

HAMBURG HISTORY

A special section contributed by Mr. Daniel Barr on behalf of the Hamburg Historical Society



Dr. Samuel Fowler
(1779 – 1844)

We all have to go see the doctor once in a while. Today we have so many choices. We have favorite doctors that we have seen all our lives, and sometimes we are forced to choose one from a book because of insurance. But, many years ago towns were lucky to have one doctor to take care of them, and they cared for everyone in the family, from delivering babies to grandmas and grandpas. Hamburg has been blessed to have had many wonderful doctors care for our residents going back 200 years. I am going to do a series on the more prominent physicians in our town's history, starting with one of the earliest and during his time, the most famous.

Doctor Sam Fowler was born in Newburgh, NY on October 30, 1779, (Goosy Night). He went to college and then medical school at Pennsylvania Medical College in Philadelphia. He arrived in Hamburg in 1801 and started his medical practice. In 1808, he married Ann Breckinridge Thompson and went on to have three daughters. His wife passed away on August 5th, 1811, and two of his three daughters passed away a few months later. No one really knows the cause of this great loss. About a year before his wife and daughter's deaths, he had purchased a large tract of land in Franklin. After his family tragedy, and after 12 years as Hamburg's leading physician, he decided to pack up and move to his Franklin property and build a house in 1813.

Fowler had spent his spare time studying his passion, Geology. He became fascinated with all the minerals native to our area. He eventually acquired the Sterling Mines in Ogdensburg. In 1816, he married Rebecca Wood Platt Ogden, granddaughter of Robert Ogden II, and daughter of Robert Ogden III. With this marriage came a vast parcel of land in Ogdensburg, known as the Ogden Farm. (38 years earlier the Ogden's settle the property and named the farm Sparta). Now Fowler owned large mining tracts in Franklin and Ogdensburg. He discovered a fluorescent mineral and named it Franklinite. Years later another fluorescent mineral was discovered and it was named Fowlerite in his honor. He would travel as far as Europe to sell the Iron and Zinc from our area.

Some of the other accomplishments of this great man were: Founder of the District Medical Society of Sussex County in 1829, served as a State Senator in 1827, U.S. Congressman, 1837-1839, (during which time was a personal friend and confidant of President Andrew Jackson), and was instrumental in creating the first national standard of weights and measures. Dr. Fowler passed away at his Franklin home on February 20th, 1844.

On a side note:

Dr. Fowler and his second wife Rebecca had many children, including a son, Henry Ogden Fowler, in 1821. Henry and his wife Mary had a daughter, Alice Fowler, in 1855. Alice married her neighbor, Elmer Brooks. Alice and Elmer had a son, Harry Ogden Brooks, in 1888. Harry and his wife, Carrie, had a daughter, Mildred Brooks, in 1924. Mildred and her husband, Walter Dubiel, had a daughter, Janet Dubiel, in 1962. Janet and her husband, Dan Barr, had two children, Meghan and Jimmy Barr, who you all go to school with. That makes Dr. Samuel Fowler, Meghan and Jimmy's Great, Great, Great, Great Grandfather.