

IPPS BACKGROUND

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As a member of the IPPS International Board—serving as International Historian—welcome to the 39th Annual Eastern Region Conference.

It is fitting that Program Chairman, Peter Orum, has asked me to say a few words as to the background of our beloved Society, since it was 21 years ago I had the honor of serving as Eastern Region President during our Conference held in this marvelous hotel. That 1968 meeting was our initial Canadian visit and was truly successful.

As we commence our Conference I would like to review, with you, the history of our Society since the inaugural meeting held at the Statler Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio, November, 1951. The Society, at that time named the Plant Propagators' Society, was the dream of a few far-sighted individuals who felt such a society would be of great benefit to the professional nurseryman, the nursery community, and the academic facet of the nursery profession. The first officers elected in 1951, were President, Jim Wells; Vice-President, L. C. Chadwick; and Secretary/Treasurer, Ed Scanlon.

In July, 1951, in conjunction with the AAN Annual Meeting at Detroit, Michigan, an organizational committee of ten gentlemen: Jim Wells, L. C. Chadwick, Ed Scanlon, Dick Filmore, Bill Snyder, Jim Ilgenfritz, Pieter Zorg, John Siebenthaler, and Roy Nordine (Steve O'Rourke was out of the country doing research in Trinidad and unable to attend) worked hard to form the framework of the Society we know today. On December 11 and 12, 1952 the Society convened in Cleveland, Ohio, at the Wade Park Manor Hotel. This establishment would be the site of the next six meetings. The year 1959 found us meeting in Philadelphia with a record attendance of 227! I can still hear echoes of members complaining about, "too many people", "getting too big", "people are here that I don't know", etc. . .

As the decade of the 1950s came to a close, the Society added the word International to its title and the Western Region was created at its inaugural meeting in 1960. The Eastern Region voted in 1962 at Cincinnati on an amendment to delete the word International from our Constitution. The amendment failed, fortunately, and several members (including a charter member) left the Conference, never to return again.

In September, 1970 the first, and only, joint meeting of the Western and Eastern Regions was held. We had excellent weather, an outstanding program and site, but the attendance was very disappointing! Members simply did not turn out! As International Vice-President in 1970 I had the honor of serving as Conference Program Chairman, and one of the finest papers presented at that St. Paul, Minnesota meeting was by George Oki. The next time you are pursuing back issues of our Proceedings, pick up Volume 20 and marvel at the words of Past International President Oki.

I am writing a history of our beloved Society, as requested in 1985 by then International President Byers. I have titled chapter III 'A Decade of Growth' which covers the Society's activities from 1970 to 1979. In the early years of the decade, I had the highest honor I have ever received, that of being elected International President for the year 1971. As of January 1, 1973, the Society appointed a Historian to the International Board and I have had the privilege to serve in that position since its inception. The Board now has three members—Editor, SecretaryTreasurer, and Historian—who can assist new officers in understanding the ideology of previous boards, since those three positions are reasonably permanent.

The development of the three overseas regions was the result of much unselfish missionary work of a great gentleman, James S. Wells. This dedicated Society member spent many hours, and some of his personal income, to realize his dream of a truly International Society. Jim had the thrill of giving the keynote papers on September 18, 1968, the Inaugural meeting of G.B.&I. (Great Britain and Ireland); September 26, 1972 in New Zealand; and October 28, 1973 in Australia. Our latest Region, the Southern, had their first meeting December 7, 1976, moderated by John Machen. They officially established their Region in 1977 with the dynamic Charlie Parkerson serving as President. He would later serve as International President when the Board met in Aberdeen, Scotland.

We start the decade of the 1990's under the competent leadership of our own Elton Smith. The 1989 International Board charged Elton and all Regions, to vigorously pursue recruitment (our Society total membership has been almost stagnate in the past five years) and the pursuit of new Regions. Preliminary dialogue in the countries of Poland, Israel, and France have commenced and the Board has created a budget line item for Regional expansion.

As of August 15, 1989, the Society has a total of 2,433 members world-wide, of which 670 members belong to our Eastern Region. Our motto, "TO SEEK AND TO SHARE", which was contributed by Peter Vermeulen, is being practiced world-wide. We are all fortunate to be members. We are all marching to the same drummer!