CHAPTER IX
FIRST MEDICAL CONVENTION

The type of medical men who were now predominant in the State felt the need of organization, not only as a protection for the public and their own interests, but also to pass on the ideals of Hippocrates; that is, the calling together of inquiring minds who would consult and carry on professional improvement, the exchange of ideas and ideals. This sentiment crystallized into the following call from the doctors of Austin.

"Medical Convention—The members of the medical profession resident in the city of Austin and county of Travis, had a meeting on the 9th instant, to consider the propriety of assembling a convention of the profession throughout the State at an early day. After due consultation, it was unanimously resolved to issue the following call. The objects to be attained are of an important character, and we commend the subject to the serious consideration, and prompt action of physicians in all parts of the State:

"To All regular authorized Physicians of the State of Texas:

"We the undersigned, Physicians of the City of Austin and vicinity, being desirous of promoting the advancement and improvement, as well as elevating the standard of our profession within this State, propose as an object conducive to that end a State Medical Convention, to meet at the City of Austin on the 17th day of January next, for the purpose of organizing a state medical society and generally to do and take such action then as will be most conducive to these objects.

"And we furthermore express the wish and hope that all the members of our profession throughout the State who can, will meet with us at the time and place specified, and aid us in the proposed organization.

Arthur J. Lott, Edward McDonnell, J. M. Litten,
J. T. Alexander, S. K. Jennings, Jr., R. N. Lane,
S. W. Baker, W. K. Brown, W. A. Morris,
J. P. Duval,

"Austin, Texas, December 8th, 1852."—Texas State Gazette, Dec. 11, 1852.
In answer to this call a meeting was held in Austin. In the following proceedings we note with interest the names of those doctors who first stood for ethical and organized practice of medicine in Texas.

Abstract of Proceedings of the
TEXAS MEDICAL CONVENTION

(Printed by J. W. Hampton, Gazette Office, 1853.)

"According to previous notice, the Convention met in the city of Austin on the 17th day of January, 1853, and was organized by calling Dr. S. K. Jennings of Travis to the Chair.

"The following gentlemen were elected Vice Presidents pro tem., viz, Dr. Joseph Taylor of Harrison, Dr. W. A. Morris of Travis and Dr. James Gaines of Milam, Dr. A. J. Lott of Travis, Secretary.

"On motion, the following members of the profession registered their names as members of this Convention, viz:

Dr. S. K. Jennings ................. Travis County
Dr. D. C. Dickson ................. Grimes County
Dr. Joseph Taylor ................. Harrison County
Dr. W. K. Brown ................. Travis County
Dr. O. F. Renick ................. Bastrop County
Dr. W. P. Smith ................. Fayette County
Dr. G. S. C. Harper ................. Williamson County
Dr. J. M. Litten ................. Travis County
Dr. Edward Tucker ................. Grimes County
Dr. W. L. Gammage ................. Freestone County
Dr. W. S. Baker ................. Travis County
Dr. J. L. Holliday ................. Burleson County
Dr. R. N. Lane ................. Travis County
Dr. W. H. Johnson ................. Travis County
Dr. W. Russell ................. Hays County
Dr. H. M. Allen ................. Navarro County
Dr. A. J. Lott ................. Travis County
Dr. James Gaines ................. Milam County
Dr. J. P. Duval ................. Travis County
Dr. W. A. Morris ................. Travis County
Dr. H. W. Davis ................. Travis County
On motion, the Rev. J. W. Phillips was requested to attend during the sitting of the Convention, and open each meeting with prayer.

On motion, Drs. Taylor, Smith, Litten and Renick were appointed a committee to draft a Constitution and By Laws to govern The Texas Medical Association.

On motion, the Chairman and Secretary were added to the committee.

On motion, Drs. Duval, McDonnell, Harper, Holliday and Allen were appointed a committee to memorialize the Legislature and petition for a charter.

On motion, the Convention adjourned until tomorrow at 2 o'clock, P. M.

January 18, 1853, two o'clock, P. M.

The Convention met—Dr. Jennings in the Chair. Prayer by the Rev. J. W. Phillips.

On motion, a committee was appointed to superintend the publication of the proceedings of this Convention, together with the Constitution and By Laws of the Texas Medical Association, composed of Drs. Gammage, Lane and McDonnell.

The chairman of the committee appointed to draft a Constitution and By-Laws reported.

After the adoption of the Constitution and By Laws the Convention proceeded to elect officers for the ensuing year, which resulted in the election of:
Dr. Joseph Taylor, of Harrison County, President,
Dr. W. A. Morris, of Travis, 1st Vice President,
Dr. Edward Tucker, of Grimes, 2nd Vice President,
Dr. A. J. Lott, of Travis, Corresponding Secretary,
Dr. R. N. Lane, of Travis, Recording Secretary; and
Dr. O. F. Renick, of Bastrop, Assistant Recording Secretary.

"The Convention adjourned until two o’clock, tomorrow.

"Austin, January 19,

"Convention met pursuant to adjournment—Dr. Joseph Taylor in the Chair, prayer by the Rev. J. W. Phillips.

"The Minutes of the preceding meeting having been read.

"On motion, the Convention proceeded to elect a Treasurer and Orator; which resulted in the election of Dr. J. M. Litten, of Travis, Treasurer, and Dr. James Gaines, of Milam, Orator, to deliver the address of the annual meeting of the Association.

"On motion the following gentlemen were appointed Counselors for the ensuing year:
Dr. Joseph Taylor..................................Harrison County,
Dr. D. C. Dickson..................................Grimes, County,
Dr. Edward Tucker..................................Grimes County,
Dr. W. Russell..................................Hays, County,
Dr. G. S. C. Harper................................Williamson County,
Dr. H. M. Allen..................................Navarro County,
Dr. W. L. Gammage................................Freestone County
Dr. W. P. Smith..................................Fayette County,
Dr. W. S. Burke..................................Milam County,
Dr. J. T. Jeffries..................................Milam County,
Dr. C. F. Renick..................................Bastrop County,
Dr. Edw. McDonnell................................Travis County,
Dr. A. J. Lott..................................Travis County,
Dr. J. P. Duval..................................Travis County,
Dr. S. K. Jennings................................Travis County,
Dr. J. L. Holliday................................Burleson County,
Dr. J. W. Throckmorton..........................Collin County,
Dr. J. W. T. Coles................................Lamar County,
Dr. W. F. Evans..................................Polk County,
Dr. Theo Koester..................................Comal County,
Dr. William Remer................................Comal County,
Dr. Chas. A. Porter..........................Comal County,
Dr. —— Nohe..................................Comal County,
Dr. Lewis A. Bryan..............................Harris County.

"On motion, the Convention adjourned until 8 o’clock P. M.

"The Convention met pursuant to adjournment, Dr. Joseph Taylor in the Chair, prayer by the Rev. W. P. Smith.

"The minutes of the previous meeting having been read, on motion, it was

"Resolved, That the following names be added to the committee on memorializing the Legislature, viz: Drs. Bryan, Taylor, Throckmorton, Dickson and Smith.

"On motion, the Chair appointed the following committee to procure an appropriate Seal for the Texas Medical Association, viz: Dr. Litten, Lott and McDonnell.

"On motion, it was

"Resolved, That the Corresponding Secretary be, and he is hereby authorized to receive and take charge of the Constitution and By-Laws, when issued from the press, and that he transmit by mail three copies of the same to each member of the Association; the remainder to be distributed throughout the State; and that he be further requested to transmit by mail or otherwise, the extra numbers of the Gazette containing these proceedings.

"On motion it was

"Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be presented to the physicians and citizens of Austin, to the Pastor and Trustees of the Methodist Church for their kindness to its members during its session. Whereupon the Convention adjourned.

S. K. JENNINGS, JR., Chairman.

"ARTHUR J. LOTT, Secretary."

The second meeting of the State Association was called in Austin at two p. m. Monday, November 14, 1853. The President, Dr. Joseph Taylor of Harrison County, was not present. Vice President, W. A Morris of Travis County presided at all sessions.

There was a report on Constitution and By-Laws which was adopted. A resolution was passed asking each member to place opposite his name on the roll the university or school
from which he was graduated. Committees were appointed on Publication, Medical Topography and Diseases of the State, and Membership. Two County Medical Associations were reported—Bexar, organized September 22, 1853, and Travis, organized October 22, 1853. Delegates to the American Medical Association were elected. They were Ashbel Smith, O. F. Renick, Willis G. Edwards, G. S. C. Harper, J. R. Sims, M. A. Taylor, John J. Roberts, H. P. Howard, R. N. Lane, George Cupples, Charles A. Porter and John T. Alexander.

The treasurer's report showed $43.05 on hand. Of the forty-eight members, thirty-six had not paid their dues.

Report of the nominating committee resulted in the election of:
President, Dr. George Cupples..........................San Antonio
First Vice President, S. K. Jennings..................Travis County
Second Vice President, John T. Alexander.........Travis County
Recording Secretary, R. N. Lane.....................Travis County
Asst. Recording Secretary, M. A. Taylor........Travis County
Corresponding Secretary, A. J. Lott..............Travis County
Treasurer, J. M. Litten..............................Travis County

Dr. D. C. Dickson of Grimes County was elected Anniversary Orator.

There are no records of another meeting of the State Association until 1869, when it met in Houston.

At a reorganization meeting a resolution was passed "respectfully recommending to the citizens of this flourishing city that they demand of every man who assumed the responsibility of a physician to their families, their diplomas as certificates of their worthiness of patronage, and that they see to it that they are not imposed on by a diploma from a medical society or a certificate of qualification as a dresser in a hospital." This action of the Association is doubtless one of the reasons doctors still frame their diplomas and place them in a prominent place in their offices.

Four annual meetings of the Association were held in Houston, the fifth being held in Waco.

During the sixteen years between those two meetings, 1853-1869, rapid progress had taken place in all lines of development in the state. Winding trails along rivers and across meadows had straightened out into highways. Proud
swaying pine trees had bowed their heads and ties now bore the burden of the iron horse as he roared his way to many new and thriving villages. Medical men were following these arteries of commerce. But they again felt the need of organization and co-operation. Epidemics of smallpox and yellow fever had taken a terrible toll of life in the State. Boards of Health had been appointed and were functioning in many parts, but conferences were needed and wanted.

These figures, taken from medical records, tell the story of yellow fever in one town in Texas.

1853.......................... 536 deaths,
1854.......................... 404 deaths,
1858.......................... 344 deaths,
1859.......................... 182 deaths,
1864.......................... 259 deaths,
1867.......................... 390 deaths.

The gallant fight made by the profession against this scourge is recorded in hundreds of the biographies that follow in this book. At the reorganization of the State Association in Houston, Dr. T. J. Heard of Galveston was elected president. Following this meeting, many county organizations were effected.

Doctors followed the railroads in their development of the State, building hospitals at their terminals, establishing drug stores, bringing nurses into the profession, and always doing their full share of civic as well as professional duty.