

# Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS  
Ranger-Naturalist

Before World War II, farmer U. Liu was plowing his rich black farm land in South Manchuria preparatory to sowing sorghum, millet and wheat when his plow suddenly turned up some hard, strange-looking objects. They looked almost like wine cups. Curious, he took them home, cracked them with a heavy object and found inside each "cup" a dozen acorn-like dark brown objects which contained soft creamy centers.

Liu tasted them and they tasted good. But what could they be?

Finding other sweet-tasting objects in his black loam in succeeding days, the puzzled Liu sent them to a botanist friend, Ichiro Ohga, in Tokyo, telling

have the oldest visible seeds that any scientist had yet come across.

He tested 200 of these seeds in his laboratory — and 200 sprouted.

**Seeds Given Scientists**

Ohga gave them to scientists and explained how they were found in a cultivated field. Some scientists made wild guesses as to their possible age — others, frankly, disbelieved the whole story.

Finally, the true story came after World War II in Chicago and the answer is today in Washington, D.C.

The answer came through a new dating method, called Radiocarbon 1 test — a test based upon the intake of radioactive carbon by all living things, including man, and its slow but steady disappearance from the tissues of all plants and animals once they die or stop growing.

Using the best of these seeds, the founder of the method, Dr. W. F. Libby of the University of Chicago discovered that these seeds were 1,040 years old, give or take a few years.

Thousand year old seeds! Still viable — but how viable? They had sprouted in a laboratory but would they grow, blossom and bear seeds to reproduce themselves? That was the crucial question.



him he had been finding them while plowing in a field bordered by willows, elms and poplars.

Dr. Ohga at once identified them as lotus seeds — but how could lotus seeds occur in plowed land — and land that had been plowed by four generations of Liu?

Curious scientist that he was, Dr. Ohga went to Pulantien in South Manchuria to see for himself. There, sure enough, he too found seeds near a grove of poplars and willows. Judging from the peaty nature of the soil, he surmised correctly that the land had once been under water. Perhaps an earthquake, not uncommon to that region, had raised the land; or an eruption of a volcano deep inside the earth had raised the valley floor so that the lake had drained; or a tremendous flood had sluiced out the lake. But judging from the size of the poplars, that must have been at least 150 years ago. If so, the lotus seeds must have lain in the ground all these years. Now if he could get them to sprout, he might

Now our story jumps to Washington. Horace V. Wester of the National Park service took two of these now precious seeds. He filed through their flinty sides and soaked them in water for 15 minutes. Then he put them under moist cotton in a covered dish. On the fifth day, a tiny rootlet came out of one. On the seventh, the other seed sprouted. He transplanted them into large pots immersed in a tank of water in a greenhouse.

If you want to see plants growing today from this oldest living seed ever discovered, then go to the Xenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Washington, D.C. And tell 'em Burns sent you!

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LEAVING WASHINGTON TOGETHER for a brief vacation are the President and Charles E. Wilson, defense secretary, left, with Mrs. Wilson. If there is any difference between them over Wilson's remarks about the National Guard it is not apparent here. (International Soundphoto)

best true-life nature adventure, or the best nature observation, or the best question on nature and wildlife a complete 30-volume set of this world-famous reference work in a handsome Sealecraft binding. Each week new submissions will be considered. Sorry, I simply can't answer your many friendly letters. Please address your letter to: Is That So; care of Medford Mail Tribune, Box 575, Sausalito, Calif.

## TABLE ROCK Many Attend Club Program

By R. E. NEALON

Table Rock—The Table Rock Community meeting Friday night, Jan. 25, drew a larger attendance than usual, with many visitors present from other parts of the valley.

The program consisted of a "litterbug" skit by members of the Central Point Garden club, a trumpet solo, by Jeffrey Anhorn, accompanied by his mother, both of Central Point, a short play, "The Scandal," by five Table Rock ladies, Ruth Brown, Norma Matteson, Barbara Taylor, Joyce Robinson, and Lois Smith and a song by Anita and Rita Pierce.

Miss Marjorie Hatten, 4-H leader, a recent sojourner in Norway, showed slides illustrating farm life and conditions in that country, explaining as she went along, farming methods and machinery used in planting and harvesting crops.

Mrs. Ernest Smith, heading a committee to study some plan of arousing more interest in community meetings and spacing the time of meetings, made a report in which plans were submitted to be voted on by members at the next meeting, Feb. 22.

During a round table discussion at Saturday night's meeting of the Sams Valley Grange, it seemed to be the consensus of opinion that the family size farm that Ray Gill, past master of the Oregon State Grange, claims is the back bone of the nation, is fast disappearing as a place to make enough to live and raise a family.

One farmer stated that if the Soil Bank would pay him \$12 an acre for keeping his land idle, he would make more than he does farming it.

The ground was frozen here to a greater depth than for several years. The little woman decided that we should dig a mess of carrots, so we started in with a trowel, and ended up using a pick before we got a few carrots out of the five inches of frozen ground.

The flock of swans that have been coming to this section to winter for about 11 years with this year only 3 or 4 showing up at first, have now increased to some 14.

Jim Cornutt, the Kanes creek poultry and dairyman was up this way last week after feed, and took back with him 10 gallons of drinking water, his water system being frozen.

Of interest to Table Rock folk was the news of the birth of a son, Alan Patrick, Saturday Jan. 19, to the Delmar Dooleys in Tehran, Iran. Mrs. Dooly is the former Thalia Doty, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Doty of this district.

A young black and white dog, about the size of a cocker spaniel, came to the A. C. Allen place recently. The dog is a nice friendly critter, and would be a nice pet for children. It can be obtained by communicating with Mr. Allen.

Mrs. Ray Wyatt left by plane Friday morning to visit her son, Kenneth and family, in Castro valley, Calif. She expects to be gone about two weeks.

A birthday dinner given for J. S. Richardson last Sunday at the R. E. Nealon home was attended by Mr. and Mrs. James Cornutt and Mrs. Emma Houston of Kanes creek, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Leavitt of the Old Stage road and Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Richardson of this district.

L. D. Inskip, our 180-pound doctor, was asking us if we knew of an old timer who told him some 37 years ago about a big snow and flood in the Rogue River valley. The man telling the story was supposed to have been here, and his partner, at the time having built a cabin near the present site of the Table Rock store. When the five feet of snow finally went off, the fast moving water got so high that the cabin was almost submerged before the occupants knew it, and the partner was never seen again but the narrator was saved by getting to Table Rock. The date as "Doc" remembers it was '73. We have heard the same story, but the date was 1860, but we never met the narrator or knew his name.

John B. Caird, deputy assessor, was on official duty here Thursday. He was taking a census of new buildings constructed since last year's census, and buildings torn down or destroyed.

E. A. mentioned to us that he felt complimented that we named our typewriter for him, but we are afraid we spoiled it when we said Eric was an awful poor speller.

The Rev. Allen Hill and family of Central Point, were visitors last Sunday at the local Sunday school.

The Table Rock Ladies club will meet Feb. 14, on Thursday, instead of the usual Wednesday at the Ray Bosworth home.

"Tippie," the watch dog at the Don Wheeler farm, recently increased the dog population by a half dozen, which Mrs. Wheeler says over-stocked the farm, so she is giving the pups to folks who might want just a common dog.

## Medford Attorney Back From Salem

Edward Branchfield, a partner in the legal firm of Roberts, Kellington and Branchfield, returned last week end from Salem where he had been for two weeks.

Branchfield was assisting in the State Bar association's program of furnishing lawyers to draw up bills in their proper form for members of the legislature. The plan has been in effect for the past several sessions, and has been well-received by the legislature.

The Bar association program is one of three ways legislators have of getting bills prepared. The others are through the legislative council and the attorney general's office.

Mrs. Branchfield and their son, Paul, visited Branchfield for a few days during his stay in Salem.

Bolivia's unit of currency is called the Boliviano.

## Leo Ghelardi Buys Bearing Sales Company

Leo Ghelardi of Central Point has announced his purchase of Southern Oregon Bearing Sales Company, 301 North Bartlett st., Medford, from George A. Shuler of Medford.

Ghelardi took over ownership of the establishment on Jan. 1. He said the company will continue to deal in bearings for automotive and industrial use. One additional employee has been hired, Ghelardi said, but no other immediate changes in the company are planned.

**SOUND EFFECTS**

Trenton, N.J. —(U.P.) — The Trenton Symphony orchestra needs the army for some sound effects in its concert production of the opera "Tosca." Maestro Guglielmo Sabatini said he'd ask Fort Dix authorities to fire blanks from a field artillery piece and some rifles offstage. Puccini's opera calls for cannon fire during act one and rifle fire in the final act.

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## JACKSONVILLE Date Set For Smorgasbord

By MRS. C. S. HOSKINS

Jacksonville — The Jacksonville Parent-Teachers association has set the date for their annual Smorgasbord and Square Dance for Feb. 9, according to Mrs. Ross Crowley, general chairman of the event.

It will be held at the Jacksonville school with dinner to be served from 5 until 8 p.m. Mrs. Fred Edens and Mrs. John Neidermeyer will be serving with Mrs. Crowley, co-chairman, and other members of the P.T.A. assisting with serving and preparation of the food.

On the menu will be roast turkey, baked fish and ham, Swedish meatballs and the usual trimmings. There will be a charge of \$1.50 for adults and 75 cents for children under 12. Ten of the valley's popular callers will be on hand for the square dance for which no extra charge will be made. Dancing will be from 8 until 11 p.m.

Some out of town visitors last week were Mr. and Mrs. Albert Peterson of Brainerd, Minn. They spent a day visiting with the J. E. Johnsons with whom they have been friends for 40 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Byron Sanford moved last week to the small house on the Preston ranch on the Applegate. Their home here, at 801 South Third street, has been leased.

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Reavis have recently sold their home at 610 south Fourth street to Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Tetreault of Dark Hollow road near Griffin creek. The Reavis family has

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