



HARRY E. UMPHREY HONORED

The addition of a man to our Honorary Life Membership who has passed away is unique in the rolls of the Potato Association of America. Harry E. Umphrey, of Washburn, Maine, had been considered and approved before his passing in early January of this year. Even though it seems a bit strange, it still is very fitting and proper that we add the name of Harry Umphrey to the honorary rolls of The Potato Association of America.

As we review his activities of a lifetime, we are very much impressed by the tremendous contributions that he has made. Thus, it is not a time for sadness at his passing but rather a cause for rejoicing that such a person lived amongst us and made such an impact on the lives of all who knew him in so many areas of business and social life. There is neither time nor space to list his many contributions, but we can review some of the most important.

I like to think of him particularly, as he was so well described by the award of the New England Council a few years ago, when they gave him the title of Agricultural Adventurer. This he was in its full depth of meaning.

Harry Umphrey was a leading producer starting from the time he carried mail in a rural route to supplement his farm income to the production last year of about two thousand acres of potatoes. Harry soon grasped the importance of marketing and hence, started a sales organization in the early 1920's to market his and his neighbors' crops. This led to his being selected as General Sales Manager for the first large-scale co-operative sales organization in 1923, the Maine Potato Exchange. When that organization dissolved, Harry and his associates established the Maine sales organization for the American Fruit Growers, Inc., which operated from 1925 until about 1940. This was followed by the incorporation of his own sales organization, the Aroostook Potato Growers, which is still active in the marketing of potatoes.

True to the descriptive term, Agricultural Adventurer, Harry Umphrey saw that the processing of potatoes opened up great possibilities for the future in merchandising of the Maine potato crop, and in response to the demand of the War Food Administration, a processing plant for potatoes was established in 1941. At the close of the war Harry's associates decided to discontinue so he established the "Tater-State Potato Products Company" which has been one of the leading freezing operations in Maine.

The contributions of Harry Umphrey to agriculture were many and varied. He served for two years as President of the Aroostook County Extension Association; as one of the first chairmen of the National Potato Research and Marketing Advisory Committee, he made a major contribution in the encouragement of market research; he served for several years as a member of the Agricultural Committee of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce; he was Secretary of the New England Council for a period of years and was a member of its Agriculture Committee.

Harry Umphrey was active in banking circles, a member of the Board of Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, a member of the Board and Executive Committee of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, St. Croix Paper Company, and McCormack and Company of Baltimore.

Harry was a great family man, loyal to his friends, helpful to those in distress, always ready to encourage young men and women by financial aid and advice, a builder in his community and State, an Agricultural Adventurer in the truest sense.

It is an honor to the Potato Association of America that Harry E. Umphrey is included on its membership rolls.

—Frank W. Hussey