

ELBA

John Lackland Curtis (1830-1880) was a native of Genesee County and with ten years of almost continuous medical study, he became a doctor in Elba. He was among the first in this country to demonstrate, in the general practice of medicine, the value of electricity and magnetism as therapeutic agents for those multitudinous diseases of the nerve and brain. He was also among the first in the use of the electro-thermal bath for the cure of distorted limbs, joints, and general deformity from rheumatism, gout, partial paralysis, and kindred causes. As the inventor of that ingenious system of treatment for catarrh and consumption known as the electro-atomic pulmonary bath, he furnished the most rational and by far the most successful treatment for these terrible diseases.

He discovered that in every community there are a great number of persons afflicted with chronic difficulties or incurable diseases. Believing that a majority of these cases were not beyond recovery, patients came from long distances, until it became necessary for him to relocate to Batavia being the prominent railroad centre. Later in his career he has been compelled to drop his general practice and open offices both in Rochester and Buffalo

Taken from: Historical Atlas of Genesee County, 1876 Page 36
Submitted by Scott Benz, Town of Elba Historian

Mary Elizabeth Wood (1861-1931) was born in Elba and became the pioneer of the library movement in China. She was the first director of the Richmond Memorial Library in Batavia from 1889 until 1899. Her brother, Rev. Robert E. Wood (1872-1952) was an Episcopal clergyman, who first went to China in 1898 and he maintained a mission in Wuchang. Miss Wood visited her brother and at his suggestion took charge of an elementary English class. By 1904 she received an appointment as a lay missionary. Through her efforts to secure financial support, the library building at Boone School, the first modern school library in China, open in 1910. Her efforts brought numerous libraries to China and established a strong program to train librarians. She died at her residence in Wuchang at the age of 69 and her ashes are buried in the Batavia Cemetery on Harvester Avenue.

Submitted by: Susan Conklin, Genesee County Historian