

Reverend Nathaniel Eggleston's Woods

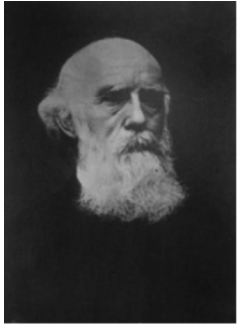


Nathaniel Hillyer Eggleston was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on May 7, 1822. Nathaniel is my 4th great-grand uncle and the brother of my 5th great-grandparent Orrin Eggleston (1783-1870).

Nathaniel graduated from Yale College in 1840 and Yale Seminary (now Yale Divinity School) in 1843. He served as a Congregational pastor in Ellington (CT), New York, Chicago, Madison (WI) and Stockbridge (MA) and was a founder of the American Congregational Union and the Chicago Theological Seminary.

After many years of leading a rapid westward expansion of congregational churches, Nathaniel's life took a remarkable turn when he went to Washington D.C. and was appointed to be the second Chief of the U.S. Division of Forestry (1883-1886).

[U.S. Forest History Society \(edited\)](#) In 1893, U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture George Loring appointed his friend Eggleston as chief of the Division of Forestry. ***Neither suited for the job nor a strong administrator***, Eggleston floundered as chief but did offer some ideas that were later acted upon. In his first annual report he suggested that the federal government should ensure that the extensive federal forest lands in the public domain were properly cared for and were used for the general welfare. He also recommended that the federal government establish forest experiment stations.



*The trees are man's best friends; but man has treated them as his enemies. The history of our race may be said to be the history of warfare upon the tree world. But while man has seemed to be the victor, his victories have brought upon him inevitable disasters. **Nathaniel Eggleston***

A new presidential administration in 1885 brought a new commissioner of agriculture, Norman J. Colman. He did not ask for, nor did Eggleston volunteer to provide, a plan for the division. Eggleston couldn't even get a meeting appointment with him. When Colman requested and received Eggleston's resignation, he waited a month before returning it to the chief. Eggleston spent the next year "befuddled by indecision and uncertainty...meekly waiting to be fired." **Eventually, he was demoted but contentedly stayed on as a clerk for the next twelve years.**

[Gifford Pinchot](#), considered by some to be the father of the American conservation movement, was less than enthralled with Nathaniel and in his book *Breaking New Ground*, stated (Eggleston) was "one of those failures in life whom the spoils system is constantly catapulting into responsible positions."

[Amateur Hour: Nathaniel H. Eggleston and Professional Forestry in Post-Civil War America](#)

[Religion in politics; a discourse to the congregational church and society in Madison, Wisconsin](#)



The stand of trees in Church Park, at the east end of the village green was planted under the supervision of the ninth pastor of the Congregational Church, the Rev. Nathaniel Eggleston, in the late 1840s. The skinny trees were referred to as "Eggleston's woods."

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