

Dr. James W. Crane, Great Practitioner, Teacher, Historian, Dies Here at Age of 82

Dr. James W. Crane, of Iona Station, former Acting Dean of the School of Medicine at the University of Western Ontario, died on Tuesday at the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital. He was 82, and had been seriously ill for the last two weeks.

Dr. Crane was one of Elgin County's best known residents, and those who have viewed his long record said he was the owner of a name almost synonymous with medicine in Southwestern Ontario. His contributions to the Elgin County Pioneer Museum and his interest in the county in general will be long remembered.

Dr. Crane was born at Orwell and graduated from the St. Thomas Collegiate Institute. He was one of Ontario's oldest doctors, having received his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1898. He took post-graduate work in the United States, England and Germany, but began his practice here in Elgin, working at Iona and Wallacetown. He always had an active interest in the county, and among other services, was instrumental in organizing the Wallacetown and Lake Shore Telephone Company in 1901, and the Southwold and Dunwich Telephone Company in 1905.

The front plate of a scrapbook donated to the Elgin County Museum three years ago by Dr. Crane includes a sketch of a young doctor answering a night call on an old-fashioned rural telephone, evidence of his farsighted viewpoint, even then.

TO LONDON IN 1913

His interest in the life of Elgin County continued even when he moved to London in 1913, on his appointment to the staff of the University of Western Ontario's then-new Medical School. He was professor of pharmacology and physiological chemistry for many years, and also taught biochemistry and therapeutics, twice becoming Acting Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and later the Alumni Director of the University.

DEVOTED TO ALUMNAE

He was probably best-known for his outstanding alumnae work and was widely known as "Mr. Western Alumnae." He started the Alumnae Association in 1924, and after retiring from teaching in



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1936, devoted his next 10 years to this organization. In 1919 he founded the Harvey Club to advance the study of the history of medicine among practicing physicians. He was the inspiration for other organizations in this area, including the Osler Society and the Noonday Study Club, which now numbers more than 200 members and meets weekly at the London YM-YWCA.

In 1947, he received an LL.D. from UWO in recognition of his long service in the cause of medicine.

During his lifetime, Dr. Crane, greatly interested in historical records, collected a very large medical library, an outstanding and highly specialized type of collection, and he donated 1,000 volumes to the University of Western Ontario Medical Library. Library cataloguing had always been of interest to him too, and his medical catalogue of the doctors of Southwestern Ontario, which is quite well known, was donated by him to the London Public Library.

The many young men and women who studied under him, later kept in constant touch with him and when he retired to Iona Station, his farm home, "Kelligrew" became a mecca for doctors from

all over, many coming to see his library and to talk with the man Dr. Evan Shute, of London, describes as "the greatest-hearted doctor of his generation." He was a member of the Covenanted Baptist Church at Wallacetown.

An extremely valuable historic scrapbook about Elgin County, compiled by Dr. Crane in 1955, was donated to the Elgin County Pioneer Museum by him in 1956. The doctor was an avid and painstakingly efficient compiler of records and significant material dealing with many subjects.

His wife, the former Mary E. McColl, died some eight or ten years ago. He is survived by four nieces and three nephews, Mrs. Stuart (Nessie) Brown, of Toronto; Miss Bessie Evans, Toronto; Mrs. Vern (Margaret) Welter, Aylmer; Mrs. Helen Jean Pringle, London; Clarence Crane, of New Sarum; Arthur Crane, of Avon, and Thomas Crane, of Mount Brydges.

The funeral service is to be conducted at 2 p.m. on Friday at the A. Millard George funeral home, 190 Wortley road, London, by Elder George Ruston, of Dutton. Cremation will take place in the Toronto Crematorium, and interment will be made in the McColl Cemetery in West Elgin.



DR. J. W. CRANE
in his office
at WALLACETOWN
in EARLY 1900's

Homage to Late Dr. J. W. Crane

(By Dr. Clifford M. Keillor, Kingsville, Ont.)

There is a distinct void in the passing of Doctor James Wellington Crane and West Elgin has lost one of its most illustrious citizens.

Born in Orwell, a graduate in medicine at Varsity in 1898 and following two years internship in the United States, he put out his "shingle" in Wallacetown in 1901. It is of his years as general practitioner and humanitarian in this small village that I desire to write and pay tribute.

I was about ten years of age when the new doctor arrived. Unmarried at the time, he temporarily took up residence in the old "Ontario House" on the corner, long since removed by fire. My eldest brother, Ben, who was teaching school at Cowal, came home for week-ends by bicycle. It was mother who suggested that Ben invite the young doctor for Sunday dinner and this was the beginning of a long, intimate and friendly relationship between the Keillor family and this wonderful man. Ours was the first, but certainly not the last home to entertain him. Because of his jovial nature, his humane and kindly characteristics he was in great demand for all social functions.

This is an age of specialization. Even in the science of medicine the family physician is gradually being relegated to the background. Whether this is a progressive step from the standpoint of the nation's health and welfare is for history to decide, but in any event and in my book, Dr. Crane was outstanding as a family physician. He possessed a kindly and sympathetic attitude with all his patients. He made a study of the family emotional characteristics, so important in diagnosis and treatment. There was no assembly line procedure during office hours. With rich or poor there was no favoritism, and he always had time for a chat concerning the every day struggle. Nor did he have any keen desire for material gain. Very few, if any, demands for payment emanated from his office.

Hippocrates, the father of medicine, maintained that the patient as well as the disease were inseparable considerations and in the code of

ethics to which all physicians must subscribe, he dictated, "With purity and holiness I will pass my life and practice my art; I will follow that system of regimen, according to my ability and judgment I consider for the benefit of my patients and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous." Truly Dr. Crane followed this philosophy throughout his career. He was a born teacher. In this regard I must speak in a personal vein. When my brother Fred of Edmonton and later myself were studying medicine, Dr. Crane's office was ever open for guidance, advice and counsel; and for this and all his many kindnesses we shall always hold his memory dear.

A Born Leader

Quite apart from his fondness for people and teaching ability, he was a born leader. At the turn of the century, long before the advent of automobiles, good roads, radio and television, it was necessary in the main for villages to create their own amusement. In this field Dr. Crane again demonstrated leadership in a modest manner. He initiated a camera club, a literary society, a skating club and took a keen interest in the baseball activities.

Perhaps his outstanding achievement in the economical life of the townships of Dunwich and Southwold was the development and construction of the Wallacetown and Lake Shore Telephone Company; extended easterly to Iona. Up to this time the only telephone in the area was located in the general store owned and operated by J. A. Cameron. This was on a Bell branch line from Dutton. What a boon and novelty this party line development meant to the whole community.

Dr. Crane was the first to operate a car in the village, a red Maxwell roadster. How generous he was and how he enjoyed taking villagers for their first ride.

Despite his busy practice which covered a wide area, and time consumed in his driving community spirit, he was one to try to keep abreast of the advances in the science of medicine. This included a memorable journey to the British Isles and the Continent in company with the late Dr. J. A. MacGregor of London.

With his keen interest in students and his inherent love of teaching, it was inevitable that he would be called to a centre of learning. It is freely admitted that Dr. Crane's drive and enthusiasm was one of the prime factors in the advancement of the University of Western Ontario to its present stature.

After a very active and productive career of over fifty years, not only in medicine but to public welfare, the humanities and philanthropy, he and his charming wife retired to the scenes of his earlier triumphs and settled in Iona Station. Their delightful home "Kelligrew" became a mecca for friends, students and university associates, who down the years had benefitted under the influence and guiding principles of this remarkable man.

Retirement is defined as "the act of withdrawing from business or public life." Dr. Crane could not and did not go into seclusion. In addition to his many attributes he possessed a keen interest in history and particularly the development of West Elgin. On one of my last visits to Kelligrew he was still actively engaged in bringing his scrapbook up to date. His active interest and the many contributions he made to the St. Thomas and Dutton public libraries will be invaluable to future historians.

I cannot terminate this narrative without relating another experience. Many of the visitors to Kelligrew included young students from the public school hardby. He was extremely devoted to children, and more is the pity that the Crane household was not blessed with children of their own. On this occasion two young lassies told me in the Doctor's absence that they had come to thank him for the presents. On inquiry, I learned that for some time Dr. Crane had been donating cash prizes as encouragement to students in the senior grades. Ostentation was absent in his makeup and I am sure the number and nature of other charitable donations throughout his life will remain unknown.

And so, after a lifetime of giving, he has passed on; may his soul rest in peace.



DR. CRANE'S 1908 MODEL
"RED MAXWELL"
FIRST CAR IN WALLACETOWN
2 CYLINDERS - NO WINDSHIELD
NO DOORS - 30 MILES MAXIMUM SPEED
CARBIDE TANK ON RUNNING BOARD,
GASOLINE 15 CENTS A GALLON. LXIXI

Fine Scrap Book, Catalogue Compiled For Elgin Pioneer Museum by Dr. Crane

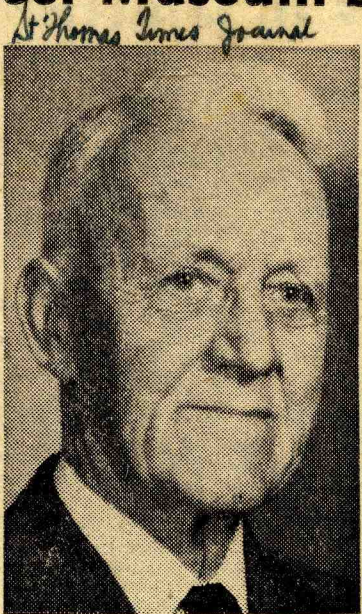
Scrap books which have been carefully kept, and catalogued or indexed, are among the valuable possessions of any library or museum, and it is gratifying to know that a current book on activities and events in this county has been prepared already for the library of the Elgin County Pioneer Museum by Dr. J. W. Crane, of Iona Station. The assembling of material for this book was begun in January, 1955, but the newspaper clippings include a note from The St. Thomas Times-Journal "In Bygone Days" column, recalling that over twenty-five years ago Dr. Crane suggested that the building now chosen as a museum would be a good site for such an establishment.

The clippings include the story of the early plans of the Women's Institutes of the county to lead in the establishing of a museum for Elgin County, the development of those plans, the successive interesting Elgin Museum News columns written by Mrs. J. R. Fitcher, chairman of the Museum Board, for The Times-Journal, and considerable pioneer history.

With the farsighted viewpoint of a sincere historian, Dr. Crane has included with the story of the museum project and the records of early history, a third type of information in clippings of current news from various sources which will be of historical interest for such records as the years go by. Each clipping is carefully dated and the source noted and an invaluable companion to the book is a comprehensive catalogue of many pages listing the names of people and of subjects appearing in the book. This catalogue is more than an index as each listing is descriptive.

Student of History

The scrap book and the catalogue indicate the student of history who has learned through his own experience the importance of preserving an accurate record of current events at the time (with care as to dates and names) and the value of a complete catalogue, without which endless hours can be wasted by the student or researcher. The book plate of the donor, one designed as a gift for Dr. Crane while he was at the



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University of Western Ontario, gives an indication of his own close connection with this part of Southern Ontario and his interest in it.

Dr. Crane received his medical degree from the University of Toronto and did postgraduate work in the United States, England and Germany, but, born at Orwell and a graduate of the St. Thomas Collegiate Institute, it was in this county that he began practice, at Iona for a few months and then at Wallacetown for a number of years, and he has always had an active interest in the life of his native county.

The book plate, which is biographical, includes a sketch of the young doctor answering a night call on an early type of rural telephone. This has a definite place in such a historical scrap book, for, very active in the life of the community, among other services Dr. Crane was instrumental in organizing in 1901 the Wallacetown and Lake Shore Telephone Company and in 1905 the Southwold and Dunwich Telephone Company.

Dr. Crane's interest in the life of Elgin County continued even after his moving to London on his appointment to the staff of the University of Western Ontario, where he was for many years Professor of pharmacology and physio-

logical chemistry, twice Acting Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and later Alumni Director of the University. Successive sketches on the book plate indicate his work in laboratory and at lecture desk.

Indicated too is his long interest in historical records. Dr. Crane has collected a very large medical library, an outstanding and highly specialized type of library, dealing with medical history, about one thousand volumes of which he has donated to the University of Western Ontario. Library cataloguing has long been an interest too and his medical catalogue of the doctors of Western Ontario, including about a thousand and cards, which he donated to the Public Library in London, is well known.

Alumni Director

The book plate indicates also the many young men and women who studied under Dr. Crane at the University of Western Ontario and the thousands with whom he later kept in contact as Alumni Director. He has been the founder not only of early telephone companies, but of other organizations too, and on March 7, members of the Osler Society, which he, together with the late Dr. Wray Lloyd, of St. Thomas, founded in 1925, held a testimonial dinner at Braemar Lodge in London in his honor, with presentations. Dr. Crane was also responsible for the formation of the Harvey Club at the University in 1919 and of the Noon-Day Study Club, a luncheon medical club of London, in 1932.

In the background of the book plate is a forest of trees, representing the very interesting grove of about sixty species of trees which have been planted by Dr. Crane at his present country home, "Kelligrew," at Iona Station, where he is seeking to collect as many as possible of the varieties of trees which grow in Ontario. Other scrap books and catalogues are a feature of his library at "Kelligrew" and there a second volume of the Elgin County Pioneer Museum Scrap Book is already in preparation.

Such records compiled by one so well informed about local history and so long interested in the careful preservation of historical records, will be a most valuable feature of the museum's library.

Noted Doctor's Books Form Geriatrics Study Library

The late Dr. J. W. Crane, one time acting dean of the University of Western Ontario School of Medicine, and one of the most outstanding medical men in Canada, is to have his memory honored by establishment of a

Ont., graduated from the UWO in 1898, practiced in Wallacetown until 1913 when he joined the university faculty to teach biochemistry, pharmacology and therapeutics. He served as dean from 1927 to 1929.

Library Much Sought

When he retired to his farm at Iona Station, doctors from across the land visited him to see his library, believed unexcelled in Canada.

The new library at Toronto, to be known as the J. W. Crane Memorial Library will have as its nucleus 200 volumes.

"I believe this is the purpose for which he would have wanted them used," said Dr. Priddle.

A formal announcement of the new library will be made to a group of 120 graduates of the UWO medical school when they meet at the Geriatrics Study Centre Jan. 14. Purpose of the meeting is to form an organization of Western graduates practicing in the Toronto area.



LATE DR. J. W. CRANE - - - provides library

library at the Geriatrics Study Centre in Toronto, it was announced yesterday.

The portion of his famous library which he bequeathed to Dr. W. W. Priddle, chairman of the Department of Health and Welfare advisory committee on geriatrics, is to form the nucleus of the library. Geriatrics is the study of diseases in elderly people.

The announcement was made by Dr. Priddle, physician, student and friend of Dr. Crane.

Dr. Crane died Nov. 3, 1959, at 82. He was a native of Orwell.

Crane Woodlot at Iona Station Taken Over by County

An eight-acre woodlot north of Iona Station, to be known as The J. W. Crane Memorial Park, was officially turned over to Elgin County by the University of Western Ontario last Wednesday afternoon.

The unveiling of a stone monument and plaque paying tribute to the late Dr. Crane highlighted the ceremony.

Dr. G. E. Hall, president and vice-chancellor of the university outlined briefly Dr. Crane's career. He said Dr. Crane joined the staff at Western in 1911 and in 1912 became the first full-time member of the medical school staff. He retired in 1947 after 36 years of affiliation with the University.

"Dr. Crane liked to see things grow," he said, "and one of his hobbies was planting trees."

Dr. Hall said Dr. Crane brought trees from England and all across Canada.

"People will be able to see the results of his hobby for years to come," he said.

Accepted by Warden

The formal transfer of the property to the Corporation of the County of Elgin was made by W. L. Duffield, vice-chairman of the board of governors of the university. Mr. Duffield said the land is to be used as a demonstration woodlot, a park, and a memorial to the late Dr. Crane who died in 1959.

In accepting the land, Donald Burgess, warden of Elgin County, pledged to "maintain it and preserve it for the pleasure of the public, as it was intended."

The invocation and benediction were said by Rev. W. T. Eddy, of Shedden United Church.

Study Group Honors Dr. Crane, Ex-Dean Can't Understand Fuss

Free Press St. Thomas Bureau

IONA STATION, April 8 — "When you get to be my age that blarney (kind words had just been passed his way) is like oats to an old horse. You just keep licking it up."

It was a characteristic remark, as characteristic as one uttered a few minutes before his visitors arrived: "I don't know why these boys insist on making such a fuss. I haven't really accomplished very much."

But others who viewed the record of Dr. J. W. Crane, former dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario, owner of a name almost synonymous with medicine in Western Ontario, for years known as Mr. Western Alumni, obviously disagreed.

The disagreement came from members of the Noon Day Study Club which Dr. Crane founded 25 years ago to give "the younger fellows training in discussing and presenting medical papers" a

privilege formerly limited to doctors over 40).

They had just travelled from London to mark the anniversary of the successful study group which still meets weekly at the YM-YWCA and boasts a membership of nearly 200. And they knew that two other groups he organized were still functioning strongly; the Harvey Club, a medical fraternal organization, and the Osler Society, an undergraduate group dedicated to medical history.

To commemorate the anniversary the members presented him with an engraved silver starting gun which had been converted into a lighter. Again, oddly enough, he had minutes before labelled himself "a great starter but a poor finisher."

A physician since 1898, Dr. Crane became a general practitioner in the Wallacetown area near here, consented in 1913 to teach biochemistry, pharmacology and therapeu-

tics at Western's new medical school and served as dean from 1927 to 1929.

After 23 years of active professorship he left the teaching field in 1936. He spent the next 10 years developing almost single-handedly Western's Alumni Association. Western cited this man who "really hadn't accomplished very much" with an honorary doctor of laws in 1947.

Spending his 82nd birthday in hospital recently on the advice of doctors he had taught, Dr. Crane was forced to miss what was to have been a testimonial dinner on the study club's 25th year of founding.

Today the testimonial came to him and he was as excited as when he saw Toronto defeat Boston in the Stanley Cup playoffs last night. A man who seems in little danger of being forgotten in his advancing year frankly admitted: "It's certainly nice to be remembered by your old friends."

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