

Lake County Mini Profiles: *Our Early First Responders*

It is only fitting that in this unprecedented pandemic year of 2020, we acknowledge the heroes of today - nurses, doctors, fire and police as well as many others. I witness first-hand the efforts of my wife, sister and cousins who are front line nurses and firemen in these extraordinary months. Today though we look back in local history at some of Lake County's early first responders.

Dr. Storm Rosa

Born in 1791 in New York, he earned his doctor's degree in 1816. That same year he hung up his shingle in Centerville (Madison, Ohio). In time, Dr. Rosa branched out into community affairs. 1829-1851 saw him serve as President of the Painesville Academy, prior to it becoming the first public school system of the day.

His landmark moment came in 1843 when he embraced the homeopathic school of thought. As an early crusader for cleanliness, diet and preventive medicine, his lasting contribution to the county came when he built a 'water cure' stone bath house on Little Mountain Road. This resort and its water-based therapies lasted only a few short years. Dr. Rosa championed homeopathy into the Civil War years until his death in 1864.



Dr. Phrania Chesbrough

The first lady of medicine in Lake County was a family doctor and deliverer of generations of county children. She was born in 1870 in Madison, Ohio. She moved to Willoughby and graduated in 1892. Initially rebuked in her vocation choice of a nurse, she taught for a year before revisiting that desire. She entered a nursing program at Ensworth Hospital in St. Joseph, Missouri. A tempestuous period followed upon graduation. Her disdain of current nurse-doctor motivations lead her to return to Ensworth to pursue a medical degree. Graduating in 1899, she assisted her brother-in-law in his practice for awhile. Obstetrics and general practice became her main focus. She returned to Willoughby in 1907. Her personal home at 47 Euclid Avenue was also the hospital maternity wing for the next four decades. At 78 she still made house calls. She was called home in 1957 after more than fifty years of service. Her stately home was sold in 1945 becoming First Federal, Charter One and later Citizen Savings Bank. It remains today a tribute to a nurse and doctor bar none.

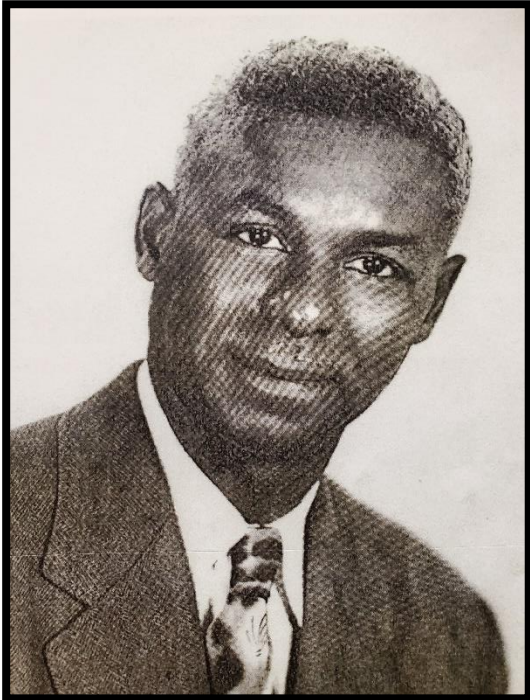


Dr. Charles Hawley

The January 23, 1928 Painesville Telegraph reported the death of Dr. Charles Hawley of Richmond and Erie Street in Painesville. He was 79 years old. His obituary mentioned his early education was random due to the pastoral charges of his Dad. It mentioned his 1864 admission into Hiram College and a 1871 graduation

from Pennsylvania University Medical College at Philadelphia. Dr. Hawley returned to Cleveland for a five year hospital stint. Next followed a private practice period in Bedford, Ohio. Dr. Hawley moved to Painesville to succeed Dr. L.C. Stebbins and served three plus decades as a local physician. He was a staff member of the Lake County Infirmary for 12 years; a Painesville Board of Health member for 11 years; a Painesville Board of Education member for 10 years and a county commissioner.

Dr. William & Mildred Rucker



In 1938 this Nashville born and educated physician moved to Painesville, Ohio. He joined the staff of Lake County Memorial Hospital. For the next 42 years the county's first African-American medical duo impacted their adopted community Painesville and all of Lake County for generations to come.

Dr. Rucker added a private practice to his resume in 1944. His residence became the office. It was here his wife Mildred served as his nurse and secretary. From



this home on West Jackson Street, it may be said that they literally touched the lives of every African-American child born between 1940-1987.

Dr. Rucker was also a deacon for St. John Baptist Church in Painesville, a contributing member to the local NAACP and County Garden Clubs at the time of his death in 1980. Mildred led child enrichment experiences until her passing in 1992.

Dr. Amy Kaukonen

A story well known to many county residents is the story of this Conneaut, Ohio Finnish graduate. These brief facts were shared by Aunt Amy's relatives Lisa M. Potti Profughi and Bob Potti in 2013. Upon high school graduation, one of the first women to do so, Amy studied medicine in 1911. A 1915 graduate of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania was another women's first. She completed a residency at the Women's Hospital of Philadelphia before moving to Ashtabula. She hung her shingle there for a short time.

At age 29, she moved in 1920 to Fairport Harbor, Ohio where a large Finn population had settled. Elected Ohio's first women mayor in 1921, her three-year medical and mayoral career did not blend well with the era. She left in late 1923 for Seattle where her life and career blossomed. Aunt Amy returned late in life and her Fairport Eagle Street residence survived till 2003 before being demolished.

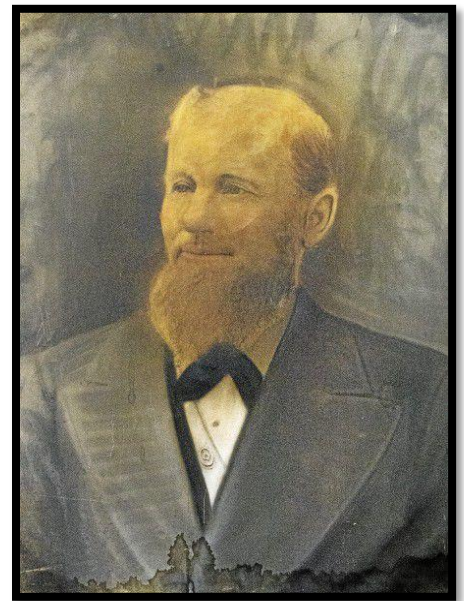


Dr. Francis Stebbins

The son of famed Dr. Loring Clark Stebbins of Chardon, Francis graduated from the Medical College of Wooster in 1874. A local physician for some years, his career was derailed by a leg amputation that led to a second career choice. Francis joined the family business on State Street in Painesville. Many will recall the pharmacy - L.C. Stebbins and Son.

The Original Painesville Hospital

Pictured here in 1904, the original facility was housed in the Stephen Mathews house on Washington Street in Painesville, a home constructed in 1831. Built by Jonathan Goldsmith, it was to resemble the home of Mathews's brother Dr. Jack Mathews. That home is currently located on the Lake Erie College campus. The hospital charter was obtained in 1902 and the patient care facility opened in the house in 1904. It continued as such for three years before being purchased outright. In 1912 the new hospital was erected in downtown.



Dr Loring Clark Stebbins



Submitted by Dan Maxson

*Local Lore by Max, 2010-2016 - Community Media Lab, The News-Herald
Volunteer Trustee, Curator - FHHS/ Fairport Harbor Lighthouse & Marine Museum*