

**THE HISTORY OF
THE ZANESVILLE-MUSKINGUM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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A history is an important and vital aspect of the organizational structure of an institution. It helps to develop an understanding of the culture of that institution. The development of the history of an organization helps an individual to see and captivate the accomplishments throughout the years that were attained through aspiring goals, struggles and values. It is these aspiring goals, struggles and values throughout the years that has set a pathway to success of the institution.

City Health Department

These authors have done extensive research in an attempt to compile a history of the Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department. The research dates back to 1888 where talks have begun related to organization of the City Board of Health. The first city health department included two paid officers. This included a clerk and health officer. The City Council played a large part in the early stages in the formation of the City Health Department. The Zanesville tax levy in 1889 totaled \$32,000 and City Council appropriated \$840.00 of this to the budget of the early health department. The City Council had a strong impact on the health department, that lead T. J. McDermott to appear before them in behalf of the Board of Health. The board member expressed the need for power enabling the department to set the rules and regulations to govern the health of the city. The ultimate goal was to preserve the health of the city.

In order to preserve the health of the city, it was important to enforce the laws of littering. The early sanitation enforcers were of the police department, and the department referred to them as sanitary policemen. Filth was seen as an endangerment to public health. Policemen also played a large role in the enforcement of quarantine regulations. Few cases of fatal diseases were reported in 1903.

Smallpox became a threat to the community in 1904. Council members questioned the validity of the disease. Several homes were quarantined in an attempt to stop the spread of the epidemic. The council appointed a committee to investigate the validity of the reported cases.

Also discussed at the council meeting was the salary of Health Officer, Dr. Sellars. Dr. Sellars requested a salary of \$50.00 and \$420.00 for special services.

The threat of typhoid fever existed in 1905. The City Health Department and city Mayor, W. B. Deacon, urged individuals to have their water analyzed. The Mayor was stricken with typhoid during this year. This illness prompted quicker action to control the epidemic. There were 120 cases of typhoid fever reported in the previous year, 12 cases proving fatal. Recommendations of the City Health Department included moving the present intake pipe of the water works one mile up the Muskingum River.

The Health Department also urged citizens to boil their water supply before consumption. Other diseases recognized during this era was diphtheria, scarlet fever and membranous croup. In an attempt to educate and treat these diseases, antitoxins and educational materials were purchased. Fumigating of homes and furnishings were also recommended. Typhoid fever still persisted through 1917 accompanied by an outbreak of measles.

It was with the interest of health authorities that urged the cooperation of physicians and citizens to contain the epidemic of typhoid fever. The epidemic of communicable diseases in 1915 prompted health bodies of Ohio to join forces. This new organization was called The Ohio Public Health Federation. The purpose of this organizational campaign was to promote education and improve public conditions in interest of disease prevention. Members of this federation included The Ohio Association of Graduate Nurses, The Ohio State Hospital Association and The Ohio Osteopathic Society.

The early years of the City Health Department was mainly to identify and quarantine the citizens thought to have communicable diseases. Little was recorded regarding The Health Department activities after 1917.

County Health Department

Concerned members of the community expressed a dire need to develop a stronger health agency for the surrounding community. This led to the formation of the Muskingum County Board of Health. The first meeting was held on September 25, 1919. The first county board was as follows: Dr. J. M. O'Neal, Dr. R. E. Wells, O. K. Parrott, W. J. Paul and J. S. McGinnis. The first county health nurse was Margaret Gibbons and first clerk was Dorothy Rhinehart. The Muskingum County Health Department actually began functioning as an organization January 1st, 1920. The provisions left the City Health Department unchanged.

The County Health Department was organized under provisions of the Hughes-Griswold Act that was passed by state legislature in 1919. It was under the provision of this act that made it necessary to appoint a county health commissioner. Candidates for health commissioner were subjected to take a civil service examination. This examination was conducted by the City Civil Service Board.

1920's

In 1921 Margaret Stevenson was appointed the second county health department nurse upon resignation of Margaret Gibbons. The other nurse appointed during this year was Miss Mary Bonham on Trinway.

Miss Bonham served the county health department until 1927. This prompted the appointment of a dedicated nurse, Miss Nadean Pace. This nurse served the county for approximately 32 years. Another dedicated individual with boundless energy was County Health Commissioner, Dr. Beatrice Todd Hagen. She was appointed in 1928. Dr. Beatrice Hagen actually started her public health career in 1922 with the City Health Department. Dr. Hagen made history in the State of Ohio as being the only full time woman Health Commissioner in the State of Ohio with much protest. The years under Dr. Hagen produced many changes in public health. One of these changes was the provision of the Social Security Act of 1936. Under this provision, the office of county sanitation was created and funded. The first sanitation worker of the county was Charles "Chick" Hazen, who had previously served the city for 26 years. Hazen died after one year of service to the county. The loss was felt by both the county and the city. This led to the appointment of Paul Aitken. Paul Aitken saw the need for a milk sanitation program. The ordinances which governed milk inspection were in 1929, but was not enforced until 1935. Sanitation workers played a vital part in controlling the spread of epidemics during the 1930's and 1940's.

1930's

The 1930's and 1940's were difficult times. The spread of communicable diseases was an ongoing battle. These struggles forced the city and county health departments to join forces often. Dr. Caudy was the city health commissioner, and Dr. B. Hagen, who was the county health commissioner, felt that chlorination of private wells in flooded areas would slow the spread of diseases.

It was during the 1930's that infantile paralysis was a public threat. This prompted the organization of the Crippled Children Clinic in both the city and the county health departments. This organization still persists today, but is now known as The Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps. The Crippled Children organization was one of the finest and well known in the state.

The 1930's had seen widespread outbreaks of tuberculosis, smallpox and rabies. It was due to the outbreaks that influenced early vaccination practices of the health department. It was the outbreak of rabies that warranted the complete quarantine of citizens of several counties, including Muskingum County. The county health department urged inflicted individuals to be treated with the 14 day series of rabies vaccine. This service was provided free by the county health department. The outbreak of rabies prompted the State Board to make it mandatory to report all dog or animal bites to your local health department. This law still exists today.

It was during this era that caused the death rate to exceed the birth rate. Dr. Hagen was an advocate of keeping vital statistics related to death and birth rates. Dr. Hagen and her staff were highly recognized in one of the public health journals in keeping excellent records in vital statistics.

Collaboration of the city and county health departments prompted the opening of a dental clinic. The Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department still feels that dental health is still an important aspect of health prevention. Prevention was still an important aspect in 1939, which prompted safeguards such as confiscation of 35,000 Japanese shaving brushes. Several of the brushes were linked to the anthrax outbreak.

1940's

It is with the practice of the prevention aspect in the 1930's that lead to a turnaround in the vital statistics. It was the year of 1940 that birth rates exceeded death rates. The Health Board's budget in the year of 1940 was \$8,250.00. It was with this budget that diseases were battled. These included: typhoid, measles, tuberculosis, polio, rabies and smallpox. The focus of prevention lead to the well baby clinic and mobile TB units. It was during the year of 1946 in which the City/County Health Center was established at 51 Fourth Street in Zanesville. The purpose was to combat the tuberculosis epidemic. This clinic still exists today under the name of the Rambo Health Center.

It was the previous year of 1945, that the county health department observed their 25th anniversary. It was the achievements of the first 25 years that ranked the Muskingum County Health Department third in the state. Expansion of the health department at that time was made possible through state and federal funds. The staff in 1945 consisted of four nurses, a sanitarian, clerk and a health commissioner. This expansion made it possible to aid the operation of the city's venereal clinic. The present board of health in 1945 was composed of: Dr. C. F. Sisk, Dr. D. K. Matthews, Dr. I. W. Curtis, B. O. Taylor and R. Grimsley. The public health nurses were honored and received recognition this year. The sanitation department continues to offer new services in the aspects of inspection of food stores.

Rabies was ranked the number one killer in the year of 1948. It was during this year that polio remained a threat. The Cancer Clinic was initiated this year in regards to identification and link's to one's lifestyle.

Diphtheria and typhoid was again another threat to the community. It was the concerns about the communicable diseases that lead to increased needs in the areas of food safety, water and general health. Antitoxoids were received in April 1949 to combat these communicable diseases.

Another focus of communicable diseases that year was an experimental campaign related to social diseases. Zanesville was one of four cities targeted for experimental treatment regarding social diseases.

1950's

The following year of 1950 brought the retirement of Dr. Beatrice Todd Hagen. Dr. Hagen served public health for 22 years. She served both as city and county health commissioner despite the fact that her appointment brought much protest from the Ohio State Health Department. Dr. Hagen, unlike most health commissioners, did perform much of the actual work herself. Dr. Hagen was described as a person with boundless energy. She traveled throughout the entire county in good weather and bad to meet the needs of the community. A few of her accomplishments included: newborn/mother visitations, containment of communicable diseases, orthopedic work for children, examinations of preschool children and bus drivers. Dr. Hagen was a dedicated physician who worked day and night during bouts of epidemics. Dr. Beatrice Hagen was a woman who liked to face challenges head on.

Dr. Hagen graduated from the University of Buffalo College of Medicine in 1900 and later attended at Old Starling Ohio, which is now the Ohio State University College of Medicine. She first practiced as an anesthetist at Bethesda Hospital.

The Muskingum County Academy of Medicine honored her in 1950 upon achieving her 50th anniversary in medicine.

Upon resignation of Dr. Beatrice Hagen, Dr. Margaret M. O'Neal was appointed County Health Commissioner. She had begun her duties with The Muskingum County Health Department on January 1st, 1950. Dr. Margaret O'Neal was a native of Zanesville, Ohio and graduated from Zanesville High School. She was granted a leave of absence after 4 years of service to complete her education in public health of which she received her Master's Degree. The Saturday Evening Post featured her outstanding work related to the halt of diphtheria in 1952. She also served as Health Commissioner for Guernsey County. Her area of specialty was pediatrics. She served the Muskingum County Health Department until her death in 1958.

The 1950's was focused on the administration of vaccine to conquer outbreaks of polio and diphtheria. Prevention still played a vital role evidenced by the beginning of air pollution surveys, food licensor, milk sanitation and fluoridation of public water supplies. The Salk vaccine was introduced in 1955 to prevent further outbreak of polio. The first shipment arrived April 23, 1955. All of these services were provided on a financial budget of \$10,110.88. Other services during this decade included speech, hearing and epileptic clinics. Tuberculosis remained a threat with 27 reported cases and 4 deaths in the year 1955.

Dr. Beatrice Todd Hagen died on February 13, 1957. It was the following year that public health had yet another loss. Dr. Margaret M. O'Neal, County Health Commissioner, died after undergoing brain surgery at the Cleveland Clinic.

The decade also honored Miss Nadean Pace, R.N., for 25 years of Public Health Nursing. She was honored at a two day conference with the Ohio Public Health Association.

Dr. Caudy was the City Health Commissioner in 1958. The city boasts of its sanitation programs. One such program was milk sanitation, which was one of the best in the State of Ohio. Also playing a vital role in 1958 was the plumbing inspection for the city.

1960's

The year 1962 saw the introduction of the Sabin Oral polio vaccine. According to The Times Recorder (1962), the famous motto for Sabin's Polio vaccine, "Three days, three drops, polio stops". It was during the use of Sabin's Polio vaccine that nobody was turned away due to inability to pay. 80,000 doses of the Sabin Oral Polio vaccine arrived in Zanesville in 1961.

School nursing and health screening were of vital importance during the 1960's. The well child clinic and immunization clinics continued to grow.

The other areas of interest included diabetic surveys. The county and city health nurses participated in the surveys.

Sanitation codes were upgraded in 1969 with regard to proper sewage disposal. The sanitation codes helped prevent any possible transmission of communicable diseases.

Dr. Merritt McCuskey was appointed as Health Commissioner in 1969. It was with his appointment as health commissioner that he proposed the city and county health departments merge. Dr. McCuskey felt that by this merger, they could better serve the community by pulling together available resources. They were in the process of applying for home nursing care under Part B of the Social Security Act. Securing of these monies could have been possible 3-4 years ago, if resources could have been pulled together.

It was with the plans of the merger that allowed Guernsey County to soon split. The merger of the departments made the service accessible to all Muskingum County residents. The office was located on Main Street in Zanesville.

This merger gave more concentrated power to The District Advisory Council. This organization was composed of the chief executive of each village. Each township had an appointed chair person to represent their townships health concerns. This council was required to meet annually.

Their powers and duties included the selection of Board of Health Members, to make recommendations to the Board, and to authorize contract agreements with other health districts.

The Board of Health consists of 6 members selected by the District Advisory Council. The Board of Health has 3 representatives from the county and 3 from the city. Each member serves a 6 year term. These terms are staggered and only one member is appointed each year. The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at the health department. The Board of Health has the authority to appoint staff, determine their duties and the salaries of the staff. The Board of Health complies with the Civil Service rules and regulations, whenever applicable. Also, appointed by the Board of Health, is the Health Commissioner. His or her responsibility is to enforce the public health laws adopted by the Board of Health.

1970's

The years following the merger, little information is recorded. Few tax levies were passed in this early stage of the Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department. The 1970's focus was on the identification of diseases.

1980's

Disease prevention prompted the motto of the 1980's. The motto at this time was "Moving Up To Wellness". Programs focused on the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

The department received a federal grant from the Ohio Department of Health. This grant was provided to promote Health Education and Risk Reduction programs. The office of litter was still part of the Health Department during the 1980's. Public Health Nursing emphasizes education, as evidenced by school, stress management and promotion of fitness in the senior population.

The Prenatal Clinic was established in 1982. Three years later, the Dental Program was developed. This program provided the county school children with fluoride rinses and preventive dental education.

Two sanitary workers were hired in 1985, and they were Bill Miller and Mike Kirsh. In the same year, Edgar Shuey, Sanitation supervisor, received outstanding sanitarian of the year award for the Southeast District of the Ohio Environmental Health Association. Health promotion continues to be the focus during this era. The Health Department continues to expand and develop new programs. Cancer studies, mosquito control and newborn home visitation were examples of this expansion. The Health Department received a grant for \$17,000 used to fund Child and Family Health Clinics.

1990's

Ron Elble, administrator, was elected President of the Ohio Public Health Association on June 11, 1990. Another employee of the Health Department receiving a prominent position in Public Health was Judy King, Director of Nursing. She was elected President of the Ohio Public Health Nursing Director Form. This nursing organization acts as a liaison to the Ohio Health Commissioners Association.

Also recognized in 1990 was Shellie Benson, Muskingum-Traffic Council, for achieving excellence for her work in keeping the highway safer. Shirley Blosser, B.S.N., R.N, is named Service Coordinator of the year. Communicable diseases during these times focused on hepatitis, encephalitis, the epidemic and measles.

This year also brought the controversial subject of smoking to the public's attention. The ban of smoking continued to be a hot topic for the next few years. Public support was received in favor of banning smoking in several establishments.

The motto in 1992 was the many faces of your Health Department is working to keep you healthy. On a sadder note, AIDS takes its first child in Muskingum County. A quilt was dedicated to Baby S. AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, shigella and salmonella threaten public safety. The 1990's prompted widespread administration of immunizations.

A new Administrator of the Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department was appointed on August 8, 1992. Robert Titko previously served as Chief Executive of the Health and Human Service Agencies for 20 years. He also has a long time involvement with the Ohio Public Health Association.

The Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department has constantly changed to meet the needs of the community. The Nursing and Sanitary divisions continue to expand, providing new services as needed. The present Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department offers various services, such as: AIDS Counseling/Testing, BCMH, Pediatric Clinic, Well Child Clinic, Early Prevention Program, Prenatal Clinic, School Programs, Senior Citizens Program, Newborn Home Visitation, Traffic Safety, Senior Citizens Program, Newborn Home Visitation, Traffic Safety, Public Education, Environmental Health Safety, Vital Statistics, Home Health Care, Dental Services, STD Clinic and Immunizations.

Conclusion

Many changes have taken place since the early days of public health. This paper is dedicated to the ones that made the changes in public health possible. The appendix of this paper will include several pictures taken from the Archives of the Health Department and The Times Recorder. The appendix will also include the organizational structure of today's Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department.

Reference

“Three days, three drops, polio stops.” (1962, March).

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