Henry, Louis (1854-1924)

Louis Henry was born in Melbourne to a German Jewish family which had migrated some years earlier but retained strong connections with their families of origin. His father, David Hersch Henry, was a financier. Louis married Alice Moss, daughter of financier Mark Moss, in 1887 and the couple had a son and a daughter in 1889 and 1890, before divorcing in 1903.

Louis' early education was at Scotch College, Melbourne, before he left for Germany, entering the Lyceum at Mannheim, where he matriculated and enrolled at the Heidelberg Medical School. He worked in the physiological laboratory of Gehelm Rath, also with Professor Kuehne and a period at Leipzig Hospital before graduating MD from Wurzburg University. He spent a year as a Resident Medical Officer at Queen Augusta's Hospital in Berlin before a further period at the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin and the Manchester Infirmary in England, where he gained the LRCP in 1878, before returning to Australia in 1879. He was a Fellow of the Medical Society of London and of the Obstetrical Society of London.

Louis Henry registered with the Medical Board of Victoria on 4th April 1879. His application for membership of the Medical Society of Victoria was rejected. This occurred at a time of conflict within the MSV committee, resulting in the resignation of Dr James E Neild, who interpreted Henry's rejection as antisemitic. Neild and Henry immediately proposed to establish a branch of the British Medical Association in Victoria. Henry made a brief journey to England and brought with him authorization from the BMA for establishment of Australian Branches. They organized a meeting to garner support and the Branch was officially launched on 25th September 1879. Although notionally fraternal, with many medical practitioners belonging to both organizations, there was a growing competitiveness between MSV and BMAVic.

Henry was Secretary of BMAVic from 1879 to 1886, when he was elected President. He was very involved in the medical politics of the day. His interview with '*Table Talk*' magazine reported that he had been awarded the MD (Melb) in 1888 although this is not listed in Ken Russell's "*The Melbourne Medical School*".

Henry was appointed an Outpatient Physician at the Alfred Hospital in 1879 and elected Inpatient Physician in 1881 but retired a year later because of the heavy demands of his private practice. Twenty years later, he returned as an Outpatient Physician in 1902, elected Inpatient Physician in 1908 until he retired in 1910. He was a Visiting Medical Officer of Victorian Homes.

He was well-known as an advocate of nurse training, supporting the advocacy of colleagues Felix Meyer and John Springthorpe. Outside of his medical practice, he was a member of the Wallaby Club, a Justice of the Peace and was active in the Kalizoic Society, dedicated to beautifying the city. He was also a music enthusiast and President of the Victorian Liedertafel. He died in St Kilda on 18th July, 1924, aged 70.

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Sources: H. Boyd Graham, 'Happenings of the now long past,' Med.J.Aust. (1952), p. 246; Australian National University, https://peopleaustralia.anu.edu.au/biography/henry-louis-19428/text.
Draft compiled by Allan Mawdsley

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DR. LOUIS HENRY.