

Fort Worth, Texas in 1886 during the time that Dr. I. M. Darter practiced medicine and served as City Physician.

Isaac and Annie lived in Fort Worth during the 1880's and early 90's when there was much excitement about new inventions, means of transportation, and improving the cities public works. Son Frank recalls that at one point he saw the first incandescent light globe in the back of an old black covered wagon attached to a generator. Richard F. Selcer in his excellent book on Fort Worth (Ref 16) mentions the following interesting things in Fort Worth:

- ! In 1882 there were three street car lines operating on Houston, Main, and Taylor Streets (Dr. Darter's brother, W. A. Darter, had previously laid out all of these streets as the first County Surveyor) in the 1870's.
- ! The city spent lots of money on public improvements in the early 1880's, with the proudest achievement in graveling of Main and Houston streets and sidewalks.
- ! Fifty gas street lamps were installed in the business district in 1883.
- ! "In 1888 the first electric power generating plant was built, and five years later all the city's street lamps and streetcars were converted to electricity, making Fort Worth one of the first cities in the southwest to make a switch."

- ! By 1887, there were twenty telegraph lines into the city operated by Western Union.
- ! In 1882, a central telephone exchange connected all 40 telephone owners with each other. In 1882, the first long-distance telephone service to Dallas was in place.
- ! Selcer states that saloons and newspapers were never in short supply in Fort Worth. “Fort Worth’s reputation for hospitality and diversity of political opinion made the city a convention mecca in the 1880’s.”
- ! “In 1890 the city acquired its first sky-scraper, the eight-story Hurley Building, followed by the six-story Martin-Brown Building the next year and the seven-story Wheat Building in 1898.”
- ! “Fort Worth Medical College, opening in 1893 as just the third medical school in Texas. It represented a great advancement for both higher education and medical care in Fort Worth.” Perhaps Dr. Darter was a promoter of the Fort Worth Medical College.
- ! “The Texas Spring Palace was a grand exhibition of the native products of the state of Texas, with musical entertainment and art displays included to appeal to a wide audience.” (1889-90) “During its brief, two-season run, the Spring Palace put Fort Worth on the national map for the first time, thanks to shrewd advertising and aggressive marketing.” (Ref 16)

These were a small portion of the goings on in Fort Worth during these exciting times when Isaac and Annie Darter and their three boys lived and worked there. These happy days would soon come to an end for their family.

Early Death of Dr. I. M. Darter

Dr. I. M. Darter became ill in the spring of 1893 and though he must have fought his disease bravely, he survived for not more than about six months. He was later remembered as “one of the young pioneer citizens (he lived near or in Ft. Worth since the 1860’s) and physicians of Ft. Worth” who practiced medicine for 10 years from 1883 until his untimely death in 1893. He literally gave his life for his patients – dying at the early age of 42 on October 11, 1893. His obituary from the Ft. Worth Daily Gazette, Wednesday, October 11, 1893, p. 2:

Dr. I. M. Darter, 42, died today at his home, corner of Lipscomb and Jarvis Streets. Services will take place at the home with burial in the old cemetery. Dr. Darter came to Texas from Alabama in 1859. Survivors: wife and three sons. Physicians of Fort Worth are requested to meet at the residence to attend services.

Another obituary for an unknown newspaper stated the following:

After a Long Illness Dr. I. M. Darter Passes Away.

At 1 o’clock this morning Dr. I. M. Darter brother of William Darter, an old citizen of Fort Worth, died at his residence, corner of Lipscomb at Jarvis street, after a long illness. The funeral will take place at the family residence at 10 o’clock to-morrow morning, the interment at the new cemetery immediately after. Dr. Darter was well and favorably known in this city, and while his death had been expected for several weeks the announcement of it will cause pain to his many friends here.



WORKS,

Norton Block, Cor. 3rd & Main,
FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Dr. I. M. Darter taken before his early death of TB. His frail condition can be observed in this photo as compared to his much more full face and image in the earlier photo previously shown.

This obituary adds an important fact that he died “after a long illness” which will subsequently be discussed. He was a much beloved doctor and many mourned at his passing. According to his son Bill, Dr. Darter and Annie were two of the founders of the Christian Church of Ft. worth. The following “Resolutions of Respect” were written by the physicians of Fort Worth and presented to his wife Annie and three sons (Frank, Bill, and Mike) at the funeral:

Resolutions of Respect
--to the Memory of--
Dr. I. M. Darter

At a meeting of the physicians of Fort Worth held at Dr. Howard’s office, Oct. 10, 1893, the following resolutions were adopted:

*“Whereas death has removed from among us,
all that is mortal of our friend and brother Dr. I. M. Darter.*

Resolved, That in his death the community has lost a good citizen; the poor, a friend in time of need; the medical profession, a studious and honorable member; his family, a faithful and loving husband, a kind and affectionate father.

Resolved, That, we mourn his loss, and that our sympathies go out to the family in their affliction, and that in token of this, a copy of these resolutions be sent to the bereaved wife.”

*Wm. R. Howard
I. L. Van Laudt
R. B. Grausmen
Committee*

As this memorial and the newspaper article states, he was a very studious person. What a very touching and meaningful statement: “the community has lost a good citizen; the poor, a friend in time of need; the medical profession, a studious and honorable member; his family, a faithful and loving husband, a kind and affectionate father.”

Resolutions of Respect
to the Memory of
Dr. I. M. Darter.

at a meeting of the physicians of Fort Worth,
held at Dr. Steward's office, Oct 10, 1893, the
following resolutions were adopted:

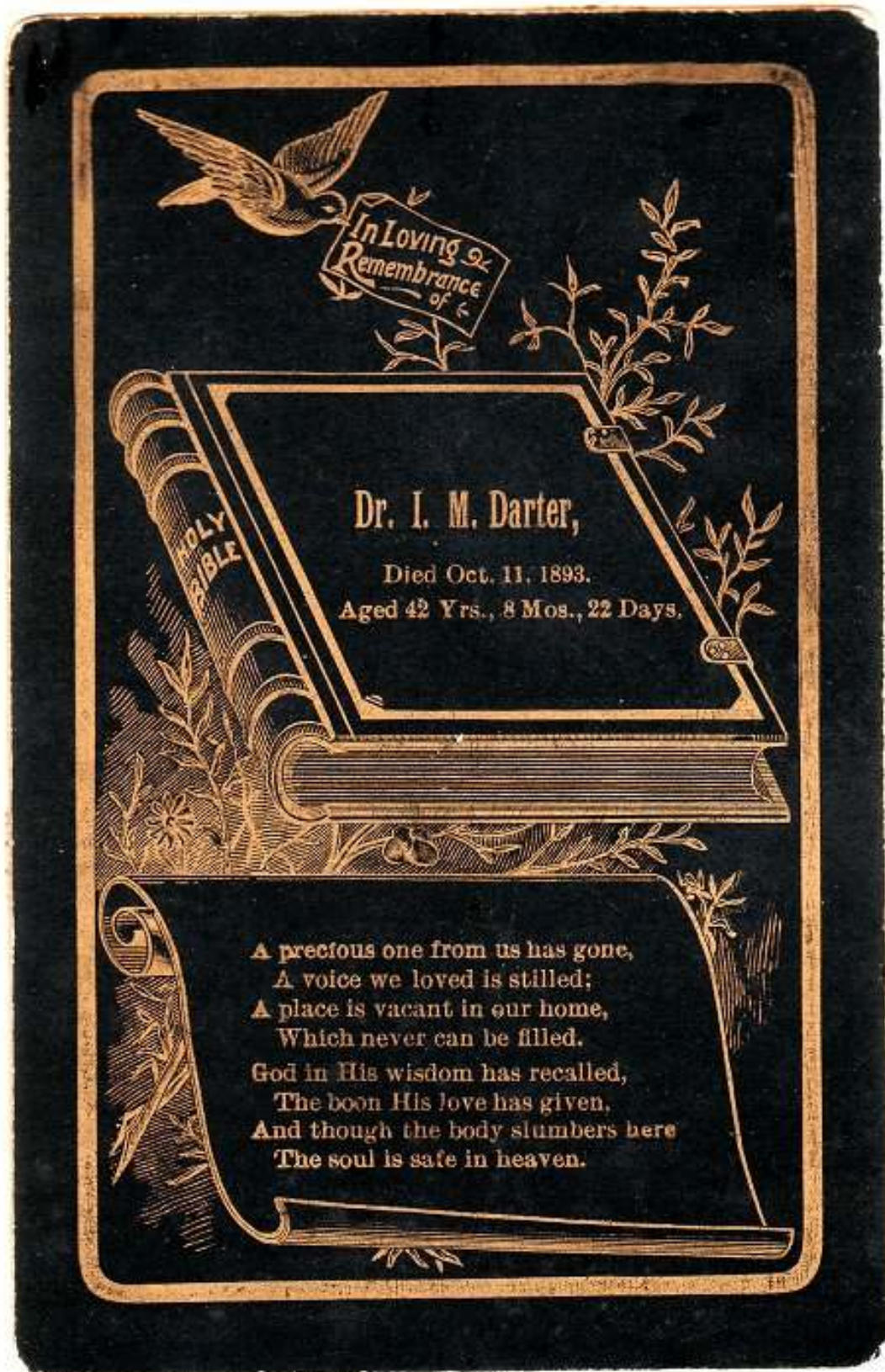
Whereas death has removed from among us,
all that is mortal of our friend and brother
Dr. I. M. Darter.

Resolved, That in his death the community has lost
a good citizen; the poor, a friend in time of
need; the medical profession, a studious
and honorable member; his family, a
faithful and loving husband, a kind and
affectionate father.

Resolved, That we mourn his loss, and that our
sympathies go out to the family in their
affliction, and that in token of this, a copy
of these resolutions be sent to the bereaved wife.

Wm. R. Steward,
J. L. Van Kleeck } Committee
R. B. Grammer }

Photograph of the original "Resolutions of Respect" for Dr. I. M. Darter
prepared by the Doctors of Fort Worth.



A "Loving Remembrance" for Dr. Darter sent out to the many friends of the family.

His two sons, Frank and Bill, 11 and 9 years old, remember his death, each in their own way. Bill, the youngest, recalls: “Frank and I, not knowing the liabilities of spilling all the kerosene out of Dad’s (horse) carriage lamps, he got lost without his lamps one night, coming back from a late case; caught his sickness and never overcame it. It has been a nightmare to me, from that time till now. I know he has forgiven me, however, I will tell him when we meet in Heaven, how sorry I am again.” (Ref 12) This is typical of Bill Darter who had a tender heart and was incredibly kind and caring.

Frank, who was two years older, remembers his Dad’s death differently: “One day, Bill and I were playing around the (horse) carriage and accidentally spilt all the kerosene out of the lamps. We didn’t realize the seriousness of this, and forgot to tell Dad about the accident. He went out to visit his sick patients in the evening and being very stormy weather, the river was running over its bounds and the bridge was covered with water. Coming back from his rounds, he was unable to find the bridge because of the storm and the darkness, and so he left the buggy and being an excellent swimmer, he put his clothes and bag in one hand and swam across in the icy cold water and made it safely across. Due to exposure and catching a bad cold, it turned into pneumonia and he died soon after, 11 October, 1893.” (Ref 13)

The death certificate for Dr. Darter indicates he died of “consumption.” Consumption is what we now call respiratory tuberculosis (TB). TB claimed more lives in the United States than any other disease during the 19th Century. It reduced greatly in the first half of the 20th century due to improvements in sanitation, medical care, and nutrition. Dr. Darter probably caught TB from one of his patients because it is primarily an airborne disease (such as frequent coughing by a person with TB). The cause of his death is important because the belief by his son Bill (which he held his entire life) that he and Frank had caused the death of their father by emptying the oil from his buggy lamps causing him to get lost one evening and thus requiring him to swim the swollen Trinity River is not likely true. Recall that his obituary stated clearly that “After a Long Illness Dr. I. M. Darter Passes Away.”

The disease affected him for some time before his death, and it is believed that the photo of him standing previously shown was taken because he knew that death was approaching. He appears to be weak and under weight. One piece of evidence that he realized the seriousness of his illness was that he went to an attorney on May 26, 1893, five months prior to his death, and wrote out and signed his will. Most men in their early 40’s would not do this unless death was eminent.

One can only imagine the many visits during the time prior to his death from his brothers and sisters and their many children in Ft. Worth and the love and concern they had for Isaac, Annie, and the three boys. Those were sad days and his family, friends, and neighbors, all knew they had lost a true friend. It might be said of him, that he gave his life for his patients, because he was always out at night to help those in need and gave them free service, which seemed to bring him and Annie much happiness.

Annie Darter purchased a family burial plot in Pioneer Rest Cemetery and there Dr. Isaac Michael Darter was buried in Ft. Worth, Texas. This rectangular plot was not far from the grave of his father, Francis Michael Darter and his mother, Mary Boyd Darter. In this cemetery lies the remains of the original founders of Ft. Worth since the 1850’s. It’s the same one that one of his sisters, Margaret Jenkins Darter, had protected against the possible moving of the cemetery with a rifle by the gate to Pioneers Rest Cemetery and told them if anyone tried to move any of the graves, she would shoot

them down. The plan to move the cemetery was abandoned. (Ref 4)



Picture of Grave Marker I. M. DARTER, MD being observed by his grandson, Michael Isaac Darter (although not recorded, I. M. Darter's 21 year old son Isaac Michael Darter born in 1886 was buried next to his father in May of 1907)

Dr. Darter's Will, written five months prior to his death, is located in Tarrant Count courthouse and reads as follows (note the original Will is in long hand written by a scribe and difficult to read. The signature of I. M. Darter was copied and pasted into this typed version): (Ref 5)

The State of Texas in the County of Tarrant in the Name of God, Amen. Know all men by their presents that I __ I. M. Darter being of sound and despairing mind and memory and considering the great uncertainty of life and the certainty of death have this day and do hereby make and publish this my last will and testament revoking all other wills heretofore made by me.

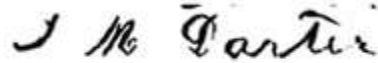
Ist I hereby bequeath and distribute to my beloved wife A. M. Darter all my entire estate both real and personal which I now own and which I may own at the time of my death consisting of lands, tenements, and hereditments, of goods and chattels, livestock, wagons, vehicles, and every other kind and character of personal property including all household and kitchen furniture, including all my separate estate of every kind and character and all my entire interest in the community estate and property of myself and my present wife A.M. Darter. To have and to hold the same unto the said A. M. Darter and her heirs and assigns in fee

simple.

2nd I hereby make, nominate, constitute, and appoint my beloved wife, A. M. Darter my sole testamentary executrix of this my last will and testament and to fully administer my said estate without bond.

3rd It is my will and desire that no action whatever be had in the probate courts of the county in regards to my said estate except the probation of this my last will and testament.

Witness my hand this the 26th day of May 1893.



The undersigned attesting witnesses of the last will and testament of I. M. Darter have this day and do hereby subscribe our names hereto as attesting witnesses to the same, and that we here sign our names hereto in the presence of the said I. M. Darter, and at his request and that we saw him sign his name and subscribe to the same and that he signed his name to the same in our presence and that we signed our names and subscribed to the same in the presence of each other this the 26th day of May, 1893.

*J. F. Martin
J. W. Alderman
L. B. Slauter*

*Filed Nov. 23, 1893
John P. King, County Clerk*