

NEHA NEWS

Find Your Community With the Private Water Network



The Private Water Network (PWN) is a free, virtual community of practice for anyone working to protect communities from contaminants in private drinking water sources. Through a virtual, easy-to-use platform, PWN provides a place to exchange ideas and

solutions with professionals working on similar issues and facing similar barriers. The goal is to build a sustainable community for those working to support private water programs to connect with their peers and share experiences, insights, and resources to ultimately build capacity to protect private water quality.

The virtual community platform includes a discussion forum, comprehensive resource library, educational events and webinars on private water issues, newsletters focused on private water issues, and member directory with a community-wide search option. We hope to expand membership to include individuals from every state and territory in the country. We are particularly interested in new members working at state, tribal, local, and territorial governmental public health agencies, federal agencies, national associations, certified laboratories, and academic and extension partners.

Membership to PWN is free. While NEHA membership is not required to be a PWN member, a MyNEHA account (<https://neha.users.membersuite.com/auth/portal-login>) is needed to log in. Learn more and join PWN by visiting <https://pwn.neha.org>.

NEHA History Project Update

By Kristen Ruby-Cisneros (kruby@neha.org)

Back in 2020, NEHA President Dr. Priscilla Oliver (2019–2020) appointed the NEHA History Project Task Force to study and review the rich history of NEHA and the environmental health field. The NEHA History Project Task Force was charged with making the important history of NEHA and environmental health available to all NEHA members, as well as other practitioners, students, and the general public. The task force, made up of luminaries from across the environmental health field, has convened since March 2020 to assess the history we have recorded, gather data and historical documents, collect historical artifacts, and review records. We wanted to highlight the work completed by the task force and the endeavors currently underway.

Spotlight on Several Items From the NEHA Virtual Museum

The NEHA History Project Task Force has put together a virtual museum of artifacts, instrumentation and tools, publications, and miscellaneous items from NEHA's and environmental health's past. Thanks to Dr. Robert Powitz, who has provided photos and descriptions from his personal collection, almost 50 different items are now displayed in the NEHA Virtual Museum

at www.neha.org/virtual-museum. The following are just a few of the items on display.

Don't Spit on the Sidewalk Brick



Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine (1862–1954) of Dodge City, Kansas, was one of the leading figures in the field of public health in the early 20th century. Beginning in 1904, he served as secretary of the Kansas State Board of Health for 20 years. Dr. Crumbine was concerned about the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases and campaigned for their prevention. He became particularly concerned after observing tuberculosis patients spitting on the floor of a train. As part of his public health campaign, he convinced brick manufacturers to imprint the slogan, “Don't Spit on the Sidewalk,” on their products.

Dr. Crumbine's public health crusade argued for pure food and drugs, the elimination of houseflies and rats, water and sewage sanitary control, and the prevention of tuberculosis. He succeeded in abolishing the common drinking cup, the common or “roller” towel, and spitting in public places. He promoted these campaigns with simple and easy to remember slogans, such as “Bat the Rat,” “Swat the Fly,” and “Save the Baby.”

The Samuel J. Crumbine Consumer Protection Award was established in 1955 in his memory and is awarded each year to local environmental health jurisdictions that demonstrate unsurpassed achievement in providing outstanding food protection services to their communities.

Food Inspection Set



The Food Inspection Set, Veterinary was issued to members of the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps who were charged with ensuring food safety. The set contained the essential tools to examine packaged foods upon delivery such as a hammer and pry bar, tin snips, awl, two bimetal thermometers, and a pocket ruler. The tools in the set allowed the veterinarian in charge of food safety to inspect food for freshness, temperature, quality, and sanitation before accepting food deliveries. This set dates from the Vietnam War era.

Inspection Mirror



The mirror is an absolute essential in the inspection toolkit. Before the development of the ball hinge, lever hinge mirrors were the available inspection tool. It is a two-handed device where the mirror is articulated using the looped lever-type hinge mounted on the back of the beveled mirror. This meticulously crafted inspection mirror is made of brass (manufacturer unknown) and has a brass sliding cover to protect the mirror. It is probably from the post-World War I era and was salvaged from equipment discarded by the Detroit Health Department.



Chicago Inspection Badges

Chicago, Illinois, had some of the most ornate inspector badges of any large city. The Chicago Health Department was overseen by a board of health and created several first-of-their-kind ordinances in the U.S., including the mandating of milk pasteurization in 1909. The unsanitary conditions of the stockyards and meat-

packing plants in Chicago prompted Upton Sinclair to write his exposé, *The Jungle*, which resulted in the 1906 Meat Inspection and Pure Food and Drug Acts.

The gold badge with the Swiss cross (top left) is from 1900. The badge with the stylized Celtic cross (top right) is from the 1940s. The star badge (bottom middle) is from 1920.

NEHA AEC History

The NEHA Annual Educational Conference (AEC) & Exhibition is the premier environmental health conference that brings together professionals from around the globe to learn and dis-

cuss current and emerging environmental health topics and issues. Each AEC highlights how local agencies, industries, and levels of government work to ensure the safety of the public and environment, and how they contribute to the advancement of the profession.

The first NEHA AEC was held on June 25, 1937, in Long Beach, California. Since that time, NEHA has held over eight decades of AECs in 30 different states, Canada, and Washington, DC. The most AECs have been held in California (14), followed by Colorado (5), Florida (5), Nevada (5), Ohio (4), and Texas (4).

The NEHA History Project Task Force has created a listing of past AECs by decade at www.neha.org/past-aecs. Links to past AEC summaries published in *The Sanitarian* or *Journal of Environmental Health* have also been included. These summaries provide a rich history of the evolution of the AEC, relevant topics within the profession and association, award winners and notables, and images from our past.

Other Projects Underway

The NEHA History Project Task Force is currently working on posting the stories of several “giants” in the environmental health field, including Larry Gordon, Walter S. Mangold, Jerrold M. Michael, P. Walton Purdom, Walter F. Snyder, John G. Todd, and Henry Vaughn. These stories were researched and written by Dr. Herman Koren. As part of his research, Dr. Koren connected with family and friends of these individuals to learn more about their lives and to request review of each story to ensure their accuracy.

The task force also presented at the NEHA 2022 AEC & Exhibition in Spokane, Washington, on June 29. The panel presentation, “Your Profession’s History: Updates From Environmental Health Mentors,” was moderated by Dr. Leon Vinci, chair of the task force, and featured several task force members who shared milestones, stories, and other key developments of the environmental health profession.

The task force is also working on:

- A history of the NEHA affiliates to share their rich stories and impact at the state and local levels.
- A thorough history of NEHA and the environmental health profession from its origins to the present.
- Biography webpages for the past presidents of NEHA to document their achievements and success in making NEHA what it is today, as well as to honor their service and dedication to NEHA and the environmental health profession.

Please visit the NEHA History Project webpage at www.neha.org/neha-history-project for all the resources and information currently posted. You can also find a listing of task force members and how to get involved in this endeavor. Thank you to the task force members for their continued contributions to discover, record, and preserve our history! 🐾