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The Granville Institute of Hydropathy

This essay is taken from a larger piece found in Charles Browne White's *The Philosopher of Mount Parnassus*. It is an interesting account of a unique medical establishment which existed in Granville in the middle part of the last century. As C.B. White notes, the Granville Institute of Hydropathy may have been the first such "water cure" facility in the Middle West. The buildings were located east of the present Bennett's service station where the Granville branch of the National City Bank now stands.

The rise in establishments like the Granville Institute of Hydropathy may have reflected local implementation of the ideals of nineteenth century Jacksonian democratic populism. President Jackson was concerned about the perceived elitism of all professions, and the medical profession in particular. With sweeping egalitarianism, Jackson removed many procedures by which trained physicians were licensed. Because most criteria for entering the medical profession were dismissed, all kinds of sectar-

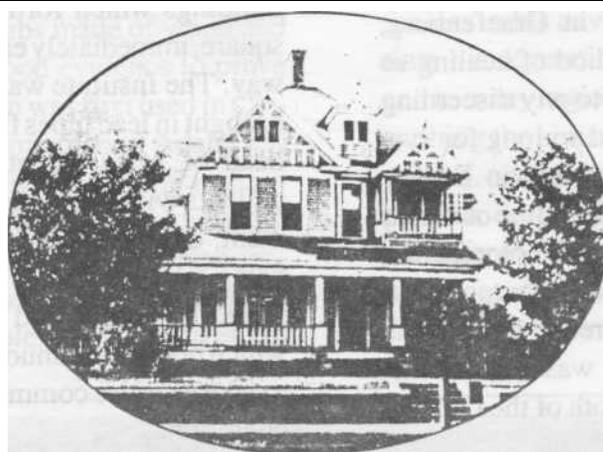
ian medicine rapidly evolved. The perception was rampant that anything a doctor could do could as easily be done in a home. A result was the advent of botanical cures,

herbal remedies and experimental treatments like the water cure. It is likely that Dr. Bancroft's interest in hydropathy and the establishment of the institute in Granville resulted from the rush to popular medicine and was part of the anti-elitist populism of Jacksonian democracy.

C.B. White's interest in the Bancroft establishment was focused by the razing of Dr. Bancroft's residence and institute.

The editors of *The Historical Times* are delighted to publish this account of a unique medical establishment located in our village in the middle part of the nineteenth century.

November, 1932, will be notable in the annals of Granville, Ohio, as the month which witnessed the demolition of one of Ohio's historic structures, namely the



Turkish, Russian Electric Light Baths and Massage

• ALSO A GENERAL HOSPITAL
TRAINED NURSES FURNISHED

NEWARK SANITARIUM

KENNEDY & MONTGOMERY
PROPRIETORS

159 W. Main St.

NEWARK, OHIO

The Kennedy and Montgomery Sanitarium still used aspects of hydropathy as late as the second decade of the twentieth century. This advertisement is found in the 1915-1920 Licking County Directory.

residence and professional headquarters of William W. Bancroft, M.D., who founded, in 1852, the Granville Institute of Hydropathy, popularly known as the Water Cure, and managed it with marked success until about 1865. This article is the result of an endeavor on the part of the Granville, Ohio, Historical Society, to add to the recorded history of Granville, Ohio, an accurate account of that once famous sanitarium.

Used by Roman Soldiers

Hydropathy, as a therapeutic system complete in itself, dates from about 1829, in Graefenburg, Austria. It is strange that a method of healing so near to nature, and so apparent to any discerning intelligence, should have waited so long for systematic development; for there were in Europe many thermal and mineral springs, some of which were used by Roman soldiers and colonies not only for ablution but also for curative purposes. In fact, hydropathic practice, more or less crude, antedates recorded history and was not uncommon among primitive peoples both of the Old and the New World.

Hydropathy was introduced to England about 1840 and to America soon thereafter. In Europe and the United States it spread rapidly. One of the first, if not the first, water cures in the Middle West was that at Granville, Ohio, which was established by W. W. Bancroft, M.D., in 1852. Dr. Bancroft was born in Granville, Massachusetts, in 1805. In 1814 his father, Azariah Bancroft, removed with his family to Granville, Ohio. The son, William W., was graduated from the Ohio Medical College, with honors, in 1827. In 1828 he was married to Anna Moseley Wright, daughter of Spencer and Abbey (Cooley) Wright, a woman of great charm, fine mind, and high ideals. After practicing his profession for a few years in Granville, Ohio, he spent some months in graduate study at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, and in hospitals in New York and Philadelphia, and then attended a

special course of lectures by the celebrated Dr. Storer, of Boston.

It was while pursuing his advanced study in the East that he became interested in hydropathy. Being possessed of unusual native ability and professional equipment, and being free from professional bigotry, he recognized in it a system of great therapeutic value when properly administered. His conviction of its value grew with the years and in 1852 he established the Granville Institute of Hydropathy. To house it he erected buildings which formed three sides of a hollow square, immediately east of his residence on Broadway. The Institute was well equipped. Water was brought in lead pipes from a perennial spring at the head of Main Street. A gymnasium furnished patients with the means of exercise and divertisement, one of the most popular mediums thereto being a bowling alley. The grounds were embellished by shrubs and flowers and by a fountain which played continuously. Patients were required to take exercise commensurate with their physical condition.

Enlightened Eclecticism

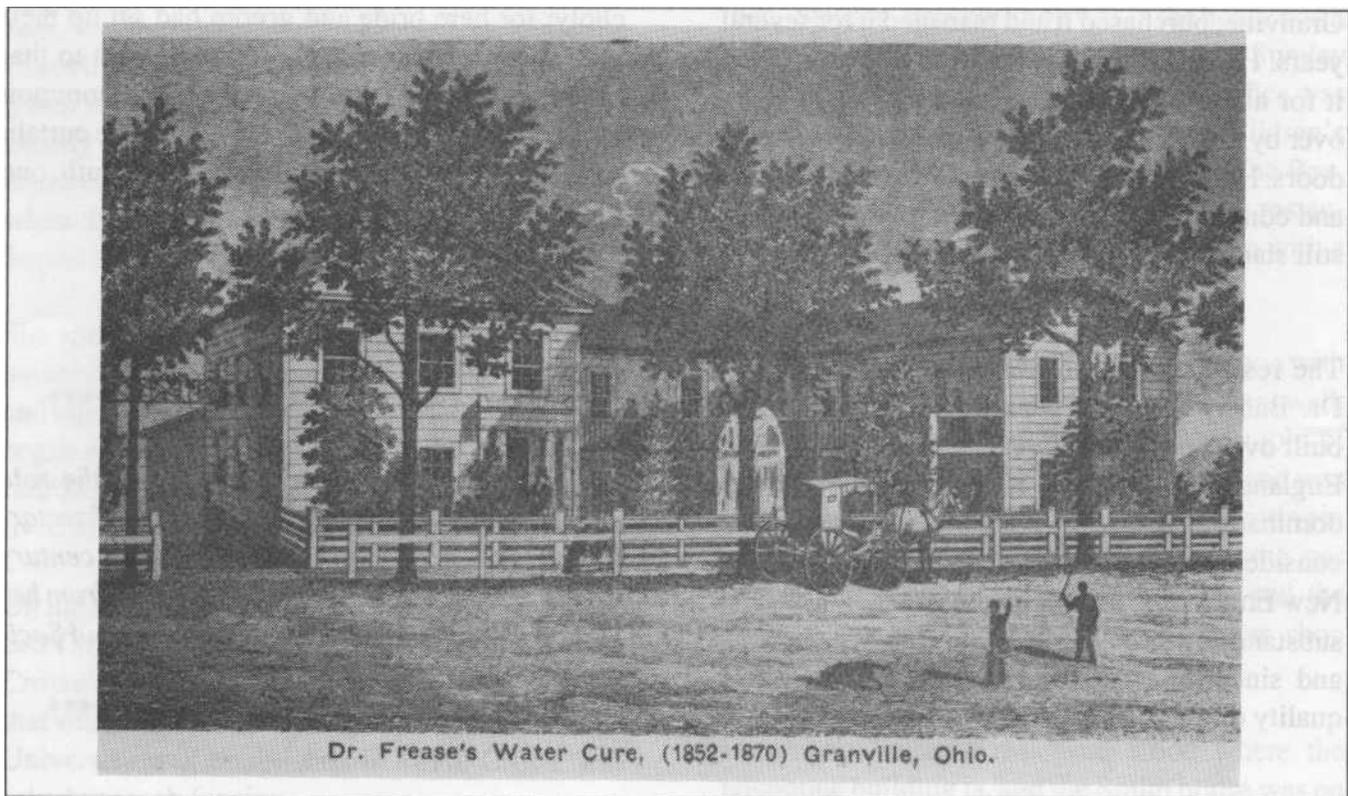
The system of treatment practiced by Dr. Bancroft might be termed an enlightened eclecticism. In the archives of the Granville Historical Society there are circulars, catalogues and pamphlets setting forth the therapeutic methods followed in the Granville Institute, a perusal of which reveals the surprising circumstance that the system of treatment in vogue in European spas and American mineral and thermal spring resorts today differs but slightly from that employed at the Granville institute of thermo-therapy. Emphasis was placed on diet, exercise, proper relaxation, and repose, a resolute optimism, avoidance of anxiety, and abstinence from excess. As a matter of fact, the active agents in the physical treatment of the hydropathic system were heat and cold; and water was scarcely more than the vehicle, and not the only one.

There is sound physiological authority for faith in the curative virtue of heat and cold and in the value of water as a vehicle in the utilization of heat and cold. The popular conception of hydropathy, however, ascribed undue importance to the use of water. Dr. Bancroft was too well versed in medical science to base his treatments upon the use of water alone; but he did employ water freely, as an expedient, and in many ways, both internally and externally.

One method of external application was by immersion in water at temperatures varied according to the nature of the disease under treatment. For this purpose he used bath tubs made of wood and lined with lead. There is good evidence to prove that, in America, the bath tub was first used in Cincinnati, in 1842, in the home of one Adam Thompson, who got the idea while visiting in England. Its growth in popularity was very slow. Doctors denounced it as a menace to health. Newspapers ridiculed it as a luxury calculated to corrupt the plain virtues of the people. That the citizens of

Granville were fairly open-minded is proven by their acceptance of bath tubs when installed by Dr. Bancroft in his Institute, in 1852. It is a safe assumption that the first bath tubs to be used in an Ohio hospital were those in Dr. Bancroft's hydropathic sanitarium.

The Granville Institute of Hydropathy, under the management of Dr. Bancroft, was remarkably successful, especially in the treatment of chronic disorders. Dr. Bancroft's education had been unusually complete and he was equipped with the best medical science of his day. To this he added great sagacity as a diagnostician. And he was tireless in his devotion to patients. Within a short time his reputation had spread throughout Ohio and to many regions beyond Ohio. A pamphlet describing the aims and methods of the Institute and printed, one infers, about 1865, contains a list of its patients during the year. They number 187, and come from Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, New York, Tennessee, and Iowa. That is indeed astonishing, in view of the fact that



Granville, in that era, was but a small village, with no railway connections nearer than Union Station and Newark, the former three miles and the latter six miles distant.

Dr. Bancroft's Health Taxed

One would suppose that the care of so many patients, most of whom suffered from chronic ailments, would overtax the physical endurance of any physician, no matter how robust; and Dr. Bancroft had never been robust. Though he was assisted, at times, by fellow-physicians, and always by a corps of nurses and attendants, his health broke under the strain of excessive service and he was obliged to discontinue his connection with the sanitarium which he had founded and brought to success. This was about 1866. (Dr. Bancroft died June 22, 1870.)

He was succeeded in its management by S. D. Jones, M.D., and William Owens, M.D., who were followed successively by Doctors Strong, Hudson, and Frease. In 1870 E. L. Jones, a native son of Granville, purchased it and managed it for several years. He sold it to a Dr. Ralston, who conducted it for about four years, when it was again taken over by E. L. Jones, who soon thereafter closed its doors. He divided the buildings into three sections and converted them into dwelling houses, which still stand.

Epitome of Colonial Character

The residence and professional headquarters of Dr. Bancroft was an attractive structure. It was built over one hundred years ago, when the New England colonial style of architecture was still dominant in Granville. That style might well be considered an epitome of the character of colonial New England. It was plain, dignified, honest, and substantial. Moreover, it was thoroughly sincere – and sincerity is perhaps the one indispensable quality of all good art.

Native Stone & Granville Bricks

In designing the house which was to be his home, Dr. Bancroft naturally adhered to the colonial tradition, for he had been born in Granville, Massachusetts, and brought up in Granville, Ohio. It was constructed of native stone and of bricks manufactured in Granville. It was built for a home and every feature of it was a sincere declaration of that purpose. And since to New England colonials a home was much more than a mere residence, it was built to endure. It seemed to those who saw the mass of stone and bricks which its demolition yielded, that it had contained enough structural material for two houses of its size. It would have withstood the ravages of centuries.

In addition to its architectural attractiveness, it had that charm which age alone can give to a house of stone or brick—the patina which Time bestows in compensation for the war of the elements. It had, moreover, that appeal which every old human dwelling makes to the imagination of the beholder—an appeal touched with tender melancholy; for here bride and groom had set up their family altar; here children had been born to that heritage of joy and sorrow which is our common lot; and here death had entered to drop the curtain on the drama of life. This house was, in truth, one of Granville's finest relics. [1932]

Editor's Note: The information about the role Jacksonian populism played in the rise of sectarian medical practices in the nineteenth century was suggested by Megan Lisska, gleaned from her Harvard University course, "Medicine and Society in America."

Remembrances of Granville

The editors are pleased to reprint a Tuesday, October 15, 1963 article from The Newark Advocate in which Alma Utter, the Granville correspondent, writes about an historically important rendition of early twentieth century Granville. The event of this narrative is a set of reminiscences of the village given by Minnie Hite Moody at a Granville Rotary meeting that autumn. While much has changed in Granville since 1963 when Mrs. Moody met with the Rotary members, nonetheless one can still recognize many of the sites she considered from the perspective of thirty years ago.

Minnie Hite Moody Recalls Granville of her Childhood

by Alma Utter

GRANVILLE—Minnie Hite Moody, novelist and poet, was introduced by Dr. Lionel Crocker to the Granville Rotary Club when she spoke to the group following luncheon at Granville Inn. Mrs. Moody reminisced yesterday about the business district as she remembered it, first as a child of six when she often accompanied her grandfather, Squire W. Evans, to the village.

She spoke of the difference in appearance of the businessmen of that day, with their long beards and mustaches. The business district then, as now, began at the tracks of the Toledo & Ohio Central railroad. The station agent and telegraph operator lived above Geach's store.

On the west side of Main Street was the Garretson and Cheshire Lumber Yard on the site of Charlie Crowe's blacksmith shop. Mrs. Moody recalled that when the College of Engineering at Ohio State University was established in 1876, Crowe was **asked** to teach forging.

The Welsh Church occupied the building now used by Granville Grange. She said the services were conducted in old Welsh; and that it was not unusual to hear conversations on street corners in Welsh. She said that the Baptist Church looked as it does at present, but that the Presbyterian Church was a red brick before the new surface was applied.

On the east side of Main Street was the Hulshizer Milling Company. Jake Jones, undertaker, was on the corner of Main and Elm with the casket showroom around the corner on Elm. Dr. Cook's office was in the Aheb Jenk's house and McCollum's Grocery Store occupied Dr. E. A. Sheffler's office and later was moved to Broadway where the toy shop is.

Next came the Methodist Church, a soft pink brick then. Stearns' Bicycle Shop was in the house north of the Methodist Church, now used for Sunday School. Mrs. Moody said that the post office was in the building now occupied by Rush's Children's Corner on the south side of Broadway. The Rev. Ramsey was rector of St. Luke's church. A restaurant was in the present Granville Museum with a sign, "the Oaks for Meals."

The next building was a pool room and saloon with three steps up to the door and the only cement walk in the village was in front. Mrs. Moody told of sitting on the steps to tie her roller skates and was promptly reported to her grandmother for sitting in front of the saloon. Futerer's Bakery, the gas office, and Mills King's jewelry store, and the Charlie Perrin and Alex Roberts' barber shop came next.

Dr. A. K. Follett's residence stood where the telephone building is, and the Smith house was on

the corner. Samson's harness shop, with a millinery shop in front, was also on the south side of Broadway.

Mrs. Moody, recalling the north side of Broadway, mentioned Wilbur Ramson's barber shop, Squire Malone's Hats and Tailoring, and George Piper's meat market. Guy and Clifford Case's Candy Kitchen came next. The late Miss Abbie Davis and Miss Gertrude Carpenter were clerks in the J. V. Woods Store. Wright and Wright groceries was where the Fuller Market now is; Ackley's Drugs and Interurban Station was next, then Morrow's Dry Goods Store. The Chrysler and Owen Grocery and the Granville Bank came next.

Ullman's Drugs and Books was where the Granville Times Store is now. Granville Times, established in 1880, is the only business occupying the same location. The Buxton jewelry was on the corner. Across Prospect on Broadway, Mrs. Moody remembers McCollum's Grocery store that moved from Main Street; Jones and Van Voorhis, hard-

ware; the telephone office, with the late Blanche Horton, operator; and later, the gas office with T. M. Kier.

On North Prospect Street were the jail, Simpson and Evans, plumbers, and the Gun and Watch shop of Tom Jones. Mrs. Moody explained that Gunsmith Jones taught her to take revolvers and rifles apart. Also on this street were the Frank Robinson livery stable, later moved to the site of the present resident (sic) of Dr. and Mrs. Lionel Crocker and the John Evans blacksmith shop.

On the site of the Granville Inn, Mrs. Moody said, was the Methodist Old Ladies Home in a four story frame building, said to be the largest frame building in Ohio. East of Buxton House were Burkham's livery stable and Perry Jones' blacksmith shop.

During Mrs. Moody's childhood there were four doctors besides Dr. A. K. Follett and J. D. Thompson, and a veterinarian.

