

# Historically Speaking

P.O. Box 1 • St. Paul, NE 68873 • [www.historichc.us](http://www.historichc.us) • E-mail: [historichc@historichc.us](mailto:historichc@historichc.us)



*Dr. Georgina Grothan was married to Dr. Ole Grothan. She graduated with honors from medical school at Northwestern University in Chicago. The couple adopted a child and later divorced. Photos circa late 1890s. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack.*



*Dr. Ole Grothan was a leading doctor in Howard County for many years. This image was taken when Grothan was serving in the Spanish American War. One of his offices was located in the upper level of what was commonly known now as the former Knights of Columbus Building (northwest corner of Seventh Street and Howard Avenue). At the time he had his office there, the building was known as the Grothan Building. He is buried in Grand Island, NE. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack.*

## Say Ahhh

By Julie Spilinek

One of the most frequently discussed topic during the past several months has been the recently adopted Obama Care or more accurately, the Affordable Health Care Act, which is suppose to allow people access to health care that doesn't 'break the bank'. Like so many aspects of our lives, taking care of our bodies has involved

numerous changes over the past 100 to 150 years. Most of these changes have been for our benefit as they have allowed us to escape many of the diseases that meant a period of suffering, or even an early death. Most of you reading this suffered from chicken pox, measles and/or mumps. Many of you were the victim of whooping cough, scarlet fever and smallpox. Some of you may even

## A Message From the President Gary Peterson

July has been a busy month with week end visitors and special tours. In early July a group of ladies came from Clearwater, Nebraska for a tour and a week later a tour sponsored by the Boone County Hospital hosted 53 visitors.

Thank you to Rose Ross for getting volunteers to be hostesses at the buildings for the weekends and for her and Evelyn Dvorak's keeping the tours going.

The Depot is being painted and the village is going to be rewired this summer. The museum has inadequate electricity to the buildings because of air conditioning and if we try to plug-in other things we blow out fuses.

The GCA Days pie sale was very successful with many delicious pies. Thank you to all who brought pies and worked at the stand. For the GCA Days the Village was very active with visitors Saturday afternoon with people of all ages visiting the buildings. Many good comments were heard and everyone seemed to enjoy the museum/village. On Sunday of GCA Days an Old Time Tent Revival was held at the village. A good crowd attended.

Thank you to the board members and the many volunteers that work so hard to make our museum an asset to the community.

had polio, which was ravaging the country during the 1950's. For those whose respiratory systems were affected, the iron lung, an artificial breathing machine, was the recommended treatment.

During the late 1800's and the early 1900's most people did not seek professional medical attention unless they were seriously injured or ill. Yet, some of the smallest towns had a doctor.



Dr. E. R. Fletcher moved to St. Paul in 1873 and became the first physician in the Loup Valley. Photo courtesy of Deb Potts.

According to an 1890 business directory Boelus had a Dr. George W. Miller listed; Dannebrog had F. G. Salter and Elba had Paul Hullhurst as a physician. The former townsite of Midway had a J. L. Lamb. As would be expected, St. Paul had several—R. F. Worth, R. F. Hovel, D. R. Fletcher, and D. E. Morrill, who was a dentist. Several drug dispensaries were also part of the medical scene during these early years. They could often diagnose an ailment and offer advice or even dispense a medicine to ease or alleviate the problem. This was a time before regulations affected the pharmaceutical industry.

Thanks to Deb Potts of Kearney and Ron Sack of Omaha, I am able to provide information on a few of the early physicians who practiced in Howard County. Both individuals sent accounts of Dr. Fletcher and I am including a column that appeared in a promotional St. Paul publication entitled the HEADLIGHT, that Mr. Sack sent. Included were also columns featuring Dr. O. Grothan and his wife, Dr. Georgina Grothan.

E. R. FLETCHER, M.D.

This place has a number of physicians who have gained honored and respected names throughout this locality, but none who meet with more profound consideration than this true, tried and honored professional gentleman. He has become endeared to the people in the surrounding country as well as the city, not only in a professional but also in a social way. He has had a practical experience of many years and is recognized as a skillful, sympathetic and conscientious practitioner. He is a cultured gentleman, standing high in his profession, and is a profound advocate of public progress.

Dr. Fletcher was born in Chicago, read medicine in St. Paul, Minn., and was graduated from Rush Medical College, Chicago, class of '70. He began practice in Little Falls, Minn., continuing until 1873, when he removed to St. Paul, Neb., being the first physician in the Loup valley. He has a wide acquaintance and an extended practice, covering the entire surrounding country. He is also local surgeon of the U.P.R.R.

He is one of the most highly esteemed and respected citizens, and has always been prominent in the affairs of the community and foremost in every movement conducive to the best interests of the town and people.

DR. GEORGINA GROTHAN was born at Saybrook, Ill. in 1867 and resided in the State until 18 years of age. She was educated in Chicago, graduating from the South Chicago High School in 1883. Soon after she removed to Nebraska, and in 1888 was married to Dr. O. Grothan and began the study of medicine. The following year Mrs. Grothan entered the Northwestern University Woman's Medical School, Chicago, graduating with high honors, class of '93. The next year she served as house physician to the National Temperance Hospital in Chicago, after which she returned to St. Paul, where she very successfully practiced her profession. Mrs. Dr. Grothan is a lady of much more than ordinary ability, a thorough student, careful, conscientious and sympathetic, and is devoted to her profession. There is always a demand for women physicians and her time is entirely taken up with her extensive practice. She is widely

known and highly esteemed, and worthy of her enviable reputation as a physician.

DR. O GROTHAN is a native of Norway, and when 12 years of age came to America and attended school for seven years. He then returned to his native country and attended school three years, after which he returned to America, locating in Louisville, Ky., where he attended college and graduated in medicine, class of '86. He then came to Nebraska, locating at Scotia, where he successfully practiced his profession five years, when he located at St. Paul. In '93 he took a course at Rush Medical College, Chicago, graduating from the institution in '94. He has built up an extensive practice and is one of the most progressive and successful physicians and surgeons in the West, as well as a leader of prominence in the politics of the State, and has been highly honored by his fellow citizens in many ways. Although a Democrat, residing in a Republican district, he was elected to the State Senate in '96 and served with distinction. Dr. Grothan stands very high in his profession and his services are much sought after in consultation by physicians of the State. On June 25, 1898, he was appointed surgeon of the Third Nebraska volunteer infantry, with the rank of major, by Gov. Holcomb, and served until the regiment was mustered out, May 11, 1899. Upon his return from the war he resumed his practice, which reaches beyond his county and even to other States. He is also local surgeon of the B.&M.R.R., a member of the State Board of Health and was appointed a delegate to the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States for 1899 by the Governor of Nebraska

F. S. NICHOLSON, M.D.

There are few people today who have any conception of the struggles that have been made and the privations that have been endured by self-sacrificing physicians to advance the science of medicine. There is not an age in history but what has produced men in this profession who have sacrificed their lives for its advancement. The dangers physicians are exposed to and their devotion to their calling are well known. No profession has done so much to alleviate the sufferings of humanity or ameliorate the condition of mankind

as has the medical profession.

Dr. Nicholson is a native of Toronto, Canada, and was graduated from Trinity University, class of '94. He then came to the United States, locating at Dannebrog, Neb., where he opened an office and successfully practiced his profession for about one year. In 1896 he was associated with Dr. Fletcher and removed to St. Paul, where he has secured a large and successful practice. Dr. Nicholson is fitted by nature for a physician and will achieve success and distinguished name in his chosen profession. The doctor and his estimable wife have proven a valuable acquisition to the social functions of the place.

The following information was provided by Ms. Potts from the NEGen Web Project—Who was who in Howard County in 1940. Merton O. Arnold was a physician and surgeon. He was born in a sod house in Palmer, Nebraska on July 19, 1889, the son of William G. Arnold and Winnifred E. Prince Arnold. He was educated at the York Academy, York College, and the University of Nebraska. In 1919 he graduated from Northwestern University of Maryland. He was an intern at St. Lukes Hospital in Chicago. He came to St. Paul in 1920 and soon became a popular doctor. He was a member of the Howard County Medical Society, the Tri-County Medical Society, and the Nebraska State Medical Association. His office was located at 806 7th Street.

In 1960 Dr. Arnold sold his practice to Maurice D. Mathews, who continued to serve the area until 1997 when he retired. A few years after being in St. Paul, he built his own clinic on Indian Street. That was 1972. He remained there until he retired and the Howard County Hospital absorbed his practice. In 1987 Roger Wells, P.A.-C. joined Dr. Richard Hanisch as his PA, then continued with Dr. Hansen when he bought Dr. Hanisch's practice. He later joined the staff at Dr. Mathews's clinic and continues providing health care to patients today. On February 2, 1998, Dr. Bob Cooper of Nova Scotia, became the director of the new Medical Clinic, which became part of the Howard County Hospital. A Dr. Peré, also from Canada, also became part of this team.

Another well known physician was Edward C.



*Salomae Mamot McDermott, along with her husband, Harold McDermott, operated the McDermott Hospital at 910 Indian Street in St. Paul for many years. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack.*

Hanisch, who was born at Rockville on January 19, 1883 to O. G. Hanisch and Louise S. Dieterichs Hanisch. He graduated from the University of Nebraska Medical College in 1918 and interned at the University Hospital in Omaha for one year. He also was a member of the Howard County, Tri-County and Nebraska State Medical Societies as well as the American Medical Association.

The "Entering Howard County" book offers the following additional information on E. C. Hanisch. He was born in a sod house in Sherman County and grew up on the family farm but dreamed of becoming an engineer on the U.P.



*The McDermotts operated a hospital out of this home in St. Paul for many years. The house is still standing and is located at 910 Indian Street in St. Paul. Photo courtesy of the Howard County Assessor's Office.*

Railroad. He attended school only through the eighth grade, then worked at a shop in Rockville, Nebraska. His younger brother convinced him to complete his education and become a doctor, which he did. Two of his sons, Edward, Jr., and Robert, also became doctors, both practicing with their father at one time. Their sister, Beata, attended nursing school and helped in the office; she also did some of the bookkeeping. Dr. Bob, who joined his father in 1948, unfortunately died suddenly in September of 1971. The Sr. Dr. Hanisch officially retired on January 1st of 1972 but lived in St. Paul until he died on April 20, 1986, at 103 years of age. Edward, Jr., died in June of 1992. In 1962 a special celebration honoring Dr. E. C. Hanisch was held but he didn't retire until January 1972. Several people made note of the fact he always had a dog who would frequently accompany him on errands, house calls, even hospital calls but would wait in the car.

Another Dr. Hanisch was Richard, a nephew of the elder E. C. He was born December 11, 1927, at St. Paul. From 1952 to 1959 he was a dairy farmer. He then enrolled in the University Medical School, earning his degree in 1963 and began his practice in 1964. He was still practicing when he died in 2002.

Peter M. Pedersen was a physician who practiced medicine in Dannebrog. He was born in Toustrup, Denmark, on June 24, 1871 to Kristen and Mette Marie Pedersen. He came to Nebraska in 1894 and attended Blair College and the UN Medical College; he began his medical career in Dannebrog in 1904. He, too, belonged to the three medical organizations previously mentioned.

Dorwin Burgette Wengert was born in Mapleton, Iowa, June 4, 1904. He received his medical degree in 1929 from the University of Nebraska and was an intern at Bell Memorial Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, and came to St.



*The T. T. Bell home eventually became a hospital in St. Paul. It is located at 1005 9th Street in St. Paul. From the automobile in the picture, this photography appears to be from the 1950s. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack*

Paul in 1930 where he remained for at least 10 years. His office in 1940 was at 717-1/2 Howard.

Anselm L. Danitz was born in Farwell, January 17, 1907. He received his education from Farwell, St. Paul High School, and Creighton University, receiving his dental degree in 1929. From 1929 to 1939 he was a dentist in Omaha, and came to St. Paul in 1939. I have no information on how long he remained there.

J. Ray Hughes was also a dentist in St. Paul for a time, initially settling there in 1928 and continuing at least until 1940.

Thomas M. Thomsen and his wife were dentists in Dannebrog prior to 1923 when they moved to St. Paul. He was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1871 and received his dental degree

there and came to the United States in 1899 and found his way to Dannebrog where he met Johanne; they were married in 1901. From the information I have it appears she attended dental school after they were married as she began her dentistry in 1907.

In the "Entering Howard County" book there is an entry for James Jens Bisgard who was born August 3, 1869, in Aster Homan, Nibe, Denmark...and died in 1943 at the age of 74. At age 20 he came to Harlan, Iowa, and worked as a farm hand until he saved enough money for medical school. He attended the University of Omaha Dental College, graduating in 1898. He began his practice in Central City and one year later moved to St. Paul. He was active in Odd Fellows, the Masons and the Danish Brotherhood.



*The hospital at 1005 9th Street became the home of Eugene and Carolyn Jorgensen and is now the home of Steve and Jodi Studnicka. Photo courtesy of Ron W. Sack*

During more recent times there were Dr. Roemmich, followed by Dr. Plith; a Dr. Crawford, who preceded Dr. Norman Griesen, who was here in the 1970s. Dentists who had lengthy relationships with the citizens of Howard County and the surrounding area include Dr. Roemmich, who came to St. Paul in 1946 and retired in about 1980, and Dr. Norman Griesen. Today there is Dr. James Krejci, who began taking care of teeth in 1984 in the old Coast-to-Coast store in St. Paul and recently moved into the former office of Dr. Griesen.

Doctors and physician assistants currently on the staff of Howard County Medical Center in St. Paul are Dr. Dan Harrahill, Dr. Angela Brennan, Dr. Jared Kramer, Dr. Chris Tomhave, Roger

Wells, PA-C, Kelly Platek, PA-C, Jessica Stanton, PA-C, and Lora Trvdy, PA-C.

In addition to taking care of our teeth, eyecare is also an important part of one's overall health-care. Dr. Stine started his Family Eyecare in 1984 with Dr. Krejci in the Coast-to-Coast. In 1985 Dr. Bunger joined him and in 1992 he relocated just west of the Citizens Bank. In 2005 Dr. Hudnell joined the team, and more recently Dr. Grabowski. Just last year, 2013, they made another move to the former Swinarski Pharmacy building.

*NOTE: A photograph of Dr. E. C. Hanisch will be published in our next issue. If there are any corrections or additions, please contact me at 308-863-2275.*



HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
 P.O. BOX 1  
 SAINT PAUL, NEBRASKA 68873



### Historically Speaking



*E. R. Fletcher M.D.*  
 INSIDE: "Say Ahhh" is a compilation of Howard County physicians and dentists, as well as the early hospitals and was written by Julie Spilinek

### Historically Speaking

**PUBLISHER:**

Howard County Historical Society

**EDITING, LAYOUT, AND DESIGN:**

Many fine members of the Howard County Historical Society

**CIRCULATION:**

300+

**MAILING ADDRESS:**

P.O. Box 1, Saint Paul, NE 68873

**MEMBERSHIP (INCLUDES NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION AND MAILINGS):**

\$10 per person

Preserving the history of:  
 Boeius, Cotesfield, Cushing,  
 Danco, Danovirke, Elba,  
 Fairdale, Farwell, Nysted, Paplin,  
 Saint Libory, Saint Paul, and Warsaw

**2014 OFFICERS:**

Gary Peterson, President  
 Jessie Kiser, Vice President  
 Julie Spillock, Secretary  
 Evelyn Dvorak, Treasurer

**OTHER 2014 DIRECTORS:**

Jean Foss  
 Janet Hraza  
 Jim Ross  
 Rose Ross  
 Carl Huebner  
 Roger Van Pelt  
 Robin Eljermier  
 Marlene Govlik

The HCHS is a non-discriminatory provider