



Gone Fishing!

The State of Idaho is known for more than its wonderful oats - the fishing is fabulous as well, as can be attested by the photo and certificate below! The documents were recently discovered in the USDA-ARS archives. Four of those in the photo laid the groundwork for much of the oat research and breeding being carried out today.



Frank Coffman
Pat Murphy
Gus Wiebe
Harland Stevens
Lee Briggie
Springfield Lake

Figure 1: Frank Coffman, H.C. (Pat) Murphy, Gus Wiebe, Harland Stevens, and Lee Briggie after a hard day's work fishing at Springfield Lake, Idaho.



To all who shall see these Presents, Greetings:

KNOW YE, that the undersigned do hereby and hereon individually and severally declare and affirm that the attached is a true, authentic and accurate photographic record of those participating therein and a certain portion of the zoological specimens of aquatic craniate vertebrates of the order Pices aquired thereby as the result of a carefully planned and scientifically conducted expedition for the explicit objective of the thorough study of the fauna and flora of the enirons contiguous to and included within the confines of the geologically igneous area known geographically as Springfield Lake, said lake being located in the County of Bingham, State of Idaho and in the United States of America.

We do further declare and affirm that said expedition was conducted on and between the hours of 5:01 and 13/60 P.M. and 9:43 and 7/60 P.M. (Standard Mountain Time) all within the fifth day of the eighth month, (August), in the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty Nine, A.D.

In full and complete confirmation of the above, without the least evasion or slightest equivocation whatsoever, we do individually and severally and in the presence of each other and of the witnesses signatory hereto affix our duly authorized signatures to wit:

Franklin A. Coffman
Harland W. Briggles

Harland W. Briggles
Franklin A. Coffman
H.C. Murphy

The above being sworn and subscribed to in my presence, the presence of each other and of the witnesses as shown on this the 23 day of the Feb month of the year 1960, I hereby attest to its authenticity by my signature James P. Bowley and further by authority vested in me do cause to be affixed hereto the great seal of the sovereign State of Satisfaction.

My commission expires forthwith.

Figure 2: Details concerning the aforementioned outing.

Frank Coffman was a principal agronomist at the USDA-ARS in Aberdeen, ID, and was “[known for his research achievements in winter oat improvement and in initiating uniform oat testing nurseries](#)”. (His obituary is [here](#).) Perhaps his best-known work is the book “[Oat History, Identification and Classification](#)”, published in 1977.

Harland Stevens was a senior research agronomist at USDA-ARS in Aberdeen, and was “[widely recognized for his work in growing small grains for researchers across the United States](#)”. Among other things, he co-authored “[Culture of Oats in the Western States](#)” with Frank Coffman and T.R. Stanton.

Lee Briggles was a research geneticist with the USDA-ARS. “[His research contributions \(were\) principally through breeding and genetic studies involved with disease resistance and end-use quality factors in wheat and oats.](#)” For example, he studied [the amino acid composition of oat groats](#).

H.C. (Pat) Murphy “[figured prominently in international oat research for developing disease resistant oat varieties and in spearheading programs to improve oat quality...He was first to](#)



screen the world oat collection for resistance to crown rust, one of the most destructive diseases of oats, and to establish a standard procedure for identifying pathogenic races of the crown rust fungus". (That paper is [here](#).)

Gus Wiebe worked on barley, not oats, but we'll forgive him for that!

Many similar fishing trips have been made by oat researchers visiting Aberdeen over the years. The great tragedy in all of this was Pat Murphy's death by drowning in 1968. More information can be found [in his obituary](#). This year marks the 50th anniversary of his death, which was [commemorated at the AOWC 2018 meeting in Seattle, WA](#).

-Charlene Wight, November, 2018