



## **Albert Koebele (1853-1924)**

Biographical Sketch by Hany Abdoun, Archives Intern

Albert Koebele was born on February 28, 1853 in Germany. Although he had little education, he was always interested in natural history. He came to the United States at a young age and in 1880 he was naturalized as an American Citizen in New York City.

Albert Koebele is credited with being one of the first entomologists to introduce beneficial insects to combat insect pest. In 1881 he held the post of Assistant Entomologist for the United States Department of Agriculture in Washington D.C. Koebele disliked life on the East Coast and was transferred to Alameda, California in 1885. In 1888 he traveled to Australia, where he collected the *Novius Cardinalis* (ladybeetles), which he brought to California to combat the *Icerya Purchasi*, a citrus pest. This process was very successful and considered to have saved the citrus industry in California. After resigning from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1893, Koebele worked as Entomologist at the Experimental Station in Honolulu, Hawaii. While in Hawaii, Koebele traveled extensively in search of beneficial insects, visiting Australia, Fiji, Ceylon, China, Japan and Mexico. In 1908 he returned to Europe, where his health declined, and in 1910 he was relieved from active duty but remained as Consulting Entomologist. The outbreak of World War I prevented Koebele from returning to the U.S. After the armistice, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association made another attempt to bring Koebele back to the U.S., but he contracted malaria and his health became too weak to endure such a trip. In 1921 a final attempt was made by former mayor of Alameda, Mr. E. K. Taylor, but he failed to get permission for Koebele to re-enter the U.S.

Koebele was a member of many scientific organizations including the Brooklyn Entomological Society and the California Academy of Sciences (a corresponding member in 1890 and 1891).

Albert Koebele died on December 28, 1924, in Waldkirch, Germany.

### **Sources Consulted:**

*Journal of Economic Entomology*, Volume 18, No. 3, June 1925

*Hawaiian Entomological Society*, Volume 6, No. 2, July 1926