

MARYLAND PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY

An organization meeting to establish the Maryland Psychiatric Society was held at the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty Building in Baltimore on Oct. 9, 1908. An article in the *Baltimore Sun* on Oct. 11, 1908, records this fact and comments that it is "the only state-wide society of its kind in the United States." Reference is also made to the fact that the section on neurology of the Johns Hopkins faculty appointed a committee to work with the new society.

The first meeting of the Society was held at the Shepard and Enoch Pratt Hospital in Towson on Nov. 6, 1908, at which time 34 charter members were present. At that meeting Dr. Hurd was appointed chairman and Dr. W. R. Dunton secretary. Dr. Dunton was to play a prominent role not only in this Society but in later psychiatric organizations and publications over a period of many years. At the first meeting the members decided to hold subsequent meetings quarterly in the various psychiatric institutions around the state and in nearby communities. It was decided that no permanent chairman would be appointed, but that the host at each quarterly meeting would be appointed chairman for that occasion. The main goal of the Society was stated as "better care of the insane."

At the earlier meetings of the Society a great deal of attention was focused on the role of the state in the care of the insane, aftercare, the role of expert witnesses, and similar topics. At a June 1909 meeting there was considerable discussion over the role of the expert witness and of a bill which had been proposed to establish a panel of court-appointed impartial witnesses. At the January 1909 meeting the value of the Wasserman Test in the diagnosis of syphilis and the relation of this disorder to general paresis were discussed.

Reference to the role of occupation and recreation in the treatment of mental illness appears in the Society's minutes beginning in 1911. The members were preoccupied with this and related topics from then on. The first issue of the *Maryland Psychiatric Quarterly* appeared in July 1911. It was founded by Drs. Herring

and Wade, and Drs. Herring and Dunton were joint editors. The scope of the *Quarterly* was outlined "to embrace, first, the administrative side of hospital life; second, the medical service in our state hospitals as well as in the corporate and private hospitals; third, the Social Service Department; fourth, the extension of occupational and recreational life among the insane; and, fifth, the Psychiatric News Section."

The first issue contained a short resume of the organization of the Society and a short history of its activities to that time. It says, in part, "the membership at present numbers 67 including a number of general practitioners, charity workers, lawyers, and psychologists, as well as those more directly concerned with the care of the insane." Also in the first issue is an early paper by Dr. Adolf Meyer on aftercare of the insane. From then on events of the Society were regularly reported in the *Quarterly*.

As mentioned above, the concern of both the Society and the *Quarterly* became largely that of occupational and recreational therapy with relatively few articles or discussions for purely scientific interest. Some exceptions can be cited, however. For instance, at the twentieth meeting of the Society, there were a number of articles on the problem of suicide. Papers by Dr. Meyer and an attorney, Mr. Julian Jones, on the problems of commitment in the state of Maryland were published in 1917. During the war years there were references to the role of psychiatrists in the military services.

Some items of interest that reflected the times include reference in 1922 to the "uplifters" and activities of the prohibitionists, noting that even then prohibition was out of hand, and the fact that the subscription price of the *Quarterly* for one year was 50 cents.

The last issue of the *Quarterly* appeared in January 1923. The last reported meeting of the Maryland Psychiatric Society was held at Rosewood on Dec. 13, 1922. The Society was an organization composed mainly of institutional psychiatrists, since there were so few psychiatrists in private practice. Two other things must also be

remembered: first, the Society included not only psychiatrists and neurologists, but also internists, and the lines of distinction were not as clear as they later became; second, the Society was basically, and most importantly, the Neuropsychiatric Section of the Baltimore City Medical Society.

There seems to be little information available between 1922 and the summer of 1930. During this period, however, a group of internists who had a strong influence in the field and who dealt with mild psychiatric cases, psychoneurotic problems, and psychosomatic illness, took an active part in the Society.

During the 1930's the Society held monthly meetings during the winter, except in December, under the auspices of the Baltimore City Medical Society. These were purely scientific meetings and little thought was given to attempting to influence legislatures or public thinking. This was left to the Mental Hygiene Society. The average meeting was attended by 25 or 35 physicians. There were usually two papers, followed by considerable discussion since the neurologists were reluctant to accept any explanation of symptoms on a functional basis. Psychoanalysis, of course, was in the air.

Meanwhile two groups were forming: the men who were interested in psychoanalysis established the Washington-Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society, and their attendance at meetings of the Maryland Psychiatric Society diminished; others, greatly influenced by Dr. Meyer's psychobiological approach and by the writings of Dr. William A. White at St. Elizabeths, constituted a non-analytic group.

During the 1930's the state hospital people became more active in psychiatric affairs, and also during this time the trend toward private practice became more pronounced. This latter group naturally had special interests which the institutional orientation of the Society did not meet, and after a time, under the leadership of Dr. Wendell Muncie, they formed the Maryland Association of Private Practicing Psychiatrists. Three organizations, each going its separate way, now existed.

During the decade 1930 to 1940 Society meetings seemed to swing away from the purely scientific to greater stress upon attempts to popularize psychiatry, and it was not uncommon to have 100 to 150 people present, many of whom were social workers, psychiatrists' wives, and the interested public.

During these ten years, the presidents of the Society included Drs. William W. Elgin, Whitman Newell, Manfred Guttmacher, Wendell Muncie, Thomas Rennie, Lawrence Woolley, Leslie Hohman, and Harry Murdock.

World War II had an immediate and profound effect upon psychiatrists of all ages. House staffs fell off, many of the men in practice went in the uniformed services, and others worked in induction stations and draft boards. It is not definitely known whether meetings were suspended, as in the case of some national organizations, but the activities diminished considerably.

After the War when the men returned there was an influx of candidates for training in psychiatry, due equally to the GI Bill of Rights, the Mental Health Act which created training grants, and to the fact that they had become interested in psychiatry through their work in the services. Between 1946 and 1950 was a period of rebuilding and transfusing new blood into psychiatry. By the mid 1950's people began to finish their training and many who were interested in psychoanalysis went into private practice.

The Society began to limit its meetings to more scientific programs and became a District Branch of the APA in May 1954. This meant a complete revision of the constitution and bylaws and the establishment of limited classes of membership, since only members of the APA could vote and hold office in the affairs of the District Branch. Also at about this time a group of psychiatrists of considerable experience began to feel that there should be some purely scientific forum which reached all physicians in the field. They hoped that a reorganization would prevent those psychiatrists and psychoanalysts in private practice from drifting away from the Society. The credit for this reorganization and for the reawakening of the Society should go in large part to Dr. Leonard Gallant, although others, including Drs. Jerome Frank, Eugene Meyer, Kathryn Schultz, Virginia Huffer, Joseph Lichtenberg, Jerome Styrt, and Leon Eisenberg, played major roles in the renaissance. This reorganization went a long way toward accomplishing the desired effect and during the latter part of the 1950's the almost defunct Inter-Society Council was revived and an attempt was made to formalize its meetings.

Part of this latter development and the formalization of the Inter-Society Council resulted from the fact that in addition to being a scientific body, the feeling was strong among the members that the Society should lend its weight to various efforts to improve psychiatric education, psychiatric training, and knowledge of psychiatry in the schools, courts, etc. The Society became interested in the reorganization of the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in the question of privileged communications, and in the establishment of community clinics. This latter interest has continued and is still an important aspect of the Society's activities.

During the latter 1950's and early 1960's the various classifications of membership were further restricted so that today the active membership is confined to physicians who are primarily active in the practice of psychiatry. In 1965, there were 219 members.

Since the 1950's the balance of power has swung away from the institutions for a variety of reasons. It is not wholly because of the number of psychiatrists in private practice, but in some measure it is because of the number of foreign graduates in the institutions. Some of them have not shown much interest in the Society; others still feel strange and ill at ease and tend to avoid the meetings or to be hesitant about taking an active part in them. However, this trend seems to be diminishing as some of the foreign physicians have been assimilated into the professional community. During the past five years particularly, since the APA has adopted the principle of

new members coming in through their local Society, the District Branch of the Society has received more attention.

At the present time the Society holds monthly meetings from October through April. The majority of these are still held in the Medical and Chirurgical Faculty Building, although for the past several years, one or two meetings a year are held at one or another of the psychiatric hospitals. One meeting a year is a joint meeting with the Maryland Association of Private Practicing Psychiatrists and the Baltimore Psychoanalytic Society. As a result of these widened interests of the Society, the gap which existed among the three major organizations is now of relatively minor importance, particularly since practically every member of the other two organizations is also a member of the Maryland Psychiatric Society.