



August 16, 1990

Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
Professor and Director  
Division of Epidemiology  
School of Public Health  
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Dear Henry:

Many thanks for your comments re the draft manuscript and for the CVs for Joe Anderson and yourself. The insights that you have provided will be incorporated in the revised version. Again, thanks. I hope that you are having a good summer.

The "grapevine" tells me that you may relinquish some of your extensive administrative responsibilities so that you can "profess" more. Not a bad move.

Sincerely yours,

E.R. Buskirk, Ph.D.  
Professor of Applied Physiology

ERB/bmm

410 Groveland Avenue No.802  
Minneapolis MN 55403  
8 July. 1990

Prof. E. M. Buskirk  
Noll Laboratory of Human Performance Research  
118 Noll Laboratory  
University of Pennsylvania  
Univ. Park, PA 16802

COPY

*File  
Buskirk*

Dear Buz,

Thank you for the copy of your presentation at the meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine. I am impressed with it and, as I said before, I marvel at the amount of material you were able to gather for it. You said I should feel free to mark up the draft but I write so poorly by hand now that I'll put my comments on the word processor. Margaret, as usual, will correct my typing errors she sees on the monitor. From your letter I take it that the final ms. will use my comments and corrections made in my previous letter to you.

As noted before, we never asked permission from the USSR to go to the high mountains. We wanted to go to the Pamirs and for that we needed permission from India which was refused. The alternative was the Andes at the wrong time of the year. For that no permission from Chile was needed.

Our first war-related job came from a request by the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps to design and test a ration for paratroops. To this day I don't know why they called on me. Neither we nor the military were interested in vitamins; the problem was to put calories in a very small packet of non-perishable food.

Col. Rohland Isker came here and he and I selected food items from a grocery store, put them in brown paper bags and tried them out with a platoon of infantry at nearby Fort Snelling. Some changes were made and, as you noted, we got help from Wrigley and others in putting the ration in water-tight packages to fit in an army jacket. I wrote before about the mistake, in my view, of using the paratroop ration for infantry where there was no real need or emergency.

In regard to the starvation study, when our work for the Army was winding down we were concerned with what would be the effects of the great food shortages caused by the war in northern Europe. The military was putting conscientious objectors in concentration camps and in my official position as a Special Assistant to the Secretary of War I could ask why not put some of them to use in an experiment to study the effects of semi-starvation so we could better cope with the post-war problems of half-starved populations.

When the military agreed to the proposition the problem was where to house the volunteers among the objectors. My friend Frank McCormick, Director of Athletics, offered space in the stadium, the University authorities approved and there we housed, fed and studied the starvation subjects with 18 assistants housed with them to monitor and take care of emergencies among them.

The end of the war brought attention to the newly recognized problem

of coronary heart disease. Our idea was to find the characteristics of susceptible men so attempts could be made to change them. We were looking for what later would be called risk factors. Out of this work and similar work done in other institutions the major risk factors are now known -- high serum cholesterol, blood pressure and smoking. Eventually we decided to learn from the experiments of nature as revealed in different populations. The decision was made to concentrate on villages where we could be sure of well-defined samples -- not poorly defined as you wrote. The definition was all men aged 40 to 59 permanently in the village or, in Zutphen a statistically chosen four-ninths of all men aged 40 to 59.

About publications, I have no record of a paper in 1935 by Taylor and me. Please advise.

Some of the things you write about the personnel of the "Lab" are new to me. I am glad you were able to get such information.

For me there are a couple of items you might like to know, not for your paper. Besides my Ph.D. from the University of California I also have a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. To get that required no effort by me. Sir Joseph Barcroft wanted me to stay on in the faculty so he arranged for me to be given the Ph.D. from Cambridge as having more local meaning. I had moved to Cambridge because I received a Rockefeller fellowship which Krogh arranged with no application from me. I moved to Harvard because Henderson offered to double the salary I had at Cambridge and I thought it time to go home after three years. You know why I moved to the Mayo Clinic and then to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

I suppose you know I was a visiting Professor at Oxford in 1951-52. My most prestigious award was election to the Academy of Finland which is patterned after the Academy of France and in Finland is similarly honored. The gold medal that went with the award is worth \$700 as gold. Finally I have big colored parchments stating that I am a Cittadino Onorario (Honorary Citizen) of two towns in Italy. One of them is Gioia Tauro, reputed to be a major headquarters of the Mafia! The other is Pollica, the city of which our village Pioppi is an administrative part. None of this is for your paper.

About other persons at the Lab you should know that Henry Blackburn just received, belatedly, the American Heart Association Gold Heart award. He is now retiring from the directorship to have the freedom of a professor. There are four good candidates for the job.

Finally, I want to stress Margaret's fifty years of invaluable help to me and to many of our projects here and around the world.

As ever,

Ancel Keys



June 9, 1989

Laboratory for Human Performance Research

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Chairman, Department Epidemiology  
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*NT*  
*Reply on scope -*  
*note addresses*  
*& photos needed*

Dear Henry:

I'm going to need some assistance from you or that from one of your current colleagues who is familiar with the past history of the Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene.

I have been asked by the program committee chairman to present the 2nd Historical Lecture at the 1990 Annual Meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine scheduled for Salt Lake City. Carleton Chapman gave the first lecture on "The Long Reach of Harvard's Fatigue Laboratory: 1926-1946." My lecture is to describe the Minnesota Group as a spin-off of the Harvard Fatigue Laboratory. I haven't selected a title as yet, but I would like to start collecting pertinent information.

Do you still have some of the early reprints or copies of manuscripts from the 1940's and early 1950's? If so, I would like to have them.

I know that Ancel, Henry and Carleton all worked in the Harvard Fatigue Lab, but were there others? Are there any old calendars or other records that indicate former associates of the Harvard Fatigue Lab who visited the Laboratory for Physiological Hygiene or worked there for a period, e.g., Have Christiansen, Erling Asmussen or others? I joined the Lab in 1950, but I must confess I didn't pay too much attention to what went on at the Lab in the 1940's other than the starvation experiments and the yearly appraisal of the local businessmen.

Also, if you have Nedra's address or the address of others who might be able to help me gather information, I would appreciate receiving their addresses.

Incidentally, pictures or early illustrations that could be made into slides would be helpful as well. This raises the possibility that you or someone else may have prepared a history of the Lab.

Henry Blackburn

-2-

June 9, 1989

I plan to write to Carleton Chapman, Austin Henschel, Joe Anderson, Jaska Brozek, Olof Michelsen and Paco Grande as well as others who they suggest.

Will Ancel be back in Minneapolis this summer? If so, what is his address and phone number?

I'd also like to contact some of the early graduate students such as Bernard Metz, John Paul Stapp, Bill Castor and others, as well as former employees such as Walter Carlson. You may be able to suggest other names as well. Their addresses would also be useful.

At the moment, I'm only reaching for information and I look forward to interacting with you as I accumulate material.

I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,



E. R. Buskirk  
Professor of Applied Physiology

ERB/bmn



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April 11, 1990

Dr. Elsworth Buskirk ✓ 4/11  
Director  
Laboratory for Human Performance Research  
119 Noll Lab  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

Dear Buzz:

The promised photos are, belatedly, on the way. The enclosed photocopy may amuse you. It will be printed in a few weeks.

Cordially,

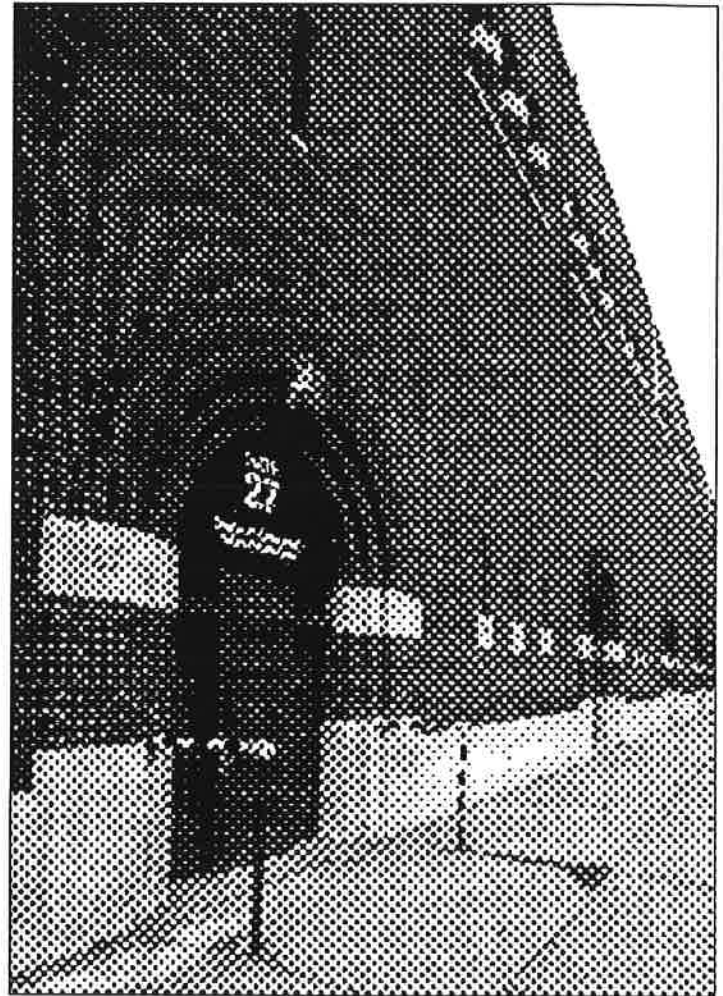
Henry Blackburn, MD  
Professor and Director

✓ pc: K. Ramel

/jrh

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Gate 27 in Memorial Stadium at the University of Minnesota was the primary home of the Laboratory of Physiological Hygiene for more than 30 years and still houses some of the research activities of the Lab's successor, the Division of Epidemiology. Many of the Lab's classic studies took place behind this door, and one of our colleagues at another University has described Gate 27 as the "Mecca" for cardiovascular disease epidemiologists. At this writing, the Stadium is still standing, but it is slated for demolition, leaving future "classics" to be carried out at a yet-to-be-determined location.

*Cover photo/illustration by Patrick O'Leary and Tim Matti*



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July 10, 1990

Dr. Elsworth Buskirk  
Professor of Applied Physiology  
119 Noll Laboratory  
The Pennsylvania State University  
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Dear Buzz:

It looks as if our communications crossed in the mail. I think you have done an awfully nice job. I understand particularly your focus on the early days and the research thrust of the investigators of that time.

You kindly referred to the worldwide Minnesota Code and to the "standard" (W.H.O.) cardiovascular survey methods that were developed in the laboratory, but referred to them without assignation. As you know, those were my "babies" and my particular contribution to the "great leap forward" in cardiovascular disease population studies that Ancel and Henry took.

On page 24, you are technically correct that I was not a graduate student in Physiological Hygiene. I was, however, an LPH post doc and got my M.S. in medicine in 1956 in laboratory researches with Ernst.

On page 33, there was an error in the Division brochures I sent you. Leonard Schuman's appointment should be 1954 to 1983.

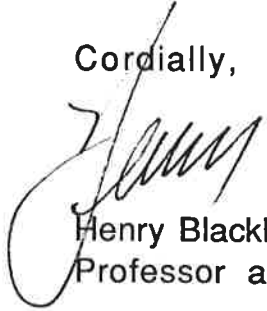
I think the kudos you give Art Leon in "somewhat of a continuation of the original Physiological Hygiene research" are fine. The "move underway to establish a professorship" is true, but Physical Education is moving very slowly, in fact, dragging their feet. The donor is not lined up, and the



situation is uncomfortable. I think it is correct to say that there is "a move underway," but I think it might be embarrassing to Art, and to the Division and to the University, to indicate that Art Leon is the "designee" for the Chair, particularly in this period of equal opportunity. A national search will be required for the Chair, if it ever materializes.

Thanks for your good efforts. Yours is a useful and readable tribute to an important period in history and to most of its major players.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Blackburn", written in a cursive style.

Henry Blackburn, MD  
Professor and Director

/nmf

p.s. Enclosed are Joe Anderson's and my CVs.



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July 3, 1990

Professor Elsworth Buskirk ✓7/3  
Laboratory for Human Performance Research  
119 Noll Laboratory  
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Dear Buzz:

Last night I enjoyed listening belatedly to your "Harvard to Minnesota" story. I was also amused by Ancel Keys' reaction. Please let me know if this is going to be published. If so, it will likely become the definitive external history of the Laboratory. And in that case, of course, I would like to do a little "setting the record straight" myself.

Congratulations on the nice job.

Cordially,

Henry Blackburn, MD  
Professor and Director

/nmf



July 3, 1990

Henry Blackburn, M.D.  
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*Reply on tape*

Dear Henry:

Enclosed please find a draft manuscript that approximates the presentation I made in May at the annual meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine. The information you provided me was greatly appreciated, but now is the time to check my interpretation. Therefore, I'd greatly appreciate your review of the draft manuscript. Please feel free to bring inaccuracies to my attention. If you have pertinent additions, I would appreciate them as well. Note that I have not incorporated illustrations or references as yet.

So, many thanks for your help and I look forward to your further comments.

I sincerely hope that you are having a good summer.

Sincerely yours,

*Ben*

E.R. Buskirk, Ph.D.  
Professor of Applied Physiology

*One omission is for Andersson -  
do you have a copy of his CV that  
I could have?*

ERB/bmm

Enclosure: Draft Ms.