

## TO THE FATHER OF AMERICAN GYNECOLOGY



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Photo and Text by Carl T. Julien.

On the southeast corner of the State House grounds in Columbia stands the monument to Dr. James Marion Sims who was one of South Carolina's famous sons, and one of the world's greatest surgeons.

Of simple and impressive dignity, this memorial, of Mount Airy granite, was designed by Harold Sterner, architect of New York City, as a background for the beautiful bronze bust of Doctor Sims by Edmond Quinn. The inscription by James Henry Rice, Jr., follows:

Above: "Where the love of man is there also is love of the art," quoted from Hippocrates.

On the sides: "The first surgeon of the ages in ministry to women, treating alike empress and slave;" and "He founded the science of gynecology, was in all lands honored, and died with the benediction of mankind."

Doctor Sims, the "father of Ameri-

can gynecology," was born in Lancaster, S. C., in 1813; graduated from South Carolina college in 1832, and Jefferson Medical college, Philadelphia, in 1835. He began practice in Lancaster. In 1840 he moved to Montgomery, Ala., where he established a hospital. In 1853 he moved to New York, where he founded the Woman's hospital. He practiced in London, Paris, Dublin and Edinburgh, where his operations were regarded as miracles, and where he was greatly honored for his services.

Dr. Sims was surgeon-in-chief of the Anglo-American Ambulance corps during the Franco-Prussian war. For his work there he was decorated by Italy, Portugal, Spain, Belgium and France.

He revolutionized the science of surgery-under-anesthesia by giving ether to the world.

He died in New York city, November 13, 1883.

In 1909 a movement to erect a monu-

ment to him was started by Dr. S. C. Baker of Sumter. Upon Doctor Baker's death, Dr. Sophia Brunson of Sumter revived interest in it, and finally, in 1928, an act was passed appropriating \$3,000 to match an equal sum collected by the Woman's auxiliary to the South Carolina Medical association.

The monument was unveiled May 10, 1929. James Henry Rice, Jr., delivered the memorial address, "an enlightening biography, and a superb tribute," which has since been published in pamphlet form for distribution, as authentic history, beautifully told.

(Note: The historical facts contained in this sketch are from the South Carolina legislative manual, 1930, by the late J. Wilson Gibbes, clerk, house of representatives.

## EARLY CAROLINA DOCTORS

From Dr. J. I. Waring's Department, "Caroliniana," in the Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association.

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In an interesting article, "Notes on the History of Public Health in South Carolina, 1670-1800," in the proceedings of the South Carolina Historical association (1932) St. Julien Childs says the following:

"Doctors, so-called, appear to have been quite plentiful in Charleston from the beginning. There were two with the first colony and there is record of more than a score who had been in the province before 1700. Woodward, Scrivener, John Thomas, Thomas and George Smith, Thomas Smyth, Bodett, Clark, Harris, Williams, Adams, Burnham, Hardy, La Bruce, Salmon, Porcher, Corde, Guerard, Snow, Franklyn. Five of these were French Huguenots. Thirty-six are mentioned by name in the weekly South Carolina Gazette from 1732 to 1738, inclusive. Probably some of these were plain quacks, others apothecaries or surgeons or men who had been apprenticed as such. Of bonafide physicians with university degrees, among the first known to have settled in South Carolina was Thomas Dale, M. D., of Leyden, who arrived about 1725. Later the province had a rather surprising number of distinguished medical men.

"The first mention of nurses is a casual one in 1704. It required little training to become a nurse in that day and they were probably represented from the beginning.

"The earliest reference I have seen to midwives is in a memorandum of 1746 complaining of their scarcity. Later they became more plentiful.

"The compounding of home remedies was a popular custom throughout the European world in the period we are examining and probably nowhere more so than in his frontier land where the country people usually far from the reach of any kind of 'doctor' and the existence of strange herbs and creatures tempted the curious to ex-

periment.

"Of other influences affecting the health of the community it is probable that the extremely transient character of its population during the period prior to the Yamasse war (1715) together with the comings and goings of Indian traders, pirates and smugglers, meant the bringing in of many diseases. To the importation of Negroes from Africa the outbreaks of small-pox were often attributed. The frequent incursions of yellow fever were doubtless partly due to Charles Town's West Indian trade and the fact that that city is today the only known focus in the United States to filariasis, a mosquito borne disease, may well be an inheritance from the extensive Barbadian immigration of colonial days, as Barbados has long been famous for this malady. To the notable increase of malaria in the country in the 18th century, the development of agriculture almost certainly contributed. Generous use of intoxicants, particularly West Indian rum, presumably did the people no good and the persistence in the heavy meat diet popular in England must have had a good deal to do with the commonness of dysentery.

"To conclude, I think we may safely concur in an opinion expressed by Washington in 1796, that the state of health in South Carolina was below the average of contemporary English speaking communities in this country, a condition for which the prevalence of malaria appears to have been largely accountable. Knowledge of this fact, if such it be, seems to make more understandable a number of well known features of South Carolina's early history, such as the relatively slow increase of her population, the general failure of small farmers in the coastal area and the frequent pilgrimages of prosperous Carolinians to Europe."

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S.C. — Biography — Physicians

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