

BIOGRAPHY

WILLIAM BRODBECK HERMS



The worth of a man may be appraised in many ways. He may have contributed much to the material welfare of the public; he may have produced ideas, good or evil, which have affected men's thinking; he may as a teacher have influenced and guided young men to useful careers, and helped to mould their characters.

Although he was probably the first and is unquestionably the foremost medical entomologist in America, William Brodbeck Herms (Billy to his many friends) is above all a great human being, who has the marvelous faculty of interesting young men in his subject and stimulating them to purposeful study and productive research. The able medical entomologists he has developed at the University of California over a period of more than thirty-five years are his greatest achievement.

His own direct contributions to science are considerable, his extensive technical writings covering works on malaria, relapsing fever, poliomyelitis, typhoid, the dysenteries, and many other diseases and their anthropod

vectors; in the veterinary field, on many parasites, arthropods and helminths, of domestic animals; in the economic field, the pests of coconut palms in the South Pacific, the life histories and control of termites, and many others.

The high-frequency electrical trap with a monochromatic light attractant highly selective for a specific insect, such as the artichoke plume moth, resulted from his basic studies and under his supervision, and he was probably the first to use a suction fan with an insect light trap.

His principal book, "Medical Entomology," was the first definitive book on this subject. The first edition was published in 1915, and is now about to appear in a fourth edition. Another useful book is "Mosquito Control," written jointly with Harold F. Gray, the first edition of which appeared in 1940; a second edition, revised and enlarged, is appearing in March, 1944.

Herms originally intended to be a physician, but about the time he graduated from Baldwin-Wallace College in 1902 his interest in malaria, stimulated by the new discoveries concerning its transmission by mosquitoes, caused him to concentrate on the arthropod vectors of disease. After graduate study at Ohio State and Harvard Universities, he taught zoology at Ohio Wesleyan for two years, and came to the University of California in 1908 as Assistant Professor of Entomology, becoming Professor of Parasitology and head of the Division of Entomology and Parasitology in the College of Agriculture in 1920.

The presence of a severe endemic malaria in the central valley of California gave him the opportunity to conduct what was the first definitive campaign, in the continental United States, to control malaria by the control of the *Anopheles* vector only. This campaign, at Penryn, California in 1910

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9 The Activities of the National Research Council in the National Program for the Control of Malaria. By G. A. Carden, Jr.

The National Research Council was created in 1916 as the active agent of the National Academy of Sciences. On September 3, 1941, the Chairman of the Division of Medical Sciences called the first Conference on the Chemotherapy of Malaria. Later, in connection with the Office of Scientific Research and Development, a Board for the Coordination of Malaria Studies was set up with the following four panels: (1) Synthesis of antimalarials; (2) Biochemistry of antimalarials; (3) Pharmacology; (4) Clinical Testing. Results include data on about 6000 new drugs which have been tested on one or more parasites. Exchange of information through the office of the Survey of Antimalarial Drugs conserves manpower by avoidance of duplication of effort. It is hoped that out of this large coordinated effort an effective field prophylactic will be discovered.

10. A Proposed Program to Prevent the Spread of Malaria in the United States from Infected Individuals returning from abroad. By W. A. Sawyer.

The danger of introduction of exotic strains or vectors of malaria is emphasized and the following measures are proposed to minimize introduction of infection into communities: (1) All individuals with malaria among returning military personnel should be treated until clinically free of the disease before discharge; (2) Special anopheline surveys and control should be undertaken to minimize the spread of malaria from places in which returning personnel with malaria are concentrated; (3) The malaria patient on discharge from a military hospital should be notified in writing of the diagnosis and the species of *Plasmodium* involved and should be instructed to consult a physician and show him the communication on the occasion of any subsequent illness within a year; and any reports requested by civilian health authorities should be supplied; (4) Strong efforts should be made to educate physicians in the diagnoses and treatment of malaria and the fundamentals of prevention.

Measures to make the community non-infectible are listed as follows:

(1) Extensive malaria and anopheline surveys, particularly the latter, must be

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was followed by many others, and the stimulus of his work led finally to the establishment of some 26 mosquito abatement districts in California.

In the first World War he was a Major in the Sanitary Corps, U. S. Army, handling malaria control at the Port of Embarkation, Newport News. In 1943 he was called back into active service as Lieutenant Colonel, and until retired in October was assigned to teaching duties at the Army Medical Field Service School at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Professor Herms received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science from Baldwin-Wallace College in 1935. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the California Academy of Sciences, and a member of the Entomological Society of America (President, 1940), the Association of Economic Entomologists (President, 1928), the American Society of Parasitology, the American Society of Tropical Medicine, etc. For many years he has been Consulting Entomologist to the California State Department of Public Health. He has been a Trustee of the Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District since its organization in 1930.

His principal hobby is the Boy Scout movement, and for many years he has been President and guiding spirit of the Berkeley-Contra Costa Area Council. In 1937 the City of Berkeley conferred upon him the Benjamin Ide Wheeler award, granted occasionally to its most distinguished and useful citizen. In 1935 the Republic of France awarded him the Croix de Chevalier du Merite.