

6 well-respected early doctors

by Joellen Ulliman, Curator

Dr. John Hole (1755-1813)

Dr. John Hole was born in New Jersey in 1755. At age 11, a Newark doctor took an interest in the smart young boy and offered to foster him and teach him the medical arts. This doctor eventually sent him to the University of Berlin in Germany to pursue a formal education.

Most of his medical education came on the battlefield after graduation. After 5 years abroad, he returned to America to find the colonies on the brink of the American Revolution. He joined the militia as surgeon's mate in Boston. He was at the Battle of Bunker Hill, in Cambridge, when George Washington took charge of the troops. He went further north with General Richard Montgomery. He was at the tragic Battle of Quebec on Dec. 31, 1775. He also served at Long Island, but he was substantially weakened by his time in Canada and deemed unfit to serve any longer.

Once home, he had a very brief marriage to Hannah Clark and then he married Mercy (Massee) Ludlow. The Holes moved into the Northwest Territory (Ohio) with other extended family members and their families. They settled in Cincinnati first. He stopped an outbreak of smallpox there by using knowledge learned from inoculating soldiers. In 1796, they found a permanent home along a vibrant creek in Washington Township ([approximately the windmill house on Alex-Bell](#)). Dr. Hole and his family were the first settlers in the Township.

He was just what was needed in this wild, new land. He understood pioneer medicine.

Dr. Hole was the first and only doctor in Montgomery Co. for 5 years. He was one of the first 120 doctors inducted into the newly formed Ohio Medical Society in 1812. He rode his horse for miles to aid the sick and injured, sleeping out in all kinds of weather. He was generous and caring when serving others. In addition to his medical practice, he built two sawmills along the creek.

Dr. Hole died from illness in 1813 at almost 58 years old. He and Massee had a total of 12 children, but 7 died before Massee did in 1842.

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Dr. Nathaniel Strong (1783-1867)

Although Dr. Strong was born in Massachusetts in 1783, life eventually brought him to Centerville. He served in the War of 1812 and afterward sailed around the world as a ship's surgeon. He decided to settle here in 1814. His practice was at **28 W. Franklin in the old Anderson home, now the Tarlano Building**.

He was licensed to practice medicine three years later in 1817. He mixed healing preparations for his patients. He also wrote a locally acclaimed paper on the woman's reproductive cycle in 1818. Although it never was accepted into the medical society's journal, probably because he was an unknown physician, Dr. Lamme praised his work and encouraged publication.

Dr. Strong was active in the Montgomery and Clark Co. Medical Societies, serving as an officer frequently.

He married Hannah Davis; they had one child, a son named Hiram in 1825. Later Hiram served heroically in the Civil War at the Battle of Chickamauga.

Hannah died at age 34 in 1833. Dr. Strong married Sarah Anderson in 1839. He owned a lot of property in the Uptown area and Woodbourne. He lived and practiced at 28 W. Franklin in addition to owning **63 W. Franklin (now part of Manna)**. At one point in his life, he lived with his family at **79 W. Franklin (now a dentist office)**.

In the 1850's, he quit practicing medicine completely and pursued multiple business opportunities. He also held Township offices.

He died of bladder disease in 1867. He was 74 years old.



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Dr. William Lamme (1826-1889)

Dr. Lamme was born near Dayton in 1826. He attended Germantown Academy and began studying medicine with a doctor in Carrollton at age 19; he attended many medical lectures at the Ohio Medical College in Cincinnati. When he graduated from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia in the fall of 1850, he came to Centerville to practice as a physician and surgeon.

A year later, he married Anna Catherine Maxwell. The couple eventually had 5 children together over a span of 23 years. Their oldest son died at 2 years old, and their youngest daughter died at age 21. They were devout members of Washington Presbyterian Church.

The family lived at **58/60 N. Main (now Glass House Realty)**. They lived there from 1852-1891.

Always willing to learn, Dr. Lamme traveled to Philadelphia in 1854 for a course of study of the lung and heart. Soon after, in 1861, he joined the Union to help the efforts in the Civil War. He was well respected and loved by his men.

His wife Anna rallied around the soldiers' cause. She also gave great support to the community and their church. Clergy and educators stayed at the Lamme home frequently.

Sadly, Dr. Lamme became ill at the Battle of Shiloh. He never fully recovered.

After the war, he moved and practiced in Toledo, Dayton, and Xenia. He was in charge of the Dayton Hospital and also went into a drug business with another doctor.

Throughout his lifetime, he studied the Bible avidly. He wrote many important medical articles too.

In 1874, Dr. Lamme returned to Centerville and practiced medicine until his death in 1889. He passed after a long illness at age 62.

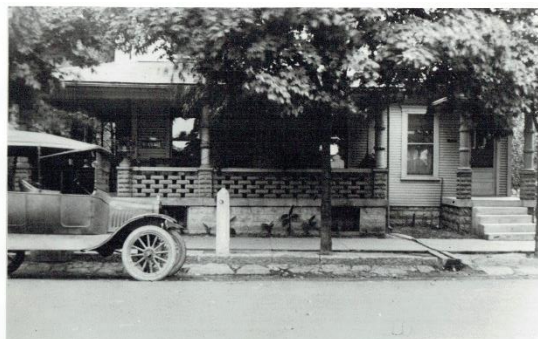
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Dr. Charles Dodge Slagle (1871-1948)

Born in 1871 near Portsmouth, Ohio, Dr. Slagle's inspiration for medicine apparently came from his own father, a doctor himself.

In 1897, he graduated from Sterling Medical College, which is now a part of Ohio State University. He immediately moved to Centerville to practice medicine by 1898. His home and office were at **11 N. Main St. (where Agave and Rye now sits)**.



Dr. Slagle's home/office at 11 N. Main

Dr. Slagle married Mayane L. Brandau in about 1896. The couple had seven children, 4 boys and 3 girls.

Dr. Slagle made many late-night house calls, by horse and buggy, in all kinds of weather. Once in 1914, his horse and buggy got stuck in a snowdrift on a call five miles south of town. After walking to a nearby farmhouse, he eventually made

it in time to deliver his patient's baby. He then went to bed at the house with the family. During his career, he delivered 1500 babies.

Dr. Slagle served during World War I. His oldest son enlisted on the same day as he did. He served with the Army Medical Corps. He entered the service in October 1918 as a Captain and served until May 1919. He was sent to Camp Greenleaf in Georgia. He then headed to the east coast to treat servicemen returning from France. He missed the Spanish flu epidemic here in Ohio, but regrettably his teenaged daughter Marion died from the disease in 1918.

In 1925 he traveled in Europe with the Interstate Medical Society of America. He was a member of the national, state, and county medical societies. Additionally, he was a member of the Masonic Lodge. His faith was important to him; he was not only a member at Centerville Baptist Church, he was a deacon and trustee.

During World War II, Dr. Slagle and all 4 of his sons served in the military. He retired in 1945 after 47 years of practicing medicine; he moved to Dayton. After a long illness, he passed away in 1948.

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Dr. Dudley Kever (1859-1953)

Born in late 1859 in Ridgeville, OH into a Quaker family, Dr. Kever was always known as quiet and peaceful. His father was also a doctor.

Dr. Kever attended one-room school houses and eventually Miami Valley College in Springboro. He was the very last graduate of this establishment. Then he attended Miami Medical College (now part of University of Cincinnati). He spent one year at Dartmouth College. His internship was as the resident doctor in the Cincinnati Work House.

He married Ida Wright in 1886; they eventually had 2 sons. He came to Centerville in 1890 after practicing for a short time in Springboro. He practiced out of his home, located on the **northeast corner of Main and Franklin (now Graeter's)**. Ida became a charter member of the Centerville Library Club, established in 1900.

He was a physician, surgeon, dentist, and pharmacist as there was no drug store in town yet. He mixed up his own medicines, using powders and creating prescriptions and rolling his own pills.

He made house calls by horse and buggy. In his later years, he owned a Chrysler. Being on a corner in the center of town, he sped through the traffic signal without stopping. He defended his bad driving, saying, "I came before the traffic lights!" In his twilight years, he only did office visits (much safer).

Ida died in 1946. Dr. Kever retired then but lived until 1953. He died peacefully at age 93 in his sleep from coronary thrombosis. Ironically, at age 30, insurance did not cover him because the examining doctor claimed he had a "bad heart". The next 60 or so years were healthy for him . . . as he gave his heart to his patients.

He was honored by both Montgomery Co. Medical Society and the Ohio Medical Association for his long, respected career of more than 56 years.



Mrs. Ida Kever in front of home/office at 2 N. Main

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Dr. Slagle and Dr. Keverer tended to the entire community...sometimes together...

Practicing medicine right across Main St. from one another, between Dr. Slagle and Dr. Keverer, everyone in the local area had excellent health care.

In 1910, there was a horrible explosion at the northwest corner of Franklin and Main. Two men were cleaning a well at the nearby general store. They emptied the water. Then they dropped a lit lantern into its depths to see.

Unbeknown to them, petroleum fumes had found their way into the well. BOOM! An explosion like never heard before shook the ground.

Both doctors helped the men and surprised bystanders who were injured in the blast. One of the workers was thrown 30 feet. He died when his skull was crushed. The other broke his right knee when he was thrown. He sustained painful burns. Dr. Slagle's own son Lister was burned mildly.



Dr. Dudley Keverer in front of home/office at 2 N. Main

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Dr. Albert Vincent Black (1913-2000)

Arguably Dr. Black could be considered the last of the “country doctors” in our area. Born in 1913 in Woodstock OH on a farm, he lived during a time of great medical transition.

In 1935 he received his BA from the University of Dayton. In 1938 he earned his medical degree from the Ohio State University. His internship was at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Dayton. There he met the love of his life, student nurse Enid Ruth Martin. They wed in 1939.

From 1939-1942, he served his residency at Dayton State Hospital in neuropsychiatry. After, he joined the Medical Army Air Corps and served in England and France. There he used penicillin for the first time to stop an infection. He also used pentothal as an anesthetic.

After his military service in 1946, he came to Centerville as a general practitioner and then an internist. He took over Dr. Slagle’s practice at **11 N. Main (now Agave & Rye)**. He worked as a dentist and surgeon as well, here and at local hospitals. Through the 1950’s, he worked as an ER physician, obstetrician, counsellor, and general internist. As a country doctor, he took care of every need.

He did the first hip repair in Washington Twp. He used pentothal and a Smith Peterson nail. He performed the first angiogram in Dayton in 1957. Another area doctor began installing pacemakers, so Dr. Black carried a screwdriver in his bag in case he had to make quick adjustments for his patients.

He, Enid, their 3 daughters, and 1 son resided on the top floor of his office. The medical office and family shared the same refrigerator.

Dr. Black made many house calls. He drove an old car, but during the Blizzard of 1950, he had to borrow a horse to see a patient on Ferry Rd. Many of his patients did not own cars; some even drove to his office on tractors.

He was active in local organizations and medical community. He served on the school board for 8 years as well as in many service clubs and his church. He wrote a column for the Montgomery Co. Medical Society and served as president and treasurer. He was known as being quiet, soft spoken, and gentle. People remembered him as both compassionate and professional.

As time passed, he felt sad that medicine was becoming more of a business and less about the doctor/patient relationships.

He retired with Enid to Florida in 1983 after 37 years of medical practice. He still volunteered in medical and social services. He loved music, playing both clarinet and saxophone. He enjoyed fishing, bowling, and photography. He died in 2000 at age 86.