The events leading to the establishment of the University of California Medical Center at San Francisco are a part of a very colorful period in the history of the medical profession in the State of California.

Prior to the discovery of gold in 1848, there were very few physicians in the State. The first resident physician was Pedro Pratt, a Spaniard associated with the initial party of colonization led by Gaspar de Portola in 1769. There were many who pretended to be physicians and were able to practice under their "self granted" certificates. Among the best known in this group are mentioned Dr. John March (1799-1856), who had a Bachelor's Degree in Arts from Harvard, which, being written in Latin was accepted as legitimate by the padres of San Gabriel when asked later to pass upon it by the city fathers of Los Angeles and James Ohio Pattie, a trapper, who in 1829 vaccinated almost the entire white population of the State and became surgeon-extraordinary to His Excellency the Governor. To the irregulars must be added the doctor adventurers, such as Dr. John Townsend, who came because of his love of adventure, trading in commodities or playing revolutionary politics and who practiced medicine more or less spasmodically.

In the American period California owed its medical population to the gold rush of 1848-49. It is estimated that over 1500 physicians swept into the state with the initial human tide. At Rich Bar there were no less than 29 doctors in its population of scarcely 1000 and on ships arriving in San Francisco it was not unusual for five per cent of the listed passengers to be doctors. In the fifties, the ratio of physicians to the general population was around 1 to 300, three or four times lower than the national average. The all-abiding interest was to get rich quick in this fabulous El Dorado of the gold fields.

The vast, unorganized mass of immigrants were, for the most part, totally unequipped for the arduous task of mining and their failure populated such centers as San Francisco. With them there came out of the hills, the physicians determined, if we are to judge from contemporary fee schedules, to extract from the population the gold which they failed to find in the fields. Indeed,
there was Dr. Elbert P. Jones (of Jones St., San Francisco) who would receive no fee except in gold dust, nuggets would not do, in which he nightly bathed to die eventually in his chest covered by a quarter of a million dollars worth of gleaming splendor.

Owing to the great number of physicians, competition in the fifties and sixties was fierce. They were a quarrelsome lot, drawn from almost every nationality on the globe. So great was this competition that local physicians were quite unable to establish medical societies which would endure for more than a few months. The vindictive factionalism which existed is reflected in the rate at which new medical journals appeared only to disappear, unable to withstand the quarrels of rival groups. No state in the Union can rival California in the number of journals to make their appearance in the short fifty years prior to 1900. It is astonishing that medical schools should have been established in this early period to add to the vast horde of medical practitioners. However, if competition was great, so were the fees and there were several who had made a sufficient fortune as to desire to memorialize themselves in a medical school of their own creation.

The first of these physicians to establish a school was Elias Samuel Cooper [1822-1862]. An able and ambitious surgeon, he had first established a clinic on his arrival in San Francisco in 1855. The ethics of his practice were highly questionable and he rode rough-shod over the sensibilities of others. Very unpopular among his colleagues, nonetheless this scheming man possessed enough of creativeness and audacity to hold the loyalties of others in establishing the West's first medical school in 1858 in affiliation with the University of the Pacific, a Methodist college which had been founded in 1851 with headquarters at San Jose. Cooper contended that there was great need for a medical school because of the poor transportation to Eastern Schools, whereas others asserted that Cooper and his friends possessed no other desire than to exalt themselves to professorial rank for which they had no qualification whatsoever.

Two years later Dr. Cooper began to show signs of a cardiac ailment and sent for his brilliant young nephew, Dr. Levi Cooper Lane [1830-1902], a Naval Surgeon. However the young Lane was unable to hold the school together after the death of its founder in 1862 and the first Cooper Medical School suspended its functions.

The second physician to establish a medical school was Dr. Hugh Huger Toland [1806-1880], a graduate of the University of Transylvania at Lexington who, like so many of his colleagues, had come initially to California in search of gold, but was unsuccessful. He retired from the mines to San Francisco to
practice medicine. Well trained and an able surgeon, he was heartily disliked not only because of his success as a practitioner but also because of his Southern origin and sympathies during the Civil War period. Toland's greatest gift lay in his ability to make money and soon after his arrival in San Francisco he was making in excess of $40,000 a year -- an enormous sum in those days. The basis of Toland's financial success was the development of a mail order business with Wells Fargo as an intermediary. His new gold mine, two barrels in his pharmacy, one labelled "anti-scurf," the other "anti-syph," from which he supplied all and sundry with remarkable profit. Toland had long nursed ambition of establishing a medical school and the collapse of Cooper's college gave him his opportunity. In 1864, the Toland Medical School came into being, its faculty drawn very largely from the former medical school of the University of the Pacific.

The Toland Medical School was conveniently situated on Stockton Street near the then County Hospital and Home for Inebriates. At the time of its foundation it was the only organized medical group existing in California which is indicative of the intense factionalism among the profession. By 1870 this factionalism resulted in a split in the faculty over Toland's intention of affiliating his school with the newly founded University of California. Levi Lane and the former members of Cooper's medical school walked out taking with them the entire student body save one solitary student who, it has been suggested, was too weak to walk. Lane reconstituted became known as the Cooper-Lane Medical School, although its correct title was the Medical College of the Pacific and eventually the Medical School of Stanford University.

In order to hold the school together, Toland needed a man of greater tact and qualities of diplomacy than he possessed himself. The man he chose was Richard Beverly Cole, a man of scintillating wit, fearless disposition with a flair for politics and contagious joviality. That Toland should have selected Cole to join him and become Dean of the School is even more remarkable since it was not long before that they were sworn enemies.

Richard Beverly Cole [1829-1901] is frequently known as "King Cole of California" being the leading practitioner of the State and the first President of the American Medical Association elected from California. Cole, unlike his colleagues, was one of the few physicians who came to California in search of better health. A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, anatomist and surgeon with a particular interest in Obstetrics and Gynecology, Cole in his ambitious attempt to establish himself as the leading physician of Philadelphia had driven himself to the point of exhaustion and had suffered a severe pulmonary haemorrhage. The highly publicized reports of the healthy climate of California had prompted his migration westwards.

In 1856, three or four years after Cole's arrival, there
occurred the assassination of James King of William, Editor of a San Francisco newspaper, by James Casey, a crooked politician, who had been exposed as a former inmate of Sing Sing in an editorial. The crime occurred at Clay and Montgomery streets where Casey was taken but Edward McGowan, a police judge of shady character, was observed surreptitiously stealing away from the site of the crime and there was every reason to believe that McGowan was Casey's accomplice. Dr. Beverly Cole was one of the first two physicians called in attendance on King and had vainly protested the introduction of a sponge into the wound to arrest the haemorrhage since, he contended, if the artery had been severed by the bullet, then it should be taken up and ligated and if not, the presence of the sponge would cause disaster. Toland, at this time the leading surgeon of San Francisco, not only dismissed Cole's opinions but with scant courtesy elbowed Cole out of the case completely. The eventual death of James King of William had San Francisco in a turmoil and the Vigilantes quickly disposed of the assassin, James Casey. Cole, as Surgeon-General to the Vigilante Committee, was profoundly moved by the death not only of a patient, but of a personal friend, and would seem to have projected some of this feeling against his colleague, Toland.

At length, James Casey's suspected accomplice Edward McGowan, was apprehended and, because of local prejudice, was brought to trial for the murder at Napa. At the trial Cole attacked the opinions of Toland and stated that the death of King was due to the incompetence of his medical attendants and especially of Toland. In fact, he implied that Dr. Toland should have been brought to trial for the murder instead of McGowan. As a result of Cole's evidence, the jury acquitted McGowan and declared that the deceased Casey was guilty of murder.

It is remarkable that Toland, in view of the bitterness which must have existed between them, should have selected Cole to be his new Dean. It says much for Toland that he dropped all personal prejudice and recognized the superb administrative abilities possessed by Cole, abilities which were sorely needed if the school was to survive its infancy.

The union of Toland's Medical School with the University of California was delayed for some years after Lane's departure because of Toland's demand that his name be preserved in the title of the school. However, under the wise leadership of President Gilman and the diplomacy of Cole, the affiliation was consummated in 1873. Under the agreement, Toland's name was to be preserved in the naming of the Chair of Surgery and in
Toland Hall. In 1880, Dr. Toland died and thereafter the entire development of the school rested in the hands of Cole.

Above all things, Beverly Cole was a man of vision. In 1867 he became a member of the "Outside Lands Committee" of the Board of Supervisors and conceived the idea of purchasing a large section of the sand dunes at the western edge of the city which might be turned into a public park, the future Golden Gate Park. To this he added the conception of bringing to San Francisco the entire University located in outlying Berkeley. He was able to interest Adolfo Sutro, who had made a fortune in the Comstock Lode, and who owned the present site of the University of California Medical Center. Adolfo Sutro wanted to have the greatest library in the United States as the nucleus of the campus and began by sending abroad one of his engineers, who was an amateur bibliophile, to make collections for this library. The engineer collected one of the most magnificent collections of the century and all was deposited in a warehouse in the Mission area. Unfortunately, the library, which was to be on the present site of Langley Porter Clinic, was never built because of Sutro's financial losses. In his will Sutro stipulated that the library collection was to go to the State but the collection must always be located in San Francisco. The state failed to appropriate the necessary funds for the construction of a library building. During the earthquake and fire of 1906 the Army distributed an important part of the library collection to the refugees for shaving paper. Even though the library did not materialize, Dr. Cole persuaded Mr. Sutro to give the University the land holdings from Parnassus Avenue south, most of which is still owned by the University. The next move was to influence the State Legislature to appropriate funds to move the buildings from Stockton Street. A grant of approximately $250,000 was made available and three buildings constructed - the present Dental/Pharmacy Building, Medical School Building, and one other, the law building, which no longer exists. These buildings housed what was then known as the Affiliated Colleges and there were to be the three professional schools of the University - Law, Pharmacy, and Medicine on the campus. The legal faculty refused to occupy their building because of lack of transportation which at that time consisted of horse drawn carriages as far as Stanyan Street. This resulted in our present Hastings School of Law which remained downtown. However, in his choice of site, Dr. Cole was motivated by the desire to erect an imposing new school which would overlook the Cooper Lane Medical School in its new building across the valley. He continued in his enthusiasm and was able to get other prominent men in the area to support his project although he was never