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DR. FRANK TAYLOR FULTON (1867–1961), who became a pioneer in electrocardiography in Rhode Island, grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania. To pay for college and medical school at Johns Hopkins, he traversed the rural roads of his home state during summer vacations selling encyclopedias and kitchen ranges to farm families.

Following his graduation from Hopkins in 1899, he did a post-graduate year at Boston City Hospital in pathology, which led to his appointment as the first fulltime pathologist at Rhode Island Hospital, in 1900.

His interests in medical specialties were wide and varied. In the early 1900s, Dr. Fulton became interested in infectious diseases and tuberculosis prevalent in factory workers in RI, and he presented at many world congress TB symposiums.

In 1912 and again in 1914, he went to England to work with two prominent cardiologists, Sir James McKenzie and Sir Thomas Lewis. The former was a pioneer in the use of polygraphs and the study of arrhythmias and the latter published the book, *Clinical Electrocardiology*, in 1913, the first treatise on the novel science of electrocardiography.

Dutch physiologist Willem Einthoven invented the machine, and Dr. Lewis pioneered its use in clinical settings. While working with Dr. Lewis in England in 1914, Dr. Fulton ordered an EKG machine, and purchased it at his own expense. The machine arrived in Rhode Island by ship; it was the size of an upright piano. This signaled the development of the Heart Station at RIH, which opened in 1915, with the first EKG machine in the region and the third in the country.
In 1918, Dr. Fulton served in the Army medical corps, but the majority of his 45-year career was spent in the practice of internal medicine with a special interest in cardiology and education. In 1932, Dr. Fulton established a residency training program at RIH, and the Heart Station played a vital educational role.

He also served as president of the Providence Medical Association, the Rhode Island Medical Society and the New England Heart Association. Dr. Fulton retired several years before his death, in 1961, at the age of 93. His nephew, Marshall N. Fulton, MD, in a memoriam, recalled his uncle, with whom he lived while an undergraduate at Brown, this way: “He himself would cherish no tribute more than the statement that his life and career bore witness to Osler’s teaching that hard work is the ‘master word’ of medicine.”

A teaching seminar at the Rhode Island Hospital Heart Station in 1957.

Electrocardiogram taken with Einthoven’s original string galvanometer, predecessor to his EKG machine.