

## **Professor John Bernhardt Smith**

Professor John Bernhardt Smith was a famous State Entomologist, and a professor at Rutgers.



JOHN B. SMITH.

Mr. Smith was born in New York City in 1858. He became a lawyer, and then became a special agent to the US Department of Agriculture. He studied insects and in 1886 became an assistant curator of insects to what we is now the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. J. B. Smith was a key person in solving the mosquito problems during the building of the Panama Canal. He had mosquito workers hand-dig permanent sink holes eight feet square and connect them with ditch systems that would intersect breeding areas on the marsh.

Mr. Smith became a professor at Rutgers. He also was named State Entomologist. He and his family moved to New Brunswick near the University.

Early mosquito control in New Jersey began with reducing places where mosquitoes could live. No chemical methods were used in the early years. Dr. J. B. Smith recommended a hand trenching method to help eliminate mosquito breeding in salt marsh and dune areas of Barnegat Bay. These early systems supported many fish that ate the mosquito larvae. This technique, first tried at Beach Haven in 1907, became a major component of Open Marsh Water Management.

Mr. Smith was active in scientific organizations. For example, he was Secretary of the American Association of Advancement of Science, a well known scientific organization.

Professor Smith was a key person in efforts to get rid of mosquitoes in New Jersey. One large effort was to get the New Jersey State Legislature to pass legislation creating organizations that would control mosquitoes and fund the staff and activities. Just a short time after his death in 1912, the New Jersey State Legislature passed a bill to create Mosquito Control staff. The Mosquito Control Commissions were formed as a result of that legislation.