INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF BACTERIOLOGICAL
NOMENCLATURE AND TAXONOMY
Vol. 13, No. 3 July 15, 1963 pp. 127—131

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Dr. Sara Elizabeth Branham, one of the grand ladies of microbiology, passed away at her home on November 16, 1962. Her death was sudden and unexpected; only a few hours earlier she was enthusiastically making arrangements to spend the winter months in Florida. Few women have had a more illustrious career in bacteriology; her contributions were numerous and valued and she was the recipient of many honors in recognition of these scientific achievements. Dr. Branham was born in Oxford, Georgia, July 25, 1888. Her collegiate education commenced at Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, where she received the A.B. degree in 1907. Her outstanding record at this institution is noted by the fact that she was elected to membership in several honor societies, including Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, and Alpha Omega Alpha. In 1919 she received a B.A. degree from the University of Colorado after which she pursued graduate studies at the University of Chicago where she earned the following degrees: M.S. (1921) Ph.D. (1923) and M.D. (1924). After serving on the staff at the University of Chicago and the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry she joined the U.S. Public Health Service in 1928. She retired in July 1959 as Chief of the National Institutes of Health's section on bacterial toxins. She retained her association with the academic environment during most of this time as Professorial lecturer on preventive medicine at George Washington University.

Among the honors she received were the Ricketts prize for research in pathology (1924), an Honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Colorado (1937) and selection as the Medical Woman of the Year by Branch 1, Washington, of the American Medical Women's Association (1959). She was an active member in many scientific organizations and during her lifetime was elected or appointed to many important positions in these societies. She was a diplomate of the National Board of Medical Examiners and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Public Health Association and the American Academy of Microbiology. The aforementioned are but a partial list of her scientific affiliations and are indicative of her active participation in the affairs of science.

Her scientific contributions to microbiology are recorded in her long list of publications over the years. Her research activities included studies of salmonella, shigella, and diphtheria toxins and particularly the biology and taxonomy of Neisseria. Her work with the genus Neisseria and specifically the meningococcus established her as an international authority on this subject. She was responsible to a large degree for establishing an internationally acceptable scheme for the designation of serological types of the meningococci. Before her retirement from the Public Health Service she took care to deposit carefully documented strains of representative serotypes in national type culture collections. Dr. Branham was one of the leading personalities in the subject of Neisseria taxonomy and nomenclature. She was secretary of the Neisseriaceae Subcommittee of the International Association of Microbiological Societies Committee on Bacteriological Nomenclature from its inception until she resigned from the secretaryship (but not the committee) in 1956.

The esteem with which her colleagues regarded her professional character is revealed to some extent in the following quotation taken from the report of Professor E.G.D. Murray (then Chairman of the Neisseriaceae Subcommittee) in which he announced Dr. Branham's relinquishing the position of Secretary:

"Dr. Sara E. Branham has been Secretary of the Subcommittee on Neisseriaceae from its inception and the acknowledged constructive contribution of the Committee is very largely due to her wise, unselfish and energetic work. Many difficult situations were overcome through her kind and considerate actions and this encouraged the response and contributions made by the members of the Committee.

"Dr. Branham has an unequalled knowledge of the Neisseriaceae; so it is fortunate she consents to continue to be a member of the Committee and to establish the Type strains in her collection. Her opinions and guidance will thus continue to be available in what is still an important matter."

Dr. Branham's retirement from full-time employment in no way dulled her enthusiasm or interest in the Neisseria. Just weeks before her death she had participated in several

meetings, with national and international representatives, at which problems relating to the Neisseria were discussed. Her scholarly counsel was eagerly sought and she willingly responded with her usual graciousness and enthusiasm.

Her very many friends in all countries will recall and remember the very charming personality so characteristic of Dr. Branham. Not only has the profession lost a distinguished scientist but also a lady of exceptional grace and charm.

We are indebted to the National Institutes of Health Photographic Research Section FSA-PHS for the photograph of Dr. Branham, photographed by Vernon E. Taylor, which is reproduced herewith (p. 128).

Michael J. Pelczar, Jr.