

*J. A. Fern Nov 1902*  
*A sample will write down if desired*  
*Read 22 Aug 1912*  
*Wrote letter*  
Kooskia, Idaho, August 7, 1912.

*ack 8/10/12*

Mr. Gifford Pinchot,  
1617 Rhode Island Avenue,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Pinchot:

I have jotted down a few items pertaining to my earlier experiences in the Forest Service, as requested in your letter of last April. What is written refers practically to the first year of my experience in the Service, though it seemed to me necessary at times to refer to occurrences of a later date in order to make the story coherent. I send you this outline in the nature of a sample and if the matter is stated in a satisfactory form I shall be glad to take up later years along the same lines. I shall deem it a pleasure to be allowed to assist you in any way possible in carrying out your plan of writing up the history of the forest movement in this country.

Very sincerely yours,

*J. A. Fern*

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- 1 -

The people of the Pacific Slope had heard of forest reserves before 1898 when they first really knew them. It was common knowledge that the President had, by the Act of March 3, 1891, been given authority to set aside tracts of land as forest reservations but as to the purposes for which that authority might be exercised very little was known, at least in Idaho. Before the Act of June 4, 1897, had been practically applied here the Spanish-American War came on and for nearly a year and a half thereafter I was occupied as a soldier giving very little, if any, consideration to other subjects.

*Bygones*

Prior to the year 1900 my notions of the National Forest Reserves were the vaguest, but in that year having been chosen chairman of the State Central Committee of the Republican Party in Idaho I was brought in touch with things political and among all the vexatious matters brought to the attention of the Committee none was more troublesome than the Forest Reserves. As chairman I found that two reserves had been established in Idaho; that Mr. James Glendenning, a brother-in-law of U.S. Senator Geo. L. Shoup, held the position of Superintendent of Forest Reserves in the State; that under his direction were several Forest Supervisors and numerous Forest Rangers; and that not only was the administration of the reserves a reproach to good government but that the personnel of the Service was such as to disgust the better elements of the people, particularly respectable republicans jealous of

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No man ever surpassed Senator Shoup in party loyalty. He was a politician at once intensely patriotic and incorruptably honest. Political corruption was as abhorrent to him as personal immorality was hateful. When he at last became convinced of Glendenning's corrupt and shameless conduct, personal as well as official, Senator Shoup was deeply wounded. He felt that his relative had been traitorous to his country, disloyal to his party and untrue to the friends who had confided in him.

Formal charges were preferred against Glendenning with the result that he lost the place and I was appointed to succeed him in June 1901. I had had no previous training in forestry, knew nothing about forestry, I went into the forest work primarily to do what I could to labor for cleaner methods in a service which up to that time, at least in Idaho, had been a political catch-all into which was cast whatever discarded baggage the dominant party could not deposit elsewhere. The forest reserve service was purely political and surely afforded an inviting field for reform. I deliberately entered the service as a reformer, not as a forester.

Let me give a few examples of how forest reserve officers carried on business in the "good old days." The Superintendent, Glendenning, was a confirmed drunkard (he died of acute alcoholism) and repeatedly was picked up in the streets of Lewiston and other towns overcome by liquor and carried to some less conspicuous place to sleep off his troubles. He charged one Lee Mann, a Chinaman, a butcher in



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Myers secured the job of delivering the beef from the shop to these customers. It kept him busy seven days in the week and thus was he "patrolling with saddle horse and pack horse" and receiving \$2.50 per day from Harrington for so doing.

But it was among the Rangers that we had the most striking examples of official <sup>in</sup> efficiency. Ranger Anderson of Kooskia, later of Stites, Idaho, was a veterinarian <sup>and</sup> while he was in the Service regularly drawing \$60.00 per month he did not leave his business and never saw the reserve. Ranger Beaudette, a jeweler and watch tinker of Kooskia, was Anderson's twin brother so far as the forest reserve work was concerned. Ranger Malcom Glendenning, a son of the Superintendent, pulled down \$60.00 a month from Uncle Sam without interfering with his duties as bookkeeper for Charles Sweeney at a salary of \$125.00 a month at Concord, Idaho.

But it is useless to lengthen this list. Suffice it to say that pursuant to the recommendations of Inspector <sup>MacLennan</sup> Mc----- (I've forgotten the name but it was McCall, McCoy, <sup>MacLennan</sup> or something of the kind, McSomething anyhow) and myself, of the entire personnel of the BitterRoot Reserve, some 25 men in all, on May 30, 1901, there were but three rangers left to take the field at the beginning of the fire season on July 1, 1901. They were W. E. Parry, B. F. McConnell, and George V. Ring. Parry resigned but was always a good officer; McConnell was promoted to be Supervisor of the Priest River Reserve but succumbed to his besetting sin,



drinking, and was dismissed from the Service. Mr. Ring is now Supervisor of the Nezperce National Forest, P.O. Grangeville, Idaho.

As bearing on the political phase of the forest reserve work in the pioneer days it is amusing to recall one of my early experiences in selecting rangers. I had adopted the plan of appointing anyone who applied provided his personal character was vouched for by at least three reputable persons of his vicinity. The constituted authorities of the Republican Party in Idaho County, regarded the policy I outlined as an encroachment upon their prerogatives and insisted that I make no recommendations for appointment except upon nominations made by them. There was surely an interesting controversy on the subject. It was animated at times, to say the least and dire were the results with which I was threatened if I persisted in my obstinate disregard of immemorial custom. It may be interesting to give the personnel of the Republican Machine I had to go up against. Judge D. W. Standred of Pocatello, was National Committeeman; Governor Frank R. Gooding, Chairman of the State Committee; Col. Allan Miller, Idaho County member of State Committee; the present supreme court Justice J. F. Ailshie, Chairman of the County Central Committee. When I firmly held to my position regarding appointments a meeting of the County Committee was called to consider my case. The meeting which involved an expense of several hundred dollars to the faithful, with all due formality adopted very strong and emphatic resolutions pointing out my duty as a

republican Forest Superintendent and forwarded them up through regular party channels. The ominous document was finally sent to me without letter of transmittal but bearing the "O.K." of Miller, Gooding, and Standred. Doubtless it was thought such an admonition would be sufficient to recall the most wayward to a proper sense of party fealty and obligation. It failed to convince me of the error of my ways. I forthwith enclosed the set of resolutions with all the OK's and red-tape in a very brief letter addressed in regular course to the Secretary of the Interior (the only letter I ever had the honor of addressing to a Cabinet officer, by the way) in which I stated in substance that if in the making of recommendations for appointment of Supervisors and Rangers in the territory under my charge I was to be subject to the dictation of every political committee that saw fit to intrude into my affairs my resignation was at his service. Soon afterward I received a reply from the Commissioner of the General Land Office telling me to go ahead as I had been doing. That was all. And thus ended active local, political management of the Forest Reserves in Idaho. It is more than a surmise, still not a certainty, with me, that my failure to keep the Forest Reserves as a potent political asset of the Republican Party had a good deal to do with the engendering of Senator Heyburn's opposition to whatever bears the stamp of the Forest Service. The Senator is "regular" in party matters and he hates anything that smacks of political insubordination.



There was a stronger reason, however, for Senator Heyburn's deep seated animosity towards the Forest Reserve policy. His first personal contact with the policy occurred when he was attorney for the Sweeney Syndicate that owned and claimed a large amount of valuable mineral land in the Buffalo Hump Mining District in the Bitter Root Reserve. This was before Heyburn entered the Senate and while he was practicing law in Wallace, Idaho, and Spokane, Washington. The Syndicate had headquarters at Spokane and Charles Sweeney was the head of the concern. The Sweeney interests were trying to secure a blanket patent to a lot of land that had never been shown to be mineral in character, under the mining laws. One of the objects sought was title to a considerable body of timber near their mining properties. The timber was very valuable not only because of the general scarcity of trees in that locality but also because whomever could control that timber would have practical control of a large number of mining claims held by private parties which the Syndicate wanted to get hold of at low figures. Without the timber the claims could not be worked, there was no other supply of timber accessible. A second reason for the blanket application for patent was the securing of control of Crystal Lake which was the key to a water power of immense value. Claims without a trace of mineral were located, "staked" all around the lake by the Syndicate and its agents and included in the application for patent. The fact that the lands were all in the Reserve had caused no anxiety so long as the Superintendent was Glendenning, whose son, Malcolm, as stated above was Sweeney's



bookkeeper and a Ranger at the same time, but when the new order of things confronted Sweeney he was apprehensive lest a too rigid enforcement of the law might defeat his schemes. A movement was, therefore, started to have the south western part of the reserve eliminated and restored to entry. Heyburn engineered the movement and among other things filed an elaborate brief and argument in support of the petition for elimination. Of course, the papers in the case were referred to me for consideration and report. I had been posted on the "inner and spiritual grace" of the whole combination through some incautious remarks made by Malcolm Glendenning and others and was in position to write a vigorous report against the elimination. In that report I did not mince words and however the Commissioner of the General Land Office may have regarded the case on its merits, it is certain that the elimination was not made until years afterward when Heyburn could reenforce his ability as an attorney with his prestige as a U. S. Senator before the Department.

By the time the field season of 1902 came around a noticeable change in public sentiment had taken place. The new methods had borne fruit. But the more friendly attitude of people generally was manifested toward the Forest officers as men rather than as official representatives of a policy that was still looked upon with suspicion if not actual hostility. The fact that the personnel of the Service had been made respectable and was worthy of courteous, respectful consideration was established. A very great advance had been

made in a single year. Forest officers no longer encountered discourteous or contemptuous treatment in their official dealings with the public. It was, at least, admitted that the officers were personally "all right" however wrong might be the policy they represented. It was now possible calmly and dispassionately to discuss the forest policy and its aims and purposes. Something that had been entirely out of the question previously. From the day the Service and its general policies could command a respectful hearing the result of the discussion was assured, though time, to be sure, would be required to bring it about. The greatest obstacle to rapid progress in the work was found to be the natural tendency of an occasional officer to develop megalomania soon after assuming his duties. I've had more trouble curing "swell-head" than in handling all other maladies peculiar to Supervisors and Rangers. Arrogance in any form is extremely obnoxious to the ordinary westerner and any manifestation of it on the part of a Forest officer in Idaho will invariably meet with a call down by the public. I knew this and made this feature perfectly plain to every man who held an appointment under me. Even style of dress, though a small thing seemingly, has been in one or two instances a temporary hindrance to the recognition of a man's true worth. The prejudice against "Eastern Dudes" as most all of the Forest Assistants and other officers from the east were called, was due chiefly to style of dress and forms of speech that showed the individual not "to the manor born." Some of our best and most popular officers were considered "dudes" and treated cavalierly when they first came



among the people here. Native worth and real adaptability to surroundings will quickly change aloofness to cordial friendship among the people at large and where those qualifications have been combined in them I have never yet failed to see an "Eastern Dude" take his rightful place as a mighty good fellow with the public. Lacking these essentials the man has been a failure as an administrative officer no matter how efficient from a technical point of view.

The sympathetic cordiality and the esprit de corps that now pervades the entire Forest Service are in marked contrast with the feelings of jealousy and estrangement that formerly existed between the field and central office forces. Correspondence was then wholly formal. Every letter from the field was couched in terms of deference, while communications from the other end of the line were usually so framed as to impress the superiority of the author upon the subordinate in the woods. For an officer in the field to question the policy outlined in the regulations on any point no matter how trivial, or to suggest that a change in a regulation would be beneficial to the Service or conducive to better administration was almost equivalent to religious heresy. I shall cite a single case in this connection. Shortly after I entered the Service I was called upon to consider several applications for special use cases in the town of Elk City. A Mrs. Jones, a widow who then was and for several years before the creation of the Reserve had been making a precarious living by taking in washing, was required to secure a "Laundry Permit." Her customers were miners who patronized her, chiefly through a spirit of charity, to aid the worthy woman in earning an



honest living. As in all cases of the kind the issuance of a permit to Mrs. Jones was conditional upon her giving a bond of not less than \$500.00 No bond, no permit, and yet the amount of the bond was at least equal to her average annual gross receipts. The absurd injustice of the bond requirement aroused the indignation of the miners all over the Elk City mining district. Mrs. Jones' case and a few others of a similar character threatened to engender a spirit of hostility to the Service which it was most desirable to avoid if possible. Being young in the Service and in many ways ignorant, I wrote to the Hon. Commissioner of the General Land Office quite a long letter suggesting what I felt would be desirable changes in certain parts of the regulations. The answer "put me wise:2. It was initialed "L.M.S." and as I later learned was prepared by Miss Lucy M. Strong. After simply acknowledging receipt of my letter the reply advised me that "It is the duty of Forest officers to obey their instructions and not to question them." Short and to the point, was it not?

Kooskia, Idaho, August 7, 1912.

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There was a stronger reason, however, for Senator Heyburn's deep seated animosity towards the Forest Reserve policy. His first personal contact with the policy occurred when he was attorney for the Sweeney Syndicate that owned and claimed a large amount of valuable mineral land in the Buffalo Hump Mining District in the Bitter Root Reserve. This was before Heyburn entered the Senate and while he was practicing law in Wallace, Idaho, and Spokane, Washington. The Syndicate had headquarters at Spokane and Charles Sweeney was the head of the concern. The Sweeney interests were trying to secure a blanket patent to a lot of land that had never been shown to be mineral in character, under mining laws. One of the objects sought was title to a considerable body of timber near their mining properties. The timber was very valuable not only because of the general scarcity of trees in that locality but also because whomever [sic] could control that timber would have practical control of a large number of mining claims held by private parties which the Syndicate wanted to get hold of at low figures. Without the timber the claims could not be worked, there was no other supply of timber accessible. A second reason for the blanket application for patent was the securing of control of Crystal Lake which was the key to a water power of immense value. Claims without a trace of mineral were located, "staked" all around the lake by the Syndicate and its agents and included in the application for patent. The fact that the lands were all in the Reserve had caused no anxiety so long as the Superintendent was Glendenning, whose son, Malcolm, as stated above was Sweeney's bookkeeper and a Ranger at the same time, but when the new order of things confronted Sweeney he was apprehensive lest a too rigid enforcement of the law might defeat his schemes. A movement was, therefore, started to have the south western part of the reserve eliminated and restored to entry. Heyburn engineered the movement and among other things filed an elaborate brief and argument in support of the petition for elimination. Of course, the papers in the case were referred

to me for consideration and report. I had been posted on the "inner and spiritual grace" of the whole combination through some incautious remarks made by Malcolm Glendenning and others and was in position to write a vigorous report against the elimination. In that report I did not mince words and however the Commissioner of the General Land Office may have regarded the case on its merits, it is certain that the elimination was not made until years afterward when Heyburn could reinforce his ability as an attorney with his prestige as a U. S. Senator before the Department.

By the time the field season of 1902 came around a noticeable change in public sentiment had taken place. The new methods had borne fruit. But the more friendly attitude of the people generally was manifested toward the Forest officers as men rather than as official representatives of a policy that was still looked upon with suspicion if not actual hostility. The fact that the personnel of the Service had been made respectable and was worthy of courteous, respectful consideration was established. A very great advance had been made in a single year. Forest officers no longer encountered discourteous or contemptuous treatment in their official dealings with the public. It was, at least, admitted that the officers were personally "all right" however wrong might be the policy they represented. It was now possible calmly and dispassionately to discuss the forest policy and its aims and purposes. Something that had been entirely out of the question previously. From the day the Service and its general policies could command a respectful hearing the result of the discussion was assured, though time, to be sure, would be required to bring it about. The greatest obstacle to rapid progress in the work was found to be the natural tendency of an occasional officer to develop [sic] meglomania [sic] soon after assuming his duties. I've had more trouble curing "swell-head" than in handling all other maladies peculiar to Supervisors and Rangers. Arrogance in any form is extremely obnoxious to the ordinary westerner and any manifestation of it on the part of a Forest officer in Idaho will invariably meet with a call down by the public. I knew this and made this feature perfectly plain to every man who held an appointment under me. Even style of dress, though a small thing seemingly, has been in one or two instances a temporary



hindrance to the recognition of a man's true worth. The prejudice against "Eastern Dudes" as most all of the Forest Assistants and other officers from the east were called, was due chiefly to style of dress and forms of speech that showed the individuals not "to the manor born." Some of our best and most popular officers were considered "dudes" and treated cavalierly [sic] when they first came among the people here. Native worth and real adaptability to surroundings will quickly change aloofness to cordial friendship among the people at large and where qualifications have been combined in them I have never yet failed to see and "Eastern Dude" take his rightful place as a mighty good fellow with the public. Lacking these essentials the man has been a failure as an administrative officer no matter how efficient from a technical point of view.

The sympathetic cordiality and the esprit de corps that now pervades the entire Forest Service are in marked contrast with the feelings of jealousy and estrangement that formerly existed between the field and central office forces. Correspondence was then wholly formal. Every letter from the field was couched in terms of deference, while communications from the other end of the line were usually so framed as to impress superiority of the author upon the subordinate in the woods. For an officer in the field to question the policy outlined in the regulations on any point no matter how trivial, or to suggest that a change in a regulation would be beneficial to the Service or conducive to better administration was almost equivalent to religious heresy. I shall cite a single case in this connection. Shortly after I entered the Service I was called upon to consider several applications for special use cases in the town of Elk City. A Mrs. Jones, a widow who then was and for several years before the creation of the Reserve had been making a precarious living by taking in washing, was required to secure a "Laundry Permit." Her customers were miners who patronized her, chiefly through a spirit of charity, to aid the worthy woman in earning an honest living. As in all cases of the kind the issuance of a permit to Mrs. Jones was conditional upon her giving a bond of not less than \$500.00. No bond, no permit, and yet the amount of the bond was at least equal to her average annual gross receipts. The absurd injustice of the bond requirement aroused the indignation of the miners all over the

Elk City mining district. Mrs. Jones' case and a few others of a similar character threatened to engender a spirit of hostility to the Service which it was most desirable to avoid if possible. Being young in the Service and in many ways ignorant, I wrote to the Hon. Commissioner of the General Land Office quite a long letter suggesting what I felt would be desirable changes in certain parts of the regulations. The answer "put me wise." It was initialed "L.M.S." and as I later learned was prepared by Miss Lucy M. Strong. After simply acknowledging receipt of my letter the reply advised me that "It is the duty of the Forest officers to obey their instructions and not to question them." Short and to the point, was it not?