

Scabs in the Refrigerator

*With apologies to Richard Preston, author of The Demon in the Freezer
and with thanks to Nana Henderson, who has agreed to bare her frankest thoughts*

This is a view of the Smallpox Eradication Program from the home front. Most staff spent long periods in the field, away from home and family, whether family was in the home country or the country of assignment. Wives had a unique, sometimes difficult, and always critical role in enabling the work of the SEP.

This section includes excerpts from letters by Nana Henderson, DA's wife, to family in the USA (plus a few from DA, highlighted). She wrote long, newsy letters on carbon paper and kept the 7th (bottom) carbon. Excerpts include sections relevant to the SEP and the build-up to it, but also about DA's private moods, his travel schedule, the upheaval of moving to a new country and the entertaining.

The title alludes to the fact that, on occasion, suspected smallpox specimens were stored in our refrigerator before sending on to the lab. Nana insisted that they not be kept on the same shelf as the milk.

[Editor's note: Letters were essential because, during most of the Hendersons' stay in Geneva, one had to request a line for an overseas telephone call and wait, sometimes for hours, for a line to be available. Calls to the U.S. cost \$12.00 for the first 3 minutes, and were simply not in the Henderson household budget.

1961-1966

Chronology

- 1961 Public Health Service assigns DA as Chief of the Surveillance Section, Epidemiology Branch, Communicable Disease Center (CDC). He was also Chief of the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS).
Luther Terry becomes Surgeon General (SG).
- 1962 A Smallpox Unit was set up in the Surveillance Section under the direction of J Donald Millar.
- 1965 Millar took a year's leave for post-graduate study. Henderson relinquished his role as chief of the Surveillance Section to fill in for Millar. During 1965-66, negotiations with AID resulted in the West African AID-CDC Vaccination Program.
Bill Stewart, one of the first EIS officers, becomes Surgeon General.
- 1966 On his return, Millar assumed leadership of the program, a position he held through 1970, Henderson became chief of WHO's Smallpox Eradication unit in November 1966.

Sep 13 1961

The kids have all been in a Measles Vaccine field trial — the injections were given by jet injector. This blows the vaccine into the skin without use of a needle. They all have reactions today, though Alex is the only one who knows the code. Some were given placebo but there is alum in the water so a localized reaction will occur anyway. We have to keep temperature charts for two weeks and record any abnormal reactions like slight rash, loss of appetite, etc. This is a killed vaccine for the ones that got it, and eventually they will all get it.

The jet-injector has many advantages particularly in mass vaccination programs. No sterilization necessary, and the operator, who does not need to be a doctor or nurse, can handle the patients as fast as they can walk through the line. Some vaccines are too thick to be used this way, and the operator has to be able to strip the gun down and repair it, and they cost fifteen thousand apiece, so they will not be in common use for a while.

[Editor's note: Alex Langmuir was Chief of the Epidemiology Branch at CDC, founder of the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), and DA's boss.]

Jan 3 1963

[Editor's note: On Jan 31 1963, Henderson was awarded a US Public Health Service Commendation Medal. He was cited "in recognition of his sustained leadership and administrative abilities in the nationwide surveillance of communicable diseases." Special mention was made of his work with oral polio vaccine. He did not own a PHS uniform to wear for the ceremony. James Goddard was Chief of CDC.]

DA has located a pair of pants, a gift — used, of course — and a coat in a size 41. We are hoping it will fit better than the 38 he borrowed the other day. So few of the men at CDC have uniforms, but he is determined not to buy one, and heaven knows, we can't afford it. It will all be inside so he will not need a hat. They are having trouble scheduling DA, Dr. Goddard, and the CDC auditorium, so we are not sure at this moment when the thing will be presented. I believe DA would just as soon skip the entire thing. He is a bit embarrassed about it and feels a lot of fellows he knows have made more important contributions.

Jan 29 1963

Tonight the small wives are meeting here. This started out to be the small Wives' Group, as contrasted with the big Wives' Group for all of CDC, but some one of the boys named it the Small Wives' Group – big joke! We were supposed to see Don Millar's slides of Indonesia, but he left for NYC to look at a suspected smallpox case last night.

DA didn't return from Washington until Friday, exhausted, and very discouraged. That for another letter — it concerns CDC's role in international health.

Feb 10 1963

DA came back from Washington tired and discouraged because they are going to license the measles vaccine and he alone felt it is too early. He fought all day alone as spokesman for CDC. This is not for publication, of course.

Feb 25 1963

DA is in Washington for a few days. Mostly measles meetings. Dr. Goddard was supposed to chair these meetings – it is the Surgeon General's advisory committee on measles vaccine. But he went into the hospital yesterday morning. Auricular fibrillation. It is the second time he has had an attack, apparently.

Mar 13 1963

Friday afternoon DA has to go to NYC because CBS is taping a broadcast to go on TV on Sunday afternoon March 24, we think, about 4 to 5 in the afternoon. Charles Collingwood, on measles vaccine. DA has tried everything but outright insubordination and resigning, to get out of this. But Jim Goddard told him the Surgeon General specifically requested DA, Alex and Jim Goddard.

Saturday, the 23rd, he leaves for two and a half to three weeks in Europe. The trip to Europe we are so excited about. He will spend most of the time in Geneva. WHO is putting on a malaria control program, with experts from many countries. There will be lectures five days a week and outside reading scheduled on the sixth. So it is sort of like a course. Only two other Americans have been invited. Invitations had to go through SG's office. That will take two weeks, and then he spends several days in Paris with a former EIS officer stationed there with AID, or some such.

Apr 17 1963

He had a wonderful trip, but missed being on an epidemic. In other words, he got tired very quickly of the course, and wished he were working. Also, it was hard to get into the back woods. When he is on an epidemic, he has to circulate and work with the people in the little towns as well as the cities, and I think it must be lots more interesting.

Apr 25 1963

EIS Conference. Sunday evening we had the annual hot dog feast for the new officers in the backyard. Fellows were interviewed all day — there are thirty five medics alone in this group, so they restricted the group here to 60 men.

Last night was the banquet with the usual reunioning — so many of the old group come back and the papers and seminars given during the week are quite high caliber, say the visitors. So we have entertained informally most evenings this week, DA has had three dinners, and it is busy and fun. The class that has been in service for two years, and is leaving in June, always puts on a skit that seems to

get funnier every year. They really took off on DA last night. Another thing they do is make up a plaque which is always very amusing and very original and significant. Alex has twelve or thirteen of these hanging on his office wall. This year they used the idea of a “year of crises” and the plaque consisted of a pink plate, shattered and glued to the board, each piece labeled with some significant fight or epidemic — measles vaccine licensing, bridge ladder scoring, Zermatt, smallpox, etc.

There is a very remarkable esprit de corps in this group each year. The fellows are loyal to Alex. And they are a crazy bunch.

Jun 4 1963 (to Oberlin College friends)

In 1962, DA went to Manila on cholera epidemic, with brief stops in Tokyo, Taipei, Hong Kong, Sydney, Fiji, and — Samoa. Is leaving this week on a jaunt to cover New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, and — Samoa. He gets to Pago Pago more frequently than we get to Oberlin! Now they are looking for a virgin population (i.e., unvaccinated) of 100,000 for vaccine trials. He's doing the Geneva circuit, too. Was there, Paris & London in March for WHO Symposium on malaria eradication, and goes for 3 weeks in July on measles.

Job continues to intrigue, challenge, and all the things a good job does. The hours are still dreadful — I suspect this will be the case no matter where he finds himself.

Past six months have brought offers of 2 deanships, medical schools — this is what he felt years ago he'd like to do — but right now international health field exerts a strong, frustrating and very exciting pull. I think this will occupy him for next few years anyway.

Jun 19 1963

We have had more than the usual amount of mail from DA. He says it has rained for five days straight where he has been. We sat up till two in the morning, Del and I, Monday night, waiting for a call via ham operator, but it finally came through at 3:30, so the operator talked to him and didn't call either of us. Which was certainly just as well.

[Editor's note: DA was on a trip to New Caledonia, Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. Delmar Ruthig had been medical director for Samoa, and at the time of writing was assistant chief to DA.]

Nov 8 1963

[Son David's teacher reported] that he gets an idea of the way something should be handled and won't be shaken — like a horse who has to be given his head. DA says this is what Alex keeps telling him about himself — DA, i.e.

DA and Alex are giving a paper at APHA meetings in Kansas City next week announcing that the PHS feels the influenza vaccine program has been a complete failure. This, needless to say, had to be cleared by the Surgeon General. This ought to make newspaper copy, and thought you might like an advance. This conclusion they have suspected for some time, but now have three years statistics to back it up.

Nov 15 1963

Well, we took the plunge Monday and Dave, Leigh, Doug and Mommy were all vaccinated for smallpox.

Dec 11 1963

No news of note. DA picked up the receiver the other day and the voice said “Dr. Henderson? This is the White House calling.”

[Editor's note: Nana provides no further details of this intriguing incident.]

Dec 31 1963

We have a couple of inches of real snow this morning, and it is now sleeting. Leigh was invited to a taffy pull and DA took her over on the Epidemiology branch Tote-Gote, a motor scooter we keep in our garage temporarily. The motor scooter was purchased for the immunization bit on the island of Tonga, where there are big hills and no roads. One of the boys is due to go there in January for several months. Well, it wasn't purchased for snow, but it works just fine.

Feb 1 1964

DA has now gone back to the office. He has all but lived there this last week. It is one of those times when they are fiercely busy. They have men in Jordan, Brazil, Viet Nam, Taipei, etc., plus all over the country. Big break in hepatitis vs. clams in New Haven.

[Editor's note: The hepatitis outbreak is perhaps the first time that time DA made waves on a national scale. Press coverage prompted a midnight phone call from the Surgeon General. He was not amused.]

Feb 4 1964

They are so busy at the office they are calling it This Was the Week That Was.* Only it is still going on. DA is constantly on the phone, even when he is home. I am going to make an appointment to see him. He is cutting way down on his cigarettes. And putting on weight. Otherwise he is euphoric about being so busy. EIS has really come into its own this year. Not for publication but Alex is considering a perfectly tremendous job offer — will give his decision March 1.

**That Was the Week That Was was a satirical news show featuring David Frost and airing on NBC during 1964-65.*

Feb 19 1964

I cannot very well describe to you the agony we have been going through in the past two weeks. But I offer a listing of the facts and you can draw your own conclusions. If Alex decides to take the position in NYC, DA will be asked, so he has been told by Dr. Goddard, to take Alex' job as chief of Epidemiology Branch. This has been going on in our minds unofficially since the first of the year, when Alex first discussed it with DA. We couldn't believe he would really leave, but have been quite preoccupied with the whole thing anyway.

Needless to say, we don't want him to leave. DA doesn't really want the job. He would be put in an unenviable position with his own peers, to say nothing of Alex' peers. And he would have to retrench the international program which is just beginning to really go. Well, this was his feeling for weeks — he has been very depressed and upset and consequently so have I. Alex has built this program from absolutely nothing, in 16 years, to the point where, in this administration, with everybody else down here and in Washington being cut back in budgets, they have just received word that money has been provided for them to take 10 additional men into EIS in July. DA feels they are just beginning to build a permanent staff of career officers and that if Alex could stay another 3 or 4 years things would be in great shape.

Alex has taught DA everything he knows about this business, and it would be a personal loss to us both to have them [Alex and his wife Sally] go. However, this sort of thing can't stand in their way, any more than they would stand in DA's way if he wanted to leave.

Well, as it stands now, Alex has committed himself if they can come to terms on salary. And DA and I have accepted the fact that he might very well leave, probably in June. And DA has been thinking of the

job in more positive and optimistic terms, and has done some talking to the ones that Alex had already talked to. One fellow, who is very good and has been on the fence about staying permanently, told DA if he is chief of the branch, he will stay. The feeling expressed by Don Millar and Jim Mosley was, "let's grab the ball and run" — "we can carry it as a team", etc.

Alex is one of those extraordinary individuals who can administrate and teach with equal facility, and DA feels without teamwork, he could never carry the teaching end of it. They have men coming from literally all over the world to take the course they give every year in July.

Feb 25 1964

DA's been out of town as of Sunday, but returns tomorrow night, if all goes well. Cleveland, Columbus, both in Ohio, i.e., and Washington. After all the soul searching bit I put you through last week, it looked on Saturday evening as though Alex has no intention of leaving. Needless to say, we are relieved if this be the case, and feel as though we can settle down again. They still have not definitely said. I tried to get something from Sally, as tactfully as I could, which was undoubtedly not very !, but found out exactly nothing. March first should tell the tale.

Mar 4 1964

No news from CDC front. No decision by Alex. But I do believe it is at the point where there would be great surprise if he decides to leave now. We have sort of forgotten about it, even, sort of, almost.

Poor DA is trying to study for Boards, on 19 of March, I think. He will have to go to Baltimore to take them.

Mar 11 1964

DA is due to go to Louisville Monday to lecture. Then he will go on to Baltimore and not let anyone know he is there, hole up in a hotel room and take his Boards Thursday, Friday and Saturday. He should be able to do some cramming in the hotel. Poor guy — things are hopping. But on Friday appeared the following message from Alex, on DA's desk:

With apologies to Mark Twain, I can announce: The rumors of my impending departure have been grossly exaggerated.

The Population Council is 'not prepared to meet' my 'conditions', which I felt were utterly reasonable; in fact, they would have meant no financial gain at all. Further negotiations have been terminated.

My first reaction was one of misunderstanding and disappointment, but this will not last long. I suspect I am well out of an affair I would have regretted.

I want to thank you for your patience and understanding, should I even say tolerance, for my temporary dalliance. For better or worse, for richer or poorer, I will cleave to my first love.

Now really – isn't that great! What a guy! We were so happy we all but cried. Things are back to normal, as witness the above comment about situations hopping. And oh, it feels so good to be settled, and to be settled in this way!

May 6 1964

The EIS Conference was very successful. The skit was very sophisticated and much enjoyed, sarcasm was well-directed and very funny and didn't hurt anyone as it had last year. The take-off on DA's Canadian accent as he talked on the phone to Dr. Goddard, calling him "Admiral" was hysterical.

Jul 10 1964

Polio vaccine advisory committee meetings today and tomorrow, here in Atlanta. They are doing preliminary reports and next weekend the Surgeon General comes down for the second session. DA spent a long time on the telephone with various people at the Biltmore Hotel trying to talk them into a suite for the SG at a considerably reduced price, since he is, like everybody else, on a 16.00 per diem expenses. Finally, they agreed to give him a \$40.00 suite for \$10.00. About half an hour later DA got a call from the SG's office in Washington — they knew nothing of his little coup, of course. "Please arrange for a room at the Peachtree Manor costing no more than \$7.00."

DA couldn't face the Biltmore, so called back Washington and said this was where Dr. Terry would stay (everybody else is there anyway) and if he couldn't afford \$10.00 per night DA would cheerfully tuck him into bed each night and pay the difference. At least that's what he said he said.

DA had a phone call this week from the Congo — Brazzaville. We have two boys over there. Wouldn't want to be those wives. DA expects a round-the world trip in October – four or five weeks.

Jul 21 1964

DA was very discouraged with the results of all the work they put in on the Polio Vaccine Committee. He is secretary so the recommendations go out over his name and he wishes he could submit a minority report.

Tonight is the second of International Nights at CDC. This is an attempt to introduce the new men to opportunities and possibilities in foreign field. Last week Don Millar spoke on Indonesia, and all on his own, Dr. Goddard called the Embassy in Washington and ordered a cookbook and the cafeteria manager prepared an Indonesian dinner for the gang. Wives are invited. Tonight it is Tonga, and they are preparing a sort of luau. After the dinner is sort of a technical time, with the papers. But should be fun. Girls are wearing muu-muus. And we sent over our Samoan artifacts and tapa cloths, etc.

House guest for a few nights last week, and again this weekend — all associated with the course or polio meetings. It is a relief not to have to listen to the convention news. DA is threatening to leave the government if that fool [Goldwater] gets himself elected.

Sep 2 1964

We had some nice house guests last week — the Gene Gangarosas, he was classmate of DA's at Rochester, just returned from two years with AID in East Pakistan. DA wanted him here — he is an epidemiologist, and Alex was reluctant until he met and talked with him, then offered him a job as asst. chief of the branch.

DA had a call from the White House physician wanting to know if it would be safe for the President and Humphrey to spend the weekend at the ranch.*

**Epidemic St. Louis Encephalitis in Houston, 1964. A Cooperative Study. JAMA. 1965;193(2):139-146.*

Feb 25 1965

DA leaves on March 21 for Europe, to be gone four weeks and possibly until the end of April. Expects to be in Geneva for two weeks, which is too bad, really, as it is expensive, and he is hindered in getting around because of his lack of French. He was in a meeting on Friday in Washington where everybody had top security clearance and there were guards all over the place. In the middle of the day he got a phone call and was really surprised to receive this in this place. Well, it was HEW building calling to see if he knew where Dr. Goddard's socks were.

[Editor's note: The trip to Geneva was for the purpose of drafting WHO's report on smallpox eradication, to be presented at the World Health Assembly in May. The following letters from DA were written during this trip. Karel Raška was the newly appointed Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases and a proponent of smallpox eradication. Dr Charles Cockburn was chief of the Virus Diseases unit. The Director General (DG) of WHO was Marcolino Candau.]

Mar 31 1965 (Letter from DA)

Interestingly, the smallpox report, ostensibly written, translated and ready to go to the World Health Assembly, in fact, had been held pending Cockburn's return Monday and my visit! For the past two days, we have worked feverishly to accomplish what amounts to a complete rewriting of the thing. We completed the last sections at 6:30 tonight — the secretaries will redraft it and we will have a final go at it tomorrow afternoon. What we had hoped for through my three-month participation will be effected in a 3-day consultation. Thursday, Friday, Mon, Tues, will be spent with Raška evolving something in international surveillance and, then back with Cockburn on measles and finally a go at typhoid vaccine trials and malaria. In truth, the two weeks will go rather more rapidly than I anticipated with much more to do than I expected. Geneva has been nice the past two days but it's still Geneva. Had I a bit of French I expect it might be better but with enough to do, it's acceptable. Had dinner with Roy Fritz, wife and some couple from Paris embassy last night—the Fritz's dwelt on Atlanta a good part of the time. I think they'd like to come back if they could find a way.

Apr 2 1965 (Letter from DA)

A strange bit this visit to Geneva with a complex set of personality clashes of a rather bitter sort. The smallpox program is now rewritten and pretty much put to bed although some further sessions on this Monday & Tuesday with higher authorities. Am now working frantically over the proposed 'global surveillance' program which is Raška's primary enthusiasm. Unfortunately, he has trouble looking at the nuts and bolts part and has painted cloud pictures everywhere. I've just finished a sort of 'position' paper from my vantage point which may serve as a place for departure in discussions. The whole thing has to be delicately handled to put the appropriate props here and there while removing most of his construction efforts for total reconstruction. To say the least, it's been a bit of labor!

Apr 5 1965 (Letter from DA)

Problems and conflicts persist here re: smallpox. Have not written back to CDC with particulars since I'm puzzled as to how it will all proceed. Whatever, the rewrite of the recommendation is generally good. The rest of the report (prepared by the consultants) needs major surgery which I anticipated we would do on the weekend but gather we will be doing today, tonight and on into the week. No question but that something wholly new and good is being constructed. It's a helluva time to be finishing it since it should have been completed two weeks ago (with translations) for transmission to member governments as a principal item for the World Health Assembly meetings next month. We're plodding ahead and I, quite clearly, am in the middle of it all.

Apr 9 1965 (Letter from DA)

The smallpox report got done (Thursday) — 30 pages and completely written and rewritten by the team of Cockburn and Henderson. The Director and Deputy Director General have read it and approved it enthusiastically. The Deputy DG asked for a special appointment to express his thanks and that of the Organization — at time of leaving, I was being placed on the Panel of Consultants for WHO — some technical gimmick but rather good, I guess. Whatever — the work of the Section is getting magnificent recognition and I am really quite overwhelmed at every step of the way with the reception accorded.

May 20 1965

DA has been tied up the whole weekend with a very interesting smallpox scare. They worry about every case of smallpox reported in the US because the adult population is largely unprotected. There has not been a case in 16 years but the team is ready to roll, and does roll, for every suspicious case. Well, this one is confusing, but the whole crew has been at CDC almost constantly over the weekend — lab people, Goddard, Langmuir, Gangarosa, etc. The lab tests all come out positive for smallpox, but the case looks for all the world like chicken pox clinically. It is in Washington, and they have already vaccinated about five hundred people.

They are hoping to get a big appropriation for smallpox eradication in the Western hemisphere, and [President] Johnson has issued a White House statement about it. Also the WHO wants to do this eradication program DA was involved in writing protocol for in Geneva. This would presumably mean a spot in Geneva for a CDC man, but there are only two Americans WHO would accept for the post — DA and Don Millar.

DA goes to New Orleans tonight for Immunization Board meetings, and to Baltimore to lecture to students next week. Then expects to be home for the summer except for a few lectures early in August. In Honolulu.

Well, more excitement and tie-ups and decisions. Botulism in the state of Washington. DA almost stayed home last night but went on and may come back early. Except that he is already filling in on panels for several men who are on the smallpox team in DC. Never rains but it pours.

Jun 21 1965

DA canceled his trip to the Caribbean this month, as he now expects to go to Geneva for a week the first part of August — this came up unexpectedly. He will get back just in time to go to Honolulu.

Jul 9 1965

DA has passed his halfway mark in the Public Health Service. I don't think he is actually looking forward to retirement — he is too busy to think about it, thank heavens. He and Don Millar and Dr. MacKenzie made a surprise trip to Washington, just for the day today, although they went up last evening. AID wants to turn over the entire smallpox vaccination program in West Africa to CDC and they are talking in terms of 2 million dollars a year to do it. Right now DA doesn't have the personnel but they wouldn't mind having control of the program. I don't know what will develop. DA and Don were supposed to lecture to one of the International Night dinners on smallpox last night, but they made a quick change and the Cholera boys took over.

Otherwise things are as busy as they usually are in July — at the present rate the EIS Course population will be decimated by the end of the month, as it usually is, with most of the new recruits being sent out prematurely — to their delight and to the consternation of the poor young wives. Boy, are they young!!!

Jul 30 1965 (Letter from DA to his parents)

With each visit, Geneva and WHO have become more interesting. On this trip I began by consulting on the proposed WHO International Research Center (the purpose of my visit) but before I was done, I was involved in top-level policy discussions on smallpox eradication with the Director General and in lengthy emergency planning sessions as to how to meet the crisis of a suddenly rampant cholera epidemic in Iran. It was CDC only on an international scale and in the course of the morning we had talked to Teheran, Alexandria, New Delhi and Atlanta by phone.

There is considerable pressure for me to assume a staff position in Geneva next year as Director of the World Smallpox Program. I've been highly reluctant to do so for a host of reasons and so indicated to them which only succeeded in their offering more money and more inducements. Whatever, the Assistant Director General comes to Washington at the end of August to discuss the program further with the Surgeon General — we'll know more eventually. Goddard has also been urging this move for a two-year period with the thought that I might return to Washington as Assistant Surgeon General in charge of all international health activities for the Public Health Service. It's flattering but we do love Atlanta.

Sep 11 1965

DA is at CDC working on the paper he's supposed to give in Geneva in a few weeks. He goes to Geneva unexpectedly next weekend, and will be there three weeks this time.

Oct 1 1965

We have heard nothing from DA as yet, but expect him home a week from next Tuesday. I think he will be delighted by the new SG. Bill Stewart was a member of one of Alex's very first classes of EIS officers. I have mixed feelings about Jim Goddard — we think he would have been very good, but we are glad he is staying on at CDC — that would have been a real loss. I called Sally [Langmuir] when I heard the announcement on the radio, and she said, "Bill Stewart?? That's impossible — he was just here for dinner last Saturday night and never said a word." Best guess is he didn't know — that is the way the President likes to do things. It is nice to have it decided once and for all.

Nov 18 1965

We are getting DA ready to leave in the morning for Washington, New York, Paris, Geneva, Paris, Ouagadougou, Niamey, Abidjan, Lagos, Douala, Yaounde, Douala, Paris, Geneva, London and home on December 18. Not a minute too soon for any of us. Now isn't that an itinerary! He will be with two other men, although they are splitting up several times in Africa so they can cover all the countries. DA will give papers in 2 of the places, for conferences, rest of the time they will be setting up for the smallpox eradication to start in July. Not all the myriad countries in Africa, of course — only 16 I think. Both our globe and our atlas out of date on Africa and the "emerging" nations.

So it has gone this far. When DA gets back he may be no longer with Surveillance Section, but have the Smallpox and Malaria units to worry about. At any rate there will be reorganization.

Jan 19 1966

DA got home from 2 days in Washington Friday night, the phone was ringing when he walked in the door, and he didn't get off until nearly 11:00. Has been at CDC ever since, just about. Dave Sencer will be the new Chief of CDC.

President Johnson included the smallpox eradication program in his State of the Union Address.

I will also propose the International Health Act of 1966 to strike at disease by a new effort to bring modern skills and knowledge to the uncared-for, those suffering in the world, and by trying to wipe out smallpox and malaria and control yellow fever over most of the world during this next decade; to help countries trying to control population growth, by increasing our research — and we will earmark funds to help their efforts.

Jan 27 1966

DA has had a hideous schedule the last 2 or 3 weeks. Just because the president wants this program doesn't mean it goes easily through the red tape, this time in AID. He goes up and back to Washington, and has spent 2 solid weekends at CDC with some others writing up some elaborate reports, which I must say are beautifully done. He has discovered some friends in the State Dept. also, and generally things are going along reasonably well.

Feb 16 1966

DA went to Washington and Baltimore on Sunday night, back on Monday, and expects to go up for another conference or meeting at the end of the week. To Geneva by the end of the month, but that will be for only a week.

Feb 25 1966

DA went to Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Madison between 4 P.M. one afternoon and 6 P.M. the next and did four interviews. His trip to Geneva was delayed for a week, although he may go to Wash. and Lagos, Nigeria next week before going to Geneva on Friday. Sheesh!

Alex Langmuir was "the real Alexander Langmuir" on *To Tell the Truth* Monday night. The program was pre-empted here but we all went down to the CBS station here where they tied into the coaxial so we could see it. About 60 people showed up and it was fun. Fairly silly, but fun.

Mar 11 1966

DA went up to Washington last Sunday afternoon, after several false starts during the week — we had him all packed for Europe at one point and then unpacked. He had reservations on flights to Geneva for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, finally left rather suddenly late Wednesday night from Washington. He is hoping to come home next Thursday the 17th for a couple of days as there is an ambassador coming that he wants to entertain and talk to. But then he has to return to Bobodioulasso for a week of meetings beginning on the 19th. So, depending on how things go in WHO this week, and depending on planes to Bobo. (in Upper Volta) he might very well go on straight from Geneva. With all his winter clothes! This trip to the meetings came up after he left Atlanta, so he has all this cold weather gear along and will simply roast in Africa. Home toward the end of the month.

Mar 26 1966

Last Friday DA called me about 11 and said the ambassador's plane wasn't leaving until 8 and no meal on it. So he [the Ambassador] came here for dinner. He was marvelous. Several others came and they all called him "Mr. Ambassador" all evening. I asked DA about that and he said that is appropriate, even at a gathering where several ambassadors would be present.

DA left on Sunday for Africa for a conference in Bobodioulasso and then on to Leopoldville in the Congo. The people he is to see are in a regional office of WHO in Brazzaville, but Americans can't go to Bra-ville, across the river, so they are going to Leopoldville to talk. Then he flies out to Brussels and home next weekend.

Well, you know our big news now [DA becoming chief of the SEP]. We find it hard to settle down to anything else right now. Sometimes it seems so unreal and others like the easiest and most natural thing in the world. I have application blanks for the kids for the International School and have been gathering recommendations and transcripts, pictures, etc., as we have to apply now in order to get them in for the

term starting next January 16. They will take their classes in English, but French is required. DA will be on PHS salary, with a sort of cost-of-living allowance from WHO which pays almost all of the tuition.

[Editor's note: Sometime during the 2nd week of March, DA accepted the post of chief of WHO's Smallpox Eradication unit—for a period of 18 months.]

Mar 28 1966

The job will be an enormous challenge. The word has gone from Washington that DA will be released, to take this post. We will be on diplomatic status which gives us a few fringe benefits. He will be doing essentially the same thing he is doing here — coordinating the international program for eradication of smallpox. The Director General of WHO has been corresponding with Bill Stewart asking for DA. He did not want to go if it meant burning his bridges behind him, or if it would mean being pressured to go to Washington on our return. We are, needless to say, very excited about the whole thing. There is something very rewarding about being smack in the middle of something you believe in.

Apr 22 1966

We want only a bare minimum of stuff to distribute when we move. We expect to be spending December on a sort of “camping out” basis. We will have to send our furniture a couple of months in advance since it goes by surface, i.e., boat. We can send 11,000 pounds. It will be tricky to figure out just what we need so we don't have a lot extra to take care of. We have sent the kids' applications for school. We have to go through the rigmarole of immunizations, passport photos, etc.

May 3 1966

Last week was the week of the EIS conference and it was busier than usual, if such be possible. We had 3 different house guests in varying combinations, company every night for dinner except Thursday night which was the banquet (with the annual skit, much of which as devoted to a satire on the “break-up” of Alex and DA) and finishing Sunday morning when the last guest departed — and then DA still had meetings scheduled for Sunday.

Friday we had 50 or so men here for a cookout. This was DA's smallpox group, recruited from all over the country, physicians and operations officers, legal aides, black and white (the first time we have had a mixed party that overflowed into the yard — no repercussions from the neighbors that we are aware of). They consumed 60 hamburgers and 50 hot dogs, pots of potato salad and beans, and seven 7-layer refrigerator cakes, along with 35 cups of coffee. The only real wrinkle was that at 4 PM, the plumbers were here with the commode from the powder room out in the hall and water all over the place.

It was really interesting to meet all the people that were here. And rather sobering. These are not kids. Many are mature men a decade older than DA, with large families, pulling up stakes for a couple of years to go to an unknown future in Africa. When I think of them leasing their houses, storing their antiques, etc., and realize that DA started all this and is responsible for what happens to these fifty families and what contribution they are about to make, it gives me cold chills. Particularly to know about all the stuff that goes on in the background with the various governmental agencies squabbling, etc., before we get the thing off the ground. DA has to stay optimistic. They had several hundred applicants all told. These people for the most part feel, in what may seem a very idealistic way, and I guess that's just what it is, that this is the time to do something meaningful in their lives and for the world, etc. I don't mean to be maudlin, but you get the picture, I'm sure. As I say, it is very sobering. So many said to me, “I believe in what your husband is doing.” In October he will turn the program over to Don Millar, and in Geneva will be doing the same sort of thing except for more than West Africa. Deane Hutchins, who stayed with us all week, is a classmate from medical school. He has four daughters, 7-14, and was in private practice for 7 or 8 years in Maine. He says it is great for one's ego and the pocketbook, but no real time for the family.

So he left and became director of the student health program for U. of Maine. Time for the family but the challenge is gone. He said they have been looking for several years for a program where they could give more in the way of service and have an interesting family life.

[Editor's note: Alex did not approve of DA's decision to take the job in Geneva, hence the "break-up".]

May 25 1966

DA found a house this last week and hopes to get an answer one way or the other on his return. They may not hold it long enough for us. He was able to get some definitive information on appliances, pets, etc., which we needed to know before beginning to plan what we will move and what we will store.

The Russians have been dissatisfied with their representation, or lack of it, at the unit level in WHO, and had proposed a well-qualified man for the job, but the DG wanted DA, and the SG talked to the DG last week in person and so it is set up. DA has seen his office, the budget of 2.4 million for the first year was voted through, and things are beginning to move. If you saw the article in *Time* magazine last week about the ten-year program for eradicating smallpox, this is it. DA will organize and direct it for the first two years. It gives me butterflies. It gives DA butterflies, too, just between me and thee.

[Editor's note: The back story is that WHO was extremely sensitive about the failing malaria eradication campaign and the DG was reluctant to risk the failure of another eradication campaign. Pressure from the US forced the issue, which passed the Assembly with only a 2-vote margin. The DG wanted to be able to put the onus for failure on the US and thus insisted that the chief be an American.]

Jul 27 1966

We go to French class [run by CDC for the smallpox team assigned to francophone West Africa] 2 hours each morning — DA's class is every night for 2 hours — makes a very long day for him, as it is really very concentrated work. The technique they use is like that in the Army and other areas of government — all by ear. We don't see a written word and the instructor speaks entirely in French. Each family has a tape recorder, and the tapes that go with the course, and the textbook, which is entirely pictures. In class we use filmstrips, and a Language Lab with headsets, etc. Classes are no more than 10 students. We have to do a good bit of work at home.

Aug 6 1966

This weekend DA is working night and day, as he had a sudden call to go to Geneva for a week, and will leave after he gives a lecture Monday morning. Chances are he will stop in Washington on his way back so we do not expect him for about 9 or 10 days. The Nigeria coup has things up in the air for the African program, as they are planning to establish the regional headquarters in Lagos. This all may delay DA's departure to WHO which is now set up for Nov. 1. We have made no attempt to rent our house, since we don't know whether we will leave in October sometime, November, or December. It is quite probable that DA will go over first, and we will follow when we rent the house and our furniture has arrived in Geneva. At the moment we are planning to send the furniture in 6 weeks.

Aug 12 1966

I have been trying to attend some of the lectures they have set up for the smallpox group; they have some terrific speakers from all over the country — an anthropologist, AID types, Peace Corps types, etc. This part is called the "Culture" classes by the group. Tomorrow I will have to represent DA at a soirée for

3 WHO people who are here for the course. Then Sunday there is a picnic at Stone Mountain for the smallpox group.

Aug 28 1966

The move to Geneva is in TWO AND A HALF MONTHS, or maybe two months!!! It seems hard to believe, and yet we are in the messy part of the preparations, and reality inflicts itself at every turn of the day.

We have not yet found an agent to handle the house — apparently they are not much interested in taking care of residential property aside from apartments, so we are at a bit of a loss to know what to do. We have not attempted to rent it as yet.

We still do not have an address in Geneva — they said they would write DA but no word as yet.

Present plans call for the following: DA will arrive Geneva Nov. 1, we will plan to arrive about the 15th. Our furniture will hopefully arrive during those two weeks. If not, we will hole up in a pension for a few days. This means our furniture will have to leave here Oct. 1. Which means we have talked twice to the mover here. But we have to submit three estimates to WHO and get one approved.

Also, we can move and store a total of 13,500 pounds. No more than 11,000, including weight of crates, etc., can go to Geneva — this bill to be footed by WHO. However, we can send an additional 500 pounds at the last minute as long as we declare our intention to do so now. But that goes by sea and takes also 6 to 8 weeks. However, this will take care of linens, etc., but I will need linens when we get there, so had to go out to the August white sales and get some extra stuff to send ahead. PHS will store what we don't send, up to a total both places of the 13,500 figure, not including the crates, etc.

Also, we have to order electrical appliances, such as refrigerator, toaster, iron — on 50 cycle 220 volt something-or-other.

Sep 4 1966

I keep thinking that if I say all this over to myself enough times, the logistics will assume some semblance of reality, but so far to no avail. Besides everything has changed since last week, including the mover. We can have the house DA wants on Oct. 1 — this letter came in French and the only part that came through loud and clear was 1600 francs per month rent. However, DA has written to see if they will rent it as of the middle of October, so we won't have to pay the entire month's rent and not live in the house. Now our furniture is scheduled to leave the country on Sept. 30. On Oct. 28 they will come in and pack our linens and summer clothes to be sent, and put the other things in storage and we will leave that night. So go the plans this week.

Saturday night we had 20 or 30 in for dinner — I lost count. The Nigeria group.

It has also become apparent that we can't possibly pay the insurance premium on the shipment of furniture we had planned to take to Europe, so we are cutting down to a bare minimum, and plan to have a garage sale in October. We are told that a lot of odds and ends are available once one is over there in Thrift Shop affairs from people who are leaving Europe to come home to the States, etc. We will store the antiques, furniture, glass, plates, etc., of course, and also the things we have hanging on our walls.

The smallpox course is now over and it has been probably the most grueling 9 weeks DA has ever put in. There was always so much more than just the course to be done and worried over. He is holding up very well. I can't describe all the frustrations that DA has had in the last 8 months — I don't know how he holds up so well — I really marvel at him. He doesn't dare let on at work how concerned he is about a lot of things. Morale and all that. It's funny but even though we don't have a lot of time for communication these days, I feel as though we are all a closer family than we have ever been before. I guess we are all as

involved in the whole program as he is — and this surely includes the kids because they have had to be unbelievably flexible in the last few months. I guess we all just believe in the thing so completely.

Sep 20 1966

I just had no idea there would be so much piddly stuff to do. In addition we have received our lease — a pound of it at least and all in French — we have not been able to get it all translated but know such things as that the fruit trees must be kept trimmed to a fifteen foot height, and that nice cats that don't bite people are welcome. And that hot water will always be available but the temperature is not guaranteed. We also received a floor plan from some of our neighbors who said that 3 of the bedrooms are too small to accommodate a standard-size Americans twin bed! We still haven't ironed out that one. DA will order a Fiat when he goes in Oct. and pay one-third down on that, so we will have a car to drive when we arrive as we will drive our Dart to our port of export and then it will go by ship. We have to send 4 months' rent in advance, and the heat and electricity have to be paid for one year in advance, plus a breakage fee of 1400 francs, plus a bank guarantee, or something. Plus the kids' tuition. This will all iron itself out in a short time, as we receive a settlement allowance or something, but the question, of course, is WHEN? Meantime we are trying to order a fridge from GE that is 220 volt, 50 cycle — this has to go from NYC.

Don Millar will be the new chief when DA leaves. Dave Sencer made the choice, a very good one, and the announcement to the group this week. He made it sound as though the WHO Director General had personally begged for DA's release for a couple of years. Which is kind of nice to hear in front of a group, especially since that is the way it happened. But you don't talk about it.

Sep 23 1965

Got a reaction to my smallpox this time which seems to please DA enormously.

This weekend coming up will be awful — an orgy of packing and sorting. Furniture leaves Friday. The mover called today and said he has a ship he could put it on next week if he could pick up our stuff on Monday. I laughed like a hyena. Poor man.

Oct 15 1966

So far DA's orders have not come through so we can't make any definite plans. Tentatively we will fly from here on Saturday, the 29. We are not sure as yet whether our 7 lift vans of furniture, which finally added up to only 6400 pounds, so we were well within our limit, has left New Orleans. As of today, our house is in our name, according to the lease, and the rent which we have paid through the 15th of January. The telephone is in, according to a friend who is over there taking care of such details — but it is still under the name of the archduke of Hohenzollern — I guess it is his house we are subletting. Dr. [Stephen] Falkland has also been sent the money to buy DA's Fiat; hopefully it will be there on our arrival and we will all squeeze into it until the Dart arrives.

Until DA's orders arrive we don't know what we do about the car — we have to drive it to a port of embarkation, as yet unknown, presumably on the East Coast.

The thing that really has made it so exciting in the last week, is that George Lythcott returned from Nigeria, the papers are signed, the State Dept. released the ban on dependents, and half the entire Africa group, which will be stationed in various areas in Nigeria, left yesterday!!!!!!!!!! We are all riding on cloud nine, I'll tell you. These people have been sitting on temporary duty, quarters, etc., for two solid months — and all because of DA's favorite agency — AID. Now the French group is yet to get off, but morale soared this week like nothing I've seen in ages.

It takes so much of the pressure off DA, and makes us free to think about Geneva and enjoy, for the first time, the idea of going. It is really very difficult to be pleased about such a good assignment when the

program and the people you are involved with, in this case the Africa people, are all up in limbo someplace.

Dec 26 1966 (Letter from DA to his parents)

Gradually we are getting settled. Never have I filled out so many forms or gotten so many cards to confer this or that privilege or exemption or what have you. We're still not finished. Besides a Swiss driving license, I now must carry the Swiss diplomatic identification card, a U.N. employee cooperation membership card, a Swiss Touring Club card, two gasoline cards (2/3 discount to diplomatic staff), a Swiss driver's license, my PHS identity card, a U.N. employee store card plus vehicle registration, They do seem to be organized in Switzerland.

Work progresses reasonably well although it is a bit difficult to get used to a totally different system for files, communications, etc. The ultimate diplomatic courtesies I find to be rather tedious and cumbersome to the point that I'm not always certain as to what has been said (nor, in fact, have my compatriots who ostensibly understand these things). Thus, I still take the fairly direct approach which sometimes astounds and confuses but seems to get more accomplished. My dealings now are so rarely with Americans that when one does encounter an American, it is rather refreshing — there is seemingly more of a common language and ease of communication. The interest and impetus for the program is encouraging and exciting — if we do more than instill a few principles of sound management in the whole affair it will vastly facilitate the whole program.