

## A Dream for the Future



**Walter Kuse – Environmentalist and Artist**

In the 1930's, Walter Kuse, our father, painted a series of pictures showing an original forest, logging operations, forest fires, cutover wasteland and reforestation of Northern Wisconsin forests. His own experience in logging

camps, clearing land after the wasteful cutting had occurred, and improving his farm contributed to his desire to be a wise steward of the land so that it could be a blessing for future generations.

He wrote this poem to accompany that series of paintings.

### Our Forests

A beautiful place was once this land  
When original forests here once did stand.  
For miles and miles t'was to be found,  
Tall and slender, thick and sound.  
Peaceful and low would whisper the pine,  
And through an opening the sunbeams would shine  
To dance among the leaves and play  
As though this beauty would always stay.

And what do you think did happen then?  
They grabbed and grabbed those thoughtless men,  
And clipped the woods quite close and bare.  
The logging camps were then full go,  
And what they did we yet still know.  
With oxen and horses to the woods they went  
And down the rivers the logs they sent.

The best of all was only taken;  
The rest then rotted and was forsaken.  
This all was done in quite a haste  
And left behind a heap of waste.  
A careless match then burnt the rest  
From north and south, then east and west.  
The birds and animals sure suffered then  
From careless deeds of thoughtless men.

And where this place of beauty once stood  
Was left behind some charred black wood.  
And who has seen a place of this kind  
I'm sure will have a thought in mind,

To plant the land with trees once more  
With lakes on hand with a beautiful shore,  
The birds and animals again can roam  
And call this spot their quiet home.

Our government now has made the start,  
And we can also do our part,  
To do what's right in every way.  
And may this work a blessing stay.

Walter Kuse

Walter Kuse's work is described in a book.  
Barton, J. (1948) Rural artists of Wisconsin. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

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