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Pulaski County medical organizations minutes, 1872-1924

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Pulaski County medical organizations minutes MS.000155

Finding aid prepared by the Arkansas State Archives

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

March 10, 2020

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Arkansas State Archives
One Capitol Mall
Little Rock, Arkansas, 72201
501-682-6900
state.archives@arkansas.gov

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Summary Information

Repository	Arkansas State Archives
Title	Pulaski County medical organizations minutes
Date [inclusive]	1872-1924
Extent	0.5 Cubic feet 1 box
Language	English
Language of Materials	Materials entirely in English.

Preferred Citation

Pulaski County medical organizations minutes, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Biographical/Historical Note

As the Civil War drew to a close, physicians in Arkansas decided it was time to organize professionally. In January 1866, the Little Rock and Pulaski County Medical Society was formed. It had 13 inaugural members, and for the first six years of its operation was led by six different presidents. One of its early presidents was Philo O. Hooper, who went on to establish Little Rock's College of Physicians and Surgeons in July 1873, after a dispute arose among members of the county society.

On June 7, 1873, 13 disgruntled members of the Little Rock and Pulaski County Medical Society officially withdrew from the organization in protest over its admittance of Almon Brooks, whom they felt fell short of the society's professional standards and ethics. They formed the College of Physicians and Surgeons, which continued for six years, resulting in two almost identical, yet competing medical associations in the Pulaski County region.

In 1879, leaders of the two organizations were approached by the president of St. John's College, Leo Baier, who wanted his institution to include a medical department. Hooper, who still headed the College of Physicians and Surgeons, consented to the proposition, as did the competing organization's leaders, James A. Dibrell, Jr., and James H. Southall. The first joint meeting to discuss the venture was held on April 4, 1879.

Unfortunately, St. John's College was already faltering, and more challenges arose in selecting a faculty, so an initial department never materialized. But the union between the previously competitive associations remained firm as they found a new home for their school: the Arkansas Industrial University, now known as the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Washington County. Incorporated in September 1879, this new medical department was an independent part of the university. Hooper selected the faculty, staff, and curriculum, but the University did not financially support the department. Instead, eight physicians invested \$5,000 each, which was enough to buy the Sperindio Hotel at 113 West Second Street in Little Rock. These eight doctors became the University of Arkansas Medical Department's chairmen, and that autumn, they accepted their inaugural 22 students.

In 1911, fueled by a need to improve medical education standards in Arkansas, the university's medical department merged with a competing Little Rock medical school, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, which had been founded in 1906. (This college should not be confused with the original College of Physicians and Surgeons, which was simply an association of physicians.) With the merger came a fundamental change in the department's organization. The university began having a more direct role in educating budding physicians, while the department was able to begin receiving state appropriations.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of ledgers recording meetings called to order between 1872 and 1924 by the Little Rock and Pulaski County Medical Society, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the faculty of the University of Arkansas Medical Department.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Arkansas State Archives 6/15/2011

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research use.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Mary J. Gibson, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1920.

Collection Inventory

1873 July 5-1884 March 29: College of Physicians and Surgeons, Little Rock, Arkansas

1872 July 3-1885 November 3: Pulaski County Medical Society

1909 December 13-1924 December 1: Pulaski County Medical Society

1900 July 17-1911 May 16: University of Arkansas Medical Department faculty