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Forest Owner

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WHAT MY FOREST MEANS TO ME By Paul Steinfeld

(Editor's Note: As a forest owner and NYFOA member you will enjoy this meeting with a kindred spirit! As Dave Hanaburg said at our Fall Meeting West Galway Luncheon, "Let's have a story from you about your woods and forest interest!" Your words will be welcome.)

One of the many rewards of our fall conference was the privilege of traveling with our vice president, Mr. Dave Hanaburg, to our various field destinations. In these brief intervals we shared some of our experiences in forestry, Mr. Hanaburg's a rich and long professional experience, mine a recent amateur one. Dave suggested that I write my thoughts on what my forest land means to me for the Forest Owner. Much of the meaning is intensely personal, but I believe that important personal experiences have universal meaning.

Background:

Recently a new detailed map of Greene County's highways appeared. A few bits of roads in the Town of Halcott were identified by names of the landowners whose property they reached. One two-tenth mile spur bears my name. Commenting on this to Town Supervisor Ward Reynolds I indicated pride and said this had not happened to a Steinfeld since the days of the Czars. Ward paused and said, "Well, it's about time."

My parents came to New York City from Lithuania, which was part of Czarist Russia. There, as in many other parts of Europe, Jews were not permitted to own land. My grandfather had been a tenant farmer but he could never

aspire to land ownership. My title to 194 Catskill acres therefore has a special meaning. It is the fulfillment not only of a personal dream, but an old dream of the people from which I originate. I feel a deep gratitude to this country and a great love for the land whose good has been crowned with brotherhood.

As a professional social worker, resident in a children's institution in Pleasantville for the past 13 years, increasing responsibilities for 180 children and 150 staff members intensified my need for a retreat. About eight years ago my search for a country retreat brought me to the Catskills, whose mountains, forests, and waters I have learned to love over many years. I first heard the term "abandoned farm" from a real estate agent. Subsequently I contacted the Conservation Department, the Jewish Agricultural Society, and the County Agent, all of whom were very helpful in developing my idea of fulfilling not only a need for a country retreat, but also a desire to draw closer to the land and to help improve it.

Realization:

On August 8, 1958, Mr. Constantin Boscu sold me his farm and buildings. His hard work as a dairy farmer in improving a marginal piece of land, and rehabilitating its buildings, has been a constant inspiration. My wife and I, both city reared, now own these 106 hilly, stony acres. Subsequently we purchased an adjacent woodlot of 88 acres which reached to the top of our western ridge an elevation of 3500 feet. We considered it a privilege to enroll as cooperators with the Conservation Department and the Soil Conservation Service who provided the following management plan.

The 15 acres of meadow would continue to yield hay for our neighbor's cows. Thirty-five acres of old steep pasture would be planted with red, Scotch and Austrian pines, larch, and Norway spruce - or allowed to fill in with sprouting hardwoods. The remaining acreage is covered mainly by hard maple, and also yellow birch, cherry, beech, soft maple, and a little ash. Their quality and ages vary. Some stands require thinning. One stand could be developed as a sap bush. The new woodlot was ready for a harvest of saw and veneer logs.

Restoration:

To date I have planted 18,000 seedlings mostly with my own hands; and many with the help of family and friends. I am caring for these trees by spraying with animal repellent, pruning and shearing. Some will be cultivated as Christmas trees, others will remain for permanent forest cover. During our fall meeting it was my special pleasure to talk with Professor Winch about prospects for my first Christmas tree harvest next year.

I have improved 20 acres of woodland by chemical thinning and am about to release another two acres where weed species are encroaching on some of the planted pines. The contractor with whom I had arranged for selective harvesting of 88 acres has finished his work and paid me 80% of my purchase price for this woodlot. I have earned membership in the American Tree Farm system. While I have used the personal pronoun, none of this could have been done without the help of foresters from the Conservation Department, staff from the Soil Conservation Service, and the excellent publications of people like Professor Winch. Our own Association has become increasingly important to me.

Inspiration:

We are currently developing a fish pond of 1/3 acre, which illustrates recreational use of our land not only for our own family, but for many others who have visited, camped, and hunted on it. Last winter I experienced a special kind of joy when I saw some grouse rise from the shelter of the Scotch pine I had planted. Similarly when I look up the slope of a stony hillside, formerly bare, and now covered with young red pine, I find abundant compensation.

During recent summer vacations I have especially enjoyed pruning and shearing my pine trees. Shaping a Scotch pine toward an ideal tree, or trying to help it grow in the best way it could possibly grow is a wonderful experience. I feel like a sculptor whose living

material challenges him to conceive of its maximum beauty not only now, but also in years to come. There is a growing sense of achievement and competence in being able to spot quickly the tree in trouble, and knowing how to help it. Coming down from the pine plantation with fragrant fingers and arms full of boughs for the house, I feel alive and creative.

We call our place Gilead Tree Farm. The forests of Gilead, northeast of Jerusalem, were especially famous in biblical times for their balsam trees whose sap produced the "balm" of Gilead, known to Jeremiah and others for its healing qualities. I could not carry many of the responsibilities I do were it not for the balm of my own Gilead. Sometimes I retreat to it for only 24 hours and return physically and mentally refreshed. A few years ago Professor Edwin Ketchledge, of the State University College of Forestry, graciously supplied me with several cuttings from the balm of Gilead poplar tree. I have propagated them and plan to set out four of these saplings next spring. Their name and thick pungent buds will help convey the meaning of my farm.

FALL BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS

In the handsome setting of the Saratoga Holiday Inn banquet room 110 guests and NYFOA members participated in a varied program following a 6:30-7:00 cocktail hour on Friday evening, October 1.

Against a background of a six foot diameter grey, green and red wall symbol of NYFOA, flanked by two resplendent fall floral pieces, Don Tuttle, Supervisor of Farm Broadcasting, WGY Schenectady serving as Toastmaster, did a masterly job in presenting the 15 guests at the head table including: Saratoga's Mayor Arthur J. Kearney, who welcomed the guests; Norman W. Olmsted, member of the Tree Farm Committee of the New York Forest Industries Committee, who awarded four Tree Farm Certificates; and Albert Lounsbury, Saratoga County 4-H Club Agent, who introduced several 4-H Club members with a variety of pleasant vocal and musical talent.

The banquet speaker, Mr. William E. Cooper, Executive Director of Virginia Forests, Inc. of Richmond, Va., traced the importance of forestry from the time the early Colonists landed at Jamestown, Va. in 1607, through the colonial development period up to

the present, and summarized predictions of the need of wood by the year 2000.

Citing an 80 million U.S. population increase from 1920 to 1962, he pointed out that in the 38 year period from '62 to the year 2000 it is estimated that the U.S. population will grow to approximately 325 million, with a consequent 80 percent increase in the need for wood products.

Future progress of the New York Forest Owners Association in his opinion, can be encouraged by:

1. Having a definite and positively stated purpose.
2. Seeking as broad a membership as possible.
3. Having an adequate and reasonable dues structure.
4. Developing worthwhile projects such as:
 - a. Educational programs for members.
 - b. Supporting Tree Farm and Keep Green campaigns.
 - c. Encouraging Arbor Day and tree planting.
 - d. Setting up poster and other contests for schools.
5. Providing services to the membership through information, advertising, legislation and public relations activities.
6. Avoiding permanent control in a vested few.

SATURDAY MORNING PROGRAM OCTOBER 2

In a cool but clearing atmosphere following a buffet breakfast at the Holiday Inn, Larry Gordon, Arrangements Chairman, assembled the caravan alongside the motel and then led the way to the Robert L. James pine plantation where First Vice President Dave Hanaburgh introduced Stanley W. Hamilton, NYFOA Director. Stan related the interesting history of the area.

Two stops in the midst of a hundred acre plantation of red, white and Scotch pine established a half century ago revealed outstanding red pine height growth up to 70 feet or more, but the crumbling of trees like jack straw under the impact of an ice storm brought home vividly the need for thinning plantations to prevent stagnation, and the growth of too slim trunks, which are both subject to storm breakage and vulnerable to wind throw. Whereas a good crown development in plantations calls for about one third of the height of the tree to be in live branches, - in this plantation, less than a fifth of the height of the

tree had live branches due to the persistent overcrowding and shading. In spite of this, there seemed to be good prospects for both poles and piling as well as pulpwood.

Moving northward the caravan passed through some of the best autumn color to be seen on the way to the Saratoga County Forest. Here Philip E. Barber, District Manager of Blister Rust Control of the U.S. Forest Service, with headquarters in Saratoga, explained the value of this forest and how the acreage had been acquired by the county as a result of tax delinquent land and converted into plantations where it served to provide employment for people on county welfare.

A second stop revealed results of balsam growth where an overstory of aspen had served as a nurse crop. As the noon hour arrived the caravan turned south to go through Saratoga and westward to West Galway for lunch.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON OCTOBER 2

In the opinion of most every one of the 72 caravaners who arrived at the West Galway Presbyterian Church and took seats at tables arranged around a U shaped balcony in the church, this was the best and most enjoyable meal of the Fall Meeting. All those present attested to the prompt service, excellent food and the general friendly atmosphere that prevailed during the lunch hour as NYFOA members dispatched a variety and quantity of home cooked foods.

Then getting into cars parked all around this century old church, some 50 members visited with member Robert L. Eaton's forest property including plantations, Christmas trees and sugar orchard. Here in the pleasant fall sunshine in contrast to the rain of the day before, NYFOA members enjoyed a walk through the woods and questioning Bob Eaton on ways of growing Christmas trees. Bob was generous in his information and details regarding planting, maintaining, pricing and marketing, with many a humorous comment.

To the Committee on Arrangements, Lawrence S. Gordon, Chairman; and to the Committee on Program, Dr. Gerald R. Stairs, Chairman; and to the Committee on Registration, Mrs. Luella B. Palmer, Chairman; and to all those who participated in the program, go the thanks of all NYFOA members for another memorable Fall Meeting. To quote from our banquet

speaker, Bill Cooper, he said: "I was particularly impressed with the quality of your membership."

PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S MESSAGE ON NATURAL BEAUTY
PART VIII

(Editor's Note: We continue with another in this 12 part message.)

POLLUTION (cont'd)

"In addition to its health effects, air pollution creates filth and gloom and depreciates property values of entire neighborhoods. The White House itself is being dirtied with soot from polluted air.

"Every major river system is now polluted. Waterways that were once sources of pleasure and beauty and recreation are forbidden to human contact and objectionable to sight and smell. Furthermore, this pollution is costly, requiring expensive treatment for drinking water and inhibiting the operation and growth of industry.

"In spite of the efforts and many accomplishments of the past, water pollution is spreading. And new kinds of problems are being added to the old:

--"Waterborne viruses, particularly hepatitis, are replacing typhoid fever as a significant health hazard.

--"Mass deaths of fish have occurred in rivers over-burdened with wastes.

--"Some of our rivers contain chemicals which, in concentrated form, produce abnormalities in animals.

--"Last summer 2,600 square miles of Lake Erie -- over a quarter of the entire Lake -- were almost without oxygen and unable to support life because of algae and plant growths, fed by pollution from cities and farms.

"In many older cities storm drains and sanitary sewers are interconnected. As a result, mixtures of storm water and sanitary waste overflow during rains and discharge directly into streams, bypassing treatment works and causing heavy pollution.

"In addition to our air and water we must, each and every day, dispose of a half billion pounds of solid waste. These wastes from discarded cans to discarded automobiles litter our country, harbor vermin, and menace our health. Inefficient and improper methods of disposal increase pollution of

our air and streams.

"Almost all these wastes and pollutions are the result of activities carried on for the benefit of man. A prime national goal must be an environment that is pleasing to the senses and healthy to live in.

"Our government is already doing much in this field. We have made significant progress. But more must be done.

"Federal Government Activity:

"I am directing the heads of all agencies to improve measures to abate pollution caused by direct agency operation, contracts and cooperative agreements. Federal procurement practices must make sure that the government equipment uses the most effective techniques for controlling pollution. The Administrator of General Services has already taken steps to assure that motor vehicles purchased by the federal government meet minimum standards of exhaust quality."

FISHER IS THE FASTEST

The fisher is the fastest tree-traveling mammal. It can overtake a red squirrel or a marten and can even outrun a snowshoe hare on the ground.

--Remington Newsletter, September 1965.

DO YOU HAVE A TRAPPING PROBLEM?

We have been impressed with the circular received from National Live Trap Corp., P.O.Box 302, Tomahawk, Wisconsin, 54487. It started out - "Gentlemen: Over 40 years ago my Uncle Elmer owned and operated a fur farm. He had the usual problem with animals escaping. He soon found there was only one successful method of capturing animals alive and absolutely unhurt. That is with the box or enclosure type trap.." etc., etc. Traps are designed for a number of animals: cat, fox, muskrat, porcupine, raccoon, woodchuck, etc. You may wish to write them for circular and prices. Circular includes list of baits for 19 animals. The company makes both rigid and folding type traps.

F.E.C.
