

**A Brief Biography on:
FRANK FOWLER DOW**

Dr. Dow was born in Fowlerville, N.Y. on April 6, 1851. His father was Benjamin F. Dow who had come to western New York as a boy from Vermont and who founded the firm of B.F. Dow & Co., manufacturers of agricultural implements at Fowlerville. His mother was Caroline Capron Dow, granddaughter of Wells Fowler who came to that locality in 1816, and for whom the village was named.

Dr. Dow prepared for college at Geneseo and at Williston Seminary, Easthampton, Mass. He entered Amherst and was graduated in 1874. After a short business association with his father, he took up the study of medicine at the University of Buffalo, from which he was graduated in 1885. He continued his study of medicine and surgery in Germany, Austria and England. Returning to this country he began the practice of medicine in Rochester and continued until his health failed.

All during his life Dr. Dow maintained an intense interest in educational matters, civic and church affairs as well as raising to leadership in medical organizations. Even in Dr. Dow's college days, his gift for organization and leadership was apparent. As a member of the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity at Amherst, he was instrumental in purchasing property to accommodate the fraternity, and this house was one of the first college fraternity houses in the country. As another evidence of his great gift, Dr. Dow organized the University Club of this city, drafting its constitution and by-laws. He was also a founder of the Rochester Medical Association.

Regardless of how busy his own chosen profession kept him, Dr. Dow found time to bring his leadership to educational affairs. In 1895 he became a member of the Board of Education, and in this capacity and after a careful study of school laws throughout the United States, Dr. Dow led a movement which finally brought about a thorough reform in the administration of school affairs. At that time the board consisted of 20 members, one elected by each ward. Politics more often than special fitness or training dictated the choice of men to whose supervision the education of Rochester's children was entrusted.

Dr. Dow's purposes were to free the school from political domination; to provide sufficient funds for the erection of more suitable buildings with adequate playgrounds, as well as for carrying on educational work. He drafted a proposed law, known as the Dow Law, which was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. This law brought about a drastic change in the school system of Rochester and exerted a marked influence on educational laws in this country. The old board of 20 members was replaced by a board of 5 elected by the city at large. Provision was made for school funds based on enrollment. The modern system of public school education and the modern school plant in Rochester date largely from the enactment of the Dow Law, which Dr. Dow drafted in his service as school commissioner for a single term of 2 years. And, bear in mind, during this time of intensive study he still carried on his own profession.

His capacity or work, study and leadership was exceptional. Dr. Dow was a man of broad human sympathies, which endeared him to all with whom he came in contact.

Upon the death of a person who has accomplished so much of importance in a lifetime, the papers were full of "certain portions of his work which come within the notice of the public in general." One friend wrote to Mrs. Dow in a letter sent in sympathy and which I was privileged to see. "How many private lives did that great long life reach." Dr. Dow was not only a distinguished man in public eye, but was a source of real help to many in need. Just to what extent we shall never know."

Soon after his death, the city paid tribute to him in the form of giving to this place of learning, his name. This gesture shows the generations deep perception of the real man in its attempt to develop an art adequate to the expression of his greatness.

A long life, a life of useful service to city and state, came to a close on July 14, 1928. Its influence cannot be measured in words. The record stands as a challenge and an inspiration to us of the younger generation.