

Gideon Herman Boewe, 1895-1970

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Gideon Herman Boewe was born October 3, 1895, in Parkersburg, Ill., the son of Henry M. and Augusta C. Maas Boewe. He died suddenly on December 19, 1970, at his home in Champaign, Ill. He was married to Isabelle Shafer on June 12, 1921, in Olney, Ill. He is survived by his wife and a brother, Ellis, of West Salem, Ill. He was preceded in death by his parents, three brothers, and one sister.

Mr. Boewe attended grade schools in Richland County and graduated from Olney Township High School. He attended Illinois State Normal University and Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, receiving the B.Ed. degree from the latter institution in 1928. He received the M.S. degree from the University of Illinois in 1930. He taught in the grade schools of Richland and Lawrence Counties from 1918 to 1924.

Mr. Boewe joined the Illinois Natural History Survey as field botanist, March 17, 1930, where he worked with plant diseases until his retirement in 1966. He became assistant plant pathologist in 1947 and associate plant pathologist in 1955. Mr. Boewe worked mainly on the distribution, severity, and incidence of diseases of field, forage, fruit, and vegetable crops; however, he was interested in plant diseases in general and collected numerous specimens throughout the state which form a large part of the plant disease survey herbarium of the Survey. From 1933 to 1946, the accumulation of Illinois vascular plants for the Survey herbarium was added to the duties of the plant pathologists on the staff. Mr. Boewe conscientiously assumed this duty, and collected numerous samples in conjunction with his work on the plant disease survey. In the course of his field work, Mr. Boewe discovered many diseases new to Illinois, including downy mildew of soybean (1929), a tiny toad stool on crop plants (1935) which he named *Naucoria cerealis*, and charcoal rot of potato (1941).

In cooperation with other staff members, he reported the discovery of the following diseases in Illinois: peony anthracnose (1942); violet scab (1945); *Helminthosporium* blight of oats (1946); *Deutzia* leaf spot (1957); *Abelia* leaf spot (1957); anthracnose of iris (1957); and *Cercospora* leaf spot of soft maple (1960). In 1964,

his report on plant diseases new to Illinois during the period 1922-1964 included 123 organisms that attack 101 host plants.

Mr. Boewe was well known for his annual surveys on the diseases of field, forage, fruit, and vegetable crops in Illinois. These surveys were made for over 30 years. He furnished information to plant pathologists, extension advisors, and growers, especially to sweet corn growers. His annual forecasts on the late season or leaf-blight stage of Stewart's disease of corn were started in 1948 and continued until 1969, 3 years after his retirement. These forecasts or predictions were based on the close correlation that apparently exists between the temperatures during December, January, and February, and the amount of disease that develops during the following growing season.

The Natural History Survey Circular on diseases of cereals by Mr. Boewe has been in constant demand since it was first published in 1939 under the title "Diseases of Small Grain Crops in Illinois". It was revised and published in 1960 under the title, "Diseases of Wheat, Oats, Barley, and Rye". Mr. Boewe was the author of over 60 scientific papers.

Mr. Boewe was a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, The American Phytopathological Society, the Illinois Academy of Science, the Illinois State Horticultural Society, the Illinois Vegetable Growers Association, and the men's division of the WCTU, serving as Treasurer of the local union and the county unit since 1967. In the Illinois Academy of Science, he served on the council (1961-1963), and on various committees as follows: membership committee (1944-1950; chairman 1950-1959), nominating committee (1962-1963), and resolutions committee (several years). His devotion to the Academy is indicated by the greatest increase in membership while he was chairman of the membership committee.

Mr. Boewe was active in his church, the First United Methodist Church of Champaign. He and his wife were members for 40 years. He not only attended regularly but served as an usher for 25 years, was a church school teacher for many years, and was secretary of the church school during the past 10 years. For many years he served on the Official Board. He was also an active member of the men's club in the church. Those of us who associated with Mr. Boewe at work soon learned that his religion was not a "Sunday Cloak", but a vital part of his life which was exemplified by his kindness and generosity to his fellow man.