

Major Walter Reed, MD (September 13, 1851 – November 22, 1902)

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Walter Reed (see Figure 1) was a U.S. Army physician who, in 1901, led the team that postulated and confirmed the theory that yellow fever is transmitted by a particular mosquito species, not by direct contact. The team collected data about mosquitoes (see Figure 2), and observed transition patterns. They built on the work of others, and disproved other theories through rigorous science. Their insights gave impetus to the new fields of epidemiology and biomedicine, and led to public health decision making that saw houses fumigated and wet areas drained. Patients sick with yellow fever were quarantined in screened areas so mosquitoes could not pick up and transfer more virus-infected blood, and countless lives were saved (see Figure 3). Their work led to public health practices that are still in practice today.

Figure 1. Walter Reed, MD.

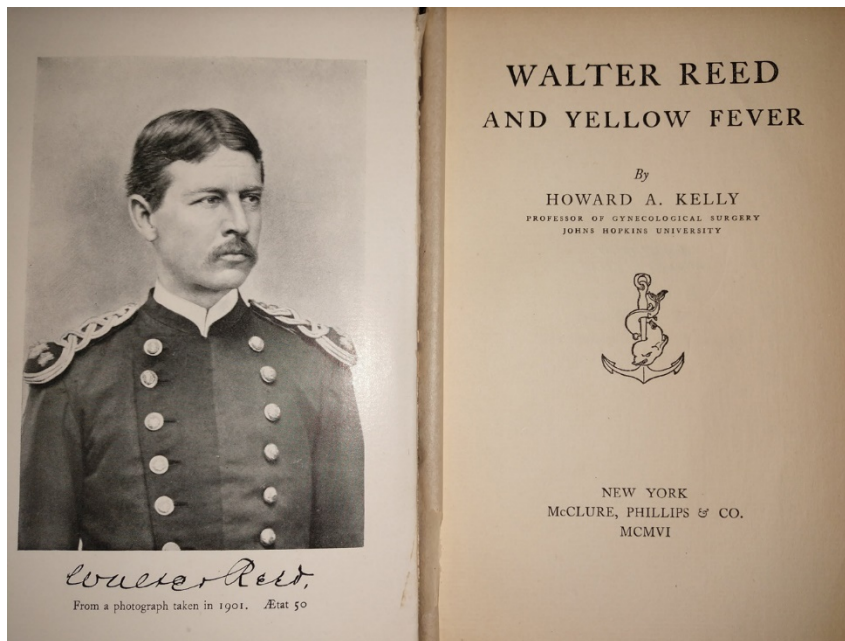


Figure 2. Mosquitoes

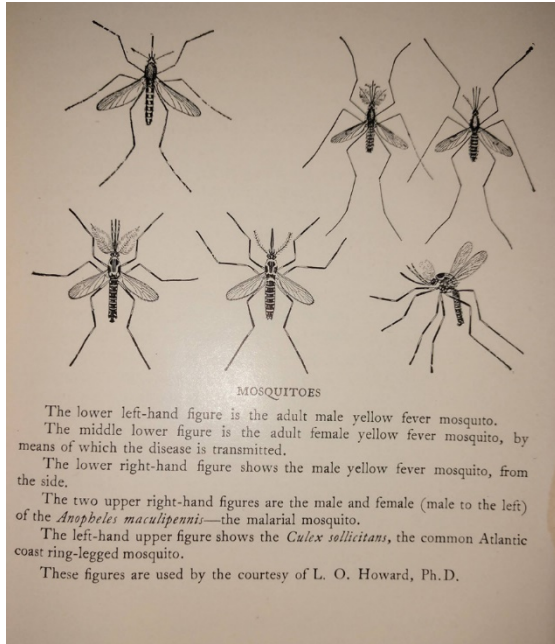


Figure 3. Average Monthly Mortality from Yellow Fever

