

Frederick Henry Abbott, Dairy Industry: Davis

1891-1979

Associate Specialist in the Experiment Station

Lecturer

Fred Henry Abbott died at eighty-eight in Davis on September 25, 1979. Born in London, England in 1891, he was brought to Muscatine, Iowa, in 1894, where the family lived on a small, one-cow farm. He was not able to attend high school until he was twenty-one years of age and, went on to graduate in Dairy Industry from Iowa State College, Ames.

Fred, after graduation, managed dairy plants in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. During this time he spent one year in the army during World War I. He was brought to the Dairy Industry Division at Davis in 1922 and stayed for thirty-seven years until his retirement in 1959.

One of his many activities started in 1922 when he was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the California Creamery Operators Association. This activity continued after his retirement until 1971: fifty years of service. The Association, founded in 1900, was instrumental in establishing a Dairy School at Davis, brought about by a legislative act in 1905 with the assistance of Judge Peter J. Shields of the Creamery Operators Association.

Fred instructed many of the students enrolled in the two-year dairy program at Davis and helped with students in the four-year program. He was involved in many student activities, was a faculty advisor for Kappa Sigma Fraternity, and was an early president of the Faculty Club.

Abbott played a major role in the development of the California Dairy Industry. Early in his career he assisted in securing passage in California of the country's first butter labeling act. He was presented with a California Golden Bear statue by the California State Fair for his success at improving dairy products while serving for many years as superintendent of the dairy products exhibit. During World War II, Abbott received a letter of appreciation from the president of the United States for his work with various war boards and the Administration. His work during this period enabled California to increase its output of critically needed dairy products. In 1951, he was awarded membership in the National Dairy Shrine, an honor reserved for only a few dairy leaders in the U.S. and based on their outstanding leadership and accomplishment.

Fred, an avid fisherman, was well versed in the better fishing areas of California. He was often accompanied by Robert Sproul, Claude Hutchison, and others of the University administration. Abbott's first wife, Zelpha Mae, died in 1963. His second wife, Lillian M., died in 1976. Two sons, Fred, Jr., and Robert, both of Woodland, and a daughter, Irene, of Burlingame, survived him. At the time of his death, there were eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

B. E. Hubbell R. Bainer E. B. Collins