

The Dixie Ranger

Editors: Bert and Betty Bray Vol. XXVII No. 4 November 1997

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Thirty Seven Years of Personal Experience and History in The U. S. Forest Service

We got our first CCC Camp in June 1933 at Camp Hedges and were told they would last about six months and to get everything we could out of them. At the end of two months I had just about completed my telephone system but, other than that, I had not gotten anything done. At the end of six months I had another camp at Push Mountain and neither camp finished. We had a few men on roads. I lost all my fire guards and road crew. However, I managed to get most of them in as foremen or Local Experienced Men enrolled in the CCC camps. The fire situation continued to be bad. We constructed more towers and cabins, manned them with L.E.M.'s and had a good well-trained fire crew in each camp headed up by good local men.

During my stay on the Sylamore, I did not have to worry about the road construction and maintenance jobs. All this was taken care of by the road superintendent and foremen, who had one of the best trained fire crews I ever worked with. The Supervisor gave me more authority to go ahead and work out my problems than I ever had before or since that time. I never tried to put anything over on any one. I always discussed any changes with the supervisor, but at that time we did not have to wait until some one from the Regional Office approved these small jobs.

I think I enjoyed my stay on the Sylamore about as well as any assignment I have ever had, although the living conditions were not the best and we had a lot of tough problems to work out.

* * * * *

Southern Forest Service Retirees Association, 1973 Hwy 34 East, Newman, GA 30265-1327. Printed in February, May, August and November. Dues are \$8 per year, payable in January.

A ranger with several years experience does not appreciate some one coming around and trying to change his plans, especially if he thinks he knows what he is doing. I have had tower sites moved ten or fifteen feet, well sites, gardens, etc., by people who did not know much about our problems or the customs of our people. I do not mean to have the water bucket on a shelf on the front porch with a gourd for a dipper, but to get the best work from any employee, you must have him and his family satisfied. If they want chickens, a cow and garden at or near the tower, we should try to furnish the areas and where they want them as near as possible without violating any sanitary conditions.

As soon as a good man finds out you have confidence in him you start getting more and better work. It is the little things that make people like the Service. A nice house with attic fan, lawn mower, etc., makes a man and his family think before leaving us.

It costs several hundred dollars to train a lookout and a good man is worth more each year he works, besides the time saved by the ranger or dispatcher training another man. Fifty percent of the people you hire do not stay. They do not know what we do and as soon as they find out, they leave us and the time and money spent on these people is wasted.

Civil Service hit us a blow in our fire control jobs. We do not need it. A ranger should be allowed to hire and fire all his fire control men and laborers, fix the hours of duty, etc. We were able to just about solve the fire problem on the Sylamore by the end of 1936. It took the Supervisor and his staff including the law enforcement assistant, along with the district employees and good people on the district, to accomplish this. Practically every one cooperated to the fullest extent, and that is what determines the success or failure of any job.

February 15, 1937 - June 30, 1953. I was transferred to the Leesville Ranger District February 15, 1937. This was the toughest assignment I ever had. We had three units, the Kisatchie, Vernon and Evangeline, consisting of about 225,000 national forest acres. Three CCC camps, a large job fencing, planting, special uses and the fire control situation was one of the roughest I had ever tackled. I did not know the people, their customs, etc. These people are altogether different from people on the Arkansas Forests, especially the people who live out on the forest. They are more clannish and are distant, suspicious and hard to get acquainted with. The Vernon was by far the toughest job.

In 1936 the former ranger had 615 fires on the Vernon District. The Evangeline Unit was added to the Catahoula July 1, 1937. The fires on the Leesville Ranger District, consisting of the Kisatchie and Vernon Units, averaged 95 per year the first ten

years, 1937 through 1946. The Vernon had about 80 fires average and the Kisatchie 15 average. The last six years the average has been cut to 32 fires—about 10 on the Kisatchie and 22 on the Vernon per year. The fires peaked in March 1940. We lost 25,000 acres in two days and nights. In 1937, 38, 39, we had about 150 to 180 fires per year. In 1940 we were able to get five people sent to jail for a period of six months to two years. This helped to reduce these fires. We had a law enforcement officer from another forest to help us on this job. Conditions and people were so much different from the areas he was trained in, he was not able to do the work he was doing on the forest where he was trained and knew the customs and habits of the people. These were the first cases we had been able to get in court since the Assistant Supervisor caught two men February 1937.

The Vernon Unit had a pretty thorough job of analyzing the problem. The Supervisor hired a man, a special investigator, who was a past law enforcement officer. This man was recommended by several local officers. He worked during the early part of 1937. This man got some information that was helpful. We had sociologists and psychologists borrowed from other agencies to study the causes of fires, likes and dislikes of the local people on the Vernon Unit.

The first guard on the Kisatchie Unit was a local man who was well liked by every one. This guard did an exceptionally good job starting the Kisatchie Unit out right. This man later quit us and went into farming and stock growing and has been one of the best cooperators we have. He helps to smooth out any little differences or misunderstandings that come up between the people and the Forest Service. It is nice to have people like this man to do things for you that you can not do yourself, especially when you know they enjoy doing this.

We had a group of six to ten men on this unit who were our advisory group. These men were not asked to serve and do not know we had them selected. Some were contacted oftener than others, depending on the need for contacts. The reason for this group was that we had more work than we could do and we could not see all the people often enough. When this guard quit us, something had to be done and after a lot of discussion among ourselves, this plan was adopted. I think this is done more or less on all ranger districts, but we were fortunate in our selection on this unit and most of them were good men. We could not get a group on the Vernon Unit that would cover the entire unit. We have a few good cooperators but in some communities we were never able to get the information we needed. When you have conditions like this, it is up to the employees to gather this information, and some times this is expensive.

A good fire control employee is seldom, if ever, paid enough because he and every member of his family are working for you

every hour of the day, and the public is watching him and each member of his family, listening to every statement made by them. This applies to every one in our organization including laborers.

The Forest Service has come a long way in the fire control job the last 35 years. This is due to better training and contacts - through contacts we understand each other better. Group training has had a lot to do with this improvement. Annual fire training groups, and one of the best training methods is inspections by the right kind of inspector. Each and every good man benefits by inspection regardless of who makes them. A good inspector in my opinion is a man who loves to talk about the fire problems local and forest wide. The ranger is the man who has a chance to find out whether or not his man was listening or benefitting from any inspection. I am for more inspections from the top down to the last laborer and less manuals and paper work. Some of the best training I ever saw was a small group, 3 to 6 men, in bull sessions on towers, in work shops, or bunk houses, drinking coffee, eating cake, etc. Just discussing every day problems, local and otherwise. And don't forget the on-the-job-training, which is an all day job with all employees who supervise one or more men.

PRESCRIBED BURNING. In 1939 I made a trip to Lufkin, Texas, with the Supervisor and one of the things we looked over was an area prescribed burned by Ranger Jared. Later that year, as I remember, we burned an area on the Vernon. After the big fires in 1940, we started experimenting more and more each year until 1944, when we started on approved prescribed burning plans. The parish officials and local people had to be sold on prescribed burning. This took time, show-me trips, etc. We had a big investment in plantations and natural regrowth. Naturally, we could not afford to let the fire control job get out of hand, especially on the Kisatchie Unit where cooperation from the local people had been so good. On the other hand, we had 32,000 acres natural longleaf and 6,000 acres longleaf plantations suffering with brown spot. With the help of everybody, Parish officials and our staff of local advisors, we got along all right.

Since 1940 we have burned from 6,000 to 18,000 acres each year and these longleaf areas are the best in this part of the country. The Red Dirt area is one that any Forester would be proud of and I am looking forward to showing this to my grandchildren and telling them the small part I played in the game and how I enjoyed having the opportunity to be one of the team that helped make this area what it is.

PLANTING started on a large scale in 1935 on this district and when I came along in February 1937, they had all the camps and crews well organized and trained. I found three CCC camps and two side-camps with men borrowed from the state forest camps and SCS, and every available man planting trees, including the fire crews

between fires. I think this was the best organized job I ever saw from Camp Commander, Foreman, leaders on down to the last man. I got my training fast. We planted late that season, and with that organization, including all the Junior Foresters from the supervisor's staff, foremen, leaders, I thought I was a fair planter for the first 8 weeks. Nobody would talk about anything except fires and planting. This planting was a year-round job. During the summer months we had our crews building fences for plantations, making fence posts, cutting right-of-way and actual fence construction. About the first of October all crews were gathering pine cones and hauling to the dry sheds at the Nursery. As soon as the fall rains started and the seedlings were dormant, we started planting and planted until the seedlings were planted which usually took us to around the first of March. March and April were always our worst fire months. Then back to fencing. This gave us a year-round job and the supervisor was always crowding us to plant more trees.

SPECIAL USES. The special use problem was a large one. We had three hundred cases, one-half acre to 100 acres. These were squatters, people who lived on timber company land some 20 to 25 years. They traded and moved around just like the land and improvements belonged to them. The improvements were poor in most cases. Some even had share croppers. It was a difficult job to collect for these uses. The Ranger usually had to make several trips to make one collection. Some never paid. A few had to be hired in order to collect these fees.

The first year I was here the supervisor came by on one of his trips and told me he was expecting two inspectors from the Washington Office and asked me to select two or more of these uses to visit while they were here that they could get some idea of our problem. I selected two of the average uses, and when they came, we made it all right on the first one, but when we drove up to the second place, a stranger came walking out and I had to introduce myself to him (and was I red). I asked him how long he had been living there and he said since last night. He had an old truck and had moved the former occupant for his improvements.

We tried about everything we could think of to get these people to move or pay their fees. As soon as one moved, we rushed in and planted the area to keep some one else from moving in. We also repaired some of these houses, put screens on the doors and windows. We also moved them with our truck, if they were willing to move and did not have to be hauled too far. We moved several of them from national forest to lumber company lands again. The Army moved a part of them. Conditions have changed and most of them have either left or have been able to build better homes. We only have about 40 cases now, including army, power lines and gas lines.

GRAZING. In 1936 Kenneth Lane, Jr., grazing examiner, contacted every family on the district in order to prepare a grazing plan and secure contact records. He evidently did a good job. He left all the data necessary to make a grazing plan which was finished by the time I got there.

Soon after I came we organized a grazing association in the Red Dirt Area. J. D. Cooper was a member and at that time he was President of Louisiana Cattlemen's Association. W. B. Few, Tom Beasley, J. D. Montgomery, Elmer Smith, Mr. Pratt and others formed this association. Earl Dodd was hired by the association as range rider and to care for these cattle. He lived at the old ranch previously owned by the timber company and was paid a monthly salary. This was about the first grazing adventure of this kind in this area.

The citizens got together and asked the Police Jury to close this area to hunting of any kind and they did. They kept it closed until 1940 and there was a few deer accumulated which were partly killed out that year. This area was made a Federal Game Management Area on September 27, 1941, after the citizens had continually been on Congressman A. Leonard Allen to help make this a federal project in order to get better protection. We had a few deer left and were able to get two bucks and three does from the Sylamore on the Ozark. The game did well, especially deer and quail. We had two good wardens. The state came in and we had a cooperative agreement with them, which did not suit part of the citizens who again called on Congressman Allen and we had a meeting at Red Dirt Tower with about 130 angry citizens, but the supervisor was able to quiet them down and get everything straight. There were some heated arguments, and evidently the Congressman did not know the score. He was more or less over a barrel until the supervisor cleared things up. The area is now well stocked as well as part of the surrounding country. We had our first game violations last year, which was not very serious.

CAMP POLK. In 1941 Camp Polk was started. This takes a large part of the Vernon Unit, approximately 38,000 acres for the camp, artillery range, small arms ranges and maneuvering area. They moved people from all the north area, disrupted all our plans, wrecked all our plantation fences and other improvements, especially our roads which were not built for that kind of traffic. They took just about all our men either in the army or as civilian workers in the camp. We lost every man we had on the Vernon but we managed to keep three men on the Kisatchie, one of which we moved to the Vernon.

We struggled along with our fire problem and sales kept increasing until the war was over. We had the best of cooperation with the army and their personnel. Three of our former CCC camp superintendents were with the Post Engineers plus several state

employees we knew, which made it easy for us to contact different officers. They have been very cooperative in all our work especially fire control, road maintenance, etc.

TIMBER SALES. Sales have been increasing since 1940 to about 6 to 10 million feet per year. Local people began watching our receipts grow and after World War II, when Camp Polk temporarily closed down, the people of Leesville tried to get a paper mill. They brought in outside interest, made trips to New Orleans, Baton Rouge, several to Washington, D. C. They were hard to convince that we did not have the timber supply for a paper mill. They hired a private timber cruiser from East Texas to cover the area and make an estimate. But they were not satisfied. They hired a professional concern from Arkansas to make a survey, plus business men who secured timber contracts with each individual landowner. The banks and business men got busy and started doing something about the timber supply. The Farmers and Merchants Bank bought a tree planter that they furnished free of charge to any one interested in planting. The Chamber of Commerce sponsors an Annual Forestry tour which costs several hundred dollars each year and the business men prepare the meals themselves, bankers, doctors, merchants, auto dealers, mayors, etc. This is a real community project sponsored and handled by the business men in the community. All this makes the ranger's work easier. We have more time for sales, planting and timber stand improvement. If the Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations are willing to do your Public Relations work or take the lead in this work, they get better results because the public responds to this type of education. When these organizations, newspapers and business men take over, you get away from the paid propoganda idea that a few people have.

The business people, bankers, school superintendent, school board members and police jury are watching our receipts steadily grow plus the people who are indirectly employed by the Service. We did not have this to start with which made our work an up hill proposition. The public is interested in money or commodities, etc. If you can not show up with anything, a big percentage are not interested in you or what you are doing. Then it boils down to an educational job which has to be started with the leaders in the different communities. Their selection—and the different methods used to train or educate them is important. It takes constant work and thinking to keep these people interested and working. You must know your leader, what he or she can do, how they are thinking—you cannot expect results if you load them beyond their ability. This makes each one a different problem. Some people like to take the lead in any thing they do, others had rather get behind and push or stay out of the limelight. The ranger must learn these people and use them where they fit best. This takes time and study—some times hours with people that bore you. However, most leaders are

pleasant and you enjoy discussing your problems with them and listening to them and their neighbors problems. All of this takes time and hard work and has to be done when your leader is in the mood to talk because you can't rush them.

The Public Relations job on a ranger district is not eight hours per day. It is closer to 12 hours 365 days per year. You simply have to take it with you to Church, Lodges, Civic Organizations, Community Centers, picnics, etc. I do not mean to be boring, but you must be able to answer questions and explain our plans and methods. If you are loaded and ready when some one asks you a question about our work, you make a far more effective contact when the subject is brought up by some one else. Some times you have an opportunity to talk to a group by a simple question asked by one of the group. To be able to do these things you will have to read a lot, study and try to have the right answer.

TRAINING AND WORK PLANS. The Forest Service has been growing. We have come from a small organization to a very large concern. A ranger handles more business now than a supervisor handled 35 years ago. Our personnel has increased until we do not know each other like we once did. Sometimes I think we are top heavy. Our methods of doing things are different, our standards are higher in some ways. We have come a long way in training. Sometimes I think we have over done the training job by making it too complicated. There is nothing that will take the place of practical training and the place for training is on the job with the ranger and his men. I have spent days in offices, both supervisor's and ranger's, with people training me for jobs that I had years more experience on than the man doing the training and I felt like I knew my problems and people better than 90% of these trainers.

Work plans are a part of our training and also a part of our job that is over done. The ranger's work plans are changed annually. I think we should decide on some plan and stay with it. I do not think you can operate without a plan, but plans should be local, simple and flexible enough to fit working conditions. I would suggest job analysis once each year along with allotment estimates plus simple job list weekly or monthly for ranger and assistants. I wish I had a record of all the time I have wasted on worthless work plans. Plans that could not be used. All any ranger needs is job analysis and allotments in money. Let him figure out how to spend this money. If you have rangers that can not do this, get some that can. I do not think any ranger ever tried harder than I have to make these plans work out. There are thousands of things to put you off and you simply have to adjust your plans to fit the different emergencies, and you are usually so far off in three months, you seldom carry your plan the balance of the year.

The last year's plan resembles the first old card record plan with all job specifications, etc., except you only had man days. We had one man to die, one to quit and another got sick. Each man was paid a different salary and all this had to be figured out when you started to make adjustments, and these adjustments had to be made on the ranger district. The ranger must know how much money he has to make these corrections. I think we have too many men working on these plans that do not know enough about the actual conditions on the different ranger districts. I have been in the game a long time and the first ranger meeting I ever attended, there was talk of cutting down paper work and that subject has been brought up at every conference or training meeting ever since and paper work has increased twenty times or more. The only way to stop paper work is to take these paper boys out of offices and put them in the field. I would suggest timber sales work.

I do not have to tell you I cannot write. My writing speaks for itself. And I realize I have never done anything outstanding. My batting average has been low. Far below 300! And I have often asked myself why they kept me on the job. I hope nobody takes any exceptions to what I have tried to write. If you take exceptions to what I have said, just take it like I have had to all these years when someone would say, "this is just constructive criticism."

Guy Cox, District Forest Ranger, Leesville District, Kisatchie National Forest, Region 8, June 30, 1953. Many thanks to Merlin Dixon for sharing this little piece of F. S. history will all of us—the Editors.

* * *

NEW REGIONAL FORESTER FOR SOUTHERN REGION. Elizabeth Estill, former Regional Forester for Region 2, has been named Regional Forester for Region 8. Other changes in personnel: Gloria Manning, former Deputy Regional Forester is now Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System. Sandra Key, Forest Supervisor of the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Wyoming, is the Associate Deputy Chief for Programs and Legislation. Former Regional Forester Bob Joslin is now Deputy Chief, NFS, in the Washington Office.

* * *

YOU KNOW YOU HAVE BECOME A SENIOR CITIZEN WHEN things you used to find exciting now require too much effort, and

time becomes quirky: it seems as if you've been around forever, but just yesterday you were young. *Bob Neelands*



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

John M. Archer (Sue)
361 Kirschwood Drive
Hot Springs, AR 71913
Phone: 501 767-5715
e-mail: rangerjohn@hsnp.com

Tony Durkas (Jean)
4323 Vista Brook Lane
Oakwood, GA 30566-3284
Phone: 770 532-7378

David L. Harris (Opal)
3632 Gaye Lane SW
Roanoke, VA 24018
Phone: 540 989-6386

Carl Wilhelm (Shirley)
111 Eagle Point Rd
Colfax, LA 71417

James W. Cole (Nadine)
6505 AL Hwy 157
Danville, AL 35619
Phone: 205 974-8558

Please make the following address changes in your Directory:
(underscoring indicates change)

Bill Eaton, 5400 Little River Neck Rd, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582

William C. Anderton, 5336 Royal Stuart Court, Leesburg, FL 34748

Add E-Mail address: Jim McConnell elanjim@bellsouth.net

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LUNCHEON DECEMBER 11

Our Christmas Luncheon is December 11 at the Petite Auberge Restaurant on North Druid Hills Road in the Toco Hills Shopping Center. We have fellowship at 11:30 a.m. and lunch at 12 noon. The cost of lunch is now \$10. Please phone in your reservations to either the Brays (770 253-0392) or Peaches Sherman (770 253-7480) no later than Tuesday, December 9. Looking forward to seeing you there.

YOU ARE INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW BOOK ENTITLED: "FOREST SERVICE ANIMAL TALES."

HiStory ink Books Publications is asking for stories about animals that are true and took place within a National Forest, government owned or leased building or land area, or adjacent property if relevant, such as a ranch or park. Please give a title to each story. The stories may be humorous, dramatic, poignant, sad, goofy, short, long, on or off duty, personal or of other peoples experiences, etc.

General subjects might include hunting or fishing experiences, fire situations, relations with ranchers or permittees, inspections, close calls, pets at government compounds or on trucks, government owned horses or mules, transportation and much more.

Submissions may be computer or typewriter generated or hand written. Material is being accepted until February 1, 1998. Book to be issued in the spring of 1998. Please submit to: HiStory ink Books, P. O. Box 52, Hat Creek, CA 96040.

BOOK REVIEW

Forest Service Memories - Past Lives and Times in the United States Forest Service. This is a delightful collection of over 300 stories, letters, poems, biographies and essays. Each piece was written by and about Forest Service employees, retirees, wives or children. They tell of the courage, foresight, audacity, humor, trials, success and failures of those who went before us. The book is a tome with more than 300 articles on 624 pages. Some are only a paragraph and some 4-5 pages in length so it makes for easy reading. It deals almost entirely with the West. Only three or four concern the South and a few others tell about old Region 7 and current Region 9. Jack A. Gooden gives an excellent account of the Cherokee and the old Cumberland (now Daniel Boone) National Forests in several articles. They are so true to life for those of us who were first employed in the 50's. Universally, the authors gave so much and ask for so little in return. In their hearts they knew what they had done and we are all better off because of them and their dedication.

For those of you who worked in Regions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 I highly recommend this book. You will probably find stories by and about someone you knew or have heard about. There are a lot of fire stories but many about other phases of Forest Service life. The cost of the book is \$26.95, plus \$2.50 shipping. The address is the HiStory ink Books, P. O. Box 52, Hat Creek, CA 96040.

--Jim McConnell



LETTERS FROM OUR MEMBERS

ROBERTO COX, NORCROSS, GA - Your patience knows no bounds in putting up with old dead beats like me. I would like to continue receiving *The Dixie Ranger* so I hope this gets to you in time.

The pithy remarks and stories in the DR show the remarkable talent of its members. It's a little late to hope that some of that talent would rub off on me. Congratulations on doing such a good job!

REX & LIL POST, MT. DORA, FL - Here's a reunion notice for your next publication.

OLD SMOKIES REUNION

The eighth annual Old Smokies reunion is scheduled for Saturday, April 18, 1998. FS retirees in Florida will meet at Doe Lake Recreation Area, Seminole District, Ocala NF.

Rex and Lil Post are chairmen of the event, and would like to hear from retirees who are not on their mailing list. Anyone interested in more details may contact them at 101 N. Grandview St., Apt. 101, Mount Dora, FL 32757, phone 352 383-1281. Letters and reservation forms will go to those on the current mailing list about April 1.

The Old Smokies organization is made up mainly of retirees in Florida, but any FS retiree would be welcome. Hosting the event is rotated among the NFs in FL: Tallahassee area people (and those from the Apalachicola NF) use Silver Lake Rec. Area and the Osceola folks use Ocean Pond. Doe Lake dining hall has been beautifully restored and the grounds and lake make it a perfect place for our meeting on the Ocala. We mail 100+ notices each year and have pretty fair response. Any and all come join us!

And speaking of picnics, the FS retirees potluck picnic held every year at Oscar Scherer State Park, Osprey, Florida, was dissolved this year after 15 years. This from John Maslack to the Eastern Forest Service Retirees Newsletter, Vol XIV, Issue 2, August 1997--Editors.

JEANNE EMERY, ROANOKE, VA - Just a quick note to let you know your message about the dues being due, came through loud and clear!! Two years enclosed.

Am still living in Roanoke as you can see from postmark. Have 6 grandsons and Bill, Ralph, Jack (our son's Brad's) are doing fine. Susan passed away at 34 years in 1984. Brain tumor. We still miss her.

Have been busy keeping myself fit and traveling a lot. Have a photo of several of the fellows from the R.O. in Atlanta that was taken way back when we were on the Black Warrior Ranger District, Bankhead NF. Will send it on soon. Some of Brad's do-workers may enjoy seeing these fellows.

CARTER QUALLS, LAGUNA, TX - I see from the label that my dues are about to run out so I'd better renew before I forget. I enclose my check for the next 5 years. You see I'm still optimistic. Better include a short report from deep south Texas - we consider anyone from north of Corpus Christi a yankee. Been doing quite a bit of traveling. Went to the North Pole on a Russian icebreaker in July. That was an interesting experience. Checked Santa's list while there, sorry, you're not on it, Bert.

When home, we stay pretty well occupied with the Coast Guard Auxiliary. I've got over 20 years in now. Some of these night call outs are getting to be not quite so much fun as they used to be.

Except for arthritis, which we manage to live with, we're in good health and do pretty much what we want to--within reason.

BETTY WELLS, MONTGOMERY, AL - Just a few lines with good news and bad news. First, the bad. A long-time timber clerk on NF's in AL, Lottie D. McKim, died August 4. Meant to get it to you sooner, but with the birth of a first great-grandchild (no, we aren't that old), 45th class reunion, mother of the baby in the hospital twice, once for surgery, we were pretty much pushed to the limit! I know there are a lot of subscribers to your paper that I recognize as once being on the Alabama, and they would like to know about Lottie.

Secondly, and most important, I really enjoy *The Dixie Ranger*. I had lost track of so many and then it is fun to read the "tall tales" of some of the older employees. I worked in NF's in AL from 1968 to 1989 and saw a lot come and go, and always like to keep up with people.

Saw George Gibbs and his wife at the Cracker Barrel one morning when we were eating breakfast. They were passing through town. They never stay in one place long. He really looked good.

You do a great job of keeping folks entertained! Keep up the good work.

JIM CARTWRIGHT, CHARLESTON, SC - *The Dixie Ranger* gets bigger and better and I know that means a heavier work load for the editors. But, oh what pleasure you bring to retirees who treasure their memories of working in a wonderful organization with such wonderful people. We cannot thank you enough.

Bob Neelands story RIDING WITH RED brings back some of my own experiences with that colorful individual. I know that Red had a flamboyant side that I did not see much of, though he used to pass out cards introducing himself as aviator extraordinaire, dancer, singer, magician, etc. When it came to flying he was dead serious and really dedicated to safety. I have often heard him say, "There are old pilots and there are bold pilots but there are no old, bold pilots." We never did take off without him first draining the petcocks to insure there was no air in the fuel lines to cause an engine to sputter or fail on takeoff. When a small plane crashed in a thunderstorm, killing the pilot, his wife and two children, he said to me, "A small plane has no business in the sky when there are thunderstorms about." He applied that rule to himself as well as to others, as I was to learn later.

The US Border Patrol had confiscated twenty Piper Pawnee crop dusting planes and a large supply of spare parts that were all crated for shipment to Cuba and located near Ocala, Florida. They turned them over to the USFS to be made available to the states as Federal Excess property. Since that was one of my responsibilities in CM-2, I was assigned the job of inventorying the whole lot. And since I was not familiar with airplane parts, Red was assigned to help me. The Florida State Forest Service also assigned their chief pilot to assist us. We had spent a week on the project and finished late Friday evening. The three of us flew to Tallahassee where we hoped to drop off Florida's pilot and fly on to Atlanta. Red got a weather report and told me, "There is a line of thunderstorms moving through. We will not be flying to Atlanta tonight." We got home about noon Saturday.

When Region 8 first decided we could justify having an aircraft the main problem was figuring how to finance it. The Fire Control Division could not do it alone so CM-2 in State and Private agreed to share the use and expense. This worked out very well and we kept it pretty busy. Two people could fly commercially cheaper than taking the Aero Commander and we were suppose to keep this in mind when planning its use. On one occasion Red and I were scheduled to South Carolina. I do not remember if we were taking part in a training session or what but it was on a Friday. Red thought he could justify taking the Aero Commander and that suited me. It was in December and the days were short. Dusk was approaching as we left the Columbia airport. As we crossed into Georgia we encountered a blizzard. The farther we went the worse it got. When we got to the Dekalb Peachtree airport Red circled it,

then decided not to risk landing there. He was sure he could do it but felt he would be criticized if he did. We turned back east and landed at Gainesville, GA. Red rented a car and drove me home. The next morning he drove back to Gainesville, checked in the car and brought the Aero Commander home. I still wonder how the log read on that trip.

I made many trips with Red to many parts of the Region. One more stands out. Red was flying all of the men in our CM-2 Division to a meeting in eastern North Carolina. We suddenly found ourselves passing through an area of towering convection columns of churning clouds surrounded by clean air. Red was flying around and between columns and encountering no turbulence. The columns were lighted in many colors and made one of the most beautiful scenes we had ever beheld. Never had we longed for our cameras so fervently. They were all in the baggage compartment.

My life is richer having known Red.

PETE HANLON, FAIRVIEW, NC - I better get this in the mail, otherwise December will be here and no *Dixie Ranger*. So, here's the wherewith to continue a good investment.

The Hanlons, 91 and 83, are enjoying their retirements and grateful for being able to do some extensive traveling, thanks to our two sons. Most of it is by air with frequent flyer tickets earned by the younger son. Also, we appreciate all those fine retirees who are contributing so much to the DR. Great!

JAMES W. COLE, DANVILLE, AL - Just got a copy of *The Dixie Ranger*, August edition, from a friend. I read it and sure did enjoy the material. So many names I remember. I am a retiree from the Bankhead NF, Double Springs, AL, with about 34 years of service. I retired in January, 1986. This DR was the first information I have on the retirees Association. Will you please add me as a member and send me the DR? My dues are enclosed.

* * *

IN MEMORIAM

RAYMOND E. PHILLIPS, 85, of Alpharetta, GA, died September 15. He is survived by a son, two daughters and 4 grandchildren.

HARRY C. MOUNT, JR., Woodstock, GA, died August 24. He is survived by his wife, Jacqueline Mount, (Forest Service retiree) a daughter, a son and two grandchildren.

DAVID M. GAUFIN, 82, Salt Lake City, Utah, died July 5. Mr. Gaufin during his career was Assistant Director, Wildlife Division, Washington, D.C.

MARION "RED" NELSON, 88, died in Salem, OR. He retired as Deputy Chief of the FS in 1971. He is survived by his wife, Mildred, and two sons.

R. JOSEPH KOWAL, Asheville, NC died in February 1997.

What's happening throughout the Forest Service--

Consolidation of RM and INT Stations - The Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station in Fort Collins, CO, and the Intermountain Research Station in Ogden, Utah, have been consolidated into one research station. The new station name is Rocky Mountain Research Station and the headquarters are in Ft. Collins, CO.

Mary Maher, the Executive Assistant to the Regional Forester, R-8, has been nominated for the National Meeting Planner of the Year Award. Nominated by the Georgia Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Mary's selection results from her outstanding efforts to plan, coordinate and oversee meetings for the Forest Service over the last year.

Southern Region Braces for Severe Fire Season - The lack of summer rainfall in the South has firefighting experts bracing for what could be one of the worst autumn wildfire seasons in more than a decade.

Regional Civil Rights Unit Sponsored Summit of the South - a summit designed to increase program awareness and participation that relates to underserved farmers and woodland owners. Nearly 200 people registered for the summit, including about 74 woodlot owners and farmers from several southern states. The Secretary of USDA and Chief Mike Dombeck were invited to speak.

* * *

Harvey Mack, Curator of the FS History Center in Corona, CA is still missing Forest Uniform Patch Arches from these forests:

Angelina, Davy Crocket and Sabine in Texas
Francis Marion-Sumter in South Carolina
Ouachita in Arkansas

It may be that some of these Forests did not have these named arches as it is difficult to trace consolidations or other organizational changes. Should you have any of the above, please send to: Harvey Mack, Curator, Forest Service History Center, Cleveland National Forest, 1147 E. 6th Street, Corona, CA 91719.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
SOUTHERN FOREST SERVICE RETIREES ASSOCIATION

Date: _____

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Membership Dues are \$8.00 per year. Amount Enclosed _____

Membership in the SFSRA includes:

4 issues per year of *The Dixie Ranger*, issued quarterly beginning in February.

Directory of Membership (issued every two years).

The opportunity to become published as an author when articles are submitted to *The Dixie Ranger*.

The most economical way to stay in touch with friends and co-workers through *The Dixie Ranger*.

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Mail application, with payment to:

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A Reminder

Please phone in your reservations by December 9 for the luncheon on December 11 to the Brays or Peaches Sherman. See page 10 for phone numbers.

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