DOCTORS, DENTISTS AND LAWYERS

By Lillian Macksy

Before Appleton was little more than a cluster of pioneer homes the county's first recorded doctor, dentist and lawyer settled there. Dr. S. E. Beach, physician, and lawyer George H. Meyers came in 1849, with Dr. Byron Douglas, dentist, arriving a few years later in 1852.

These were the days when a doctor could "hang out his shingle" without a license, dentists learned their "trade" through apprenticeship and many lawyers in new villages like Appleton often turned to land sales for the greater part of their incomes.

Perhaps the most famous professional man produced by Outagamie County was one of the nation's outstanding doctors, John B. Murphy, Chicago surgeon.

Born in 1859 on a farm near Appleton, he was one of the six children of pioneers, Michael and Ann Grimes Murphy, who came from Ireland to Grand Chute Township. Young John Murphy attended country school and Appleton's Ryan High School. He studied medicine at Rush Medical College, Chicago, and in Austria and Germany. During his medical career he was head of the department of surgery and clinical surgery at Northwestern University Medical College, chief surgeon at Mercy Hospital and, in 1908, joined the United States Medical Corps.

Dr. Murphy is noted for his development of simplified techniques in abdominal operations and other surgery and he wrote several books on surgery. He received wide recognition for his service to medicine including honorary degrees both from American and foreign universities. He was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in England, a life member of the Societe de Chirurgie of Paris and the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Chirurgie of Berlin and was made a Knight of St. Gregory by the Pope. He edited General Surgery for the Practical Medicine Series from 1901 until his death in 1916.

COUNTY MEDICINE

The story of medicine in the county, however, concerns the men who spent part or all of their professional lives within the county caring for the health of its
people through the years. In the early days the horse and buggy and often the saddled horse were as necessary to the doctor as his familiar black bag and saddle bag that he carried over back roads and wilderness trails.

The first half-century was not easy for these doctors, for they fought cholera, smallpox and diphtheria in epidemic form as well as each other in their struggle to isolate communicable diseases and make such things as vaccination a widespread practice.

Dr. Beach and the other early doctors who followed him were really typical "country doctors" since they were the only medical men in the whole county area for many years. The census of 1850 shows three doctors in Appleton for that year, Doctors Beach, Robert Williams and Justice C. Burroughs. The leading doctors in 1853, and the only ones according to T. H. Ryan in his county

history, were Doctors Beach, H. M. Merriman and Mosier. In 1854 Dr. M. Mayer, a homeopathic surgeon from Germany, settled. Dr. I. A. Torrey opened a branch office from Neenah in 1857 and Dr. M. W. Williamson began his two year practice in 1859, leaving for Florida on the grounds that "Appleton was too healthy a place."

If the J.I.C. Meade who pioneered Bovina Township before 1853 is the same "J. I. C. Meade, Eclectic Physician," who was practicing medicine at the little settlement of Shiocton in 1862, he, too, was one of the county's very earliest doctors. Hortonville had a resident physician by the name of Perry as early as 1856, the Doctors Bowen and Mills coming later. Dr. H. J. Hardacker, who came as a small child to Outagamie County in 1848, was the best known early doctor at Hortonville.

By 1862 several new doctors located at Appleton, including Doctors Thomas, Fuller, Earle Ostrander, J. Sutherland, G. R. Shaw and perhaps a few years later, Dr. M. F. Page. In 1864 Dr. Merriman died at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a casualty of the Civil War. He was assistant surgeon of the Fourteenth New York Cavalry. The list of Civil War dead also includes the name of S. E. Beach, but there is no record that this was the earlier Dr. Beach. The 1850 census shows Dr. Beach to be 28 years old in that year, so it is possible he, too, succumbed in the Civil War.

Following the Civil War, doctors came to the county in greater numbers. Outstanding in the sixties were the earlier Dr. Page and Dr. M. J. E. Hulbert, a tumor specialist who developed an active practice but who moved to Illinois in 1868 after three successful years in Appleton.

Dr. James Theodore Reeve came to Appleton in 1865 following his service as a Civil War surgeon and he practiced there until his death in 1906. He was president of the State Medical Society for one year and served this organization as its secretary for 18 years. He also was
an active promoter of the State Board of Health, becoming its secretary. Dr. Emory Stansbury also came in the sixties, practicing from 1868 to 1899.

Dr. Rush Winslow, Dr. A. H. Leving and Dr. J. R. Reilly were outstanding Appleton doctors who started in the seventies. Dr. Winslow was active in politics, public health and education. He was elected mayor of Appleton in 1887, serving the city as its head for four terms. He also worked toward establishing St. Elizabeth Hospital and was Chief of Staff until his death in 1902. Dr. Reilly was the first attending physician at the county hospital for the insane, built in 1889.

The seventies brought more doctors to the growing villages out in the county, communities that had heretofore depended on medical service from doctors from nearby cities. Dr. B. T. Strong was the first resident physician at Seymour, Dr. R. A. or G. L. Loope at Black Creek. Dr. Loope came from Omro in 1873 and in a few years opened a drug store in the village. Other early Black Creek doctors had the names of Rozell, Rinert and Kenyon. Dr. Osborn G. Lord located in Kaukauna in March, 1872, and Dr. Hardacker was established at Hortonville.

Abijah W. Kanouse and T. T. Beveridge started their active medical careers in Appleton in 1880. Dr. Herbert B. Tanner came the same year to Kaukauna and, after a prominent medical career of 25 years, retired in 1905. Dr. H. E. Ellsworth, Appleton, began his 60 odd years of medical practice in 1882. Other outstanding doctors of the eighties and their years of service include Dr. Henry Lummis (1884-1905) and Dr. W. O. Kenyon (1885-1908).

Doctors of the nineties and their first year of practice in the county include the following: James S. Reeve, Appleton, 1890; C. D. Boyd, Kaukauna, 1891; J. V. Canavan, also one of Appleton’s mayors, 1894; James A. Lyons, Bear Creek, 1894; William N. Nolan, Kaukauna, 1894; Manley J. Sandborn, Appleton, 1896; Henry W. Abraham, Appleton, 1898; Alfred P. Holz, Seymour, 1898; J. H. Doyle, Little Chute, 1898; George A. Ritchie, Appleton, 1899; Victor F. Marshall, Appleton, 1899.

Other doctors who were active in the years before and after the turn of the century were Dr. S. S. Willis of Appleton, Dr. James Hittner of Seymour and Dr. Perry Comerford of Appleton and Bear Creek.

In the early years of the new century the county saw more medical men, most of whom were newly graduated from medical schools. There was Dr. John Jamison Laird, son of Ellington Township pioneers, who turned from school teaching to medicine. Dr. Laird started his 20 year career of medicine at Black Creek in 1904. Canadian Dr. Argo Melbourne Foster located at Kaukauna in 1904 and Dr. Frank E. Donaldson a year later. In Appleton, Dr. C. E. Ryan started practice in 1902; Dr. James R. Scott came from Hortonville where he started in 1900; Dr. Everett H. Brooks in 1902 and Dr. E. L. Bolton in 1903. By 1905 Appleton doctors also included E. W. Cooney, William Comerford, A. M. Freund, N. P. Mills, E. H. Ostrander, H. Schaper, F. J. Jones and A. E. Rector.

Dr. Lillie Rosa Minoka Hill, famed Indian woman doctor at Oneida, came from five years of practice in Pennsylvania in 1904. Dr. Hill was born in New Jersey of a Mohawk mother and a white father and was reared by a Quaker family when her parents died. She was graduated from a woman’s medical college in 1899 and upon her marriage in 1904 to Mr. Hill, Oneida Indian, she came to Oneida. Although her husband’s death 11 years later left her with six small children, Dr. Hill found time to both rear her family and tend to the health of her husband’s people.

In 1947, on Thanksgiving Day, Dr. Hill was chosen the outstanding Indian of the year by the Indian Fire Council, held in Chicago. She was also adopted by the Oneida tribe as one of their people.
and given the Indian name that means "She Who Serves."

More recently, in February, 1949, Dr. Hill was honored as one of the 10 outstanding leaders in the farm, home and community life of the state by the College of Agriculture, University of Wisconsin. Today, at 72, Dr. Hill still practices medicine at Oneida.

Dean of medical men in the county are Dr. H. E. Ellsworth, 92, and Dr. James S. Reeve, 84, of Appleton, both now retired. Dr. Ellsworth goes back to the eighties, over sixty years ago, for the beginning of his practice. His community health work in the nineties and the early years of the present century is recognized as outstanding. He was city physician six years, county physician four years and served the county as its coroner until his retirement a few years ago.

Dr. Reeve, as illustrious a doctor as his father, James T. Reeve, practiced medicine from 1889 until his retirement in 1938.

Dr. J. H. Doyle finished his fiftieth year of "doctoring" to families in the Little Chute area in the centennial year, 1948. One of the county's outstanding surgeons, Dr. Victor F. Marshall, is in his fifty-first year of practice in Appleton. The story of nearly 50 years of medicine and surgery in Outagamie County is told by Dr. Marshall in his book, "Doctor! Do Tell!", published in 1945.

Dr. E. H. Brooks, Appleton, has completed his fifty-first year of medicine, with 46 years in Appleton. The late Dr. G. A. Ritchie completed 56 years of medicine, 43 of them in Appleton, and the late Dr. A. E. Rector lacked just a few months to complete his fiftieth year at the time of his death in 1947.

Kaukauna's Dr. C. D. Boyd, who died in 1946, is known for his fight to establish Riverview Sanatorium, the county institution for tuberculosis patients. He was active in county medicine for 55 years and served as the head of the sanatorium from the time it was completed in 1914 until his retirement in 1946. The institution grew under his supervision from a 16 bed hospital to its present 65 bed institution, equipped with x-ray, solarium and other improved methods of treatment.

County medicine today is a far cry from the early days when a few doctors fought raging epidemics and "doctoring" was invaded by charlatans as well as sincere, skilled men for their time.

The earliest doctors were busy in the fifties with a cholera epidemic that struck the county in 1854, particularly at Little Chute and among the Oneida Indians. Of the 17 deaths reported at Little Chute nearly all were those of foreign-born newcomers to the area. The panic became so widespread that village residents and workers on the river improvement fled their homes.

Diphtheria became epidemic in the Town of Ellington in 1863 and the following year brought an unusual amount of sickness to the whole valley with diphtheria and lung diseases causing an enormous mortality among the children of the county.

The report of smallpox in Appleton during the summer of 1864 started a heated verbal battle among the doctors. Dr. M. F. Page examined the cases at city request and as a result published a bulletin on the facts and symptoms of various rash diseases. He denounced the physician who diagnosed the smallpox, declaring that "one physician diagnosed the case at a distance and pronounced it small-pox when it was only prairie itch."

Dr. J. Sutherland followed this criticism with an article on quackery in the newspapers in June, 1864.

"Let a man say that he came from some large city, let him rent a house in a respectable street, put on the door in large gold letters, "Physician and Surgeon," furnish himself with a case of medicine bottles, buy a horse and buckboard, dress himself invariably in black, drive like Jehu up and down the streets telling everybody who will listen that he has an immense number of patients; let him tell of extraordinary cures he has
made, making the slightest cold and sore throat cases of typhoid and diphtheria; let him do all this and you may set it down that he knows nothing about the properties of medicine or the character of disease."

There seemed a definite difference of opinion among the doctors concerning smallpox and its treatment, according to the views they aired through newspaper controversy. Some favored isolation while others scoffed the idea, stating that a person broken out with the disease could walk among people without the slightest danger of contagion.

Hortonia Township had a brief smallpox scare in 1869 and in 1884 the disease broke out in Black Creek. Dr. Reeve, then secretary of the State Board of Health, was called on the cases and he quarantined seven families. He discovered that a German family, newly arrived from the old country, had brought the disease there.

In 1889 every available doctor in the county was kept busy fighting diphtheria, which became epidemic again in 1892 and 1893. The following year the State Board of Health gave orders for the vaccination of all schoolchildren in an effort to fight smallpox. This same year and in 1895 schools closed in Appleton to help prevent the spread of diphtheria. When smallpox invaded the city in the winter of 1895, vaccinating parties were organized but they were most unpopular.

The year 1899 brought a new state law requiring the county clerk to keep a record of all physicians practicing in the county.

At the turn of the century smallpox made its appearance again and by 1902, some 75 cases were reported in Appleton alone, while many other cases were concealed. Fifteen Appleton doctors proposed quarantine and vaccination. By this time, it became the practice, in the event of epidemic disease, to close schools and churches. In 1903 Appleton helped stamp out a serious onslaught of smallpox by establishing a temporary isolation hospital.

Although the Wisconsin Medical Society organized in 1853 and Brown County had a society as early as 1850, Outagamie County doctors did not organize until 1877. On May 12 of this year, county doctors met at the office of Dr. J. T. Reeve to organize the Outagamie County Medical Society. The first officers of the organization were: Emory Stansbury, president; J. T. Reeve, vice president; H. J. Hardacker, secretary; A. H. Levings, secretary; Dr. Heidessow, treasurer. Doctors Reilly, Levings and Ford were censors.

The beginnings of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton had their start in the late nineties and before very many years the hospital was a reality. It was preceded by the short-lived Prescott Hospital and several private ones. Four Sisters of the Order of St. Francis worked for two years in a frame building on the present hospital site before a brick structure to house 50 beds was built. Chief of Staff for the new hospital was Dr. Rush Winslow, with the staff including Doctors T. T. Beveridge, A. M. Freude, S. S. Willis and V. F. Marshall. In 1923 the original building was converted into an obstetrical ward and a large addition was built at the cost of $700,000.

According to the records of the Outagamie County Medical Society, the following doctors are members in the county today:


DENTISTS

The genial, enthusiastic dentist of 1852, Byron Douglas, learned dentistry from his father, Dr. Beriah Douglas, in Albany, New York. When he came to Appleton village with his wife and child, he worked for his father-in-law in the Woodward store, practicing his dentistry only part time. This was not unusual, however, for it is believed that Dr. Douglas was one of the first dentists in this part of the state to launch into his professional career on a full time basis.

Dr. Douglas became a civic leader and well known throughout the state. He served 14 years as the treasurer of the Wisconsin Dental Society, which he helped organize. He was the county treasurer for four years, a member of the assembly for six years, one of the promoters of the first railroad in the county and an enthusiastic leader in community affairs. After 41 years of active practice he retired in 1893. He died in 1908 a respected and well loved man, whose mature life was lived in the first half century of the country’s existence.

Earl Douglas, his son, also became a dentist and, like his father, learned the work by the apprenticeship method. When but 15 years old, young Earl began to study under his father’s tutelage. In 1867 both father and son were in practice together.

There is record of Dr. J. N. Howard coming to Appleton in 1853 and he called himself a “surgeon-dentist.” The story is that Dr. Howard was at once a physician and dentist. Dr. George Parker is listed for 1869, Dr. Silas N. Buck for 1887.

Although colleges and schools of dentistry were established in the country soon after the Civil War and more developed in later years, it was not until the nineties that dentists as a group were being graduated from accepted colleges and schools of dental surgery.

Among these men were Dr. G. D. Libby, who came to Seymour in 1897; Dr. Frank C. Babcock, Kaukauna, 1897; Dr. A. E. Adsit, Appleton, 1899; Dr. E. C. Hallock, Kaukauna, 1900–; Dr. J. W. Crawford, Appleton; Dr. Robert I. Cole, Appleton, 1901; Doctors Harry K. Pratt and William O’Keefe, Appleton, 1902.

Both Dr. Libby, still in active practice at Seymour, and Dr. Babcock, now at
Appleton and retired, were in practice in the county for 50 years. Dr. Libby is in his fifty-second year of active practice. Dr. Harry K. Pratt is the oldest practicing dentist in Appleton, completing his forty-seventh year of service next September.

The Winnebago-Outagamie Dental Society preceded the present Outagamie County Dental Society as a component part of the state and national organizations. Some dentists belonged either to this group or the district group which included Brown County. Another active society for dentists, which today meets annually, is the Fox River Valley Dental Society, organized at the Sherman House in Appleton in March, 1904. Dr. Byron Douglas was made the honorary president of this group which had for its first officers, W. H. Chilson, president; J. W. Madden, vice president; Dr. Hartings, secretary; F. R. Houston, treasurer.

As more dentists located in the various counties, the district societies under the American Dental Society, re-formed into county units, with the Outagamie County Society organizing about 1912 to 1915.

The present officers of the Outagamie County Dental Association are Dr. W. A. Grossman, president; Dr. E. A. Rydell, vice-president; J. E. LeFevre, secretary and treasurer. Dentists of today in the county as listed by the Outagamie County Dental Society include the following:


**LAWYERS**

Before 1849 the county pioneer took his legal troubles either to the Justice of the Peace, if the matter was under his jurisdiction, or to a lawyer in Green Bay or Fond du Lac.

At that time, the present Outagamie County was a part of Brown County and was in the area of the Fourth of five circuit district courts. The picture changed in a few years with the arrival of lawyer settlers in 1849 and 1850 and the establishment of a county court in 1852, the year following the organization of Outagamie County. The county elected Perry H. Smith as its first county judge.

In 1855 the Tenth judicial circuit included Outagamie County under Circuit Court Judge T. O. Howe, a former resident of Appleton. Two Appleton lawyers later served as judges in this court during the years before 1900, George H. Myers, the county's first lawyer, and John Goodland, Sr. Myers became judge of this circuit in 1880, after serving the county as district attorney and county judge. He was Appleton's postmaster from 1868 to 1876. Goodland was admitted to the bar in 1877; he served as district attorney and became a circuit judge in 1891 upon the death of Judge Myers.

According to Ryan's *History of Outagamie County*, the first case in the county was filed August 5, 1852, the case of Hermeneque St. Marie vs. Ephraim St. Louis.

'Suit was commenced June 28, 1851, before Benjamin Proctor, justice of the peace, the plaintiff claiming $70 and interest for a cream-colored mare sold to the defendant. Anson Ballard represented the plaintiff and Frederick Packard the defendant. The latter presented a counter claim of $72.85. The justice awarded the plaintiff $2.25 plus the costs, all amount-
Hartley B. Cox started in Hortonville in 1858.


Lawyers seemed to be too numerous in the opinion of the Crescent, which published an article on April 10, 1880, headlined, “Too Many Lawyers.”

“Appleton contains too many lawyers; so please stop writing to us to ascertain if this is a good place for lawyers. Indeed the supply is far above the demand. There are, of course, some who are doing a large business, but the generality are not, but are what are usually termed, ‘the poor unfortunate devils.’

The first move toward forming a county bar association was made in February, 1884, when 16 attorneys met for discussion at the Appleton office of H. D. Ryan under the chairmanship of William Kennedy. John Bottensek was the secretary. A temporary organization was formed at a still later meeting with H. W. Tenney as chairman and F. W. Harriman, secretary. The committee appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws included Ryan, L. L. Collins, Kennedy, O. E. Clark and John Goodland, Sr. The Outagamie Bar Association became a reality at the third and final meeting held the same month when the first officers were elected. L. L. Collins became the first president; H. D. Ryan, vice president; F. W. Harriman, secretary; George C. Jones, treasurer. A. B. Whitman, A. O. Blackwood and L. Hammel comprised the first official committee of the organization, appointed to
prepare a catalogue of all available law books in the community. Paul V. Cary, 81, Appleton, who started his practice in 1897, is the present oldest member of the association.

In the late eighties the local bar became known as one of the ablest in the west due to the brilliant work of its lawyers in the numerous cases on river, canal and water power rights.

As early as 1893 the county bar association worked toward establishing a municipal court in Appleton. Lawyers ap-

pointed to the original committee to draft a bill for its establishment were Humphrey Pierce, L. E. Barnes and G. H. Dawson. Pierce was later against the move. A. H. Krugmeier, who came to Appleton in 1899, also worked to establish this court with F. M. Wilcox, then a state senator.

Wilcox is called the "Father" of the Municipal Law Act of March 21, 1907. He originally came in 1894 to Seymour, practicing law there until 1898, when he moved to Appleton. He was a state senator from 1904 to 1908.

Thomas H. Ryan, Sr., became the first municipal judge in May, 1907. From the time he took office until December 31, 1908, only a little more than a year's time, he heard 431 criminal actions, 93 civil actions and 56 actions under city ordinances. During the first four years of the court, some 1,579 cases were filed. State Legislation in 1945 gave the municipal court broader powers of jurisdiction until today its scope nearly equals that of the circuit court. Consequently, Outagamie County has one of the outstanding municipal courts in the state.