'Forest Ranger Poetry' as Verse in the Gospel of Conservation: Rhymes and Ballads of the U.S. Forest Service, 1908-1938

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The unvarnished poems that are the subject of this essay were composed by early-twentieth-century Americans who focused both their careers and their poetic efforts on the natural environment. It is poetry (as most of its creators surely would have been the first to admit) that has little or no serious literary merit; much of it is mere doggerel. However, these often-homely rhymes and ballads do provide a useful avenue of investigation: a path to explore the broadly shared attitudes, self-image, and relation-with-Nature held by the United States’ first professional government conservationists, the rangers of the Forest Service.

This essay collectively refers to early-day Forest Service as “rangers.” Their corpus of work (numbering nearly 500 known poems) does not represent some quaint variation of the “cowboy poetry” that has undergone a popular resurgence in recent years. “Ranger poetry” instead forms a personally revealing historical literature of one particular profession’s time and place. It illustrates --- perhaps better than would any official correspondence or later memoirs --- the early rangers’ clear sense of *esprit-de-corps* as protectors of the new National Forests, their attitudes about the workday world (including the sometimes foolish behavior of an ungrateful public and the burdensome paperwork of the bureaucracy that employed them), their at-times ambivalent vision of the Forest Service’s gospel of utilitarian conservation, and their personal relationship with the awe-inspiring Western landscape entrusted to their stewardship.

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The field-going men (and, on occasion, women) of the Forest Service during its pioneering phase (i.e., the so-called “custodial era” from shortly after 1900 through the Great

Depression) included forest supervisors, district rangers, fire guards, fire lookouts, horse packers, and others who regularly tried their hand at rhyming. Theses literary endeavors probably served both as a form of self-entertainment and as a form of mutual amusement and competition with their colleagues. The writers ranged from literate local cowhands and woodsmen with limited formal education (individuals hired into the Service for their practical experience and force-of-character) to middle-class, college-trained foresters who typically arrived as newcomers to the Western forests. In their poetic efforts, forest rangers were, of course, far from unique; composing poems remained an important part of American popular culture and a common pastime from the 19th century well into the twentieth.

Some Forest Service employees, at the encouragement of the editors of the American Forestry Association's popular magazine, *American Forests*, wrote and published prose stories about their adventures in the woods. The great Pacific Northwest fires of 1910 produced the Forest Service's first heroes, stout-hearted leaders of men facing grave danger, rangers such as Ed Pulaski and Joe Halm. Both Pulaski and Halm produced narratives of their exploits soon thereafter. Others wrote tales of terrible lightning storms, encounters with grizzly bears, and showdowns with poachers or firebugs.[i]

While consciously aiming such prose efforts at the general reading public, ranger poetry, in contrast, usually speaks to a much narrower audience of fellow Forest Service employees. Ranger verse appeared in a relatively restricted variety of venues. A few poems were found tacked to the walls of remote ranger stations and later taken back to town for transcription (and hence for their serendipitous preservation in agency archives or personal papers). Many found their only publication within the typed, carbon-copied onionskin sheets of individual National Forest newsletters with extremely limited distribution. A few appeared in the pages of local

newspapers, and fewer still in issues of *American Forests*. A large number eventually found a wider audience in two volumes of collected Forest Ranger verse, compiled and published in 1919 and 1935, respectively, by forester John D. Guthrie.[ii]

Defining the Ranger

As a new kind of "government man" on the Western scene after 1900, the forest ranger faced an often suspicious and even openly contemptuous public. Some Western newspaper editors disparaged the ranger as a lazy, "beardless...snob, with lily-white hands" who couldn't tell the difference between "tall tamaracks and sagebrush," or as a fussy "wet nurse to a lot of pine saplings."[iii] It is understandable then that so many of the earliest ranger poems emphatically defined the writers as manly, competent, and hardworking. Some writers made these points through bemused sarcasm, such as forester Fred Plummer's verse entitled "The Forest Loafer": ***"The Forest Ranger's life is joy, / His days are spent in play, / His weeks are fun without alloy; / His months one happy roun'-de-lay. / But just to keep himself in trim / He works a bit each day."***[iv] Or, in the rhyme of another ranger: ***"The season's over, and they come down / From the ranger stations to the nearest town, / Wild and wooly, and tired and lame / From playing that 'next-to-nature' game. / These are the men the nation must pay / For 'doing nothing'---the townsfolk say."***[v] And then there is a playful piece, "The Tourist and the Ranger," written by then-district ranger Aldo Leopold: ***"'I say there, Ranger-man, Too-hoo! / Come chat a jiffy with me here --- / Do tell me what it is you do! / By jove! It seems so queer.'"*** Swelling out his chest, Leopold's ranger proclaims*:*

Fair sir, I am a Ranger-man, / And my home is in the hills.

My food's the sweet dew at dawn, / My drink the mountain rills.

Fair sir, I am a Ranger-man, / And I love the breeze of Spring.

I love to see the saplings grow / And hear the birdies sing.

I love to see the rocks and trees / And the posies small that blow.

And all the little buglets on the leaves / Whose Latin names I know. [vi]

In a similar vein, one anonymous Forest Service writer describes a ***"spinster fair...with trousers a bit risqué,"*** as enthusing, ***"My good man, yours is wondrous work, / It must be just like play! / You go about / in your brand-new uniform! / And you've the sweetest little cabin to protect you from the storm!"*** [vii] Another poet -- after recounting a summer's fill of mosquitoes and flies on the trail, missing horses in the morning, and counting livestock on the range -- asks: ***"And when the quail were thick... but you couldn't take a shot, / Did the badge on your suspenders help your feelings out a lot? / And at night when you're so tired, you can hardly even eat, / Does some tourist 'drop in on you,' and take your only seat? / Stick his feet up on your stove hearth, and although he is a stranger, Tell you calmly as he lolls there, 'It's a snap to be a Ranger'?"*** [viii] And, finally, another bard relates that his ***"City cousin says to me, 'You're a ranger now,' says he. / A pension job, some soft for you, ---what the deuce does a Ranger do?'"*** In reply the patient ranger pulls his daily work-diary from his vest and, in detailed rhyme, describes the many hard tasks he's done, but, alas, the ***"City cousin sneered a sneer ---" I s'pose you <u>do</u> work, once a year.'"*** [ix]

While many other early poems openly mocked the public's dismissive ignorance of their work, an even larger number -- often with titles like "What's a Ranger Do?" -- deftly paint a self-image (an image, by the way, that Forest Service publicists then continued to present throughout the twentieth century) of the ranger as hardy "jack of all trades" --- or as one poet put it, the "Government's Handy Man":

In August's heat he makes his beat from lowlands to the higher,

And often mid deep smoke and flames he battles forest fire.

The ranger's works are legion: he cooks, he packs, he rides.

He's carpenter and mason, he paints and drafts besides.

He's sometimes building cabins and installing telephones,

And sometimes cruising timber, and sometimes hauling stones.[x]

One anonymous rhymester interestingly titled his poem "Why is a Ranger?" and answers: ***"He must be an expert woodsman, and a guide and trapper too; / And must know in all emergencies the proper thing to do; / How to fix a motor, mend a leg, or rope a steer; / play a tune on the typewriter to please a diplomatic ear; Also how to run a survey, find a corner where it ain't, / and, in those extra stressful moments, exercise restraint."***[xi] A 1915 ballad, "Recipe for a Ranger," similarly sums up the tactful, multi-talented ranger ethos:

First get a big kettle and a fire that's hot,

And when everything's ready, throw into the pot,

A doctor, a miner, of lawyers a few,

At least one sheepherder and a cowboy or two.

Next add a surveyor, and right after that,

A man with horse sense, and a good diplomat.

Add a man that'll work, and not stand round and roar,

Who can do ten-thousand things and then just a few more.

Now boil it up and skim off the scum ---

And ranger you'll find in the residuum. [xii]

The "Forest Ranger Lad" portrayed by poet Joe Brogan, after flirting with death --- by

fire during summer and in winter from exposure while rescuing an injured trapper high in the snow-bound mountains --- is hailed without a hint of irony: ***"The pine-tree shield his battle flag, the axe his trusty blade, / His horse the...comrade without fail; / He's a modest kind of fellow, is the Forest Ranger lad, / He's the unsung...hero of the trail."*** [xiii]

* * * *

Directly related to a proper forest ranger's many skills was his stoic endurance of ceaseless toil. John Guthrie, long-time Forest Service inspector in the Pacific Northwest, told of the ever-demanding "working plan" sent out to each ranger by the supervisor's office. Citing a litany of daily duties, from wrangles with complaining ranchers to confrontations with angry squatters, Guthrie concludes that ***"through it all [the Ranger] rides in glory, / His badge a'shine in the sun, / With his 'Working Plan' ever before him, / Saying, 'Somehow, I'll get it...done.'"*** [xiv] An exasperated district ranger Aldo Leopold claimed that: ***"if the Lord should run my District, even He'd be cuttin' sign, / To find that scarce commodity that the Super calls 'spare time'. / Now, my fried, I'd best be travellin. Adios! and don't forget. / That spare time for writing verse is the only kind I get."*** [xv] But in a slightly later poem entitled "The Busy Season," now-Supervisor Leopold exhorted: ***"There's many pine trees on the hills, / In sooth, they're tall and straight, / But what we want to know is this, --- / What board-feet will they estimate? / All this and more, --- it's up to us -- / And, boys, Can we do it? / I have but just three words to say, / And they are these: 'TAKE TO IT!'"*** [xvi]

James Hungerford echoed Leopold's sentiments with, ***"He's on the job twelve hours a day, / And he goes where he is sent. / An' surely earns his monthly pay, / The Forest Ranger gent."*** [xvii] Perhaps no verse better illustrates the Forest Service man's pride in hard work than these two stanzas by Stanley Bartlett: ***"Have you carved with your hand from the forest, / a***

cabin of moss, log, and stone, / Or wrested your rations from nature, / And lived for long weeks all alone? / Ranging is more than romancing -- / You'll learn that a man must not fail / When you've entered the Service / And followed the timberline trail." [xviii]

Spreading the Gospel

As Bartlett's reference to "Service" alluded, the ranger ethos entailed far more than a hard job well done; most any man could be proud of that. The forest ranger toiled as selfless *missionary*, one who sought the long-term salvation of a wasteful and imperiled nation by, to paraphrase historian Samuel Hayes, spreading the Progressive-Era Gospel of Conservation. Forestry was far more than a profession; it was a calling. And the Forest Service was less another government bureau than it was a brotherhood. That shared sense of mission rings through much ranger poetry. Evoking the feared famine in America's natural resources, one early poet asks: ***"How long will timber of the West,/ Wealth of an empire manifest?"*** and then warns ***"Bend low and weep, / With us who know, / Today men sow, / Who may not reap."*** [xix] Another urges his fellow rangers on in their pursuit of greedy despoilers: ***"They [are] hot on the trail of the looters, / Ever scenting these men as their prey, / For they [bring] them to [heel] in short order, / And scarcely one e're [gets] away."*** [xx]

In one rhyme the Forester is told that he is both ***"...master and servant of Nature; / Your work is for Mankind at large. / May God in his heaven bless you--- / You and your sacred charge."*** [xxi] The plodding work of reforestation also symbolized the selfless and visionary ranger: ***"What does he plant, who plants a tree? / An emblem of Men yet to be... /...Who plants a tree he doeth well, / Performs with God, a miracle!"*** [xxii] A second poet rhymes with multiple responses to very nearly the same question ***"What do <u>we</u> plant when we plant a tree?,"*** his

many answers ranging from ***"we plant lumber to build us a house"*** and ***"we plant cover to harbor the grouse"*** to ***"we plant a blanket to hold the soil"*** and ***"we plant good wages for those who toil." "Beauty, contentment, prosperity, / All these we plant, when we plant a tree."*** [xxiii] Or, as another put it: ***"Mine is the vision that sees beyond today's small fir, / The lumber for a Nation's use, and pleasure. / I plant the seedlings I shall never fell. / I am a Forester."*** [xxiv] Less florid language but more to the point is this reply of one of Uncle Sam's tree-planters to a tourist's question, ***"'You don't expect to live to see, / The standing timber, say, do ye?' / He looked, reflectin' down the hill; / 'Wall, no, by thunder! but some un will!'"*** [xxv]

Thanks to its charismatic founder Gifford Pinchot, the Forest Service literally was born with *esprit de corps*, an organizational pride shared throughout the ranks. One poem, entitled "Service," grounded that pride in the outfit's self-reliant field men: ***"Weary the man and horse patrol, / Noble the purpose, high the goal---/ While saddle cinch squeaks, 'Service.'.../...Happy the man in cabin crude --- / Happy that king of solitude, / Where the silence whispers, 'Service.'"*** [xxvi] And Sierra forest supervisor Charles Shinn (who subsequently wrote a classic history of California mining-camp governance) sent his praise upwards: ***"Here's to those who lead us...[the] men from Washington; / To our Great Chief, Gifford Pinchot -- he and Forestry are one."*** [xxvii] Shinn ended a later poetic effort with a paean to the organization itself: ***"Forest, that shall long endure, / Service, immortal and sure."*** [xxviii] The anonymous writer of "The Last Word," final poem of Guthrie's first volume, best captured the Forest Service's self-anointed role in the Progressive crusade:

At last the Harvest our years have sown,

At last the ending of ancient wrong.

As the People take the People's Own

With civic conscience aroused and strong.

The finer types of men with a soul ---

Pinchots and Lincolns -- in full control,

Till, once more leading the human race,

The Old-time REPUBLIC takes its place." [xxix]

Fire and Lesser Foes

Inspired by their surroundings, rangers' poems consistently praised the elements of the natural world --- forests, mountains, rivers, sunsets, most wild creatures, even the rain and the snow --- as gifts of God's creation. A rummaging bear, scolding jay, even the pesky porcupine and the hungry pine beetle merited friendly verse. However the poets invariably singled out one element of Nature, fire, for unanimous condemnation as "evil." Destructive flame, whether set by lightning or by human hand, was an enemy that threatened their mission's success. Forest fire, likened to a ravenous Beast or even to the Devil himself, rose up as the ranger's eternal nemesis:

"The red, red wolves lie sleeping, / When the snow palls are unfurled,

The red wolves still are drowsing, When Spring wakes up the world.

But when the blue-skied summer, / Makes brown and sere the brake,

The red, red wolves are rousing, /Shake of their sloth and wake….

Then they are loosed from their hiding, And the red wolves they are a' riding

--- There is blood and blast and fury in their eyes ---

As their pack goes a crashing, / There's a crackle and a lashing,

Breathing smoke and sparks and splinters to the skies." [xxx]

A second Forest Service poet, Ranger John Frolicher of the Flathead National Forest, personifies forest fire as the ***"red-eyed witch…her blue-gray hair / Is snaking up the gullies / On the wind-twisted air… / Her [evil fingers] of flaming gold / Poison the forest and turn it old."*** [xxxi] And another asks, ***"Have you seen the snarling Demon's, / Curling, licking, scarlet tongue, / 'Round the sighing boughs of spruces, / Where swaying mosses hung?"*** [xxxii] This is but a small sample. Only Also Leopold (he who later wrote eloquently of seeing in the eyes of a dying wolf "a fierce green fire") grants to fire a place in the Divine plan: ***"Have you…[f]elt the bellow of the thunder, / Shake the hills beneath the sod? / Seen the pine trees smashed to kindling, / And the smoking, whirling splinters, / Stab into the hillsides, trembling, / Like the javelins of God?"*** [xxxiii]

Poems about fire prevention repeatedly rebuked careless smokers as "damned fools" and ignorant wastrels, whose laziness and thoughtlessness burn up the country's future. (The 1910s-20s nation-wide forestry debate between proponents of "light burning" and those of complete suppression indirectly figured in a few poems; without exception they portray "light burners" as ignorant hillbillies, and total fire control as the ultimate ideal.) Arsonists, however, committed outright treason: ***"Comrades, we have some traitors in our midst, / Who'll fan the fire or kindle it anew, / And sacrifice a Forest to the flames, / To get themselves a job upon a crew!"*** [xxxiv] But true fire fighters are heroic figures as in this stanza: ***"The wind sweeps off the spire-like peak, / And is whirling the cinders high; / While down in the stifling, deadly reek, / We struggle, and all but die."*** [xxxv]

Or they become martyrs, as in this free verse from a memorial to Ranger Roy Goodell, who perished in 1922 fighting fire near northwestern Washington's Mt. Baker: ***"Though <u>my</u> face be so marred they know me not…May stranger and friend say of me as of <u>him</u>, 'He fell with***

his shovel in his hand.'" [xxxvi] The tragedy of 1910's Big Blow-up replays itself in Anthony Euwer's ballad about a fatal fire in Clear Creek canyon:

> ***And may the blessed Jesus save all souls of mortal men,***
>
> ***Who perish in that fiery maze, walled in their smothering pen,***
>
> ***Like those they found near Jefferson upon the mountain side,***
>
> ***Who strangled there near Jefferson --- with fingers clenched they died."*** [xxxvii]

* * * *

If the firebug earned calumny, most other two-legged reprobates -- thoughtless vandals, bumbling tourists, or greedy "Users," usually received somewhat gentler condemnation: ***"He's the riding, walking ape, / The sign-destroying homo-sap, / Masquerading in man's shape / An empty space beneath his cap... [Is he just a common sneak?.../ [Or] Is he then a Bolsheveek?""*** [xxxviii] A strong anti-urban bias runs throughout ranger poetry, part of a broader current in American popular thought during the Progressive Era; and incompetent city-folk bedevil many a verse. Just one example, penned by Pacific Northwest forester and recreational planner Fred Horton to parody the then-popular *"Rubiyat of Omar Kayam*": ***"A sound of curses beneath the bough, / A punctured tire, a busted spring, and --- Wow! / A tourist howling in the Wilderness, / oh, Wilderness were simply Hell enow."*** [xxxix]

The seemingly incessant complaining and cheating of those individuals who reaped the forest's resources for profit provokes disgust that is best symbolized in "The Scaler's Dream," wherein a Forest Service timber-sale scaler has visions of a trip to heaven:

> ***"So the Angel and the Scaler / Started up the Pearly Way, /***
>
> ***When passing close to Hades / The Angel whispered, 'Wait!' / '***
>
> ***There's a place I want to show you, / T'is the hottest in all Hell /***
>
> ***Where those who've always crabbed you / in fiery torments dwell.' /***
>
> ***And behold the Scaler saw there [loggers] by the score, /***
>
> ***And leaning on his scale-rule, he wished for nothing more. /***
>
> ***Said the Angel, 'Come on, Scaler, / There the Golden Gates I see!' /***
>
> ***But the Scaler only murmured, / 'This is heaven enough for me!'"*** [xl]

Organizational Culture: Pride and Frustration

The Forest Service, for all of Pinchot's emphasis on decentralization and efficiency, was still a ranked hierarchy, as well as a government organization beset with paperwork. "The Scaler's Dream" is just one of scores of poems that portray workday life from the varying perspectives of the low-ranking seasonal hands through the harried District Ranger to the desk-bound Forest Supervisor and his permanent office staff. Among the former are poems by and about packers (whose patience and skill could be sorely tested by the string of horses and mules that supplied the outfit's work-force in the field): ***"In the morning, have you tried to catch your horses, then seen them start to run / Across that big wet meadow / And wished you had a gun?"*** [xli] Even the men sent into the high country each April to maintain the miles of trail and telephone line through the woods had their ballads: ***"I come in advance of the season / To work on the lines and the trail, / I shinny up trees by the hundred / And do it in snow, rain, and hail."*** [xlii] Fire guards (the so-called smoke-chasers, who spent summers at remote guard stations and who usually arrived first on a fire) composed many poems. Many of them share a soldierly perspective, a theme that continued on into the late 1930s, as illustrated by this poem from a Civilian Conservation Corps newsletter: ***"...Nor let me see a wisp of smoke / Curl up where forests dwell, / But if I do --- God give me strength / To do my duty well!"*** [xliii]

Lookouts wrote by far the largest number of poems by seasonal fieldhands. This is unsurprising; after all they often had considerable free time on their hands (although many of their poems take pains to debunk the myth that lookouts were craggy-peak loafers). For some, the lengthy solitude could be conducive to bouts of creativity. [xliv] A ca. 1920 lookout writes: ***"The foothills were made for the kid-glove gang, / the palsied, the weak, and old. / But the dog-toothed peaks were made for [<u>us</u>], / They are ours to have and hold."*** [xlv] And another lookout's refrain: ***"I've seen the lightning flicker, / And heard the west wind roar. / I've felt the***

thunder pounding / 'Till it shook the cabin door." [xlvi] Many fire lookouts returned summer after summer to their same remote peak, but the following writer apparently not without questioning his own sanity:

> ***I've cursed the job and mountain,***
>
> ***Cursed the grub both blue and black;***
>
> ***Cursed the world and then the weather,***
>
> ***Cursed myself for coming back."*** [xlvii]

* * * *

Further up the chain-of-command, the ever-present tension between Ranger and Supervisor, or between jack-of-all-trades and college man, could find release in good-natured poetic mockery. From very simple taunts (***"The Supervisor's...steady job and daily care, / Is holding down a swivel chair."*** [xlviii] to more complex but biting insults: ***"Tom Slick was a Super, A forest school man, / Who lived on Instructions; Each job had a Plan. / While Henry B. Easy, most homely in looks, / Had never been known to / Spend much time on the books.../...[But][t]he District Forester most always / Picked ol' Easy a'fore Slick. / 'For a job that is done / In the best way you can, / It's better,' said he, 'than / A paper-made plan.'"*** [xlix]

Eastern forestry-school graduates came in for both gentle ridicule and helpful advice: ***"When the new-made assistant goes into the West / With a red kerchief, and a shield on his chest, / He must learn a few things that he hasn't half guessed / Ere he makes a good forest assistant. / Get along with the men that you find on the job; Don't criticize grammar, set up for a snob; <u>They</u> were woodsmen 'for <u>you</u> learned to 'puff on a cob,' / And wear a badge like a forest assistant."*** [l] In other poems the ridicule was less merciful, but shared danger ultimately resulted in mutual respect between native and newcomer : ***"I was a ranger on the [Medicine]***

Bow / In the Service's early days, / With scalin' stick and army Colt, / And a nerve you couldn't faze; A veteran of the cattle-war / And the Leadville riot row, / With a keen contempt for the Easterner, The pin-head, town-bred Easterner, / Who called a steer a 'cow.'" But then came the "fires of Nineteen ten", during which -- fighting alongside the Eastern forester, the same poet "Fought and ran, and fought again"…

Now we feel he's one of us,

And forget his Eastern birth,

We find he knows some things we don't

About this planet Earth. [li]

Supervisors could prove reluctant to compliment a job well done, causing this "Ranger's Growl": ***"Many things I've seen befall, / But one thing I can ne'er recall, / I'll tell <u>you</u> so <u>you</u>'re the wiser, / 'Tis a word of praise from a Supervisor.../...In <u>his</u> esteemed judgment sound, / Some <u>tiny</u> thing might <u>yet</u> be found, / (I wonder if he ever tries 'er), / Worth the praise of a Supervisor."*** [lii] Or, the head man could shower his hard-working rangers with seemingly endless, petty demands: ***"He writes the rangers. 'Please do this, / And do it very soon; / And how far is it from here to there?, / And how far to the moon?.../ And don't forget to send this in, / And [most] carefully prepare, / A statement of your horse's oats, / And how he combs his hair."*** [liii]

* * * *

If some poems evoked regional, class, and social divisions within the Forest Service, what of gender? The preceding bit of verse actually came from the pen of an anonymous ranger's wife. Although the Forest Service's <u>paid</u> field force remained virtually all male until the first women fire lookouts were hired during World War One, many ranger wives shared the joys

and hardships of their husbands' outdoor life. And some of these women wrote considerable amounts of verse, almost exclusively on the beauties of Nature. In contrast to the ranger's wife, within the often-urban confines of the Supervisor's Office toiled the busy Forest Clerk, who spent many of her hours, in the words of one poet, “smiting ol’ Oliver” (the Forest Service’s standard-issue typewrite into the 1920s, made by Oliver Manufacturing Co.). One such clerk, Margaret Hayden, writes with obvious pride: ***"[If] with vision clear, and no desire to shirk.../ [You] swim...with head above high water, --- / [And] the joy of having seen it through--- / [Then] you might become a Forest Clerk, / My daughter."*** [liv] Another ruefully inventories the bewildering variety of tasks that the Forest Supervisor sends her way.

For the many rangers, guards, and lookouts, men who found themselves "batchin' it" all summer without female companionship, poetry expressed their longings for a sweetheart, or even their infatuation with the image of a magazine cover girl tacked to a cabin wall. There are dozens of such poems. As one would expect from their era and the simple fact of their publication, virtually without exception these poems are sentimentally romantic and completely chaste. Only the lookout who composed this 1920s stanza hints at the sexually suggestive:

She said 'I love the great open spaces,' / Said my beautiful [visitor] to me.

She gazed at the peaks, canyons, and valleys / While <u>I</u> stole a peak at her knee! 'Yes,

<u>they</u> are great,' I answered her query, 'They thrill me as nothing else can,

When I get to looking at...open spaces, / I realize the weakness of man.' [lv]

* * * *

Rangers responded to their bosses' calls for mid-season meetings in distant towns, penny-pinching efficiencies, and seemingly endless reports with the kind of sarcastic rhymes that bureaucracies, both private and governmental, continue to generate. Between 1907 and 1917, for example, the agency's then-new alphabetical filing scheme, its mandatory but confounding format for range-appraisals reports, its insistence on an employee's detailed history "clear back to Adam" for the official personnel statement, and many other irritants came in for lyric ridicule (some of it now arcane but still clever). Several poems bemoaned the passing of Pinchot's renowned pocket-sized "Use Book" and its steady transformation over the years into the "FSM" (Forest Service Manual) --- a set of numerous, thick volumes filled with fine-print agency policy that would have taken a string of mules to pack it into the woods, had any ranger been fool enough to do such a thing.

Among some of the college men, correcting a colleague's written grammar apparently provided personal satisfaction. One Forest Supervisor, his letters probably having been critiqued by a higher-up, composed a lengthy ode to the split infinitive. Pointless-seeming efficiency campaigns provoked exasperation as well. During the late 1920s, a Montana poet mocked the repeated commands of his new District (Regional) Forester, "Major" Evan Kelley, to reduce the "waste" of basic office supplies such as pencils: ***"I am willing to wager - that our clever young Major/ Can find other 'leaks' equally bad, / There's the quarts of good ink --- / That our***

blotters will drink, / While the wear on erasers is sad." [lvi] Even the organization's output of verse came in for parodying in several poems, such as one by young forester Richard E. McArdle (who went on to serve as Chief of the Forest Service during the 1950s): ***"Sing a song of ranger men, And shed a weary tear. / We've about a dozen Ranger poems this year.../ Now really I've a liking for the bold ranger guy, / The*** **crème de la crème** ***of all men; / But I wish he would sing of his virtues in prose--- / Whenever he does it again."*** [lvii]

* * * *

Working in a bureaucracy brought inevitable frustrations. On the other hand, working on a particular national forest for any length of time typically inspired intense local pride. This feeling, which could border on chauvinism, doubtless helped bond a forest's individual employees into a more cohesive team, and it created a healthy sense of competition with other units. Whose forest was "more beautiful"?; "tougher"?; had the better hunting, or fishing?; had the higher mountains?, or bigger timber? Scott Leavitt bragged that, ***"Till you've seen the sun set behind Sun River Pass / You've not seen the sunset none other can surpass!"*** [lviii] E. A Jackson, stationed on an Oregon forest, composed a greeting to the newborn son of a fellow ranger: ***"Welcome, little fellow, here's a word of hail to you. / We believe you'll like our climate, / And we hope you'll like our crew,--- / For we're honored by your coming / to the sun-kissed Siskiyou."*** [lix] James Sizer, one of the more prolific Forest Service poets, defended his Southwestern forest against its critics with these words: ***"You say the Tonto, as a forest, is a mighty poor excuse, / That our hills are grown to cactus, not to yellow pine and spruce,"*** and he invited doubters to visit: ***"We can show you shady trout streams; we can show you game galore; / From mountain sheep to turkey to javelina boar!"*** And so on through other splendors; ending with: ***"For we can show resources upon which we base our claim, / That the***

Tonto is a Forest, and deserving of the name!" [lx]

Charles Brereton, stationed in the Ozark Mountains during the 1920s, found his relatively new national forest and its generally uncooperative rural denizens worthy of note: ***"The Oregon Ranger looks at a stranger / As though he were something new; / The Sierra Ranger makes light of the danger / That lurks in his Mulligan stew ; / But the Arkansas Ranger must chase him a granger / Every morning while the day is yet new."*** [lxi] An anonymous winter poet in northern California boasted that ***"The men of Shasta at Ash Creek, / Doing reconnaissance on snow-shoes all the day round… / It's surprising how simple the corners are found, / By us MEN*** [orig. emphasis] ***of the Shasta, the ones of renown."*** He trumpeted the hardy winter-time timber cruisers: ***"Other Forests did scoff and were against our great plans, But their ignorance should be pardoned as they can't understand / What a tough little bunch our Super had on hand, / The Men of the Shasta!"*** [lxii]

The Shasta National Forest poem, which likely appeared in the District (Regional) newsletter, provoked this retort from someone on the Tahoe Forest:

> ***The depth of snow of Shasta's hills***
>
> ***In Shasta's men great fear instills;***
>
> ***When out they go to count the trees;***
>
> ***They take with them their twelve-foot skis,***
>
> ***Or lacking skill with these to tread,***
>
> ***They get out the webs*** [snowshoes] ***instead."***

Along with chest-thumping, came further insult: ***"But further south they manage to do/ Without the aid of ski or shoe; / With cowhide boot our <u>Tahoe</u> treads / O'er snow that <u>Shasta</u> fears and dreads."*** [lxiii]

Changing Times

In the years following its 1910 baptism by fire, the Forest Service steadily gained legitimacy and acceptance in local communities. And, after the American entry into World War I, government foresters across the country, along with their neighbors, joined the military. A number of Forest Service men enlisted in the Army's 10th and 19th Engineers, which employed their lumbering knowledge on the Western Front: ***"Where France's forests bleed for France / They toil with hand and heart and brain / To help the Starry Flag advance --- / God send them safely back again! 1917"*** [lxiv]

During the 1910s and early 1920s, ranchers submitted to Forest Service grazing permits, often with somewhat reduced herd sizes on range allotments; squatters either proved up on a viable forest homestead or they moved on; lumbermen followed, if reluctantly, timber-sale contract requirements to pile and burn their slash. And, forest supervisors emerged as *de facto* members of local market towns' main-street elites --- joining the Chamber of Commerce, the Elk's lodge, and so on. One poem explicitly portrays the supervisor as a dutiful 1920s joiner, participating in numerous civic meetings, and generally becoming a "leading citizen" in large part so as to validate the Forest Service as part of the community.

* * * *

Taken as a whole, ranger poetry records significant organizational transformations between Pinchot's day and the New Deal, as well as important continuities in the Forest Service during that time. The former include technological change, as well as the passing of the agency's "old guard." Fire suppression witnessed some of the most startling changes: In "Wheels of Progress," one old timer recounted the simple tools, "handled with brains and pluck,"

of his early career, but then observes: ***"Now there are automobiles and other contraptions clever, / Pumps and flying machines; everything run on a plan! / Only the trees are the same, the forest that's green forever, / And the old stern sense of duty that burns in the heart of man."*** [lxv] Another 1920s poem, entitled "Evolution," describes the "miles of No. 9" (telephone wire) now connecting to lookouts towers perched "on every peak," so that, once spotted, a smoke's location is speedily reported to the ranger:

> ***The volunteers are called in a minute,***
>
> ***he cranks his Ford and all jump in it;***
>
> ***But two minutes have passed since the fire was [first] seen,***
>
> ***And they are off in the Ranger's machine...***
>
> ***They soon reach the fire, no damage is done,***
>
> ***to put out the small ones is only fun;***
>
> ***Then back to town in time for lunch,***
>
> ***The Ranger in a Ford,[he really packs] a punch...***
>
> ***May you all make good as you have in the past,***
>
> ***But there's surely been some changes since I met you last.*** [lxvi]

The 1920s also brought substantial expansion of the Forest Service's timber-harvest program. Logging camps sprang up and logging railroads snaked up into formerly untouched national forests all over the West. This trend was, of course, integral to the forest ranger's original utilitarian mission. But a few poets viewed the development not without some hint of misgiving: ***"Today, a 'woodman strong," and I / Tore some scenery from the sky --- / A green tree sown and grown by God / We left quite helpless [up]on the sod."*** [lxvii] Another questioned the zealousness of the Forest Service timber marker, "The Man with the Marking Axe," to 'get out the cut' from a particular timber sale: ***"Who wrote the [timber-sale] clause guaranteeing ninety per cent?.../...[N]ow we leave 'not to exceed' a measly ten per cent. / Concerning those who wield the marking axe today, / What will the judgment of the people be, / After the silence of half a century?"*** [lxviii]

Such ambivalence also may be reflected in1920s rhymes that wax nostalgic for the outfit's early days, and that commemorate the thinning ranks of its veteran rangers. G. A. Allen's poem "The Old-Time Ranger" describes its aging hero's: ***"Broad shoulders, bowed by heavy packs,... / The fingers stiffened by the mattock's grip, / That holds no facile pen to write a study course --- / A mind that's quick to act in time of need... / Few words, --- but these the settlers and stockmen [did] heed."*** [lxix] An anonymously written verse likewise gives the old timer his due:

He lived and toiled in early days, / And blazed a trail to better ways.
He hewed and hacked with patient care, / on timber problems everywhere.
He did his best, passed on and then, / His place was filled by other men.
But to success, and ideals clear, / He gave his share, this pioneer." [lxx]

Economic and environmental hardships of the Great Depression, along with the resulting

New Deal conservation programs, brought renewed vitality to the Forest Service's original Progressive-Era sense of mission. Therefore, paeans of praise to the early-day ranger only increased during the late 1930s as that cohort of now-elderly men retired from the Service and went on to their graves. Respect for these founding figures likely pervaded all ranks of the agency, but it may have been most strongly felt by those who literally followed in the first rangers' footsteps --- the local field-men who expanded a forest's trail and lookout systems and who ran the Civilian Conservation Corps fire-fighting and planting crews. One such employee was John S. Byrne, on the Applegate Ranger District of southwestern Oregon's Rogue River National Forest, who wrote in simple lyrics an obviously heart-felt tribute:

That restless urging that brought them here,

Anxious to reach the last frontier.

And the Forest Service drew from these

The men to watch and guard their trees.

They were a tough and hardy breed,

With <u>Conservation</u> their only creed.

They hacked and hewed that they might bring

The graded trail to the mountain spring.

Or followed up the course of winding creek,

to plant the flag on mountain peak.

A host of things are [still] here to tell,

That they did their work, and did it well.

True to themselves, and without pretense,

Endowed with humor and common sense,

They matched the motor and starting switch

With alforjas and the diamond hitch...

Byrne's poem ends with a call to honor the legacy the old rangers had passed on: ***"In this faltering world of drought and dust, They pass to you a sacred trust.../ When they trek out to that last frontier...[w]e hold it a privilege that we have been / On the trails with <u>these</u>, the sons of men."*** [lxxi]

John Byrne's closing mention of the "last frontier" is, of course, recognition of individual mortality. A relative large portion of ranger poetry makes similar reference to "that Great Divide," or to "the Last Divide" --- that is, the metaphorical final tough ridge to be climbed at one's death. Solemn or light-hearted, these poems unfailingly end with the hard-working ranger's just reward, as in these two examples: ***"[W]hen he gets his outfit packed, / And climbs the Last Divide, / He finds old Peter waiting, / And the gates are open wide."*** [lxxii] And this: ***"[W]hat do you in your dingy cities / Know of the heart of the world God made?.../...[O]f the last white tent of the Forest Ranger, / Where the flame of a...campfire gleams / At the end of the trail when life is over, / And Death awaits with his gift of dreams."*** [lxxiii]

The Forest Ranger's View of Nature

The preceding references to the Hereafter serve to bring this essay to a final element: the forest ranger's personal view of Nature. Utilitarian concerns certainly molded the ranger's world view, whether he was a woods-wise local hand or a college man. Collectively, however, these ranger poets so obviously loved their time in what townsfolk called "the Outdoors" --- and so much of their admittedly homely verse reveals profound reverence for the natural world --- that we should consider them "Nature poets" of a sort.

Perhaps a postmodern literary critic (if in a charitable mood) would characterize the forest rangers' poetry as 'spiritually informed largely by main-stream American Protestantism, including the Social Gospel, with some few hints of Emersonian pantheism.' Nevertheless, it is clear that experiencing Nature, particularly while traveling among the high mountains and through the great forests, provoked feelings of sheer spiritual joy in ranger poets. To them, Nature was God's Holy Creation, to be stewarded, *and* to be awed by: ***"It signals me to worship there / The God that made all things, / to lay my yearning spirit bare / To rest with folded wings."*** Nature, like God's final judgment, was the great equalizer, as in this poem entitled "The Forest Cathedral": ***"To worship in this House of God, / No soul was ever late; / Whether philosopher or clod, / He finds an open gate."*** [lxxiv] Another writer echoed these sentiments in a poem about the old-growth Douglas-firs that set him a prayerful example: ***"Cathedral-like they wall me 'round / And change the sod to holy ground; / They cleanse my thoughts like pillared nave, / And worship strives my soul to save... / Their sky-aspiring heads they raise / And urge in me the upward gaze; So straight of trunk, so clean of limb, / So reverently they speak of Him."*** [lxxv]

Aldo Leopold, a better poet than most and probably less fettered by conventional religious sentiments, hints at the ineffable wonder of Nature, in his case evoked by an October flock of *Piñoneros*, Pinyon jays, in the mountains of New Mexico:

Wheeling off across the mesas ---

Calling. . .Calling. . .

Piñoneros, each one softly to the rest.

Calling dimly in the distance. . .

Piñoneros faintly calling . . . .but ever calling

To the foothills of the west." [lxxvi]

Conclusions

In summary, “forest ranger poetry” provides an undeniably self-conscious yet self-revealing glimpse into the *ethos* of America’s first professional conservationists. Their verses speak forcefully and earnestly of rangers’ sense of pride, personal camaraderie, and shared mission. Ranger poets reserved their irony and parody for the "bothersome little things" --- from the ignorance of the public to the frustrating routines of the organization. They loved the woods, and they loved fighting the righteous fight of conservation.

* * *

The writing of Forest Ranger poetry continued, but in reduced quantity, after World War II. A few unpublished examples of verse from the Pacific Northwest show that the old-timers’ sense of mission and sense of humor had been passed on intact to the harried managers of postwar multiple use. “The Ranger’s Plea” calls upon divine aid in dealing with timber-hungry lumbermen:

Lord, spare me from the logger free,
Who doesn’t give a hoot for me,
Who only sees green dollar bills
Instead of trees upon our hills,
Who treats my men as simple fools
But cannot follow the simplest rules,
Who say they will and then they don’t
Who say they’ll pay but then they won’t,

Who's cut and ruined the private stands

And wants the same for public lands. [lxxvii]

Another poet bemoans the seemingly impossibility of keeping up with "the cut" with reforestation efforts on the grand scale: ***"A tree is really tough to raise / Although, to try, is still the craze. / First the rodents eat some seeds, / Then on the seedlings, fungus feeds. / Cutworms chomp some others down, / And blight will turn the needles brown…***

Then summer drought will kill some more,

And every critter joins the war.

The tree is eaten from both ends

By Smokey's pals we thought were friends,

For while the deer consume the shoots

The gophers feed upon the roots…

And nothing left but just a stick,

Enough to make a woodsman sick. [lxxviii]

The Forest Service's regional newsletters and other avenues of agency communication featured fewer and fewer rhymes over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, until today they are rarely seen. The odd poem may still appear on a ranger-station bulletin board, or as an attachment to a widely forwarded e-mail message.[lxxix] But --- reflecting the tenor of the Forest Service's recent struggles --- the few poetic efforts of the present time consist largely of sarcastic if stoic protests against seemingly never-ending re-organizational efforts, slashed program budgets, downsizing of staff, the perceived meddling of litigious special-interest groups, and so on. Few indeed are rhymes that are similar in spirit to:

The finer types of men with a soul ---

Pinchots and Lincolns -- in full control,

Till, once more leading the human race,

The Old-time REPUBLIC takes its place.

---

[i] Some of these stories later were compiled and published in a single volume: Ovid Butler (ed.), *Rangers of the Shield: A Collection of Stories Written by Men of the National Forests of the West* (Washington, D.C.: The American Forestry Association, 1934).

[ii] John D. Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger and Other Verse* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, The Gorham Press, 1919); John D. Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire and Other Verse* (Washington, D.C.: The American Forestry Association, 1935). Guthrie compiled *The Forest Ranger* in 1915-17, but the United States' entry into the World War delayed publication until 1919; former Chief Forester Pinchot gave his imprimatur to the enterprise with a glowing foreword, written in August 1917.

[iii] *Couer d"Alene* (Idaho) *Press*, March 3, 1906; E. Jackson, "The Forest Ranger," *American Forestry* (17) 1911:.447.

[iv] Fred G. Plummer, "The Forest Loafer," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 96.

[v] Anon., "The Forest Loafer," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 39. According to Guthrie's note, this poem was found tacked to the wall of a ranger station on the El Dorado national Forest in California.

[vi] Aldo Leopold, "The Tourist and the Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.) *The Forest Ranger*, 80-81.

[vii] The Poet Lorry Ate, "The Truthful Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 5. The "Poet Lorry Ate" is just one of such *nommes de plume* that appear several times in Guthrie's two volumes.

[viii] **Get**: _____, "_____," in: Guthrie (ed.) *The Forest Ranger*, __-__.

[ix] H. R. Elliott, "What Does a Forest Ranger Do?." in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 76-77.

[x] A. G. Jackson, "What the Forest Ranger Does," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 42.

[xi] Anon. "Why is a Ranger?," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 53.

[xii] J. B. Cammann, "Receipt [*sic*] for a Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 157.

[xiii] Joseph L. Brogan, "The Forest Ranger Lad," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 7.

[xiv] J. D. G., "A Ranger's Working Plan," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 57.

[xv] Aldo Leopold, "Spare Time," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 66-67.

[xvi] Leopold, "The Busy Season," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 116.

[xvii] James Edward Hungerford, "The Forest Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 56-57.

[xviii] Stanley F. Bartlett, "The Ranger Speaks," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 94.

[xix] Kenneth E. G. Land, "Forest Fire," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 1-2.

[xx] C. C. Hall, "To My Old Comrades," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger,* 122-123.

[xxi] James C. Iler, "Our Charge," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 180.

[xxii] Anon. "Planting a Tree," in: Guthrie (ed.*), Forest Fire*, 265.

[xxiii] Samuel T. Dana, "Forest Planting," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 87.

[xxiv] Jno. D. Guthrie, "The Forester (adapted)," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 263.

[xxv] J. R. Simmons, "Prospectin'," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger,* 165.

[xxvi] Stanley F. Bartlett, "Service," in: Guthrie (ed.) *Forest Fire,* 197.

[xxvii] Charles h. Shinn, "Ranger Song for the North Sierra reserve," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger,* 143-144.

[xxviii] Charles Howard Shinn, "Rode Through the Mountains a Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 243.

[xxix] Anon., "The Last Word," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger,* 174.

[xxx] Anthony Euwer, "The Red Wolves," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 34-35.

[xxxi] John C. Frolicher, "Fire," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 91.

[xxxii] Stanley F. Bartlett, "Fire Sacrifice," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 233.

[xxxiii] Aldo Leopold, "Mesa de los Angeles," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 18.

[xxxiv] W. H. Currie, "Traitors! (To an Incendiary)," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 251.

[xxxv] Arthur Chapman, "The Forest Fire Fighters," in: Guthrie (ed.*), The Forest Ranger,* 62.

[xxxvi] L. H. Pedersen, "With Shovel in Hand," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 96.

[xxxvii] Anthony Euwer, "By Scarlet Torch and Blade," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 51.

[xxxviii] Frank Winniford, "Is There an Ape-Man on Your District?," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 188.

[xxxix] F. V. Horton, "The Longlariat of Nomore Kayenne," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 186. Other well-known poems that became grist for rangers' literary efforts included various Mother Goose nursery rhymes, Kipling's "If" and "The Road to Mandalay," Longfellow's "Midnight Ride of Paul Revere," and, not surprisingly, Joyce Kilmer's brief lyric to a tree.

[xl] Anon., "The Scaler's Dream," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 139.

[xli] A. R. Ivey, "A Ranger's Joys," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger,* 60.

[xlii] Vondis E. Miller, "The Maintenance Man," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire,* 130-131.

[xliii] Anonymous, "The Ranger's Prayer," *Medford District CCC News,* Oct. 1939 (reprinted in: *Medford District CCC News,* Vol. VII, #10, 1 Sept. 1941, 4).

[xliv] The poetic inspiration of work on a fire lookout was demonstrated decades later by Beat and Zen/hipster lookout-poets such as Philip Whalen, Jack Kerouac, and Gary Snyder, who each served summer stints in northern Washington's High Cascades.

[xlv] Chart Pitt, "Men of the Crags," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 79.

[xlvi] James C. Iler, "The Lookout's Goodbye," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 103.

[xlvii] Vondis E. Miller, "The Lookout's Farewell," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 178-179.

[xlviii] A. G. Jackson, "The Forest Supervisor," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 156.

[xlix] Wallace Hutchinson, "Ranger's Billets-Doux," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 104-105.

[l] Jack Welch, "The New Forest Assistant," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 101-102.

[li] Welch, "The Easterner," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 24-25.

[lii] Anon., "The Ranger's Growl," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 119.

[liii] A Ranger's Wife, "A Forest Symposium – The Suping Supervisor," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 168-169.

[liv] Margaret Hayden, "A Forest Clerk's 'If'," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 246.

[lv] H. R. Elliott, "Beautiful Nature," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 115.

[lvi] G. F. Allen, "Save the Pieces," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 213.

[lvii] R. E. McArdle, "Hot Doggerel!," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 316.

[lviii] Scott Leavitt, "Sun River Pass," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 73-75.

[lix] A. G. Jackson, "Welcome to the Siskiyou (To the Young Son of Forest Ranger Jesse Dewitt)," in: Guthrie (ed.), Forest Fire, 137.

[lx] James H. Sizer, "The Tonto Forest," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 17.

[lxi] Charles V. Brereton, "The Arkansas Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 217.

[lxii] Anon., "The Spasm from the Shasta," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 134-135.

[lxiii] Anon. "A Quiver from the Tahoe," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 136-137.

[lxiv] Bristow Adams, "Foresters to the Front," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 171.

[lxv] W. H. S., "The Wheels of Progress," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 37.

[lxvi] J. B. Curl, "Evolution," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 166-167. The year 1925 saw the "Scopes Monkey Trial" in Dayton, Tennessee, and the term "evolution" held nation-wide currency that year.

[lxvii] Stanley F. Bartlett, "Torn," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 51.

[lxviii] Anon., "The Man with the Marking Axe," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 149.

[lxix] G. F. Allen, "The Old-Time Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 27.

[lxx] Anon., "The Pioneer Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 85.

[lxxi] John S. Byrne, "Lest We Forget," in: *The Rogue* (Rogue River NF monthly newsletter, ca. 1938; from the collection of Evelyn Byrne Williams, Jacksonville, OR). "Alforjas" refers to the pack saddles or panniers carried by a ranger's packstring of horses/mules. In 2003, Byrne's poem was shared with a large number of agency employees via the Forest Service's electronic mail system with this rhyming preface: ***"John Byrne's poem's a product of John's time, / So temper your judgment of what's said in his rhyme. / Honest and hard-working, John's ridden beyond the last hill,/ But his simple words, if you listen, speak to us still. / From his own beleaguered days of 'drought and dust,' / To*** our ***tough times of "downsize we must," / Ever since Pinchot, we've had countless critics and debates, / Much hollerin' like 'Give the Forests to the Counties and States.' / So, think of John's poem as a kind of lodestar above, / For an honorable old outfit, that many still love."***

[lxxii] Norman k. Olmstead, "The Hobo Ranger," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 71-72.

[lxxiii] W. P. Lawson, "Forest Ranger's Song," in: Guthrie (ed.), *The Forest Ranger*, 112-113.

[lxxiv] Hans N. Kleiner, "Forest Cathedrals," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 66-67.

[lxxv] R. Manley Orr, "The Douglas Firs," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 286-287.

[lxxvi] Aldo Leopold, "Piñoneros," in: Guthrie (ed.), *Forest Fire*, 152.

[lxxvii] George S. Wooding (forester, Rogue River National Forest), "The Ranger's Plea," 1973 (RRNF historic records collection).

[lxxviii] Duane Kingsley (silviculturalist, Rogue River N.F.), "I Hope That I Shall Never See Another Poem About a Tree," ca. 1967 (RRNF historic records collection).

[lxxix] From the agency's Eastern Region, comes this 2004 lament from a Forest Planner, inspired by the rhymes of children's writer, the late Dr. Seuss: ***"' I am Stan. Stan I am. And you must write a Forest Plan.' / 'But I do not like them, Stan the man. I do not like these forest plans. / I will not write it, not at all. Not in the Spring nor in the Fall.' / 'But you must plan!' is the boss's retort. "Even if we end up in court!' / 'We need a plan, a plan that's thick. A plan as heavy as a brick.' / …'I do not like to forest plan. I do not like it, Stan the man! / Would you, with a Planner's hat, write and write on habitat? / Or wax poetic what you see, for species viability?',"*** March 2003.