

1844-1994



Our

Medical

Heritage

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Our Medical Heritage



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Lancaster City & County Medical Society

Section 1

The History of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society



LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, 1844

Chapter 3 *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society*

Address of Dr. Jacob L. Ziegler, M.D.

February 7, 1894

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

Time; noiseless, ceaseless, swift-winged time; has brought us to the fiftieth anniversary of our existence as a society. It seems but yesterday that the venerable Dr. Samuel Humes first occupied the honorable position of president of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society.

On the 14th day of February, 1844, this Society was organized by the adoption of a Constitution and By-Laws and election of officers. There had



Jacob Ziegler

been several preliminary meetings of the city physicians held at the home of Dr. Ely Parry, the first of which was held January 18, 1844, at which meeting a sketch of the constitution and by-laws was submitted, and a call issued to the physicians of the county to assemble on the fourteenth day of February, 1844; this, the first meeting, will be best understood by reading the minutes; "At a meeting of the medical gentlemen of the city and county of Lancaster held this day pursuant to notice in the public papers, the following gentlemen were present: Drs. Samuel Humes, F. A. Muhlenberg, A. M. Cassidy, P. Cassidy, C. L. Baker, J. Leonard, J. B. Stubbs, Henry Carpenter, W. R. Fahnestock, J. A. Ehler, M. R. Gryder, Ely Parry, F. S. Burrowes,

N. W. Sample, Jr., J. L. Atlee, D. Hayes Agnew, A. Bitner, G. B. Kerfoot, S. Duffield, John W. Leaman, and W. L. Atlee.

Dr. Samuel Humes was called to the chair, and Dr. W. L. Atlee appointed secretary. The object of the meeting having been stated by Dr. Ely Parry, the prime-mover of this association, it was on motion resolved: That the minutes of the proceedings of the city meetings be read for the edification of the country members. After reading the minutes, it was on motion of Drs. Burrowes and Muhlenberg, RESOLVED, that the Constitution and By-Laws be read, and that after their reading a committee of three members from the city and three from the country be appointed to take them into consideration and present them to the meeting in the afternoon for final adoption.

The committee consisted of Drs. J. L. Atlee, Burrowes, and Parry of the city, and Drs. Stubbs, Duffield and Sample Jr. of the country. The meeting then adjourned to meet at 2 o'clock P.M.

At 2 o'clock P.M., the meeting being called to order, the minutes were read and adopted. Dr. H. E. Muhlenberg was present in addition to the gentlemen above named.

The committee appointed in the morning presented the Constitution and By-Laws, which were considered by sections, and after some slight amendments, the whole Constitution and By-Laws, on motion of Drs. Parry and J. L. Atlee, were adopted.

On motions of Dr. J. L. Atlee and Parry, it was RESOLVED that a committee be appointed to nominate the officers recognized by the Constitution. The Committee consisted of Drs. J. L. Atlee, Clarkson, Bitner, Duffield and Humes. After a short lapse, the Committee reported the following nominations:

President: Samuel Humes, M.D.

Vice Presidents: F. A. Muhlenberg, M.D., Samuel Duffield, M.D.

Recording Secretary: Henry Carpenter, M.D.

Corresponding Secretary: Washington L. Atlee, M.D.

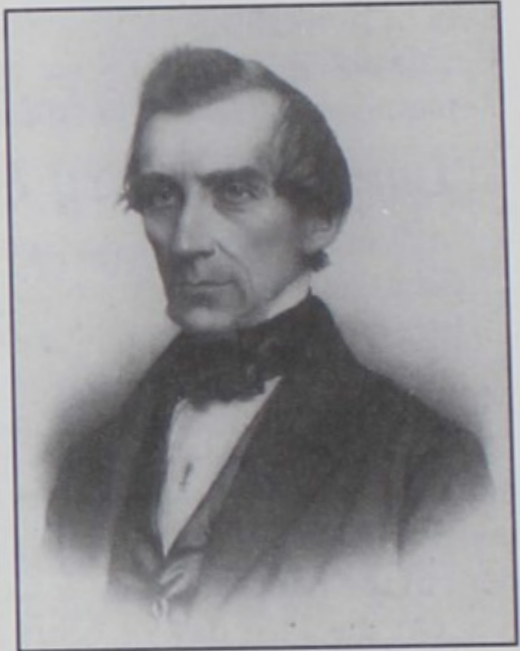
Treasurer and Librarian: Ely Parry, M.D.

On motion of Drs. Burrowes and F. A. Muhlenberg, RESOLVED, that the nominations close, and RESOLVED, that the gentlemen nominated be considered the officers of the Society until the stated meeting in January next.

Dr. J. L. Atlee now nominated for membership the following gentlemen: William E. Maxwell, M.D., Marietta; John Myers, M.D., Marietta; Jacob Glatz, M.D., Marietta; Richard E. Cochran, M.D., Columbia; William S. McCorkle, M.D., Columbia; and George Moore, M.D., Columbia, who were elected.

Letters signed by H. Shoenfield, M.D. and Daniel E. Shirk were received, read, and ordered to be laid on the table. On motion of Drs. Parry and Carpenter, RESOLVED, that a committee be appointed to transcribe the preamble and constitution on parchment, and present it to the Supreme Court for an Act of Incorporation. The committee, Drs. Parry, H. E. Muhlenberg, and W. L. Atlee. On motion of Drs. J. L. Atlee and F. A. Muhlenberg, RESOLVED, that a committee of three be appointed to make a selection of medical journals to be subscribed to by the librarian. The committee, Drs. J. L. Atlee, F. A. Muhlenberg, and Burrowes.

On motion of Drs. Parry and Carpenter, RESOLVED that the officers of this Society be authorized to purchase such books as their duties require. On



Ely Parry

motion of Drs. Parry and Carpenter, RESOLVED that a committee be appointed to procure a suitable room for the meetings of the Society. The Committee, Drs. Parry, F. A. Muhlenberg, and Humes.

We point with pride to the distinguished originators of our organization, and we hold in grateful remembrance the men eminent in their profession whose labors shed a luster on the Society, whose names stand upon the records at its organization. All have gone to their rest with the exception of Dr. J. Augustus Ehler, who is still engaged in the active duties of the profession with such vigor and energy that, were it not for the "flourishing almond tree," one could not realize the possibility of his participation in the organization of our Society.

The Lancaster City & County Medical Society, if not the first organized in the country, may be said to be the pioneer. It was the first to aim at the general organization of the medical fraternity of the country. It antedates both the national and our own state society. Its members took an active part in their organizations, and its principles are engrafted on their government.

In 1848, 59 physicians, representing 12 counties, including delegates from medical colleges, hospitals and lawful societies, met in our City of Lancaster and organized a Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania. The Lancaster City & County Medical Society had nine representatives in this body, six of whom were participants in the organization of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society, which, with a beginning of 43 members, has increased to 95.

The State Society, with a representation of 12 counties and 59 members, has increased to a representation of 54 counties, embracing an enrolled membership of 2,500, with a representation of 500.

Our Society has been honored by the choice of four presidents of the State Medical Society, and once by the highest honor of the profession, the president of the American Medical Association.

Your historian, 46 years a member of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society, has a distinct recollection of all the originators of the Society, with many of whom he enjoys pleasant social and professional memories.

Dr. Samuel Humes, our first president, tall, dignified and precise, "his lyart haffets wearin thin and bare," illustrious vestige of the old-time physician. Eminent in counsel, widely-known, highly respected, honored by the fifth reelection as president by our Society, and the first President of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania.

Dr. F. A. Muhlenberg, a man of fine physique, dignified and clerical in aspect, well-stocked with scientific and medical lore, an accurate diagnostician, popular and often called upon in council, his presence gentle and soothing in the sick room, paternal toward the younger members of the profession.

Dr. F. S. Burrowes, a graduate of Edinburgh, an Irishman "without guile," brim full of wit and good humor, the center of the social set, a distinguished

surgeon, kind, gentle, and encouraging in the sick room.

Dr. John L. Atlee, whom you all knew, whose presence gave such zest to our proceedings, whose energetic and active participation in everything pertaining to the profession he loved ended only in death, whose distinguished achievements and his election to the highest honors of the profession, add another star to the crown of our rejoicing.

I cannot forgo the opportunity of again referring to his successful revival of the operation of ovariectomy, under circumstances so unfavorable, when the opposition of the most distinguished surgeons was such that none but the bravest would venture on such untried fields; yet, in the face of opposition,

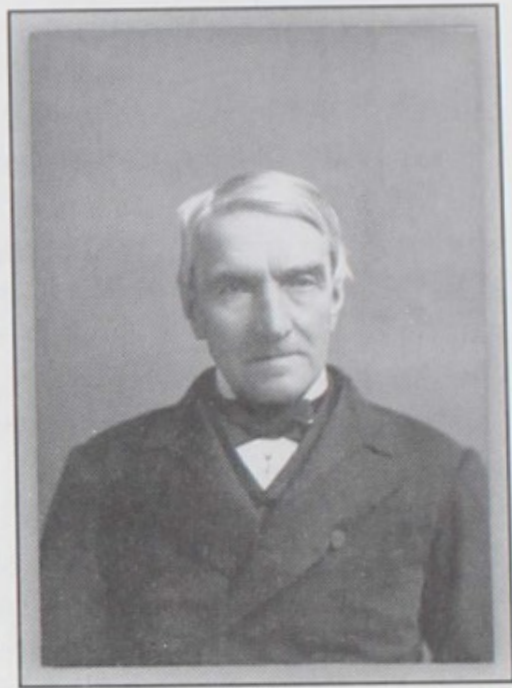
of contumely and denunciation of pen and press as barbarous and cruel murder, he performed his first ovariectomy June 29, 1843, antedating the existence of this Society almost a year. The patient is still living in her eighty-third year.

Dr. Henry Carpenter, a descendant of physicians, was the first and for many years secretary of our Society, a successful extensive obstetrician and surgeon and general practitioner, with whose cordial social presence many of you are familiar.

I might mention many others distinguished in the ranks of the profession who retained their connection with our Society until their demise, but time does not permit, as a few of those who withdrew from the Society and sought other fields of labor demand a passing notice.

Washington L. Atlee moved from Lancaster to Philadelphia, where he occupied the chair of chemistry in the Pennsylvania Medical College. He became famous as a gynecologist and ovariectomist. He performed the operation more frequently than his brother, Dr. John L. Atlee, and in the beginning of his career shared with him the reproaches of those opposed to the operation. His first operation was performed on the 29th of March, 1844, nearly a year after his brother performed the first operation, the patient, Mrs. G. S., residing in Mount Joy. His third operation was performed on the 13th of March, 1849. It was the first ovariectomy he performed under the influence of an anesthetic, a mixture of one part chloroform and two parts ether. He was noted for his kindness and affability. I shall ever remember with gratitude my professional intercourse with him in the first year of my practice.

The name of Dr. D. Hayes Agnew stands out in bold relief among the galaxy of peerless exemplars. His eminence as a surgeon, a teacher, a writer



John L. Atlee

and a Christian gentleman is so well and so extensively known that it needs no commendation. Our Society deems itself honored by having his name ascribed on the roll of its membership.

Dr. John Leaman, after practicing very extensively and successfully for many years, entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church and was elected professor of anatomy and physiology at Lafayette College, a position he satisfactorily filled until his death.

Of the members of our Society who joined subsequent to its organization and who have closed their earthly career, much might be said in remembrance of their labors and virtues, would time permit, but I cannot refrain from the mention of one who so recently was in our midst whose high attainments and his presence added so much to the pleasure of our meetings, whose advice and counsel were so acceptable, whose interest in the welfare and progress of the profession was always sincere, as was his detestation of dishonorable practice and quackery; the father of physicians, Dr. Joshua M. Deaver.

But the old familiar faces greet us no more. The voice hushed in death no more is heard expressing the kindly welcome or the sage advice. Their life work is done "and like one that wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams," they have passed away; their hopes and fears, their trials and triumphs, their deeds of love and charity will only be known when the Book of Life shall reveal the records for eternity.

*There is no death; what seems so is transition.
This life of moral breath
Is but a suburb of life Elysian,
Whose portal we call death.*

How many changes have been wrought during this half century, the changes of many-colored life! Old landmarks have passed away, the landscape ever-changing, ever new, has been transformed. Teeming with busy life, nature and art vying with each other to add new beauties to the scene.

The lightning drawn from heaven, becoming an obedient servant, has been made to transport us from place to place, and light us on our way; made to carry our messages of love and sorrow, fate and triumph, success and failure, annihilating time and space; days have been changed to hours, minutes to seconds; the progress in arts and sciences in every department of human industry has been unprecedented. The mind is lost in wonder and amazement when comparing the present with the past, and yet our present advancement must not be attributed alone to the genius of the generation. The agencies which bring about these results are the outgrowth of the patient and oft-times unrequited labors of those whose names are almost forgotten.

Lancaster County is second to none in the world's history for its influence on human progress. He, who shortened the pathway of the oceans,

brought the continents into proximity, and revolutionized commerce, was born in Lancaster County.

Robert Fulton, by his application of steam to navigation, did more toward the spread of the arts of civilization than any other agency; though despised and ridiculed in his first feeble attempt, today the rivers and oceans of this world teem with the evidence of his success.

So too, in our own profession. Dr. A. Kuhn, an almost forgotten citizen of Columbia, was elected president of materia medica and botany at the University of Pennsylvania, and one of the physicians of the Pennsylvania Hospital. It was said that he was remarkable for his carefulness, precision and punctuality.

Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton was born in Lancaster City. The distinguished medical teacher, writer, and physician, he was early in his life professor of botany and materia medica at the University of Pennsylvania, and after the death of the distinguished Dr. Rush, he was appointed to the chair of practice of medicine. "Natural history and botany were his favorite studies, and in his investigation of these branches of science, he made a conspicuous figure."

Dr. John Eberle, a native of Lancaster County and citizen of the village of Manheim, a professor of materia medica and obstetrics at Jefferson Medical College, was a writer of distinguished merit. His treatise on "The Practice of Medicine" was considered at the time of its publication one of the most valuable works on this subject that has ever issued from the American or English press.

The labors of these distinguished men, with others in the profession, laid the foundation for the advent of a galaxy of bright stars in our professional world, whose names and influence were foremost in the advancement of the best interests of our profession, by advocating a wider and more thorough system of education, by their labors in the organization of the profession, in commemoration of which we are today assembled. One cannot properly appreciate the immense advantage derived from the organization of the profession into county, state and national associations.

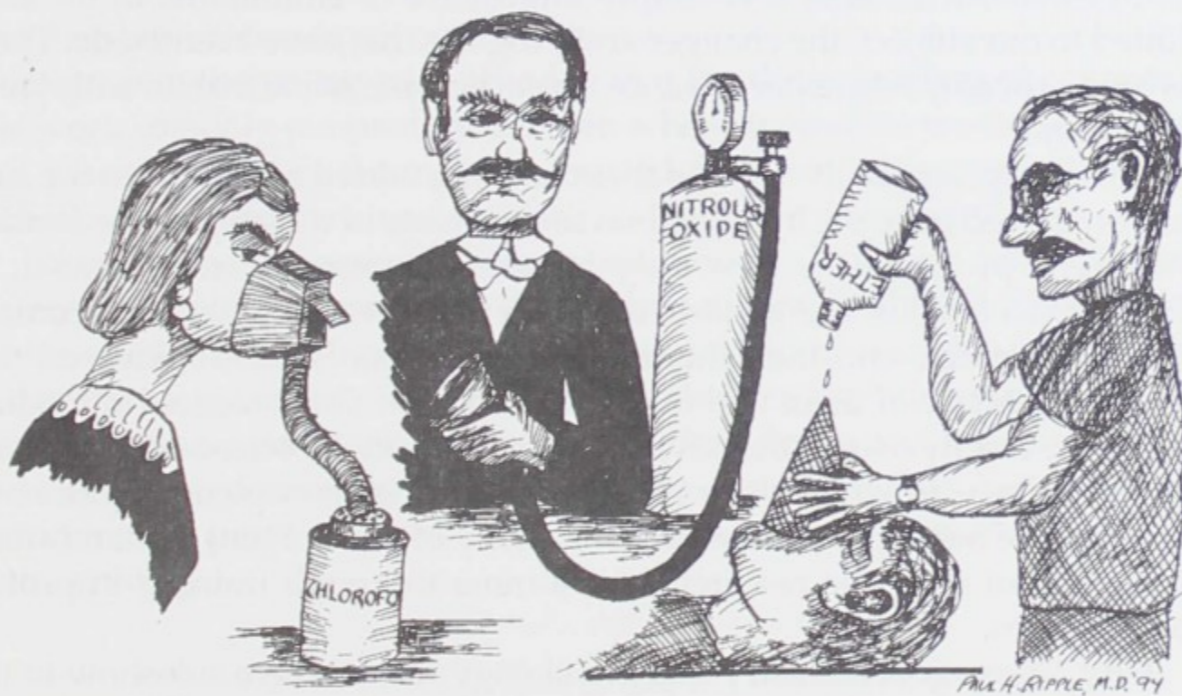
Just here allow me to digress, by reminding those who are not yet members of the national association, that it is their duty to show their appreciation of the labors of our predecessors by uniting their influence with the American Medical Association. This can be done so easily by simply sending the credentials of your membership in the County Society, together with your annual fee, to the treasurer. Your name will be enrolled on the list of membership, and you will receive in return the weekly visits of the best medical journal published in the land.

Contemplate for a moment the character of the profession before medical societies existed. Then every man's hand was against his neighbor. Envy, jealousy, fault-finding and prauduction (sic) injured the whole profession in the

estimation of the public. Now, the science has been so much enlarged and advanced in the various departments, and so rapid is the process that it requires so close an application to study in order to keep abreast of the times, that one finds little time to quarrel with his neighbor. At the same time, these gatherings make us better acquainted with each other, and round off the sharp corners of asperity, uniting us in helping each other as brothers engaged in the arduous labors of a noble and honorable profession.

A retrospective history of our science for the past fifty years will bring to our attention a vast change in the permanent advance toward its establishment as a true science.

Then, anesthetics were unknown. Now, the greatest boon ever conferred on suffering humanity is in common use. Contemplate for a moment the courage required of a patient about to submit to some fearful operation conscious of the agony to be endured while submitting the quivering flesh to the knife. Contrast this to the calm, happy and undisturbed oblivion of all pain, and you will realize the blessing conferred upon thousands daily who are compelled to submit to the surgeon's art.



AGE OF ANESTHESIA 1842-1846 →

The discovery of pathogenic microorganisms and their role in the production of disease is one of those triumphs of science which has enabled the surgeon to secure favorable results to an extent never thought of by our predecessors, and to the physician it is a field of wide extent and inestimable value, although much remains to be explored; results already obtained demonstrate the possibilities in store for the careful observer and earnest worker in the domain of preventive medicine.

The microscope (which, within the recollection of your historian, was simply considered a philosophical toy) has thrown a flood of light on the subject, for without it we would still be groping in the darkness of conjecture; to it we know the knowledge obtained by the bacteriologist, and I may add that it has become indispensable to the physician as an aid to diagnosis. What the microscope has revealed as a cause of sepsis and antisepsis enables the surgeon to prevent or counteract.

The hypodermic syringe has enabled us to defy nausea, and almost instantly to relieve suffering, and it has removed all doubts concerning the effects of drugs upon the system.

The thermometer: by its aid in diagnosis, we can be more certain of the character of disease, and be directed as to the major remedies.

The laryngoscope and the ophthalmoscope have enabled us to inspect living organs, and the aid furnished by these instruments has enabled us to treat disease with an exactness hitherto unattainable.

Indeed, there have been so many additions and helps by instruments of precision that their mere enumeration would prove irksome. In the department of materia medica, it is simply impossible to enumerate, in the time allotted to our subject, the changes and progress that have been made. There has been probably no greater advance in practical medicine than in antipyretic medication.

Chemistry, especially organic chemistry, has added a long list to the substances derived from the hydrocarbon series, many of which possess decided antipyretic properties. A few only have been generally useful, such as antipyrin, acetanalid, and phenacetin. Their number is so great, their composition so complex, and their therapeutic application so undetermined that any further notice of them will readily be excused. This progress in medical science we chiefly owe to the advancement made in the science of chemistry and physiology, in which our predecessors exercise conspicuous influence. The annals of our organization bear testimony of their urgent demands for a wider field of scientific research, and a more thorough training in professional studies.

Fifty years ago, chemistry and physiology were a mere sideshow to the students of medicine. Indeed, most of our medical colleges did not have a chair of physiology, and the lecture hour occupied by the professor of chemistry was generally devoted to tired students' worship of Morpheus.

Today, chemistry and physiology have become the chief cornerstone of the science of medicine, and he who would rank as an educated physician must cultivate these sciences. In view of what has been said, and the many subjects of interest and profit necessarily admitted, we need not be surprised that the efforts made for a more thorough education and a more prolonged course of instruction are so urgently demanded by the profession, and, as we have, to a limited extent, obtained legal protection, we may with brighter

hope look forward to the time sectarian medicine, with its pompous arrogance and ignorant self-conceit, will be relegated to that oblivion to which it is justly entitled.

Let me say to those who have recently entered the profession, that by the general diffusion of knowledge and the impetus of our public system of education, the future generation will be much more competent to judge of your ability and will demand a higher standard and a more thorough knowledge of your profession. Although great has been the advance and the rapid accumulation of facts elicited by our modern appliances and agencies for the prosecution of research, so that the neophyte might think that there was nothing left for him to do but simply follow in the footsteps of his predecessors, let him not be deceived. We are only on the threshold of the temple of medical science, and the possibilities in store for the earnest worker will amaze the laggard, and leave him stranded in the bogs of hesitancy and irresolution.

Let me urge our young men to arouse and imitate our great predecessors' untiring application, earnest prosecution and unflinching determination. If an Agnew or an Atlee had not possessed these qualifications, we could not point to them today with the pride and rejoicing in the honor which their membership confers upon our Society.

It is upon the young men of today that the duty devolves of continuing this work so nobly pursued by the men whose memories we this day recall, and whose patient endurance has erected for them monuments that shall endure when the physicians' art shall no longer be a necessity.

To the younger members of our association, we look for a continuation of the advances already made, the exploration of new fields and new agencies for the amelioration of suffering humanity, for aid in extending and uniting in compact legion the coworkers in our noble profession; laying aside selfishness, jealousy, and bickering with an ardent desire and just emulation to excel in every good work, so that when our centennial shall have come, the historian may point with pride to a galaxy of brighter stars in the crown of their rejoicing.