



Shellfish Pioneers

Julius & Thurlow Nelson

"There is plenty of room for improvement in the culture of oysters...the real labors of the Biologist lie in this direction" – Julius Nelson, 1888
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Annual Report

"He had a peculiar simplicity and sincerity which endeared him alike to students, colleagues, oyster growers, and persons in all walks of life." - C.R. Woodward and I.N. Waller, *New Jersey's Agricultural Experiment Station 1880-1930*

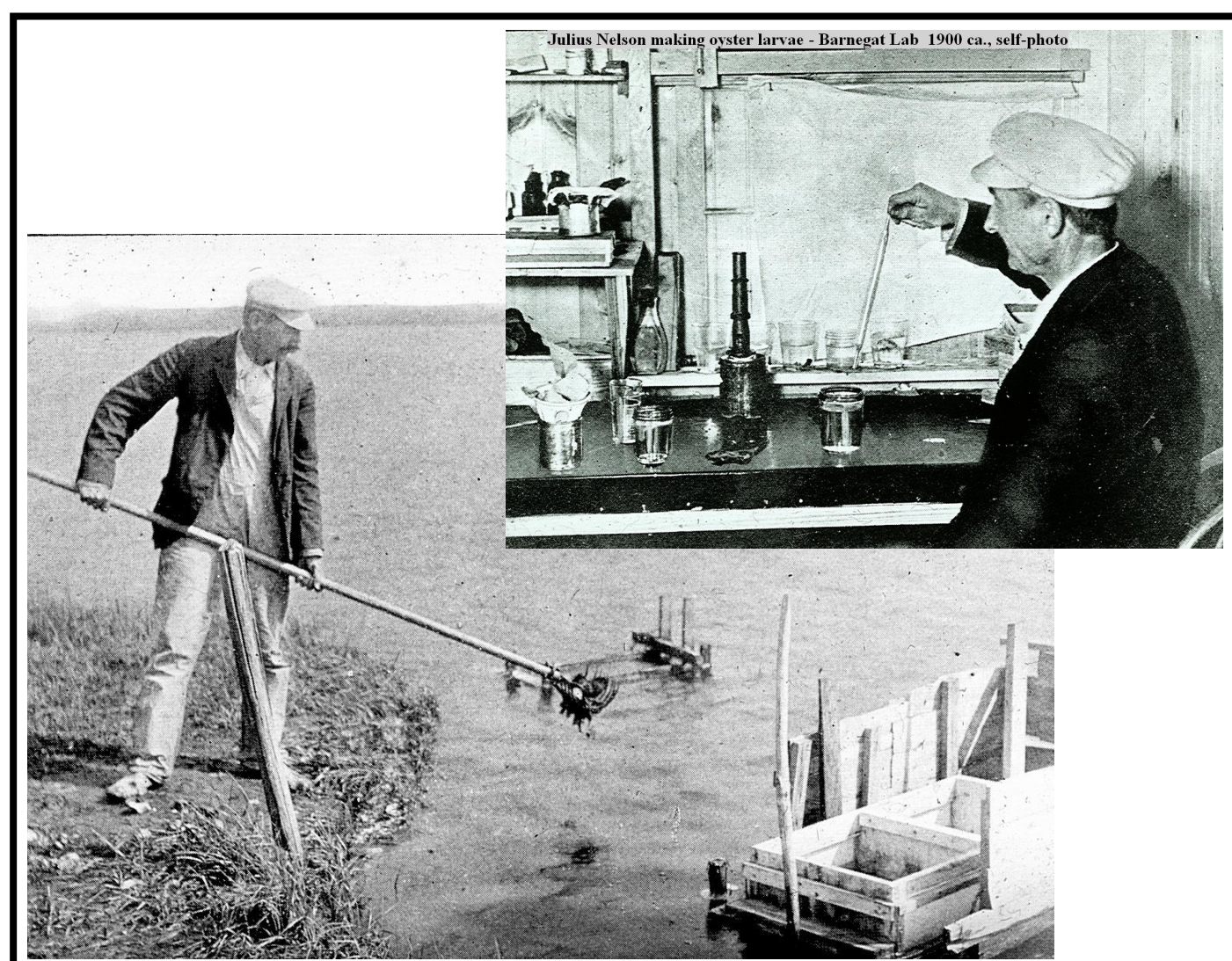


Julius Nelson
(1858-1916)



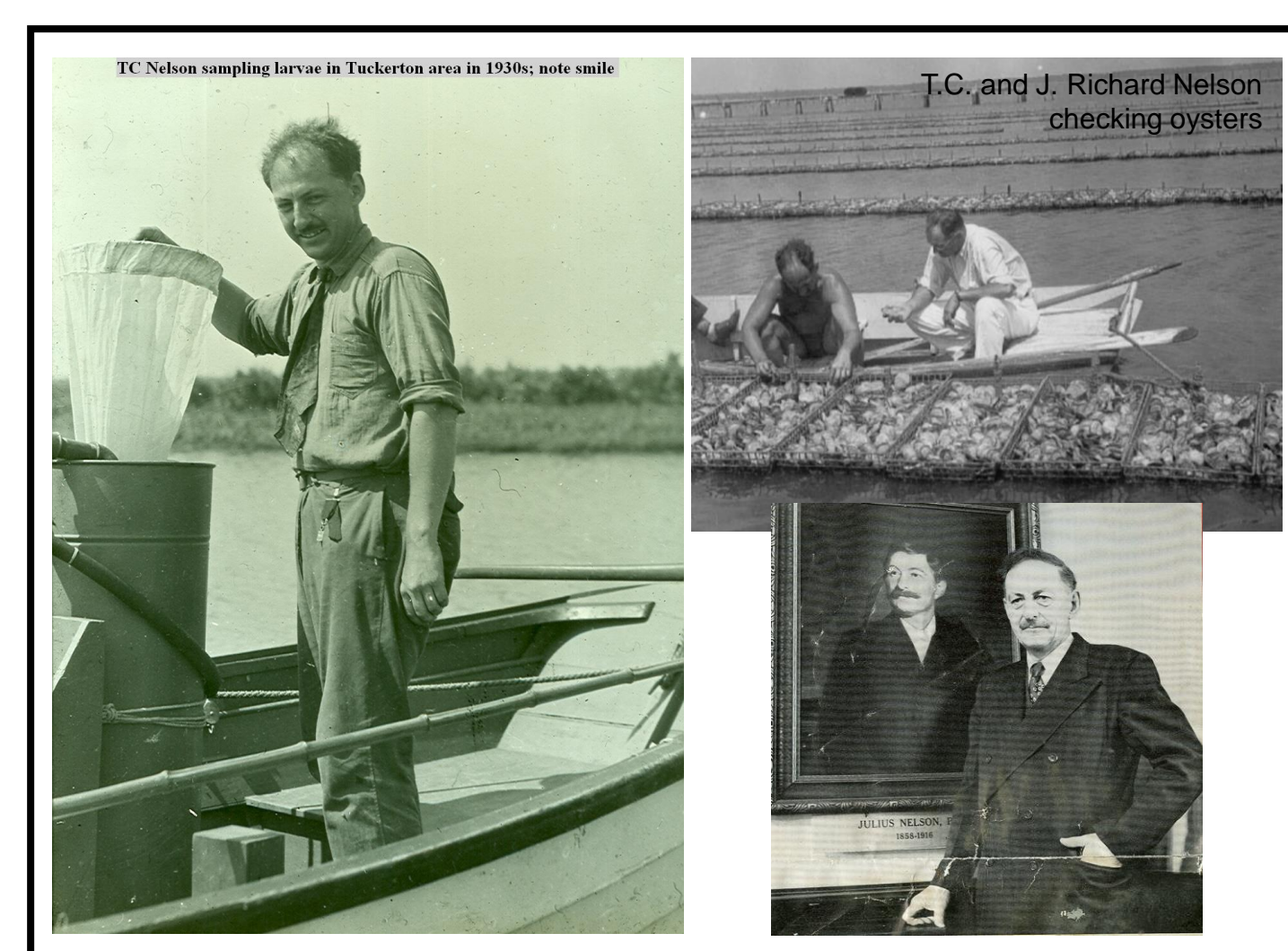
Thurlow C. Nelson
(1890-1960)

"His keen mind, warm personality, sincere and forceful speech, genuine interest in people, and deep enthusiasm for biology attracted many students to him. . . He died in the midst of the elements which provided so much of the stimulus for his productive life." - Melbourne R. Carrier, from *Proceedings of the National Shellfisheries Association*

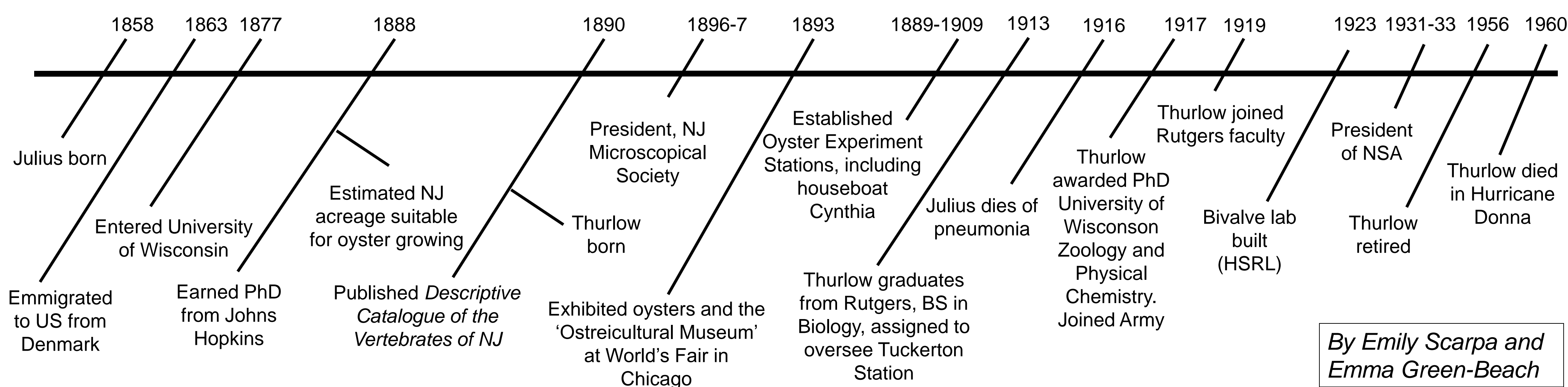


For 28 years, Julius Nelson served as biologist of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station and professor of biology, physiology, and bacteriology at Rutgers University. During this time, he issued a *Descriptive Catalogue of the Vertebrates of New Jersey* (1890), and contributed sections, including oysters, shrimp, and sponges, to the *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture* (1908). He was a member of the National Association of Shell Fish Commissioners, the New Jersey Tuberculosis Commission and the New Jersey Science Teachers' Association, as well as President of the New Jersey State Microscopical Society. Julius was keenly interested in the balance of science and religion, often speaking on this topic. Julius's research spanned much of the agricultural industry, but oyster investigations were his greatest achievement. In 1888, Julius estimated the acreage of New Jersey waters suitable for growing oysters was 200,000 acres. His research on the nature of oyster propagation included development of embryos, comparisons of viability of different stocks, parasites, predators, and comparisons of oyster problems in different localities. Julius had numerous oyster laboratory stations built throughout New Jersey, along with some of the first experimental oyster culture ponds and a laboratory houseboat.

Thurlow C. Nelson became a professor of zoology at Rutgers University in 1919 and continued the oyster research begun by his father. In 1920, Thurlow was appointed biologist of the New Jersey State Board of Shell Fisheries. From this position he surveyed effects of pollution in Delaware Bay and established an experiment station at Bivalve, NJ. He also planted oyster shell in Barnegat Bay and advised oyster farmers on when to plant shell in order to catch oyster spat. Thurlow was the President of the National Shellfisheries Association from 1931 to 1933, treasurer from 1939 to 1941, Vice President of the American Microscopical Society in 1941, and the Vice President of American Society of Zoologists in 1948. He served as chairman of the Committee on Pollution of Inland and Coastal Waters of the Ecological Society of America and the Chairman of the NJ State Water Policy and Supply Council from 1945 to 1960. Thurlow was awarded the Rutgers Distinguished Scholar and Gifted Teacher award in 1934. He was the biologist in charge of shellfish investigation at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station until 1950 and the President of the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography in 1953.



TIMELINE



By Emily Scarpa and Emma Green-Beach