

Dr. Elisha Sears Lewis

b. 5/22/1874 Springfield MA, -- d. 7/9/1954 Princeton, MA

Dr. Lewis father and mother were George Smith Lewis and Ellen Maria Sears. He married Jane Catherine (Marsh) Lewis, 9/1/1899, and they had a daughter Catherine J. Lewis b. 7/21/1901. Jane died 4/26/1910 after a long illness. He remarried Emma May Hosley of Princeton on 5/17/1911.

Dr. Lewis finished medical school at Yale in 1905, went to Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore, and then interned in Berlin, Vienna, London, and Dublin. Returning home to Springfield in late 1906, he met a drug salesman and asked if he knew of any small town that needed a doctor.

At that time, Princeton had a population of 950 residents, was close to Worcester and had 10 hotels and boarding houses that drew a large number of summer residents and visitors from Boston, New York and Rhode Island. The doctor and his family moved to Princeton in 1908, and he had his office in his home across from the town library at 18 Mountain Rd.



After accompanying a man to Europe to visit many therapeutic, watering spas, Dr. Lewis developed a new dream, to establish his own sanitarium. Therefore, like neighboring Rutland with its

tuberculosis hospital, he built his own small sanitarium in 1914, which he called the Princeton Nauheim Institute. It was located directly behind his home and its current address is 20 Mountain Rd. Princeton. With its high altitude, crisp, clean air, and available spring water of “unrivaled purity”, it provided an ideal location and the key ingredients needed for his health resort.

His patients were afforded an





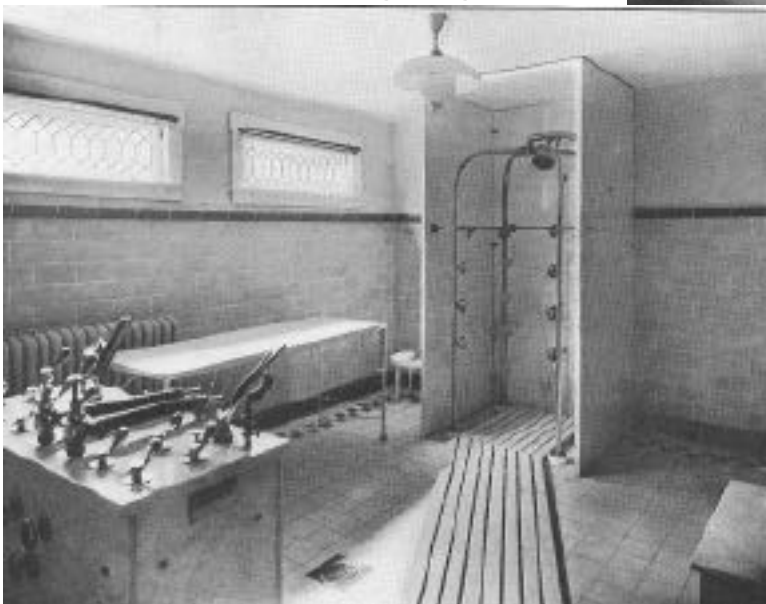
attractive homelike atmosphere, with views of Boston, a piazza on which to relax, surrounded by numerous comforts and healing agencies, equipped with the most modern scientific apparatus of the time, where they could receive personal attention and skilled treatment.

The sanitarium was built to accommodate a limited number of patients, and the most advanced hydrotherapy was offered. The object of this European hydrotherapy, called

Waffles, which was a high frequency violet ray electrical treatment, was to supply natural, curative methods in attacking chronic diseases, in relieving high blood pressure and restoring depleted nervous systems and in building up worn out bodies requiring natural invigoration rather than drug stimulus. Some of the diseases treated were; chronic heart disease, asthma, bronchitis, pleurisy, anemia, diabetes, gout, obesity, rheumatism, hysteria, and neuralgia.



Bathrooms were equipped with the requisite apparatus for giving every



known kind of bath and simulating with chemical exactness the baths of Nauheim Spa, Baden-Baden Germany. Radioactive water was given to patients in connection with the baths, thus duplicating the “magic” of the foreign springs.

Adjacent to the baths was the electrical room, “equipped with the latest improved apparatus for the use of the high frequency electricity and for the application of violet-rays, the

latter being used with marked success in destroying worn-out tissues and reconstructing new and vital tissues and improving the circulation.”

An electric light bath was used with great success in the treatment of many diseases. The facility also had a room with a system of faucets and levers, where the patient could be given any kind of spray bath from a soft mist to a powerful stream, and of any temperature.



The second floor of the sanitarium was used for sleeping accommodations for patients and their attendants.



Marvel Violet Ray Instrument (not sure I'd want this used on me)



The thought of a second spa was on his mind, but in 1916, the country was involved in World War I. Lewis enlisted, and when he returned to Princeton he found almost no place for patients to stay near his home. The hotels were gone and the day of the automobile allowed people the opportunity to travel all over the country.

Dr. Lewis knew a hospital was needed in the Holden area for his patients and people in surrounding towns. He knew Dr. Washburn of Holden and together they started planning. In September 1922, the Holden Community Hospital opened.

He closed his sanitarium and sold his property to Arthur B. Howe 7/3/1929.

As previously described in our August, "Then & Now" entitled The 1918 Pandemic, his second wife, Emma, was a local hero to residents as she nursed many through recovery from that deadly virus Spanish Flu.

Besides being the town doctor for 40+ years, he was also involved in:



20 Mountain Rd

1. The first action taken by the Town in the matter of street lighting was at a meeting held April 6, 1903, when the Town voted "that the sum of \$300 be raised and appropriated for establishing and maintaining street lights in the residential districts of Princeton Centre and East Princeton." Arrangements were made with the Globe Gaslight Co. for a suitable outfit. Gas and kerosene streetlights were to be placed in certain areas of the town, but over time this proved unsatisfactory.

At the April 3, 1911 Town Meeting, Dr. E. S. Lewis, J. D. Gregory, and P.C. Doolittle were chosen to investigate Electrical Street Lighting and report at a future meeting.

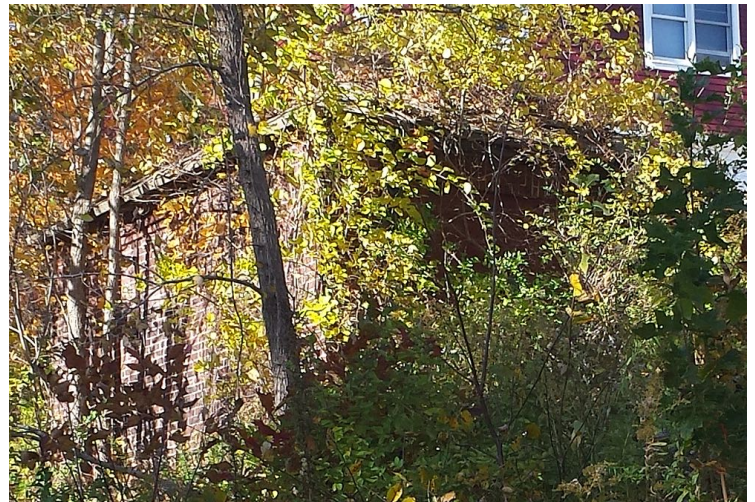
They reported unanimously in favor of such a system, and H. P. Houghton, J. B. Marcou, and P.C. Doolittle were chosen as a committee and given full power to make the contract. The



18 Mountain Rd

matter of raising a sufficient amount of money to finance the project if municipal ownership of an electric system was discussed at meetings held on various dates. It was finally decided favorably on September 14, 1912, by the overwhelming majority vote 88-12, to approve the establishment of Princeton's own municipal electric utility. A Board of Commissioners was elected and authorized to borrow \$15,000 to construct Princeton's first municipal power plant. A

Shingle Style building was built for \$450.00 on town property near Hubbardston Road and called the Princeton Electric Light Building. It proved a success and 130 streetlights were maintained in different parts of town. The current was purchased from Gardner Electric Light Co. and was generated by the Connecticut River Transmission Co. at Vernon Vt. In 1914, the first full year of operation, Princeton Light Department had 56 customers, gross revenues of \$895.00, and 130 streetlights. This building functioned as the Princeton Light Dept. until approximately the 1950's.



2. Dr. Lewis and P. C. Doolittle formed a business where they bottled and sold water under the label Wachusett Mountain Spring Water.
3. He donated a flagpole to the town, which stands between the library and the town hall on the north side of Town Hall Drive in 1917, to honor of his parents, George Smith Lewis and Ellen Sears Lewis. Their names are inscribed on its base.
4. He was an active member of the following associations and groups:
 - American Medical Associations
 - Massachusetts Medical Associations
 - Rutland Clinical Club

- Princeton Board of Health
- Princeton Grange
- Worcester Automobile Club
- Princeton School Physician
- Medical Examiner for the Wachusett Lodge A.O.U.W.

The above is compiled from articles written by:

- Landmark 7/14, 2011 reporter Phyllis Booth
- Ancestry.com
- Findagrave.com
- United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places for PRINCETON CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT
- Blake, Francis Everett. History of the Town of Princeton 1759-1915: Vol. 1 Pages 369, 397, Narrative, Princeton, Mass. Town of Princeton, 1915.

Please feel free to write us, if you have any questions or information to offer at:

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To learn more about Princeton's rich history, please visit:

<http://www.princetonmahistory.org>