

Dr. E.J. Schellhous, M.D. (1821-1915): A Biographical Sketch  
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*In his book the New Republic, Dr. Schellhous seeks to bring political and social awareness to the injustices of modern Capitalism and its effects on citizens. He provides solutions based on reason and logic, with the core foundations in cultivating the individual citizens' awareness of the power of proper knowledge and education. In his afterword, he comes to a conclusion that is not based in violence, but rather in knowledge (education), evolving one's consciousness, and wisdom of the heart.*

“They did their duty well: let us do ours; for we have a duty to perform, not upon the battlefield, nor the council-chamber. The work is in the brains, illumination, and heart purification.” <sup>1</sup>

“We live in deeds: not in years. We should count time by heart-throbs: not by figures on the dial-plate. He lives most who feels the noblest, thinks the wisest and acts the best.” (written at the age of ninety-two) - E.J. Schellhous, Roseville, April 1913, at home <sup>2</sup>

The quote above was found handwritten in black ink in a memorabilia book amongst the pioneer treasures located in the attic of my grandmother’s home. Overjoyed that I found this sweet little prose (whose author shares our family name ‘Schellhous’), I transcribed the quote onto a slip of paper and tucked it away for future study. Two years later the slip of paper had fallen onto the floor after which I then began to investigate its origin and author. Along with the quote discovered in the attic, I had found *The New Republic*, and realized the first two initials of the handwritten quote were that of Dr. Edwin (‘E.J’) James Schellhous. What I have uncovered in the last year has not only fascinated me, but has led me to further study the life of a man who was a spiritual and intellectual enigma, yet ruled by logic and reason . Listed by the census as a farmer, school teacher, physician, Dr. E.J. Schellhous came to California with his brother Martin A. Schellhous in 1852. Leaving the Midwestern states (Michigan and Indiana) to settle in California (Sonoma County, Roseville, San Francisco) <sup>3</sup> and later residing in Sinaloa, Mexico,

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<sup>1</sup> E. J. Schellhous, M.D., *The New Republic: Founded on the Natural and Inalienable Rights of Man, and Containing the Outlines of Such a Government as the Patriot Fathers Contemplated and Formulated in the Declaration of Independence When Struggling for Liberty*, (California: Bacon & Company, Printers, 1883), 353-54. .

<sup>2</sup> Handwritten quote by E.J. Schellhous quoted (in author’s possession, Roseville, CA, 1913). Original version by E.J. Schellhous from *The New Republic*: “We live in deeds, not years. We should count time by heart-throbs, not by figures on the dial-plate. He lives most who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.”, 354.

<sup>3</sup> *Schellhous vs. Ball*, Placer County District Court Case 2048, (1864), Placer County Museums, Archive and Research Center.

Dr. Schellhous was nothing short of a pioneer. A scholarly individual, he dedicated a great deal of his life to education, publishing, political reform and the spiritual arts.

He was born in Huron, Ohio in 1821 to Martin G. Schellhous and Betsy Anderson, and one of five children: Martin, Julia, Edmund (his twin), Selina, Helen and Cyrus.<sup>4</sup> His twin Edmund C. Schellhous passed away at the age of 27 in May of 1848.<sup>5</sup> His father Martin G. and his brothers were some of the earliest settlers of Colon, Michigan, with the name “Colon” attributed to Lorancie Schellhous.<sup>6</sup> According to historian Roy D. F. Sowers: “Cyrus and Martin Schellhous had a great influence over the Nottawa Indians and were busy constantly keeping peace between the settlers and Indians”.<sup>7</sup> The history of Martin G. and his brothers deserve further research. Dr. E.J. Schellhous’ early interests were in medicine and education. In Thomas A. Robertson’s *A Southwestern Utopia*, the author goes into detail about Dr. Schellhous: “Young Schellhous attended Michigan State University in 1837, took a medical course in Cincinnati, married in 1848, Ohio, moved to California in 1852.”<sup>8</sup> In July 1848 he married Cartharine Tyler in St. Joseph County, Michigan.<sup>9</sup> In 1849 his daughter Frances (“Frankie”) Ellen Schellhous was born, whom he was very proud of.<sup>10</sup> She was known as a “remarkable [sic] intelligent girl ” and “kind in her disposition”.<sup>11</sup> He is listed in the 1850 census as a resident of Prairie,

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<sup>4</sup> Christine Harris-Glade, “Letter from Irene Chaffee to Annie” (Battle Creek, MI) in *Schellhous Genealogy*.

<sup>5</sup> Christine Harris-Glade, “ Kinship of Debbie Osella” in *Schellhous Genealogy*.

<sup>6</sup> “ How Colon was named, ” *The Express*, (Colon, MI) in *Schellhous Genealogy*.

<sup>7</sup> Roy D. F. Sowers, *St. Joseph County Historical Review and Business Guide* (University of Michigan: 1932), <https://tfred.tripod.com/hiscol.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas A. Robertson, *A Southwestern Utopia. Sketches by Cas Duchow* (Ward Ritchie Press: 1947), 41.

<sup>9</sup> *Schellhous vs. Ball*, Placer County District Court Case 2048, (1864), Placer County Museums, Archive and Research Center.

<sup>10</sup> Robertson, *A Southwestern Utopia*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> “Ella M. Tyler Testimony,” *Schellhous vs. Ball*, Placer County District Court Case 2048, (1864), Placer County Museums, Archive and Research Center.

Kosciusko, Indiana, with the occupation as “physician”.<sup>12</sup> After moving to the Roseville area he turned his efforts to one of his greatest passions: education. He became the first school teacher of Roseville in 1857, and classes took place in a barn on the Thomas S. Dudley Ranch in the Dry Creek District.<sup>13</sup> Dr. Schellhous was a frequent lecturer, presenter and Vice President of the California Teachers’ Institute.<sup>14</sup> His methodical and philosophical approach to teaching grammar was received well by his colleagues.<sup>15</sup> He was well known in Placer County as a “prominent educator”.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Schellhous resided with his family on the “Dr. Schellhous Ranch”<sup>17</sup> in Placer County, Dry Creek, while Martin A. Schellhous and his family took up residence on Shellhous homestead off of PFE road, also in Dry Creek. In 1864, his daughter Frankie succumbed to scarlet fever.<sup>18</sup> This tragedy may have been the motivating reason to shift trajectories to deeper pursuits of the human condition: truth, morality, ethics, spirituality and purity of the heart.

Dr. Schellhous left teaching and returned to practicing medicine. In 1875 he graduated with his medical degree at the University of California Berkeley<sup>19</sup>, and took a post graduate medical course at

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<sup>12</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Kosciusko County, Indiana, population schedule, Prairie Township, p. 301a, image 8 of 24, dwelling 39, family 39, Edwin J Shellhouse 26, Catharine Shellhouse 19, and Frances Shellhouse 4/12; image on-line *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>13</sup> Leonard. M. Davis, *From Trail Rail!: Being a History of the City of Roseville, California 1864-1909* (Roseville: 1964), 4 .

<sup>14</sup> “Proceedings of the California Teachers Institute, Held at Mercantile Library Hall September 13-16, 1870”, (Sacramento: D.W. Gelwicks, State Printer: 1871), 77.  
[https://www.google.com/books/edition/Proceedings\\_of\\_the\\_California\\_State\\_Teac/-hkYAQAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Proceedings_of_the_California_State_Teac/-hkYAQAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0).

<sup>15</sup> “School Teachers’ Convention,” *Placer Herald* (Auburn, CA) 11, no. 43, June 27, 1863, 6,  
<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=PH18630627.2.12&dliv=none&srpos=1>.

<sup>16</sup> “Locals in Brief”, *Placer Herald* (Auburn, CA) 27, no.38, April 26, 1879.

<sup>17</sup> *Schellhous vs. Ball*, Placer County District Court Case 2048, (1864) , Placer County Museums, Archive and Research Center.

<sup>18</sup> “Died,” *Placer Herald* (Rocklin, CA), Saturday, April 2, 1864, 2, <http://www.newspapers.com/image/385675530>.

<sup>19</sup> Medical School Directory of Graduates: 1861-1921, third series, 15, no.3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1921), 6, <https://archive.org/details/directoryofgradu00univrich/page/6/mode/2up?q=Schellhous>, Internet Archives.

Cooper's Medical Institute in San Francisco.<sup>20</sup> He began writing, publishing, and editing from 1876 into the beginning of the 20th century. "From 1876 he began publishing articles on political and financial reforms, edited a paper, *Emancipation*, and was a delegate of the Greenback-Labor Convention in 1884, probably meeting Owen".<sup>21</sup> His most notable publication, *The New Republic* (1883), along with other publications, can be found at the historic Bancroft Library archive at UC Berkeley and various university archives throughout the country.

Perhaps what makes Dr. Schellhous so fascinating is his time spent in the Utopian Society in Topolobampo, Mexico where he, along with other colonists, sought to expand his political, social and spiritual awareness. "In California the Credit Foncier movement was led by an interesting personality, Dr. Edwin J. Schellhous".<sup>22</sup> "The Credit Foncier of Sinaloa" was a financial corporation, founded by Albert Kimsey Owen, chairman and leader of the movement which traded shares of stock that corresponded scripts as credits given for labor.<sup>23</sup> In 1886 he and his younger brother Cyrus Schellhous (and his family) boarded the steamer *Newbern*, and were the first group of colonists to arrive in Mazatlan, Mexico.<sup>24</sup>

Thomas A. Robertson portrays Dr. Schellhous:

"He is described at 66 years of age as strong and active, an accomplished swimmer, oarsman and skater. He was said to be an able orator, a philosopher, yet a practical man of affairs- to be a kind hearted, generous, never quarrelsome, genial and witty in conversation. He was a spiritualist and was reputed to have extraordinary powers as a medium of contact with the spirit world."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Roseville Tribune, May 5," in *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, CA), 45, no. 7, May 13, 1915, 6, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=AJ19150513.2.52&srpos=1&e=-----en--20-AJ-1--txt-txIN-Dr.+Schellhous+-----> .

<sup>21</sup> Robertson, *A Southwestern Utopia*, 41.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-30.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

According to the colony newspaper titled *New City*: “E.J. Schellhous had deserted the Colony and had been employed by the Mexicans for the past three years or more...”<sup>26</sup> While in Mexico he met Teresa Urrea, a prominent Mexican healer known as “Santa Teresa”<sup>27</sup>, whom he described as a “healing medium.”<sup>28</sup> This extraordinary meeting was titled “Teresa Urrea, the Healing Medium of Cabora” published in the *Carrier Dove* in 1890.<sup>29</sup>

In 1894 he returned to California after being in Mexico for nearly 10 years. At the turn of the century he moved to Kansas City, Missouri where he was a permanent participant in a seance group.<sup>30</sup> “I have spent three [sic] years in the production of three books. *Beyond the Veil*, *The Guiding Star*, and *The Dawn of Another Life*...”<sup>31</sup> He spent his later years studying metaphysics, theorizing and publishing in spiritualist journals. In 1912 he returned to the Schellhous homestead on PFE Road in Dry Creek, and passed away at home in 1915 at the age of 94.<sup>32</sup> A funeral was held at the Schellhose homestead, and was attended by family and friends.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Albert K. Owen, “A Look Back and a Step Forward,” *New City* . 1, no.3, (Topolobampo, Mexico), January 8, 1893, 8, accessed May 25, 2023, <https://litsdigital.hamilton.edu/collections/new-city-topolobampo-mexico-vol-01-no-03-january-8-1893>.

<sup>27</sup> Frank Bishop Putnam, “Teresa Urrea, ‘The Saint of Cabora,’ ” *Southern California Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (1963): 1, <https://doi.org/10.2307/41169794>.

<sup>28</sup> E.J. Schellhous, M.D. “Teresa Urrea the Healing Medium of Cabora,” *Carrier Dove* 7, no.16 (August 1890): 142-44, [http://iapsop.com/archive/materials/carrier\\_dove/carrier\\_dove\\_v7\\_n16\\_aug\\_1890.pdf](http://iapsop.com/archive/materials/carrier_dove/carrier_dove_v7_n16_aug_1890.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> J. H. Nixon and W. W. Aber, *The Guiding Star to a Higher Spiritual Condition: Sequel Number Two to Rending the Vail* (Boston: Eastern Publishing Co., 1905), [https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Guiding\\_Star\\_to\\_a\\_Higher\\_Spiritual\\_C/6ioXAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=permanent%20Dr.%20Schellhous](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Guiding_Star_to_a_Higher_Spiritual_C/6ioXAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&bsq=permanent%20Dr.%20Schellhous).

<sup>31</sup> E.J. Schellhous, “Letter from E.J. Schellhous to Stella Schellhous,” (in author’s possession, Kansas City, MO, 1912).

<sup>32</sup> “Roseville Tribune, May 5,” in *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, CA), 45, no. 7, May 13, 1915, 6, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=AJ19150513.2.52&srpos=1&e=-----en--20-AJ-1--txt-txIN-Dr.+Schellhous+-----> .

<sup>33</sup> Dr. E. J. Schellhous, “Obituary,” *The Roseville (California) Register*, 07 May 1915, p.2, col.1, image copy Newspapers.com, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/477887172/?>.

To this day, I do not know where the burial site of Dr. E.J. Schellhous is located. Perhaps he was laid to rest beside his brother Martin A. Schellhous- both pioneers, farmers, educators, visionaries and scholars; exemplary of the Old Western Dream. This article is one in the series of articles written about the life of Dr. E.J. Schellhous, and will feature important points in his life, including: contributions to education, literature, medicine, life in Mexico, and spiritualism.

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