



## *Theodore Walker Gilbert*

1898-1978

Ted Gilbert belonged in the forest.

It was there he began what became a long, productive, and celebrated career with Weyerhaeuser Company. He spent years in the woods and knew them well. He walked the woods endlessly as a timber cruiser and trail builder in his first years with Weyerhaeuser. Later, as a timber engineer and land supervisor, this intimate knowledge of his company's holdings served him without fail.

Gilbert was a forester's forester. He gave many years of service to Weyerhaeuser and made noted contributions to the management of its timberlands. For his work, he was honored by his colleagues, his company, and the State of Washington.

Theodore Walker Gilbert's tenure with Weyerhaeuser began in 1923 when he joined the firm as a compassman at the Centralia office. He made his headquarters there for the next 31 years. During 1925 and 1926 Gilbert was with the original cruising group in the Longview area where he built trails, cruised timber, and established bench marks in Weyerhaeuser's St. Helens tree farm region.

Many years later the Washington Department of Natural Resources, paying compliment to a surprised Gilbert, dedicated a new fire lookout in the St. Helens area and name it the Ted W. Gilbert Lookout.

"Ted built the first lookout tower on Elk Mountain, five miles to the south," noted Howard Stolaas, the department's district administrator, during the dedication ceremony on August 14, 1963. "And that was 30 years ago,"

The first lookout was badly damaged by a 1962 windstorm. The U.S. Forest Service rebuilt the new lookout on the same site Gilbert had selected years earlier. It sits atop a 4,200 foot ridge which earlier in 1963 had been named Gilbert Ridge.

The dedication of the tower to Gilbert, only two weeks before his retirement, was in response to many years of service to the region's timberlands.

"From time to time we name these lookouts after men who have given so much of their lives to maintaining these forests," said Bert Cole, Washington Commissioner of Public Lands, during the ceremony.

In 1930 Gilbert was named regional supervisor for Weyerhaeuser lands in western Oregon and parts of southwest Washington. He assumed responsibilities as chief cruiser in 1941 and was made timber engineer in 1947. In 1954 Gilbert moved to Tacoma where he became land supervisor while continuing to serve as timber engineer. His boundaries expanded while he fulfilled his new duties. He traveled many miles from northern Canada to Central America.

A highlight in Gilbert's career came in 1959. Forest researchers Dr. John Rediske and Dr. William H. Lawrence were looking for an appropriate land tract to accommodate their studies. Rediske, a physiologist who pioneered the use of radio isotopes in industrial forest research, needed a place to store contaminated materials and treat test trees in a controlled atmosphere. A wildlife biologist, Lawrence was looking for a home for animals used in forest protection experiments.

The company began a search for the ideal piece of land to satisfy these needs. It turned to Gilbert. With his unequalled knowledge of Weyerhaeuser lands, Gilbert proved invaluable in the hunt. He suggested a site of 320 acres located 15 miles southeast of Centralia, his headquarters for so many years.

The Weyerhaeuser land had been logged between 1917 and 1920. With an abundant crop of second growth Douglas fir, it had a wide range of growing conditions, making it ideal for research. It had easy access for projects that needed constant checking. The decision was made to locate the research project at the site Gilbert recommended.

The company's research staff thanked Gilbert for his work on the project by naming the tract the T.W. Gilbert Forest. Since its initial use as a site for contaminated materials and animals, the forest has grown into a site supporting a wide range of research activities.

Ted Gilbert was born August 12, 1898, in Castle Rock, Washington. He spent his childhood there, as well as in Yakima and Purdy, Washington, San Diego and Tacoma, where he attended high school. Following high school in 1917, he enlisted in the army. He went to Officers Training School in Jacksonville, Florida and though he completed his training successfully, he was too young to be commissioned. He served in France and on other European fronts during World War I and was discharged in 1919 as a sergeant.

Before joining Weyerhaeuser, he worked as a truck driver and as a salesman for Crown Zellerbach Company in the Tacoma area.

He married Dora Betty Hass in Vancouver, British Columbia on August 25, 1930. Among his favorite pastimes, he counted horses, farming and tree farming.

Gilbert was a 50-year member of the American Legion and the Scottish Rite Bodies and was a member of the Centralia Masonic Lodge and the Afifi Shrine Temple. In addition, he held memberships in the Society of American Foresters and the American Right-of-Way Association.

Following his retirement from Weyerhaeuser in 1963, Gilbert served as a consultant to the company's tax department. He continued to live in Tacoma. He served as a consultant until 1970. On February 8, 1978, he died in Tacoma.

Gilbert's long years of tireless service to the company and to forestry – and the honors bestowed upon him not only by Weyerhaeuser but by others – will help preserve the memory of a man whose work in the woods filled a long and productive life.