

California Pioneers of Santa Clara County

Essay Contest

Adult Education Entry

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Nineteenth Century Medicine in the Santa Clara Valley

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This essay is dedicated to all the men and women who arise, bleary eyed, from the dark of night, to bring healing and comfort to the afflicted.

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PREFACE

Hippocrates, who lived from 460 to 377 B.C., was the most prominent physician of his time. He took the first major step in transferring causation of disease from the gods to science. His theory being, that disease was an imbalance in the four humors.

The four humors consisted of phlegm, probably mucous, considered cold and moist. Blood considered hot and moist. Black bile, most likely blood in vomitus or blood in the stool or urine. This was labeled cold and dry. Lastly, yellow bile(fluid from the gallbladder), which was designated as hot and dry. Thus, if a patient had a fever, the etiology was excess yellow bile, and the treatment would be cold baths. If a patient had a cold(excess phlegm), the treatment was warm compresses and wine. He was also known to order purgatives and emetics in order to balance the humors. Bloodletting was popular in Hippocrate's day, as it was a practical way to lower the blood humor. This would apply to a patient with fever and chills, as in an influenza illness.

Twenty-one hundred years later, we find a somewhat similar philosophy in practice in the United States. Dr. Benjamin Rush,one of Americas most prominent

physicians in the early nineteenth century recommended treating all diseases by bloodletting and purging.

Other groups of doctors saw the danger in this approach and by the 1850's there were some changes. More moderate treatment included the use of herbal medicines and the discontinuation of blood letting. Herbs contain a small amount of active ingredient and when further diluted, as was done by some groups, their therapeutic value was compromised.

One wonders where the science was during these centuries of over and under treatment. The answer came from our European colleagues, who laid the foundation for modern medicine after 1850. They discovered the germ theory and used asepsis to decrease the morbidity of surgery and childbirth. This was a major change for the better for medicine.

American counterparts were quick to catch on. Anesthesia, which revolutionized surgery, was popularized in America by Dr. Thomas Morton in 1846(ether) and by civil war surgeons in 1861-1865 (chloroform).

County medical societies and the American Medical Association(1847) placed censures on medical practice, created requirements for medical education and published data from clinical trials to help guide the practitioner in treating illnesses.

Nineteenth century medicine ended on a high note. Much progress had been made in taking it from theory to fact, from guesswork to science. The twentieth century would reveal even more astounding medical discoveries. Science would make even more of an impact than the century before. The body of knowledge would continue to grow.

This essay is focused on medicine in the Santa Clara Valley during the nineteenth century. In order to better understand our local history, a certain amount

of generic medical information and national medical history will be presented.

OHLONE PERIOD

The history of medicine in the Santa Clara Valley must begin with the first “doctors” in the area. These men and women were known as shamans. They lived with their tribe in the bay area for the past several thousand years. They were an exalted group who were both admired and feared by their fellow tribesmen.

Shaman received their calling early in life, usually in a dream. They served an apprenticeship until the elder shaman deemed them ready to heal the sick by themselves. Paid in various types of shells and animal skins, the shaman was considered wealthy by tribal standards. They were called upon by the family of the sick patient after various home remedies had failed. The shaman might spend days with the patient, chanting songs and dancing rituals that were designed to heal. He might also perform a small abdominal skin incision, through which he would appear to insert a small hollow bone tube. Sucking on the tube, he would produce the cause of the ailment. It could be a tangled ball of coyote hair, an inchworm, or a live minnow. If the shaman was lucky, the patient recovered. If the shaman was unlucky, he might be in danger of bodily harm or even death by the grieving family.

Many of the native americans possessed some knowledge of herbalistic

medicine. These herbs contained active ingredients that could relieve symptoms of many of the common ailments that afflicted the Ohlones.

Some of the common herbs used by these lay practitioners were:

(a) Balsam Root- related to echinacea, which had some immune enhancing properties, that could fight off viral and bacterial infections.

(b) Poppy root was an analgesic(pain reliever) when applied to a painful tooth and antiseptic to cuts.

(c) Yerba Santa(Bears Weed)- This would increase saliva and thin mucous, and was used to treat lung diseases.

(d)Rose hips- High in vitamin c and used as a tea for colds and flu.

(e) Yerba buena- a mint like herb used as a tea for colds and flu.

(f) Worm Wood- used to treat worms, labor pains and indigestion.

(g) Willow Bark- Used as a tea for aches, pains and fever. It contained salicin which is converted to salicylic acid in the gastrointestinal tract. Today we know this as aspirin.

(h)Rattlesnake tail beads- ground into a powder and mixed with water, it contained oxytocin which will cause uterine contractions. It was used to stimulate desultory labor in childbirth.

(i) Tobacco-Inhaled or sometimes ingested, its nicotine affect could be calming and sedating.

(j) Jimson Weed- as a tea, it was used to induce a vision rich narcosis.

(k) Buckthorn(Rhamus Purshiana)- A laxative to counter the constipation affect of an acorn diet.

(l) Gum Weed(Grindelia Robuste) used to treat respiratory illness and poison oak(topically).

The treatment of fractures was one area the Indian had learned the basics. Dr. Rollin of the La Perouse Voyage of 1786 is quoted “ their conduct in the treatment of fractures appears to be a little more rational;they place the ends of the broken bones in contact; keep them in that position by a bandage; and placing the limb in a case of bark, tied fast around it by leather thongs, the patient is made to lay perfectly quiet until the parts are completely united”¹

The following story took place near the Klamath River, and is chronicled here due to its incredible outcome. In the late eighteen hundreds, Carl Marshall, while serving as a government school teacher, wrote this account “ here is a case which I verified, and which happened not so long ago. A young Indian became enamored of a neighborhood girl, but his suit was not looked upon with favor by the girl’s father. In a fight that ensued the lover’s abdomen was laid well open from groin to groin by a butcher knife in the hands of the elder man. The boy had to run for it, and as he told me, “ I had to hold my guts in as I ran.” He made for a nearby stream, where he lay immersed in the cold water, all the rest of the day and the following night. With his shirt folded tightly under his belt,he then made his way to his home,more than two miles away, where an old squaw, his aunt, who was somewhat of a “doctor woman,” sewed him up with some net cord, a sort of very strong and durable string which the Indians make from the midribs of the mountain iris, and used for making fish nets. Happily the unities of the romance were preserved, and the boy later got his girl, and made everything up with the father. He showed me the long gruesome scar that he bears as a memento of his courtship.” ²

Another interesting surgical procedure called trephining was practiced by native americans in our valley. It has been described as far back as the neolithic

period(seven thousand years ago). A sharp instrument, such as a obsidian blade, was used to chip away at the skull until a small opening was created. As long as the dura(membrane covering the brain) was not disrupted, the patient had a good chance for surviving. The reasons for this operation are speculative, and include, headache, skull fractures, seizures, insanity, and releasing evil spirits. Patients can tolerate this procedure because the skull has relatively few pain fibers.

The Temascal (sweat house) was another home remedy for the Ohlones. This was a small enclosure dug beneath the ground and covered with thatch. It had a small fire pit in the center and a single entrance on the side. The men were the primary users of this native sauna. As a medical treatment, it was a type of cure all. It was beneficial for skin infections and, no doubt, relieved arthritic pains. It was also used as a preparation for hunting by sweating off body odor that might alert the hunter's quarry. When the Indians began living at the missions, they were allowed to build their temascals and continue the tradition.

Pregnancy and childbirth were conducted by the Ohlone people, themselves. They had their own methods and guidelines that served them well for several thousand years.

During the prenatal period, the prospective mother avoided salt, meat , and fish in order to keep her swelling minimal and to prevent large babies. There were no physicians available for cesarean sections. Of interest here is the fact that two cesarean sections were performed by the Franciscans on dying Ohlones in labor. The babies were stillborn and were baptized after the delivery by the padre. The first cesarean was done at Mission Dolores in 1805 and the second was at Mission San Jose in 1825. The mission records show no cesarean sections on any living Ohlone

women.

Labor was attended by several of the village women, one of whom usually more skilled in midwifery. She would take charge near the delivery stage. The patient would labor with her attendants present. They might make quail like sounds, which was thought to help the progress of the labor. Manual fundal pressure or sometimes abdominal rope binding was used to assist in the bearing down stage.

Perineal pressure by the midwife was applied as the head emerged in order to prevent tears of the mother's external tissues. After the baby arrived, the placenta and umbilical cord were taken out and burned by one of the attendants. In a few hours, mother and baby were escorted to a stream, where both were bathed. They returned to their home where the husband had prepared a thick layer of herbs and warm stones. After six or seven days of rest, mother and baby took their place in the Ohlone community.

SPANISH PERIOD 1796-1822

The late seventeen hundreds saw the arrival of the Franciscan missionaries and the spanish surgeon generals in California. The Fathers founded 21 missions all along the lower and central California coast. Presidios for the soldiers were erected in a few strategic locations. Monterey was the most important of the presidios, and it was here that the surgeon generals were stationed. Between 1769 and 1824, there were nine of these army doctors stationed at Monterey. These men received their medical training in Spain. It is of note that most of their medicinal compounds actually came from Spain's experience in Mexico and South America during the previous two hundred years. It was the Aztec Indians who were particularly known

for their herbal preparations.

At least one of these doctors made the trip to el Pueblo de San Jose de Guadalupe founded in 1777. He was Pablo Soler, who traveled forty leagues(120 miles) to see patients. He is recorded as saving one Indian who was gored by a bull, and required suturing of his abdominal wound.

In 1792, a phlebotomist named Jose Castillo arrived in Monterey. He practiced blood letting at the Monterey Presidio for sixteen years. Elsewhere in California, blood letting treatment had been learned by barbers from visiting ships. The abuse of this procedure led Governor Borica in 1779 to ban barbers from performing the procedure.

Some of the medical problems during the early Spanish period were tuberculosis, smallpox, and scurvy.

Tuberculosis, although no treatment was available, was recognized as a contagious disease. Precautions were taken after death by a thorough cleaning and burning of the victims clothes, furniture, and even his home.

Smallpox vaccinations were done as early as 1786 in Monterey District. James Pattie, in 1828, bargained his way out of jail in Monterey by vaccinating several thousand residents of California.

Scurvy, caused by a lack of vitamin c, was a serious condition that affected sea voyages from Mexico to California in the late seventeen hundreds. A significant mortality rate was found on many of these trips. This in spite of French and English use of lemonade to successfully prevent the disease in the seventeenth century.

The California Missions were founded by the Franciscan missionaries from Spain in order to subjugate the native americans and save their immortal souls. King

Carlos III of Spain was primarily interested in the former goal, while the Franciscans were eager to convert the natives. The Ohlones were enticed into the local missions (Santa Clara-1777 and San Jose- 1797) by the thousands. They lived in crowded, unhealthy conditions. In the seventeen hundreds, approximately ten thousand Ohlones lived between the San Francisco Bay and the Monterey Bay. By 1830 there were only twenty five hundred. Jose Maria Benites, A surgeon general in

1804, reported on the alarming death rate. He listed the causes as dysentery, fever, pleurisy, pneumonia, and venereal disease. There were other causes also. The measles epidemic of 1806 killed two hundred thirty six Indians at Mission Dolores. Smallpox was equally devastating to the native americans.

The Padres did have access to herbal medicines which they acquired from the Indians.. They also were supplied with medicines from the surgeon generals. Each mission had its infirmary, supplied with mats upon which the sick neophyte lay. There was, however, little effective treatment for the majority of diseases they suffered from.

Venereal disease was a significant cause of morbidity and mortality in the Ohlone population as well as the Californios. The two most common forms of VD were syphilis and gonorrhea. The introduction of these diseases has been attributed mainly to the Spanish soldiers.

Syphilis is caused by a bacteria, *treponema pallidum*, which was identified in 1905. Exposure is by sexual contact. The spread of the organism in the body is by blood and lymphatics. Initially a genital sore appears and regresses spontaneously in two to three weeks. Weeks to months later spread to the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) or cardiovascular system(heart and blood vessels) may occur.

These are serious infections and may lead to death. Syphilis can spread to the fetus by way of the placenta, resulting in late abortion or significant birth defects.

Treatment was generally ineffective. It consisted of arsenicals, mercury salts in oral, topical and injectable form, bismuth compounds and potassium iodide.

Gonorrhea is caused by the bacteria, neisseria gonorrhea. It is also transmitted by sexual contact. It is more serious for the women because of the pelvic infections

that can occur , resulting in death or infertility. Treatments included mercury injections, copaiba(an aromatic resin from a South American tree), and cubeb, a spicy berry from an east or west indian vine. Astringents such as zinc sulfate, tannin and silver nitrate, were used by irrigating the urethra and the vagina. None of the treatments were very effective.

MEXICAN PERIOD 1822-1846

The Spanish Government of California officially ended April 11, 1822, when Mexico gained independence by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Surgeon Generals began arriving in Monterey in 1829, after a seven year hiatus. There was a total of five doctors from 1829 to 1844. There is no record of these men attending to citizens in San Jose as had been the case with some of the Spanish doctors.

Smallpox epidemics occurred in Northern California in 1828, 1838, 1840, and 1844. Many Indians and Californios died during these outbreaks. James Ohio Pattie(previously discussed) did help limit the epidemic in 1828 by vaccinating several thousand people .

The first public hospital in California was built near Monterey because of the 1844 smallpox epidemic. It was not much of a functioning hospital as there was no treatment at the time. It was staffed by two nurses and a burial squad.

In 1844, the first regulation of medical practice appears. The Mexican Government decreed that, before starting practice, physicians must present documentary proof of their qualifications to the town council or judge. Fees and the price of medicines were regulated and disobedience was punishable by fines or expulsion.

John Marsh had followed a similar regulation set up in Los Angeles in 1836. He managed to pass off his baccalaureate degree from Harvard(written in latin) as a medical degree. Henceforth, he was known as Doctor Marsh. He purchased a land grant from Jose Noriega for five hundred dollars. It was known as Los Medanos and was situated near the foot of Mt Diablo, near the present site of Antioch. Here he practiced medicine part time while raising cattle and wheat. An unpleasant personality left him few friends, and in 1856,he was killed by some of his own vaqueros over a dispute regarding wages.

There were more reputable paramedical individuals for the ailing populace. One of these was Juana Briones de Miranda. Born in Monterey in 1802, she was one of nine children. Juana learned about herbal medicine from her mother, Maria Isidora Briones de Tapia, and the local Indians. She filled the role of nurse and physician in the small community of Yerba Buena. Sometimes the Indians requested her help which caused some of the shaman to become resentful. One of her treatment methods was a warm mud bath trench, five feet long and two feet wide. The warm mud came from a nearby kettle, filled with hot water and adobe. She

purchased a one league ranch in present day Los Altos Hills in 1844 and lived there until her death in 1889.

Mary Folsom Hayes-Chynoweth was born in Upstate New York in 1825, the ninth of ten children. From the age of eleven she began using herbal medicines to treat family and friends. She became interested in divine guidance and by age twenty nine, was a full time faith healing preacher. In 1877, the power advised her

to move to California. She was married by this time and had three sons. The family built a mansion called Edenvale, located in south San Jose, on part of the Bernal Rancho. She held "Reception Days" on Tuesdays and Fridays, when she would minister to people with physical or psychological illnesses. She never charged for these services. Mary died in 1905.

Jesusita Patron Bernal (1844-1928). This enterprising women founded a company based on the healing properties of spring water. The spring was located on her Rancho Santa Theresa in South San Jose. Calcium carbonate was the ingredient in the water that was advertised as a bone builder(which does have some scientific merit) and a treatment for Tuberculosis(which it was not). After her death in 1928, a shrine was erected in her memory at the spring font. It contained a statue of St. Theresa, as well as a medallion, blest by the Pope.

Ascencion Solorsano was known as the Medicine Woman of the People. She was born May 22, 1855. Her parents were full blooded Matsun Indians, who lived in San Juan Bautista. She lived most of her life in Gilroy, where her prescribed treatments included sunshine, bathing, poulticing, and herbal medicine. She treated patients for tapeworms, skin infections, poison oak, stroke, fevers, colds, and influenza. In addition to the use of herbs for medicine, she knew the secret of dove

weed(Yerba del Pescada). Ground to a powder, she would throw it into a quiet section of the Pajaro River. The stunned fish would float to the surface where Ascencion would scoop them up in her basket. It was then off to home to cook the family dinner. Ascencion Solorsano died of stomach cancer in 1930.

THE AMERICAN PERIOD 1847-1899

By some estimates, thirteen to fifteen hundred physicians shared the California Trail during the Gold Rush decade of 1849 to 1859. They came primarily as gold seekers but there were some pioneers among them, who were looking for new territory in which to practice and live.

Medical training for these adventurous doctors had been a combination of preceptorship alone, or preceptorship plus medical school.

Preceptorships in the early eighteen hundreds were sometimes the only method of medical education. It was a paid arrangement(one hundred dollars a year) between the student and any doctor that would accept him.The preceptorship lasted two to three years, and if successful, the student would receive a certificate to begin his practice. As more medical schools were founded, preceptorships began to be affiliated with them. The student would go to class four months per year for two years with the interval time devoted to the preceptorship. This was gradually changed to three or four years in school and no preceptorship. A medical degree would be given to the student and he could practice anywhere in the country.

There were three philosophies of medical practice during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Allopaths, Homeopaths, and Eclectics.

Allopathic physicians (also known as regulars) were in the majority. They initially followed the teaching of Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of America's most esteemed doctors at this time. Dr. Rush used bloodletting, purgatives, emetics, and poultices as the foundation of his practice. This treatment regimen was based on the theory that all disease was caused by a state of agitation in the nervous system or vascular system. If a patient had a fever and appeared restless, bloodletting and purgatives were used until a restful state was achieved. This form of therapy became known as aggressive treatment and was the main point of contention between the regulars and the other two sects of medicine. Since results of this therapy were less than satisfactory, even the allopaths began to modify their approach. Bloodletting and purging fell out of use with most doctors by the 1870's.

The homeopathic school was founded on the concepts of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician. His system rested on three principles. (1) The law of similars: symptoms of a disease were thought to be the body's attempt to cure itself. Therefore, this symptom should be emulated in treatment. i.e. diarrhea was treated with purgatives (e.g. calomel). (2) single remedy: no more than one medication per disease (3) minimum dose: the medication (mainly herbs) were diluted and this, according to the allopaths, made them ineffective in treatment.

The eclectic sect preferred the use of botanicals only. They rejected bloodletting but did tend to pick and choose from the other two groups. Hence the name eclectics. The latter two sects were, number wise, in the minority.

The field of general surgery made remarkable progress from the mid-nineteenth century. This was largely due to the germ theory and anesthesia.

Louis Pasteur(1860's) was responsible for discovering that micro organisms were present in the air, but not created by the air. He also recognized that these "germs" were the cause of infection. He proposed aseptic technique to avoid microbial contamination. This led to Ignaz Semmelweis, a Hungarian doctor, to use handwashing techniques before delivering a baby. This significantly lowered the maternal mortality rate in childbirth. Joseph Lister, a British surgeon, took this one step further, and used carbolic acid as a germicidal agent to wash his hands and the patient's skin. This lowered the post operative infection rate that was so prevalent in general surgery cases. Sterile gloves, gown and mask followed shortly, and antiseptic surgery was born.

Anesthesia was also a major breakthrough for surgery. Ether and chloroform replaced whiskey as the anesthetic of choice for major operations.. Prior to this, most surgeons were restricted to treating fractures, traumas, draining abscesses, and performing amputations. With the advent of aseptic technique and anesthesia, surgery involving the abdomen(cesarean section, hysterectomy, appendectomy, gallbladder removal, and many others) could be done without the exhorbantly high morbidity and mortality rates of the early eighteen hundreds.

HORSE AND BUGGY DOCTORS

The earliest American physician to practice in San Jose was Dr. Isaac Chauncey Isabel. He arrived in 1846 and opened his office at the Santa Clara Mission. He did make house calls in San Jose and describes having to swim his horse across the Guadalupe River. He made a considerable fortune in gold mining with John and Daniel Murphy, which led to his early retirement from medicine. His

wife is credited with opening the first English speaking school in Santa Clara in 1847.

The first American trained physician to live and practice in San Jose was Benjamin Cory. He arrived at the pueblo on December 1st, 1847. The population at that time was approximately eight hundred. Dr. Cory was the product of the Allopathic Medical College of Ohio, located in Cincinnati. He received his MD

degree in 1845. His brother, Andrew, also a physician, arrived in San Jose in 1860.

Thanks to Dr. Cory's diary, the following is a list of medications that he brought to San Jose on his overland journey in 1847.

1. Calomel tablets (mercurous chloride)-used to induce copious diarrhea in order to cleanse the bowel and rid the body of disease. Used to treat cholera, fevers and abdominal pain.

2. Laudanum-an alcoholic herbal preparation from the opium poppy(the equivalent of one percent morphine). This eventually replaced Calomel as the most frequent medication prescribed. It was used for the relief of pain and because of its anti diarrhea effect, was helpful in treating cholera. The disadvantage of Laudanum was its addictive properties which led to some restrictions in its general use.

3. Morphine- similar to Laudanum and could be given orally or by injection.

4. Tartar Emetic-used in normal doses to induce vomiting or in small doses as an expectorant to treat bronchitis.

5. Potassium Nitrate(salt peter)-caused vomiting and dilated blood vessels to lower blood pressure.

6. Sugar of Lead(lead acetate)-treatment for intestinal complaints

7. Blue Mass Pills- contained mercury and used to treat

tuberculosis, constipation, parasites, labor pains, syphilis, and depression. Abraham Lincoln used these pills for his mood disorder but discontinued them because they caused such irritability.

8. Asafoetida (stinking gum)- found in the root of an herb, ferula. It actually had some anti-microbial properties and was used to treat bronchitis, whooping cough, and grippe (influenza). It could also be made into a paste and hung around a child's

neck to treat asthma and colds. It had a distinctive pungent odor.

9. Potassium Iodide- given orally to thin mucous in asthma and bronchitis.

10. Red Precipitate (mercuric oxide)- used as a laxative

11. Cinnamon Oil- extracted from the cinnamon tree to relieve stomach cramps and diarrhea.

12. Peppermint Oil- used orally to calm the gastrointestinal tract.

13. Dover's Pulverules- contained one twelfth grain of Calomel. Used in small doses to treat croup and pneumonia.

14. Opodeldoc Liniment- made up of soap, alcohol, camphor, and, worm wood. Used for topical treatment of muscle pain.

15. Oil of Cloves- typically used as an analgesic to relieve toothache.

16. Cotton Oil- from the seeds of a small tree native to India. Used topically to cause burning and redness of the skin (poulticing).

17. Camphor- from the bark of the Camphor tree. Used topically to relieve pain and itching of the skin.

18. Capsicum- an herb containing Capsaicin. Used in lotion form to reduce pain sensation in arthritis, shingles, and back pain.

In addition to a busy practice, Dr. Cory twice went prospecting and returned

on one occasion with four thousand dollars.

Politics was another interest of the doctor. He served one term on the first California State Assembly and four years on the San Jose Common Council. He helped pass legislation to promote several public health measures. Along with brother Andrew, he helped found the Santa Clara County Hospital, the present day Santa Clara Valley Medical Center.

Involved in education, he was appointed trustee of the State Normal School by Governor Booth in 1872. He served for ten years. The school would later become San Jose State University.

Dr. Cory married Sarah Braly on March 16, 1853. They raised two sons and six daughters during their forty three years of marriage. He died January 16, 1896. State offices were closed for a day and flags flown at half mast in his honor.

John Townsend MD came west with the Stephens Party in 1844. He opened the first medical office in Yerba Buena in 1846. He was appointed Alcalde by the military governor on April 1, 1848. In 1849, Dr Townsend moved from the hustle and bustle of San Francisco(population thirty five thousand) to the quiet of the Santa Clara Valley. Tragically, he and his wife died in the Cholera epidemic of 1850.

Following close on the heels of Drs. Cory and Townsend was Henry H. Warburton MD. He was born May 23, 1819 in Staffordshire, England, one of seven brothers, all of whom were also doctors. Educated in England, he practiced with his father for seven years. July of 1844 found him in New York, where he stayed for only one year. After serving on the whaler, Corea, he made his way to Santa Clara via San Francisco in 1848. Here he practiced for fifty six years until his death in

1903. A replica of his office is on display at San Jose History Park.

Dr. John P. Dudley arrived in San Jose in November 1850. During his many years of practice, he lived on a two hundred acre ranch located at Robertsville, just south of San Jose. He is also known for forming a local militia to fight on the Union side, if necessary, during the Civil War.

Dr. A. B. Caldwell is remembered for building the first house in Nevada City in 1848. He shortly moved to San Jose where he practiced until his death in 1876.

His son, Robert, who received his medical education in San Francisco, returned to San Jose to take over his father's practice.

Drs. T. J. Ingersoll, A. W. Bell and Spencer were early physicians in San Jose. They became household names because of a famous grizzly bear attack in 1854. Charlie McKiernan, known as Mountain Charlie, was attacked by the bear on his ranch in the Santa Cruz mountains. A triangular shaped piece of skull, above the left eye, was removed by the powerful jaws of the bear. It measured three and three quarter inches on each side. Drs. Ingersoll and Bell attended to Charlie and placed a silver plate over the gap in the skull. Due to an inflammatory reaction, the silver plate had to be removed two days later. Due to persistent headaches for a year Dr. Spencer, a well known surgeon, found and drained an abcess under the incision. The patient recovered and the headaches disappeared. Charlie lived another thirty eight years, passing away in 1892.

Dr. Benjamin Headen, pioneer physician, came to the Santa Clara Valley from Kentucky in 1852. He was part of the founding board of trustees for California's first medical school, named The Medical Department of the University of the Pacific. The school opened in San Francisco in 1859. This school would later become

Stanford Medical School.

J. Underwood Hall Jr., son of Dr. J.U. Hall Sr. was born February 9, 1868 at Gold Hill, Nevada. He graduated from Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia in April 1889. Upon his return to California, he was appointed resident physician and surgeon for the Quicksilver Mining Company in New Almaden. He held this position for five years. After studying surgery with Dr. McBurney in New York, he returned to San Jose and became very active in O'Connor Sanatorium for twenty five years.

There were two prominent female MD's in San Jose during the late eighteen hundreds.[note: the first woman to graduate from medical school in the United States was Elizabeth Blackwell. She graduated from Geneva Medical College in Upstate New York in 1849.]

The first woman was Dr. Euthanasia S. Meade, educated at the University of Pennsylvania and in Europe. She arrived in San Jose in 1879 and played a major role in organizing the state women physicians. The organization was called the Women's Medical Club of the Pacific. Her junior partner for years was Dr. Elizabeth Gallimore.

Dr. Gallimore was a native of the Santa Clara Valley. She graduated from the Cooper Medical College in San Francisco in 1887. She also served as secretary for the Santa Clara County Medical Society.

Dr. John S. Potts, born in Missouri in 1840, came west to improve his wife's health. In addition to his medical practice, he was active in civic affairs. He was one of the founders of the Board of Trade, a forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce. Largely through his efforts, the Hotel Vendome was erected in San Jose at First and

Hobson streets. He was also one of the original founders of the County Medical Society.

Among those physicians practicing in San Jose for over twenty years was Dr. A. McMahon. He graduated from the Ohio Medical College of Cincinnati in 1857. He was elected coroner of Santa Clara County in 1876, and served as county physician in 1878 and 1879. Dr. J. McMahon, his son, graduated from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in 1887, and practiced with his father in San Jose.

Prior to obtaining his MD from Rush Medical College of Chicago, Dr.

Thomas Kelley served in the union army during the civil war. He was appointed postmaster at San Jose during the term of President Harrison, which post he held for four and a half years.

George W. Seifert MD, graduated from Santa Clara College in 1879. He studied in the east at the Medical Department of Jefferson College Philadelphia and graduated with his MD in 1883. He returned to Santa Clara where he became the school physician at Santa Clara College, a position he held for eight years. A bachelor all his life, Dr. Seiffert willed his estate(valued at two hundred and fifty thousand dollars) to Santa Clara College.

The next three doctors were all prominent homeopathic physicians.

Dr. William Simpson was one of the first eye, ear, nose, and throat specialists in San Jose. He was twice elected president of the State Homeopathic Medical Society.

Dr. R.E. Freeman of Los Gatos graduated from the Hahnemann College of Philadelphia in 1886. He had special training in surgery and opened the Fairview Sanatorium where his surgical patients could recuperate. He was known as one of

the best orificial and abdominal surgeons in the area.

Orificial surgery was a particular branch of the homeopathic sect of medicine. It was founded by Dr. E. H. Pratt in 1885. Simply stated, orificial medicine attributed all chronic diseases , physical and mental, to irritations at all the bodily orifices. These include the mouth,nares(nose), ears, anus, vagina, and urethra. Most of their surgeries were directed at the orifices of the lower body. Incredibly, disorders in women such as depression, painful menses, fear of intercourse, were treated by surgery involving the hymen, cervix, rectum and urethra.

Dr. F. H. Bangs received his medical education at the Cleveland Hospital and the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Chicago. He came to San Jose in 1890. In 1893, he established a sanatorium on third street for the treatment of chronic diseases.

HOSPITALS

The first hospital in California was the State Marine Hospital built in San Francisco in 1850. It was located in made over hotels in the city. It closed five years later under a cloud of quality of care issues. Over the next six years, six more hospitals were operating in San Francisco.

- (1) U S Marine hospital, provided by the United States Congress
- (2) British Governmental Hospital for British marines
- (3) French Hospital on Main Street
- (4) German Hospital on Mission Street
- (5) The City and County Hospital
- (6) St. Mary's Hospital of the Sisters of Mercy

San Jose's history of public hospitals began in 1855, when the city and

county agreed to share costs for public medical care. A county physician was appointed and the city agreed to pay fifty dollars per month for the care of the sick. About this same time, the old Levi property was rented for a hospital with the city paying a monthly fee of forty dollars. In November of the same year, the county, feeling it needed more hospital space, bought the old Sutter house for \$5500. This house was in the northeast part of San Jose and came with twenty five acres. The county occupied the premises until February, 1856, when the owners failed to make a proper deed, and the purchase was rescinded.

The county then contracted for a physician to use the Levi house as a hospital. Dr. G. B. Crane agreed to see seven patients a day for forty six hundred dollars a year. This was followed by Dr. A. B. Caldwell, who agreed to see patients for two dollars and fifty cents per day. This worked from 1857 to 1859. Dr. T. D. Johnson took over the task and carried on until the county bought the Hiram Cahill farm for four thousand dollars in 1860. The site was on the present Park Avenue and Montgomery street. This establishment became hopelessly inadequate by 1868, and the county was forced to look again. In 1871, J.S. Conner was paid twelve thousand dollars for 114 acres on the west side of San Jose(the present day Bascom Avenue). The buildings on the Cahill site were moved to the new site to be used until a gothic style three story structure could be erected in 1875. The new building and associated structures(water tank, pesthouse, and potters field) would form the nucleus of the future Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. Drs. Crane, Andrew Cory, Benjamin Cory, Augustine Caldwell, Taliaferro Johnson, Jacob Brown, Alexander J. Spencer, and Abraham McMahon, all played a role in establishing the County Hospital. Dr. Andrew Cory was named the first director.

Fourteen years after the opening of the County Hospital, the O'Connor sanitarium was established.. It was founded by Judge Myles O'Connor, designed by Theodore Lenzen and operated by the Sisters of Charity. It was a two story brick building with sandstone facings. A south wing housed the women's ward and the north wing, the men's ward. It was built, initially, for chronically ill patients, who required no acute care. Later at the turn of the century, it would be one of the finest acute care facilities in the state.

In 1897, Doctor Lewis J. Belknap decided a hospital was needed on the east side of the valley. Garden City Sanatarium was built on a five and a half acre parcel on what is now East Santa Clara Street. The thirty five room main building was located in the center of attractively landscaped grounds, featuring a palm lined walkway to the entrance.

ORGANIZED MEDICINE

The representative medical body of San Jose is the Santa Clara County Medical Society, which was organized by nine physicians on May 9, 1870. The primary objective of the society was to continue the education of its members in their chosen field of medicine. Monthly meetings were held which consisted of (1) clinical and research papers (2) discussion of interesting clinical cases (3) any other business which would further the cause of good medical practice. Representation by county members on the State Medical Society were an integral part to (a) license physicians (b) expose and prosecute pretenders or impostors of the medical profession (c) review and impose penalties on physicians who violated the principles that the society represented.

The Homeopathic and Eclectic physicians organized their own state and

national medical societies. There was resentment and friction between the allopaths(regulars) and the above two groups. This would last until the twentieth century, when finally, all three would unite to form one state and one national medical society.

MENTAL ILLNESS

The cause of mental illness in the eighteenth century centered around witchcraft and demonic possession. This was replaced in the nineteenth century by the view that mental illness was caused by external stimuli, such as stress, fright, and a host of other moral and physical factors.

Dr. Benjamin Rush(1793-1850) was the first physician to propose this theory in his textbook on mental disease. Titled,"Medical Inquiries and Observations upon Diseases of the Mind". It was published in Philadelphia in 1812. The concept being that mental illness resulted from brain damage secondary to exposure to any of these moral or physical factors. The following is a list of these factors compiled in 1882.

MORAL

Family anxiety
Death of a husband or wife
Domestic troubles
Fright
Worry
Overwork
Overstudy

PHYSICAL

Absence of Menses
Brain disease
Congenital
Epilepsy
Head injury
Intemperance
Old Age

Removing patients to a safe and secure environment(such as an asylum), where they could indulge in clean healthy living, would allow the brain to heal. Some asylums were far from this ideal and it was Dorothea Dix, who led the

campaign to correct the abuses that were carried out in some institutions.

Even in the best of conditions results were disappointing. Advances in Neurology did help to clarify some of the mistakes. Conditions, such as epilepsy, chorea, and paresis(stroke) were identified as physical disorders and not mental illness. It would take Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis and neuro-pharmaceutical drug therapy in the next century before significant improvement in outcome would happen.

Our own history on mental illness paralleled the national picture. During the gold rush of 1849, psychiatric patients were locked up in ships that had been abandoned in the bay. Station houses(jails) were also used to confine these patients. By 1850, the San Francisco Marine Hospital was in use for the mentally ill. As California's population increased, the state authorized the first insane asylum to be constructed. It was built in Stockton in 1851. This was followed by Napa State Hospital in 1876.

Overcrowding at these two facilities led to the decision that a third hospital was needed. San Jose was chosen as the site because of its location in central California. In 1855, the state purchased three hundred and twenty three acres of land located seven miles north of San Jose. Construction began in July 1866 and the first patients were admitted October 30, 1888. The name of the facility was the California Hospital for the Chronic Insane. The name was later changed, by the Act of March 11, 1889, to the State Asylum at Agnews. This was done so that the hospital could accept acute as well as chronic cases.

Jacob Lenzen designed the building following the Kirkbride Plan. This plan was named after Dr. Thomas Kirkbride who wanted asylums to be conducive to the

humane and moral treatment previously described. The main building consisted of a four story central administration section with two wings, each three stories high. In addition, a separate building housed a kitchen, bakery, laundry, carpenter shop, and morgue. Grazing fields for dairy cattle, vegetable gardens, and fruit tree orchards filled the remaining two hundred and seventy six acres. Seven artesian wells supplied water for drinking and irrigation. Landscaping with shade and ornamental trees completed the project.

Treatment of patients mirrored the treatment in most parts of the country.

Restraints, such as straight jackets, were used at times. Morphine, tonics, and stimulants were also employed as needed.

In 1890, Dr. F. W. Hatch (medical director) initiated a social program that involved live music and dancing. It was held every Friday evening with one third of the patients allowed to attend. Guests were invited from surrounding towns. Although they were warned to be careful, Dr. Hatch told one visitor, “Do not offend the unfortunate persons you meet, and if they ask you to dance, do not refuse the request.”³

The inpatient population at Agnews continued to grow, and by 1906, there were over a hundred persons employed and a total of one thousand and seventy three patients.

END NOTES

1

Henry Harris MD, California's Medical Story (Baltimore: Charles C. Thomas, 1932) 11.

2

Ibid., 12.

3

Lorie Garcia. Agnews Asylum, Hospital Development Center 1885- 1996(Santa Clara: Lorie Garcia, 2003) 46.

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