

Ray G. Wenger and Arthur W. Wenger

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Ray Grayson Wenger and his twin brother, Arthur Winters Wenger were well known as the “Utah’s Famous Twin Team.” They were born hearing in Salt Lake City on December 3,



Ray G. Wenger

1892. Their father, David H. Wenger, a lawyer, was the first city judge and their mother was a school teacher (E.F.L., *The Silent Worker*, May 1922; UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964; UAD Bulletin, June 1973).

At the age of two, they had severe attack of scarlet fever, which left them deaf. Ray and Arthur were inseparable and had the same tastes. At home, their mother taught them to read and to speak. Through her efforts, they were able to attend the public schools through 6th grade. At the age of fourteen, they enrolled at the Utah School for the Deaf in 1906 where they excelled in sports, classrooms, and extra-curricular activities. Upon graduation in 1913,

they went on to Gallaudet College and remained there for the first three years. During World War I, Ray and Arthur were eager to complete their senior year at Gallaudet, but his family’s savings shrank. They didn’t want to put a burden on their parents paying their education. They agreed that they would take turns in working to put each other through the University of Utah; one working to pay the expenses of the other for attending the university (E.F.L., *The Silent Worker*, May 1922; UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964). It turned out that Arthur found a good job as a

candy and soda syrup maker. Ray enrolled at the University of Utah in 1917 and received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1918 and Master's in 1919 in bacteriology while Arthur worked (UAD Bulletin, June 1973).

By this time, Ray found part-time work with the State Board of Health and a faculty position at the University of Utah. Arthur happily enrolled at the University of Utah. Just like his brother, he completed his bachelor's and master's degrees, in chemistry (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964).

Ray and Arthur's careers included a wide variety of mining camps, hunting microbes in the LDS Hospital and Wenger Laboratories. Ray began his career as a biochemist at LDS Hospital in Salt



Arthur W. Wenger

Lake City in 1922 and served there for 44 years. During that time, he aided in the establishment of the first blood bank in Utah and produced the first set of anti-sera for blood matching in the state (The Utah Eagle, October 1973). Eventually, Ray became assistant bacteriologist and pathologist and later head of biochemistry activities at the same hospital. Arthur organized and operated a chemical laboratory in a new 200 bed hospital in Idaho Falls, Idaho where he was also an X-ray technician and teacher of biochemistry in the nurses' training (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964; Deseret News, May 8, 1973; UAD Bulletin, June 1973).

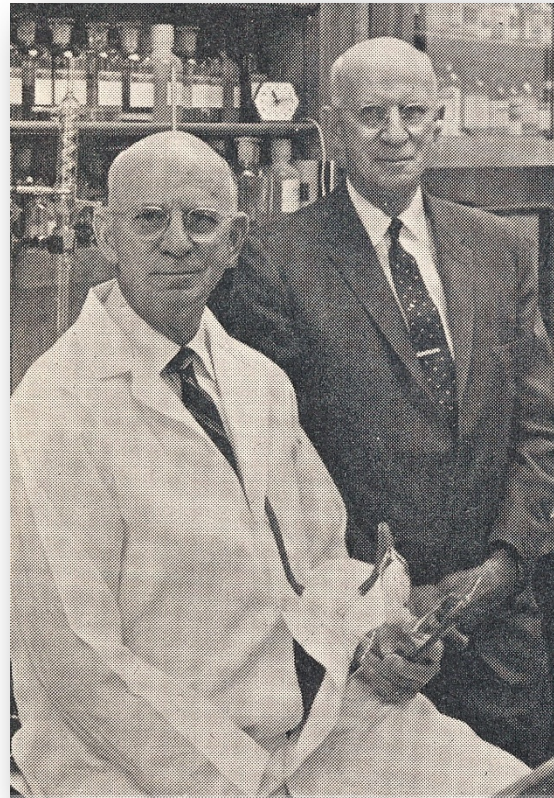


The Wenger Brothers at the University of Utah, 1922. Ray, wears a hat while Arthur sports a cap
Photo courtesy of the Silent Worker, May 1922

In 1938, Arthur saved \$80.00 to join his brother Ray in establishing the Wenger Laboratories, a bacteriological-chemical laboratory in downtown Salt Lake City, Utah. Since its establishment in 1938, Arthur had been the director while Ray was the assistant director. Their laboratory quickly gained a favorable reputation among doctors and professional people. At the lab, Ray met his future Deaf wife, Willena Newman. They married in 1939 and they had two boys, Grayson and Brent. Arthur remained a bachelor and was in love with his work (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964; Deseret News, May 8, 1973; UAD Bulletin, June 1973; The Utah Eagle, October 1973).

According to the Winter 1964 UAD Bulletin issue, soon after Ray and Arthur opened their laboratory, they collaborated on a bacteriological-chemical research for Utah Copper Company (the company later changed its name to Kennecott Copper Corp and then to Rio Tinto Corporation) in connection with a million-dollar lawsuit brought by residents in the valley who claimed the company's operations were damaging their farms and health. They conducted exhaustive tests and their research was instrumental in the court's finding of no cause for action. Ray and Arthur were glad that their work was found satisfactory because Utah Copper Company had previously turned them down, on account of their deafness, when they sought employment (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964).

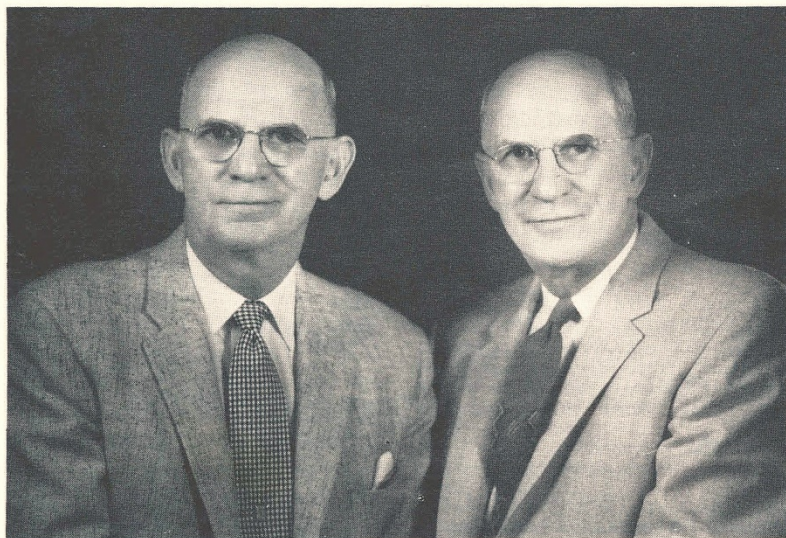
Ray and Arthur also assisted with other lawsuits by providing their expert testimony for the Salt Lake Telegram and "the woman with the golden blood" by the name of Rose McMullin of Washington, D.C. (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964).



Clinical Chemists. Utah's famous twin team, Arthur & Ray Wenger, operate out of their own laboratory in Salt Lake City, Utah where they have specialized in pollen extracts and medical clinical chemistry (1968) The UAD Bulletin, Summer 1968

The brothers could not live on a college degree alone. In order to keep up with the newest discoveries of chemistry, they buried their nose in dozen magazines on chemical magazines,

journals and latest books. They were able to give doctors and patients the benefit of those new methods and ideas. In addition, they participated in numerous professional conferences and workshops and prepared many technical papers (Wenger, *The Silent Worker*, January 1925).



Arthur W. and Ray G. Wenger

UAD Bulletin, June 1973

The Arthur Wenger Athletic Association, a club for the older boys, was organized in 1919 and named in honor of Arthur, one of the school's outstanding graduates. The purpose of this club was to promote social development and good fellowship among the boys through participation in athletic activities. The Arthur Wenger Scholarship Fund was also named after him in 1957 (Pace, 1946).

The twins had a Deaf brother named D. Hartzler Wenger who also attended the Utah School for the Deaf. The three were known as "The Three



Arthur Wenger (central). 1920 Utah School for the Deaf Basketball Team

Musketeers” of Salt Lake City. The Utah Deaf community knew him as “Hart.” He was the “baby” in the family but was as tall and strapping as his older brothers. His wife, Gladys Burnham, was well known. They had no children (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964).

On April 21, 1973, at the age of 80, Ray and Arthur received honorary doctor of science degrees at Gallaudet College’s 109th commencement exercises for their work in bacteriology and



D. Hartzler Wenger

biochemistry (Deseret News, May 8, 1973). They were called Utah’s twin gift to science, education and community service for the deaf (Kinney, UAD Bulletin, January 2002). Their distinguished work was recognized as research scientists in bacteriology and biochemistry, careers not easily nor commonly attained by a Deaf person (The Utah Eagle, October 1973). Gallaudet president Edward C. Merrill, Jr., in bestowing a citation of honor on the twin brothers, recognized their success as Deaf persons, noting that it served as a “model and inspiration to other Deaf people” (UAD Bulletin, June 1973). As for the Wenger brothers, their fame

was not as leaders but as chemists. It was unique that two brothers, twins, worked as chemists (Dr. Robert Sanderson & Valerie Kinney, personal communication, July 8, 2011).

Despite the heavy demands of the twins’ employment, they found time to be of much service to the deaf. Arthur was a past president of the Utah Association of the Deaf and was also a lifetime member of the association. Ray was made a lifetime member of the association in 1957, in recognition of his many years of service in behalf of the deaf,



**Arthur & Ray
Unknown date**

particularly in the field of education. Ray had also served on the Utah School for the Deaf and the Blind Advisory Council. He was a participant in the 1961 Workshop on Community Development through Organization of and for the Deaf at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Arthur was a delegate to the 1964 National Association of the Deaf convention. Ray and Arthur were friendly and down-to-earth. They had the respect and admiration of all who knew them (UAD Bulletin, Winter 1964).

Ray passed away on May 3, 1984 and Arthur on April 5, 1987. Their brother, D. Hart passed away before the twins on July 18, 1972 in Denver, Colorado.

Note

Robert Sanderson & Valerie Kinney, e-mail message to Jodi B. Kinner, July 8, 2011.

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