

HEALTH, MEDICINE AND THE AYPE OLD TIMES

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In March, 1909 a “Clean Up” campaign began in Seattle to get the city ready for the AYPE. Property owners were to see that their property was clean and rat free for the coming summer. The city Health Department worked hard to clean up long neglected health issues. Privy vaults, water sources, dairies, and stables in the city that attracted flies were all inspected in large numbers. New understandings of public health came with huge changes in medical science, i.e. newly developed laboratory tests, x-ray technology, and an understanding that germs caused diseases. New hospitals were being built in Seattle with more knowledgeable and sophisticated care.

In 1908 another hospital opened to serve the public. In a quiet corner of the grounds of the AYPE, the Emergency Hospital was constructed with stables for the horse driven ambulance service. The buildings were completed and in use a full year ahead of the opening of the AYPE. It served the many workers and visitors on the grounds. The first patient was a workman with a crushed thumb.

Visitors to the fair were assured of the best medical care, should they fall ill or be injured. The hospital prided itself on being modern and up to date and consisted of a surgery, private rooms, a ward and quarters for the staff. A resident physician and nurses were always in attendance. Dr. E. Rininger was the Medical Director of the hospital and had a staff consisting of Dr. W. Kanter and Dr. M. McKinney and Miss B. Wiese and Miss Mary Anderson, the nurses.

Local newspaper accounts occasionally gave an insight as to what was happening at the AYPE Hospital including an animal keeper who was attacked by a wolf at the Live Game Exhibition. The ambulance responded to the “hurry up” call and quickly got the bleeding keeper to the hospital where he, no doubt, survived because of the close proximity to the hospital. Other emergency cases were often reported in the newspaper; a man who fell 25 feet from a tree “knocking him senseless,” an unfortunate 18 year old girl who dropped dead and a man who was shot in the sometimes rowdy “Streets of Cairo.” A new diagnosis was even coined: the AYPE headache named by Dr. Kanter which seemed popular among the visitors on the grounds and brought many into the hospital.

Health and medicine in 1909 was a blend of the “old” with patent medicines and quackery practices still being advertised, along with the development of the “modern and progressive” with improved procedures, medicines and hospitals. The AYPE left a legacy of health care and public health in Seattle. The city improved its public health programs to get ready for the fair, proceeds from the fair contributed to the building of Firlands TB Sanatorium; the Emergency Hospital provided excellent, sometimes life saving, care to fair goers and the public health exhibits created for the AYPE were taken

by car across the state to continue to inform the citizens of public health concerns long after the fair had ended.