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Jefferson Medical College

Chapter 8

Jefferson Organizations
The J. Aitken Meigs Medical Association was founded in 1880 by eight Jefferson graduates, all personal friends who wanted to meet regularly both socially and to exchange medical ideas. In 1980, the society celebrated its centennial at the Academy of Natural Sciences, marking it as one of the oldest associations of its kind – a testament to its founders.

It was during his last year of medical school that Lewis Steinbach, a member of the class of 1880, discussed with his friend Joseph B. Potsdamer, an 1879 graduate, the idea of forming a society to carry on the Jefferson experience. By April of that year, with the help of six other members of the class of 1880, the James Aitken Meigs Medical Association was born – its name chosen in honor of the revered Professor of the Institutes of Medicine at Jefferson from 1868 to 1879 who had died just four months before.

The founders, in addition to Steinbach and Potsdamer, were Max Bochroch, Conrad Bready, Alexander H. DeYoung, Henry H. Freund, Louis Jurist and Edwin Rosenthal (Fig. 1). Legally minded, these originators drew up a constitution and bylaws, with Freund as the first elected President. Steinbach was the first Secretary and it is due to the careful execution of this office through the years that such an accurate record of the Meigs exists. The minutes, faithfully recorded for 115 years, are bound in hard-back covers, except for those of the last few years, in 14 volumes in Jefferson’s Scott Memorial Library Archives. Volume II (from March 1896 to November 1912), unfortunately, was discovered missing in the 1950s.

The Society’s original intent is clearly recorded. “The formal purpose of the Society is to continue and strengthen the bonds of friendship formed during the student life and to promote that social and intellectual condition becoming the profession. Graduates of Jefferson Medical College who have been matriculates and regular attendants upon the lectures from 1877-1880 shall alone be eligible to membership.”

The original eight members met the second Thursday of each month in one of their homes. A scientific presentation took place first, followed by a social portion, for which the wives tried to outdo each other’s elaborate repast. As time went on, the members decided the late social hour was causing digestive problems, so they reversed the order of the evening.

An eyewitness account of these original special evenings was provided in a 1956 presentation by Mr. Louis Potsdamer, son of the founder (Joseph Potsdamer, M.D.) and a lay associate member.

“I recall when I was a little fellow,” Potsdamer wrote, “how my mother prepared for these more formal gatherings, always in the home of the host. The family supper had to be early so that the dining room could be cleared and made ready for the Big Event! The members gathered about 8 p.m. and held a formal meeting, followed by the reading and discussion of the scientific paper (in the second floor living room).

“Then about 10 p.m. that portion of the meeting was adjourned and they went down to the dining room. A cold spread together with some hot dishes had been readied for them, with the ever-present keg of beer — draft beer. Compared with the banquets that ‘Old Lady Union League’ sets before us now - these were truly simple affairs. But to the wives of the members, they were anything but - for those good women were the caterers, waitresses and assisted at the scullery clean-up.

“Everyone had a good time - and again I recall the night that Dr. Judson Daland became a member (1896). It happened to be at our home. They really cut up - they dressed him in baby clothes and made him drink milk from a bottle, nipple and all. Those of you who recall the dignified and
(Founded 1880)

POTSDAMER

ROSENTHAL

FREUND

BACHRACH

MEIGS

STEINBACH

DE YOUNG

JURIST

BREADY
The wonderful Judson Daland will understand the real fun in this — and similar occasions.

It seems the rivalry among the wives for these events was resolved by holding meetings at a nearby cafe. The florid style of the handwritten minutes records one meeting at Cafe Hochheimer, at Franklin and Poplar Streets, where the guests completed an evening of "gastronomic gymnastics" much to everyone's pleasing. The tenth anniversary meeting was held at the Bellevue Stratford Hotel for a cost of $10.00 per person, rather expensive for that era.

Lots were drawn to determine which member was to offer the scientific presentation. Published papers on a current topic were discussed and subsequently each host was required to prepare a presentation from his own clinical experience. The subjects of these talks reflect their times. At an 1885 meeting, the pros and cons of antisepsis versus scrupulous cleanliness for surgery and control of infection were discussed. Opinion was divided between the Listerian methods and non-Listerian teachings of Samuel D. Gross, M.D., Chairman of the Jefferson Department of Surgery for 26 years.

At the Meigs first anniversary meeting, Dr. Bready made remarks on spinal sclerosis and elephantiasis, but the topics soon extended beyond medicine. In 1915, William E. Hughes, M.D., gave a talk on Italy with lantern slides. The following year, Dr. Daland spoke on the Arctic after his safe return from Point Barrow, Alaska’s most northerly point. With time, it became more customary to obtain an outside speaker.

Eventually, the founders decided it was advantageous to elect Jefferson graduates from years other than originally specified and to extend membership to those of other medical institutions. In 1885, George A. Muehlech, a Philadelphia physician who graduated from the University of Heidelberg, was the first non-Jeffersonian to join the Meigs. It was then decided to limit the membership to 14, with the essential requirements that members be congenial socially and interested in continuing education.

Two non-physicians did become associate members of the Meigs. The first was a man named Larry McGuinness, who is fondly remembered by the Meigs for supporting the meetings with liquor from his own Canadian distillery during Prohibition (1920-1933). He also smuggled additional bottles for the guests to take home. McGuinness had no formal medical knowledge, but would always discuss the evening's topic at length to the great amusement of the members. His jovial and congenial participation through the years led to his being promoted from guest to an associate member in 1937. He hosted the 60th anniversary meeting at the Union League of Philadelphia. The second was, as earlier mentioned, Louis Potsdamer, a chemical engineer elected in 1942, and an outstanding Secretary of the Association for many years.

In the Meigs' formative years, rules were strict. Dues of $3 were paid on a quarterly basis (as opposed to the $100 required yearly today) and any member who missed three consecutive meetings without excuse was automatically expelled - a stipulation that has disappeared in view of the demands of time placed on today's physicians. The length of time for holding office was indefinite and remains so. The founders each served as President, and later Albert Brubaker, Professor of Physiology at Jefferson who was elected to membership in 1908, held that office for 30 years. Dr. Brubaker died at the age of 90 in 1943.

In the earliest years of the Association, very few journals and books were available, so the founders contributed small amounts to begin a library. The journals circulated among the members for continuing education. Fines were levied for medical literature kept too long, which the minutes record in amounts from 10 cents to $5.40. The library gradually disappeared by attrition and never had a home.

Throughout the years, the members of the Meigs have adhered to the formalized tradition of their predecessors. They are a diversified group of physicians pursuing knowledge, but they are also a group of friends who have a great deal of fun together.

Today’s Association meets on the third Thursday of each month from October to May. Dress is black tie, with cocktails and hors d’oeuvres begin-
ning the evening. The banquet follows with host, speaker and officers at the head table. The latter are the President, the Secretary, and the Bankettmeister. Although the meeting place is at the discretion of the host, the most frequent choice is the Union League. When held there, a copy of Meigs' portrait, kept by the League, is displayed upon an easel in honor of the Association's namesake. The original was commissioned by the Jefferson Class of 1880 and was last hanging in the staff room of the Gibbon Building. At the May 1983 meeting, Dr. Hobart A. Reimann, Visiting Professor of Medicine and former Chairman of the Department at Jefferson, donated his own copy of Meigs' portrait to the Association in an unveiling ceremony conducted by long time member Dr. John H. Hodges, (JMC, '39). Dr. Reimann's own portrait hangs in the halls of Jefferson and one of the rooms in the Kellow Conference Area honors his name.

Dr. John Y. Templeton, III (JMC, '41) was for several years the unanimous choice for President because of his outstanding talent to move the complicated proceedings of the evening at a lively pace and his unique wit, all enhanced by a fine singing voice. Preceding Presidents have been similarly chosen for acknowledged leadership and ability to spread good feeling among the members.

A highlight of the evening during the banquet portion is the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting by Dr. Charles Shuman of Temple University. He has continued the tradition of detailed reporting in highly stylized and colorful vocabulary. His vivid, flamboyant reviews recall and intensify memories of the meetings for those who have attended and ameliorate the feelings of loss for those who could not. There is no one to surpass Dr. Shuman's mastery of language and editorial flair, so it is likely that he will remain the Secretary for many years to come.

The duties of Bankettmeister are as important to the success and pleasure of the evening as those of the President and Secretary. Dr. Paul A. Bowers (JMC, '37) has carried out his office with such natural aplomb that laughter is seldom absent for more than a few seconds at a time. A series of toasts are proposed throughout the banquet time to the Patron Saint Dr. J. Aitken Meigs, to the departed members, to the guests and finally to the host, with the singing of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow," including the refrain "And He Lives Down In Our Alley." One of the guests proposes a toast to the members.

At each meeting, the Bankettmeister is expected to give a short history of the Association. Dr. Bowers' recital is referred to as the "The History According to St. Paul." He deliberately distorts the facts in an hilarious fashion.

Also during dinner the members launch into the telling of tall tales, with each trying to outdo the other. The late Charles Fineberg, M.D., was the raconteur par excellence and there were frequent demands for his retelling the classic story of the "Irrawaddy reptile." Cigars and cordials are traditionally supplied following dinner - a custom much counted on by those of hearty constitution.

The President then introduces the speaker of the evening, usually with a biographical sketch. The formal presentation lasts about 45 minutes, with time set aside for discussion. The topics may include anything of interest to physicians, from the purely medical to travel, literature, economics, philosophy or even horse breeding. The meetings then disband, with each member feeling rewarded both intellectually and gastronomically.

Membership continues to be by invitation only and is always considered a high honor. There have been approximately 115 members since the founding, including the present around 30. It is an economic hardship for younger physicians to become members because of the expense for lavish entertainment of the expanded membership and guests. Thus, while the average age of the founders was 22, members now average approximately 72. Another factor is that most physicians invited into the Association are outstanding in their fields, a position usually earned with time.

The strong leadership and high standards assure that the Meigs will continue indefinitely not only for Jeffersonians, but for those of other medical colleges as a link with kindred spirits and as an extension of their professional intellectual interests.
The Meigs has always been strong on tradition. We have always stood strictly on ceremony, except on the rare occasions when the presiding officers, impaired by temporary dementia from whatever cause, became unable to recall the order of the service.

One of the most important features of every conference has been the recounting of the history of the Association, to which end the office of Historian was established several years ago. Since then, the Historian, Frederick B. Wagner, Jr. has alternated with our Bankettmeister, Paul A. Bowers, in making this presentation. As a result, two histories are extant. Dr. Wagner’s has been factual, serious and presumably well documented in the archives that he keeps in the office maintained for his convenience by the University. Members may have access to these files by appointment. In contrast, Dr. Bowers belongs to the revisionist school. Driven by a fertile and bizarre imagination, he has managed to link the early days of this organization to many of the most famous and infamous historical figures, going back now to the troublesome times of the Crusades.

Tonight, I shall do neither. Instead, I propose to speculate upon the several factors that have held this group together for well over a hundred years. Why has the Meigs, founded as a Continuing Medical Education project by a handful of impecunious Jefferson medical graduates, reading scientific papers and washing down their homely fare with vin ordinaire, survived and prospered until we see it as it is today? Why indeed!

The membership has included men who are
able, accomplished, professionally well recognized, socially skilled, in whose company it was a pleasure to be. It has also included some who were none of the above. It has been a heterogeneous group, paradoxically perhaps, since almost all its members have been physicians. (Lampooned members are depicted in Figures 1 to 7.) Exceptions that come easily to mind are Potsdamer and the sainted McGinnis. Many medical institutions have been represented. Beginning with Jeffersonians, the society has been enriched by the inclusion of men from most of the medical colleges in the City. Most importantly, the guests have added immeasurably to the fabric, coming as they do from many professions and offering their own varied, but always welcome viewpoints. The speakers (some members, some guests) have been protean in their choice of subjects, ranging across the broad spectrum of medicine to nuclear submarines, oenophilia, financial management, etc.

Friendship, fellowship, the prestige of the society, good stories and alcohol hold this heterogeneous group together. The first three are vital, self evident and require no discussion here.

The society has been served by outstanding raconteurs and sadly those who would but couldn't be. All have received the attention that was their due. Lately, there has been concern that there are no new stories. True, but there have never been new stories. Only new audiences. All stories were created during the first micro second after the big bang and have been floating around our universe ever since. Since the universe is expanding rapidly, the time space between stories gets even longer.

Alcohol has played a part in the preservation of the Meigs as exemplified in the reverence shown for the sainted McGinnis, the lay member who brought potable liquors to the meetings from Canada during Prohibition. All great civilizations are said to have required alcohol. There have, of course, been exceptions. But in any case, the grape has benefitted this group. If nothing else, it has eased the burdens of the Bankettmeister. On some evenings the assemblage will laugh at almost anything.

What to conclude from all this? It is that we must not be complacent. That this is the oldest

Fig. 2. John Y. Templeton, III (JMC, '41), cardiac surgeon and "pretty woman." [© James M. Fox (JMC, '64)]

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organization of this sort still active in the United States simply means that many others have fallen

Fig. 3. Paul A. Bowers (JMC, '37), obstetrician/gynecologist, Bankettmeister and Baron von Munschhausen historian. [© James M. Fox (JMC, '64)]

forgotten by the wayside. We must respect our unique heritage, maintain our bonhommerie, hold to our traditions and honor our forbears. This is not to say that we are not now doing all these things. It is just that we must continue to do so.

Fig. 4. Charles Fineberg, M.D., (Jefferson Resident, '55), surgeon and raconteur par excellence. [© James M. Fox (JMC, '64)]
Fig. 5. J. Wallace Davis (JMC, '42), plastic surgeon and all-around good fellow. [© James M. Fox (JMC, '64)]

Fig. 6. K. Kalman Faber, M.D., (Jefferson Resident, '49), pediatrician in great demand for children of Jefferson physicians. [© James M. Fox (JMC, '64)]
Dining clubs comprised of physicians or scientists became popular both abroad and in America during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In London in 1854 Huxley’s “X” club was formed. As stated by Huxley, “These friends forgathered with no special object beyond the desire to hold together a group of men with strong personal sympathies and to prevent their drifting apart under the pressure of busy lives.” He further stated, “They probably could have managed among them to contribute most of the articles to a scientific encyclopaedia.” (Quoted from Cushing’s Life of Sir William Osler, Vol. I, p. 224).

Sir William Osler is estimated to have belonged to possibly as many as 20 social/scientific clubs in his lifetime. During his five years in Philadelphia (1884-89) he belonged to three, - the Biological Club, the Mahogany Tree Club, and Medical Club or “Club of 19.” The “Club of 19” was composed of a group of colleagues, most of whom powered the Medical College of the University of Pennsylvania. The members met fortnightly in rotation at each other’s homes where “a club” was stated to be given. It is interesting that two of the members at these elite gatherings were Jeffersonians, - Samuel W. Gross, Professor of Surgery, and Hobart A. Hare, Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics. The simple fare gradually metamorphosed into formal gastronomic competitions. The “Club of 19” at Penn has survived to the present time with meetings occurring regularly in the homes of its members.
In the fashion of dining clubs for physicians, Jefferson Medical College was not to be outdone. In 1880, eight Jefferson graduates banded together to form the J. Aitken Meigs Medical Association, named in honor of their beloved and recently deceased Professor of the Institutes of Medicine. Its purpose was to maintain the bonds of friendship formed during student life by meeting socially and exchanging medical ideas. Its membership grew to around 25 and later included graduates from other medical schools. It flourishes today as one of the oldest such clubs in existence.

In 1929 yet another medical dining club was formed at Jefferson to remain known as the "X" Society. The 12 founders were young Jefferson graduates who wished to share their diverse academic interests and promote good fellowship by meeting monthly. The late Dr. John B. Montgomery ('26) gave a recorded oral history in 1984 at the home of his son, Bruce B. Montgomery ('60), also a member. He credited Leon Solis-Cohen ('12) as the father and main organizer of the group. A list of the founders, their years of graduation, and their specialties are as follows:

Leon Solis-Cohen ('12), Roentgenology
Adolph A. Walker ('17), Surgery
Benjamin F. Haskell ('23), Proctology
Abraham Cantarow ('24), Biochemistry
Aaron Capper ('24), Pediatrics
John T. Eads ('26), Gastroenterology
Theodore R. Fetter ('26), Urology
Emmet Jones ('26), Ear, Nose and Throat
Kelvin A. Kasper ('26), Ear, Nose and Throat
John B. Montgomery ('26), Obstetrics and Gynecology
Carrol R. Mullen ('26), Ophthalmology
Robert A. Matthews ('28), Psychiatry

The first meeting of the "X" Society was held in the rooms of Drs. John Eads and Kelvin Kasper who at the time were living in the Gladstone Hotel at Eleventh and Clinton Streets across from the old Daniel Baugh Institute of Anatomy. The format of these early meetings was drastically different from what followed in later years. The program started with a scientific presentation, followed by refreshments and the playing of cards, usually poker. The card playing frequently got out of hand, lasting into the wee hours of the morning, all of which led to a late night collation. Dr. John Montgomery, who professed to never having played cards before, developed an alarmingly speedy and dangerous proficiency at these games. Over time the members saw the error of their ways and abandoned the late hour activities.

The revised and current program starts with drinks and hors d'oeuvres from 6-7 P.M., followed by a dinner with a scientific presentation and discussion from 7-9 P.M. The Society meets monthly from October through May.

Almost all the founders rose to prominence in later years on the Jefferson faculty, and five became Chairmen of Departments (Montgomery, Fetter, Mullen, Cantarow and Matthews). Through the years the membership has been limited to 12-15, with an attempt to represent a wide spectrum of medical interests. There has been no formal organization such as to have a constitution, rules and regulations, by-laws, officers, or minutes (except on two rare occasions). The host, on rotation, gives his own presentation, but at a few meetings there have been guest speakers. The topic is usually medically related, but may consist of any subject befitting the cultural interests of the profession.

Dr. John Montgomery reminisced that the founders could not agree on a name for the society. The suggested names of Jefferson, Gross, Keen and Da Costa failed to gain unanimous approval. The temporary expedient of "X" was never changed, and was not meant to imply any secrecy; nor was there any thought of Huxley's "X" Society.

Meetings at first were in the members' homes, but in order to relieve the wives of the burden of preparing the meals, it was deemed more appropriate to hold the affairs in a restaurant or private club. In recent years the Jefferson Faculty Club has become standard. Dress is professional but not formal.

Fortunately, minutes were taken and preserved by Dr. John H. Hodges of a meeting held January 20, 1969, at the home of Dr. John Y. Templeton,
III. They characterize the flair and goings-on of a typical meeting.

"The meeting started at 6:30 P.M. with the following members present:

John Y. Templeton, III    John Hodges
Andrew Ramsey             John B. Montgomery
Kelvin Kasper             Abraham Rakoff
Jay Jacoby                Charles Wirts
George Strong             Herbert Luscombe

"The host had available the usual adequate drinks, hot hors d’ouevres, and other delectables. The premises were graced by two dogs: one, a large German Shepherd which was rather complacent and friendly; and secondly, by a six-inch high black terrier who vocally gave commands to all those within hearing that he was to be obeyed although his size belied any such possibility. The guests were intrigued by the collections of Boehm birds, and by a tour conducted by Dr. Templeton’s son, Bruce, to the basement where he displayed three reptiles, the largest of which was a dark phase Indian Rock Python which was said to be suffering from pneumonia, and none of the consultants present disputed this diagnosis.

"A delectable dinner was served by Mrs. Templeton with the assistance of Mrs. Luscombe. The dinner consisted of Clams Casino, white and red wine, steak in wine sauce, various vegetables, salad, and topped with Baked Alaska. At the beginning of the dinner, the host had the members rise and give a toast to the new member on his first official attendance, George Strong.

"Following dinner, liqueurs were served. Dr. Templeton gave a discussion on the heart as a pump and illustrated it with slides and movies of heart operations, particularly the removal of a ventricular aneurysm following a myocardial infarct. Specimens of artificial heart valves were demonstrated. A lively discussion followed and it became generalized when the discussion turned to the cause of atherosclerosis. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 P.M."

Respectfully submitted,
John H. Hodges, M.D.

The meeting of November 17, 1986, was recorded by Dr. Andrew J. Ramsey as follows:

"Eleven members of the “X” assembled at 6:00 P.M. in the Faculty Club, Jefferson Alumni Hall, upon invitation of Dr. John Hodges, host.

"Present were: Doctors Coon, Gartland, Goldburgh, Hodges (host), Kuroda, Jacoby, Ramsey, Schaedler, Strong, Templeton, and Wagner. Four members were unable to be present: Doctors Luscombe, John B. and Bruce B. Montgomery, and Wirts.

"Following the delightful reception period the company were served an equally delightful and unique dinner featuring veal Oscar and wine, enhanced by erudite conversation covering sports, medical pseudo-scientific, philosophical, and metaphysical topics. (None of the world’s real problems were solved.)

"Toasts honored the memories of our departed members and, of course, recognized our gracious host of the evening.

"The passing of Mrs. Betty Montgomery, wife of Dr. John B., was noted with deep regrets and it was decided that a tribute to her memory be expressed by a combined contribution from the membership, directed in her name, to the Aid Society of the County Medical Society. Checks should be sent to Dr. John Templeton for transmittal to the Society.

"Dr. Hodges spoke briefly on plant and animal pigments, the former being obvious in our autumnal foliage display recently. There followed an informative discussion and recapitulation of hemoglobin and its history, including the chronology of the development of methods and devices for its study, determination of amounts present, and the contributions and participation of Jefferson physicians in this vital area of medical science. Good discussion followed Dr. Hodge’s scholarly presentation.

"The warm, friendly and informative evening adjourned about 9:30 P.M."

A. J. Ramsey

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The ideal number of members has remained around twelve as originally organized, and with an attempt at distribution through the various specialties. As a result, the total members over the past 60 years has numbered only 34. The subsequent members after the twelve founders already listed have been:

Paul C. Swenson (Minnesota, '26), Radiology
Anthony F. DePalma ('29), Orthopaedics
Andrew J. Ramsey (Cornell, Ph.D. '34), Anatomy
Charles W. Wirts ('34), Gastroenterology
George A. Bennett (Munich, '37), Anatomy, Dean of JMC
Abraham E. Rakoff ('37), Gynecology, Endocrinology
John J. O'Keefe ('37), Otolaryngology
George H. Strong (Hopkins, '39), Urology
John H. Hodges ('39), Medicine
Herbert A. Luscombe ('40), Dermatology
John Y. Templeton, III ('41), Surgery
Frederick B. Wagner, Jr. ('41), Surgery
Jay J. Jacoby (Minnesota, '41), Anesthesiology
John J. Gartland (S'44), Orthopaedics
Julius M. Coon (Chicago, '45), Pharmacology
Gerald D. Dodd ('47), Radiology
Warren P. Goldburgh ('52), Medicine
Russell W. Schaedler ('53), Microbiology and Immunology
Paul C. Brucker (Pennsylvania, '57), Medicine, President TJU
Koson Kuroda (Northwestern, '60), Radiology
Bruce B. Montgomery ('60), Obstetrics and Gynecology
Louis Dale Lowry (Missouri, '62), Otolaryngology

The acknowledged founder, Dr. Leon Solis-Cohen, died in 1965 and the last surviving co-founder, Dr. John B. Montgomery, died in 1987. In 1990 a membership review was made of the 22 non-founders. Four were deceased and eight were inactive, leaving a total of ten active members. Six new members were elected in the Fall, namely:

Edward H. McGehee ('45), Family Medicine
Harvey S. Brodovsky (Mannitoba, '55), Oncology
Jussi J. Saukkonen (Helsinki, M.D., Ph.D., '56), Dean, Graduate College
Bryce Templeton (Case Western, '57), Psychiatry
S. Grant Mulholland (Temple, '62), Urology
Joseph L. Seltzer ('71), Anesthesiology

There were three occasions in which the spouses were invited to purely social gatherings. The first was around 1960, and was sponsored by the Society at the Barclay Hotel in Philadelphia. In May, 1979, Dr. and Mrs. John J. Gartland entertained for cocktails, dinner and dancing at their home in Wynnewood, PA, and in May, 1980, Dr. and Mrs. John J. O'Keefe did likewise in their home in Gladwyne. The sentiment of the present members favors the welcoming of women into the membership, which most likely will occur in the future.

High standards have been maintained through the years, most elected members having attained professorial rank, deanship, chairmanship, or honorary or emeritus Faculty status. The vitality and longevity of this organization are ensured by the academic ideals, the excellent presentations, the spontaneous leadership and warm fellowship.
The Jefferson Society for Clinical Investigation

The Clinical Services at Jefferson Medical College Hospital traditionally were manned by volunteers. The recruitment of new physicians for the care of patients usually began by appointment of recent house officers to outpatient services where teaching was carried out by members of the various departments. Designation as an Assistant in a Clinical Department usually carried with it an appointment to the faculty at the entrance level, an Assistant Demonstrator. Such appointments began with application to the Department Head who would then request confirmation by the Dean. Since there were no clinical residencies beyond the internship, clinics and wards of the hospital provided the training ground for young physicians but laboratories in the basic sciences (anatomy, physiology, bacteriology, pharmacy/pharmacology, pathology and chemistry) were also manned by physicians and provided opportunities for the few research minded graduates.

During the early years of the 20th century there were publications by Jefferson physicians, mainly textbooks by well known professors, and case reports by younger clinicians. Research had not yet become universal in medical school programs but a change was developing by reason of American Medical Association efforts to weed out medical "diploma mills," and by the Flexner report of 1910 which aided in defining the necessary qualifications for medical education. These changes were abetted as younger clinical teachers, especially during and following World War I, were developing newer perspectives and enlarged visions of the broadening fields of medicine. Jefferson was fortunate to have a number of young men in this category. Informal discussions about forming an organization had taken place in the middle 1920s but no firm initiative developed until 1926. At that time a farewell dinner was tendered by a group dubbed "The Revolutionaries" to Dr. David Metheny (JMC, '23) as he completed his Chief Residency and went on to the Mayo Clinic for a fellowship. The dinner was recalled by Dr. Thaddeus L. Montgomery (JMC, '20), as having led to a long discussion about clinical research at Jefferson, concluding with a plan for an organization of academic physicians. The group the very next day communicated with Dean Patterson for his approval which was immediately obtained. The Jefferson Society for Clinical Investigation was born.

Comprising the organizing group were bright young teachers almost all of whom had already developed a position of competence and leadership which increased their appetites for opportunities to share and publicize their work. The Founders were:

Jones, Harold W.
Montgomery, Thaddeus L.
Scheffey, Lewis C.
Lintgen, Charles I.
Krusen, Frank H.
Willauer, George J.

The purposes of the society were stated to be "to afford opportunities for those interested in scientific medicine and in the history of medicine; to present and discuss medical papers; to stimulate the interest of junior staff and graduates of the Jefferson Medical College and Hospital in clinical investigation; to provide opportunities and facilities for studying problems of research in the clinics and in the various departments of fundamental sciences; to stimulate the writing and publishing of medical papers and their presentation and discussion at local, state, and national meetings."

The organizational process proceeded apace. The Founders were joined by thirty charter members as follows:

Clerf, Louis H.
Tucker, Gabriel
Crawford, Baxter L.
Tyson, Ralph M.

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Clarke, J. Alexander
Lyon, B. B. Vincent
Flick, John B.
Shallow, Thomas A.
Weiss, Edward
Konzelmann, Frank W.
Lull, Clifford B.
Davis, Warren B.
Sidlick, D. Mitchell
Bernstein, Mitchell
Decker, Henry B.
Lott, H. Hunter
Lukens, Robert M.
Saleeby, Eli R.
Cantarow, Abraham

Billings, Arthur E.
Klopp, Edward J.
Wagers, Arthur J.
Fox, C. Calvin
Richards, James L.
Bucher, Carl J.
Lipshutz, B.
Perlman, Henry H.
Stimson, C. M.
Mohler, Henry K.
Rehfuss, Martin E.

A constitution and by-laws provided for the mechanism of government in an orderly manner and the first officers were elected: Harold W. Jones, President, Thaddeus L. Montgomery, Vice President, John T. Farrell, Treasurer, and Burgess Gordon, Secretary.

It is noteworthy that the list of founders and charter members was remarkable in that virtually all went on to distinguished careers in medicine and the great majority stayed at Jefferson. One of the provisions of the constitution stated that on appointment as Assistant Professor, members could automatically be transferred to Emeritus status, thus preserving the youthful energy of the organization. Another requirement for continuing membership was the presentation of “at least one paper yearly before the Society or before a local, state, or national society, and the publication of at least one medical paper every two years…”

The constitution also called for the collection of funds for clinical investigation both from and through the members, those funds to be dispersed “on recommendation of the Executive Committee and passed by two-thirds vote of the Society.” Subsequently the Society made an annual award for the most valuable scientific contribution by a member. In 1930, Dr. John T. Farrell was the winner with his paper: “The Roentgenographic Incidence of Calcified Pulmonary Foci and Their Significance.”

The Society flourished and its membership grew. Meetings were held monthly and the papers became more sophisticated as clinical research at Jefferson increased. During the 1930s, the institution of residency programs provided a new stimulus but as war time limitations intruded in the early 1940s, attendance suffered and for several years only token meetings were held. In May, 1946, however, the Society’s activities were reinaugurated and monthly meetings were resumed with presentations mainly by the newer members. Numbers increased to a total of 200, 104 of whom were active members. The Annual Dinner was held in November, 1947, at the University Club with 108 members and guests attending. It was addressed by Dr. George W. Corner of Washington, D.C., formerly Professor of Anatomy at the University of Rochester. (Dr. Corner became a noted scholar and historian).

Enthusiasm for the Society remained high for the next half decade. Meetings were well attended and young investigators profited from the policies of the group. The annual dinners continued to be well attended and papers were of high quality. In 1953, the attendance was the highest in its history. The dinner address by Dr. Henry L. Bockus (JMC, ’17) emphasized the philosophical and practical benefits of clinical investigation.

In spite of this postwar surge of interest and activity the days of the Society were numbered. Laboratory investigation, basic science research and the increase in departmental projects resulted in changes in the perception of the Society’s role. Furthermore, a number of members desired to publish the proceedings but this effort failed to gain acceptance. By the mid 1950s attendance diminished, interest flagged, and the Society lost its reason for existence.

During its lifetime the Society contributed much to the academic progress of its members. As observed at the onset, the founders and charter members were exceptionally able intellectually and highly principled. The opportunity to share their findings and to experience the stimulation of developing knowledge added an important dimension to teaching and practice. Their successors carried on the original stated purposes for three decades after which the explosion of medical and technological knowledge required more universal methods of research and communication. Early members could take pride in the individual accomplishments of their group, most of whom became distinguished professors and clinicians.
James Aitken Meigs (JMC, 1851); Professor of Institutes of Medicine and Medical Jurisprudence (1868-79); Patron Saint of Meigs Medical Association.