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Lanza obituary

His first assignment as Chief Surgeon was to take over the investigations of health conditions in the lead and zinc mines in the Joplin, Missouri, district, which had been started by the Public Health Service but in 1914 were assumed by the Bureau of Mines. There was an extraordinary prevalence of tuberculosis among the miners, and, accompanying it, was an underlying occupational disease which they themselves recognized and labeled "miner's con." Doctor Lanza examined the miners at a clinic established for that purpose at nearby Webb City, and, with Edwin Higgins, Mining Engineer, made extensive studies of ventilation, temperatures, and dust conditions underground. His first report (with Higgins), published in 1915, covered the pulmonary diseases among the miners and their relation to rock dust in the mines. His second, in 1917, was on "miners' consumption." And his third (with Harrington), in 1921, had special reference to lung conditions in the Montana area.

About the time Doctor Lanza began the Joplin studies, the Public Health Service established its Division of Industrial Hygiene, under Doctor Joseph Schereschewsky, who, as head of the Office of Field Investigations of Occupational Diseases, had just completed an exhaustive study of the health of garment workers in New York City. When World War I interrupted the mining investigations centering in Butte, Doctor Lanza was assigned to the Laboratory Station in Pittsburgh, under Schereschewsky's direction. He was followed as Chief Surgeon of the Bureau of Mines by Doctor R. R. Sayers, who had been associated with him in the Joplin and Butte investigations. In January, 1918, Schereschewsky was given charge of the USPHS Division of Scientific Research, and Doctor Lanza succeeded him as head of the Division of Industrial Hygiene. While the war continued, this Division's principal concern was the health of the workers in munitions plants and the environment in which they lived and labored.

In 1920, after thirteen years in the Public Health Service, Doctor Lanza resigned to become Medical Director of the Hydraulic Steel Company, at Cleveland, Ohio. This was an unusual company. All its executives were young men — none was over forty; and its labor relations and social and personnel policies were decades ahead of their time. Being the head of its Medical Department was a comfortable job. But Destiny hadn't been preparing this man for that kind of a life. It allowed him a year of it, and then the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, which had been arranging to set up a Division of Industrial Hygiene in the National Health Service of Australia, offered him the position of Special Field Officer. He promptly accepted, and — with Wilbur Sawyer who afterward became head of the International Health Board, and Frank Longley, Engineer — set sail for "down under." He was stationed in Melbourne, the capital; his Chief was Doctor H. L. Cumpston, Director General of Health. Australia, however, was not ready for industrial hygiene supervision on a national scale, and the undertaking resulted in not much of permanent value. The State of New South Wales established its own Industrial Hygiene Division, which is still active; but it took the exigencies of World War II to demonstrate to the general economy the advantages of doing the same. After a little more than three years — during which he had visited mines and factories in all parts of the continent, seeing and learning, and had ventured a published comment on his observations — Doctor Lanza felt that he had accomplished all he could, notified the International Board, and returned to the United States. He was thinking of going back into industry as a Medical Director — not, however, for Hydraulic Steel, as it had lost its identity in a merger — when the opportunity to join Metropolitan Life Insurance Company as an Assistant Medical Director presented itself. He says of this: "Fortunately for me, I had the good sense to accept."

At Metropolitan, together with the late Doctor Wade Wright, he conducted a consultation service in industrial medicine and industrial hygiene for the benefit of the many concerns whose group life insurance was carried by his company. Among those who worked with him side by side throughout the twenty-three years he was with Metropolitan were J. Wm. Fehnel, experienced in industrial hygiene, and Doctor Wm. J. McConnell, quiet, capable possessor of vast wisdom in industrial medical matters, freely shared when it would serve a need. The varieties of working conditions with which these men became familiar were all that could be imagined, and the problems they presented ran the gamut of the possible and sometimes nudged the impossible. A soon-discovered relation between the problems and the kind of industry in which they occurred led to the inauguration of industry-wide studies, and beginning with its survey of occupational pulmonary disease in the asbestos industry, the Metropolitan group became distinguished for its industry-wide analyses of the hazards to health in foundries, potteries, chemical plants, the making of steel, and many other kinds of work.

In 1925 the Metropolitan Life organization, together with the Mine Operators' Association, the Public Health Service, and the Bureau of Mines brought about the establishment, at Picher, Oklahoma, of the Picher Clinic for the further investigation of miners' diseases and

working conditions in the Tri-State area (Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma). Two years later, at age forty, Dr. Leroy U. Gardner, already distinguished as a pathologist and authority on tuberculosis and pneumoconiosis, became Director of the Saranac Laboratory, at Saranac Lake, New York, and thereafter, at Doctor Lanza's behest, he and his Assistant Director, Donald Cummings, gave invaluable aid to the Picher Clinic in advice and counsel, and by way of scientific research that brought the Saranac Laboratory into enduring fame. Reports of the Picher enterprise are found in various governmental publications. Doctor Lanza and Doctor Gardner became great friends, and each was a source of inspiration to the other. Considering the unusual ability both possessed to inspire others in general, this was a high-voltage relation. The remarkable success of Doctor Gardner's Symposiums on Silicosis in bringing together scientists and researchers from all over the world owed much to Doctor Lanza's cooperation, and reflected, to an extent, his international acquaintance among those who were interested in the pneumoconioses. During the 1930's Doctors Lanza and Gardner, together with Doctor R. R. Sayers, of the USPHS, who had succeeded Doctor Lanza as Chief Surgeon of the Bureau of Mines, were "a persuasive triumvirate" in widespread educational activities among medical and technical societies, industrial organizations, and legislative groups, aimed at bringing about a better understanding of occupational diseases in their clinical as well as their compensation aspects. Doctor Gardner died in 1946, at age 58, untimely taken in his brilliant prime.

At the outbreak of World War II, Doctor Lanza, on leave from Metropolitan, was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel in the Office of the Surgeon General of the Army, and put in charge of the newly-created Division of Occupational Health, Preventive Medicine Service, under the direction of the late General James S. Simmons, who afterward became Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health. This was an entirely new enterprise for the Army, and it necessitated much reshaping of traditional attitudes regarding the functions of a military physician. The Army quickly became owner of all types of manufacturing plants, and the operator of most of them, the others being run by contractors. Doctor Lanza's Division was concerned only with the Army-operated plants, but these produced ordnance, airplanes, chemicals, clothing, food and food containers, munitions, quartermaster supplies, and whatever else the Army needed, and, at the peak of the war effort, employed more than a million people, about forty percent of them women. Here again Doctor Lanza had the benefit of the abilities and services of Doctor William McConnell, who was charged with the responsibility of health supervision in the ordnance plants. Under Doctor Lanza's Division of Occupational Health were the Army Industrial Hygiene Laboratory, first set up in the School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, under the direction of the late Doctor Raymond Hussey, and the Armored Force Medical Research Laboratory at Fort Knox, better known as the Tank Laboratory, a most successful enterprise headed by Doctor Willard Machle.

In 1942, Doctor Lanza was promoted to the rank of Colonel. When he left the Service three years later and returned to his position at Metropolitan Life, he left to his successor, Colonel Leigh Cook, the well-organized industrial medical program he had established in the Army. This has been continued, and for a long time has had its counterparts in the Navy and the Air Force. The Industrial Hygiene Laboratory became the Environmental Hygiene Laboratory, located at Edgewood, New Jersey. Doctor Lanza was awarded the Legion of Merit.

In 1947, Doctor Lanza was asked by New York University if he would be interested in organizing an Institute of Industrial Medicine in its Post Graduate Medical School. This he considered a challenge and an opportunity he could not refuse, and so, through the cooperation of the University authorities and Metropolitan Life, it was arranged that he would give half his time to each until his retirement from Metropolitan which, under Company regulations, would be due in 1949. At the start the Institute was part of the Department of Preventive Medicine, of which Professor Edward Meleny was Chairman. After two years it was set up independently, with Doctor Lanza as Director and Professor of Industrial Medicine. The Institute was successful in bringing together as faculty members a young and enthusiastic group, both full-time and part-time; and when Doctor Lanza, under the University's compulsory retirement system, retired in 1954 as Professor Emeritus he left it solidly established, with Doctor Norton Nelson as its able and energetic Director, and Doctor David Goldstein, Medical Director of *The New York Times*, its Professor of Industrial Medicine.

Although compulsory retirement age has overtaken him twice — at 65 at Metropolitan Life, and at 70 at New York University — the third time is not yet, for now, at 76, Doctor Lanza is still active, still interested, writing and editing within his beloved field. In addition to other commitments, he is Editor-in-Chief of the series of Modern Monographs in Industrial Medicine (Grune & Stratton) now appearing from time to time. One wishes he would pen the narrative of his long and varied experience. There is more

than the suggestion of drama in many of the "catalyzer" episodes. Their stories all would be interesting, and some could have definite value, particularly those of his contacts with the military mind — which knew nothing and cared less about industrial medicine, and couldn't conceive of an Army doctor in any other relation than as serving troops. What he did, and the fact that he did it, are history, but the firsthand account of *how* he did it could prove useful in many places.

Doctor Lanza's thirteen years in the Public Health Service, 1907-1920, coinciding as they did with the years of industrial medicine's most rapid and intensive growth, brought him into contact with practically the whole range of its problems; and his investigative, analytical, and retentive mind stored up an encyclopedic knowledge of their causes and solutions. This, as the years were to prove, was excellent scientific equipment for a long future as consultant. The year or so as Medical Director for Hydraulic Steel reinforced his practical background, and his temperament and special abilities furnished all else that was needed to make that long future a successful one. Interestingly, it does not appear that such a future was the one he sought — there was even a period, just after his return from Australia and while he was in an advisory capacity with the National Health Council, during which the comparative security of a Medical Directorship in industry seemed much more attractive. However, it was the future for which he had been prepared and the Guiding Hand that had led him thus far was not to let him stray. Industrial medicine already had consultants — in surgery, diagnosis, toxicology, administration, research, occupational diseases, techniques in general. But, even so, there was the feeling that more were needed, although what for was only dimly seen. Tony Lanza's emergence was a sort of cumulative answer. It was gradual, almost imperceptible as it came to pass; the successive needs he filled had a way of seeming to appear tangible only after he had met their demands, or quieted their latent threats. And so his progress toward the eminence that is his was little noted as it went along, and thus was unrecorded. And by the time it was realized that he had become a consultant of such abilities as gave new meaning to the term, it was much too late for timely memos on how he got that way. In review, however, and because there is no alternative, something of a record may be attempted from several objective sources.

One of these sources is the recollections of the many who have worked with him or have seen him in action. He was always a "team" worker; never a "cause" man, or crusader; never protagonist in any individualistic purely Lanza enterprise. The matter in hand was his only concern; and his attitude toward it was objective, his interest in it proportional to its value in the development of industrial medicine, his treatment of it impersonal. In his contacts with organized medicine, grudgingly aware of the new profession growing in its midst, and with industry, interested but unconvinced, he was the perfect liaison. Unselfish, sincere, plain spoken — sometimes almost blunt — his presence was felt, even when his part in what was going on was only the undramatic "passiveness of a catalyst in the result." Granting the "catalyzer" role, he gave it his own distinction. Whether active or passive in the action or reaction, he left something of himself in it and added something to his own experience from it. He was too forceful to be present without the one; too sensitive to leave without the other. The influence of his personality was almost tangibly and measurably a quiet, palpable, centripetal force, impelling toward the center of whatever was in hand.

All this, throughout the years, built up a second source from which, with search and patience, the record as to Tony Lanza's place in the development of industrial medicine may be confirmed. This consists of the impressively large number of references to him, items about him, and comments on his work that one comes upon in the literature of industrial health, occupational diseases, and industrial hygiene — "comes upon" because they are not indexed and mostly they occur in identification with co-workers and associates, or with the subject of the text. An example is found in a reference to "a world review and evaluation" of "Silicosis and Allied Disorders." One reads: "This report was prepared by the (Industrial Hygiene) Foundation's Medical Committee, under the leadership of its Chairman, Dr. A. J. Lanza, and 'brought together for the first time a practical summary of what was known and remained to be learned about dust diseases.'" Another occurs in connection with industrial medicine in Western Pennsylvania; he is named as one of four distinguished men who "figured prominently in its development." There are many similar allusions to his part in whatever was going on. But much more numerous are such capsule encomiums as: "pioneer in the investigation of industrial dust hazards in the United States"; "distinguished for long and instructive experience in industrial hygiene"; "leader in the development of industrial medicine in the United States and the world." Students of the published material on occupational diseases and industrial hygiene encounter recognitions of this kind so frequently and in so many contexts that they take them quite for granted as fittingly phrased and properly placed. In the permanence

of the printed word, "A. J. Lanza" is an oftenmet and much-respected name.

A third source from which information about this man may be derived is the formal, indexed account of the books he has to his credit, the addresses he has made, and the articles, reports, and technical papers he has produced. These are listed in several chronologies. Their texts confirm his distinction as indeed a pioneer in the investigation of dust diseases in general, and the identification of silicosis in particular. His books include *Silicosis and Asbestosis* (1938) — "the still definitive book in this field" — and *Industrial Hygiene* (with Jacob Goldberg, 1939). The timing of his articles and reports shows the second half of them published in 1933-35 (the last two in *J.A.M.A.*), after which it seems that the "catalyzer" part of his work grew into first attention. His continuing interest in occupational diseases, however, is evident from his organization affiliations. He was a Trustee of the Trudeau Foundation, and of the Industrial Hygiene Foundation, and in the latter, Chairman of the Medical Committee. In the New York Academy of Medicine he was Chairman of the Committee on Industrial Health; in the American Public Health Association, Chairman of the Committee on Pneumoconiosis; in the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, member of the Committee on Health and Safety in Mines; in the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, Chairman of the Industrial Hygiene Committee. He was a member of the Medical Subcommittee of the Pennsylvania Commission on Compensation for Occupational Diseases, which made its report in 1932, and a member of the Committee on Prevention of Silicosis through Medical Control, established by the Secretary of Labor in 1936. The American Medical Association's Council on Industrial Health, established in late 1937, added him to its membership a year later.

If they mention it at all, the long-time chronicles of industrial medicine no doubt will consider it pure coincidence that the middle thirties, when Doctor Lanza was beginning to be really effective in his self-styled role as "catalyzer," saw the start of a remarkable spreading out of industrial medical programs among industries of all kinds. This was clearly reflected in the upsurge that began about then in the membership of the industrial physicians' association. From the lowly 1935 total of 287 — survivors of the twenty-year doldrums in which the average had been barely more — the number of members grew to seven times that many ten years later, and then went on to double that in the next ensuing ten. The economic influences then at work will be credited, of course, but it is within the memory of many who lived in the thirties that there were also the influences of powerful personalities, and that these had so much to do with the happenings of the period — in big affairs and little — as to make its truest history properly biography. Tony Lanza was one of them; and the Knudsen Award, industrial medicine's highest honor, given him in 1946, was one of the ways his medical colleagues had of telling him, and the world, that they knew him to be so. He was the seventh recipient of this Award. The citation stressed his leadership. But a "catalyzer" leader? Easily enough, when the leadership is less of leading than of being followed. In this man's case it was effectively that. Unmatched skill in unifying; a positive genius for enlisting the aid and cooperation of those with whom he worked; the "with" that pervades the chronology of the things he accomplished; the results obtained, with the credit shared equally by all — these characterized the many years of days in which he did "to the best of his ability" whatever fell to him to do.

At the meeting of the Permanent Committee and International Association on Occupational Health on the day preceding the official opening of the Thirteenth International Congress on Occupational Health, at New York, July 25-29, 1960, Doctor Lanza, along with Doctor R. R. Sayers (United States) and Professor F. Koelsch (Germany), was made an Honorary Member of the Permanent Committee. This brought to five the number of Honorary Members, only W. R. N. Kranenburg (Holland) and Alice Hamilton (United States) being the living holders of that distinction at the time of the meeting. And on July 27, 1960, at a reception at New York University Medical Center, Doctor Lanza was the recipient of a New York University Presidential Citation "for his leadership in the field of industrial medicine and his service to the University." Some three hundred of his colleagues, many of them delegates to the International Congress on Occupational Health, attended the ceremony. After stating that Doctor Lanza in 1947 became the first Director of the University Medical Center's Institute of Industrial Medicine, and, in 1949, the first Chairman of the newly-organized Department of Industrial Medicine in the NYU Post Graduate Medical School, the citation continued: "Throughout his career Doctor Lanza's guidance has been sought by many. He has served as adviser in industrial medicine to many industries and other organizations. . . . Behind any recital of dates, titles, and geography are those qualities that help make the man those around him have known: the warm understanding, the unfailingly perceptive intellect, the unassailable integrity, and, most of all, the calm and steady wisdom."

—A.D.C.