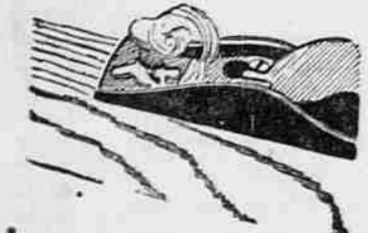


Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

Wood which accompanies man from red maple cradle to white pine coffin, and made even the page you are now reading is the very fiber of our land. From the moment the tree began to grow, it had form and plan. As it grew, it split rocks apart, its roots traveled far in search of water. Pliant, resilient, it adjusted itself to its surroundings: when winds blew, it leaned with them, when snows fell, it bent its boughs under their weight; when droughts came, its leaves curled and drooped. Within that tree was the power of reproduction; the ability to repair injuries . . . and go on. Living, it sweetened the air. In hot summers, it cooled the air. It laid dust and tempered the wind.

Felled, sawn and seasoned, it laid bare the hidden beauty of



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its figures and grains—no two pieces ever alike, and more lovely, surely, than the most premeditated design. And color: douglas fir with its heavy growth layers of orange wood on a yellow background; redwood with its warm hue and glossy sheen; rosewood with sunset streaks of color; the chocolate brown of walnut; and driftwood gray of magnolia.

Look about your home now and you will see some of the 1,000-odd native species of North American trees: the table top of birch (as well as thread spools); the paneled wall of elm; the basket of woven willow splits; the tobacco pipe of briar; the roof shingles of red cedar; the hickory log upon the fire; the Christmas tree of spruce; the floor of oak; the fence of redwood; the ash rake-handle, strong, yet lean.

Pilgrims Exported Pine
How adaptable the uses of



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wood. From earliest days—30 years after they landed, Pilgrims were exporting white pine even as far away as Madagascar. Nowhere else in the world was there a wood so light that grew so tall. A single tree made a mast tall as a ship could carry, yet so light it was never top-heavy.

Tough live oaks made the sides of our frigate Constitution—appropriately nicknamed Old Ironsides! Lincoln's cabin was made of white oak logs—the rails he split were black walnut. On rims of hickory and spokes of oak, pioneers rolled west to the Pacific. Wood fired the river steamers of the Mississippi and ties cut from eastern forests spanned the treeless plains with railroads.

White pine built New England's loveliest colonial mansions and churches. Because it works smoothly under a plane and shrinks or swells little when properly seasoned, it has always been a favorite of carpenters.

Black walnut—which does not splinter—made rifle stocks for the woodsman, and still does. With handling it does not roughen, it becomes smoother.

Short on good glues, our ancestors learned to fit seasoned hickory legs into chair seats of green sugar maple: when the maple shrank, it clasped the hickory legs in a grip that scarcely anything could loosen.

Ash for Bats
For toughness, not steel itself is so shock-resistant as hickory. That is why ski champions insure their lives by insisting upon hickory. For his bat, the baseball player prefers ash to absorb the sudden crack of ball against bat. For golf club heads, persimmon is better.

Many are the uses of spruce—and quite astonishing. From the little boxes which hold berries for the market, to the Christmas tree, and the top of a violin to give a rich mellifluous tone.

The wood that holds the graphite in your pencil is made of eastern red cedar—no other wood can quite equal it for ease in sharpening in all directions. For the shingles on your roof which will not rot or split, regardless of whether, it is usually western red cedar . . . the same wood the northwest Indians used for their giant 40-man canoes hollowed out by fire from one log. Or for their great totem poles to perpetuate and keep fresh their past.

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Free: By special arrangement with the editors of the Encyclopedia Americana, my panel of judges will award each week to the readers who sends me the



PEDDLING PACHYDERM
—Trainer Floyd Smith of St. Louis Zoo teaches Wendy, 20-month-old elephant to mount a specially-built tricycle. Later comes task of teaching her to peddle it. It's all part of preparing for next season's elephant shows which start in May.

Exams for Fireman Applicants Dec. 3

Applications for persons interested in taking civil service examinations for firemen must be filed with Fire Chief Gordon Barker by 5 p.m., Monday, Nov. 28.

Examinations will be held at the Central Fire station, Third and Front sts., at 8 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, Barker said.

Men who successfully complete the examination will be placed on the eligible list in the order of their standings and future appointments for firemen will be made from the list. Starting salary for the probation period is \$300, with increases governed by ability of the individual.

Requirements for applicants include at least a high school education, minimum height and weight and good physical condition.

best true-life nature adventure, the best nature observation, or the best question on nature and wildlife, a complete 30-volume set of this world-famous reference work in a handsome Sealcraft binding. Each week new submissions will be considered. Sorry, I simply can't answer your many friendly letters. Please address your letter to: IS THAT SO? c/o Medford Mail Tribune, Box 575, Sausalito, Calif.

In the Day's News

By FRANK JENKINS

Let's talk today for a moment about the First Thanksgiving. The Pilgrims left England in search of more religious liberty. They started out in two ships, the Mayflower and Speedwell. The Speedwell proved to be unseaworthy, so they had to turn back. Arriving in port, they abandoned the Speedwell and all of them crowded into the Mayflower.

Then they set out again. THE Mayflower was 25 feet wide (at the widest place) and 85 feet long. That is to say, there was less than 2,000 square feet of space below her deck. There were 102 Pilgrims, plus the ship's crew. If you will do a little figuring, you will come to the conclusion that each occupant of the ship had less than 18 square feet of space at his disposal—even assuming that all their gear (food, clothing, implements, etc.) could be stored on the deck and in the hold.

Remember that 18 square feet of space is three feet wide and six feet long—just about big enough for a grown man to lie down in. In these crowded quarters they had to cross the stormy North Atlantic at the beginning of the stormy season. It must have been rugged.

ARRIVING in Cape Cod bay—they thought they were headed for the Hudson river at the present site of New York, but the ship's captain landed them elsewhere—they had to turn in and build rude houses for winter shelter. The houses were of logs, chinked with mud, with thatched roofs and dirt floors. The only heat was a fire on the floor, with the smoke finding its way out through holes in the roof. Many of them became ill. There was no medicine. So many of them died. There was little enough food, so all of them were hungry all the time. Under these conditions they passed the winter.

COME spring, they planted gardens of corn, barley and peas. They had a break. Instead of descending on them with knives and tomahawks, the Indians came in, led by one Squanto, with food and agricultural advice. The agricultural advice included the trick of putting a dead fish in each hill of corn for fertilizer.

Thus they got through the summer. IN THE fall, their crops turned out quite well.

To show their gratitude to God for their good fortune, they planned a big feast. From their gardens, they contributed grain and vegetables they had grown. The Indians came in with deer

Sunday, November 27, 1935

MEDFORD (OREGON) MAIL TRIBUNE—FIVE

and wild turkeys, providing the meat so essential for a REAL feast.

It lasted three days. Everybody was happy. They were TRULY grateful. That was the First Thanksgiving.

WHAT they had was little enough. But— It was riotous plenty in comparison with what they had had when they landed on the bleak shore of Cape Cod bay a year earlier.

A THOUGHT in closing. A WHAT we have is FABULOUS PLENTY in comparison with what our forefathers had. But there is discontent among us. We are discontented because we think we ought to have more. The politicians who are out and want back in are capitalizing our discontent by telling us how shamefully we have been misled and misled.

I SOMETIMES wonder if we wouldn't be happier if we were more grateful for what we have and less discontented because of what we HAVEN'T GOT.

New Orleans, situated on the Mississippi river, is actually 107 miles from the river's outlet into the Gulf.

Norway Expresses Regret For Bombing

Oslo, Norway —(U.P.)—A Foreign Office spokesman said Saturday Norway had expressed official regret to Russia for the fact a bomb was thrown through the window of the Soviet Embassy Friday night.

No casualties were reported and apparently there was little damage. The bomb was thrown through a window into an ante-room which was not occupied by any of the 80 Russians who work in the grey stone building. Police stepped up the search for the culprits, believed to be teen-agers.

Fish are the most numerous of the vertebrates with about 20,000 species.

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