

REFORESTING THE BALDWIN AREA

1910 - "Raise trees instead of potatoes" was a new idea urged by persons interested in preserving forests. Giffort Pinchot, a former United States Chief Forester, spoke in St. Paul on the idea. It was a new concept introduced to Sherburne County farmers, to think of growing trees for a profit, and was viewed with much suspicion by area farmers.

1916 – At the end of May, one of the worst dust storms in county history raged for two days. One of the earliest snowstorms in the county's history hit October 19, and left five inches of snow.

1936 – Farmers who took part in the federal soil conservation program received payments of \$5 per acre for planting limited acreages of trees on crop or pasture lands during 1936. Two other approved practices were seeding legumes on cropland, for which farmers were paid \$1 to \$2 per acre, and limiting crop or pastureland, for which \$2.50 per acre was paid.

1946 – Thousands of trees were planted by community groups. More than 6,000 Norway pines and spruce were planted at the Sand Dunes State Forest by 150 people involved with the 13 4-H Clubs.

1949 – M.L. Gilpin, forest supervisor, announced that the 1949 tree-planting program in the Sand Dunes State Forest was completed. In all, 300,000 trees mostly jack pines, were planted by tree planting machines. Later in the year, Sand Dunes State Forest was established as a state game refuge. Orders were issued by Frank D. Blair, Director of the Division of Game and Fish, in time to prevent hunting of deer in the forest and in nearby tracts during the 1949 deer season. The game refuge was established to protect wild life and reduce fire hazards in the heavily hunted area. A large part of the park was planted in evergreens and it was noted that if the State Forest ever did become over-populated with wild life, it could be opened to hunting.

1954 – About 470,000 trees were planted in the county as windbreaks. Grasshoppers infested the county. Palmer, Becker, Elk River, Baldwin and Livonia Townships were the hardest hit.

1966 – According to County Agent Enock E. Ejuge, 10,323,208 seedlings had been distributed in Sherburne County since 1946. The State Division of Forestry Nurseries was authorized by the State Legislature to make trees available to the public.

"Tree planting on poorer soil began in 1938 by WPA crews. To begin with, most plantings were to control erosion of the soils. By 1952, some of the first plantings turned out to contain some fairly good Christmas trees. The Norway pine until that time was not considered a good Christmas tree. Wild spruce and

balsam were the favorites. Several large tree growers began to shape the trees by shearing and thus improved the product to the extent that plantation trees now dominate the market.

“Plantation Christmas trees have contributed to the economy by increasing the labor market. Further benefits will be noted when the remaining trees grow to pole size and later, when logs will be available for lumber.

“Within a very short time there will be pine logs in this area enough to be used in the construction of log house. With the continual higher prices of Western lumber, the building of log houses would be the answer to lower cost housing.

“Three principal tree growers presently in the area are: Norson farms, managed by Richard Nelson, Nan Conifer, and Art Nelson’s tree farms.