

## ELMHURST HISTORY HIGHLIGHT: The Lindlahr Sanitarium

Elmhurst is well known for its [hospital](#), but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the city was a destination for a different kind of healing center. Dr. Henry Lindlahr (1862-1924) took his training in the "Nature Cure" in Europe before opening his practice in a Chicago office in 1902.

Eventually the practice expanded to include an administration building and Lindlahr College in Chicago to train physicians and nurses in his methods of treatment. Dr. Lindlahr and his staff believed in the Nature

Cure which included a vegetarian diet, sunbaths, air baths, exercise, hydrotherapy, and manipulation. One of the brochures stated: "No Surgery, No Drugs, No Serums."



*Lindlahr Sanitarium in Elmhurst, Illinois 1914 -1928. M2015.1.63*

In 1914, Dr. Lindlahr bought eight acres of the former Lathrop estate in Elmhurst to establish Lindlahr Sanitarium where patients could receive Nature Cure treatments in a country-like atmosphere. Lindlahr Sanitarium was located on the south side of St. Charles Road between Cottage Hill and Prospect Avenues. The property eventually included an administration building; an annex with bedrooms; baths; parlors; porches; the main treatment room; bungalows and a tent city in the summer with screened tents with electric lights.

A brochure for Lindlahr Sanitarium advertises treatment for all illnesses except for those requiring quarantine, and patients who were "violently insane". The large, wooded grounds in Elmhurst provided patients plenty of room for exercise, which was an important part of the Nature Cure. Lindlahr created a sports program that included tennis, basketball, lawn croquet, volleyball and exercise groups. Patients from all over the world came for the Nature Cure at Lindlahr Sanitarium. One of the best-known patients was five-time presidential candidate for the Socialist party, [Eugene Debs](#), who died at the Lindlahr Sanitarium in 1926. It was estimated that Dr. Henry Lindlahr treated 80,000 patients during his career.

Dr. Henry Lindlahr wrote and lectured extensively about the Nature Cure, which was considered a somewhat unorthodox health program at the time. He authored five volumes on Natural Therapeutics, one of which is *Nature Cure* (1913) in which he writes about "the philosophy and practice based on the

unity of disease and cure." Dr. Lindlahr and his wife, Anna, wrote *The Nature Cure Cook Book and ABC of Natural Dietetics*, which had four printings. Dr. Lindlahr also published *Nature Cure* magazine.

Lindlahr Sanitarium closed in 1928, a few years after Dr. Lindlahr's death in 1924.

*By Nancy Wilson, Elmhurst History Museum Staff*

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