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## Founding of the School of Medicine at Howard University, 1866-1873

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## FOUNDING THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE OF HOWARD UNIVERSITY

OCCASION, 1860-1868

FOOD AND SCHOOLS

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Slavery in the United States was gone forever by November 19, 1866, notwithstanding the many attempts by "Black Codes" to restore it in disguise. "I suppose," said a speaker on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the freedom of the Negroes of Washington, D.C., "it will no longer be presumption to call you fellow-citizens, since the Constitution has been so amended as forever to prohibit slavery and involuntary servitude except in punishment for crime, and since the "Civil Rights Bill" has become a law of the land."<sup>3</sup>

There were then in the United States about 4,000,000 of these newly enfranchised fellow-citizens. Of these the great majority were too poor and too ignorant to enjoy fully the privileges or exercise properly the duties of their high position. They enjoyed their freedom as best they could, however, moving about from farm to town and from city to city,—moving with "their poverty and wretchedness, their raggedness and nakedness, their hunger and thirst, their weakness and sickness."

They sought the large cities. From a population of 14,275 Negroes in 1860, Richmond, Virginia, grew to 23,110 in 1870; Savannah, Georgia from 8,417 to 13,068; Louisville, Kentucky, from 6,820 to 14,956; Cincinnati, Ohio, from 3,731 to 5,900; Indianapolis, Indiana, from 498 to 2,931; Washington, D.C., from 10,000 to 40,000.

Washington was the most attractive. It was a "promised land" to many a freeman. For it was the capital of the nation—that is, of the North that had set them free. There, too, slavery had been abolished since 1862 and there, by 1863 schools for blacks had been opened. Thousands, therefore, poured into Washington. Between 1800 and 1860, a period of sixty years, 10,000 had come to the capital. Now, for three times that number to enter suddenly, as it were, within the next ten years, thousands of them destitute, was a matter of grave concern both for the city and for the new-comers.

These new-comers "squatted" where they could. They took possession of vacant houses and vacated barracks wherever found.

The people had compassion upon them. The Federal Government,<sup>4</sup> through the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, enlarged the hospitals of the city and vicinity; it moved the Colored Or-

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<sup>3</sup>*Howard University Studies in History*, No. 1, 1921, 6-8. Hereafter referred to as *Studies in History*.

<sup>4</sup>Freedmen's Bureau, 1866, 23-27; 1867, 44.

phans' Home from Georgetown to "8th Street extended," in Washington, and housed it in a new and larger building (1866); it erected near the Capitol, houses and sold them on easy terms for cost; it purchased 375 acres of land on the Potomac River, situated "next north of the St. Elizabeth Insane Asylum" and erected houses on one acre lots and sold them also for cost (1867). It opened soup houses for the 26,357 Negroes who were idle—idle for only 5,192 of the 31,549 in Washington and Georgetown were gainfully employed during 1866, and because 22,798 were patients in the Government Hospitals that year, and because "there . . . (was) reluctance on the part of the majority to leave even the miserable homes they (had) established . . . and start forth to parts of the country new and strange to them."

Yet this extraordinary effort on the part of the Bureau was not sufficient. The Federal Government was compelled on April 17, 1866 to make a special appropriation of 25,000 for "the temporary relief of the destitute citizens of the District of Columbia, and on March 16th, the following year, another special appropriation of \$15,000; this time "for the relief of Freedmen or destitute colored people in the District of Columbia."<sup>5</sup> 965 whites and 827 blacks had been relieved by the \$25,000.

Neither were the private organizations of the country disinterested. The Federal Government was engaged primarily in supplying food, clothing and shelter. Freedmen Aid Societies and Church denominations maintained schools. There were in operation during 1866 at least 45 day schools, more than 15 night schools, and more than 20 Sunday Schools in Washington and Georgetown. The Baptist denomination was especially active. It maintained in Washington during 1866 three schools of higher grade—Rev. Dr. Turney's Washington Educational Institute, Rev. G. M. P. King's branch of the National Theological Institute and the Wayland Theological Seminary, the last "being a most successful Theological and Normal Class."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Freedmen's Bureau, 1867, 23, 36.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1868, 20. Appendix E.

NUMBER DESTITUTE 1867

<i>States</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Black</i>
Virginia -----	2,500	2,500
North Carolina -----	3,000	2,000
South Carolina -----	5,000	5,000
Florida -----	500	1,000
Georgia -----	7,500	5,000
Alabama -----	10,000	5,000
Tennessee -----	1,000	1,000
Mississippi -----	1,862	2,038
Arkansas -----	1,000	500
Louisiana -----	300	200
Texas -----		
TOTAL -----	32,612	24,238

“RADICAL CHRISTIANITY”

It was to assist these agencies already at work in the relief of ignorance and personal suffering in the District of Columbia and in the country at large, that the School of Medicine of Howard University was founded.

But there was another purpose,—another occasion for the School of Medicine. It was to be an evidence of a change in race relations in the United States. Dr. L. C. Loomis, in his address at the opening of the “Medical Department” emphasized this purpose when he said:

“The principles upon which the University proposes to be conducted are:

“1st, It recognizes the great truth that “God made of one blood all nations of men.”

“2nd, It proposes to be guided by the rule “Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

“3rd, It proposes to dispense with the prayer, “God I thank thee I am not as other men are;” and

“4th, It proposes to be “No respecter of persons.””<sup>7</sup>

“It is the belief of not a few,” said Reverend Byron Sunderland,<sup>8</sup> “that events have demonstrated, and will still continue to show, alike the fallacy and impracticability of all theories and projects which look to the speedy separation of the two races, and that the only feasible, as it is the only just and sensible plan, is to accept the situation as it is—to recognize the principle of Hebrew legislation in respect of those escaped from bondage and “permit them to dwell among us in that place which they shall choose” . . . . “where it liketh them best” . . . . while at the earliest possible moment there may be prepared for them, and for all who are in like necessity, such means of instruction and discipline as shall be adequate to the largest requirements of the country and the age.”

“On the day set apart for prayer for Colleges, January 25th, 1872, we organized” said Mr. Nichols “a small church at Howard University. Since the organization, we have had three communions at each of which we have added to our number. Last Sabbath was a day of special interest in the history of this infant enterprise. Dr. Rankin preached the sermon, after which two native Chinese, supported here through the contributions of your society, were among the number received. In looking over our files, I find a letter from Rev. E. P. Smith, then your Field Secretary, dated Feb. 18, 1870, making an application for the reception of three Chinese young men to our institution, named Fung Affoo, Leong Sing and Choy Awah. The two first named, he regarded as men of great promise, and they having indulged hope in Christ, were last Sabbath baptized by Dr. Rankin, in the

<sup>7</sup>Howard University, 1868-'92, Catalogues and Reports.

<sup>8</sup>Annual Report of Howard University, 1867-68, 4.

name of the Holy Trinity, and entered into covenant with the people of the Lord. At the same time a native African from the eastern coast, who came to this country with the Rev. Mr. Robbins, missionary of the Am. Board, a daughter of a deceased missionary to Africa, a Creek Indian, a young man who was a slave in the South at the breaking out of the war, now a promising young man, and our University Treasurer, J. B. Johnson, were received into this infant church. A large audience was present to witness the interesting ceremonies, and manifested deep interest in the exercises of the hour.

"As the writer looked upon this scene, the words of the Saviour came forcibly to mind: "And they shall come from the East, and the West, and the North and the South, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God."<sup>9</sup>

"The question of amalgamation" said the *Cincinnati Gazette* of January 31, 1868 "has great charms for conservative ears. It has lately come up for consideration in one of the leading religious bodies in Washington.<sup>10</sup> But before Democrats begin to rejoice let them read the result. General Howard has within the past year raised a large sum of money to erect a Congregational Church in Washington, and his efforts combined with effective ones in other directions have so far succeeded that the building is nearly completed—and a magnificent structure it is, and a fitting monument to northern generosity.

"The chaplain of the House, Dr. Boynton, is its pastor; a man esteemed here to be somewhat tinctured with radicalism, having grown gray as an Abolitionist, before the war began, and having moved on in Republican directions as the struggle opened, progressed and as it is still progressing. The Democrats say "he makes stump speeches to the Lord" in his prayers, and that they have no protection through the previous question, as he discourses of human rights during his devotions. Taken altogether he may be set down as a Radical.

"But a little company—of *men* be it said to the credit of women—are far more radical than their minister. And lest the Church itself should be disgraced at the North, and those who there gave so freely of their money to build it, should feel that

<sup>9</sup>*The American Missionary*, January, 1873, XVII, No. 1, 1.

<sup>10</sup>"I was claiming for us love of God and our neighbor, when suddenly the pastor asked significantly: "General Howard, do you believe in amalgamation?" Instantly it occurred to me that there were two meanings of that word "amalgamation"; one was the union of whites and blacks in church and school relation; the other the union in marriage. Whichever Dr. Boynton meant, I decided to make answer to the latter. I had never hitherto advocated intermarriage; but a case illustrated my thought on the subject, I said: "A gentleman in Virginia, soon after graduating from West Point, had left the army, married, and settled on a plantation. After perhaps one year his young wife died. He did not marry again, but had one of his slave women as his home keeper, and by her had several children. This woman had recently come to me for protection against the gentleman's severity of discipline; as she was leaving she said: "Do not hurt him, for I love him, only, keep him from whipping me!" Now, I added, "before God that man and that woman are man and wife." Here I closed, Dr. Boynton cried out: "Yes, and I would marry them." *Autobiography of O. O. Howard*, II, 433-434.

they had been swindled, let it also be said that this minority numbers less than a dozen. But they have been enough to secure the attention of several Conservative journals in this section, and the eyes of Washington are being turned toward the splendid structure which Northern men are building, to see whether it will, in fact, become a church where there shall be no distinction of race whatever, but where such distinctions shall be wholly ignored; not only at the public meetings of the church—where all agree that they should be laid aside—but in social parties, in family intercourse, and even to *intermarriage*. For all these things this little party is fighting.

“The attempt is being made here, to fix the responsibility for this thing upon General Howard, and Democrats are pointing to it as an evidence that all Freedmen’s Bureau efforts lead directly to amalgamation. Justice to General Howard requires that the country should know he is no disciple of this doctrine and is not administering the affairs of the Bureau to encourage it. His name has been connected with it, because the little clique or most composing it, happen to be employed in the Bureau. The General has been greatly tried by their operations but as yet his goodness of heart has prevented him from shaking them off, employment being scarce in Washington, and those requiring his constant assistance numerous enough, already.

“The battle began to assume interesting proportions. At length it took a definite shape. Two colored men were put forward for membership, and although it was discovered that one of them was in league with the amalgamationists, and that the game was to get these in, and then follow their admission by continual applications from others, until the church was formed in great part of colored people, still no opposition was made to receiving them. Yet it was a difficult question to settle in its general aspects. No one in the church desired to exclude a man because he was black. It was the knowledge of the plan so carefully hidden that perplexed the church authorities. At this stage the pastor preached a sermon, in which he took the ground that the greatest advantages would be derived by the blacks in organizations of their own, rather than in bodies where they could not control. Upon this point Dr. Boynton spoke as follows:

““This subject presents two questions that are entirely distinct and must not be confounded. One is, if a black man seeks admission to the church of white men, should he be rejected? Certainly not. Let him enjoy the same rights and privileges in this respect as other persons have. Christianity in this regard knows no distinction of color. Another and very different question is, in view of their own best interests and highest happiness, should we induce or advise them to come? Where they have no church organizations of their own that they can enter, I should do so; but in a community where suitable churches and schools of their own people abound I can not conscientiously, as a friend to the black, advise them to avoid these organizations of their own and bury themselves in a living

grave, an unheeded little company in the larger masses of the whites. Everyone taken thus from the number of the blacks diminishes to that extent their strength and their power of progress and elevation. We can afford to receive the colored people, but their own race can not afford to lose them."

"The sermon settled the matter, and while no effort whatever, was made to shut out the colored candidates, while they were examined and would have been recommended and announced for membership; but understanding fully that the attempt to force social equality in the leading Northern church of Washington, was a total failure, they indignantly withdrew. Since this was settled, it has fully come to light, that the plan was to make of this church, built by Northern benevolence an institution where a perfect social blending of the races should take place, to the end that here, in the National Capital, there should be one model Christian church, whose cornerstone was not exclusion in any of its forms, but amalgamation and complete social equality.

"The Conservative journals are already pointing to this matter as the legitimate result of radical Christianity and as the tendency of all of General Howard's efforts. As they may not tell their readers that the movement here has been made and the excitement regarding it kept up by an insignificant number of really insignificant men, it is due from Republican papers that they should defend this new church enterprise and also expose the attempt to connect the Head of the Freedmen's Bureau with the doctrine of amalgamation."

#### CONCEPTION 1866-1868

##### CHAIR OF HYGIENE AND NATURAL THEOLOGY

There was in that "insignificant number of really insignificant men" three of the Trustees of Howard University—D. B. Nichols, W. F. Bascom and E. W. Robinson. The most radical of the group, Nichols, was the most active in the organization of the "Medical Department." It happened in this way:<sup>11</sup> The Reverend Benjamin F. Morris, a member of the First Congregational Church of Washington, D.C., visited Wayland Theological Seminary, Monday, November 19, 1866. At a meeting of the Missionary Society of this church, that evening, the condition of the Freedmen in Washington and in the country at large was considered; also the duty of the country and the Church toward their elevation. During the evening the great change which had come over "the face of society," since the Free Soil Convention of 1850, was discussed. The work of the American Missionary Society was reviewed; the organization of another society to cooperate with it was proposed. Reverend Mr. Morris

<sup>11</sup>*Studies in History*, No. 1, 1921, 9-11.

related his experience at the Wayland Seminary. He impressed those present with what one teacher with poor equipment was accomplishing in that school. The meeting adjourned but not before one at least had been convinced that not another missionary society, but a Theological School was needed. Reverend Mr. Nichols reports that the sentiment manifested that evening to establish a school sometime in the future led him to say within himself, "Why not now?" At another meeting of the little group, the next evening Tuesday, November 20, 1866, a school was decided upon and a committee appointed;—three preachers, C. B. Boynton, B. F. Morris and D. B. Nichols. This committee decided to open a "Theological Seminary" and proceeded immediately to organize the "Howard Theological Seminary under the following temporary programme of instruction:<sup>12</sup>

Reverend C. B. Boynton—Professor of Theology  
 Reverend D. B. Nichols—Professor of Biblical Literature.  
 Reverend B. F. Morris—Professor of History and Church  
 Polity  
 Reverend J. W. Alvord—Professor of Homiletics and Pas-  
 toral Theology."

Before reporting this plan to the group, Mr. Nichols showed it to Dr. S. L. Loomis a professor in Georgetown College. Dr. Loomis suggested that since Negro preachers would be called upon to write many letters and to visit the sick they should be taught English Composition and Physiology and Hygiene. He suggested a "Chair of English Literature" and a "Chair of Hygiene and Natural Theology". Thereupon the committee modified its report and provided for English Literature and Physiology and Hygiene. They also added a chair of sacred music.

Finally the committee made this report: That in view of the pressing demand of the southern field we proceed immediately to organize the Medical Department of the Howard Normal and Theological Institute under the following temporary programme of instruction:

"Reverend C. B. Boynton—Professor of Theology  
 Reverend D. B. Nichols—Professor of Biblical Literature  
 Reverend B. F. Morris—Professor of History and Church  
 Polity  
 Reverend J. Kimball—Professor of English Literature  
 Reverend J. W. Alvord—Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral  
 Theology  
 Doctor Slias L. Loomis—Professor of Hygiene and Natural  
 Theology  
 \_\_\_\_\_—Professor of Sacred Music."

<sup>12</sup>Appendix D.



## MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

On December 18, 1866 this report was approved by the group by the unanimous election of the professors named. But before another month had passed they had decided that a University was necessary and not merely a Normal and Theological Institute. At a meeting January 8, 1867, Dr. S. L. Loomis, Dr. Hiram Barber and Reverend A. B. Nichols were appointed a committee to report a plan for the organization of the Medical Department of the proposed University. The committee reported January 14, 1867 a Medical Department with the following professorships:

“Silas L. Loomis, M.D.—Professor of the Practice of Medicine  
Hiram Barber, M.D.—Professor of Materia Medica and Jurisprudence  
S. Read Ward, M.D.—Professor of Anatomy.”

From that meeting to the opening of the school about two years hence, events moved slowly. Committees were appointed and discharged; the faculty was reorganized again and again. On June 17, 1867 at the suggestion of General O. O. Howard, Dr. Robert Reyburn and Dr. Joseph Taber Johnson were elected—the former as Professor of Surgery, the latter as Professor of Obstetrics and diseases of women and children. On February 3, 1868, the Faculty as it then stood, was made the committee on organization of the Medical Department and all other committees discharged.

Drs. Loomis, Barber, Reyburn and Johnson, who composed this committee, reported at a meeting of the board on March 2, 1868, the following organization for the Medical Department:

“A Medical School with nine professorships.  
A Pharmaceutical School with four professorships.  
A General Hospital with surgical, medical and obstetrical wards and a dispensary.”

On April 13, 1868, the plan was approved. But within less than a month, on May 4, 1868, Dr. H. Barber, a member of the faculty resigned and Dr. S. Read Ward a member of the faculty failed of re-election. Finally the faculty was completed by the election of Dr. L. C. Loomis, as Professor of Physiology and Microscopy and by the election of Dr. A. T. Augusta as demonstrator of Anatomy. This was on September 21, 1868. With five teachers, therefore, at 5 p.m. Monday evening, November 9, 1868 the “Medical Department” of Howard University opened for instruction. It opened in a frame house near what is now

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Dr. Robert Reyburn resigned in 1873 and returned to Georgetown College as a professor. In 1879 he returned to Howard University and remained until his death in 1900.

W Street just across from the building of the General Baking Company on Georgia Avenue, N.W. A lumber company at present (1929) occupies the original spot of the first medical building.

### IN THE BEGINNING 1868-1873

#### THE FIRST FACULTY

##### QUALIFICATIONS

Securing a faculty was no easy task. Religious and political animosity, race prejudice and local school rivalry were the chief obstacles to be overcome.

It was evident from the beginning that only Protestants would be appointed to positions in Howard University. For it was "Resolved on April 29, 1867 that every person elected to any position in Howard University shall be a member of some Evangelical Church."<sup>13</sup>

It was also decided very early that only Republicans would be appointed, "As the design of the Institution has never, in any sense, been partial or sectarian, within the proper scope and limitations of Protestant Republicanism, so neither should the official trusts and responsibilities be confined by any narrower boundaries. In the future as in the past this principle will continue to be applied in the selections made to fill vacancies, as well as in the creation of other offices."<sup>14</sup>

Race prejudice operated in two ways. It made it difficult to secure white teachers. It made it difficult to secure Negro teachers. The Negro had not had an opportunity to acquire an education in Medicine. And what it entailed for a competent white man to be connected with the medical faculty of Howard University in the beginning is suggested by this letter:

*Washington, D.C., 7th Sept., 1868.*

MY DEAR SIR:<sup>15</sup>

As this is the evening for the regular meeting of the Trustees of the University, several subjects of vital importance will come up for consideration, in regard to the Medical Dept. and Dr. Loomis who is especially charged with the care of them, I fear will not be present, as he had not yesterday returned from the South.

Recent events have transpired in the Faculty of the Med. Dept. of Georgetown College (in which both Reyburn and Loomis are full professors) which make some special action necessary (I think) by your Board tonight. Dr. Loomis has

<sup>13</sup>Board of Trustees.

<sup>14</sup>*Report of President of Howard University, 1868.* Appendix E.

<sup>15</sup>To whom addressed has not been established, probably to O. O. Howard. Appendix I.

already been expelled from that College on account of his connection with the Howard University or as they put it a "rival college" and in conversation with one of the Professors of the Old College last week he told me that they only awaited an expression from Dr. Reyburn to do the same by him.

Reyburn is away now, and will not be back for about a week, and his Faculty are anxiously waiting his return. They all like him as a man, and as a professor, and are hoping to be able to secure him for their school. One of the officers of the Faculty told me earnestly this morning that "he regarded the Med. Dept. of Howard University as a much more dangerous rival than the Med. Dept. of Columbian College, and said he knew that our College would, in a few years, have more endowments, and more students than they would. He could see the determination on the part of the "Niggers" to be educated, and on the part of their friends throughout the North, that they would be educated—and he knew the University would be a final success," southern sympathy man as he is.

He says Reyburn is our best man—that he has the largest Hospital in the city, and can afford the college he is connected with, *more advantages for clinical instruction than any man in the city*, and that they are going to get him away from our college. He says it would be a staggering blow in the eyes of the Community for Reyburn, who has become known to all the colored men in the city who have had anything to do with Doctors, and is also known generally to have been elected to a professorship, to withdraw, and permanently join their college, and I think so too.

They are confident that they will secure him. They fear and openly say, too or leave us to infer their meaning, the growth of our college, if Reyburn who is so popular in theirs, withdraws from them, and comes to ours. They will do their best to make him renounce ours forever or turn him out the day he gets back.

Now the grand point of this letter is, that we cannot afford and ought not under any circumstances to loose Reyburn, and I most earnestly ask of you, and your Board tonight, that you take such action as will keep him in the Medical Department of Howard University.

That action will readily suggest itself to your mind and need not, therefore be mentioned by me. Some promise for the future from Oct. '69 I think would keep him. He cannot afford to make a great sacrifice for his love for the school. I think it would be a great calamity to loose him. Begging your pardon for so long a letter I am in haste

Resp. JOS. TABER JOHNSON,  
*Secy. Medical Faculty Howard University.*

It was not enough for the applicant to be a good Protestant and a good Republican but it was also necessary for him to have a "liberal education."

This was also decided early in the history of the University, for on June 17, 1867, when, "the question of qualifications for Professorships in Howard University was freely discussed," "a high standard was deemed essential to the most eminent respect of the University and the attainment of its best purposes, and . . . a liberal education was by common consent approved."<sup>16</sup>

SALARIES<sup>17</sup>

While the question of money did embarrass the Trustees in their effort to secure a Faculty, the embarrassment was not as serious as it might have been. The income from the sale of lots and from the Freedmen's Bureau was sufficient to liquidate all indebtedness by 1870. Then, too, the professors were part-time men teaching during the evening mainly. However, salaries were quite a problem, and to some extent, the salaries paid by other schools. In this connection the following letter is suggestive:

NEW HAVEN, April 19, 1871.

MY DEAR DR. RANKIN:

Your letter of the 14th I found awaiting me on my arrival home from New York this morning.

I have not yet decided concerning the Harvard College call; but the very fact that I am considering it must be accepted as evidence that I am not immovably fixed here. Your own invitation to Howard University, therefore, I am not disinclined to consider. Perhaps the most serious question in the matter is whether my family could be comfortably cared for on \$3000 a year in so expensive a city as Washington. Perhaps the income from the Medical School (independent of course, of the salary in the college) would make up the needed amount. Yale or Harvard at \$3000 must I suppose be considered preferable to Howard at \$3000. Columbia pays \$6000 and my friends who are professors there, tell me that they can hardly live in New York on that. I am inclined to believe therefore, that I could not come to Washington unless on a salary of \$5000 from both the Academic and Medical departments together. . . .

Professor Gibbs, of Harvard is now in Washington, attending the meeting of the National Academy. You might learn something from him which would be for your advantage in this line.

With the highest esteem I remain

Very truly yours,

GEORGE F. BARKER.

<sup>16</sup>Board of Trustees.

<sup>17</sup>*Studies in History*, No. 8, 1927, 7-8.

While, as early as 1869, \$3000 was the annual salary for full-time work in the University, the annual salaries paid for this part-time teaching were as follows:

	1868-69	69-70	71-72	72-73	73-74
Professor	\$1000	\$1000	\$600	\$833.33	\$290
Demonstrator <sup>18</sup>	\$1000	\$ 500	\$300		

The panic of 1873 forced the Board of Trustees to reduce all salaries. In fact a request was sent each officer of the University for his resignation. Reinstatement was possible in the case of each officer, but at half salary, except in the professional schools. They were put upon a self-supporting basis. The teachers in the School of Medicine were to receive "the same salaries provided the money could be raised." From time to time small sums were divided among these teachers.

On June 18, 1875, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees ordered that the sum of \$500 should be divided among the members of the Medical Faculty." And, four years later on June 1, 1879, the Board of Trustees, while "grateful to the Faculty for their self-denying labors in behalf of the Medical Department, regreted that they could see "no possible way of adding to (their) compensation, but that which was authorized a year since, viz. the charge of a small tuition fee."<sup>19</sup> A tuition was charged again during the early 80's and the income did increase the pay of the teachers in the Medical Department. But regular salaries were not paid until sometime later.

#### DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES

The duties and privileges of the faculty of the School of Medicine were numerous. Through the performance of its duties the faculty acquired greater privileges and unusual power. It came about in this way. In the beginning the medical faculty and the Board of Trustees of the University were, in personnel, practically one. At the first meeting of the faculty of the School of Medicine fifty per cent (50%) of those present were members of the Board. This vital connection of the faculty with the Trustees was the chief source of the faculty's power. The recommendations of the faculty were practically actions of the Board. When the faculty recommended the appointment of a teacher or his dis-

<sup>18</sup>Salary for 1873-74, probably \$290. Appendix. F. During 1872-73 there was no Demonstrator. H.U.M.D., 143.

<sup>19</sup>H.U.M.D., 32, 37. "A communication was received from members of the Medical Department, suggesting certain colors for the University in order to have uniformity, etc. It was unanimously voted by the Board that the colors of the American Flag, known as 'Old Glory,' be adopted." (Board of Trustees, January 16, 1894, p. 389.) The red of the American Flag gradually dropped out leaving the white and blue which are the University colors today.

missal, it was done; when it recommended a salary or its reduction or its increase, it was approved. And annually the medical faculty elected its secretary-treasurer and dean.

As the other departments grew, jealousy developed because of the advantages which accrued to the medical faculty through this Board connection. The law faculty protested. It was decided in 1870 that each department hereafter should be represented on the Board by one of its members elected for that purpose. This brought about some degree of equality. But the medical faculty was still at an advantage being represented by this elected member and by its dean, who had been a member of the Board from the beginning. Hence in 1873 faculty representation on the Board was reduced to one person—namely the dean. And finally in January 1875 the Trustees voted, "that no person be allowed to attend the meetings of the Trustees except members of the Board unless specially invited."<sup>20</sup>

With the severance of this vital connection of the medical faculty and the board of trustees, went many of the privileges and much of the power of the faculty. But one prerogative continued into the 20th century—the election annually of its secretary-treasurer and dean.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Appendix G.

<sup>21</sup>Appendix H. Board of Trustees May 26, 1903.

#### DEANS OF SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Silas L. Loomis	1868-1870
Robert Reyburn	1870-1871
Gideon S. Palmer	1871-1881
Thomas B. Hood	1881-1900
Robert Reyburn	1900-1908
Edward A. Balloch	1908-1928
Numa P. G. Adams	1929-

#### SECRETARY-TREASURER

James Taber Johnson	1868-1873
Charles B. Purvis	1873-1896
Furman J. Shadd	1896-1908
William C. McNeill	1908-1920

#### MICRO-PHOTOGRAPHY

"The appointment of a Microscopist has been more important to the Department than was anticipated. It has been found that besides the mounting of microscopical objects for illustration of the different branches, it is within our means to obtain microphotographs of the same, and we now have them in process of production. I am informed that the Medical Department of Howard University is the first institution in the world that has made this valuable means of illustration available to students. This is one of the most important steps in Medical education taken in this century, and we congratulate the University on its being one of the first to introduce it in the general course of instruction." Report of the Dean of Medical Department, 1870.

The first University Professor of Chemistry was appointed June 13, 1871—Dr. S. L. Loomis.

## THE FIRST SCHOOL DAY

The School of Medicine was in the beginning an evening school. The first day extended from 5 P.M. to 9:30 P.M., the "time customary in the Medical and Business Colleges of the District and . . . most acceptable to the students of this city." During 1870 and thereafter, clinical lectures began "at 3:30 daily except Sunday." This time was chosen "because it acomodated the clerks in the Government Departments who constituted a large part of the Medical students and whose official day at that period ended at 3 P.M." In 1871 "Practical Anatomy and Pharmacy," began at 9 P.M. The day, then, extended from 3:30 P.M. to 10 P.M. This custom continued until 1903. At that time, the lectures, recitations and practical work of the freshman and sophomore classes were scheduled "mainly" for the day instead of the evening as before. By 1908, all classes were scheduled for the day. From 1908 to 1910 a four-year course was conducted during the day and a five-year course, during the evening. Since 1910 the evening classes have been discontinued and all classes in the School of Medicine, have been conducted during the day.<sup>22</sup>

## THE FIRST SCHOOL YEAR

The first year of the School of Medicine was less than four months in length, about fifteen weeks from November 8 to March 1. From 1869 to 1890, the year was five months or twenty weeks. One month was added during 1890, another in 1895—making a term of seven months or twenty-eight weeks. Since 1906 the year has extended from October to June—eight months or thirty-two weeks. The present year is exactly twice as long as the first and is divided into two semesters. From the beginning a student, who failed to graduate at the March commencement, could review in the spring and graduate in June. In 1873 a "Summer Session" was held which was probably the nucleus of the second semester.<sup>23</sup> From 1930-31 the year will be divided into quarters.

THE FIRST CURRICULUM<sup>24</sup>

## MEDICINE

The "Medical Department" in the beginning embraced a Medical School, a Pharmaceutical School and a hospital.

Three years were required for a degree in Medicine. In 1893 a fourth year was added. Today, 1929 Medicine is a four year course.

<sup>22</sup>*Catalogue*, 1904-05, 31; 1905-06, 31; 1906-07, 71. H.U.M.D., 25. Medicine became a day course, 1904-05; Dentistry, 1906-07, and Pharmacy, 1907-08.

<sup>23</sup>Sixth Annual Report of the President, 1873, 9. H.U.M.D., 28. Appendix C.

<sup>24</sup>H.U.M.D., 43; *Catalogue of Medical Department*, 1906-07, 20-22. *Catalogue*, 1921-22, 272.

## PHARMACY

While the first graduate of the "Medical Department" was from the course in Pharmacy which closed March 3, 1870, this course was not differentiated from Medicine proper until the beginning of that year, January 17, 1870. At that time, Dr. Charles B. Purvis was elected, Professor of *Materia Medica*; Dr. G. S. Palmer, Professor of Pharmacy; and Dr. S. L. Loomis, Professor of Chemistry. In June 1871, the trustees added to this faculty Mr. Oscar Oldberg, a druggist of Washington, D.C. as lecturer on Practical Pharmacy and Mr. William H. Seaman, as lecturer on Botany. Both served without pay. During 1904-5 Pharmacy which began in 1868 as a two-year course was made three. Today, 1929 it is a four-year course, having been extended to four years in 1922-23. A student, however, may still receive a degree of Pharmaceutical Chemist by pursuing a three-year course. The enrollment in the beginning was very small. One student graduated in 1870; one in 1872 and not another until 1880.

## DENTISTRY

Dentistry was introduced at Howard University during the early 80's. About October 11, 1881, Dr. James Hodgkins of the medical faculty was instructed to lecture to the medical class on Practical Dentistry. The next year, Dr. N. W. Whitcomb, of Buffalo, New York, was appointed professor of Operative Dentistry—to lecture to those "desiring it" for which "a small fee" was charged. Six students elected the subject. "Extraction of teeth" was about all the course embraced.

It was not until 1884 that the first regular lectures in dentistry were delivered. Dr. Starr Parsons and Dr. N. W. Whitcomb were then in charge. By 1885-86, a dental student, before graduation, "should treat some patient" and "bring him before the Professor of Operative Dentistry"; prepare an "artificial case" and "bring the patient before the Professor of Dental Mechanics"; "prepare at least one approved specimen case made at the college building to be deposited in the University collection"; "present a written thesis on some dental subject" also "provide himself with such instruments as were necessary in the Infirmary and laboratory".

The enrollment for the first years was very small.

Year	Students	Graduates
1882-1883	6	0
1883-1884	5	1
1884-1885	2	1



From 1884-1893 Dentistry was a two-year subject being extended to three in 1893 and to four in 1916.<sup>25</sup>

TEXT-BOOKS AND WORKS OF REFERENCE, 1872-1873

- Surgery* -----Druitt's Surgery; Gross' Principles and Practice of Surgery; Paget's Surgical Pathology; Macleod's Surgical Diagnosis; Holmes' System of Surgery.
- Obstetrics* -----Cazeaux's or Bedford's Obstetrics; Thomas and Hewitt on Diseases Peculiar to Women; Atthill on Diseases of Women, and West or Tanner on Diseases of Children.
- Anatomy*-----Leidy's Elementary Treatise on Human Anatomy; Wilson's Anatomy, with Kolliker's Microscopical Anatomy; Sharpey and Quain's Anatomy; Gray's Anatomy; Agnew's Dissector and Hodge's Dissector.
- Institutes of Medicine* -----Marshall's Physiology; Dalton's Physiology; Draper's Physiology; Beal on the Microscope.
- Materia Medica* -----Stille's or Biddle's Materia Medica; Carson's Synopsis; Wood and Bache's Dispensatory; Headland upon the Action of Medicine.
- Practice of Medicine* Flint's, Wood's, or Bennett's Practice of Medicine; Walsh on the Diseases of the Heart and Lung's; Tanner's Practice of Medicine; Reynold's System of Medicine.
- Chemistry* -----Towne's Chemistry—last ed.; Attfield's General Medical and Pharmaceutical Chemistry; Shmann's Physiological Chemistry; Taylor's Toxicology.
- Botany* -----Wood's Botany.

<sup>25</sup>At the last meeting of the National Association of Dental Faculties, it was voted that beginning with the session of 1917-1918, the schools belonging to this Association should increase their course from three to four years. This requirement applies to this School, and went into effect October 1, 1916. *Catalogue*, 1916-1917, 167, 181. *Catalogue of Medical Department*, 1903-4, 3. H.U.M.D., 51.

ORDER OF LECTURES, MEDICAL DEPARTMENT, SESSION 1872-'73<sup>26</sup>  
 The Fifth Annual Course of Lectures commenced Monday October 7, 1872, and will terminate the last week in February, '73

CLINICAL INSTRUCTION

HOURS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 1/2 P.M.	Medicine: Prof. Strong	Nervous Diseases: Prof. Palmer	Surgery: Prof. Reyburn	Disease of Eye Dr. Barrows	Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Infants: Prof. Johnson	Diseases of Chest: Prof. Purvis

DIDACTIC INSTRUCTION

5 1/2 P.M.	Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence: Prof. Purvis	Physiology and Hygiene: Prof. Palmer	Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence: Prof. Purvis	Physiology and Hygiene: Prof. Palmer	Materia Medica and Medical Jurisprudence: Prof. Purvis	Physiology and Hygiene: Prof. Palmer
6 1/2 P.M.	Descriptive and Surgical Anatomy: Prof. Augusta	Surgery: Prof. Reyburn	Descriptive and Surgical Anatomy: Prof. Augusta	Surgery: Prof. Reyburn	Descriptive and Surgical Anatomy: Prof. Augusta	Surgery: Prof. Reyburn
7 1/2 P.M.	Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children: Prof. Johnson	Chemistry: Prof. Tilden	Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children: Prof. Johnson	Chemistry: Prof. Tilden	Obstetrics and Diseases of Women and Children: Prof. Johnson	Chemistry: Prof. Tilden
8 1/2 P.M.	Practice of Medicine: Prof. Strong	Practice of Medicine: Prof. Strong	Practical use of Microscope: Dr. Cheyney	Practice of Medicine: Prof. Strong	Botany: W. H. Seaman	Practice of Medicine: Prof. Strong
9 1/2 P.M.	Practical Anatomy: Dr. Cheyney	Practical Anatomy: Dr. Cheyney	Practical Anatomy: Dr. Cheyney	Practical Anatomy: Dr. Cheyney	Practical Anatomy: Dr. Cheyney	Practical Pharmacy: Prof. Palmer

<sup>26</sup>Catalogue, 1871-72, 57-58.

THE FIRST HOSPITAL<sup>27</sup>

## WASHINGTON GENERAL HOSPITAL AND ASYLUM

From the beginning it was evident that a hospital was absolutely necessary for a first-class medical curriculum. For that reason conferences were held with a group of colored men of Washington, D.C., who were planning to open a hospital, looking forward to associating their hospital with the Medical Department of Howard University. This hospital did not materialize. Meanwhile plans were made for incorporating an independent institution. This was done March 25, 1870. This Washington General Hospital and Asylum never opened because Freedmen's Hospital sometimes called Washington General Hospital and Asylum was made available. It was for that reason among others, that General O. O. Howard, nominated Dr. Robert Reyburn, for a position on the faculty. Dr. Reyburn, was officially connected with the federal hospital of the District of Columbia. In 1865, after a checkered career, this hospital was located at the northeast corner of what is now Florida Avenue and Georgia Avenue reaching back in general to what is now W Street and 2nd Street, N.W. During 1862-65 it had been located between R and S Street, 12th and 13th Streets; for a few months during 1865 it was between Vermont Avenue and 14th Street, and L and M Streets, N.W. In August of 1865 it was moved to the Campbell Hospital which occupied then, in general what is now Le Droit Park.

## FREEDMEN'S GENERAL HOSPITAL AND ASYLUM

The Freedmen's Bureau was in charge of Freedmen's Hospital in 1865. The Bureau was gradually closing up its work. What to do with the 300 or more "sick and lunatic" who would be a permanent charge upon the Federal Government was a serious problem. It was necessary to have a permanent home for them. It was decided to locate the Hospital on land belonging to Howard University. This was done late in 1869. This however, did not lay all anxiety. The medical faculty was fearful that when the Bureau did finally cease activity, the school would lose the clinical opportunity offered. It was then that the Washington General Hospital and Asylum was incorporated. But the Freedmen's Hospital gradually became a general hospital open to all—"a poor man's retreat." By 1871 the name "Freedmen's" was substituted for "Washington", it being named then Freedmen's General Hospital and Asylum.

When the Bureau closed July 1, 1874 the hospital was placed under the supervision of the Interior Department of the Federal Government.

<sup>27</sup>H.U.M.D., 8-15.

In addition to the clinical advantages offered the medical students of Howard University, the hospital was concerned with the education of its employees of its inmates and of the nurses of the city. For the instruction of its employees, an Evening School was opened in the hospital chapel, December 20, 1869. For the instruction of those who were living in the hospital, an industrial school was maintained. On September 18, 1865 Miss Susan Walker, was placed in "charge of the Industrial School" "to instruct the people not only in sewing and making garments but in the common duties and virtues of daily life." The people referred to, who were to be instructed, were "respectable colored persons" who had rented homes in this Asylum. During 1868 coffin-making was added to the course of study, because the "coffins which were furnished for the use of the Hospital and Asylum were too small for the average adult".

The Evening School, and the Industrial School which were maintained by the hospital gradually ceased, but another more permanent school was begun. This was the Nurses Training School of 1893. This school continued the work of the Washington Training School for Nurses begun in 1877. For many years this training school received its practical instruction at the Emergency, Columbia and Freedmen's Hospitals. During 1893 the work was transferred to Freedmen's entirely. From that date to 1896 the medical faculty, as a faculty conducted it; during 1896, it was transferred to the Hospital Staff. On March 9, 1908, the medical faculty and the Hospital Staff were joined in control of this school.

The medical course was greatly enriched by the clinical opportunities afforded by this hospital. During the second term, arrangements were made for the admission of the medical students "under proper restrictions for the study of diseases at the bedside". "Surgical and obstetrical cases (were) seen by the classes under the supervision of the Professors and operations (were) performed in their presence in the amphitheatre".<sup>28</sup>

#### THE FIRST STUDENT BODY

School opened for class-room instruction Monday evening November 9, 1868 at 5 P.M. On the evening of Thursday, November 5, in the first Congregational Church of the city, was delivered this first Freshman lecture.

<sup>28</sup>H.U.M.D., 13, 14, 21, 56, 71-73. *Third Annual Report of the Howard University*, 1870, 10.

#### SURGEONS IN CHIEF OF FREEDMEN'S HOSPITAL

Robert Reyburn .....	1868-1875
Gideon S. Palmer .....	1875-1881
Charles B. Purvis .....	1881-1894
Daniel H. Williams .....	1894-1898
Arthur M. Curtis .....	1898-1901
William A. Warfield .....	1901-

FRESHMAN LECTURE<sup>29</sup>

"Members of the medical class, you enter upon a high and holy vocation, one fraught with toil and anxiety and peril, yet to the faithful and worthy, one of constant blessings. You assume to be a co-worker with Him who gives us life. You assume to preserve what He bestows. The physician walks as in a dim twilight along the shore of an unfathomable sea, scarcely able to penetrate a foot-step before him, yet never in uncertainty or hesitation, knowing that the same omnipotent hand holds the ever restless waves as fixed as the eternal hills, and feeling that man may safely walk where God has gone before him.

"Along, this, to us uncertain boundary, he makes his way questful of the healing balm and the waters of life that he may hasten with the precious gift of heaven, not with shout and banner, but rather as the angels come, silent and unheralded, to the couch of pain and suffering and touch the wasted frame and say rise up and walk. None whose pursuit lies so continuously near the unfathomable beyond. None who walks a path so fanned by human sighs, so moistened by the ever-falling dewdrops of sorrow. None on whose words hang so much of hope and trust or fear and dread. None to whom throbbing hearts, in the wild hour of helplessness and despair, turn with such supplication. When danger comes we turn to the wise and skillful physician as to our last, truest, and trustiest friend. As the darkness dims our horizon he stands by our side to fight our battle for us, and when we are laid helpless upon our bed, over our prostrate body he still struggles to keep the unseen enemy at bay. And if, in the conflict, reason is overthrown and we are left to wander in darkness and the shadow of death, he follows us still, if perchance he may bring us back again to the realm of light. It is one of our dearest, sweetest consolations that when these sorrowful hours shall come to each of us, as come they must, we may feel that the one to whom we have trusted our all of life and hope and love will never leave nor forsake us till he brings us back to health, or till the spirit is called home by its Giver.

"What a field of honorable toil is here! How limitless its opportunities for good! How worthy the life that uses them well! Such toil, such opportunities, and such honor open to the patient, conscientious, and faithful student of medicine. May the after years of your lives my young friends, justify the hopes of the present hour, and along your sometimes weary student's life may you never forget that success comes only of patient toil, and that patient toil never fails of success".

<sup>29</sup>Howard University, 1868-92. *Catalogues and Reports*.

FIRST CLASS<sup>30</sup>

Eight students, all men,—seven colored, one white, seven in medicine, one in pharmacy, was the first enrollment:

*Bennit, William	-----	New York City
Bowen, James L.	-----	District of Columbia
Bronaugh, Franc W.	-----	New Jersey
Brooks, George W.	-----	District of Columbia
Crusor, Washington F.	-----	District of Columbia
Jordan, Jesse P.	-----	Maryland
Stewart, William H.	-----	District of Columbia
†Wormley, James T.	-----	District of Columbia

## ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

No doubt all of the first class were admitted without condition. The entrance requirements were very low. "Persons of all religions, all nationalities, all colors and both sexes, are equally admitted to the privileges of this school, provided they possess good moral characters and have the requisite intellectual abilities and acquirements."

This was probably true in November, 1868, for the resolution requiring membership in some "Evangelical Church", for all persons connected with the University was rescinded December 7, 1868.

The first students simply furnished evidence of "good moral character" and paid the fees. Even the fees were remitted in part "if indigent", or if a "regularly ordained" clergyman, or if a graduate of a "regularly chartered medical college".

Beginning with 1870 to matriculate one must have "a thorough English education", must "have studied the elementary treatises on mathematics", and must "have a sufficient knowledge of the Latin language to understand prescriptions and the medical terms in common use".

By inference eighteen years was the minimum age for registration. For in 1872-73 a graduate must have attained his twenty-first year.

These were the entrance requirements until 1903, when a high school education or its equivalent was required. Since 1914-15, two years

<sup>30</sup>Howard University, 1868-92, *Catalogues and Reports*.

Howard University opened with five white girls, daughters of two Trustees—D. B. Nichols and E. W. Robinson; the Medical Department poened with one white man and seven Negroes. By 1885-6, 53% of the enrollment of the Medical Department was white; during 1887-8, 60% was white. Since then, the percentage of white students has fallen off. In 1899-1900 they were 17% of the enrollment. Today, 1929-30, 365 are black and three are white. At the commencement of 1887, a Negro was valedictorian of the medical class, a white man was valedictorian of the dental class, and a white woman of the pharmaceutical class.

\*White.

†Pharmacy, Appendix D.

of college work have been required to enter medicine and since 1920-21 one year to enter dentistry.<sup>31</sup> From 1930 two years of college work will be required to enter dentistry.

ENROLLMENT<sup>32</sup>

The enrollment for the first six years was small. In 1868-69, eight matriculated; in 1869-70, twenty-four; in 1870-71, twenty-four; in 1871-72, forty-eight; in 1872-73, forty; in 1873-74, twenty-one. Five women registered for the second session; two for the third; six for the fourth; four for the fifth; two for the sixth.

The geographical distribution of the graduates and undergraduates of 1871-72, is very interesting.<sup>33</sup>

Austria -----	1	Maine -----	2
District of Columbia -----	5	New York State -----	2
England -----	1	New Jersey -----	2
Georgia -----	1	New Hampshire -----	1
Indiana -----	1	Ohio -----	1
Illinois -----	1	Pennsylvania -----	6
Kentucky -----	3	Prussia -----	2
Liberia -----	1	Scotland -----	1
Massachusetts -----	2	Virginia -----	2
Maryland -----	3	West Indies -----	6

Thirteen states, the District of Columbia and six foreign countries were represented that year.

## FEES

Because of the small enrollment in 1872-73 the fees were reduced in 1873. Tuition and matriculation in 1872-73 were \$235.00. They were reduced to \$115.00. The students of the first term had paid \$105.00, those of the second term, \$195, those of the third term \$130.00. A reduction in

<sup>31</sup>*Catalogue of Medical Department, 1920-21.*

The Dental College became a member of the Association of American Dental Faculties in 1904. The College of Pharmacy became a member of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy in 1927. The College of Medicine joined the Association of American Medical Colleges in 1891. Today 1929-30, it is rated A-1.

<sup>32</sup>This enrollment is given in Howard University Medical Department, page 143. The enrollment for the corresponding years given in the annual reports of the Presidents of the University does not agree with this. For example, the report for 1870 gives twenty-three for 1869-70; the report for 1871 gives thirty-one for 1870-71; the report for 1872 gives "over forty," for 1871-72; the report for 1873 gives thirty for 1872-73. The report for 1872 gives sixteen for 1869-70. This report and the report for 1870 give five for the first session 1868-69. From reliable sources, it is established that eight attended the first session. Their names are in the records. But just how many attended the second and subsequent sessions prior to 1874 is doubtful. "Over 40," "number has nearly doubled that of the preceding year" and "only about twenty-four"—such inexactness in the reports of the deans and of the presidents, makes accuracy impossible.

<sup>33</sup>*Catalogue, 1871-72, 54-55.*

tuition fees in 1873 did not materially increase the enrollment. So, during 1874, all tuition fees were remitted, not to be charged again until during the 80's.

Evidently very few students actually paid the fees. This was because of the many exemptions. The total income from fees for the year 1868-69 was \$335.00; the total income for the next year was \$360.00.

It was also evident that the students did not pay but a small percent of what it cost to educate them. During 1868-69 the University expended for "salaries and material for lectures" \$6510.14. The same year, the students paid in fees \$335.00. The next year, the University expended for instruction \$8386.75. That year, the income from fees was \$360.00. This annual deficit explains in part the \$100,000 debt by 1874.<sup>34</sup>

#### CO-EUDCATION

But the constantly increasing deficit was not the only problem. Co-education presented some difficulties.

On February 17, 1873 the faculty received a communication from two women students, "complaining of ill treatment and insults from some men students, and that the Demonstrator and janitor did not give them proper facilities for Practical Anatomy". After investigation the faculty passed the following resolution: "Resolved, That the Dean be directed to communicate to the students of the College the vote of the Faculty concerning such persons as were guilty in the recent discourtesies shown to the lady students, and that he express in the strongest terms the disapprobation of the Faculty thereat, and also that he announce their inflexible determination to carry out to the letter the spirit and intent of the organic law of the University, which provides for the education of both sexes, and that their (the ladies') interests shall be equally cared for under any and all circumstances".

The Medical Alumni also took action in the matter, March 22, 1873:

"Whereas an unjust discrimination is being made against certain members of our profession on account of sex:—Therefore be it resolved: That we discountenance and denounce said discrimination as being unmanly and unworthy of the profession: That we accord to all persons the same rights and immunities that we demand for ourselves: That said discrimination rests upon the basis of selfish interest or ignorant prejudice: That we highly appreciate and honor intellect and capacity without regard to nationality or sex: And that a copy of these resolutions be forwarded by the Secretary to the Medical Faculty of Howard University with a request that they be read before the Medical class".<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup>*Studies in History*, No. 8, 1927, 5.

<sup>35</sup>H.U.M.D., 23.



## THE FIRST ALUMNI

GRADUATES<sup>36</sup>

James T. Wormley was the first graduate of the "Medical Department". He received the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy, "Ph.D.," March 3, 1870.

The first graduates in medicine proper were:

1. Danforth B. Nichols
2. Joseph A. Sladen
3. James L. N. Bowen
4. William N. Bennit
5. George W. Brooks

These five men, three white and two colored, finished in 1871. In 1872, eleven (11) graduated; in 1873, five (5); in 1874, six (6); in 1875, four (4). In the class of 1872 was the first woman graduate—Mary Dora Spackman.

## COMMENCEMENT

The first commencement was held in the new Medical building on the campus. It was very simple. We are told "addresses were made by the President of the University and Dr. Palmer and prayer by Reverend Doctors Rankin and Anderson".

Commencements for the next thirty years were more elaborate. They were held, with one exception, in the First Congregational Church, corner of 10th and G Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. The exception was during 1879-82 when Lincoln Hall, 9th and D Streets., N.W., was used.

The date of Commencement has varied. From 1870 to 1891 the closing exercises were held during the last of February or the first of March. Then for four years, 1892-95, April was the Commencement month. From 1896 to date (1929) the last of May or the first of June has been the closing season.

Referring to the Commencement of March 1, 1871, Dr. D. B. Nichols, one of the three white members of the class says:<sup>37</sup>

"As I stood on that historic day in a class of five, one at least of the class slaveborn, going forth with our diplomas on the divine mission to heal the sick, surely it was a small beginning. But it was a small beginning too when a group of men gathered at the foot of the Capitol grounds in Washington, a group of workmen armed with picks to pick the cobble stones for the coming of comfort and speed for the beginning of the

<sup>36</sup>1, 2, and 4, were white. H.U.M.D., 31, 21, 36-38, 143. Appendix D.

<sup>37</sup>H.U.M.D., 5.

fulfillment of prophesy, 'Behold I make all things even'. Behold the beautiful city now. One who viewed that beginning writes this sketch, was one of the founders of the University, one of the five who looked into the future and the glorious triumphs of right over might, and who read the future in the words of Faber:

"But right is right since God is God,  
 "And right the day must win;  
 "To doubt would be disloyalty,  
 "To falter would be sin.

"From the day I received my diploma from Gen. O. O. Howard, then the President of the University, until now, when I am over 83 years old, I have not received as much as a dime for medical services; one dozen sweet oranges in Florida is the sum total of what the world would call fees. I held a commission from higher authority than human to go forth and teach righteousness; to the second commission the first was joined, and I have been ministering to the body by teaching as well as the soul."

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

The requirements for graduation were in the beginning very general and stated as follows for 1868-1869:<sup>38</sup>

1. "He must (referring to the applicant) furnish evidence of a good moral character.
2. "He must have studied medicine not less than three years, during which time he shall have attended two full courses of lectures at some regular Medical College, one of which shall have been in this Institution.
3. "He shall have dissected at least one winter, and shall have attended the clinical lectures.
4. "He must present to the Secretary of the Faculty an acceptable thesis, in his own handwriting, upon some medical subject.
5. "He must pass a satisfactory examination."

The next year, 1869-70, this statement of requirements for graduation appeared in the announcement:

"Applicants for the degree of M.D. must have studied medicine at least three years, and have attended two full courses of medical lectures, one of which shall have been in this institution. They are required to possess a thorough English education, to have studied the elementary treatises on mathematics, and to have a sufficient knowledge of the Latin language to understand prescriptions and the medical terms in common use.

"For the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy the candidate must be at least twenty-one years of age, present proper testimonials

<sup>38</sup>Report of President of Howard University, 1867-8, 20.

of good moral character, produce satisfactory evidence that he has studied two years with a druggist duly authorized to practice his profession; he must also have attended two full courses of lectures, the last of which shall have been in the Howard University, and have passed a satisfactory examination, and have presented an acceptable pharmaceutical thesis in his own handwriting.

“AD EUNDEM DEGREES”

“The ad eundem degree of Doctor of Medicine may be conferred upon any regular graduate in good standing who has been engaged in the legitimate practice of medicine for not less than five years, on payment of the graduation fee.”

Since 1891 when the College of Medicine became a member of the Association of American Medical Colleges, its requirements for graduation have been gradually raised.<sup>39</sup>

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION<sup>40</sup>

Immediately upon graduation March 10, 1871, the class of that year organized an Alumni Association. Only graduates of medicine proper were at first admitted to active membership. Later pharmaceutical graduates were admitted also. In 1879 upon the organization of a Union Alumni Association admitting members of all the departments of the University, the Medical Alumni Association was discontinued and its members made a part of the University Association.

Later, 1883, feeling the necessity of more unity among medical graduates the Medical Alumni Association was reorganized. By 1886 all graduates of all the departments of medicine, were admitted on equal terms.

Dr. S. R. Watts, an undergraduate at the time of the Alumni Association was organized, has left this statement concerning it:

“The first Medical Alumni Association was organized at the College building March 10, 1871, by five gentlemen who composed the class which had just graduated March 1, viz: Drs. Danforth B. Nichols, Joseph A. Sladen, James L. N. Bowen, William W. Bennit and George W. Brooks.

“The object for which it was formed, as outlined in the original constitution, was as follows:

““The object of this Association shall be the perpetuation of friendship in our Alma Mater, to keep alive the interest we have in her welfare, and to collect and record all things of interest to her history.”

“Annual meetings were to be held on the day preceding commencement, Sundays excepted. Active membership was limi-

<sup>39</sup>Howard University, 1868-92, *Catalogues and Reports*.

<sup>40</sup>H.U.M.D., 23, 40.

ted to the graduates of the Medical Department; professors and other instructors in said department were made ex officio members. Professors in any department of Howard University, as well as graduates of any regular medical school, were admitted as honorary members by vote of the Association. It was required that the Secretary should be a resident of the District of Columbia. Dues, one dollar a year; assessments might be made. By resolution offered by Dr. Slade, the following was adopted qualifying continued membership:

“Resolved: That any members of this Association who have or may hereafter adopt the practice of any other than the regular school of medicine, his name shall be stricken from the roll.”<sup>41</sup>

#### PRACTICE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

By “regular school of medicine” was meant the Allopathic School of Medicine. The fact that the graduates of Howard University were of this school, began to give the faculty of the Medical Department some concern in the Spring of 1870. For on April 22, 1870, the control of the practice of medicine in the District of Columbia was vested in the Homopathic Medical Society of Washington:

“Be it enacted that the members of said society (Homeopathic Medical Society) or such of their officers or members as they shall appoint, shall have full power and authority to examine all candidates for membership concerning the practice of specific medicine and surgery, provided such candidates shall sustain a good moral character and shall present letters testimonial of their qualifications from some legally authorized medical institution and if upon such examination the same candidates without exception on account of color, shall be found qualified for the practice of medicine and surgery, they shall receive the certificate of membership or the licence to practice medicine or surgery within the District of Columbia.

“Be it further enacted that any acts or parts of acts conflicting with the provisions of this act be, and are hereby, repealed. Approved April 22, 1870”.

In February 1871, the medical faculty sent a committee to explain to the Committee of Congress in charge of District affairs the effect of this new legislation. It seems that nothing official was done. However, on June 15, 1878 and on May 7, 1906, provision was made for an impartial examination for the practice of Pharmacy in the District of Columbia. On June 11, 1878 and June 6, 1892, an examination for Den-

<sup>41</sup>H.U.M.D., 23.

tists was provided. While on June 3, 1896, Medical Boards were created to supervise the examination for the practice of Medicine.<sup>42</sup>

#### THE FIRST RECOGNITION

##### MEDICAL ORGANIZATIONS

A year and a half before the "Medical Department" opened, Dr. S. L. Loomis brought its interests before the American Medical Association and the Convention of Medical Colleges both of which met in Cincinnati in May 1867. "At these meetings the Medical Department of Howard University was first brought before the world and acknowledged a place among the Medical Institutions of the Country."<sup>43</sup> And, for the next three years, the delegates from the "Medical Department" of Howard University were cordially received by the national medical associations. But when, in May 1870, a Negro appeared in the delegation, the American Medical Association refused to seat it.

"It is painful to record the disgraceful proceedings of the Session. It is scarcely necessary to state, that your delegates were refused their seats in the Association, and that, that great body embracing the highest professional talent in the country, degraded itself so far as to refuse admission to the delegates of Howard University, on a pretense of violation of the Code of Ethics, whilst—as was notorious and patent to all who were present, the real reason was that one of the delegates was not of the Caucasian race."<sup>44</sup>

It happened that that year the American Medical Association, the Pharmaceutical Convention, the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Convention of Medical Teachers all met in Washington, D.C. during the same month, May. The medical faculty sent delegates to all of them. "The treatment accorded them by the Pharmaceutical Society, says Dr. Reyburn, one of the delegates, "presented a very strik-

<sup>42</sup>Act of Congress, June 15, 1879; Act of May 7, 1906; Act of June 11, 1878; Act of June 6, 1892; Act of June 3, 1896.

The University conferred its first honorary degree upon Alexander T. Augusta, 1869—"M.D."

"The colored medical fraternity of the District embraces four members, three alopah and one eclectic physician, all graduates of Northern Medical Colleges, and of whom one or two are men of superior mental attainments. Under their direction several students are preparning for the profession and the colored people will soon be relieved from dependence on the white physicians for medical advice and care. The Medical Association of the District, still refuses to admit the black practitioners, but the decreased vote at the last meeting of that association, shows that their prejudice is rapidly disappearing. The colored physicians can gain nothing by an admittance to the association, but they would feel gratified at this recognition of their services. The Medical Association of Pennsylvania, has offered to receive them whenever they may see fit to make application." (Washington Morning News, November 4, 1869)

<sup>43</sup>Appendix D.

<sup>44</sup>Report of Dean of Medical Department, 1870.

ing and agreeable contrast to that received by the delegates to the American Medical Association, indeed special attention and consideration was shown them and it seemed to be the intention of those present to endeavor in some measure to atone for the indignities received by your delegates in the American Medical Association". The Howard delegation also had a harmonious and attractive meeting with the Medical Teachers and, for seven years thereafter the Howard delegates were received by the national medical associations without serious objection.

But, in 1877 upon the objection raised by the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia, the Association of American Medical Colleges refused to seat the Howard representatives. It objected on the ground that the "Howard Medical College did not charge a tuition and taught men and women in the same classes". Just how this objection was met eventually does not appear in the records. However, thereafter the Howard delegates were admitted notwithstanding the fact that men and women continued to be taught in the same classes and tuition was not charged again until during the 80's.

These annual meetings did not afford enough association for the Negro physicians of Washington, D. C., two of whom were members of the Medical Faculty. Dr. Charles B. Purvis and Dr. Alexander T. Augusta, the two Negro members of the medical faculty, applied for admission to the District Medical Association of Washington. They were refused. Not to be deprived of the benefits of such an organization, the medical faculty of Howard University took the lead in the organization of the medical men, white and black in the District of Columbia "who were favorably disposed."

The following call was published in the city papers:—<sup>45</sup>

"All regular physicians in the District of Columbia in favor of extending equal rights and privileges to regular practitioners of medicine and surgery, are requested to meet at the Congregational Church, corner tenth and G Sts., N.W. Saturday, January 15 at 7:30 P.M. to take action referable to the formation of a Medical Society and such other business as may come before them".

As a result the "National Medical Society, District of Columbia" was organized that evening in 1870. Two years later its name was changed to the Academy of Medicine. In 1884 the Medico-Chirurgical Society was formed and in 1895 after a period of inactivity was re-organized.

#### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT U. S. A.

While the medical organizations of the District of Columbia were refusing recognition to the faculty of the "Medical Department" of

<sup>45</sup>H.U.M.D., 21. During 1869-70 and for some time thereafter, women were segregated in certain classes. H.U.M.D., 22.

Howard University, the Federal Government of the United States and the Government of the British Empire were duly recognizing the same. From the organization of the Board of Health of Washington, D.C., in 1870 to its close 1877 members of the medical faculty of Howard University were appointed to it by the President of the United States. And during this period one Negro physician from Howard University was appointed, Dr. Charles B. Purvis. Meanwhile the British Empire was also endorsing the University:

BRITISH EMPIRE

British Legation  
Washington, D.C.

November 13, 1874

I hereby certify that the Howard University in the District is duly incorporated by an act of the Congress of the United States signed by the President in March 1867, and that the Institution is in successful operation and in good standing. I also learn from Doctor G. S. Palmer, Dean of the above mentioned University, that Dr. E. F. Clark, who is about to establish himself as a physician in Georgetown, British Guiana, recently graduated at that institution with distinction.

Edward Thornton  
B. W's Minister<sup>46</sup>

Seal

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<sup>46</sup>H.U.M.D., 32, 35-36, 42.