

Medicine

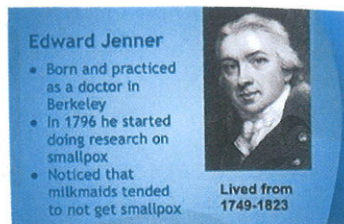
In the early years of New Jersey, medicine as a science was in a primitive state. Offsetting this somewhat, was the general robust condition of the people and the good climate in which they lived.

The ministers were often known to practice medicine. The profession was composed of anyone who had ever lived a year or two with any sort of practitioner, read a few books on medicine, and assumed the title of "Doctor," then offered himself to cure ailments which the human body was subject to.

Daniel Denton was considered the first physician not only in this area but also the entire East Jersey. He was one of the petitioners for the patent of Elizabethtown and was the first Town Clerk. In all, Daniel Denton taught school, practiced medicine and served as Justice of the Peace. Also, Old Jersey records indicate that letters of administration were granted in 1687 to Edward Gay. Doctor Gay is one of the earliest physicians recorded in this part of New Jersey.

In the early colonial days, Lyons Farms had one of the few learned medical men of America living and practicing in that community which contributed to the early settlers staying healthy in these parts. Doctor Ichabod Burnet arrived in Elizabethtown in 1700. In the year 1730, he was living and practicing his profession in Lyons Farms. He died in 1774. Doctor Burnet and his wife had two sons, William and Ichabod, Jr. both who became physicians. In addition, William Burnet later practiced his profession in Newark. Later on becoming an early president of the New Jersey Medical Society. Ichabod, died too early to leave much of a record.

This territory had the advantage of having another learned man practicing among its population and through his scientific knowledge, they were in a position to receive prophylaxis against small-pox in Elizabethtown and vicinity thirty seven years before William Jenner published his discovery to the world, Dr. William Barnet, who was on intimate terms with the discoverer of vaccination. Dr. Rush, the noted American physician, and teacher of medicine of Philadelphia also invited Dr. Barnet of Elizabethtown to inoculate for small-pox in 1759 as Dr. Barnet was well known at the time as a promoter of the inoculation and a physician of extensive reputation at the time. This practice at the time was much opposed, soon became the norm. William Jenner published his discovery on small pox in 1796. Dr. Barnet died almost six years before the World was advised of this advancement in preventive medicine at the age of 67.



Another parson physician was acquainted with area residents of Salem & Lyons Farms and dispensed his knowledge. He was the Rev. John Darby who was, for a time, minister at Connecticut Farms and a physician at that place.

In the history of medicine in the community, no family stands out more prominently than the Ward family of old Lyons Farms.

Isaac Moreau Ward M. D. purchased a farm in Lyons Farms from David Lyon. The farm was located on the upper Elizabeth Road, now Elizabeth Avenue. In later years the farm was acquired by the Essex County Park Commission and is now part of the Weequahic Reservation. When living at the farm he soon became interested in scientific horticulture – especially the pear. He grew over 50 varieties of this fruit – at that time considered a very large assortment.

Joseph B. Ward M. D. the son of Dr. Isaac M. Ward was born in 1833. His medical career was limited as he contracted typhoid fever during the civil war. Like his father he was very fond of rural pursuits especially the cultivation of fruits and flowers. He held many positions in the New Jersey Horticultural Society.

Dr. William Rankin Ward M. D. was President of the New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution. Dr. Ward was born on the street now known as Chancellor Avenue. He practiced medicine for some years in Lyons Farms and vicinity and officiated at the birth of many who were prominent in the community as well as at the last illness of many of those hardy old residents who carried on here in the days gone by.

Dr. Westrup, D. V. S. was not a medical doctor. After coming to America in his youth he settled in Lyons Farms where he took up the study of veterinary medicine under Dr. Humphry. The community, in those days was composed of agriculturists and dairymen in most part, whose greatest assets included livestock which made the services of Dr. Westrup in great demand. His practice extended through Union and Essex counties. The doctor died in his home at 1266 North Broad Street and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery. Born in 1852 and died in 1913.