

Dr. John G. Randall Goes To Missoula, Montana After Seven Years in Monroe

Dr. John Randall, homeopathic physician, moved to Monroe in June 1898. He met Ernest Wright, a Presbyterian minister from Missoula, Montana in 1904 when he served as a pastor here. Wright let Randall know in July 1905 that Dr. William Glasgow was selling his medical practice in Missoula, which Randall immediately agreed to purchase.

Residents in Missoula would be able to make it to the office, but those in the rural area would still expect him to make house calls. Wright advised his friend to take advantage of purchasing Dr. Glasgow's rig in two letters written late in July. "You will absolutely need one." He suggested that Randall better buy it, the horse and buggy. The horse was nine years old and had cost \$160, but he was "a fine beast." The buggy had cost \$115 and the harness \$25. Dr. Glasgow was willing to sell it all to Randall for \$175. Wright added that the horse was the wife's pet and she wanted to take it to Seattle with them, but the doctor preferred "to sell it to someone who would care for it well." Wright also suggested that he board the horse where Wright boarded his for a cost of \$20 per month.

Randall, of course, was a bit worried about taking the Montana exam so long after completing his studies, but Rev. Wright reminded him that Dr. Glasgow would be administering the test, "so you need



Dr. John Randall met Ernest Wright while Wright served as a substitute pastor in 1904 at the Presbyterian Church here in Monroe. It was Wright who encouraged Randall to purchase a medical practice in Missoula, Montana and move there the following year. The Presbyterian church, shown here in a photo from the Green County Historical Society archives, was located on the corner of 8th Street and 16th Avenue.

not fear." In a letter written on July 26, Glasgow assured Randall that he would have little difficulty passing. "You need not study up on Chemistry, Histology, Pathology, or Bacteriology, as we don't

examine in them. There are only 10 subjects and a very fair examination.” Glasgow also confirmed that he would quiz Randall on the various subjects ahead of time.

After he had sent an acceptance telegram to Wright, Randall wrote a letter to his mother in Beloit on August 3. Randall had been born in Michigan, but was living in Beloit with his parents and four siblings by 1880. “Things are the same here as usual and practice is rather slow just now, but I have wore out here and so I am ready to leave. But I did hate to leave before I had shown them what I could do, and now, as everyone is saying, yes, he is a good doctor, I am satisfied.” He knew that he was taking a risk in leaving his familiar surroundings and the financial stability of Monroe.

He further explained to his mother that he’d like to have taken more money from his Monroe practice as he knew he might have to borrow money when he got to Montana. He also expected to make some money before Dr. Glasgow left the practice a month after Randall’s arrival. He added, “I think I will be about \$400 deeper in debt by the change, but as his terms are reasonable for such a place, I will have to stand it and take the risk.”

In another letter to Randall, Wright showed his sense of humor by writing, “Monroe? RATS with Monroe! Say, John, MISSOULA OR BUST!” He went on to say that if Randall did not show up on time, he would “travel down there and kick you all the way out here, for not realizing the chance of your life and gobbling it [up], and then kick you back again after letting you see what you missed.”

It was announced in two separate articles in the Monroe Evening Times on August 7 that Dr. Randall planned to leave Monroe for Missoula. “Dr. Randall has built up a profitable practice in this city, but desires to enter a larger field. He has many friends in Monroe who will regret to learn of his intention to leave the city.” The second article asked that, “all persons knowing themselves indebted to him will call and settle same in the next 15 days. All bills not settled before the 23rd of this month will be placed in hands of a collector be collected.”

Less than two months after the original note was written, William A. Glasgow transferred his practice and office furniture to John G. Randall in Missoula in mid-September. The contract concluded with the statement: “[I] pledge him my good will with the people of Missoula.” Ernest W. Wright probably smiled brightly when he signed as a witness of the transaction! Dr. Randall passed the licensure examination on October 3 - on his first attempt.

John Randall remained in Missoula the rest of his life. He left in late July 1940 for a vacation and rest, but was taken ill and returned to Missoula for treatment. He passed away in a hospital on August 15 after an illness of two years and a three-week hospital stay. He was survived by his wife Nettie, who he had married in 1911, and his daughters Charlotte (born 1917) and Joann (born 1921).