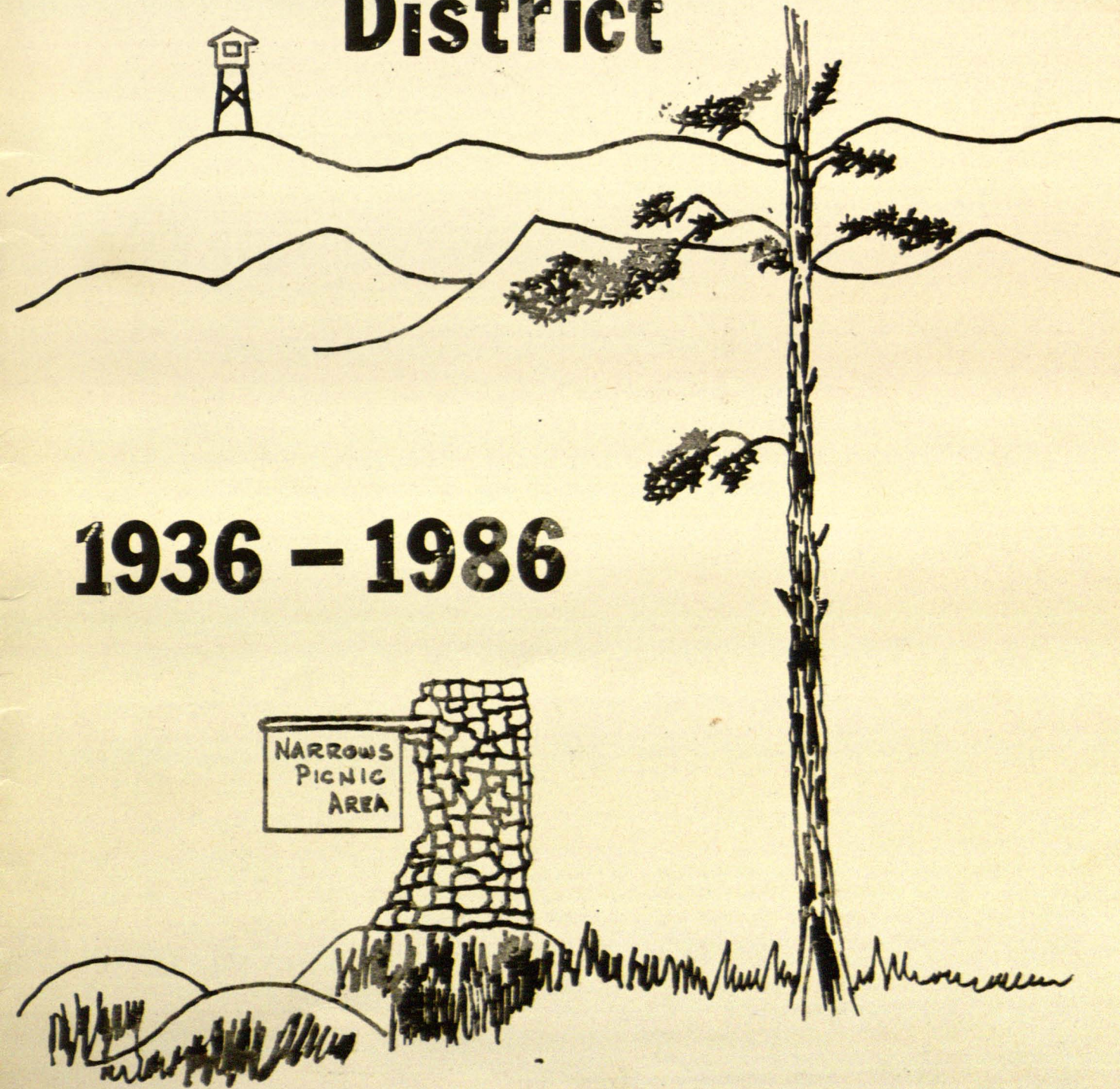


History of the Armuchee Ranger District

1936 – 1986



This cover designed by District Ranger, Joe King, depicts the Ridge and Valley Province characteristic of the Armuchee Ranger District. The Narrows Picnic Area was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the early 1940's. The area was closed in 1968 due to heavy vandalism. The stone sign base which indicated the entrance to the Narrows Picnic Area is still visible today. This weathered, stone column passed unnoticed by many forest visitors is a silent reminder of the past. This structure serves to remind U. S. Forest Service employees, on the Armuchee Ranger District, of the hardwork, dedication and determination which the early Armuchee employees heartily exhibited while managing a portion of Northwest Georgia's land resources through an applied program of prudent conservation principles and techniques.

"I STILL FEEL LIKE I'M PART OF THE FOREST SERVICE.

I DON'T GUESS I'LL EVER GET OUT OF IT."

--Retired U. S. Forest Service Employee

Cecil Huggins, November 13, 1985

HISTORY OF THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT
ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT, CHATTAHOOCHEE-OCONEE NATIONAL FORESTS
USDA FOREST SERVICE
MAY, 1986

PREPARED BY: Tom Fearrington, Forester DATE: 5/21/86

APPROVED BY: Joe W. King, District Ranger DATE: 5/21/86

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"The History of the Armuchee Ranger District" was prepared to meet the Armuchee Ranger District's history project goal for Fiscal Year 1986 and to commemorate the District's 50th Anniversary as part of the Chattahoochee National Forest. This report provides an account of the District's progress from its inception by Congress in 1936; early development work by the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1938 - 1942; the District's timber management program beginning with its first timber sale in 1945, the wildfire suppression program and the fire prevention campaign, and the District's broad based economic benefits to Northwest Georgia.

This report is a tribute to all the individuals who have been responsible for shaping the progress of the Armuchee Ranger District from its rudimentary beginnings in 1936 to the present. In 1938, the Armuchee Ranger District was administered solely by a District Ranger. Work on the newly acquired lands were provided by the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp F-16, which was located at the present site of the Pocket Recreation Area. The first permanent forest employee, other than the District, was Cecil Huggins who was hired in 1942. As years passed additional permanent forest workers as well as temporary workers were recruited. The District's first clerk-typist was hired in 1960. By 1986, the District's work force includes a District Ranger, two forester assistants, a reforestation forester, a finance clerk (Support Services Specialist), a Business Management Clerk, one Civil Engineering Technician, two Surveying Technicians and eight permanent Forestry Technicians. In addition, nine Senior Community Service Employment Program enrollees provide assistance to the District crews. The District does not have any temporary forest workers.

There is one individual, Cecil Huggins, who should be recognized for his help in the preparation of this Armuchee Ranger District History.

Without Mr. Huggins' recollection of his early District work assignments, wildfire suppression and prevention efforts, and timber management activities, this report would not have been very comprehensive.

Information regarding the District's early organizational years between 1937 and 1948 would have been lost. Regrettably, Mr. Huggins passed away on January 8, 1986, several weeks following the initial recorded interview with him. Though additional follow up interviews had been planned, the initial two-hour interview provided information on the Armuchee Ranger District's formation and early management goals, objectives, problems, and accomplishments.

Special thanks go to District employees Windom Neal and Bob Fitzpatrick for arranging the interview with Cecil Huggins. Windom and Bob - veteran employees on the District - provided additional information on the early resource management activities and policies through a separate recorded interview.

Particular mention should be made of the assistance provided by Rachel Schneider (Public Affairs Assistant - Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests) and Jack Wynn (Forest Archeologist - Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests). Rachel was helpful in locating news articles relating to the early establishment of the Armuchee Ranger District. Jack provided encouragement and constructive insights with respect to the development of this history project.

Special mention goes to Richard Mills - District Ranger on the Sylamore Ranger District - Ozark-St. Francis National Forest, Arkansas - for his assistance in providing the Armuchee Ranger District an early photograph of his father Horace O. Mills. H. O. Mills was the Armuchee's first District Ranger.

Thanks go to Joe King, District Ranger, for his support of this District history report and providing the design for the cover. The tedious job of typing this report was the responsibility of Business Management Clerk, Sherry Koonce; while Support Services Specialist, Ann Pope helped gather information for the project. Their enthusiasm and support for this report was greatly appreciated.

Tom Fearrington
Author of Report
May, 1986

INTRODUCTION

The word Armuchee is derived from the Cherokee Indian dialect. It means "Land of Wildflowers". The Armuchee Ranger District is located primarily in the Ridge-and-Valley Province, mostly along the Armuchee Ridges in Northwest Georgia. This province is composed of long parallel ridges, arranged northeast-southwest to nearly north-south. The ridges are steep-sided, with long, broad valleys situated between the ridges. Most of the drainage is to the south and southwest, through the Chattooga, Oostanaula, and to a limited degree, the Conasauga Rivers. These rivers are all part of the Coosa system which drains much of Central Alabama. The northeast and southwest trending of the mountain ridges isolates the northwest corner of the State from the rest of Georgia, to greater and greater extents as one moves northwestward. The Armuchee Ridges are separated from the rest of the topography by two wider valleys, the Chickamauga on the west and the Great Valley on the east. These valleys provide more available agricultural land. There are no Forest Service holdings in these larger valleys.

The lands purchased for the Armuchee Ranger District were mostly cut-over, burned-over, eroded lands which were considered of little economic value. Fire protection was one of the District's biggest jobs as thousands of trees were planted in the cut-over and burned-over areas. Fish and game were restocked throughout the District. The Depression and its related Civilian Conservation Corps were integral forces in the development of the newly acquired lands comprising the Armuchee Ranger District. Under the supervision of trained engineers, fire lookout towers, roads, and recreation areas (Kartah Dell and the Narrows) began to take shape. In

the timber management, hundreds of barren acres within the District's boundaries were reforested with young pine seedlings.

With the initial purchase of lands to comprise the Armuchee Ranger District beginning in 1936, officials envisioned that the new District's land-based resources could be developed, enhanced, and maintained to the aesthetic and economic advantage of the individuals of Northwest Georgia. This concept has become a reality as the development of this District has been an economic boost to Northwest Georgia. The strong timber management program, wildlife conservation programs, and diverse recreation opportunities have contributed to Northwest Georgia's growth and overall development.

Presently the U. S. Forest Service manages the natural resources found on the Armuchee Ranger District to provide for the greatest, long-run benefit to the public. The land is managed for outdoor recreation, timber, water and wildlife. By using careful management practices, the U. S. Forest Service provides for the protection and wise use of a portion of Northwest Georgia's natural resources.

CULTURAL HISTORY
of the
ARMUCHEE DISTRICT

The Armuchee Valleys

The Armuchee Ranger District area was separated from Chattahoochee on the grounds of the physical separation of this area from the Chattahoochee, the different physical environment (a ridge and valley complex), and the different base of employment and social orientations of the people.

Historically there was relatively little major fighting during the Civil War period in the northeastern part of the State, but the northwest saw several major operations, including Sherman's famous march, resulting in the burning of Atlanta and the capture of Savannah. The battles of Chickamauga and Resaca, for control of the rail line from Chattanooga to Atlanta, left a number of scars on both land and people. During the depression, people moved into the cities seeking industrial jobs, only a few of which were successful. The land was sold, some of it to the Federal agencies, later becoming part of the Forest Service system.

The Federally-owned land in this area is very fragmented, primarily occupying the upper slopes and ridges. The valleys between them are occupied by private owners, where some farming and cattle raising is still being carried on. Most families living either in rural or urban areas have depended on the carpet industry for at least the last 20 years; before that, agriculture was predominant.

Farming continues to be a major interest, although its prime importance is social rather than economic today. The concern here as elsewhere in Appalachia may simply be to maintain contact with the land. In addition to gossiping and trading stories of the buck or the fish that got away, the size of one's vegetables or the condition of one's garden are regular sources of conversation in the informal social gatherings in the country stores, small town cafes and on the courthouse steps.

Most people were reared in a rural atmosphere. These individuals pursue rural ideals and norms despite the fact that they are currently employed in industry. Having been raised on farms and continuing to live in rural areas, their interests are in land, fishing, hunting, hiking, and general outdoor activities fill weekends and vacations.

The few full-time farmers who remain are operating on a much larger scale than those of the past generation. Three farms in the West Armuchee Valley put in more crop land (600 to 1,000 acres) than all the farmers farmed in that valley in 1940 according to one respondent. Another commented that "It is simply not possible to make it without being big." These

big operators raise cash crops such as soy beans, which require large outlays of money for equipment. They likewise depend upon national and international markets so fluctuations in market prices have drastic effects on the local farmers.

The individuals living in this area tend to identify themselves with the area rather than with a particular industry or job, or even with the mountains. In fact they think of themselves as "valley people" rather than "mountain people". They do maintain the conservative attitudes and cautious approach to the outsiders which is seen in the mountains.

There are no incorporated communities within the proclamation boundaries for the National Forest, but several are either on the boundary or just outside. These include the towns of LaFayette, Dalton, Calhoun, Ringgold, Summerville, and Trion. These towns range in population from 1,800 to 20,000, Ringgold being the smallest and Dalton the largest. A number of smaller, unincorporated communities also exist in and around the Ranger District. In addition are other urban concentrations important to this area: Chattanooga, Tennessee is north at the state line, and Rome, Georgia is 20-30 miles south.

The principle employment centers for people living in the Armuchee area include all the towns listed above, with major concentrations in Dalton and Chattanooga. A large portion of the carpet industry in the United States is centered at Dalton in Whitfield County. The current recession has strongly affected the industry, but recent census data show that Whitfield County population increased about 19.3% between 1970 and 1980. The area population increase shows more dramatically in the eastward "spill over" into Murray County which grew from 12,986 to 19,654 (51.3%) in that same period.

Within the past 20 years the tendency has been to move away from urban areas and out into the countryside. Thus there is an increase in population density in the country around Dalton, Chattanooga, and Rome. This movement from the urban to rural areas is greeted with some concern by the traditionally rural folk; they hate to see the property broken into small pieces as they and their neighbors sell farm lots to outsiders. This increases the number of neighbors and thereby increases the numbers of interpersonal and social problems. The opportunity to gain money from the sale of the property does seem however, to override the concerns with the increasing population. (Hicks 1976)

There are relatively few second-home concentrations and no major second-home or resort developments in the Armuchee. The mountain housing complexes have not been built away from urban centers, but Dalton is developing large condominium and apartment complexes within the city limits. These are located with easy access to I-75 on the west side of town. This highway is the main connector between Dalton and Chattanooga and most of the young people who are looking for entertainment usually go to Chattanooga.

One can also make excellent time to Atlanta on I-75 to shop, and that highway carries a steady stream of trucks with goods produced in the Dalton mills to Atlanta markets for sale or trans-shipment.

The consolidated educational facilities of the Armuchee area are similar to those in the Chattahoochee, with secondary education concentrated in the county seats. Two year post-secondary educational institutions include the area vocational-technical school in Jasper, Dalton Junior College and Reinhardt College. Shorter and Berry Colleges at Rome both provide four-year college programs. Graduates of the colleges can proceed to the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga (UT-C) or elsewhere. Although UT-C is much more convenient, and the prevailing desires would keep high school graduates close to home, the prospect of paying out-of-state tuition there tends to encourage Georgia students to use in-state schools.

The religious orientation is basically Protestant, predominantly Baptist and Methodist. There is a recent influx of Seventh Day Adventists from Tennessee into the eastern part of this area, concentrating in the Ellijay-Chatsworth area and spreading westward. Additionally there are a few Jehovah's Witnesses in the area who are slowly becoming accepted in the communities. (Wynn, 1981:16-18)

CULTURAL DESCRIPTION
OF PEOPLE
IN AND AROUND
THE
ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

While there is some differentiation in the Armuchee Valley country between the locals and the outsiders, the social distinctions appear to be organized on an economic basis. This is due at least partly to the influence of carpet and related industries. Some individuals and families have risen from the middle and lower classes to millionaire status within one, or at most, two generations.

1. Upper Class. This group includes people from three origins. The old landed families of northwest Georgia, diversified their investments to maintain themselves at or near the top socially, economically and politically. Some of the "carpet millionaires" began as teachers or mechanics who, with luck and business acumen, managed to become the owners and operators of major carpet and related companies. There are also some outsiders who have come in to invest and operate textile or support industries. It is said that the Dalton area has more millionaires per capita than anywhere in the country. Whether strictly true or not, it reflects some of the local thinking and local pride in this "home grown" industrial complex.

The size of the Upper Class does appear larger than the norm for the north Georgia area in comparison to the Middle Class. The Upper Class members own large homes, some on the ridgetops overlooking the surrounding valleys, and participate in the social life of Dalton, Chattanooga, and Atlanta and the politics of local, State and Federal governments.

They tend to seek their summer recreation around the marinas on lakes near Chattanooga, Lakes Lanier and Allatoona, in sumptuous watercraft, or skiing either in the eastern or western mountains in the winter, reflecting a cosmopolitan outlook. Their children tend to attend prestigious schools, both in and out of state. A few (perhaps two dozen) large scale, mechanized farms, sawmills, and construction companies also provide sufficient base for their owner-operators to participate in this socio-economic class.

2. The Middle Class. This group is proportionately smaller than would be expected for the overall population size. It is composed of college-trained managers, educators, clergy, small businessmen, and middle-level management in the carpet and related industries. A large portion of them are outsiders, from Georgia and elsewhere. Local people who leave for college educations, tend to stay away, taking jobs in Atlanta, Chattanooga or well out of the area. Local provincialism in rural populations would dictate that young people would stay in their local areas, but a shortage of jobs for the college trained people has forced them "out of the nest."

Schooling in the Armuchee is limited to Vocational-Technical and Junior College courses, which prepare the student either to continue at a four-year college or university (at Rome or somewhere else) or for the local industrial plants. Outside influences like television here, as across the Georgia mountains, broaden horizons and provide stimulation to seek job opportunities outside the area.

Recreational use of the National Forests in the Armuchee District tends to be mostly by the middle and lower classes, in both dispersed and developed areas. Such use includes hunting, fishing, hiking and camping, with favorite areas being advertised by word of mouth from family to family. These folk may also be seen along the highways towing bass boats to the lakes and reservoirs within 40-60 miles for weekend fishing. Increased prices of gasoline tend to limit the frequency and length of such trips, however. As the southerly areas are developed and the road ways are improved, greater activity will probably come from the Rome-Atlanta directions.

3. The Lower Class. The vast majority of the population in the Armuchee area falls at the lower end of the Middle Class and in the Lower Class. These are the would-be farmers and part-time farmers who spend their days in the mills, as described in the section on the Blue Ridge area. Basically an outdoors people. Some may take off from work on the first day of hunting season. Others may be frustrated enough from time to time with confines of the mill work, indoors and without windows to take off for short periods outdoors. The "facts of life" however, dictate the necessity of shift labor, since farming is no longer profitable or sustaining except for the very large operators and limited number of Lower Class tenants. The core of the mill worker population originally lived in the company-owned milltowns scattered around Dalton. After the conversion from the hand-made tufted chennille bedspreads, which were frequently cabin crafts or home industries, the mills began to expand. Mechanization, and subsequent development of the tufted carpet mills have increased the size, economic importance and number of employees in the modern mills. The bedspread, and later carpet industries were traditionally low-paying occupations, hiring a high percentage of women, but did provide additional support for the gradually declining farm family incomes.

In the recent past, plant employment situation was such that workers could pick and choose their jobs. If they were unhappy with one position, they could leave and find work in other plants with little difficulty, allowing considerable individual freedom of movement for the workers. As the current recession began to worsen in 1978, the housing market began to decline, and with it, so did carpet manufacturing. The result of the continued market decline has been layoffs and closing of some mills, throwing some of the mill workers onto the unemployment rolls, and others into alternative pursuits, both within and outside the area.

Statistics for Dalton-Whitfield and adjacent counties show that the population is predominantly white, with only 5-6% black. A portion of the blacks (perhaps half) are involved in the various mills and other related occupations. The student body at Dalton Junior College reflects the general populations. About 2-3% of the students are black, in both the Vocational-Technical and Liberal Arts curricula. The surrounding counties have somewhat lower percentage of blacks, usually in small rural communities, such as those living near West Armuchee and Oostanaula. As hunters and fishermen, blacks prefer the dispersed recreational activities, seldom using the developed areas such as The Pocket and Hidden Creek Recreation areas. (Wynn, 1981:30-32)

GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION OF LANDS IN GEORGIA

The beginnings of the National Forests in Georgia were tied in with the forces that brought about the creation of National Forests in the Appalachians. The first "stirrings" are quoted from Breaking New Ground by the late Gifford Pinchot.

"The first suggestion for the purchase of Eastern Forest Reserves came from Professor Joseph A. Holmes, then State Geologist of North Carolina, and later Director of the United States Bureau of Mines. It was made to me, you may remember, in the little Brick House at Biltmore in 1892 or '93. Holmes' suggestion was never out of my head for long. But in those early days of American Forestry, there was comparatively little to be done about it.

In 1898, I understand through the initiative of Dr. Georgia Ambler, the Appalachian National Park Association was started in Asheville. On January 2, 1901, a memorial of the Associations was presented to Congress and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and an investigation was authorized. Accordingly, during the fiscal year 1900-1901 the Division of Forestry, in cooperation with the United States Geological Survey, made a study of the Southern Appalachian forest. An area of 9,600,000 acres was examined and mapped.

The results were set forth in an elaborate report transmitted to Congress with a message on December 19, 1901, by Theodore Roosevelt, and ordered printed as Senate Document No. 84. That document contained reliable information concerning the proposed Appalachian Forest Reserve, and gave exhaustive data on the composition of the forest of a region then little known.

Early in 1901, the North Carolina Legislature had ceded to the United States authority to acquire title Forest Reserve purposes, with exemption from taxes. For this long step ahead, Joseph Hyde Pratt, lifelong friend of the forests, was largely responsible. Similar measures, also, were passed within three months by Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. We were making progress. (The South Carolina act was also passed this year.)" (Alter, 1971:18)

HIGHLIGHT DESCRIPTION OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE NATIONAL FOREST

The following newspaper article written by Chattahoochee National Forest Supervisor, W. H. Fischer, provides an early description of the uses and benefits derived from the forest circa 1940.

The Chattahoochee National Forest is located across the northern part of Georgia. Of the four Ranger Districts, which comprise the National Forest, the Armuchee District with Headquarters at LaFayette, is the westernmost District. The Forest area lies above latitude 34 degrees and 30 minutes and is located in the 19 northern counties of the State. The Blue Ridge Mountain Range is the predominating range running east and west. Both pine and hardwoods are found in abundance in the Forest. Timber, watershed protection, recreation, wildlife, and other values of vital importance are provided for the people living in and around the Forest. The major interrelated uses and benefits from the Forest include:

TIMBER PRODUCTION - The forest is divided into four organized working circles containing 506,000 acres which sustains an estimated total volume of 961,500,000 board feet of merchantable timber with an annual allowable cut of 17,100,000 board feet. In addition there is 409,000,000 board feet of chestnut which is unregulated. In 1939, the first year of operation under management, a total of 8,247,000 board feet was cut, providing work for approximately 200 men. The cutting and manufacturing of this timber on a sustained yield basis furnishes continuous employment for 240 men. In 1939, 220 acres of old field were planted with pine trees within the Forest, of this total, the Armuchee District planted 120 acres.

FORAGE PRODUCTION - Commercial grazing on the Forest is of minor importance. In 1939, two hundred free permits for grazing domestic stock were issued to local residents.

WATERSHED PROTECTION - The Forest has 1,600,000 acres of high watershed value for the upstream control of runoff and erosion and for the protection of the headwaters of streams which supply water power for 25 hydroelectric plants and 17 steam operated plants that generate over 600,000 horse power which provides electric power and light to over 560 towns and cities, giving service to over 175,000 families. There are seven large hydroelectric plants located within the National Forest.

RECREATION - In 1939 the Chattahoochee National Forest was visited by 154,079 campers and picnickers, 1009 summer residents, and 27,734 hunters and fishermen. One organization camp has been built and 750 children from low income groups coming from 10 communities in or near the Forest used the camp.

WILDLIFE - In 1936 the Director of the Division of Wildlife of the State of Georgia and the Regional Forester entered into a cooperative agreement for the management of wildlife resources on this Forest. Under this agreement, four fish and game management areas, including 153,000 acres of land were placed under management, 24,500 acres of which had been a Federal Refuge since 1927. These areas have been stocked with deer, bear and trout. In 1939 over 100 predatory animals were trapped. The estimated population of major game species at the end of 1939 is 900 deer, bear 10, and turkey, 1000. During 1939 over \$1100 was collected for special fishing permits. During 1939, 70,000 five to six inch trout were stocked in the streams in these areas and regulated fishing was permitted.

EMPLOYMENT - Administration and development of the Forest in 1939 required 89 year-long employees and 895 seasonal and temporary workers (including ERA, NYA, CCC etc.,) who expended 798 man-years of labor in protection, management, and development of the Forest. In addition this Forest could provide a justifiable reservoir of public works, including such essential developments as administrative structures, utilization roads, erosion control, and recreation improvements, etc. This program could employ 500 man-years of labor annually over a six year period with a total annual cost of \$572,290, including equipment operation and purchase of materials.

FOREST RECEIPTS - Beside all intangible benefits Forest receipts in 1939 were: Timber \$50,945.91, Grazing \$31.92, all other \$1,994.66. Total \$52,972.49. Twenty-five percent of these receipts (\$13,243.12) will be turned to the Counties in lieu of taxes, and for road and school maintenance. An additional 10 percent of these receipts (\$5,297.25) is returned to the Forest Supervisor to be used on the construction and maintenance of roads within the National Forest. (Fischer, June 27, 1940)

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

As for the Chattahoochee National Forest, it was established by Presidential Proclamation on July 9, 1936 (Fed. Reg. July 14, 1936) with a gross area of 1,165,000 acres with 486,598 acres acquired in Dawson, Fannin, Gilmer, Habersham, Lumpkin, Murray, Rabun, Towns, Union and White Counties. (Alter, 1971:23) Of the gross area 407,800 came from the Cherokee Purchase Unit, 253,900 from Nantahala and 503,300 from additionally approved purchase areas in Georgia. (Alter, 1971:23) All areas not included in this proclamation were dropped from prior approved purchase areas since at that time that National Forest and Purchase Unit boundaries were co-terminous. During the same Fiscal Year (1937), the National Forest Reservation Commission approved the addition of the Armuchee Purchase Unit with 250,000 acres in Chattooga, Dade and Walker Counties. (Alter, 1971:24) Also the Lookout Mountain addition of 143,000 acres in Chattooga, Dade and Walker Counties, Georgia, and 61,000 in Cherokee and DeKalb Counties, Alabama, was authorized.

Mrs. Beulah Shropshire Taylor of Summerville, Georgia, was called by H. O. Mills, the Armuchee's first ranger, the "Mother of the Armuchee". Mrs. Taylor, when asked about how it happened, said she had been interested in the area now called the Armuchee even as a young woman. About 1927, Malcomb Connor Tarver, a junior Representative in the U. S. House, asked her one day when he was visiting her father's law office where she worked, if there was anything he could do for her in Washington. Her reply was "Yes"; he could see about setting up some way so that Taylor Ridge and other mountains nearby would get some fire protection. (Alter, 1971:24) "Judge Tarver", as he was known, said that was a pretty big order for a junior Congressman but he would keep it in mind. (Alter, 1971:24) Some ten years later, he wrote Mrs.

Taylor that the Armuchee was a reality if the owners would sell their land. Mrs. Taylor had bought 1200 acres of farm and ridge land in the area that she was trying to look after and was quite proud of her holdings. Her father wanted to know if she would give it up. She said she would if it would help get protection for the rest of the area; she did sell. Thus the Armuchee was a thought in the mind of a young lady several years before becoming a reality in 1936. Judge Tarver didn't forget her request, and he is also reputed to have been the main local influence in having the Limestone Valley Land Utilization area set up near Dalton. (Alter, 1971:24) Some of this unit was exchanged for lands which helped toward the consolidation of the Armuchee in the 1960's.

The Lookout Mountain Purchase area was never activated due to rising land prices and other factors. The final straw apparently was when Governor Ed Rivers of Georgia was able to get the State Highway Department to build a road down the ridge through the purchase area to make more accessible some Rivers family property on Lookout Mountain. (Alter, 1971:27) Prices then went above what seemed practical to pay for forest land there in comparison to what land could be bought for elsewhere. Also shortly after that time, acquisition money became very limited. Since the State of Georgia now gives fire protection to the area, the need for it to have National Forest status is somewhat less than in the 1930's. (Alter, 1971:27)

The Armuchee was the last Forest Service activated purchase area to be added to the Chattahoochee. (Alter, 1971:76) The Armuchee's close proximity to well populated areas and railroads resulted in its early heavy logging. The area was burned over with great regularity. Timber cover was so thin on the upper slopes and ridge tops that these made

excellent quail shooting areas when the unit was put under administration. The first ranger on the area was H. O. Mills, who had been Assistant Ranger on the Tallulah District just prior to being assigned to the Armuchee. Mills says that from the overall conservation standpoint he found the difference in the two areas "most distressing". (Alter, 1971:76) The Armuchee was really in great need of good conservation practices.

The following newspaper article written in 1938 provides an account of the formation of the Armuchee Ranger District:

In the northwest corner of Georgia, including portions of Catoosa, Walker, Whitfield, Gordon, Chattooga and Floyd counties, lies a rugged, largely non-agricultural territory, draining north through Chickamauga Creek into the Tennessee River, and south through tributaries of the Coosa River. Most of the forests in this section have been logged over and for years fires have raged over most of the areas unchecked, so that today the the land is at a low stage of timber productivity.

Realizing the importance of reforesting these uplands for control of watersheds and consequent lessening of destructive floods, the U. S. Forest Service, through the National Forest Reservation Commission, established the Armuchee Purchase Unit of 250,000 acres, within which lands were to be bought for forestry purposes. To date 32,315 acres have been approved for purchase.

Jos. C. Kircher, Regional Forester for the U. S. Forest Service, announces that lands acquired within this purchase unit will be administered as part of the Chattahoochee National Forest, the Supervisor's headquarters being at Gainesville and headquarters for the District Ranger at LaFayette.

Surveys and plans for fire protection of this unit have been made and a CCC camp near Rome is starting on the task of building forest roads and telephone lines and constructing lookout towers. With the support and cooperation of people living in and near the forest, it is expected that the present fire menace will soon be so diminished that the denuded mountains can be reforested and the timberlands brought to maximum productivity.

Mr. Kircher points out that, in addition to direct expenditures by the Government, the counties within which the purchase unit lies will eventually benefit by the fact that twenty-five percent of all receipts from the forest will be turned over to them and an additional ten percent will be used by the Forest Service to build roads within the forest. Hunting and fishing will also be improved and opportunities for recreation developed.

During the acquisition of lands to comprise the newly formed Armuchee Ranger District, a unique land ownership situation was discovered. An article written by Don Carter for the Atlanta Journal in January, 1938, provides the following account of the circumstances surrounding the property:

It's the "lost country" of Georgia. Located between Whitfield counties in a rugged mountainous section of northwest Georgia is a tract of approximately one hundred acres of land which neither county claims.

And since 1851 when Whitfield was formed, no taxes have been levied and no local law has been exercised over this "lost" area.

On the land maps, it is known as Lot No. 329, in the Twenty-seventh District of the third section of what was old Cherokee county. But when Walker county was formed in 1883 out of the old Indian District, and Whitfield was organized eighteen years later, neither claimed nor wanted the tract.

Land owners tried to register the parcel at the county seats of both counties, but officials would not record the land deeds. Cherokee county, the parent government, had no claim for it either.

For the last twenty years the Price family of LaFayette has held the land. There is a homestead there and some farming and gardening is possible.

When the Price family auctioned it to the Federal Government sometime ago for addition to the Chattahoochee National Forest in the Armuchee division, government agents began to check the title to the property.

They found that it had been drawn originally by William Miller, of Stewart County, but was subsequently turned back to the state. On March 31, 1846, it became the property of William B. W. Dent, of Heard County, and since then has passed through a number of owners.

Condemnation proceedings were filed in Federal Court Tuesday by Assistant District Attorney H. H. Tisinger in order that the title may be cleared and the property turned over to the Federal Government as a part of the vast Chattahoochee National Forest.

Then, Mr. Tisinger says, it won't be necessary for this land to be located in any county. It becomes a part of the Federal Government's domain and is governed strictly by national laws. (Carter, date unknown)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

The following newspaper articles written for the Walker County Messenger by Horace Mills - the first ranger on the Armuchee Ranger District - chronicle the early establishment and subsequent development of the District from 1939 - 1940.

The National Forest Reservation Commission in a recent meeting at Washington, D. C., approved the purchase of 7,450 acres in the new Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest. This addition increases the acreage under the administration of the Forest Service on Armuchee District to 39,765 acres. The new purchases will be in Walker, Whitfield, Floyd, Gordon, Chattooga and Catoosa counties and will adjoin land previously purchased by the Forest Service in this area.

A CCC camp located in the 'Pocket' which is in the heart of the Armuchee District, is carrying out the work program of the Forest Service. This camp is now building roads, foot trails, and telephone lines which are essential and necessary in the administration and protection of the Forest. Construction of the first seven fire lookout towers will be started at an early date. The first tower to be built will be located on the high point of Johns Mountain in Walker County, where the old 'flag pole' was located for signaling during the War between the States.

RECREATION AREAS - Work will soon be started on several recreation areas, located in the more scenic parts of the forest which will be particularly accessible to the people of LaFayette, Trion and Summerville. Additional recreational areas will be constructed in other parts of the Forest when more acreage is acquired.

FOREST FIRES - The greatest problem in the administration of the new Armuchee District is the prevention and suppression of forest fires. Some of the finest timber in the South once grew in this part of Georgia, but due to the fact that fires have raged unchecked over most of this area in years past, the land is now at a very low stage of timber productivity. Fine timber can again be grown in this area. This will bring more jobs and additional revenue to the people living in and around the National Forest, provided fires can be prevented and kept to a minimum.

More than 99 percent of the fires on the Armuchee District are caused by man's carelessness and thoughtlessness. This means that practically all the forest fires which annually damage the forest land in this area could be prevented.

Only a little care and precaution is necessary to prevent these forest fires from starting. The rules for fire prevention are simple.

FIRE PREVENTION RULES - Don't throw lighted matches or cigarette stubs along the roadside or in woods.

Don't leave your campfire or warming fire until it is absolutely out.

If you have fields and brush that must be burned off, the following precautions should be taken:

1. Obey the law and advise your neighbors before burning.
2. Rake or plow a line around the field to be burned.
3. Don't burn on a dry, windy day, when fire is dangerous to handle.
4. Wait until the late afternoon of a day when there is no wind and the ground is moist from recent rains before burning.
5. No matter how light the breeze, always burn against it.
6. Ask your neighbors to help you if there is any danger of the fire getting out of control.

Every person should appoint himself a volunteer fire warden to see that neither he nor any other person is responsible for starting a forest fire. If these rules are applied to burning, the fire loss this year will be greatly reduced.

Information regarding the Chattahoochee National Forest and the work of the Forest Service can be obtained from the District Ranger at LaFayette, Georgia, or from the Forest Supervisor in Gainesville, Georgia. (Mills:September 9, 1939)

This article outlined the construction of fire towers and recreation facilities on the newly established Armuchee Ranger District by the Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees. The CCC camp was located in the "Pocket" which is in the heart of the Armuchee Ranger District.

Approximately two years ago the United States Forest Service established the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest here in Northwest Georgia.

To date, 48,000 acres of land have been acquired or are in the process of being acquired in those parts of Walker, Whitfield, Gordon, Floyd and Catoosa Counties, which are within the National Forest Boundary.

This land is being managed by the Forest Service so that all the natural resources of the forest will be developed, protected and wisely used to provide the "greatest good to the greatest number of people in the long run." This means that definite plans have been made and are being put in effect on the Armuchee District to manage this Forest so that the biggest and best timber can be grown in the shortest amount of time, watersheds are protected to control erosion, and flood damage, recreation areas, and recreation uses are developed on those parts of the forest best suited to recreation, and wildlife resources are developed.

A CCC camp located in "the Pocket" which is in the heart of the Armuchee District, is carrying out the Forest Service work program necessary to develop, administer and protect the Armuchee District. In order to develop adequate fire protection for the forest, the completion of our lookout towers and telephone system has been emphasized. To date three lookout towers have been constructed on Taylor's Ridge and Johns Mountain and construction work will be started soon on two more towers on Chestnut Mountain and Dick's Ridge. The Forest Service telephone system which connects the lookout towers and other important points with the CCC camp and the District Ranger's office is nearing completion, with 56 miles of line constructed.

During the past two years 21 miles of road and 18 miles of trail have been constructed. The Jenkins Gap Road on Taylor's Ridge was completed over a year ago, and the Dunaway Gap Road across Johns Mountain was finished this year. In cooperation with Walker County, the County Road from Villanow to the CCC camp has been greatly improved this year. Construction of the Dug Gap Road across Rocky

Face Mountain is now being finished. In addition to these roads, low standard service roads have been built to all the lookout towers. Work will be started soon on reconstructing the Narrows Road across Taylor's Ridge near Trion to a high standard road.

Two picnic areas, "The Narrows" and "Kartah Dell" on Taylor's Ridge have been developed and plans have been made to enlarge considerably the facilities and development at Kartah Dell. Additional recreation areas in other parts of the Forest will be developed for the use and enjoyment of the public when more acreage is acquired.

Though it is the Forest Service Policy to restrict most of the land buying to wooded land and land which is best suited for growing timber, some tracts of land which contain old abandoned fields and a little good agricultural land have been purchased. The good agricultural land will be kept in agriculture but the abandoned fields which are worn out or are washing will be put to work again growing good timber producing trees. Last winter 120 acres of these old fields were planted to trees and 300 more will be planted this winter.

These activities of the Forest Service are all steps toward fulfilling the purpose for which National Forests are credited; to provide "the greatest good to the greatest number of people in the long run." (Mills: November 28, 1940)

This article urged individuals living within the boundaries of the Armuchee Ranger District to adopt strong wildfire prevention ethics.

Definite progress is being made on the new Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest in the development and conservation of its natural resources. However, this Forest Service program is endangered by the frequent occurrence of forest fires. The prevention of and control of these forest fires is one of the biggest jobs the Forest Service has to accomplish.

Forest fires have caused a great deal of damage in this area, killing young trees, damaging and slowing down the growth of old timber, destroying some food and cover, and destroying the natural ground cover which holds moisture, thereby causing the soil to wash and streams to flood.

If the Forest Service is to succeed in stopping this damage and in developing the natural resources of this new National Forest District, so that the public will receive all the possible benefits of the Forest, woods fires must be prevented and controlled.

Last fall and spring 56 fires were fought which were burning on or were threatening the National Forest. Only one of these fires was caused by lightning; all the rest were accidentally, carelessly or intentionally caused by man, and therefore could have been prevented. Twenty-nine, or over half of the fires were caused by smokers dropping matches or tobacco; six fires started from campfires which were left burning; five fires were caused by hunters smoking game or bees out of trees and neglecting to put their fires out and five fires were intentionally set. Ten fires were caused by those who burned off their fields, brushpiles and ditch banks on windy dangerous days, or who burned without taking sufficient precautions to prevent the fires from spreading. On three of the fires it was necessary for the Forest Service to demand payment of the fire suppression costs by the persons responsible, or resort to legal action, as National Forest land would have been burned if the fires had not been fought.

The damage caused by all of these fires and the cost of putting them out represents a loss to the public. These losses could have been prevented if everyone living near or using the Forest had been careful with fire.

In spite of the considerable number of fires which occurred last year, it is encouraging to note that there has been a steady decrease in the number of fires and the acreage burned each year. Therefore, progress is being made in reducing the fire damage on the Armuchee District and this progress has been made chiefly through the friendly interest and cooperation of the people living in or near the Forest. A reduction of the number of fires occurring each year must be continued and this can be accomplished only if everyone gives their whole-hearted support and cooperation. (Mills, December 5, 1940)

The following newspaper article written by District Ranger Horace Mills in October, 1939, recognized the need for the public to adopt wildfire prevention ethics on a local and statewide level.

The week of October 8 to 14 has been set aside as National Fire Prevention Week. While most attention will be centered on danger and damage from fire in town and cities, it is also a good time to think of the ravages of fire away from towns and cities - out on our forest lands. Georgia has 23,500,000 acres of forest land, which is about 62 percent of the total area of the state.

According to surveys made by the U. S. Forest Service, about one-fourth of all the forest land in Georgia is burned over each year. From 1934 through 1938 the average area burned each year was 5,510,000 acres.

In earlier years when there were plenty of timberlands for every purpose, people were little concerned over forest fires. Nowadays, with many people in the state needing work, there is every reason to stop waste and to build up every source of income and employment. Forest fires are responsible for a tremendous waste. They kill little trees, and kill or injure big trees and retard their growth. Game animals and young birds and their food are destroyed. Forest fires increase the danger of 'washing' of the soil, destroy the natural beauty of the countryside, reduce the fertility of the forest soil, and create idle land that is a tax burden. The damage from forest fires in Georgia is estimated at close to \$6,000,000 each year, but there are some losses from injury to woodlands that cannot be figured in dollars and cents.

It would not be any insuperable task to practically eliminate forest fires in Georgia. Our forests are not nearly as inflammable as the forests of certain other sections of the United States where a much smaller proportion of the forest area is burned. Already in Georgia some of the forest land is receiving organized fire protection, and the results have been very encouraging. The State Forest Service (presently known as the Georgia Forestry Commission), working with timber protection associations throughout the state, has managed to keep the burned area down to a small figure on the protected lands. The Chattahoochee National Forest gives fire protection to 566,000 acres in the mountain part of the state. In 1938 only 109 acres was burned on this large National Forest area. During the same period in Walker, Chattooga, Floyd, Gordon, and Whitfield counties, 39 fires destroyed 1,955 acres of unprotected lands.

Some kind of fire protection is needed for all of the forest land in Georgia, but the fire problem would be much more simple if fewer fires got started. Ninety-nine percent of the forest fires occurring in the state result from the activities of people, and more than 50 percent are incendiary fires - fires set intentionally because of a desire to burn the woods.

It can thus be seen that the biggest obstacle in protecting Georgia forests from fire is the attitude of a large body of our citizens. Many people see no harm in "burning off the woods." Many others are indifferent to this serious evil. When we have developed a strong public opinion against woods burning, it should not be difficult to practically do away with the red-tongued enemy of our woodlands. (Mills, 1939)

This newspaper article appearing in the October 30, 1963, Walker County Messenger shows the U. S. Forest Service's trend toward educating the public on the agency's role as a multiple use land management resources agency. The emphasis is not being placed on the public individual's need to prevent wildfires as in the 1939 article but instead focuses the public's attention to the management of National Forest lands for timber, water, wildlife and recreation.

On the weekend of October 12-13 approximately 50 Boy Scouts of the Cherokee Council visited the Pocket Recreation Area on the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest.

The Scouts and their leaders from Troop 62 in Linwood, Troop 64 in Chickamauga, and Troop 67 in LaFayette arrived at the Pocket area Saturday afternoon for their camporee weekend activities.

During the course of events Saturday afternoon, District Ranger Jack Fortin and Assistant Ranger Bascom Hemingway of the U. S. Forest Service conducted five nature walks for the Scouts. On these walks Fortin and Hemingway assisted the boys in tree identification and explained some of the uses of the trees identified.

Later during the afternoon, Ranger Fortin spoke briefly to all the Scouts, explaining that developing and maintaining recreation areas such as the Pocket area is just one of the activities conducted on National Forest land by the U. S. Forest Service.

He explained that the Forest Service operates under the Multiple Use Management concept which means that National Forest lands are managed for timber, water, wildlife, and recreation. Ranger Fortin reminded the Scouts that along with the privilege of using the recreation areas in the National Forests goes the responsibility to protect the facilities from damage by fire or carelessness (writing on picnic tables, chopping or carving initials on trees, leaving litter on the ground).

Assistant Ranger Hemingway then demonstrated to the Scouts the proper way to use an axe and the safe methods of use to sharpen axes. (Walker County Messenger:October 30, 1963)

During the early inception of the Armuchee Ranger District, man-caused wildfires resulting from public apathy about effective, responsible burning procedures was a very serious problem. Ranger Horace Mills recognized wildfires as the top priority problem on the new District. Through newspaper articles and person-to-person contacts which included farmers, rural store owners, private landowners, and businessmen, Ranger Mills made strides in educating the public about fundamental fire prevention concepts.

The Civilian Conservation Corps were a very important part of the wildfire suppression efforts on the Armuchee Ranger District. In recognition of the wildfire suppression efforts provided by the Pocket CCC Camp F-16 and the nationwide CCC effort. Ranger Horace Mills wrote the following article which appeared in the September 28, 1939, Walker County Messenger.

During the winter of 1938-39 Forest fires destroyed 1955 acres of timber in or adjacent to Walker County. The season is now approaching when hunting again will be in vogue, and every sportsman who enters the woods should think of the possible damage to property and life through carelessly started forest fires. The greatest damage is done by the carelessness of smokers throwing cigar or cigarette stubs and matches in dry leaves or pine needles.

The boys of the CCC are doing a great work in helping to protect our forests and it is appropriate here to reproduce a portion of an editorial from the Salt Lake City Telegram, which give an impressive tribute to five boys who lost their lives while fighting a forest fire in Nevada.

"None of those five victims was a westerner. Four were from New York and one from Kansas. Yet they gave their lives in the broad service which the CCC is performing for the West - saving timber and watersheds from ravages of fire; conserving and rebuilding our forest; restoring range lands; preventing soil erosion and water waste; building roads and recreational areas. It is a little too easy for us in the West to accept the service of

the CCC as a matter of course.

Many a westerner's home and land have been saved from destruction by brave CCC fighters. It is our natural resources of forest land, and water that are being conserved and protected by the three C's. It is WE who will enjoy the recreational areas they open up and improve.

The death of these five youths brings home to us in a tragic but forceful manner the value of the service of the CCC. Even at the cost of their hopeful young lives, they are safeguarding and building the West. And, despite their rough clothing, they're just boys - a long way from home, a little lonely at times, a little reckless and exuberant at times - still just boys, with a boy's innate courage and bravado and ready welcome for a kindly word of praise and encouragement or a friendly smile.

Next time you see some of the three C's you might remember that five of their fellows died rather horribly fighting a fire for YOU. Maybe you'll see them through new eyes."

Though the CCC have not lost any lives in this section, there is no way of knowing when such an event may occur. When you travel through the woods, whether hunting, fishing, camping or just strolling through, remember, that through your carelessness or bad judgment in not leaving your fires DEAD out, you may be the cause of some boy just beginning life to lose that life. You will cause some mother to lose faith in mankind and destroy the possibilities of a future useful citizen to some community just like your own. (Mills, 9/28/1939)

ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT ROAD WORK
ACCOMPLISHED UNDER THE ACCELERATED
PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM

The following newspaper article describes road work completed through the Accelerated Public Works Program on the Armuchee Ranger District in the early 1960's.

Work under the Accelerated Public Works Program on that part of the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest which lies in Walker County is now in progress on several projects. These projects include construction of Forest Service Road No. 635-A near Smith Gap; re-construction of Forest Service Road No. 208 to Johns Mountain Tower, No. 219 up Ponder Creek, and No. 227-A, a timber operator constructed road near Manning Mill on West Armuchee Creek; and construction of Forest Service Road No. 702 which will lead to the Keown Falls Recreation Area, also to be constructed under this program.

Right-of-way has already been cleared and bulldozers are now building the road and installing culverts on Road No. 635-A near Smith Gap. This single-tracked road with turnouts when completed will not only provide access to timber which will be sold in future years, but will also provide access for hunters and fire suppression crews into an area which was previously accessible only by foot.

Additional right-of-way needed has also been cleared for the necessary widening of curves and installation of culverts on the Johns Mountain Tower Road, the Ponder Creek Road, and the timber access road near Manning Mill.

A bulldozer is presently at work on the road near Manning Mill installing culverts, widening curves, making additional turnouts and reducing grade in some sections.

Bulldozers will begin work on Monday, November 18, installing culverts, sloping banks, and removing large rock from the roadbeds of the Johns Mountain Tower Road and the Ponder Creek Road.

Surveys have been completed for the Keown Falls Road and for the Keown Falls Recreation Area. Both of these projects are to be built on contract. The double lane road into the recreation area will have a gravel surface and will terminate in a gravelled parking lot. Facilities

in the recreation area will include picnic tables, fire places, garbage cans, toilets, and a small unattended visitor center which will contain information on the history of the area. Approximately one-half mile of trail will lead from the area to Keown Falls where an overlook will be constructed to provide visitors with an unobstructed view of the scenic falls.

These and other projects on the Chattahoochee National Forest and those on other National Forests are under the supervision of the USDA's Forest Service. Overall direction of the Accelerated Public Works Program is the responsibility of the Area Redevelopment Administration of the Department of Commerce. (Walker County Messenger, 11/20/63)

Another article appeared in the newspaper Trion Facts outlining the national forest improvements in Gordon County under the Accelerated Public Works Program. This article stated:

Rep. John Davis has announced that nearly \$300,000 worth of national forest improvements in Gordon County have been authorized under a public works speed-up bill passed by Congress.

These projects, in the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest, are authorized under the Public Works Acceleration Act, which President Kennedy signed into law after its approval by Congress.

Before this work can begin, however, Congress must provide the necessary funds in a separate appropriations bill.

Congressman Davis said he has been informed by the Forest Service that the Gordon County work can begin 24 hours after the President signs the needed appropriations bill into law.

The authorizing legislation gives President Kennedy authority to spend up to \$900 million on public works projects to spur the economy of depressed areas if Congress provides the money. The Gordon County projects are eligible under this act.

Davis, who voted for the authorizing legislation, said he is hopeful Congress will vote the necessary funds before adjournment.

A total of \$296,350 would be spent in Gordon County on four separate projects in the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest. Most of the work would be completed by the end of 1963.

The largest single project in the district would be \$128,100 to build five miles of timber harvest roads and ten miles of recreation trails in the forest for public use. The target schedule calls for this project to be 50 percent complete by the end of 1963 with an estimated 43 man-years of work going into it.

Next largest item is \$82,250 for resource development, timber stand improvement, reforestation, wildlife and recreation improvements and soil erosion control. This includes 3,000 acres of timber stand improvement, 500 acres of reforestation and 2,000 acres of wildlife habitat improvements.

The latter item includes the clearing of feeding patches in the forest for deer and most especially water development, such as the improvement of streams and lakes for game fish, the building of wildlife ponds, elimination of rough fish and re-stocking with game fish.

This resources development, stand improvement, reforestation, wildlife and recreation improvement and soil erosion control project will involve an estimated 15 man-years of work to be 75 percent completed by the end of 1963.

Another item calls for \$22,000 to be spent on resource protection and fire hazard reduction. This includes the clearing of roadsides and picnic and camping areas of tree limbs and other inflammable material, and the construction of fire breaks. This item calls for nine man-years of work to be 100 percent complete by the end of 1963.

Still another expenditure of \$128,100 is envisioned on administrative improvements, buildings and surveys, the major items to include two new administrative dwellings at ranger stations and construction of a heliport to facilitate the use of helicopters for aerial seeding and spraying and fighting forest fires. This item calls for five man-years of work to be 75 percent complete by the end of 1963. (Trion Facts, 10/3/62)

FIRE WARDEN DISTRICTS ON THE EARLY ARMUCHEE

Eight warden districts within the administrative boundaries of the Armuchee Ranger District served as wildfire prevention and detection zones. Each zone fire warden was responsible for maintaining fire tools at their home or place of business. Upon the discovery of a wildfire, the warden would contact individuals from a volunteer roster of individuals residing within his respective warden district.

The creation of the Georgia Forestry Commission in 1951 eliminated the need for wardens. Boxes with fire tools remained at the fire warden's houses or business establishment until the early 1960's.

The fire wardens were as follows:

Dell Ballenger - store owner Gore area - Chattooga County

Tillman Gazaway - farmer - Stover Creek area - Whitfield County

Mr. Goss (first name unknown) - farmer - Rocky Creek area - Gordon County

John Hammontree - store owner - Ponder Creek area - Walker County

Ernest Stansell - store owner - (later was the second permanent Forest Service employee after Cecil Huggins) Walker County

S. I. Storey - sawmill operator - Crystal Springs area - Floyd County

Doc VanHorn - farmer - Houston Valley area - Walker County

Will White - store owner - Subligna - Chattooga County

FIRE TOWERS ON THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

There were seven fire towers within the administrative boundaries of the Armuchee Ranger District. Completion of the fire towers and telephone system was emphasized to provide adequate fire protection. By the end of 1940, three fire towers had been constructed by the CCC's at Crystal Springs, Johns Mountain and work was soon to start on the Chestnut Mountain and Dick Ridge towers. At the same date, the Forest Service telephone system, connecting the fire towers and other important locations with the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp F-16 and the District Ranger's office in LaFayette, was near completion with 56 miles of line constructed. These lines were not well maintained after the CCC's left the Pocket in 1942, and the radio gradually replaced the phone. These seven fire towers were as follows:

CALHOUN GAP - This tower was actually a wooden platform constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1938. The lookout platform was the first structure for detecting and monitoring wildfires within the District boundaries. When the CCC's left the Pocket area in 1942, this tower was abandoned. By 1957, the tower had completely rotted down. The poles from this structure are now used in a ballfield in the West Armuchee Valley.

CHESTNUT MOUNTAIN - This tower was constructed in 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. This tower supported by treated wooden poles was 60 feet in height with a 8 foot x 8 foot wooden cab. A four-foot wide catwalk with guardrails encircled the exterior of the cab. This fire tower was secured by steel cables and completed in 1941. Pocket CCC camp enrollee B. W. Barton was hired by the U. S. Forest Service to serve as a lookout on the Chestnut Mountain tower and later the Johns Mountain

fire tower. (Barton, personal conversation, April 7, 1983).

CRYSTAL SPRINGS - This tower was constructed in 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The tower supported by treated wooden poles was 60 feet in height with a 8 foot x 8 foot wooden cab. A four-foot wide catwalk with guardrails encircled the exterior of the cab. The Crystal Springs tower was dismantled in 1959.

DICK RIDGE - This tower was constructed in 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The tower supported by treated wooden poles was 60 feet in height with a 8 foot x 8 foot wooden cab. A four-foot catwalk with handrails surrounded the catwalk. The Dick Ridge fire tower was dismantled in 1960.

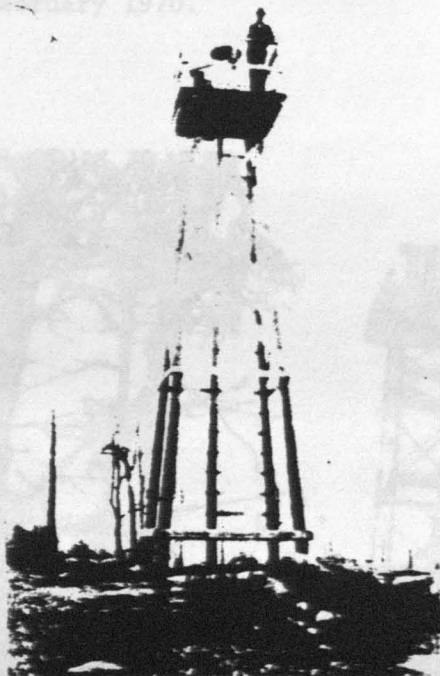
HIGH POINT - This fire tower was constructed in 1956 by the state's Georgia Forestry Commission. The steel tower had a six foot x six foot metal cab and is 60 feet in height. Today, the tower is still being utilized by the Georgia Forestry Commission. It is the only tower remaining on the District.

JOHNS MOUNTAIN - This tower was originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1940. The tower was built by the CCC's on Johns Mountain at the site of a confederate signal flagpole used during the Civil War. The tower was 60 feet in height with a 8 foot x 8 foot wooden cab. A four foot wide catwalk with guardrails encircled the exterior of the cab. The wooden fire tower built by the enrollees on the flagpole's site was torn down by the Forest Service in 1961, at the same time being replaced by a metal structure which had been purchased in Alabama and erected adjacent to it. In 1979, the metal tower was removed and donated to the Walker County Correctional Institute where

part of it is currently in use as a lookout tower. The steel tower was 80 feet in height with a six foot x six foot metal cab.

NARROWS - This steel structure was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1941. The tower was 42 feet in height with a 12 foot x 12 foot wooden cab. A four foot wide catwalk with guardrails encircled the exterior of the cab. The tower was dismantled in 1978.

Narrows fire tower constructed
in 1961 by the Civilian
Conservation Corps. The tower
was dismantled in 1978. Photograph
taken February 1970.

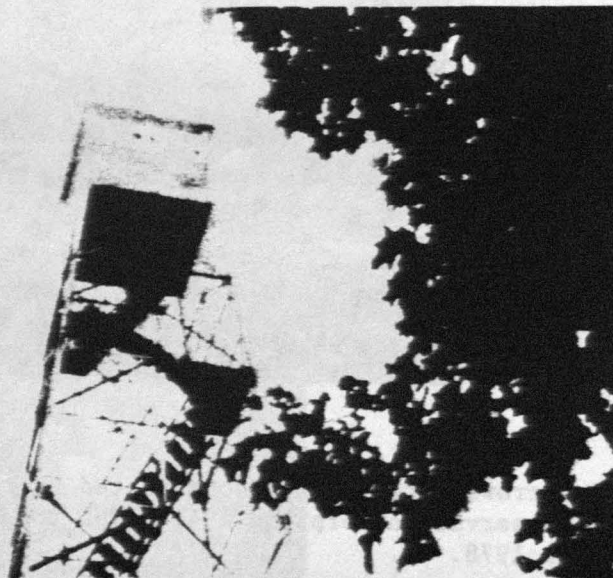
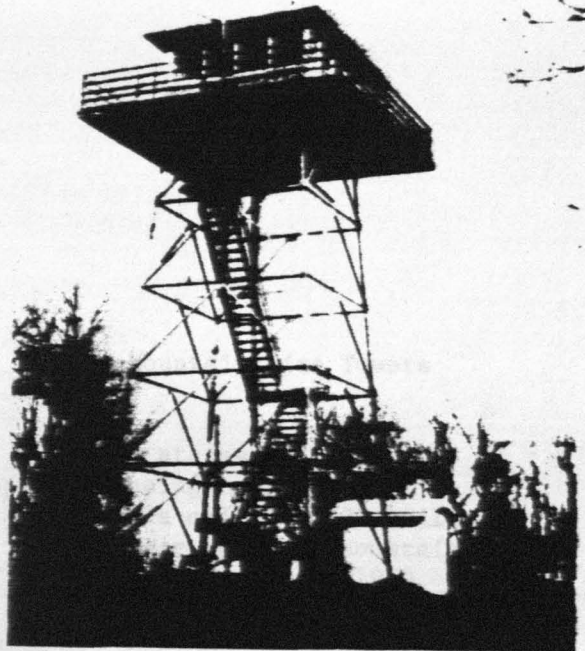


Two views of CCC built lookout tower at Calhoun
Gap. The poles from this structure are now used
in a ballfield in the West Armuchee Valley. This
structure, constructed in 1938, was the first fire
observation lookout post on the Armuchee Ranger
District.



CCC constructed fire tower on Chestnut Mountain.
Work was completed on this tower in 1941.

Narrows fire tower constructed in 1941 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The tower was dismantled in 1978. Photograph taken February 1970.



Johns Mountain fire tower. This steel tower was constructed in 1961 to replace a wood/steel structure originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Photograph taken September 1968.

Narrows Fire Tower constructed
in 1941 by the Civilian
Conservation Corps. The tower
was dismantled in 1978. Photograph
taken February 1970.



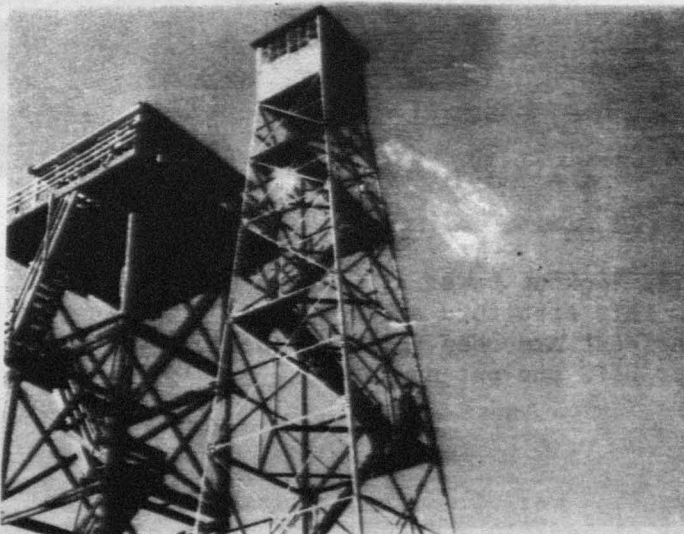
Narrows Fire Tower - constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1941. The tower was dismantled in 1978.

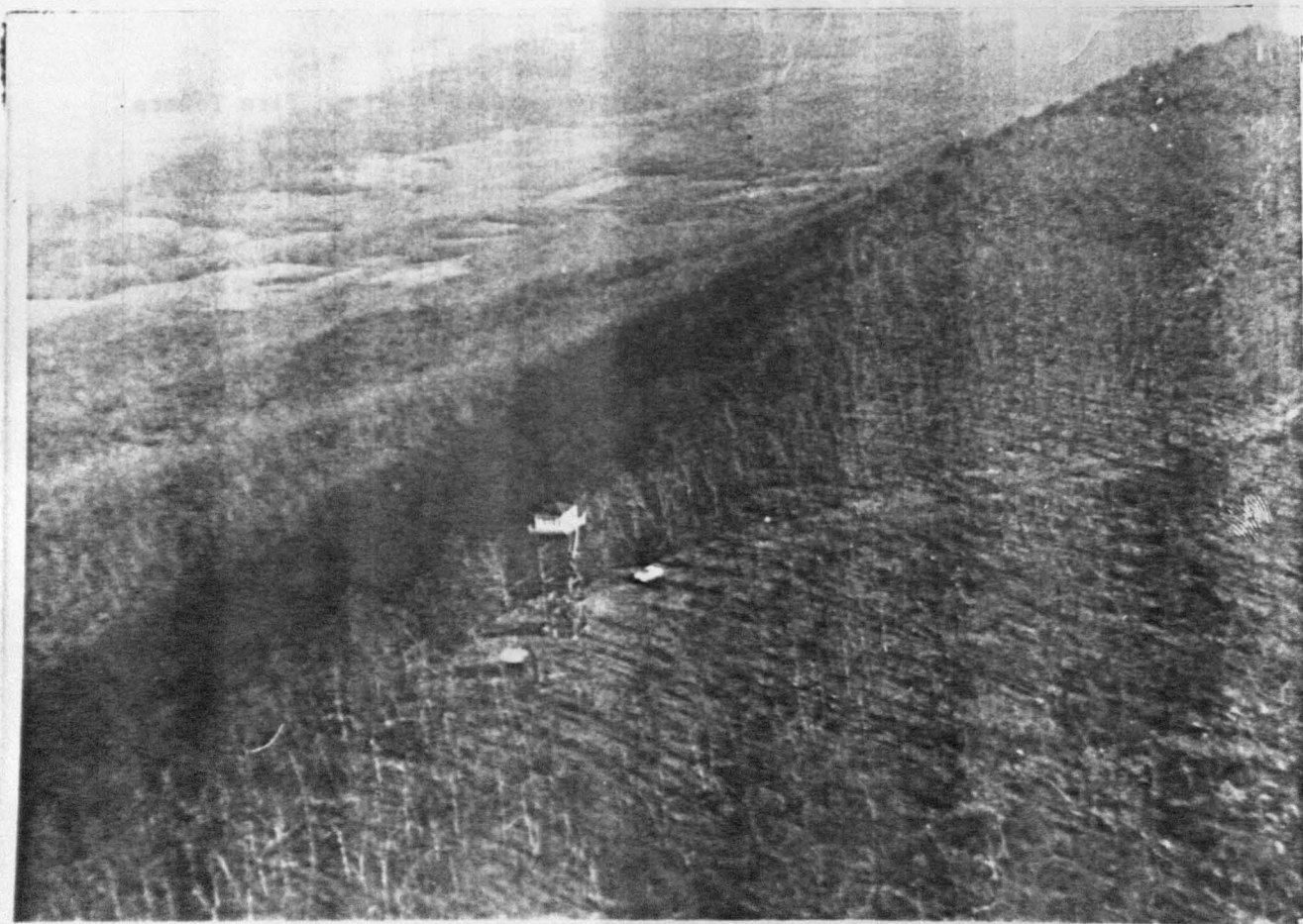


Johns Mountain Fire Towers



Various stages of new metal tower being constructed alongside original CCC-built fire tower on Johns Mountain. CCC tower dates from 1940. Last photo on this page was taken 10/27/61. Forest Service employee Grady Richardson was reportedly foreman on the new tower construction. New tower was purchased from Alabama and, several years ago, removed by the Forest Service and donated to the Walker County Correctional Institute.





The original Johns Mountain fire tower constructed by the Civil Conservation Corps in 1940. This tower consisting of a wooden cab with steel supports was replaced in 1961 by an all steel structure.

ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

District Rangers

Since the Armuchee Ranger District's initial establishment in 1936, Fifteen District Rangers have administered the District's program of work with subsequent goals and objectives. The District Rangers tour of duty on the Armuchee are as follows:

Horace O. Mills	1938 - 1942
Orrie W. Hanson	1942 - 1943
Frank Kuhn	1943 - 1944
James W. Owens, Jr.	1944 - 1945
Robert (Bob) D. Williams	1945 - 1952
Johnie E. Davis	1952 - 1953
George W. Biskey	1953 - 1957
William (Bill) J. Chapparo	1957 - 1960
John R. Allen	1960 - 1963
John (Jack) B. Fortin, Jr.	1963 - 1966
Paul E. Fuller	1966 - 1971
Jack R. McCormick	1971 - 1973
R. Forrest Carpenter	1973 - 1975
R. Paul Bullard	1975 - 1982
Joe W. King	1982 -

The present residence of Frank Kuhn, James Owens, Bob Williams, and Johnie Davis is not known. It is assumed that these former Armuchee Ranger District Rangers are retired. Orrie Hanson is retired and currently residing in Atlanta, Georgia. Horace Mills is deceased. His wife lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

George Biskey is retired from the U. S. Forest Service and resides in Dahlonga, Georgia (location of the Chestatee Ranger District). George transferred to the Chestatee Ranger District from the Armuchee Ranger District in 1957. George served as the District Ranger on the Chestatee until his retirement on May 29, 1971.

Bill Chapparo presently serves as a Timber Management Staff Officer in the U. S. Forest Service's Region 3 Office located in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

John Allen retired from the Forest Service in 1984. His last duty assignment prior to his retirement was as a Fire Management Staff Officer in the U. S. Forest Service's Region 8 Office located in Atlanta, Georgia.

Jack Fortin is currently the Forest Planner in the Ozark National Forester, Supervisor's Office in Russellville, Arkansas.

Paul Fuller is presently the District Ranger on the Quachita National Forest, Tiak Ranger District, Idabel, Oklahoma.

Jack McCormick is currently the District Ranger on the Ozark National Forest, Boston Mountain Ranger District, Ozark, Arkansas.

Forrest Carpenter, at this time, is the Forest Supervisor of the Allegheny National Forest. His office is located in Warren, Pennsylvania.

Paul Bullard is presently the District Ranger on the National Forests in North Carolina, Croatan District Ranger, New Bern, North Carolina.

Joe King, the present District Ranger, began his tour as District Ranger on the Armuchee Ranger District in 1982. Prior to reporting to the Armuchee Ranger District, Joe was a Forester (Other Resources Assistant) on the Daniel Boone National Forest, London Ranger District, London, Kentucky.

Professional Foresters Assisting The
District Ranger

Since the Armuchee Ranger District's initial establishment in 1936, twelve forester assistants, and three forester trainees have assisted District Rangers in directing the District's work accomplishments.

Forester Assistants on the Armuchee Ranger District

John R. Allen	1956-1958
Gene Jackson	1958-1961
George B. Hemingway, Jr.	1961-1965
Jack Steelmon	1965-1968
Robert (Bob) E. Butler	1968-1971
Jere Hancock	1971-1977
Timothy (Tim) Traugott	1975-1977
Larry Furniss	1977-1980
Richard (Dick) Weil	1977-
James (Jim) Kidd	1980-1983
Thomas (Tom) Fearrington, Jr.	1983-
William Scott Layfield (Reforestation Forester)	1985-

Forester Trainees on the Armuchee Ranger District

David Carr	1973-1974
Joel Gardner	1974-1975
William Scott Layfield	1983-1985

All the District workers, with the exception of the Forester and District Ranger, reported to Cecil Huggins' house (site of the first "work center") until the present work center was constructed at Villanow in late 1958. On July 1, 1956, John Allen, the first forester assistant to the District Ranger, transferred to the Armuchee Ranger District from the Homocitto National Forest in Mississippi. John served as a forester assistant on the Armuchee Ranger District from 1956 to 1958. He later returned in 1960 as the Armuchee's District Ranger. Mr. Allen served in this position from 1960 - 1963. He is now retired from the U. S. Forest Service.

Gene Jackson was the second forester assistant on the District, from 1958 - 1961. Gene is now the Recreation Staff Officer in the Supervisor's Office, National Forests in Mississippi. (Jackson, Mississippi)

George B. Hemingway, Jr., was the District's third forester assistant (1961-1965). George is now the District Ranger on the Ocala National Forest, Lake George Ranger District, Silver Springs, Florida.

Jack Steelmon, the fourth forester assistant, transferred to the Armuchee Ranger District from the Tallulah Ranger District, Clayton, Georgia in 1965. He served on the Armuchee from 1965 - 1968. Jack is now retired from the U. S. Forest Service. His last duty station prior to his retirement was as District Ranger on the Daniel Boone National Forest, Somerset Ranger District, Somerset, Kentucky.

Robert E. Butler was the Armuchee Ranger District's fifth forester assistant. Robert served on the District from 1968 - 1971. He transferred from the Kisatchie National Forest, Winn Ranger District to the Armuchee in December, 1968. Currently Bob is with the Corp of Engineers serving as a Park Manager at DeGray Lake near Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

Jere Hancock was the sixth forester assistant on the Armuchee Ranger District. He served on the District from 1971 - 1977. In 1975, an additional forester assistant slot was established on the District at which time Jere became the Other Resources Assistant (ORA). The principle duties of this job included planning, programming, and execution of recreation, fire, wildlife, land, water, minerals, fleet management, road construction and maintenance, special uses and human resource programs on the District. Jere is currently the Fire Management

Officer at the Supervisor's Office, National Forests in Florida.
(Tallahassee, Florida)

In 1975, Tim Traugott served as the District's Timber Management Assistant (TMA). Tim was responsible for planning, implementing and administering the District's timber program. He worked on the District from 1975 - 1977. Tim is currently the Area Forestry Specialist with the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service in Granada, Mississippi.

In 1977, the TMA slot and the ORA slot became vacant with the transfer of both Jere Hancock and Tim Traugott. Larry Furniss transferred to the District as the TMA from the National Forests in Mississippi. Larry stayed on the District until 1980 at which time he transferred to Missouri. Presently, Larry is the ORA on the Mark Twain National Forest, Poplar Bluff Ranger District, Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

Also in 1977, Dick Weil transferred to the Armuchee Ranger District from the National Forests in Florida, Apalachicola Ranger District as the ORA.

In 1980, Jim Kidd transferred to the Armuchee Ranger District as the TMA from the Chattooga Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest. Jim worked on the Armuchee from 1980 - 1983 at which time he transferred to the Tallulah Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest to serve as the District's Silviculturist.

In 1983, Tom Fearrington transferred to the Armuchee from the Chestatee Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest. Tom assumed the duties of the ORA. Dick Weil switched over from this position to become the TMA.

At this time, Dick and Tom are still foresters on the Armuchee Ranger District.

The District has had three professional forester trainees. Each trainee was supervised by the District Ranger. David Carr was the District's first Forester Trainee. He worked on the Armuchee from 1973 - 1974. David resigned to work with Georgia Kraft, Rome, Georgia.

Joel Gardner was the District's second Forester Trainee. Joel worked on the District from 1974 - 1975. Currently, Joel is the District Ranger on the Sumter National Forest, Edgefield Ranger District, Edgefield, South Carolina.

In 1983, the District's third trainee, Scott Layfield reported to the District. Prior to accepting the Forester Trainee position on the Armuchee, Scott had been a coop student for 1½ years and then a trainee for six months on the Chattooga Ranger District, Chattahoochee National Forest. Scott served as a trainee on the Armuchee Ranger District until September, 1985 at which time he was promoted to a Forester. Scott currently administers the District's reforestation program and is supervised by the Timber Management Assistant (TMA). He is the first Forester on the Armuchee Ranger District.

Support Services Specialist
and
Clerical Positions

Prior to the hiring of a District Clerk-Typist, the District Ranger was the only individual present in the District's administrative office. The following newspaper article outlines the LaFayette office's operating hours as of September 7, 1949.

The Armuchee Ranger District office of the U. S. Forest Service, located in the Rhyne Building at LaFayette, will open on Tuesday mornings and Friday afternoons, states District Forest Ranger Robert D. Williams. These office hours are established for the convenience of people who sometimes travel to LaFayette and fail to find the Ranger in the office. All matters pertaining to National Forest lands are handled through the LaFayette office.

The Armuchee District covers parts of Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, Gordon, Floyd and Chattooga Counties. It extends from Ringgold south to Armuchee. The western boundary is the old Alabama road and the eastern boundary is roughly, the Southern Railroad which runs south from Dalton through Oostanaula. The District includes 232,000 acres of which 53,000 is owned by the government. The Armuchee District is one of four Districts which comprises the Chattahoochee National Forest. C. K. Spaulding is Forest Supervisor and has headquarters at Gainesville, Georgia. (Summerville News: September 7, 1949)

The Armuchee Ranger District's first Clerk-Typist, Lucy Ayers, was hired on September 6, 1960. Mrs. Ayers worked in this position until she resigned on March 31, 1961. Ann Pope was hired as Mrs. Ayers replacement on June 26, 1961. Ann is presently the District's Support Services Specialist - having been employed with the U. S. Forest Service for 25 years.

Ann provides an account of her initial employment and early job assignments with the U. S. Forest Service. She relates:

While working for a lawyer in Summerville, Georgia, during the early part of 1961, I learned there was a vacancy with the U. S. Forest Service in LaFayette. After talking to the District Ranger (John Allen), I was informed that I would need to take a Civil Service exam in Chattanooga, Tennessee. (At that time the LaFayette area was in that Civil Service test zone) The Civil Service information I received informed me that I would have to take a written test as well as a typing test. I was required to bring my own typewriter. I borrowed a typewriter from Trion High School and began practicing as it had been some time since I had taken a speed test. There were only manual typewriters being used at that time. On the day of the test, I carried the typewriter to Chattanooga, Tennessee. There were a lot of people taking the test but only three from the LaFayette/Summerville area were applying for this job. After all was said and done, I was the only one of the three who successfully passed the test. I began working 2½ days per week as this was all the work that was available. After several months, the Ranger changed my appointment to 3 days per week. My primary duties at that time were maintaining the Forest Service manuals, typing and filing. I remember when I first came to work the District Ranger (John Allen) assigned me first to getting the Forest Service manual amendments and supplements filed. I bet the amendments and supplements were stacked two feet high - just waiting for me to file. Another time, I remember Paul Vincent (the Forest Supervisor at that time) visiting our office. He was alone and I did not know he was coming to visit. The District Ranger (John Allen) was not in the office at the time. I had been warned about what Mr. Vincent looked like, so I knew who he was. He asked me how much timber we were selling that year. Mr. Vincent proceeded to tell me that my salary was coming from these timber sales. In 1962, about a year after I came to work, the Accelerated Public Works Program was initiated by Congress. At that time I began working full time for that period. The Accelerated Public Works Program (APW) was a program set up by Congress to help the counties who had very high unemployment. Of course, the duties since that time have steadily increased with the years. (Pope, personal conversation, December 5, 1985)

Ann Pope's job title was changed to a Business Management Clerk (BMC) in 1979. In 1982, she was promoted to a Business Management Assistant (BMA) and in 1984 to a Support Services Specialist (SSS).

Annette Keith was hired as the District's Business Management Clerk in 1978. In January, 1985, Annette Keith resigned. Sherry Koonce was hired as Annette's replacement in February, 1985.

Tammy Jones served as a part-time Clerk-Typist from January, 1983 to June, 1984. Tammy worked two days a week during this time period assisting the full-time Clerk-Typist.

RECREATION AREAS ON THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

The District currently has four developed recreation sites: The Pocket, Hidden Creek, Keown Falls and Johns Mountain Overlook.

The Pocket Recreation Area

The Pocket Recreation Area gets its name because it lies in a low area surrounded on three sides by the steep ridges of Horn Mountain. This recreation site consists of 27 camping sites arranged in a large loop. Each campsite has a tent pad, picnic table, fire ring, and parking spur. Water for drinking and cooking is available at five water hydrants. A picnic area, adjacent to the camping loop, consists of 11 picnic tables and pedestal grills. The Pocket Recreation Area was the site of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp F-16, which was in operation from 1938 to 1942. Forest Service Budget & Finance records on the Pocket document 1958 expenditures of \$1,687.55 in Protection & Management funds with no designation of purpose. It is assumed that conversion of the Pocket site to a recreation area began at or slightly before this time.

The following newspaper article describes the improvements made in the Pocket Recreation Area in 1963.

Preparation for the coming recreation season on the Armuchee District of the Chattahoochee National Forest includes construction of eighteen new camping units in The Pocket Recreation Area, seven (7) miles south of Villanow, Georgia.

Each of the new units will include a parking spur, picnic table, fireplace, tent platform, and garbage can.

Other facilities already existing in this area include picnic tables, fireplaces, a spring which is tested regularly to ensure that its water is safe for human consumption, a parking lot, garbage cans and water facilities.

Under the Accelerated Public Works Program surveys have been completed for Keown Falls Road and the Keown Falls Recreation Area. This area is approximately 5 miles south of Villanow, Georgia. Both the Keown Falls Road and the Keown Falls Recreation Area will be constructed under contract.

The double lane road into the recreation area will have
 low a gravel shoulder and will be paved with concrete and
 parking lot.
 1961. It will be paved with concrete and will have a
 facilities in the recreation area will include a well
 with handpump, picnic tables, fireplaces, garbage cans,
 toilets and a small restaurant which will
 contain information on the history of the area.
 money area. It will be paved with concrete and will have a
 leading from the picnic site to Keweenaw will be
 future development. The area will be paved with concrete
 mountain stream past an old mill site and then winds up
 to the top of the mountain.



Developed recreation - Pocket Recreation Area.

Developed with 1.5 miles of paved road, water for drinking and cooking is available at a hand pump.
 located beside the bulletin board at the entrance to the campground.
 facilities include picnic tables, fireplaces, garbage cans, toilets and a small restaurant which will
 contain information on the history of the area.
 leading from the picnic site to Keweenaw will be paved with concrete.
 future development. The area will be paved with concrete and will have a
 mountain stream past an old mill site and then winds up to the top of the mountain.

The double lane road into the recreation area will have a gravel surface and will terminate in a gravelled parking lot.

Facilities in the recreation area will include a well with handpump, picnic tables, fireplaces, garbage cans, toilets and a small unattended visitor center which will contain information on the history of the area.

Leading from the picnic site to Keown Falls will be approximately one-half mile of trail which follows a clear mountain stream past an old still site and then winds up the rugged mountainside to an overlook which will be constructed to provide visitors with an unobstructed view of the scenic waterfall. Work is now in progress on construction of this trail.

Bids have been received and the contract will be awarded soon for construction of the Keown Falls Road.

Bids for drilling, casing, and testing the well for the Keown Falls Recreation Area were issued December 11, 1963.

Bids for the remaining construction in this area will soon be released.

Construction of the Keown Falls project is under the supervision of the USDA's Forest Service. Overall direction of the Accelerated Public Works Program is the responsibility of the Area Redevelopment Administration of the Department of Commerce. (Tri-County Suburban Press:December 24, 1963)

Hidden Creek Recreation Area

Hidden Creek Recreation Area is located within a shaded old growth hardwood Forest along Dry Branch Creek. As the name implies, Dry Branch is an intermittent stream which is dry at various times during the summer months. This campground has 16 campsites complete with picnic tables, tent pads, parking spurs, and fire rings. Water for drinking and cooking is available at a hand pump located beside the bulletin board at the entrance to the campground loop. Sanitary facilities include two pit toilets centrally located in the camping area. Hidden Creek Recreation Area was constructed

during the Accelerated Public Works Program in 1963-1964. The well was dug by Martin Well Company, Incorporated on July 3, 1963.

Keown Falls Recreation Area

Keown Falls Recreation Area is located adjacent to the 218-acre Keown Falls Scenic Area. This area offers an abundant variety of colorful wildflowers and shrubs. Several waterfalls provide scenic beauty and excellent photographic opportunities for forest visitors. The Keown Falls picnic area offers 14 family picnic units. Water for drinking and cooking is provided at a hand pump which is centrally located. Sanitary facilities consist of two pit toilets.

Keown Falls Recreation Area was constructed during the Accelerated Public Works Program in 1963-1964. The developed picnic site of 14 picnic units, this unattended visitor center, the interior trails, well and hand pump, and sanitary facilities were all built under contract by Rogers Construction Company of Rome, Georgia, at a cost of nearly \$18,000.

Designs, specifications, and supervision for construction of the facilities were provided by Forest Service architects and engineers.

Keown Falls Road, FS #702, which leads into the area from the county maintained Pocket Road, FS #203, was also built under contract during the Accelerated Public Works Program. This nearly 3/4 mile road was built by Bob Patten Construction Company of Roswell, Georgia, at a cost of nearly \$16,000.

Forest Service engineers provided the survey, plans, specifications, and supervision of construction to insure proper drainage, surfacing, and reestablishment of vegetation on road banks to prevent erosion.

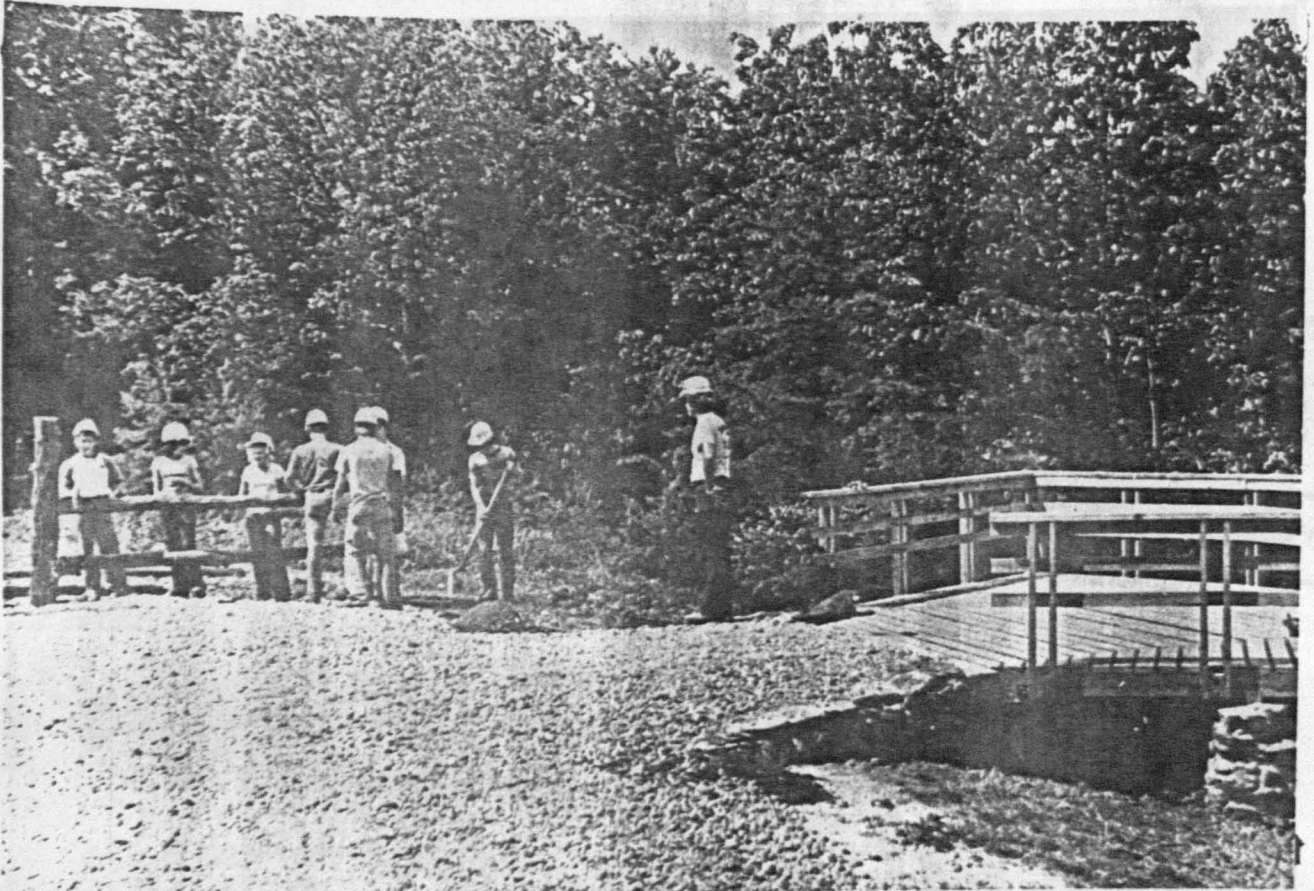
The 3/4 mile hiking trail leading from the picnic area winds up the side of Johns Mountain through Keown Falls Scenic Area to an observation platform on top of the bluff overlooking Keown Falls. This observation platform was constructed during the Accelerated Public Works Program in 1964. Rustic log benches are provided along the steeper, upper half of the trail for those who wish to rest or to sit and enjoy the beauty of the Scenic Area. One trail footbridge crosses Keown Falls Branch which the trail follows part of the way up the mountain.

Johns Mountain Overlook

Johns Mountain Overlook offers the forest visitor a scenic view of East Armuchee and West Armuchee valleys. There are no picnic sites, camping pads, or fire rings at this site. A viewing platform has been constructed at the site to accomodate the recreationists. The overlook is the former location of the Johns Mountain fire tower which was dismantled in 1979. The Johns Mountain Overlook was developed as a recreation area in 1980 by the Youth Conservation Corps - a youth manpower program.

KNOWN FALLS SCENIC AREA

The Known Falls Scenic Area adjacent to the Known Falls
Recreation Area was established on November 27, 1962. This
area is typical of the mountainous and plateau country.



Youth Conservation Corps - construction of the
Johns Mountain Overlook Fiscal Year 1980.

Enrollees from left to right are; Carolyn West,
Anita Dykes, Renee Talley, Robert Brown, Ken
Gilliland, Jimmy Key, Tim Carlock, and crew
supervisor Forestry Technician Billy Bruning.

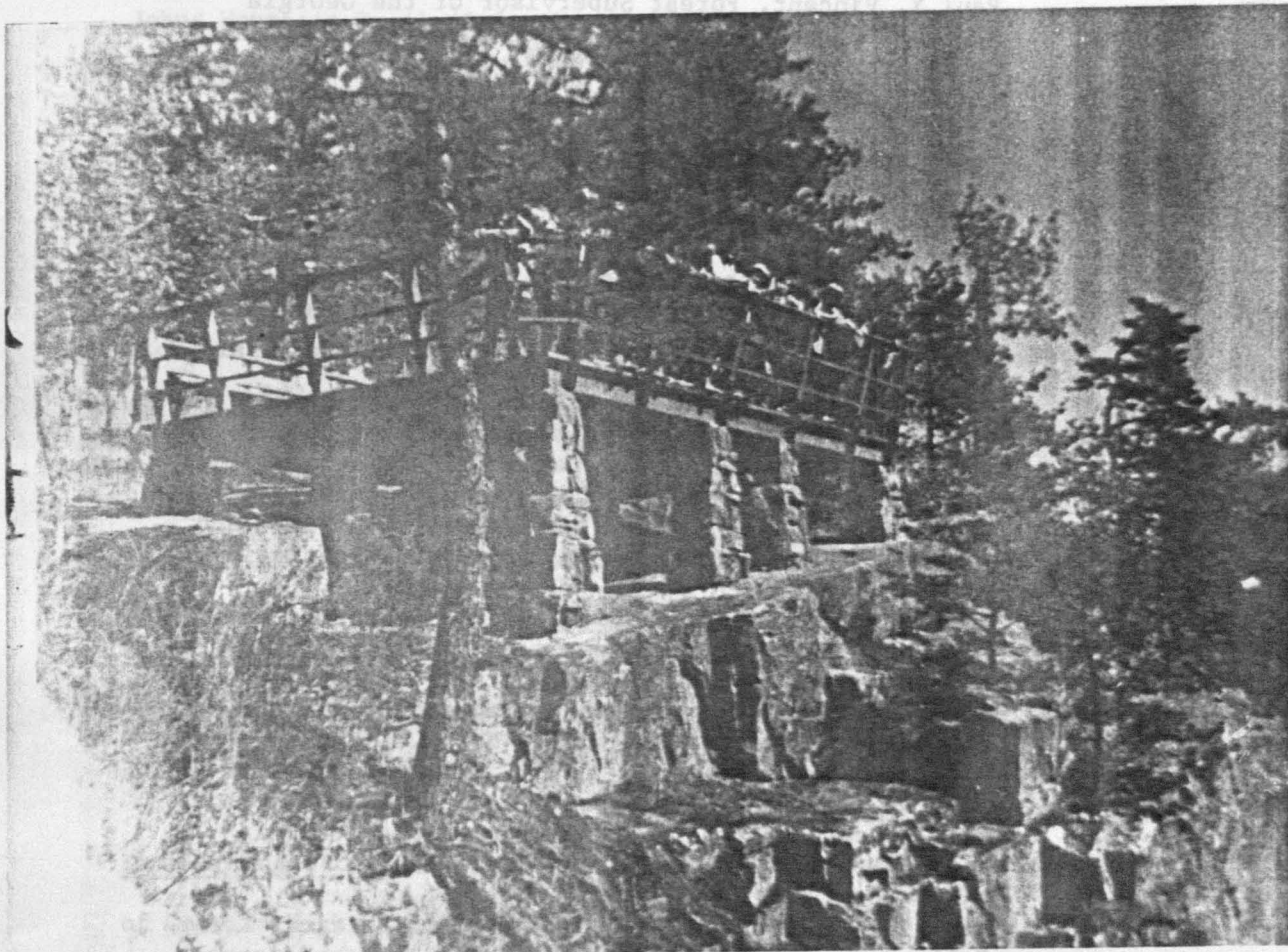
KEOWN FALLS SCENIC AREA

The Keown Falls Scenic Area adjacent to the Keown Falls Recreation Area was established on November 27, 1962. This area is typical of the Limestone Valley and plateau country. Johns Mountain rises about 1000 feet from the gently rolling valley below. Johns Mountain is a long, narrow, sharp-top ridge which drops rapidly at a rock cliff on the eastern side. From the base of this cliff towards Johns Creek is a steep slope.

Keown Falls Scenic area contains waterfalls on two streams found in the bowl-shaped escarpment of Johns Mountain. The streams flowing over the falls are fed by a series of small springs on the flat area above the bluffs. One stream flows north and the other south. The two streams join in the cove below the waterfalls.

The main falls, on the larger stream, is about 60 feet high while the small falls is estimated to be 40 feet. Below and around the bottom of the falls lie large boulders which have worn away from the cliff and tumbled into the cove below. At the base of the large falls is a small cave-like depression in the side of the cliff. Both streams dwindle to a few drops during dry periods of the year.

The falls are named for Gordon Keown, surveyor who did much of the surveying and acquisition work for the Berry Schools.



Keown Falls Observation Platform - constructed in 1964 under the Accelerated Public Works Program. Extensive rehabilitation work was performed on the platform by the Youth Conservation Corps in 1979.

The following article appearing in the Atlanta Constitution details the area comprising the scenic area.

A 218 acre national forest area in Walker County has been set aside as a natural scenic area, bringing to seven the number of such areas in Georgia.

Paul Y. Vincent, Forest Supervisor of the Georgia National Forests, said the area, known as Keown Falls Scenic Area, will provide the public with a tract of primitive, undisturbed forest.

"Here people may walk and enjoy the forest much as it appeared to their forefathers and the American Indians," he added.

A WORKSHOP - The area also will provide a wilderness workshop for botanists, biologists, naturalists and all students of natural sciences.

Keown Falls long has been a scenic attraction for the people of Walker County. Although much of the area was heavily damaged by the March 1960 ice storm, the timber stand has aspects of a virgin pristine watershed similar to that which once existed in this ridge and valley province of northwest Georgia, Vincent said.

The falls are formed by rock bluffs approximately 70 feet high. There are actually two sets of falls side by side. Adding to the attractions are large boulders which have been worn away from the cliff's sides and tumbled to the valley below.

LOTS OF WILDLIFE - It is possible for the public to walk beneath the falls. The area also abounds in squirrel, deer, turkey, grouse and other forest animals.

The first area in the Armuchee Ranger District, Keown Falls adds another link in the chain of scenic areas across north Georgia. Other areas include the Cooper Creek, Sosebee Cove, High Shoals and Coleman River areas, the supervisor said. (Atlanta Constitution: January 3, 1963)

RECREATION TRAILS ON THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

There are 15.8 miles of trail on the Armuchee Ranger District.

The trails are as follows:

Johns Mountain Trail (3.5 mile loop) This trail, designated for foot travel only, departs from Johns Mountain Overlook, goes to Keown Falls and returns to the Overlook.

Keown Falls Trail (1.2 mile loop) This trail for foot travel only starts at the Keown Falls Picnic Area, winds its way up the hillside alongside a small stream and passes beneath Keown Falls and returns to the picnic area.

Pocket Trail (2.5 mile loop) This foot travel only trail departs from and returns to the Pocket Recreation Area.

Chickamauga Creek Trail (6.2 mile loop) This trail designated for foot travel only begins at the end of Ponder Creek Road and makes a loop around Dick Ridge.

Taylor Ridge Trail (2.4 miles) This trail starts at the intersection of Georgia Highway 136 and Taylor Ridge. This trail is designated for foot travel and trail bikes and follows Taylor Ridge to U. S. Forest Service Road 635-A.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT ON THE ARMUCHEE RANGER DISTRICT

No Human Resource Program can be successful without stimulating people. The development and wise use of human resources is as important as conserving natural resources. The Armuchee Ranger District depends on basic forestry activities to motivate people and help minority, economically depressed, elderly, handicapped and youth groups. The Armuchee Ranger District has utilized four human resource manpower programs. These are the Youth Conservation Corps, Young Adult Conservation Corps, Senior Community Service Employment Program and Volunteers in the National Forest. Of these four only two programs are currently in existence as of Fiscal Year 1986 - the Senior Community Service Employment Program and Volunteers in the National Forest.

Youth Conservation Corps

The Youth Conservation Corps program was conducted on the Armuchee Ranger District during the summer (June, July, August) of Fiscal Years 1978, 1979 and 1980. The program was administered by the U. S. Forest Service in cooperation with the Department of Interior. This eight-week environmental education program for young people, ages 15 to 18, provided the participants with the opportunity to learn more about their natural environment and heritage while being gainfully employed during the summer. During Fiscal Year 1978, the YCC program was conducted from a residential camp at Camp Aquilla near the Gore community south of Summerville, Georgia. In 1979 and 1980, the program was nonresidential in scope. The individual's commuted back and forth from their home to the Villanow Work Center. The YCC enrollees were paid the minimum hourly wage for their 40 hour work

week. Projects accomplished through this program included the construction of the Chickamauga Creek Trail, Pocket Trail, Taylor Ridge Trail, Johns Mountain Overlook viewing platform, the construction of a rock wall around the parking lot at the Keown Falls Recreation Area, the rehabilitation of individual camping spurs at the Pocket Recreation Area, performing major repairs on the Keown Falls viewing platform, conducting pre-commercial thins in young pine plantations, constructing headwalls around culverts, and trimming brush along Forest Service maintained roads to afford the forest traveler better viewing.

Young Adult Conservation Corps

The Young Adult Conservation Corps manpower program was conducted on the Armuchee Ranger District from Fiscal Year 1978 through Fiscal Year 1982. This program provided the enrollees with year long employment at minimum wage. The program was open to all young men and women between the ages of 16 and 23 who were unemployed and did not leave school for the purpose of joining the Corps. The enrollees performed useful conservation work on the District. Projects included: assisting District Project crews engaged in reforestation/timber stand improvement activities, erosion control, surveying (landline establishment/maintenance), recreation area construction (new camping spur loop at the Pocket Recreation Area) and completing hiking trails (Chickamauga Creek, Pocket and Taylor Ridge). These trails were started initially by the Youth Conservation Corps. The YACC was administered by the U. S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior through an interagency agreement with the Department of Labor.

Senior Community Service Employment Program

The U. S. Forest Service through an interagency agreement with the Department of Labor operates a Senior Community Service Employment Program. The objective of this program on the Armuchee Ranger District is to improve the welfare of underprivileged, low-income and elderly citizens in rural areas by hiring them part time to improve federally administered lands. Currently the District has nine enrollees in the SCSEP program. This program has been implemented on the District level for 12 years beginning in Fiscal Year 1974. It is the oldest human resources manpower program on the Armuchee Ranger District exclusive of the Volunteer Program. The enrollees work 1300 hours yearly (usually from March 1 - November 30), 32 hours a week and earn minimum wage. Project duties include: building and grounds maintenance of the administrative office and work center, recreation cleanup and maintenance, performing soil and water restoration work on timber haul roads and gullies, maintaining wildlife openings, assisting project crews in the evaluation of progeny test sites, assisting project crews in performing maintenance work on previously established landlines, and performing maintenance in the form of washing and waxing the District's fleet of vehicles.

Volunteers in the National Forest

The Volunteers in the National Forest program allows concerned individuals or groups to contribute their services to the improvement of the natural resources both on a National Forest level as well as a District level. Individual and group volunteer efforts on the Armuchee Ranger District have been responsible for the construction and maintenance of hiking trails as well as the management of developed recreation facilities.



District Senior Community Service Employment
Program Enrollees

Front row left to right - William H. McSpadden, Deforest Bailey,
Sam Garner, Lucille Brooks, Ruby Lanier, George Pence, Back row
left to right - Carl Shaw, C. J. Hill, Robert Farmer, Alfred Price.
(photograph taken March 26, 1986)

Volunteer Program at the Pocket
Recreation Area

During Fiscal Year 1983, the Armuchee Ranger District began utilizing individual volunteers as campground hosts at the Pocket Recreation Area. The volunteers serve to greet the campground/picnic area visitors, provide information to these individuals, explain the user regulations, perform minor maintenance and cleanup, and report user violations occurring within the recreation area to District personnel. In return for their services, the District provides the volunteer(s) a place to stay - a mobile home located at the entrance to the Pocket Recreation Area. During the three year campground host program at the Pocket Recreation Area, five individuals have offered their volunteer services. This included one individual volunteer and two volunteer couples.

The Pocket Recreation Area's first campground host was Joe Plaster of Chickamauga, Georgia (currently resides in Chattanooga). Mr. Plaster assumed his volunteer duties in May, 1983. He was retired from Hertz - having worked for the company throughout a nine state area in the South.

George and Lillie Mae Jesonis served as the recreation area's second campground hosts. This couple was from Rome, Georgia (current residence). Mr. Jesonis was employed with the Southern Experiment Station for 17 years. George worked in Macon and Athens, Georgia in conjunction with the Georgia Forestry Commission and the Georgia Forest Research Council. The Jesonis' served as campground hosts at the Pocket Recreation Area from April 1, 1984 to October 24, 1984.

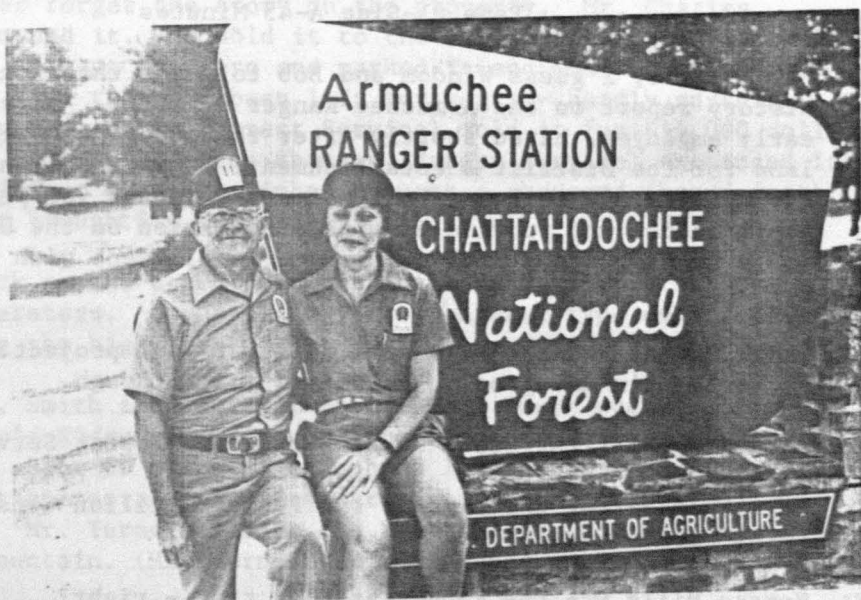
The third volunteer campground host couple is Linda and Afton Martin from St. Petersburg, Florida (current residence). Linda is retired from clerical/bookkeeping work while Afton is a retired U. S. Postal Service employee. The Martins served as campground hosts from May 1, 1985 to October 27, 1985, and will return in May of 1986 for their second season as the Pocket Recreation Area campground hosts.



**Joe Plaster, first volunteer campground host
at the Pocket Recreation Area Fiscal Year 1983.**



George and Lillie Mae Jesonis - the second volunteer campground hosts at the Pocket Recreation Area, Fiscal Year 1984.



Afton and Linda Martin - the third volunteer campground hosts at the Pocket Recreation Area, Fiscal Year 1985, and Fiscal Year 1986.

TRANSCRIPT

Cecil Huggins Interview

Cecil Huggins, first permanent U. S. Forest Service employee on the Armuchee Ranger District, interviewed by Joe King, Tom Fearrington, Bob Fitzpatrick and Windom Neal at the Armuchee Ranger District's Office in LaFayette, Georgia. Mr. Huggins began his career with the U. S. Forest Service on September 25, 1942.

DATE: November 13, 1985

TIME: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

SUBJECT: Activities on the Armuchee Ranger District from the District's initial establishment in 1938 until the time of Mr. Huggins retirement in 1955.

EQUIPMENT USED: A MacDonald cassette tape recorder and TDK^r D90 tape. Tapes are on file at the Armuchee Ranger District Office in LaFayette, Georgia.

CODES USED: JK - Joe King - District Ranger
TF - Tom Fearrington - Forester
BF - Bob Fitzpatrick - Surveying Technician
WN - Windom Neal - Timber Sales Administrator
CH - Cecil Huggins - Retired Forest Service employee

Tape #1-Side A-45 Minutes

TF: Mr. Huggins, I guess Windom and Bob told you that I'm preparing a history report on the Armuchee Ranger District. As you were an early employee, hired shortly after the government began purchasing land for the District's establishment, I wanted to interview you. Perhaps you can tell us about the early duties you performed on the Armuchee and provide us with information on the District Rangers you were associated with during your employment with the Forest Service.

CH: Okay, Windom and Bob have told me about your project. I'll do my best - I'm not good on dates and years though.

TF: When did you first start working with the Forest Service?

CH: I started during the time of the Pocket Civilian Conservation Corps Camp - Late 30's.

TF: Horace Mills was the Ranger at that time - right?

CH: Yes, he was.

TF: What kind of personality did he have?

CH: Real fine man - expected the field hands to do a good job. Horace was fair to the men. I liked him. He gave me a job.

JK: Did Ranger Mills have a staff in his office - a clerk?

CH: No.

JK: Didn't have anybody - just himself?

CH: Just himself and what I did. He was out in the fields a lot. It's a different story now; work load keeps piling up in the office.

BF: Did they have timber sales when you first started work or did it come later.

CH: Just, uh, I guess in 1941 - the first timber sale was in the Pocket down there - it was fine timber. It was the first cruising, marking I done.

JK: Why weren't other parts of the District being cut? Was it the condition of the stands?

CH: Yes, yes, we would just go in and thin it, cut it you know we wouldn't clean cut it (clearcut the timber). We would sell it. The second timber sale was on the east side of Taylor's Ridge; right over in front of the old school house in West Armuchee. I'll never forget the story on the property. Mr. Charles Coulter owned it. He sold it to the Forest Service for \$1,400 dollars. I went in there and marked it and most of it was Virginia Pine that had been left for years - hardly anything - it was so bad and we (Forest Service) sold it for \$14,000 dollars. That's a lot higher price than we (Forest Service) exchanged it for. I forgot what the timber brought a thousand (board feet) then. It brought \$14,000 dollars.

TF: Going back to the staff, Mr. Huggins, you say there were five tower operators. I guess they were seasonal type employees - on during the high fire danger days.

CH: Yes, L.Z. Smith took care of the Narrows Tower over in Trion on Taylor's Ridge. He helped on the work - like we had to maintain about 80 miles of telephone line - ran that line through the mountains to fire wardens. We would have to keep that up. Mr. Turner came to the Narrows and L.Z. went to John's Mountain. (Mr. Turner was a seasonal lookout at the Narrows.)

TF: Do you remember all the tower sites? You said there was the Narrows, John's Mountain and I guess Dick's Ridge?

CH: Dick's Ridge.

TF: Do you remember the operator?

CH: Yes, Harry Copeland was on Dick's Ridge. He just lived down off the mountain from Dick's Ridge. He stayed there until he went to Bowaters.

WN: Sometime in the early 50's. (Copeland went to Bowaters).

CH: Sonny, my boy, stayed in the Dick's Ridge tower. Then on John's Mountain - Crystal Springs tower down on the end of John's Mountain. There was several different ones who stayed there. A fellow that lived right off there stayed there a good while. What was his name, Windom?

WN: Stewart.

CH: Bobby Stewart. I believe was his name.

WN: I stayed there in 1948 and 1949.

BF: Riley Bomar stayed there a while.

WN: Stayed there one year - 1947.

CH: Riley didn't stay long.

WN: Fred Stone was over at Chestnut Mountain.

CH: Fred Stone?

WN: Yea, then Harold Stone - his boy took over later.

CH: That's right - yea.

JK: The state tower at High Point was built later after that.

CH: They all were built back in the CCC days.

WN: Not the state tower down at High Point. It was built back in the 1950's.

CH: Sonny stayed there some. He stayed on the Narrows Tower. I kept the High Point Tower up (performed needed maintenance on the tower).

TF: There was a fire tower, I understand at Calhoun Gap. It was a crude one - just a platform.

CH: That was just a platform. Just south of the gap road there. We never did use it anymore after the CCC's left the Pocket (1942).

TF: I think the enrollees down at the CCC camp built the structure originally.

CH: Yea.

TF: I didn't know how long the Forest Service manned it. You say not very long?

CH: No, the Forest Service didn't have any towers up at that time (late 1930's).

BF: Did they have a telephone line that went there too?

CH: No, I don't think so.

BF: I never did see one.

CH: I don't think so, they weren't too far away from the CCC camp.

WN: Now there were fire tool boxes in a lot of the stores around here - in addition to the fire tool boxes maintained by the fire wardens.

CH: We had fire tool boxes in Subligna, Crystal Springs,

WN: Villanow, Hammontree's store. What was John Hammontree?

CH: He was a fire warden.

WN: Didn't he start about the same time you did?

CH: No, he started way after I did. Just before he went in the Army. He stayed about two years.

TF: That would be the mid 1940's or later.

WN: Early 1940's.

CH: Anyway the Army got him.

BF: Was there a warden in Houston Valley or a fire tool box or something up there?

CH: No, there was never a warden up there.

WN: What about around Silver Hill? There wasn't any down there. Mr. Ballenger was in Gore.

CH: He was sort of a fire warden.

BF: What about Crystal Springs? S.I. Storey was there. Was Storey a warden or did they just have a fire tool box there?

CH: He just had a fire tool box there.

WN: He would take his sawmill crew out if we (Forest Service) needed them.

CH: No S.I. didn't. I would get them.

BF: You would go by and pick up the sawmill workers?

CH: Yes.

TF: Dell Ballenger.

CH: Dell Ballenger was at Gore.

TF: He would do the same thing. He would take a crew out as needed.

CH: The way we would operate was according to where the fire was, and what the fire danger was, and everything. I would take my crew and pick up one of the wardens and their crews, if fire danger wasn't high. If the fire danger was high and got a good start, we would have two or three of them or all of them if they needed them.

WN: Back then, he used high school boys a lot. I went with them when I was in high school. He would come by and pick us up.

CH: I would come get them in my truck. They would enjoy getting out. They were good hands too.

TF: Was there hazardous duty pay back then as we know it now? Was there any pay at all involved?

WN: High school boys, we were getting around .35¢ an hour; something like that.

CH: Something like that. It probably got higher.

TF: Mr. Will White. What do you remember about him?

CH: We had a fire tool box there on his store porch. If it really got hot, we would run into Subligna and there was that fire tool box, get some men and get some more tools out of these boxes. That's what they (the tools) were there for. And of course, the boys liked the one over in Rock Creek - Goss - I'd say he was one of the best wardens we had and had the best crew. If the fire broke out down there, the tower man could see it, why he would take care of it himself.

TF: Tillman Gazaway.

CH: He was over in the cove.

TF: Over in Whitfield County - Redwine Cover Area?

CH: Yes, he could get a good crew. Course we were doing it all by hand back then. Front lick method, the front man would hit six feet apart and the others would come on and hit.

TF: The fire warden districts were organized in the late 1930's when the Forest Service began acquiring the land. Were they in existence prior to the land acquisition for the Armuchee Ranger District?

CH: No, I guess it was a couple of years before we got organized. After I went to work back in the CCC days.

TF: So the warden districts came into existence in the early 1940's?

CH: Maybe a little earlier. I don't know.

TF: So your initial duties were primarily maintaining telephone lines to the five fire towers?

CH: Roads, keeping up the towers (lookout towers).

WN: Recreation areas and the Taylor's Ridge trail.

TF: I guess the CCC enrollees were instrumental in building a lot of the recreation areas like Kartah Dell. Didn't they do the initial work on Kartah Dell?

CH: That's right.

TF: The Narrows Picnic Site?

CH: And the Taylor's Ridge trail. They built it. Of course, the Forest Service kept it up - trimmed out. There was a lot of horseback riding, motorcycles and walkers on that trail. I sorta hate to see the Forest Service drop that trail. There was a lot of people who enjoyed it.

TF: Where did the Taylor's Ridge trail start?

CH: Down at Mack White Gap going across to Summerville.

WN: We went in from Silver Hill. Don't you remember it went off in the Silver Hill community? We maintained it all the way to Nickajack Gap.

TF: There's traces of that trail today. Hunters keep it pretty well stomped out.

CH: No not as much as they used too.

TF: There's a group from Shorter College in Rome that approached us about the idea of running the trail from High Point and running the trail all the way to Maddox Gap. They want to do about 40 miles of trail along Taylor's Ridge.

BF: You can still see the trail.

CH: Oh yea, I never will forget later on just below Smith Gap I had a fire that burned two-three acres. I want to give you this while I am thinking about it. This area hadn't been burned in years. I was watching to see what the young pines were going to do there. You know you could go in there where the fire burned it down where the seed could get down to the soil. You could go back four years later and see where the young pines were coming up all around. You could see around the unburned area where seedlings tried to sprout but couldn't get out through the thick mulch. As soon as dry weather would come, the seedlings were

gone (in the unburned area).

TF: As far as any planting, I know the CCC enrollees did a lot of planting. I guess you all (Forest Service) were working with them. We have some of the 4x4 corner marker posts like Windom found. Were the CCC enrollees responsible for planting and the Forest Service did the follow-up work?

CH: No they planted before the CCC camp closed, we (Forest Service) took the planting activities after the CCC camp closed.

TF: Did they turn all the records over to the Forest Service?

CH: Yea, one year we put out half a million seedlings.

TF: Loblolly?

CH: Yea. They were all loblolly. We would go down to Sheffield, Alabama to a nursery down there.

TF: They didn't have the state nursery at Macon at that time?

CH: We never did get any trees from there. We would go down and get a pick up load and bring them back and put them out there close to my place. Take a tractor and plow a furrow. Lay them in there and close the furrow back up. We would use them, the pines would be in good shape. I know a lot of places we got 90% survival.

TF: Can you recall some of the areas where you planted?

CH: Oh yea, Sand Mountain. All over you might say. Where the Forest Service would buy land. It was open land. Down in the Pocket. They bought more after I was hired. They put a lot of trees out down in there.

BF: Somebody told me that you planted the Treadaway place down in the Pocket. It came later and you planted it.

CH: Yes, yes.

TF: This is the area near Keown Falls.

BF: It's where they are thinning now.

TF: Where the Kinsey brothers are working.

CH: All the fields in Snake Creek (Snake Creek Gap), course it was a narrow road then. The road crossed Snake Creek seven or eight times. We planted all those fields. The new road grade came along and got most of the planted fields.

TF: The present road (Georgia Highway 136)?

CH: Yes.

TF: Regarding the recreation areas, the CCC built all of them. The Forest Service did not initiate any of the work at the Narrows or Kartah Dell. You all inherited the administration duties once the CCC camp closed.

CH: Yes, of course we improved them a lot, the Forest Service dug wells there (Narrows Picnic Area). Down at Kartah Dell, they had a spring there. They had to discontinue Kartah Dell while I was still with the Forest Service.

TF: If we were to put dates on Kartah Dell would you say it was constructed in 1939/1940 somewhere in there?

CH: Somewhere along in there, yes.

TF: Okay, how about the Narrows Picnic Area.

WN: The Narrows stayed open until the 1960's.

TF: I'm talking about initial construction.

WN: Oh, they were all built about the same time.

TF: 1939 or 1940?

WN: Yea.

TF: Kartah Dell was closed in the 1950's or later than that.

WN: In the early 1950's.

BF: Didn't you retire, Cecil, in 1954 or 1955?

CH: 1955.

BF: It had to be before 1955.

CH: See, they turned the Pocket CCC camp into a recreation area. The Forest Service developed it after the CCC's moved out.

TF: I'd like to go back to the early rangers. We talked about Mr. Mills and you said he was an authoritarian but a real nice guy to work with. Do you remember Orrie Hanson?

CH: Very well.

TF: How about him as far as personality.

CH: He wasn't like Mr. Mills. He was, I don't know, a lot different than Mr. Mills. He would pout a lot. He gave me trouble with some of my help. For instance, we had a fire on the end of Horn Mountain. I could get help anywhere in the area. I had to go on a fire. Mr. Masters there ran a dairy. He would take his crew and go on a fire. He had four men and himself. This fire came off the Kendalls property. I don't know what was a matter with Mr. Hanson that day. He came over after we had the fire controlled. We were standing up by the dairy

and I was getting a list of the men's names (firefighters). Mr. Hanson came up and started accusing Mr. Masters of setting the fire. I was beginning to think Mr. Hanson and Mr. Masters would get in a raze (fight).

TF: Do you know where Mr. Hanson went after he left LaFayette? Where his next duty assignment was?

CH: No, I don't.

TF: What about Mr. Mills, do you know where he went?

CH: He went out in the northwest somewhere. I know that he would keep in contact with me and I would always write back. Two or three different times - I couldn't get off and go make the trip - He would invite me to come up there. He would guarantee me an elk or moose - said it would not cost me a thing except the trip up there and back. I could stay with him. I couldn't hardly resist it.

JK: Do you know Mr. Mill's son - Richard?

CH: Yes, Yes.

JK: He's a Ranger out in Arkansas.

CH: He is? Well is Mr. Mills still living?

JK: I don't know.

CH: He was just a few years ago. I got in contact with him.

JK: How old was Richard at the time they were here?

CH: Oh, he was just a little boy. I would say about 10, 11, 12 years old - something like that. Where is he (Richard) stationed?

JK: Mountain View, Arkansas.

CH: Well, if he's like his daddy, he's a good one.

JK: He's a nice fellow, really is, must have carried through.

CH: I imagine he remembers me.

JK: Probably so, I haven't met Richard but once.

TF: Do you remember, Robert Williams.

CH: Robert Williams - I sure do.

TF: Care to elaborate on him any?

CH: I would be glad too. (Laughs) Bob was a good one. I was left here (on District) by myself for about three months at that time and was working on the Narrows Fire Tower.

TF: About what year was this? Do you remember?

CH: Just after the war. He had just got out of the Army. I don't know. When was the war over?

TF: 1945.

CH: Mr. Williams came up. He had received the job and he was hunting for me. I was working on the Narrows Tower road. He came up and introduced himself - told me his business. He was going to be the next Ranger. He was another H.O. Mills. You couldn't beat him.

TF: Do you remember where he went? He left the District in 1952.

CH: He went to Tennessee. He wanted me to go with him, but I couldn't pull up my sticks here and go up there. He stayed a year, maybe two years and then he went with Bowaters (Timber Company). I tried to get a hold of him here a while back. What's the town he lived in?

BF: Winchester? It's in south Georgia.

WN: South or middle Georgia.

CH: Well I declare! He first stayed here while he was with Bowaters - then they moved him down there.

WN: Yea, he lived in Calhoun probably.

CH: Yea, he was a fellow that could get along with people. I never saw him out of sorts with anybody. I sure hated to see him go. He told me, course I wasn't able to do it, he wanted me to go over and take the woodyard they have up here. Buy timber with them. I just wasn't able to do it. I haven't been able to do a decent days work since I retired.

TF: Mr. Johnnie Davis. He was here (Ranger) a short time from 1952-1953. He was around about a year.

CH: Who did he follow?

TF: He followed Bob Williams.

CH: I had forgotten him.

WN: He was the one that wanted us to take off during the summer. I was working for Bob (Williams).

CH: Oh yea, I remember now.

WN: At the Narrows Picnic Area one day he (Mr. Davis) said you boys are going to have to be off for the rest of the summer.

TF: This was Bob Williams that said this?

WN: No, Johnnie Davis. We were off the whole summer he was here.

JK: He was the only one working - looking after things?

WN: I think Cecil was on weren't you?

CH: Yes, now Frank Kuhn followed him, I think.

TF: Well, no George Biskey followed him.

WN: Kuhn must have been in earlier. Must have skipped him.

TF: I don't have him down!

CH: He (Mr. Kuhn) told me the only reason he was with the Forest Service was to keep out of the Army.

WN: He was before Biskey. You're getting into time after I began to work.

CH: He was here before the end of the war.

TF: He might have been in between Mr. Hanson and Mr. Williams.

CH: I believe that's right.

WN: Yea, somewhere around in there.

CH: I worked under seven Rangers.

JK: He was probably here a short time then.

CH: He was. As soon as the war was over, he moved on.

TF: Do you remember Mr. Kuhn's first name?

CH: Frank. He was a Catholic. Wasn't a Catholic Church around here. He just stayed a couple of years. He had me move the office to Dalton where he could go to church. I had to build about four miles of telephone line out to his house. He was a don't care man.

JK: Was there actually an office in Dalton or just his house?

CH: Yea, the office was in Dalton. I moved it over there and then moved it back to LaFayette.

WN: Where was the office in LaFayette originally? Was it upstairs in the Rhyne Brothers Building?

CH: No, the office was originally located in the Bank of LaFayette at the time H. O. Mills was the Ranger. Later Frank Kuhn had the office moved to Dalton. When Bob Williams became the Ranger, Bob had the office moved back to LaFayette at which time the office was moved to the Rhyne Brothers Building.

TF: The Forest Service office was in LaFayette in the mid 1950's?

WN: In 1948, it was up in the Rhyne Building.

TF: When the Armuchee District was first being purchased in the late 1930's, early 1940's, where was the office or was there one?

CH: Yes, there was an office in LaFayette. As I said earlier, H. O. Mills, the first Armuchee District Ranger, had his office here in the Bank of LaFayette Building.

WN: The first office was in the Bank of LaFayette.

CH: Yes.

TF: Regarding the site of the work center, I understand you had the tool storage for many years on your own property.

CH: Oh yea. When they came out of the Pocket (CCC camp closed), it was on my place. The work shop and everything. We would meet there at the shop.

TF: Do you remember when the Villanow Work Center was built as we know it today? Was that the site after your place or was there an in-between site?

CH: It went to Villanow. I never will forget Mr. Biskey. Who was the Supervisor then Windom? Do you remember?

WN: John Allen was here when the work center at Villanow was built.

CH: I was talking about just before when they were over at my place.

WN: Spaulding.

CH: Who?

WN: "Lankie" Spaulding.

CH: They wanted to buy the Jordan place for the work center. They came to me two or three times. Wanted to know if I'd go to Villanow. I told them no. The third time they came back and said, "Cecil, why don't you want to do that? You can rent that farm for the boys over there." It was a good farm, good pasture and everything. That's where the headquarters would be now. I had these boys here. Don't want you to think I'm smart or anything like that but I don't want to move my boys to Villanow for any of that property.

TF: About what year was this Mr. Huggins?

CH: It was when "Lankie" was here as Supervisor and I can't remember the years to save my life.

WN: That was during the time Bob Williams was the Ranger.

CH: Yea.

TF: We're saying the work center was built in the early 1950's.

WN: No, the work center at Villanow was built in late 1958.

BF: If I'm not mistaken, after you retired, didn't they have to move the tools into a shop that belonged to (Ernest) "Punch" Stansell or somewhere over in Villanow?

CH: I don't think so.

WN: He had some tools there.

CH: There were some tool boxes and things there but they were stored at the S. I. Storey mill.

WN: Ernest (Stansell) is the one we never brought up. Was he a warden to start with?

CH: He was a warden to start with.

WN: Then he came on permanent?

CH: Yea.

TF: You came on board in 1939?

CH: Yes, 1939.

WN: He (Ernest) didn't go permanent until the 1940's.

CH: Ernest would get some boys. Some of them boys were pretty good hands on a fire.

TF: So as far as any permanent work force - going back to the early organization - it would just be you and Ernest. Was the rest of the work force seasonal employees?

CH: That's right.

TF: When you would go plant would you hire on people to help plant. Once the planting season was over they would be laid off.

CH: That's right.

TF: What about trail work, the roads and the recreation areas. It would just be you and Mr. Stancil.

CH: Mostly, later on Windom helped do some of that work. On the trails, L. Z. and Henry Smith.

TF: (talking to Windom) You were hired as a seasonal initially and later put on permanent.

WN: Right.

TF: When did you start Windom? Do you remember?

WN: I started in August, 1948.

TF: Were you picked up initially as a tree planter?

WN: No, initially to do road work and telephone work.

CH: I can give you a little story on Windom's telephone line work. We had to build another circuit out to West Armuchee. The circuit we had was over-loaded. We were building the line and I had Windom putting brackets on the telephone poles going up through the ridge. I went up there. Windom was up on a pole throwing up. I said, "Windom, what in the dickens is wrong with you." Windom replied, "I don't feel well, I have a sick headache." I told him to get down from there. I got him down. He laid down. Don't believe you got on any more poles.

WN: I think it was close to quitting time then.

CH: I didn't think you worked on these poles! It scared me when I saw him up there.

TF: Now what about you, Bob, when did you come on board?

BF: Oh, I'm a new man, I didn't come on until 1962.

TF: 1962?

WN: I remember one time we were going on a fire back when you picked us up from high school - going down south of Subligna there was a fellow in front of us in a jeep pulling a farm trailer. We started around him, we separated the farm trailer from the jeep. Cecil got out and the old fellow told Cecil, "Cecil, didn't you know I was turning off here?"

CH: That's the only mishap I ever had.

WN: Bunch of high school kids in a one ton old truck.

TF: Going back to the fire suppression, do you remember when you got the first fire plow unit - a little Oliver? Do you remember that?

CH: Oh yea. I can't tell you just what year we got it.

JK: Did that make a big difference in your fire suppression when you got your plow - did it make an improvement or did it take a while to catch on?

CH: No, I went over to Suches, Georgia. They brought it down there to demonstrate it. Ranger Woody, you have heard a lot about him, he was the first Ranger on the Chattahoochee National Forest. He was there. Olie Hooper was there.

TF: Who was Mr. Hooper?

CH: He worked over at Holly Creek. Maintenance man on equipment. He could handle equipment but he couldn't handle any paperwork at all. When you put him on a tractor or road grader you couldn't beat him.

WN: He's still building roads.

CH: Gosh! He is two or three years older than me (84 or 85 years old).

BF: You all were talking about Cecil going around to schools. Everytime Cecil would come over to the school, they had a certain bunch of boys that would go, you had to be a certain age. I never will forget, I wasn't quite old enough. Sometimes Cecil would catch me before I got on the truck and sometimes he would have to get me off the truck. I was trying to get out of school. I would get on the truck, and Cecil would grab me off.

CH: When I would turn in over at the West Armuchee school, all the boys would want to go so bad, they would crawl out the windows.

TF: Do you remember what the pay scale was back when you first came on board, Mr. Huggins?

CH: Around \$3.00 a day. Less than \$200 a month.

TF: As far as reporting to work. You would just walk out your back door and be at work.

CH: Yes, except when I would have to come in to the office.

TF: The seasonal workers, would they meet at the planting site or at your house?

CH: They would meet at my house and we would go to the job site from there.

TF: You had a Forest Service vehicle?

CH: I had a pick up truck and a big truck with a cab to carry the fire plow. The Ranger had a truck. That was all the equipment we had.

TF: Going back to the fire tractor, you didn't get it until the mid 1940's.

CH: That's just about right. I was telling you about going over to Suches for training. I had never been on a fire plow. I had used farm equipment. I got on the plow unit. It wasn't more than driving a tractor to me. The only mistake I made. They had a log about 12 inches in diameter. I had to go over it. When I went over it I didn't let the tracks ease over the log, I let the back track cleats "slap" it. They laughed at me. I drove it around a while and back to the truck. They told me that I should let Olie Hooper on it. I believe this was the first fire plow on the Chattahoochee.

JK: Did the state have any plows at that time?

CH: No.

WN: There wasn't a State Forestry Commission.

TF: We were trying to figure out when the Georgia Forestry Commission was established. Looks like 1949, they had a Department of Forestry.

WN: It was around the early 1950's when they started in Walker County.

CH: Sonny (Huggins) was the second Walker County Ranger with the Georgia Forestry Commission. (Cecil Huggins' son).

TAPE 1-SIDE B-45 MINUTES

- JK: Did you all ever take action on fires on private land?
- CH: Well, sometimes we would go when it would endanger government property. We would go out and put it out.
- WN: Fires outside on private, we would let them (fires) run.
- CH: On that fire at Silver Hill down at the end of Taylor's Ridge down on the east side, the fire got away from the sawmill. As far away as the state place over there (Distance from LaFayette Forest Service Office to Georgia Forestry Commission Office) there was a still (moonshine still) just in front of the mill. I never did know whether the fire got away from the still or the sawmill, but anyway it crossed the main road there and there was sage four-feet high and three houses. I plowed two lines south of the houses before the fire burned up there. I had several boys stand there and watch to see if fire would cross the line. We saved the houses. We saved several outbuildings and barns.
- JK: Talking about the still, we noticed a lot of old still sites on the District. Was that pretty big business back then?
- CH: It was a big business. One of my fire wardens - I wasn't thinking about it. I was marking timber over in Redwine Cove. You've probably been over there and know how it lays. I was back in the head of the cove started in the morning and worked late in the evening toward quitting time, I was working a little late. I saw a still and I went down there to look at that thing. I never saw such a still and brick furnace.
- TF: Who operated it?
- CH: It was Tillman.
- BF: Tillman Gazaway.
- TF: The fire warden over there?
- CH: Yes.
- TF: Wasn't enough fires to keep him busy.
- CH: They had nine malt boxes or was it eight and they were lined up in a row. The main still was as high as this ceiling (8 feet) of course when the cap was on it. The boxes were made on a square. Inside each box was a cheese cloth cover framed with wood to form a lid. I raised up one of them (cheese cloth lid). There was a dipper nearby. I knew the malt was ready to run. I had been around enough of them. I dipped out some of the beer. I was real thirsty anyway. I drank that dipper full, then I got me another. I was a good way from my truck. I was working late. When I got within sight of my truck, I saw someone down from me in a truck. I said to myself "I wonder who in the dickens

is that". I couldn't tell who it was it was so dark down there. Went on down there and it was Tillman. I said "Tillman, what in the dickens are you doing down here at this time of night?" It was a good ways from his house. He commenced to talking. Tillman said "Cecil, what would you do if you ran up on a still?" I said I won't do anything as long as you keep the fire from getting out. He first asked me if I was going to mark all that timber in there. I told him I didn't know, the Ranger will decide. Tillman asked well what would he say? I told him, he wouldn't say a thing as long as it didn't start a fire. Tillman said "Well I've got one up younder of course my wife knows it, but I don't want my kids to know it for nothing. I make great corn whiskey for these "big shots" in Dalton. I don't drink a bit of it. They come and get it. That's all I do. We're going to start a run tonight. Take us to the next to get through. If you'll come by I'll give you a gallon of it." I never did go back and get it. I wished a lot of times I had. I'll never forget the two fires that got away from stills. One was at the springs on the east side of Taylor's Ridge.

TF: Artesian well?

CH: Turn off the first road to the left after you cross Mack White Gap - Marble Springs?

WN: Yea, Marble Springs.

CH: Anyway, we told Doc (Doc Ballenger) if he would bring a good crew, I would work them. He was good. That's all he would want to talk about - his crew. It was hot and dry. We went up there and went to work on that fire. We corraled it before it could get to the steep part of the mountain. If we hadn't there would be no way to stop it. It would have gone all the way to the top. We got back when we got corraled, it burned about 20 acres. We split up just before dinner and I took off toward Hollow Creek which was about seven feet wide, mopped up down that side. I took my crew and went around the hot side next to the mountain. We came back, Doc was standing there talking. He was eating K-rations. I said "Doc, did you check that?" He said "No, hell we were just fixing to start." Well I took out down there right quick and the fire had jumped that line - already burned half an acre. I said "Doc, you got us in trouble, if you had gone on down there we wouldn't have had that trouble." We got it out.

TF: Referring to the land acquisition, I noticed that Sam Greenwood did a lot of the land survey.

CH: I worked with him.

TF: Did he get his own crew?

CH: No, he would get his crew here. I would work with him.

TF: He would use you as a permanent person and hire seasonal workers.

CH: I would take some of the crew I had and cut the lines. Carry the range rod. I carried a range rod most of the time.

TF: Your crew was a seasonal crew - right?

CH: Yes.

TF: He was working out of the Supervisor's Office in Gainesville, Georgia.

CH: That's right.

TF: When he came down, would he stay months at a time? Would he live here?

CH: He would stay in a motel room in LaFayette.

TF: I didn't think he would commute back and forth.

CH: He did all the landline work on the Chattahoochee and Cherokee National Forests. I believe he was one of the best surveyors I've ever seen. We started on the District line near Naomi. Went on south through West Armuchee to Horn Mountain. We had to get a new starting point; had to come in at Horn Mountain - that's where we were going. We looked at a map of the area and decided where to go. We headed out and found the point - a well established corner on an east/west line. We walked around there about 80 feet and there was another corner. Sam was smart on that. He kept looking around. He told me, I can tell you what happened here. When they surveyed this one party was going east and one west. When they got to the District line they set a corner at each stopping point - one east, one west. We spent three or four days resurveying the lines. He said he would defy anybody that says these lines are wrong. (Sam Greenwood was running the north line of District 26.)

JK: Did you use a transit or staff compass?

CH: He would use a transit. I used a staff a lot. Most all the time, I used a staff.

BF: I've been to that corner you're talking about. It's still there. This is a District and a landlot corner.

CH: He (Mr. Greenwood) ran one line down to the Lawrence land in Subligna near the Chattooga/Walker County line. There were five corners down there. Mr. Lawrence had run the lines, he had a hand compass.

BF: Did you all tear down the other corners?

CH: No.

BF: There isn't but one there now.

CH: Is that right?

- TF: Did you know Miss Shropshire - Beulah? She was called the "Mother of the Armuchee". Her married name was Taylor. She was from Summerville. She was instrumental in trying to get Congress to set aside land down in northwest Georgia for the Armuchee District.
- CH: I remember something about that in the office. I can't get her in my mind. I knew a Reese woman below Gore. I had Shorty Patterson over from Holly Creek. We wanted to find a corner that ran two miles from the Reese line. We went from their house going west. Shorty was pacing it off. It was almost to the top of Taylor's Ridge. I was about 100 yards ahead of him Shorty says, "Cecil, you better hold up, I'm going to run out somewhere up there where you are". I went over and sat on a rock. Shorty came pacing up to me and he came within 10 feet of the corner. He paced it off. We would have to practice that pacing.
- WN: Shorty started in the CCC's didn't he?
- CH: Yea. I never will forget his pacing. Pacing off a couple of miles and getting that close.
- BF: Cecil were you there when the Forest Service took over that LU Project (Land Utilization) above Dalton or was that after you quit.
- CH: On Rocky Face Mountain?
- BF: No, it was north of Dalton toward Varnell.
- CH: No, all the land we had was above Rocky Face. It was about two miles above Dug Gap Road. They finally swapped it for some land somewhere else. They were having a lot of trouble with people burning it. It was giving us some problems. People burning it to get the pine knots and sell it for kindling. I know I had to go in on the east side several times. One fellow in that business stopped me and would not let me go across his property. I talked with him a little bit. I told him he could stop me and I wouldn't go across his property. I told him he was likely to get in trouble though. He studied a little bit. I knew he was the one starting them. Finally he let me go across. What did they trade that land for?
- BF: I went with Windom and the crew years ago to fight fire north of there (Rocky Face). I was wondering why we went up there.
- CH: I never did go up there on a fire the 14 years I was with the Forest Service.
- WN: North of the highway? That was a state fire.
- CH: It was hard work back then but I enjoyed it. We started one morning at 10:00 a.m. a little north of John's Mountain tower on the west side. We came off of that fire three days later. We had a guy we had to get rid of. Finally the Ranger made it so hard on him he quit. Made me mad. We went to sitting on that fire at 10:00 a.m. We crossed John's Mountain right below John Treadaway's. The fire was on top of Mill Creek Mountain. We took up there - went on around got off on the Lee side of the mountain. We got little rest on the fire, got good food. We would walk the lines to make sure the fire was safe, then we would

lay down and sleep. We would get up the next morning. I would light out and get breakfast. I would bring it back. We would get the utensils off the line and then start work. We came off Mill Creek the third day.

BF: Do you guess, Cecil, that fire was over 2,000 acres? The reason I ask is that the biggest one was over 2,000 acres.

CH: I'm not sure - I forget. We never did measure it out. It would have taken a few men to measure it.

BF: The Pocket burned off one time from the Pocket Road to Snake Creek Gap. They figured that as about 2,000 acres. I was wondering if that was the biggest fire the District ever had? I know when you first started, all the mountains were burning. All summer long just about weren't they?

CH: Yes, It was a big job getting the farmers fire educated.

JK: How would you compare the game (wildlife) population back then - say the 1940's?

CH: We don't have as many deer as we used to have.

JK: Probably had more open fields and such.

CH: Had plenty of birds, turkey, raccoons, and grouse. I have fox hunted since I was twelve years old. I had my own dogs. How long have I been retired?

BF: 1955 wasn't it?

CH: 1955. I kept my hounds on up until I had my heart attacks. Wouldn't go by myself so I finally sold them.

About the roughest fire we had on the Armuchee District was on Calbeck Mountain. It was in June or July. Anyway we had Mr. Pierce Turner, he lived on the Narrows Tower. He called me one morning and said we had a fire way across on Calbeck Mountain.

TF: Do you remember the year, Mr. Huggins?

CH: No, It was dry as it was as dry as it was before the rains started this fall. The convicts were working on the road - they were burning out wasps or yellow jackets. That was during the time I was here (on the District) by myself. We got Mr. Goss and Doc VanHorn. Doc VanHorn got his crew down to the fire. We put that fire out. We did a half day mop up on the fires. It was dark when we went back to the truck. The supervisor and somebody else was with him. Bob Williams was Ranger at that time. We just did a half day mop up job like I said. He (supervisor) cooked supper there and we stayed all night and got up next morning. The fire had crept over on us. Gosh, it finally got to burning big. I don't guess you fellows will believe this, but there was an old poplar tree there. It was growing

about four feet up on a bank beside a hollow branch. All the fuel had collected down in there during all the years and we had it corraled - all but that spot right in there. It was hot as the dickens. Sap was running up the poplar tree. The heat blew that tree up. It just busted! It was a whole lot louder than a shotgun. It was sorta like lightning and thunder. It (the fire) busted that poplar tree.

JK: Did you ever have anybody seriously hurt on fires?

CH: Never did. The closest I got was almost losing some high school boys down at Gore. A fire started and I got some of the boys started (fireline construction). Hill Pope, the insurance man, was leading the crew. I told Pope to stay on the trail - don't try to put a line around the fire on the side of the mountain. I had two more crews on above and I went up there to check on them. When I got back, Pope's crew was way down off the mountain. They hollered at me and I hollered at them I told them to get out of there now. I told them to get the hell out of there. By the time we got to the top of the mountain the fire was about to come over on us. I guess Pope's crew would have gotten burned up if I hadn't been there. We never had an accident.

They didn't call my accident an accident. Ernest Stansell was on the "Cat" (dozer). We were digging up on Taylor's Ridge below Gore. Ernest tried to plow through a big rock which I knew he couldn't do. The tractor was just digging. I told Ernest we could dig it out by hand. It was on the side of a ridge. We had it where we could roll it. Back then, I was stout as a bull and Ernest was stout too. My back cracked I said Ernest, I bet you anything I broke my back. Sure enough I had.

The supervisor and Ranger contacted me twice about being a Ranger. I didn't have a degree in Forestry but like Bob Williams said I trained a few Rangers. I had Rangers like Frank Kuhn who didn't know the species of a tree. They asked me before I got hurt, how would I like a Ranger's job. I told them naturally I would like the job because of the pay and everything, but you know my education. I only went to the eighth grade. The paper work is piling up all the time. The supervisor said that would make no difference, he could get somebody to do the paper work. Then I got hurt. You talk about pinching(bad luck) somebody. I was on the operating table 5½ hours.

TF: How old were you, Mr. Huggins, when you started with the Forest Service?

CH: Oh, I was born December 31, 1903. I was about 32 years old.

TF: How did you happen to get a job with the Forest Service? Did they advertise?

CH: I became acquainted with Mr. Mills. I would see him and talk with him. I told Mr. Mills if they had an opening I would like to get on with the Forest Service. I had worked in timber all my life - farmed. He told me, he would keep me in mind. They didn't have any workers at first - just one Ranger. He called me one morning to the office and signed me up. The next evening late, he sent me word to be ready to go to Camp

Wahsega. That's where they went every year - They would have a week of training over there.

TF: I know Camp Wahsega was an old CCC camp. The Forest Service used it as a training facility.

CH: I guess they still use it, don't they?

TF: It's a 4-H camp operated by the Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. They still maintain all the cabins up there.

CH: During a training session at Camp Wahsega, a creek within the camp over-flowed during heavy rain-flooding several cabins. The cabin I was in with four other men was raised up but the one Ed Reese was in was in water along with four other cabins. The supervisor had his wife and boy with him. They were wading water almost waist deep.

JK: You were talking about early trail work. There's not many trails. Where were they? I know one went the entire length of Taylor's Ridge.

CH: Yea, we talked about it earlier.

JK: Were there any other long trails on the District?

CH: No that was the only one. I would like to see it opened back up.

JK: Was it used quite a bit?

CH: Oh yea, yes.

JK: It wasn't just hunters?

CH: Oh no, there were people hiking it, motorcycles used it. I didn't know too much about it. We never had any fires to start off of that trail. We commenced maintaining the trail on the lower end. We worked to a point below Smith Gap. I don't know how many rattlesnakes we killed that day. At quitting time we were below Smith Gap about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. Windom said "It's getting about time to kill another rattlesnake". It was in the fall and the snakes were coming back from the low lands to the mountains to hibernate. Windom heard something and walked over to the lip and said here comes one. The snake came on up and Windom killed him. That snake had seven little ones about eight inches long in it. They were alive. That made 14 counting the little ones that we killed that day.

BF: Who was the Ranger that set the fire on the wrong side of the mountain?

CH: It was Kuhn. That was down at Silver Hill.

We had trouble with one section in Silver Hill - fire sets. We had to go down there every other day at least for a week. I caught a boy, but I actually didn't see him set the fire - I knew he did it though. It burned just a little strip. I had the fire plow and left it in front of the boy's house. I scouted the fire out and saw the boy at his house take off on a bicycle. I took off after him but couldn't catch him. I had to call in the crew. I told the Ranger (Bob Williams) about

him. Bob went down to his house and cornered the boy. We didn't prosecute him. It scared him enough to make him stop setting fires.

Down at Subligna, there was a black family that lived back there. Turn off there by the Methodist Church and go back near Taylor's Ridge. I had to go down there about every evening after work. I told the Ranger if another fire started down there this evening, I was going to call Phillips (Correction Officer at Walker County Correctional Institute) in Chattanooga and bring the bloodhounds down there. Another wildfire occurred so I called him and he said he would bring the bloodhounds down in about an hour and thirty minutes. Fire danger wasn't high. I had three men. I never had seen bloodhounds work. He gave me both of them on a leash and he (Phillips) took one. Phillips was getting some years on him and he couldn't get through the woods as well. I asked him how these dogs would spot the scent. He (Phillips) said you'd know it. I told him we should get it on the south side of this fire. About that time that dog got a sniff. I took out after him and came out about where the road goes to Subligna. I heard something coming around me, I looked back and Biff's dog had gotten away from him. My two dogs went up the road toward the black family's house. I took off in a run with them. The dogs went up to the porch - wagging their tails. When Phillips got there, he just opened the door. That darn dog walked over to a black man in bed. The dog stood there looking at the black man. The dog wagged his tail. Phillips said there's your man. Come to find out there was some boys hiring him to set the fires. I knew one of the boys. He didn't get on Forest Service land so we couldn't bust him (the boy). Warren Scoggins was the guy. I talked to Warren, he asked me if I got my man. I said yea. The old boy yelled out to some other guys that were with him. "Boys we are going to have to nickel up and bail our guy out." I told Warren he had better keep his mouth shut.. If that fire did burn on government land again, you would be the first one I would arrest. We were going to prosecute him if we ever caught him.

We solved every fire starting case we had except one. Warren Wright set the one at John's Mountain. We were on it for three days. We trailed him with dogs up to his house - up at Mill Creek. They did that while we were taking the plow unit off the transport. Same dogs we had used in Subligna case. I don't know why the dogs evidence didn't stand up in court. I never did ask. Talked about it - kept fooling around. He (Warren) got mad because the dogs came into his house. Phillips didn't carry a gun. He had a gun but didn't carry it. Orrie Hanson was the Ranger. He got smart with Warren. The boy grabbed at the Ranger's mouth. Warren grabbed out his knife. Phillips said he would have shot Warren. He could probably justify it. I think he (Warren) would have cut Orrie. That's how crazy he (Warren) was.

There was a lot of things that happened back in those days.

JK: Were you ever issued a uniform?

CH: No.

JK: The Ranger was the only one who had a uniform?

CH: Yea, the Ranger had one. I had a badge. Bob Williams was pretty smart in the Forest Service. He was quiet kind of guy. Everybody loved him - LaFayette liked him. Everyone that knew him liked him. He was that kind of guy. He would introduce me first then himself. He would say I was the Ranger.

He (Bob Williams) was on another fire over in the Narrows that a guy had set. Bob was over there and he was scouting.

TAPE II-SIDE A-30 MINUTES

JK: I guess the timber sales they had back then - there wasn't any clears the way we call them today.

CH: Oh no, the young timber that was growing. It was healthy.

JK: Most of it was young - it was thinning more or less.

CH: Oh yes, yes. We had a lot of old stuff we had a lot of this on Taylor's Ridge and over on a little ridge in east Armuchee there was shortleaf growing timber. Fifteen miles of the Taylor's Ridge was Peters Mining Company Land. Of course, they sold out to the government. You can go down to Gore and see the old mines today.

JK: Was there any underplanting of white pine done while you were here?

CH: We put some down there below me (Manning Mill area) on the Scoggins' place.

JK: I think Williams or Biskey did a lot of this planting.

CH: Oh yea, we put some (white pines) down in Snake Creek Gap.

BF: On the Scoggins place - down where the big game food plot is?

JK: Yea.

BF: Below my house.

CH: Bob said they cut the pines - most of the white pines. I was watching them to see what they would do. They were growing as fast as the loblolly. They were going on up. I hated that they cut them.

BF: I guess you helped plant those, they have cut some at Dry Creek, and below Johnny Parsons on the left.

CH: I was thinking they were on the right - yea they were on both sides of the road. Yea, I set them out all along there.

You know back then we had those five fire towers. I had to do a lot of flying. Visibility would get so bad you couldn't see the mountains.

JK: I didn't realize they flew much back then.

CH: Oh yea, sometimes when the fire danger was bad, I would fly two-three times a week. I would fly the whole area. The government had a school for young men from the Army. I would go over and get a plane and we would fly. I enjoyed flying in planes. Felt like a bird floating around up there. I flew one but I never did set one down.

I never will forget one trip we made. There was a big fire down in the Pocket near the lake (Lake Marvin) on the left on Calhoun Gap Road. We were going to go down by the tower (fire tower on John's Mountain - overlook now) L. Z. Smith was on the John's Mountain Tower. I talked to L. Z. over the radio that we were going to circle around and go back

by him. I asked him if he received the message. Course he had (L. Z. Smith). He would contact the dispatcher and have some more men sent down there.

TF: Where was the dispatcher working from?

CH: Narrows Tower. Well, we headed back to the airport. I got in the truck headed out and got my crew. I got Mr. Goss down there. He came up. If you are acquainted with that road (Calhoun Gap Road) - you know how wide the road is now. It was wide then. You know where that high bank is just before you went out on top on Calhoun Gap? That fire was so hot it jumped that road I believe it was at least 50 yards from where the fire jumped to from the lower side of that road. Course, it wasn't any trouble as it was on top there. We fought several fires up there.

I remember when I was going to fly. I was sitting - taking the weather. The wind was blowing 40 miles an hour. Winds were southwest. There was an old buzzard down there - he wanted to go west. I watched him for about 30 to 40 minutes. When he would get to the top of the ridge and try to go over the wind would blow him back over. I went down to the airport, Dennis and I headed out. (Dennis' last name unknown)

TF: Were you flying out of Dalton?

CH: No, we were flying out of Trion - a little airport there. We flew down Taylor's Ridge. It was so rough then - you could get up just over the top of the mountain. You had to get up pretty high there in order to get over. We went on down to Lyerly and turned around heading back north toward Crystal Springs. We got over Rock Creek. The winds started bothering us. The plane's wings were shaking. We got down to 600 feet around S.I. Storey's sawmill. We were like that buzzard. Seemed like the plane just stopped in mid air with those winds blowing directly into the front of the plane. We made it okay, but I wasn't anxious to fly again when the winds were high.

I wish I had brought you my pictures of the lookout towers.

TF: We have got some more pictures other than these, Mr. Huggins. Joe sent them to Gainesville (Supervisor's Office) to have copies made. In 1986 the Chattahoochee National Forest will have its fiftieth anniversary. Gainesville wants to use them for display purposes.

Now you retired in 1955.

CH: 1955.

TF: The last Ranger, I guess, you worked for was George Biskey. George was here from 1953 - 1957.

CH: I believe that's right.

TF: He went on from LaFayette to Dahlonega (Georgia) didn't he?

CH: Yes, Bob Williams went to Ocoee, Tennessee.

JK: Did Ranger Arthur Woody ever come over to the Armuchee?

CH: No, I don't believe he ever came over here. He was always over at Camp Wahsega. I never will forget him. He was sitting next to me at one of the training sessions at Camp Wahsega. He was asking questions. We were looking at some pictures of wildfires crowning out. I asked him (Mr. Woody) what he would do in a case like that? He said, "throw down my fire rake and run like hell!" But that old man was the rolling gospel up there on that mountain (Suches, Georgia). Everybody liked him, but he was rough.

JK: It was like and respect. People respected him.

CH: Yes, that's right.

WN: Walter Woody, was that his boy?

CH: He had a boy, he was your age. He (Walter Woody) worked with the Forest Service. Didn't he? Retired too.

JK: Yes, he was a Ranger for about 35 years. He was in Clayton, Georgia for a while. The old man was a Ranger for a long time too.

CH: I would go to his house (Arthur Woody's) and he would make us feel at home. Preach Parsons. Is he still alive?

JK: He passed away two or three months ago. I think about him a lot. He had the same job I have here. He got the Ranger's job in Clayton.

BF: He was the last one to "grandfather" into a Ranger job wasn't he?

JK: Yes, I believe so.

BF: But he got a forestry degree, didn't he?

JK: No, he didn't.

CH: I don't believe he did. The last time I saw him, he had a travel trailer and was traveling around.

WN: He had cancer, didn't he?

JK: I think that's right.

CH: Last time I saw him, he was in pretty good shape.

BF: He must have followed Woody as the Ranger.

JK: I guess so.

BF: They haven't had many Rangers over there (Suches area) I don't guess.

CH: Follow who?

BF: Didn't Parson follow Arthur Woody as the Ranger?

CH: No, Nicholson. He was one of the old hicks. He was one of the nicest guys I ever saw - he was over at Clayton - not Suches area.

JK: I thought Arthur was over at Clayton.

CH: No, he was over at Woody Gap.

BF: He was at Suches.

JK: Where did Walter (Woody) come in?

CH: He was Arthur Woody's son. He made Ranger at a later time.

JK: Oh, okay.

CH: He (Walter) was just a young man when I knew him.

JK: How do you think the local people look on the Forest Service now compared to the way they did back 30 years ago?

CH: I imagine they agree with you. Some of the older people may not agree with you though. I don't know how it is now. When I was with the Forest Service, we were cutting timber. We were the only government department that never was in the "red". (losing money)

JK: I think we're in the red now. We're still not costing the taxpayer like everything else.

CH: I know that when the fiscal year was out, the money started giving out. The supervisor came over and said we couldn't carry any of the money over (to the next year). He told us to buy some things we needed with what money we had left prior to beginning the new fiscal year. He told us to spend it and buy things which we needed as in the next fiscal year we may not have enough money to purchase the items.

JK: Some things never change.

CH: That's right. I didn't spend near what I could have.

JK: The Narrows Picnic Area was closed down due to vandalism.

CH: Oh, yea.

JK: What about Kartah Dell?

CH: Kartah Dell, people tore it all to pieces. They would tear up the concrete tables and benches - get the rocks. They did the same thing at the Narrows. Bunch of drunks.