

The First Publication Series of the Southern Forest Experiment Station

James P. Barnett

James P. Barnett, Retired Chief Silviculturist and Emeritus Scientist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station, Pineville, LA 71360.

INTRODUCTION

The first U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service regional experiment stations were created in 1921 with few guidelines and directives for their organization. Newly appointed, station directors used creativity in organizing their programs, including how to gain support and direction for the experiment stations. This was especially true for the Southern Forest Experiment Station (SOFES), which was established when much of the southern timber industry had cut out, or were on the verge of cutting out, their virgin forests.

While Reginald D. Forbes served as the first station director (from 1921 to 1927) of the SOFES, it was Elwood L. Demmon, Station Director from 1927 to 1944, who created much of the Station's organizational and administrative policies with little guidance from the Washington Office.

One early challenge was how to communicate the results of research studies. Early publications (a term used in its broadest sense) included Washington Office bulletins, reprints from scientific and trade journals, and mimeographed texts of the station director's trade-association speeches. An end-of-year list of these publications was sent out, making them available upon request. For example, the list for 1932 included 27 items, ranging from a rather trivial 1-page chart of *How Does a Tree Grow* to a substantive 210-page mimeographed monograph by Putman and Bull (1932), *The Trees of the Bottomlands of the Mississippi River Delta Region* that Philip Wakeley, Station scientist, suggested was "one of the two or three best research publications of the Station up to that time, and perhaps of all time" (Wakeley and Barnett 2016).

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

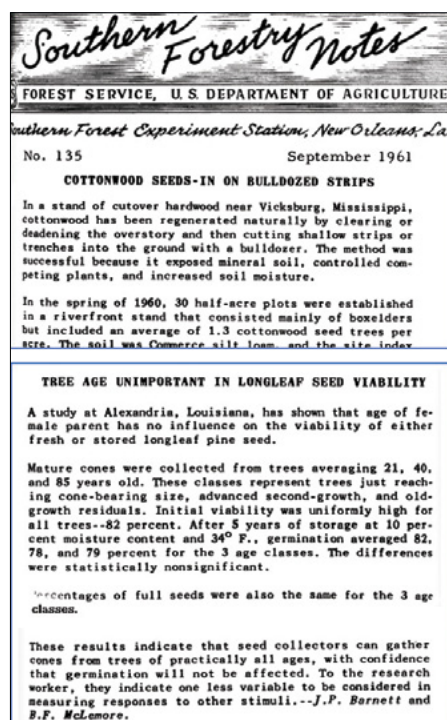
In 1932, Station Director Demmon conceived the idea of consecutively numbering all mimeographed releases from the SOFES. Demmon thought that numbering the releases in a named series would tie them together, emphasize their connection with the Station, and make the releases easier to be cited. During this time, other stations were publishing unnumbered technical reports or notes (Southeastern Forest Experiment Station 1947). The name "Occasional Papers" (OP) was adopted to give the reports distinction. Occasional Papers were produced at irregular intervals, as data worth releasing became available. There was no implied commitment to a publication deadline like that of an annual report, or of a monthly or periodic professional journal. There was no stated indication of space, length, or style, and the contents could be varied to fit the reported results. Furthermore, this

“The name “Occasional Papers” (OP) was adopted to give the reports distinction. Occasional Papers were produced at irregular intervals, as data worth releasing became available. There was no implied commitment to a publication deadline like that of an annual report, or of a monthly or periodic professional journal.

gave the Station a flexibility in publishing that was an asset. For example, in 1951, it made possible the release (in three volumes, totaling 579 pages) of 800 copies of Wakeley's *Planting the Southern Pines*, in a form that effectively precluded the Washington Office from altering its contents (a plan reflecting Wakeley's earlier difficulty with their editors!) (Wakeley and Barnett 2016).

The first SOFES OP was entitled *Truck Logging of Pines in Mississippi and Louisiana* written by Russell R. Reynolds. Issued in July of 1933, this paper was not one of Reynolds' most important contributions. Indeed, Reynolds (1933) was described by Wakeley as "a scant ten pages in length, mimeographed, single-spaced without illustrations" (Wakeley and Barnett 2016). Because there had been 27 earlier publications of various types, Demmon numbered the first OP as 28. This decision reflects the stirring of an impulse toward the modern game of "creating an image."

The OP series proved to be a pioneer in this type of research release. The original crudeness of this publication series reflected the meagerness of facilities and resource limitations of that time. Over time, OP became increasingly well written, edited, designed, and printed. Not surprisingly, they developed a world wide circulation and have been frequently cited in leading textbooks and periodicals. Many OP have become classics in their field of research. OP offered a wide scope of important and influential topics, from Putnam and Bull's "magnificent" work¹ on the bottomland forests of the Mississippi River Delta; pine silviculture, protection, and health (Bickford 1943, Bond and others 1937, Thatcher 1960); forest products utilization (Carpenter 1950, Snow 1944); forest measurements (Avery 1957, Grosenbaugh 1954, Mesavage 1947); and other aspects of forest development (Langdon and others 1952, Lull and Reinhart 1955, Nelson 1938).



This example of a Southern Forestry Note (number 135) had four short articles and a listing of recent Station publications that were available upon request; my article included three paragraphs over two pages (bottom of image).

SOUTHERN FORESTRY NOTES

In 1939, the more informal Southern Forestry Notes (SFN) series was created to communicate with the forestry community and gain their respect and support. SFN's were "...published from time to time, with the purpose of making available to [those] interested in the management of forest lands in the South, timely and pertinent items of information gleaned from forest investigations in this and other forest experiment stations." (Southern Forest Experiment Station 1939). SFNs were widely mailed and included a section providing information on publications in other outlets.

The SFN was a mimeographed and folded sheet of paper (see the figure to the left for a partial example), usually with four printed pages (rarely did a note include two sheets, or eight pages). An issue typically had three articles, which were often very short. For example, my first publication regarding the role of tree age in longleaf pine seed viability was three short paragraphs from the same issue of SFN shown in figure to the left (Barnett and McLemore 1961). Although brief, this article was appropriate to communicate this tidbit of information and a citable publication (an important aspect for young researchers). Frequently published (142 were published between June 1933 and

¹ Demmon numbered and reissued the monograph by Putman and Bull as Occasional Paper 27 which had been published unnumbered the previous year. Wakeley called Putman and Bull's paper "magnificent" probably because of its outstanding technical quality, but also because a limited number were printed on glossy paper with excellent quality photographs for presentation purposes (Wakeley and Barnett 2016).

November 1962), SFNs were a highly effective communication tool that helped engage the public in the Station's research program and linked the reader to more meaningful research.

CONCLUSIONS

By committing resources to produce quality publications, Demmon and his successors determined that both the OP and SFN series reflected favorably on the SOFES. Upon direction from the Washington Office's revision to the Forest Service's Research and Development Program, both series ended in late 1962. In part, they were replaced by some of the service wide publication series which continue to this day.

REFERENCES

- Avery, G. 1957. Forester's guide to aerial photo interpretation. Occasional Pap. 156. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 41 p.
- Barnett, J.P.; McLemore, B.F. 1961. Tree age unimportant in longleaf seed viability. Southern Forestry Notes 135. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station.
- Bickford, C.A. 1943. The use of fire in the protection of longleaf and slash pine forests. Occasional Pap. 105. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 22 p.
- Bond, W.E.; Wahlenberg, W.G.; Kirkland, B.P. 1937. Profitable management of shortleaf and loblolly pine for sustained yield. Occasional Pap. 70. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 37 p.
- Carpenter, R.D. 1950. Amount of chipplable waste at southern pine sawmills. Occasional Pap. 115. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 7 p.
- Grosenbaugh, L.R. 1954. New tree-measurement concepts: height accumulation, giant tree, taper, and shape. Occasional Pap. 134. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 32 p. <https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.title.127759>.
- Langdon, O.G.; Bomhard, M.L.; Cassady, J.T. 1952. Field book of forage plants on longleaf pine-bluestem ranges. Occasional Pap. 127. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 117 p.
- Lull, H.W.; Reinhart, K.G. 1955. Soil-moisture measurement. Occasional Pap. 140. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 56 p.
- Mesavage, C. 1947. Tables for estimating cubic-foot volume of timber. Occasional Pap. 111. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 70 p.
- Nelson, M.L. 1938. Preliminary investigations on dry, cold storage of southern pine seed. Occasional Pap. 78. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 19 p.
- Putman, J.A.; Bull, H. 1932. The trees of the bottomlands of the Mississippi River Delta Region. Occasional Pap. 27. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 210 p.
- Reynolds, R.R. 1933. Truck logging of pines in Mississippi and Louisiana. Occasional Pap. 28. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 10 p.
- Snow, A.G. 1944. The use of chemical stimulants to increase gum yields in slash and longleaf trees. Occasional Pap. 106. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 36 p.
- Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. 1947. Bibliography of the Appalachian Forest Experiment Station 1921-1946. [Unnumbered, mimeographed document]. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southeastern Forest Experiment Station. 192 p.
- Southern Forest Experiment Station. 1939. Southern Forestry Notes (SFN-1). New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station.
- Thatcher, R.C. 1960. Bark beetles affecting southern pine: a review of current literature. Occasional Pap. 180. New Orleans: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station. 25 p.
- Wakeley, P.C.; Barnett, J.P. 2016 Early forestry research in the South: a personal history. Gen. Tech. Rep. SRS-137. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Southern Research Station. 159 p. <https://doi.org/10.2737/SRS-GTR-137>.

“SFN’s were “...published from time to time, with the purpose of making available to [those] interested in the management of forest lands in the South, timely and pertinent items of information gleaned from forest investigations in this and other forest experiment stations.”