

Tom

A tape was made in  
1958 - M.T. Story

March 1958  
July 2011

The Dr. Dodge Tapes  
John Brandt and Roger Elmer

Roger Elmer- You started working there when you were how old did you say? How old were you when you started working there, Uncle John?

John Brandt- I was gonna be ten years old in November, and I went there in the last part of July.

Elmer- Your eighty how old now?

Brandt- Well' I'm going to be eighty four

Elmer- That's about seventy four years ago, huh?

B- Well, I was born in 1874.

[pause in the tape]

E- Em-ha ,so, I guess he treated people and doctored by.. by going into sort of a trance.

B- He had to go into a trance and somebody had to write for him to know what he was saying see, when he got out of a trance he didn't know what he said at all. Somebody had to write it down on paper. And his voice- naturally, if you wasn't used to it you couldn't understand him.

E- Ohhh?

B- He spoke different.

E -He spoke in a different tone of voice than he did otherwise?

B- All together Words and he could describe medicine and he could tell you where to get it.

E- You said he prescribed medicine? Did he know about medicine otherwise? Was he trained at all?

B- No, nothing at all.

E- When he was in one of these trances- Did you ever hear him in one of them?

B- Oh, yes, many times.

E- Did you ever hear him use any medical terms?

B- What do you mean by medical?

E- Well, would he talk about any medical terms that he wouldn't know about when he was awake, you might say?

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^ B- He didn't, naturally he didn't know very much about it. I suppose he practiced quite a while and he did remember some things because they wrote it down and they kept most of those things and had a record.

E- Ohh.. Who did most of his writing? Did his wife do that?

B- Well, when I was there Depplers wife, She was about nineteen years old ..... She was there one year. And then she got married.

E- Chris Depplers wife, She worked out there. She did the writing for him?

B- She did most of it, his wife did some but she wasn't fast enough...

E-- Ohh..

B- he talked a lot, so fast, you know, he said some words that we didn't know what it meant.

E- He did?

~ B- You had to write out what you could---- some of them didn't even know how to spell them. His wife didn't know how to spell them. She didn't have very good education neither, you know and she didn't know how to spell them. but she put something down and if you asked him how to spell it he could <sup>spell it</sup> for you.

E- He could spell it? Afterwards did he know what it was?

B- Yes.... no, he wouldn't --- he sometimes wouldn't know.

E- In otherwords he must have been using words when he was in a trance that he wouldn't have known had he been awake.

B- That's right, he didn't. He couldn't spell those words when he was normal like any other person. He couldn't spell them.

E- But when he was in a trance he could.

B- He could spell them and get them correct too. And that aint all he could tell you exactly what drugstore had the medicine.

E- Ohh..

B- In Chicago ... In Chicago he got an awful lot of it.

E- Did he go to Chicago or did he treat people that suffered.....

B- Oh no they just wrote him a letter and told him where they lived and send a lock of hair, the first time, oh just about that much <sup>from Chicag</sup> <sub>gestur</sub>

E- Three or four inches long.

B- And he would take it between his fingers you know and it wouldn't be three minutes till he'd see the person right there. The next time they kept that mans address or woman who ever she was they kept a record of that they didn't have to send hair anymore.

E- Ohh..

B- Just once.

E- Em- he, Did they send anything besides hair?

B- They had to get the hair He--he ...They made out a prescription for medicine and they got it in Chicago.

E- But I mean could he take anything besides hair or was that what he wanted to identify them?

B- But anybody that he knew... Now when he doctored that man that had a lizard in him in Chicago ..... he prescribed a medicine and they wrote back and said they didn't have it. ..the drugstore that had it and he wrote back and told them what shelf it was on, in the back and they found it.

E- Oh for goodness sakes! What do you remember about this lizard.. I think you told me something about that.

B- Well a.. He told him how much to take I can't remember what it was... He didn't have to take it but twice .. and the lizard would pass in pieces through his bowels and it did. The third day he was All a new man.

E- What led up to this.. Was that somebody who wrote to him.

B- Well he saw it in the paper, he took the Chicago paper and he saw where this man was begging for help and they couldn't help him. He spent all the money he had. And that time they didn't know very much about operations and he seemed to have something that gave him awful pains at times... just awful pains that seemed to move around in him and if he'd eat heavy it sort of quieted down. -

E- Ohh

B-- and they couldn't make out what it was and the man told them it was a live lizard, he told them where he got it. when he was in the [Civil War] it was awful dry and he layed down and he'd drank water out of a crick or a ditch like and the lizard was very small but those things don't happen very often that they live, but the lizard did live in him till it got to, well, it weighed five or six pounds and they had a pretty big lizard he got so poor that he couldn't hardly walk any more whatever he eat the lizard took..... everything you know he didn't have any strength and he was a poor man and after he got rid of the lizard he used to get a letter from him every day

E- Humm...

B- Every day... for I'd say pretty near a year..... And the docter could tell you things They'd come there.... and a lot of people had there horses stolen

E- You mean, besides the medicine he could tell you other things?

B- He could, and he could tell you every year who our president was gonna be.

E- you mean predict ahead who it was gonna be?

B- Way ahead.

E- Em-he

B- He'd tell you who it was gonna be and, he'd tell you almost how strong he's going all the time he didn't know him at all. But he had to go into a trance to do it and some people would do that on purpose trying to get bets--- but he wouldn't do that he just told it to his own family.

*Dr. Hoyle*

E- He never took advantage of what he knew on the betting or anything like that

B- No,--He did not. I've seen him offered a hundred dollars if he'd tell where the man was that stole Smiley's team at one time- two horses- they was worth about four hundred dollars at that time. But he wouldn't do it, and they were pretty good friends too

E- Ohh..

B- And all he wanted to know was just where that man was

E- Em-ha

B- but he wouldn't do it, he didn't care about the money, he could have been a millionaire-as far as that goes but he just wouldn't take money that way. They had to... And he was an awful religious man.'

E- He Was?

B- Yes, he was. Almost every Sunday if it was possible at all, him and I went to the Gap Church.

E- Em-ha..How old did you say you were, Uncle John?

B Ten years old in November and I went there in July.

E- How long were you there?

B- Four years.

E- Four years.

B- He died.

E- Oh, he died while you were there?

B- No, he died the last year, in the fall when I was there and than I of course was out of a job and out of a home

E- Did you sort of a.. Did you work for him?

B- I worked for him. Went to school there.

E- You went to school there.

B- Yeah, I done all his work, he had three cows, a team of horses and some chickens and about an acre of garden and he had about everything in that garden that you could think of.

E- Ohh..

B- Nothing.. ~~Nothing~~ comes to the end of the store that he didn't have! We raised it, and I had to tend it, because he wanted it, he liked it, he liked to live out of the garden. and I had to raise chickens so he supposed he would have them. [Laughing]/

E- How big... He didn't have much land then actually?

B- He had a farm but he rented it out.

E- Oh he rented out the farm? Where was that farm?

B- Well,... in Albany township.

E- Town of Albany?

[Voice yelling from the kitchen] Sylvester!!

E- Aunt Dora says Sylvester Township

B- Yes I guess it was Sylvester Township come to think about it.   
 I know it was Sylvester township, it's pretty close to the line, though.

*Cristie*

E- Now you told me once that somebody stole his wallet or something.

B- Oh, yes [chuckles] there was a feller coming along the road and he wanted a job- work-, and the docter told him that he didn't have any work for a man, that I done all the chores and everything, but he begged pretty hard and it was cold, ten degrees below zero probably. The snow was deep and so he said "you got a pile of wood out there" couldn't I cut that wood up and get a little money that way! And he said "I expect to have that sawed with a big saw but if you want to saw it up with a bucksaw or ax you can have the job if you want it.

*the man*

*the man*

*Dr. Dealy's*

E- Em -ha...

B- And he took the job, I don't remember what it was. It wasn't very much money. I don't think it was over five dollars, but it took him better than a week to do it. And he worked from daylight to dark to do it.

E- Ohh..

B- and he boarded him, kept him all night, he had no home and he done a very good job and Meldrid Kope, his neighbor there and he was down there one evening and he said he was petty near

*The man*

*- Dr. Dealy's*

Yes, he hired him

done with <sup>his</sup> the woodpile and he said maybe I could get you to cut MY wood too. He's cutting the timber and he'd haul it up and saw it. And he hired him and he was there about ten days I guess and he had the wood all cut and he was a good worker And ~~it~~ then he paid him <sup>So the man was</sup> ~~Kope~~ up and he left. And nobody knew where his home was, nobody <sup>the man's</sup> asked him, he paid him up and that was all there was to it and he left there.

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And One morning the Doctor woke up and his money was gone out of his pocket, he always kept it in his coat pocket here, he had a great big pocket and when he got up and came to the breakfast table and he asked is wife if she had taken his pocketbook and she said "No". Well maybe it fell out and fell under the bed. He always hung his clothes on the end of the bed You know they had posts like that on the old fasioned bed. So she said to me you better go and see, it might be under the bed, but it wasn't.. wasn't there and he had quite a lot of letters that he had to take care of, go into a trance for. So she asked him where his pocketbook was while he was in the trance, And he found it! Wasn't long. He said the man was in Albany and theres a train gonna leave there pretty quick and he's going on that train and then he'll be in Milwaukee and you'll probably never find it. She asked him if he thought it was possible to hitch up Seedum, he had a pretty fast horse, That was my horse too.

E- Ohh..

Dr. Dodge

B- He was old but he could really hit the road. He said you'd better jump on to his back and run over and get Ed, that's his son. Tell him that my pocketbook was stolen and the man is in Albany and if they had made good time they could catch him before the train left.

So I jumped right on that horses back and I had to go north through the farm over to Ed's Around the road it'd be a couple miles but we lived straight, through and I had my horse pretty well trained ~~South~~ and I never stopped to open the gates just jump over, not over the gate but over the fence, rail fence. And I was there in just a few minutes and Ed jumped right on a horse and followed me back and hitched Seedum up to a buggy and they went to Albany.

Dr Dodge

So he tied the horse down there to a post and he went into a trance of course, he had to go into a trance he couldn't find him otherwise--there was about a hunded people ~~over~~ there that day, a big crowd there and just as he stepped into the train he caught the

The man

man by the collar and he said here Mister you've got my pocketbook you better give it to me right now And he got so nervous, Ed said, he just stood there like ~~a~~ that, shaking and he did turn white and Dr. Dodge said "it's right there in your pocket, get it out" and he knew he hadn't taken none out because he asked him, ~~and~~ asked him if he still had the money in there and he says he has, and he was in a trance yes he was in a trance and the money was all in there, and it was too!, nothing taken out.

E- Was he walking around in a trance? Did he walk around in the trance?

B- Sure!, sure, he could walk, and he could go fast too. [chuckles] I followed him out through a snowstorm, one day to find my jackknife I had lost, lost about a week... about four foot of snow ....Back of the barn.... us boys had played there one Sunday, school boys you know come there and sometimes I'd go to their place ....Anyway..The reason he got me that knife.

I had to build a fire every morning in the kitchen. And they wouldn't allow me to use kerosene because it was dangerous and I took a butcher knife, of course a lot of them old boards had nails in and I ran that butcher knife right in there .... and his wife told me she said "you can't use my butcher knife anymore. I can't cut bread with it."

Well he went to town and he got me one of them pocketknives, well I thought I was a millionaire with that knife, you know.

E- Yeah...

B- Great big blade on it like that. you know. regular ole choppin blade I thought the world of it - carry it to school a few times, Well, she discovered again that I was using the bread knife and she got after me pretty hard, she said, "did you trade that off or sell it." "No" I said, "I didn't." "Are you sure?" "Yes I'm sure!" Well what did you do with it? I don't know what I did, just don't know what I done with it. I wanted it one morning and it was gone and I can't remember where I could of laid it down or lost it. I never thought about romping around one Sunday on the straw stack turning summeresets on there with the boys

[omit] And it snowed for about three, four days just continually and [omit] they had about four foot of snow right on the level

And she asked him in the trance where my knife was. And it didn't take him over a second he found it. She said You tell us where it is "No he says you can't find it. I gotta go get it." No, she says "you can't

Dr. Dodge

go, because the snow is so deep and your sweating you can't go. Well, he says, "you can't find it." But he was bound to go so we put a big overcoat on him and he wallered down through that snow through the barn north of the barn Oh I'd say about five or six rods back away from the barn where the straw stack was it was all covered with snow all buried He walked real fast and I tried to jump into his tracks and follow him [chuckle] and all at once he climbs up the stack and he stopped right dead still and he gets down on his hand and knees Sticks his hand right down, down down down. *Gestric*  
Come out and it was mine, my knife.

*"Yes he did"* E- He did it, huh?... *What was your duty? you fine? right the*

B- They got ~~up~~ *up* about five o'clock in wintertime ~~clean~~ the kitchen fire, then go out and milk the cows and feed the horses, the pigs and the chickens and then I come in to breakfast and I couldn't hardly do everything and then I had to fill the <sup>on</sup> resa voire fill the woodbox and get a extra pail of water in before I could go to school. and ~~than~~ at noon I let the cows out to water and cleaned the barn and watered the horses and let them out and let the cows back in. I'll tell you that I had to run both ways and then I'd be late running. But I liked it there because he never said a cross word to me. But she made up for it.

E- She did eh?

B- [chuckle] I guess she did. [chuckle] She was snappy-awful snappy you know, Everything had to be done before I could go to school in them days .....I had to fill the resovoir in the stove too, and it had to be full too.

E- Did they have any children?

B- No, no Dr. Dodge had only one boy, Ed, and he had three girls .....they didn't come there very much, I guess perhaps they didn't like the new wife. Ed came there a lot, and I remember when Dr. Dodge died. They got into quite a scrabble. Ed knew that his father had quite a lot of money. Ed said to her I'll give you a hundred dollars if you'll tell me what became of that money <sup>in the</sup> *he made* last four or five years. .... Dr. Dodge was close to ninety When he died He had been practicing since he was twenty years old, He told me that himself.

E- Did he ever tell you how he knew he had this----gift

B- No he didn't but he said when he was 20, That's the first time I knew that I could do this. I said how'd you learn it and he said I didn't learn it, it just come to me Born that way I guess I didn't know of



any other way. Him and I was good friends, He told me everything, You couldn't ask for a better man than he was, That's the way he got started and that's the reason he had to leave New York State because he got to telling people things that causes trouble .....

E-Stepped on somebody's toes maybe? Did he ever say if the medical profession jumped on him out there. The doctors?

B- No, no, no, they didn't bother him at all, but he said, some people threatened him if he didn't get out. The people that he exposed you know. They took something or done something or somebody wanted them,

E- Did he ever say if the doctors out there gave him a bad time at all? He never mentioned that at all?

B- We had a doctor in Albany and they was the best of friends- Dr. Roberts, he was an old man, but he wasn't as old as Dr. Dodge but he was an old man, but they was the best of friends. And my grandmother was awful sick and they had a Doctor from Monroe the only doctor they could get and they said, there's no show for her to get better, had double pneumonia and she couldn't get better. And my father came over there and seen Dr. Dodge and he prescribed a poultice to put on the bottoms of her feet, an onion poultice, I'm pretty sure it was an onion poultice, it was a home remedy to put on the bottoms of both feet and she came out all right, and she did too, she came out okay and he didn't see her at all. No he didn't need to see her. He just knew my father and knew me and he told him where his mother was, over in Dutch Hollow there, She came out all right.

*Hand*

E- Did you have any idea how many people he treated a week?

B- Too many sometimes I carried mail and I had a mail bag, [gesture] just about that wide and that high and I put it right over here and I rode horseback, and it would be plum full and he got one paper, Chicago paper, and the rest was all letters, he did get an awful lot of mail. He couldn't hardly handle it. It was one thing when he got older it all most used him up. ....

E- Did he prescribe for more than one at a time when he went into a trance?

B- You could ask as much as four letters if they wasn't too long, .... And Dr. Dodge would have to take all of his coats off and everything and he'd go in a room that was ice in there, never no heat in there, and when he come out of it the sweat would come clear through his shirt, he'd take his coat and everything off and the sweat would come clear through his shirt, and drip right down his face,

*when he was in a Trance*

especially if he had to go to Chicago. It would use a man up, when he got out of it he was awful weak.

*(Trance Reenter)*

E- Well did he have more trouble when he was a distance away, you say when he went to Chicago...

B- Well not if it was easy to find and he'd give him the exact right street number and everything correct and a lock of hair he could find him pretty easy and he wouldn't have much trouble... that man that stole his pocketbook up to Albany there, he found him about that quick, sitting in the depot waiting for the train to come just that quick ~~that~~ you know and it took him right out of the trance..

E- Did he go into a trance almost every day then.

B- Well usually in the forenoon but not in the afternoon. He was too tired, he couldn't make it.

E- Did he go into more than one in the forenoon or ...

B- Well sometimes two if there was something very serious

E- In other words he might treat seven or eight patients in one half day?

B- I didn't know him till he was old, but when he was younger they said he could go into a trance in the afternoons too. But if it was somebody round home close there it wouldn't take him over five minutes, it didn't take him over three minutes, oh no it didn't take him over a minute. He'd take his coat and everything off and he'd set down like that and all at once you'd think he'd [groaning] and then *(Gesture)* he'd start.

E- He'd stiffen out?

B- Oh yes, you'd think he'd tear his arms right to pieces and when he come out of it, it was about the same way. And he didn't know one word that he said, when he come out of it.

E- Could he come out himself or ...

B- They'd have to tell him "Now that's all, you can quit now." always told him Otherwise he'd wait I suppose for somebody to tell him.. Someone had to talk to him and read the letters to him ..... Otherwise he couldn't read it

E- He couldn't read eh?

*can't not then*

*(Gesture)* B- No, no, his eyes was closed all the time. No, he couldn't read. He could read, but he didn't take the letter at all, all he took was the lock of hair the first time, and he'd find them right away

E - Well you have any idea how many people a week he could treat or would treat at that time? He had a bag of mail was that for a day or was that for a week?

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B- Twice a week. And I had to take quite a lot of mail back too. He wrote to those people and ...

E- Did he write to those people himself?

B- No, no writing he didn't do any of it- and that aint all there was any amount of those people that he'd tell them he couldn't do nothing for them just tell them just eat anything you want and enjoy yourself I can't do you any good You won't be here long.

E- Oh, he told him that?

B- They kind of wanted to know, I suppose, and he'd write right back, there's nothing I can do for you.

E- Were most of the people he treated from away?

B- Well he did a lot at home too, A lot of people come there a lot of neighbors come there I know one time there was a fellow by the name of-- oh he lived up toward Evansville, the other side of Evansville and he had two boys one was about eight and the other was about nine and they got awful sick one time just awful sick well he thought the quickest way to do it before he'd get a letter there he just load them up and brought them over there. And they had convulsions and he went in a trance and he told them that they was just plum full of green apples .....

*Penkins*

*in the wagon*

*out >  
of  
Character*

\*\*\*\*\*  
*But I gotta tell you ?* *Thurston*

B- If there was any danger Dr. Dodge would have nothing to do with it. If somebody would ask for something bad he wouldn't tell anything

E- You mean as far as getting in trouble with the law or anything like that?

B- He would say "No' I don't do that anymore." I used to do that when I was young, but I don't do that anymore now.

E- Well you don't have any idea of what he meant by, he used to do it when he was young what it might have been ?

B- Well I think that up there he told me that he was threatened and he had to leave. That's one thing he told me, that he was threatened and he had to leave. And he come out here.

E- You have any idea of how old he was when he came out here? !

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B- Well I don't know that, I don't even know <sup>whether</sup> when he was married when he come out here or whether he married here the first time [chuckle] I never thought enough to ask anything like that.

E- You haven't any idea when he came out here actually?

B- No, I don't,

E- What did he do when he was young was he on a farm or was he in town?

B- He said they had a little land there. His folks did and it seemed like he was the only boy. and I never asked him, He said he never had a brother and I never asked him whether he had a sister or not, they lived out there and his folks always went to church. Always! His mother and father always went to church and he did too, and he said that when you get to be as old as I am I just think I've got to go. — That's all there is to it.

E- What church did he go to? Do you know?

B- Gap church. Once in a while if there wasn't anything there he'd go to Albany in the summertime. They had a Baptist church there. ~~That was a Baptist church too at one time.....~~

E- He went to church every Sunday you say?

B- Every sunday that the weather was fit. That we could go! If it rained or in the winter time we missed quite a lot. The road wasn't open, we couldn't get through.

E- You were there you say from the time you were ten til the time you were fourteen

B- .... before he died I was fourteen I was fourteen years old.

E- You think he was ninety-something years by the time he died.

B- Well if he wasn't he was awful close to it.. because I heard him talk about his age once in a while and he was pretty well up in his eighties. Eighty eight and I think he lived a couple years after that.

E- What year did you say you were born Uncle John?

B- I was born in 74.. 1874

E- So that would have been approxiamately 1888 that he died then?

B- Somewhere around then.

E-- Did he ever talk to you at all about what he felt when he went into these trances. Did he have any explanation at all for it?

B- You know I was young I suppose that he would tell me anything that I asked and he'd tell me, he never turn me down on that

but I was young and after I'd been there a year why it was just like talking to you and he'd go in a trance but he did tell them that he was getting awful weak and they'd better not leave him in very long because he might not get out and I know that he couldn't walk, sometimes for ten minutes after he got out. He'd just set there ..... sweating. He was just exhausted just like somebody had working, *him* just as hard as he could work. It was pretty hard on him if they was awful sick. If you wasn't very sick it didn't seem to affect him very much

E- Oh, is that right?

B-No, no but if they was awful sick he was affected bad.

E- Now he helped a lot of people that couldn't get help anywhere else.

B-- Yes, anybody'd come along ~~said he'd~~. Used to be a lot of fellers come along wanting something to eat, never turned em down, never.

E- How'd he know as far as treating them if they were sick you say that there were some of the people that couldn't get help anywhere else that he helped.

B- He did, you didn't have to pay him neither. If you was a poor man or a poor woman he he didn't want your money at all, He'd do all he could for you and if he couldn't do anything for you he'd tell you so right out.

E- What did he charge those that had money, did you have any idea?

B- A dollar. A dollar went a long ways then. a dollar would come right in an envelope. paper dollar yeah a dollar. He could have been independent rich. They offered him all kinds of money and all that for things that he didn't want to do, why he didn't want their money at all.

E- Did he ever help any of the police departments at all? He never helped them solve a crime.

B- They only had one police in Albany and only one in Monroe at that time. I can remember him. [chuckle] They called him Hoppentrop?? Big grizzly, *fellow*

E- That was in Monroe?

B- In Monroe, And next year I worked for a neighbor, it was a neighbor there, Charlie Williams, and he give me four dollars a month. And he thought I ought to do a man's work, well I couldn't do it. He pitched the hay on the wagons and I was supposed to load it

and when they went to the barn why, he'd set the fork and I was supposed to mow it, well it just about killed me, I couldn't hardly do it. and at that time we had a different school, I went to school in the winter, I couldn't go in the summer, and when the crops was all in I could go to school, but I couldn't get any wages, so I stayed with him that winter and I had two and a half miles to go. He milked fourteen cows by hand and I had to milk seven and he had to milk seven and every time he got in trouble with a cow, she kicked him a few times, he turned her over to me and I tell you I missed Dr. Dodge at that time.

E- Well, did many people come there to be treated or was it mostly by mail?

B- Well, the biggest share, far the biggest share, was by mail because if you lived any distance at all like twenty or thirty miles you just better send him a letter. Cause you couldn't get there by horses, take just a day or more to go back and forth you know. If it was as far as Milwaukee...

E- Did he do some work in Milwaukee too, people from Milwaukee.

B- ~~Oh, yes from all the towns around, Madison and all over, he got mail from everywhere from Chicago alone--- but as far as I know that was the furtherest I know anything about that was Chicago. But he got a lot of mail from Chicago He got a lot of mail He got mail from east of there pretty near all those towns. Cause if you were so you could drive you'd drive, but if it was say twenty miles or thirty miles you better just send him a letter.~~

E- You got more letters than you had people come

B- Oh, yes much more. But I can remember one time a lumber wagon come and there's four men in there. Had a big team hitched up to that old wagon, and they had boards across the box and they told us who they were they were, ... Lasaters that lived there, they was young people then and they had one in the wagon that was blind, stone blind and they come to Dr. Dodge and they brought him there to cure him. The doctor went into a trance. He said I can't do a thing for him. And he never did see.

E- He was blind all his life?

B- Yes, he was blind all his life. He might have been 20 years old at the time when they brought him to Dr. Dodge. Years later I met some Laseter brothers and asked them If they wasn't to see Dr.

Dodge about their brother being blind. One of them spoke up and said "Yes we were". I said I was there when it happened.

E- Ohh..

B- And he said, He's quite a man well he's quite a man, but he couldn't help my brother any". And he couldn't. Dr. Dodge said "Your blind and that's all there is to it.



\*\*\*\*\*



①

Tom E. J.

**PRESCRIPTION FROM DOCTOR DODGE**

Sylvester May 8th, 1882

Geo. Simmons,

The liver is rather inactive and a little enlarged at times, somewhat of a nervous rheumatic neuralgia affects you, the spleen is enlarged. The kidneys are weak.

**Prescription**

Take Kennedys Dissolvent first one teaspoon in two tablespoons of sweetened water take it half-hour before each meal.

One oz. of Soda, one oz. of Ginger, one oz. of bismuth, two oz. of Magnesia. Mix these well together (mix them dry) take one teaspoonfull in two tablespoons of pure water in the middle of the fore and afternoon.

Put one table spoon of pulverized charcoal in two thirds of a pint of new milk to drink.

page 2

Half oz. of spirits camphor put it in one pint of alcohol, rub the back from the neck downward every other night.

Continue these medicines six weeks then you are to be seen again.

Examination & Prescription  
By Dr. J. Dodge

---

(Copy of original handwritten not)



7.

Sylvester May 8th 1882

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put one table spoon of pulverized charcoal in two thirds of a pint of new milk drink of this when ever you wish to drink

Half oz. of spirits camphor put it in  
one pint of alcohol rub the back from  
the neck downward Every other night.

Continue these medicines six weeks then  
you are to be seen again

Examination & Prescription

By Dr. Dodge

Dr. Dodge  
Boston  
Mass  
Jan 10 1880

Dr. Dodge  
Boston  
Mass  
Jan 10 1880

2

## Obituary--Dodge.

Dr. John Dodge died December 15th, 1889, aged seventy-six years, four months and two days. The deceased was born near Auburn, Cayuga County, New York, August 13th, 1813. He was married to Frances M. Blake, of Auburn, in the year 1836, at which time he was a carder of wool and dresser of cloth in said city. To them were born seven children, six girls and one son. In the year 1849 it was discovered by one Professor Rogers that Dr. D. was a clairvoyant, and from then to the present time of his last sickness, he has examined and prescribed for the afflicted in all parts of the United States. Owing to poor health of his wife he immigrated from New York in 1856, leaving three little girls buried in the eastern city; he settled in Sylvester township, Green County, Wisconsin, November 27th of the same year. November 6th, 1878, death entered the happy home and claimed the wife and mother. In September, 1881, he was married to Mrs. Sarah Young, of Garden Prairie, Illinois, who survives him. He united with the Baptist Church over forty years ago. In the home and among associates he has lived a noble life. Four children, three daughters and one son, mourn the loss of a kind and loving father. As a citizen he was respected, as a neighbor, beloved for kindness and friendship.



**DOCTOR HAM**  
**OF BELLEVUE HOSPITAL,**  
**NEW YORK CITY.**

assisted by a full corps of competent physicians and surgeons, treats with unparalleled success all Chronic, nervous, Skin and Blood Diseases. He particularly invites all whose cases have been neglected, badly treated or pronounced hopeless. Patients who are doing well under the care of their own physicians need not call on us, but we are prepared to treat those who cannot find relief elsewhere. No money required of responsible parties to commence treatment.

HAM has attained the most wonderful success in the treatment of the cases to which he directs his special attention. After years of experience he has discovered the most infallible method of curing Organic Weakness, Nervous Debility, Losses, Impaired Memory, Mental Anxiety, and all the kindred Affections, — those terrible disorders which render marriage impossible.

**PLEPSY OR FITS** positively cured by a new and infallible method.

**WILLING OF PILES. GUARANTEED.** Will cure for any case of failure.

**THE EXAMINATION OF URINE.** Each person applying for treatment should send or bring a sample of their urine for chemical and microscopical examination.

Send all correspondence strictly confidential. — No charge sent to any part of the United States. — Questions free.

Address, **DR. HAM, Madison, Wis.**

**IN PROBATE.**

County Court, Green County.  
**IN THE MATTER OF THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN DODGE, deceased.**

On reading and filing an instrument in writing purporting to be the last will and testament of John Dodge, late of Green County, deceased, and also the accompanying petition of E. J. Dodge, of Juda, Wisconsin, representing among other things, that the said John Dodge lately died at the town of Sylvester, that said instrument is the last will and testament of said deceased, and that he, the said petitioner, is the identical person named and appointed in and by the said last will and testament executor thereof, and praying that a day be appointed for hearing the proofs of said last will and testament of said deceased; it is ordered that proofs of said instrument be heard before the Judge of this Court, on Tuesday, the 4th day of February, A. D. 1890, at 10 o'clock a. m., at the Probate Office in Monroe, in said County. And it is further ordered, that public notice thereof be given to all persons interested by publishing a copy of this order for three weeks successively, prior to said day of hearing, in the Monroe Sentinel, a weekly newspaper printed at Monroe, in said County.

Dated at Monroe, this 21st day of December, A. D. 1889.  
**B. DUNWIDDIE,**  
 County Judge.

**VOLUNTARY ASSIGNMENT.**

**Notice to Creditors.**

All persons are hereby notified, that on the 13th day of December, 1889, A. M. Wolcott, of the city of Monroe, County of Green and State of Wisconsin, voluntarily assigned to the undersigned for the benefit of his creditors, all of his property and effects except such as is by law exempt from execution. Every creditor of the said A. M. Wolcott is required to file within three months with the undersigned Assignee, or with Andrew Lewis, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Green County, Wisconsin, whose post-office address is Monroe, Green County, Wisconsin, an affidavit, setting forth his name, residence and post-office address, the nature, consideration and amount of his debt claimed by him over and above all offsets, on pain of being debarred a dividend. My post-office address is Monroe, Green County, Wisconsin.

Dated December 16th, 1889.  
 S. S. HYDE, Assignee.  
 38W4

**A STUPEND**

**J. H. W.**

Has Just Received by e  
 Cloak House, a

**Pattern.**

Different Styles,  
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**25 TO 35**

And Close out the lot  
 now. Having only i  
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2 Albany

169.9 acres

*Dr. Robert Brown*



MALKOW ARTHUR

6-550-40  
100 acres

2 Monroe

Dr. Day Tombstone



THE GAP CEMETERY 6-552-13

Albany, Wis.

Tom Foy

# The clairvoyant who could cure

Among the tales of unusual characters I've picked up during my years in Wisconsin is that of the mysterious Doctor Dodge, a transplanted New Yorker who practiced clairvoyant medicine in the Albany-Monroe area during the late 19th century. As he had no discernible medical education, his methods were certainly suspect. Nonetheless, many swore by his diagnostic and curing powers.

Doctor Dodge came by his profession in a very curious way, with most of his training taking place in a carnival tent. It began back East, when one evening he visited a show put on by an itinerant hypnotist and was asked to be a volunteer assistant to the entertainer. During the performance the hypnotist suddenly cried, "At last I've found a true clairvoyant. Yes, he is a young man of amazing perception whose rare gifts should be turned to doctoring the ills of the world."



## Voices From the Heartlands

By Robert E. Gard

Dodge wondered if the hypnotist could possibly be talking about him. When it seemed he certainly was, Dodge was suddenly transformed. A believer in every word that had been spoken, the young man quickly decided that, thereafter, he would call himself "Doctor Dodge" and do exactly as the hypnotist had suggested — doctor the ills of people anywhere and everywhere.

Traveling west to Wisconsin, Doctor Dodge settled in the countryside between Albany and Monroe, an area that he perceived to be the perfect place to practice his special medicine. The basic charge for a visit to his office was set at \$3, with answers to "questions of importance" each costing an additional \$1 — steep fees in those days. Still, as word spread that Doctor Dodge could indeed tell what was ailing people and give good advice about what to do to get healthy again, more and more patients sought him out. Sometimes he would make his diagnosis from a lock of hair sent through the mail or delivered by a messenger.

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Doctor Dodge rarely laid hands on his patients and never employed any form of laboratory testing. Instead, he would assume his "clairvoyant stance," standing rigid in the center of the room and staring fixedly at a spot on the wall until he fell into a trance. Then, his assistants would lower him into a chair from which he would begin to speak in a low, monotonous voice. The voice was dull as dull can be, yes, but everyone present was sure to hang on every word, an assistant taking everything down on paper.

After the diagnosis came the prescription, and here Doctor Dodge showed signs of what might truly have been clairvoyant powers. Not only would he list every ingredient of the medicines he prescribed, but he could tell exactly on which shelf and in which bottle at the local pharmacy the drugs could be found. It all came to him in his trance, he insisted.

Many thought Doctor Dodge to be a charlatan, a fraud deserving to be run out of the state. Yet, more than an equal number came to swear by his advice. There were even cases where he somehow managed to upstage legitimate physicians.

In the early 1870s, when the small son of Sever and Mary Gothompson fell desperately ill, the family doctor and several learned consultants were unable to identify the nature of the illness. The frantic mother finally carried a lock of her son's hair to Doctor Dodge. Grasping the hair, the Doctor went into his usual trance and soon began to mutter that "measles don't always have to bring red spots." According to Dodge, the boy had a peculiarly obscure, but virulent form of the dread disease. It was, unfortunately, too late for any kind of doctoring to save him, Dodge said.

About the time the Gothompson boy died, an epidemic of measles began sweeping the area. Years later, when the mother was 95 years old, she still marveled about the accuracy of Doctor Dodge's diagnosis and wept at her mistake of not seeking his help early enough to maybe save her son.

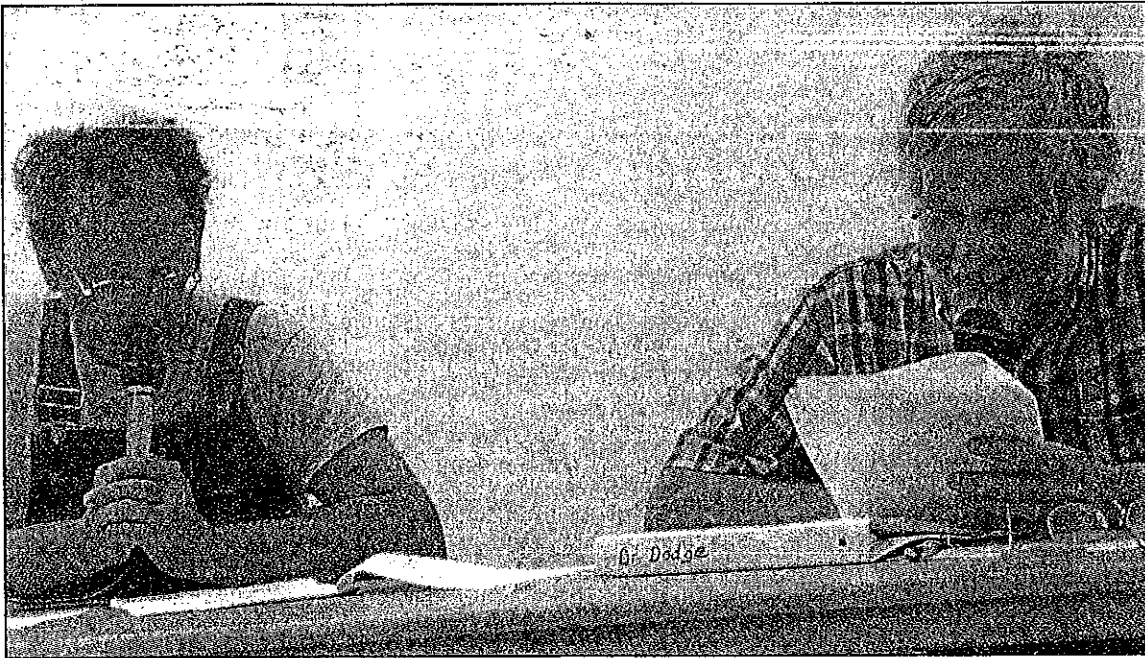
Doctor Dodge's practice grew larger and larger, allowing him to live extravagantly for many years. Finally, the old man was so weakened by his many exhausting trances that it's said he died in the middle of giving a diagnosis. How ironic it seemed that he failed to recognize his own condition.

Many old families in southeastern Wisconsin remember him and have stories to tell about the clairvoyant Doctor Dodge. His descendants are said to be living somewhere in the state, but I have not heard about any of them who've inherited his peculiar gifts — mystic powers, if indeed that's what they really were.

*If you'd like to see the first 100 of these columns reprinted in book form, write: Creative Consultants, P.O. Box 5562, Madison, WI 53705.*



Brodhead  
Dr. Dodge



Mel LeBaron photo

Tom Fay and John Oschner read from a transcript about a young chore boy's reflection on working for Dr. John Dodge at the Brodhead Historical Society on June 27.

# Dr. Dodge worked wonders

BY MEL LEBARON

**BRODHEAD** - Until he died in 1889, people regarded Dr. John Dodge as a miracle worker.

Members of the Brodhead Historical Society heard an account about the renowned man on Monday, June 27.

Dodge, the eldest of a dozen children of English ancestry, was born on August 13, 1813, in Auburn, New York. He married Frances M. Blake but moved to Green County before his wife passed away in 1878. The couple had six daughters and one son, though three of the daughters also died.

Dodge eventually married his second wife, Sarah Young, and she outlived him. He was also well known for attending Gap Church faithfully in Albany. His tombstone is still there.

Several people, including Dodge's great-great-grandson, Frank Gombar, shed light on his famous relative. Dodge discovered his clairvoyant abilities while knowing a professor with the name of Rogers in 1849.

Though Dodge grew up as a clothier with his family, he assisted the afflicted both personally and by reading a letter from a concerned person who didn't know who else to turn to.

Later, this merged into a sort of business venture. Dodge charged each "patient" but often helped

those who were less fortunate for free.

Sometimes, Dodge received locks of hair, usually at about four inches in length. He then would go into a cold room and go into trance. Then he'd come up with a solution, such as recommending a pharmacy or a special "recipe" for a person to salve their injury, for example.

"He would stare fixedly at a wall," explained Gombar. "Then his daughter would write down what he said."

After Gombar gave a brief biography of his great-great-grandfather, Tom Fay and John Oschner introduced themselves and their "skit."

In 1958, a man named Roger Elmer taped a 90-minute interview with his uncle, John Brandt, about Dodge. Part of the transcription of the original interview is the "skit" that historical society members heard as Fay and Oschner gave voice to such old times.

Starting at age 10, Brandt observed Dodge for four years in the 1880s during his time as the Dodge family's chore boy. With amazement and certainty, Brandt reported his memories and inklings about how Dodge would go into trances, which often exhausted the man.

Brandt (Fay) recalled how a man from Chicago wrote to

Dodge, explaining that he had a living lizard in his stomach. Supposedly, during the Civil War, a small lizard got inside of this man, and gave him awful pains. In response, Dodge somehow fixed this unique conundrum.

Another example of Dodge's power of intuition concerned a man who was hired to cut wood at the Dodge farm for a week. After noticing his money was missing from his pocketbook, Dodge went into the trance and told his son Edward that the thief was in town, waiting for a train to Milwaukee.

Sure enough, Edward went to the train station and caught the robber before he left town, according to Brandt (Fay).

At the meeting, on a nearby table, there was a copy of a letter that Dodge received from a Mr. Simmons who complained of liver problems, a weak kidney, and an enlarged spleen.

In response, Dodge told Simmons to "put one tablespoon of pulverized charcoal in a two thirds of a pint of new milk to drink" among other suggestions.

Before the end of the meeting, members heard a few more similar anecdotes about a man who fixed problems that most others had given up on.

## TOWN OF SYLVESTER

# Bringing Dr. Dodge back to life

Local historians reenact  
clairvoyant healer of 1870s



By **Katjusa Cisar**  
kcisar@themonroetimes.com

**TOWN OF SYLVESTER** — Once upon a time in Green County lived a clairvoyant healer so skilled he once cured a man who'd had a lizard living inside his belly since the Civil War.

Dr. John Dodge practiced his trance-inspired medicine in the mid-1800s on a farm southwest of Albany, in the Town of Sylvester. He died in 1889 and is buried a few miles away under a fungus-encrusted marble headstone at the Gap Cemetery on Wisconsin 59.

Tom Fey, a Monroe history enthusiast, has studied Dr. Dodge on and off for more than 20 years. In 1990, he got hold of a reel-to-reel tape recording of a man who worked for Dr. Dodge as a boy.

John Brandt was 84 in 1958 when his nephew, Roger Elmer, recorded him talking in his kitchen in Brodhead.

Fey eventually transcribed the first half of this conversation — a task that took him about 15 hours — and now reenacts it with his friend and fellow historian John Ochsner. The pair most recently reenacted the story of Dr. Dodge for about 40 people at the Green County Historical Society's monthly meeting Wednesday.

Ochsner, who lives near Albany, plays the inquisitive nephew, while Fey plays Uncle John. Uncle John's wife, Aunt Dora, also has a small part when

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Times photos: Anthony Wahl

**TOP RIGHT:** A photo of "clairvoyant doctor" Dr. John Dodge and his wife Frances, preserved by local historian Tom Fey. **ABOVE:** Local history enthusiasts Fey, left, and John Ochsner stand by the grave of Dr. Dodge in the Gap Cemetery near Albany Friday morning. Dodge was a healing legend in the Albany area in the 1870s. Patients from as far away as Chicago sought him out. **BELOW:** Fey and Ochsner consult a guidebook of aerial photos to Green County farms Friday morning at the old house of Dr. Dodge, located on County FF near Balls Mill Road.



# Bringing Dr. Dodge back to life

Local historians reenact  
clairvoyant healer of 1870s



By **Katjusa Cisar**

[kcisar@themonroetimes.com](mailto:kcisar@themonroetimes.com)



Times photos: Anthony Wahl

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**TOWN OF SYLVESTER** — Once upon a time in Green County lived a clairvoyant healer so skilled he once cured a man who'd had a lizard living inside his belly since the Civil War.

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Ochsner, who lives near Albany, plays the inquisitive nephew, while Fey plays Uncle John. Uncle John's wife, Aunt Dora, also has a small part when she chimes in to correct her husband on historical details. It's an engaging enactment and provides a glimpse of daily life 140 years ago in Green County. Given a little tightening and direction, "The Dr.

**Ailing people  
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prescription.**

See **DODGE**, Page A6

# SEWHERE

The Monroe Times Saturday, January 19, 2013

## Dodge

From Page A1

Dodge Tapes" would make a good production for a community theater group to take on.

Fey still has half of Uncle John's conversation with Elmer to transcribe. He's already transferred the conversation onto cassette tape and CD and donated the original reels to the Wisconsin Historical Society for preservation.

Uncle John came from a large family of at least nine kids. His parents were too poor to support him, so they made a deal with their neighbor Dr. Dodge. The boy would do chores around the farm in exchange for food and lodging. He lived there from age 10 to 14.

Among Uncle John's tasks was writing down the diagnosis and prescription that came to Dr. Dodge when he fell into a trance to treat a patient. One prescription, dated May 8, 1882, advised mixing equal amounts of soda, ginger, bismuth, magnesia and consuming the tincture in "two table-spoons of pure water in the middle of the fore and afternoon."

## Watch the video

To see a video of Tom Fey and John Ochsner performing the Dr. Dodge story, visit [tinyurl.com/drdodge](http://tinyurl.com/drdodge).

The Green County Historical Society meets at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesdays of the month at the Monroe Public Library, 925 16th Ave. Upcoming presentations include a history of Doris and Edwin Blair's dolls by Christie Strait (Feb. 20) and "The Evolution of the Coffee Cup" by Linda Schiesser (March 20).

Dr. Dodge told the same patient, diagnosed as having a "rather inactive" liver, to "put one tablespoon of pulverized charcoal in two-thirds of a pint of new milk to drink."

Not all his prescriptions were so complex. He once told the father of two sick boys they were "just plum full of green apples."

The self-proclaimed doctor often made his diagnosis and prescription without actually seeing the patient. Ailing people from as far away as Chicago would send him a lock of hair to evaluate for a prescription. Uncle John recalls Dr. Dodge receiving boxes of letters weekly from across the region.

One day Dr. Dodge read in a Chicago paper about a man who believed a lizard living in his belly was causing "awful pains that seemed to move around in him and if he'd eat

heavy, it sort of quieted down." Dr. Dodge offered to heal him and get rid of the amphibian.

"Well, the man told them it was a live lizard," Uncle John later recounted to his nephew. "When he was in the Civil War, it was awful dry and he laid down and he'd drink water out of a crick or a ditch." The man speculated he drank in the lizard then. By the time Dr. Dodge heard of the situation, the animal "weighed five or six pounds and it was a pretty big lizard."

Dr. Dodge prescribed him a medicine and through his clairvoyant powers was even able to tell the man where to find it on the shelf at his neighborhood drugstore in Chicago. The medicine worked in days. The lizard passed "in pieces through his bowels," Uncle John recalled. "The third day he was all a new man."



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