



Reflections



Reflections:

Historical Perspectives on Pathology
in Houston and Galveston

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Preface

When the Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists asked me to research and write a history of pathology in the Houston and Galveston area, I was delighted to have the opportunity to look closely at the emergence of this medical field in one location. The history of pathology at the medical institutions on the East Coast, where studies in pathology were made an integral part of the medical school curriculum between 1880 and 1910, has been amply studied. However, the circumstances here in Texas in the same period were considerably different. While some of the issues concerning pathologists here mirror those elsewhere, there were also developments here that were unique to this setting. Histories of particular medical disciplines have traditionally documented the important figures in the field, their great accomplishments, and the institutions where they worked. This account of pathology in the Houston and Galveston area instead examines important themes in the development of pathology in this area, using selected details from the careers of individuals and institutions to illustrate how pathologists, as practitioners, teachers, and researchers, dealt with the challenges they faced in finding and keeping a niche for pathology in the medical world. As a result, many familiar names and places will appear on these pages; but many pathologists equally worthy of recognition and praise are not discussed here. In no way does this history aspire to being a comprehensive accounting of all the people who contributed to the spectacular growth and reputation of pathology in this area. For a more comprehensive accounting of individual pathologists and their contributions to the field, I refer interested readers to the book by Marilyn Miller Baker, *The History of Pathology in Texas* (Austin, TX.: Texas Society of Pathologists, 1996).

A history is only as good as its sources, and I am indebted to quite a few people for providing access to materials. I would like to thank Elizabeth B. White, archivist, and Margaret Irwin of the McGovern Historical Collections at the Houston Academy of Medicine-Texas Medical Center Library (HAM-TMC); Sarita Oertling, archivist of the Blocker Collection at Moody Medical Library, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston; Dianne Ware, archivist, and Kimberly Weathers, at the Baylor College of Medicine Archives; Leslie Brunet, archivist of the Hermann Hospital Archives; Kashonna Shaw-Charles and Darlene Jeffcoat at the Harris County Medical Society—Houston Society of Clinical Pathologists Archives; Melinda H. Freisleben in the Department of Pathology at Baylor College of Medicine; Dr. David Smith, emeritus professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston; and Dr. Chester Burns, at the Institute for the Medical Humanities at The University of Texas Medical Branch, for rendering invaluable assistance while I was researching this project.

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