

Son of Transylvania Family Is One of Country's Foremost Investigators In Unusual Field

Homer E. Whitmire, Son of Mr. and Mrs. Jordan Whitmire, Has Become Recognized Authority On Non-Poisonous Insecticides.

(By Wm. G. Moore)

ST. LOUIS, Mo., Aug. 10—"Local Boy Makes Good"—a familiar line, but, unfortunately, one that seldom holds true among the boys who grow up, leave the homes where they were born and go out into the world to take a pot-shot or two at Lady Luck.

Brevard has one son, however, who is thoroughly deserving of the phrase, for Homer E. Whitmire, son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Jordan Whitmire of the French Broad section, is making good on a scale that seems to promise nothing but success and well being for the future. At the present time he is one of the country's foremost investigators in the comparatively new field of non-poisonous insecticide chemistry.

"Destruction is my business," said Mr. Whitmire when interviewed in the small laboratory in St. Louis, Missouri, where he began his real work with insecticides—a laboratory that has since been replaced by a new three-story building, equipped with the latest in research, manufacturing, and packaging equipment.

Insects Raised for Testing Purposes

"I raise 'em, and I kill 'em—the whole process from birth to death takes place right here. C'mere, I'll show you." He led the way into a small, dark room filled with hot clammy air, and turned on a light. There on shelves were glass jars carefully labeled and filled with insects of every kind. Roaches in this one; bedbugs over there; the maggot-like creatures were carpet beetles, he explained, and down below there are the flies and mosquitoes. "This insures us a plentiful supply of whatever we need," he explained. "Now, I'll show you how we test them in the death chamber."

Carefully lifting the lid of one of the jars, he permitted a number of flies to escape into a screened box with a sliding door. Then he went out into another room. In the center of this was a large wooden box about six feet tall around, with windows in the sides. "This," he said, "is the death chamber. Now watch."

Action in the Death Chamber

First, he released the flies into the trap and let them fly around for a minute or two, and then suddenly from a nozzle protruding into the trap from above, he shot a powerful spray of insecticide. The effect on the flies was instantaneous. Most of them dropped to the floor immediately and lay still. A few took longer to fall, and then lay there, kicking and squirming. Inside of ten minutes, there was no motion in the box at all. "You see?" he said. "That's why we call it the death chamber."

"We put the flies or whatever insect

is being tested in here. The temperature is always 85 degrees, and the humidity is 45. Twelve cubic centimeters of spray are used, and we note the number of flies overcome at the end of five minutes, ten minutes, and so on. Then at the end of twenty-four hours a count is taken of all dead flies, live ones, if any, and moribund flies and thus the efficiency of the spray is determined.

(Moribund insects are those which are alive but cannot walk, eat or perform any of the normal living functions with the exception of breathing. Moribund insects die in a short time.)

A Discovery By Means of the "Hot Walk"

Up to the recent time it was thought necessary that the insecticide come in direct contact with the body of the insect before it would take any effect. One of Mr. Whitmire's discoveries, however, has revealed the fact that the spray will do the job equally well even though it comes in contact with the legs of the insects only. The experiment which proved this and which has been confirmed by such men as Dr. R. C. Roark, chief of the United States Bureau of Insecticidal Chemical Research, and Dr. J. J. Davis, entomology chief of the University of Purdue's agricultural station at Lafayette, Indiana, was simple enough.

"Simple enough is right," said Mr. Whitmire. "Watch." Going back to his fly hatchery once again, he let a number loose in a small wire cage. Then he painted the strip down the top of the cage with his insecticide. "We call this the 'hot walk,'" he explained.

"Tear Gas" for Insects

For a while the flies buzzed around. Finally one landed on the "hot walk." He walked along for a few seconds, then fell suddenly to the floor of the cage. In another few seconds two more flies came. The same thing happened. They would walk along the painted strip, seemingly in the best of health—then suddenly would drop and fall to the bottom of the cage to move no more. A few remained in the moribund state for a few minutes, but eventually these died too. "That's all there is to it," said Mr. Whitmire. "The poison paralyzes the nerves and muscles in their legs and is probably inhaled through the pores as well. In a few minutes the fly is dead."

Mr. Whitmire's second discovery is that of Azofumid, a kind of insect "tear gas." This chemical which was discovered and developed by Mr. Whitmire has the faculty of giving off vapors that are poisonous to insects but harmless to human beings. Combined with other chemicals, it acts much in the manner of tear gas on human beings and makes possible an extremely efficient repellent-type insect spray.

It has been definitely established that one spraying of cattle or other livestock early in the morning is enough to keep insects off all day. The Shell Petroleum Corporation has the exclusive rights to this chemical, according to Mr. Whitmire, and it forms the chief ingredient in their Shell livestock spray.

Insecticide Formulas A Closely Guarded Secret

Although much is known about the methods of developing insecticides, little can be said about the actual contents, for these are generally trade secrets, and each manufacturer has his own formula. In the case of the Whitmire Research Corporation, only the basic substance in insecticide is manufactured—a substance known only by the general class of compound to which it belongs—the rothoreals. This is then sold to large commercial producers who blend it with lethane, thio-cyanates, and other chemicals, according to their different formulas.

Exactly what this base contains is a rather closely guarded secret. We do know that up to the present time one of the main ingredients in insecticide basis has been a product called pyrethrum which comes from a chrysanthemum-like flower in Japan and is shipped to this country to be blended into

Society News and Club Activities

ST. PHILIP'S BOOK TEA TO BE EVENT OF TUESDAY AFTERNOON

A book tea sponsored by the Guild of St. Philip's Episcopal church will be held Tuesday afternoon from 3 to 5 o'clock at the home of Mrs. G. B. Lynch on S. Caldwell avenue. An apron sale will also be a feature of the event.

The nominal admission charge will entitle the purchaser to refreshments and choice of a book. The public is invited.

TEA HONORS VISITOR HERE

Mrs. Jack Trantham was hostess at a lovely tea Friday afternoon at her home on Jordan street, entertaining in honor of Mrs. J. F. Winton, of Slater, Mo., who was guest of her sister, Mrs. Anthony Trantham.

Summer flowers in pretty arrangement decorated the rooms. A pleasant time was spent in social conversation, giving the honor guest an opportunity to renew former friendships and to meet new friends. A fruit drink, sandwiches and cake were served during the afternoon.

KIWANIANS ENJOY DINNER MEETING

Members of the board of directors of Brevard Kiwanis were entertained with a dinner Thursday evening at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Fred Zachary.

Mrs. Zachary, and Miss Lillian Zachary served a tempting dinner to the following guests: Dr. E. J. Coltrane, John Bennett, Dr. Harry Bradley, C. M. Douglas, Rev. Yancey C. Elliott, Julian Glazener, Rev. Charles Jones, Professor J. B. Jones, R. T. Kimzey, Harry Sellers, and Dr. Zachary.

Following the dinner, matters of business were taken up, including the possibility of establishing a student loan fund for worthy Brevard College students. The question will be presented to the club at its meeting Thursday of this week.

GARDEN CLUB MEETING POSTPONED A WEEK

The August meeting of the Garden club has been postponed from the regular date on the third Friday to Friday afternoon, August 26. The change in date was made necessary due to the absence from town of the president, Mrs. Pat Kimzey.

HOMEMAKERS CLASS MEETS TUESDAY AFTERNOON

Announcement has been made of the meeting of the Homemakers class of the Baptist church, which will be held Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock at the home of Mrs. John Ashworth.

Insecticide formulas. Chief advantages of this, according to chemists, is its ability to strike insects down quickly. Chief disadvantages is the fact that after being sprayed with it, a high percent of the insects recover at the end of twenty-four hours. In other words, its effect is not permanent unless used in highly concentrated quantities, and this is impossible because of its high cost.

Chemicals which Mr. Whitmire has been working with for some time now seem to point to a basic ingredient that will "knock down" insects like pyrethrum, and most important of all, kill them. Another great advantage of this new discovery is that it will cost no more than the Japanese product. Particular emphasis has been given to work along this line by the war in China, which has caused the price of pyrethrum to rise tremendously in the past year.

With the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy and a diploma in Pharmaceutical Chemistry, as well, Mr. Whitmire (really Doctor Whitmire) is well fitted for his work, both by training and inclination. After attending Mars Hill College at Mars Hill, North Carolina, and doing graduate work at the University of North Carolina which led to his receiving these two degrees, he worked for some time in the research laboratories of the Vick Chemical Company at Greensboro, North Carolina.

Set Up His Own Laboratory
Then he went to St. Louis where he was a member of the research staff of Purina Mills. All this time he was carrying on research in insecticides as a hobby on the side, and, finally, four years ago, he left Purina to set up his own research laboratory in a little two-story building with one man as his assistant. Today, he has a new three-story structure complete with the latest equipment necessary for manufacturing and research, and he employs about fifty men, including a graduate entomologist and a number of mechanical and chemical engineers.

His commercial customers (for the Whitmire Research Corporation does not engage in retail trade) includes such widely known firms as the Shell Petroleum Corporation, the E. J. Prentiss Drug Company of New York, and the Dodge and Alcott Company, also of New York.

Back Home To Brevard
As a member of the National Standardization Bureau for Insecticide, Mr. Whitmire helps determine the standards which are adopted by the Government in its Federal Insecticide laws, a section of the National Pure Food and Drug Act.

But even an outstanding figure in the field of insecticidal chemistry can have a fly in his ointment. Mr. Whitmire misses his home and the friends he left in Brevard. Going Back? "You bet I am," he said. "I'm going to take a much needed vacation soon, and when I do, I'm going right back to those green hills around Brevard to my family and the people I've missed so long."

Editor's Note—The above story was written by Billy Moore, formerly news reporter for The Transylvania Times, but now with the publicity department of the Shell Petroleum Corporation.

METHODIST CIRCLES IN REGULAR MEETINGS

The August meetings of three circles of the Methodist church were held Thursday afternoon in the homes of members.

Mrs. E. J. Coltrane was hostess to the members of Circle No. 1. Following routine business, in charge of the chairman, Miss Alma Trowbridge, a chapter in the study book, "Women of the Bible," was reviewed by Mrs. J. B. Pickelsimer, telling interesting facts concerning Lydia. It was decided to hold the September meeting on the first Friday instead of Thursday to convenience the hostess, Mrs. J. D. McRae.

The members of Circle No. 2 met with Mrs. C. E. Buckner, who presided over the business transactions, as chairman, and led the devotionals. The program was in charge of Mrs. Cordia King and Mrs. Roscoe Nicholson.

The meeting of Circle No. 3 was held at the home of Mrs. J. L. Saltz, with the chairman Mrs. R. F. Mock, presiding. The Bible lesson study was conducted by the leader, Mrs. Harold Norwood, reviewing a chapter in the book of Ephesians.

Each hostess served refreshments at conclusion of the meetings.

O. E. S. OFFICIAL TO VISIT LOCAL CHAPTER

Mrs. Althea Brown, of Tarboro, worthy matron of the Eastern Star of North Carolina, will make an official visit to the local Pisgah chapter Tuesday afternoon. It is expected that other state officials will be present for the special meeting here.

SARAH TAYLOR PICNIC THURSDAY EVENING

Members of the Sarah Taylor circle of the Methodist church will meet at the home of Mrs. Oliver Orr in Forest Hills Thursday evening of this week at 6 o'clock for a picnic supper. Mrs. Ernest Boys will be assistant hostess with Mrs. Orr.

DAUGHTERS WESLEY CLASS MET TUESDAY EVENING

The August business and social meeting of the Daughters of Wesley class of the Methodist Sunday school was held Tuesday evening in the ladies' parlor.

Routine business in charge of the president, Mrs. E. S. English, was followed by a social feature. Watermelon and cantaloupe were served by the three hostesses, Mrs. J. B. Pickelsimer, Mrs. L. K. Ratchford and Miss Alma Trowbridge.

PRESBYTERIAN CIRCLES HAVE AUGUST MEETINGS

The August meetings of the three circles of the Presbyterian church were held Thursday afternoon and evening. The meeting of Circle No. 1 was held at the Davidson River church, conducted by the chairman, Mrs. Frank Patton. The meeting opened with prayer by Mrs. Arthur Foulkes, and a program on service opportunities was led by Mrs. T. E. Patton, Jr. The two hostesses, Mrs. Foulkes and Mrs. Clarence Allison, served refreshments at conclusion of the meeting.

Mrs. C. D. Brown was hostess to the members of Circle No. 2 at her home. The chairman, Mrs. C. L. Newland, presided over the routine business, and Mrs. Willis Brittain conducted the program. Devotionals were led by Mrs. E. W. Blythe.

Circle No. 3 met at the hut, with the chairman, Mrs. M. M. Feaster, conducting the business transactions. The program discussion was led by Miss Julia Wood.

Each of the meetings concluded with light refreshments.

Little Monte Carlo Helping Building Program For Schools

Deputy Sheriff Buck McCall used good judgment last Friday afternoon when he took four extra officers along with him to arrest "two defenseless women" down below Penrose.

Armed with a search warrant and one which set out a rigamarole about "operating a general nuisance against the peace and dignity of the state," Deputy McCall and his party called at "Little Monte Carlo," and after a war that was not much different from breaking the Hindenburg Line in '18, managed to "bring 'em back" alive, and two of the county's enterprising "business ladies" rested securely behind the criss-cross windows of the McCall Hotel just in the rear of the court house.

Professor J. B. Jones now has an extra \$100 which the defendants put up as cash bond when they decided that they were sober enough to get out of jail, and finally came sufficiently to their senses to pack their belongings in an automobile and head west for more "wide open" spaces where sheriffs, highway patrolmen, and police officers are less stringent on just what sort of business shall and shall not operate.

The "ladies" did not tell from whence they came, and they left no forwarding address when they left—but Chief Freeman can tell you that they added a lot of new words to the dictionary, but the new words are such that they can't be printed in The Times.

The community probably made two enemies out of the deal—as the same parties were "closed out" a couple weeks ago by Sheriff Shuford after they had started operations up at Laurel Cabins on the Rosman highway—then they had insult added to injury when they were forced to relinquish their "exclusive tea room" down on the Hendersonville road.

BLACK CARDBOARD 10c AT THE TIMES OFFICE

LOCAL GIRL WINNER IN ART CONTEST

Miss Josephine Ramsey has been notified that she is winner of a cash prize in a contest of "The Captains" a club of amateur artists and journalists sponsored by Cargo, a Methodist Sunday school publication, of Nashville, Tenn. Miss Ramsey's contribution was an original drawing which will appear in the October 2nd edition of Cargo.

In addition to the cash award, Miss Ramsey was presented with a club pin and membership card, entitling her to active membership in The Captains club. Miss Ramsey is an art pupil of W. H. Oliver.

INTERESTING PROGRAM AT ST. PHILIP'S AUXILIARY

The August meeting of St. Philip's Auxiliary and Guild was held Thursday afternoon at Silvermont, the home of the hostess, Mrs. J. S. Silversteen.

The president of the Auxiliary, Mrs. David Ward, led the devotional portion of the opening, and welcomed the following guests: Mrs. Welziller, Mrs. Sullivan, Miss Smedberg, Mrs. Morgan, Misses Annis, Alcesta and Lyda Tulane. Routine business followed.

Mrs. Frank Sledge was program leader, and presented most interestingly two topics, "The Christian and War," and "America and World Peace." At conclusion of her discussion, there was a forum discussion of the subject.

Following the program, the meeting of St. Philip's Guild convened, with Mrs. Harry Bobst, vice president, in charge, in the absence of the president, Mrs. Frank Jenkins, who was ill. The most important business brought forth was the book tea to be held August 16 at the home of Mrs. G. B. Lynch. The following committees were appointed by the chairman: General arrangements, Mrs. Lynch, Mrs. T. D. Grimshaw, Miss Lillie Holcombe; books, Mrs. Harry Perry and Mrs. Ward; publicity, Mrs. J. M. Allison, Mrs. Harry Sellers.

At conclusion of the session, a delicious ice course was served and a social hour enjoyed.



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