

## HISTORY OF MEDICINE

# The Secret Kappa Lambda Society of Hippocrates (and the Origin of the American Medical Association's Principles of Medical Ethics)

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This paper relates the neglected history of an idealistic, secret medical fraternity that existed briefly in Lexington, Kentucky, during the first half of the 19th century. It was created for students in the Medical Department at Transylvania University, the fifth U.S. medical school, founded in 1799. One goal of the fraternity was to counter the widespread dissension and often violent quarrels among doctors that characterized American medicine of that period. And to that end, it was among the first to promote Thomas Percival's code of medical ethics in this country. Branches of the fraternity were established in Philadelphia and New York City, where members became influential in local medical politics but in time encountered hostility from rival physicians. The secret character of the fraternity branches was publicized and maligned during an anti-Masonic movement in this country in the 1830s, which soon led to the demise of the Philadelphia group. The New York branch remained active through the 1860s. Members of both branches were among those who, in 1847, established the American Medical Association and devised its Principles of Medical Ethics.

## INTRODUCTION

Recorded histories about specific topics are often deficient in some small detail or incomplete due simply to space limitations. An example is the origin of the American Medical Association (AMA). So several versions of a subject need be perused to gain an accurate interpretation. The following essay relates some little known particulars about an early 19th century secret medical fraternity whose greater significance lies in its members who helped found the AMA.

## EARLY SECRET COLLEGE FRATERNITIES

In the United States, the first student fraternity was Phi Beta Kappa, established at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1776. During its early years, the fraternity had an oath of secrecy and a special handclasp or grip [1]. Some histories state that in this country, it was "the sole society of its kind for 50 years" [2]. Indeed, other secret Greek-letter fraternities followed from 1825 to 1827 at Union College, Schenectady, New York,

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†Abbreviations: AMA, American Medical Association.

(KA, ΣΦ, ΔΦ) and in 1832 at Hamilton College, New York (ΑΔΦ). Also, in 1832, the first of two secret societies was formed at Yale: Skull and Bones; the other, Scroll and Key, appeared in 1842.

However, the distinction of being the second secret college society in the United States (after ΦβΚ) must go to the Kappa Lambda Society of Hippocrates, established at the Department of Medicine at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1819. This fact is little appreciated today for several reasons: the KΛ Society in Lexington survived for less than a decade, although branches established in several eastern cities continued for several more. But its members greatly influenced the early character of a later important institution, the American Medical Association. The story of the KΛ Society and the AMA begins with Transylvania University and its Department of Medicine, founded in 1799.

## TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY

“Transylvania” means “the country across the woods” and was the name given to the lands bordered by the Ohio, Cumberland, and Kentucky rivers — that part of present day Kentucky that originally was the western extension of Virginia. In 1780, the General Assembly of Virginia deeded 8,000 acres of escheated land “in the County of Kentuckee” for “a Public School.” The adjective “escheated” referred to lands previously owned by British subjects who were no longer legally allowed to own them. Another 12,000 acres were added later to help fund “the maintenance and education of youth.” The public school was named Transylvania Seminary and became the first institution of higher learning west of the Alleghenies. Instruction began in 1785. In 1792, Kentucky became the 15th state. In 1798, the seminary’s name was changed to Transylvania University [3].

A fundraising campaign for the new seminary/university (“a lamp in the for-

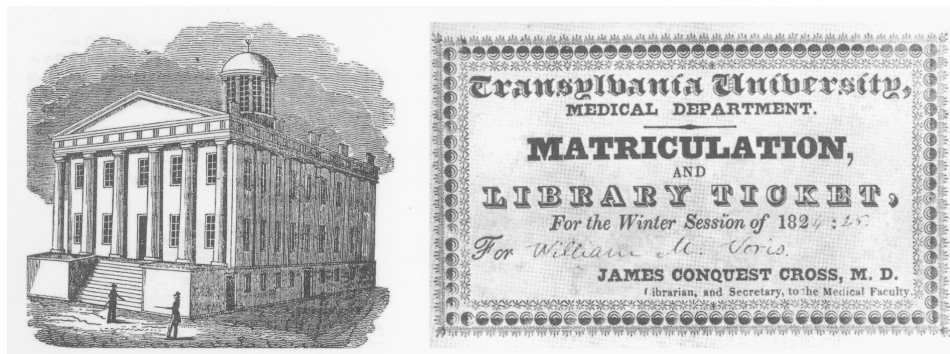
est”) was promoted in eastern cities. George Washington and John Adams each contributed \$100 and Aaron Burr, \$40. Pledges totaling \$10,000 were obtained [3]. An editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1905 noted that “the little school at Lexington grew with phenomenal rapidity to a position second to none in the United States” [4]. For a decade during the 1820s, Transylvania University was “ranked among the leading institutions of higher learning” in the Union. Indeed, Jefferson favored sending students there rather than to Harvard. At Transylvania, they would be imbued with “more of the flavor of the old cast,” meaning a more democratic outlook, while at Harvard they would return from Cambridge as “fanatics and Tories” [5] (see note [6]).

The Civil War impoverished the small colleges in the South, causing many to fold. In order to survive, Transylvania merged with the small church-funded Kentucky University in 1865. In the same year, a new land grant college, the Agriculture and Mechanical College, was added to Transylvania’s campus. Also the College of the Bible was included in the mix, all of which came to be known as Kentucky University for the next four decades.

In 1878, the A&M College moved from the Transylvania campus to a nearby site in Lexington and later was renamed the University of Kentucky. The Bible College also separated and became the Lexington Theological Seminary. Now divested of these two academic partners, the Transylvania campus resumed its old name of Transylvania University and over the next century attained its present reputation as a highly regarded, small liberal arts university (see note [7]).

## TRANSYLVANIA’S DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

In 1799 the trustees of Transylvania University inaugurated a Medical



**Figure 1. Left: Medical Department Building, Transylvania University, circa 1840. Right: Matriculation and library ticket, 1824 to 1825. Figures used courtesy of Transylvania University.**

Department [3]. This became the fifth (or seventh, see note [8]) medical school organized in the United States but indisputably the first west of the Alleghenies. Early United States medical schools were commonly called “Departments” or “Institutes” of Medicine. The first had been established by the University of Pennsylvania in 1765 followed by King’s College in New York City in 1767 (or 1764), Harvard University in Cambridge in 1783, and Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1797 [9]. (The Medical Institution of Yale College was created around 1810 [10].)

Students were admitted to Transylvania’s Department of Medicine beginning in 1800 and taught initially in preceptorships with the four or so faculty at hand. During the first decade or so, lectures were given irregularly to small classes of students, numbering 20 or so. The academic year was only four months long. A formal curriculum was not in place until the winter of 1819. The first class then included 39 students. By 1825, the department had 281 students, its peak number. The average enrollment in the 14 medical schools of this period was 147 [11], although the University of Pennsylvania then had 440 medical students [12].

In the early 1800s, several large donations allowed Transylvania faculty to trav-

el to Europe to purchase entire private libraries of medical works, anatomical preparations, and the newest scientific instruments. In 1828, the Transylvania Medical Library held over 3,000 volumes. (Figure 1). At the time, Transylvania was the “best endowed medical school in America” and had “one of the best [libraries] in the country” [13]. The library and museum of anatomical and scientific items are still intact and on display today at the university (see note [14]).

Transylvania’s Department of Medicine remained preeminent in trans-Appalachia for two decades, from the 1820s through the 1830s. However, in the mid-19th century, steam navigation caused inland Lexington to be eclipsed economically by two nearby cities on the Ohio River — Cincinnati and Louisville. In 1837, the Louisville Medical Institute was opened with a class of 80 students. It became the University of Louisville’s Medical Department in 1848 [13]. In the 1840s, enrollment at Transylvania’s Medical Department began to decrease. Dissatisfaction within the Transylvania medical faculty, notably with the lack of bodies for dissection, led several members in the fall of 1850 to move to Louisville and form the Kentucky School of Medicine. In 1908, the two medical schools in Louisville merged. In

Lexington, Transylvania's last class of nine doctors completed their studies during the 1856 to 1859 term.

Throughout its nearly six-decade existence (1799 to 1857), Transylvania's Department of Medicine enrolled 4,358 students and graduated 1,881 physicians. In the antebellum South and Southwest of this country, the majority of trained physicians were medical graduates of Transylvania [3].

### **ORIGIN OF THE SECRET KAPPA LAMBDA SOCIETY**

The KA Society of Hippocrates was founded by Dr. Samuel Brown (1769 to 1830), the first Professor of Theory and Practice of Medicine and also Professor of Chemistry at Transylvania's new Department of Medicine. He was born in Virginia and had obtained his medical training in Philadelphia and Scotland. The renowned American surgeon, Dr. Samuel Gross, described Brown as "a beautiful type of man [with] a magnificent physique ... a thorough gentleman in manner and address." To others he was eloquent, learned, benevolent, liberal, and idealistic — but a dreamer, some said [15].

In 1802, while students were being taught mainly by preceptors, Brown was occupied vaccinating 500 Lexingtonians. At the time, physicians on the East Coast were still debating the safety of this procedure. Only two years earlier, Benjamin Waterhouse had obtained the first cowpox vaccine in America and had immunized seven members of his Boston household [16].

In 1803, Brown founded the Lexington Medical Society. It seems to have been for the benefit of the medical students, since the February minutes only listed them, some 15 in number. The October minutes concerned renting a meeting place and purchasing "candle, candlestick, and snuffers."

As noted above, a formal medical curriculum began in 1819. Part of the

delay in starting regular class work stemmed from discord with local practitioners and among the small medical faculty. Doctors in the community were wary of the new medical college, fearing it would churn out rival physicians competing for paying patients. Even within the Department of Medicine conflicts arose; one led to a duel in 1818 involving three professors (see note [17]). Numerous professional and academic disputes were spread by pamphlets and anonymous letters to the local newspapers and disrupted the academic calm.

At the same time, a physician in Philadelphia wrote that his medical colleagues "lived in an almost constant state of warfare, quarreling, and even worse ... street fights" [18]. Indeed, there was not a city or town in the whole nation "where doctors were not at each other's throats" [19]. The cause was competition for paying patients.

The vulgar deportment of his medical colleagues both in Lexington and elsewhere led Brown, the idealist and dreamer, to inoculate his Transylvania students against such unworthy conduct through his lectures, correspondence, and conversations. An acquaintance wrote that Brown "sought by all means — by precept and example — to sustain the dignity, vindicate the honor, and raise the status of the profession" [15].

In 1819, with 39 restless students now attending regular medical lectures, performing human dissections, and occasionally robbing graves, Brown may have thought that a student fraternity might rein in their rowdiness and instill some professional decorum. He gave the new fraternity a mysterious name: the Kappa Lambda Society of Hippocrates. Secrecy was a notable feature of it. He may have felt that a secret symbol and a secret password would make the fraternity more appealing to spirited youths and that a badge and goals would help form a professional bond among them. The December 1822 minutes



of the K $\Lambda$  Society listed 128 members, including one from Ireland.

The significance of the two Greek letters in the society's name was never disclosed publicly, but recall that Brown also taught chemistry. The Greek letter Kappa is thought by some to represent the Greek word "crystal," "κρυσταλλος." The simplest crystal is the cube, and this was the symbol adopted by the society as its emblem — indicative of purity and primitiveness. Indeed, the word "primitive" was a secret password to be used during introductory conversations to identify a member. The word was also inserted (often somewhat forced) in documents of the society — e.g., "the great primitive Author of nature" or "the triumph of primitive nature." The Greek letter Lambda had no particular significance except "to lead astray the uninitiated in their conjectures" [20] (see note [21]) ( Figure 2 ).

The fraternity badge was a square (like a cube) on which was inscribed the words "Virtue, Science, Friendship, and Harmony." The four goals of the society were 1) to promote medical science, 2) to communicate reports of interesting cases of diseases and important discoveries in the science of medicine, 3) to cultivate

"friendly and brotherly feelings between practitioners," and 4) to establish branches of the K $\Lambda$  Society in all states of the Union.

Nothing of lasting significance appears to have transpired in Lexington's chapter of K $\Lambda$ . It remained active for less than a decade and faded from history a few years after Samuel Brown retired and left Lexington in 1825. The *Transylvania Medical Journal* (1828 to 1852) was edited by members of the Department of Medicine, but it had no connection with the society. However, the spirit of the K $\Lambda$  Society survived in its branches, which flourished for a time in several East Coast cities.

## KAPPA LAMBDA SOCIETY BRANCHES AND MEDICAL ETHICS

Chapters of K $\Lambda$  were established in Philadelphia and New York City. Others were started in Baltimore, Washington, and possibly elsewhere, but little or nothing about them has been preserved. In Philadelphia, the chapter was called the "K $\Lambda$  Society of Aesculapius," while in New York City it became the "K $\Lambda$  Association of the United States." A medical society with lofty goals was desper-



A certificate of membership in Kappa Lambda,  
the nation's first medical honorary



Figure 2. Left: Certificate of membership in the K $\Lambda$  Society. Right: Brass seal of the K $\Lambda$  Society. Figures used courtesy of Transylvania University.

ately needed in these two cities because of the chronic dissension among doctors. In Philadelphia, Benjamin Rush had written before his death in 1813 that “nothing could exceed the malice of rival authors except the rancor of rival physicians” [22].

But the rancor in the City of Brotherly Love apparently subsided somewhat with the advent of the KΛ Society, one of whose local founders was Dr. René de la Roche (1795 to 1870). He wrote of the medical profession there that “soon after establishment [of the KΛ Society], harmony — comparative harmony at least — was restored among its members.” The explanation for this success may relate to an 1822 document from the KΛ Society in Philadelphia which reads, “... we have adopted such parts of the [book] *Medical Ethics* of the illustrious Doctor Percival, as are adapted [applicable] to the state of the profession in this country.” The parent organization in Lexington had published extracts from Percival’s Code in 1821 and sent them to its branches in Philadelphia and New York City [23].

In the English-speaking medical world, Percival’s small book, titled *Medical Ethics, or, A Code of Institutes and Precepts*, became the manual for future medical ethicists. He had compiled it in an effort to prevent the perennial disagreements among the medical staff at the Manchester Infirmary.

Thomas Percival (1740 to 1804) had trained in medicine at Edinburgh and absorbed the ideas of two Scottish philosophers who taught there — John Gregory and David Hume. Gregory (1724 to 1773) espoused “common sense medical ethics,” which seeks, among others things, to distinguish the physician’s duty from his personal interests. David Hume (1711 to 1776) stressed the importance of “cooperation in societies” to “achieve natural needs” — i.e., mutual happiness. Cooperation implies cordial relationships. These views were incorporated into the medical ethics and etiquette in Percival’s

book, published in 1803. But very likely these ideas had been absorbed during the preceding decades by many other medical students at Edinburgh, including two Americans — Benjamin Rush and Samuel Brown.

Rush (1745 to 1813) received his formal medical training in Edinburgh in the 1760s. He is remembered today with some dismay for his aggressively bleeding and purging patients suffering from yellow fever and other febrile illnesses. But among his more worthy medical contributions were his *Lectures on the Medical Jurisprudence of the Mind*. Published in 1810, this was the first review of medical ethics in America. Rush speculated that professional rivalry (“this peculiar professional depravity”) was due to physicians’ isolation — an isolation which could be relieved by physicians holding “frequent social and convivial meetings” [22].

Samuel Brown’s medical education in Philadelphia with Rush in 1792 and in Edinburgh the following year gave him a double dose of Scottish medical ethics and etiquette. Brown was undoubtedly responsible for a Lexington press publishing extracts from Percival’s book in 1821 and for the society distributing copies to its two branches in Philadelphia and New York City, as noted previously.

The need for some socializing force in the profession, as well as a forum for settling medical disputes, was milling around in the minds of various American physicians. Daniel Drake had concluded that the only solution to such conflicts was to establish a neutral body — some impartial medical association — which would arbitrate disputes and elevate the level of social intercourse among physicians [19].

So the ethical ideas of Gregory, Hume, Percival, and Rush were likely in Brown’s thoughts when he established the KΛ Society in 1819 [Figure 3]. This society might have been more visible in the history of American medicine had not its branches in Philadelphia and New York



**Figure 3. The harbingers of medical ethics and etiquette in the United States. Figure 3a (left) from Leake CD. *Percival's Medical Ethics*. Baltimore: The William and Wilkins Company; 1927. Figure 3b (center) from Corner GW. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush*. Princeton University Press; 1948 (used with permission). Figure 3c (right) used courtesy of Transylvania University.**

City been destroyed by jealous, uninitiated physicians. Nonetheless, the society's influence would later be expressed in another organization, the AMA.

### **DEMISE OF THE KAPPA LAMBDA SOCIETY**

The demise of the two KA branches seems related to an alleged murder in western New York State. William Morgan was an occasional stone mason who lived in Batavia, New York. It's not known whether he was ever admitted to membership in any Masonic organization, but he acquired enough knowledge to write a book purporting to reveal the secrets of the Masonic Order. Efforts were made to prevent its publication, including arson at the shop printing the book. One day in September 1826, Morgan was jailed briefly for a trivial debt. When released that evening, four men were observed shoving him into a yellow carriage. Morgan was never seen alive again.

Suspicious neighbors assumed that he had been abducted and drowned in Lake Ontario when a decomposed male corpse floated ashore near the mouth of the Niagara River [24].

Morgan's book about the Masons was published but aroused little excitement or interest compared with the mystery of his disappearance. No other crime of the period garnered so much coverage in the northern newspapers. The lingering notoriety of his supposed murder seeded a latent hostility to Freemasonry. An anti-Masonic hysteria swept over the country and soon touched other secret societies.

Phi Beta Kappa was one so affected. As noted previously, it originated as a secret society and developed chapters at several East Coast universities. In 1831, the Harvard chapter "removed the requirement for secrecy" in response to the anti-Masonic fervor. All ΦBK chapters soon assumed the purely honorary character familiar to us today. Other Greek-letter fraternities relaxed their shields of secrecy.

But at Yale in 1832, the ultra-secret society Skull and Bones was founded — perhaps as a contrarian response of students there to the prevailing anti-Masonic, anti-secrecy sentiment.

Meanwhile in Philadelphia, the secret nature of the local KA branch was revealed to the general public during a faculty fracas at Jefferson Medical College. In 1829, one of its professors, Francis Beattie, was fired. He had said unkind things about the school's founder, George McClelland, father of the future Civil War general. Dr. McClelland sued Dr. Beattie. During the trial, it was disclosed that Beattie was supported by a secret medical fraternity, the city's KA Society of Aesculapius. A flurry of charges and counter-charges appeared in rival medical journals — one claiming that both the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Hospital were now dominated by KA members. The unfavorable publicity soon led to the demise of the Philadelphia KA branch [15].

One tangible reminder of the Philadelphia branch resides in the few libraries still preserving the *North American Medical and Surgical Journal*, which was edited by KA members from 1826 until 1832. In 1830, while defending Beattie, the journal sought to preempt bad publicity about the secret society in Philadelphia by being the first to discuss the KA branch there. The article added parenthetically that KA had “a very excellent branch in New York City” [15].

So it was inevitable that the northern branch would soon come under scrutiny. By then, the KA membership in New York City had grown to include many physicians with the best hospital and academic appointments, the president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and some of its trustees. In the mid-1830s, the trustees “brought charges” against the Physicians and Surgeons faculty for some now forgotten fault. Many professors resigned in protest and established a medical school

affiliated with Rutgers College in New Jersey. Animosity became focused not only on the KA trustees, but on other KA members of the medical establishment.

An article “stigmatizing” the KA Society and listing 17 New York members was published in *The American Lancet* in 1830. Two so-named were not members and initiated libel suits that dragged on for some years [15, 20]. In 1839, a collection of essays appeared entitled *A History of the New York Kappa Lambda Conspiracy*. Its caustic critique of the society included a poetical “epitaph,” of which the following are but a few lines.

Here lies the Kappa Lambda wight [25],

Begot by Selfishness and Night.

It was a thing of craft and guile,

Which bowed and smiled, and wronged the while.

Through dark and sinuous paths, by stealth.

It crawled to office, [&] gathered wealth.

The epitaph concludes ...

Exposed at length, to truth's pure ray,

It raved, writhed, withered, [&] passed away.

## THE IDEA OF AN AMERICAN MEDICAL ORGANIZATION

Contrary to the epitaph, the New York KA Association did not pass away in 1839 but survived until 1862. During its waning years, there appeared in New York City the first stirrings of a more durable organization, the future American Medical Association. In the late 1840s, at meetings in New York City and Philadelphia, physicians began addressing the country-wide issues of medical education, certification, and licensure along with the pressing problem of professional etiquette and ethics. The latter problem had led to the creation of the KA Society in 1819. But why in 1846 to 1847 were the other issues finally being discussed at a national level?

It was primarily a matter of economics. Competition for paying patients had become fierce with the mushrooming



numbers of doctors in the Union — regular physicians and non-regular healers, the latter including homeopaths, herbalists (Thomsonian doctors), Eclectics, empirics, and quacks. It was estimated that in the 1840s, the proportion of medical practitioners per population in the United States was five times greater than in France [26]. In 1800, there were 343 graduates from the four then-well-established United States medical schools. In 1840, there were 30 or so medical schools, from which 6,849 new physicians came that year [12]. In 1850, there were 42 regular medical schools with 17,213 graduates that year. Added to these between 1820 and 1850 were the thousands who emerged from the 30 or so United States schools of homeopathy, Thomsonianism, and Eclecticism [27]. This intense rivalry for gainful patients was reflected in the precarious incomes of most practicing physicians of the period.

This competition was the cause of much of the hostility and many of the fights among American physicians. Again, these were the concerns that led Dr. Samuel Brown to form the KA Society in 1819, to adopt Percival's Medical Ethics in 1821, and to send copies that same year to the society's two branches in New York City and Philadelphia.

Other American groups besides the KA Society had been receptive to Percival's ideas. In 1808, the Boston Medical Association used precepts from Percival's second chapter concerning relationships among physicians in its rules titled the *Boston Medical Police* [28]. In 1823, the New York State Medical Society appropriated nearly the whole of Percival's Code. And in 1832, the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Baltimore issued *A System of Medical Ethics* based on Percival's little book [29]. Boston's rules were adopted by 11 other state medical societies between 1817 and 1842.

In May 1846, delegates from 16 of the 26 United States met at New York

University to draft resolutions on various matters facing American medicine. These resolutions, intended for further discussion and adoption at a later meeting in Philadelphia, included mainly a national medical association, medical education and licensure, and a uniform code of medical ethics.

### **THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

In May 1847, representatives from 40 medical societies and 28 medical schools convened in Philadelphia and approved the establishment of the American Medical Association. Delegates to the earlier meeting in New York City had included two prominent members of the New York KA branch: Drs. Edward Delafield and Alexander H. Stevens. From the now-defunct Philadelphia branch came Drs. John Bell and Isaac Hays, who co-authored the report on medical ethics, which was unanimously adopted. The official code of conduct adopted was patterned largely after Percival's Code, preserving "to a considerable extent" his phrases but also inserting elsewhere "the words of the late Dr. Rush" [30].

The Preamble of the AMA's Constitution stated the purposes of the organization, which included "fostering friendly intercourse between those engaged in [the medical profession]" [31]. This wording is very similar to one of the original goals of the KA Society — that of bringing about "the cultivation of friendly and brotherly feelings between the practitioners of different districts and states" [32].

### **THE INFLUENCE OF THE KAPPA LAMBDA SOCIETY ON THE AMA**

This essay suggests that the KA Society contributed in particular to one area of greatest concern to the AMA delegates, namely the Principles of Medical Ethics. As



early as 1821, KA members in the Lexington had seeded Percival's Code to its branches, whose Philadelphia members in turn proposed the Code to the AMA convention in 1847.

Also, one goal of the KA Society was incorporated in the AMA's Preamble as noted above. "The cultivation of friendly and brotherly feelings" was included in the minutes of an 1822 meeting of the KA Society in "the Medical College of Transylvania University," as recorded by Henry Miller. He was the 43rd member in the society's list for that year; soon afterwards, he was a Transylvania medical graduate and in 1859 the 13th president of the AMA. He practiced obstetrics in Kentucky and taught at the Medical Institute of Louisville University. Whether he was a delegate to the 1846 to 1847 meetings in New York City and Philadelphia leading to founding the AMA is unknown. In addition to the KA members cited above, there were eight other members from Philadelphia [33]. Four presidents of the AMA were KA members: Drs. A.H. Stevens (the 2nd, 1848), G.B. Wood (9th, 1855), H. Miller (13th, 1859), and S.D. Gross (20th, 1868).

In conclusion, the early focus of the KA Society on medical ethics and professional courtesy and the subsequent role of its members in founding the AMA suggest a debt owed by the American medical profession to this forgotten secret medical society.

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5. Jefferson T. Letter to Joseph C. Cabell, Jan. 20, 1820. In: Ford, P.L., ed. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. Vol. 12. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons; 1905:154-5.
6. Thomas Jefferson was an ardent advocate for public education and felt that the lands in the west belonged to all the people and not to land speculators. He had opposed the privately owned Transylvania Company, which had purchased lands between the Cumberland and Kentucky Rivers from the Cherokee Indians in 1775 and sold parcels to settlers [34]. His Land Ordinance of 1787 designated other lands beyond the Alleghenies to support education. It is likely that Jefferson promoted the Virginia legislature's grant in 1780 of escheated lands for a "Public School" in "the County of Kentuckee."
7. Famous early 19th century alumni of Transylvania University included Henry Clay, Stephen F. Austin, Cassius M. Clay, Jefferson Davis, and two United States vice presidents: Richard M. Johnson, and John C. Breckinridge.
8. A scrupulous scholar might argue that Transylvania's Department of Medicine was not the fifth medical school founded in this country but the seventh or eighth because of several others established in the late 18th century [9]. 1) In Philadelphia in 1765, medical faculties existed at both the University of Pennsylvania and the College of Philadelphia. In 1791, these two schools merged under the name of the former. 2) In New York City a medical department was established in 1792 at Queen's College (later Rutgers College). Teaching here was "suspended before 1800," resumed when the school was reorganized, but ceased in 1828. 3) A short-lived medical school was also founded at The College of William and Mary in 1779; it granted only one degree—an honorary one in 1782. Concern for priority rankings here pales in the knowledge that North America's first medical school was founded in Mexico City nearly a century before, in 1578 [35].
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  13. Norwood WF. The Schools of Kentucky. In: *Medical Education in the United States Before the Civil War*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1944:289-303.
  14. The Special Collections and the Museum at Transylvania University represent time capsules of 19th century medicine and science. The Special Collections hold 1,772 theses written by medical graduates, 1,800 19th century medical books, and over 800 such books printed before 1800 [36]. The Museum contains numerous wax models (anatomical and pathological) plus "philosophical apparatus" made in the early 19th century, such as planetaria, Magdeburg spheres, electrostatic machines, a Lucernal microscope, an Archimedes screw, etc. [37].
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  16. Hopkins DR. *Princes and Peasants: Smallpox in History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1983:380.
  17. Duels date back to antiquity (Achilles and Hector, David and Goliath) and were still common in 19th century Europe and America, as any encyclopedia will describe. In this country not only politicians (Hamilton vs. Burr, Henry Clay vs. John Randolph, Andrew Jackson vs. numerous opponents) but doctors also engaged in this often fatal exercise. As noted in the text, a local example involving three Transylvania professors occurred in 1818, when Dr. Benjamin Dudley challenged Dr. Daniel Drake to duel (see note [38]). Drake declined (as later he would other challenges in Cincinnati), but his honor at Transylvania was defended by a colleague, Dr. William Richardson. Dudley's bullet severed Richardson's femoral artery, and the latter would surely have bled to death had not Dudley rushed over to the victim and, after asking his permission, applied his thumb over the groin, allowing time for a ligature to be fixed in place. "The two men were life-long friends from that moment" [3].
  18. Ellis JH. *Medicine in Kentucky*. Lexington, Kentucky: Kentucky University Press; 1977: pp 43-44.
  19. Flexner JT. Genius on the Ohio: Daniel Drake. In: *Doctors on Horseback*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.; 1937:151-214.
  20. van Antwerp LD. Kappa Lambda: Elf or Ogre? *Bull Hist Med* 1945;17:330.
  21. When this paper was presented as a talk at April 2005 meeting of the American Osler Society, Dr. Charles G. Roland, a member and former president, made the astute suggestion that the two Greek letters might also have referred to the first letters in Kentucky and Lexington, respectively.
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38. The most famous physician in the Ohio Valley during the first half of the 19th century was Daniel Drake (1785-1852) — creative, charismatic, but also somewhat contentious. He taught at Transylvania during three different periods. His restless combativeness was reflected in the 11 academic

moves he made through six medical schools. He founded the Medical College of Ohio at Cincinnati in 1819. A year later he was expelled from its faculty even while he was the presiding officer of the meeting. Once Drake met one of the College's professors on the street. As they approached the professor said, "I do not propose to step aside for a fool." Drake replied, "I will" and stepped aside [19].