

Dr. Robert Earl Beddoe
Wuchow Rotary Club Charter Member & President 1937-1938
By Herbert K. Lau (劉敬恒) (Rotary China Historian)

22 May 2016



Dr. Robert Earl Beddoe (畢濟時醫生) (1882–1952) was an American Southern Baptist medical missionary who served in China for nearly 40 years. Since 1918 he moved to be on staff at Stout Memorial Hospital (思達公醫院) in Wuchow (*Wuzhou*) (梧州), Kwangsi (*Guangxi*) Province (廣西省), Republic of China (中華民國).

Wuchow is situated at the confluence of the Xi River (西江) with its northern tributary, the Gui River (桂江), just west of the border with Kwangtung (*Guangdong*) Province (廣東省). The city occupies a location of strategic and economic importance, dominating the principal route between Kwangsi and southwestern China, as well as the Canton (*Guangzhou*) (廣州) area to the east along the coast of the South China Sea. Wuchow was opened to foreign commerce in 1897, after which a flourishing trade grew up with Germany and the United Kingdom. Industrial growth began in the 1920s-30s, when chemical plants that manufactured pharmaceuticals and sulfuric acid were established.

After the Tsingtao Intercity Meeting, the Canton Rotary Club (廣州扶輪社) undertook to sponsor a new Club there. B. B. Anthony served as Special Representative to 81st District Governor Dr. Chengting T. Wang (王正廷博士). With full support of the officers and members of Canton Club, he succeeded in getting together the leaders of that city. After several provisional meetings, the Rotary Club of Wuchow (梧州扶輪社) was regularly organized on 3 April 1936 and provisional officers duly elected. The Club, of 17 charter members, was admitted to Rotary International on 22 May 1936 with Charter #3977.

Being the administrator and medical superintendent of Stout Memorial Hospital, Beddoe was invited to be a charter member and the Vice President. He later served the Club as President in 1937-1938.



TO THE CLUB SECRETARY:

Under direction club board of directors three copies of this form should be filled out completely. The original and one carbon should be returned promptly to the governor—the other carbon is for the club files.

Purpose of the Report:

- (a) To aid the district governor in keeping informed as to the activities of the clubs in his district and to assist him in preparing his reports to the board of directors of Rotary International.
- (b) To acquaint the board of R.I. with the manner in which the member clubs are carrying out Rotary's program.
- (c) To furnish the board of R.I. with information and data for its guidance in making helpful suggestions for club activities.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
 REPORT FROM CLUB
 TO
 DISTRICT GOVERNOR
 ON
 CLUB ACTIVITIES

(Please leave this space blank)



Rotary Club of Wuchow
 District No. 96 Year Club Organized 1936
 No. of Members Now 22 Date of This Report Mar 21-38

What is your club doing in:

1. Club Service?

*Inactivity because of
 political conditions*

2. Vocational Service?

4. International Service?

5. On what phase of Rotary service would you like information or suggestions?

3. Community Service?

*Free treatment for
 hook-worm patients
 subscription of
 \$600⁰⁰ - L.C. for war
 refugee relief*

General Remarks

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ROTARY CLUB

Of Wuchow, So. China
 By President Robert Pedder
 and Secretary John Thomson

(Reverse side may be used if necessary for answers to any of these questions or for additional remarks.)

"SERVICE
ABOVE SELF"



"HE PROFITS MOST
WHO SERVES BEST"

先
公
後
私

社 輪 扶 州 梧
THE ROTARY CLUB
OF
WUCHOW

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MEETINGS: 6 P. M. ~~FRIDAY~~
Thursday

April 22 no38

Rotarian H H Snuggs

Canton

Dear Fellow-Rotarian:

Learning that you may attend the Rotary International in San Francisco, the Wuchow Club voted to request that you proxy for them. In case our own member, Rotarian Roy R Pearson, finds it impossible to attend the meetings you will then become the only representative of the Wuchow Club--& uninstruced.

With best wishes for a wonderful meeting to yourself and all attending Rotarians,

Most sincerely yours,

WUCHOW ROTARY CLUB

Robert E Beddoe

Robert E Beddoe, President



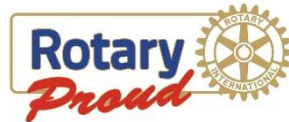
In the 1948《Wuchow Rotary Club Bulletin》, there is a short message describing Wuchow Rotary Club's community service in the Stout Memorial Hospital:

Medical Aid Work

The Rotary Club of Wuchow in endeavoring to carry out its motto of "Service Above Self" wished to find some way in which it could be of help to the many people in Wuchow who are sick but cannot afford to pay for hospitalization. It was felt that there were many people in Wuchow who ordinarily could make ends meet in a financial way under ordinary circumstances but when they became sick and required hospitalization they were unable to meet this aided expense.

The Rotary Club of Wuchow desirous in its effort to help these needy sick made arrangements with the Stout Memorial Hospital of Wuchow whereby they would pay the complete hospital expense of a limited number of those cases. Ten medical and surgical beds and two obstetrical beds are reserved in the hospital by the Rotary Club of Wuchow. This plan was put in effect in October 1947 and up to the present time 32 patients have been hospitalized under this plan. Not only Rotarians but any citizen of Wuchow may recommend that a needy patient be admitted under this plan and the Rotary Club will pay for his hospitalization.

The Stout Memorial Hospital is glad to co-operate with the Rotary Club of Wuchow in order that this worthy service may be rendered to the community.



Early Life and Education

Born on 9 September 1882, in Dallas, Texas, U.S.A., Robert Earl Beddoe came from a distinguished Baptist family. His grandfather was Robert Cooke Buckner, founder of the Buckner Orphans Home. He graduated from the Baylor University School of Medicine in Dallas before surrendering to missionary service.

Missionary Work in China (1909–1948)

Beddoe arrived in China in 1909 under the Baptist General Convention of Texas. His career was marked by several leadership roles in medical administration:

- Stout Memorial Hospital: He served for many years as the administrator and superintendent of this hospital in Wuchow.
- Other Roles: He was a staff surgeon at the Baptist Hospital in Canton and served as the secretary-treasurer for the Orient Region of the Foreign Mission Board.
- Medical Innovation: In 1935, he notably broke cultural traditions by successfully introducing female nurses into male wards---a move he initially attempted with "fear and trembling".

Return to the U.S. and Later Life

Following his return to the United States in 1948, Beddoe joined the faculty of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. There, he taught hospital administration and oversaw the university hospital. He was also an accomplished musician, known for giving organ recitals.

Beddoe died in Shawnee, Oklahoma, in 1952, and is buried in Texas. His life story is detailed in the biography 《Doctor in an Old World》 (1969) by Helen Thames Raley.

Family

Beddoe married Louella Houston (1883–1979) in Shanghai (上海) in 1911. They had two daughters: Addie Buckner Choate and Mrs. Lamar Ross.

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Robert Earl Beddoe

by Luke Holmes / 14 July 2020

The history of the SBC includes thousands of missionaries, pastors, workers, and others who often get lost to history. My goal is to highlight a few of those people in order that we can be encouraged and inspired by their lives and sacrifice.

Robert Beddoe was born to a prominent Baptist family in Dallas, Texas September 9, 1882. His mother was the daughter of R. C. Buckner, the founder of the Buckner Orphans Home, and his father A. F. Beddoe was both an ordained minister and a doctor of medicine. His mother was later the elected leader of the Texas WMU organization, and his family constantly involved in Baptist work in Texas. He was baptized at the age of 11 by his grandfather in 1893 at Washington Ave Baptist Church in Dallas. He later surrendered to missionary service under the preaching of G. W. Truett, the famous pastor of FBC Dallas. It's no surprise that Robert chose to follow his father's footsteps in becoming a doctor, and then as a medical missionary was able to combine both of his father's passions.

Beddoe graduated from Baylor Medical School and entered the mission field in China in 1909. After two years on the field, he married Louella Houston in Shanghai in 1911. Dr. Beddoe served as superintendent of the hospital in Yingtak, as the chief surgeon of the Baptist Hospital in Canton, and for a time was the secretary-treasurer for the Orient region of the Foreign Mission Board. In 1918 he moved to be on staff at Stout Memorial Hospital in Wuchow.

There was a great work to be done in Wuchow and Beddoe and his growing family gave themselves to the task. He began to expand the hospital, adding floors, wings, terraces, and living quarters for staff. He raised the money to do all this work himself along the way and was a gifted journalist who used the power of his words to express to those back home the

challenge in China. God blessed their ministry and faithfulness. They had not been in Wuchow long, however, before Beddoe had to learn again to trust in the grace of God.

Robert Stanley Beddoe was almost four when he wandered away from his baby sitter and into the construction zone of the hospital. He wandered under some loose timbers used in the pouring of concrete that fell and crushed him. Everyone on staff at the hospital worked valiantly to save him, but he lost his life on February 8, 1917.

Beddoe continued to work, even in the middle of his great grief. The reports of the hospital from 1919 show great progress in the work being done and celebrated the goodness of God, but behind the scenes, his heart ached over the loss of his son.

In 1920 he recorded the following.

“Now God, in his fathomless wisdom, has brought this great sorrow to our hearts, which instead of turning us from our purpose, shall only serve to increase our zeal and efforts to serve the people of China— our adopted county. We can no longer in truth be called foreigners for now the bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh is mingled with the dust of this land. To our gracious Lord and to those who love his appearing, we renew our pledge for service to the limit of what strength may be given us.”

Beddoe did what many who face tragedy have done: turn to God for comfort and continue to work for His glory. Still, he continued to face trials and difficulties, all while trying to do what God called him to. In 1927 he was forced to leave the mission field due to very serious eye trouble. After several operations and treatments, Beddoe was sent back to be the director of Stout Memorial in Wuchow in 1934. The work was great, but he gave himself to it as he always did.

Beddoe wrote about the great need in China:

Some days I can hardly stand up under the strain. These suffering people, and our suffering co-missionaries. The strain breaks out in the most unaccountable times and ways. Some days back I was walking in the rain on muddy, filthy paths after sending a cablegram to you. My heart was bleeding as I thought of recent events. I passed a woman. With her was a girl of eight or nine years. The child was dressed in a few rags and an old sack. She was as thin as a sparrow. The weather was cold and she was drawn together against the wind and rain. She carried a small basket and I noticed her picking up bits of straw, chewings from sugar cane, tiny bits of bamboo and so forth, for fuel. To keep up with her mother she had to travel in a slow trot. Yet, there was a smile on her drawn face and she glanced at me as at a friend and said “American gentleman, friend of China.” Well, the whole picture just broke my heart. I thought of my little girls. In a flash the whole picture of their sheltered lives passed before my mind’s eye. I thought: What if that were my daughter! Without volition the tears streamed from my eyes and I stopped in the rain and wind, leaning against a machine-gun pill box and wept. O God in heaven how can we stand it?

The work was so much so that at times it became almost unbearable. He wrote the Foreign Mission Board soon after arrival in 1934 desperately asking for the help of another surgeon. Near the same time, the FMB received a letter from a young surgeon requesting to be sent on the foreign field. The arrival of Bill Wallace in China was an answer to the prayer of Robert Beddoe. The young doctor was skilled at surgery but not at administration, and so Beddoe let him do what he excelled at, all the while teaching him to lead the hospital as well. Wallace led the hospital during the furlough of Beddoe and became the full-time director of the hospital himself upon returning from furlough in 1942. Wallace owed a great debt to Beddoe as he taught him to be a leader, both spiritually and administratively. Wallace later died in a Chinese jail cell in 1951 and inspired millions through a book and movie about his life.

Beddoe left China in 1947, but the people that he labored for never left his heart. He continued to support mission work from his new home in Oklahoma, as well as training others to go. Beddoe served faithfully in a local church where he was a gifted musician. After the death of Bill Wallace, Beddoe penned the hymn "Let not your heart be troubled," which he dedicated to the persecuted Christians from China.

Into each darkened life he'll come
Bringing the light of God's holy Son
Dying He'll save you
Living He'll keep you
Trust Him to lead you safely back home

Robert Earl Beddoe followed the Son safely back home on January 19, 1952.



中華民國. 廣西省. 梧州. 思達公醫院

Stout Memorial Hospital, Wuchow, Kwangsi, Republic of China