



*Chips*

*and*

*Sawdust*

**A Newsletter**

From

**Forest History**

**Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**

403 McIndoe Street

Wausau, WI 54401

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## From the Deacon Seat\*

As I write this column, Wisconsin forests are turning green again after a long and exceptionally severe winter. The promise of spring is for another year of growth and change for our forests.

In the forestry profession, the main spring chore is usually planting trees on thousands of unproductive acres of both public and private lands. Many federal, state, county and industry foresters spend long hours and a number of weeks at this task. The thought occurs to me that these newly planted forests, as well as those already existing, will be the basic source of our future forest history. It is a well-known fact that Wisconsin's forests are constantly changing in character (species mix), in diameters and in height classes. Natural disasters and ecological successions add to their variety and complexity. One role of our Association can be to provide a record of the more significant changes that occur from time to time, as we did by having our 1985 Student Award winner present her paper on the "Destruction of 'The Big Block'" and Dr. Randall Rohe recount his "Life and Death of a Lumber Town", at our 10th Annual Meeting last fall.

Our 1986 Annual Meeting is scheduled for the weekend of October 3-4, to be held again at Treehaven, near Tomahawk. The planning committee includes Walt Goldsworthy, Russ Roberts and a third member yet to be selected. I know that they will do a great job of preparing an interesting, informative and entertaining session. Association members will be well-advised to note the above dates on their calendars and make early plans to attend. Details of the event will be forthcoming in our August issue of "Chips & Sawdust".

The Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame selection committee met recently and decided upon the three inductees for 1986. However, by mutual agreement among the sponsoring organizations, the identities of these inductees will not be disclosed until shortly before the actual induction ceremony, which will take place at the Lake States Logging Congress banquet on the evening of September 5th in Green Bay. Host organization will be the Timber Producers Association of Michigan & Wisconsin.

In an otherwise uneventful spring for FHAW, we are glad to have our secretary-treasurer, Frank Fixmer, back from sunny Florida, where he spends the winter until the dandelions are blooming again on his lawn. Things seem to run somewhat smoother with him around. If you haven't seen the article on Frank's career in the winter edition of the "American Tree Farmer", be sure to look it up.

Have a rewarding summer in all respects!

Tom Albrecht  
President

\* The "deacon seat", according to L. G. Sorden's "Lumberjack Lingo", was the one classic piece of camp furniture, built in the outer end of the muzzle-loading bunks. Usually made of half a log, flat side up. The men sat around the fire before turning in, resting, smoking and talking.

## **Gordon R. Connor, 1905 - 1986**

When Gordon R. Connor of Wausau died at his home on February 28, 1986, the Forest History Association of Wisconsin lost an honored member who was nationally known as a leader in the lumber industry.

Prior to the sale of Connor Forest Industries, Inc. in 1982, Connor had served as its chief executive officer since the 1930's. During that period, he was directly responsible for significant expansions of the corporation's forest land holdings and the intensive management of the northern hardwood timber types thereon.

Connor was a co-founder and past president of the Timber Producers Association of Michigan & Wisconsin, and a former president of the National Hardwood Lumber Association.

Among his survivors are his wife, Mary Roddis Connor, a past president of the Forest History Association and author of "A Century With Connor Timber". Together they established the nationally recognized Camp Five Logging Museum at Laona as a memorial to the hundreds of logging camps and sawmill towns that existed during the heyday of lumbering in Wisconsin. Their sustained interest in the preservation of forest history was manifested several years ago when the Connor Foundation made a major contribution to the capital fund campaign of F. H. A. W.

## **1986 Scholarship Award to U.W.-Madison Senior**

F.H.A.W.'s 1986 scholarship award was won by Susan E. Krebs, a forest science major and senior at the College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin-Madison. That announcement was made by John Saemann, chairman of the awards committee, following a review of the academic records and demonstrated interest in forest history by the several competitors.

Ms. Krebs' essay on the notorious John Dietz vs. Lumber Barons incident particularly impressed the judges with the evident research effort that went into its preparation.

## Birth of Soo Line R.R. Prelude to End of River Drives

A little over 100 years ago, the president of the Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie and Atlantic Railway Company — now known as the Soo Line — delivered his first annual report to the directors and stockholders of that fledgling railroad. The company had been organized less than two years before — September 29, 1883 — under provisions of Wisconsin statutes even though the corporate offices were in Minneapolis, Minnesota, mainly because the largest portion of the proposed line would be within the state limits of Wisconsin.

The full text of that first report by president W. D. Washburn was reprinted in the October, 1933 issue of THE SOO, quarterly magazine of the Soo Line Historical and Technical Society. Of special interest to Forest History Association members is Washburn's references to that railroad's penetration into the pineries of the upper reaches of both the Chippewa River and Wisconsin River valleys, which in effect spelled the end of the river-driving era in those areas.

Washburn's predictions of the tremendous amount of forest products traffic that would develop along the proposed route were optimistically expressed as follows:

"Feeling that the traffic growing out of the movement of pine lumber was to be one of the most important to our line I have taken some pains to ascertain in an approximate way, about how much pine timber still remains uncut in this region, that is naturally and almost inevitably tributary to our line. From the best information I have been able to gather I am satisfied there is to-day from twelve to fifteen thousand million feet of pine timber tributary to this line of road, the larger portion of which can be taken to market by our line so much more cheaply than any other, that competition will be substantially out of the question. To move twelve thousand million feet of pine lumber would give our railroad employment for twenty-five years, even should it move five hundred million feet, or fifty thousand car loads, each year. These figures, it is true, seem very large, but I do not believe they are in the least exaggerated. Besides this enormous amount of pine lumber that will necessarily find its outlet over our line, there is a very large amount of hemlock timber, and an almost inexhaustible quantity of the various kinds of hardwood, oak, maple, yellow birch, and other kinds of hardwood found in this region of the Northwest. In addition to this there is the peninsula of Michigan a large quantity of cedar, which already furnishes a very large traffic to the branches of the Northwestern railroad traversing that

region, in the way of cedar posts, paving blocks and telegraph poles. With our road open through this region of country, and with time for the erection of sawmills at the various points on the line, it seems to me that the volume of traffic coming from these forest products will be immense."

"The question has been raised as to the value of these forest lands when it has been stripped of its timber, and I have therefore taken pains to investigate this question very thoroughly. I find from actual examination that a very large portion of these lands will become valuable for agricultural purposes when denuded of its timber. Such is the case with much of the land where pine grows exclusively, and where pine grows mixed with hardwood, good agricultural land is almost invariably found. It has been the experience of all roads projected into timber country that agriculture has followed closely the cutting of the timber. Such has been the case on the road from Hudson and Stillwater to Bayfield and to Washburn, as also from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Duluth. This country, which was originally considered only valuable for the timber growing upon it, has become valuable as agricultural lands, and there are now large agricultural products on the lines of both these roads. While this is true with these two roads, the same will be the case to a greater extent on the line of our own road."

## **Wisconsin Big Trees**

Readers of the D N R's bi-monthly magazine, WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCES, were treated to a "special report" in the March-April 1986 issue. Titled "Wisconsin's Champion Trees", separate articles provide accounts of how big tree records were initiated, methods for measuring potential champion big trees, and the experiences of several big tree hunters. A list of the state's current record trees also is given by species, dimensions, county locations and nominators.

Of special interest is the news that a Wisconsin Big Tree Society has been organized. Co-founder Chad McGrath says "We will inform the public about the importance of our trees by relating their history to our state's future."

For more information about this group, write to Jerry Lapadakis, Dept. of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

## **Evolution of Logging Camps Documented**

Noted historian and Association member DR. RANDALL E. ROHE has researched the development of logging camps in the Great Lakes timber country from the primitive log cabin

types to the multiple wood-frame buildings of a "modern early twentieth century camp.

The results of that intensive research are detailed in a feature article in the January 1986 issue of the **Journal of Forest History**, quarterly periodical published by the nationally-oriented Forest History Society.

Titled "The Evolution of the Great Lakes Logging Camp, 1830-1930", Dr. Rohe first describes the typical camp in the state of Maine during the early 19th century and its introduction into the Lake States by migrating loggers and lumbermen. He then goes on to describe the gradual changes that took place in construction and lay-out through the balance of that century, with particular reference to a number of well-known Wisconsin camps. Numerous vintage photographs enhance the interest of the reader.

Dr. Rohe is a professor of geography at the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha and the author of numerous published articles on various aspects of Wisconsin's forest history. Attendees at the Association's Tenth Annual Members Meeting last fall will remember him for his paper on "The Life and Death of a Lumber Town", which has been published in the PROCEEDINGS of that meeting.

## **Landmark Book to be Published**

Two Minnesota historians have begun a research project which will result in the publishing of "Frontierswomen in the Upper Midwest" in early 1987.

The book will contain annotated bibliographical entries on pioneer women's unpublished diaries, journals, letters, memoirs, oral histories and photographs. These source materials will deal primarily with those written and pertaining to the 1840-1900 period in the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. The work will contain a series of essays on the geographical and cultural history of the Upper Midwestern frontier and the uses of these previously unpublished materials illuminating the roles which women played in the early settlement of the region.

Researchers Susanne L. Bunkers and Sara Brooks Sunberg, both associated with Mankato State University, are asking for assistance of F.H.A.W. members who may have some knowledge of the existence of any of the mentioned materials. Members interested in cooperating with these historians should request from the Association secretary a copy of the guidelines for listing the relevant information. This should be done as soon as possible, since they will need the completed information sheets by June 1st in order to complete their analysis of all submittals during the summer of 1986.

## Another New Addition to Our Reference Library

An anonymous donor has presented the Association's reference library with a copy of Volume III of "The History of Wisconsin: Urbanization and Industrialization, 1873-1893". The donor apparently considered Chapter 2 of Part I. "Lumbering: Organizing Beyond Woods and Mills" of sufficient importance to merit its addition to our growing collection of reference works. We thank whoever was responsible.

The 41-page chapter on logging and lumbering in the two decade period between 1873 and 1893 occupies a relatively small portion of this 700-page volume. However, the significance of this part of the economy to the industrialization of Wisconsin is not diminished thereby.

The compilers of this chapter have relied heavily on such standard works as Current's "Pine Logs and Politics", Fries' "Empire in Pine", Hurst's "Legal History of the Lumber Industry in Wisconsin", and others. Numerous references are even made to books by F.H.A.W. members, notably Charles Twining's "Downriver" and William Rector's "Log Transportation in the Lake States Lumber Industry", as well as an unpublished manuscript by Carl Krog.

The result is a condensed account of the operations of early-day loggers, sawmillers and sundry industrialists and politicians who eventually contributed to the decimation of Wisconsin's forest resources. In that process, however, it was admitted in due course, and with some reluctance, the lumbermen did actually perform a service by turning "the encumbering forest into . . . an incalculable source of wealth to the nation."

Volume III of "The History of Wisconsin" is the third of six to be published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, beginning with the period from exploration to statehood and ending with the mid-century period of 1940-1965.

## Members in the News

CHARLES TWINING, F.H.A.W.'s vice-president and former history professor at Northland College, Ashland, will be a featured speaker at a symposium to be held in Vancouver, B.C., next October. The event will be part of the national Forest History Society's annual meeting. Twining's topic will be "George Long and the Western Forestry and Conservation Association."



ROBERT J ENGELHARD, assistant dean, College of Natural Resources, U. W. - Stevens Point, and RALPH G. SWANSON, retired timberlands manager for Consolidated Papers, Wisconsin Rapids, were among those elected as Fellows of the Society of American Foresters.

Corporate member OWENS-ILLINOIS, and DICK BIERLICH, its operations manager, with the help of their maintenance crew, practically rebuilt the bus that provides vital transportation for many of Trees-for-Tomorrow's field programs.

MARK BRUHY, archaeologist with the U. S. Forest Service at Rhinelander, is the author of an article on the preservation of historic properties on the national forests of the Lake States in the March-April issue of NORTHBOUND, a periodical of Trees-for-Tomorrow. The properties include logging dams, lighthouses, prehistoric (Indian) village sites and Depression Era buildings constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

## **Welcome, New Members**

### **ALBERT ISAKSSON**

Herbster, WI 54844

### **DONALD J. NELSON**

415 N. 7th St.  
Tomahawk, WI 54487

### **PATRICIA M. SCHROEDER**

HCR - Box 717  
Park Falls, WI 54552

### **KEMPTON SPOONER**

P. O. Box 263  
Conrath, WI 54731

### **JOSEPH L. STARK**

Box 129  
Drummond, WI 54832

## **Committee Chairmen 1985-86**

### **1986 Annual Meeting**

To be appointed

### **Student Awards**

John Saemann  
Route 1 - Box 309  
Florence, WI 54121

### **Distinguished Service Awards**

Frank N. Fixmer  
604 - 9th Street  
Mosinee, WI 54455

### **Annual Proceedings**

William Sylvester, Editor  
211 Green Avenue  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

### **Publicity**

Thomas Albrecht  
103 Sunset Circle  
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### **Newsletter**

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