

HAMBURG HISTORY

A special section contributed by Mr. Daniel Barr on behalf of the Hamburg Historical Society

The Pellett Family

In my final installment of "Early Physicians of Hamburg", I want to tell you about one of the most beloved families in our town's history.

Dr. Jackson Brainard Pellett, (affectionately known as 'J. B. ') was born on August 4th 1847 on a farm in Wantage. His family was wealthy and at one time owned 2500 acres of farmland. Instead of following in the family tradition of farming, he became interested in medicine. He attended Columbia University in NYC, and received his medical degree in 1869. He stayed in NYC to start his private practice as a surgeon. He wanted to specialize in diseases of the eye and studied at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary.

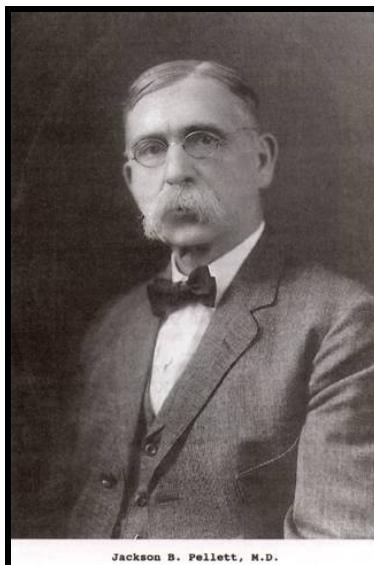
In 1871, J.B. returned to Sussex County to practice with Dr. William Linn, the son of Dr. Alexander Linn. (As mentioned in my last column, Sussex Hospital was originally named for Alexander Linn). In 1874 Dr. Pellett moved his practice to Hamburg. He started working out of 2 rooms in the Hamburg Hotel. The hotel was owned by the Smith family, In-Laws to Reeve Harden. Dr. Pellett's medical practice would continue for over 60 years. He became so well known and respected, people would come from outside the county to see him. Traveling was so hard that people would sleep in his waiting room or stay in the hotel just to be seen by him. Dr. Pellett married Margaret Lawrence, the daughter of State Senator Thomas Lawrence, also from Hamburg, in 1880. They were the parents of 7 children, all of which would be raised in Hamburg, and would attend Hamburg School. In 1884, they moved into a new 15 room home he built on Rt. 23, (then known as Wantage Ave.). He moved his practice into his new home. He would go on to build his practice into the largest in Sussex County. Behind his house, near Orchard St. was his barn where he housed his horse and buggy. He also had a cow for fresh milk. When Dr. Pellett made house calls, he would travel by buggy. Sometimes he would travel so far to see a patient, it would be required to stay over night at the patient's home.

Dr. Pellett belonged to the Church of Good Shepard, but he contributed to all the churches in town. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Hardyston National Bank of Hamburg. Dr. Pellett died on May 3rd, 1939 at the age of 92.

One of the 7 children of Jackson Pellett was Thomas Pellett. Dr. Thomas Pellett would join his father's practice in 1912. Born on December 8th, 1886, he was named for his maternal grandfather Thomas Lawrence. He attended Hamburg School until his sophomore year when he transferred to a private school in New Hampshire. He received his medical degree from University of Pennsylvania in 1911. After joining his father's practice, J.B. Pellett became known as "Old Doc Pellett" and Thomas was known as Dr. Tom. Tom's brother, Dr. Russell Pellett became a dentist in Franklin. Thomas' practice would last 56 years, until his death in 1968. So, for 94 years the Pellett family took care of all the medical needs of the good people of Hamburg. They handled everything from common colds, to delivering most of the babies in town, and the surgeries required to sustain a quality of life. Today there a many people still walking around that were delivered into the world by a Pellett.

On a side note of interest, Dr. Thomas Pellett had a daughter, Linda, who not only attended Hamburg School, but went on to become a teacher. She spent her entire career teaching the children of Hamburg. Dr. Pellett would deliver them, and Linda Pellett Lannin would educate them. She was my 4th grade teacher, and if you look at the teacher's portraits that line the office wing of the school you will see her portrait.

I don't think in the history of Hamburg has there been a family that gave so much selflessly to the people of Hamburg for more than a century.



Jackson B. Pellett, M.D.