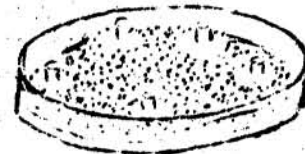


PENICILLIN

Our project sponsored by the War Production Board to look for high penicillin producing molds ended officially at midnight on December 31, although most of the machinery had been stopped a couple of weeks earlier. The big lecture room on the first floor is now piled high with all of the thousands of Petri dishes, test tubes, and flasks, the miles of rubber tubing, the innumerable bottles of assorted chemicals, and the miscellaneous array of machines and gadgets used during the project, awaiting official disposition. An occasional cockroach beats across the clearing, looking lonely, bewildered, and sad. The three shakers still occupy the room built around them in 105, and Clyde Christensen every now and then is overcome with nostalgia and sneaks down to turn them on, looks at them fondly as they jump into violent life and throw bolts, nuts and bearing metal in his face. Like the course of true love, the shakers didn't always run smooth, but it is kind of quiet since they quit.

During the course of the project about 8000 wild cultures were tested, and from the better ones of these some 20,000 mass and single-spore isolates were tested, and the better ones selected and retested, and so on. From a total of about 30,000 cultures, plus or minus a few thousand, 20 cultures were sent to the commercial penicillin producers, as well as to the University of Wisconsin and to the Northern Regional Research Laboratory at Peoria, where facilities were available for large scale tests. Results so far available indicate that several of the cultures selected here are consistently high producers of penicillin, and at least a couple of them are already being used commercially to some extent, so that it looks as if the project may have paid off.



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SERVICEMEN

Christopher- Chris has been serving with a medical and sanitation unit in the land of the Taj Mahal, but we had a postcard-telling of a change of his A.P.O. No., but as yet no letter relating the significance of the change.

Hanna- Capt. Bill Hanna, of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Ottawa, attended a meeting in Montreal in January of the U.S.-Canada Joint Board for Defense. He says that recently his service life has been uneventful, which is probably well received after his experiences in the London blitz of 1940-41. Promises to send more news for AURORA "one of these days."

Kernkamp- "Kerny" writes from Italy that he had the opportunity to spend five days in Rome. He rather feebly excuses a failure to write by claiming that there is nothing to write about. That excuse doesn't go; the pictures he took rate some comment.

Mitchell- A similar card from Mitch, with the exception that the change in his case means overseas duty for the first time.

Munnecke- Don is really seeing the country these days. First Georgia, and now the range of the long-horned cattle. Don has transferred from an anti-aircraft company to the infantry, and takes up his new duties at Fort Bliss, Texas.

Nyland- Nyland is being sent to Port Director's school at Port Hueneme, California, and at the end of about 12 weeks he expects to take up duties at an advance base with a Port Director Unit.

Olson- "Married life is Wonderful." * Olson is still stationed at Ft. Tilden, New York, but since December 29th has been in a state of marital bliss. He and Herb Johnson got together in N.Y. City for a short while and discussed as only Old Timers can.

*Heard from the mouth of authority at an afternoon coffee session: "It's all right--you guys can keep the wives you have, but don't let me hear of you bringing around any new ones!"



Shema- Bernie is still performing as a travelling M.P. based at New Orleans. He states that he'd exchange his web-feet for the chance to pitch some honest-to-goodness snowballs, but finds that his time is too occupied to do any extra-curricular travelling.

Thomas- Walt is another of the imbibers from the foaming fount who is continually on the move. From Harvard's Navy Communications school, to duty on the North Atlantic and then California. Walt seems to have become another member of California's volunteer chamber of commerce.

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OLD TIMERS

James M. "Jimmy" WALTER, of the Forest Pathology Field Laboratory at Morristown, N. J., renewed acquaintance with Old Timer Art VERRALL, forest pathologist and musician, when the latter visited Morristown in December. Jimmy says he has personnel difficulties--"We have lost personnel gradually until I am here all alone"--first, because he needs personnel; secondly, because he has trouble with himself! Others of us feel the same way, Old Timer, that we are in a backwash with the war swirling all around us. The man in service is not the only one who needs morale building! Who will send AURORA and her satellites a word of encouragement?

* * * * *

Our roving representative returned from Pullman, Washington, with glowing reports of pathological activity there! Old Timers involved in said activities included ANDERSON, HOLTON, FISCHER, SCHUSTER. Other ex-Minnesotans were Herman Schultz and Stanley Swenson, agronomists--even Dean Johnson graduated from S.L. and A. at Minnesota. Glenn KENKNIGHT also joined the group from Idaho. Among other things there was a seminar on the barberry and rust situation. All in-all, according to roving representative, it was perfectly evident that practical and basic pathological investigation is flourishing at Pullman--evident from research material and from ideas.

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Dr. José Vallega sent a new address at Christmas time and says he is working very hard. He invites his friends to write to him at Alen 168, Buenos Aires, in care of the Division Inmunologia Vegetal, of which he is chief.

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Our public relations officer also went and came from Colorado in January! In Denver and Fort Collins he saw Old-Timer STARR, of Wyoming, Lambert Erickson, formerly of Ag Botany at Minnesota, Wm. Riedl, who minored in plant path and is now at Laramie, D. O. Robertson, a plant breeding major, and Joe Tobiska, soils major. Among the things that impressed the P.R.O. at Fort Collins were the mural decorations illustrating the evolution of plants and animals in the botany lecture room. The decorations were not only artistic but also very effective symbolically. They were made by L. W. Durrell.....Other means of attaining scientific atmosphere was a combined seminar, class, and laboratory room in plant physiology which seemed so homelike that you would think students would never want to leave it!

Scientific spirit is not a matter of size of buildings or staff.....Plant pathology, where P.R.O. did most of his visiting, fairly crackled with research ideas and materials.

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Remember the 4th Floor Front in the old Tottering Tower? The Seminar Room and its magnificent cross ventilation, Mr. Tolaas and the grinding out of seed potato tags, the mysterious Q.C.F. and its illustrious members, including Ebi Lambert, Guy Bisby, D. L. Bailey, Rodenhiser, JJC, Craigie, Clyde Allison, Margaret Newton, Forbes, Greaney, Holton, Moore, Shumway (whose recent visit brought all this back), Irene Knuth, and Dorothy Harnala, now Mrs. Moore. There were also storerooms in which the rats frisked freely! The stairway from 4th to 3rd was wide enough for Moore and Dean Freeman to pass, but was one-way only for such as Melander and LeClerg. Wonder if Chris could run up those steep stairs now?

SHUMWAY is County Agent at Pine City, Minnesota, cooperating with Rose in a seed-treatment project on Swede turnips, or rutabagas if you prefer. With 5 boys and 1 gal, SHUMWAY would almost have to be a "county gent" to enumerate his family.

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Q.C.F.--member Clyde ALLISON took good care of our reporter-at-large while he was in Columbus early in February. Lewis SABOE, agronomist, was among the Minnesotans present. Says our reporter, "there is an outstanding job of teaching being done at Ohio in botany: they make botany function in general education."

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Just a snatch of news came from Rosemary McLEOD, once upon a time of the Plant Path office: Her latest address is Bl.N, Dorm 2, Room 29, Hickam Dormitories, Honolulu 58; and her social life is heavy! Seems to us we remember a pretty heavy social life when she was here. In our reminiscent mood we are reminded of other Old Timers who will remember Rosemary--Gladys Kelly, Big Andy, Thornberry, George Hafstad, Helen Pearson, Alan Gemnell, J. G. Leach, and many others.

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The CURRANS, whose new address was given in the last issue, are now established in Wooster, Ohio. Father Gordon C. thinks Ralph, age 10, has some real interest along scientific lines and says he may be a future Minnesota student. Donald is 12 and interested in camping and history. Gordon writes:

"I am supervising salesmen for the Company (Allied Mills, Inc.) in Ohio, West Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania. In addition, there are a large number of retail feed stores to look after. Under war conditions we have labor shortages, and problems of every description with which to contend....Had a fine letter from Reiner BONDE recently in which he gave a lot of detailed information concerning his trip to Minnesota..... Kind regards."

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N. V. PONOMAREFF, who was one of those who took up very little room laterally in the crowded corners of the T. T., owns and operates the "Village Garden and Flower Shop," of Tucson, Arizona, P.O. Box 1722. A recent letter reports:

"I am in good health and keep on doing nursery business on a small scale without any hired labor....have my own glasshouses and 10 acres of good land for propagation and growing and just recently opened a retail store in a very good location in a rich and populous suburb. At present I am handling my own grown plants and later intend to go into florist business, as there is great demand for that here. This is something I have to learn first, as there is nothing in common between florist's and nurseryman's businesses....My hearty hello to the Towerites....NICK"



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BOOKSHELF

- HANSING* Smut, stem rust, crown rust in 4 oat crosses J.A.R. Jan. 15
- C.C.ALLISON* Barberry eradication Ohio Ext. Serv. Bul. 259
- CASSELL+KREITLOW Forage crop diseases Fl.Dis.Rep. Dec. 15
- WILSON* Concealed damage in peanuts Ibid.
- PRESLEY Diplodia dieback of guayule Ibid.
- WEISS Check list revision continues Ibid.
- JACKSON Little-leaf of southern pines Phytopath. Feb.
- BRIERLEY* Rosette-susceptible Liliun spp. Ibid.
- PERSON Pathogenicity of Rhizoctonia isolates Ibid.
- NEWTON+JOHNSON+PETURSON+CHEREWICK Races of cereal rusts in Canada in 1944 Mimeographed, 11 pp.

The new early dim-out regulations must be having their effect on the local output:

- TERVET Fungi affecting soybean storage, viability, etc. Phyto. Jan.
- CHRISTENSEN, J.J.* Mars, new barley. Minn. Farm+Home Sci. Oct. 15.

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The Revival of Research

The proposition that civilization can not progress without research is defensible. Certainly the material and mechanical aids to better living are not going to be developed and improved without research; nor are people in general going to be emancipated from ignorance without research. Of course many people who are not classed as research workers do succeed in emancipating themselves from ignorance by approaching subjects with a scientific attitude. This means simply that such people try to get all of the facts that are pertinent to judgments, that they classify these facts properly, that they reflect upon them in an intelligent and unbiased manner, and then determine their applicability and significance in such manner as to assure their validity.

Certain types of research are more necessary in war than in peace. There always is a tendency, however, to be over-impressed with the immediacy of events, and many researches fall into desuetude during periods of stress. The statement is trite but true that preparedness depends upon the existence of a reservoir of facts and principles that can be applied quickly when needed. The statement also is trite but true that every one who now has opportunity to do research has a unique obligation, not only to do the research but to do it as effectively as possible. Objectives must be scrutinized and selected carefully, and the researches must be carried on in the most direct and economical manner. Research that is done merely for self-satisfaction under present circumstances is scarcely justified. Research that is done to obtain facts and elucidate principles for their technologic or scientific value not only are justified but essential, even...

To be most valuable, research must have meaning to others besides those who do it. This means that whatever is done must be well done. Clarification, not confusion, is what is needed...

STRICTLY LOCAL

Mr. Thomas T. Muzik from the Firestone Plantations Company visited here February 7 and 8. He was on his way back to Liberia and stopped off to see what Darley is doing with Hevea brasiliensis and its pathogens. Mr. Muzik is very handsome but the most impressive thing about him is his height. Our towering pathologists shrank to pygmy size by comparison.

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On February 7, Shan Ming Chen started his homeward journey after nine years in our midst. Everyone quite outdid himself in the brilliance of his speech at Chen's tea and perhaps most of us learned to know the imperturbable scientist better in that hour and a half than in all the previous years we had been circulating together in our common strivings. A caravan of some 20 well wishers saw him off at the station. (Ed Andrews went to St. Paul instead of Minneapolis!)

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On February 14 a drove of plant pathologists accompanied Mrs. (Billie) Rodriguez to the Station. She is returning to her native home, Mexico City, to await the blessed event. Jose has been mournful and impatient with the U. S. mail system ever since.

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On February 9, we welcomed petite Nancy Ju-Shen Hsu (Mrs. Lee Ling) to our midst. She comes from China to spend three years working for a Ph. D.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

Farm and Home Week has come and gone but not before a trusted group of Towerites had held a round-table discussion of disease problems with some of the visitors. Feet under the table belonged to R. C. Rose, C. J. Eide, E. G. Sharvelle, and Louise Dossall.

No sooner had groundhog observers had their day than the Cooperative Committee on Science Teaching decided it was time to have a conference. ECS was 1 of 2 representatives of the Executive Committee of the AAAS delegated to attend the meeting held in Chicago on February 3.

Sharvelle is on the mashed-potato-and-green-pea diet circuit, inasmuch as he is guest speaking at banquets such as the one sponsored by the FFA at Mountain Lake, at which he enlightened the boys on the "Causes of Plant Disease."

February 15 found the same redoubtable disease fighter going on the air over radio station WDGY with "Sabotage in the Orchard."

Comuter Stakman has been at it again. January 10 saw him in Pullman, Wash. for the Experiment Station Conference where he gave two talks, the first titled "Future of Agricultural Research and Service" and the second, "Agricultural Progress and Problems in Mexico." The next day he revealed the "Invisible Enemies of Crop Plants" to the Pullman Kiwanis Club.

On January 24, The Colorado Grain, Milling and Feed Dealers Convention was held in Denver and those present were treated to a discussion of "The Importance of Plant Diseases in Small Grain Production." (Slides). It was a natural jump to Fort Collins the next day, where the Chief gave Sigma Xi a talk.

February 8 found our match blighter back in Minneapolis talking to the Minnesota Farm Managers Association on "Pathological Problems in Crop Improvement." There is no record as to whether he stopped off in St. Paul, but February 12 and 13 saw the Plant Institute of Ohio in session in Columbus, where two talks, the first on "Genetics of Plant Pathogens" and the second on "Agricultural Problems and Progress in Mexico," were on the program. The second half of February must have been scheduled so's "The Man" could catch his breath.

Carl Eide went on the air February 21 and prepared the people who intend to start vegetables in seed flats etc. so that they will be able to diagnose their own troubles in "Darning Off and its Treatment."

C. M. Christensen, continuing his talks on the basic research in plant disease problems, had discussed "Late Blight" and "Seed Treatment."

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THE FOLLOWING NEWS FROM TED WRIGHT, T/SGT WITH THE 45TH CHEMICAL LABORATORY, WAS RECEIVED AT THE LAST MINUTE FROM ASSAM, INDIA.

"We went up to Darjeeling on our furlough. I don't know whether it was the change or the extreme hospitality accorded us there, but we really had a wonderful time. We rented a room in the apartment of an Austrian lady, a refugee, and for a surprisingly small amount we were provided with excellent Viennese meals prepared somehow from Indian materials.... Scenery was beautiful, and the facilities for hiking, riding, and photographing were endless. There was an excellent botanic garden there, well landscaped and with the specimens well marked.... But am still at a loss to identify those of Assam.... Going back to the furlough, on our second morning there we woke to find 6 in. of snow on the ground! It was a treat, first that I have seen in 4 or 5 years.

"The garden (at camp), after many trials and disappointments, is finally producing. You would have enjoyed seeing the blowmen we hired trying to break this turf with a pointed stick and a team of water buffalo. After the fertilizer problem was solved, we had to keep planting in order to find the right season. Now that the monsoon is over, the insect problem has ceased, and the plot is yielding cabbage, tomatoes, crinkle-leaf cabbage, and a sort of greens whose identity is a mystery. Soon we shall have lettuce, peas, beans, and cauliflower. Some of the bananas should begin bearing this year and pineapple likewise. Almost forgot papayas, too. Believe me, fresh vegetables taste unbelievably good after a year of canned food.

"From AURORA and the Christmas letters you folks must have enjoyed your holidays greatly.... After so long an afraid I'm rusty in the ways of civilization and would hardly know how to act, particularly with mistletoe around. Had many laughs over those accounts!..."

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We are particularly glad to be able to report good news from Captain Tommy KING, whose connection with the 10th Armored Division caused us much concern during the Battle of Bastogne.

"To say that I am older and grayer is putting it mildly." Says he saw the whites of the enemies' eyes at five feet and that was close enough for him. However, the Yanks could not be dislodged, and after the battle his outfit received presidential citation.

* * * * *

There was a young lady named Millie-cent
Who disliked the perfume her Willie sent;
In fact, I am told,
It left her quite cold;
The silly scent, Willie sent, Millie-cent!

H. A. R. B.

One crisp January night, Division members foreign to ice and skating were duly initiated on the Langford rink in Tower St. Anthony Park. José Rodriguez, a complete stranger to the blades, set about mastering the art unaided and really succeeded. Curt Roane, native of Virginia, also came off definitely the victor; but Jimmy Lyle, "from Kentucky, sub!" though he recorded only a few tumbles, decided the sport was not for him. Elisa Hirschhorn, on the strong right arm of Stevensen, bravely strove for mastery and claims surprise that the ice was not cold when she fell on it! About 15 other members of the staff cavorted about in various stages of ability or lack of it, Dot and Matt Moore, Ruth and Dick Davidson being in the "with ability" bracket and Ernie DuCharme grandstanded royally, proving for the novices what can be done when you put your feet into it! After skating, the group accepted an invitation from Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Cotter, who live opposite the rink, to enjoy their hospitality and Mrs. C's very delicious doughnuts and coffee! It was a wonderful party!

(Remember when Dr. Noble learned to skate; when Loh took to the sport; when Eide used to come, see, and conquer, only to give it up as soon as he had mastered it?)

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The bowling team is "batting" 500 percent at mid-season. Dr. Sharvelle has shown greatest improvement in recent weeks xxxx Roane finally managed to win one game of chess from Gattani xxxx Lyle, Roane and Mullin, three gentlemen from the Sunny Southland, have groaned most about our Minnesota winter. Nevertheless they have enjoyed throwing snowballs more than the Yankees in the group.

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Cigarette Snaring

Because several Old Timers have asked how we are making out in the present cigarette shortage, we submit the following notes. Hardest hit are the 100 percent fag smokers; least hit is E.C.S., 100% pipe smoker. Reaching a new high in activity and helpfulness are the non-smokers, who make the rounds of various stores once a week and sell whatever packs they can get AT COST (no profit, as is claimed by some) to their tobacco-hungry friends..... At first every one tried rolling his own freehand, but the results were so varied and unpredictable that this method was discarded. Jim Lyle saved the day by bringing out his rolling machine. This prompted Eide to make his own machine, and he turned out one sturdy enough to roll cigars.....All brands of tobacco and clover leaf are used, but Eide's "Good Old Sunnertime" is the best (or worst). Dick Davidson rolled 20 Prince Albert on Lyle's machine and then discovered he couldn't stand to smoke them so had to give them all away. Some brands of tobacco are on the tarry side: one frequently sees Clyde Christensen drawing very hard but ineffectively on a home-made cigarette, then hears him utter, "Damn! Another cinder!"

Overheard in the hall:
"Who wants to trade a package of Rameses?"