

Oral History Interview

E. Worth Hadley

with

Roy R. White
(6/30/59)

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

LAKE CITY, FLA.

E. WORTH HADLEY

JUNE 30, 1959

by: Roy R. White

MR. WHITE: You were in the Forest Service, I believe you told me since about 1920?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, I was in the Forest Service from about 1920 until about 1943.

MR. WHITE: And what was your job?

MR. HADLEY: To begin with I was in New Mexico and Arizona doing general Forest Service Administration work in the usual succession of jobs a young technical forester had. I started off with a job of technical field assistant work, and from then on to ranger and district supervisor and so on. And I remained out there until 1924, and I then came back East as a member of the staff of the Southern Forestry Experiment Station at New Orleans, Louisiana.

MR. WHITE: When they organized that experiment station was that a general thing over the South?

MR. HADLEY: The Southern station was organized I think in '25, '24 or '25, with an original appropriation of about \$8,000. There were four original members of the staff including myself. There was R. D. Forbes, the director, a man called Wyman, who used to teach at Duke and Billy Hines, and that was the four of us. Now, of course, the Southern station went on from there and built up rapidly through the influence of the industry. They were very anxious, they were very anxious to have that help.

MR. WHITE: With your objective of doing work beneficial to the industry were they cooperating with you all the way along the line?

MR. HADLEY: Well, not all the way along the line. But, industry, the Southern Pine Assoc., and some of the other industrial lumber associations were very anxious to have this station established in the South and to start research work because they were then beginning to run out

of timber and they saw the end of the virgin stands and they wanted to do something to perpetuate the industry.

MR. WHITE: In other words, some of the initiative came from individuals and associations?

MR. HADLEY: Oh yes, the leaders of the industry were right along in there, they were right behind us. They were helpful in getting appropriations for the work as well as cooperation among themselves by the members of their associations.

MR. WHITE: That association was generally of large industries wasn't it? Weren't there a great many small operators and no way of contacting for this purpose?

MR. HADLEY: Well most of the—see, that was in the days of the big lumber companies. Bogalusa being one of the largest cutting around a million board feet a day. At least that was their boast and I imagine they cut that, but there were literally thousands of lumber companies throughout the South and most of them belonged to the Southern Pine Association.

MR. WHITE: Was it the larger companies that took this interest in your work or did you seem to find it throughout the industry?

MR. HADLEY: I'd say that most of them, most of the lumber companies particularly those that held lands and many were beginning to buy lands. Of course, they used to have to buy lands to get timber. Ordinarily, they cut out and abandoned the lands and they went back and were sold for taxes or disposed of otherwise. That was in the late twenties. The late twenties marked the turn in the attitude of the lumbermen toward forestry. They began to believe there was something to this. Their thinking was more or less forced on them by economy. By the fact that the operations were coming to an end and they wanted to help out in any way they could to perpetuate what was then, and still is, a big industry.

MR. WHITE: Were your experiments conducted on company property or on property you had there?

MR. HADLEY: Oh no, most of the experimental work was done on property owned by the lumber companies or by big landowners. Most of the landowners were also timber operators, one or two with thousands of acres of land and they were all very cooperative and anxious to

have some sample plot work or experiments of some kind established on their property or that of their company, particularly the larger operators. A man named Henry Hardtner of Louisiana, who is famous in the history of private forestry, probably was the earliest of the figures in that field who became known for his interest in that work and he was also quite a politician. As I recall, on the occasion of the oil boom in his part of Louisiana, but that was the end of forestry there.

MR. WHITE: And you met Dr. Cary, I believe you said in 1925?

MR. HADLEY: It was the latter part of 1925. He first came down to the station which was very shortly established. He came there to go over our investigative program, to suggest, from his contacts with the industry what problems should perhaps be worked on, what problems should be set up in the program for starting the investigations. So there again, in that way, as I recall, he worked between industry and the forest research by bringing to the experiment station the problems of industry and then taking back to industry any results we may have gotten. He was an important contact.

MR. WHITE: And yet he wasn't connected directly with the experiment station?

MR. HADLEY: Oh no. He was not on the staff. He, at that time was more in the extension field. His work actually could be classified as forestry extension work. That is, his service work.

MR. WHITE: Several times he mentioned he was a public relations man. That is what it amounts to?

MR. HADLEY: Yes.

MR. WHITE: Did you ever hear him make any addresses at any of the meetings?

MR. HADLEY: I don't believe I recall hearing him address any of those at that area, La., and Mississippi. I am sure he did though. I know he was a guest of the lumber companies and lumber associations. I imagine I just didn't happen to be at one of them when he talked.

MR. WHITE: I get the picture from reading Cary's files that he just picked up and jumped from one place to another, especially when he first came South. Is that the way he generally operated? How did he travel?

MR. HADLEY: I think he travelled the long distances between states by rail, of course. And when he traveled with us of course we took him around in our Model T Fords. That's what we had in '25 of course; that's all there was then as far as Fords go. I remember the first trip I took with him. I took him out on one of our experimental areas. It belonged to the Great Southern Lumber Company. It was a 200-acre area that was set up to study methods of cutting and the results that followed each method. He came up by rail to Bogalusa where I was stationed and we started out in this Model T Ford that was assigned me. Someone else was driving, some other higher official than I. He and some other official and Dr. Cary were sitting in the front seat. Cary was sitting on the passenger side, of course, and I was sitting in the back and I thought I had noticed that Dr. Cary was chewing tobacco. After we had ridden awhile I was sure of the fact that Dr. Cary was chewing tobacco so I got out my rain coat—after that we progressed more pleasant.

MR. WHITE: So he was a tobacco chewer. Did he smoke?

MR. HADLEY: He chewed tobacco and smoked cigars.

MR. WHITE: How would you describe him physically? What did he look like?

MR. HADLEY: He was of medium size, medium height. He was very chunky and a sort of round sort of figure. He had a stomach—one of those types. He was sort of a heavyset, medium height.

MR. WHITE: Had his beard and hair turned gray?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, I think he was. I can never remember Dr. Cary without a gray beard.

MR. WHITE: I've learned he was red-haired in his youth, but I think he was gray by the time he came down South.

MR. HADLEY: I think he was. I don't recall ever seeing him without his gray beard.

MR. WHITE: You say that in Starke, he kept a residence and invited you over several times? That you think his sister kept house?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, that's the way I remember it. I know he established a residence there about 1930 or '31. We were working here buying this national forest, buying lands for the national forest, the Osceola National

Forest. He was working around with the turpentine operators and lumbermen in his usual capacity in the Forest Service. He was very helpful in helping us get some of the landowners to sell their land, although that was the beginning of that depression and there wasn't much trouble about buying lands in those early days.

MR. WHITE: He has been known as quite an individualist, particularly in his economic thinking and I know you are well aware of that. That he stood squarely on the side of the property owners and businessmen. Were businessmen very conscious of the fact that Cary felt that way, seemingly so much more so than the Forest Service in Washington?

MR. HADLEY: I think that's right, because I knew quite a few of the lumbermen and operators myself and they always spoke very highly of Dr. Cary, they all expressed great confidence in what he had to say and what he advised. I do think that perhaps his attitude, that attitude of his, sympathizing more with the landowners, and his problems, than some of the other officials had done made him very popular with them and helped him to reach them with his forestry work.

MR. WHITE: Now, let's turn that around. When times became hard as in the depression, I think I'm right in saying some of the lumbermen leaned to getting rid of their lands. Do you think he had influence in counterbalancing that? He was always confident in the future. Did he have any weight in holding off government and public acquisition?

MR. HADLEY: I think he advised the lumbermen, by and large, to hold on to their lands, particularly if they had lands that were well-stocked with timber or with young growth timber. He predicted even back before we had any pulp mills in Florida or before there were more than a few in the entire South, he predicted the industry, the pulp and paper industry, would move south in a great way. Of course, his predictions came true. I know that when I drafted the forest management plan for this Osceola Forest here I made the first objective of management, the production of naval stores because there was no other national forest that had that for its major objective and it was thought that there should be one national forest where that would be the main product, the main goal. I recall Dr. Cary didn't think very much of that because even then he predicted the decline of naval stores and the greater demand for pulp. And he probably saw ahead a great deal further and at an earlier date than a lot of the rest of us.

MR. WHITE: There were quite a few predictions, they seemed to come along periodically, that at the rate things were going we were heading for a timber famine. How did you feel about that?

MR. HADLEY: Well, by 1926 or 1927, the industry had come to the end of virgin timber. There were small areas scattered about here and there but the bulk of the virgin yellow and southern pine had been cut over and on some of the older cut-over areas there was some young, some second growth that was beginning to fill in and take the place of the original virgin stands. Of course with the cutting out of the virgin timber that's when the great production of the southern pine lumber declined.

MR. WHITE: Do you think that with the cutting of 1927 and 1929 had it continued, would a severe shortage of timber resulted by early '30s?

MR. HADLEY: Well they did reach a shortage in virgin southern pine. Of course, that shortage was filled in very promptly by the Pacific Coastal lumber. Even now, I imagine Pacific Coast lumber represents quite a percentage of the sale of the lumber in the South. I'm speaking of the Western white cedar for instance or western red cedar.

MR. WHITE: Replacing material the South used to produce for itself?

MR. HADLEY: No, they produced pine but this is cedar that comes from the Pacific Coast now. I imagine that a great deal of the roofing, two by fours, and structural timbers are coming from the Pacific Coast right now. It's gotten just as cheap here as the pine, and a little cheaper, I understand and is more durable.

MR. WHITE: At one time Cary devoted a lot of time to fire protection. You mentioned quite a lot of burned-over lands. What was the big problem then?

MR. HADLEY: Well, the—what we might call the natives here in the South, in piney woods region, southern pine region, farmers, well, most of them were cattle men, in a small way, they all had their own heads of cattle, and they used the native range over in the piney woods, to head their cattle. The grasses in the piney woods are not very good, not very palatable nor very nutritious unless they are burned. So the cattlemen all burned an area on which to graze their cattle. They would burn it successfully, that is they would start early and

would burn off a patch and the young grass would sprout up. The cattle would get in it and they would have another burned patch coming on and so on up to the middle of the season. Actually, that was the biggest problem in fire control trying to fence the cattle and so they wouldn't burn the woods. Of course, they knew throughout the practice of a hundred years that they had to burn the woods in order to get grass good enough for the cattle. And that's admitted today by the investigators.

MR. WHITE: Then it was necessary in the farmer's interest to burn the woods?

MR. HADLEY: Yes.

MR. WHITE: Then the answer was in controlled burning?

MR. HADLEY: That's what it finally developed into in a sense—controlled burning by most landowners and even the Forest Service. Of course, there were so many years when they attempted total protection. During which many volatile and inflammable material developed, that they called the rough! Where there was more than three or four years rough, you just couldn't control all that because it would just burn like kerosene, green or—wet or dry. So the controlled burning idea came along almost a little late. That is, so late that it required a lot more effort to control burn than it would have had they just kept on like the old cattlemen did back there a hundred years ago. Of course, controlled burning, as practiced by foresters was designed to reduce hazards so that when they did have fire it would be a very light fire and would cause very little damage, while the farmer on the other hand, he didn't care when he burned the woods whether it damaged the trees or not, he was interested in grass.

MR. WHITE: That points out another of the predictions of Dr. Cary. In his letter pretty far back he mentions he's not convinced that some burning isn't beneficial. He expected to get "kicked around" for that opinion. That I believe was in the mid-twenties. Does that fit in with your recollections?

MR. HADLEY: Yes, because following the cut-over of the virgin stands the shade was reduced from the land and a complete change of environment caused by cutting. Diseases developed that had not been serious before. One of them being the long leaf pine leaf spots. During the early days I think Dr. Cary thought that burning the woods controlled the leaf spot disease. And there again that was borne out at a later date by scientific investigation.

MR. WHITE: Was that after his death this was borne out?

MR. HADLEY: I think it was coming in just about the time he died. I know I left here in '35. I left this area in '35 and he was then able to get into things: "Well now, maybe fire has its place and can be used as a silvicultural tool, in managing these southern pine forests." Disease control, reduction of fire hazards and other things. As I recall it was about this time that soil experts couldn't find any significant damage to the soil. The soil being so poor anyway that it couldn't be much poorer.

MR. WHITE: I know you weren't in Washington, but do you have some idea of how higher officials felt about Cary? Particularly when sometimes he went a long way from their line of thinking?

MR. HADLEY: Well, at times they were a little concerned over Dr. Cary's unorthodox program and unorthodox ideas although they all had profound respect for Dr. Cary. But they were more worried by the fact that these conclusions of his were based on just random observation and experience rather than scientific investigation. And I've seen that sort of thing happen on several occasions, where an old-timer who had lived in certain conditions all his life had predicted certain results long before the scientists got around to proving them through sample plots and that sort of thing.

MR. WHITE: Was there ever any attempt made to hold him down in his views?

MR. HADLEY: I don't think so. I don't think so.

MR. WHITE: Did he ever antagonize anyone or any particular group?

MR. HADLEY: I don't think he ever antagonized any group outside the Forest Service. He may have antagonized a few of the Forest Service people who were working along the same lines or on the same problems but along different lines. Of course, as you know, he was a very rank individualist, without which the world could never progress. He didn't care what he said. I mean he wasn't—I don't mean he was impolite or anything like that, but he generally spoke his mind in any group, on almost any occasion. He had a rather gruff sort of personality. Meeting him the first time, you would think he was—well, my first impression was he was a gruff old man. Of course, I was a very young man when I first met him. I was about 25 and he was about 55—and with this gray beard.

MR. WHITE: Cary, in correspondence with Mr. Morrell wrote he was unable to get around as he had. This was in 1930. Do you recall that his activities slowed down?

MR. HADLEY: Of course I was stationed right here in Lake City from 1928 to 1935. I used to see Dr. Cary around quite a bit but it never occurred to me that if I probably didn't see him very often that it might be his health. I thought he was just out on some other trip.

MR. WHITE: He didn't give any impression he might be in a sort of semi-retirement?

MR. HADLEY: Oh no. Not at all.

MR. WHITE: Do you recall his ever mentioning an examination?

MR. HADLEY: He never mentioned it to me if he had. He was always up and going around here. Of course he was older then; in the early thirties. An old man in fact. He acted like an old man but he was an old man.

MR. WHITE: He spent a lot of time in the woods. Did he tramp carrying a pack on his back? How did he get around?

MR. HADLEY: Well of course, here in the South you could take a Ford out through the woods most anywhere. It was all open woods and particularly where there was virgin timber left it was open. Where it was cut over there were woods trails nearly everywhere. You could drive almost anywhere in a car.

MR. WHITE: When you were stationed here did you and Dr. Cary have opportunities to get out much together or did your jobs vary too much?

MR. HADLEY: No, we didn't go out in the woods together too much. Though he used to come out on some of our national forest operations there where we were marking timber for cutting and where we were cutting or sold timber and take a look at some of the procedures we were using and make his own comment on it. But the thing I remember most about Dr. Cary out in the woods was his habit of taking notes constantly. He just wrote down everything it seemed that anybody said. I do know that one time when I was visiting him over at his residence in Starke he had lost a notebook or

something and he went back to look for it. He had a trunk back there, a big trunk, you could get a man in it, and that trunk was full of his little notebooks that he kept. Apparently he kept every note he ever took whether he used them or not. He really was a note-taker.

MR. WHITE: Then when you saw him you saw a notebook in his hand?

MR. HADLEY: If he didn't he would say, "Just a minute." and he would pull out his book to make a note of whatever point he wanted to remember.

MR. WHITE: Are you familiar with his writings? Particularly those on naval stores published in *The Naval Stores Review*?

MR. HADLEY: That's right. He wrote some articles in conjunction with Miss Eloise Gerry who was a chemist I believe at that time who traveled around with him a great deal on this public relations work. Of course Dr. Cary was on the production of trees and she was on the production of gum from the trees and the production of gum to naval stores. They did a great deal of work together and I'm sure I have noticed they were co-authors of a number of articles. Most of them appeared in trade journals. She was around here quite a bit in the late twenties and early thirties. I think she was a Doctor of Chemistry.

MR. WHITE: How old was she then? About Dr. Cary's age?

MR. HADLEY: She was younger. She was about 50.

MR. WHITE: There is one other question I would like to ask. In many instances I have read lumbermen gave Dr. Cary credit for getting them started in forest management. What is your opinion on that.

MR. HADLEY: I think that is a fair question. He was responsible for getting large numbers of lumbermen interested in forestry and actually helping them to get started. For I have been with him when he has talked with them out on their lands. He liked to do that. Go out in the woods with them and say, "Well now, you see this stand of young timber? Well, that out to be thinned, you ought to take out half of that, all trees up to a certain diameter." Or he would say, "You shouldn't cut any more of that, leave it for seed." That sort of thing. I think that is one way he gained the confidence of the lumbermen, most of whom were good woodsmen: they knew the woods. And

by going right out there in the woods with him and by just talking with him right on the ground.

MR. WHITE: Did they seem to take his advice in good part?

MR. HADLEY: Oh yes. They were glad to listen to him.

MR. WHITE: Then he would revisit as many as he could, almost annually?

MR. HADLEY: I think perhaps he had a great interest in getting back to some of the same land, to some of the same owners he had visited before to see what progresses they had made. In fact he had a great number of friends in the lumber industry and they were always interested and seemed to welcome him whenever he came around.

MR. WHITE: Wasn't that method of operation a little peculiar to the general methods of the service?

MR. HADLEY: Well, no, I don't think so. I think that up until that time the service just didn't have the men, enough of them, to do that sort of thing. They had a few around. They had extension foresters who were public relations men and they tried to get around. But unfortunately for them they didn't have the experience and background that Dr. Cary had and naturally when a lumberman saw Dr. Cary coming and heard him speak he could find out he knew what he was talking about on the industrial side of the picture as well as the forestry side and they liked that.

MR. WHITE: I certainly thank you, Mr. Hadley for your cooperation.