



NEWS DIGEST

AN event which attracted attention far beyond medical and health circles was the celebration, on April 8, of the eightieth birthday of Doctor William Henry Welch.

This dean of American medicine was on that day honored by simultaneous ceremonies held in Baltimore, Washington, New York, New Haven, London, Paris, Berlin, Leipzig, Tokio and Peiping. At Washington, focal point of the celebration, President Hoover delivered the principal address on a program in Memorial Continental Hall, beginning at noon, which was heard over a nation-wide radio hook-up.

The etcher, Alfred Hutton, had been commissioned to make a dry-point portrait of Dr. Welch for the occasion. The first print was given to Dr. Welch at the Washington ceremonies, and other prints were presented simultaneously to more than forty institutions

with which he has been connected as student, teacher, or adviser.

The distinguished leadership of Dr. Welch has long been recognized by those familiar with the history of American medicine and public health, a leadership which has been of incalculable benefit to millions of people. Dr. Simon Flexner, in a statement made ten years ago, said that Dr. Welch "by the vigor of his living example and the charm of a rare personality, as well as by the power of his spoken and written word, in the short span of a lifetime raised medicine in the United States from a beneficent art to an expanding science."

The pioneering work of Dr. Welch, graduate of Yale College and of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, in New York, began in 1877 when he started teaching pathology at the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, in New York. Fresh from studies abroad and



LOUIS SCHMIDT

WILLIAM HENRY WELCH
*Chairman of the Advisory Council of the Milbank
 Memorial Fund, whose eightieth birthday was
 celebrated on April 8, 1930*

familiar with the new scientific technique which had there led to the discovery that infectious diseases were caused by germs, he introduced at Bellevue the laboratory methods which launched a new era in medical education in America.

In 1884 Dr. Welch became Professor of Pathology at Johns Hopkins University. He was

the first dean of the Johns Hopkins Medical School. He was also the first director of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, dedicated in 1926, a pioneer school of this kind in the world. At present he is Professor of the History of Medicine, at Johns Hopkins, and the new Medical Library, dedicated last October, bears his name.

Albert A. Michelson is chairman of the General Committee for the celebration. Dr. Simon Flexner is chairman, and John A. Kingsbury, is secretary, of

the Executive Committee, of which the headquarters are in the offices of the Milbank Memorial Fund.

GEORGE L. NICHOLS, an active member of the Board of Directors of the Milbank Memorial Fund since its establishment in 1905, has resigned after twenty-five years

of service, due to the pressure of other duties. Mr. Nichols is a member of the law firm of Masten and Nichols. He was a close friend of Elizabeth Milbank Anderson, founder of the Milbank Memorial Fund.

Frank L. Polk has been elected to succeed the late Chellis A. Austin as a member of the Board of Directors of the Milbank Memorial Fund, and Dr. Linsly R. Williams has been elected to fill the vacancy on the Board created by the resignation of Mr. Nichols.

Mr. Polk, a partner in the law firm of Davis, Polk, Wardwell, Gardiner and Reed, was Under-Secretary of State during President Wilson's administration. He was head of the American delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris, July 28 to December 9, 1919.

Dr. Williams is director of the New York Academy of Medicine, president of the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, and treasurer of the National Health Council. He is likewise a member of the Technical Board and the Advisory Council of the Fund.

THE third and fourth county health administrative units in New York State were re-

cently established within the period of one month. The Cortland County Board of Health was created on November 26, 1929, and the Westchester County Board of Health on December 26, 1929. Cattaraugus County created the first county health administrative unit in New York in 1923, and Suffolk County established the second one in 1928.

In New York State, by permissive legislation of 1921, county boards of supervisors are authorized to appoint county boards of health. This is the first step in placing local governmental administration of health on a county-wide basis, to replace the existing small district basis. In both Westchester and Cortland counties, boards of health, comprising seven members, have been appointed.

Westchester County has appropriated \$100,000 for its health budget for 1930. Dr. Matthias Nicoll, Jr., resigned his post as New York State Commissioner of Health to accept the appointment as the first county health officer of Westchester.

Where forty-three separate health districts formerly ex-

isted in Westchester County, under the present plan a unified health administration will prevail. Under the law, the establishment of the county health unit in Westchester abolishes the health districts of sixteen towns and also those of five villages with less than 3,000 population. Four cities in the County—Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle and White Plains—may participate in the county plan, or they may decide to remain under local health jurisdiction.

Prior to its action in creating the health unit, the Westchester County Board of Supervisors appointed a commission of eight persons to study the plan. The report of this commission was unanimously favorable to its adoption.

As salary for a full-time county health officer, the Westchester County budget provides \$12,000 annually, which is the same amount New York State pays its Commissioner of Health. Dr. Nicoll said his reason for preferring the County appointment was his desire to organize a county health department.

“The future development and success of public health work, in my judgment,” Dr.

Nicoll declared, “depends very greatly on decentralization and the placing of responsibility, in so far as it is possible, on the administration in the local health bodies, not on a central state organization or on small, generally ineffective village and town units, but on the county itself, with only such supervision by the state as may be necessary to meet unusual situations.”

Before deciding to adopt the county health unit plan, the Cortland County Board of Supervisors likewise appointed a committee to study and report on the feasibility of establishing such a unit. In their investigations members of this committee studied the work and organization of the Cattaugus County Board of Health. Impressed with its benefits they unanimously reported in favor of the establishment of such a service in Cortland County. The project was also strongly urged locally by committees of citizens, members of the medical profession and various health and welfare organizations. The entire County will participate in the plan, inasmuch as the Council of the City of Cortland, with 13,000 residents, unanimously

voted to join in the project.

Aided by the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Committee on Tuberculosis and Public Health of the State Charities Aid Association has taken leadership among the several state and local groups interested in promoting county health units in New York State.

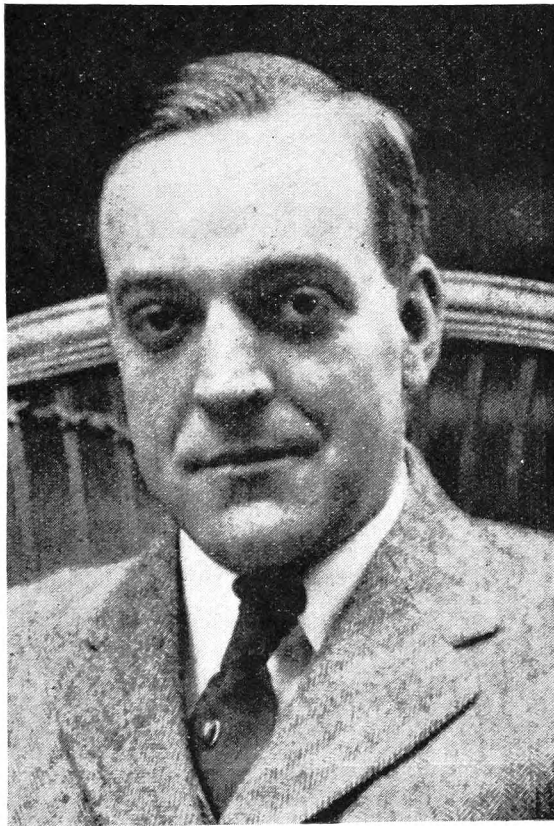


THE death of Dr. Athel Campbell Burnham, on January 19, 1930, at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, cut short a useful career of public service in the field of preventive medicine and public health. As assistant in preventive medicine of the State Charities Aid Association's State Committee on Tuberculosis and Public Health since 1922, Dr. Burnham was closely associated with the organization and promotion of the Cattaraugus County and Syracuse health demonstrations. He served as the liaison officer between the Associa-

tion, which was appointed by the Milbank Memorial Fund as its organizing and advisory agency for the demonstrations, and the local health authorities and voluntary agencies.

Dr. Burnham was a man of unusual native ability and superior medical training. He was born in Massachusetts in 1880. He was a graduate of the Col-

ATHEL CAMPBELL BURNHAM
*Assistant in Preventive Medicine of the
State Charities Aid Association
July 11, 1880-January 19, 1930*



lege of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, a member of the class of 1906. He took graduate work in Vienna, Berlin and Paris. In 1916, Dr. Burnham gave up a wide private practice in New York City in order to enlist in the United States Army Medical Corps. During the World War he was sent overseas, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, as commanding officer of Base Hospital 82, American Expeditionary Forces.

After his discharge from the army Dr. Burnham devoted part of his time to private practice and served as part-time director of the first aid work of the Atlantic Division of the American Red Cross. In 1921 he definitely gave up the private practice of medicine for public service when he accepted the appointment of medical director of the child health program of the American Red Cross for all of Europe. In 1922 Dr. Burnham joined the staff of the State Charities Aid Association where he filled a position of high usefulness and responsibility in the public health program of that organization.

Dr. Burnham was the author of numerous technical articles

and publications. His book on "Community Health Problems," published in 1921, has been widely used as a textbook.

More than a year ago Dr. Burnham was forced to relinquish his work because of the seriousness of his condition. At that time he hoped that a rest of several months would enable him to return to his post for a while longer. Throughout the long months of his distressing illness he displayed the same fine courage and noble endurance that characterized his life of public service. Dr. Burnham is survived by his widow.



DR. C. FLOYD HAVILAND, superintendent of the Manhattan State Hospital on Ward's Island, died of pneumonia on January 1, 1930, in Cairo, Egypt. Dr. Haviland was a member of the Advisory Council of the Milbank Memorial Fund. In the field of public health Dr. Haviland was well known as a psychiatrist, a mental hygiene leader and a hospital administrator. He was clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia University and chairman of the New York City Committee on Mental Hygiene.

