

1844-1994



Our

Medical

Heritage

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Our Medical Heritage



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Lancaster City & County Medical Society

Section 1

The History of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society



LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, 1844

Chapter 15

The Sidle Microscope

Microscopes Made in Lancaster

In 1878, a medical school professor, J. E. Smith, while attending a meeting about microscopes, complained about the high cost of custom-made microscopes for medical students. John S. Sidle, a Lancaster optician, took up the challenge and teamed up with a Mr. Poalk and designed an inexpensive microscope referred to as "Acme Microscope."

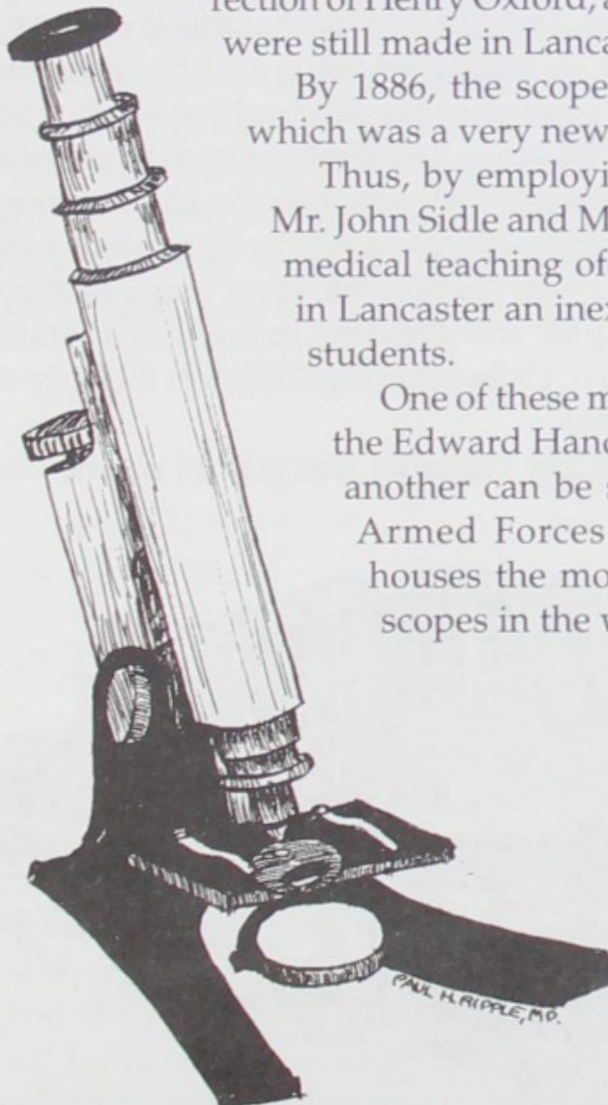
They designed about five different scopes, although the first one was never manufactured. John S. Sidle & Company, located at Cherry and James Streets in Lancaster, began to manufacture microscopes in 1878, and their instruments were sold by Queen & Company of Philadelphia.

In 1882, J. W. Queen & Co. of Philadelphia purchased Sidle and Poalk, and they manufactured some of the eye pieces and objectives under the direction of Henry Oxford, although most of the Acme Scopes were still made in Lancaster until the end of the century.

By 1886, the scopes had all interchangeable parts, which was a very new concept in microscopes.

Thus, by employing mass production techniques, Mr. John Sidle and Mr. Poalk contributed to improved medical teaching of the day, by manufacturing here in Lancaster an inexpensive microscope for medical students.

One of these microscopes is in the possession of the Edward Hand Medical Heritage Museum and another can be seen at the famous Walter Reed Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, which houses the most extensive collection of microscopes in the world.



THE SIDLE MICROSCOPE