

CURSON, HERBERT HENRY (September 22, 1892, Umzimkulu, South Africa – January 15, 1968, Pretoria, South Africa). *Veterinarian; Anatomist; Zootechnologist; Historian*. Son of Henry Charles Curson and Constance Emilie (née Blair) Curson. Married Maria Hugo de Wet, October 1918.

EDUCATION: Michaelhouse, Balgowan, Kwazulu-Natal, 1907-1909; Royal Veterinary College, London, 1914: MRCVS; Tierärztliche Hochschule, Hanover, 1925: Dr Med Vet; Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, London, 1926: FRCVS.

CAREER: 1915 – 1917, state veterinarian, Cape Town; 1917 – 1918, member of Inter-Colonial Commission on rinderpest in German East Africa; 1918 – 1920, veterinary research officer, Onderstepoort; 1920 – 1921, Veterinary Laboratory Grahamstown; 1921 – 1923 Trypanosomiasis Research Laboratory, Zululand; 1923 – 1926, veterinary research officer and lecturer, Onderstepoort; 1926 – 1936, veterinary research officer and professor (Anatomy), Onderstepoort; 1936 – 1952, Deputy Director of Native Agriculture, Department of Native Affairs; 1952 – 1962, historian, Military Archives, Defence Headquarters, Pretoria; 1940 – 1943, Captain, South African Veterinary Corps.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Curson made significant contributions in several veterinary research disciplines and published prolifically. The theme of his FRCVS thesis was: *Some little known South African poisonous plants and their effects on stock*. Apart from his work on trypanosomosis in South Africa, he was also seconded for 4 months in 1930/31, on request of the Imperial Government, to work in Ngamiland with Dr H Carpenter on trypanosomosis. He made a thorough study of indigenous African cattle and their husbandry by their tribal owners. Curson was very interested in the history of the veterinary profession and military veterinarians in South Africa, making invaluable, detailed contributions in a comprehensive series of articles. He also published two monographs on South African military history: *Colours and Honours in South Africa, 1783 – 1948* and *Regimental Devices in South Africa, 1783 – 1954*. He was also co-author of the publication: *The South African Field Artillery in German East Africa and Palestine, 1915 – 1919*.

HOMAGES AND DISTINCTIONS: 1910 – 1914, received 14 College Medals during his studies for the MRCVS; 1918, British War Medal for services on Colonial Commission on rinderpest in East Africa; 1936, elected Lifelong Vice-President of the South African Veterinary Medical Association; 1945, Africa Service Medal and British War Medal for military services.

WRITINGS: Author and co-author of 175 articles – no published reference available. Also see above under “Contributions.

Curson H.H., 1919. Rinderpest in the New Langeberg Province of German East Africa during 1917 – 1918. *Journal of Comparative Pathology and Therapeutics*, XXXII (3), 197-218.

Curson H.H., 1926. Antimosan (Heyden 661), Bayer 205 and *Tartar stibiatus* in experimental *Trypanosoma congolense* and *T. brucei* infections in mice. *South African Journal of Science*, XXXIII, 603-608.

Curson H.H., 1928. Nagana in Zululand. *13th and 14th Reports of the Director of Veterinary Education and Research*, 309-412.

Curson H.H., 1935. The Veterinary Profession in South Africa: A veterinary account of the Zulu War, 1879. *Veterinary Record*, XV(1), 4-14.

Curson H.H. & Thornton R.W., 1936. A contribution to the study of African native cattle. *Onderstepoort Journal of Veterinary Science and Animal Industry*, 7(2), 613-737.

Curson H.H., 1942. History of the South African Veterinary Corps. *Journal of the South African Veterinary Medical Association*, 13, 86.

REFERENCES/OBITUARIES: Anon., 1968. Obituary Herbert Henry Curson. *Journal of the South African Veterinary Medical Association*, 109-110.

Knesl, O., 2004. Past military veterinarians. Herbert Henry Curson F.R.C.V.S., Dr. Med. Vet. (Hanover) (1982-1968). *Veterinary History NS*, 12 (2), 193-196.

Posthumus, P.J. (Ed). Past veterinarians in South Africa. 10th Edition. Undated and unpublished collection of summarised *curricula vitae* of deceased veterinarians. Archives of the Onderstepoort Veterinary History Museum.

AJ Snijders

23 January 2011