



Dr. Abbie Ann Jarvis

Dakota Images

Dr. Abbie Ann Jarvis was born Abbie Ann Hall at Zanesville, Ohio, on 16 September 1854. Later the family moved to Reedsburg, Wisconsin, where she married Matthew James Jarvis on Christmas Day, 1876. In the spring of 1880 Matthew and Abbie Jarvis and their two sons moved to Redfield, South Dakota, where they lived until 1883. Then they homesteaded on various claims, including one claim in Faulk County near DeVoe. During this time the couple had three daughters, Annette, Lucretia, and Maggie Bell, who died in infancy.

In 1890 the family moved to Faulkton where Matthew bought a drugstore. After being encouraged by her father, who was a doctor in Faulkton, Abbie decided to take a medical course and become a doctor. She attended the Woman's Medical College of the Northwestern University in Chicago. She had no previous college education and entered the college along with many young girls just out of school. Also, she had to interrupt her education for two years to take care of her sick mother. However, in June 1898 she graduated fourth in her class out of a group of twenty-four.

After returning from the university, she began her practice in Faulkton. She was the first licensed woman physician and the first licensed woman pharmacist in South Dakota. She was also elected vice-president of the State Board of Pharmacy. As her practice grew, she was seen making house calls over the prairie in the heat of summer and the cold and blizzards of winter. When she became older, she was forced to give up her town office for an office in her home.

She was loved and respected by all her patients and had a very successful practice. She died of cancer on 2 May 1931 at the age of seventy-six.

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