

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

Kentucky's First Woman Dentist

by

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As printed in the Kentucky Dental Journal
March/April, 1984, Vol. 36, No. 2

www.nkyviews.com

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It has long been claimed that the first woman dentist in Kentucky was Dr. Lucy Dupuy Montz, of Warsaw, and we have never seen any evidence to the contrary. So, until this claim is disproved, we shall continue to accord her this distinct honor.

Lucy Ann Dupuy was born December 30, 1842, in a small brick house which still stands today on the Ohio River at the mouth of Craig's Creek, about two miles below Warsaw. Her father, John T. Dupuy, was born in Petersburg, Prince George County, Virginia, August 5, 1817. He came to Gallatin County, Kentucky, and on October 5, 1841, married Henrietta Ross. In 1849, having been "bitten by the gold bug," he went to California as a "Forty-Niner" seeking gold, and was never heard from again. Her mother,



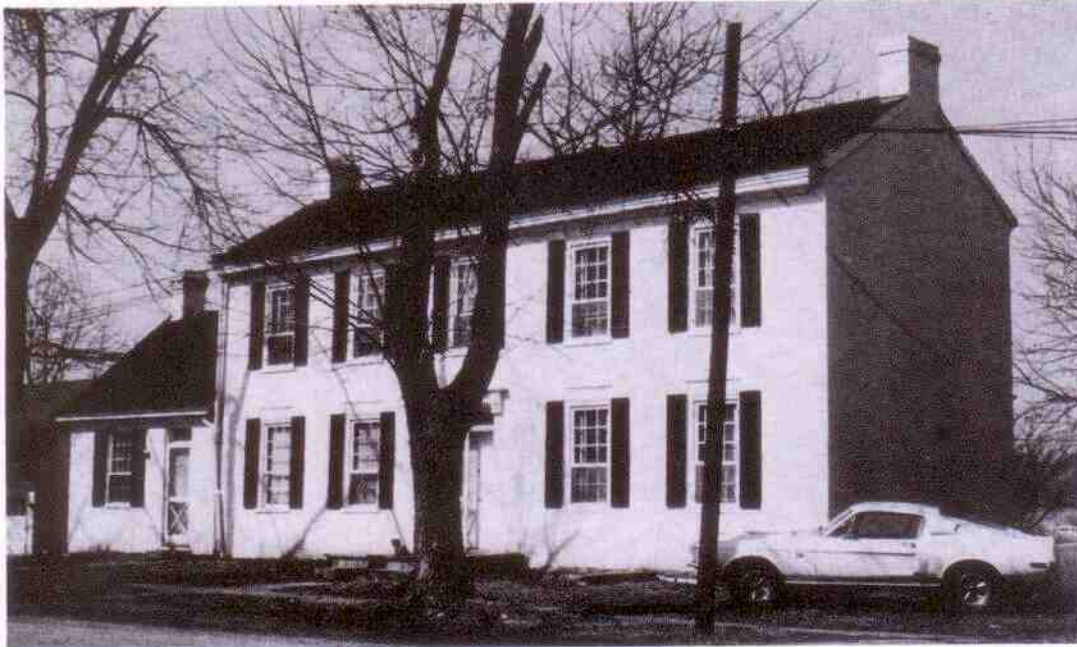
Lucy Dupuy Montz, D.D.S.

Henrietta Ross, was born February 19, 1820, daughter of Andrew Ross and Sarah Harris, of Virginia, but also early settlers in Gallatin County. She died August 19, 1895. Lucy Ann was the eldest of three surviving children - the others being James Madison Dupuy (1845-1917) and Henry Dupuy (1848-1890), both of whom actively served in Union regiments during the Civil War.

John T. Dupuy was a son of Jesse S. Dupuy and Mary Ann Thompson, of Petersburg. He was descended from Barthelme Dupuy and Suzanne Lavillon, who fled from France during the bloody persecution of the Huguenots, arriving in Virginia in 1685. John T. Dupuy had three sisters: Mary and Virginia, both of whom married men by the name of Cord, and lived in Flemingsburg, Kentucky; and Eliza Ann (1809-1880), who was never married and lived in New Orleans where she was a successful novelist, publishing seven books between 1850 and 1875. She was buried at Flemingsburg, where her monument is inscribed: " 'T' is only the actions of the just, smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

In 1860, Lucy Ann Dupuy, then eighteen years of age, married in Louisville Frank P. Montz, a steamboat man. She became the mother of a daughter that lived only a short time. Lucy was a widow by the time she was twenty. Next we find her at the age of twenty-four teaching school in Covington, Kentucky. An old photograph dated 1877 shows her with a group of teachers at the Scott Street School.

Later in her teaching career she decided to become a dentist, an unheard of idea for a woman of that day and time. While still teaching she attended the Cincinnati College of Dental Surgery, graduated with honors on



The Montz House, Warsaw, Kentucky

March 4, 1889, and became a member of the faculty of the school. A certificate to practice dentistry in Kentucky was issued to Lucy D. Montz, D.D.S., under the date of September 18, 1891, and was signed by J. H. Baldwin, D.D.S., Secretary of the Kentucky Dental Association; and by William VanAntwerp, D.D.S.; A. D. Rawley, D.D.S. and F. Peabody, D.D.S., of the Kentucky State Board of Dental Examiners. She decided to enter practice in her home town of Warsaw, Kentucky, where her license was registered on June 3, 1893, in the County Clerk's office. At this time she was fifty-one years of age.

On June 20, 1893, she was elected to membership in the Kentucky Dental Association. The rules were suspended and she was elected to membership by acclamation with all the members standing. In the same year at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, her name was inscribed with honors in the Kentucky Building as the only woman dentist in the State.

She carried on a very successful practice of dentistry in her beautiful

Federal Style, two-story brick home overlooking the Ohio River at 301 West High Street. This fine old house had been built in 1832 by Edward T. Turpin, and in 1885 was conveyed by Richard K. McCarney to Dr. Montz's mother, Henrietta Ross Dupuy; and in 1895 she deeded the property to her daughter, Dr. Lucy D. Montz, whose office was in the East first floor room.

Dr. Lucy, as she was always called, continued an active practice in Warsaw until 1921, when she finally had to retire because of failing health. A sale of her personal effects was held and her dental equipment, instruments, books, papers, etc., were sold at public auction; along with her other personal property and real estate. Many items of memorabilia can still be seen in Warsaw homes today. The Gallatin County Historical Society has in their museum collection several of Dr. Lucy's dental instruments, given to them by the late Elmer C. Threlkeld, D.D.S. of Warsaw.

Following the sale she went to Madison, Indiana, to live with a niece, Mrs. Edward Holwager. She died in Madison on March 23, 1922, at the age

of seventy-nine; and was buried in the family plot in the Warsaw Cemetery beside her mother and her brother, Henry Dupuy.

Dr. Lucy Dupuy Montz was a pioneer in the long struggle by women to compete with men in the professional fields. She made a lasting impression in the hearts and minds of her fellow citizens of Warsaw and Gallatin County, and although she has been dead these sixty-two years, she has continued to occupy a permanent place in their affections and memories.

*Dr. Bogardus practiced medicine in Austin, Indiana for forty years. He has retired and returned to his hometown of Warsaw, Kentucky, where he is now a historian and genealogist. He researched and wrote this article at the request of Roy D. Eaglin, D.M.D., also of Warsaw. □