



The Laboratorian

LIMITED EDITION

HISTORY OF THE DSHS LABORATORY 1928-2002 PART 1 OF 2

Ninety years and counting! While the Bureau of Laboratories was officially established in 1928, there were several public health milestones that led to its creation.

In the early to mid-1800s, Texas was hit by epidemics of cholera, small pox, and yellow fever. During this time, camp fire tales were told about odd animal behavior, which are now attributed to rabies. It was becoming evident that public health measures were necessary!

In 1896, the Texas State Health Officer requested \$2,000 per year to hire a chemist to analyze drinking water and a bacteriologist to perform microscopy on bacteriological specimens. This was the beginning of public health testing in Texas. The early 1900's the Pasteur Institute of Texas was created to aid in the diagnosis of rabies in pets and other animals. The Pure Food Commission was also established to analyze food. In 1912, an official Bacteriology Laboratory was established and 1,082 tests were performed that year.

A consolidation of the Pasteur Institute of Texas, Texas Dairy and Food Commission, and the Bacteriology Laboratory led to the creation of the Texas Bureau of Laboratories. The newfound bureau was located in a new two story, red brick building at 5th and Trinity Streets in downtown Austin. Over time, the laboratory grew in specimen volume, budget, and even building size. By 1946, the laboratory processed 160,324 specimens annually and had an operating budget of \$200,000. By 1998, the laboratory processed nearly 1.5 million specimens each year! By 2003, the laboratory relocated to a new, seven story in central Austin facility to begin its next chapter of history.

1928
The Bureau of Laboratories Created a two story building located in downtown Austin



1936
Licensed by NIH to make vaccines

1945
Additional story added to downtown lab building

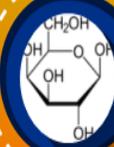
(typhoid, rabies, tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis)



1958
Dedication ceremony for new public health buildings on 49th and Lamar

1965
Bill passed to start phenylketonuria (PKU) testing inception of today's Newborn Screening Program

1971
DSHS Lab stopped vaccine production



1983
Newborn Screening Program required 2nd screen for Texas babies

1985
Texas Newborn Screening Program acquire first automated "robot" first of it's kind in public health

1995
Microbiology lab implemented pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) for E. coli one of four labs in the US selected



2002
DSHS Lab created the Emergency Preparedness Branch to respond to anthrax attacks

STAY TUNED FOR PART 2 OF 2
FOR YEARS 2003—2018