



Shades of Color at OAC, 1916-1921: The Untold Story of Palmer Patton

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Welcome and introduction

Upcoming Wikipedia Editathons in the Valley Library – Writing PNW African American History into Wikipedia – Feb. 28 2-5pm Autzen classroom; Writing PNW Women’s History into Wikipedia March 13 2-5 Autzen Classroom.

Thank NF, Charlene Alexander and Scott Vignos in OID for their suggestions, RLL for listening to my sometimes late night discoveries of new PP info or OSU student of color.

Over the next half hour or so, I would like to share with all of you the compelling story of Palmer Patton, a student and faculty member at Oregon Agricultural College between 1916 and 1921. This is not an ordinary story, yet one that probably not unique. It has considerable nuance in terms of racial identity at Oregon State and in the Northwest United States.

Patton’s story was garnered from sources here at OSU, from the archives of other universities with which Patton had a connection, resources from Ancestry.com, and the magic of digitized historic newspapers.

Carrie Halsell, 1926 OAC graduate



For more than twenty years, Oregon State University has celebrated Carrie Halsell as the university's first identified African-American graduate. That status was acknowledged in 1927 in *The Advocate*, Portland's African American newspaper in the 1920s and 1930s. She graduated in June 1926 with a degree in commerce, and went on to a long career in higher education, including service at multiple HBCUs. Halsell's memory and accomplishments were celebrated in 2002 with the naming of a new dormitory for her, Halsell Hall. Likewise, we celebrated William Tebeau, who was OSU's first identified male African American graduate in 1948 -- until the discovery of Patton -- with the naming of Tebeau Hall in September 2014. We will continue to remember and honor both Carrie Halsell and Bill Tebeau.

Palmer Patton's senior portrait,
1919 *Beaver* yearbook.



In the fall of 2018, most of you likely recall accounts of politicians and others having appeared in blackface during their high school or college years. This also sparked debate within higher education about blackface imagery in yearbooks, and how that should be interpreted and contextualized. I knew that some of the OSU yearbooks in the early part of the 20th century contained blackface images -- the 1919 yearbook in particular. I was leafing through that volume in order to refresh my memory of those lurid images, should there be questions about them. In the course of that review, I was struck by the image that we see here. My research over the past year has uncovered the story of an African American who graduated from OAC with not one, but two degrees, just a few years before Carrie Halsell and 30 years before Bill Tebeau. Palmer Patton attended OAC from 1916 to 1920, receiving bachelors and masters degrees in agriculture in 1918 and 1920 respectively. While working on his masters degree and shortly thereafter, he was considered to be a faculty member here, though on the research side of the academy. Therefore, Patton may also be considered OSU's first faculty member of color. What makes his story more intriguing is that he was probably bi-racial, and likely identified as white while at OAC and in subsequent professional positions with the federal government and Montana State College. He was a person of color who had success

navigating in predominantly or entirely white spaces. But at what cost?

- Living in Chicago
- Racial designation is Black
- Grandfather Jacob Jones' occupation is hostler (horsekeeper or stable man)
- Grandmother Isabella Elliott Jones is a housekeeper
- Patton's mother is listed being "at school"

[illegible]


Multiple sources indicate that Palmer Patton was born on October 1, 1893 in Bay City, Michigan. Bay City is north of Detroit, on Lake Huron. His mother, Isabella Jones, was born in Canada in the early 1870s. His mother's family moved back to the U.S. in the late 1870s, and in the 1880 census for Chicago, seen here, they are listed as black. I don't know why they moved to Canada -- it could have been to escape Jim Crow laws in the post Civil War United States. If they had been living in Chicago, it could have been because of the devastating fire in that city in 1871. Patton's maternal grandfather, Jacob Jones, was born in Maryland in the late 1830s and his grandmother, Isabella Elliott Jones, was from Pennsylvania.

We have virtually no information on Patton's father, other than he was originally from Tennessee. Patton's mother, Isabella Jones, took the Patton surname at some point.

Other records give us potential clues about Palmer Patton's father. There are military records for a Palmer Patton from Michigan who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. And a Palmer Patten (spelled en) who was white died in 1896 in a state asylum in Saginaw, Michigan, about 15 miles from Bay City. The asylum records indicate his birthplace as Canada.

1900 Census, Chicago

- Jones/Patton family on Chicago's south side in a racially mixed neighborhood; their race is listed as Black
- Palmer Patton was 6 years old
- Patton's mother's occupation is listed as school teacher; uncles are listed as a butler and paper hanger
- Grandfather is listed as a "pensioner"



TWELFTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES.
SCHEDULE No. 1.—POPULATION.

Enumeration District No. 1234567890
Sheet No. 1234567890

City of Chicago, Ill.
Ward of city, 1234567890

Enumerated by me on the 1st day of June, 1900, *John A. Jones*, Enumerator.

NAME	AGE	SEX	RACE	RELATION	INDUSTRY OR OCCUPATION	REMARKS	EDUCATION	PROPERTY	VALUE	REMARKS
Isabella Patton	35	F	Black	Wife	School teacher					
Robert Jones	45	M	Black	Uncle	Butler					
Jacob Jones	55	M	Black	Uncle	Paper hanger					
Isabella Jones	65	F	Black	Grandmother	Pensioner					
Palmer Patton	6	M	Black	Son						

Palmer Patton appears in the 1900 census, living in Chicago with his mother, Isabella Patton, two uncles, Robert Jones and Jacob Jones, and maternal grandparents Jacob and Isabella Jones. Their racial identifications are all listed as black. Their address was 6012 Ada Street, which is on Chicago's south side, apx. 3 miles west of Lake Michigan. Patton's mother is listed as a widow and whose occupation is a school teacher. Palmer Patton appears to have the extension Jr. next to his name, indicating that he was named for his father.

- Family included Palmer Patton (16 years old), his grandmother Isabella Elliott Jones, and uncle Robert Jones
- Their racial designation is Mulatto; they are the only people of color listed on this census sheet
- Uncle's occupation is railway clerk

[illegible]

Their race was listed as Mulatto, which may be an indication that multiple family members may have been lighter skinned. The only occupation listed is for his uncle, Robert Jones, who was working as a railway mail clerk.

6

Manual Arts High School,
Los Angeles, ca. 1915

Photo courtesy of the University of
Southern California Libraries and
the California Historical Society.

Palmer Patton graduated from this
school in February 1914. He was 20
years old.



According to Patton's OSU student record, he attended and graduated from Los Angeles's Manual Arts High School in February 1914. This was a relatively new school, having been established in 1910. It was just the third high school in Los Angeles, and today is the oldest LA high school still on its original site.

Left -- University Farm School track & field team
 Right -- Track team distance runners (Patton in center?)

1916 Agricola yearbook



On Distance Run

In 1915, Patton enrolled in the University of California's University Farm School – which is UC-Davis today. He attended for two semesters, studying agriculture. He was also a member of the school's track team, as documented by this photo in the school's 1916 yearbook. Notice the spelling of his surname. He participated in all five of the team's track meets that spring as a long distance runner.

Patton as a member of the University
Farm School Hort Club, Davis,
California, 1916

1916 *Agricola* yearbook



Patton was also a member of the Farm School's horticulture club.

At the end of the 1915-16 academic year, he transferred to Oregon Agriculture College. We don't know why he chose OAC – perhaps it was on the recommendation of a professor at the University Farm School. By 1916 OAC was well established as a leading agricultural school in the western U.S.

Corvallis's population would have been around 5,000 residents in 1916. Six years earlier, the 1910 census counted one African American resident in the city. Patton was entering to a community that was almost exclusively a white space.

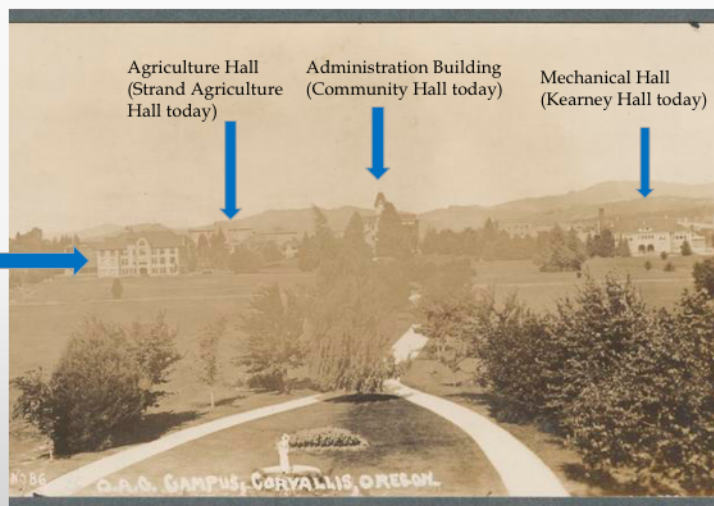
Southern Pacific Railroad
payroll for the Portland
Division, Dallas District,
July 1916

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY—Pacific System, To HONOR PERSONS, Inc.														
Maintenance of Way														
For Division located in the State of Oregon, under the direction of														
By Foreman Portland Division, on or at Dallas Dist. For this period Let's in Let's during the month of July 1916														
Line No.	Name	Position	Rate	Time	Rate	Time	Rate	Time	Rate	Time	Rate	Time	Rate	Time
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Prior to the start of classes at OAC in fall term 1916, Patton worked briefly that summer for the Southern Pacific Railroad in the Dallas, Oregon, district.

OAC campus looking west,
ca. 1915

Science Hall (Furman
Hall today)



This is generally how OAC looked when Palmer Patton entered OAC on July 21, 1916 as an advanced sophomore. He took summer session classes in 1916 and 1917 in addition to classes during the regular academic terms. He may have lived in Cauthorn Hall (now Fairbanks Hall) when he first arrived. OAC's enrollment for the fall of 1916 was 1,635 students.

Patton's course load included various agriculture and science related courses, as well as history and spanish. He also took courses in commerce and journalism. He was a good student – receiving mostly higher grades.

During his first year at OAC he took military drill and and a military instruction course. This was in the era when the U.S. military was segregated. And Oregon was still ten years from repealing the black exclusion laws in its constitution, even though they had been rendered unconstitutional by the passage of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1866.

Patton's classes would have been in Agriculture Hall, Science Hall, the Dairy Building, the Farm Mechanics Building, the Men's Gymnasium, and the Armory.

REGISTRATION CARD 43		No. 71
1	Name in full: <u>Palmer Patton</u>	Age in yrs: <u>23</u>
2	Address: <u>652 Jackson Corvallis Oregon</u>	
3	Date of birth: <u>Oct 1 1893</u>	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention to become a citizen? <u>A natural-born citizen</u>	
5	Where were you born? <u>Bay City Mich. U. S. A.</u>	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? <u>XXXXXXXXXX</u>	
7	What is your present occupation, occupation or office? <u>Also laborer in div. of veg. gardens. Student at the Oreg. State College, Department of Vegetable Gardening, Oregon State Agricultural College, Corvallis, Oregon.</u>	
8	Where were you employed? <u>Corvallis, Oregon.</u>	
9	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, totally dependent on you for support (specify which)? <u>No</u>	
10	Married or single (which)? <u>Single</u> Race (specify which)? <u>Caucasian</u>	
11	What military service have you had? Rank: <u>XXXXXX</u> Branch: <u>XXXXXX</u>	
12	Do you claim exemption (specify grounds)? <u>XXXXXXXXXX</u>	

I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.

Palmer Patton
(Signature of registrant)

REGISTRAR'S REPORT 36-2-1 "A"	
1	Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? <u>Medium</u> Slender, medium, or stout (which)? <u>Slender</u>
2	Color of eyes? <u>Gray</u> Color of hair? <u>Dark Brown</u> Hair? <u>No</u>
3	Has person had any, leg, hand, foot, or body parts, or is the otherwise disabled (specify)? <u>A case of chronic appendicitis due to injury by fall.</u>

I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:

J. R. Rogers
(Signature of registrar)

Resident: 11
City or County: Corvallis
State: Oregon Date of registration: June 6, 1917.

Patton's WWI military registration card, June 1917

Patton was 23 years old at the time. His race is identified as white.

During his first year at OAC, the United States entered the Great War -- what we now know as World War I. Shown here is Patton's military registration from June 1917. It includes his Corvallis address, occupation, and details of his physical appearance. Notice on the front (left side) portion of the card that his race is identified as Caucasian. This is the first indication that he identified as white.

Patton does not appear in the 1918 yearbook, which would have covered the 1916-17 academic year.

1919 *Beaver* Yearbook, page 257



Patton was involved with OAC's farm management club and held a leadership position. He was the "Keeper of the Records" for the Farm Management seminar in 1918.

Oregonian, January 20, 1918

Patton participated in constructing the farm management program's float for the OAC fair. The image accompanying the article was taken in front of the Armory (McAlexander Fieldhouse).

BETTER MANAGEMENT OF FARM AS BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IS BIG FACTOR TO SUCCESS

Application of Practical Methods is Demonstrated at Recent Agricultural Fair at Corvallis—Exhibits Give Valuable Lessons to Farmers.



McAlester will carry liberty to all the world if the farmer does not fail him.

Part of Farm Management Float at OAC Fair.

BY H. D. SCUDGIER,
Chief in Farm Management, O. A. C.

WITH the need for greatly increased production and the higher prices of machinery and other materials and the scarcity of labor, the farmer must use the wisest management methods to win the war with the crop and livestock industry of the farm today.

An answer to this question was given in a unique way by the students in farm management at the agricultural fair at Oregon Agricultural College during farmers' week.

"Yes," they said, "if farm management methods were used."

Farm management as a science in itself is something rather new, it seems. Farmers have directed all their efforts and study hitherto almost exclusively to better production methods, means of or outwitting the land for better management of the farm as a business enterprise, rather than as a producing concern. The same students, however, proceeded to demonstrate what farm management is and how vitally it affects the farmer's success.

Final Tractor Lesson.

In the farm management float which took first prize in the agricultural parade at the fair they showed how "Uncle Sam" can carry liberty to all the world if the farmer does not fail him; and that in turn the farmer

would not fail, even with most of present conditions, if he made proper utilization of the factors in management which make the farm successful. His own lively young Americans dressed in civilian dress, representing one of the important factors in farm management, carried a "liberty bell" over the float, carrying the farmer, Uncle Sam, and Liberty, toward success.

Of the last graduate, right in the front truck where the farmer is building for maximum production, they designed for the agriculture, rearing and instruction of the last fighting farmer to give him first aid in farm management and send him back to the farm with added strength for food production.

Inside "the last" the wheat farmer was shown how, by better management methods, to increase wheat production, get at the main time and work, and, in the end, to make the most of his farm labor in the use of machinery and other equipment, in the use of capital, methods of increasing the size and diversity of his growing crop—these and many other of the most important factors in successful farming were demonstrated in exhibits that told their own story. In a few minutes, however, the float and its various special features will be ready for the farmer, other good farm management

practices pertinent to the present situation were emphasized.

A display of the chief soil types of the state and a graphic sketch of their composition, value and management, together with the seeds for agricultural uses, rotations and fertilizers and, was shown.

The special features of the exhibit were, as demonstrated, management and farm management plan of a Williams Valley farm now actually undergoing the change from failure to success, one of many such plans advanced students in farm management are working upon.

The drifts, largely offered by the educational value, attractiveness, novelty, etc., was another fine farm management exhibit. The pages were in M. F. Plummer, of Portland, for many years a prominent figure in the livestock world and in educational circles; J. W. Brown, State Farm Labor Commissioner, former president of the Oregonian Congress, and himself an extensive grower, and W. H. Brown, of Corvallis, superintendent of the Breckhoff system of the State Fair and for many years, Benton County's high school principal.

The students during special credit for the strenuous work of preparing the winning exhibit were, L. A. Brown, Palmer Patton, R. H. Williams, Dr. Charles A. Hoffmann and H. D. Scudgier. "Uncle Sam" Liberty played the part of "liberty of Liberty."

Patton began to make his mark during his senior year with various activities of the farm management program. This article from the Oregonian in January 1918 includes mention of Patton as a contributor to the farm management program's participation in the OAC fair.

Article by Palmer Patton in the May 1918 edition of *The Oregon Countryman*. The monthly journal was published by students and faculty in OAC's School of Agriculture.

326 THE OREGON COUNTRYMAN

The Farm Manager

Edited by E. E. Radcliffe

WASTE OF PRODUCTIVE LAND IN INEFFICIENT FENCING

By Palmer Patton

One of the principles underlying successful farm management is the efficient utilization of farm land. The percentage of land cropped has a direct effect naturally on the labor income. Farm management surveys show that those farms having the highest incomes nearly always have the highest percentages of total area in crops.

One of the greatest wasters of productive land is found in the type of fence used on the average farm. The following table compares the land wasted by fences of different types where tillage is carried as close as possible to the fence:

Kind of fence	Av. width of untitled land to waste 1 acre	No. of rods
Barbed wire	5 ft. 7 in.	437
Woven wire	5 ft. 10 in.	450
Board	7 ft. 6 in.	335
Worm rail	12 ft. 4 in.	214
Brushgreen	18 to 20 ft.	

The greatest offender in land wasting is the worm rail fence and that type of fence is most prevalent in Oregon. This fence, as is seen, wastes a strip of land averaging 12" 4" wide all along its length of one acre of waste for every 214 rods in length of the fence. Compare this with the barbed and woven wire fences which waste one acre in 437 and in 450 rods respectively. In other words the rail fence wastes a little over twice as much or over two acres in the same distance that the others waste one acre.

Another land wasting fence not infrequently found in Oregon, is the brushgreen fence. This type of fence is found on the older farms where the brush has been allowed to grow up along the old board fence and when the board fence rotted to pieces the brush was allowed to set as a fence instead. This type wastes not as a fence instead. This type wastes from 18 to 20 feet of land along its length besides being unsightly and decreasing materially the value of the farm.

Of course it is not practicable to tear down all rail fences and put up woven wire fences immediately but with such facts as these in mind it would be reasonable to expect the gradual elimination of the rail fence and replacement with a type less wasteful.

With timber as cheap and convenient as it is in Oregon, the temptation is great to put up the rail fence, but it is doubtful if the cost of cutting timber and rails and the laying of the fence makes rail fencing much cheaper than the woven wire fencing. Of course lack of capital sometimes necessitates the use of rails even if it is not the cheapest fence. In this connection, however, it is interesting to compare the cost of investment in rail and woven wire fencing. According to figures given above, and assuming the land waste to be worth \$100 per acre, the land wasted per rod would be worth 47 cents for the rail fence. This is sufficient in normal times to pay for the woven wire fence. Such wastes are also harbors for vicious weeds and insects, besides the destructive creepers.

The durability, attractiveness, and better stock turning qualities are other advantages that the woven wire fence has that make it the most desirable type of fence. Last, but not least, the woven wire fence adds decidedly to the selling value of the place and costs less for upkeep.

One of the most interesting features that has been brought out in the work in the Graft orchard at Hood River is that of the cumulative influence of careful spraying in the control of apple scab. Three years ago this orchard was about the scabbiest orchard in the scabbiest district in the Hood River valley. In 1917 a few trees left unsprayed for a test developed less than 2% scab. In neighboring orchards where the work during the past three years has not been nearly as thorough nor effective, scab reached the proportions of 25%.

Patton published this article in the May 1918 edition of the *Oregon Countryman*, which was a monthly journal published by agriculture students and faculty at OAC. With this article we begin to see Patton's proficiency as a statistician. During the spring of 1918 he also created and helped with implementing a reorganization plan for a 500 acre farm in Polk County.

Newspaper articles about Patton's participation in OAC's track meet against the University of Oregon and his induction into the Varsity O, May 1918

Oregon Takes Low Hurdles
Oregon took a first and second in the low hurdles, Foster winning in 26.3 seconds with Wilson and Horner placing second and third. The high hurdles were won by Eickelman in the fair time of 16 2-5 seconds. Wilson of Oregon beat out Radcliffe of the varsity for second place.

The pole vault was a clean sweep for the varsity, and they took all three places in the order named. Horner, West, and Eickelman.

Patton, a recent flier, took the high jump easily for the varsity, with Eickelman jumping into second place. Brown and Estes of Oregon tied for third place.

The shot put went to Eickelman and Oregon captured the discus throw. McClain, another dark horse, came out and threw the javelin 150 feet, 8 inches, which was good enough for a first place.

Broad Jump Close
The broad jump was extremely close between Ross of the varsity and Patton of Oregon. Ross had it 112. Patton's last jump when the Lemon-Taylor lad stretched his jump to 22 feet one inch for a first place.

The solar was never in doubt. Captain was never in doubt. Captain was never in doubt.

tox, O. A. C. 2nd; Horner, O. A. C. 3rd. Time, 10 flat.

220 low hurdles—Foster, O. 1st; Wilson, O. 2nd; Horner, O. A. C. 3rd. Time 26 3-5.

120 high hurdles—Eickelman, O. A. C. 1st; Wilson, O. 2nd; Radcliffe, O. A. C. 3rd. Time, 16 2-5 secs.

Pole vault—Horner, O. A. C. 1st; West, O. A. C. 2nd; Eickelman, O. A. C. 3rd. Height, 9 ft. 9 in.

High jump—Patton, O. A. C. 1st; Eickelman, O. A. C. 2nd; Brown and Estes, O. tied for third. Height, 5 ft. 6 in.

Shot put—Eickelman, O. A. C. 1st; Gilbert, O. 2nd; Runquist, O. 3rd. Distance, 37 ft. 10 1-2 in.

Discus—Runquist, O. 1st; Eickelman, O. A. C. 2nd; Gilbert, O. 3rd. Distance, 121 ft. 2 in.

Javelin throw—McClain, O. A. C. 1st; Heywood, O. 2nd; Lodell, O. A. C. 3rd. Distance 159 ft. 8 1-2 in.

Broad jump—Foster, O. 1st; Ross, O. A. C. 2nd; West, O. A. C. 3rd.

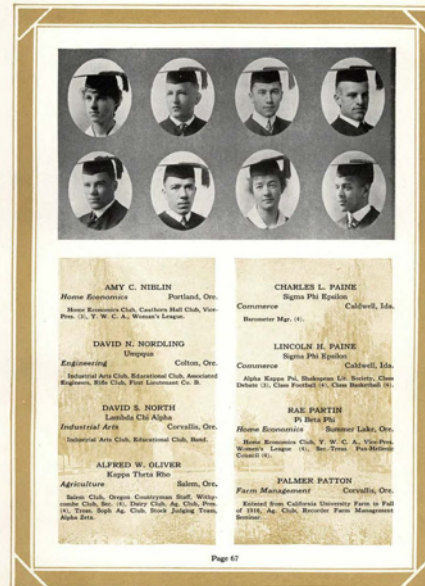
Initiation in Athletic Society Proves Amusing to Veteran Members.

Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis, May 14.—With "Ike" Eickelman, Aggie hurdler, defeating "Pat" Patton, star high jumper, in a pie-eating contest in the remarkable time of one and one half minutes; with James Spriggs, stellar distance runner, attempting to sell "Tin Lizzy" to a supposed audience on a downtown street; with Emil Seibert seeking in vain to offer his hand and heart to a fair waitress for ever and a day; with Carl Rickson looking in vain for a heart mate on a downtown thoroughfare, and with all of the other would-be members endeavoring to live up to the requirements of the initiation committee, members of the "Varsity O" gathered Thursday evening and staged the annual initiation of their new members.

The ceremonies lasted throughout the evening, with every candidate proving successful in passing the degrees. Ten new members were entered upon the rolls of the organization, which is composed entirely of letter men, the names consisting of Paul Scea of Milton, Clyde Horner of Corvallis, Palmer Patton of Corvallis, James Spriggs of Portland, Forrest Mattox of Long Beach, Cal., and John Eickelman of San Bernardino, Cal., all track men, and Carl Rickson of Portland, Emil Seiberts of Pendleton, Edward Olson of Corvallis, and Edward Preston of Dallas, all baseball men.

During his senior year, Patton joined the track and field team. In his first meet, against the University of Oregon, he won the high jump. This gave him instant credibility and an invitation to join the exclusive "Varsity O," essentially a letterman's club. The newspaper article on the right describes the initiation rite in which Patton participated – a pie eating contest.

1919 *Beaver* Yearbook, page 67



Patton received his bachelor of science in agriculture degree on June 3, 2018.

After graduation and prior to starting his graduate work, Patton worked for the USGS in Burns as a junior land classifier. An article in the Oregon Daily Journal from May 23, 1918 stated that "Palmer Patton, Aggie star high jumper, prominent senior and farm management student, leaves here within the next few days for Burns, OR to enter into the United State geological survey division as a junior land classifier at a salary of \$105 per month. The work that he is to do is in connection with the classification of the Oregon-California land grant territory." Burns, in southeast Oregon, would have been almost exclusively white in 1918 – another white space Patton had to navigate.

Southern Oregon To Get Model Farm

The first farm settlement unit, purchased by the state, is now being developed by a scheme planned by H. D. Scudder, Clair Wilkes and Palmer Patton of the farm management department of the O. A. C. The tract of land is a 60 acre diversified farm plat two miles south of Independence. The farm will be developed on funds loaned by the state to the settler.

The land settlement board, appointed by the governor, has been authorized to select sites in five different parts of the state. Plans will be drawn up and the sites, equipped by the state. Two farms will be in Eastern Oregon, one on the coast and one in Southern Oregon.

Left -- Article on model farm from the Ashland Tidings, May 30, 1919

Center -- Professor H. D. Scudder, ca. 1920

Right -- Patton's biographical form from his OAC personnel file



OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
Office of the President

To the Faculty Member Addressed:

It is desired to have on permanent file in the institution certain information regarding employees and it would be appreciated if you would kindly write in answers to the questions listed below. Return this sheet to President's office at your early convenience.

1-Name (in full, as it should appear in official College publications, including degrees or degrees) *Wm. Patton, B.S.*

2-Date of birth? Day *1* Month *Oct* Year *1892*

3-Place of birth: City *Ashtabula* State or country *Michigan*

4-In what year did you first become connected with the faculty of the Oregon Agricultural College? *Fall 1916*

5-Has service been continuous since that time? If not, so indicate *Continuous*

6-Indicate title or rank and the length of service in each position held in the College up to present time *Student graduate, 1916-17; Laboratory Assistant, Farm Management (Senior year)*

7-Indicate in space below the institutions of college or university grade which you have attended, location of institutions, length of attendance in each, and degrees (if any) received.

NAME OF INSTITUTION	LOCATION	DATE OF GRADUATION	DEGREE	REMARKS
<i>University Farm School</i>	<i>Ashtabula, Mich.</i>	<i>1916</i>	<i>B.S.</i>	
<i>O.A.C.</i>				

8-Give Concise statement of educational experience prior to assuming duties at O. A. C. *Graduated Farm Management, 1916. Student Assistant (Senior year). Junior Level, 1915-16. M.S. graduated, 1917. Assistant and Laboratory, 1917-18. Farm Management, 1918-19. Oregon.*

Respectfully,
W. A. JENSEN,
Secretary.

Date *Feb. 6, 1919*

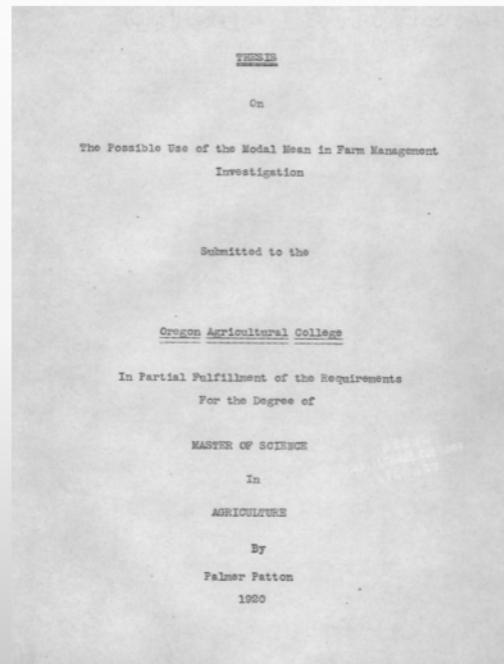
*This information will be regarded as confidential.
Give degrees, i. e., B. S., A. B., etc.

As a graduate student, Patton worked closely with Professor H. D. Scudder, who headed OAC's farm management program. Scudder served as a mentor for Patton, and chaired his thesis committee. The article on the right describes a project that Patton, Scudder and Clair Wilkes, another farm management faculty member, worked on together.

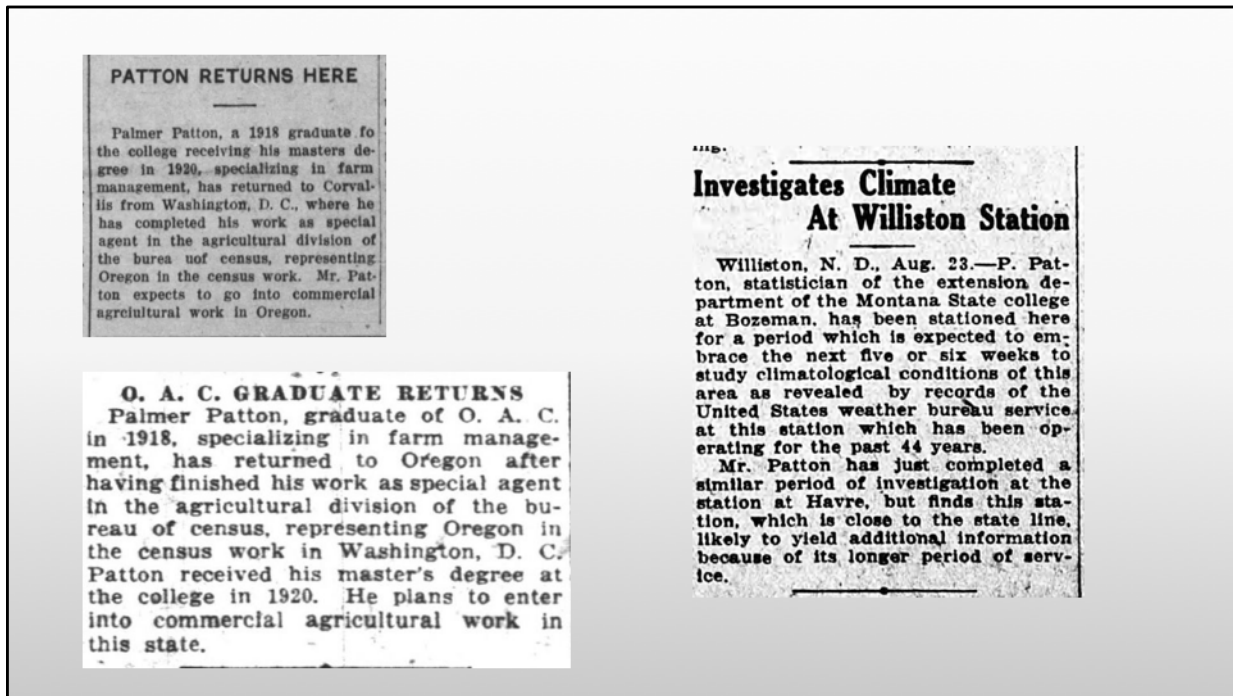
During the course of his graduate work, Patton was considered a faculty member. On the left is the faculty biographical sheet that Patton completed in February 1919. It is the only extant document in his OSU personnel file. The 1920 Beaver yearbook listed him as an instructor in farm management, and the 1919-20 catalog listed him as a research fellow in farm management. I have not found any evidence that he taught classes – his faculty work was on the research side of the academy.

Title page of Palmer Patton's OAC
masters thesis

H. D. Scudder, head of the farm
management program, was his major
professor.



Patton's masters thesis focused on statistical applications within farm management. He completed his oral examinations on May 26, 1920, and received his master of science degree a few weeks later. During the 1919-20 academic year he was a member of Alpha Pi Delta, an agriculture honor society.



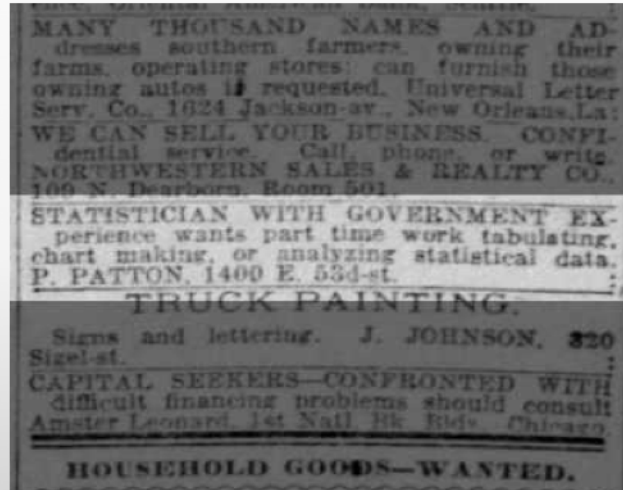
In late 1920 or early 1921, Patton left OAC, and for the next of year or so worked for the U.S. Census Bureau. That work took him to Washington, DC, where he worked in the Bureau's agriculture division. One article described him as the only agricultural census representative from the western U.S. He returned from DC in September 1921, and indicated that he planned to go into commercial agricultural work. He was living in Sheridan, Oregon, at the time.

Ironically, Patton does not appear in the 1920 census – he was in Corvallis at the time. Nor does he appear in the 1930 or 1940 censuses – those that are presently open.

At some point in 1922 he went to work for Montana State College as a statistician in its extension service. That assignment took him to Williston, ND and Miles City, MT, and Havre, MT. This began a five year relationship with Montana's land grant institution.

Patton in Chicago,
1923-24

Classified ad in the Chicago
Tribune, October 2, 1923



Patton took a break from his work at Montana State and returned to Chicago in late summer or early fall 1923. He spent two semesters at the University of Chicago doing additional graduate work, in botany.

He also ran this classified ad in October 1923 offering his services as a statistician. The address listed is northeast of the University of Chicago campus apx. one mile. I have not been able to verify if this is his mother's address. She had remarried in 1921.

Patton's work at Montana State College noted in various Montana newspapers.

MONTANA MUST HUMP SELF TO KEEP LEAD ON M'INTOSH REDS

Need of maintaining Montana's high quality standards in McIntosh Red apples shipped to eastern markets, is pointed out by P. Patton, statistician at the State college, who has found that eastern areas are rapidly increasing their acreage of McIntosh Red apple trees. With-in the next few years the production of this apple will have been doubled in the orchards around the population centers of the east, he says.

In spite of the heavy production of McIntosh Reds in and around New York, the Montana-grown apple has enough advantage in quality at this time to command a premium which offsets the long shipping disadvantage. If this Montana quality is maintained, Montana growers still will be able to meet competition from the increasing eastern acreage of McIntosh Reds, Mr. Patton believes.

Agricultural Experts Meet at Miles City

MILES CITY, June 17.—(Special).—The building up of a state program for the development of the possibilities and resources from agricultural effort in Montana was the central theme presented and discussed by the county agents from 13 Montana counties in a two-day meeting that closed Tuesday evening.

Besides A. J. Ogaard, agronomist at the Montana State college, the following were in attendance: M. H. Merritt, J. C. Taylor, assistant director; F. M. Harrington, horticulturalist; J. N. Nelson, dairy expert; P. Patton, statistician; E. H. Lott, assistant county agent leader; R. L. Waddell, livestock specialist; Charles Potter, in charge of the boys' and girls' club work in the various counties, and V. D. Gillman, in charge of farm management.

The following farm bureau county agents were present: H. N. Burgess, Madison; Carl Peterson, Fergus; S. E. Bodley, Gallatin; W. H. Jones, Stillwater; A. W. Worden, Daniels; George Gustafson, Blaine; M. E. Stebbins, Valley; Ralph Mercer, Rosebud; Charles H. Ruzicka, Yellowstone; J. O. Hembre, Fallon; Grover Lewis, Prairie; Harold F. Depue, Richland, and Paul W. Lewis of Custer.

ODDS FAVOR FARMER IN NORTHERN MONT.

SOME DOLLARS FOR EVERY FIVE
WILL BE RETURNED TO
CULTIVATORS

The odds are seven to five in favor of the farmer in northern Montana, according to figures worked out by M. L. Stearns, farm management director, of Montana State college, and P. Patton, statistician at the agricultural extension service.

In other words, a farmer who uses approved methods and stays long enough to get the benefit of an average of crops will get back seven dollars for every five he puts into the ground, according to their calculations.

Weather Records Used.

The figuring of the better odds is based on the farmer's loss in relation to the loss of crops to frost in northern Montana, since 1915, with a calculation of what crops would have been left there had been any crops for as far back as weather records are available.

Mr. Patton has secured records of temperatures and rainfall for as far back as 1880. From figures based on the old army post at Fort Asselberts, Pa. many years before that, he has records from United States army and army engineers who were with troops in the Indian campaigns of northern Montana, which has been again, significant of the times when the troops were sent to other places to combat the Indians.

Five Pages Records.

Another source of information as to early crop and weather which, Mr. Patton has secured is in the files of "The Great Frontier," a weekly newspaper published at Fort Benton 50 years ago.

"The crops or regular occurrence of good or bad crop years can be traced from our charts," said Mr. Patton. "We looked for the first thing but found that the poor crop years, which are those of small rainfall, low humidity and high temperatures, did not come at any calculable intervals."

In some spring months wheat, on land cropped every year, as our bar crop and worked out charts which represent the average yearly yield. These showed that since the year a succession of crop failures had occurred sufficient to number as winter and also suggest a farmer might have made out of one or two good crops.

"Then we made a table of the yield on summer followed hard and found that it amounted to the risk and low odds of the other chart."

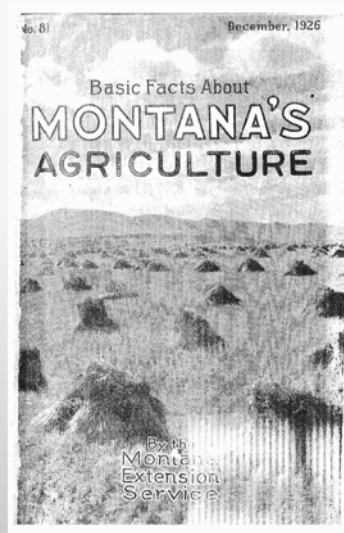
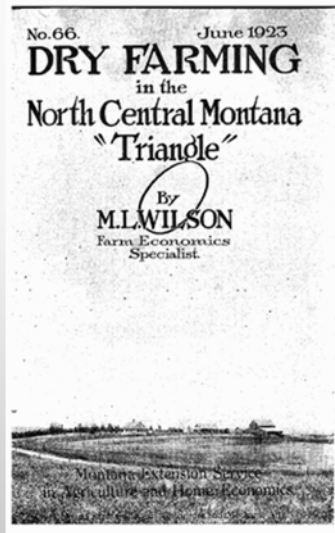
"We are, of course, still compiling data and have not attempted to work out conclusions. When we get them we hope to have calculated what will show to the farmers of northern Montana, particularly in the irrigated lands, that the crops along the Great Northern, what crops they expect to grow and the best methods to make sure of a profit over a number of years."

In 1924 Patton returned to Montana State College, where he served as a statistician for the Extension Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station. Much of his work entailed responding to inquiries for agricultural statistical data about Montana, and he contributed to the monthly "Montana Agricultural Outlook" report, which was distributed across the state.

He was apparently able to do some original research on the effects of weather on various crops in Montana.

After leaving OAC, and especially while he was at Montana State, Patton kept connected to the college. He sent periodic updates to the alumni magazine. Patton was active in the Montana OAC club, which was based in Bozeman.

Patton contributed graphs, charts and other statistical data to these Montana State College publications



Patton's work at Montana State also included the creation of statistical graphs, charts and other compilations for use in extension and experiment station publications, such as these two bulletins. He was listed in the credits for both.

His work in the Dec. 1926 bulletin was specifically noted in the acknowledgements.

Montana State College faculty member
Milburn Lincoln Wilson, ca. 1930

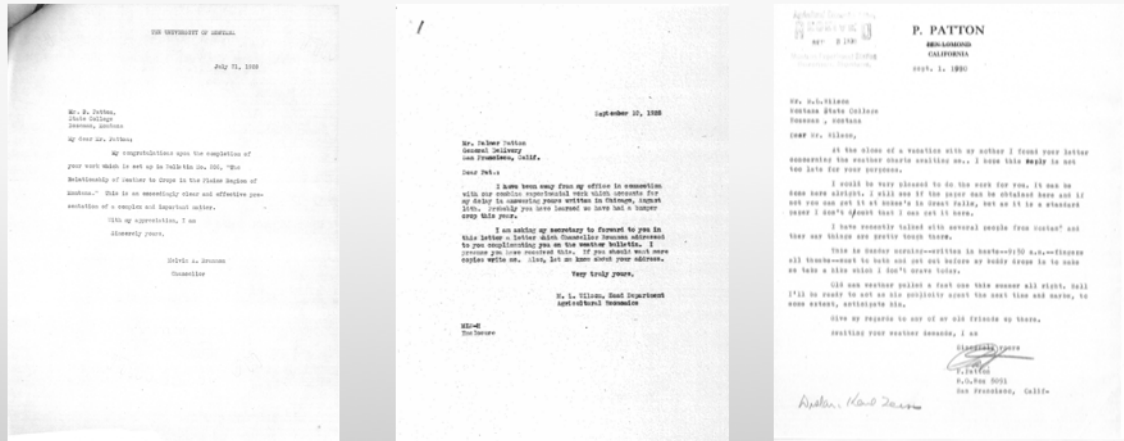
Wilson was Patton's supervisor and mentor.

parc-000521, courtesy of the Montana State
University Library



M. L. Wilson was Patton's supervisor at Montana State and also served as a mentor. After Patton left MSC in the spring of 1927, he and Wilson carried on a correspondence that lasted more than three years. One of the constants of those exchanges was Wilson's attempts to find work for Patton, including contract work for MSC and positions with federal agencies.

Left – letter to Patton from the MSC chancellor
 Middle and right – correspondence between Patton and Wilson
 Courtesy of the Montana State University Archives



In 1927 Patton was able to complete an experiment station bulletin titled “The Role of Weather in Montana’s Plains Region.” The letter on the left is a commendation from the chancellor of the college.

But by July 1926 Patton seemed to have run into disfavor with the Dean of Agriculture, who complained to M.L. Wilson that “Mr. Patton is interested in ecology, but this is outside your department.” He felt that the work Patton was doing was better suited for the Extension Service. He questioned whether “Patton will work in” with the Experiment Station. Wilson would need a good statistical clerk, but with “Patton’s limitations in special training for your work, etc., I believe the quicker he gets into his special field the better for him and for your work.” This was despite Patton’s rank as the state statistician and the kudos that he had received for his work in experiment station publications. There was also an implication that the dean wanted two of his own choices in experiment station positions. Patton was able to hang on until early spring 1927, though he had trouble getting his final paycheck.

Patton left Bozeman and returned to Chicago, but continued corresponding with Wilson. In 1928 Patton moved to San Francisco. In an April 1930 letter he wrote to Wilson that he was taking up gazetteering – essentially journalism. He had taken a couple of journalism classes at OAC. In the same letter Patton wrote that he was going to night school and was editing the school paper. There is no mention of which school he was attending. The letter on the right, dated Sept. 1, 1930, is the final correspondence between Patton and Wilson that I found.

From this point, we lose track of Patton for nearly twelve years.

Address is 916 Kearney Street, San Francisco. This is the historic Sentinel Building, which today houses the American Zoetrope film studio.

REGISTRATION CARD—(Must have on or after April 26, 1937 and on or before February 26, 1938)			
REGISTRATION NUMBER	1. Name (Print)	OTHER NAMES	
D. 1948	PALMER (MARR) PATTON		
F. Place of Residence (Print)	2. Date of Birth (Print)		
216 Kearney St. San Francisco Calif	4/15/1905		
3. Place of Issuance (Print) (This must be the name of the State or Territory of Issuance.)			
SAN FRANCISCO, LAND 1 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WAS ISSUED IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA			
A. Marital Status	G. Date of Issue		
MARRIED	4/15/37		
H. Duration	I. Age at Issue	J. Date of Birth	K. Date of Issue
1 Year	48	4/15/1905	4/15/37
L. Name of Issuer (Print)	M. Name of Issuer (Print)	N. Name of Issuer (Print)	O. Name of Issuer (Print)
San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
P. Place of Issuance (Print)	Q. Name of Issuer (Print)	R. Name of Issuer (Print)	S. Name of Issuer (Print)
San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
T. Name of Issuer (Print)	U. Name of Issuer (Print)	V. Name of Issuer (Print)	W. Name of Issuer (Print)
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X. Name of Issuer (Print)	Y. Name of Issuer (Print)	Z. Name of Issuer (Print)	AA. Name of Issuer (Print)
San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
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San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
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CM. Name of Issuer (Print)	CN. Name of Issuer (Print)	CO. Name of Issuer (Print)	CP. Name of Issuer (Print)
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San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
DA. Name of Issuer (Print)	DB. Name of Issuer (Print)	DC. Name of Issuer (Print)	DD. Name of Issuer (Print)
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San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
DK. Name of Issuer (Print)	DK. Name of Issuer (Print)	DK. Name of Issuer (Print)	DK. Name of Issuer (Print)
San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
DL. Name of Issuer (Print)	DL. Name of Issuer (Print)	DL. Name of Issuer (Print)	DL. Name of Issuer (Print)
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San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
DN. Name of Issuer (Print)	DN. Name of Issuer (Print)	DN. Name of Issuer (Print)	DN. Name of Issuer (Print)
San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco	San Francisco
DO. Name of Issuer (Print)	DO. Name of Issuer (Print)	DO. Name of Issuer (Print)	DO.

His residential address, 916 Kearney Street, was the famous Sentinel Building in northeast San Francisco, which had been built in 1907.

Muster roll for the Navy destroyer U.S.S. Fanning, October 1945

Could the Palmer Patton listed here be
OAC's 1918 graduate? Note the "n" in
parentheses next to the name.

Palmer Patton appears on several muster
roles for the U.S.S. Fanning, between 1943
and 1945

of the U. S. S. FANNING (DD391)									
for the quarter ending 1 October, 1945									
NAME	GRADE	STATUS	DATE	DAY	MONTH	YEAR	Days present		
							Day	Mo.	Yr.
LEWIS, Walter (n)	031 36 31	SEA(1)Y					23	11	43
LOVE, Harry Harvey	006 29 44	SEA(1)Y					7	8	42
LOVE, Marion Elsie	002 04 37	SEA					12	6	44
MADE, Gregory Owen	065 36 40	SEA					21	1	45
MALDONAD, John Harrison	533 04 32	SEA(1)Y					9	4	43
MALDONAD, Virgil Raymond	553 03 74	SEA(1)Y					27	2	43
MATSON, Harold Leo	061 78 18	SEA					27	10	43
MELAN, Gertrude Almond	065 75 37	SEA(1)Y					16	7	44
MERCE, Clarence (n)	055 99 77	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MERTON, Atwell Brian	072 79 74	SEA					28	12	43
MILLER, Paul Leslie	039 04 31	SEA					18	12	43
MORAN, Charles Frederick	036 28 27	SEA(1)Y					6	4	43
MURPHY, John Francis Jr.	025 50 06	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Charles Harold Jr.	046 07 15	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Louis Joseph	031 74 19	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Donald Joseph	025 50 37	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Kenneth (n)	028 73 04	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Roy Bert	048 53 56	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MURPHY, James Clark	056 52 51	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MURPHY, Leo Ground	008 02 02	SEA					6	6	41
MURPHY, Stewart Earl Jr.	083 54 00	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MURPHY, Fred James	013 36 18	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MURPHY, Lemuel Aron	004 50 54	SEA					16	8	45
MURPHY, Edwin Riley	006 40 79	SEA					10	7	45
MURPHY, Earl (n)	028 73 04	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Edward James	065 73 14	SEA					11	9	45
MURPHY, Donald Barrett	004 36 15	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MURPHY, George Edward	040 08 01	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Freddie Swain	072 21 30	SEA					27	5	42
MURPHY, Stewart Eugene	065 73 13	SEA					28	12	43
MURPHY, Palmer (n)	028 73 04	SEA(1)Y					28	12	43
MURPHY, Homer Oliver	058 04 59	SEA					12	6	44
MURPHY, Ellen Max	000 54 01	SEA(1)Y					12	6	44
MURPHY, Charles Wesley	021 02 27	SEA					15	6	44

Among the records that I found via Ancestry were several WWII U.S. Navy muster rolls from 1944 and 1945 for the Navy destroyer USS Fanning that included the name Palmer Patton. All of them included an "n" in parentheses next to his name, as well as with other names. This could be a racial designation for negro. The U.S. military was still segregated in WWII, but many Navy ships included African American sailors, who were relegated to lower status duties.

The Palmer Patton listed on this muster roll was a gunner's mate who began his service on the ship on Dec. 28, 1943. Our Palmer Patton would have been 50 years of age.

The USS Fanning saw considerable service in the Pacific during the war, and was decommissioned in late 1945. In all Palmer Patton spent the better part of two years on the ship.

Palmer Patton's Obituary
San Francisco Examiner
July 16, 1976

PATTON, Palmer (AKA Paul) —In San Francisco, June 26, 1976, Palmer (AKA Paul) Patton, dear friend of Audrey Janesen; a native of Michigan; aged 83 years.
Private services were held.
GREEN STREET MORTUARY

Surprisingly, Palmer Patton appears in the Summer 1963 Oregon Stater as a contributor to the OSU Fund for 1962-63. We have no record of the amount of his donation nor what prompted it.

There is no firm record of Patton in the sampling of the San Francisco city directories that I reviewed. There was a P. Patton listed in the 1971 directory.

Patton died in San Francisco on June 26, 1976. This short obituary lists a “dear friend,” Audrey Janesen – the only evidence we have of any type of relationship with someone of the opposite sex.

Patton was interred at the historic Cypress Lawn Memorial Park cemetery, south of San Francisco, on August 12, 1976.

We need to determine how to best honor and celebrate Palmer Patton's contribution to OSU's history.

Portland Advocate, 1924
Student portraits from various
Beaver yearbooks



College Students Spend Thanksgiving Here

Misses Otheida Nichols, Jennie Dora Grayson, **Carrie Halsell**, Idras Williams and Richard Bogle arrived in the city Wednesday night from Corvallis where they are attending O. A. C., and spent Thanksgiving vacation.



More recently, Natalia Fernandez shared with me this newspaper article from the Portland Advocate, which had been found by library colleague Laurie Bridges. Besides Carrie Halsell, there were four other African American students who attended OAC at the same time -- their photos are on the left of this slide -- Othieda Nichols, Jennie Dora Grayson, Idris Williams, and Richard Bogle. One of them, Jennie Dora Grayson, graduated in 1928.

Additional yearbook research revealed two other students who attended Oregon State in the early 1930s -- Maxine Maxwell, who was from Salem, and Dehlia Coleman, who was originally from Alabama. Coleman graduated in 1931.

This poses the question – are there other African American students who attended Oregon State in the 1920s and 1930s?

WE HAVE **WORK** TO DO

Help discover the stories of these students

I would like to end by putting out a call for action – let's reveal, share, honor and celebrate the stories of all of these students.

Thank you for listening, and Dwaine and I would love to hear your questions, thoughts and ideas.