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Centennial Trilogy of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine


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1980

## Golden Anniversary

Edward A. Holyoke  
*University of Nebraska Medical Center*

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# GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

**Edward A. Holyoke, M.D., Ph.D.**

**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL CENTER**

**Omaha, Nebraska**

**1980**

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Printed August 1980



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## INTRODUCTION

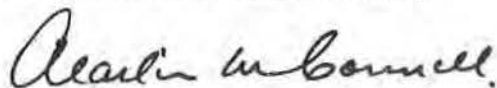
Medical schools, perhaps more than other institutions, seem to attract a succession of individuals of strong personality to their faculties. Some of these "characters" are remembered because of their warmth, generosity, and wisdom. Others are remembered for less endearing traits. Both types are commemorated in this book of the memoirs of Dr. Ed Holyoke. The author faithfully and very effectively served the Anatomy Department and the College through 50 years of dramatic changes and draws mainly from his own rich store of personal reminiscences to fashion this delightful book. At times only a thin disguise protects him from identification as the perpetrator of some of the more mischievous pranks.

Here is an account of student high spirits, practical jokes, and the antics of members of faculty, sometimes quaint, often amusing, occasionally outrageous. These memoirs paint vivid pictures of colorful individuals who walked the halls of a College of Medicine and University Hospital in days gone by, and whose ghosts, so it is reported, still haunt these same corridors.

The non-medical reader may ask, "Was medical school really like this?", or perhaps somewhat more ruefully, "Was the distinguished gentleman, who is now my trusted physician, once a student like those spotlighted in this text?" Alas, it may be so. However, in spite of the high spirits of student days, it remains true that the College of Medicine at the University of Nebraska has over the years more than adequately fulfilled its responsibility to train high-quality physicians for service to the community. Indeed, the boisterous good humor of college days almost certainly contributed to those qualities of character required in the physician. A physician's robust common sense, his sense of humor, his equanimity in facing stress, are amongst the ingredients necessary for his role as a comfortor of the sick and distressed, and as an adviser and supporter of those who face fear, loss or tragedy.

Books describing medical faculty and student life have always held a fascination, but to none more than the individuals who lived these times and experiences themselves. Undoubtedly, therefore, this book will create special interest and nostalgia in alumni of the College.

Richard Gordon pulled back the curtain on medical student education elsewhere, some years ago, with his "Doctor in the House" series of publications. Dr. Ed Holyoke has done a similar superb job in drawing back the curtain in Nebraska to reveal the effervescent sub-culture which makes up the life of medical students and faculty.



*Alastair M. Connell, M.D., Dean  
University of Nebraska College of Medicine*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*The writer is most grateful to the Division of Biomedical Communications for their assistance in producing this book, and to Miss Rose Reynolds, who made the illustrations possible.*

*He owes his thanks to many of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine alumni who have contributed to the collection of stories. Among the many who have helped by adding their experiences are:*

*Dr. Carl Amick  
Dr. Harley Anderson  
Dr. Robert Benford  
Dr. Eugene Erman  
Dr. Alister Finlayson  
Dr. William Glenn  
Dr. William Hay  
Dr. J. Bruce Henriksen  
Dr. Roscoe Hildreth  
Dr. Jerome Hirschmann  
Dr. William Hollister  
Dr. Marshall Jensen  
Dr. Delbert Judd  
Dr. F. William Karrer  
Dr. Harold Kautz  
Dr. W. C. Keettel  
Dr. Emil J. Krahulik  
Dr. Harry Kretzler*

*Dr. Eugene Maire  
Dr. Jack Maxfield  
Dr. Charles McCulloch  
Dr. Frank Menolascino  
Dr. Paul A. Reed  
Dr. Merrill J. Reeh  
Dr. Verne Reynolds  
Dr. Albert Schmidt  
Dr. Melvin Sommer  
Dr. Robert Steven  
Dr. C. Rodney Stoltz  
Dr. Willis H. Taylor, Jr.  
Dr. R. H. Tibbels  
Dr. I. L. Tilden  
Dr. A. Roy Wanamaker  
Dr. Jack Wickstrom  
Dr. Ralph Worden*

*Special thanks go to Dr. Archie Powell, class of '36, for the use of his cartoons which help to illustrate some of the anecdotes and add much to this book.*

*Edward A. Holyoke, M.D., Ph.D.*



PART I

A HALF-CENTURY  
OF MEMORIES





Edward A. Holyoke, M.D.  
(Photo, 1943)

## FOREWORD

*The "hero" of this story isn't real. He isn't even a disguised member of his class, faculty member or physician in Omaha or any where else. His classmates, named and unnamed, his teachers, his associates and all of the other characters that appear are real. So are his experiences and the story of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine. These are what this piece is all about.*

*What our school was fifty odd years ago, half way back to its beginnings, and what it is today are still written in memory of many including the writer who started in the same class and has to appear in the story himself because, in a small way, he was part of it.*

*Our hero sees the college through the eyes of one of the clinical staff, the writer through those of a full-time basic scientist and these views can be different at times. Here I have tried to reconcile them as far as the facts will allow. But both writer and his creation had the same experiences, the same teachers, the same classmates and the same problems, and both have watched the college over this same span of years.*

*Edward A. Holyoke*



*The University of Nebraska College of Medicine, Omaha, 1928.*

## A HALF-CENTURY OF MEMORIES

### **“Pre-med” Days**

At this late point in your life if anyone asked you how you happened to go into medicine you might simply have to answer that you are not quite sure. Perhaps you are one of those who are perfectly sure and can put your finger on an event or moment when the idea was born. More probably it simply germinated through your childhood and was born at some time in your high school days when you finally had to decide what you were going to do with a life that lay ahead of you.

In any case, you have decided to study medicine. You are fired up over the idea and are willing to devote the years and hard work you know it is going to take. Back in high school you began to ask questions about where to go — Harvard? Hopkins? Stanford? Your family physician, who knows your family and its financial circumstances well has suggested that you might as well go to the Medical School in Omaha. He has pointed out that as state schools go, you can't possibly do any better. He has named some of the notable graduates and he has told you that if you graduate there you can do what you will in medicine — your own abilities will be the only limiting factor. You were sold and pitched into your “pre-med” years, perhaps at the University of Nebraska, perhaps at one of the other colleges in the state, perhaps you went away for your pre-med work. In any case, you completed two, three or perhaps four years of college and decided to apply. You wrote in for information and in due time you received a bulletin and an application form. You filled out the form, asked two of your professors to write recommendations for you, you dug up twenty-five dollars for a deposit and mailed in the package. That was all there was to it. About a month later you got a letter back from Dean Keegan's office that you were accepted; School started on a certain date in late September, you were to forward the balance of your tuition and you were admitted. So, you understood, were about a hundred others.

So now it is spring in, say 1928; you hear that pre-med day will be held in early May and you decide to go and have a look. If you are in school in Lincoln, the whole pre-med group will be going and you sense that you will be treated to a real celebration. In this you are not wrong. You are met on campus and escorted in a rather small group through the laboratory buildings. You visit the hospital and are probably treated to a rather bloody operation, perhaps the first you ever saw. You watched a few of your companions pass out and have to be taken out onto the roof of the hospital to recover and, before the day is over, you feel quite indoctrinated.



*J. Jay Keegan, M.D., Dean, 1925-1929.*

That afternoon there are baseball games and you probably have been taken in hand by one or more of the fraternity groups that seem to be waiting about to grab you and, if they like you, to begin the high pressure work of getting you to “spike” their fraternity. This is rushing in a high power sense and you may feel literally “rushed” off of your feet. There are parties at all of the houses and your hosts will get you a date if you don’t have one. They may even inquire as to your tastes — good dancer? “heavy necker”? and so on.

You will be put up for the night and sent back to your college in the morning with the feeling of having indulged in a Roman Holiday.

### **On to Medical School**

You were certainly told what to expect when you arrive in the fall. You will take Embryology the first eight weeks and this will be the big test. If you don’t pass that you are out right then. Dr. Latta will be your teacher and he will be *tough*. You may be given the impression that the chief objective of that first semester will be to “get you if they can” and you must watch your step very carefully all of the time. No one will care in the least what happens to you — this is all cold blooded business. Before your first year is over you may learn what a mistake much of this is but a sense of tension that will last through much of your first year has begun to build up before you have entered a class! You will hear of Dr. Poynter and Gross Anatomy and be told that before your first day is over you will be



*Students gathered on the steps of University Hospital's Unit I for five decades (1917-1967). Photo — 1964, Rinehardt-Marsden.*

They leave with the air of men going to execution and usually come back a bit crestfallen but much more relaxed. They have been told their faults but usually they have been encouraged and they realize that this is not the end of the line, yet, and that Dr. Latta is a very human human being.

The fourth week brings another examination in Embryology. The laboratory has kept you humping too. You have now made two or more graphic reconstructions. They have been laborious but may have given you an insight into Embryonic structure you never had before. If you have a taste for this sort of thing you are finding this work fascinating but how you wish the pressure would ease off! It won't for the rest of the first eight weeks. The final examination in Embryology is coming and it will spell the end for some of you. Some of your classmates have almost accepted the inevitable. Some are beginning to feel a little more at ease. They already sense the fact that they are going to make it. Most of you don't know yet and the tension is still there. Finally it comes. You write that last exam in Embryology, you take one in Bacteriology and here you check in your equipment. That course is over. You don't check in in the lab upstairs. There is more to come.

Now you feel a tremendous let down. The pressure is off for the moment and that first eight weeks is done. No matter what bad news may be in store for a few early the next week there will be celebrating and parties at all of the fraternities tonight as the tension of the past two months blows off.

### **Anatomy Begins**

Your breather is a short one and you know it. Next week you will settle into the real grind of the year — the course in Anatomy. You are already prepared. You have purchased that big Anatomy book and a set of white clothes — pants, coat and cap. You have a kit of dissecting instruments and you have turned in your name with three others who will be a dissecting team in the laboratory.



*C. W. M. Poynter, M.D., Professor of Anatomy, 1911-1946, Chairman of the Department to 1941.*

Now you await your first encounter with the legendary figure that you have heard so much about: at eleven o'clock you will meet Dr. Poynter. The morning is a continuation of the previous eight weeks. You meet Dr. Latta again now in Histology. Then at eleven, you go back down to the amphitheater and you find it full. Almost everybody in the student body is there and you realize that the first lecture in Anatomy is a tradition. The bell rings and Dr. Poynter walks in. What a contrast to Dr. Latta's entry eight weeks ago! Instead of silence the house explodes into applause. Everybody stands up, claps and cheers. Dr. Poynter reaches the lectern, smiles, bows graciously and begins. You don't hear anything about Anatomy — except a welcome to the course. You get a talk on the philosophy of medicine and medical education. Poynter is a superb speaker and you leave feeling thoroughly entertained.

Then you have another experience that you will never forget — that first afternoon in Anatomy. Now you suddenly find yourself confronted by a human body and you really meet the object of your whole professional life. One of your group has drawn a number that indicates the table at which you will work. It may be at the north end of the fourth floor where there is a single large room with six tables, this you hear called the "bull pen." You may draw one of the private rooms or you may go to the south end where the cubicles are divided by slate partitions. You are handed a sheet of mimeographed instructions. You sit down and begin to read them. You unwrap the back of that body and begin to pore over it. A stocky man with a bald head walks in. You heard him in the next stall dressing down your neighbors because they hadn't started to dissect. You get an equally vigorous dressing down because you have! This has to be Dr. Grodinsky and he will terrify you and blister your ears untold times over the next several months. Dr. Poynter in his old black coat pays you a visit later that afternoon and you feel a sense of awe at how he talks to you about your work.



*Demonstration in Anatomy — M. Grodinsky, M.D.*

By the end of the afternoon, you have skinned the back and started to pick in the superficial fascia to find all of the superficial vessels and nerves. That night you begin to study that huge Anatomy book and begin to wonder how you can possibly learn even a small part of the detail that it contains. The weeks pass along and you settle into the groove. This is the long pull instead of the furious first eight weeks rush. By Christmas vacation, you have dissected the axilla and pectoral region. You have written a two hour examination on that area and you have been through your first demonstration — an oral examination over your work. If Dr. Grodinsky gave it to you, you got your usual tongue lashing no matter what you did. By then, however, he has probably given you a few lectures and you realize that here is a superb teacher — however rough and ready his way of handling you. Histology now plays second fiddle — your chief occupation is Gross Anatomy. You come back after Christmas, dissect the arm and hand and reach the end of the semester.

Now there is a change. Dr. Latta bows out at the end of Histology. You are a little sorry — you have come to like and deeply appreciate the man who scared you so that first day.



*W. A. Willard, Ph.D., Professor of Anatomy 1914-1946. (Photo from 1929 Caduceus.)*

Dr. Willard now enters the picture — “Jess” the students have named him. He continues with Microscopic Anatomy, Organology you call it now, but the grind is still in Gross Anatomy. You are on the head and neck now. Day after day you labor away but the mass of detail piles up and you feel more and more buried by it. It is dead of winter and you wonder if spring will ever come. You are becoming fatigued and so is the whole class. You continue to admire Poynter. He visits you at your table about once a week and you talk about everything from the problem before you to Greek Philosophy. Somehow he always plants a new idea or starts you thinking about something you never thought of before. This keeps you going. Then you go through the demonstrations of the head and neck and that written examination.

That weekend the lid blows off. The traditional parties that mark the end of the head and neck are the most explosive of the year. Enough to realize that some of you didn't pass that ordeal — you will find out next week. The head and neck is done — spring is coming. The low point of the year is passed and you feel that it will be down hill from here.

Still it isn't quite all down hill. You now face Neurology. You labor over those charts in the laboratory and pore over your text books. You have grown to like Dr. Willard but his lectures don't help you much.

The thorax and abdomen are a relief from the minutiae of the head and neck but there is still lots to learn in Gross Anatomy. The improving weather makes it harder to stick to your work — you want to get outside. Perhaps you take off one afternoon for a golf game — wondering if Grodinsky will find out and take you apart the next afternoon. You finish the abdomen and that Roman Holiday — “pre-med” day comes again. Now you are one of the hosts. If you belong to one of the fraternities you will be involved in the rushing. You will greet the friends you left back at college and will try to high-power them even as you were high-powered a year ago. Perhaps you are on the student committee for “pre-med” day. If you are assigned to prepare the surgical amphitheater for the customary operation, you will be given a can of ether and instructed to pour it around under the seats — liberally. Now you know one reason why so many of your associates passed out here last year. You may be assigned to help those who pass out this year onto the roof, and you can be sure there will be some.

It is back at it next week for the final push. You have already spent some evenings in the library reading up on some topic, and written the “freshman thesis” that the Department of Anatomy requires of you. This may be your introduction to the scientific literature and it has probably been another eye opener for you. You sweat over those charts in Neurology and dissect at a furious pace to get the lower extremity done. Then one fine day a notice appears on the bulletin board and you rush to have a look — those who got out of “star chamber,” that final oral examination in Anatomy. This year it will be a comprehensive covering all of the courses — an experiment that will be dropped next year to be taken up again some years later. No matter now. If you got out of it you are home free. If not, well you have been up against it many times before. Perhaps you take it and as you walk out Dr. Poynter puts a hand on your shoulder in a way that tells you all you need to know — you made it! The sophomore year is a reality now. A number of your classmates didn't make it. Some ten or twelve failed to appear in Gross Anatomy back in November. A few more vanished at the end of the semester and some more when the head and neck was finished. You know that a few others won't be back with you in the fall — unless they are repeating the freshman year. The hundred you started with is down to about seventy eight but you made it!

## **The First Summer**

Now it is summer again. Perhaps you go home and take a job. You want to rest a little after that first year. Perhaps you stay in Omaha and find a job on campus. You may be working in the library, shifting books in the stacks — the library just moved into the north wing of Unit II two years ago and things are not quite settled yet. You may be on the lawn crew working for Darcy. If so you will be kept busy — he has no use for loafers. Whatever you do, you begin to learn a little more about what is going on and where things are. You learn to recognize Dr. Bean the hospital superintendent. You recognize Saxon the operating superintendent. You find the lunchroom and the switchboard — at the entryway of the hospital with that blonde, Martha, working at it. There seems to be a



*Richard C. Darcy, Groundskeeper, College of Medicine in Omaha, 1913 until retirement, late 1940's.*

delightful sense of impropriety about her! Perhaps you will work a trick or two on that board at night. Many students do. You begin to recognize some of the clinical staff as they come and go. The old timers you have heard of — B. B. Davis, Pollard, Summers, Bridges, become real people. You learn that a few others — Jonas, Gifford, W. O. Bridges have retired. You may meet Grodinsky about the hospital. If you do he will be warm and friendly and may even laugh at some of your past experiences with him. Dr. Keegan comes and goes from the Dean's office. You may have had to visit him there last year, especially if you had academic problems or got into any mischief. You sense that things are stirring there and along in July comes the word. Keegan has resigned! Poynter has been appointed Dean! You may not realize now that he will hold that post for seventeen years!

You wonder what Anatomy will be like next year and how lucky you feel — you were in the last class that had the privilege of knowing Dr. Poynter as Professor. Your successors will remember him as Dean. Somehow you feel that you have a sympathetic friend now. Keegan seemed so cold and remote and aloof!

Your sophomore year is approaching and you feel a little sense of apprehension again. You know that Biochemistry lies ahead in that first semester and that "Sir Jesus" (Dr. Morgulis) will probably get a few more of your classmates. The sense of pressure you felt in your first year will be there several more times — but never so continuous and intense again.

So September comes and you go through another rush week — this time rusher — not rushee. You take your turn at telling those freshmen what is in store for them. After all you got that kind of conditioning so why shouldn't they? It is all part of the game. The

great difference is that Dr. Poynter is in the Dean's office and you are not sure what Gross Anatomy will be like. Krieg and Blum are gone now, Blum into the junior class and Krieg to a career in Neuroanatomy that will make him world famous. Some of last year's sophomores will have those fellowships and be next year's assistants.

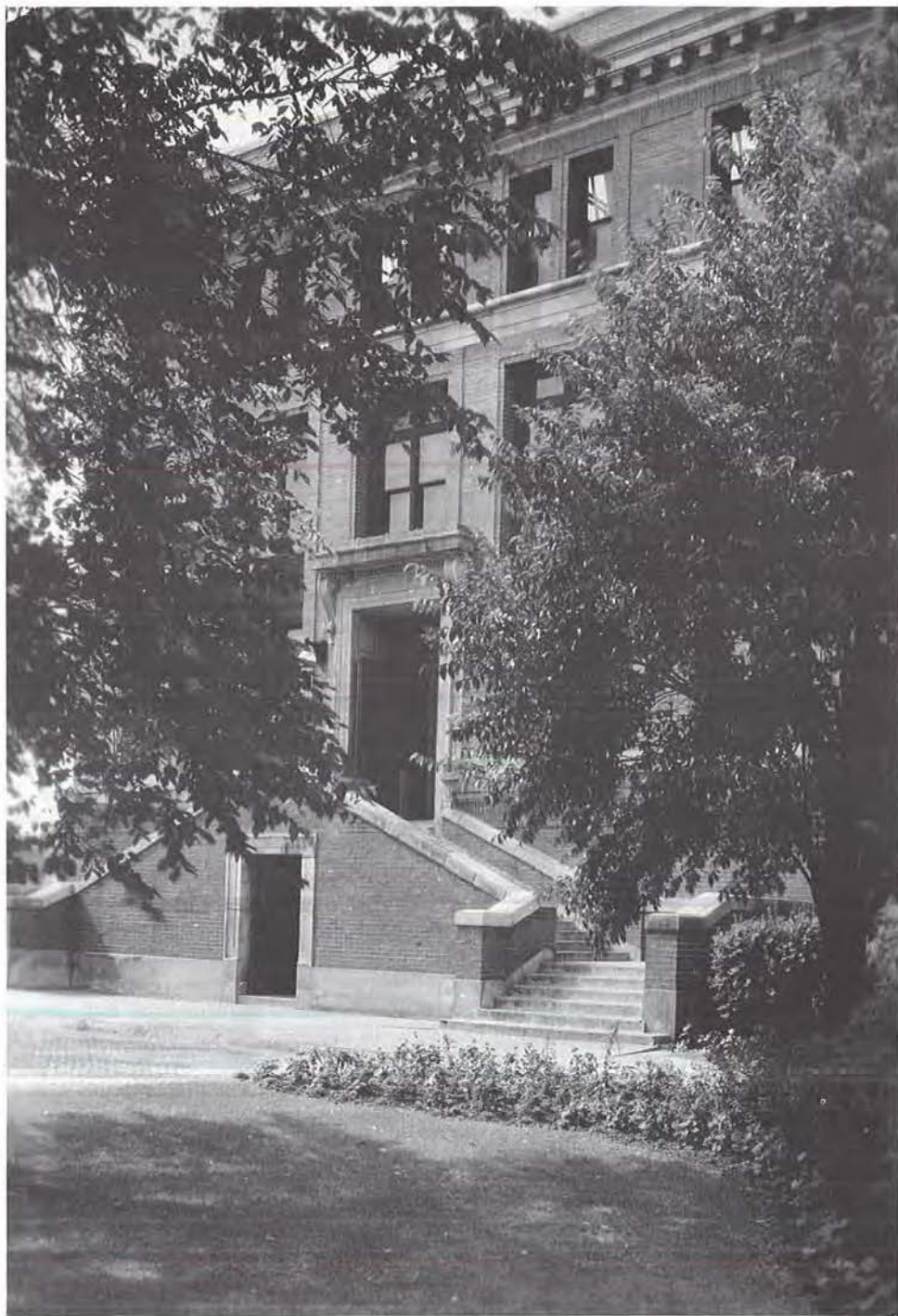
## **The Sophomore Year**

School starts again and you find yourself in Physiology and Biochemistry. You feel a little let down in ways. "Skippy" Cope just isn't the caliber of man you knew last year in Latta, Willard or Poynter. Morgulis is, but you have learned to be wary of him. You won't know where you stand and you will be on pins and needles about your work. You will start with Physical Chemistry and shift to real Biochemistry a little later in the year. The course is excellent but it keeps coming back — you don't know where you stand. You feel a sense of resentment toward this man growing in the class that was never there last year with all of its rigors. You grind along in the Physiology laboratory smoking drums, making muscle preparations out of frog legs and hoping that your records will look somewhat as the book says they should. You aren't given the sense of relevance to medicine of what you are doing that you were given last year and you tend to get restless and wonder when will you ever really get into medicine!

And so the first semester comes and goes. You pass that final in Biochemistry. A few of your associates didn't. They won't be out of school but they will have to go to Michigan next summer and make it up. You may wonder where they will get the money. The stock market crashed last October and you may sense that depression and hard times lie ahead.

Now you start a second semester. Things begin to change a little. You are taking Pharmacology and that isn't much more inspiring than Physiology was. You are a little put out about this for you sense that here are two of your most important basic sciences. How you might envy those who will follow you when that department changes in a very few more years. But your crystal ball isn't working just now and you plug ahead. But there are compensations. You started Pathology and Dr. Eggers is bringing that phase of medicine to life. You begin to learn what disease process is all about and the why of the symptoms and signs of various diseases many of which had been no more than big words to you. You do get a little tired of the laboratory with those endless write-ups and painting those little pictures of your various specimens in water color. Still you begin to know what congestion and inflammation are all about. You begin to recognize necrosis and caseation and can sense the difference between a malignant cell and a normal one. Then too you get those introductory clinical courses. You are taking physical diagnosis now and learning how to use a stethoscope, to take a blood pressure, to percuss and palpate — all on your classmates — no patients. Half way through the course your teacher Dr. Wm. N. Anderson (Cocky Anderson) vanishes. You learn that he moved to California to join the fabulous Dr. Crummer. His replacement "Gene" Simmons is equally good and the course goes on.

You meet Dr. Conlin in an introductory course in Medicine, Dr. Sage in Obstetrics, and you get an introduction to Psychiatry from Dr. G. Alexander Young. The year moves on and in some ways your interest grows as you begin to see a little better how what you are doing will fit into what you plan to do. Toward the end of the year you get a brief introduction to Immunology and a little course in laboratory methods. You run Wassermans and blood counts and urines. You apply your Biochemistry to blood sugar determinations but you haven't seen a patient yet except when you were taken to an occasional il-



*The North Building, 1928.*

lustrative clinic or an operation. You are restless to get on with it and how you wish that Dr. Eggers wouldn't talk quite so fast and that Dr. Guenther could talk at all!

Along in the spring a few of your classmates have been approached by Dr. Latta or Dr. Morgulis or one of the others on the graduate assistantships next year. If you stood near the top of your class perhaps you were approached too, otherwise, forget it. You probably want to go straight on anyway. Harald and Ed and Ted and a few more seem interested and may drop out of your class for a year. They will be replaced by last year's assistants. Harald will go on to a career in laboratory medicine, Ted will some day be an ophthalmologist and Ed will throw in his lot with Anatomy for the rest of his life. Those were the men to beat for scholarship honors. The change won't help you much, the ones returning to the class — Fred Lemere, "Dinty" Moore and "Andy" Gump will be just about as tough.

Finally the sophomore year ends. The only real hurdle at the end was Dr. Eggers' unknown examination in Pathology. You finish the year convinced that you will make it through. There will still be pressures but you know that almost all who are left of your classmates are going to graduate.



*Junior student nurses, ca. 1929.*

You put in another summer working and learn your way around a little better. There isn't much going on about the place this summer. The weather is hot and the news isn't very good. The depression that seemed inevitable after the crash in the stock market last fall is here and deepening. More patients come and go from the dispensary and you see some of last year's juniors working there — getting ahead on their service. It won't help them very much anymore — Dr. Poynter put a stop to the opportunity to graduate at the middle of the senior year. You feel lucky to have that job this summer and you probably put in your name for next summer too. Several of the old timers have passed on — Gifford and Patton among them. Dr. Poynter is permanent Dean now and a new man has been hired in Gross Anatomy. Perhaps you have begun to call at Conkling Hall occasionally. The nurses are there and many of them are attractive and good company. Here you may find dates for next year's parties and possibly real romance. A number of your classmates will.

## The Junior Year

September comes again and you are really looking forward to your junior year. Now you will start your clinical work and really begin to taste your profession. You can't forget your basic sciences. You will need what you learned in your clinical work and will be expected to know it. Besides you are going to have to take that new basic science examination. You may have taken it last spring. If not, you must sometime before you graduate. You can't get your medical license without it.

You soon learn what is in store for you this next year. You will take major courses in all of the clinical subjects. You will go into your clinical clerkship and rotate through all of the hospital services. The order in which you take them will be determined at the beginning of the year. You will be assigned patients. You will take their history, you will examine them, run laboratory studies on them and follow them either until they are dismissed or you go on to another service. You must prepare a complete write up and study on each one. You will have more guidance than your predecessors had. Dr. Kirk is in charge of the clinical clerks and you quickly learn that he is going to keep you up to the mark. But no matter — you are seeing patients now. You won't forget how awkward and uncomfortable you felt with your first one. That feeling leaves you fast as you begin to get your confidence in yourself and realize that the patients have some confidence in you.

If you begin with Obstetrics or Surgery you will be instructed in how to scrub and stay sterile once you make yourself that way. Some of you will blunder and have to scrub again. Miss Dietrichs, the operating room nurse, doesn't like this and she lets you know it!

You will stand with the surgeons at operations and really see what is going on. Your task may be just to hold a retractor until you feel that your hand is going to drop off. Then one day the surgeon may turn to you and say, "Doctor, you close up." He will strip off his gloves and walk out and there you are. You go ahead, clumsily at first but your technique improves after a while. You may even do part of some procedure with the surgeon right there in case any problem comes up. Before your "O. B." service is over you have probably delivered your first baby and taken the last few stitches in the perineum. You learn to work with some of the staff men and some of them can be very difficult, while others are helpful to you. You become involved in "EKGs," you go down and learn how they take X rays, but most of all it's histories and physicals, histories and physicals, lab, lab, and write, write, write — but you are learning.

The clerkship isn't all. There are hours on end of sitting in clinics, lectures and quizzes. There is Clinical Pathology with the big report you must work up on a complete case each week. It will include every item in the history, every finding on the physical, every lab report with an explanation of each. There will be a step by step analysis of the patient's progress, a write up of the autopsy and discussion of the findings. Dr. Joe Weinberg teaches that course and he expects those reports to be complete and thorough although you begin to suspect that he doesn't read them all. So you write - write - write and how you learn. At night you have a big pile of books now and you know that you can't cover all of them but you also know that you should, so you read - read - read. Osler, Babcock, Williams — on and on. Read and absorb all you can. Here is pressure again — pressure of a different kind but pressure just the same.

You have vivid memories of various lectures and clinics — and those who gave them. Dr. Brown with his meticulous presentations, Dr. Waters and his dapper precision, Dr. Lynn Hall and his easy going ways, Dr. Sage and the continual ribbing you get from him — you could go on forever with these. Dr. Howard Hamilton — now chairman of Pediatrics has given you the fundamentals of feeding babies, Dr. Bennett a look at Clinical Neurology.

Christmas vacation comes and you may go home. This time when you meet your family Doctor you find that you can speak his language. He may take you to the community hospital and what you see means something. You recognize what is going on with those patients and can chat about what he is doing for them. He begins to talk to you like a colleague and you begin to feel that you belong. When you cut your hand he sewed it up and wouldn't let you pay the modest fee he used to charge your family. You know you still have a long way to go but you feel a part of the profession.

## The Second Semester

It's back at it right after New Year's, and you head into those first semester exams. Here you will add to your stock of experience. That night when you took all of those orals — how you came into the North Building and found almost the entire staff there. Miss Jones, the Dean's secretary, sits at a table with a pile of schedules. You draw one and find where you will go each fifteen minutes when she rings that big electric bell. A different room and a different examiner — four times to the hour and this will last several hours. There are many courses and many examiners. You come out at the end feeling that you have come through all right in spite of the fact that some examiners have asked you things you haven't covered yet. You have also written long examinations in Clinical Pathology, your laboratory work, Obstetrics, Internal Medicine and Surgery. There will be make up writtens for those who didn't fare too well on those orals. You probably didn't have to



*Clinic in the Medical Amphitheatre.*

take these. Most of you are not particularly worried anymore, but there may be one or two who will fail a course and have to make it up next year. You had an occasional senior in some of your classes who ran into this problem last year. This time there is a break in classes for a few days at semester's end — but it doesn't help you much. You fell behind on your clinical clerkship the week before exams and you catch up on your patients and your charts on those few days.

Then it is back at it. You still have half of your clinical services ahead of you. The number of courses increases now as you are introduced to the various specialties. You meet Wherry in Otorhinolaryngology, Stokes in Ophthalmology (he has replaced Patton who died last year as Wherry has replaced Lemere who moved to California). There is Ed Davis in Urology, hard talking, red faced Tomlinson in Dermatology, he scares you but it proves to be more bark than bite. Wigton will start you in Psychiatry, Hunt (he has just replaced Pierce) in Radiology, Lord, Schrock and Johnson in Orthopedics and Waters in Gynecology. All of this is in addition to the big courses in Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics and Obstetrics. Only Clinical Pathology is over and done. You thought you had more than you could read last semester — now a look at the pile of books scares you, but you dig in and continue to read and read and write and write and learn. Some of your clinics are memorable. Dr. Bliss in Internal Medicine and B. B. Davis in Surgery. Still the pressures are different now. Most of the work this year has been fun. You do take off to a show during the week once in a while and sometimes you go out with the boys for a beer or two after dinner. Prohibition is still on and you don't advertise the fact that you do this.

You reach the end of the junior year and encounter an even more formidable mass of examinations than you met last winter. Then it is over — one more year to go. But what a year this has been! You come out knowing what clinical medicine is all about. You are a rough ground physician — but the polishing is still ahead, you still have the senior year.

## **Your Final Summer**

You may stay around again this summer and if you do, you learn some more of what is going on. It is 1931 and there is work on afoot about the campus. They are adding a west wing to Conkling Hall. That old bunkhouse dorm for some of the nurses is coming down. It will be replaced by a new service building and many of the offices will move down there. The switchboard will vanish from the entryway of the hospital and you won't see that blonde anymore.

A few more of the old guard have left the scene. B. B. Davis is head of surgery now. Best is back from Vienna and has one of the hospital services. You learn of the world famous work that Morgulis has done on nutrition and you realize that you had a great man for a teacher, however much you disliked him.

Grodinsky has made a mark in the world of Anatomy with his work on the foot and on spinal anesthesia. Weinberg is sticking his toes into the still cold water of thoracic surgery. Latta is a well known hematologist, MacQuiddy is making a name in the field of allergy. You appreciate the fact that you are privileged to know these men.

You see them around from time to time. One afternoon you pass the Dean's office and Dr. Poynter suddenly appears and calls you in. You have seen little of him since your first year but he remembers. He asks about your plans and begins to talk of your internship. He had a place in mind where he thinks you might go, and you get the feeling that when he decides, you probably will go there. You wake up with a start to the fact that your internship is only a year away. You may drift off into any subject in the world before you are through. This man hasn't changed since those days in Anatomy that in some ways



*C. W. M. Poynter, M.D., Dean, 1929-1946.*

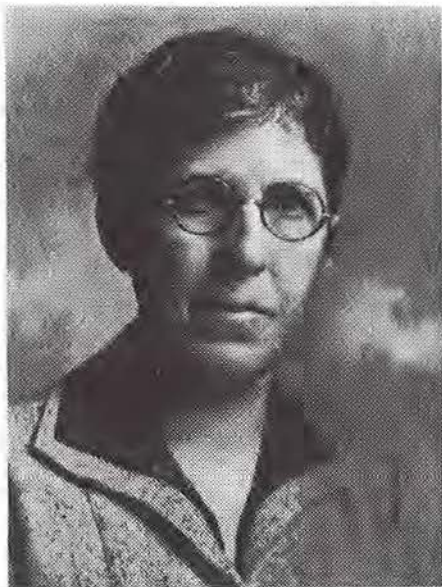
now seem long ago. You meet Latta as you come and go and he always calls you by name. How completely different he seems now than on that first morning when you started. If you come back twenty years from now he will still call you by name.

You are probably conscious of the fact that the depression is deepening — there are signs all about you. The hospital census goes to the breaking point. The clinics over there in the dispensary are full. A few of your fellow students will have to lay out a year and earn some money before they can come back to school, and some are wondering how they are going to earn it.

### **The Senior Year**

You look ahead to your senior year and you may put in a little time over in the dispensary and get part of that service out of the way.

You know that the last year will be very different than those that have gone before. The pace can be more leisurely if you choose to make it so and some of your classmates will begin to “goof off” a bit — something that but few dared to do up to now. There will be clinics aplenty and lectures aplenty — some you will remember very well. Your chief experience will be the dispensary. Another will be the elective courses. You spent a full day in the rush to register. There are some of those electives that you really want to take



*Miss Josephine Chamberlin, R.N.,  
Superintendent of the Dispensary,  
1919-1946.*

and registration is limited. If you don't get there promptly the popular courses will be filled. You are disappointed in one or two of your choices but you turn up with a pretty good selection.

You meet at the dispensary for your indoctrination. Dr. Moser is supposed to be in charge. You get some instructions from him and then you meet Miss Chamberlin and you quickly find out who really *is* in charge.

She tells you how to handle patients — what you are expected to do — what you must do and what you can't do. You understand very soon that she is really interested in you and she will stand up to anyone for you — unless you are irresponsible — or inconsiderate of those patients — then how she will tell you off. She can tell the staff men off too but they take it from her. Everybody likes her and respects her. If you come back years later she will remember you and be interested in what you are doing. There is no one you have met here whom you will remember more fondly. Now you begin to rotate through the services. You may begin with outcall. This will take you into all of the worst parts of the city and you learn a great deal about how people live — and how they make out — or don't in these depression times. You have your little black bag and you go when a call comes in — perhaps with a partner — perhaps on your own. You are really lucky if you have a "beat up" old car now or can find a partner who does. You get a taste of another angle to the practice of medicine. You are settled down to an evening of study — the phone rings and you are off into the night. You may be back early — it may be late if you run into something serious and have to send a patient into the hospital. You are not entirely on your own — you can call a staff man if you need help but mostly you must rely on yourself. There is some responsibility here. You know that if you miss a case of diphtheria and the patient dies you will be out of school — at least for a year, and there is some diphtheria around. You will see measles, scarlet fever, perhaps a case of typhoid and innumerable minor infections and family troubles and accidents — many in children. For

that six to eight weeks you are on the go constantly and you catch the opportunities for study as best you can but you feel that the experience is one of the best in your education. There will be an outcall home delivery service. Here you will pick up a delivery kit containing what you need. You will pick up a nurse who will help you and off you go to see some woman in labor and deliver her baby in her own bedroom. You are expected to deliver at least four or five but there are not enough cases and you probably won't get that many.



*Dispensary Waiting Room, first floor, South Building, ca. 1930.*

Then day after day you will work in the dispensary itself. You will accept those rows of people sitting out in the dingy halls in the South Building waiting their turn. You don't like to handle people this way but there is no better one. They get care and good care this way which they otherwise might not get at all. How you admire Miss Chamberlin for how kind she is to them and how rough she is on you if you are not the same. Night dispensary is really a madhouse. This is venereal disease time and the services are appropriate — Urology, Gynecology, and Dermatology. Here you work on an assembly line basis taking your turn at doing pelvics, rectals, passing sounds, "shooting" arsenicals and bismuth. You really wash up when you get home from these clinics.

The classes and hospital clinics go on too. You get a course in Therapeutics, a big one in Orthopedic Surgery and some more advanced work in Medicine and Surgical Diagnosis. Things are often a little more informal than they were and you become quite friendly with some of the younger staff men. You don't with some of the older ones like Keegan and Brown.

Some of your elective courses meet in the evening, often at the homes of the teachers. People like Mrs. Davis and Mrs. A. D. Dunn take an interest in you and usually serve you wonderful refreshments before you leave.

Semester examinations come and go but they worry you very little now. You just take them in your stride and they are not very memorable.

You meet Dr. Mason in Tropical Medicine and how you enjoy listening to his experiences in Thailand where he served as a missionary for years. Two of his sons are in your class. They grew up and were educated in the Orient mostly by their mother.

## **Finals and Graduation**

But the pressure begins to go up a little again! You have to write the senior thesis. This will be a real piece of work and it has to be in by sometime in April or early May. So it's back to the library again and dig into the literature of what ever subject you have chosen and had approved by Dr. Poynter. You read and compile a bibliography, then you write and write and a thesis takes shape. At one point you don't think you can get it in on time. You stop and ask Dr. Poynter for a few more days. You wind up talking about your internship and then find you have discussed the relative impact on history of the orations of Demosthenes and the writing of Lucretius! You have no idea how you got around to that subject but somewhere the message slipped in — you will have your thesis in on time! You go back — sweat a few more nights and make the deadline.

In the meantime, another notice appears and everybody looks. Some of you, perhaps ten or so, have been elected to Alpha Omega Alpha. You look at the list; perhaps your name is there. If it is you have received the highest scholastic honor you can get in medical school. If it isn't, well most of those you know in medicine were not there either. Most of your classmates shrug it off, they knew that they didn't have a chance. A few who came close are disappointed. Some of the names you knew would be there — Moore, Lemere, Rathman, Reeh, Bowers and a few more. One or two surprise you. If you were elected there will be an initiation banquet and keys will be handed out. You will be admonished that you are not a group apart from your fellows and you will try to act that way.

Now it is spring and one more big hurdle remains — the final comprehensive. There doesn't seem to be any way to prepare for it, so you have put it out of your mind over most of the year, but now it draws close. You know you will be called on to write a two to three hour essay on some big general topic. Speculation is rife in your class as to what that topic will be. Water metabolism? Urine? Fever? These subjects have already come up. You can't even guess what it will be this time. You go on your way and finish up your dispensary service. There are a few course examinations, but not many and they seem easy. You won't even remember what they were for very long. Those last few weeks you come as near to taking it easy as you ever have since you started. Then one fine morning you are gathered in the North Amphitheater where you have gathered so many times before. Miss Jones comes in and walks to the board and writes Discuss — Blood!

There it is and you think a while then write for the rest of the morning. You don't feel badly — you know something about it but afterward you keep remembering things that you might have included.

The next day you are back to write a half dozen shorter questions and then you wait out the weekend while the committee slaves over all of those papers. This time they *are* read and read carefully. Sometime Monday you see the list of those who didn't do well enough and have to take the orals. There aren't many but there are a few. Most of them



*The Graduating Class of 1932.*

will pass — at least you hope so — you will feel very sorry for anyone who comes this close and then has to wait another year.

All that is left is formality. How you whoop it up at the parties this week. Now you talk of the past four years — of your internships — of what you intend to do — all sorts of things. Some of you are set to be married. You have waited for one, two or more years for this. Some of your classmates already are married, but not very many. You may be among those who have waited. Perhaps she will be that pretty nurse you started dating back in your junior year — perhaps.

First there will be graduation. You will go to Lincoln for commencement — in the Colosseum where you will be last in the giant ceremony. Your class will all stand as a group and be declared educated. There will be no individual awarding of diplomas — only the Ph.D.'s get this and you feel just as good as they are. You will rush downstairs and scramble with a thousand others to get that diploma. Then you have it. You will write M.D. after your name from now on — from now on no more Mister — it will be Doctor. You have arrived!

But wait a minute. Have you?

When that degree was awarded there were those last words “when licensed by the proper authorities.” You aren’t licensed by any authority. You knew it all the time. It is back to Omaha where you will sit for three more days writing your State Board Examination. You already took the basic science exam — perhaps over a year ago.

This time you don’t worry, it will be a fluke if you don’t pass this, but you will have to wait a few more weeks before you finally get it — that license that says that you can practice your profession. Medical school *is* behind you. How the time has gone and how many things have happened since that September day four years ago when Dr. Latta walked into the North Amphitheater! Nothing could buy that experience from you but how glad you are that it is over!

## **Internship**

You probably go home for a week or so. You may feel like a long vacation but you aren’t going to get one. It is already well on into June and your internship starts the first of July. Your class has scattered now — all over the country to various hospitals and you know that while there will be reunions you will never all be in the same place at the same

time again. You and Dr. Poynter finally agreed that you should intern at the University Hospital so you are going to be in your old haunts for yet another year. Your classmates, Barr, Callison, Dewey, Gump, and Lemere will be with you.

There will be about twelve of you in all. You will rotate through the various services during the course of the next year. Much of the time you will live in the hospital — just over the Dean's Office, and your bride won't see as much of you your first year as either of you would like, but the chances are that she has a job as one of the floor nurses. You are better off than many. This new life is no bed of roses either. When you are on it is around the clock, twenty-four hours a day. You have responsibility for a service now and except when you sign out for twenty-four hours, you rarely get an uninterrupted night's sleep. Some nights you hardly sleep at all. Now you are in closer touch with the staff and you know more of what is going on. Some of it isn't good. There is a threatened cut in the University budget and if this comes, Dr. Poynter is going to close some of the wards and cut down on your experience. You hope this doesn't happen, but in point of fact, it will within a year. Your immediate taskmaster is Dr. Bean. You knew who he was before but now you really deal with him. You have some time to see what goes on about the campus. The new wing in Conkling Hall is open. So is the new service building and the switchboard is moved out of the hospital. There are changes in the faculty — not many in the clinical staff this year, but a few. Leon McGoogan has come on in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Perry Tollman is back from Boston and is taking on the course in Clinical Pathology that will become an integral part of the clinical clerkship soon. He will take over most of the autopsy service that Joe Weinberg has carried ever since you started school. "Skipppy" Cope has moved on to New York and a new man from Chicago named McIntyre has come into Physiology and Pharmacology. Here you sense is a first class scientist and that department shows signs of coming to life at last. That man who came from St. Louis in Anatomy didn't last and your old classmate Ed has taken the job. Ed will have to spend two years as a senior to get the work in. He will last a little longer than his predecessor — about fifty years!



*Pediatrics Ward, University Hospital, ca. 1929.*

You see a new class come in but you are little involved in the rushing and such activities. You look in on the parties — if you can get the evening off, but your life is in the hospital now, not the student body. A new junior class starts in September and there are clinical clerks running around the wards — just as you ran two years ago. But things are different now. They come to you for help and they sometimes get in the way and goof things up. You try to be patient but you mentally forgive the occasional intern who was a little abrupt with you when you were a junior. You are very much interested in the curriculum for you have to participate to some extent, but you know it by heart and it doesn't change much. It won't change much for several years to come.

Your relations with the staff have changed. They call you Doctor now. You are first assistant at operations and you begin to do a few on your own. You deliver babies on your own and only call a staff man if things really go wrong. You are not completely responsible yet, but you are nearly so. You can't get help every time you have a problem. Some of the staff men you learn to like very much — some you just admire. You wish that Brown had more time for you, he is one of the finest, but so aloof and gruff. You get mad when Roeder raps your knuckles and calls you down but again, things are different. You are a Doctor now and once in a while you snap back. Kennedy is a prince to work for, Waters sputters all the time but you get on well with him. You learn to live with those mad men Schrock and Johnson in Orthopedics. Schrock is the Chief now — Lord has retired. Hunt can get impatient with you but you admire him and you make out all right. Sometimes Poynter stops you and you have a little chat and you occasionally walk over to the North Building and visit Eggers or Latta or Willard. They begin to seem like old friends. Grodinsky is an old friend too. He is great to work with on the surgery service. You get none of that "tear you down and rip you up" that he gave you as a freshman, but you hear that he still gives it to the freshmen. Perhaps you get out for Christmas Eve and perhaps you don't. People still are sick and the hospital still runs. You do throw a party in the interns' quarters and you don't tell Dr. Poynter all about what you had to drink! Dr. Bean is different — he may have slipped in and had one with you — but not too many. You are on service and have to be responsible.

January and February come and go and you change from service to service. You hardly know that it is winter for you don't get out that often. You begin to look to next



*Winter, the mid 1930's. Garage and Carpenter Shop north of Hospital Unit I.*

year and what you are going to do. This seems a bad time to start practice on your own, but you need money and you don't feel that you can take another year of training. Your opportunity comes — Dr. X will take you into his office here in Omaha. You draw up an agreement and you will start practice here next summer. You are assured a junior staff appointment at the University, so after all of this time, you will still be here.

## Practice at Last

July comes and you start in. At last you are in practice and you can have a few of the things you dreamed about. You can live with your wife and have a home. It will be a modest one at first. You aren't going to get rich very fast in this profession in these times. But it has taken five years since college to get here and you could easily have taken several more. It is well that you finally have a little something in these hard times. Perhaps now your wife is expecting and your family back home are feeling the pinch of the depression.

You know when you start that life won't be any easier than the one you have been living. You are low man on the totem pole at the office, in the hospital, and at the University. You can guess who will take the night calls and get the not-so-select cases. You don't resent it — your senior partner started that way before you. You are associated with the staff of one or more hospitals — the Methodist, the Clarkson, the Immanuel, but you are not a full member yet. Your faculty appointment at the University is Clinical Assistant — as low as you can get. Still, you are on the staff, you will find out in what capacity soon. You just might get a hospital service, but more likely you will take your turn in the dispensary for a few years. You may be given one of those quiz sections. If so, it will be back to those books still another time. You have to keep ahead of those students. They are sharp and if you don't "know your stuff" they won't be long in finding it out. Your number has probably been given to the outcall service. Now *you* will be the staff man and the students will call you. No one to fall back on now, you are it, you are responsible. Here is pressure again of another kind and this will be with you the rest of your professional life. You won't have all of those evenings at home with your family. After all, before you started you dreamed about them and knew you wouldn't get them. You have to go to meetings, the Omaha-Douglas County and the staff meeting of each of your hospitals. You still have to read your journals and keep up to date in your profession and it is developing all of the time. You have to take your turn at presenting cases for the hospital staff. You have to keep up your charts and your records, but you probably love it. This is what you worked for.

You are on the inside now at the University. You go to the staff meetings of your department. You know that there are some important developments. E. L. Bridges is gone and Bliss is chairman of Internal Medicine. B. B. Davis passed on suddenly last winter. The new chairman of Surgery is Keegan. You thought it might be Alfred Brown who is superbly qualified, except for his temperament. But Keegan is superbly qualified too, although he is a neurosurgeon, not a general surgeon.

McIntyre is head of Physiology and Pharmacology now. Guenther is about to give up. They will bring in another man from Chicago soon, by the name of Bennett. He and McIntyre will be a superb team for years to come. Tollman is taking hold in Pathology and as a full time man he can organize a little better than Joe Weinberg who had his practice to attend to.

The financial crunch has hit the University, a twenty percent cut right through everything and you wonder how the paid staff is taking it. Fortunately prices are going down and they just pull up their belts and hang on. Poynter has lived up to his threat and has

shut down some of the hospital wards. Those interns this year won't get the experience you had. There are some splendid ones among them like Fay Smith and Bigger and Jakeman.

Some things are picking up and being done. Poynter has jumped in and applied for some of the public works program money and the next few years will see the steam tunnels built, the heating plant enlarged, work done in the basement of the North Building and finally an addition to the west of the South Building.

You are up to your ears in your practice, but you have to take your few months each year on the dispensary service. Now you tell those students what to do. You had better be considerate of those patients and your students or Miss Chamberlin will be down your neck just as fast as she used to be when you were a student!



*Dispensary, Newborn Clinic.*

Another year rolls by but your life doesn't change this time, except for that bouncing baby boy of yours. You think of the school again and wonder if perhaps? It's a little too early to speculate yet. This summer (1934) you have been at it a year already. Not all of your patients are your senior partner's anymore, some are yours. Work goes on over at school on those tunnels. The depression isn't letting up and the drought has set in. This is the hottest summer you ever remember and there hasn't been any rain. The whole state has burned up and times are bad. So is the news. The Nazis have taken over Germany and you worry a little about what may come in the next ten years.

In many ways the school is stable. Except for changes on the staff as the old timers gradually go, things are just about as they were when you went through. Bennett has joined the team in Physiology and that department *has* changed. Along in the fall Myers suddenly disappears. You have heard rumors and you don't want to repeat them, but he has gone, and Paul Bancroft has had to take the course in Bacteriology and does the best he can with it.

You went to the annual faculty meeting this last spring and listened to those endless reports and voted on the degrees for the graduating class. Some of your fellow students are back in town, or were when you started your practice. Floyd Nelson is out in Benson. Bill Wright, a year ahead of you, is in with "Fritz" Niehaus. Chester Waters, Clyde Moore, and Charlie Kennedy have sons in medical school. Your classmate Ed is going for a Ph.D. in Anatomy and may very well be a fixture at the school. He is an instructor now, a higher rank than you have!

You probably won't get a hospital assignment this year either. It's back to those quiz sections and back to the dispensary. You are involved in the brand new Omaha Midwest Clinical Society. You have been made a member of the Omaha Clinical Club, a group of younger physicians in town. You feel as though you begin to belong to the community now instead of just the school.

The summer of 1935 isn't quite as bad as last one but it is bad enough, and there were those dust storms last spring. Overall morale in the entire state is low and you may be helping out your parents a little now. It isn't easy. You are still new and you aren't getting rich, but you are making it and paying your bills. Perhaps your family has grown again and you hope you can pay for that little girl's wedding when the time comes. Some of the people you wish were here have gone. You became close friends with Fay Smith and his charming wife Jo but they went to Imperial and while you keep in touch you don't see them often.

There are the continued changes in the clinical departments. Jonas, E. L. Bridges, hardboiled old J. E. Summers have passed on. A replacement for Myers has arrived from Minnesota, Millard Gunderson. He will be something of a character at the school for some years to come.

As the year goes on you hear that Grodinsky is seriously ill and Ed, your onetime classmate, has had to run Gross Anatomy. Poynter has come back to help him out but he can't make it all of the time, and Ed has a lot of responsibility. You wish him luck.

## **The Passing Years — War**

So the years go on but the atmosphere at the school doesn't change much. It is doing a good job and there are some splendid students going through there. Still in a sense the school is hanging on, but so are all of the other schools in the country. Times are still hard.

Thirty-seven and thirty-eight come and go. Some things are better. Rain has come to Nebraska again and morale is picking up. Some things are worse, war seems inevitable in Europe almost any time.

Pollard retires and goes down to Peru to live. Sage is now head of Obstetrics and Gynecology. John (T.B.) Allen, Conlin and Hall are professors and the senior staff men now. The so-called old guard is gone. Ed got his Ph.D. in Anatomy and is an Assistant Professor. Grodinsky's health is failing and Ed will probably be *the* gross anatomist soon.

Perhaps by now you are an Instructor, not very high, but better than Clinical Assistant. You may have a hospital service now. If you do, you are luckier than some of your contemporaries.

Europe has exploded into war and national defense has become the watchword. The depression is really over and in that way things are much better. Those janitors over at school who were good intelligent men have found good jobs and the custodial service has slipped a few notches. The South Building is being overhauled and a big addition put on the west end. This will make the dispensary a much more adequate place. You are sick of those old cramped and crowded quarters. A few more old timers pass on — Lord and Howard Hamilton. Some of the newer men like McLaughlin and Bisgard are taking on major stature but the tone of the school hasn't changed much. You recognize it as the same school you went through and the experiences of the present students won't be very different from yours.

Then Pearl Harbor comes and with it the call to the service. You know that your ordered life is going to be upset again for you are almost sure to be involved. You do get involved and leave it all behind for you know not how long. So do many of your fellow faculty members. Best, Bisgard, Weinberg, McLaughlin, and many, many more. The students are subject to the draft and the military has moved in. Most of the student body is in uniform, assigned here to become medical officers. So you go and it may be early in 1946 before you get back. You may not care to be reminded of all that happened in those years, but you come back. Best, Bisgard, McLaughlin and many more come back. Some don't come back here. Joe Weinberg for one goes to California. Some like your classmate, Gordon Pracher, don't come back. Some of the students you knew like Musselman are back like specters from the grave. They sat out the war as prisoners in the Philippines and what they endured you can hardly write about.



*University Hospital from 42nd Street, ca. 1952.*

## A New Era Dawns

The school looks about as it did when you left it. Nothing of the physical plant has changed. The lawns are not up to their old standard — Darcy is getting old and will retire in a year. Changes are in the wind, however. A whole era is passing. Poynter retires this summer. This is the passing of an era in itself. A foundation is being set up in his name and you gladly pitch a little money in the pot. Probably no one in the world has done more to shape your career or develop your philosophy of life and your profession than this man. Latta is chairman of Anatomy now. Poynter gave that up about the time you left. Grodinsky is completely incapacitated and, you understand, dying. Ed, now a Professor, is "Mr. Gross Anatomy" and turning into something of a tradition himself. You don't particularly envy him, he has big shoes to fill and you just hope that he can live up to the standards that have been set for him. All of the basic science departments have changed. Willard has gone and Eggers will retire in another year. Gunderson runs Bacteriology now and Tollman will soon be chairman of Pathology. These two will soon be separate departments. Physiology and Pharmacology are thriving as McIntyre and Lawrence Bennett have developed one of the strongest areas in the College.

There is a whole new crop of senior men on the clinical staff now. Best, McLaughlin, Bisgard, Moody, Judd, MacQuiddy and others are stepping into that role. Perhaps you were one of the lucky ones who could count his military service as training and take his specialty boards. You may come home board certified. In that case you may soon be an Assistant Professor, assured of a hospital service and something better than quiz sections.

The new Dean arrives, Harold Lueth. He is fresh out of the Army and you wonder how his Army ways are going to go over back here in civilian life. He takes over the



*Harold C. Lueth, M.D., Dean, 1946-1952.*

Department of Internal Medicine too, Bliss has retired. Keegan will hang on in Surgery for a few more years.

You sense that great changes in medical education are on the way and that your school is soon going to grow into something far different from the one you remember. Most schools are building and expanding fast. They are restructuring their curricula and changing the face of medical education. Yours doesn't seem to be doing these things and you are afraid that some of the prestige it once knew is slipping away. The full time clinical staff seems inevitable now and your crystal ball tells you that it will be required before long. The volunteer faculty you served on and knew so well can't run the school that their predecessors founded much longer. You somehow accept this philosophically but many of your associates don't. They begin to feel threatened and pushed aside.

The change had really begun before you left. Two full time men had come in under a maternal-child health program, Dr. Willis Brown in Obstetrics and Dr. John Gedgoud in Pediatrics. Their status has changed. Brown left and went to Iowa and Gedgoud didn't stay full time very long. He has a little office down the street and does some private practice.

You wonder how Poynter is taking all of this. You remember so well the time before you left that you asked him how soon we would have a full time staff and he answered very emphatically, "I hope not for a thousand years." Poynter was conservative but he doesn't run the show anymore. He can only watch. The change here isn't coming fast — not as fast as it should but the next two or three years do alter the face of the campus. The new Children's Hospital just west of the College is opening and the entire west end of the campus has been graded down. Those high clay banks along Dewey Avenue and Forty-fourth street that you remember so well are gone. So is the magnificent lilac hedge that flanked the college to the north. There is talk that the Clarkson Hospital will build next to the campus in a few years and that something resembling a medical center may one day spring up.



*The Childrens Memorial Hospital. Completed in 1946.*

Meantime, many of the people you have known as teachers continue to bow out of the picture. You won't forget that banquet in the spring of 1947 honoring T. B. Allen, Rod Bliss, Alf Brown, Waters, "Jess" Willard, Wigton, Eggers, and Young. Miss Chamberlin, too, will soon retire and how everybody will miss her!

There have been a few developments affecting student life. A few of the fraternity houses have folded up. Since the war a good many more of the students are married than in your time. After all, you went to school in the depression days that scarcely seem more than a memory to most people now. Just before Dr. Poynter retired, Dr. MacQuiddy persuaded him to authorize a canteen or coffee shop in the South Building and this has become a gathering place for students and faculty alike. Some of the austerity of the institution you knew as a student has gone and you are glad to see it. MacQuiddy has also brought the Alumni Association to life. They have a little office on the campus now and promise to become a real force in the future of the school. Up to now it has been an almost purely paper organization.

Over the next few years, Dr. Poynter gives up the research position he had in Anatomy. His health is failing and in 1950 you hear the news. He is gone. You hope that he will always be remembered for the great man that he was.

Lueth is nearly out of the picture too. He has had problems with members of the staff. He hasn't gotten along too well with the Board of the Clarkson Hospital and there have been consequent delays in the building plans. You look at Kansas, at Iowa, at Colorado, and realize that we haven't moved as our neighbors have. You are sorry, for personally you liked Lueth but the blow falls in 1952. Lueth is gone and Perry Tollman, now on leave with the Air Force, will be back as Dean. This delights you but you don't envy Perry. He will have a hard row ahead of him. For one thing, the change over to a full



*J. Perry Tollman, M.D., Dean, 1952-1964.*

time clinical staff will face him and this will bring problems as it already has to most other schools. For another thing, the school will have to build and it will take some delicate negotiating to get the money. The urgency of these things is quickly emphasized as Tollman is greeted with his first crisis — possible loss of accreditation of the school. This possibility really upsets you for you remember the college from your student days as one of the elite among the State Medical Schools. The demands are plain: fulltime clinical staff and more clinical facilities. In spite of administrative handicaps, Perry moves and some changes begin.

Some building is already past the planning stage. The Nebraska Psychiatric Institute which has operated on a shoestring at the County Hospital needs quarters. The new director, a fireball by the name of Wittson, is pushing plans for a building southwest of the Children's Hospital. The way he will raise the money and organize the institute will earn him the admiration of everybody. Clarkson Hospital too is committed to building just north of Dewey Avenue and a new Physicians building will soon be located over on Farnam Street. You will probably leave the old Medical Arts Building, downtown and move your office out there.



*The Nebraska Psychiatric Institute. Completed in 1955.*

The legislature has responded to the needs of the college and money is appropriated for Unit III of the Hospital. The end of the 1950's will see this phase completed and the clinics finally move out of the South Building. By 1954-5 there are four fulltime clinical department chairmen. There is Roy Holly in Obstetrics, Bob Grissom in Medicine, "Jim" Musselman in Surgery and Gordon Gibbs in Pediatrics. There will be many more fulltime men soon and you can foresee the time when there will be no more volunteer department heads. Rudy Schenken who came as pathologist at the Methodist Hospital is head of Pathology. He is a powerful figure in medicine now and, at least at the school, will be regarded as a controversial one by some. No matter, you admire him in many ways and count him as a warm personal friend.

You continue your part on the volunteer staff, for you have a deep interest in the medical school. You take your turn on the hospital service and give your set of lectures to the junior and senior classes. This has become more of a drain on your time for your practice has probably grown and you are a senior partner in your office now. You hold full staff positions at your hospitals and have some important committee responsibilities. Your family is growing up and in college — your son perhaps enrolled at your old alma mater. You are probably involved in community affairs and perhaps hold an office at Happy Hollow or the Country Club for you probably belong to one of them.



*The Eugene C. Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer and Allied Diseases as seen from the north entrance of University Hospital Unit III, 1962.*

In a few more years a center for cancer research appears on the campus. The senior men who were almost new when you started are beginning to retire or pass on: MacQuiddy, Charley Owens, Lynn Hall, Fritz Niehaus, John Allen, Keegan. *You* are a senior man now and your title may be Professor but your position is different. The fulltime staff runs the service and you see your students mostly at the other hospitals.

Ed is Chairman of Anatomy now — even Dr. Latta is retiring, another era fading. A move has developed to build still another hospital east of Forty-second street and this precipitates a document known as the “White Paper.” Perhaps you keep out of this one but most of your colleagues don’t keep out and feelings run high. Finally Perry Tollman resigns. He has had twelve trying years but one thing at least pleases you: Everybody still likes him and feels that he has done well.

### **A Medical Center**

Now that fireball from the Psychiatric Institute, Wittson, moves in with his fabulous way of getting things done and they get done.

That idea of a hospital east of Forty-second street is squelched and the morale of the staff improves. Still the volunteer staff will never again play the part they once did at the College and many of them have begun to lose some of their interest. The curriculum has been changed and no longer bears much resemblance to the one you remember from your



*Cecil L. Wittson, M.D., Dean, College of Medicine, 1964-1968; President, Chancellor of the Medical Center, 1968-1972.*

school days. The basic sciences have been cut back and you wonder if the new generation of students will be as well grounded as you were. Soon there is money for a new hospital — and a basic science building which will fill the space between the North and South Buildings. The campus you have known for so long will soon be just a memory.

Dr. Wittson has brought your old friends Fay and Jo Smith back from Imperial. Fay is Professor of General Medicine and will be a right-hand man for Dean Wittson for the next few years. You are delighted to renew your old friendship and will be saddened by Fay's untimely death in a very few years.

Changes are coming so fast now that you can hardly keep up with them. You see the new Basic Science Building grow and the new Library appear above it — a tribute to Dr. McGoogan's magnificent efforts.

You see the new hospital open and the old wards remodeled and converted to other uses. A major radiation center is added linking the Eppley Institute and the Department of Radiology. A new Eppley Science Hall is opened but at the expense of demolition of your well remembered North Amphitheater. The North Building is completely changed, but is now, you feel most appropriately known as Poynter Hall. You see the School of Nursing become a college with a Dean and the College of Pharmacy move in from Lincoln. New programs like a school for Physical Therapy and Physician's Assistant division are added as the College of Medicine grows into a Medical Center. Dean Wittson now becomes the President, later the Chancellor, and a new Dean, Bob Kugel runs the medical school under him. The face of your alma mater has completely changed and you have to guide your old friends from out-of-town around — they can't find their way anymore.



*An End and a Beginning. Clearing of ground for the Basic Science Building, 1967.*

By the mid-seventies almost all of the people you knew and worked with are retiring. McIntyre, Bennett, Jacobi, Howard Hunt, Bisgard, McLaughlin — all of them retired and some of them gone. Ed has retired from the chairmanship of Anatomy but remains as an active teacher. You and Ed are almost the oldest of the new old guard.

Then one day you get that formal letter that you knew would come. Do you want to be a Professor Emeritus or a senior consultant? You too, will retire. You can continue to watch your school — now the Medical Center, and from the bottom of your heart, you wish it well.

You realize what a major part of your life it has been since you saw it on that first pre-med day and when Dr. Latta walked down the aisle of the old North Amphitheater that Monday morning almost a half a century ago.



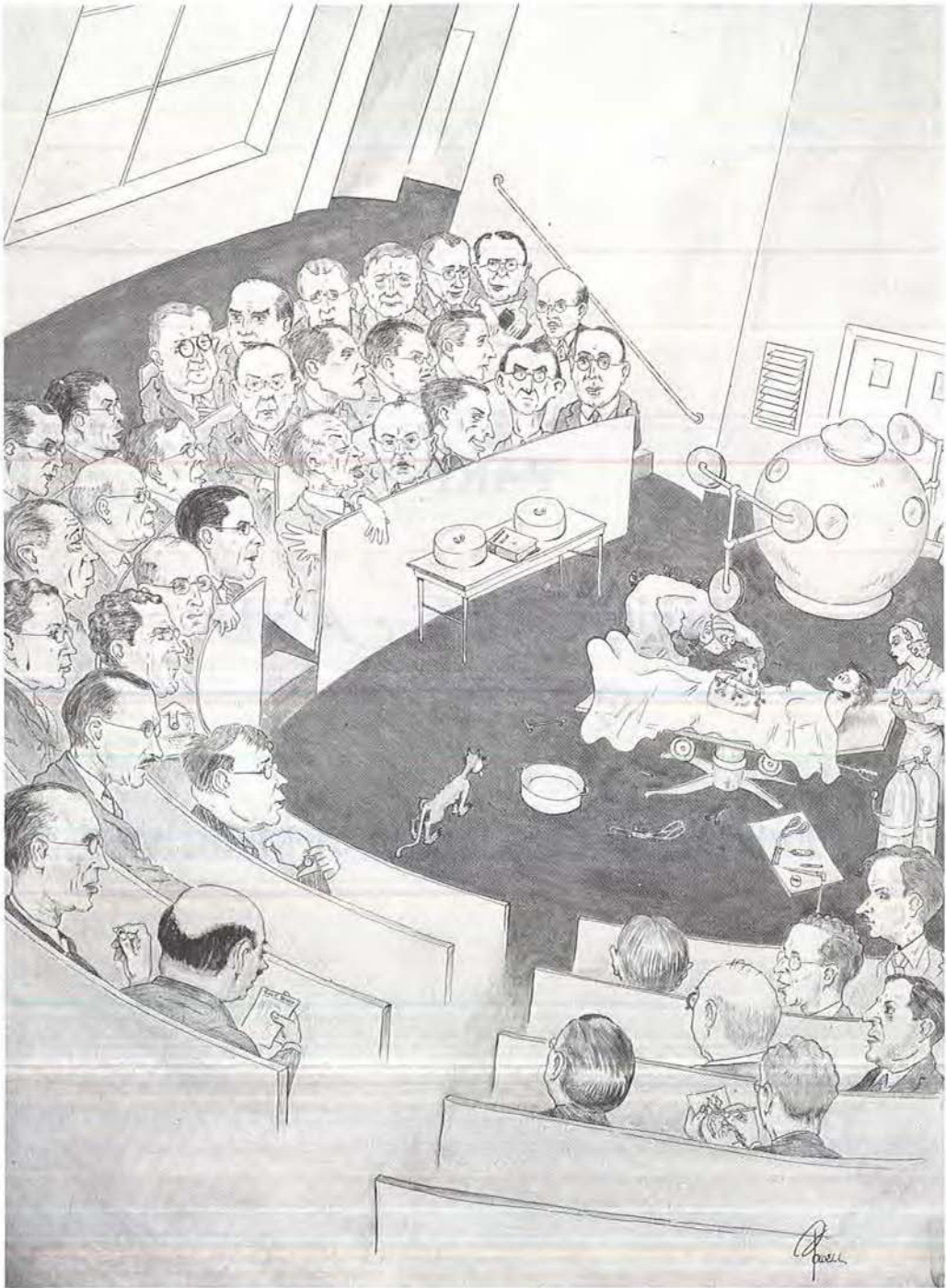
*Wittson Hall (below), completed in 1969 — The L. S. McGoogan Library of Medicine (above), completed in 1970.*



**PART II**

**NUGGETS AND  
PYRITES**

**Folklore of the College of Medicine**



*For identification, see page 104*

# NUGGETS AND PYRITES

## Folklore of the College of Medicine

### INTRODUCTION

History is a serious business and usually an impersonal one. True, people appear in it, in fact they make it, but you usually meet them as shapers and makers, heroes and villains, rather than as people. The main events, the turning points, the critical battles and the crucial decisions as well as the great main trends and what determined them, the times or precise dates at which things happened are the stuff of which History is made. These things are important and we must know something of them if we are to understand our own times and guide our own future wisely. We must also know them if we are to appreciate our own culture. This applies whether we are thinking of the world, a country or civilization, a region, or simply an institution. It should, and must, be written and documented if it is to be preserved and passed on.

But what of our own personal lives, memories and experiences? These consist mostly of the lesser things, the little incidents, the personal quirks, daily experiences and contacts which are quite unimportant in the big picture but still flavor our lives and give us much of what we treasure. Our own school is rich in these little events and experiences. They colored our own school days and the days of those who preceded us and followed us. They are what determined what the life of a medical student really was and is, what the people who studied and taught in medicine really were, and are like and how they got that way. Collectively these little things probably had much to do with shaping the major events.

These are the things that are apt to be lost in the ocean of time, and once gone no historian can recover them or more than guess at what they were. Yet when old timers or new timers get together they make up a large part of the reminiscences. This is my excuse for setting down a number of these things experienced at the University of Nebraska College of Medicine during a few years as a student and rather more than a few as a faculty member. If no one writes them down they are lost as many similar items in our history doubtless already are.

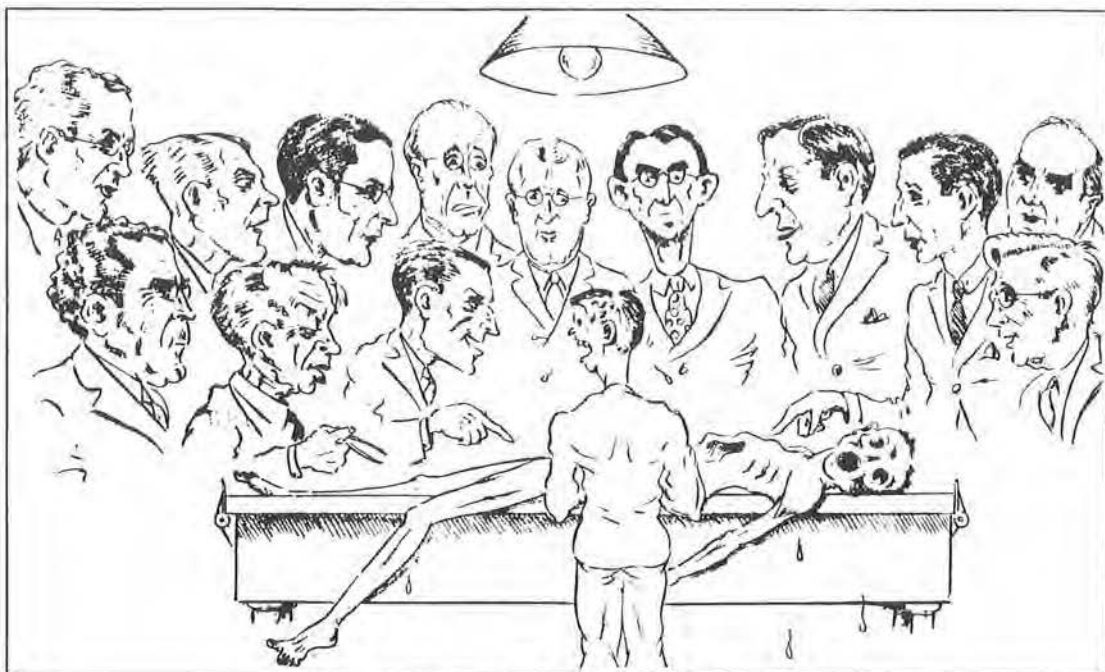
Very few of these stories are really important, though some of them seemed so at the time. Many are comic, a few are tragic, and some of them are things that could not or should not have been written at the time they happened but fall into the "now it can be told" category.

Obviously the collection is very incomplete, no volume could hold all of them. Obviously they are slanted toward the times and experiences of the author who saw things one way as a student and, sometimes, another way as a Professor.

The author hopes that others with different experiences in different times may also be moved to set them down. Today's newcomers will be tomorrow's old timers and recent events will be folklore in another generation.

All of these incidents happened, some precisely as told, some as nearly as the author can reconstruct them. All of the people are real, many named, a few unnamed when the latter course seemed wisest or occasionally the kindest. All obvious "bear dope" is either left out or exposed for what it was.

I sincerely hope that any indulgent reader can share some memories, some quiet chuckles, an occasional "belly laugh" and once in a while a tear with the writer. I sincerely hope that no one living is hurt, I have taken pains to avoid this, and that something of the flavor of our school and medical student life as it was can be passed on. In this spirit I humbly present what follows.



*For identification, see page 104*



In the early days of the Medical School the space behind the hospital was used as a baseball diamond. The game was real baseball (hard ball) and some memorable interfraternity games were played. Max Grow was a pitcher for the Phi Rhos and a good one — so good that professional baseball was interested in him. For a time he had George Shaner, another fine athlete, for a catcher and when that battery was working the opposition didn't have a chance. They were lucky ever to get a man to first base let alone score a run. The problem was that the battery was not always together. The Phi Rhos and Phi Betes were locked up in a game one day and George wasn't there, why this writer doesn't remember. Max tried to pitch but no one else on the Phi Rho team could catch him. Two tried and retired with split fingers and it soon became evident that if Max kept on no Phi Rho would be able to play. So Max retired to second base, the Phi Betes pounded the substitute and won the game.

A week later the Phi Betes played the Phi Chis. Gerry Thomas was the Phi Chi pitcher. He wasn't great but he was the best that the Phi Chis had. The game was close but the Phi Chis had a one run lead going into the last inning. (We played seven inning games).

At that point the Phi Betes got two men on base and Fay Smith came to bat. Fay was one of the finest characters ever to come out of our school but he wasn't a great hitter. He had gone down easily twice before in that game. Now Gerry, a cocky soul who was feeling his oats, teasingly fed Fay a soft one. Fay stung it for a two bagger and the Phi Betes won the game. The Phi Betes won the interfraternity baseball cup that year but it took a few assists from the opposition to enable them to pull it off.



The Phi Rho parties could on occasion get loud and somewhat boisterous. Many of their alumni were not in accord with such goings on but from time to time enough of the others were, so that they sometimes happened.

One dark Saturday night long ago, the Phi Rhos were really whooping it up. The band was loud, the voices were loud and the lights upstairs indicated clearly where abundant liquid refreshments were being poured. Late in the evening two brothers (not of Phi Rho Sigma) just happened to come up out of the darkness. Not that the brothers were truly derelicts, both were elected to AOA and have had reasonably honorable careers since. But on that night they were up to no good. They happened to have six — six-inch flash crackers — the equivalent of cherry bombs and a length of fuse designed to give them time for a getaway. The charge was planted in a garbage can just outside one of the open windows, the fuse was lighted and the brothers took off into the shadows of the old North Building. Nothing went wrong. The explosions rocked the neighborhood. Lights came on, people came out on their porches with flashlights, traffic stopped for a moment and an attitude of a surprise bombing prevailed. But from the Phi Rho house? Absolutely nothing. The hullabaloo inside was such that no one there knew that anything had happened!



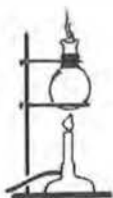
No one who took his premedic course in Lincoln in the 1920's or early 30's, will ever forget the annual pre-med day in Omaha. On that day the pre-med group came to the Medical School "en masse" for a regular Roman Holiday. The chief attraction was invariably a surgical operation, usually a bloody amputation by Dr. John E. Summers. These operations were held in the old surgical amphitheater at the south end of the operating suite, then located on the top floor of unit one of the hospital. It opened out onto the roof. The upperclass medical students always prepared the room in advance, pouring cans of ether around under the seats and seeing to it that the windows were closed and the heat turned on. The result was always a number of innocent premeds, unused to either the gory proceedings or the atmosphere, laid out on the roof recovering from various degrees of fainting.

Some of the others subjected to the Anatomy Lab for the first time met the same fate and no one will ever know how many would-be medics were turned into other channels on those days.

Other activities that marked pre-med day were the fraternity parties, a cut throat rush weekend unhampered by any regulations and a general atmosphere of hoop-a-la.

One of the traditions was a baseball game between the pre-meds and the freshman medics, often a pretty good game for there was some athletic talent in those groups. There was always a second game between AOA (the medical honor society) and SOL, a now forgotten group which included a selection of the hail-fellow-well-met members of the senior class. The latter group usually won the game!

Pre-med day was soon tamed down and became a reasonably civilized affair, but many old timers still lament the passing of the "wild and woolly" days.



Dr. Sergius Morgulis was the Professor of Biochemistry for many years and the perennial terror of the sophomore medical students (Biochemistry was given in the sophomore year for many years). He was a profound student of his subject and enjoyed an international reputation. He taught an excellent course but was not generally loved by most of his students among whom he was popularly known as "Sir Jesus." The stories about him are legion and some of these are perhaps better left buried in the past.

No one seemed to know exactly what determined the grade in Biochemistry but the opinion was widely held that if he liked you all was well. If he didn't, look out! The tale was often told of the unfortunate who had one question on his final oral examination namely "vat iss de Ph of goose fet?"

One thing that Dr. Morgulis could not stand was any interruption of his lectures. This was unfortunate because he got one almost every day.

In that time the steam locomotives ruled the American railroads and anyone who can remember them knows that they were among the noisiest machines that man ever invented. The belt line ran (and still does) past the campus just behind the heating plant and service building. During the fall, the windows of the south amphitheater were usually opened and almost invariably during the middle of the lecture a freight train came along blasting with the throttle wide open as it started up the long grade past the County

Hospital. Just opposite the South Building it whistled for the crossing at Forty-second street and din made hearing in the amphitheater impossible. No one will forget the moments of silent fury in which Dr. Morgulis used to stand when one of those trains went by, or sometimes the not-so-silent torrent of invective and profanity that he could pour forth in Russian.



Dr. Rodney Bliss was a big kindly man, the very image of a traditional family doctor. For many years he was the head of the Department of Internal Medicine. In his early days he had been a left-handed baseball pitcher, good enough to attract the attention of several major league clubs.

Dr. Bliss used to hold a weekly clinic in Internal Medicine for the junior students, in the old south amphitheater. There are many incidents that happened in those clinics. Traditional among them were his demonstration of a resonant "burp" following air swallowing and futility of the use of a stethoscope in cases that were self evident without it, emphasized by throwing his stethoscope across the room.

One thing that Dr. Bliss would not tolerate was sleeping during those clinics. No season ever passed without some unfortunate student dozing off in one of the front seats. The answer was always a piece of chalk thrown left handed as only a pitcher could throw it, which invariably hit the victim exactly in the center of the forehead. On one memorable occasion Dr. Bliss missed the mark and broke a student's glasses. Poor kindly Dr. Bliss was profuse in his apologies and the glasses were replaced. But what happened when the next student dozed off? A piece of chalk hit him in the middle of the forehead!



If you meet anyone who graduated from the College of Medicine between 1920 and 1945 and just remark "now when I was in Shanghai" or "when I was at Cook County Hospital" he will respond with "Dr. Eggers."

Dr. Eggers, for years head of Pathology and Bacteriology (it was all one department then), used to teach the sophomore course in Pathology. His lectures were something to remember. Walking back and forth behind the long lecture table in old room 208, North Building, he talked so fast no one taking notes could keep up with him.

The lectures were good ones but they simply came too fast. Dr. Eggers was always opposed to any outline or pre-written notes on his lectures, a point of view which would be rather understandable if the lectures changed from year to year, but they never did. Such sets of notes did exist however, compiled by students who worked in organized shifts to get them. They were run off and sold to subsequent classes for rather respectable prices, all without Dr. Eggers' knowledge or consent.

The author of this sketch once had a set of those notes, now long lost. It is a pity, for they would be a real collector's item, and incidentally still a pretty good review of Pathology.



No school such as ours has escaped its tragic episodes as well as its comic ones. A bright young intern who had graduated the year before pricked his finger while assisting at an autopsy. Later that day he went out to play tennis but soon returned to the interns' quarters acutely ill. By the next morning he was in extremis and that afternoon he died. The story was told for years as a caution to any who went into the autopsy room or doubted the lethal potential of the hemolytic streptococcus in the days before the sulfa drugs or antibiotics.



Alice Folda, the dietician once in charge of the cafeteria, was a nice looking girl and her disposition usually matched her looks. One noon however, the tigress in her broke through the surface and she literally flew right into Dr. Gunderson's face. "Gundy" was sometimes rather bluntly outspoken and not always in the right times or places. On this particular day it wasn't that Alice was in a bad mood, she just resented hearing Gundy call the food she served crap!

On another occasion Gundy was called down to investigate an outbreak of salmonella among a group of guests at a party. Suspicion seemed to point toward some lemon cream pie. Gundy, something of a trencherman himself, looked longingly at that pie. Then he said "It can't be that pie, in fact, I want a piece of it." After some hesitation, a piece was served him and devoured, and Gundy remarked, "Gosh that was good, give me another." Before Gundy left one of the girls asked him how long it would be before he got sick: if he were to get sick. "In about a day," responded Gundy, "but I won't get sick." About twenty-four hours later someone from that establishment called Gundy. His charming wife Dorrie answered the phone, with "He can't come to the phone now, he is sick."



Once Dr. Holyoke came up the stairs leading to the anatomy laboratory on the top floor of the old North Building (Poynter Hall). Before he reached the last landing he sensed that all was not well. There was just too much noise coming down the stairs from above. As he reached the top, one of the students came dashing out of the "bull pen" with a handful of lung, winding up with the obvious intent of throwing it at something, or more probably, someone. Dr. Holyoke was as sympathetic toward such goings on as his position would permit. He had himself been on the carpet in the not too distant past, but he was in charge and he had to keep order. He ordered that student out of the laboratory with the provision that when he thought he could behave himself he could come back — not until.

Later Dr. Holyoke heard wailings coming from the washroom. "Mike" (Mike spent many years as the absolute prototype of a family doctor in western Nebraska, but he grew up in South Omaha and he could be rough and tough); Mike had me down on the floor. He was beating me over the head with that G.D. lung. Then Dr. Holyoke kicks *me* out of the lab."

Perhaps justice didn't prevail that day!



Up into the middle 1930's there used to be a selection of elective courses offered to the senior students. Most of these were limited to comparatively few students and admission was on a first come, first served basis. Senior registration was always a madhouse with students lining up hours before the process began. It is said that some had even spent a night outside the door to be sure of a place in line. This is still done for World Series tickets and such events, but it isn't customary for medical students waiting to register.

One of those courses was a weekly seminar on current developments in Internal Medicine which was held at the home of Dr. A. D. Dunn in the evening. Not only were the seminars of exceptional value, they were always carefully prepared, there were always the wonderful refreshments served by Mrs. Dunn afterward. That course may have been the chief incentive for students sitting up in the hall all night. As a sequel it might be stated that Dr. Poynter soon abolished senior electives. He could find no reasonable way to select students for classes with limited enrollment.



Every Tuesday and Thursday morning the entire operating suite at the University Hospital was something closely akin to Bedlam. The orthopedic surgeons did their work on those mornings. This meant that Dr. Lord, Dr. Schrock and Dr. Herman Johnson were all in the same place at the same time. Some time later, schedules were rearranged and some of the orthopedic work was done at other times. The operating room staff simply could not take all three "orthopods" at once.



*Dr. Robert D. Schrock*



Students do not seem to take on much, if any, of the rough and ready work around the College anymore, but there was a time, through the 1930's and before, when you might have found a medical student working at almost anything. In fact, more than a few students depended on these jobs for their education. There were very few scholarships, and loan money was scarce and not easy to come by. Besides, the idea was then prevalent that there was considerable advantage to graduating from school free of debt.

Just a few of the jobs about the campus where you might have found a student working:

Mowing the lawns and working in the greenhouse

Rolling and dragging the tennis courts

Working on the switchboard at night

Carrying trays and washing dishes in the cafeteria

Wrestling down the campus sheep and bleeding it for sheep cells used in the old Wassermann test

Unloading coal from railroad cars at the heating plant

Wrapping cadavers for the course in Anatomy

Sweeping and mopping floors



One of the best remembered student projects once in the long ago was the College Club Orchestra. This dance band started under the leadership of Harley Anderson. It was chiefly an activity of Phi Rho Sigma and while not an entirely closed corporation when some special talent was needed, it did consist mostly of medical students. For over fifteen years it was one of the leading dance bands in Omaha, highly in demand at all college and high school dances. You can still find a few physicians who have fond memories of playing their way through medical school in the College Club. Harley Anderson, Speed Cogswell, Ray Rice and Bob Benford are surviving members.



In the spring of 1929 a new requirement for graduation was introduced, the comprehensive examination. For the next fifteen or twenty years this exam was almost the only cloud that hung in the sky of the senior medical students, once the thesis was finished.

The examination was held in two sessions, the first a single topic on which the neophyte physician was supposed to write for three hours. The second consisted of four or five more specific essay questions.

There was always speculation rife among the seniors as to what the long question would be, but no record that anyone ever guessed correctly. Some of the topics included water metabolism, urine, blood, inflammation, syphilis, and secretion and excretion.

Any of you who think you have it tough with the National Boards, how would you like to write a three hour essay on any of those subjects right off of the top of your head?

Incidentally, how would you like to have been on the faculty committee that had to read all of those essays within forty-eight hours of the time that they were written?

The writer of these sketches went through both experiences and feels that the latter was probably the worse of the two.



Dr. Millard Gunderson was the Professor of Bacteriology, later to become Microbiology, from 1935 until after World War II, and the first Chairman of the Department of Medical Microbiology. He was also something of a character.

Gundy was no enthusiast for taking long walks and a house within a block of the medical school suited him to a "T."

The trouble was that the house was also next door to the Phi Rho house and the time an era when that fraternity housed some of the most accomplished campus rowdies. A sometimes cold, and occasionally rather hot, war was waged back and forth for some years. Gundy was a good sport about the noise attendant on the parties at the house as long as they kept it indoors and at a reasonable level, neither of which conditions was always fulfilled. There was the occasion when an all night party in one of the upstairs rooms plagued him beyond endurance and he finally aimed a high power flashlight in the window to illuminate the goings on.

Another time someone thought it would be a ducky idea to start tossing beer bottles out of the window onto Gundy's driveway. The following morning there were five or six bleary-eyed Phi Rhos, who were still taking Microbiology, out in Gundy's driveway cleaning up the glass.



Single medical students in fraternity houses "don't grow into plaster saints." The Phi Rhos had no corner on escapades that sometimes brought a visitation from the faculty and occasionally the police. At one time or another the Phi Chis, the AKs, the Nu Sigs and Phi Betes were justifiably in the dog house and under dire threats of what might happen if they didn't mend their ways. Many of those episodes are perhaps better left in the past, although they all might tickle the nostalgia of more than one honorable and respected physician still in practice.

One thing is perfectly clear, a medical fraternity house was not likely to be an ideal next door neighbor!



The Phi Betes had at least their share of big innings when it came to raising hell. Back in the late 20's they had a favorite rendezvous down in South Omaha which was known as Walt's. What has become of it since I have no idea. One thing that Walt's had besides plenty of good prohibition time beer was a little known side door. How often, as the raiders came in the front door, did the medics step out of the side one. This was fortunate; medical students were not supposed to patronize such places in those days.

Just a few years later the picture changed. Prohibition was gone and Jamison's, Jim's it was called, was the meeting place for the whole school and very conveniently located at Fortieth and Farnam. The class of 1939 made such a place for themselves there that Axel, the bartender, cried when they graduated!



In 1921 the newly appointed Assistant Professor of Anatomy, fresh from an Instructorship at Cornell University, was walking down a hall in the old North Laboratory building toward his new office. As he passed the head of the stairs he was accosted by a tall, lean man who walked with an air of authority, and talked the same way. He fixed the new Professor with a stoney eye and said, "Don't you know it's against the rules for students to smoke in the hall?" "Yes, I do," said the stranger. "Then you take that outside and get rid of it." "I think," said the recruit, "that I will just take it to my office; that is where I was going." Dr. Latta and Dr. R. A. Moser were good friends for years after the incident and Dr. Latta never let him forget how he once confused him with a medical student.



There never was a silence more profound than that which prevailed in the North Amphitheater (now torn down) when the freshman class gathered for the first lecture in Embryology and Dr. Latta entered. No one who was ever there can forget the effect of his opening remarks, "It is my pleasure to introduce you to the study of medicine. Embryology is an excellent elimination course, it has many intricacies."

Once a student who had a way of being perplexed more often than tactful, called down the hall after Dr. Latta. "Hey Latta, I need some help." Dr. Latta looked at him for a minute and quietly remarked, "If you want to be familiar, my name is John."



*Dr. John S. Latta*



A student sat at his place in the Organology lab one morning trying to get a somewhat balky microscope to focus on a specimen. He was approached by Dr. Willard, for many years Professor in the department. Dr. Willard took in the situation and, as always kindly and helpful, sat down and proceeded to disassemble the microscope. When the instrument was completely dismantled, the noon bell rang and Dr. Willard departed for lunch, leaving the student staring at what lay before him. Sometime that afternoon, the microscope was reassembled, but the student missed his lunch, and the microscope still wouldn't work well.

Many old timers remember well how Dr. Willard's progress through the laboratory was preceded by a wave of disappearing drawings. All too many students knew that if Dr. Willard had suggestions to make, they were usually accompanied by marks on the paper which left the poor artist no choice but to start the drawing all over again.



It is a strange thing how such diverse forms as arthropods and reptiles can become confused in folklore. For years, every freshman student knew before he started his first class that Dr. Willard had once dissected the fifth cranial nerve out of a sand flea. Dr. Willard's uncanny skill at manipulation and his meticulous technique seemed to be consistent with the story. Unhappily, the sand flea was not a sand flea. It was a lizard, *Anolis carolinensis*. Dr. Willard's description of the cranial nerves in this form remains a classic to this day, eagerly sought after by comparative neurologists.



One of the things that Dr. Holyoke was always remembered for was a highly characteristic speaking voice. For years he was regularly imitated at the senior banquets and such occasions. Sometimes it happened right there in the Anatomy Lab.

Once he was demonstrating to a dissecting group early in the course, and one of those students continued to speak back with an identical accent. Finally Holyoke turned on him and told him, "Buster — you had better talk that way through all of the rest of the course or you are going to be in trouble."



It isn't customary for people to stick knives into each others' livers except for the purpose of murder or surgery, and yet it happened in the dissecting lab one afternoon years ago.

It seems that in those days students were required to wear white suits to the laboratory and these were laundered at the student's own expense, or at the expense of sweat on the brow of his mother. Somehow the suits didn't get washed very often and when one did, the beautiful clean white stood out like a snowdrift on an obsidian cliff. A tradition arose in the lab that when a clean white suit

walked in the door, it was to be thoroughly marked up with colored chalk by the other filthy birds. This led to occasional lively scuffles, when the staff was off at some far corner of the laboratory. On one such occasion, the clean victim backed against a wall, and, with no intended malice, held his dissecting knife out in front of him. An oncoming student was given a push from behind and impaled himself on the blade, which entered just at his right costal margin. After the casualty was rushed over to the hospital and the blood was mopped up, it was proven that the knife had actually entered his liver. That student made a rapid and uneventful recovery and survives today, the ex-chairman of one of our departments and one of the best-known specialists in his field (and a past king of Ak-Sar-Ben!).



One of the better-known works to come out of the Department of Anatomy dealt with the fascial spaces of the neck. This work was based in part on a careful study of cross-sections of human cadavers. However, in that far-off day, there were no electric band saws, no carefully prepared sliding table, and no artificial freezer, so much more primitive measures had to be used. The specimen was placed on the roof of the old North Building and the investigators patiently waited for a cold wave. Nature obliged them that year with one of the most bitterly cold winters in our history. The specimen was beautifully frozen, but there were no technicians to help out. The sections were cut by two half-frozen anatomists working furiously with a meat saw and warming their fingers between cuts as best they could. May it be added, should you look up the papers in which this work was published, you will find no mention of the sectioning process under Materials and Methods!



Students and faculty who were here in the fifties and sixties can never forget H. Chandler Elliott. Dr. Elliott was a neuroanatomist who came from Toronto and pretended to be more British than any who ever came here from the shores of Albion. He had been badly crippled by poliomyelitis since childhood and was highly admired for the way he lived with a terrible handicap. While Elliott was admired, he definitely was not generally loved. He was perhaps the most irascible character who ever crossed our stage. People who didn't know used to try to help him get about and to help when he fell down — which he did at least once a day. They were always repulsed brusquely and rudely. Some even had their shins cracked with his cane. The would-be good samaritans soon learned to let be, even if they passed by on the *same* side of the road.

For some years Elliott taught the course in Neuroanatomy. His lectures were given in perfect and precise diction, for Elliott was a highly erudite man. The trouble was that they frequently contained more erudition than Neuroanatomy. They were given in room 208 Poynter Hall, since Elliott couldn't get into the north amphitheater. The room was crowded and uncomfortable. Some students had to stand or sit on the risers, and most of the finesse of Elliott's lectures was wasted. He used his own textbook — one that to this writer's best knowledge was never used anywhere else. The labs were devoted to a meticulous series of "foldout" charts that the students were supposed to make.

Elliott did make a few close friends in the student body almost every year, but most of our graduates don't remember their Neuroanatomy with any particular pleasure.



Dr. H. Chandler Elliott may have come closer to battering down the North Building than all of the wind and weather of over fifty years. He used to park his car exactly at the south door against the steps. He backed in, and his conception of when to stop backing was when his car hit something. His car always looked like the business end of a battering ram. The steps soon looked as though they had been exposed to the business end of a battering ram and they required repairs on a number of occasions. Later, when Wittson Hall was under construction, approach to the south door was blocked off. Elliott then started to use the west door inside the angle of the building. He backed in from the driveway — some sixty or seventy feet away — right over the lawn, which became a mass of ruts. With this long run, he often hit the building hard. He never backed over anyone — mostly because people learned to look out for him, but the marks he put on Poynter Hall are still there.



One of our most famous and distinguished alumni was taking a quiz in Anatomy from Dr. Poynter. Dr. Poynter reached into a little tank and brought out a specimen, which he handed to the student with the query, "Is this the right kidney or the left?" The student, somewhat puzzled for a moment, finally said, "I think this impression identifies it as the right kidney." "It's the spleen," chuckled Dr. Poynter.

Once in the long ago, Dr. Poynter was occupied with a dissecting group in the old Gross Anatomy lab when a piece of liver came over the partition and hit him in the back of the neck. The marksmen in the next room soon found out who they had inadvertently hit, but nothing happened and the expected storm did not break. Three days later came the oral demonstration on the abdomen, and at the end of the afternoon, four thoroughly shaken and chastened students left that cubicle. They had been quizzed for a full two hours on the liver!



During the many, many years that Gross Anatomy occupied the top floor of the North Building (now Poynter Hall), there was a washroom located near the inside angle of the L-shaped edifice. The students used to assemble here for a break during the long dissecting periods. Often in the spring, when the windows were open someone would sit on the wide ledge with his rear elevation exposed to view from the lawn below. He was also exposed to the roof of the west wing of the building just above. Furthermore, the corner of the building made an excellent parapet to hide anyone on the roof. One beautiful spring afternoon, a student sitting in the window emitted a howl. Something hit him and stung him. Soon another followed and before the afternoon ended, some dozen freshmen anatomists were rubbing little welts over their gluteal regions. Obviously they had come under fire from some marksman on the roof armed with a rubber band and plenty of paper wads. The incident created quite a stir, enough so the marksman was never identified but a senior Professor in the department smiles happily to himself whenever he hears the story.



If you ever have occasion to read the bulletins of the Omaha Medical College for the first few years of its existence, you can find some curious entries. One of these concerns an anatomical museum stated to be the personal property of Dr. George Ayres, the first Professor of Anatomy. The bulletin solicits contributions to the collection with the statement that any donations will be duly catalogued and the donor recognized.

In 1884, Dr. Ayres was replaced as Professor of Anatomy by Dr. Ewing Brown, and no further mention can be found of the museum. This writer wonders what happened to it.



When Dr. Willard used to give the lectures in Neuroanatomy (Neurology, as it was called in those days), he usually brought with him an old papier mache model of a brain stem. He would lay it on the lecture table and proceed with his lecture, which was prone to wander off in a variety of directions, but rarely toward the brain stem. At the end of the lecture, he would pick up the model and take it with him, only to bring it

back the next day and repeat the performance. You can still find many alumni of that day who remember him bringing that model to every lecture in the course and never referring to it once.



It was rumored in the old days that Dr. Willard once pushed a penis into a trachea and sectioned the combination for an unknown in Histology. The story has been repeated often, but no one ever remembers having actually seen the specimen.

Dr. Willard once dropped a little flask full of sulfuric acid. The flask hit a knife in his pocket and broke, covering him with its liquid fire. He quickly drenched himself from the waist down with water and so saved his skin from serious damage. Then he started to walk home. By the time he got there, he was looking for a policeman. His pants had entirely disintegrated.



There are some who feel that far too much emphasis is placed on the number of papers a faculty member publishes without enough on the content of those papers. So we have the so-called "pot boiler" and avalanches of references many of which contain nothing in particular. Consider, however, the case of Dr. Willard. Dr. Willard held a professorship in Anatomy for over thirty years. His *only* publication was the

classic work on the cranial nerves of *Anolis carolinensis*. The trouble was that he could never drive himself to publish an incomplete piece of work. He was a tireless investigator and over the many years he accumulated a magnificent series of experiments on the tenth cranial nerve complex of the mouse. He had the entire distribution of all components of the vagus nerve including the accessory root worked out in detail but nothing ever published up to the time he retired. Unless all of Dr. Willard's specimens and notes have been thrown out, somewhere in the department lies the answer to the complexities of the vagus nerve in one mammalian form, information that we very much need. Dr. Willard's career stands as a big plus for the cause of those who advocate a "publish or perish" philosophy.



One of the really delightful habits in the old Department of Anatomy was the philosophical discussions. Over the years these included everything imaginable. One afternoon, Dr. Eggers (once Professor of Pathology), himself a philosopher with a lightning quick wit, was engaged in one of those discussions which turned to the subject of free will.

A graduate student (who afterward had a most distinguished career as Chief of Cardiology at the Mayo Clinic) declared openly that come what might, he had a free will and was the director of his own destiny. Dr. Eggers immediately challenged him, "You can't even walk down the hall and back on your own free will." The student promptly walked down the hall and returned triumphantly to be met with "Of course you didn't. If I hadn't challenged you, you never could have done it. It was my influence not your will that controlled your action."



The fascia fight has disappeared from the repertoire of medical student monkey business some years ago. Not that it was ever sanctioned by the staff although some of them had certainly participated in this unhallowed sport in their student days. The lab was too big and staff too few to prevent it entirely. One afternoon a battle royale broke out in the old north dissecting room in Poynter Hall. By the time the professor walked in, everything in the room was smeared with grease, including the students. The professor disappeared to reappear a few minutes later with buckets of hot water, soap, and sponges. These, he said, are going in this door. When they come out that one, this room will be clean. That was the last big fascia fight that year. A practicing psychiatrist in Omaha still reminds the professor of that event with a twinkle in his eye.



In the days when ladies usually covered up a little more than now, two graduate students in Anatomy developed a stratagem. When an attractive new technician or secretary appeared she was to be escorted over the department and the tour included a trip down the old open and lattice-work fire escape, with the students always sure to go first! The scheme worked beautifully but the ladies soon caught on and the tradition did not last long. But there are a few survivors who remember it!



If you ask anyone who studied Anatomy between 1922 and 1939 if he remembers Dr. Grodinsky, you may notice a momentary pallor sweep over his face. Grodinsky was probably one of the most highly accomplished terrorizers of medical students that American medical education has ever known. He had a way of tongue lashing everyone, even the best and when he was well warmed up, his stentorian voice resounded over the entire fourth floor of Poynter Hall. There are many tales of devastated medical students that he left in his wake, but also one in which he nearly devastated himself.

A rather fat and lazy student had exasperated his table partners beyond endurance by his habit of managing never to dissect at all. One afternoon, he was lured into a larger

room containing four tables and sixteen students and the door was locked behind him. All of these ruffians set upon him, laid him over a study table and proceeded to administer a beating with Anatomy books. Suddenly the door opened and Grodinsky walked into the riot. The tongue lashing lasted fifteen minutes. It included references to the bad quality work, the bad behavior, the bad dissection, the lack of knowledge, and negligible possibility that anyone involved would ever pass the course. Grodinsky, as he always did, finished by hitching up his pants, turning on his heel, and making a dignified exit leaving emotional wreckage behind him. It was then that he stumbled over a stubbed-off water pipe and only stopped when he hit the wall across the hall. He was never quite so rough on those particular students again and all survived to practice medicine.



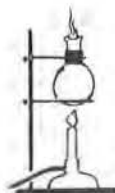
Once Dr. Grodinsky was sitting in his office at the west end of Poynter Hall when his attention was attracted by a kite flying over the South Building. Then he noticed that the string seemed to lead right into the window of one of the dissecting rooms. The would-be Benjamin Franklins all went home that night with blistered ears and promises (unfulfilled) of flunking in Anatomy.

A long time member of the Department of Anatomy, also a distinguished orthopedic surgeon, speaks with feeling on his terrifying encounters with Dr. Grodinsky as a freshman student. When he was in Europe in the combat zone during World War II, he used to dream that Grodinsky was standing over him still telling him what he thought of his work.



A bothered student came to Dr. Poynter shortly before the final "star chamber" in Gross Anatomy and asked what he could do to prepare. Dr. Poynter never did believe in cramming for examinations. He told the student that he might as well go to a show the night before and try to forget the whole thing. The student followed Poynter's advice and betook himself to the Gayety Theater, Omaha's Burlesque show of the time.

The next day he arrived for his examination and happened to draw Dr. Poynter for his examiner. He told Poynter where he had been the night before. Poynter quizzed him on surface and topographical Anatomy and the student passed with a good grade.



Some fairly good research used to be done in the Department of Anatomy with improvised apparatus that a modern investigator would say was thrown together from scrap lumber and baling wire. A fairly nice study of pericardial absorption (still unpublished) was once carried out by substituting for the cardiac pulsations a canula in the femoral artery of a rat connected to a rubber tube which was rhythmically stroked by a projection soldered to the turntable of an old phonograph. The action of the iliopsoas muscle as a rotator was once studied with a model consisting of a pelvis, a femur, thirty feet of clothes line, five pullies, and a flatiron. That study was published (in a "refereed" journal).



The old morgue with its outdated incinerator in the basement of Poynter Hall could have been the site of the perfect murder. A victim could have vanished from the face of the earth with no real sign of what became of him. Perhaps such a murder nearly occurred there one evening many years ago. The Department of Anatomy had a preparator who had been trained in Europe and who did absolutely superb work, of the kind we haven't seen since. He was, however, something of a psychiatric case. Two students had been hired to bring up bodies from the morgue to the dissecting rooms for the course which was to start in a few weeks. The preparator took a hearty dislike to one of those students. That student was working late by himself wrapping bodies in cotton and bandages when he suddenly felt he was not alone. He turned to see the preparator standing over him with a raised hammer. Fortunately, the student was something of a rough and tumble fighter himself and he quickly had the situation under control, although the preparator repeatedly said, "I am going to kill you." The student still had a queer feeling about the incident years afterward. The Department of Anatomy had a new preparator the following year.



The buildup for the rigors and terrors of the course in Embryology used to be drawn in vivid colors for all entering freshmen medical students some of whom started in a near state of panic. After the questions were handed out for the first examination one year, Dr. Latta heard a thump on one of the desks and turned to see a big, husky medical student with his head down on the desk. He had read the first question and fainted.



*Dr. R. A. Moser, Dr. John F. Allen*



A student (and a very good one) was busy dissecting on the face one afternoon when Dr. Grodinsky walked in and began to look at his work. Then he demanded "Where is the buccinator muscle?" "In the bucket" retorted the student pointing under the table. "So is your grade for this region" shot back Grodinsky as he walked out and slammed the door leaving the student horror-stricken over what he had just blurted out.

There was an occasion when Dr. Grodinsky had finished demonstrating a group on the upper extremity. He finally asked one student how he thought he had done. The student replied, "I am afraid I failed." Grodinsky roared back at him, "That is the only correct statement I have heard you make all afternoon." (The student eventually passed Anatomy).



A freshman student was found chewing tobacco in the Anatomy Laboratory one afternoon. The instructor in charge called him in and started to make it rather plain that tobacco chewing was not appropriate and no one intended to clean up the can he used for a cuspidor. The instructor was slightly disarmed when the student retorted, "My father used to chew tobacco in this laboratory and Dr. Poynter let him do it. It was the only way he could stand the smell up here. I had hoped that you would be as liberal as Dr. Poynter."



Grodinsky was not only noted for his hammer-and-tong ways with medical students, when he got into his car he also had a "lead foot." In 1935, the American Association of Anatomists met in St. Louis. This seemed a grand opportunity to attend and the entire department, from Chairman to graduate student, piled into two cars and took off. On the return trip, everybody stopped off in Hannibal to look in on the past of Mark Twain. They started for Omaha the following morning. Grodinsky and his passengers got a late start and "Grody" was bent on getting home early. Two graduate students in the back seat were clocking him at a mile every 50 seconds. The first car load was passed fifty or sixty miles out on the road. Then *they* passed a stationary and furious Grodinsky that afternoon in Clarinda. He had stopped for a sandwich and locked his keys in the car.



There was a year in the late 30's when the graduate students in Anatomy were a highly accomplished group of pranksters. The list of goings on was almost endless. An instructor in Bacteriology went to lecture with an eye blackened by a device he was asked to look through. A graduate student cleaning an animal cage was locked in and exhibited to a passing class of nurses as a recently captured specimen. A Professor of Microbiology found a handful of bolts under the wheel cover of his new car. A new instructor in Anatomy became quite unpopular with the group and endured a number of strange

things. After the chief wag of the group found an ad in a magazine which inspired him, only the good judgement of the others prevented that instructor from receiving a grand piano on thirty days free trial.



"Old Robert" was one of the janitors and caretakers at the College of Medicine a long time ago. He used to sleep in a room on the ground floor of the North Building (Poynter Hall) and some people really believed that at some remote time in his past he had actually had a bath. Old Robert eventually developed carcinoma of the rectum and died in the University Hospital, but his sleeping quarters went untouched, unused, and unfumigated for some time afterward. Then hay was stored for a time in that room and used in a little animal room built in a penthouse on the roof. The animal room communicated through a ventilator with the departmental darkroom on the floor below. The time came when the technician and photographer, some graduate students, and faculty began to itch and notice strange little bites. An expert was consulted, made a diagnosis, and the darkroom was inspected. Several homes were badly disturbed that night. Everyone who had used the darkroom was infested with bed bugs.



The technician over in Biochemistry who made up the solutions and filled the bottles was a favorite of everyone. When he was admitted to medical school everybody was happy. The young man fared well for his first few weeks and then began to run around with a decidedly rowdy element in the student body. No one ever knew quite what happened, but the sunny disposition faded and he became more and more silent and withdrawn. No one who was there can forget that dinner meeting of the basic science staff when Dr. Poynter was called to the telephone and returned, visibly shaken, to announce, "One of our freshman students has just committed suicide."



In the late twenties a group of freshman students went to work on their cadaver on their first afternoon in the dissecting room. In those days it was required that the skin be reflected precisely and all of the cutaneous nerves on the upper back dissected out in detail before the subcutaneous tissue could be removed. These students didn't seem to appreciate. They were either a few years ahead of their time or, more probably, a little blind to their instructions. In any case by mid-afternoon they had the upper back bare almost down to the muscles. At that point they were accosted by Dr. Poynter who promptly hit the ceiling. That body was to be wrapped up and not touched again until they had his expressed permission to do so. They had done the worst that they possibly could by that body and any more of the same was sure to lead to a catastrophic end to their careers.

The students were still in a state of shock from that visit when they had another from Dr. Grodinsky. The dose was repeated as only Grodinsky could repeat it and he was perhaps the most masterful hand at dressing down students that the school has ever known. What little wreckage he left behind was cleaned up by Dr. Best, who delivered the third installment.

Four freshmen left the campus that evening convinced that any hopes they had of ever entering medicine were dashed forever. Somehow that group did manage to recover and to go on to complete the course. One of them even came back to Anatomy as a major career. Whenever he reads the incident in the Bounty Trilogy of the man who was flogged through the fleet, he remembers his first day in Anatomy.



One morning Dr. Latta and Dr. Holyoke walked around to the west end of Poynter Hall and found Dr. Willard collapsed at his desk obviously in severe pain and near shock. They quickly got him over to the University Hospital where emergency surgery revealed a perforated duodenal ulcer. Dr. Willard survived that episode. He died at his home in California years later at the age of 93.



When Manuel Grodinsky was working on the fascial spaces of the foot, he needed material. He got it by collecting all of the legs and feet that he could find in the dissecting room. One dissecting group had been taking special pains to see that the feet on their specimen were in good condition. They had carefully wrapped and rewrapped them and kept them thoroughly moist. Imagine their feeling when they suddenly found those feet replaced by two dried up specimens that couldn't have been dissected with a hammer and chisel. They were told that this was all in the best interests of research. One of them did get over the jolt and eventually did a little research on his own. The other three never did recover. To this day none of them has even published a paper.



Dr. Grodinsky never did give up his investigative work in Anatomy. Some years after he had been forced to retire from active teaching, a co-worker, still in the department, used to go to his home to continue a study on the inguinal region. He still remembers his last visit. Grodinsky, far gone with myasthenia gravis, was gamely propped up at a table by his housekeeper (his wife had died a year before), still as keen as ever, but hardly able to hold a pencil. Two weeks later Grodinsky died. His family destroyed the manuscript and notes and the work was never published.



Somewhere in the Department of Anatomy is a strange model of the knee joint. It consists of a femur, tibia, fibula, and patella with a few of the ligaments and menisci restored. The strange thing about this model is that it consists of a left femur mounted on a right tibia and fibula. A stranger thing about it is that it was used for years by Drs. Poynter, Grodinsky, Best, Davis, and Holyoke as a teaching specimen without one of them discovering the error. The error was discovered by a not overly bright medical student during an oral examination!



Dr. Poynter was a man who had no use for frills. During his long tenure as Dean there were no student eating facilities on campus and no such thing as a coffee shop or canteen. Dr. MacQuiddy, always a staunch friend of the students, although something of a martinet himself, finally prevailed on Dr. Poynter to approve the establishment of a canteen as his last official act before retiring.

In some ways Dr. Poynter was a very formal man. He and Mrs. Poynter used to entertain and no old timer can forget those dinners. They were always meticulously and beautifully served and those evenings were always a delight. There was, however, nothing alcoholic. Dress was formal and the poor graduate students of that day could choose — stay at home or rent a tuxedo.

Dr. Poynter always smoked Fatimas. During the war years, these were often hard to get. The medical students who were in uniform and had access to the post-exchange could still buy them, and Poynter had a standing agreement with several students. He bought whatever cigarettes he could get and traded them to the students for Fatimas.



This writer would love to know where the statuary that has been in the Department of Anatomy ever since he can remember it, came from. There were at least four pieces: the Greek slave girl, a statue of an unidentified man, one of the famous Hercules, and the Greek boxer, the last with the dermatomes painted on it by Rose Reynolds. An old picture of the Anatomy Laboratory in Poynter Hall, taken in 1914, shows some of these statues, and they probably came up from Lincoln with Dr. Poynter when the medical school was established on its present site. Where Dr. Poynter got them it is likely that no one living knows. At all events they graced the laboratory for many years lending a classic and artistic touch that some of us miss in these utilitarian days. Some of the old equipment in the department can be identified in the pictures of the Anatomical Laboratories at the Omaha Medical College before the turn of the century.



The hospital dining room was always located in the south wing of unit one on the ground floor (now occupied by the nose and throat clinic) until it was moved to its present location not too many years ago. Before World War II, it was restricted to the hospital staff. The general public and student body were not supposed to eat there. The door opening into the cafeteria had an open upper panel which was filled with clear glass. Once years ago that panel was broken. The splinters were removed, but no one got around to replacing the glass for some weeks. In those days, the interns used to come down for a midnight snack after their work on the wards was done. This was something you could do in those happy and informal times. With the glass gone, it was fun to try to jump through the opening in the door.

One night two of these interns came down and one took off and made the jump, unaware that the glass had been replaced that very afternoon.

No one knows why he wasn't cut, but the fact remains that the door went a few more weeks minus glass; and from then on, the boys felt the opening first and jumped afterward.



Neither Dr. Latta nor Dr. Holyoke ever quite forgave the operating superintendent who ruled the campus during the war years. Cleaning up the dirty dissecting tables after the course in Anatomy, he contended, was not a part of the custodian's duties and none of them would be allowed to do it. At that time there was no preparator available, and the two anatomists had to do all of the embalming and the heavy work in the morgue. When added to that was the job of cleaning up those filthy tables after three consecutive courses, neither of them quite got over it.



There used to be a story going the rounds that Dr. Latta fixed a link of sausage and sectioned it for an unknown in Histology. That story isn't true, but Dr. Latta did bring an unknown specimen from Cornell, made by cramming a variety of tissues and organs into a piece of duodenum and sectioning the whole thing. That unknown was tried out on graduate students from time to time, but was never used on medical students.



People wonder what became of two whale vertebrae that used to lie around the Anatomy lab during its days in Poynter Hall. It is suspected that they were eventually shipped to Lincoln but no one seems to really know. These two vertebrae were dug up along the right-of-way of the belt line railroad near the present location of the Omaha Steel Works. They were brought to Dr. Poynter by excited workmen who were sure that they had discovered a prehistoric monster. How vertebrae belonging to what obviously was a modern whale came into this part of the country was a mystery for a long time. Then someone ran onto an old newspaper story of a stranded whale that was loaded onto a railroad car and exhibited across the country as a side show. When it reached Omaha, the health authorities condemned the carcass which was buried near the tracks where it had been exhibited and forgotten.



During his years in Anatomy, Dr. Poynter became an accomplished physical anthropologist. For years he used to tramp the hills of southeastern Nebraska usually in company with Dr. Guildler, who was better known as an artist and painter. The collection of skulls the two unearthed occupied a large case in the dissecting room for many years. When Dr. Poynter retired, the collection was left with no notes or identifying labels to aid another investigator in taking up the work. The collection was shipped to Dr. Schultz to grace the Morrill Hall Museum in Lincoln.



A story has come down through the folklore of the medical school that a senior Professor in the Department of Anatomy once parachuted frogs off of the roof of Poynter Hall by a handkerchief tied at the four corners. The story has been warped over the years in passing from generation to generation. Actually, the frogs were parachuted off of the South Building by two sophomore medical students who were supposed to be working in the Physiology lab. It is true that the frogs floated down beautifully. It is also true that one of the students involved went into the Department of Anatomy as a graduate student the following year.



Dr. Archie Powell, now located out in the Pacific Northwest, was a cartoonist and an absolutely superb one. No one else has ever been able to portray the feelings of the students, life in medical school or the members of the faculty as he did. All of the way through medicine, he left a trail of those masterpieces behind him, on laboratory tables, on professors' desks, about the fraternity house, everywhere. Those cartoons have become collector's items highly prized by all who have them. At one time, Dr. Ralph Moore collected a set of them and printed them up in book form. A few of these sets still exist, and the owners wouldn't part with them for rubies. This writer now has what was perhaps the masterpiece, an assemblage of almost the entire faculty in what was probably the old medical amphitheater. He wonders how many old timers could recognize everybody in the picture.



*For identification, see page 104*



When Dr. Holyoke was initiated into Sigma Xi he was selected to give the response for the newly initiated members. A car load from the Department of Anatomy drove down to Lincoln for the occasion. Everyone stopped to refresh themselves after the drive. One of the taps at a wash basin was evidently a little temperamental. When the prospective initiate stopped to wash his hands, it put forth a torrent which soaked the front of his trousers. Dr. Holyoke gave that response looking as though he hadn't reached the washroom soon enough.



There was a time when some of the departments teaching in the second year of medical school did not match the scholarly standards of those teaching in the first year. Some students used to feel disgruntled over what seemed to them a slip back to standards that they thought they had left behind when they came to medical school.

Once, two outstanding students came to Dr. Latta and flatly stated that they were not going back to take any more of a certain course! Dr. Latta had to explain, as only Dr. Latta could, that like it or not they *had* to pass that course. Both students did pass the course and went on to illustrious careers. The names would be familiar to most readers of these sketches if the writer were to set them down.



During the prohibition era, a time developed when all of the alcohol in the various laboratories used to vanish, usually on the weekends when the fraternities held their parties. Many schemes were devised to frustrate these raids, such as hiding bottles, locking cabinets, and occasionally adding something that would render the alcohol undrinkable. The losses were cut in some degree, but no one ever completely baffled the ingenuity of the medical students, and only the repeal of prohibition really solved the problem.

One of the later users of laboratory alcohol was a scrawny janitor who became generally known as Tarzan. Somehow rooms ceased to be swept (not a notable occurrence in those days), and when needed the janitor could never be found, especially in the mid-afternoon. Someone did finally locate him, safely asleep on the seats in the North Amphitheater hidden from public view by the chair backs.



For some years the junior medical students used to take oral examinations over most of their courses at the end of each semester. These examinations were given at night, usually in the North Building, now known as Poynter Hall. As the junior curriculum used to contain over a dozen courses, the exams were something of a traffic jam. The Dean's secretary used to preside, and operated a large electric bell which she rang every fifteen minutes, to signal a change of students from one examiner to the next. Why this system was instituted we can only guess. There is a suspicion that most of the faculty preferred a hectic evening to reading eighty-odd papers. No one who took his junior exams that way is likely to forget the experience or some of the odd events that went with them.

On one such occasion, a student turned up as drunk as a billy goat. Since this was in the days of prohibition, this was even less acceptable than it might otherwise have been.

The poor secretary couldn't cope with the situation and finally Dr. B. B. Davis, then Chairman of the Department of Surgery, assisted by half a dozen students, managed to remove the culprit and things returned to normal.

The next Monday morning, a girl from the Dean's office tapped that student on the shoulder and he left the class with her. No one ever saw him on the campus again.



For a good many years the outpatient clinic, then known as the dispensary, used to run evening clinics. The services represented were Dermatology (then Dermatology and Syphilology), Urology, and Gynecology, and the clinics were strictly aimed at venereal disease. They were very well attended and were run on strictly assembly line methods.

One student in each service, along with the staff man, was on the charts and directed what each patient was to have. In Dermatology there were two teams, one giving neo-arsphenamine, and occasionally other arsenicals; and the other, bismuth. In Urology one team instilled argerol, another passed sounds and a third massaged prostates. It was a great experience in learning the techniques, but not many of us learned the whys and wherefores, here. This was all business; you learned elsewhere. Still, many stories used to come out of those clinics, such as two senior students who had so much confidence in their methods that they used to make dates with the lady patients on the way out! No one of that day can forget "night dispensary."



*Dr. John F. Allen, Miss Josephine Chamberlin*



There are endless tales of various events centering around the days when the area inside the angle of the North Building and along the south side of the North Amphitheater (since torn down) was used for parking cars. The permanent staff with offices in the North Building had marked stalls, and other places were reserved for the members of the volunteer staff who came and went during the day.

How many of you old timers can remember how Dr. Eggers used to block in cars he found in his stall?

How he used to peer between the spokes of the steering wheel of that big Packard he used to drive?

How someone tossed a cigarette out of an upstairs window and set the seats of Dr. Poynter's car on fire?

That old antiquated Moon that Dr. Myers used to drive?

Dr. Latta's little Chevrolet coupe which he soon traded for a much larger car?

Dr. Summers' old Packard which he used to park exactly in front of the hospital steps, no matter who said what to him about it?

How Dr. Latta bluffed Dr. Hoffman out of usurping his parking stall?

How often someone would disrupt the lectures in the North Amphitheater by starting his car and gunning the engine just outside the window?



The old course in Clinical Pathology consisted of writing up cases item by item, covering every symptom and finding point by point, every change in the patient's hospital course, producing a diagnosis, analyzing the autopsy report and discussing the findings. Such a report could easily cover thirty or forty hand-written pages, and during the first semester of the junior year, one was required every week. It was a wonderful way to learn about clinical medicine, although it was time consuming and laborious. Many of us have since wondered, did anyone really read all of those reports?

In the days when all of the students used to learn the techniques of the old Wasserman test by running one on their own blood, there was always some wag in the class who knew that cigarette ashes in the serum would fix the complement and yield a false positive. Every year a few victims turned up, and you could get some idea of their extracurricular activities by how seriously they were worried.



The senior class of not too many years ago got a big break. The senior thesis that had always been a requirement for graduation was finally dropped. During the last years of the thesis, the seniors must have been spoiled. All older alums will remember the time when a thesis of some sort was required every year.

A few of these included one for Anatomy in the freshman year, one of sorts for "Skippy" Cope in the sophomore year, usually one for someone in the junior year and one for Joe Weinberg in Surgical Anatomy in the senior year.

How many Christmas holidays were ruined for how many students by these theses will probably never be known, but it is doubtful if anyone got away without losing at least one. This is just one of several reasons why present-day medical students who go to old timers for sympathy usually find a deaf ear.



There are many little incidents that old timers will remember.

How ten students all came out through the windows of an old Model T Ford sedan when someone left a little smoke bomb under the hood?

How Dr. Gunderson drove off completely unconcerned after a present Professor of Anatomy had put a handful of old bolts into one of his hub caps?

How the graduate students in Anatomy tied an old bucket to Dr. Snider's car and so upset him that he resigned the next year?

Dr. Alfred Brown's magnificent walk over to the hospital which helped earn him the nickname "Major Hoople"?

What Dr. Myers used to do with the hand he had in his pocket when he lectured?

How Grodinsky used to hitch up his pants after bawling out some poor Anatomy student as he had never been bawled out before?

The old black coat that Dr. Poynter wore in the Anatomy lab?

Guenther trying to explain the pharmacological action of atropine?

"Skipper" Cope lecturing on the physiology of the male reproductive system?

Dr. Lynn Hall leaning back in a chair to conduct his course in therapeutics?

Dr. Conlin's tale of his own feet sticking out from under the covers when he had hyperthyroidism?

Dr. Sage stretched out on his belly propped up on his elbows on one of those long lecture tables telling the sophomore students what a selected bunch of obstetrical blockheads they all were?

Dr. John Allen's style of percussing a chest?

Dr. Poynter's traditional opening lecture in Gross Anatomy?

Poor old "Pappy" Rich with his game legs talking about "appendeacetus"?

How Miss Chamberlin used to lay down the law to the seniors before they went on outcall?

How you sometimes used to struggle to get your charts written up on your clinical clerkship, interspersed with an occasional week when you didn't have a patient?

"Jess" Willard marking up some student's laboratory drawings before he had to turn them in?

How silent the North Amphitheater was when Dr. Latta began to draw on the board before one of his lectures?

What it felt like when you learned that you got out of "star chambers"?

The look on a student's face when Morgulis told him, "Now you will have to take the oral, and maybe you pass and maybe you flonk"?

Dr. Schrock in the operating room?

Dr. Roeder ditto?

Dr. Edwin Davis and his perineal prostatectomy, complete with his patented "ass jack"?

Marveling at the way Dr. Poynter said something to you in the laboratory at the same time you were wondering just what it was he had said?



Does anyone remember Darcy? Darcy was the English gardener who kept up the campus and grounds for more than a generation. During his time the medical school, "the state hospital," people called it, was a showpiece. There was the meticulously kept lawn, those magnificent canna beds and that gorgeous lilac hedge along the north border of the campus. Darcy had a little greenhouse down by the heating plant, and he cared for his flowers like a faithful shepherd looking after his flock.

Darcy was a little man and as English as the image of John Bull. He always wore a beaten-up straw hat but rarely an overcoat, even in the coldest weather. He was a peppery little man and no one who worked for him took any liberties with him. He drove the

students who worked for him in the summer hard, and woe to any of them he caught loafing when he had something for them to do, which he always did.

Darcy was friendly with everyone and used to converse with anybody from the Dean to the janitors, and he had no hesitation in ordering anyone, transient, medical student, visitor, or Dean off the grass. You never cut across unless you were sure Darcy wasn't looking.

Darcy became a tradition and was sorely missed when he retired, and the campus promptly lost some of its traditional beauty. It is a tribute to him that years afterward when Dr. Keegan presided over a celebration at the school he brought Darcy with him, then an old man but still very articulate.

I hope he rests easily in his grave, but I fear that if he knew what had happened to his beloved lawn and flowers, his ghost would be haunting us now.



When Dr. Lueth replaced Dr. Poynter as Dean of the College of Medicine, he was fresh out of the Army and seemed intent on wearing out his collection of Army shirts. Apparently the students of that day were more concerned with dress than they are now, at least for the Dean. In any case, when Dr. Lueth attended his first senior banquet he was presented with a white shirt.



Dr. Eggers dreamed up the idea of chemotherapy for cancer many years before it became a reality. He had once taken a major in chemistry, and he had his background to fall back on. Even in those far-off days, it was known that cancer cells glycolize much more rapidly than normal ones, and it occurred to Dr. Eggers that if he could hook a toxic molecule — say arsenic — onto a glucose derivative, the cancer cells might take up enough to kill them before normal cells got a lethal dose.

So he began his experiments, and soon he was trying to synthesize his carbohydrate arsenical. This required a high temperature applied to a volatile substance, and this Dr. Eggers achieved by sealing his compounds in heavy glass tubes and boiling them in a glycerine bath. Obviously this generated some very high pressures, and eventually the inevitable happened. One morning when all seemed peaceful, the roof of the North Building suddenly seemed to jump a foot. The blast shook everyone from the Anatomy lab to the basement. In Dr. Eggers' own laboratory (the same room that was once occupied by the library), there was hot glycerine over all of the walls and a blown-out window. One of those tubes had exploded.

But that isn't all. In the cubicle right next door, one of the instructors was sitting at a desk working and the semi-partition is all that saved him from possible serious injury. If you want to know the state of the chair when the assistant got out of it, write Dr. Paul Bancroft in Lincoln. I am sure he remembers! From that time on, Dr. Eggers put his tubes into lengths of steel pipe, and if any more exploded the results were not so dramatic.

Dr. Eggers never did cure a cancer patient, although he was a far-sighted pioneer in this field. He may, however, have come perilously close to doing in a non-cancerous graduate student.



There were some unsung but remembered heroes and heroines of those pre-World War II days at the medical school. How many, I wonder, remember: Miss Hillis, the librarian? Buhla Evans, her first assistant, and the campus public address system when scandal was in the wind? Adeline Jones, the Dean's secretary, and later Mary Lou Leslie and Helen Pitzer who held the same position?

What about Dr. Francis Bean, the assistant hospital superintendent (assistant by order of Dr. Poynter)?

Can anyone still place Frieda Dietrichs, the operating room boss? (She still lives in Omaha and would be glad to see any old timers), or "Torchey" Blaine? There are some who will never forget her.

Anyone who took his junior year in the early 30's will remember Anna Collins, the nurse in charge of the O.B. ward, and how the fur could fly when she and Dr. Sage were at the same place at the same time.



A few graduates still living can remember Skarda. Skarda was the preparator in the Department of Anatomy, and a highly skillful one. He was also something of a psychopath and an incident, reported elsewhere, finally ended his career in the department. Most students remember him as a butt for jokes, and his volatile responses made him an excellent one.

He had no use for any frivolity in the dissecting room and set himself to stamp it out, an objective that not even the faculty was ever really able to achieve. In those days, the tables were illuminated by a light on the end of a drop-cord with a little glass shade that gave forth a beautiful ringing tone when tapped with a scalpel. If someone rang

a lampshade, Skarda was quick to start after the offending students. The trouble was that the students were highly successful in keeping track of Skarda. Often in the late afternoons when most of the staff were elsewhere, those ringing shades would sound, now here, now there, first at one end of the lab, then the other, then in the middle. Skarda, his tongue hanging out from running, was never able to find anything but innocent-looking students apparently hard at work. Little wonder that he had emotional problems!



Back in the early twenties there was a dissecting group in Anatomy that used to work in one of the cubicles at the south end of the laboratory. These students were somewhat rough characters, and they were given to some rather rough and ready play. They used to consider it good clean fun to stand one of their members up against the wall, protecting himself with a laboratory apron, and throw their dissecting knives at him. Later they developed the habit of knocking on the water pipes which happened to run through Dr. Latta's office on the floor below. This made it almost impossible for anyone to concentrate on what he was doing in that room. Finally, Dr. Latta had enough of it, and he paid those scamps a visit. If they wanted to risk their own hides by throwing knives that was their business, but when it came to disturbing the peace, that was something else.

Dr. Latta had a quiet way about him that could be very cooling to hot medical student blood. That group was much more subdued for the rest of their freshman year. They left a trail of mischief, some of it not entirely trivial, all of the rest of the way through medical school, but very little more in Anatomy.



At one time or another a dog would attach himself to the student body and start attending classes. No one seemed to mind in the basic science areas, although none of those mascots ever made it into the hospital or clinics.

Once a beagle (certainly not pure) called Rusty began to come and go with the Phi Rhos. Rusty was not a particularly colorful character, but he did seem to set a precedent of sorts. Then came a totally nondescript little mutt who became known as Pavlov. Pavlov was a pet of the Nu Sigs. He came to class every day, sometimes to the freshman and sometimes to the sophomore classes. Pavlov would lie quietly at the back of the lecture room until the bell rang, then he would set up a howl. He was probably the best cure ever developed for professors who were inclined to run over-time.

Pavlov was an alcoholic. The Nu Sigs used to give him his little bowl of beer before dinner time, and Pavlov became feisty and grouchy every afternoon until he got back to the fraternity house and had his drink. Then he became the most affable and affectionate pet imaginable, until the next afternoon when his thirst began to tell again.

The king of all of these canine students was Eskie (Esculapius). For over ten years, he was on campus and in class or the laboratories every day. Eskie was a large collie and looked as though he had had good breeding. He was calm, friendly, and in some ways a little aloof. No one knows where he came from, but he usually boarded at the A. K. house.

Occasionally he would call on one of the other fraternities, and he was always welcome wherever he went. He attended some lecture every morning. Sometimes it was in Anatomy, sometimes the lecture in the South Building. He spent most of his afternoons in

Gross Anatomy lying quietly outside one of the doors until the students came out. Occasionally he would stop by some professor's office, and everybody knew him. If he absorbed all that he heard during those years, he was better grounded in basic medical science than most practicing physicians. The whole school went into mourning when Eskie finally died.



In fairly recent years there have been a number of monkeys on campus, mostly down at the memorial research building. Here they have made some valuable contributions to a few of the ongoing research programs. The first attempt to use a monkey as an experimental animal, many years ago, was not so successful. This monkey was quartered on the roof of the South Building, along with the dogs that were kept there. The arrangement did not last long. The first time he was let out on the roof he ran to the edge, jumped off four stories to the grass below, took off across the campus and was gone. He was found a few days later in the trees in Elmwood Park, but no one tried to bring him back to the school. It is said that he found a permanent home at the Riverview Park Zoo, and it was over thirty years before anyone tried to work with monkeys again.

The monkey wasn't the only animal to jump off the roof of the South Building. One of our illustrious graduates once had the job of tending the animals that were kept in the penthouse on that roof. One morning he let some of the dogs out on the roof, and one of them ran to the edge and jumped. He didn't fare as well as the monkey, and it cost the poor student a dollar of his hard-earned money to replace him.



A graduate student in Anatomy once set a record of sorts. He went into the hospital for an appendectomy which was performed at 8:00 a.m. At ten that morning, he was back in the laboratory working.

Dr. Willard very nearly tied that record a few years before. He was seen in the operating room at 8:30 one morning about to have an old remnant of a tonsil removed. At eleven, he gave his lecture in Neuroanatomy.



There have been many great and wonderful characters who have come and gone during the hundred years that the University of Nebraska College of Medicine and its predecessor, the Omaha Medical College, have been around. Perhaps none of them are more fondly remembered and universally loved by the students than Josephine Chamberlin, who ran the dispensary, as it was then called, for many, many years. Miss Chamberlin had to cope with all classes of patients, with responsible and irresponsible medical students, with irascible staff men, a slim budget and long hours, and she was entirely equal to all of them.

It was she who told the students just what they had to do on the dispensary service and just how they were expected to behave. It was she who told them what they must and couldn't do on outcall and who listened to their experiences and woes when they came back. How she could dress a student down when he neglected a patient, and how she could stand up to a staff man if he started to abuse a student! They were her boys and she could

treat them as she wished, but no one else could. For years she was one of the first that all returning alumni stopped to see, and she rarely failed to remember them. Our school was much the richer for her being here, and the poorer for her passing.



Until after World War II almost all of the clinical teaching was done by the volunteer staff, who also operated the hospital and the dispensary (clinics). It is very much to be hoped that people here remember the service that they gave, or time that they took from their own private practice, and that they realize what an outstanding job they collectively did. Many of those men were meticulous about meeting their University commitments, but there were always some who were not quite so reliable. In a few courses, the instructor didn't "show" about as often as he did. The general rule was that you waited for fifteen minutes and then took off and went on to other things, sometimes back to the ward to work up a patient, sometimes back to the fraternity house to put your feet up. Some classes used to sing while they waited in the old Medical Amphitheater. Sometimes the singing was fairly good, sometimes it was terrible; always it was loud. One year Dr. Poynter put a stop to it "because it disturbed the patients."



Various surgeons had different ways in the operating room. Dr. Roeder used to explode like a cherry bomb, while Dr. Waters sputtered like a string of little fire crackers. Dr. Brown huffed and puffed. Dr. Summers cussed, and "Charlie" Kennedy smiled and took it all in his stride. Strange! Kennedy was the first to go with a coronary occlusion.





*Dr. Alfred J. Brown*



Dr. Alfred Brown was one of the most unusual people who ever crossed the stage of the surgical staff. He came from Columbia University, where he had spent some years as a protege of the legendary George S. Huntington. He was an accomplished anatomist, he was a scholar of medical history and the author of a much sought-after volume, called "Old Masterpieces in Surgery." He was an artist; he made the beautiful book plates that the Library of Medicine used for many years. He was a master craftsman at almost everything he put his hand to. He bound books beautifully, he was a skilled machinist, and his lectures in Surgery were given with a precision and perfection of diction almost unequalled.

Dr. Brown was a large, pompous-looking man, and he had a pomposity of manner and an apparent arrogance that were always his hallmark. Few ever got to know him well and he stood as a magnificent, grouchy, aloof character that few people probably really understood. To the few who cracked the hard shell, he was charming; to most of his confreres he was imposing and pompous, and among them he earned the epithet "Major Hoople." Here was a man who could have led the school in the field of Surgery for a generation and who was never head of the department because his confreres couldn't stand him. I see him now as one of the great and tragic figures of our school, and how I wish I could have really known him.



Dr. Alfred Brown was always most conscientious about meeting his classes and his students were just as well satisfied that he was, for his lectures were masterpieces of diction and precision. Unhappily, while everybody loved the lectures, not everybody loved Dr. Brown. One morning Dr. Brown was ill and couldn't meet his class. He found a substitute and asked him to explain to Dean Cutter that he simply couldn't be there. The substitute lecturer stopped by Dr. Cutter's office and told him that Dr. Brown was sick that morning, to which Dr. Cutter replied, "I trust that it is nothing trivial."

Once a student asked Dr. Alfred Brown if a surgical procedure which he had just described was major or minor surgery. Dr. Brown responded as only Dr. Brown could, with a snort and a disarming glare, "Son, the only surgery that is minor is the surgery done by a minor surgeon."



In the old days, one of the medical students used to have the job of cashier in the hospital dining room. After the meal it was always his duty to take the cash box up to the Dean's office, where it could be put into the safe. One day one of those students started for the Dean's office when Dr. Morgulis passed, walking down the hall, and dropped a few pieces of paper. Being a little curious, the student picked up one of the sheets and found the first sixteen questions to the final examination in Biochemistry. That night the phones between the fraternity houses were unusually busy and the class made a pretty good showing on that examination.



For years, Ralph Wilson was the stationary engineer at the heating plant. Ralph, however, soon became very much more than that. He was a tireless worker and had no patience with the easy-going habits of some of his fellow workmen. He could do almost anything, and before long was involved in almost any emergency that came up at the college. He did all of the plumbing, participated in heavy moving, and became one of those people who held a rather unique position which he had made for himself. Ralph had a vocabulary of profanity and obscenity second to none anywhere, and his fluency was amazing.

During those same years, there was a janitor (he was still called that) in the North Building who was as highly accomplished at doing nothing as Ralph was at working. His favorite post was in the doorway of the building, and he occupied it so regularly that Dean Lueth once asked about the statue at the North Building. The one thing that could move that statue was the sight of Ralph coming. Ralph was absolutely merciless in his ribbing of Joe, and Joe got away from him whenever he could. Ralph retired some twelve years ago and was given a parting send-off attended by most of the staff and presided over by Dr. Wittson. In the summer of 1979, a note appeared in the paper that Ralph had died. It is a pity that no attention was paid to it at the college he had served so long and so well.



Another campus character out of the past was a Dane who everybody called Copenhagen. To the best of this writer's memory, his real name was Rassmussen, but it is doubtful if anyone really knows.

"Cope" used to haunt the old freshman locker room in Poynter Hall, waiting for students to come in and lag pennies with him. His greeting always was "Jesus Kriste you gotny pennies?" Usually he won. Copenhagen used to keep his razor in the washroom next to the freshman lockers. The one time anyone remembers seeing him furious was the occasion when two students used his razor to shave a dog before an experiment!



Physicians and medical students very often have talents along lines completely unrelated to medicine. These include the fine arts, music, painting, drawing, sculpture, and drama, to name a few. At one time or another, the student body has harbored an alternate organist at the First Congregational Church, a regular soloist at the same Church, the cellist of a fine string quartet, many members of the Omaha Symphony Orchestra, and no one knows how many members of various choral groups and choirs. At least two of the students here were well on the way to careers as concert pianists. There have been, and still are, some highly accomplished artists. If anyone doubts, let him take in the art show which is a part of the annual Oktoberfest.

Once someone decided that some of the talent should be displayed on campus, and a few musical programs were organized and put on in the old North Amphitheater. These programs were really pretty good, although some of the talent was not of the very best. On one such occasion, a chorus or glee club was organized at the School of Nursing and presented a few numbers. Among them was the old light opera number "Stout-Hearted Men." There a problem arose. When the chorus reached the line "Start me with ten who are stout-hearted men, and I'll soon give you ten thousand more," someone in the audience let out a very audible snicker. The meaning caught on, and the whole house exploded in laughter. The poor girls had a hard time finishing their number.

It is doubtful that there was any cause and effect relationship here, but that was the last of those programs.



Dr. Frederick Niehaus and Dr. Manuel Grodinsky were complete opposites when it came to calling down an occasionally slightly disorderly class. Not that there were any serious riots (there was one years ago at the old Omaha Medical College), it was just that whispering and little noises would occasionally break out and could sometimes make things a little difficult for a lecturer in the days before amplifiers. Dr. Niehaus was soft spoken, and one day before the junior class he dropped his subject and uttered a few sentences which were missed by most of the class. Only those in the front row realized that the class had been thoroughly "bawled out."

Grodinsky, on the other hand, had the stentorian voice so well remembered by a generation of students in Anatomy. If the class displeased him he named names, threatened failure and generally tore the amphitheater apart, and anyone on that floor of the building knew that a class was being told off.



While at one time medical students were eligible to compete in varsity athletics at the University of Nebraska and a few of them did, there seems to be no record of any who tried to mix football with medicine. It is true that back in the day of the Omaha Medical College, the school did field a football team and two or three pictures of that ferocious-looking group are still in existence. It is also true that a number of Nebraska football players did subsequently go to medical school. A complete list of these students is not immediately at hand, but it is easy to remember a few of them. Ted Riddel, George Shaner, Ken McGinnis, Pat Clare, and Rex Fischer are a few names that Cornhusker fans young or old will remember.



A not-too-attractive or popular female medical student was about to seat herself at a laboratory table when a roughish student passing by poured a little pool of ether onto the chair behind her. In the dead of night, when all is quiet in Poynter Hall, it is said that the corridors still echo the screams that followed when the ether reached the mucocutaneous junctions.

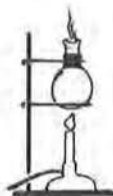


In the era between 1917 and 1927 when the second wing of Unit II of the University Hospital was built, there was a cinder track at the west end of the campus. Through the early 1920's an annual track meet was held here with athletes from the various high schools in Omaha participating. This meet, known as the Medic Relays, was dropped sometime about 1927, but the track remained for some years longer. During these same years students in the various graduate schools were eligible to compete in varsity athletics as long as they had not received a degree. A number of medical students were on the varsity teams in those days. Paul Flothow was on the basketball team, Harry Kretzler and Edgar Allen were on the track team and Kretzler, George Fisher and Ted Slemmons were on the cross-country team. How these men managed varsity competition and the medical curriculum at the same time might be a mystery to some of the students who followed them, but they did. In fact, Edgar Allen became one of the school's truly illustrious alumni, for years Chief of the Cardiology section of the Mayo Clinic.



Hidden away inside the firewall enclosing the stairwell on level 4 in Poynter Hall is an inscription written on one of the 2x4 studs. The author hopes that the firewall is not dismantled in his lifetime. That inscription might even yet destroy his standing with the University administrators.

The elevator in Poynter Hall is probably one of the slowest ever installed. The banisters, however, were ideal for sliding. A freshman student once bet five dollars that he could slide down the banisters from the top floor to ground level and run back up the stairs while the elevator made a single trip down. He won.



The elevators now operating in both the North and South Buildings are replacements of archaic originals. The one in the North Building was, and still is, primarily a freight elevator and probably the slowest ever designed. The one in the South Building is reasonably modern. Its predecessor was also a passenger elevator, but was slightly on the unreliable side. It was an open cage affair, and older graduates will remember it.

One day, Dr. Morgulis came walking in through the dispensary, as he always did. He hurried onto the elevator and started up for his office, which used to be on the fourth floor. Half way up to the second floor, the elevator got temperamental and stopped, leaving "Sir Jesus" suspended betwixt and between. He raised a howl for help, and Miss Chamberlin promptly started to his aid. Midway she was stopped by the students and forcibly detained while all of the students working in the dispensary were called to come and enjoy a look at Morgulis in his predicament!



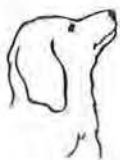
Dr. MacQuiddy was one of the first members of the faculty to develop a keen interest in Allergy. To the end of his days, he always kept that interest up and he developed it to the point where for some years he wrote an annual review of the literature on Allergy which was published in several national medical journals. MacQuiddy developed an elective course in Allergy which was available to senior medical students. He used to try to give that course in the late summer, and he used to take his students on field trips collecting pollen from a number of the weeds most productive of hay fever. The problem that developed was that a number of students sensitized themselves to some of those pollens. It would be interesting to really find out how many students came away from that course richer for knowledge of Allergy and poorer for their hay fever.



In the late 1920's a student entered the College of Medicine who had an aunt who was the director of the Visiting Nurse Association in Omaha for years. There is nothing particularly significant about that bare statement, but it did have some repercussions.

Miss Burgess, the director of the School of Nursing, was very protective of her flock, and when it came to medical students, they were a breed hardly to be trusted. It wasn't always easy for the boys to find dates at the nursing school and when they did, the girls had to be back in far too early to suit either the nurses or the students. This particular student, however, was something special. If he had that particular aunt, then he simply had to be a nice boy. For a few years that student and his

cronies at his fraternity house had no problem getting dates with the student nurses. It may never be known how many romances developed — a few of them permanent — through Miss Burgess' misplaced confidence in that student.



Dr. Elliott was a man of many talents — or near talents. He wrote very well. His popular book on the nervous system makes very good reading. He wrote science fiction, and achieved some recognition in this field. His not-too-successful textbook of Neuroanatomy did not suffer from any lack of literary style. He was purported to be a gourmet cook, but those who were treated to a sample of his wares seldom went back for a second dose. He was something of a musician, too. He had an old guitar that he used to plunk on, and his singing voice was not at all bad. He also used to play the trumpet — not particularly well — but loudly. This produced both some inconsistencies and some problems.

Elliott had a cot in his office, and he often slept there. He kept food in his lab (a complication in its own right) and did some cooking on a Bunsen burner. He also kept his trumpet in his office and sometimes used to toot away a noon hour, or some spare time in the afternoon. That was the source of the trouble.

Dr. Elliott could not stand noise when he was working, and his very special peeve was barking dogs. They drove him right up the wall. Although the animal room in the basement of the North Building was mostly used for small animals, a few dogs were kept there for some years. Their barking simply infuriated Elliott. He wrote letters to the Dean, to the Chancellor, the grounds superintendent — vitriolic letters telling them what a sifted set of idiots they all were to let dogs bark in a room under his office. People soon got used to these letters, most of which hit the wastebasket as soon as identified. What never seemed to occur to Elliott was that some people didn't like trumpet-tooting any better than he liked barking dogs.



In many ways Dr. H. Chandler Elliott was a tragic figure, a statement he would have furiously resented. He could be charming company when he had a mind to be. He was very well read, an excellent conversationalist and highly intelligent. Over the years he had some close friends, some from the student body. His life, however, was mostly a very lonely one. His own living quarters were never very inviting to guests, and it was extremely difficult for him to go to people's homes. Most of all, his irascible disposition tended to repel people, and there were more of his associates who disliked him than not.

He wouldn't fit into any program in his department, and his distracted chairman finally had to remove him from teaching Neuroanatomy because no one could work with him. He used to order the junior members of the department around as though they were his slaves, and they all resented him. Finally, he clashed with the Dean of the Medical School and the Chancellor of the Center over where he could park when Wittson Hall opened. His previous attacks on these men destroyed whatever sympathy they may have had for him, and in a fit of rage he retired. He did get a six-month job after that — teaching in Hawaii and later returned to Omaha, where he died. He was a man who could have had a host of friends — with a little more patience and milk of human kindness. And yet it certainly was his very irascibility that enabled him to overcome physical handicaps that would have made public charges of most men. The very qualities that made his life spoiled it. I devoutly hope that the next world is kinder to him than this one was. If not, the imps and demons had better be warned. They have a tiger by the tail!



Dr. Gunderson had a way about him when it came to children and dogs. While he never had any children of his own, he did raise two boys, one of whom is numbered among our alumni. Gundy always had dogs — usually two or three, and pekingese were his favorites. Gundy out walking his “pekes” used to be one of the familiar sights in the neighborhood of the Medical Center. He could always make friends with any dogs he met along the way, and he was tireless in devoting himself to any and all neighborhood kids and faculty children who visited him.

There were probably a few in the student body who didn’t always love Gundy, but no record of a little kid who didn’t, or a dog.

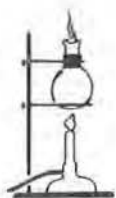


There is a uniformity about the content of the various sections of medical courses that didn’t used to exist. This occasionally made things a little awkward for the students. Consider the situation as it once was in Obstetrics. The junior course was often taught in two sections. One was given by Dr. Taylor and one by Dr. Sage, Dr. Hoffman or some other member of the department. Each had his own definitions and description of the mechanism of labor and such essentials. The problem was that a common examination was given to both sections, and woe to the student who gave Taylor’s definition to Sage or vice versa. You simply had to guess who wrote the question and who was going to read the paper!

In the days of the junior oral examinations, each student was required to spend fifteen minutes with each of two examiners in Surgery. You knew at the start that if you drew Keegan or Brown, you would get about an 80 for a very creditable performance. If you drew Rich or Kennedy you would get 90 for nothing in particular. The rule was that if your grade from the two examiners differed by more than 10 points, you had to take a make-up written examination. This often happened to very good students who had a tough and an easy examiner, a combination that fortunately was usually “rigged” in the drawing. Also, fortunately, if you did well on the written, you could still get a high grade in the course.



When Dr. Keegan came back from the service in World War I, he brought a technician with him who had impressed him with her work in one of the Army hospitals. Her name was Helen Wyandt, and for years she directed the student laboratories in the hospital and the technicians’ training course. Things changed, and Helen was shifted from one job to another — but always held a responsible position. Eventually she married — a veterinarian by the name of Reihardt. Even then she didn’t completely vanish from the scene. Her skill as a technician really never did cease to keep her in demand. She stayed on long after retirement age, and after her husband died she began to do technical work for one of the local biological establishments. Helen is still with us. She is one of the active volunteers over in the hospital, and she still looks as fresh and sharp as she did sixty years ago when she first came here.



Once Dr. Morgulis was looking out of his laboratory window when the juniors were crossing the campus on the way to a class. It was then that one of his graduate students heard him remark to himself, "There goes \_\_\_\_\_; I wonder if I should have flunked him."

In about that same era, Dr. Morgulis stopped a student who was working in the lab and asked where he had taken his pre-med work. The student replied Wayne State College. Said Dr. Morgulis, "Wayne State! Bah! Phooey!"



Some families have figured in the story of the College of Medicine — a few of them in more than a minor way. Here are some of the father-son and occasionally grandson combinations who have been a part of our faculty. Father-son combinations who have been students are far too many to even attempt to list.

Harold Gifford, Sr. — Sons, Harold, Jr., and Sanford  
 Harrison Wigton — Son, Robert S., Grandson, Robert  
 George Alexander Young — Sons, Richard H., G. A., Jr.  
 Chester Waters — Son, Chester, Jr.  
 C. R. Kennedy — Son, "Jack" C.  
 John C. More — Son, Ralph  
 B. B. Davis — Son, Herbert H., Grandson, John B.  
 E. L. MacQuiddy — Son, E. L., Jr.  
 John S. Latta — Son, C. Rex  
 William R. Hamsa — Son, William (Bill), Jr.  
 George B. Potter — Son, Stanley  
 Willis H. Taylor — Son, Willis H., Jr.

A few notable combinations of brothers:

Wayne, John, Howard, Guy, Earle and Owen Slaughter  
 Ted, Tom and Frank Stander  
 Max and Bill Gentry  
 Robert and Dick Gentry  
 Harold and Sanford Gifford  
 J. Hewett and Delbert Judd  
 Claude and Jim Mason — Later, Roger  
 Paul and Hamilton Morrow  
 Edward and John Holyoke



Without doubt the family championship for all time must go to the Karrers. From 1900 on they have come through in an unending stream which still shows no sign of drying up.

F. W. Karrer, Senior, graduated in 1904, and practiced in York for years. He was the one who started the procession. He was followed by three sons, F. M. (1929), located in McCook; Robert E. (1936), who went back to York, and Rush (1938), who has been joined by his son, John W. (1970) in Scottsbluff. F. M. also furnished a son, F. W. (1956), who is in Omaha. He too got into the game and his son, F. M., graduated in 1979. But this still isn't all. A cousin of the three brothers, Max, graduated in 1954, and this brings the total to eight.

Any other family who wants to get into the competition had better get busy, because they will have a lot of work to do.

The archives in the library contain a whole file devoted to the Karrers.

The two families that come the nearest are the Gentrys with six and the Harveys with seven!



In the summer of 1929, a little item in the *World Herald* read, "Lightning can strike twice in the same place." The picture that went with that story might still be familiar. It was the smokestack down by the heating plant at the Medical Center. The stack obviously had been struck in a thunderstorm the night before. Part of the top was gone, and there was a crack running part way down the side. This was the second time that chimney had been struck since it was built back in about 1917. This time, however, there was a little more to the story. Many of the student and staff nurses were then housed in Conkling Hall, which had been completed a few years before, but Conkling Hall wasn't large enough to hold them all. The overflow lived in a temporary structure down on the south side of Emile Street almost under the smokestack. Imagine how these girls felt when that lightning bolt landed almost on their heads, and then bricks from the chimney started crashing down on the roof. There are probably a few veterans left in Omaha who were there that night. The chimney was repaired and protected with a lightning rod. In all of the half century since, it hasn't been struck again. The temporary dorm was eliminated when the west wing of Conkling Hall was built, and no one mourned its passing.



After the heating plant was built down by the tracks, the boilers that were housed in the North Building (Poynter Hall) were taken out and the big metal chimney that was once a feature of the building was torn down. This left a large two-story basement room unoccupied and it was promptly converted into an animal room, a function it served for half a century. Very few large animals were ever kept there. The colony consisted of white rats, mice, rabbits and guinea pigs. There was a caretaker who did much of the work, but usually individual graduate students and researchers cared for their own animals. The cages were never ultra modern, and sometimes animals got out. Some were caught again, but some took up a wild existence and thrived in the building for years. It was no rare occurrence for someone to find a white mouse wandering about the building, and a set of old storerooms in the basement soon became invaded by rats. Periodically, someone had to declare war on the rats in the basement, and almost all that were ever caught were white!



Dr. Eggers' course in General Pathology was something to remember. Besides his lectures, which had a flavor all their own, there was that laboratory. Here you not only looked at as many as five or six slides during a period — you painted them. Everybody had his little box of watercolors and sheets of drawing paper. Since almost all of the specimens were routine eosin methylene blue stains, the paintings consisted of varying collections of red and blue blobs. The paintings were to be cut out in circles, you drew around the bottom of a specimen glass for this, and pasted into a notebook which was supposed to contain both an objective and a subjective write-up of the specimen. Some of us used to fall behind keeping up that notebook, and had to devote

weekends of furious work to catch up again. There is serious doubt that those notebooks were ever read after the first few weeks. In fact, there are a few who wrote unspeakable irrelevancies into them, and no record of any repercussions. One thing is certain: you learned something about those specimens by writing them up. Another thing is equally certain: the course never developed a watercolor artist.



*Dr. Harold E. Eggers*



Medical students have never been known for their violence, but there have been a few episodes. A really serious fight broke out once way back in the time of the Omaha Medical College, but nothing of the kind has happened since. A few students have been professional boxers, but they were not prone to mix that profession with medicine. Over the years there have been a few fist fights in the fraternity houses. These, however, were not common. There have been a few instances in which the students did get a little belligerent.

Once, two freshmen were walking past a store window downtown. These two, for some reason, were not bursting with brotherly love. They passed two men who were decorating the window, and after a few words, dared them to come out and fight. The two decorators obliged and did come out. What the two freshmen didn't know was that the decorators were in Omaha to compete in the Golden Gloves tournament. For a week or more afterward, those students were trying to explain that they had been in an accident.

On another occasion, a student entered school and one way or another attracted enough attention so that his classmates began to rib him. This he resented, and he finally

"chose" one of his chief tormenters, who, being a feisty soul, wasn't about to turn the challenge down. The two agreed to meet after lab in the alley back of the Phi Rho house. Word got around, and most of the freshmen were there to take in the blood-letting. Coats were removed, the two squared off, and for a few minutes punches were thrown, all of which hit empty air. Honor was satisfied, but very little else. In the opinion of most of those who were there, that fight was a bust. Opinion always ran that any of a dozen or more husky students who were watching could have stepped in and licked them both.

Violence toward professors was rare indeed, but there were one or two incidents when even this was threatened. There was an occasion when a sophomore taking his oral in Biochemistry suddenly decided to take Dr. Morgulis apart and had to be restrained by two assistants.

There was another case that could have been more serious when a disgruntled freshman came on campus with a gun, looking for Dr. Grodinsky. No one knows whether or not the gun was loaded, but the incident was hushed up and certainly was not taken lightly at the time.



Dr. Morgulis always had a way with the ladies — at least, he always liked them. There is no record that any good-looking girl ever failed Biochemistry. In fact, the girls were usually assigned to front row seats. Morgulis would sometimes stop and ask questions, and those girls invariably got easy ones that they could answer — and be congratulated with a pat on the shoulder. No male student ever had his shoulder patted, even if he answered a hard question. Come on, girls! You had some lib even way back when you used to think it was hard for you in medical school!

Mrs. Morgulis was Russian. For years she used to go to Europe every other year or so and spend the winter. Perhaps it was just as well, for she and Dr. Morgulis were noted for their squabbling. Certainly it was rumored to be a good thing for sophomore medical students. For years it was taken for granted that if you took Biochemistry the year Mrs. Morgulis was away, you had a much easier time of it than during a year when she was home.



When Lueth was the Dean, he sometimes found it hard to forget that he wasn't in the Army anymore, and it occasionally brought on complications. Perhaps his duties were not quite as pressing as those of a modern Dean. Parking was a little hard around the hospital then as it is now, and the facilities were not well developed. Sometimes a visiting staff member would pull up in front of the hospital if he had to run in and see a patient or was almost late to a class. This, however, was taboo and Dr. Lueth sometimes constituted himself guardian of the parking lots. He would sometimes catch the offender on his way in and order him away. Rarely, he was obeyed to the letter. In a few cases he was told that if he wanted the car moved, he could damn well move it himself! Usually the staff man simply drove off, and the patient wasn't seen or the class wasn't met. It turned out that the University wasn't the Army!

Imagine anyone telling Alf Brown or Jay Keegan that he had to move his car!



One Tuesday morning, the orthopedic surgeons were involved in one of the gigantic operations that they performed periodically. It involved open reduction, bone transplants, plaster, the whole works. Dr. Schrock, Dr. Johnson, two or three interns and as many students — the entire operating suite staff — were all in on it. Schrock was after everybody, everybody was tense, the room was hot, pressures were high and tempers were bad. Students who were supposed to watch were in the amphitheater seats looking at the backs of the crowd around the operating table that completely blocked the view. Then a fly came gracefully sailing in through the door and began to circle the surgical team. Pandemonium broke loose. Both Johnson and Schrock began to swear and beat the air. Schrock roared for the head nurse. Johnson swatted at the fly and missed — he hit the wall and had to rescrub. The fly alighted on the instrument tray, which had to be resterilized. Students stepped back and most of them became contaminated, too. It was half an hour before order was restored, new instruments brought in and the procedure taken up again. Meanwhile, the fly had quietly departed from whence it came, leaving a ruined morning for ten people behind it.

A few days later, Dr. Taylor was in the same room repairing a perineum. A fly, possibly the same one, came in the door and began to buzz around. Someone sounded the alarm, "A fly, a fly!" Dr. Taylor looked up and remarked, "I guess it's a sterile fly," and went back to his work.





Dr. Bliss always felt that students on the clinical clerkship should take their own histories and do their own physical examinations. He never considered it quite proper for a student to look at the hospital chart until his own work was done and handed in. How many students of another generation can remember finding him quietly looking over their shoulder when they were "just taking a quick look" at the hospital chart?



*Dr. Rodney W. Bliss*



Awe-inspiring as he was, Dr. Poynter always had a wonderful sense of humor. In the dim past when various objects used to be tossed around in the dissecting laboratory, a student once let fly with a wad of cotton soaked in preserving fluid. That wad found its target squarely in Dr. Poynter's face. Poynter swiftly left the cubicle where he had been working, walked in on the culprit and fixed him with those piercing eyes of his; then he turned and walked out again. Later that day he found a fraternity brother of his intended victim and explained that when he saw the look on that student's face, he had to leave before he exploded in laughter. We can be sure of one thing, though; the student who threw the cotton got the message, even if nothing was said.



Until after World War II, the entire west end of the campus was fifteen or twenty feet higher than it is now, but both Dewey Avenue and Forty-Fourth Street were on their present levels. These streets were secluded and flanked by high clay banks. They made excellent lovers' lanes and were very much used by medical students on the way back to Conkling Hall with their nurse dates. On a nice Saturday night after the fraternity parties, there might be five or six cars parked on those streets. If Miss Burgess had thought of going through those lanes with a flashlight, no one knows how many nurses might have had altered careers. The author of those lines will have to admit he is glad that the idea never occurred to her.



Once a small group of students was gathered on the porch of the old Douglas County Hospital to listen to words of wisdom from Dr. MacQuiddy about the patients they had just seen on the wards. It was late spring; the weather was beautiful and windows were all opened. A pause came in the discussion, and for a moment everything was silent. Then the voice of Dr. G. Alexander Young sounded through the window of a nearby room as he drawled, "Now John, tell me, did you ever jack off?"



*Dr. G. Alexander Young, Sr.*

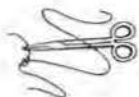


Dr. A. C. Stokes was always one of the sterling supporters of the College of Medicine. At one time he was its main champion on the Board of Regents, and before that he had been effective in the hassle to bring the school to Omaha.

Stokes was a bluntly outspoken man and very articulate. He gave his lectures in Surgery in the same way he did everything else. He had a way of emphasizing things with memorable dicta and salty phrases. One of his students still remembers, "Board-like abdomen — Delayed vomiting — Perforated vescus" and "Remember, Gentlemen — that never is a damn, damn, damn long time."



A little group was once gathered outside of the North Building talking rather loudly when someone on one of the upper laboratory floors tossed a surgical glove distended with water out of the window into their midst. The talking exploded into curses as the gang dispersed and started hunting for the culprit. They never did locate him, although they did find a graduate student at work in one of the labs. For some reason he wasn't charged with the crime and to this day, some forty-five years later, no one ever pinned it on him. He hopes that if one of his victims reads these lines now, he won't be too anxious to perpetrate physical violence on the author.



Dr. Edwin Davis was performing a perineal prostatectomy for the edification of the junior class many years ago. Dr. Davis, something of a showman himself, was demonstrating his infallible sacral block anesthetic, and, he emphasized the point, the one hundred and thirty-fourth consecutive case with never a hitch. He placed his needles with the technical finesse so characteristic of his work; the patient was draped and cocked up into Dr. Davis' favorite lithotomy position. Dr. Davis reached for a scalpel, briskly made a perineal incision; the patient emitted an agonized howl and started to climb off the table. Dr. Davis didn't flinch; he yelled for the operating room staff, he demanded the concentration of the solution, he found a flaw in the surroundings somewhere. Another block was administered, and the patient went into the books as number one hundred and thirty-five!



There are some strange and even eerie things that have happened at our school during the past one hundred years. Some of them have involved people whom no one could normally associate with such things even in a dream.

One evening a congenial group was gathered at one of the fraternity houses whiling away a few weekend hours before the inevitable rush of study and work that would come with the days ahead. Finally one of the students and his financee decided that it was time to go, and the student took her to his car to drive her home. As they left a car parked across the street started up and began to follow them. The student eventually noticed and decided not to take his beloved home for a while, but wherever they went that car followed. Finally in exasperation the student turned into a blind street and quickly maneuvered so as to block his shadow in. He then accosted his pursuer only to find one man sitting with his face in his hands obviously covering up his face. After unburdening his soul to his pursuer as to what he thought of such proceedings the student drove off and left that lone man still sitting with his face buried in his hands.

Years later that student suddenly came across his pursuer and recognized him both as the man who had followed him that night and as one of his former professors!

There seems to be no explanation to this strange episode, but to the writer's knowledge it isn't the only one involving that same man. The other events will be left unrecorded lest a combination might hint at the man's identity. Enough to say that he died many years ago but still has survivors who might be hurt if more of these stories were told.

These strange events so completely out of keeping with the known character of the man must forever remain as a part of the totally inexplicable background of our school.



One of our older staff members was once called out to the north side of town to see a teenage girl who was complaining of abdominal pain. Her mother kept complaining, "See, she has gas all the time, gas—gas." The long-suffering physician quietly went about examining the abdomen. It was obvious that the girl didn't have any peritonitis. As the doctor palpated the abdomen, there were constant audible borborigmi — audible intestinal growls and rumbling. Each time the mother kept on, "You see vot I mean, gas—gas; all the time, gas." The doctor continued, so did the rumbling and so did the mother. Finally, the girl interrupted, "But Mama, dot vas not me — dot vas der Doctor."



Dr. Paul Bancroft, for years a leading pediatrician in Lincoln, was an assistant and later an instructor in Bacteriology for several years. Paul set a record of sorts for that time and his friends, of which he has always had many, are thankful for it. As a graduate student he set out to study the terrible fungus disease, *coccyeoides granuloma*. The techniques in mycology in those days were not what they are today, and Paul caught a laboratory infection. At that time *coccyeoides* was generally regarded as a universally fatal disease. Paul is one of the very first cases on record known to have recovered from it. Now over fifty years later, he survives and to the best of the writer's knowledge, is perfectly healthy.



One morning during one of those memorable winters in the 1930's, when the driveways were filled almost head high with shoveled snow, Dr. Morgulis was walking toward the South Building. Suddenly a car appeared around the corner almost in his face. The driver hit his brakes, but the driveway was slick and all Morgulis could do was hit one of the snowbanks. Morgie, who was anything but athletic, did manage to escape with an intact hide and skeletal system. Within an hour the story was rife in the student body that one of the seniors had tried and very nearly succeeded in altering the Department of Biochemistry with his car. The rumor died down as fast as it arose, but it wasn't forgotten.

A few years later, one of our illustrious graduates was back on campus after his discharge from the Navy. Before he left Omaha he was in conference with Dr. Poynter, who was still Dean, over the possibility of continuing here on the faculty. Much to our subsequent misfortune, he declined the offer, but as he was taking leave, the well-remembered twinkle appeared in Dr. Poynter's eye as he asked, "Is it true that you tried to run down Dr. Morgulis with your car when you were a senior?"



A symposium on low back pain was held one evening in the old Medical Amphitheater. It was well attended by the elite of the Hospital Staff and Basic Science Faculty. There were four prominent and well known staff members who were to present their news, namely Dr. Robert Schrock, Dr. Edwin Davis, Dr. Jay J. Keegan and Dr. L. S. McGoogan. Dr. Schrock concluded that ninety percent of low back pain was due to sacroiliac strain. Dr. Davis concluded that ninety percent of low back pain was due to chronic prostatitis. Dr. Keegan concluded that ninety percent of low back pain was due to herniated intervertebral discs. Dr. McGoogan concluded that ninety percent of low back pain was due to chronic endocervicitis. That seemed to add up to 360 percent of low back pain. This writer winked at Dr. Poynter and Dr. Poynter winked back. To this day one of us is not sure what is the chief cause of low back pain!



In the early 1930's soon after F. D. R. had been inaugurated and had embarked on his programs hopefully designed to pull the country out of the depression by its bootstraps, one of our students got off on a patriotic or some other kind of a binge. His dissecting partners came into their cubicle one afternoon to find the place decorated with red, white and blue streamers. Boldly written on the blackboard in colored chalk was:

When the I.O.U.'s and C.O.D.'s  
of the N.R.A. come due  
There'll be hell to pay  
in the good old U.S.A.

Members of the staff began to happen by and the students began to be frightened and later when the Professor of Physiology, the Professor of Biochemistry and finally the Dean turned up, they were in a state of panic over what had happened. At the end of the day nothing of consequence had developed and in another day or so the whole episode was forgotten. Perhaps not all of those students ever really learned that Dr. Holyoke and Dr. Latta rigged the whole set of visits just to see what would happen.



A former student returned and worked for some months in the Department of Pathology. Eventually he was offered a permanent position on the staff which he respectfully declined. His reason was that his incentives were simply too negative. If he were to take a position here, his only real objective was to become the Dean and the only reason that he wanted to be the Dean was so that he could fire Dr. Morgulis!



Dr. Walter Judd was perhaps the most accomplished orator that ever graduated from the College of Medicine. During his years as Congressman from Minnesota this attribute served him well many times. In fact he delivered what may have been the outstanding keynote speech of the century at the Republican Convention in 1956.

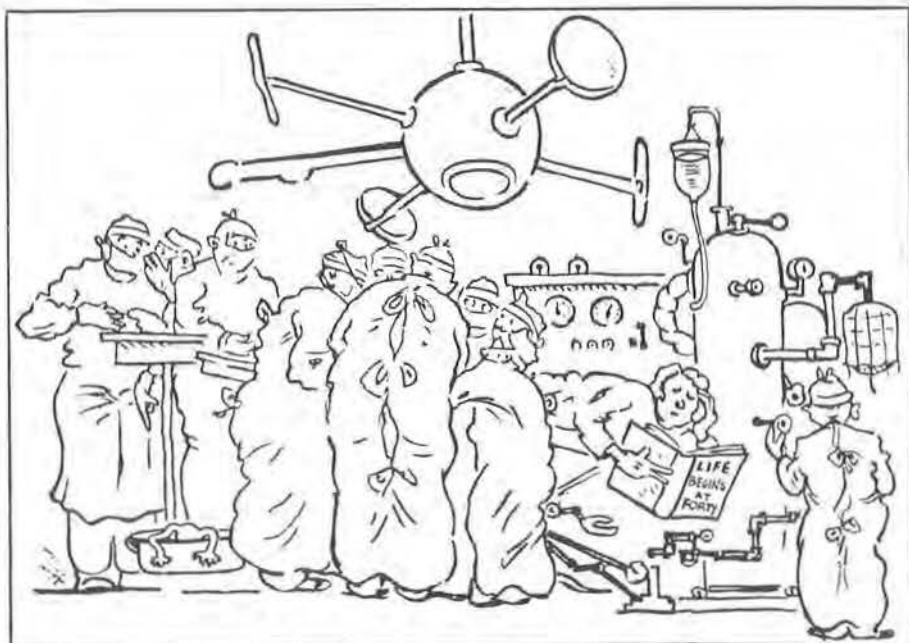
There was an occasion long ago when he was in medical school that his persuasiveness may have rescued his career as a medical student and those of a number of his classmates. One of the students in that class simply was not in the habit of taking a bath quite as often as he should have; at least that was the unanimous opinion of his fellows who had to sit near him, and they finally decided to take action. This was in the era immediately following World War I and the students who had served in the Army had already learned the treatment for such cases. The offender was caught in the locker room of the North Building, bodily thrown into one of the shower stalls, clothes and all and the water turned on. There he was forcibly detained until everyone finally decided that he must be a little cleaner. The thoroughly enraged victim betook himself, sopping wet, to Dean Cutter's office to complain about the outrage that had been perpetrated on him. Cutter may have realized that the treatment was perfectly military but it didn't strike him as particularly professional. He called the culprits to his office with the avowed intention of proclaiming no one really knows what penalties. In the mind of the students, dismissal from school seemed to be the least that would happen. Walter Judd, however, took the role of spokesman for the group. When he finished with his oratory and logic, Cutter let the miscreants go with a verbal slap on the wrist and some of them still enjoy their memories of the episode.



Dr. Jonas was busy one morning in the midst of a hysterectomy in the one-time surgical amphitheater with a class looking on. He had selected the case on the basis of a diagnosis made by a resident and was now showing how it should be done. In that class was a girl who perhaps because she was being financed by a church group was going to school on a shoe string. It may have been that because of her plain clothes she compensated a little. It may have been something else. In any case, as the uterus came out she piped up, "It looks like a pregnant uterus to me." One didn't say things like that to Dr. Jonas unbidden. He turned and asked in his iciest way, "Would you care to open it?" The girl wasn't about to back off now. The uterus with a scalpel was presented to her on a

tray. She opened it and found an amniotic sac and fetus! Jonas silently went back to his work and leaving the resident to close the skin, marched down to Dean Cutter's office and demanded that the resident be fired. No one knows what happened in the office that day but the resident wasn't fired.

As for the girl, she did go on to a career as a medical missionary after graduating one up on Dr. Jonas, a distinction not many could claim.



A student recalls that once when he and his partners were dissecting early in the course in Gross Anatomy, one of the instructors walked in on them, grabbed a pair of forceps and made hash out of a beautiful dissection of the superficial veins around the areola. "So," he is said to have snarled, "fast guys, come in and see me before you go back to work."

He turned and walked out, leaving four students in impotent fury. That dastardly deed has been blamed on this writer who doesn't believe a word of it! If he ever treated students that way, it was so long ago that he has forgotten.

On another occasion, Dr. Holyoke happened by after a group in Anatomy had finished the subcutaneous phase of one of the major regions. In those days, part of the job was to dissect out all of the subcutaneous vessels and nerves before proceeding with the deeper structures. This particular dissection seemed remarkably free of anything of the kind. Holyoke looked under the table and then demanded, "Where is it?" "Where is what?" asked the students, somewhat puzzled. "The lawnmower, you couldn't have done that with a scalpel."



*Dr. J. Jay Keegan*



In his heyday as Omaha's great urologist Dr. Edwin Davis was active in research and he was a pioneer in investigating urinary antiseptics. He used to solicit student volunteers who were to pool their urine before, during and after administration of test drugs, notably the long well known acraflavine. Dr. Davis' works did much to establish the value of this drug as they also did to establish other well known antiseptics such as mercurochrome. What of the students? There seems to be no record of what reward they received but they were known among their classmates as the "fire brigade."

Students also made a significant contribution to Dr. Keegan's classic work on the dermatomes — cutaneous distribution of individual spinal nerves. This work is now generally accepted and a part of almost all standard textbooks of Anatomy. Dr. Keegan found plenty of cases of herniated lumbar intervertebral discs which gave him abundant opportunity to map out each of the sacral and lumbar segments. He was not so fortunate in finding herniated cervical disks which would enable him to map out the distribution of the cervical segments. He solved the problem with student volunteers. Each was to be given a novocain block to one of his cervical nerves following which, any sensory changes would be carefully plotted. The work was highly successful as its subsequent worldwide acceptance attests. But what of the students? Their reward is well known. Dr. Keegan threw a party with everything available. The party was a huge success and well remembered by all who were there. But at the end of the evening the subjects would hardly have qualified for similar studies. Few, if any of them, could have felt any pain anywhere!



If you search our records back into what is almost pre-history, you will find that our school is the second University of Nebraska College of Medicine just as the University of Nebraska is the second University of Nebraska. The first was located at Fontenelle, Nebraska, and burned down during the Civil War.

The first University of Nebraska College of Medicine was born in Lincoln in 1883 and only survived until 1887. In most ways, it had nothing to do with the genesis of the present College. There are, however, a few connections. Any old grad who took his pre-med work in Lincoln in the 1920's or before will remember Dr. Albert Mitchell. Dr. Mitchell always took an interest in the pre-med group. He used to come to all of the pre-med dinners that were held at the old Grand Hotel for years and he frequently appeared as a speaker on those occasions. Mitchell had been the Dean of that old medical school and also the Professor of Anatomy. He has written of the vicissitudes of teaching Anatomy in those far-off times.



Dr. McIntyre is well remembered by many as one of the foremost scientists that ever graced this school. Among his students in Pharmacology, he is sometimes remembered for some other things as well. His biting sarcasm which he used freely at times and his clipped Scottish accent marked him as an individual.

McIntyre had a reputation of continually asking things on tests that the students felt had not been covered in class or assigned. There is a story that once he popped a three question quiz to which no student knew a single answer. Most of the class tried to write something, a few handed in blank pages. The latter students fared the best; they all got zeros. Everyone else had a negative grade!

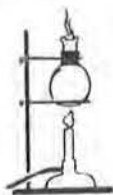


Once long ago, one of our students was down in southeast Nebraska helping out the local physician. This kind of thing was done in those days with approval of the College authorities. In fact, this student had gone at the instigation of Dean Cutter. The great "flu" epidemic of 1918-19 was raging and all of the local physicians had more than they could possibly do. A call came in one evening and the student was sent to a farm some thirteen miles from town where he found a woman with acute otitis media. The situation seemed to demand immediate attention but the poor student had no surgical instruments and no such thing as an otoscope. The latter deficiency was made up by rolling a piece of paper into a cone and using a hand mirror and a kerosene lamp. Then the house was searched and a steel knitting needle scrounged up. The student retired to the tool shed with his trophy, found an old foot powered grindstone to sharpen the point and managed to perform what we would now call an ersatz paracentesis. All went well, the student was commended for his resourcefulness, something you really needed in those days.



Dr. J. E. Summers was a surgeon of the old school. He had had good training and was an excellent operator but sometimes he could get a little unconventional. There were times when he couldn't quite feel what he was working on that he would suddenly state, "I can't feel a damn thing through these mittens." At such times he would strip off his gloves and finish his operation bare handed.

Schrock and Johnson were perhaps the most meticulous of all the staff on aseptic techniques. They used the no touch method. All instruments were passed with forceps including the heavier items such as hammers that the orthopedic surgeons used. To watch the poor operating room nurses trying to pass instruments and thread needles using tongs instead of fingers was enough to wring a sigh out of tiles in the floor. The payoff usually came when services changed and a new student stepped up to the table and began to sponge by hand. Everything always hit the roof as only Schrock and Johnson could make it hit the roof. These episodes quite likely turned half a dozen students a year away from Orthopedic Surgery into other channels.



There is a story concerning Dr. Morgulis and a class in Biochemistry. Legend has it that he gave a final examination and one student made a perfect grade. When he worked out his course grades on this basis, it turned out that all of the rest of the class failed the course. This didn't sit well with the class and an angry group assembled outside his office door, some say with the avowed intention of tearing him limb from limb.

Finally, he opened his door and said, "Please go home boys, you all pass."

The story has several versions. One is that Dr. Cutter had a voice in rescuing the class from ignominy. Another is that the event happened at Creighton and precipitated Morgulis' moving to the University of Nebraska the following year.

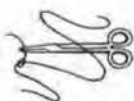


For years the Nebraska State Licensure Board Examination was given in Omaha the week following graduation. This meant that after the four year grind was over and celebrated, the one hurdle remained. It always came as an anticlimax to what the class had just gone through especially since the examination was usually not overly difficult and almost everybody passed it.

One year the class was reconvened for the State Board and in this case the boys were really "feeling their oats." They were waiting, not too patiently, for the examination to begin when the door opened and a lady walked in with the questions. The class exploded into cheers and shouting at this unexpected arrival and she in turn decided that her reception was not too becoming of recently graduated professional men. She walked to the front, deposited the questions and after glaring icily at the assembly remarked, "Just how old are you boys anyway?" A pause followed, and a voice from the rear spoke up, "And just how old are you?"



One morning a demonstration microscope, at the end of the Histology lab, began to get a little balky and Dr. Latta decided that it needed a little on-the-spot fixing. He procured a screwdriver several sizes too large for the job but the best he could find on the spur of the moment, and went to work. One of the students who had stepped out of the lab for a moment and stepped back in again saw Dr. Latta's back as he bent over the ailing microscope. He didn't recognize who was there, walked up behind him and demanded in a loud voice, "Why don't you go and get a crowbar?" Dr. Latta turned and the two parted, the student to his desk in deep chagrin and Dr. Latta to the hall where he could gracefully blow up in laughter.



Dr. J. E. Summers could be quite “salty” in the language he used at times but he had a taste for the art of medicine as well as the science, and occasionally he used to try to pass a little on to the medical students. Once he flavored a lecture in Surgery with a few pointers on what one said to patients. One of his admonitions was to remember “Horses sweat, men perspire and women glow.”



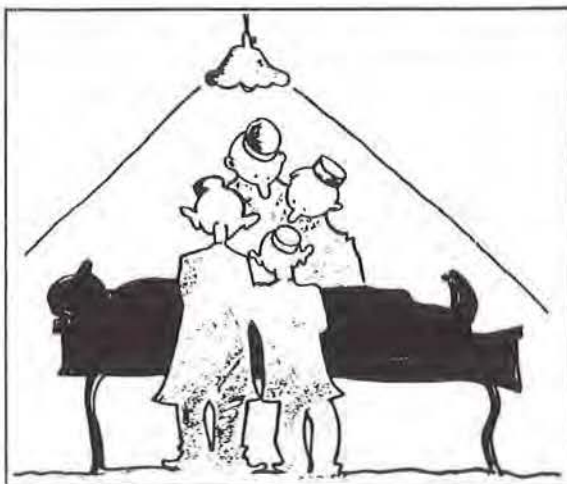
Dr. Russell Best spent a few years teaching in Anatomy before he became too involved in his surgical practice to carry it on. Dr. Best liked to discuss Anatomy sitting in a chair leaning back against the wall of the dissecting cubicle. One afternoon, he was deeply involved with a team of students who kept him constantly getting up out of his chair to demonstrate something. After about the fourth or fifth of these moves, Dr. Best missed his chair and landed on his fanny. Since one student just happened to be behind the chair at the moment, the evidence all pointed to the fact that the chair had been jerked. The poor student protested that he had done no such thing and won his case with no particular trouble although he had a few moments during which he pictured himself going back to playing in a dance band. Then he met Dr. Latta in the hall and Dr. Latta told him that it just wasn't becoming of medical students to jerk chairs out from under professors. For a horrible moment all of his worst nightmares returned before he caught the playful glint in Dr. Latta's eye.



In the days when you used to start work in Anatomy by dissecting out all of the cutaneous nerves on the back, an unhappy student once wrote:

Twinkle, twinkle little nerves  
With your hidden twists and curves  
How I wonder where you're at  
Down among the G.D. fat!

At one time this writer knew who the author of those lines was but he has long since forgotten. If the author recognizes them, I wish he would let me know.



Ted Sanders, who graduated back in the early 30's, has had a distinguished career as an ophthalmologist in St. Louis for many years. Somewhere, back in his pre-med days he earned, or at least was bequeathed the nickname "Squawk." This writer can't remember exactly whence that name came but to the best of his memory it was in a class in Comparative Anatomy. He is sure of one thing, however, Dr. Sanders won't

thank him for digging it up out of the past.



Dr. MacQuiddy was one of the better teachers in the Department of Internal Medicine. He was a pioneer in the study of allergies and became quite well known in the field. He ran the junior clinical clerk service at the County Hospital for some years and kept the students working. MacQuiddy was a rather flamboyant person, and he sometimes tended to get rather oratorical. When he did, he had a voice that carried. It might have

been this that inspired the latent talents of someone. In any case, a verse once turned up and was quoted around the school for a few years:

Nobody can see the wind  
Neither you nor I  
But when the leaves are rustling  
MacQuiddy's passing by.



*Dr. W. P. Wherry, Dr. H. A. Wigton, Dr. H. B. Hunt*



C. Edward Thompson, generally known as "Eddie," used to teach in the course in Internal Medicine. Eddie was never one to take life more seriously than the law allowed. There was a time when he would bring his dogs to class with him and spend more of the hour on the subject of dogs than on medicine. During the last session of the course, many years ago, he gave up on medicine entirely and devoted the period to what one might do with the first money he earned in practice. One student remembers following the advice that Eddie gave them and doing very well thereby.

Eddie taught a course in the History of Medicine, probably not because he was any great historian but because no one else seemed to want to take it on. The final exam in that course was always given off campus. It consisted of a party with a contest to see who could drink the most!



One morning Dr. Sage walked into his junior class in Obstetrics and flashing a fistful of twenty dollar bills began with "When you dumb bunnies get as smart as I am, you can get this much money for one operation." He put the bills down on the little demonstration table and began his class in his usual style. After a while he called one of the students down front to demonstrate one phase of the mechanism of labor on a model pelvis and fetal head. The student took the model to the demonstration table and began. In the process he scattered Sage's bills all over the floor. He calmly continued his

demonstration while Sage got down on his hands and knees to gather up his lucre. That student probably didn't make a hit with Sage that day but his classmates will always remember him fondly.



Does anyone remember the time that a nonplussed sophomore was called to the blackboard by Dr. Sage to draw the female perineum and, how in the middle of his struggles, Sage called out, "Don't laugh, he thinks he is drawing a cow"? That student was called "Butch" the rest of his time in school. That same year Ferrall Moore became known as "contest Pete" by winning a "burping" contest. Both are immortalized by those names in the first issue of the Caduceus (a one time student year book) but very few remember whence the names came.



Dr. Sage had a group of students about him one morning when he opened a particularly large and foul abscess in one of the labia of a patient. When the students all recoiled from the fetor that followed he turned on them with, "Well, what's the matter with you guys? It isn't supposed to smell like a rose!"

Dr. Sage once defined a woman as a "narrow-waisted, broad-hipped, constipated animal with a persistent backache."





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*Dr. Earl C. Sage*



Once Dr. Sage came dashing into the delivery room in his shorts. Things were about to happen, and he couldn't find any scrub pants. He was duly gowned, minus pants, while he was blasting the delivery room staff and all others concerned or otherwise to the tune of what totally incompetent idiots they were.

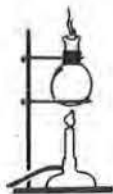
That didn't end the episode. There happened to be a group of students assembled for that delivery, and this seemed to be a made-to-order occasion to demonstrate the use of forceps. The pants were forgotten as Sage carefully applied the forceps with an explanation of just how it should be done and why. With the forceps in place he dexterously and successfully completed the delivery — of a breech presentation!



When the College of Medicine moved to Omaha, Dr. Cutter and Dr. Poynter were two of the faculty members who came along. They were never what one would call close personal friends. Both had aspirations of becoming the Dean, but the lot fell to Dr. Cutter. Cutter served the College well from 1915 to 1925, but the rift between him and Dr. Poynter never really healed. In fact, when Cutter was called to Chicago to an illustrious career as the Dean of Northwestern Medical School, he arranged to be succeeded by Dr. J. Jay Keegan, mostly with the object of making sure that Poynter didn't get the job. The ruse didn't work for long. Four years later Keegan resigned to devote himself to his practice in Neurosurgery and Poynter became the Dean, a position he held from 1929 to 1946!



The first building on the site of the present Medical Center was the North Laboratory, now known as Poynter Hall. It was completed in 1913, and before the Hospital and South Building were added, it housed the entire College of Medicine. The North Building was almost finished in time for the great tornado which hit Omaha on Easter Sunday in 1913. Everyone interested in the College was scared to death, for the new building was directly in the path of the storm. They could have saved themselves the worry. In the midst of almost total desolation the building stood undamaged. It was opened for classes on schedule that September.



Dr. Guenther used to have the idea that good treatment for medical students was to take a little of their own medicine. During the laboratory in Pharmacology, various doses of various drugs were made up; the students used to take them and record the effects. This practice was rough on the class as the effects sometimes rendered part of the class less fit for duty than they normally were for a day or two at a time. Once or twice it came near seriously misfiring. Once for some reason the dose of atropine was multiplied several times, and about a dozen students spent a day with symptoms of serious atropine poisoning. There were no fatalities, but there were some badly scared people and Dr. Guenther probably never got over it. That same year one of the students was given an ether cocktail. This was well enough but some of his mischievous pals stepped in and backed it with two or three shots of alcohol. That student was out of the picture for the evening, but what was worse, he had a date for a party in Lincoln the following night. He bravely or foolishly went down but had to give up and take refuge at the home of some old family friends. They called a doctor and the story came out. Still worse, the tale found its way back to Omaha somewhat embellished. That rascal had gone and got drunk and was talking his way out by blaming the school. He had some problems for a few days convincing the administration that his cause was genuine. Drug-taking in Pharmacology fell off rapidly over the next few years!



Student experiments in Physiology have always had a way of not working right. Perverse biological materials like frog hearts won't twitch properly and produce acceptable records on the old smoked drums. Physiology professors have never been noted for their sympathy for students in this predicament, and medical students with their unlimited ingenuity have always been able to invent ways to cope with problems of this kind.

Once a group of four students began to post a sentry at the door to warn of the approach of anyone official. Then one would turn the drum while another moved the levers and a fairly respectable facsimile of a proper record could be turned in. One afternoon the group was busy with a particularly refractory frog heart. The record was no good and the day was getting late. The sentry was duly posted, but this time he happened to encounter an attractive female graduate student and was eventually lured away from his post of duty. The result was that an unannounced instructor slipped in and observed the ersatz methods. That group worked until eight that night and eventually produced a genuine record.



A student in one of the classes of a bygone day developed an agonizing pain that his classmates correctly diagnosed as a ureteral calculus. As cystoscopy in those days was a rather heroic affair, the student, wisely or not, decided to ride it out on such sedatives as he could get. The only thing available to him was bromide, and being in agony, he was rather liberal with his dosage. Triple bromide is a drug with what we now call side effects and in this case, one definitely materialized. The poor student broke out with pustular eruption, and to add to his woes, he was willy-nilly carted off to the isolation hospital, otherwise known as the pesthouse, with a diagnosis of smallpox. He stands as a wonderful example of the wages for the sin of self-medication and the side effects of bromide!



The Pathology lab of Dr. Eggers' time was set up with rows of long tables and closely spaced chairs where the students sat to study and incidentally to paint the slides that were handed out each day. Frequently a student got up and went out for a break or perhaps a smoke and a drink of water. Sometimes someone would pass by and fill the empty chair with tepid water. If the absentee returned and sat down in the water he was likely not to notice anything until his pants were well soaked, and then he was exposed to the obvious indignities that are likely to go with wet pants.

One of our old time graduates had just treated the chair next to him when Dr. Eggers appeared and asked "What slides did I assign for study today?" Then he added, "Oh, here is a vacant chair. I'll just sit down and have a look." The culprit sweated out the next few minutes and then Dr. Eggers got up and left. Nothing happened.



In the days when anything that came to hand might serve as a missile in the Gross Anatomy lab, Dr. Poynter would sometimes get into the line of fire, and there are a number of classic stories about such events.

It was late in the year and almost everyone was working in the annual frenzy to finish the lower extremity, when one dissecting group became plagued beyond endurance by their neighbors who kept tossing things over the partition. Finally one of the boys armed himself with a lung and vowed that he would really fix the next so and so who came near. The next one who did come near was Dr. Poynter and he caught the lung right in his epigastrium. You didn't do that to Dr. Poynter. The poor student turned and started to dissect furiously. Dr. Poynter stood behind him for about five minutes. God knows how long it must have seemed to the student. Then he remarked, "You are working pretty hard, aren't you?" The student respectfully replied, "Yes Sir," and Dr. Poynter quietly walked out.



Sometimes Dr. McIntyre would interrupt one of his lectures with a question shot at some student that he would call by name. Occasionally he would run into a name that didn't fit well with his clipped Scottish accent. An Italian-American student with a rather long name baffled him completely. Every time that McIntyre tried to call his name, he tripped, stumbled, tried again and after four or five starts, moved on to the next name in the alphabet. It all worked out very well for the students. He of the long name was never asked a question because McIntyre never did get his name out. Meantime his

alphabetical neighbor knew he would be next and had ample time to get his thoughts in order.

The result was two happy students: one who never had to answer a question, and one who got all of the answers right.



When Morgulis used to be the terror of the sophomore year in medicine, the students who failed in Biochemistry, and there were always some, were all sent to the University of Michigan to make it up the following summer. In fact, Michigan became a sort of byword for that course in Biochemistry. It was during that time that the game of Monopoly appeared and for some reason, it caught on in a big way at the medical fraternity houses. Before long a new card appeared in the Chance Pile in the game at one of the houses. It was marked the "Morgulis card" and it read, "Go to Michigan — go directly to Michigan — do not pass go — do not collect \$200."



Way, way back before the memories of most of our real old timers, Dr. Robert Hollister was a member of the Department of Surgery. He was another unforgettable character.

Hollister had graduated from Harvard Medical School, and probably had one of the best minds ever to come to medical Omaha. He also had a mind of his own and some very definite ideas on how he wanted to live. Above all else, he was a frugal man. During all of his years in Omaha he drove a Model T Ford. He wouldn't buy a car with a starter. There was a crank on the front end that was meant for starting the engine, and nothing else made any sense to him. To the end of the days of the Model T in 1926, Hollister cranked his car. He always had an open car and even in the bitter cold weather, he would never bother to put the side curtains on. He used to wear a huge buffalo coat and a big coonskin cap. He was always stopping to pick up acquaintances he met along his way, but most of them reached their destination half frozen to death. It was said that you could tell when he was coming by the wave of people vanishing behind poles, mail boxes, or anything so that they wouldn't have to ride in that open car.

Hollister dropped what had promised to be an illustrious career in medicine to move onto a farm at Irvington — then as remote as the next county would be now. He dropped his position on the faculty at that time, but older Omaha physicians remember him driving that open Ford back and forth every day.

In his later years, Hollister did mainly insurance examining, and for years he was on the medical staff of the Union Pacific Railroad. Eventually he moved to Ohio where he spent his last years chopping wood and keeping a garden, both of which he decided to give up — on his ninetieth birthday!



When Jack Ivins was in medical school he used to hold a reserve commission in the Cavalry. This meant that he had access to the horses that were stabled north of Omaha. For some years, he lived with the Holyokes and Ed, then a graduate student and instructor in Anatomy and something of an old ranch hand himself, and Jack would occasionally go riding up the river road north of town. At that time, there was a resident in Pathology who either fancied himself a horseman or had ambitions of being one. He finally prevailed on Jack to take him along on one of those rides. The result was near disaster, but

the resident did manage to stay on the horse although there were serious doubts at times. The blow fell when he was taken home and dropped at the foot of a long flight of steps leading to the front door. When he painfully bowlegged it up those steps neither Jack nor Ed could stand it any longer. They sat in the car and howled. The poor resident never quite forgave them.



Sex Please, We Are British!"

There are many, many incidents about the College of Medicine that would make good reading and telling that will have to wait for another generation. They are too recent and too many people are involved who might be upset or hurt. An indication of current medical student humor did crop up very recently when the freshmen presented Ken and Norah Metcalf with tickets to the Fire House Dinner Theater. The play? "No



outsoken in his feeling on the matter as he was on everything else.

Lord was the head of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery, and he and his office ruled the roost in the field in Omaha for many years. Dr. Lord always introduced the junior class in Orthopedic Surgery with a short tirade on how Orr had pirated a method of treatment of osteomyelitis from him and made it world-famous!



Very recently the College has been beset with an epidemic of paper airplanes. They tend to fly in clouds in Wittson Hall Amphitheater before every class and occasionally during the class. Rumor has it that someone in Psychiatry suggested that the students take out their frustrations that way. There are a few of the first-year teachers who probably wish that there was a special circle in hell where that psychiatrist could be spread-eagled and peppered with paper airplanes throughout eternity.

Paper airplanes, however, are nothing new around the Medical College. They flew in the old North Amphitheater, the South Amphitheater and the Medical Amphitheater before the memories of most of us today. Paper wads shot with rubber bands used to be in vogue, too. They were worse; when they hit you, they stung! An almost endless variety of things has been thrown about the lecture rooms at one time or another. Little white rubber balls once had their day. The old Surgical Amphitheater opened onto the roof of the hospital making snow available in the wintertime, and there have been cases of a student being smacked with a snowball as he walked in. Once a huge pair of boots that were left outside of the Medical Amphitheater were tossed in and thrown about for a while. Professors like Dr. Bliss used to reply in chalk, and even erasers have been tossed into a class to keep sleepy students awake. Dr. Morgulis was once twirling his glasses at the end of a ribbon. The ribbon broke and the glasses flew off and hit a student. This led to a number of Russian words which must have been bad, but no one understood. There seems to be no record of a brick being thrown, but there is little else throwable that isn't on the list.

Throwing has been a traditional, if not honored, art by both students and faculty since our earliest times.



From 1920 to 1938 there were no less than five medical fraternities at the College of Medicine, each operating a chapter house. Through those years there were five fraternity groups plus a sixth of about the same size which included all of the students who were unattached. Very few of the medical students were married until they reached the senior year, and not many even then. A fairly large proportion of the student body lived at the fraternity houses and quite a bit of the social life centered around them. The first of the fraternities was Phi Rho Sigma, established here in 1902. Nu Sigma Nu followed in 1906, and Phi Chi in 1916. Alpha Kappa Kappa and Phi Beta Pi arrived in 1920 and 1921.

At first sight these organizations seemed designed to split the student body into individual cliques, and to some extent this was true. There was, however, a sense of solidarity, especially in the senior class, that persists right down to the present.

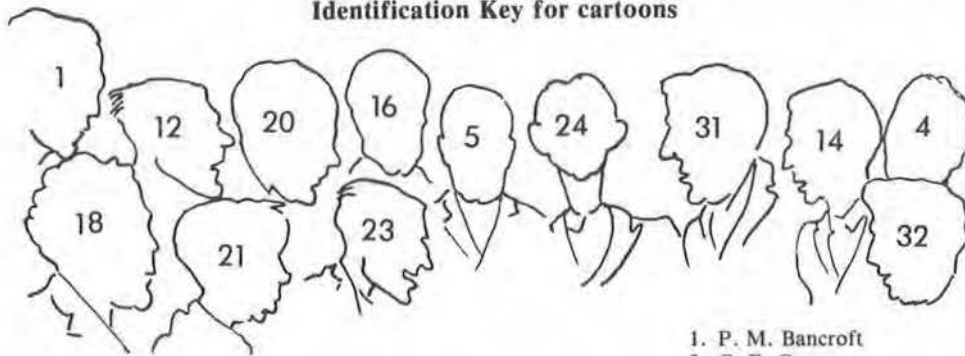
There was considerable competition between the fraternities — baseball, basketball, golf and tennis and also lively rivalry for honors in scholarship. To this end most of the houses ran tutorial sessions especially for the freshmen, and sometimes these were effective and helpful, sometimes not. The “rushing” was a rather chaotic affair with no rules such as exist at most universities. It was a cut-throat proposition with no holds barred and amounted to something that resembled a membership drive more than a rush week. Here feelings sometimes ran high, even to the point of fisticuffs, and while there was some talk of instituting rules, none were ever made.

At the end of the 30's the system began to break down. The Phi Betes went first in an avalanche of unpaid bills. There had been some serious mismanagement of the Chapter's financial affairs. The “A K's” vanished second, but the other three survived World War II. Something overtook Nu Sigma Nu in the 50's — now they were here, now they were gone. The Phi Chi's and Phi Rho's hung on. The former fraternity had wisely placed its affairs in the hands of a strong alumni group who managed affairs well. They procured the old Metz home, a mansion on Dewey Avenue where they flourish today. The Phi Rho's were secure in the stately house right at Forty-Second and Dewey Avenue where it had been since 1914. Here, however, things seemed to deteriorate. The once elegant fraternity house began to look more and more run down at the heel. Finally about three years ago the bulldozers moved in and a long-time landmark at the Medical Center vanished almost overnight, with a parking lot left as its only memorial.

The Phi Rho's still operate a club and how long it will continue is anyone's guess. The members will probably tell you that it will be here forever. Some skeptics are not quite so sure. At least Phi Rho survives as a club, Phi Chi as an active fraternity. Nu Sigma Nu and Alpha Kappa Kappa have left scholarship funds behind them while the Phi Betes vanished without a trace except in the minds of a few aging and nostalgic alumni.

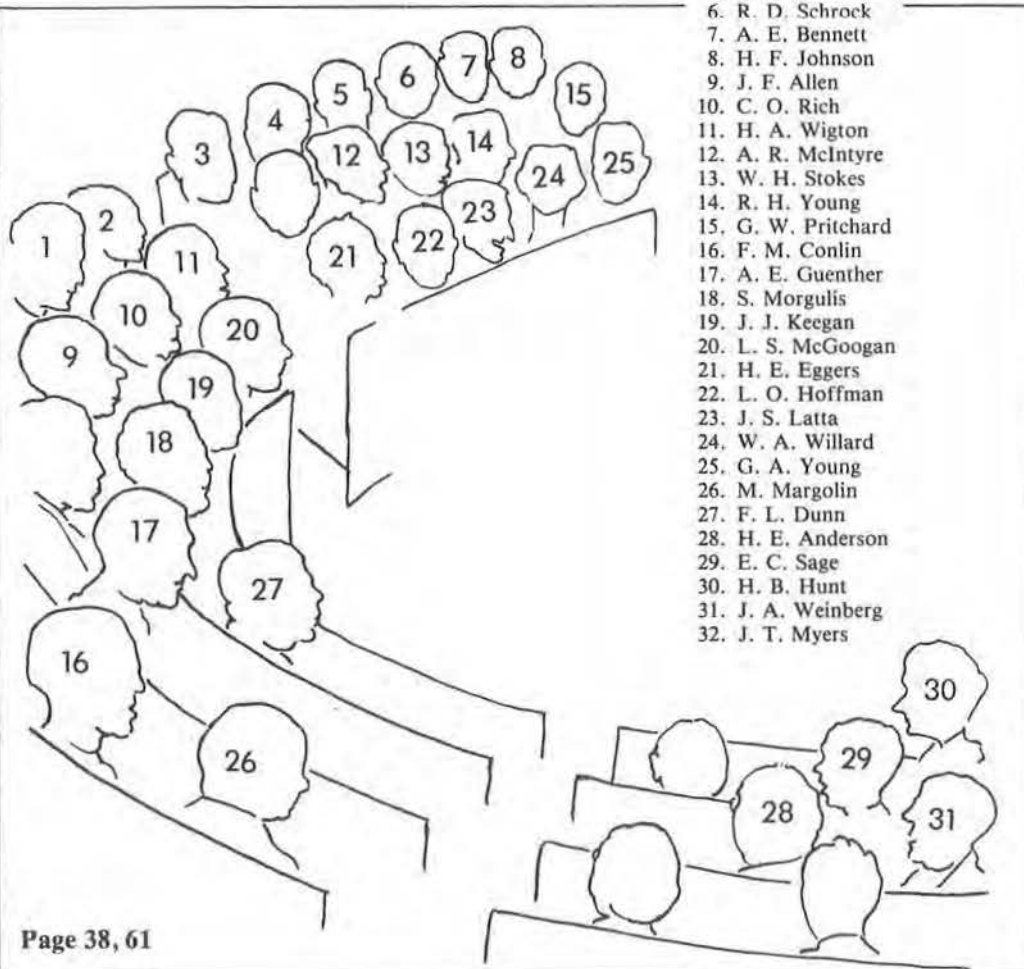
One thing is certain: the fraternity system as it was early in the century is gone “with the snows of yesteryear” and pretty much “just a memory.”

# Identification Key for cartoons



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1. P. M. Bancroft
2. C. E. Gurney
3. W. P. Wherry
4. M. Grodinsky
5. H. H. Davis
6. R. D. Schrock
7. A. E. Bennett
8. H. F. Johnson
9. J. F. Allen
10. C. O. Rich
11. H. A. Wigton
12. A. R. McIntyre
13. W. H. Stokes
14. R. H. Young
15. G. W. Pritchard
16. F. M. Conlin
17. A. E. Guenther
18. S. Morgulis
19. J. J. Keegan
20. L. S. McGoogan
21. H. E. Eggers
22. L. O. Hoffman
23. J. S. Latta
24. W. A. Willard
25. G. A. Young
26. M. Margolin
27. F. L. Dunn
28. H. E. Anderson
29. E. C. Sage
30. H. B. Hunt
31. J. A. Weinberg
32. J. T. Myers



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SELECTED  
VERSES

*by*  
*E. Gustave Polehock*



# DAYDREAMS IN MY LAB

## 1. Reverie

I wish I were a spider in the corner over there  
In a cozy little cobweb behind that broken chair  
I'd be secure and happy in the corner of the room  
Where the janitor would never come and threaten with his broom  
Where the dust would always hide me from the sight of hostile eyes  
Where I know they'll never fix the screen and keep away the flies  
Where the leaky pipe will give a drop of water now and then  
While I sucked a juicy cockroach I could hear the talk of men  
The only thing to trouble my secure abundant life  
Would be if I went courting and got eaten by my wife.

## 2. On Being Stung By A Wasp

Why pick on me, you outlaw, I never did you harm  
My first acquaintance with you is this welt upon my arm  
If you had only been content to buzz around the door  
You wouldn't be a crumpled heap just stamped into the floor  
Perhaps you didn't like it, lost, inside my lab  
Compared to all the great outdoors it is a little drab  
But if you felt resentful of the holes within my screen  
You should have thought of justice and gone and stung the dean  
You should have stung the chancellor and the board of regents too  
When we don't have a budget there is little I can do  
But to you it matters little if you find the guilty guy  
The others would have smashed you just as flat as I.

### 3. A Rainy Morning — North Lab

The day is dark and dreary, the rain is coming down  
The view is dank and cheerless from my window on the town  
I can watch the treetops lashing, I can hear the bleak wind roar  
I can hear the dripping, dripping of water on the floor  
I can walk around the puddles that gutter in the hall  
To watch the brand new plaster coming off the wall  
The plaster that we waited for — still white and free of taint  
Virgin pure, that never knew the lustful weight of paint  
And I wonder where the ceiling will show another stain  
I wonder where the roof will spring another leak again  
I shouldn't let it get me — I have seen it all before  
I saw the plaster leave the walls in nineteen forty-four  
I remember how they fixed it all spic and span and new  
I watched it all come off again in nineteen fifty-two  
I remember when they tarred the roof, the grounds department swore  
From that day on they had it waterproof forevermore  
And still upon this stormy day and in this chilly rain  
I can watch the paint and plaster all coming off again  
There is talent on this campus for wonders in our art  
We've got artificial kidneys and an artificial heart  
We can fix blue babies' leaky valves, we work with isotopes  
We study mitochondria with electronmicroscopes  
We're finding out that viruses can make lymphomas grow  
The secret lives of lysosomes we're shortly going to know  
But this dreary rainy morning and the many years give proof  
That no one seems to know enough to fix a leaky roof.

#### **4. Thinkin'**

Thinkin' over how another summer day is done  
Thinkin' how the courses in the fall are going to run  
Thinkin' on how many little jobs I haven't done  
Just thinkin'

Thinkin' on the projects that I have to supervise  
Thinkin' on the things I'm going to have to organize  
Thinkin' on the research that I ought to publicize  
Just thinkin'

Thinkin' on the work that I'm going to have to do  
Thinkin' on the plans it takes to see the building through  
Thinkin' on the ways to develop something new  
Just thinkin'

Thinkin' on the paperwork that never seems to stop  
Thinkin' on the mess we have up yonder in the shop  
Thinkin' on the chance I ever have to get on top  
Just thinkin'

Thinkin' on the budget that is going to have to do  
Thinkin' on the training grant I know we must renew  
Thinkin' on the applicant I have to interview  
Just thinkin'

Thinkin' on the work to make a good department run  
Thinkin' over all these things that come up one by one  
Thinkin' that I'd better get to work and get it done  
and quit just thinkin'

#### **5. Observation**

He who controls his limbic system  
Is a candidate for a nimbic system

## 6. A New Skull

You sit there on my table all clean and new and white  
You cast a curious shadow in the autumn morning light  
I can pick you up and ponder on the things you have to tell  
Your sutures, fossae, markings and your frontal fontanelle  
Your foramina and condyles, your jaw and pterion  
Your styloid and your mastoid, your canals and nasion  
I wonder where you spent your life, what joys and woes you know  
I wonder if you ever loved and anyone loved you  
I wonder at what twist of fate has ordained this to be  
But for the grace of God, I might be you and you be me.

## OBJECTIVES (Or What It All May Come To)

Once there was a student who started into school  
He was highly motivated and he studied every rule  
He read the class assignments and the course objectives too  
Because he knew they told him all the things that he should do.

He studied those objectives and he learned them all by rote  
There was nothing in the handouts that he couldn't freely quote  
He could write a list including all the muscles he should know  
He could list the nerves and vessels that would make the muscles go.

He'd identify the structures, both the living and the dead  
When he got through with saying there was little to be said  
And his teachers all were happy because he could excel  
And they gave him grades of honors and a scholarship as well.

So our student went to clinics where the patients come and go  
And saw a man who dropped a chunk of granite on his toe  
The toe was smashed and bloody and seeping through his shoe  
So our student thought a moment and decided what to do.

He recalled the many things that he had mastered one by one  
And did exactly what objectives stated should be done  
He worried just a little over any points he missed  
Tho' the patient needed treatment the objectives said to list.

He listed all the muscles that he knew he ought to know  
The long and short extensors and the flexor of the toe  
He listed the abductor and the flexor brevis too  
The things that both the plantar nerves should make the digit do.

He listed the adductors both the transverse and oblique  
He mentioned every vessel that had started in to leak  
He listed all the lymph nodes that would filter out the dirt  
And the lateral thalamic tract that made the digit hurt.

He listed retinacula and all the minor points  
And after he had finished this he started on the joints  
He listed the electrolytes — their excess and their lack  
And while he sat and listed the toe was turning black.

So the indicators showed he knew the things that he should know  
He got honors for his efforts and the patient lost his toe  
The student got his Doctorate and A.O.A. to boot  
The patient got a lawyer and began to file a suit.

So everyone was happy — the student got his key  
The lawyers on the case were glad because they got a fee  
The patient was delighted because he won his case  
And the underwriters liked it because it raised the base.

So now we write objectives — it's the modern way to teach  
The students know that all they have to do is to master each  
And you cannot criticize them — they cannot be amiss  
When they can be productive of a happy tale like this.

## WAITING

On a bitter winter morning they began to cut the trees  
They dug the frozen soil while they watched the landscape freeze  
The men all worked like beavers and the excavation grew  
They said move in by Christmas, we will have the project through!

The blasts of winter mellowed and the birds began to sing  
They bored and sunk the footings, they poured the first floor in  
The men still worked like trojans and the boss began to say  
We won't be done by Christmas but we'll have you in by May

Spring reddened into summer and we watched the columns grow  
But the men began to slacken and the pace began to slow  
They worked like tired horses and began to disappear  
But they still sang out the war cry — next academic year!

The golden days of autumn came, the year was growing old  
We hoped they'd have it all enclosed before it got too cold  
Christmas came and Christmas went and men began to say  
Start your classes over here — we'll make it Labor Day.

Another verdant springtime — a flower-scented May  
The microscopic changes continued day by day  
The men poked on like snails where the bustle once had been  
It may take up to Christmas to get the casework in.

Still another summer and still another fall  
It will take till January — Just three more months, that's all  
Another Merry Christmas — another winter's snow  
And still we hear the story, just three more months to go

The spring is breaking out again and now I wonder why  
We can't make any changes till the middle of July  
So I wonder if when summer comes we'll hear the old refrain  
And if our moving day won't be at Christmastime again

So I ponder as I wander among the empty walls  
And watch the tired workers mopping water in the halls  
And watch the brand new ceilings being watered one by one  
If anyone will live to see the God damned building done





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A Century of Preparation



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