



## Bellwether Magazine

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# 98 Down, 2 to Go

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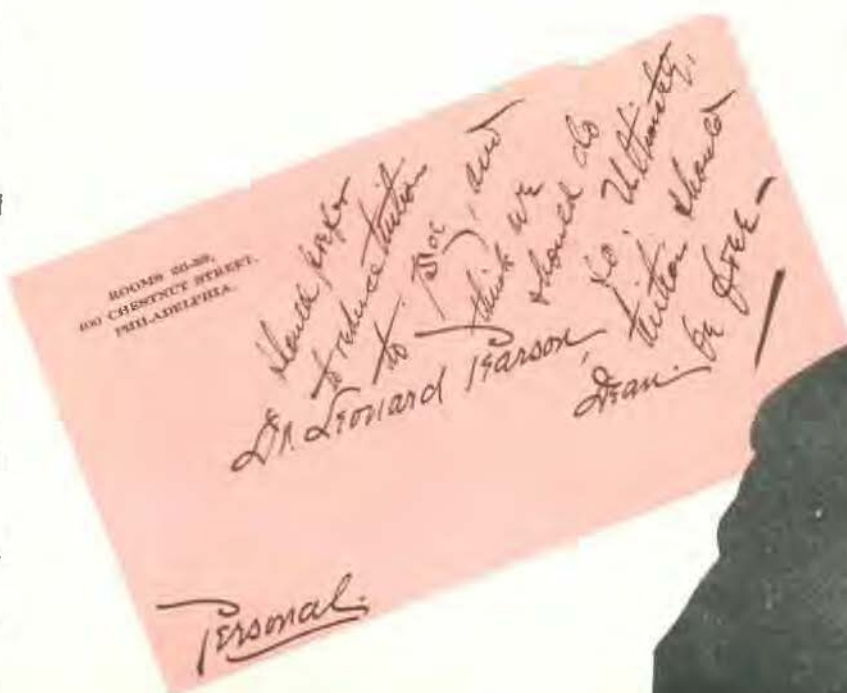
Although the first class that graduated from the Veterinary Department had only ten members, these new veterinarians represented an important contribution to the welfare of the country. At this time the United States was suffering great losses due to animal disease and there were few trained veterinarians to cope with the problem.

Considering most of the students in the first class had little formal education, the completion of the three-year veterinary course must have represented a real milestone. The fact that the School itself not only survived but began to grow almost immediately was also highly significant, since a number of previous attempts to establish veterinary schools had failed because of a lack of students. By 1888-89 the total enrollment in the Veterinary Department had reached seventy-eight and by 1909 it had grown to 150 students. Tuition remained at \$100 per year for the first twenty-five years but there was a move on the part of the University to raise it in 1908. In October of that year Provost Charles C. Harrison wrote a memorandum to Dean Leonard Pearson inquiring as to whether "the time has fairly come when we can announce an increase in the tuition fee to \$150." Dr. Pearson's reply is preserved in the form of a note he penned on an envelope to the effect that "we should prefer to reduce tuition to \$75" and that "ultimately tuition should be free." So much for the state of the economy in 1908!

Like the student body, the faculty grew. In 1884, the original faculty had thirteen members and by 1909 it had grown to twenty-four. There was a gradual increase in faculty having veterinary degrees but there remained a strong representation from the Medical School and other University departments. One trend that was established early was the inbreeding of the faculty. Most of the new appointments were graduates of the School, and this rather unhealthy state of affairs continued until the 1950s.

During the first twenty-five years there were three deans: Rush Shippen Huidekoper, M.D., V.S. (1884-89), John Marshall, M.D., Nat. Sc. D. (1890-97) and Leonard Pearson, B.S., V.M.D. (1898-1909). Dr. Huidekoper provided the leadership and enthusiasm needed by the new department in its infancy; Dr. Marshall was a good administrator, but essentially a caretaker; Dr. Pearson provided the vision and the prestige needed to point the School to future greatness.

In 1885 a large animal hospital was added to the original building of the Veterinary Department which stood at 36th and Pine Streets. In 1882 a small animal section was attached to the hospital, the first of its kind in the country. From the outset there were sufficient cases for the hospital to fulfill its teaching function. During the first three decades of the School's existence there were many farms in the Philadelphia environs so that transportation of farm animals to the hospital was no problem. Also, the horse still provided most of the transportation power. In 1886, a total of 352 cases were seen in the hospital; by 1901 this had increased to 4,755. The hospital fees were *somewhat* less than today! The charge for hospitalizing animals was: horses and mules, \$1.00/day; donkeys and dogs, 50 cents;



Dr. Leonard Pearson



and cows, sheep, pigs, cats, and birds, 25 cents. Prior to 1891 the clinicians were paid directly by the client, but after this time a free clinic was established.

During these early years there was little money available to support research. Through the efforts of Dr. Leonard Pearson, some funds were obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and there was some research on forage poisoning, osteoporosis, and foot and mouth disease. Dr. Pearson himself conducted the first practical tuberculin test in America when he tested a large herd of Jersey cattle belonging to Mr. Joseph Gillingham, president of the Board of Managers of the Veterinary Hospital. At about the same time, Dr. Pearson introduced the use of mallein for the diagnosis of glanders in horses.

In 1901 the Veterinary Department received what could have been a mortal blow, except for the loyal persistence of faculty and students. At this time the University Trustees decided that the site occupied by the Veterinary Department was needed for expansion of medical facilities. Consequently, the original building of the Veterinary Department was demolished and the Department was moved to an old two-story structure located on Woodland Avenue between 38th and 39th Streets. This building had been used previously as a car barn and it was almost totally unsuitable for a veterinary school. Actually, when this move was made it was believed that the School would be in these quarters for only two years. As it turned out, a new building was not ready until 1907, and the car barn location became rather bitterly known as the "temporary-permanent" quarters.

Despite the hardships of functioning in the car barn building, the School held on and enrollment increased along with the hospital census. Finally, in 1907 the first portion of the quadrangle building was ready for occupancy and by 1913 this structure was complete. This would be the home of the Veterinary School for over forty years.

With the graduation of the class of 1908, there were 395 alumni of the Veterinary Department of the University of Pennsylvania. Most of the graduates went into practice and made important contributions to the health of the country's growing livestock population. Some early graduates became leaders in other areas of professional work. Dr. John R. Mohler (V '96) became Chief of the Federal Bureau of Animal Industry and Dr. T. Edward Munce (V '04) became State Veterinarian for Pennsylvania. Dr. George Hart (V '03) went west to the University of California where he built up an outstanding career in nutrition, physiology, and reproduction, and eventually became dean of the Veterinary School. Dr. John H. McNeil (V '08) was dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Iowa State University from 1902 until 1909. Three other graduates during the first quarter century became deans of the Veterinary School of the University of Pennsylvania: Leonard Pearson (V '90), Louis A. Klein (V '97), and George A. Dick (V '04).

In 1909 the School received one more shattering blow, with the death of its energetic, young dean, Dr. Leonard Pearson. He had become dean in 1898 and in his few years in office he had accomplished some amazing things. Dr. Pearson was a national figure in the young veterinary profession and this, along with his being State Veterinarian for Pennsylvania and president of the A.V.M.A., brought the School the prestige it so badly needed in its early years. Dean Pearson was the architect of the quadrangle building and had excellent connections in the state government and in leading agricultural societies. It is reasonable to believe that if Dr. Leonard Pearson had lived, the School, now housed in a new building, would have entered a period of prosperity. Instead, the important beginnings made by Dr. Pearson were allowed to languish and for the next four decades there was little growth.