

## Appendix F: William Page Diary

*From the diary of William R. Page (Archives, Institute for Regional Studies, NDSU. Mss 241)*

William R. Page was born in Hamilton, ND where he graduated from high school in 1914. He attended Iowa State University, receiving his degree in Animal Husbandry in 1922. He was Grand Forks County Agent with the North Dakota Extension Service from 1927 to 1953. He married Mae Walker in 1926 and they had two daughters, Carol and Sandra. Gardening was one of his hobbies. After he retired, he gardened more extensively and took particular interest in fruit shrubs and trees.

The following excerpts have been taken from his diaries. I found the years after his retirement to be most fruitful in discussion of gardening, but the diaries are too extensive (daily entries for 50 years) to examine closely. I quoted every entry relating to gardens for the months I examined.

**Please note I have not checked with Institute for Regional Studies archivist John Bye about permission to quote from this diary, though I informed him of the nature of my research. You may contact him at [john.bye@ndsu.edu](mailto:john.bye@ndsu.edu).**

1942

Tuesday May 5, 1942. [at top of page is written "Sun!"] Rake garden – too wet to dig.

Friday May 8, 1942. [top of page is written "Planted Garden"] Plant radishes, lettuce, carrots, beets, & chard after supper. Smiths had no onion sets. Did not know where to get them. The "fruit" I'll miss the most. Put P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> on top radishes, lettuce, 1<sup>st</sup> row carrots and then every other row. Volunteer lettuce has leaves size of my thumb nail. Plan to transplant and water clump freely. Mrs. Nuroder plums in full bloom. Lavelles apricot nearly so.

Tuesday May 12, 1942. After supper I dig up more garden.

Sunday May 17, 1942. Radishes up in garden. Honeysuckle outside window . . . .  
Neuroders bush (old one) a crown of dark purple.

[notes in the diary indicate that 1942 is a wet spring and 2 degrees cooler than average]

Sunday May 23, 1942. Carol helps me plant beans and cucumbers . . .

Sunday May 24, 1942. [Page has driven out to his farm where his fruit trees grow] . . .  
Note new fruit trees not growing.

Thursday May 28, 1942. Picked up 15 Victory tomatoes at Vairs' [spelling?]. Planted before supper. Put cut worm rings around them after supper. Phosphate on all of them. Beans are poking through.

Thursday June 4, 1942. I buy pole beans and put to soak.

Friday June 5, 1942. Plant pole beans before lunch.

Tuesday June 9, 1942. Emil Sulemid [spelling?] reports for work [at Extension office]. Send him to Gilby for garden meeting [this is probably a reference to Victory Garden activity.] Mae & I to Rotary dinner at country club. Leave at 8 for garden meeting. Not one show up except M. Kernal and Mrs. Kannowski.

Wednesday June 10, 1942. A dozen women attend garden meeting (committees) and we hold forth until 10:40.

Thursday June 11, 1942. Rain today. . . . Read but can do no work in garden because of wet soil.

Saturday June 20, 1942. Dug up asparagus bed after last picking.

Monday June 22, 1942. Cold sprinkles. Hit 29° at Parshall & freezing temp at 9 points in state by 6:30 a.m. June 23 no frost here.

Monday July 6, 1942. Hoe garden.

August 31, 1942. Picked a small pan of ripe tomatoes - birds eating them now. Cool month. Crops mature slowly.

Wednesday September 2, 1942. Mae picks a pail of green tomato for pickles and nearly a pail of beans [these were picked at Grandma's house, or sometimes called Mae's house]. Back home I pick a gallon of nearly ripe tomatoes to save from light frost forecaste [sic] for tonight.

[In September Page visited a number of orchards with apple and plum trees, and grape vines]

Hansho plums still green on September 10 [at top of page]

Thursday September 10, 1942. Beta grapes a heavy crop

Sunday September 13, 1942. About 4 o'clock we leave for country and have Donna and Ruth Christianson along for girls company. Starts to rain so we stop, pick field corn & have corn and wiener roast on Kush farm.

Friday September 18, 1942. Mae & I go for 2 bushels ripe tomatoes after supper. Gardner piling hay along north side to burn for frost protection. Tomatoes 85c bushel.

Saturday September 19, 1942. Mae and Sandra canned 2 bushels of tomatoes. I helped clean up loose ends of job . . . . Mae has bad headache and cries hysterically about it for a few minutes. Two more aspirin and ice packs quiet her and she fixes watermelon pickles after supper which she ate heartily enough after we had it ready.

Tuesday September 22, 1942. Frost again.

1943

Tuesday April 20, 1943. Dug up piece of garden.

Thursday April 22, 1943. Art Wardner asks me to talk on Victory Garden program at Kiwanis. . . . Plant radish lettuce, carrots & onion set (1 lb for 50c) in garden soil of fine tilth. Carol helps with sets & little neighbor girl.

Sunday May 2, 1943. I dig up more garden. Transplant volunteer lettuce, seed beets, card and Chinese cabbage with help of Carol at seeding. As soon do it myself but fine chance to teach the little ones.

[there were few more entries in 1943. I turned then to diary entries after he retired . He takes more interest in flowers after retiring, but continues with his fruit trees on the farm, as well as vegetable gardens at his home, his wife's mother's home, and in the community garden]

1956

Tuesday May 1, 1956. I prune apple trees & note rabbit damage pretty bad in one Hiberna [apple]. I cut cions [sic] for possible grafting uses.

Saturday May 5, 1956. Backyard gardening . . . Dig up veg patch & plant lettuce & carrots. L[ettuce] is Tom Thumb & Salad T a purple.

Tuesday May 8, 1956. I survey fruit trees & note 2 oldest crab trees killed by rabbits & heavy pruning, barking & bud eating of grafts even in the tops of trees.

Thursday May 17, 1956. Garden started. I planted Golden Beauty hybrid sweet corn a.m. . . . Then I plant Golden Rocket corn & onions and parsnips bought at Smiths p.m.

Saturday May 19, 1956. Shot female rabbit in garden with regret but garden things need protection, I think. Dress it for food.

Wednesday May 23, 1956. I plant Manitoba tomatoes in paper cups & squares after . . . breakfast.

Thursday May 24, 1956. Beans Melons Corn . . . Plant golden Bantam corn, Stringless green and Top Crop beans, Far North and N. H. Midget melons and Morcrop cukes in Academy [community garden] plot. Note earlier corn planted has shoots in ground – 7 days.

Friday May 25, 1956. Grafts set. I set 2-3 doz apple grafts on Rescue & Hibernial [apples]. Plum buds are swelling to bloom all week. Rescue & Chestnut apples are leafing out several days earlier than other apples – Goodland, too.

Saturday May 26, 1956. I hoe backyard garden; now ready for rain.

Friday June 1, 1956. Plant peppers & tomatoes for Sandra [now in her own home with a family]. Move last 2 rhubarbs.

Tuesday August 7, 1956. I picked beans & cukes Help Mae can 14 pts beans.

Thursday August 9, 1956. Dad & I get corn, ripe tomatoes, cukes at garden & meet neighbor gardener.

Friday August 10, 1956. After supper we go to Carols, taking her canned corn along & 2 big ripe tomatoes (44c at Red Owl)

Saturday August 11, 1956. After a few duties I pick beans & Mae cans 'em for Carol. I go to Carls to help with garage - bring a few early spuds, cukes & tomatoes.

Thursday August 16, 1956. I picked garden stuff and on to Sandra's to help Carl out with his overhead garage door construction. Home for 12 & again stop at garden for corn. Note kids have stolen all w.melons of promise, while still green. Rest awhile after lunch & to spruce farm where I note apples have been stolen off trees (except a few on north tree). I . . . pick a gallon plus of Convoy [the Convoy is a cherry plum] plus a few Tecumseh nearly ripe. . . . Home by suppertime. Its sweet corn & Bantam is getting past prime now.

Friday August 6, 1956. I went to garden, hoed a few weeds & brought back mmelons, cukes, & tomatoes. I saw one [of] our citrons (?) in neighbors garden which some kids broke open & discarded as a poor "eating" melon.

Saturday August 18, 1956. Mae canned 10 pts Convoy Cherries, my whole crop from one tree at Spruce farm.

Friday August 24, 1956. Had "late patch" corn for supper.

Sunday August 26, 1956. Go to garden. Pick tomatoes, first Far North m.melon (nearly ripe) and 2 doz late sweet corn for our picnic.

Friday September 7, 1956. Still harvesting corn, tomatoes, and melons.

Wednesday September 12, 1956. I picked tomatoes at plot & last of sweet corn. . . . Helped Mae can or fix 7 quarts tomatoes for canner.

Friday September 14, 1956. 25° deep frost. All tender things are frozen now.

Saturday September 15, 1956. Carl stopped in for DDT for their house use & I give him my garden duster.