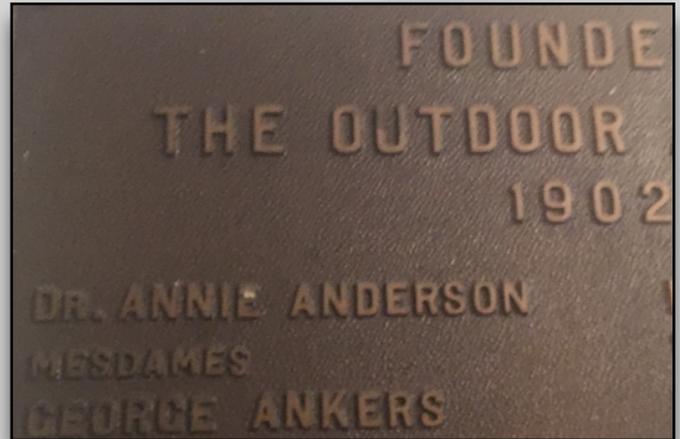


The OAC Serial, "The 35 Ladies Project" continues . . .

Dr. Annie Anderson

1866 – 1945

When looking at the brass plaque in our foyer, this name immediately catches the viewer's attention. Alphabetically, she is the first of the 35 listed Founders, one of only three for whom we know her given name. At first glance, we also know she had a profession — she was a physician at a time when few females were practicing medicine. So, who was this woman, Dr. Annie Anderson?



Immigration and census records tell us that Annie Mary Slate Anderson was born on February 16th, 1866 in Hong Kong to Scottish parents. Why were they there? Were they missionaries? We don't know. But the family did return to the British Isles, because four years later, Annie's sister Elizabeth was born in England. In 1892, Annie earned a medical degree from the University of London. Nine years later, in 1901, Annie's mother, sister and her sister's daughter emigrated from England to Vancouver, BC, and then journeyed on to the US via the Canadian Pacific Railway. One year later, Anne received a California medical certificate.

While records say her primary residence was in Los Gatos, in 1902, the year of the OAC's founding Annie was 35 years old, and the only female physician listed in Marin County, so perhaps we can assume she also had a home in Mill Valley. A 1902 record of Occupational Licenses, Registers and Directories lists her address as Mill Valley. We know from evidence in our archives that Annie was active at the beginning of the OAC. Before we had a clubhouse, she often offered her "nearby" office for Board Meetings. (A close perusal of early tax-assessor maps show Annie owned property located at the corner of Blithedale and Buena Vista Avenues, where a beauty shop now sits and which is directly across the street from the site of the OAC's future clubhouse. We assume her office was located on that property.) Her civic interests were also evident early. In September of 1902 she was unanimously voted head of the OAC Civic Department, and in October at a meeting "*an interesting paper was read by Dr. Anderson on beautifying school grounds (with) tree planting and the growth of vegetables and flowers.*"

Unfortunately, Annie was not able to be a fully active OAC member for long. She resigned from the club in January of 1903. A letter of regret from the Board was sent, sorry that "*she is obliged to retire from office.*" But no reason for her resignation was given. As a working physician, perhaps it was too difficult to fit afternoon Club meetings into her schedule? We do know, however, that she continued a civic and public health interest in the town. An article in the January 22, 1908 Mill Valley Independent was headlined, "Mill Valley Board of Health After Rats: *Since the appointment of a Sanitary Inspector by the Town Board of Trustees last Tuesday evening and providing money for such inspector the Board of Health, composed of Dr. Spotswood, M. Staples, A. Avery, Dr. Annie Anderson and S. M. Burt, the Board has held several meetings and will work with the proper authorities for the extermination of rats and the general betterment of our sanitary condition.....*"

Additionally, an article in the March 1908 Mill Valley Record also showed Annie's civic and personal engagement in the new town: "Large flag Pole Donated To Local Grammar School *The Mill Valley Grammar*

School flagpole, which formerly stood on some property near Millwood recently purchased by Dr. Anderson. The pole is one of the largest in town and was a long felt want at the schoolhouse. It will be immediately erected on the school grounds and the school's big American flag will soon be flying from its top." We feel it is safe to assume that Annie not only practiced medicine in Mill Valley, but she also speculated in real estate.

Additional evidence of Annie's character is found in a delightful article in the September 1909 Marin Journal. Headlined *"Wants \$125 for Professional Services"*, the article reveals a doctor not only with community interests, but also a determined business woman: *"In the Justice Court of San Rafael Dr. Annie Anderson sued the estate of L.R. Tuttle and Mrs. Ella Tuttle for professional services tendered to L.R. Tuttle who committed suicide some time ago. After listening to the evidence, Judge Magee granted the plaintiff judgment in the sum of \$25. The case is a rather mixed affair and was hard to unravel. It appears that at the time Mr. Tuttle killed himself, Dr. Anderson was summoned to the house by someone there and when she arrived she found Tuttle lying on the front porch, dead. After that she remained at the house about an hour consoling Mrs. Tuttle and her daughter. It seems that she presented a bill against the estate for \$40 which was rejected. She then commenced suit against the estate and Mrs. Tuttle for \$125, claiming that owing to the fact that she had to be called before the Coroner's jury etc., her services were worth more. The doctor also thought that because she had to walk up the hill at night which took her about 25 minutes, her bill was not exorbitant. Drs. Wickman and Kaser were called as witnesses to testify as to what professional services were. Dr. Wickman thought \$15 or \$20 was about right, while Dr. Kaser thought that about \$50 or \$60 was the right amount. Judge Magee holds that professional services cannot be rendered to a dead man, and therefore no bill could be rendered against the estate, so in allowing \$25 he made it payable from Mrs. Ella Tuttle, instead of the estate."*

While we know that Annie Anderson practiced medicine while also buying and selling property in Mill Valley in 1908 and 1919, it is puzzling to know that census records in 1910, 1920 and 1930 all show her as a resident of Los Gatos. This seems to be where her mother, sister and niece settled soon after immigration to the US. But tantalizing questions remain: What brought Dr. Annie Anderson to Mill Valley in the first place? Why did she begin her medical practice here and not Los Gatos? What motivated her in 1902 to join with 34 other women in the club Laura Lyon White was organizing, just one year after she arrived in the US? And why in 1903 was she *"obliged to retire from office,"* resigning from The Outdoor Art Club even though she continued to be involved in the town's public health? Since it is clear that for many years she traveled back and forth between Marin and Santa Clara counties, it is interesting to speculate on how she managed that. She got to the US via railway, perhaps she then was able to commute via railway?

As far as we know Dr. Annie Anderson never married. We know only a little about her life in Santa Clara County. A brief notice in the Oakland Tribune in January of 1920 stated that *"Owing to the illness of Dr. Annie Anderson, health officer for this community, the Los Gatos Board of Trustees last night authorized the employment of a deputy health officer."* At this time, Annie was 58 years old. As of yet, we know nothing about the nature of this illness. A 1940 census listed a Annie Anderson as a patient in a Livermore Sanitarium, one that was founded by a psychiatrist, a pioneer in the study of mental and nervous diseases, and one where patients deemed mentally ill were treated. Was this connected to her 1920 illness, one that necessitated the hiring of a deputy health officer? Tuberculosis patients, however, were also treated at this Livermore sanitarium. Perhaps that was her illness? But then we found a 1940 register of voters in residence at the Livermore Sanitarium which listed Dr. Annie Anderson as a physician on staff.

Dr. Annie Anderson died in 1945 at age 78 and is buried in Los Gatos Memorial Park.

In the next installment of the OAC Serial, **"The 35 Ladies Project"**,
you will meet another Founder whose historic home
Is now the residence of a current OAC member.