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Mahoney Obit
& correspondence

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McNulty

He finished his first rewrite of a film script at city room speed, appalling his fellow writers, who threatened to lock him up if he did not slow down.

His first marriage having ended in divorce, McNulty was married on Sept. 24, 1945, to Faith Corrigan Fair, whom he had met at the *Daily News*. They had one son. Unhappy in Hollywood and unsuited to film writing, McNulty returned to New York City in 1946. He wrote a sports column for the newspaper *PM* that became a personal column called "Easy Does It." At the same time, he wrote "casuals" and "Reporter at Large" pieces for the *New Yorker*. After a heart attack in 1947, he wrote an account of his stay in Bellevue Hospital, one of his best long pieces. *A Man Gets Around*, McNulty's second collection of sketches and stories, was published in 1951; and his third book, *My Son Johnny*, in 1955. He died at his summer home in Wakefield, R.I.

The World of John McNulty, a collection of his best writing, came out in 1957 and was extensively reviewed. The reviewers especially noted his perceptive observation and his keen and accurate ear for language. Virtually everyone who knew McNulty seems to have felt his personal magnetism. Thurber wrote, "Nobody who knew McNulty . . . could ever have confused him for a moment with anybody else. His presence in a room was as special as the way he put words down on paper." Many of McNulty's stories originated in a Third Avenue saloon run by Tim Costello, whose friendship McNulty shared with Thurber and many other writers.

Never an intellectual, McNulty avoided the word "art" as embarrassing and pretentious. He loved language and regarded it with the eye of a perfectionist. He often reread H. L. Mencken's *The American Language* and greatly admired the work of E. B. White and Ring Lardner; but wit and satire simply did not interest him. He was one of the very few American storywriters of the twentieth century whose skill was balanced by an inexhaustible generosity of feeling. Gifted in many of the same ways as Ernest Hemingway, Lardner, and Dorothy Parker—all masters of the American vernacular—McNulty never fell into irony or despair, never hardened under his experience of human suffering or lost his delight in mankind.

[James Thurber's preface to *The World of John McNulty* (1957) is the only substantial essay, but further material can be found in obituaries in the *New York Times* and *New York Herald Tribune*, July 30, 1956; James Thurber, *The Years With Ross* (1959);

Mahoney

Burton Bernstein, *Thurber* (1975); and Brendan Gill, *Here at the New Yorker* (1975). Significant reviews are in *New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1957; *Saturday Review of Literature*, Sept. 14, 1957; and *Time*, Nov. 4, 1957. McNulty's role in his favorite Third Avenue saloon is described in Joe McCarthy, "Costello's: The Wayward Saloon," *Holiday*, Oct. 1959.]

DEAN FLOWER

MAHONEY, JOHN FRIEND (Aug. 1, 1889–Feb. 23, 1957), physician and public health administrator, was born in Fond du Lac, Wis., the son of David Mahoney, a locomotive engineer, and Mary Ann Hogan. After graduating from high school in Fond du Lac in 1908, he worked for one year as a truck farmer before undertaking studies at Milwaukee University and Marquette Medical College. He received the M.D. in 1914 and began two years of intern training, first at the Milwaukee County Hospital and later at the Chicago Lying-in Hospital.

Mahoney's professional career was divided into two phases. The first consisted of thirty-two years as a commissioned officer of the U.S. Public Health Service. Mahoney was commissioned in September 1917 and, after various assignments characteristic of a junior officer, was detailed to the U.S. Foreign Service in 1925. During the ensuing four years he served as public health adviser in Haiti, Ireland, England, and Germany. He married Leah Ruth Arnold on Sept. 29, 1926; they had two children. While serving abroad Mahoney exploited the opportunity to observe the management of sexually transmitted diseases in foreign clinics and the laboratory methods used in their diagnosis. This experience enhanced his interest and skill in dealing with venereal diseases, which were a very important problem for Public Health Service medical officers, most of whose patients were seafaring men exposed to the diseases in port cities throughout the world. At that time there was no effective treatment for gonorrhea and the treatment for syphilis consisted of injections of toxic drugs administered weekly over periods of months to years.

In July 1929 Mahoney was appointed director of the Venereal Disease Research Laboratory located at the Marine Hospital (now the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital) at Stapleton, Staten Island, N.Y. During the next twenty years he was associated there with a series of young investigators working on both laboratory and

Mahoney

clinical problems. Mahoney's scientific publications, frequently written with one or more associates, mark the progress of technology as applied to diagnosis and treatment of venereal infections. His early work was devoted to experimental infection of rabbits with the corkscrew-shaped syphilis organism, using the dark-field microscope, which enables one to see the unstained living organism. Knowledge of the mechanism and rate of penetration into tissues by the germ became the basis for more rational procedures for prophylaxis against infection. Later he turned to studies of the serologic tests for syphilis, the blood tests that for many years have been the principal aid to diagnosis after the earliest stage of the disease has passed. Although now invaluable, these tests had many deficiencies in Mahoney's time: the reagents were crude, the techniques were not standardized, the test results were inconsistent, and there was an undesirable incidence of both false positive and false negative reactions.

When Surgeon General Thomas Parran made the control of venereal diseases a major concern of the Public Health Service during his tenure from 1936 to 1948, Mahoney's laboratory played the key federal role in improving diagnostic methods. Because serologic testing was being done on a massive scale by state and local governmental laboratories, much importance was attached to minimizing the test deficiencies. Interstate evaluation surveys were conducted and information about sources of error was disseminated, which resulted in improved reagents and standardized methods. During this period he published several papers dealing with the efficacy of sulfonamide drugs in treatment of gonorrhea. When penicillin first became available during World War II, it was in very short supply and subject to allocation. After meeting the military needs for treatment of wound infections there was little available for study of novel uses. Mahoney obtained enough to demonstrate in rabbits that the drug might kill the spirochete of syphilis. This led to the allocation of a supply of penicillin to continue the rabbit studies concurrently with clinical trial in four patients with early syphilis. The success of this experiment, reported in December 1943, led to a large clinical trial by collaborating investigators that confirmed the value of the drug and quickly made it the standard treatment.

Mahoney is probably most widely known for this role in revolutionizing the treatment of syphilis. In 1946, when the first Lasker Awards were conferred by the American Public Health

Mallory

Association, he was one of five individuals chosen for the honor in recognition of his "outstanding leadership in the treatment of syphilis by penicillin." In succeeding years he contributed knowledge derived from long-term follow-up of treated patients. In particular, he studied the changes in serological reactions after treatment and continued to improve reagents and test methods.

In December 1949 he retired from the Public Health Service and began the second phase of his career, as director of the Bureau of Laboratories in the New York City Health Department. Four days later Mayor William O'Dwyer appointed him to the post of health commissioner, in which he served until 1953. Under his leadership the department initiated a number of important programs. Among these were a campaign to prevent lead poisoning in children, the introduction of isoniazid chemotherapy in tuberculosis clinics, and the recommendation that New York City's water be fluoridated. Upon appointment of a new commissioner in 1954, he resumed the direction of the Bureau of Laboratories, where he served until his death.

Mahoney held appointments in clinical syphilology at New York University School of Medicine and in dermatology at Columbia University School of Medicine. He was a member of the Syphilis Study Section of the National Institutes of Health and of the Committee on Research and Standards of the American Public Health Association. He served as chairman of the committee of experts on venereal disease of the World Health Organization, of the National Serology Advisory Council, and of the Committee on Standardization of Serological Tests for Syphilis of the American Public Health Association. He died in Staten Island, N.Y.

[On Mahoney and his work, see an editorial in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Dec. 1946; Ralph C. Williams, *The United States Public Health Service 1798-1950* (1951); *Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus*, 1930-1956; a mimeograph, *Chronology of New York City Health Department*, Mar. 1966; Bess Furman, *A Profile of the United States Public Health Service, 1798-1948* (1973); and the *New York Times* obituary, Feb. 24, 1957.]

DAVID E. PRICE

MALLORY, ANNA MARGRETHE ("MOLLA") BJURSTEDT (1892-Nov. 22, 1959), tennis player, was born in Norway, the

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daughter of a retired a playing tennis with her age in Norway and in 19 competition in Sweden. Excelling at the game, captured the Norwegian eight times and held th with her sister. Acc selected to represent h Olympic Games at Sto the bronze medal.

In October 1914 Ma States and decided to se where she hoped to pra masseuse. However, u coming women's natio championship to be hel lowing March, she pror the list of competitors ment by defeating thre Wagner. Mallory went year of competition by metropolitan champion championship, and both national clay court singl championships Mallory kiss Wightman, one American players. By t year of competition, M women's titles and was r United States Lawn Te.

Mallory's fame sprea became the recognized tennis. In 1916 she wrote Samuel Crowther) and Championship Tennis, *Journal*. She stressed the for health and recom beauty of a sun-tanned c she suggested that aspiri should hit harder, play n stop relying on net pl advised her followers to instead of as the ball w master of her own advic steady and accurate all-c

After her victories in to lead women's tennis f In 1916 she again won indoor singles tourname outdoor doubles with national indoor doubles v again was ranked the nur the United States. Worl competition in 1917, b triotic Tournament, wh

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DICTIONARY OF American Biography

Supplement Six

1956-1960

John A. Garraty, *Editor*

WITH AN INDEX GUIDE TO THE SUPPLEMENTS

Charles Scribner's Sons

NEW YORK

1980

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FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
MEMORANDUM

May 3, 1943

To: The Surgeon General

FROM: Assistant Surgeon General R. A. Vonderlehr

On May 1st I proceeded to the Venereal Disease Research Laboratory, New York City, to confer with Doctors Mahoney, Van Slyke, J. E. Moore, Arnold, Eagle and Thayer regarding the possibility of the personnel of this laboratory taking over the study of the epidemiology and prevention of gonorrhea in human volunteers. It will be recalled that this study was proposed by the Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases of the Committee on Chemotherapeutics and Allied Subjects of the National Research Council and that the work is to be done, according to present plans, in one of the hospitals of a Federal penitentiary, probably the one at Terre Haute, Indiana.

Doctors Mahoney and Van Slyke raised a number of questions regarding the likelihood that the study might be developed on a basis which would make it possible to carry it to a successful conclusion. Most of these questions were satisfactorily answered.

Doctor Mahoney seemed to think that a study of the efficacy of penicillin which is at present under way and which includes the action of this drug on sulfathiazole resistant patients with gonorrhea has precedence over the proposed study of the epidemiology of gonorrhea in human volunteers. It was pointed out, however, that due to the limitation on the manufacture of penicillin, it could only be used on sulfathiazole refractory cases and could not be used routinely. Consequently, the present scope of use of penicillin would be limited.

It was finally agreed that Doctors Mahoney, Van Slyke and Thayer would proceed to Terre Haute within the next month in order to obtain complete information regarding the facilities which are available there. Subsequently, if it seems that these facilities would be satisfactory, Doctor Van Slyke is to re-write the plans which were drafted by the Subcommittee on Venereal Diseases for the prosecution of the study of the epidemiology and prevention of gonorrhea in human volunteers. This revised plan is then to be submitted to the Bureau of Prisons and to the Office of Scientific Research and Development for approval.

Respectfully,

(Sgd) R. A. Vonderlehr
R. A. Vonderlehr
Assistant Surgeon General
Division of Venereal Diseases



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0415- General (VD)

May 3, 1943

Sr. Surgeon J. F. Mahoney
Venereal Disease Research Laboratory
U. S. Marine Hospital
Staten Island, New York

Dear Doctor Mahoney:

Upon returning to Washington I have communicated with Doctor Marion King. He tells me that he will discuss with Doctor Ora H. Cox, the Medical Officer in Charge at Springfield, Missouri, at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association next week, the proposed study of the epidemiology and prevention of gonorrhoea utilizing human volunteers. Doctor King advises me that it will be satisfactory for you, Doctor Van Slyke and Doctor Thayer to proceed to Springfield, Missouri, at any time during the week of May 16th in order to ascertain the suitability of facilities there for the prosecution of the above study. Travel authority for the three of you will be requested at the indicated time.

The reason Doctor King proposes the hospital in the Federal Penitentiary at Springfield rather than at Terre Haute is because of certain administrative changes which are taking place at the latter location. The Medical Officer in Charge is being removed and is being replaced possibly by Doctor Russell O. Settle about the end of June. In view of the fact that the utilization of the facilities at Terre Haute would entail certain delay, Doctor King feels that it would be more advisable to utilize the facilities at Springfield. Springfield, also, in Doctor King's opinion, has the advantage of being administratively more directly under the Public Health Service.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) R. A. Vonderlehr

R. A. Vonderlehr
Assistant Surgeon General
Division of Venereal Diseases

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CC: Dr. J.E. Moore
Dr. Marion King

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0415- General (U.D.)

April 15, 1943

Sr. Surgeon J. F. Mahoney
Venereal Disease Research Laboratory
U. S. Marine Hospital
Staten Island, New York

Dear John:

Your letter of April 9th has been received in which you discuss the possibilities of conducting the proposed study on the epidemiology and prevention of gonorrhoea utilizing human subjects. This study offers so much of potential value that I personally feel it would be a great mistake if the Public Health Service failed to do everything possible to carry it through. I realize that there are many handicaps which must be overcome before work of this kind can be completed successfully. Nevertheless and in spite of the war, I believe that this is a real opportunity and if I had the proper background I would like very much to have the opportunity to do the work.

Since the original plans for the study were changed, Mr. James V. Bennett of the Bureau of Prisons has lost interest in the proposed project. The original plans consisted of chemoprophylaxis in inoculated subjects, but during the last meeting of the committee, Doctor J. E. Moore mentioned that this work would probably not be done and that local chemical prophylaxis would probably be investigated instead. Doctor Marion R. King who has charge of the medical work in the Bureau of Prisons has since informed me that this change in the proposed plans has caused Mr. Bennett to lose interest.

It seems to me that if you and your colleagues wish to conduct this study, one of the first steps would be to confer with Mr. Bennett and Doctor King. Mr. Bennett thinks a great deal of the Public Health Service and if we assure him that the investigation will be done by regular officers in our Service I believe that he will show much more interest than he has evinced in recent weeks.

Sincerely yours,
(Sgd) R. A. Vonderlehr

R. A. Vonderlehr
Assistant Surgeon General
Division of Venereal Diseases

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February 9, 1943

Doctor A. N. Richards
Chairman, Committee on Medical Research
Office of Scientific Research and Development
2101 Constitution Avenue
Washington, D. C.

Dear Doctor Richards:

I have your letter of February 3, 1943 concerning the gonorrhoea prophylaxis study utilizing human subjects for experimental inoculation and the desire of Doctor Bush to be assured that my approval of this study "was expressed with due regard to the possibility of adverse reaction on the part of the public or perhaps of Congress."

There are many unsolved problems relating to the prevention of this disease which can be solved only by experiments on human volunteers. Therefore, since this disease still remains a major cause for the high rate of noneffective days in the armed forces, and, likewise, represents a serious threat to the health and efficiency of our defense workers, it is my considered opinion that research in the field of prophylactic measures designed to prevent the transmission of gonorrhoea is fully warranted.

The utilization of human subjects who voluntarily submit themselves to experimentation may properly be compared to the research which enabled Doctor Walter Reed and his co-workers to discover the method of transmission of yellow fever, and enabled Doctor Joseph Goldberger to establish the fact that pellagra is due to a dietary deficiency.

Sincerely yours,

(sgd) Thomas Parran

Surgeon General

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c.c. G. H. J. E. Moore
" " " C. M. Carpenter

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FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY
U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
MEMORANDUM

February 24, 1943

TO: Dr. F. M. King, Bureau of Prisons
FROM: Dr. R. A. Vonderlehr

Referring to the telephone conversation with you and Doctor J. E. Moore on February 22nd, I had an opportunity yesterday to discuss with Doctor Parran the desirability of utilizing prisoners in penal institutions on a voluntary basis as subjects in a study of the prevention, mode of infection and cure of gonorrhoea.

Doctor Parran was of the opinion, if you and Mr. James V. Bennett approve, that Federal penal institutions would be one of the most desirable places for the prosecution of such studies inasmuch as the facilities for medical care are as good in these prisons as in any other group of prisons in the world.

(Sgd) R. A. Vonderlehr

R. A. Vonderlehr
Assistant Surgeon General
Division of Venereal Diseases

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CC: Dr. J. E. Moore

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