

Ashland Hospital and Healing Home

By Lori Adams

If asked, most people with some knowledge of local Ashland history would probably answer that Center Street is the first and only location of a hospital in Ashland. Actually, that isn't the case. The first hospital in Ashland was located on West Main Street, probably in the area of today's county office building.

The Ashland Hospital and Healing Home, as it was called, was operated and managed by Dr. Elmore J. Worst. Worst was born in Wayne County in 1848 and moved to Ashland in 1877. He taught school for three years, worked in the grocery business for five years, and then got involved in medical care and the manufacturing and distribution of medical specialties.

The Ashland Healing Home was described as being in the "quiet, healthful surroundings of Ashland, a city free from smoke, foul air, and the nervous excitement of larger cities." The 1895 Ashland City Directory describes Ashland as having the most healthful reputation in Ohio.

It is believed the hospital was only open for a few years in the late 1800's. It was referred to as "a priceless boon to suffering humanity" according to an article in the book *Historic Ashland County Volume 1*, by Betty Plank.

The facility also touted that it had the most skilled physicians and surgeons that could treat such diseases as chronic rheumatism, tuberculosis, bronchitis, hay fever, asthma, Bright's disease, diabetes, catarrh, partial deafness, neurasthenia and neuroses, paralysis, sexual debility, writer's cramp, and other illnesses, along with major and minor surgery.



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The cost of treatment plus room and board was \$10 per week in advance, but the costs were more if special nursing care was needed.

Dr. Worst moved on to mail order propriety medicines and appliances as his line of work after the hospital closed.

Worst lived in or ran businesses from several addresses on West Main Street in the early 1900's according to city directory information. His periodical and magazine advertisements often listed his manufacturing company as located in the Elmore Block, Ashland, Ohio. He also once operated a business on Church Street in 1895 called the Australian Pill Co.

Various testimonials existed about Dr. Worst's mail order products including one from John Showers of Oriental, Pennsylvania, who reported his daughter was restored to perfect health from a "gaunt, pale, and weak thing to a ruddy, plump, and strong young lady as a result of Dr. Worst's remedy."

In 1903, *Purple and Gold* magazine printed an ad for Worst's "Combination Treatment" which involved the use of a vaporizer and vapor oils. *Purple and Gold* was described as an educational magazine published monthly and dedicated to art, literature, science, and religion. Worst stated he would send free to anyone one of his Co-ro-na medicators and a treatment plan which would cure catarrh, kidney trouble, rheumatism, or their kindred ailments if they mentioned the ad within the next 30 days. He requested a \$2.00 payment if

it worked after using it for five days, or that it be mailed back to him at a cost of five cents if it didn't.

Worst was well-known for advertising his medicators and catarrh treatment all around the country. He was recognized during Ashland's Centennial in 1915 as aiding in much of the commercial development in Ashland at that time.

Dr. Worst passed away in 1927. His obituary was listed on the front page of local newspapers, but there was no mention of his work at the Ashland Hospital and Healing Home. He was a trustee at Ashland College for 35 years and was active in the First Brethren Church. He was survived by his wife, Minda, who was the daughter of prominent Ashland physician and surgeon Dr. L.B. Ash. They had three daughters.

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AGENTS WANTED.

Address **E. J. WORST, 66 Elmore Block, ASHLAND, OHIO.**

An old catarrh medication advertisement in an unknown publication



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