

Elton K. Hanks

March 2, 1904 — January 4, 1973

A native of Allegany County, New York, Professor Elton K. Hanks attended public schools in the community of Portville and was graduated from Cornell University in 1926. After a few years of association with the Sand Hill Farm Business he commenced his career as an educator and administrator in the position of assistant county agricultural agent in Delaware County, New York, in 1931. His field work for the Cooperative Extension Service continued until 1944, during which time he served as county agricultural agent in Delaware, Seneca, and Rensselaer Counties.

Professor Hanks came to the State College of Agriculture at Cornell University in 1944 to assist with the supervision of the Emergency Farm Labor Program, and in 1946 he was made supervisor of the program. His knowledge of rural people, the agricultural industry, the food needs of a nation at war, and his organizational ability were the basis for his distinctive service during this critical period.

He was appointed an administrative specialist on the extension director's staff in 1948. One of his responsibilities was the coordination of the work of extension faculty in the subject matter departments of the College. He pioneered in establishing the first course to be offered for extension faculty in the Cornell Regional Extension Service Summer School. Practical experience gained through his earlier field work and his comprehensive knowledge of the extension function of the College were effectively utilized while teaching the course. In 1951 Professor Hanks was appointed chairman of the State Interdepartmental Committee on Farm and Food Processing Labor, by Governor Thomas E. Dewey, an appointment he held until 1955. Also during this period he edited and published *Current Episodes*, the monthly Extension Service house organ. Another of his roles was state distribution officer for U.S.D.A. publications, which are widely used by college faculty and extension field staff. He also served as general chairman of the College's Farm and Home Week for many years.

Professor Hanks understood and loved rural people and had a keen insight into the nature of their aspirations, needs, and problems. He possessed that rare talent of being able to instill confidence and motivations in those with whom he worked and served. A skillful teacher of agricultural technology and business management, he was never satisfied until his teachings had been put into practice by those whom he taught. He was a man of action and high energy output and expected no less from his associates and the recipients of his teaching and counsel. His strong leadership was tempered by kindness toward people. He became known as a master organizational

strategist during these years of living and working with the people served by the extension function of the College of Agriculture. He exercised great skill in helping people to organize and to use their organizations effectively for solving problems and satisfying their needs.

Professor Hanks retired in 1961 and until his death spent his winters in his Sarasota, Florida, home. During the summer he lived in the small community of South Schodack, New York, among the rural people he loved so well.

He is survived by his wife, Beulah D. Hanks, of Sarasota, Florida; two sons, Kenneth Hanks of Gaithersburg, Maryland, and Dr. Richard L. Hanks of Anchorage, Alaska; a daughter, Mrs. George Mesick, Jr., of South Schodack; fourteen grandchildren; and a brother, Harold Hanks, of Blasdell, New York.

Robert J. Ames, Samuel T. Slack, John C. Swan