

ERNEST BLUE LOVED THE WOODS AND MADE A LIFE OF FORESTRY

11/11/97

Many old-time residents will recall Ernest Blue. He was District Forest Ranger of Region #3, an area that encompassed over two million acres.

Appointed to the post on September 1, 1917, he and his family moved to Old Forge on September 29, 1917. They moved to Poland in August 1926, and resided there until Ernest's retirement October 1, 1951.

Ernest was born August 3, 1890, on a farm near North Gage. The farm bordered the West Canada Creek where he spent much of his time searching for Indian artifacts. Some of the objects, such as weapon points and scraping tools, were dated to at least 9,000 years old. The collection is now in the New York State Museum in Albany.

Graduating from school in Holland Patent, one of a class of nine in 1909, Ernest entered the Biltmore Forest School. It was a traveling school operating at the time near Cadillac, MI. The fall and winter of 1910-11 was spent near Darmstadt, Germany. The school returned to its U. S. base near the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, where Ernest graduated in 1911. The site near Brevard, NC, now houses The Cradle of Forestry In America Museum. His diploma is on display there today.

After graduation, he began work cruising timber for Finch Pruyn Company on their extensive timberlands in Hamilton County. In 1912, he was hired as a laborer at the Saranac Inn Tree Nursery for the State. The Manager, Robert Rosenbluth, was to play a large part in his future.

Rosenbluth convinced the Corrections Department to experiment with prisoners to plant trees. He chose Ernest as his assistant with a wage of \$2 a day. A short time later, he was titled Foreman (Lumbering) at a salary of \$1,200 a year. In March of 1914, Ernest left to work with Rosenbluth on a new venture.

It was the New Hampton Project, a New York City Reformatory Program, which proved extremely successful. Returning to the tree-planting project a year later, he was appointed State Forester. One month later his appointment as Forestry Field supervisor at \$1,400 a year, enabled him to take the big leap into marriage.

With his marrying Lulu Davis on April 15, 1916, we are back to the beginning of this missive.

Ernest had a long and distinguished career with the State and as son Allan put it, "A life in the woods." I am indebted to Allan for the "write tip" on his father.

Ernest Blue was the person responsible for convincing both the State and D. B. Smith Company, manufacturer of the Indian Backpack Pump, to converting same for fire suppression. Originally designed for agricultural use, Ernest was the first to see its potential as a fire tool.

Allan Blue and I share the same birth year and month; Father Ernest and I, many more traits. One in particular not obvious to the casual observer but striking to me: We both had to hoe corn in our youth and more rows were added for any transgressions. I am sure I was guilty of one sin of which Ernest was not - I only hoed down the end of the rows as far as Dad could see. The field looked like a dishpan when it was time to harvest it.

To make a long story short, I only got away with it one year!