

## Charles C. Deam

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To present a short summary of the life of Charles C. Deam is almost impossible because his life covered so many years filled with so much activity. These remarks stem for the most part from the many letters that he wrote. That his letters portray the man is well illustrated by one received from him in 1946 while he was in Florida: "Last eve before I retired I took up the Journal of Forestry to scan its contents and after reading one or two articles, I was too sleepy to read more when I came to the obituaries. Well, I could not pass these because in them were some old-timers I knew. I kept busy reading them and at last I turned a page and my eye first caught my picture and I said to myself: 'My God is Deam dead too?' I was not sure if I was dead or dreaming. I stood up and then sat down and when I read the headline, I was oriented.

"Well, Dan, I wish to thank you very much for this publicity although I know I am not worthy. You know I am just a common old plug rooting around with the boys. I try my best to keep out of the road of others and be friends with all of 'em. Plenty of room in this world for all of us which Hitler learned too late. You surely were not aware of the paper shortage or you would not have asked the Editor of the Journal to waste two pages on me. I did learn one thing by the write-up and that is, you should be careful of what you write in letters. You quoted a whole lot of low down on me. Moral, be careful of what you write but this comes to me too late to profit by it. One thing is true, my letters truthfully reflect my character O. K. I am just plain Charley Deam and I never want anyone to think anything else. The fact is, I do take a semi-annual bath to keep clean and occasionally do change clothes to be respectable (wife's doin's), otherwise, I am just plain old Charley Deam. I hope my life suits some, at least."

Now for an account of his life which began in Wells County, Indiana on August 30, 1865. To a friend he wrote, "I was born in 1865 two miles up the river from here. I grew up on a farm. I broke new ground when I was 13 and split rails for 120 rods of fence. My life was mostly work with an occasional day off because of a squirrel hunting desire that my father possessed."

After graduating from Bluffton High School he took a job teaching school. Of this experience he reports, "Three of the teachers had been thrown out before I came. I had to lick two boys who were bigger than I was. I licked four of them before I was done but I stayed."

Then came his two years at DePauw University. As he records it, "I ran out of money and so I quit college. Then, too, it took too much time." He did join a social fraternity, Delta Upsilon. In a letter written in 1952 to the widow of one of his fraternity brothers he expressed himself as follows: "It is hard to say an everlasting good-bye to an acquaintance, fraternity brother and classmate of 64 years. I will try to share your sorrow."

He started his career as a druggist in 1891 when he took a job clerking in a Bluffton drugstore. Of this he wrote, "I was able to save \$80.00 in two years. During those years, I budgeted myself to spend 15 cents a week for Sunday School and church, 50 cents for foreign missions and \$1 for something to read."

His purchase of a drugstore came about in a very unusual manner while he was a clerk in a Kokomo drugstore. His boss had the habit of standing in the doorway of his store, advertising the fact that his business was bad. Deam told him he shouldn't do it. One day, when Deam was out of the store, the owner and a salesman stood in the doorway talking. When the owner saw Deam approaching, he said, "Oh, I have to get out of the doorway. Charley Deam won't let me stand here." The salesman took an interest in this unusual clerk. Later he set Deam up in a Bluffton drugstore.

Of his early days as a business man he wrote, "I began business here in 1891 when the town had sixteen saloons, two houses of ill fame, one floor of gambling, one policeman, and one night watchman. Those days, we put a drunk out on the street with a ball and chain to his leg to crack rocks. Things were quite different than they are today. How things have changed since I went into business! We carried out the showcases to the sidewalk and scrubbed the floor every Friday night. Later, I was the first one to put linoleum on the floor. I was the first to give a clerk a week's vacation with pay. This sounds good to the clerks but the fascists may hang me. May the third of this year (1952), I shall celebrate my 60th year in business. While I have not been active in the store, I am as proud or prouder of being a conscientious pharmacist than anything I have ever worked at. What a pleasure and honor it is to be an intelligent, conscientious, obliging merchant. These three qualifications are or should be 'musts' in business."

During his long career as a druggist, he published Deam's almanac. A complete file, covering 32 years, has been given to the State Historical Society. The almanac is really a historical account of the early years of the drug business.

Deam fell ill from too long hours in his drugstore and too late hours studying, arguing, and debating with friends. Doctors advised him to get outside and so he began his outdoor walks. He wasn't content to just walk, so he began to study vegetation. When asked about his early botanical interest he said, "I had a buddy by the name of Bruce Williamson. He is in the largest part responsible for my life work. I was much older than he but I was about the only one available to go with him. We were together on two trips to Guatemala. Those were the days when I owned a drug-store."

An excellent summary of his early travels and other activities is contained in a letter written in December, 1951: "I was in the drug business and behind the counter 20 years and man, how I did work—like an idiot. Well, by the second year, my health broke and then I spent a vacation of seven weeks in Florida. I made a success of the retail drug business. In 1893 I married and in 1894 we vacationed in Florida. I had learned one must vacation to put in as many hours as I did. I was trying

to live on 4-6 hours sleep. This can be done but few people can take it and then only for a limited time. Since then, I take plenty time off but it is in the field.

"I was about 30 when I quit going to church and Sunday School. I knew more about the Bible, etc., than my teacher and I learned nothing so I just quit. Now, I go nowhere but to the woods and funerals.

I did make a few long field trips—to Mexico in 1896 and 1900 and to Guatemala in 1904 and 1909, each for three months. I made three trips to the Tennessee Highlands. I have botanized in every one of the 1,016 Indiana townships. So you see I have licked a lot of mosquitoes, picked up enough ticks to tell stories. I am deathly afraid of snakes so I first scan the field for reptiles and then plants."

That account gives a picture of his botanical and travel activities as well as revealing his fear of snakes.

A whole book could be written about his forestry activities which began with his appointment as State Forester in 1909 when Governor Thomas Marshall called Deam and asked him to accept the appointment. He told the Governor he was too busy in his store and could not accept. His friends in Bluffton who had been instrumental in having Deam appointed learned of his refusal and persuaded him to reconsider. Shortly afterwards, he was made State Forester. Deam relates that, "I went to Indianapolis. All the Governor did was to ask me if I was a Democrat. I didn't know I was State Forester until I returned to Bluffton where they put on quite a celebration." This wasn't the only time the people of Bluffton put on a celebration for him. Regarding one that was held in his honor in 1940, he wrote to me, "Think you know the business men here are giving me a testimonial dinner on October 27. You are invited and I want you to be here. You see they had this dinner brewing a month before I knew anything about it. The first I knew about it was when I read it in the paper. I was paralyzed but it had gone so far I could not get out of it so I am the ram led to the slaughter. Wish me good luck by coming over. Dean Coulter will be our guest and whoever he brings along. Since the affair is pulled, I want as many of my friends here as possible. Remember your invitation includes as many as you wish to bring. All you have to do is to keep your mouth shut and do not tell any mean things or shortcomings of mine. I do not wish to be debunked before the crowd. Otherwise, no limitations. All you have to do is to look wise and be still."

In 1943, when he was invited to join a group attending a forestry meeting in Michigan, he replied, "I regret to inform you that I must decline your invitation, principally because I am not physically able to make the trip. Secondly, I have been smoked out already too many times. Then, I can no longer hear a speaker in a crowd. Again, the meeting seems to be held so the group can see a football game which I do not attend. . . . I sure would like again to see old faces and the new ones as well but I would have to pay too dearly for the opportunity. Wife says the trip will kill me and the fact is, I cannot stand but one such experience."

In this letter and many others, he reveals his dislikes of smoking and

athletics. As early as 1911, he wrote in one of his diaries: "Today, I saw a young man pick up a playing card that was lying on the sidewalk, which many a passerby had stepped upon. He was smoking a cigarette."

In this same diary on May 22, 1911, he writes, "Stopped at Hovey Lake in Posey County with a Mr. Weatherford which reminded me of 'old times.' The 'spare bed' was in the 'front room,' the floor was carpeted with the old hand woven carpet. The walls were papered and decorated with two enlarged pictures of deceased relatives. The room was furnished with a few chairs and a bureau on which was the photo of 'Tom Thumb and his wife.' Under the bureau was a small yellow chamber. On the floor in the corner was the family Bible. The bed had the old style large pillows with the red embroidered pillow cases." Apparently, his observations were not confined wholly to botanical fields.

His early experiences in forestry work in Indiana were interestingly summarized thus, "When I assumed the job of secretary of Indiana forestry in 1909, I was the boss and all hands with a so-called stenographer thrown in. Throughout my term of office, I kept a record of the first and second class mail I received each day and for that which was sent out. My recollection now is that the first week in office I received three letters, no second class mail. This lowly beginning reminds me of the anthropological finding that our modern horse's ancestor was a real miniature animal. We should be proud that the work in forestry is growing in Indiana."

Politics came into his activities as State Forester in 1912. A letter sent to him contained the following request, "Will you please be kind enough to prepare a list of the ladies of democratic families who are working in your office and mail to me at your earliest opportunity?" Deam's reply was, "I have your letter asking for a list of the ladies of this office whose parents are democrats. I do not know the purpose of such an inquiry and beg to learn if this is official business. I have never made inquiries of the politics of the parents of our stenographers but if by law, I am compelled to do so I shall proceed at once to make the necessary inquiry. If this is political business, I cannot regard your letter other than an impudent one." Apparently, it must have been political but Deam did not carry out the request.

Even in those early days the planting of trees on the stripped coal lands came to his attention. When asked to consider the problem one of his responsibilities, he replied, "I had enough to do without following them with a shovel and rake leveling the ground. They soon found out that only a level terrain would suit me."

He always took a very active interest in forestry affairs and was keenly interested in Indiana's forestry problems. An article in the Indianapolis Star in 1943 prompted him to write to me about the U. S. Forest Service. This letter not only gives an insight into his thinking but is an historical gem: "Well you may not know it but I have never been favorable to the U. S. Forest Service getting into Indiana. I fought them off while I was in office and they still would be out of Indiana if I had my way. I know I am prejudiced but it all came about in a natural way, too long to write here. I recall that one of the very first U. S. Foresters to call on me (cannot now just recall his name), but I met him

at the Clark County State Forest. When he got off the traction line car, he swaggered over to me with a brief case. You may be old enough to recall when 'dandies' and the 'uppercrust' made themselves conspicuous when the tooth brush came into existence. Then they would carry a tooth brush in their vest pockets, especially to church, etc. Later another badge of distinction came in (the fountain pen). Then we had to save our money to buy one, probably about a dollar. Sometimes, the high toned would have a tooth brush and a fountain pen. Then came the brief case (the modern carpet bag). Every guy of authority presented himself behind a brief case. Well, I detoured a little but that guy who came to see me at Clark County Forest had rings in his ears and one in his nose. He told me he had hayfever. Too bad he did not know enough not to be led by this superstition. We walked up thru the 'park' and when we came to a catalpa tree, he asked what kind of a tree it was. Then I was through. I soon found out while I knew nothing about forestry I was to teach him. Others of his like came. . . . I once called on the Chief Forester. While I was a caller, he sat at his desk with his number 10 feet on top of the desk and he leaned back in a swivel chair and smoked a pipe. He had a half gallon jar of tobacco on his table. Well, you know me as well as anyone. I am no sport but I do and always have had the sense and dignity to receive a State Forester with the dignity that the occasion demanded. When I was in office I always ceremoniously received everyone with as much courtesy and dignity as I could. I still believe in that, especially when people are strange to you. Of course, I would not now expect you to apply such rigid rules to me. But to be brief, I had no use for the Super Service. I know that the U. S. Service has a lot of very highest grade men."

One who understood, can appreciate Deam's attitude toward the Forest Service because it seemed as if most of his official dealings were with those who smoked—a thing which he always disliked and one of the things by which he judged people.

That he was an independent thinker who possessed a very keen sense of humor, as well as being an unusual person with some queer notions and one who was a great influence on those who worked with him, can best be summarized by a series of quotations from his letters.

To one of his friends, he wrote, "I have your letter and I am glad to learn you are still making trouble on the face of the earth."

A request to another: "Will you please bring me \$2.00 worth of gold fish, assorted sizes? Our town does not sell them. I'd prefer to have them delivered alive."

"The honey came yesterday. What am I going to do with you? I am already deeply indebted to you and here again you add to my debt. I told the Mrs. that I was going to send you a check but she said no. I take her intuition for horse sense and just say thank you."

"I don't give a rap what happens or how I look. I dress to please the Mrs.—and shave so I will not be mistaken for a dog and be shot. Wife is also a legislator. I just got orders to wear my teeth all the time. I have been in the habit of resting them to avoid constant irritation. Maybe I can violate the edict to some extent. These darned teeth irritate me. You

know some people do play solos with their teeth much to the disgust of the audience. I guess that is my problem to make a noise with them *so low* as not to be heard. Here's hoping!

"My eyes are about out. I go tomorrow to see the oculist to see if anything can be done. There are two loads of manure just hauled in and I will now go out and toss it about. Guess this will not hurt my eyes as much as my muscles." This was written when he was 83 years old.

To one who sent him some tree seedlings for his arboretum he wrote: "Seedlings came in excellent condition and planting conditions fine. I did the job myself with my little spade. I heard one little seedling say, 'I'm glad they sent me to Deam because if I had been sent to some farmer, I would be sawed up when I reached my prime but they tell me Deam will keep me until I die and he will provide me an old age pension.'"

Many were his comments on the planting of multiflora rose. Here is one of them, "I understand they are strongly recommending now that all the old cemeteries be planted with multiflora rose. When Gabriel sounds his horn I am afraid some will be stranded and not be able to get thru the roses. Please do not recommend the multiflora rose except for the bonfire."

This next quote fits the present because it was addressed to Professor Kinsey. "Yes, I remember the time you compared me to an insect and tried to make me believe that the insect knew more than I did. I am now getting so old that I have no mind so I guess you win. In the meantime, we are all anxiously awaiting that 'Girl Book' you are working on."

Many were those who wrote to him about plant materials and published information on plants. His opinions were usually frankly and interestingly worded. After receiving a letter from a botanist who commented on Muenscher's new book, Deam answered, "You know one of the difficult things to do is to think and not let your prejudice influence you. I, personally, do not like him. It seems to me that the book is a most excellent one. So far, I have only one criticism, that is, omissions. I can't think that was ignorance on his part but just pure damned egotism. I think it might be well for somebody to dress him up a bit, and put the old boy where he belongs."

A friend wrote to him about Fernald's death and this is a part of his reply, "We have had great botanists in these United States but in my estimation Dr. Fernald was the greatest of all. Do not expect everyone to accept his findings. This would make him perfect, which he doubtless would repudiate. His general sin was being conservative."

Shortly after the new Gray's Manual was published, three botanists visited Deam. About this visit he wrote, "This week I had as guests, Professors McFarland, Steyermark and Swink. I regret their visit was short so we did not prune up Fernald the way we wanted."

In another letter he comments, "I confess I have not been able to study the Gray Manual very much. You already know I am a darned fool on a lot of this 'hooey' botanical names. I have permanently put the hyphens in moth balls. I, at present, am fluctuating between high and low blood pressure and when I read the Gray Manual, 'calyx-lobes' my blood begins to boil. Do not misconstrue me—I think the world of Fer-

nald and I admire conservatism but it must not be tied to ignorance. I cannot understand why Fernald uses the hyphen between the words just mentioned but not to use it between like words."

This last quotation about hyphens illustrates one of his own problems in the revision of "Trees of Indiana." Prior to 1944 he discussed with me the revision which he had already started. However, in November, 1944, he wrote, "I have given up the revision because of my health" and then this long letter contained details of what he intended to do. Later he wrote, "All I can say is that I am going ahead as fast as I can but my first effort is going to be to revise and bring to date all that I have written."

That he had many physical and mental problems during the time that he wrote the "Trees of Indiana" is well illustrated in one letter,— "Guess I will quit writing on forestry and start to write political platforms, that is where you write something and nobody knows what it is about. Now here is what I had in mind. Let botanical authors publish their writings in recognized botanical magazines and not hide them in some obscure journal and be overlooked and in a hundred years we may have a new name."

When the manuscript on Trees was completed and sent to Indianapolis, his desires to have the material correctly printed are shown in his letter of instructions which contains the following: "I write you this note as a suggestion and stimulus to meet the printer when you present the galley proof to him with the numerous corrections to be made but do not let them talk you out of making them. . . . It is not necessary for me to point out errors all of which you know better than I do. I am surely much pleased to learn that I have such an able helper. The Lord knows I am in the lower brackets when it comes to publication but I do have some ideas of my own which I hope I may realize on." An appeal to secure action on printing the tree book is well stated when he said, "For my sake, please hasten the appearance of the proof and God will take care of the other items."

To one who had written to him about his revision, he replied, "I call your attention to some of the major novelties for fear I shall not be here when the book is published, if ever."

His realization of his limitations are contained in one of his letters of warning: "I have warned you that my health is going fast (at 87 years of age). Remember I still have the index to write after I get the page proof and my brain does not function as it did when I was fifty years old."

Deam liked to get out in the fields and woods to study plants. One of his letters about a field trip begins, "You are hereby subpoenaed to appear at Bluffton, Indiana on or before August 28 to act as chauffeur for a decrepit old man who wishes to collect *Helianthus*." He also expressed his desire to get to the woods thus: "I feel like never going to the woods again. But my desire to get out seems to be perennial and as soon as I feel better I want to go to southwest Indiana. But the date is so far in the future that it is now only a dream. I make no engagements for the

distant future. I am always glad to get out to the woods. I wish I could stay there and have my meals brought to me."

With advancing years Deam became very much concerned about his health. He expressed this concern in some very unusual ways. In 1951 he wrote, "I regret to inform you that I am down and out. Tuesday, I spent \$33.50 at the hospital. They gave me a blood transfusion and said I would feel like a fighting rooster. I misinterpreted this because I feel like a rooster that was all pecked to pieces. I am very weak and can scarcely walk. Fortunately, I do not have a pain or ache. After being examined at the hospital for everything except ingrown toe nails, they say I am suffering from nutritional anemia." In another letter, he says, "Old Man Deam is about to pass on. My health is very bad. I have run out of gas. I fatigue very quickly and too my cerebral hemorrhage (parlor name for stroke), last July affects me very much. Too, my eyes are weak and I miss them very much."

An interesting description of his physical condition and growing old was written by him in 1950: "The material in our arboretum (most of it) is now old enough to vote. I know you will be surprised to see how fast it has grown and how Deam has grown old." In spite of his failing health he continued his botanical work and tried to keep in touch with those who had an interest in plants. He was very much interested in the Indiana Academy of Science. That he wanted to attend the meetings is expressed in a letter written several months prior to the 1950 meeting. "It is humiliating and irritating to go some place with a 'tar bucket' hanging on the coupling pole. Here is the same old tarbucket but in bad shape. Just received notice of meeting of Indiana Academy of Science and I am depending upon you to transport me. I can go and return any time. Now, I ask you to fill in the enclosed blanks to suit your convenience. For my meals I take fish but damn the haddock. We should be at the evening meal. As to bed, I do not care where except that I must sleep. Will you please remit for me and take chances that I will not forget it?"

Many more interesting and descriptive quotations could be given. They would help to characterize him as a man who was a keen observer, an accurate recorder, a true scientist possessing an unusual mind, a keen sense of humor and a faculty for growing old—gracefully.

The shortest letter that I ever received from Deam will serve as my summary. In February, 1952 he wrote, "Your letter of January 22 is received. I have nothing to write only to tell you that I love you still." The last four words of that letter express my own feeling for our departed friend, Charlie Deam.