

Obituary To Dr. J. F. Abel

J. FANNING ABEL
1868-1938
of the Old School, A
son of the New.

Dr. Abel, (by request of the
Waynesville Masonic Lodge.)

Dr. Abel was a graduate of
the University of Michigan in
1892. He served for several
years as senior student
of the professor of sur-
gery at the University Hos-
pital. In 1895, he and
his fellow-students of
the class were permitted
to work in surgery in the
Johns Hopkins Medical
Department. Here his work
was under the supervision
of Dr. Wm. H. Keen, who
at that time was the
head of the hospital
and offered Dr. Abel an in-
ternship in the Johns
Hopkins Hospital. Thus we see
the very beginning of his
career his bent for sur-
gery pronounced.

For financial reasons,
Dr. Abel declined this much
prized position and he
came home to take
charge of carrying on the
practice of medicine and
surgery in the town of
Waynesville. In 1900, he
moved to the town of
Waynesville, where he was to
spend the remainder of his
life. Here, in his
and-buggy days, he

practiced medicine and surgery
over almost all of Haywood County.
Herein he followed Dr. G. D. S.
Allen of blessed memory, whose
horse-back parish of an earlier day
had been the whole county.

Dr. Abel was forever seeking to
learn—that he might do more for
his patients. In 1909 he went back
to Baltimore to the Johns Hopkins
Hospital for clinical work in Gyn-
ecology under Dr. Howard A. Kelly
and Pediatrics under Dr. Von
Pirquet. Later back in Baltimore
again he had Microscopy under Dr.
Charles Simon, Pediatrics under
Dr. Mason Knox, and attended sur-
gical clinics at the Hopkins Hos-
pital. Next came the World War
and he volunteered for service in
the medical corps. He was not
sent overseas, but for 16 months
he served in the training camp at
Ft. Ord, California. After the
Armistice, he was retired in De-
cember, 1918 as Major in the Med-
ical Reserve Corps, U. S. Army,
until he reached of age 65 when
he automatically went into the Re-
serve Auxiliary.

When retired from the army in
1918, Dr. Abel came home to be-
gin again his life work among his
own people. But he came with his
bent for surgery stronger than ever,
and, interestingly enough his op-
portunity in that line was waiting
for him.

In 1917, Bonniecastle, a wooden
structure on Pigeon street, in Way-
nesville, was converted into our first
hospital. The building was ill-
adapted to its new purpose, its
equipment was scanty to the point
of poverty and only by courtesy
could it be called a hospital. In
January, 1919, Dr. Abel was put in
charge of this hospital. He bought
supplies, chose the staff, and prac-
ticed general surgery and gave such
service as Haywood County had
never had before. To those of us
who know the condition of the ma-
jority of the patients who came to
him, it seemed as if the absolutely
impossible was demanded of him.
But since he did not know that such
things could not be done, he did
them.

The Haywood County Hospital
was organized in 1925 in the Bon-
niecastle building. About this
time there was launched a cam-
paign to build a larger modern

Rail oddities



THE AVERAGE FREIGHT CAR TODAY HAS 20 PER CENT MORE CAPACITY THAN THE AVERAGE FREIGHT CAR OF WORLD WAR DAYS (1918)

ABOUT THIRTY CENTS OF EVERY RAILROAD TAX DOLLAR GOES TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THUS PROVIDING SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO EDUCATE APPROXIMATELY 1,300,000 BOYS AND GIRLS EACH YEAR.

IN ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN RAILROADS

hospital. In this campaign, Dr. Abel, by exhortation and much more by his unusually successful medical and surgical practice in the old hospital and in the homes and lives of his patients, played a small part in converting the first negative vote on issuing bonds into an affirmative one on the second trial. The new hospital was opened January 1, 1928 and Dr. Abel was made chief of staff. But he re-
signed shortly to give his whole time and strength to his work with his patients out of the hospital as well as in it.

Dr. Abel was always a student, since ever within him was the desire to learn more—that he might do more for his sick. With this new work before him, he saw that he had to have more special training for it, and in characteristic fashion he went about getting his training.

This discipline was mainly had in Chicago. In 1919, Dr. Abel spent eight weeks there working in the Augustana Hospital and in the Clinical Laboratory of Surgical Technique. In 1920, he spent eight weeks as a surgical interne in Cook County Hospital. In 1921, he attended for 12 weeks clinics at the American Hospital.

In addition there were almost annual attendances (12 week in all) at summer clinics at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. And in 1929 he spent 6 weeks in Dr. George C. Culle's Thyroid Clinic at the Lakeside Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Abel was a member of the following medical organizations: Haywood County, 10th N. C. District, and N. C. State Medical Societies; American Medical Association; Southeastern Surgical Congress (charter member); Association of Railway Surgeons (vice president in 1937) and Association of Military Surgeons. In 1925, he was made a fellow of the American College of Surgeons—the highest membership distinction that can come to a surgeon in America. It corresponds to membership in the Royal College of Surgeons of Great Britain.

In the title it was said that he was "a doctor of the old school," but this must not be interpreted too literally. He was ready to use all the modern technical aids to

stantly he felt the need to learn more, not only by books and journals, but by attending the clinics of such master operators as Kelly and Halstead at the Hopkins, and Cuile at Cleveland.

Dr. Abel made use of all modern techniques, especially of the X-ray fluoroscope and photograph, and of bloodcounts as aids to pre-surgical diagnosis. But these things, together with all that he learned in long months spent in surgical clinics as noted above, do not account for the extraordinary and at times almost uncanny success of his operations. That this statement may be justified, I quote from his records that during the calendar years 1936 and 1937 he performed 163 major operations (besides a multitude of minor ones) in the Haywood County Hospital with but two deaths. To those of us who know that many of these patients came to him almost with one foot in the grave, this is but little short of marvelous.

In explanation of this extraordinary record, I must again quote Dr. Alexis Carrell. "The success of eminent surgeons comes from the clear understanding of certain adaptive phenomena. It is indispensable not only to preserve wounds from infection, but to respect, in the course of operation—handling, their structural and functional condition." In the words of another great surgeon, "One must respect tissues not abuse them." And Dr. Carrell again says "The good surgeon possesses the power to open the body, explore the organs, and repair lesions almost without risk to his patient. To many people, he restores health and strength. To those with incurable diseases, he is capable of bringing some relief"—and some comfort and courage to stand.

But there is another factor in the life and practice and service of this very successful doctor and surgeon—the implicit faith of his patients in him, in his almost infallibility. This is the other side of the picture. And without this faith of the patient, in many more cases than the two noted, all the knowledge and skill of the surgeon would have oftentimes availed not.

I have recently reread that most moving story of the Scotch doctor, William MacLure, "A Doctor of the Old School," by Ian MacLaren. Dr. MacLure in his parish of Dumtochy was the veritable prototype of Dr. G. D. S. Allen, who on horseback ministered to almost the whole of Haywood County in the '70s and '80s of the last century. Dr. Abel came afterward in the horse-and-buggy days and then in the good roads and automobile period. Of his work, as of both

U. S. Air Hero



Shown making out his report after testing an army plane at Wright Field, Ohio, Capt. Samuel H. Harris, of Pittsburgh, is the peacetime ace of the U. S. Army Air Corps. He has been decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross for facing dangers approximating those of battle in his career as test pilot.

these other doctors of the Old School, I can quote MacLaren's words—"He did his best for every man and woman and child in his circuit, in heat and cold, in sun and snow, in darkness and light, year in and year out." It was good to see him come into the yard for the very sight of him was victory.

And finally I may quote the parting words of the great Edinburgh surgeon to William MacLure, after the stormy ride, and the fording of the flooded stream, and the operation that saved the life of Annie, Tammas Mitchell's wife—"Give'e another shake of your hand, MacLure; I'm proud to have met you; you are an honor to our profession." And so it may be said of our beloved physician who rests from his labors.

JOSHUA FANNING ABEL

LICENSE REVOKED

The drivers' license of Robert Leroy Mull was revoked by the highway safety division after Mull had been convicted of driving drunk. He was tried in the Mayor's court in Hazelwood.

Maple Grove Club Has Program On Seasonal Clothing

The Maple Grove home demonstration club met at the home of Mrs. C. R. Palmer on October the eighth.

During the business meeting plans for the fall achievement day were discussed.

Reports from the poultry and garden leaders were heard and a paper on Sweden was read.

The demonstration, by Miss Smith, was "Seasonal Clothing." Many new style hints were given, also helpful ideas as to the remodeling of old clothing and how to make inexpensive accessories, were gained.

A social hour featuring a game and delicious refreshments was enjoyed by the members.

The club planned an all day meeting to be held on the second Tuesday in November, at the home of Mrs. Homer Justice.

It's free speech so long as it is not used to criticize our own candidate.

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The committee pledged the beer industry's aid to law-enforcement agencies to the end that retail beer dealers operate lawfully and in the public interest.

The committee believes its pledge has been fulfilled. During the past 17 months it has aided authorities in ridding the state of 131 undesirable beer outlets—107 by revocation, one by surrender and 23 by refusal to renew licenses.

The committee can help by restricting your patronage to those places which obey the law.

Brewers and North Carolina Beer Distributors Committee

EDGAR H. BAIN, State Director
111-17 COMMERCIAL BUILDING RALEIGH, N. C.

ATTENTION REPUBLICANS OF HAYWOOD COUNTY

All who did not register in the new registration will have to register this Saturday, October 26th, if you wish to vote in the November Election.

Haywood County Republican Executive Committee

Paid Advertisement.

Honored by Pope



The Reverend Charles Jerome Callan, O.P., is the first native-born American to be appointed consultant to the Pontifical biblical commission. Appointment was made by Pope Pius XII. Prominent theologians came to New York's Church of Saint Vincent to honor Father Callan.

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