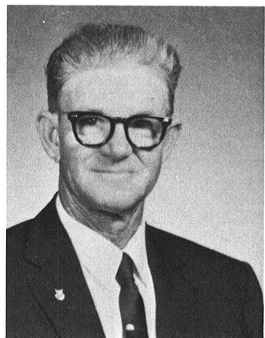


Paul Allen Young, 1898–1979

G. M. Watkins



Dr. Paul A. Young, plant pathologist, retired, of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station (TAES), died at his home in Arlington, Texas, on 8 June 1979. He had established the Tomato Disease Laboratory, a TAES field unit at Jacksonville, in 1935, and worked there as plant pathologist-in-charge. His years of service were within the era in which the TAES, expanding rapidly, set up field units to study problems of limited scope.

During his tenure at Jacksonville, Paul Young was "Mr. Agriculture" to farmers in that part of eastern Texas, a role he filled with endless enthusiasm and energy. He applied an unsurpassed knowledge of crop diseases and crop management and displayed a genuine, always outgoing affection for his neighbor clients. His service to Texas coincided precisely with the existence of the Laboratory. He established it; he directed it; he served it. Pursuant to policy, he closed it as he himself retired.

Paul Young was born on a farm near Concordia, Kansas, on 31 May 1898. His parents were George A. and Delia B. Young, who the following year moved by covered wagon to Dodge Center, Minnesota, finally settling near Wolf Lake, Indiana, in 1904. Paul began his education in a one-room, red-brick school, graduating in 1917 from the Albion (Indiana) High School. He completed the baccalaureate in botany in three and a half years in Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana. Continuing into graduate study in plant pathology, first at Cornell University and later at the University of Illinois under the guidance of Professor F. L. Stevens, he earned the Master's in 1923 and the Ph.D. in 1925. His dissertation dealt with histologically and cytologically discernible differences in host-parasite relations involving a considerable number of examples of facultative parasitism. The examples ranged from cases typical of those in classical literature to some in which the candidate pathogen barely qualified as such. The opportunities for philosophical speculation on the variations observed, ideal for the young professional of broad botanical background, were understood and duly explored.

Paul Young and Reba Clack were married in 1928. Mrs. Young and their daughter, Lucille, survive him. Through the years Mrs. Young followed her husband's work in the field, greenhouse, and office closely. There is no doubt that her constant encouragement and physical assistance contributed greatly to his great productivity in plant pathology.

Dr. Young's post-university professional career of 54 years (1925–1979) comprises three periods. The first, from 1925 to 1935, his first postdoctoral employment, found him serving as research botanist at the Montana Agricultural Experiment Station at Bozeman. Among phytopathological tasks he confronted during those years were studies of the dwarf bunt and snow mold of wheat, *Sclerotinia* wilt of sunflower, general studies on control of potato diseases, and emulsions of petroleum oils as sprays for apples. Young was then, as throughout his career, diligent in publishing technical and semipopular articles. The papers resulting from his work at Bozeman included several Station bulletins, as well as articles in *Phytopathology*, *Plant Physiology*, *American Journal of Botany*, and others.

The second and longest segment, from 1935 until retirement in 1963, were the years at the Tomato Disease Laboratory at Jacksonville. Commencing about 1890, the farmers of that

community had developed an intensive "green-wrap" tomato industry, so called because the fruits were harvested green, wrapped individually in tissue paper, packed in baskets, crates, or lugs, and shipped in refrigerator cars to urban centers in the north central states. The industry grew and prospered until about 1930; then for various reasons it began to decline. Some problems had been diagnosed as postharvest disease. When growers requested research help of the TAES, the response was phytopathologically oriented. A small laboratory was to be set up to identify diseases and seek control measures. Dr. Young was employed to establish the laboratory. Temporary facilities were set up on land originally used for the town airport. In 1943, the townspeople bought a farm of about 65 acres and buildings were constructed.

From that point onward Paul Young simply did everything a pioneer should do. He epitomized the complete phytopathologist: He identified the plant diseases of the area, set up and conducted field trials of varieties and fungicides, worked out seedling disease control in hot beds and cold frames, studied rotations and soil fumigation for nematode control, and identified components of virus complexes. He increasingly interested himself in the inheritance of disease resistance and later joined a group of tomato breeders who monitored and coordinated the nomenclature of genes being identified in that crop. With keen attention to the clientele he was committed to serve, he conducted well-organized field days to inform the public of his progress. He provided newspapers with a constant stream of notes and comments. Much of the time he had a local radio program.

To get some measure of Paul Young's tremendous professional output for inclusion here, two quick surveys were made. In one of them, his own terminating resume was reviewed. Such resumes were requested by the Experiment Station in those days to provide for the files the retiring scientist's own narrative of what he had undertaken and achieved during his period of service. At the end of Paul's account are listed 146 titles of articles, bulletins, notes, etc., nearly all of which bore his name as author or coauthor. A few were by journalists featuring articles about his work. Many of the articles were published in *Phytopathology* or other refereed journals. One biographical summary credits him with "more than 200 scientific and popular articles."

In the second survey, the entries submitted by him for inclusion in the TAES Annual Reports for the years 1936 through 1964 were scanned. These were brief summaries of ongoing or completed research performed by each staff member. Within the 28 years reviewed, there were 85 such reports, nearly all attributed solely to Dr. Young.

The final years of Paul Young's professional career followed his retirement from the Texas Station. He closed the Jacksonville Laboratory in 1963 and moved to Arlington, in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. There he set up and operated a 200-foot greenhouse to produce tomatoes for the local market. Simultaneously he hung out his shingle as a plant doctor.

Dr. Young was a Life Member of the American Phytopathological Society. His several other memberships included Sigma Xi and Phi Kappa Phi. He was one of the founders of the Sigma Xi Club at the Montana State College, serving as its first president during 1930–1931.

Modest, utterly unassuming, of unimpeachable morality and decorum, tireless and innovative practitioner of his science, Paul Allen Young was a sterling example of the right man for his time and place.