

# Albert Hoefler

*March 31, 1891 — February 17, 1977*

With the passing of Albert Hoefler, a man of vision, character and dignity, Cornell University and the 4-H Program of New York State Cooperative Extension and the nation lost a leader and friend dedicated to the needs and concerns of youth.

Albert Hoefler was born in Clifton Springs, New York, on March 31, 1891. As a member of the Omega Club in Elmira, his career in youth work started even before the formal establishment of the 4-H program. He graduated from Elmira Free Academy, attended Cornell University, and was graduated in 1916.

Professor Hoefler's entire professional career was devoted to the development of youth through educational programs. His career began in Rensselaer County as director of agriculture for the youth garden program, a World War I school garden program. He was a pioneer in the establishment of county 4-H programs in 1919, setting up and leading a 4-H program in Rensselaer County until his appointment in 1931 as an assistant state 4-H leader at Cornell. In 1943 he was appointed state 4-H leader.

Albert Hoefler was a strong advocate for youth, for youth work as a profession, for the growth and development of volunteer leaders, and for the involvement of local people in program determination. He had an ability to communicate this in essays that have been used nationally to express the ideals and philosophy of 4-H work, as illustrated in the following quotation from 4-Haps, the state newsletter: "We must work with the people whom we would serve, listen and pay heed to what they are saying, share with them the development of ideals and objectives that shall guide us all."

In World War II, Professor Hoefler was appointed executive secretary of the New York State Victory Garden Program. During the same period he provided leadership for New York 4-H'ers who sold bonds that resulted in the commissioning of a liberty ship. In the postwar years, he exerted leadership at the national level by serving as a member of the National Advisory Committee on postwar 4-H programs and assisting in the establishment in Germany of youth organizations similar to 4-H. In this Marshall Plan approach, New York 4-H'ers contributed heavily to the "Hoes for Hoefler" program that he organized to provide basic garden tools to German youth.

Professor Hoefler was instrumental, as chairman of the National 4-H Subcommittee, in the establishment of the National 4-H Foundation and in the development of the International Farm Youth Exchange Program. The

National 4-H Foundation programs, which focus on leadership development for both adults and youth in support of the 4-H program, have had a far-reaching impact on state and county 4-H programs throughout the country. Hoefer, through his involvement with the 4-H Foundation, was instrumental in the establishment of the National 4-H Center in Washington, D.C.

In spite of the demands of his career, Albert Hoefer was an active member of the community. He was the founder and later president of Kiwanis Clubs in Troy and Ithaca. He served as an elected official in the City of Ithaca and was active in bringing about the move of the Tompkins County Hospital to its present location.

Albert Hoefer was recognized by his coworkers at county, state, and national levels for his organizational ability and his strong leadership. He received the Superior Service Award of the United States Department of Agriculture, a special citation by the New York 4-H Agents Association, and the Award of Merit from the Lambda Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national extension honorary fraternity. Tangible evidence of the high esteem of his colleagues is the Hoefer Memorial Room at the National 4-H Center and the Hoefer Room, dedicated by the Kiwanis Club of Ithaca, at Tompkins County 4-H Acres. His ideals and philosophies live on in the minds and hearts of men and women who were directly and indirectly exposed to his wisdom.

Albert Hoefer retired as professor emeritus in Extension and State 4-H Leader on December 31, 1955, after a distinguished career of almost forty years. He died on February 17, 1977, and is survived by his wife, Helen, and two sons, Albert, Jr., and David. In his career, Albert Hoefer provided a firm foundation and a sense of direction for youth programs in Cooperative Extension, not only on a state level but on a national level. This foundation has been firm and enduring, the direction dynamic and flexible.

*Bernice M. Scott, Phyllis E. Stout, Harold B. Sweet*