



LancasterHistory

Dr. George B. Kerfoot Collection, 1828-1851

Object ID: MG0128

1 box 12 folders .25 cubic ft.

Repository: LancasterHistory (Organization); PV7

Shelving Location: Archives South, Side 4

Scope and Content Note: The Dr. George B. Kerfoot Collection contains medical lectures, mostly given by Dr. Kerfoot. Topics include surgery, epilepsy, colds, injuries of the head, digestion, the senses, phrenology, and morality and science.

Creator: Kerfoot, George Barrett, 1808-1851.

Conditions for Access: No restrictions.

Conditions Governing Reproductions: Collection may not be photocopied. Please direct questions to Research Center Staff at research@lancasterhistory.org. Permission for reproduction and/or publication must be obtained in writing from LancasterHistory.

Language: English

Biographical and Historical Note: "Dr. George Barrett Kerfoot, M.D., returned to Lancaster to establish a practice in medicine in the Spring of 1830 after graduating from Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. That year he also married Elizabeth B. Reed.

From 1830 to 1843, Dr. Kerfoot expressed strong sympathy in lectures for such pseudo sciences as phrenology & Mesmerism, also promoting lectures and courses at his Anatomical Hall. Dr. Kerfoot opened a drug store and placed advertisements for the patent medicines which he sold there. In 1838, Kerfoot conducted a much publicized, sensational electrotherapy experiment on the body of Henry Kobler, a convicted killer, hanged for the murder of Lazarus Zellerbach. An April 1843 newspaper advertisement stated that Dr. Kerfoot was ending his drug and patent medicine business in order to concentrate on "the practice of medicine, surgery and obstetrics." Three weeks after the April 1843 advertisement, Eliza opened a millinery shop, with "Spring fashions" and a "supply of bonnets."

In 1843 the Kerfoot family resided on Center Square next to the Lancaster Bank. George was then aged 35; Eliza (Reed) Kerfoot, 36; children: Ann Louisa Kerfoot, 12; George Kerfoot, Jr., 9; William Dale Kerfoot, 6; Eliza Reed Kerfoot, 4; Emma Kerfoot, 2; and the family's live-in servants. In 1847 a daughter Sweetie H. Kerfoot was born and in 1848 their daughter Emma Kerfoot died.



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In the 1840's Dr. Kerfoot served on the City Council, as a Democrat, and on the School Board. Dr. Kerfoot provided expert testimony in Lancaster criminal court in the 1847 Haggerty trial in which the insanity defense was used, and also in the 1851 Knepley trial at Harrisburg.

Dr. Kerfoot was a recording secretary for the Pennsylvania State Medical Society and charter member of the Lancaster City & County Medical Society. He was a Mason and became District Deputy Grand Master; was a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge and a promoter of the Lyceum movement; held membership in the Temperance Society; St. James Episcopal Church; allegedly wrote some for *The Lancaster Intelligencer*. Dr. Kerfoot practiced medicine until his death in 1851.

Most of this info, quoted verbatim or paraphrased, is from: "Competing in the Medical Marketplace in Jacksonian America: The Creative Strategy of Dr. George Barrett Kerfoot," by Thomas R. Winpenny.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/106207258/george-barrett-kerfoot>

Source of Acquisition: Unknown.

Custodial History (Provenance):

Accruals: No further accruals are expected.

Preferred Citation: Dr. George B. Kerfoot Collection (MG0128), Folder #, LancasterHistory, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

People:

Kerfoot, George Barrett

McClellan, George

Gibson, William

Spurzheim, Johann Gaspar

Gall, Franz Josef



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Subject Headings:

Anatomy	Lancaster Society of Literature & Science
Blood	Larynx—Surgery
Botany, Medical	Lectures
Brain	Lyceums
Burns and scalds	Lymphatics—Diseases
Cerebrovascular disease	Magnetism
Chyle	Manuscript groups
Cleft lip	Neuroses
Cold (Disease)	Paralysis
Communicable diseases	Philosophy
Depression	Phrenology
Diagnosis	Physiology
Digestion	Pregnancy
Diseases	Prognosis
Edema	Respiration
Electricity	Scrofula
Epilepsy	Senses and sensation
Finding aids	Surgery
Gangrene	Tetanus
Hemophilia	Tonsils
Hernia	Tumors
Inflammation	Vomiting
Jaundice	Wounds and injuries—Treatment
Joints--Diseases	



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Search Terms:

Anatomy
Apoplexy
Blood
Botany, Medical
Brain
Burns and scalds
Chyle
Cleft lip
Cold (Disease)
Communicable diseases
Depression
Diagnosis
Digestion
Diseases
Dropsy
Electricity
Epilepsy
Finding aids
Gangrene
Hemophilia
Hernia
Inflammation
Jaundice
Joints, Diseases

Lancaster Society of Literature &
Science
Larynx
Lectures
Lyceums
Magnetism
Manuscript groups
Neuroses
Paralysis
Philosophy
Phrenology
Physics
Physiology
Pregnancy
Prognosis
Respiration
Scrofula
Senses and sensation
Surgery
Tetanus
Tonsils
Tumors
Vomiting
Wounds and injuries

Processing History: This collection was cataloged prior to 1997. This collection has been documented, preserved and managed according to professional museum and archives standards. The finding aid was updated using DACS conventions.



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Folder 1 Two medical lecture booklets, 1828. Galvanism, Electricity. Human Utero Gestation.

Folder 2 Three medical lecture booklets, 1828. Topics: Surgery; Hare Lip; Laryngotomy; Hard and Encysted Tumors; Hernia; Medical Botany; Surgery; Inflammation; Burns & Scalds; Gangrene and Mortification; "Scrophula".

Folder 3 Two booklets of medical lectures, 1828-1829. Topics: Practice of Physics; Colds; Contagion; Diagnosis; Puke; Prognosis; Collapse; Tetanus; Mode of Dressing Wounds.

Folder 4 Two booklets of medical lectures, 1829. Topics: Epilepsy; Dropsy; Neurosis, Apoplexy; Palsy; Hemophilia.

Folder 5 Two booklets of medical lectures, 1829. Topics: (by Dr. Kerfoot) Wounds of the Abdomen; Gunshot Wounds; Injuries of the Head; Depression and Apoplexy; Injuries of the spine; (by Dr. Gibson) Diseases of the Joints; Diseases of the Spine; Diseases of the Nerves; Diseases of the Eye; Diseases of the Nose; Enlarged Tonsils; Jaundice.

Folder 6 Two booklets of medical lectures. Topics: Magnetism; Digestion; Chyle; Lymph; Venous Circulation; Air and Breathing; Arterial Blood.

Folder 7 Medical lectures. Topics: Brain; Senses: Smell, Taste, Touch, General Senses.

Folder 8 Two booklets on Phrenology and Mental Science.

Folder 9 Two Introductory Lectures to Medical Students, no date, 1839. Introductory Lectures on Anatomy, Physiology & Philosophy to Medical Students by Geo. B. Kerfoot at Lyceum. Published in 1839 by Carry, Donnelly, Kennedy, Bahnson & Moore.

1 card announcing Medical Lectures by Dr. Kerfoot, 1851.

Folder 10 A Lecture at the Lyceum, not medical. A Lecture Advocates a Social Lyceum to Advance Morality & Science.

Folder 11 Two Masonic lectures.

Folder 12 Minute Book of the Lancaster Society of Literature & Science. 1841-1842.