
1958 history of the Buncombe County Health Department

III. Maternal and Child Health

1. School Health

Important steps were taken by the City Health Department in its first fifteen years to improve the health of city school children. In 1911, a Hookworm Campaign, in cooperation with the Rockefeller Hookworm Commission, was conducted in the Asheville schools. One thousand five hundred and eighty-four children were examined, with one hundred and ten cases of hookworm and two hundred and fifteen cases of other parasitic infections found. In 1916 Pearl Weaver became the first School of Nurse in Asheville. Her salary was paid by Mrs. Reuben Robertson, President of the Orange Street Mothers Group, or forerunner of the Parent Teacher Association. It was Miss Weaver's responsibility to help carry out the immunization programs which were begun in the city schools as early as 1916.

In the Buncombe County Health Department, the Health Officer, and later the Public Health Nurse, were held responsible for the examination and immunization of county school children. From October 1 to December 30, 1914, Dr. Sevier, County Health Officer, examined 553 school children. Of those examined, twenty-seven per cent had defective hearing and thirty-seven percent had defective vision.

1. Public Health Nursing

Significant progress was made in the area of maternal and child health by the Asheville Health Department in its first fifteen years. First, Public Health Nursing began to function as a unit in the city in 1919. At this time, it was not a division of the Health Department as it is now. It was placed under the supervision of a Public Health Nursing Committee with Pearl Weaver as Supervisor. Jane Brown, the first Public Health Nurse in Asheville, Mrs. I.C. Hanna, and Mrs. Edna Jenkins were pioneer leaders of Public Health Nursing in its early years. Funds were supplied by Associated Charities, the Asheville School System, the City of Asheville, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and interested citizens. Public Health Nursing became an integral part of the Health Department.

Second, important primary care clinics were set up in 1922 which were staffed in part by Public Health Nurses. The following clinics were set up in Asheville: Maternity, Sick Children, Orthopedic, Tuberculosis, and General. In this same year, Mrs. Maggie McAdams Greenlee became the first black Public Health Nurse in the Asheville Health Department, and Mrs. I.C. Hanna replaced Pearl Weaver as Supervisor of the Public Health Nursing Committee.

May Stockton was appointed part-time Public Health Nurse for the Buncombe County Health Department in 1923. A year later, she was replaced by Maude Setzer, the county's first full-time Public Health Nurse. Miss Setzer married the County

CHRONOLOGY

1893

- First municipal sewer lines were laid.

1896

- Anti-spitting law passed.

1897

- Dr. M.H. Fletcher – First City Health Officer.

1901

- Pest House constructed near French Broad River.

1903

- Dr. Carl Reynolds succeeded Dr. Fletcher as City Health Officer.

1906

- "Swat the Fly" campaign.

1907

- First City Milk Ordinance passed.

1910

- Asheville Board of Health became City Health Department. Dr. L.B. McBrayer succeeded Dr. Reynolds as City Health Officer.
- Dr. McBrayer began publication of Asheville Health Bulletin.
- Ordinance passed requiring building of surface toilets for all residences and buildings not accessible to sewer and water lines.

1911

- Hookworm Campaign, in cooperation with the Rockefeller Hookworm Commission, was conducted in city schools.
- Meat Ordinance passed requiring ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection and condemnation and disposal of animals and meat unfit for human consumption.
- First Garbage Removal Ordinance passed.

1912

- Certified Milk Commission established. Members: Dr. A. W. Calloway, Carl V. Reynolds, Joseph B. Green, Lewis W. Elias, and L.B. McBrayer.
- First pasteurized milk in city produced by Carolina Creamery.
- First certified milk in the South produced by Biltmore Dairies.

1913

- Jane Brown employed by Associated Charities as visiting nurse, the first Public Health Nurse in Asheville.
- State Vital Statistics Law Passed, requiring registration of all births and deaths.
- Quarantine Law passed, requiring reporting and quarantine of infectious and contagious diseases, and disinfection of premises after recovery.
- An incinerator for the burning of trash and dead animals begun.
- Dr. D.E. Sevier – First County Health Officer.

1914

- Dr. Carl Reynolds again became City Health Officer upon resignation of Dr. McBrayer.
- City Health Department budget was \$10,000. Asheville population was 20,000.
- From October 1 to December 30, 553 school children examined: 405 found to be defective. 27% defective hearing, 37% defective vision.
- Buncombe County began registration of births and deaths.
- First rules and regulations regarding sanitation passed.

1915

- City Health Department moved to another wing of City Hall.
- Dock Ledbetter employed to inspect city dairies and food handling establishments.
- Inoculation against typhoid begun on voluntary basis.
- T.P. Bishop hired to quarantine communicable diseases.

1916

- Pearl Weaver appointed First School Nurse in Asheville. Her salary was paid by Mrs. Reuben Robertson, President of Orange Street Mothers Group, a forerunner of PTA.
- City ordinance passed regulating the sale of milk.
- City acquired 16,000 acres of watershed, which included all the lands drained by the headwaters of the Bee Tree, Sugar Fork, and North Fork Creeks.

1918

- Dr. Margery Lord named part-time School Physician for Asheville.

1919

- First City Venereal Disease Clinic established. Dr. A.F. Toole, Clinician.
- Dr. W.H. Scruggs appointed County Health Officer upon resignation of Dr. Sevier.
- First attempt at Rabies control made. Dog tax enacted; all dog-owners identified and money raised to meet expenses of rabies treatment.

1920

- New Housing Law for tuberculosis patients enacted.
- Dr. Eugene Cocke appointed School Physician.

1921

- Dr. Robert G. Wilson succeeded Dr. Scruggs as County Health Officer.
- City-County Venereal Disease Clinic established. Dr. A.F. Toole, Chairman.

- Two veterinarians hired for Meat and Milk Inspection.

1922

- The following clinics were set up for the City: Maternity, Sick Children, Orthopedic, Tuberculosis, and General.
- Mrs. Maggie Greenlee, first black Public Health Nurse, added to City nursing staff. Mrs. I.C. Hanna replaced Pearl Weaver as Supervisor of Nursing.

1923

- Public Health Nursing became integral part of City Health Department.
- Asheville began chlorination of its water supply.
- Dr. D.E. Sevier became first full-time City Health Officer upon resignation of Dr. Reynolds. City Health Department had fifteen employees – full-time and part-time. City Health Department budget was \$23,050. City population was 28,000.

1924

- Buncombe County Commissioners appropriated \$6,800 toward a budget for public health work. State Board of Health added another \$1,000.
- First full-time County Health Officer appointed, Dr. M.P. Moorer.
- First full-time Public Health Nurse for Buncombe County, Mrs. Maud Morgan, hired.
- First County Health Department office set up in old County Court House.

1925

- City ordinance passed requiring physical examination of foodhandlers.
- First State Dental Clinic was held.
- Dr. S.B. Till, a qualified veterinarian, appointed City Milk Inspector, Mr. C.L. Boyte employed as Restaurant Inspector for Asheville.
- Following death of Dr. Moorer, Dr. Grady Morgan appointed County Health Officer.
- First county sanitarian appointed, Karl L. Jones.
- Inoculation against diphtheria begun on voluntary basis.

1926

- The first diphtheria toxin anti-toxin was used in the city schools.
- Dr. Lord again appointed School Physician upon resignation of Dr. Cocke.
- Jane Brown named Dr. Lord's assistant. Mrs. Edna P. Jenkins named Supervisor of Nursing.
- The first sewer lines in the county laid in the Swannanoa Valley.
- A legislative act was passed creating twelve utility districts in the county to provide water and sewage service.
- County Board of Health passed special rules regulating plumbing; initiating a purity inspection of wells and springs used by the public on highways; and requiring all persons handling milk to have a Certificate of Health.
- Mrs. Beatrice Crowell appointed as County Public Health Nurse. Buncombe County thus became First County in the state to have two fulltime Public Health Nurses.
- Pre-natal and Well-Baby Clinics started.
- Mrs. Mary Louise Clay joined the County Health Department as Health Educator.

1952

- Weekly Health Program on radio begun, sponsored by the City and County Departments.
- Law passed making it compulsory for all County Foodhandlers to have x-rays.

1953

- The Moore Wing for Negroes of the Western Carolina Tuberculosis Sanatorium completed.
- Animal Shelter constructed on the northern part of the County Home property. J.L. Parris was made Chief Warden.
- Mrs. Lilliyn Woodford was hired as Public Health Nurse by the City Health Department, the second black Public Health Nurse in Buncombe County.

1954

- The United States Public Health Service made an educational film on Foodhandling in Asheville for national distribution.
- Dr. Henderson-Smathers named School Physician replacing Dr. Catherine Carr.
- Dr. Grady Morgan brought in once again as acting Health Officer of County upon resignation of Dr. Whims.
- Greater Asheville Council appointed a committee to study the matter of consolidation and come up with recommendations.

- The Asheville City Council voted to abandon the City Health Department as a city service as of June 30.
- The personnel of the two departments were combined to form the new Buncombe County Health Department. Dr. Margery Lord named acting Health Officer.

1955

- Classes in Planned Parenthood started.
- First Silk vaccine for Polio received and vaccination clinics opened. 5,573 received their first shots.
- Mass Chest X-Ray Survey for ages fifteen years and over carried out. 24,297 persons were x-rayed. A Blood-Testing Program carried on simultaneously with X-Ray Survey.
- Frank Nelson received the first annual Award for Meritorious Service in the Field of Sanitation from the Sanitarians Section of the N.C.P.H.A.

1956

- Alcoholism Information Center of Alcohol Beverage Control established by Dr. Margery Lord with the assistance of Mae McFee,
- The Health Department received the Merit Award for Outstanding Public Health Performance for 1955 from the N.C.P.H.A.
- Second Mass Polio inoculation was carried out.

1957

- Dr. Margery Lord resigned as Assistant Director of Health Department. Donald Dancy resigned as Health Educator.
- School Health Council for Buncombe County organized to look at ways of dealing with school health problems.
- Mrs. Maud Morgan resigned as Public Health Nurse after forty years of service.
- C.C. Demaree, Director of the Laboratory, received the Rankin Award for outstanding health service over a long period of time from the N.C.P.H.A.
- Paul Lyday was appointed Chief of Milk Division upon retirement of Henry Bealmear.
- Five Air Sampling Stations and one Mechanical Air Supply Station set up in Asheville for experimental purposes. This was the only station of its kind in the state, set up in cooperation with the United States Public Health Service Pollution Center.