

Hattiesburg Area Historical Society

HAHS MUSEUM
Hattiesburg Cultural Center
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HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN HATTIESBURG

By Barbara Ann Conner Ross

Hattiesburg, in the Choctaw Indian Lands of Mississippi, was founded in 1882 by Capt. William H. Hardy, pioneer lumberman and civil engineer. The City of Hattiesburg was incorporated into a town in 1884 with a population of 400.

Hattiesburg was first known as Twin Forks, later the railroad stop was known as Gordon Station and the town was called Gordonville, named for a pioneer citizen William Scott Gordon by his friend, A. D. Hartfield. The small community received its final name from Capt. Hardy in honor of his wife, Hattie.

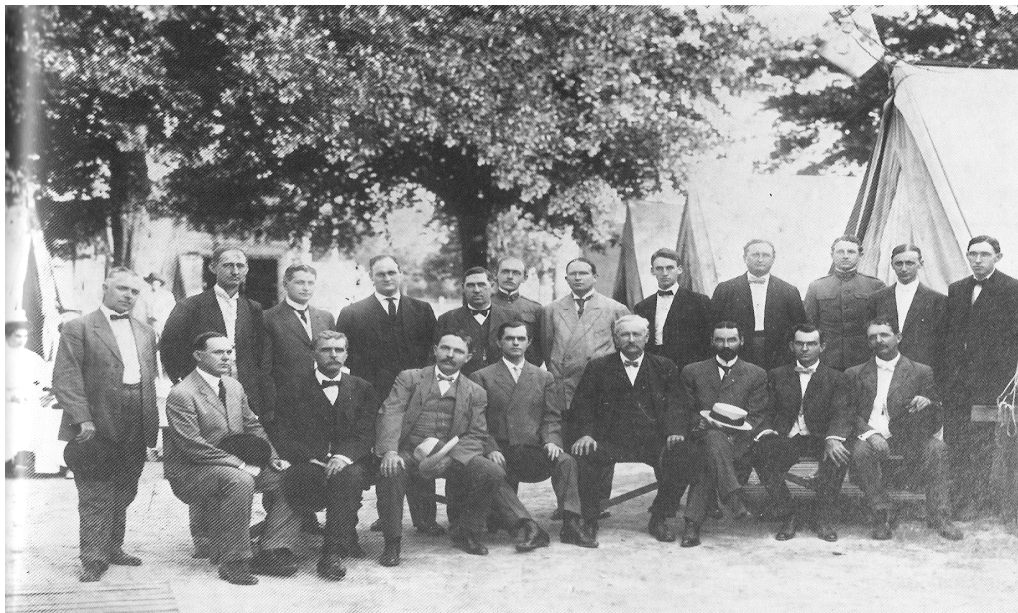
Captain Hardy was married three times. His first wife was Sally Johnson who died in 1872. Hattie Lott, his second wife for whom Hattiesburg was named, lived in Meridian and upon her death on May 18, 1895 was buried in Mobile, Ala. She never lived in Hattiesburg as many people have thought. Ida V. May was the third wife for whom Mr. Hardy built the lovely home known as "Pinehurst." On the site of the original location of this home stands the palatial home built by Mr. and Mrs. West Tatum after their death occupied by one of their sons, Dr. A. T. Tatum, and his family. Captain Hardy died in 1917 in Gulfport where he is buried.

Hattiesburg was fortunate in having an "accoucheur" living near the limits of the spot of its birth in 1882. Dr. John Gillis, a graduate of Tulane Medical School, lived just south of Hattiesburg at "Dixie Pine."

In 1884 Dr. Gillis opened the "Doctor Shop" up the path from Mobile and Front Streets. City Counsel meetings and other civic affairs were held there in addition to the practice of the healing arts. Dr. Gillis was noted for his remarkable cures in the treatment of typhoid fever possibly more than any other disease. He continued his practice in the town until he grew too old to be active. He died March 14, 1901.

Dr. J. J. Thornton was the first physician to move into the village after its organization. Other physicians soon attracted were Dr. A. L. Dozier from Jasper County, Dr. G. R. Mathison, Dr. Harris, who remained here a short time before moving to Richburg to take care of the workers of the Rich Lumber Company. Dr. Polk Watkins and Dr. John Stevens, a son of Capt. Ben Stevens of Augusta, opened an office in Hattiesburg in 1891. In 1892 Dr. T. E. Ross located here.

In 1893 Dr. C. W. Bufkin of Vossburg arrived. Others who came were Dr. John Rushing Jackson who moved to Hattiesburg from Laurel to practice his specialty of Eye, Ear, Nose and (continued on page 2)



Hattiesburg doctors: Left to right, seated: W.W. Crawford, unidentified, John Stevens, J. R. Jackson, I.H.C. Cook, H.C. McKinnon, L. W. Bayne, and unidentified. Standing: B. F. Mosley, D. J. Donald, unidentified, J. J. Bethea, T. E. Ross, Sr., unidentified, F. Champenois, L. B. Hudson, unidentified, unidentified, Leo Martin, and J. E. Hulett. Tents in the background are for victims of the 1906 Purvis tornado.

Throat. Dr. J. D. Donald followed closely in his arrival. Dr. Donald, who later served as Senator in our state legislature, at a later period (1907-11) served as Mayor of the city. Another noted physician moving from Augusta was Dr. I. H. C. Cook.

Hattiesburg had taken on such a rapid growth that it was natural to expect a rapid inflow of doctors namely Dr. L. W. Bayne, Dr. W. W. Crawford, Dr. J. S. Turner, Dr. B. F. Mosley, Dr. W. R. Thames, Dr. R. B. Stapleton, Dr. H. T. Mounger, Dr. H. L. Flake, Dr. Leo H. Martin, Dr. L. B. Hudson, Dr. H. L. McKinnon, and Dr. J. J. Bethea.

Hattiesburg had its share of epidemics and the year 1888 was made memorable as it resulted in the first "shot gun" quarantine to keep out the dread yellow fever. The marshal was ordered to arrest any and all persons violating the ordinance barring trains from stopping inside the city limits or be arrested himself. Ten men were appointed with the instructions to shoot to kill if necessary. This lasted until frost.

Then on August 9, 1890, the town was thrown into a state of panic by the reporting of several cases of small pox in the family of Rev. J. M. Smith, pastor of the Presbyterian Church. A quarantine of the most rigid kind was established. A building was set apart which was called the Pest House. Those who had the disease, or were exposed to it, were required to stay there until the disease had run its course. There is at least one incident on the Mayor's docket where a person was sentenced to twenty days in jail for having small pox and not going to the Pest House.

In talking medicine, we would be remiss if we did not mention the hospital facilities of Hattiesburg.



In 1892 at the corner of Front and Short Streets Dr. T. E. Ross, Sr. opened his office. This building also housed the Dozier Drug Store. Then on March 1, 1900, Dr. Ross opened the first hospital in the southern part of the state when he added a second floor to his office building. In order to extend the sphere of usefulness and to assure the success of Ross Sanitarium, an arrangement was entered into with the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad to lease the Sanitarium for employees of that railroad. This led to such an increase of patronage until it was decided that a larger building was necessary. Plans were drawn, specifications were written, and survey for a site for the new hospital was made. The building at the end of Bay Street was finished and occupied in October, 1903.

When the new building went into service in 1903, the name was changed to Gulf and Ship Island Hospital. Through the ensuing years it was known for brief periods as the Hattiesburg Hospital, King's Daughter's Hospital in 1918, and then in 1921 as the Methodist Hospital.



The South Mississippi Infirmary was organized May 1901 by Dr. W. W. Crawford, Dr. C. W. Bufkin, and Dr. J. D. Donald, three of Hattiesburg's leading physicians. It was located on Plum Street. Two years later Dr. Crawford became the owner. In early summer of 1904 the Infirmary was destroyed by fire and plans were immediately made for its rebuilding. The rebuilding had barely been completed when it was again destroyed by fire. Again plans were prepared for its rebuilding with the building being completed in May 1905 at a new location on Walnut Street near the intersection of Buschman Street. Dr. Crawford, one of the leading surgeons of the state, was a pioneer in the use of radium in this area. In May 1956, the Infirmary was closed and the patients transferred to either the Methodist or Forrest General Hospital. The Infirmary was then demolished.



Forrest General Hospital developed as an out growth of a need for more medical facilities in Hattiesburg. A report brought to the Hattiesburg Junior Chamber of Commerce in March 1946, by John Drew, co-chairman of the Jaycee Public Health Committee, stated in part: "We have contacted several Hattiesburg doctors, and they have indicated that between 100 and 200 beds should be considered to meet current needs. They feel that there is a critical need for more space and more equipment...Furthermore, they anticipate no relief..."

(Continued on page 3)

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

December 1, 2012 – March 14, 2013

- * Postcards: Postcard Folder c1941 of Camp Shelby with info on Isaac Shelby – Steve Kirkland.
- * New AT&T Answer phone with 3 extensions – Ursula Jones.
- * Book: The Art of Marie Hull by Morweed et al – Estates of Jacq Jones & Ruth Lake Polk
- * Four Photos of WXXX Radio with pictures identified and fact sheet – Irv Cuevas
- * Various invitations, letters, and leaflets plus picture of Sullivan Service Station – Claude Leaman.
- * DAR Certificate of Award to Brian Blair 5th Grade at Woodley – Marilyn Blake.
- * Panoramic photo of Camp Shelby soldiers during World War I – Barb & Alvin Drader.
- * Newspaper: Birmingham News, Birmingham, AL Feb. 15, 1942. Original & copy – Betty Ward
- * Little Theatre Memorabilia Collection from the Estate of Norma Sullivan – Garland Sullivan.

Recent Monetary Contributions

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Thus what began as a Jaycee report, backed by local physicians, community leaders and other organizations ended in a Forrest County bond election of \$350,000 matched by a similar sum from both Federal and State governments on Nov. 17, 1947. Hard work and determination on the part of a number of local citizens had crystallized the dream of a new hospital into a stage of hopeful reality with the ground-breaking ceremony being held Aug. 23, 1950. The formal opening of the new hospital at the corner of Mamie and 28th Ave. was held July 11, 1952.

As the hospitals of Hattiesburg have continued to grow with medical science, increasing in size, scope, and services to meet the needs of an ever increasing health conscious population, so the medical community has grown with every major specialty being represented.

(This essay, c1977, was the forward in "A Pine Belt Region Cookbook; Cone Cookery" by Hattiesburg Medical Auxiliary. Used by permission.) Pictures are from the files of the Hattiesburg Area Historical Society.



Medical memorabilia on display at the HAHS Museum. Visitors are welcome M, T, Thurs from 2 – 4:30 p.m.



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This nursing lamp was presented to Eula Mae Arnett Earles upon her graduation from nursing school in 1934. After graduating with Dovie Adams, Eula Mae worked on the Gulf Coast. In 1945, at the request of Dovie Adams, Eula Mae returned to Hattiesburg to work at Mississippi Methodist Hospital as operating room supervisor until her retirement in 1951. (Donated by her daughter Jerre Earles Boker.)



Above nurses pose in front of Hattiesburg Hospital circa 1910.

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