

Veterinary Surgery

The history, curriculum, and personnel of the Department of Veterinary Surgery

H. Perry Jensen, '42

"**T**HERE is an old saying that whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. In no connection is this more true than in surgery. The necessity for a surgical operation can usually be realized by the owner of the animal, especially if it is some external condition. Perhaps he witnesses the operation or waits while the operation is performed. He then sees the animal after the operation and during the healing process, and knows that whatever change has been made in the animal is directly due to the surgical treatment. The operator can rest assured that the owner can size up his methods and facilities for doing surgical work very quickly, and if there is opportunity for choice, will soon choose the one who follows the rules of asepsis and antisepsis, and who practices the use of anesthesia and other good surgical technic." These observations of Dr. H. E. Bemis, first head of the Department of Surgery, are taken from an address made by him before the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association in 1929.

Dr. J. H. McNeil

The work in surgery of the Veterinary Division of Iowa State College, for many years following the founding of the division, was performed by various members of the staff. Dr. J. H. McNeil entered the institution in 1900 and was made Dean of the Division in 1903, which position he held until 1908. He was the first member of the staff to carry the title, Professor of Surgery, assigned to him in 1906. In 1908, he left Iowa State to become Professor of

Veterinary Surgery at Ohio State University. After a few years he left this position to manage a large cattle ranch in Brazil. Later he returned to the United States and became State Veterinarian of New Jersey and remained there until his death in 1936. Dr. McNeil left a profound impression upon the clinical work at Iowa State College.

The Department

Dr. H. E. Bemis became a member of the staff as assistant professor in 1908. When the division was organized on the departmental plan in 1911, he became the first head of the Department of Surgery. He held this position until 1927 when he became Professor of Surgery at the University of Pennsylvania. He was succeeded by Dr. W. F. Guard, a graduate of Ohio State University, who entered the department as Assistant Professor of Veterinary Surgery in 1913. Dr. Guard served until 1929 when he was called back to Ohio State as Professor of Surgery and Director of Clinics. Meanwhile, in 1927, Dr. W. A. Aiken was transferred from the Department of Anatomy to the Department of Surgery. He resigned in 1931 to enter private practice at Merrill, Iowa. In 1929 Dean C. H. Stange was made acting head of the department and served until 1932 when Dr. G. R. Fowler assumed the title, which he now holds.

The course in surgery is divided into three phases: classroom, laboratory, and clinic. In the classroom, the student is ac-

quainted with the general principles of surgery in the first quarter of his junior year. In the winter and spring quarters of the same year, the technic of various operations is described and discussed. A course in Ophthalmology is also offered to students in the fall quarter of the senior year.

Laboratory and Clinic

In the laboratory, practice in actual surgery and the performance of specific operations are carried out in both large and small animals. An effort is made to teach correct surgical technic which can be applied to any species and any operation. The restraint and medication of domestic animals is also discussed and the student required to carry on these procedures until proficiency is gained.

Students in the surgical clinic have an opportunity to observe the wide variety of cases which are brought in large numbers from the surrounding country and even adjacent states. They have an opportunity to observe and assist in the actual operations and also to perform a great deal of the preoperative and post-operative care.

The Staff

Dr. G. R. Fowler, D.V.M., B.S. Professor and Head of the Department.

Dr. M. J. Johnson, D.V.M. Associate Professor.

Dr. G. H. Conner, D.V.M., B.S. Graduate Assistant.

George R. Fowler, D.V.M., B.S.



Dr. Fowler was born in Michigan. When 13 years old, he moved to England where he lived for five years. He attended the University of Manchester for one year and then returned to the United States and attended the University of Missouri and the University of Idaho for one year. After graduating from Washington State College in 1925 with the degrees,

Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Bachelor of Science, he joined the Washington State College staff with the title of Instructor in Anatomy and Surgery. In 1928, he accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Anatomy in the Iowa State College and in 1929 transferred to the Department of Surgery. He was made head of this department in September, 1932.

Dr. Fowler is a member of the A.V.M.A., Phi Kappa Phi, Alpha Psi, and Phi Zeta. He also belongs to the Iowa State Veterinary Association and is an honorary member of the Eastern Iowa Veterinary Association. In 1941, he served as Secretary of the Section on Surgery and Obstetrics for the A.V.M.A. and was a member of the Scientific Council.

Morris J. Johnson, D.V.M.



Dr. Johnson was born and raised in South Dakota. He received his D.V.M. degree from Iowa State College in 1932. He joined the staff of the Department of Surgery as instructor immediately following graduation, and was made Assistant Professor of Surgery in 1936.

Dr. Johnson is a member of the A.V.M.A. and Phi Zeta.

Gabel H. Conner, D.V.M., B.S.



Dr. Conner graduated from Washington State College in 1941 with the degrees, D. V.M. and B.S. Following graduation, he accepted a position as graduate assistant in the Department of Surgery at Iowa State College.

He is doing work on his masters degree and his special problem is, "Prognostic Values of Blood Determinations in Certain Surgical Cases." Dr. Conner is a member of the A.V.M.A. and Alpha Psi.