

## Manson B. Linn, 1908-1983

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Professor Emeritus Manson B. Linn died August 28, 1983, at his home in Urbana. He spent his professional career at the University of Illinois in the Departments of Horticulture and Plant Pathology. Manson was born June 15, 1908, and raised at New Ross, Indiana, a son of Henry and Gertrude Bowman Linn. He married Frances Elizabeth Tharp September 4, 1932, at Whitesville, Indiana, and they have two daughters, Pegeen Soare and Gretchen, and three grandchildren.

He received his A.B. degree in 1930 from Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana, an institution that has been the starting point for a number of famous plant pathologists. While working his way through college, he served as an assistant at Purdue University during the summer of 1928-1929, working on tomato diseases, and as a teaching assistant at Wabash during the 1928-1930 academic years. He taught taxonomy, bacteriology, general botany, mycology, and plant pathology as a full-time instructor at Wabash College after receiving his A.B. degree until entering graduate college at Cornell University in 1932. There he served as a research fellow in the Plant Pathology Department, was awarded the Ph.D. degree in 1940, and most likely was greatly influenced by H. H. Whetzel, who was famous for his mastery in teaching plant pathology.

Manson's research covered a broad range of vegetable and ornamental diseases, pathogen groups, and insects. In 1941, he was appointed Instructor of Mycology, then Research Assistant, then Assistant Professor and was in charge of potato seed certification in New York. During this time he worked closely with the Staten Island Vegetable Growers Association.

Illinois attracted this sharp, young, personable professor to Urbana in March 1942 as Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology Extension, specializing in vegetable crop diseases in the Department of Horticulture. Much of his early work with vegetable crops was on disease control through the use of fungicides. The major accomplishment during his first years was the development of chemical seed treatments for control of onion smut, then a serious problem in the United States. He also developed control techniques for other vegetable crop diseases. He was regularly consulted about disease diagnosis of all vegetable samples received in the clinic.

In 1944 he was given added responsibilities as Assistant Chief of the Plant Pathology section, and by 1945 he was assigned teaching and research responsibilities. Manson was promoted to Associate Professor in 1950 and to Professor in 1952. Efforts in the late 1940s and early 1950s to form a Department of Plant Pathology received final approval in 1955 from the College of Agriculture, and without doubt, the growing success of the Department of Plant Pathology resulted from Manson's appointment as its Acting Head. Providing yeoman service, he masterfully dealt with all the details, hired staff, and set the tone that has been followed since. He proposed a "Guide for New Staff Members" that evolved within a year into a detailed

"University Faculty Handbook" that was in use until 1970. In 1957 Manson resumed his full-time teaching and research responsibilities.

Manson was very active on College and University committees, including University Senate committees for Open Meetings and for Educational Policy and College of Agriculture committees on Policy and Development, Duties of the Illinois Agriculture Experiment Station Director, Courses and Curricula, and Educational Policy.

His research efforts along with his extension experiences led to a major publication on vegetable diseases and nearly 100 publications. Many of Manson's extension publications and bulletins led to the currently highly popular University of Illinois extension series in plant pathology, *Reports on Plant Disease*. Much of his research was published in state bulletins, publications for vegetable growers, and other popular articles.

Manson's primary research interests were in disease control, and he was most excited by the advent of the new systemic fungicides. His research during the 1960s focused on methods for applying fungicides to soils for control of root, crown, and stem rots of peas, beans, sweet corn, and onion sets. He worked with various formulations of wettable powders, emulsifiable concentrates, and granular formulations. He worked closely with the vegetable processing industry and fresh market produce.

Undoubtedly, his great joy came during his final 10 years when he began teaching the Introductory Plant Pathology Course. He was so people-oriented that success could be predicted, and it came. The course was extremely well received by students, and enrollment increased from 33 during the 1965-1966 school year to 119 in 1973-1974. During that time he inspired a number of students to pursue graduate studies in plant pathology. Each semester he received excellent teaching ratings from his students, but he continually sought to improve his teaching ability by attending conferences sponsored by the American Phytopathological Society and a 1968 National Science Foundation short course. He was inspiring and innovative, well organized, clear, concise, warm, and friendly, and he integrated the breadth of his knowledge into his teaching. Graduate students appreciated his enthusiasm and imagination and his relaxed and easy-going style of supervision and counseling.

He held honorary and professional memberships in Sigma Xi, Alpha Pi, Gamma Sigma Delta, the American Institute of Biological Sciences, The American Phytopathological Society, The Potato Association of America, The American Association of University Professors, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

A quote from D. B. Creager's letter of 1941 recommending Manson for that first Illinois job summarizes what many people voiced at his death 42 years later: "He is unselfish and cooperative, always seeming to derive a great deal of pleasure from helping the other fellow."

Manson retired August 31, 1974, after a full and distinguished career at the University of Illinois. He maintained a strong interest in teaching and research, and faculty, staff, and students will miss his regular visits during which he brought cheer and delight and encouraged us to look always on the bright side.