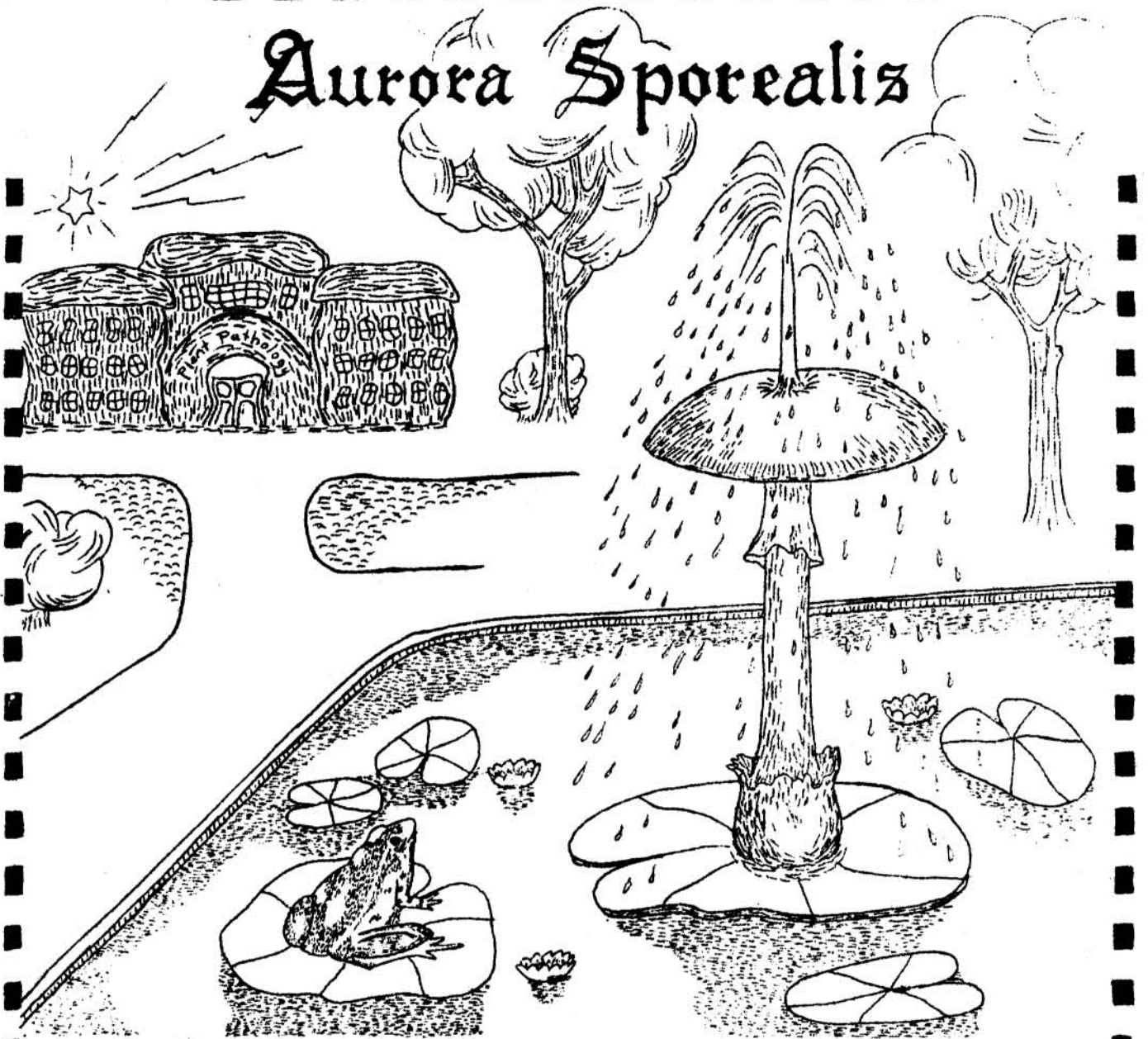


# Aurora Sporealis



Wherein are recorded the recollections, the ruminations and the raspibrations of those who have drunk from the foaming fount of the Department of Plant Pathology of the University of Minnesota and who now spout forth in divers ways.

Let the fount foam and never rundry,  
Let the spout squirt and never lose power.

WEST COAST SUPPLEMENT

Some time ago a letter from the Plant Pathology Seminar arrived. The recipient was so overcome with admiration of the letterhead, pleasure with the contents, and nostalgia from the signatures that he was unable to answer at once. Subsequently it was decided that the best response might be in the form of a number of Aurora Sporealis emanating from the far west. Accordingly letters were written and information was gleaned. The latter was edited and censored and the remainder is herewith presented.

Minnesota Pathologists have not penetrated the far west in proportion to their infiltration into Louisiana or Liberia. A statistical analysis of the situation would seem to indicate that the distribution of Minnesota Pathologists is closely correlated with the Chief's travels. Since he has failed to beat a path to this region, eximates of the T. T. are few and far between out here. However, as Holton continually says, "the quality is outstanding."

In preparing this piece, effort was made to reach all old-timers who are located west of the Rockies. We think that all have been reached and that most have responded.

The roster is as follows:

R. H. Bamberg	- Bozeman, Montana
C. S. Holton	- Pullman, Washington
J. G. Harrar	" "
G. H. Starr	- Laramie, Wyoming
G. R. Hoerner	- Corvallis, Oregon
J. M. Wallace	- Riverside, California
G. E. Hafstad	- Phoenix, Arizona

In addition there are the following of Minnesota descent or adoption:

E. C. Johnson	)	
Stan Swenson	)	Pullman, Washington
G. W. Fischer	)	
Dave Lindgren	)	Riverside, California

It was hoped that many of this group might meet at the Salt Lake City meetings of the Pacific Division of the A. A. A. S., but restrictions on travel, lack of rubber, and gas rationing have destroyed that possibility. Thus certain feature articles, which might have gone into this issue of Aurora, are lost forever.

For the most part, the Old Timers came through in excellent shape with the information requested. In a few instances material was hard to obtain. The worst case was that of C. S. Holton, who lives just down the hall, but who finally had to be interviewed in order to get this to press. The interview was not too satisfactory as it was difficult to get Holton's early life straight. When queried, all he would say was that he just suddenly got tired of plowing, chopping cotton, and seeing mules from only

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one angle, and so went to college. Other semi-authentic versions have it that (1) he was such a poor farmhand that his Daddy caught him, shoed him and sent him to school, (2) he ran away from the farm and out of money in Baton Rouge, (3) he applied at the University of Louisiana and they let him in thinking he was someone else. However, the records show that a number of years later he was graduated from the Louisiana State University, and through the good office of friends of his (if not of Minnesota) he became an inmate of the T. T. It is reported that he improved immensely while in St. Paul and acquired much valuable scientific information as well as many social graces too numerous and vicarious to mention. It was at this time that he came under the influence of Person, Bamberg, Hines and others and subsequently went through some of his more unpublicized episodes. At present he holds the rank of pathologist in the Bureau of Plant Industry and is carrying on highly important work with the cereal smuts. His publications are numerous, scholarly and authoritative. (Note - We forget whether the next one is a Holton and Fischer or a Fischer and Holton creation. The boys may not have matched for it yet.)

A personal note from George Fischer is as follows (as well as a dubious couplet).

George Fischer still holds fond memories of the few weeks he spent at the "Tottering Tower" a year ago, and will ever be grateful for the many courtesies that were accorded him while there. He wishes to send the following bit of advice to the neophytes and to those of the old-timers as can still listen to advice:

Better a lumper than a splitter be,  
For splitting dulls the edge of Mycology.\*

Dr. Fischer might have said much more in regard to his work with diseases of grasses, his farming activities and fishing propensities, but we can say that in all respects he merits induction as an honorary member of the Minnesota "Old Timers."

+ + + + +

Dr. J. M. "Peewee" Wallace writes as follows:

"Dear Aurora, Old Timers and Others:

I have been asked to contribute something for a Pacific or Western Supplement of Aurora Sporealis and can think of no better way to do so than in the form of a letter. Perhaps the wise and witty Eds can think of a clever title for this contribution, particularly since it comes from the GREAT state of CALIFORNIA! And now that I have brought up the subject I might as well finish it in the beginning inasmuch as a little Sunkist propaganda seems to be expected from an inhabitant of these parts.

No foolin' - this is really a delightful place to live, play, and work. It gets "slightly" warm sometimes; occasionally our annual rainfall all comes within the same week causing an excess of surface moisture; periodic "tremblors" jar one from his dreams at times, and very unusually, there is a slight taste and smell of oily smoke from the heaters used in the citrus orchards. But these minor variations out here take the place of autumn leaves, blizzards and 30 below weather which serve in certain other parts of the country to break the monotony of things in general. The city of Riverside, with a population of about 35,000 is, we think, one of the prettiest towns of the State. It is old enough to have escaped the boom period and although it has arisen from a desert valley, the trees and vegetation in general seem much more natural than is the case in many of the newer towns. A personal criticism of this country is that it is an awful long distance

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\* With apologies to Bill



from most of the U. S. A. Aside from that, when one tries to think of other shortcomings, they seem to be few. Perhaps one of these is the shortage of Minnesota pathologists out here and I should like to see that corrected. When I first arrived in Riverside, Oldtimer Thornberry was located here but he soon departed for more easterly points. This year I have seen O. T. George Hafstad a few times while he was located near here on peach virus work. However, he has recently transferred to Arizona. There is an occasional opportunity for reminiscing of Minnesota days with Walt Sinclair (Biochem.) and Dave Lindgren (Ent.) both of whom have memories of the kittenball rivalry and of Stak's ability to coach, play and umpire in the same game.

It has been suggested that we Westerners include a biographical sketch of ourselves in this issue. That would be an easy, brief job for me if I could decide whether to begin at the period of my life when I "introduced" Governor "THE MAN" Bilbo or when I arrived in St. Paul from the deep south with a B. S. degree from Mississippi State College, an appointment as Assistant in Plant Pathology, and a trunk full of woolen underwear. Perhaps it is best not to put the true story of the "Governor" episode in writing as it gets better and better each time Stak tells it, and it might handicap him considerably if he should be forced to stick to the script.

Through the help of H. D. Barker, I was given an appointment in Plant Pathology and arrived at the University in the Fall of 1923. At that time the Big Chief was in Australia I believe, and it was some two or three months before he returned and had a chance to form any new or different opinions of Barker! For the next few months Stak made it pretty tough on me, but when Spring rolled around and after I had parked a few of the opposing pitchers offerings over the "Ice-House" Stak began to ease up on me and from then on I had clear sailing. You all know his softness for athletes?

Nineteen years is a long time, but I think I can come pretty close to remembering the occupants of the T. T. when I arrived there in 1923. There were Freeman, Stakman, Leach, Chris, Dodsall, Rose, Tolaas, Lambert, Levine, Melander, Cotter, Hart, Nelson, Hursh, Seal, Flor, Hecker, and Rodenhiser. I believe Craigie came that year too, and possibly Sanford and Henry. Soon Broadfoot and Hynes showed up and I believe Paul Peterson and Big Andy were showing some interest in Plant Pathology at that time as undergraduates. Soon other now famous Oldtimers arrived and Plant Pathology began its long string of kittenball championships. In order to hold on to the first won trophy, Stak scouted far and wide and picked up three promising recruits from the South, - Bamberg, Person and Holton, all of whom proved their worth on the diamond until old age began to have its effect. They were then granted their degrees to make way for younger talent and to boost a weakening team. I understand that at about that time the team won two games by only 8 runs, so worrying the Coach that he immediately began to build a new team.

But to get on with the autobiography -- Upon my arrival at the farm I was made First Asst. to Eagle in the greenhouses where I soon became an expert soil potter, wheat planter and greenhouse whitewasher and washer-offer. As soon as Stak discovered I could play kittenball, he gave me easier duties, raised my salary and "status" and soon I could compete with Mose in describing the reactions of LC, Ma, Krd, Kota, etc., to physiologic forms 1 to 39. With the barberries getting scarcer under Melander's guiding genius, and thinking that we had just about found all the existing forms of P. graminis, I finished my studies, took my prelim. and moved on to South Carolina, leaving Lee Hines to take up where I had finished "rusting." After a few months at Clemson College, I accepted a position with the Division of Sugar Plant Investigations, U. S. D. A. and went to Twin Falls, Idaho. On the way West I stopped by St. Paul, took my final exam and got my degree, helped Rody make the jump into what I am sure he will

describe as a state of double-blessedness, and incidentally, took care of a similar matter personally. After six years in Idaho, I was transferred to California where I continued work on the curly-top disease until the first of this year. At that time I accepted a position with the University of California, with headquarters at the Citrus Experiment Station at Riverside.

On the present job I am devoting most of my time to a study of a virus disease of citrus known as Psorosis. I am continuing a study of certain phases of the curly top problem that I have been interested in and which were incomplete at the time I made the change of jobs.

My Chief at the Citrus Station is Dr. H. S. Fawcett who most of you know is one of the authorities, if not the authority on Citrus pathology at the present time. The staff is about 50 research scientists, and many phases of sub-tropical agriculture are under investigation here. We have 7 Plant Pathologists here and a much larger number at other state institutions. We conduct a Pl. Path-Pl. Physiology Seminar bimonthly and there is also the Synopsis Club which features programs of general agricultural interest once a month.

The above seems to just about "wrap up" the requested information regarding this Old Timer. There is not much to add except that the Norwegian girl from Minneapolis (Adeline Hoién, Home Ec. '25) that I found myself married to while I was getting Rody and Stella under the same roof, is still with me and that she is doing a good job of her job, - keeping house and "raising" our four-year old daughter Jane. Said daughter being such a delight that I feel sorry for Chris and Rody who have to get along with just boys!

As for the War, - so far, all is relatively quiet on this Western front. Once a week I serve a 4-hour shift at night at the County Defense Headquarters. I have finished the Standard and the Advanced First-Aid training but am hoping I won't have to use any of my acquired knowledge because of military action. I have experienced two blackouts and that is as far as I have been affected other than the rationing of sugar and the shortage of tires. My tires are thin, but I take turns with three of my neighbors in furnishing transportation to the Station which is four miles from my home.

GREETINGS TO ALL!

PeeWee

Dr. G. H. Starr of Laramie responded to our request for information with the following observations:

"Weather relations -- This is an important factor, affecting pathologists as well as pathogens. We have had a backward spring, warm in April, and cold in May--considerable rain and snow and even cloudy weather. Many people infected with Wovweather Nonspringeitherr Starr.

"Yellows-- or chlorosis is prevalent with our trees and shrubs in Laramie and I doubt if it is confined to the plant world. We miss the iron of great leadership that was once available, but because of the high-line of distance and ever-activity, we have become slightly chlorotic. The present rubber situation will probably mean delayed treatment.

Omniverous parasitism--Because the harvest is great and workers are few, my investigational work here has been spread over a number of hosts. However, at the present time I am concentrating on bacterial ring-rot of potatoes with bean diseases taking a lesser portion of my time.

Mutualism--Our symbiotic relations here consist of four organisms, all Minnesota men, with physiological specialization of work. They are as follows:

Dr. Wendell Bartholdi--plant breeding and horticulture  
W. A. Riedl, plant breeding and plant pathology

Lambert C. Erickson, seed analyst who was also inoculated with some of the plant pathology courses; and

myself, G. H. Starr. I left Minnesota in September, 1931, and have been plant pathologist of the Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station since that time.

I inoculation--Fortunately, other workers here and I were carefully inoculated with excellent course work injected by skilled "inoculators." We also were well inoculated with the Minnesota spirit and learned that one of the first requirements of greatness is ambition and industry or just plain work. Infection failed on a portion of this inoculation work, but the inspiration received from great and understanding leaders will always be felt and, I trust, in part reflected.

Necrosis--The inspiration received at Minnesota will help to delay any symptom of necrosis. However, today I feel that my necrosis is in an advanced stage. This is why--yesterday afternoon was the Agricultural Club picnic. The Agriculture faculty team played two soft-ball games, first with the Seniors and next with the Juniors. Surprisingly enough, we won them both by good margins. We were soft punks to start with, today our muscles are as stiff and hard as imperfect Rhizoctonia.

Greenhouse--The effect of this structure on both the pathogen and the pathologist is pronounced.

Our new greenhouse unit is practically completed now, including equipment. This consists of three units of glass and a large "head house." The latter houses a research laboratory, an inoculation room, a classroom, offices, various work rooms, and ample storage rooms located on one of the three floors in the building.

Greetings and Good Luck to all.

I'll be at the Greenhouse when you call."

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Recently we had the pleasure of meeting G. R. Hoerner, T. T. 1918, who visited Pullman and kindly consented to speak before our seminar on the subject of Hop mildew. Hoerner's response to our plea for news does him proud.

#### "MUSTY MUSINGS"

"On May 2 I serenely celebrated my -- birthday. Physiologically speaking, I should be an old man. I confess only to being an Old Timer! Age is like that. Patterning Ponce de Leon, I have long searched for the fountain of youth. And listen dutifully, Diogenes, I have found it -- in three little words: Interest, Enthusiasm, Imagination. I commend them to our more youthful compatriots. Memories are for the middle-aged!

As I mentally retrace my steps over the bridge of time, now over a quarter-century long, what a "honey" of a hindsight I have--with the aid of my bifocals! Had my foresight been half as keen, ah, me, what an imposing string of vital statistics I could have presented for the modern methods of analysis indulged by the dilettanti!

Incidentally, it has been suggested that, "In biological research, mathematical analysis can never take the place of a pair of observing eyes and two skilled hands."

Yes, I know, reference to what might have been sounds like the famous last lines, "the saddest words," etc., the poets prate about. But then I always did relish rhyme.



"Backward, turn backward,

Oh, Time, in they flight!"--while I peer penitently into my treasure chest of memories and conjure up in non-kaleidoscopic array:

My first view of Lake Minnetonka and those Jensen family Sunday spreads...gray bark of raspberries...the Siren of the Seed Lab...war emergency smut treatments...the Biology Club and the Huang Nus...Mrs. Williams' boarding house...Lake Como and those capacious canoes...Flora the Flirtatious...the Barberry eradication campaign...thesis-time in St. Anthony Park...Jean the Judicious...the State Fair...Indian Summer and those rock-fried steaks...summer school and those up-state teachers...Sunday night chop suey in Minneapolis...the first officers' training camp competition...The Gayety theater in St. Paul...the Farm School classes...munching mushrooms with the mycologically-minded...potato inspections in freezing freight cars...hot rum toddies...seminars and visiting notables...journeys to Washington and way points...my many "Kosher" contacts...extension lectures and their unpredictable receptions...sloe gin rickeys...crown rust of oats...and all the honorable host of men and women, living and dead, single and bond, the mere mention of whose names raises a blister, a blush, or a benediction!

Aurora's spontaneous, though irregular advent periodically disperses nostalgic mists which tend to becloud a pungent past. I am less moved by the persistence of the plethoric platitudes of the Pundits than by a reminder of their individual idiosyncrasies.

Human relationships are the things that matter, as time tinges our titian tresses with gruesome gray. What a man says is not nearly so important as what he does!

The scientific savant may focus a cold, calculating, penetrating and impersonal gaze upon his research problem, which is commendable. If, however, in his personal contacts he remains forbearing and sympathetic, retains a spirit of play and a sense of humor, courts companionship and it is not "udderly" impossible to squeeze a few drops of the milk of human kindness from his bag of tricks, then Laertes, "couple him to thy soul with hoops of steel."

As the midnight taper and your scribe warm to their subject, they both get soft and the latter--God forbid!--begins to pander to philosophy. My contemporaries perhaps have grown contemptuous and the young fry neither know nor care--so what the hell! I better stick to the "vital statistics."

Still welded to the wife I took unto myself while mastering at Minnesota--poor dear! There have been vicissitudes, of course, but we have placated posterity. My son, a DU like his dad, next year will be a Senior in Dramatics at the University of Washington. Since his father escaped military service in World War I, it is retribution, I suppose, that he will, upon graduation next June, enter the Navy for training as an Ensign in World War II.

One daughter, a Theta, is finishing her Sophomore year in Home Economics here at Oregon State.

A second daughter graduates from the local High School at the end of this month. Time marches on!

Since 1931 I have been stationed here as an Agent with the U.S.D.A., Division of Drug and Related Plants, confining my scientific attention to diseases of hops.

Professionally, I am at present affiliated with (1) American Phytopathological Society, (2) Northwest Scientific Society, (3) Western Society of Horticulturists, Entomologists and Plant Pathologists in addition to membership in the local U. S. D. A. Club and Chairmanship of a local Hop Investigations and Extension Committee.

Since leaving Minnesota, I have attained membership in the Oregon State Chapter of Delta Sigma Rho and Phi Kappa Phi and the Oregon



Chapter of Sigma Xi and have become a life member of the Oregon State College Alumni Association.

Extracurricular service includes that of Faculty Adviser and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the O. S. C. Cooperative Association; Faculty Adviser to the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Managers' Association; Secretary of the Intercollegiate Athletic Board; Chairman of the Advisory Board and Secretary-Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the Building Association of the Oregon State Chapter of the Delta Upsilon Fraternity and a National Deputy of the General Fraternity.

Of life's many lessons, the one that perhaps because of intimate association, has impressed me most is--

The Lesson of a Glass of Beer  
by Melvin J. Messer

Life is the crystal goblet that I grasp  
And hold beneath the silver faucet's nose,  
Time, the check spring that nimbly I unclasp,  
And joy, or grief, the liquid that outflows.

The snowy foam that mantles o'er the glass,  
Is the exuberance of youthful days;  
Pleasure supreme, elusive, soon to pass,  
Leaving the flat, stale beer no man can praise.

Small troubles, cares and sorrows are the notes,  
The broken hop leaves and stray seeds that vex  
The tapster's soul, that on sheer fineness dotes,  
And him with many a doubt and fear perplex.

Excessive bitterness, though pure the draught  
(That is the wholesome discipline of fate),  
Or sweetness without intermission quaffed  
(Monotony of fortune's tranquil state).

Give captious customers rare cause for fault,  
But all their plaints I silence with this saw,  
The Master Brewer from the Eternal Vault  
Deals out this drink by His, not mortal, law.

Be satisfied, O man, give thanks and sip,  
Pull out thy purse and pay thy reckoning clear,  
Speak words of courage, peace, good fellowship  
Such is the lesson of a glass of beer.

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Dr. R. H. Bamberg of Bozeman, Montana, wrote us briefly but succinctly. Part of his letter appears below:

"I was born on the main street (4 miles out from the city limits) of Winona, Mississippi, June 22, 1905. B. S. from Mississippi State College in 1927, M. S. from Minnesota in 1929, and Ph. D. in 1933. My work was primarily in Cereal Pathology from 1929 to 1937 but since February of that year I have been doing breeding work with spring and winter wheats--Another pathologist gone wrong by changing from plant path to plant breeding.

Married in 1930 in Minneapolis. Two daughters now -- Karen and Nancy born in 1938 and 1940 respectively--this might have been slow but not as slow as Rodenhiser and Wallace.

In addition to the rather usual program of wheat improvement I am

concentrating some effort in: getting winter wheat varieties resistant to dwarf bunt, determining the effect of environment on the efficacy of bunt inoculum, and studying the genetics of kernel characters in wheat.

I still do not like blizzardy weather much more than I did in Minnesota and I still haven't found a place dry enough that I hardly notice the temperature when it gets to 25 below zero. That is bunk.

You can boil all this down to a couple of lines if you wish. I would do it myself if I had more of an idea about what type of writeups you intended to include in your list of characters--villains, heroes, sirens, and heroines. Knowing you and Chuckie as I do, I suspect there will be items added that I have not touched upon."

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Normally nothing would be added to Bam's own statements, but since he evidently fears the worst we are tempted to work him over a little. However, instead we shall refrain and in return will collect personally from him on our next trip to Bozeman.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Although Dr. S. P. Swenson came from the wrong side of the University Farm tracks, we should mention that he is located in Pullman as an ornament to the Department of Agronomy. He still remembers a little Plant Pathology but has a slight tendency towards immerisms. He sends his regards to all of his friends from and in the T. T.

\*\*\*\*\*  
George Hafstad writes that he is now Assistant Soil Conservationist and is located at Phoenix, Arizona. (Our request to George Hafstad for news of himself brought only a brief reply, and we are drawing on a personal letter recently received by C. S. Holton for a detailed report on this Old Timer).

All of the Old Timers who know George Hafstad will welcome this recent news of his whereabouts and current activities. Last April he accepted a position with the Soil Conservation Service as Assistant Soil Conservationist (Economics) and is located at Phoenix, Arizona. His long-time program is designed to collect, analyze, and prepare social and economic data pertaining to agricultural land use and to act as planning technician for the state of Arizona. At present he is devoting his time to a survey and inventory of all the irrigation projects in the state. We have his own word for it that he likes the work. Hafstad went to Arizona from San Bernadino, California, where he was doing inspection work for the Quarantine Service. George claims to be growing old no faster than Chris (the terrible Dane) and recently guaranteed to catch 7 innings if Bam could pitch two. Address: 721-1/2 E. Pierce Street, Phoenix, Arizona. C S Holton

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Dr. J. G. (Dutch) Harrar has apparently become quite Occidentalized during his denizenship as head of the Department of Plant Pathology of Washington State College, Pullman, Washington, during the past year. The Doctor appeared quietly, but suddenly, in the new Phytopathology Palace at University Farm during the dog days of August and comported himself as if there had been no hiatus in his residence within the confines of the most civilized portion of the United States. We finally got some of the basic facts regarding the geography, geology, agriculture, olericulture, floriculture, and arboriculture of that portion of the United States which some people have nicknamed "Washington".

The rhapsodies sung by some of the former residents of Washington were sung to an entirely different tune, although this is not to intimate that the tune was not pleasing. There were new angles, however, on Chinooks, on mountain scenery, and on vegetation. Evidently the facts given by the doctor were more nearly true facts that those given by some whose vision had been clouded by too long a sojourn in the fog-blanketed regions of the west coast and the sun-baked deserts of the interior. The statements of Harrar must be accepted as official, as they were made in a special Seminar, and whoever heard of anything but true facts being presented in Seminars!