

Gad Parker Scoville

May 4, 1885 — March 9, 1971

Gad Parker Scoville, professor of farm management, emeritus, died in St. Petersburg, Florida, on March 9, 1971. He was born in Varysburg, New York, and received his early education there and at nearby Attica. He was graduated from Cornell in 1910 with a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture. He did graduate work in economics at Harvard, where he was awarded a Master of Arts degree in 1922.

Mr. Scoville taught in the high school in Fresno, California, for two years, 1910-12. In 1912 he became the first county agricultural agent in Chemung County, New York. Agricultural extension work was a new educational effort and there was no definite pattern of procedure. While a student at Cornell, Scoville had learned the farm management survey method, which was a revolutionary method for studying farm businesses developed at Cornell. He pioneered in applying this method to extension work with farm operators. He was able to analyze the management problems of farmers and provide the basis for study of alternate solutions.

His work was so successful that it soon attracted widespread attention. In 1914 the Farmers' Cooperative Demonstrations Division of the United States Department of Agriculture arranged for a joint appointment with the College of Agriculture at Cornell in order that Mr. Scoville might train farm management demonstrators from other states as well as from various New York counties.

In 1916 he was appointed assistant professor of farm management at Cornell, and in 1920 he was promoted to extension professor of farm management, a title which was changed to professor of farm management in 1921. For more than two decades Professor Scoville devoted his research to the economic aspects of the production and marketing of fruit crops from the point of view of New York farmers. By means of surveys of fruit farm businesses nearly every year, he kept abreast of changes made by farmers and the effect of these adjustments on the profitability of their businesses.

For many years he taught a course in advanced farm management for seniors and graduate students. Field trips in this course were a highlight in the academic programs of many of his students. He used problem-solving techniques and worked personally with his students in studying farm business situations and solutions to management problems. Perhaps his greatest contribution to his students was training in assembling the pertinent facts and in basing conclusions on these facts. He was an expert in challenging ideas and particularly those which could not be supported with evidence. His challenges encouraged careful study.

Professor Scoville married Hazel Perrine on June 25, 1913. During much of their life at Cornell, Professor and Mrs. Scoville lived on and operated a poultry farm on West Hill where he practiced the farm management concepts which he taught. Professor Scoville retired in 1953 after forty-one years of association with the University and the extension service. For several years following retirement, Professor and Mrs. Scoville lived near their son at Goshen, New York. Later they made their home in St. Petersburg, Florida. He is survived by his wife; their daughters, Mrs. George McLellan of Ithaca and Mrs. Sidney Highley of Fredonia; and their son, Parker Scoville, of Goshen.

G. W. Hedlund, S. W. Warren, M. C. Bond