

# Walter Long Williams

*February 26, 1856 — October 23, 1945*

Dr. Walter L. Williams was born February 16, 1856 near the present village of Argenta, Illinois. His early education was obtained in a country school followed by a year in the Presbyterian Seminary at Mt. Zion. After a year of school teaching, he entered the Illinois Industrial University, now the University of Illinois. Spending two years there, he became intensely interested in the subject which was to become his life's work. He continued his veterinary studies in the Montreal Veterinary College where he attended classes conducted by the great Dr. William Osier, graduating as honor student in the class of 1879.

Following graduation, he established a private veterinary practice in Illinois and became Assistant State Veterinarian. In 1891, ill health compelled him to enter a less strenuous field. For two years he served as professor of Veterinary Science at Purdue University following which he accepted a professorship in the Montana Agricultural College, Bozeman.

When plans were announced in the American Veterinary Review regarding the establishment of a College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell, Dr. Williams wrote to Dr. Law and later came to Ithaca for an interview with President Schurman and Dean Law. He received the appointment of Professor of Veterinary Surgery, Obstetrics, Zootechnics and Jurisprudence and began his work in 1896, one of the original faculty of the New York State Veterinary College. He served in this capacity until 1915 when he was appointed Professor of Veterinary Obstetrics and Research Professor in diseases of breeding cattle. In 1911 he became a Professor Emeritus.

Dr. Williams was an inspiring teacher. He brought nearly twenty-five years experience as a practitioner in an extensive equine practice to his students. He was a thorough believer in learning by doing. Through his zeal, the clinics which are now an integral part of veterinary training were founded at Cornell. He was also the first to establish a course in Surgical Exercises. The training received from his clinics was invaluable.

During a sabbatical leave in 1910, Dr. Williams acted as veterinarian on the Parker ranch, the largest cattle ranch in the Hawaiian Islands. Later in 1919-1930, he spent a year on this estate where, as usual, he was wide awake to opportunity—here on a vast scale—for research and advancement of knowledge pertaining to disease in breeding animals.

The experience of sixty-five years in the veterinary profession added to intellectual curiosity and authority of leadership in his chosen field resulted in an impressive wealth of internationally recognized articles and books.

Of his books, his "Veterinary Obstetrics" and "Diseases of the Genital Organs of Domestic Animals" are used in many of our colleges as well as in those of other English speaking countries. Their translation into Spanish have spread their influence to South American schools as well as to Continental Spanish speaking colleges. "Veterinary Obstetrics" also has found its way into Italian instruction through an Italian translation.

Among Dr. Williams' contributions to veterinary science are the following:

The diagnosis in 1885 during his practice in Bloomington, Illinois of *dourine*. This was the first diagnosis of the disease in America.

The development of the roaring operation which was demonstrated to the English in London in 1909.

The poll evil operation.

The production of a surgical operating table for large animals which was duplicated in leading schools as well as in the U. S. Remount Station and adopted by prominent veterinarians.

The studies in genital disease.

Dr. Williams was an Associate Editor of the American Veterinary Review between 1890 and 1911; Editor for the United States of the Veterinary Journal of London between 1906 and 1908; President of the Illinois State Veterinary Medical Association from 1889 to 1900, the American Veterinary Medical Association in 1893, the New York State Veterinary Medical Society in 1906-07; an honorary member of the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, a foreign corresponding member of the Society Centrale De Medicine Veterinaire of France; an honorary member of the Central Veterinary Society of England, and the Veterinary Society of Sweden.

Until his final illness, Dr. Williams was a frequent visitor at the College Clinics, always alert and interested. In January at the 1945 Veterinary Conference, when almost eight-nine years of age, he presented a paper, "Recollections of, and Reflections Upon Sixty-five Years in the Veterinary Profession."

At the time of his retirement in 1921, the faculty and alumni of the Veterinary College gave a testimonial dinner for Dr. Williams in Prudence Riskey Hall. The large attendance, the speeches, the letters, and telegrams attested to the high regard in which the honor guest was held.

Again on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, the Veterinary faculty with some of the former assistants in his department gathered in Balch Recreation Room in honor of Dr. Williams' anniversary. It was a pleasant affair, an

evening of friendly good will of the kind one experienced in the cordial atmosphere of Dr. and Mrs. Williams' home.

A living likeness of Dr. Williams, painted by Olaf M. Brauner in 1911, was presented to the University by the Veterinary Alumni and may be viewed in the Flower Library.

*J. N. Frost, H. J. Milks, Earl Sunderville*