Cornerstone ceremonies for NIH's 14-story Clinical Center have been scheduled for Friday, June 22, it was announced by Dr. William H. Sebrell, Jr., Director of NIH. The ceremonies are part of a threefold program which will begin on Thursday night, June 21, with the first R. E. Dyer Lecture. The following day NIH will hold Open House for visitors from 1 to 9 p.m.

Many prominent scientists and government officials, as well as hundreds of Washington area residents, are expected to be present for the laying of the Clinical Center cornerstone. Work on the structure began in late 1948 and is scheduled for completion in 1952.

As a national medical center with a 500-bed hospital and allied research facilities, the Clinical Center will study and treat selected patients with diseases that are under investigation by the seven Institutes of NIH.

The recipient of the R. E. Dyer Lectureship, established last year upon the retirement of Dr. Dyer as Director of NIH, will be announced at a later date. Proceeds of the fund subscribed in Dr. Dyer's honor by his friends and colleagues are being used for this lectureship, to be awarded annually to an outstanding scientist.

NIH committees are now drawing up comprehensive plans for the June 21-22 programs. The lecture-ship and cornerstone ceremony, together with the Open House, are expected to draw from three to five thousand visitors. Special exhibits and demonstrations of laboratory studies will be set up in each building.

Contracts Toxoplasmosis; Organism Under Study

A 46-year-old technician serving in NMI's Memphis, Tenn., laboratory died recently of toxoplasmosis, an obscure parasitic disease under investigation by the Laboratory of Tropical Diseases, both at Memphis and here at NIH. This is apparently the first known instance of a fatal laboratory infection attributed to this disease.

The employee, Mrs. Virginia Fogg, had been working with the disease organism for about two years. She succumbed on April 13 after an illness of about two weeks. Her initial symptoms simulated those of influenza. Later she developed symptoms of central nervous system involvement and died in a coma.

Toxoplasmosis was suspected from serological tests performed both at Memphis and here at NIH. However, all forms of therapy were without response. The diagnosis was confirmed by inoculation of spinal fluid into mice and by autopsy findings.

Dr. Thomas H. Tomlinson, Assistant Chief of LTD, was in Memphis at the time of Mrs. Fogg's death and assisted in the autopsy. Later, Dr. Willard H. Wright, Chief of LTD, and Dr. Martin D. Young of the Epidemiology Section, LTD, conferred with Dr. Don Eyles, Officer in Charge of the Memphis Laboratory, and with the staff of John Gaston Hospital, in an effort to develop some clue as to the method of exposure in Mrs. Fogg's case.

A painstaking investigation failed to disclose any laboratory procedure or untoward incident which would account for the apparently accidental infection. However, further safety devices have been installed and rigid precautions are being taken to safeguard members of the staff who are continuing with the research problem.

While Mrs. Fogg's death apparently represents the first fatal case of toxoplasmosis in a laboratory, the episode serves as a reminder of the importance of safety precautions in research work.

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This recent shot of the Clinical Center shows the 14-story structure with only a few floors yet to be bricked in. Cornerstone will be laid next month.
Lab technician in NIH's Gerontology Section measures blood samples to determine acidity and carbon dioxide content -- important guides in detecting diabetes and age changes in body.

Further Studies in Gerontology

No. 47 of a Series

Average age at death in Roman times, we are told, was about 23 years. It was 47 in the United States at the start of the twentieth century, and today it is crowding 70.

By adding about 20 years to life expectancy in the last half century, medicine and education have been responsible for a sharp increase in the proportion of elders in our population. This upward trend will continue. Some authorities, in fact, believe that expectancy will eventually top 100 years.

Medicine's answer to this phenomenon of a rapidly aging population is the science of gerontology. In the era ahead, this infant in the family of science is certain to speak with increasing authority.

In order to utilize fully the contributions of elders to the Nation's economy, it is imperative not only to know not only the health status but the performance capacity of individuals in this older age group. Studies along this line are being conducted by NIH's Gerontology Section, whose Chief is Dr. Nathan W. Shock.

The general objective of the section's program, conducted in the Baltimore City Hospitals, is to obtain basic knowledge leading to the understanding of heart and other degenerative diseases of old age. One aspect of this work concerns the effects of aging on muscle efficiency and work capacity.

Investigations here show that certain limitations in performance develop with increasing age. This is particularly true of perception and motor skills in which speed is important. At the same time, the tests show that individual differences are very great and that many older persons exceed the average performance of individuals considerably younger. Other tests reveal that the ability to learn is not significantly reduced in middle age or even later -- contrary to popular opinion.

Statistics show that chronic disease is most prevalent in the years from 35 to 54, while invalidism and disabiliy are highest from 50 to 74. Dr. Shock points out that much of the invalidism in the older age groups stems from disorders present 20 years earlier. This indicates that one of the most important problems confronting researchers in this field is the development of methods for discovering early signs of disability.

Here and There

Honors

Dr. Paul A. Neal, Chief of the Laboratory of Physical Biology, NIAMD, was recently elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He has also been appointed a member of the subcommittee on toxicology of the Food Protection Committee, National Research Council.

Dr. Francis A. Arnold, Jr., Associate Director, NIDR, was elected a member of the International Association for Dental Research at the organization's recent annual meeting at French Lick, Ind.

Cancer Film

NCI reports that over 900 prints of its film, "Breast Self-Examination," have been sold to date. In Iowa, approximately 70,000 persons have attended request showings of the film.

Trips and Talks

Dr. Clinton C. Powell, NIAMD, addressed the annual meeting of the Conference of State Sanitary Engineers, May 9, in Washington.

Dr. Harold Dorn, Chief of the Biometrics Branch, attended the May 12-13 meeting of the Population Association of America, in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Dr. Robert H. Felix and other NIMH staff members attended the May 7-11 meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Cincinnati.

Ten representatives from NIH are attending the May 13-18 meeting of the National Conference of Social Work in Atlantic City.

Safety Problem

Employees who park their cars at NIH are urged by Safety Engineer James Black to register their tag numbers with the Buildings Management Branch. He points out that during the warm months heat expansion causes gasoline to leak onto the roadway, causing a fire hazard. If tag numbers are registered, building guards can notify the owner quickly so that he can remove his car from the parking area.
SEX HORMONE LINKED WITH LIVER CANCER

Experimental studies by NCI scientists suggest that the male sex hormone, testosterone, plays an important role in susceptibility to liver cancer induced by a coal tar product.

Findings to this effect were reported by Dr. H. P. Morris, NCI biochemist, at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Cleveland, April 27. The experiments, utilizing male and female rats, are the work of Dr. Morris, Dr. H. I. Firminger, and Mrs. Celia Dubnik Green.

Liver cancer generally developed in male rats fed the coal tar product. But female rats proved relatively resistant to the development of liver cancer by this tumor-inducing drug.

This difference in susceptibility is attributed to the male sex hormone, testosterone. As evidence, the scientists report that, when the sex glands that produce testosterone are removed from male rats, they are just as resistant to liver cancer as normal females. On the other hand, when female rats are castrated, then given male hormone in place of the usual female sex hormone, a diet that includes the coal tar product produces nearly as many liver tumors as it does in normal males.

NMI DEATH Cont'd

laboratory infection due to this disease, two other cases are known in Europe in which toxoplasmosis was acquired in the laboratory. These events, it was pointed out, strongly indicate the need for vigilance in handling Toxoplasma material.

Only in recent years has toxoplasmosis been recognized in man as a general infection caused by a protozoan organism. The first human case was reported in medical literature in the late 1930's.

The exact mode of transmission of the disease in nature is unknown. Arthropod transmission has been suspected. Dr. Leon Jacobs and Dr. Paul Woke of L T D have been investigating this possibility, and work has also been carried out on diagnostic methods.

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DR. WYCKOFF HONORED BY ROYAL SOCIETY

Britain's Royal Society, an organization for the advancement of science, has elected Dr. Ralph W. G. Wyckoff as one of its foreign members.

The NIH scientist, along with two other Americans and a Norwegian, was chosen by the society from among men of the greatest scientific eminence abroad. Foreign membership is restricted to a maximum of fifty.

Dr. Wyckoff is Chief of NIAMD's Section on Molecular Biophysics. (Life magazine in its April 23 issue carried a series of pictures made with the electron microscope by Dr. Wyckoff and two M.I.T. colleagues. They show in three-dimensional form the actual shapes and contours of various types of molecules -- flu viruses, muscle tissue, skin fibers.)

With his associates, Dr. Wyckoff has developed methods for the application of the electron microscope to the new scientific problems whose investigation is now possible. Almost 60,000 electron micrographs have been taken with the new research tool.

The Royal Society to which Dr. Wyckoff was elected is the oldest scientific society in Great Britain, and one of the oldest in Europe. It was founded in 1660, and through the years has been consulted by the government on scientific undertakings of national importance. Most notable among the treatises published by the society was Sir Isaac Newton's "Principia."

NIH TO HELP PRODUCE LAB TRAINING FILMS

Production of a movie and a series of film strips, both aimed at improving work performance and increasing the safety consciousness of laboratory workers, will be jointly undertaken by NIH and the Communicable Disease Center, Atlanta. Representatives of the two organizations have explored the need for visual training aids and received authorization for the project.

The film strips, 40 to 75 frames in length, will each deal with a specific laboratory problem, showing how it is handled and what safety precautions are involved. The movie will give an over-all picture of all aspects of laboratory behavior. According to present plans, NIH will supply a technical adviser when shooting begins and, where necessary, a technician to arrange demonstrations.

At NIH, the Management Analysis Section is cooperating with NMI in planning the project. Suggestions from personnel in other Institutes on film content and training objectives will be welcomed.

LINE OF DUTY DEATHS IN NIH NOW THIRTEEN

The death last month of Mrs. Virginia Fogg, Memphis laboratory technician, raises to thirteen the number of NIH employees who have lost their lives due to accidental infection in line of duty. Six were employees of NMI's Rocky Mountain Laboratory. For the entire Public Health Service, fatalities in this category total twenty-seven.

In the battle against infectious diseases, yellow fever has claimed the heaviest toll of PHS lives -- eight. All but two of these were in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when the new science of bacteriology was spearheading a medical advance comparable to this century's achievements with antibiotics and blood derivatives.

Second only to yellow fever was Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Before the answer to this disease was found, four PHS workers had lost their lives in line of duty. Typhoid, meningitis, tularemia, influenza, and scrub typhus each claimed two lives.
WHAT EMPLOYEES WIN IN AWARDS PROGRAM

This is the second in a series of articles on FSA’s Incentive Awards Program and its significance to NIH employees.

Under Public Law 600 and the Classification Act of 1949, Congress authorized an incentive awards program for Government employees, the most important aspects of which concern cash bonuses for meritorious suggestions, and salary increases for superior accomplishments.

The amount of a cash award may range as high as $1,000. An adopted suggestion submitted for consideration is tested against these general objectives: Does it make better use of manpower, material, equipment, or space? Does it eliminate unnecessary work? Does it improve conditions affecting safety and health? Does it increase production?

Awards may be made on a group as well as an individual basis. However, the law provides that no award shall be paid for any suggestion which represents a part of the normal duty requirements of the employee’s job.

In another category is recognition of superior accomplishment, which consists of a one-step salary increase if an employee has not reached the top of his grade. To receive this award he must qualify in one of four ways:

By receiving an outstanding performance rating. (This makes an employee eligible for an award, but it is not an automatic procedure.) By sustained work performance, meriting special recognition for at least three months. By initiating a new idea, method, or device. By performing a special act or service in the public interest.

EQUIPMENT SHOW OPENS

A three-day exhibition of new and improved laboratory equipment opened this week at NIH. Half of the exhibits are on view in Wilson Hall, and the others at the Peter House. Forty manufacturers are displaying their equipment. Exhibit hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

NIH Spotlight

Marjorie L. Melton

Tired of Washington summers? Looking for respite from heat and humidity -- some Shangri-la where cooling ocean zephyrs will wash away memories of Washington’s Turkish bath temperatures? Then head for Guatemala.

That’s the advice of NMI’s Marjorie Melton, who last summer regretfully left the banana republic, where she served two years on a malaria study. She returned with some drastically revised notions of what life is like in the tropics.

Take the weather. In Guatemala City -- elevation 5,000 feet -- the average temperature is 70 degrees. Anything in the eighties is unusual. Not at all like the movies’ version of the tropics.

A parasitologist, Marjorie served on a malaria project undertaken in cooperation with the Pan-American Sanitary Bureau. The staff tested antimalarial drugs and plotted malaria incidence by taking blood specimens from the natives, two-thirds of whom are Indians. She found them friendly and cooperative. They weave their own clothes, and natives could be identified as to village by their distinctive dress.

Marjorie’s favorite native dish was platano -- mashed bananas mixed with black beans, fried, and served with honey.

Latin American revolutions are no longer history book stuff to her. She found herself in the middle of one in Guatemala City, when an opposition group, piqued by the assassination of its leader, decided to overthrow the government. She lived only two blocks from the police station, which was shelled by the revolutionaries -- and not too accurately. After two days the revolt was put down.

Born in Cherokee, Iowa, and graduated from Iowa State, Marjorie came to NIH in 1942, serving under Dr. Coatney in NMI. After returning from Guatemala, she was assigned to Dr. Jacob’s unit, which is investigating toxoplasmosis.

108 RESEARCH GRANTS GET PHS APPROVAL

Development of an irradiated tuberculosis vaccine will be supported by a PHS grant made to Dr. Albert Milzer of Chicago’s Michael Reese Hospital.

This is one of 108 grants recently approved by Surgeon General Leonard A. Scheele upon the recommendation of the National Advisory Health Council. The grants total $1,054,967 and will support medical research at 82 institutions in 33 States, the District of Columbia, and 2 foreign countries.

The Milzer grant will follow up preliminary studies on laboratory animals that indicate an irradiated tuberculosis vaccine is superior to the standard BCG vaccine.

Under a grant made to Dr. E. T. Bell of the University of Minnesota, investigations will be conducted to determine whether diabetes can be induced experimentally by prolonged elevation of the blood sugar level through continuous infusion of glucose.

WIN LASKER AWARDS

For their outstanding interpretation of medical problems in the field of public health, a New York magazine writer and a Cleveland newspaperman have been presented the annual $500 Lasker Journalism awards.

Berton Roueche of the New Yorker magazine was chosen for his articles on trichinosis, a disease hazard of pork, and on smog deaths and sicknesses in Donora, Pa. Don Dunham of the Cleveland Press was cited for his articles on fluoridation of Cleveland’s water supply. Speakers at the Washington awards dinner, April 25, included Surgeon General Leonard A. Scheele.