

# Brown County Journal

December 15, 2014

## Events:

Brown County Historical  
Society Dinner  
January 5

Brown County  
Genealogical Society  
Annual Meeting  
January 13

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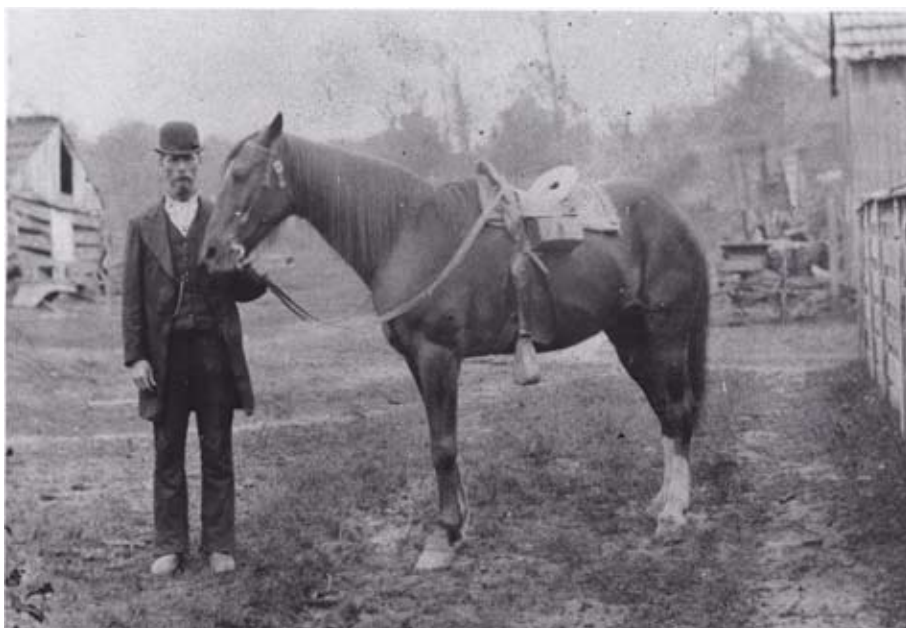
## Our Earliest Country Doctors

"In the late 19th and early 20th century, medicine in the settlements was often carried out far from a doctor's office. In order to obtain treatment, settlers living on isolated farms undertook a long and sometimes arduous journey. A minor injury or a common complaint could become an emergency or result in death solely because of the lack of proximity to medical help. If a settlement was lucky enough to have a doctor living within a day's journey, settlers often expected the doctor to come to them.

Doctors traveled long distances on foot, on horseback, in wagons, and buggies. Traveling to a settlement might be a cross country journey on nothing more than an unmarked trail. The doctor's bag was designed to carry the tools of the trade and withstand travel in all sorts of weather. Bags of durable oiled canvas or leather stood up to extended travel, whatever the season and terrain.

Rural doctors were general practitioners by necessity. They delivered babies, set broken limbs, pulled teeth, and tended to all sorts of wounds and diseases. They often created their own medications, as well as many of the instruments they used. The rural family doctor was well known in the community and was often considered the most valuable asset in the area. They most probably delivered every child in the community, and sat with the dying as they drew their last breath. They saw people into and out of this world and in the meantime tried to keep them alive and healthy.

Rural settlers often had nothing to pay with except the fruits of their labor. Doctors would commonly be paid in cord wood, produce, meat, eggs, blankets or other items of value. The doctor was a family friend and might know more than anyone about any given person or family in the region. When a settlement doctor passed



### **Dr. Alfred G. Ralphy**

away, it was cause for great concern and mourning.

Country doctors are some of the finest health care providers and tend to practice whole-person care rarely seen in urban medicine.

Most studied medicine in a big city — probably even grew up in one — but had chosen a rural practice because they appreciate the lifestyle and community.

In many cases, the doc might not be an actual “doctor,” but a skilled professional with different credentials. Besides practicing all forms of medicine, they participated in the community in other ways

also.” (STORIES OF FRONTIER SETTLEMENT DOCTORS, Oregon Health & Science University website: [www.ohsu.edu](http://www.ohsu.edu))

The local doctor was also a neighbor in every sense of the word. They may have farmed or managed a store or was a political representative to their county seat. Some in Brown County migrated here from other countries. For some reason Brown County was a mecca for foreign immigrants early on, and that included professional men. In the 19th century Brown County saw in its population around 58 doctors. Many didn’t stay, but moved on. Many did stay and decided to make their home here. Some of these doctors took up residence in secluded villages too, moving from time to time wherever the residents needed them the most or wherever they found a good spot for a home of their own. Briefly, here, we will cover some of the more well known or interesting doctors in our county’s early history.

### **Dr. Stephen B. Mossop**

Dr. Mossop was one of our first practicing physicians in Brown County. He lived in Schooner Valley, which is in western Washington township. He was born about 1816 near Ennis, Ireland, County Clare. He was one of several of our professional men that immigrated here from another country. Dr. Mossop got his medical degree in Dublin, Ireland. After his education in medicine he was married to Eleanor Madgett on April 23, 1849 at Drumcliff, Clare, Ireland. On their marriage record his father was listed as William Stephen Mossop. Her father was John Nicholas Madgett. Afterwards they left for America



### **Schooner Valley group - Belmont Store**

coming through Canada. They arrived in Cincinnati, Ohio where he obtained his naturalization to become an American citizen. His naturalization record read: Stephen Mossop, age 34, departed from Canada on August 15, 1849 and arrived in Buffalo on August 20, 1849. His declaration for citizenship occurred on March 5, 1851.

From there they moved across the Ohio River into Campbell County, Kentucky where he practiced medicine for about 8 or 9 years. He and Eleanor had a son named William. By 1860 they had left Kentucky to settle in Brown County. Eleanor's brother, Thomas Madgett had followed them here from Ireland. Not much is known of Dr. Mossop's character and his life here, but a short glimpse into his life can be read from his obituary.

"Dr. Stephen B. Mossop, 79 year of age, a lifelong recluse and eccentric character, and the first practicing physician Brown County ever had, died Monday at the home of his son, William. Dr. Mossop was a native of Ireland and a graduate of Dublin University. He came to this country about 50 year ago and settled in Brown County. He has only been without the borders of the county twice, the last time being to attend a special communion service here last summer at the Episcopal church, of which he





### **Dr. Story's house**

child, David. After Catherine's death while still in Ohio. Doc Story married a second time to Jane Morrison with whom he had two more sons, Enoch and George Story.

Dr. Story moved his family from Morgan County, Ohio to Van Buren Township, Brown County about 1851. In that year he got a land grant from the government for 173 acres and settled in what is now the village named after him, Story, Indiana. At the time he received his land grant the county was still considered mostly wild country although most of the Indians had left by this time. The description on his land patent read, "south of the Indian Boundary Line."

was a member." (The Lima Times Democrat, Oct. 18, 1894).

Stephen Mossop, his wife, Eleanor, son William, and brother-in-law, Thomas Madgett and his wife are all buried together at Duncan Cemetery. They are all engraved on the same tombstone.

### **Dr. George P. Story**

Dr. Story was another one of our early doctors that settled in Brown County. He was born about 1809 in Pennsylvania and first settled in Ohio as a young man. He was first married to Catherine Shelenburger and they had their first and only



**The Wheeler Store now the Story Inn**

If you visit Story, Indiana there is a sign here that marks the area as being on the Ten O'Clock Line boundary.

Doc Story served the area as their physician for about thirty years. He was postmaster of a post office called Valley Hill from 1860 to 1879. This may have been what Story was called before it was named after him. The post office of Story was never officially named until 1882. His sons all married women from Brown County, but didn't stay here long. His wife, Jane died in 1872 and is buried in the Christiansburg Cemetery. He then married a third time to a lady named Sandusky Percifield. By 1880 his sons had moved west from Brown County to Kansas and Missouri. Doc Story sold his land in 1882 to John Noblet. He then headed west himself. He is said to have moved to Dudleyville, Illinois. That is the last anyone from Brown County had ever heard from him.

His house still stands in the little village of Story just west of the Story Inn. The small community where he had lived and practiced medicine was called Storyville for many years, but had been shortened over the years to Story, Indiana.

### **Dr. Samuel Carlton Wilson**

Dr. Wilson was also one of our earliest doctors that we have any personal records of. His family kept his journals that have helped to document some of his life as a doctor. He was born about 1831 in Ohio. He like Dr. Story came from the same area of Ohio. He was orphaned at an early being raised by relatives in Belmont County, Ohio. He came to Brown County by 1857 when he married Mary Ann Campbell. They had ten children together. He had studied medicine with Dr. George Story and practiced medicine in the Christiansburg/Pikes Peak/New Bellsville area of Van Buren Township.

Dr. Wilson was named as postmaster of New Bellsville in 1859. At one time he was known to have lived in the Christiansburg area. Dr. Wilson's log house still sits next to Christiansburg Road just north of the Christiansburg Cemetery. He practiced medicine up until the 1890s and was listed as a member of the American Medical Society in 1898. He left some of his medical records which have



**Dr. Samuel Carleton Wilson**

been transcribed for genealogical purposes. As an example, in his journal of births he wrote a date and name with maybe a small notation afterward. Many of the births in his journal often read like this: September 28, 1875 - Silas Eddy - waiting on girl (which meant waiting on Silas Eddy's wife to deliver).

Dr. Samuel C. Wilson who died in 1900 and wife, Mary Ann are both buried in the New Bellsville Cemetery. (Reeve Family Study #261)



**Dr. Wilson's House, Christiansburg**

### **Brown County Medical**

### **Society, Midwives, and Others**

In October of 1879 the physicians that were serving the residents of Brown County came together and formed the Brown County Medical Society. Drs. Joseph M. Cook, Alfred J. Ralphy, John H. Leonard, Richard E. Holder, William H. Beatty, Nathan Browning, James P. Mosier, Theophilus E. Smith, Enoch S. Arwine, James B. Campbell, Marion H. Duncan, John F. Genolin, and Anthony A. Zook were the founding members. It was decided that any regular physician of the county could become a member of the society. The ethics of the American Medical Society was adopted for the regulation of the organization. They held regular meetings as their membership grew and the population grew. (Goodspeed's "County of Brown, Indiana, Historical and Biographical," 1884)

Not only did physicians practice in Brown County, several midwives were officially recognized. Those that we know of were Louisa Hatchett, Johanna Richards, Sarah Merriman, Marietta J. Smith, and Amy Whitehorn. You can find many of Brown County's practicing physicians and midwives on the Ruth Lilly Medical Library website at: <http://library.medicine.iu.edu/>

(Photos from the Brown Co. Historical Society Archives and Rhonda A. Dunn)