

Autobiographical Sketch

Wallace Huffman

I was born in Iowa approximately on the day that T.W. Schultz resigned as head of the Department of Economics and Sociology at Iowa State College. Who could have predicted that 22 years later I would first meet Schultz and be encouraged to pursue graduate work at the University of Chicago. Attending college and later graduate school at the University of Chicago has provided many new opportunities and greatly changed my life from what it might have been.

I grew up in southeast Iowa, and as an only son of a farm family, the age for starting school and farmwork were approximately the same. Caring for livestock and driving a tractor for fieldwork were regular farm work activities during grade school and high school years. However, my father was quite creative in designing buildings and machinery, so as I got older, I participated in building things. It was a valuable experience watching him search out new ideas for designs, modifying them to our needs, and then going about the sometimes extensive work of completing a building project.

I became a serious and well organized student when I went to high school, and my mother encouraged the idea of (possibly) attending college. Although there were limited curriculum choices in my first 3-years of high school, my senior year was in a new and larger community high school that offered expanded course options and better quality science and math. It also helped me make a transition from a very small to a larger student body, which would be important in attending college.

My choice for college was Iowa State University and a two-year program in the Farm Operations program, a general agricultural program. My stated intention at the time was to obtain some college training and then return to farming. The choice of the two-year program was also easier for my father to accept. Once at Iowa State, I was able to succeed in a wide range of courses and changed to a B.S. degree program. Starting my second year, I obtained a three-year scholarship that required taking considerable course work in mathematics and physics while maintaining good scholarship. This turned out to be good preparation for graduate study in economics. Early in my economics course work, I met Ray Beneke who greatly encouraged me to take some hard courses and pursue graduate work in economics, as opposed to agronomy which was another undergraduate interest of mine. It was also through Ray Beneke that my first meeting with T.W. Schultz was arranged in the fall of 1965.

At the University of Chicago, T.W. Schultz and Gale Johnson got me interested in human capital and economic growth with an emphasis on agriculture. My dissertation research, which was completed in 1972, and much of my later research has had a strong human

capital focus. Much of my research over the long term has focused in three areas: (i) analysis of payoffs to investments in education of farmers, other farm people, and farmworkers in different technology settings, (ii) analysis of impacts of agricultural research, especially the payoff from public investments in research on crops and livestock and from applied and basic research, and (iii) analysis of the implications of different funding mechanisms for public agricultural research. The book, *Science for Agriculture: A Long Term Perspective* (Iowa State University Press 1993) co-authored with Robert Evenson, Yale University, summarizes approximately a decade of joint research on this important topic.

I joined the faculty in the Department as an assistant professor in August 1974 after spending two years as an assistant professor in the Department of Economics at Oklahoma State University. My new appointment brought a significant reduction in teaching load and increase in resources for research. Over the long term my teaching responsibilities have been primarily in labor economics, econometrics, microeconomic theory, and agricultural policy. I was promoted to Professor in 1982.

My job has enabled me to travel for business and pleasure to many interesting places--44 of the U.S. states and 20 countries. Almost every place I go, I try to see at least a few of the interesting sights. Over time, I have found this to be a valuable educational experience, adding to my understanding of different cultures, agriculture in different technology settings, institutions, art, history, and geography. Furthermore, I have found that these travels provide interesting photographic opportunities, and color photography has been a hobby of mine for more than a decade.

My wife, Sonya, completed her Ph.D. degree in economics (1999), and we are enjoying our daughter, Nadia, who was born August 1, 1997.