

Since college days, Lowell Dunham, former FBI agent and professor of modern languages at O.U., has maintained an interest in and friendship with Latin Americans. He has proved to be

# A Good Neighbor

BY BILL GOODNER, '52BA

There's a full-of-fun fellow over in Kaufman Hall whose life is a kaleidoscope of interesting experiences, colorful expressions, and a boundless zest for enjoying everything.

This teacher who takes such a wholesome delight in everyday living is Lowell Dunham, '32ba, '35ma, assistant professor of modern languages.

An example of how Dunham makes conversational capital happened in Bolivar, Missouri, in 1948. President Gallegos of Venezuela and President Truman met in Bolivar for the presentation of a statue of Simon Bolivar to the city. Dunham, who had translated and edited Gallegos' famous novel *Donna Barbara* for an American reader, was invited to the festivities. He was a guest of the presidential party and was seated on the speaker's stand about three rows behind President Truman and Gallegos.

Noticing an important looking man on his left, and judging from the amount of braid that he was a "big wheel" of some sort, Dunham decided to engage him in conversation.

"President Truman certainly looks in perfect health," he remarked casually.

"He is," came the emphatic reply. "His health is excellent," stated the man in uniform as he handed Dunham his card. It read: "Brigadier General Wallace Henry Graham, Physician to the President, Medical Corps United States Army.

Laughing about the incident Dunham said. "And I guess if anyone should know he should."

There's another interesting yarn leading up to Dunham's friendship with Gallegos.

While Lowell was a student at the University—majoring in languages—he struck up a friendship with Edmundo Luengo, '33bs, who is now Under Secretary of the Interior in Venezuela. Luengo was one of the first three Venezuelan students to study petroleum engineering at the University. The friendship soon developed into a Sooner Pan-American collaboration. Lowell

helped Edmundo with his English and Edmundo would lend an assist to Lowell with his Spanish. During the course of their Latin American confabs Edmundo interested Lowell in the works of two Venezuelan authors. Manuel Diaz Rodriguez, who pioneered in the psychological novel in Latin America and Romulo Gallegos, Venezuela's most distinguished man of letters.

When Dunham started work on his master's degree in Spanish he used as the subject of his thesis, *The Life and Works of Jose Diaz Rodriguez*. It was translated into Spanish and was published in serial form in *El Diario*, in Caracas, Venezuela and received many favorable reviews from leading magazines in that country.

In 1949 Dunham's work received the annual Andres Bello Literary Award presented by the government of Venezuela.

Embarking on his teaching career in 1935, Dunham taught Latin and Spanish at Idabel highschool. From 1936 through 1940 he was employed at Central State College, Edmond, as an instructor in French, Latin, Spanish and English. Also, he served as Principal of the Demonstration School for Central State College two and one-half years. During this time his friend Edmundo obtained for him the American rights to Gallego's novel *Donna Barbara* which was published in a school text edition in the fall of 1943.

Dunham decidedly doesn't favor the stereotyped movie version of a super sleuth or cloak and dagger man, but the record shows that he interrupted his teaching profession for five and one-half years to serve as a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Immediately prior to World War II the F.B.I. found itself confronted with the job of internal security and was badly in need of linguists.

Lowell's father attended a meeting called by the F.B.I. to organize the local law enforcement agencies and volunteered Lowell's services.

After the interviews were over, however,



WHEN HE ISN'T TEACHING CLASS Lowell Dunham can usually be found over at the library putting the finishing touches on his dissertation. Here he is shown working with the film reader. Translating Spanish writings for thesis purposes is a very tedious process.

Lowell was assigned to the bureau as a special agent in training. Finishing the required course in Washington, D. C., he graduated to the ranks—as Dunham says—as a “full-fledged six weeks wonder.”

During the course of two years, Dunham was stationed in Washington, D. C., Detroit, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri, and Houston, Texas. He was sent to Puerto Rico as an agent in March of 1942 and in January of '43 was promoted to assistant Special Agent in charge of the San Juan Field Division.

His duties there were manifold. Since there was only one other agent in the office who could speak Spanish, he had personal supervision over 44 hand picked Puerto Rican police. The police were given to the F.B.I. by the Puerto Rican government to assist with investigation where the regular bureau agents couldn't go wearing “Yankee faces.” Being one of the two agents speaking Spanish automatically brought him the burden of the Bureau's public relations job. He delivered lectures to Puerto Rican groups, organized police training clubs, served as a faculty member at the Police Academy, and handled the necessary correspondence in Spanish.

One of his babies while there was conducting the investigation of the Spanish Falange Party on the island. The Falange is the political party of General Franco and modeled after those of Hitler's and Mussolini's, employing both youth and women movements.

While in San Juan he struck up an acquaintance with Rexford Tugwell, governor of the island and one of President Roosevelt's braintrusters. They became fast friends. When Dunham started to leave the island in 1946, Tugwell offered him the post of Chief of the Puerto Rican Police. He considered it seriously but finally decided against it, ignoring the advice of a Texas agent who quipped, “Hell, Dunham, you should take that job and strut around with a couple of those gold mop cords on your shoulders.”

The Puerto Rican police also regretted to see Dunham leave and complimented him with a farewell banquet well spiced with fiery speeches and the gusto that is typical of Latin celebrations. They presented him with a gold watch—which Dunham proudly displays when he's in the watch wearing mood—finely inscribed “A. L. C. Dunham—De Sois Amigos Policia De P. R. (To L. C. Dunham—From His Friends the Police of Puerto Rico).”

Puerto Rico holds a grip on Dunham's sentiments. Probably his biggest achievement while on the island was his marriage to Frances Ranson, '37ma, Watonga. It



LOWELL DUNHAM, on the left, is shown conferring with the former president of the Republic of Venezuela, Gallegos. Dunham, who is working on his doctor's degree at U.C.L.A., is writing his dissertation on the life, work, and writings of the South American novelist.

seemed that the two Sooners were destined to turn into a family sleuthing team; Frances worked in the office of Naval Intelligence while they resided on the Island. Neither could carry tales home from work. Mrs. Dunham also had a fling in the literary world publishing a short story in *Colliers* and a poem in *Atlantic Monthly*. Her writing has sort of gone over the board to round out the third parallel of their joint interests. She is the critic teacher for English at the University Lab school which doesn't leave much time for literary ventures.

The chief reason Dunham declined the tempting police position in Puerto Rico was to return to his original profession. He resigned from the F.B.I. in September of '46 to accept an assistant professorship of modern languages at the University.

When pressed as to why he should leave a romantic profession to return to an academic one, Dunham flashed a quick smile and replied “why I just like to teach.”

At present Dunham is completing his work for his Doctor's degree in languages

through U.C.L.A. He attended that institution on leave from O.U. from 1948-1948. The topic of his doctor's dissertation is not a surprising one; it is a general study of the political ideas represented in the works and the life of Romulo Gallegos.

During the summer Dunham visited Gallegos in connection with his thesis. Gallegos is presently living in Mexico City, in exile from Venezuela, due to a military coup.

Gallegos is planning on returning the visit to Dunham the latter part of November or in early December and will probably speak to campus groups. However, Gallego's main purpose in visiting is to leave his 15-year-old son with Dunham to attend the University Lab school.

While in Puerto Rico, Dunham collected several paintings by Spanish artists who were in exile there. Another hobby of the language teacher provides a quiet contrast to his own lively manner—an impressive collection of saintly Madonnas. Any spare

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moment that Dunham now has, however, is devoted to the preparation of his dissertation.

Dunham's bustling personality probably accounts for why he is perpetually drifting into interesting incidents and why his students soon tag him for a friend as well as teacher.

A janitor in Kaufman Hall neatly summed up Dunham's pleasant impact on people. When asked if he knew Dunham and where his office was, the janitor leaned against his broom handle and said, "Yeah I know him. He's up on the second floor." Resuming his sweeping, he added, "Ya know, for a professor, he's a cheerful sort of a fellow."

## Faculty Loses Two

**Dr. Dowd Is Dead.** Professor Emeritus Jerome Dowd, 88, professor at the University of Oklahoma for 39 years, died August 12 in Norman of circulatory ailments.

Dowd came to O.U. in the autumn of 1906 as a specialist in the field of social work and retired from the faculty in 1945. While on the staff at O.U. he established the Departments of Sociology, Economics, Anthropology; the Schools of Journalism and Social Work, and the College of Business Administration.

He was both friend and teacher to thousands of students at the University during

his 39 years of teaching and was known as much for his wit as for his knowledge.

He was born March 18, 1864, in Carthage, North Carolina, attended grade school there and obtained his first degree, a master of arts, from Trinity college near Charlotte, in 1896.

Dowd was a member of the McFarlin Methodist church in Norman, the Rotary club, the American Anthropological Society, and Southwestern Political and Social Science association.

He also was the author of several books in the field of social sciences including his own biography, *Social Aspects of the Autobiography of a College Professor*.

His survivors include his wife, Alma, '12mus, of the home, one son, Jerome H., '43bus, of Oklahoma City; one daughter, Mrs. Jean Boylin, Charlotte, North Carolina, and one sister, Mrs. Nan Harding, also of Charlotte.

**Dr. Schmitt Killed.** Dr. Karl Schmitt, assistant professor of anthropology at the University, was killed and his wife seriously injured when their car and a Santa Fe railroad engine collided on a railroad spur near Magdalena, New Mexico, last August.

Their twin children, Sigrid and Karl Eric, 9, escaped injury.

Mrs. Schmitt suffered a dislocated hip and deep laceration of one leg and was confined to the hospital at Socorra, New Mexico.

Dr. Schmitt was driving west on Highway 60 when the locomotive suddenly

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