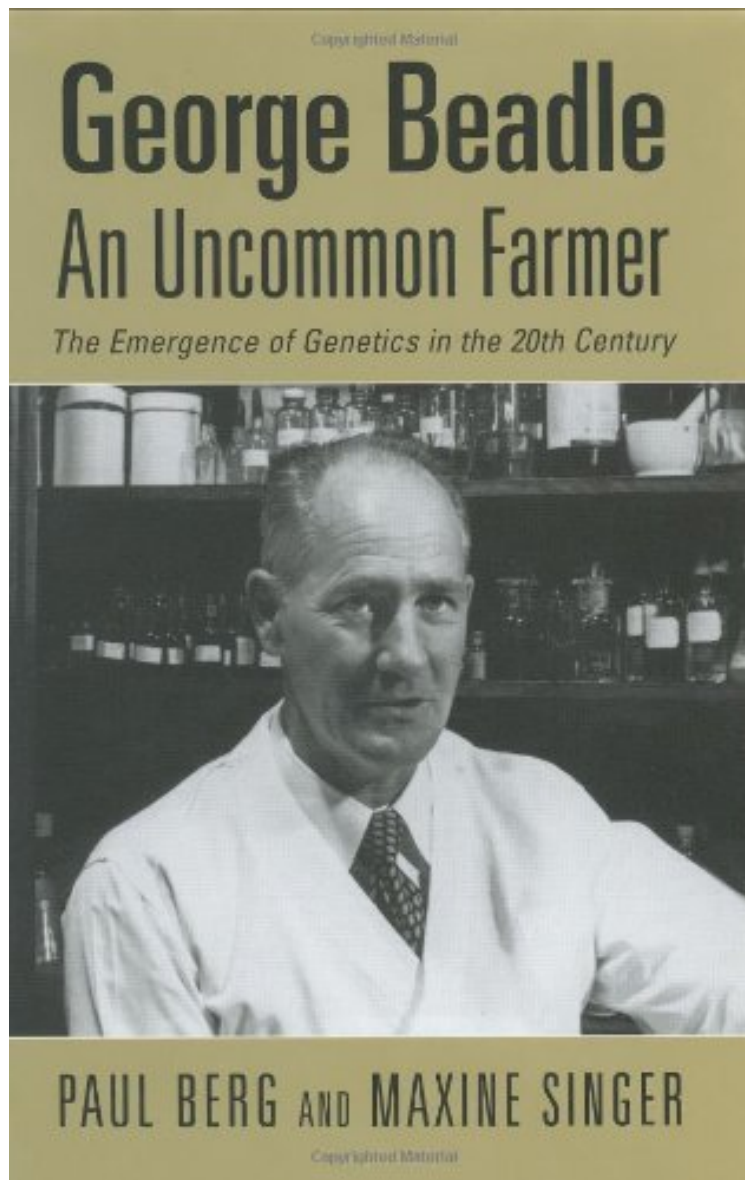


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George Beadle, *An Uncommon Farmer: The Emergence of Genetics in the 20th Century* (New England Monographs in Geography)

Paul Berg

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#1751115 in Books Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press 2003-08-18 Original language: English PDF # 1
6.30 x 1.20 x 9.10l, #File Name: 0879696885408 pages | File size: 22.Mb

Paul Berg : *George Beadle, An Uncommon Farmer: The Emergence of Genetics in the 20th Century* (New England Monographs in Geography) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *George Beadle, An Uncommon Farmer: The Emergence of Genetics in the 20th Century* (New

England Monographs in Geography):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic! By William Varenas
Awesome quality and delivery of the book!!! Very pleased and I would definitely recommend this seller to anyone!!!
5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. jf from nj
By Calochortus
High marks for telling an interesting story well. George Beadle was a old-fashioned, principled country boy from Nebraska. But he and a cast of brilliant colleagues revolutionized how biology is done, and that is the highlight of the book. It is best when showing how Beadle got where he did scientifically. George Beadle was a driven, brilliant workaholic who kept his emotions tightly bottled, like his flies, except for short, well-directed bursts of anger directed at lab workers for sloppiness. His wonderful institutional personality contrasts sharply with more infamous, disagreeable sorts, like Delbruck and Watson, who appear later in the book. The book moves along smartly and efficiently, but lapses in a couple areas. I recognize this is a book about biology, but it's also a biography, and so Beadle's personal life is fair game, besides being inherently as interesting as much of the later administrative info, in which the book becomes bogged down. So, here goes: Frequent references are made to the unpleasant personality of George Beadle's first wife, Marion. But no attempt is made to flesh this out in any effective way. What did she say and do that was so offensive to so many people. What was her problem? She remains too much of a mystery, given that she was an important part of Beadle's life. This lack of info contrasts with the often overly detailed, and somewhat murky explanation of the neurospora life cycle. I had to read it three times to understand what they were talking about and have taught this stuff for 20 years. The authors are scientists, not historians or novelists, and it shows. Still, it's close to a page-turner for the first half.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Two great scientists on a leader of 20th Century Genetics
By Leonard
A page turner on the excitement of uncovering many secrets of life from the rediscovery of Mendel to the threshold of revealing the genetic dictionary and how it is translated into living forms told by two leading biochemical geneticists.

George Beadle was a towering scientific figure whose work from the 1930s to 1960 marked the transition from classical genetics to the molecular era. Among other distinctions, he made the pivotal, Nobel Prize-winning discovery with Edward Tatum that the role of genes is to specify proteins. From 1946 to 1960 he led the Caltech Biology Division, rebuilding it to a powerhouse in molecular biology, and afterwards became a successful President of the University of Chicago. This is the first biography of a giant of genetics, written by two of the field's most distinguished contributors, Paul Berg and Maxine Singer.

Berg (a Nobel laureate biochemist at Stanford University) and Singer (a former president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington) are thoroughly acquainted with Beadle's work and its place in the history of genetics. Not only do they tell us a lot, both scientific and personal, about Beadle, but they set the stage by describing his associates and their work. The authors have done their homework, reading the old literature and conducting hours of interviews. The result is a full, accurate, authoritative, and balanced biography. And their writing is splendid as well....
Science --Science
The book tells us in detail about Beadle's two marriages, the salaries he earned (but not their equivalent values today), his journeys by ship and by train, and the fact that he succumbed to Alzheimer's disease. There is plenty here for everyone. Those interested in the history of genetics will want to read the whole book, but today's students would benefit from just a few chapters. Nature --Nature
Excellent biographies of scientists are rare. Those written by nonscientists often omit the major scientific work and focus on the personality of the scientist and the importance of their work. Those biographies written by scientists often bury readers in technical details that only specialists can appreciate, and all too often the personality of the scientist is missing. Fortunately, both Paul Berg and Maxine Singer have avoided these two pitfalls. Their biography of George Wells Beadle is a magnificent effort of good writing, good insights, and a comprehensive account of the life and work of one of the greatest geneticists of the 20th century....
For those who enjoy learning how great ideas arise and get transformed, who want to see how the science of one's time constrains the interpretations, and how highly motivated and talented investigators succeed in solving problems, this book will be richly rewarding. The Quarterly of Biology --The Quarterly of Biology