EARLY HISTORY OF DALLISGRASS IN THE UNITED STATES

Paul Tabor

DALLISGRASS, *Paspalum dilatatum* Poir, was named for A. T. Dallis of LaGrange, Georgia. Mr. Dallis told the writer a few seed came in a letter from a traveling salesman in Australia during the early 1890's. About a year before this he and the traveling salesman were chance companions on a ship from Savannah to New York. The need for better grasses in the South was discussed during the trip.

The few seed were planted in a common bermudagrass sod on a fertile spot at LaGrange. The new grass grew vigorously and within three years suppressed the bermudagrass. Seed were saved and divided with interested friends in Georgia. About 1900, some seed were sold as dallisgrass to T. W. Wood and Sons, Richmond, Va. A nephew of Mr. Dallis credits Hoke Smith, coauthor of the Smith Lever Act, with suggesting the name dallisgrass. Later the Australian common name, *Paspalum*, was used by T. W. Wood and Sons. Following the advice of C. V. Piper, the agricultural workers in the Southeast continued to use dallisgrass as the common name.

Dallisgrass was brought into the United States from South America presumably in ship ballast long before Mr. Dallis received it. In "The North American Species of *Paspalum*" by Agnes Chase, a collection in Louisiana without locality during 1840 is credited to Carpenter. In 1869 another collection in Louisiana at Opelousas and Gulf Railroad was made by H. W. Ravenel, a self-taught botanist of South Carolina, on a 3-month assignment by the U. S. Commissioner of Agriculture to study the relation...