

## Early Physicians - Healing in the Backcountry

Early settlers in the Carolina Piedmont relied heavily on home treatments of diseases and injuries. Family traditions, social customs and superstition often shaped accepted medical practices in the 1700s and 1800s. Home remedies and treatments were handed down from generation to generation in families, shared from neighbor to neighbor, and learned from home medical guides and newspapers. Medicinal recipes usually featured mixtures of garden herbs, local wild plants and roots, and purchased narcotic drugs and chemicals.

By the late 1700s, men with various degrees of medical training provided medical attention to others. Many of these men were primarily farmers or tradesmen who had apprenticed with another doctor, and had access to a medical dictionary or guide. Eventually more students sought out and received college or university training, and the medical profession in the Carolina Piedmont prospered.

Carolina Piedmont Physicians

Availability of trained physicians and medical care varied widely throughout the towns, plantations and remote settlements of the Carolina Piedmont. Historical documents, such as wills, estate inventories, censuses and family records, provide some insights into the practicing doctors and the medical services they provided to citizens of the Carolina Piedmont from 1780 to 1900.

Dr. Josiah Moore (1775-1807)

According to Dr. Maurice A. Moore, Josiah Moore attended Bullock's Creek classical academy and graduated from an institution in Kentucky. He studied medicine with Dr. McDowell of Danville, Kentucky and returned to South Carolina in 1803 to practice medicine in Yorkville. According to Moore, Josiah Moore was the first physician to settle in Yorkville.

Reverend Dr. Joseph Alexander (1735-1809)

A native of Pennsylvania, Joseph Alexander graduated from Princeton College in 1760 and shortly after moved to North Carolina. In 1774, he settled in Bullock's Creek, South Carolina. Dr. Alexander was an eminent educator and established a classical school at Bullock's Creek in 1787. He organized churches in both North and South Carolina and preached until 1801. He then attended the College of South Carolina and received a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1807. According to an account of Major Joseph McJunkin's experiences in the Revolutionary War, the house of "Rev. Dr. Joseph Alexander . . . was a real Lazaretto [a hospital for contagious disease] for the sick and wounded of our army." Major McJunkin contracted smallpox while recovering from a wound at Alexander's home. According to Dr. Maurice A. Moore's writings in the 1860's, Rev. Alexander performed smallpox inoculations prior to 1796 at his home during an epidemic.

Dr. James Alexander

Dr. James Alexander also seems to have been involved in the treatment and prevention of smallpox. D.A. Thompkins states in History of Mecklenburg County (1903): "In 1780, when the smallpox was epidemic in the county, having been brought here by the British and the American armies, Dr. James Alexander vaccinated many of the people of his section. In one family he vaccinated ten persons, charging one pound currency for each 'inoculation'."

#### Battle of Huck's Defeat, July 1780

John Adair served as an officer during the American Revolution in the militia regiment of Colonel Edward Lacey and fought in the Battle of Huck's Defeat at Brattonsville. In 1839 he dictated an account of the battle to his son who forwarded the information to Dr. Maurice A. Moore in a letter: "Immediately after the battle my father was sent out by Col. Lacy for a Doctor Turner who lived about a mile in the neighborhood, to attend to the wounded. He did not find Turner..." In 1859, Dr. Moore published The Life of Gen. Edward Lacey which includes a description of the battle: "The battle lasted about one hour; the Whigs had one man killed, the British between thirty and forty killed, and about fifty wounded, who were mostly billeted upon a few Tory families in the neighborhood, and attended by a Dr. Turner, who resided near the battle ground." In a footnote, Moore states, "The evening after the battle...some old ladies came in to administer to the sick and wounded."

#### Dr. Samuel Davies Alexander (1771-1855)

In his will, Rev. Joseph Alexander wrote: "...my Son Samuel has occasionally administered medicine & attended on me & family;..." and stated that this medical account had been previously settled.

#### Dr. David T.W. Cooke, "Quack" (1810-?)

A notice signed by prominent residents of the York County area appeared in several southern papers in 1810. It announced: "On the night of the 20th of July last, Dr. David T.W. Cooke eloped from his place of residence in the district of York, South Carolina, where he had for some time attempted to palm himself on the public as a Physician and Surgeon...Immediately before his flight, Dr. Cooke, under specious but false pretenses, procured certificates, expressive of his medical acquirements, from several respectable citizens of this district..." The announcement also describes Cooke's rising debts, his patient wife and children, and his life of "idleness and most wanton dissipation."

#### Dr. Maurice Augustus Moore (1795-1871)

A native of York County, Maurice Moore studied medicine in Wadesboro, North Carolina with Dr. William Harris and then took medical courses at the University of Pennsylvania. He returned to Yorkville and went into partnership with his brother Dr. William Moore (1791-1861), who had already established a practice. After his first wife died in 1826, he traveled to Cuba, as he believed the climate would restore his poor health. He remarried in 1833 and moved to Union County, South Carolina where he devoted himself to agriculture. His plantation, he felt, was subject to malarial fevers, and he soon began summering at Glenn's Springs in Spartanburg

County, believing the water there to be therapeutic. In 1838 he and several others formed a stock company intending to develop the springs as a spa. The malarial season was too short to make the enterprise financially stable, but even after the company liquidated, Dr. Moore continued to welcome invalids and offer them the healing power of Glenn's Springs water.

**Dr. Robert Hervey Hope (1818-1890)**

A native of Cabarrus County, North Carolina, he graduated from the Medical College of the State of South Carolina in 1841. He first practiced medicine in the Bethesda community of York County and moved to Rock Hill in 1859. He is said to have been the first doctor to settle in Rock Hill. During the Civil War, Dr. Hope was released from service by the Confederate government to remain home and continue his practice.

**Dr. Robert Turner Allison (1798-1882)**

A native of York County, he graduated from the South Carolina College in 1821 and from the Medical College of Lexington, Kentucky in 1825. Besides practicing general medicine, he farmed and ran a store at his Old Plantation on Clark's Fork Creek in western York County. Dr. Allison was active in politics and was elected to the State Legislature in 1838, serving two terms. He was also a member of the State Convention of 1860 that passed the Ordinance of Secession.

**Dr. Thomas Boyd Meacham (1836-1908)**

A native of Jackson, Tennessee, he graduated from the Medical College of South Carolina in 1860. He enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1861 serving as Captain of Company E in the 17th Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers. The Company was reorganized in the spring of 1862 and he returned to Rock Hill. After the war he opened the Fort Mill Drug Company, the first drug store in Fort Mill. He also practiced medicine in York County. He sold the drug store to J.R. Haile in 1907. He is listed on the 1860 Federal Census of York County as a physician.

**Dr. William Francis Strait (1854-1898)**

A native of Chester County, Dr. Strait attended country schools in his community and studied medicine under his brother-in-law Dr. David Lyle and his uncles Drs. Alexander and William Wylie. He graduated from the Medical College of the State of South Carolina in 1876 and returned to practice medicine in Chester County. In 1890, Dr. Strait took a course in surgery in New York City. He then moved to Rock Hill and entered a partnership with Dr. Thomas A. Crawford. They rented a small house in Rock Hill to use as a hospital and performed surgeries there.

**Dr. Thomas Allison Crawford (1854-1919)**

A native of York County and nephew of Dr. Robert Hervey Hope, Dr. Crawford attended Kings Mountain Military School in Yorkville and continued his education in the medical department at the Central University of Kentucky, graduating in 1877. He set up practice in Rock Hill in 1878 and entered a partnership with Dr. William Francis Strait in 1891.

Dr. William Wallace Fennell (1869-1926)

1919 Nursing Class possibly Fennell Infirmary. A native of Chester County, William Fennell attended the Medical College of the State of South Carolina in Charleston. He later studied under the Mayo brothers of Rochester, Minnesota, and then studied in Europe for a year. Dr. Fennell returned to Chester County to begin his practice and about 1895 moved to Rock Hill. He established his first hospital around 1900, and in 1910 opened a training school for nurses and a hospital known as the Fennell Infirmary. This facility was the only real hospital in York, Chester, Kershaw, and Fairfield counties at that time. As patients came from a great distance, many by train, the Southern Rail Line established a stop at Confederate Avenue named "Fennell Infirmary Crossing". One description of the infirmary reads: "In a commodious two-story house, the doctor set up...fifty beds, a separate ward for black patients, a dining room, a kitchen, and a laundry." Due to his declining health, Dr. Fennell leased the hospital to his assistant Dr. W.B. Ward in 1926. Dr. Fennell was recognized as a leader in his profession and he served in various medical organizations. His 1926 obituary states: "South Carolina's most noted surgeon and founder of the Fennell Infirmary, Rock Hill passed away at his residence...." Dr. Ward sold the hospital in 1935 and the name was changed to St. Philips Hospital.

African-American Physicians in York County

During the Reconstruction Era (1867-77) two schools offering medical education to African-American students opened - Howard Medical School in Washington, DC, and Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee.

Howard was open to all qualified applicants regardless of race or religion; but with a few exceptions, it functioned as an all African-American school. Meharry served only African Americans. Shortly thereafter, five or six other private African-American medical schools opened in the South. All but Howard and Meharry disappeared in the early 1900s when they were unable to meet rising medical school standards, but not before producing over a thousand physicians. Many of these physicians became licensed and practiced in African-American communities across the South.

Dr. J.O.G. Amble

A native of Nashville, Tennessee, and a graduate of Meharry Medical School, Dr. Amble came to Rock Hill in 1905 and left in 1908.

Dr. J. B. Russell

A native of Blackstock, South Carolina, and a graduate of Meharry Medical School, Dr. Russell practiced in Rock Hill from 1917 to 1930.

Dr. Dewey M. Duckett, Sr.

A native of Union County, South Carolina, and a graduate of Meharry Medical School, Dr. Duckett, Sr. came to Rock Hill in 1927.

Dr. I. A. Macon

A native of Chester County, Dr. Macon attended Shaw University Medical College in Raleigh, North Carolina and practiced in Rock Hill from 1901 to 1927.

Dr. James Barber

A native of Chester County, Dr. Barber graduated from Shaw University Medical College and practiced in Rock Hill in 1904.

Dr. George W. Harry

A native of Spartanburg, South Carolina, Dr. Harry practiced in Rock Hill from 1904 to 1907.