

# Bethinking of Old Orleans <sup>11-8-85</sup>

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Dr. Charles E. Fairman 1856-1934

"For direct self-preservation, or the  
maintenance of life and health, the  
all-important knowledge is science."

---Herbert Spencer

Dr. Charles E. Fairman was born in the Town of Yates on December 28, 1856, the son of Prof. Charles and Mary Gambel Fairman, both of whom were at one time teachers in Yates Academy. Having cultured and well-educated parents, Dr. Fairman naturally inherited a love of learning and attained many high school scholastic achievements. His early education was received at the Yates Academy. In 1868 he went with his parents to Acton, Ill. where his father had accepted a position as teacher of mathematics at Shurtliff College. It was there that Dr. Fairman began his studies in Medicine. In 1873 Prof. Fairman accepted the Principalship of the Academy of Havana (now Montour Falls, N.Y.). Dr. Fairman then returned with his family to New York State and attended the University of Rochester from which he graduated in 1874. In March 1877 he graduated from St. Louis Medical College and received a degree of M.D. That same year he returned to Lyndonville where he began his practice of medicine, being associated with Dr. John D. Warren whose daughter Lois Warren, he married in 1878. She pre-deceased him in 1912.

During the 1890's Dr. Fairman became interested in the study of Fungi (Mycology). He specialized in small fungi that he studied with a microscope. Once in an interview with Harriet Fitts Ryan she quoted him as saying: "If I have a little time in the morning as I start my calls I stop in the woods and search for fungi. If I find anything interesting I take it with me and when I get home for lunch I get out my microscope and study it. If it proves worthwhile, I give it further study that evening and get it ready for my files." During his lifetime he collected over 25,000 examples of fungi, many specimens of which he named. He was a correspondent with mycologists all over the United States and Europe and became famous among students of mycology. Dr. Fairman was singularly honored by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington when he was asked to name a series of fungi which Paul C. Standley, a botanist for the Smithsonian had discovered in New Mexico. Likewise, the Field Museum in Chicago also asked him to name a series of fungi they had collected from Santa Catalina Island.

The Rochester Academy of Science published a number of papers by him on the subject of fungi. He particularly studied the type of fungi which grows on various sorts of rotten wood.

His work as a physician was never overshadowed by the fact that he was recognized as an international authority in mycology. In July 1927 he was given a banquet at Fairview Manor in honor of his 50th anniversary of continuous practice of medicine in the Town of Yates. Dr. Fairman was a member of the Yates Baptist Church and served as a deacon of that church for over 30 years. He was a member of the staff of the Medina Memorial Hospital and served as coroner for several terms. He was a member of the Yates Lodge 675 F&AM and was for many years president of the Board of Education in Lyndonville.

When Dr. Fairman died in 1934 an outpouring of tributes came in his behalf from many of his colleagues and contemporaries both in medicine and mycology.