

Granddaughter of

Mrs. Schmitt's Garden Club Work Leads to Tree-Saving Activity

By Margaret March-Mount

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Every day is Arbor Day to Mrs. Max J. Schmitt, of Wauwatosa (Milwaukee), Wisconsin, though she sometimes longs for "a good old-fashioned Monday washday," without a lecture, luncheon, film, article, or birdhouse contest scheduled.

Mrs. Schmitt, née Hiles, is the granddaughter of a Wisconsin lumberman, who did his share of "cleaning out some of the State's finest timber." "But," she explains, "that was at a time when one could plead a belief that timber never would give out. Timberland owners of today know better." It is to them Mrs. Schmitt is looking for a long-range policy.

Daughter of civic-minded parents, Mrs. Schmitt found her cause 10 years ago while directing Junior Garden Clubs. She is now, and has been for more than one term, State Conservation Chairman of the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation. She goes in for forest as well as flower arrangement. One of the educational projects is the giving of scholarships to young students who have the stuff of which foresters are made, but are unable to pay for the technical courses required by forestry schools.

Arousing Public Interest

Mrs. Schmitt is also foster-mother to the prewar "penny-pine-project," which caught the imagination (and pennies, dimes and dollars) of youngsters from Pago Pago to Puget Sound, and which has not been officially restored by the Federal Government's Forest Service.

She is executive secretary of the brief but pungent periodical "Forests," dedicated to the production of wood without waste,—"selective logging" to the technician. Among "Forests" directors are Earle H. Clapp, formerly acting chief of the U. S. Forest Service, Washington, D. C., Wm. J. P. Aberg, Madison, Wis., and Mrs. Edward LaBudde, Milwaukee, Wis. The late Gifford Pinchot was also a director.

But this conservation apostle's activities are not confined to paper. As chairman of the Milwaukee County Conservation Alliance, she was at its North Woods summer camp around Eagle River, Wis., Aug. 17 to 23, sharing her background with anyone over 13 who was interested to become a conservation leader.

Land and Water Stories

Out in the woods, two sessions were held each day, where land and water told their own story. Untrained in technical phrases, she diligently reads the publications put out by forest authorities. But she gets her knowledge not so much from printed books as from running brooks and "tongues of trees."

Last year the group toured Nicolet National Forest and studied tree growth, the relation of trees and vegetation to wild life, and other such important forest

phases. At this school in the woods, state and federal foresters made up a large part of the field faculty.

The program this year included educational trips which she hoped would eventually help to shove Wisconsin up toward the place it held when it led the country in lumbering 40 years ago, before the great pine and hemlock forests were tragically exhausted through excessive exploitation.

Family All Co-operative

Fortunately, daughter Maxine, a sophomore at Milwaukee State Teachers' College, and 17-year-old John, lend filial support, to Mrs. Schmitt's efforts; and her husband, Max J. Schmitt, partner in a blueprinting company, takes care of postage and telephone bills, including not infrequent long-distance tolls. Recently swift action was necessary to save a venerable American chestnut tree at Whitewater, Wis.

A plane trip to the National Capitol in such a cause could well use up a full cost budget.

Though her desk is in her own home, Mrs. Schmitt's interests go far. She is devoted to birds, bees, flowers and trees in Canada, Kansas, and Korea. Early in the summer, by request of the chief U. S. Forester in Korea, she sent films to show the little Koreans some of the better phases of American forestry.

She has also been requested by Nam Dong Soon, head of the Korean Forestry Service, who has read some of her writings, to send an autographed photograph, that Koreans may see what manner of husky Amazon is dividing her time between cooking, canning, baking, sewing, sweeping, hoeing, and the welfare of her country's woods, waters, and wild life.

Solicits Women's Support

Given a chance to serve the common good with their free time at brand-new forest activities, Mrs. Schmitt says women function effectively. She believes the forests should have the interest of women. As to getting trees into the ground, women's nimbler fingers outdo the men's in transplanting seedlings from nurseries to tractor furrows.

The war drafted women into hitherto strange occupations, but it temporarily set them back in forestry. It is hoped that a peacetime economy will welcome women to wider forest horizons, where they will be no less charming because they are turning their talents to the protection of raw resources.