Journey to Health

Dr. John Kellogg and his wife Caroline bravely endured the risks of the Oregon Trail in the hope of a healthier life. Sarah were urged by Isaac to join him on Whidbey Island. They settled on the island in 1854 providing medical care for the growing community. Free land was a financial incentive to head West, but to live disease-free was a dream for most emigrants. Many had experienced the heart-wrenching loss of friends and family from disease and injury.

Dr. Kellogg and his wife later moved to the island to practice as a doctor. They established a small hospital and began vaccinating children against smallpox. The Kellogg's stories are representative of what native tribes, emigrant Chinese and other healthcare workers experienced for the next 60 to 70 years. When populations increased, the need for healthcare also increased.

The Kellogg's hospital was small, but it was a place where people could receive medical care. Dr. Kellogg left and returned to the island numerous times over the course of his career. He was a pioneer in the field of homeopathy, and his work helped to establish the field of alternative medicine.

In the early 1900s, Anna Langway opened a hospital in Coupeville which later became known as the Wayman Hospital. This hospital was a one-room log cabin that was used for childbirth. Other hospitalizations were set up in the homes of island residents, including the Bultman Maternity Home and the Kruick Maternity Home.

During her almost 30 years of practice, Harpole cared for, delivered, and treated patients of all ages. She became famous for her daring 18-minute patient transport to Everett General Hospital. She also Island County's first public health nurse and went on to become one of the first women to open a drugstore on Front Street.

Many doctors and nurses treated island residents, as well as becoming involved in the growth of the town. Some because of financial incentives, others because of passion for the work. The town grew from a small settlement to a thriving community.

Undaunted, Carskadden threw himself into his work, treating patients down and rush them to Everett General Hospital. He transformed the hospital into a medical office equipped to do minor surgeries. The patient was then transported back to Whidbey Island.

Although his medical office was equipped to do minor surgeries, he was the only doctor on Whidbey Island. He cared for, delivered, and treated patients of all ages. He worked tirelessly for the community, providing medical care and service.

In the early 1930s, Pauline “Polly” Harpole, RN, came to Whidbey Island in 1934. She had a hospital. After a remodel, it was state certified in 1945.

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We are grateful to those who recorded events and preserved this history; their efforts have made these history walls possible. They include:

- Maria Holland Arnew, RN
- Octavia Millman
- Marilyn Sherman Clay
- Pauline “Polly” Harpole, RN
- Dr. Henry Carskadden
- Anna Langway
- Ben Swedber
- Dr. Thomas White

Whidbey Health Archives

Island County Historical Museum