

Archives and Special Collections

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MSS 100 / PSC 113

Dr. John Nelson Bell Collection, 1887-1922

2 boxes; 1.3 cu. ft.

History

Dr. John Nelson Bell practiced medicine in the Delaware County community of New Burlington for forty years. Born at Morgantown, Virginia on April 21, 1858, the son of Henry and Louise (Swisher) Bell, Dr. Bell attended school at Fairmont, West Virginia. (After the Civil War, the section of Virginia in which Dr. Bell was born and grew up became part of what is now West Virginia.)

Dr. Bell began teaching school at age sixteen. For ten years, he taught and supplemented his education by taking classes at a normal school. He became interested in the practice of medicine and in 1884, entered Starling Medical College at Columbus, Ohio. He left there after two years and entered the Medical College of Ohio, graduating from that institution in the spring of 1888. The previous fall, Dr. Bell had heard that Dr. Samuel Jump, the practicing physician in Perry Township, Delaware County, Indiana, had received a presidential appointment as the postmaster of Selma and would be moving to Liberty Township, leaving a medical vacancy in Perry Township. So after graduation, Dr. Bell came to Delaware County, where he began his practice at New Burlington.

That same fall, on November 28, 1888, he married Carrie L. Will of Perry Township, the daughter of John and Mary (Keesling) Will. Dr. Bell and his wife had three daughters, Letha B, Mary F. and Enid A. Mary F. was born with a defective heart and she died at the age of five.

Along with practicing medicine, Dr. Bell eventually owned a 125 acre farm in Perry Township, on which the doctor became especially interested in dairying and swine breeding. A republican, Dr. Bell was also a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New Burlington and active in the Freemasons, serving four times as worshipful master of Whitney Lodge No. 229. Dr. Bell died September 1, 1928.

Scope and Content

This collection is divided into three series: Account Books, which contains Dr. Bell's financial dealings, including payment from patients and money paid out for supplies; Day Books, which gives names of patients, reason for doctor's visit and charge for services.

PSC 113 contains two picture postcards, one of Dr. Bell and one of Dr. Bell and his daughter.

Revised by M. Read, 7/17/07

MSS 100
Container List

Box Folder

1		Account Books
	1	1888-1894
	2	1896-1902
	3	c.1904-1910
	4	c.1910-1922
2		Daybooks
	1	1888-1892
	2	1892-1896
	3	1896-1899
	4	1900-1902
	5	1902-1906
	6	1909-1912
	7	1912-1913
	8	1920-1922
		Notes
	9	Medical School, 1887-1888
	10	Treatments, n.d.

PSC 113

Picture Postcard of J. N. Bell, M.D., n.d.

Picture Postcard of J.N. Bell, M.D. and his daughter Enid in their first car, a 1911
Ford, c.1911