

## Thoreau's Inspiration for Earl Stephen's Work

Thoreau, Henry D.

*Humboldt has written an interesting chapter on the primitive forest, but no one has yet described for me the difference between the wild forest which once occupied our oldest townships, and the tame one which I find here today. It is a difference which would be worth attending to. The civilized man not only clears the land permanently to a great extent, and cultivates open fields, but he tames and cultivates to a certain extent the forest itself. By his mere presence, almost, he changes the nature of the trees as no other creature does.*

p. 155 – The Maine Woods  
Houghton, Osgood and Co. Boston  
The Riverside Press, Cambridge  
1878

Earl Stephen's Writing  
Ca 1950

When Henry David Thoreau stated these thoughts, some contemporary readers might well have considered his words solely as well written literary expression. Others certainly regarded them with a philosophical air, as subjects of academia discourse. While a few, not doubt, read such opinions with contempt, contempt for the author who dared to suggest that the primitive forest was anything more than an impediment to the progress of an expanding society or a means to achieve the human endeavors associated therewith. Surely the citizenry of Thoreau's time did not place the same perspective upon the forest primeval as that of today's. During his lifetime the supply of wood seemed inexhaustible.

Like so many of his other observations, these few cited here would appear to be more appropriate now than when they were written almost one hundred years ago.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the forests of North America have generally become recognized by the current populace as an exhaustible but a renewable resource. Great effort is being expended to learn the means of sustaining the wood supply at a level commensurate with the demands that are being thrust upon it. As a result, forestry in the United States has progressed rapidly. Forestry as a science and a profession has long since developed to the state where it first must be separated into the many and varied basic disciplines before it can be viewed in its proper perspective.

Forestry is commonly divided in three major aspects: protection, production, and civilization. Each of these aspects can in turn be characterized by particular disciplines or allied sciences which tend to contribute most to it. Together, they constitute the general field of Forestry.

A WOODLOT  
THE HISTORICAL APPROACH  
TO  
SILVICAL RESEARCH

Introduction -

Description of the area -

General Field Procedure -

Part I – The Vegetation

Part II – Subject Matter

Part III – Methodology

a. Field

b. Laboratory

Part IV – Appendix

*Source: Earl P. Stephens writing, ca 1950, Harvard Forest Archives*