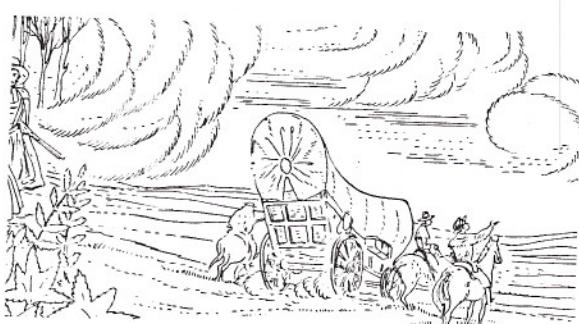


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HISTORY OF THE SEDGWICK COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

by Howard C. Clark, M.D.

MANSAS STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Chapter III

Wichita Medicine in the Eighties

IN THE early 80s Wichita boasted of 2,000 residents and several brick buildings. The city had grown down Main Street and east on Douglas Avenue. It was just as William Greiffenstein had predicted — having spent much time and effort having his vision come true.

It is astonishing to realize now how only a few solid iron-willed citizens helped make Wichita a city. Much credit goes to Munger, Meade, Matthewson, Woodman, Greiffenstein, English, and the pioneer physicians. They stood out from the crowd of jointkeepers, itinerants, and sharpers, whose only interest was easy money, with no thought of the city's future interest.

In the early day newspapers there were many references to the civic leaders and their determination to make Wichita "the best city in the pioneer West."

The Frisco railroad had been completed from St. Louis to Wichita by this time, opening more trade territory for the Arkansas River Valley town. Farmers now were producing livestock and grain crops. The wildest town in the West was settling down into a respectable city, with schools, banks, a library, and a strong inclination toward civic culture.

There were doctors on every board of directors — possibly because they were better educated at that time than the average citizen. They could read, write, express themselves, and they stood out among the pioneers as the substantial citizens. The toughs and vagabond Indians had moved west to Dodge City to make a new "Boot Hill," which became much larger than Wichita's. The solid citizens of Wichita simply did not give that element enough time to work up a sizable potter's field for those dying violent deaths.

In 1883, streetcars were put on the streets of Wichita at a cost of \$16,000 to the taxpayers. There were three mule-drawn cars and two and one-half miles of track placed in the middle of the streets. Six teams of mules alternated pulling the cars around the circuit at a stiff clip. The transit system ran west on Douglas Avenue to Main Street, north on Main to Murdock, and east on Murdock to the old Santa Fe depot which was situated about on the present corner of Mosley and Murdock. In 1887, the streetcar company acquired an electric franchise, retired its mules

and extended its track out Douglas Avenue to Hillside and up Hillside to Fairmount College.

The city council was talking about water tanks, wooden water pipes, sanitation, and a plan for wide city improvement. Some of the more studious citizens organized a literary society which was well-attended because even the roughest element wanted to improve their knowledge. Doctors kept moving to Wichita. They liked this new city, and constantly worked toward the realization of a great metropolis of the prairie.



Corner of Main and Douglas looking north on Main Street. Note the new mule team and streetcar track, also the change to brick structure on Main Street

X Among the early physicians, several practiced homeopathic medicine. Outstanding in this list was Frederick W. Whitlock, who, with his two sons, Edward A. and Albert, carried on an extensive and successful practice from 1880 to 1906. Frederick W. Whitlock was born November 8, 1823, in Hanover, Germany. He came to America via New Orleans in 1837. He settled in Van Buren County, Iowa, and was first a cabinetmaker, but was forced to give up the trade because of poor health. He decided to study medicine and was graduated from a homeopathic medical college in St. Louis in 1868.

Dr. Whitlock practiced in Farmington, Iowa, until 1880, when he came to Wichita. He first opened an office in a small, one-story brick building at 119 South Main Street, where Wolf's cafeteria is now located. In 1885, he erected a three-story permanent building at the corner of English and Main Streets, which is still standing. At

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present, the structure is occupied by the Wichita Trunk company and the Cubana apartment hotel.

Dr. Whitlock was a studious and progressive physician. He spent much time in compounding an oral medication to be used in prevention of smallpox, since he was opposed to the use of smallpox vaccine. He was a devout churchman and an early Sunday School superintendent in the original German Methodist Church, which in later years was converted into the Calvary Methodist Church. This pioneer was Dr. Arthur Fegly's grandfather.

Edward A. Whitlock, the older son, was born in Farmington, Iowa, in 1854. He graduated from the Pulte Homeopathic Medical college in Cincinnati, Ohio, and began his practice in Iowa in 1875. In 1882, he came to Wichita to be associated with his father. He attained prominence in surgical work and diseases of the eye. He was active in civic and Masonic circles. He died in 1897.



Dr. Frederick W. Whitlock

Albert Whitlock, the younger son, was born March 6, 1856, in Farmington. He attended the Hahnemann Homeopathic college of Cincinnati, and started practice in Iowa in 1878. He first moved to California but soon came to Wichita to practice with his father and brother. He was particularly interested in diseases of children. He died in 1906.

Following are a few interesting items which appeared in the newspapers during this era and reflected the Wichita scene in the 1880s:

The Wichita *Eagle*, September 13, 1883, tells of a Mr. Wycoff suffering from a gunshot wound. It seems he was quietly eating his noonday meal in a restaurant adjoining a gunsmith's shop. The gunsmith next door accidentally discharged a weapon he was checking, and the ball passed through two partitions, striking Mr. Wycoff in the back of the head. The charge virtually circled the

skull and came out above the eyes. There was no mention of the physician's name, but people were warned to be more careful with firearms within the city limits.

The 1884 death register, as compiled by the state board of health, was carried in the Wichita *Eagle*, January 13, 1885:

Pneumonia	8	Lockjaw	1
Inflammation of Brain	3	Heart disease	3
Old age	1	Gunshot	1
Unknown	5	Amputation	1
Childbed fever	2	Drowned	1
Inflammation of Bowels	4	Membranous croup .	3
Erysipelas	3	Measles	1
Stillborn	2	Summer complaint .	12
Spinal disease	1	Dysentery	2
Typhoid fever	4	Consumption	8
Typha Malaria	11	Catarrh fever	2
Whooping cough	4	Cancer	1
		Paralysis	3

It is believed there were many more deaths that were not reported to the state officials. In the isolated regions many sick patients died and were buried with very little ceremony. Many of these deaths were due to poor sanitation from polluted water, hog lots, stables, and corrals. The doctors and city officials were already becoming health-conscious and public health departments were being organized. Many Kansas towns even began to drain the streets and mudholes.



Dr. James E. Oldham

Dr. J. E. Oldham came to Wichita in the spring of 1883. He was a graduate of the Ohio Medical college in Cincinnati and practiced in Charleston, Indiana, for several years. This was his home town and he did not do well as his friends did not want to confide in him. Just as William Osler said: "One can make a friend out of his patients, but one can never make a patient out of a friend." This is still true—ask any of the old-timers.

Dr. Oldham had heard of Wichita and overnight decided to take a look at this "wild western

<i>When Registered</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>School of Practice</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>No. of Years in Practice</i>	<i>Name of College</i>
Dec. 22, 1885	H. Owens	Eclectic	Wichita	62	30	- 1873 - Cincinnati Eclectic Med. Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio
Dec. 30, 1885	J. L. Odell	Eclectic	Garden Plains	33	10	Cincinnati Eclectic Med. Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio
Apr. 21, 1885	J. E. Owharn	Regular	202 E. Central Wichita	44	17	- 1875 - Medical College of Ohio Cincinnati, Ohio
Oct. 16, 1885	M. A. Pratt	Eclectic	Wichita	44	12	- 1879 - Bennett & Board State Exam. of Kansas
Sept. 8, 1885	Jas. B. Purdy	Homeopath	Wichita	34	8	- 1879 - Chicago Homeopath College Chicago, Illinois
Oct. 1, 1885	K. F. Purdy	Regular	Wichita	34	12	- 1874 - Rush Medical College Chicago, Illinois
Oct. 14, 1885	J. N. Phillips	Regular	Mt. Hope	65		
Apr. 5, 1888	Hannah Pryor	Midwife	Wichita	68	47	
Dec. 22, 1885	J. H. Russell	Regular	Wichita	51	25	- 1861 - College of Physicians & Surg., Keokuk, Iowa
Dec. 11, 1885	J. Ada St. John	Regular	412 E. Elm Wichita	38	4	- 1881 - University of Michigan Ann Arbor, Michigan
Dec. 11, 1885	P. D. St. John	Regular	412 E. Elm Wichita	34	1	- 1883 - College Physicians & Surg. New York City
Oct. 2, 1885	J. J. Stiner	Homeopath	Wichita		14	- 1870 - Hahnemann Med. College & Hosp., Chicago, Illinois
Oct. 7, 1885	B. F. Sippy	Regular	Garden Plains	36	3	- 1884 - College of Physicians & Surg., St. Louis, Mo.
Jan. 1, 1883	Mary E. Schaeb	Midwife Obstet.	Wichita	32	5	- 1885 - Newlans Lying In Institute, St. Louis, Mo.
Oct. 3, 1885	G. H. Tebo	Regular	Wichita	47	21	- 1872 - Rush Medical College, Chicago, Illinois
Dec. 23, 1885	F. H. Van Eaton	Regular	Clearwater	50	27	- 1858 - Missouri Medical College
Oct. 1, 1885	Clara E. Vallaner	Regular	Valley Center	32	5	
Oct. 3, 1885	A. H. Wendel	Eclectic	Wichita	43	4	- 1881 - Eclectic Med. College Cincinnati, Ohio
Oct. 3, 1885	F. W. Whitlock	Homeopath	Wichita	59	25	- 1868 - Homeopath Med. College of Missouri
Oct. 25, 1885	Alex. C. Winter	Eclectic	Wichita	28	10	- 1878 - Bloomington University Bloomington, Illinois

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