

***Chips***  
*and*  
***Sawdust***

**A Newsletter**

From

**Forest History  
Association of Wisconsin, Inc.**

403 McIndoe Street

Wausau, WI 54401

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Marinette, WI 54143

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7817 N. Club Circle  
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Hayward, WI 54843

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4238 Mohawk Drive  
Madison, WI 53711

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Platteville, WI 53818

# **Edward F. Steigerwaldt, Sr.**

## **1922-1983**

The Forest History Association lost another of its charter members when Edward F. Steigerwaldt, Sr., Route 5, Tomahawk, died on March 12, 1983 while vacationing near Anaheim, California.

Steigerwaldt was well-known throughout the state and nationally as a consulting forester with special expertise in the application of aerial photography techniques to forest inventories and appraisals. He was a co-founder of the Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association and served as its president during 1980-82. Active as a registered tree farmer for over 25 years, Steigerwaldt had served as a director and president of the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Growers Association and was also a long-time member of the Wisconsin Tree Farm Committee, state sponsor of the national tree farm system.

Steigerwaldt earned his degree in forestry at the University of Michigan in 1943 and his master's degree in 1947. He was a veteran of World War II and served at one time as a photo-interpretor on the staff of General MacArthur during the occupation of Japan. Subsequently he joined the former Wisconsin Conservation Department and eventually headed that agency's first state-wide forest inventory for over nine years before leaving to organize his own consulting firm. Professional affiliations included the Society of American Foresters, Association of Consulting Foresters and the American Society of Photogrammetry.

## **Nye-Hayes Plantation Oldest Managed Privately-Owned?**

The February issue of "Chips & Sawdust" listed several of the oldest reforestation efforts in the state and referred to the Nye-Hayes "family forest" in southern Douglas County as being one of the first privately-owned plantings that used seedlings raised in the first state-operated nursery. The following details regarding the establishment of that plantation have been condensed from a bulletin of the Wisconsin Department of Agri-

culture published in October, 1942, which was a report on "Forest Plantations of Wisconsin" made by the Division of Land Economic Inventory and Land Use.

In 1907, Miss Mary Nye (later Mrs. Frank Hayes), a school teacher in Superior, took up a claim three miles west of Wascott in southern Douglas County under the old homestead law. This tract had been logged over a few years previously and was mostly a sandy, stump-covered wasteland. Miss Nye, her father and two brothers subsequently decided to reforest this tract and, in 1914, planted 1000 trees on one acre with Norway, Scotch and White pines. In 1915, another acre of these three species were planted, and in 1916 another  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre of Norway pine was added. Those plantings were carefully and regularly cultivated by hand, or by horse-drawn cultivator, by Miss Nye's father, Joseph H. Nye. Those 3000 trees then became known as the "war garden" because they were planted during the first three years of World War I.

Subsequent smaller plantings occurred in 1917 and 1921. When, in 1923, Mary Nye married Frank Hayes, the reforestation project became known as the Nye-Hayes Plantation. Additional plantings were made by them in 1926, 1928, 1931, 1932 and 1939. As these various plantings attained sufficient height, pruning of the lower limbs became a regular weekend family activity, which they called their "pruning parties".

In the course of time, the original objective of passing on this property from one generation to the next failed to take place, even though three generations were at one time actively engaged in its management. Although the tract received a maximum of protection from fire, neither Mr. and Mrs. Hayes nor succeeding members of the family could be convinced of the need for thinning those increasingly overcrowded plantings because of their fear of "destructive cutting" and the resulting fire hazard of the slashings. Eventually, ownership passed on to Mr. Russell DeBrock of Superior, who then was persuaded to manage the tract on a more intensive basis, employing the best of forestry technology toward that end.

Accordingly, in 1962, the first thinning operation was performed by foresters of the Mosinee Paper Corporation on  $6\frac{1}{2}$  acres of the several plantings in that area which then varied from 25 to 47 years of age. The objective of that thinning was to salvage those trees which were dying as the result of overcrowding and excessive competition, as well as those expected to die during the following 3 to 5 year period. Additionally, defective and deformed trees were also cut to upgrade



the overall quality of the remaining stand. In this process, approximately 7 cords per acre were cut, for a total removal of almost 46 cords of posts, poles and pulpwood.

Owner DeBrock subsequently chose not to do any further timber stand improvement until the fall of 1981. This became mandatory as the result of a local outbreak of pine bark beetles in 1980 which killed all trees on a 1/3-acre area threatened to spread through the balance of the overstocked and severely stressed plantation. The combination salvage and thinning operation, again carried out by Mosinee Paper Corporation foresters, was applied to the 8½ acres previously thinned plus an additional ½ acre. This time a total of 124 cords of posts, poles and pulpwood were removed for an average of 17.7 cords per acre. In spite of that seemingly heavy cut, the remaining basal area of 163 square feet per acre is still above desirable levels of stocking. The principal factor limiting that cut was concern for potential wind damage in that portion of the stand that averaged 70 feet in height with an average diameter of only 9 inches. The height-diameter relationship is now expected to improve by the time of the next scheduled thinning.

Today the DeBrock (Nye-Hayes) Plantation is a registered Wisconsin Tree Farm under the American Tree Farm System sponsored by the American Forest Institute.

# Golden Anniversary Observances Announced

Many Forest History Association members will be interested in two recent announcements relative to the forthcoming 50th Anniversary commemoration of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC's) and the establishment of the two national forests in Wisconsin.

The VILAS COUNTY NEWS-REVIEW, published in Eagle River, WI., announced that it will issue a special commemorative edition in late April which will cover in detail the growth and development of the Nicolet National Forest. In-depth stories by forest staff members will describe the various goals and objectives of the Nicolet's management program. Copies of that special edition will be distributed by the Forest Service at all of its ranger stations, at community chambers of commerce, sports and trade shows, state and county fairs and at the national convention of the C.C.C.'s in Eagle River next September.

The Forest Service has also announced plans for an elaborate traveling exhibit, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, which will be built around the theme "Wisconsin Forests - 50 Years of Growing Together". This exhibit also commemorates the golden anniversary of the beginning of the C.C.C. program and the establishment of Wisconsin's two national forests.

To quote from the in-service newsletter NICOLET NEWS: "The exhibit will interpret the history of forest management from the period of early exploration, to exploitation, and then the rehabilitation by the C.C.C.'s to utilization and management of today. A feature of the exhibit will be two three-dimensional dioramas which will be animated with running railroads. One railroad scene will depict the logging era in the early 1900's and the other today's modern system of transporting forest products."

To be displayed at the Wisconsin State Fair next August, it is estimated that upwards of one-half million people will view this unusual and informative exhibit.

# **E. M. Griffith And The Early Story Of Wisconsin Forestry—1903-1915**

The full story of early efforts to develop a forestry and conservation program in Wisconsin has finally been put together and published. Twenty years of research by author F. G. WILSON, supplemented by his records of his personal experiences and reminiscences, have resulted in an absorbing account of the role that Wisconsin's first state forester, Edward Merriam Griffith, played in that development.

In a 66-page booklet published by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, "E.M. Griffith and the Early Story of Wisconsin Forestry (1903-1915)", Wilson vividly describes the problems of that period and the eventual progress and achievements made under Griffith's leadership.

Further recounted is a factual report of the growing opposition that was fostered by land developers, agricultural promoters and even by some segments of the lumber industry that had the most to gain from a sustained forest protection and management program.

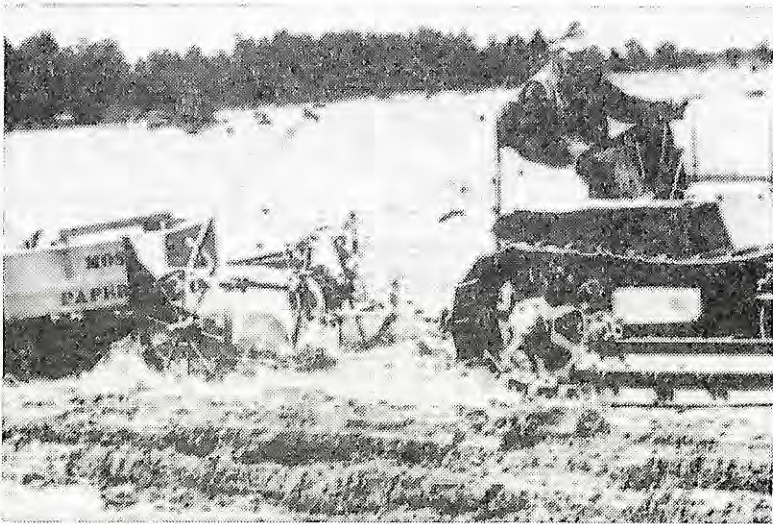
The Griffith story is further enhanced by details concerning his life before coming to Wisconsin. Griffith's 11-year tenure ended in disillusionment and disappointment with the political process involved in determining the constitutionality of a state forestry program. However, Wilson outlines in his final chapter how the aftermath years from 1921-1933 vindicated most of Griffith's policies and precepts by the passage of basic legislation which eventually resulted in the literal "greening" of Wisconsin.

## **Early Planting Machine To Be Donated By Mosinee Paper Corporation**

One of the first planting machines built and used in Wisconsin will be donated by Mosinee Paper Corporation to Trees-for-Tomorrow for permanent display at its natural resources center in Eagle River. First used in the spring of

1944, it was the forerunner of large scale machine planting on Mosinee's industrial forest in northwestern Wisconsin, when as many as four machines were operated on a single planting site.

The design of the original planting machine was developed in 1943 by agricultural engineers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in collaboration with the late F. B. Trenk, then state extension forester. Essentially its components consisted of a rolling coultter to slice the sod, a double moldboard to roll it back and form a shallow furrow, a trencher to open the soil with a narrow trench, side angled arms to push the soil back into the trench after the tree roots were in position and finally, packing wheels to firm the soil around the planted tree. Second-hand, small farm plows, usually of the International Harvester "Little Wonder" or "Little Genius" models were modified and converted to these earliest of tree planting machines. They were pulled with either wheeled or crawler-type tractors.



Those machines were primarily adapted to the planting of old fields and grasslands free of stumps, rocks or slash. As planting sites of that type became scarcer and more emphasis placed on the reforestation of cutover tracts, commercial manufacturers improved the ruggedness and efficiency of the early models, and the Wagler and Lowther machines became the most popular of wild land planters.





### FIRST FOREST PATROL FLIGHT

The first forest patrol flight was made from Trout Lake by Jack Vilas June 29, 1915.

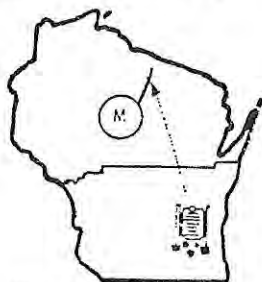
Vilas was commissioned "Official Aviator" by the Wisconsin State Board of Forestry (now Wisconsin Conservation Department) and on his own request received no salary other than "many thanks."

During July and August, 1915, patrol flights were made almost daily in a Curtiss Flying Boat. Vilas had shipped his plane from Chicago to Trout Lake by train. In those days the 350 mile flight from Chicago would have taken several days and a crew of special mechanics following in a train, to keep the "flying machine" going.

The flights from here by Jack Vilas marked the first time anywhere that an aircraft was used in detecting and locating forest fires and patrolling large forest areas.

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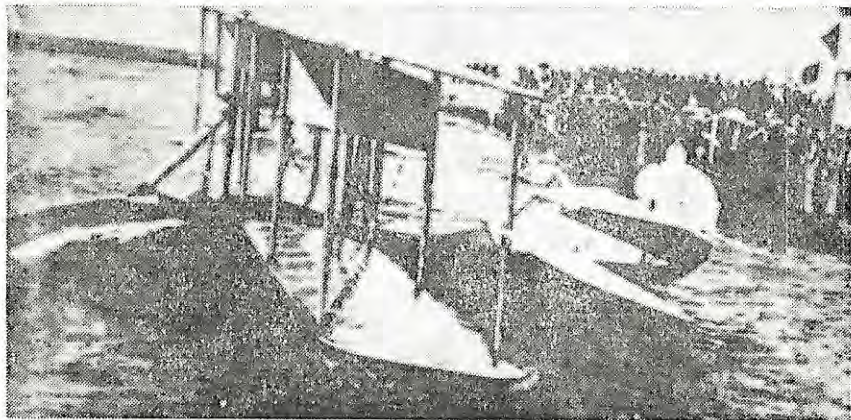
Located: County M - 6 mi.  
south of Boulder Junction.



OFFICIAL STATE MAP, 2-F  
VILAS COUNTY

Jack Vilas takes off from Trout Lake in Curtiss Flying Boat, June 29, 1915

State Historical Society of Wisconsin



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**Forest History Association  
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Maunau, Wisconsin 54401

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