National Museum of Health and Medicine

Otis Historical Archives

OHA 17
Curatorial Records, Ludlow Etomology Records

Date of Records: 1889-1924

Size: 2 cubic feet, 2 boxes

Finding Aid by: Eric W. Boyle (2012)

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Biographical Note: Clara S. Ludlow was born in 1852 to Jacob Rapelyea and Anna Mary Ludlow two years after they moved from New Jersey to Easton, Pennsylvania. Her father, Jacob Rapelyea Ludlow, was a prominent Easton physician who served as a medical officer in the Civil War. He practiced in Knoxville, TN for a short period after the war, but by 1970 was back in Easton, where he practiced medicine until his death in 1904. Henry Hunt Ludlow, one of Clara's brothers, was a prominent West Point colonel. Clara's visit to Henry in 1901 in the Philippines was reportedly the starting point of her interest in mosquitoes. Another brother, David Hunt Ludlow, was a mathematics professor at the University of Tennessee, later a lawyer, and finally a physician who joined his father in medical practice in Easton in 1896. Clara enrolled at the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music in 1877 at age 25 and graduated in 1879, with specialization in piano and singing. Surprisingly, very little more is known of her life over the course of the next 18 years. It is believed that she taught music and did concert work. In 1897, she enrolled at the all-male Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College at the age of 45. In 1900, she received the degree of Bachelor of Science in agriculture and in 1901 the degree of Master of Science in botany.

After graduation in 1901, she visited her brother, Capt. H. H. Ludlow, an artillery officer in Manila, Philippine Islands, where she began her research on mosquito taxonomy and an association with the military that would last the rest of her life. With the support of the Army, she began collecting specimens from Army posts around the world. In April 1904, she received assignment to the Army Medical Museum in Washington, DC. From 1905 to 1911, Clara worked as a lecturer in medical entomology at the Army Medical Museum and as a graduate student and staff member at George Washington University. She received her Ph.D. in February 1908 at age 55. In 1908, she was also elected to active membership in the American Society of Tropical Medicine, the first woman and the first non-physician scientist member of the society. She spent one-year, 1909-10, in medical school. From 1908 until 1911 she also taught histology and embryology at G.W.U. During this period, she published 20 of her 53 papers, all on mosquitoes. She went on to serve as Anatomist at the Army

Medical Museum, and later as Chief Entomologist, where she continued to receive and identify specimens sent in by Army surgeons. After suffering an illness in 1919, she published only four papers from 1920 through 1924. Ludlow died of cancer in 1924. Her eulogy at All Souls Unitarian Church was given by Major General James F. Coupal, personal physician to President Coolidge and her supervisor at the Museum. Her lifelong association with the Army continued to the end. As a tribute to her service, she is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Ludlow was the first woman known to have published extensively on the taxonomy of mosquitoes and their occurrence in relation to the incidence of mosquito-borne diseases. She forged a pioneering career in medical entomology during a time when women were rare among the ranks of entomologists, and the military.

Series/Scope and Content Note: Records include correspondence, notes, reports, logbooks, and other research materials of Dr. Clara S. Ludlow, the Museum's chief entomologist. Ludlow's research centered on identifying mosquitoes, including a project working with specimens sent in from military posts, which resulted in a Museum film, "Mosquito Eradication," in 1918.

BOX AND CONTENT LIST

SERIES 001: CORRESPONDENCE

Box 001:

00001: Correspondence, Undated

00002: Correspondence, 1889

00003: Correspondence, 1900

00004: Correspondence, 1901

00005: Correspondence, 1902

00006: Correspondence, 1903

00007: Correspondence, 1904 [1 of 2]

00008: Correspondence, 1904 [2 of 2]

00009: Correspondence, 1905 [1 of 3]

00010: Correspondence, 1905 [2 of 3]

00011: Correspondence, 1905 [3 of 3]

00012: Correspondence, 1906

00013: Correspondence, 1907

00014: Correspondence, 1908

00015: Correspondence, 1910

00016: Correspondence, 1914

00017: Correspondence, 1915

00018: Correspondence, 1916

00019: Correspondence, 1917

00020: Correspondence, 1918

00021: Correspondence, 1919

00022: Correspondence, 1920

00023: Correspondence, 1921

00024: Correspondence, 1922

00025: Correspondence, 1923

00026: Correspondence, 1924

SERIES 002: PUBLICATIONS AND RELATED MOSQUITO MATERIAL

Box 002:

00001: Articles by Ludlow

00002: Reprints, Clippings, and Bibliography

00003: Notes—Misc.

00004: Malaria and Mosquitoes

00005: Undated Correspondence Related to Mosquito Study

00006: Mosquito Collection Logbook (MM 8741) I

00007: Mosquito Collection Logbook (MM 8741) II