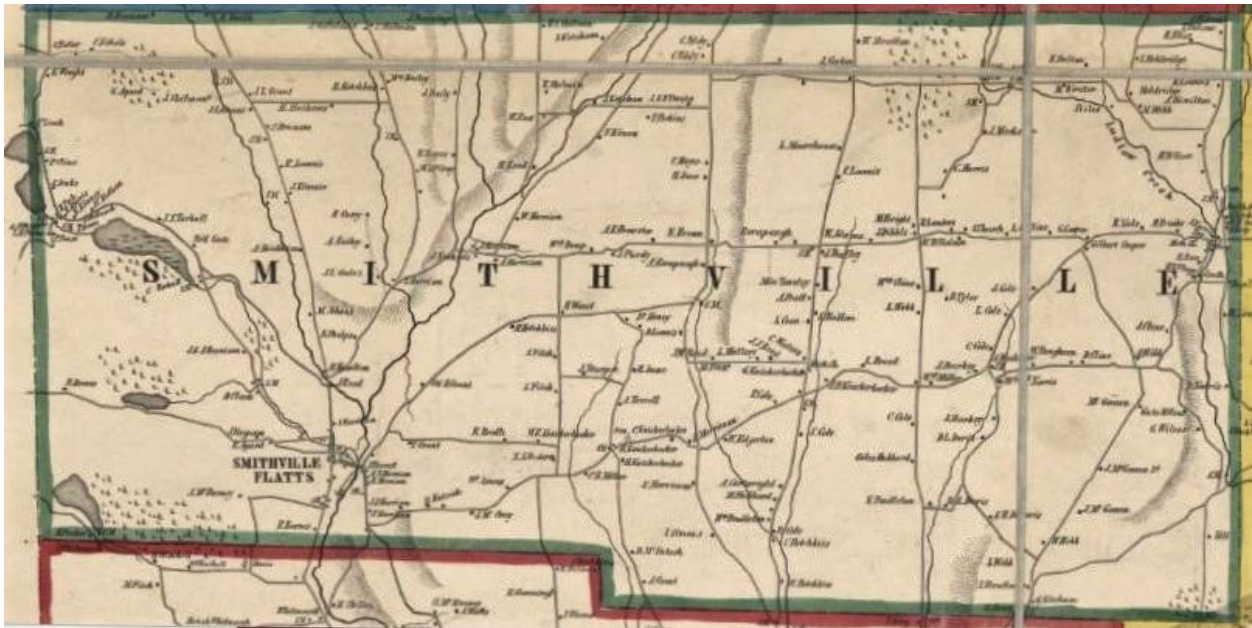


WHO WERE THEY?

PHYSICIANS IN THE TOWN OF SMITHVILLE CHENANGO COUNTY, NEW YORK

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Town of Smithville, 1855

Old records and newspaper accounts show that Smithville residents were treated not only by physicians who lived in the community, but by doctors from nearby towns. Given Smithville's size and shape, this is not surprising. Doctors from surrounding towns joined with local doctors to attend to Smithville's births, deaths, illnesses, and prescriptions—physicians from Brisben, Cincinnatus, Greene, McDonough, Oxford, and Willet.

The following is a compilation of physicians who lived in and had an office in Smithville. This listing of resident doctors may be incomplete, as some physicians came to Smithville and left again before a census was taken, and written records are scarce. The compilation is not intended to discredit the impact the outlying physicians had on the community, as their contributions were substantial.

In 1800, only four medical schools existed in the United States—Harvard, Dartmouth, King's College, and the University of Pennsylvania. Because of the need for physicians, the predominant method of medical training was by the apprentice system. A young man would study medicine with a practicing physician and, for a fee and the performance of menial tasks, learn by assisting. A typical period of this preceptorship was three years.

In the early to mid-1800s, privately-owned medical schools began to flourish. With no entrance requirements other than the ability to pay tuition, the training might consist of two four-month lecture sessions.

The American Medical Association, formed in 1847, set as one of its goals to standardize medical education. After the Civil War, colleges and universities opened medical schools, with the training period extended to three years. Then, by the turn of the century, proprietary schools were closing. Standards were set for the education of physicians, with appropriate licensing.

Medical practitioners subscribed to and were trained in one of four branches of medicine: eclectic, allopathic, osteopathic, and homeopathic. If known, each local physician's branch is identified.

BRANCHES OF MEDICINE

Eclectic Medicine. A branch of American medicine that evolved from Early American and Native American herbal remedies. It made use of botanical remedies and other substances, along with physical therapy practices. Its popularity expanded in the 1840s, peaked in the 1880s and 1890s, and by 1910, it was no longer sanctioned.

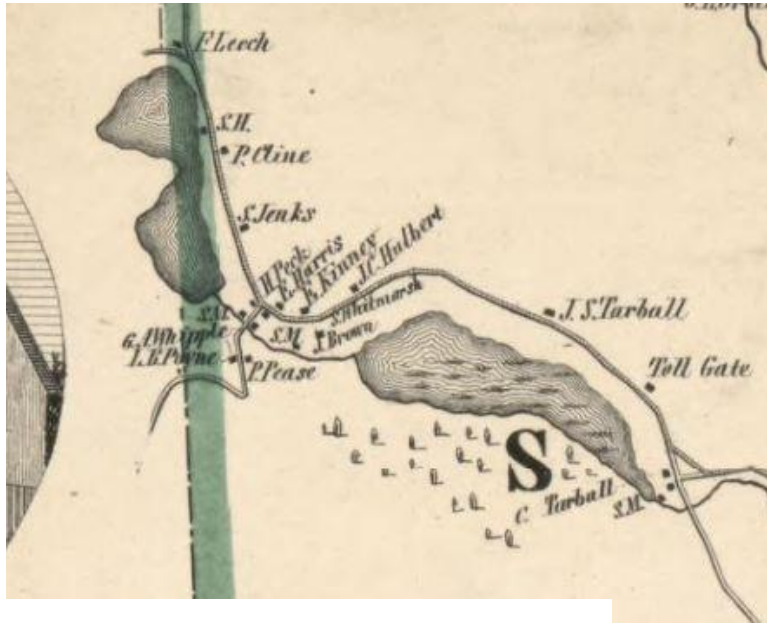
Allopathic Medicine. Science-based modern or mainstream medicine. Professionals are now granted M.D. degrees and are licensed to practice. Treatments include medicine, surgery, radiation, and other therapies and procedures.

Osteopathic Medicine. Professionals are now granted D.O. degrees and are licensed to practice. D.O.s use all modern treatments and medicine, are fully trained, and focus on interrelated body parts that help with healing.

Homeopathic Medicine. A holistic, natural approach to treatment, with the thought that the body can heal itself. Homeopathic practitioners use herbs in their treatment.

THE FIRST PHYSICIAN

"Dr. Locy," (Dates of birth and death unknown). (In Smithville 1822-1831.) Smithville's first known physician, "Dr. Locy," came to the town about 1822 and practiced until 1831. He settled north of Smithville Flats near the Cortland County line on land overlooking Cincinnatus Lake.



Frederick Leach farm overlooking Cincinnatus Lake, 1855

The farm, whose owners through the years have included Frederick Leach, Stephen Hoag, and Swift Tarbell, is now 6138 State Highway 41. [When searching the 1830 federal censuses of Smithville and Willet, I did not find any name like Locy, Lacy, Lacey, or Lucy.] (Source: *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880.)

A LONG TIME STANDING

Dr. Daniel Clark, (1803-1887). (In Smithville 1827-1860.) Dr. Daniel Clark, Smithville's second physician, was the most long-standing of Smithville's doctors, practicing here for thirty-three years. He was born in Delaware County, New York in 1803 and arrived from Genegantslet about 1827 when he was a young twenty-four-year-old physician.

Dr. Clark lived in, and probably paid for the construction of, the two-story Greek Revival home at 5242 State Highway 41 in Smithville Flats. He purchased the property in 1833 from George and Clarissa Agard. The small, early Agard home on the lot was moved to a new location on today's Water Street. Dr. Clark's medical office may have been at his home, although indications are that he hung his shingle downtown.

Dr. Clark served as a preceptor for young medical students; one of his apprentices in 1834 became a physician who went on to national prominence: Nathan Smith Davis, whose father's farm was on today's Ott Road. Dr. Davis was one of the founders of the American Medical Association and was the first editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.



Former Dr. Daniel Clark home as seen in 1976

In addition to mentoring future physicians, Dr. Clark served as Clerk of the Congregational Church in Smithville Flats from its re-organization in 1855 until 1862, when he asked to be dismissed from the church and transferred to the church at Franklin, New York.

Not only was Dr. Clark a physician, but he was a man of many interests, one being horticulture. At the first Smithville Fair in 1858, he earned a prize for displaying the largest variety of fruit. He owned a farm on Tarbell Road, and his home in the Flats at that time sat on a lot of two-and-a-half acres. He nurtured and grew a nursery of more than 20,000 fruit trees—100 varieties of apples and pears; cherry, plum, and chestnut trees; and fruits such as grapes, gooseberries, rhubarb, currants, strawberries, and raspberries.

Dr. Clark also owned a sawmill on his farm. “Clark’s Dam” backed up water from Pond Brook to operate the mill. According to John H. Buck: *“Long Pond outlet was also dammed further south, just above the intersection of the Round Pond outlet. This sawmill was apparent on the 1855 and 1875 maps. The farm and sawmill at this location were owned by Dr. Daniel Clark as shown on the 1855 map. In the 1855 State census, Clark’s Mill reported production of 200,000 board feet of lumber with value of \$1,100.”*

The Clark family left Smithville about 1860. In 1861, the Greene *Chenango American* reported that Dr. Clark was living in Franklin, Delaware County, New York. *“Medical.—Among the new comers at Franklin, says the Franklin Visitor, is Dr. D. Clark, late of Smithville, Chenango County. In that part of Chenango and the adjacent parts of Broome and Cortland Counties, Dr. Clark had a long and successful practice. His rooms are at the residence of W. B. Hanford.”*

By 1865, Dr. Clark, his wife, and son James, were living in the town of Cortlandville, New York. And by 1870, Dr. and Mrs. Clark were residing with their son and daughter-in-law in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Before his death, Dr. Clark returned to Smithville for a visit. The Greene *Chenango American* reported on August 24, 1882: *“The philosophical Dr. Clark, of Philadelphia, formerly of this place, is with us once again.”*

Dr. Clark died in 1887. He and his wife are buried in the Fernwood Cemetery, Fernwood, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

(Sources: US Censuses; *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; Chenango County Deeds; American Medical Association; Greene *Chenango American*; *Sawmills Along the Genegantslet Creek*, John H. Buck, 2015; Congregational Church Records, Smithville Historical Society; Findagrave.com; Wikipedia.)

TYNER

Dr. Edward York, (1797-1855). (Allopath, in Smithville ca 1835-1836). Edward York, M.D., is the only physician to have ever located in Tyner, at that time known as East Smithville. He was born in Connecticut in 1797 and was a Yale Medical School graduate. He practiced about a year in

Tyner and at other times was in McDonough or Oxford. According to published reports, he was fond of his profession and was ahead of his time in medical thinking. He was a man of excellent character but lacked confidence in his abilities, so he was not a good match for his profession. He enjoyed farming and served a time as the McDonough Postmaster. When his health failed,



he and his family moved to the Village of Oxford, where he died in 1855. His name is recorded in cemeteries in Oxford and in Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York. (Sources: *Annals of Oxford*, Henry Galpin, 1906; *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; Findagrave.com; Appointments of U. S. Postmasters.)

THE TARBELL CONNECTION

Dr. Rufus Thayer, (1820-unknown). (Eclectic, in Smithville 1841-1846.) Dr. Thayer, son of Rufus and Mary Niles Thayer of Massachusetts, was born in Lebanon, Madison County, New York in 1820. He read medicine with Dr. Van Fleet of Hamilton, New York; attended lectures at Cincinnati Eclectic Medical College, Ohio, where he graduated in 1841; and practiced at Smithville Flats for five years. He moved on to Montrose, Pennsylvania in 1846 and lived there and in other Susquehanna County communities for many years.

During Dr. Thayer's time in Ohio, private medical schools were reeling from incidents of grave robbing, the bodies being used for medical education. His alma mater, Cincinnati Eclectic Medical College, had been forced to move out of Worthington, Ohio after reports that the school had desecrated local graveyards.

Dr. Thayer's own brother-in-law, Eli Tarbell of Smithville, was a victim of grave robbing in Ohio a few years later. Dr. Thayer's wife, whom he married in 1842, was the former Joanna Tarbell of Smithville Flats. She was the half-sister of Eli Tarbell, who is credited with founding Tarbell Farms. Joanna Tarbell Thayer died in 1869 and is buried in Montrose.

Rufus Thayer	42	m	Physician	✓	5500	1400	N.Y.
Joanna G.	46	f					Vermont
Sybill L.	19	f	Teacher	✓			N.Y.
William E.	15	m					"
Sydia A. Wallan	24	f	Servant	✓			Penn
...					"

1860 Federal Census, Montrose, PA

Their children were son William Eugene and daughter Sybil (who married E. L. Weeks of Binghamton). Dr. Thayer's second marriage was to H. Celina Bush in 1870. His death occurred sometime between 1880 and 1900. (Sources: *Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania*, Stocker, 1887; US Censuses; Wikipedia; Willoughby, Ohio Historical Society.)

A GOOD EDUCATION

Dr. George Douglas, (1823-1906). (Allopath, in Smithville 1845-1846.) Born in 1823 in Franklin, New York, Dr. Douglas was a well-educated young man. After studying at the Delaware Literary Institute, he studied medicine with Dr. Hine in Franklin and Dr. Daniel Clark in Smithville Flats. Just nineteen years old, he entered the Geneva Medical College, and two years later, the medical



department of the University of the City of New York. When he graduated in 1845, he began to practice in Smithville Flats as an allopath and stayed one year. He moved on to Oxford, then Brooklyn, and back to Oxford. He died in 1906 and is buried at Riverview Cemetery, Oxford.

(Sources: *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; Findagrave.com; Directory of Deceased Physicians.)

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Dr. David George Wilder, (1821-1850). (Allopath, in Smithville ca 1847-1850.) Dr. Wilder, born in 1821, was a native of Verona, Oneida County, New York. In 1844, he married Elizabeth Williams of DeRuyter, and based on birth information for their children, it appears that the family came to Smithville about 1847. He is listed in the 1850 census as a physician and living near Dr. Clark. [The census incorrectly shows his surname as Miller.] Listed with the family in the census is a "Student at Medicine," Willard F. Fisher, age 24.

Dr. Wilder's descendants tell us that both Dr. Wilder and his brother Dr. Alexander Wilder spent time at the Oneida Community, a socialist Utopian community. The brothers quarreled over vaccination, Dr. David being in favor of, and Dr. Alexander being opposed to.

According to his daughter's obituary, Dr. Wilder was "a very successful physician" who died at his home in Smithville Flats. The cause of death was typhoid fever; the date was October 13, 1850, and he was twenty-nine. He left his widow Elizabeth Wilder and three young children, Susan



Elizabeth (b 4/25/1845); David George (b 12/15/1846); and John Fisher (b 4/15/1849).

From an unknown newspaper clipping pasted in his granddaughter's scrapbook: *"Obituary—Died, at Smithville Flats, Chenango Co., David Wilder, M.D., in the 30th year of his age. The decease of Dr. Wilder, in the prime of manhood, and in the full tide of an unusually successful career, has made a breach in our ranks which will not soon be supplied. As a man, he was generous, confiding, [sic] and strictly upright; as a reformer, he was bold, decided and unyielding; as a physician, devoted and earnest and unremitting in his professional attention. He died like a true soldier, with his armor on; and passed to a better future, as one who had been faithful to death."*

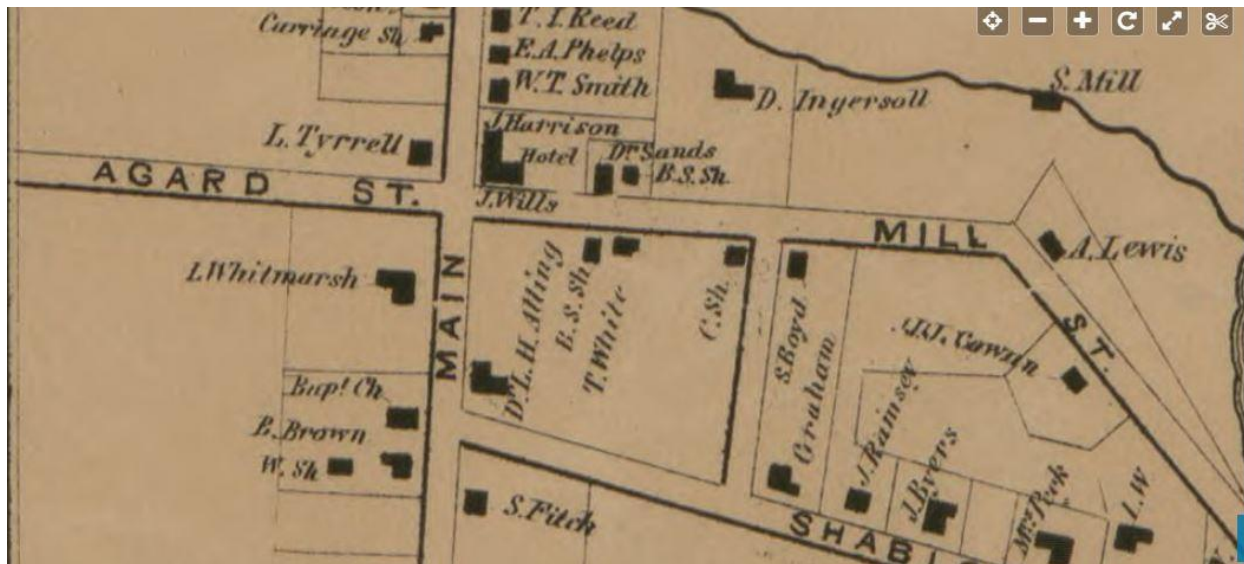
Dr. Wilder died without a will; the administrators for the estate, estimated to be less than \$1,200, were his wife and her stepfather, clergyman Thomas Fisher. Alonzo Lewis and Lambert Terrell, Smithville Flats merchants, were appointed to appraise the estate.

Dr. Wilder is buried in the Seventh Day Baptist Churchyard in DeRuyter, Madison County, New York, where his wife's mother and stepfather are buried. (Sources: 1850 federal census; Findagrave.com; Wilder family; Chenango County Wills.)

FLYING UNDER THE RADAR

Dr. Lewis Henry Alling, (1831-1864). (Allopath, in Smithville 1860-September 27, 1864.) Dr. Alling was born in Connecticut in 1831. At age twenty-nine, and with a wife and two children, he graduated with the Yale Medical School Class of 1860. He lived and died in Smithville Flats between the taking of censuses and therefore was never recorded as a resident.

When Dr. Alling and his family came to Smithville in 1860, he replaced Dr. Daniel Clark, who was moving on. Not only did Dr. Alling replace Dr. Clark as the community's physician, but he purchased Dr. Clark's house and his nursery stock.



Dr. Alling home in Smithville Flats, 1863

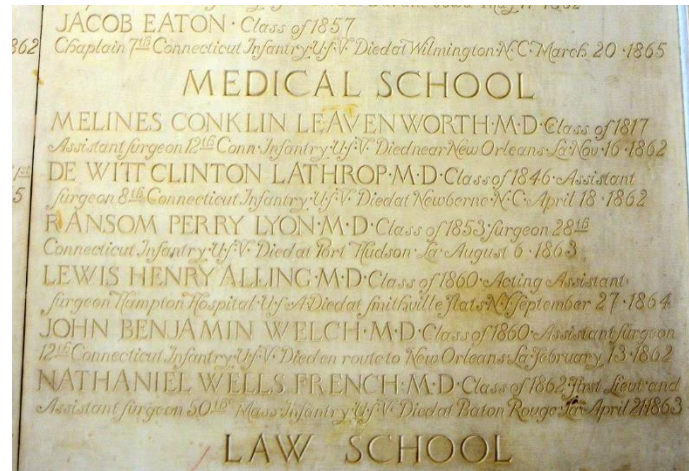
The family fit in easily with Smithville people and participated in local activities: Sabbath School, the Smithville's Soldiers' Aid Society; War rallies, and the Smithville Fair. Dr. Alling earned prizes at the 1861 fair for his tomatoes, blackberry wine, and grape wine. In 1863, the *Chenango American* reporter touted the Dr. Alling orchard's pears—twenty-six varieties!—and he was awarded prizes for his beans, beets, and for the greatest variety of apples.

From the Greene *Chenango American* of April 7, 1864: "Smithville Nursery. This Nursery contains about 20,000 Trees in different stages of Growth, is situated in the village of Smithville Flats. A full proportion are of large size, and all were Propagated by Dr. Daniel Clark, From Trees proved in bearing and scions. From the choicest varieties of the Rochester and other Nurseries, with special reference to adaptation to this climate and soil. The stock consists of about 1000 Varieties of Apples and Pears! (Standards and Dwarfs,) Cherry, Plum and Horse Chestnuts. Clinton, Delaware and Concord Grape Vines, Pie and Wine Plants, Gooseberry, Raspberry, Siberian Crab, &c.

"Persons at a distance can order and have their Trees sent by express. Prices reasonable. Address L. H. Alling, Smithville Flats, N. Y. L. H. Alling, Proprietor. Smithville Flats, April 4, 1864."

It is not clear how the nursery stock was transferred from Dr. Clark to Dr. Alling—perhaps by contract, as no property deed transfer between the two for the farm has been found. Further, it is not clear to what extent this nursery was located on the farm or at the home property in the Flats. It is clear from deeds that the home property at a minimum included apple and pear nursery trees.

Dr. Alling must have felt the call to volunteer for service in the Army of the Republic, for in July of 1864, he enlisted as a Sergeant in the 10th NY Cavalry Regiment. At that time, the regiment was stationed in Virginia during Grant's campaign for Richmond, fighting battles and severe skirmishes. Dr. Alling served as Acting Assistant Surgeon at the Hampton Hospital complex, a primary receiving point for patients. At that hospital, he contracted a disease. Subjected to fever and derangement, he was brought home to Smithville Flats, where he died on September 27, 1864, aged 33 years and 3 months. His gravestone at the Grove Street Cemetery, New Haven, Connecticut notes, "Died in the service of his country." Further, he is honored on a memorial at Yale University: "Lewis Henry Alling, MD, Class of 1860. Acting Assistant Surgeon, Hampton Hospital, USA, died at Smithville Flats, New York September 27, 1864.



Yale University memorial

The widow Mrs. Alling sold the home in the Flats to Robert Hetrick in March of 1867. As part of the agreement, she reserved the right to use certain rooms of the house until September 1 and reserved ownership of the nursery stock (except 50 apple and 6 pear trees), to be removed by December 1, 1867.

Sources: *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; *Greene Chenango American*; Findagrave.com; Ancestry.com; Chenango County Deeds.)

DR. MOHAWK VISITS SMITHVILLE

Dr. Allen Mohawk, (ca 1823-1869). (Eclectic, in Smithville 1861-1861.) For at least one week in the summer of 1861, Dr. Allen Mohawk saw patients in rented rooms at Bailey's Hotel in Smithville Flats. He was preparing to open a practice in Greene, and perhaps his time in Smithville was to solicit patients from outlying communities.

Good News for the Afflicted !
Dr. A. MOHAWK, Indian Physician,
RE-PECTFULLY announces to the inhabitants of this place and vicinity, that he is stopping in town for a few days, for the purpose of practicing his profession.
 He can cure Scrofulous Affections, Eruptive Diseases, Rheumatism, Pleurisy, Sick and Nervous Headaches, Coughs, Colds, Lung Complaints, Kidney Affections, Quinsy, Sore Throat, Croup or Rattles, Worm Diarrhoea, Spinal Complaints, Scald Head, Cancers, and any other disease of long standing.
 N. B.—I can cure Consumption in its first stages.
 Rooms at A. A. BARR'S HOTEL, Greene, till Aug. 20, and at Bailey's Hotel, Smithville Flatts, from Aug. 20, one week.
 Dr. MOHAWK, the Indian Physician, has visited our town on professional visits for some time, and has been very successful in curing what he undertakes. We might cite numerous instances where the Doctor has cured diseases of long standing, which had been given up — *Nunda News*.
 Greene, July 25. 1861. 34244

According to Greene Town Historian Peg Ross, Dr. Mohawk practiced herbal medicine. Dr. Mohawk went on to establish his Greene practice in the white brick cottage that stands on the southwest corner of Page and South Chenango Streets.

Dr. Mohawk was well liked and successful. A member of the Seneca Nation, he stood more than six feet tall, was athletic, and was a skilled horseman. His blood-curdling war whoops throughout Greene attracted the attention of natives and strangers.

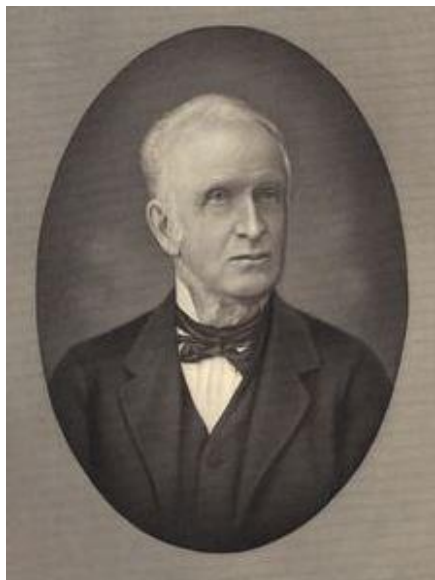
One story about Dr. Mohawk and Smithville Flats comes from Mildred Folsom, former Greene Town Historian. Is it oral history, written history, or folklore? She gave no

source. “. . .As he neared Smithville Flats to make a professional call, he sensed trouble there at a tavern, so stopped to investigate. In the barroom he saw an excited, tearful woman dispensing drinks to six Irishmen who were making no effort to pay for what they demanded. So he told the gang to settle and clear out or he would throw them out. They were in a fighting mood and started for him but he backed into a corner and let each one have it with his fist as they lunged toward him. Each hit floored his man and when three were down he lost his temper and said he would kill the fourth. The result was that besides knocking the ruffian unconscious with several teeth out, he also broke one or two of his own fingers. It is needless to say that the other two had seen enough, and quickly disappeared.”

Dr. Mohawk died on February 1, 1869 at age 46 and is buried at Sylvan Lawn Cemetery. He was the father of Carolina Mohawk, later known as Go-Won-Go Mohawk, actress and Wild West performer. (Sources: Greene *Chenango American*; Greene Historical Society; Greene Town Historian Peg Ross; *From Raft to Railroad*, Folsom, 1967.)

A MAP MYSTERY

Dr. William Guthrie Sands, (1810-1889). (Did he practice in Smithville?). An 1863 map of Smithville Flats shows a building and blacksmith shop owned or occupied by Dr. Sands just east of John Wiles' hotel [today Seeber's Tavern].



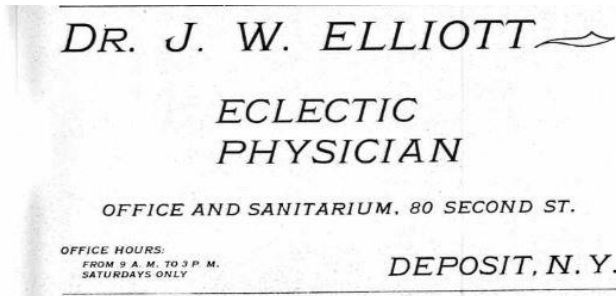
Smith's *History of Chenango and Madison Counties* indicates that Dr. Sands practiced medicine in Oxford. While Dr. Sands was a physician, we have found no indication that he practiced medicine in Smithville, yet he purchased that property in 1843 and also owned the tavern itself from 1843 until 1854. (Source: Map of the Counties of Chenango and Cortland, New York, 1863; Ancestry.com; Chenango County Deeds.)



Dr. Sands' property in Smithville Flats, 1863

FROM PEDDLER TO PHYSICIAN

Dr. John Wesley Elliott, (1835-1906). (Eclectic, in Smithville ca 1864-?). Dr. Elliott and his family were recorded in Smithville in the 1865 NYS census. Although he was a Chenango County native, just five years earlier, he had been a peddler living in Elmira. His service in the Civil War may have given him the training or inspiration needed to become a physician. Born in 1835, he enrolled in Company H, 86th Regiment of the New York Volunteer Infantry in 1861. Less than eight months later, he was mustered out due to a disability. His arrival date in Smithville and subsequent departure are not known.



In 1880, Dr. Elliott was practicing medicine in Deposit, Broome County. He remained there until his death in 1906. He is buried in the Nineveh Presbyterian Cemetery with his brother and family; his first wife, who outlived him; and their three children.

(Sources: NY and US Censuses; Ancestry.com; Findagrave.com.)

FROM CINCINNATUS TO SMITHVILLE

Dr. Dwight Morgan Lee, (1843-1895). (Allopath, in Smithville 1865-March, 1867.) Dr. Lee was born in Madison County in 1843 to a Presbyterian clergyman. While his father served the Congregational Church in Cincinnatus, the future Dr. Lee studied at the Cincinnatus Academy and began to read medicine with an Earlville physician. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hamilton College in 1863. After attending medical courses at the University of New York, he studied at the Albany Medical College, graduating in December of 1864 with a degree of M.D. He entered the army as assistant surgeon for the NY 22nd Cavalry, was promoted to surgeon, and after four months of service, was mustered out in August 1865 at the age of 22.

Dr. Lee "returned to Smithville Flats to resume the practice of medicine" in August of 1865 and was boarding with the William McCray family. He married Elizabeth Gleason in Triangle the following year, with his father presiding. In 1866, he gave an essay to the Chenango County Medical Society on the topic of diabetes.

In March of 1867, with Dr. Lee being noted as a "skillful practitioner," the family moved to Oxford, where he continued to practice until his death in 1895. His obituary shows that he was an exemplary participant in the life of his community.



He is buried at Riverview Cemetery, Oxford. (Sources: 1865 NY census, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; *Greene Chenango American*, Findagrave.com.)

A CENSUS MYSTERY

Dr. C. H. Johnson, (ca 1836-unknown). (In Smithville ca 1865-?). In addition to Dr. Lee, Smithville's 1865 census taker recorded C. H. Johnson, a physician, age 29, born in Dutchess

41	103	Thom	2000	104	William McCray	62	M		Ireland	1	1								
42					Henry J. McCray	47	M		Irish					1					
43					Marjaret McCray	28	F							1					
44					Anderson Bailey	30	M		Boarder	Chenango				1				Smithville	
45					C. H. Johnson	29	M			Dutchess				1				Physician	

County, New York, boarding at the William McCray home in Smithville Flats. Nothing more is known about Dr. Johnson. (Source: 1865 NYS census.)

GRADUATED TO GREENE

Dr. George O. Williams, (1843-1916). (Allopath, in Smithville April 1867-1873.) Dr. George O. Williams, born in Connecticut in 1843, began the study of medicine with his father, Dr. R. O. Williams, at Upper Lisle and Dr. F. H. French at Lisle. Graduating from the Albany Medical College in 1866, he began his practice in Smithville Flats in 1867.

Dr. Williams, another in a line of Smithville's young physicians, married Julia Crandall of Upper Lisle that year. They settled into life in the community, with Dr. Williams' office "one door north of the Post Office." The couple lived in the McCray house on the southwest corner of Round Pond Road and State Highway 41.

In addition to his medical practice, Dr. Williams managed the drug department of George Kinnier's store in the Flats. He was active in the Genegantslet Fire Company and was a member when their new fire hall was built in 1871.

After six years, the Williams family moved to Greene, where Dr. Williams continued a successful practice until his death in 1916.



A memory from Dr. Williams' granddaughter shows Smithville's respect for Dr. Williams:

"My grandfather, George O. Williams, M.D., began the practice of medicine in Smithville Flats in 1867. He and our grandmother lived in the Greek Revival house on the left side, just beyond the right turn into town past Hansmann's Mills. He was an organizer and member of the fire department as well. In 1873, grandfather moved his family to Greene, where he practiced medicine until his death in 1916. I remember a watch given to him by the fire company in Smithville Flats when he moved to Greene. It was a fat silver watch with a little key for winding. The presentation was engraved on the inside of the

top cover. My father gave this watch to George O. Williams III when he was born in the early 1950s. George is the great-grandson of my father's brother. I assume that the Smithville Flats fire company's gift is alive and well on Long Island where George III now lives". – Jane Williams Kelly (1917-2006)

(Sources: *Echoes of the Past*, Folsom, 1971; *Everybody Has a Story*, Ross and Buck, 2019; US Census; *Greene Chenango American*.)

CURIOUS AND TRAGIC

Dr. Luther James Purdy, (1848-1912). (Allopath, in Smithville 1873-ca 1899.) Dr. Purdy was the second of Smithville's long-serving physicians. He was born in the town of German in 1848 and studied medicine in McDonough with Dr. E. L. Ensign and in Cincinnatus with Dr. R. Barnes. He entered the Albany Medical School in 1869 and was graduated in 1871. After practicing in McDonough for two years, he moved to Smithville Flats.



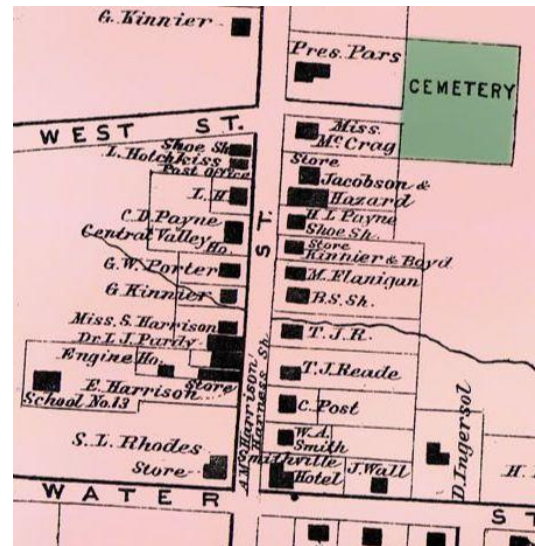
Dr. and Mrs. Purdy, daughter, and two workers at home in Smithville Flats ca. 1880

Dr. Purdy, an allopath, purchased a home in Smithville Flats for \$3,600 on October 1, 1873. The home still sits on the southeast corner of State Highway 41 and County Road 2. His office, with its own entrance, was on the highway side of the home.

The following year, Dr. Purdy began a drug store business (along with groceries) with J. D. Skillman, buying Skillman's interest by the end of the year. Charles Keough was his clerk. In 1875, Dr. Purdy purchased an empty lot that was subdivided from Susan Harrison's home on the west side of Main Street. The cost was \$100, and the lot measured 20' wide by 57' 6" deep. He built a drug store, and the deed allowed him to build so that the eaves could drip on Miss Harrison's property.

That same year, his father-in-law Nathan Rogers purchased Dr. Purdy's home for \$3,000 and assumed the mortgage that was due. This may have given Dr. Purdy needed capital for his pharmacy business. Mr. Rogers remained the owner of the Purdy home until he died.

Written records conflict about the drugstore. The *Greene Chenango American* states that Dr. Purdy sold his drug store business to Lewis Fernald, M.D., of McDonough in 1876. Charles Keough's biography states that he bought the business from Dr. Purdy in 1879, and Smith's *History of Chenango County* has Dr. Purdy continuing as a druggist in the year 1880.



Dr. Purdy's drugstore, 1875

Four notable events occurred in Dr. Purdy's life during the early 1880s—one curious, two tragic, and one unfortunate. First, in January of 1880, Dr. Purdy's father-in-law Nathan Rogers purchased Dr. Purdy's drug store property from Dr. Purdy for \$1,500. This was the second parcel Mr. Rogers purchased from Dr. Purdy, leaving Dr. Purdy living and working in Smithville but with no property in his own name.

Later that year came the first tragedy. Dr. and Mrs. Purdy had two children, Orlando born in 1872 and Harriet "Hattie" born in 1876. In July, little Orlando was killed in a horrible accident, described in great detail in the *Greene Chenango American*. Orlando was riding in a buggy with his father. As they crossed a bridge just north of the Flats, a bird flew out of some bushes and frightened the horse. The horse leaped over the side of the bridge twelve feet down into the water, carrying with him the buggy, Dr. Purdy, and Orlando. Orlando hit his head and died nine hours later. The accident caused a widespread feeling of sadness throughout the community.

A year later, in 1881, fire struck Main Street in Smithville Flats. Along with the New York Store and a harness shop, the drug store building now owned by Dr. Purdy's father-in-law burned to the ground. The father-in-law, Nathan Rogers, later sold the vacant lot for \$100.

In January of 1882, the *Greene Chenango American* reported that Dr. Purdy had met with quite an accident in the town of Preston. After watering his team of horses, the wagon was overturned somehow, and he was thrown out. He sustained several injuries, including a dislocated shoulder. Dr. Lee of Oxford (formerly of Smithville) was called to treat him, and Dr. Purdy was taken to his father-in-law's home.

Dr. Purdy's wife Emma died in 1893. It is interesting that her father administered her estate, rather than Dr. Purdy. Dr. Purdy remarried the following year, and in 1899, Dr. Purdy "of Binghamton" was in Smithville Flats advertising his patent medicine. He is listed that same year in the Binghamton City Directory as a physician, as well as proprietor of the Purdy Medical Company.

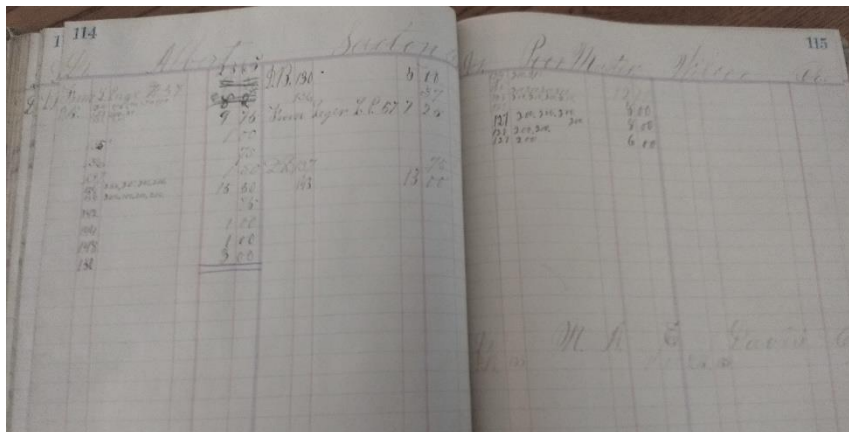
Nathan Rogers, father of the deceased Mrs. Purdy, died in 1900. He left the Purdy house in Smithville Flats to his granddaughter, Harriet Purdy Harrison.

In 1901, Dr. Purdy was practicing medicine in Binghamton; in 1905, he was a farm laborer in Willet; and in 1910 he was boarding with the Gilbert Brown family in Smithville and earned his living as a laborer performing odd jobs.

Dr. Purdy died in Greene on January 30, 1912. It is presumed he is buried in the Upper Cemetery in Smithville Flats, as his name and birth year are listed on the gravestone. (Sources: *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; *Greene Chenango American*; US and NY Censuses; Ancestry.com; Chenango County Deeds; Chenango County Wills; *Biographical Sketches of Leading Citizens of Chenango County*, 1898.)

THE LEDGER

Dr. Arthur L. Lowe, (1853-1884). (Allopath, In Smithville 1877-1884.) Born in West Almond, New York in 1853, Dr. Lowe's education was at the University of Wooster in Ohio (1874-1876) and the University of Buffalo, where he graduated on February 22, 1877.



Pages from Dr. Lowe's ledger

He opened his practice in Smithville Flats on June 1, 1877 as an M.D. Dr. Lowe's ledger book, purchased online by Kathleen Roberts and donated to the Smithville Historical Society, lists his 198 patients, from Cora Adams to Thomas Yarns, and tracks their accounts—debts for care and treatment and credits

for payment. Payment was received in cash, notes, cord wood (30 face cords @ fifty cents), roof shingles, and farm products.

In 1880, Dr. Lowe was boarding at the Central Valley Hotel in Smithville Flats, a grand mansard-roofed building that had been constructed ten years earlier. He paid \$3.00 a week for his board and exchanged that for medical services to the proprietor, John Landers. That same year, he

was listed as a faculty member of the Smithville Union School and Academy, teaching physiology and hygiene.

In July of 1881, the bachelor Dr. Lowe married a patient, Miss J. Minnie McCray, at her mother's home in Smithville Flats. Miss McCray was a teacher of vocal and instrumental music at the Union School. Either Dr. Lowe himself or the married couple made their home with Mrs. McCray, because her medical bills were paid through credit, or "balanced by board bill."

A year after the wedding, the Greene *Chenango American* began relating the sad story of the couple: "Mrs. A. L. Lowe has returned from her visit in Philadelphia. We are sorry to say that she left her husband, the doctor, sick at his father's in Corry." (August 31, 1882)

This on November 23, 1882: "Dr. Lowe, who has been unable to attend to his practice for some time, is making preparations to go South. He will probably pass the winter in Tennessee."

Then: "Dr. A. L. Lowe, who spent the winter in Georgia for his health, returned on Thursday last." (June 14, 1883)

In September of 1883: "Dr. A. L. Lowe had a severe attack of pleurisy last week. He is slowly improving."

And finally, on 1/17/1884: "Dr. A. L. Lowe, of Smithville Flats, died in Georgia recently, where he was sojourning for the benefit of his health, which had been poor for some time. Doctor Lowe settled in Smithville Flats about six years ago, and was a genial gentleman, and had many friends in this section. His parents reside at Cora [sic], Pa., where he undoubtedly will be buried."

Dr. Lowe died on January 10, 1884 and is buried alongside his father at the Wattsburg Cemetery, Wattsburg, Erie County, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Lowe remarried a Smithville man, Frederick Thomas, and continued to live in the town until her later years. (Sources: Ledger of Dr. A. L. Lowe, Smithville Historical Society; 1880 US Census; *History of Chenango and Madison Counties*, Smith, 1880; Greene *Chenango American*; Findagrave.com; Ancestry.com.)

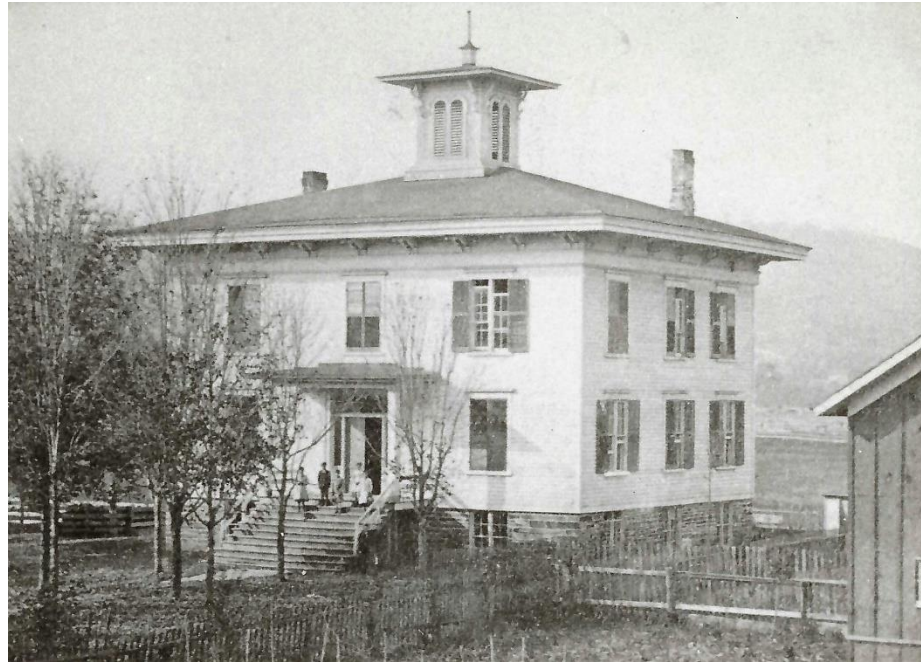
PHYSICIAN FATHER, PHYSICIAN SON

In its April 6, 1882 issue, the Greene *Chenango American* reported that Smithville was to gain a third doctor. "It seems that three doctors in town could make business for more than one undertaker." Dr. Samuel Smith joined Smithville doctors Luther Purdy and Arthur Lowe.

Dr. Samuel Lord Smith (1859-1937). (Allopath, in Smithville ca 1882-1894.) The son of a Cincinnati physician, Dr. Smith studied at the Cincinnati Academy and graduated with a medical degree from the University of Iowa. In 1883, McDonough's Dr. Ensign proposed Smithville's Dr. Smith for membership in the Chenango County Medical Society.

Once settled in Smithville Flats, Dr. Smith married Mary Jane Crozier, the daughter of deceased community leader Hugh Crozier. Their two children were born in the Flats. Dr. Smith served as a county coroner for some years while operating his medical practice.

In 1894, Dr. Smith moved his practice to



Cincinnatus Academy, still standing on Telephone Road as an apartment building. Photo courtesy of the Cortland County Historical Society.



Binghamton, where he also opened a pharmacy. Two years later, Mrs. Smith donated land in Smithville Flats to her home church, the Smithville Presbyterian Church, the lot where it now stands.

Dr. Smith, active in the Republican party, served as an alderman in Binghamton and from 1901-1905, served as Binghamton's mayor. He sold the pharmacy business to the Liggett chain in 1913 and retired. When he died in 1937, he was buried at the Floral Park Cemetery, Johnson City, New York. (Sources: Greene *Chenango American*; *Binghamton Press and Sun*; Chenango County Deeds; Findagrave.com; US Censuses.)

THREE NOTATIONS

Dr. A. S. McKnight, (Dates of birth and death unknown). (In Smithville 1889-?). What is known of Dr. McKnight comes from two Greene *Chenango American* notations put forth by the Smithville Flats correspondent and an entry in the town's record of deaths. On October 10, 1889 it was noted that Dr. A. S. McKnight of Philadelphia had made arrangements to permanently locate at Smithville Flats. On November 21 of that year, the report was that Dr. McKnight had entirely settled into town, "occupying the house with Thomas Meecham." Dr. McKnight certified a death in the town on December 22, 1889. Nothing more is known of him. (Sources: Greene *Chenango American*; Town of Smithville Death Records.)

THE CHENANGO AMERICAN REPORTS

Dr. George Jesse Ganow, (1869-1949). (Homeopath, in Smithville 1894-1898.) Dr. Ganow's presence in Smithville Flats was traced through items reported by the Smithville Flats correspondent in the Greene *Chenango American* newspaper. In August of 1894, after graduating from Hahneman Medical School in Philadelphia, Dr. Ganow started a practice in Smithville, setting up residence in rooms at the L. L. Pease home.

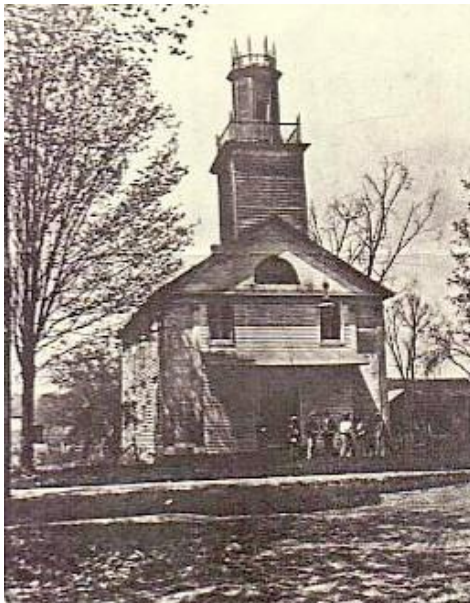
Born in 1869, he and Flora Willcox had been married the year before. The couple is mentioned in newspaper notes, both social and professional, and their daughter Marguerite was born in Smithville in January 1896.

Dr. Ganow served in Smithville until 1898, when he moved his practice to Oxford. Then after working in Oklahoma and Sidney, NY, he began a practice in Port Dickinson in 1915, where, except for serving as a captain in World War I, he remained active until three weeks before his death at age 80. He is buried in Vestal Hills Memorial Park. (Sources: Greene *Chenango American*; Findagrave.com; US Census; Ancestry.com; Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin.)



THE MISSIONARY

Dr. Henry Thurice Elliot, (1848-1922). (Allopath, in Smithville ca 1895-1900.) Dr. Elliot, his wife, and children moved to Smithville Flats from New Jersey sometime before May of 1895. He was born in New York City in 1848 to a medical doctor, studied at the Collegiate School in New York, and graduated from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1871. Dr. Elliot practiced allopathic medicine, treating symptoms and diseases with medicine, surgery, and radiation.



Smithville Opera House, formerly a Baptist Church and later used by the Methodists. The building burned to the ground in 1906.

According to Rev. Henry E. Hubbard of Greene's Zion Episcopal Church, Dr. Elliot his wife were ardent Episcopalians, and their four children had been baptized in the Church. Dr. Elliot took his family regularly to Zion Church but began missionary work in Smithville Flats and *"urged that I start services there, which I did on Sunday afternoons in the Opera House, which had been an abandoned Methodist Church (later we were given the use of an abandoned Universalist Church)."*

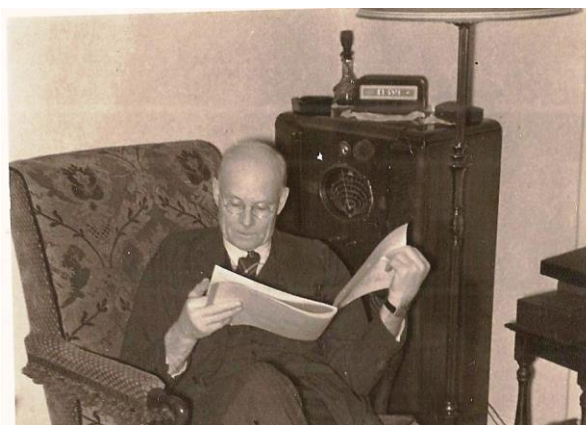
The Elliot family left Smithville Flats for Genesee Street in Greene in 1900. Dr. Elliot bought the M. B. English farm in 1907 and retired from practice. He died March 12, 1922, age 73 and is buried at Sylvan Lawn Cemetery.

(Sources: *Directory of Deceased American Physicians, Echoes of the Past*, Folsom, 1971; *Greene Chenango American*; Findagrave.com; US censuses; *Everybody Has a Story*, Ross and Buck, 2019.)

THE POET

Dr. Charles W. Chapin, (1877-1966). (In Smithville ca 1900-1904.) “*Dr. Charles W. Chapin was born in Unadilla and taught school in Gilbertsville to earn money to pay his way through Albany Medical College. He began practice in Smithville Flats, removing from there to Greene in 1904 to take Dr. Bowen’s place. In 1909 he bought Dr. H. T. Elliot’s house on West Genesee Street in which he kept his office until purchasing the Morse block. There he practiced until his death December 16, 1955.*

“*He was a man of unlimited energy and varied interests and acquired considerable property in the village. He owned a large poultry business, wrote poetry, was a better than average golfer, and was an active member of the school board for many years.*” (*Echoes of the Past*, Folsom, 1971.)



While Mrs. Folsom reported that Dr. Chapin moved to Greene in 1904, the 1905 NY Census shows the Chapin family still living in Smithville, and Dr. Chapin as a physician. (Source: 1905 NY Census.)

CHENANGO COUNTY DIRECTORY

Dr. Charles O. Payne, (Dates of birth and death unknown). (In Smithville ca 1902-1903.) Dr. Payne appears as a physician in the Smithville section of the *Directory of Chenango County NY*.

He presided at births in the town that same year and in 1903. Nothing more is known about Dr. Payne. (Sources: *Directory of Chenango County NY*, 1902; Town of Smithville Births.)

532	SMITHVILLE TOWN DIRECTORY.
<hr/>	
Nichols William, (Smithville Flats)	
Nolton Albert E, (Brisbin) off r 82, farmer 65	
Norris Mable E, (Oxford) r 49	[176
Norris Willis E, (Oxford) r 49, farmer with Mrs J D Thayer	
Norton Walter E, (Smithville Flats) r 72, dairy 25 cows, farmer on shares for Mrs W G Walsh, of Greene, 300	
Oliver Thomas H, (Smithville Flats) r 34, dairy 22 cows, farmer 66 and leases of Seymour Tarbell 160	
Oliver William H, (Smithville Flats) r 34, farmer	[100
Parker Bion L, (Smithville Flats) r 31, dairy 10 cows, farmer	
Parker Charles E, (Smithville Flats) r 31, farmer, h and lot owned by wife	[Elmer E Barnes 70
Parks Aurelius V, (Smithville Flats) r 68, farmer leases of	
Partridge Eli T, (Smithville Flats) r 33, justice of the peace, carpenter	
Payne Charles O, (Smithville Flats) physician	

TWO HONORARY DOCTORS

It must be noted that two more Smithville men carried the moniker of doctor: Dr. Graham Henry (1807-1875) and “Doc” Nathan Davis (1854-1935).

There is no indication that either was a physician. It is believed that for Dr. Henry, it was a term of respect, and for Doc Davis, a nickname. Doc Davis’s uncle was Dr. Nathan Smith Davis, one of the founders of the American Medical Association.

CLOSING A CHAPTER OF SMITHVILLE’S HISTORY

In the early years of medicine, learning from an experienced physician substituted for rigorous formal training. Through the years, Smithville served as a place for young physicians to learn, gain experience, and move on. Dr. Daniel Clark served as a preceptor for many young physicians. As he prepared for retirement, it seems that he was grooming Dr. Lewis Alling (a Yale Medical School graduate) as his replacement. Dr. Alling’s untimely death in 1864 left Smithville with a series of short-term physicians until Dr. Luther Purdy came to town in 1873.

As transportation improved and Smithville’s population base declined, it became practical for a physician to locate in a more populated community. From what is currently known, Smithville’s last resident physician was Dr. Charles W. Chapin, who left in 1904 or 1905.

Dr. George Weaver (1860-1931) practiced and resided in McDonough, but he made house calls to Smithville in the 1920s. His name is included here because of Ruby Eggleston White’s fond remembrances of Dr. Weaver. Clearly, he had a presence in Smithville. Ruby’s mother was Smithville’s telephone operator who ran the central office single-handedly; that is, all calls went through Mrs. Eggleston. Ruby remembered Dr. Weaver in this pleasing way:

“Old Doc Weaver from McDonough made house calls, stopping at the Central Office to see if any calls had come in for him or to leave some pills for a patient to pick up. He carried a case of pills, so a patient didn’t always have to go to a drug store. Then he would ask to call his ‘Happy Home.’

“Each phone line was shared by a number of families—from two to ten; only one at a time could use it. That was the party-line system. Every family had a code of short and long rings. For an incoming call, everyone’s phone on the line rang at once. If you heard your family’s code, you picked up the receiver for your call. When the doctor’s ring was heard, shorts and longs on the old crank phone, everybody picked up their phones and eavesdropped to learn who was sick. Sometimes Old Doc would say, ‘If you’ll hang up and let me do my business, I’ll call you all back and tell you about it.’” (Source: *Working Lives*, Ross and Buck, 2013.)

“Dr. Locy” – 1822-1831

Dr. Daniel Clark – 1827-1860

Dr. Edward York – ca 1835-1836

Dr. Rufus Thayer – 1841-1846

Dr. George Douglas – 1845-1846
Dr. David George Wilder – ca 1847-1850
Dr. Lewis Henry Alling – 1860-1864
Dr. Allen Mohawk – 1861
Dr. William Guthrie Sands – 1863?
Dr. John Wesley Elliott – ca 1864-?
Dr. C. H. Johnson – ca 1865-?
Dr. Dwight Morgan Lee – 1865-1867
Dr. George O. Williams – 1867-1873
Dr. Luther James Purdy – 1873-1899
Dr. Arthur L. Lowe – 1877-1884
Dr. Samuel Lord Smith – 1882-1894
Dr. A. S. McKnight – 1889
Dr. George Jesse Ganow – 1894-1897
Dr. Henry Thurice Elliot – 1895-1900
Dr. Charles W. Chapin – 1900-1905
Dr. Charles O. Payne – 1902-1903