

Robert Clark Kedzie was born on January 28, 1823 in Delhi, New York. He graduated from Oberlin College in 1846 and received his M.D. from the University of Michigan Medical College in 1851. He practiced medicine before joining the Union efforts in the Civil War, leaving in poor health. This illness led him to abandon his medical practice and to accept the position of Professor of Chemistry at Michigan Agricultural College (MAC) in February 1863, where he taught until his death on November 7, 1902. During his forty years at MAC, Kedzie assisted in securing the passage of an act which established a state food and dairy commission; secured the passage of a law providing for the inspection of commercial fertilizers; and upon discovering the hazards of arsenic-laced pigments used in wallpaper and other items, fought to make such pigments illegal. Kedzie also ascertained that southern Michigan was well adapted for growing sugar beets and thus has been called "the father of the beet sugar industry in Michigan."