

W. Clement Percival



W. Clement Percival is the founder and builder of the West Virginia University Division of Forestry. His professional career is one of remarkable success because of his vision, determination, patience, and outstanding abilities as an administrator.

A native of Vermont, he received B.S. and M.S. and Ph. D degrees from the New York State College of Forestry. Upon completing his college work in 1933, he came to West Virginia to work as a District Ranger on the Monongahela National Forest

In 1934, Dr. Percival accepted a position as a land planning consultant on the faculty of the college of Agriculture at West Virginia University. In this capacity he first proposed a Division of Forestry to train men in hardwood timber management to preserve one of the State's most valuable resources. In 1935, the WVU Board of Governors ordered that the first two years of curriculum in professional forestry be established in the College of Agriculture. Because of his interests and qualifications, Dr. Percival was employed to develop the program. The 1937 Legislature allocated funds to establish a four-year curriculum and at the time the College name was changed to the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Home Economics.

Under Dr. Percival's leadership, the Division of Forestry had a steady growth in both student body and facilities for teaching and research. The Division was fully accredited by the Society of American Foresters in 1948 and in the early 1960's a new Forestry Building was dedicated on the West Virginia University campus. The building, named Percival Hall is a monument to Dr. Percival and his continuous efforts to improve the competencies and service of the Division of Forestry to the University and the State.

Through Dr. Percival's efforts large forest acreage has been secured for the Division's teaching and research programs. A tract of 7,400 acres is now on a 99-year lease to the Division from the State of West Virginia. This tract is within convenient travel time of the campus and is used almost daily by students and faculty for teaching and research.

In addition to his work in organizing the Division of Forestry, Dr. Percival has served his State and profession in many other ways. In 1937, he organized the non-profit West Virginia Forest Products Association, Inc., to provide timberland management services to landowners throughout West Virginia. At its peak, this organization managed approximately 100,000 acres. During World War II, Dr. Percival and his staff aided in the procurement of white oak for naval timbers and tulip poplar for the airplane industry.

In 1961, Dr. Percival was cited by the Industrial Committee of the American Forest Products Industries "in recognition of services rendered to the forest products industries of West Virginia." As of 1976, Dr. Percival was the only West Virginian to be elected "Fellow" in the Society of American Foresters. Dr. Percival has been an active member in the Society of American Foresters and was instrumental in establishing the West Virginia Chapter of the Allegheny Section.

Dr. Percival has been characterized by a colleague as "an outstanding Christian gentleman and a real professional in his field."