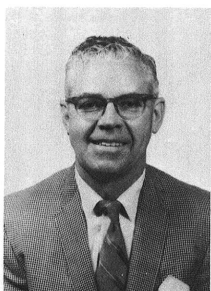


Jack Taylor, 1922-1975

W. M. Powell and E. S. Luttrell



Although Jack Taylor began his professional career well into the modern era, circumstances gave him the experience of a pioneering, turn-of-the-century plant pathologist and made him by the time of his death the leading general practitioner and diagnostician in Georgia. While still working toward his master's degree, he was assigned in 1950 to be the first plant

pathologist-entomologist to the Georgia Mountain Experiment Station at Blairsville in the previously neglected North Georgia mountain region. His primary responsibility was to salvage the disastrously declining apple industry. The revitalization of this industry was his major single-handed accomplishment, although the experience he gained in this endeavor brought him later to a position of leadership in State-wide programs on peaches and pecans as well as apples.

His isolated position forced him to become the consulting authority on all crops in his region and to publish research on subjects as far from his primary interest in fungicides as "fertilizer burn" on corn and the effects of fertilization on bacterial leaf spot of pepper. It also kept him in direct contact with growers. This association and his dual concerns with diseases and insects were responsible for his emphasis on integration of disease control measures with crop production practices. His experience made him a valuable ally of the extension pathologists, who first arrived in Georgia some 10 years after Jack started his work and who used him as a consultant in situations in which his matter-of-fact bluntness in presenting the alternatives to rigorous disease control programs was more effective than the most diplomatic persuasion.

Jack's recommendations were based on sound research. Early spraying, a major point in his apple disease program, was based on his demonstration that black rot of the fruit in August resulted from latent infections at blooming time in April and May. His insistence on sanitation was supported by proof that fire blight-killed twigs function as black rot disease reservoirs. His field tests were preceded by laboratory screening of fungicides. His 1953 paper in *PHYTOPATHOLOGY* is cited by Tarr in his 1972 text as an early example of development of fungicide resistance in plant pathogens.

Jack was a complex person. He had an intense pride in his work, but this was concealed by an air of casual irony that sometimes led to misunderstanding among his associates. He was born on February 23, 1922, near the

little town of Tiger in Rabun County where the Appalachians cut diagonally across the northern boundary of Georgia. His father, Henry C. Taylor, was born in Rabun County and his mother, Maude Shirley Taylor, in neighboring Habersham. His wife, Nelda Sears Taylor, whom he married in 1943, was a native of Franklin County. After graduating from Stephens County High School in Eastanolle in 1939, he worked in the construction industry in Toccoa and in Panama City, Florida. In 1943 he joined the U. S. Marine Corps and served in the Pacific until 1945. He entered the University of Georgia in 1946 and received his B.S.A. in 1949 and his M.S.A. in 1951 for research on ripe rot of pepper with Julian H. Miller. His appointment at the Georgia Mountain Experiment Station extended from 1950 to 1968, interrupted only by two years of graduate study at the North Carolina State University where he received his Ph.D. in 1957 for research on blueberry diseases with C. N. Clayton. At the time of Jack's initial appointment the small, but locally important, North Georgia apple industry had declined from a peak of 1,000,000 trees in 1930 to 25-30,000 trees in commercial orchards, and most of these orchards were marginal operations. Following his development of effective disease control programs, numbers of trees climbed to 150,000 in 1964 and to 300,000 in 1967. Since then the industry has continued to flourish and has expanded into Middle Georgia.

In 1964, Jack was appointed University of Georgia Foundation Professor of Plant Pathology, and in 1968 he joined the resident faculty on the Athens campus. He was appointed coordinator of a multidisciplinary peach decline research team in 1967 and was senior author of a research bulletin on peach decline in 1970. He became coordinator of a similar research team on pecan diseases in 1970. His personal research on pecans dealt with transplant problems, spray schedules, and mycoflora of nuts. At the same time, in cooperation with Jim Dobson, Superintendent of the Georgia Mountain Experiment Station, and Frank Jones, Jr. (Jack's longtime technician at Blairsville), he continued his work on apple diseases. His last paper, which was published with Jim Dobson in 1974, was concerned with minimum use of pesticides on apples. He was a member of The American Phytopathological Society, The Mycological Society of America, and Sigma Xi.

The significance of Jack's contributions to plant pathology is best expressed in the words of one of the growers he served: "I have just gotten my 1959 spray schedule. My thanks for the most informative schedule Georgia has ever issued in my day. It stimulates confidence that had about hit rock bottom. It implies that the orchardist might have some intelligence."