

DHS News

The Official Newsletter
of the

Deposit Historical Society

Feb. 2015: Vol XII, Issue I

The Deposit Historical Society

145 Second Street

Deposit, New York 13754

(607) 467-4422

Website: www.deposithistoricalsociety.org

Note: You can view our newsletters with color pictures in pdf format on our website!

As I conducted two recent historical programs for the month of February, I was reminded of how valuable our services are. The community around the area needs constant refreshing of historic data. Who better to offer such encyclopedic information than the representative auspices of the historical society? If we don't advertise ourselves who else would do the job?

Many times people ask how to retrieve past genealogy. I usually refer to our own Tuesday morning group. Where else can one seek and find such valuable information? If a trail of details about the past doesn't exist somewhere, where is it to be discovered. The answer is simple. I hope you understand the point I'm making.

This year our museum and board of directors will offer new and exciting events for the months ahead. The annual meeting is March 11. It is a "covered dish" supper. All the public is invited. Entertainment will be provided by folk singers Beatrice Summers and her father Wayne Daddis. They promise to beguile us with early songs and music. Also a vote is needed to pass the current 2015 budget.

With May approaching, our Folk and Craft Festival will return on Saturday, May 23. The village looks forward to this event. Our newsletter editor has promised an exciting exhibit of hooked rugs from his family. It seems that we'll have a great new and fresh year ahead! I feel stronger about the success and continuance of the revitalized society. See you all sometime!

Richard Axtell, president

On Feb 22, 2015 Richard Axtell, president of the Deposit Historical Society supervised the careful opening of the time capsule from the old Deposit Elementary School. The building had become derelict and needed to be torn down. During the demolition the time capsule was discovered behind the corner stone dater 1915. Newspapers and other interesting artifacts of the time had been stored within.



Highlighting Medical Practice in Deposit from the Civil War to the 1950's

Part 1

The following articles summarize programs presented at the Museum dealing with the practice of medicine in Deposit. The research and programs were the work of Richard S. Axtell and Ellen Jogo.

Most doctors were “horse and buggy” country doctors. The practice of medicine in those days was a 24 hour job. The normal routine began with house calls in the morning, office calls right after noon, and further house calls in the afternoon, followed by evening office hours that might end as late as 9 or 10 p.m. During the night, emergency calls were not answered by EMS, but were answered by the doctor himself after he was aroused from his sleep by the need of someone for prompt attention.

Doctors enjoyed making house calls. They collaborated on some calls when surgery was required. Often, during a tonsillectomy in a farmhouse, the doctors would check the wood stove to make sure the fire was out (because of the flammable ether) and then pull a table over to a window for better light. Next, ether was administered, and out came the tonsils from the patient lying on the bare table.

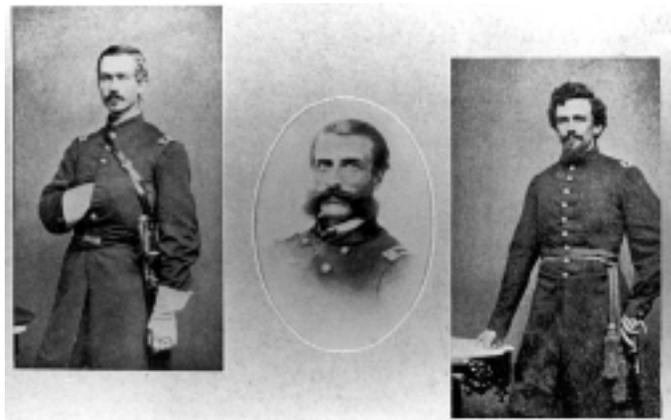
Family doctors generally had their offices in two or three rooms apart from their main homes. Patients came to the waiting room and were called into the inner office by the doctor in the order they had arrived. No appointments, no secretaries, no nurses. For the charge of \$2 an office call, the doctor gave you a hands-on examination, maybe asked you about your family, and sent you out with a small packet of pills from his dispensary at no extra charge. For unusual or more expensive drugs, prescriptions were written on blanks, usually furnished free by Brown's or Smith's Pharmacy, filled out and signed by the physician.

When Brown's or Smith's could not furnish a needed item quickly, Hamlin's Drugs in Binghamton delivered by the next day. Items ordered in bulk, such as 100 cans of ether, were usually split between the doctors.

Dr. Oliver T. Bundy, Jr.

One of Deposit's early doctors, Dr. Oliver T. Bundy, Jr., served as an assistant surgeon in the 144th Regiment of the New York Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. He was the youngest member of the surgical staff. Born in Windsor, NY on March 3, 1837,

he was the son of Oliver T. Bundy, Sr., a practicing physician in Windsor who later moved to Deposit. Oliver Jr. graduated from New College in Philadelphia in 1860. He then commenced practice with his father in Deposit until he was commissioned in the Army. At the close of the war, he was put in charge of 3,300 prisoners released from Andersonville Prison. After the end of the war, he resumed the practice of medicine in Deposit, where he was active in the community. Dr. Bundy was instrumental in organizing the fund raising campaign for the installation of Deposit's Civil War monument.



Dr. Bundy's residence is owned by the Deposit Historical Society and is located next to our museum. The Bundy House contains medical artifacts from the medical practice of Doctor Clayton Axtell, as well as period furniture from the 1800's.

Dr. Roswell K. Palmerton

Dr. Roswell K. Palmerton was born in Barbourville, Delaware County, on April 13, 1857, and received his early education at the district schools of the village. At age 17, he began to teach, continuing for five winters. At the same time, he furthered his education at the Deposit Academy while assisting his father on the family farm. In 1877, he clerked in Studevant's drugstore in Deposit and began the study of medicine with doctors Studevant and Radiker. In 1879, he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Baltimore. Upon his graduation on March 1, 1881, he began to practice in Cannonsville, where he remained for several years until he moved to Deposit in 1919. He married his first wife Jennie Wilson and; later Lillian Darling became his second wife.



where he had opened his first office after graduating from Baltimore Medical College in 1907. The next year he married his childhood sweetheart, Mabel Greer. She taught school in a one-room schoolhouse after their marriage. In 1915 Dr. C.V. Latimer, Sr. set up his medical practices in the village.

Dr. Latimer was an avid fisherman and hunter, spending two weeks in the spring and again in the fall in the North Woods in the Adirondack Mountains. He belonged to several clubs. One such club was called the “Fat Men’s Club” which was a gourmet group that gathered every Friday night at his Oquaga Lake cottage, that had been named the “Coffin Box” because it was lined with plywood from coffin boxes obtained from a Deposit undertaker. He was active in Boy Scouts, helped organize the Deposit Lions Club, and was a member of the Rotary Club from its inception.

The Village of Deposit proclaimed the week of Dec. 1, 1968 as “Dr. Latimer Week” to honor him for his years of practicing medicine. Four generations of families passed through his office door seeking help. In 1968, Dr. Latimer was 85 years old, but he still opened his office five days a week to his patients and was available other days if needed. He estimated that, in his years of practice, he delivered 3,500 babies. In the earlier years of delivering babies, he was helped by Mildred Stewart.

Dr. Latimer, usually know to his friends as “C.V.” or “Doc,” died on October 29, 1970. He had practiced medicine for 55 years in the Village of Deposit, and he was still seeing patients until October 23rd. Later that evening, he suffered a stroke and died in Binghamton General Hospital at age 87. At the time, he was the oldest practicing physician in New York.

Dr. Palmerton was one of the oldest physicians practicing in Deposit and during his years there he won the respect and esteem of his clientele. He actively practiced medicine in Deposit for 20 years until the age of 75. One of his observations was that he brought nearly as many babies into the world as the total population of Deposit.

Many of his treatments were based on his knowledge of plants and herbs. One such “prescription” was a cough syrup made from the following ingredients: glycerin, simple syrup, linseed oil, oil of wintergreen (gaultheria), cassia or cinnamon, Irish moss, and marshmallow root or althea. For many years after his death, people called, wrote, and came to his home trying to obtain a bottle of this cough syrup.

Driving an automobile was a skill he tried to master later in life and one at which he was never very successful. He was known to drive around the village in low gear, having numerous mishaps, including driving through the front window of the bank.

In 1911, Miss Emma Carola Woerishoffer was injured in an automobile accident while inspecting working camps at Cannonsville in the interest of helping the poor with her time and money. She was driving a 50 horsepower Marmon that rolled and pinned her underneath. After she was taken to Dr. Palmerton’s house, it was decided an operation was needed to treat her internal injuries. Along with Dr. F.J. Hitchcock from Deposit and two specialists from Bellevue Hospital, the operation was undertaken, but Emma did not survive. In gratitude, the family had the car (in which she had her accident) restored and delivered to Dr. Palmerton as a thank you for trying so hard to save Emma’s life.

Dr. Palmerton, at age 81, died at his home on June 7, 1938. While in Cannonsville, he became postmaster, supervisor for several terms, and health officer for Town of Tompkins, Delaware County. He was the director of the Farmers National Bank in Deposit from 1905 until his death in 1938 and served as bank president from 1936-1937. He was a member of Deposit Lodge 396, F. and A.M. and Deposit Chapter 187, R.A.M.

Dr. C.V. Latimer

Dr. Latimer came to Deposit from Masonville,

Undertaking since the Civil War and Funeral Practices

On October 10, 2014, Rick Zacharias, a graduate of the Simmons School of Embalming and Mortuary Science in Syracuse and the owner of the Zacharias Funeral Home for the past 40 years, spoke on the history of undertakers and funeral homes.

In the frontier, there were no undertakers' and "Grandma" was kept in bed while the family came to pay their respects. She was then wrapped in a sheet or a feedbag and buried. After the grave was dug and filled in, stones were placed on top to prevent the animals from digging it back up. The old homesteads had their own small cemetery plots. There were no rules to follow.

From the time of the Civil War to the early 1900's, undertakers did everything for the family. Prior to the Civil War embalming was rare. The Civil War changed the way that bodies were viewed and treated. A "Sanitary Commission" sign on an army staff tent marked where the dead were taken. Many Northern families had wealth and could not accept that their son was to be buried in a Civil War cemetery in stead of the family plot. They wanted their son sent home, and this required a way to preserve the body for the trip. Embalming was in its infancy at this time, and the "sanitary" sites were where solutions were worked with to find the best preservative. Arsenic and mercury were the common base preservative chemicals. Abraham Lincoln's body was embalmed with mercury for its trip from Washington, D.C. to his hometown. Although mercury preserved, it turned the skin a bronze color.

Soon, even the common man with a little money wanted to have a casket. In the late 1800's, companies that made furniture decided to expand their business into casket making. Pine boxes were commonly used before the National Furniture Company manufactured premade caskets and sent them to furniture stores for sale. Since furniture stores had wagons in the back of the store for furniture delivery and horses ready to go, they got into the undertaking business. The casket sizes kept in stock were 5', 5'3", 5'6", 5'9" and 6'. They never needed a casket over 6 feet as the average person was shorter then. For example, General Robert E. Lee was 5'2" when he died. Casket space allowed an extra 1" from the head and 1" from the feet as they did not want to put

anybody into a casket bigger than was needed. In the late 1800's, undertakers used to carry a string in their pockets with a knot every 6 inches in order to properly measure the deceased. If a person requested a made-to-order casket, full size calipers were used to measure shoulder width to allow for a custom fit casket made in chestnut (hardwood) or basswood.

An ice casket was often used in a house. It was a plain casket with a galvanized tray below for the ice that would keep the body cool. The undertaker would check on the ice and recheck it to make sure it was cooling the body properly. Houses built in the 1880's were built with a front door and a side door off the porch that opened into the parlor which allowed the undertakers to ease the casket and body into the parlor without having to navigate corners. Some caskets were made from wicker. Wicker badges were placed on the deceased's porch with a drape to let people know that someone had died there. Another casket option was a faceplate in the casket which allowed the people to see only the deceased's face through a window and not the rest of the body.

The typical funeral cost in 1864, including shaving but not embalming, was \$20.00. The price would vary according to special options. Extras included having a satin lining in the casket (\$5.00), more silver on the casket, having 6 handles instead of 4 (\$5.00), having a pine box to put the casket inside of (\$3.00), having the casket made of mahogany (\$20.00) and paying for the total conveyance to the cemetery (\$20.00). In 1892, \$160.00 paid for the top of the line funeral. Families either paid in cash or in chickens, hogs, or whatever else they had for barter. In 1932, \$620.00 was the cost for the top of the line funeral, and \$192.00 paid for a regular funeral. Also, in 1932 the government instituted a \$250.00 death benefit that was meant to cover the cost of a funeral. Forty years ago, the price of the casket included the cost of embalming.

Deposit's Robert Brown was an undertaker. He would go to the house of the deceased where he would shave and dress the body on the bed in which the person had died. His son, Floyd, would often hold the lantern for his father while this was done.



When he did the embalming in the house, he would put a rubber sheet under the body and use the tools in the black bag he always carried with him. Later, Mr. Brown would bring the benches for the people to sit on, the wicker pedestals for each side of the casket, the hangers for flowers, and the steel “curtain” that would go around the casket to dress it up.

Robert Brown had specialty vehicles and horses. The hearse used in the village was a “heavy hearse,” as shown in the old western movies with big windows, silver lanterns, a bud vase on the side for a rose, and plumes. A casket was either made of mahogany (the most expensive), of walnut, or was similar to Abe Lincoln’s black and silver one. There was a door in the back of the hearse to get the casket in, a trap door in the bottom, and bier pins that were set up against the casket, so that the casket didn’t slide around when the hearse navigated street corners. The “light hearse” was an all season wagon that was used outside the village. In the winter it had bobs (short sleds) on it to get through the snow. Working one of these required heavy duty work gloves, as the hearse often tipped over or lost a wheel. Often, a buggy or surrey would meet the family. The “heavy hearse” required the hiring of matching horses (a \$2.00 fee) that the livery man would bring.

A good looking hearse was important and its maintenance was a big job. In order to clean the hearse, the wheels needed to be removed and the axles rubbed with castor oil to prevent drying out. Once a year, usually around Christmas time, the hearse was totally refinished. Pumice stone was used to shape the columns with flutes and to sand the hearse down to its

bare wood. The dents were filled in and “coal black” was used on the mahogany to get a shiny finish. Before five coats of varnish were applied, the barn was cleaned with a “toothbrush” to get it clean and free of dust. If the undertaker had his own horses, he had the additional daily barn chores of grooming and feeding the horses. Robert Brown died in 1932, and his funeral business was sold. In 1945, his furniture business was sold to Henderson’s in Hancock, and Bryce’s Hardware bought the building.

Funeral customs have changed over time. During the Victorian Era, house clocks were stopped at the time of a person’s death. Mirrors were covered in black material, supplied by the undertaker, to prevent the person’s spirit from entering the mirror and haunting the house. The dead would leave the house feet first to prevent them from looking back at the house and wanting to stay. The undertaker, with his hearse, would take a roundabout route leaving the house to confuse the spirit so that it could not find its way back to the house. The undertaker would supply black mourning scarves or veils to the women who would wear them for a year. He would also cut the deceased’s hair and would give it to the family who would use the hair to make bracelets, pictures, and shadowboxes. The family would often go back to the cemetery several times a year for a picnic and to perform maintenance on the gravesite by cutting the grass and shrubs.

In the Dutch section of the Raymond Cemetery in Brooklyn, there are curved pipes coming out of the ground with bells attached. There is a cord that goes from the bell to the casket so that if a person was mistakenly buried, he/she could ring the bell and someone would come and dig the person up. A person was employed to stay at the cemetery to hear the bell ring and had a house there.

After Rick’s presentation, he answered many questions. The following are his answers.

When he first started embalming, he used a hand pump to force fluid in the body while the body was still at its home. A bottle was used to collect the blood that was pushed out as the embalming fluid was pumped in. At the funeral home, he used a funnel-shaped glass container held at a height with

tubing and used gravity-feed (6 pounds of pressure) to embalm. The body pumps blood at two pounds of pressure. Today, the blood is put in a container that disinfects it and then it goes into the sewage system. Clorox is the main disinfectant. In the past, Brown's had a septic system in the back.

The bottles that contained the embalming solutions have the chemicals listed on the side. There is a tool that sets the person's facial features while the embalming fluids set the muscles. The tool has two hooks that go into the nostrils and another part that goes under the chin that holds the mouth closed during the embalming. Needles are used for suturing. Hypodermic needles are used to inject embalming fluid into areas that did not get the fluid during the embalming process. Tubing is used to insert into veins and may be branched to do both femoral arteries at the same time. A metal clot remover is used to draw clots out of veins if the fluid does not go in. A head block is placed under the head.

Needles come in different shapes and sizes for injecting different sites depending on the person's condition. If a person was jaundiced, the femoral artery in the leg would be used as the yellow color leaves the head last. If the deceased had a heart attack, the carotid artery would be used for injection as the heart would be in bad shape. Certain fluids would not be used on a dark skinned person as they would turn them white. In the past, cosmetics such as powder would be applied with an atomizer to give the person his/her "pink" color. If an atomizer was used, then eyebrows and eyelashes had to be carefully cleaned. Since our skin color is due to the blood in our tissues, Rick uses fluids with added dye in them to get the correct skin color.

Today, most bodies are gotten from hospitals or homes (especially if under Hospice care). If the person is suspected of having Ebola, then the body has to have CDC clearance. Then, the body has to have either a direct burial or be cremated and then be buried under one foot of dirt before the family is allowed near the gravesite. When Rick embalms, he wears a hospital gown, nitrile gloves, eye protection, and has an exhaust system running. Human waste is treated and goes into the sewage system. All organs are still inside the person unless they were donated. The donation removal is done in the hospital before Rick arrives. If an autopsy is done at the hospital, the organs are placed back in the body. If some

organs are incinerated, then cellulose is placed inside the body to "fill" it out.

The Public Health Laws states that the only bodies that have to be embalmed are those that were infected with cholera and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Universal precautions take care of everything else.

Rick had several tools with him. He showed the black bag that was used by Sid Busfield and relayed some of the uses of its contents. He also demonstrated a memorial record tube that is used for identification. Inside the tube is a parchment that would include the person's name and death date which would be buried in the casket. This proved to be useful in the past when cemeteries were washed out and funeral directors had to identify bodies and bring them to the correct cemetery to be reburied. He also had a walking stick that was used with the horses. When a body came in on a train, the horses had to back up the wagon to the railroad shipping container, made of pine boards, to allow the casket transfer. The horses would back up by following the walking stick.

One of the stories that Rick recalled was that of Harry Northrup, a funeral director in Waterville, NY. The doctor had told the nurses that when the man who was in a coma died, to call Harry who would then come and pick the man up. Harry came to the hospital, pulled the man from the ice box drawer in the hospital, put the man in the hearse, drove 45 minutes to the funeral home, placed the man on the embalming table, and went upstairs to change. When he returned, the man was sitting on the embalming table. The jostling had brought the man out of the coma. Harry quickly called the hospital. The man was sent to a different hospital and lived several more years.

When asked why he became a funeral director, Rick replied that he started out as a social worker in Virginia for the Department of Corrections. He used to write letters home for incarcerated road gangs. Instead of working at Attica, he decided to go back to school for undertaking. He feels he does more social work as an undertaker than he did as a social worker.

A big "thank you" is extended to Rick for coming to the Historical Society and sharing the history of undertakers and funeral directors. It was an informative meeting that was enjoyed by all.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, March 18, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Deposit Historical Society Annual Meeting and Covered Dish Supper. Music will follow by Beatrice Summers and Wayne Daddis.

Wednesday, April 15, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Don MacKinnon, a newcomer to Deposit, will present "A Slide Presentation of Paintings and Sculpture." MacKinnon, gifted in the arts, is a graduate of and former professor at the Pratt Institute. Saturday, May 23, 2015 from 10:00am to 3:00pm

Saturday, May 23, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Annual Folk Art and Craft Fair at the Museum. Come and enjoy the craftsmen's wares, good food, a 50/50 Raffle, and museum items – including our publications and tiles.

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. **Pending!**

Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

Gerald Smith, Binghamton City and Broome County Historian, will present "*Baby Boomer Memories, Growing Up in the 50's, 60's, and 70's in Broome County.*" If you remember Mr. Peanut, Fowler's at Christmas, and five and dime stores, you were part of that wonderful generation. Watch for Gerald's articles in the Binghamton Press.

Saturday, July 18, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Brown Bread and Baked Beans Sale on Front Street during the Lumberjack Festival.

Wednesday, August 19, 2015, at 7:30 p.m.

Scott Payne presents "*Treasures of the R.M.S. Titanic.*" Receive a ticket to board the ship, enjoy its art, facts, and photographs, and find out if you are a survivor of that fateful voyage.

Friday, September 18, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.

The Museum will present "*Vintage Clothing of Deposit's Past, A Fashion Show.*" The show is the brainchild of our curator, Ellen Jogo, and it will be narrated with anecdotes and history by Kay Hoban. Don't miss this! It's a rare peek at the fashions of days gone by.

Sunday, October 4, 2015, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Annual Harvest Pie Sale. Look for us on Front Street during Oktoberfest.

Sunday, October 11, 2015 (Columbus Day Sunday) The Museum closes for the season at 4:00 p.m.

The Research Library will still be open on Tuesdays from 9:00 a.m. until about noon. Call ahead to be sure or make an appointment. Phone: (607) 467-4422.

Wednesday, October 21, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

Chuck D'Imperio presents "*The Unknown Museums of Upstate New York.*" Chuck, an Oneonta radio broadcaster and an avid on-the-road historian, speaks enthusiastically of his passion for finding hidden treasures that are easy to miss but so good to find.

December 6, 2015 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Join us as we celebrate the season with the Holdrege family singers providing music for Christmas time. We'll be decked out for the season and ready to provide refreshments. Come and bring a friend or a relative for a wonderful afternoon.



It Is Membership Renewal Time Again..

If you are not a lifetime member, it is time to renew your membership for 2015. Please send us your check for the amount due, along with your name and address. *We welcome additional donations too!*

The current rates (per individual) are as follows: Lifetime membership \$100, Annual membership \$20, Senior or Student membership \$10.

Please make the check out to Deposit Historical Society and mail it to Carol Epstein 59 Parker Rd., Deposit, NY 13754. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Contact the DHS News editors for information, suggestions, or address changes...

If you have information to share with us about our mysteries, historical events, or suggestions for new articles or projects at the Museum, **or if you have moved**, mail it to DHS Newsletter editors Michael and Gail Musante at 199 Front Street, Deposit, NY 13754, or email it to one of us at gail.musante@gmail.com We will be delighted to hear from you! Thanks!!

Website: www.deposithistoricalsociety.org

Would you like to receive a paperless copy of future DHS Newsletters?

Please send your email address to dephistsoc@aol.com

The Deposit Historical Society Newsletter
199 Front Street
Deposit, NY
13754

TAPE
HERE
TAP
HERE

TAPE
HERE
TAP
HERE

TAP
HERE
TAP
HERE