History of the Texas Medical Center—Lecture 1

Date: September 2, 2015
Speaker: Bryant Boutwell

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Thomas Cole

00:00:00 Welcome to the first session of the History of Medicine course and series for this year. The first thing to say is that this series and course is a long-time collaboration between UT McGovern Center, Baylor College of Medicine, and the Texas Medical Center Library. Those of us who have been working on this over the year are Phil Montgomery from the TMC library, who specializes in the archives, and Simon Whitney from the Department of Family Medicine. We share responsibility and blame for how this goes. So let me say a few words about how we set up this course and what you can expect. You should have in front of you a copy of the syllabus for the series of lectures and a bibliography.

Let me start with a few brief remarks before we get to our main speaker, who’s Dr. Bryant Boutwell. Let me say just a few words about history as a discipline. The key to understanding history as a discipline is to understand the difference between what happened and what historians say happened. Those are not the same thing, and the intellectual work of being a historian is trying to bridge that gap. Let me give you some examples of the sources that historians use when they try to reconstruct what they think happened as opposed to what did happen. You can look at manuscripts, newspapers, tax records, tombstones, hospital records, the writings of physicians, or—for this course—oral history, the testimony of people who have lived through the history that you’re thinking about.

Take for example, the Hippocratic Corpus. There are about sixty volumes in the Hippocratic Corpus. Many of them are not written by Hippocrates. They were written sometime in the fifth and fourth centuries before the Common Era. They were lost in the Middle Ages. They were preserved by Arabic scholars. They were rediscovered in the Renaissance, translated from Arabic back into Latin, and then
became sort of a standard of medical knowledge until the nineteenth century, with the discovery of bacteriology.

00:02:39 So how do we know this? Well, historians tell us, and since none of us is professional historians except a couple of people in the room, we’re not responsible. But we are responsible for understanding history as a discipline and being open and knowledgeable about basic sources in the history of medicine. So there is a bibliography that you have. For those of you interested in the history of medicine as a field, those sources are overviews of the history of medicine in the US and in the west.

Let me give you one more example of the uncertainty about what happens in history. Take the Hippocratic Oath, for example. We don’t know who wrote it. We don’t know who read it. We don’t know who agreed with it. All of those things are unknown. We don’t know what Hippocrates thought about it, but it was rediscovered and began to be used in the eighteenth century in Edinburgh, where it was used for hundreds of years as a means of initiating people into the moral codes of medicine. And today, of course, it’s a standard oath and the source of many values that we still hold as we become physicians—as you become physicians.

So just a few more things. The format of this course is going to be a little different from previous years. The course was run by Dr. Bob Rakel from Family Medicine at Baylor for upwards of thirty years, and we are indebted to him. He did fabulous work for all these years. He retired, and so it was time for us to rethink exactly how we were going to do this. So for this year, the theme of the year is Living History. We’re interested in hearing from and talking to and listening to people who have lived through, participated in, been patients in medical history at the TMC over the last fifty years. So our sources are going to be those who have lived over the last fifty years here, making history at the Texas Medical Center.

Who better than to start us off thinking about the Texas Medical Center than Dr. Bryant Boutwell? Dr. Boutwell knows more about the history of the TMC than anybody else in the world. He’s talked to people. He’s recorded. He’s listened. He’s served in the TMC for over thirty years. He recently wrote a book, a biography of John McGovern, and is working on a book about Dr. Red Duke, who, unfortunately, you know has recently died. There’s a memorial service for him at five o’clock today in the conference center at Memorial Hermann. So Dr. Boutwell is going to give us an overview of the Texas Medical Center in the last fifty years, and that will serve as a context for us as we hear, over the next year monthly, from people who have been researchers, physicians, and patients at the Texas Medical Center. So please welcome Dr. Bryant Boutwell.

**Dr. Bryant Boutwell**

Thank you very much. I was born in Mississippi. I’m a writer, and that makes me a storyteller. I think genetically I was predisposed for storytelling, and I think I do qualify for living the history. I was in my
early twenties when I came to the medical center to work for Lee Clark. He hired me as a science writer at MD Anderson. That was forty-one years ago, so don’t do the math. I can tell you a lot of these stories because I was writing the press releases on a number of buildings. Many of the students, when I’m talking about this, don’t believe me, and I just say, “Well, there was free parking around all of the hospitals when I arrived,” and they get the idea.

00:06:51 Dr. Clark told me two things. He was the founding president of MD Anderson. He said, “First of all, go back to school.” I said, “Why do I have to do that? I just got out of UT Austin.” I had a biology and a journalism degree so I could be a science writer. He said, “Well, you have to know what a p-value is. You can’t tell the media what’s significant if you don’t know what a p-value is.” And I said the very smart thing, “What’s a p-value?” and he said, “The School of Public Health is right over there.” He also told me to collect the stories. He said, “You’re going to meet a lot of interesting people. You stick around here and stick around my office. You’re going to meet all kinds of people, and I want you to collect their stories.” A few years later, I was working with Dr. Cooley during his heart transplants during the early ‘80s. He did the same thing. He said, “Go talk to Leopold Meyer. Go talk to—” he gave me a whole list of names. “In your spare time, collect their stories.” So I’ve been collecting these stories ever since.

One of the reasons is why collect stories. Why stories? Well, I’ve come to realize what they were after. We experience a lot through a good story, so you can kind of grade me today if I’m doing these stories well. You will experience—almost like going to a good movie, you will have an experience related to each of the stories, and each one of them is unique. I’m going to be talking about some of the early founders of our medical center, and they’re emotional glue. You can relate. When I talk about George Hermann or Monroe Anderson, you might be able to relate to them in a better way if I do a good job telling the story, and they provide meaning. And hopefully, you’ll share these stories. They’re part of our history.

Here’s a story—a longitudinal story. If you’re a seagull flying over the medical center in ‘25, ‘71 and 2005, and you can see the free parking around all. That’s about two years before I arrived. This is in 2005. I put this on purpose because you can see the original Hermann very clearly. But of course, today this would all be filled up with buildings. It seemed like just as I arrived, they were saying we’re not going to give parking anymore, and it started disappearing. No parking problems up here in the early Hermann days. In fact, they had to requisition fencing because the coyotes were howling outside the open-air rooms.

But as a historian, just like Tom was saying, I want to get closer to the facts. I want to get closer to the people behind how all of this happened. And so when you get closer, you come down to street level, you start seeing all these names. Now, these are the names I saw when I drove in that first day to work
with Dr. Clark. I had no idea what these street names meant. I had no idea of the history behind them. Here’s where you get the real stories, and I want to put a plug in for Phil Montgomery and our historical archives the TMC Library oversees. They’re a wonderful resource. If you want to get close to these names and if you want to get close to their papers, that’s where you go. For the McGovern book, I spent three years out there. For the Duke book, I’ve been talking with him all of the past year, just about every Friday having breakfast with him, and it is a sad day. In fact, when I look at this picture, the first thing I see is this story—Life Flight and its heliport—and I think of Dr. Duke. So I hope you all have him in your thoughts today and his important contribution.

00:10:14 Another reason for this slide is that you’re all part of this living story, too. You’re contributing now, so don’t just think the history of the medical center is about the past. We’re making the history now as well. I think Anderson stole that from me. We’re making history now. You’re part of the future of this history. But I want to focus back on some of these early days and how we came to be, and if anything, out of this talk, you won’t be like me in 1974 looking at those street signs and wondering what those names mean and how they came to be.

If you get behind the street signs, then you start seeing the faces of these individuals. And so I’m going to do some storytelling, and I’m going to tell you the stories of how this forest became the Texas Medical Center and some of the key players. Now, you notice there are no women here. I have three daughters. That kind of bothers me. Back in the days of the ’40s when the medical center was being developed, I think there were, I believe, only about 7 percent of women in American medical schools. Today, it’s almost 50/50, so we’ve come a long way. I have another set of stories to show you, that behind a number of these individuals were very powerful women that made their stories complete.

But let’s start with George Hermann. His father received a sabre wound fighting with Napoleon. He was from Davos, Switzerland. George was very proud of that. George’s father was a baker. After the sabre wound, he decided maybe baking and confectionary work might be a little safer, so he went to Paris. He came over to Houston in 1836. That’s just as the Allen Brothers were buying the 6000 acres. They had tried to buy Harrisburg, where our Brays Bayou hits Buffalo Bayou, but John R. Harris wouldn’t have any part of selling it. So they came up to the White Oak and bought those 6000 acres. George’s dad, for some reason, said, “You’re not ready to get a city going,” so he went off to Vera Cruz, came back two years later, and started his family. He built a home where our city hall is, Tranquility Park. George’s dad taught him that if you are going to be a baker be the best baker you can be and buy the land underneath your bakery.
George didn’t like going to school too much. He liked hanging around the stables and the horses. He would go off in the Civil War in the 1860s. He was born in 1843. In the 1860s, he came back. His father and mother died. Shortly thereafter, his siblings died. And I should mention that there had been another George in the family. The first George son that was born had died in a hunting accident. That’s what we have to wonder today. The second son was named—when they had another son, they named him George. What would have happened if the first George had lived? Because this George not only inherited the property his father had, he hooked up with his friends, the Settegasts—we still have the Settegast Funeral Home in town—and leased and bought land, leased land, lumber mills—whatever it took. And then he said he couldn’t afford a wife. They were too expensive.

In 1905, he had bought some land. He actually won it in a poker game up in north Houston. He tried to trade it for a mule. Nobody wanted to do that, and that turned out to be the early Humble oil field. He was making $50,000 a week. He’s a bachelor. His friends take him downtown to eat breakfast, and he says he’s not hungry and sits outside and eats an apple he had started the day before. That’s how frugal he was, but he had a soft spot in his heart for families who worked hard but who were down and out on their health issues and luck. He would ride his white horse, Leo, around town on Sundays. The whole town considered George Hermann—in 1905, we only had 70,000 people in Houston. Almost everyone knew George Hermann, and he decided that he would leave in his will money for a couple of major things. One is a hospital, which in 1925 after he died in 1914, was built. And he also wanted to leave this land that he owned to bank a park.

The reason for that was about 1886, he took one vacation, and he went back to Switzerland to find his relatives. As soon as they saw him, they said, “You’re our rich, Texas relative. We’d like some money.” And he fled, but when he came back through, he went through New York City and saw the beautiful park there, Central Park, and he said, “My city needs a park.” So that’s where he got the idea. In 1913, he gives this parkland to Houston. In 1914, he dies at Johns Hopkins of stomach cancer. The Settegasts brought him back on a train. The entire city of Houston closed down for his funeral, which processed downtown to Glenwood Cemetery. George Hermann didn’t own this land. I want you to keep your eye on this land. But this hospital with the charity hospital named in his name with about a million dollars of his estate, which it was a chunk of his estate at that time.

So how do we get to here? Here’s another bachelor I want you to know, Monroe Dunaway Anderson—MD Anderson. When I worked at Anderson with Dr. Clark, I’d always hear these patients saying, “Nobody but Dr. Anderson touches me.” I had to explain that he was a cotton broker, and he couldn’t spell oncology, so you probably wouldn’t want him to treat you. He was born thirty years after George Hermann, so we’re talking 1873, in Jackson, Tennessee. Monroe was like Jimmy Stewart in It’s a Wonderful Life. He was sitting behind the bank teller’s desk in the bank in town, and everyone said he was the most trusted young man in the city. But he had a brother, who didn’t want to work behind a desk, named Frank. Frank Anderson said, “I’m going to make my fortune in cotton.” This is the late
1800s before oil. Monroe says, “You don’t know a thing about cotton, Frank. You might want to just work at the bank.” And he said, “No, I’m going to learn about cotton.” Well, something really happened that really helped him.

00:16:14 A family named the Claytons moved to Jackson, Tennessee from Tupelo, Mississippi. They had a son named Will Clayton. Will Clayton had the same dream. That family had had some cotton dealings in Mississippi. Will went off to New York—American Cotton Exchange. Comes back tells Monroe—tells Frank, “Let’s start a company to merchandise cotton.” What does that mean? That means everything from the farmer and your relationships with farmers to getting the cotton to getting it ginned to getting it transported to getting it in warehouses to getting it internationally shipped with banking networks. It’s a big operation, and the bottom line is they turned Anderson, Clayton and Company—they started it in 1904. Monroe came in with them because they needed $9000. He was the only one that had his $3000 and started the company in Oklahoma, where they had an uncle.

But what happened in 1900 around this city, especially in Galveston? Galveston was blown away again, and we were having a ship channel that was starting to be under construction. And so, the Anderson-Clayton fellows were pretty smart. They said, “Well, Oklahoma’s good. There’s a lot of cotton up here. But something’s happening down in Houston. We’d better get someone down there.” So guess who got sent? Monroe. Monroe came down. In 1907, he arrived in Houston—got him a—set up an office on the second floor of the Cotton Exchange Building downtown, one of the few historical buildings we have left. He lived in the Bender Hotel. That was the fanciest hotel. It had just opened in time for the new Rice University’s grand opening in 1912. He carried a sack lunch every day down to his office. The doorman at the Bender said that he thought he was a shoe salesman. He had no idea he was the richest man in town, because the whole Anderson Clayton company exploded in success in terms of international merchandising of cotton.

And to make a long story short, by the Depression in the ‘20s, Monroe had $21 million to his own name. He told his brother, Frank, and he told Will and another—Will’s brother, Ben Clayton had also come into the company. Ben was kind of smart. He went up to New York and was the stenographer for their administration. So when he joined the company, he knew everything about how the American Cotton Company operated. Monroe just said, “Well, you can’t buy me out. It’s a problem.” The tax laws at the time would not allow him to just let his partners buy him out. He would have to fold the company and basically almost start over. They had seven hundred employees in Houston. Monroe didn’t want to do that.

So he turned to his two trusted friends, John Freeman and William Bates. These were attorneys at Fulbright and Crooker. We know it now as Fulbright & Jaworski. They were very successful attorneys at Fulbright and Crooker because a few years later it became Fulbright, Crooker, Bates, and Freeman. John Freeman had grown up in Houston very poor, but he wanted to go to law school, so he went to Chicago.
He had no money. He was walking down the street. He sees this man that owns a store. He asks if he could work in his department store. He gets a job there. That man was Marshall Fields. Talk about good luck. John Freeman got his law degree in Chicago, came back to Houston, teamed up with his friend, William Bates, who he had known, and the two of them managed the Anderson, Clayton and Company business. They said, “Well, start a foundation with your money, Monroe.” So they did. They rolled the money in. Twenty-one million eventually. Monroe said, “I want to do something for health. I want to do something for cities.” William Bates said he got all kinds of letters from the citizens. Some wanted a circus. There were all kinds of ideas on how to use the money.

But Monroe had insisted that maybe we do something for health care. I think George Hermann probably influenced him. I would love to find as an historian the overlap. Hermann dies in 1914, but he came in 1907. There are seven years of overlap. I would love to be able to find something where Hermann and he ever met and discussed things. But anyway, they came up with the idea. Let’s followup on his plan, because he died in 1939 and leaves them to figure out what to do with $21 million. They were loyal, loyal, loyal to Monroe Anderson. They spent all of their time trying to figure out what to do and how to do it, and they came up with this idea. He dies in 1939, so this is right before World War II. They put their eyes on this forest here. Who owns that forest? Well, you would think maybe the Hermann estate owned it. They did own the land across the street here, where Rice is, but Colonel James Baker was able to buy most of that for Rice University.

This had been bought by Will Hogg. Anybody know Will Hogg? Ima Hogg? Bayou Bend. Will Hogg’s dad, Steven Hogg, had been the first native-born governor in the state of Texas. Will had purchased this land with the idea—failed idea—that he could get the University of Texas, Galveston—UTMB—to come up and be across the street from Rice University. Once again, UTMB said, “No, we’re not interested in moving up.” So he got mad and he sold the land back to the city at his own cost. The city told him, “Well, if you want to buy this land, the citizens have to vote. It has to be a referendum.” Well, they were pretty smart. They thought, “Well, if we’re going to get the citizens to vote—” and this vote took place in 1943—full-page ad in the Houston Post, December 12, I believe—if the citizens were going to vote, let’s go line up something. Well, things just kind of fell in place. In 1941, Representative Cato, Weatherford, Texas, has a family member die of cancer. What does he say? I’m starting a bill that’s going to create a cancer hospital for the state of Texas. I think the University of Texas could run it—the system. Maybe in Dallas. I don’t know. And of course, they hotfooled it to Austin and said, “Well, we’re going to have land, and we have money if you’ll move that cancer hospital to Houston and name it in memory of MD Anderson.”

Then they said, “Well, let’s get a medical school.” So they went down to the island to try to get UTMB. What do you think the answer was there? No, we don’t want to move up there. So where do we go? Well, they went to Dallas because Dallas had a Baylor Medical School. The dean was Walter Moursund. Moursund was a dean because the faculty had just thrown out the other dean. They didn’t like working
with him, and they trusted Moursund. He had been on the faculty, and Moursund had just signed an agreement with this new group called the Southwest Foundation to stay and get some land in Dallas and rebuild his medical school. Well, Bates and Freeman hotfoot it up there and they said, “Well, you ought to read your contract.” Lawyers are very good at this. And he said, “Well, what’s wrong with the contract?” And it says the Southwest Foundation, the way it’s written, will have controlling votes over your medical school. They will basically run your medical school. If you come to Houston, we’ll give you land and money. Remember, they don’t have this forest yet. And you can—we won’t tell you how to run your medical school.

00:23:28 Well, Moursund—they redid the contracts. Moursund—it was mitosis. Half of his faculty came with him in 1941, and half stayed and became the nucleus for UT Southwest. Moursund had to figure out, okay, well, with a medical school and with MD Anderson lined up, they could then run their ad in 1943, December 12. Vote for the Texas Medical Center. We have land. With this land, we have a cancer center. We have a medical school. The citizens voted yes. They were able to purchase the land. I think it was about $2500 an acre, 134 acres, although someone from Fulbright & Jaworski sent me the original document. Like Dr. Cole—let’s see the original document. It was actually 136-point-something acres. But let’s just stick with 134. And MD Anderson would go in the forest here. They were given land and 500,000, and Baylor would break the forest here. Moursund had to find temporary place while his building was getting designed and built—found the old Sears & Roebuck warehouse that walled Allen Parkway. It used to be down there, but I’m told now they’re building condos on that site.

Clark had to find—would find temporary—but not Clark. First, there was a temporary director, so let me just tell you his story real quick. The story of Bertner is that he went to UTMB as a student, graduated in 1911, but it’s not that simple. He lived in far west Texas, and when he came home on winter break from his first year of medical school at UTMB, his dad received a telegram from the dean that Billy, as they called him, had failed four of his six courses. The dean suggested he resign from medical school and find another line of work. So this man, who would become one of the most respected physicians in Houston and Texas, came very close to not being a physician at all. But he did what he had to do. He got on that train and went back to Galveston, talked to the dean, talked to the faculty, graduated in 1911, came up to Houston. He was one of the most respected physicians in our area in Houston.

But before he got to Houston, something very lucky happened to him. He was doing a residency. His training was more in cancer, and there wasn’t much to do in cancer in those days. We didn’t have all the modalities, but he was very interested in ovarian cancer and these sorts of things. And while he was doing his residency up at St. Vincent’s in New York, who becomes his patient but Jesse Jones. Mr. Houston was up there, and Jesse Jones says, “Hey, you’re a nice young Texas guy. Are you going to go back to Texas?” He said, “Well, I’m thinking about it.” And Jones says, “Well, I’m building this little hotel called the Rice Hotel, and if you want to live in the Rice Hotel for free for the rest of your life, you can be the house physician.” Bertner thought that might be a good idea. He never had kids. He brought his wife
and lived in the Rice Hotel the rest of his life. Guess who hangs out or lives in the Rice Hotel. All these movers and shakers. That’s where they all met. So they’ve got to figure out how to build a medical city. They’ve got a cancer hospital and a medical school lined up, but now they’ve got William Bertner right there in the center to be the medical mind to guide them in terms of how to build this medical city and the kinds of things they should be thinking about.

00:26:50 So naturally, they turned to him to be the interim director of this new cancer hospital while they search for the permanent director, Dr. R. Lee Clark, from Hereford, Texas. And he was in Jackson, Mississippi when they found him. Bertner dedicated the original temporary MD Anderson hospital on the grounds of Captain James Baker’s estate, The Oaks, which is down on Baldwin. It’s no longer there. When Captain Baker—that’s Jim Baker’s grandfather—passed away, Captain Baker—for everyone from Rice is who saved the William Marsh Rice will and made Rice happen and hired Odell Lovett. He was able to dedicate the new temporary MD Anderson at that six-acre estate.

And when Clark arrived in 1946, he immediately said, “Well, the greenhouse—” there was a basement in the greenhouse. I don’t know how that can be, but he said, “We can start working on radiotherapy. We can get cobalt-60. We can hire a guy named Gilbert Fletcher.” So Clark was already thinking about modalities, because he was a surgeon but he knew radiotherapy—these things had to happen. Clark was from Hereford, Texas, as I mentioned. I don’t have time to tell all the stories of how he picked the pink Georgia Etowah marble, but I do write a blog of all these stories. So if you write this address down, you can go find different pieces on these individuals. Lee Clark then would do surgery during the day out at The Oaks. He used to tell me, “And then I’d go up in the attic and fix a water pipe. And then I would go to my office where we were designing the new cancer hospital, and then I would go out at night to talk to community groups about the new MD Anderson Hospital and Tumor Institute,” as it was called back then. Actually, there was an original name of MD Anderson Hospital for Research, then tumor institute, and now MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Clark would be president for thirty-two years and guide MD Anderson to move into the medical center in 1955. Baylor cut the forest and opened a little earlier—a few years earlier than that. Moursund did something else as the new dean at Baylor here in Houston. He said, “I’m going to go find me a surgery chair,” so he went off to Tulane and he found this guy named Michael DeBakey. That’s a pretty good recruit. And then DeBakey in 1950 would bring Cooley to work with him, so the medical center became like a magnet once you got this going.

The Methodists were downtown—Rosalee San Jacinto—seventy beds. They were getting ready to expand across the street. Mrs. Fondren owned that land. Walter Fondren had been very involved in the Methodist Hospital. And of course, Bates and Freeman said, “Wait a second. We’ll give you land and money if you’ll come and expand down in the medical center.” So Methodist came and they opened 300 beds in about 1955. Well, then the Episcopalians said, “Well, we’ve got to have a hospital.” So St. Luke’s
was born. And then eventually Leopold Meyer, a friend and patient of Cooley’s—it’s one of those stories I had to collect because Cooley said, “Go talk to Leopold Meyer.” He talked to his friend, Jim Abercrombie, and said, “We need a children’s hospital.” And Jim Abercrombie gave the first million and underwrote the deficit for the first five years to start Texas Children’s. So it was very much like a magnet, drawing all these individuals in.

00:30:19 We can’t leave this fellow out, Fred Elliott. Bertner, after getting Anderson going, Clark comes in. He then becomes kind of the first president of Texas Medical Center, the position Dr. Robbins holds to this day. William Bertner then started looking at the city plan. Okay, we’re getting all these hospitals coming in. We need some organization. Bertner died in 1950, but this fellow goes back to 1932. Fred Elliott was a dentist—came here because the Texas Dental College started in 1905. John Kirby had a bad day at the dentist. He said, “We’ve got to have some kind of a school to train dentists around this city.” And he got together $9000 and some friends. Everybody started these companies with $9000. He started the Texas Dental College downtown. The original dean had a great name—Gambati. He was a well-trained dentist who cared about education, and he was the dean of that Texas Dental College for twenty-five years. They bumped around downtown in buildings where they could find free space. One of their students was Denton Cooley’s dad, Ralph Cooley, was a graduate there. And then he would eventually join the Board of Trustees.

But you know what was happening in 1905 and then in 1910 with the Flexner Report was you could no longer be a proprietary medical school or dental school as they were a proprietary dental school. You needed to be linked to a medical school—to a university and have a research base, a teaching base, and a clinical base. So in 1930, Gambati says, “I want to retire.” They had built one building, and that had been on Blodgett. There’s a Texas Dental College there. In 1930, they recruit Fred Elliott, he comes in, and his job is to find a linkage with a university. He went to Rice. They didn’t want a dental school. He didn’t cash his paycheck for many a month because they were in so much financial trouble. He worked tirelessly going to Austin. When Clark arrived, the two of them teamed up. That’s why the original dental school building in the medical—across off of Moursund—has the same Georgia Etowah, pink Etowah marble. They asked Fred Elliott how many times he went to Austin to get hooked up with the University of Texas. He said, “I don’t know, but my old Chevrolet had 200,000 miles on it when I was done.” About 1943, the University of Texas Dental Branch was born from the old Texas Dental College. So that means that his dental school goes back to 1905. Rice goes back to 1912, so for those that say Rice is the oldest higher education institution in Houston, they’re wrong. It’s actually the Texas Dental College.

Ralph Cooley was very involved with that transition of getting the University of Texas and, of course, he had two sons, one of them named Denton, who we know very well today. Little details you find out when you look around. Bertner was a very respected physician here in Houston. He was the Harris County Medical Society president, Texas Medical Society president, and he delivered Denton Cooley at the old Baptist Hospital. So when I drive down Bertner, as a historian, and I cross the Denton Cooley
building—Bertner and Cooley—there are many connections. I think history is about connecting all of these dots in many ways.

Something interesting about Fred Elliott—since we talked about stories and emotional glue and these sorts of things—he started out in Kansas City as a dentist after he got his degree. He was in this Wortham building. It was a two-story building, and down the hall was this fellow drawing cartoons of mice and ducks. And he thought, “This poor guy’s never going to make a living.” It was Walt Disney.

00:34:13 In 1950 when Bertner dies, Elliott had saved the old Texas Dental College affiliated with the University of Texas. He had designed and gotten the construction underway—the ground breaking for our dental school. We’ve now replaced it. UT Health has a new dental school, but he had that one underway that would open in 1955. So when Bertner dies in ’50, they asked Fred Elliott, “Will you step over and now be the director of the entire medical center?” And he is one of eleven names that signed the TMC Inc. contract, which really created the formal medical city with a body of rules and guidelines—a city plan, an architecture, a thirty-three-member board. Fred Elliott was very key in all of that city planning—so UT Health—and we can all be proud of people like Fred Elliott for all he did.

So now when you look at the forest, you kind of have a bigger picture of who all these fellows are that are behind that story. Of course, there are many others, but these are major founders. And if you saw the street signs, I had Holcombe and others, but I don’t have time to go into those stories. Please look at this if you would like to see those.

What I want to talk about now is—well, there were some women. You’ve got to go deeper in these stories. We talked about how smart and clever Clark was. He came here and he took over that Oaks and built the MD Anderson and opened the “Pink Palace of Healing.” Time magazine in 1955 had a cover of Hemingway and inside was the “Pink Palace of Healing,” and that was a story of Clark’s new cancer hospital. Pink because when he was a medical student in Virginia, he was hitchhiking back from the fields of North Texas. He was born in Hereford. He’d been working with his roommate in the wheat fields. He ended up at Emory University sleeping on the grounds because he didn’t have any money. And when they woke up the next morning, the sun hit this hospital and turned it this bright, glowing pink. And Clark turned to his roommate, Jack, and said, “If I ever get to build my own hospital, it’s going to be pink. I want that glow,” and that’s why MD Anderson had that pink Etowah—Georgia Etowah.

So Clark was great. I worked with him. I was always amazed at everything he could do. But then I came to meet Frances Goff. When Clark first arrived in ’46, what’s the first thing you have to do if you’re part of the University of Texas? You better go up to Austin and figure out how things work and get up there with the legislature. Well, he went up to meet the legislators, and every time he asked a question they said, “Ask Frances.” So then, he went to the governor and asked a question, and he said, “Ask Frances.” So finally, Clark said, “Who is Frances?” Well, it was Frances Goff. She had been the right hand of about three or four governors through the ‘40s and ‘50s. She knew everything about how everything works.
She had written most of the rules, so Clark did the smart thing. He met her and said, “I want to recruit you and bring you to Houston.” And she said the smart thing, “Dr. Clark, I will be of more use to you here in Austin. Come back in five years and we’ll talk.” Five years later, he brought Frances Goff to Houston.

00:37:19 Frances Goff ran MD Anderson. She picked out every chair for that new cancer hospital that opened in ’55. When I first started in ’74, the first thing I was told was, “Don’t tape that flyer in the elevator. Frances Goff will find you. She will hunt you down.” I’m terrified of taping anything in an elevator since those days. She was the right hand to Clark, and in her spare time, she gave up all of her vacation time so in the summer she could be the director of Girls State, more than twenty years. That’s a program finding promising high school young ladies with—honoring leadership skills. And one of—amongst many of the wonderful women that trained in Girls State who spent summers there was Ann Richards, who graduated from Waco in 1950—the high school—and Ann Richards became governor as Clark left and Charles LeMaistre came in. I worked with Dr. LeMaistre, so it was always funny to watch Dr. LeMaistre come into Frances’ office because in ways he was kind of upset because she represented the Clark years. There’s a very hard transition when you’re the new president. But then he would look on the wall and there’s a picture of Ann Richards, the governor, and Frances, and it said, “To Frances: I owe you everything. Ann Richards.” So Dr. LeMaistre didn’t say too much to Frances. She was wonderful as a historian to collect a lot of stories from, and she had a hand in everything that happened at Anderson and all the success of the early days.

Clark—when he walked into the legislature, the halls literally parted because he was very, very smart. He didn’t go there to say, “I need this much money for my cancer hospital.” He said, “Here’s what we want to do for your children and their children, and here’s how much it’s going to cost.” He was very, very successful.

Now, I told you Fred Elliott’s story, but what I didn’t tell you is in his memoirs, he writes, “If it hadn’t have been for Elna Birath—” I pronounced it Burr-ath once, and I got corrected by a dentist. I think he was about ninety years old, and he said he had been at the dental school with her, and he didn’t like her at all because she had taught accounting one day, and he didn’t like that course. But she was a clerk that was working at the old Texas Dental College, and when Fred Elliott got there, she’s the one that told him, “Here’s who you need to meet in the community. Here’s how you need to do things. Here’s what we know. If you’re not going to cash your check, I’m not going to cash my check so we can make sure we get this place in the black.” She was his right hand, and he wrote in his memoirs, “Without her, I would have probably resigned three or four times.” Now, this is the man that becomes the successor to Bertner and the architect of the medical city, and he’s basically saying without her, I probably would have left Houston two or three times. We need not—we shouldn’t forget people like that. When he broke the ground for his new dental school, he told her he wanted her up on the podium, and she said—Dr. Steinberg’s not going to like this. She said, “I will not sit on the podium unless all of the other women
who have helped me can sit on the podium with me.” Well, obviously, he didn’t have enough chairs, but he said in his memoirs she was right, and we shouldn’t forget her.

This was a real hero—Josie Roberts. If you go over to Methodist, you can find a plaque dedicated to her. That old Methodist Hospital—San Jacinto and Rosalee—seventy beds. The physician that owned that hospital—and he had his home right there—his name was Norsworthy. He had decided in ’26 to sell his whole place to the Methodists for $35,000—it was valued at $86,000—with some conditions that they would expand. She was just a clerk that had been hired in about ’26, but she worked her way up to being the main administrator of all of Methodist, and the difficult times of Methodist trying to decide do we expand across the street or do we move in the medical center—she and Miss Fondren hooked up, and they were a real force at Methodist. And basically, Methodist came into this medical center in 1955 because of her leadership and her guidance. But it didn’t just stop there.

00:41:33 I mentioned Moursund had recruited this fellow, Michael DeBakey. Baylor, in those days—he came in ’47. Hermann was their teaching hospital. They would cross the old wooden bridge in front of the library that you don’t see anymore. But that’s where the box culvert and the Harris gulley runs—and go over to Baylor. But he also had patients down at San Jacinto and Rosalee, that little seventy-bed hospital. Well, Mrs. Roberts told all the staff, “This young DeBakey’s an up and comer. Give him anything he needs.” And then he would go over to Hermann and they would say, “DeBakey who?” So guess what happens. Methodist becomes the teaching hospital of Baylor up until recent years. So in many ways, she helped shape Methodist. And now today, I look around. Our medical school’s getting a new woman dean, the first woman dean—so many women that are running departments, outstanding researchers. We’ve come a long way. And as I mentioned, I have three daughters, so this is all good news for me and for everyone.

So here is the—these ‘Bout Times are electronic. You can pull them up at that website. I’m sorry I couldn’t get into more detail, but I wanted to leave a little time for questions if there are any questions. Thank you. (applause)

Male Audience Member
That was excellent. From the point of public hospitals, you didn’t really touch on the background of those and those evolving—Ben Taub and the public system. I guess Hermann played a part in that role of the public hospitals that were there before. Can you mention a couple of those?

Dr. Bryant Boutwell
Well, the old Jeff Davis Hospital was built down on Elder way back near downtown, and after they built it—it wasn’t Jeff Davis when they first built it. They realized they had built it on top of a cemetery, and there were many Confederate soldiers buried in there, so the families were not very happy that they had built over the cemetery. So to find a way not to have to tear down the building—it was a beautiful
building, and it’s still down there. It’s been retooled now as the Elder Lofts artist facility housing. They named it Jeff Davis and then eventually—that’s the old Jeff Davis. And then it was moved to Allen Parkway, and this was their county hospital. It moved to Allen Parkway and that’s where DeBakey and Cooley—he told me he did a lot of surgery out there. Lois Moore was a nurse in the OR who eventually became the administrator of the entire hospital district and president. And then Jeff Davis had a board member who was very involved named Ben Taub, and I did write a piece on Ben Taub. I didn’t include him, but by 1963, they decided they needed a new building. They would put it in the medical center, and they renamed it Ben Taub. So as the University of Texas is moving their Confederate statues in the last week, we took the Jeff Davis name off in 1963.

00:44:42 Now, LBJ Hospital was redone in the ‘90s and was affiliated with the University of Texas, our medical school—and almost overnight, the reins were handed to the University of Texas in 1990. It’s a wonderful story, and I did write a piece in there, “The Long Reach of LBJ” because there’s a portrait hanging out there, and we talk about LBJ’s contributions to higher education. LBJ had a federal program where if you’re a university to build infrastructure in the ‘60s, each state could match into this fund and get money for their infrastructure of their systems, and we had Frank Irwin as our chairman of our Board of Regents. Frank Irwin was quite a bulldog, and he had the permanent university fund behind him. So he literally put a person on the corner of LBJ’s desk in Washington. And when Missouri couldn’t match, he would say, “I can match theirs,” and he could match. He would take their ten million, and that’s how the University of Texas system got such a strong infrastructure through the ‘60s. So LBJ has many connections, but our two county hospitals—and then we have twelve county clinics, which Baylor oversees—Ben Taub and half of those clinics—and we oversee half. You know more than I do about that. And then there’s Thomas Street, which is shared. So that’s a little on him.

Male Audience Member
Were the—St. Joseph’s or the Baptist Hospital downtown—were they invited to be a part of the Texas Medical Center in the early years?

Dr. Bryant Boutwell
Good question. St. Joseph’s had been there. The Baptists, in 1905, sold their sanitarium for like $8000, and that became Memorial Hospital, which has now become the Memorial-Hermann system. But no, they were not—maybe they were not interested. That’s a good question. I don’t know the answers. Cooley was born in the old Baptist Hospital downtown. There were a lot of old hospitals in Houston, and Phil Montgomery may know more than I do about some of them. In fact, he has postcard collections out there of some of the—the Navy Hospital and all of that. Of course, Dr. DeBakey was very involved—met with Ben Taub in getting the connection with Baylor and Ben Taub. And of course, DeBakey inherited the
old Navy Hospital, and that became our Veterans. That's why Baylor has such a wonderful presence and, of course, the DeBakey name is out there.

**Male Audience Member**

Can you tell us something about the founding of the University of Texas School of Medicine and then the emergence of the other five schools that make up the Health Science Center?

**Dr. Bryant Boutwell**

**00:47:27** Yeah, real quick. There’s a fellow named Ashbel Smith that people need to know. He was around when Sam Houston was living in Houston in the Republic of Texas. In fact, Sam Houston made Ashbel Smith his—he was a physician trained at Yale and made him the physician for the republic—the army of the republic—and they were even roommates—Sam Houston and Ashbel Smith. Ashbel Smith did a lot of different things, but one of the things he said is, “We need a state university,” and so the University of Texas was born out of that in 1883, I believe. And then the next thing they said was, “Well, we need a medical department.” There was actually—people don’t know there was actually a vote. Cities could put their name in a hat that they wanted to be the host for the medical school. Houston tried to put a bid in—sort of like the Olympics. Galveston went nuts. They wanted that medical school. They were rebuilding hospitals, clinics. They had people all over Austin. The citizens voted. The governor at the time was Orin Roberts. My daughter went to Roberts Elementary. Most people don’t know the connection to Roberts. He counted the votes and Galveston was named the city to be the medical department of the University of Texas. And then Ashbel Smith became the first what is now the Board of Regents—the first chair of the Board of Regents, which run all of the University of Texas. So Galveston would be first. Of course, there’s UT San Antonio, UT Southwest.

But let’s talk about your question. How did the UT Medical School come here? We already had Baylor. Moursund had come in ’41. Well, Charles LeMaistre, who I worked with for years, was the first Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs at the UT system. But if you back up, he was in Dallas as a physician. He was a gumshoe epidemiologist. He was very proud of that. He’s still with us. He’s living in San Antonio. He got a call from his dean to come down. There was a fellow named Harry Ransom that wanted to meet with him, and this is 1966. He said, “I didn’t even know Harry Ransom the chancellor knew me.” And Harry Ransom said, “I have a little project for you, LeMaistre. I want you to go around the state and do a report on the—foresee the needs of medical training in the state of Texas, all the way out to 1990.” This was in ’66. So LeMaistre went home and told his wife, Joyce, “Keep the house in Dallas. This may take me a year, and I’ll be back.” And thirty-five years later, he retired from the University of Texas system. He was moved up to be the first Vice Chancellor of Health Affairs and then LeMaistre became Chancellor. But one of the things he wanted in Houston as the Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs was he wanted our UT schools that were all kind of operating independently—each dean was reporting in to
Austin, so you had like Dr. Stallones at the School of Public Health—that’s 1967. You had the dental school, obviously. It goes way back to 1905. You had all these deans reporting and they decided to meet the needs of the state of Texas for physicians. Let’s put a medical school in Houston. And so that’s when Frank Irwin was head of the Board of Regents—made that call and they started planning in the mid ‘60s from the basis of that report to bring a medical school to Houston, which the governor, Preston Smith, came in 1969 to the library’s auditorium—Simone Library auditorium—and that’s where he signed the paperwork to let the funds flow for the new medical school. He then got on a plane and went to Texas Tech because he was from Lubbock and Texas Tech got a medical school the same day.

00:51:18 So LeMaistre then, by ‘72, created the UT Health Science Center as the umbrella because Austin didn’t want Dr. Smythe, the first dean here, Stallones—all these different deans reporting separately. He said, “Let’s name one president and have one umbrella, the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.” And then that was used in other cities like San Antonio. Tyler used to be a health center, but now it is considered a health science center. The first interim dean was a dental school dean, Dr. Olson, in 1972. First president of UT Health Science Center came in 1974. I was right there with Clark’s office when Charles Berry walked by, the first president of MD Anderson. It was his first day at work in 1974. He’d been the astronaut’s physician—the Mercury astronauts. The book I’ll write when I retire will be the stories I can’t tell because not all the deans were too happy with Dr. Berry at the time. There were a lot of things that went on at those times. Dr. Smythe was a brilliant public health physician.

I should mention Chauncey Leake was the chancellor down at Galveston. And you would think, well, Galveston would be very upset in the ‘40s. This is during the ‘40s. They didn’t get this medical center. MD Anderson actually was given postgraduate continuing education for physicians. That’s where the postgraduate school of medicine—Clark was handed that, and he wasn’t even a degree-granting institution. Baylor was not happy about that. Galveston wasn’t. That’s why in ‘63 Clark retooled the post-graduate school of continuing education program for physicians across the state, which Anderson probably never had any business doing. And the legislature agrees with me because they wouldn’t fund a penny of it. The Anderson Foundation’s the one that kept it funded. But Clark retooled it in ‘63 to the graduate school of biomedical science to train PhDs in a clinical setting—researchers—which was a brilliant idea, and now we’re at what—fifty-three years of success, and that’s why Anderson and UT Health Science Center both share that school, because it was born out of that whole postgraduate—

**Dr. Thomas Cole**
Great. So a big hand, as you can see, for this encyclopedic person. (applause) That’s only the tip of the iceberg of what he knows. So we’ll see you next month on the first Wednesday of the month. Phil Montgomery will be interviewing Dr. Jack Schull, geneticist from the School of Public Health. And Dr.
Schull was one of the first scientists to go into Hiroshima after the bomb, and he will be talking to us about his experience as a geneticist for the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. He’s in his mid nineties, strong as an ox. You will enjoy him.

00:54:13 (end of audio)
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