

Famous People

With the realization that unless you have known all those who have been here before us, it is impossible to decide whom should be listed as "the greatest" in our first hundred years, the historical committee has chosen three whose names should be mentioned with any group of outstanding Shelbinans.

Dr. J. D. Smith: Throughout Shelbina's century of existence, few if any individuals have left their impress upon the people as did Dr. Jacob D. Smith.

A short biography is given in the Early Settlers, but even this section cannot tell all that should be of a man who was loved by so many people.

He was orphaned at the age of four years. After the death of his parents he lived in the home of an uncle, David Harris, in Quincy, Ill., where he received all care and attention possible. His academic training was from Soules Academy, and one year at Quincy College.



He began the study of medicine under the direction of Dr. I. T. Wilson, later attending Rush Medical College, in Chicago, graduating with his M.D. in 1870. He began his practice in Shelbyville, Mo., in September, 1871 and after two years moved to Shelbina to become the partner of Dr. E. N. Gerard for three years.

The life of a country doctor is necessarily one of privation and sacrifice. He belongs wholly to the public. In the period Dr. Smith practiced, the population was scattered and the sick calls covered many weary miles in all kinds of weather, bad roads and often far into the night. This experience was new to Dr. Smith for he had never had to forego his own wishes for the comfort or welfare of others. However, he accepted this daily requirement.

A good part of two generations in this community was brought into the world by him, while countless others are alive because of his skill in medicine and surgery. It is too bad there is no record of the number of lives he saved, the number of babies he brought into the world, or the number of calls he made without getting a fee.

Most of his practice was before the automobile era and easily accessible hospital. Often emergencies were met by Dr. Smith on horseback with the kitchen for an operating room and members of the family for nurses. There was scarcely a pioneer home in Shelby county which had not at some time known the genial presence and the fine skill of Dr. Smith, and literally thousands of others owe their restoration to health to the kindly ministrations of Dr. Smith.

After 53 years of wonderful service to the community, Shelbina people, old and young, wishing to pay homage to their good family doctor, gave a banquet in his honor in 1926. Besides the huge crowd which attended, letters, telegrams from far away places poured in, showing the esteem in which he was held.

For 64 years he practiced his profession. Then when he was spent with serving and bent under the burden of years, he ended his work. A poem as written by Mrs. Cena Wright with the Doctor as the inspiration:

"What is it like to be loved for your worth,
By hundreds of people all over the earth,
Who remember you both for service rendered,
Wisdom and warmth of friendship endeared."

Dr. Smith died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. E. W. Jewett, May 18, 1947, at the age of 98 years.

"God bless the day that marks your birth
With all that's good and true,
For of all the best things here on earth
None were too good for you."

Much of W. O. L. Jewett's story is told in the Early Settlers' section.

He came to Shelbina in 1867 after service with the Union forces in the Civil War and following study of Law. The story is told that he was an ardent Republican but finding his new community overwhelmingly Democratic, changed his party. Throughout his life there was no more outspoken Democrat in the county than W. O. L. Jewett.

William Orrington Lunt Jewett, born in Maine Dec. 27, 1836, suffered a disability during his first enlistment with the Union army, being discharged in January, 1863.



Part of his service was in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. In 1864 he re-entered the service with Battery A, First Illinois Artillery, marching with Sherman.

In 1866, after studying in the law department of the University of Michigan, he was admitted to the bar in Michigan and Illinois. In 1867 he moved to Shelbina.

From 1875 to 1881 he assisted in the publishing of the Shelbina Democrat, then bought a half interest in the paper. In 1876 he was elected prosecuting attorney of Shelby county; in 1886 became a representative in the state legislature.

Whatever Mr. Jewett became interested in, he became a part of. Among the newspapers he was president of the Missouri Press Association in 1892. In 1899 he became Grand Master of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In 1904 he was appointed to the Board of Visitors, University of Missouri. He is given credit for fathering the State Historical Society and also the School of Journalism.

A huge picture of him hangs in the public library, he being the first to give to the permanent endowment fund, contributing \$500.

From 1901 to 1911 Mr. Jewett was the sole owner of the Democrat. After leasing the paper to his sons, he moved to California but continued writing an editorial column for the paper until his death in 1928 at the age of 91 years.