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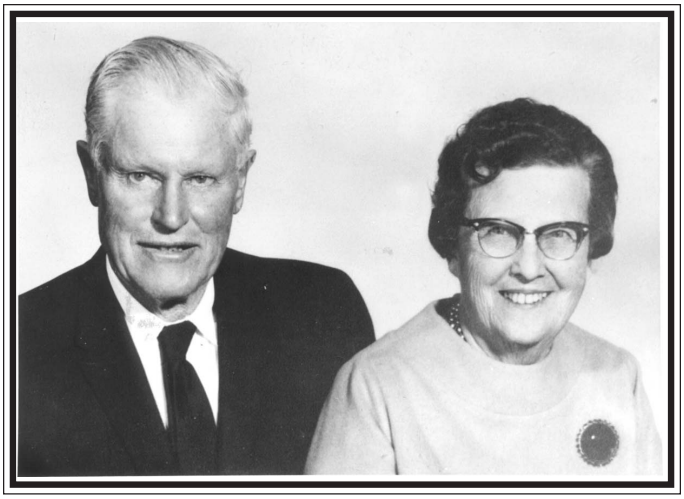
Dr. Mary Fulstone, Nevada's Doctor for the Ages

Dr. Mary: The Story of Mary Hill Fullstone, M.D. A Nevada Pioneer by Dixie Westergard is available from our History of Medicine Program for $18.00 plus $4.50 shipping.

It would not be exaggerating to say that Dr. Mary was one of Nevada's most remembered and best-loved physicians. She practiced in Lyon County for over sixty years and was respected by her patients and peers. Dixie's book highlights Dr. Mary's long life, from her birth in 1892, to medical school in San Francisco and medical practice in her community, until her death in Smith Valley in 1987. In addition, the book is infused with memories of prominent citizens, such as former Nevada Supreme Court Justice, Cameron Batjer, and the many physicians who knew and respected her abilities and love for her patients. Dr. Roderick Sage: "…this revered elderly lady doctor who single handedly held the community of Yerington-Smith Valley-Wellington together, medically speaking…." Dr. William Tappan: "I consider it a great privilege to have known Dr. Mary, and to have assisted her in the care of many of her patients." Dr. Robin Titus: "Dr. Mary touched my life in many ways. She literally helped open the door for women in medicine." In addition to having a busy medical career, Dr. Mary served on the Nevada Board of Education for nineteen years and the local school board for twenty-four years.



Fred and Mary Fulstone (1892-1987) - (Great Basin History of Medicne Achieves)

Mary Ruth Hill was born in 1892, in the mining town of Eureka, Nevada, where her father was a respected businessman and accountant. At the age of four Mary moved with her family to Carson City where she eventually graduated from Carson City High School. During high school she developed an interest in math and was active in sports and outdoor activities, such as camping and women's basketball. Influenced by her math teacher she attended the University of California, Berkeley, where math quickly slipped into the background once the world of biological sciences opened up to the young college student.

After graduation Mary attended medical school in San Francisco at a time when women were not

encouraged to follow demanding careers, such as that of a medical doctor. In fact, it would be over seventy-five years before female medical students would be equal in numbers to male students.

Dr. Mary was a full-time physician, but she was also a full-time housewife. Exactly when she first met Fred Fulstone is not mentioned in the book, but his family had been in the territory since 1858. Mary and Fred married in 1919, a year before she finished her medical training. Fred understood his wife's demanding schedule and helped with household chores in addition to becoming a leading rancher in Smith Valley. Fred and Dr. Mary eventually had five children. Another of her legacies is the Lyon County Hospital.

In the early 1950s, Congress passed the Hill-Burton Act, which made money available to remodel, enlarge, and build new hospitals. Most of Nevada's hospitals were recipients of Hill-Burton Funds, and they provided an opportunity to construct a new Lyon County Hospital. County bonds provided $150,000, and the federal government came up with the rest of the money to build the $350,000 hospital, but there is no question that Dr. Mary was the driving force behind the campaign to build the hospital and improve healthcare in her community.

Besides serving the hospital in various capacities, Dr. Mary was active in the community and state. Civic duty was a way of life for the busy physician. For more discussion on Dr. Mary's life and accomplishments, I recommend *Dr. Mary* by Dixie Westergard.

Residence of Fred amd Mary Fulstone, M.D. (History of Medicine Achieves)

Traditional Great Basin Indian Herbal Medicine

(Continued from Spring 2005, by Janet K. Holmes)

Because of the hundreds of varieties of plants used within their ethnobotanical medicine, it is not possible, within this venue, to cover every plant that the Great Basin people used for herbal cure or to cover the traditional preparation of each remedy. Therefore, we will briefly examine only approximately fifty species of plants and their uses. The list is alphabetically listed by common English plant names, but we will be glad to supply the scientific botanical name for those who are interested. [Please note that common names of all plants differ from locality to locality and a specific named plant may mean something quite different to different individuals].

It is recognized that Native Americans used many plants that were pharmacologically active, such as Ephedra, and were used appropriately. It is also known that, as a rule, Great Basin Native Americans did not suffer from scurvy because many of the plants were dried and used during periods when fresh plants were not available. Consequently, Vitamin C was ingested from these dried leafy plants.

Alumroot was used to make a tonic for use in general debility, as well as for heart trouble, venereal disease, high fevers, eyewash, liver problems, and diarrhea. In addition, it was used as an astringent and as a treatment for colic.

Arrow weed was used for bloody diarrhea, indigestion, or a sour stomach.

Balsamroot was used for severe stomach problems as well as bladder troubles.

Biscuit root, Toza, Cough root, Fern-leaf or Carrot-leaf was employed to treat trachoma, swellings, sprains, sore throat, gonorrhea, hay fever, colds, coughs, bronchitis, fevers, chest congestion, influenza, pneumonia, and as an antiseptic for small pox, rashes, sores, and cuts. Biscuit root was also considered a curative for tuberculosis. It is still commonly used to treat arthritis, colds, and influenza.

Black cottonwood was used for headaches, venereal diseases, tuberculosis, stomach disorders, and general disability (blood tonic).

Brass buttons was used for constipation, stomachaches, and cramps. It also acted as an emetic and physic, as well as was used as eyewash.

Bristlecone pine was used to draw out boils and administer to sores.

Butterball was used as a cold medicine, eye medicine, a remedy for stomachaches, and venereal diseases.

Button snakewood was used for diarrhea.

California incense cedar was considered to protect against contagious diseases.

Cow parsnip was used for toothaches, sore throats, coughs, colds, diarrhea, tuberculosis, rheumatism, and to benefit healing of wounds .

Creosote bush was believed to be a general cure-all. It had analgesic and antiseptic properties. It was used to stimulate urination, to cure venereal diseases, colds, rheumatism, chicken pox, burns, and bowel cramps, and to aid in new skin formation. It worked as a styptic and, in recent years, it has been useful for treating cancer [It was also called Greasewood and because of its extensive medicinal use, this quarterly bulletin is named after it.]

Dodder was believed to induce sterility.

Ephedra, Mormon Tea, Indian Tea, or Squaw tea: was used as a treatment for venereal diseases like syphilis and gonorrhea. It was also used for ailments of the kidneys and cramps. It was also used for bladder disorders, colds, blood purifier, circulation, delayed or difficult menstruation, and stomach disorders. When combined with other plants, it treated diarrhea, cure for sores, and burns. Some considered it to be a curative for backaches and anemia.

False Hellebore or Skunk cabbage: was used as a contraceptive. In addition, it was used for venereal diseases, sore throats, heavy colds, inflamed tonsils, swellings, rheumatism, sore nipples, infections,

sores, cuts, boils, blood poisoning, and as a liniment. It was also applied to snake bites. Other uses include burns, bruises, toothaches, and fevers.

Gourd was used for venereal diseases e.g. gonorrhea and syphilis as well as an emetic and physic. It was a remedy for bloating and for worms. Gourd plants were also considered to be a cure-all by some indigenous people.

Horehound was believed to stimulate blood circulation. It also acted as a cough, cold, and respiratory aid.

Horsetail rush was taken for kidney problems. It was used as a diuretic, eyewash, and for urinary tract infections.

Jimson weed was not known to have been used for medicinal purposes. However, it was known for its narcotic properties. It was used on occasion to render a person unconscious.

Juniper was used by Great Basin Indians as a blood tonic or treating venereal disease. It was also used for headaches, colds, disinfectant, fever, measles, burns, and wounds.

Lovage was made into a cough treatment.

Manzanita was used for venereal disease. In addition, manzanita was used for poison oak, and wounds.

Mint, Spearmint or Peppermint was used in a large variety of afflictions like colic, stomachaches, indigestion, diarrhea, headaches, colds, fevers, sore throats, and to reduce swelling. It was also used for heart problems. Spearmint leaves cured an upset stomach; and was used as a cough syrup. Peppermint was used for gas pains.

Milkweed was employed for headaches and ringworm. It also could have drawn out snakebite poison.

Pink sand was applied to burns.

Prince's plume, Desert plume, or Indian cabbage was used to treat sore gums and teeth, earaches, rheumatic pains, and general weakness after an illness. It was also used during a diphtheria epidemic to relieve pain and congestion of the throat.

Puffball was considered beneficial for swellings and sores.

Quaking Aspen was used for venereal diseases. Some indigenous people insisted that this had no medicinal value, but rather the black cottonwood should be used instead.

Rabbitbrush was made into remedies for colds, stomach disorders, and bloody diarrhea. It was also rubbed into the scalp to stimulate freer breathing. A general tonic was also made out of this. A liniment came from rabbitbrush as well.

Sagebrush was used as a headache remedy and used for rheumatism. Sagebrush was also used in healing ceremonies. Old black leaves were used on baby rashes.

Sand wort was used as an eyewash.

Serviceberry was used for snow blindness.

Single-leaf pinyon was frequently mixed with other plants and used for colds, venereal diseases, rheumatism, tuberculosis, fevers, nausea, chronic indigestion, influenza, pneumonia, bowel trouble, diarrhea, kidney problems, small pox, ruptures, sciatic pains, chest congestion, and as part of a post-childbirth tonic. It was also used as a treatment for insect bites, swellings, sores, rashes, and cuts, or for drawing out boils and slivers. In addition, it was a sore throat remedy. Intestinal parasites, worms, and muscular soreness were also symptoms that this was used to treat.

Smokebush was used as a cough and cold remedy, as well as used to treat pneumonia, tuberculosis, influenza, whooping cough, stomachaches, toothaches, small pox, measles, venereal diseases, muscular pains, diarrhea, sores, rheumatism, face neuralgia, incontinence, kidney trouble, or to induce urination.

Snowberry or Waxberry was used for stomach pains and indigestion. These plants also helped to relieve the pains of childbirth.

St. John's wort was used for bullet wounds, cuts, swellings, aching feet, toothaches, and venereal diseases.

Sulphur flower was used for rheumatism, lameness, stomachaches, and colds.

Tobacco was employed to expel worms, as well as treat athlete's foot, asthma, tuberculosis, swellings, rheumatism, cuts, sores, snakebites, hives, eczema, skin infections or irritations. Tobacco was also used for decayed tooth pain. It also functioned as a cold remedy . It functioned as a physic and an emetic. [The tobacco plant that is found in the Great Basin has much less nicotine than its relative from the East that is used in cigarettes, etc. It was also used in the healing ritual.]

Violet was considered to be a sweat inducer. Canadian Violets were used for lung trouble.

White fir was believed to cure tuberculosis, venereal diseases, sores, boils, cuts, and lung troubles.

White-sage or Winterfat was used as an anti-lice treatment, as well as a general scalp and hair tonic . It was believed to hold anti-graying and anti-baldness properties, as well as a potential hair-restorer . It was also used to relieve eye soreness. This helped to alleviate intermittent fevers and it aided in relieving respiratory ailments.

White sand was employed for swellings.

Wild buckwheat was used for tuberculosis, cough, lameness, rheumatism, and bladder trouble.

Wild geraniums were used for upset stomach, swollen feet, venereal diseases, sore eyes, and colds and as a contraceptive. These were used for ulcers.

Wild mustard was another treatment for burns.

Wild rose or Woods' Rose was used for cuts, sores, wounds, intestinal influenza, bloody diarrhea, burns, swellings, boils, and as a general tonic or physic. It also was a cold remedy.

Yarrow had a wide range of medicinal uses, e.g. a liniment for muscular pain, an itch remedy, stomachaches, indigestion, swellings, sores, rashes, fevers, headaches, sore eyes, colic, dyspepsia, kidney problems, local anesthetic, post-childbirth blood tonic, and bladder ailments. It was also used for toothaches and gas pains. It was also used for colds, and bruises.

Yellow dock, Indian rhubarb, Curly dock is considered to be a common weed across the Great Basin. Depending on the preparation, it was used to treat rheumatic swellings, bruises, burns, liver disorder and venereal diseases. It was also used as a pain reliever, a blood purifier, cure for

diarrhea, and as a general tonic. In addition, it was used for a variety of ailments (e.g. scurvy, scales, running sores, skin eruptions, and itch reliever). It was used to treat stomachaches. (It was also smoked in certain ceremonies.)

Yucca, Spanish Bayonet, Lord's candle was used for blindness and skin irritation.

Summary: Many of these herbs were also used for veterinary purposes. Beyond botanical remedies, there were many non-plant remedies that were also used by the Great Basin people as well. These included such treatments as using breast milk for a nursing baby's sore eyes, skunk grease on chapped skin, and horse urine for broken and itching pustules. In addition, the fat from some animal hearts was thought to be a cure for tuberculosis.

Within this paper, we have only begun to glimpse the extensive medicinal knowledge used by the Great Basin indigenous people. It is clear to see that these Great Basin people were creative in their cures. One can tell by the wide variety of plants for certain diseases (e.g. venereal diseases and rheumatism) that they had difficulty in finding reliable remedies. This seemed to be especially true for ailments that were brought in through European contact. It was also well known that various cures were adapted from their immigrant neighbors, and they, in turn, borrowed from the Native Americans.

By looking at these curatives, one can also gain perspective about the kinds of maladies that were most common. The indigenous Great Basin people found a wealth of medicinal riches amongst what would be considered to be mostly a wasteland of worthless desert by many modern Americans. It is hoped that modern Great Basin inhabitants, as well as Americans in general, may benefit from a better understanding of the knowledge and gain a true appreciation of these old aboriginal ways. Edited by the staff of *Greasewood Tablettes*.

Greast Basin History of Medicine Program's Annual Dinner

Herbert M. Swick, MD, Director of the Institute of Medicine and Humanities at the University of Montana and St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula, will speak at our annual meeting on September 29, 6 PM, at the Eldorado Hotel and Casino. He will talk about plague that was first described before Christ, but it has persisted up to the present time. The story of plague is fascinating and reaches back to the Trojan and Peloponnesian Wars, but it blossomed in the 14th Century with the Black Death in Europe. Its introduction to America is also an intriguing element in the tale. Plague transformed history, literature, art, and other social and cultural institutions. All of our readers are invited to the dinner and program. The price is $35 for the meal. Call pathology at 775 784 4068 for reservations.

GREASEWOOD TABLETTES © is a quarterly publication of the Department of Pathology, Great Basin History of Medicine Division, University of Nevada School of Medicine. Anton P. Sohn is our editor. Teresa Garrison is the associate editor. Lynda D. McLellan and Gussie Burgoyne are our production assistants. The newsletter is printed by the University of Nevada Printing Shop. **The cost of publication is paid for by a grant from Parks, Ritzlin and Sohn, Ltd.** The editor solicits any items of interest for publication. Suggestions, corrections and comments are welcome. Please feel free to write or call us. The address is Department of Pathology/350, University of Nevada School of Medicine, Reno, NV, 89557. Our telephone is (775) 784-4068. The name GREASEWOOD TABLETTES © is derived from the greasewood plant or creosote bush, a plant that was used by Native Nevadans for medicinal purposes. It is still the subject of pharmacological research today.