

## Howard Reed Garriss, 1909-1976

D. E. Ellis, F. A. Todd, and J. C. Wells



Howard Reed Garriss, Extension Professor Emeritus, North Carolina State University, died in Raleigh April 30, 1976. He was born July 8, 1909 in Northhampton County, North Carolina and grew up on the family farm near Conway. He was the youngest of six children (four sons and two daughters) born to Charles Jackson Garriss and Mary

Morse Garriss. He lived and worked on the farm until he graduated from Conway High School in 1927 and entered North Carolina State College.

Garriss (his many friends called him Garriss rather than Howard) obtained his B.S. degree in botany in 1931. He taught science and coached football at Hallsboro, N. C. High School from 1931-1934. Although stricken by polio as a child of 16 months which left him physically handicapped, he was much interested in athletics, especially football, and participated enthusiastically to the extent that he could. He attended Wallace Wade's coaching school at Duke University in the summer of 1931. From July 1934 until December 1935 he was sales representative for the Norman Packing Corporation of Suffolk, VA and traveled extensively in eastern North Carolina and Virginia. He returned to teaching science in the Bunn, N. C. High School (January-June, 1936) and Tabor City High School from September 1936 to June 1937. At Tabor City he was again involved in coaching football. He also organized and taught while there an innovative course for retarded boys and girls which received special state-wide recognition.

As an undergraduate Garriss had been a laboratory assistant in general botany. This experience plus his excellent record led to the offer of a teaching fellowship and he returned to N. C. State in 1937 to work on his M.S. degree in plant pathology under Dr. R. F. Poole. He was awarded the degree in 1939 and immediately accepted an appointment as Extension Plant Pathologist at N. C. State where he spent the next 31 productive years until he retired June 30, 1970. Except for brief periods when he had part-time extension assistance he was the only extension plant pathologist in the state until 1950 when J.

C. Wells joined the faculty. Garriss was promoted to Specialist in Charge of Plant Pathology Extension in 1951 and was the leader of one of the foremost extension plant pathology programs in the nation until he retired. While he was perhaps best known for his work on diseases of tobacco, cotton, peanut, tomato, and watermelon, he had an amazing knowledge of diseases of all plants and his advice was in constant demand on disease problems of ornamentals and forest trees as well as field and vegetable crops. His extension programs on control of blue mold of tobacco, seed treatment, and the use of fungicides for leaf-spot control in peanut, the promotion of resistant cultivars of tobacco to Granville wilt and black shank and of watermelon to *Fusarium* sp. were outstanding and saved growers many millions of dollars. He also taught growers in the mountains how to grow tomatoes despite late blight through the use of fungicides. He traveled widely in North Carolina and was well known by growers and extension personnel in each of the state's 100 counties. His outgoing personality, friendly smile, and ready wit together with his professional competence, devotion to duty, and love of his fellowmen all contributed to his success.

Professor Garriss' reputation extended far beyond the borders of North Carolina for he was active in numerous regional and national organizations. He was a member of The American Phytopathological Society, The Society of Nematologists, The American Institute of Biological Sciences, The North Carolina Academy of Science, Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Phi Kappa, Mu Beta Psi, Sigma Pi Alpha, Epsilon Sigma Phi, The Tobacco Workers Conference, and The Cotton Disease Council. His services to the latter two organizations were recognized by special citations. He received the Extension Award of Merit in 1955 and special recognition for 30 years of service to Extension in 1970. He was author or co-author of more than 120 extension and research publications.

Garriss was married in 1939 to Grace Pendleton of Elizabeth City, North Carolina who survives him. He is also survived by a son, Howard Reed, Jr. of Raleigh, two daughters, Mrs. Betty Garriss Kiesenhofer of Boone, North Carolina and Mrs. Mary Garriss DeLaney of Honolulu, Hawaii, six grandchildren and a brother, Mr. Charles H. Garriss of Los Angeles, California.