



Newsletter of

The Association of Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences

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## History of Medicine Division, National Library of Medicine by John B. Blake

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### COLLECTIONS

The National Library of Medicine has an outstanding collection of books and journals on medicine, early as well as modern. The History of Medicine Division (HMD) holds all of the material in NLM that was printed before 1871 as well as thousands of later pamphlets and dissertations. Altogether the total is probably close to 500,000 pieces, of which some 70,000 were printed before 1801. HMD also has a growing collection of modern manuscripts that now numbers an estimated 850,000 pieces including about 200 oral history memoirs, as well as a collection of approximately 70,000 prints and photographs. The last includes portraits, pictures of institutions, caricatures, and fine graphic art in a variety of media illustrating social and historical aspects of medicine. There are also small special collections of Arabic and Oriental medical literature.

Guides to much of this material have been published. Dorothy M. Schullian's A Catalogue of Incunabula and Manuscripts in the Army Medical Library (1950) and Richard J. Durling's A Catalogue of Sixteenth Century Printed Books in the National Library of Medicine (1967) with Peter Krivatsy's Supplement (1971) list most of the books printed through 1600. Inevitably such catalogs begin to fall behind in any growing library as soon as they are published; since 1971 HMD has acquired 15 incunabula and about 450 16th century imprints. The best guide to post-1600 works in HMD is still the Index-Catalogue. When supplemented by the series of NLM catalogs published since 1950, it gives an excellent picture of 19th century holdings, but for the 17th and 18th centuries it is much less complete. An estimated one-third of HMD's holdings of 1601-1800 imprints will not be found in NLM's published catalogs or in The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints. A catalog of the 17th century collection is now under preparation but cannot be expected to appear for some years yet. A short-title catalog of the 18th century

imprints, excluding dissertations, is in press and will appear in 1979.

The most complete list of NLM's collection of 78 early manuscripts (before 1600) is in Seymour DeRicci and W. J. Wilson's Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts (1937) and its Supplement (1962) by C. U. Faye and W. H. Bond. Many of them are described more fully in Dorothy Schullian's Catalogue. Four manuscripts acquired since the publication of Faye and Bond's Supplement have not been described in print. HMD also has a collection of nearly 600 microfilm copies of manuscripts in European libraries. These are fully described in the Division's card catalog; because of restrictions imposed by owning libraries they may be used only in NLM.

Although NLM has had a small number of modern manuscripts (post 1600) for many years, it has been collecting them on an extensive scale for hardly more than a decade. Cataloging data are reported to the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections. Additional information is available in the card catalog and in unpublished registers at the Library. The catalog of the picture collection consists only of a working card file in HMD. There are no plans for publication at this time.

### SERVICES

Virtually all of the material in HMD is available for use in the Library, the only exception being certain modern manuscripts which are under temporary restrictions imposed by donors. Most of it is also available for use outside the Library in one form or another. The chief exceptions are microfilms of manuscripts owned by other libraries, modern published microform photocopies of early works, noncirculating reference works like dictionaries and biographies, and most modern manuscripts.

Printed works in the historical collection may generally be borrowed by libraries in the United



States through interlibrary loan, usually in photocopy. Requests for works printed before 1871 should be addressed to the History of Medicine Division, NLM; requests for pre-1801 publications may be sent directly, without being routed through the Regional Medical Library system. Books of the 18th century and earlier are supplied on microfilm, provided the physical condition of the volume permits satisfactory filming without undue damage. Books printed after 1800 will be lent on film or in the original according to individual circumstances. Certain 20th century books in HMD which may still be subject to copyright and which because of value or condition cannot be circulated in the original may be provided on film under special circumstances, provided requirements of the copyright law are satisfied. Articles from pre-1871 periodicals are usually provided as photocopies. To avoid the necessity of repeatedly copying certain classic articles, return of the photocopy may be requested.

Whenever HMD microfilms a book in order to satisfy a loan request, it keeps the original negative and uses it only to prepare duplicate reels, which are sent on loan. HLM will also sell reels to libraries or directly to individuals who may need them for longer than the usual loan period. HMD now has about 3,000 reels of microfilm copies of books in the collection. Interlibrary loan and purchase requests for books already on film can usually be supplied in a day or two. Otherwise, it usually takes about a month. A word of caution here is advisable. Because of limitations on personnel and other resources, HMD cannot undertake to supply microfilm for purposes of building libraries, either personal or institutional. Requests for film copies should be limited to those items for which there is a specific research need.

Manuscripts are not loaned outside the Library in the original. Those of the 18th century and earlier, most of which are bound, may ordinarily be copied on microfilm. More recent collections, because of their size, copyright, and possible donor restrictions, usually cannot be copied in their entirety. Each request must be considered individually and those interested should write directly. Generally, it will be necessary for investigators to visit the Library if they wish to undertake extensive research in the modern manuscript collection. A reasonable amount of photocopying may be possible after the researcher has selected the relevant items.

The Library does not lend material from the Prints and Photographs Collection. However, photographic prints and slides are regularly prepared for a fee as a special service. The best way to select pictures is to examine them at the Library. Failing that, patrons may write stating their needs and we will attempt to provide them with lists of available pictures on the subject

of their interest. The more carefully and narrowly the request is defined, the greater is the likelihood of our being able to help. Requests for portraits including full names and dates are usually the easiest type to handle by phone or mail. Slides and photographs of title-pages, illustrations, and other special pages in books may also be ordered.

Because of the size of its staff, HMD is able to give only limited reference service. Insofar as possible, we will attempt to answer specific questions about material in the collection, but we cannot answer general questions on subjects relating to medical history nor can we prepare extensive bibliographies on medico-historical topics. For such purposes we believe we can best serve the medical historical community by publishing the Bibliography of the History of Medicine and providing its data base on-line through NLM's computerized information system.

Because the collection is so large, valuable, and multifarious, it is impossible to set forth in this brief account all the possible conditions and exceptions governing the use of each and every item. There may be individual exceptions in special circumstances to almost any of the policies stated above. In every case, however, our guiding principle is to make the historical resources in HMD as widely available as possible for scholarly use, consistent with the Library's obligation to preserve and protect the collection for future scholars and within the constraints imposed by limitations on budget and staff.

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## Editorial note...

The Editor has recently been taking a wiggling from several quarters for issuing this rag without sufficiently identifying ourself or our place of business. From the wonderful swiftness with which these arrows have come winging to 58 W. Tulpehocken Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144, we doubt whether the complaints are altogether justified. Nevertheless, in future we shall come out from under our cloak of fear, cowardice and false modesty, and identify ourself in every issue.

-- Lisabeth M. Holloway



## Dental biographical information, or Everyone's grandfather was a dentist by Aletha Kowitz and Christine Dolan

With the publication of Alex Haley's Roots and its subsequent appearance on television, many persons became interested in tracing their genealogy or in tracing some one person and his or her activities. The result was a surge of requests for genealogical material in libraries, and the American Dental Association's Bureau of Library Services was not overlooked.

The Bureau had always received a number of requests for biographical information on dentists from editorial staff for use in feature articles or obituaries, from persons interested in dental history, either for their personal knowledge or for an article or book in preparation, and from persons doing a genealogy. Now the demand for this type of material has skyrocketed and we are elated that we have a file of information which had been dubbed the "Biography File."

Through the years we had collected biographical material including newspaper clippings, journal articles, obituaries, photographs, vitae, programs of meetings honoring an individual, and any other form of information which could prove useful to staff and other interested persons. The file has grown to four overflowing drawers, and has continued to grow about one-quarter of a drawer per year.

Included in this file are:

1. ADA Presidents.
2. ADA Secretaries.
3. Honorary members of the ADA.
4. ADA staff at level of department head or above; ADA staff who have been featured in some publication or earned some award.

5. Persons who have contributed substantially to dentistry (even if not dentists).
6. Dentists who have made contributions to or become famous in other fields (e.g., David Solot, the artist; Winfield Dunn, Governor of Tennessee; Adrian Kristeller, stockbroker).
7. Persons identified in some way with dentistry (e.g., St. Apollonia, George Washington).

This file is made available to interested persons by writing or telephoning the Bureau and requesting specific information. It is used together with standard dental directories (Polk's, national and international associations, specialties, biographical, etc.) and copies are made of pertinent items at a price of 10¢ per page.

Separately, in the package library collection of printed articles, files are maintained on persons having special connections with dentistry (St. Apollonia, George Washington, Paul Revere) as well as on the dental conditions of some Presidents of the United States and of famous persons (William Henry Seward, Sigmund Freud, Elizabeth I). These files are made available in the same manner as the Biography File.

Though we frequently do not have the information requested because dentists are seldom recognized in print, we are successful often enough to justify the maintenance and continued expansion of our Biography File.

## Books & articles of note...

### A NEW EDITION OF HARVEY?

Publishing appropriate and accurate facsimiles of very rare books is not a bad thing. The Lier editions of Ketham and Canano in the 1920s provided copies of books to which few collectors could aspire in the original and at the same time offered scholarly commentary in the form of introductions. More recently at descending levels of commercialism

the idea has been pursued by "Medicina Rara" and "The Classics of Medicine Library." The Franklin Mint method of merchandising is applied to medical history and there is no real harm in this. No doubt there are "collectors" who enjoy having a tattered photocopy of a first edition Osler more than they would a time-dulled third edition at the same price. Chacun à son livre, and never mind that those genuine leather bindings are merely casings from a stamping press.

However, the 1978 Classics of Medicine



edition of Harvey invites comment. The volume begins with a dim facsimile of the 1628 *De motu*, and one would have thought there were enough of those. The character of the book vanishes when the quarto composition is squeezed onto an octavo-shaped page. If he reads the accompanying brochure, Frank Gyorgyey should not be offended to hear that the Yale copy from which the facsimile was made suffers from certain "black spots" and he should even be relieved to know that "we were unable to remove (them) for fear of damaging the original edition."

Next comes Harvey in English, photocopied from one of the handsomest of twentieth-century medical publications, the Nonesuch Press Harvey of 1928. It takes a little study to discover that what is reprinted in the English part is only *De motu* and not the 1649 *De circulatione*. Fair enough, but why then reproduce the Nonesuch title-page stating that the latter is there? And when you are appropriating so much, why omit to borrow the exquisite Stephen Gooden plate which Keynes commissioned because the first English edition had none?

Most astonishing is to see the English referred to on the new title-page as "the Keynes translation" and in the brochure as "his brilliant 1928 English translation." Apparently photo-offset book production has become so facile that it is possible to send out upon the world a parcel of print at a stiff price without being aware that the contents are 17th-century and not 20th-century English. What, one wonders, does the publisher use that impressive-sounding editorial board for if not to guard against howlers like this? He should be charged with practising bibliography without a license.

-- G. S. T. Cavanagh

## Once over lightly...

### ALHHS doings...

#### ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 2, 1979 - Pittsburgh, Pa.

10:15 A.M. The Bookbinder, 209 S. Craig St., Oakland. Olivia Primanis-Cherin, proprietor, will demonstrate hand bookbinding techniques.

11:30 A.M. The Scaife Gallery, 4400 Forbes Avenue, Oakland. Luncheon in the Gallery Cafe. \$6.50 per person.

1:00 P.M. The Hunt Botanical Library - Hunt Library Penthouse, Carnegie-Mellon University, Oakland. Ms. Bernadette Callery, Librarian, Hunt Botanical Library, speaking on "Gardens

of Health -- Early Medical Botany at the Hunt Institute." She will show books from the Hunt Botanical Library's collections.

2:15 P.M. Ms. Jean Gunner, Bookbinder, Conservator, Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, will present an illustrated lecture: "Book Preservation, Restoration, and Related Materials." Tour of the bindery, on 3rd floor of Hunt Library.

4:00 P.M. Falk Library, Scaife Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Oakland. Ms. Janet Kubinec, Curator, will open the Historical Collection for inspection.

4:30 P.M. ALHHS Business Meeting. Afterwards we will return to the William Penn Hotel, downtown Pittsburgh, for cocktails and registration for the AAHM annual meeting.

Janet has graciously added the arrangements for the ALHHS meeting to her already heavy responsibilities in respect to the AAHM. We are grateful to her for what promises to be a very interesting meeting.

### News & announcements...

#### MLA - HISTORY OF MEDICINE GROUP MEETING

Tuesday, June 5, Honolulu, Hawaii.

7-9 P.M., Hilton Hawaiian Village. "Oral History, a Prototype Interview." Nancy Zinn will interview Dr. Charles S. Judd, Jr.; Estelle Brodman will give a historical introduction to the topic of oral history. Lucretia McClure is Chairman of the Group.

#### MEDICAL HISTORY AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

The ten-year-old Medical School at Memorial University of Newfoundland has recently established a Chair in Medical History, named after Dr. John Clinch (1749-1819). Dr. Clinch, a close friend and countryman of Edward Jenner and probably the first person to vaccinate in the Americas, was physician at Trinity, T. B., Newfoundland, for more than thirty years. Dr. K. B. Roberts, formerly Professor of Physiology at the University, has been appointed to this Chair. Another recent appointment is that of Mrs. Isabel Hunter to the position of Health Sciences Librarian.

With Dean A. R. Cox's encouragement, a plan has been adopted to have a working collection in the history of medicine within two years. The Health Sciences Library has already journal and book holdings in this field which will be strengthened by the purchase of new books, facsimile reprints, microfiche and original material. A modest sum has been set aside for this purpose. A first list has been drawn up of subject areas which will be emphasized. Naturally enough, any items relating to health care and



the health professions in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador will be diligently sought.

There is an obvious association between the Province and sea-faring occupations; the University has strength in maritime history. For these reasons, nautical medicine will be represented in our collections.

Major infectious diseases, including tuberculosis, maternity and child health, the biomedicine and epidemiology of hypertension and the development of medical physiology are other subjects in which we are particularly interested. After the experience of one year's collecting, and further faculty and student advice, this list will be amended.

Any help and advice which others in the history of medicine may care to give will be most appreciated.

-- K. B. Roberts

#### OSLER LIBRARY 50th ANNIVERSARY

"Books, Manuscripts and the History of Medicine," a symposium to celebrate the Osler Library's semi-centennial, will take place on 29 May 1979, in the Stewart Biological Building, 1205 Docteur Penfield Avenue (until lately called McGregor Avenue), just around the corner from the Osler Library itself, in the McIntyre Building, 3655 Drummond Street. Speakers include Charles G. Roland, Richard J. Durling, Estelle Brodman, and G. Thomas Tanselle.

#### UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER NEWS

Philip Weimerskirch reports the acquisition by the Edward G. Miner Medical Library of the working library of Dr. Edwin G. Munn (1804-1847) an early ophthalmologist in Rochester. The Rush Rhees Library of the same institution has acquired the papers and some memorabilia of Dr. Munn, and also a collection of some 400 items, mostly letters and manuscripts relating to the Bartlett family of Rhode Island, and especially the eminent Elisha Bartlett, (1804-1855).

Members of ALHHS will want to congratulate Lucretia W. McClure on her appointment as Librarian of the Edward G. Miner Library of the University of Rochester Medical Center.

#### UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PROGRAM

"Compulsory Health Insurance: The American Debate" is the subject of a program at the University's Memorial Union, April 30, 1979. Speakers include Roy Lubove, Arthur J. Visel-tear, Paul Starr, Ronald L. Numbers, Gary Land and Wilbur J. Cohen. Inquire further of the Department of the History of Medicine, 1305 Linden Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

## Current members, ALHHS

Names of officers of the Association are marked by the symbol \*; Steering Committee members are marked by \*\*. Non-voting members are marked by ◇.

Virginia R. Allen  
History of Medicine Division  
Univ. of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center  
P. O. Box 26901  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73190

William K. Beatty  
1509 Forest Avenue  
Evanston, Illinois 60201

John B. Blake  
3038 Newark Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C., 20008

Inci A. Bowman  
Library, University of Texas Medical Branch  
Galveston, Texas 77550

Estelle Brodman  
4464 West Pine Blvd., Apt. 17G  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

G. S. T. Cavanagh  
Medical Center Library, Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina 27710

Sandra Chaff  
Archives & Spec'l Collections on Women in  
Medicine, Florence A. Moore Library  
Medical College of Pennsylvania & Hospital  
3300 Henry Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pa., 19129

Helen Crawford  
1305 Chandler  
Madison, Wisconsin 53715

◇ Nicholas Dewey  
Church Enstone  
Oxford OX7 4NL England

\* Jonathon Erlen, Secretary-Treasurer, ALHHS  
14247 Shoredale  
Farmers Branch, Texas 75234

Marilyn Fransiszyn  
Osler Library, McGill University  
3655 Drummond Street  
Montreal H3G 1Y6, Quebec

Emil F. Frey  
Director, UTMB Library  
Galveston, Texas 77550

\*\* Ferenc A. Gyorgyey  
Yale Medical Library, Historical Library  
333 Cedar Street  
New Haven, Connecticut 06510



Mildred Hallowitz  
294 Hendricks Boulevard  
Buffalo, New York 14214

\* Lisabeth M. Holloway, Editor,  
The Watermark  
58 W. Tulpehocken Street  
Philadelphia, Pa., 19144

Glen Pierce Jenkins  
Howard Dittrick Museum of the  
History of Medicine  
11000 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

Margaret Jerri  
Archives & Special Collections  
on Women in Medicine, Florence A. Moore Library  
Medical College of Pennsylvania  
and Hospital  
3300 Henry Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pa., 19129

Jack D. Key  
624 - 23rd Street, N.E.  
Rochester, Minnesota 55901

Aletha Kowitz  
American Dental Association  
Library  
211 E. Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

David A. Kronick  
1223 Mt. Riga Drive  
San Antonio, Texas 78213

Janet Kubinec  
Curator, Historical Collection  
Falk Library of the Health  
Professions  
Scaife Hall, Univ. of Pittsburgh  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15261

Lucretia McClure  
164 Elmore Road  
Rochester, New York 14618

Ruth J. Mann  
605 - 11th Street, S.W.  
Rochester, Minnesota 55901

Wilhelm Moll  
The Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, Box 234  
University of Virginia Medical  
Center  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22908

Salli Morgenstern  
New York Academy of Medicine  
2 East 103rd Street  
New York, New York 10029

Caroline S. Morris  
Historic Library, Pine Bldg.  
Pennsylvania Hospital  
9th and Spruce Streets  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107

Stephanie A. Morris  
520 Sterner Mill Road  
Feasterville, Pennsylvania 19047

Walter L. Necker  
1415 Hoffman Avenue  
Parkridge, Illinois 60068

◇ Jeremy Norman  
442 Post Street  
San Francisco, California 94102

\*\* Peter D. Olch  
History of Medicine Division  
8600 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

\*\* Judith Overmier  
Bio-Medical Library, Diehl Hall  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

Christine A. Ruggere  
Historical Collections, Library  
College of Physicians of Philadelphia  
19 South 22nd Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Laura Allen Rucker  
Asst. Director, Public Services  
University of Oklahoma Health  
Sciences Center Library  
Post Office Box 26901  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73190

Doris E. Thibodeau  
Institute of the History of  
Medicine  
Johns Hopkins University  
1900 E. Monument St.  
Baltimore, Maryland 21205

Carol Unger  
History of Medicine  
Librarian  
Uniformed Services  
University of the  
Health Sciences  
4301 Jones Bridge Rd.  
Bethesda, Maryland 20014

Edwina Walls  
History of Medicine  
Librarian

University of Arkansas for  
Medical Sciences  
4301 Markham  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Philip Weimerskirch  
Medical Historian/Archivist  
Edward G. Miner Library  
601 Elmwood Avenue  
Rochester, New York 14642

Nancy L. Weinstock  
Philadelphia College of Pharmacy  
and Sciences  
42nd and Woodland Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

Dorothy Whitcomb  
Middleton Medical Library  
University of Wisconsin  
1305 Linden Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Barbara Williams, Archivist &  
History of Medicine Librarian  
Hahnemann Medical College  
245 North 15th Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

E. Louisa Worthington  
14-F Soldiers Field Park  
Boston, Massachusetts 02163

Larry J. Wygant  
1628 Avenue N 1/2  
Galveston, Texas 77550

\* Nancy W. Zinn, President, ALHHS  
1410 - 21st Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94122



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