Imposing portraits of three eminent Jefferson Medical College professors are celebrated in a special gallery named in honor of the artist Thomas Eakins. A contemporary visitor to the Eakins Gallery might assume that he was the official portraitist for Jefferson Medical College in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. Ironically, while he is so esteemed and cherished today, during his lifetime the controversial painter was repeatedly passed over for Jefferson portrait commissions in favor of Samuel B. Waugh, George W. Pettit, and other competent but conventional artists scarcely known today.

However, by his own request Thomas Eakins did depict two members of the faculty, Drs. Benjamin H. Rand and Samuel D. Gross, whose portraits became part of the Jefferson collection. A third portrait in the collection is of Dr. William S. Forbes, commissioned by Jefferson Medical College in 1905 near the end of the careers of both sitter and artist.

Many distinguished art scholars now laud Thomas Eakins as America's greatest portraitist and one of its preeminent artists in any genre. Art historians have researched and placed into their cultural contexts the biographical details and guiding motivations of his life, the depth of his artistic training, and the legacy of his demanding standards and rigorous scientific preparation as an art educator. The influence of European artists and traditions on Eakins, his uncompromising personality, tensions between realism and artifice in his work, and his overt and underlying themes have all been extensively interpreted.

Therefore, this account will explore Thomas Eakins's professional relationships with Jefferson Medical College faculty and present relevant new information about his father's work; and describe the physical history of, and the public and institutional attitudes toward Jefferson's three portraits, especially The Gross Clinic.

I will trace Thomas Eakins's lifelong, passionate interest in human anatomy as the basis for his art; describe the medical environment in institutions where he pursued training in and teaching of anatomy, especially the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and Jefferson Medical College; discuss his admiration for physicians and other scientists; and summarize his own contributions to the scientific community. As will be seen, portraits of leading intellectuals formed a significant portion of his total output.

In addition, my delineation of a medical institution's perspective of ownership of three important portraits may contribute to Eakins scholarship from a viewpoint not often considered. The documentary record shows that although Jefferson Medical College did not favor Eakins with multiple commissions (nor did any other institution), it revealed pride of ownership and admiration for the artist from the time it first acquired one of his works in 1877, long before he was at all fashionable. Late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century attitudes have been culled from contemporary minutes of Jefferson Medical College meetings of trustees, alumni, and faculty; annual reports and ledgers; catalogues, announcements, and yearbooks of the college; lectures and addresses; medical journals and books; memoranda and correspondence; and period photographs of portraits in situ.

Thomas Eakins: Student and Teacher, Expert Anatomist

Thomas Cowperthwait Eakins was born in Philadelphia in 1844 and except for study and travel in Europe in the 1860s passed his whole life in that city. His scenes of sporting and leisure activities and his portraits of men and women of achievement are his testimonial to and celebration of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Philadelphia.

His father, Benjamin Eakins (1818-99), was a well known professional calligrapher and writing master widely admired for his superb technique and methodical teaching standards. Mr. Eakins very likely gave the
son his first drawing lessons, and always encouraged his desire to become a professional artist with both financial and moral support. The Eakins family lived in comfortable circumstances and was well acquainted with many of the city's best known painters and graphic artists.

An 1861 graduate of Central High School, Thomas Eakins placed in the upper level of his class and received a grade of one hundred in drawing all four years. Among the school's requirements was a considerable amount of science: four years of natural history including zoology, anatomy, and physiology, and three years of chemistry and physics. Four years of classes in drawing and writing included penmanship, outline drawing, drawing from solid objects, mechanical and perspective drawing, and ornamental lettering. Problems in the construction of complex geometric shapes led to the representation of machines and architecture. Advanced figure drawing was taught exclusively from casts of sculpture, not from the live model.

The curriculum was so rigorous that the school awarded the bachelor's degree, and in Eakins's time students could go directly from Central to medical or other professional school. In an assessment of Eakins's high school education, noted Eakins scholar Elizabeth Johns wrote,

Eakins' intellectual heritage from Central High School—a way of thinking, a faith that this method applied to all pursuits, and a deep respect for intellectual achievement—informed his entire career as a painter...Like the emerging anthropologists, psychologists, and sociologists of his time who investigated man with the objectivity other scientists trained on the rest of the natural world, Eakins applied himself to portraiture to study the intellect and spirit of man.

After graduation from Central High School Eakins applied unsuccessfully for the post of drawing master at the school, and worked briefly helping his father engross documents and teach penmanship. At the same time he enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts where he drew from antique casts, attended lectures on anatomy, and took life classes (drawing or painting from the live model). For formal instruction in painting and sculpture, lessons were arranged on a private basis with established artists.

Artistic anatomy was the only course taught by a regular instructor at the Academy. From 1856 to 1870 this post was filled by Dr. Amos R. Thomas (1826-95), a graduate of both the Syracuse Medical College and Penn Medical College (later Penn Medical University). Thomas was a demonstrator and then professor of anatomy from 1854 to 1862 at the latter school. He also taught artistic anatomy at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (now Moore College of Art and Design). Sometime during this period Thomas converted to homeopathy and in 1867 was made professor of anatomy at Philadelphia's Hahnemann Medical College and then dean there.

Dr. Thomas's synopsis of his artistic anatomy course at the Academy written a few months before the first session in the autumn of 1856, stated that he planned to deliver twenty lectures to cover the skeletal, muscular, adipose, areolar, and nervous systems, and the anatomy of expression. Materials included cadavers, live models, and skeletons. At least some of his lectures for the art students were delivered at the amphitheater of the Penn Medical University at Ninth and Arch Streets.

Eakins scholar Elizabeth Milroy stated that Dr. Thomas had to discontinue dissection from his curriculum in 1860 for "unspecified reasons." She added, "The study of gross anatomy had long been a recognized adjunct to life drawing and many European as well as American art schools encouraged students to attend medical school courses." Milroy conjectured that Dr. Thomas might have suggested anatomy lectures at Jefferson Medical College to Academy students seeking more in-depth study of anatomy.

One may wonder why Eakins specifically chose Jefferson Medical College to study anatomy. Actually, his choices were few during the Civil War years. Most of Philadelphia's private medical schools and schools of anatomy either closed or foundered during this period. For example, classes were suspended at Penn Medical University after the session of 1862-63 until the session of 1874-75. Even the leading medical schools, Jefferson Medical College and the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania, experienced difficult times with the loss of southern students and faculty and with so many professors serving in war hospitals or in the army.

Another Eakins scholar, Ellwood C. Parry III, offered a practical reason for Eakins's choice stating that Jefferson Medical College was "but a short walk" down the street from the Pennsylvania Academy then at Tenth and Chestnut Streets. However, he could also have selected the Medical Department of the University of Pennsylvania. It was not until the mid-1870s that the University of Pennsylvania gradually moved from Ninth between Market and Chestnut Streets to a new site twenty-five blocks west across the river. The Med-
J\nJefferson Medical College Anatomy Admission Ticket

ANATOMY ADMISSION TICKET
(obverse, earlier ticket)
Engraving, ink on card
1864
Card size: 3 1/2 x 5 in.
Inscription: "JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE/"Optimi Consultores
Mortui'/Practical/Anatomy/By
Joseph Pancoast, M.D./Admit Mr. T. C. Eaken" [sic]

Courtesy Collection Archives,
Charles Bregler material, Hirshhorn
Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution. Photograph
by Lee Stalsworth

In addition to the presence of the estimable Dr. Pancoast (and Dr. Benjamin H. Rand, see below) a further incentive for Eakins to attend Jefferson Medical College was his own father's connections to the institution. I have discovered a Jefferson Medical College ledger showing that from 1846 to 1878 Benjamin Eakins was paid for inscribing diplomas with the names of Jefferson graduates for the annual March commencement ceremonies.²

Through his decades of service Benjamin Eakins was surely acquainted with several Jefferson deans and faculty members. In a manuscript diary in the Jefferson archives Dean Robley Dunglison, M.D. described activities in his office and made several references to Mr. Eakins, including a typical notation of February 10, 1859: “Directed the Janitor to have the diplomas sent up to the President of the College—Judge King for his signatures. Saw Mr. Eakins, and arranged with him in regard to the filling up of the Diplomas so that there may be as little detention as possible.”
As a nonmatriculating student, Thomas Eakins's name does not appear on the official Jefferson Medical College register, but his earlier and later tickets of admission to anatomy courses are preserved in the Charles Bregler material in the collection archives of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Like most medical schools at this time, Jefferson was a proprietary institution, and student fees were distributed by the dean directly to the professor of anatomy.

The first of the tickets identifies the professor as Dr. Joseph Pancoast and the student as "Mr. T. C. Eakert" [sic]. The reverse of the card is clearly dated the session of 1864 and 1865, and Dr. William H. Pancoast is named as the demonstrator. The ticket's authenticity is confirmed by identical tickets in the Jefferson archives issued to medical students for the 1864-65 winter session. These other cards are the same size, same orange color, and inscribed in a handwriting that appears the same as the Hirshhorn ticket issued to Thomas Eakins.

The Jefferson Medical College Annual Announcement for 1864-65 stated that the winter anatomy session would commence on October 10 and terminate on the last day of February. The dissecting rooms would open on October 1, under the direction of the professor of anatomy and the demonstrator. Dr. Joseph Pancoast was listed as the professor of general, descriptive, and surgical anatomy, and he held that position from 1841 through the 1873-74 session. His son, Dr. William H. Pancoast, listed as the demonstrator of anatomy, retained that position from the session of 1863-64 until April 1874 when he succeeded his father as the professor of anatomy.

Eakins would have been eligible to attend the anatomical dissections and also the clinics of Dr. Samuel D. Gross, the professor of the institutes and practice of surgery. The Announcement describes the "clinical riches" that students including Thomas Eakins could avail themselves of, in addition to the formal lectures:
The General Dispensary of the College, which the students...have the exclusive privilege of attending gratuitously, will be in active operation in September. The College Clinic, connected with this, affords admirable opportunities for the student to learn the practical parts of his profession, and the proper application of the principles which he is taught from the various chairs. The clinic is richly supplied with medical and surgical cases, and throughout the session it forms a prominent, and in the estimation of the Faculty, a most important element of the educational course. The patient is examined, prescribed for, and if a surgical operation is needed, it is performed before the class...The hours of attendance at the clinic of the College are so arranged as to permit the students to attend, every Wednesday and Saturday, the clinics held at the Pennsylvania Hospital and the Philadelphia Hospital.

Dr. Joseph Pancoast's introductory lecture to the anatomy course for the 1849-50 session may suggest what Eakins took in when he attended in 1864-65. Pancoast's philosophical address discussed the "most perfect" construction of the human body in terms of both mechanical practicality and spirituality:

We prefer to look at the structure of man, directly in reference to its uses. To carry out a course of anatomical instruction on this basis...to display the parts as they actually exist, and particularize carefully their medical and surgical relations, will be my aim...inasmuch as it makes the subject more plain and easy, and is in full accordance with the practical tendency of the times...

You have a machine laid before you, for investigation and management, more perfect in its construction...than anything that has ever entered into the heart of man to wish for, or the mind of man to conceive; a machine, moreover, of God's own construction, and made to serve as the habitation of that divine essence which was breathed into it with the breath of life, and which is held in durance for a while in the material body.

Jefferson Medical College Anatomy Admission Ticket

ANATOMY ADMISSION
TICKET (obverse, later ticket)
Engraving, ink on card
Ca. 1874
Card size: 3 5/8 x 5 1/16 in.

Inscription: "Optimi Consultores Mortui: Anatomy/BY/Wm. H Pancoast M.D./For Thos. C. Eakins/1864 & 65"

Courtesy Collection Archives, Charles Bregler material.
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution.
Photograph by Lee Stalsworth
ANATOMY ADMISSION TICKET
(reverse, later ticket)
Ink on card
Ca. 1874
Card size: 3 5/8 x 5 1/16 in.
Inscription: “Spring Session/Wm H
Pancoast MD/Demonstrator/per T H
Andrews MD”
For lack of documentary evidence about much of Eakins's activities in the early 1870s, several scholars have been understandably confused about the exact date of the artist's enrollment for a second course in anatomy at Jefferson Medical College. Some suggest that he attended in the early 1870s. Of those who state the year 1874 none has heretofore offered evidence. Several have omitted any reference to a second course in the 1870s. Lloyd Goodrich states the dates 1873 and 1874.15

A second anatomy ticket of admission also owned by the Hirshhorn Museum identifies the instructor on the front of the card as Dr. William H. Pancoast and the student as “Thos. C. Eakins.” The date “1864 & 65” was written in ink decades later by someone not affiliated with Jefferson Medical College.14 The reverse of the card identifies the course as the “Spring Session,” with “Wm H Pancoast MD/Demonstrator/per T H Andrews MD.”

The dates 1864 and 1865 cannot be correct because of the physicians mentioned: Drs. William H. Pancoast and Thomas Hollingsworth Andrews were not yet colleagues. Dr. Andrews graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1864 and was named demonstrator of surgery in 1873.

The session of 1873-74 was a transitional year. In both the college’s Announcement and Catalogue of 1873-74 Dr. William H. Pancoast is listed as demonstrator of anatomy for the regular winter session (October through March), but as lecturer in visceral and surgical anatomy in the supplementary summer course (April through June). In various Jefferson documents the terms “summer” and “spring” are used interchangeably for these supplementary sessions from April through June.

Unfortunately the name of the demonstrator of anatomy for the summer course is not listed, but presumably it was Dr. Andrews. The reason is that in the following winter session of 1874-75 both Catalogue and Announcement list Dr. Joseph Pancoast as emeritus professor and Dr. William Pancoast as the professor of general, descriptive, and surgical anatomy, with Dr. Thomas H. Andrews as demonstrator of anatomy. Dr. William Pancoast did not lecture in the summer session of 1875; probably Dr. Andrews was given this primary assignment because he was the demonstrator during the regular winter session.

Therefore, the evidence points to the 1874 spring session as the time when Thomas Eakins took a second course at Jefferson Medical College: visceral and surgical anatomy. Professor Samuel D. Gross was the lecturer on clinical surgery in the 1874 spring session, and Dr. John H. Brinton was listed as lecturer on operative surgery.

After attending the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and between his two anatomy courses at Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Eakins studied abroad. He embarked for Paris in September 1866, in the hopes of receiving the highest quality art education. His application for admission to the École des Beaux-Arts, the prestigious state-run academy, was finally accepted after a determined campaign on his part.

Eakins was also very pleased to enter the atelier of the celebrated realist painter Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904), a popular teacher at the École whose students drew the figure first from plaster casts and then from the live model. The teacher encouraged his students to take supplementary instruction in human and comparative anatomy, including dissection at the École. It is not known whether Eakins sat for anatomy examinations.15 It is thought that he took advantage of opportunities to dissect and attend surgical clinics at the Paris hospitals and the École de Médecine.16

During Gérôme’s absences from Paris Eakins studied clay modeling with the sculptor Augustin Dumont (1801-84) and figure painting with the independent portraitist Léon Bonnat (1833/34-1922). In a letter to his father dated October/November 1867, Eakins wrote, “It has been my good fortune to have spoken personally with some of the greatest men in the world known in Europe and America alike,” and significantly, he listed Dr. Joseph Pancoast among them, the only physician mentioned.17 While abroad Eakins visited numerous museums throughout France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Spain. He returned home in July 1870.

During his first few years back in Philadelphia he sent work to Gérôme for criticism, and began to exhibit paintings at the Union League of Philadelphia in 1871, at the American Society of Painters in Water Colors in New York in 1874, and at the Paris Salon in 1875. He had some modest sales during this period. In the 1870s and early 1880s his subjects were portraits and domestic scenes of close family and friends, nostalgic “old-fashioned” themes, and sporting scenes of coaching, hunting, sailing, and rowing.

Eakins’s lengthy period of artistic training was followed by two decades of teaching at many different schools. He began his career conducting life classes at the Philadelphia Sketch Club without pay from 1874 to 1876.

By 1876 Eakins became an instructor at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts which had suspended classes for six years during construction of its new building at Broad and Cherry Streets. He became an un-
paid assistant to the aging professor of painting and drawing, Christian Schussele (1824-79), by teaching his evening life classes. Eakins was also unremunerated for his service as chief demonstrator in Dr. William W. Keen's course of artistic anatomy. In 1877 Schussele was admonished to discontinue delegating his evening duties.

In 1877 a group of disgruntled Academy students who formed the Art Students' Union persuaded Eakins to serve as an unpaid instructor for additional life study classes. The same year a petition from women students at the Academy requested an evening life class with Eakins as the instructor, but he was not yet reinstated. The petition was presented by Susan Macdowell, a leader among the students who would become Eakins's wife in 1884.

A few months later the board rescinded a previous resolution to allow Schussele assistance. By the fall of 1878 the Academy formally named Eakins as assistant professor of painting and the chief demonstrator of artistic anatomy. Upon Schussele's death the following fall, Eakins was promoted to professor of drawing and painting, and for the first time received a salary (six hundred dollars a year, half of Schussele's salary). He now had full charge of the classes on drawing from ancient art works and drawing from live models.

In 1882 he was appointed director of the Academy and drew up a plan to reorganize the school. Though following the Academy's traditional figure-based curriculum (itself based on the French method), Eakins shortened the period of drawing from casts of antique sculptures and encouraged his students to paint from the live model as soon as possible. His more rigorous curriculum was concerned with "pure art education" for all students including amateurs and those entering the commercial arts. It included human and animal anatomy, modeling the human figure in clay, portraiture, photography, and perspective. He strove to encourage the students' independence and visited the classroom only once or twice a week.18 In Eakins's words, "The course of study is believed to be more thorough than that of any other existing school. Its basis is the nude human figure."19

Eakins's arrival at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1876 coincided with the appointment of Dr. William W. Keen as the professor of artistic anatomy there. Keen remained in his Academy post through the session of 1889-90. From 1878 to 1882 he was also professor of the anatomy of animal forms as applied to decorative art at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art. Keen was to become a distinguished surgeon at Jefferson.

Prior to his post at the Academy Keen had been lecturer in pathological anatomy at Jefferson Medical College from 1866 to 1875 and director of the Philadelphia School of Anatomy during the same period. At the latter school he had lectured each year on descriptive and surgical anatomy and operative surgery, and had given three courses on clinical or surface anatomy and two courses on artistic anatomy.20

Keen's first session on artistic anatomy at the Academy consisted of thirty lectures. The introductory lecture emphasized the importance of anatomy to art; this was followed by eight lectures on the skeleton, twelve and one-half on muscles, one each on the nose and ear, one and one-half on the eye, two on the skin and subcutaneous fat and veins, one on hair and postural expression, and two on the influence of sex on the development of the body. In addition to dissection, Dr. Keen utilized skeletons, plaster casts, drawings, and a live model whose muscles were "called into play" with dumbbells, weights, rings, and a galvanic battery, the latter especially for facial muscles.21

Keen developed an innovative teaching technique of hanging the cadaver upright by two iron hooks inserted into trephine openings in the sides of the skull, so that cadaver, skeleton, and living model were all in the same vertical position, and "no mental transposition from a cadaver lying horizontal on a table to a skeleton and living model in the vertical position was necessary."22

Always fascinated with teaching methods, Keen delivered a paper, "On the Systematic Use of the Living Model in Teaching Anatomy," at the International Medical Congress in London in 1881. Lamenting the absence of a satisfactory textbook on artistic anatomy, he began a manuscript on this subject but found little time to complete the book due to his burgeoning surgical practice.

In his Memoirs Keen described the benefits of teaching artistic anatomy:

These excursions into artistic and decorative anatomy were very delightful by-products...of my anatomical work. They broadened my conception of the uses and value of anatomy and brought me into intimate personal acquaintance with both officers and students in these two institutions. Not a few of my old pupils, especially in the Academy, have become distinguished painters, sculptors, and illustrators.

Keen's annual reports to the Pennsylvania Academy made frequent mention of Thomas Eakins's assistance. In his first annual report of 1876-77 Dr. Keen expressed...
“very deep obligation” to Eakins and some students for their dissections of the “subjects”; and for Eakins’s dissections and casts of the muscles of the dog and cat. Keen also asked authorization for Eakins to have casts made of his dissections of the horse and sheep.23

Keen’s report for 1877-78 praised Eakins for superintending the dissections, and complimented Eakins and some students for preparing the muscles of the face in sections and casts of the muscles of the dog and cat. Keen’s report praised Eakins’s “extremely valuable casts showing not only the surface anatomy of the horse, dog, and sheep with illustrative diagrams for the comparative anatomy of expression. He mentioned that they also marked on one side of the human and horse skeletons the exact origin and insertion of each muscle.

For 1878-79 Keen reported that his course had expanded to thirty-seven lectures for “more thorough study” of the bones, muscles, and proportions. In accordance with instructions from the board, Keen appointed Eakins as chief demonstrator and six students as assistant demonstrators. Keen’s report praised Eakins’s “extremely valuable casts showing not only the surface of dissections but also the cross sections of the muscles,” and said that gelatin molds would be made of the casts for easy reproduction and availability to students.

Keen’s annual report of 1879-80 mentioned that Eakins had been promoted to professor of painting, and so was replaced as chief demonstrator of artistic anatomy. The number of lectures was reduced to thirty-four but the course was substantially the same.

Keen’s last extant annual report of 1880-81 stated that the course was a repetition of former years, except in one respect. Bowing to the suggestion of the committee on instruction, he “omitted the lectures to the male and female life classes on the sexual differences of form. It was feared that it might give rise to unfavorable criticism and I very gladly yielded to the judgment of the Committee.” In subsequent years Academy Circulars stated that Keen’s course consisted of about thirty-five lectures, the last of which was devoted to proportions.

From the beginning of his tenure Keen proposed and implemented the formation of a library of richly illustrated books and periodicals devoted to anatomy. At the same time Eakins was assembling a photographic collection of male and female nudes for use by Academy students. Some photos were of professional models, others of male and female students, and a few even of himself.

Partly because of Eakins’s innovations, his teaching career at the Academy was marked by continuous friction with school authorities. He was resentful that his actual salary was less than had been promised. And he was stung that the Academy vehemently seconded criticisms of his curriculum and methods, such as lack of emphasis on composition, aesthetics, art history, decorative arts, or landscape painting.

In a largely complimentary article of 1879 about the Academy’s curriculum compared with art schools in New York, literary and art critic William C. Brownell questioned whether the exhaustive study of anatomy could result in the habit of “looking for anatomy and nothing else,” whether students would “acquire a habit of looking solely at structure and neglect both character and color and all the other elements of art not less important than structure, which depend so much on intuitive perception and so little on exact knowledge.”

In reply to this criticism Eakins said, “We turn out no physicians and surgeons. About the philosophy of aesthetics, to be sure, we do not greatly concern ourselves, but we are considerably concerned about learning how to paint.” Eakins acknowledged that dissection is “disagreeable” work, adding, “No one dissects to quicken his eye for, or his delight in beauty. He dissects simply to increase his knowledge of how beautiful objects are put together to the end that he may be able to imitate them.”

This latter thought does seem to echo Dr. Joseph Pancoast’s ideas on the essence of anatomical structure, and a few Eakins scholars have noted that anatomical study at the Pennsylvania Academy approached or even surpassed that of some contemporary medical schools. However, Dr. Keen agreed with Eakins about not “turning out” physicians or surgeons, and asserted strongly in Brownell’s article that the object of his lectures is “not a study of pure anatomy, but of anatomy in relation to form; not to make anatomists but artists.”

A more sensational and delicate issue that disturbed the Academy’s directors was internal and external criticism about Eakins’s lack of propriety in his own behavior and moral judgment. On the one hand Eakins was justly proud of the Academy’s facilities for women art students: separate life classes and dissection sessions, and joint attendance with male students for anatomy lectures. On the other hand Eakins’s uninhibited attitude toward study of the human body exceeded the tolerance of Victorian society in Philadelphia.

Some of Eakins’s male and female students willingly posed for each other in the nude in their homes or in his studio, and allowed themselves to be photographed by him and his assistants. Eakins was criticized for posing male and female models next to each other in the

Historical Survey
life classes. In his private studio he himself disrobed in order to explain the movement of the pelvis to a promising female student, and is said to have asked female students to pose nude for him.

The board of directors reacted to mounting criticism about his coarse behavior and alleged lack of morality from some female students and their parents as well as criticism about his narrow curriculum from a group of younger rival associates who were former students. They wanted to include more courses in drawing, pictorial composition, and watercolor. In February 1886 the board demanded his resignation when he allegedly defied Academy regulations by removing the loincloth from a male model in front of female students.25

Almost immediately following this crushing dismissal and after student petitions demanding his rehiring were ignored, some of Eakins’s advanced pupils established a new private school, the Art Students League of Philadelphia, and asked Eakins to develop the curriculum and take charge there. Eakins served devotedly with no pay at the club-like school until it closed in 1893.

Eakins’s subsequent teaching was confined to lectures in artistic anatomy, and his persistence in using completely nude models caused predictable confrontations with administrators at other schools as well. He was expelled from the Philadelphia Sketch Club the same year as his dismissal from the Academy. In 1895 he was abruptly dismissed during his first season at Philadelphia’s Drexel Institute amid a hail of adverse publicity about sexual improprieties.

However, he lectured on anatomy without incident at several other schools: the Art Students Guild of the Brooklyn Art Association (1881-85), the Art Students League of New York (1885-89), the National Academy of Design (1888-95), the Women’s Art School of the Cooper Union, New York (1891-98), and the Art Students’ Guild in Washington, D.C. (mid-1890s).26

Eakins retained a lifelong devotion to anatomy as the underlying basis for his art. His student and long-term disciple and friend, Charles Bregler, wrote,

His knowledge of the human and animal anatomy was profound, and equal to that of a surgeon. This was acquired by years of study in the most unpleasant and gruesome way possible namely in the dissecting rooms of a Medical College. He had only contempt [sic] for those who try to acquire this knowledge in any other way. I quote his words on this subject,

To learn anatomy out of a book is like learning to paint out of a book. It’s a waste of time.27

Some Eakins acquaintances and art scholars have speculated about whether Eakins considered becoming a physician. Lloyd Goodrich traces that notion to Cecilia Beaux, a successful turn-of-the-century portrait artist and teacher, who wrote, “He is said to have hesitated in his youth in the choice of a profession. Should he be a surgeon or an artist? He decided on the latter.”28 In 1931 Goodrich asked Susan Macdowell Eakins, the artist’s widow, if this were true and she replied, “He was so serious about study that he very likely contemplated both professions.” Goodrich could find no confirmation of Beaux’s statement elsewhere.29

In a trenchant description of her husband Susan Eakins painted him as being “so simple, so unwilling to work for admiration, never a Club man or society man” but one who was “welcomed by men of science. Dr. Gross admitted him in his Clinic. He saw that the young Eakins interest was to learn.”30

Eakins’s scientific legacy was not confined to preparing anatomic materials and teaching artistic anatomy. He also made a thorough study of perspective and lectured on that subject at the Pennsylvania Academy and several other art schools. His unpublished manuscript on linear perspective (notes for formal lectures) is located at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and several of his preparatory perspectival drawings are still extant.31

On at least two other important occasions Eakins was accepted as a peer by Philadelphia’s scientific community and treated with great respect. In 1884 Eakins was appointed to a commission that supervised the pioneering “stop-action,” serial locomotion studies of humans and animals conducted by the photographer Eadweard Muybridge on the hospital grounds at the University of Pennsylvania. The commission chairman was Edward H. Coates, chairman of the Academy’s committee on instruction, and the other seven members were Penn faculty members in medicine, anatomy, engineering, and physics.

Muybridge had first been invited to lecture at several locations in Philadelphia by Fairman Rogers, a former professor of engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and a director there and at the Pennsylvania Academy, as well as a sportsman and photographer. In 1879 Rogers had commissioned Eakins to depict his handsome coach drawn by horses in motion, The Fairman Rogers Four-in-hand (Philadelphia Museum of Art).

The Muybridge photos of human figures moving down a track were taken with a battery of twenty-four cameras each of which made exposures from a different viewpoint as well as cameras from the side making
diagonal shots. At the same time the commission financed a shed for Eakins to experiment with his own apparatus; he used a single camera of his own design to create multiple exposure images of athletes in motion on one plate, an adaptation from a method developed by a French photographer, Étienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904).

The original Muybridge publication of 1887 was a sumptuously illustrated, eleven-volume, folio edition of the work on animal locomotion. The following year the university published a more modest but scholarly version called Animal Locomotion: The Muybridge Work at the University of Pennsylvania: The Method and the Result, with essays about technical processes and analyses written by several professors. The treatise by Dr. William Marks, a professor of engineering, included a description of Eakins’s methods and apparatus prepared by the artist.

Because of his expertise in equine anatomy which he had been investigating for almost twenty years, in 1894 Eakins was invited to deliver a lecture to the members of Philadelphia’s Academy of Natural Sciences entitled “The Differential Action of Certain Muscles Passing More Than One Joint.” In preparation for the published version, he received assistance from physiologist Dr. Harrison Allen, a colleague from the Muybridge Commission. In the article Eakins noted his dissatisfaction with standard accounts of the muscular action in equine locomotion in which the muscles were classified as flexors and extensors, working and resting alternately.

In his years of dissection and photographic observation of the horse, he had discovered that the flexors and extensors were “in strong action at the same time.” Although Eakins began his illustrated lecture with the remark, “It is not without diffidence that I, a painter, venture to communicate with a scientific body upon a scientific subject,” he ended with confidence describing his own artistic viewpoint,

On the lines of the mighty and simple strains dominating the movement, and felt intuitively and studied out by him, the master artist groups, with full intention, his muscular forms. No detail contradicts. His men and animals live. Such is the work of three or four moderm artists. Such was the work of many an old Greek sculptor.

After his forced resignation from the Academy, in the summer of 1887 Eakins spent ten weeks among cowboys on a ranch in the Dakota Territory to recover from emotional exhaustion. Most Eakins scholars attribute this “rest treatment” to the recommendation by one or both of his friends, Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, an eminent Philadelphia neurologist (and Jefferson graduate of 1850), and Dr. Horatio C. Wood, professor of nervous diseases at the University of Pennsylvania, and part owner of the B-T Ranch. Always an outdoor enthusiast, Eakins partook fully in this immersion in nature. He returned to Philadelphia refreshed and inspired.

After 1886 Eakins concentrated mainly on portraiture but few of these were commissioned works; in most cases he asked the sitters to pose for him. Unlike rival portrait painters Eakins eschewed socially prominent and political subjects, in favor of men and women of scientific, intellectual, artistic, religious, or athletic accomplishment.

Because of his expertise in artistic anatomy of humans and animals, in experimental photography, optical perspective, and other elements of science, and his acquaintance with professional men at Jefferson Medical College and elsewhere, it is not surprising that he depicted so many physicians and other scientists. Today one may regret that Jefferson Medical College never attempted to acquire portraits of its numerous other alumni or faculty painted by Eakins, but a program of collecting works by particular artists was never its mission.

Thomas Eakins’s portraits often show the subjects at work or in their working environment. His figures display muscular or psychological energy or tension when concentrating on a task or even when resting but deep in thought. The artist’s mastery of the underlying skeletal and muscular structure is so complete that his figures exude an almost palpable sculptural presence in space.

Even though he felt comfortable with his chosen sitters, the resulting portraits were often displeasing to the subjects and their families or institutions. Not only were Eakins’s sitters never flattered or idealized, sometimes they were deliberately aged, as comparisons with contemporary photographs attest. Many appear somber, withdrawn, tense, preoccupied, or resigned, sometimes vulnerable, and they rarely make eye contact with the viewer. Young female sitters, especially, were offended because the penetrating delineation of
their character often came at the expense of physical grace or conventional ideals of beauty.

Eakins's objective was to probe his sitters' permanent, innate character and spirit by means of posture, gesture, and expression rather than to imitate their outward appearance at a specific moment in time. Their prevailing mood of introspection bespeaks intelligence, creativity, and seriousness of purpose, qualities that modern viewers find appealing. The poet Walt Whitman was unusual for valuing his own portrait, saying that it "fulfills its purpose, sets me down in correct style without feathers, without fuss of any sort. I like the picture always—it never fades or weakens."

Even though many critics, sitters, and the general public considered Eakins personally unconventional and coarse and his painting style too harsh and unyielding, it would be erroneous to assume that his career was totally unsuccessful and that he had no supporters. Although several paintings were rejected by exhibition juries, and those exhibited were usually ignored or criticized, and many paintings were never approved by their intended owners, he still received some significant acceptance by the art establishment.

Many of his works were accepted at the most prestigious museum exhibitions and international expositions where he was awarded several prizes. At the Chicago Exposition of 1893 he won a bronze medal for ten paintings including The Gross Clinic. In 1900 he won an honorable mention at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. In 1901 he won a gold medal at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. In 1904 he served on the Philadelphia advisory committee for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis where The Gross Clinic won a gold medal. The same year he won the Temple Gold Medal at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In 1905 he won the Thomas R. Proctor Prize at the National Academy of Design. In 1907 he won a gold medal at the American Art Society of Philadelphia.

In 1907 he also won a medal of the second class at the Carnegie Institute where he served on the juries of awards five times for the institute's international exhibitions. In 1902 he had been made a full academician of the National Academy of Design. He actually declined his election in 1908 to the National Institute of Arts and Letters (writing caustically to the treasurer that he could not afford the five dollar membership fee). His only one-man show occurred at Philadelphia's Earle's Galleries in 1896.

Near the end of his life critics began to single him out as a leading American realist painter, and art collector Dr. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia was victorious among rival collectors vying for his portrait of Dr. D. Hayes Agnew. Moreover, from the outset of his career he had a small but fervent band of admirers and defenders among art students, fellow artists, and a few critics, and the constant support of many family members, especially his father and his wife.

Posthumous recognition was almost immediate. The year after his death in 1916 a memorial exhibition was initiated by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and then shown at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. In the next two decades his reputation slowly ascended and museums and collectors began to buy his paintings.

Susan Eakins fervently hoped to establish her husband's reputation in Philadelphia, the city of his birth. In 1930 she and Mary Adeline Williams, family friend and companion, made a magnificent gift of fifty oil paintings and other works remaining in their possession to be installed in a special gallery in the recently built Pennsylvania Museum (later the Philadelphia Museum of Art). That donation and significant later additions of art works and manuscripts, combined with the outstanding portrait and archival collections at Thomas Jefferson University, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary, have made Philadelphia a center for Eakins scholars and admirers ever since.

Happily, there is no evidence that either Jefferson Medical College or the three Jefferson professors depicted by Eakins were dissatisfied with their depictions. Quite the contrary. The portraits of Drs. Benjamin H. Rand, Samuel D. Gross, and William S. Forbes were installed at important locations at the medical school soon after their completion and have always been esteemed by the institution.
Benjamin Howard Rand, M.D. was the artist's first sitter outside his circle of family and close friends, and first in a long series of portraits of physicians and scientists. As in the two other large-scale, full-length portraits of Jefferson professors, Dr. Rand is shown at work with attributes that identify his professional specialty and allude to his intellectual prowess.

Subject and artist had been acquainted since Eakins’s student days at Philadelphia’s Central High School where Rand was the chair of chemistry from 1859 to 1864 and of which he also was an alumnus. Rand held similar posts at the Franklin Institute (1850-64), the Medical Department of Pennsylvania College (1859-61), and the Philadelphia College of Medicine (1854-58).

Benjamin Howard Rand was born in 1827 in Philadelphia. He began his medical studies in 1843 with Dr. Robert M. Huston, and graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1848 after serving as clinical assistant to Drs. Thomas Mutter and Joseph Pancoast. Rand succeeded Dr. Franklin Bache as professor of chemistry at Jefferson Medical College in 1864.

Board of trustees minutes show that Dr. Rand was in competition with several distinguished chemists for the post, and finally reached a majority vote on the tenth ballot. He was evidently deemed very effective because he was appointed dean of the medical school just five years later. He served as dean until 1873 and held the chemistry chair until his resignation in 1877.

Rand contributed numerous articles to scientific journals and also edited Samuel L. Metcalf’s third edition of Caloric: Its Agencies on the Phenomena of Nature (1859). Original textbooks written by Rand include An Outline of Medical Chemistry for the Use of Students (1855) and Elements of Medical Chemistry (1867). Dr. Rand was a member of the American Medical Association and the American Philosophical Society, a fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and an active member and secretary (1852-64) of the Academy of Natural Sciences.

Jefferson medical students valued Rand’s emphasis on applied rather than theoretical chemistry in the practice of medicine, and found his lectures practical and instructive. This pragmatic approach, not unlike Eakins’s teaching “how to paint” rather than “the philosophy of aesthetics,” is evident in his textbooks in which the sections on chemistry of the elements and organic chemistry highlight their medical effects. Rand’s teaching also stressed the professional and social responsibilities students should assume when they become physicians. In a commencement address of 1866, he cautioned the new graduates who were in the “flush of youth, full of hope and ambition, eager to plunge into the battle of life” to abide by the following duties:

1. To yourselves— Avoid sloth and procrastination. At first you will not be overwhelmed with patients or with fees; still you may spend your hours, not in card-playing, dissipation, or worse still, politics, but in the
Rand’s untimely retirement in 1877 at age fifty-one was caused by an unfortunate accident and he died six years later. Bouts of pneumonia interfered with his teaching after he had accidentally inhaled arsenuretted hydrogen (a colorless, extremely poisonous gas) during a medicolegal investigation. Thereafter he remained almost housebound until his death at which time the executive committee of Jefferson’s alumni association noted that the organization had “sustained a loss of one of its sincere friends and most active and faithful members.” An obituary noted that Dean Rand had been “kind and obliging to the students, always sympathizing with their troubles, and ready to listen and to advise.”

As noted, Professor Rand began his career at Jefferson Medical College in 1864 when Thomas Eakins first studied anatomy there, and it is possible that the chemist influenced his choice of medical school. The young painter asked Rand to sit for his portrait in 1874 when he was enrolled for a second anatomy course at Jefferson. Several scholars have conjectured about Eakins’s choice of the estimable Professor Benjamin H. Rand as his first public portrait subject.

Ellwood C. Parry III pointed out that in 1874 Eakins would have been aware that Jefferson’s alumni association was beginning its tradition of commissioning portraits. Starting in the early 1870s, Jefferson had begun to commission and collect paintings of illustrious professors at the urging of Dr. Samuel D. Gross. William H. Gerdts developed this line of thought, noting Eakins’s admiration for Rand and that “he wanted to create a notable portrait that would advertise his talents” and secure other commissions.

Elizabeth Johns has contributed information in two other areas. One was a more personal connection between Eakins and Rand in their mutual interest and participation in the popular sport of rowing. Eakins and many of his friends at Central High School had taken up rowing, and Benjamin H. Rand was for a time president of Philadelphia’s Undine Barge Club where Eakins was likely a member. Johns also suggested a second connection: that Dr. Rand might have asked Eakins to arrange for the purchase of a French fossil collection for Philadelphia’s Academy of Natural Sciences while he was studying art in Paris.

I have investigated another personal connection between artist and sitter: the profession of their fathers. Both were well known writing masters in Philadelphia. Benjamin Eakins (1818-99) engrossed diplomas for local schools and colleges and inscribed other documents such as deeds and marriage certificates. He taught writing at several local private schools, including Friends’ Central School for fifty-one years, from 1845 to 1896.

An influence on his son can be seen in the handsome lettering, the numerous figures who are writing, and the plethora of writing materials in many Eakins paintings, including those at Jefferson.

Benjamin Howard Rand the elder (1792-1862), also a professional calligrapher, taught penmanship for more than twenty-five years, and published several popular books on the subject. It is not known whether the two writing masters knew each other personally, but it is almost certain that their sons knew of their fathers’ common profession.

A contemporary Jefferson Medical College ledger shows that both writing masters were employed to “fill in” student diplomas. Benjamin Rand did this briefly from 1843 to 1845. Benjamin Eakins succeeded him the following year and remained until 1878. Considering the family connections with Jefferson Medical College and especially Thomas Eakins’s familiarity with Dr. Benjamin H. Rand, it is not surprising that he chose the chemistry professor for his first public portrait. Aged thirty and optimistic about his future as a portrait painter in 1874, Eakins was confident enough to portray the distinguished physician boldly, unconventionally, and with kindly humor.

The professor is shown working at a desk in his home study. Presumably he posed in Eakins’s studio, for he is seated in an upholstered Jacobean Revival armchair with an elaborately carved cresting rail. This chair was purchased for the Eakins household and appears in
about a dozen portraits.  

Rand is positioned in the middle ground, seated frontally on the far side of an expansive partner’s desk which bisects the composition horizontally. A more traditional composition would have placed the scholar in front of or next to his desk in the foreground, and he would be partially turned to make eye contact with the viewer.

As painted by Eakins, he reticent, sober-faced scholar is so absorbed in private thoughts that he ignores the viewer and gazes downward. The mood of absolute concentration is expressed solely by his knitted brows. His mouth is hidden by his full beard and his eyes are obscured by the narrow, rectangular lenses of his wire-rimmed spectacles. For comparison see the contemporary photograph where he looks serious but more relaxed. The carte-de-visite was donated by a student who had attended Rand’s chemistry lectures in 1875 and 1876.

In Eakins’s portrayal Dr. Rand uses his finger to keep his place in a passage in an open book. His left hand rests awkwardly on the arched back of a gray cat which insouciantly rests a front paw at almost the same place, interrupting Dr. Rand’s reading. The fall of the cat’s foot contrasts with Rand’s careful gesture. At first glance it is difficult to detect this congenial house pet because of the dark coloration. Eventually its upright tail, proprietary stance, bright red collar, and direct outward stare engage one’s attention. Its sinuousness and luxuriant fur are a counterpoint to the cerebral pursuits of the professor.

The chemist’s self-effacing posture and locale prompt most viewers to scrutinize the desktop first. Its surface is crowded with a gleaming array of objects, ranging from the scientific and academic to the personal and domestic. Brightly highlighted brass instruments on the left include a compound microscope and a spectroscope. Behind is a wooden rack with test tubes, and to the right of this group, a red, graduated, pharmaceutical cylinder with a spatula. A letter opener (or knife) parallels the edge of the desk over the kneehole, and reading materials and quills are strewn about left and center.
On the far right is a bright pink rose, and a sheet of crinkled, cool-white tissue paper that hangs over the edge of the desk. Blurred forms behind appear to be a perpetual calendar and some fruit. In the right foreground is a brilliant pink, tasseled afghan or shawl draped over the back of a chair. Below the desk is a red-figured oriental rug and wicker trash basket, and on the left a fur rug in a pyramidal heap, and an open desk drawer.

The murky interior space is very shallow and largely undescribed architecturally, except for a bookcase in the left rear and curtains on the right. The prevailing dark neutral tones are punctuated by daylight entering the room on a raking angle from the right, highlighting Rand’s face and spectacles, his shirt front, and the desk-top objects. This spotlighting effect, coupled with the dominant brown tones of the furnishings, produces a warm glow that suffuses the painting.

Bright red accents, therefore, come as a surprise, and are scattered so as to encourage the viewer’s eye to circle the whole painting. Red or bright pink are found on the graduated cylinder, the cat’s collar, the flower, the afghan, and the oriental carpet. There is a touch of green, the complementary color, in the curtains.

The physician’s attire and some nearby objects suggest nonacademic, social pursuits. He has removed his necktie, and his highlighted white shirt is wrinkled. Do the white vest and the flower suggest a recent return from some special evening occasion, and do the shawl and the flower suggest the unseen presence of a woman? Eakins does not overtly provide the answers. In 1869 Rand had married Mary M. Washington, great-granddaughter of Fairfax Washington. The physician had been a widower for fifteen years following the death of his first wife, Hannah M. Kershaw, after only one year of marriage.

In this initial major portrait by Eakins there are two rather disconcerting elements. First, the sitter is upstaged by his own attributes. The magnificently painted still life cluttering his desk on the left draws
attention away from Professor Rand, the nominal subject. Many of the objects on the right side of the desk are included gratuitously with no visible means of explanation. The shawl and fur rug in the foreground are overly prominent distractions. Possibly the effect of the subject’s secondary position behind the desk and the arrangement of sensuous objects before him was both an intended comment on Rand’s self-effacing personality, and also a manifestation of the young artist’s desire to create a showpiece demonstrating his ability to render an impressive variety of textures and shapes.

Nevertheless one is disconcerted by the unconvincing rendering of the portion of Professor Rand’s body seen under the desk. His legs and feet are barely discernible and do not seem aligned properly with his upper body.

The portrait of Dr. Rand was exhibited at the Centennial’s international art exhibition, along with two other oils, Elizabeth at the Piano and The Chess Players, and two watercolors. While expressing general disappointment with the American paintings, one local critic
praised Eakins's oils particularly and called the depiction of Rand "a portrait which is made a picture by the many accessories introduced and which is one of the best contributions to the section."49

A second review was written by Eakins's friend William Clark, head of the Philadelphia Sketch Club and a newspaper critic as well as a former student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. One of the few discerning contemporary critics who appreciated Eakins's work, Clark gave a balanced evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Rand portrait:

Dr. Rand who is shown seated behind his library table—upon which are scattered a number of articles such as a microscope, books, papers, etc.—with one hand petting a Maltese cat, and with a finger of the other following the lines on a page in the book before him. The composition in this last-named picture is rather too elaborate for a portrait, and the eye is confused by the multitude of objects that are introduced. The picture is carefully and consistently worked out, however, and although it lacks the simplicity that is desirable in a portrait, it is an admirable example of genuinely artistic workmanship...Unfortunately, both of these pictures [the Rand and Elizabeth portraits] are in too low a key for their best qualities to be easily discerned in the badly-lighted galleries in which they are hung. It can be seen at a glance, however, that the artist has attempted something more than the mere making of recognizable likeness, and has aimed to make his portraits pictures in every sense of the word.50

Professor Rand expressed pride that his portrait was included in the Centennial's art exhibition and showed a sense of urgency in donating the work to Jefferson Medical College. Minutes of an April 27, 1877 board of directors meeting included the professor's letter of resignation dated April 14, 1877, and a second letter dated one week later offering his portrait to the college. He wrote, "I am not able to leave the house else should have called upon you before this, to state that my portrait by Eakins lately on exhibition at Memorial Hall, is at the disposal of the Board of Trustees."

In response Jefferson's board of trustees immediately resolved "that the portrait tendered by Dr. Rand be received with thanks." The minutes of the May 1 meeting mentioned another communication from Rand stating that "as soon as it was decided where his portrait was to be hung he would send it." The matter was referred to the president of the board who decided on the location.

An 1881 board of trustees report on donations mentioned that the portrait had been hanging in the reception room of the Jefferson Medical College Hospital. Librarian Charles Frankenberger reported in 1915 that the Rand portrait was hanging in the west lecture room of the 1898 College Building, in the same room with The Gross Clinic.51 Before the Rand portrait was moved to the Eakins Gallery in Jefferson Alumni Hall in 1982, it was installed for more than five decades in the stairwell leading to the second floor landing of the 1929 College Building, in the vicinity of portraits of some of Jefferson's most prominent professors, deans, and trustees; The Gross Clinic was the focal point of Jeffersonians ascending to the second floor landing. Each of these subsequent locations was a conspicuous, public area where the Eakins portraits would have been highly visible to all passersby.

Professor Rand was a popular figure who would probably have been pleased to know that successive generations of Thomas Jefferson University students, professors, and staff have admired Eakins's insightful portrayal of him. These viewers respond affectionately to the wry humor of the cat and the controlled clutter of disparate objects on the desk. They identify with the preoccupied and reticent professor as a familiar type, hard at work even in the privacy of his home. Thomas Eakins lost an enthusiastic supporter early in his painting career when Dr. Benjamin H. Rand became incapacitated and died.

In certain ways Eakins's portrait of Dr. Rand prefigures his portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross: its large scale, innovative composition, restricted neutral palette accented by one bright color, and dramatic highlights and contrasts of light and dark. When Eakins first undertook the group portrait known as The Gross Clinic, few would have prophesied that it would eventually become his most acclaimed masterpiece, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

To understand the magnitude of Eakins's accomplishment it is important to place the work and the artist's canny choice of Dr. Gross as portrait subject in the context of the professor's teaching and clinical career and his contributions to American surgery; and to compare the work with Jefferson's other, official portraits of this acclaimed professor and his family.
The Life and Career of Samuel D. Gross, M.D.

Dr. Samuel D. Gross, sometimes referred to as the “Emperor” or “Nestor” of American surgery, was born in 1805 into modest circumstances on a farm near Easton, Pennsylvania. His family spoke the Pennsylvania German dialect common in that area, and Gross did not learn “correct” German or even English until he was an adolescent. In his Autobiography Gross said he was a “natural-born” doctor whose desire to enter the field of medicine “seized” him before the age of six.52

As was customary in Gross’s era, he began the study of medicine as a private pupil in the office of a practicing physician. After trying three different preceptors, he realized that his prior education at the local one-room school had been inadequate to the task. To obtain a more classical education he studied first at the Wilkes Barre Academy in Pennsylvania and then at the Lawrenceville High School in New Jersey, concentrating on Latin, Greek, mathematics, geography, and English grammar. Two years later he reentered the office of one of his original preceptors, Dr. Joseph K. Swift of Easton, before entering medical school.

Although Dr. Swift provided Gross with letters of recommendation to faculty members at his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, instead the young student sought out Dr. George McClellan who accepted him as a private pupil for two years. In 1828 Gross received his medical degree with the third class to graduate from Jefferson Medical College.

After struggling to make a living as a surgeon in Philadelphia, in 1830 he returned to Easton where he was more successful. During those lean years he filled any spare time by translating foreign medical texts into English, and by anatomic dissection and animal experimentation, even transporting a cadaver by buggy all the way from Philadelphia by himself. His first treatise, The Anatomy, Physiology, and Diseases of the Bones and Joints, was published in 1830.

His first academic appointments were at the Medical College of Ohio at Cincinnati as demonstrator of anatomy (1833-35) and at the Medical Department of Cincinnati College as chair of pathological anatomy (1835-39), remaining at the latter school until it closed. While in Cincinnati he published his first important text, Elements of Pathological Anatomy (1839), a pioneering, systematic work that went through three editions.

In 1840 Dr. Gross accepted the professorship of surgery at the Louisville Medical Institute (later the University of Louisville). His next sixteen years (except for one year at the University of the City of New York) were spent very productively in Louisville. There he published on such diverse subjects as: wounds of the intestines; diseases and injuries of the urinary bladder, prostate gland, and urethra; operations for malignant diseases; foreign bodies in the air passages; lithotomy; ovariotomy; aneurysm; and gunshot wounds.

Although Dr. Samuel D. Gross held the University of Pennsylvania in the highest esteem, he declined their offer to be a candidate for chair of surgery, and instead accepted the professorship at Jefferson Medical College in 1856 at the age of fifty-one, succeeding Dr. Thomas Mütter. During his twenty-six-year tenure as professor of the institutes and practice of surgery, Gross was revered as an operator and teacher, internationally celebrated as an author, and widely respected as a founder and member of local, national, and international medical societies.

Dr. Gross made many contributions to surgical technique and instrumentation, although few are still associated with his name because of modification or obsolescence. He was the first to treat ganglia of the hand or foot by subcutaneous division of the cyst; to use adhesive plaster for skin traction in treating fractures of the lower extremities; to perform high amputation in senile gangrene; to suture divided nerves and tendons; to operate directly for hernia by suturing the pillars of the external ring; to do laparotomy for rupture of the bladder; and to wire the ends of the bones in dislocations of the sternoclavicular and acromioclavicular joints.

He invented an instrument for extraction of foreign bodies from the air passages; a special catheter for draining urine mixed with blood; forceps for arterial compression to arrest hemorrhage from deep-seated vessels; and a tourniquet for arterial compression of vessels of the extremities during amputations.

Considering his prodigious surgical and teaching responsibilities, Gross’s contribution to the medical literature is astounding. He appropriated early morning hours before breakfast and late evenings for study and writing whenever possible, and even composed in his carriage on the way to visit patients.53 The first edition of his most famous work, System of Surgery, appeared in 1859. This text eventually went through six editions, the last in 1882, and was translated into several foreign languages, spreading his fame throughout the world. He wrote A Manual of Military Surgery at the beginning of the Civil War in
In 1861 at the government's request.

In 1861 he also edited a biographical work, *Lives of Eminent American Physicians and Surgeons of the Nineteenth Century*. For the U.S. Centennial he wrote the history of American surgery for "A Century of American Medicine, 1776-1876," published in the *American Journal of Medical Sciences*. In addition to textbooks, Gross's literary contributions included almost one thousand published medical articles, case histories, addresses, biographies, and introductory lectures.

Although he has been the subject of numerous biographies and memoirs from his own day to the present, the most enduring description of his life and career is his autobiography, edited by his sons, Dr. Samuel Weisell Gross and Albert Haller Gross, and published in 1887, three years after his death. He wrote the "sketch" of his life for the gratification of his children and grandchildren, and for members of his profession for the sake of "stimulating the ambition of whose who may come after me to work for the advancement of science and the amelioration of human suffering." He hoped that his devotion to medical science may "exert a salutary influence upon the conduct of young physicians, and thus to inspire them with a desire to excel in good deeds." 

Gross also exerted a profound influence in the establishment and leadership of professional societies ranging from the local to the international. On the local level, Dr. Gross was a founder and president of the Kentucky State Medical Society, the Jefferson Medical College alumni association, the Philadelphia Pathological Society, and the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery; and was president of the Pennsylvania State Medical Society.

On the national scene he was president of the American Medical Association, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Academy of Sciences; and a founder and president of the American Surgical Association. Internationally, Gross was president of the World Medical Congress in 1876; and a member of the Imperial Medical Society of Vienna, the Medical Society of Christiana of Norway, the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London, the Medical Society of Vienna, the Medical Society of London, the Medico-chirurgical Society of Edinburgh, the British Medical Association, and the Royal Society of Medicine of Belgium.

Aside from the public display of his portraits, honors accorded Gross's memory in Philadelphia include the Samuel D. Gross Room and Endowed Library at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and the Gross Prize of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery. At Jefferson Medical College, the Gross Professorship of Surgery was endowed in 1910 by the professor's daughter, Maria Gross Horwitz. Jefferson's Department of Surgery created the Samuel D. Gross Distinguished Service Award in 1979 and dedicated the Gross Conference Room in 1982.

Gross's honorary degrees from American and European universities include the LL.D. from Jefferson College, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania (1861); the D.C.L. from Oxford University (1872); and LL.D. degrees from Cambridge University (1880), Edinburgh University (1884), and the University of Pennsylvania (1884).

In 1882 at age seventy-seven Gross resigned from the chair of surgery and was named emeritus professor. He died of congestive heart failure in 1884 and his desire to be cremated was honored, his ashes being placed in the family grave at Woodlands Cemetery in Philadelphia.

Gross had declared that when he died he could wish no better epitaph than "A teacher of Principles." He felt that medicine and surgery are so closely allied as to be indivisible, writing, "The principles of surgery are the principles of medicine, or, in other words, the principles of the art of healing."

Accordingly, the opening seven weeks of his lecture course on surgery were devoted to a discussion of principles including inflammation and its consequences, syphilis, struma, tumors, and wounds. The rest of the course was devoted to diseases and injuries of particular regions and tissues. He confined himself to "matters of fact," not to "hypothesis, conjecture, or speculation."

Dr. Gross took the long view in his approach to educating medical students, impressing them with both advances and discarded ideas in the history of medicine, and giving credit to those professional forbears who deserved it. In "Then and Now," an introductory address in 1867 of which new medical students specially requested printed copies, Gross ranged over the entire body of medical and surgical knowledge of that day compared with what had been known four decades earlier when Jefferson Medical College was founded. He singled out anatomy and histology for having almost entirely "attained [the] highest degree of perfection," and for their important effect upon the knowledge of physiology and pathology.

In his discussion of surgical procedures and instrumentation, he considered at some length the recent publicity on the subperiosteal resection of entire
bones, or of portions of their shafts and even of joints, “the operation being founded upon the well-known agency exerted by the periosteum in the regeneration of osseous tissue.” He said that he had “in all the numerous operations that I have performed during the last thirty years for the removal of dead bone [the procedure shown in The Gross Clinic] scrupulously respected this envelope,” and presumed that “there is not an enlightened surgeon anywhere who has not pursued a similar plan of treatment.”

Gross’s exhortations about seriousness of purpose and personal conduct were also directed toward newly minted physicians at the 1868 commencement ceremonies: “I am no oracle, but if I were consulted as to the means by which a young physician, emulous of distinction, could obtain the greatest and most honorable fame, my response would be, ‘By steady, unswerving devotion to his profession, by boundless industry, and by a profound love for his species.’”

He told the students how a physician’s presence can dispel a patient’s “gloomy cares and unpleasant forebodings”:

The sorrows of the sick-room are often materially lightened by the agreeable manners of the medical attendant...A genial smile, a kind word, a gentle pressure of the hand, a timely anecdote, are often much more effective remedies than quinine and opium, nay even than milk-punch and beef-essence, so fashionable at the present day in the treatment of disease and injury.

You need not be told that, while you are expected to be men of science, and refined, cultivated, high-toned gentlemen, you are also to be earnest working physicians, watching and caring for the sick...The interests of your patients will be paramount to every other duty; nothing must be left to chance; nothing must be regarded as too trivial or insignificant when life is trembling in the balance.

Images of Dr. Samuel D. Gross and His Family

There are more original images of Dr. Samuel D. Gross in the Thomas Jefferson University art collection than of any other professor since Dr. George McClellan: four paintings, two sculptures, one drawing, five prints, and eleven vintage photographs, in addition to diverse memorabilia. Not surprisingly, there are interconnections among the works since several were created posthumously and relied on earlier sources. The university is also gratified to possess portraits of the professor’s beloved wife, Louisa Weissell Gross, and their son, Samuel W. Gross, M.D.

Portrait of Samuel D. Gross

SAMUEL DAVID GROSS, M.D. (1805-84)
By Samuel Bell Waugh (1814-85)
Oil on canvas, mounted on wood
1874
30 x 25 in.

Signed and dated lower right: “S. B. Waugh 1874”
Given in 1875 by JMC alumni association
Exhibition: Philadelphia, Centennial Celebration Loan
Collection of Portraits, College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 1887
Accession number: 1875+c.P01

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The first image of Dr. Samuel D. Gross owned by Jefferson Medical College is an oil portrait by Samuel B. Waugh. This painting and a sculpture of Gross by Alexander S. Calder are among the few early portraits in the Jefferson collection for which details of the commission process are extant.

Minutes of the alumni association’s executive committee meeting of April 16, 1874 noted that Dr. Thomas H. Andrews moved that a committee “wait upon Prof. Gross and request him to sit for his picture, the same to be paid for by subscription.”

In addition to Dr. Andrews members of the original Committee on Professor Gross’s Picture included Drs. Ralph M. Townsend (JMC 1866), Richard J. Dunglison (JMC 1856), and Lemuel J. Deal (JMC 1865). Dr. James M. Barton (JMC 1868) was added the following October in place of Dr. Deal. Their primary task was to solicit subscriptions, and by the meeting of March 8, 1875 they announced that the picture “had been some time completed and paid for.” Dr. William B. Atkinson (JMC 1853) was selected to present the portrait to the trustees at the March 11 commencement.

Reporting on the commencement, the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* noted succinctly that the portrait was “well executed and handsomely framed.” Further, Dr. Gross was omnipresent at this ceremony: he not only awarded a prize for the “best report of his surgical clinic,” but also delivered a stirring valedictory address. Documents state that the painting was hung in a place of honor in the amphitheater of the hospital when the building opened in 1877. Archival photographs show that later it was moved with other portraits to the library of the 1898 College Building.

Like Waugh’s other commissioned portraits of Jefferson professors, this is a conventional depiction in its size, format, likeness, and paint style. Dr. Gross is shown bust length and seated frontally with his head turned slightly to the right, located in an atmospheric, neutral background. The smoothly painted surface accentuates the professor’s distinctive features, even overemphasizing the windswept appearance of his naturally wavy, thick hair. His bland facial expression is not particularly revealing of any inner thoughts or character traits.
bust length to half length, adding a more complete view of the arms and hands. Here Professor Gross’s left arm leans on a table covered with red cloth, and he fingers the gold chain of his watch fob, an addition that symbolizes material attainment. Compared with Waugh’s original portrait, the physician’s features are somewhat flattened and the activity of the hair is more restrained.

The painting at Jefferson descended in the Gross family and was presented to the university in 1987 by Susan Bullitt Ward, M.D. (JMC 1985), the professor’s great-great-great-granddaughter. She also generously donated to the Jefferson archives a family scrapbook (compiled by his daughter) containing correspondence and news clippings mainly related to Professor Gross’s final illness and funeral. About her illustrious forbear, Dr. Ward said in a Philadelphia Inquirer article of June 7, 1985, “It wasn’t until after I had been here for quite some time that I realized how big a figure he was. I’ve never made a big thing out of it, but I do feel pride.” She is presently a clinical assistant professor of medicine in the division of rheumatology at Thomas Jefferson University.

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**Portrait of Samuel D. Gross**

**SAMUEL DAVID GROSS, M.D.**

By Frederick Gutekunst (1831-1917)

**Photograph**

Ca. 1870-80

Image size: 5 5/8 x 4 1/8 in.

Card size: 6 1/2 x 4 1/4 in.

Stamped below image: “F. Gutekunst, Philadelphia”

Given after 1884 by unknown donor

Accession number: 1884+t.Ph.03

This undated cabinet-sized photo is roughly contemporaneous with Samuel B. Waugh’s portrait of Dr. Gross. The pose is almost identical in photo and painting. The arrangement of the necktie, the upturned shirt collar, the suit lapels and waistcoat, and the watch chain are the same. The photo existed in many copies; this and similar ones in the Jefferson archives could have served as an aid for the Waugh portrait and for prints that followed.

Differences between the Waugh painting and the photo lie in the artist’s interpretation. In the photo the professor’s face is longer, his eyes more almond shaped, his mouth thinner and wider, and his wiry hair more constrained than in the painting. His shoulders are squarer and his neck thicker than in Waugh’s interpretation.
This undated print of Dr. Samuel D. Gross by Samuel Sartain relates to the oil portraits and photograph above in pose and costume. The print bears an ever closer resemblance to an unsigned steel engraving of Dr. Gross which forms the frontispiece to volume one of his autobiography. (The frontispiece to volume two is an etching after The Gross Clinic.) Significantly, this image was chosen by Dr. Gross’s sons who edited the autobiography, while they pointedly ignored the oil painting by Samuel B. Waugh which had been displayed at Jefferson Medical College since 1875.

Samuel Sartain was a member of a distinguished Philadelphia family of engravers: the son of John Sartain and the brother of William, Emily, and Henry Sartain, all printmakers. Samuel Sartain was born in Philadelphia in 1830 and studied engraving with his father. Then he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts where he exhibited paintings and engravings between 1848 and 1866.

In 1851 he founded his own firm in Philadelphia and produced engravings and mezzotints for local publishers. Later in life he served as manager and treasurer of the Franklin Institute.
This delicately rendered etching of Dr. Samuel D. Gross by Ludwig E. Faber is another in the family of images derived in part from the Gutekunst photo discussed above, or a similar one. The features, hair style, costume, posture, and expression closely resemble the photographic source.

The artist shows a mastery of anatomic structure in depicting the face with strength and vigor. Like the Gutekunst photograph and the Sartain print, the light source for Faber's large print is from the right, dramatically spotlighting the forehead and side of the sitter's face. The feathery area at the bottom of the print mimics the faded area at the bottom of the photograph. Compared with the Sartain print, Faber's depiction is much freer and lighter in weight.

The posthumous, etched portrait was made in 1898, but was symbolically anachronistic in one respect. The remarque (vignette in the margin below) shows the Ely Building with the renovations by Napoleon LeBrun and the new Laboratory Building by Frank Furness, as they appeared only between 1879 and 1881. Since Dr. Gross served on the Jefferson faculty from 1856 to 1882, it would have been more appropriate to depict an earlier version of the Ely building or to a lesser extent the 1877 Jefferson Hospital, to suggest a locale of longer duration for the surgeon's triumphs.

Like Samuel Sartain, Ludwig E. Faber was a Philadelphia native and the son and brother of artists. Born in 1855, Faber was trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts before going abroad. He studied in Paris at the Académie Julian with Benjamin Constant (1845-1902), Jules Lefebvre (1836-1912), and Tony Robert-Fleury (1837-1911), and then at the Munich Academy.

A painter and etcher, Ludwig Faber collaborated with his father, Hermann, and his brother, Erwin, to illustrate George A. Piersol's *Human Anatomy* (1907) on which they labored twelve years. The brothers also illustrated Gwilym G. Davis's *Applied Anatomy* (1910).

Ludwig Faber was a member of the Philadelphia Sketch Club, the Philadelphia Society of Etchers, the American Art Association of Paris, and the Pennsylvania Society of Miniature Painters.
Collage of Photograph of Samuel D. Gross and Surgery Admission Cards

SAMUEL DAVID GROSS, M.D.
By Lothrop (active late nineteenth century)

Vintage photograph
Ca. 1875-77
3 3/4 x 2 3/8 in.
Surgery admission cards: 3 3/8 x 4 7/8 in.
Photograph and cards mounted on paper: 14 3/4 x 6 7/8 in.

Inscriptions on cards: “Jefferson Medical College/OF/PHILADELPHIA/Lectures/ON/SURGERY./BY Samuel D. Gross M.D./Admit/T.M. Throckmorton 1875-6”;
and “Jefferson Medical College/OF/PHILADELPHIA/Lectures/ON/SURGERY./BY Samuel D. Gross M.D./Admit Thos. M. Throckmorton 1876-7/Iowa”

Given after 1940 by unknown donor
Accession number: 19404.Ph.08

Dr. Thomas M. Throckmorton was a member of the Jefferson Medical College class of 1877, and almost certainly a relative of the donor of the Reverend Ely’s portrait (who very likely also donated this collage). One imagines that the Iowa student was inspired to arrange a collage of his surgery admission cards with a contemporary photograph of Dr. Samuel D. Gross to keep alive memories of his experiences from 1875 to 1877. This photograph records Dr. Gross’s appearance around the time of Samuel B. Waugh’s portrait and of Thomas Eakins’s Gross Clinic.

The Jefferson archives include a larger version of this photograph of Dr. Samuel D. Gross stamped with the name “Lothrop,” a Philadelphia photographer. The larger photograph is less faded, so the surgeon’s features are outlined with greater clarity. A notable variation in costume from the other images seen so far is Gross’s jaunty striped bowtie, knotted asymmetrically.

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This charming and animated, if untutored, charcoal drawing of Dr. Samuel D. Gross by Hubert F. Praeger seems to be a faithful enlargement of the Lothrop photograph. The only change is that the sitter’s bow tie is solid black instead of striped.

The refreshingly direct but amateurish quality steered me to the medical anthologies rather than to the art directories to learn more about the artist. The drawing is the only nineteenth-century example in the Jefferson art collection of a medical student being inspired to render such a private, artistic tribute to an honored professor. The only information retrieved so far about Dr. Praeger is that he graduated from Jefferson Medical College in 1878, and that he came originally from Sweden.

This neoclassical style sculpture of Dr. Samuel D. Gross is one of three identical plaster busts by J. Obermeier at Thomas Jefferson University. All are painted dark greenish-black to simulate bronze. They closely resemble a marble bust of Gross by Joseph Obermeier at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, presented in 1884 by Albert Haller Gross.

The marble bust of Gross at the College of Physicians is signed “Jos. Obermeier,” while the bust at
Thomas Jefferson University is signed "J. Obermeier." An artist named Joseph Obermeier exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1867 (no address listed). A James Obermeier from Philadelphia exhibited sculptures in various media at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1868 and 1869. One wonders whether Joseph and James are the same artist, and one name was misspelled.

As early as October 19, 1882, minutes of the executive committee of Jefferson's alumni association report a motion to procure busts of Drs. Samuel D. Gross and Joseph Pancoast. The Pancoast bust was presented to the trustees the following year by Dr. Gross. Several years passed before the college acquired a bust of Gross.

The earliest record yet found is a report of the Jefferson Medical College Hospital of 1901 in which Dr. Jacob da Silva Solis-Cohen's donation of a bust of Gross was mentioned, but it is not known which of the three busts is his gift. A photograph of the alumni office in the Jefferson Medical College Building (occupied from 1898 to 1929) shows a Gross bust on top of a filing cabinet.

In Obermeier's depiction the surgeon's expression is neutral and his features are regularized and idealized, especially the aquiline nose. His eyes are upraised as if looking for divine inspiration. His chest is exposed and he wears a toga, common characteristics of neoclassical busts connecting contemporary subjects with a heroic past. The carving is very smooth and the surface is uniformly dark.

The Samuel D. Gross Monument

SAMUEL DAVID GROSS, M.D.
By Alexander Stirling Calder (1870-1945)

Bronze
1895-97
105 x 51 x 36 in.
Granite pedestal: 97 x 54 3/8 x 54 3/8 in.
Cement steps: 22 5/8 x 132 x 132 in.

Signed lower right on integral base of statue: "Calder"
Inscription lower left on integral base: "JABOEUF & BEZOUT. Fondateurs a Paris"
Inscription on pedestal: "SAMUEL D. GROSS/AMERICAN PHYSICIANS HAVE ERECTED/THIS STATUE TO COMMEMORATE THE GREAT DEEDS/OF A MAN WHO MADE SUCH AN IMPRESS/UPON AMERICAN SURGERY THAT IT HAS SERVED/TO DIGNIFY AMERICAN MEDICINE/1897"

Commissioned jointly in 1894 by the JMC alumni association and the American Surgical Association for the "people of the United States" in Washington, D.C.; relocated in 1970 to Thomas Jefferson University through the efforts of JMC alumni association

Accession number: 19704-e.S.01

In contrast to the generally negative public and critical reaction accorded Thomas Eakins's Gross Clinic when the immense painting was first exhibited in 1876, Alexander S. Calder's larger than life-sized bronze statue of Dr. Samuel D. Gross was treated with great anticipation and admiration two decades later. The official monument was initiated by medical peers to memorialize the professor in the nation's capital and the sculptor was selected by competition, whereas the unofficial painting had been initiated by the artist himself.

Although decades after its unveiling the sculpture passed through a period of neglect in its original site in Washington, D.C., it was resurrected with great fanfare and moved to Philadelphia in 1970. Finally, Thomas Jefferson University proudly displayed the two major depictions of Dr. Samuel D. Gross. Another boast expressed in the 1890s was that the only public full-length bronze monuments of distinguished physicians in this country were both of Jefferson alumni: the statues of Dr. J. Marion Sims in New York and of Dr. Samuel D. Gross in Washington.

Many aspects of the sculpture's history have been documented in Jefferson correspondence, board of trustees minutes, and College and Clinical Record accounts. It was reported in December 1891 that the American Surgical Association had recently appointed a committee to confer with friends and admirers of Dr. Gross and with the "profession at large" to initiate a movement to erect a monument to the professor in Washington, D.C. Six months later it was reported that the association did not want to limit subscribers to its own members but resolved to open the opportunity to the "entire American profession," because Gross was "of no exclusive faction, but a leading member of the whole profession."

The Jefferson Medical College alumni association actively participated in raising funds, but resolved in March 1893 to take steps to change the proposed mon-
ument site from Washington to Philadelphia, "where Gross had lived and died, and by his diligent and successful work as a surgeon and teacher had made his name an honor to the medical profession." There is no further notice about an effort to change the location, so the effort must have been rejected straightaway.

By February 1895 it was clear that the credit for fund-raising and sponsorship was jointly shared by Jefferson Medical College which had raised $1521.37 and the American Surgical Association which held over six thousand dollars. In addition, the U.S. Congress agreed to appropriate fifteen hundred dollars for a granite pedestal.

A letter dated June 20, 1894 in the archives of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from Dr. William W. Keen, Jefferson's representative to the Gross Monument Committee, to Academy president Edward H. Coates, asked the latter for a recommendation of the "four or five best artists in the country to whom we might entrust this." The committee then invited three artists to enter a juried design competition. One unnamed sculptor withdrew, and the other two, Alexander S. Calder and Charles Grafly (1862-1929), briefly exhibited their models for the Gross memorial in special galleries during the Academy's 1894 Annual Exhibition, held December 17, 1894 to February 23, 1895.

The 1897 Transactions of the American Surgical Association recounted other details about the statue's history and reprinted the dedication speeches. The monument models were inspected by Edward H. Coates and the Pennsylvania Academy's main teacher of painting, Thomas P. Anshutz (1851-1912); famed New York sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907); Samuel D. Gross family member Dr. Orville Horwitz (grand-nephew by marriage) and son A. Haller Gross; and Dr. William W. Keen. The jury awarded the commission to Alexander Calder who subsequently modeled the statue in Paris where it was cast in bronze, and then shipped it to America where it was reportedly to be admitted duty free.

A letter of February 1897 from Dr. Keen invited all Jefferson alumni to "assist" at the unveiling of Gross's statue during the triennial meeting of the Congress of American Physicians and Surgeons in Washington on May 5 at five o'clock. At the same time Jefferson trustees were also making arrangements to be "fittingly represented," and board secretary Simon Gratz reported in May that many trustees, and "the greater part" of the faculty, demonstrators, instructors (and presumably also students) left Philadelphia at 1:12 P.M. on a special train provided through the kindness of trustee Sutherland M. Prevost, a vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The planned ceremonies for the occasion were: an opening prayer by the Reverend B. L. Whitman, president of Columbian University in Washington; presentation of the statue by Dr. Claudius H. Mastin of Mobile, Alabama, president of the American Surgical Association and initiator of the monument; unveiling by Miss Adele Horwitz of Baltimore, a granddaughter of Dr. Gross; reception of the statue on behalf of the government by Brigadier General George M. Sternberg, Surgeon General of the United States Army; and a closing address by Dr. W. W. Keen.

The May 1897 issue of Dunglison's College and Clinical Record gave a colorful description of the unveiling events attended by distinguished medical men from throughout the country:

Toward the end of Dr. W. W. Keen's emotional dedicatory address he noted that Washington's squares, parks, and circles were filled with statues of deserving statesmen and warriors, but that these men were not the "sole possessors of bravery." He recalled that Gross's hometown of Easton had sent the young surgeon to New York in July 1832 to assess the cholera epidemic there, in dread of this plague spreading to Pennsylvania. He had stayed a week visiting hospitals and charnel houses. Keen urged greater public recognition of men of science who have won victories of peace: "scores of courageous physicians ready to sacrifice their lives for their fellowmen with no blare of trumpets, no roar of cannon, no cheer of troops, no plaudits of the press! No battlefield ever saw greater heroes; no country braver men!"

As has been seen, the conception and erection of the Gross monument was truly a national effort. The impressive but derivative bronze portrait of Dr. Samuel D.
Gross was completed when Alexander Stirling Calder was twenty-seven years old, and his mature work still lay in the future. This public work helped to launch his career.

Interestingly, in his diary Calder referred to only one competitor for the commission, his friend Charles Grafly. Calder praised Eakins's depiction of Professor Gross and mentioned the painter's use of photographs (no longer extant), saying that Eakins had painted Gross's clinic before and "had made some very fine photographs of Dr. Gross for his own use." By appointment the two sculptors called on Eakins at his home on a Sunday in 1894 to "obtain the use" of the painter's negatives. He continued, "Eakins came into the parlor to greet us with a monkey on his shoulder. Perfectly unself-conscious, he was apt to be careless of formalities."  

Larger than life-sized atop a monumental granite pedestal, Calder's imposing sculpted figure is stiff and stolid compared with Eakins's naturalistic figure in The Gross Clinic, yet is clearly derived from the painting in details of costume and pose, even the scalpel in the surgeon's right hand. Slight variations from the painting can be found in the statue's left arm which is bent more, the right forearm which is raised a bit, and the position of the head which is frontal and tilted slightly. In the statue the physician's jaw is squarer, his features are regularized, and his hair protrudes like frozen triangles.

Alexander Stirling Calder was born in Philadelphia in 1870. He was the son of Alexander Milne Calder (1846-1923), celebrated for his extensive sculpture program for Philadelphia's City Hall, and the father of Alexander Calder (1898-1976), credited with inventing the mobile, a moving sculpture made of sheet metal and wire.

Stirling Calder entered the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at age sixteen. Although he studied only briefly with Thomas Eakins, because that was the year of the artist's forced resignation as Academy director, Calder recalled that Eakins was then the "idol of the school, at least of that part of it that I met, the men. During rests...he often talked with us informally about methods and showed us a few simple gymnastic feats...I knew little and cared little about the controversy raging about Eakin's [sic] lack of decorum and shocks to prudery, not having been long enough under his tuition to succumb to his mastership and charm."  

Calder also described Dr. W. W. Keen's artistic anatomy course at the Academy in which senior students prepared the dissected subject for his exhibition of the muscles. He boasted that the physician praised his dissections and that he became a "sort of deputy demonstrator of anatomy." Keen's presence on the Gross monument committee might have tipped the balance in favor of Calder over Grafly.

In 1890 Calder had also studied sculpture in Paris with Henri Chapu (1833-91) at the Académie Julian and with Alexandre Falguière (1831-1900) at the École des Beaux-Arts. He returned to Philadelphia in 1892 and became assistant instructor in modeling at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts where he served on the jury...
of selection and the hanging committee. He won a gold medal at the Philadelphia Art Club the following year.

By 1903 he also began teaching at the Pennsylvania School of Industrial Art. A consistent prizewinner at major exhibitions, Calder was awarded an honorable mention at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901, the Lippincott Prize at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1905, the grand prize at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909, the Designer’s Medal in San Francisco in 1915, and the silver medal at the Philadelphia Sesqui-centennial Exposition of 1926.

He served on the sculpture advisory committee and won a silver medal at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. He was in charge of the sculptural decoration at the Panama-Pacific Exposition of 1915 in San Francisco where he contributed two fantastic groups: The Nations of the West, featuring mounted cowboys and Indians, explorers and scouts, and oxen pulling covered wagons; and The Nations of the East, with Arabian horsemen, desert tribesmen on camels, Asian warriors, and a bejewelled elephant.

By 1910 Calder was living in New York and teaching at the National Academy of Design and later at the Art Students League. A famous work in Manhattan is his monument of George Washington at the Washington Arch. He also continued to receive commissions in Philadelphia, notably the Swann Memorial Fountain at Logan Circle in 1924, and Tragedy and Comedy, the nearby Shakespeare memorial.

The Samuel D. Gross Monument in Washington, D.C.

By unknown photographer

Photograph
Ca. 1897
9 x 6 1/2 in.

Given after 1898 by the College of Physicians of Philadelphia which had received it from DeForest Willard, M.D., a pioneering orthopaedic surgeon from Philadelphia
Accession number: 1898+1. Ph.01

Alexander Stirling Calder would have been astonished to know of the Gross statue’s subsequent fortunes. Its original location was on the mall near the old Army Medical Museum and the Surgeon General’s library. That site became obsolete when the Army Medical Museum was renamed the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology and most of its collection was moved to the grounds of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the 1950s, and its library became part of the National Institutes of Health and moved to the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland. The old medical museum was eventually demolished to make way for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

The effort to find and relocate the statue was initiated in 1969 by alumnus Harold L. Stewart, M.D. (JMC 1926) of Rockville, Maryland who contacted Norman J. Quinn Jr., M.D. (JMC 1948), then chairman of the Jefferson alumni association’s centennial committee. In early 1970 administrators of the Armed Forces Institute escorted Dr. Quinn and Dr. John J. McKown Jr. (JMC 1947) to inspect the abandoned statue. It had been “dismantled,” but was found to be structurally sound, if badly weathered, and located on a nearby driveway.

Largely through the negotiations of Dr. Quinn and the Jefferson Medical College alumni association approval was won from the Department of the Army and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology to relocate the sculpture in Philadelphia. But arrangements became more complicated. It even took a Congressional bill to “de-commission” the statue, because the original commission had stipulated that it was to be erected in Washington; and it was also necessary to win the concurrence of the District of Columbia parks, planning, and fine arts commissions.
On April 4, 1970 the *Samuel D. Gross Monument* was brought to Philadelphia where it underwent thorough cleaning and conservation at the university's Scott Plaza. The festive rededication ceremony on May 1 was a major event in commemorating the centennial of the Jefferson Medical College alumni association.
He wrote that Louisa Ann Weissell was born in 1807 near London during a visit of her parents to England. A refined and cultured young woman, she became acquainted with S. D. Gross in 1827 when he was a student at Jefferson Medical College and they were married the following year. Gross acknowledged that they were both poor, so their "affection was therefore of a pure and unselfish character." He noted that "few men have ever been so blessed in their matrimonial relations." They had been married for almost forty-eight years when she died in 1876. Her headstone at Philadelphia's Woodlands Cemetery bears the simple inscription, "A NOBLE, CHRISTIAN WOMAN." Gross wrote these tender and respectful words about their mutual devotion:

The attachment formed in our young days gradually increased in intensity as we advanced in years, and burned with a steady flame until my wife expired in my arms, mingling thus her last breath with mine. I know of nothing more touching than the sight of a young and loving wife encouraging her husband in his efforts to earn a livelihood for his family, and watching his rising fame...She was contented with her lot, and sympathized in all my movements, labors, and aspirations. I never knew her to be guilty of one selfish act. Her ambition always was to accommodate herself to circumstances...Unlike many of the women around her, she never lived above her means or her husband's income...

Her musical talents, her remarkable intelligence, her fine conversational powers, and her genial disposition drew around her a coterie of friends, always as welcome as they were improved and gratified, and made her one of the most attractive women in the social circle whom I have ever known...Although she was fond of fashionable society, she never allowed herself to be influenced by its exactions, or to be drawn aside by its allurements...

With my wife religion was not a mere sentiment; it was a positive reality...Reared in the Episcopal Church...she was a scrupulous observer of its rites and ceremonies, and a devout believer in the truth of its doctrines...

I know she loved me with an intense ardor. I need not add how fondly I was attached to her, and how constantly I strove to augment her happiness...As a mother she was in every respect quite as exemplary; warm-hearted, generous, indulgent, and yet exacting, with an eye constantly alive to the moral and religious training of her children.

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Portrait of Louisa Weissell (Mrs. Samuel D.) Gross

LOUISA WEISSELL GROSS (1807-76)
By Samuel Bell Waugh (1814-85)

Oil on canvas
1872
36 x 29 in.

Signed and dated lower left: "S.B. Waugh 1872"

Given in 1986 by Orville H. Bullitt Jr., Ph.D. and family: Dr. Bullitt was a great-great-grandson of Dr. Samuel D. Gross and a TJU trustee until recently
Accession number: 1986+e.P.01

Dr. Samuel D. Gross referred to Louisa Weissell Gross as his "crown and jewel of a wife." A long, affectionate description of his wife and their family can be found in his autobiography.62
Samuel B. Waugh's portrait of Mrs. Gross was painted in 1872, two years before he painted the portrait of her husband, so the two works were not planned as pendants. Perhaps Waugh was commissioned to portray Dr. Gross by Jefferson's alumni association because the professor liked the earlier depiction of his wife.

Louisa Weissell Gross is shown two-thirds length, seated facing the right, holding a closed fan in her lap. Her thick, dark brown hair is crowned with a braid on top, and she appears younger than her sixty-five years. She gazes serenely into the distance. This attractive woman wears a modest black dress trimmed with lace at the cuffs and square neckline. The decorative fan is her only embellishment since she wears no jewelry.

Portrait of Samuel W. Gross

SAMUEL WEISSELL GROSS, M.D. (1837-89)
By George W. Pettit (d. 1910)
Oil on canvas mounted on board
1890
30 x 25 in.
Signed and dated lower left: “G.W. Pettit/1890.”
Given by JMC class of 1890
Accession number: 1890-e.P01

Dr. Samuel Weissell Gross followed in his father's footsteps by succeeding him as professor of surgery at Jefferson Medical College. He was one of four surviving children of Dr. Samuel D. Gross and Louisa Weissell Gross. Samuel W.'s brother, Albert Haller Gross, became a successful Philadelphia lawyer. His two accomplished sisters, Maria and Louisa, married brothers from Baltimore who were attorneys.

Dr. Samuel W. Gross was born in 1837 in Cincinnati. After graduating from Shelby College in Kentucky he began his study of medicine at the University of Louisville where his father was then professor of surgery. He received his medical degree from Jefferson Medical College in 1857 after which he began a practice in Philadelphia and helped his father edit the North American Medico-chirurgical Review. He served for almost four years during the Civil War as brigade surgeon with the rank of major, and was awarded the brevet of lieutenant colonel in 1865.

He returned to Philadelphia after the war and lectured on genito-urinary diseases and general surgery in Jefferson's summer courses that began in 1866. He joined the Jefferson, Howard, and Philadelphia Hospital staffs. In 1882 he was named professor of principles of surgery and clinical surgery at Jefferson (surgery was "divided" with two chairs following the resignation of his father as professor of surgery).

Dr. S. W. Gross was well deserving of this exalted post according to his colleagues. Dr. John Chalmers DaCosta said that "only a singularly notable man could have escaped being dwarfed into insignificance by his father's transcendent reputation." In another essay about S. W. Gross, DaCosta wrote, "He was not only learned in surgery and in literature of surgery, but also in pathology, in fact, he personally sectioned and examined all the tumors he removed. He was a teacher of the very first order, even a greater one, I believe, than his illustrious father. He was a formidable person and we, his assistants, had a proper dread of him."

Dr. S. W. Gross was the first American surgeon to advocate extensive operations for cancer of the breast and shares with Dr. William S. Halsted and others the mod-
ern radical operation for cure. His Civil War experiences in combatting hemorrhage taught him that veins, like arteries, could be ligated with safety. He made the first comprehensive study of bone sarcoma. He was one of the first surgeons in Philadelphia to adopt antiseptic surgery.

Among his literary contributions are: *A Practical Treatise on Tumors of the Mammary Gland, Embracing Their Histology, Pathology, Diagnosis, and Treatment* (1880), and *A Practical Treatise on Impotence, Sterility, and Allied Disorders of the Male Sexual Organs* (1881). Prominent in local and national medical societies, Dr. Gross was a founder of the Philadelphia Academy of Surgery in 1879, and president of the Pathological Society of Philadelphia that same year. He was a founder of the American Genito-urinary Association and a prominent fellow of the American Surgical Association.

Dr. Samuel Weissell Gross died prematurely of pneumonia in 1889 at age fifty-two. His wife was the former Grace Linzee Revere, great-granddaughter of the colonial patriot Paul Revere. Seventeen years younger than his husband, the widow married Dr. William Osler three years later. Her will of 1928 stipulated a bequest to Jefferson Medical College to establish a lectureship in surgery in her first husband’s memory...today known as the Grace Revere Osler Professorship of Surgery.

In tribute to their revered teacher the Jefferson Medical College class of 1890 presented a posthumous portrait of Dr. Samuel W. Gross at the April 1890 commencement. Their spokesman said about Professor Gross,

> And today this class, who loved him living and revere him dead, meet with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow—joy for his great deeds, tears for his untimely taking off—to pay an affectionate tribute to his memory.

Take it [the portrait] and place it in the amphitheatre of the hospital, the scene of his labors and professional triumph. Place it side by side with the portraits of the great dead who have gone before, the elder Pancoast, Meigs, Mitchell, and the other Gross, kindred in blood, kindred in genius. And as...future generations of students pass through those old Halls...may they...never fail to honor his worth and do justice to his memory.

The artist selected for Dr. S. W. Gross’s posthumous portrait was George W. Pettit who had also painted the posthumous portrait of Dr. James A. Meigs in 1879 and would take on several others for Jefferson. Pettit’s bust-length depiction of Gross facing slightly right could have been based on one of several photographs in the Jefferson archives by Frederick Gutekunst featuring the same pose.

The subject’s most distinguishing features are his long oval face, high domed forehead, and luxuriantly curled mustache. Oddly, his shirt in the painting has a collar with wing tips pointed down, but pentimenti reveal an earlier version with standing collar. His collar appears in both styles in various cabinet-size photographs. It is not known if Pettit himself made the change in collar style.

The Jefferson collection has a heavily restored, close copy of the portrait, also signed and dated “G. W. Pettit/1690.” This second portrait entered the Jefferson collection before 1947 from an unrecorded donor. Interestingly, the shirt collar is turned down in this copy, with no sign of alteration. There is a very similar, third portrait of Dr. S. W. Gross with standing collar at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, a copy of Pettit’s work painted by Philadelphia artist Frances van Horn Heberton and presented in 1890 by Mrs. S. W. Gross and Albert Haller Gross.


2. Goodrich, Eakins, 1-5.


4. Milroy, 41, 44.


8. Milroy, 63.


11. Corner, 104-05.

12. I am currently researching *The Wearing Master* (Metropolitan Museum of Art), Thomas Eakins's 1882 portrait of Benjamin Eakins at work inscribing a document. From the legible marks on the painted certificate, I have concluded that it is probably a Jefferson Medical College diploma, unlike any other diploma yet encountered from schools where Benjamin Eakins is known to have worked.

13. Goodrich, 1:325 n. 123-7-8, states that both Jefferson dean Ross V. Patterson, M.D. and librarian Joseph J. Wilson wrote to him in 1851 saying that "records" (unnamed) showed that Eakins studied at Jefferson in 1873 and 1874. Contemporary Jefferson historians say that the only records available in 1851 were probably the same as today: the Jefferson Medical College diploma, unlike any other diploma yet encountered from schools where Benjamin Eakins is known to have worked.

14. Goodrich, 1:315 n. 13-1-6, says that the date was written by Charles Bregler (Eakins's former student, disciple, friend, advisor to the artist's widow, and compiler of a collection of the artist's manuscripts and memorabilia now at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts).

15. Milroy, 141.


17. Milroy, 169-70, 185 n. 78.


21. Information about Dr. William W. Keen's course of lectures is derived in part from his five annual reports to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts' board of directors (from the sessions 1877-78 through 1880-81), and thereafter from the Academy's *Circular of the Committee on Instruction*.


23. For a discussion of Eakins's anatomical drawings and casts see Foster, 93-100, 306-30, 447.


25. See Homer, *Thomas Eakins*, 166-82, for further details of scandals relating to Eakins's morality.


30. Letter of July 9, 1936 from Susan Eakins to Alton O'Steen, a music educator and acquaintance; manuscript in Charles Bregler's Thomas Eakins Collection, Archives, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.


32. Published in *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia* 46 (1894): 172-180, and also issued as a reprint that year.


34. I am currently researching Thomas Eakins's portraits of physicians. Of his more than two hundred portraits, a significant number of sitters were physicians, many of whom he knew through his associations with Central High School, Jefferson Medical College, the University of Pennsylvania, the Academy of Natural Sciences, and elsewhere. He
painted physicians' portraits throughout his career beginning with Dr. Benjamin H. Rand in 1874, his first public portrait subject, and ending with Dr. Edward A. Spitzka, his very last portrait painted in 1913 or 1914; both were Jefferson Medical College professors.

Of Eakins's twenty-four medical portraits, almost half (eleven) sitter were Jefferson alumni (superscript 1 below) and/or faculty members (superscript 2). The Agnew and Gross clinic group portraits are treated as one each. (All but one of Gross's assistants were Jefferson alumni, though none of Agnew's was.)

Eakins's subjects who earned M.D. degrees include: The Agnew Clinic (including portraits of D. Hayes Agnew [also represented in a completed oil sketch], J. William White, Joseph Leidy II, Ellwood R. Kirby, and Fred H. Mulliken); George F. Barker (well known as a professor of physics, but received an M.D. degree in 1863 from Albany Medical College); The Medical Examiner (Henry Beates Jr.); Daniel G. Brinton1 (also an ethnologist); John H. Brinton2; Matthew H. Cryer (an oral surgeon with both medical and dental degrees); Jacob M. DaCosta1; Thomas H. Fenton; William S. Forbes1; Albert C. Getchell1; Frank L. Greenwalt; The Gross Clinic1 (including portraits of Samuel D. Gross, Samuel W. Gross, Daniel M. Appel, Edward A. Spitzka, his very last portrait painted in 1913 or 1914; both were Jefferson Medical College professors.) 4

A Freudian analysis of "writing/drawing and painting," an exploration of unresolved tensions between materiality and illusion in Eakins's art.

According to Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1883), 168, Rand's books included The American Pension, Rand's System of Partnership, Rand's Copy-Book, and Appendix; the books went through several editions and sold more than one and one-half million copies in his lifetime.

To give an idea of late-nineteenth-century wages, Benjamin Eakins earned between $25.62 and $84.69 for his annual services, depending on the number of graduates per year.

Foster, II. 449-50. The chair is dated ca. 1860 and is included among the memorabilia in the Charles Bregler Thomas Eakins Collection at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

See Berger, who puts a slightly different construction on the objects: "Eakins established a metaphor of visual tension in his canvas" by setting the physician in the center of a male grouping of objects on the left and female grouping of objects on the right, on a "continuum" between the "hard/soft" and "metallic/organic" objects; and that the artist himself was the "scientist's partner along the depicted sexual continuum" (pp. 74-84).


William Clark, "The Centennial," The Evening Telegraph, June 16, 1876.


George Barrie, 1887), 1:16-62.


Calder, 3-4.


DaCosta, "The Last Surgical Clinic in the Old Amphitheater of the Jefferson Medical College Hospital, Held before the Senior and Junior Classes, May 10, 1922, by Professor John Chalmers DaCosta," Selections, 340, reprinted from the Jefferson Medical College Alumni Bulletin 1 (Feb. 1925).