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## THE PLAINS SHELTERBELT

By D. S. Olson

Ever since I left the good old Region in 1934 for the hottest, wildest, biggest, most worth-while thing the Forest Service ever found itself holding by the tail - The Shelterbelt - I've wanted to write and tell you all about it. But I couldn't, and there is proof enough that no one could.

...landed us see and few pening devastated resource and not develop modera ing to ain't to protect must be conserved and most important of all are our food productive soils. These soils are being eroded at an alarming rate. When a farmer sees a water pipe that he buried 12 inches below the surface ten years ago now fully exposed, he awakes with a bang to the realization that he has lost 12 inches of the original 16 inches of fertile top soil. Both literally and figuratively,

Archival research by  
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## I'LL NEVER FORGET

By Adolph Weholt

It was early in July 1907, when I heard that the Supervisor at Kooskia, Idaho, wanted a few men for fire protection in the vicinity of Elk City, Idaho. I called at the Supervisor's Office and landed the job. I was instructed to report to Ranger Grant Litchfield at Elk City. I got a saddle horse and a pack horse, and reported to Litchfield two days later. An oldtime prospector, Gus Keating, was at the ranger station awaiting my arrival so that we could take our post at Iron Mountain for detection and fireman duty.

The ranger accompanied us to make sure that we would be properly located, and also to give us instructions on the ground. We made camp on a most beautiful little meadow near the head of American River. The grass was actually feet high. The narrow but deep stream, almost covered by vegetation, abounded with trout. The huckleberry crop was exceptionally good, and gallons of them could be gathered in a short time. The nights were cool, with dew on the grass each morning. There was nothing to disturb our slumbers in the silent nights. The birds sang all day and far into the twilight. In this high altitude the sunshine was perfect.

My duties consisted of riding to the top of Iron Mountain each day, a distance of two and one-half miles. Gus worked at cutting out the trail. What a job! What a paradise! Paid for taking a real outing! Fortunately we had no fires to mar the perfect season.

In September, however, nights became cold, snow fell and killed the grass, our horses gave us trouble, the frost destroyed the huckleberries, the fish quit biting, the birds left, our tent leaked, our scant bedding was not ample for such cold nights, the sun did not shine any more, and around camp it was wet and muddy. That was the only time I have experienced homesickness.

Orders came from the Supervisor for Gus and me to proceed to the Selway River for winter assignment on trail work. The orders were delivered personally by the ranger (not many telephones those days). Three other men joined us, and all five started cross-country for the Selway River. No trail, but lots of brush and thick reproduction, down logs and steep mountains. In going through the dense brush the bunch became separated. It happened that Gus and I, somehow, got back together again. We started down to the river, the slope being so steep that the horses had difficulty in holding their footing. Gus had a large pack horse - we called him "Jumbo." "Jumbo" was not so active, and Gus could see that he was about to lose his balance. Gus snubbed the halter rope around a small fir tree. "Jumbo" was unable to regain his balance even with this help. The big horse settled back on the halter rope more and more, Gus holding on with all his might. Gradually the rope kept slipping, "Jumbo" being much heavier than Gus. (A movie at this moment would have been good.) A few seconds later the knot slipped through Gus' hands. What a spill! "Jumbo" actually sailed through space, landing rods from where he had been standing. It was not a very happy landing on top of the pack, flattening

out our sourdough can, utensils, and tin dishes. The old pack horse continued down the hill, end over end, for 150 yards, and finally jammed between some fallen lodgepole trees. The horse was not hurt, just more dizzy than before. We gathered up what we could find of the pack and proceeded again. From here everything seemed to work in our favor.

We reached the river at dusk. No place to camp here - the steep banks extended to the water's edge. We decided that we had better try to cross. Gus and I were not acquainted with the clear sparkling water in the Selway River. After some discussion, it was agreed that it would be possible to cross at this point. We could see perfectly good bottom all the way across. Gus could not get old "Jumbo" in motion, so I started first. My saddle horse started into the water and went down - down - and submerged completely. The cold water filled my shirt pockets. At this time I thought that I was due for a complete submersion, too. My pack horse followed close behind and came in for the same ducking. Soon realizing his predicament he swam to where footing could be gained.

Gus scrambled around on the rocks and managed to get to a riffle about 100 yards below and crossed without getting into deep water.

With one pack well crushed, the other soaked, we put in our first night on the Selway River. The other men arrived the next day.

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Editor's Note: Let's have more "I'll Never Forget" stories.

Members of the Forest Service should be able to supply interesting stories based on real experiences. These stories may be something humorous, or perhaps one of those embarrassing moments. Perhaps something tragic, pathetic, a good deed, heroism, etc. Look over your list of memoirs and these items "I'll Never Forget" will come to mind and are sure to be worth passing on.

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Dr. I. T. Haig Acting Chief of Division: Dr. I. T. (Ted) Haig, who has been Assistant in the Division of Silvics of the Research Branch of the Forest Service since late in 1955, has been named Acting Chief of the Division, succeeding E. N. Munns, formerly Chief of the Division, and who was appointed Chief of the Division of Forest Influences.

Ted Haig is well known in Region One, having entered research work with the Northern Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station at Missoula in 1923. During his more than a decade with the Experiment Station, he secured leaves of absence in order to earn his Master and Doctor Degrees at Yale University.