

1504 Ridge Road,
Raleigh, N.C. 27607

29 October 1979

Prof. Tom Averill,
1046 Pennsylvania,
Lawrence, Kansas

Dear Dr. Averill:

I am much interested in how Western Writers and Writings are finally having their effects in our Literature. Not that the Old West didn't touch, because it did, and the workmen like Lane Gray were read world wide by English speaking readers. But it has seemed to me that the writers who produced truer thinking in Western Stories and History have had short attention. Paul was one of these. The Southern Writers have had much more impact (I dislike the use of this word for some reason - I suppose because I am a pretty objective Scientist and I hear "Impact" as a sound between two hard objects). But now, with what you are doing in Kansas these thoughtful writers of the Short Grass and Tumble Weed country will be looked at more intelligently. [Excuse my preamble.]

I have your letter of 19 October requesting information about my brother Paul Wellman. Maybe some of what you asks I can help with. You must also write to Paul's

only sister. They were very close, she is still writing books, they had wonderful rapport comparing notes, helping each other, and keeping humour in all their doings, never allowing drivel, I think you will get pictures and a lot from his sister. She is a good writer. I called her last night. (Mrs. Alice Wellman Harris, 3151 College Street, Costa Mesa, California 92626. Tel: 1, 714-546-5949.) She will help you probably more than I. Call her if you want.

(Paul's wife's address: Mrs. Paul J. Wellman, Park Westwood Tower, Apt. 501, 969 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024. She has Paul's sons address, neither I nor my sister have it.)

(Paul's other brother's address: Manly Wade Wellman P.O. Box 744, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Tel: 1-919-942-4912.) But above all get in touch with Alice. Manly is a professional, over 70 books, but my sister is the sound repository of information. Manly will help, and be proud to do so.

Pardon me if I just talk about Paul.

As a boy he and I were thrown close together in Africa. Our parents were very successful missionaries, and all four

children ^{each} had a black companion (called a "nurse boy"), Paul's was Malangey and mine Seke-Seke. They were very jealous boys and we loved them. Paul's Malangey helped in the kitchen a little and that meant we got extra cookies at times, and my Seke-Seke taught us how to catch mole-crickets and flying ants to eat. Seke-Seke had four wives, they all liked me, but Malangey had only one wife who, however, made excellent mush!

We used the language like any other boy. Our playmates were naked kids who teased us about our white skins that got red when the sun burned our shirtlessness (if we could sneak off our shirts). They called my brother "Pai^eloo," I was given a native name since I was born there, "Kanjoy," and they had a hard time with my given name.

Our blacks were Bantus (of the Umbundu tribe). A large tribe that practically worshipped my parents ^{like gods}. My father learned their language to perfection, by using Paul mostly as his teacher. Paul was good at relaying questions about things my father wanted to know, and I think gained his first interest in language before he was 8 years old. Anyway with Paul's suggestions about word uses, my father translated old time songs and gave sermons and made friends in a way he never could have because he knew nuances from Paul.

I was sickly the first 2 years of my life, nearly died, and in later years my doctors believed I had had a "mild" case of polio. That was before anyone had invented that disease, and Paul worried about me even then though he was only two years older than I. (I recovered well, still have lateral spine curvature, but Paul escaped infection. He watched over me, for many years until I rebelled at his close and loving brotherly acts. He used to wade in after I was about whipped in schoolboy fights back in Kansas and pick off the boy I'd been scrapping with. We both had to do fighting because we talked African language to each other. He always was heavy and about half a head taller, all his life, than I.)

In High School Days my brother enjoyed history and english as his best studies. He made a real place in the hearts of his teachers by his excellent use of the English language and his stories about Indians which he fabricated around his memories in African bush adventures. Soon he began talking with Old Timers around Cimarron and Dodge City in Kansas and then is when he really started his interest in writing and story telling.

About this time our father decided he wanted to change his life, he divorced his family and it was a terrible thing for Paul. He realized more about what it meant than the rest of us. He was 13 and he just sort of made the transition to maturity in one year's time. He organized the "four kids" into a viable, honorable, helpful, and

dependable quarter around our mother. Paul landed a job as cowboy with a rancher who lived 8 miles from our home and Paul soon had a good reputation as a young cowboy. The rancher tried to hire Paul permanently but our mother wouldn't hear of it. Meanwhile Paul learned a lot, met many other ranchers, ^{and} cowboys, and Indians and would come home weekends full of stories that he told me when we had time.

I think mothers can have tremendous effects, and ours drew Paul out in his story telling, and she got for us subscriptions to the Saturday Evening Post, The Youth's Companion, and the St. Nicholas. I don't know which Paul liked the best. We were also fairly bathed in books by Kipling, Edgar Rice Burrows, H. G. Wells, Lew Wallace, even Henry and Mark Twain. We read a few books ^{by} ~~about~~ Horatio Alger Jr., but Paul kidded about them unmercifully.

Paul was never a churchy person but he was underneath a religious person in the best sense. We had to go to church, and Paul made up words of hilarious sort that we sang loudly while the rest of the ^{congregation} ~~audience~~ came forth with grand old hymns. Paul enjoyed humour and did a great deal with it. Of all sorts and degrees.

Paul was a very successful journalist with both the Wichita Beacon and Eagle, the Kansas City Star, and then he worked in Hollywood. He taught himself to "run his typewriter" with

all kinds of loud distractions about him.

Paul loved the short grass country, he admired all the best things about the prairie Indian, tumble weeds he viewed with poetry on his tongue, and he helped anyway he could publicizing the regeneration of buffalo herds. He and I disagreed about this, because I lived and worked so long as a scientist in the seething and dripping green jungles in the tropics. He had many a joke about the jungle, nothing but almost religious admiration for the great prairies, for Kansas, and for the near desert.

Ask Paul's sister Alice about dates of Paul's life and his journalistic life. I confess I've been sent around over the earth so much I've lost track of a lot. You can't do everything and I carried a terrible load for many years, and was moved around whether I wanted it or not, to the detriment of family data.

I am afraid I am not being of very great help about Paul, I do want the evening about Paul to be a great success, and give a rounded picture of this beloved brother of mine.

Good luck,

Sincerely

Frederick J. Wellman

Paul was born 14 October 1895
in the Oklahoma ship
but first was at Okla.
Jr