

Pioneer Physicians in Martin County:  
Dr. Ferdinand Hunt and Dr. George Harnden

The following, the third in a series, are accounts of two more pioneer doctors of Martin County, Dr. Ferdinand Hunt and Dr. George Harnden. Sources for this article are the MCHS archives and the June 3, 1978, edition of the *Sentinel*.

Dr. Ferdinand Hunt was born in Illinois in 1857, the son of Nehemiah Hunt, a pioneer physician in Blue Earth County. He attended public school in Mankato and completed two years of college at Carleton. He also was a teacher and a principal in Fairmont for three years.

He attended medical school in St. Louis in 1859 and later graduated. He then moved to Fairmont and took over the practice of his brother, David W. Hunt, who had become ill.

Dr. Ferdinand Hunt was an active individual who often made trips of fifty to sixty miles, or more, across the pioneer prairie. He also had a great love of horses. This was a hobby that many early day physicians had as they spent many long hours with the horses to which they entrusted their lives on those long trips across the winter prairie to call on ill patients.

He married Ida Cadwell, daughter of a Fairmont merchant, in 1882. They had two sons, Roscoe of Fairmont and Rollo, who became a lawyer in Duluth.

After selling his practice to W. J. Richardson in 1893, Dr. Hunt moved to Blue Earth where he spent the next twenty-one years. In 1914, he and his son, Dr. Roscoe Hunt, returned to Fairmont and established the Fairmont Hospital. His practice in Martin and Faribault Counties spanned more than fifty years. He passed away in 1934, as a result of a head injury from a fall.

Another pioneer physician of Martin County, Dr. George Harnden, was born in Illinois in 1839. The oldest son of an old time Whaler, he also attended country school in Illinois. Harnden and his two brothers came to Minnesota by covered wagon in 1873 and homesteaded claims east of Sherburn.

He acquired an interest in medicine as a result of the illness of his first wife because his family doctor gave him a medical book to study. This was the start of his medical studies. He then went on to study at Wheaton College and the Homeopathic Medical School of Chicago. He received a diploma in 1884. After studying medicine in Chicago, he returned to Sherburn to practice. He later moved to Fairmont and practiced medicine until 1934.

Dr. Harnden was a well respected citizen and physician for the forty or more years he was in Fairmont. Although outwardly appearing somewhat gruff, he was said to be very sympathetic and tender hearted by those who knew him well. He was a familiar figure

riding his bicycle to his calls, even when they were in the country. When a patient was seriously ill, he would often stay at their home for a period of time until the crisis passed.

Visit the Pioneer Museum in Fairmont to learn more about pioneer physicians of Martin County.