Samuel Cate Prescott
1872-1962

Samuel Cate Prescott, former Dean of Science and Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, died in Boston on 19 March 1962 at the age of 89.

Born on a farm in New Hampshire on 5 April 1872, Dr. Prescott became interested in science at an early age and graduated from M. I. T. in the class of 1894.

He was a man of broad interests, although his specialities centered in microbiology, industrial biology, food science and technology, and public health.

Early in his career, while on the staff at M. I. T., he became associated with William Lyman Underwood, a graduate of and a special lecturer at M. I. T., and during this association collaborated with him on the solution of fundamental problems in bacteriology as related to the canning industry. Their research did much to put the canning of food on a sound scientific basis. Later he accomplished noteworthy results in research on banana diseases, as well as the chemistry and preparation of coffee, the bacteriology of water supplies, the development of dehydrated and quick-frozen foods, and fermentation.

Also, he did much to further education in the fields of health education, public health engineering, food science and technology, and industrial biology.

In 1922, Dr. Prescott became head of the Department of Biology and Public Health, a position which he held for many years, and he had the honor of being the first Dean of the School of Science at M. I. T., a post which he held from 1932 to 1942, the year of his retirement. During his entire career and until his death, he presented lectures and carried on productive work.

In his lifetime, Dr. Prescott was active also in many nonacademic activities. He directed the Boston Biochemical Laboratory from 1904 to 1921, and was a staff member of Sanitary Research Laboratory and Sewage Experimentation Station from 1910 to 1915. During World War I, he was a Major in the Sanitary Corps of the U. S. Army, afterwards being promoted to the rank of Colonel in the Reserves; during World War II, he served as expert consultant to the Office of the Quartermaster General, especially in matters relating to dehydration.

Dr. Prescott was the recipient of many honors and awards. He was a charter member and President of the Society of American Bacteriologists in 1919. As one of the principal founders of the Institute of Food Technologists, he served as its first president in 1941 and was guest of honor at its annual meeting in April 1961. He received both the Appert and Babcock-Hart awards of this organization. He also served as a member of the editorial board of Food Research for a number of years. He aided in the formation of The Refrigeration Research Foundation and served as chairman of its board of governors; at the time of his death, he was honorary chairman.

Professor Prescott was a gifted writer. He translated Efron's book on "Biochemical Catalysts in Life and Industry." With Dr. Murray P. Horwood, he rewrote and expanded "Sedgwick's Principles of Sanitary Science and Public Health;" with Dr. Cecil G. Dunn, he was co-author of "Industrial Microbiology," the second edition of which was translated into German, Spanish, and Russian; with Dr. Charles Edward A. Winslow, and later Mr. Mac Harvey McCrady, he was co-author of "Water Bacteriology." His book "When M. I. T. was Boston Tech" is a history of the early years of M. I. T.

Dr. Prescott is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Eleanor P. Clemence, two sons, Robert S. Prescott and Samuel C. Prescott, and three grandchildren.

Dean Prescott will long be remembered as a sage teacher, an administrator, a researcher, an author, a "father" of food technology, and as an inspiring friend of outstanding integrity, honor, and loyalty.

Cecil G. Dunn