



Clarence Richen

1912-2000

In 1998, Clarence Richen, a dedicated forester for more than 65 years, had a unique opportunity to witness a snapshot of his life's work. "Looking at maps and timber data showing the year of planting and the year of harvest, I found where I had counted seedlings in 1939. Here were stands of trees nearly ready for harvest. Almost 60 years old, they stood over 100 feet tall, in greater numbers than the original forest. It was Nature's bounty, with some help from foresters to be sure." It is hard to imagine a man more deserving to see the fruition of his hard work in the forests of the Northwest.

Clarence Richen was born June 6, 1912, in Portland, Oregon. His parents, Peter and Caroline Richen, had emigrated with their families from Switzerland in the 1880s, initially settling in the small community of Helvetia, Oregon. Clarence attended grade school and high school in Portland.

The outdoors appealed to Clarence at an early age, initially prompted by stories that his father had brought home with him from Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory, where he owned and operated a hotel shortly after the Klondike gold rush of 1897-1898. Clarence's interest in forestry grew in high school as he read about the threat of fire to the nation's timber resources. Forest Service employees whom Clarence knew further sparked his interest in this field.

In 1931, Clarence began to turn his interest into a professional pursuit, enrolling in the School of Forestry at Oregon State Agricultural College (later named Oregon State College, and now Oregon State University). The charismatic George Wilcox Peavy, Dean of Forestry and later President of the College, held court with his students every month, instilling lessons about fire prevention and the threat of timber famine if forest management was not followed.

Clarence graduated in 1935 with a bachelor's degree in Forest Management. In that same year, he secured a position with the Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, Region 6, in Portland. Assigned to logging engineering, he took on a number of tasks, including the study of logging equipment, harvesting methods, and log grade recovery in both Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine forests. At this time, steam-powered

logging equipment was still employed in the timber industry. Clarence also conducted time and motion studies to measure logging efficiency.

Clarence and his co-workers at the station would later emerge as some of the most respected names in Northwest forestry. These individuals included Thornton Munger, Richard McArdle, Leo Issacs, and Ernest Kolbe, many of whom have had ties to the World Forestry Center.

In 1938, Oregon State College's School of Forestry had a surge of students. To handle the influx, Clarence was offered a nine-month appointment as an instructor of logging engineering at an annual salary of \$1,700, which was \$100 less than he currently was making. Clarence's nine-month contract stretched to four years.

During his off time in the summer months, Clarence worked for Washington Pulp and Paper Company, Weyerhaeuser Company, and Crown-Willamette Paper Company. In 1942, he went to work full time as a forester under Ed Stamm for Crown-Willamette, which later became Crown-Zellerbach.

Clarence and Crown Z were a hand-and-glove fit. Since its start in the late 1800s, the company was progressive in developing and matching its resources to its markets. In 1946, Clarence took on the role of Chief Forester, helping guide Crown Z during a period of aggressive acquisition of timberlands. In 1957, he was appointed Manager of the company's Northwest Timber Division. In that position, he oversaw the management, acquisition, reforestation, harvesting, and supplying of mills from forestlands in Oregon and Washington. Under Clarence's guidance, Crown Z's holdings grew to one million acres divided among seven separate management units, each with its own staff.

Drawing on his forest engineering and research background, Clarence vigilantly pursued new ideas and new technologies that improved the forestlands and the products that followed. Clarence's pursuit of innovation corresponded perfectly with an industry in the midst of a broad transformation. Timber work increasingly was being mechanized, and new machinery in the mills, like the hydraulic debarker, changed the way timber was sorted and sold.

Quick to keep pace, Clarence introduced new harvesting methods that enabled small trees to be barked and chipped on site. On the forest management front, he implemented genetic tree improvements and pre-commercial thinning efforts. He also utilized herbicides and improved nursery stock to enhance the timberlands under his management.

Crown Z not only promoted innovation in the woods, but also encouraged its employees to be good corporate citizens and tell the story of the industry. Drawing on his passion for the woods and his experience as an educator, Clarence rose to the challenge. Throughout his career, he made public presentations about forest management and the use of forest products.

Through these efforts, he became a recognized champion for industrial forestry. Even in the face of challenges to the industry, his enthusiasm never dampened. "We really need to tell the story of how technology has changed the value of the whole tree," he said, "That story is a marvelous story in itself."

Clarence participated extensively in professional associations and activities, making himself a leader among and source of inspiration to his professional peers. In addition to giving a half-century of service to the Society of American Foresters, of which he is a Fellow, Clarence served with numerous organizations to promote sound forestry practices.

In 1953, Clarence took on the duties of Associate Editor of Forest Management and Engineering for the Journal of Forestry—an assignment that lasted several years. For many years, he was a Director of the Industrial Forestry Association, serving as its President in 1960 and 1961. Also in the 1960s, the Society of American Foresters appointed Clarence to a committee to organize and develop interest in the Douglas fir region's forest soils. In 1962, he was President of the Western Forestry and Conservation Association. He also served two terms on the Oregon State Board of Forestry, playing a leading role in winning passage of Oregon's Forest Practices Act in 1971. A leader of the Keep Oregon Green Association, Clarence served as Vice President in 1972-73 and President in 1974-75; he was a trustee of the organization for many years as

well. He also served on the Governor's Water Pollution Control Advisory Committee and was on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Forest Industries Council. He also worked with scores of other state and national organizations to promote the advancement of forestry.

For more than one-quarter century, Clarence was also a committed leader of the World Forestry Center. He was elected to the World Forestry Center's Board of Directors in 1974, served on its Executive Board until 1985, was Chairman of the Board (or President, as the office was then called) from 1979 to 1981, and an Honorary Director after 1985. Clarence was one of the most active international ambassadors for the Center, visiting more than a dozen nations.

Clarence also received numerous accolades for his efforts, including the 1969 Leadership Award for Forest Management from the National Forest Products Association; the 1970 Current Achievement Award from the Western Forestry and Conservation Association; and the WFCA's 1977 Western Forestry Award for Lifetime Service.

In 1974, the Oregon State University Faculty Senate recognized Clarence with its Distinguished Service Award as an "unselfish advocate of the public's interests and environmental concerns in the management of private forests...firm, fair, and forceful...honored for exceptional and distinguished service to the land and people he loves."

Though quickly approaching retirement age, Clarence was far from being retired. In 1977, at age 65, Clarence retired as a Vice President from Crown Zellerbach after 35 years of service with the company. At that point, he had a combined 42 years in the industry.

True to his character, Clarence began his retirement by going back to work. In 1978, he was offered and accepted a position on the Board of Directors for Navajo Forest Industries, where he served as Chairman and Vice Chairman until 1994. On the Navajo reservation, which is about the size of Illinois, the Navajo tribe operated a sawmill and particleboard plant, utilizing trees from its forests of one-half million acres of Ponderosa Pine. Over time, the mills and logging activities employed exclusively Navajo men and women.

In addition, Clarence served as a Visiting Professor at the School of Forestry, University of Florida.

Throughout his life, Clarence always played an active role in the community, both as a lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church and an active member of the Boy Scouts of America. He served as President of the Columbia Pacific Council of the BSA from 1972 to 1974 as well as on the Executive Board.

One of Clarence's proudest achievements takes him back to the woods. In 1979, to "keep his hand in forestry," he established Richen Tree Farms, Inc., where, into the twenty-first century, he managed nearly 500 acres of productive forestland in Columbia and Clatsop Counties. At the outset, he thought he would never see any harvest from those lands, but time proved him wrong, as well as the surprising productivity and speed of tree growth. "You'd think there wasn't time to see forestry activities promote tree growth, unless you live as long as I have," said Clarence. "But time has a way of passing when Nature is at work. Most people don't really understand the potential of true growth."

Clarence Richen's career, community service, and promotion of sound forestry clearly demonstrated his own understanding of the potential for growth in Nature and among humankind.

October 2000