

A mirror on Missie's past:

Dr. W. Crewe

Her first surgeon

By TINA IVANY

Comfortably ensconced on a couch, Dr. Edward Rawling replaced the receiver on the telephone in the doctors' lounge at the Mississauga Hospital. As he did so, his eyes were drawn to a series of framed documents, hanging on what had previously been a bare wall in the 'inner sanctum'.

His curiosity piqued, he ambled over to inspect the contents of the documents, contents which intrigued him enough to have spent countless hours since that first "sighting", documenting the story of Dr. William Pool Crewe, the first surgeon to serve Cooksville and its surrounding districts.

The documents, bequeathed by Dr. Crewe's great-great-niece, Mrs. Maude West,

The documents bequeathed consisted of a series of records, outlining the medical training that Dr. Crewe received in England, a letter of recommendation, dated

1822, from Sir Astley Cooper with whom he trained and a license to practise in Upper Canada from Sir Francis Bond Head.

Those slides, accompanied by an hour long, informative and entertaining talk about Dr. Crewe, highlighted the November meeting of the Mississauga Historical Society held last week.

DIFFICULT

An exact documentation of Dr. Crewe's life is difficult to compile, according to Dr. Rawlings, because very little was written about him.

"I've only come across

about four lines of history dealing with Dr. Crewe! But, we do have his day books, the day-by-day record of patients' appointments, from which we can determine both the names of the people Dr. Crewe treated and the number of patients he saw. From those records, it's obvious that Dr. Crewe worked as long and as hard on Christmas Day as he did on any other."

According to an article, written by Dr. Rawlings about Dr. Crewe and published in the November 1973 edition of *Canadian Doctor*, Cooksville's first surgeon had no early intentions of ever entering the field of medicine. It was while he was working in his father's publishing firm in London, England, that because of a shoulder injury, he came under the care of Mr. Astley Cooper, who so inspired him that he, too, set out to become a surgeon.

It was in the winter of 1836, says Dr. Rawlings that William Crewe accepted an invitation to practise in Jacob Cook's Cooksville. Cook, who had purchased much of the land in the area from the Crown who had, before him, purchased it from the Mississauga Indians, provided a temporary home for William and his wife, Sarah, close to a mile from the present day intersection of Highways 5 and 10. It was at that corner that Cook built the Revere Hotel, a structure that was razed by the

bulldozer only this year . .

STAFFORD HOUSE

Cook sold Dr. Crewe 100 acres of land on the south side of Dundas, not far from Centre Road (Highway 10), for \$350.

On this site, Dr. Crewe built Stafford House, a 15-room mansion, five rooms of which were used as surgical suites.

His patients lived in an area bounded by Lake Huron to Kingston, necessitating long "house calls" on horseback or by gig and sleigh.

According to Dr. Rawlings, when Cooksville was levelled by fire in 1852, only the brick homes remained standing. Stafford House was one of the latter and became a "temporary hospital" to relieve the overcrowded facilities at the Toronto General.

When Dr. Crewe died in 1861, his wife, Sarah, married Jacob Cook the following year and, according to Dr. Rawlings, "between them, they gave away much of their wealth to the poor."

Dr. Rawlings entitled his article "Almost Forgotten", an apt title in light of the fact that because the Crewes had no children and left behind no detailed impressions of their lives, he almost was forgotten.

Indeed, Stafford House itself was levelled less than two decades ago and Dr. Crewe's tombstone, in Dixie Union Cemetery, was desecrated about the same time.

The article concludes on a sombre note. It reads: "This erasure regrettably left Cooksville without its best truly classical home, and without its last memory of its first surgeon."