

LAKEVILLE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HERITAGE CENTER, 20110 HOLYOKE AVENUE, 952-985-4680

"In recognition of the responsibility to past and future generations, the mission of the Lakeville Area Historical Society shall be to document, collect, preserve and teach the history of the Lakeville area."

JUNE 2014

A Look at Our Past—"Two Influential Doctors"

Dr. Thomas J. Gaffney was licensed to practice medicine in 1898 and subsequently moved to Lakeville with his wife, Madeline. For 45 years he could be seen in his horse-drawn buggy serving the people of Lakeville, Eureka, Burnsville, Lebanon, and Rosemount. Many of you probably remember the days when a doctor would come to your house, even in the middle of the night. As a child, I lived on a farm twelve miles from town and the closest doctor. At that time, a severe earache was cause enough for a doctor visit after midnight. Can you even imagine that today? I often wonder how that same doctor, who was usually the only doctor in the small town, treated patients in the clinic the next day. Exhaustion must have been an every-day occurrence.

In spite of the long hours, Dr. Gaffney was known for his good sense of humor and concern for the health of his patients - if not for a tender touch or mincing words. In later years he used cars, but he never learned to drive properly, causing his patients much concern. He died in 1945.

Another local doctor was Dr. James A. Sanford of Farmington who practiced medicine in this area from 1901 to 1954. Dr. Sanford also had a large country practice, but he hired drivers so he could use the traveling time to sleep.

He was known for his surgical abilities and saw a growing need for a hospital. An old house became the first hospital, but in 1924 he persuaded the people to help him build a modern facility. The building was erected in 1925 and served as a hospital and a hotel. This hospital served the people of Farmington, Lakeville, and Rosemount until it was replaced by a new building in 1964. Dr. Sanford died in 1954 shortly after completing his book [A General Practitioner Speaks](#).

The passing of these two country doctors marked the end of an era in medical practice where bills were often paid in whatever goods the patient could give in exchange for "Doc's" services. Both are fondly remembered for their concern and unselfishness.

If anyone has a photo of Dr. Gaffney, or of other early medical events, we would appreciate being able to copy those for our historical records.



James A. Sanford, MD, practiced medicine in the area for 54 years and authored, "A General Practitioner Speaks"

June LAHS Calendar

The Historical Society display area at the Heritage Center will continue to be open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Members are encouraged to attend the monthly board meeting at 3 p.m. Monday, June 16.

"Rainy Days and Mondays" (and Wednesdays)

The school year is almost over, and the cries of, "I'm bored" will be heard soon. This would be a great time to introduce your grandchild or child to Lakeville's history. A rainy (or too hot) day doesn't have to be an excuse to spend hours playing video games. One of the displays or our many history videos is sure to peak your youngster's interest. Visit us on a Monday or Wednesday this summer.



Our New Hall Window Display



You might have already noticed the new window display that replaces the winter ice harvesting exhibit.

The items in the window are meant to initiate conversation about items

that remind us of our mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and other women in our lives.

Many of the displayed hats, gloves, jewels, dresser sets, etc., have special meaning for us in the Historical Society, and we hope that they call to mind memories for you, too. We have tried to make it an educational, as well as pleasing, display that you can continue to peruse during the spring and early summer seasons.

The "by-gone" eras that many of these pieces represent are certainly worthy of our attention now.

Visit our website: www.mnlahs.org