

**Oregon Health & Science University
Historical Collections & Archives**

**Willamette University Medical Department Records
Accession No. 1999 - 001**

Guide

Organizational History¹

In 1864, Governor A. C. Gibbs and a number of Portland physicians requested that the Board of Trustees of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, establish a medical department in Portland, to be called the Oregon Medical College. The department closed soon after its founding due to lack of organization by the faculty. It is unclear whether or not the department ever offered any instruction. By 1866, Willamette University had a new president, Dr. J. H. Wythe, who began efforts to establish a medical department in Salem. A committee appointed by the university's Board of Trustees ordered the officers of the Medical Department in Portland to surrender the charter granted to them by the university, and lectures began in Salem on March 3, 1867.

On February 8, 1878, the Oregon Medical College was incorporated in Portland. Though it bore the same name as the Portland campus of the Willamette University Medical Department, created thirteen years earlier, the college was an independent entity. The original founders, stockholders and faculty, Rodney Glisan, Philip Harvey, Matthew P. Deady, William H. Watkins, William B. Cardwell, R. G. Rex, William H. Saylor and O.P.S. Plummer resolved, on April 15, 1878, at a meeting of the faculty, that "the interests of the medical profession of the Northwestern States and Territories adjacent require the maintenance of one institution for medical education and that the city of Portland, by reason of its greater population, the clinical material available in its several hospitals and the greater number of competent resident physicians and surgeons who may be engaged as teachers, is better adapted for the location of such an institution than any point north of San Francisco" (Volume I, p. 23). It was noted in the minutes that the faculty recognized and appreciated the efforts and successes of the faculty at the Willamette University Medical Department, and did not wish to do injury to the existing school in Salem by establishing a medical school in Portland. Therefore it was resolved that a committee of three be invited from Willamette University to confer with a similar committee from the Oregon Medical College to harmonize their efforts. On June 5, 1878, resolutions were made in Portland to accept the recommendations of the President and the faculty of the Willamette University Medical Department, that on the abandonment of the Oregon Medical College, the Willamette University Medical Department would move to Portland. The Oregon Medical College was disincorporated, and stock was canceled at a meeting of the stockholders, June 17, 1878.

¹Source: Larsell, Olof. *The Doctor in Oregon. A Medical History*. Portland, Oregon: Binford and Mort for the Oregon Historical Society, 1947.

The Willamette University Medical Department relocated from Salem to a site on Fourth Street, between Morrison and Yamhill, with a dissecting room in a livery stable on Park and Jefferson. In 1886 a new building was constructed at Fourteenth and Couch, which was occupied in 1887. On April 8, 1887, schisms among the faculty led to the resignation of many of its strongest members: William H. Watkins, James Brown, E. P. Fraser, Otto S. Binswanger, Arthur D. Bevan, A. C. Panton, Richmond Kelly, Frank B. Eaton, Kenneth A. J. Mackenzie, Holt C. Wilson, Simeon E. Josephi and George M. Wells. Several of these men helped organize a rival school, the Medical Department of the University of Oregon. The Willamette Medical Department stayed in Portland until 1895, when it returned to Salem and appointed physicians from the Salem area. In 1910 the department failed to meet the standards of the Council on Medical Education on May 5, 1913, having graduated two hundred and thirteen since its inception in 1867, the department was discontinued. Then it was absorbed by a merger with its former rival, the University of Oregon Medical School.

Scope, Content and Arrangement

The Willamette University Medical Department Records consist of two handwritten leather-bound volumes. Volume I, 1878 February 8 - 1896 September 14, contains the minutes of the Oregon Medical College stockholders, Board of Directors, and faculty in chronological order, enrollment records for the Willamette University Medical Department for the years 1878-79 through 1895-96 and alumni lists. Two news clippings are attached to the inside cover and first page, and a Xeroxed, typewritten mailing list is attached to the back page. Material in this volume documents the creation of the Oregon Medical College and the transfer of the Willamette University Medical Department from Salem to Portland on June 5, 1878. The volume is in good physical condition, though some text is fading. Volume II contains Willamette University Medical Department faculty meeting minutes, dated 1878 June 18 - 1888 May 28. A photocopy of an examination of jurisprudence was loose in the volume; it was removed to a folder during processing. Some minutes are taken in shorthand. Minutes in this volume record the irreconcilable differences between members of the faculty and their formal resignations on April 8, 1887. The binding is fragile, and some fading of the text is evident.

Series Title: Minutes of stockholders, Board of Directors and Faculty

Date Range: 2/8/1878 - 5/28/1888

Arrangement: Chronological

Physical Characteristics/Condition: Volume I: 1 leather bound volume, handwritten. Some fading of text. Two news clippings attached to inside cover and first page. 1 Xeroxed, typewritten mailing list attached to back page. Volume II: 1 bound volume. Binding fragile. Handwritten in ink and pencil. Some notes taken in shorthand. Some fading of text. Loose in the volume is a Xerox copy of an examination. See inventory for complete description.

Related Materials

Archives: 2005-005 Harry J. Sears Collection

Quantity

Volume I: 34 x 23 cm. Volume II: 22 x18 cm.

Linear Feet: 1

Provenance

The records were created by the Willamette University Medical Department. They were transferred to the University of Oregon Medical School Library probably between 1950 - 1980. No other details about their provenance are known. OHSU Library Special Collections staff processed the collection in the spring of 1999.

Inventory

<u>Volume I</u>	<u>Date</u>
Oregon Medical College Articles of Incorporation	1878 Feb 8
Authorization to receive stock subscriptions to Capital Stock	[1878 Feb 9]
List of Stock subscriptions	1878 Feb 9
Consent to the first meeting of the stockholders and election of the directors	1878 Feb 9
Oregon Medical College stockholders meeting minutes	1878 Feb 9
Oregon Medical College Board of Directors meeting minutes	1878 Feb 9
Oregon Medical College Board of Directors meeting minutes	1878 Mar 13
Oregon Medical College Faculty meeting minutes	1878 Apr 15
Oregon Medical College Faculty meeting minutes	1878 Jun 5
Willamette University Medical Department enrollment records for sessions	1878-79 - 1895-96
Alumni mailing list	[ca. 1878 - 1899]

Permanent mailing list [ca. 1878 - 1899]

News clipping, "Medical Graduates" 1884 Mar 3

News clipping, "Graduating Exercises" [ca. 1878 - 1896]

Volume II

Willamette University Medical Department Faculty meeting minutes 1878 Jun 18 - 1888
May 28

University of Oregon Medical School, an examination of
jurisprudence [removed to folder] 1899 Feb 27