

Roy A. Olney

June 4, 1891 — October 7, 1949

The sudden death of Roy A. Olney on October 7, 1949, marked the passing of one who has served the field of Agricultural Education not only at Cornell University and in the State of New York but also in the States of North Carolina and West Virginia.

Roy A. Olney was born on a farm near Victor, New York, June 4, 1891. He graduated from the Victor High School in 1911 and entered Cornell University, graduating with a B.S. degree in 1915 as a member of one of the first groups trained to teach Vocational Agriculture in secondary schools. He taught Vocational Agriculture at the Union Academy of Belleville from 1915-18; he served as a critic teacher in the Trumansburg Practice Center from 1918-1920; and then served for three years as assistant state supervisor in North Carolina. He joined the staff in Agricultural Education at West Virginia University in 1923 as an assistant professor; he was appointed an associate professor in 1929, upon the completion of his Ph.D. degree, and continued to serve the State of West Virginia as a teacher trainer and itinerant teacher trainer for a total period of fifteen years, or until 1938. He resigned his position in West Virginia to become an Assistant Professor of Rural Education at Cornell University to work in the program for training teachers of Vocational Agriculture. He was appointed Associate Professor in 1942 and became Chairman of the Agricultural Division of the Department of Rural Education, upon the retirement of Professor R. M. Stewart in 1946. He became Professor of Rural Education in 1947.

In addition to his regular appointments, Professor Olney conducted a special survey in Pennsylvania and served as a member of the Summer Session staff at Iowa State College in 1938 and at the University of Vermont in 1944.

Professor Olney was an active member of the Association of Teachers of Agriculture of New York, the New York State Vocational and Practical Arts Association, the American Vocational Association, the Theta Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa and several community organizations. One of his greatest services to organizations was made to the Future Farmers of America as chairman of the Board of Trustees of the State F.F.A. Camp at Camp Oswegatchie. He was tireless in his efforts to make the camp a success and his achievements in raising funds and in shaping camp policy were outstanding. He also served on several important educational committees and councils in his own department.

During the period from 1935-39, Professor Olney was editor of the Agricultural Education Magazine. In this capacity he made a decided contribution to the literature of his field. He also served with the State Supervisory

staff in the Food Production War Training program during World War II with a major responsibility for supplying teaching materials, of the emergency type, to our teachers of Vocational Agriculture in New York, who were actively engaged in conducting courses for increasing the production of agricultural commodities. As a result of studying and evaluating all the supervised farming programs of all boys enrolled in Vocational Agriculture in New York, he compiled a valuable summary in mimeographed form. This was entitled, "Farming Programs for Pupils in Vocational Agriculture", 1946, and it has been a valuable contribution to the field of Vocational Education in Agriculture.

Professor Olney's greatest contribution was made as a teacher. His many former students, both in New York and West Virginia, have testified as to his teaching success. One of his last professional contributions was made in relation to our present plan of apprentice teaching in training teachers of Vocational Agriculture in New York. This plan has met with general approval throughout the State. His point-of-view was always practical in nature, as directed toward useful applications of his teachings. More specifically, this might be called the pragmatic point-of-view.

It may be said that Professor Olney was a good representative of the field of thought that directs students to seek the application of principles; to study and use scientific findings; or to conduct original research in the pursuit of knowledge to be used in the solution of practical problems. Though Professor Olney gave his life to the cause of Agricultural Education, his philosophy will live on for it may be truthfully said of him that Agricultural Education was only his medium for teaching boys and in turn for teaching men to become leaders in directing the lives of rural youth.

Professor Olney's personal characteristics were strongly reflected in his philosophy of education. He was well known for his cheerfulness and friendly attitude toward life; for his loyalty to a worthwhile cause; and for his cooperative spirit toward the several services related to his own. These and many other fine personal qualities will long live in the hearts of his students and associates.

E. R. Hoskins, S. W. Warren, F. B. Wright