Biology Editor Dies

➤ DR. FRANK THONE, 58, Science Service biology editor and a well-known science reporter for the past quarter of a century, died unexpectedly in Washington on Aug. 25. Death was due to coronary occlusion.

A plant ecologist, he joined the staff of Science Service in 1924 after a brief career as college professor. As a science writer, Dr. Thone specialized in biological fields but covered a wide variety of important stories in science. He covered the famed Scopes trial at Dayton, Tenn., the evolution or "monkey" trial, in the summer of 1925, and more than two decades later was a correspondent at the atomic bomb tests at Bikini.

He was best known to many readers for his columns on nature which were widely read in many newspapers and the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. Another regular newspaper feature which he authored was a weekly story on new patents.

In 1946, Dr. Thone was one of 13 recipients of George Westinghouse distinguished science writing awards.

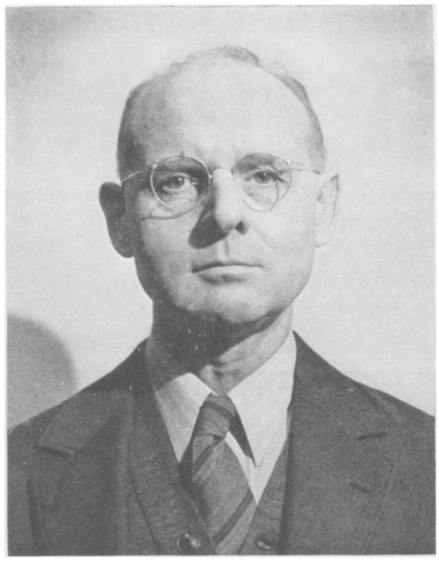
Born in Davenport, Iowa, April 12, 1891, Frank E. A. Thone attended public school in Des Moines, Iowa, and graduated from Grinnell College in 1915. He served as a second lieutenant in the U. S. Army during the first World War and continued his education after the war at the University of California, Johns Hopkins University and the University of Chicago where he received his Ph.D. in 1922. He taught at North Dakota State College and the University of Florida before joining the staff of Science Service.

Dr. Thone served as a naturalist at Yellowstone National Park for two summers and was the author of TREES AND FLOWERS OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (J. E. Haynes, 1923). He also wrote THE MICROSCOPIC WORLD (J. Messner, 1940).

A member of many scientific organizations, Dr. Thone was active in the affairs of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Washington Academy of Sciences and the National Association of Science Writers. He was a member of Sigma Xi, Phi Beta Kappa, Botanical Society of America, American Society of Plant Physiologists, American Society of Mammalogists, Seismological Society of America, The Wildlife Society, National Parks Association, Biological Society of Washington, Botanical Society of Washington, Wild Flower Preservation Society, Overseas Writers, Outdoor Writers Association, Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs and the Cosmos Club.

Dr. Thone is survived by his mother, Mrs. Mary Anna Thone, and a sister, Margaret Thone, both of Des Moines.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1949



DR. FRANK THONE

MEDICINE

Mice Exposing Man's Ills

➤ FROM mice whose heritage can be traced back more generations than any human being, there may come the living materials with which scientists will solve problems in human behavior, mental illnesses and chronic and degenerative diseases, Dr. W. E. Heston of the National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, Md., told the twentieth anniversary meeting of the Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine.

One of the greatest hopes for attacking medical problems of the future lies in the development of kinds of mice that inherit many other diseases just as some lines of mice hand down cancer to their progeny in as high as 98% of the animals.

To get even more information about cancer, many more inbred strains of mice susceptible to various kinds of disease are needed, and Dr. Heston urged greater effort to create them by breeding.

Other animals are likely to give scientists new information about the diseases of fighting and aggression which, among human beings, cause so much trouble in the world and threaten to precipitate world war. Jackson Laboratory is developing a particularly ferocious and aggression kind of rabbit which will snap at anything that is poked into its cage. Most rabbits, like most people, are relatively peaceful and harmless.

From experiments on ferocious rabbits and their kind, it will be possible, scientists believe, to learn more about fundamental reasons why other animals, including man, fight and perhaps even go to war.

The thousands of mice which are reared and studied at Jackson Laboratory are in general not aggressive creatures. Due to the fact that they multiply much faster than even the proverbial rabbits, their speedy reproduction aids study of kinds of diseases that can be genetically concentrated in them.

If mice can be found that have the crippled joints of arthritis or the damaged hearts of cardiac victims, they can then be used to test suggested treatments for these chronic diseases or to explore into their cause.

Some Bar Harbor mice are being tested for their reaction to insulin and electric shock as a step toward an experimental study for this method of treating some forms of mental illness in human beings.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1949

ASTRONOMY

Adopt "New Look" in Domes for New Telescopes

➤ THE "new look" in domes has come to the student observatory at the University of Denver's Chamberlin Observatory.

After 58 years with a single-slit dome, the observatory has received a new, wider aperture to accommodate three new telescopes donated by two Denver men.

The new equipment—a 12-inch Newtonian reflecting telescope, an eight-inch Schmidt-type telescopic camera and an eight-inch Cassegrainian reflecting telescope—will replace the six-inch refractor 'scope mounted in 1891 by the observatory's first director, the late Dean Herbert A. Howe.

The present director, Dr. Albert W. Recht, said the new equipment will be used to supplement the main observatory's 20-inch refractor telescope and would be used, specifically, to "catch up" on asteroid and comet observations which had to be neglected during the war.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1949

CHEMISTRY-BOTANY

Salt in Water Will Kill Weeds in Beet Fields

➤ THERE'S no need to use some of the potent new chemicals with complicated names if you want to kill many of the weeds found in beet fields.

Experiments at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station show that many of the common weeds can be destroyed with a spray containing 200 pounds of salt in 100 gallons of water.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1949