

The Following correspondence is an excerpt from the:

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
OF THE  
STATE OF KANSAS

FROM ITS ORGANIZATION, APRIL 10 1885, AND  
ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1885.

LAWRENCE, DOUGLAS COUNTY, KAS., Dec. 5, 1885.

*J.W. Redden, M.D., Secretary Kansas State Board of Health* – DEAR SIR: In compliance with the requirements of the State Board of Health, I herewith present a report of the progress made in organizing under said law, to improve the sanitary condition and regulate the practice of medicine in Douglas county.

The local board was organized in July, and received blanks for registration on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of August. October 30<sup>th</sup> the blank certificates were received, and their distribution commenced; true, the registration was incomplete, and so much time was consumed in perfecting it and registration and general distribution of blanks warrants us in expecting full returns for the present month; very few, if any, physicians who are engaged in actual practice have neglected to register. The following exhibits the number and classification of the physicians and midwives who have registered: Regulars, 33; eclectic, 7; homeopaths, 10; independents, 2; allopaths, 1; magnetic, 2; electric, 1; blank, 2; midwives, 8; total, 66. The number who reported as graduates of some medical school is 37; non-graduates, 26; not properly stated, therefore doubtful, 3; total, 66.

No definite action has been taken in reference to vaccinating scholars in public schools. The superintendent of public instruction has promised his aid, and the local school boards will be invoked to cooperate in an effort to secure information. The number of children in Douglas county of school age is 8,555. How many of these have been successfully vaccinated I am not able to state.

In this connection I desire to state that at my request, J.A. Lippincott, Chancellor of the State University, and Rev. H.M. Greene, Superintendent of the Kansas State Asylum of Imbecile and Idiotic Youth, have each kindly reported the sanitary conditions of the institutions over which they preside as being excellent; and fully concurring in said statements, I herewith present their reports. The State University, School for Feeble-Minded, Baker University and Haskell Institute all being massed in Douglas county, with their scholars coming from all parts of the State and adjacent territory, renders it quite probable that contagious or infectious diseases will be introduced. To prevent occurrences of this kind and stamp out infection and contagion when introduced, will require sleepless vigilance.

The people of Douglas county have enjoyed unusual good health during the last year, having been exempt from epidemics of all kinds. A few isolated cases of diphtheria occurred, and a few deaths induced by it were reported. But it either lacked the usual element of infection or yielded to the disinfecting and improved sanitary measures, as it in no instance spread beyond the families where it originated. During the latter part of summer and throughout autumn typhoid and typho-malarial fevers have been developed at various points in the city of Lawrence and Douglas county. The infected families being widely separated and having no communication with each other, in no instance could it be said that the disease was communicated by those persons who had it. These facts led me to believe that the disease was produced by local causes, chief among which was impure water. This opinion I think is fully confirmed by the following cases. In the first family I found them using water from a drive well in sandy soil. A pit had been dug three feet deep and the pump stock driven down in the pit. Ducks, geese, and pigs were wallowing in pools of filthy water that drained down into the pit around the pump stock. This was connected, and though communication with the neighbors was not cut off, the disease was confined to only a part of the family. The second family used water from a well in a similar condition with the same results. The third family used water from a drive well similarly arranged, but in this instance the surface water from a stable washed down into the pit which contained the pump stock. The fourth family received their water supply from a drive well in the yard surrounding a slaughter house, the blood and washings from which ran down into a hog-wallow that surrounded the pump. The fifth family procured water from a cistern which was found to contain a number of dead toads. In this family the wife, daughter and a small boy had the fever, while the father and the older son who were away from home escaped, though they returned and nursed those who were sick. In the sixth family, the father and two sons who worked with him on the farm had typhoid fever. They drank water from an open well in the barn yard, while the mother and two daughters, who used water from a well in good condition in the door yard, escaped, though they had nursed those who were sick and were therefore exposed to the contagion. In the seventh family two young men running a dairy turned their door yard into a cattle pen. They slept on the floor in the house and used water from a well in the yard that was surrounded with the excreta from the cattle several inches deep. One of them died, while the other had a very narrow escape. In the eighth family the husband and wife both had typhoid fever. The well was open and in bad condition. Two young women (sisters) nursed them and both returned home and had typhoid fever. Disinfectants were freely used, and though there were eight persons in the family not one of them was attacked; I therefore infer that they contracted the disease by using impure water while attending their sick neighbors. My object in presenting these cases is to call attention to one of the most common sources of the origin of typhoid fever. That the

disease may be contracted by contact with the patients suffering with it, I think there is no doubt, and for this reason the most thorough and powerful disinfectants should be judiciously employed. I think the importance of this measure clearly illustrated in the foregoing cases, as the spread of the disease was immediately arrested when the original cause was removed.

Yours truly,

N. SIMMONS, M.D., *Health Officer.*

LAWRENCE, KAS., December 5, 1885.

*Dr. N. Simmons, County Health Officer* - MY DEAR SIR: In answer to your communication of 2d inst., I may say that we have in attendance about 370 students, and that the general health is very good. Indeed, I may say that the continued good health of our students is remarkable. There has been nothing, so far as I know, of epidemic or endemic nature to break the force of this general statement. I am sincerely,

J.A. LIPPINCOTT, *Chancellor State University.*

BAKER UNIVERSITY,

BALDWIN, KAS., Dec. 11, 1885.

*N. Simmons, M.D.* - DEAR SIR: I regret that I have delayed answering your communication. I overlooked the fact that your report was to be made by the 10<sup>th</sup>, and a press of duties just now caused the delay. Our students have had good health for the most part. There were several cases of malarial fever; one of which went to the loins, and the young man died. The other, that of Miss Erick, went to the brain. The doctor thinks her hard work on her father's books in the store last summer made her susceptible to the disease.

H. W. SWEET, *President.*

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

KANSAS STATE ASYLUM FOR IMBECILE AND IDIOTIC YOUTH,

LAWRENCE, November 4, 1885.

*Dr. N. Simmons, County Health Officer, Lawrence, Kas.* - Dear Sir: In response to your kind invitation, I submit the following as a report of health for the Asylum for Imbecile Children during the year ending November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1885. The average number of pupils in attendance during this time was 25 $\frac{1}{3}$ . Our practice is to allow parents to remove their children for vacation on or after July 1<sup>st</sup>. These are again received September 1<sup>st</sup>, when the terms open, but are often not returned for a considerable time afterward. This will explain the fact that with 31 pupils in present attendance (beyond the proper limits of the building), the average is below. The only case of illness among the pupils the entire time occurred in January last, a case of simple influenza, which endured only two days. There have been at times incipient symptoms of disease, which by careful attention and proper treatment has been overcome. One death occurred November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1884 – a case of atrophy of long standing, aggravated by profuse suppuration from a superficial

though extensive burn, received accidentally some weeks before. No blame attaches to any of the employees of the institution, the accident occurring through the failure of the acting board to appoint or allow the appointment of a night attendant – an error speedily and thenceforth provided against repetition. The entire amount of medical attendance from without was four visits, for which four dollars was paid. When the character of the population thus presented is considered, many being afflicted by anemia, epilepsy, scrofula and other diseases in various stages of development, and scarcely one free from some form of bodily ill or deformity, I am amazed at the immunity from diseases we have thus far enjoyed, and can only refer it to the sleepless care of the kind Providence who watches over the most feeble and insignificant of his creatures, and to the skillful ministrations of the Matron and employes.

I am, most respectfully, yours faithfully,

H. M. GREENE, *Superintendent.*