Adventurous Life*. Ox-Shoe Publications, 2001.
- Davies, Gilbert W., and Florice M. Frank. *Stories of the Klamath National Forest: The First 50 Years : 1905-1955*. History Ink Books, 1992.
- Davies, Gilbert W. *Memories from the Land of Siskiyou: Past Lives and Times in Siskiyou County*. History Ink Books, 1993.
- _____. *Memorable Forest Fires: Stories*. History Ink Books, 1995.
- _____. *The Forest Ranger Who Could: Pioneer Custodians of the United States Forest Service 1905-1912*. History Ink Books, 2003.
- Gray, Bob. *Forest Fires and Wild Things*. Naturegraph Publishers, Incorporated, 1985.
- _____. *The New Pioneer*. Historical Society of Siskiyou County, 1997.
- Herbert Kaufmann. *The Forest Ranger*. Johns Hopkins Press, 1960, 1967.
- Pyne, Stephen J. *Year of the Fires: The Story of the Great Fires of 1910*. Penguin Books, 2002.
- Reddick, James. *Forty-Seven Years in the Forest Service*.
- Schmidt, Andrew R. *The Role of the United States Forest Service and Other Federal Agencies in the Lake Tahoe Region*. June 1981.

Interviews

This list represents only interviews consulted for completion of this book. The date in parenthesis is the date of the start of the interviewee's full-time career, and serves as the chronological organizer for the entire book. All interview audio files, transcripts, documentation, and photographs can be found at the USDA Forest Service Regional Office in Vallejo, California.

- Lee Berriman**, Interviewed by John Fiske, June 3, 2004 (1933)
- Harry Grace**, Interviewed by Gene Murphy, April 29, 2004 (1934)
- Richard Droege**, Interviewed by Brian Payne, July 10, 2004 (1936)
- Bob Flynn**, Interviewed by Gene Murphy, May 10, 2004 (1936)
- Jim James**, Interviewed by Gerald Gause, February 5, 2004 (1940)
- Spike Slattery**, Interviewed by Gerald Gause, June 8, 2004 (1940s)
- Andrew R. Schmidt**, Interviewed by Nordstrom ("Nord") Whited, December 18, 2003, and January 21, 2004 (1941)
- Bruce Barron**, Interviewed by Janet Buzzini, July 1, 2004 (1942)
- Bob Gray**, Interviewed by Susana Luzier, August 5, 2004 (1942)
- Mary Ellen Bosworth (Wife of Irwin Bosworth)**, Interviewed by Bob Smart, February 17, 2004 (1944)
- Lorraine Macebo**, Interviewed by David Schreiner, August 19, 2004 (1946)
- Hurston Buck**, Interviewed by Larry Hornberger, September 25, 2004 (1947)
- Scollay Parker**, Interviewed by Doug Leisz, July 19, 2004 (1947)
- Ed Grosch**, Interviewed by Bob Smart, March 9, 2004 (1949)
- Max Peterson**, Interviewed by Brian Payne, July 2, 2004 (1949)
- Douglas "Doug" Leisz**, Interviewed by Bob Smart, September 10, September 30, and October 12, 2004 (1950)
- Joseph B. "Joe" Church**, Interviewed by Bob Cermak, January 21, 2004 (1951)
- Ginny Church (Wife of Joseph B. Church)**, Interviewed by Bob Cermak, January 21, 2004 (1951)
- Bob Gustafson**, Interviewed by Janet Buzzini, August 23, 2004 (1951)
- John "Jack" Kennedy**, Interviewed by John Fiske, February 24, 2004 (1951)
- Mary Kennedy (Wife of Jack Kennedy)**, Interviewed by John Fiske, February 24, 2004 (1951)
- Richard Millar**, Interviewed by John Grosvenor, March 23, 2004 (1951)
- Lawrence Whitfield**, Interviewed by Steve Fitch, August 28, 2004 (1952)
- Carol Whitfield (Wife of Lawrence Whitfield)**, Interviewed by Steve Fitch, August 28, 2004 (1952)

Robert “Bob” Cermak, Interviewed by Jerry Gause,
March 30, 2004 (1953)

Robert “Bob” Irwin, Interviewed by Glenn Gottschall,
August 12, 2004 (1953)

Mike Howlett, Interviewed by Steve Kirby, July 15, 2004 (1953)

Bob Righetti, Interviewed by David Schreiner, August 11, 2004 (1954)

Jim McCoy, Interviewed by Bob Harris, March 26, 2004 (1955)

Salvatore S. “Sam” Alfano, Interviewed by Larry Hornberger,
August 24, 2004 (1956)

Lee Alfano (Wife of Sam Alfano), Interviewed by Larry Hornberger,
August 24, 2004 (1956)

Jon Kennedy, Interviewed by John Grosvenor, June 15, 2004 (1956)

George Leonard, Interviewed by Bob Van Aken, June 28, 2004 (1956)

Bob Rice, Interviewed by Janet Buzzini, October 14, 2004 (1958)

Bob Tyrrel, Interviewed by Steve Fitch, September 1, 2004 (1959)

Janet Tyrrel (Wife of Bob Tyrrel), Interviewed by Steve Fitch,
September 1, 2004 (1959)

Gilbert Davies, Interviewed by Janet Buzzini, October 21, 2004 (1960)

Edward R. Schneegas, Interviewed by Bob Cermak,
December 18, 2003 (1960)

Bob Smart, Interviewed by Doug Leisz, July 28, 2004 (1960)

Paul Hill, Interviewed by David Schreiner, August 11, 2004 (1963)

Ron Stewart, Interviewed by Fred Kaiser, July 7, 2004 (1969)

Who's Who



Salvatore "Sam" Alfano

Service: 1957-1985

Lure of the woods: Camping with the Woodcraft Rangers

1st Forest Service job: 1951, Oak Grove Hot Shots

Career: Recreation, Assistant Ranger, District Ranger, Forest Recreation Officer

Region 5 Locations: Angeles, Sequoia, San Bernardino, Los Padres

Pages: 32, 148, 177



Bruce Barron

Service: 1944-1959

Lure of the woods: Spending childhood summers in the Sierra Nevadas

1st Forest Service job: 1944, District Clerk & Dispatcher, Gooseneck Ranger District, Shasta National Forest

Career: Clerk, Dispatcher, Procurement, Admin. Assistant, Auditor, Personnel Assistant

Region 5 Locations: Shasta, Lassen, Plumas, Eldorado, Regional Office

Pages: 8, 55, 102, 127, 160, 168



Lee Berriman

Service: 1933-1965

Lure of the woods: Father was District Ranger on the Eldorado National Forest

1st Forest Service job: "Bug job" on the Sierra National Forest

Career: Timber, Fire, Assistant Ranger, District Ranger, Region 5 Timber Inventory, Fire Control Officer

Region 5 Locations: Sierra, Trinity, Shasta, Cleveland, Angeles

Other FS Locations: Research and Experiment Station

Pages: 1, 45, 123



Mary Ellen Bosworth

Lure of the woods: Marriage to forester Irwin Bosworth

1st Forest Service job: Lookout, Angeles

Career (Irwin, 1939-1973): Timber, Dispatcher, Assistant Ranger, District Ranger, Forest Timber Management Officer, Forest Supervisor ; also, mother of Dale Bosworth, current Chief of the Forest Service

Region 5 Locations: Angeles, Lassen, Shasta, Plumas, Eldorado

Pages: 56, 127



Hurston Buck

Service: 1937-1996

Lure of the woods: Father ran CCC and FRD (a Depression works program) camps

1st Forest Service job: Worked with father in fire camps (unpaid at first)

Career: Fire crewman, Equipment Operator, Inmate Foreman, Engine Forman, Dispatcher, District Fire Management Officer

Region 5 Locations: Trinity, Klamath, Stanislaus, Los Padres

Pages: 9, 130, 170



Robert "Bob" Cermak

Service: 1953-1982

Lure of the woods: Boy Scouts, hiking, camping, books

Career: Project Sales Officer, Timber Management Assistant, Assistant District Ranger, Forest Recreation/Lands/Fire Staff, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Forest Supervisor, Deputy Regional Forester

Region 5 Locations: Plumas, Inyo, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Region 2, Black Hills, San Isabel; Region 6, Okanogan; Region 8, George Washington, National Forests of North Carolina

Pages: 21, 70, 112, 144



Joseph "Joe" and Virginia "Ginny" Church

Service: 1951-1979

Lure of the woods: As an airman in WWII, sent to rest camp at Santiam Pass, Oregon

1st Forest Service job: 1948, summer job cruising

Career: Timber, District Ranger, Planning Team, Resource Forester

Region 5 Locations: Klamath, Six Rivers, Stanislaus, Mendocino, Plumas

Pages: 16, 66, 110, 135, 136, 175



Gilbert Davies

Service: 1960-1990

1st Forest Service job: Administrative Assistant, Shasta-Trinity

Career: Administrative Services Staff, Contracting Officer

Region 5 Locations: Shasta-Trinity, Klamath

Pages: 38, 91, 166, 167



Richard Droege

Service: 1936-1972

Lure of the woods: Grew up next door to Plumas ranger

1st Forest Service job: Local Experienced Man (LEM) at CCC Camp

Career: Thinning crew, Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger, Fire Training Officer, Forest Supervisor, Assistant Regional Forester, Assistant Chief of Fire and Recreation, Regional Forester, Deputy Chief for Administration

Region 5 Locations: Plumas, Stanislaus, Lassen, Cleveland, Angeles

Other FS Locations: Region 7-Regional Office; Region 8- Regional Office; Washington Office
Pages: 3, 50, 101, 124, 167



Robert E. "Bob" Flynn

Service: 1936-1975

Lure of the woods: Forest Service neighbor offered a job

1st Forest Service job: Trail crewman, Eldorado National Forest

Career: Lookout-fireman, Road crew, Grader operator, Fire crew foreman, Fire control assistant, District Ranger, Forest Fire Control Staff Officer

Region 5 Locations: Eldorado, Los Padres, Sierra, Shasta-Trinity
Pages: 4



Harry Grace

Service: 1934-1972

Lure of the woods: Hiking all over the Angeles National Forest as a youth

1st Forest Service job: Relief lookout, Angeles

Career: Lookout/Fire guard, LEM (Local Experienced Man in CCC), Assistant foreman-Erosion control, Fire control assistant, District Ranger, Forest Fire Staff, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Forest Supervisor

Region 5 Locations: Angeles, Eldorado, Sequoia, Shasta-Trinity, Stanislaus

Other FS Locations: San Dimas Experiment Station
Pages: 1, 48, 99, 124, 155, 156



Bob Gray

Service: 1942-1976

Lure of the woods: Ad in school paper for Forest Service summer employees

1st Forest Service job: Lookout

Career: Fire Crew foreman, District dispatcher, North Zone dispatcher, District fire control officer, Fire management officer

Region 5 Locations: Shasta, Trinity
Pages: 8, 55, 103



Ed Grosch

Service: 1949-1981

Lure of the woods: California Division of Forestry employee

1st Forest Service job: Firefighter Lookout on the Mendocino National Forest

Career: Packer, Fire guard, Fire foreman, Dispatcher, Timber Sales Inventory Crew foreman, District fire assistant

Region 5 Locations: Mendocino, Eldorado

Pages: 11, 61, 107, 130, 172



Bob Gustafson

Service: 1951-1980

Lure of the woods: Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine (blister rust control)

1st Forest Service job: Summer recruitment crew foreman

Career: Blister Rust Officer, Project Sales Officer, District Ranger, Branch Chief (Pest Control), Branch Chief (Cooperative Forestry)

Region 5 Locations: Eldorado, Shasta-Trinity, Regional Office

Pages: 15, 139



Paul Hill

Service: 1963-1992

Lure of the woods: Summer job

1st Forest Service job: Fire Control Aid, San Luis Ranger District, Los Padres

Career: Fire Control Aid, Helitack, Foreman, Job Corps Work Program Officer, Equipment Specialist, Fore Program Manager

Region 5 Locations: Los Padres, Mendocino, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: San Dimas Technology and Development Center.

Pages: 41, 95, 154



Mike Howlett

Service: 1953-1983

Lure of the woods: Public job listings in San Francisco

1st Forest Service job: Flood control engineer, Los Padres

Career: Forest Engineer

Region 5 Locations: Los Padres, Cleveland, Angeles, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Washington Office.

Pages: 26, 115, 145



Bob Irwin

Service: 1953-1982

Lure of the woods: Watching people go to fires on Georgetown Ranger District in early 40's

Career: Fire, Timber, Grazing, Recreation positions, District Ranger, Forest Fire Management Officer, Focus Liaison Officer, Firescope Program Manager [became Incident Command System]

Region 5 Locations: Six Rivers, Sequoia, Riverside Fire Lab

Pages: 25



Morrison R. "Jim" James

Service: 1940-1972

Lure of the woods: Raising bugs at Riverside Experiment Station

1st Forest Service job: Smokechaser/Lookout, Lolo National Forest

Career: Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger, Forest Fire and Recreation Staff Officer, Assistant Division Chief of I&E, Forest Supervisor

Region 5 Locations: Angeles, Cleveland, Six Rivers, Sequoia, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Region 1, Lolo

Pages: 6, 52, 101, 125, 158, 168



John "Jack" & Mary Kennedy

Service: 1951-1988

Lure of the woods: Summer job in college - trailing line on Clearwater National Forest

1st Forest Service job: Research assistant

Career: Junior forester, Timber Management Assistant, District Timber Management Officer, Timber Sale appraiser, Chico Tree Improvement Center Director

Region 5 Locations: Plumas, Mendocino

Other FS Locations: Alaska

Pages: 19, 132



Jon Kennedy

Service: 1956-1997

Lure of the woods: Sunday School teacher was Forest Service employee

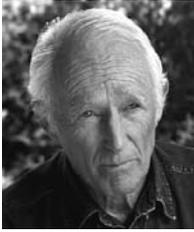
1st Forest Service job: Survey Crewman, Region 2

Career: Engineer, Forest Engineer, Pre-construction Engineer, Assistant Regional Engineer, Data Management Staff Director, Regional Engineer, Regional Land Management Planning Director, Director of Resource Recovery, Assistant to the Regional Forester

Region 5 Locations: Stanislaus, Regional Office, Sacramento

Other FS Locations: Region 1, Bighorn; Region 2, Regional Office; Washington Office

Pages: 33, 82, 165



Douglas R. "Doug" Leisz

Service: 1950-1982

Lure of the woods: Family vacations to the forest

1st Forest Service job: Bureau of Entomology, plant quarantine

Career: Nursery foreman, District Ranger, Assistant Regional Forester, Forest Supervisor, Regional Forester, Associate Chief

Region 5 Locations: Mt. Shasta Nursery, Mendocino, Eldorado, Shasta, Six Rivers, Sequoia, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Region 6, Washington Office

Pages: 13



George Leonard

Service: 1956-1993

Lure of the woods: Father (teacher) was summer recreation aid (with whole family) at Forest Service campgrounds

1st Forest Service job: Fire crewman in the summers

Career: Fire crewman, Recreation Aid, TSI crew leader, Engineering crewman, National Director of Timber Management, Associate Deputy Chief, Associate Chief

Region 5 Locations: Stanislaus, Lassen, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Washington Office

Pages: 35, 117



Lorraine Macebo

Service: 1946-1979

Lure of the woods: State Employment Office job listing

1st Forest Service job: Clerk-Dispatcher, Los Padres

Career: District Clerk, Assistant Forest Fire Dispatcher, Administrative Assistant, Secretary to Director of I&E

Region 5 Locations: Los Padres, Stanislaus, Northern California Service Center, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Washington Office

Pages: 9, 104, 160, 169



Jim McCoy

Service: 1955-1982

Lure of the woods: Co-worker at California Division of Highways

1st Forest Service job: Road surveyor, Redding Service Center

Career: Road survey, Assistant forest engineer, Construction engineer, Regional engineer recruiter

Region 5 Locations: Trinity, Shasta-Trinity, Tahoe, Plumas, Regional Office

Pages: 28, 80, 145, 176



Richard Millar

Service: 1951-1980

1st Forest Service job: Blister rust control, Plumas

Career: Fire crew foreman, Junior forester, District fire control officer, Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger, Forest Fire Staff Officer, Forest Supervisor, Assistant Nat'l Director of Fire, Assistant Regional Forester for Fire

Region 5 Locations: Plumas, Klamath, Modoc, Sequoia, Los Padres, Mendocino, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Washington Office

Pages: 19, 111, 140



Scollay Parker

Service: 1947-1977

Lure of the woods: Grew up on ranches next to national forest

1st Forest Service job: Lookout, Eldorado National Forest

Career: Scaler, Project Sales Officer, District Ranger

Region 5 Locations: Modoc, Stanislaus, Eldorado

Pages: 11, 57, 105, 130



Max Peterson

Service: 1949-1987

Lure of the woods: Two uncles worked for the FS; and born inside Clark NF

1st Forest Service job: Plumas National Forest

Career: Forest Engineer, Regional Engineer, Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Forester, Deputy Chief, Chief

Region 5 Locations: Plumas, Cleveland, San Bernardino, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Region 8, Washington Office

Pages: 12, 59, 108, 173



Bob Rice

Service: 1958-1989

Lure of the woods: Uncle owned sawmill and needed a forester

1st Forest Service job: Blister Rust control team, Superior National Forest

Career: General district assistant, Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger, Assistant Forest Supervisor, Forest Supervisor,

Region 5 Locations: Inyo, Stanislaus, Eldorado, Klamath

Other FS Locations: Region 9 Superior; Region 1 Idaho Panhandle

Pages: 36, 85, 149, 166



Bob Righetti

Service: 1954-1981

Lure of the woods: Father was crew foreman for the Forest Service

1st Forest Service job: Road Crew and Tank Truck Operator

Career: Crew foreman, Fire Prevention Technician, District Assistant Fire Management Officer, District Fire Management Officer

Region 5 Locations: Los Padres

Pages: 27, 79, 116



Andrew R. Schmidt

Service: 1941-1973

Lure of the woods: Summer work at Mt. Shasta/McCloud as special student enrollee in CCC

1st Forest Service job: Junior Forester, Trinity National Forest

Career: Asst District Ranger, District Ranger, Forest Timber Management Officer, Regional Office Branch Chief, Assistant Regional Forester, Team Leader Forest Service Planning Team, Lake Tahoe Basin, Administrator of Lake Tahoe Basin

Region 5 Locations: Trinity, Lassen, Klamath, Eldorado, Lake Tahoe

Other FS Locations: Region 9, Regional Office; Washington Office

Pages: 6, 53, 102, 126



Edward R. Schneegas

Service: 1965-1984

Lure of the woods: California Department of Fish & Game employee

1st Forest Service job: Biologist, Modoc National Forest

Career: Wildlife Biologist, Forest Staff Officer, Regional Branch Chief, Regional Director of Wildlife and Fish

Region 5 Locations: Modoc, Inyo, Sequoia, Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Region 1, Regional Office

Pages: 39, 92, 150



Spike Slattery

Service: 1940-1975

Lure of the woods: My cousin Jack

1st Forest Service job: Recreation Inventory

Career: Assistant District Ranger, Land Acquisitions

Region 5 Locations: Eldorado, Plumas, Klamath, San Bernardino, Regional Office

Pages: 5, 126



Bob Smart

Service: 1960-1999

Lure of the woods: Father was District Ranger

1st Forest Service job: Forestry Tech, Kootenai National Forest

Career: Forester, YCC Camp Director, Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger

Region 5 Locations: Eldorado, Cleveland, Klamath

Other FS Locations: Region 1, Kootenai

Pages: 40, 93, 118, 151



Ron Stewart

Service: 1969-1999

Lure of the woods: Enthusiasm of high school biology teacher

1st Forest Service job: Brush Field Reclamation & Prevention & Ecology Research Unit , Roseburg, OR

Career: Project Leader, Pacific Southwest Research Station (PSW) Assistant Director, PSW Director, Regional Forester, Associate Deputy Chief

Region 5 Locations: Region 5-Regional Office

Other FS Locations: Corvallis, Washington Office, Pacific Southwest Research Station

Pages: 44, 97, 119



Bob & Janet Tyrrel

Service: 1959-1992

Lure of the woods: Fishing and hunting with father

1st Forest Service job: Timber marker, Hiawatha National Forest

Career: Roving timber marker, Forester, Assistant District Ranger, District Ranger, Job Corps Center Director, I&E Staff Officer, Fire/Soil/Water/I&E Staff officer, Forest Supervisor, Regional Director of Planning/ Programming/Budget, Forest Service representative to the Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service

Region 5 Locations: San Bernardino, Shasta-Trinity

Other FS Locations: Region 9-Hiawatha, Shawnee, Chippewa, Superior, White Mountain; Region 6-Regional Office

Pages: 37, 88, 150, 178



Lawrence & Carol Whitfield

Service: 1952-1981

Lure of the woods: Summer job on fire crew while in high school

1st Forest Service job: Forest guard

Career: Hotshot foreman, Forester, Timber Management Assistant, Asst, District Ranger, District Ranger, Forest Fire/Recreation/Lands Staff Officer, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Forest Supervisor, Asst Director of Lands, Director of Legislative Affairs, Deputy Regional Forester, Regional Forester

Region 5 Locations: Shasta-Trinity, Sierra, Sequoia

Other FS Locations: Region 1, Regional Office; Region 8, Regional Office; Washington Office

Pages: 20, 69, 142, 143, 164

