

Preface

Arnold Platt said that nothing he had done merited special remembrance; consequently, he spent two days at the incinerator, burning most of his private papers. Perhaps he did not want to make the work of the biographer entirely impossible, so he left a few things behind. Most significant for the story of his early life, in late 1989, when he was eighty years old, he tape-recorded his recollections of those years. The recollections end in 1931, with the birth of his first child, Wayne. Arnold also wrote an account of his farming experiences in the Westlock district for his family. The family has made the tape recordings and the account available for this project.

Much of the narrative is taken from these tapes, as are direct statements by Arnold in Chapter 1. Arnold also left a 30-page account of the move from Innisfree to Westlock, and elements of that account also inform the story in the first chapter.

Because he truly had “been there” in so many events and occasions of public record, documentary evidence provides considerable insight. In addition, a considerable number of people—some who knew him as early as 1940—have willingly shared their recollections to corroborate and extend the public record. The sources of information are identified throughout the text. Where I refer to a person’s recollection or narrative, the source is an interview or discussion with that person; those interviews are listed in the References section.

In the Platt family papers, documentation of the years in Swift Current consists of copies of the scientific papers that Arnold published while at the experimental farm. Included in the family papers are the letter from Claire Taylor referred to in the text, a copy of Baden Campbell’s history of the Swift Current Research Station, and an envelope from the Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science containing Arnold’s transcript from the University of Alberta. Had the materials available been limited to what Arnold left behind, the story of the development of Rescue wheat would have lacked the drama that is so significant a part of it. Except for Arnold’s report of work in California, which was occasioned by Charles Jenkins’ accident, and associated memos dealing with the payment of costs, the National Archives contain no records from Arnold’s time at Swift Current. The Experimental Station records for the years 1936 to 1949 seem to have been lost. Neither the library at what is now the Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre (SPARC) at Swift Current nor the library at the Lethbridge Research Centre has any records related to the events of those years.

Interviews with three of Arnold’s co-researchers from that era, Stewart (Stew) Wells, Ruby Larson, and Stu McBean, contributed significantly to the story. Stu McBean’s suggestion that papers might still exist prompted an inquiry to Dr. John Clarke of SPARC, which drew a response from Dr. Ron DePauw, saying that some boxes of papers in his office might be relevant. Those boxes contained reports and memos documenting

the achievements and frustrations associated with the development of Rescue wheat. Copies of the documents are now in the files in my office. I do not believe that the originals have been included in the SPARC archive.

At the Lethbridge Research Centre, the librarian, Ms. Ronning-Mains, had kept a small file of archival materials related to Arnold's time there. The file contains memos regarding the move from Swift Current to Lethbridge, Arnold's memos regarding his unmet requests, Alice Wall's two-page note on Arnold that was published in the Centre's newsletter, and Chris Farstad's tribute to Arnold on his resignation from the Centre. It also contains a special section of the *Lethbridge Herald* celebrating the opening of the new research facilities on September 17, 1949. It does not contain Arnold's letter of resignation.

Archival material held in the office of the Agricultural Institute of Canada (AIC) provided a useful context for understanding the development of Arnold's ideas about agricultural research generally, and the importance of marketing and marketing education. The Institute does not maintain a formal archive, but it does have several scrapbooks of historical materials. The files related to Arnold being made a Fellow of the AIC seem to have been lost, although he is mentioned in the lists of members honoured by that designation.

Arnold kept no records related to Sundance Farms or Red Crow Limited. The Department of Indian Affairs located files related to the awarding of the lease and the farming operation on it, and made them available to me in Calgary. Interviews with Shirley (Platt) Deneka, Margaret (Platt) Oikawa, Stewart Wells, Dean Lien, and Gerald Schuler, as well as my recollections of Arnold's account of that farming operation, inform the narrative in Chapter 4.

Harry Patching provided his firsthand account of Arnold's earliest involvement in the Farmers' Union of Alberta (FUA), while Dean Lien, Alex McCalla, Jim Lore, and Gerald Schuler recalled many of the events and incidents associated with Arnold's presidency. Arnold kept a complete bound set of *The Organized Farmer* published while he was president of the FUA and editor of that paper, but that was all he kept from that era. In a collection of the materials Carrol Jaques used in writing her history

of Unifarm was a complete set of *The Organized Farmer* as well as a file of materials related to the establishment of the Goldeye Centre. She made these materials available to me.

Arnold's experiences in Geneva in 1959 affected him profoundly, as Jessie Oxford observed. Yet the only material evidence Arnold kept of that time is a collage of photographs taken during the proceedings. Published materials such as Charles Frederick Wilson's *Canadian Grain Marketing* (1979) provide little information about the actual negotiations. Alfred Gleave's book provides more of a personal insight, but suggests that the role of the producers' delegates was quite minor. Archival sources offered little hope at first. The archives of the Canadian Wheat Board are closed and, although Arnold was a member of the Wheat Board's Advisory Committee from 1956 to 1959, the Board made no exception to its policy of keeping its archives closed. J.E. Brownlee, president of United Grain Growers (UGG), was also a delegate to the 1959 meetings in Geneva, but the UGG archives at the University of Manitoba contain no papers related to his involvement in those negotiations. The National Archives contain the Charles Frederick Wilson Fonds, but access to the volumes and files associated with the Fourth International Wheat Agreement is restricted; however, the National Archives arranged for me to have access, and those files provide the context that corroborates Arnold's account to me of these events.

Arnold kept the three volumes of the report of the Royal Commission on Transportation but none of the associated correspondence. Interviews with Helen Platt provided essential elements of the narrative, as did Shirley (Platt) Deneka's recollections. Archival materials, both in the National Archives and in the Diefenbaker Centre, are comprehensive, and I have drawn on these.

The archives of the University of Alberta and of the University of Calgary contain documentary evidence of Arnold's contributions as member of the Board of Governors, chair of the Agricultural Economics Advisory Committee, and chair of the rural campaign for the 3AU fundraising drive. The Platt family papers contain Arnold's speech to Convocation at the University of Alberta, and correspondence related to his being awarded the honorary LLD in 1966 by the same institu-

tion. They also contain his account of the change in the composition and powers of the Board of Governor's finance committee, an account corroborated in the interview with Dr. Joseph Richter. Dr. Richter and Dr. Warrack added detail to the account of Arnold's contributions to the Department of Agricultural Economics, as did Gerald Schuler.

The files associated with Arnold's time at the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) Co-op seem to have disappeared. They were thought to have been deposited with the Glenbow Archives in Calgary, but had not been. Arnold kept very few items of correspondence associated with his work at UFA, but his memo to the manager and his letter of resignation provide some insight, as do his speaking notes on the dedication of Blunden Manor. The Platt Family Papers also include his appointment calendars from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s. Helen Platt provided significant insights, as did Dean Lien. The interview with Arne Olson gave another insider's views. UFA Co-op, through its office in Lethbridge and the coordinator of its history project, Gordon Tolton, made available the complete minutes of the Board of Directors, a file of photographs, and the issues of the *UFA Co-operator* and *The United Farmer* for the years that Arnold worked for UFA.

Documentation in the Platt Family Papers related to Arnold's work on farm organization and farm policy during his time at UFA consists of copies of the reports and papers he presented; Arnold did not keep any working papers or notes. However, Arnold tape-recorded his thoughts about the changing role of farm organizations and deposited that tape with the Provincial Archives of Alberta. (Had Arnold not told me that he had made this tape, it is possible that it would not have been available, as an initial search of the Provincial Archives failed to find it; the tape was located after the archives moved to their current location.) Interviews with Gerald Schuler and Jim Lore filled in the background.

Documentation of Arnold's work on communal property, land use, and on the management of water resources in southern Alberta is quite good. The Platt Family Papers include extensive files of newspaper clippings related to these projects, as well as copies of various reports. Most of the files related to this work are now housed in the Provincial Archives of Alberta although I had access to these archives as they were compiled.

Gerald Schuler, Allan Warrack, Jim Lore, and Dean Lien provided valuable perspectives on the work Arnold did during these years, while Helen Platt shared her insider's knowledge. I have drawn on conversations I had with Arnold over the years while having the good fortune to work with him.