

History of the Medical Society of the County of Kings

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ON this, the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Medical Society of the County of Kings, it seems only fitting and proper to recount the story of the Society's founding and to review some of the Society's endeavors and accomplishments during its past one hundred fifty years of existence. The saga of physicians from a bygone era, the roster of the pioneer doctors of yesteryear, and a glance backward at the early organizational and medical activities in Kings County are indeed such as to confer upon us a justifiable pride in our Society and in its founders and leaders.

To be sure, the contrast between the humble status of medical practice in 1822 and the complex art and science of modern medicine emphasizes the ever-rising standards of our profession and stresses the constant upward trend of even greater goals which we must strive to achieve. But, most important of all, the fact that the Medical Society of the County of Kings has existed for one hundred fifty years and is still today the most potent agent for medical progress in this borough is indeed a tribute to the democratic acumen and motivation which have prevailed among the leaders and members of this organization since its inception.

In 1806, the New York State Legislature, alarmed by the increasing numbers of medical quacks and charlatans, passed "An Act to Incorporate Medical Societies for the Purpose of Regulating Physic and Surgery in this State". The statute specifically required that all practicing physicians be members of a medical society in the county wherein they resided, and it empowered Boards of Censors in such county societies to examine and license practitioners of the healing arts. Following passage of this Act, the Medical Society of the State of New York was quickly established, as were twenty-one county societies including New York, Queens-Nassau, and Richmond, as well as others in such remote areas as Broome County, Columbia, Delaware, Oswego, and Ulster. However, the physicians in Kings County, with true Dutch conservatism, "made haste slowly", following the old Dutch proverb "Eile mit Weile"; and sixteen years were to pass before organization of a medical society was considered.

In 1819, immediately following his graduation from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, Dr. Adrian Vanderveer, who was born and raised in Flatbush, began medical practice there at the age of twenty-three. On Monday, February 25, 1822, Dr. Charles Ball and Dr. Matthew Wendell of the town of Brooklyn, Dr. John Carpenter and Dr. Francis H. Dubois of the village of New Utrecht, and Dr. William D. Creed of the village

of Flatbush, met at Dr. Vanderveer's home by his invitation to discuss the propriety of forming a county medical society.

Dr. Vanderveer's home, located at the corner of Church Avenue and Flatbush County Road, was one of the oldest houses in Flatbush and dated back to a time before the Revolutionary War. Prior to 1794, the house was occupied by the Rev. Dr. Livingston, Professor of Divinity of the Dutch Reformed Church; and he provided theological instruction to a group of divinity students there. Dr. Livingston had hoped to establish a theological seminary in Flatbush, but was unable to gather sufficient community support. Eventually he removed his seminary to New Brunswick, N.J., where it became a part in the formation of Rutgers College. Subsequently, the house was occupied by a Dr. Schoonmaker, from whom it was purchased in 1819 for Dr. Vanderveer by his father.

At the initial meeting, which consisted primarily of informal discussion, Dr. Ball presided and Dr. Vanderveer acted as secretary. A committee composed of Dr. Wendell, Dr. Dubois, and Dr. Vanderveer was appointed to draw up by-laws, after which the meeting stood adjourned until Saturday, March 2, at 2 P.M., when the group planned to meet again at Auld Lang Syne Tavern.

Auld Lang Syne Tavern, also known as the Washington Inn because of its large sign out front which bore the appurtenance of George Washington, was located on the west side of Fulton Street, near Nassau Street, in the town of Brooklyn. The tavern was operated by William Stephenson and his wife, Biddy; and it consisted of a 2½-story frame building with a large meeting room on the second floor. Biddy was locally famous for making a very delicious turtle soup, and the tavern was popular with doctors of that day because of the turtle soup and the other liquid refreshments available there.

At the March 2 meeting, the Kings County Medical Society was formally organized, its by-laws adopted, and the following officers elected:

President	Cornelius Low
Vice President	Matthew Wendell
Secretary	Adrian Vanderveer
Treasurer	John Carpenter
Censors	Charles Ball, Joseph G. T. Hunt, and Thomas W. Henry
Delegate to the State Medical Society	Matthew Wendell



Home of Dr. Adrian Vanderveer, Flatbush, where Medical Society of County of Kings was organized. 9 members

All those elected, along with Dr. Francis H. Dubois, Dr. William Duryea, and Dr. William D. Creed, were in at-

Minutes of the Kings County Medical Society, organized March 2nd 1822.

A number of the Physicians of the County of Kings, met in the village of Flatbush, on Monday the 25th of February, 1822. Pursuant to previous notice present, Drs. Charles Ball, Matthew Wendell, John Carpenter, William D. Creed, present: Francis H. Dubois & Adrian Vanderveer.

Dr. Ball was called to the Chair, & Adrian Vanderveer chosen Secretary.

On Motion,

Committee
to draft
By-Laws.

Resolved; That a Committee be appointed to draft By-Laws, for the Regulations of a Medical Society, & that they report at the next meeting of the Physicians; of which due notice will be given.

On Motion,

Resolved, That Drs. Wendell, Dubois & Vanderveer constitute the Committee.

On Motion,

Adjourn
to
March 2nd

Resolved, That an adjourned meeting be held, at the house of William Stephenson, in Brooklyn, on Saturday, March 2nd, at 2 O'Clock P.M. for the purpose of organizing a Society & choosing officers.

On Motion,

Resolved, That this Meeting adjourn, to meet again, at the house & place next above mentioned.

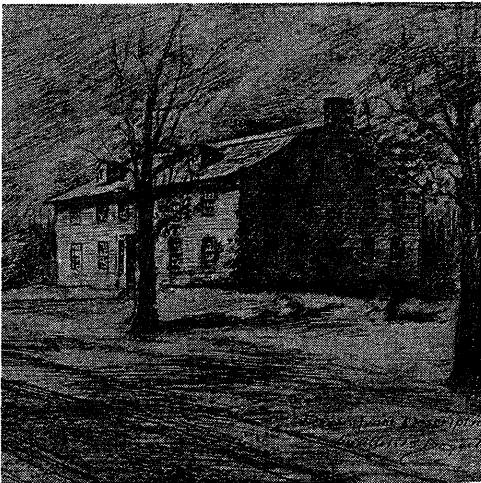
Charles Ball Secy
Adrian Vanderveer, Secy

tendance and thus became charter members of the Society. Dr. Henry, like Dr. Vanderveer, was a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. All the others were licentiates.

Dr. Low had been born in Albany about 1750 and was licensed to practice medicine in 1782. He had a large medical practice in Bushwick, with patients coming to him from as far away as New Lots and Newton. He was an ardent patriot, his name having been enrolled among the citizens of Bushwick who assembled at Fort Swift during the War of 1812 for the defense of Nassau and Manhattan Island. Fort Swift was located on Long Island, on a line with Fort Greene and between Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street. Dr. Low served three terms as President of the Kings County Medical Society. In 1825, he pleaded the infirmities of age against his re-election to office. He died in Bushwick in 1830.

Dr. Matthew Wendell was born on July 9, 1777 in Albany, New York and became a licentiate in 1804. He came to Brooklyn a year later, and entered medical practice in partnership with Dr. Charles C. Ball, their office being located on the corner of Fulton and Sands Streets. He was Health Officer for Brooklyn from 1831-1838 and from 1851-1857 and was said to have displayed keen executive ability in times of pestilence as well as in times of quiet. Dr. Wendell deserves a place in history for being Brooklyn's first physician exponent of mild therapy as opposed to the drastic drugging which was so customary at the time. It is said that he was a conscientious practitioner and did not believe in the efficacies of calomel, jalap, and blood-letting which so commonly prevailed in those days. He has been described as having the dignity and reticence of the old-style practitioner without any display of pomposity. He was tall and elegant almost to the point of fastidiousness, and was referred to as a "model physician". He became the Society's sixth president, serving in 1836. In his later years, Dr. Wendell became quite senile, was addicted to heavy gambling, and finally died in July, 1860 at the age of 83, from cancer of the stomach.

Dr. Charles Ball, Dr. Wendell's partner, became President of the Society in 1833. Guy's painting of old Brooklyn in 1821, when there were about 4,500 inhabitants, shows the three-story brick building which he erected at Fulton and Main Streets. It was the first in the city and was surrounded by beautiful grounds. Dr. Ball was the richest physician of his time. He owned all of what is now Brooklyn Heights, and he introduced the first doctor's carriage in 1816. He was a public-minded citizen and led a movement in 1824 through which the town of Brooklyn



Auld Lang Syne Tavern (Washington Inn) Fulton Street near Pineapple 1822-1827

regraded and paved its streets, putting in gutters to replace the watercourses in the middle.

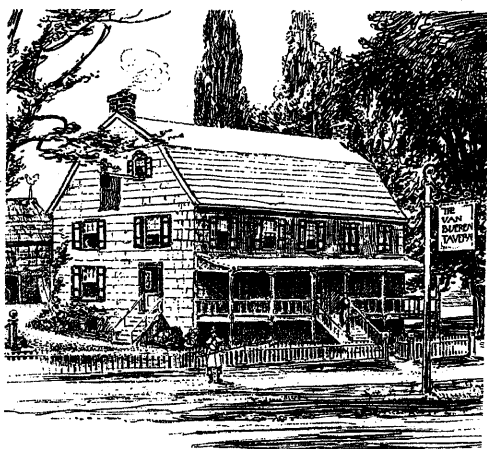
Dr. Adrian Vanderveer was educated at Erasmus Hall Academy before attending Columbia College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. He served as the Society's seventh President, from 1837 to 1838. He was the first Brooklyn physician to abandon general practice and to specialize. This aroused much criticism and opposition from his medical colleagues, but he persevered and eventually accomplished much. Like many of the early physicians, he was closely identified with church work; and he organized the Reformed Church Sabbath of Flatbush in 1827, serving as its superintendent until his death. He died on July 5, 1857 at age 61.

Dr. John Carpenter, born at Goshen, N.Y. on April 17, 1791, took a preceptorship under a Manhattan doctor and became a licentiate in 1812 of the New York State Medical Society. It is believed that he also obtained the first license granted by the Kings County Medical Society which was given him in 1822. Dr. Carpenter organized the first Sunday School in Fort Hamilton and served as its superintendent for thirty-eight years. In a borough of churches, he was often referred to as "the father of the Brooklyn Sunday School system". He died on September 13, 1864.

Dr. Thomas W. Henry, born in New York City on June 17, 1796, obtained his education in private boarding schools of that city before entering the College of Physicians and Surgeons. He was graduated in 1820 and began his medical practice in the town of Brooklyn, at Jay and Sands Streets. He also conducted a drug store at that address, a customary business of physicians in those days. He served as President of the Society in 1831. Contrary to reports by many early historians, Henry Street was not named after him or any of his family.

The next meeting of the Kings County Medical Society, on April 8, 1822, was held at the Van Beuren Tavern. This tavern was owned by Simon Voris and was located on Flatbush County Road, in Flatbush, next to the old jail, at a spot now corresponding to about 930 Flatbush Avenue. Like the Auld Lang Syne Tavern, the Van Beuren Tavern was a sober, dignified, and spacious wayside inn for travellers; and it had a large meeting room just to the right of the entranceway where the elite of Flatbush and Brooklyn were accustomed to gather for dinner parties, charity balls, and community meetings. For the next five years, quarterly meetings of the Kings County Medical Society were held alternately between the two taverns.

In July, 1822, the Society adopted its official seal: a



Old Van Beuren Tavern 930 Flatbush Avenue 1822-1827

serpent spirally wound around a staff, with the legend "Scientia Saluse Deo" in the surrounding field.

Medical meetings in this era were always held about mid-day, inasmuch as the means for travel was slow and tedious and the roads were unlighted. Public conveyances did not make their appearance until about 1838; and until then, the populace had to travel about in their own carriages, gigs, farm wagons, and barrouches.

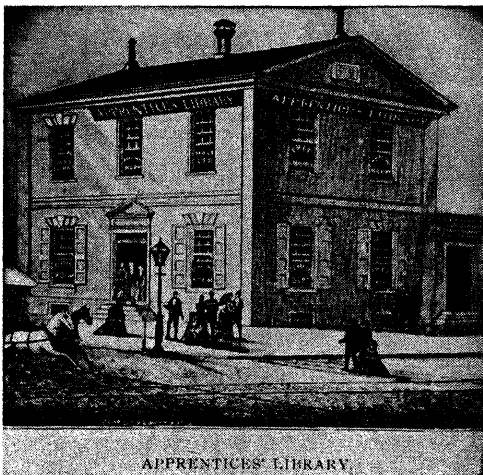
From 1827 to 1837, the Society met at the Apprentices' Library, a three-story brick building which had a twenty-five foot frontage on Cranberry Street and extended back for forty feet along Henry Street. The cornerstone of the Apprentices' Library had been laid by General Lafayette on July 4, 1825. In 1837, the building was purchased by the town of Brooklyn, enlarged and converted into an armory for the New York State Militia.

In 1837, the Society's meetings were shifted to the Brooklyn Lyceum, later known as The Brooklyn Institute, located on Washington Street. Meetings continued there until 1866, after which, for the next twenty years, they were held in various rooms along Court Street or at Everett Hall, 398 Fulton Street.

The first building owned by the Society was located at 356 Bridge Street. It was a modest, four-story, gas-illuminated brownstone, and it was occupied by the Society from May, 1887 until August, 1898. The building was purchased for \$7,600, of which \$5,050 had been raised by subscription from amongst its 268 members.

In 1894, Dr. George McNaughton, in his inaugural address on assuming the presidency of the Society, stressed the imperative need of a new, larger, more centrally-located Society building with more spacious quarters for the Society's growing library which could be made fire-proof and burglar-proof. Although the country was in a severe financial depression at the time, Dr. McNaughton's enthusiasm and courage banished inertia. Of the Society's 650 members, 214 subscribed more than \$20,000 to get the project underway; and almost an equal amount was raised by the Physicians' Wives Auxiliary through a highly-successful, two-week-long social event, a Graeco-Roman Festival which ended with Olympian games. The affair was held at the New York State National Guard's Thirteenth Regiment Armory on Summer, Putnam, and Jefferson Avenues, Brooklyn. Practically the whole city supported the ladies' undertaking, and people turned out en masse to see and to associate with visiting dignitaries from around the world, representing all walks of life.

After a diligent search for a site to erect the new building, 1313 Bedford Avenue, the geographical center of

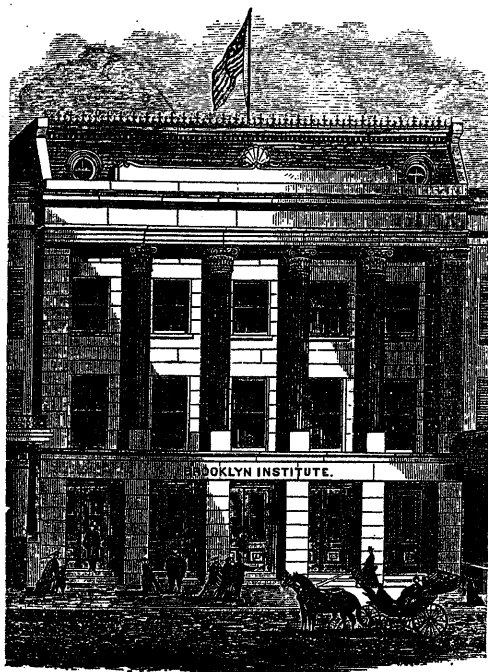


Apprentice's Library Henry and Cranberry Streets 1827-1837. 16 members

Brooklyn's burgeoning metropolis, was finally selected; and the cornerstone was laid on November 10, 1898. One and a half years later, on May 19, 1900, the new building opened its doors to the membership. During the course of the building's construction, one contractor was forced into bankruptcy, having failed to correctly estimate the number and cost of the huge steel beams required by the city's Building Code for erecting and roofing the auditorium.

The plushness of the new building made it a show-place of which the medical profession in Brooklyn could be justifiably proud, and the building offered all the modern conveniences of the time including even a bicycle room or storage garage in the basement with a ramp leading to the street outside. At its completion, the new building had cost \$87,020.49, of which approximately \$17,500 had been expended for the land, \$50,000 for construction of the building, and \$20,000 for furnishings. Appropriately enough, in honor of the man responsible for the new building, the auditorium on the main floor was named the McNaughton Auditorium. It is interesting to note, however, that the plaque over the entranceway to this auditorium spells McNaughton with an *Mac* although Dr. McNaughton used only *Mc* in the spelling of his name. Shortly after Dr. McNaughton's death on March 17, 1914, a biographic memorial book of 200 copies was issued, having been compiled by Albert T. Huntington, Dr. William Browning, and several other contributors. One of the contributors was Donald Stuart *Mac*Naughton, M.D. who wrote of Dr. McNaughton's reputation and treatment in the management of sterility patients. Although Dr. George McNaughton was a bachelor, he had two sisters and nine brothers, including Stuart, a dentist. Perhaps Donald Stuart *Mac*Naughton, M.D. was a nephew and the spelling of the family name with or without an *a* in *Mac* was used interchangeably.

In 1922, at the time of the Society's centennial celebration, by which time the membership had grown to 1,250, Dr. Frank D. Jennings, the President, proposed that the Society's quarters should be enlarged and renovated. A mortgage of \$25,000 was still being carried at 5 per cent interest on the Society's existing building, but this was no deterrent. Dr. Jennings and his officers arranged for a sale of bonds, most being in the \$1,000 category although available in other denominations from \$500 to \$2,500, from which more than \$60,000 was eventually realized. Using some of this sum, the adjacent property on the corner of Atlantic and Bedford Avenue, north and east of our building, was purchased for \$54,000. It was expected that rentals from the apartment houses on the property plus a drug



Brooklyn Lyceum (Brooklyn Institute)
1837-1865. 62 members

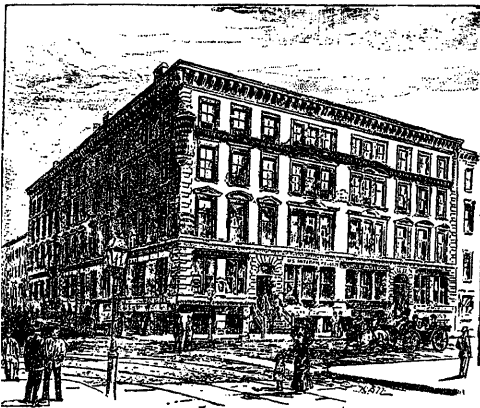
store and other commercial enterprises would finance the cost of the investment as well as pay off the old mortgage, but the Society soon discovered that being a landlord was no rosy staircase to riches. The buildings were all torn down in the mid-1930s, and the empty lots with their open basements were enclosed by a high wooden fence. Later, the area became overgrown with weeds and filled with trash.

Although elaborate architectural plans for enlargement of the Society building were drawn up and approved, the project never got beyond the planning stage. World War II intervened, and by the time that many of the Society members had returned from military service, the Medical Society found itself beset by many other problems of far greater magnitude. For one thing, the face of Brooklyn was changing rapidly. The ever-increasing local and state taxes, rising crime rates, and deterioration in all public services made urban living seem less and less attractive. The more affluent residents were moving to the suburbs, and the doctors along with them. Those physicians who remained began to complain about the rising rates of dues for membership in local, state, national, and specialty organizations. In about a ten year period, the Society lost almost a thousand of its members.

In 1959, the vacant lots north and east of our building were filled in and paved and the area was converted into our present parking lot.

A brownstone at 1323 Bedford Avenue, several doors to the south of our building, was rented by the Society in the late 1930s to take care of the overflow from our growing facilities and to provide additional filing and storage space. In 1951, 1317 Bedford Avenue, the building just adjacent to our present building, was purchased for the Society by the Board of Trustees at a cost of \$13,500. The past few years, however, have taken their toll—the building now needs a new heating plant and an air-conditioning system, and its general maintenance has become very costly. The building is no longer actively used by the Society although it still remains in our possession.

In 1961, President Irving Pallin proposed relocation of the Medical Society to the vicinity of the Downstate Medical Center. He presented plans for constructing a small office building to house the administrative section of the Society and suggested that the larger business meetings of the Society and its scientific sessions should be shifted to auditoriums obtained on a leased or rent-free basis from the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center. The controversy over whether to stay or to move continued to vacillate during the next ten years and was abet-



Hamilton Building 44 Court Street 1866-1873. 151 members

ted by Dr. Robert A. Moore during his term of presidency in 1967.

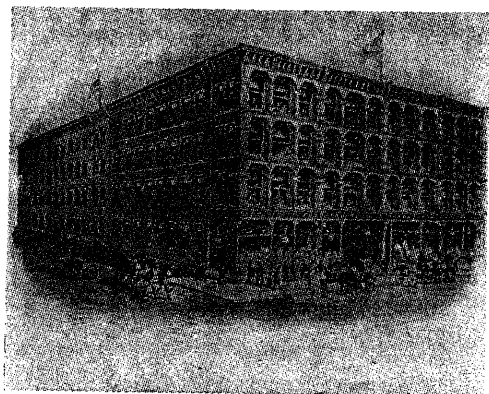
In 1964, the Section Room and its anteroom on the third floor of the Society building were completely renovated and refurbished. In 1970, the auditorium was repainted and recarpeted; and more recently, the business offices were relocated on the second floor in the reading rooms and offices vacated by the former Medical Library. With such face-lifting and the restoration or replacement of some of the antiquated furniture and facilities, and aided by improved indoor and outdoor lighting and the addition of several Pinkerton guards, the hue and cry to move has died down perceptibly. Most members have become agreeable to the fact that 1313 Bedford Avenue was chosen for us as our destination, and there we shall remain.

In the years immediately following its founding, the Kings County Medical Society concerned itself primarily with the regulation of the practice of medicine. Early meetings were devoid of scientific presentations and discussions. Under the provisions of the 1806 Act, medical societies had the power to license practitioners in their respective counties. When the Censors were satisfied with a candidate's fitness, they granted him for a fee of \$5 a medical diploma written in Latin or English, which had been signed by the Society's president and secretary. Upon its receipt, the licentiate was required to register his diploma with the County Clerk, at the same time signing a declaration to "honestly, virtuously, and chastely conduct himself, and with fidelity and honor do everything in his power for the sick placed in his care". The Censors of the Kings County Medical Society issued sixteen such licenses during the period in which they were empowered to do so.

Unfortunately, the Act of 1806 did not impose any penalties on unlicensed practitioners. The only deterrent of the law was a provision preventing unlicensed physicians from being able to sue patients for collection of their fees. Later, an amendment was passed which provided an additional fine of \$5 for each month of illegal practice, half of which was to be paid to the informer.

Hence, apothecaries, charlatans, and quacks continued to practice medicine in New York State; and their numbers continued to grow with each ensuing year. The problem continued to be a chaotic one for many years, and it was not until 1858 that the State of New York officially assumed the duty of issuing medical licenses to qualified practitioners.

In the 1840's, following several severe cholera epidemics, there developed an increasing awareness in the importance of scientific meetings for the dissemination of



Everett Hall 398 Fulton Street 1873-1887.
268 members

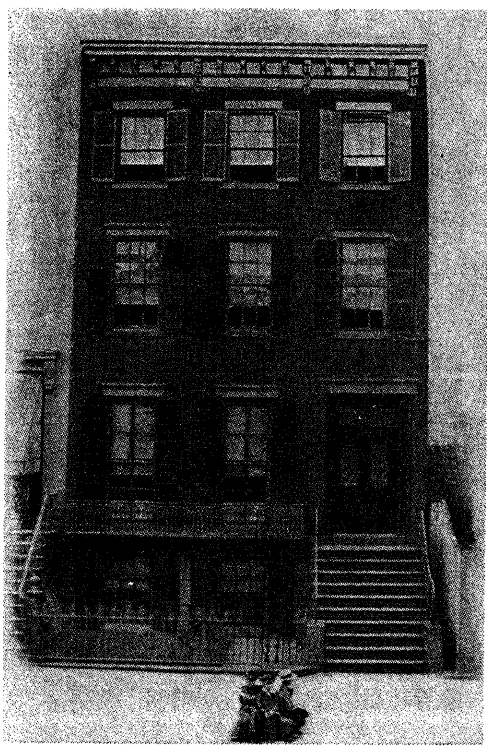
medical knowledge and the interchange of opinion on medical subjects. Accordingly, a Scientific Committee was appointed in 1849, and case reports and papers presented before the Society began to appear in the *NEW YORK JOURNAL OF MEDICINE*. From 1858 to 1865, the Kings County Medical Society published its transactions in pamphlet form for distribution amongst its members; and from 1876 to 1884, it included these transactions in a monthly periodical called *THE PROCEEDINGS*. These pamphlets and periodicals were the forerunners of *THE BROOKLYN MEDICAL JOURNAL*, a monthly publication established in 1888 by Dr. Joseph H. Raymond. This publication assumed the task of publishing all the scientific transactions of the Kings County Medical Society as well as those of other specialty and regional groups springing up around Brooklyn. In no time at all, *THE BROOKLYN MEDICAL JOURNAL* became one of the outstanding medical publications in the nation. Actually, the publication had been started by the Society so as to obtain exchanges and books for review, thereby reducing significantly an extra financial burden on the membership.

An essential part of our Society's history is the story of our Medical Library. It dates its beginning to 1844 when Dr. Bradley Parker, in his inaugural address as President, proposed that a medical library be established in Kings County. This portion of our history is a story unto itself and will be found under its own masthead elsewhere in this volume.

In addition to a discussion of the founding of the Society, its various meeting places and homes, and its Medical Library, there have been many notable events and personages over the years that have brought honor to the Society, to the medical profession, and to the people of Brooklyn. The chronological record of these people and occasions rightfully belong in this account:

The first physician proposed for membership in the Kings County Medical Society was Dr. Nelson L. Hurd. Dr. Hurd was an 1822 graduate of Yale Medical College and was proposed for membership in 1823.

In 1825, Dr. Joseph G. Hunt began his duties as the first Health Officer in the town of Brooklyn, at a salary of \$200 per annum. As a surgeon in the U.S. Navy, Dr. Hunt had served under Admiral Decatur in the Algerian War in 1803; and he was aboard the U.S.S. *CHESAPEAKE* in 1807 when she was captured by the British *LEOPARD*. Later, Dr. Hunt was stationed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. When he resigned from the Navy, Dr. Hunt opened his office at Fulton and Concord Streets. He was a charter member of the Kings County Medical Society and its sec-



356 Bridge Street First building owned by Society 1887. 337 members

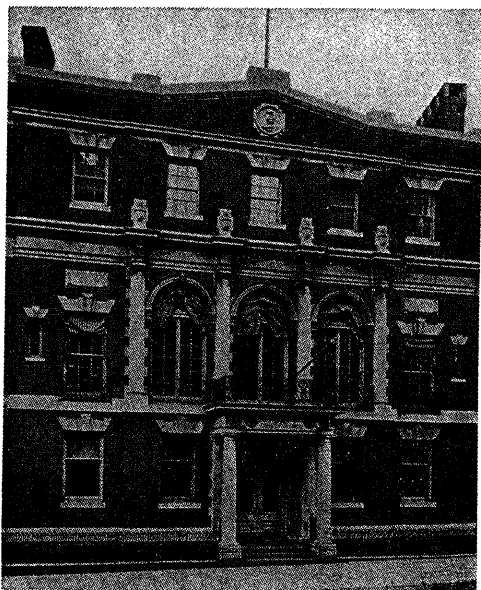
ond president, holding office from 1825 until his death in 1830, a longer period than any subsequent president.

In 1832, the first Board of Health in Flatbush was organized, to help combat a severe cholera epidemic at the time. Dr. John B. Zabriskie was in charge, with Dr. Adrian Vanderveer as Health Officer and Dr. William D. Creed and Dr. Robert Demond as assistants. Dr. Zabriskie had first practiced in Manhattan, then moved to New Lots, Brooklyn in 1830, and later to Flatbush where he continued to practice actively for eighteen years. Dr. Zabriskie represented the Kings County Medical Society in the State Medical Society from 1829 to 1831. He served as the County Society's eighth president in 1839, and presented a scientific paper for his inaugural address, "A Dissertation on Paralysis", the first medical paper to be recorded in the Society's archives. He died in 1848 of a contagious disease contracted during his professional service.

The Kings County Almshouse on Clarkson Avenue in Flatbush was established on April 9, 1832, with Dr. Zabriskie employed as the physician-in-charge at a salary of \$70 per annum. In 1837, a new building which had been erected solely for the care of the sick and injured was opened to the public, and this marked the beginning of Kings County Hospital. However, because of poor transportation facilities and the distance of the hospital from the more densely populated areas in the county, additional public medical facilities in the town of Brooklyn were sorely needed. In 1833, through the efforts of members of the Kings County Medical Society, the first Brooklyn City Dispensary was established at Jay and Sands Streets. In 1839, the first Brooklyn City Hospital was opened on Adams Street; and this led, in 1845, to the founding of The Brooklyn Hospital on property at Raymond Street and DeKalb Avenue.

In 1835, the sum of \$100 was approved by officers of the Society to purchase surgical instruments for use by any of the members. The instruments were kept, for safe-keeping, by the Treasurer. It was also decreed about this time that if a member of the Society died, all remaining members were obliged to wear a mourning badge for one month. It is interesting to note, also, that three members constituted a quorum at Society meetings, and no one was allowed to leave a meeting without first securing permission of the chair.

At a meeting of the Society on May 13, 1835, after much deliberation and compromise, a medical fee schedule was adopted and later published. The schedule called for a regular office visit fee of 50 cents, a house call at night for \$3. A herniorrhaphy could be obtained for \$100 to \$125.



Our Present Home 1313 Bedford Avenue
1900. . . .

SKETCH OF THE ORIGINAL SEAL



*Scientia Salusque Deo
In God's knowledge and welfare*

*Societas Medica Comitatus Regis
Instituta, A.D. - 1822.*

*The Medical Society of the County
of Kings Established, A.D. - 1822.*

THE SEAL AS WE KNOW IT TODAY



Catheterization was \$5 while abdominal paracentesis cost \$10 to \$15. An ordinary obstetrical case varied from \$8 to \$25, with a difficult labor and delivering costing up to \$50.

In 1838, the Kings County Medical Society officially adopted a Code of Ethics which had been proposed and approved by the State Medical Society.

On May 5, 1846, four delegates from the Kings County Medical Society attended a convention held at the Medical Department of New York University. Representatives of sixteen states were present. Discussion was directed primarily to the formation of a national medical organization for the purpose of elevating the standards of medical education and professional qualifications. At a subsequent session in 1847, delegates from twenty-two states, including the four from the Kings County Medical Society, met in Philadelphia and laid the foundations for the American Medical Association.

Almost immediately after its organization, the American Medical Association formulated its own system of medical ethics. This system was adopted, with some alterations, in the same year by the State Medical Society and the Kings County Medical Society. In 1882, however, because the New York State Medical Society had previously revised the AMA's Code of Ethics before adopting it, the American Medical Association refused to recognize or to seat New York State delegates at its national convention. The conflict remained unresolved until 1906.

In 1847, the Society's twenty-fifth birthday passed unnoticed.

In 1832, 1849, and 1854, cholera raged through Kings County in epidemic proportions, with a death list of 1,800 attributed to the disease. In 1849, the first scientific meeting of the Society was held when a paper on "Is Cholera Dangerous?" was presented. No decision was reached, but the favorable comments regarding the meeting subsequently led to the appointment of the Scientific Committee for the Society. Soon, case reports and scientific papers were being presented at regular meetings. Also in 1849, the increase in the number of abortions was first reported, discussed, and deplored. In 1850, topics presented for discussion included male sterility, club foot, anthrax and yellow fever. Often meetings had to be adjourned for lack of a quorum.

After 1858, the NEW YORK STATE JOURNAL OF MEDICINE published the Society's transactions. Notable among some of the papers presented at the time was one dealing with a new instrument for removal of foreign bodies from the larynx while another discussed dilatation for stricture of the urethra.

About this time, there were seventy qualified physicians licensed to practice in Kings County. The population of the three towns of Brooklyn, Williamsburgh, and Bushwick was estimated to be about 205,000.

In 1856, the Brooklyn Medico-Chirurgical Society, fostered by the Medical Society, was established. Its primary purpose was devoted exclusively to the presentation and discussion of medical papers. It was disbanded after ten years.

In 1858, partly through the endeavors of several prominent members of the Medical Society, the Long Island College Hospital was chartered as a hospital and a medical school. Classes began in 1860.

In 1861, a special meeting was called to determine the Society's duties and role during the Civil War. In 1862, a special meeting was devoted to vaccination; and a year later, a meeting was held which was devoted to a protest by the members against the illegal dispensing of medications by pharmacists.

In 1866, the Society meetings were changed from quarterly to monthly intervals. As early as 1842, the Society had resolved to meet every two months "for the purpose of intercommunication on subjects of medical and surgical science and practice and such other matters as may tend to elevate the character of the profession and to promote friendly feelings amongst its members". Somebody had merely forgotten to implement the resolution.

In 1870, the Brooklyn Pathological Society was formed as the first Section of the Kings County Medical Society.

In 1871, at a regular meeting of the Society, \$1,338 was raised by voluntary subscription from amongst the Society members and was sent to the physicians of Cook County, Illinois, for their relief following the catastrophe of the Chicago fire. The Brooklyn doctors were among the first contributors to this worthy cause. In 1878, \$547 was collected and forwarded to southern physicians for the relief of families of physicians who had fallen victims to yellow fever.

In 1872, a dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Society went into arrears to the sum of \$30, due to the failure of several members to pay for their tickets although they attended the affair. Fortunately, the treasury was able to withstand this onslaught on it—the treasury showed a balance of \$753.67. Dues were \$5 per year at the time.

By 1884, the Society had enrolled some female members: Mrs. E. D. LaVergne, an 1855 graduate of the Hydro-pathic College; Dr. Jennie Baker; and Dr. Suzan McKen-

ney, who was born in Brooklyn and who was graduated from the N.Y. Medical College for Women in 1870. Dr. McKenney was the first Negro female physician in the United States. Also an active member about this time was Dr. August Jacobi, a graduate of the University of Göttingen, circa 1860. Dr. Jacobi was one of the earliest borough physicians of Jewish descent.

In 1890, the Brooklyn Gynecological Society was founded, many of its founders being leaders in the Medical Society.

On May 14, 1896, the Jenner Centennial commemorating the inauguration of smallpox vaccine was celebrated. All the guests received large bronze medals struck especially for the Society in recognition of the occasion. For the local numismatists and token collectors, these soon became, and have continued to be, collectors' items.

The 75th anniversary of the Society's founding was celebrated at a special meeting of the Kings County Medical Society on April 18, 1897.

The Medical Society of the State of New York held its annual meeting and convention in Brooklyn in May, 1921 during the presidency of Dr. J. Richard Kevin, a Brooklyn physician. The 23rd Regiment Armory across the street from our Society building as well as the Kings County Medical Society building at 1313 Bedford Avenue were the sites of the meetings and exhibits.

As the oldest scientific organization in Brooklyn, the Kings County Medical Society took a giant step forward in 1922 which put it far ahead of all the county medical societies in the nation. Through the efforts of Dr. Frank D. Jennings, who conceived the idea that graduate medical education could be extended to every doctor in Brooklyn through properly established methods, the Society, in conjunction with the Long Island College of Medicine, provided graduate extension courses at minimal costs sufficient only to cover administration and materials.

Beginning also in 1922 was a Practical Lecture Series, ten one-hour lectures being given on Friday afternoons at 5 P.M. each spring and another ten in the fall. The lectures were clinical, covering the problems of everyday general practice. Outstanding authorities from across the nation were secured to make the presentations, and they were specifically instructed not to read formal papers but to give ad lib talks filled with facts which would be of clinical value to practicing physicians. These lectures soon became famous from coast to coast, and the local physician response was so overwhelming that McNaughton Auditorium could not hold all those who sought to attend. On several

occasions, hundreds of physicians had to be turned away for lack of room.

The lectures given between 1922 and 1926 were published in three volumes, the first as COLLECTED CLINICAL LECTURES published privately by Dr. Henry G. Webster, Editor of the LONG ISLAND MEDICAL JOURNAL. The other two volumes were published by Paul B. Hoerber under the title of PRACTICAL LECTURES.

In 1927 the Maternal Welfare Committee was organized under the chairmanship of Dr. Charles A. Gordon. The Committee immediately set about to formulate standards for prenatal care, to propose dietary and weight restrictions for maternity patients, and to provide guidelines for the management of certain obstetric complications. The stated meetings of this Committee, held late on a Thursday afternoon once each month, were well attended for many years and were considered greatly responsible for the marked improvement in the material mortality and morbidity statistics within the borough.

In 1933, the official name of the Society, viz. the Medical Society of the County of Kings and the Academy of Medicine of Brooklyn was adopted, denoting its continuance as a medical society devoted to the professional interests of its members as well as its augmented development as a scientific and educational organization.

On May 24, 1934, the Society held a Golden Membership Anniversary Dinner at the Hotel St. George. The affair honored eight physicians who had been members of the Society for more than fifty years as well as seventeen other members who had been in medical practice for more than fifty years. Dr. Dean Lewis, the President of the American Medical Association, gave the address of the evening. The toastmaster for the affair was Dr. James P. Warbasse, while Dr. John L. Bauer was the Society's President.

Another big social event of that era was a testimonial dinner given to Dr. Charles W. Goodrich on February 22, 1938, by the Society and the Doctors Club of Brooklyn. Dr. Goodrich, who had been our Society's President in 1928, was serving at the time as President of the Medical Society of the State of New York. Almost eight hundred people attended the elaborate affair held at the Hotel Astor in New York City. Entertainment that evening included many stage, screen, and radio stars, including the complete Mennen Radio Show, "Cheer Up, America", all provided free by the Mennen Company of Newark, N.J.

In 1922, Dr. Alec Nicol Thomson was engaged by the Society to administer the work of the Public Health Com-

mittee. In 1925, he became the Executive Secretary of the Committee, at which time the Board of Trustees authorized the president, Dr. John E. Jennings, to raise funds toward the salary of the Executive Secretary in connection with the Public Health Committee's work. In 1926, Dr. Thomson became the Editor of the Society's BULLETIN, and he was instrumental in establishing many innovations. A short time later, his official title was changed to Director of Medical Activities, in which capacity he served until his retirement in 1939. Dr. Thomson was the first physician to serve as a full time Executive Director of any county medical society.

Dr. Thomson was succeeded by Dr. Charles F. McCarty, and it was under his direction that the Society made its greatest strides and achieved its most members. Dr. McCarty was particularly adept in administering the Society's functions and he was the innovator of many new projects and activities. The President's Medal was struck and presented to each president as he retired from office in accordance with a suggestion by Dr. McCarty, and the annual President's Dinner each fall was another one of his innovations. The Coordinating Council comprising representatives of medicine from the five New York City boroughs was another one of Dr. McCarty's ideas and was organized and developed through his efforts in conjunction with representatives from the other four county societies. Dr. McCarty's close cooperation along with that of Dr. Charles W. Mueller as advisors to the Selective Service System during World War II was important to the staffing of many of the borough's hospitals during that difficult time. Dr. Mueller continued to serve in that capacity during the post-World War II period, the Korean War, and now the Vietnam conflict, rendering a most valuable and important service to the medical profession, the Society, and the borough's hospitals for more than twenty-five years.

Dr. Maurice J. Dattlebaum served as President of the Society in 1941 and later became active in the Medical Society of the State of New York, serving as its Treasurer for many years. Dr. Thurman B. Givan, served as its President in 1946, later serving as President of the Medical Society of the State of New York in 1957.

In the early 1950's a resurgence of attendance at Medical Society meetings occurred, due mainly to the opposition by organized medicine against contract practice. The socio-economics of medicine were becoming more important in some ways than the art and science of medical practice itself! The business sessions of the Society were enlivened by the brisk debates of members, some of whom favored (or were participating with) the Health Insurance

Plan of Greater New York, while others (and by far, the majority) were violently opposed to it.

In 1955, Dr. Paul Dudley White of Boston, who had successfully treated President Dwight D. Eisenhower for a heart attack only a few months before, was the guest speaker at a stated meeting. Dr. Solomon Schussheim, the President, and other officers of the Society felt that Dr. White, coupled with the current H.I.P. problem, would generate a large enough audience to warrant renting for the occasion the auditorium at Girls' Commercial High School on Classon Avenue near Eastern Parkway. The decision was a wise one. Over 1,200 physicians and guests filled the auditorium for the particular occasion.

As time rolled on, the question of contract medicine began to fade from the limelight, and so did the attendance at meetings. By 1960, a crowd of one hundred members and guests was considered a fine turnout, despite the fact that three-fourths of these had been the personal guests of the President at a pre-meeting dinner and they therefore felt obligated to stay. By this time, also, the cost of being President had reached such astronomical proportions that many likely and good presidential prospects were spurning the candidacy. As a result, the number of stated meetings was reduced from eight to six, and finally to four; and the Society gradually began to subsidize the cost of the pre-meeting dinners.

In 1956, Dr. Robert F. Warren became the first physician to follow in his father's footsteps as President of the Society. Dr. Luther Warren, his father, had served as President in 1930. In 1970, Dr. A. W. Martin Marino, Jr. repeated the example, Dr. A. W. Martin Marino having served as President in 1948. And the third father-and-son team to be so recorded is that of Dr. Leo Schwartz who served as President in 1944 and Dr. Ralph M. Schwartz, President for 1971-1972.

In the spring of 1960, the members of the Board of Trustees and the Comitia Minora were guests of Dr. Robert A. Moore and the Downstate Medical Center for a three day weekend at the Princeton Inn in Princeton, New Jersey. Dr. Moore, who was Dean of the Medical College as well as President of the Downstate Medical Center, and his faculty members spared no expense to make the stay a memorable and enjoyable occasion for all who attended. Dr. Moore had arranged a program of information and statistics, presented by key faculty members, which was designed to smooth out the difficulties then existing between the two factions, representing the "town" on one side and the "gown" on the other. This particular weekend outing represented the first and only time that the fiscal and the

executive branches of the Medical Society had ever congregated outside the borough of Brooklyn.

The subtle lobbying helped considerably to ease off the strong opposition to the Medical College and its faculty members; and in time, Dr. Moore was chosen without a single dissenting vote to be the Vice President of the Kings County Medical Society, an honor which he valued most highly. Several years later, he was elected President of the Society, serving from 1967 to 1968, during which period he instituted many changes and reforms, especially as to committee appointments and tenure of offices.

Over the past 150 years, many Brooklyn physicians have been called upon to fill positions of honor demanding the highest integrity and intellect, both in state and national organizations. The following members of our Society have served as President of the MSSNY:

Joseph C. Hutchinson	1866
Edward R. Squibb	1876
Alexander Hutchins	1883
Lewis Stephen Pilcher	1892
Algernon T. Bristow	1903
William F. Campbell	1913
John Richard Kevin	1920
Charles R. Goodrich	1937
Thomas A. McGoldrick	1943
John J. Masterson	1949
Thurman B. Givan	1957

Four members served as President of the American Gynecological Society:

Alexander J. C. Skene
John Byrne
Charles Jewett
Robert Latou Dickinson

Lewis Stephen Pilcher served as President of the American Surgical Association, while Glentworth R. Butler became President of the American Congress on Internal Medicine.

Dr. John J. Jennings and Dr. Merrill N. Foote served as Regent in the American College of Surgeons.

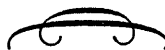
Dr. John J. Masterson was elected National Catholic Physician of the Year.

This dissertation has had to omit for reasons of brevity the names of many distinguished members, contemporary and otherwise, who have contributed so much to the success and progress of the Kings County Medical Society during the past 25 to 50 years. Many interesting stories could be told about, many contributions could be attributed to,

and the Society and its members owe debts of gratitude to men such as Charles Anderson, Louis Berger, Benjamin M. Bernstein, Louis Hornstein, Abraham Koplowitz, Aaron Kottler, Isaac Levine, Charles Loughran, Nicholas Ryan, Irving Sands, and many others too numerous to mention who have passed from our midst.

I cannot close without paying tribute to Solomon Schussheim who devoted his time and interest to working in and for the Kings County and State Medical Societies, who served as a Councillor to the State Society and Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the KCMS. Upon his death in 1967 a fund was created to continue the work and interest which he had fostered in the socio-economic aspects of medicine.

So ends the history for the first one hundred fifty years of the Medical Society of the County of Kings. Many things have happened and many changes have occurred during those years; but with the rapid pace of present day living, I am sure that the next twenty-five or fifty years will record an even greater and more exciting collection of events and data. To the next historian, I surrender my pen.



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