

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS WITH PAST-PRESIDENTS

The following letter is an extension of earlier replies (April 1978 issue) in response to a letter sent to Past-Presidents of APS.

Hymen S. Mayerson:

I have just re-read the Past-President's Address which I gave in Miami on the occasion of the 75th birthday of the Society. I entitled it "Physiology and Physiologists in the Gay Nineties." I reviewed the first volume of the American Journal of Physiology and then went on to discuss the material, particularly as to the elaborate set-ups used to obtain and record data. It was fun.

But things are different now. The kymograph is gone, so is the inductorium and the nice levers we all were accustomed to use. It wouldn't be near as much fun to do now and I don't know what the equipment will be like in 1987. But the old equipment served its purpose—we were in the descriptive phase of physiology then—we progressed to the analytic phase and new approaches and new vocabularies. And this continues apace, the march from the general to the specific and then back to the general, only this time, it's a new ball game or rather a number of new ball games. And there will, naturally, be more new societies as we begin to burrow for new gold "in them thar hills." Physiology was exciting in 1887—in 1962—and it will always be so! We shall continue—tongue in cheek—to moan about the "good old days" but really be excited with all the marvelous new facts and concepts that have and will continue to be elucidated.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The following letter was addressed to Dr. William C. Gibson:

"A physiologist friend has called my attention to the interesting paragraph about my father-in-law, the late Dr. Otto Loewi, in your article "Physiological Progress," *The Physiologist*, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 17 (1978).

"This paragraph gives due prominence to the lifelong friendship between Otto Loewi and Sir Henry Dale, and to the invaluable help given by Sir Henry when my father-in-law came to England and later to this country as a refugee. It is also perfectly true that the Nazis in 1938 robbed Otto Loewi of his half of the Nobel prize awarded in 1936 (and of all his other possessions). However, in the interest of historical fact I have to tell you that the story at the end of your paragraph, however much in Sir Henry's character, is a pleasant but unfounded legend: that Loewi, on his arrival in England, was presented by Sir Henry with his own half of the prize. In fact, my father-in-law's Nobel money was never replaced or restituted."

Yours sincerely,

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ST. LOUIS AND THE AMERICAN PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The American Physiological Society and American physiology have many roots in St. Louis, Missouri.

If it can be said that the Society was born in 1887 in New York City, it equally holds that APS "came of age" in St. Louis in 1923.

The incorporation of the Society in Missouri came about in that year, the incorporation meeting being held in the Chase Hotel, the ancestor of the Chase Park Plaza, the site of our 1978 Fall Meeting.

Missourians have made many contributions to American physiology, and William Beaumont, considered by many to be the first native American physiologist, is buried there.

Dr. Beaumont's grave is located in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis, where it is the scene of an annual ceremony. The St. Louis Medical Society places a wreath on his grave on each anniversary of Beaumont's birthdate, November 21, 1785. Dr. Beaumont lived in St. Louis from 1834, first as an Army Surgeon, then in private practice until his death in 1853. He was one of the founders of the Medical School of St. Louis University, serving as Chairman of Surgery, beginning in 1837.