



# CAPITAL PAST TIMES

## NEWSLETTER FOR THE BISMARCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAY 2018

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### The First North Dakota Woman To Earn A Doctor Of Medicine Degree

#### DR. FANNIE (DUNN) QUAIN (1874 - 1950)

by Ann Vadnie, Bismarck Historical Society Board of Directors



Fannie Dunn was one of the first white children born in the "small village" of Bismarck, Dakota Territory in 1874, the daughter of pharmacist John P. Dunn and dressmaker/hat maker Christina (Seelye) Dunn. Fannie graduated from *Bismarck High School* during the time when all grades attended school in the *North Ward School* building.



First Fannie earned a teaching degree from the *State Normal School at St. Cloud*. Although she loved being an educator, her primary goal was always to pursue a career as a medical physician.



At that time, women were not often encouraged to pursue a medical degree. Fannie's parents were not able to help with expenses. Fannie was determined to attend medical school. So, in order to help pay for her own tuition, she taught school, did housekeeping, and worked as a bookkeeper.

Through hard work and persistence, Fannie graduated from the *University of Michigan Medical School* at Ann Arbor in 1898. After an internship at *Northwestern Hospital* in Minneapolis, Dr. Dunn returned to North Dakota.

Dr. Fannie Dunn worked across the state often traveling long distances and braving brutal weather to attend to her patients. These two photos show her using



several forms of transportation to get around town or to visit her patients.

Fannie's father John was politically active, serving on the school board in 1881 and as Bismarck's mayor from 1884 to 1885. So, she grew up in a family who "rubbed shoulders" with notable social, political, and military leaders. As a result, she developed an interest in the history and politics of *Dakota Territory* and the state of *North Dakota*.



One friend of the Dunn family was Mark Kellogg, the *Bismarck Tribune* reporter killed at the *Battle of the Little Big Horn*. Years later, Fannie turned over Mark Kellogg's blood-stained

diary to the *Bismarck Tribune* archives. The diary is now in the manuscript collections of the *State Historical Society of North Dakota*.

Fannie always remained active in her support of education in Bismarck. She was elected Burleigh County, North Dakota Superintendent of Schools in 1898 and 1900.



Dr. Fannie Dunn met surgeon Dr. Eric P. Quain in an operating room at Bismarck's *St. Alexis Hospital*, at that



time located in the original *Lamborn Hotel* building on the NW corner of 6th and Main. The couple married in 1903. They had two children, a son named Buell and a



daughter Marion. The Quain family lived in this house at the corner of 6th Street and Ave. A.

Here is one of the greatest stories about Dr. Fannie Quain, "A man traveling by rail had acute appendicitis and needed medical attention immediately. Dr. Quain was informed of the medical incident. In order to get to the man, she cranked a 600-pound hand cart by herself down the track six miles, over the Missouri River on the Northern Pacific Railroad Bridge, to the train coming down the rail line. She then escorted the man to the local hospital and saved his life!"



From the very beginning of her medical career, Fannie was a doctor who was actively involved in working against tuberculosis. In 1908, she addressed county school superintendents to begin education about tuberculosis.

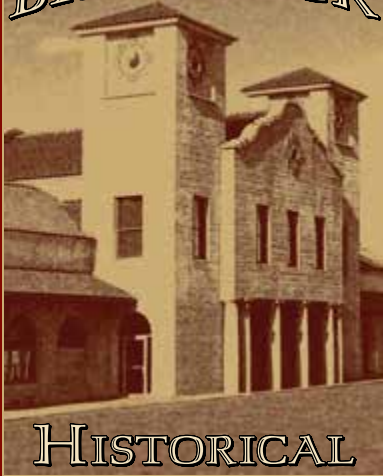
On July 26, 1923, just after full woman suffrage was granted to all women citizens of the US, Dr. Fannie Dunn Quain was one of those impaneled on an all-woman jury in Burleigh County.

Dr. Fannie Dunn Quain stayed active in medicine even after leaving her medical practice. She was instrumental in establishing *North Dakota Tuberculosis Association* (now *American Lung Association of North Dakota*) serving in a variety of positions including as its

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# BISMARCK



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

### SIMPLE MUSINGS

by Kate Waldera, President of the  
Bismarck Historical Society

It is supposed to be spring but Old Man Winter seems to have other plans and so we continue to fuss about our extended winter. Weather is an obsession with those of us who live in the upper Great Plains. Therefore, I decided to take a stroll down memory lane.

Many of us remember the monstrous blizzard of March 1966. It went into the record books for the length of time it raged across the state (March 2-5) as well as for the snowfall amounts and the wind gusts of over 70 mph. Transportation across the state came to a sudden halt, ranchers suffered severe loss of livestock, and many locations were without phone and electrical service. And who can forget the Northern Pacific passenger train stopped in its tracks near New Salem

when it became buried by the storm? The snow melt a few months later resulted in severe flooding.

People during the long winter of 1996-1997 endured at least 10 blizzards that affected the state. The first one hit on November 15, 1996 and the last on April 5, 1997. Snowfall totals for that winter were 101.6 inches for Bismarck and 117 for Fargo. The biggest problem across North Dakota was that the snow kept accumulating with little periodic melting. We all remember what happened that spring...the massive flooding in the Red River Valley, the worst since 1826.

I guess I will now stop complaining. Maybe Old Man Winter is just in a playful mood this year and has not read the memo about the arrival of spring?

I certainly hope so.

## DR. FANNIE (DUNN) QUAIN

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

president from 1928-1936. One of her biggest accomplishments was helping found the *State Tuberculosis Sanitorium* at San Haven, ND.



She was a founder of the state's first baby clinic and served on *North Dakota State Board of Health* from 1923 to 1933 to help raise standards of nurses' training in the state.



Fannie chaired the *Nurses Training School Committee* at Bismarck *Evangelical Hospital* from 1920 to 1940 and was the president of the *Nurses Training School* during the 1930s.

Dr. Fannie Dunn Quain was acutely aware of the challenges faced by women physicians. She served as regional director of the *Medical*

*Women's National Association* (now-*American Medical Women's Association*) from 1933 to 1934, for the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa.

She became active in politics herself. She was a Delegate to the Democratic National Convention at Franklin Field, Philadelphia, PA. on June 27, 1936 where Franklin D. Roosevelt accepted the party's nomination for the Presidency.

Sadly, in August 1939, Fannie and Eric's son, Buell, a well-known anthropologist, died under unusual circumstances in Brazil. There is no way to determine whether it was a factor...however, soon after Buell's death Fannie and Eric Quain divorced. Eric remarried in 1940, Fannie did not marry again.

After a long and successful career as a physician and public health advocate, Dr. Fannie Dunn Quain died of a heart attack on February 2, 1950, at the age of 75.



## TRIVIA

### BISMARCK PLAQUE

There are not many images of Otto von Bismarck in our fair city. However, there is an interesting plaque located in the *Missouri River Room* of the *Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library*.

It is a bronze bas-relief bust of Otto von Bismarck. The plaque was donated by the *Rotarians of District 5580* in February 2001. It surprisingly had been purchased at an auction near the Otto von Bismarck estate in Germany.



# THANKS FOR THESE GREAT PROGRAMS:

FEBRUARY 14, 2018



Annette Willis, owner and operator of *Bismarck Tour Company* spoke about her new business and the tours she has done in the past and has planned for the future. Many audience members braved the cold and snow to attend this presentation.



At the end of the program questions were raised on the "fate" of the *Bismarck-Mandan Railroad Bridge*. Several speakers who have been "following the action" spoke about the topic and notes were taken for future reference.



MARCH 14, 2018

Fern Swenson, Director of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for the State Historical Society of North Dakota presenting on "Double Ditch." There was a great turn out for this wonderful program! As we always say, "the more the merrier!"



Swenson gave a detailed history of Double Ditch and finished by telling everyone about what was done to preserve and save this important historic site. It was both informative and inspirational...a reminder to all of us to do whatever we can to save places such as this for future generations.



APRIL 11, 2018



Dr. Barbara Handy-Marchello educated the audience with a variety of historic facts, stories, and illustrations concerning the World War I War Bonds Program. Especially interesting were the statistics

about North Dakota's part in supporting the Liberty War Bonds. It was an informative and enjoyable evening spent learning about this great bond program in World War I.



## DO YOU REMEMBER?

### THE BISMARCK BATTLESHIP



Dr. Robert D. Ballard finally found the wreck of the German battleship *The Bismarck* in early June 1989. The *Bismarck* was the lead ship of her class and the largest German warship then commissioned.

This was Ballard's second expedition, and after combing an area of some 200 square miles, he and his team located the wreck at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean at a depth of 15,700 feet.

Despite the heavy shell and torpedo damage that the British inflicted on the battleship and the obvious effects of

the sinking itself in May 1941, the wreck was in surprisingly good condition. Few shipwrecks are as well preserved as the *Bismarck*, and the wreck may continue to resist the effects of the corrosion for a few hundred years more.







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**COMING EVENTS:**

**FOUNDERS DAY**

**May 9, 2018**

Ann Vadnie and Kate Waldera—“BISMARCK MAYORS THROUGH THE YEARS”  
 This will still remain a “FOUNDERS DAY” celebration of “Bismarck’s Birthday”  
 It will also include a “ROUND TABLE” style discussion  
 with the living former mayors who are able to attend.  
 Bismarck Veterans Memorial Library-Meeting Room A.

**AUGUST 29, 2018.**

**Note the date change**  
 All-Member Picnic  
 Change in venue this year to Hillside  
 Aquatic Complex-Community Room  
 located at 1719 E. Boulevard Ave. More  
 information will be available later.

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2018**

St. Mary’s Catholic Church  
 On-site tour and talk, including information  
 about the beautiful stained glass window  
 in this historic Bismarck Church.

**OCTOBER 10, 2018**

“HIGHLAND ACRES AREA NATIONAL REGISTER  
 NOMINATION PROJECT”

**NOVEMBER 14, 2018**

Annual Meeting

**DEC. 12, 2018**

Marilyn Snyder “EARLY MEDICINE IN BISMARCK”

**JANUARY 9, 2019**

Terry Bohn “MODERN BASEBALL IN BISMARCK”

**FEBRUARY 13, 2019**

Mike LaLonde (and friends) “THE  
 PHOTOGRAPHY OF LEO LALONDE”

**MARCH 13, 2019**

Ted Quanrud “VINTAGE BISMARCK POSTCARDS”

**APRIL 10, 2019**

Susan Lundberg “THE HISTORY OF SLEEPY  
 HOLLOW”

**MAY 8, 2019**

“FOUNDERS DAY” celebration of “Bismarck’s  
 Birthday”

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

All programs, unless noted otherwise, will begin at 6:30 and be held in Room A at the Bismarck Public Library.  
 More information on coming events in the next newsletter.