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# Dedication

Ames Forestry Club

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# D E D I C A T I O N

*This issue of the Ames Forester is dedicated to Dr. Julius Ansgar Larsen, forester, painter, poet, philosopher and long-time member of the Forestry Faculty of Iowa State.*



**B**ORN to a long line of sea captains, Julius A. Larsen began his life on December 13, 1877, in the small Norwegian city of Drammen. His father, Gustav Walde-mar Larsen was owner and captain of the coaster "Mercurius" which he used for transporting building material from Drammen along the coast to Oslo.

With an older brother, Johannes, a seaman, and a captain it was expected that Julius would also take to the sea, and in 1895, at the age of eighteen, he signed with a Captain Johnson aboard the barque "Alf." The first and second voyages were to Quebec, via Scotland, where the cargoes were coal and white pine logs. It was on the bark "Berna" early in 1896 that the sailing career of Julius Larsen ended with a shipwreck in heavy seas off Trinidad. The badly damaged ship finally reached Barbados where it was condemned.

Instead of taking passage back to Oslo, as offered by the Norwegian Consulate, young Larsen asked to be sent to the United States where his sister was living in New Haven.

Through these circumstances Julius Larsen ultimately became known as "Skipper" and ultimately became one of the pioneers in American forestry. Although the "Depression of 1893" was still being felt in the East and even though he was not yet out of his teens and he spoke English very poorly, he supported himself by working first in a bicycle shop and later, for four years, at Winchester Arms.

In 1901 he had saved enough money to go to Eastern Maine Seminary, an Academy at Ducksport, Maine, where he was able, in three years, to complete his high school work and thus pass the entrance examinations for Yale.

From 1904 to 1908 Larsen was an undergraduate at Yale. He did so well that, upon graduation, he was awarded a graduate scholarship in Economic Geography at Sheffield Scientific School. But finding his first courses in graduate school to be Physical Chemistry which "... I found interesting but the instructor not," he changed his program to forestry.

In this new course of study he was under the direction of such men as Henry Solon Graves, H. H. Chap-

man, James Toumey, Ralph Hawley, and Ralph Bryant. Here "Skipper" became enthused with the prospects of practicing this new profession.

After receiving his M.S. from Yale and attending the last year summer camp in Clarks, Louisiana, Larsen took the Civil Service exam. He was asked to report to Kalispell, Montana, on July 3, 1910.

His first job was on the Blackfeet National Forest where he did the usual beginner's tasks of scaling, marking, and fire fighting on the big 1910 fire at Olney.

In 1911, Jenny Borghild Spieckermann, whom he had known as a child in Oslo and whom he had again met in 1908 at his sister's in New Haven, came from Oslo to Kalispell where they were married on March 4. They celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary recently in Ames, where they were honored by their daughter, Margaret Elaine Blumenschein, their son, Inar, and six grandchildren.

The years from 1913 to 1921 were busy ones for Larsen as director of the newly established Experiment Station at Priest River. New research projects had to be originated and there was considerable administrative confusion about who had supervision of experimental areas. These must have been difficult but fascinating years, for every Iowa State forester who has studied under "Skipper" has heard many tales of the "Priest River Country."

In 1921 "Skipper" was assigned to the Regional Office of the Forest Service at Missoula. In 1923 he took several months' leave and returned to Norway for the first time since his mother's death in 1898. While traveling in Germany he became well acquainted with Dr. Schenck and his work in the Black Forest.

Dr. G. B. MacDonald asked Larsen to join the Forestry Department at Iowa State in 1924 and it was here that his years of work in theoretical and applied silviculture were to have their greatest impact. Julius Larsen was, and is thoroughly trained scientist; his appreciation of the art and science of forestry has solid footing. By 1936 "Skipper" Larsen was also Dr. Larsen, having earned the Ph.D. degree in Plant Physiology.

In 1948 Dr. Larsen went to his last forestry summer camp, fittingly, at Priest River. But in the intervening years he attended and administered many camps and convinced many strong young men that there are also strong old men for he was, and is, an enthusiastic outdoors man.

His first two years of college followed a classical trend. He then explored the humanities. However, during the major parts of his junior and senior years at Yale he found the natural sciences, from botany and biology to physical geography and general geology, etc., very much more to his liking. Unknowingly, he thus laid an excellent foundation for the career in forestry. Naturally he still and always has found delight in art, literature and philosophy, by which he has found a means of easing the stress and strains of life and has enabled him to enrich his classroom work with pertinent quotations and examples of good writing. He has written many poems bearing on nature and the life of a forester which have been printed, and during his later years on semi-retirement he has produced over 100 charming water-color pictures. He is a gentleman in an "Old World" way that makes an evening with him unforgettable. He brought to many midwestern boys the concept of professional competence and the philosophy of the well rounded life. How many have done more?