

## THE 1985 MEMORIAL LECTURE HONOREE

THOMAS J. HEADLEE, 1877-1946

Thomas Jefferson Headlee was born February 13, 1877 in Headlee, Indiana, near Lafayette. He graduated from the State Normal School at Terre Haute in 1900 and earned an A.B. in 1903 at Indiana University, where reportedly his interest in entomology was sparked by a zoology professor on Saturday field trips through the Hoosier countryside. After an A.M. degree in 1904 from the same university, he attended Cornell University and received a Ph.D. in 1906. During 1907 he was an assistant and then an Associate Entomologist at the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station. From 1907 to 1912 Dr. Headlee was head of the Department of Entomology and Zoology at the Kansas State Agricultural Experiment Station. In 1912 he joined the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station as successor to John B. Smith, who dared to believe, and to state publicly, that the mosquito menace confronting New Jersey's citizens and development, could be controlled. As Professor of Entomology and Head of the Department of Entomology, Dr. Headlee recognized the progress of Dr. Smith and devoted increasing attention to the biology of mosquitoes as a key to their control. He worked for the passage of mosquito control legislation and statewide organization of county mosquito extermination commissions, with the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station as a coordinating agency. He also met increasing costs of labor and materials during World War I by adopting numerous mechanical improvements, notably salt-marsh ditch-digging and cleaning machines developed on specially built caterpillar tractors.

Dr. Headlee was secretary of the N.J. Mosquito Extermination Association in its formative years and served in that capacity until 1944. Bearing the direct responsibility for coordinating county mosquito programs, Dr. Headlee in

1921, in cooperation with the county representatives, formed and was chairman of the Associated Executives of Mosquito Control Work in N.J., an organization which continues to meet monthly. In 1935 he and 24 other mosquito control workers, established the Eastern American Mosquito Control Workers, which initiated the publication of *Mosquito News* and through expanded constitution and bylaws became the American Mosquito Control Association; from 1935 to 1938 he served as president.

A prolific writer, Dr. Headlee prepared more than 280 papers, bulletins, circulars and reports on various insect species, and authored "The Mosquitoes of New Jersey and Their Control" (1945) effectively updating and adding to the 1904 report of the same title of J. B. Smith. In addition to mosquitoes, the gypsy moth, codling moth, and Japanese beetle were the object of his personal or collaborative research. His interest in insects and the biology of sewage disposal led to the formation of a new discipline department dealing with water resources and sanitation at Rutgers University.

In 1935 Dr. Headlee received the Rutgers University Trustees Award for teaching and research, and in 1944 was awarded the Citation of Distinguished Service by the N.J. State Board of Agriculture. He served as president of the American Association of Economic Entomologists and was a charter member of the Entomological Society of America. On his retirement in 1944 the T. J. Headlee Fellowship for graduate students in entomology was established and continues to support graduate students studying basic aspects of entomology. In 1975, his accomplishments were further recognized by the University in its naming of the T. J. Headlee Laboratories, which today accommodates the research and extension activities of the Mosquito Research and Control Unit.