

# 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 <sup>th</sup>	Diphtheria				G. W. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 28	Musson	6		F		W			N. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	"				J. A. Lincoway M.D.
Oct 2	Lena Agle	2	6	F		W		242	South 8 <sup>th</sup>	"				G. G. Taylor M.D.
" 4	Annie M. Good	3		F		W		138	South 8 <sup>th</sup>	"				G. W. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 5	Mary Neiburger	6		F		W		144	N. 7 <sup>th</sup>	"				J. A. Lincoway M.D.
" 7	Edw. J. Jergan	16		M		W		202	S. 6 <sup>th</sup>	"				W. S. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 8	Albert Reech	7		M		W			Walnut 14 <sup>th</sup> 6	"				Alex. Craig M.D.
" 9	Ellie Kern	10		F		W		35	1 <sup>st</sup> St Paul	"				J. M. Livingston M.D.
" 9	Isabel C. Lutz	1		F		W		369	Chestnut	Scarlet Rash				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 9	Madame Lutz	3	6	F		W		369	Chestnut	"				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 9	Ruth M. Novak	"		F		W		227	Vermont	"				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 9	Gertrude Lehman	6		F		W		242	Vermont	"				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 8	Bennett							243	Perry	Diphtheria				S. A. Amon M.D.
" 12	Gertrude Parsons	4		F		W		21	N. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Scarlatina				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 13	Sophie Willert	9		F		W		715	Clarence	Diphtheria				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 13	Nancy Munich	3		M		W		160	S. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Diphtheria Compd				A. S. Leroy M.D.
" 13	Michael	3		M		W			Locust bet. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Scarlatina				Alex. Craig M.D.
" 14	Howard Schall	7		M		W		124	N. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Scarlet Fever				J. M. Livingston M.D.
" 14	Ethel Bremer	4		F		W		33	N. 5 <sup>th</sup>	"				J. M. Livingston M.D.
" 14	Henry	4		M		W			Manor 8 <sup>th</sup> 5 <sup>th</sup>	Diphtheria				A. S. Leroy M.D.
" 15	Anna Minick	5		M		W		160	S. 5 <sup>th</sup>	"				G. W. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 15	Marton			M		W		327	Cherry	Scarlet Fever				S. A. Amon M.D.
" 16	Caroline	10		M		W			4 <sup>th</sup> & Mill	Diphtheria				C. P. Markel M.D.
" 16	Nagantogler	9		M		W		141	N. 7 <sup>th</sup>	"				C. P. Markel M.D.
" 17	Norman Schrell	6		M		W		22	N. 6 <sup>th</sup>	"				J. M. Livingston M.D.
" 17	Frank Howard	10		M		W		53	N. Broad	"				J. A. Lincoway M.D.
" 21	Charles Minick	3		F		W		277	Vermont	Scarlet Rash				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 22	Minnie Metz	9		F		W		728	Chestnut	Diphtheria				J. A. Lincoway M.D.
" 23	Nata M. Sliver	"		F		W		239	Walnut	"				J. M. Livingston M.D.
" 23	J. H. Mittenberger	4		M		W		366	Cherry	Scarlet Fever				J. A. Lincoway M.D.
" 25	Wm. Rorr	12		M		W		545	Newton	Diphtheria				G. W. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 26	Sam. Matson	9		F		W		127	S. Broad	"				W. G. Taylor M.D.
" 26	Nancy Bondle	7		M		W		711	Walnut	"				J. M. Livingston M.D.
" 27	Maggie Von Statten	3		F		W			8 <sup>th</sup> Vermont	"				W. S. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 27	Maud Haasfelder	13		F		W		124	N. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Scarlet Fever				W. S. Bronckhorst M.D.
" 27	Miles Haasfelder	8		M		W		124	N. 7 <sup>th</sup>	"				W. S. Bronckhorst M.D.

# Phthisis

## (Tuberculosis)

Among the infectious diseases recorded in Columbia, diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, and smallpox came and went as epidemics. Only tuberculosis—phthisis—was an ever-present threat to life and the public health. Counting only those deaths that can be clearly identified as being due to tuberculosis, the death rate from this disease closely mirrored that of the United States. Even though over ten years had passed since Koch identified the infectious cause of tuberculosis, many still considered it hereditary. Families often insisted that an alternative diagnosis be recorded as the cause of death to avoid the stigma associated with tuberculosis. Commonly used euphemisms were bronchitis or catarrh. From 1893 to 1900, an average of sixteen Columbia residents died of tuberculosis each year. These deaths were recorded in the death log. The average age was thirty-four, a young adult in the prime of life often leaving behind a spouse and children.

