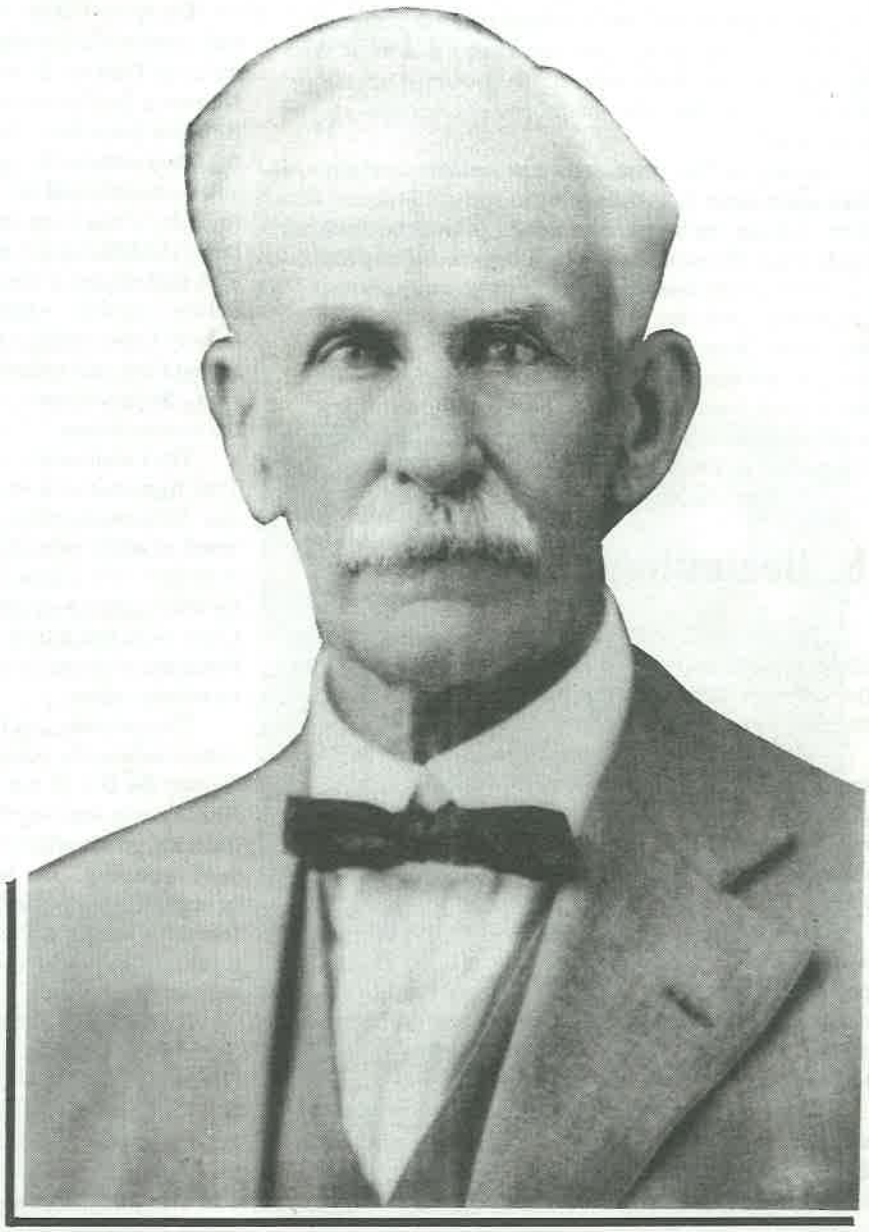
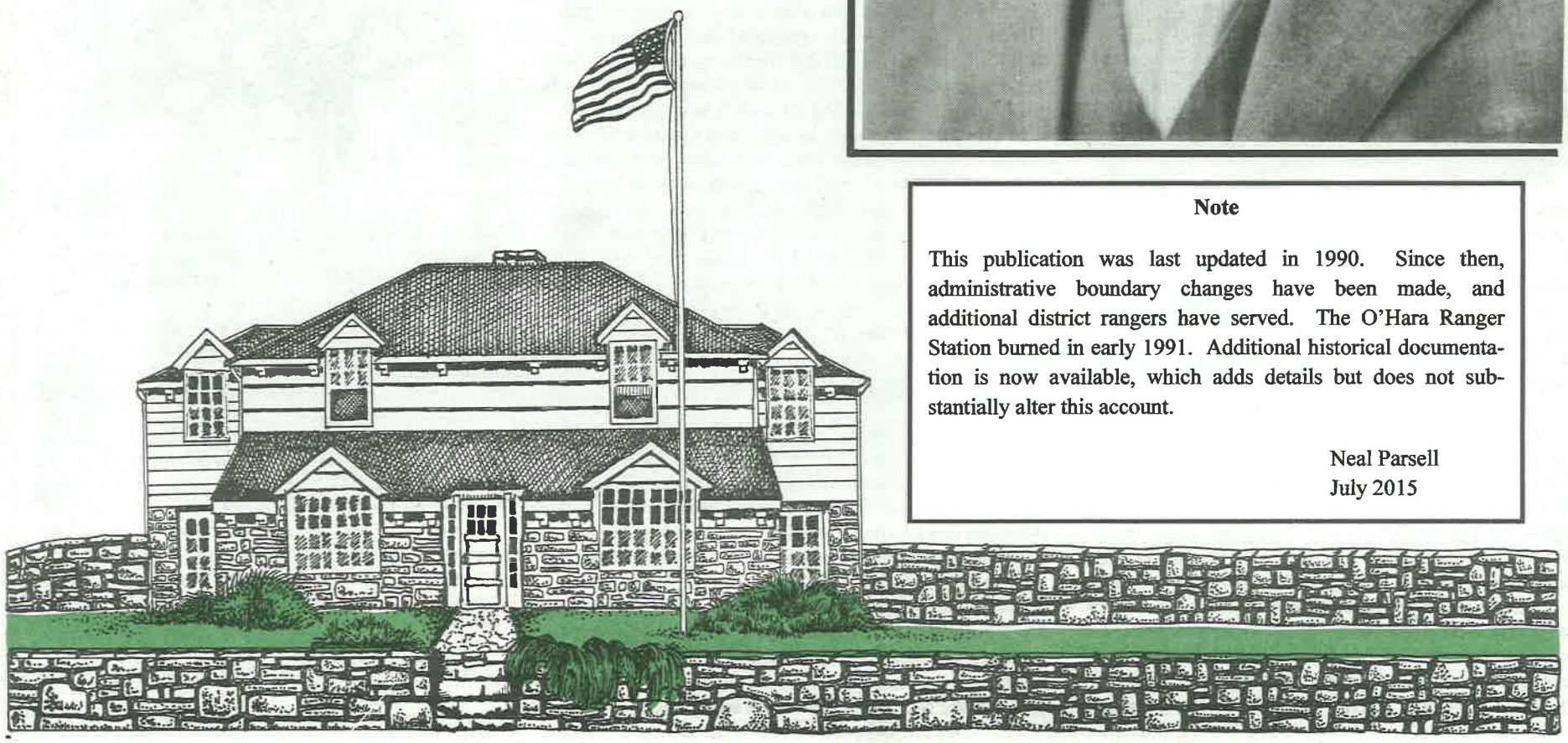
MAJOR FENN'S COUNTRY

A history of the lower Lochsa, the lower Selway, the upper Middlefork of the Clearwater, and surrounding lands.

by Neal Parsell





Note

This publication was last updated in 1990. Since then, administrative boundary changes have been made, and additional district rangers have served. The O'Hara Ranger Station burned in early 1991. Additional historical documentation is now available, which adds details but does not substantially alter this account.

Neal Parsell
July 2015

To The Reader

This is an illustrated historical overview of events on all lands ever administered out of Fenn Ranger Station on the Selway River. That land area was once much larger than it is now. From 1940 to 1956 it included both sides of the Lochsa River up to Snowshoe Creek, both sides of the Selway up to Three Links Creek, and both sides of the Middlefork downstream to the national forest boundary.

I have also reviewed the original homestead patents along the rivers within these boundaries, but have not attempted to trace all property ownerships since that time. The rest of the account runs from the earliest days up to about 1970.

The information given will be of most interest to federal land managers and residents of north central Idaho. Without intending to discourage visitors, it must be said that some knowledge of the country is necessary if the following narrative, maps, and photographs are to mean much.

However, this is not an insurmountable problem. All that is necessary is a willingness to spend a little extra time studying the maps and exploring along the roads and trails around Lowell, especially along the Selway Road.

Perhaps this essay and the accompanying photographs can some day become part of a general history of the Lochsa-Selway country, a project I have neither the time nor the resources to undertake. It needs to be done. In the meantime, the objective here is to furnish a few hours of instruction and enjoyment for a reasonable price. I hope that goal has been achieved.

Neal Parsell, May 1986, April 1990.

1. Beginnings

Ten thousand years ago, the weather in north central Idaho was wet and cold. For hundreds of years at a time, the summers were not warm enough to melt all the snow that fell during the winters.

Although the great ice sheets had not reached south to the the Lochsa-Selway country, individual valley glaciers were common. They advanced and receded in response to temperature and precipitation, and formed many of the topographical features that are present in those valleys today.

The climate gradually became warm and dry—warmer and drier than it is now. The glaciers disappeared. Then, about 4,000 years ago, cool and wet conditions returned, accompanied by more glaciation at higher elevations. These glaciers also melted as temperatures warmed into the climate of today.

People inhabited the Clearwater Valley through all of these changes. Not much is known about where they came from, but they were the ancestors of the people who later called themselves the Ne-me-poo and who are known in American history as the Nez Perce.

By about 7,500 years ago, a subsistence routine had developed based on fishing, hunting, and gathering of roots and berries. It required a nomadic way of life, and the social structure that evolved consisted of a number of independent, permanent villages, each with temporary, seasonal camps. The permanent camps in the Clearwater drainage were mostly downstream from Kooskia and Stites. The Lochsa-Selway country was little used in the winters.

Food was abundant, but it was seasonal. Salmon and steelhead came up the rivers by the thousands in the spring and fall. Camas and kouse roots were abundant on the prairies above the lower Clearwater in the spring and summer. There were plenty of deer, which were easier to hunt after a powerful bow was developed. Made from the straightened horn of a mountain sheep, this bow could send three-foot arrows deep into the bodies of animals.

Lean times were not unknown, and sometimes they were serious. Camas, kouse, and salmon were dried and stored for winter, and these were supplemented by deer and elk if the animals could be shot or snared while on their winter ranges. But the food supply often gave out before the spring salmon runs. When this happened, tree bark and moss had to be gathered and eaten.

The Nez Perce way of life, which had evolved over centuries, rapidly changed after about 1700, when the people of the Clearwater obtained their first horses. In less than 100 years, selective breeding was common practice, and herds of 50 to 100 animals per family were not unusual. These horses enabled a dramatic increase in mobility. Long-range trade relationships were established, and expeditions outside the Clearwater country were far more frequent than before.

Hunting trips into the Clearwater and Bitterroot mountains also became more extensive. There was plenty of forage in the high mountain meadows, and hunting parties were no longer limited to what they could carry on their backs.

By the end of the eighteenth century, an extensive trail system had developed. The best known today are the Lolo Trail on the ridges north of the Lochsa and the Nezperce Trail on the Clearwater-Salmon divide. Between these two, a trail followed the Middle Fork of the Clearwater to the junction of the Lochsa and Selway and then continued up the Selway to the falls. A major route ran along Coolwater Ridge and over Ghost Mountain to Old Man Lake and eventually over the Bitterroots. This trail started in several places around the Lochsa-Selway junction. Another well-used route left the river at Selway Falls, climbed Indian Hill, followed the ridge to Indian Park, and continued eastward through Lost Horse Pass. Several branches of the Lolo Trail gave access to the Lochsa River.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition traveled the Lolo Trail from east to west in the fall of 1805 and returned over it the next spring. Although the Nez Perce had heard of white men, these were the first most of them had ever seen. The Indians gave the explorers food and cared for their horses over the winter. In return, Lewis and Clark spent much time treating the sick and gave the Nez Perce ammunition for a few guns that they had acquired a short time before.

The fur trade that followed Lewis and Clark was conducted mostly outside the Nez Perce homeland. Neither the British nor the Americans ever interested the Nez Perce in trapping beaver on a large scale, although the trade goods offered—such as blankets and guns—were appealing. The Nez Perce preferred to trade horses or act as guides and interpreters. Many became close friends of the American mountain men; they traveled together, celebrated together, and fought mutual enemies together.

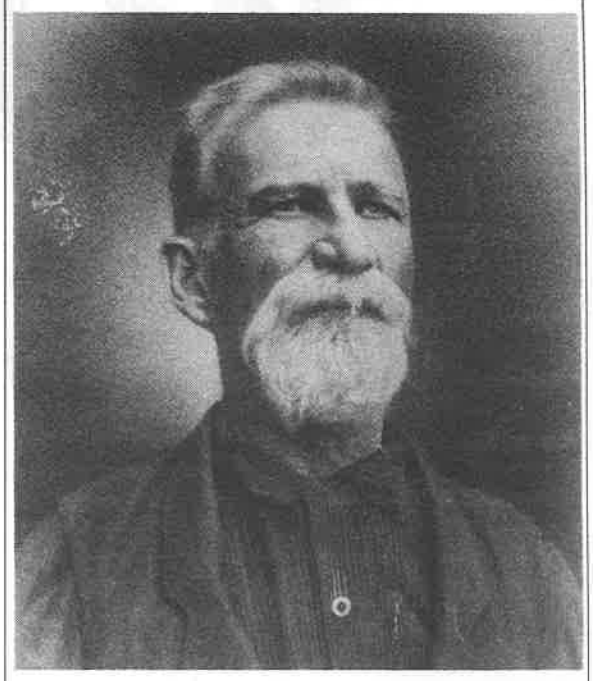
By the 1850s, the mountain man era was over. Settlers were moving into what is now Washington and Oregon. In 1855, a treaty was concluded between the U.S. Government and several Northwest tribes. The Nez Perce managed to retain almost all of their ancestral lands under this treaty, including all of the Clearwater country, and were guaranteed that no white man would be allowed on the new reservation without their permission; but they were disturbed by the way the negotiations were conducted, and what that might mean for the future.

Their fears were justified. In 1860, gold was discovered at Pierce, and in 1861 strikes were made at Elk City and Florence. Miners stampeded to the diggings and explored every drainage in the country. In 1863, a new treaty established a 784,996-acre reservation, just 10 percent of the area set aside only eight years before. The Lochsa-Selway country was not included in the new reservation.

Not all Nez Perce leaders signed the 1863 treaty, and in 1877 the U.S. Government undertook to force these leaders and their bands onto the reservation. War broke out. The Nez Perce retreat over the Lolo Trail into Montana is well-known, but the cause was hopeless.

The last treaty between the U.S. Government and the Nez Perce was signed in 1893. Each Nez Perce man, woman, and child was allotted a share of the reservation. On November 18, 1895, the rest of the reservation was opened to settlement under the U.S. land laws; and, 90 years after they had welcomed Lewis and Clark to their country, the Nez Perce way of life was gone.

Pete King



ELVA ROWLEY

Pete King was born in Germany in 1832. When he was a year old, the family came to the United States and settled in Indiana.

King went to the California gold fields when he was 18 years old. He mined and prospected all over the West and ended up in Idaho County, where he had relatives. From about 1881, he had an interest in a homestead near the town of Clearwater. He died there in 1907.

The claims on Pete King Creek were among the last he worked. His cabin at the mouth of the creek was built before 1894, but he probably didn't stay there all year every year. The highway now covers the cabin site.

Pacific Dogwood

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Pacific dogwood is a bush or small tree that always flowers in May and sometimes does so again in September. The blossoms are white and from 3 to 5 inches across; they can't be mistaken for anything else.

Although it is abundant along the upper Middlefork, lower Lochsa, and Lower Selway, Pacific Dogwood is a coastal species and is rarely found east of the Cascade Mountains. Its presence in the Lochsa-Selway country is a reminder that the coastal forests once extended far inland.

When the Cascade Range rose millions of years ago, much of the rainfall originating from the Pacific Ocean was blocked, and the lands to the east became drier. However, when air masses moving east arrive at the Clearwater and Bitterroot mountains, they are forced upward and rainfall increases. The result is a climate similar enough to the coastal climate that Pacific dogwood and several other coastal plant species have survived far from their native habitat.

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2. The Homesteaders

Late in the fall of 1891, W.E. (Billy) Parry, a 29-year-old New Englander who had come to the new state of Idaho on his doctor's recommendation, set up for the winter in an abandoned cabin on what is now the site of Fenn Ranger Station.

Prospectors and trappers had previously wintered along the Lochsa and Selway, and cedar had already been logged and floated to Lewiston. But these prospectors, trappers, and loggers came and went; and, whatever his original intent, Billy Parry stayed the rest of his life.

He established a more permanent base in the spring of 1892 on the Lochsa near where it joins the Selway, and began looking over the country's possibilities. While up the Lochsa a few years later, he ran across a man half-starved, whom he revived and took to his cabin. Thus did Henry Lowell arrive at the place that now bears his name.

In 1895, Sumner Rackliff and his mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs. B.B. Stuart, took up permanent residence at Syringa. They were natives of Maine. After residences in four other states, they moved to Elk City in 1883, where Rackliff and Stuart mined and prospected. From there, they made their last move—to the Middle-fork.

There were few roads in those days. Billy Parry traveled the old Indian trail to the Selway. The wagon road into Elk City wasn't finished when Rackliff and the Stuarts moved from there. The townsites of Kooskia and Kamiah were not yet surveyed, and the new railroad up the Clearwater hadn't yet reached Idaho County.

Gradually, these earliest settlers got some neighbors who also had the idea of staying on. Lew McNair settled at the mouth of Pete King Creek in September 1909, and Al Peterson established a homestead at the mouth of Elk City Creek at about the same time. At Syringa, Rackliff and the Stuarts sold 40 acres at the upriver end of their place to Charles Strite. Rackliff's sister Ermie and her husband Wyman Bullock and their family moved out from Maine.

The newly-created Forest Service was also becoming active. As early as 1905, trail work was being done up the Selway, and in 1907 the Forest Service built a ferry to cross the Lochsa. Cabins were being put up on administrative sites, and a telephone line from Kooskia to the Lochsa-Selway junction was completed.

Lowell, Idaho, became a mailing address in the spring of 1908 when the post office was moved upriver from Syringa and named after the new postmaster, Henry Lowell. Prior to obtaining the deed to his property, Lowell operated a way station under permit from the Forest Service. Since the country was full of railroad surveyors at this time, business was good enough to enable him to hire help to clear more land and build irrigation ditches.

In 1911, Mr. and Mrs. Marion Cleveland moved from eastern Washington. The lands to which they eventually secured title ran along the Selway from just above the Lochsa-Selway junction to Roar Creek. The Clevelands were middle-aged and had grown children. One of their sons, Guy, was a barber and set up a shop in Kooskia; a daughter, Mildred, was a schoolteacher there and elsewhere for many years. Another daughter, Alberta (Babe), lived with her parents when she was not participating in rodeos throughout the Northwest.

Henry Lowell

MARIE HOVEY

Henry Lowell took up permanent residence in an existing cabin above the Lochsa in 1902. He had no family with him; his wife had died and his daughters were married and living in Washington.

He lived on his place until the spring of 1913, when Billy Parry accompanied him to Boise and he was admitted to the state soldiers' home. His health improved, and by the summer of 1918 he was back on the Lochsa for a visit. He died in 1920 at the age of 87.

This photograph was taken about 1910 at the Parry home on the "Ought Seven" ranch.

The Parry Family

MARIE HOVEY

W.E. (Billy) Parry came to the Selway in 1891 and Maude, his wife, came to Kooskia with her family in 1902. She was married both before and after her marriage to Parry.

The Parrys spent most winters in Kooskia, but were usually upriver in the summers. They liked to take extended horse camping trips, going by a different route each year. In 1910, their party was camped in the Moose Creek country when the fires burning there blew up. Together with their livestock, they plunged into the nearest lake until things cooled down.

After Parry married Maude, he adopted her daughter, Lottie Casady. In 1922, Lottie married Elmer Walde, who was a forest ranger at the time. Soon thereafter, the couple moved to Minnesota.

Maude Lake, Lottie Lake, Lottie Creek and Walde Mountain are named after members of this family. Chain Meadows north of McConnell Mountain was known as Parry's Meadows in 1904 and 1905, but this name never found its way onto a map.

The Johnson family moved from Missouri to an existing homestead at the lower end of Goddard Bar in the spring of 1912. Ed Johnson was a printer whose doctor had told him to abandon the printing trade and find outdoor work. His parents had already moved to Kooskia, and his brother had won the homestead in a poker game.

This was Dee Johnson's first experience with wild, remote country; and she had three small children to watch after. Although a wagon road had been built from Kooskia to Syringa, Goddard Bar was some 16 miles from there by trail. A trip to town took two days each way, and was not often made. The Johnsons and Clevelands became good friends. The Forest Service allowed private parties to use their telephone line, and this helped ease the isolation.

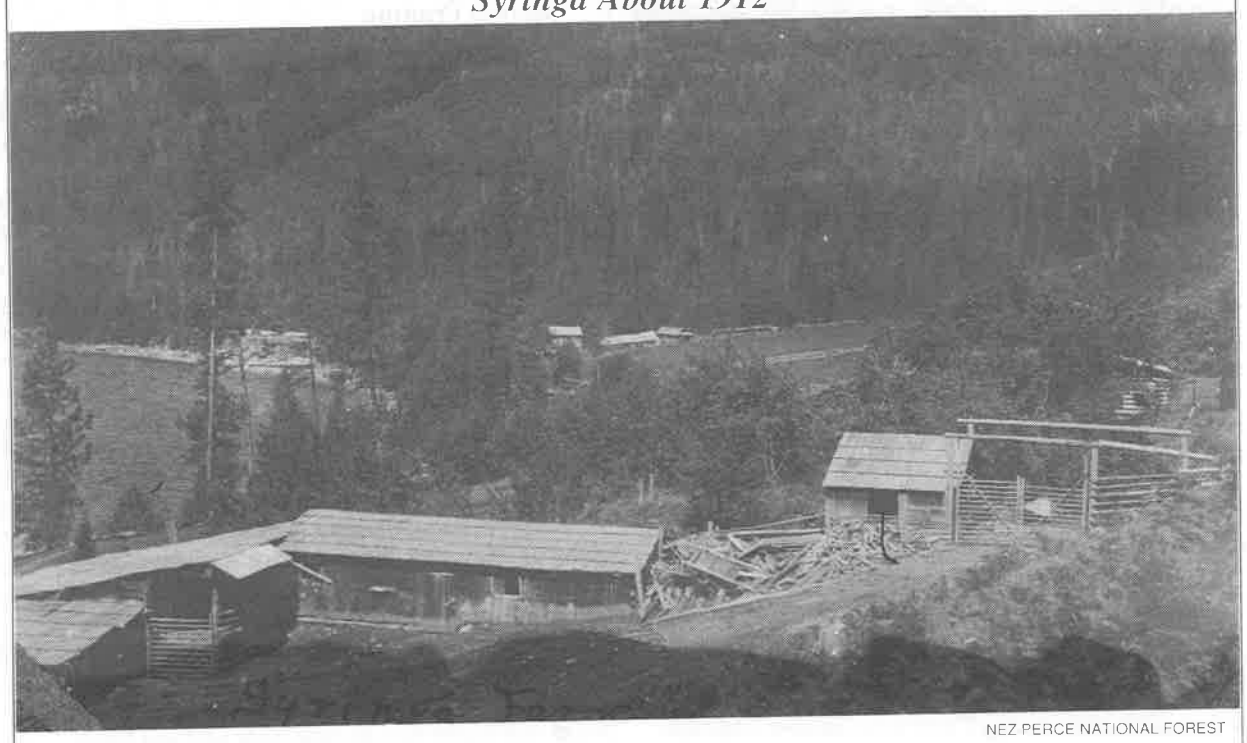
During these years, Billy Parry worked at just about everything the country had to offer in the way of making a living. He trapped. A few years after the Forest Reserves were established, he worked for several seasons as a ranger. He did a lot of prospecting and staked other prospectors. When the Lochsa and Selway canyons were surveyed by the railroads, he got into packing in a big way, contracting supplies to the survey crews. Later, he was a livestock buyer and foreman on cedar pole drives on the rivers. He also packed hunters and fishermen, although he disliked sport hunting himself. As a result of all these activities, he became well-known in the upper Clearwater country.

In 1907, Parry homesteaded what is known to this day as the "Ought Seven," a place a few miles downriver from Syringa. Several years later, he also bought out Henry Lowell.

By 1919, all the lands now in private ownership in the Lowell, Pete King, and lower Selway vicinity were occupied. All of the homesteaders planted fruit trees and had large gardens. Most places could furnish enough of a hay crop to carry a few animals through the winter. Some even had small herds of cattle. In addition, there were plenty of fish in the rivers and deer on the slopes above them.

Homestead buildings were small and were built of native materials, mostly logs. There was little indoor plumbing; no one had a flush toilet. Any lumber used had to packed in on animals or sawed on the site by hand. Hardware and windows had to be brought in. Wagons and farm implements were taken apart, packed in, and reassembled. Many tools and implements were improvised.

Syringa About 1912

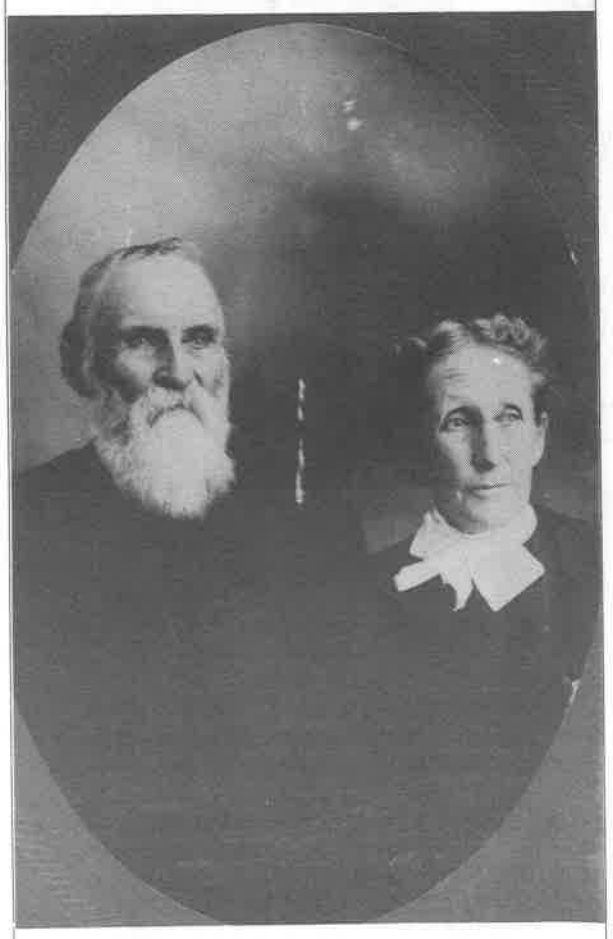


NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

The Strite place is in the foreground; the house, built by the Stuarts before 1909, is partially hidden in the trees.

The rest of the buildings around Smith Creek and Little Smith Creek were occupied by Mary Stuart and her family.

B.B. and Mary Stuart



EMMETT RYNEARSON

The Stuarts came to Syringa in 1895. Mary was married in 1854 to John Sumner Rackliff in Maine, and they had two children. Rackliff died in 1861, and in 1868 she married B.B. Stuart. The next year, the family moved to Missouri, where they spent three years. After living in Oregon, Utah, Colorado, Boise and Elk City, and having two more children, the Stuarts became the first permanent settlers at Syringa. B.B. Stuart died in 1908 and Mary Stuart in 1919.

Syringa Residents; Forest Rangers

EMMETT RYNEARSON

Sumner Rackliff, on the left, was a miner, homesteader and forest ranger who came to Syringa in 1895. Although he had been crippled in a mine accident in Colorado when he was 21 years old and as a result had to wear a six-inch lift on one of his shoes in order to walk, he put in at least 10 seasons as a forest ranger. After leaving the Forest Service in 1915, he contracted the mail route between Kooskia and Lowell.

B.F. Cressler, on the right, was Rackliff's brother-in-law. His family homesteaded on Tahoe Ridge out of Kooskia in 1895. He was ranger at Fish Lake in 1907 and 1908 and later worked for the Forest Service in other jobs.

Trapper Cabin and Visitor

CARL WEHOLT

Many trapline cabins could be found in the backcountry in earlier days. As can be seen here, these cabins were just large enough for a trapper to get out of the weather, and little effort was made at fine craftsmanship in their construction. Provisions were packed in during the summer, and the cabins were marked so they could be found beneath the snow during the winter trapping season.

Even when fur prices were high, trapping was a hard way to make a living. Running an extensive trapline in the winter where there are no roads requires great physical stamina and endurance. Trappers usually operated alone, and over the years more than a few were found dead along their lines and in their cabins. As a result, trapping usually flourished only in hard economic times.

The visitor to this cabin is not a trapper; he is a forest ranger. Adolph Weholt joined the Forest Service in 1907 and had a long career, retiring in 1944.

Three Devils Cabin

GEORGE TINKER

This cabin above Three Devils Rapids is one of many that were once to be seen along the rivers.

The Three Devils were three boulders in the river so large they were exposed even during high water. Cedar poles floated from upstream would hang up on them and jam. After a few years of this, the pole makers drilled the boulders and dynamited them.

The Three Devils Picnic Area (or Park, as it was then called) was established soon after the road reached the location in 1919. It was a cooperative venture between the Forest Service and Kooskia area residents.

Cash money for staple groceries, clothes, and shoes was always short. Although some income could be generated by selling fruits, vegetables, and hay from the homesteads and by trapping and making cedar fence posts or railroad ties, most of the men had to find outside work for part of the year. This was easier after the Forest Service began building trails, cabins, and telephone lines. It was a mutual benefit: the jobs were available for six weeks or two months in the summer and fall, when the men could get away.

Services taken for granted today were unavailable. When one of the Johnson girls broke her arm, her parents splinted it themselves. The Johnsons were the only family in the area with small children, but Dee Johnson had taught school before her marriage and she set one up around the kitchen table. Commercial electric power was many years in the future, and refrigeration was impossible in the summer. If someone shot a deer in warm weather all of the neighbors got part of it, since it would spoil before any one family could eat all of it.

Transportation difficulties were reduced somewhat when a primitive road reached Lowell in late 1919. By 1924, the Lochsa had been bridged and the road extended to O'Hara Bar. For those who could afford an automobile, it was possible to go to Kooskia and return the same day, but it was a long day. There weren't many good roads connecting Kooskia with the outside world. Long-distance travelers and almost all freight went on the railroad.

To Michael Heinrichs, also known locally as "Slim" Hendrickson, the Selway road was not an unqualified benefit. In 1918, he had bought a homestead relinquishment on the land upstream from Roar Creek which included the flat across the river from the mouth of Swiftwater Creek and had since obtained title to the place. The road engineers insisted on building the road where it is still located, which cut Heinrich's place into two pieces and ran through ground he had lately spent much time and energy clearing. Disgusted, he packed up and left the country. A few years later, the place was sold for taxes.

Some of the earlier settlers who had secured title to their land sold out and moved on. Earl Cleveland, Marion Cleveland's son, bought Al Peterson's place in 1923. The Johnsons had moved to Portland, and Earl Cleveland's father-in-law bought their place in 1926.

Their plans for the future were shattered when Earl Cleveland was killed in the fall of 1927. He was moving horses from one pasture to another and was apparently kicked in the face by one of them. He was a long time being discovered and transported to a hospital in Lewiston, where he underwent surgery for a fractured skull.

Lew McNair's Cabin

GEORGE ROBINETT

Lew McNair homesteaded 75 acres at the mouth of Pete King Creek in 1909 and built this cabin about 1911. By 1915, he had eight acres under cultivation, two of which had been cleared when he filed on the land.

McNair worked for the Forest Service about two months each year for several years prior to 1913. He was foreman on the Selway Falls-Moose Creek telephone line construction job in 1912.

Shortly after the road was completed to Lowell, McNair sold his place to a group of businessmen and professional people from Kooskia who had plans for a recreational development. Nothing ever came of this, but the cabin had many occupants after McNair.

The operation failed, and he died two days later. Earlier the same year, Marion Cleveland had died. In a few years, the rest of the family had moved from the Selway.

At Syringa, Charles Strite in 1923 patented 56 acres upriver from the 40 acres he had bought from Rackliff and the Stuarts in 1909. Although he had built a log house and made other improvements on the land, the Forest Service objected to the patent on the grounds that the clearing and cultivation requirements of the law had not been met. The General Land Office did not agree, and the patent was approved.

Meanwhile, Sumner Rackliff's sister Ermie and her husband Wyman Bullock had acquired title to the land across the river from Syringa. Somewhat later, after all available land around Lowell, Pete King, and the lower Selway had passed into private ownership, their son Sumner Bullock patented the rest of the available land at Syringa. Rackliff sold out and moved to Kooskia, where he died in 1933.

By the mid-1930s, the Forest Service needed more pasture along the lower Selway. O'Hara Bar was entirely taken up by the ranger station and the proposed Civilian Conservation Corps camp. Plans were being prepared for a new ranger station that would occupy a large part of Goddard Bar. Negotiations were begun with the owner of the Johnson place and finally, in 1937, the U.S. Government traded timber on Yakus Creek in the Clearwater National Forest for Johnson Bar and what is now the lower pasture at Fenn Ranger Station.

Billy Parry lived his last years in the old McNair cabin at the mouth of Pete King Creek. He had sold the Ought Seven in 1920, and the Kooskia bank had foreclosed on the Lowell place in 1927. His wife was gone, married to another man; his adopted daughter was in faraway Minnesota. The hills around his rented cabin that he had first seen 50 years before and never left for long were covered with snags from the 1934 fire. He died alone in June 1941.

◆

When the first settlers arrived, all of the land was in the public domain. Land likely to be homesteaded was surveyed and divided into lots, and after the survey was approved, the lots were open to settlement.

Under the Homestead Act of 1862, any person who was the head of a family or over age 21, and who was a U.S. citizen or had declared an intention to become one, could secure a deed to (patent) 160 acres of the surveyed public domain by living on the land for five years, cultivating it, and making improvements on it. This law

The Fourth of July — 1906

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

When this group of forest rangers rode in the Kooskia Fourth of July parade, the federal forest reserves in the Lochsa–Selway country had been established less than 10 years, and the Forest Service itself was only a year old.

Public acceptance of the new forest reserves and the resulting restrictions on their use was far from universal. These and other early rangers spent many hours both on and off the job persuading homesteaders and other local residents that proper management of the forest reserves was in everyone's best interest.

Forest officers prior to establishment of the Forest Service were political appointees, many of whom knew little and cared less about forest management. Corruption was widespread. Although by 1906 most of these people had been eliminated on the Bitterroot Reserve, the job of their successors in explaining the Forest Service to local citizens was not made any easier by common knowledge of recent abuses.

The building in the right background is Kooskia's first school house, built in 1905.

Bounty Hunter

CHARLES J. JOHNSON

Charles Johnson began hunting and trapping at an early age. His teachers were local Indians and trappers. Since his father was absent much of the year working at the outside jobs necessary to support the family, Johnson had added responsibilities as "the man of the place" during those absences.

Going Fishing—1916

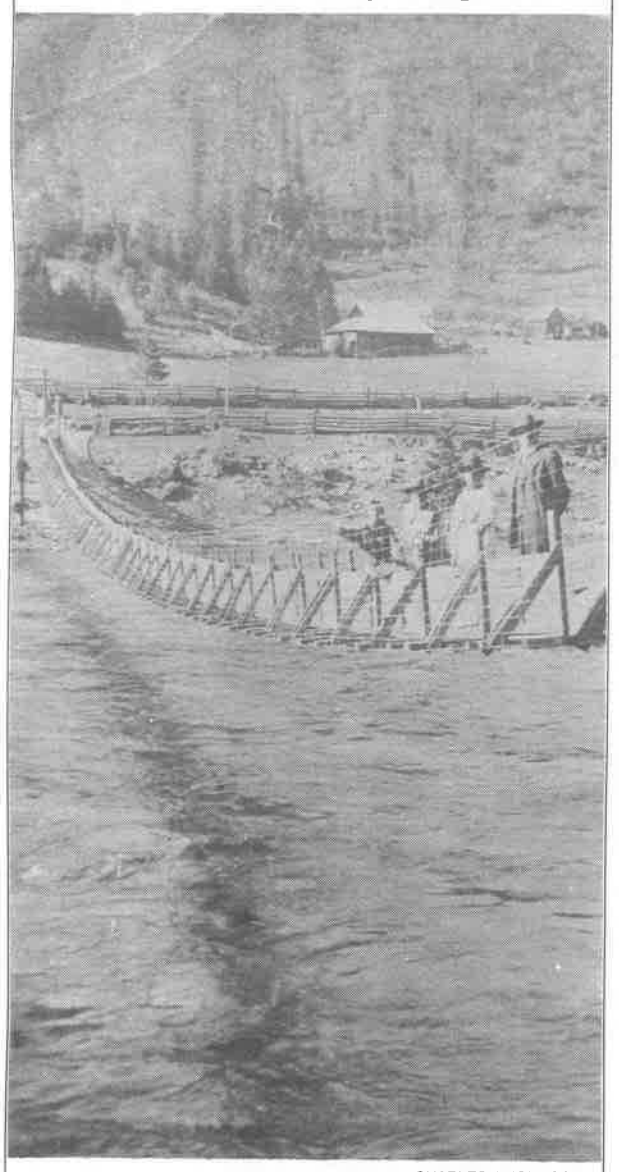
CHARLES J. JOHNSON

Charles Johnson, about 10 years old in this photograph, and his father Ed Johnson took the family's homemade boat across the Selway to catch supper at the mouth of Cedar Creek.

Cedar Creek is now known as Goddard Creek, probably after Jack Goddard, a Forest Service employee around 1906. The name was changed on the 1921 Forest Service map, but on this map Elk City Creek was called Cedar Creek. Everything was straightened out on the 1928 map; Cedar Creek disappeared from the Selway country.

The Johnsons left the area in 1920. Later Charles Johnson graduated from Oregon State University in civil engineering and had a long career as a construction engineer.

Lowell Swinging Bridge



CHARLES J. JOHNSON

This bridge was built in the spring of 1918 as a sheep crossing. The original bridge was six feet across, but this proved too wide. One band of 300 sheep crowded up on the bridge and were dumped into the river during high water, but almost all of them made it to shore safely. The bridge was rebuilt with the runway only two feet wide, so the sheep had to cross in a single file.

Lowell is in the background. The large building is the barn, the pitched-roof building is the post office, and the other building is the house. Those on the bridge are (left to right): Alberta (Babe) Cleveland, Mrs. Marion Cleveland, Mrs. Ed Johnson, and Marion Cleveland.

People and Places

Prospectors, trappers, and others put up many cabins along the rivers. Some of these were used only seasonally; most are gone now. Many of the sites have been obliterated by road and campground construction.

Pat O'Hara had a cabin on O'Hara Bar about 1895. Earlier, he worked mining claims on the Middlefork.

Jim Boyd built a cabin at the mouth of Boyd Creek in the 1890s that was still there in 1925. He died at the County Poor Farm in 1919.

Dick Gedney trapped in the Gedney Creek drainage and had a cabin at the mouth of the creek. When he failed to return from a trip there, Sumner Rackliff and Bert Cressler went to look for him. They found him dead and buried him near his cabin. The creek was originally called Goat Creek and was renamed on the 1911 map.

Henry Clay Glover was in the Glover Creek vicinity about 1910.

Sumner Rackliff built a cabin and mined at the mouth of Rackliff Creek. For a time, he occupied a cabin below Lowell where the highway turnout is.

Elmer Black had mining claims in the 1920s and 1930s on both sides of the river about two miles below Lowell. In about 1922, he built a cabin across the river from the road, on a graphite claim. In the early 1930s, he occupied another cabin, this one along the highway. The site was known as Skunk Point, and may have been used earlier by the Forest Service.

The cabin beside the highway below Two Shadows Creek was occupied by H.O. Miller about 1920 and by others after him. It was on a mining claim. The creek was named by the Fenn and Trenary families of Kooskia, who had a summer cabin, under permit from the Forest Service, which they called "Two Shadows Lodge."

There were many other cabins.

was liberalized in 1912 to require only three years' residence, and the homesteader could be absent from the land for five months each year.

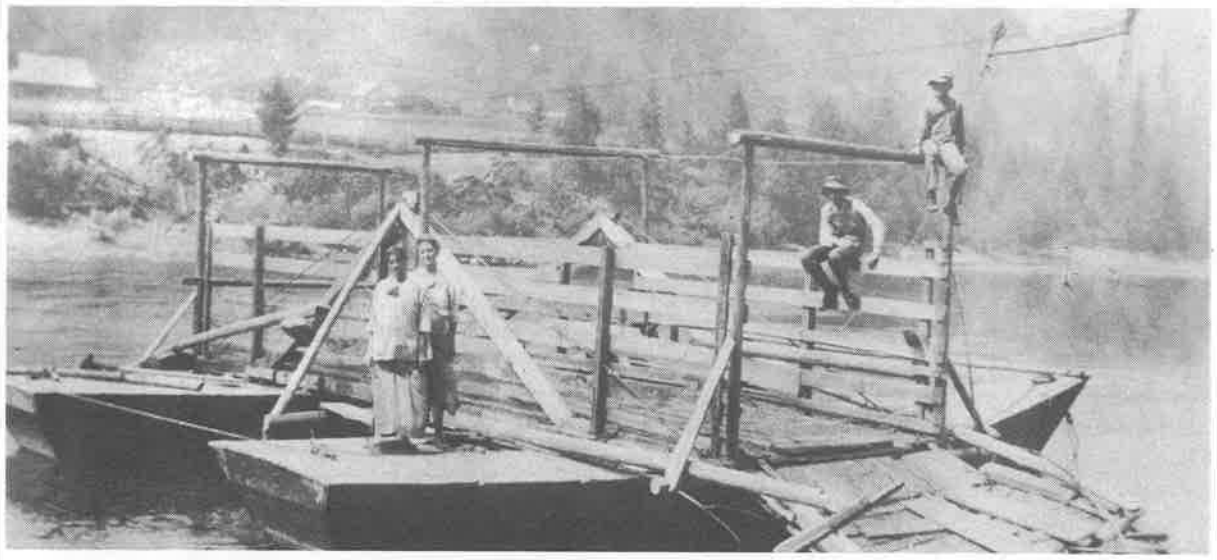
Under Idaho's Statehood Act of 1890, sections 16 and 36 of every township were granted to the state for the use and benefit of public schools. Besides these grants of public school lands, the state was given additional grants of varying acreages for other purposes, such as support of Normal Schools, a penitentiary, and an insane asylum.

When the Forest Reserves were proclaimed, beginning in 1891, lands within their boundaries were put off limits to further homesteading except to those who were already living on valid claims. This limitation on homesteading was highly unpopular throughout the West, and there was a tremendous uproar. Finally, on June 11, 1906, Congress passed legislation that authorized homesteading within the Forest Reserves on lands specified by the Secretary of Agriculture to be chiefly valuable for agriculture.

Overall, the reclassification and survey work required by this Act took the Forest Service years to accomplish, but in the Syringa, Lowell, and lower Selway areas, previous General Land Office classifications and surveys were adopted. The Land Office still granted title to the lands, but the Forest Service made recommendations on all homestead patent applications after 1906.

In 1907 and 1908, all of O'Hara Bar, some of Goddard Bar, the Number One site, the Pete King site, and many others were withdrawn from the public domain for use as Forest Service administrative sites. Although buildings were soon constructed on most of these sites, the main consideration in the withdrawals was the

The Lowell Ferry



MARIE HOVEY

This ferry was built by the Forest Service in 1907 and was in service until 1922, when the first highway bridge across the Lochsa was completed.

Ranger Sumner Rackliff supervised the project and Ranger George Trenary was in charge of carpentry. The lumber was sawed by hand with a whipsaw. Henry Lowell furnished the general design and plenty of advice, and sold the Forest Service an acre of land for one dollar.

The lady on the left it unidentified in this 1918 photograph. The others are (left to right): Maude Parry, Henry Lowell, and Bud Hovey.

A Homestead Dwelling

ERNIE BOHN

This cabin stood across the river and downstream from the mouth of Swiftwater Creek. It was built by one of the several persons who filed on that land before 1918 and failed to "prove up" on it. Ernie Bohn and two other Forest Service employees rented the cabin for several years in the early 1930s, when this photograph was taken.

availability of pasture.

Thus, settlers could secure a deed to land in the area, except that withdrawn for administrative purposes, either by homesteading it under the current laws or, in the case of the school land, by buying it from the state of Idaho. The original 1893 General Land Office survey map of the lower Selway, which appears on the facing page, is overlaid and numbered to show the first owners of these lands as they passed from the public domain.

1. Patented in 1911 by Henry Lowell. Sold immediately to W.E. Parry, but Lowell continued to live there.

2. All of Section 4 was reserved in 1898 for support of a Normal School. Chan Wallace of Nezperce bought Lot 6, the site of Three Rivers Resort, from the state of Idaho in 1912.

3. This was also state land. Dr. J. M. Veberkmoes of Kooskia is listed as owner in a 1939 Idaho County atlas. Apparently the deed was never recorded.

4. This state land was sold to George M. Reed in 1909.

All of the state ownership in Section 4 is now deeded.

5. Patented by Henry Pfranger in 1914.

6. Patented by Alberta Cleveland in 1922.

7. All lands in Section 16 were school lands that came to the state of Idaho with statehood. R.M. Finnell bought this tract in 1917. The rest of the east half of Section 16 is still owned by the state. The west half was not surveyed until 1935. By that time, it was part of the Nez Perce National Forest and never became state land.

8. Patented by Michael Heinrichs in 1924.

9. Patented by Alfred W. Peterson in 1913.

10. Patented by Edward W. Johnson in 1915. In 1937, it was returned to public ownership a part of the Goddard Administrative Site.

11. Withdrawn by the Forest Service in 1908. The site of Fenn Ranger Station.

12. Patented by Harry G. Pillow in 1924.

13. Patented by Charles J. Bock in 1921.

14. Withdrawn by the Forest Service in 1908. The site of O'Hara Ranger Station.

15. Patented by Arthur C. Bagley in 1924.

Lew McNair patented his place at the mouth of Pete King Creek in 1916.

The first surveys at Syringa were made in 1903. Sumner Rackliff patented part of the original homestead in 1907 and the rest of it in 1916. Charles J. Strite patented the upriver end in 1923. Wyman Bullock, Rackliff's brother-in-law, patented the land across the river in 1929, and his son, Sumner Bullock, patented the rest of the available land in Syringa in 1939.

Other people passed into and out of the country during the homesteading period and left no record. Also, some of the first homesteaders gave up before they met the requirements of the law. As an example, Michael Heinrichs was the fourth entryman on the place he patented. So a list of the first landowners is by no means a list of all the inhabitants over these years.

The aim of the Homestead Act was to provide self-supporting farms to all who wanted them. However, nowhere in the West was 160 acres enough to provide agricultural self-sufficiency. No homestead in the Lowell-Syringa-Pete King and lower Selway area was even that large, and parts of almost all of them were too steep ever to be farmed. In most cases, the costs of clearing the land exceeded its agricultural value. The early Forest officers understood this, and probably most of the settlers did too. However, the U.S. Government was very liberal in granting patents. For most of the settlers, owning their own land was worth the price of hanging on for a few years.

Today, most of these homesteads support recreation-based developments of one kind or another. No one tries to make a living farming the land. All of the places have been subdivided at least once and some of them have been subdivided many times. Except for one small parcel at Syringa, none of the land in the area is now owned by descendants of those who struggled to "prove up" on it.

3. The Bitterroot Reserve and the Early Forest Service

Twenty years before the Stuarts settled at Syringa, members of the American Forestry Association and other conservationists of the time were urging the creation of public forest reserves.

Millions of acres of forest land had passed from the public domain after the Civil War. The public land laws, although well-intentioned, were full of loopholes and were not well enforced; they were easy to evade. Much land intended for settlement by homesteaders was acquired both legally and illegally by timber companies. In addition, Congress made generous land grants to the transcontinental railroads, and the railroads enthusiastically entered the real estate business.

Most logging practices at that time were of the "cut and get out" type. Timber companies cut everything they wanted out of one stand and then moved to the next one. All the emphasis was on immediate profit; none was on long-term productivity. There were few trained foresters in the United States, and no forestry schools.

In the eastern and midwestern United States, the results of these land management policies were plain to see; and efforts to promote sound forestry practices slowly succeeded. A U.S. Commissioner of Forestry was named in 1876, and a Division of Forestry was established within the Department of Agriculture in 1881.

Ten years later, Congress authorize the President to set aside public timberlands, and President Benjamin Harrison immediately proclaimed the first "forest reserve." More proclamations followed; before the end of his term, Harrison had reserved 13,000,000 acres. Presidents Grover Cleveland, William McKinley, and Theodore Roosevelt set aside other reserves until Congress ended the President's authority to do so in 1907.

President Cleveland, on the recommendation of a commission formed by the Secretary of the Interior, set aside 21,000,000 acres on February 22, 1897. Among the reserves thus created was the 4,147, 200-acre Bitterroot Forest Reserve in Idaho and Montana, which included all of the Lochsa-Selway country.

At this time, the Division of Forestry had six clerks and five scientific employees. It gave technical advice only; the General Land Office administered the forest reserve, and the U.S. Geological Survey did the surveying and mapping.

No one except a few trappers and prospectors knew much about the new Bitterroot Reserve, so the necessary first step of those who were to administer it was to learn something about it. John B. Leiberg of the U.S. Geological Survey spent the summer of 1898 on the reserve and the next year published the first comprehensive report on it.

The Bock Homestead

KEN SCHORY

A homestead entry made on the open space immediately below O'Hara Bar in 1913 was relinquished in 1915, and that same year Charles Bock took over the place. He had been a Chicago newspaperman, and had come west for his health. Considerable clearing had to be done before a hay crop could be grown.

A Forest Training Session

EMMETT RYNEARSON

Some of the people in this photograph have not been identified, but others worked for the Forest Service for many years. Left to right, the first two are unknown, and the others are Jim Garrison, Burt Cressler, John Barton, Ray Fitting, Ed Thenon, unknown, Fred Mills, Jack Goddard, Cassius Day, George Ring, Sumner Rackliff and John Durant.

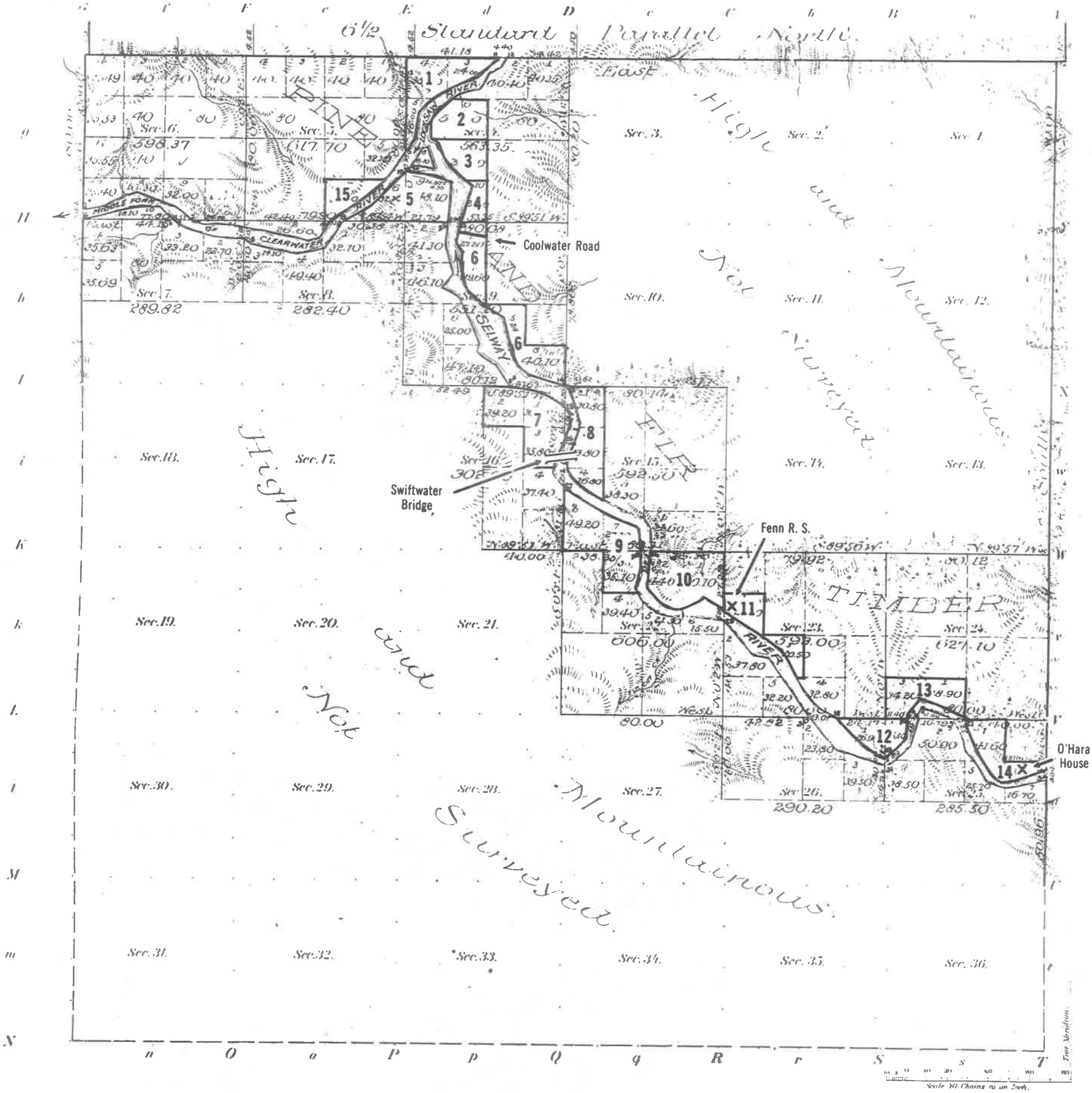
John Barton was forest assistant, and was the first technical forester on the Bitterroot Reserve.

Cassius M. (Cash) Day was supervisor of the Bitterroot Reserve from 1904 to 1907. He was appointed by Major Fenn; the two were old friends. When Fenn returned to Kooskia as supervisor in 1907, Day retired.

Two years after this photograph was taken, George Ring was appointed the first supervisor of the Nez Perce National Forest.

The headquarters building in Kooskia was erected about 1900. In 1909, an addition was constructed. Although the Forest Service moved out of it in 1913, the building still stands near the approach to the old bridge across the South Fork of the Clearwater.

Original Lower Selway Land Survey -- 1893



Area of Water Surface 495.21 acr. - of Public Land 6199.44 a. Total number of Acres 6694.65.

Surveys Designated	By Whom Surveyed	Date of Contract No. 156	Amount of Surveys M.	Ch.	Lks.	When Surveyed	Mean Declination
Township lines	Daniel W. Waite	February 17, 1893	7	00	00	Aug. 27-Sep. 2, 1893	
Subdivisions	"	"	22	78	39	Sep. 21 Oct. 7 - 1893	20° 25' E.
Meanders	"	"	20	53	65	"	
Connections	"	"	0	24	62	Aug. 27-Oct. 7, 1893	
Standard	"	"	0	00	00	Aug. 23-26, 1893	

He found the country challenging. The west slopes of the Bitterroots "branch out into a vast mass of curving, winding, peak-crowned spurs constituting the watersheds of the Clearwater basins," he wrote, and "the primary dividers, with the great number of lateral spurs to which they give rise, form a perfect maze of bewildering ridges. The curvings, windings, ascents and descents are incessant and confusing."

That same summer, 1898, the first attempt was made at administering the Idaho portion of the reserve, which was by far the largest part of it. James Glendenning, superintendent of all forest reserves in north Idaho, sent two men to the field. They were supposed to patrol the entire reserve. What they actually did is not known, but they took along a pick, a shovel, a gold pan, and plenty of whiskey.

Since 1898 was a bad fire year, Leiberg's attention was directed that way. He thought all of the fires he saw burning were man-caused and offered evidence to support this conclusion, although without doubt some of them were caused by lightning. In any event, he saw that a larger force would be needed to patrol the reserve.

The next year, 10 men were put to work as "forest rangers" on the Idaho Division of the Bitterroot Reserve. Many of them were selected on the basis of their political loyalties. One was the son of Governor McConnell; another was the son of Idaho's Chief Justice. Superintendent Glendenning, who appointed them, was a brother-in-law of Senator Shoup. The headquarters were at Grangeville.

One of these first rangers was George Ring, who was appointed on May 8, 1899. His salary was $50 for the first month, $60 a month thereafter; and he was required to furnish his own saddle horse, camp equipment, and food. He was instructed to patrol for fires and to suppress any he discovered. His territory included most of what is now the Clearwater National Forest.

In 1900, the reserve headquarters were moved from Grangeville to Kooskia, which had rail service, and supervision was strengthened. Over the next few years the ranger force was increased. Fire patrols and firefighting were the main objectives, but other projects were also undertaken. George Ring and four men started clearing and improving the Lolo Trail in 1902, and in 1905 Ring supervised initial construction on the Selway Trail. The rangers took over several abandoned cabins and built a few more. They stopped some of the more flagrant violations of the law.

Ranger districts as they are known today did not exist; men were assigned to geographic areas. In 1905, Billy Parry was a ranger south of the Lochsa and Sumner Rackliff was a ranger north of the Lochsa. The work was seasonal; the rangers had to find something else in the winter. Most of them were homesteaders or trappers, and almost all of them did some prospecting, both on and off the job.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Selway Falls Cabin

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This cabin was built in 1907 and was a standard Forest Service design. It was located on a flat below Selway Falls that is now the Fog Mountain Road junction.

Two land withdrawals were made. The first, in 1907, was only 2.85 acres, the actual site of the cabin. The second, in 1908, included the first withdrawal and an additional 38.7 acres extending upriver past the falls and a short distance up Gedney Creek. Also in 1908, 27 acres near the mouth of Meadow Creek were withdrawn. These additional withdrawals were for pasture.

After the Selway road was extended to the falls in 1926, the cabin was dismantled and reconstructed at its present site above Selway Falls. At the same time, a stock shoeing shed and a warehouse were built. The station was used as a point of departure for pack trips to the upper Selway, the Selway Crags country, and Meadow Creek.

Although the original design has been modified several times, principally by enlarging the windows and adding a back porch, the building still serves its original purpose. It is also used as an information center for visitors to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

GEORGE ROBINETT

In 1905, the Forest Service was officially born. A few years before, a forestry division had been established in the Department of the Interior, and the Commissioner of the General Land Office was opposed to continued cooperation with the Department of Agriculture. As a result, the entire forestry technical staff in the Department of the Interior resigned. After much pulling and hauling, the forest reserves were transferred to the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Forestry there was renamed the Forest Service. Gifford Pinchot was named Chief Forester.

Frank Fenn took over the Bitterroot Forest Reserve, by then renamed the Bitterroot National Forest, in 1907. Known to everyone as Major Fenn, after his rank in the Spanish-American War, he had been associated with the supervision of forest reserves in Idaho since 1901. Like all others selected for the higher ranks of public forest management in the Land Office days, he was a political appointee; but unlike some of the others, he was well-educated and experienced in leadership. He was also in thorough agreement with the conservation ideas of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. Although he was not a forester—there were very few at the time—his reputation and character were of great importance in overcoming local opposition to the Forest Service and in hiring a force of loyal and competent people.

The Bitterroot National Forest, as it originally existed, lasted one year. On July 1, 1908, the Nez Perce National Forest was created out of parts of the Bitterroot and Weiser national forests. George Ring was named supervisor, and his office was established at Grangeville. On the same day the Clearwater National Forest was proclaimed, which consisted of the northern part of the Bitterroot National Forest, including the Lochsa-Selway country, and part of the Couer d'Alene National Forest. Major Fenn was the supervisor, and his office remained in Kooskia.

In December 1908, a district office was set up in Missoula, and Forest Supervisors Ring and Fenn no longer had to deal directly with Washington on routine forest business.

When the national forests were taken over by the Department of Agriculture, all of the General Land Office rangers and supervisors were transferred to the Forest Service. Pinchot quickly ended the selection of employees for political reasons and started weeding out the work force. Many of the political appointees resigned or were dismissed, but Ring, Fenn, Rackliff, McPherson, Thenon, and many others who were competent and wanted to stay on were retained.

New rangers were then selected by competitive examination. The first of these in Kooskia was conducted by Major Fenn in 1907. Each candidate had to supply three head of horses and tools to build trails and cabins, and had to demonstrate that he knew how to use the tools and how to pack the animals, using diamond hitches on the packs. There was a compass and pacing exercise and a written examination, which required the candidate to furnish practical solutions to various problems. Those passing the examination were given jobs in the order of their scores. They were appointed at $75 a month, and had to furnish all of their stock, camping equipment, tools, and food.

Tahoe Ranger Station

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Ranger Ray Fitting, who built a cabin on Sixty-Two Ridge in 1908, later said of it, "We constructed a cabin near the spring and glorified it by calling it a ranger station." The same can be said of Tahoe Ranger Station, also built in 1908 in the head of Tinker Creek.

Efforts began about 1910 to find a site for a year-round ranger station near Clear Creek. In 1915, 285 acres were withdrawn near the forest boundary where a small cabin had been built in 1911. In 1917, a better site was found near Crane Hill that was also accessible by wagon roads from Kooskia and Clearwater. Although preliminary work was done, this site was never withdrawn. At about this time the Tahoe District was combined with others.

Tahoe Ranger Station was eventually abandoned. The remains were burned with logging slash in the 1960s.

Pete King Ranger Station—1911

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This log building was constructed in 1908 and 1909 on the flat above Lowell where the Idaho Department of Transportation highway maintenance station is now located.

In 1911 it was a ranger station, but it was later used as a base for crews working in the area. For a few years after the road reached there in 1920, it was again a district headquarters. Additional buildings were erected, and the place became a supply distribution center for the Selway Forest.

The log building was burned in the early 1960s when the Idaho Transportation Department took over the site.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

People and Places

Many tales and anecdotes circulated among the early rangers. One that may or may not be true was about a supervisor on the Bitterroot Reserve a year after it was established, who was also the proprietor of a Grangeville saloon. He would go to the window, look out at the forest, write "viewed the forest today" in his official diary, and go back to tending bar.

◆

Another legend, this one true, was related of Lloyd Fenn, son of Major Fenn, who took the ranger examination in 1910. When confronted with the question of what to do in the event of a crown fire, Lloyd Fenn wrote, "Run like hell and pray for rain." Since about the only action that can be taken with a running crown fire is to get out of its way, all the early rangers enjoyed his way of explaining that fact.

◆

John Leiberg, in his 1899 report on the Bitterroot Reserve, offered many suggestions on its management, including this one: "A system of registration and license of all persons entering the reserve would accomplish far more toward abating the fire evil than a large force of rangers could possibly do." This suggestion was never adopted.

◆

Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, was fired by President Taft in 1910 as a result of differences of opinion between himself and Interior Secretary Richard Ballinger. The early rangers named creeks on the Selway after both of them.

◆

Rock Island on the Selway was withdrawn as an administrative site in 1908, along with Goddard Bar, O'Hara Bar, and the Selway Falls site. Apparently a ranger station or cabin was planned on the island, but nothing was ever built.

◆

One of the early rangers, James Stuart, had surveyed the townsite of Kooskia in 1897. He was part Indian, and had been educated in Indian schools. He had also traveled to Washington, D.C., to represent Nez Perce interests.

While Stuart was a ranger, the Forest Service was made responsible for timber management on the Nez Perce Reservation, and he was transferred to this work.

Kooskia was known as Stuart until 1902. The name was changed at the insistence of the railroad, which had another town named Stuart on its lines.

Stuart Hot Springs on Three Links Creek are named for James Stuart.

◆

Henry Bimerick was a Forest Service employee for a time. While working on the Pete King Trail, he made a cut through a ridge, 6 feet deep and 30 feet long, which everyone called the "Bimerick cut." The creek and meadows were originally known as Little Bear Creek and Bear Meadows; the names were changed to Bimerick on the 1921 map.

◆

Brown's Spring and Brown's Spring Creek near Lookout Butte are named after Ansgar Brown, an early resident of the Clear Creek country. Will Hamby was Brown's nephew and an early Forest Service employee; Hamby Creek is named for him.

◆

Parsons Lake is named for Billy Parsons, a Nez Perce who was a Forest Service packer for many years. Apgar Creek on the Lochsa is also named for a Forest Service employee.

Although the field part of these examinations was discontinued after a few years, many men who had long careers with the Forest Service were selected this way. Starting in 1908 the Forest Service, through the tireless efforts of Pinchot in Washington, began to get increased appropriations to build trails, roads, and other improvements; more men were needed. As one old-timer put it, "Those examinations really were effective. The written test eliminated the illiterates, and the field tests insured that we got experienced hands."

Scheduled rail service was established at Kooskia in 1900, and several railroad companies began looking at the possibility of a route up the Lochsa and over Lolo Pass to Montana. As early as 1899, the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company (ORN), a part of the Union Pacific system, was exploring the Lochsa canyon. In the spring of 1906 the Milwaukee Road completed a preliminary line that had taken all winter to run, but the company decided to build its road over St. Paul Pass and down the St. Joe River instead of over Lolo Pass and down the Lochsa.

The ORN renewed its survey of the lower Clearwater in the fall of 1906 and by the spring of 1907 was again on the Lochsa. In early 1908, the Northern Pacific (NP) also decided to survey a route up the Lochsa. The ORN ran their survey up the north side of the river and the NP, after surveying a tunnel through Mt. Stuart at Kooskia, stayed on the south side of both the Middlefork and the Lochsa. The ORN also went up the Selway at least as far as Pinchot Creek, but the NP did not try a Selway route.

Both railroads had to furnish provisions for large survey crews. The NP, and the Milwaukee before them, tried boats, both floating them downstream and dragging them upstream by manpower. This failed. The NP then switched to pack stock, which the ORN had been using from the start. The delivery of supplies was contracted, and most of the packers and pack stock available in the region were hired. Billy Parry had about 75 head of stock and about 10 packers working for him. He got into the business early, in 1906.

Pete King Ranger Station—1916

KEN SCHORY

By 1916, front and back porches had been built on the log house, and the American flag was still prominently displayed. Sunday was washday for the crew. Water was heated on the stove and washboards were used: these were the Forest Service laundry facilities at that time.

KEN SCHORY

There were no trails along the Lochsa at all, and the Selway Trail ended at the falls. The Lolo Trail was used, but any route possible was taken to get pack stock from it to the river. Since the Forest Service had neither the money nor the manpower to build trails for the surveyors, the railroads hired their own trail crews and built barely passable trails and bridges along the Lochsa and up the Selway as far as Pinchot Creek.

A race developed between the railroads to complete a survey. On the Lochsa, the NP began using trails built by the ORN. The ORN was unhappy about this and hired a man to delay the NP pack strings. When the ORN built a bridge across Canyon Creek, their man camped on it and would not let the NP string across. The NP then built their own bridge. When it was finished, the ORN man moved to Deadman Creek and did the same thing, and the NP built another bridge there.

Other tactics were used. Each side pulled the other's survey stakes, turned the other's stock loose, and set the other's boats adrift. In one bad place, the ORN built a trail by drilling horizontally into rock, then leaving the steel in the holes and laying logs across it as the trail. They let the NP packstrings across, then destroyed the trail.

Major Fenn became disgusted with all of this, probably because he feared someone would be killed and a full-scale war would break out. He sent in some of his rangers, and they arrested one of the men the ORN had hired to delay the NP crews. This action quieted the rivalry.

In the end, of course, no railroad was built. Although they had spent thousands of dollars on surveys, the two companies declared a truce and agreed that neither would build a line on the Lochsa. The ORN crews pulled out so fast Billy Parry was still on the road buying supplies when he found out they were gone.

By 1910, forest crews had completed a substantial number of improvements. The wagon road from Kooskia had been extended to Middlefork Ranger Station (Number One). Cabins had been built at Pete King, O'Hara, Selway Falls, Teepee Creek, Tahoe, and other places. A ferry was built in 1907 to cross the Lochsa at Lowell, and the first river trail to Moose Creek was finished in 1909. A trail up Rye Patch ridge connected the Lochsa with the Lolo Trail. Rangers at Selway Falls and Cedars cabin at the head of Canyon Creek could talk to the supervisor in Kooskia on the telephone.

Fire activity was light during the years this work was done, but that changed in 1910. Although the winter was normal and rainfall in May was above normal, June and July were hot and dry. By late July, numerous large fires were burning that the Forest Service didn't have manpower to control.

These fires became larger, and on the evening of August 20 gale-force winds began. All of the fires blew up, and fighting them was impossible. The winds continued day and night until the afternoon of August 22. Then temperatures cooled and a little rain fell to quiet the fires. Heavy rains and snow on August 27 ended the fire season.

O'Hara Ranger Station—1912

CARL WEHOLT

This building replaced one built in 1908 that burned in the fall of 1910. The fire was caused by a defective flue, and the loss was total. Reconstruction began in the spring of 1911 and was finished in the summer of 1912; the building was nearing completion when this photograph was taken. The gardeners are Ranger Jim Agnew's wife and daughter.

O'Hara was Selway District headquarter until 1940, when the move to Fenn Ranger Station was completed. At that time, there were 10 buildings on the site. Now there are four—the dwelling, finished in 1912; a log cellar, built in 1930; a garage, one of the original set of buildings put up in 1908; and a pole-shake woodshed built in 1978.

Frank A. Fenn

More than any other individual, Frank Fenn was responsible for establishing the Forest Service in the Clearwater country. He was admired and respected by his employees and by the community at large; and he understood and agreed with the goals and objectives of the Forest Service as put forth by Pinchot, who called him "one of the very best forest officers the West has produced."

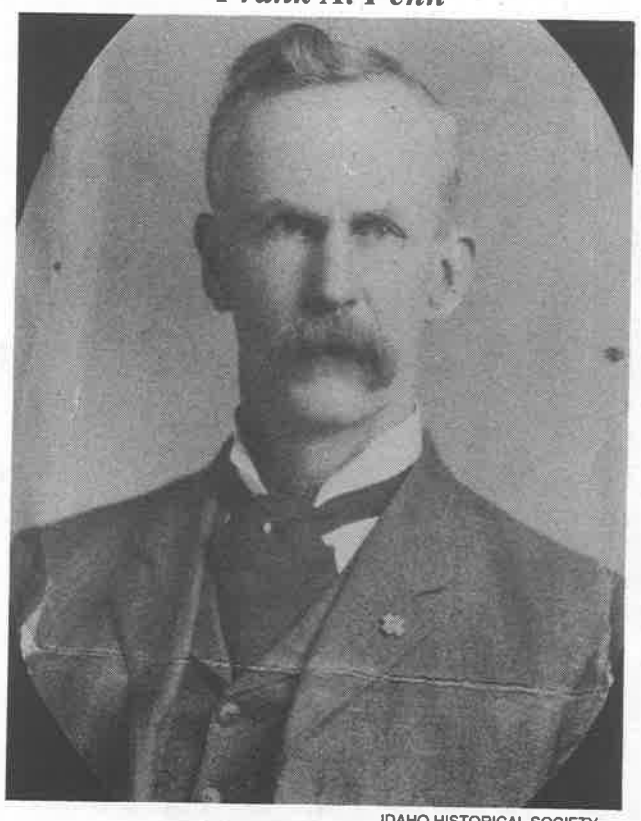
The Fenns were Idaho County pioneers. In 1862, the year after rich gold strikes were made at Florence and the year before Idaho Territory was created, the family moved from California. Frank Fenn was then nine years old. His father, Stephen S. Fenn, mined and ran a store at Florence. The elder Fenn later represented Idaho County in the territorial legislature for five sessions and represented Idaho Territory in Congress from 1874 to 1878.

Frank Fenn was one of seven who attended the first public school in Idaho. He continued his education at Lewiston and Walla Walla, Washington, and in 1869 was appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis. He remained there until the fall of 1872, then spent three years voyaging to foreign ports.

Upon his return to Idaho County, Fenn taught school and operated a ranch. When war broke out with the Nez Perce, he was appointed a first lieutenant in the Idaho Militia and participated in several battles in Whitebird Canyon and on Camas Prairie.

In December 1877, Fenn married Florence Holbrook, one of his students. In 1886, he was elected to represent Idaho County in the territorial legislature. He was elected again in 1890 to the first state legislature, where he served as Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In the spring of 1891, he was appointed chief clerk of the State land board and the family, which now included four children, moved to Boise. He was with the Land Board until 1896, when he was again elected to the state legislature, this time from Ada county. He began to read law, and was admitted to the Idaho Bar in 1897.



IDAHO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

When the Spanish-American War began in 1898, Fenn volunteered for service and was appointed to the rank of captain. He went with his command to the Philippine Islands, where he took part in several engagements. He was mustered out of the army in September 1899, with the rank of major.

Returning to Boise, he resumed his law practice and his political activities. In 1900, he was chosen chairman of the Republican State Central Committee. In June 1901, Fenn was appointed superintendent of all forest reserves in Idaho, and the family moved to Kooskia. He never re-entered politics.

In 1904, the forest reserves were reorganized. Superintendents became inspectors, and those in charge of individual reserves became supervisors. Fenn moved back to Boise, where he was inspector for the Boise and Payette Forest Reserves and settled a number of grazing controversies. The family returned to Kooskia in late 1907, and in 1908, Fenn became the first supervisor of the Clearwater National Forest. When the Selway National Forest was split away from the Clearwater in 1911, he remained in Kooskia as supervisor of the Selway.

Fenn was Selway forest supervisor until the end of 1914, when he was named Chief of Lands in the District (Regional) Office at Missoula. He retired in 1920 and moved back to Kooskia, where he practiced law and ran a newspaper with his son Lloyd until his death in 1927.

Fenn Ranger Station is named for Frank Fenn, as are Major Fenn Picnic Area on the Lochsa and Fenn Mountain, the highest peak in the Selway Crags. Florence Lake is named after Mrs. Fenn. Lloyd Lake is named after his son Lloyd, who was briefly a ranger but followed his father as lawyer, politician, newspaper publisher, and educator. Rhoda Creek is named after Fenn's oldest daughter, who married W.B. Willey, a longtime forest supervisor in Idaho and Montana. Another son, Homer, was also an early ranger, and was later Chief of Grazing out of Ogden, Utah. He resigned from the Forest Service to become a rancher.

Huge areas were blackened all over northern Idaho and there were at least 86 fatalities. No loss of life was recorded in the Lochsa-Selway country, but there were some narrow escapes; firefighters were overtaken and had to submerge themselves in Moose Creek until the flames subsided. One fire that started in what is still known as Fire Creek burned up the south side of the Lochsa to Boulder Creek and Fish Lake. This fire also crossed Coolwater Ridge and burned from Slide Creek to Stuart Hot Springs on the Selway. Other large fires burned from Sixty-Two Ridge east and north of Moose Creek, and there were many smaller ones that would be considered large in a normal year.

The 1910 fires were a sobering experience for the five-year-old Forest Service. Firefighters since the creation of the Bitterroot Reserve had not had to deal with critical fire conditions, and when they came the organization was overwhelmed. Fire planning obviously had to be totally overhauled.

This was undertaken immediately. One of the first conclusions reached was that some of the forests were too large for effective administration. One of these forests was the Clearwater, and in July 1911, all of the Lochsa-Selway country was split off from it and became the Selway National Forest. Charles Fisher was sent to Orofino to supervise the Clearwater Forest, and Major Fenn remained in Kooskia as supervisor of the Selway.

4. The Selway National Forest

It took in all of the Lochsa drainage and almost all of the Selway, about 1.8 million acres. No one knew how many for sure; no accurate maps existed. One mile of wagon road had been built within its boundaries, and most of the few trails were barely passable. A journey from the Supervisor's Office to the most remote ranger station took at least six days. Messengers furnished the only communication with some stations on the Selway National Forest in 1911.

The Forest Service learned from the 1910 disaster. Fire detection and suppression had to be improved, which meant that better transportation and communication had to be developed. C.H. Shattuck, a professor of forestry at the University of Idaho who toured the Forest in 1910, offered a typical example of what had happened. A fire started on the Lochsa and:

"By the time a ranger located this fire, it had assumed such proportions as to require a fighting force of at least 20 men for several days. At this time, about 65 men were at Packer Meadows, 30 miles away...these should have reached the fire...Two serious difficulties rendered this impossible. In the first place, there was no telephone. In the second, there was practically no trail from Powell down the Lochsa..."

O'Hara Ranger Station—1916

KEN SCHORY

By 1916 the site had been landscaped and the interior had been furnished. Jim Agnew was still the ranger, and Mrs. Agnew, along with all other rangers' wives of that era who lived in government quarters, served without pay as cook and telephone operator.

The exterior appearance of the building has not changed, although interior alterations have been made over the years. Today, the O'Hara Ranger Station is on the National Register of Historic Places.

KEN SCHORY

The Heliograph

KEN SCHORY

When the Forest Service began stationing men on mountaintops, there were few telephone lines. The only means of communication for some lookouts was the heliograph.

As the name suggests, this instrument utilized the sun. Therefore, it could not be used at night or when the sky was cloudy. It had to be adjusted frequently to compensate for the movement of the sun, and a complicated code had to be memorized.

However, when everything worked communication was possible up to 80 miles and the answering flashes were almost blinding in intensity.

The mirror used for flashing the signals had a small hole in the center. The operator looked through this hole over a sight and locked the assembly directly on the receiving station. This mirror and sight are on the rear tripod in the photograph.

The front tripod holds the shutter. After the receiving station had been locked in, the mirror was adjusted to focus the sunlight on the shutter. This adjustment had to be watched constantly and kept perfect. If the sun was shining from anywhere except directly in front of the instrument, an auxiliary mirror had to be used to direct sunlight onto the main mirror, and this also required frequent adjustment.

The heliograph program was not very successful. Few if any of the lookout people had any experience sending or receiving code, and they found it difficult to concentrate simultaneously on the code and the need to keep the instrument adjusted.

The heliographs were abandoned as soon as telephone lines were built to the lookouts. However, as late as 1919 they were used between Fish Butte, which had no telephone, and Coolwater, which did. This photograph was taken at Coolwater in 1916.

Middlefork (Number One) Ranger Station

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This station was located where the Smith Creek Road now leaves U.S. Highway 12, about a mile below Syringa and about a mile inside the National Forest boundary.

A previous cabin at this location was called "Cabin Number One" by early forest reserve employees, and forever after the station was called "Number One" by everyone, although after 1909 it was officially the Middlefork Ranger Station.

Construction of the cabin shown was started in the fall of 1904. The logs were cut across the river, floated downstream, and skidded to the site with a team of horses.

From about 1910, when the road reached there, until 1920, when it was extended to Pete King, Number One was the supply distribution center for the Selway Forest. Between 1910 (top two photographs) and 1917 (bottom) the main cabin was modified and more buildings were put up.

A new house for the ranger was built in 1928-1929; this was the last building erected. It is also the only survivor. Today it is a private residence on the hill across the river from Lowell.

U.S. Highway 12 now covers most of the Number One site.

CARL WEHOLT

People and Places

In 1918 and 1919, Hollywood invaded the Selway country to film a movie called "Told in the Hills," starring Monte Blue. Part of the movie was filmed on Coolwater Ridge, where some cabins were built. Another part was filmed near Kamiah, where the Nez Perce set up a teepee village. When the movie company came to Goddard Bar and the Johnson homestead, Dee Johnson was shocked at their behavior and wouldn't allow her children to have anything to do with them.

◆

Coolwater Ridge was originally called Coldwater Ridge. The name was changed at the insistence of Ranger Jim Agnew's wife.

◆

George Ring, the first supervisor of the Nez Perce National Forest, hated office work. He tried to resign several times and each time was coaxed into staying on. Once he actually did quit, but the Forest Service raised his pay and brought him back. Finally, in 1917, he was demoted to deputy supervisor and assigned to the field work he wanted. He retired in 1931 after 30 years' service.

◆

Nineteen Mile Creek, 20 Mile Creek, 23 Mile Creek, and 25 Mile Bar on the Selway are all named for trail distances from Number One Ranger Station.

◆

SOB Creek on the Selway was named before 1928. Anyone who has ever been in the bottom of it can testify that the name is appropriate.

◆

Rye Patch Cabin was located about four miles up the ridge between Pete King Creek and Rye Patch Creek on what was then the main trail from Lowell to the Lochsa-North Fork divide. It was built before 1905, probably by rangers. A pasture (rye patch) was fenced to hold stock. Gradually the place fell into disuse, and by about 1920 it had been abandoned. All that now remains is the name of the creek.

◆

A human skeleton was found on Deadman Creek about 1907. It was never identified.

◆

The river bar above Selway Falls and across from the mouth of Meadow Creek was named "Racetrack" by Ralph Hovey, Tony Locke, and Tom Lindner, packers for Billy Parry during the railroad surveys, who raced their horses there for fun in 1908.

◆

Renshaw Creek was named before 1911, probably for Harvey Renshaw, who worked out of the Selway Falls Station in 1910.

When this fire was finally reported, 12 men were sent to build a trail to it, but by the time supplies could be sent in, the fire had blown up and the crew could do nothing to stop it.

While the Forest Service's national leadership hammered away at Congress for more money to build trails and telephone lines, Major Fenn organized the new Forest into nine districts. Boundaries of these districts were imprecise; most "ranger stations" were log cabins where tools were stored and men were posted during the fire season. Backcountry stations were not occupied during the winter. In addition to Number One, Pete King and O'Hara, stations were located at Tahoe, Bear Creek, Three Forks (of Moose Creek), Powell, Fish Lake, and Elk Summit.

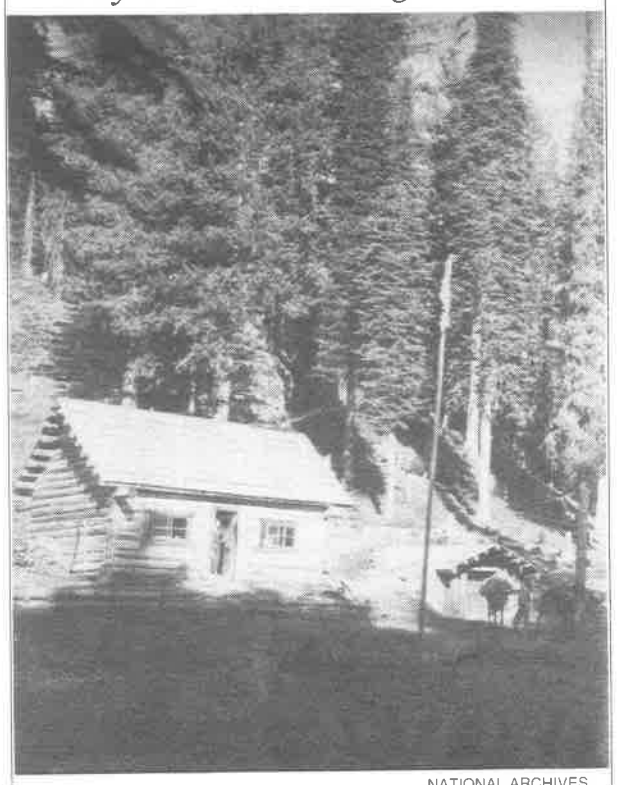
Some of the men who worked out of these stations were sent to mountaintops, where they more or less remained for the season, and others rode the ridgetops; all looked for fires and were prepared to fight them. No lookout buildings yet existed; tent camps were used. If a fire got out of hand, someone had to call for help on the nearest telephone, which was often many miles away.

These men were expected to remain in the backcountry throughout the fire season, and they had to be supplied. The only way this could be done was to pack the supplies to the ranger stations on horses and mules. Commercial pack outfits which before had packed supplies to mining camps and to the railroad surveyors did part of this, but the Forest Service also began buying stock and hiring packers.

Techniques of moving cargo on animals changed dramatically over a very few years. The early rangers and packers all used the "sawbuck" saddle, which was difficult to load and seldom fit the animals properly. A different kind of packsaddle was developed by O.P. Robinett of Kooskia that did away with these problems, and it was adopted immediately by almost everyone.

The earlier practice required two men to a pack string. The head packer rode ahead leading a bell mare. All of the pack animals were loose, and the job of the rear packer was to keep them moving. This was hard to do; some of the animals always wanted to stop and graze. Billy Parry furnished his rear packers with air rifles to encourage the laggards, and this was very effective. But the new packsaddle could be loaded by one man, and soon pack animals were being tied together and led by one packer.

Canyon Meadows Ranger Station



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This cabin was built in 1916 at the head of Canyon Creek. Although it was on the same ranger district as Number One and Pete King Ranger Stations, it was used as the district headquarters for two years. After a few more years as a smokechaser station it was abandoned.

Although cedar logs had been driven down the Selway as early as 1890, the first advertised timber sales in the Lochsa-Selway country, on Smith Creek and O'Hara Creek, were sold in 1913. The Smith Creek Sale was for 5,000 cedar poles, and prospective buyers could bid on all or any part of the proposal. The O'Hara Sale offered 1,000 live cedar poles.

In 1914, the Kerr Pole Company bought 33,000 cedar poles and other cedar products. The sale area extended seven miles up the Lochsa from Lowell, and all of the poles were within a half mile of the river. The advertised minimum bids were 50 cents for a 45-foot pole up to $1.20 for an 80-foot pole, and 50 cents a cord for shingle bolts. Since there were no roads, everything from this sale had to be floated down the river to Kooskia. The company set up a camp near the mouth of what is still known as Kerr Creek and spent at least five years there.

Cedar pole sales were made regularly after 1914, but there wasn't much demand for anything else. By 1923, the Selway Forest had a full-time man administering these sales in the Smith Creek vicinity. Billy Parry was a foreman on some of the later pole drives.

By 1914, the difficulties of managing the Selway Forest from Kooskia were obvious: the eastern part of the forest was much more accessible from the Montana side. During the winter of 1914-1915, the forest was reorganized. Although the official forest boundaries were not changed, the Lolo National Forest took over the Powell District and the Bitterroot National Forest took over the Elk Summit District, which also went to the Lolo in a 1922 reorganization.

The remaining districts were reshaped. Both Pete King and Number One Ranger Stations ended up on the same district, and the headquarters were established at Number One. The Tahoe station had already been moved to Anderson Butte.

Founders of the Selway National Forest—1911

This photograph was taken at a ranger meeting at Number One cabin about three months before the Selway National Forest was established. Eight of the nine original Selway Forest rangers and the forest supervisor appear in it.

Standing on the porch (left to right) are Ed Thenon, Lou Fitting, Sumner Rackliff, W.B. Willey, Joe McGhee, F.A. Silcox, and Jim Agnew. Standing on the steps and path (left to right) are Shelton I. (Rene) McPherson, John Durant, Ashley Roche, Adolph Weholt, Frank Tompkins and Jim Garrison. Seated (left to right) are Frank Rogers, Roy Monroe, Supervisor Fenn, and Frank Smith.

Thenon came to work for the Forest Service in 1906, and was deputy supervisor by 1910. He resigned in 1912 to build the Selway Hotel in Kooskia.

Lou Fitting began during the Land Office days. He built the first cabin at Fish Lake and was ranger at Three Forks (of Moose Creek) when this picture was taken. Ray Fitting, a nephew, was stationed at Fish Lake in 1911, but is not in this photograph.

Sumner Rackliff was ranger at Bear Creek in 1911.

W.B. Willey was Major Fenn's son-in-law. He was later supervisor of several Idaho and Montana forests, including the Clearwater.

Joseph McGhee, from the Weippe area, was ranger at Number One in 1911. He operated the first year-round station there, but resigned a few years later.

F.A. Silcox was the District (Regional) Forester in 1911. In 1933, he was named Chief of the Forest Service.

James D. Agnew, Jr., of Boise was the first year-round ranger at O'Hara in 1910 and continued there until 1918. His family spent the winters in Kooskia.

Rene McPherson began in 1904 and, among other projects, supervised construction of the South Fork Trail from Harpster to John's Creek. He was one of the rangers on the Nez Perce National Forest when it was created, but transferred to the Clearwater in 1910. He had a homestead on Clear Creek and was ranger at Tahoe in 1911.

John Durant started about 1906. He was ranger at Musselshell in 1911. That part of the country stayed with the Clearwater when the Selway was created and so did Durant.

Ashley Roche had a long Forest Service career, most of it on forests north of the Clearwater.

Adolph Weholt, who began work in 1907 and was in charge of the Selway Falls-Moose Creek trail job in 1909, was ranger at Elk Summit in 1911.

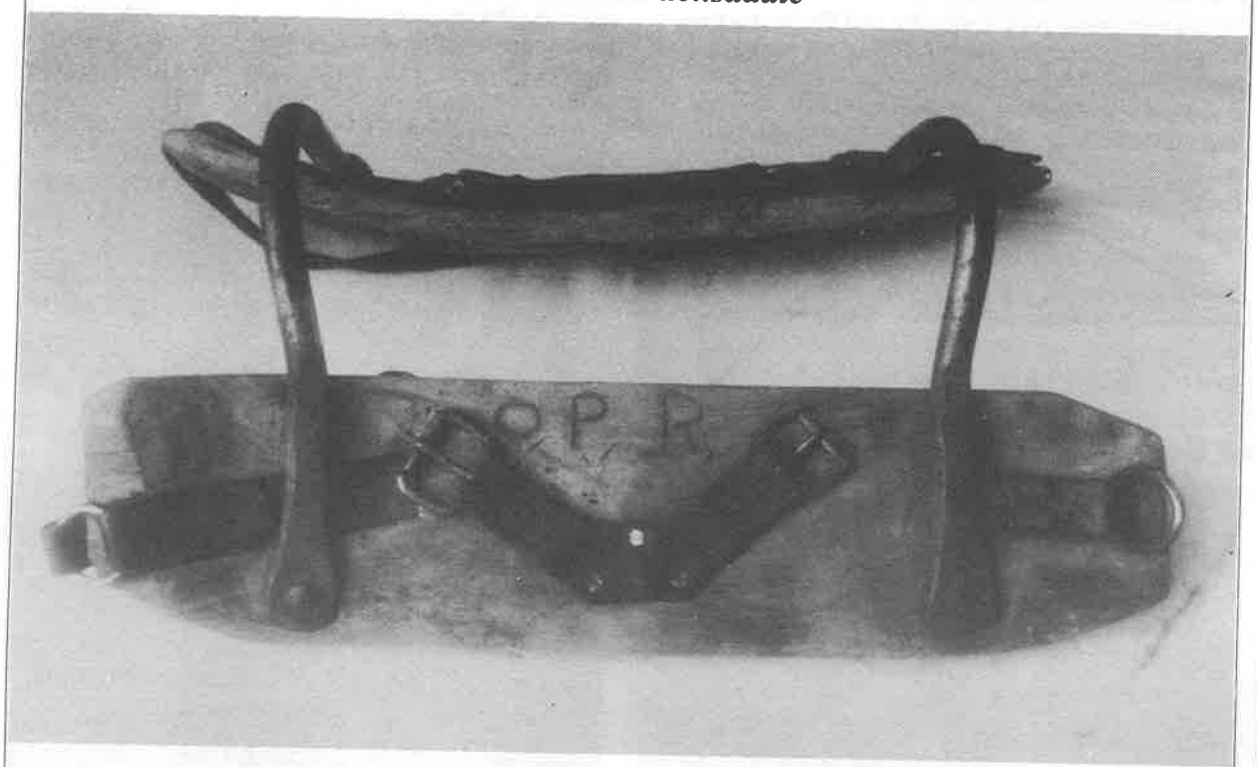
Jim Garrison resigned a few months after this photograph was taken.

Frank Rogers was ranger at Pete King in 1911.

Roy Monroe was appointed in 1910. After the forests were divided, he stayed with the Clearwater as ranger in the Bald Mountain area, but resigned in 1913.

Frank Smith, a native of Ohio, was ranger at Powell in 1911.

The O.P.R. Packsaddle



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

In the earliest days, there were no roads anywhere. All freight had to be moved on the backs of men or animals, and as mining camps boomed overnight there was plenty of it to move. The railroad surveys created additional demands, and large commercial pack outfits grew up to meet them.

Packsaddles in use at the time were not equal to this kind of heavy work; they could not be made to fit the animals properly. Packers began experimenting with ways to move more tonnage without galling the backs of the animals.

Oliver Prez Robinett of Kooskia was one of these packers and was also a skilled blacksmith. In 1906, he began building and using a packsaddle with forks of 3/4-inch round steel, which could be heated and bent to fit the saddle to an individual animal. Robinett first used pine for the bars, but splitting was a problem, so he switched to green cottonwood.

The advantages of this packsaddle were obvious, and Robinett began making them for other packers and the Forest Service. Bert and John Decker, who operated several large pack strings, helped in the development of the "halfbreed," not shown in the photograph, which is a double canvas stuffed with padding that fits over the saddle tree and protects the animal from heavy or awkward loads. The best padding material proved to be dried beargrass.

The Deckers also made an agreement with Robinett to market the saddle, and it was soon known as the Decker Pack Saddle. Robinett, a good-natured, easy-going, and generous man, did not object to this.

From 1914 to 1919, Robinett was packmaster at Number One Ranger Station. He broke new mules, shod them, and fitted them with saddles before turning them over to other packers. In 1919, he moved his base of operations to Pete King Ranger Station, where he worked as a blacksmith in the summers and hauled freight in the winters. He built saddles and the first "Pulaski" tools used on the Selway forest. Robinett left the Forest Service in 1927 and made packsaddles for a living. Before his death in 1946, he had turned out some 12,500 of them.

During most of this time, the Robinett family lived at various places along the Middlefork. During the years at Pete King, the family's summer home was a tent camp near the station. The photograph below, with O.P. Robinett on the left and his son Mel on the right of a shipment of trees, was taken when they lived at the lower end of the "Ought Seven."

Although some preliminary work was done toward obtaining a patent on the saddle, it was not followed up. No patent was ever granted. Others also made the saddles, although Robinett was the acknowledged master at fitting them to the animals. Each Robinett tree had "OPR" branded on the bars, and some of these are still being used.

"Oll" Robinett made his trees by hand. Although the bars are now turned on automatic lathes and manganese instead of mild steel rod is used in the forks, the saddles are still being made to the original design.

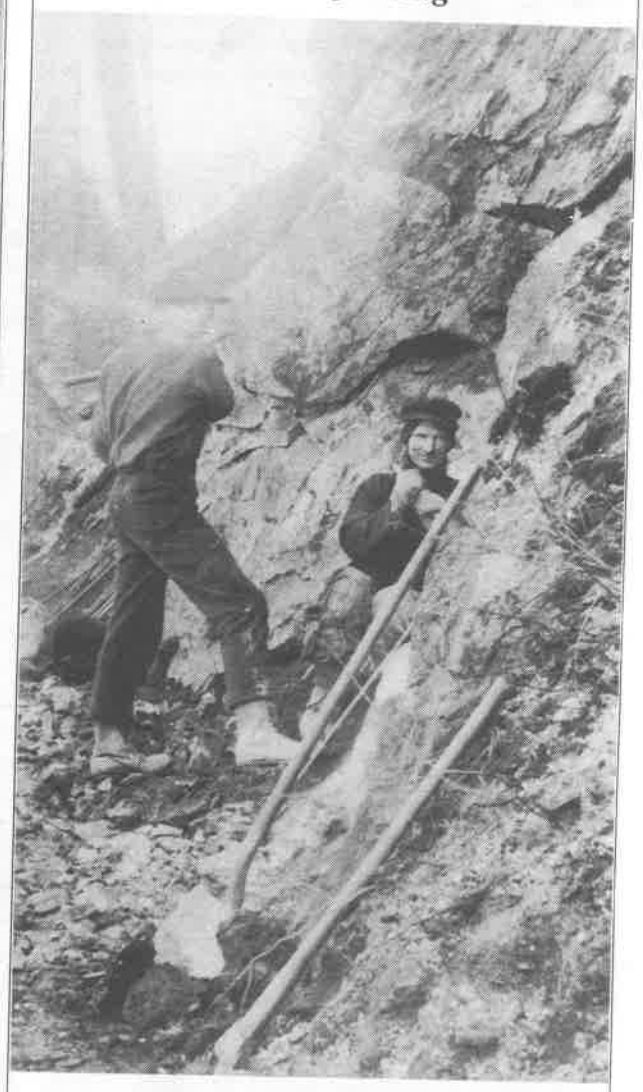
EMMETT RYNEARSON

These changes left the forest with six districts administered from the Supervisor's Office in Kooskia.

At the end of 1914, Major Fenn was transferred to Missoula and was succeeded as supervisor by Charles F. Howell, his deputy. Practically the whole town of Kooskia turned out for a farewell reception organized by local civic organizations, which included skits, dancing, games, and an informal banquet. The evening concluded with everyone joining in singing patriotic songs.

The years 1911 to 1918 were not explosive fire years, and as much cabin, telephone line, and trail construction was done as appropriations allowed. The old Indian trails were improved by rerouting and re-grading. A trail from Number One to Selway Falls via Tahoe Ranger Station, Lookout Butte, and Iron Mountain was completed; and a trail was built up the ridge between Cupboard and Power creeks to Fog Mountain.

Double Jacking



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Early trails were built almost entirely by hand, although horse-drawn plows and graders came along later. Rock outcrops and bluffs were avoided if possible; all of the first trails had precipitous climbs and descents to get around these places. The objective was to get stock over the trails, nothing more.

As the construction program progressed, trails came to be better designed. Locators tried to hold steady grades, and the construction crews could no longer go around bluffs and outcrops. They blasted through them.

Holes had to be drilled in the rock to hold the explosives. Since no mechanical aid was then available for this purpose, it was done by hand by two- and three-man teams. One man, or two men taking turns, would hit a drill steel with an 8-pound sledge (double jack) and the other would hold the steel and turn it 90 degrees after each hit. It was not an easy job; drilling holes this way was not fast. It could also be hazardous if the man swinging the double jack didn't hit the steel squarely every time.

This photograph was taken on the Meadow Creek Trail. Ivan Shriner has the double jack, and Charlie Johnson is holding the steel.

The first telephone line from Selway Falls to Moose Creek was built in 1912. In 1913, a spur was constructed from this line to Sixty-Two Cabin and, at about this time, a line was run to Coolwater. By 1914, the telephone line on the Lochsa side had been extended to Castle Butte. Most lookouts were still tent camps, but by 1916 frame buildings were in place on Coolwater and Castle Butte. By this time, the Forest Service furnished food, equipment, and stock for employees.

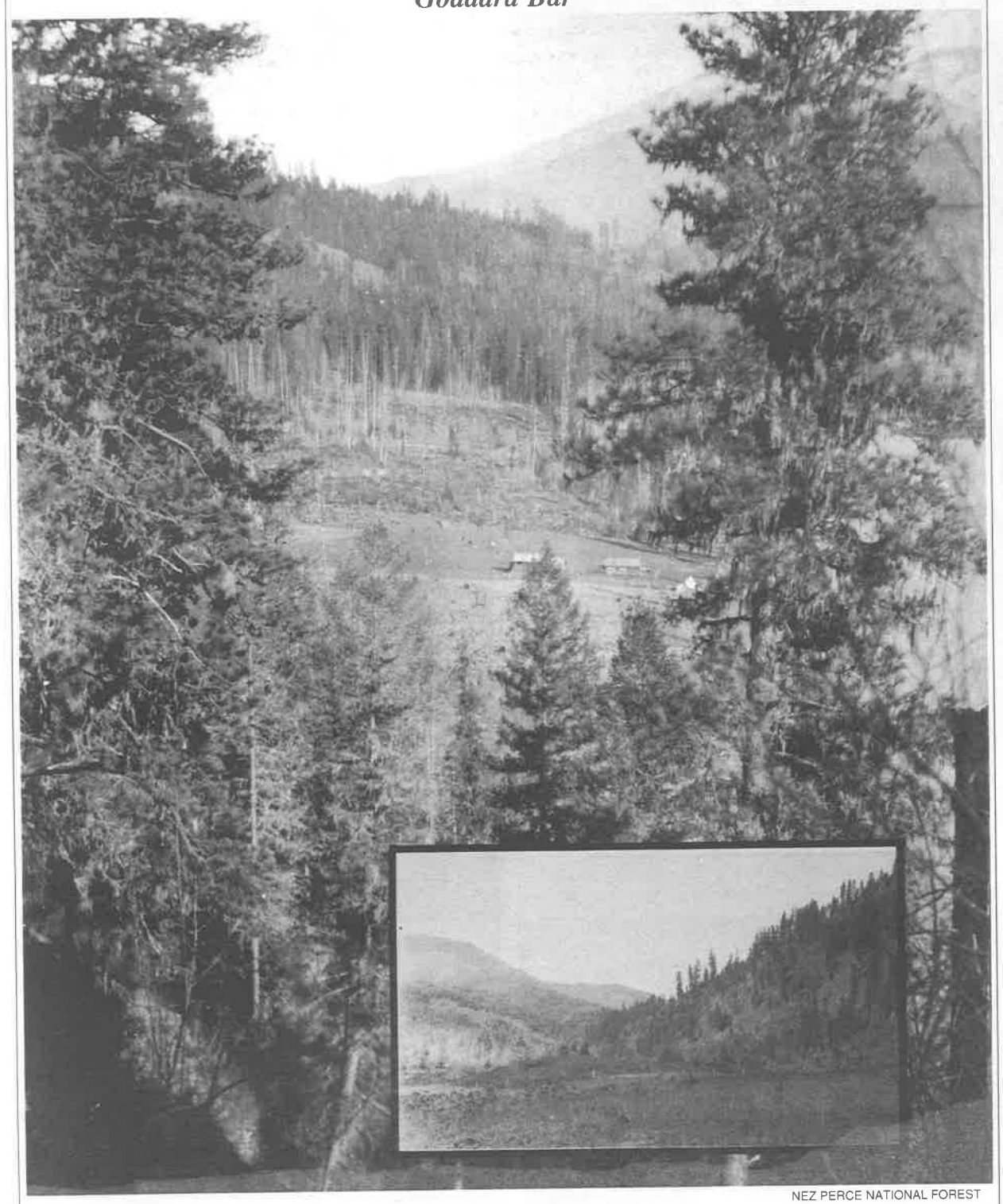
In 1919, as in 1910, all hands had to abandon other projects to fight fire. The winter had been warm with little snow, which was gone by mid-May. June was dry, and by July the brush was brown and dust boiled up on the trails. Then the lightning storms began. When the rains finally came at the end of August, the upper end of Meadow Creek, the head of O'Hara Creek, Fish Creek, and Split Creek were burned out. The Nez Perce and Clearwater forests were harder hit, and the destruction would have been even worse had there not been a lack of fuel in the areas burned in 1910.

For the second time in ten years, forest crews had to watch helplessly as winds, this time on August 19, pushed fires beyond control. The best that firefighters could do was to try to keep the flames out of unburned drainages, and sometimes that didn't work either.

Forest Supervisor Howell resigned in September 1919 to go into farming and stockraising. He had planned to leave earlier but stayed through the fire emergency. He was replaced by Frank Jefferson, deputy supervisor of the Nez Perce Forest.

Since 1910, the Forest Service had depended heavily on the Spokane labor market for emergency fireline workers after local resources were exhausted. Many of these firefighters came straight from skid road; few of them had coats or adequate shoes and most of them were physically exhausted by the time they had hiked to a fire. In 1919, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) sympathizers caused problems on firelines and in fire camps by making impossible demands or by refusing to work. Although many Forest Service people agreed with the general IWW objective of improving working conditions in the mines and logging camps, none of them welcomed boycotts or rabble-rousing while large fires were yet to be contained.

Goddard Bar



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This is the site of Fenn Ranger Station as it was about 25 years before the station was built. The buildings shown had been abandoned by others when the Bitterroot Forest Reserve took them over in 1902. The inset photograph shows the actual location of the station.

Goddard Bar almost passed into private ownership. In 1924, the Forest Service concluded that there was no need to retain an administrative site there and proposed to exchange 35 acres for lands within the Clearwater National Forest owned by the Clearwater Timber Company. The company would in turn sell the 35 acres to the owner of the lower end of Goddard Bar, which was then private property.

Terms were set by early 1927; negotiations were all but complete. Then the Forest Service learned that the Federal Power Commission, under authority of the Federal Water Power Act of 1920, had recently classified most of Goddard Bar as a potential hydroelectric power site. Disposal of lands so classified was prohibited by the act, so the deal was off.

Construction of Fenn Ranger Station began nine years later, and a year after that the Forest Service acquired the deeded property on Goddard Bar by trading timber for it.

Meadow Creek Ranger Station

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

In 1924, a trail was completed from Selway Falls to a small bar 16 1/2 miles up Meadow Creek, where a new ranger station (top) had been built and district headquarters moved to it from Anderson Butte.

The toolhouse (center) was built in 1925 and the bunkhouse (bottom) in 1932. The bunkhouse was built using the "Swede" scribe, which became standard for all log buildings in 1929. Through its use, logs could be fitted together tightly enough to eliminate the need for a lot of chinking.

Meadow Creek Station was a district headquarters for less than 10 years, and the same ranger worked out of it nearly all that time. It has been used as a backcountry work center since 1932. After narrowly escaping the torch in the 1960s, it has since been completely restored.

The First Road on the Selway

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Not long after the Forest Service began using permanent administrative sites on the Selway, wagons were disassembled at the end of the road on the Middlefork, packed in, and reassembled. A rock bluff along the river about midway between Goddard Bar and O'Hara Bar prevented use of the wagons between the two places until a primitive road was blasted out of it about 1911. As can be seen, the road wasn't any wider than necessary.

So once again changes were made in the fire control organization. The practice of hiring only a few local men and depending primarily on Spokane labor for firefighting was abolished. Instead, on the Selway Forest, the lookout and smokechaser forces were increased by half, and organized crews of eight to twelve men were placed on each ranger district. These new men were almost all local and were hired by the month during the summer and fall. Although they worked at many jobs, firefighting always took precedence. After 1920, dependence on outside labor for firefighting was much reduced.

With this additional manpower and increased appropriations, construction of trails and lookouts accelerated. A trail up O'Hara Creek to Iron Mountain was built in 1920-1922. In 1923, a cable suspension pack bridge was finished across the Selway River above the falls. The year before, two crews, one working from each end, started a trail along Meadow Creek that was finished in 1924. The toughest job of all, a 12-mile trail through Black Canyon on the Lochsa, was finished in 1927.

The first road construction also got underway. During the winter of 1919-1920, a road nine feet wide was completed between Syringa and Pete King. In 1922, a 300-foot steel truss bridge was built across the Lochsa. By 1924, the Selway Road reached O'Hara Ranger Station, and in 1926 it was possible to drive to Selway Falls and to Bimerick Creek on the Lochsa. A road reconnaissance was made from Selway Falls to Moose Creek, but no money was available for this section.

Although timber sales were few for any species other than cedar, the Selway Forest did a considerable business in livestock grazing. This began on Coolwater Ridge even before the 1910 and 1919 fires created more range elsewhere. The first permits were issued on Fog Mountain in 1915. Before 1920, both cattle and sheep were grazed, but after World War I the sheep business improved, and most of the permits were for sheep.

By 1924, the estimated carrying capacity of the forest was 23,500 sheep, although fewer were actually grazed. The season ran from mid-June through the end of September. Most of the range was in the Fish Creek-Deadman Creek area and from Coolwater Ridge east. The sheep were trailed in over the top via the Lolo Trail or up the Middlefork Road. All of the permittees were big sheep outfits; few of them were local.

Telephone Communications

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

In the days before radio communications, the Forest Service used telephones. By the mid-1930s, each ranger district on the Selway National Forest had over 100 miles of line to maintain each year before fire season arrived. This was a big job.

Construction of telephone lines began even before the Selway Forest was established. By 1910, there was a line between Kooskia and Selway Falls and another from Elk Summit to Hamilton, Montana. The 1910 fires underscored the need for better communication, and many more lines were built in the next several years.

The first telephone lines consisted of Number 12 galvanized wire hung on solid insulators spiked to trees. This type of construction almost assured that the line would break if a tree fell across it.

About 1911, Ranger William Daughs of the St. Joe National Forest invented the split-tree insulator. It was a simple device that paid big dividends. As shown in the photograph to the left, the insulator was in two parts, which locked together. After the two parts were put around the telephone line and wire together, a large hole remained in the center so the line could easily slide through. The early models were white, but the color was changed to match tree bark, which made the insulators less noticeable to sharpshooters.

This insulator was adopted at once, and Number 9 wire, much harder to break than Number 12, also became standard. Staples were driven into trees at a specified height, and the insulators were wired to them in a way that would pull loose easily. Plenty of slack was left in the spans between trees. If a tree fell across the line, slack would be pulled out of the spans on both sides of it; if all the slack was pulled up, the insulators would detach from one or more trees and the line would go to the ground with the falling tree.

If there had been high winds or heavy snows the previous winter, most of these lines would be on the ground in the spring. Maintenance consisted of cutting the fallen trees off the line, climbing standing trees with lineman's climbers, and rehanging the insulators. Sometimes there were no pole-size trees available, as in the photograph to the right. If there was a break or a hopeless tangle in the line, it would be put back together using a standard Western Union splice. Trees sometimes fell across the lines during fire season, but it was usually possible to talk over a downed line unless the grass and brush were sopping wet or the line was immersed in a creek somewhere along the route.

Since only one wire was used, the line had to be well-grounded at both ends or the telephones would not work. This was difficult at some lookouts on account of rock. In some cases, a wire had to be run to the nearest spring. However, if the lines were maintained and grounded, and were not near electric power sources, the telephones were very dependable. They were noisy, and experienced users held the receiver away from their ears if there was any lightning within miles. Each lookout was equipped with a switch that would connect the telephone line to the lightning protection on the cabin in the event that strikes were about to come down in the vicinity of the line.

The first radios were unreliable, and for years many miles of telephone line were maintained as a backup. Gradually the maintenance ceased. Much of the line was taken down and rolled up, especially along the mainline trails, but some of it is out there yet.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Coolwater Lookout

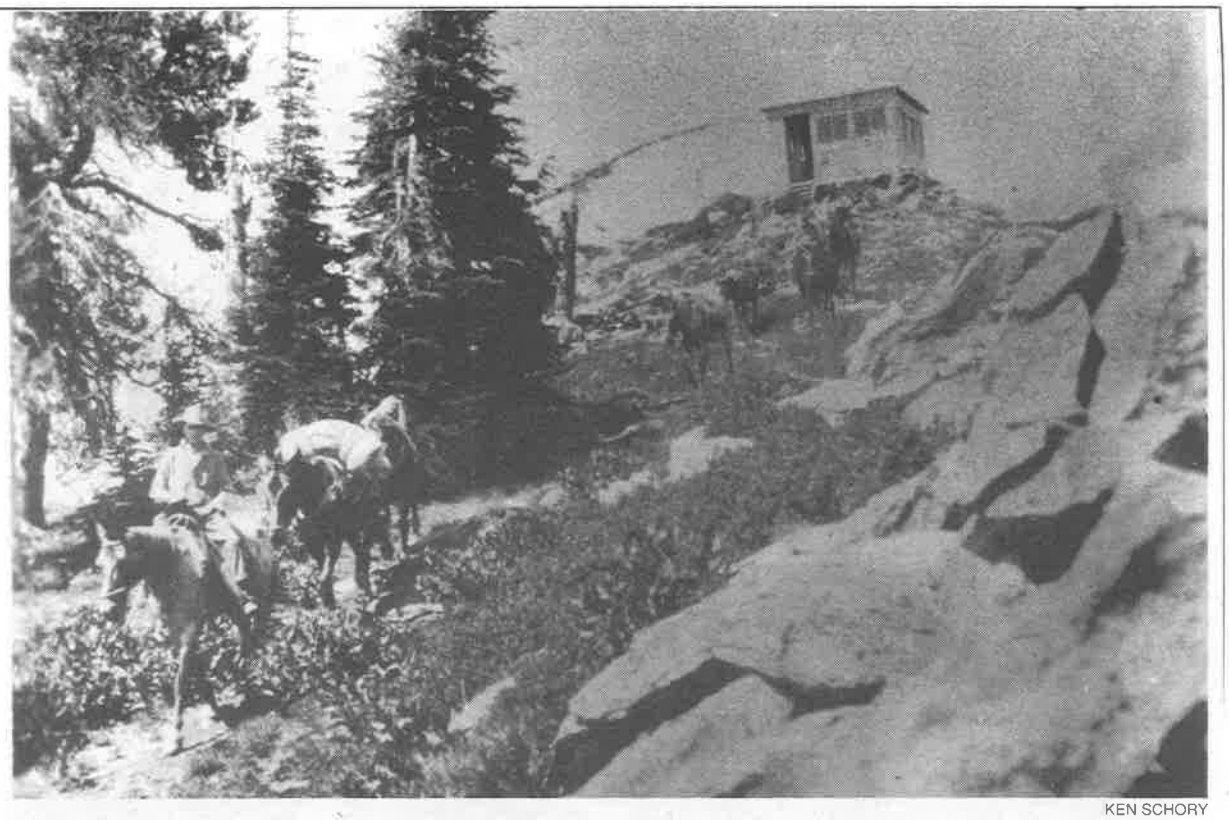
There have been three lookout buildings on this pinnacle. The first, a 12- by 12-foot frame structure anchored to the rocks, was built in 1915 and was one of the first lookout buildings in the Lochsa-Selway country. It had no lightning protection.

G.A. Burrows, a forestry student from Cornell University, was the lookout man in 1916. He also ran daily patrols on the ridgetop about five miles each way from his station. Among his other duties were relaying heliograph messages from Fish Buttes over his telephone to O'Hara Ranger Station. It wasn't much of a fire season; Burrows went up to Coolwater on July 19 and on August 20 six inches of snow fell. But he did turn in a few fires and took a lot of pictures.

The packers in the photograph are Ed Gilroy and Jim Agnew. Gilroy left the Forest Service; he was Kooskia postmaster for many years. Agnew was the first ranger stationed at O'Hara and supervised construction of the station there.

The alidade and plane table inside the lookout were known as the "Koch board," after the inventor. These were the first "firefinders" and were introduced in 1914.

In 1930, the original frame house was moved down the hill about 100 feet for use as a storehouse and a 14- by 14-foot L-4 cabin was erected in its place. This was used until 1953, when the old frame building was burned, the 1930 house was moved down in its place, and a new lookout was built on a 10-foot tower.



KEN SCHORY

CARL WEHOLT

KEN SCHORY

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

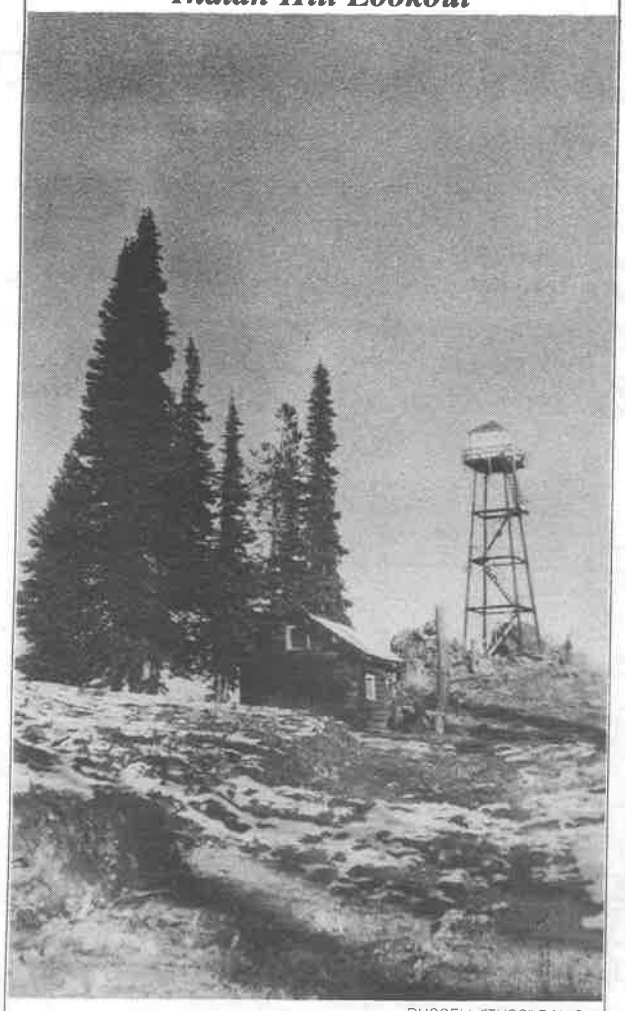
Shortly after the road reached Selway Falls, another grazing division was opened that included the entire Buck Lake Creek drainage. One driveway into this division ran up Indian Hill and out to Copper Butte and Indian Park. Another came in from Elk City via Anderson Butte and Disgrace Ridge. This range was never popular with the stockmen because it was nearly inaccessible.

Fire season, preparing for it, and cleaning up after it remained the major annual activities. Trail, road, and building locations were all determined by fire control objectives. All Selway Forest employees understood that fire was the first priority—that the timber resource was worth millions of dollars and that their job was to protect this wealth until it could be tapped. Local newspapers carried frequent articles on this theme; some were Forest Service press releases and others were written by the editors.

Nationally, however, interest was growing in noncommodity uses of the National Forests, including keeping parts of them wild and undeveloped. In 1924, at the urging of Aldo Leopold, 574,000 acres in New Mexico were designated wilderness; this was the first such designation. The Chief of the Forest Service encouraged more wilderness classifications.

Forest Supervisor Jefferson doubtless had this in mind when he wrote in a 1925 report on inaccessible grazing lands that "it is this portion of the Forest which previous reports have advocated setting aside as a sort of hunters' and campers' paradise. Fish and big game are present in abundance and the most ardent seeker of

Indian Hill Lookout



RUSSELL "TUSS" DAVIS

Indian Hill was first used as a permanent lookout station after 1920. At first, it was a tent camp with observation points along the ridge. In 1929, a Forest Service standard 14- by 16-foot cabin was built, which was followed in 1930 by a 45-foot tower. A few years later, an L-6 house was installed on the tower. This house was only 8 feet square and was not intended as living quarters. The lookout man lived in the cabin.

A new lookout with an L-4 house was built on a 51-foot tower in 1951. The cabin has been maintained and is used for storage.

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

solitude must find his desires satisfied if he reaches this region. It is one of the most beautiful portions of Idaho, and will eventually be discovered as such by the wilderness loving fraternity."

Further commenting on the area's wilderness qualities, Jefferson wrote, "Three semi-civilized Forest Rangers, a few Forest Guards and a strand of number nine wire constitute the extent of its contamination by civilization."

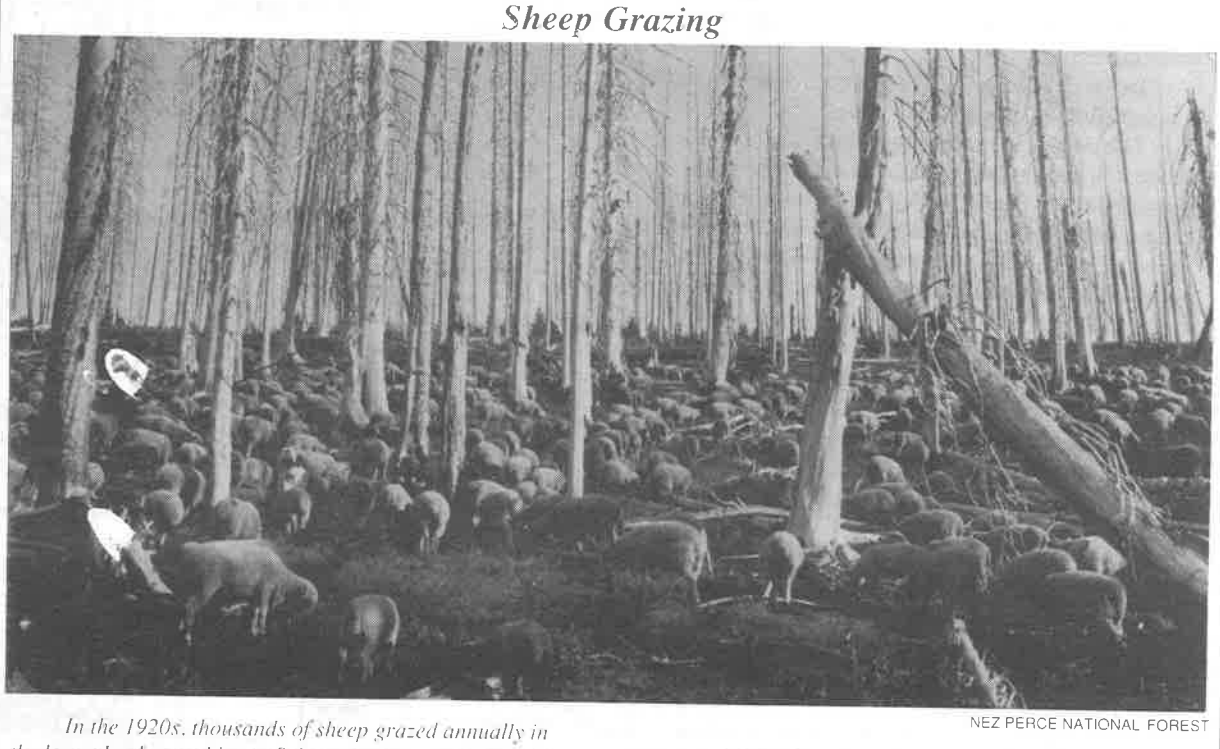
In September 1927 Bob Marshall, who with Leopold was largely responsible for establishment of wilderness in the National Forest system, set out from Pete King Ranger Station on one of the marathon hikes for which he was famous. He visited Castle Butte, Powell, Elk Summit, Diablo Mountain, Big Sand Lake, and Blodgett Pass, and made a number of side trips. Marshall always kept an account of the mileages he travelled on these excursions; on this one, he covered 253 miles in eight days. He stayed at Forest Service stations and didn't carry much gear.

Supervisor Jefferson, after six years on the Selway, was transferred to the Kootenai National Forest in January 1927. He was succeeded by Kenneth Wolfe, another old-timer who had been a deputy supervisor in Montana and who returned there three years later.

By 1928, the essential trail network was in place, and 14 cable trams had been built to allow men to cross the rivers. But the Forest Service wanted to build even more trails. Construction standards were dropped; just about any trail a loaded pack string could traverse became acceptable. These "way trails" ran everywhere in every direction, but most of them were never maintained and cannot be found today.

Attention was increasingly directed toward roads. At that time, all federal road construction was done under the direction of the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR). The Forest Service assured that agency it didn't want to build highways, only low standard "truck trails." The BPR agreed to this, and the first road construction from either river to the ridges above was begun in 1931, to Coolwater Ridge. A few airstrips were also built; the first airplane landed at Moose Creek in July 1931.

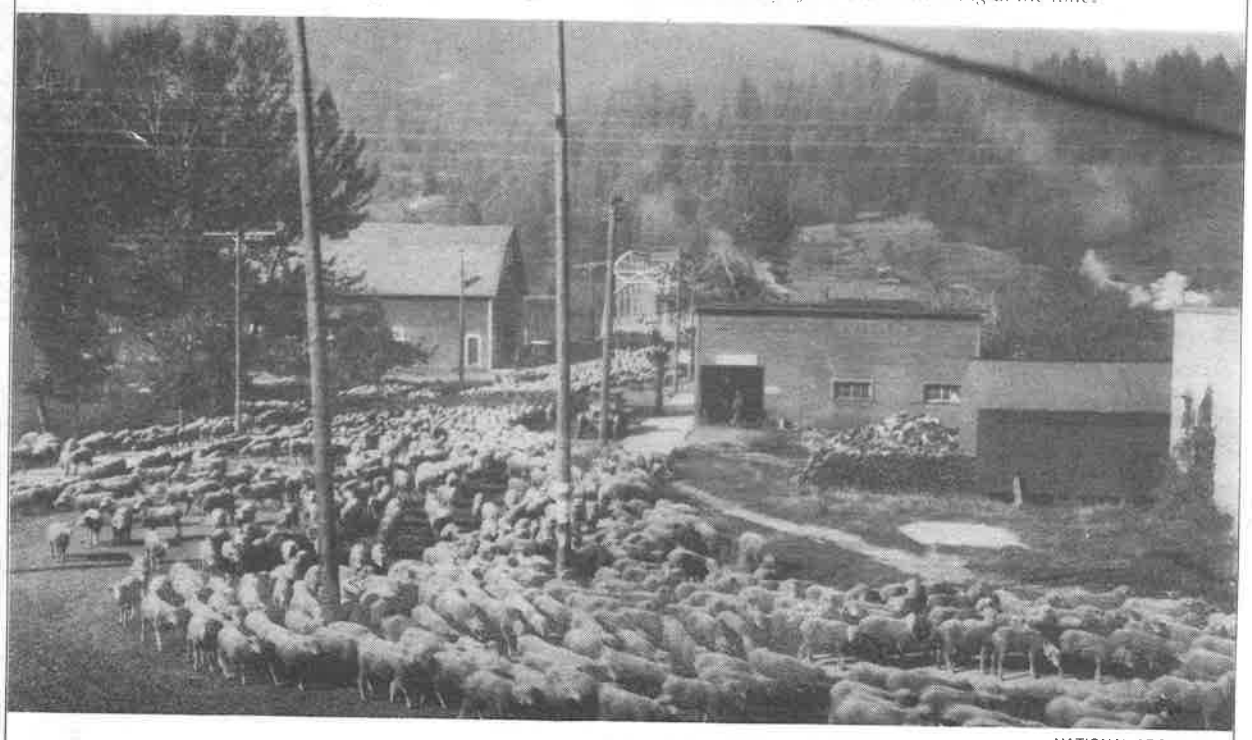
Sheep Grazing



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

In the 1920s, thousands of sheep grazed annually in the lower Lochsa and lower Selway country. Ranges were located in high-elevation open lands such as Iron Mountain, Coolwater Ridge, and Indian Park and in areas where the 1910 and 1919 fires had created browse, such as Middle Butte and Obia Creek. The upper photograph shows sheep grazing on one of these fire-created ranges.

By 1928, sheep were being brought in from Washington and Oregon as well as from Idaho. Some were transported to Kooskia by rail. The lower photograph shows one such band passing through town. It was taken from the forest supervisor's office, which was located in the second story of the Stuart Building at the time.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

By the late 1920s, the Selway Forest owned and used over 200 head of pack and saddle stock. However, even this was not enough in bad fire years. In 1930, several grazing permits were cancelled on Coolwater Ridge and a pack stock reserve was established. The Forest Service did not own this stock; it was contracted in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington and was delivered to Kooskia by rail in late June and early July. Upon arrival at Coolwater, the stock were shod, organized into strings, and trained by skilled packers. In this way, an additional 300 head of stock were made available for fire and other duty in late July, August, and early September; when the need ceased, the stock were returned. The Coolwater Remount operated through the 1934 season, when its functions were absorbed by the Ninemile Remount in Montana.

Fire plans were revised again in the early 1930s, and one part of this effort was an analysis of the fire detection system. Men were sent out to map the areas that could be seen from all existing lookouts and many points that were not regularly used as lookouts. These maps were then overlaid and studied to determine the combinations that gave the best coverage and to specify the height of towers if they were needed. It was decided that where towers were required, the living quarters as well as the fire detection instruments should be on the towers to insure 24-hour coverage.

In the next decade, the number of lookouts in the Lochsa-Selway country nearly tripled.

The deepening economic depression of the early 1930s made reorganizations and cost-cutting programs necessary throughout the Forest Service. All forests eliminated ranger districts by combining them with others. On the Selway Forest the Bear Creek and Meadow Creek districts were added to others in 1932. The Powell-Elk Summit country, which had been run out of Montana since 1915 but was still officially part of the Selway Forest, was combined into one district the year before. By the spring of 1934, the Nez Perce Forest at Grangeville had five districts, the Clearwater at Orofino had four, and the Selway at Kooskia also had four.

By midsummer there were persistent rumors around Kooskia that the Selway National Forest was going to be closed out. The state highway to Grangeville was nearing completion and a highway along the river from Kamiah to Greer looked certain. Local newspapers noted that Supervisor James F. Brooks had been transferred and that no replacement had been named. But the Forest Service wasn't saying anything.

Speculation subsided because soon just about everyone in the country was either fighting fire or assisting the effort. In the Lochsa-Selway country, the holocaust of 1934 was second only to that of 1910. A moisture deficiency had built up over the winter, and no rain fell after June 27. Fire danger ratings were the highest since 1919, and the fire control organization was 20 percent less than full strength due to reduced financing.

On August 10, a fire started by a road construction compressor in Meadow Creek was stopped at 1,500 acres. Almost all the Selway crews and many from the adjoining forests, about 1,100 men, were on the lines. Only mop-up remained, and the weather forecast was for fair weather, no change in humidity, and gentle winds.

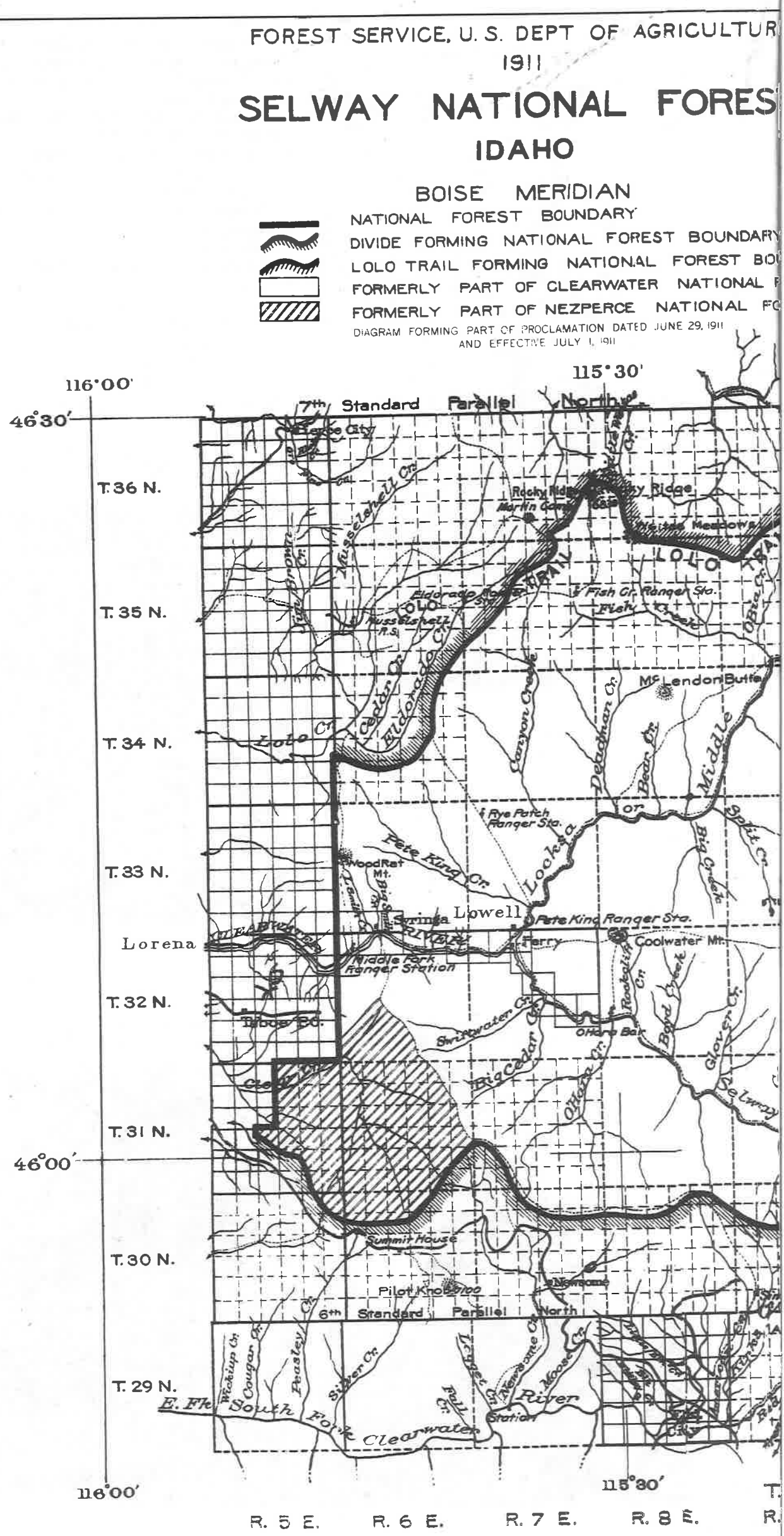
Between 3:00 and 4:00 a.m. the next day, lightning storms raked the northern part of the forest. The heaviest recorded rainfall was "trace," and there had been none for 45 days. Nineteen fires were located and reported by 8:00 a.m. All manpower possible was pulled off the Meadow Creek fire and dispatched to the new ones, and these weary men managed to control all but three.

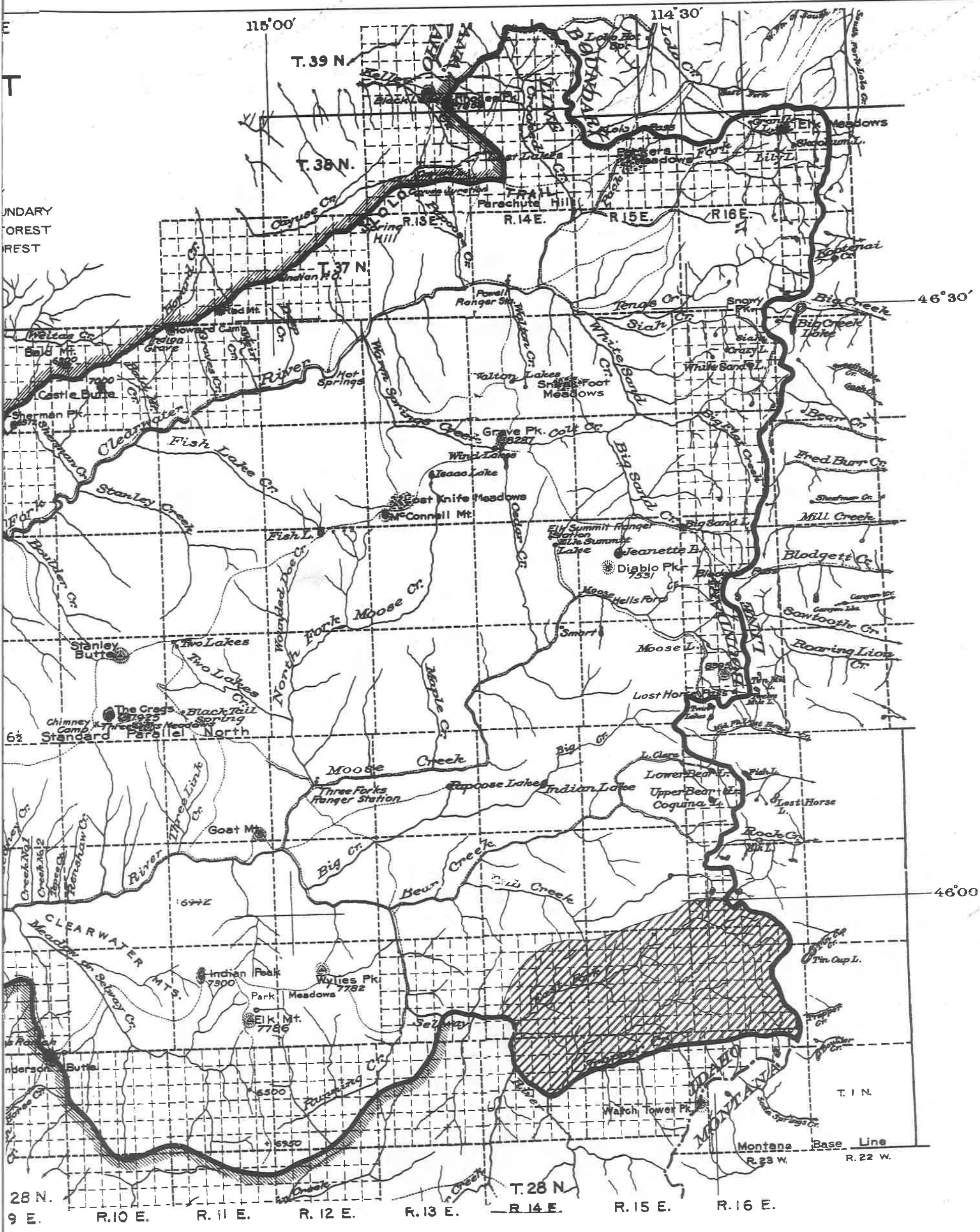
People and Places

By the mid-1920s, some of the rangers were graduate foresters, but most were not. For the latter, the University of Idaho offered short courses. One such three-month course in 1924 covered silviculture, forest regeneration, forest protection, scaling, cruising, surveying, mapping, and wood technology. Several electives were also included.

◆

An old saying on the Selway National Forest: "When you are really thirsty, nothing tastes quite so good as cold spring water out of an old, rusty tin can."

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Montana Base Line
Elk Meadows
Parachute Hill
Spring Hill
Indian P.O.
Red Mt.
Howard Camp
Indian Grave
Bald Mt.
Castle Butte
Sherman Pk.
Hot Springs
Powell Ranger Sta.
Snowy Pk.
Big Creek
Big Creek Lake
White Sand L.
Snake Foot Meadows
Grave Pk.
Wind Lakes
Isaac Lake
East Knife Meadows
McConnell Mt.
Fish L.
Elk Summit Ranger Station
Elk Summit Lake
Jeanette L.
Diablo Pk.
Moose Hells Ford
Smart
Moose L.
Lost Horse Pass
Stanley Butte
Two Lakes
The Crags
Black Tail Spring
Chimney Camp
Three Forks Meadows
Moose Creek
Three Forks Ranger Station
Papoose Lake
Indian Lake
Lower Bear L.
Upper Bear L.
Coquina L.
Lost Horse L.
Goat Mt.
Bear Creek
Cub Creek
Indian Peak
Wylies Pk.
Park Meadows
Elk Mt.
Watch Tower Pk.
Tin Cup L.
Fred Burr Cr.
Mill Creek
Blodgett Cr.
Sawtooth Cr.
Roaring Lion Cr.
Fish Lake Cr.
Stanley Creek
North Fork Moose Cr.
Maple Cr.
Cedar Cr.
Big Sand Cr.
White Sand Cr.
Siah Cr.
Tenas Cr.
Kootenai Cr.
Colt Cr.
Warm Springs Creek
Walton Cr.
Cayuse Cr.
Weitas Cr.
Howard Cr.
Graves Cr.
Sherman Cr.
Boulder Cr.
Wounded Doe Cr.
Three Link Cr.
Renshaw Cr.
Creek No. 1
Creek No. 2
Tepee Cr.
Meadow or Selway Cr.
Running Cr.
Selway
Clearwater River
CLEARWATER MTS.
IDAHO
MONTANA
BOUNDARY LINE
UNDARY
FOREST
REST

Four men were dispatched to the Pete King fire, and when they arrived the fire was burning in two acres of snags and windfalls. It was spotting ahead and was too hot to work near. Eight more men arrived shortly, but the 12-man crew could not hold the fire.

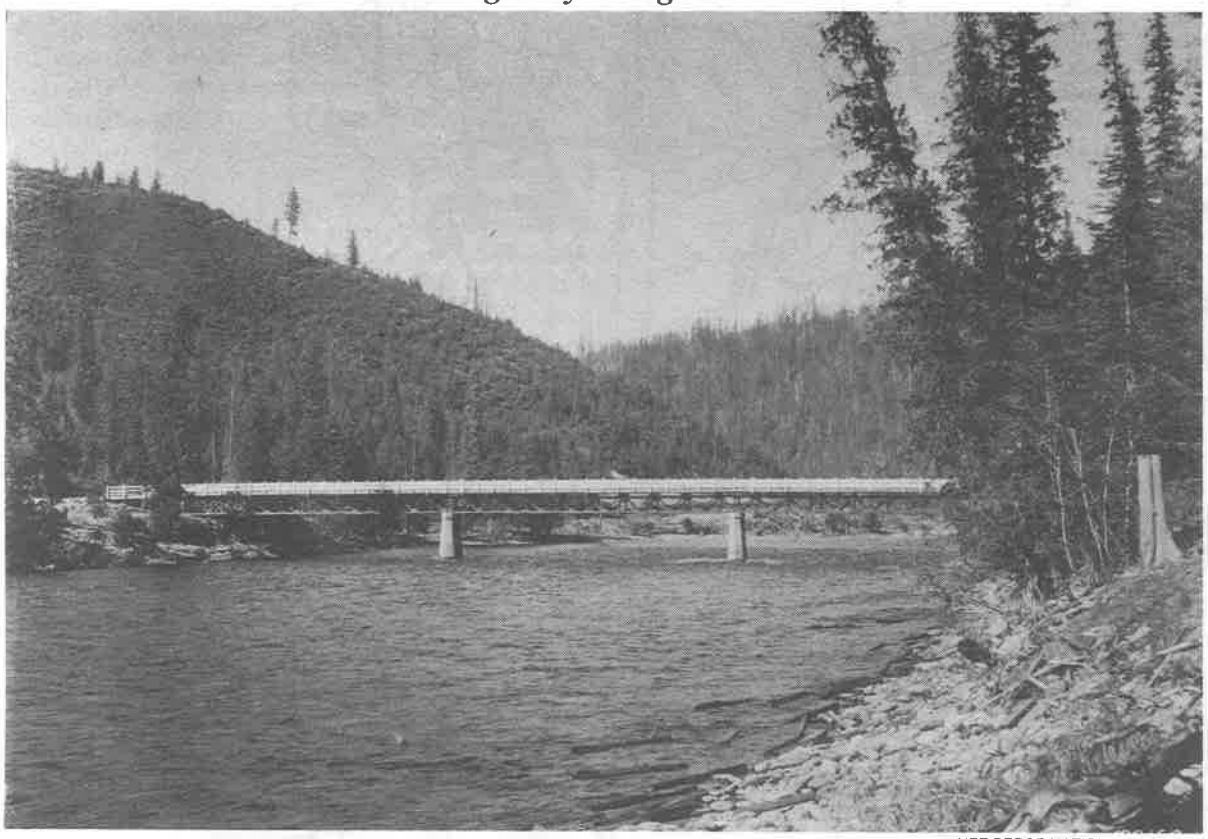
The McLendon Butte fire was attacked by seven men less than an hour after it was discovered. Three hours later they had the fire nearly controlled, then noticed a spot outside the line. Part of the crew went to work on it, but a wind came up, causing more spots. Twenty more men were put on the fire, but by then it had begun to spot as far as three miles, and these spots were creating more spots.

The Martin Creek fire was not discovered until midafternoon. It was blowing up when a two-man crew reached it. By nightfall, these three fires had burned over 10,000 acres.

Since the Pete King and McLendon Butte fires eventually joined and burned into the Martin Creek Fire, the rest of the story is the story of those two fires. By August 16, they had burned about 24,000 acres, but good progress was being made toward containing them. Then about noon on August 17, a strong, shifting wind began and by nightfall the fires had made a 53,300-acre run. The Pete King fire jumped the Lochsa River and roared over the divide into the Selway canyon. Some crews had to run for their lives. Several lookouts burned, and the Pete King and Lochsa ranger stations were saved only by desperate battles.

More blowups occurred over the next 10 days, forcing crews to retreat on several occasions to the Selway River. By September 1, over 5,000 men were on the firelines. Gradually they gained control. By September 7, crews were being released, and on September 22 a heavy rainfall helped put the finishing touched on the fire. In all, 252,250 acres were burned.

First Highway Bridge at Lowell



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

When the road reached Lowell in the winter of 1919-1920, plans were already underway to extend it up the Selway. In 1922, this steel bridge was constructed across the Lochsa at the upper end of the flat where Three Rivers Resort is now located. Each span was 15 feet wide and 100 feet long.

When the present bridge was built in 1957, the old bridge was dismantled. The piers can still be seen when the river is low.

Lookout Butte

DOT MILTON

A 45-foot tower was built on Lookout Butte in 1923 and a standard 14- by 18-foot cabin was put up in 1925. About the same time, a small house was placed on the tower. This served until 1935, when a 50-foot tower with an L-4 house was erected.

The cabin was burned in the 1950s. In 1962, a new tower was built beside the old one. The new house has a flat roof and is built of plywood.

The lookouts in the photograph are Arnold and Dot Milton and the packer is Mike Baker, all of the Kooskia vicinity.

DOT MILTON

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

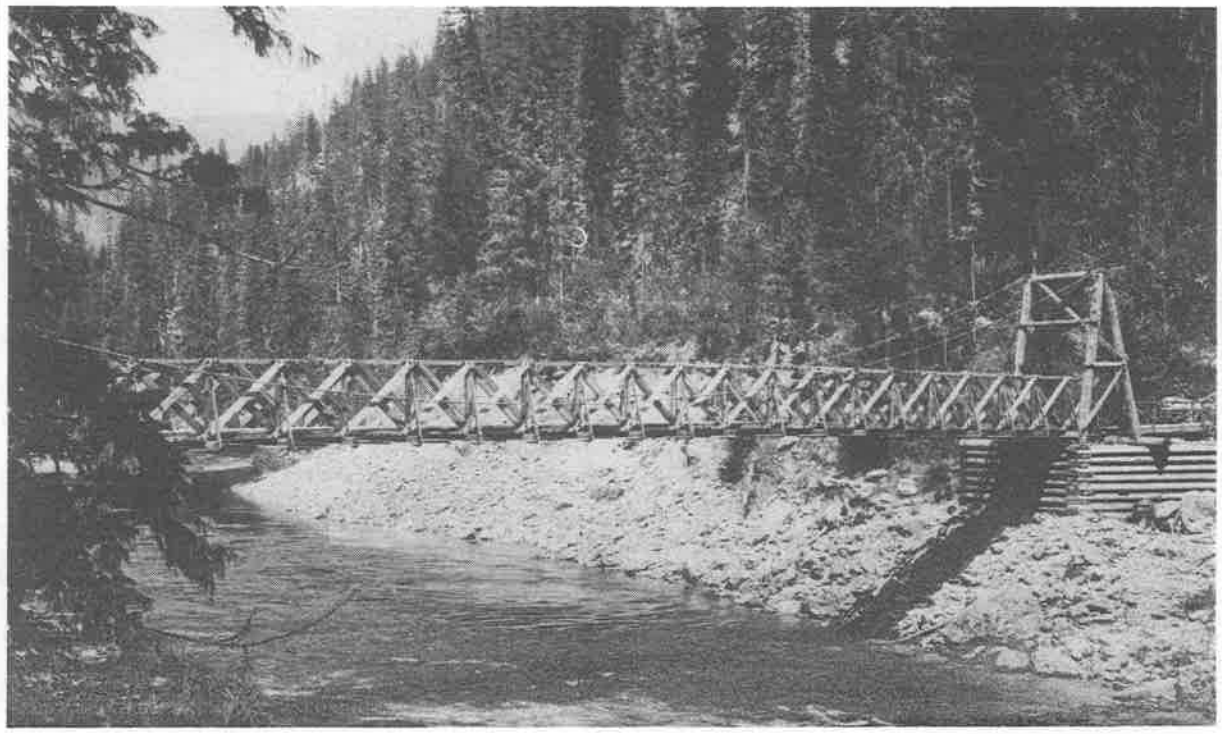
Selway Falls Pack Bridge

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This cable suspension bridge, finished in 1923, enabled pack strings to go from Selway Falls to Indian Hill, Meadow Creek, and Iron Mountain without fording the Selway River which was hazardous, if not impossible, in the late spring and early summer.

Sand and gravel for concrete in the deadmen and piers had to be packed across the river. The lead mule on one string stumbled midway across the ford and dragged the rest of the string into deep water. All of the mules drowned, and some were carried over the falls. The packer was injured but survived.

A steel truss bridge was built immediately above this one in 1934, and the suspension bridge was taken down.



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Before the smoke had cleared and the ashes had cooled, the Selway National Forest was abolished and dismembered. Within two weeks, the Kooskia headquarters were closed.

5. Fish and Game

Idaho had been a state for seven years when the Bitterroot Forest Reserve was established. Fish and game laws had been enacted by Territorial Legislatures since 1864; one such law provided a 7-month season on deer and elk. The first State Legislature continued this tradition, making it illegal to kill a moose anytime, anywhere within the state.

The Forest Reserves were administered under an "organic" act approved by Congress in 1897. This law was silent on the subject of fish and game. However, in 1899 Congress provided that "all persons employed in connection with the administration and protection of forest reservations shall, in all ways that are practicable, aid in the enforcement of the laws of the State in which said forest reservation is situated in relation to the protection of fish and game."

Thus, the right of the states to enact game laws and enforce them on national forest lands was recognized early by Congress.

An 1893 Idaho law prohibited running game with dogs and established a 3-month season on deer and elk. It also specified that no fish except salmon, steelhead, and sturgeon could be taken in any way other than with a hook and line, and made illegal the use of dynamite to catch fish.

Woodrat Lookout—1915

GEORGE ROBINETT

Woodrat Mountain is on the western boundary of the national forest, and much of the area seen from it is state and private land. However, it was one of the first lookouts, and an observation platform similar to many others of that time was built there.

In 1925, a 14- by 16-foot cabin was built near the summit, and a 60-foot tower with an 8- by 8-foot house was put up at about the same time. In 1946, this was replaced with an L-4 house on a 41-foot treated timber tower. This was destroyed in 1972.

Lookout Styles

Before about 1930, most lookouts built where towers were not required were of the cupola type. In these, the map board and telephone were in the cupola, and the main cabin was the living quarters. The log cupola houses erected on Vermilion Peak (top, right) and Fog Mountain (center, right) were typical.

The cabin on Roundtop Mountain (bottom, right) did triple duty as a lookout, a smokechaser station, and a residence for Forest Service employees supervising grazing permits in the area.

The Highline lookout (below, bottom) was a local design. It was built in 1932 to supplement a 35-foot tower built in 1929.

The 14- by 14-foot L-4 lookout house became standard about 1930, and hundreds of them were put up in Idaho and Montana. Although there were a few changes in the design, the L-4 remained standard until the mid-1950s. Stillman Point (below, top) is a representative example.

All of these lookouts are gone now.

DEL COX

DEL COX

WANDA BOLLER

JIM BROTNOV

DEL COX

Pete King Ranger Station

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

After the road reached Pete King, the station became a supply center for the entire Selway Forest. By 1921, a commissary, warehouse, and shop had been built (top). In 1922, a bunkhouse had been added (center), and early in 1923, the original log building was moved to allow construction of a cookhouse (bottom).

From 1919 to 1924, Pete King was headquarters for the Middlefork District. In 1925, the headquarters were moved to Number One. Two years earlier, the Meadow Creek ranger had been transferred to Pete King to run the supply operation.

None of these buildings remain; they were not needed after the move to Fenn Ranger Station. The Fleming highway maintenance station is now on the site.

GEORGE ROBINETT

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Recognizing the need for some means of enforcing these laws, the Legislature charged the commissioners of each county with appointing a game warden, whose salary was to be half of the fines collected. Apparently these jobs did not attract many applicants; in 1987, the law was changed to require county sheriffs to enforce the fish and game laws.

In 1897, the Legislature provided for a state fish and game warden to be appointed by the governor and paid out of the public treasury. The state warden was authorized to appoint a deputy in each county whose salary would be half of the fines. In addition, all police officers were required to enforce the fish and game laws.

Licenses were first required in 1903 for all males over 12 years old; women did not have to buy them. A summary of the fish and game laws was printed on the backs of these licenses. Fees were $1 for residents and $25 for nonresidents, payable to any justice of the peace or game warden. Deputy wardens were to be paid $3 a day when actually employed, but this employment was limited to 90 days a year. In 1905, the limit was extended to 150 days a year, and in 1909 to 300 days a year.

This general system prevailed until 1919, when a Fish and Game Bureau under the direction of a fish and game warden was established in the Department of Law Enforcement. In 1922, however, a separate Department of Fish and Game was set up under the governor, who appointed the state warden with the approval of the State Senate.

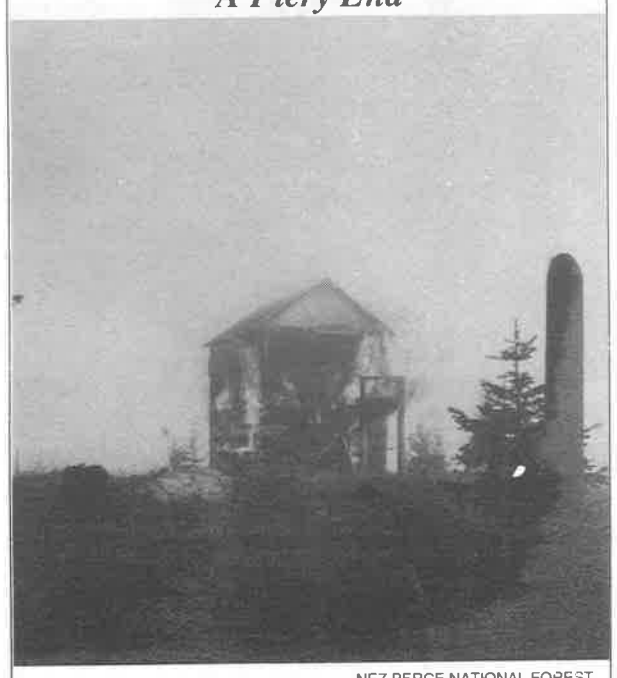
Big game tags were first used in 1925. After 1927, both men and women were required to buy licenses.

By the mid-1930s, public dissatisfaction with fish and game management was growing within the state; many thought it should be less political and more professional. The Legislature was unmoved by these arguments, and support increased for an initiative which would establish an independent Fish and Game Commission. The means were in place; a constitutional amendment had been adopted in 1912 which established the right of citizens to present legislation directly to the voters. The initiative was voted upon in the general election of 1938 and was approved by a large majority.

This initiative, with a few changes, still governs fish and game management in Idaho. The commission sets seasons, bag limits, and general policy, but the Legislature establishes license fees and penalties for violations.

The commission is responsible for management of all species, both game and nongame, and these species number in the hundreds. Each has a history and each is

A Fiery End



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

By the mid-1960s, the original buildings on all lookout points still in use had been replaced. Towers and buildings elsewhere were unnecessary and had become unsafe. Salvageable items were removed, and the lookouts were burned. One of the last to go was Falls Point, above.

important, but all cannot be touched upon here. Of necessity, this discussion must be confined to a few words about oceangoing fish and the rise of the great Lochsa-Selway elk herds.

The salmon and steelhead runs that sustained the native Nez Perce for centuries continued into the early decades of this century. The fish came up the Clearwater River in astounding numbers and went to the very headwaters of the Lochsa and Selway. As an example, chinook salmon were once seen within a mile of Indian Lake in what is now the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. That is high country; at that elevation, the creeks are very small.

Selway Falls presented something of an obstacle to the fish, but large numbers made it over, usually after several attempts. Delayed in their journey upstream, the fish collected in pools and were easy to spear, which is the way they were caught at that time. The falls was a favorite fishing spot for both the Nez Perce and the early residents.

Once the salmon spawned, they died; then the predatory animals and birds moved in. Sometimes the creek bottoms would stink for weeks from the rotting fish.

The salmon runs ended abruptly when a dam was completed near the mouth of the Clearwater in 1927. A one-runway fish ladder was built at the dam from plans approved by the Department of Fish and Game, as was the law, but the salmon and some of the steelhead could not or would not climb it. Two redesigned runways were added in 1939, and an attempt was made to artificially restore the salmon. By that time, though, problems were beginning to multiply downstream, between Lewiston and the ocean.

The Lewiston dam has been removed from the river, but today the fish must cross or be transported around eight other, higher dams and traverse about 475 miles of slack water on their migrations to and from the Lochsa-Selway country. Several hatcheries annually release millions of small fish that will go to the ocean, but the dams, commercial fishing, and Indians fishing under treaty rights reduce the numbers that will return. Keeping the runs alive is a never-ending challenge to both the fish and the people who aid them.

Elk were not abundant in the Lochsa-Selway country during the early years of this century; at any rate, they were not as abundant as they later became, and once were. They were also found only in specific areas; none could be seen anywhere near Lowell.

Apparently this had been so for at least 100 years. Lewis and Clark did not see any elk when they passed through in 1805 and 1806, although their Nez Perce guides told the explorers elk were plentiful around several warm springs on the upper Lochsa and that they hunted them there. The Carlin party killed several elk at these warm springs in 1893, so elk were there then.

Elk City was inhabited and named in 1861. There must have been at least a few elk in these high meadows in June, when the first gold strikes were made. By late fall, according to some accounts, there were 2,000 people in the camp. Food supplies were short, so those elk that didn't move out probably didn't last long.

Elk were seen and killed in Clear Creek in 1904, but the population was not large.

Early reports from the Moose Creek country indicated elk were not numerous there. Billy Parry reported some sign around the junction of the North Moose with the main creek in 1989, and in 1910 a Forest Service crew saw eight head there. The first ranger at Elk

Tom's Cabin

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

In 1930, the Forest Service built a 14- by 16-foot log cabin on a small flat just off the Meadow Creek trail a little over a mile downstream from Indian Hill Creek. It was called "Tom's Cabin" after Tom Mattison, the alternate ranger at Meadow Creek, who left the station alone on his horse one morning and was later found dead in the creek a mile or two downstream. His horse survived.

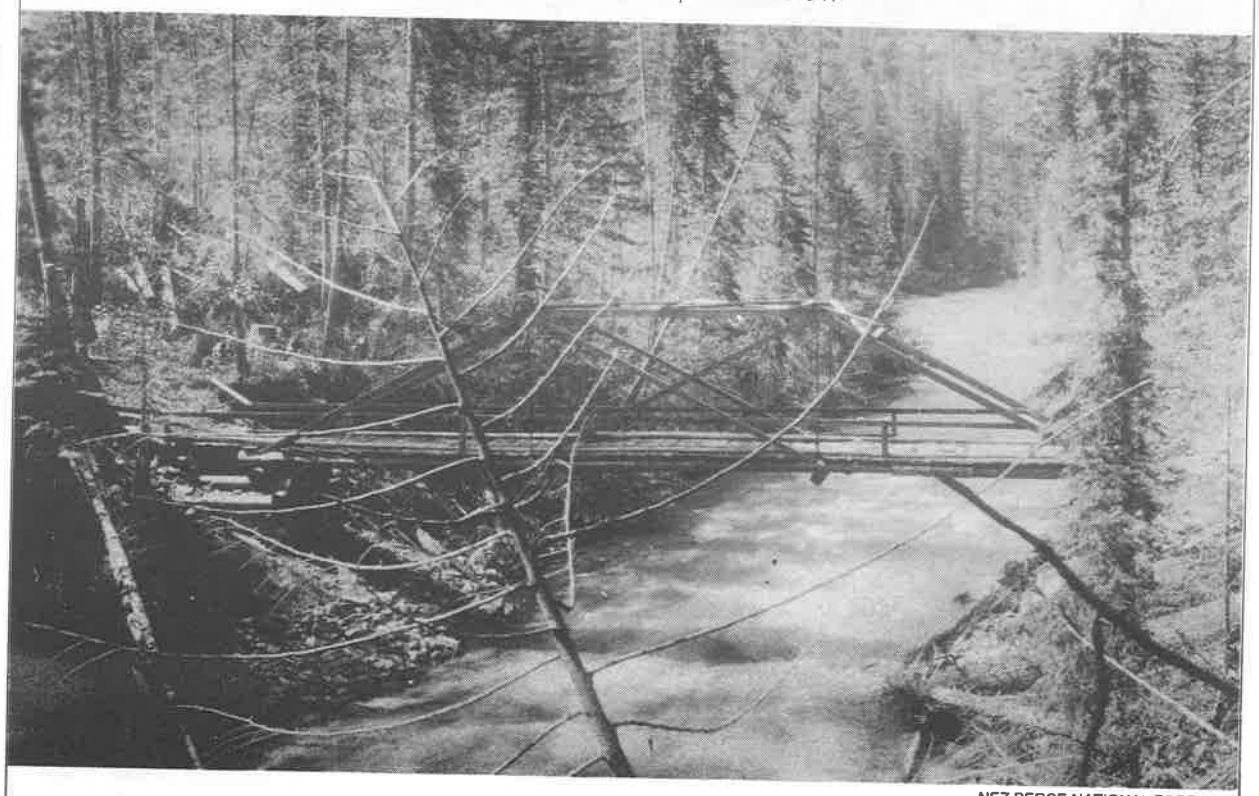
Trail Bridges

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

On the lower elevation mainline trails, streams too wide and swift for stock to ford during high water were bridged. All of these bridges were built of materials near the site, mostly cedar and Douglas-fir. Construction was done with hand tools and brute strength.

The top photograph shows the bridge across Gedney Creek as it was a few years before the Selway Road was built. The log crib abutments were filled with boulders hauled to the site by hand.

The truss bridge in the bottom photograph crossed Meadow Creek immediately below what is now Selway Falls Campground. Trails on the east side of the creek led to Meadow Creek Ranger Station and Indian Hill. This bridge was no longer needed after the steel bridge was built upstream in 1934.



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Summit mentioned one herd of about 100 at a natural lick on East Moose and small bands elsewhere. However, Elk Summit, Elk Mountain, Dead Elk Creek, Elk Ridge, and Elk Creek, widely separated features in the upper Lochsa-Selway country, had all been named by 1915.

Most of the early observations of elk in the upper Selway country were made in the summer and fall, before the elk concentrated on their winter ranges. Billy Parry ran a winter trapline on the Lochsa before 1900 and reported a large herd in Deadman Creek at that time. When all the scattered Selway bands were forced onto their winter ranges by snow and cold, the populations may have been greater than summer and fall hunters and forest workers supposed. In any event, according to all observers elk on the lower Lochsa and Selway were rare if they existed at all.

U.S. Highway 12 in 1925

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A wagon road from Kooskia upriver to the Number One Ranger Station was completed about 1910. In 1919, a bridge was built across the Middlefork at Kooskia, replacing the ferry there, and work was in progress extending the road to Lowell. This first road was nine feet wide and closely followed the contours of the hills. It was widened and straightened several times in later years.

The upper photograph was taken just below Three Devils Picnic Area on the Middlefork, and the lower photograph was taken above Pete King Creek on the Lochsa.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This was the situation about 1915. In the next 30 years, the elk population in the Clearwater drainage exploded. By the mid-1920s, elk were being reported in places in which they had never been seen before. By 1935, the Deadman Creek winter range was overloaded; 60 percent of the available forage on the Moose Creek-Bear Creek winter range had been killed by overuse; and elk could be found on the Selway, Lochsa, and Middlefork to the forest boundary and beyond. Numbers continued to climb until after World War II, when heavy hunting and a severe winter finally reduced the size of the herd.

What had happened?

Theories have not been lacking over the years. Most of the reasons that have been given for the surge in the elk population after 1910 can be combined under four headings—effects of forest fires, effects of predators, effects of migrations, and effects of hunting.

It has long been known that forest fires create browse that is beneficial to elk. Leiberg, in his 1899 report on the Bitterroot Forest Reserve, said that fact was well established even then.

Huge fires swept the Lochsa-Selway country in 1910, 1919, and 1934. Since the increase in elk began after 1910 and continued after 1934, many argue that the additional forage created by these fires caused the buildup in the elk population.

Others are not so sure. While agreeing that these fires undoubtedly benefitted the elk, they cite the facts that elk were known to be in the area of the fires before 1910 and that large fires burned in these same areas before 1910, then ask why the elk didn't begin to multiply rapidly before 1910.

There is no doubt that fires ravaged the Clearwater drainage in the nineteenth century: both Leiberg, writing in 1898, and Shattuck, writing in 1910 before the fires, discuss at length the subject of past large fires. Forest Service fire records go back to 1889; these added to personal accounts of people living on Camas Prairie at the time confirm that 1889 was a very bad fire year. It was only one of many.

So, fires and elk coexisted before 1910, but there was not a rapid increase in the elk population after the earlier fires.

During the settlement of the West, the idea developed that all predatory animals should be shot on sight wherever found. This view persisted for years afterward. In 1907, the Idaho Legislature established bounties on wolves, coyotes, bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions. When delivered to the nearest game warden, each lion hide would bring $15. This was a generous reward at the time. For example, newly appointed forest rangers were paid $75 a month in 1907, and many families had far less cash income.

The Forest Service supported the program. When one of the men working on the Selway Trail in early 1907 shot four lions, the forest supervisor helped him collect the bounties.

About 1913, a pair of lion hunters spent two winters on game ranges along the upper Selway. They brought out over 100 hides, and quit only when the hunting no longer paid.

The predator control program continued throughout the time elk populations were building. Bounties were raised. About 1926, the state hired a predatory animal hunter, and he killed over 166 mountain lions between then and 1943.

By 1925, lions were becoming rare, and by 1935, they had been nearly exterminated in the Lochsa-Selway country.

Many early forest rangers believed the reduction of the mountain lion population was the primary reason that elk numbers began to increase. Others took a different view. None of those who commented on the lack of elk suggested that there was any shortage of deer, they said, and deer are much easier for lions to kill than are elk. In October 1913, one of the homesteaders on the upper Selway killed eight deer in one day. This account also mentions lions being present. According to homesteaders on the lower Selway, there were many deer and many

lions, but no elk. So, some argue, if removal of mountain lions caused elk to multiply rapidly, the lions must formerly have killed many elk, and few deer.

It has been known for a long time that bears will eat elk calves, along with just about anything else. Before 1920, many bears were trapped; after then, about the time elk were beginning to be seen in the lower country, many more were simply shot. Large bands of sheep were then being grazed on Forest lands, and the sheepherders killed all the bears they could. Forest Service employees, many of whom carried guns in those days, were officially encouraged to kill bears. So the bear population was reduced, and the grizzlies disappeared.

Then there are the migration theories. The historical record shows that elk were once found in nearly all the United States, which seems to indicate they can adapt to many different kinds of habitat. Nevertheless, it was widely contended in the 1920s that elk are basically plains animals and were forced by man to migrate to the forests.

About 1910 or 1912, elk from Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and Yellowstone Park were relocated in the Bitterroot Valley of Montana. It has been argued, although not much in recent years, that these elk left the valley, moved into the Bitterroots, and augmented the herds already there.

The problem with this theory is, of course, that few facts exist. It does give rise to some interesting speculation. For one example, the first reliable report of elk wintering in the Meadow Creek drainage came in 1924. Were these elk always there? Did they come from the Moose Creek country? Did they come over the divide from the Salmon River? No one knows.

Finally, the effects of hunting must be considered.

There was little elk hunting when the herds began to expand. No roads had been built into elk country, so major pack expeditions were necessary. Even then, elk were not easy to find. Before 1910, many people thought hunting them wasn't worth the time and trouble.

Nevertheless, an effort was made to protect elk in the Lochsa and Selway drainages. In the early days, the Legislature set hunting seasons. The 1910 general elk season ran from September 1 to December 1, but from 1911 to 1917, Idaho County was closed to all elk hunting. The 1917 and 1918 Idaho County seasons lasted 30 days, the month of November. In 1919, the Idaho County season became the same as the general season, which ran from October 1 to November 15.

Undoubtedly, elk were killed illegally during this time. The state had few wardens, and even after forest rangers officially began helping enforce the game laws in 1909 there were never enough men to patrol the territory. According to some, much of the illegal kill was by hunters who shot elk for their teeth, which would bring $25 to $30 a set, more than the mountain lion bounty.

When the Legislature reopened Idaho County to elk hunting in 1917, it also established a 194,000-acre Selway Game Preserve.

The southern boundary was Old Man Creek to Old Man Lake and the Selway Crags, then down Lizard and Rhoda creeks to Moose Creek, and then up Moose Creek to Lost Horse Pass. The northern boundary was the Lochsa River. In 1925, territory north of the Lochsa and south of Sherman Peak, Castle Butte, and Indian Grave Peak was added.

All game animals were protected in this preserve, and trapping was prohibited. Predatory animals could be killed by game wardens or those authorized by wardens to do so. Although the Selway Game Preserve contained little winter range, game increased rapidly within it.

So there are the theories, and enough arguments to show that a single conclusive explanation of the rise of the Clearwater elk herd is probably all but impossible. As more time passes, it becomes even less possible. Perhaps the only statement that can safely be made is that after about 1910 whatever elk were in the country and any that may have moved in had abundant food and few enemies.

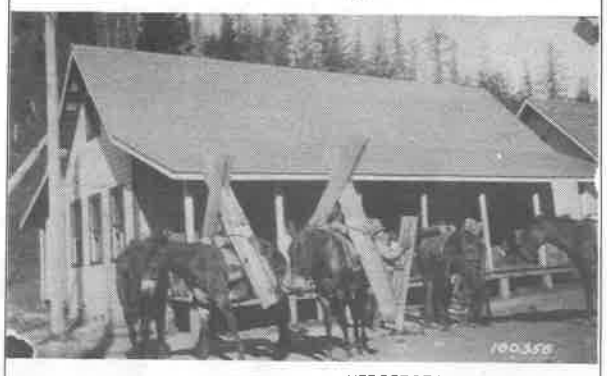
People and Places

Most of the mountain lakes in and near the Selway Game Preserve were originally barren of fish. Deputy Game Warden C.K. "Andy" Hjort planted fish in almost all of them in the early 1920s, before roads were built to Coolwater and Fog Mountain.

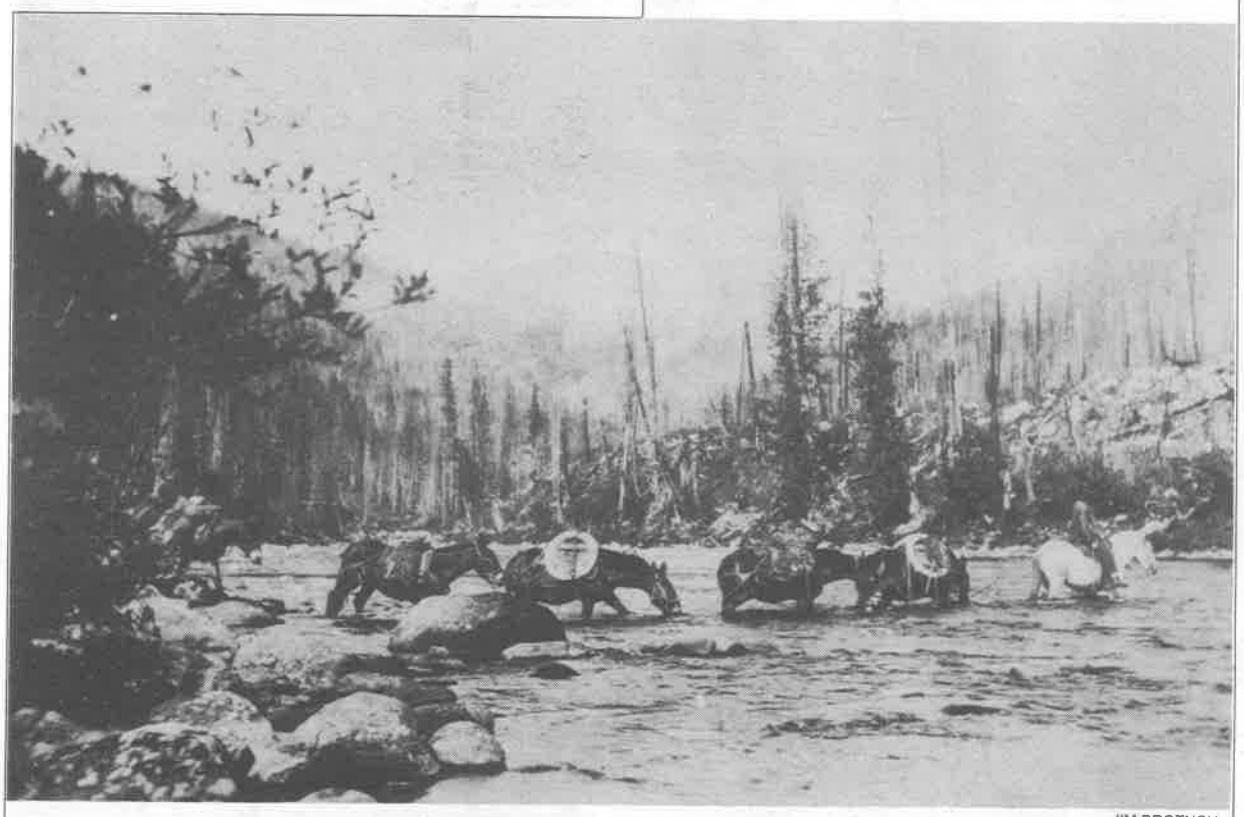
Hjort had once been a forest ranger and was a skilled packer and woodsman. He had planted fish as early as 1908 in the Boise National Forest. Stocking the lakes in the Selway Crags was a four-day job. The fish were transported in 10-gallon cream cans. Hjort had troughs 16- by 16-inches by 16 feet long at Lowell, Coolwater, and Old Man Lake to hold the fish overnight. When traveling, the pack string had to move constantly to aerate the water in the cans. Most of the fish were eastern brook trout.

Andy's Lakes and Andy's Hump on Coolwater Ridge are named after "Andy" Hjort, as is Hjort Lake in the Selway Crags.

Packing



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST



JIM BROTNOV

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Before trucks and airplanes came into general use and roads and airstrips were built, everything had to be moved on pack animals. Both in and out of the Forest Service, skilled packers were high-status people who took pride in their ability to pack almost anything almost anywhere.

In those days just about everyone grew up around saddle and pack stock. Nearly all of the men and boys as well as many of the women knew the basics of packing. Out of necessity, all of the early rangers knew how to do it.

There have always been arguments about whether horses or mules are the better pack animals, but the Forest Service decided early on mules. Some experiments were later done with burros, but these animals were never widely used.

The top photograph shows mules at Pete King Ranger Station loaded with lumber for lookout construction. The center photograph shows a pack string fording the Selway River at Otter Creek not long after the 1934 fire, and the bottom photograph shows pack strings headed upriver from Number One in about 1912.

By 1934, the Forest Service was becoming concerned about overuse on some of the winter ranges and initiated a series of studies. These were carried out during the winters of 1934-1935 and 1935-1936. A special study was made during the winter of 1936-1937 on winter ranges along the Lochsa, lower Selway, and Meadow Creek.

One objective of the 1936-1936 study was to write a game management plan for the Lochsa and Selway drainages. In developing the plan, the authors noted that hunters took far less than what had been determined to be the annual increase in the herd and that this was especially true in the Selway Game Preserve. The first legal hunting there, a special hunt on East Moose Creek in 1936, resulted in a kill of less than 100 elk. The following year another special hunt was authorized, and this one included almost all of the preserve. The 1937 special hunt removed 450 animals, but the total taken during the regular season and the special hunt was still less than the annual increase.

Meanwhile, some winter ranges were showing the results of heavy use, the authors said. Some, such as the Moose Creek-Bear Creek range, were depleted to the point that deer were not able to compete with elk for what browse was available and were dying. Other ranges, such as Deadman Creek on the Lochsa, were in imminent danger of the same fate.

But some ranges were seen as understocked. By 1937, the lower Selway was roaded and was more heavily hunted than the areas accessible only by pack train or airplane. One of the authors observed that along the Selway Road "hunters have literally formed a firing line...that advances up practically every ridge and canyon." The result was a winter range that was capable of supporting more elk than it did in fact.

So it was suggested that the 1937 season be extended 57 days in the inaccessible areas and run from September 1 to November 31. It was further suggested that the lower Selway be closed to elk hunting. With a few modifications, these suggestions were adopted.

Boyd Creek Fish Hatchery

After two years of testing water throughout the Clearwater drainage, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 1936 announced plans to build a fish hatchery at the mouth of Boyd Creek on the Selway. The hatchery was completed in 1938, and some 781,000 fish were hatched and planted the next year.

Hatchery production was predominately rainbow and cutthroat trout, with large numbers of eastern brook trout in some years. At first grayling were also hatched and planted, but this was discontinued after a few seasons.

Water sources were a constant problem. Shortly after the hatchery commenced operation, it was found that Boyd Creek carried too much silt in the spring and that later in the summer it was too low and the water temperature was too high.

It was decided to use water from Island Creek, which empties into the Selway about a mile above Boyd Creek on the other side of the river. A wooden pipe was built from the hatchery to Island Creek; this pipe crossed the river under a narrow bridge suspended from cables salvaged from the old Selway Falls pack bridge.

This did not completely solve the problem, and the hatchery was closed in 1951. However, over 3 million cutthroat trout had been reared in it and planted in the area.

In 1952, the main building was torn down and the concrete ponds were demolished and buried. A house that had been occupied by the superintendent was taken over by the Forest Service. In 1962, this house was sawed in two and moved to Fenn Ranger Station, where the two halves were joined together on a new foundation adjacent to the other houses there.

Boyd Creek Campground now occupies the hatchery site.

NEZ PERCE NAITONAL FOREST

EMMETT RYNEARSON

ERNIE BOHN

NAITONAL ARCHIVES

The lower Selway elk season was reopened in 1941, but during World War II hunting declined and, assisted by range revitalized by the 1934 fires, the elk herd continued to build.

By the end of the war, everyone knew that the country was full of elk, and the number of hunters increased dramatically. In 1946, hunters checked 4,386 elk out of the Lochsa and Selway drainages; in 1948, they checked 3,675. Doubtless more elk were killed and not checked.

Nature then intervened. The 1948-1949 winter was long and cold, with heavy snows. Between 1,000 and 2,000 elk died of exposure and starvation in the spring of 1949. The maximum population had been reached; elk numbers were never again as high as they were in the summer of 1948.

People and Places

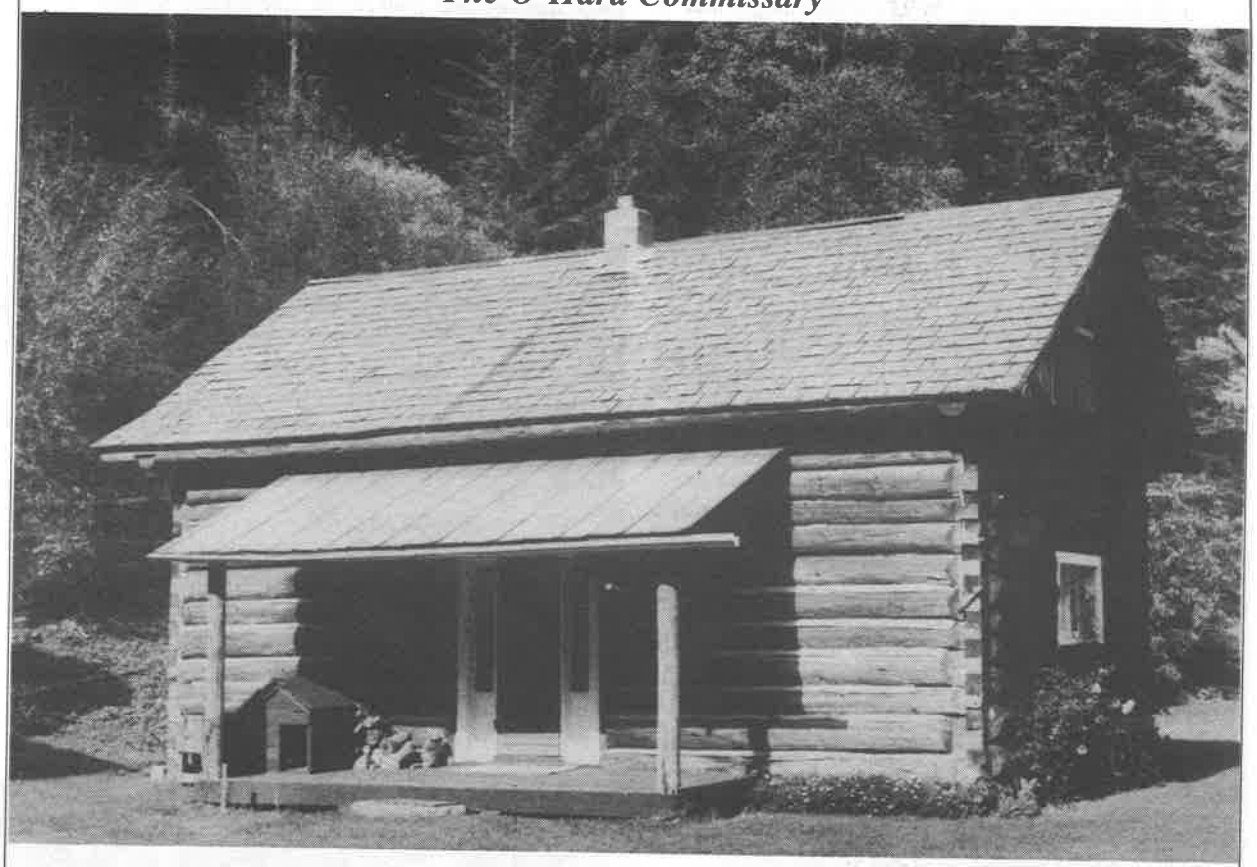
Idaho once had the most extensive big game salting program in the United States. In 1921, the first year salt was put out, about 1,000 pounds were distributed in the Lochsa-Selway country by the Department of Fish and Game. The program expanded, and the Forest Service assisted with packing and placement. By the 1940s, much of the salt was delivered by air, but the department also had a special pack string for the purpose.

The objectives of the program changed over the years. The salt was first used to supplement the diets of the animals and to help them combat ticks and mange. Gradually, the idea developed that elk probably get enough salt from their natural foods, and the tick-and-mange theory likewise fell out of favor.

Meanwhile, game concentrations around salt licks were observed to be damaging winter ranges. Someone came up with the idea that if all the salt were placed on summer ranges, it would draw the animals off winter ranges early in the spring and thus relieve the pressure on them. This then became the objective of the program.

Effects of the game salting program in the Selway drainage were studied at great length in the mid-to-late 1950s by several investigators, none of whom could find any evidence that salting summer ranges hastened the departure of game from winter ranges. Shortly thereafter, salting stopped.

The O'Hara Commissary



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This building, now a summer home on the Selway, was erected in 1928 as a commissary building at O'Hara Ranger Station and was later remodeled into a house. In 1959, August M. Seubert bought it from the Forest Service and moved it to its present location at Rock Creek.

Ralph Hand, who retired from the Forest Service in 1955 and was Lochsa District ranger from 1923 to 1929, related this story about the building:

"I started out the new year (1928) with a winter detail at O'Hara to help 'Red' Crocker (Clayton Crocker, the district ranger) build a two-story log commissary building. It began as a training project; Clyde Blake came up from the Nez Perce to spend a few days showing us the mysteries of the Swede cabin scribe. Afterward we served as instructors to the rest of the Selway and most of the Clearwater rangers. They came in groups of two or more and usually remained just long enough to make at least one blunder. I'll bet Crocker could look at that building today—if it's still standing—and point out each ill-fitting corner or other evidence of poor workmanship, including the dovetail I put in backwards. Furthermore, I believe he could name the person responsible for each bungle."

Both Ralph Hand and Clayton Crocker have passed on to that place where fires never crown out and the stock never runs away, but the building still stands and is well maintained.

The 1949 Winter Kill

LOU HARTIG

RAY MILLER

The 1948-1949 winter was severe, and at least a thousand—probably well over a thousand—elk in the Lochsa-Selway country did not survive it.

Heavy snows came early that winter, and the elk were forced to low elevations in December. January was extremely cold, preventing the snow from packing and concentrating the elk even more. Heavy snow fell again in February, driving the elk off their winter ranges and down the rivers in search of food. Many were so weak that they showed little fear of people.

When the snow and ice melted in the spring, dead elk were everywhere along the riverbanks, and carcasses littered the Selway Road and the Lewis-Clark Highway. These were removed and buried, but elk and deer skeletons could be seen for years along many of the stream-bottom trails.

6. Depression, War, and Postwar Years

The Selway National Forest officially died on October 29, 1934, but the last rites had been conducted over a month before. The Kooskia office and all its employees were moved to Grangeville almost overnight; many employees were reassigned from there. Kooskia community leaders were not consulted about anything, and a bitter taste remained for years afterward.

Although there were a few small boundary changes, division of the Selway was accomplished by assigning ranger districts to other forests. The Powell-Elk Summit country went to the Lolo National Forest, which was more or less a formality since that forest had administered it for 20 years. The Moose Creek District went to the Bitterroot National Forest and the Lochsa District went to the Clearwater. The Nez Perce National Forest took over the Middlefork and Selway Districts and thus became the major beneficiary of the reorganization.

The new Nez Perce-Clearwater boundary ran along the Lochsa-Lolo Creek divide from Woodrat Mountain east to the head of Canyon Creek, then to the Lochsa via Frenchman Butte and McLendon Butte, and then to Lizard Lakes by way of Huckleberry Butte and Stanley Butte. The Nez Perce-Bitterroot boundary ran down Sixty-Two Ridge to the Selway, then south along Moose Ridge to Wylie's Peak and Archer Mountain.

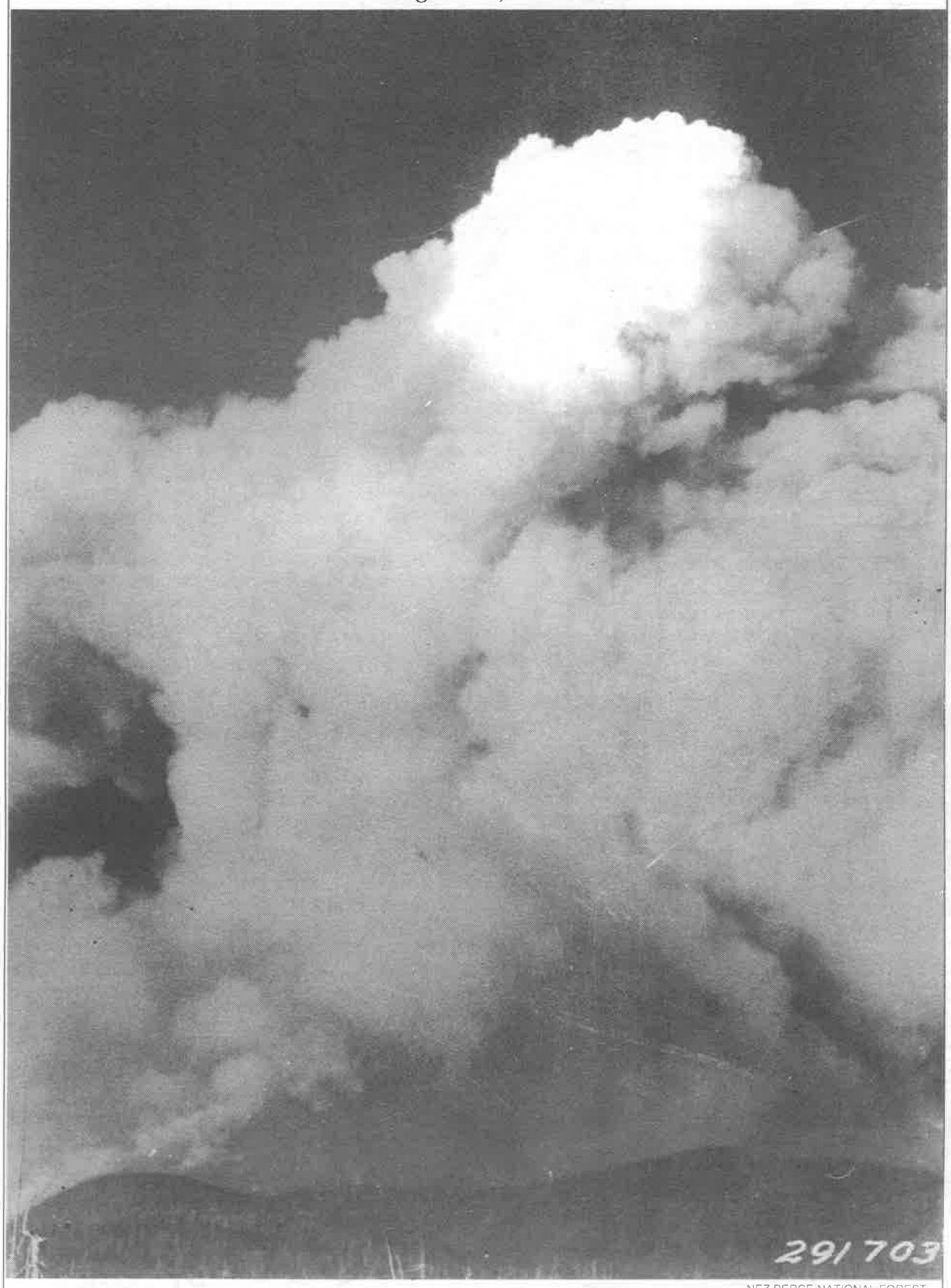
Middlefork and Selway District headquarters remained at Number One and O'Hara, and Pete King remained in use, but by 1935 construction of a single ranger station to replace all of the existing stations was being discussed, and looked within reach. With its Depression-era budgets, the Forest Service alone couldn't finance such a project, but most of the money would come from New Deal agencies, and most of the labor would be furnished by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

The CCC was one of the first of many new government agencies set up in 1933 to help deal with the economic depression that began in 1929. The objective was to furnish employment for young men from 17 to 25. The U.S. Army built camps and supervised the enrollees in everything except work projects, which were run by federal conservation agencies. Participants had to enlist for six months and could re-enlist for up to two years.

Many Forest Service people were skeptical about this program and thought it wouldn't last more than a few months. Some also doubted that unskilled boys from Eastern cities and the rural South could accomplish much. However, the Roosevelt Administration pushed the program with vigor, and soon the woods of northern Idaho were full of CCC enrollees from all over the nation. In August 1934, some 2,475 of them helped fight the Pete King-McClendon Butte fire.

The first CCC camp in the lower Lochsa-Selway country was set up in 1933 at the mouth of Canyon Creek on the Lochsa. It was a seasonal camp. Most of the enrollees were from New York, and they worked on a road from the Lochsa to Van Camp lookout. In 1934, a tent camp was established at Glover Creek on the Selway that was occupied by about 80 enrollees from the Chicago area and a few local participants. This was also a seasonal camp. The projects were construction of steel bridges across the Selway and Meadow Creek, together with initial work on the Fog Mountain, Indian Hill, and Falls Point roads.

August 17, 1934



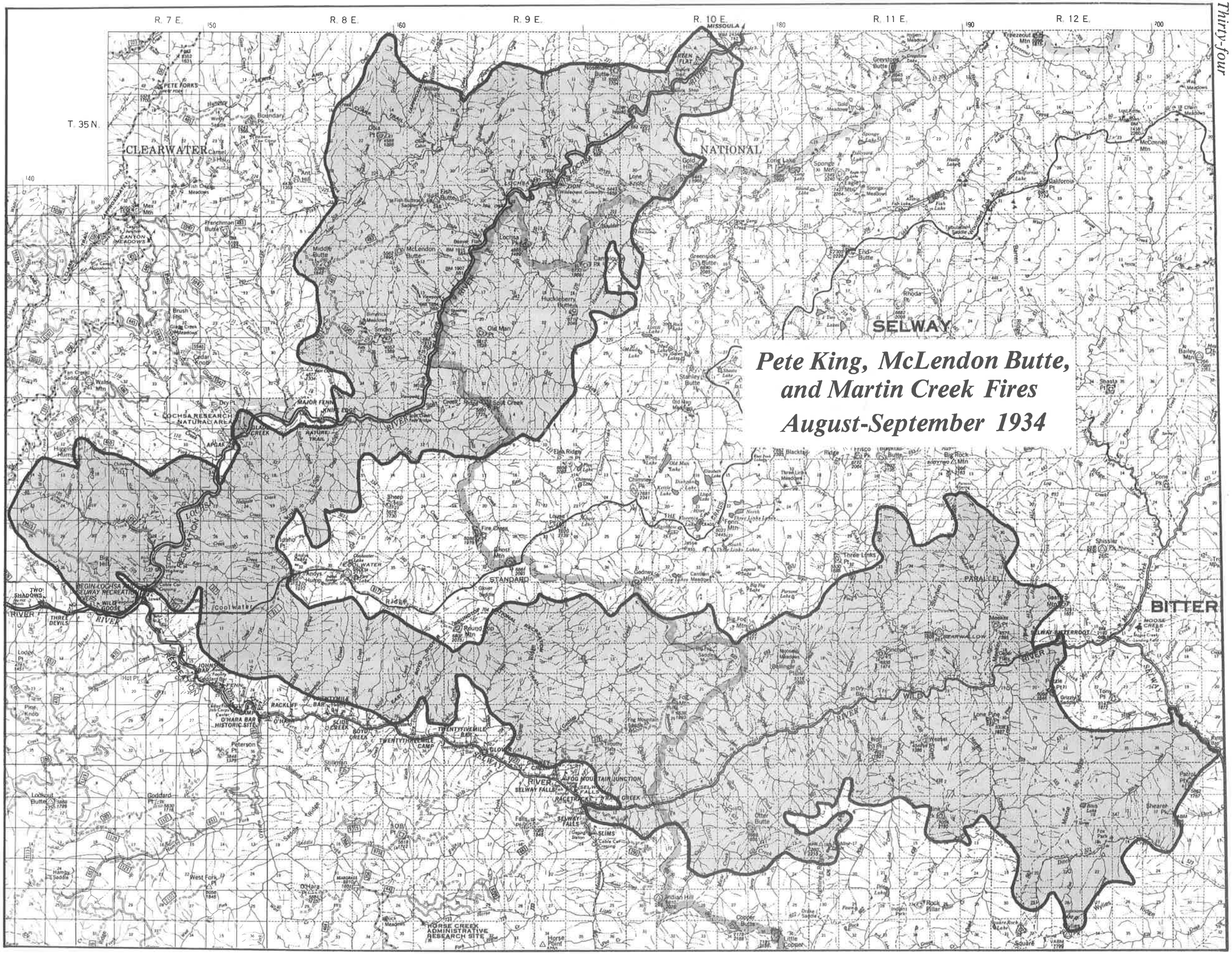
NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

The McLendon Butte fire started on August 11. Control efforts were making headway on it and the Pete King fire when high winds came up and made firefighting impossible. The two fires blackened 53,300 acres in eight hours on August 17, an average of over 100 acres a minute. When finally controlled, these fires had burned 252,300 acres, about an eighth of the Selway National Forest.

The Aftermath

ERNIE BOHN

This photograph of the Otter Creek drainage was taken during the 1934-1935 winter and is representative of the landscape after the 1934 fires. Grass was seeded and trees were planted in a few accessible places, but these were only token efforts. Most of the regeneration was left to nature.



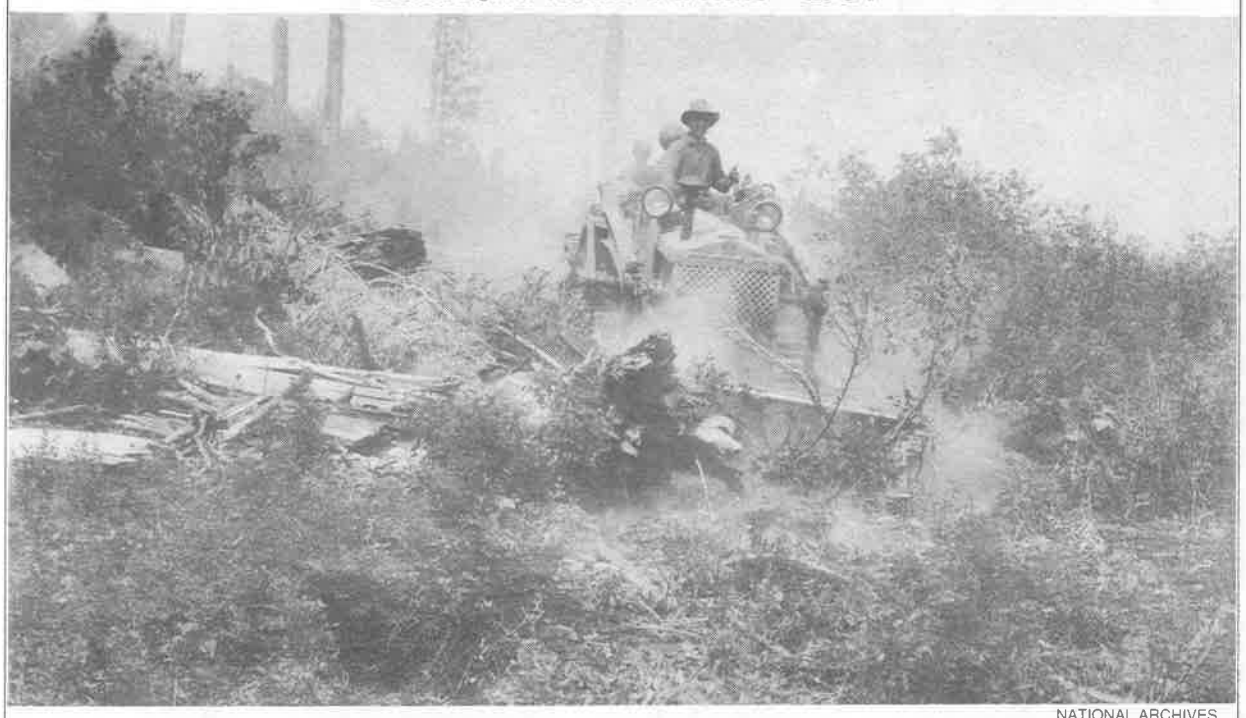
Pete King, McLendon Butte, and Martin Creek Fires August-September 1934

On the Way to the Big Fire

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Of the 5,000 men on the Pete King-McLendon Butte firelines, nearly half were CCC enrollees from camps in Idaho and Montana. Few of them had any experience fighting forest fires; the program was still new and CCC crews had not yet been fully incorporated into the Forest Service fire control organization. That all changed in the next few years.

Bulldozers on the Fireline—1934



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Three bulldozers built about 20 miles of line on the McLendon Butte fire in 1934. This was the first time they had ever been used for this purpose.

The Forest Service played a big part in the development of the bulldozer. In 1929, Earl Hall, a Forest Service road construction foreman in California, designed an adjustable angle blade that could be raised and lowered hydraulically. Commercial manufacturers quickly began to turn out machines based on the principles developed by Hall.

The first bulldozers were small and lacked power, but they were improved during World War II. The Caterpillar D-7 appeared in 1944, and it revolutionized road construction.

Trail Construction—New Style

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

These photographs were taken on the Selway Trail near Teepee Creek in the late 1940s. It was a major relocation job. The old trail wound up and down through the bluffs and was the site of some spectacular wrecks with pack strings.

As is apparent, trail construction had become mechanized. Compressors and air drills had replaced double-jacking. The scaled-down bulldozer eliminated many hours of hand work.

The man standing beside the "trail cat" is Fred Reimler, longtime alternate ranger on the Selway District.

DEL COX

DEL COX

In 1935, a year-round 200-man camp was built below the ranger station on O'Hara Bar. The first enrollees to work out of this camp were from Illinois, but after the fall of 1936 most of them were from Arkansas. A few were local.

Although the enrollees were civilians, the camps were run along military lines by reserve Army officers. There were inspections, bed checks, and formations at reveille and retreat. World War I surplus uniforms were issued along with denim work clothes. The Army also furnished medical and dental care, and arranged for recreational activities.

Work was directed by project superintendents. In the beginning, these were political appointees, and some of the early ones knew little or nothing about the work to be done. When it became apparent that the CCC was a vast reserve of manpower that wasn't going to disappear, the Forest Service began searching out its own employees who were both competent and politically acceptable and getting them placed in the CCC program. The superintendents then selected the foremen needed. On the Nez Perce, the CCC project superintendents were not attached to ranger districts; they worked directly for the forest supervisor.

All the enrollees tried to get duty in spike camps, which were run by the Forest Service. Food for these camps was bought locally on competitive bids and was much better than that served in the main camp. In addition, there was little if any military presence in the spike camps.

Since almost all of the enrollees arrived on the Selway totally inexperienced in the work they were to do, on-the-job training was an important part of the program. Many skilled craftsmen and equipment operators were hired. In addition, Camp O'Hara had an education program, which was conducted after hours and was voluntary. An educational advisor on the camp staff determined the needs and interests of enrollees, then tried to find persons among the Army officers, the Forest Service people, and the enrollees themselves to serve as instructors. Classes in basic literacy were always being held; at one time, 83 of 150 enrollees at O'Hara could neither read nor write. Other classes were set up on almost any subject if an interest existed and an instructor could be found.

Payday for the enrollees was once a month, in cash. The basic salary was $30 a month; each enrollee got $5 and the rest was sent to his parents. Thus, construction projects on the Selway contributed substantially to the economy of Arkansas.

In addition to the 12 buildings at the new ranger station, the CCC laborers, working beside experienced craftsmen, built bridges, roads, and telephone lines. They also did some trail and lookout construction and became an important part of the fire control organization. They learned fast and were willing workers. Forest Service skepticism about the program vanished early.

Construction of Fenn Ranger Station was fully underway by the fall of 1936. The next year, an administration building, two warehouses, and two garages were completed. By the end of 1938, a cookhouse, gashouse, and one residence had been added. Another residence, a bunkhouse, and a powerhouse were completed in 1939. The barn was built in 1940.

During this time, other CCC crews worked on road construction. By 1936, the road from the forest boundary near Tahoe to Lookout Butte, which had previously been pioneered by Forest Service crews, was widened and improved with CCC labor. The Fog Mountain road had been completed. By late 1937, roads to Indian Hill and Falls Point lookouts were finished, as was a road from the Lochsa to Big Hill. The last major project, a road up Swiftwater Creek that joined the Tahoe-Lookout Butte road, was completed in 1939.

The other major CCC project from 1936 to 1941 was construction of new telephone lines from Grangeville to Fenn Ranger Station and from Grangeville to Elk City. Rights-of-way were surveyed and cleared, poles were set at regular intervals, and the wires were supported by crossarms on the poles. Trees were not used. These lines were the forest's primary communication system until commercial telephone service became available.

Ever since about 1915, when it became obvious that no railroad would be built over Lolo Pass and down the Lochsa canyon, interest had grown in a highway on the route. Major Fenn was one of the chief promoters of this highway: he made a speech on the subject to the Missoula Chamber of Commerce four years before the first road reached Lowell. His efforts increased after his retirement from the Forest Service. In 1921 he told reporters, "The Lolo Pass highway is my only hobby, and I am certain I am going to see the realization of my dream."

By 1928, the road had been built east to Bimerick Creek and west to Powell Ranger Station. Then construction stopped; other projects were given priority and no money was available. About 50 miles remained to be built.

CCC Road Construction

DEL COX

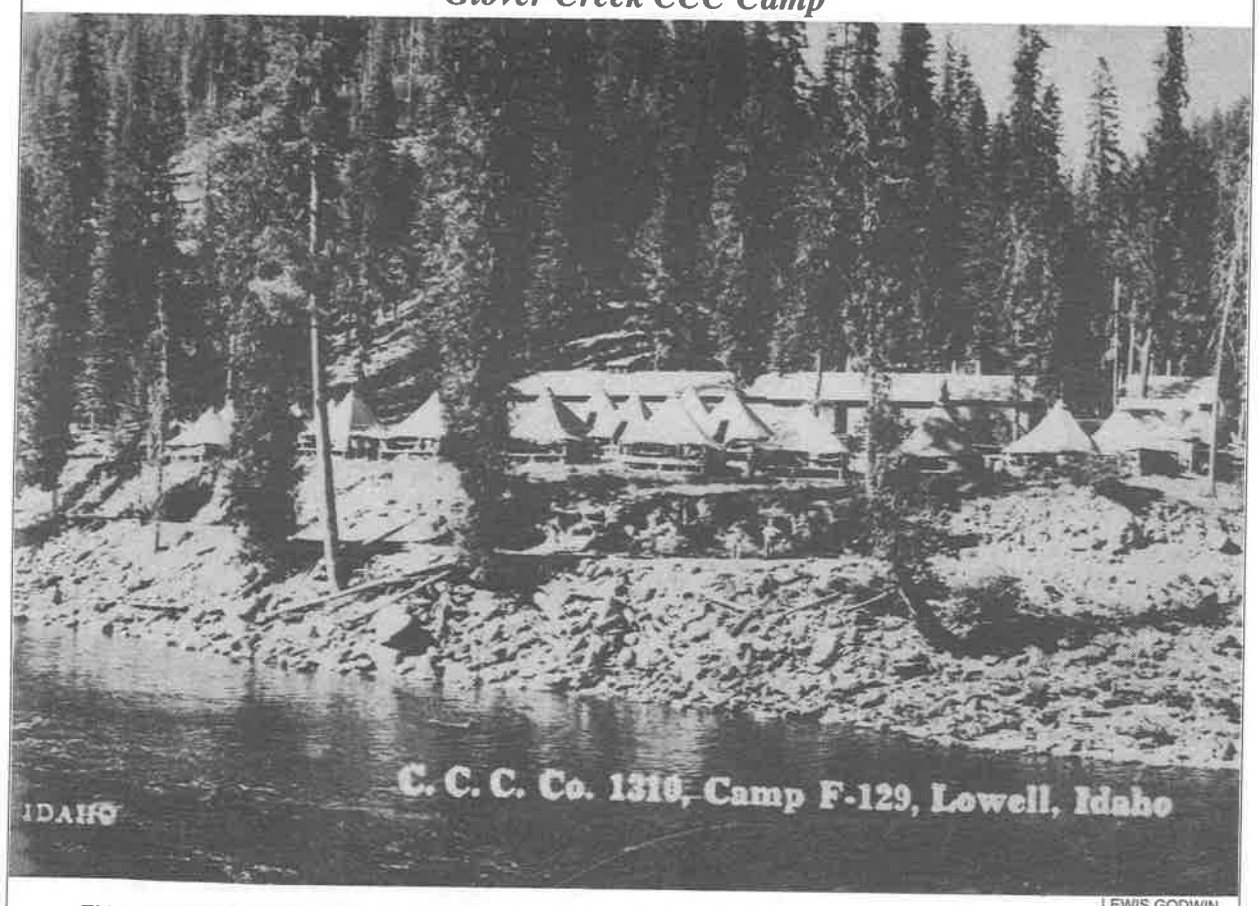
Design of the CCC roads was primitive by present-day engineering standards. They were "truck trails" only, and were built much the same as pack trails, but wider. Grades were established with an Abney level, and usually only a centerline location was staked.

Much of the work was done with hand tools; however, the CCC crews did have air compressors and pneumatic jackhammers, which eliminated double-jacking. At least one small bulldozer was in constant use on each job.

The Forest Service built these roads for use during the summer fire season and did not anticipate the heavy use they would eventually get during the fall hunting season. As built, they were not surfaced and had few culverts or drainage ditches, making them subject to damage from heavy traffic in wet weather. That problem continues to this day.

Some of the roads, such as Van Camp and Big Hill, were later converted to trails. Others, such as the Swiftwater Road, were later widened and stabilized to accommodate logging traffic.

Glover Creek CCC Camp



LEWIS GODWIN

This was the first CCC camp on the Selway and was not occupied in the winter. It operated during the 1934 and 1935 seasons and was then replaced by the year-round camp at O'Hara. The wooden buildings are the messhall and shower house.

Glover Campground now occupies this site.

CCC Telephone Lines

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Commercial telephone service in Idaho County was limited in the late 1930s, and the increasing use of electric power caused problems where Forest Service ground-return telephone lines were near power lines. In 1941, the CCC finished a "metallic" telephone line between Fenn Ranger Station and Grangeville which overcame these problems.

This line was not attached to trees; poles and crossarms were used throughout. The poles were cut from standing dead cedar taken from wherever it could be found and treated with creosote. Number 12 copperweld wire was used, with two wires to a circuit. The wires were crossed over each other without touching (transposed) according to a predetermined scheme: this eliminated interference from electric power sources.

O'Hara CCC crews also built a metallic line between Grangeville and Elk City. This line was designed by Bell Telephone and had a "phantom" circuit: three circuits were run on four wires. Everyone was skeptical about this, since it seemed to defy common sense, but the instructions were followed exactly and when the line was finished, it worked as promised.

A metallic telephone line was also planned between Fenn Ranger Station and Selway Falls, but it was never finished past Twenty-Three Mile Creek. Two ground-return lines ran from there to Selway Falls Cabin.

The metallic telephone lines were expensive to maintain, and as soon as commercial service became available in the early 1960s, the Forest Service left the telephone business. The line between Kooskia and Lowell was sold to the highest bidder. "It brought $1.00," Lochsa District Ranger Louis Hartig recalled, "and at that I had to talk the man into bidding."

NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

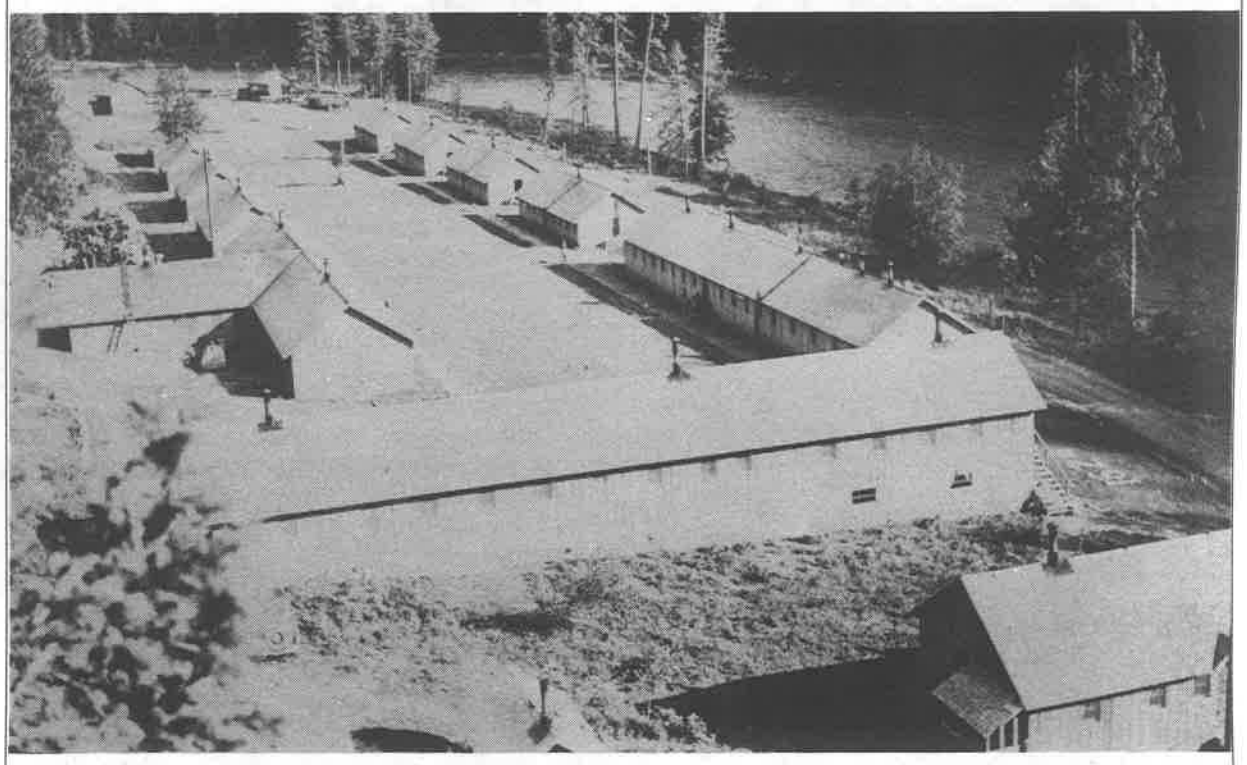
In 1935, supporters of the highway persuaded the Federal Bureau of Prisons to bring in convict labor. The bureau established a camp at Canyon Creek, the second of its kind in the United States. The prisoners were to be supervised on the job by the Bureau of Public Roads, and the Forest Service was to contribute money for supplies.

The camp superintendent and several guards arrived in Kooskia in September 1935. In December, the first small group of prisoners arrived and was taken to the camp. They were housed temporarily in the abandoned CCC messhall. By spring, enough buildings had been completed to accommodate 60 prisoners; and by midsummer, 80 were living there. The capacity of the camp was eventually increased to 160.

There were no chain gangs on the road project, the prisoners did not wear uniforms and the guards did not carry guns. Most of the prisoners were either doing a short term or the last year or so of a long sentence. The camp was largely self-governing: committees of prisoners prescribed punishment for infractions of camp rules. Prisoners were allowed the run of the camp after duty hours. The emphasis was on rehabilitation.

However, security was not ignored. The road was closed above Pete King Creek. Hunters were allowed to pass through enroute to the Van Camp area, but they had to register at Pete King Ranger Station and be checked through at the prison camp, where they were told they could not stay below Deadman Creek. The prisoners

O'Hara CCC Camp

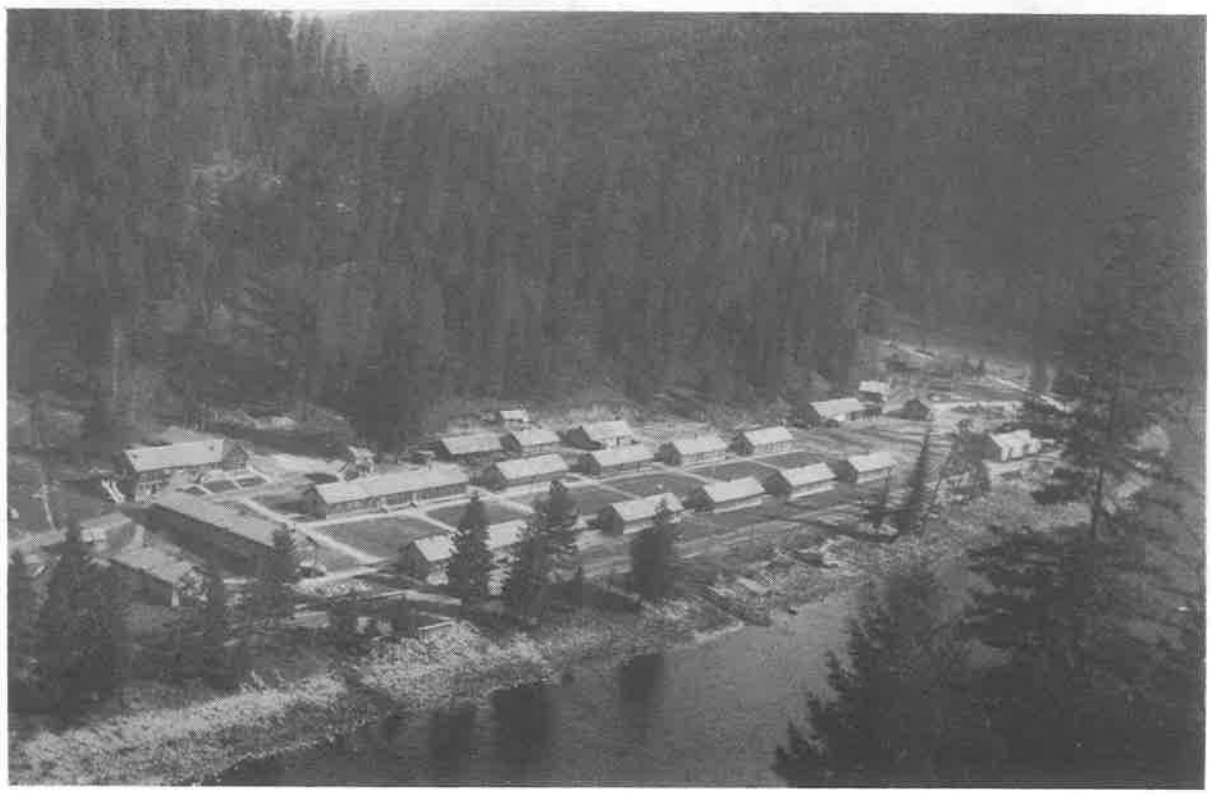


NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

This camp was built in 1935 on the river bar below O'Hara Ranger Station. The buildings were designed by the U.S. Army, which also supervised their construction.

The building farthest downstream is the infirmary. The long building parallel to it is quarters for Army officers and Forest Service foremen. The T-shaped building is the messhall, and across from it, in the same building, are the Army and Forest Service offices and the recreation hall. The others are barracks and utility buildings.

When the camp was closed in 1942, the Forest Service took it over. In 1946, the O'Hara Camp Association, a group of church Sunday school and 4-H organizations, began using the camp for summer meetings. This use continued until the buildings became unsafe. In 1969, those remaining were burned.



DEL COX

Canyon Creek Prison Camp

AMELIA JACKS

The drawing shows the camp, looking down Canyon Creek toward the Lochsa River. The stacks on the lower building are on generators that furnished electric power for the camp and the residential area.

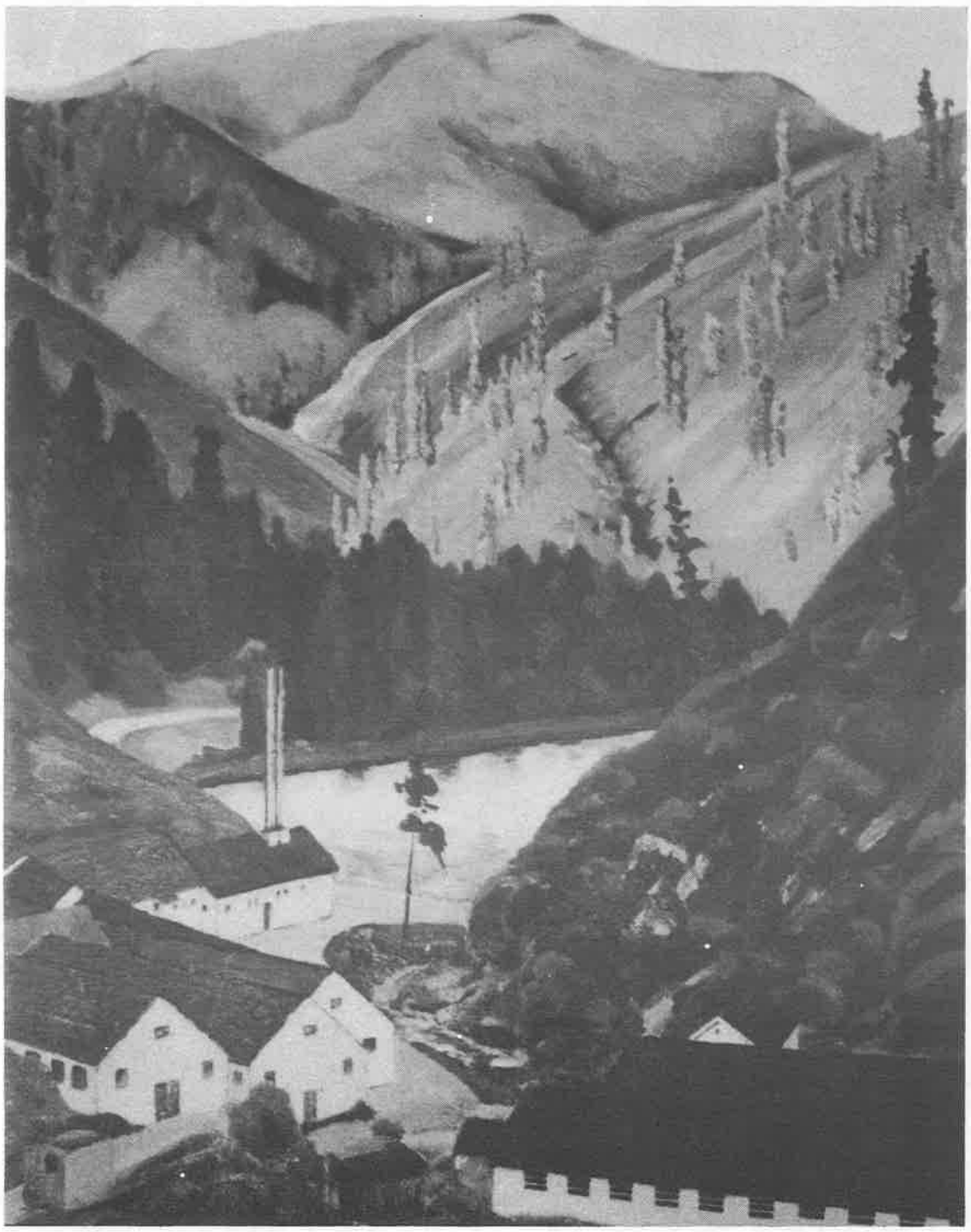
The dormitories in the camp were about 25 feet wide and 125 feet long. A combination messhall/assembly room was about the same size. There were other, smaller buildings.

In the photograph below, the building in the foreground is the messhall. A corner of the administration building appears to the right of it.

Ten cottages for guards and administrators were located a half-mile upriver on a landscaped site at Apgar Creek (top).

All of the buildings are gone now. Some were torn down after the camp was closed in 1945; others were hauled away intact. Part of the residential area is now a Forest Service campground.

CECIL BOLLER



CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST

worked on the Syringa-Lowell section of the road from time to time, and local residents were cautioned not to have anything to do with them or they would be moved back up the river. These warnings were heeded since the road was badly in need of work and at the time there appeared no other way to get it done.

New construction on the highway had to go through cliffs and bluffs, many of solid rock. There never was enough heavy equipment on the job for this kind of work and little progress was made building new road, but most of the existing road above Pete King was widened and improved. With the help of a Work Projects Administration (WPA) crew, the road was pioneered to Wildhorse Creek.

By the mid-1930s, it began to look as if national forest lands in the Lochsa-Selway country might eventually be completely roaded. Construction of truck trails was well underway almost everywhere. Many had been completed, and many more were planned.

Since 1929, Forest Service regulations had provided for establishment of "primitive areas," "within which will be maintained primitive conditions of environment, transportation, habitation, and subsistence with a view to conserving the values of such areas for purposes of public education and recreation."

On July 3, 1936, the Chief of the Forest Service established the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area. It contained 1,870,000 acres, all but 290,000 of which were in Idaho. No new roads were allowed, but those under construction were to be completed to logical stopping places. Construction of airplane landing fields was not restricted. There was no general public pressure for the establishment of this primitive area: the Forest Service decided it was worth doing and did it. Public comments were solicited, but most people simply weren't interested.

The regulation under which primitive areas were established was rescinded in 1939 and replaced by a set of new regulations. These provided for studies of all existing primitive areas and specified that those with greatest values as wilderness be so designated. The

Chief of the Forest Service directed that these areas should, even before formal reclassification, be managed as wilderness as set out in the new regulations. Thus, although official reclassification was still some years in the future, the name "Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness" began to appear on maps.

By the fall of 1939, Fenn Ranger Station was ready for occupancy, and Middlefork and Selway district employees began moving from O'Hara, Pete King, and Number One. The new station had meeting rooms, a cookhouse, a bunkhouse, and a gashouse that were used by both districts, but each district had its own warehouse, garage, and office space in the administration building.

Forest Service Facilities by Decade of Construction

(R)—Replacement; (E)—Building still exists

MIDDLEFORK DISTRICT D-6

1900-1910

Rye Patch Cabin	Number One Cabin
Tahoe Cabin	Pete King Cabin
Other Unknown Cabins	

1911-1920

Coolwater L.O.	Canyon Meadows Cabin

1921-1930

Idaho Point L.O.	Bimerick Cabin
Roundtop Cabin	Woodrat L.O.
Wildhorse Cabin (Lochsa River)	Iron Mountain Cabin
	Lookout Butte L.O.

1931-1940

Clear Creek L.O.	Big Hill L.O.
Crane Hill L.O.	Dry Point L.O.
Walde L.O.	Lodge Point L.O.
Coolwater L.O. (R) (E)	Frenchman Butte L.O.
Hot Point L.O.	Lookout Butte L.O. (R)
Van Camp L.O.	West Fork L.O.
Goddard Point L.O.	

1941-1950

Woodrat L.O. (R)

1951-1960

Coolwater L.O. (R) (E)

1961-1970

Lookout Butte L.O. (R) (E)

In 1941, the Middlefork District maintained 161 miles of trail, 128 miles of ground-return telephone line, and 41 miles of metallic telephone line.

SELWAY DISTRICT D-7

1900-1910

Selway Falls Cabin (E)	Sixty-Two Cabin
Teepee Cabin	O'Hara Cabin (burned 1910)
Other Unknown Cabins	

1911-1920

O'Hara Cabin (R) (E)	Dry Bar Cabin (Selway River)

1921-1930

Bearwallow L.O.	Falls Point L.O.
Indian Hill L.O.	Beargrass Cabin
Iron Mt. Cabin	Tom's Cabin
Fog Mountain L.O.	Highline L.O.
Vermilion Peak L.O.	Meadow Creek Cabin (E)
Blacktail Butte Cabin	

1931-1940

Disgrace L.O.	Fog Mountain L.O. (R)
Highline L.O. (R)	Otter Butte L.O.
Remount Cabin	High Spring L.O.
Horse Point L.O.	O'Hara Point L.O.
Stillman Point L.O.	Three Links Cabin

1941-1950

Frisco Peak L.O.

1951-1960

Indian Hill L.O. (R) (E)	Bearwallow L.O. (R)

Lookout points, without buildings, regularly used in the 1930s include Mink Peak, Prospect Point, and Wolf Point.

In 1941, the Selway District maintained 397 miles of trail, 129 miles of ground-return telephone line, and 8 miles of metallic telephone line.

Each ranger had a house and garage on the site. Electricity was furnished by a hydroelectric plant which used water from Johnson Creek.

Everything was moved by the spring of 1940, and all property was marked either D-6 (Middlefork) or D-7 (Selway) to eliminate mixups.

Fire occurrence in 1940 on the Nez Perce and Clearwater was the highest in history, but that year the forests had more men to fight them than ever before. Both forests had several CCC camps, and the Clearwater also had a large force working in white pine blister rust control. Each district at Fenn manned at least 12 lookouts, and both had large project crews. So despite the large number of fires, manpower was available to attack them.

Also in 1940, two men parachuted to a fire in the Martin Creek drainage on the Selway District. It was the first use of smokejumpers on an actual fire. Within a few years, backcountry firefighting was changed forever.

The manpower situation changed dramatically after the fall of 1940. It appeared doubtful that the United States could stay out of the war in Europe, and the nation's first peacetime draft had been passed by Congress. Most CCC enrollees and prospective enrollees were draft-age, and the camps began to shrink. Many of the reserve Army officers who administered the CCC were called to active duty. After the U.S. entered the war, help became increasingly hard to find, and the Forest Service hired women and high school students to get the work done. The students were supposed to be 17

Lowell Long Ago

GEORGE TINKER

These photographs show the Lowell commercial area before there was one.

The upper photograph was taken between 1918, when the cable swinging bridge was built across the Lochsa, and 1922, when the first highway bridge was begun. The Wilderness Inn now stands on the ground at the end of the swinging bridge.

The lower photograph is the site of Three Rivers Resort and the residential area above it in the 1940s. The turn onto the east end of the bridge was almost a 90-degree angle, and what was then the Selway River Road is now the entrance drive to the resort. Airplanes landed in the pasture in those days.

The present bridge that crosses the river at the lower end of the flat was built in 1956-1957.

BOB SMITH

years old, but some of them were 16 or even 15; if they could do the job, no one much cared how old they were. There was only one ranger at Fenn during most of the war years; he ran both districts.

In the spring of 1942, the O'Hara CCC camp was closed, and a year later the Canyon Creek Prison Camp was converted to a wartime internment camp. In all, 1,250 prisoners had been assigned to Canyon Creek. There had been 17 escapes, but all escapees had been captured.

Shortly after the last prisoners departed, a contingent of Japanese internees arrived at the camp. These were not prisoners captured in battle; most were fishermen on Japanese boats off the U.S. coast when the war began.

The internment program continued under the direction of the U.S. Immigration Service until the end of World War II. The camp was never reopened after that.

The postwar years brought great changes. Wartime experiments with scheduled air patrols for fire detection in Montana were so successful that this method was adopted everywhere. Radio communication began to be reliable. The smokejumpers became a potent organization. As a result, many lookouts were no longer needed and were abandoned, along with many miles of trails and telephone lines.

The most significant development during the war years and immediately thereafter was a boom in the lumber business. Twin Feather Mills, Inc., constructed mills at Kamiah and at the mouth of Clear Creek outside of Kooskia, and there were other, smaller operators. For the first time, there was a demand for national forest timber other than cedar.

The Forest Service eagerly turned to timber sale preparation and administration. Protection of the timber resource had been the dominant mission for over 50 years; now the timber could be managed and forestry could be practiced on a large scale. Timber management and road engineering skills, never absent from the organization but never widespread either, were rapidly developed on all but the most remote ranger districts.

To help meet the growing demand for logs, the Middlefork District in 1951 made the largest single sale up to that time in the history of the Nez Perce National Forest. This sale, in Smith Creek and Pete King Creek, was entered by a road built across the site of the old Number One Ranger Station. Of the 44 million board feet sold, almost half was grand fir, a species that previously had had little value.

In 1953, Twin Feather Mills became part of the Potlatch Corporation (then Potlatch Forests, Inc.) which assured that demand for national forest timber in the Lochsa-Selway area would remain constant.

After the war, work was resumed on the Lewis-Clark Highway and it was done by contractors, not prison labor or enemy aliens. By 1956, it was clear that the road would be completed in the next few years. This made another forest boundary adjustment necessary.

On July 1, 1956, all of the Nez Perce Forest lands north of the Middle Fork of the Clearwater and the

District Rangers—Middlefork and Selway Districts

The first forest rangers were hired in 1899, but no two men were in charge of specific areas known as the Middlefork and Selway Ranger Districts until the fall of 1909.

MIDDLEFORK
Joe McGhee 1909-1915
Charlie MacGregor 1916-1922
Jack Parsell 1923-1925
Ray Ferguson 1926-1934
Charlie MacGregor 1935-1939
Abner Foskett (Acting) 1940-1941
Del Cox (Acting) 1942
Ed Shults 1943-1946

SELWAY
Jim Agnew 1909-1917
S.I. (Rene) McPherson 1918-1922
Clayton Crocker 1923-1932
Fred Shaner 1933-1934
Dewey Sousley 1935-1937
Jack Gaffney 1938-1943
George Wolstad 1947-1949

(Foskett and Cox had been CCC project superintendents. Shults ran both districts from 1944 to 1946; Wolstad ran both districts from 1947 to 1949.)

MIDDLEFORK
Bill Johnson 1949-1956

SELWAY
Glenn Boy 1949-1956

(The Middlefork District was discontinued in 1956, and the area north of the Middlefork River and Coolwater Ridge went to the Lochsa Ranger District, Clearwater National Forest.)

LOCHSA
Lou Hartig 1943-1966
John Leasure 1967-1969
Joe Higgins 1970-1974
Jon Bledsoe 1974-

SELWAY
Bill Johnson 1957
Karl Spelman 1958-1960
John Ulrich 1960-1962
Clyde Blake 1962-1965
Bill Covey 1965-1966
Ike Ellison 1966-1971
Tom Squire 1971-1977
Darrel Kenops 1977-1981
John Righter 1981-1983
John Twiss 1984-1986
Gloria Flora 1986-1990

Lowell Post Office

JUDY LEFLER

The first post office at Lowell was established in 1908 in Henry Lowell's house. The last one was located along the Lewis-Clark Highway beside the original highway bridge across the Lochsa.

The post office was closed in July, 1943, when rural mail service out of Kooskia began. Mail was delivered daily except Sunday to individual mailboxes between Kooskia and Fenn Ranger Station. A few families living upriver had to come to the station to get their mail.

The three persons in the photograph are Charlie and Violet Johnson on the left and Lon Osborne, postmaster, on the right.

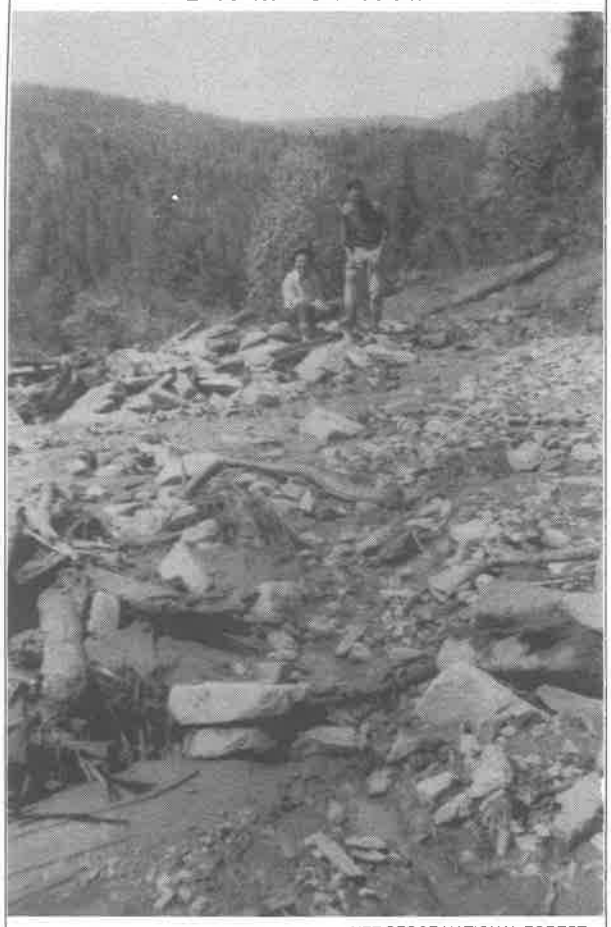
Working on the Highway

CECIL BOLLER

In May 1943, the first group of Japanese internees arrived at the Canyon Creek Prison Camp, replacing federal prisoners who had worked on the Lewis-Clark Highway since 1936. It was wartime, and since little heavy equipment was available most of the work was done by hand.

There was little problem with attempted escapes. None of the Japanese wanted to be at large in a Caucasian nation at war with their country. No one was shooting at them on the Lochsa, and they were even paid a small wage for their work.

The 1948 Flood



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

Almost every spring during the snowmelt, the weather turns warm for a few days, loosening and softening the snow in the high country. This is often followed by locally heavy rains, which melt the snow rapidly. The result is a torrent of water roaring down individual streams, which sometimes causes channel alterations and damage to trails, roads, and anything else that happens to be in the way.

In late May 1948, unseasonably hot weather was followed by drenching rains over the entire Clearwater country. Water gushed out of nearly every drainage. The Lochsa had been higher on one other occasion since recordkeeping began, but the Selway and Middlefork surpassed all previous levels.

Damage was extensive. The upper photograph shows the Selway Road at the Johnson Creek crossing; it had to be reconstructed. The lower photograph shows debris lodged against a bridge that loggers had built across the river at O'Hara Creek. The bridge gave way a few minutes after the picture was taken.

Lochsa-Selway divide were transferred to the Clearwater National Forest. Plans were already underway for a new ranger station at Kooskia.

The Nez Perce took over the Moose Creek District from the Clearwater and Bitterroot forests. The ranger there transferred to another district on the Bitterroot, and the Selway district ranger at Fenn moved to Moose Creek.

Fenn became a one-ranger operation. The Middlefork District was discontinued and its ranger took over the Selway District, which was now those parts of the Middlefork District that remained with the Nez Perce and a large part of the old Selway District.

Designed and built to accommodate two districts as they existed in 1935, Fenn Ranger Station was a two-district headquarters for 16 years. Never without problems, the two-district concept finally became unworkable. Because of manpower shortages during the war and after, two fully qualified district rangers were in residence only seven of those sixteen years.

7. A Legacy for Future Generations

After 1956, logging increased on the ridgetops above the north side of the lower Lochsa, the south side of the lower Selway, and both sides of the Middlefork. Timber sale preparation and administration, along with road design and construction, became the major Forest Service activities; and the wood products industry became the area's largest employer.

By 1968, the Lochsa-Selway country was known nationwide, but not for timber production. The lumber business was booming all over the West, and the local expansion was not unique. National attention was centered on large acreages of undeveloped lands and clean, clear, free-flowing streams, which more and more were viewed as scarce national assets.

In 1953, the Forest Service began reexamining the boundaries of the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area, which was being managed as a National Forest Wilderness under 1939 U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations, but had not yet been formally reclassified.

The Wilderness Society took an active part. In general, their position was that no acreage reductions should be made except those absolutely necessary to accommodate existing roads. The society bitterly opposed construction of a proposed road on the upper Selway that would connect an existing road at Warm Springs Bar with another existing road at Paradise Guard Station.

DEL COX

In the spring of 1961, hearings were held on proposed boundary revisions. Public interest in wilderness, largely nonexistent in 1936 when the Primitive Area was established, was now intense. Few questioned the need for wilderness; most of the debate was over the size of the area, the location of the boundaries, and the various restrictions to be imposed on use.

People and Places

Fenn Ranger Station was originally to be called Goddard Bar Ranger Station. The local rangers opposed this; Goddard had not exactly been an outstanding citizen, they said. When the time came to order a sign for the new station, it was decided to change the name. In a letter to Regional Forester Evan W. Kelley, Nez Perce Forest Supervisor Roy Phillips said, "It is a well-known fact that no forest officer in these parts has ever been able to measure up to Major Fenn in the estimation of those who knew him."

◆

Electric power lines of the Idaho County Light and Power Cooperative had reached Wilson Creek on the Middlefork by 1949, and the next year were extended to Swiftwater Flat on the Selway. Employees at Fenn Ranger Station had to struggle with the hydroelectric plant, a never-ending source of problems, until 1958 when commercial power finally arrived.

◆

The only literary magazine ever published on the Lochsa was written by prisoners at the Canyon Creek camp. The *Lochsa Pioneer* was issued at regular intervals for at least three years. A sample, from a 1940 issue: "I stand atop the precipitous walls of formidable Black Canyon, and look straight down more than 2,000 feet at the swirling tremolo of air hammers and the whine of machinery as it cuts a thoroughfare through this wilderness."

◆

The years following the economic crash of 1929 were not easy ones for the local residents. No one had much money even before the Depression, and the general business slowdown made things worse. Seasonal Forest Service employment and various New Deal programs helped many families keep food on their tables. The market for cedar fence posts held up through the worst years, and just about everyone in the country split and sold them.

◆

Before U.S. 12 was paved, travel was slow. The road was usually rough and in dry weather the traffic produced great clouds of dust, which was always a nuisance and sometimes a hazard.

A bus trip from the Lowell area to the Kooskia school and back resulted in a long day for the children. In 1949, an elementary school was established at the old Pete King Ranger Station, and all the pupils in grades one through eight who lived above Smith Creek attended it. The schoolhouse was a building moved from the Canyon Creek Prison Camp, and the teacher lived nearby.

The Pete King School was discontinued in 1956.

◆

The Lewis-Clark Highway was formally dedicated August 20, 1962. On that day some 4,500 persons gathered at Packer Meadows near Lolo Pass and watched the governors of Idaho and Montana saw a log into two pieces with a crosscut saw.

This ceremony was held 43 years after the first construction on the road—a bridge across the Middlefork at Kooskia that was replaced before the highway was finished.

◆

The Selway Falls fishway was built in 1963 and 1964 under the direction of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. An open fish ladder was first considered, but it was later decided to excavate a tunnel around the falls.

The fishway is about 10 feet wide and 500 feet long. It is lined with steel and concrete. The final cost was nearly three times the original estimate, and the dollar figure does not include two lives that were lost during construction.

Finally, in January 1963, the Secretary of Agriculture formally established the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, which was about 635,000 acres smaller than the Primitive Area.

At the time, legislation was being considered in Congress that would set up a National Wilderness Preservation System, in which wilderness would be established by law and boundary changes could not be made by administrative action. The idea had long been discussed. The first bill to establish a national wilderness system was introduced in 1940, but World War II shelved the issue.

After the war, supporters renewed their campaign. Momentum built and by 1956 Congress was again considering wilderness legislation. After eight years of debate and 65 different bills, the Wilderness Act was passed in the summer of 1964; and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness became a part of the national system.

The objective of the Wilderness Act was to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." All wilderness was to be established by Congress; the Forest Service and even the President could make only recommendations. However, no "wilderness service" was authorized. The areas were to be managed by those agencies having jurisdiction prior to passage of the act, and no special appropriations were to be made for wilderness administration.

Congress defined wilderness as "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Some uses were prohibited, such as use of any motorized equipment. Other uses, such as landing of airplanes on established landing fields, were allowed to continue. Overall, the areas were to be managed "in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

The Wilderness Act was a landmark in American conservation. Supporters knew a legislative precedent had been set, and directed their efforts toward extending it. They were successful. Four years and one month after final Congressional approval of the National Wilderness Preservation System, a National Wild and Scenic Rivers system was established, which included the Middlefork, Lochsa, and Selway.

A Lowell Landmark

FRANK BOWLES

Frank and Butler Bowles moved to Lowell from Petersburg, Virginia, in 1941, making the 3,000-mile trip in an old school bus loaded with all of their belongings. Frank was no stranger; he grew up in the Clearwater country and had worked on the Selway during the 1914 season. He landed in Virginia during World War I, where he met Butler. They were married in 1919.

Butler knew what kind of house she wanted at Lowell and drew up plans. It was finished in 1947 and has been a landmark ever since.

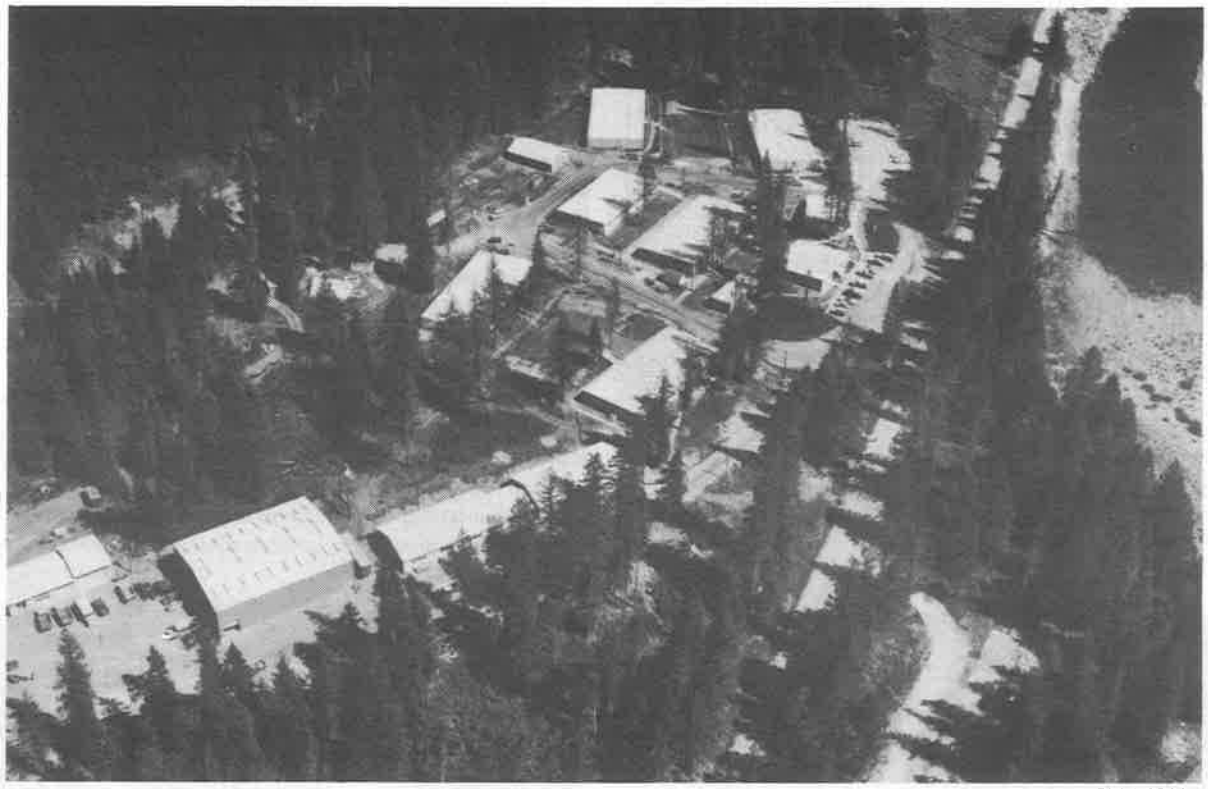
Lochsa Post Flume

BOB SMITH

The 1934 fire left large volumes of sound dead cedar along the lower Lochsa, but much of it was across the river from the highway. The cedar could be split into fence posts, but some way had to be found to transport the posts to the road, where they could be loaded on trucks and hauled to market.

The problem was solved by construction of several flumes, suspended from cables, which used water from creeks on the other side of the river to float posts to the road. These flumes were located at Coolwater Creek, Fire Creek, and others. Thousands of posts were split by hand and floated across and above the Lochsa on the flumes in the 1940s.

Cedar Flats Job Corps Center



BILL HOPSON

The Job Corps was a part of the federal government's "War on Poverty" in the late 1960s. Construction of the Cedar Flats Jobs Corps Center, one of two on the Nez Perce National Forest, began in July 1965. Modular buildings were extensively used; these were made up of 10- by 55-foot sections similar to mobile homes in appearance and construction. Other buildings, such as the shops and gymnasium, were more permanent.

A 30-unit trailer court was built for employees about 1/4 mile from the center. Water supply and sewage treatment systems were also installed. By 1968, there were 18 buildings on the site.

While the Job Corps in some ways resembled the Civilian Conservation Corps, there were important differences. The Job Corps had no connection with the Army; the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Forest Service ran the centers. Basic formal education, a haphazard, after-hours affair in the CCC, was a fundamental objective of the Job Corps. Although on-the-job training existed in the CCC, the goal was immediate employment for the participants. The Job Corps concentrated on vocational training for their future employment.

Most Job Corps enrollees were not well enough educated or trained to enlist in the military services or hold any but the most menial jobs, and that was what the Corps hoped to overcome. At Cedar Flats, it was to be accomplished through three programs. The basic education program furnished instruction in reading and mathematics, the vocational education program trained enrollees in basic work skills, and the work program concentrated on work attitudes and application of practical skills on the job.

The center had a capacity of 220 enrollees, and was authorized a staff of 52. Some staff members were Forest Service career employees, some were local residents, and others were professional educators and social scientists.

The Cedar Flats Job Corps Center lasted four years. After it was closed in the spring of 1969, the modular buildings were moved away. All of the permanent buildings except the gymnasium remain on the site.

This law protected the free-flowing rivers named in it, and its enactment had an immediate effect in the Clearwater country—there would be no more discussion of dams on the river above Kooskia.

Interest in the hydroelectric possibilities of the rivers was not new; power withdrawals had been made as early as 1927. In the early 1950s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as part of a comprehensive plan for development of the Columbia Basin, recommended that a dam be built below Penny Cliffs on the Middlefork about four miles above Kooskia.

Nothing much happened for a few years, but in 1962 Bruce's Eddy (now Dworshak) dam on the North Fork of the Clearwater below Orofino was authorized by Congress, and the Penny Cliffs dam came under serious consideration.

As visualized by the Corps, the dam would be a rock and earth fill structure 620 feet high and 4,300 feet long. The highest pool elevation would be 1,855 feet; this would extend the reservoir 29 miles up the Selway to Pinchot Creek and 20 miles up the Lochsa, past Macaroni Creek. The maximum drawdown of 200 feet would leave Selway Falls exposed, but it would be covered when the reservoir was full. The site of Fenn Ranger Station would be under 100 to 300 feet of water.

By 1963, the Forest Service was conducting simultaneous studies on impacts of the dam, if it were built, and possible inclusion of the Middlefork, Lochsa, and Selway in a nationwide system of "wild rivers," if it were not. The biggest impact of the dam was seen as the relocation of 48 miles of the newly completed Lewis-Clark Highway, at a cost estimated to be $37.6 million. Overall Forest Service costs as a result of the dam were set at $58.6 million.

It was also suggested that if the dam were built and Fenn Ranger Station had to be abandoned, the Selway Ranger District should be split up among the Lochsa District on the Clearwater National Forest and the Elk City, Clearwater, and Moose Creek districts on the Nez Perce.

The dam was never authorized. Wild rivers legislation was introduced in Congress in 1965, and the Forest Service supported it. Reintroduced and modified in the next Congress, it was signed into law in October 1968.

The Wild and Scenic River System was limited to free-flowing rivers that have "outstandingly remarkable" values. By law, "they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations." The Selway within the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness was designated a "wild" river; this category "represents vestiges of primitive America." The Middlefork, the Lochsa, and the Selway outside the wilderness became "recreational" rivers; these are easily accessible by road.

As specified by Congress, shoreline development is controlled along the rivers. The objective is to maintain the status quo; owners of private property are compensated for rights they give up. Nearly $3 million has been paid to property owners along the Middlefork, Lochsa, and Selway to acquire scenic easements and thus assure that in the future the river environment will appear much the same as it does today.

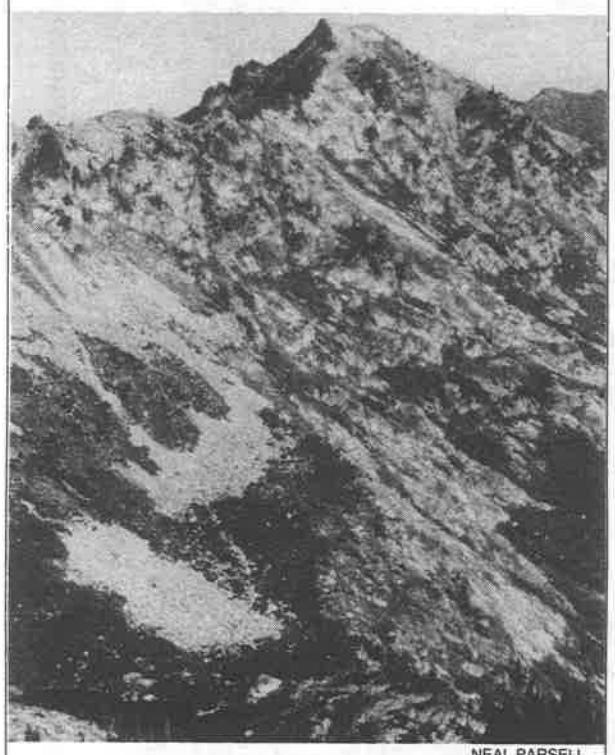
In 1887, Aaron F. Parker, founder of the *Idaho County Free Press*, wrote, "All the region between the Lolo Trail on the north and the Nez Perce Trail on the south is terra incognita. So little is known of that primeval region that information possessed by those who know it best is confined to a knowledge that four large branches of the Clearwater have their sources therein."

That was something of an overstatement but, indeed, little was known about the Lochsa-Selway country then or later, when the first forest rangers and homesteaders arrived. It remained one of America's least developed and least populated regions and attracted little attention until almost every other region in the lower 48 states was industrialized and urbanized.

Then, when wild country was becoming hard to find and clear, free-flowing rivers were disappearing, the Lochsa-Selway country, which had them, became known throughout the United States.

Thus, through specific acts of Congress, an important birthright of Americans yet unborn is preserved in Major Fenn's country.

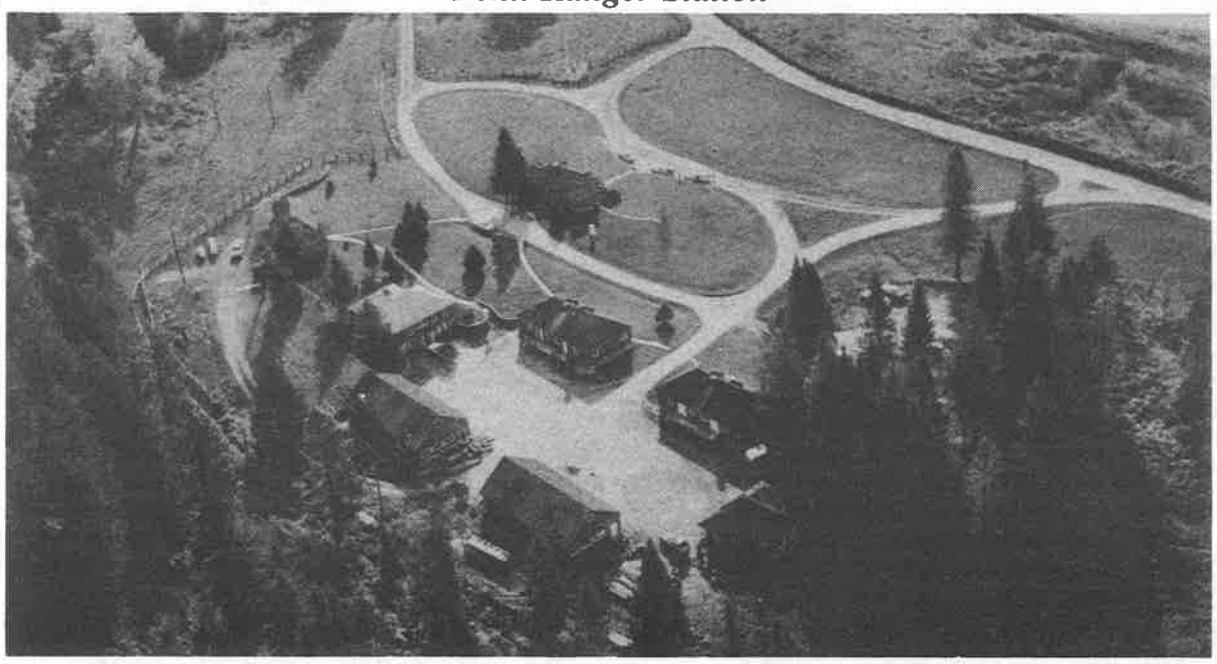
Fenn Mountain



NEAL PARSELL

At 8,021 feet, Fenn Mountain is the highest of the Selway Crags in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and it was named for Frank Fenn during his lifetime.

Fenn Ranger Station



NEZ PERCE NATIONAL FOREST

When Fenn Ranger Station was completed and the grounds landscaped, it was considered a showplace. Today, it is one of the Forest Service's classic stations.

Two garages and two warehouses face the open space on the north and south. The gashouse is on the west side of the compound, and the split-level bunkhouse is on the terrace to the east. The cookhouse is behind the bunkhouse, and the administration building faces the river to the south.

Acknowledgements

Anyone lacking faith in the human race ought to undertake a project such as this one. Nearly a hundred persons helped in one way or another. Many were old friends; others I had never met before. Lack of space prohibits a complete listing, but some debts must be acknowledged.

I would not have begun at all without the support and encouragement of Selway District Ranger John Twiss. Over the next nine months, I made many requests of Selway District and other Nez Perce Forest people, and I thank them all. On the Clearwater Forest, Mel Fowlkes and Dennis Griffith of the Lochsa District were very helpful, as was Forest Archaeologist Karl Roenke.

All of the photographs are credited to the donors in the text, but several contributors deserve special mention.

Marie Hovey of Kooskia obtained several photographs from the Walde family in Minnesota. Emmett Rynearson of Kamiah went to some trouble to find a good photograph of Sumner Rackliff. Ken Schory of Centerville, Ohio, generously supplied prints of photographs taken by his grandfather in 1916.

Charlie Johnson of Woodburn, Oregon, not only supplied photographs of the family's Selway homestead, but made a special trip over to visit me. When I was having trouble dating the O'Hara House, Carl Weholt came up with a photograph of it, confirmed to have been taken in 1912.

Eight persons reviewed the manuscript and made valuable suggestions. Ralph Space of Orofino was supervisor of the Clearwater National Forest from 1954 to 1963 and is a native of the Weippe country. Del Cox worked on the Selway District from 1930 to 1949, minus a few years during World War II, and was project superintendent at O'Hara CCC Camp.

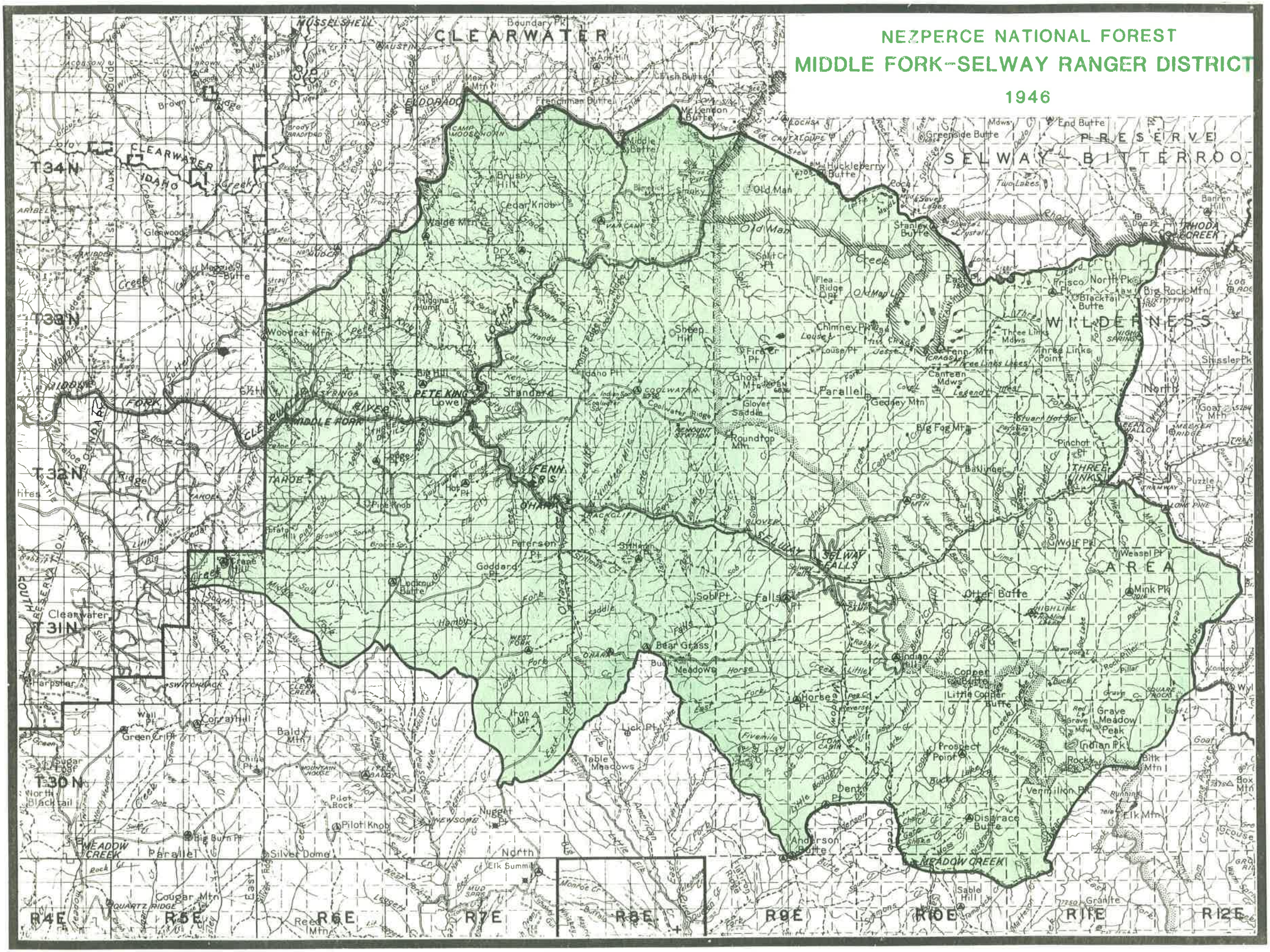
George Robinett was born in 1913, and lived and worked in the Lochsa-Selway-Middlefork area all of his life, with only brief absences. Don McPherson's father and grandfather both worked for the Forest Service, and he was a Fish and Game Department employee for many years. Emmett Rynearson and Ernie Bohn are longtime residents.

Finally Mary Zabinski of the Nez Perce Forest attempted to repair some of my more offensive errors in grammar and punctuation.

This account is largely based on written records, and thanks are due to those who are custodians of the records. Betty DeVeny and Gayle Hauger assisted in locating various Forest Service historical files. The folks in the Idaho County Recorder's Office were very helpful when I was running down property records. The staff of the University of Idaho library was likewise hospitable when I went through microfilms of the old Kooskia newspaper and generally tried to dig out anything else they had.

Elizabeth Jacox of the Idaho State Historical Society furnished biographical material about Major Fenn, and Inez Hopkins sent me information on past activities of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The list could go on and on.

Louis Hartig wryly observed in his excellent account of historical facilities on the Lochsa Ranger District that "if no errors crop up in this record, it will no doubt be the first completely accurate history ever written." All I can add is that any errors here should not be blamed on the people just mentioned. They are mine alone.


NEZPERCE NATIONAL FOREST
MIDDLE FORK-SELWAY RANGER DISTRICT
1946
CLEARWATER
SELWAY-BITTERROOT
PRESERVE
WILDERNESS
AREA
T34N
T33N
T32N
T31N
T30N
R4E
R5E
R6E
R7E
R8E
R9E
R10E
R11E
R12E
Boundary Pk
Mex Mtn
Frenchman Butte
McLendon Butte
Huckleberry Butte
Greenside Butte
End Butte
Stanley Butte
Old Man
Brushy Hill
Cedar Knob
Walde Mtn
Dry Pt
Woodrat Mtn
Sheep Hill
Chimney Pk
Frisco Pk
North Pk
Big Rock Mtn
Blacktail Butte
Three Links Point
Shissler Pk
Big Hill
Lowell
Standard
Parallel
Gedney Mtn
Big Fog Mtn
Roundtop Mtn
Glover Saddle
Ghost Mtn
Canteen Mdws
Pinchot Pt
Batlinger
Puzzle Pt
Goat Mtn
Wolf Pk
Weasel Pt
Mink Pk
Otter Butte
Falls Pt
Sobl Pt
Goddard Pt
Peterson Pt
Lookout Butte
Bear Grass
Buck Meadows
Indian Hill
Copper Butte
Little Copper Butte
Horse Pt
Grave Meadow Peak
Indian Pk
Prospect Point
Vermilion Pk
Elk Mtn
Disgrace Butte
Anderson Butte
Dent Pt
Lick Pt
Table Meadows
Iron Mt
Nugget
North Elk Summit
Silver Dome
Pilot Knob
Pilot Rock
Big Burn Pt
Baldy Mtn
Green Cr Pt
Corral Hill
Harpster
Cougar Mtn
Reed Mtn
Sable Hill
Granite
Clearwater
Elk City
Pierce
Orogrande
Selway Falls
Meadow Creek
Three Links
Fenn Rs
Pete King
Lochsa
Middle Fork
Selway River
Clearwater River
Idaho
Aux
Glenwood
Maggie Butte
Big Horse Cr
Tahoe
Pine Knob
Crane Hill
Hot Pt
Brushy Hill
Cedar Knob
Walde Mtn
Dry Pt
Hudgins Mtn
Sheep Hill
Idaho Pt
Fire Cr Pt
Ghost Mtn
Glover Saddle
Roundtop Mtn
Canteen Mdws
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