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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

The founding of the School of Medicine of Howard University dates back to the days of Reconstruction, when on November 9, 1868, the school opened its doors with eight (8) students and five (5) teachers. Crude and discouraging were the physical conditions in the beginning. "I well remember," says a member¹ of the first class, "the frame house on Seventh street, where the first session was held. The first floor was occupied as a residence by Professor Amzi L. Barber. The second floor was used by the Medical Department. The lectures were given in the front room where dissections were also made until the fact came to the knowledge of the family below. The subject was then removed to an old building on the same lot, until the family secured more congenial quarters." This "frame house"—an old abandoned German dance hall, was located on "7th Street Road" just above Florida Avenue, then called the "Boundary," in an unimproved section just outside the city limits. To reach it, many a person had to cross lots, jump an open sewer and "carry a lantern."² The physical conditions in the beginning were indeed crude and discouraging, but more discouraging still were the problems due to the fact it was a school for "niggers."

¹Washington F. Crusor, *Howard University Medical Department*, 12. Hereafter abbreviated, H.U.M.D.

²H.U.M.D., 30.