The late nineteenth century saw the science of anatomy gain a new circle of influence as more American researchers traveled to Europe to learn from pioneers such as Wilhelm His. In Germany, the American students of His and Carl Ludwig included Franklin Paine Mall, William H. Welch, and Charles S. Minot. These and other American scientists were participating in the stream of discovery and, feeling the influence of their scientific forebears, realized the need for more anatomy research facilities and publication venues in America. This brief timeline highlights some of the events that influenced the history of the American Association of Anatomists. It also singles out some of the people whose scientific contributions have shaped the modern science of anatomy: gross anatomists, histologists, embryologists, cytologists, philosophers, doctors, scientists, advocates, surgeons, anthropologists, paleontologists, chemists, image engineers, inventors, students, teachers, authors — discovers all.

**1866**

**Discovery of neural crest cells**

Wilhelm His identifies the structure that would later become known as the neural crest. It consists of a migratory population of cells loosely referred to as the 4th germ layer. The neural crest develops into skin, cartilage, bone, and various other tissues.

**1873**

**Golgi Method**

Italian physician and scientist Camillo Golgi develops a novel technique for staining nervous tissue in 1873. Golgi initially calls it the “black reaction” due to its staining ability, but it becomes better known as the Golgi stain or Golgi method.

**1886**

**The Neuron Doctrine**

By 1886 Wilhelm His theorizes that each nerve fiber stems from a single nerve cell, an idea that was essential to the development of the neuron doctrine which states that the neuron, or nerve cell, is the basic unit of the nervous system.

**1888**

**AIA founded**

The American Association of Anatomists is founded by Joseph Leidy, Joseph Lash, and Jacobson. It promotes the discovery and, feeling the influence of their scientific forebears, realized the need for more anatomy research facilities and publication venues in America. This brief timeline highlights some of the events that influenced the history of the American Association of Anatomists. It also singles out some of the people whose scientific contributions have shaped the modern science of anatomy: gross anatomists, histologists, embryologists, cytologists, philosophers, doctors, scientists, advocates, surgeons, anthropologists, paleontologists, chemists, image engineers, inventors, students, teachers, authors — discovers all.

**First AAA President**

“...the idea that was essential to the development of the neuron doctrine which states that the neuron, or nerve cell, is the basic unit of the nervous system.”

—Franklin Paine Mall

**“The ancient science of anatomy has been perpetuated and extended during the many centuries of its existence by great men who have dedicated their lives to it. The list is a long one for the development of the science has been slow and progressive from the earliest ages to the present time; we find it in the one hand, some of the greatest who have ever lived - Aristotle, Vesalius - on the other, the names of those who rank as leaders of a generation, Bichat, His.”**

—Franklin Paine Mall

**John Hopkins University**

In 1888, John Hopkins University was founded. This was a significant development in the field of anatomy, as it provided a new platform for the study of the nervous system.