

More on the BOQ Fire

Having read the article (Winter 2000) late in the spring because of extensive traveling, and then waiting for the next issue and possible letters, I thought I would add to the flood of letters I am sure that you have received.

I remember that time. It was extremely cold that December, and there were some reports that some barefooted, pajama-clad residents of the destroyed dormitory had come to class "as is" because they hadn't anywhere else to go. In that year, because of the large enrollment of veterans under the G. I. Bill, the University was full to the brim, and classes were held six days of the week. I think the burnt-out students were only a matter of concern for the very early classes.

I was interested and not a little shaken because the year before, my first year at OU, I had lived in that building, (I think) as it was then a women's dormitory, and of course the thought came that the same thing could very well have happened then. As I recall, there was some idea that the fire could have been started by spontaneous combustion in a cleaners closet where mops and polishing rags were kept. Because of the general age of the buildings, the maintenance staff seemed to take great pride in at least making the floors, etc., shine, and fresh paint might have been a factor.

There was one story I particularly remember (possibly apocryphal) about a student on the second floor who had just finished either his master's thesis or his doctor's dissertation. However, because of the stringent limitations on how much the government would pay for various things, he could only afford for the typist to do the original and no copies. Naturally, when the fire became so huge, the thing he wanted to save was the dissertation, so he threw it out the window, only to see it sucked back into the fire on the lower level before he jumped. I never did hear how it turned out, but of course, the story went that he wouldn't have the time/money to continue on for another month.

One thing might interest you. I had to have an emergency appendectomy about two weeks or so later and

was in the dispensary following surgery by Dr. James Haddock. At that time, during the Christmas season, the organized houses would go Christmas caroling, women and men alternating nights. Since I was in the dispensary, my sorority sisters sang several carols under my window, and the next day, many of those fire victims who were ambulatory came into my room to thank me and my friends for the carols.

Most of the men still in the hospital were burn victims, and most of those who came to the door of my room were still wearing the "burn jackets," great amounts of cotton wadding over heavy grease or some other type of burn medication. The "jacket" was to keep the fluids in and not dehydrate the patient, or at least that was the explanation given me.

As I remember, we continued (the caroling) as long as I was at the University.

Your article brought back many memories. Thank you for such a wonderful magazine. It has followed me over most of the United States.

*Frances Hurst Murray, '51 B.A.
Altamonte Springs, Florida*

The Massad Fan Club

The article on Paul Massad ("Sooner Spotlight," Spring 2000) was overdue. Paul has been an OU treasure for years. His contributions have been significant and appreciated by many. His leadership and counsel were invaluable to the New Orleans, Kansas City and Charlotte Alumni Clubs with which I was associated. Let's hope he never retires.

*Robert Brady, '60 B.B.A.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma*

Two Pauls Valley Guys

Thank you for the excellent article that recently appeared in the *Sooner Magazine* ("Medical Mentors in Rural Oklahoma," Spring 2000). I was quite impressed with the accuracy of your article and appreciated the comments by Dr. Brand.

I was embarrassed to see my childhood hero, Bill Paul, on the back cover of the magazine, who is current president of the American Bar Association and also a Pauls Valley man. I felt

honored to be in the same magazine with him, but felt he should have been on the front cover (but secretly I was proud to be there). Jeff Garrett was effervescent at the graduation ceremonies for the medical school at the Myriad on (May 21), since we appeared on the front cover.

Thank you again for your kind comments and for making a scraggy looking, old country surgeon a celebrity.

*Jim Lindsey, M.D.
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma*

A(ddre)ss Correction

Being a loyal Sooner, I enjoy immensely my *Sooner Magazine*. However, could you possibly change the mailing label to Johnston & Associates instead of Kenneth R. Johnston & Ass.?

My new law partner (and son), another loyal Sooner (B.A. '86, J.D. '89), fails to see the humor in the label. You see, we practice in a small town, and certain postal employees and even some of our own office staff now refer to us affectionately as, well, you know what.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Kenneth R. Johnston
'69 B.S., '73 J.D.
Chickasha, Oklahoma*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Alumnus Johnston takes the prize for the most creative address correction request and apologies for embarrassment caused. However, one would think that, with all that "snow and rain and heat and gloom of night staying these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," our postal employees would have better things to do than holding their loyal customers up to ridicule.

The Rest of the Story

I recently received my copy of the *Sooner Magazine* (Spring 2000) and read with considerable interest your article on Professor Alfred Barnaby Thomas. I thought I would bring you up to date on Prof. Thomas' career after he retired from the University of Alabama.

First, I am a graduate of OU, B.A. with distinction, history, 1959, and Ph.D. in history 1965. Obvi-

George Goodman and the World Around Him

The Bebb Herbarium, located on the second floor of Cross Hall, houses today the world's finest collection of the flora of Oklahoma, along with strong holdings of the flora from surrounding states, the southwestern United States, the Great Plains and Mexico. The herbarium is truly one of the outstanding facilities of its kind at a state university. The development of this herbarium is due in large part to the extraordinary efforts of Dr. George J. Goodman, Regents Professor Emeritus and Curator Emeritus of the Bebb Herbarium, who died on May 23, 1999. Dr. Goodman built the collection from a few thousand plant specimens into one that before his retirement in 1975 would amass nearly a quarter-million specimens.

Dr. Goodman first came to the University of Oklahoma in 1933 after completing his doctoral degree at Washington University and the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis. With the exception of a brief period between 1936 and 1945, when he served as curator of the herbarium at Iowa State University in Ames, Dr. Goodman devoted the rest of his professional life to the University of Oklahoma, the Department of Botany and Microbiology, and the Bebb Herbarium.

I was Dr. Goodman's last graduate student, and, no, he never accused me of being the reason for his retirement. In fact, we continued to work side by side both in the field and in the herbarium for nearly a quarter century after his so-called "retirement."

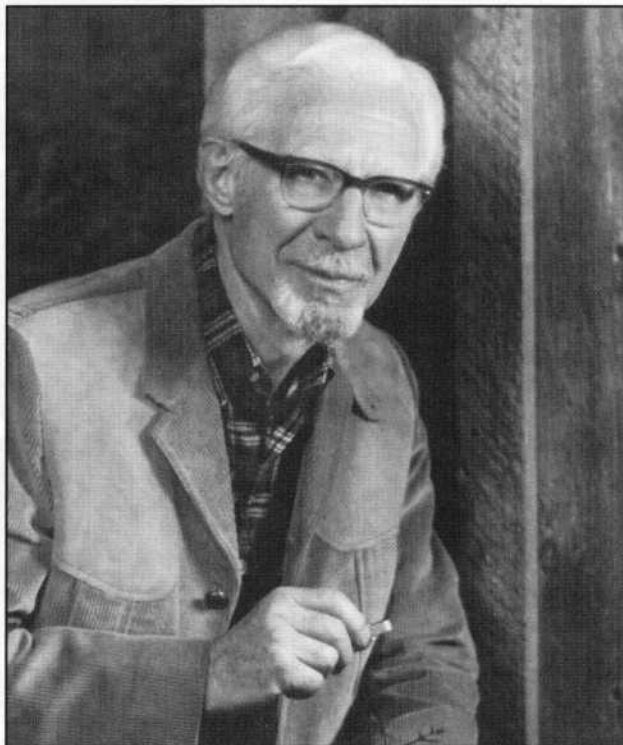
During the fieldwork for our book, *Retracing Major Stephen H. Long's 1820 Expedition: The Itinerary and Botany* (OU Press, 1995), we traveled extensively in the West where this Wyoming native and former rancher was

quite at ease. One glorious field day along the Rampart Range of the Colorado Rockies, we climbed a butte known now as Dawson Butte. We had pinpointed this butte as the one that Major Long and one of his men had climbed in July 1820. Our ascent was slow, as every few feet Dr. Goodman would find another plant and enthusiastically share his

knowledge about it. I never found a plant that Dr. Goodman did not recognize. His botanical knowledge was encyclopedic. When we did finally reach the top of the butte, we were nearly overwhelmed by the beauty in all directions. As we stood there in silence taking in all the magnificence, Dr. Goodman said to me, "Do you hear that sound?" I acknowledged, and he said, "It's the sound the wind makes only through the ponderosa pine." Dr. Goodman went on to say, "I'm reminded of the old Indian chief who sat beside a western campfire with his braves—a full moon above, a coyote howling in the distance, and a gentle breeze catching the smoke of the campfire and swirling it toward the twinkling stars. The old chief uttered, 'Itamahpi,' which meant to wish for nothing more."

It was stories like this that through the years made me so keenly aware of how much this scholar appreciated the world around him and of how much fun he made it for everyone who knew him. He built a marvelous herbarium for this university while at the same time he shared his love for life, his wonderful sense of humor, his ever-present smile, and his infinite knowledge of plants with all those he met. For that I say, "Itamahpi," dear friend, "Itamahpi."

Cheryl A. Lawson
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Shawnee, Oklahoma



Botanist George J. Goodman

ously, by the time I arrived at OU, Professor Thomas was long gone.

In 1969, I accepted a position as associate professor of history at the University of West Florida, Pensacola. When I arrived I was especially pleased to discover that Professor Thomas had been teaching there for a year. This was obviously after he had retired from the University of Alabama. Since my

field of history was Latin America and especially the Spanish Borderlands, I was delighted to have this opportunity to become acquainted with Dr. Thomas.

Prof. Thomas stayed with us for several years—I don't remember exactly when he left—ca. 1974? He moved to Austin, Texas, where one of his daughters was living at the time. A couple of years later, I was

at the University of Texas doing some research and visited Prof. Thomas. He was a patient in one of the hospitals there at the time. Unfortunately, within a year or two after I saw him there, he passed away.

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