

Harry Albert Britton

October 26, 1881 — February 17, 1959

Dr. Harry A. Britton, Attending Physician, Emeritus, at the Cornell University Infirmary and Clinic, died in Ithaca on February 17, 1959, after a long illness. Born in Reading, Pennsylvania, October 26, 1881, Dr. Britton received his early education in Reading and, in 1913, was graduated in medicine from the Medico-Chirurgical College in Philadelphia. He completed his internship at the Philadelphia General Hospital in 1914 and remained on the staff of that institution for the next two years as resident physician. He then became resident physician at the City Hospital in Minneapolis, Minnesota, until 1919 when he returned to Reading to engage in private practice and serve as school physician. In September, 1921, he came to Ithaca and became a member of the medical staff of the student health service at Cornell, a position which he held until retirement in 1950. Thereafter he curtailed his professional activities until ill health forced complete retirement in 1954.

In 1925, Dr. Britton was appointed team physician for the Cornell University Athletic Association, beginning a service which was to continue for the next twenty-three years. In this capacity, he treated the injuries and illnesses of hundreds of young Cornell athletes who, when returning to Cornell for alumni events in later years, never failed to visit their old friend and benefactor. Wrestling was his favorite sport. He became an expert in treating the ear injuries so frequently incurred in this sport in a manner designed to prevent "cauliflower ears." His original article on the subject, published in 1927, is still quoted whenever the management of external ear injuries is discussed, and a second article, published in 1953, summarized his experience with over a thousand cases. He is particularly remembered by the large number of wrestlers to whom he gave unstintingly of his time and effort. In June, 1954, the Cornell wrestling team held a dinner in his honor and presented him with an award in recognition of thirty-three years of service in the interests of Cornell wrestling.

His principal interest, aside from his professional duties, was in the Boy Scout movement and from 1924 to 1936 he served as Scoutmaster of Troop 1 and, during the summer camping period, as Medical Director at Camp Barton. He was a member of the local Red Cross chapter for many years and gave freely of his services as a first aid adviser and instructor during World War II.

Dr. Britton was a modest, quiet, kindly man who thoroughly enjoyed association with young people and had a genuine interest in their health, personal problems, and later progress in life. He will always be affectionately remembered by his many friends and associates.