Oakdale in the Newspapers

April 16, 1930 Front Page

DR. WM. J. KAY
DIES SUDDENLY
1930
Throat Infection Proves Fatal to the Superintendent of Mich. Home

Dr. William J. Kay, superintendent of the Michigan Home and Training School and beloved citizen of Lapeer, died this morning shortly after midnight, following an illness of only a few days from a streptococcus infection in his throat. His condition was not thought to be serious until about 24 hours previous to his death.

Dr. Kay has been a resident of Lapeer County since 1897 following his graduation from the Detroit College of Medicine in June. During his long residence here he became so enshrined in the hearts of the people of the community that his death is felt as a distinct loss to many, many people of Lapeer, and surrounding countryside.

First Practiced in Attica

When Dr. Kay first came to Lapeer County he lived in Attica where he practiced medicine for five or six years. At the same time Dr. H. E. Randall was practicing medicine in Dryden and the two young doctors formed a partnership and moved to Lapeer, occupying the building which is now used by the Michigan State Telephone Co. at the corner of Court and Clay streets. After a few years Dr. Randall moved to Flint but Dr. Kay continued the practice of medicine, later purchasing the residence and office at the corner of Cedar and Clay streets. In September, 1924, Dr. Kay was appointed superintendent of the Michigan Home and Training School by Gov. Grosbeck.

Honored by Gov. Crossbody

Dr. Kay's appointment, following the appointment of the former superintendent, Dr. H. A. Haynes, to the superintendency of the University Hospital at Ann Arbor, came not as a result of Dr. Kay's political activities, but in recognition of his preeminent success in field of medicine and because of his understanding of sociological problems and his study of educational work among the underdeveloped. Not only had Dr. Kay been highly successful in the practice of medicine in the local field but was recognized throughout the state as one of the most successful general practitioners and students of medicine. He was signally honored by his associates by being chosen president of the Michigan State Medical Association.

Born in Canada

Dr. Kay was born on April 5, 1878, in Bellmore, Ont., son of Dr. and Mrs. John Paterson Kay. His father was a citizen of the United States and had served as surgeon during the Civil War.

Dr. Kay was a member of the Lapeer Rotary Club, the Masonic Lodge, the K. of P., the Consistory, and Shrine.

He was particularly interested in educational work and served on the Lapeer Board of Education for several years.

He is survived by his widow, Miss Elaine Kay, at home, one sister, Mrs. Louis C. Cramton of Washington, D. C.; two brothers, Fred B. Kay of Lapeer and George Kay of Baltimore, Md.; an older daughter, Burnice (Mrs. Ralph White), died in 1921, leaving two sons, William Kay White and Burne Kay White, who have since made their home with Dr. and Mrs. Kay.

Funeral Services Friday

The body will lie in state from 1 to 3:30 o'clock Friday afternoon at the Presbyterian church. The funeral service will begin at the church at 3:30. Burial will be made in Mt. Hope cemetery, Lapeer.
Gov. Green Issues Proclamation on Dr. Kay’s Death

STATE OF MICHIGAN
EXECUTIVE OFFICE
LANSING

FRED W. GREEN
GOVERNOR

April 16, 1930

In the death this morning of Dr. William J. Kay, Superintendent of the Michigan Home and Training School at Lapeer, the State of Michigan has lost one of its most valuable servants, a man who was a true and kindly father to those many unfortunate “children” who had been placed under his care during the five years he has had charge of that institution.

Dr. Kay was appointed Superintendent September 12, 1924, when there were 2363 patients committed to his care. The number has increased until today there are 2910 patients in the Home, which is crowded far beyond its capacity originally intended, but which Dr. Kay had expanded through his indefatigable labors to provide for those committed to the Home.

Recently he had found delight in the knowledge that the State, tardily as it was, had arranged to increase the accommodations of this institution. He had been giving careful attention to the details of the building plans with a view of arranging for the maximum comfort of the patients, whom he thoroughly understood.

FRED W. GREEN
Governor

Dr. Dixon Heads Michigan Home

Supt. of Epileptic School Succeeds the late Dr. Wm. J. Kay as Supt.

Selected solely because of his fitness for the position Dr. Robert L. Dixon was appointed superintendent of the Michigan Home and Training School late yesterday afternoon by Gov. Green. The appointment came entirely unsolicited on Dr. Dixon’s part.

Dr. Dixon has been superintendent of the Michigan Farm Colony for Epileptics at Wahjamega, near Caro in Tuscola County since that institution was founded 16 years ago. His management of that hospital and training school has been so successful that it has become one of the outstanding institutions of its character in the United States. It was entirely fitting and just that the appointment to the larger institution at Lapeer should go to Dr. Dixon. He will move to Lapeer within a few weeks and assumes his new duties at once, coming here daily until he is able to move here.

Dr. Dixon’s family consists of his wife, one son, Robert, Jr., who is a senior at the University of Michigan, and one daughter, Elizabeth, 11, at home.

Dr. Dixon is 52 years old. He is a member of the Caro Rotary Club and has always taken an active part in community activities. Dr. Dixon’s successor at the Wahjamega institution has not been appointed yet.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

August 19, 1931

Laying of Michigan Home Corner Stone Was Big Event In History

Governor and Other Notables Present at the Time

(Tribute by Geo. N. Lawrence)

Thirty-seven years to the younger generation may be a long time to look ahead, but to those who attended the cornerstone laying June 26, 1894, of the first cottage erected on the State Institution grounds west of Lapeer, it would seem but a short period of time. It was the largest demonstration ever enacted in Lapeer in which a crowd estimated at over 20,000 were present at the spectacular ceremony. It has meant much to the citizens of Lapeer, and the State of Michigan in caring for the unfortunate. It will be a sweet memory to those who took part in the program and a sad reminder to read the names of those who have died since that time.

The Michigan Home and Training School, formerly known and named the Michigan Home for the Feeble-Minded and Epileptics under the authority of Act No. 250, was located by the board of building commissioners at the City of Lapeer, Lapeer County, and a tract of land containing 710 acres. Just west of Lapeer was selected as an ideal place for the school so much needed in this State. One hundred acres are occupied by buildings and play grounds.

This review may be of more than ordinary notice in this issue of the centennial which because of the men who were active in securing the Home which has become a small city by itself at the western city limits of Lapeer.

Epileptics Separated

As cottages were erected and a large waiting list to be housed, it was necessary to separate those stricken with epilepsy in order to give the other children an opportunity for school training.

In 1916, a location was selected at Wahjamega in Tuscola County, four miles from Caro and 11 miles from Vassar. The "Michigan Farm Colony" site consists of 1,510 acres of land and was purchased for $53,500. Since that time the Home at Lapeer has taken the name of "Training School."

The late Dr. William A. Polglase was the superintendent at the Home. Harry S. Evans, steward, and Frank DesNoyer, engineer, are about the only ones remaining that were present at the opening of the training school. Miss Anna Schill, a former nurse under the regime of Dr. Polglase, was formerly superintendent of Hurley Hospital at Flint, prior to her marriage.

Masons Lay Cornerstone

It was during the term as governor of the late John T. Rich that the cornerstone of Cottage A was laid by members of the Grand Lodge of Michigan.

Lapeer County Press & Lapeer County Clarion

Wednesday, August 26, 1931

“Sandy” was admitted to the Lapeer County Infirmary, on November 28, 1928. “Sandy” was born in Canada and was 70 years old at the time he wrote this article for the newspaper.

“Sandy” was only a kid when the first train came to Lapeer 60 years ago. Mrs. Hart put on a feast for the train crew and the crowd when the first train came from Pt. Huron. “Sandy” remembers the log roads that ran through Lapeer and how hundreds of loads of shingles and lumber used to go along its streets. It used to take a strong team to bring a load of lumber up Nepsing Street. In those days “Sandy” took to traveling but he always came back to Lapeer. He was here when the smallpox epidemic broke out at the Michigan Home. Earlier he was the teamster that drew the first load of lumber and first keg of nails to the Home site for the first cottage.

“SANDY” KERR
Oakdale in the Newspapers

February 14, 1934

**STATE OKEHS HOME BUDGET**

Nearly a Million Dollars to Be Spent There Next Year

Officials at the Michigan Home last week received official word from Lansing that the institution’s budget for the next two years will be $955,190, for each year, an increase of nearly $240,000 over the last two years.

Although the budget is some $87,000 less than that requested by the Michigan Home, the amount will still be sufficient with careful planning to carry the institution along on the same basis as at present.

No building is contemplated at the Home in the next two years, the appropriation providing no funds for that purpose.

The $955,190 appropriation will be spent as follows:

- Personal service: $404,000
- Supplies, material and contractual: $456,040
- Outlay for equipment: $35,150
- Operation of farm: $60,000

Total: $955,190

Besides this amount, the Home receives about $50,000 worth of produce from its farm, which is not included in this budget.

Dr. R. L. Dixon, superintendent, says it is not expected that it will be necessary to make any salary cuts to fit the expenses within the limits of the budget.

**Kitchen Curtains Start Fire at Nepessing Lake**

June 5, 1935

A farewell party was given Thursday evening by the employees of the Iris Hospital at the Michigan Home at the Knutson home in Lapeer, for the Misses Margaret Hustead and Elizabeth DeView, who are entering the St. Camillus School of Nursing, Borgess Hospital in Kalamazoo. Contests and games were played and dainty refreshments served. The girls received lovely gifts.

August 19, 1936

Waiting List Jammed at M.H.T.S.—Dixon

A plan for increased facilities to care for the mentally deficient and mentally deranged of Michigan was voiced by Dr. Robert L. Dixon, medical superintendent of the Michigan Home and Training School, Lapeer, to members of the Lions club of Port Huron at their weekly meeting Wednesday in Hotel Harrington.

“More than 1,300 persons, actually adjudged mentally deficient, are on the waiting list of the Lapeer school,” he said. “No other state in the union has so many cases needing control without provisions being made for them. Everyone recognizes the sociological principle that the rights of society are based on the rights of an individual; and that because of this some persons should be removed from the life of society.”

The second great sociological principal that we seemed to have forgotten is that for every right that society asserts, there is a commensurate obligation. We have the duty to take care of these cases.”

Dr. Dixon cited figures showing that only 55 per cent of the cases at Lapeer are hereditary.

Waiting List Jammed at M.H.T.S.—Dixon

October 14, 1936

Will accept Lapeer Savings Bank certificates on dental work or assignments of same.—Dr. G. A. Graham.

Tell ‘em and sell ‘em for 35 cents in a County Press Want Ad.
Date Not Known, Year 1938

Lapeer Sees Its First Picket Line

Construction work on the new buildings at the Lapeer State Home was completely stopped Saturday morning when this group of pickets prevented the entrance of any one of the project who wanted to return to work.

The pickets were led by Dr. Fred R. Hanna, who has been acting medical superintendent of the State Home and Training School at Lapeer since May, 1937, now named superintendent Monday by the State Hospital Commission.

DR. FRED R. HANNA has received his permanent appointment as medical superintendent of the Lapeer State Home. The announcement was made this week by Dr. Joseph E. Barrett, director of the Michigan hospital commission.

Dr. Hanna has been acting superintendent of the Home since May 13, 1937, when Dr. R. L. Dixon, former superintendent, was transferred back to the Michigan Farm Colony at Wahjamega. He has been here for the past five years when he came to Lapeer from Oakland county and joined the medical staff of the institution. He was assistant superintendent under Dr. Dixon.

Dr. Hanna is the present president of the Lapeer Rotary Club, and is highly regarded in the community, which extends its congratulations.

Born and reared in Detroit, Dr. Hanna received his medical degree from Wayne University in 1914. For two years following his graduation, he served as an assistant county physician for Oakland county, then came here to join the medical staff at the Lapeer Home.
Oakdale in the Newspapers

County Press
January 26, 1938

Three Ways to Ease Crowding at State Home

Plan 300-Bed Addition at Lapeer, Cost $300,000

In a talk with The County Press when he visited Lapeer recently, Dr. Joseph E. Barrett, director of the State Hospital Commission said he was not in favor of institutions such as the Lapeer Home being built up to too great a size.

"The Lapeer State Home is large enough now," he said. "It we were to increase its capacity greatly we would lose opportunity for personal contact with the patients."

More Attention for Patients

"We must remember these afflicted persons are human beings entitled to the best care we can give them. I believe that in a smaller institution they can receive more attention."

Dr. Barrett said that the problem was to strike a happy medium between the best care of the patient and the least expenditure of money.

At the Children's Village at Coldwater, "baby" of the state institutions, cost per patient is $1.89 per day. At Lapeer, largest of the institutions, the cost is only 75c per day.

Three plans are in progress to relieve the load of patients that is overcrowding the Lapeer State Home:

1. Construction of a 300-bed addition this spring at the Lapeer State Home. Cost is estimated at $300,000, and it is expected to be finished by fall.
2. Transfer of some of the patients to the Children's Village at Coldwater, Mich., where 500 additional beds are planned this year.
3. Construction of a new institution located more nearly in the central part of lower Michigan. No money has been appropriated for such an institution, and it would first have to be approved by the legislature.

At the Lapeer State Home now there are 1,000 more patients than the rated "capacity" of the institution of 2,700. The present building program will relieve only part of the overcrowding.

Waiting List of 1,800

In addition there is a waiting list of 1,500 that cannot possibly be cared for until additional buildings are erected.

Dr. Barrett said legislation would be required to permit the housing of all types of youthful mental patients at the institution, which now is reserved for the "upper types" of feeble-minded.

The commission agreed with Dr. Barrett that the state could effect economies as well as provide a convenience to southwestern Michigan patients through such expansion.

County Press, April 1939

Hope to Build New Chapel at Home

Lapeer State Home officials do not expect that the chapel, practically destroyed by fire Saturday afternoon, will be rebuilt. Earl Smith, steward of the institution, said: "The building was erected in 1902 and has been inadequate for years since the institution has grown to its present size. If sufficient money is available from the state, we hope to put up a larger and more suitable building near the new group of buildings now going up."

The loss was set conservatively at $20,000, although if a new building is to be put up, it would cost several times that amount. The chapel seated 350 persons, and was used for movies, plays, dances, and the annual arts and crafts exhibits.

Fifteen patients who were in the club store in the basement, were forced to escape through windows when flames blocked the stairway exit. Considerable damage was done to the stock of goods in the store and the furnishings of the club rooms.

The fire broke out at 3:15 p.m. The Home and the Lapeer City fire departments had water on it a few minutes later, but flames had gained such headway in the stacks of canvas scenery and in the old wooden rafters that it could not be checked. A false ceiling of steel below the rafters confined the fire between the state roof and this ceiling, making it difficult to quench.

Origin of the fire is unknown.
THE WORST FIRE IN THE HISTORY OF THE LAPEER STATE HOMESTEAD

The top picture shows the interior of the church at the Lapeer State Home and Training School, damaged by fire Saturday afternoon, including the steeple where the blaze broke out. At right is a view of the 81-year-old building showing how the fire burned through the west end of the roof during an hour and 15 minutes. Lapeer city Firemen and institution response battled to gain control of the blaze. Fifteen patients trapped in the church were rushed to safety through the rear windows; their clothes through the door were cut off by flames.

It was the worst fire in the 44 years of the institution.

Hundred of Lapeeites had gathered to watch the blaze.