

PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

ON FOREST TREE IMPROVEMENT

New Orleans, Louisiana, January 5 and 6, 1955

Morning Session, January 5

Moderator, E. L. Demmon

1. OPENING REMARKS

E. L. Demmon, Director  
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It is a pleasure to act as Moderator at this opening session of your conference on forest tree improvement. Not only is it a pleasure to be back amongst friends in New Orleans where I spent so many years of professional work (1925-1944), but also to have a small part in this important discussion of forest genetics.

My interest in forest genetics dates back about 35 years to the time when I helped initiate breeding experiments with plantation rubber in the East Indies, to increase yields of natural rubber. That experiment grew into practices which resulted in greatly stepping up average yields by the American company with which I was associated.

During my tenure at the Southern Station, studies by Wakeley and others were initiated to determine the effect of geographic source of seed, and to increase yields of gum naval stores through seed selection. These studies are now bearing fruit, and have served as background for further research. Also, our Southeastern Station is now well launched in forest genetics work in Georgia and Florida, the results of which will be reported at this conference. I am glad to see that the Lake States Forest Experiment Station is represented on the program, as I was also connected with that station for several years (1944-1951).

Back in April 1938 I gave a talk on "The Importance of Forest Genetics Investigations in the South" before a Farm Chemurgic group in Chicago. In that discussion I stressed the need for stepping up research

in forest genetics, but progress has been very slow until recently. I am sure it is stimulating to all of us to know that a Southern Institute of Forest Genetics, from which we can expect important contributions, is now a reality.

Many groups and institutions throughout the United States are at present busily engaged in forest tree improvement research. It is a fine thing to hold periodic conferences such as this, to hear reports on progress being made, and to better correlate research efforts, thus avoiding unnecessary duplication. I congratulate your Committee on having arranged such an excellent program.

And now I have the pleasure of introducing your first speaker, a man who is well known to all of you, and who is an authority on his subject, "The Place of Forest Genetics in Silviculture"--Dr. Scott Pauley of Harvard University.