



Forest Ray Moulton **Astronomer, Mathematician, Son of Homesteaders** **1872-1952** **LeRoy, Michigan**

Forest Ray Moulton was born in a log cabin built by his father, a civil war veteran, on the family's 160 acre homestead claim. Young Moulton was educated at home by his mother, and later taught in a one-room school before entering and graduating from Albion College. He enrolled as a graduate student at the University of Chicago in 1895, and in 1899 earned a Ph.D. in astronomy and mathematics. He immediately became a member of the faculty there, rising to full professor in 1912. When the United States Army entered World War I, Moulton was commissioned a major in the Army and Placed in charge of the Ballistics Branch of the Army Ordinance Department in Maryland.

Following the war, Moulton returned to the University of Chicago, Where he taught theoretical astronomy and mathematics. He also authored several books and articles and was widely considered an excellent teacher. Some of his more famous works include *An Introduction to Celestial Mechanics* (1902), *The Nature of the World and Man* (1926), and *Consider the Heavens* (1935). He also became the host of a popular radio science program.

In 1926, Moulton left the University of Chicago to become director of the Utilities Power and Light Company. The company prospered until the onset of the Great Depression, though Moulton remained there until 1937. He then took a position as permanent secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, then the nation's largest scientific society. He retired from this position in 1948.

Forest Ray Moulton played a very active role in popularizing science. His books, lectures, and radio performances had great influence on astronomers, college students, and scientists. Though he had many disagreements and controversies with others in his field, the body of his work remains impressive and of great influence.