



Fulton County Historical Society

Spring 2020 | 518-725-2203 | fultoncountyhistoricalsociety.org

Dr. Emily L. Hill, Early Fulton County Physician

Written by Peter Betz

In 1874, the family of Caroline and Reuben Hill removed from Fortsville, Town of Moreau, Saratoga County, to Gloversville, where most of the Hills, nine daughters lived out their lives. The last, Charlotte, died March 16, 1948, aged 90, the last charter member of the Fremont Street Methodist Church. This story however, concerns only one of those nine ladies, Emily, who became the first female doctor in Fulton County.

Newspaper references identify Dr. Hill as a Doctor of Homeopathy. Her alma mater was the Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago, named after the father of homeopathy, Dr. Christian Hahnemann, which begs the

question: what is homeopathy? Merriam and Webster define it as, "a system of medical practice that treats a disease especially by the administration of minute doses of a remedy that would in larger amounts produce in healthy persons symptoms similar to the disease," and yes, whether one accepts this concept or not, homeopathy is still practiced.

The Hahnemann Medical College opened in 1860, becoming coeducational in 1871. Except for emphasis on homeopathic therapy, most courses duplicated those in regular medical schools. How Emily Hill, a young woman from a large Gloversville family in 1890s America, found both means and fortitude to leave home and achieve an advanced education cannot now be explained, but through intelligence, determination, and a refusal to accept medicine as a male only profession, Emily Hill succeeded, and after graduating, she returned home to begin practicing.



Dr. Emily L. Hill. Photo courtesy of Forgotten Faces, Forgotten Places Facebook group.

First notice of Dr. Hill's presence appeared in the September 27, 1894 Johnstown Republican, which printed, "It is said that Johnstown has a woman physician all to herself, but since the ethics of the profession forbid advertising, we shall have to wait until time discloses the undoubted usefulness of Dr. Emily Hill, meanwhile (we are) extending her a warm welcome."

How well her Johnstown practice progressed isn't indicated, but she wasn't without friends. On January 4, 1895 the Republican announced, "A large party of friends of Dr. Emily Hill paid that lady a social visit last evening. Refreshments were provided and a general good time was the order of the evening." Whether this event was orchestrated because her practice was or wasn't doing well remains unknown.

For whatever reasons, Dr. Hill soon divided her practice between both cities. On March 30, 1895, the Daily Leader informed readers, "Dr. Emily Hill of Johnstown will meet patients at Number 74 Fremont Street, Gloversville on Thursdays from one to four and seven to eight." Seventy-four Fremont Street was actually the Hill family home, so the wise doctor avoided renting an office. Apparently Johnstown simply didn't afford Dr. Hill enough income: by May 2nd 1895, the Daily Leader noted, "Dr. Emily Hill will remove from Johnstown and resume practice in this city." Her practice must have improved in Gloversville.

(Article continued on page 3.)

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From the Executive Director

As we continue to roll into 2020, I want to take a moment to say: thank you. In my nearly nine months working at the historical society, I've been so grateful for the generosity and support of our community, both near and far. You've attended new programs and events, joined or renewed your membership, and donated to our first year-end appeal. Your commitment to preserving Fulton County history is clear. Whether I've had the chance to meet you, chat with you on the phone, or just send you a thank you letter, I appreciate each interaction with you.

You have made some exciting accomplishments over the past year possible, and your continued support will keep that momentum going. Visitation increased by over 100% from 2018 to 2019. We tried some new events, like the trolley tour and the Sleepy Hollow storytelling event; both sold out, thanks to your enthusiastic attendance at these programs. We've also begun updating museum operations, including redesigning our website and purchasing QuickBooks software. We are exploring funding opportunities this year to address collections storage and access, and we are seeking to complete an Existing Conditions Report of our historic 1900 school building. This report will document the building's environment, evaluate its existing condition, and provide the general recommendations necessary to address existing issues and concerns about the structure in consideration of its current and potential adaptive use. This report is an important step in creating a plan for future preservation, restoration, and upgrade projects.

So once again, I want to say thank you. I'm excited about the future of our small but mighty historical society, and I hope you are, too.

Please check out page 5 for some of the events we have coming up (with more to be announced). Save the date for the Ice Cream Social on May 15th, which is always a great time. I hope to see you at the museum soon!

Samantha Hall-Saladino
ssaladino@fultoncountyhistoricalsociety.org



Parade at the Gloversville Four Corners, c. 1915

Dr. Emily L. Hill, Early Fulton County Physician

(Article continued from front page.)

The Leader published Nathan Littauer Hospital's monthly reports, and for July 1897 it recorded, "Five patients have been treated by Dr. Emily Hill." She also possessed an interest in local history, which we learn from a December 21st reference. "The Meeting of the Epworth League at the Fremont Street Methodist Church last evening was unusual, as a very interesting paper on the place of Sir William Johnson in history was read by Dr. Hill." Hill was also a member of the Montgomery County Homeopathy Society: at the January 1898 annual meeting, she was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

Dr. Hill occasionally received newspaper recognition for rendering treatment. The January 20, 1899 Leader remarked, "While on her way to Park Street School this afternoon, Florence Woodworth, 12 year old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Harry Woodworth, fell on the sidewalk and broke her wrist. The unfortunate girl was taken to her home at 38 Montgomery Street where the fracture was reduced by Dr. Hill." Again on March 8, 1901, "Raymond Porter, a boy, was injured by a horse yesterday while coasting down the hill at the high school grounds and Dr. Emily Hill dressed the wound."

Like all of her family, Dr. Hill was actively involved in the Fremont Street Methodist Church's activities. On

December 14, 1899, "A meeting of the Sunday School Teachers Union held at the Congregational Church was well attended. The lesson for next Sunday was ably taught by Dr. Hill, who merits her reputation as a scholar and teacher." She must also have gained respect among her fellow Gloversville doctors, for on May 3rd, 1900, at the Littauer Medical Staff annual meeting, she was elected President. The Daily Leader editor remarked, "The election of Miss Hill to the chief office of the board is the first instance of a woman elected president of a hospital board not composed entirely of women."

While this was certainly an honor for a female physician in those chauvinistic times, Dr. Hill held still greater ambitions. On May 24, 1902, the Troy Daily Times noted, "Dr. Emily Hill is attending post graduate school in New York," and again on September 15th, it announced, "Dr. Emily Hill expects to leave Gloversville September 30th to assume new duties in New York."

Although returning home frequently for vacations, Dr. Hill practiced as an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist in New York for the remainder of her career. Becoming ill late in 1936, she returned to Gloversville, dying September 3, 1938. This forgotten pioneer female physician is buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Seeking Volunteers

Do you love history? Volunteer at the Fulton County Historical Society! No experience is needed and on the job training is provided. Some volunteer opportunities include: event volunteers, seasonal docents, assisting with school programs, office and clerical work, and more. We're happy to find something that fits your interests and availability.

The FCHS Board of Directors is also seeking volunteers to serve on various Board-driven committees: Fundraising and Marketing, Programs, Collections and Facilities, Personnel, and Finance. Volunteers do not need to be members of the Board to participate (though we encourage you to consider a Board seat if you are interested).

Those interested should please contact Samantha at ssaladino@fultoncountyhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

Wish List

You can make a donation of money or time, but you can also help support the museum by donating a Wish List item. These are items we need to make exhibitions, programs, and operations even better!

- 8.5x11" regular printer paper and card stock
- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Handsoap
- Toilet paper
- Art supplies
- Plexiglass/acrylic frames (8.5x11")
- Extension cords
- Cordless phone with answering machine

If you are interested in donating a Wish List item, please contact Samantha at 518-725-2203. Thank you for your support of the FCHS!

Ask Elisha the Elk

Hello! My name is Elisha the Elk and I'm the FCHS mascot. You may know my twin brother, the big elk who lives outside of the museum. Lucky for me, I get to go on all sorts of adventures around the county and the state!



We often get questions from visitors that require a little more research, or that we find particularly interesting, or both! In this little corner of the newsletter, we'll share some of those questions and answers.



Q: Who was Elisha Yale?

A: My namesake, Reverend Elisha Yale, came to Kingsboro from Lee, MA in 1804. Dr. Yale served as the pastor of the Kingsboro Presbyterian Church, located just down the street from the museum. He felt it was important for local children to have an opportunity for education. Dr. Yale began

teaching in his home, but soon helped to establish the Kingsboro Academy in 1831. Eventually, this private school became the public elementary school for the neighborhood, and a new building was constructed in 1900 and used until the 1970s. Today, it's home to the FCHS. Elisha Yale served as pastor of the church until his retirement in 1852. He died the following year.

You can learn more about Elisha by visiting the museum. A monument to Dr. Yale is situated in the park across from the church on the site of the original Presbyterian church.

Find Us Online

The FCHS is on Facebook and Instagram! Give us a follow to keep up to date with all of the goings-on, behind-the-scenes looks at the museum, and exciting things around the county.

 facebook.com/fultoncountymuseum

 instagram.com/fultonhistorical

2020 Special Exhibit

"The Decade That Roared: Fulton County in the 1920s"

The FCHS is commemorating the centennial of the dawn of the 1920s with exciting programs and a new special exhibit. The 1920s were a transformative decade in American history. The social, cultural, and political fabric of the country was changing.

The decade began in the wake of World War I and the Spanish Flu pandemic. It brought the country out of an economic recession into a boom, ushering in a decade of mass consumerism. On January 16, 1919, America was given a deadline: in one year, the entire country would go dry. After decades of work and political rallying by temperance groups, the Eighteenth Amendment was ratified. The ratification of the 19th Amendment gave women the vote (though New York had already granted suffrage two years before). Criminals amassed huge fortunes running illegal booze and clandestine speakeasies. Young women found new freedom as they adopted the flapper lifestyle. The 1920s also gave us the Harlem Renaissance, increased popularity of jazz music, and the "Lost Generation" of writers and artists who were disillusioned by new mass consumerism.

"The Decade That Roared" exhibit explores how these major social, political, and cultural changes affected Fulton County and its citizens. The exhibit will be open during regular museum hours (see page 5), during special events, and by appointment. Keep an eye out for special programming exploring this decade in Fulton County history!



Welcome Home Arch at the Four Corners, Groversville, 1919.

Upcoming Events

Presentations & Conversations

15 Miles on the Sacandaga Canal? The Canal Craze

Sat. March 21st, 2pm

\$5 suggested donation, FCHS Members free

David Brooks, Education Director at Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, will discuss the construction and success of the Erie Canal and the subsequent "canal craze" that sparked the idea of a Great Sacandaga Canal.

In Cold Blood: True Crime, an American Genre (Reading & Discussion Group)

Pre-meeting & book pick up April 2, 7pm

Thurs. April 16, 23, 30, & May 7, 7pm

Free (Registration required)

This program will focus on three texts in an exploration of why true crime has flourished as a genre in American literature, film, and history and why these stories engage audiences across age, gender, and background. Discussion will be facilitated by Lou Fagan, Assistant Professor of English at Fulton Montgomery Community College. This program is funded by Humanities New York.

Famously Infamous: Fulton County's Notorious Murderers

Thurs. June 4th, 7pm

\$5 suggested donation, FCHS Members free

A housewife. A butcher. A teenager. A traveling jewelry salesman. A jealous sweetheart. What do they all have in common? They all committed violent crimes. Join Samantha Hall-Saladino in an exploration of some of Fulton County's most notorious murders throughout history.

Festivals & Fundraisers

Annual Ice Cream Social

Fri., May 15th, 6-8pm

\$5 per ticket or \$20 for 5 tickets

Help kick off the season with our annual ice cream social fundraiser. Enjoy ice cream and other sweet treats, then tour the museum. More info coming soon!

For Families

The Gloversville Library Traveling Story Time

Thurs. July 30th, 10:15-11:30am

Free

The FCHS is excited to again host Gloversville Library's Traveling Story Time. Hear some great stories, make a craft, and meet some new friends! Recommended for ages 2 and up, accompanied by an adult.

Visit the Museum

The museum re-opens for the season on May 30th. Hours are Saturdays & Sundays from 10am-4pm through June 21st and Thursdays-Sundays from 10am-4pm from June 25th through Labor Day. Other times by appointment.

Save the Date!

FCHS Community Celebration Fundraiser

Sat., October 3rd, 6-9pm

at the Eccentric Club, Gloversville

More information coming soon!



More events to be announced! Please visit our website at fultoncountyhistoricalsociety.org for the most up-to-date information.

Thanks to our New & Renewed Members!

Richard Aulisi
Suzanne and Robert Best
Lucille Blunck
Eleanor Brooks
Keith Bundy
Vincent and Sue Chadwick
Mary Anne Chiariello
Jo-Ann and Patrick Clear
Bonnie Clizbe
Norman and Doris Clo
John Collins
Maurice Farhart
Bill and Barbara Fielder
Anne Haggerty
Sally Holmes
Hon. Polly Hoye and James Del Salvio
Jack Horning
Scott Jeffers
Lynn and Mike Kicinski
Beverly LaBarge
Robert Landrio
L. Bernard Landrio
Frank Lauria
Geraldine Liggero
Margaret Locatelli
Ryan Lorey
Yvonne Major
Joanne Marinopoulos
John and Jan McEneny
Charles Pannaci
Judy Ferraro and Peter Pollak
Valerie Prohaska
Gloria SantaMaria
Christine and Peter Schoonmaker
Stephen and Susan Sparks
Eileen Studders
Jake Wesley
Don Williams
Don Wilson
Jack Wilson
Jim Zayicek
Sylvia Zierak
Sam Zimmerman

Historian Spotlight

Moira Marshall

Historian, Town of Stratford

Did you know that every municipality in the state is required, by law, to have an appointed historian? We're excited to feature the historians around Fulton County who are working diligently to preserve, protect, and educate about our community's fascinating history.

How long have you been in your historian position?

I have been the Stratford Historian for 1 year.

Where are you from originally?

London, England. My family came to North America when I was a baby.

What sparked your interest in history?

My family. And specifically my father's passion for history. My father felt that it was important to understand and appreciate the history of your surroundings. An example of this would be any time we went on vacation my father would research the history of where we were going and would provide the historical narrative on our trip. I continue this tradition to this day.

What projects are you working on right now?

I am currently archiving the historical collection, and working on a social media presence for the history of Stratford.

What's your favorite thing about being a historian?

I love the enthusiasm of the people I speak to about their knowledge about our town.

What is one thing you wish people knew about the history of Stratford?

That Stratford had been a vibrant town boasting 3 hotels and numerous stores and businesses that provided employment to the people of the town. But this just touches on the exceptional history of Stratford.

Thank you!

On behalf of the FCHS Board of Directors and staff, thank you to everyone who donated to our first-ever Year-End Appeal. Thanks to your generosity and support, the FCHS raised just over \$2,500. These donations support school programs - including on-site field trips, outreach, and enrichment programs outside of the classroom; community events and programs; presentations; the preservation and upkeep of our historic 1900 school building; and more. Since 1891, the Society has worked to preserve, promote, and share our county's heritage through the tireless dedication of volunteers and Board members and the support of donors like you.

If you haven't been to the museum lately, we invite you to attend one of our upcoming programs or schedule a visit during our "closed" season. Contact Samantha at 518-725-2203. We hope to see you soon!

Around the FCHS



"Legend of Sleepy Hollow" story event, October 2019.



Haunted History with GMS 8th graders, November 2019.



Paint & Sip fundraiser, February 2019.



How Did They Play in the 1920s? February 2019.

Fulton County Historical Society Membership Form

- Individual - \$20
- FCHS Partner (volunteer) - \$10
- Student - \$10
- Family - \$30
- Supporting - \$50
- Patron - \$100
- Benefactor - \$150
- Lifetime - \$250

Name -----

Phone Number -----

Address -----

City -----

State -----

Zip -----

Are you interested in volunteering? Yes. Not at this time.

FCHS PO Box 711 Gloversville, NY 12078

payable to the Fulton County Historical Society and send to:

Email -----

Please make checks
