



Adolph E. Waller 1892 - 1975

A.B. The University of Kentucky 1914
M.S. The Ohio State University 1916
Ph.D. The Ohio State University 1918

The following are excerpts from comments by R. S. Davidson, Ann Rudolph, both of Battelle Laboratories, Columbus, Ohio and Dr. Emanuel Rudolph, Botany Department, The Ohio State University.

Adolph E. Waller, Professor Emeritus of Botany at The Ohio State University was on the faculty of The Ohio State University for 45 years (1919-1964) prior to his retirement in 1964. Professor Waller was born August 24, 1892, in Louisville, Kentucky, and was a graduate of the Louisville Male High School, one of the oldest private high schools in the midwest. His undergraduate studies were undertaken at both the University of Michigan and the University of Kentucky. Graduate work at The Ohio State University culminated in the Ph.D. degree in 1918.

During his graduate years he participated in the early efforts to control wheat stem rust through the USDA barberry eradication program. His graduate research was devoted to some of the earliest studies of agriculture crop ecology, resulting in his publications *Crop Centers of the U. S. and The Relation of Plant Succession to Crop Production*. These investigations established some of the present day agricultural crop production principals.

During World War I, his professional contributions to increase food production were meritorious. At about this same time he was also involved in a flood control program in the Miami River Valley (Ohio) utilizing native grasses on the river banks and flood plain. In the early 1920s he participated in studies of the impact of air pollution from copper smelters on arid land crop production in the Salt Lake Basin.

Dr. Waller pursued postdoctoral studies at the Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, England. He joined the staff of The Ohio State University Department of Botany in 1919. Always a devoted and inspiring teacher, he encouraged many of his students to pursue graduate studies in the sciences. Several of his former students attained national and international reputations. During his teaching career at the University he planned, developed and served as curator of the University Botanical Gardens for more than 15 years. (The gardens were in the area to the southwest of the Botany building on property now occupied by the Dental and Medical schools.)

Professor Waller was always concerned with the advancement of the sciences, particularly Botany, Genetics and the History of Science. He served as treasurer of the Ohio Academy of Science for almost two decades and was named an honorary life member of the Academy in 1966. From 1919 to 1923 he was on the editorial board of *Ecology*. He was a member and active participant in many professional societies. Both the American Academy for the Advancement of Science and the Ohio Academy of Science named him as Fellow. He was a member in the Ohio Academy of Medical History, The Ecological Society of America, the History of Science Society and Sigma XI.

He was a recognized authority on the hybridization and propagation of *Iris*. It was in his research fields immediately to the west of the Botany building that he undertook his genetic research. He was an outstanding field botanist and his field trips to Fairfield and Hocking counties were highlights for his students. In 1940 he located the previously unreported *Iris christata* in both Adams and Scioto counties. He published, authored and co-authored numerous publications

including *A Guide to Ohio Plants* and an extensive series of papers dealing with the early Ohio botanists and geologists who also held medical degrees. Following his retirement he served as a consultant to the Columbus Laboratories of Battelle Memorial Institute for several years.

Dr. Waller's early investigations of Xenia in Maize led him in the 1930s to study the history and culture of the early Maya in Central America. His travels to that region enabled him to examine the cultural significance of the development of maize as a western hemisphere agricultural crop.