

May 1, 2023

Special points of interest:

- **The Coenosium Rock Garden History starts in this issue.**
- **There is a sexually confused conifer in this issue.**
- **It's back to school with a quiz.**
- **Big sale on books. It is time to reduce inventory. Great for gifts or to complete a library.**

Inside this issue:

Conifer of the Month: <i>Pinus densiflora</i> 'Umbraculifera'	2
Tree of the Month: <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Ansorgei'	4
Coenosium Rock Garden Part I	6
Conifer Quiz	8
Stack 'em Deep & Teach 'em Cheap, an excerpt	10
The Death of an Army: The Battle of Franklin, an excerpt	12
A Western Serial in Three Parts: The Dog Soldier Part III	14
Reader Comments, Contact Information, and Book Special	16

Bob's News & Musings

What's New?

This issue of my newsletter has something new. I have included two quizzes for my readers. You may use these quizzes to test your conifer knowledge. One or two quizzes will show up from time to time. I will publish the answers in the following issue.

The first quiz in this issue focuses upon naming conifer cultivars. There is space for you to write your answer, if you are printing these newsletters.

The second quiz involves matching the picture of a conifer with its name. In designing this quiz, I focused more upon

matching a descriptive name with the appropriate plant. When I give the answers in my next issue, I will explain the reasoning behind them.

I have also added a new section to the newsletter that will focus upon a garden. The first garden selected is the Coenosium Rock Garden at South Seattle College. It will be explored over approximately four issues. I will show the design and construction, then the maturation of the garden, and finally, the renovation after twenty years.

I presently include chapters from a completed book on

teaching and a book on the Civil War battles of Franklin and Nashville. I also have been including a short story in serial form. The serial will disappear after this issue and I will finish sharing the chapter on the Battle of Franklin over the next few issues.

Afterwards, I will alternate the two in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

My June 1 email will have a likes/dislikes questionnaire in its text. I would appreciate your comments to help me plan future issues of this newsletter.

SPRING HAS SPRUNG



A mixture of boys and girls at the top while the bottom picture shows a plant at the former Ossorio Estate



***Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera': A Sexually Confused Conifer**

First described as being from Japan in 1890, the shrubby and multistemmed *Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera' (syn. 'Tanyosho') is relatively easy to identify. Taking on a form similar to an umbrella, it will maintain that shape as it ages and grows taller. *Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera' will grow up to 6 inches (15 cm) per year.

I noticed early on that *Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera'

has a problem with its sexuality. Typically with pines, when the new growth elongates in the spring, male strobili (pollen producers) develop along the sides of the new shoots up to where the needles first appear. Female strobili (cone producers) form at the ends of the shoots, waiting for pollination. However, on some shoots of 'Umbraculifera', female strobili appear among the male strobili,

and sometimes a male strobilus is partially female. I do not know of any other pine that acts in this manner.

Additionally, many spring shoots are smothered with female strobili along their entire length. When these female strobili develop into cones, they often strangle the shoot, killing it.



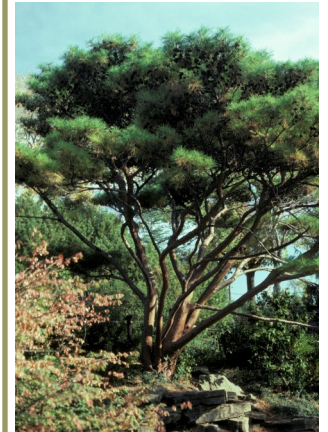
The top two pictures show mostly normal coning with the pollen cones (strobili) along the spring shoots. However, notice the shoot with the female strobili above that became cones in the upper right picture.

The picture to the right shows male strobili that are topped with female strobili.





Two pictures of typical *Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera'. Top was taken at the U.S. National Arboretum and the bottom was taken at the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden in Scotland.



Two pictures of typical *Pinus densiflora* 'Umbraculifera'. Top was taken at the Cincinnati Zoo and the bottom was taken at the Sequest Arboretum in Ohio.





Fagus sylvatica

'Ansoergei' is great
for the smaller
garden.



Fagus sylvatica 'Ansoergei'

Fagus sylvatica has produced several cultivars that work very well in the smaller garden. My favorite would have to be this selection. The unique leaves with their lanceolate shape and dark red color make it particularly interesting. Visitors to Coenosium Gardens were always attracted to our specimen of *Fagus sylvatica* 'Ansoergei'. I have always believed it would make an excellent choice for colder areas where red forms of *Acer palmatum* might struggle to survive.

Discovered about 1884 in

Hamburg, Germany 'Ansoergei' is almost unheard of in this country. In fact, it was almost lost to cultivation in Europe. Dick van Hoey Smith discovered a specimen growing somewhere in Eastern Europe and was able to get it back into propagation at a Dutch nursery. A shrubby plant with narrow, dark purple leaves, it is ideal for the smaller yard or for the borders of a large garden.

I saw my first plant of 'Ansoergei' in 1978 while visiting Mike Kristick near Dover, Pennsylvania. Mike was work-

ing with Marty Brooks as a source of rare plants from the Bergman Collection and had his plants propagated by Geroge Okken at his New Jersey nursery. Quite a few plants in my early days of collecting came from Mike.

When Mike showed me his 'Ansoergei' I knew I had to collect something other than just conifers.



Winter Propagation of *Fagus sylvatica* in Holland

European beech, *Fagus sylvatica* is grafted and the graft is coated with wax. Then the plant is potted into a clay pot and tented. The scions are about one foot long, and the understock is almost the thickness of a thumb. I observed this process at several nurseries.

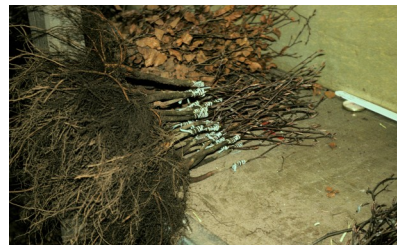
The propagators I talked to like to have both the understock and scion at the same stage of

dormancy. The narrow, blue band is tightly wrapped with many gaps and the wound is waxed just before potting. The pots are laid in a bed at about a 30-degree angle and buried in peat moss. They are then covered with plastic that is supported with curved wires. The tent-house is heated to about 70 degrees Fahrenheit. About three weeks later, the grafts are moved

to a cooler greenhouse to slow the growth of the new foliage (which starts in about two weeks). The new foliage grows from both the scion and the understock at the same time. If the success rate is less than 95%, the grower becomes very upset. I looked under the poly in several different houses and could not find a bad graft.



Left- Scions, bands, alcohol, and understock.



Right- finished grafts ready for waxing.



Left- finished grafts being waxed.



Right- Finished grafts being potted into clay pots.



Left- tented grafts in greenhouse with *Fagus* under supported poly and conifer grafts in the closer beds without supported poly.

Dutch grafters purchase seedlings grown in Europe and graft them upon delivery before potting them.

Winter Propagation of *Fagus sylvatica* in America

I knew several excellent beech grafters who propagated *Fagus* in greenhouses that were maintained at 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Dormant, potted understock was placed in the greenhouse and when 30% were leafed out, scions were grafted and the wound sealed with wax. Even then, it was often

hit-or-miss. The callous-tube method seen here has a very high success rate. I will be going into summer grafting of *Fagus* and *Acer* as well going into detail on the callous-tube system in future newsletters. My June 1 issue will look at winter grafting of *Acer palmatum*.



THE COENOSIUM ROCKGARDEN AT SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PLANNING STAGE

In 1990 Dianne and I were at the Farwest Show in Portland, Oregon. It is a nursery trade show sponsored annually in late August by the Oregon Association of Nurseries. We met a gentleman named Steve Nord. He was a horticulture instructor at South Seattle Community College.

The horticulture program was expanding at the college, and one of its essential aspects was a developing arboretum where students could learn and practice various skills related to the program. In addition, it would serve as an outdoor laboratory for students.

Steve had discovered dwarf conifers and had heard of Coenosium Gardens and us. He asked if we would consider donating dwarf conifers for the arboretum as part of a dwarf conifer garden.

Since Dianne and I always valued education and spent our adult lives as educators, we agreed to work with Steve and the college to donate a dwarf conifer garden. We wanted students to perform most of the work in their educational programs.

Fate intervened, and it was five years later, in 1995, we were finally able to contact Steve about the project and start to get things moving. We had decided the best way to display dwarf conifers in a public setting was by constructing a rock garden. We knew there were several public rock gardens in the Northwest but many of them, especially in the Seattle area, were more like perennial gardens with a scattering of rocks mostly hidden from view by the fast-growing perennials.

We wanted to do a rock garden that was not only well designed but also a garden that would showcase many of the better dwarf and miniature conifers that are available from specialty nurseries and little known to the public.

South Seattle Community College was, and still is, where the garden would serve an educational purpose and be a functional, changing centerpiece to a small arboretum and educational program. An undeveloped portion of the arboretum was tailor-made for our needs. Initially, we were doing a garden of about 10,000 square feet (1/4 acre). However, it soon

became apparent that the project scope exceeded the space, and we subsequently increased it to approximately 1 acre.

The actual planning began in 1999 when a landscape design student, Yukai Kato, developed the basic plan for the garden. She designed the elevations and the hardscape. Dianne and I did most of the plant design.

The site consisted of heavy clay soil with no drainage, a row of Lombardy poplars, and a turf testing facility of concrete-bordered soil plots. All of which we had to correct before work could progress.

We completed the project in three phases. The first phase developed the area between the rock garden and the city street bordering the college's east boundary. We installed a mixed border of compact to standard-sized conifers among deciduous trees.

Phase two covered the development of the garden area. Students installed berms, walkways, rocks, and plants.

Phase three concerned the installation and planting of a water feature that bordered the west boundary of the Coenosium Rock Garden.

Since Dianne and I always valued education and spent our adult lives as educators, we agreed to work with Steve and the college to donate a dwarf conifer garden.





The design team is examining the site.

L-R

- Helen Sutton
- Yukai Kato
- Steve Hildebrand
- Dianne Fincham
- Van Bobbit and his dog

Left to right:

Van Bobbit (instructor and arboretum coordinator)

Steve Holdebrand (instructor on construction projects)

Helen Sutton (Representative for arboretum support committee)



The site consisted of heavy clay soil with no drainage, a row of Lombardy poplars, and a turf testing facility of concrete-bordered soil plots.

(Picture on Page 8)



Left to right:

- Van Bobbit
- Robert Fincham (me)
- Steve Hildebrand



Picea abies

'Pendula' or *Picea*
abies f. *pendula*?



Conifers In Cultivation Quiz #1 Plant Names (Answers in next issue)

1. When may a selected conifer be considered a cultivar and not just a species?
2. How does the cultivar name of a plant become accepted as the valid name for that plant? Be sure to mention both ways.
3. Explain why some cultivar names should no longer be accepted, but rather should be considered as a *forma* of the species. Give at least one example.
4. Explain the difference between a *forma* of a species and a *variety* of a species. Give at least one example.
5. How does a cultivar differ from a cultivar?
6. Why don't taxonomists include the cultivar level in their taxonomic structure charts?
7. List five Latin terms that are part of plant names and explain what each one means.
8. What is wrong with this name? *Pinus strobus* "Sea urchin"

Match the Plant with Its Name



- A> *Abies alba* 'Mlada Boleslav'
- B> *Abies alba* 'Pendula'
- C> *Abies alba* 'Pyramidalis'
- D> *Abies alba* 'Aurea'
- E> *Abies alba* 'Green Spiral'

Here is another cultivar that might add to your confusion: *Abies alba* 'Contorta'.

Top: National Dwarf Conifer Collection in England.

Bottom: Spring Grove Cemetery in Ohio.



Stack 'em Deep & Teach 'em Cheap

Section One: Students

Unit Three: Curriculum

Chapter Five

Sex Education in School: Abstinence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder

I doubt any topic riles up parents or jams people into school board meetings faster than sex education in the school's curriculum. This topic hits more hot buttons than the Theory of Evolution. Yet, I wonder how many think sex education teaches students how to have sex.

State laws vary regarding the teaching of sex education. Some states leave the curriculum up to the local districts and even allow them to opt-out of teaching it. As of 2022, twenty-nine states require that public schools provide a class in sex education. Some of the other states focus on curriculums emphasizing sexually transmitted diseases. However, several of those restrict that focus to only HIV.

Educators tend to turn a blind eye to the fact that many adolescents have sexual relations. Resistance to instruction related to sexual orientation and contraception is fierce in many parts of the country. Some states restrict sex education to an abstinence-only viewpoint.

Politicians strive to avoid controversial topics that might affect their electability. Sex education support is low on most elected officials' policy lists. They prefer to squirm their way out of any debate supporting it. Parents who think they are protecting their children from "dirty" topics feel good about themselves.

But, of course, they have probably never been in middle school hallways these days when the classes are passing.

Meanwhile, the United States has higher rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases than most other industrialized countries.

Teaching abstinence does not stop teens from engaging in sexual relations. Teaching contraception does not encourage teens to have sexual relations. If a teacher shows how to put a condom onto a banana, the students do not suddenly start having sexual relations. If sometime later in the year, two teens have sex, they likely will properly use a condom and have a better chance of avoiding pregnancy or sharing an STD. They will also know that condoms are not 100% effective in either case.

In the states where sex education is not a part of the school curriculum, authorities assume that parents will provide that information to their children. Good luck with that idea. Roughly 50% of teens in these states have no reliable knowledge of birth control before their first sexual relationship. Recent studies show that those children get most of their sex education through the internet.

When I was a student in high school, sex education involved spending a class period with all the boys in my grade, sitting on the bleachers in the gym while the teacher talked to us about sex. I do not recall one thing that he said. My real sex education came from my friends.

Many parents still find it awkward to discuss sex with their children. They are even too embarrassed to kiss each

other in front of the "kids," who often make a negative comment or, at times, respond with the "fake gagging with an index finger in the mouth" routine. These parents are happy for the school to take on some of the responsibility for sex education. Of course, some parents want schools to stay out of it, but in most states, they are in the minority.

The state of Washington requires teaching this topic, and I think many parents are relieved because they find it challenging to sit down and talk to their children about this topic.

I volunteered to take on health as part of the eighth-grade life science curriculum at Keithley Middle School, teaching sex education as part of that curriculum for two years. The physical education teachers had avoided teaching health for years, short-changing the students. I could see the need for this curriculum whenever I talked to students.

For one thing, most students refused to shower after taking a physical education class, leading to some smelly situations. The P. E. teachers had given up fighting this battle with them. After conversations with different students, I concluded that most were not too lazy to shower. Instead, they (mostly boys) were afraid that one of their classmates might be "gay," see them nude, and make a pass at them, because, they assumed, a gay eighth-grader has no self-control around naked boys. I had never considered that such fear even existed. I took P.E. in school, and we did not play 'grab the wiener'. All we did to each other was some towel snapping to give a good ass-sting.

Teaching abstinence does not stop teens from engaging in sexual relations.

Teaching contraception does not encourage teens to have sexual relations.

Stack 'em Deep & Teach 'em Cheap (cont.)

Since I had the same students for a full year of life science, I developed a rapport with most of them and their parents before starting the health unit. I told my students to feel free to ask me any question on their minds, and I always gave them straight answers. In our science lessons, I got them used to words like penis and sperm, so they got the giggles out of their systems. They felt comfortable with me.

Using a realistic approach with my students, I only ever had one parent complain about my teaching sex education. He told me he was standing up for all the parents who were afraid to approach me. Feeling sorry for his daughter, I excused her from the one day of "ask me anything about any sex topic, using the appropriate language."

Eighth graders think they know all about sex. Their naiveté is interesting. On "ask any question day," my female students seemed to ask the most pointed questions. The mechanics of sex for procreation and the effects of STDs were part of the regular curriculum, so the "ask any" questions ranged from how gays could have sex to why boys are so fascinated with girls' breasts.

I never demonstrated how

to put a condom onto a banana, but I did present a unit on birth control and abstinence. Many students previously thought condoms were 100% effective at preventing conception and STDs. I pointed out how that train of thought could easily lead to problems later. I always preferred to point out the consequences of sexual behaviors and focus on the girls since they could not walk away from unwanted or accidental pregnancies. When I finished the unit, students understood abstinence was the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy and STDs. But they also knew how to handle situations where abstinence might not be an option.

This unit also allowed me to discourage the destructive behaviors of some of the eighth-grade girls with high school boys. For example, they learned that oral sex could not result in a pregnancy but could spread an STD.

The material on birth control was essential. I knew that teaching abstinence alone was not only a waste of time but also misleading and could be highly damaging. Anyone who says otherwise needs to get a teaching job in a different field to do less harm to their students.

I enjoyed teaching health as part of my science curriculum. I felt as if I was influencing my students beyond academics alone. They responded positively to the curriculum, and when they moved on to the ninth grade, many of them looked forward to seeing me when I visited the science teachers on the high school campus. My former students often went out of their way to see me when they heard I was there.

When Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) testing fever hit the state of Washington (administered from 1997 until 2009), I had to change my curriculum to reflect the demands of the science portion of the test. Reluctantly, I converted my curriculum from life sciences to earth sciences and gave up the health unit. It was to be taught by the physical education teachers, even though they were "allergic" to a regular classroom setting. In my last three years at the middle school, no one taught health as a separate course or unit. Supposedly it was integrated into physical education as part of a "wellness curriculum."

*Eighth graders
think they know all
about sex. Their
naiveté is interesting.*

Inside Story Headline

Sex education has always been a controversial subject in schools. It varies from a single day's lesson or an ancient military film on venereal diseases in high school to a complete curriculum with details designed for each grade level.

In many parts of the country things have not changed very much. That is unfortunate for the students who then have to get

their sex ed from friends or the internet.

When I went to school, if a girl became pregnant, she disappeared from class just before it started to show. Sometimes she returned after giving birth, sometimes she did not.

Schools where I taught allowed pregnant girls to attend classes as long as they were physically able. I wonder if a good sex

ed program would have prevented the student pregnancies I saw?

As long as parents can have their children opt out of the program, it needs to be part of any complete curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of the students, not their parents or the politicians.

The Death of an Army (Part 3 of 5)

Battle of Franklin, TN

Chapter Five: 5th/13th Combined Arkansas, November 30, 1864

As Aaron's men started to move up the dirt embankment, more charging Confederates came through the smoke and swelled their ranks. Off to the right some Georgia men had pushed ahead and were going over the top of the fortification. There was an officer and some enlisted men trying to stop their advance and vicious fighting was taking place. Aaron angled in their direction and ten or fifteen of his men followed him. The others continued straight up the bank. As he reached the top, he heard a Yankee bugle signaling an advance. It was just the one bugle and he saw the bugler standing next to a big sergeant. He raised his rifle and put a ball directly into the bell of the bugle. Several others fired at the same time. Many Yankees had been moving toward them but now appeared to be confused. At that time, Aaron's men along with three other Arkansas regiments reached the top of the embankment and began firing down at the Yankees. Hundreds of men swarmed around Aaron and his company. As they overwhelmed the few Union soldiers on the top of the wall, Potter rushed forward and bayoneted an officer who was directing the defenders. He pushed his bayonet into the officer's body just under the breastbone. Then, screaming like a lunatic, he picked him off the ground with his rifle and pitched him down the slope into the climbing Confederates.

Potter had succumbed to his blood lust and forgot all

caution as he focused upon killing any man in a blue uniform. Not bothering to reload his rifle, he charged down the interior side of the embankment toward a small group of Union soldiers. The Confederate soldiers in the area followed his lead and the charge pushed ahead. Georgia and Arkansas soldiers intermingled as they literally flowed over the former barrier. The two armies made close contact and the battle became more personal.

Potter seemed to be invincible as he bayoneted an unfortunate private in the breast. The mortally wounded soldier grunted at the initial impact of its sharpened point and opened his mouth to scream as the long sliver of iron pierced his body. Only a gurgled sound issued from his throat as blood from a torn and punctured lung flowed copiously from his mouth. As Potter made to remove the bayonet, it resisted his pull. Cursing profusely, he tugged and twisted with his rifle, but it was stuck in the cartilage and gristle with the blood adding suction to the resistance. He tried to fire his rifle to blow it clear, but he had not reloaded. Then with a mighty twist, the bayonet snapped off where it had been weakened by rust from its days as a tent peg. With an angry, feral growl, Potter smashed the dying man with his rifle butt, breaking every bone his face. The man felt no pain. He was gone. Then throwing down his rifle, he drew his Bowie knife and looked for another Yankee to kill.

Combat swirled through the area. Bayonets, rifles, pistols, and knives killed soldiers on both sides. Confederates were pouring over the embankment in large numbers and

swarming the defenders. Regiments had also flanked the fortifications and were moving along their interior toward the center from both sides.

It was difficult to see very far, but as Potter charged down the bank Aaron saw a cluster of Yankees sheltering in a debris field with some regimental flags. That same company had begun a futile counterattack before he killed their bugler. The Arkansas men that had followed him had gone with Potter, who was fighting like a maniac. Meanwhile, Caleb and Fordge hunkered down with the rest of the Arkansas men exchanging shots with the Yankees. As he shifted over to join Caleb, he noted several men in blue who were killed as they charged up the slope. One of them was still moving until Fordge put a ball into his head.

The volume of fire was getting heavier as the Confederates were approaching from the sides in the flanking movement. It was time to get these men moving before things backed up at this section of the line. Potter was having a strong effect on the resolution of the Yankee defenders farther along the line as he slashed and stabbed indiscriminately among them. Several eviscerated men lay on the ground sobbing, praying, or cursing as they slowly died.

Aaron got Caleb's attention and pointed downhill. Waving his arm forward, he charged toward the debris field. The rebels on the embankment stood and followed Aaron and Caleb down the slope screaming at the top of their lungs. Scattered yankees stood and died while many more decided a retreat was in order. As they turned, the onrushing Confederates collided with the Union

Combat swirled through the area. Bayonets, rifles, pistols, and knives killed soldiers on both sides.

The Death of an Army (cont.)

line and the killing became more personal and violent. Blue and Gray were intermingled, and cold steel was the weapon of choice. Bayonets were effective and frightening where space allowed their use. Bowie knives and clubbed rifles were used in close. Things got very bloody as the defenders were overwhelmed, and the Union line broke. The Yankees were in full retreat and the rebels were among them. Some of the Yankees were bayoneted in the back as they ran. Others were killed where they stood, fighting to the end. The blood lust was among them all and horrific fighting ensued.

A few scattered units stayed together as the retreat became a rout. Aaron and Caleb led their men into the debris field where one company had been effectively resisting. Prepared to fight their way into this area, they were surprised to find only a few scattered bodies. The company had obviously retreated or scattered soon after the Confederates charged down the embankment.

Moving forward toward the main fortifications around Franklin, Aaron tried to keep his men together as an organized unit. It was hopeless. Soon the men from Arkansas were intermingled with soldiers from Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. The leading regiments had completely encircled and overwhelmed the Union defenses and captured hundreds of enemy soldiers. Then the mixed regiments moved on the city itself, which was surrounded by strong fortifications but wide open along the road from the captured strongpoint. Now these regiments and brigades were driving the

defeated Yankees toward this gap in the lines. Yankee artillery could not fire on them since they were thoroughly intermingled, friend and foe. The battle lines that had followed the assaulting brigades were at the trailing edge of this throng. The battle lines that had flanked this central attack were moving on the fortifications around Franklin and suffering from profuse and accurate cannon fire along their flanks. They were no longer in parade formations since many of the lines had merged during their march over the uneven battleground while under fire. This moving wave of gray made an enticing target for the artillery and it was difficult to miss, especially as it came close enough for the guns to fire canister into the lines.

As these divisions pushed forward to support the breakthrough in the center, they left a gray and red carpet on the ground behind them. Moving faster as they came closer to the Union lines they attempted to keep them from reinforcing the center of their line. In addition to the pressure on the Union flanks, the regiments in the center were attempting to exploit their breakthrough. They were advancing into Franklin through the fortifications, intermingled with retreating Yankees. They sensed that victory was within their grasp.

As they pushed forward, there were scattered pockets of resistance where Union troops tried to maintain some sort of a formation to resist the Confederate advance. With about twenty of their Arkansas men, Aaron and Caleb had encountered an area of organized resistance by troops retreating in good order. These were the

troops from the debris field and a tough, experienced sergeant led them. The Arkansas men pushed directly into the unit and a melee ensued. One of the Yankees charged Aaron from his left side with a leveled bayonet while he was trying to club an opponent with the stock of his rifle. "Dammit!" was all Aaron could think as he clubbed his opponent senseless. He started to turn just as his attacker moved in preparing to thrust his bayonet into his vitals. He noted that the bayonet was encrusted with dripping blood just as everything seemed to slow down. His feet felt as if they were mired in mud as he tried to turn away from that red glistening bayonet. "So, this is how I die." he said to himself. From behind the Yankee came a thick arm that wrapped around his throat, stopping him in his tracks. Then the point of a Bowie knife projected from his belly as it severed his spinal cord and tore up his vitals.

*As these divisions
pushed forward to
support the
breakthrough in the
center, they left a
gray and red carpet
on the ground behind
them.*

Short Story Serial Part 3 (final part)

The Dog Soldier and The Army Scout (May 1874)

As he watched the men, Bloody Knife began to feel uneasy. Someone must be nearby. He held his rifle where he could aim and instantly fire as he visually searched his surroundings. There was no sign of anyone, and the forest was quiet, except for the occasional shout from the white men as they found gold nuggets.

Bloody Knife decided to scout toward the horses and mules and moved in that direction when a small pebble hit him in the back of the neck. He quickly turned, raising his rifle to his shoulder. He saw a Cheyenne warrior with a head-dress of raven feathers standing still with his hands in the air.

It was the dog soldier he had helped that morning. Lowering his rifle, he quietly walked and greeted him with a sign of peace. Then he asked, "Why does a dog soldier want to meet with me?"

"Army scout, I bring you a warning. Lakota have heard these foolish men who hunt the yellow metal. They come to kill them. Others also follow your tracks from the morning when you helped me. If you stay here, you will die."

"I am called Bloody Knife by the soldiers. I am an Arikara warrior and do not fear the Sioux. Many of them are my blood enemies."

"You are the one who Chief Gall has sworn to kill. The one who shares the blood

of the Lakota."

"Yes, I am him."

"I am Laughing Wolf, and the Cheyenne sometimes ride with the Sioux and sometimes fight them. While the white eyes are here, we ride with the Sioux."

"What happened this morning? I saw Sioux kill Cheyenne."

"Old memories do not always leave us. Two Cheyenne were in the Sacred Hills to offer gifts to the Great Spirit. I was following them as a hidden protector. They were only armed with hunting bows and did not expect trouble since we are allied with the Sioux."

"They met with a large hunting party and were received as friends. They shared tobacco and talked of past feats. When they bragged of how the Cheyenne had stolen most of the Sioux horse herd some years ago, the Sioux must have become angry."

They suggested a smaller party might have more success and sent three of their warriors with the two Cheyenne on a separate hunt. At the first opportunity, they killed them, and I had to avenge their deaths."

"Now the main party follows your trail here. But a smaller group arrives first."

Bloody Knife had stood silently while Laughing Wolf spoke. After he finished, Bloody Knife said, "These white eyes are fools and will not stop hunting the yellow metal. One tried to kill me as I left them."

"I stopped him," was Laughing Wolf's reply.

"That made us even, yet you still warn me about these Sioux parties," Bloody Knife said.

"These Sioux are like snakes. They killed my friends like cowards, and I must punish them. You helped me, and they want to kill you as well. I can hurt them by helping you escape."

The two men moved farther away from the creek to where Laughing Wolf's pony waited beside Bloody Knife's horse. As they led the animals away, they heard screaming from the prospectors.

"The smaller war party is killing the white eyes," Laughing Wolf said.

"If we go downstream for about a mile, there is a place where we can lose anyone who might be following us," Bloody Knife said.

"I cannot kill the leader if they do not follow my trail," Laughing Wolf said, pulling a Sharps Rifle from beneath a blanket roll.

The two men rode to a spot along the creek, where they entered the water and proceeded downstream. Before getting very far, they came upon Mulvany's body wedged among some rocks. They stopped beside it for a minute. Bloody Knife dismounted to take a closer look at the body while Laughing Wolf continued moving downstream.

The man's Colt pistol was still in its holster. Bloody Knife took it and ejected the wet cartridges. He started replacing them with dry ones when a Sioux rushed at him, swinging a

He slapped the lock mechanism shut and rolled the cylinder on his sleeve before cocking the hammer and firing a .45 slug into the chest of the oncoming warrior.

Short Story Serial Part 3 (cont.)

tomahawk. He slapped the lock mechanism shut and rolled the cylinder on his sleeve before cocking the hammer and firing a .45 slug into the chest of the oncoming warrior.

Sticking the revolver into his belt, he took out his knife. He deftly removed the man's scalp before jumping onto the back of his horse and following Laughing Wolf downstream.

"Now we have two Sioux war parties to follow us," Laughing Wolf said when he reached his side.

Bloody Knife simply shrugged and said, "I now have two pistols to use if they catch us."

Leaving the creek first, Bloody Knife followed a rocky trail that led up into some higher ground covered with scattered boulders. Laughing Wolf went farther downstream and left the water where a massive rock formation reached into the water. There was no sign of his passage as he followed a different trail into the same high ground as Bloody Knife.

It was late in the afternoon, and night was only a few hours away when a large group of Sioux came splashing down the creek. They quickly spotted Bloody Knife's tracks and saw that he was less than an hour ahead of them.

There were eighteen warriors in the combined war parties. The two groups had united, and they all wanted the same man. Without a word, they silently left the water and followed the trail taken by Bloody Knife. They were soon moving single file among the

boulders, ascending a long hill. The track was a bottleneck with no smaller paths providing an alternate route.

The men started getting uneasy. They saw how constricted the trail had become and noticed several ambush sites in the rocks on the higher land ahead and to the sides. The leader signaled to go faster when a shot rang out, knocking him off his pony. A second shot killed the warrior immediately behind him.

The Sioux started to dismount and go for cover when a volley of shots rang out from a high point a short distance ahead. The shots were coming fast and furious, indicating a large group of men must be lying in ambush. Luckily, they had opened fire too soon, giving the war party a chance to retreat before being wiped out.

Their medicine was bad, and they were in danger of being wiped out. The Sioux turned and fled back down the trail. They would have to find another way to catch the man who had killed several of their people.

A short time after the Sioux had fled down the trail, Laughing Wolf arrived at the ambush site, where he found Bloody Knife waiting. As he rode up to him, Bloody Knife said, "I like two pistols. Make me sound like whole company of long knives."

Laughing Wolf just grunted and dismounted. "I will take these scalps to the families of Slow Bull and Bright Owl. Once the sadness has passed, they will be pleased to know I

avenged their deaths.

The two men clasped arms, and Laughing Wolf said, "If we meet in battle, I will show you no mercy, and if I am the victor, you will keep your scalp."

Bloody Knife responded by saying, "I will take no pleasure in having to take your life. I will not take your scalp, and you will keep your headdress."

Bloody Knife rode through the boulder field and followed the trail to the north across the high ground well into the night. The last he saw of Laughing Wolf, he was riding slowly toward the southeast.

He made a cold camp without a fire in case any Sioux were in the area. Bloody Knife awoke when the sky brightened in the east and got an early start. He figured he had a few miles to cover before meeting up with the Lieutenant and his patrol. They had agreed on a rendezvous site where the men would be camping. The Lieutenant expected him to be there with a deer or two when the patrol arrived. Then they would travel toward the northeast from that location.

Bloody Knife guessed about where the patrol should be along their route and headed in that direction. They had been restricted to the northeast corner of the Black Hills and had completed their orders. They had not found any prospectors in violation of the treaty. It was time to return to Fort Lincoln.

Bloody Knife reached a point along their expected

route just beyond the edge of the Black Hills and waited for them. He had shot an antelope along the way and had it hanging in a tree by a small spring. It would make a good campsite for the night.

The patrol arrived in the late afternoon. Several Sioux were watching their movement as the soldiers left their holy ground. They had agreed to allow uniformed soldiers to patrol parts of the Black Hills, so there was no fighting. Their open presence was just a warning for the army to honor the treaty.

Bloody Knife reported to the Lieutenant and told him what had happened to Mulvany and Schmidt. He left out any reference to Laughing Wolf but did include the three prospectors. He said they had all died for fool's gold. He showed him a few pieces he had picked up in the boulder field where he and Laughing Wolf had stopped the Sioux war party.

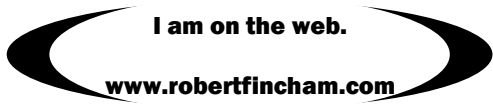
The Lieutenant shook his head in frustration and thanked Bloody Knife for the antelope, which two of the men skinned and cut into pieces for a hearty supper. The next day they'd return to the fort, and he'd report to Custer that prospectors are sneaking into the Black Hills.


Organization

COENOSIUM PUBLISHING

Robert Fincham
12609 118th Street Ct. E.
Puyallup WA 98374

Phone: 253-208-0233
Email: bobfincham@mashell.com



For the month of May, all my books are on sale with a discount of 40%. They are described on my website at www.robertfincham.com. You may pay by check or use PayPal for your order. No code is necessary to get this price but the deadline for ordering is May 31, 2023. My inventory is shrinking and when they are gone, I will be using the Kindle Direct Publishing system offered by Amazon. It is print on demand and prices and shipping costs are set in stone.

Here are the discount prices (list price-discounted price) with partial book titles. There is no charge for shipping. It is included in this deal. Prices per book are the same regardless of quantities. Books will be mailed on May 15 and June 1 via USPS.

\$34.95 – \$21.00 Gone But Not Forgotten & Vol. II Colorful Conifers & Artsy Fartsy Conifers

\$29.95 – \$18.00 Vol. III Shapely Conifers

\$24.95 – \$15.00 Vol. I Historical Perspective & Stack ‘Em Deep Teach ‘em Cheap

\$19.00 – \$11.50 Fagus sylvatica

\$15.00 – \$10.00 Growing Up in the Switzerland of America

Small Conifers for Small Gardens is not included in this sale. It is only available through Amazon KDP.

Comments on the April issue by readers

Jason: FYI, *firma* is also desirable to those in areas with bad *phytothora cinnamoni* (spelling?) I think it's overrated. Nordmann or Turkish are also great ones for those areas and they have good disease resistance. When I have customers talking about *firma*, disease resistance is one the main reasons they state.

Pinus mugo has been a great rootstock for parviflora cultivars. Especially the dwarf varieties.

I have not heard of any compatibility issues with the *mugo*. The trick is to use a straight growing seed source so its easier to graft.

Sherry & David: We wanted to relate our experience with *Pinus densiflora* ‘Burkes Red Variegated’. We planted it here in Wisconsin in 2011. We planted it in full sun but with a wind break against north-west winter winds. Until last summer, it always had bright yellow banding through summer, fall and early winter. However, we were really concerned after the first winter. That first spring, all the needles turned a rusty “red”. I thought the plant was dead, but by June, it was fully banded and looking great. Each spring we had the same experience and I came to

realize that Burke probably called it “red” because it went through a burnt red phase after each winter. Unfortunately, last summer it did not transition into the bright yellow banding and we pulled the tree out. In digging it out, I noticed the tree had not developed a very good root system, which probably accounted for its ultimate demise.

Me: Burke’s plant only showed red as a very young seedling one time, probably in the winter.

Richard: Thanks for sending the latest installment. Is it really Vol. 1, Issue 1?

Me: It is funny that no matter how much I proofread, I always miss something.