

For immediate release:

March 17, 2016

Contact: Susan Navarre, Executive Director

director@fitchburghhistoricalsociety.com 978-345-1157

Photographs available

Interviews available: Kathy Flynn, curator; Susan Navarre, Director

Wallace Exhibit Series Presents:

Healing Hands: A History of Medicine in Fitchburg

Exhibition Looks at Fitchburg's History as a Center

For Medical Innovation and Nursing Education

The Fitchburg Historical Society will exhibit some of its historic medical implements, photographs and documents for the first time in decades as part of its new Wallace Exhibit Series exhibition, *Healing Hands: A History of Medicine in Fitchburg*. On view at the Fitchburg Historical Society from April 4 to May 25, 2016, this show features the stories of some of Fitchburg's earliest medical practitioners, along with more recent generations of doctors and nurses who served at Burbank Hospital, the Lucy Helen Hospital, and Fitchburg's other practices.

***Healing Hands: A History of Medicine in Fitchburg* is an introduction to the science of medicine through the stories of Fitchburg's healers and is free and open to the public. It is supported by a grant from the George R. Wallace Foundation.**

Since Fitchburg became a town in 1764, it has benefitted from a chain of notable doctors. This exhibition includes their stories, and artifacts from their practice. Later, Fitchburg's rapid growth during the Civil War era created new health dangers like epidemics and water pollution. Nineteenth-century doctors provided treatments very different from today's medicine.

At the dawn of the 20th century, old approaches like “eclectic medicine” were replaced with a new scientific approach that led to the understanding of germs, bacteria and immunizations. In addition, highly-trained doctors brought new tools and procedures to Fitchburg. One such doctor was Curtis Jennings, who brought X-rays as a diagnostic tool to Fitchburg’s Burbank Hospital only a few years after they were discovered.

Says exhibition curator, Kathleen Flynn, “Fitchburg provides an example of the kind of changes that transformed medicine. It was a rapidly growing city where factory owners became civic leaders and provided scientific medical care and modern hospital facilities.”

“Fitchburg’s Burbank Hospital was before its time, when it established the Burbank School of Nursing at the same time the hospital was founded. We will present their history, along with profiles of other hospitals, including some that the public may not know about,” she continues. “In addition, many of Fitchburg’s doctors were real pioneers in medical practice: this show will feature their stories, with medical artifacts from our collection that have not been exhibited for many years.”

The Fitchburg Historical Society and Crocker Family Center for the History of Fitchburg is located at 781 Main Street, Fitchburg in the historic Phoenix building. It is open Monday and Tuesday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. There is abundant on-street parking near the Historical Society and free parking behind the building. The building is handicapped accessible.

For more information, call 978-345-1157, write welcome@fitchburghistoricalsociety.com, visit www.fitchburghistoricalsociety.org or <https://www.facebook.com/FitchburgHistoricalSociety>.

- 30 -

Wallace Exhibit Series: Healing Hands

April 4 – May 25, 2016

George R. Wallace Jr. and Alice G. Wallace Exhibit Hall, Fitchburg Historical Society

781 Main Street, Fitchburg

Free and open to the public.

About the Fitchburg Historical Society: Founded by James F.D. Garfield in 1892, the Fitchburg Historical Society is an independent non-profit that was created to collect, preserve, and interpret the history of Fitchburg. Now located in an historic H.M. Francis-designed building on Main Street, the Society hosts lectures, exhibits and annual events relating to the city's history. Exhibitions and educational programming about Fitchburg history are supported by a grant from The George R. Wallace Foundation, and are presented in the George R. Wallace Jr. and Alice G. Wallace Exhibit Hall.