

## Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine

# Service with Integrity for Over 135 Years: The Hagyard Equine Medical Institute

By Dr. Donald F. Smith  
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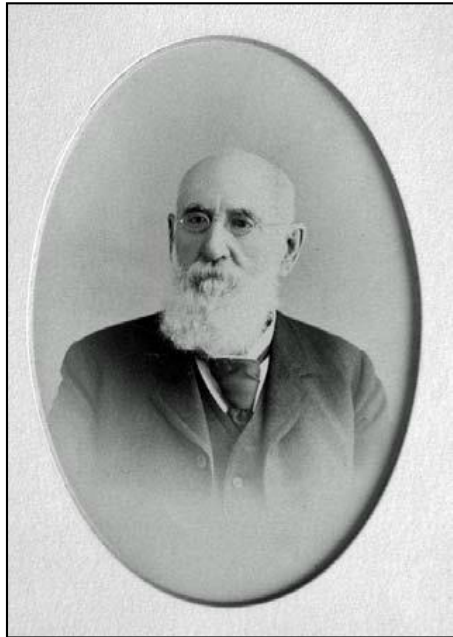
The large mural in the Lexington, Kentucky, airport describes Hagyard Equine Medical Institute in simple yet profound terms, *"The world's premier equine practice since 1876."*

Situated on the outskirts of Lexington, Kentucky, the practice is a sprawling 109-acre medical campus, with over 100,000 square feet of clinical space for patients that come to the clinic for outpatient treatment, or for inpatient medico-surgical care. In addition to the approximately 20 veterinarians who attend to the horses at the clinic and hospital, another 40 travel to farms in the surrounding area where they attend to the health and reproductive needs of over 20,000 horses annually.



*Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, Lexington, Kentucky, circa 2010*  
(© Hagyard Equine Medical Institute)

The beginning of the five-generation Hagyard family of veterinarians dates to 1839 when Edward Thomas Hagyard, a Scot, graduated from the Edinburgh Veterinary College. He immigrated to Canada in 1849, and soon become a prominent practitioner as well as a leader in professional veterinary circles. He served as external examiner for his friend, Andrew Smith, the principal of Toronto's Ontario Veterinary College (OVC).



*Dr. Edward Thomas Hagyard, Edinburgh Veterinary College 1839 (1<sup>st</sup> Generation and Founder)*  
(Photo provided by Dr. Edward H. Fallon, Lexington Kentucky, 2011)

Dr. Hagyard was invited to Kentucky in 1875 to consult on a valuable Shorthorn bull, named *Duke of Geneva*, who had an intractable gastro-intestinal problem. Hagyard's expertise so impressed the local cattle and horsemen that he was encouraged to move to the Lexington area and set up his veterinary practice. He moved to Kentucky the following year and established a practice primarily devoted to horses and cattle work but, in a manner that was typical of the English veterinarian, small animals were also welcomed.<sup>1</sup>

Edward Hagyard's three sons all became veterinarians, graduating from the OVC in 1875 (John Robert Hagyard), 1878 (Thomas Horsley Hagyard), and 1888 (Edward Weddell Hagyard). All three practiced in the United States, either in Lexington or in Nashville, Tennessee.

Edward worked with his father in Lexington until he answered a call to move to Montana as chief veterinarian for the Bitter Root Stud Farm. An enterprising Irishman named Marcus Daly was operating the world's largest copper company in the Bitter Root Valley. At the same time, he was collecting valuable mares from England and building an impressive horse farm. After Daly died unexpectedly in 1902, it fell upon Edward to disperse the herd and close down the operation.



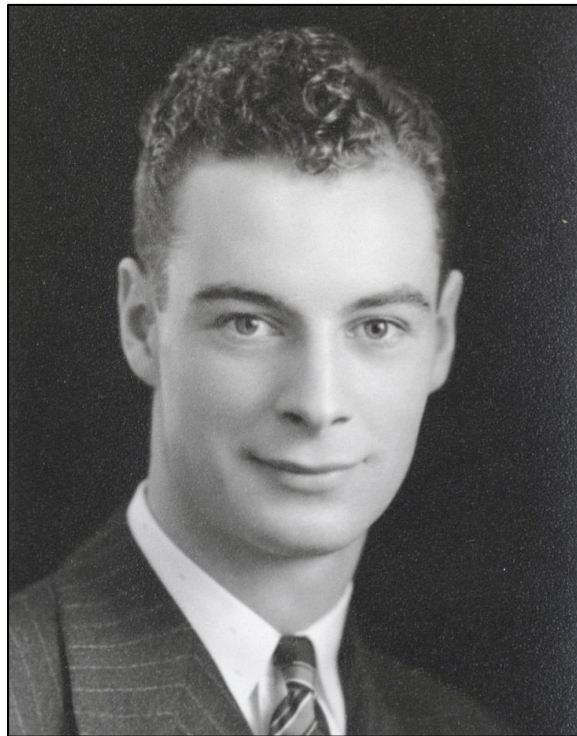
*Dr. Edward Weddell Hagyard, Ontario Veterinary College 1888 (2nd Generation Hagyard veterinarian)*  
(Photo provided by Dr. Edward Fallon, Lexington Kentucky, 2011)



*Dr. Charles Hagyard, Ontario Veterinary College 1924 (3rd Generation Hagyard veterinarian)*  
(Photo provided by Dr. Edward Fallon, Lexington Kentucky, 2011.)

Dr. Ed, as he was affectionately known, eventually returned to Lexington and had two children, a son (Charles Edward Hagyard), who returned to Canada for his veterinary education (OVC, 1924), and a daughter, Esther. Later known simply as Uncle Charlie, Charles was the third generation member of the family in the Lexington practice.

About 1940, Charles took on two veterinary partners—Arthur Davidson (Iowa State University, 1936) and William McGee (Washington State University, 1940). By this time, the thriving practice was devoted exclusively to horses and Charles Hagyard became a magnet for equine veterinarians, attracting some of the leading researchers and academicians of the day. He was, for example, the veterinarian for *Man O' War*, considered one of the best Thoroughbred racehorses of all time. Charles was also an outstanding Thoroughbred breeder in his own right.



*Dr. William McGee, Washington State University 1940*  
(©Washington State College of Veterinary Medicine, 1940)

The family veterinary lineage continued through the marriage of Charles Hagyard's sister, Esther, to John Harold Fallon, who maintained the famous racing stable of H. P. Headley of Beaumont Farms. Esther and John's second child, Edward Hagyard Fallon, was a natural horseman like his father, and an aspiring veterinarian from his youth. "*I had always intended on working for Uncle Charlie,*" he told me during my visit to the equine center in 2010.

Ed received his veterinary degree from Cornell University in 1956, and became the fourth generation member of the Hagyard family to join the practice.



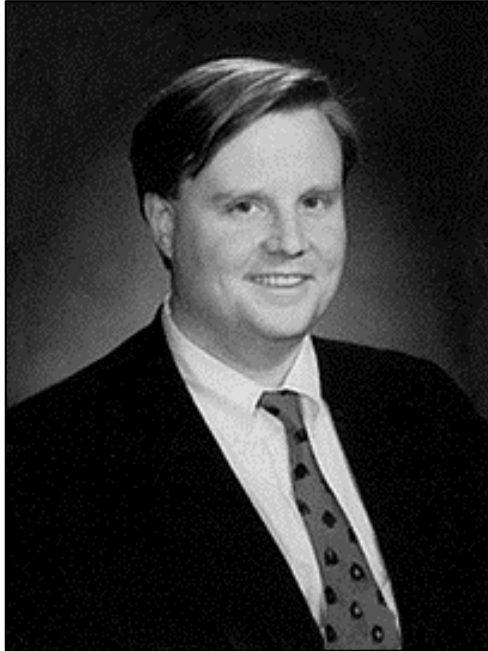
*Dr. [John] Edward Fallon, Cornell University 1956 (4<sup>th</sup> generation Hagyard veterinarian)*  
(©Cornell University, 1956)

Dr. Ed Fallon married Priscilla Beverly Roberts (painter, sculptor and horse woman) in 1958, and they have four children: Lillian Elliott (an architectural designer), Esther Roberts (a teacher), Alma Hagyard (a molecular biologist) and Luke Hagyard.

Following in his father's footsteps, Luke attended Notre Dame University, and then joined Cornell's veterinary class of 1996. From the beginning of his veterinary education, he knew he wanted to return to his family legacy in Lexington where he is now well established as the fifth-generation veterinarian in the Hagyard legacy.

Hagyard is also a leader in veterinary education, providing instruction to 200 upper-class veterinary students who visit the practice for two- to four-week externships during their final year of veterinary college, as well as 20 interns who spend one year developing their clinical skills following graduation. Staff veterinarians and partners/owners of the institute come from many countries and have a variety of experiences and clinical specialties.

A tribute to the Hagyard legacy, as it matured during the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is embodied in a stunning portrait of the three veterinarians who gave the practice the distinctive image that became aligned with the phrase, *Service with Integrity*.



*Dr. Luke Hagyard Fallon, Cornell University 1996 (5<sup>th</sup> generation Hagyard veterinarian)  
(©Cornell University, 1996)*



*Portrait of Drs. William McGee (left) and Arthur Davidson (right)  
and Charlie Hagyard (seated)*

(© Photo provided by Hagyard Equine Medical Institute 2013)

Though the name has since been changed to Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, people of my generation will always remember the way we referred to it during our formative years in the profession. We called it Hagyard, Davidson and McGee, or sometimes, just Hagyard.

In a profession that has now turned 150 years old in the US, it is impressive that one practice has thrived for 137 of those years.

**Addendum:** Readers are invited to view an expanded version of an interview by the author with Drs. Edward Fallon, Luke Fallon, William McGee and Walter Zent, as well as Mrs. Priscilla Fallon and Mrs. Ali McGee, from which some of the material in this story was derived.

See A Biography of and Interview with Edward Hagyard Fallon, DVM.

<http://hdl.handle.net/1813/29544>

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<sup>1</sup> Bryans, John T. Our Hagyards. Unpublished manuscript. 2002.

**KEYWORDS:**

Ontario Veterinary College  
Edinburgh Veterinary College  
Andrew Smith  
Edward Hagyard Fallon  
Hagyard Equine Medical Institute  
Edward Weddell Hagyard  
Charles Edward Hagyard  
Edward Hagyard Fallon  
Luke Hagyard Fallon  
William R. McGee  
Arthur Davidson  
Ontario Veterinary College  
Cornell University  
History of Veterinary Medicine  
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Hagyard-Davidson-McGee  
Lexington, Kentucky

**TOPIC:**

Equine Practice

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

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Dr. Donald F. Smith, Dean Emeritus of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, had a passion for the value of the history of veterinary medicine as a gateway for understanding the present and the future of the profession.

Throughout his many professional roles from professor of surgery, to Department Chair of Clinical Sciences, Associate Dean of Education and of Academic Programs and Dean, he spearheaded changes in curriculum, clinical services, diagnostic services and more. He was a diplomat of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons and a member of the National Academy of Practices. Most recently he played a major role in increasing the role of women in veterinary leadership.

*Perspectives in Veterinary Medicine* is one of his projects where he was able to share his vast knowledge of the profession.