

## BOOK REVIEWS

*A Century of Medicine, 1848-1948: The History of the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania.* Edited by HOWARD KISTLER PETRY, M.D. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1952. xiv, 404 p. Illustrations, portraits, appendices.)

Although the organization of a state medical society in Pennsylvania (1848) was preceded by such societies in fifteen other states, Pennsylvania could lay claim to many medical accomplishments. Such firsts, included the Philadelphia Medical Society (1765), the first medical organization in the colonies; the first degree of Doctor of Medicine (June 21, 1768); the first president of the Provincial Council and, in effect, the first governor of Pennsylvania, Dr. Thomas Lloyd, who came to America with William Penn (1682); the first American textbook on medicine, written by Dr. Thomas Cadwallader (1745); the first permanent medical journal in America, later to become the well-known *American Journal of Medical Sciences*, published in 1820; the first woman's medical school in the world, the Female Medical College, founded in 1850, from which one of its early graduates, Clara Swain, M.D. (1869), became the first American medical missionary; and the first board of health in the United States, established in Philadelphia in 1795. Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of Pennsylvania's most famous physicians, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a member of the Continental Congress.

Prior to 1848 Pennsylvania had few county or district medical societies; among these were the temporarily or permanently organized ones of Berks (1824), Franklin (1825), Chester (1828), Susquehanna (1838), Lancaster (1844), Schuylkill (1845), Lebanon (1847), Mifflin (1847), Montgomery (1847), and Mercer (1848), most of which were in the eastern and middle parts of the state.

The Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania was organized in the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lancaster, on April 11, 1848, by sixty-one physicians representing several medical colleges in Philadelphia and twelve counties. Dr. Samuel Humes of Lancaster was the first president. The constitution adopted was much the same as that existing today. Article II reads: "The objects of this Society shall be the advancement of Medical knowledge; the elevation of professional

character; the protection of the interests of its members; the extension of the bounds of Medical Science, and the promotion of all measures adapted to the relief of suffering, and to improve the health and protect the lives of the community." Since travel across the state was difficult at the time, Allegheny was the only western county represented at the second annual meeting (1849) at which only thirty-one members from the state were present. But at this meeting such important recommendations were made as small-pox vaccination, state registrations of births, marriages and deaths. Meetings were held annually except in 1861 and 1889 (on account of Johnstown flood), the first one in the western part of the state in Lafayette Hall, Pittsburgh, in June, 1867. The centennial meeting held in Philadelphia in 1948 was attended by 6,228 registrants out of a state membership of over 10,000 physicians. Among the society presidents have been twenty from the western counties of the state, sixteen from Allegheny County. Ten Pennsylvania physicians have been honored with the presidency of the American Medical Association (1847-1947). Over 2,800 physicians served in World War I, of whom 49 died.

Among the many resolutions and recommendations proposed for state legislation were others such as withholding support from faculties and graduates of Female Medical Colleges (1859-1867, rescinded in 1871). That aroused bitter debate in conventions. Among proposals that have become an actuality were: Army Medical Library and Museum (1876), a federal secretary with rank of Cabinet Member (1892), registration of Vital Statistics (1895), and the Blue Shield and Blue Cross Associations.

In 1895 the Woman's Auxiliary was organized "to aid the Medical profession—in obtaining better legislation to assist the Medical Society at Meetings and Conventions, to promote friendship among doctors' wives" of which the membership was made up. This volume presents much information on the early history of the medical profession and societies, the part played by the individual county societies (many very superficially covered), the functions of the various committees, officers, trustees, scientific programs, exhibits, publications, etc., with headquarters at Harrisburg. Photographs of all the state presidents, as well as many of special groups, help make a somewhat statistical volume more attractive.

*Pittsburgh*

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