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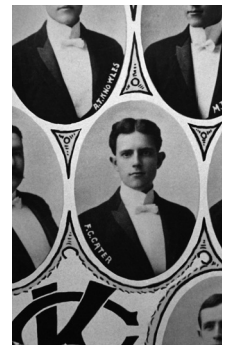
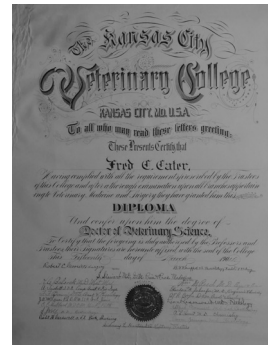
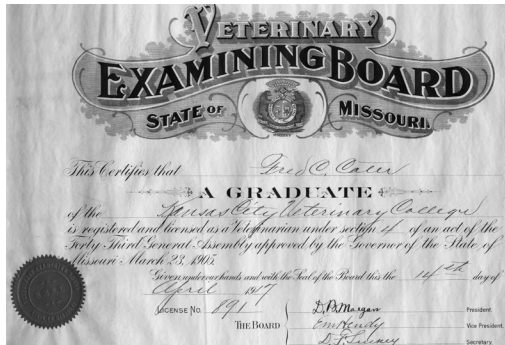
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Built on the Shoulders of Veterinary Giants: We Weren't Always Called Doctors

BY: DR. STEVE JOSEPH, KCVMA HISTORIAN

Recently an article appeared in *Veterinary Practice News* I'd like to paraphrase and share with you.

It is not clear when the public began to refer to veterinarians as doctors. The AVMA and the American Veterinary Medical History Society (AVMHS) agree the usage probably started in the 1860s or 1870s.



No private or public veterinary schools and colleges existed in the U.S. until the middle of the 19th century. Some veterinarians came here from Europe. However, they were called veterinary surgeons.

In this country graduates received the degree of Doctor of Veterinary Science (DVS), as shown in the diploma and license for Dr. Fredrick Cleveland Cater, a 1904 graduate of the Kansas City Veterinary College (KCVC) (1891 – 1918). His diploma and other documents from the KCVC are held in the KSU CVM archives. Dr. Cater's materials were donated to KCVMA and later sent to KSU by his granddaughter, Meg Berrian of Webb City, MO. The private college closed after 27 years of service when World War I required manpower to win the war and publicly funded state institutions began to surface. Later, the DVS degree was replaced with DVM – except at UP SVM where the designation is VMD.

AVMHS Secretary/Treasurer Susanne Whitaker reports the first DVM degree from a U.S. university was awarded to Daniel Elmer Salmon in 1876 by Cornell CVM.

Dr. Whitaker added, "...during the period of growth of the profession there was a struggle for recognition and respect away from being called simply a 'horse doctor'. Those individuals would likely have wanted to use 'doctor' in front of their name, as would the quacks and semi – educated individuals who lacked credentials but wanted acknowledgment."

AVMA librarian and veterinary historian Diane Fagen has found doctor references regarding veterinarians in newspapers from the 1870s.

The first President of the AVMA, founded in 1863, was Josiah Henry

Stickney. He was addressed as doctor because he was an MD. Later he attended and graduated from the veterinary college in London.

According to veterinary historian Dr. Howard Erickson at KSU CVM, H.J. Detmers was referred to as doctor when he served the college in the 1870s. He was the founding dean at The Ohio State University CVM.

As students we recall the writings of anatomist Septimus Sisson. He was a herdsman in Manhattan before joining the KSU faculty. Later he would be another member of the OSU faculty.