

Town Hall

Help!

In the late 1800s, Hampton doctors were called to attend to the following accidents:

- Painters falling off houses.
- Workmen cut or mangled by machinery or having body parts crushed while unloading wagons or train cars.
- Drivers and passengers falling from wagons and railway cars.
- Drivers running over pedestrians.
- People kicked or bitten by horses.

More specifically, a newspaper article in 1889 reported:

- J. Freeman Williams was recovering from having had his foot crushed by the road machine.
- Painter Henry C. Tate shot himself in the foot, losing a toe, while hunting on the marsh.
- A Mr. Perkins lost a thumb and Edwin J. Hobb's son injured his hand – accidents that occurred while working on machines at the shoe factory.

The Evolution of the Ambulance

Sturgis Funeral Home was first to provide emergency ambulance service in Hampton at no cost from 1949 until 1968, when Raymond Sturgis sold his business.

Local pharmacist Francis X. McNeil filled the void in 1969 by organizing a volunteer ambulance corps. A Hampton resident who paid a membership fee of \$5 incurred no further charges if he or she needed an ambulance ride. Otherwise the cost was \$25. The ambulance corps didn't survive due to limited funds, equipment problems and a shortage of personnel.

In 1972 Hampton established an ambulance service based at the Fire Department.

Today the Hampton Fire Department offers Emergency Medical Service from basic life support to advanced paramedic interventions.

What is a Chirurgeon?

At the beginning of the 17th century, chirurgeons – primitive doctors or surgeons – were considered craftspeople similar to barbers and tailors.

Robert Tuck, who helped found Hampton in 1638, was a chirurgeon in New England. He had been a tailor in England, so was skilled at cutting and sewing.

Tuck and his wife Joanna were also Hampton's first tavern keepers.

The House Call

Doctors no longer provide medical care in patients' homes, but Hampton doctors made house calls into the mid-1900s.

Doctors had office hours, but when a woman was having a baby or when patients were too sick to go to their offices, doctors went to them. At the time there were no ambulances, and the treatment for many illnesses was confinement.

Hampton's doctors were dedicated.

Dr. Marvin F. Smith, a heavy-set man, spent so much time in his wagon making house calls that the wagon had a permanent tilt to the right, the side where he always sat. Nor did winter weather stop Dr. Smith from making his rounds. He used a high-back sleigh that was a family antique.

When automobiles became available, the local doctor, William B. Mack, had the first car in Hampton.

The last of the "horse-and-buggy" doctors was E. Henry Thompson, whose daughter Isabelle drove him on his rounds in his red Maxwell automobile.

Nurses to Keep Hampton Healthy

Hampton had its epidemics. Malaria – 1883. Diphtheria (called throat distemper) – the winter of 1735-36. Diphtheria, again – 1890-91. Spanish Influenza – 1918.

The Spanish Influenza had a particularly devastating effect. As more and more townspeople became ill, Hampton's doctors became increasingly overworked.

With the backing of the Red Cross, Hampton hired its first community and school nurse in 1922 to help combat contagious diseases. Mrs. Alys G. Hemingway saw an average of 40 students a month at Centre School, which had an enrollment of 200 students. She also operated a first-aid station at the beach that was open daily, with extended hours Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays until 11 p.m.

The newspaper reported that since hiring the nurse, Hampton had not had any epidemics.

Nurse Hemingway was followed by other nurses who were equally dedicated to a healthy Hampton.