Doctor for 50 Years
He Holds Ohio Certificate No. 3

Since 1900, approximately 9000 medical certificates have been issued to aspiring young physicians by the state of Ohio. And a member of the first class that took the written examination inaugurated in 1900, and holder of certificate number three, is an 80-year-old Columbus doctor.

He's Dr. W. A. Humphrey, who insists he has no right to be called a practicing physician, though he still prescribes for several old patients of long standing. And he's still listed in the directory at Ohio State university as a member of the student health service staff.

Though he received his certificate 40 years ago, Dr. Humphrey practiced medicine for more than 50 years. "I started in Nebraska, practiced out there for several years. When I came to Ohio in 1900, the law requiring written examinations had just been passed and because I was from out of the state, I took the examination along with the others," he explained.

Doctoring was much different when he started out than it is today, Dr. Humphrey declared. "In Saunders, Neb., travelling was difficult. I went every place by horse and buggy. There was no hospital in the vicinity so we did our operating in the home," he said.

Clear in his memory is an occasion when he was called upon to operate on a friend who had shot himself in the foot. "He was 16 miles from town and I had to go out and amputate his foot by lamplight. And it turned out to be the prettiest amputation you ever saw," he chuckled.

Most of the time, the doctors of that era tried to do their operating in the daytime—the light of day was better than the uncertainty of artificial lights for the delicate business of surgery, the doctor pointed out.

Dr. Humphrey brought more than 500 babies into the world during his years of practice. Today, some of his 'babies' have grandchildren. It was to do obstetrics and operations concerned with diseases of women that Dr. Humphrey came to Ohio State several years ago. Since 1914 he has been associated with the university health service.

Does he have one particular case that he remembers more readily than any of the others on which he worked? Dr. Humphrey most certainly has.

"I was doing a Cesarean section a number of years ago, not conscious of the fact that I was doing it with any great speed. When I finished, a doctor who was standing nearby, asked me if I realized that I had completed the operation in two minutes!"

From his home at 15 East Twelfth avenue, it is just a step to the campus. And in spite of his 80 years—his birthday was just last Sunday—Dr. Humphrey occasionally drops over to the faculty club for lunch.

"I'm not very active in organizations any more, though," he pointed out. "I guess I'm not as young as I used to be."

He retains, however, membership in such organizations as Acacia fraternity, the University Masonic lodge, the Ohio State Medical society, the American College of Surgeons and the Columbus Academy of Medicine. His son, a retired oil man, lives in Omaha, Neb.