A MEDICAL HISTORY OF THE WOLLONGONG DISTRICT

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1. KIAMA

It is obviously impossible for me in the time at my disposal to give a pen picture of all the men who have been at Kiama in the last ninety years, so I fear that my remarks may somewhat resemble the Book of Genesis.

The first recorded name is that of Dr. Menzies (1860). He combined farming with medical practice. I have no record of how he divided his time. His deeds are shrouded in the mists of antiquity. He was succeeded by Dr. Taylor and Dr. Nolan. They were constantly at loggerheads and their squabbles were fully recorded in the Kiama Independent (1865).

In 1870 two brothers, Dr. Herman Tarrent and Dr. William Tarrent practised together. Dr. William Tarrent was killed in a buggy accident when driving home from a Masonic meeting. His horses bolted, and they, or he, capsized the buggy. Dr. Herman Tarrent became the Member of the Legislative Assembly for the district and went to live in Sydney. He was later elected Worshipful Grand Master of the New South Wales Lodge of Freemasons. He must have been a man of very considerable ability. When his term of office expired he went to England and returned with secret cures for every known disease. He started as a medical specialist (I presume of everything) and ran a large medical institute in Macquarie Street. He advertised in all the papers and had a large photograph of himself in The Sydney Morning Herald.

Dr. Caird and Dr. Lacey succeeded Dr. William Tarrent. Dr. Caird died soon of what is described as heart disease, and Dr. Lacey was killed by a falling tree. Dr. Calib Terry succeeded him, and years later Dr. Hedley Terry joined him. I remember him best as an excellent left-handed batsman. I was captain of Wollongong Club in those days, so his memory is green.
Dr. Fox carried on from 1905; he introduced the first motor-car — a Robertson and Kangaroo Valley were in his practice, he certainly needed one.

Dr. Fletcher took over in 1929, but after a time he went to Sydney to do radiography. Dr. Fletcher was succeeded by Dr. B. A. Stephen, who in his own words, is struggling on. Judging from his appearances, I think the struggle has been a successful one.

Dr. Robert Beith went to Kiama in 1899 and practised there for twenty-six years. When he left, a tumultuous valedictory meeting was held in his honour. He was a dour Scotchman. Dr. Corner succeeded Dr. Beith; he left to specialize in ear, nose and throat work. Dr. John Harris succeeded him; but he, whilst attending a ball, died suddenly of coronary occlusion. Kiama doctors seemed to be addicted to sudden and violent deaths.

Dr. Max Cramm came next, and the two practices were united for the first time.

One other man I must mention, though I do not know where he fits in. He was known as "Leather-Bag" Reid. He was Dr. George Reid, and he was in Kiama about 1890. A tall, dignified, handsome man, he always did his rounds on foot, wearing a top hat and morning suit. I think he must have found the humid atmosphere trying, but anyhow he kept up the dignity of the profession.

Acknowledgment.

I am indebted to Dr. B. A. Stephen and the Kiama Independent for most of my information.

RAILWAY TUNNELS:

A. J. North, Chartered Accountant writes from Maroubra ordering a copy of Railway History and continues —

My great-grandfather who originally came from the Cornwall area settled on the South Aust. copper minefields and then brought his family to Illawarra to contract on the tunnels in the Helensburgh and Stanwell Park areas. My grandmother has often described her childhood days at the railway camps, and how they were so rough that she was sent off to school in Sydney. In later years the family like so many others moved on to the Cobar copper fields and then to the Kalgoorlie and farther out goldmines.

I am sure that the publication will be of interest to me.

Yours faithfully,

A. J. North.