

# History of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State College

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**C**ONTRARY to prevalent opinion, veterinary medicine was not a new science when the Division of Veterinary Medicine was established at Iowa State College in 1879.

The first period in the development of veterinary medicine began with our earliest recorded history and ends with the establishment of the first veterinary school in 1762 at Lyons, France. Austria, Belgium, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Germany followed in close order with the establishment of more veterinary schools.

The study of the anatomy of animals was founded by Aristotle. Hippocrates, another Greek writer and veterinarian, lived about the fourth century. Absyrtus, another Greek who lived about the same time was the most important writer of all on animal diseases.

## France

France held leadership in medical sciences and culture for about half a century and it was near the beginning of the period that the first veterinary school in the world was established by Bourgelat who did much to break the bonds of quackery and superstition and gave science room to develop. The school was opened to students on January 2, 1762, at Lyons.

While history indicates that practically all of the early veterinary colleges in Europe and the United States were either established or sponsored by persons especially interested in fine horses, no such factor is apparent in the establishment of the "School of Veterinary Science" at the Iowa Agricultural College and Farm. Iowa found it necessary to provide some method and organization for controlling animal diseases before animal industry could be successful.

\* Condensed from the booklet edited by Dean Stange on the occasion of the semi-centennial of the Iowa State Veterinary College and added to by the author.

In 1871 veterinary science and practice was included in the second semester of the senior year in agriculture. The curriculum included comparative anatomy, physiology, pathology, veterinary science and practice. There is no record of a veterinarian on the staff from 1872 to 1877 at which time Dr. Stalker received his title of V. S. from the Ontario Veterinary College.

Money must have been hard to get in those days the same as it is now for in May, 1877, an appropriation of \$50.00 was made to the Department of Veterinary Science.

## One Year Curriculum

It was during 1878 that Dr. Stalker conceived the idea of starting a veterinary school. On May 23, 1879, the Board of Trustees ordered that the course in the Veterinary School be extended one year; that Professor Stalker and the President of the College be authorized to arrange the proper studies therefor; and that the Board hereafter on recommendation of the faculty confer a suitable diploma upon such students as shall complete such extended course. Thus was the birth of the Veterinary Division sixty years ago. This marks the founding of the first veterinary school in the West. Also, it makes the Iowa State College Division of Veterinary Medicine the oldest state veterinary college in existence.

In those days they knew nothing about oil immersion lenses or substage attachments, and the entire work in pathology, so far as the microscope was concerned, was pathological histology. The relation of bacteriology to medicine was but little known. Pasteur was in the midst of his investigations and Lister was slowly bringing to the profession a knowledge of the relation of pathogenic bacteria to inflammation and their influence in wound

healing. The course of instruction here was two years, of nine months each. At that time a regular medical course was two years of lectures of from 16 to 24 weeks each. The veterinary course was a graded course while in medical colleges it was not graded, and all students listened to the same lectures without distinction as to class or grade, altho a few medical schools were making some experiments in the direction of grading their classes.

For many years the founders looked forward with apprehension to the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, who had from year to year warned the faculty to keep their satchels packed for sudden removal.

#### First Quarters

The veterinary school was first given quarters in the president's old house which had just been vacated by President Welch, who had built a new home. Later this building was known as Music Hall. A small bedroom with one window was used as a laboratory. For larger classes they were permitted to use the front parlor when Professor Bessey did not need it for botany classes. Their equipment consisted of three or four student microscopes left over from the botany laboratory and one larger microscope. With this equipment and with specimens of tissues from the butcher shop, a few staining fluids and reagents, they were in a position to study specimens of blood, connective tissue, muscle, etc. The next question was would any young men classify as veterinary students.

To provide for the clinical and practical side of the veterinary work in the early days, a barn located west of the Horticulture Department was renovated and called the veterinary hospital for the use of Professor Stalker.

It is apparent from the records that the principal part of the faculty from a medical viewpoint consisted of Dr. M. Stalker and Dr. D. S. Fairchild. Dr. Stalker had been on the faculty since 1873, and Dr. Fairchild had been serving as college physician. On December 4, 1879, he was elected professor of histology, pathology, and therapeutics in the veterinary school and fifty dollars was appropriated which, with moderate fees from students, made up his salary. On May 24, 1880, he was voted a salary of \$400.00 to begin March 1, 1880.

#### Entrance Requirements

The entrance requirements of the college at this time were stated as follows: "Candidates for admission must be at least sixteen years of age. Before entering the classes they must pass an examination in reading, orthography, geography, grammar, and arithmetic. Candidates for graduation must be eighteen years of age or over; must have completed the entire course of study, and attained a standing of 75 per cent in all the studies pursued; and, finally, shall present an acceptable thesis upon some subject approved by the faculty. A graduation fee of five dollars will be required."

The degree, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, which has since become the standard of all the veterinary colleges of the

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Sanitary Building, later  
College Hospital and  
Music Hall, first build-  
ing erected for the Vet-  
erinary Division.  
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United States, was conferred in the beginning only on those with some advanced standing.

At this time veterinary medicine was listed as one of the three special schools maintained in the college.

#### **\$500 Clinic Building**

On November 5, 1882, the Board of Trustees approved a contract for a hospital building. Records indicated that the contract was for \$500.00. Two days later \$1,000.00 was appropriated for a model of a horse. As one looks back now this seems rather disproportionate, but the care and treatment of hospital cases was not developed as it is now. There is also the

#### **Building Appropriations**

In 1884 the Board appropriated \$10,000 for two buildings for the Veterinary Division. One, a two story brick building, was opened June 1, 1885, and was used by the Veterinary Division until 1912 and removed in 1926 to make room for the new Memorial Union. The building devoted to the theoretical branch of the work was situated about 15 rods from the hospital. This was known as the "Sanitary Building," later as the college hospital, and finally as Music Hall.

Students were not so numerous during those first years. Some three or four young men classified the first year. The



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Old Veterinary Hospital, erected at the same time as the Sanitary Building.  
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fact that in those days anatomy was considered the most important branch of veterinary medicine and dissections were made of fresh material instead of carefully preserved specimens as is the case today.

In 1884 President Welch asked for \$10,000 for a veterinary hospital. Dr. Stalker reported that facilities had been increased by the erection of a small building to be used as an infirmary, but it was inadequate for hospital work. The extent of the clinic during the year was about fifty boarders and three hundred patients presented at clinics. No case receiving treatment at the hospital during that year proved fatal.

second year there were 12 students classified. While there were only 305 students in college in 1886, twenty-one students classified in the veterinary college for the year 1885 and six were graduated.

During these years Dr. Stalker was acting in the dual capacity of head of the School of Veterinary Medicine and state veterinarian.

#### **Adopt 3-Year Course**

In 1887 the faculty decided that two years was insufficient, which led to the adoption of three years. At that time the Veterinary Department had but one classroom, while there were two and some-

times three classes in progress at the same time.

Buildings were not the only things difficult to get in those days, as on January 21, Dr. Harriman asked for a microscope and reported that he could buy one worth \$200.00 from Mrs. I. W. Smith for \$125.00. The board appropriated \$15.00 to rent the microscope for one year with the privilege of buying it and applying same on the purchase price.

Action on November 18, 1897, provided that the veterinary hospital be connected with the water supply and that the wind-mill be taken down.

### 50 Students

During the year 1899 fifty veterinary students were in attendance. Funds were still very low as is indicated by the following salaries: Stalker \$1,600, Harriman \$700.00, House Surgeon \$200.00, current expenses \$350.00, pathology \$50.00 and histology \$50.00.

For several years President Beardshear acted as dean of the Veterinary Division. He died August 5, 1902, at his home on the campus—"The Knoll." For about eight months the Veterinary Division was without a dean, but the veterinary profession in the state had become interested and urged that a veterinarian be appointed dean. This was done on April 7, 1903, when Dr. J. H. McNeil was elected, being the first veterinarian to hold that position.

The college had become "embarrassed by prosperity," or, as President Storms stated, "The college has grown much more rapidly than its resources." The requirements for admission had been raised. The quality was much higher and more satisfactory than ever before in the department.

Dr. McNeil asked, as President Beardshear had done before him, for a new building. He recommended one costing not less than \$150,000.00. As a reason he stated that student enrollment was increasing and the clinics were becoming larger; in fact, they had far outgrown the facilities provided.

On June 4, 1907, Dr. W. A. Stuhr resigned from the faculty and C. H. Stange,

who was being graduated, was elected, "subjects to be arranged."

### Stange Second Dean

In 1908 the University of Ohio needed a surgeon in the Veterinary College, which position was accepted by Dean McNeil. A committee was appointed to consider a successor. This committee reported to the Board of Trustees on March 17, 1909, that C. H. Stange had been selected as dean of the Veterinary Division to be effective February 4, 1909. Dr. Stange, at the age of twenty-eight, became thereby the second veterinary dean of the Iowa State College. Before he accepted appointment he had the assurance that the Veterinary Division would receive the same consideration as did the other divisions of the college.

The most important task before the new administration was the planning of the new veterinary buildings, for which the last legislature had appropriated \$150,000.00.

Some difficulties arose in connection with the location of the new buildings. It was first decided to locate them on the southwestern part of the campus near the new athletic field. This location was reconsidered on May 25, 1910, and the buildings were relocated on a tract north of the greenhouse. This was the first educational building to be located north of the street car line. The new buildings were occupied in the spring of 1912, and pronounced by many as the finest in the country.

### Research

With an increased staff, some attention was now given to research and work on hog cholera was taken up in 1911. Dr. Charles Murray, present dean of veterinary medicine, was associated with this work.

Requirements for admission were again boosted in 1911, when 15 units of high school work were required for entrance. These requirements made this school the first in America with the uniform four year course requiring matriculants to be graduates of an accredited high school.



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 Old Agricultural Hall,  
 Veterinary classroom  
 and laboratory quarters  
 1893-1912.  
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The budget adopted on July 16, 1912, showed the following faculty: C. H. Stange, W. W. Dimock, H. S. Murphey, H. E. Bemis, H. D. Bergman, Chas. Murray, N. L. Nelson, and George Judisch, who had been giving lectures on pharmacy to veterinary students since 1900.

An important innovation in 1912 was the establishment of the departments of anatomy and histology, physiology and pharmacology, pathology and bacteriology, surgery and obstetrics, and theory and practice, each having certain definite work, planned to secure maximum results. The dean was also appointed assistant state veterinarian.

#### **Two Week Internship**

At this time Iowa State College had no ambulatory clinic, but as in many other schools a driving team and buggy or automobile were kept in readiness and calls were answered. However, senior students were assigned for two weeks' practice with leading veterinarians throughout the state. The students received no compensation, but did everything possible to assist the veterinarians to whom they were assigned. This plan was continued until a satisfactory ambulatory clinic was organized.

In 1913 attention was turned to the organization of a Research Department. Dean Stange emphasized the importance of having veterinary investigations well supported and conducted by men highly trained in the science.

During the World War Iowa State College was turned into a training camp, with all its complications and misunderstand-

ings. Then in 1918 came the flu epidemic to take its toll of young and old. Veterinary progress was practically at a standstill; in fact, the enrollment in the college dropped alarmingly.

Following the war students and professors came back from military duties and before long the Veterinary Division was again at full strength. Trials and hardships were again encountered during the post war depression when students were few and appropriations were small.

#### **5 Year Curriculum**

In 1931 the faculty decided that four years was insufficient time for the completion of an adequate course in veterinary science, so it was proposed that one year of college training be required of applicants for admission into the veterinary school. The graduating class of 1935 was the first class to graduate under the new requirements.

On April 26, 1936, the entire veterinary profession was saddened by the sudden death of past president of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Dean Stange. His death was particularly keenly felt in the Veterinary Division at Iowa State College, where his services had been of such great value as an educator and administrator.

Shortly following Dean Stange's death Dr. Charles Murray, head of Veterinary Research, was appointed acting dean by the president, and in the following November the Board of Education officially elected him Dean of Veterinary Medicine.

*(Continued on Page 129)*

## HISTORY—

(Continued from Page 77)

Throughout his memorable administration Dean Stange had spent many hours planning and dreaming of a new veterinary clinic that would stand second to none. It was in 1926 that the cattle wing of the new building was erected. Although completion of the building seemed very far in the future, Dean Stange had spent hour after hour of his leisure time poring over blue prints and plans for his dream clinic.

In the fall preceding Dean Stange's death the legislature had appropriated \$60,000.00 per year for the purpose of erecting new buildings on the college campus. The Board of Education agreed to allow \$85,000.00 of this amount to be used for the purpose of building a new veterinary clinic. An appropriation was secured from the Public Works Administration which swelled the total to approximately \$180,000.00. The original plans called for \$260,000.00, so many of the early features

incorporated in Dean Stange's original plans had to be given up. However, the plans were changed to meet the emergency. The building was erected and stands as one of the most modern and complete clinics in the country today, with an approximate value, including equipment, of \$205,000.00.

On May 6, 1936, a resolution was proposed by the Jr. A. V. M. A. to name the veterinary clinic in honor of Dean Stange. This resolution was presented to the Iowa State Board of Education and adopted. The "Charles Henry Stange Memorial Veterinary Clinic" will stand as a fitting and permanent tribute to the loyalty and ideals of one of the finest men the veterinary profession has ever known.

Dr. W. G. Venske of the Anatomy Department spoke, at the meeting of the Iowa Academy of Science, Saturday, April 22, on the subject of "The Histology of Thyroid Glands of Dogs Sixteen Weeks of Age".

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