

Edwin Jay Foscue

*Professor of Geography and Chairman of the Department of Geography,
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On the occasion of Dr. Foscue's retirement it has seemed particularly appropriate to honor his forty-two years of teaching at Southern Methodist University with a special issue of the *Journal of the Graduate Research Center* because in 1932 he became the first editor of *Field and Laboratory*, the predecessor of the *Journal*, and in 1960 his paper, "East Texas: A Timbered Empire," comprised the first issue of the renamed and expanded *Journal*.

In other respects also Dr. Foscue has been a part of early developments that came to impressive maturity. Southern Methodist University was only eight years old when he, an alumnus, joined the faculty. And at the time of his entry into the field of geography, the profession was a small one. By virtue of taking his two graduate degrees from the two leading university departments of geography, Dr. Foscue came to know as a student a surprising proportion of the leading geographers who, at that time, were setting the main course and shaping the specialties of the discipline. At the University of Chicago, his master's thesis on the Mesilla Valley was supervised by Dr. Robert S. Platt, who was one of the foremost scientists in developing theory and methods of field research. The quality of Dr. Foscue's graduate work was recognized by his election to Sigma Xi. At Clark University, he wrote his dissertation under the supervision of Dr. W. Elmer Ekblaw, editor of *Economic Geography*, and in his younger days one of the first American explorers to reach the vicinity of Thule in northwestern Greenland. Among many of his own generation as well, Dr. Foscue had the advantage of an early acquaintance as a fellow student. The stimulus of these associations he brought back to the students of a young university.

Teachers, colleagues, and students all have responded to his zest for the field of geography. It caught the interest of his students, led to

wide-ranging travels, and produced papers on a diversity of topics and regions. An equal enthusiasm for education in the basic meaning of the term—the development of the student's own abilities—has characterized his teaching and lent permanence to his influence on students.

Further expressions of the keenness of Dr. Foscue's interests are the wide range of his travels and published research. The two are closely related, as they should be, for the primary materials of geography are phenomena spread across the face of the globe. Though economy in time necessitates the use of library materials and other secondary sources, these can never be a satisfactory substitute for acquaintance with the phenomena themselves. Dr. Foscue's publications and travels center on Anglo-America, especially on Texas and the Southwest, his native region. But the topics extend over subjects as varied as the steel industry and the resort industry, henequin and port development, while the localities involved stretch from Skagway, Alaska, to Costa Rica. In addition to articles, Dr. Foscue, with his co-author, Dr. C. Langdon White, contributed one of the landmarks in the textbook field. The *Regional Geography of Anglo-America* has gone through three editions, acquiring a third author, Dr. Tom L. McKnight, in its latest form, and selling more than 100,000 copies. Both the second and the third editions have also appeared in a special British Empire edition. In 1961, a Spanish translation was published in Buenos Aires. In addition, Dr. Foscue was invited to contribute a condensed version for the Pan American Institute of Geography and History. It was published in Rio de Janeiro in 1958.

Dr. Foscue's travels have gone beyond the regions on which he has published articles and include extensive visits to all the continents except Antarctica, and to the West Indies and the South Pacific island realm.

A special aspect of his travels and a tribute to his professional standing has been his participation in ten international congresses and conferences, to seven of which he was an official delegate representing the National Research Council, the National Academy of Sciences, or the State Department. In addition he has been a member of three national conferences or seminars.

The learned societies of which he is a member have also elected

him to responsible offices. He was a councilor of the Association of American Geographers from 1943 to 1945, and the president of the Southwestern Social Science Association in 1950. From 1947 to 1949, he was a member of the National Research Council. From 1954 to 1960 he was a member of the Committee on Geography, Advisory to the Department of State, for the Pan American Institute of Geography and History. Also of nationwide importance in the field of geography is the quarterly, *Economic Geography*, which Dr. Foscue serves as a contributing editor.

During the war (1943-1944), he was the Assistant Director of the United States Board on Geographic Names, an agency providing a variety of research services for the armed forces and other divisions of the government.

First and last, however, Dr. Foscue's long career has been associated with Southern Methodist University. In 1923 he initiated the teaching of geography on the campus, and in 1946 became chairman of the Department of Geography when it was separated from the former Department of Geology and Geography. Early in the department's history, his alertness led to the purchase of the Frank Carney collection of wall maps, which was exceptional in the Southwest. During his service in Washington, he heard of the Army's plan to distribute among learned institutions the surplus maps provided for the campaigns of World War II and certain captured maps. Dr. Foscue succeeded in getting the Map Library of Southern Methodist University named as one of the depositories, thereby enriching its collections by about 60,000 sheets. In 1952, his representations to the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey led the agency to make the Map Library a depository for its charts. In 1955-56, through the cooperation of the Dallas Council on World Affairs and Southern Methodist University, the Southwestern International Development Institute was set up to bring promising young Latin Americans to the campus. Dr. Foscue served as the Institute's director.

This record of service to the university and of scholarly achievement was cited in April, 1960, when Dr. Foscue received the Alumni Association's Faculty Achievement Award. During the same month, his cordial relations with students and faculty members brought him the Southern Methodist University Air Science Department's Faculty Award for Meritorious Service.

Although Dr. Foscoe officially retires from the Southern Methodist University faculty in July, 1965, the range and diversity of his activities give this account something of the aspect of a progress report, rather than a final statement of his career in geography and the Southwest.

ATTENDANCE AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCES

- 8th Pan American Scientific Congress, Washington, 1940
- 16th International Geographical Congress, Lisbon, Portugal, 1949 (representing the National Research Council)
- 17th International Geographical Congress, Washington, D. C., 1952 (member of the United States Delegation representing the Department of State)
- 3rd Pan American Consultation on Geography, Washington, D. C., 1952 (member of the United States Delegation representing the Department of State)
- Brookings Institution—Southern University Conference Seminar Participant, San Antonio, Texas, April, 1952
- Brookings Institution National Seminar (member), Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H., September, 1952
- Third Conference on the Caribbean, Gainesville, Florida, 1955
- 6th General Assembly, Pan American Institute of Geography and History, Mexico City, 1955 (member of the United States Delegation representing the Department of State)
- 18th International Geographical Congress, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1956 (member of the United States Delegation representing the National Academy of Sciences)
- 5th Pan American Consultation on Geography, Quito, Ecuador, 1959 (member of the United States Delegation representing the Department of State)
- 19th International Geographical Congress, Stockholm, Sweden, 1960 (member of the United States Delegation representing the National Academy of Sciences)
- 10th Pacific Science Congress, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1961 (member)
- 20th International Geographical Congress, London, England, 1964 (member)

PUBLISHED WRITINGS

Books

- Regional Geography of Anglo-America (first and second editions with C. Langdon White, third edition with C. Langdon White and Tom L. McKnight.) New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., First Edition, 1943; Second Edition, 1954; Third Edition, 1964.
- Regional Geography of Anglo-America (with C. Langdon White and Tom L. McKnight.) British Empire Editions. London: Constable and Co., 1957 and 1964.
- America Anglosajona: Geografía Regional. (with C. Langdon White.) Spanish Language Edition, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1961.

Geographic Regions of the United States. Comissão de Geografia Publicação No. 214-(199-V), Instituto Pan-Americano de Geografia e História, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, 1958.

In the American Resort Series of the Southern Methodist University Press. Gatlinburg: Gateway to the Great Smokies. Dallas: University Press in Dallas, 1946.

Taxco: Mexico's Silver City. Dallas: University Press in Dallas, 1947.

Estes Park: Resort in the Rockies. Dallas: University Press in Dallas, 1949.

Journal Articles

Destructive Effects of a Hail Storm in a City. *Journal of Geography*, Vol. 26, 1927, pp. 81-86.

Agricultural Production in China. (with Al LaFleur.) *Economic Geography*, Vol. 3, 1927, pp. 297-308.

Rainfall Maps of Cuba. *Monthly Weather Review*, Vol. 56, 1928, pp. 170-173.

An Unusual Snow Storm in Texas. *Monthly Weather Review*, Vol. 58, 1930, pp. 108-112.

The Mesilla Valley of New Mexico: A Study in Aridity and Irrigation. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 7, 1931, pp. 1-27.

The Iron and Steel Industry of Sparrows Point, Maryland. (with C. Langdon White.) *Geographical Review*, Vol. 21, 1931, pp. 244-258.

Land Utilization in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 8, 1932, pp. 1-11.

Bridging the Gaps. *Home Geographic Monthly*, Vol. 1, 1932, pp. 1-6.

Physiography of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. *The Pan-American Geologist*, Vol. 57, 1932, pp. 263-267.

The Natural Vegetation of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. *Field and Laboratory*, Vol. 1, 1932, pp. 25-30.

The Climate of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. *Monthly Weather Review*, Vol. 60, 1932, pp. 207-214.

Irrigation in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. *Geographical Review*, Vol. 23, 1933, pp. 457-463.

The Central Highway of Cuba. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 9, 1933, pp. 406-412.

The Distribution of Population in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. *Field and Laboratory*, Vol. 3, 1934, pp. 40-42.

Agricultural History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Region. *Agricultural History*, Vol. 8, 1934, pp. 124-137.

The Development and Decline of Skagway, Alaska. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 10, 1934, pp. 419-428.

Rainfall on the Western Front During the World War. *Field and Laboratory*, Vol. 3, 1934, pp. 1-15.

The Growth of Dallas from 1850 to 1930. *Field and Laboratory*, Vol. 4, 1935, pp. 16-18.

The Life and Works of Doctor Frank Carney. *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 16, 1935, pp. 51-59.

The Place of Geography in the Senior High School with Special Reference to Texas. *Journal of Geography*, Vol. 35, 1936, pp. 117-122.

- Transportation Adjustments to Geography in Dallas, Texas. *Field and Laboratory*, Vol. 4, 1936, pp. 60-67.
- Sugar Plantations of the Irish Bend District, Louisiana. (with Elizabeth Troth.) *Economic Geography*, Vol. 12, 1936, pp. 373-380.
- The Frank Carney Collection of Maps. *Field and Laboratory*, Vol. 5, 1936, pp. 13-16.
- Influence of Contrasted Soil Types Upon Changing Land Values Near Grapevine, Texas. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 28, 1938, pp. 137-144.
- Henequin: The Green Gold of Yucatan. (with C. Langdon White.) *Journal of Geography*, Vol. 38, 1939, pp. 151-155.
- Historical Geography of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. *The Texas Geographic Magazine*, Vol. 3, 1939, pp. 1-15.
- Land Utilization in Costa Rica. *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 53, 1941, pp. 427-439.
- Gatlinburg: A Mountain Community. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 21, 1945, pp. 192-205.
- Industrialization of the Texas Gulf Coast Region. *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 31, 1950, pp. 1-18.
- Memorial to Ellis William Shuler. *Proceedings Volume of the Geological Society of America: Annual Report for 1954*, July, 1955, pp. 133-136.
- The Ports of Texas and Their Hinterlands. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, Vol. 18, 1957, pp. 1-14.
- The Industrial Port of Corpus Christi. *Proceedings: Eighth General Assembly and Seventeenth International Congress*, International Geographical Union, Washington: 1952. [Published, 1957].
- East Texas: A Timbered Empire. *Journal of the Graduate Research Center*, Vol. 28, 1960, pp. 1-60.

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