

Hal Ogle Winds Up Half Century Of Forest Work

By BILL JENKINS

Nearly half a century of service to the forest lands of the Klamath Basin!

That's quite a record for anyone to roll up. A record that covers the time when timber management was pretty much a proposition of fire control and a little prevention up to the present days of intensified silviculture and a fire prevention system that keeps an around-the-clock watch on our vital timber resources throughout the year.

That is the record of Hal Ogle who will retire as District Warden, Klamath Forest Protective Association as of May 1.

Hal joined KFPA on June 3, 1910, just under a year after that organization had been put together by the late Jack Kimball. Hal was just five days short of his 19th birthday when he picked up the tools of the firefighter's trade. Tools in this case which amounted to one shovel issued by KFPA. For the rest of his outfit, a horse, saddle, blankets, a small tent and an even smaller box of grub, Hal borrowed the money.

It wasn't exactly what one would call an auspicious beginning for the young smoke chaser, either. His first assignment was to ride to Keno and contact Harry Pearson from whom he was to learn the finer points of using a compass.

Hal rode to Keno that afternoon and pitched his camp in a thick stand of small trees about where the schoolhouse now stands. It was a good camp, as he recalls. The next morning he got up, ate his breakfast, carefully buried his fire and walked down to the store to see Pearson.

Pearson met him, talked to him briefly, then asked where he was camped. Hal gestured over his shoulder to the grove.

"Well," said Pearson, "you'd better go up there and put out that fire then."

"That's when I learned," says Ogle, "that you don't bury a campfire in duff and needles when you want to put it out."

It was a minor blaze, Hal managed to save his tent by cutting the ropes and throwing it outside the line of fire, which he then proceeded to bury in good dirt—once and for all.

Since that time he's seen a lot of fires come and go. But most important he's seen the days come when fires are usually detected in time to control them before extensive damage is done. He's seen the day come when communications over a wide area allowed fires to be pinpointed, when a system of fire roads had been laid out that allowed crews to get on the fires while they were still small.

Back in 1910 there were less than a dozen men connected with KFPA. A dozen men to cover, on foot and on horseback, the same area that many times that number of men cover today. Cover in radio equipped trucks, aided by an airplane overhead and by a complex network of lookouts, standby crews from the surrounding mills and the greatly expanded US Forest Service.

In those early days Hal covered any fire that he saw. He went first to Parker Station, located just about where WTC's Camp Four is now. He went from there to Pinchurst where he lived in an abandoned log cabin until the loneliness got him and he moved back to Jenny Creek. He recalls that on one occasion he rode halfway down the Greensprings to fight a fire on the Ashland side. On another occasion, Hal recalls, he stood on the summit of Chinquapin Mountain and saw seven big, A-bomb shaped smokestacks going up in various portions of the district.

By 1913 Hal had been promoted to assistant under Kimball and was working at Pokegama, then railroad for the area and the

point where the logs were shipped out. It was while serving here that he got hold of a motorcycle. This was his fire horse. He would tie a shovel across the handlebars and, when a fire was reported, take off up the mountain paths on the roaring monster. Hal recalls with a great deal of glee that he would get a report on a fire, telephone the necessary fire crewmen closer to the fire to tell them about it and then, with his motorbike, beat them to the blaze. This always made them about half mad, he recalls.

It was Major Spencer who finally got the best of him, Hal says. Spencer knew every cattle track and forest path in the area. He got himself a bicycle and waited for the next call. When it came from Hal at far-off headquarters Spencer leaped on the bike and sped, by roundabout cattle trails, to the scene of the fire. When he got there he hid the bike in the brush and was calmly fighting fire when Hal showed up.

"Took me several hours to find that bike and find out how Major beat me to that fire," Hal recalls.

Hal hasn't spent all his time with KFPA. In between he went to work for Shasta View Lumber and Box as a cruiser and in buying and selling timber. From there he went to logging with Doug Puckett for a short time and then came to Klamath Falls and hung out his shingle as a timber cruiser. He put in two or three years at this work and then, in 1929, went with Weyerhaeuser Timber Company as a forester. He stayed there until 1945 when he took over as District Warden for KFPA following the death of its founder, Jack Kimball. In those days the KFPA office was in the old building on Conger Avenue, now gone, located on what is now the Eccles property. He has been with KFPA ever since, doing his part, and a big one it has been, to protect the timber resources of the region.

Hal is one of the better known historians of the area and is a mine of information concerning the early days. He is an amateur photographer of no mean repute and is known far and wide for his collection of old photographs and negatives. An interest which he intends to keep up when he has a little more time, he says.

Of course, he's going to have to wait a little while until he has as much time as he really wants for his hobbies. He'll stay on at KFPA for another year in an advisory capacity and to help in cleaning

up some details that he knows more about than anyone else. George Wardell, his capable assistant for the past several years, will take over the fire fighting duties as district warden.

Hal will be missed when he's gone. He was a familiar figure to the lumbermen and others of the area, speeding on his way to a fire in his green sedan, a cigar (before he quit 'em) going furiously while he fiddled with his two-way radio in an attempt to get just a little better reception despite the rough roads and the screening timber.

He has done a job all the time he's been with the service. A job for which the people of the Basin owe him a debt of gratitude.

Gratitude which I am sure he has. Just a few of the letters sent on his retirement are printed here. They tell only a small part of the story, but they reflect in some measure the affection with which Hal Ogle is held around these parts.

Mr. H. H. Ogle
Klamath Forest Protective Assoc.
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Dear Hal:

It certainly must be a source of comfort and satisfaction to you to look back across the busy years in which you have contributed so significantly to the cause of effective forest protection in Oregon. And while it has not been my privilege to know you most of these years, it has been my privilege to be intimately associated with you in a personal and business way the past few. From my standpoint of President of KFPA this has been a most constructive relationship. Your accomplishments over the

THE COVER
Hal Ogle, pictured on this week's cover, is winding up nearly 50 years of service to the forest industry on May 1 when he retires as district warden. This picture was taken by Ted Durment, WTC, and shows the hard working Ogle behind his desk at KFPA headquarters at the Ashland junction.

years are certainly a reflection of your many fine attributes.

On behalf of the directors and members of KFPA please accept our sincere thanks for protecting so effectively our many acres from fire, for spending our protection dollars so wisely, and for your unselfish devotion and friendship.

The best is yet to come for you and Mrs. Agle. May you find these golden years as challenging and as well spent as those that have gone before.

Yours sincerely,
Vincent W. Bousquet
President
Klamath Forest Protective Association

Mr. Hal Ogle
Klamath Falls,
Oregon

Dear Hal:

I'm taking my pen in hand to say a few words to you on the occasion of your retirement after half a century of service that has made Southern Oregon a far, far better place to live.

I really don't know whether to congratulate you or to commiserate with you. You're an active devil. Your record shows that. Only an active devil could have accomplished what you have. Whether you can settle down to enjoy life quietly, I don't know. You've always had ants in your pants.

But I can congratulate the community—because from now on you can settle down to enjoy your hobbies. I can assure you that I'm going to keep prodding you to bring the history of this fascinating area of ours into focus. That and a lot of other things.

Thinking it over, I'm going to congratulate you — for I'm sure you're going to enjoy it.

Sincerely,
Frank Jenkins

Mr. Hal Ogle
Klamath Forest Protective Assoc.
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Dear Hal:

When I learned that you are retiring a surge of mixed emotions welled up within me. For one thing it gets harder and harder to accommodate one's self to the fact that the "old order changeth." And then I thought, "Gosh, now if I happen to be riding with Hal and he spots smoke I won't have to wear myself out trying to keep up with him on the fire line." So then I felt better.

Anyhow, it's time to extend appreciation for your many years of association and friendship from which there need be no retire-

ment. As a hobby, which I understand everyone should have, I recommend you add to those in which you already indulge that of color photography. You'll either enjoy it or it will drive you to distraction.

Sincerely yours,
Ted Durment
Weyerhaeuser Timber Company

Mr. H. H. Ogle
Klamath Forest Protective Assn.
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Dear Hal:

Congratulations on nearly fifty years of outstanding service to forest protection and conservation in the West. It is hard to think of you actually retiring but we certainly hope that you will take some time off now for your many active interests. But whether you do or not, we in Western Forestry wish to express our appreciation for the fine contribution you have made to western forestry.

Our Association is having its 50th Anniversary Conference at its founding site, Spokane, Washington, on December 9-11 this year. We are going to try to get as many oldtimers in forest protection and management to attend this meeting as possible. You are cordially invited to attend and be an honored guest of the Conference. Art M. Roberts and Bert Curtis are cooking up some extremely interesting activities and a good time will be had by all. We sincerely hope that you can be there.

Prior to that date I would like to make an appointment with you to go over some of the history of forest protection and Western Forestry and look over some of the oldtime photographs which I am told you have. I am charged with getting together a display of photographs of oldtimers and I certainly could use your help and advice. I can also say that part of my plan would include getting to meet you and visit with you, which for some reason has not yet happened.

Our best wishes on the advent of your retirement.

Sincerely,
H. R. Glascock Jr.
Western Forestry and Conservation Association

Dear Hal:

If I have looked at the record correctly you have been in forestry work or the forest protection business since 1910. This represents 49 years, except for a period in World War I when you were in the Armed Services. This means that you have taken an active part in the transition of fire fighting from the hazel hoe to the bulldozer and all the ramifications of improvements accompanying this change.

You and the many others who have so willingly devoted your Sundays and Holidays year after year to forest protection are to be highly complimented. Such an unselfish service as this can come only from a love of our great outdoors and a true desire to take part in its protection.

I hope that your retirement may be a happy one and that you may be able to take an active part in the many interests you have.

With best wishes,
Sincerely,
Fred H. Brundage
Oregon Forest Fire Assoc.

Mr. H. H. Ogle
Klamath Forest Protective Assn.
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Dear Hal:

I couldn't resist writing this note to go along with the many others I know you are receiving in recognition of your years of service to the community and the industry.

I'll always recall the warmth of the KFPA "shack on the hill" during the newspaper days, the night-watches on fires, the air



TIMBER STANDS SUCH AS THIS ONE have been the prime concern of foresters and fire prevention men since the West started its vast expansion. Protection of these stands for future use is one of the major tasks of the modern day forester.

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