

Centennial Moments

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Early Beginnings at Loma Linda, Part 3

One of the earliest struggles for the development of a professional medical work within the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the dearth of physicians to staff these institutions.

In fact, James White, the organizational genius behind many of the earliest church institutions including the first health institution in Battle Creek, dubbed the "Health Reform Institute," found that the key to success was finding qualified Adventist physicians. They found such a qualified individual in Horatio S. Lay who was on the staff of a similar water-cure run by Dr. James C. Jackson in New York.

A few additional physicians joined the staff after a couple of years which allowed for the continued existence of the one institution. Yet as the denomination matured and realized a sense of its worldwide mandate to preach the "everlasting gospel" to the farthest parts of the world, this carried with it a realization that one of the most effective ways they could do that was through medical missionary work. And in order for this to take place, the denomination needed trained physicians.

The first Adventist youth to be trained as physicians were hand-selected by church leaders who saw "potential" in them. At the time almost anyone could get a medical diploma if one had enough money

and two to three months of time. Some so-called medical schools even offered mail order medical diplomas.

Yet the church pushed one young physician in particular to continue his medical education until he had obtained the best



medical training available. This young man who later became the world-famous Dr. John Harvey Kellogg took the humble Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek and transformed it into the Battle Creek Sanitarium. By the turn-of-the-century it was said that one could mail a letter from anywhere in the world to the sanitarium without a postal address. The rich and famous from around the world patronized this sanitarium because of the advanced medical treatment they could obtain there.

Adventist medicine really came of age during the 1880s as an increasing number of Adventists sought medical training. Because many of these youth were in central-Michigan, it is not surprising that many of these earliest physicians received their training at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

The Del E. Webb Memorial Library is featuring a new exhibit in the main lobby that shows a late 19th-century medical office. The artifacts are on loan to Loma Linda University from private collectors, Dr. Larry and Donna Serber, who have a knack for finding medical artifacts and have graciously set up this exhibit as part of many other numerous centennial happenings here on campus.

During the mid-1890s the Seventh-day Adventist Church felt it was important to an expanding, international medical work that a medical school be launched. Named the "American Medical Missionary College," part of the training was received at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, and clinical work was done at an Adventist-run mission in Chicago. It lasted for about ten years and had to be closed in 1905. In memory of this first attempt here at Loma Linda we have a monument stone located between Evans Hall and Shryock Hall that served in Loma Linda's 50th-anniversary celebration.