

John F. Dahlberg
1145 Apache Trail
Brookfield, WI 53005
(414) 786-8933

THORNAPPLE COUNTRY

E. M. Dahlberg

Introduction

This volume is an assortment of excerpts from my notes and memories of my experiences and mistakes during twenty-three years of semiprofessional landscape gardening in and around Ladysmith in north central Wisconsin. The reader of this somewhat biographical chronicle of landscaping will need to suspend the conventional limitation of the word landscape as applied to proper gardening and accept the more liberal outdoor meaning of the term as used here.

I kept a sort of diary of the happenings and transactions. In my personal files I labeled these diaries "Chips from the Wood Lots" and "Cuttings from the Nurseries." This rather woody book grew from these "chips" and "cuttings."

By profession I am a schoolmaster. The part time character of this profession affords embarrassing intervals of unemployment in periods of from one to thirteen weeks. This professional unemployment totaling sixteen weeks each calendar year was responsible for my choice of a partially remunerative hobby. My hobby is a combination of wood chopping and plant propagation.

Northern Wisconsin has changed during my years here. A thriving dairy industry has now largely displaced the lumbering. Power dams have replaced the logging dams on the Flambeau River, and kilowatts pulsate over high lines to distant points where thousands of consumers receive light and heat from the ceaseless energy of this ancient watercourse which perhaps few of them have ever seen.

The home of the author during the twenty years recorded in this chronicle of wood lots and rivers has been a small cottage in Ladysmith. This cottage is typical of its occupant, being to most people a backward affair. The back door and kitchen are toward the street and the

front and living rooms look out over the Flambeau River. The front lawn breaks off abruptly into a natural bank of pin cherry, basswoods, white birches and red elderberry bushes which drops at a forty-five degree slope to the river some thirty feet below.

Going west and north by the zigzag section line roads, one comes to the Thornapple River at a point about five miles northwest of Ladysmith. This small stream, like the greater Flambeau, was once the seasonal highway for millions of feet of timber on its way to Chippewa Falls and other mill towns. Here we built the cottage we call Slabshack.

About half way between the cottage on the Thornapple and the residence on the Flambeau are two other properties. One is a forty acre cedar and balsam swamp bisected by a railroad and the other three parcels of land consisting of two, three, and twenty-eight acres collectively known as the nursery.

Addison said in the Spectator's account of himself, "I have observed that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of a like nature that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author."

I am not so confident as Addison was of my reader's interest in these personal matters. It is perhaps sufficient to say that this is the chronicle of a schoolmaster's hobby and some of his meditations on the twentieth century scene. The color of the author is the shade of white that originates from Sweden and Denmark and there has been but one wife.

Dittlemeyer's Corner

*Come my tan-faced children
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? Have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers? O pioneers?*

-Walt Whitman

The geographical setting for this narrative is the State of Wisconsin, especially the northern area of woods and water. The beginning, at the end of the nineteenth century, is vague and indefinite since I lacked keen interest in my geographical surroundings in my first decade of existence. I am sure, however, that my exploratory talent was precocious within the limits of my orbit.

Many interesting things happened to me growing up on the family farm. When I was learning to walk, my sister who was tending to me took a little time off to visit with a neighbor who was hauling a load of hay. I somehow managed to get under the wagon and my foot was so badly injured that it was several months before I took up the walking problem again.

As soon as I was able to get around, I practiced climbing a rail fence. It was reinforced on the other side with barbed wire to prevent a wise old horse from pushing the fence over. The scar over my right cheek, the semicolon under my left eye, and the funny distortion of my right nostril are the marks acquired when I made my descent into the horse pasture.

In the middle west, most of the children who were born a decade before or after the turn of the century were children of immigrants. In Wisconsin these were chiefly of northern European nationalities. We were reared under the wholesome discipline of thrift, industry and honesty. The many simple influences of the first ten years of my life have never wholly disappeared. I have often thought how the economic patterns of nineteenth century Sweden and Denmark were transplanted by my parents to our Clark County farm. Coming from a country where fuel was always scarce, they practiced the same thrifty salvage of roots, knots and branches in a region of surplus wood. The perennial pursuit of fuel was never irksome. On the

contrary, it was fascinating. Making wood with axe, cross-cut saw and splitting maul, or "bucking" pine roots and hauling "stone-boat" loads of "pine pins" off the new plowing were regular chores. I still love to salvage wood for my fireplace with my own axe in my own wood lot.

Nothing in the written history of America is further from the truth than the persistent theme of historians implying that the early pioneers suffered endless privation and hardship. Certainly no other segment of American life has ever achieved the self-sufficiency, security and satisfaction that was known to the pioneer people of the Lake States. Privation and hardships were virtually unknown in the average pioneer community. There was freedom from want and freedom from fear. No period in our history has been so free and secure as those days on the homesteads of middle western pioneers' farms.

Our home on Flour Barrel Hill had a basement filled with potatoes, rutabagas, onions, cabbages, pumpkins and many other vegetables for as long as they would keep in storage. Quantities of wild fruits, especially raspberries and blackberries, supplemented dried fruits.

I was born in the old house, a masterpiece of Swedish woodwork made of white pine timbers squared and dovetailed. My first recollection of the old house was of a combined carpenter and blacksmith shop in one end and a granary at the other end. Even then the new house was being built.

The fall butchering was a day to remember. A German neighbor, an experienced butcher and sausage maker, was engaged each fall for a full day--that is to say from sunrise until the job was finished late in the night. Mr. Hensel was busy for several weeks on a circuit through the German and Scandinavian community.

A huge pile of pine roots and knots was on hand for boiling the scalding water in which to dump the pigs. Pork, beef and mutton enough to last the family through the winter was prepared in this one day operation, and there was a job for everyone. By bedtime, long poles in the unfinished upstairs of the new house were hung with scores of sausage rings, as many kinds as could be made from the edible parts of pigs and steers.

Never since leaving the farm in 1910 have I tasted that ambrosia of animal food called klub. Klub could be had for only a few weeks each year. It was made from the blood of freshly butchered animals. The blood was caught in a pan and stirred while salt was added to prevent thickening. Dumplings were made by adding other ingredients. Served with butter or sliced and fried with bacon, this dish surpasses every other food of animal origin that I have ever eaten. The few people with whom I have discussed this seemed horrified at the thought that anyone would eat something made of blood. We washed many yard of intestines on butchering day to make cases for the sausages, but I learned not to talk about that either.

I was never sure of the word klub; I had never seen it written. My mother pronounced it with the long U sound. To my surprise, I recently found klub in a cookbook just as I have spelled it. However, I fear I shall never have the pleasure of eating klub again. Today our meat seems to be obtained without bloodshed.

My second preference in animal food was smoked ham. When the spring breakup came in April, the hams that still hung from the beams in the old house were moved to the smoke house. My job was to keep a smoke of birch wood around the clock. We fired entirely with yellow birch. I have heard that hickory is more desirable, but we had no hickory. I started sampling hams about the time they thawed out. Through the several weeks of slow smoke, I took several samples daily always from the side of the ham that could not be easily observed from the door. I am sure now that my parents were aware of my indulgence and probably amused by it.

Portions of the pig not appropriate for smoking were packed in a brine barrel to be available through the months until the next butchering day. This was supplemented with fresh poultry, mutton and veal. The only refrigeration was the well in which fresh meat could be lowered forty or fifty feet to a temperature zone that provided proper cooling.

In 1946 I revisited my childhood home in Clark County. The old house was gone. The new house stood sturdily on the field stone foundation that my father laid in the late 1880s. The barn of framed timbers and lumber sawed from the wood lot was changed only by the replacement of the wood shingles with composition roofing.

The wood lot on the west forty that had been so carefully managed was gone. I had hunted rabbits and partridges and picked ground pine for the Christmas season there. Now it was a large field of thin grass extending to other fields where other wood lots had joined ours. Here was left no refuge for any wild thing. The place could not be found where Otto Olson and I had a little log cabin under the hemlocks beside the creek. The hemlocks were gone, the creek was gone. Only a dry run lay where I had caught mink and muskrats and fished chubs in my early teens.

Dittlemeyer's Corner, so named because it was at a corner of the Dittlemeyer farm, had been a cherished spot in the woods. Here the community youth gathered around a bonfire, told tall tales and hurried home by nine o'clock. I would have to look at Dittlemeyer's Corner! It had become the community cemetery. Nearly all the names on the markers were familiar. They were the pioneers from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Germany who first settled this portion of Clark County in Wisconsin. But there were names too of many of my generation, boys and girls with whom I had attended the country school, with whom I had played hide-and-seek and run-sheep-run over these very acres.

Seeing their names reminded me of the great pine stump. We called it a stump, though it was much more than that. It was a fifteen or eighteen foot stub of an old tree that had been broken in a storm at least a half century earlier. It had undergone the peculiar deterioration common to white pine--decay from within. All that remained of the giant tree was a hollow bole with a large oval opening about ten feet up. A smaller opening near the base was no doubt the work of fire and decay aided by porcupines. It stood close to the road and just inside

Olson's pasture fence line; thus it was spared for a time by builders of roads and fences. The entrance at the base was not visible from the road. We had chipped notches by which we could climb to the very top. Even our parents were not aware of the goings on in the pine stump.

Everyone for miles around knew the pine stump as a landmark. Strangers were directed to places on the north road or side roads according to the location in reference to the stump. But, beside the porcupines, only Otto Olson, Ervin Dittlemeyer and I knew the secrets of its inner chamber.

It was a sad day among the small fry on Flour Barrel Hill when the authorities decided to remove the stump for better grading and drainage. It had been our post office where we left secret messages for each other, a fort from which fierce snow battles were lost or won, even a hideout on occasions when some onerous task threatened to interrupt our plans.

I stood a moment by the grave of Otto Olson, remembering the creek that used to be and the little log cabin under the hemlocks and the great pine stump.

Getting an Education

Sow an act, and you reap a habit. Sow a habit, and you reap a character. Sow a character, and you reap a destiny.

-Charles Reade

Many of us remember much more detail about the extracurricular things in our secondary education than we do about the courses of study in which we were enrolled. My own eight years of formal education after the eighth grade were liberal to say the least. Of my two years in Colby High School, I clearly recall *Silas Marner* and some of the pictures in the geography book. The extracurricular activities at that time were limited to class plays and literary societies; athletics in small towns were just beginning to enter the interscholastic stage. In the spring of my second year, I played the part of a school board member in the senior class play, a comedy about the burning of a school house. (The cast was bigger than the class; that's how I got in.) I had to make one momentous pronouncement in the last act. "I will spend every dollar of my fortune in ascertaining the perpetrators of this atrocious crime." Several years later I learned the full meaning of my extravagant commitment.

I was the only member of our eighth grade class who had gone away to high school. Attendance at Colby High School involved either arrangements for room and board or housekeeping arrangements where we could prepare our own meals. Three of us from three different rural schools rented a small two-room house on the edge of town. Each week we brought supplies of vegetables, meat, baked beans and loaves of homemade bread to last from Monday to Friday. The trip was made by train. Fuel wood was hauled overland by horse power. Our fathers took turns keeping us in wood.

The autumn term of my third year was interrupted by the illness of my sister who had to be taken to the Marshfield hospital. My parents were required to be near her for some time. I was left in charge of sixteen cows and other livestock. It was over a month before I could

have returned to school. I elected not to do so for fear of failing geometry which was already a vague confusion of sines, co-tangents and hypotenuse. This could easily have been the end of my formal education.

After thirty years of labor carving a fine farm out of the raw wilderness, my father realized that no one of his family was interested in taking over when he would have to leave off. So in the summer of 1908 he sold the farm.

My parents planned to return to Salem, Massachusetts where they had lived before coming to Wisconsin. After revisiting Curtiss I understood their shock at the changes they observed in Salem. The house where my oldest brother was born had been in a Scandinavian community. It was now one of a score of neglected rental properties. After a fortnight spent in exploring the possibilities of little places like Danvers, Lynnfield, and Swampscott, we relabeled our cumbersome baggage and bade goodbye to my cousin Charles Ebsen who had feasted us lavishly on seafood at his resort on the Salem Willows.

My recollections of the Massachusetts fortnight include the inspection of numerous earthen defenses near Salem. I was disappointed at not finding any native son who could tell us of their historical significance. At Marblehead we paused briefly before the summer residence of President Taft. No doubt among the boys we saw on the lawn that day was one named Robert.

Our destination on the return trip was Cherry Valley, a small town on the Kishwaukee River in north Illinois where my father's brother lived. Two experiences in Cherry Valley had a lasting influence on my way of life. First, by accident of employment, I acquired a lifelong avocational interest in horticulture. The other experience was a personal decision that seems now to have set a pattern for my life, an avoidance of all unnatural bigness. Intolerance for big cities, big schools, big commercialism. This phobia, however, seems to dissolve whenever I cross the line between the artificial and the natural. I have never seen a mountain, lake, river or tree that seemed too big.

At Cherry Valley my father purchased an acre of an old nursery property that was being sold in acre lots. Here we built a huge home completely out of keeping with my father's diminishing family and his advancing age. I procured seasonal employment in Hall's Nursery and learned the fundamentals of propagation, pruning, and general business practice under the kindly direction of the aged proprietor. This practical knowledge later enabled me to establish an enjoyable and profitable avocation which in turn has considerably relieved the traditional indigence of the "poor school teacher."

In September I entered the little high school at Cherry Valley. This three room establishment housed three teachers and about fifty students. Before the Christmas recess school officials announced that the junior and senior classes would be transported to Rockford beginning the second semester. This announcement aroused my anti-bigness phobia and prompted a quick decision to forego the Rockford opportunity and to enroll instead at Northland Academy, a small denominational school at Ashland, Wisconsin on Lake Superior.

Having chosen this course, I was obliged to earn most of my way since I had forfeited the benefits of free high school available at Rockford. At Northland the classes averaged between ten and fifteen. My class of 1911 had twelve graduates. Like most academies in the early private schools, Northland was gradually becoming a college. The first college class of three men were in their third year in September 1911. Staying at Northland offered a simple transition from academy to college. This I did for the freshman and sophomore years.

Northland at that time was largely a self-supporting institution. All janitorial work was done by the boys; all dormitory and kitchen work at Dill Hall was done by the girls. A campus farm employed crews of students during the summer to raise vegetables for the dormitory and fodder for the campus cows that furnished milk for the Dill Hall kitchen. Here was an institution after my own heart, almost as self-sustaining as the old farm at Curtiss. Even some small industries operated on the campus: manufacture of overalls, brooms, and cement blocks and a small craft shop where students worked in wood and copper. Best of all, there was a college wood lot. This was a quarter section of cutover land at Cayuga, thirty miles south of Ashland.

At the Cayuga woods some small camp buildings had been left by the jobber who had logged it--a bunkhouse, cook shanty and horse barn. During the Christmas and summer vacations we "packed off" to the Cayuga woods to cut cordwood for the Academy furnaces. Our crew on these occasions was made up of about half boys from rural Wisconsin and Minnesota who were experienced woodsmen and half boys from around Boston who didn't even know the names of the tools they were expected to use. The Boston boys, some of them unaccustomed to labor of any kind, became the victims of shabby cavil. One of them, the cook, lost an important part of a thumb while cutting kindling. We hadn't thought of that hazard in connection with cooking.

At this distance in years from the Cayuga Camp, recalling whether an incident took place in summer or winter is sometimes difficult. I know, however, that we were using the bunkhouse at the time of the bear in the cook shanty. We camped in a tent during the summer and used the bunkhouse on Christmas vacations, so the time must have been midwinter. Ben Johnson thought up this prank while we were sitting around the box stove after supper and Gemme was cleaning up in the cook shanty. Upon Gemme's return to the bunk house, Ben reported having seen indications that a large bear was prowling about the camp. He predicted that it would sooner or later raid the kitchen, which, according to Ben, was standard conduct for Wisconsin bears. That evening when we made the necessary trip to the airy latrine, Ben took much more time than was customary while we talked noisily in the bunk house so Gemme would not hear any sounds of pots and pans in the cook shanty. A 12 gauge shotgun shell was surreptitiously relieved of its shot in case Gemme should want a gun in the morning.

There was more than the ordinary snoring in the dark when Gemme got up to prepare breakfast. As he left the bunkhouse, a cautious clanking of pots and pans was heard in the cook shanty. Then, a terrible clatter, as if the whole shanty would come down. The bunkhouse door flew open. Gemme rushed in and pulled it shut after him. He didn't ask for the gun, he didn't say anything. I suspect he had caught a glimpse of some binder twine between the buildings and now that he was safe behind the closed door the situation was becoming clear to him.

After a tense moment everybody laughed. Of course, we knew that bears don't raid kitchens on sub-zero nights; perhaps Gemme knew it too. After that we had some small helpings of gauze and adhesive tape served in our pancakes for a few breakfasts, but no casualties resulted from the bear incident in the cook shanty.

We who made cordwood at Cayuga for the college furnaces are proud today of our part in the early history of the college on Chequamegon Bay. Our pioneer experience in the wood lot is permanently commemorated in the college seal which is made from a snapshot taken at Cayuga camp of Bob and Brinks working against a background of dense evergreen. The inscription reads, "A Highway Shall Be There."

In June 1913 when Northland College conferred its first degrees, several of us in the class of 1915 dropped out to finish at older institutions. Felix Gustafson transferred to the University of Wisconsin. I also considered Madison, but in the end decided to enter Beloit College, doubtless under the same inner compulsion that made me elect Northland Academy in preference to Rockford High School.

During my two years at Beloit, I earned and learned as I did at Northland, but the jobs were altogether different. My apprenticeship in the Chapin Hall kitchen, like that of James Hall at Grinnell, was mostly potato peeling. My off campus jobs provided more varied experiences. I washed windows for the mayor's wife--twice. I didn't get the windows clean enough the first time. I assisted a lady and her daughter who manufactured fine butterscotch candies in their home. I did a little house work. When it was in season, I cashed in handsomely (thirty cents an hour) on my knowledge of landscape work, planting and pruning trees and shrubs on the campus and on private grounds.

At Beloit the chance to explore in woods and stream was limited. The Rock River was dammed at every possible dam site and polluted by many cities. I had a canoe at the boat house above the dam. I enjoyed paddling up to Big Hill, a natural piece of landscape not yet spoiled

by commercial recreation in 1913. A year later it became a ski resort, to the distress of the president and faculty who were shocked by reports that students had attended a tournament on a Sunday.

In the fall of my senior year I discovered a colony of muskrats in a slough near the Fairbanks Morse factory north of Beloit. This seemed like a good chance to pick up some easy money by trapping from a canoe trap line. A license cost only a dollar and, to my surprise, there were no restrictions on trapping within the city limits. In less than three weeks, I caught one hundred and six muskrats. I paddled upstream before dawn each morning and picked up my catch. Then I would paddle out in midstream where the current would take me back while I skinned the muskrats and dropped the carcasses in the river. This disposal was not good conservation, but there was no place for skinning and disposing of muskrats at Chapin Hall. I tried to convince our matron that these rodents were perfectly good to eat and in fact were being sold as "swamp rabbits" at that time, but she would have none of that. The pelts were stretched over shingles and hung up to dry in the attic of Chapin Hall. If the odor annoyed any of my house mates, they were most charitable about it; I never heard a sniff from any of them.

One embarrassing incident came out of the muskrat project. *The Milwaukee Journal* published an account of my trapping under my picture with the caption, "Beloit Senior Skinning His Way Through College." Clippings of this item came in my mail from Ashland, Curtiss, Colby, and Cherry Valley. Regrettably, the article came to my mother's attention. She was sorely embarrassed and considered the report a humiliating reproach. She failed to see anything funny about "skinning my way through college."

My Beloit years were enriched by association with men like Dr. Collie, John Pitt Dean, and President Edward Dwight Eaton of distinguished ancestry and many classmates who have since attained eminence in arts and science, industry and statesmanship.

Beginning Teaching and Marriage

All sensible people are selfish, and nature is tugging at every contract to make the terms of it fair.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

In 1915 a college graduate who didn't have a rich uncle or a family business to fall back on taught school. Having majored in English, I supposed that I would teach English. Among the superintendents who came to Beloit to interview candidates was Mr. Toby of Wausau. He seemed to think I would be a first rate risk to teach commercial geography and general science, but my conscience would not let me teach subjects in which I was wholly unprepared. I took a job offered by Superintendent Edward Light of Harvard, Illinois based on my application to teach English. On opening day I found myself in charge of classes in general science, commercial geography and one section of freshman English. Also, I was to coach football, basketball and track.

The year ended in a blaze of glory with Harvard winning the McHenry County track and field meet by taking over half the points in a triangular contest. Beloit was host that year to an interstate high school invitational meet. Inflated by the victory at McHenry, I took a half dozen boys to Beloit. I secretly counted on my pole vaulter who had done over ten feet in the county meet. I had not taken into account two boys from Oregon, Illinois by the names of Loomis and Landon. My vaulter followed the competition up to ten feet six. I have forgotten now whether the winner was Loomis or Landon, but when the crowd called for an exhibition jump, the boy easily cleared the bar at twelve feet. He refused to go higher because he still had other events to do. My Harvard track squad must have told their sons and grandsons of the track meet at Beloit in which they met Loomis and Landon who were winners in their events at Antwerp in the 1918 Olympic games.

My athletics success at Harvard impressed some of the neighboring schools. An offer came from Marengo to teach and coach though no question was asked concerning my major preparation. Even in 1916 athletics was beginning to overshadow the curriculum.

My decision to go to Marengo was influenced by the fact that I had an appointment in Crystal Falls, Michigan on June 12 to marry Stella Johnson whom I had met at Northland. We planned to live with my parents in their big house at Cherry Valley. I would commute via "interurban" to Marengo, a distance of nearly twenty miles.

The years at Beloit and in northern Illinois, though rich in many ways, were years of yearning for the wild woods and white water of the north. In our plans for the future, Stella and I had thought of purchasing a place on a northern river where we could camp on our summer vacations. In keeping with this plan, I made a trip to Ladysmith in April and purchased forty acres of wild cutover on the Thornapple River. This land was below the fork of the Little Thornapple and over a mile from the nearest road. The salary I had earned at Harvard was \$750 for a ten month term. This left something over board and room, since there were no income tax deductions, no dues for local, state and federal teachers' organizations, no retirement withholding, and no insurance. The forty acres cost \$640; I made a down payment of \$200. The next several years I never got ahead of the interest and taxes on this extravagant investment.

Our marriage took place at the home of Stella's parents. The local paper reported as follows on this important day in our lives: "The young couple will go to their summer home in Wisconsin for their honeymoon and then to Illinois where Mr. Dahlberg has accepted a desirable teaching position near his home."

The summer home was to be a borrowed tent! The desirable teaching position turned out to have certain drawbacks, but we were embarked on a long and very successful marriage.

Honeymoon on the Thornapple

*The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven--
All's right with the world!*

-Robert Browning

After the wedding Stella and I took a train to Ladysmith, the closest rail station to our recently acquired forty acres on the Thornapple River. The trip was not the greatest way to spend one's wedding night.

We arrived early the next morning. By noon we had located and hired the horse-drawn dray that would take us the four or five miles to the bridge over the Thornapple River some miles above our property. We needed the dray to haul the second-hand canoe and the tent which I had shipped to Ladysmith earlier to await our arrival. In addition we needed provisions and boards to make a floor for the tent.

The wise old teamster looked down on us with concern as we took to the fast water in our over-loaded canoe towing the boards. Although we were both fairly good canoeists, we did learn something about the hazards of towing a raft of lumber on a fast river. The raft soon came apart and most of the boards hurried down stream ahead of us.

We also soon learned that unnavigated wilderness rivers can collect huge quantities of forest debris. We had some difficulties negotiating our way around trees that had fallen into, and often across, the river. In some places the river narrowed to thirty feet or less. When we reached the junction with the Little Thornapple the skies were darkening. Suddenly we realized that rain was sweeping down on us from the southwest.

The borrowed tent was tied up the way it had come by express from Illinois. I ruined several yards of good rope preparing a quick shelter for my bride. Tent stakes and poles were made ready in time to erect a comfortable and dry shelter for our first night on the Thornapple River.

Since the rain continued into the night, the preparation of our first meal was something of a triumph in camping under difficulties. A dry pine stump stood a few feet from the tent entrance. This was fuel for the campfire. By covering our frying pan and inserting a pole in the handle we easily prepared fried eggs and toast while the coffee boiled in a two-quart pail.

The situation was much brighter in the morning. We were relieved of one worry when we found practically all of our lumber scattered over the rapids a short distance below the site we selected for our summer camp. That day was spent in preparing a comfortable campsite. This involved considerable brushing to reduce the mosquito habitat near the tent. I cut poles for joists to support the floor boards off the ground.

Water from a wilderness river in 1916 was usually safe to drink. We decided to take no chances, however, and boiled our drinking water.

We had taken for granted that fish would be a large part of our diet that first summer together, and that proved true. Stella and I seemed to have the river all to ourselves and had no problem catching all the fish we wanted. I had no particular fishing gear, just a troll line and a black-tail spinner. But catching fish was a side line. The main event was the canoe ride.

Some years later we learned that a few days before we made our trip down to our camp site, three men from neighboring farms had dynamited the river just above our property. This is an easy way to get lots of fish in a hurry. Such unsportsmanlike behavior must have been prohibited even in those days, because the local gossip had it that I was a state inspector investigating the incident.

After about ten days in camp our stock of food needed replenishment. We were doing very well on fish, wild berries and occasional experiments with clams and woodchucks. But we did feel the need of some "boughten" food stuff.

On a map of Rusk County that we had acquired with the forty (at no extra cost), we saw that it was only a short distance down the Thornapple to the Chippewa River, then by the Chippewa to Bruce. To make this trip by canoe and secure our supplies at Bruce seemed to promise a fine adventure. This would be much easier than walking to Ladysmith. In 1916 there were neither cars nor hitch-hikers on the roads. One could almost say there were no roads.

We embarked at the head of our rapids about sunrise to make sure of our return before dark. The first mile was over water with which we were already familiar. Fortunately I had taken an axe along to clear away such obstacles as windfalls and other forest debris. On that day I did many more hours of labor with the axe than I did with the paddle. It seemed likely that no one had gone over the last half dozen miles since the Indians.

Our map absorbed a good deal of water and soon came apart at all the folded places. However, we pieced the map together and by mid-afternoon we estimated that we were about three miles from Bruce by road. This was a Saturday and, as strangers, we couldn't count on any favors from the natives in Bruce. To be sure of procuring groceries before the following Monday, we hid our canoe in the tag alders and started to walk the remaining distance to Bruce.

Then I remembered a shortcut--the railroad bridge over the Chippewa River. I was familiar enough with the local train schedule to know that no train was due to cross here in mid-afternoon. The railroad trestle that crossed the Chippewa was five or six hundred feet long and over thirty feet above the river. We were barely halfway across when a train whistled! We ran for the end of the bridge. When we reached the point where the tracks were no longer over the river, we jumped and slid down the steep embankment. Exhausted and humiliated we looked up at the train as it thundered past above us. We couldn't help but laugh. It was a circus train!

We arrived in Bruce in time to purchase the necessary supplies, but too late to make the return trip to our camp. This was a financial blow, since we had not intended to stay overnight in a hotel but had no camping equipment with us. However, the rate was reasonable--or so we thought before we discovered the bedbugs. They gave us a bad night. Some years later we were pleased to hear that the hotel had burned to the ground.

We have taken many trips down the Thornapple since the memorable adventure of 1916. The trestle crossing, however, has never been repeated. Later we found the run from the point where we cached the canoe down to Bruce to be the finest stretch of canoe water on the whole trip. We would have been spared several weary hours and some chagrin if we had gone on by canoe that day.

The river upstream from our campsite offered miles of excellent canoe water. When our two boys were in high school, a day's trip down the Thornapple to Bruce with some high school friend was announced as casually as a walk to the drugstore or a swim in the river. Recollections of those canoe trips must be among their happiest memories.

In his first chapter of *Walden* Thoreau declared, "I have traveled a good deal in Concord." Our family has "traveled a good deal" on the Thornapple since 1916. Even the Indians, whose artifacts we find by the lake and at the forks, probably never achieved (for one family) as many miles in as many years on one river.

Back to Illinois

*Two roads covered into a wood, and I--
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

-Robert Frost

All too soon our honeymoon was over. The time had come to go back to Cherry Valley and start my second year as a high school teacher.

My classes at Marengo were ancient history and physics. I was also asked to teach manual training which I refused to do after seeing the equipment. My father's shop in the old house on the farm was a modern manufacturing plant by comparison. No, I wouldn't teach manual training with a textbook and a hammer--so I got a class in physiology instead.

The year of commuting from Cherry Valley to Marengo was the darkest year of my life. I should have known it would be, for I have never been able to ride over a half mile on a streetcar without getting sick. The only way I could avoid nausea was to stand in the entryway and catch the fresh air when passengers got off or on. On very warm days I got sick anyhow. In freezing weather I froze but otherwise felt fine. By coaching after school I missed two chances to get home at a reasonable hour. I usually made it by 10 p.m. We had breakfast at 6 a.m. so that I could be at the nearest car stop by six thirty. In those days the athletics contests were on Saturday, so my schedule was usually a six-day week.

The year at Marengo, like the one in Harvard, ended with a triumphant track meet, a dual meet at Dundee. I entered three husky farm boys in a half dozen events each. (That was allowable in 1917.) They literally ran away with the meet. Again we were invited to the Beloit meet where we took some honors.

While we were in Beloit, the superintendent of the Belvedere schools called at my home and left an offer of \$1,350 to teach public speaking and coach athletics at Belvedere High School, a large facility just then being completed. The mail that same day brought a letter from

Superintendent Bahr of Ladysmith offering a salary of \$810 to teach English. At last an offer in the field in which I was best prepared--and no hint about any obligation in athletics. The Ladysmith offer had come in reply to my inquiry without benefit of teacher's agency or college placement bureau.

My rejection of the Belvedere offer was a great disappointment to my aging parents who naturally hoped that I would follow the profession into a good position in the Rockford schools. Belvedere, only six miles from Cherry Valley, was less than a third of the commuting distance to Marengo. But I was drawn to Ladysmith in the Northern Wisconsin of woods and rivers. I never disclosed to my parents the disparity between the Ladysmith salary and the Belvedere offer. I am sure they must have thought the difference was the other way.

I never regretted the change, for I found at Ladysmith an opportunity to pursue a way of life that has satisfied my particular needs. Over the years, I have had no reason to believe that my family suffered too much disappointment or privation because of my decision.

Return to Thornapple Country

I love any discourse of rivers.

-Izaak Walton

The summer of 1917, like that of 1916, Stella and I spent on the Thornapple. Since we would move to Ladysmith when school opened, we shipped our small amount of furniture there. The friendly real estate man who had sold us the Thornapple property stored the furniture for us at no cost in his garage. We had hoped to borrow the tent again, but it was not available. So we built a log cabin.

Downstream a few hundred yards from our tent site of the previous summer was a grove of trees of suitable size for our first semi-permanent summer home. The cabin we built was only as large as the tent space had been, eight feet by ten feet. Tents were big in those days. The floor boards we had used for the tent became the roof boards of the cabin. There was one door and two windows. All we needed to bring in for the project was some additional lumber, a roll of tar paper for the roof, and screening for the windows. We decided on a dirt floor. Not fancy, but a place to shelter ourselves.

The river bank where we built the cabin was at its highest point perhaps thirty feet above the river. To make it easier to get down the bank to where we kept the canoe, we cut the brush to make a trail. Just as we were completing this task we found the spring. There would be no more boiling of water.

The hillside above the spring was dominated by large pine trees. The slope down to the river was covered with maidenhair and other ferns. After emerging from its underground source, the water spilled over stones we had strategically placed, forming a pool from which water trickled to the river. It was a lovely spot. Fringed gentians grew nearby and there was the damp, sweet smell of moss.

Our second summer on our little river was much more tranquil than the first. I suppose in part that was because we knew that when the summer was over we would move only the few miles to Ladysmith, not back to Illinois.

Almost from our first day the year before we had heard loons. The cry sounded to Stella like someone in distress. We had heard that there was a small lake not far from our property line. There we saw the pair of loons.

We saw many great blue herons on the river. As we paddled upstream fishing, we would often disturb their fishing.

In college I had had a limited music career which left me in possession of a wooden flute. That second summer I had it with me and learned how to mimic the hermit thrush reasonably well. Once or twice I thought we talked back and forth to each other. We saw ducks with their ducklings during the day and at night we heard many different owls. The whip-poor-wills with their plaintive, repeated call were constant evening companions. The wonderful variety of birds seemed to have no end. The summer was idyllic.

However one problem remained--how to avoid making the difficult trip to Bruce or Ladysmith for our weekly grocery supplies. The farmer from whom we purchased milk and eggs informed us that a man called Frank made a trip to Ladysmith every Saturday and picked up groceries for several families in the area. Frank was glad to take on our grocery list. But we soon found a hitch in this arrangement.

In those days of "local option" communities could choose whether to be "dry" or "wet." In Ladysmith the sentiment was overwhelming fluid. Fortunately in 1917 there was no motor traffic and Frank's farm team could always be trusted to bring him and the groceries safely home.

On one occasion in July I waited long after dark at the farm for Frank to return. The day had been hot and the night was sultry and very dark. Finally Frank arrived with an arm load of packages. He stumbled over the door sill and groceries were broadcast all over the

kitchen. Embarrassed and badly in need of an alibi, he squared his shoulders, kicked his heels violently against the floor, and, ignoring calendar and thermometer, uttered, "Oh, that damned ice on my heels again."

Fortunately the groceries did not include eggs or liquid merchandise so the scrambled supplies were soon sorted. I returned long after dark to the cabin and a worried wife frightened by my lateness and the night sounds around the camp.

In September 1917, I reported at Ladysmith High School to teach English after two years in general science, commercial geography, history, physics and physiology. So far in my experience as a teacher I was having my greatest success in the thing I was least prepared to do. I had not participated in athletics at Beloit although I had some football and track experience at Northland. In my sophomore year at Northland College, I won a silver medal for being the best all-around athlete in the sophomore class. Since there were only twelve members in the class, this achievement would hardly qualify one as a coach of all high school sports. Yet it appears I might have continued in that position with some success.

We moved into a rented house in Ladysmith and did our best to make it comfortable with our few pieces of furniture. We had at last moved out of my parent's home. In that sense we were now completely on our own.

Our first son, Burt, was born in early October. Being the father of an infant made it possible for me to continue to teach rather than to become an active participant in World War I.

At midyear the science instructor dropped out to take advanced work at the University of Wisconsin. The superintendent, knowing of my teaching experience of the past two years and finding difficulty in locating a science teacher at midyear, offered me a substantial increase in salary if I would teach physics, biology and general science. This I did.

Other than our little log cabin on the Thornapple property we were not home owners that first year in Ladysmith. Our two summers on the Thornapple had given us more than enough time to fall in love with that small but beautiful river, and we now lived in a city that had once been known as Flambeau Falls. The Flambeau River almost encircles Ladysmith. This major river was one of the things that attracted us to the area.

On a cold Sunday in February of 1918 we were invited to a gathering at the home of a school board member. The large and very lovely house was located on a high point above the river with a steep slope down to the water's edge. The view, both up and down the river, was magnificent. We thought that we were in the last house on the street, but as we looked out a window we could see that the street extended down the hill and past a small neighboring house also on the river. As if she could read our minds, the wife of our host came up behind us and whispered, "It's for sale."

Making the necessary financial arrangements took us four months, but by the end of the school year we had our house on the Flambeau.

John Dietz

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

In the fall of 1910 I was a student at Northland Academy in Ashland, Wisconsin, and on the football team. The team had journeyed to Hayward to play the Indian Training School. It was an exciting day in Hayward not because of the football game but because the long drawn out battle with "The Defender of Cameron Dam" had come to a close. John Dietz, his wounded son, and perhaps other members of his family were being held in the county jail awaiting trial. We visited with Mr. Dietz through the bars of his jail cell. When we told him that we had come to play a football game with the Indians he said, "I hope they beat you. I'm always with the underdog."

About three years before the capture of John Dietz a book had been published called *The Story of John F. Dietz, the Defender of Cameron Dam*. The authors, Phillipps and Erickson, pictured Dietz as an heroic figure who was defending his rights and his family from the unjust and inhuman lumber interests. Perhaps that book was the main reason why the people with whom I was associated were disposed to stand on his side of the issue. I recall that the Academy students sent flowers to a Dietz girl who was in a hospital recovering from a gunshot wound. To us the issue was simple. A pioneer family was besieged and shot in their own house for trying to stop a lumber company from flooding part of their land so that logs could be floated downstream.

When we purchased our first forty acres on the Thornapple River about forty miles below Cameron Dam, it did not occur to me that hearing so much about the river only a few years earlier was probably what attracted me to it. I had never heard of the Thornapple River until the Dietz affair.

In 1901, John and Hattie Dietz and their six children moved into their new log house on the banks of the Thornapple. Mrs. Dietz had purchased 160 acres of wild land. The family were truly pioneers in a very isolated area. Cameron Dam, a small wooden dam built by the Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company, was their only neighbor. No personnel were located at the dam except for short periods each year when the dam was closed to create a pond which was then used to sluice logs downstream.

About this time the lumber company surveyed their buildings in that area. This led to the discovery that the dam was actually on the property that now belonged to Dietz.

Thus began a series of events that dragged on for years. First Dietz posted a sign at the dam which read, "You Pass This Place at Your Peril." The Company attempted to make a settlement, but Dietz claimed that he was owed \$8000 for logs previously sluiced through the dam. Dietz assaulted the representative of the lumber company and by 1904 a warrant for his arrest had been issued. Dietz kept everyone--including the county sheriff--away from the property at gunpoint. Over the next few years there were sporadic attempts to settle the argument. In 1906 at least one deputy was wounded in a shoot-out, as was one of the Dietz boys.

In the fall of 1910 things came to a head. The closest village was Winter, about ten miles from the homestead. The authorities in Winter were responsible for the education of the Dietz children. They accomplished this by building an addition to the Dietz home to serve as a schoolroom. They also hired a teacher who was housed with the Dietz family. One day on the streets of Winter John Dietz accosted a school board member. Dietz was incensed because the school board had refused to pay his bill for janitorial services at the schoolroom. Dietz was a much larger person than the school board member and when the confrontation became physical a bystander intervened. Dietz then pulled out a pistol and shot the bystander. Holding the hostile crowd that had assembled at bay, Dietz and two of his sons untied their horses and fled for home in their wagon.

This was too much for the authorities. Even Governor Davidson became involved. In early October, after futile attempts to end the matter peacefully, the sheriff and about fifteen deputies laid siege to the Dietz homestead. It took all day and one deputy was killed. Others, including Dietz, were wounded. Dietz was convicted on a murder charge but was pardoned after serving eleven years.

All of this, of course, held up the sluicing of the logs down the Thornapple. When the lumber company finally attempted to do so, many of the logs were so water-soaked that they hung up by the thousands all along the river. When we first made our summer camp on the Thornapple, the "Dietz logs" were still much in evidence, but over the years they have deteriorated and disappeared.

The story of "The Defender of Cameron Dam," however, lives on. Hero or villain? I'm still not certain which side I'm on.

The Parks of Ladysmith

*If, of all words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are, "It might have been,"
More sad are these we daily see:
"It is, but hadn't ought to be!"*

-Bret Harte

The history of Ladysmith's parks and street side trees is probably typical of the confusion, the doing and the undoing, and well-meaning administration that attends the landscape programs of most American small towns and cities. The older residential section is a living demonstration of all the errors in landscape planning and planting. The spacing problem arises because the landscaping is done by the lot instead of by the block. The standard pattern was for each owner to plant three trees on his frontage--one in the middle and one near each property line. The final result is a block planted with alternate intervals of about twenty-five and eight feet.

This error is accentuated because the planting was done at different times. Perhaps twenty years passed before all the lots in a block were purchased and planted. Ten foot trees on some lots contrasted with thirty foot specimens on others. Add to this the confusion of species and you have a block planted to ash, elm, maple, even an occasional spruce or pine of all sizes and various distances apart.

This was the curbside situation in Ladysmith in 1917. In May of 1918 I was honored with the title of city forester. (Both words were a gross assumption.) The title was really a device contrived by a newly appointed park board to relieve them of blame for the development of two potential park properties that belonged to the city. However, we got along well for over a decade.

These embryonic parks didn't even have official names. Since the forty acre tract of native hardwoods and hemlocks on the northeast corner of the city was already popularly known as Greenwood, it naturally and officially became Greenwood Park. The thirteen acre property

on the river had virtually no trees except for seven tall pines that were not good enough to tempt the early loggers of pine. Riverside Park was for many years the designation for this area. While Riverside Park had no trees at that time, it had more logs than any park of equal area ever had. The big log drives on the Flambeau were about to end. A profitable salvage operation of dead heads had already been going on for several years. The several square miles of flowage above the Ladysmith dam was awash with dead heads. The best place to deck and dry the salvaged logs was on this treeless stretch of Riverside Park. The entire frontage of fifty or sixty rods was decked with logs on rollways that extended into the park from forty to a hundred feet.

The log drive was by far the most picturesque and adventuresome of all logging operations from forest to mill. Guiding several million logs down a river like the Flambeau, breaking log jams on places like Little Falls and Beaver Dam, was a rugged and dangerous operation.

The buoyancy of a log diminishes as soon as it is placed in the water. After many weeks or months hundreds of logs acquire the density of water and sink to the bottom where they may be preserved in cold pack for many years. Foresters in New England took advantage of this cold pack method when a coastal storm blew down millions of board feet of timber some years ago. The timber was hauled to the nearest ponds and lakes where it was sunk and saved until sawmills and other requirements could be made available.

After many years of log drives, flowage bottoms were covered with valuable logs. These submerged logs were called dead heads. Dead heads were easily raised by probing for them with pike poles. After the pike pole spike was firmly set in the wood, only a slight effort raised the log to the surface for towing to shore. Commercial salvage crews used motor driven rafts to tow ten or a dozen logs at one time. Horse power was always used at the water's edge to skid the logs and deck them to dry. After a summer on these skidways, the logs recovered their buoyancy and could be rolled into the stream to finish the journey to the mill. In early logging days, the logs of several companies would be all mixed up in the same drive. Each log

was marked to designate its ownership. At the mill sites, the logs were sorted at the sorting gaps where timber cribs full of rock provided a holding for boom logs making a surface dam that held the logs back.

The flowage at Ladysmith yielded many thousands of logs. The disposal of bark and other debris left at the landing in Riverside Park was the first major problem in developing this area. It became my duty to advise the local mill owner of the park board's order to remove the debris. No doubt I was tactless and abrupt for my request won me the contempt of the timber tycoon. Nevertheless, the gentleman soon had the entire park shoreline cleared of bark and rubbish and work on Riverside Park was started.

The whole story of the development of these thirteen acres is a tedious tale. The terrain was a deposit of rock and gravel with no real soil either under or over it. The water along the shoreline was shallow flowage. In this flowage were acres of huge pine stumps, the tops of which were just visible above the water. Before any planting could be done on the gravel, the stumps had to be removed from the flowage bottom and the park was the only place in which to land them. A whole summer and several thousand dollars were required to get the stumps out of the water.

This was accomplished with steam power and draglines. The stumps heaped all in a windrow, forty rods long and twenty feet high, looked so terrible that I felt ashamed for having ordered the clean up of the litter and bark from the dead head salvage. The stumps were not dry enough to burn for several years and then they were burned accidentally by an out-of-control grass fire. Although the stumps weren't completely burned, the fire went on across the park and destroyed a hundred elms and maples that the park board and I had planted one Sunday.

The task of making Riverside Park was seldom funny, but one incident did have a sordid humor. The first building erected in the park was a sixteen by twelve foot structure made possible by public subscription and intended for use as a "swimming accommodation for boys." By this time, Ladysmith had become sophisticated to the point where boys were expected to

wear bathing suits. The building was to provide a place to change. After a hectic summer administering this building, the board concluded that teaching boys to use the place for changing was impossible. The boys insisted on changing behind the house and used the interior as a "necessary." That fall the board decided to sell the building and get it off the grounds. At our next meeting, a bidder acquired the building for \$25. Thirty years later the park was provided with toilet facilities to accommodate hundreds of people and change houses were available for both sexes. Park attendants were busy each morning picking up the rubbish left by convivial revelers the night before.

At the dedication of a bronze monument after World War I, the park was renamed Riverside Memorial Park. At this time a formal planting extending from the monument to the river was laid out. This half acre was called The Mall which would probably have amused any English landscape architect.

Ironically enough, my efforts toward the development of Riverside Park created rendezvous for the very activities that I most disliked. No residence in the city was more vulnerable than mine to the disturbance from nocturnal screaming and horn honking at beer parties in Riverside Park. The park was also host to the annual three day madness of "The Mardi Gras of the North." When this event offended us beyond endurance, we retreated to Slabshack on the Thornapple. This line from Byron describes my predicament: "The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree I planted."

The Riverside Park site was originally a gift from one of Ladysmith's earliest industries, the Menasha Wooden Ware Company. Greenwood Park, however, was purchased by the city for \$6,000. The forty acre tract of virgin woods was made up of a fairly uniform mixture of hard maple, yellow birch, and hemlock. These woods never had held any important stand of white pine. The pine loggers had found only two or three dozen giant trees. Moss-covered stumps four or five feet across gave evidence of that.

At that time the last big logs were going down all the rivers in northern Wisconsin. Many mill towns were going out of business and everywhere the town tycoon was donating one big log to be mounted in the park, town square, or court house lawn as a monument to the late lumber industry. For a city to have within its limits a virgin forty acres was most unusual when the landscape for many miles around was shorn of all merchantable timber. The small group of citizens who influenced the purchase of this tract were pioneers in conservation.

Ladysmith, however, was also among the scores of fading sawmill towns that paid tribute to the vanishing forests by mounting a memorial log in a public place. Riverside Park was the site chosen. Sixteen feet of the great bole of a yellow birch was mounted under a wooden shelter. The choice of yellow birch was appropriate for it was a vanishing species. At that time nearly a hundred yellow birches were alive in Greenwood Park. All of the bark has long since disappeared from the memorial log not without some encouragement of vandal hands. The exposed wood is carved with initials and questionable poetry by transient talent from all parts of America.

I am sure the hope and intention of the people who promoted the purchase of Greenwood Park was that it would always be administered as a natural wilderness area. The forty acres was bounded on two sides by good roads so there was no real need for any road building within the woods. Unfortunately, a pioneer tote trail ran diagonally through the tract and the park board could not long resist the pressure to improve this road for easier access to the park.

This concession was the beginning of the end of our wilderness park. Many people who used the diagonal road soon made requests for permission to cut fuel wood available in dead and deteriorating trees. The danger element was introduced and we were berated for allowing "dangerous" trees to remain standing along the diagonal road. In short, nearly everyone wanted to administer the forty acres as a community wood lot and only a small minority gave any consideration to the wilderness values.

Then came the public works programs of the depression. For a short time the park board was able to resist the pressure of local politicians to commit to projects in Greenwood Park. Our resistance was abruptly quashed by the city council's suspension of the park board. One councilman said, "We appointed them, didn't we? So why can't we disappoint them?"

Of the thousands of ill-advised projects in natural areas across the continent in that decade, Greenwood Park was just **was just** one of the casualties and perhaps a very small one. Several acres were completely shorn of natural shrubs and leveled off for playgrounds, picnic and parking places. This, of course, destroyed the whole flora of the forest floor.

The diagonal road was surfaced and "beautified" by many man hours of rustic creations. Numerous parking spots were provided. These places were soon cluttered with the usual excreta of automotive recreation. In addition to the bottles and cans thrown from cars, a few residents found the road a convenient place to deposit springtime offerings of rubbish and garbage.

After the relief administrations were discontinued, the park board was still in a state of "disappointment." During this period the city officials authorized the logging of the hemlocks in the park. The place was still called Greenwood Park, but there was no green wood left. My appraisal of the situation was expressed in the following obituary submitted to the local press:

Parks are areas set aside by federal, state or municipal governments to preserve places of scenic, geological, sentimental or historical significance. About the year 1915 public-spirited and far-sighted men in Ladysmith promoted the purchase of such an area that possessed scenic, sentimental and historical significance in this community. It was the forty acre tract of native Wisconsin forest situated in the city limits at the northeast corner of the city. It was a perfect sample of the typical north Wisconsin hardwood and hemlock forest--a living monument to the forests of Wisconsin. No other city could boast anything like it. Here was preserved a whole piece out of the vast wilderness pattern that was Wisconsin. Towering hemlocks, scattered pines and the best native hardwoods were here. On the rich forest floor were all the wild flowers of the woods--dainty bishop's caps, blood roots, wild ginger, and all the rest of the vanishing wildings flourished here.

There was also much local sentiment and tradition in Greenwood Park. It was a symbol of an earlier day and of the logging and lumbering that sustained the local economy for nearly half a century. It was a fitting park for a town that was proud to be called the "Lumberjacks."

But the park board that had presided over the city park system was pushed aside by the pressure of relief projects that overflowed in the parks and roadsides of America. Unpaid park administrations could not supervise the scores of men who were assigned to these civic "improvement projects." Much of the work had to be

taken over by the paid, imported directors of the various branches of the many emergency administrations. Under this program a scout cabin was erected in city park property. It has since become an object of most unspeakable vandalism. Various forms of PWA art sprouted in parks everywhere--painted rocks, totem poles, scenic bridges and pseudo statuary. A plaster paris Indian stood guard to the entrance of Memorial Park even without head or arms. But the last vestige of any sentiment or tradition about our parks passed away recently with the logging of Greenwood Park.

This logging was announced in The News as a "thinning operation." Today there isn't a large hemlock left in the park. In fact, Greenwood Park is gone. It is now only a cutover patch of sad saplings. Our Greenwood Park was literally sold down the river. Many men still living here gave much time and thought and labor in the early administration of Ladysmith's parks. They guarded Greenwood against vandals and wood merchants for nearly two decades--but when the project agents pushed these men aside the park soon became a common wood lot.

The little trees will struggle up again. There will be shade, and some day perhaps another generation of "Lumberjacks" will think they have a pretty park with grass and dandelions everywhere. But the deep shadows of the hemlocks, the sturdy furrowed trunks of forest trees, the silent pageant of the forest flowers and the broad fronds of lofty evergreen--all these are forever gone.

I have written and spoken many times of the thoughtless vandalism that seems to characterize our treatment of the trees of Ladysmith, so it is perhaps fitting that I should write this--the obituary of Greenwood Park.

Bill Powers

*He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,
Had banished him from better days
To play the Prince of Castaways.*

-Edwin Arlington Robinson

In the winter of 1919 a legal dispute between a lumber company and a jobber afforded me an interesting experience during my Christmas vacation. The logger had cut and decked thousands of logs on several sections of land during the previous summer and fall. A dispute arose over the actual quantity delivered on the skidways. It was agreed that settlement would be made on a recount by an impartial person uninfluenced by either the operator or the jobber. I got the job. I spent the greater part of my two weeks vacation on snowshoes counting the logs on the skidways in the town of Big Falls ten miles up the Flambeau from Ladysmith.

Each night I recorded my count and prepared a map to show the various branch roads and the skidways I had counted. This tabulation I did in the timekeeper shack. Here I met a most interesting, talented, and mysterious person. I am sure that his name was not Bill Powers, but that is the name he was known by in his short and dramatic career in the Flambeau country.

Bill was a well-educated German-born man of about forty. According to his own account, he had been trained for a high ranking position in the German Merchant Marine. This explained his possession of some small but obviously expensive mariners' instruments that graced the desk of this strange Johnny Inkslinger. He spent the Christmas holiday in Chicago and on his return he exposed a talent of which all his camp acquaintances had been wholly unaware.

When I next came into the time shack to resume my evening tally, Bill was playing a violin. I am not able to judge the talent of a musician or the quality of an instrument. I am sure, however, that such music had never been heard before that night in any North Wisconsin

lumber camp. We were amazed that he had not mentioned such talent in the many months of his employment in the camp. I do not recall that Bill ever played for the men in the bunk house. But in the boss camp he poured out his pent-up passion for the music of the masters.

During those two weeks I had an opportunity to observe the cosmopolitan cross-section of a lumber camp in the early twenties, a period of post-war depression and unemployment. Employment agencies were trafficking in the idle masses. A typical consignment made up of such men was sent to our camp from Chicago arriving late at night. Among them were green horns who didn't know the difference between a cross-cut saw and a cross-haul. There were soft-handed professional men as well as husky fellows equal to any kind of work situation.

One man in particular I shall never forget. He made his way directly to the boss camp. He was a big, handsome, intelligent-looking man. As he stepped inside he said, "I would like to speak to the boss of this camp." During the conversation that followed, the man said, "I just want to tell you that I am no lumberjack and I am a damn poor bluffer. I am a marine engineer out of a job and thought I would try working in a lumber camp." He was assured that something would be found for him to do in the morning and as he left the cabin someone remarked, "Hell of a fine fellow, ain't he."

The next day was my last day in camp and the end of my mission on the Big Falls logging operation. That night, after making a final tally of my data, Bill and I had our last cup of coffee together from the pot that brewed constantly on the time shack stove. As I left his camp, I expressed my pleasure in having met him and suggested that, should he come to Ladysmith, I would like him to meet my family. I was astonished at his reply which wasn't softened by his sharp German accent. "Thank you, Mr. Dahlberg, I certainly will do that if I go to Ladysmith, but it will be a damn long time before I go to Ladysmith."

Despite Bill's emphasis to the contrary, he did come to Ladysmith not many weeks later. He came down from the woods for a weekend with the camp superintendent.

About nine o'clock that Sunday morning, I answered my phone. The familiar voice of the superintendent said, "Ed, come over right away and bring your wife."

We heard the violin before we knocked on the door. I think it was an intricate Beethoven composition. We stepped in and sat down near the door.

The musician was facing a large window overlooking the Flambeau. He must have been looking up the river as he played. When he finished, he appeared to be wholly unaware of any audience. He carefully placed his violin in its silk-lined case and went to the piano. After lightly touching a few preliminary chords, he took up the same classic he had just played on the violin, performing again with the same delicate and professional skill.

As he finished the selection and turned toward us, I said, "Bill Powers, what are you going to do next?"

Modestly and in his best English he answered, "Good morning, Mr. Dahlberg. You have now heard me play two instruments, but you have not yet heard what I can really play--the pipe organ."

When the winter logging ended, Bill came to Ladysmith. I do not remember how long he was in our community. Those were the days of silent movies and Bill furnished the theater music on an inferior organ that was installed for him. He gave lessons in violin and piano, and one spring he gave a concert in the high school gymnasium with a local accompanist at the piano. That concert is remembered by local music lovers as one of the finest musical events in the history of our community.

I was among the very first in Ladysmith to hear Bill's violin. Probably I was also the last person to see him in this area.

On a summer Sunday evening, Stella and I were returning from a drive to Sand Lake, about twenty miles southwest. Those were the days of narrow dirt roads, deep with mud or dust according to the season. On this day it was dust. When we saw a cloud approaching we gave it a wide berth. I caught a glimpse of the driver as the car sped by. Bill Powers was at the wheel. This was verified the following morning when we learned that Bill was gone with a car that didn't belong to him.

That is about all I know about Bill Powers. However, a year or so after he disappeared, a Chicago radio station featured a program that was called "The Phantom Violin." The artist never spoke and the name was never announced. Local people who knew Powers and his music were sure that he was the phantom violinist. Inquiries sent to the station did not yield any information. It will be remembered, however, that when radio was in its infancy, talent was sometimes loaned from penal institutions.

The marine engineer who told us that he was a "damn poor bluffer" was not a bad bluffer after all. He worked at just about every job he wanted around the camp. Finally he spent a few weeks as night watchman. On this job he went to bed right after the crew left camp for the woods and was in the bunk house most of the day.

One day he informed the camp superintendent that he was leaving. Showing his secret service credentials, he explained that he had shipped out of Chicago with that consignment of transient labor believing that a man in the crew was wanted for a crime back East. He had gone through the personal effects of those men and listened to their conversations when they were leaving camp each morning--but with no results. Or at least so he said.

Could our marine engineer have been on the trail of our musician? Could this German mariner have been in America at that time on business for the Fatherland? Who was Bill Powers? What was he doing and what had he done? These are questions for which I have no answers. Perhaps the "marine engineer" could write an interesting conclusion.

The Cedars

*The night is freezing fast,
Tomorrow comes December;
And winterfalls of old
Are with me from the past.*

-A. E. Houseman

In my constant endeavor to supplement my school salary during the early years in Ladysmith, I devoted Saturdays and often Sundays to various remunerative projects. The birth of my second son in 1920 made success in these endeavors all the more important. These activities were generally in wood products such as fuel, Christmas trees, florist greens and other seasonal items.

In the fall of 1921, a florist in St. Louis ordered a carload (ten tons) of balsam boughs. This was a large order for a small weekend business enterprise. I decided to explore one possibility before rejecting the order. I was familiar with a forty acre swamp area two and a half miles west of Ladysmith and knew its dense stand of balsam and cedar would yield many times that amount of greens. At least I could inquire at the court house for the name of the owner of the tract.

The county treasurer informed me that the tract was tax delinquent and could be acquired for seventy-six dollars. I borrowed the money and purchased the forty acres the same day. No other investment in my forty-year adventure in collecting "worthless acres" has ever paid off as handsomely.

Located only two and a half miles from the town residence, this tract became a popular hiking objective for my family and friends. We built a miniature (eight by ten feet) log cabin near the center of the property. This camp was not originally intended to serve any other purpose than to provide a warm place to eat our lunch on sub-zero Saturdays.

Very little room was left after installing a secondhand box stove, a table, and two bunks, one above the other. Since fire was always a danger, I accompanied any overnight expeditions to the cabin and slept on a folding canvas cot between the door and the stove. Since this space was only about three feet wide, the fire had to be kept very low and the occupant of the cot was obliged to prepare for bed outside and pull the door shut in the process of going to bed.

All of this inconvenience was tolerated for two winters. In late fall of the third year, an addition was built on. The addition was somewhat larger than the original structure. We have always called the forty acre tract "The Cedars." Years later, our daughter Mary, the youngest family member, christened the cabin "Cedar Hut." We have never called it anything else.

In 1932 we bought an entry book to serve as a camp log. Excerpts between December 1931 and November 1952 recall memories of those days when the entire family shared every adventure and almost every task.

The log book tells of a party on a January Sunday night probably the largest gathering of adults ever assembled in Cedar Hut on any one occasion. The twelve guests included the county superintendent of schools and his wife, the county agricultural agent, the local judge, an insurance man, and two teachers. A substantial portion of our large round blocks of fuel wood were required to seat the entire party at one time. I am sure that the Cedars never before echoed with such mirth and songs as rang out on the frigid atmosphere that January night.

A week later there was a big logging operation in the Cedars. My adult partner on the cross-cut saw registered in the camp log that day and below his signature my teamster also signed. The operation could have been fence posts, fuel wood, or saw logs. On the same day several scouts registered. Their objective was to achieve points for a merit badge and they had stopped to pay their respects to Cedar Hut. Scouting parties made up most of the guests in 1932 and 1934. These were the years of our boys' greatest scouting activity and they made frequent hikes to Cedar Hut for overnight and weekend camping.

An entry at the end of a Christmas vacation sums up the material achievements of the vacation period.

Breaking camp after vacation activities. This season mostly cutting wood and hunting rabbits. Each got one snowshoe with his new gun. Saw two deer on January 4.

A February entry records an unusual incident.

County sheriffs Nelson and Wilson visit the Cedars in search of the notorious Rusk County "crazy man," Sam Hewitt. He was captured and taken without further incident on the east line of the railroad crossing.

Hewitt was being held at the county jail for a minor offense and somehow escaped. Someone reported seeing him walking west on the Soo Line. The two officers drove out to an abandoned road that leads down to the railroad and the Cedars. I was crossing the tracks when I saw the two men coming down from the highway. It was not unusual to see people on this abandoned road, but when I turned in on the trail that leads to Cedar Hut I noticed that someone had gone over the trail just ahead of me. Students and fellow teachers frequently came out to take noon lunch with me or even to assist a little while on the cross-cut saw or the splitting maul. But on arriving at the cabin I could see that someone had just left because the door was open and footprints were visible in the frozen sphagnum moss where someone had taken a shortcut to the railroad about a dozen rods to the north. Just then I heard voices on the railroad track and hurried over in time to see the two officers handcuff the "notorious Rusk County crazy man."

I have always regretted that Hewitt did not have time to register in the diary. His comment would probably have seemed quite rational beside many others, including some of my own.

In every high school there are boys and girls who inspire their instructors. An outstanding example of such a student in Ladysmith High School was Wallace Grange. His signature appears in the Cedar Hut diary as of March 8, 1934. Wallace was a student of extraordinary talent in all his subjects. But his first love was natural science. At the time of his visit at Cedar Hut, Wallace was employed by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission and in charge of the State Game Farms. He had with him on his visit to the Cedars two snowshoe hares, probably live-trapped for experimental use in a game farm project. Wallace turned the rabbits loose

in Cedar Hut while we walked through the Cedars to discuss the game and wild life situation there. On our return to the cabin we found that the rabbits had escaped by way of a faulty floor board. I am unable to report any biological consequences favorable or unfavorable from this inadvertent crossing of Rusk County hares. In any event, the species still prospers handsomely among the Cedars and tag alders around Cedar Hut.

While he was employed by the Wisconsin Conservation department, Wallace prepared a volume titled *The Wisconsin Grouse Problems*. This was published by the Wisconsin Conservation Department under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project. This 318 page volume, beautifully illustrated with photographs of grouse and grouse habitat, is a valuable guide in grouse management and has had a significant influence in restoration of the species in many areas.

In 1949, another book by Wallace Grange, *The Way to Game Abundance*, was published by Charles Scribner's Sons. This 365 page volume, handsomely illustrated mostly by his own photographic talent, covers all major American game species and includes the obituary of species that man, in his ignorance or greed, has already exterminated.

In 1953 Wallace published his book, *Those of the Forest*. Surely all who have read it will agree that it merits the honor it has won in the Burroughs Award. My own appreciation of the volume is briefly stated on the jacket. "A work of extraordinary skill in the portrayal of the intricate elements of ecology into a beautiful idyll of wilderness life. Not until one has finished reading does he realize there has been no single reference nor any trace or sign of man. Yet he is challenged by the philosophical interrogations to contemplate the destiny of his own species in the ages ahead. It humbles one's thinking."

The next diary entry was made on March 22. This entry merely states that we found deer horns and bear tracks. The presence of deer horns in March is significant because it indicates that porcupines are on the decline or the horns would have been eaten.

The entries for November suggest all work and no play.

We cut and baled the following greens for decorations at the 4H convention in Chicago: 20 ten foot balsam trees; 40 five to six foot balsam trees; 800 fifteen to eighteen inch cedar sprays.

This project yielded substantial remuneration, but the whole operation had to be done during a chilly November rain.

The usual procedure on winter Saturdays was to go directly to the cabin and start the fire before beginning the day's work. There were two reasons for this. The first was to prevent our lunch from freezing and the second was to have a warm place to eat.

January 12, 1935, was scheduled for cutting fuel wood. Our lunch pack was placed on the table near the stove to thaw out after our two and a half mile hike on that ten below zero morning. When we returned at noon, the camp was comfortably warm, but we noticed that something had happened to our lunch. The pack was tipped over and the contents scattered on the table. The package which had contained a dozen doughnuts was torn and empty. We had no trouble tracing the trail over the floor to a hole under the bunk. Prying up the floor board we found all the doughnuts. After our rugged four hour session with the cross-cut saw and axe we could ill afford to reduce our rations by a dozen doughnuts. So we salvaged nine of them and left three that were badly damaged as compensation for the labor of the "little red raiders." We of the Cedars and the Thornapple do not share the popular hostility for red squirrels. They deserve something better than being live targets for would-be marksmen.

After 1936 a sweeping trend developed toward vandalism and destructive trespass on all exposed properties like Cedar Hut. The stove, axe, lantern, and cooking utensils were soon stolen from the camp. The last note in the diary was written in January 1937.

Because of vandalism at the camp the diary has been taken to the Nursery office. Fortunately it was not stolen or destroyed during recent raids at Cedar Hut.

The Flambeau River

Like all things animate and articulate, My River has its many moods, while its voice, even its very spirit, is swayed by the seasons.

-Byron E. Veach

Our home was on the banks of the Flambeau River. Actually we lived on the flowage of the Ladysmith dam which we called the paper plant dam since it was owned by a paper company. A similar paper mill plant was located at Park Falls, perhaps seventy river miles upstream. In between were two hydroelectric plants. The Big Falls dam was ten miles upstream from Ladysmith. The other dam was only a few miles downstream from the Park Falls dam. The Big Falls dam had been built only a few years before we settled in Ladysmith.

Living in our home on the flowage seemed more like living on a lake than a river except for a discernible flow of water in the downstream direction. In our early years on the Flambeau we still saw log drives. Sometimes adventurous young men would cross the river jumping from log to log, never getting their shoes wet.

The Flambeau is a much bigger river than the Thornapple. The flowage in front of our house was perhaps two hundred yards to the opposite shore. To cross the Thornapple at our camp was a voyage of no more than one hundred feet. In the early years Stella and I boated on the rivers near our home, but we did not really get to know the untamed waters that were just upstream until our two boys had learned to swim.

Our first family trip on the Flambeau was a three-day outing in 1927 when John and Burt were seven and ten years old. Family is not exactly the right word, since we left Stella and our baby daughter at home. We three "men" were taken by friends to the "put in" point--which was called the Oxbo--about fifty miles by road, but at least sixty miles by river. We had been told that this would be a three-day trip.

The names that designate the points of interest along the rivers of America reflect the mood and manner of the hardy river folk who first followed their courses by canoe or bateau. The Indians had for centuries known the various falls, lakes, tributaries and rapids by meaningful names in their own language. These being both meaningless and unpronounceable to the early lumbermen and pioneers, they provided new names, especially for the difficult and troublesome places encountered on the wilderness rivers.

Owing to the potent profanity and other immodest vocabulary that flourished in lumber camps and on log drives, many of these on-the-spot christenings of falls, rapids and elbows were unspeakable in the more refined company who later followed the rivers for sport and recreation.

However many names of historical significance survive on the Flambeau River. Our map indicated Hansen's Camp, Payne's Farm, Big Falls and Little Falls. The site of that earliest logging camp and that clearing where vegetables and fodder were grown for men and oxen at the turn of the century are still known as Hansen's Camp and Payne's Farm. Big Falls and Little Falls now lie beneath vast flowages that cover many charming islands and miles of singing water. But the names, Big Falls and Little Falls, survive at the two great hydroelectric dams.

The great loop on the Flambeau below Park Falls where we put in is appropriately called the Ox-Bow (locally spelled Oxbo). This name was well chosen by a generation who knew what an ox-bow was. The first logging along the Flambeau was done with teams of sturdy oxen in ox yokes instead of the complicated harness gear required for horses. There were no lines for driving. The drivers guided the oxen with only a simple vocabulary--gee, haw and whoa--usually embellished with colorful profanity that was meaningless to the oxen but the lumberjack's normal vocabulary.

Porcupine Rapids was an appropriate name at least until the mid-thirties. Before that time canoe parties were almost sure to see porcupines catching fragments of floating vegetation that drifted down to them. They would sit on exposed rocks busily catching and eating their salad with no fear whatever of the canoe parties that often passed only a paddle length away.

After 1930 the porcupines began to disappear. Porcupines and snowshoe rabbits during the 30's were considered to be second only to fire as a menace in the forests. Seldom now is a porcupine seen along the Flambeau, but their name survives at Porcupine Rapids.

Then there was Wanigan Rapids. Tradition informs us that the wanigan of an early log drive came to grief somewhere on these three stretches of white water. Aside from the tragedy of a drowning, nothing was more distressing to a log driving crew than the loss of their wanigan. The wanigan on a river drive was a large bateau that carried all the food and tobacco supplies and all other merchandise essential to clothe, feed, shelter and provide first aid for the crew on the long and dangerous drives from the upper tributaries to the mills at Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire.

Most of the names on the Flambeau were well chosen. They may commemorate an incident like that of the wanigan or scenery as at Cedar Rapids or relative size such as Big and Little Falls. But the reason for the name, Beaver Dam, is unknown. Possibly an early cruising party came upon this pitch at a time when beaver activity was evident at the mouth of the little tributary just above the rapids. No other plausible reason comes to mind for christening such a turbulent and unpredictable pitch with so modest a name.

We knew these names because they were indicated on our map. Now we were to become acquainted with them first hand. The first rapids that we encountered were the Porcupines. One problem was that we were unsure of how many of the pitches were accumulated under that one name. When we made our first camp that night, we felt good about our day's efforts.

The next morning we came upon a particularly beautiful stretch of relatively quiet water. We were truly in the splendor of the wilderness. Late in the morning we came to a roaring rapids, the first of the three Wanigan pitches, and we soon found out that we had much to learn about white water canoeing. Because John, my younger son, was just learning to swim, we cheated on the last (and most difficult) of the Wanigans by lining the canoe. This meant that we walked the shore and let the lightened canoe drift down tethered by a rope.

We followed the same procedure at Cedar Rapids and Beaver Dam, both beautiful wild water rapids. Cedar Rapids was graced by an island in midstream with large pine trees. (We didn't notice any cedar trees.) We camped that night at the Big Falls power dam.

Our final day on the river brought us to the most magnificent rapids of all--Little Falls. An island rose midstream, much like the one at Cedar Rapids. Between the island and the left bank the river dropped through a narrow gorge. The waves were huge. Once again we portaged rather than attempting to run it.

I suppose this was the trip that started our love affair with the Flambeau. For my part, I had been canoeing for years. The boys had only known the Thornapple which was tame by comparison. Over the years we continued to show our respect for Cedar Rapids, Beaver Dam, and Little Falls by portaging the camping gear that we didn't want to get wet, but never again did we avoid shooting the rapids. We had our share of spills, particularly at Little Falls, but that only added to our enjoyment.

Between 1927 and World War II, we canoed the Flambeau at least once every year. Our family matured along with a growing love for both of our rivers. The Thornapple was our quiet refuge. The Flambeau was our exhilaration.

Skunk Frank

I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue his own way.

-Henry David Thoreau

Our first Flambeau River canoe trip was memorable for many reasons. When we reached Beaver Dam, we quickly realized why our map had indicated that it should be portaged. Unfortunately, we chose what later on proved to be the most difficult side of the river to portage. We could see a log cabin on the opposite shore, but there was no sign of habitation. The following year we portaged on the other side. That was when I first met Skunk Frank. If all the times that I met him and we talked together were added up, the total would not be more than a few hours, and yet he was one of the most unforgettable persons I have ever met.

Frank said that he remembered us from the year before and had regretted that we had not stopped to see him and to sign our names in his guest register. In 1922 his sister had given him the 700-page guest book which came to be known as *The Skunk Frank Diary* although not one entry was written by Frank himself. At the time of his death in 1934, the book held more than four thousand signatures. I had the opportunity to study the "diary" in some detail and found entries from fourteen states and seven foreign countries.

Several entries made the same year I first met Frank told of a tragedy that had occurred in mid-October at a time when Frank was not home. But his door was always open and these two entries were recorded in the ledger.

Rambling through. The river is high, the rapids and falls are growling. Our Old Town comes through on high. No bad spills yet. Will report if we have bad luck in Beaver Dam.
-Art R.

Immediately below this comment, his buddy wrote:

The canoe tipped over and Art drowned. I am going to take your boat and start downstream.

The body was found the following spring.

Most of the entries were no more than the name and date. A surprising number, however, had a few words to say about the relatively unspoiled wild river they were experiencing. A typical example was signed by Ernest Swift who later became the director of the National Wildlife Foundation.

The three of us came down the river in low water. Saw 74 deer in a day and a half. This is fine country. Hope no lumber companies and no fires gut this timber, and no power companies ruin the river.

Starting in 1928, regular entries were made by my family.

One of the earliest entries dated 1923 was that of O.C. Doering and his sons, O.C. Jr. and Paul, from River Forest, Illinois. They signed Frank's diary in 1924, 1927, 1929, and September 9, 1932. This last entry has a special significance.

At midnight on that date I was aroused by a telephone call from O.C. Doering whom I had never met. The message was urgent. His sons had just returned from a Flambeau River canoe trip and had found Skunk Frank seriously ill with an infection in his right leg. He asked me to arrange to get Frank to a hospital as soon as possible and assured me that he would defray all expenses.

At that time I was a member of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission which meant that I was in a position to get cooperation from people who could help Frank. Before dawn, two canoes guided by the local game warden had reached Frank's cabin at Beaver Dam. O.C. Doering had been rightly concerned. By the next day Skunk Frank's right leg had been amputated.

I don't have much information about why Frank was back at Beaver Dam just sixty-four days after that midnight call. I do know that the Doerings had made arrangements for him to spend the winter at a convalescent home in Chicago. I strongly suspect that his great love for his little world on the Flambeau at Beaver Dam made it an easy choice for him to return.

During his absence, the diary indicates that many people stopped at his cabin. Some of the comments conveyed their best wishes for a speedy recovery. Others seemed not to know of his misfortune and assumed they had just missed him.

Very sorry Frank was not here.

Missed Frank's pancakes for which he is renowned.

Nobody home but the cat.

I was not the only person who was deeply touched by the charming character of this kindly old woodsman. One entry in the diary reads--

All my life I have been wanting to meet a man with the character, history and background of Skunk Frank. May the Holy Saints watch over him.

The final entry in the diary is dated June 3, 1934.

Found Frank dead at his spring at 10:40 a.m. Tough old Frank, quite a noted character. So long, old boy.

I had only known him for half a dozen years. Like many others, I learned to respect his independence and his love for his little corner of the world. I could appreciate that love and share it with him.

To me, he was always just Skunk Frank and in those years I never thought about how inappropriate this name was for such a kindly and friendly personality. Many years later when a number of his friends contributed a modest fund to provide a marker for his grave I learned his full name. The original inscription was to have been "Skunk Frank - The Hermit of Beaver Dam." It was changed however to "Frank Strouf - The Hermit of Beaver Dam." I was not in favor of the change, but I guess it really doesn't matter. So long, old boy.

The Conservation Commission

*In nature there are neither rewards nor
punishments--there are consequences.*

-Robert G. Ingersoll

In 1927 the Wisconsin legislature enacted a provision to provide for the appointment of a six member conservation commission consisting of three members from the north and three from the south half of the state. I had a telephone call from a friend who then headed the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture. He had formerly served as agriculture agent for Rusk County. He called to ask if I would accept an appointment to the new Conservation Commission. He and Governor Zimmerman had discussed it and I had been recommended. I accepted the appointment. Later the same week a local politician confidentially informed me that my appointment was entirely his idea. This was my introduction to politics.

An influential Wisconsin daily paper, notably antagonistic to the governor, editorialized on the appointments. Nothing favorable was said about any of us, but I did rate a little better treatment than the others. This was done in a guarded statement that one member from the north had been active in local conservation activities. The article ended with the comment that probably only one man on the commission "could tell the difference between a wall-eyed pike and a smoked herring." I supposed this was a compliment to me, but at my first meeting with the commission I discovered that the commissioner from Green Bay was thoroughly familiar with the intricate problems of the Great Lakes Fisheries, so I have no doubt he was the member who was supposed to know about fish.

I have many memories of those men serving without compensation in the administration of Wisconsin's conservation program. One member was the chairman and I was designated as the secretary on the foolish assumption that since I was a school teacher I should at least know how to spell.

President Coolidge made his summer headquarters that year near Superior on the famous Brule River where he could indulge his love of fly fishing for trout. Since they had chosen to vacation in Wisconsin it was proper that the Conservation Commission should bid them welcome to the charming natural resources of Northern Wisconsin.

Upon our arrival at the Brule River we first stopped at the summer home of the commissioner from Milwaukee. The ladies served us refreshments and I was the first served from a tray of cold drinks with lemon slices floating in them. Lemonade, I supposed, but after one sip I knew that this was no drink for a teetotaler. The glass was not very large, so I took a chance on the contents, but declined a second as graciously as I could. I thought my indulgence had not been observed by my fellow commissioners who already knew of my abstinence. However, late that night when we were leaving the hotel lobby for our various rooms, the chairman laughed and said, "Say, fellows, did you see our secretary do away with that whiskey sour this afternoon?"

The day following our official welcome to President and Mrs. Coolidge, we settled down to routine business and inspected the fish hatcheries and other conservation projects at Ashland. That night we registered in an Ashland hotel. In these prohibition days the baggage of some men traveling in strange cities was apt to be very heavy. The porters took our bags to our respective rooms and we spent an hour or more in the lobby preparing our itinerary for the next day. Shortly after we had gone to our rooms, the commissioner from Madison rapped at my door and entered with my suitcase. His baggage was exactly like mine, but there was an important difference in the contents. The entire supply of liquid refreshments for the rest of the commission had been delivered to my room!

A year later the entire commission took a brief but eventful canoe trip on the Flambeau which I had already canoed several times. The purpose was to officially visit an area being proposed as a state forest. The purchase would involve what was a considerable amount of money in those days. Included in the group was the then Governor Phil LaFollette and several

other distinguished guests, among them an influential newspaper editor. Since I was almost the only member of the Commission who had canoeing experience, several game wardens and foresters were added to the party to provide that important expertise.

We had planned a two-day trip, but the Governor's schedule only permitted him to be with us the first day. We put in the river at a location that would quickly bring us to the proposed state forest area and would only involve a few minor rapids. At that time lumbering operations were still going on. Arrangements were made for the Governor to be picked up at the end of the first day and taken back to civilization by a lumber company "speeder", which is like a car equipped to run on rails. A temporary railroad line even crossed the river at one point, but not too many years later it was hard to find any trace of the bridge.

Needless to say, the game warden who was assigned to the Governor's canoe was the most experienced canoeist of us all. Our flotilla of canoes soon reached the proposed forest tract where we landed and took a brief walking tour in the woods of virgin cedars and hemlocks. This was truly God's country.

Back in the canoes, we soon came to Porcupine Rapids which had never provided any excitement on our previous trips. My canoe was in front and we had already negotiated the rapids when we heard shouts and the banging of paddles and the distinctive crunching sound that canoes make when they hit rocks. The canoes had not been far enough apart to maneuver properly. One canoe tipped over--the Governor's. His hat came riding down toward us, jauntily sitting right side up. We retrieved the hat and paddled back to where the Governor was clinging to a rock. This was no laughing matter. In October the temperature of the river water was not ideal for swimming, especially in heavy clothing.

We went ashore and built a roaring fire. The Governor removed his boots and pants which quickly dried by the fire. He relieved the tension by telling us that the pants were from a uniform he had worn in the war. The logging bridge was only a mile or so down stream and

we soon had the Governor on his way back accompanied by a few members of the commission who decided they did not want to face the much tougher rapids we would negotiate the next day.

That night we camped along the river and next day had a great time running the rapids down to the Big Falls dam. The Governor did sign the measure that created Flambeau River State Forest and that trip remains a cherished memory.

In the early years of my membership on the Conservation Commission I was under the delusion that a duly appointed commission was empowered to avoid or correct obvious errors and abuses concerning the administration of natural resources. I soon discovered that well-informed and sincere conservationists can actually have very little influence in conserving or protecting the resources of the state. The Commission can do little more than administer the laws that are handed down by the state legislature.

For an example of this, consider the bounty problem. Very few informed biologists in conservation departments will honestly defend a bounty law on any native species. Yet bounty laws persist because candidates for state legislatures can improve their election chances by promising to support the bounty laws. This is good politics not only with bounty hunters and trappers but also with farmers who will thus receive a reward for killing predatory animals that they would kill anyhow.

The bounty situation becomes particularly complicated when one state pays bounties and an adjoining state does not. One bounty hunter who operated in the northern counties was turning in an unprecedented quantity of "trophies." When he was interviewed at a hearing on his operations a commissioner asked how it was possible for him to get so many coyotes. He answered, "Oh, I just run them down with my car." This was true in one respect. He made many trips into the timber area of an adjacent state that did not pay bounties that year. It is unfortunate that politics can perpetuate such a program under the legislative title "Predatory Animal Control" despite the objections of the duly-appointed conservation commissions and contrary to the recommendations of the wild life biologists in the conservation departments.

My dual capacity as a teacher of conservation and a conservation commissioner influenced the Izaak Walton League of Milwaukee to publish my *Note Book on Conservation Education*. Two thousand copies were distributed to teachers attending the 1928 Teachers Convention in Milwaukee. This distribution created a demand for literature on conservation education in Wisconsin. This in turn inspired me to prepare an enlarged manuscript. *Conservation of Renewable Resources* was published in 1939. The four editions were widely distributed in the Lake States area.

My resignation from the commission after nearly six years was long over due. Frequent absence from my school obligations and neglect of my private business in nursery and forest were sacrifices that neither my family nor I could well afford. Yet I never regretted the experience. I was richly rewarded by personal acquaintance with such people as Alfred Gross, Aldo Leopold, Sig Olson, Earnest Swift, Mrs. Edward La Budde, and many others who gave abundantly of their thought, time and talent in the cause of the preservation and conservation of America's natural resources.

Slabshack

*Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire.*

-William Shakespeare

After a dozen years, the little log cabin on the Thornapple had served its purpose and we put into effect our plan to replace it with a more suitable cottage. We decided to build on the exact spot where we had pitched our honeymoon tent. The new cottage was made by the labor of our own hands. All of the basic building materials came from our own woods. We hired a portable sawmill to saw the boards and even the cedar shingles.

More than just sentiment determined the site of the new family camp. We were well aware that higher ground a few rods back from the river would have afforded greater freedom from mosquitoes and the dangers that high water could pose. However, the little rapids and its perpetual music was a powerful attraction. The laws of physics inform us that the intensity of sound is inversely proportional to the square of the distance. We had to build within thirty feet of the river bank to achieve the perfect sound level.

One major problem had to be overcome first. Our property on the river was landlocked. The only direct land access was across property that belonged to someone else. This had been almost a blessing until plans for the new cottage were developed. The difficulty of access meant relatively few unwelcome visitors. But now we realized that we would have only limited use of the property if everything had to be carried in more than a mile from the nearest road.

Happily, the farmer who lived at the end of the county road and whose property adjoined ours had no objection to our building a road, which we proceeded to do. For the most part, this was a simple task. We built a small plank bridge over one drainage ditch. More of a challenge was a swampy area. Over the years we did more road work on this perhaps seventy yard stretch than on all the rest of the road.

The cottage was built on the installment plan and took several years. First there was the framework for a single room, about twenty by twenty, with a sleeping loft at one end accessed by a ladder. Having recently sawed logs to provide the necessary lumber, we had a good supply of slabs--that part of the outer edge of the log often with bark still attached., We decided to saw these so the width of each slab was uniform and to use them as the exterior sheeting. We placed them in a vertical position. The name Slabshack was almost at once adopted. The first addition was a kitchen and we started collecting field stone for a fireplace which was soon added. A few years later we built a screened porch across the entire west side facing the river.

When the cottage was completed we found out that what had been thought of as a summer place could be enjoyed all year long. In wintertime, of course, the road we had built was useless. Snowshoeing that last mile became a pleasure and we often enjoyed a pot of hot coffee and warm buns before returning. Overnights were not uncommon either, although the icy weather necessitated getting up to stoke the fire several times.

The gregarious instinct of human nature almost threatened to destroy the very thing we most prized at Slabshack--seclusion. A few friends who shared our philosophy also acquired property on the Thornapple, one above and one below Slabshack. Both of these friends also built cottages. Almost at once we regretted having neighbors, even though they were friends.

The neighbor up-river built an elegant log cabin. A few years later an accident involving a lantern and a bale of oakum burned this cabin completely down. It was never rebuilt.

The other cabin was a considerable distance downstream. It too was made of logs and was the least substantial of the three structures. It was built by our minister and we always referred to the cabin by his name which was Lambright. His family was able to enjoy their cabin for only a few years before he was transferred to another city. We then purchased that property. While Slabshack was always our first love, for a time we did use two cabins along the river.

Both Slabshack and Lambright narrowly escaped destruction by fire. The first fire started when workers who were cleaning the road to where the Lambright cabin would be built were careless in disposing of their ever-present cigarettes. The fire started about a quarter mile from Slabshack. Burt, my elder son, and I had gone out after supper to see how the road work had progressed. The workmen were gone and the fire had a good head start. Fortunately we had two fire cans at Slabshack used to keep the fire under control when we burned brush. A fire can is a water tank which can be strapped on one's back like a knapsack. A pump action spray head is attached to a short rubber hose. Like a garden hose, the spray can be adjusted to adapt to the situation. The two of us worked constantly with the water cans while the fire kept spreading. We would check the fire at one point only to have it break out anew at another. The flames kept getting closer to Slabshack. We were despairing of success and weak with fatigue as the cans were very heavy when full. Then, just after midnight, a gentle rain came to our relief. The fire slowly died out.

On a Labor Day several years later, a picnic party left a fire in a stump near the Lambright cabin. It smoldered for some time, and then, when it really got going, the smoke was spotted from a fire tower about five miles away. Now the same trail (to call it a road seems a bit too grand) that had provided access to the picnickers also provided easy access for the plow and bulldozer of the fire protection services. In little more than an hour the fire was surrounded by a broad furrow broken by the giant plow. This was a heartening demonstration of what can be accomplished with the proper equipment. This fire was contained without the help of rain.

History and literature make frequent reference to the trilogy of terrors--fire, famine and flood. So far in our time on the Thornapple we have not been overtaken by famine, but when fires threatened us the flood was not far behind.

Despite our concerns about siting Slabshack so close to the river we were never threatened by high water, even when the banks were overflowing.

Then, one August, after several years of very little rain, a torrential downpour covered all of north Wisconsin and continued with little respite for almost a week. The rivers of northern Wisconsin were out of their banks by August 16 and the rain continued to pour down. There was no doubt we would have water in the cabin. Twelve miles north on the Little Thornapple the local sportsmen had sponsored the construction of an earthen dam to impound a large acreage that would attract waterfowl for fall shooting. This loomed as a major peril for our cabin. If the dam gave way the flood waters would rise to unprecedented heights on the lower Thornapple.

The third day of the rain Stella and I watched all day and measured the rise every hour. The river rose between two and three inches an hour most of the day. Then at dusk our hourly reading recorded a sharp rise. We felt sure that the mud dam had gone out. This proved to be true.

We watched all night from the high ground behind the cabin and saw the water rising above the door sill. A few hours later it lapped at the window sills. By midnight we could see only the upper sash of the double windows. We were sure that the end had come for our Slabshack on the Thornapple. When we measured the rise of that last hour, we saw that the increase was slightly less than the increase of the preceding hour. This was no reason for optimism for the rise would naturally be slower as the surface of the water became wider. But during the following hour there was a much smaller rise and at three a.m. there was a perceptible drop below the two a.m. reading.

At this time the water was lapping the eaves of the kitchen roof and the large windows were completely inundated, but the cabin still held fast. We walked out to our car, drove home for a short rest and returned a little after daylight. Slabshack still stood out there in a swirling flood. The watermark we had last set up showed a drop of several inches. We were certain now that the cabin would survive.

More than two days passed before the water receded below the floor of the cabin. On the third day we viewed the desolation and started to restore a semblance of order. Every square inch below the roof was covered, one could say plastered, with mud. The reed organ, a family relic that had served well at many song fests in the cabin, was completely ruined. Tables and chairs were all loose in the joints. The walls were covered with mud.

Among the cherished things that were destroyed or badly damaged was the guest book. Fortunately the book was kept in a cardboard box which was left on the fireplace mantle. It escaped being completely ruined for it remained on the plank mantle which floated on an even keel until the flood waters receded. We found the mantle with its cargo on the floor at the opposite end of the cabin. The native buoyancy of our cedar plank mantle had saved the precious record of those twelve years when our three children and their friends had shared in every adventure and every task at Slabshack on the Thornapple.

Woodmaking Tools

The owner of the axe, as he released his hold on it, said that it was the apple of his eye; but I returned it sharper than I received it.

-Henry David Thoreau

Over the first fifteen to twenty years of my activities in the nursery, the Cedars, and the expanding Thornapple property, I had no problem hiring either a single horse or a team of horses to do the chores that in those years required horse power. Sometimes I was the teamster, but more often I hired the horse or both horse and owner. I became aware over the years that even some of these local people, so recently removed from the logging era, didn't know what I was talking about when I referred to a *go-devil* or a *stone boat*. In the interest of preserving at least a sketchy record of some of the "tools of the trade" from the logging era and from the days when pioneer farmers cleared the land they would farm, here are my recollections concerning some of them.

Axes, saws, wedges and chains were purchased. Much of the logging apparatus, however, was fashioned by the user himself.

Some kind of conveyance is needed to hold the ends of the logs off the ground for skidding. A simple contrivance for this purpose is the *go-devil*. It is made by bolting two natural hardwood crooks (a curved piece of log) together at the curved end and securing them with a bunk (crosspiece) across the center, giving the contrivance the appearance of a large capital A. The logs to be skidded were then secured across the bunk with chains.

Another device was needed to remove rocks from fields that were to be plowed or from roads or for a score of other uses. The *stone boat* was a simple flat platform usually about four feet by six feet in size. It was made by selecting two six foot poles with either a natural crook at one end or with one end shaped like a sleigh runner. Sturdy planks were then nailed across the two poles. The front plank was bolted and a chain attached to which the horse or horses were hitched.

A *jumper* is a two-runner wooden sled. It is built higher off the ground than a stone boat and is used where the terrain is too rough to accommodate other devices. A really serviceable jumper required fine workmanship.

Special equipment is needed to deck logs. In the logging years, logs were usually decked on the bank of a river where they could be rolled into the water for a log drive. If the transportation was to be by sleigh or railroad, the deck had to be higher off the ground. To load or deck logs a *jammer* was used. This is a derrick run by steam engine, gas engine, or horsepower.

Some of the jobs in winter logging operations also have interesting titles. A *road monkey* is a workman whose duty was to keep the logging roads in good repair and to help the teamsters at difficult places, usually hills. A *wood butcher* was the craftsman who built and repaired the logging sleds, water tanks, go-devils, and all the other pieces of equipment that were used. A *swamper* was a woodsman who cleared away underbrush, slashings, and saplings that would otherwise obstruct the passage of the skidding teams. The sole implement of his office was a sharp axe. The *bull cook*, unlike what the name might imply, was a general camp flunky and alarm clock. He started the fires, called out the crew, chopped the firewood, and was never permitted to have anything to do with preparing food.

Needless to say, in the miniature logging operations that I have undertaken, I am road monkey, swamper, wood butcher, bull cook, as well as the *bona fide cook*, sawyer and teamster. In short, most often I was the whole crew.

A word about the hand tools--the axes and saws, and the canthook. The canthook, already a thing of the past, was a straight-handled tool with a toe ring on the base of the stock. About a foot or so above the toe ring was a curved metal hook designed to fit around a log. It was used to roll logs.

My experience has been that woodsmen become almost personally attached to their axes and saws. I have a collection of axes that range from a Junior Plumb to a two and a half pound Kelly. I never liked the single-bladed axe, so mine are all double-bitted. Of these, I have a special favorite, one I don't admit to having when friends want to borrow an axe.

The lack of understanding of how to use these tools of the woods always amazes me. I have loaned a beautifully sharpened axe only to have it returned with unbelievable damage, even huge chips out of the blade. Sometimes it has been used to split wood on a gravel or even concrete driveway or to chop stumps out of a lawn or garden. Most surprising of all is that the borrower usually is oblivious to the damage.

With saws the problem is even greater. I once loaned my perfectly sharpened one-man crosscut saw to a neighbor. When it was returned I couldn't believe that there were any logs that could have caused so much damage. Then I learned that the saw had been used to cut up a telephone pole richly inlaid with spikes, bolts and nails. Almost every loan of a saw meant resetting and filing before it could be used again with pleasure.

On the other hand, I have discovered from time to time, often in the most unlikely places, kindred spirits who not only know how to use the axe and saw but also how to keep them in perfect condition. In this company I count a college president, a medical doctor, and a doctor of divinity. We join with such noted Americans as Henry Thoreau, Theodore Roosevelt, and Calvin Coolidge in our appreciation of axes, saws and woodmaking.

To the wood chopper, perhaps the most insignificant product of "making wood" is the wood itself. The real compensations come in other forms. The appetite satisfied by unusually large portions of liver sausage, rye bread and coffee prepared over an open fire. The sharing of that meal with the chickadees or Canada jays. Perhaps the most satisfying reward is in finding a time and place for contemplation. Woodmaking permits meditation.

Trespass, Vandalism and Robbery

*As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,
I've got a little list--I've got a little list
Of society offenders who might well be under ground
And who never would be missed--who never would be missed!*
-W. S. Gilbert

Our cedar forty is a rare remnant. It escaped destruction by fire in the early decades of the century only because it was too wet to burn. When we acquired the tract, it had already suffered heavy timber trespass north of the railroad, but the stand of cedar south of the track was inaccessible because trespassing loggers could not cross the railroad without an approved grade crossing which would not be furnished to anyone who could not show title to the property. Three major assaults occur on such wild land areas. These are timber trespass, hunting or trapping violations, and vandalism. In an area like the cedars the timber trespass is the most serious. Here are some instances.

An enterprising citizen who lived about two blocks from my home in Ladysmith was engaged in the wholesale Christmas tree business. He loaded out several carloads each December at the railroad landing in Ladysmith. On a Saturday morning in early December when I arrived at the north side of the Cedars I met a man coming out of the woods with a team of horses and a huge sled load of balsam Christmas trees. The man had been employed by the local Christmas tree dealer with instructions to select the trees from this particular forty and deliver them at the railroad landing. I am sure that neither the teamster nor the dealer knew that the trees belonged to me. The error obviously occurred because this forty had for many years been listed as delinquent land. Before county governments employed foresters to check delinquent lands, there was much timber trespass on such tracts with only an occasional arrest. I instructed the teamster to haul the load to my nursery and report to his employer. The trees were delivered as requested. I sold them in my Christmas trade and never heard another word about the transaction.

The second important trespass involved cedar fence posts. In March of 1936 we were hauling fuel wood by horse power from across the railroad to our landing where we would later cut it to stove lengths. While unloading our first load we heard a tree crash down. I soon discovered that two men had cut down most of the fine cedars on the north side of the forty. The men had obtained an order for two hundred cedar fence posts at a local lumber yard. I followed their logging trail to their farm home and found an abandoned barn almost full of fine cedar posts. Settlement was made on the same pattern as the Christmas tree deal. I had them deliver the posts to the lumber yard and the buyer paid me for the posts. The man who I had employed to haul wood that day was the brother-in-law of one of the post snatchers. Clearly there was no great bond of brother-in-law love between them.

On a morning in early November I walked out to the Cedars by way of the railroad. When I came within a few rods of the crossing, I heard the sound of poles being loaded on a truck at my wood landing. Two men had come in with a huge truck and were helping themselves to my wood pile. I should have approached them through the woods instead of rushing down the road in full view. They saw me when I was still a dozen rods away. They jumped into the cab like acrobats and bounced away over the rough road. Every pole bounced off before they reached the highway so there was no loss other than my time spent reassembling the poles scattered over eighty rods.

On examining the woodpile to see if any previous trips had been made, I found two good fifteen foot logging chains that would have securely bound a fine load of my pole wood if I had been a half hour later in arriving at the crossing. The two chains are still serving us well.

Two instances of juvenile trespass were more amusing than offensive. The two boys in the first instance were conspicuous discipline problems in the junior high school. They disappeared after a clash with the principal and gave the parents and local officers a troubled week. Since the season was mid-winter and the region Northern Wisconsin, the chief concern was how and where the boys could be comfortable and safe at that time of year.

After what must have been a very long week for four worried parents, I had occasion to visit the Cedars on a Saturday morning. As soon as I got into the woods south of the tracks I was sure that the prodigal sons had found Cedar Hut. Obviously they had come with the intention of living off the land. Every rabbit runway that crossed the trail between the railroad and the cabin had a snare or trap in plain sight. The boys weren't in the camp, but the fire in the stove, a horse blanket on one of the bunks, and dirty dishes frozen together on the table by the door were evidence of their occupancy.

When the boys came in, they were greatly surprised to see me. I was taken aback too, for I had never seen a tougher looking pair of teen-age boys. They probably had not taken their clothes off during the entire week. They certainly had not washed their hands or faces and they probably had eaten nothing but a rabbit and a couple of squirrels. The area about three or four feet from the door had served as their disposal system during their occupation of the camp. I made them remove the debris and bury it several rods away from the camp.

The only real damage was in their choice of fuel. I had a pile of twenty-five or thirty cedar posts ready to haul to the landing. These they used for fuel by chopping them into stove-lengths with my camp axe. I am sure they must have had a crackling good time around the old box stove with such expensive fuel.

The boys admitted that their week in the woods was somewhat tougher than a week in school. They consented to walk back to town with me in spite of the prospect of returning to school on Monday.

There have been at least two instances of commercial trespass. One was a small retail operation but the other was a big wholesale proposition. The retailer was a seventeen year old farm boy who decided to do a little local business in Christmas trees. He took his father's team and drove down the trail behind my nursery office where he chopped down twenty tall spruces none of them under thirty feet and lopped out an eight or ten foot tree from each top which he sold at twenty-five cents each.

The wholesale case was much more impressive. One December morning I found a respectable looking elderly man in my balsams with a team and sled engaged in loading trees. I knew at once by his actions that he was not committing a deliberate trespass. He explained that he had been hired to cut and haul several loads of these trees to the railroad landing where a box car load of Christmas trees was being assembled. Crews of men and boys were also working up and down the highways and side roads in every direction out of Ladysmith. These crews delivered balsam and spruce trees at the roadsides where they were gathered up by trucks and transferred to the car on the landing. For four or five years this particular tree merchant preyed on the roadside evergreens of at least three counties. Carload lots were shipped from many points and I would estimate that his operations cost the landscape at least 25,000 fine evergreens taken chiefly from along the roadsides and other easily accessible places like my wood lot.

Surely there is nothing in the whole calendar of seasonal trespassing that is less Christian than the common practices employed in obtaining Christmas trees in both private and commercial quantities. The plague of roads and automotive vehicles that fell upon rural America during the decades of this chronicle brought an offensive and unsavory debris of unethical practices. Not the least among these was the tremendous increase in the wholesale thievery of Christmas trees. Men in fleets of giant trucks foraged the road-riddled wilderness and went away with tens of thousands of trees. As legislation slowly evolved to cope with the situation, these merchants were gradually pushed into other occupations.

Beside these scattered instances of timber trespass, all cottage owners are victims of endless pilfering and house breaking by resident and transient vandals. The transient vandal usually comes by car and makes a specialty of smashing private gates. No obstacle is so sure to arouse the contempt of some people as a keep-out sign and a padlock on a private gate. I have had to repair or replace my gate on the Thornapple an average of twice a year. Gate-smashing artists that I have apprehended included city fishermen and their wives, numerous hunters, and even one minister.

Many "sportsmen" enjoy a special form of vandalism. After shooting down the keep-out signs, they shoot holes through cottage stove pipes or metal chimneys. They occasionally make a complete job of shooting out every window in a cottage.

One summer two friends from Rockford, Illinois paid us a surprise visit just as we were leaving for a two-day trip into Northern Michigan. Since our trip could not be postponed, the only hospitality we could offer our guests was the use of our home on the Flambeau or the cottage on the Thornapple or both. The prospect of a few days in the woods appealed to them, so we gave them the keys and bade them goodbye.

On our return we found a note left by them at the town house. It was a detailed account of a robbery they had experienced. While they were in Ladysmith getting provisions, a prowling vandal entered the cabin and carried off their traveling bags and every necessity that they had brought with them, all within an hour of their arrival at the camp.

House breaking is so common at the cottage that I do not attempt to keep a complete record in my diary. The first camp stood unmolested for several years, but when it was finally looted the job was complete in every detail. They took the stove, dishes, lantern, trunk, bedding, axe and hammer. In fact, they took every last thing the camp contained and for good measure included the door and the two windows.

The odd fancies of house breakers are sometimes hard to account for. One visitor took the hasp off the door of my cedar camp. The door wasn't even locked. He simply wanted that fifteen cent piece of hardware and must have carried a screwdriver with him in order to get it off.

A midwinter caller took the oars of my duck boat and early one spring a young man's fancy led him to make off with my canoe. Fish poles, guns, almost any items of sporting equipment are almost sure to be carried off, but seldom does an intruder show any interest in a man-sized axe or cross-cut saw. This may throw some light on one characteristic of house breakers.

The most amusing theft so far was revealed one morning in the nursery. I found two great excavations where someone had laboriously dug two large golden willows the night before. The willows in that block were overgrown and worthless in the nursery trade. I would gladly have given anyone the whole lot for taking them away. Nothing ever amused Claude, my somber field man, more than this incident. He emitted the one and only wisecrack I ever heard him make. "Now won't it be hell if those willows die and that guy comes back for a replacement."

No kind of trespass can be more annoying than that which involves the devastating movement of livestock herds over one's property. My nurseries and the Thornapple property have both been the happy hunting grounds for herds of hungry cows. The dumb marauders have not come from adjacent farms, but from places two miles distant. Cows and cars have two things in common: horns and a determination to pursue every trail and by-road to its very end. At least cars do not leave that offensive green slime in their wake.

The two herds that have given me many a headache and cost me a tidy loss of property and temper were the Sweet and Osborn herds. Sweet's hungry Holsteins numbered in the thirties the last time they visited my nurseries. After an hour or two of reveling in my peonies or raspberries, the scene would be a shambles. Two or three lesser Sweets would eventually arrive on horseback and gallop through what little remained of my gardens and drive off the offenders with a great flourish of western cowmanship.

One Saturday afternoon, a customer selected a special lot of fine Arbor Vitae for a landscape job. He left instructions for the stock to be balled and burlapped and ready to be picked up early on Sunday morning. The trees were properly prepared and placed by the driveway behind the office. But that night the Sweet herd descended *en masse* and defoliated every tree in the lot as completely as could have been done by an invasion of army worms. They must have bivouacked for the night under the friendly shelter of the pine grove, for there were scores of green puddles, round and symmetrical, deposited during their leisurely rumina-

tion of the lush and aromatic supper I had set for them. The conference with Sweet the next morning was not a proper Sunday service. Sweet did promise to reimburse the amount of the damaged order, but he never did.

At the time I didn't think I had made much of an impression on this ex-lawyer dairyman, but there was a sequel which indicated otherwise. This came to light during another Sunday morning service held in the Osborn barnyard the following spring.

The Osborn Guernseys annoyed me for three years. The practice of this gentleman was to send his wife or small boy to retrieve the trespassing cattle. I relayed various bits of advice to farmer Osborn regarding fences and other obvious matters.

Cattle are passionately fond of the foliage and tender shoots of basswoods and basswoods are among the choicest of the arboreal resources along the Thornapple. The Osborn herd browsed not only off the shoots and lower foliage, but they learned that the trees up to three inches in diameter were easily pushed over by walking into the clumps. In this manner they were able to completely defoliate basswoods up to fifteen feet high. After taking their fill of this choice foliage, it was the ugly ungulates unfailing practice to follow the trail to the cottage. Here they would put their stomachs in reverse and recline in the cool shade of the cottage park with that contentment which only a ruminant can understand. Before returning down the river trail they would be sure to lay a mosaic of green puddles over the entire grounds.

At least three of the cows wore bells and I shall always remember the exact pitch of their approaching discord, although the short intervals of silence were even more aggravating.

But I had my day in a most unexpected way. Mr. Osborn did not know that C. N. Gray of Minneapolis who owned the river property joining his on the east was my brother-in-law. Being an absentee owner, Mr. Gray's property was especially subject to the usual timber trespass. He therefore had vested in me the power of attorney to deal with any emergencies that might arise. The property being a few miles off my regular beat, I arranged with William Turnbull, who lived close to it, to inform me of any irregularity he might observe.

Turnbull informed me one day that "Guernsey" Osborn was apparently preparing to log off the pines on this property. The following Sunday morning I drove out to investigate. Going over the land with Turnbull, I found that only five rather second rate trees had been cut, but the brushing out of skid roads clearly indicated that Osborn intended to cut the entire grove of Norway and white pines. This grove and an alluring wooded ravine were the assets that had intrigued Mr. Gray to invest in the property.

I had never met Osborn, but I had been advised that if I called on him I would find myself in a veritable bull pen and might be received with assault and battery.

I drove into his yard and up to the pump where he was doing some chore. I gave him my best smile and emitted the usual pleasantries. I even remarked favorably on his Guernsey herd which for the moment at least were not browsing my basswoods but were sunning themselves in genuine contentment by the south exposure of the barn.

I approached the immediate problem by remarking that I represented Mr. C. N. Gray and that I had just observed a matter of trespass which I would either settle on the spot for the nominal sum of ten dollars or turn over to the sheriff on my return to town.

Osborn sparred a little with a feeble alibi about confusion over the exact location of the property line and finished with an offer to settle for \$5.00.

At this point it occurred to him that my identity was not clear and that he could refuse to settle on the grounds that I might be an impostor. I told him my name and suggested that he invite his wife or boy out to introduce us. Right then my efforts on that other Sunday morning bore fruit. Mr. Osborn took a deep breath to support a full measure of contempt and uttered this astonishing finish to the whole affair.

"Oh, so you are *that* Dahlberg who has the summer cottage up the river. Say, I'm going to give you your ten dollars. I know all about you. Your neighbor Sweet told me."

So that was that and while Sweet's promise to pay amounted to nothing, his advice to the Guernsey man made this claim payable on sight. I gave the disputed logs to Bill Turnbull for his vigilance which must have turned Osborn's ruddy hue to a deep, dark green.

I have suffered no Guernsey invasions since that day, and the Sweets and their Holsteins have migrated to distant pastures beyond the range of my pines and peonies.

The most common form of trespass that all rural lands are subjected to is that of sportsmen and hunters. I use both terms advisedly because some sportsmen are very sensitive about too broad a use of the term. In fact, there are those who will contend that sportsmen do not trespass; that if a hunter trespasses he is not a sportsman. But this is merely a quibble over words. The truth is that hunters with or without licenses constitute an undisciplined armed force. Squads, troops and regiments of this standing army go into action at the call of conservation departments whenever there is a surplus of wildlife or a need of funds--which means approximately the same thing in political game conservation circles.

The issue between the hunter and the private property owner becomes more acute with each passing year. The popular theory that the game belongs to the state is the foundation and justification of the license system of game management. But in spite of this theory and the power of many conservation departments to declare open season when and where they please, a tendency is growing to recognize the right of private property against all kinds of trespass.

In the opinion of many hunters, no practice is more despicable than the posting of private lands to save some hunting for the owner's family. Close by my cabin on the Thorapple, a mother ruffed grouse raised a beautiful family of ten to legal shooting size. Scarcely a day passed that summer that we did not see these birds around our camp. Came noon of October second and open season on ruffed grouse. I arrived at the camp about 12:30. The smoke had already cleared away and five piles of guts lay between the gate and the cabin. But the birds belonged to the state and no doubt the hunters had licenses.

The genuine sportsmen, of which there are many, are sponsoring various programs to procure public shooting grounds and thus to some extent relieve the clash between landowners and hunters. Landowners are finding it profitable to cooperate and offer good hunting areas at a special admission fee by the day or season. In most of these cases the hunter agrees to pay for any horses, cows, pigs, or barnyard fowl that he mistakes for valid game.

To conclude these comments about trespass, here is an experience that might be called trespass by remote control. It exposes a kind of real estate traffic that still thrives in many places, yet few people are aware of it.

An eighty acre tract lying south of my Thornapple forty had a stand of moderately valuable and very attractive timber. A perpetual nightmare for twenty years was the realization that those evergreen woods within sight of my camp might be slashed any winter and I would be powerless to prevent it. I watched the property to prevent any wholesale trespass because of my desire to preserve its charming wilderness character. Even so, at least two large barns have found there way out of these woods and onto nearby farms.

In 1933 the list of delinquent taxes included these two descriptions. I lost no time in taking up the certificates at the court house. The state law allows a five year delinquency before a property is sold for taxes, so I faithfully bought up those certificates for five years.

In August 1938 I received notice that I could procure tax title to the property by presenting the five certificates. I acquired and recorded the tax title and proceeded to examine my woods for needed improvements.

October 14, 1938 was a most unusual day for these parts. We had a howling twenty-four hour blizzard. Tons of wet snow lodged against the evergreens and countless thousands of cedars, spruces, hemlocks and balsams in the boggy grounds were pushed over by the combined weight of the snow and the force of the wind since the bogs were not frozen solid enough to hold the roots in place. Just two months after acquiring this eighty acres I had a fair-sized logging job thrust upon me by the elements.

During the Thanksgiving weekend I started to salvage the timber. While I was at it, Bill Schaad, who owned the adjoining 100 acres of land and the lake, came over to inquire if I had come to terms with the fellows who wanted to buy the timber. This was the first I had heard about any timber prospectors.

The following Monday, a real estate man called to inquire if I would be interested in a cash deal on that eighty acres. I told the gentleman why I had purchased the property and that I certainly was not interested in making it possible for someone to strip the land and leave it to the county again.

A week later the most interesting part of the deal came to light. I learned that a tavern keeper had actually paid that real estate man cash for my eighty acres. But when the land man went to the court house to procure the title so he could legally convey the property he had sold, he was confronted with the embarrassing discovery that it belonged to me. I am not sure what kind of a scene there was at the tavern when the shrewd salesman returned with the money, but I was told that all patrons who happened to be there enjoyed a drink at his expense, so the matter must have ended in good spirits.

This incident is just a sample of thousands of deals that have been put over by "land sharks" who play the old and profitable tax title game. The deal that I spoiled in this case would have made a profit of over 400% for the land man. Perhaps this was not trespass, but it was something on that order.

I am sure that this chronicle of trespassing will only serve to put the narrator in a bad light with many readers who have not been annoyed by trespassing. To understand the author's point of view, it is only necessary to acquire a small acreage of our cherished rocks and rills in at least three parcels separated from each other by two or three miles and try to practice an economic administration of the resources of these lands against the onslaught of trespassing bipeds and quadrupeds. After twenty years or so of this, I do not doubt the reader would join me in my denouncements of all who trespass.

Porcupines, Woodchucks and Skunks

No humane being, past the thoughtless age of boyhood, will wantonly murder any creature, which holds life by the same tenure that he does.

-Henry David Thoreau

In my lifelong familiarity with porcupines I had never heard their eerie nocturnal mating song until the summer of 1916. The sound suggested all the suffering and savagery of bloody murder and we were almost convinced it was nothing less. Stella and I paddled our canoe up past the forks without making a sound. Then near the waters edge we saw two amorous porcupines clumsily shuffling off into the dark woods. I have since auditioned a repeat performance of this awful ritual one night on the Flambeau.

The porcupine, like the skunk, suffers perennial persecution by foresters, farmers and hunters. This is the attitude that is sometimes described as the inability to see the forest for the trees. Ecologists and biologists are aware that the porcupine, like every other native mammal, is an asset in its relation to the forest. When we replace our natural forests with pure stands of planted trees in a geometrical pattern, the porcupine will no longer be needed.

For several decades the Cedars has failed to yield any reproduction of porcupines. Suppose the trappers and hunters could have suppressed their zeal to shoot down every porcupine. And suppose that the bounty hunters had permitted a token population of fox, coyote, and wildcat to remain. Under those conditions a limited population of deer and rabbits could survive on the browse dropped from the treetops by porcupines feeding there. This was nature's pattern under which those incomparable forests of pine, hemlock and cedar in the Great Lakes area flourished until less than a century ago.

Recently a professional forester was assisting a committee from a high school senior class in locating a bearing tree in their school forest along the Thornapple. An observant boy noticed that the bark had been eaten off in some of tops of the tamaracks. He called attention to this by saying, "I see we have at least one porcupine left in the school forest." To this comment the professional forester replied immediately and emphatically, "That's one too many."

While the species can still be said to exist in the school forest and along the Thornapple River, there is only a dim hope that they can survive another score of years. Porcupines are listed along with coyotes, wildcats, foxes, skunks and weasels as "unprotected at all times." It is indeed unfortunate if professional foresters recommend total extermination of porcupines.

The porcupine in the pioneer era was highly respected for a reason that our mid-century citizen can hardly comprehend. The earliest pioneers and their families were constantly fearful of being lost in the forest wilderness. This was not for fear of the wild animals but for the more realistic probability of starvation. These pioneers knew that a porcupine on the ground will not attack but will take a tense stance which erects all of its quills making attack by any animal impossible. However, man can dispatch a porcupine by a single blow on the head, and thus acquire a reasonably palatable source of food for survival. This provision can keep a lost man alive indefinitely or until he finds his way out or is found by others.

Owing to this important emergency value, pioneers throughout the north timber country adopted a policy of tolerance of the porcupine. Probably no later law for the protection of wildlife was ever so carefully observed as was this voluntary law for human survival.

A myth regarding this species is its reputed talent of "shooting" its quills. Dogs and livestock do sometimes return from a night out with their noses bristling with inverted quills. These quills were by no means discharged through space at unsuspecting victims. When a dog or a cow comes close enough to threaten a porcupine, he simply slaps their faces with devastating evidence that he means business. However, we still hear fantastic tales about porcupines shooting their quills. Perhaps a pardonable pun is that porcupines do have FANTASTIC TAILS.

Woodchucks have been all but exterminated in this area by a bounty law. Game biologists have discovered that the decrease in small game, especially cottontail rabbits, is directly connected with the extermination of woodchucks. Research has shown that woodchuck burrows are often used by rabbits to escape their carnivorous enemies. In many areas woodchucks have not been seen for several years. Seldom do we hear or see any mention of them, other than the perennial weather forecast that newspaper editors never fail to mention in February.

A memorable incident occurred at Slabshack some years before the woodchuck purge. During three or four weeks each year, we cannot visit our camp on the Thornapple owing to the impassable condition of the roads during the spring break-up. This period of impassability usually coincides with the emergence of groundhogs from their hibernation.

People who have summer camps often furnish them with cast-off furniture from the family residence. Slabshack has been the final resting place for a truck load of such castoffs. One of the early consignments included two wicker rocking chairs. In our kitchen we had constructed a large cupboard with composition panel doors to protect the contents from raids by mice and chipmunks.

When we arrived at Slabshack that spring we were amazed to discover that every wisp of wicker was gone from the rocking chairs. They stood there, stark skeletons of what we had left by the fireplace where we had coffee and doughnuts on our last snowshoe trip in early March.

We were sure that it could not have been termites; some kind of creature had entered our cabin. In searching for the point of entry we discovered a hole in the kitchen cabinet door. This at first seemed fantastic; surely we could not have locked an animal in the cabinet. We soon discovered that a woodchuck had gnawed a hole through the cedar flooring, then through the cabinet bottom, and finally through the door.

The skeletonized chairs were of no further use to man or rodent, but we enjoyed the transient warmth when we burned them in the fireplace that afternoon.

One summer while Burt and John were fishing from the canoe, one of them hooked a snag that turned out to be a wire fish trap. At that time, such traps were commonly used by violators on the Thornapple and other wild rivers. A fish trap is a wire cage made of small mesh chicken wire with a funnel entrance in one end.

The boys hoisted the trap aboard the canoe and brought it back to Slabshack. Thinking he might be interested, we reported the incident to the local game warden. Then all of us, including the game warden, forgot about the fish trap which we had left behind the cabin.

In early October the boys and I went out to the Thornapple to build about fifteen rods of fence. While brushing out the line we came close to the abandoned fish trap. We were about to pull it out of our way when we discovered a live skunk in it.

We were sure that the skunk's release alive would be a very smelly business. Yet we felt an obligation to release it since we had neglected to destroy the trap. At least we would finish our job first to avoid working in an unpleasant atmosphere.

About mid-afternoon we finished everything that could be done before disposing of the captive. By this time the skunk had become accustomed to our movements and we were able to approach without causing any apparent distress on the skunk's part.

Then we discovered that in the cage with the skunk were the remains of a partridge's wings, feet and feathers. This explained the situation. The skunk, prowling through the thicket, flushed a partridge that was very close to the trap. In its explosive flight the partridge went through the funnel and was caught inside with the skunk close behind. The repast must have been everything a skunk could desire, because it was so sated that it had not yet considered that there might be a problem.

Maneuvering the skunk out of the trap through the wrong end of the funnel was impossible. We decided to cut the other end out of the trap or at least cut a hole in it. The skunk seemed interested in our movements and came right up to the end of the cage where I was cutting an opening with wire cutters. John pulled the cut portion aside and stepped a few feet

away from the trap. The skunk made an indifferent examination of the partridge remains and then walked out of the cage and into the underbrush along the river as if the whole affair were routine.

Recently I read an article describing the symptoms of a rabies infected skunk--its fearless attitude and a tendency to approach a person. The writer described all of the characteristics I have observed in skunks as far back as I can remember.

Some skunks have been adopted as household pets and others have lived in barns with cats and cattle. Wallace and Hazel Grange had a family of skunks living under their doorstep at Sandhill Game Farm when I last visited there. The arrangement seemed to have the approval of their two dogs.

About Gardens and Forests

*Give Fools Their Gold and Knaves their power,
Let Fortunes bubble rise and fall.
Who sows a field or plants a tree or trains a flower
Is more than all.*

-author?

Many different motivating influences prompt people to become gardeners. Some folk plant merely as a sort of social obligation to the community in which they live. These people would never think of pruning a tree or planting a flower unless such operations were in conformance with adjacent lots. I do not condemn conformist gardeners; every community should be grateful for them. They are willing to have their grounds take on the approved appearance even if it has no particular appeal to them personally.

Then there is the garden version of the old urge to keep up with the Joneses or, better still, keep ahead of them. This type of gardener is proud to have the best looking spruce in his block.

But the urge that motivates most gardeners is the old ancestral agricultural background of us all, that inborn desire to put our hands and feet in God's good earth.

The physical discipline that attended every occupation of our forefathers has been effectively dissolved by the modern ways of life. The machine age has foisted upon us a leisure that compels us to restrict most of our gainful employment to forty hours a week. The art of walking practically disappears at forty (when life begins) and many of my good friends haven't walked for pleasure in years. Against untimely abdominal inflation and hardening of the arteries, an effective antidote is available to all--the pursuit of some form of garden or landscape activity.

In my city the roll call of dirt gardeners includes a doctor's wife whose beautiful gallirias, delphiniums and heliotropes have been tended these twenty years by her own hands. My editor neighbor cannot find hours enough to labor with his extraordinary collection of "glads"

and his flawless lawn. The merchant down our street devotes every day that he can spare from his business to the landscaping of a hundred acre campground for the youth of his religious denomination. A county agent has been the founder and landscaper of a river campsite for the 4-H clubs of this county. These acres are being converted into an interesting arboretum under his ceaseless and enthusiastic administration. The lawyer down the street is a great lover of the native things in the landscape. His home grounds have been made attractive chiefly with the plants native to the north Wisconsin woods.

In the spring of 1936 I undertook the administration of a forest project which has since increased four-fold and promises to become one of the most interesting undertakings of its kind. Tragedy came to the Ladysmith High School class of 1936 in the untimely death of their beloved class president. When spring came around that year, the senior class memorial committee had more than tradition to guide their selection of a class memorial. The class unanimously desired to dedicate a living memorial to the memory of their deceased classmate. Upon examining previous class memorials, the committee discovered that many had been lost, destroyed or discarded. They decided this memorial should be one that could not be destroyed, lost or defaced by vandals or the careless indifference of future students. It should be a memorial which time would enhance rather than hamper or erase.

One suggestion meeting all these requirements was that the class purchase forty acres of Rusk County land and assign the administration of it to the biology department to be managed as a school forest. The suggestion was met with overwhelming approval and a site was selected just four miles west of the high school.

I have never heard a senior class memorial presentation given with greater sincerity than that of the boy who spoke the sentiments of his class on this occasion. He said--

I appeal to the youth of Ladysmith, to classmates and school mates and to those who shall follow us in the years to come, that you preserve and protect this memorial forest. It is our wish that this land shall be managed as a school forest. It is our hope that forty thousand trees may be planted there; that, as the years pass, it may become an ever more beautiful symbol of the sunny disposition and engaging personality of our departed classmate.

Even before this presentation was made, over six thousand trees had been planted along the highway. By June of the following spring the forty acres had been planted with forty thousand pines and spruce in keeping with the wish of the donors.

When graduation time came for the class of 1937 they decided to add forty acres to be incorporated with that of the class of 1936 as part of the Ladysmith High School Memorial Forest. Subsequent classes have added two more forties. These 160 acres are covered with a stand of native hardwood and over 90 acres have already been under-planted to the more valuable species of pines and spruces. The project enjoys the kindly cooperation of the State Conservation Service; trees are furnished free from the Forest Nurseries and the tools for preparing and planting are always available for the asking at the local Ranger Headquarters situated exactly half way between the school and the forest. The rangers maintain a vigilant watch over these and a million more acres of potential northern forest.

Here is an adventure in education which I consider most practical and worthwhile. The planting so far has been done by the biology and agriculture departments. In two or three field days each spring crews of fifty to seventy students have planted from twenty to thirty acres annually. Here the students are able to comprehend a cross section of nature's scheme. The complete fauna and flora of an entire section of America is arranged here across a mile of native landscape over which this little forest stretches. In it the indigenous varieties of wild flowers, shrubs and trees can find habitat to accommodate them. Bird life abounds providing pleasure to observers in all seasons. So also is the forest a haven for the native mammals--the snowshoe hare, the cotton tail, and the mice are suppressed in their destruction of the trees by resident weasels, skunks, owls and hawks. Here we can see nature's great plan of natural selection whose only disturbance is human. If every school in America could have a piece of nearby landscape on which to observe and preserve or restore a small pattern of nature's handiwork, who can say what new levels of outdoor appreciation and conservation would be attained in a generation.

Conservation and restoration of the native landscape, so far as it is consistent with the legitimate progress of agriculture and industry, is the greatest social and civic obligation of American garden folk. My hope is that we all contribute not only to the beautification of our own property, but also to that larger landscape that embraces our beloved "woods and templed hills."

Many notable landscape projects have a doubtful if not a negative relation to the beauty of the landscape. I have not seen the colossal carving of those historic faces at Mount Rushmore in the scenic hills of South Dakota. Neither do I question the talent of those engaged in executing this tremendous undertaking. I am not sure, however, that I would be thrilled to see those familiar faces peering out of those ancient rocks across the canyon. The thought of it seems a little like a grim jest; one is confused between the dignity and humiliation of it. Do those venerable rocks dignify the likenesses of those great but transient humans? Or do the stone faces of these men humble that ancient mountain which raised its head above the broad planes before man was.

The most encouraging aspect of the conservation of the greater landscape is the nationwide tendency toward reforestation and forest conservation. All friends of the native landscape are happy to see the sweeping strides in national and state forestry programs. Counties, townships and even a few cities have followed the trend and are engaged in the better administration of their forest resources. Commercial forestry likewise is acquiring a conservation attitude. In many operations selective cutting and slash disposal are now normal forestry practices.

Perhaps my early training in the wood lot of my father's farm was responsible for my adoption of wood lot management for a hobby when I came to Ladysmith. Over the years my hobby has been a source of much wholesome exercise and needed revenue. The fundamental principle is that the landscape forester aims not to exploit or deplete his resources but rather to develop and enhance the area under his administration. The intermittent employment schedule

of a school master fits in admirably with the forestry hobby. Saturdays are generally available for a workout and there are the usual sixteen weeks of vacation without pay when most teachers have to go job hunting anyhow.

People in other professions or in business may not have these handy periods of unemployment in which to practice forestry. Nevertheless I know of doctors, merchants, lawyers and preachers who are engaged in forestry projects small and large.

Joining my Thornapple property on the west is an eighty acre tract along the river owned by a preacher who resides nearly 100 miles away. This property is used only as a summer vacation camp and the natural landscape is preserved. The forty acres to the east are beginning to green up conspicuously with the pine plantings of the county superintendent of schools. To the south, a school teacher from Milwaukee maintains over two hundred acres under a strict program of soil and forest conservation. I do not know whether my efforts inspired these other activities, but I do know that the movement is spreading. There is no reason why a chiropractor in Chicago, a broker in Boston, or a preacher in Philadelphia cannot administer an interesting and eventually a profitable enterprise in private forestry in some nearby suitable locality. The folks engaged in this inspiring hobby are a fine company of men and women. May their kind prosper so that the landscapes new shorn and denuded may again be clothed in perennial green.

Birds

I value my garden more for being full of blackbirds than of cherries, and very frankly give them fruit for their songs.

-Joseph Addison

The common (unscientific) classification of birds in the middle latitudes places them in four groups according to migratory habits. These groups are simply called summer birds, winter birds, permanent resident birds, and transient birds. Summer birds are resident only in summer overlapping into fall and spring but migrating south in winter. Winter birds overlap fall and spring but migrate north for the summer. Permanent or non-migratory birds reside in the same general area the year-long. Transients merely pass through, stopping only occasionally to refuel on their long migrations. Familiar examples of these groups are robins in summer, grosbeaks in winter, chickadees the year-long, and transient wild geese.

The inclusion of birds as an important natural resource in the forest needs no defense. Birds are constantly at work on the jobs of insect control and seed dispersal which contribute immeasurably to the health and reproduction of the forest. In their aesthetic and spiritual appeal they surpass even the wildflowers for, though clothed in incomparable splendor, flowers are mute while a bird's song can gladden the dullest day for all who are attuned to nature's symphony.

Appreciation and conservation of birds is promoted and practiced on a large scale in America. The Audubon Society has long been known for its sincere and militant devotion to America's native birds. State and national societies of ornithology have done much to raise the level of bird appreciation. However, the slaughter of many species of the feathered fauna still flourishes under a cult called "sportsmanship." This traffic in "game" birds could extend to robins and meadowlarks, as it already has to the little mourning doves in the Mississippi Valley. Only a genuine and widespread appreciation of wildlife, a sentiment to let live rather than an urge to kill, can prevent open seasons on the smaller furred and feathered creatures.

I have concerns about winter feeding of birds. This otherwise commendable practice is subject to some unfortunate errors and abuses. In the first place, so far as possible all wildlife conservation should encourage the species to remain wild. Chained bears, deer penned up behind roadside taverns, owls displayed in cages, and muskrats exhibited in bath tubs are intolerable violations of good wildlife conservation.

While bird feeding is not to be considered as among such impositions and indignities as mentioned above, when it becomes a fad as it has in many cities, it can develop into a contest to see who can display the most spectacular and bounteous feeding station. The danger is that over-feeding of birds accustomed to rigorous pursuit of their own livelihood is attended with the same hazards that beset a human heir who suddenly finds himself wallowing in wealth that he has not earned.

Concentration of birds at feeding stations is almost certain to attract predators. The northern shrike, a common killer of birds in the wilderness, is frequently found at feeding stations. The shrike seldom eat his kill; he seems to kill for sport. The victim is nevertheless dead. Far more serious than the shrike is the menace of the domestic cat. Cats are quick to take advantage of these unnatural concentrations of birds. The roosting sites in evergreens, shrubs, and window sills near the feeding stations are soon found by the prowling cats who in turn fare exceedingly well on the fattened feathered guests.

These harsh remarks are not intended to urge the abandonment of bird feeding but only to caution all who are host to wild birds to keep them alert and wild for their own preservation.

As an alternative to artificial feeding, every home landscape planting should include plant species that are attractive to birds, not only in winter but throughout the year. For example, our home is on a lot of about thirty square rods situated between the river and the street. I have attempted to provide good bird habitat in landscaping this lot. A large horse chestnut is host to many ruby-throated hummingbirds each season. They extract the nectar from the great white flowers and dart away to their nests. A mountain ash bears bushels of little berries that ripen precisely at the time when robins are taking on their flight fuel for the

trip south. Scores of them descend on the tree and consume the fruit to the last berry in less than a week. The fruit of a hawthorn south of the house is gobbled up in an equally unmannerly fashion. If Hawthorn and mountain ash seeds retain their viability after the birds' digestive process, the descendants of our trees must be scattered across the continent from Ladysmith to Florida.

The fruits of bitter nightshade, woodbine and barberry are eaten by many migrant and winter species. Along the river boundary, native sumac and plantings of white cedar and spruce attract the chickadees and pine and evening grosbeaks. The great clusters of oily sumac fruit constitute a favorite winter food for grosbeaks.

In the white birches and lindens, transient flocks of goldfinches and slate-colored juncos are often seen. The fine chaff that drifts down on the snow from the birches indicates that they harvest the tiny seeds from the pistillate catkins. Hundreds of them must be required to furnish the calories needed by a bird on one cold winter night.

A most satisfactory natural feeding station is found in the taller (and therefore safer) samara-bearing trees. The box elder and the green ash are among those that hold their seeds all winter. Both of these species are bisexual; they bear stamens and pistils on separate trees. Since only the pistillate trees bear seeds, the sex of the trees should be known if one is interested in winter birds.

In the school yard of Ladysmith High School stands a forty-foot pistillate green ash which has been winter host to hundreds of pine and evening grosbeaks. The tree is within easy observation from the windows of the biology classrooms. The students who planted it on Arbor Day thirty years ago understood the purpose it would serve in the years ahead.

Besides being a source of winter food for birds, the natural landscape planting is also a haven to numerous nesting birds in summer. Each year the oriole hangs a new nest in a maple near my study window. The charming and talented catbird, mockingbird of the north, utters it

raucous catcall at the slightest disturbance of the huge elderberry bush in which it nests and feasts each summer. In moments of relaxation it mimics the voices and songs of brown thrashers and orioles and many other birds.

A cornice ledge over the south door supported several generations of phoebes until the nests of successive seasons formed a three-story structure. These phoebe generations were the subject of an early wildlife research project by Wallace Grange, then a student in Ladysmith High School. Having procured a bird banding permit, he banded a nest of fledgling phoebes. Banded birds returned from their winter vacation in the south and proceeded to add another stucco structure to the rather untidy collection on the projecting cornice.

A golden mock orange on the east exposure has housed a family of yellow warblers for many seasons. The perfect blending of the nesting yellow bird in the golden foliage is an interesting instance of protective coloration. This did not always prevent the impositions of the cowbird who lays her eggs in the nests of smaller birds. Also, prowling cats have been a perennial menace and often the cause of stark tragedy for whole families of fledgling birds.

The five square miles of natural landscape including the school forest and adjoining private lands offer practically every habitat situation suitable to birds native to north Wisconsin. In most places the shrinking wilderness is forcing out many species that require a wide range. Bald eagles still resident in the county are seen over the school forest only occasionally following deer seasons when the hunters have left the offal of their kill. Loons were summer residents here until 1920 when a Chicago family acquired the only lake in the area. They are still occasionally seen at dawn winging their way out of the mist to more remote sanctuary.

The partridge, also called the ruffed grouse, though heavily hunted year after year and subject to periodic reduction by disease, is easily seen on any field trip that extends beyond a quarter of a mile off the highway. This bird, because of its popularity as a game bird, is extensively studied by game biologists and the subject of much debate and controversy among sportsmen and wildlife professionals. Many technical reports have been written about its habits, cycles and diseases. In 1953 and 1954, a game biologist used the school forest as a base for

trapping and banding which resulted in some fundamental research on the local grouse problem. For one who has walked in the north woods for many decades, resisting the urge to tell of many experiences with this challenging and charming game bird is difficult. The thrill of seeing one performing his drumming act, the unexpected fun of flushing a scattered company of them from under the snow, or the magic moment in which a precocial dozen chicks seem to vanish without sound or movement while the mother flutters at your feet feigning helplessness.

Wallace Grange described one of these acts in his nature classic, *Those of the Forest*:

One comes sailing toward a snowshoe, its wings deeply arched, turns slightly, avoids the clump of alders, and in a spot where a few square yards of snow show neither twig nor branch, the grouse plunges slantingly down, and into the snow, it pushes and wriggles through the snow for some four feet, tunneling in the form of a crescent moon. At the end of the tunnel, it turns around a few times, hollowing out a cavity in which it will be comfortable, warm and unseen. Some of the snow at the entrance tumbles into the tunnel, closing it against any draft of wind that might disturb the roosting bird. Each grouse roosts by itself, each will use its plung-burrow but once, never returning to quite the same spot again. Each will digest, as it sleeps, the green nutrients of the brown buds, and cast off during the night fifty or more fibrous droppings.

Many other permanent birds may be seen on a forest trip. The black-capped chickadees are probably more trusting and sociable than any other small bird of the forest. They are always ready to take lunch with anyone who invites them and who can be quiet enough not to frighten them away. The white-breasted nuthatch will surely be busy in the nearby trees making its funny hoarse call of "hank-hank" whether heading up or down the tree trunk. Its bill is adapted for scooping eggs and larva of insects out of the grooves in the rough bark. If one wishes to share lunch with the nuthatch, the offering must be placed firmly in the fissured bark. Butter is always appreciated. When the chickadees find that the offered food exceeds their immediate needs, they fly off with chunks of bread, butter, or bacon and cache the surplus somewhere in the trees. Bird students can easily determine where the cache is by observing the movements of the sly blue jays as they silently and quickly filch each cache.

By this time someone has heard the soft twittering of birds in the treetops. A flock of little olive drab birds are busy on the small cones and seeds of cedar and birch. The species is obviously gregarious for this is a sizable flock of fifty or more birds. That gay dipping flight

and familiar twitter--where have we seen this bird before? It is almost exactly like the sound and flight of the summer goldfinch or wild canary. This is the goldfinch. The young ornithologists didn't know that it lives here the year around, that its color changes from yellow-gold to olive drab, and that it moves into the friendly forest for food and protection in the winter. This bird is not a migrant, as many had supposed, but a permanent resident living in flocks in the forest all winter, feeding merrily in the tops of birch, cedar and tamarack.

In the deeper and denser region of the black spruce swamp, someone has found a place where a snowshoe rabbit met sudden death. Perhaps high in a tree nearby sits a satisfied owl dozing the day away after a successful nocturnal hunt.

Coming out of the swamp onto higher ground and into a stand of rare yellow birch, a strange sound brings the party to a sudden stop. They cannot agree on the direction from which it came and each one seems to have a different version of what the sound was like. Then a boy discovers a large black bird gliding over the trees and announces, "It's just a crow." But the huge, graceful, gliding creature can't be a crow. Neither the sound, size nor manner of flight is that of a crow. Though living only a few miles from the habitat of this bird, these high school students had never seen a raven.

The raven is almost twice as large as a crow and is never seen in large flocks. In fact, they are usually observed only in pairs and are believed to be monogamous--mated for life. Some ornithologists claim that ravens will not nest in trees but only on cliffs and rocky ledges. This has been disproved in the school forest for there are several nests, one of which is situated less than a mile from the point of this field observation.

Cruising high above the trees, the raven, with its keen sight, can discover where fox, coyote, horned owl, or sportsmen have left the carcass or "crumbs" of a recent kill. Ravens do not kill, but seek only the remains of animals killed or dying of other causes. The ravens, turkey vultures, and many species of mammals are scavengers; they feed on the refuse of forest

life. The term scavenger is too often taken as a term of contempt. The truth is that scavengers are the health officers of the forest and just as essential to the health of the forest community as the disposal of garbage and refuse is important in the human community.

On returning to the old tote-road, the sharp-eyed sophomore who first saw the raven came to a sudden stop. "Do you see what I see?" he said. He pointed to a fungus-like form on the stub branch of a large dead birch. He had discovered the roosting place of the great horned owl. It remained motionless under the scrutiny of the observers, probably under the illusion that it had not been seen at all, which came very near to the truth.

The Christmas Bird Census

*When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw;
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marion's nose looks red and raw.*

-William Shakespeare

Each year about a dozen students joined me on a bird trip through the school forest. This was always an interesting and valuable experience because the group was small and consisted of those who were personally interested in nature and outdoor activity.

Winter bird walks in the woods do have some disadvantages. Not the least of these is too much snow and not enough snowshoes if the group needs to be provided with these wonderful inventions. Also parents may understandably object to the crazy notion of moving a class four miles out in the country to tramp over four or five square miles of woods for several hours. Because of these disadvantages and objections, conservation field days in our school forest were not a required part of the course during the winter months. However, for a number of years each member of the class was required to prepare a record called the Christmas Census. Those who did not take the Christmas Tour were required to prepare a seven-day census of the birds seen around their homes and community. This usually turned out to be a list of the same English sparrows and starlings seen day after day in the same places around town. Farm children recorded a little more variety, especially if the home was near the farm wood lot or surrounded by some native shrubs and trees. Even so, the farm census ran heavily to English sparrows seen around the barnyards.

The group arrived at the usual starting place about nine o'clock. By following a northeasterly course for about a mile and a quarter, almost every type of forest habitat to be found in the north central forest region could be passed through. The swamp habitat ranges from open sphagnum bog to heavily wooded areas of tamarack and black spruce. Dense margins of

balsam cover the slopes around the bogs and the higher rough terrain is covered with young stands of mixed hardwood species. This wide variety of habitat provides food and shelter suitable to a wide variety of winter residents, many of which are never seen in the urban communities only a few miles away.

Most of the resident species observed during our October visit to the school forest were seen again in the Christmas census. The chief objective, however, was to observe the winter visitors who had joined the permanent residents since October. The chickadees had learned that these strange flightless marauders often carried good things to eat. As soon as we came to a stop, they were sure to be conspicuously nearby, pecking at anything they happened to perch on. A few partridges were "budding" in the aspens, having already emerged from their overnight shelters under the snow. Usually we arrived too late in the day to have the thrill of flushing others out of the snow, for the cold nights required a lot of "internal combustion." Now they were refueling for the day and would take on a capacity load of aspen buds before sunset. They would dive at dusk into another under-the-snow, self-made igloo for the night.

The first observation of a winter visitant species was somewhat confusing. A large flock of birds was spotted in the balsams and tamaracks. Some students said they were gold finches. Others said they were red polls. It turned out that both species were there. Red polls, however, were the only entry on the Christmas census of winter visitants, as gold finches were there year-round though now in winter plumage. Gold finches and red polls are about the same size and are sometimes confused in their flight. However, there is a marked difference in that goldfinches fly in a dipping movement. (Ornithologists call it "undulatory.") Both are gregarious, generally seen in fairly large flocks, and frequently together in cedar and tamarack woods. We observed some of them at close range where they were picking at the tag alder. This observation was exceptionally fruitful. Not only was it the first entry on the winter census, but it also justified the existence of tag alder. An important tenet in the naturalist's creed is that every native species of plant or animal life must serve some ecological purpose. This was hard to believe of the common swamp alder, locally known as tag alder (*alnus incana*). If this

crooked, sprawling, aphid-infested swamp alder is genial host to one lovely red poll in winter, that is reason enough to tolerate tag alders in the school forest swamps. Perhaps even the woolly aphids that cluttered its stems in October were, in their turn, ambrosia to some creatures of the forest.

Outside of the alder fringe on higher ground stood several large dead aspens. Here was provision or at least recreation for the Paul Bunyan of the woodpecker tribe, the pileated. We heard him long before we could see him, but our approach did not disturb him in the least. How his little cousins, the hairy and the downy, must envy this giant from the north as he whacks great chunks out of the old poplars. What he was getting for his efforts was not clear. Perhaps it was more a display of power than a search for food. Does the pileated woodpecker chop up wood just for fun? This has been the conclusion of some electric linemen in charge of maintaining power lines through our forested country. Hundreds of softwood poles have been honeycombed by this seemingly aimless drilling into timber which harbored no insect larva. Unfortunately, flickers are also reported among the raiders of power poles. This is a serious problem because man has established the precedent that any creatures that obstruct his progress must go. The destruction of vegetation under electric and communication lines is already accomplished by chemical control programs along hundreds of thousands of miles of American roadside as well as across countless miles of wilderness.

Some readers may object to the classification of the winter pileated woodpecker as a winter visitant. Objection is sustained. But this diary was a local record and in the area observed there had been no nesting record of the species since the removal of the virgin forest. In remnant virgin timber stands not far distant, the species was reported as a permanent resident.

Having already proceeded to the very center of the forest, the two species recorded did not seem a very impressive record. A place was chosen on the sunny side of a balsam thicket for a fire and lunch. Dry shells of old pine stumps were quickly assembled and a fire easily started with birch bark and one match. A pot of coffee was soon burping in the black smoke over the open fire of pine.

The first ceremony in boiling a pot of coffee in the woods was to reduce the snow to water. The procedure was for each student to take his cup and put a cupful of snow in the coffee pot. This was repeated until each had contributed three cups of snow. With a good fire, the snow melted almost as fast as it was supplied. This could be considered an elemental demonstration of heat or fusion and it furnished some data on the relative volumes of water and snow for the same mass of each.

All the sandwiches were firmly frozen and whether to toast them over the coals on a green forked stick or just dunk them in the hot coffee was optional. While eating lunch, a raven, probably the same one seen in October, cruised over the campsite. No doubt it dropped in on our deserted camp before we were a half mile away to salvage any chance morsel that appealed to its not-too-delicate taste.

Foreign Weeds and Plant Diseases

*While better men than we go out and start their working lives
At grubbing weeds from gravel paths with broken dinner knives.*
-Rudyard Kipling

A manual of weeds compiled in 1921 by Ada E. Georgia of New York State College of Agriculture and illustrated by F. Schuyler Mathews lists 217 noxious weeds introduced in the United States from foreign countries. How many others have arrived in three and a half decades of improved transportation one can only guess. I suspect they would fill another hundred pages in the weed manual.

My major outdoor activity has been hoeing and cultivating several acres of landscape nursery stock and garden vegetables. This occupation, from early May to September, is necessary to prevent imported weeds from taking over my nursery business. If quack grass, purslane, crab grass, yellow dock, bind weed, shepherds purse and wild mustard had not been introduced in American soil, much of my summer vacation could have been devoted to the study of our native plants, many of which I have not had the time to identify.

I have often endured the ennui of hoeing by rehearsing the Latin names assigned to the global flora by the ingenious Linnaeus. For example, the common shepherd's purse has a root comparable in texture to haywire. Its Latin name is *bursa pastoris*. We can assume this was its common name in its Mediterranean homeland. *Bursa pastoris* means the purse of the shepherd. If shepherds had to hoe this weed instead of tending the sheep while they ate it, the name could easily have been shepherd's curse. However this plant with its flat little purse-like seed pods was appropriately named.

All weeds, whether native or imported, classify in three categories according to the life span of a single plant. These groups are designated as annuals, biennials, and perennials.

The man with a hoe has at least a chance with the annuals. With the biennials he has only a fifty-fifty chance. The only defense against perennials, like quack grass and Canada thistle, is to fallow plow the infested area once every four or five years, then plant it again and take on another five-year losing campaign against the underground strategy of millions of sharp pointed rhizomes advancing in every direction.

Scores of plant diseases from abroad have established themselves in the western hemisphere, probably many more than we have discovered. Every fungus disease in the world will almost certainly eventually establish itself in every region on the globe that offers a host species for the completion of the life cycle.

When we acquired our first forty acres on the Thornapple, we felt an urge to assist nature in the restoration of at least a token area of the magnificent white pine (*pinus strobus*). The State Conservation Department nurseries were already producing trees for forest planting. We planted several hundred white pine seedlings among the huge stumps where there had been a forest of white pines. The trees made satisfactory progress in spite of some damage by deer and rabbits.

During the second decade of the century, entomologists in the middle west realized that there was trouble in the white pine plantations. Many thousands of acres had been planted in public and private lands of the Lake States' cut-over areas when it was discovered that a widespread disease was destroying millions of the thrifty young white pines. Research soon revealed that the pines were being attacked by a disease of European origin, the white pine blister rust. Like the noxious weeds, this disease had some how hitched a ride across the ocean and was already well on its destructive course over the pine region of North America.

The white pine blister rust is one of many species of parasitic micro-flora. This particular parasite belongs to a complicated group known as the alternate-host parasites. This means that the species has a life cycle in which it preys on one host for a season and in a dif-

ferent form attacks a different host the next season. The white pine blister rust's intermediate host is of the genus *ribes* including all species of currants and gooseberries. The spores from the deceased *ribes* pass through the atmosphere to the pines, completing the cycle.

The obvious approach to controlling such a disease is to destroy one of the host plants. Since wild gooseberries and currants have no commercial value the most sensible approach seemed to be the eradication of currant and gooseberry bushes. However, eradicating all native species of *ribes* in thousands of square miles of wooded country is impossible. Such a program would probably never have been undertaken if this problem had not arisen during the years of America's most devastating depression.

Perhaps no triple letter agency in the depression years was so well known and widely distributed as the C.C.C.--the Civilian Conservation Corps. Hundreds of thousands of boys were engaged in road building, fire protection, rodent extermination, and every other task that could possibly qualify under the category of the middle "C". The midwinter assaults on gooseberry and currant bushes in the woods and bogs of the Lake States employed thousands of teen-age youth. I do not belittle the importance of that employment, but it did not contribute much to the destruction of the pine blister rust.

In the summer of 1955 we started to cut down the diseased pines in our earliest plantings on the Thornapple. In a little over two decades, they had attained an average height of twenty-five feet. We spared those trees that showed no sign of the disease, but we are sure that within a few years every white pine in our plantation will develop those drying branches which foresters call the red flags that mark the trees as white pine blister victims.

This seems to be the end of natural forests of white pine in the Great Lakes region. After they have been gone for a half century, perhaps the disease will die out for want of a secondary host. The bogs and remnants of native woods may by that time be drained or cleared, thus destroying all *ribes* habitat. The foresters of the future may again plant pines, but these will not be forests. They will be tree farms, intolerant of all other plant or animal life. They will be sprayed and dusted from the air with herbicides and insecticides and patrolled for

trespassing porcupines and red squirrels. This trend toward streamlining natural biotic situations and the ruthless extermination of plant and animal species can end in a catastrophic eruption that can never be resolved. This we have already seen in a small way in such experiments as the planned importation of English sparrows and German carp.

Like the white pine, many other native trees are threatened or attacked by foreign enemies. The introduction of the Dutch elm disease was traced to a consignment of elm logs shipped from Holland during the First World War. Ironically, these logs were used to make gun stocks that were used in the European conflict.

The disease has already destroyed millions of elm trees from the New England coast to the Mississippi River. It has moved north into Canada and is reported as far west as Colorado. In the summer of 1957 it took a devastating toll among the large elms of Milwaukee and other cities in the Great Lakes region.

The imported European buckthorn (*rhamnus cathartica*) is responsible for the introduction of the crown rust fungus on oats. Entomologists of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture estimated that this state alone suffers an annual loss of over a million dollars from the ravages of this foreign fungus, *puccinia coronata*, or crown rust.

Probably at least as many imported insect species are at large in America as are weeds and fungus diseases. A few of those that are currently giving us a bad time are the San Jose scale, the cabbage worm, the gypsy moth, the Japanese beetle, and the European corn borer.

The San Jose scale was an oriental stow-away that arrived on the West coast and made its debut in the horticultural industry at San Jose, California. It has been a very successful immigrant.

The cabbage worm arrived on the East coast in 1816 with a shipment of cabbages from England. This immigrant not only costs us a tidy sum in cabbages, but requires an annual expenditure of thousands of dollars for insecticides to keep them from taking the whole crop. The total cost of their board and lodging in America for nearly a century and a half might easily have financed a project to put a man on the moon.

The gypsy moth was an invited guest. In fact the entomologists provided a passport to bring a cage full of them to New England where they were to be crossed with an American species of *lepidoptera* with the hope of producing a superior hybrid silkworm. The cage was tipped over and the gypsy moths flew away in a new world of boundless resources. They are doing very well in America.

Some Birds, Mammals and Fish

*Presentment--is that long Shadow--on the Lawn--
Indicative that Suns go down.*

-Emily Dickinson

The unwarranted assaults on bird life in America seem to have been a form of mass madness, an urge to wallow in wanton slaughter of everything alive. This madness has so far achieved the total extermination of seven species of birds. How many more are hovering on the verge is something that our best informed ornithologists are unable to determine. The countless millions of passenger pigeons that had winged their migratory way across the continent down through the centuries were reduced by 1914 to the last single captive pigeon. It died in that year.

The heath hen was a popular game bird on a wide range along the east coast. By April 1928 the survivors of this species consisted of three males on their last refuge at Martha's Vineyard off the east coast. Evidence suggested that the last of these was taken by an imported Persian cat. Five other species of exterminated American birds are the Labrador duck, the great auk, Eskimo curlew, Carolina parakeet, and the ivory-billed woodpecker.

While we were in the process of exterminating these native birds, authority was being granted to import and release foreign species of avifauna. The man who was granted permission to import the English sparrow was later permitted to import the English starling. None of these errors seem to dampen the zeal for foreign introductions. Many states carry on experimentation with foreign game birds on state game farms. The experiments with sparrows and starlings seems to inspire no caution in the release of foreign game birds on native game bird habitat. Surely the evidence so far must indicate that a successful importation is almost sure to be detrimental to native species.

In 1926 the Biological Survey released information that over seven hundred species of foreign birds were then alive in zoological gardens and private collections in North America. While most of these would probably fail to survive if released, surely among seven hundred species a few score might survive and turn out to be birds of a feather with English sparrows and starlings.

Among the introduced animals, exclusive of domestic livestock, the brown rat and Persian cat are the most undesirable. The brown rat is probably the most contemptible mammal on the continent. In fact, its name is commonly used as a term of contempt. I recently heard the term used by a politician in describing a member of the opposite party.

The brown rat got around the world as early as man provided intercontinental transportation. I am not sure that Columbus brought them to the Western Hemisphere, but it is not at all unlikely. Rats released on islands have been known to destroy virtually all other animal life either by killing them or by devouring their means of sustenance. I am sure that my contempt for rats must be shared by virtually everyone, with the possible exception of some laboratory biologists who find them to be valuable guinea pigs for the numerous experiments on life and death. Fortunately brown rats are virtually nonexistent in any real native wild habitat.

I am well aware that few people share my opinion of cats. I will concede that a well-mannered house cat, if kept in due bounds, can be as companionable as a house dog. We have all seen instances of very friendly association of dog and cat in the same household. On the other hand I have seen many nests of young fledgling songbirds raided by those very cats.

In my boyhood I learned that our barn cats vacationed all summer in the farm wood lot. For two or three months we would not see them. But by early October they were back mewing for a pan of milk and no doubt rendering valuable service around the barn in their pursuit of mice and English sparrows. In the Thornapple wilderness I have seen domestic cats miles distant from the nearest farm. Like the cats of my youth these predatory pets were feeding on the small wild life, especially the birds of the forest. In some grouse seasons I have shot more cats than grouse. At the Cedars I have found them in the cabin in mid-winter; my abandoned shack

in the woods may be a winter hang-out for a stray cat. Finally I submit that a feline courtship is as unromantic as that of a porcupine. But it can be said of the porcupine that he confines his courting and the vocal accompaniment to the deep, dark forest rather than the alley behind your house.

I have mentioned in the discussion of foreign birds that the importation of the English sparrow was so successful that some years later the same Englishman was granted permission to introduce the English starling. The importation of fish is a similar situation. Permission to import German carp was granted to a Mr. Poppe in 1872. The species made such satisfactory progress that the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries procured a second and larger consignment in 1877.

This jumbo size bottom feeder may have rendered some service as a scavenger, but tons of them have been seined and buried in trenches like garbage in a refuse yard. Experiments to use them as fertilizer had negative results.

The success of Mr. Poppe's carp project can be estimated by the report on a rough fish operation on three hundred miles of the Mississippi during 1955. This stretch of water is bounded by Wisconsin on the east and by Minnesota and Iowa on the west. The catch reported here includes only that of the Wisconsin Rough Fisheries; Minnesota and Iowa fisheries must have taken comparable quantities. Thirteen or more species of fish in this water are classified as rough fish meaning undesirable in general and especially detrimental to game fish. The total take of the thirteen species yielded 3,958,589 pounds. Of this amount, 2,745,284 pounds were German carp. Mr. Poppe at least established an indestructible source of revenue for rough fishermen.

Several other disastrous piscatorial eruptions have occurred in consequence of our improvement of inland water transportation. The most serious of these seems to be the sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. Fisheries authorities have estimated that this species is responsible for 5.5 million dollars loss annually in the lake trout industry on Lake Huron and Lake

Michigan. These figures do not include Lake Superior but a 1954 Lake Superior catch one million pounds below the 4.4 million normal was reported. These statistics are taken from a report by James Moffett, Chief of Great Lakes Fisheries Investigations, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In our confusion over these imported weeds, wildlife, insects and aqua-fauna we are now turning blindly to chemistry for a means of controlling them. To control insects in our forests we have fleets of airplanes dusting the forest canopy with tons of poison. This program is detrimental to birds and fish in the forest trees and streams. In our lakes we have already demonstrated that we can poison the whole fauna and flora and after a period of waiting can restock it with desirable species of plants and animal life. The elm trees are being treated with a selective repellent to prevent the Dutch elm disease but the poison is injurious to our native birds.

The chemical industry offers a selective herbicide for almost any plant you can name. It also offers a general herbicide for everything that grows under power and telephone lines or obstructs the view of billboards.

Surely our "foreign relations"--weeds, fungi, mammals, birds, insects and fish--comprise a costly company of guests for Uncle Sam and his family. Unfortunately, they have all come to stay.

A Requiem for Little Falls

*For no ways can I find
To sail agaianst the wind.*

-Sir Thomas Wyatt

About 1946 I first heard that the Dairyland Electric Cooperative (Rural Electrification Administration) was planning to build a dam at Little Falls. This was devastating news. Having served on the Wisconsin Conservation Commission I knew that the commisioners were generally very supportive of the preservation of such significant natural resources, particularly one such as this that had so much recreational value. The Public Service Commission, however, was charged with the responsibility of approving or disapproving power dam construction. I was comforted by the knowledges that in the past the Public Service Commission had recognized the need to preserve scenic waterways. I prepared to fight the dam with considerable hope.

The many hearings held by the Public Service and Conservation Commissions were attended by a few people who had run Little Falls, but most had never even seen it. Some of the people who protested the dam came great distances at personal expense. They came because they knew that a priceless wild thing was threatened.

The Public Service Commission held hearings expecting substantial support for the scenic and recreational values of Little Falls. But those of us who claimed these values were only a small minority and we were openly ridiculed for our stand by the dam proponents. Even so, there was every indication that the Public Service Commission would not grant permission to build the dam. Then the political ground work was prepared to usurp the powers of the commission and confer them on the county boards. Before the hearings were finished the machinery was in place for acquiring flowage and right of way and the Rural Electrification Association lobbyist was openly announcing that the "county board law" was already in the bag.

Farmers living 200 miles from this power source harangued about living in the dark. Some of the acts were almost professional. Dramatic poses were obligingly held while press photographers climbed, crawled and rolled into positions for the most spectacular shots. At the last hearing held in Ladysmith I faced a hostile audience while I made a futile plea for Little Falls. The attorney and lobbyist for the REA advised me after the meeting that the state legislature would pass the bill to override any refusal of the Public Service Commission.

Local majorities have usually favored exploitation of natural resources. Lumbering industries and their communities have never wanted conservation of forests while there were trees left to cut. Commercial fishermen have never wanted conservation of fish while quantities of fish could still be caught. Sportsmen have wanted more open seasons and larger bag limits to the very point of extermination of many species such as the passenger pigeon, the heath hen and the Labrador duck. On the Flambeau River, with eight dams already in operation, the power interests wiped out one of the most beautiful stretches of natural river in the state.

I believed that every community in America should preserve at least some small piece of its native landscape in its natural state. If for no other reason, this should be done out of respect for the God-given resources with which the land was blessed and perhaps with some small thought for the inspiration to our youth, present and future, who might wish to see some evidence of what America once was. My plea for the preservation of Little Falls was consistent with the fundamental principle that priceless human values are inherent in the preservation of rare bits of natural landscapes.

Subsequent action by the Public Service Commission was unfavorable to the dam proponents. However, the legislature obediently enacted the wishes of the rural demonstrators who packed the legislative chambers and the County Board quickly exercised their new power and approved the project.

The millions of dollars needed for the dam were poured in from the Washington hopper while the courts pondered the constitutionality of the "county board law." Concrete and steel were quickly assembled and flowage rights acquired. The flowage area was shorn of its native

cover. Little Falls lay for a while exposed and naked of all the grace and grandeur in which it had been clothed. Civic organizations and the local press rejoiced in this murder of a landscape. The demise of perhaps the loveliest stretch of wild river in our north country was celebrated as if some hideous monster had been vanquished.

At the dedication of the new plant the few of us who had voiced a preference for wilderness over kilowatts at Little Falls were scathingly denounced. This was a sobering distinction, since mine was virtually the only written local protest.

The erasure of wilderness resources did not stop at the dam. While the plant was being built, high line clearance crews were slashing wide swaths through the forests to make room for transmission lines. The largest pines on the school forest had to be sacrificed to clear the way. The clearing by ax and fire was followed by periodic application of chemical sprays to destroy any new growth that threatened to reach toward the sun. Viburnums, dogwoods, and all the other native flowering shrubs had to be eliminated.

A half mile of poles, wires and a transformer were provided to serve a hunting cabin equipped with three forty watt lamps that were used less than a dozen hours a year. Since the poles were along the road to Slabshack, the things destroyed were in a measure mine. The elm by Twin Creek, the viburnum and paniced dogwoods, their flowers in spring and fruit in fall were mine to enjoy. Surely others have missed the lovely wild things destroyed in this raid of the rural roadsides, but only a few have spoken.

The denouement of this narrative about the losing fight to save Little Falls was in a sense fitting. Some time after the dam had been completed and Little Falls was only a memory, the courts finally completed their review of the legislature's actions in transferring to the county boards the Public Service Commission's responsibility to approve or disapprove the siting of power dams. They found the law unconstitutional.

The Quetico

*But now the salmon-fishers moist
Their leathern boats begin to hoist;
And, like Antipodes in shoes,
Have shod their heads in their canoes.
How tortoise-like, but not so slow,
These rational amphibii go!*

-Andrew Marvell

In July 1950 after the possession of Little Falls by the Rural Electric interests, taking our annual canoe trip on the Flambeau was unthinkable. This was the end of a family tradition. Literature from the American Forestry association convinced me that a trip on the border lakes in Ontario and Minnesota would help me forget my disappointment on the Flambeau. So I joined a canoe party of "Trail Riders of the Wilderness" at Ely for a nine-day expedition over the lakes and streams of the Quetico Superior Wilderness. The trip was different than any other I had taken in two respects. It was the first I had taken with professional guides and also the first with strangers.

The Quetico Superior Wilderness, like the Flambeau, is under constant jeopardy of encroachment by commercial exploitation. The original timber over the entire extent of our tour was logged off many years ago. The remains of decaying log booms and floes are still to be seen at many of the portages. However, the second growth is a heartening demonstration of how a wilderness will recover when left to its own resources.

Past canoe and camping experiences were always enriched by the sense of self-sufficiency that one gets by making camp, fetching wood and water, portaging the duffel and, most of all, shooting the rapids according to one's own judgment. I feared I would miss my independence on this guided tour. To my surprise, I rated a paddle and a front seat in one of the canoes with Al Beard of the American Forestry Association on the first day. As it turned out, we alternated places in the number ten canoe for the entire cruise.

The only accident on the trip happened after supper on our first night out. Perhaps it should not be called an accident. I have secretly felt that I could be blamed for what happened, but I was never accused. The first night the camp was at a short portage between two lakes-- about thirty to forty rods. We had "put out" at the mouth of a lusty inlet that came pouring out of the upper lake. The fall between the lakes was steep, the course was fairly straight, and little obstruction was visible in the fast water. I followed the entire length of the inlet through a dense stand of cedar, birch and balsam. When I reached the upper end, the guides were already there with the canoes having portaged them to the point from which we would take off the next morning. I asked one of the guides if anyone ever shot this stream. In the discussion that followed I remarked, "It would be a thriller all right, but there is one bad spot about half way down."

Perhaps my casual appraisal of the risk was what tempted the boys. However, thirty years ago I am sure I would have done just what the boys did.

I returned along the stream the way I had come. Almost before I realized they were coming, they crashed broadside on the very boulder I had mentioned. The twenty foot aluminum canoe just folded up and zigzagged crazily down to the next lake. I don't know how the boys got there, but they were down at the outlet retrieving paddles and aluminum when I got there. Now the party was one canoe short and a whole day away from base. While we slept the boys returned to Olson's Landing and were back before breakfast. The emergency justified the use of a motor to bring up the two canoes in time for the party to proceed on schedule.

Our routine was fairly well established by the second day. We could already sense the diminishing burden at the portages after every meal; there certainly was a reduction of sixty to seventy-five pounds. Al and I didn't profit much from this since our cargo was chiefly tents and ground canvas.

I think it was on our third night out, probably on Knife Lake, that an airplane taxied up and carried off one of our guides. I don't recall what the emergency was. In any event, the crew in command of number ten canoe was not affected in any way.

The schedule provided a "lay over" on the third day. This gave everyone a chance to get acquainted with everyone else. The lay over was also a field day for the study of birds and other wild life or for a bit of botanizing among the wildflowers, shrubs and trees that flourished there.

I have said it was my first canoe trip with complete strangers. I should have known that these strangers would be the kind of people one always meets in the wilderness. I have made many wonderful friends around the campfires and along the portages of forty summers. These were "my people."

Ours was an unusual party in that it carried one entire family and a grandfather. I more or less adopted the two boys in this family for the duration because they reminded me of my own boys at that age. At night I told them bedtime stories of the adventures of Burt and John. The stories as told were less fact than fiction, but Albert and David always came back for more John and Burt stories at night. The grandfather (we called him Grand Pere Lowrie) was the youngest octogenarian I have ever met. On this trip in 1950 he was at the half way mark of that distinguished decade. In the literature of the "Trail Riders of the Wilderness" the American Nursery Association published a brochure with a picture of Mr. Lowrie and his grandson titled "from eight to eighty-five." He was taking the Quetico canoe trip with his daughter's family for the third time in as many years.

Mr. Lowrie won the love and admiration of the entire party. He packed his personal duffel across every portage. He was present at all the fireside hours and was a source of authentic wood lore and historical data relative to the lake states and the border region of the Quetico Superior Wilderness. Besides David and Albert, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Glover and their daughter Robin were also in the party.

The tents for nineteen riders and the guides made up quite a canvas colony and required some community planning. The arrangement of tents was naturally determined by the lay of the land. Where there was no land, the ground canvas was simply spread across the rock. The guides were able to anchor a tent in most ingenious ways even where driving a stake was impossible.

The four unattached men were assigned to one tent. We were known on the expedition as the "bachelors" and our tent was the "bachelors' tent" although we were really three benedicts and only one bachelor. Three women from the east tented and traveled in a group. They were three doctors--two medical doctors and a naturalist.

At the campfire hour one night, Dr. Bucher addressed one of her tent mates as "Teddy." Until that moment on the third day I had not realized that Mrs. John Fletcher was Theodora S. Fletcher, author of *Driftwood Valley*. On other wilderness adventures I had met Dr. Alfred Gras, Aldo Leopold, Wallace and Hazel Grange and Sig Olson. Now on a wilderness island I met another noted naturalist and author.

At one of our camp sites a strange canoe came out of the darkness. The visitor was Sig Olson, Jr. who was doing a thesis on loons for a degree in wildlife research. His father, Sig Olson, Sr., was a conservationist and champion of wilderness projects. Sig Junior informed me that he knew my son Burt, also a research biologist. It seemed like a father and son hand clasp all around.

When "The Trail Riders of the Wilderness" returned to Ely, we quickly dispersed over the various runways back to our busy beats in the treadmill of civilization. We have paused now and then to remember the people we met and the places where we camped in the wilderness of the Quetico.

In her Wellesly Alumni Register, one of the female doctors learned that a classmate who had married a doctor lived in Ladysmith and had four children. She wrote to ask if I had by any chance come across her in Ladysmith. I replied, "Gussie Bauer is my next door neighbor. Your directory is out of date; she has five children!" The next selection we made from a book club we belonged to at that time was Teddy Fletcher's book, *The Tundra World*.

The Bee Tree

*Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying Yesterday
To Somebody you know
That you were due.*

-Emily Dickinson

In the early years on the Thornapple, I must have spent a month of Sundays attempting to discover a bee tree by that intriguing formula recorded by Burroughs in his nature volume, *Birds and Bees*. I made a "bee box" by replacing the sliding cover of an old-fashioned chalk box with a properly fitted glass. I purchased the oil of anise as recommended and provided an ample helping of comb honey. I must have captured hundreds of bees in my bee box. They always gorged themselves on honey and then took off according to the Burrough's formula. But never once did I establish a "bee line" to the promised bee tree and its golden treasure.

After decades of autumns without retrieving as much honey as the bees had taken, I abandoned hope and bee box and decided to forego the luxury of wild honey.

In the summer of 1954, we remodeled the cabin kitchen and replaced a small high window with a large one to better enjoy the beauty of our north side view. While adjusting a window casing, I glimpsed a red flash that seemed to go almost perpendicularly into the top of a huge American elm about thirty feet from the cabin. The flash was a swiftly moving bird. I hoped it was a redstart, a species I had not seen since Wallace Grange pointed one out several years earlier in this same area. With my field glasses I looked carefully through the branches expecting to find the bird somewhere in the spreading top of the elm. Suddenly I found myself looking into a knothole about forty feet above the ground. It was a familiar hole having been the home of a family of red squirrels a few years earlier. But now the hole was boiling with bees.

I knew Stella would object to cutting down the huge elm although I saw no other way to get the honey. Since this was late in July, there was time to establish a feasible reason for cutting down the tree. I theorized that a trunk that could house a family of squirrels and later a huge swarm of bees, not to mention the vast cache of honey, could hardly be a safe tree so close to the cabin. It could come crashing down through the roof on any stormy night. This argument prevailed.

We settled for a Saturday early in October for the harvest. I procured a secondhand smoker and persuaded my nurseryman to be my assistant apiarist. We sawed the tree down with my two-man cross-cut saw. The bees, following their traditional behavior, paid little attention to us but attempted to consume the honey instead. While they covered the honey, we cut out the four foot block that contained the cache. Then, while I applied the smoker, my man split the block in two parts from which we scooped out almost thirty pounds of the finest honey we have ever eaten. We suffered three or four bee stings each, but this was little enough to pay for those buckets of golden wild honey.

The following autumn when we sawed the elm tree into blocks for the fireplace, we found that the two and a half foot chunk below the honey was partly hollow and partly filled with decayed wood that had fallen from the cavity above. When cleaned out this block made a useful receptacle to hold the fireplace poker and shovel. Several of the huge blocks from the trunk were appropriated for stools by the fireplace. Thus we were often reminded of that pleasant day in October 1954 when we finally obtained a cache of golden wild honey.

Several years after the bee tree episode at Slabshack, there was another honey bonanza. An ambitious flicker was determined to whack a hole through the nursery office wall presumably to build a nest. This I discouraged by covering the hole with a piece of tin. The flicker abandoned the project and later in the summer I removed the conspicuous tin from the wall.

The following summer we discovered that a swarm of bees had taken over where the flicker had left off. I was concerned that the bees would be unfriendly to our customers.

I decided to turn the problem over to our local apiarist who can do about everything that can be done with bees. He hoisted a bee hive charged with a substantial quantity of honey and secured it close to the opening in the wall. The bees proceeded at once to transfer the honey from the wall to the hive. By sunset the transfer was accomplished.

Shortly after the evacuation, I discovered bees in the wall again. This, no doubt, was an escape from a nearby apiary. This time I decided to cash in on the situation. My nephew, Vernon Green of Rockford, Illinois, an apiarist by occupation, was scheduled to pay us a visit. I persuaded him to bring his bee gear along.

Vernon smoked the bees out of the wall and we sawed out the boards and shingles between the two studdings. The honey occupied a space approximately six feet long by four inches thick and sixteen inches wide. The scar on the wall is a source of much inquiry among nursery customers. The usual question is, "What happened here?" The most extravagant guess so far was by an electrician who said, "It must have been lightning!"

After Thoughts on Education

*Things are in the Saddle
And ride mankind.*

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Education on the secondary or teen-age level is having a bad time in this mid-century decade. Unprecedented crime and violence are sweeping across the continent and reports indicate that teen age youth are offenders. Since many of these lawless characters are recent graduates from high school or students still in secondary education, people everywhere are naturally asking, "What is the matter with our public schools?"

This question seems to imply that secondary education is at fault, that teachers, superintendents and boards of education are being derelict in their duties. While there may be some grounds for this assumption, the actual causes that have demoralized secondary education have been operative within the high school structure for several decades. These influences have not had their origin in the school faulty, the administration, or the local boards of education.

To clarify the situation, let us examine the early high school curriculum. When I first taught school, the courses available were exclusively academic. When I came to Ladysmith to teach, the new high school building had facilities for instruction in two non-academic subjects: manual training and domestic science. These two courses may be considered as the beginning of what is now very seriously the matter with our high schools.

In 1917, all but two of the members of our faculty were graduates of universities or liberal arts colleges. The curriculum consisted chiefly of academic subjects in science, history, English, foreign languages and mathematics. Students were required to complete four credits in English, three in science, two in mathematics, two in history and one foreign language. The minimum requirement for graduation was sixteen credits, but able students were allowed to enroll in five subjects and often earned as many as twenty credits before graduating.

After 1917, a commercial department was added to the non-academic curriculum and a few years later the agriculture department was introduced. As each of these non-academic departments achieved a four year status, enrollment in academic subjects declined.

Here is what happened in my physics class. In my first two decades of teaching at Ladysmith, I had thirty-five students enrolled each year in physics. Others would have taken the course, but my lecture room had only thirty-five seats and my schedule did not leave room for a second section. By 1940 the multiple offerings in non-academic courses were attracting so many students that very few seniors had taken enough mathematics to qualify for admission to physics. By 1940 my enrollment had dropped to twenty, it was reduced to ten by 1950, and after that I had three consecutive years with enrollment of five each year. During this time the school population was almost constant. Projecting these statistics over the high schools of America may explain why we have retrogressed so dramatically.

This scuttling of the academic curriculum cannot be blamed on the high school faculty. In fact even the local superintendents and the boards of education had little choice in the matter. State departments of education through state legislatures mandated these extra-academic courses. Recently we have had the imposition of driver training and presently there is pressure for firearms safety. What next?

With consolidation wiping out many rural school districts, we got into the transportation business on a large scale, not only transportation of rural children, but also transportation of town children. This mass transportation in turn required a communal commissary. Millions of dollars worth of food is served by the school kitchens of America. The hot lunch program in our local schools keeps four or five people employed four or five hours daily and the garbage disposal truck hauls several garbage cans of partly used food to the local dump yard each afternoon. This program is at least consistent with our national penchant for waste.

As soon as the several hundred youth have wolfed down their helpings or dumped them in the garbage cans, they are free for the noon hour. This is a supervised recreation period in the large new gymnasium. The physical education faculty and the coaches are in charge of this noon hour period, which I understand is now chiefly dancing.

The overwhelming influence of athletics in the secondary schools has been a major liability in education. The few dozen boys who make up the athletics squads are toasted, cheered, banqueted and decked with medals and letters. Coaches in many schools outnumber the faculty in some of the major scholastic departments. These coaches generally teach one or two classes such as physical education and freshman science. The trend in coaching is quite specialized; a school that engages in three athletic sports will usually have three "head coaches", one each for football, basketball and track. Many of these coaches are not competent to conduct major scholastic courses. It is considered a great triumph in a community when a noted college athlete is signed up as local coach. But this triumph may turn to defeat in the classroom, for while the four-letter college man is apt to be a good coach, his scholastic qualifications may be inadequate.

Unfortunately, most school administrations will go along with the local promotion of athletics. We have seasons when the whole emphasis seems to be on winning football and basketball games.

The promotion of school spirit keeps the student body in a high fever over basketball with two games a week from the close of football season until late in March. Then into the frenzied finals leading to the state meet. With the bus facilities now available, scores of students follow the team in every contest. Home games are garnished with bands and drum majorettes and bevy of cheer leaders. Always in the last moment before the game there is the solemn announcement, "Ladies and gentlemen, the National Anthem." After that sedate interlude, bedlam descends on the bleachers while the ten high school heroes battle for their right to compete in the state tournament.

Frankly, I see little in this frenzied performance that can enhance education. The American high school might be immeasurably improved by de-emphasizing the physical in favor of emphasis on the scholastic performance of youth. The overemphasis on athletics and the clutter of non-academic curricula have not been imposed on the community by the teaching faculty. There are, of course, superintendents and boards of education who permit the local schools to be used as a sports arena for the entertainment of students and community fans.

These observations of forty years in secondary education suggest that the high school diploma of this decade can hardly be rated on a par with those of two or three decades earlier. Surely there has been a cheapening of education in this fusion of academic, commercial and recreational interests.

Sunset on the Thornapple

*Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith: "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God, see all, nor be afraid.*

-Robert Browning

Having retired from education and from the rigorous pursuit of horticulture, I now have time for contemplation and relaxation in the wilderness we have saved along the Thornapple. Perhaps Stella and I shall experience many more discoveries as thrilling as the bee tree and the wild yam. Now our botanizing in the bogs can be leisurely. Perhaps now we shall capture the wild blueberries before they drop in the sphagnum moss and harvest the cranberries before they freeze. Too often in the past we have missed these ambrosial offerings while we pulled the purslane or dug the dandelions in the nursery rows.

Like the purple clematis growing beside our trail as we passed unaware, other wildings must be waiting to be appreciated on acres on which we have not yet had time to walk.

We want to explore the historical traces of human occupation, red and white. On the shore of the little lake of many names, arrowheads have been found. Here too lies the mystery of the derelict dug-out, an intriguing clue for amateur research.

Across Twin Creek in the School Forest a mile west of Slabshack, a forty-by eighty-foot lumber camp housed the crew that slashed the virgin pine forest in the first assault on the Thornapple country. This camp apparently escaped burning owing to its location between the lake and Twin Creek. All that remains is a huge rectangular enclosure where the timber walls have returned to earth. Here should be a rich store of Paul Bunyan artifacts, the now obsolete hardware of those hardy woodsmen--rust-encrusted remnants of ox shoes, cant-hooks, chain

links, the hardware portions of ox yokes and pieces of discarded kitchen ware. These rusted remnants of another era will remind us of the hardware in the blacksmith shop on the farm near Dittlemeyer's Corner.

One day, perhaps a day in July, we shall revisit Bruce by way of the canoe route taken on that memorable day in July of 1916. We shall not return however by the rigorous pole and paddle ordeal of 1916, but will persuade some good friend to pick us up by the Chippewa bridge in Bruce.

There will be time to catch a fish now and then--a walleye or a musky at the forks or a bass or northern pike below the spring. While we do enjoy fishing as a sport, our indulgence in it never exceeds our appetite for fish. We will go back to camp as soon as we have a fish for breakfast.

When we acquired the eighty acres and the cabin that we call Lambright, we did not realize that we would become attached to the property to such a degree as to restore the cabin for occupation. Already we have made a good start to that end. We can bring it back to life, so to speak, without extensive cost in labor or material. A small logging operation in the cedars has already provided the lumber needed. This restoration will enable us to make overnight canoe trips on a moment's notice.

The river between Slabshack and Lambright has in miniature all the attractions of the late Flambeau wilderness. There are stretches of modest rapids with some white water and intervals that are deeper and slower. The banks on either side are continuously clothed in native shrubs and trees which in turn provide cover for wildlife by day and by night. This is the little wilderness that we have saved for our sunset years along the Thornapple.

The wilderness has many voices. In winter the sharp quick bark of foxes in pursuit of snowshoe hares, the long drawn night call of the coyote, and the weird hoot of the great horned owl. The drumming of the ruffed grouse and all the songs of mating birds in springtime. The

twilight zoom of night hawks over the river and the endless cadence of the whip-poor-will along the banks. These sounds and scenes are the rewards I have for saving a bit of native wilderness.

Perhaps I have had something in common with those three men, John Dietz, Bill Powers and Skunk Frank. Like Dietz I have stubbornly pursued a way of life that is rigorous and unpopular. Like Powers I have often taken refuge in the forest from the annoyances that harass and distract. Like Skunk Frank I have loved my river and lived by it all these years.

Perhaps some moonlight night in autumn when nocturnal wildlife is on parade, we can choose at nine p.m. to paddle down and spend the night at Lambright. Sleeping bags, flash light and provisions for breakfast can be assembled in five minutes. Drifting silently we shall see or hear the muskrats plunk as they slide off rocks and logs into the water. In the deeper places below the spring a v-shaped wave will mark the course taken by a beaver. Along the shore line, porcupines, skunks, raccoons, and flying squirrels that we cannot see will discuss among themselves the audacity of this nocturnal invasion of their empire. Overhead the night herons will pass silently or scream violently; they seem to have no intermediate voice. And the owls along the river will inquire, "Who? Who?" as we two drift down to Lambright.

About the Author

Edwin Monroe Dahlberg was born April 11, 1882, on a farm a short distance from Curtiss, a tiny village in north central Wisconsin. His education was not easily accomplished, but he graduated from Beloit College in 1915. By profession he was an educator. For most of his career he served as principal of Ladysmith High School. He was a classroom teacher of biology and physics in addition to his administrative duties.

A second profession was that of nurseryman. He often said that the nursery was necessary to make it possible to be able to afford the pleasure of being a teacher. In addition to the half dozen or so acres he devoted to the nursery operation, he gradually purchased over 350 acres of wooded lands which he managed with the care of one who truly loved the out-of-doors and the wild things that lived there.

In 1926 he was appointed to the then newly constituted Wisconsin Conservation Commission. He continued to serve in that capacity for six years.

Throughout the years he somehow found time to write. In 1939 his book, *Conservation of Renewable Resources*, was published. Second, third and fourth editions soon followed. At the time of his death in November of 1971 he left the manuscript of another book and a group of sketches reflecting on his years in his beloved "north country."