

INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

VOLUME LVI

JUNE 1960

NUMBER 2

The Indiana Central Medical College, 1849-1852

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The Indiana Asbury University, which in 1884 became DePauw University, was established in Greencastle, Indiana, in 1837. Its original charter authorized its Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors¹ to appoint such professors and instructors as might be necessary to offer proper instruction "in the learned professions" as well as in the arts and sciences.² It was naturally impossible to start a complete university program at once. A start was made with an "ABC," or primary, school in the spring of 1837, followed by a preparatory department in the fall of that year; and by the year 1839-1840 a four-year college program was in operation. During this same academic year the Trustees appointed a committee to inquire into the expediency of establishing a "professorship of law."³ In 1847 the Trustees started preparations for an "Agricultural Professorship" and had an agent at work collecting money for the purchase of a farm.⁴ But the first professional school to be actually set up by Indiana Asbury was the Indiana Central Medical College in Indianapolis.

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¹ The "Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors" will hereafter be referred to as "the Trustees."

² "An Act to incorporate the Trustees of the Indiana Asbury University" was approved January 10, 1837. Indiana, *Local Laws* (1836-1837), 9-13.

³ Minutes of the Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of Indiana Asbury University, September 16, 1840 (Vol. I, p. 124). The bound manuscript volumes containing the minutes are in the Archives of DePauw University and Indiana Methodism, Roy O. West Library, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana. The minutes are hereafter cited as "Trustee Minutes."

⁴ *Ibid.*, July 21, 1847 (Vol. I, p. 321); October 28, 1847 (Vol. I, pp. 334-338); *Western Christian Advocate*, XV (February 23, 1848), 151.

It was indeed high time to give attention to medical education in Indiana. The Old Northwest had a reputation as a land of cholera, ague, malaria, and numerous fevers.⁵ An "enormous amount of quack medicines" was consumed through the "credulous confidence of our physic-loving people," said Dr. John S. Bobbs in 1849;⁶ and most of these concoctions, commented his contemporary, Dr. Robert Curran, were compounds of cheap whiskey with dirty molasses covering the taste of the drugs, "generally the refuse and sweepings of old warehouses."⁷ Some of the doctors were pure quacks, with no training whatever. The majority had undergone apprentice training which Professor Buley describes: "A young man 'read medicine' with some local doctor, rolled his pills, mixed his powders, and took care of the horses. After a time he was ready to doctor on his own."⁸ In addition, there were some who had supplemented their apprenticeship with a term or two in one of the few medical schools available.⁹ At best, physicians were not well trained, and one book on frontier medical practices is dedicated "to the Pioneer Doctor who boldly faced the wilderness; and to the Pioneer who boldly faced the Doctor."¹⁰

Attempts to improve medical training were being made gradually in Indiana as well as in other midwestern areas. A Medical Society of the State of Indiana, with ill-defined power to regulate admission to the profession, was provided for by law in 1819 and reorganized in 1825.¹¹ Supplementing eastern medical publications, which had little circulation in the Midwest, a *Western Journal of the Medical and Physical Sciences* began publication in Cincinnati in 1827 and was followed the next year by *The Transylvania Journal of*

⁵ R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840* (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950), I, 240-256; Dorothy R. Russo (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine* (Indianapolis, 1949), 4-5.

⁶ J. S. Bobbs, *Introductory Lecture at the opening of the Indiana Central Medical College* (Indianapolis, 1849), 10.

⁷ R. Curran, *Introductory Lecture delivered at the opening of the second session of the Indiana Central Medical College* (Indianapolis, 1850), 16.

⁸ Buley, *Old Northwest*, I, 279.

⁹ Bobbs, *Introductory Lecture*, 10.

¹⁰ Madge E. Pickard and R. Carlyle Buley, *The Midwest Pioneer: His Ills, Cures, and Doctors* (Crawfordsville, Ind., 1945).

¹¹ Buley, *Old Northwest*, I, 297-298.

*Medicine and the Associate Sciences.*¹² In 1832 a seventy-two-page pamphlet was printed in Vincennes, Indiana, entitled *The Sick Man's Companion, or the Preserver of Health, treating all diseases common to this country*, by Dr. C. Vanhook.¹³

There had been no medical school in English-speaking America until 1765, when one had been established in connection with the institution which later became the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁴ The first one west of the Alleghenies was the Medical Department planned in 1799 and set up in 1819 at Transylvania University in Kentucky.¹⁵ Within a year the Medical College of Ohio was functioning in Cincinnati. In 1837 the Louisville Medical Institute began operation.¹⁶ Indiana temporarily caught up with the procession when the Vincennes University, which had been authorized to have a "Professor of Physic" in 1806, set up a course of eight medical lectureships to run from December, 1837, to March, 1838. Apparently this offering was discontinued after the first year.¹⁷ In 1838 when Indiana College was renamed Indiana University, it was authorized to give instruction in medicine, although it did not assume this responsibility until 1903.¹⁸ Madison Medical Institution was incorporated in 1843 and had a brief existence, but it did not confer any degrees. Meanwhile, what has been described as the "first diploma mill" in the United States functioned for a few months during 1833 at New Albany. Without bothering to offer any instruction, it granted—for a fee—handsome diplomas awarding the degree of M.D. and signed by the "Chancellor of the University of Indiana."¹⁹

¹² *Ibid.*, 280.

¹³ Russo, *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine*, 7.

¹⁴ E. P. Cheyney, *History of the University of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1940), 100.

¹⁵ L. G. Zerfas, "Medical Education in Indiana as Influenced by Early Indiana Graduates in Medicine from Transylvania University," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXX (June, 1934), 139-148. Dr. Zerfas lists the number of young men from Indiana studying medicine at Transylvania as 18 in the 1820's, 17 in the 1830's, and 37 in the 1840's.

¹⁶ Buley, *Old Northwest*, I, 278-279; B. D. Myers, *The History of Medical Education in Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 1956), 7.

¹⁷ Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 8-11.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12-17.

When in 1846 the Indiana Asbury authorities began seriously considering the establishment of a medical school, there was only one such school functioning in the state. It was the La Porte University School of Medicine, which had begun to function in 1842. Within its first eight years of existence it enrolled 565 students and graduated 127. By the time Asbury's medical college was opened, however, the Medical College of Evansville was opening. The college at Evansville was "a product of the religious fervor and temperance agitation of the time," classes were opened with prayer, and the study of anatomy was said to have been made more interesting by an "occasional injection of Bible-reading." Tuition was free for students who promised not to use liquor, tobacco, or profanity.²⁰ The Committee on Medical Education reported to the American Medical Association in 1849 that there were thirty-eight medical schools in the country, including a few that had been projected but were not actually in operation. Of these, half were in New England and the middle states, nine were in the South, Ohio had three, Illinois and Missouri two each, Wisconsin one, and Indiana had La Porte and the projected school of Indiana Asbury.²¹

On December 23, 1846, the Trustees of Indiana Asbury requested that Dr. D. J. Evens start an investigation of the propriety of establishing a medical school and report to a later meeting of the Trustees.²² In the following month an amendment to the charter was secured, authorizing the Trustees to "organize and establish as part of said University, a professional school or schools, whether of law or medicine, at such place or places in the State as they may think best."²³ In July, 1848, the Trustees appointed a physician as agent in each of five cities—Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Madison, New Albany, and Lafayette—instructing them to

bring before the citizens of those places the subject of the establishment of a Medical department of this University in

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 24-32; Pickard and Buley, *The Midwest Pioneer*, 142-144.

²¹ *American Medical Association Transactions, 1849* (Philadelphia, 1849), 281-282. The Evansville school was not mentioned in this report.

²² Trustee Minutes, December 23, 1846 (Vol. I, p. 295). A slight interest in medical education had been shown earlier when in 1841 the Greencastle Medical Society was "permitted to occupy the attic room of the Principal Edifice . . . for the purpose of Lectures and Compositions—Dissections prohibited." *Ibid.*, January 19, 1841 (Vol. I, p. 132).

²³ "An Act to amend an act entitled 'An act to incorporate the trustees of the Indiana Asbury University'" was approved January 18, 1847. Indiana, *Local Laws (1846-1847)*, 147.

the one of those places which shall make the greatest amount of contributions to said department and present the most advantages and facilities for a medical school with the assurance that such department shall be established provided a fund of ten thousand dollars or more shall be raised for the purpose.²⁴

Plans for the medical school caught the attention of the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, and that body, the original sponsor of Indiana Asbury, in its annual conference at New Albany in October, 1848, recommended a called session of the Trustees as soon as possible to select the location and proceed with the establishment of the medical school.²⁵

On November 1, 1848, the Trustees met, with some unnamed "medical gentlemen" sitting with them, and agreed on the founding "of the Medical Department of this University," to be located in Indianapolis "in the name of the Indiana Central Medical College." "Seven Chairs of Tuition" were listed, and men were elected to fill each of them. The Trustees agreed that they would "not incur any pecuniary responsibilities in the establishment or maintenance of said Medical College." The medical faculty was to have full power of government and to fix tuition, length of sessions, and qualifications for graduation. The medical faculty might temporarily fill vacancies on their staff, subject to approval by the Trustees. They might by majority action also recommend vacation of any chair. Final action on the staff itself and on all matters not specifically delegated to the medical staff was reserved to the Trustees. The newly appointed faculty was instructed to meet later that month to fix the time for opening the school and to transact any other necessary business.²⁶

It would appear from these actions that instruction was to begin soon, but the minutes of the July, 1849, meeting of the Trustees indicate that there was confusion and delay. Since the meeting of November, 1848, had been a called rather than a regular one, the Trustees in July, 1849, "with a desire to remove the scruples of the most cautious," ratified and confirmed their previous action, except in regard to the

²⁴ Trustee Minutes, July 18, 1848 (Vol. I, p. 357).

²⁵ Minutes of the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, October 10, 1848 (Vol. I, p. 261). These minutes are in the DePauw Archives, Roy O. West Library, DePauw University.

²⁶ Trustee Minutes, November 1, 1848 (Vol. I, pp. 367-375).

vacating of professorships. The Trustees now affirmed that they could act without the advice of the medical staff. They also straightened out some confusion regarding one of the professors elected, and elected men to take the place of two who had resigned.²⁷

Finally, a notice appeared in the *Western Christian Advocate* of August 8, 1849, announcing the forthcoming opening of the Indiana Central Medical College. An accompanying editorial called attention to its "eligible" location in Indianapolis—which was "destined to become an inland city of no small size," was already connected by rail with the Ohio River, and had railroads under construction to Bellefontaine, Ohio, and to Peru, Lafayette, and Terre Haute, Indiana. The fact that political activity of the state centered at Indianapolis would make possible good contacts with members of the supreme court, legislature, and other officials. The editorial continued by calling attention to the acknowledged ability and high moral tone of the faculty, men who were not materialists but who would "inculcate the great principles of Christianity, so far as pertains to their connection with medical science." Supervision by the Trustees of Indiana Asbury, it added, would further guarantee the high quality of the first medical school to be established by any Methodist University.²⁸

In similar vein the official Visitors to Indiana Asbury reported back to the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church in October the splendid prospects for the medical venture. They mentioned "the general character of Indianapolis for moral and religious influence and general enterprise," as well as the "long established experience in Medical Science and practice of at least a portion of the gentlemen who compose the faculty of instruction." They urged members of the conference to

lay their hand upon this department also, and infuse into it by the blessing of God, as they have infused in the Indiana Asbury University the spirit of Wesleyan Methodism, which acknowledges Christianity as a divine agency in everything in the power of the healing Art as well as in the Kingdom of grace.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, July 16, 17, 1849 (Vol. I, pp. 377-378, 390-393).

²⁸ *Western Christian Advocate*, XVI (August 8, 1849), 126-127.

Such a spirit, they added, will teach us that "we are fearfully and wonderfully made," and will also teach us to "magnify the riches of God's wisdom."²⁹

Instruction in Asbury's medical college began early in December, 1849, on the third floor of the Johnson Building on Washington Street, between Meridian and Pennsylvania streets. The rooms were described as capable of accomodating 150 students.³⁰ This location was regarded as temporary, and the following year the college was removed to Matthew Little's two-story brick building on the southeast corner of Washington and East streets, described as "large and commodious,"³¹ where it remained for the rest of its short existence.

The faculty for 1848-1849 included: John S. Bobbs, dean, general and special anatomy; Robert Curran, physiology and general pathology; James S. Harrison, materia medica, therapeutics, and medical jurisprudence; George W. Mears, obstetrics and diseases of women and children; Charles G. Downey, chemistry and pharmacy; Livingston Dunlap, theory and practice; A. H. Baker, principles and practice of surgery; and David Funkhouser, demonstrator of anatomy.³²

All of these men were physicians except C. G. Downey, who was transferred from his position as professor of natural sciences in Asbury. Dr. Baker was from Cincinnati; the others were practitioners in Indianapolis.³³ Two former members of the La Porte Medical College staff joined the Indiana Central faculty in 1850. Daniel Meeker took the chair of anatomy previously held by Dr. Bobbs, who transferred to that previously held by Dr. Baker. Elizur Deming assumed a new chair of special pathology and institutes of medicine. In the final year, 1851-1852, the chairs of Drs. Dunlap and Funkhouser were vacant.³⁴

²⁹ Documentary Journal, Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, 1849-1852, pp. 10-11. The Journal is in the DePauw Archives, Roy O. West Library, DePauw University.

³⁰ Indianapolis *Locomotive*, December 9, 1849.

³¹ Jacob Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: The History, The Industries, The Institutions, and The People of a City of Homes* (2 vols., Chicago, 1910), I, 547.

³² *Catalogue of Indiana Asbury University* (1849-1850), 6. (Cited hereafter as *Catalogue*.) First names of members of the staff have been supplied from lists in G. W. H. Kemper, *A Medical History of the State of Indiana* (Chicago, 1911).

³³ Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 69, 240; Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 26.

³⁴ *Catalogue* (1850-1851), 31; Trustee Minutes, July 15, 1850 (Vol. I, pp. 425-426).

The student body during the first year numbered forty-nine. Two of these were from Illinois, two from Ohio, two from North Carolina, and the rest from Indiana. Ten degrees were awarded at the close of the first session in February, 1850. During the year 1850-1851 there were forty-one students and eighteen graduates. In the final year, 1851-1852, there were again forty-one students, with twelve graduates. Seven honorary degrees of M.D. were also conferred by the Indiana Central Medical College.³⁵

A total of over one hundred different students attended during the three years Indiana Central Medical College was in operation. Of the forty graduates, twenty-eight received their degrees after only one year of study, ten after two years, and two after three years. At least twelve of them served as surgeons or assistant surgeons in Indiana infantry or cavalry regiments during the Civil War.³⁶ Four of the students may be specially mentioned. Thaddeus M. Stevens, who was one of the students who attended all three sessions, became in 1881 the first secretary and executive officer of the Indiana State Board of Health, set up one of the first clinical laboratories in the country, and published numerous papers on medical subjects.³⁷ Robert N. Todd in 1871 became the first graduate of any Indiana medical college to be elected president of the Indiana Medical Society.³⁸ Hiram Pitchlynn was one of a group of Choctaw Indians brought to Indiana Asbury for education, and later practiced in Greencastle. Joshua T. Belles, elected secretary of the first class, and who later practiced in Spencer, became the grandfather of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan.³⁹

That Indiana Central Medical College was conducted along lines similar to those of other medical schools of the time was evidenced by a survey made in 1849 by the Committee on Medical Education of the American Medical As-

³⁵ *Catalogue* (1849-1850), 31-33; (1850-1851), 32-34; (1851-1852), 30-31.

³⁶ *Ibid.*; and a comparison with the lists of surgeons serving in Indiana regiments, in Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 188-201.

³⁷ Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 345; *Indianapolis Star*, September 27, 1953, p. 51.

³⁸ Russo, *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine*, 157.

³⁹ Bobbs, *Introductory Lecture*, 3. It was primarily through this connection that Prime Minister Macmillan was secured to deliver the commencement address at DePauw University in 1958, in which he spoke proudly of his Hoosier ancestry.

sociation. This study showed eighteen medical schools having a staff of seven, eight with fewer than seven, and three with more.⁴⁰ The staff of Indiana Central with its seven professors and a demonstrator of anatomy thus fit into the general pattern, and the professorships were similar in nomenclature as well as in number to those of other schools. Requirements as to admission, graduation, and fees also followed the general pattern.⁴¹ The student had to be at least twenty-one years old, of good moral character, and to present evidence of having studied medicine and surgery not less than three years. Each student had a physician as a "preceptor"; in only a few cases was the preceptor a member of the faculty. To receive the M.D., the student was to take two courses of lectures in a medical school, one of which had to be in Indiana Central Medical College. The catalogue noted, however, that "having been respectably engaged in the practice of medicine four years . . . will be regarded as equivalent to one course of lectures."⁴² The annual sessions lasted about four months, starting in October, November, or December and continuing through February or into March.⁴³

The announcement for 1850-1851 states not only that the curriculum was to "embrace every subject usually taught in well conducted Medical Colleges," but also that there were adequate aids in the form of drawings, models, specimens, apparatus, and instruments, as well as frequent examinations. During the evenings, the announcement added, the "Demonstrator of Anatomy will be in constant attendance in the dissecting rooms, to afford the necessary instructions and demonstrations in Anatomy." Furthermore, "each professor will afford opportunities to such students as may desire it, for clinical observations, both Medical and Surgical, in their private practice."⁴⁴ During December, 1851, a series of reports on "Cases brought before the Class of the Indiana Central Medical College" was contributed to the Indianapolis *Locomotive* by one of the students. This series included descriptions of treatment of bronchitis and occlusion of the

⁴⁰ *American Medical Association Transactions*, 1849, 284-299.

⁴¹ H. B. Shaffer, *The American Medical Profession* (New York, 1936), 55-56; Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 8, 19-32; Zervas, "Medical Education in Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XXX (June, 1934), 142.

⁴² *Catalogue* (1849-1850), 35-36.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 33; (1850-1851), 33-34; (1851-1852), 31.

⁴⁴ *Catalogue* (1849-1850), 34-35.

nasal duct; it also gave an account of an operation on a four-year-old girl for clubfoot and told of one on an old man for an artificial iris.⁴⁵

A thesis on some medical subject was required of each graduate. Titles selected by the first class included "Puerperal Fever," "Chloroform," "Acute Rheumatism," "Lap-tandra Alba," "Normal and Abnormal Actions," "Hysteria," "Temperaments," "Acute Hepatitis," "Vis Medicatrix naturae," and "Responsibilities of the Profession."⁴⁶ Graduates of the college during the other two years of its existence wrote on a similar variety of subjects.

Fees for the first year were set at \$10 a "ticket" for the lectures of each instructor, making a total of \$70 for the entire course. In addition there was a matriculation fee of \$5 and a charge of \$5 for a "dissecting ticket."⁴⁷ By the second year "tickets of all the instructors" were reduced to \$56, and a graduation fee of \$20 was added. Boarding, it was stated, could be obtained for \$2 to \$2.25 per week, including lights and fuel.⁴⁸

No descriptions of the regular lectures seem to have survived. There are available, however, complete copies of the addresses made at the opening of each of the three years during which the college functioned, and there are also summaries of two addresses made at the commencements. Dean Bobbs made the first opening address, in which he referred to the "cares, duties and responsibilities" of the position in which he had been placed and called attention to the need for more medical schools, especially for schools "domesticated" and brought within the reach of all, so that there would no longer be any excuse for practitioners who had no medical training. "Every day spent in storing the mind with the important practical truths in the science of medicine," he asserted, "will as surely bring its reward as the gentle shower of spring is succeeded by the golden fruits of autumn." He also referred to the prestige that would accrue to graduates of a medical school affiliated with Indiana Asbury and mentioned the obligation of Indiana Central Medical College to reflect honor on Asbury.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Indianapolis *Locomotive*, December 6, 13, 1851.

⁴⁶ *Catalogue* (1849-1850), 33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 35-36.

⁴⁸ *Catalogue* (1850-1851), 36.

⁴⁹ Bobbs, *Introductory Lecture*, *passim*.

In the opening address the second year Dr. Curran referred to the success which had crowned the efforts of the staff and expressed appreciation of "the strong interest manifested by the intelligent members of our profession throughout our state and the surrounding borders." He called attention to the necessity of educating physicians in reference "to those forms of disease which they will be called on to combat," asserting that "no Eastern or European school can furnish competent and complete instruction for a western practitioner." Criticizing the "present absurd methods" used in liberal arts colleges "by which the intellects are placed in a straight jacket and confined there," he asserted that "three years pupilage in the office of an intelligent physician, including public courses, is at least equal to three years at college" in cultivation and discipline of the mind. As Dr. Bobbs had done the previous year, he assailed cheap nostrums, homeopathy—"that cunningly devised fable," other new medical theories, and especially that type of medical theory which was the basis of a group termed "botanics." Members of this group, he asserted, traveled around the country "with a good stock of braggadocia, cayenne pepper, lobelia and other course fodder, a cantering horse and a pair of pill-bags as large as a blacksmith's bellows."⁵⁰

The 1851 address by Dr. Deming was largely a history of medical progress from the Greeks onward. Deming disputed the allegation sometimes made that medicine "is last in the great race of progress—that while all else travels with the velocity of the steam car, it has still its snail-like pace." He too condemned homeopaths, eclectics, botanics, and others and went on to assert that the interests of society demand well-educated and competent physicians.⁵¹

In his address to the first graduates in 1850 Dr. Harrison urged professional industry and integrity.⁵² In 1851 Professor Downey warned the young doctors that they would often have to deal with "perturbed spirits" as well as diseased bodies. They were advised to "enter into communion with the troubled spirit," leading it back to God. A minister might well be called in to become, for the time being, an "assistant physi-

⁵⁰ R. Curran, *Introductory Lecture, passim*.

⁵¹ E. Deming, *Lecture delivered at the Central Medical College (Indianapolis, 1851), passim*.

⁵² *Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis), March 14, 1850.

cian." But the doctor must be prepared to act himself, to have at his command the "*entire Materia Medica*."⁵³

Following the end of the third session early in 1852 the Trustees declared all chairs in the medical faculty vacant, then proceeded to re-elect three of the staff and to elect three new men.⁵⁴ A glowing statement in the Asbury catalogue of 1852 announced that the Trustees had "permanently located the Indiana Central Medical College at Indianapolis, reorganized the Faculty, and adopted efficient measures to furnish a suitable college building and other means of instruction."⁵⁵ The added statement that "the Institution may now be regarded as placed on a permanent footing" was soon to prove highly inaccurate.

The Trustees met in July, 1852, with some of the medical professors present. They were informed that the medical faculty had held no meeting since February, that two of the newly elected professors had declined to serve, and that no building had been secured. They wavered between two committee reports, one recommending suspension of the school and the other stating that "notwithstanding the difficulties that lie in the way . . . [the Trustees] will give the department their most vigorous support." Finally the Trustees voted that "lectures in the Medical department of the University be suspended until such time as means can be obtained for the erection of suitable buildings." A committee was appointed to take charge of the apparatus and equipment, and Professor Downey was authorized to sell whatever equipment "would be likely to injure by keeping." Downey himself was re-elected to the faculty of Asbury, this time as professor of mathematics.⁵⁶ In 1855 the assets of the defunct medical school

⁵³ *Asbury Notes*, I (October 6, 1852), 94. (*Asbury Notes* was a semi-monthly magazine issued by the faculty of Indiana Asbury.) "Anglo-Saxon," writing to the Indianapolis *Locomotive*, expressed appreciation of Downey's remarks which "spoke well for the hand and the heart," but he wished that the graduating exercises had been all in English, not partly in Latin. Indianapolis *Locomotive*, March 1, 1851.

⁵⁴ Trustee Minutes, February 26, 1852 (Vol. I, pp. 510-511). Dr. Thad. M. Stevens in a "Report on Medical History of Indianapolis" in the *Transactions of the Indiana State Medical Society*, 1874 (Indianapolis, n.d.), 18, stated that "in the wisdom of the trustees of the parent institution, an attempt was made to reorganize according to some pet scheme; but the school exploded, and went to pieces." What the "pet scheme" may have been, or whether there was a pet scheme, does not appear in surviving records.

⁵⁵ *Catalogue* (1851-1852), 31.

⁵⁶ Trustee Minutes, July 12, 13, 1852 (Vol. II, pp. 8-9, 13); Documentary Journal, Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, 1849-1864, p. 41.

were listed as \$146.25, and the following year Downey was authorized "to pay to the Medical Faculty first formed . . . the money received by him on sale of their apparatus."⁵⁷

Indiana Asbury did not completely give up the idea of operating a medical school. In 1871 the Trustees resolved that such a school should be reopened in Indianapolis "as soon as it can be done without increasing our financial liabilities."⁵⁸ In 1877 a committee of the Trustees reported an agreement with the faculty of the Indiana Medical College which had been founded in Indianapolis in 1869 that it should be "received and adopted" as the medical department of Asbury, but legal questions were raised and the report was laid on the table.⁵⁹ Additional negotiations failed in 1879-1880.⁶⁰ When in 1884 Indiana Asbury became DePauw University, plans for making the reorganized institution a real university included a medical department. There was discussion of a Greencastle location for the department and of a possible affiliation with one or both of the medical colleges existing in Indianapolis at the time, but in 1887 the Trustees decided that "the best interest of the university will be conserved by taking no steps . . . at this time."⁶¹ The matter has not been seriously considered since then.

The question naturally arises as to why the medical college, after a reasonably successful existence for three years, should have been allowed to close in 1852. There is much evidence that such a school was needed. From the closing of Indiana Central Medical College until 1869 there was no medical school in Indianapolis; indeed, from the closing of the La Porte school in 1856 until 1869 there was no medical school in the state.⁶² The relations of Asbury's medical college with the medical profession were friendly.⁶³ The temporary merging of the La Porte school with Asbury's medical school not only removed a rival, but also brought two additional

⁵⁷ *Trustee Minutes*, July 18, 1855 (Vol. II, p. 66); July 16, 1856 (Vol. II, p. 97).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, June 21, 1871 (Vol. II, pp. 331-332).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, January 17, 1877 (Vol. II, pp. 434-435); June 19, 1877 (Vol. II, pp. 444-449).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, July 22, 1879 (Vol. III, p. 42); June 23, 1880 (Vol. III, p. 58).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, March 25, 1884 (Vol. III, p. 192); June 9, 1887 (Vol. III, p. 334); *Greencastle Banner*, July 2, 16, August 13, 20, 1885; *DePauw Monthly*, VI (January, 1884), 70.

⁶² Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 12.

well-known physicians to the staff.⁶⁴ If the Indianapolis newspapers adequately represented public opinion, Indianapolis was glad to have the school. The weekly *Locomotive* expected it to make the city the medical center of the state and to increase greatly the transient population and business of the city.⁶⁵ A correspondent of the *Indiana State Sentinel*, after attending the first commencement, reported that the school had made a "bright and glorious beginning," and that the large crowd present at the exercises showed a friendly feeling toward it.⁶⁶ A committee on education also reported to the Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church "with great pleasure" that the school was functioning under favorable auspices and with an able faculty.⁶⁷

Of the ability of the faculty there is ample evidence. The correspondent of the *Indiana State Sentinel* remarked in 1850 that the professors, although "residents of a new country, with no extrinsic influences, or bloated reputations to puff them into public notice . . . would adorn the profession in any land, being practical men with sound heads and stores of medical information."⁶⁸ Dean John S. Bobbs was a graduate of Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia who had located in Indianapolis in 1835, held numerous public offices, was active in the formation of numerous medical institutions, and is known in medical circles as the "father of cholecystotomy," for he was the first to open the gall bladder in a famous operation in 1867. He was described by Dr. Wishard as the leading physician of the state in the middle third of the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ Dr. Dunlap was a graduate of Transylvania and the only surgeon in Indianapolis before 1830. Active in both public and medical affairs, he was the moving spirit in the erection of the first city hospital in Indianapolis.⁷⁰ Doctors Deming and Meeker had already made

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 23; Trustee Minutes, July 15, 1850 (Vol. I, pp. 425-426); *Catalogue* (1850-1851), 34.

⁶⁵ *Indianapolis Locomotive*, December 9, 1849.

⁶⁶ *Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis), March 14, 1850. The correspondent identified himself simply as "T."

⁶⁷ Documentary Journal, Indiana Conference of the Methodist Church, 1849-1852, p. 28.

⁶⁸ *Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis), March 14, 1850.

⁶⁹ Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 240; W. N. Wishard, Jr., "The Indiana Central Medical College," *Journal of Surgery, Gynecology, and Obstetrics*, LV (December, 1932), 792. A memorial tablet in the Indianapolis Public Library refers to Dr. Bobbs as "ILLUSTRIOUS SURGEON, PATRIOTIC CITIZEN, SELF-SACRIFICING BENEFactor, SERVANT OF GOD THROUGH SERVICE TO MANKIND."

⁷⁰ Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis*, I, 542; Russo, *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine*, 34.

reputations at the La Porte Medical College before coming to Indiana Central.⁷¹ Dr. Mears published numerous papers and began an endowment fund for medical books in the Indianapolis Public Library.⁷² At the founding of the permanent state medical society in June, 1849, Dr. Dunlap was elected the first president, Dr. Bobbs the first secretary, and all the members of the first staff who were Indianapolis physicians were in attendance. Drs. Mears, Deming, Meeker, and Bobbs each served a year as president later.⁷³ Dr. A. H. Baker subsequently served as president of the Cincinnati Medical College,⁷⁴ Dr. Curran taught in the Kentucky School of Medicine,⁷⁵ Dr. Deming in the University of Missouri,⁷⁶ and Drs. Bobbs and Mears in the new medical college established in Indianapolis in 1869.⁷⁷

Indiana Central Medical College did not fail because it was a poor one. Dean Bobbs frankly stated that it could not start as a superior school,⁷⁸ but as a good school. And after it had operated two years he reported to the Asbury Trustees that with the fostering care the Trustees could extend, it could "be made to take position, at no remote period, in character and usefulness, with the most respectable schools in the West."⁷⁹

While the main cause of the college's failure was financial, there were several additional factors. There was some criticism of the school on the ground that it was under Methodist influence. Asbury's Trustees and the Methodist Conference of course took pride in its Methodist auspices. To counteract the reports of undue Methodist control, a correspondent of the *Sentinel* pointed out that some members of the faculty

⁷¹ Dr. Deming was called "old man eloquent" in connection with his presidency of the state medical society. *Ibid.*, 9. For some reason Dr. Meeker was called "Old Death Meeker." Pickard and Buley, *The Midwest Pioneer*, 142. After serving the profession long and honorably, Meeker was expelled in 1871 from the state medical society, of which he had been president in 1857, for publishing a pamphlet entitled *Prof. Meeker's Opium Cure—A Certain and Safe Remedy for the Opium Habit*, and for deriding the profession and its code of ethics. Russo, *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine*, 11; Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 310.

⁷² Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 308-309; Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 26.

⁷³ Russo, *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine*, 8, 154-157.

⁷⁴ *Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis), March 14, 1850.

⁷⁵ Kemper, *A Medical History of Indiana*, 257.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷⁸ Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 28.

⁷⁹ Trustee Minutes, July 15, 1851 (Vol. I, p. 464).

"have not the honor of belonging to any church," that they have not "even so much as alluded to the peculiar tenets of any religious sect," and that the school was under Methodist auspices only because "none other were equal to the task of originating and sustaining such a school."⁸⁰ That the conduct of the faculty was not impeccable from the Methodist standpoint is indicated by this record in the Trustee Minutes:

A communication from the Medical Faculty in relation to Profane and Vulgar Conduct of some of the members of the Medical Faculty was laid before the Board . . . after considerable discussion and some explanatory remarks . . . the communication was laid on the table.⁸¹

Numerous resignations of members of the staff immediately after their election or after they had served a year or two might indicate faculty dissatisfaction with the school. That the Trustees after the third year declared all positions vacant and proceeded to re-elect only half the staff is further evidence of personnel problems.⁸²

One incident probably attracted unfavorable attention to the school. It was the expulsion of David J. Lee, whose long letter explaining the circumstances was published in the Indianapolis *Locomotive* under the caption "Medical College Outrage." Lee was a "botanic," one of a group strongly condemned by members of the medical faculty and orthodox physicians in general. Among other cures, the botanics emphasized steam baths and herbs. Lee's statement was that he purchased a "ticket" for Dr. Meeker's lectures on anatomy and attended regularly for several weeks. When it became known that he was not reading with an allopathic physician as his preceptor, Lee states, "a mere faction of the baser sort of the students, began their insults, hissing, hollowing steam and 'yarbs,' not only in the College, but on the streets." These students also passed resolutions saying Lee ought to leave the class. Dr. Meeker defended Lee's right to attend lectures, even though he might believe in doctoring with cornstalks. The faculty met, and the majority decided against Lee. Dean Bobbs informed him that he had not matriculated properly,

⁸⁰ *Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis), March 14, 1850. Drs. Mears and Dunlap were Episcopalians. Eli Lilly, in his *History of the Little Church on the Circle: Christ Church Parish, 1837-1955* (Indianapolis, 1957) refers to Dr. Mears as "the noblest parishioner of them all" (p. 225) and to Dr. Dunlap as one of the "staunchest supporters" of Christ Church (p. 151).

⁸¹ Trustee Minutes, February 27, 1850 (Vol. I, pp. 415-416).

⁸² *Ibid.*, July 17, 1849 (Vol. I, 392-393); July 15, 1850 (Vol. I, p. 422); February 26, 1852 (Vol. I, pp. 510-514).

that the fee he had paid for his ticket would be refunded, and that he "hoped Mr. Lee will understand that the harmony of the class renders this step necessary." Lee pointed out that the majority of the students and some of the professors acted as gentlemen and disapproved of the treatment he received because of a few students' objections. He expressed the opinion that one reason for his dismissal was fear that he might attempt to gain prestige for himself as a botanic from having attended the school; Lee went on to defend the botanics against the orthodox practitioners by commenting,

Our "School" will leave theirs as far behind, as the cantering horse, with blacksmith bellows, for pill-bags, freighted with lobelia, cayenne pepper, and other coarse fodder, (according to Prof. Curran) can leave a go-cart, laden with calomel, antimony, opium, and other death dealing articles, used by the Scientific, Murderous Quacks.⁸³

Dean Bobbs evidently did not take the affair very seriously, however, as he reported to the Trustees that he did not know of any occurrence during this session which might "awaken an unpleasant reflection in the bosom of teacher or pupil."⁸⁴

Lack of permanent quarters was an additional difficulty which the medical college faced. The two rented buildings seemed to suggest that the college was of a temporary nature. In February, 1850, Governor Joseph A. Wright, an Asbury trustee, headed a committee to look for a site, perhaps for a combined medical and law building.⁸⁵ In June of that year the state legislature authorized the sale of an acre in University Square, Indianapolis, to Asbury at its appraised value of \$3,566, but apparently the price seemed too high to the Asbury Trustees.⁸⁶ The Asbury catalogue published in 1851 made the inaccurate announcement that the Trustees had "adopted efficient measures to provide for the erection of a suitable College building."⁸⁷ About the same time, the Trustees appointed a committee to receive propositions from other cities within the state regarding buildings for the medical school.⁸⁸ The only recorded response to this action is a report

⁸³ Indianapolis *Locomotive*, February 8, 1851.

⁸⁴ Trustee Minutes, February 24, 1851 (Vol. I, p. 451).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, February 26, 1850 (Vol. I, p. 419).

⁸⁶ Ignatius Brown, *History of Indianapolis* (Indianapolis, 1868), 60; Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 26-27. The author of the previously cited article in the *Sentinel* thought the amount too much even for two acres of an "uncultivated common," sometimes used as a cow pasture. *Indiana State Sentinel* (Indianapolis), March 14, 1850.

⁸⁷ *Catalogue* (1850-1851), 34.

⁸⁸ Trustee Minutes, July 15, 1851 (Vol. I, pp. 468-469).

from a Greencastle citizen saying that he had obtained a promise of about \$200 if the medical department should be moved there.⁸⁹

The school was probably not sufficiently advertised. For instance, when an historian in 1883 was trying to get information about early Indiana medical schools, he received word from an Indiana physician who practiced in Marion County from about 1840 to 1860 that he had never heard of either the La Porte College or Indiana Central Medical College.⁹⁰

The chief difficulties, however, were financial. At the end of the first year of operation there was a deficit of \$200, and the Trustees recommended that this amount be collected by subscriptions from "ByStanders" or by agents if necessary.⁹¹ At the end of the second year Professor Downey was appointed a special agent to travel through the state "to disseminate information, collect funds for the erection or purchase of buildings . . . and secure students." After he had labored three months, he had collected \$5 in cash.⁹² Reduction in the number of professors and the assumption of the extra duties by the remaining faculty was of little help.⁹³

That Indiana Asbury did not give financial help to its medical college is hardly surprising. Through the 1840's its annual deficits frequently amounted to two or three thousand dollars; at one time it owed the president and faculty considerably more than a year's back salary. While its finances had slightly improved by the early 1850's, it was still struggling to maintain a balanced budget.⁹⁴

Indiana University's School of Medicine was established in 1903 and is now the only medical school in the state. Twenty-two medical colleges had been founded in Indiana prior to that date; these had functioned for periods ranging from a few months to twenty-seven years.⁹⁵ Among them Indiana Asbury's Central Medical College had played a creditable and promising, although disappointingly brief, role.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, February 25, 1852 (Vol. I, p. 506).

⁹⁰ James F. Hibberd to J. S. Billings, Richmond, Ind., August 5, 1883, quoted in W. F. Norwood, *Medical Education in the United States before the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1944), 355.

⁹¹ Trustee Minutes, July 16, 1850 (Vol. I, p. 429).

⁹² *Ibid.*, February 25, 1851 (Vol. I, p. 453); July 15, 1851 (Vol. I, p. 462).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, February 24, 1850 (Vol. I, p. 451); August 5, 1851 (Vol. I, p. 501).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, August 20, 1845 (Vol. I, pp. 252-257); July 16, 1850 (Vol. I, p. 428, and *passim*).

⁹⁵ Myers, *History of Medical Education in Indiana*, 2-3.