

MOSQUITO CONTROL IN ILLINOIS

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Early references to organized mosquito control work in Illinois record a State Health Department malaria control demonstration at Carbondale, in southern Illinois, in 1922 and a similarly sponsored mosquito control program at Ravinia Park, about 20 miles north of Chicago, in 1925. Broadening of interest in these efforts was materially assisted during the mid 20's by LePrince and others who, sponsored by the Gorgas Memorial Institute, were responsible for the formation of the Anti-Mosquito Board of Metropoli-

tan Chicago. Subsequent to this, on July 7, 1927, the Mosquito Abatement Act became law and immediately following enactment, three districts were formed in the north part of the state and one in the south.

In reviewing material concerning the above history I was especially pleased to learn, as I know you will be, that our good friend and fellow member, Mr. Otto McFeely, President of the Des Plaines Valley Mosquito Abatement District, qualifies for the distinct honor as the "Father

of mosquito control in Illinois." Mr. McFeely's work, which resulted in specific mosquito control by the Chicago Sanitary District, predates the earliest of the above activities by exactly one year.

As indicated in the foregoing, the 1927 Mosquito Abatement District Act is the enabling state legislation providing for the organization of "Any contiguous territory having a population of not less than three hundred inhabitants. . . ." During the two decades following enactment of the law only four new districts were added to the original four, but since 1947 nine more have been organized, so that today nearly a thousand square miles and over one and a half million inhabitants are included in the seventeen organized mosquito control districts of the State.

As in many other mosquito abatement districts throughout the United States, Illinois districts must direct their primary control efforts against the floodwater species. Our common problem is the well-known *Aedes vexans* that, because of its particular habits, in our terrain and climate, is able to locate literally thousands of oviposition sites in areas of only a few square miles. In the past we have been dependent solely on the larval sampling method to locate and evaluate these sources. Obviously, this could be done only when the larvae were present. The alternative was to collect soil samples, flood them and await development of the larval forms. This latter method was both cumbersome and tedious, requiring considerable space for rearing specimens and care throughout the developmental period. Perhaps the most significant recent achievement in Illinois has been the development, at the University of Illinois, of a practical and rapid hydraulic method for separating

Aedes, and similar eggs and their shells, from the soil. During the past year one Illinois district, using this method, processed about 1,750 soil samples from 1,150 suspected sources. Incidentally, 705 of the suspected sources were found to be positive on the basis of shells (history of past production) and/or eggs (future production potential). This technique has the effect of lengthening the handle of our dippers, thereby enabling us to locate and evaluate many more floodwater sites in any given year than has been possible in the past.

In conclusion, I might mention that the Illinois Mosquito Control Association although formed about 1950, has just held its Third Annual Conference. As with most newly reactivated organizations, we are working diligently to increase participation and revenue. At our April meeting it was reported that, due in a large part to an intensive drive for sustaining memberships, the Association is now solvent. Moreover, the active membership roll now lists some 110 individuals, and 14 voting memberships are in good standing (in Illinois each state or local governmental agency directly engaged or participating in mosquito control is eligible for a voting membership). We are looking forward to a continuing growth in mosquito control in Illinois during the next decade. Through the medium of our Association and its membership, we see the opportunity to assist this growth, especially by the active support of long overdue Federal legislation, through support of much needed state legislation to facilitate the annexation of new areas to existing districts, and in the dissemination of information to those interested in organized mosquito control in Illinois.