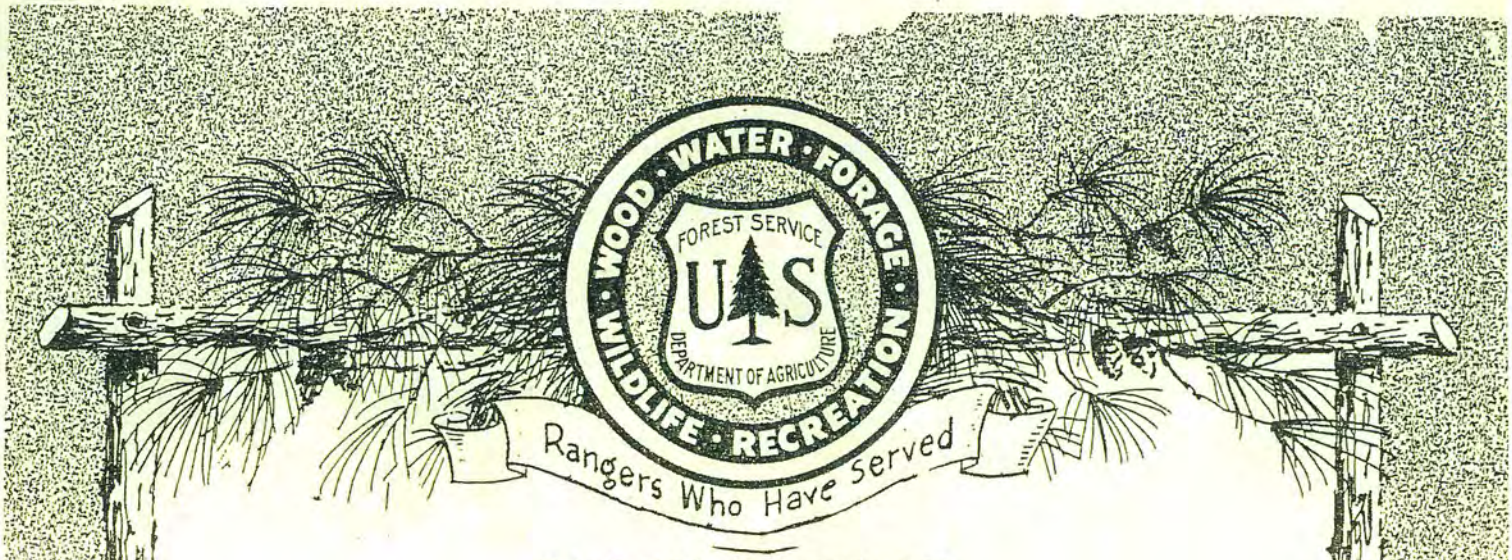
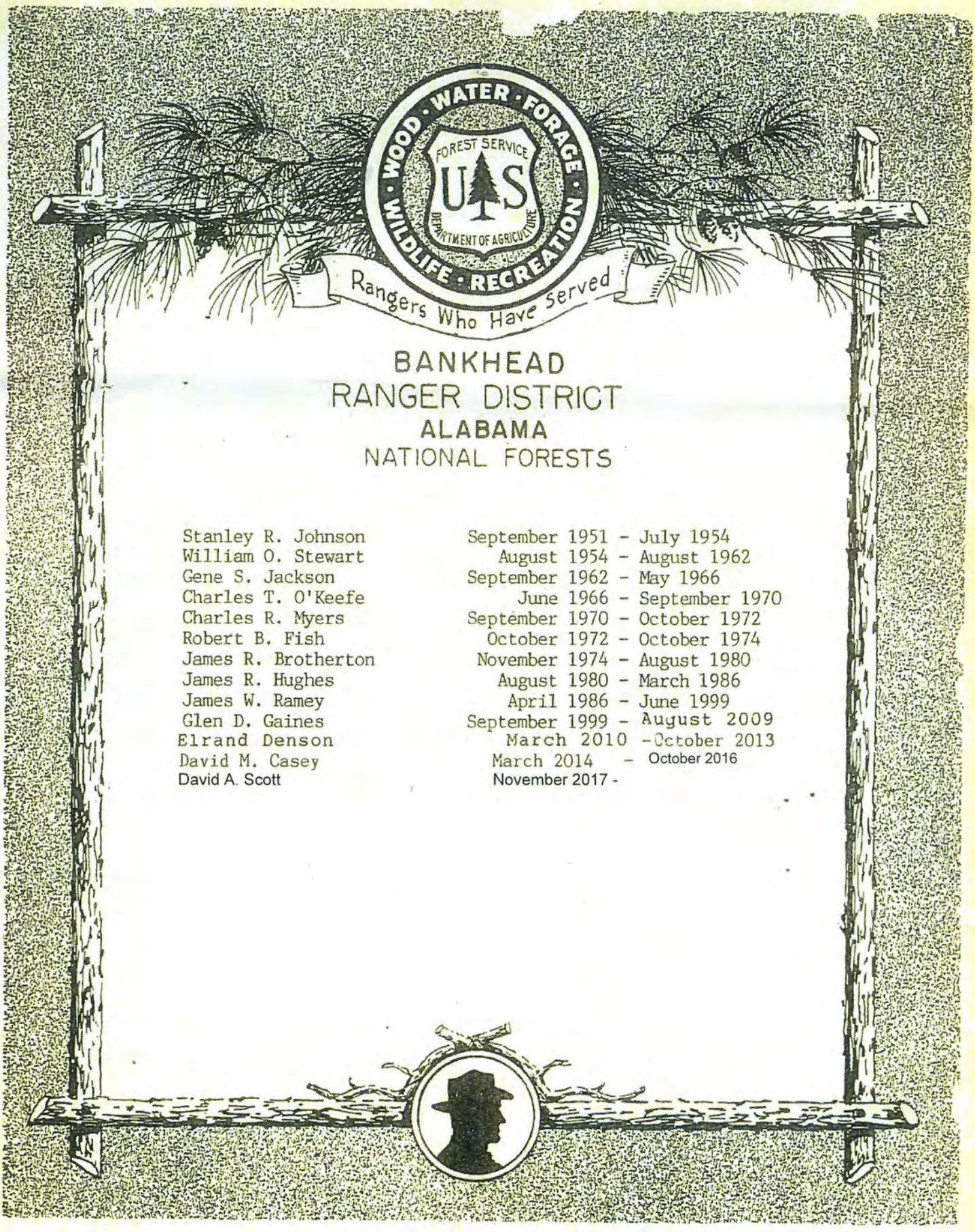


BLACK WARRIOR
RANGER DISTRICT
ALABAMA
NATIONAL FORESTS

Henry J. McDowell	April 1918 - January 1934
Fred C. Henneberger	April 1934 - February 1937
Thomas A. Wilson	March 1937 - April 1943
Fred L. Joy	May 1943 - January 1947
William V. Cranston	January 1947 - July 1952
Allen J. Logan	July 1952 - April 1956
Donald A. Pomerening	April 1956 - August 1957
Robert B. Emery	September 1957 - June 1963
Keith A. Homan	June 1963 - September 1968
William E. Bustin	September 1968 - October 1979
Stephen McCorquodale	December 1979 - October 1983

Continued on next page -

This National Forest began with the Alabama Purchase Unit, which was established by the National Forest Reservation Commission in FY 1914. On June 19, 1936, by proclamation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the National Forest was renamed the Black Warrior. On June 6, 1942 the name was changed by Act of Congress to the William B. Bankhead National Forest. The Black Warrior Ranger District was separated into two ranger districts in 1951. It became the Black Warrior and the Bankhead Ranger District. In October 1983, the two districts consolidated into one district called the Bankhead Ranger District.

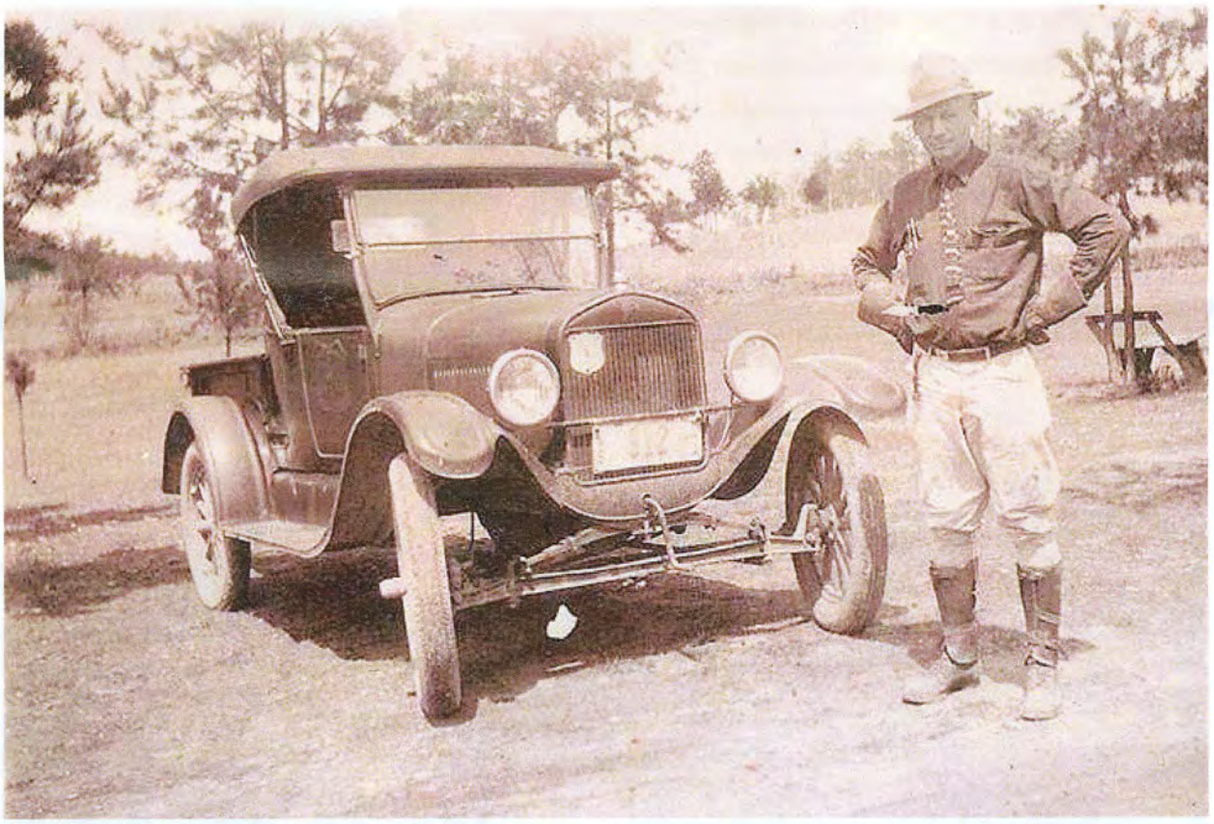


BANKHEAD
RANGER DISTRICT
ALABAMA
NATIONAL FORESTS

Stanley R. Johnson	September 1951 - July 1954
William O. Stewart	August 1954 - August 1962
Gene S. Jackson	September 1962 - May 1966
Charles T. O'Keefe	June 1966 - September 1970
Charles R. Myers	September 1970 - October 1972
Robert B. Fish	October 1972 - October 1974
James R. Brotherton	November 1974 - August 1980
James R. Hughes	August 1980 - March 1986
James W. Ramey	April 1986 - June 1999
Glen D. Gaines	September 1999 - August 2009
Elrand Denson	March 2010 - October 2013
David M. Casey	March 2014 - October 2016
David A. Scott	November 2017 -

A Brief History of the Bankhead National Forest

Robert G. Pasquill, Jr., Forest Archeologist and Historian (Retired), National Forests in Alabama

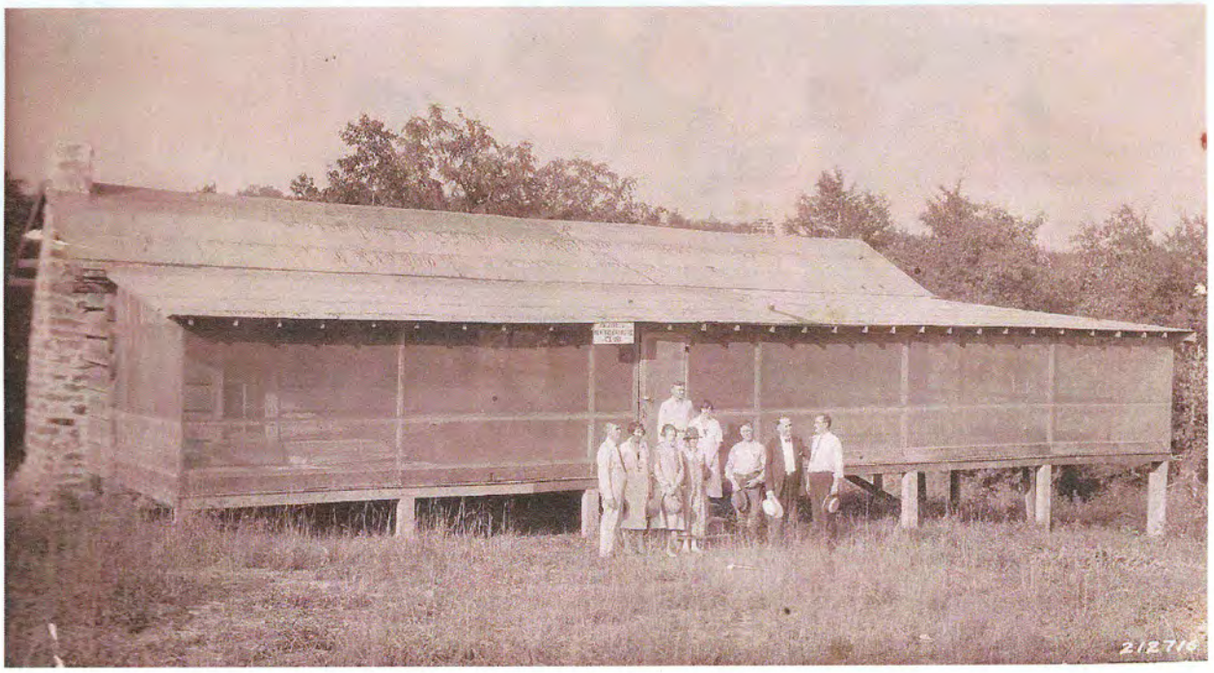


At the beginning of the 20th century, America's commercial transportation was dependent upon navigable streams and rivers. Logging practices of the 19th century had left much of the watersheds of the great waterways in the eastern United States cut-over, resulting in frequent flooding and the siltation of the streams. On March 1, 1911, the Weeks Act was passed, allowing the federal government to purchase private land to protect the headwaters of the eastern waterways. By 1913, the federal government had invested over nine million dollars to improve the locks and dams of the Tombigbee and Sipsey Rivers, creating over 400 miles of navigable waterway in Alabama. In 1913, foresters from the Yale School of Forestry came to Alabama to explore the possibility of a national forest in the headwaters of these streams in northwestern Alabama.

On February 3, 1914, the National Forest Reservation Commission authorized the "Alabama Purchase Unit." The purchase unit contained roughly 150,000 acres in Lawrence, Winston, and eastern Franklin Counties. Ninety-two percent of this timber in this area had never been cleared. There were also 9,320 acres of public domain land, that is, land still in federal government ownership. The creation of the Alabama Purchase Unit authorized the Forest Service to purchase private land within the purchase

unit area. According to R. Clifford Hall, Yale School of Forestry Class of 1908, who led the reconnaissance work in 1913, only five percent of the area was in cultivation, three percent of the land was abandoned farmland, and the rest of the area was forested.

Between 1914 and 1916, additional foresters from the Yale School of Forestry came to Alabama to conduct surveys and begin the acquisition process. These men included C.E. Beaumont, W.J. Damtoft, and W.R. Barbour. They established their offices in Haleyville. In R.C. Hall's reconnaissance report, he stated that there were several local men that would be extremely useful in identifying land owners that might be interested in selling to the federal government. Hall specifically named Joseph Jonathan Sandling as being the most important of these local men. Sandling worked for the Henderson Land and Development Company, and had intimate knowledge of the purchase area.

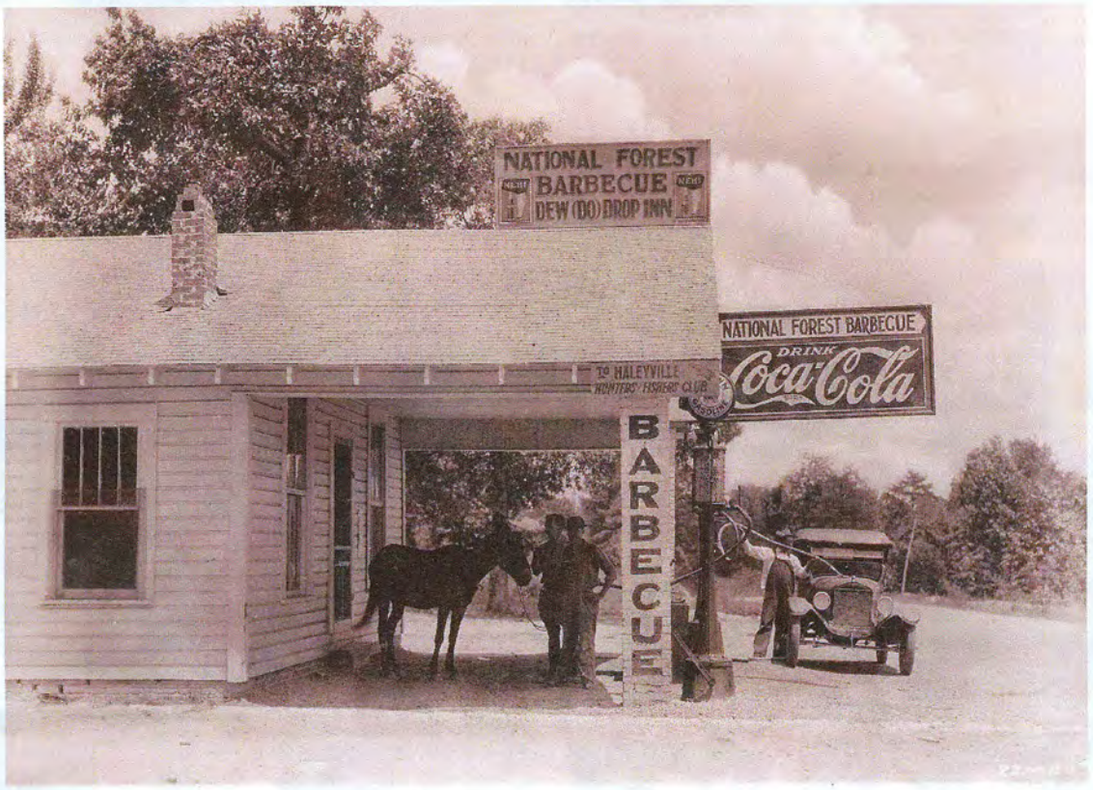


Between May and October of 1917, Loren L. Bishop, the acting Forest Supervisor of the National Forests in Florida, was put in charge of the Alabama Purchase Unit. His first priority was to develop a forest fire plan. The 1917 Forest Fire Plan for the Alabama Purchase Unit called for the hiring of one forest ranger, one or two fire guards, the building of a steel fire tower, building several tool boxes, and building several miles of telephone lines from the tower to dwellings of the fire guards. On January 15, 1918, the Alabama National Forest was created by presidential proclamation by Woodrow Wilson.

In addition to the foresters from the Yale School of Forestry, some of the other men involved in the early development of the Alabama National Forest included John C. Forney, who worked as a Field Title Attorney in land acquisition. He was located in Moulton, Alabama from April of 1917 to October of 1919. Judson S. Bohannon was the other Field Title Attorney, with an office in Double Springs,

Alabama in October of 1919. Earnest John Mead was appointed Forest Examiner in May of 1918. He replaced W.R. Barbour as Forest Examiner in Charge in January of 1919. Later, in June of 1933, he would be the Chief of Timber Management for the Cherokee and Alabama National Forests.

James David Ruble moved around in his Forest Service career. He was born in Arkansas in 1887. He worked as a ranger on the Sylamore District in Arkansas in 1911 or 1912, and resigned from the Ozark National Forest in 1914. When Ruble registered for the draft for the First World War on July 5, 1917, he listed his occupation as "forest officer" working for the national forests in Blue Ridge, Georgia. He was appointed Assistant Forest Ranger later that month for the Alabama National Forest, and was promoted to Forest Ranger for the Alabama National Forest in April of 1918. He resigned from the Alabama National Forest in July of 1918.



Silas McKinley Black was born in 1896 in Livingston, Alabama. In April of 1924, he was the watchman Eastern Tower #2 on the Alabama National Forest. In April of 1925, he transferred to Camp Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. By April of 1930, he had returned to the Alabama National Forest according to the 1930 census which documented him as a "Lookout Ranger." In May of 1933, he was the dispatcher at the Central Tower on the Alabama National Forest. He died on May 2, 1977 in Moulton, Alabama.

According to the USDA Forest Service's Service Directory of October 1920, Burley M. Lufburrow was the acting Forest Supervisor with an office in Moulton, Alabama. H.J. McDowell was in charge of the "Alabama District" with an office in Landersville.

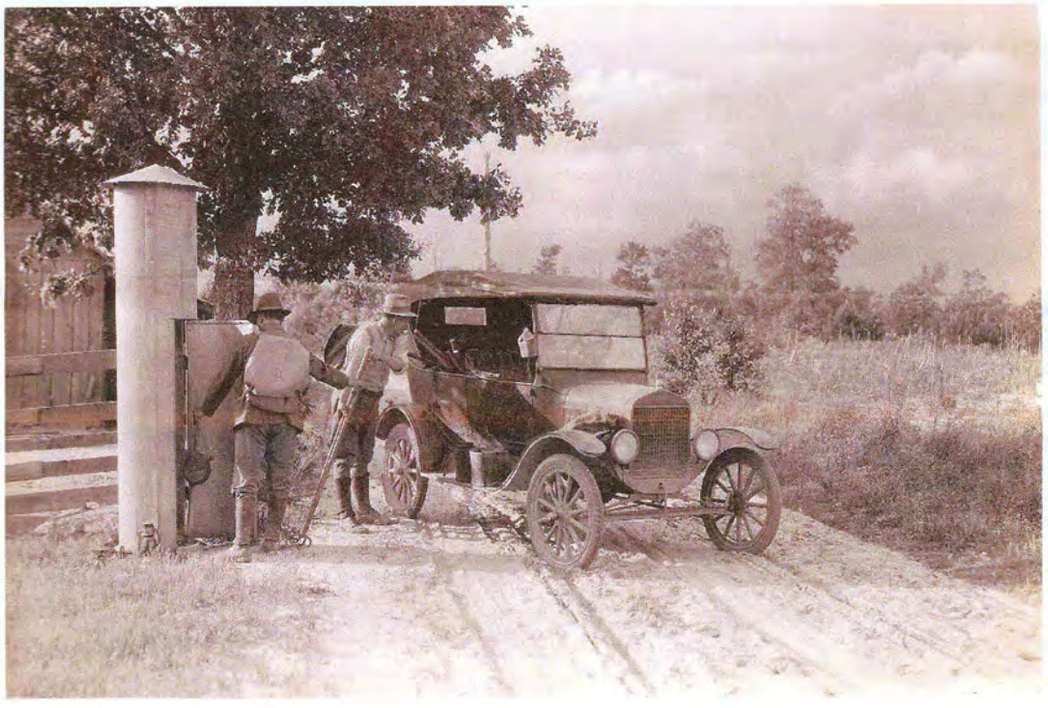
Henry Jack McDowell was born on November 6, 1884 and lived in the Pinhook Community of Lawrence County, Alabama. He began his career with the Forest Service in 1916, working on the survey crew on the Alabama Purchase Unit. He was hired as a Forest Ranger in July of 1918. In the 1920 Service Directory, the "Alabama District" was shown as being located in Landersville. This was where the post office was located. The ranger station was actually Jack McDowell's house located in McDowell Cove, several miles south of Landersville and within the national forest. Jack McDowell retired from the Forest service on May 1, 1933 at the age of 48. In April of 1935, he was appointed the head of Alabama's Fire Investigators by Governor Bibb Graves. The 1940 census listed his occupation as working as a Fire Marshall for an insurance company. Jack McDowell died on August 4, 1969.

Burley Mathew Lufburrow was born in Oliver, Georgia on January 13, 1891. He graduated from the University of Georgia in 1914. During the First World War, he served in the "Lumber Jack

Regiment." He was the Forest Supervisor for the Alabama National Forest from 1920 to 1925, and then returned to Georgia to serve as their State Forester from 1925 to 1936. Lufburrow died on October 15, 1961. He was buried in Moulton, Alabama.

The 1924 map of the Alabama National Forest shows the Forest Supervisor's Office in Moulton and the Ranger Station in McDowell Cove. The map shows that fire towers had been erected on the forest. The Eastern Tower was located between Pool and Basham Gap. The Northern Tower was located in the vicinity of Gum Pond. The Southern Tower was located south of Cranal Road in the headwaters of West Fork Caney Creek. There were four fire tool boxes placed across the forest filled with tools and supplies needed in the event of a forest fire. The 1930 map shows the addition of a fire tower at Kinlock Knob and another east of Cheatham Road, the Central Tower. By 1930, a Forest Service warehouse had been constructed east of Cheatham Knob.

On June 7, 1924, the Clarke-McNary Act was passed. The Clarke-McNary authorized the Forest Service to acquire lands beyond the headwaters of navigable streams. In addition, it made it easier for the National Forests to acquire land from private sellers within predetermined forest boundaries, enabled the Secretary of Agriculture to work with state officials to better protect forests, provided for a continuous production of timber, and facilitated cooperative work between the USDA and private land owners by distributing tree seedlings and providing forestry assistance to farmers. On July 24, 1924, *The Moulton Advertiser* reported that an additional 171,140 acres of land were to be added to the Alabama National Forest, extending its boundary to the south.



In 1924, the Forest Service began a road improvement program for not only the roads within the forest area, but also roads leading into the forest area. On January 17, 1924, *The Moulton Advertiser* reported that road between Moulton and the Forest was to be graveled. Forest Supervisor Lufburrow was securing agreements from landowners along the road to contribute labor for hauling the surfacing material from the rock crusher to the road. A road work camp had been established along the Leola Road by 1927.

In 1925, the Alabama National Forest and the Alabama Department of Game and Fisheries created the 16,000-acre Sipsey River Game Refuge. I.T. Quinn, State Commissioner of Game and Fisheries, led the coordination with the national forest to develop deer hunts and game management. In October of 1925, the first of 105 deer were released on the game sanctuary. By 1930, there were an estimated 800 deer on the refuge, and they were protected by state and federal law. In 1926, the State of Alabama released 24 wild turkeys. By 1933, the turkey population was estimated to be 2,500. In November of 1933, the first deer hunt was held on the Alabama National Forest. One thousand hunters were selected to harvest 1,000 male deer. Sixteen bucks eight does were killed. There was no deer hunt organized for 1934.

In 1926, local sportsmen created the Haleyville Hunters and Fishers Club, and built a cabin on five acres of rented land near the present-day Sipsey Bridge on Cranal Road. The club promoted hunting and fishing sportsmanship and the Alabama National Forest. In April of 1932, the club was considering expanding to allow members from other towns. The club house was lost to fire in February of 1933. The cause of the fire was never reported.

In June of 1928, Charles A. Bullock, Superintendent of the Federal Fish Hatchery at Cold Springs, Georgia, began a survey of the streams on the Alabama National Forest. The first consignment of stocked fish had been delivered to the creeks and streams in May of 1927. Bullock's survey was to determine why the stock fish had failed to reproduce and to determine the best species for the forest. On August 28, 1930, *The Moulton Advertiser* reported that bass and bream were to be stocked on the forest, and forest creeks and streams would be closed to fishing for the next two years to allow the young fish to become established.

By the late 1920s more people were using the Alabama National Forest for recreation. The Haleyville Hunters and Fishers Club had regular outings. In addition, in 1927 a one-acre area was cleared at Kinlock Springs for a camp site with a garbage pit and two latrines. The 4-H Club boys from Franklin, Lawrence and Colbert counties rented the camping area in 1928. For those wanting to picnic on the Forest, the "National Forest Barbeque Dew Drop Inn" at Rabbit Town sold everything needed for an outing. They advertised themselves as the "Gateway to the National Forest."

Between 1929 and 1934, the Alabama National Forest was supervised out of the Cherokee National Forest, headquartered in Athens, Tennessee. In 1929, the first timber management plan was written for the Alabama National Forest. It called for three four-month surveys over the next three years. The plan was signed by Clinton G. Smith, Forest Supervisor of the Cherokee National Forest on March 6, 1929.

The creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps in March of 1933 was a great boost to the development of the Alabama National Forest. The first three CCC camps in Alabama were established

on the Alabama National Forest in May of 1933. Company 463, consisting of "junior" enrollees from northern Alabama counties, established "Camp Joe Wheeler" (F-1) on May 26th at Cheatham Knob. The work project consisted of the construction of roads, bridges, fire towers, firebreaks, and telephone lines, and stream improvement. Company 464, consisting of "junior" enrollees mostly from Birmingham, spent a month at Camp F-1 at Cheatham Knob before establishing "Camp Nathan B. Forrest" (F-2) fourteen miles deeper into the Forest. Their work project was road construction, timber stand improvement, road and telephone line maintenance, construction of a fire tower and two bridges, and construction of 26 miles of firebreaks. Company 1403, consisting of enrollees from south Alabama, established "Camp Hubbard" at Kinlock Springs on May 28, 1933. Their work project consisted of road construction and maintenance, truck trail and telephone line construction, bridge construction, timber stand improvement, fighting forest fires, and stream improvement.

In May of 1933, Henry Jack McDowell retired from the Forest Service. The new District Ranger's Office was established at Decatur, Alabama, with Fred C. Henneberger as the District Ranger. The Forest Supervisor was Sam R. Broadbent, Yale School of Forestry Class of 1922, from the Cherokee National Forests, headquartered in Athens, Tennessee. Henneberger was a graduate of the Pennsylvania State School of Forestry, Class of 1924. In November of 1933, the Alabama National Forest was expanded again, acquiring another 60 square miles east of Double Springs.

In October of 1934, after a year and a half of suffering from an adequate supply of water, the camp at Cheatham Knob was abandoned. Company 463 transferred to Camp F-4 at Grayson. Camp F-4 had been established by Company 258 on October 29, 1933 by "junior" enrollees from New York and New Jersey who had spent the summer working in Idaho. Company 463 changed the original name of Camp F-4, "Camp New Yorker," to Camp Collier. The work project at Camp F-4 was similar to the

previous CCC camps in the Alabama National Forest. At this time, Company 464 was transferred to Oxford, Mississippi.

In April of 1935, a cadre of enrollees from Company 463 established "Camp Riverside" (F-5) located on the east shore of the Sipsey Fork, south of present-day Highway 278. Company 3476, originally consisting of "junior" enrollees from Alabama and Georgia, had the camp finished by July 1, 1935. Their work project covered the southern portion of the Forest. They developed the Natural Bridge Recreation Area, built the dam that created Brushy Lake, and developed the Sipsey Recreation Area.

On June 19, 1936, the Alabama National Forest was renamed the Black Warrior National Forest by proclamation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The boundary of the Forest was once more extended to the south nearly doubling the Forest in size. From this expansion, another 138,000 acres were purchased and 20,000 acres of public domain land were added to the National Forest. On June 6, 1942, the Black Warrior National Forest was changed to the William B. Bankhead National Forest by an act of Congress, honoring the former member of the U.S House of Representatives who had passed away on September 15, 1940 while still in office.