

Medical History Society of New Jersey

Two Princess Road, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648

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Newsletter

Volume 1. No. 1

January, 1981

It is appropriate that the first Newsletter of our Society be historical, a passing note on the events leading to its establishment.

The first meeting was held on May 7, 1980 at the Academy of Medicine of New Jersey in Lawrenceville. This was in conjunction with the First Annual Morris H. Saffron lecture which was delivered by Dr. Genevieve Miller, immediate past president of the American Association for the History of Medicine. Her subject was "The Control of Smallpox in England and Colonial America." The organizational and historical aspects were discussed by Dr. Morris Saffron who noted that a section on medical history had a brief life as part of the Academy, then in Bloomfield, twenty years previously. Ten years later, another group was formed which held two historical symposia, the papers of which were published in the Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey and in the Bulletin of the AMNJ. Dr. Saffron noted that a recrudescence of interest in medical history was stimulated by the Academy of Medicines' donation of its Rare Book Collection to the CMDNJ - George F. Smith Library of the Health Sciences where it is presently catalogued and on display. The Collection was presented in Dr. Saffron's name in 1978.

The question of forming a medical history society was discussed by the forty odd people in attendance at the May 7 meeting and the overwhelming consensus was that we should proceed. Strong sentiment favored the inclusion of the broad field of the health sciences, medicine and its specialties, dentistry, public health, pharmacy and the basic sciences; at all levels from student to professional, to post-graduate. An ad hoc organizing committee of Drs. Saffron, Guthorn, Wedeen and Krosnick, Professor Cowen and Mr. Cirillo was appointed.

The ad hoc committee met in June at the George F. Smith Library and again in September at the Academy of Medicine to study a proposed constitution and by-laws, membership potential and organization; aided by Mr. Cal Heitzmann Executive Director of the Academy of Medicine. In the interim, a July notice

was sent to interested individuals requesting abstracts.

A second meeting, but the first formally designated was held on October 8, 1980 at the CMDNJ - Rutgers Medical School in Piscataway. The group of about forty-five were welcomed by Dr. Richard J. Cross on behalf of Dean Richard Reynolds. The proposed constitution and by-laws was adopted and the proposed slate of officers, Dr. Peter J. Guthorn, President, Professor David Cowen, Vice President, Dr. Richard Wedeen, Treasurer, Vincent Cirillo, Secretary and Dr. Morris Saffron, Counsellor were elected.

Two papers were presented in the morning. "Edward Miller (1760 - 1812), An American Physician" by Dr. Francis P. Chinard and "The Conquest of Yellow Fever" by Dr. John Z. Bowers. Following a luncheon hosted by Dean Reynolds, two more papers were presented, "Punch Cures the Gout" by Dr. Wedeen and "Ezra Hunt" by Sam Alewitz.

MEMBERSHIP

At present the membership represents a healthy broad spectrum in the health sciences, and those interested in the broad range of the history of medical endeavor.

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1981

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COUNSELLOR

PROGRAM

The Program Committee of Messrs. Sam Alewitz and Russell McIntyre under the chairmanship of Professor David Cowen has tentatively arranged the next meeting for May 20, 1981, at the Academy of Medicine Headquarters in Lawrenceville and a fall meeting on October 14, 1981 at the New Jersey Historical Society in Newark. A 100 word abstract is requested of those who would plan to present papers at these meetings.

PUBLICATION

The papers presented at the first formal meeting in October will be edited by Dr. Arthur Krosnick and will be published in the Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey. Dr. Krosnick will continue to advise on editorial and publication matters. Stamps provided by Dr. Joseph Kler will be employed as a cover and/or within the text of the publication.

An interested and active membership to participate in our program is necessary. Enclosed are two membership applications. Please pass them on to individuals who are likely to be interested in or who would benefit from membership. Regular membership is \$15.00 and student membership is \$5.00 per year.

Investigation of historical resources in New Jersey is potentially very fruitful where many important developments in the broad field of health sciences had their origin. Many of the most important pharmaceutical discoveries were made at least in part, by New Jersey pharmaceutical companies and researchers. Other important research was carried on by colleges, universities, state agencies, and private industry. Members of these organizations with an interest in history, will make a potentially important contribution by bringing these developments into historical perspective. The presentation of papers is earnestly solicited.

COMMITTEES

Members who wish to serve on the Nominating, Admissions, Membership and Program Committees are requested to make their interests known by a note or phone call.

It should be noted that our Society has made application to the Merck Foundation to secure funds to carry on the activities of the Society including the publication of papers.

Peter J. Guthorn, M.D., F.A.C.S.
President

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