

## Forests and My Family

By

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Anyone can quote a number or recite a fact. But me, I can proudly say that I *am* a number—namely, the great, great, great, great, great granddaughter of Nathaniel Lamberton, a man who died in 1851 in Marshfield Township, in Washington, Vermont. I am the eighth generation of men and women who have grown up in the beautiful forests of Vermont. I am a number; my family is a fact. My ancestry in Vermont is history in the making. Vermont's forests are important to me because they have provided a stable economy and strong source of income for me and my family now and in generations past.

Vermont's forests help to provide reliable revenue. This reliability is largely because of a continual need for forest-based goods. My father, the president of New England Forestry Consultants says, "There is a constant need for Vermont's forest products, which helps to keep the economy strong." From a young age, my father has seen this positive economic factor first hand every day not only at work, but also at home. As a kid, he saw his great grandfather own and operate a saw mill in Marshfield. And now, 50 years later, his children are (and will be) attending college without accumulating debt. The harvesting and sale of timber on our family's forest property has supplied the necessary means for our education. Thus, Vermont's forests provide a reliable source of income.

A need for forest-based goods, however, is not the only way Vermont's forests are supporting the economy. Every winter, thousands of people travel to Vermont to adventure down Vermont's famous ski slopes. In order for this tourism to be possible, ski areas must hire a forester and a logger to clear paths down the mountain. The timber cut during this process is used to pay the forester and

logger, as well as go towards the ski area's other expenses. My father has overseen and managed the cutting of ski slopes on Vermont's Stratton Mountain, thus showing that Vermont's tourism industry has a direct effect on those who work with her forests. According to the Vermont Woodlands Association, "In 2005, the contribution of forest related recreation and tourism to the Vermont economy was \$1.5 billion." Therefore, Vermont's forests attract tourists, which help provide a strong, stable economy.

Although all of these avenues of income are designed to make the land owner money, they all come with taxing costs. Vermont's Current Use Program helps lower the burden of taxes, while encouraging land owners to manage their land. An article in the Northern Woodland Magazine states, "...the program taxes property on its current use (i.e. timber and crops), instead of on its development potential..." This program is helpful to many people such as my great aunt and uncle, who own roughly 550 acres of farm and forest lands in Bethel. Now in their 80's, the program helps them afford to remain in their home without sub-dividing their land.

Thus, Vermont's forests are important because they provide multiple avenues for a strong, steady source of income. Land management and harvesting, as well as land managed for tourist attractions and commercial sales are just a few of these avenues. For me though, Vermont's forests mean more than money; they mean family. Vermont's forests have been supporting my family for generations, helping our legacy in Vermont to become history, and me to become a number—the eighth. I agree with President Theodore Roosevelt when he said, "To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state, and to live as a people, we must have trees."

## Works Cited

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