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E.S. (Edgar Sharp) McFadden Papers

COLLECTION SUMMARY

IDENTIFIER

MA 53

TITLE

E.S. (Edgar Sharp) McFadden Papers

DATES

1914-2014

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

3.78 linear feet (9 document cases)

NAME OF CREATOR(S)

McFadden, E. S. (Edgar Sharp), 1891-1956

LANGUAGE

English

REPOSITORY

South Dakota State University Archives and Special Collections

Hilton M. Briggs Library (SBL) Room 241, Box 2115

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ABSTRACT

Edgar Sharp McFadden (1891-1956) South Dakotan and graduate of South Dakota State University who developed rust resistant varieties of wheat that lead to saving the lives of millions of people from starvation. He was in the United States Army during World War I and spent most of his career working for the United States Department of Agriculture and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. The collection consists of materials relating to his work with research and production of small grains such as wheat, oats, and flax, and in particular the development of Hope Wheat. In addition, the collection contains biographical information about McFadden and his writings and speeches.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edgar Sharp McFadden was born to James Edgar and Beatrice (Stocking) McFadden on February 3, 1891 in Day County, South Dakota. James E. McFadden came to South Dakota in 1882 to homestead and built a granary-dwelling house combination on his land.

In 1903, James E. McFadden was severely injured when he was gored by a bull. This put the burden of the 1904 spring planting onto Edgar McFadden when he was only thirteen years old. In addition to the regular planting of wheat that year, Edgar S. McFadden planted a small plot with seeds he had selected in 1903 from a few completely beardless wheat plants. He wanted to see if he could develop better grain. McFadden's first crop, including the small plot, was ruined by black stem rust.

In the winter of 1908-1909, the McFadden's left South Dakota and moved to the West Pecos area in Texas where Edgar went into the cattle ranching business in partnership with his father. Over the next three summers, Edgar S. McFadden followed the wheat harvest from Texas to their homestead in South Dakota, and then north and east into the Red River Valley in North Dakota and Minnesota. At this time, he observed that wheat rust started in the south and moved north.

In 1911, Edgar S. McFadden began taking courses in the School of Agriculture at South Dakota State College (SDSC), completing the program in 1914. He began as a freshman at SDSC in the fall of the same year. In 1916, agronomy professor Manley Champlin encouraged McFadden to plant wheat in a small plot of land behind the boarding house where he lived as a student in Brookings. He hoped to transfer the disease resistance of Yaroslav emmer to Marquis, a common bread wheat. While a student at SDSC, McFadden also worked as an assistant in the SDSC agronomy laboratory and in the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station test plots (1913-1917). He received his Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture from SDSC on March 1, 1918.

Following his graduation, McFadden went to work for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a field assistant at the Agricultural Experiment Station in Highmore, South Dakota where he continued his research to develop rust-resistant wheat. During World War I, McFadden joined the United States Army and served from May 25, 1918 to February 25, 1919. Following his military service, he returned to work for the USDA at the Highmore Experiment Station. After completing cereal experiments for the SDSC agronomy department in June 1920, he returned to his farm near Webster in Day County, South Dakota.

He continued his wheat breeding experiments on the land that his parents had homesteaded, and he farmed for a living from September 1, 1920 to February 28, 1929. After his crops were destroyed by drought in 1921, hailed out in 1922, and rusted out in 1923, he mortgaged the farm in order to continue working on his wheat breeding research. During this time McFadden developed the Hope and H44 varieties of rust-resistant wheat.

McFadden returned to work for the USDA on March 1, 1929 as an Associate Agronomist stationed in Redfield, South Dakota and also worked for the USDA at University Farm in St. Paul, Minnesota. He held that position until 1935, when he accepted a position with the USDA and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. In Texas, McFadden continued his research with wheat and other small grains, including oats, barely, and flax.

Edgar S. McFadden is best known for his work developing Hope wheat which is the parent of numerous disease-resistant varieties. He is credited with saving at least 25 million people from starvation, and an estimated \$400 million during World War II.

During his career, McFadden was awarded numerous honors and accolades including an honorary doctor of science degree from South Dakota State College (1950), the Reader's Digest award for meritorious contributions to public welfare (1946), the American Agricultural Editors' Award for outstanding service to American agriculture and country life (1947), and the *Progressive Farmer* man-of-the-year award (1950). He also received the USDA distinguished service award (1949), a citation of merit from the Texas Chemurgic Council (1947), and honored by the American Agricultural Education Association (1945) for outstanding service. Prior to his death, McFadden received the prestigious John Scott Legacy Medal and Premium (1955). In 1966, a granite memorial to McFadden was erected in Webster, South Dakota.

In 1918, McFadden married Mabel Blakeslee. They had two daughters, Carol and Phyllis, and a son, James.

Edgar S. McFadden passed away at his home in College Station, Texas on January 5, 1956.

CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is organized into series.

- Awards, Honors, and Memberships
- Biographical Materials
- Collected Material Relating to McFadden's Work
- Correspondence
- Hope Wheat and Other Varieties
- Research
- McFadden's Writings and Speeches

CONTENTS NOTE

Awards, Honors, and Memberships

This series contains information on E.S. McFadden's memberships to various professional and honorary societies including the American Genetic Association and Sigma Xi. Materials regarding the numerous awards and honors presented to McFadden are also part of this series.

Biographical Materials

This series consist of biographies, newspaper clippings, family information, photographs, and obituaries and memorials. There is also an interview with McFadden during the Texas State Fair and material regarding the movie *Waves of Green* about McFadden and his work. In addition, documents relating to McFadden's service in the United States Army during World War I can be found in this series.

Collected Material Relating to McFadden's Work

This series includes articles and other documents written about McFadden's research regarding plant pathology of small grain crops in particular his work with wheat.

Correspondence

The correspondence series contains letters with colleagues and on various topics including polio and his objection to the United States becoming involved in World War II.

Hope Wheat and Other Varieties

This series consists of documents relating to McFadden's development and sale of wheat varieties between 1925 and 1933. Testimonials are included in the series are regarding the wheat and registration certificates for Hope Wheat and Webster Wheat.

McFadden's Writings and Speeches

This series includes various articles and speeches McFadden had done during his career. Of interest is his essay entitled My Aim in Coming to College written in 1914, his article regarding Wheat-Rye Hybrids in the Journal of Heredity (1917), the Genome Approach in Radical Wheat Breeding published in the Journal of the American Society of Agronomy (1947), and an undated essay labeled Hope Wheat: the Boyhood Dream of Disease Resistant Wheat. Other items in this series include speeches and articles regarding wheat and wheat breeding, development and production of small grains such as flax and oats, and heredity.

Research

The research series consists of McFadden's field notebooks from 1916 through 1951, spanning his career in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Texas. The notebooks detail his work not only with varieties of wheat, but also oats, barley, and flax.

ACCESS

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS

This collection is open to researchers without restrictions. The materials in the Archives do not circulate and may be used in-house only.

Researchers conducting extensive research are asked to make an advance appointment to access archival material. Please call or e-mail prior to visiting the collection and indicate as much detail as possible about a particular topic and intended use.

PHYSICAL ACCESS

South Dakota State University supports access to the materials, published and unpublished, in its collections. Nonetheless, access to some items may be restricted as a result of their fragile condition or by contractual agreements with donors.

RELATED MATERIALS

RELATED ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

Edgar S. McFadden Collection, South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum, Brookings, South Dakota.

Norman E. Borlaug papers. UA-01014. Archives and Special Collections, Elmer L. Andersen Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Rockefeller Foundation records

ONLINE CONTENT

Edgar S. McFadden collection on the Digital Library of South Dakota:
<https://explore.digitalsd.org/digital/collection/mcfadden>

PUBLICATIONS

McFadden, Edgar A. Wheat-Rye Hybrids. *Journal of Heredity* 8, no. 7, (July 1917): 335

Champlin, Manley, and E. S. McFadden. Acme Wheat / [Manley Champlin and Edgar McFadden]. In *Bulletin / South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station ; No. 194, [325]-356*. Brookings, S.D. : Agricultural Experiment Station, South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, 1921.

McFadden, E.S. A Successful Transfer of Emmer Characters to Vulgare Wheat. *Journal of the American Society of Agronomy* 22, no. 12 (December 1930): 1020–34.

McFadden, E.S. Brown Necrosis, a Discoloration Associated With Rust Infection in Certain Rust-Resistant Wheats. *Journal of Agricultural Research* 58, no. 11 (June 1, 1939)

McFadden, E. S., and E. R. Sears. The Origin of Triticum Spelta and Its Free-Threshing Hexaploid Relatives. *Journal of Heredity* 37, no. 4, (April 1946): 107–116

Erickson, A. W., and Edgar Sharp McFadden. *McFadden's Hope : Fighting Plant Breeders Win Battle for Bread*. [Minneapolis, MN : Field Notes Crop Reporting Service], 1945.

Atkins, Irvin Milburn, and E. S. McFadden. Oat Production in Texas / I.M. Atkins and E.S. McFadden. In *Bulletin / Texas Agricultural Experiment Station ; No. 691*. College Station, Tex. : Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, 1947.

McFadden, E.S., and E.R. Sears. The Genome Approach in Radical Wheat Breeding. *Journal of the American Society of Agronomy* 39, no. 11 (November 1947): 1011–26.

SUBJECT HEADINGS

- McFadden, E. S. (Edgar Sharp), 1891-1956– Archives
- Agricultural innovations
- Agriculturists – United States – History
- Agronomists – South Dakota
- Agronomists – Texas
- Barley – Research
- Flax – Research
- Oats – Research
- Research notes
- South Dakota – Day County
- South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts
- South Dakota State University – Alumni and alumnae
- Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
- United States. Department of Agriculture
- Wheat – Breeding
- Wheat Disease and pest resistance
- Wheat – Field Experiments
- Wheat – Research
- Wheat – Research – South Dakota
- Wheat – Research – Texas

- Wheat rusts
- Wheat – Seeds
- Wheat – South Dakota.
- World War 1, 1914-1918

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CONTAINER LIST

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	1	Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas Students' Certificate of Appreciation	1947
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	2	American Agricultural Editors' Association National Award Certificate	1948
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	3	American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow Certificate	1951
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	4	American Genetic Association Membership Certificate	1917
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	5	American Legion Membership Card	1928
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	6	American Society of Agronomy Fellow Certificate	1948
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	7	Boy Scouts of America Membership Cards	1931-1938
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	8	Distinguished Service Award from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	1949
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	9	John Scott Medal - Nomination Materials	1947-1956
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	10	Kiwanis Club Membership	1952
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	11	McFadden Appreciation Day in Webster, South Dakota, October 17, 1947	1947
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	12	Sigma Xi Membership Certificate	1952
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	13	South Dakota State College, Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science - Correspondence	1950

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	14	Texas Chemurgic Council Certificate of Recognition	1947
Awards, Honors, Memberships	1	15	Twenty Years of Service in the USDA Certificate	1948
Biographical Materials	1	16	Accomplishments	undated
Biographical Materials	1	17	Biography Written by Caroline Blakeslee (McFadden's Mother-in-Law)	undated
Biographical Materials	1	18	Civil Service Scientific Assistant Examination Report	1918
Biographical Materials	1	19	County Agent Handbook	1919
Biographical Materials	1	20	Dates and Events in the Life of Edgar McFadden	undated
Biographical Materials	1	21	Edgar S. McFadden Symposium	2014
Biographical Materials	1	22	Exhibit about McFadden at the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum	1971
Biographical Materials	1	23	Film about McFadden, Waves of Green, publicity	1949
Biographical Materials	1	24	Interview with McFadden at Texas A&M College System Day at the Texas State Fair, October 17, 1948	1948
Biographical Materials	1	25	Journal	1937
Biographical Materials	1	27	McFadden Chronology and Family Information	2013
Biographical Materials	1	29	McFadden Seed Farm	1926-1927, undated
Biographical Materials	1	26	McFadden, Beatrice (McFadden's Mother)	1934
Biographical Materials	1	28	McFadden, Mabel (McFadden's Wife)	1974-1976
Biographical Materials	2	1	Military Service Booklets and Newspaper Clippings	1917, 1919
Biographical Materials	2	2	Military Service Order of Induction, Furlough Telegram, and Honorable Discharge Papers	1918-1919
Biographical Materials	2	3	Newspaper Clippings	1918-1976, undated
Biographical Materials	2	4	Newspaper Clippings of McFadden and Norman Borlaug	1951
Biographical Materials	2	5	Newspaper Clippings of McFadden's Trip to Mexico	1948

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Biographical Materials	2	6	Obituaries and Memorials	1956
Biographical Materials	2	8	Photographs of Family, Work, Hobo Day (25 Black & White Photographs)	1917-1951, undated
Biographical Materials	2	7	Professional and Military Service of E.S. McFadden	undated
Biographical Materials	2	9	Publications about McFadden, Burbank of the Wheat Fields, <i>Reader's Digest</i> , Volume 49, Number 293, September 1946	1946
Biographical Materials	2	10	Publications about McFadden, Edgar McFadden: Hope Inspired, by Kevin Kephart	2013
Biographical Materials	2	11	Publications about McFadden, <i>Half a Century of Progress of the South Dakota Crop Improvement Association</i> , (page 36)	1954
Biographical Materials	2	13	Publications about McFadden, McFadden's Hope, by A.W. Erickson	1945
Biographical Materials	2	14	Publications about McFadden, Men and Women of Distinction at South Dakota State College	undated
Biographical Materials	2	15	Publications about McFadden, <i>South Dakota State College Alumnus</i> , Volume 46, Number 5, January 1956	1956
Biographical Materials	2	16	Publications about McFadden, Texas A and M 75th Anniversary Booklet	1951
Biographical Materials	2	12	Publications about McFadden, The Man Who Gave Us Bread, <i>Farm Journal</i> , Volume 70, Number 9, Page 28	1946
Biographical Materials	2	17	South Dakota State College Course Schedule	1917
Biographical Materials	2	18	Texas A and M College Graduate Work	1936-1937
Biographical Materials	2	19	Writings about McFadden	undated
Biographical Materials	2	20	Writings about McFadden, Poem to Edgar McFadden	undated
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	1	Donahue, Roy L., Story of My Life by A. Soil, Texas A and Cooperative Extension, Soil Building and Conservation Series, Number 11	1949
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	2	Handwritten Notes Regarding Hope Derivatives, Possibly by Darrell Wells or V.A. Dirks	undated
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	3	History of Small Grain Crops in Texas	1976
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	4	Important 1929 Crop Percentages in Eight South Dakota Counties	1929

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	6	Letter to K.S. Quisenberry from H. Macy	1950
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	5	Letter to V.A. Dirks from S.C. Salmon Regarding First Observance of Wheat Resistance to Stem Rust	1953
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	8	Materials from the Rockefeller Archive Center Regarding McFadden's Hope Wheat	1943-1951
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	7	McFadden and Small Grains Pathology	1945-2001
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	9	Petersen, R.F., Twenty-five Years' Progress in Breeding New Varieties of Wheat for Canada, <i>The Empire Journal of Experimental Agriculture</i> , Volume 26, Number 102, April 1958	1958
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	10	Rust Resistance in Mexican Wheat	1951
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	11	Small Grain Breeding	undated
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	12	Waldron, L.R., Breeding Common Wheat Since 1916 at the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station	1950 circa
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	13	Wheat and Small Grains	1914-1982
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	14	Wheat Breeding	1940-2013
Collected Material Relating to Work	3	15	Yields of Wheat Varieties in South Dakota	undated
Correspondence	3	16	Correspondence	1930-1948
Correspondence	3	17	Erickson, A.W.	1945
Correspondence	3	18	Objections to Joining the War in Europe	1941
Correspondence	3	19	Polio	1955-1963
Hope Wheat and Other Varieties	3	20	Evaluations of Hope Wheat	1925-1933
Hope Wheat and Other Varieties	3	21	Hope Wheat Testimonials and Correspondence with Farmers	1927
Hope Wheat and Other Varieties	3	22	Newspaper Clipping on Webster CI3780	1925
Hope Wheat and Other Varieties	3	23	Project Report, Western Wheat Investigations, Comparative Value of Hope Wheat and H-44 Wheats by J. Allen Clark	1929
Hope Wheat and Other Varieties	3	25	Registration of Hope Wheat and Webster Wheat by the USDA	1929
Hope Wheat and Other Varieties	3	24	Seed Sales through the Farmer Seed and Nursery Company, Faribault, Minnesota	1929

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Writings and Speeches	9	2	Artificial Synthesis of Triticum Spelt	1944
Writings and Speeches	9	3	Autobiography for a Farm	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	4	Bananas: a Possible Source of Polio Virus (Preliminary Report)	1953
Writings and Speeches	9	5	Bearing Mendel's Law of Heredity and Malthusian Doctrine of Population	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	6	Breeding Disease Resistant Cereals	1938
Writings and Speeches	9	7	Breeding Rust Resistant Small Grains for South Texas	1939
Writings and Speeches	9	8	Confessions of a Plant Breeder	1925-1926
Writings and Speeches	9	9	Crosses of Wheat with Closely Related Genera	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	10	Emergency Oil Crops Flaxseed	1943
Writings and Speeches	9	12	Flax Production in South Texas	1939
Writings and Speeches	9	11	Flaxseed Production in the Texas Blacklands	1939
Writings and Speeches	9	13	Foreword	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	14	Genome Approach in Radical Wheat Breeding, <i>Journal of the American Society of Agronomy</i> , Volume 39	1947
Writings and Speeches	9	15	Hope Wheat: the Boyhood Dream of a Disease Resistant Wheat that Came True	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	17	Important Developments in Small Grains and Flax	1941
Writings and Speeches	9	19	Improving Small Grain Crops of Texas	1946
Writings and Speeches	9	18	Improving Small Grain Crops of Texas	Undated
Writings and Speeches	9	16	Inheritance of Family Traits	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	20	Kiwanis Club in Redfield, South Dakota Talk	1929
Writings and Speeches	9	21	Long Road of Wheat Improvement	1947
Writings and Speeches	9	22	McFadden's Remarks	undated

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Writings and Speeches	9	23	Mental Inventory	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	24	My Aim in Coming to College	1914
Writings and Speeches	9	25	Nature Cure	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	26	New Sources of Resistance to Stem Rust and Leaf Rust in Foreign Varieties of Common Wheat, USDA Circular 814, July 1949	1949
Writings and Speeches	9	27	Notes on Grains	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	28	Old Number Six and the Texas Small Grains Program, 1889-1969	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	29	Possibilities and Difficulties in the Field of Wheat Crossing	1928
Writings and Speeches	9	30	Problems in Small Grain Production in Southern Texas	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	31	Problems that Challenge the Wheat Breeder	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	32	Product from the Desert	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	33	Program and Progress in Developing Rust Resistant Small Grains	1938
Writings and Speeches	9	34	Radical Wheat Breeding	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	35	Red Rust: the Story behind the Story	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	36	Relation of New Rust Resistant Small Grains to the Future Food Supply	1940
Writings and Speeches	9	37	Rust Situation	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	1	Scientific and Popular Publications of E.S. McFadden	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	38	Seabreeze Wheat	1947
Writings and Speeches	9	39	Signpost	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	40	Small Grain	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	41	Student Room	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	42	Synthetic Rust-proof Bread Wheats in the <i>Dakota Farmer</i> , February 1, 1925	1925

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
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Writings and Speeches	9	44	Untitled Flaxseed	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	45	Untitled Polio	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	47	Untitled Speech	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	46	Untitled Wheat Production in Mexico	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	48	Webster 50 Years Ago	undated
Writings and Speeches	9	49	Wheat-Rye Hybrids in <i>The Journal of Heredity</i> , Volume 8, Number 7, July 1917	1917
Research	4	1	Flax (1 Black & White Photograph and 1 Black and White Negative)	1948
Research	4	2	News Release - Combat Race 15 B of Wheat Stem Rust	1950
Research	4	3	News Release - Seabreeze	undated
Research	4	4	Research Notebooks	1916
Research	4	5	Research Notebooks	1917
Research	4	6	Research Notebooks	1925-1926
Research	4	7	Research Notebooks	1927, 1928
Research	8	3	Research Notebooks	1945, 1946
Research	8	4	Research Notebooks	1947, 1948
Research	6	4	Research Notebooks Head Rows: Oats, Barley and Wheat	1934
Research	4	9	Research Notebooks Nursery	1930
Research	5	1	Research Notebooks Nursery	1930
Research	8	6	Research Notebooks Prairie View	1951, undated
Research	5	3	Research Notebooks Single Row Nursery and Field Plots	1931
Research	5	2	Research Notebooks Winter Wheat and Webster Nurseries	1931
Research	7	3	Research Notebooks: 8 ft. Rows	1937
Research	7	2	Research Notebooks: 8 ft. Rows	1936, 1937
Research	5	4	Research Notebooks: 9-Row Nursery and Field Plots	1931, 1932
Research	5	6	Research Notebooks: CO-OP and Rust Nurseries, Various Nurseries	1932, 1933
Research	6	1	Research Notebooks: CO-OP Nurseries and Field Plots	1933

Series	Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Research	6	3	Research Notebooks: CO-OP Nurseries and Field Plots	1934
Research	4	8	Research Notebooks: Field Plots	1929, 1930
Research	8	1	Research Notebooks: Flax and Oats	1939
Research	5	5	Research Notebooks: Head Row Wheats and Various Nursery	1932
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Research	6	2	Research Notebooks: Head Rows Oats, Barley and Wheat	1933
Research	6	5	Research Notebooks: Lake City Nurseries and Small Grains, Texas	1934
Research	7	1	Research Notebooks: Nurseries and Yield Data	1935, 1936
Research	7	5	Research Notebooks: Rod Rows and Field Plots	1938
Research	7	4	Research Notebooks: Victoria and Head Rows	1937, 1938
Research	7	6	Research Notebooks: Wheat Rod Rows, Head Rows, and Rust Nurseries	1939
Research	8	5	Research Notebooks: Winter Wheat	1949