

Bucklesberry, Back in the Day

Medicine Men

Although not physicians in the traditional sense, medicine men in eighteenth and nineteenth century American Indian culture were considered healers. Believed to possess supernatural spiritual healing powers, they treated sickness brought on by evil spirits.

Three medicine men, more properly, physicians, offered medical services to the Bucklesberry community in the mid-1800s: Dr. S. B. Evans; Dr. James M. Davis; and Dr. T. A. Woodley. The Clellan Sutton Collection of papers includes several of their prescriptions and receipts.

An 1848 prescription written by Dr. Davis is addressed to Major Parks. It was retained in the Collection by way of Major's wife, Martha (Patsy) Sutton (1829-1922), a daughter of Hardy (1803-1861) and Annie Hill Sutton (1807-1881). The pills may have been prescribed for a slave of Mr. Parks, as there are no records that Major had a son or family member named, Dickey:

"Mr. Major Parcks. I send by Donass some medicine for Dickey. You will give him two of the pills every other night commencing Tuesday night or Wednesday night. Give him two tea spoonful of salts and repeat every other night. March 27th, 1848. James M. Davis"

An undated prescription, also prepared by Dr. Davis, was for an unnamed girl in one of the Sutton households. Dr. Davis was a physician in White Hall (Seven Springs) who died in 1856. The prescription could reasonably be attributed to the Hardy and Annie Hill Sutton household, possibly for their youngest daughter, Christiana (1850-1929), since many of the documents in the Collection were channeled through this line:

"Mr. Sutton. Will give your girl two tea spoonful of the medicine in the vial 3 times a day (Shake it up well before taking it) as for the infections. I Suppose you have a plenty as you told me when I saw you. If this does not help her please send her up and let her stay a few days so I may ascertain what medicines will answer best. Very Respectfully, James M. Davis"

A January 18, 1867 receipt outlines medical treatment provided by Dr. Evans to Annie Hill Sutton, widowed wife of Hardy Sutton, and her three youngest children, twin sons, Julius Eri Sutton (1847-1925) and Junius Eli Sutton (1847-1931), and Christiana:

"Mrs. Anna Sutton 1866. To S. B. Evans. March 2-1 Dz quinine pills, \$1.00. Aug 3-1 ¼ Dz quinine pills, \$1.25. Sept. 24-Call visit night to Julius, Quinine' \$4.00. Sept. 26-Calomel (27), visit Julius, Cal...quinine, \$5.00. Sept. 28-Visit Julius + Self, Prescript for Self, Med for back, \$6.00. Oct. 6-Prescript + Medicine for son Junius, \$2.75. Oct. 27-Prescript Cal + Rhu, 1 dz

quinine pills, quinine for Daughter, \$3.25. Nov. 29-Prescrip for Daughter Christiana + Medicine, \$2.25. Cr[edit] \$5.00. Apr. 13-By 2 Dz. Eggs, \$.50. Apr. 25. By 11 lbs lard, \$.25, \$2.75. \$3.25. \$2.45 [crossed out]. \$21.75 [tax stamp] Recd payment Jany. 18, 1867. S. B. Evans, \$22 55-\$21.75, \$.80."

Dr. Evans had a medical office in Goldsboro prior to 1851. By 1852, he was practicing medicine in Pitt County. In 1875, he was a physician in New Bern. He relocated to Statesville by 1876. Regarding Dr. Evan's departure from the area, the *Goldsboro Messenger* wrote, "In him Eastern Carolina loses a most excellent citizen." (April 19, 1875)

One other prescription in the Collection prepared by Dr. Woodley is also undated. Since it is addressed to Mrs. Hardy (Annie) Sutton, the prescription was issued sometime before her death in 1881 when one of her eight sons were living in the home:

"Mrs. Hardy Sutton. To T. A. Woodley. [Pr]escription & med for son. \$2.00. [R]eceived payment. T. A. Woodley"

Dr. Woodley practiced medicine in Lenoir County. In 1857, the Kinston newspaper, *American Advocate*, announced his "services to the citizens of Kinston and the surrounding county generally, and promise [of] prompt and faithful attention at all hours to such calls as may be made...."