

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

[College of Physicians & Surgeons Student Records](#)

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY. COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.

Student records, 1816-1934 (bulk 1816-1919)

20.66 cubic feet (23 volumes and 48 boxes)

HISTORICAL NOTE: The College of Physicians and Surgeons in the City of New York (P&S) 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. That same year, P&S graduated its first class of eight students.

In 1814, students and faculty of the moribund Columbia College Medical Faculty (founded 1767) were merged into P&S. 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.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: Records of students enrolled in the College of Physicians and Surgeons which from 1860 was affiliated with Columbia College (now Columbia University); in 1891 the College completely merged into Columbia. Though the records extend to 1934, the bulk date from 1816 to 1919 with several gaps.

Surviving 19th and early 20th century student records exist in two forms: bound volumes and loose papers. Student registers, 1816/17-1861/62, 1875/76-1908/09, are those in which each enrolled student entered his name, signature, residence, and, sometimes, name of preceptor. Every volume also has a list of graduates arranged by date which includes each graduate’s signature and place of residence and sometimes also the title of his inaugural thesis.

The matriculation registers/record of fees paid, 1863/64-1909/10, appear to have been created by the P&S registrar: they include all the information found in the earlier volumes but in a single hand and also usually include a record of fees paid, withdrawals, credits and/or degrees from other schools, and other student information such as name changes. They do not include the graduation data.

Starting with the 1909/10 academic year, these two separate records appear to have been replaced by the “registration application” which includes more extensive personal information completed by each student – including home and New York City addresses, date and place of

birth, name of parent or guardian, and educational history – as well as a record of fees paid completed by the registrar.

The loose records are 16 cubic feet in extent (48 boxes) and date from 1828-1857, 1873-1902. These records are *only* for those who actually received a degree from P&S, unlike the bound volumes which include all who enrolled. Records for the classes of 1858-1872 have been lost.

During this period, three documents were required by the State of New York for candidates wishing to receive the doctor of medicine degree: certification that the candidate was at least 21 years of age; certification that he was of “good moral character;” and proof that he had studied with a physician for two years.

Records for graduates of the classes of 1828-1857 are non-standard, usually consisting of correspondence from family, friends and physicians attesting that the graduate met the three requirements. The 1873-1902 graduating class records are usually standardized forms and generally contain less personal information.

Women were first admitted in Fall 1917; the first women graduates were in the Class of 1921.

ARRANGEMENT: The volumes are in chronological order; the loose records are arranged alphabetically by student surname.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: The records are open without restrictions; however the fragility of some volumes may restrict use to Archives & Special Collections staff.

PROVENANCE: Bound volumes 1846/47-1934 were transferred from the Office of the University Registrar, Morningside Campus, 2012 (accession #2012.009). There is no accession information for the loose records. The 1 volume “Receipts for diplomas from Graduates” was a gift of Ellen Swain and was facilitated by the Sandwich, Massachusetts, Public Library, 2019 (accession #2019.002).

PROCESSING NOTE: The loose student records were originally trifolded, tied in bundles by graduating class and stored in tin boxes. In 1998, Archives & Special Collections staff flattened the records and placed them in individual folders arranged by student name.

RELATED RECORDS: For students who attended/graduated before 1816, some basic information can often be found in the minutes of the [P&S Board of Trustees](#).

Archives & Special Collections also holds a [student register](#) for the Columbia College Faculty of Medicine, 1791-1813.

Information on all P&S alumni from the first graduating class of 1811 through the Class of 1891, can be found in [The Catalogue of the Alumni, Officers and Fellows, 1807-1891](#).

Subjects

College of Physicians and Surgeons in the City of New York – Students.

Columbia University. College of Physicians and Surgeons – Students.

Medical colleges – New York (State) – New York.

Medical education – New York (State) – New York.

Medical students – New York (State) – New York.

Medicine – Study and teaching – New York (State) – New York.

Schools, Medical – New York (State) – New York.

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Student registers (7 v.)

1816/17-1825/26; List of graduates, 1811-1826, 1837

1826/27-1845/46; List of graduates, 1827-1846

1846/47-1861/62; List of graduates, 1847-1862

1875/76-1885/86; List of graduates, Fall 1875-1885

1885/86-1893/94; List of graduates, Fall 1885-1893

1893/94-1900/01; List of graduates 1894-1900

1901/02-1908/09; List of graduates, 1904-1934

Matriculation registers/Record of fees paid (4 v.)

1863/64-1878/79

1879-1889

1889-1905/06

1905/06-1909/10

Registration applications (10 v.)

1909-1910

1910-1911

1911-1912

1912-1913

1913-1914

1914-1915

1915-1916

1916-1917

1917-1918

1918-1919

**Columbia University. College of Physicians and Surgeons.
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Degrees conferred (1 v.)

1905-1934

“Receipts for diplomas from Graduates of June 10th 1891” (1 v.)

Signatures of graduates of the Classes of 1891-1899 attesting that they had received their diplomas; also includes letters from graduates acknowledging the receipt of their diplomas as well as receipts from express companies documenting that they had delivered diplomas to the intended recipient.

Loose Student Records (48 boxes; 16 cubic feet)

Classes of 1828-1857, 1873-1902