

# Emerson O. Gregory



Emerson O. Gregory was born in Webster Springs, West Virginia, in Webster County, on September 26, 1902. He received a B.S. degree in Agriculture from West Virginia University in 1972.

Mr. Gregory is a pioneer in many aspects of West Virginia agriculture. It was in 1918-1919 that the 4-H program began in Webster County and Mr. Gregory, who has recently returned to the County, played an active role as an agent.

In August 1920, he was selected as one of the 40 outstanding boys in 4-H in West Virginia who were to join similar numbers from Virginia and Maryland and conducted a Tri-State 4-H Camp at Grottoes, Virginia. The West Virginia delegation, acting upon the experience, initiated the idea of 4-H training center. Mr. Gregory was a leader of the group whose idea culminated in the founding of the State 4-H camp at Jackson's Mill, the first such in the nation. He was also one of the six boys and six girls selected to prepare the site for the first camp held there in July 1921. He was also a motivating force in building the Webster County Cottage, one of the first two cottages to be built. He played a great role in development of Agriculture, where he worked to establish livestock auctions, graded lamb and calf sales, and the cooperative marketing of wool.

In 1945, he taught chemistry and physics at Gassaway High School; from 1947 to 1952, he was director of the World War II "On the Farm Training Program" in Braxton County; and from 1952-1956, he was Director of Commodity Marketing for the West Virginia Farm Bureau.

From 1956 to 1970, Mr. Gregory was Executive Secretary of the West Virginia Farm Bureau. Due to a change in federal policy, the Farm Bureau moved into totally farm-directed management early in his term and at his suggestion, moved from Morgantown to its own building near Buckhannon. With farmers as board members and with Mr. Gregory's management of finances and field service to farmers, the West Virginia Farm Bureau began a solid and steady course of development of farmer services with farmer direction and farm objectives. Under his direction, a Farm Bureau Management Company, Farm Bureau Marketing Company, and a Farm Bureau owned an insurance company affiliated with the northeastern states.

In 1981, Mr. Gregory was honored for 60 years of continuous Farm Bureau membership, and, by implication, for a lifetime of practical farming, as well as agricultural services. It has been said that no roster of noted West Virginians would be complete without Emerson O. Gregory, whose many contributions to agriculture were always more than his worldly compensation.