



35.1949.1 Pioneer Medical Doctors/Chase S. Osborn  
Huntington County  
Marker Text Review Report  
12/20/2013

## Marker Text

Side One:

George A. Osborn, 1823-1902

Margaret Osborn, 1827-1914

Parents of Chase S. Osborn. The mother launched upon active practice here in 1860. The father practiced in Ohio before 1850.

Side Two:

Chase S. Osborn

Naturalist, "Iron Hunter," Author, World Citizen, Friend of the Indian, Governor of Michigan 1911 and 1912, born here in a log cabin January 22, 1860.

## Report

This marker was placed at a time when State Historical Marker Program guidelines permitted applicants to submit the final text of historical markers without primary source documentation. Like much of the historical research being produced at that time, secondary sources of varying quality were relied upon to craft historical marker text. Current IHB guidelines require primary source documentation to support all information on a marker. Research reveals that basic biographical details on the marker are accurate:

- According to the U.S. Census, George A. Osborn was born in Indiana in February 1823. Margaret Osborn was born in Ohio in April 1827<sup>1</sup>.
- George died on November 5, 1902 in South Bend, Indiana.<sup>2</sup>
- Margaret died on January 29, 1914, also in South Bend.<sup>3</sup>

According to historian Robert Warner, George and Margaret married in 1847 and left Ohio in 1848. They settled in Blackford County, Indiana, and ten years later, they moved to Huntington County. Together they raised eight children. Both husband and wife studied and practiced medicine, though George also worked as a carpenter and farmer and actively participated in the abolition movement.<sup>4</sup> It appears as though information about the medical pursuits of the Osborns is reliant only upon this secondary source. Warner's work includes no citations, and no primary documentation was located to confirm these details. Additionally, no primary or secondary sources were located that establish dates of practice for the Osborns.

Chase S. Osborn confirms the biographical notes on the second side of the marker in his autobiography, *The Iron Hunter*, published in 1919.<sup>5</sup> Further research using additional primary sources would be necessary to confirm claims made in the autobiography, but is outside the scope of this review. *Men of Progress*, a biographical directory published during Osborn's lifetime, confirms the date and place of his birth, as well as his employment as a writer/newspaperman, "iron hunter," and



politician.<sup>6</sup> Osborn reports on his travels and interactions with native people in his writings as well. However, “Friend of the Indian” and “World Citizen” are not terms IHB would use today, as these descriptors are vague and difficult to explain or confirm. Further research is needed to confirm the extent of Osborn’s work as a “Naturalist.”

### Learn More

Chase S. Osborn’s papers are [available](#) at the University of Michigan and you can read his biography and autobiography by clicking the links in the text and notes.

For more information about medicine in early Indiana, visit the [Indiana Medical History Museum](#), or read:

Nancy Eckerman, "Practicing Medicine Along the Indiana Frontier," *AB Bookman's Weekly* 89 (April 13, 1992), pp. 39-44.

Hugh Ayer, "Nineteenth Century Medicine," *Indiana Magazine of History* 48 (September 1952).

Jeremy Agnew, *Medicine in the Old West: A History, 1850-1900* (McFarland, 2010).

Volney Steele, *Bleed, Blister, and Purge: A History of Medicine on the American Frontier* (Mountain Press, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census 1850-1900. Ancestry Library Edition (<http://www.ancestrylibrary.com/default.aspx>).

<sup>2</sup> Ancestry Library Edition, Indiana Deaths, 1882-1920.

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry Library Edition, Directory of Deceased American Physicians, 1804-1929.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Warner, *Chase Salmon Osborn [microform]: 1860-1949* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1960).

<sup>5</sup> Chase Salmon Osborn, *The Iron Hunter*, (New York: Macmillan & Co, 1919). While written and published during his lifetime, IHB staff read autobiographies with caution, and in researching historical markers under current guidelines, always seek confirmation from alternate primary sources.

<sup>6</sup> [Men of progress: embracing biographical sketches of representative Michigan men; with an outline history of the state](#) (Detroit: The Evening News Association, 1900), p. 131, accessed Library of Congress.