

Dr. Carroll Marion Peak
November 13, 1828 - February 27, 1885

Dr. Carroll Marion Peak was born in Warsaw, Kentucky on November 13, 1828 to parents Jefferson and Martha Malvina Peak. At the age of 19, he began an apprenticeship studying medicine. He would later attend the University of Louisville where he would earn his medical degree in 1851.¹

He married Florence Chalfant on April 26, 1853 in Madison, Indiana. In that same year, the young Doctor was persuaded to move to Fort Worth, Texas to establish his practice. Their first home was a log cabin made from cottonwood trees. He is noted as being the first physician of Fort Worth, which was much needed as the city was growing quickly. With youth on his side, he committed himself to providing medical care to anyone within a 30 mile radius of Fort Worth. "The weather was never too bad nor way too perilous for him to go to those who needed him, may they be rich or poor, black, white or red."² In 1855, Carroll and his wife founded the First Christian Church inside their home. The church is still operational today and is the oldest continuously operating church established in Fort Worth.³

By 1856, Dr. Peak built a larger home in Downtown Fort Worth near the present day historic Courthouse. Connected to their home was a drug store, where Dr. Peak sold anything from ointments and medications to pocket knives and sides of beef. His establishment was just the second mercantile established in Fort Worth.

When the civil war started, Dr. Peak volunteered and helped recruit others to join the Volunteer Texas Cavalry for the Confederate Army. He would spend his service time in Louisiana as a surgeon. After the war, Dr. Peak returned home but found much of the landscape of the city had changed. Along with other prominent men in town, the decision was made that they would encourage the railroad to come through Fort Worth to help stimulate the economic growth of the city. Dr. Peak personally provided \$2,250 for the cause and the railroad came to town as they had wished.

Dr. Peak remained active in civic matters his entire life. Dr. Peak was a lifelong member of the Democratic Party and in 1880 he accomplished one of his long standing goals: to be a delegate for the Democratic National Convention held in Cincinnati. He also served on the City Council and did so much for the area schools he was known as "the father of the Fort Worth Public School System." He was a strong advocate for the education of african-americans. As the first

¹ "Dr. C.M. Peak Dead." *Fort Worth Daily Gazette*. Fort Worth, TX, Vol. 9, No. 228, Ed. 1, Saturday, February 28, 1885, Pg. 5. Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph86422/m1/5> ; Accessed 24 Aug 2023.

² Pattie, Illene. *Carroll Marion Peak: A Story of a Frontier Doctor*. Texas State Historical Association. The Junior Historian, Volume 5, Number 5, March 1945, periodical, March 1945; Austin, Texas, Pgs. 17-19. <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph391509/>; Accessed 24 Aug 2023.

³ "First Christian Church - Throckmorton." Historic Fort Worth, 2022. <https://historicfortworth.org/property/first-christian-church-throckmorton/> ; Accessed 25 Aug 2023.

president of the school board, Dr. Peak established the I.M. Terrell Nergo High School in 1882.⁴ Today, Carroll Peak Elementary at 1201 E. Jefferson St. bears his name as a token of appreciation for his efforts in education.⁵

Carroll and his wife Florence had four children together and also adopted two orphaned children.⁶ After a battle with a short illness, Dr. Peak died of a kidney disease on February 27, 1885 at the age of 56. His funeral took place in his home⁷ and he is laid to rest next to his wife and five of his children.

⁴ Pattie, Illene. *Carroll Marion Peak: A Story of a Frontier Doctor*. 1945

⁵ "Carroll Peak Elementary School." Fort Worth ISD, 2023. <https://www.fwisd.org/CarrollPeak> ; Accessed 25 Aug 2023.

⁶ Pattie, Illene. *Carroll Marion Peak: A Story of a Frontier Doctor*. 1945

⁷ "Dr. C.M. Peak Dead." 1885.