



Edward Olive Essig (1884-1964)

Biographical Sketch by Hany Abdoun, Archives Intern

Edward Oliver Essig was born on September 29, 1884 in Arcadia, Indiana. He studied entomology at Pomona College, where he received his B.A. in 1909 and his M.A. in 1912. His career in entomology started when he became a horticultural commissioner in Ventura County, California, in 1910. His field of interest was aphids, or plant lice, and Essig had the largest collection of aphids in the world. His writings and journals were specifically about the manner in which plant lice attack plants.

From 1911 to 1914, Essig was Secretary to the California State Horticulture Commission. In 1914 he joined the University of California, at Berkeley faculty as an instructor and in 1928 became a full professor at the Agricultural Experiment Station. In 1941 he became the acting Chairman of the Entomology Department at U.C. Berkeley and later Chairman in 1943 until his retirement in 1954.

Professor Essig was a member of many scientific organizations including the American Association for Advancement of Science, the Entomological Society of America, the American Association of Economic Entomologists of America and the Pacific Coast of Entomological Society. He became a member of the California Academy of Sciences in 1913 and Life Member in 1938. In 1942, he was given honorary membership to the Academy and became a Fellow in 1944. From 1946 to 1949, Professor Essig served as Research Associate at the Academy's Entomology Department and again from 1958 to 1964. From 1948 to 1953, he served as the Academy's Corresponding Secretary.

Professor Essig received many honors, including the *Chevailer Du Nerite Agricole* and the *Dykes Medal of the American Iris Society*, both for his work in iris hybridizing. He also served on many commissions and committees including the Committee for Relief of Belgium during World War I and the National Research Council.

He presented his aphid collection to U.C. Berkeley in 1962 and died on November 23, 1964.

Sources Consulted:

Berkeley Daily Gazette, November 24, 1964.

San Francisco Chronicle, November 25, 1964.