

Alumni News

Robert W. Alcock

On the morning of July 14, 1958, Robert W. Alcock was having breakfast in the new Hotel Baghdad in Iraq. He was there to confer with Mr. M. M. Hadid of the Vegetable Oil Extraction Company on a proposal for a new detergent plant to be built in that country. Bob was there as chief engineer of Industrial Engineers, Inc., of Los Angeles. He had flown to Baghdad the night before from Kuwait where he had been helping the Aminoil Company with process problems. It was the very morning that the revolution in Iraq exploded. Bob and two other Americans, Mr. George S. Colley, senior vice-president of the Bechtel Corporation, and Mr. Eugene Burns, a newspaperman, were forced by the revolutionary mob to leave the hotel. Apparently these Americans were chosen at random from the hotel guest list and shortly thereafter all three were killed in the streets of Baghdad.

Robert was born in Iowa City, Iowa, and was an honor student at University High there. He graduated from CIT in 1940 and received an MS in ME in 1941. He was well known and well liked, having been elected president of Dabney House in 1940, vice president of the ASME, and was a member of the Photo Club and the Dabney Hunt Club. He was also an ardent skier and was very active in the social life of the campus. He trekked regularly to the Scripps College campus in Claremont where he met his wife-to-be.

After Caltech, he went to Lockheed Aircraft as an engineering trainee. He soon returned to the Institute to work on the OSRD rocket project and was instrumental in devising pressure-time measuring equipment, high-capacity hydraulic extrusion presses for propellants and special machine tools. He then went with Industrial Engineers, Inc., and became their chief engineer. He supervised the design and installation of a number of important process plants, including a detergent plant in Tokyo and one in Mexico City.

Robert is survived by his wife Erminia (Nina) Aguirre Alcock, Scripps '41, and eight children ranging in age from 1 to 16. The family lives at 126 East Palm in Altadena.

Great assistance has been given to Mrs. Alcock by the Alumni Association and members of the CIT faculty. Dr. DuBridge has been in contact with Dr. Wallace Brode, the science advisor to the U.S. Department of State, for the purpose of pressing claims for reparations against the Iraqi government. The Alumni president, Edward Fleisher, and other alumni have been writing their representatives in Washington to encourage the State Department to press for reparations. Congressman Edgar W. Heistand has done an

outstanding job. He has been in constant contact with Mrs. Alcock and the State Department. He introduced a resolution in Congress asking that the new Iraqi government not be recognized until reparations were made. The new Iraqi government indicated that it would pay any valid claims and was subsequently recognized by the United States.

All of Bob's friends are shocked and grieved over his untimely death and feel a sense of frustration over this tragic occurrence. Some have questioned the wisdom of exporting our technical talents and wealth to underprivileged countries which have such unstable governments as to pose a threat to the lives and property of American citizens who are there to help. However, if we are to encourage such countries in the development of their own resources we have no choice but to continue to share our technical knowledge in spite of these tragic accidents. Robert will stand as a symbol of this American point of view.

Bob's two eldest sons have been given full scholarships to the Webb School in Claremont by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation.

A Robert W. Alcock fund has been started for Mrs. Alcock and the children. Contributions may be sent to Mrs. Ynte Posthuma, 2210 Midlothian Drive, Altadena.

—Gardner P. Wilson, '38

Fall Dinner Meeting

Nothing is more subject to criticism than the technical accuracy of a blockbuster movie—and the major studios maintain extensive research staffs to circumvent this criticism.

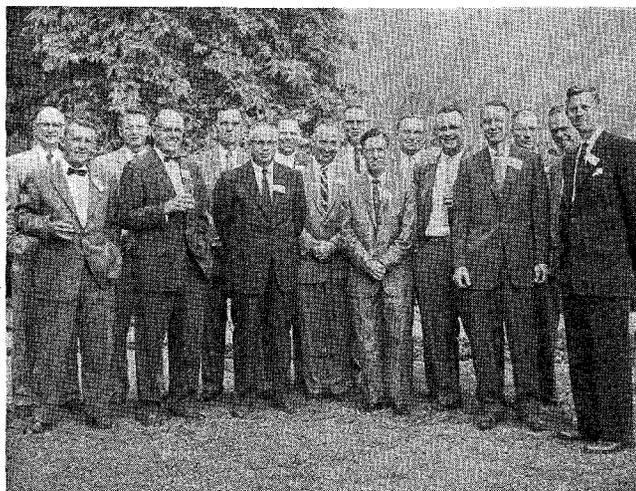
The Caltech Alumni Association is fortunate in having one of the most distinguished of these research men as speaker at its Fall Dinner Meeting on October 16 at Eaton's Santa Anita Restaurant in Pasadena.

Henry Noerdlinger, research consultant to Cecil B. DeMille and Paramount Pictures, has worked with writers, producers and technical staffs in the filming of such epics as *Samson and Delilah*, *The Greatest Show on Earth*, and *The Ten Commandments*. His work has required research on every conceivable subject from costuming to contemporary slang.

At the Fall Dinner Meeting Mr. Noerdlinger will discuss some of the techniques involved in film documentation—illustrating these techniques with observations based on his experiences while working in Egypt on *The Ten Commandments*.

—James C. Crosby, Chairman, Fall Dinner Meeting

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Class Reunion

Sixteen members of the Class of 1933 had a reunion at the home of J. Stanley Johnson in Altadena on June 11. Pictured above: (front row) Art Mathewson, Bob Smallman, Walter Scholtz, Bill Moore, Doug Marlow, Sam Johnson, George Pickett and Lee Carleton. (Back row) Fred Detmers, Bob Grossman, John Meskell, John Monning, Bill Wheeler, Trent Dames, Jack Sparling and Stan Johnson.

Alumni Development Campaign

A coast-to-coast telephone conversation with alumni by President L. A. DuBridge launched the Caltech alumni campaign in the Institute's \$16,100,000 Development Program on October 7. Through a telephonic public address system, Dr. DuBridge talked with alumni meeting in 33 cities and briefed them on their task of reaching a goal of \$1,100,000. The alumni campaign has already received over \$150,000 in advance gifts, about 13 percent of the ultimate goal.

For Your Calendar

The Caltech Student Body will present a Pasadena Jazz Festival on October 18 at the Civic Auditorium, featuring Louis Armstrong and his All Stars, the Firehouse Five Plus Two and singers Jackie Cain and Roy Kral. Tickets are available at any Mutual ticket agency or at the Caltech News Bureau on campus.

The first of a Caltech TV series called "The Next Hundred Years" will be shown on Channel 4 at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, November 1. The opening show will feature Harrison Brown, professor of geochemistry, who presents "The Story of the Irish Potato."

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