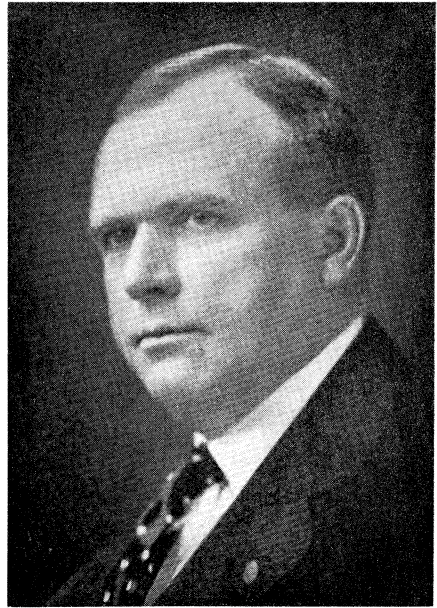




DEAN DEWITT LEWIS, M.D.
Baltimore, Md.
1874-1941

*Eighty-sixth President, A. M. A.
Milwaukee Session
June 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 1933*



Dean Lewis,

THE SELECTION OF DR. DEAN D. LEWIS to the presidency was a natural recognition of his leadership in medical education, his eminence as a surgeon, and the tribute of a legion of admiring friends everywhere.

Dr. Dean Lewis was born in Kewanee, Illinois, August 11, 1874. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Lake Forest University in 1895, and his Doctor of Medicine degree from Rush Medical College in 1899. This was followed by internship at Cook County Hospital, where he served with Doctors Rowan, Kanavel, Besley, Richter, and other well known surgeons of Chicago of that day. Upon completion of this service, he accepted a position as instructor of anatomy at the University of Chicago, and for four years arduously devoted himself to this task. While in this position, he came under the influence of Dr. Bensley, professor of anatomy, and became interested in vital staining of tissues, leading to his report on the "histologic changes and hyperplasia of the chromophile cells in the anterior lobe of the hypophysis, in the case of acromegaly." In this period were included six months of graduate study with Spalteholz the anatomist in Leipzig, Germany, where (by reconstruction models) "the fascia of the kidney" was the subject of study.

From 1903 to 1924 with the exception of the war years, Dr. Dean Lewis taught surgery at Rush Medical College, and carried

on an increasing surgical practice at the Presbyterian Hospital. He became professor of surgery in 1920. In the same year he accepted the editorship of the Archives of Surgery, to which he devoted his energies in making it one of the significant surgical journals of his day. He received offers from several medical schools to head their departments of surgery, and in January 1925 he accepted the professorship of surgery at the University of Illinois Medical School. This position he occupied for only six months, as he then accepted the professorship of surgery at Johns Hopkins University, as successor to Dr. William S. Halsted.

A noteworthy event during the period of service at Presbyterian Hospital, Chicago, was the first clinical use of ethylene as an anesthetic by Dr. Lewis, which subsequently was published as "Clinical Experiences with Ethylene Oxygen Anesthesia" by Dr. A. B. Luckhardt, the discoverer of ethylene, and Dr. Dean Lewis in December 1923.

According to one of his biographers, Dr. Vernon C. David of Chicago,—“The first World War played an important role in Dr. Dean Lewis's life, and he often remarked, it was one of its happiest periods. Having a deep regard for his country and for the soldiers of the line, enjoying the society of his fellowmen, resourceful in unexpected situations and having real ability as an organizer and sufficient physical stamina to carry on, made his service a notable one.” He was commissioned a Major in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Army in the spring of 1917, and directed to organize Base Hospital No. 13 at the Presbyterian Hospital, Chicago. In December, 1917 he was ordered to active duty with his organization at Fort McPherson, Georgia, and shortly afterward was sent to the University of Michigan to conduct research on regeneration of nerves, with Professor G. Carl Huber. He sailed for France with his unit in May 1918 arriving in June at Limoges, where Base Hospital No. 13 was permanently established. On July 8, 1918 he was assigned to Evacuation Hospital No. 7 at Coulommiers as head of a surgical team; two weeks later he was transferred to Evacuation Hospital No. 6 at Chateau-Thierry, and on August 19 was given command of the surgical service at Evacuation Hospital No. 5, also located at Chateau-Thierry. This hospital was later also stationed at Juvigny to take care of the wounded from the Thirty-second Division during the Verdun offensive, and then moved to Villers-Cotterets to evacuate the wounded from the St. Mihiel sector. Late in September the hospital was moved to LaVeuve, where it took care of the wounded from the Second Division, and from the Thirty-sixth Division during the Champagne offensive. In the final days of the

war his hospital was stationed at Staden, Belgium. After the Armistice Major Lewis was returned to Base Hospital No. 13 and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Army. He returned to the United States in December 1918 and was placed in command of U. S. General Hospital No. 28 at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, where a large portion of the service consisted of treatment of nerve injuries and reconstructive surgical procedures. He presented a comprehensive report on the "treatment of peripheral nerve injuries" at the Association meeting in June 1919. He received his honorable discharge from the service in August 1919, and some months later he was accorded the Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his efficient services.

During his period at Johns Hopkins University and Hospital he contributed largely to the knowledge of the relation of sex hormones to tumor growth. While there he edited the widely used "Practice of Surgery," of twelve volumes, in which appears his own classic work on peripheral nerve injuries and regeneration of nerves.

An expression from one of his colleagues in Baltimore is frequently quoted, "His Friday clinics to the third and fourth year medical students were among the best and most scholarly presentations of surgical discussions ever listened to. In these teaching exercises he displayed a remarkable familiarity with the surgical literature of the whole modern world, and a memory that was astonishing in its accuracy. He was particularly interested in the surgery of peripheral nerves, tendons, joints and bones, and in these fields he showed a mastery of the subject and an operative facility which was remarkable; he always laid great emphasis on the relationship of anatomy to surgery and also on acquaintance with the unusual types of infections such as actinomycosis, sporotrichosis, etc."

In the American Medical Association, aside from the editorship of the Archives of Surgery, he served as a member of the House of Delegates, representing the Section on Surgery—General and Abdominal, in 1915, 1916, and 1917. He was secretary of the Section on Surgery in 1912 and 1913, and Chairman of the same in 1919–1920. In 1931 he became a member of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals, continuing until he was elected president in 1933.

For many years he had been in demand to speak before medical meetings throughout the country, but during his two years as president-elect and president, he gave liberally of his time and energy to this service, speaking with all the enthusiasm at his command on the teaching function of medical societies, which he regarded as

the most valuable postgraduate medical training available to the profession. This theme was further expanded in his presidential address in 1933—"The Place of the Clinic in Medical Practice." In the years following his service as president, he continued his efforts to bring the latest medical knowledge directly to the medical practitioner. In 1926 a testimonial dinner was given for Doctor Lewis in Baltimore, and one of the photographs preserved from this memorable occasion shows him seated between Dr. John M. T. Finney and Dr. Harvey Cushing.

He was affiliated with most of the leading professional associations; a member of the American Surgical Association, the American Association of Anatomists, the American Physiological Society, the Southern Medical Association, the Western Surgical Association. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, the Societa Medico-Chirurgica of Bologna, Italy, and an Ausserordentliches Mitglied der deutschen Gesellschaft für Chirurgie, as well as a foreign member correspondent of the Société des Chirurgiens de Paris. He was made an honorary Doctor of Science by the National University of Ireland at Dublin in 1933.

In 1932 his portrait was presented to Johns Hopkins University, the presentation address being given by Professor John M. T. Finney.

His last illness was prolonged over a period of three years subsequent to cerebral vascular changes; a tragic closing of a life of such vigor and vitality. The end came on December 9, 1941 at his home in Baltimore at the age of sixty-seven years.

One of the many tributes from friends and admirers, a phrase is quoted from a biographic note by Dr. Vernon C. David, a former student of Dr. Lewis: "A host of friends know the greatness of his soul, his loyalty, his matchless spirit, his love of sports, his great ability as a surgeon and his comradeship."

