

Dr. Houston Mifflin Obituary
Columbia, Pa. September 22, 1936

Dr. Mifflin, 87, Died Early Today At Norwood Home

Retired Physician, Surgeon, and Philanthropist was of Pioneer Family

Body To Lie In State On Friday

Dr. Houston Mifflin, retired physician and surgeon, philanthropist and landowner, and next to the last direct descendant of one of the state's oldest Families, died at 12:10 a. m. today at the Mifflin homestead, Norwood, nestled in an estate whose historic and picturesque memories will live for posterity through the literature and art of his brother, the late Lloyd Mifflin.

Born September 29, 1849, a son of the late John Houston Mifflin and Elizabeth A Bethel Heise, he reached his eighty-seventh birthday this week. His father was of the seventh generation. The first John Mifflin, a Quaker, Came from England in 1676 at a time when William Penn was founding the State. In fact the first Mifflin family was among a ship load of religious refugees brought to America by Penn. Those settlers landed at the mouth of Darby Creek, near Philadelphia. Later when the English Crown gave Penn a tract of land in America extending three degrees in latitude and five degrees in longitude, in payment of a debt due Penn's father, he gave to Mifflin a parcel of some 300 acres, part of which is now embraced in Fairmont Park, Philadelphia.

Began Medical Career

His early days were spent in the old Mifflin home at Second and Walnut streets, lately the P. R.R. Y.M.C.A., where he was born. This also was the birth place of Lloyd Mifflin. Houston Mifflin attended the country schools at Norwood, the Washington Classical Institute of Columbia, now part of the High school, and later he spent one year at Cornell University. Following that he entered the University of Pennsylvania and in 1879 graduated from the medical department with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. The subsequent year he practiced medicine in Philadelphia. For eighteen months he was an intern in the Pennsylvania hospital.

In 1882 he went Kansas City, Missouri, where he specialized in obstetrics and attained a position of affluence and prominence in his profession. For a time he practiced in Columbia. The illness of his father; however, caused him temporarily to abandon the profession in 1884 and to return from the west to assume charge of his father's estate. After the death of his parent, in 1888, the Doctor continued to care for the estate.. By that time, his brother Lloyd, had attained an enviable position in the world of art and literature, and a third brother, James DeVeaux, was in the west. So it was that with the exception of a short time in 1910 when Dr. Mifflin went to California and had success in operating an orange grove, he spent his life in caring for the estate near Columbia which came into his possession on the death of Lloyd Mifflin July 16, 1921.

Funeral Friday

His only direct survivor is a brother, Charles W. Mifflin, now at W. Newton, Massachusetts. Four nieces survive. They are : Miss Alice and Miss Dolly Mifflin at West Newton, Mass. : Gladys, wife of Lewis Williams, Boston, Mass. And Helen, wife of Phillip Young, Boston. A nephew is John Mifflin, Niagara Falls : Mrs. Henry F. Hiestand of Marietta is a cousin. Funeral services will be held Friday at 2 o'clock in the Presbyterian church. The body will be in state from 11 a. m. to 1 p. m. that day at the church. The Presbyterian service will be conducted by the pastor, the Rev. Dr. Guy D. Wingerd. Burial will be private in the Mifflin family plot in Mount Bethel cemetery.

Dr. Mifflin had been in ill health for more than six weeks. During the last year, the Misses Loretta Elizabeth and Grace Minich resided with him. Although he kept up his daily interest in the vast estate he loved so much, Dr. Mifflin suffered greatly from heat during the summer, sapping much of his vitality. As he grew worse during the last week, he had special nurses caring for him.

Known For Philanthropies

Dr. Mifflin was perhaps best known for his fine philanthropies, yet his desire for self-effacement kept even his closest associates from knowing many of his deeds of charity and friendship. Various sums due him have

often been forgiven because of his feeling that debtor needed more than he, Grants of land have been given to the community, its schools and its hospital. Twenty-eight acres of land have been dedicated to the public use for streets and alleys in Columbia without a cent of consideration. Copies of the works of his brother have been presented to every collegiate library in the county. Many have been advanced to pupils studying the fine arts. He gave a tract of land adjoining the Norwood school for use as a playground. Childhood memories made him fond of this little red school house and he always manifested a keen interest in its pupils and teacher. He subscribed for magazines for the school and provided book cases to set up a library. The universal love and esteem in which he was held was forcibly shown by the children of the village school, who, each year on his birthday gathered at his home, bringing gifts, greetings and enjoying a social hour with him. Due to his illness, the event scheduled for next week had been canceled by the teacher, Miss Sarah Mischlich.

Gave Retreat. Field

His gifts were climaxed by the granting of the Cloverton home to the Pennsylvania State Education Association and the granting, at rent free, a field uptown for high school football. The Cloverton home recently reverted to his ownership after the retreat was abandon and recently it was sold to the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood and has become known as the St. Elizabeth Home, an adjunct of Gethsemane. After allowing use of the field for five years, Dr. Mifflin last year recalled it and was planning to break it down into building lots.

Some of his other gifts were a bronze bust of Lloyd Mifflin given to the High school; an oil painting to each school building; a collection of Mifflin sonnets to each school teacher and the furnishing of the Mifflin room at the Taylor building with fine reproductions, five oil paintings all done by an interior decorator. He was a liberal contributor of books to the high school library. He also was a liberal contributor to the U. of P.

He was one of the oldest members of the Presbyterian church and for fifty years sang on the choir. He served for fifty years as president of the Mount Bethel Cemetery Company, taking up the presidency on the death of his father. He was a member and former trustee of the Donegal Historical Society.

While his father was a man of letters and arts and later a leader in the founding of Columbia, Dr. Mifflin emulated a great grandfather, John Houston, who completed his education as a physician in Edinborough and served for seven years as a surgeon in the Revolutionary War. The Mifflin, Wright and Houston families intermarried in the early days of Columbia. Another great grandfather was an educator and later became bookkeeper in the first bank established here. Still another ancestor was the first governor of Pennsylvania. Dr. Mifflin's father showed an early fondness for drawing and was a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. This filial trait was best personified by the late Lloyd Mifflin. Giving up art later, his father took an interest in the establishment of Columbia and built many homes. He also laid out the first cemetery which became known as Mount Bethel