The Modest Beginning of the Crossett Experimental Forest
Contributed by Don C. Bragg

In early 1934, Russell R. Reynolds proudly stood next to the original Forest Service building erected on the newly opened Crossett Experimental Forest (CEF) in southeastern Arkansas. Constructed from pine boards cut and milled on site just before Christmas 1933, this utilitarian building served as Reynolds’ first office and stored tools used in the early operations of the CEF. Following this modest beginning, the southern pine silviculture research and demonstration program that started 80 years ago at the CEF continues to this day, although no longer in this structure—within a couple of years, a more permanent headquarters facility was constructed a quarter-mile south of this location. USDA Forest Service photograph from the archives of the Crossett Experimental Forest, Crossett, Arkansas.

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Felling a Giant Cedar
Contributed by Erik Piikkila

The April 1986 felling of this western redcedar (almost 17 ft in diameter and about 150 ft tall) took approximately 1.5 hours. The faller, Sauli Piikkila, relied on his decades of logging experience to help minimize loss to breakage, particularly in steep country or along streams. Felling such a large tree was a complicated process, requiring planning, strategy, and expertise to accomplish safely. Using a chainsaw with a 4-ft bar, Piikkila planned the cutting of this tree in sections. First, an 8-ft-deep undercut was made and enlarged over several stages. Once complete, Piikkila and his falling partner Garry Clark climbed into the undercut and sawed out the 4 ft of heartwood at the height of the backcut before getting out and going to the opposite side of the tree to saw the backcut, which removed the remaining 4 ft of holding wood. This western redcedar, which had lost most of its top in an 1850 windstorm, fell toward the location of the camera in the photograph and split along the seam that is evident in the photo. Photograph from the White River watershed near Sayward, British Columbia (northeastern corner of Vancouver Island) by Garry Clark, from the collection of Erik Piikkila.

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