Henry C. Beardslee, M.D.
1807 - 1884
by Ruth Hyslop
Some research by C. Turk

Connecticut and its people have been very important to the settling of our area. Henry Curtiss Beardslee was one of those important pioneers. He was born July 2, 1807 in Monroe, Connecticut to Dr. Gideon and Sarah Ann Curtiss Beardslee. At that time Monroe was called Huntington. Dr. Gideon died in 1826.

Henry began studying medicine in May of 1827 at Yale University in New Haven. He graduated the Medical Institution, had his diploma, and was ready for practice by May of 1829. The new doctor opened an office and soon had a country practice, widespread but, perhaps, not greatly prosperous.

While still in Connecticut on April 25, 1833, he married Harriet Hawley who was the daughter of Elisha and Nancy Blackman Hawley. She was also from Monroe. They had five children. Among them were Maria H., Harriet Louisa, and Charles H. Henry’s wife was born November 14, 1807 and died July 7, 1860. She is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Painesville, Ohio. One of the sons died, when only ten months old, and was buried on May 10, 1848. His marker is in the Beardslee plot. Harriet Louisa, born circa 1849 was 17 when she joined her mother and brother in Evergreen Cemetery.

Clementine M. Carrier of Enfield, New Hampshire was born in 1831 and married the widower Henry Beardslee in November 1861. They had three sons: James C. (1863), Henry C. (1865), and Lucius W. (1869). For many years after the doctor’s death, James C. and his wife, Cornelia, took care of Clementine. She is listed on the Civil War Pension List 1861-1934 as the doctor’s dependent. Henry C. the younger studied and became a physician. He and his wife, Anna Ford Beardslee, are buried in the family plot, as is Clementine.

Henry Beardslee was always an active person. He was a fine physician and an especially skilled surgeon in the more difficult operations. The family moved to Painesville in May 1845. Perhaps the class ties to Judge Hitchcock and other Yale classmates were the influence that brought him to choose Painesville. The most laborious time of Dr. Beardslee’s medical life were the years between 1863 and 1865 when, as examining surgeon for his Congressional District, he examined upwards of 12,000 candidates for military service. He was a private in Company E, 6th Ohio Cavalry.

Beardslee had an avid interest in botany from his early years. He continued this interest by traveling the area to gather specimens for his collection. It was said that the horse knew when to stop and wait for him. His Catalogue of the Plants of Ohio, including flowering plants, ferns, mosses and liverworts was published in Painesville in 1874. This book was of such import that it was reprinted in 2005. He left his herbarium to Oberlin College.

Botany and medicine were only two of his interests. In two political campaigns he
lectured throughout Connecticut about temperance and in 1844 was elected to the state legislature.

Henry C. Beardslee, Jr. wrote in the Painesville High School Alumni Record in 1925, “It is a pleasure, that looking back on my high school days...the boys and girls of Painesville were very fortunate in their school. Owing to an unusual set of men, many of them trained in the eastern universities, who constituted the school board, Painesville in those days possessed schools that were better than those of most towns its size.” His father had often been a member of the school board.

Another important facet of Dr. Beardslee Sr.’s life was his commitment to his church. He probably accepted the Christian faith while in college and gave himself to its tenets, for in February 1846 he was elected an elder of First Church (congregational). In 1847 he was elected to be a trustee. He went on to become clerk and then moderator. Later he worked with the young people and even helped with the pastoral duties when the office was vacant. Until World War II there was a Beardslee Class at First Church, Congregational.

His health failed in 1882 and his activities curtailed. He died at his residence on Erie Street on December 20, 1884 from paralysis. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in the family plot.

Sources:
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1857 Index of City Directories for Painesville, Chardon, and Madison Ohio on Lake Co. OHGenWeb
Painesville Burials 1847-65 on Lake Co. OHGenWeb.
Lake County Death Record Transcription.
Lake County Cemetery Inscriptions.
Oak Hill Cemetery, Pontiac, Oakland, Michigan for Henry C. and Harriet online.
Obituary Record of Graduates of Yale College Deceased during the Academical Year ending in June, 1885. pp. 229-230.
"Civil War Pension Index 1861-1934" on Ancestry for Clementine Beardslee.
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Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal pdf file online (has disch date).
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Sashabaw Cemetery, Clarkston, Oakland Michigan on Find-A-Grave for Elizabeth Beardslee dau of HC and Harriet.
Beardslee, H. C. Catalogue of the Plants of Ohio, including flowering plants, ferns, mosses and liverworts.
Painesville: 1874.
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