

**First Acre of the Walpole Town Forest, Planted by 900 of the Boys
and Girls of the Town, May 5, 1916
(From the Walpole Times)**

The exercises yesterday at the High School grounds formally opened the Walpole Town Forest. The Lieut. Governor Calvin Coolidge planted the first tree, and over 800 boys and girls of the town completed the planting of the first acre. Walpole has established the first town forest in Massachusetts. There is one other city that has a forest, the City of Fitchburg, but no town. The citizens may take pride in the progressive spirit in the town which made this possible; which has provided a natural park for all time, an immediate source of profit through publicity, an immediate benefit as a fine recreation ground, and for future generations not only a wonderful park but an assured source of revenue.

The program which was planned for Friday, April 28th, was postponed due to bad weather. His Excellency Governor the Hon. Samuel W. McCall, who expressed great interest in the town forest idea, as one destined to become an important influence in community life in all parts of the country as it has abroad, was unable to attend being out of the State. His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, Calvin Coolidge, came to represent the State of Massachusetts. Mr. Frank William Rose, the State Forester, who had also planned to attend the exercises on April 28th, was forced to go to Virginia and was represented by Mr. C.O. Bailey of the State Forest Department.

Mr. George A. Plimpton, to whose generosity the town is indebted for the first one hundred and fifty acres of land for the forest, spoke to the citizens and boys and girls assembled in a way which showed how valuable a citizen he is to the town, and how great an inspiration his public spirit has been, helping many times the citizens of the town to carry forward with courage ambitious progress of town improvement. The program of the day was arranged by Mrs. Joseph Leach and Mr. J. Edward Plimpton of the Conservation Committee of the Women's Club with the assistance of the Superintendent of Schools, and the Park Board, under whose direction the town forest will be developed. Mr. Geo. T. Carlisle, the forester, who had general supervision of the planting, has been appointed the town forester to supervise all future development.

At 2:30 the boys and girls of the town assembled on the beautiful play field belonging to Mr. Plimpton at the back of the Geo. A. Plimpton school adjoining the High school grounds and, with the teachers, were grouped for singing on the high land at the left of the speakers' platform, erect against a background of pine trees. A large number of the citizens of the town attended standing in front and to the right of the platform. One of the features of the arrangement was the position which the Boy Scouts took standing in a semi circle immediately in front of the stand, adding dignity to the occasion. They carried two large flags which during the speaking were erected by the speaker's stand.

The officers of the town and guests numbering about thirty-five, had seats of honor on the platform.

The Walpole Band played during the exercises and were fully enjoyed. Its playing, today, is a credit to the members.

Mr. Charles S. Bird, chairman of the Park Board, introduced the speaker. In his introductory remarks he addressed the citizens of the town, following with a short appeal to the boys and girls to always help to protect the forest from injury, particularly from fire, when ever they use it as a recreation ground. He said in part:

Fellow Citizens: -- We have established the first town forest in the state of Massachusetts. This has been made possible by the public spirit of the citizens of the town and the generosity of Mr. Plimpton who has given the first 150 acres of land. The founding of this forest must prove of immediate profit to the town through increased community consciousness. By its establishment we have not only provided a splendid natural park but have made it possible for future generations to have this forest, which is destined to be a definite source of income.

Community spirit breathes life into a town. Without it a town is dead. If warped growth and sordid materialisms which crushes the soul out of our communities are to be prevented, we must have plans for development in every branch of town affairs. We want material advance. But we must have social and civic progress if that advance is to be worth while. We are the trustees of posterity. We must not forsake our trust. If the community needs of the future are to be filled, we must make a beginning by providing for them today.

The citizens of Walpole may be proud that they not only have provided the town with a forest, but have helped forward the communal forest idea in the state, destined to become some day an important factor in community life. We should be determined to make this forest an example of the best in town forest development. By planting the land we at present own, by adding to it as time goes on, we should make the Walpole forest one of the finest in the country, and equal to some of the great communal forests abroad.

We and the citizens of the future for all time may look forward to this public property as a source of increasing interest and revenue.

Boys and Girls of Walpole: -- This town is your home. Everything that affects its welfare is your concern. As the future citizens of Walpole you should always remember that the town will develop just as finely as the citizens are ready to work together toward the idea. What sort of a home it is to be depends upon what we and you do. You should always remember that a fundamental principle of life is that we have no rights unless we recognize our duties and responsibilities. As citizens of this town, as citizens of this country, we have no rights unless we live up to the duties and responsibilities which we owe to our town and our country. Just as in a larger way we as a nation have no rights in international affairs unless we recognize our duties and responsibilities to other nations in international relations.

This forest is your forest. You should always remember that. It belongs now more vitally to you than it does to the older members of this community because in your lifetime it will grown to maturity. You should always make sure that this forest which is yours is being protected from

injury, and above all, that it is being safeguarded from destruction by fire.

You are going to plant the first acre of this forest and by every tree that is planted, each one of you will place his or her name on a stake. This event will be commemorated by a tablet which we are going to erect upon that stone at the entrance and some day when you come here and see the small seedling white pines that you plant today grown into great trees you may always feel a thrill of pride that you played your part in establishing the community forest idea in the commonwealth and planted the first acre of the first town forest in Massachusetts.

Mr. C.O. Bailey, representing the State Forester of Massachusetts, was introduced, and told of the communal forests abroad which makes it possible for many of the towns and cities in France, Switzerland and Germany, not only to have all the wood needed in building, but to receive a substantial revenue from them each year. In 25 towns the town forests with the revenue from other municipal activities makes it possible for the citizens to live without paying taxes and in some instances even a dividend is paid. Mr. G.A. Plimpton was received by the assembly with much applause and was given three rousing cheers. In introducing Mr. Plimpton, Mr. Bird, Jr., said:

Mr. Plimpton, the citizens of Walpole cannot express too deeply their appreciation of the unflinching interest you have always shown in the welfare of your and our town. The splendid cooperation which you have given us in promoting town prosperity has been an inspiration to us all.

By giving this land you have not only made it possible for us to establish this forest, which we may all enjoy immediately, and which must bear rich fruit in the future, but you have helped to forward interest in communal forests throughout the country. The development of this forest by the citizens of Walpole will be an eternal tribute to you, and the citizens of today and the future must always remember with deep gratitude your generosity and public spirit.

The Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. Calvin Coolidge, who followed Mr. Plimpton, expressed his interest in communal forest development in the state, and his address was greatly appreciated.

Following the speakers the boys and girls of the North, South and Center schools made the air ring with song and afterwards were marched in order to the acre of ground which had been prepared for the planting. The ground was divided into twenty sections and over each was a supervisor to show the youngest of the children how to plant. When the planting was completed the children sang America.

At the entrance to the forest a stone post has been erected upon which the planting of the first acre of this forest is to be commemorated by a bronze tablet.

One of the features of the arrangements was the placing by each boy or girl a stake by the tree planted with his or her name. It was announced that in some way this record should be made permanent.

The exercises were carried through without delay, and proved an attractive episode in the town's

history.

A complete plan has been prepared by Mr. Nolan and is on file at the office of the selectmen of the town.

In a recent article in the Boston Chamber of Commerce publication the municipal forest movement was strongly advocated.

The American Forestry Association has recently offered a prize of 50 acres of planted trees to the town in the State which plants 50 acres and establishes a forest. Ten entries are necessary before the contest is opened.

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