

1844-1994



*Our*

*Medical*

*Heritage*



1844-1994



# *Our Medical Heritage*



© 1995

Lancaster City & County Medical Society

## Section 1

# *The History of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society*



LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, 1844



## *Osteopathic Medicine In Lancaster County*

There is no way to establish an exact date for the start of osteopathic medicine, as it was, and is, dependent on all previous medical knowledge and writings. Andrew Taylor Still, M.D. is considered to be the founder of the osteopathic medical profession. Dr. Still was a frontier physician and a very controversial figure politically as well as in medical affairs. His education was typical of the times and location, part preceptorship as well as some formal training.

Dr. Still believed that a patient could not get sick in one area of the body without other areas being affected, and therefore should be treated as a unit. Dr. Still was not the only physician of his or earlier eras that held this belief, but he was the only one that felt so strongly about this basic concept that he developed an approach to therapy that was dominated by this concept.

The first osteopathic medical school was founded in Missouri in May of 1892. The first osteopathic physician to settle in Lancaster County appears to have been Jerome D. Wirt, D.O. who started his practice in the Woolworth building in 1901. Only a few osteopathic physicians settled in Lancaster County in the first few years of the twentieth century. However, by the early 1920s more than twenty osteopathic physicians were in active practice in the City and County. Their practices were limited in scope, and with no osteopathic hospital and osteopathic physicians not being allowed to join the staffs of medical hospitals, they had to refer all cases needing hospitalization to medical doctors or send them to Philadelphia.

In 1921 the wives of seven osteopathic physicians, led by Mrs. Ned Swift, took the first steps that resulted in organizing osteopathic medical care and eventually established a third hospital in Lancaster, now known as The Community Hospital of Lancaster. They first established the free A.T. Still Clinic in the Woolworth building. The clinic was supported and managed by the Osteopathic Club, an organization of 500 members. Dr. T. Harris Francis operated the clinic. In 1924 the clinic was moved to a newly purchased house at 17 South Lime Street. More than two thousand patients were treated each year through the outpatient services. The clinic was also open one day each week for tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy surgery.

The success of the clinic encouraged the supporters to provide more extensive services and on June 2, 1927 the charter creating the Lancaster Osteopathic Hospital Association was signed. Later that same year the site for the Lancaster Osteopathic Hospital was purchased for twelve thousand dollars. It was not until 1929 that plans were approved for a three story building. The Hospital was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and construction began. After the shell of the building was completed, the



Great Depression brought all construction to a standstill for ten years until additional funding became available.

During this time, Dr. Ralph P. Baker opened his own six bed minor surgical hospital at 327 North Duke Street, a yellow brick building next to the Iris Club. The Baker Hospital remained open until June 29, 1942 when "A" building of the Lancaster Osteopathic Hospital was completed and the first patient was admitted. There have been three additions to the hospital since 1942. Community Hospital of Lancaster has been a teaching institution continuously since its beginning.

Women were welcomed into Osteopathic medical schools early and in meaningful numbers. This trend, accelerated after the onset of World War II, has continued with female physicians now a significant force in osteopathic medicine.

Because of the policy of the United States government during World War II, osteopathic physicians could not be drafted into military service unless they were given commissions and placed on active service in the Medical Corps. Politics prevented this from happening and thus they became available and in increased demand on the home front. There are presently more than 120 osteopathic physicians in Lancaster County, covering most specialties as well as family practice. There are osteopathic physicians on the staffs of all four County hospitals.



### *The Great Depression*

Dr. David Rothman tells the story of his entrance into osteopathic medicine: "In 1926 I became a student at Temple University College of Pharmacy. After graduation, which was also the beginning of the Great Depression, I was looking for a job. I went to a drugstore and the first thing they asked me was, 'Do you know how to bake ham?' The pharmacies had luncheonettes in those days. I got disillusioned fast."

"After talking to students at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, I attended some of the lectures and watched a few deliveries and surgeries. I obtained a copy of the school's catalog and went to see the registrar. I said I would like to enroll and asked him how much the tuition was. He said three hundred dollars for the year. He asked me if I had fifty dollars and I said yes and gave it to him. He told me I was a student! That's all there was to it."