

Dr. Henry Clay Beard

Dr. Henry Clay Beard was born December 21, 1839, near Middlebrook, Augusta County, Virginia, a son of William and Jane Ewing Beard. He was born into a family who supported slavery, though it is not known if they ever owned slaves. But in his youth, Henry grew to abhor slavery, and upon completing his early education, he came to Ohio (a state where slavery was always outlawed) in 1859 to begin the study of medicine.

Henry took his first course of lectures at the Medical College of Ohio during the session of 1860-61. After war broke out, in August 1862, Henry enlisted as a private soldier in the 117th O.V.I. (later the 1st Ohio Heavy Artillery). Upon learning that he had enlisted with the Union Army, Henry's family in Virginia cut off all ties with him. He would never see nor hear from his parents again.

Henry was soon promoted to hospital steward and advanced to assistant surgeon of the 1st Regiment Ohio Volunteer Heavy Artillery, second brigade, fourth division, Army of the Cumberland. During the war, he would contract stomach and bowel trouble; this would plague him the remainder of his life. He was mustered out with his regiment at Knoxville, Tenn., July 25, 1865, and returned to Lucasville.

In October 1865, he located at California (now Stockdale), Pike County, Ohio, and engaged in the practice of medicine for four years, at the expiration of which time, he removed to Portsmouth, and engaged in the drug business, but on account of failing health was forced to abandon it and resume the more active duties of the practice of medicine.

In June 1869, he graduated from the Cincinnati College of Medicine and Surgery. He located at Lucasville in May 1870 and was actively engaged in the practice of his profession until near the time of his death.

Henry was married Dec. 25, 1860 to Mary Ellen, daughter of David and Nancy Morgan Noel, she being the descendant of pioneer families of the Lucasville area. They were the parents of five children: Nancy Jane (1862-1863); David Francis (1866-1936); Dr. Michael Jacob (1868-1915); Augusta Virginia (1871-1873); and Roscoe Eugene (1874-1950). Dr. Beard's love and reverence for his native home can be seen in the naming of his second daughter, Augusta Virginia Beard.

Dr. Beard was an active member of the Hempstead Academy of Medicine and the Scioto County Medical society, having filled various offices with honor and acquired the highest esteem and friendship of all with whom he was associated. He was also a member of the Ohio State Medical society, Bailey Post G.A.R., and Lucasville Lodge No. 465 A.F. and A.M.

His obituary, which appeared in "The Portsmouth Blade" on August 21, 1895, stated, "He was a kind husband and an indulgent father. As a man, he was esteemed and respected by all who knew him. As a physician, he ranked at the top of his profession and was noted for his good judgement and the mastery manner in which he led his patients from the valley of the shadow of death into the sun shiny paths of life. Always ready to lend a helping hand to the needy and oppressed, without money and without price, in justice to him, we can, we think, truthfully say that he will reap the reward bestowed upon he faithful who have passed to the great beyond from which none ever return."

Dr. Henry Beard paid a very high price for standing up for what was right, having lost all contact with his family in Virginia. He died at his home in Lucasville on August 21, 1895. He was laid to rest in Lucasville Cemetery.