

[Columbia University Health Sciences Library Archives & Special Collections](#)

[College of Physicians and Surgeons Records, 1857-1915](#)

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS
Records, 1857-1915 (bulk 1871-1898)
.35 feet (1 box)**

SUMMARY: Records of the College of Physicians and Surgeons including College and departmental annual reports; financial and real estate records; records on scholarships and prizes; examination questions; and correspondence, newspaper clippings, and minutes relating to the establishment of a New York State Board of Regents' admissions examinations for medical students.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The College of Physicians and Surgeons was established by a charter granted by the New York State Board of Regents to the Medical Society of the County of New York on March 12, 1807. In 1811, a new charter effectively ended control of P&S by the Medical Society and vested governance in a newly created Board of Trustees.

In 1814, students and faculty of the moribund Columbia College Medical Faculty (founded 1767) were merged into P&S. A dispute over the role of the faculty on the Board of Trustees led in 1826 to the establishment of a Board dominated by laymen and to the subsequent resignation of most of College's faculty. Although crippled, P&S survived and by the 1830s was again thriving.

In 1860, the College amicably severed its relationship with the Regents and forged a nominal affiliation with Columbia College. By terms of the agreement, P&S issued its diplomas as "the Medical Department of Columbia College." The President of Columbia sat on the Board of Trustees and, with the President of P&S, jointly presided over commencements. However, P&S gave up none of its administrative or financial independence. It was not until 1891 that P&S fully merged into Columbia, becoming its "Faculty of Medicine," although retaining its original name.

ORGANIZATION: Organized in five series: I. Annual reports; II. Financial and real estate records; III. Papers relating to the establishment of Regents admissions examinations for medical students; IV. Correspondence and subject files; V. Examination questions.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: These are miscellaneous records that appear to have originated in a variety of P&S offices, though most are probably from the Secretary of the Faculty and the Office of the Treasurer. While the records cover the period 1857-1915, they bulk from 1871-1898.

The annual reports of P&S to the President of Columbia College are probably the most informative records here. Besides noting the number of matriculants and graduates, the reports also include information on curriculum and faculty changes, prizewinners, gifts,

and changes in the physical plant. Financial records include an overview of P&S revenues from 1857 to 1870; treasurer's reports for 1887-1888; information on faculty loans to P&S; and fundraising for a new building.

Other subjects documented here include the founding of the Cartwright and Harsen Prizes and the Alonzo Clark Scholarship; the establishment of a State Board of Regents' admissions examination for medical students; and P&S examination questions, 1892-1915, for a wide variety of disciplines.

RELATED COLLECTIONS: The records of the Office of the Treasurer, 1807-1895, contain additional financial material for much of this period.

PROVENANCE: accession #96.03.06.

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Box 1

Series I. Annual reports

- 1-10 Annual Reports of the College of Physicians & Surgeons ["Medical Department"] to Columbia College, for sessions 1879/80-1888/89
- 11 Reports sent to the U.S. Department of Education, 1885-1886
- 12-15 Anatomical Department, 1885/86-1888/89
- 16 Chemical Laboratory, 1890. Includes examination questions for May 1890 in Medical Chemistry
- 17-24 Physiology and pathology laboratory, 1883-1889/90
- 25 Physiology and pathology laboratory. Special report on the condition and resources of the laboratory to the Committee on the Curriculum, Spring 1888
- 26 Physiology and pathology laboratory. Special report to John G. Curtis regarding changes in the curriculum for 1890-91 and its ramifications on the lab, Nov 1889

Series II. Financial and real estate records

- 27 Expenditures, 1857-1870. Revenues of P&S, 1857-1870
- 28 Board of Trustees Committee report to recommend plan for liquidating debt, March 7, 1871
- 29 Faculty report to the Trustees of the College of Physicians & Surgeons regarding liquidating the debt of the college and their responsibility to it, April 5, 1871
- 30 Lease and agreement between Willard Parker and the College of Physicians & Surgeons and others, Nov 1, 1857. Agreement to repay Dr. Parker, Nov 1, 1871. Includes description of classroom furnishings
- 31 Faculty loan from Alonzo Clark, Oct 30, 1871; last statement April 14, 1881
- 32 Reports about requirements for new building, March/April 1882
- 33 Report on sinking fund, May 1882
- 34 Faculty appeal for raising funds for new building, Feb 1883
- 35 Report of the Treasurer, Sept 15, 1887. Includes a 15-year analysis of receipts and assessments to the department
- 36 Report of the Treasurer, Sept 15, 1888

Series III. Papers relating to the establishment of Regents admissions examinations for medical students

- 37 Newspaper clippings, 1890

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- 38 Correspondence, June 1889-March 1890: Henry Hun; Austin Flint; John
G. Curtis; E.L. Partridge; Willis G. Tucker; Melvil Dewey
39 Minutes of a "Meeting of Delegates from Medical Colleges in the State of
New York," Oct 31, 1889
40 "An Act to provide for the preliminary education of medical students,"
Regents Office, Albany, NY, July 1, 1889
41 Proposed amendments to Chapter 468 of 1889 and Chapter 647 of 1887;
comments

Series IV. Correspondence & subject files

- 42 Announcement of session opening, Oct 1877
43 The Cartwright Prize in Experimental Research: copy of codicil of the will
of Dr. Benjamin Cartwright establishing the prize, May 1888
44 Documents and correspondence about the Civil Service Commission of
the State of New York, Oct/Nov 1883
45 Alonzo Clark Scholarship: documents establishing the scholarship,
May 2, 1888
46 Alonzo Clark Scholarship: report by first Clark Scholar, T. Mitchell
Prudden, Oct 1, 1890
47 Columbia College-P&S relations: letters from Columbia President F.A.P.
Barnard to P&S President Alonzo Clark, 1873, and Trustees' report on
possible merger, 1878
48 Commencement: correspondence with NYC re license to hold
commencement, March 13, 1883
49 Harsen Prize: recipients, 1894
50 Harsen Prize: signers of diploma, 1892
51 Normal Histology, October 1894, Student list
52 State of New York: excerpts from statutes relating to P&S, 1860, 1873
53 Dept. of Surgery: supplementary report of sub-committee on clinical work
for instruction in surgery for 1894
54 "Additional addresses for card advertisement of the College history"
[Dalton's *History of the College of Physicians and Surgeons in the City of
New York*, 1888], undated but c.1888
55 Report, Committee on Method of Examination, May 1, 1879

Series V. Examination questions

- 56 Prize Examination Questions, Feb. 26, 1877
57 Anatomy, January 1911.
58 Embryology and Nervous System, January 1911

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Box 1 (cont'd)

- 59 Gynecology, January 1911
- 60 Histology and Embryology, January 1911
- 61 Practice of Medicine, January 1911
- 62 Neurology, 1915; M. Allen Starr and Tilley [i.e., Tilney]
- 63 Obstetrics, January 1911
- 64 Pharmacology, 1912
- 65 Physiology, Spring 1892, John G. Curtis
- 66 Physiology, Spring 1893, John G. Curtis
- 67 Physiology, Autumn 1895, John G. Curtis
- 68 Physiology, Spring 1896, John G. Curtis
- 69 Physiology, Autumn 1896, John G. Curtis
- 70 Physiology, Spring 1897, John G. Curtis
- 71 Physiology, Autumn 1897, John G. Curtis
- 72 Physiology, Spring 1898, John G. Curtis
- 73 Physiology, Autumn 1898, John G. Curtis
- 74 Physiology, Autumn 1901
- 75 Physiology, May 1904
- 76 Physiology, January 1911
- 77 Surgery, January 1911