

WILLIAM GARDNER COWPERTHWAITTE
1919-1964

William Gardner Cowperthwaite, State Department of Agriculture, Division of Plant Industry, was born in Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, 10 May 1919. He died 3 February 1964 in Gainesville, Florida, when nine



passengers and a pilot were killed in a plane accident. After attending public schools in New Jersey, he received from Rutgers his Bachelor of Science in 1942, Master of Science in 1948, and Ph.D. (Plant Physiology) in 1950. He served in the U. S. Coast Guard from June 1942 through February 1946 as a Lieutenant J.G. He held a graduate fellowship from 1946 to 1950. He worked with the University of Florida Agricultural Experiment Station at the Gulf Coast Station at Bradenton as Horticulturist from 1950 to 1952. From 1952 to 1954 he was a nematologist for the E. I. duPont de Nemours and Company, Kennett Square, Penn. From 1954 to 1957 he was manager of the Florida Growers,

Incorporated, Delray Beach, Florida. On 14 October 1957 he was appointed Assistant Plant Commissioner to the State Plant Board of Florida. He was appointed Plant Commissioner 22 November 1957 and Director of the Division of Plant Industry, Florida State Department of Agriculture, 16 January 1961, when the State Plant Board became the Division of Plant Industry. As Director, he guided the programs for the eradication of the Mediterranean fruit fly for the third and fourth times in 1962 and 1963 from three south Florida counties at a cost of one million dollars. He was also instrumental in further developing the citrus budwood certification program which provides Florida with disease-free citrus stock. He established the barrier system for containing spreading decline of citrus whereby treatments using fumigants in strips between healthy and diseased trees are applied to prevent the spread of *Radopholus similis*, the burrowing nematode. He was a member of Alpha Zeta, Gamma Sigma Delta, Society of Sigma Chi, Florida Horticultural Society, Florida Entomological Society, Entomological Society of America, Southern Plant Board, and National Plant Board. He held Honorary Life Membership in the Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association and was institutional representative to Boy Scout Troop 83. He was the author of numerous articles and papers dealing with horticulture and plant pest control. He was a member of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and was a vestryman at the time of his death. He is survived by his wife, the former June Skinner, and three children, Robert William, 15; Stephen Skinner, 14; and Ann Peacock, 12.

H. A. DENMARK, Division of Plant Industry, Fla. Dept. Agric.

