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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE SOUTH¹

By GEORGE J. FERTIG

ALABAMA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

FROM the very start of colonization on the Virginia Coast at Jamestown in 1609 and from even the occasion of the explorations of DeSoto in 1539 or La Salle in 1687, the fundamental bases underlying the settlement of the South in its various areas have been precisely different from those responsible for the colonization of New England, the settlement of the Middle West or the migration to and the building up of the far western sections of the United States.

We begin this treatise on the "Development of Scientific Research in the South" with such a statement because of the belief that a study of the historical background of the South in contrast to the historical backgrounds of other sections of the country is entirely essential to an understanding and

appreciation of the trend of the South toward the solution of its numerous problems through the application of science. To discuss such a subject as research development requires previously a knowledge of educational conditions, of political influences and of industrial tendencies, since conditions in the South as regards these aspects were precisely unique.

In reality the South should not be considered as a homogenous unit inasmuch as the manifold reasons for colonization and growth of its many subdivisions were wisely diverse. The individual states came into being under considerably variant circumstances, their educational institutions under equally different influences, but withal it may be said that whatever the original manner of territorial settlement, growth or advancement the Civil War served as perhaps the most powerful factor to effect homogenizing of political thought, educational progress and industrial activity.

¹The address of the retiring president of the Alabama Academy of Science, Birmingham, Alabama, March 11, 1932.

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