

# *Waitsfield Telecom*

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 WAITSFIELD  
**TELECOM**  
CHAMPLAIN VALLEY



# Medical History Of the Mad River Valley



## Introduction

This special history section is about doctors who have faithfully served our Valley citizens. It is a collection of memories by people who lived in the Valley. Some were written in early publications and others were from conversations with folks living in the Valley today. We hope you will enjoy this unique look back at history.

The doctors were the underpinning for all events from birth and death to infection, poliomyelitis, influenza, tuberculosis, small pox and insanity. They were intimately acquainted with each family and knew them better than any of their neighbors. The doctors came when they were summoned, traveling by whatever means of transportation was available at that particular time in history.



Remedies of days gone by...

As the Valley towns took shape in the late 1700s and a group of citizens decided to make the Valley home, medical skills were needed. The first physician arrived in 1793. In the early days of a doctor's practice, the horse and buggy or sleigh were the only choices for transportation. When there was an emergency, someone had to go to the doctor's office to summon him to the sick or injured person. Sometimes it took a long time for the doctor to reach the patient.

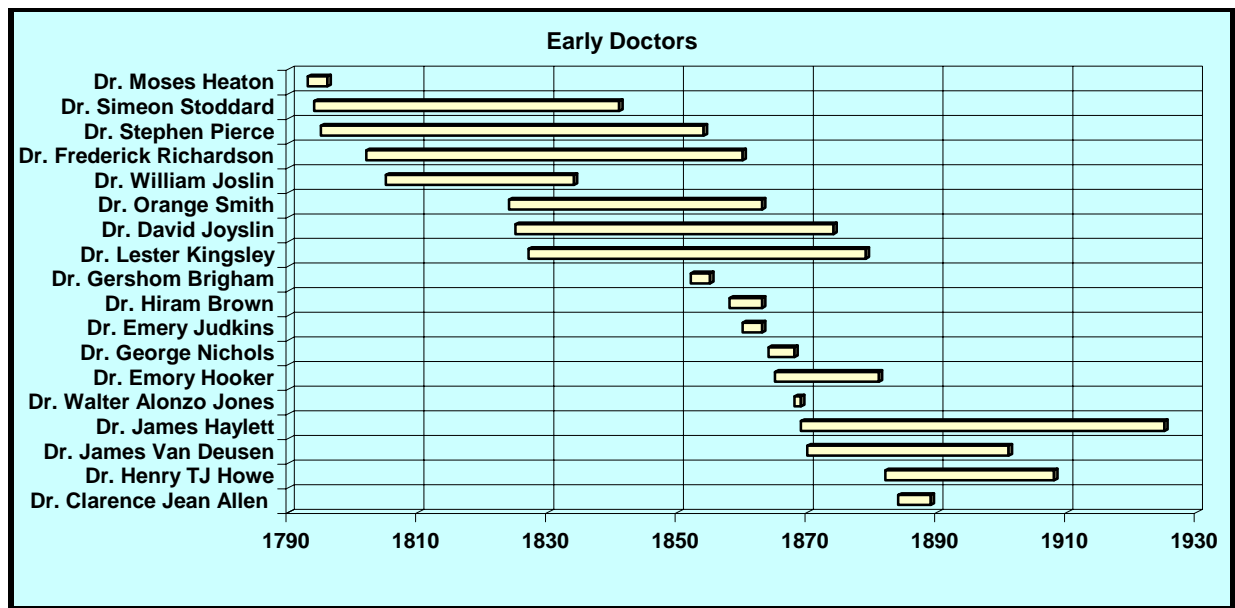


In the early days a local doctor had to travel to their patient's homes in a horse and buggy similar to the one shown here.

In 1904 an invention called the telephone came to the Valley when the Waitsfield and Fayston Telephone Co. was incorporated. The doctor could be called to a patient's house without having to harness up the horse. More and more people enjoyed the convenience of the telephone as lines were built and the system served more people.

Between the dates of 1793 and 1889, 24 doctors practiced in the Valley. Due to the lack of resources the information on their practice is somewhat limited. Below is a brief outline of the doctors who practiced in the area.



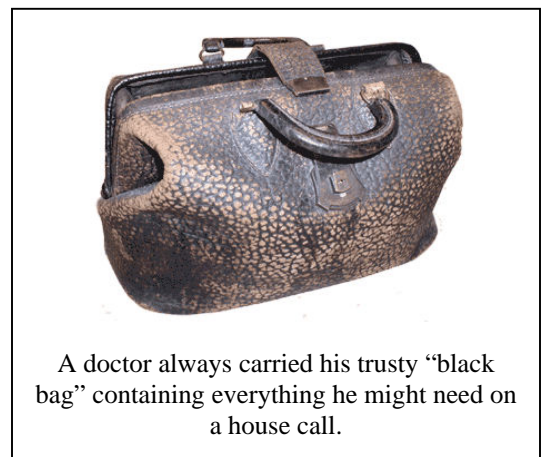


Several other doctors practiced in the Valley during those 93 years, but the corresponding dates of their service were not available. Dr. Frederick Minor came to the area as a small child in 1794. He was the first doctor to be trained in Waitsfield and practiced until 1833. Dr. Joseph Whitcomb began practicing around 1812. He remained in the Valley for several years, then moved to Texas. In 1852, Dr. Gershom H. Brigham, a native of Fayston and a physician of the homeopathic school, opened an office in Waitsfield. He was a pupil of Dr. David C. Joyslin and a graduate of Woodstock Medical College, but became one of the earliest converts to homeopathy in Vermont. He moved to Montpelier in 1855. Dr. Fred S. Kent served Waitsfield for a short time in the 1920's. Dr. Kent also taught at the University of Vermont.

Additional doctors, including Drs. Clayton Camp, Frederick Jackson, George Bidwell, and Harry Hopkins, served the Valley throughout the years. There were several individuals who were born in the area but never practiced here. Dr. Edwin Alonzo Jones practiced in Vershire and Strafford, Vermont and died at the beginning of his career. Gurley Phelps settled in Jaffrey, NH and acquired a reputation as an especially skillful physician. Roger Smith, brother of Jack Smith of Waitsfield, passed away early in his career from Hodgkin's disease. Today Dr. Diana Barnard practices at Middlebury Family Health. Dr. Kimberly Bruno is a family practitioner at Morrisville Family Health Care. Dr. Theodore Bruno is the Medical Director of the Center for Health Care Education in Killingworth, Connecticut.

## Medical Training and Education

Throughout the 1800's and early 1900's the law did not put restrictions on practicing medicine. Early education to become a doctor was quite limited. Anyone who could raise the money to pay for a room and a "shingle" was at liberty to rent the first, hang out the second, and call himself a doctor and practice upon anyone whom he could induce to employ him. Most young men who wanted to become physicians instead of quacks took up the study of medicine in some medical school. There were about one hundred and sixty such schools in the United States; good, bad and indifferent.



Throughout the years, the better class of schools had made many efforts to improve the instruction they were giving. In 1898 the University of Vermont College of Medicine had graded its courses and lengthened its curriculum to four years. But there was no standard of excellence, no way of estimating the comparative value of the diplomas from the different medical schools.



In the 1800's, physicians and medical students had a need to enhance their knowledge by studying actual human bodies. They had to determine a way in which to obtain cadavers to study. The laws at the time made this form of inquiry criminal. According to English law, which became the basis of law in the new colonies, a dead body could not be bequeathed like other items because it was not considered property. The only legal way at the time to get a body was if a judge, when he was sentencing a criminal to death, ordered that the criminal's body be given to a physician for dissection. Since very few criminals were ever executed in Vermont, there was a very small supply of cadavers. In order to obtain more bodies, the practice of grave robbing became a reality.

In the eyes of local communities, grave robbing turned physicians into vultures. However, medical schools had an urgent and indisputable need for cadavers. Patients wanted to be treated by physicians who fully understood the inner workings of a body. This knowledge could only be obtained by studying a human corpse.

On November 29, 1830 an incident occurred in the Town of Hubbardton, Vermont, which has come to be known as the "Hubbardton Raid". The corpse of Mrs. Penfield Churchill had been snatched from her grave. The townspeople were outraged by this horrible event. About 300 of the residents of the Town of Hubbardton walked five miles to storm the doors of the Castleton Medical School building demanding to be let in to look for Mrs. Churchill's body. The dean of the college finally agreed to return the body to the residents, once the townspeople agreed not to press charges against the College.

The snatching of bodies from graves was not only a problem for Vermont, but all over the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the second half of the century, changes in laws helped to ease the problem of a shortage of bodies for medical schools to use for research and study. Legislatures across the country gave unclaimed bodies of people without friends or family to the medical schools, thereby alleviating much of the need for grave robbing.

## Antiseptic Conditions in Surgery

In the late 1800's, advances in the study of wound infection were beginning to take place. Until that time, it was generally accepted by the surgeons of the day that infection would be present after surgery. The surgeons did not waste much thought on trying to prevent the infection since it was a normal occurrence. They did not realize that infection was a result of bacteria and that if the bacteria were destroyed, or never entered the wound in the first place, there would be no infection. There was no preoperative disinfection of the skin in the operating area, no draping of the patient with a sterile sheet, and no sterile caps, masks and gowns were worn by the operating team. Surgeons may or may not have washed their hands. One surgeon wore an old blue broadcloth coat, long-tailed and with a velvet collar that he had worn at home and on the street until it began to get shabby. He then brought it to the hospital to use for his operating coat. It took time for surgeons to realize the multiple sources of bacteria.

In 1869, Joseph Lister created one of the greatest events in the history of medicine. He proposed the notion that infection by germs was the cause of the deadly complications. He pioneered the use of carbolic acid as the first antiseptic to clean wounds and surgical instruments. An antiseptic is a substance that prevents the growth of

microorganisms either by inhibiting their activity or by destroying them. In the 1870's, as the source of infection was understood, deaths from infection were reduced from nearly 60% to just 4%. By the early 1900s, better methods of preventing infection gradually developed. In surgery, the antiseptic era made a path for the aseptic (germ free) era in which the emphasis is on the avoidance of bacterial contamination rather than on killing bacteria already present.

## Physicians Who Served the Valley

### Dr. Warren Howard

Dr. Warren Howard, a graduate of the University of Vermont Medical School, practiced in Waitsfield and St. Albans. He was very close to the people of Waitsfield. He married "Doc" Bisbee's sister, Gertrude, who was a well-known resident in town. Fletcher Joslin, another long-time local resident, remembers Dr. Howard's daughter Marguerite from when he was a child. Marguerite and Fletcher would often go with Dr. Howard when he made house calls. The two youngsters would often share a special treat for their efforts. Marguerite would come out of the house with two cookies and she would hold them in her hand and say, "I'll start your cookie for you." She would take a bite out of his cookie and then hand it to Fletcher before eating hers. Dr. Howard wasn't in Waitsfield very long, but upon retirement moved back to Waitsfield. Many people have fond memories of him.



Dr. and Mrs. Warren Howard

### Dr. John L. Campbell

There was a time when Waitsfield didn't have a doctor of its own so one would come from a neighboring town. Dr. Campbell, one of those doctors, was born in Rochester, Vermont on April 4, 1861. Before becoming a doctor, John worked in a silk mill in North Hampton, MA. After his father died, John moved his family to Rochester, Vermont. He attended Dartmouth Medical School and left there to join the University of Vermont Medical School where he graduated in 1900. After graduation, Dr. Campbell moved his family to Oklahoma for a while, but was not happy there. He soon returned to Vermont, this time locating in Warren where he practiced medicine for 16 years. Katherine Hartshorn, a local resident of Warren, said that Dr. Campbell was her mother's doctor when Katherine was born in 1914 and remained her doctor until at least 1928. He passed away in 1930. Dr. Campbell was a well-liked man as evidenced by the following poem written about him.

#### **Dr. Campbell**

*There are but few like him up on this earth.  
A man of ability and sterling worth.  
A man who was always quiet and cool.  
A man who followed the golden rule.  
A man who was always just and fair.  
A man who was true to compass and square.  
A man we can ill afford to lose.  
We will never be able to fill his shoes.  
We will remember him until the end.  
For he was our real and true blue friend.  
He had but few peers as an M.D.  
As fine a man as one could see.  
His greatest aim was saving life.  
We liked the doctor.  
And we liked his wife.*

Fletcher Joslin remembered two instances when Dr. Campbell helped out. Fletcher's father believed in having live animals as toys and they had a billy goat and a nanny goat. One day Fletcher and his friends from across the street, the Moriarty boys, got the billy goat out to pull a little toy wagon. Fletcher jumped into the wagon to drive. The boys soon learned that you couldn't rely on where a billy goat was going to go. The goat started off, made a quick turn and Fletcher was thrown out onto the ground dislocating his shoulder. He was *"howling and taking on terribly"*. Fletcher remembered Dr. Campbell coming to his rescue, *"I can see the doctor now; he's got his nice clean handkerchief out"*. He must have put some chloroform on it and put Fletcher to sleep. Dr. Campbell got Fletcher's shoulder back in place.

Fletcher also remembered when he had an infection in his finger. Dr. Campbell came down and got his little scalpel out. Upon seeing the scalpel, Fletcher remembered saying to the Dr., *"Oh, no, no, no, no."* Dr. Campbell said, *"Oh, I'm not going to do anything to that"*. And before Fletcher knew it, the pain was over.

It was normal practice for physicians to perform dental procedures. Ed Eurich remembers Dr. Campbell pulling a tooth when he was a young lad. Of course, at the time there was no painkiller. *"Dr. Campbell pulled my tooth and broke the tooth off. It was real painful before he was done. It darn near killed me,"* said Ed.

### **Dr. Carlos Adams Shaw**

Carlos Shaw was born on July 22, 1870 on a farm south of Northfield, Vermont. He became college educated through hard work and perseverance. Attending Randolph Normal School, he studied medicine at the University of Vermont and interned for six months in 1899 at Massachusetts General...all this interspaced with time out to work on the farm to earn enough money for tuition to return to school.



Tools actually used by Dr. Shaw

His first practices were in Brownsville and Roxbury, Vermont. He found the income from his medical practice

unreliable, taking up farming as his primary occupation.

Farming was often a necessity for physicians to provide for their families. Sometimes the doctors were paid through the barter system: cows, pigs, chickens, maple syrup or firewood.

At the outbreak of World War I, a shortage of doctors was proclaimed and Dr. Shaw announced that he would certainly go into the service if he were called. Dr. Shaw's family was very much against the idea of him going to war. His children cut the wooden spokes out of his carriage wheels so he wouldn't be able to leave.

In 1924, Dr. Shaw received an invitation from the town of Waitsfield to become the resident physician. He and his family lived in the Methodist parsonage behind the present location of the Village Grocery. At the 1932 Waitsfield Town Meeting it was voted to pay the rent on Dr. Shaw's residence, a consideration that was renewed annually for the rest of his life.



Typical dental instruments used in the "Good Ole Days" . . . **Ouch!**



Dr. Shaw never wrote a prescription, kept accounts or sent bills. He never wore a white doctor's coat or belonged to a medical association. Dr. Shaw seldom recommended that his patients go to a hospital. He traveled hundreds of miles in the Moretown-Duxbury-Waitsfield-Fayston-Warren area in all kinds of weather, using carriage, sleigh, car, snowshoes or by foot to treat the ill and touch the lives of many families from 1924 until his death in 1950.

During the depression hard times fell on the doctor, who charged little, if at all, for his services to an increasingly large number of impoverished patients. Although Dr. Shaw charged very little and never sent out bills, there were some who could well afford to pay but wouldn't. One family frequently in need of medical attention would always say, "*Oh, we'll be down on Saturday night.*" Of course, on Saturday night, they never came down to pay their bill. So one night when they called looking for the doctor, Mrs. Shaw said, "*Oh, the doctor will be down on Saturday night.*"



Old "Doc Shaw"

Dr. Shaw was an outstanding diagnostician, recognized as such by his classmates and professors at UVM. Dr. Harwood, another physician from the area, once remarked he would give his right arm to know as much medicine as Dr. Shaw, whose remarkable powers of observation gave him clues other doctors might miss.

A former patient of Dr. Shaw's who moved to Barre went to see Dr. Stephen Woodruff. He asked her to remove her clothes so he could examine her. Indignantly, she refused, saying, "*Dr. Shaw could always tell what was wrong with me, even with my clothes on!*"

Dr. Shaw didn't always take his black bag with him when he went on house calls. He would

put a collection of the nine pills he generally prescribed to his patients in his pocket. The doctor was noted for tasting a pill before handing out any, thus reassuring the patient. Since the pills looked nearly alike, by tasting it he could verify that he had chosen the right one. How much were these pills? A handful was only 50 cents. That price never changed. The doctor also had sugar pills for the hypochondriacs and the little girls with sick dolls. More valuable than the medicine was the feeling of confidence and relief patients felt when "Doc" was around. An office call was also 50 cents. The standard charge for a home call, no matter the distance, was \$1.00 and for the delivery of a baby \$5.00. But often there was no pay.

All of Dr. Shaw's patients remember the Black Drawing Salve he seemed to use for everything. He mixed up his own version of the remedy. It had a strong drawing power which promoted healing for skin ailments: boils, abscesses, splinters, carbuncles (painful pus-filled bumps that form under the skin), felons, skin infections, cysts and tumors. The ingredients varied, but one that most people remembered was the pine tar. This is still available today under the name of Icthamol, used as a drawing salve for boils and splinters.



Antique bottle that held Cod Liver Oil, used as a vitamin.

Energetic and seemingly tireless, Dr. Shaw, after an all night vigil, would rely on his horse to bring him home. Tying the reins around the whip, he would doze off. Once a new horse he had just bought carried him into the dooryard and stopped. The dooryard turned out to be that of the horse's former owner.

In the days of “party telephone lines” you can imagine how interested the neighbors were in some calls. The tongues wagged and the curiosity abounded when the wife of a patient who had been given medicine for an intestinal blockage called and simply reported, “*It happened at 7 o’clock, Doc.*”

Since the operator’s switchboard and Dr. Shaw’s home and office were located in the center of Waitsfield Village, the operator knew his comings and goings. She would put the calling party through to him no matter where he was. The operator actually was an answering service for the doctor.

It should be noted that Dr. Shaw also provided other very important services, as the nearest dentist and an able veterinarian. He understood the importance of diet and felt that many new cereals were only as nutritious as the milk and fruit added, promoting the value of apples. He also appreciated the value of fresh air and sunshine. One day he told a young woman who had been very ill that she was well enough to get outdoors and sit in the sun. When she protested that she would freckle, his unsympathetic reply was, “*That’s no problem . . . you’ve already been to the market!*” (Translated, she had already found her man and was married.)

He was a dedicated doctor until the very end. In February 1950, when he was nearly 80, he left his sick bed against the wishes of his family to make a house call. As a result he developed bronchial pneumonia and died within forty-eight hours.

A tribute written by Ruth McGill says it best:

**Dr. Carlos Shaw**  
*He was a man of knowledge  
And of wit combined.  
He gave his all in love  
To those he left behind.*

### **Dr. Charles E. Harwood**



Dr. Charles E. Harwood

When Charles E. Harwood presented himself for admission to UVM, the registrar suggested that he go home to Dorset because he didn’t have enough money. His response was one of determination to put himself through school. To earn money he took a job stoking coal furnaces for several locations in Burlington. While on one of these jobs, he met the young woman he would eventually marry. He was introduced to the Waterbury area when he worked on a clean up crew after the 1927 flood. Immediately after he received his medical license, he dedicated his life to his medical practice in Waterbury and also served the people of the Mad River Valley.

Dr. Harwood’s typical greeting to his patients on a visit to his office was, “*What the hell is wrong with you today?*” His office visits seemed to last a long time. As long as there were patients in the waiting room, he would see them, unless there was an emergency or a baby to deliver. No matter what time he finished, he then did the home visits for the patients who were too sick to travel. Eleanor Haskin remembers home calls at her house around midnight – he asked for coffee and took a short nap.



The local folks remembered Dr. Harwood's roll top desk located in the corner of his office. The desk was stacked with papers, yet he was always able to find a document he wanted to share.

Dr. Harwood was one of the first doctors to use hypnosis for pregnant women during delivery. Eleanor Haskin recalls visiting the doctor at his home in his living room every other Sunday. He would hypnotize all women present. They would go to the Sunday sessions until their babies were delivered. On one occasion, a woman was not entirely awake when she went home from one of Dr. Harwood's practice sessions and got into a car accident. After that incident, Dr. Harwood made sure that the women stayed until they were completely awake.

Dr. Harwood delivered some 2,000 babies during the term of his practice. His policy, when delivery was imminent, was to have the mother checked at his office before going to the Heaton Hospital in Montpelier. If he didn't feel the mother was ready, she would be sent home. On several occasions the doctor rushed her to the hospital in his car. On one such occasion, the baby arrived more quickly than anticipated and the upholstery in his brand new car was destroyed. Dr. Harwood's next car had leather seats. On another imminent delivery, the police stopped him in Middlesex for driving too fast. This was when there was no interstate highway, only Route 2. Dr. Harwood asked the officer if he wanted to help deliver a baby or escort him to the hospital. The officer quickly provided the escort.

Dr. Harwood's black bag was fitted with small glass vials for medication. There was always room for chocolate bits in a pill envelope for the kids. For many years, the closest pharmacy was in Waterbury. For the convenience of rural patients and because of transportation difficulties (bad roads, not enough cars, less trips to town, etc.), the doctor filled the pharmacy requirements from his black bag.

Dr. Harwood's son, Brian, shared the following story:

*"My most favorite story about my dad and the Valley is one he told of getting a call from the Howe Farm up on Moretown Common one winter night. He was of course in Waterbury, and it had snowed up a storm. They agreed that if he drove to what was then the Ward store in Moretown village they would come down in the sleigh and bring him up to the farm. Not something one would expect these days, but as many of the older families in the Valley may remember, he was used to making house calls, sometimes after he had finished the evening office hours at our house. Not long after the trip to the Howe Farm and no doubt prompted by it, he found a Model T Ford truck that could be converted to what amounted to a very large snowmobile by adding tracks to the double rear wheel axles. One of my very earliest memories is of him waking me up from a nap when he sold the Model T, to watch it drive away down South Main Street in Waterbury from our house.*

*He was one of the initial general practitioners in central Vermont to sign up with Blue Cross, Blue Shield.*

Brian Harwood

Dr. Harwood succumbed to cancer in 1962 after a long and courageous struggle. When Harwood Union High School began their academic year in 1965, Dr. Harwood had delivered nearly all of the students when they were born. The decision of the "naming" committee was unanimous; the new school would bear the name of our trusted friend and physician.

## **Dr. Shepard Quinby**

Dr. Shepard, “Shep”, Quinby was born in 1905. He was a dermatologist who came to the area from Buffalo, New York. His daughter was going to Middlebury College in 1952, so the family visited the area many times. Dr. Quinby decided that his Buffalo practice was too busy and he wanted to come to the Valley to enjoy his family and to retire. The Quinbys built a house and moved to the area in 1953. At first he practiced locally as a “part time physician”. Even though Dr. Quinby was a great dermatologist, with patients coming from as far as Maine and New Hampshire for his services, his work in the Valley quickly turned into a full-time job of taking care of all types of illnesses and injuries. He cared for the local residents as well as the many visitors who came to the Valley to ski. His daughter Pat remembers that during ski season he barely had a chance to sleep. He would lie down on the couch, fully dressed, just “waiting for the phone to ring” to help the next patient. Whenever he would set a broken bone he would send the visitor home and tell them to check with their regular doctor, but they never had to reset anything, since he was so good at what he did.

Dr. Quinby was appointed health officer for the area with responsibility for making sure that townspeople installed proper septic systems. Prior to this time, septic was simply allowed to flow into the Mad River. It is hard to imagine that this was a common practice, but no one really seemed to be concerned about the health risks that this imposed on the residents of the area.



Dr. & Mrs. Shep Quinby at the ceremony honoring their many years of service to the Valley

Dr. Quinby fully enjoyed being a “country doctor” because it was so different from his busy practice in Buffalo. He loved driving his Jeep to make house calls on his patients. He especially enjoyed sitting with the families and having coffee at their kitchen table and walking out to their barn to see the animals.

Dr. Quinby was very active in the community. He helped establish the Couples Club that maintains the Waitsfield Recreation Field. In the summer of 1954, the members of the club met at Dr. and Mrs. Quinby’s house for their very first meeting. The club voted to organize for the betterment of the community and have, since that time, maintained the field that is used by many local groups.

Steve Joslin, a long time local resident, remembers one winter weekend afternoon when he was in high school in the mid 60’s when Dr. Quinby called his father Ryford Joslin at their shop. *“Shep’s office was across the street from our house in Irasville. He asked if David, my brother, could come over to the office and give him a hand. Evidently Margaret (Mrs. Quinby) was not available. David went over and helped Shep put a cast on some skier’s broken leg. David recalls holding the plaster bucket and roll of plaster tape for Dr. Quinby.*

*He was very involved in his “spare” time in the development of the Couples Club field. When I was in about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, he would stop at the shop and ask me to help him with his work at the field. He drove a red Jeep with a removable top and a trailer for his lawn mowers. Sometimes we would get to the Couples Club field and he would realize he had forgotten something. He would send me back to his house in his Jeep to get it. I had no license; I was not old enough to get one. When I went by our house on Rt. 100 one time on the way to or from the field, my Mom was on the porch and I waved. She had a fit and my Dad just chuckled. Traffic was a lot less then and we hardly ever saw a State Policeman.*

*Shep was also involved with the ski jump that was built on the hillside at the Couples Club field. It was late fall and the remainder of the wooden decking needed to be installed. It was the upper portion of the decking. Shep asked me to help. We went down one very frosty fall or early winter day and were working on the upper part of the ramp when I lost my grip and went down the jump and off the end on the frosty boards. I did not set a hill record, but I believe I was the first off the jump.”*

Stephen Joslin

Another Valley resident, Keith Munro, shared the following memory that he has about Dr. Quinby, “Back in 1971, at the Waitsfield Elementary School at lunch break, Allen Gaylord and I got into a fight, about what? It's gone now. We had an exchange of fists and arms, which came out on top? I can't remember now, all I do remember is that Mrs. Stafford pulled us apart and sent us on our way. The next day my right hand hurt like heck! So I told my Mom what happened. She called Dr. Quinby, who said to come right down. After looking at my hand, we went to the x-ray room and found out that my thumb was broken! Dr. Quinby asked how it happened. I reiterated the story to him. His advice was to be smart and the next time I punch some one, to keep my thumb on the outside of my fist. Words of wisdom from an old country doc.”

Fran Quackenbush told us a story about how gentle Dr. Quinby was, “I will always remember how Shep gave shots. Children lined up, some crying, all nervous, waiting for that awful sting and pain – which never came! Somehow Shep had a trick way of pounding his fist on the child's arm so that the prick of the needle was simply not felt. It was funny to see the puzzled expression come over each child's face. During Shep's “reign”, no one in the Valley minded getting their shots.”

In the June 30, 1972 edition of The Valley Reporter, an article appeared on the front page of the newspaper entitled “A Tribute to the Quinbys”. The article stated that on June 24, 1972 approximately 700 people attended a ceremony at Harwood Union High School to honor the Quinby's to mark the retirement of Dr. Quinby. Vermont's Governor Deane C. Davis attended the ceremony and read the following proclamation:

### **Proclamation Made by Governor Davis**

“Whereas the Quinby's have devoted 21 years to serving unselfishly their community and hundreds and hundreds of Vermonters; and whereas Margaret and Shep have managed to dispense generous doses of no-nonsense advice as well as necessary amounts of tender, loving care; whereas Dr. Quinby has worked at a pace that has worn out the average doctor not only in his practice of medicine but in his community as well; whereas Margaret and Shep's energy and stamina to physically build rock gardens, retaining walls, ponds, tennis courts, horse stables, and remodel homes and offices astounds us all, whereas the Quinby's concern for our Valley and their enthusiasm has been vital to so many community projects; whereas Dr. Quinby has received wide acclaim from his down country medical peers regarding “his amazing orthopedic skills as the family G.P. up in the Vermont hills”; whereas so many of the Quinby's friends have gathered today to honor them all as they have done for so many of us I therefore, Deane C. Davis, Governor of the State of Vermont do hereby declare June 24, 1972 to be Shepard and Margaret Quinby Day.”

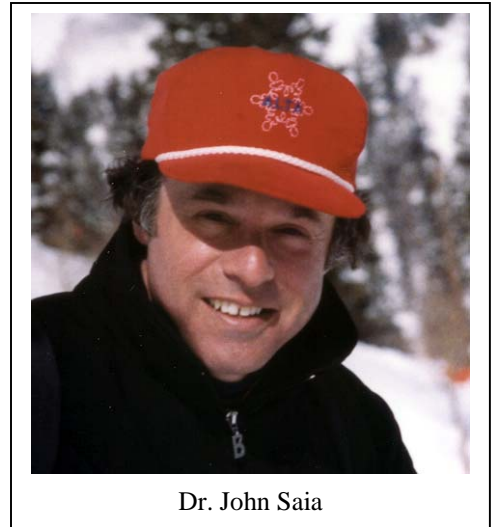
At the ceremony honoring Dr. & Mrs. Quinby, a scholarship was established for students from the area who wanted to study medicine at the University of Vermont. The Shepard Quinby Scholarship Fund has been very successful and remains in effect today, helping students from the area realize their dreams of entering the medical field.



## **Drs. John Saia and John Williams**

Drs. John Saia and John Williams came to the Valley in 1972 following completion of their residency training at the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont in Burlington. The two new doctors rented Dr. Quinby's office at the bottom of Bragg Hill. Dr. Quinby continued to work one afternoon a week doing dermatological cases for a couple of years before he moved to Prescott, Arizona.

Dr. Saia remembers that in the beginning the local folks did not easily accept him. The true natives were skeptical of the new doctor until they found out that he was from Barre. However, he took a step backward once the patients realized that he was not a 6th generation Vermonter (like most of his patients), and in fact, his parents were both from Italy. Dr. Saia was eventually accepted once he proved himself worthy of their trust.



Dr. Saia and Dr. Williams were great partners. Their styles of medicine were somewhat opposite of each other, which worked out very well. Dr. Saia had a pleasant bedside manner, which his patients very much appreciated. Dr. Williams was very focused on all that he did and everything had to be just "so". He would see a patient, quickly assess the situation and decide on a treatment. Dr. Saia remembers that Dr. Williams would take a two-week vacation every summer and upon his last day would go to the office to ensure that everything was in order. *"All the tongue depressors had to be accounted for"*, said Dr. Saia. Dr. Williams would then be ready to begin work again the following day.

Gladys Damico worked for the doctors as office manager, secretary and sometimes nurse. To the doctors, she was absolutely indispensable. One of her duties was to ensure payment from the patients. On one occasion, Gladys was attempting to get payment from a Moretown man. Several days earlier, while working on a farm, he had badly damaged his foot by dropping an anvil on it. He somehow managed to get himself to the doctor's office. He was fixed up by Dr. Saia, but needed to return each day for several days to have the dressings on his foot changed. On the fifth or sixth day, Gladys asked the patient how he was going to pay the doctor. He thought about it for a minute and finally said, *"If it heals, I'll pay. If it don't, I won't."*

Dr. Williams remained in the Valley for approximately two years. Dr. Saia continued the practice by himself for several years. In 1976, he realized that he needed a larger space for his growing practice, and purchased a house at the corner of Route 100 and Loop Road from Mr. Tucker. He hired Green Moss Builders to make considerable renovations to the house in order to make it into a medical office.

Dr. Saia was offered a teaching position at the University of Vermont and decided it was time to move his family out of the Valley. He joined the Department of Family Medicine at the Medical School; he became Director of the Family Medicine Residency Program and an attending physician at the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont. He was instrumental in developing the program that has seen several generations of UVM Medical Students spend month-long rotations at his former office in Waitsfield under the tutelage of Dr. Francis Cook. Dr. Saia continues to teach and practice family medicine in Burlington and is privileged to continue to take care of a few loyal patients from "The Valley".

# Present Day Physicians

## Dr. Francis Cook

Dr. Francis Cook came to the Mad River Health Center in 1981. There were also several doctors who worked for short periods of time. Dr. Cook and two nurse practitioners continue to provide medical services at the Mad River Health Center today.



Mad River Valley Health Center

## Dr. Karen Endacott and Dr. Tim Wargo



Dr. Tim Wargo and Dr. Karen Endacott  
from Mad River Internal Medicine

Dr. Karen Endacott started Mad River Internal Medicine in March of 2001, offering service to residents of the Valley. In late 2005, Dr. Tim Wargo returned to the Valley and joined the staff of the Mad River Internal Medicine.

## Complementary Medical Services

We are very lucky to have the choices of complementary medical service professionals in our small Valley. Each is a specialist in their type of medicine, each one dedicated to their field. Physical therapy providers include: Back to Action Physical Therapy, Green Mountain Sports Physical Therapy, Maximum Fitness and Rehabilitation and Poulin Performance and Rehabilitation Center. Chiropractic services are provided by: Mahoney Family Chiropractic Center and Chiropractic Office and Alternative Health Research Center.

## Holistic Services

There are also several holistic services available in the area. These services include massage, acupuncture, herbalists and yoga, among others.

# Medical Disasters

## Polio Epidemic of 1916

Polio, a virus that lives in the throat and intestinal tract, is a disease that has been around for a very long time and was one of the most dreaded childhood diseases of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Although it is nearly eradicated, it once was a major threat. In 1916, there was a polio epidemic in the United States that killed 6,000 people and left 27,000 paralyzed. During the epidemic, there was no doctor in Waitsfield. The horrible disease struck at least three families (the Palmers, the Moriartys and the Joslins) in the Valley. Eventually the area residents got help with the polio epidemic, as doctors from Burlington came with the serum to inject people, but not before it did major damage.



Mary Moriarty walking with her  
braces.

Fletcher Joslin recalls a story from his friend, Everett Palmer. Everett lost his brother, Carrie age 17, who passed away from paralysis of the chest area. Carrie had just played a game of baseball in Montpelier; however, when he got home he had a very high fever. The disease acted very quickly, within three days Carrie was deceased. His siblings, Hazel, Dwight and Everett Palmer, also had polio with lesser effects.

Ryford and Fletcher Joslin were given salt baths in the tub to help their muscles. Ryford went to Boston to see a specialist, Dr. Oper, who did some muscle transplants that didn't work. Ryford was paralyzed and wore a brace on his right leg all the way to his hip.

Those who became paralyzed, losing the use of their muscles, had paralytic polio. The disease affected Mary, Isabelle, Francis and Dan Moriarty. Mary wore braces on both legs for the rest of her life. The disease did not affect their brother Paul.

## **The Flu Epidemic of 1918**

In September of 1918, soldiers at an army base near Boston suddenly began to die. The cause of death was identified as influenza or "Spanish Flu", but it was unlike any strain ever seen. As the killer virus spread across the country, hospitals overfilled, death carts roamed the streets and helpless city officials dug mass graves. It was the worst epidemic in American history.

Once the flu hit Vermont, it swept through with vengeance and was one of the state's most deadly epidemics. Entire communities prohibited gatherings in order to help reduce those who were infected. Within a month it was all but gone. By the end of October 1918, approximately 1,800 people were dead across the state and thousands of lives were forever changed.

## **Trips to the Hospital and Ambulance Service**

It is hard to believe that ambulance service was at one point not a fact of life. However, some of the older residents of the Valley might remember a time when patients were transported to local hospitals (Heaton Hospital in Montpelier, Barre City Hospital in Barre, or Mary Fletcher Hospital in Burlington) by any means available at the time. Sometimes a local mortuary even helped out by providing transportation in their hearse.

The Heaton Hospital was Montpelier's first hospital and was established in 1895 by Homer Wallace Heaton. We can imagine that before the invention of the car, a trip to the hospital would have been done in a buggy or a sleigh. Private car was then the only way to get to Montpelier. Fletcher Joslin remembered an accident of long ago when a man riding a motorcycle went between a telephone pole and a tree and was badly injured. The townspeople had the injured man lying on the porch of the old hotel building for quite some time. They were waiting to transport the man to the hospital in someone's private car.



Many times patients stayed home instead of going to the hospital. Fletcher's brother, Ryford, had mastoid surgery at home and was later taken to the hospital. Anna McMahan, a nurse, lived with the Joslins for a year because of the family's episodes of polio, rheumatic fever and the birth of a child. For a year and a half, prior to Alton Farr's death in 1940 from tuberculosis, he was cared for at home instead of a sanatorium. His dedicated nurses were: Helen Reed Fielder, Fabiola Moriarty, and Beulah Moulton.



Eventually it was determined that transportation for injured or ill patients must become a higher priority. The National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council issued a report in 1966 titled Accidental Death and Disability. They recognized a lack of domestic emergency medical treatment in the field and the requirements of the expanding interstate highway system. Convinced, Congress (under President Lyndon Baines Johnson) enacted the National Highway Safety Act of 1966, which established the Department of Transportation at Cabinet level. Prior to this time, many communities' only access to ambulance service consisted of a hearse driven by employees of the local mortuary.

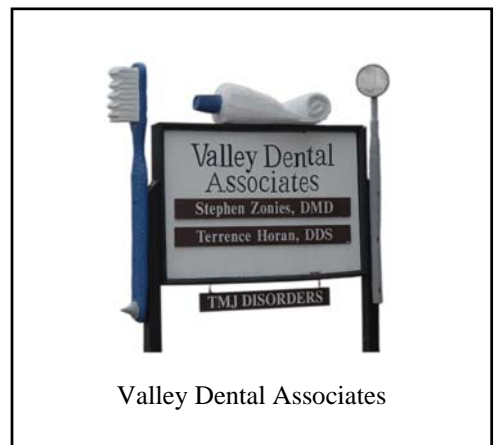
Shortly after the National Academy of Science report came out, the citizens of the Valley realized that they needed to act to get ambulance service to meet the requirements of the new law. They were not only concerned about the local people, but they also had the many people who visited the ski areas to think about. Dana Haskin was asked to head up the effort. A committee was formed, and a plan was created to overcome the hurdles of creating the first ambulance service. A used ambulance was acquired, funds were raised and volunteers were gathered. The volunteers received training, were assigned shifts and the service was underway. In the wintertime, the ambulance was stored at Peg and Harold, "Hub", Hubbard's house. In the summertime, the ambulance was stored outdoors at the telephone company office.

Eventually space was made available at the Waitsfield Fire Department for the ambulance, which is where it remained for many years. When it was determined that the Mad River Ambulance Service (MRVAS) needed a home of its own, Bonnette's Garage was purchased on Main Street in Waitsfield. The building was renovated to suit the needs of the MRVAS. The building is the current home of the MRVAS that serves the Valley towns. The community is very grateful and proud of all of the many hours that the volunteers, who work on the MRVAS, put in day in and day out.

## **Dental Services**

There was no regular dentist until Dr. John Viskup and Dr. Jim Daly established Valley Dental Associates in the early 1970's. Dr. Viskup was a dentist from Vergennes who opened a second practice here in the Valley. Dr. Daly didn't stay long, though, and left to start a practice in Middlebury.

As Dr. Viskup's patient load grew, Dr. Stephen Zonies joined Dr. Viskup. After many years of service, Dr. Viskup decided to turn the practice over to Dr. Zonies and continue his dental work in Vergennes. Dr. Terrence Horan was added to the Valley Dental staff to continue quality dental work for Valley residents.



We hope that you have enjoyed this step back in time. Hopefully it has stirred up some fond old memories of those individuals who have helped shape the Valley and care for its many residents and visitors over the years. We have fully enjoyed researching and writing this history section. We would like to thank all of the many friends who have contributed to the writing of this document and for all who shared information and memories. If we have forgotten to mention the names of anyone, it is truly unintentional.

Eleanor Haskin

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