

## THOMAS E. HOUGHTON, JR. (1984)



Thomas E. Houghton, Jr. (Tom), a "par excellence" potato seed producer for 38 years, was born on December 4, 1915. His formative years were spent on the family seed potato farm near Fort Fairfield, Maine. He received his primary and secondary education in the Fort Fairfield school system, then enrolled in the College of Agriculture, University of Maine at Orono. In 1937 he received his B.S. in Agronomy and was employed by the University of Maine's Agricultural Extension Service for the next 31/2 years. During this period, Tom married Antora (Tori) Rosen of New Sweden, Maine. They have 2 daughters, Patricia and Bonnie, 2 sons, Thomas, III (Tim), and John, and 6 grandchildren.

Tom did a tour of 4-1/2 years in the Armed Services (Infantry) during World War II, much of it in the South Pacific Theatre. The quality of his leadership in that effort earned him successive promotions through the rank of major. In 1946, Tom joined the family firm, T. Houghton and Sons, Fort Fairfield, Maine, as a partner to expand the firm's foundation and certified potato seed production and sales capability. Tom's initial assignment was the production of foundation seed on the firm's facility near Fort Kent, Maine. In succeeding years, the firm continued to

expand its seed production and storage facilities, largely because of an earned reputation over the years of delivering to all customers certified seed potatoes of exceptional high quality. Upon the death of his father in 1967, Tom individually managed the firm's operations, including sales, until 1969. That year he brought his sons Tim and John into the firm and incorporated it into Houghton Farms, Inc. Houghton Farms, Inc., continued to expand both its production and storage facilities and its sales operations under Tom's leadership.

In 1980 Tom "retired" but remained associated with the firm as a consultant, primarily in customer relations. Tom resides in Fort Fairfield, Maine, during the summer and in St. Augustine, Florida, during the winter. Beginning with his return to T. Houghton and Sons in 1946, Tom has had an intense interest in new potato varieties and innovative approaches to cultural and storage practices and equipment, which would enable him to supply an improved product to his customers. He has worked closely with the Maine Extension Service, State Department of Agriculture, Experiment Station, and industry personnel to be immediately current on all facets of foundation and certified seed production and storage practices. Tom was among the first to use the chemical Mertect successfully to minimize tuber rot in storage and to participate in the Blitecast and other new programs in Maine.

Tom had a vibrant and continuing interest in new, improved potato varieties and incurred considerable expense while participating in their development. He worked very closely with all potato breeding programs in the Eastern United States, particularly, with those in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and the USDA. Following their release and for a time, Houghton Farms, Inc., was the sole foundation seed source of varieties such as Penchip, Penn 71, Buckskin, Atlantic, Belchip, Chipbelle, BelRus, and others.

Tom's services and counsel have been sought in State and local agricultural affairs. He served for 8 years on the Maine Potato Commission and has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad for 10 years. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Fort Fairfield Hospital. Tom's innovative and aggressive approach to continuous improvement in the quality of seed potatoes produced and delivered to customers over the years earned him the accolade, "Tom is one of the best farmers in Aroostook

County and Houghton Farms, Inc., is among the top five seed producers in the county and perhaps the nation," from Winthrop E. Libby, former Dean of the College of Agriculture and past President of the University of Maine. Tom is very widely known throughout the potato industry for his seed merchandizing integrity.

Because of Tom's long-term interest and numerous contributions to improving the quality of potato seed underpinning the commercial industry, particularly, in the Eastern United States, we are pleased to present Mr. Thomas E. Houghton, Jr., for Honorary Life Membership in The Potato Association of America.

~Raymon E. Webb