



JOSEPH MEREDITH TONER, M.D.  
Washington, D. C.  
1825-1896

*Twenty-sixth President, A. M. A.  
Detroit Session  
June 2, 3, 4, 5, 1874*



*Jm. Toner*

DR. JOSEPH M. TONER, the second Washington physician to be elected to the presidency of the Association, was the medical historian, bibliophile and librarian of his period.

He was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 30, 1825. He received his collegiate education at Western University of Pennsylvania, graduated in medicine at Vermont Medical College in 1850, and subsequently in 1853 received the degree Doctor of Medicine from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. He located in Washington, D. C. in 1855 and soon acquired a good general practice and became identified with medical societies both local and national.

He developed very high social and literary qualities and became an active and persevering collector of the works of American authors and devised a repository of medical works under the control of the medical profession of the United States. Thus was founded the first library of American medicine deposited in Smithsonian Institution at Washington.

He was the first in this country to attempt the endowment of medical lectureships, founding the Toner Lectures in 1871.

In 1870 he published the necrology of physicians engaged in the War of 1861-5, and the following year a medical register of the United States. As Chairman of the Necrology Committee of the

American Medical Association for 20 years he became the faithful biographer of his medical colleagues.

Some of his important contributions were the History of Smallpox Vaccination 1865, Portability of Cholera 1866, Facts of Vital Statistics in the United States 1872, and Contribution to the Study of Yellow Fever in 1874. In 1895, he published an interesting monograph on "Personal Reminiscences."

In 1882 he presented his entire library consisting of 28,000 books and 18,000 pamphlets to the Congressional Library in Washington. It is said of him "No one ever approached, much less equaled him, in painstaking collection of data, of personal history that might prove of interest and mystery to many, who thus managed to have facts within reach when occasion called for them."

He died while spending a few weeks at Cresson Springs, Penna., July 30, 1896, at seventy-one years of age.

