

F. Henry Sipe



F. Henry Sipe retired from his 33-year career as a forester when he was almost 60 years old and started a second profession as a surveyor that lasted another three decades. He was the State's first licensed surveyor and a charter member of the West Virginia Association of Land Surveyors.

Mr. Sipe was a native of Somerset, Pennsylvania and resident of Elkins, West Virginia, since 1953. He received a forestry degree in 1925 from Pennsylvania State Forest School and a masters degree in forestry from the Yale Forest School in 1929, and served as a forester in Pennsylvania and North Carolina for several years before accepting a position with the U. S. Forest Service. Mr. Sipe also engaged in surveying as part of his forestry service assignments and following retirement from the federal government, he set his sights to upgrade the practice of land surveying in West Virginia, in addition to engaging in his own surveying and forestry business. As a result, he published several books and booklets.

In 1967, he met L. Bruce Sumner, a U. S. Forest Service surveyor in California and the two men developed a new open-sight compass which was marketed in 1971.

In 1968, Mr. Sipe was elected president of a group of surveyors interested in organizing and creating a bill for surveyor licensure, and in 1970, the Elkins Chapter of the West Virginia Association of Land Surveyors was organized.

Mr. Sipe was instrumental in a movement for a law requiring surveyor licensing in the State and he was appointed by Governor Arch Moore to serve on the first Board of Examiners where he was elected as secretary-treasurer. During his 12-year tenure on the board, 770 surveyor licenses were issued. He also assisted in the establishment of a two-year land surveying course at Glenville State College, which was first offered to students in 1972.

He was selected as the National Surveyor of the Year in 1979 by the Land Surveyors Division of the American Congress of Surveying and Mapping and was the Professional Surveyors of Northern West Virginia's Surveyor of the Year in 1969.

Mr. Sipe made about 500 land surveys since 1962, coding each of his major surveys with an individual letter and number. The codes are cross referenced to a list containing information about the survey including the client, county, magisterial district and latitude and longitude of the property.

From 1989 to 1993 he served as editor of the West Virginia Newsletter, providing advice to other surveyors and foresters. He passed away on September 17, 1993, and was honored by members of both professions. He was a member of the Society of American Foresters and was active in the forestry profession. His accomplishments in the surveying and the forestry areas have greatly benefited both professions and West Virginia.