

HALE COLUMBIA

Columbia, Pa. Medical Record, 1893-1905

Joseph W. Lahr M. D.



Introduction

Lena Agle, age 2½, died of diphtheria on October 9, 1893. Just one week earlier, Dr. William Taylor had reported her illness to the Columbia Board of Health—a newly formed agency within the government of Columbia borough. Lena was just one of 153 cases of diphtheria recorded in the log of “Infectious and Contagious Diseases” between September 1893 and December 1894. The Borough of Columbia kept this written record, the “Ledger,” from the start of the diphtheria outbreak until September 1905 (Infectious and Contagious). The same volume also contains records of births and deaths in Columbia from 1893 to 1900. This book, stored at the Lancaster County Archives and also available on microfilm, provides valuable insight into the relationship between government, public health, medical personnel, medical institutions, and society from the end of the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth century.



The new Columbia Hospital opened on Thanksgiving day, 1903. It was located at 7th and Poplar Streets in Columbia.

Photo from a post card (No. _22103) Souvenir Post Card Co., New York, with 1 cent postage

The Ledger

INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

Date.	NAME.	AGE.		SEX.		COLOR.		NO.	STREET.	DISEASE.	DIED.			PHYSICIAN.
		Yrs.	Mo.	MALE.	FEM.	WHITE.	BLACK.				MONTH.	DATE.	YEAR.	
1893														
Sept 22	Mary Good	16		F		W		138	South 8 th	Diphtheria				G. W. Brunkholz, Md.
" 28	Musson	6		F		W			N. 3 rd	"				J. A. Linscawares, Md.
Oct 2	Lena Agle	2	6	F		W		242	South 8 th	"				G. G. Taylor, Md.
" 4	Annie M. Good	3		F		W		138	South 8 th	"				G. W. Brunkholz, Md.
" 5	Mary Neuberger	6		F		W		144	N. 7 th	"				J. A. Linscawares, Md.
" 7	Edw. J. Jergan	16		M		W		202	S. 6 th	"				W. S. Brunkholz, Md.
" 8	Albert Reech	7		M		W			Walnut 14 th 6	"				Alex. Craig, Md.
" 9	Ellie Kern	10		F		W		35	1 st St. Paul	"				J. M. Livingston, Md.
" 9	Isabel C. Lutz	1		F		W		369	Chestnut	Scarlet Rash				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 9	Madame Lutz	3	6	F		W		369	Chestnut	"				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 9	Ruth M. Stenrich	"		F		W		227	Union	"				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 9	Gertrude Lehman	6		F		W		242	Union	"				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 8	Bennett							243	Perry	Diphtheria				S. A. Sever, Md.
" 12	Gertrude Parsons	4		F		W		21	N. 5 th	Scarlatina				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 13	Sophie Willert	9		F		W		715	Clarence	Diphtheria				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 13	Nancy Munich	3		M		W		160	S. 5 th	Diphtheria Compd.				A. S. Sever, Md.
" 13	Michael	3		M		W			Scout bet. 5 th	Scarlatina				Alex. Craig, Md.
" 14	Howard Schall	7		M		W		124	N. 3 rd	Scarlet Fever				J. M. Livingston, Md.
" 14	Edith Bremer	4		F		W		33	N. 5 th	"				J. M. Livingston, Md.
" 14	Henry	4		M		W			Manor 8 th 5 th	Diphtheria				A. S. Sever, Md.
" 15	Anna Minick	5		M		W		160	S. 5 th	"				G. W. Brunkholz, Md.
" 15	Marton			M		W		327	Cherry	Scarlet Fever				S. A. Sever, Md.
" 16	Caroline	10		M		W			4 th & Mill	Diphtheria				C. P. Markel, Md.
" 16	Nagantogler	9		M		W		141	N. 7 th	"				C. P. Markel, Md.
" 17	Norman Schrell	6		M		W		22	N. 6 th	"				J. M. Livingston, Md.
" 17	Frank Howard	10		M		W		53	N. Broad	"				J. A. Linscawares, Md.
" 21	Charles Minick	3		F		W		277	Union	Scarlet Rash				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 22	Minnie Metz	9		F		W		728	Chestnut	Diphtheria				J. A. Linscawares, Md.
" 23	Nata M. Stiner	"		F		W		239	Walnut	"				J. M. Livingston, Md.
" 23	J. H. Mittenberger	4		M		W		366	Cherry	Scarlet Fever				J. A. Linscawares, Md.
" 25	Wm. Rorr	12		M		W		545	Newton	Diphtheria				G. W. Brunkholz, Md.
" 26	Sam. Matson	9		F		W		127	S. Broad	"				W. G. Taylor, Md.
" 26	Nancy Bondle	7		M		W		711	Walnut	"				J. M. Livingston, Md.
" 27	Maggie Von Statten	3		F		W			8 th Union	"				W. S. Brunkholz, Md.
" 27	Maud Haefelster	13		F		W		124	N. 7 th	Scarlet Fever				W. S. Brunkholz, Md.
" 27	Miles Haefelster	8		M		W		124	N. 7 th	"				W. S. Brunkholz, Md.

Diphtheria

In September 1893 the newly appointed Columbia Board of Health had to address a major epidemic of diphtheria that lasted until the end of 1894. During that sixteen-month period, there were 153 cases of diphtheria and thirty-six deaths—a mortality rate of twenty-four percent. This outbreak occurred just as diphtheria antitoxin was first put to use in Germany, but before it would have been available in the United States. The outbreak peaked in November 1893 when Mr. Bockius, secretary of the Board of Health, reported forty-seven new cases and fourteen deaths.

Diphtheria was a disease of children. The average age of all cases was eight and one-half years, and the average age of the fatalities was four and eight-tenths years. Only five adults contracted the illness, and all were women—Priscilla Gemperling, thirty-eight; Sarah Miltenberger, twenty-one; Sarah Roland, forty; Annie Supples, thirty-three; and Anna Alexander, thirty-five—who had children who were also ill. None of their husbands were reported to have contracted the illness.



Mulford's
Improved
Antitoxin Syringe,
ca. 1897

The H. K. Mulford
Company in
Philadelphia became
part of Sharpe &
Dohme.

This syringe was
found in an antique
shop which has since
closed. The current
whereabouts are
unknown. It was
photographed with
permission.