

Charles Arthur Taylor

June 6, 1886 — May 7, 1964

Charles Arthur Taylor devoted his whole life to the improvement of agriculture and rural life—especially in New York State. “Charlie,” as his friends knew him, was noted for his down-to-earth philosophy and happy countenance. He always looked at things from the farmers’ standpoint. Being a professor did not change him. He had spent too many hours as a county agricultural agent with a Model-T Ford on the dirt roads of Herkimer County and in the barns, kitchens, schoolhouses, and milk stations ever to stray far from the rural viewpoint.

He was farming and teaching agriculture in a secondary school at Hancock, New York from 1911 to 1914. On January 1, 1915, less than a year after the Federal Smith-Lever Act of 1914 created the national Cooperative Extension Service, he began work as a county agricultural agent in Herkimer County. The fast growing Extension Service noted his dynamic leadership and on June 1, 1920, called him to the New York State College of Agriculture as Assistant State Leader of County Agricultural Agents. In 1928 he was made administrative specialist in the Extension Service and was put in charge of Winter Short Courses and the editing of the *Extension Service News*.

As an administrative specialist he could always be depended upon to accept any assignment and to initiate many on his own responsibility. He seemed to do things so easily and without any fanfare or expectation of praise or extra reward. He was most unselfish in his dealings with others and never resented the advancement of his associates.

He was primarily responsible for obtaining the cooperation of the Cornell administration in establishing the first Cornell radio station. It was through his effort that General Electric erected the first radio broadcasting towers for the Cornell Station on the north side of Beebe Lake.

He started the first local Cornell radio program dealing primarily with agricultural information. Later he organized and directed the selection and distribution of radio material to the many cooperating radio stations in the state.

During World War II, he served as executive secretary of the Extension Service Wartime Council of the New York State Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics. This Council was composed of the chairmen and secretaries of the many subcommittees of both Colleges dealing with wartime activities; it met each Saturday forenoon during the war to hear the reports of these subcommittees and to coordinate their many activities. During this period, at the request of the Cornell administration, he gathered and preserved all of the records and the many wartime

publications of the two Colleges; that material provides a complete history of the wartime activities of the Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics.

He was honored by his colleagues in being elected first president of the New York State County Agricultural Agents Association in 1919. He also served in 1940 as chief of Epsilon Sigma Phi, the honorary Extension fraternity.

Charles A. Taylor was born in Norwich, and grew up on a small farm near the village of McLean in Tompkins County. He early earned the reputation of a master craftsman at farm skills and that of a most efficient and reliable worker. Any farmer who could get Charles Taylor to help him out for a few days felt himself fortunate and was willing to pay him top wages. The equipment on the Taylor farm did not include a grainbinder, and it took cash to hire grain cut. One year when cash was especially scarce in the Taylor family, Charles Taylor cradled and raked and bound, all by hand, over 20 acres of grain, and did most of it evenings after putting in full days of work on a neighbor's farm.

After taking his high school work at the McLean Union School he entered the Cortland Normal School, from which he received a classical diploma in 1910; he knew Latin, Greek, and Shakespeare as well as mathematics and sciences. In 1928 he received his B.S. degree from the New York State College of Agriculture.

He published thousands of news articles and radio briefs as well as magazine articles, including some fiction.

During his lifetime, Charles Taylor was called on to do many different kinds of both mental and physical work, and he did all of them well. He was a happy worker whether the job was digging a ditch or writing an extension bulletin, provided the work was productive and those for whom or with whom he was working wanted a good job done. He had no use for poor workmanship or poor materials on the farm, in the classroom, or in the office.

On August 22, 1912, he married Louise Ferris; after her untimely death, he married, on March 30, 1941, Carrie Colver Williams, well known to many extension workers as a State Leader of Home Demonstration Agents. Upon his retirement on June 30, 1948, after a short period in Ithaca Charlie and Carrie took up residence in Union, Oregon, where he passed away.

His three children are Charles Arthur Taylor, Jr., of Brookings, South Dakota; Florence Louise Taylor, now Mrs. Robert Trapp of Ithaca, New York; and Robert Barrows Taylor of Los Angeles, California.

V. B. Hart, L. R. Simons, Lincoln D. Kelsey