

## To North Carolina's Long Leaf Pines: Forests of Memory and Present Glory

### Tree Farming On Weymouth Estate Preserves Moore County Heritage

When the head of the State Forestry School came down to Southern Pines a few years ago, he made a tour of the Weymouth Woods. He walked quietly along through the trees. Every now and then he'd lay a hand on one of the big red-brown, rough-barked trunks, and stop and stand looking up into the top. When he finally came out into the old Morganton Road again, he stood still, looking back down the hill at the feathery green tops. Finally he spoke. "Well," he said. "I don't know if you know it but you've got the finest stand of timber on the Eastern seaboard. Maybe it's the finest big timber in the state. It's good to see it," he smiled, "Not much left like this."

The Weymouth Woods begin out beyond the Old Bethesda Road, where it strikes off south from the Morganton Road. They run, on the south side of the Morganton Road, (or Ft. Bragg Road, as most people call it now), out as far as the Butler place. On the other side of the road there is also good timber, and some of the biggest trees are there; but most of the best, the part that the forester was talking about lies to the south.

**The Holly Woods**  
This stretch of pine forest follows along the course of James Creek, and is crisscrossed, here and there, by trails. One goes in at the foot of the Shaw Field, past the Lemon spring, where the clear water bubbles up into a cement basin, and honeysuckle vines form a shady nook. The trail goes through the heart of the finest stand, called the Hollywoods, and along the ridge above the stream, where grow some of the biggest hollytrees in this section. There are several crossings built across the creek, but the trail stays on the same side and finally comes out on the main road again, not far from the Buchanan Field, where the old house belonging to that pioneer family used to stand.

Weymouth Estate itself comprises about 1600 acres of which about 1450 are woodland or thick forest growth. A recent timber cruiser estimated that there were about 2 million board feet of merchantable timber on the property.

**Fire Protection**  
For many years the only use made of the land was as a hunting preserve, except for the fields around the Shaw Farm house, where a small amount of farming was done, but, as far back as 1913, attempts were being made to install some sort of fire protection and care for the woods. Four years ago the present own-

ers, James Boyd Jr. and Daniel L. Boyd, decided that it was time the place received expert care. After consultation with the state authorities, they engaged the present manager, a licensed forester, Donald Traylor, Traylor, who had been with the state before the war and in charge of the forest near Wadesboro moved into the Shaw House, out on the farm, and took up the job of organizing the estate.

Fire protection was the first object and during the last four years more fire lanes have been built until now the place is guarded by about 60 miles of maintained fire breaks. Traylor is also District Fire Warden, with the authority to organize the county's citizens to fight fire on this and neighboring property.

The estate has been set up as a timber farm, with a woodyard, where wood is sold locally. Timber products removed in selective cuttings include: sawlogs, poles, piling, fence-posts and pulpwood; also some split rails for fences.

**Planting of Seedlings**  
Plantings of pine seedlings are being made, and 5000 long leaf and loblolly seedlings were planted in the open glades of the woods during 1948. An interesting experiment is the planting of cork oak. These trees have been grown hereabouts with considerable success, (note the big cork oak on Bennett Street in town and others out on Mile-Away Farm.) Last spring cork oak seedlings were planted on Weymouth, along the edges of fields.

Another experiment is the extermination of black jack oak. This is a non-timber tree as far as saleability goes, and is by way of being a pest, growing fast and frequently choking out young pines and dogwoods. An attempt has been made to eradicate the black jack on a quarter acre of land through the use of "Ammate," a commercial poison. The result so far seems highly successful with about 98 percent of the trees killed.

Some farming has been carried on in conjunction with the forestry, and also plantings of peas and soybeans for game birds made along the edges of the fields.

**Selective Cutting**  
Plans for the future call for a continuation of all these activities. Selective cutting will be continued on certain parts of the property, while there are several hundred acres of young pines to be thinned for poles, fence posts and pulpwood. The merchantable timber will be removed periodically to insure continuous growth of timber products.

But while the place is being (Continued on Page 4)



The Weymouth Woods play host to forty forestry students from the University of West Virginia's Forestry School. They spent a morning in the woods where they admired the groves of original growth, almost unknown in their home state. They enjoyed a picnic lunch at the Lemon spring. In the foreground with neckties, are Forester Donald F. Traylor, manager of the estate, and, with hat beside him, District Forester James A. Pippin. Far left, with sun helmet, is County Forest Warden E. W. Davis. Talks and demonstrations were given by the local men. (Photo by Emerson Humphrey)

### "Fixing To Burn Over The First Still Night. . ."

by Old Timer  
I like to think back to the old days when I first came down here to the Sandhills to live. And never mind just how long ago that was. Long enough so I have a right to get nostalgic about it. Things used to happen then that seem to me weird and fascinating. It isn't the time that has passed, since, that makes them seem so, or even the fact that some of the good company of those days is no longer here. No, the things themselves were fascinating.

One that I recall with great vividness was the burning-over of the woods. That was a routine business with farmers then. Nowadays, most owners of timber don't burn over; in fact, it is not considered good forestry. They content themselves with burning the grass and underbrush that has grown up during the summer along the fire-lanes. This, they consider, is protection enough against fast-burning forest fires and does not destroy young seedling pines and other valuable growth.

Maybe they're right. When you consider how, quite often, the burning-over got away from the little gangs of men and boys and sometimes their womenfolks,

huddling out there in the woods to watch it, and set off racing in fiery waves across the countryside, it seems more than likely that that method of protecting timber was not particularly sensible.

But folks did it. Usually it was a sort of community thing. When burning-over time came round, you passed the word around, Saturday night. "My place like to burn up last summer," you might say, "I'm fixing to burn over my woods below the new ground. Know I can count on you all to help."

And you did know it because they'd be counting on you to help on their woods the week after. You'd settle that the first still fair night after a rain you'd send Junior to holler and then they'd come on over.

**A Still Night**  
The weather, of course, played a very important part in the operation. It always does in anything that happens out in the country, but it was especially necessary to consider it carefully before you decided when to burn. In the first place the ground had to be not too dry and not too wet. If the latter, the fire wouldn't creep along the way it was supposed to, and if the former, it was too likely to get away from you and turn itself into the forest fire that burning-over was meant to avoid.

So you chose a time a few days after a hard rain. Then it had to be a time when there was no wind and not likely to be any. That was one reason why burning over was always done at night. Wind almost always drops at sundown, as any sailor will tell you, and the air is apt to be still all through the night. The other reason for burning then is that you can see the edges of the fire and spot any flying sparks better at night. Another reason would be that everybody is free at night to come out and help. The women would add another reason: nary a man will hold back if he can go off with a gang into the woods at night, they will say, and add a few derogatory details about sitting on stumps and telling long-winded stories and so forth. But any man will tell you that burning-over is really hard work: dusty ashes stinging your eyes and getting in your throat, red hot embers burning holes in your shoes, and your arms flailing with ax or hoe till they like to fall off. Both arguments are true.

Now you've chosen your night, going out toward sunset, when it's going down in an orange, cloudless sky behind the black treetops. Supper; and then time to send out word.

**Everybody Comes**  
The neighbors and their boys, and maybe a few girls, and always a lot of dogs would gather

in the dusk. Some carried rakes and hoes, some cut off young pine-tops to beat the flames with. The girls would bring a few yams and something to drink. (It was generally the same thing.) You'd start out toward the woods, and each one would take his station along the edges of the place you were going to burn. There wasn't need for much talk: they knew where to go. Then, when everybody was ready, you'd pull up a handful of broom straw and begin to set your fire.

The blaze would be fanned by a little wind, as the fire created its own draft. The yellow flames would lick along the ground, cracking into the dry thickets wickedly. A few little pines would roar up into blazing torches, but if anything blazed too dangerously a man would pick up his tools and beat it out. They watched the fire's line carefully, alert to see that it didn't creep past them but was confined to a close space. Gradually as the land was slowly burned the extent of the fire grew, but always it was kept low by the watchers and blazing trunks were beaten out or shovelfuls of sand thrown against them.

Through the pinkish grey smoke, smelling sharply of turpentine and tar, you could see the men's figures standing or moving easily among the trees. When a stump blazed up their eyes shone in the red light and their faces, deep-etched and bony, had the copper look of Indians.

**Work Done**  
The night grew quieter, the fires died, the burning-over was almost done. Through the grey smoke and the dark night-shaded woods, the men moved quietly like ghosts, the little fires among the stumps gleaming on ax or rake. Now was the time when the girls brought out the yams, baked in the ashes, and the bottles that gurgled and shone in the firelight, as the men lifted them high and threw the contents down their throats.

If you were driving home you'd pass groups shuffling down the roads to their cars, rakes and hoes slung over their shoulders. They would raise their hands shoulder high: "Hi . . . so long . . . be seen' you."

The ground on either side of you was dotted with little flickering stumps, the earth was ashy-white except where a few embers glowed dully. It looked like the last act of Gotterdammerung or a gentle, sweet-smelling little Hell.

The air was full of woodsmoke and the tang of frost; the sky was touched with a pink glow behind the tall black pines. . . . A burning-over was a fascinating thing to see, and satisfactory to do. You felt you were taking part in one of the basic affairs of living.

### How They Turned Pines Into Dollars, Dollars To Resorts In Moore County

#### THE PINES

When the wind sings in the pines and the strong trunks stand firm, with tops tossing, it is not hard to believe that the pine tree is the original Tree of Liberty.

Pines were a source of treasure to North Carolinians. But the treasure came and went as the mighty logs groaned through the saw-mills of the eighties. The sawing goes on but now many lumbermen cherish the woods and plant seedlings to conserve the nation's heritage.

The pines are coming back, to be a present glory and a future blessing.

### Lumber Business In Moore County Has Bright Future

The author of this article on Moore county lumber prospects is executive vice-president and general manager of the W. M. Storey Lumber Company. This concern moved its office to Southern Pines from Winston-Salem two years ago. Besides doing a lot and knowing a lot about lumber, Mr. Gilmore is active in civic affairs.

But, as might be guessed from this article, he has also taken a shot at newspaper and magazine writing. The Pilot welcomes a colleague in the field.

**By Voit Gilmore**  
Lumber from Moore County is now helping build garden apartments in Miami Beach and homes in Boston and Buffalo. It provides crating for refrigerators made in Philadelphia and for automobiles shipped from Detroit to the Seven Seas.

Logging and the manufacture of rough and dressed short and long leaf pine is a substantial industry in the Sandhills, for years one of the South's principal lumber areas. Poplar and gum for furniture, oak ties for railroads and pulp logs for paper are also produced in quantity.

Travellers down Moore County roads often see logging trucks emerging from woods roads with logs or rough-cut green lumber. Down the dirt lanes are teams of men felling trees or operating small log mills. Woodsmen of this area are fortunate that sandy soil makes logging possible year-round, often on days when loggers not 50 miles distant are bogged down in heavy mud and rain that does not quickly run off.

Down paved roads logs and (Continued on Page 4)

#### A Beloved Carolinian Writes of Sandhills

A few short months before his death, the Hon. Josephus Daniels, one of North Carolina's most distinguished sons, paid a visit to the Sandhill country in the summer of 1947.

He was inspired to personal reminiscences about this section of his State, and wrote the following story for the Raleigh News and Observer, of which he was editor and publisher.

It contains some little-known facts about the beginnings of the peach industry and of the Southern Pines-Pinehurst resort section, and the coming of some of the families which helped build them up.

By Josephus H. Daniels

When you pass a beautiful girl you involuntarily say: "She's a peach." When you say it in the Sandhills, "She's a peach," it applies to the good-looking girls and also to the millions of luscious peaches hanging on thousands of peach trees.

It is a far cry from the early eighties when old man Frank Page (I give him that affectionate "old" to differentiate him from his son Frank who built the first big highway system in North Carolina) cutting and selling the magnificent forests of pine trees he had bought. He built a logging road to the West—it reached as far as Asheville—to carry his fine timber to the Northern markets over the Seaboard Air Line. About that time John Blue, also a successful timber man was felling trees and building a railroad to the south which was ultimately built as far as Fayetteville.

Many of the early settlers—mainly the "God Blessed Macs"—believed that when the trees were cut from the magnificent pine forests in this Sandhill section, that the land was so poor that it would be good only to hold the world together. When the Pages arrived here in "the forest primeval," the young people in the family felt they had been settled so far away from folks that the young lady in the family is reputed to have cried at the deprivation of the delights of social life. But she and all the Pages learned to love it as they and other pioneer spirits transformed it into a garden spot and a health and resort center known all over the United States.

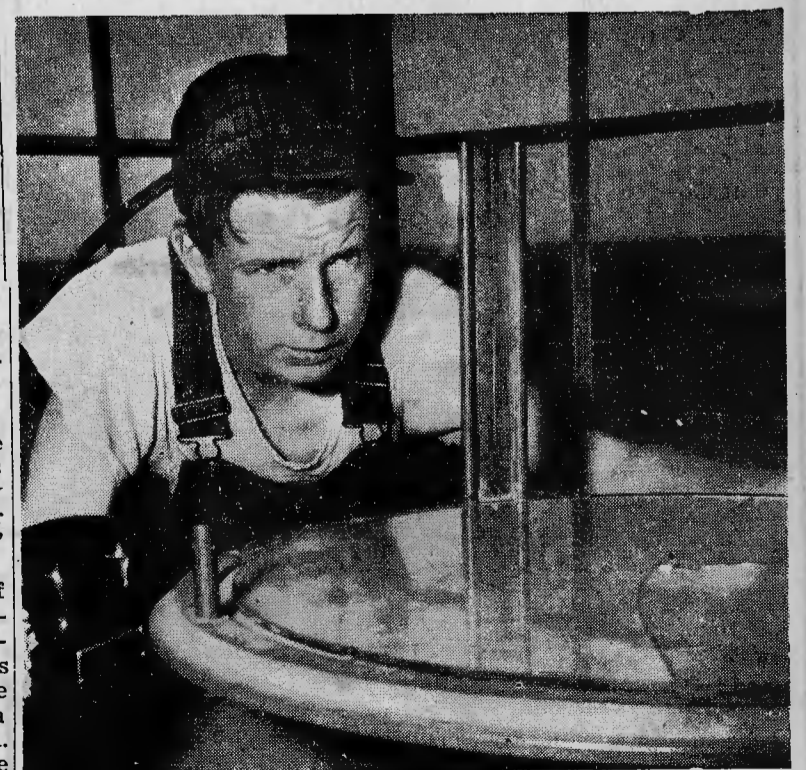
The elder Frank Page was to this section what Jim Hill, "empire builder," was to the Northwest, and his sons—among the State's most distinguished citizens—carried on the resort development. (Continued on Page 4)

### Moore County's Fire Fighting Force Is Ready



This big fire fighter was the joint purchase of both county and state. It is shown going through its trials near Southern Pines, with Warden E. W. Davis, head of the Moore County fire force, standing at right. Next to him is District Forester J. A. Pippin of Rockingham, Ranger T. N. Faulkner, wielding the hose, and A. B. Smith, state forestry department equipment supervisor. The disc and heavy plow blades are ready for use. The truck joined the local force June 1, 1948, and is still the only one of its kind owned by a county. (Photo by Humphrey)

### He Watches For Fires Near Hoffman



Robert Freeman, Jr., at his post at the top of the Hoffman fire tower, plots a suspicious plume of smoke on the azimuth map. Young Freeman is a natural at work of this sort, according to the District Forester J. A. Pippin. He did remarkably fine work during the Mackall maneuvers last year and intends to make forestry his career. (Army Photo)