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Notes relative to the life work of W. G. Weigle.

Born Sept 20 1866 at Easttown Penna.
Worked on a farm.

Began teaching school 1886.

Finished course at Shippensburg Teachers College 1890

Taught school up to 1900

Entered Railway Mail Service 1900

Chief Clerk, Philadelphia and Westchester R. P. O. While throwing mail in June 1902 I noticed a pamphlet advertising the Yale summer school of Forestry at Milford, Pennsylvania. I read it and immediately made up my mind that I would attend. When the time arrived for the school to open I requested the Division Chief to give me two months leave without pay. He refused to give me leave at that time so I resigned and next day left Philadelphia for Milford.

October 1902 went to Yale Forest School, New Haven, Connecticut.

July 1903 appointed student assistant at \$25.00 per month and keep. Reported to Horace Chittenden party in New Hampshire. First duty given a camera to take some important pictures. I had never taken a picture. In fact I had never seen inside a camera and I did not even know how to open it. I, of course, felt that I could not tell Mr. Chittenden as I was supposed to know how to do anything so I took the camera without a word. One hour later a train came in which I boarded and went 20 miles down the line to a place where they sold cameras and I took a very important lesson in photography. I completed my task as assigned with remarkable results. The New Hampshire project was to make a Forest Map of Northern New Hampshire. My work was to secure forest map data from mills and timber owners.

June 1904. Graduated from Forest School, Yale University.

July 1904. Entered Forest Service. Assigned woodlot work in Ohio, Indiana. During the fall of 1904 I gave a series of lectures in cooperation with the Agricultural Department of the University of Ohio, Columbus, Ohio. Back to Washington in the fall to write up reports on summer's work.

December 1904. Urged by Forest Service to accept position of Wood Superintendent for the Pennsylvania Paper Mills at Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. First duty, went to Scranton and employed 90 Italians to cut and peel Jack Pine. The mill was new and the company was without funds to cover transportation of the men and realizing that my end of the work had to go I used my own funds to the extent of \$800.00 over and above my unpaid salary of \$125.00 per month. I stopped at this point and demanded the \$800.00 which I received. The Forest Service paid me \$25.00 per month. I had worked five months without receiving a cent of salary and never did receive it. The mill went broke and I returned to the Forest Service in May, 1905. I was then sent to New York state for woodlot work on the Hudson, Lake George, and Lake Champlain, Catskill and Adirondak Mountains.

1905. While working in the Catskill Mountains my right arm became badly infected and I spent a month in Vassar Hospital, Poughkeepsie, New York.

1905. Fall of 1905 I went to Western Maine, Rangely and Mooshead Lake region to make a study of the Aspen. "*Populus Tremuloides*" and "*Granda dentata*".

1906. January. Was sent to Wisconsin and Minnesota to show loggers having government contracts how to pile and burn slash. Spent 3 months on snow shoes marking timber and superintending piling brush. My work was chiefly in the region of Lac-du, Flambean, Wisconsin for the Fred Herrick Company, who later operated at St. Marries and Couer d' Alene, Idaho and went broke at Burns, Oregon. He now lives in Spokane, Washington; 87 years old but very alert and in good physical condition. I called to see him recently.

1906 May. Went back to Washington D. C.

1906 July. Sent to Montana to run boundary line and make map of a big French Gulch Timber sale near Anaconda to Bill Allen. Also to mark timber for cutting. The sale operated chiefly in Lodgepole pine for stulls and the timber was transported to Anaconda by means of a flume that crossed the Continental Divide.

1906 Fall. This was the time when the citizens of Deer Lodge Valley made complaint of the damage being done by the Anaconda Smelter and President Roosevelt assigned Dr. Haywood of the Bureau of Chemistry, someone from animal industry, and I represented the Forest Service.

Dr. Haywood and I worked together in this investigation. We collected thousands of samples of grass, soil, timber, etc. and sent them to Washington for analysis. Dr. Haywood and I drove every where we could and then a considerable area without roads had to be done on horseback. Dr. had never ridden a horse. I taught him how to get on a horse and ride so we started out for a 20 mile ride and every time the horse would go up he would meet the Dr. coming down. So at the end of the 20 mile ride you know the results. I walked him 3 miles across country to a stage and I led his horse back. When we were out on foot and would come to a stream, I would always carry him across the stream piggy back fashion. I liked the Dr. and we got along swimmingly. When he was assigned to make investigations at the Redding smelter in California he demanded that I go with him.

1906 December. I was detailed from Anaconda to take charge of the big tie sale on the Medicine Bow National Forest, Saritoga, Wyoming, Keystone Range. District sale was on a high plateau 10,000 feet in altitude. When I reached Saritoga I met Mr. Ringland, sale inspector, who was planning on going in with me a 75 mile trip. We secured horses and shortly after leaving Saritoga we had to ford the river and there being some question as to which road to take at the edge of the river I opened a map and that gave my horse the excuse to buck and throw me off into the river. I waded the river and then with difficulty remounted. We continued for several hours, got into higher country and new snow. This was a thinly settled country, only two or three houses in the 75 miles. The little used roads were soon obliterated by snow and we did not know whether we were on the right road or not.

Finally we spotted a cabin. I told Ringland I was going to stay all night at that cabin whether they wanted me or not. I went to the cabin and found it unlocked and a post office but no one at home. We put our horses in a correll, fed them and then went into the house. My clothes were wet and frozen. I found bread, potatoes, bacon and coffee and started getting something to eat. Mr. Ringland took a chill and got quite sick. I put him to bed and found some empty bottles which I filled with hot water and placed to his feet to warm him up. Ringland felt better next morning. We left a note and a dollar thanking the owner for the privileges we had taken. As we strolled along next day toward the camp, Ringland would repeatedly ask me whether I was sure I was on the right road, although I did not have the slightest information as to whether or not I was on the right road I would always be sure I was on the right road and we happened to be on the right road as we reached camp that evening where we found Smith, Barton and P. T. Coolidge. The boys had a big program of marking timber. The topography was quite good, the snow dry and the temperature often as low as 24 below.

1907 January. Sent back to Anaconda to appear as a witness in the Smelter Case. When I was called in they told me they would not keep me more than 20 minutes but some pictures I had taken of large areas of dead Douglas Fir that showed no sign of beetle or fire stirred up trouble and I was qualified as an expert witness and kept on the witness stand continuously during court hours for five days and gave 418 pages of testimony.

1907 January, From Anaconda, Montana I went to Livingston, Montana to investigate a trespass near Cook City just outside the north east corner of Yellowstone park. Had to travel 8 miles on snow shoes.

February. From Livingston, I was sent to Wisconsin and Minnesota to organize the Forestry work on the Indian Reservations.

1907 March. Went back to Washington D. C.

1907 April. I was sent to the Wingate Military Reservation in southern ^{west} New Mexico to segregate railroad lands from the reservation lands. J. Girvin Peters of Baltimore and Biltmore went with me. The Post at Wingate did everything possible to make our stay pleasant. They gave us good saddle horses and trucks and piled our mess high with the best of things to eat. We were camped about 30 miles from the Post at a big spring in a beautiful stand of Yellow Pine at an elevation of 8,000 feet. The woods was full of deer and wild turkeys. We finished the work and then Peters and I took a thousand mile trip ~~on horseback~~ ^{back}.

southwestern New Mexico visiting "Inscription Rock" and "Zuna Village" which were discovered by the Spaniards more than 300 years ago.

1907 September. Back to Washington D. C.

1907 September. Left Washington D. C. for the west to attend Ranger Meetings. The first one was on the Big Horn Mountains, Wyoming which was held on a big tie sale where a million ties were shipped annually. The next meeting was in Seattle, Washington and then Roseburg and Prairie City, Oregon.

I was then sent to the University of Utah where I gave a course of lectures on Forestry for one month. I was next sent to Nevada to investigate and settle the big timber trespass with the Tonopah Water Company. Back to Reno on Thanksgiving where I bought a Cayuse and went over the Divide and down the Feather River ^{into Cal.} where the Western Pacific R. R. was then building to investigate and settle trespass. Ran into Bill Durhin who was scaling timber on a trespass near Quincy. Sold the Cayuse ^{at Quincy} and outfit at a loss of \$5.00 and went to Portland, Oregon where I cruised the timber on Tillamoot Military Reservation.

1908 January. Examined timber sale on the Columbia Forest. February and March examined timber sales in Colorado. Back to Washington D. C. in March.

1908 March. Sent to North Carolina to cruise Chestnut and Oak timber on the Cherokee Indian Reservation. The law provided that the Indians could sell the timber if the President of the United States authorizes the same. President Roosevelt requested the Forest Service to send a man to make this examination and I was sent to do the work. While down there the Indians of Duchtown and Beartown had their annual game of Lacrosse. They did not have that name for it but it is similar. It was one of the roughest games of any kind that I have ever witnessed.

1908 April. Back to Washington D. C. from North Carolina. I was sent immediately to Marshfield Oregon. Went out via Canadian Pacific and stopped off in Seattle. The C. A. Smith Lumber Company of Marshfield had expressed a desire to practice ^{forestry} on their holdings and I was sent to make a report on them. ^{Then} This logging Superintendent and Cruiser got together a pack train with provisions and bedding and we started up the Sixes River and all its branches, spending six weeks in the primitive finally coming down Cow Creek to Roseburg and then back to Marshfield. O. Went from Marshfield to Sission, California and wrote up my report.

1908 July. Went from Sission to Redding, California to make further examination on account of smelter fumes.

1908. From Redding, California I went back to Anaconda, Montana for more smelter fume examination.

1908. In October I was appointed Forest Supervisor of the Couer d' Alene National Forest. I went over to Wallace looked the town over and decided that I would not like the place. Wrote the Washington office and thanked them for the appointment but preferred to remain in the capacity I was

then working^{as} assistant chief of forest management. I shortly afterwards received a reply telling me that it would be quite necessary for me to take the job offered. It turned out about that time that there was a general blow up in Washington when the Chief Inspectors were called off and District Foresters took their places. Tom Sherrard lost out as Chief of Forest Management and was appointed Supervisor of the Oregon Forest. I succeeded R. H. Rutledge on the Cour d' Alene. I soon learned to love the Idaho Country.

The people were of the pioneer type and very hospitable and generous. Every stream had its contingent of old miners, many of them far back from civilization but for hospitality and generosity they could not be surpassed and when they become friendly they were real friends.

The Couer d' Alene Forest had another class of isolated intermittent settlers who were not always cordial to the Forest Officers. These were the timber homesteaders. The Coeur d' Alene Forest had more than 600 homestead claims of which at least 95% were taken for the timber. The few who lived on their claims were nice to deal with but those who would show up only a few days during the year had no use for the forest officer whose business it was to check up on his residence. During the winter of 1909 and 1910 I spent three months at the University of Idaho as instructor in connection with the Ranger School at the University.

The Couer d' Alene forest was a veritable fire nest. Extremely low humidity, many settlers, prospectors, hunters and berry pickers and subject to many heavy electric storms so every season brought many fires and in 1910 the conditions were worse than usual and as a result we had the terrible 1910 fire, which burned to death in one night 81 people and 30 horses.

- A insert
In the spring of 1911 while out in the field on the Little North Fork of the Couer d' Alene River, William Morris, my forest assistant, phoned me that he had received a wire from Washington, D. C. transferring me to Ketchikan Alaska as Supervisor of the Tongass and Chugach forests to succeed W. A. Langille. I had learned to like the Couer d' Alenes therefore did not want to be transferred so I wired Washington thanking them for the privilege of a change but I preferred to remain on the Couer d' Alene Forest. A letter came back telling me that conditions made it necessary for me to take the assignment and that they would keep the Couer d' Alene job open for two years then if I did not like Alaska I could return. So on the 29th of June 1911, I left Wallace, Idaho for Ketchikan, Alaska.

I soon found that the people of Alaska were pioneers much the same if not more so than the people of Idaho. I learned to like the people and the place so that when the two years was up I did not want to return to the Couer d' Alene Forest. There were no roads and few trails on the Tongass and Chugach Forests but many waterways and our only means of travel was by boat. The forest service at that time had only two boats in all Alaska. One on the Tongass and a smaller one on

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the Chugach. The boat on the Tongass was named the Tahn which was 65 feet in length and was equipped with a 75 horse power engine, a very pretty and serviceable boat which was capable of going anywhere in inside or outside waters. This boat was greatly appreciated by the people of southeast Alaska as in addition to its forest service duties it took the place now filled by the coast guard cutters.

Many times Captain Blodget was sent out with the Tahn to look up an overdue fishing boat.

In the fall of 1911 Mr. Langell and I were doing some work at the south end of Portland Canal. We discovered a 60 foot gas boat that did not seem to have the ear marks of a local boat so we drew up alongside and made inquiry as to where the boat was from. We were told she was from Prince Rupert Canada. We asked to see her clearance papers but she had none. We asked to see the pilots licence and he had none, so we tied fast to their boat and told them it would be necessary for them to go with us to Ketchikan to the Custom Officers. The boat had been hired by several parties who were looking up a fish cannery site. They begged to be permitted to return to Prince Rupert but they were all taken to Ketchikan. The Customs officers after taking affidavits from the men who had hired the boat they were excused by them but the boat was held in Ketchikan for several months before it was released to the owner.

The Tongass National Forest included practically all of the southeast Alaska consequently all of the population and industries of this region were either inside the National Forest or very close to its boundary, therefore great interest was manifested in everything that was done on the National Forest. The work in the early days of National Forest Administration consisted chiefly of:

- (1) Preventing trespass
- (2) Supervising timber sales of piling for fish traps and logs for the saw mills
- (3) Cruising timber
- (4) Reconnaissance of the National Forest
- (5) Locating and surveying of homesteads
- (6) Examination of mining and other claims
- (7) Extinction of forest fires
- (8) Surveying and granting of permits for fish canneries and salteries, fox farms, herring pounds, power sites, etc.

My arrival in Alaska was shortly after the Pinchot-Ballinger fight over Cunningham coal claims, consequently in as much as everybody living in Cordova and Katalla had expected to get rich from the development of oil and coal in the Katalla region.

The feeling against the Forest Service and Pinchot was running high, as it was generally believed that Mr. Pinchot winning out in his case against Ballinger and the Cunningham claims would put an end to the wildcat development and phoney claim ownership at Katalla which proved to be true.

The Forest Service headquarters for the Chugach Forest was at Cordova where we had a 40 foot boat stationed. On account of the coal and oil development at Katalla we had to make frequent trips with this

small boat from Cordova to Katalla and near-by points. On account of the distance being shorter and much less danger on account of bad weather we would take what was called the inside passage through the narrow sinuous passages of the Copper River delta. On account of these passages being so narrow and crooked the boat would often run her bow into the sand and mud and plow out thousands of razorback clams.

No one at that time, 1912, thought of the millions of tons of clams that were later harvested in this 70 mile wide delta of the Copper River. Five large clam canneries were later located in Cordova and thrived on the contents of this vast clam bed.

On one of my trips across this delta we got caught in a very bad storm just before reaching Katalla. We anchored behind a little island and hung on for three days when during a lull in the storm we made a dive for the narrow entrance of the little bay leading up to Katalla but the storm became violent again and to make matters worse the propeller picked up a rope which piled us up on the rocks near Katalla. Mr. Pinchot happened to be in Katalla the same day. We cleaned the rocks off of a sufficient space to work the boat down to the water then temporarily nailed patches on the holes made when she was blown ashore. Then hired another boat to stand by until high tide when we pulled her into deep water and took her into Katalla where we had her permanently patched and returned to Cordova.

Mr. Hunt was assistant supervisor in charge of the Chugach at that time, 1912, Lage Wernstedt was Forest assistant and Bill McDonald, Ranger. Wernstedt was sent up the Copper River to investigate the timber conditions on the Bremner River. He had one man and one boat with him when they got up to the mouth of the Bremner River they crossed over to the east side of the Copper River then they proceeded up the Bremner for some miles until they came to a canyon where they had to line the boat in order to proceed. They had their bedding, extra clothing, guns, camera and \$20.00 their total cash in the boat. Lage would hold the line to which the boat was attached until his helper would crawl over the rocks and relieve him of holding the boat. Then Lage found the pull too much for him and let it go. Down the raging river went the boat and all their belongings with no possible chance of getting to it. There were no habitations anywhere on the east side of the Copper River and few and far between on the west side. So the only thing they could do was to head for Copper Center located on the west side of the river about 80 miles to the North. Walking was slow and bad. They found lots of berries upon which they subsisted. They killed one Ptarmigan and one Porcupine. They happened to have some matches saved therefore was able to roast the Ptarmigan and Porcupine. They ran into five brown bear in one bunch and several individuals but as they were well fed on berries they did not molest the men.

After tramping over this rough country for five days they arrived at a small Indian villiage on the opposite side of the river from Copper Center but not having any money they had great difficulty in securing one of the natives to take them across the river but finally succeeded in getting across. I happened to be in Copper Center that evening and certainly was glad to see them. Glad to get them something to eat and get them a ticket for Cordova.

Shortly after this unpleasant experience by Lage Wernstedt he felt that his success as a Forester on the Chugach Forest would be promoted if he had a boat of his own so he bought himself a boat for which he paid \$1500.00. Shortly after he got the boat he was transferred to the east side of the Cascades in the State of Washington. He placed his boat on ways in a little bay at Cordova and tried to sell it but he was unable to make a sale, so finally the government bought the engine for \$100.00 so he only lost \$1400.00

As was customary all forest officers were required to keep a diary which would tell where they had been and what they were doing. By a careful study of these diaries the supervisor was able to keep in close touch with the work. It was a common occurrence for the rangers to get in close quarters with a Brown or Kodiak bear but Ranger McDonald's diary indicated that he had really taken ample precaution to keep the bear at a proper distance. His diary read: "Anchored in a small bay on the north side of Montague Island. Walked inland about one mile to cruise some timber. Ran into a big vicious Kodiak bear at 4:02 p.m., reached boat 4:04 p.m."

In looking up forest conditions along the east side of Cook Inlet with a rowboat or "Dingy" I got stranded at Point Possession just south of Turnigam Arm a part of Cook Inlet. There were two Indian shacks at Point Possession and it was my plan to have one of the Indians take me across Turnigam Arm in his little fishing boat to a ranger station where Anchorage is now located but a terrible storm came on and whooped her up for five days which made it impossible for him to cross the channel. My provisions were exhausted but the Indian had just killed a moose so I had a diet of nothing but moose meat for five days.

During the period 1910 to 1915, which covers the time most active in railroad and auto road construction from the Alaska coast to Fairbanks, many thousands of acres of interior forest was burned --- During the construction of the Colonel Richardson Road from Valdez to Fairbanks. In burning the refuse in clearing the right of way no attention was given to the spreading fires which often killed everything for 20 and even as much as 50 miles back from the road. The same was true in clearing the right of way of the Alaska Railroad. During August 1915 I stood on the bridge where the railroad crosses the Matanuska River and counted the smoke of 22 large fires burning without any attention and some of these fires had burned back miles from the railroad. Even though this timber was not very large it was a valuable asset to the region where it grew. When Colonel Richardson was chided by Colonel Graves during the summer of 1915 about leaving his fires spread he remarked that he had never thought of the timber being of any value.

On November 25, 1918 I was married to Clara Derrick, a school teacher in Ketchikan. In May 1919 I was transferred to Seattle, Washington as Forest Supervisor of the Snoqualmie National Forest. The backbone of the Snoqualmie is the rugged Cascade Range which for 14 years I loved to explore of all my years as Forest Supervisor at all times in rugged country I seldom used a horse, I loved to walk and in rough country by taking short cuts I could make better time walking than I could with a horse. During my 14 years on the Snoqualmie we had many forest fires but locating and fighting forest fires had become more of a science therefore, in all this time we did not have a bad fire on the Snoqualmie.

During my period on the Snoqualmie, I was closely associated with the Forest School at the University of Washington and frequently filled classroom periods for members of the faculty during their absence. I was an active worker in the Seattle Chamber of Commerce and gave many radio talks on Forestry subjects, and belonged to all the local Forestry and Conservation societies. This gave me a chance to enlist the support for the National Forest of a large number of influential people.

I was retired by the Forest Service March 1, 1933 and on February 24 of the same year I was appointed Superintendent of Washington State Parks which position I still hold.

W. G. Weigle