

Subject: draft of book proposal
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Date: Sun, 18 Mar 2007 14:41:23 GMT
To: msm@wjh.harvard.edu

Dear Matt: Thanks for a great first visit. We got a lot accomplished. I enclose a draft of the proposal. Make any corrections or additions and send back to me so I can submit it to Judy Cuddihy, the acquisitions editor at CSHL Press. Thanks, Elof

PROPOSAL

Working title: *AGENT ORANGE*

Authors: Elof Carlson and Matthew Meselson

Present stratus: Elof Carlson has visited and conducted his first meeting and interview with Matthew Meselson at Harvard. He has begun taking notes for the book; he has prepared an extended outline (enclosed); and he has worked out a schedule for reading the materials pertinent to the book at his home and at Harvard. He will be assisted by Meselson's staff, especially Sandy Ropper, who has set up a room in the basement of the 16 Divinity Avenue Laboratory for him to work when he makes his trips. He plans about ten trips from 3 to 5 days each for taking notes and Xeroxing items that will be studied in Setauket at his home. Meselson and Carlson also hope to arrange, with Jan Witkowski and Ludmilla Pollock, a small meeting at the Banbury Center of about 15 key players in the herbicide movement especially in the Vietnam War era. It will provide an oral history and a retrospective on many issues that the book addresses.

Brief description of the proposed book: *Agent Orange* will be a historical and analytical study of how herbicides arose and how they were used in peace and war. It will study the motivations and values used by the scientists, civilian purchasers, government agencies, manufacturers, marketers, military strategists, journalists, and politicians involved. It will assess the effectiveness of the spraying programs (domestic and military), ecological consequences, and the short term and long term health effects on those exposed to it during manufacture or application. Those using the book will see the origins of observational and experimental plant physiology, the discovery of plant growth and development regulators, the applications of growth regulators to weed control, the chemical industries' efforts to develop weed killers, and the eventual military uses of plant hormones as biocides. It will study all stages of the uses of these agents and the unintended outcomes from their uses as well as the multiple points of view on both the strategy for their use and the assessment of damage from their use. The book is not a polemic. It is a serious effort to study Agent Orange as a historical episode that reveals much about the relation between science and society.

Carlson

Why is this important? There is no single authoritative work on the history of Agent Orange written from the experience and perspective of a scientist and historian of science. Our joint authorship confers a scholarly approach because both of us have worked on Agent Orange and we have complimentary skills that make this book useful for a wide range of readers. We believe veterans of the Viet Nam War, military colleges, ethics courses, courses in military history, lawyers involved in litigation, journalists seeking background information, scientists desiring to know more about the history of herbicides and plant growth regulators, and historians of science will find this volume useful. It will include what is known, what is still unresolved, and what needs to be done to address issues that have been neglected. The source material we are using is enormous and contains published and unpublished materials and many that have been cleared from their early history as military secrets. The oral interview material will give an eye witness feeling to the readers of the book.

Estimated time involved for the project: We believe most of the documents will be surveyed and abundant notes on most of the proposed chapters will be available by the end of the summer 2007. Carlson will send drafts of chapters to Meselson for comments and he will incorporate those leads, corrections, and multiple interpretations. We believe a first draft manuscript suitable for review will be available early in 2008 and we hope the book will be published later that year. We expect it to be about 350 to 400 pages, including illustrations and references.