

July 1, 1943

I know Grand Central Station is usually busy, but I have never seen a place this crowded before. A room filled with Navy V-12 Trainees, all under the banners of institutions that will be hosting us during our training.

I'm sitting below the Hobart College banner, my supposed "classmates" all around me. I think I read somewhere that Hobart College is upstate in the small city of Geneva, on the northern tip of Seneca Lake. Living on a lake seems nice, I guess I could get used to that. It will give me opportunity to explore, and after briefly reviewing the course guide for our program, it looks like the institution offers some decent Biology courses.

I guess that I might as well continue my studies of the natural sciences here, it will be a good occupier of my time that is not dedicated to training.

Note to Self:

Keep journal entries regularly.

July 2, 1943

Early this morning groups of us were bussed to Waterloo for a chance to grab supplies and explore the neighboring area. While returning to campus, for some reason the driver of our bus decided to take a detour.

We drove by a couple wine vineyards located on the east side of Seneca Lake, and the bus driver stopped at one to let us get out and admire on foot. I have never been a huge drinker, but the fields of grapevines hanging from their supports next to the water is a beautiful sight.

I would have continued to walk around admiring the view, but I noticed on the drive here that down the street is the Seneca Army Depot – I could have sworn I saw a pair of deer just beyond the fencing, but slightly further behind the two I saw a glimpse of what looked like a completely white deer.

Am I going insane? On day 2?

I have nothing against the Army, I have heard mixed rumors about the Seneca Army Depot and what they are developing it for, but the truth behind their activities is worth considering since I sure as hell just saw a mutant, white-colored deer.

July 3, 1943

It is 0500, the sun is starting to rise creating that dim morning glow, and I am wide awake. The only thoughts on my mind have to do with yesterday morning.

Did I *actually* see a mutant white deer?

Better yet, did I see a mutant white deer *behind the fence* of the questionable Seneca Army Depot?

What could they possibly be doing there?

*Potential side project: Investigate the possible existence of the white deer – *do not get caught**

I should probably restrict this to a weekend project, given they have us placed in dormitories on top of the hill that runs down the west side of campus. It could be hard to leave unnoticed, but maybe after some training I will have no problem with it.

July 4, 1943

Day number 4 is over, and along with it, the entire weekend, and maybe even part of my sanity.

I forgot to write down last night that apparently these are the dorms for students of Hobart's sister institution, William Smith College, but they reallocated the women to other living quarters around campus such that our Naval V-12 program could have communal living. The rooms in Miller dormitory seemed much bigger to me than the rooms over here in Comstock, but hopefully that means it will just be less hectic of a place.

Classes start tomorrow and from the knowledge I have gained through casual conversations with other people in my dormitory, I do not think the work load will be enough to limit me from spending some time on the weekends investigating the **side project**.

Let us resume this stream of thought later in the week.

July 8, 1943

To be honest, I now have a slightly better understanding for the lay of the land. The Lieutenant told us we are allowed recess time on weekends, so I might try to make my way over towards the Depot.

Some thoughts:

- If this white deer is real, I wonder what biological mechanism is causing it to express a white-fur phenotype
- How might it be related to the normal brown-furred deer?
- Can the white fur be linked to operations occurring at the Depot?

July 10, 1943

Turns out that getting over to the Depot was easier than initially imagined. I managed to hitch a ride from someone who was driving north on Route 14.

Once next to the property, I had to try and not make myself look too obvious that I am not an Army Depot officer. I saw a small depression in the land where it looks like water can flow out from the Depot during storms and whatnot, but it also allowed me a small area to slip through and be inside the Depot fence. While maneuvering my way through the passage, I decided that it would not hurt to bring a water sample back to analyze – what kind of nutrients/chemicals might be flowing out in Depot runoff water?

I guess I underestimated the size of the Depot because once I was within the fences, it seemed like I was in a foreign territory; an ominous feeling began to come over me. Not even 10 minutes goes by before I see a brown deer grazing on what looks like clover.

Hm, clover ... Depot runoff water ... possible white deer?

- Any link between Army operations and a deer having white fur?

As I continued to watch the deer nibble on clover I hear rustling in the bushes just to my right. A white deer, maybe 4 feet in height, is walking towards the patch of clover that the brown deer is eating.

I spend a while observing the two deer interacting; it seems that the brown deer does not mind the presence of the white deer, as they are sharing the clover patch.

I feel a bit delighted. It is quite an easing sight to watch these deer interact. My eyes begin to glaze over slightly, and I find

myself lost in the moment, almost part of nature with zero clue as to how much time is passing.

After who knows how long, I snap back to reality. Maybe I am exhausted and should get some rest, but before my eyes stood *two* white deer. I swear one of these deer was brown just momentarily ago. I swear. My eyes were on them the entire time. Yes, my eyes might have pointed towards the deer, but I was not actively observing. That will be my excuse for myself, exhaustion had me fall into a daydream state of mind. I am not going insane.

I am now more curious.

- What happened to the brown deer? Did it run off?
- Why did I not immediately notice this change?
- I should come back for more observations tomorrow. I am not insane.

July 11, 1943

I return to the Depot, slipping through the same area of fencing I had used to get inside previously—I want to remain consistent and see if I can make my way back to that patch of clover.

While approaching the clover patch, the ominous feeling I had yesterday returns. I see two white deer and one brown deer grazing on the clover. Before getting any closer, the sound of two loud snap-like noises vibrate through the forest, echoing in such a way that I cannot make out the direction from which the noises were made. I drop down next to a tree, hoping that wherever the noise came from is in the opposite direction from the side of the tree I am using to shield myself.

Maybe thirty seconds go by before I hear voices. As I peek out from behind the tree, two Army soldiers equipped with bow-and-arrows enter the clover patch. The brown deer and one of the white deer are both on the ground, each with an arrow through their neck.

A pit forms in my stomach. Those damn Army soldiers just killed two innocent, beautiful creatures and are LAUGHING while tampering with their bodies. Upon realizing that I am trespassing on military property, I stop myself from running at them in a rampage and remain hidden to avoid being caught and killed—Their conversation continues:

“Two for two, man! The Lieutenant will be ecstatic to hear about this.”

“He sure will be. Hey, if we keep up with this kill rate, we should rid the Depot of these deer in no time! And you know what? The more deer you and I kill, the more clover we will be saving, and maybe the Lieutenant will recognize us—make us first in line for those new clover treatments!”

- Clover treatments? What good will clover do for Army soldiers?

As I continue to listen:

“You are a genius, man. We should make it our goal to be first in line for those treatments. I do not understand how this clover is capable of turning the deer white while giving us heightened physical and mental alertness, but maybe Doc will be able to explain it.”

“Come to think of it, I overheard Doc talking to another cadet about the clover treatments this morning when I was waiting in line to get that gash on my leg cleaned and rewrapped—apparently the clover has certain chemical properties that can alter body functions, and when mixed with the correct supplements, causes reactions inside our bodies of the upregulation of muscle fibers and neurotransmitter pathways. Apparently for the deer, eating this species of clover causes them to express the white fur color. For us, it essentially alters our body chemistry such that we will be capable of building the physique of super-soldiers, while also gaining the brain power of heightened mental awareness.”

Within a second it hit me:

The Army is trying to eradicate the deer population that resides within the Depot.

- The Army and deer are competing for the same resource: clover
- The clover alters gene expression in the deer—causes them to display a phenotype of white fur?
 - o *Brush up on genetics knowledge~*
- Clover treatments will induce Army super-soldiers?
 - o A man named “Doc” is behind the project

While waiting out the time it takes for the soldiers to exit the premises, let me start drawing connections between the deer, the clover, and the Army.

This situation is almost ironic, as I remember taking notes in my Biology I course this past week on ecosystems, niche availability, and non-native invaders.

- If both the deer and clover populations were established in this area prior to the Army’s development of the Depot, the Army is acting as a non-native, or invasive threat to the deer, as well as the clover
- If the Army wants absolute control over the consumption of clover, they will have to make it so the niche is unoccupied—ridding the Depot of the deer.
 - o Is this even naturally possible?
 - The Army is using anthropogenic methods of predation
 - Bow & arrow hunting
 - o Review notes on colonization-based saturation—might find answers here:
 - The Depot land = previously established by deer and clover → leaves no available niche space for clover consumption as a primary resource
 - Think about the Army as being an invading organism
 - Naturally, should they not be able to establish due to lack of niche availability?
 - Are they only doing so because of anthropogenic predation methods—not “naturally” outcompeting the deer through any biological trait advantages?

- Propose thoughts on situation to Professor Black in Biology sometime this week—after class on Tuesday?
 - o Possibly do this through making the situation seem like a hypothetical case-study
 - Do **not** make obvious the fact of witnessing everything first-hand

July 13, 1943

Prompt for discussion with Professor Black after Bio class today:

~Act a bit confused about the concept of colonization-based saturation~

Begin conversation with something along the lines of:

'Excuse me, Professor Black, I feel as though I might not have a full grasp on the concept of colonization-based saturation—'

I cannot focus in Professor Black's lecture right now. I swear I have never seen the second hand on a clock move slower than the one in the front of this classroom. What if I word something incorrectly and she catches on to the truth? However, would it really be that terrible if she knew? Maybe she can help me save the deer...who knows.

Two more minutes left in this class.. here we go. Just need to get the opening line out in a casual manner. I should be alright...

"Excuse me, Professor Black.."

"Yes, John?"

"I am really intrigued by the topics we have been discussing in class recently. However, I feel as though I might not have a full grasp on the concept of colonization-based saturation and I just want to make sure I can apply the idea properly."

"Ah, yes. Well John, how about you talk me through it? We have to vacate this room, but let's walk and talk—before I correct you on anything, just tell me what you know colonization-based saturation to be as of right now."

While simultaneously wishing myself luck, I respond with:

“So let’s say that..... hypothetically speaking—we have an established population of some species. White-tailed deer, for example, and their main food source is wild clover. The ever-so-numerous deer population is living within a physically confined area, it could be an island, or it could be a fenced-in area of approximately 10,500 acres, who knows but either way the population of deer is confined to the habitat by a physical parameter.”

Professor Black responds with, “That is a good start, now try to incorporate an invasion and tell me what you think the outcome might be.”

“Invasion.. alright so, let’s add that both the clover and the deer populations are endemic to this area. A group of humans move into the area and attempt to establish, but have a difficult time doing so; they want to use the wild clover as a primary resource but realize the wild deer population is interfering with this. If the native deer and clover populations are thriving and have close to all niches filled in the habitat, the colonization-based saturation hypothesis tells us that the human population should *not* be able to establish. The more native deer there are, the less available niche space there is, and over time, less humans should be able to colonize.

But here is where I have a question: the humans will have to compete with the deer for the clover. There is no available niche space for the humans to colonize and attempt to establish, yet they still manage a high survival rate because rather than naturally outcompeting, they use anthropogenic methods of predation—hunting the deer by bow & arrow. If anthropogenic predation is how the humans are competing with the deer populations for clover, can we still predict that humans will not be able to establish due to colonization-based saturation? Are humans the exception to invasion theories such that they just do not apply to us? Even though the deer

population has a major advantage naturally because of colonization-based saturation levels amidst the habitat’s niches, I do not see how they will be able to outcompete the humans in a natural sense. This just does not seem fair to me...”

There is a pause for what seems like an hour before Professor Black begins to answer.

“Wow, it seems like you have been thinking about this a lot. You clearly feel very strongly against the idea of human interference with a habitat’s ecosystem balance. To set your mind at ease for a minute, you should know that your notions on colonization-based saturation are correct; naturally, it is impossible for the humans to establish and take control over the clover population because there just is not enough available ‘space’ for both the deer and the humans to consume the clover—the deer will prevail in that sense. However, when you bring in the idea of hunting as a mode of predation, it removes the parameter of chance and natural selection. If the deer were being outcompeted by some invasive organism of the same trophic level, for example any other herbivore that primarily consumes clover, they would still be okay. Naturally, the low amount of available niche space means less non-natives colonizing over time. In this scenario, colonization-based saturation could be used to predict the outcome of the situation.

Unfortunately, the odds do not look very favorable for your hypothetical deer population. The humans will hunt them to the point of eradication if they so please. You are right to say it is unfair, any anthropogenic influence on something in nature disrupts the balance. If you wanted the deer population to survive, you would have to put an end to the hunting.”

Before I have enough time to think of some smooth way to wrap up the conversation with Professor Black, I tell her

thank you and head straight to the library. I hope running out like this does not offend her, but this is important.

The deer *can* be saved. They will survive naturally because their relative abundance is already substantial. Without human predation, the deer and clover would outcompete the Army because they have simply been around longer, in addition to also having larger populations/colonies, leaving little free space to allow for cultivation by soldiers.

All I need to do to save the deer is put an end to the hunting.

- Research species/population conservation and hunting laws
- Possibly bring Professor Brown to the Depot and show her the deer and unique clover
- Prove to her why they are important animals and should not be hunted
 - o The Army wishes for them to cease overgrazing of the clover
 - o Maybe Professor Brown can help me formulate an alternative performance enhancer compound for the Army
 - If an alternative to clover is offered, maybe the Army will agree to end hunting the deer.
- Look into adding Organic Chemistry I to schedule for this semester
- Figure out a way to explain everything to Professor Black without sounding ridiculous