

Dr. Ella Ware
WILSON COUNTY PHYSICIAN

In the year 1899 the field of medicine was a man's world. There were few women who desired to enter a medical school, few who were accepted to a medical school and even fewer who graduated to become a doctor of medicine (M.D). Dr. Ella Ware of Stockdale was one of those few courageous women who dared to follow this noble path. She received her medical degree from the University Of Texas Medical College in Galveston, Texas. She was one of the first two women to receive a Doctor of Medicine Degree from the University of Texas Medical College in Galveston. She ranked third in her class during her time in medical school.

Dr. Ella Ware was born May, 13, 1870, in Wilson County, Texas, near Stockdale. She was the eldest of sixteen children. She knew what she wanted and medicine was her interest in life. She was thirty years old when she began her journey toward graduation from medical school. Upon graduation, she was offered a full professorship at the University Of Texas Medical School in Galveston. She was grateful for the offer, but Dr. Ware elected to return to her home in Wilson County. This is where she was born and these were the people she loved. A woman doctor was rare in those days and life may have been easier for her in a large hospital in the city. But Dr. Ella Ware wanted to be a country doctor, and that is what she became. She returned to Wilson County to practice medicine. Her profession as a medical doctor seemed to fulfill her life, for she never married.

The mode of travel in Wilson County during the early 1900s was horseback, wagon or buggy pulled by mules or horses. There were few hospitals and most of the babies were born at home. There were no antibiotics, the magic bullet of modern medicine. Doctors did the best they could with the treatments they had available to them. Sometimes a doctor would stay by a patient's bed side all night to help them recover from some medical malady. Sometimes they performed surgery in the patient's home. They cared deeply and were sad and disappointed when one of their patients died.

Dr. Ware cared for her patients and did what she could to ease their suffering and pain. Many times the lady doctor would ride through the night alone. She would drive her team of horses rapidly, anxious to beat the stork to a home she had been summoned to. Dr. Ware was said to have delivered 6000 babies in Wilson County in a fifty-year time period. This pioneer lady doctor was quite a sight for the residents of Wilson County to see, as she traveled over country lanes toward the homes of patients who needed her. She had an office in Stockdale, but she still traveled to the homes of her patients when necessary.

Sometimes, parents named their babies after her. They respected her and cared about her, but she did not always get paid for her services. If her patients had money, they

paid her with cash. Many times, she was paid with a farm animal, vegetables, or eggs. This was part of the life of a country doctor.

When the first horseless carriages (automobiles) came to the area, Dr. Ware bought one. She drove a car for a long time, and drove many, many miles. She quit driving at age 79 and hired a full time driver.

She was considered to be a good doctor and a skilled surgeon. She was revered by her patients and her friends. The people of Stockdale wanted to celebrate her 80th birthday, and the 50th anniversary of her graduation from medical school. The celebration had been planned for weeks, and many people were expected to attend. However, this lady who had been such a faithful doctor and had healed so many, met with misfortune. She was helping to take down a stove in her office when she fell and broke her leg below the hip. She was taken to Baptist Memorial Hospital in San Antonio. The break required surgery, and 25 citizens from Stockdale waited for news of her condition outside the operating room. The people did have a party in her room as soon as she was well enough to enjoy it.

Dr. Ella Ware, this remarkable lady doctor, served the people of Wilson County for many years. She lived her dream of becoming a country doctor. She was noted for her compassion as a healer and rendered her medical services to those people who needed it. She helped many people and babies were named for her. She died October 29, 1958 and is buried in the Stockdale City Cemetery. Her legacy lives on.