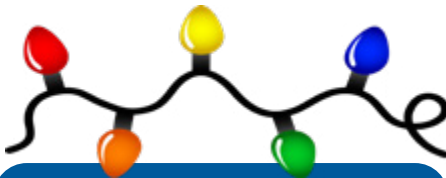


# PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

A NEWSLETTER OF THE  
PUBLIC HEALTH MUSEUM



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## THE PUBLIC HEALTH MUSEUM ANNUAL MEETING 2019 PRESENTERS

Dr. Howard K. Koh, former Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health, former US DHHS Assistant Secretary for Health, and Harvey V. Fineberg Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health was the keynote speaker at the Public Health Museum's Annual Meeting held on October 19, 2019. Dr. Koh provided a dynamic presentation of his experience in government service and public health.

Nancy Burns, EMT, CHEP, AFAA, UMV, MRC Coordinator, preceded Dr. Koh with an informative session on Preparedness Through Partnerships – Upper Merrimack Valley Medical Reserve Corps and Public Health.

Outbreak!!! 2019 high school alumni presented their personal perspective of what they gained through their involvement in Outbreak! Thank you Nicole Jo, Amina Cathey, and Charles Kefauver.



*Dr. Koh Presents at 2019 PHM Annual Meeting*

*Happy Holidays from the  
Public Health Museum!*



# THE ABANDONED STATE HOSPITAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

In October, Silver Crescent Photography collaborated with the Public Health Museum and Tewksbury Hospital to offer three photography workshops. David Manch led approximately sixty people to areas on the hospital campus not usually open to the public. As a volunteer in the Public Health Museum I was asked to ‘chaperone’.

One stop was the Annie G. McDonald House, or Superintendent’s Cottage, built in 1894. It was named after Annie McDonald, Director of Nursing at Tewksbury Hospital for over forty years and housed the superintendent of the hospital until the 1950s. This summer, season two of Hulu’s Castle Rock was filmed in and around the building. As a result, parts of the building have been restored to its former glory. We were able to explore the building, photographing exquisite built-in cabinets and shelves, period light fixtures, the kitchen (including a dumbwaiter) and the impressive main stairway.

A second building visited was the Rice Building, built in 1903. It was designed by Boston architect, John A. Fox, to house one hundred of the most “violent” women requiring extra attention and secure rooms. Starting in 1983, the building housed The Northeast Regional Police Institute, a police in-service training academy. Currently, the building is vacant, though a stairwell added as an additional exit (later enclosed) was used during the filming of Castle Rock. The haunting second floor hallway created images of the lives of the women who were residents: tiny, austere isolation rooms, with a single barred window, wooden doors scratched on the inside by inmates.

Though I have spent many hours in the Public Health Museum, I was in for a treat as we were allowed in both the basement and the clock tower of the Administration Building. Imagine walking through a dimly lit stone tunnel to a bowling alley, circa 1918, located under The Old Chapel.

The crowning jewel of the Administration Building, built in 1894, is its copper clad clock tower. We climbed carpeted stairs to the attic for the final climb up narrow, steep stairs that led to the magnificent windows overlooking the campus and surrounding area. Since it was October, the views were enhanced by the fall foliage. Those with the courage to climb the ladder to the actual clock were rewarded with close views of the clock faces and the no longer functioning clock works.

A bit of history was brought back to life through these workshops and visits into some of the buildings that were once part of a vibrant Tewksbury State Hospital campus. There are plans to hold additional photography workshops next year.

*By Liz Robinson, Public Health Museum volunteer*



*The tunnel from the Administration Building to the bowling alley under the Old Chapel on the Tewksbury Hospital campus.*

## IN APPRECIATION OF SILVER CRESCENT PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE TEWKSBURY HOSPITAL

A big thank-you to Mike Minicucci and David Manch of Silver Crescent Photography who donate a portion of their Tewksbury Hospital Abandon Workshops proceeds to the museum. A win-win partnership for both the museum and Silver Crescent! The museum would also like to thank Tewksbury Hospital and Tewksbury Hospital’s security, Chief Riggs and his team, for coordinating the access to the buildings.

# SNAKE OIL AND THE HISTORY OF PATENT MEDICINE PART 3

In our last article we looked at Traveling Medicine Shows and other patent medicine marketing strategies. The medical community also played an important role in the history of patent medicines, but probably not the role you would expect.

**Medical Science was slow to develop...** So, where was the leadership from the medical community regarding patent medicines? Why were none of the now-familiar medical experts educating the public about the danger and dishonesty surrounding patent medicines?

In the 1800s, the medical profession in the United States did not have the respect and influence they enjoy today. For the most part, Americans did not trust doctors, and their distrust was well-founded!

After the American Revolution, the medical profession took a curious turn - rather than continue to follow the scientific advancements of their European predecessors, many rejected the notion that medicine was "science." The fractured medical community embraced American exceptionalism, rejecting the idea that advances in Europe should be emulated on this side of the Atlantic.

Americans largely rejected regulation in general, and there were minimal licensing requirements or professional oversight for the medical profession. Starting in the 1850s medical schools began to compete for students and tuition dollars. Legitimate medical schools reduced their academic requirements, and under-qualified students opened their own medical schools as money-making ventures. In this environment, the respectability of physicians and the overall medical profession declined dramatically.

Only wealthy Americans could afford medical care. Doctors charged exorbitant fees for home visits, and doctors were still likely to cause more harm than good. Aggressive treatments could be terrifying with surgery without anesthesia, and widespread use of "bleeding." Particularly in rural areas, the only medical solutions available to the average American were marketed by travelling medicine shows offering inexpensive cures for every known ailment in one tiny bottle. For most folks, the lure was irresistible.

The medical community did eventually lead the effort to control patent medicines. However, through most of the 1800s, the profession did little to expose patent medicines. Despite their opposition, doctors advertised patent medicines in medical journals and in many cases even prescribed them to their patients!

The American Pharmaceutical Association, established in 1852, was active in trying to draw attention to problems associated with patent medicines. The Association offered resolutions and promoted legislation, but their efforts to turn the tide on patent medicines had very little practical effect in the 1800s.

By the end of the 19th century, cumulative advances in medical science led to a series of truly effective treatments for serious medical conditions including rabies vaccines, anesthesia, techniques for immunization, sterilization and an understanding of the origins of infections. The bacterial world was opened by Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, and by the late 1800s their discoveries were finally being used to save lives. Medical organizations including the American Pharmaceutical Association and the American Medical Association eventually helped the medical field become more professional and organized.

From the beginning of the 19th century when medical treatment more closely resembled voodoo, to the end of the century when medicine looked more like science, this was a pivotal time period for patent medicine and the medical profession in general.

**Continued on page 4**



## Patent medicine, continued from page 3

Patent medicines have not completely disappeared but have evolved into a new generation of treatments that (like their predecessors) promise a solution to a wide variety of problems. From hair loss to weight loss to enlarged prostate, a treatment can still be found all in one little bottle! Even today, there remains a vibrant and profitable industry for products that have not been vetted by rigorous scientific observation.

The great entertainment provided by travelling medicine shows back in the 1800s have also morphed rather than disappeared. We no longer have the Rattlesnake King thrilling us with fire eaters and animal tricks, but those glitzy ads and infomercials for the latest “cure” on TV and the internet provide a form of entertainment that originated over 150 years ago. It’s clear that the rules of the game have changed, but the game goes on. So, the next time you are tempted to try that fantastic “miracle cure,” keep in mind that your results may be just the latest in a long history of broken promises.

*By Paul Berian*



## FESTIVAL OF THE TREES

The Public Health Museum has been participating in Tewksbury (MA) Library’s Festival of the Trees for several years and this year is no different. Our tree theme celebrates the history of Christmas Seals. Copies of historic seals from the museum’s collections are displayed on colorful ribbons. With added festive ornaments and copies of Christmas Seals bookmarks, the Public Health Museum’s Christmas Seal tree represents a colorful way to raise funds for charitable programs. The first Christmas Seal was introduced in 1904 in Denmark and was introduced in the U.S. in 1907 to support people living with tuberculosis (TB). View trees from November 30 –December 31, during library hours. Thank volunteer Liz Robinson for the Christmas seal theme.

*By Sandra Price, Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement*

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

### How can you help the Public Health Museum today?

Interested in making 2020 your time to volunteer at the Public Health Museum? Click the link below for more information about our volunteer activities and contact Sandra Price, Coordinator of Volunteer Engagement.

Like and follow us on Facebook,  
Instagram and Twitter



Volunteer your  
time



Consider donating to  
the Museum



*“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”*

## LILLIAN WALD: FOUNDER OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING 1867 TO 1940



In 1922 Lillian Wald was named one of the greatest living American women by the New York Times. In 1933 she was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame and in 1970 she was elected to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans. This remarkable woman is best known for establishing the Henry Street Settlement in New York's Lower East Side in 1893. In 2018, the Settlement celebrated 125 years of continued service to the community. The public is welcome to visit and learn more about the Settlement today, and its history, through an interactive multimedia exhibit.

Wald grew up in Rochester, N.Y. born of a German-Jewish middle-class family. She was educated in private schools and planned to attend Vassar College but instead decided to become a nurse. Nursing was a new profession for women and rapidly growing as doctors and patients alike began to appreciate their meritorious work. In 1891 she graduated from New York Hospital School of Nursing and began to work at the Juvenile Asylum, an orphanage in the Lower East Side neighborhood of NYC.

The Lower East Side of New York City was the poorest and most densely populated neighborhood in the world. Between 1880 and 1920 more than 19 million immigrants came to America, many settling in New York City. Although there had been reforms in the previous decades that sought to improve housing, sanitation and the health of the laboring poor; squalor, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and typhoid fever, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, unemployment and alcoholism were still rampant. As a nurse, Wald became especially interested in improving the lives of women and children who she believed were most vulnerable.

Wald's life work in public health came to her in an epiphany. She was asked to teach a class on basic nursing in the Lower East Side community. The class was interrupted by a child who ran to her crying that her mother was dying at home. She followed the child to a nearby tenement and found the child's young mother had just been delivered of an infant, but was hemorrhaging and unattended. A doctor had been summoned, but refused to care for her because she could not pay him. Wald wrote that she felt ashamed to live in a society where such tragedies were allowed to occur. She set forth a plan to improve not only the health of her poor neighbors, but the conditions which brought about illness, such as economic, political and social injustice. Wald believed that the indigent deserved the same care as was given to anyone else and that poverty was not a product of moral failure, as many believed, but caused by the failures of government and society.

She started by developing a plan of action called the "four branches of usefulness for nurses": visiting nursing, social work, country work and civic work. She began to study the philosophy of the Settlement Movement which was beginning to flourish across the country. The belief was that by living in the same community among those served, long term relationships and trust would be forthcoming, as well as a better understanding of the problems that needed to be addressed. In 1893, Wald relocated to a house on the Lower East Side at Henry Street with the financial backing of philanthropist Jacob Schiff. That year, with the help of fellow nurse Mary Brewster, she established the Visiting Nurse Association of New York City. She described the nursing that they did as Public Health Nursing because the care was integrated into the community. By 1906, Wald had 27 nurses on staff. By 1913, Wald and her team of now 92 nurses had served over 20,000 patients. Wald created the National Organization of Public Health Nurses and helped to establish a baccalaureate nursing school at New York University, one of the first in the world.

To see how Wald's work changed nursing and public health, see part two of this article in the next issue of *Public Health Matters*.

*By Mary Ferguson, R.N.*

# THE PUBLIC HEALTH MUSEUM IN MASSACHUSETTS

## Our Mission

The Public Health Museum is a non-profit educational and cultural museum. The Museum strives to preserve records and artifacts from our nation's public health history; educate the public about the achievements and contributions of public health; and inspire people to build upon the past and continue to advance the future of public health. Our Museum provides a space to explore public health artifacts, inspire future public health professionals, and foster community involvement.

## Our History

Incorporated in 1990 and open to the public since 1994, the Museum has the distinction of being the first of its kind in the nation. Massachusetts has a rich history of leadership and notable firsts in the birth of our nation. In the field of public health, Massachusetts was the first to record vital statistics; the first to implement a sustained board of health; and the first to implement a communicable disease surveillance system, among many others.

## MUSEUM HOURS

Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 AM to 2 PM and first Saturday of the month 10 AM to 2 PM  
OR by appointment

## WALKING TOURS

Seasonal (May through October, weather permitting), advanced registration required. Third Wednesday at 6 PM and first Saturday at 10 AM OR by appointment

## ADMISSION

\$5.00 per person for museum  
\$10.00 per person for walking tour

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested in the Public Health Museum.

To subscribe to this newsletter, please reply with **SUBSCRIBE** to Newsletter in the subject line. To unsubscribe, please reply with **UNSUBSCRIBE** in the subject line.

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