

# James Douglass Luckett

*December 5, 1891 — April 9, 1968*

Professor James Douglass Luckett, editor at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva for forty years, died unexpectedly April 9, 1968.

Born in Washington, D.C., on December 5, 1891, Professor Luckett completed his secondary and elementary education in the nation's capitol and entered Purdue University. He received his B.S.A. degree in 1916 and his M.S.A. degree in 1919 from that institution.

While an undergraduate at Purdue University, he spent two summers as a scientific assistant in the United States Department of Agriculture's Federal Insecticide Laboratory located in Virginia. During his graduate school days at Purdue University, Professor Luckett worked as an assistant chemist in the Fertilizer Inspection Laboratory.

It was while still in school that his remarkable talent as an editor began to blossom forth, and he was asked to assume editorial responsibility for the Purdue Agricultural Experiment Station *Record*. He served as editor of this publication from 1916-20.

Following completion of his degree work, Professor Luckett joined the staff of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in 1920 as editor and librarian. Throughout his illustrious career with the Geneva Station he maintained a very close liaison with the various news media, and his frequent and timely news releases, covering research in a way that was intelligible to the non-scientist, were used widely throughout the world.

During his early years at the Geneva Station, Professor Luckett devoted most of his efforts in editing Station bulletins, and this concern reflected his tireless effort to get the results of both basic and applied research published in its most effective form.

Still not satisfied with the mechanisms used in disseminating research information resulting from Station projects to the general public, Professor Luckett established in 1934 a new publication *Farm Research* that was designed to carry reports of research written in a semi-popular form to mass audiences. This quarterly publication became well known throughout the world, and it was used by almost all other agricultural experiment stations in this country as a model for establishing similar periodicals. In 1943 the Geneva and Ithaca campuses of Cornell University began contributing material to *Farm Research* on a joint basis. Just recently, the publication has been

again broadened in scope to cover all disciplines within the College of Agriculture and has been renamed *New York's Food and Life Sciences*.

Professor Luckett also distinguished himself with extra editorial duties that went beyond the halls of Cornell University and its Geneva Experiment Station. He served as editor of the *Agronomy Journal* from 1928-48, and later as editor of the *Soil Science Society of America Proceedings* from 1938-48. When he relinquished his duties as editor of the *Agronomy Journal*, more than 2,300 papers had passed through his hands for review and publication. Through those years, he never lost the original spark that continued to bring forth new ideas which helped to mold the future objectives of the American Society of Agronomy.

Throughout all of his many activities, Professor Luckett was characterized by his friendly and diplomatic ability to work with all types of people. In his later years with the Geneva Station, the public relations role he assumed with visiting horticultural societies, groups, and individuals was an important factor in giving the full presentation of agricultural research to the public.

Following his retirement in July 1960, he was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus. Even following retirement, Professor Luckett continued to work actively, this time, however, for many community organizations. He was a member of the local YMCA Board of Directors, served on the Board of the Social Service League, was actively engaged in promotional work for the Community Chest, belonged to the University Club and Torch Club, was a member of the Auburn Board of Directors of the Union Theological Seminary, and was former president and member of the publicity staff of Geneva General Hospital.

He was also director of historical records at Prouty-Chew Museum in Geneva and conducted this work for many years on a volunteer basis. Professor Luckett was an elder in the North Presbyterian Church and held various offices in the presbytery during his lifetime in Geneva.

He was a member of the American Society of Agronomy; of Alpha Tau Omega, national college fraternity; of Sigma Xi, national honorary scientific research fraternity; and of the American Association of College Editors.

He is survived by his wife, Lenore, a son Charles, a brother George, two grandchildren, and two nieces.

*Paul J. Chapman, Roscoe E. Krauss, Donald W. Barton*