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Dr. Herrman Keidel

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DR. HERRMAN KEIDEL

Mary Holland Lancaster

A childhood memory caused a special interest in a special person whose significance I seek to preserve in the manner of this article.

When my mother, Maggie Amanda Wilson Holland, was a young girl, about 1907, she attended the Murray Institute in Murray, Kentucky, and studied German. Dr. Herrman Keidel, a dentist in Murray, of German descent, would kindly help the young people with their German lessons.

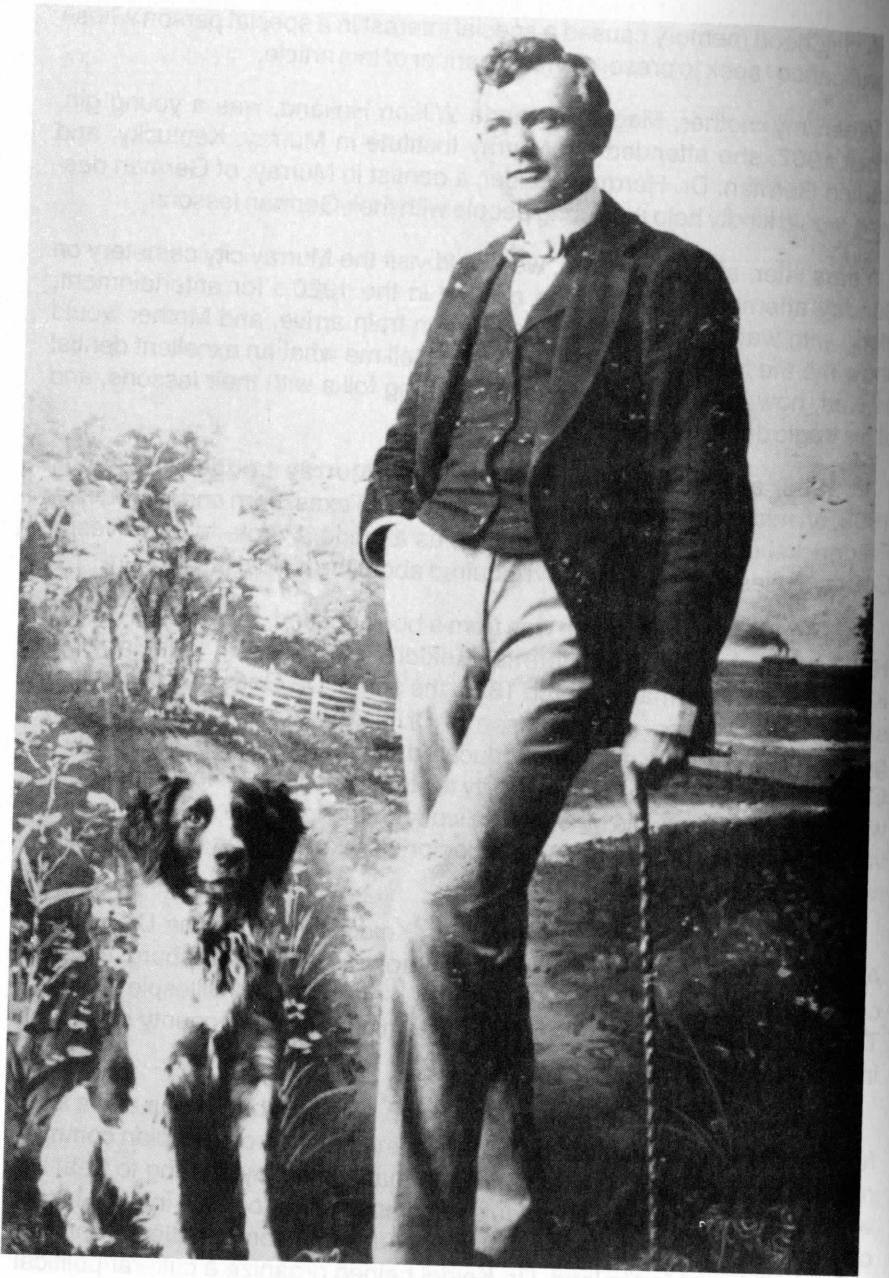
Years later, after I was born, we would visit the Murray city cemetery on Sunday afternoons, as was the custom in the 1920's for entertainment, along with watching the Sunday afternoon train arrive, and Mother would show me the tombstone of Dr. Keidel and tell me what an excellent dentist he was, how generously he aided the young folks with their lessons, and of his tragic death by a self-inflicted gunshot.

In 1983, after reading his obituary in the **Murray Ledger**, 19 August 1909, on microfilm, I noticed he was a native of Texas, born and reared near Fredericksburg. Using this information as a guide, I wrote to the Gillespie County Texas Public Library and inquired about the Keidel family.

The information sent to me was from a book entitled, **Pioneers in God's Hills**, which stated that Dr. Herrman Keidel's father was Dr. Wilhelm Victor Keidel, born in Germany, March 1825, the son of Dr. Georg Keidel, university faculty member, and grandson of Dr. Johann Carl Keidel, both surgeons. Dr. Wilhelm Keidel was educated at Georg Augusts University at Goettingen. He entered the university to study medicine, 4 November 1841, where records show his outstanding work for the four years. He left the university, August 1845, to become a doctor in Texas, sailing on the "Margarete" in September of the same year.

The Mexican War having started, Dr. Keidel enlisted in the U.S. Army. After being released, he went to the new colony of Fredericksburg, and became the first Chief Justice in the first election when Gillespie County, Texas was formed in 1848. During his administration the county court met in Dr. Keidel's home.

The doctor was an exceptionally tall man, with light brown hair and a long full beard. Being an idealist, he hoped for the creation of a utopian community in Texas and showed leadership in that subject by offering to treat ill without charge to those who would accompany him to settle in such a colony on the Pedernales River. Thus encouraged, some settlers ventured into this rich and fertile land. Dr. Keidel helped organize a cultural-political club of the Live-Oaks Pedernales community, sought to beautify the community by planting hackberry trees along the roads, and served as trustee of Live-Oak school.



Dr. Herrman Keidel

A Fredericksburg-made buggy was in the doctor's possession, but he dared not drive alone on a full moon night when the Indians raided. Indians came to his home to be treated and paid him by hanging fresh turkey and venison on a tree nearby.

Dr. Wilhelm Keidel's first wife, Albertine Kramer, died 1 July 1852, at the birth of their son, Albert. In 1856, he married Caroline Kott, daughter of Ernst Kott. Due to her frail health, he moved back to Fredericksburg, however, she died soon after the birth of their first son, Herrman, in 1865.

It was this son, Herrman, who received his dental degree from the University of Maryland, and settled in Murray, Kentucky. Dr. Herrman Keidel never married; he was forty-five years of age at the time of his death, and a resident of Murray for twenty-three years.

His obituary stated he was a dentist of exceptional ability. He also made a noteworthy contribution to Murray, Kentucky which should be remembered.

Note: Mrs. Lancaster has compiled or written the following books:
The Civil War Diary of Anne S. Frobel of Wilton Hill in Virginia.
Gathering Up Our Sheaves of Joy - A History of Trinity Episcopal Church, Florence, Alabama.
Trinity Episcopal Church, Florence, Alabama, Registers, Weddings, and Obituaries, 1836-1933.
Minutes of Red River Baptist Church, Robertson County, Tennessee, 1791-1826.