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# 150 YEARS OF NEVADA MEDICINE

## To Be Released This Fall

### 150 Years of Nevada Medicine (And More)



### Nevada's Men & Women Healers

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*150 Years of Nevada Medicine* tells the story of the many parts of Nevada's medical history including the following: Chinese doctors, Native American doctors, midwives, home remedies, medical education, medical doctors, and more. These stories and histories of little known women and men who have developed Nevada's healthcare system and should not be forgotten or lost in history. The histories highlight the contributions of numerous men and women healers of all types—hydropaths, homeopaths, shamans, Thompsonians, etc. Their philosophies on treatment and cause of disease, when added to the problem of unregulated medical schools, poor education of doctors, and lack of profession oversight gives us insight into medical care for over 150 years ago.

The book will sell for \$27.50

and has 375 pages with over 60 photos. Ordering information will be in the next issue of *Greasewood Tablettes*.

The highlights of *150 Years of Nevada Medicine* are:

- 1851 1st MD, Chas. Daggett
- 1855 Daggett treats Orson Hyde
- 1860 1st Nev. hosp., Fort Churchill
- 1860 Pyramid Lake Battle, Anton Tjader
- 1861 Steamboat Springs Hosp.
- 1862 smallpox in Washoe City
- 1863 1st black MD, W.H.C. Stephensen
- 1874 'fevers' in Reno
- 1875 Nev. MD registration law
- 1876 1st hosp. on the Comstock
- 1878 NSMA founded
- 1879 1st female grad. MD, Kate Post
- 1882 Nev. Indigent Insane Hosp.
- 1892 Nev. Board of Health created

1899 Nev. MD licensing law  
 1900 Reno anthrax epidemic  
 1904 1st Las Vegas (tent) hosp.  
 1904 1st Reno hosp.  
 1907 Reno measles epidemic  
 1907 WCMS founded  
 1912 Nev. infectious disease stats  
 1918 Carlin train wreck  
 1918 Nev. influenza pandemic  
 1922 diabetes in Nevada  
 1939 Carlin Canyon train wreck  
 1942 Las Vegas Clinic founded  
 1946 Elko Clinic founded  
 1949 Fallon Clinic founded  
 1952 High Sierra train wreck

1952 Nev. polio epidemic  
 1952 RMSF outbreak  
 1955 CCMS formed  
 1957 Orvis School of Nursing  
 1967 Ely rabies emergency  
 1971 1st class UNSOMS  
 1975 Nev. malpractice crisis  
 1980 1st MDs at UNSOM  
 1989 1st Greasewood Tablettes  
 1992 1,000 AIDS patients in Nev.  
 1993 Hantavirus in Tonopah  
 2010 4 Corners Area Hantavirus epidemic  
 2014 Greasewood Tablettes 25th birthday

Ken Maclean and Bill Tappan, and internists Stephen Phalen and Peter Rowe in the mid 1950s.)

Dr. Thompson's epic one-man cross-Sierra adventure occurred in the late winter of 1970. Comparatively, he outdid "Snowshoe" John Thompson by skiing a greater distance, at a loftier altitude, and for 5 days compared to 2. Of course, John Thompson had a job to do even though he was not paid, while Dave Thompson's trip was motivated for esthetic pleasure only.

Dave Thompson retired from medical practice in 2006. He died in 2013, the day after his 90th birthday. He exploited his fondness for outdoor Nevada for over 50 years, and for certain, few of his contemporaries have matched this Lincolnesque mountaineer's skill or his exceptional endurance. He was 6 feet 5 inches, spare and fit, a perfect counterpart to the original "Snowshoe" Thompson. (We should mention the 3rd "Snowshoe" Thompson, the well-known local sportsman, writer, and entrepreneur, Don Thompson, who promoted skiing and related

# David 'Snowshoe' Thompson

Rod Sage, MD

The first mountain man to carry the nickname of "Snowshoe" was John Thompson, who carried the mail to folks living along the Genoa, Nevada, to Placerville, California, corridor in the heart of the High Sierra. He became famous for serving his clients year around from 1856 to 1876. In the wintertime he delivered the mail travelling on skis, otherwise on foot or by horseback. Despite his well-known moniker, John Thompson rarely resorted to snowshoes, which when compared to skis were a cumbersome nuisance. His favorite mode of travel was by heavy, 10 feet long skis supported with a single sturdy spruce staff generally held by both hands.

Our own mountain man, Dr. David Thompson (1923-2013) acquired the name of "Snowshoe" after many years of recreational skiing, both downhill and cross-country in the Sierra, and on

occasion in the Rocky Mountain West.

Dr. Dave Thompson, no relation to the original "Snowshoe" Thompson or the later Don Thompson, was an Ohio native who attended medical school at the University of Michigan, followed by residency training in internal medical and hematology.

To pursue his fondness for the western mountains, Dave chose Reno for his medical career, joining the small enclave of Michigan doctors (Surgeons



Dr. David 'Snowshoe' Thompson (1923-2013)  
 Photo from *Summit Magazine*

activities for many years in the Reno area.)

The following account by Dr. Thompson is excerpted from the November 1970 of *Summit* magazine. Sadly, the magazine ceased publication shortly after this issue.

In Dr. Thompson's words:

My route over the Great Western Divide was around Triple Divide Peak. It is necessary to start climbing on a long shallow traverse from the river until a point is reached above the small lake on the river. This will put you past the cliffs, which make up the north wall of the canyon at this point. Then, one turns due north and climbs steadily over open slopes until the ridge (12,000+) stretching east of Triple Divide Peak can be crossed. At this point, about 200 yards of scrambling puts one in the notch east of Glacier Lake where one has a pleasant short run down around the Lake and into the notch containing the tiny lake at the head of Cloud Canyon

At this point, I had intended to proceed westerly, crossing Copper Mine Pass, then along the ridge to Elizabeth Pass and from Elizabeth Pass across the tableland to Pear Lake. However, the weather again worsened abruptly with a strong wind and a double cloud deck to the west. The snow slopes down to Lion Lake were topped by about a half-inch of splendid corn, and I had promised to be back home by April 1 for my granddaughter's birthday. The combination was irresistible and I headed downhill.

Unfortunately, below Lion Lake, the visibility deteriorated and I would have welcomed a couple of bottles of Mummery's Bouvier. [A.F. Mummery was a renowned 19th/20th-century alpine mountaineer who preferred Bouvier, an alcoholic drink.] It was necessary to follow the streambed carefully and this is not the most suitable route down this

canyon on skis. Two sets of cliffs are present; 1 set above Tamarack Lake and the 2nd set between the 10,000 and 10,400-foot contours higher up. The next morning, when visibility improved, it was obvious that both sets could be circumvented via open slopes to the south of the stream. However, because of the lack of visibility, I was required to crampon down a narrow but not particularly steep couloir along the creek through the upper cliffs. I spent the 4th night above Tamarack Lake and, after sleeping somewhat later than usual the next morning, I had a pleasant run down to High Sierra Trail Junction at the end of River Valley. Although I was able to ski around Bear Paw Meadow into Buck Canyon for about three-quarters of a mile, the ski crossing officially ended at the River Valley Junction and from there to Giant Forest it was a pleasant spring hike. I spent 1 more night on the trail just below Seven Mile

Hill, caught a ride from Giant Forest to the Fresno Airport and was home the evening of the 6th day.

The route west from Triple Divide Peak to Pear Lake certainly seems feasible and probably would be preferable when traveling west to east. As a matter of fact, the run down from the shoulder of Triple Divide Peak into the Kern-Kaweah River on a west-east crossing would be fantastic.

As far as equipment is concerned, I would like to put in a good word for Harscheisen. These seem particularly adapted to late winter Sierra snow conditions. They are small metal plates, which fasten vertically on the sides of the ski under the foot. When used in conjunction with skins, they obviate the need for crampons in climbing steep, hard slopes, a common early morning problem.

The Kern Basin is a lovely wild place and is twice as beautiful under a mantle of snow. Late winter is the best time and you won't encounter any snowmobiles.

## Dr. Gideon Weed, The 1st Washoe County Physician

In *Greasewood Tablettes* (fall 2008 and spring 2009) we published a two-part article by Kristin Sohn on hydropathic Doctors Gideon and Ada Weed, graduates of Dr. Russell Trall's Hygeio-therapeutic College. They came to Washoe City in 1860 after getting married at the school. In 1862 after an outbreak of smallpox, Gideon was ap-

pointed county physician to head up the first Washoe County Hospital. In 1869 he attended Rush Medical School in Chicago, and in 1870 the Weeds moved to Seattle, where Gideon became one of the most prominent physicians in Washington Territory. He served as Seattle's mayor for two terms; founded a hospital; was one of twelve founders of King County Medical Society

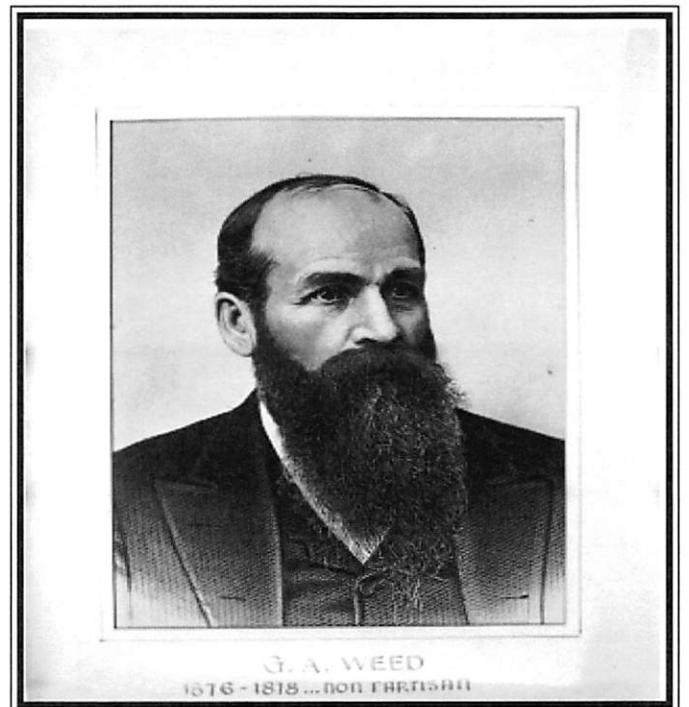
(Wash. Territory Med. Society) and its 1st president; a Regent of Wash. Territory University; and was instrumental in an attempt to start a medical school.

Earlier this year Mr. John Gerhard, a retired Boeing manager, was gathering information on the founders of KCMS and came across our article on the Weeds. Of interest is the fact that Gideon obtained a medical license in Seattle, but Ada did not. Furthermore, a similar situation occurred in Washoe City — there is no record that Ada practiced medicine. In the 19th and early 20th century there was a strong bias against women physicians. This was emphasized when she did try to establish a practice in Oregon

and was unsuccessful, so they moved on.

Mr. Gerhard provided this photograph of Gideon, courtesy of *Seattle Municipal Archives, Item No. 12259.*

*Dr. Gideon Weed*



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