

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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“Dr. J. D. Singer — 1858—1943”

Jacob Daniel Singer was born near Portsmouth, Ohio in April 1858. The family moved to Freeport, Pennsylvania where he received his initial education.

At age 13 he took a job in an iron foundry; at age 17 he apprenticed as a stone cutter. When he was 21, he enrolled in a 3-year program at Baxter Academy of Music in New York. Music became a passionate hobby which followed him throughout his life.

He moved to North Dakota to teach music; while there he became very ill (with typhoid fever, it is believed) and nearly died. As a result of that illness and the friendship he developed with a doctor there, he decided to go to medical school. He studied one year at Hahnemann College then entered the School of Medicine at Pittsburgh, graduating in 1896. Post-graduate work was done in New York City, Massachusetts General Hospital and the Detroit School of Medicine.

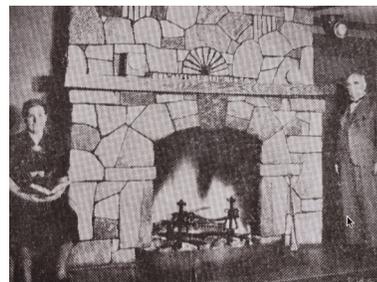
While in medical school, he worked as a stone cutter to support his growing family and pay for his tuition. His first practice was in Wyandotte, Michigan. After practicing for 13 years there, in 1909, he moved his family (wife Carrie, daughter Fedora, and sons David and G. Eric) to Brighton where he built his own home (which included a stunning hand-cut stone fireplace) near the southeast bank of what is now known as Warden Lake, and served the Brighton community with his medical practice for 33 years.

Dr. Singer had an office on Main Street, a small wooden building just East of what is now The Pound. This building later became son G. Eric’s original printing shop: The Singer Press. Not all of his patients came to his downtown office; he also performed house calls and secretly carried a small derringer in his medical bag “just in case.” Some patients were able to pay cash for his services; sometimes he would come home with bartered items such as chickens.

In addition to practicing medicine, Dr. Singer wrote music and organized and sponsored a number of musical groups in Brighton, one of which was “The Brighton Singers” who performed throughout the area. He enjoyed farming and the land around his home, tending a vegetable garden and a fruit orchard.

In the summer, he would go to the boys and girls camps at Whitmore Lake and give the children physicals. Dr. Singer passed away in 1943 and was interred in Fairview Cemetery. At 85 years old, he left a well-respected legacy throughout the Brighton community.

(Dr. J. D. Singer was my maternal great grandfather. This story was compiled from information shared in an on-line national ancestry site and from 2 old newspaper articles published in the Brighton Argus: one celebrating his 80th birthday party, the other was his obituary. Submitted by: Kathy Lueker Pearson)



Hand hewn stone fireplace laid by Dr. Singer



Dr. J. D. Singer, Farming



G. Eric Singer & Dr. J. D. Singer