



Newsletter of

The Association of Librarians in the History of the Health Sciences

Volume III, Number 3

January, 1980

History of medicine libraries observed

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by Philip Teigen

with commentary

In May of 1979 the Osler Library celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. Preliminary to that occasion, I wrote for the Library's Board of Curators a long report examining the Library's first fifty years and speculating on its future. To develop a context for that essay, I visited many North American history of medicine libraries and collections, concluding my tour with stops at the Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the Library at the Institute of the History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, the History of Medicine Division at the National Library of Medicine, the Historical Library of the Yale Medical Library, and the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, Boston.

Not included in my report to the Curators (which will appear in the Winter, 1980, issue of the Osler Library Newsletter) were several observations which may be of interest to readers of The Watermark. The first was the great variety in the kinds of historical materials in the collections. Some libraries held just books, while others also contained manuscripts, photographs, artifacts, or any combination thereof. Likewise, some contained only rare books and manuscripts, while others had circulating collections as well.

There was also a great variety in cataloguing practice, particularly in subject cataloguing. Nearly every cataloguer used a unique set of subject headings based on the Index-Catalogue of the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, the Library of Congress, MeSH, or various combinations of these and other authorities. There were even differences in which editions of the same subject authority were used.

The relationship of history of medicine libraries to their larger institutions also varied in interesting ways. Some collections were separate administrative units, others were functional units providing rare book services for medical libraries. Several seemed to be drawing away conceptually as well as administratively from their parent medical libraries.

Reflection on these visits raised several questions in my mind: a) how have historians' ideas of evidence changed over the past fifty years and how have libraries and librarians responded to them? b) does anyone have a generally useful list of subject headings which would apply to current historical literature as well as to the medical literature published during the past five hundred years, with all its changing terminology and concepts? c) in what ways can automated on-line cataloguing be applied to historical collections? d) how can history of medicine collections absorb the huge amounts of medical literature published since the Industrial Revolution and which medical libraries and information scientists are now declaring obsolete? e) how might history of medicine libraries and collections best be related administratively to their parent medical libraries?

These are some of the questions which the Osler Library must answer as it proceeds towards its centennial. Indeed, I am preparing a report on automated cataloguing for its Board of Curators. Addressing this and the other questions facing the Osler Library would be very much easier if I could learn how other libraries are facing them.

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BUT WHAT ABOUT YESTERDAY?

by William K. Beatty

During two surveys of recently-built medical school libraries in the United States and Canada in 1962 and 1972 I was impressed by how few of the 44 libraries examined had a history of medicine area that had been designed with specific possibilities for growth. This inflexible planning is now compounding the major space problem facing so many historical collections in all types of medical libraries.

Another pertinent element is the distinction between a "history of medicine" collection and a collection of "rare books." In many institutions rare books are thought of as the standard classics (the Fabrica, de Motu Cordis, Beaumont, et al.). Since nothing done in the last hundred years can possibly be a classic, the original room, cage, or vault set aside for the rare books will obviously be adequate for the rest of the library's history — however inadequate it may become for medicine's history. However, space for rare books is not really the physical problem any more than this concept of rare books is the philosophical problem.

A history of medicine collection, as a philosophical concept, is that body of material (in printed or any other acceptable format) that illustrates the history of the profession prior to some agreed-upon date. As a physical problem the history of medicine collection can be viewed as that collection of old books — some of which happen to be worth some money — that is used by a small group of rather odd people and, therefore, can be tucked away in a corner somewhere to rest quietly. Since this collection will certainly not grow, the institution's administration never has to worry about it again.

However attitudes and magnitudes have changed since either these feelings were comfortable or the collection itself could be comfortably forgotten. Indeed medicine used to be what was going on today, and the history of medicine was what had gone on the day before yesterday. Now we are forced into thinking about yesterday: the multitude of books that rests chronologically between the history of medicine collection and the current shelves. This is where many of our most immediate problems enter the picture.

Today is always a recognizable, fixed point. The day before yesterday is far enough back so that we may view it also as a fixed amount of time. Yesterday, however, is an amorphous period, and we have suddenly awakened to the fact that yesterday can be a pretty big piece of time.

If we look at a typical medical library today we can make a good case for the history of medicine area being the most rapidly growing part of the whole collection. All of a sudden the history of medicine has become more than the day before yesterday: it now embraces yesterday as well.

Individuals responsible for history of medicine collections must now face the question, "What should be done with all of those 'in-between' books?" The problem takes on even greater force and clarity when the question is re-phrased into a statement, "All or most of those 'in-between' books are going to be thrown out unless some one with historical understanding rescues those with historical importance." If these "superseded," "obsolete," etc., books are

not part of the history of medicine now, they certainly will be in a hundred years. And if they are trashed now, the chances of their being available to historians a century from now are rather slight.

The responsibility for yesterday rests solely on the individuals responsible for the present history of medicine collections. No one else cares. Yesterday is important, and this philosophical concept with its attendant physical problems must be impressed upon the administrative bodies who control the budgets.

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FURTHER RESPONSES

The Editor referred Philip Teigen's paper above to several other persons for response. Bill Beatty's reflections are printed above; more informal reactions were received also.

Phil Weimerskirch remarks, "I think this is something we might all like to discuss in Boston. I am not aware that historians' ideas about evidence have changed much in the past fifty years, except that they are now using computers to quantify and analyze data in statistical terms. I don't know how librarians could respond to this change.... A great deal has been written about computer applications to the cataloging of rare books, but ... as far as I know no one is actually using computers for this purpose at this stage. I am sure it will come soon. Many people are using OCLC etc. for cataloging rare books, but so far these systems have not made any special provision for rare books, at least not to my knowledge.... We really need a survey of these and other questions...."

The Editor herself, as a cataloger, is glad to see Mr. Teigen open the vexed question of subject headings for old-fashioned entities and concepts. If in all libraries more than fifty years old and many younger, conflicts of subject headings are extremely confusing to the cataloger, they must altogether defeat the user. (There come to mind four inches of contemporary entries on sanitary affairs of World War I beginning, "War, Pan-European, 1914-," found purely by accident.) Should we retype the headings, re-catalog the books, or slam the drawer shut and take aspirin? Should we simply start a new catalog every 25 years and leave the old behind?

Discussion of these and similar problems is needed. Perhaps a broad survey of the unique sets of headings mentioned by Mr. Teigen might result in a kind of union list of see- and see-also references, which might be helpful to cataloger, reference staff, and user.

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ADVICE WANTED

I am writing the chapter on Special Collections, History of Health Sciences, and Archives for the 4th edition of the Handbook of Medical Library Practice, and I would greatly appreciate having suggestions from this audience regarding the matters to be covered. Have you found any topics on which you would like to have at hand some reference, but none was available? Do you frequently receive questions from smaller libraries which might also profit by having such a resource at hand? These are the types of questions I would like to address in this chapter. Any suggestions or comments you might make, any issues you might raise will be of great help.

Thank you.

Nancy Whitten Zinn
Special Collections
The Library
University of California
San Francisco, CA 94143

The English Short Title Catalogue is currently collecting 18th century entries from libraries in North America. Those with holdings of items printed in "the British Isles in any language; those printed in Colonial America, the United States (1776-1800) and Canada; in any language; all relevant items printed wholly or partly in English, or other British vernaculars, in any other part of the world," who are interested in having their holdings recorded should apply to the ESTC for the requirements for submitting such information.

For particulars write to:

Henry L. Snyder, Dean
Director and Editor ESTC/NA
College of Arts and Sciences
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

You may also be interested in:
Robin Alston and Mervyn Jannetta. Bibliography Machine-Readable Cataloguing and the ESTC. (London, British Library, 1978; £ 11.00)

DUES WANTED

Jonathon Erlen, our Secretary-Treasurer, reminds us that dues (\$10) for 1979-1980 are now overdue. Please remit to him by March 1st at 14247 Shoredale, Farmers Branch, Texas 75234. Otherwise we shall have to revise our membership lists accordingly.

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Coming from any other library less well supplied with hallowed ghosts it would be pretentious. It is hardly a brief handout for library visitors or a systematic account of resources, so it cannot serve as a model for other libraries wishing to publish either. The Library's intentions for it do not seem to be stated, but it is a pleasing pictorial supplement to Bibliotheca Osleriana and that is justification enough.

- G. S. T. Cavanagh

The Osler Library. Montreal 1979. 64p.
\$10.00 (Canadian?)

Osler's books have now been at McGill for fifty years and for the occasion the Osler Library has issued a handsomely illustrated and (in a good sense) sentimental account of some of its more spectacular and more intimate possessions. Editors unnamed have shown some imagination, e.g., by facing a mention of a MS copy of "In Flanders Fields" with a colored illustration of a poppy from the library's Mattioli. The same hand or another has shown judgment by sparing us one more account of the splendors of the 1543 De Fabrica and talking instead of sixteenth-century dedication to astrology, thereby indirectly reminding us that a good library is a place where the whole picture and not only the highlights should be seen. The illustrations are stunning and the end result is a very pleasant fifteen-minute browse and as near as may be a substitute for a tourist's visit.

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Two newsletters have recently crossed our desk, on subjects of related interest:
The Abbey Newsletter, issued 6 times a year by Ellen McCrady from 5410 85th Ave., #2, New Carrollton, MD 20784; on book and paper preservation, binding, etc., etc.

Photograph Conservation, a forum of photographic preservation & restoration, published by Graphic Arts Research Center, Rochester Institute of Technology, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623, at \$5 for 4 consecutive issues US and \$7.50 Canadian. A scholarly and well-produced publication which should be of help to most of us.

-- Editor

Election results !!!

The Secretary-Treasurer reports the following election results:

For President, Janet Kubinec (1980-1981)

For Steering Committee, Marilyn Fransiszyn (1980-1981)

Our congratulations to the new officers, and a vote of thanks to Nancy Zinn and Frank Gyorgyey for their faithful service.

Directory of libraries in the history of the health sciences...

Selected entries

ENTRIES PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE WATERMARK

- Arizona. University. Arizona Health Sciences Center Library. II, 2, Oct. 1978
- Arkansas University for Medical Sciences. Library. I, 3, Feb. 1978
- California Historical Society. III, 2, Oct. 1979
- Chicago Historical Society. I, 3, Feb. 1978
- Colorado Historical Society. Documentary Resources Department. I, 4, Apr. 1978
- Emory University. Robert W. Woodruff Library. Special Collections Department and A. W. Calhoun Medical Library. III, 1, July 1979
- Kansas State Historical Society. Manuscript Department. II, 2, Oct. 1978.
- Loma Linda University. Vernier Radcliffe Memorial Library. I, 3, Feb. 1978
- Louisiana. State University. Department of Archives and Manuscripts. I, 4, Apr. 1978
- Maryland Historical Society. II, 1, July 1978
- Minnesota. University. Biomedical Library. Owen W. Wangenstein Historical Library of Biology and Medicine. III, 2, Oct. 1979
- Nevada State Historical Society. I, 4, Apr. 1978
- Ohio Historical Society. I, 3, Feb. 1978
- Oregon Historical Society. II, 3, Jan. 1979
- Pennsylvania. State University. Milton S. Hershey Medical Center. The George T. Harrell Library. I, 4, Apr. 1978
- South Carolina Historical Society. I, 4, Apr. 1978
- Texas. University. Medical Branch at Galveston. Moody Medical Library. I, 4, Apr. 1978
- Washington. University. School of Medicine. Library. II, 1, July 1978
- Wisconsin. University — Madison. William S. Middleton Library. II, 1, July 1978
- Yale University. Yale Medical Library. Historical Library. II, 2, Oct. 1978

McGILL UNIVERSITY. MCGILL MEDICAL LIBRARY. OSLER LIBRARY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE. Founded 1929

McIntyre Medical Sciences Bldg., 3655 Drummond Street, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1Y6
514-392-4331 (or 4329)

Hours: 9 - 5, Monday - Friday.

Librarian: Philip Teigen. Head Cataloguer: Miss O. Werbowyj. Manuscripts and Reference Librarian: Miss M. Fransiszyn. Library Assistants: Three full-time, one half-time; occasional part-time help.

Services: Open to the general public for reference and borrowing. Photocopying and microfilming available, if warranted by physical condition of the original; estimates available on request. Inter-library loan similarly available, although loan of microfilm preferred if possible.

General collection: 157,046 vols. (monographs and serials); 2,270 journals currently received.

Materials in the history of the health sciences:

Primary materials: 11,000 vols. (estimated).

Manuscripts. Ancient: one fragmentary Assyrian medical tablet, with cuneiform writing, ca.700

B.C. Medieval: 7 vols. Renaissance: 36 vols.

Modern: 367 vols., 220 lin.ft., including:

Society records and archives: Osler Society papers, 1.66 lin.ft. Osler Library archives, 8 vols., 25 lin. ft. (Note: McGill Faculty of Medicine archives maintained by University Archives.) Medical Library archives, 102 lin.ft. Canadian Dermatological Association papers, 1.5 lin.ft.

Papers of noted physicians: Osler papers, 92 vols., 6.75 lin. ft. W. W. Francis correspondence, 5 lin. ft. Babkin collection, 1.5 lin. ft. W. H. Drummond papers, 31 vols., 2 lin. ft. C. K. Russel papers, 5 lin. ft. H. Cushing papers re biography of Osler, ca. 5 lin. ft. Casey A. Wood papers, 18 vols. Maude Abbott papers, 10 lin. ft. Collection of Sinhalese mss. (olas) of works on Hindu medicine, 19 items. Casey A. Wood Historical Collection of Sinhalese Materia Medica (olas), 28 items. Persian, Arabic and Hindustani medical manuscripts, 87 vols. Bethune Collection, 4 lin. ft. A. Cantero Collection (cancer research), 9 lin. ft. A. D. Blackader papers, 1 lin. ft.

Printed materials: Incunabula, 153 titles. 16th century, ca. 1,000 titles. 17th century, ca. 1,500 titles. 18th century, ca. 3,000 titles. 19th century, ca. 5,700 titles.

On specialties of medicine, etc.: Ophthalmology (15th - 19th century, gifts of Casey A. Wood), ca. 1,000 vols. Anesthesia, ca. 300 vols. Dentistry, pre-1900, ca. 400 vols. in McGill University Faculty of Dentistry Library; Nursing, ca. 75 vols. and one file cabinet of historical material in McGill University Archives.

On special topics: Missionary medicine, ca.100 vols.

By and about noted physicians: Sir William Osler,

approx. 2,500 items; Norman Bethune, 20 items; Sir Thomas Browne, ca. 250 items; Maude E. Abbott, ca. 50 items.

Early journals: Titles listed in Index-Cat., 1st ser., vol. 16, and 1st Suppl.: 15 per cent or less.

Americana: Approximately 10 per cent of Austin titles (microfilm of all Austin titles except journals); approx. 5 per cent of Ebert's list of American journals before 1850.

Garrison-Morton holdings: Approximately 50 per cent.

Secondary materials: 11,000 vols. (estimate). Biographies, histories, 3,000 vols. Miller's checklist II complete. Bibliographies, ca. 120 vols. All current journals in the history of medicine indexed by Index Medicus.

Pictorial materials: 20 paintings; 1,609 photographs; 3,658 engravings; prints, paintings, posters, drawings; 1,154 reproductions; 45 motion-picture films; approx. 825 slides; 6 solander cases of pathological illustrations.

Medical artifacts: 606 artifacts, including: instrument sets, stethoscopes, thermometers, apothecary scales and weights, syringes, trephining instruments, lancets, commemorative medals, speculae, collection of Ceylonese and Sinhalese artifacts from Casey A. Wood, memorabilia of Sir William Osler, instruments of Norman Bethune, obstetrical instruments, copies of R. Tait McKenzie's masks, etc. May be photographed but not borrowed.

Catalogues and indexes of the collections: Bibliotheca Osleriana (Montreal, 1929; 1969 reprint available, \$65). Books, etc., listed in the National Union Catalogue of Canada; mss. listed in the Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories. Books added (quarterly); Osler Library Newsletter (three times yearly); and The Osler Library (1979).

Charleston, records, 1925-1952, 1 ft. Roper Hospital, Charleston, minutes and papers, 1845-1940, 2 ft. South Carolina Medical Association, Women's Auxiliary, records, 1927-1955, ca. 100 items. Physicians: James Woods Babcock, 1856-1922, papers on pellagra, 1885-1920, ca. 200 items. Olin Burnham Chamberlain, 1892-1968, papers 1918-1941, ca. 85 items. Theodore McCann Davis, 1889-1974, scrapbooks, 1927-1966, ca. 40 items. Francis Bonneau Johnson, 1881-1958, papers, 1915-1954, ca. 130 items. Frederick Evart Kredel, 1903-1961, papers, 1925-1955, ca. 90 items. Middleton Michel, 1822-1894, papers, 1846-1890, ca. 150 items. Francis Peyre Porcher, 1824-1895, papers, 1850-1892, ca. 250 items. Hillyer Rudisill, 1902-1949, papers, 1936-1942, ca. 285 items. Horace Gilbert Smithy, Jr., 1914-1948, papers, 1940's, ca. 186 items. Robert Burbidge Taft, 1899-1951, papers, 1917-1945, ca. 300 items. Joseph Ioor Waring, 1897-1977, papers, 1923-1973, ca. 250 items. William Weston, 1874-1962, collection of reprints on acrodynia, 1914-1932, ca. 80 items. Misc. mss. relating to South Carolina medical history (prescription books, lecture notes, theses, diplomas, etc.): 30 ft. Misc. biographical material, relating to South Carolina medical history: 36 ft.

Museum materials: Medical prints or portraits, ca. 150. Photographs (number unknown) of institutions and S. C. physicians. Caricatures: 71; slides of caricatures: 40. Slides on history of University and medical history of S.C., ca. 100. Artifacts (instrument cases, medicine chests, saddlebags, etc.), ca. 350.

Catalogues, etc.: Holdings reported in part to NUCMC and to Special Collections in Libraries of the Southeast.

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The Watermark is issued quarterly to members of the Association and subscribers. President, ALHHS, Janet Kubinec, Curator, Historical Collection, Falk Library of the Health Professions, Scaife Hall, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15261. Secretary-Treasurer, Jonathon Erlen, 14247 Shoredale, Farmers Branch, Texas 75234. Editor: Lisabeth M. Holloway, 58 W. Tulpehocken St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19144.

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MEDICAL UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA.

WARING HISTORICAL LIBRARY. Founded 1966
171 Ashley Avenue, Charleston, S.C. 29403
803-792-2288

Hours: 9 - 5 Monday - Friday.

Curator: Anne K. Donato. Conservator: Agnes R. Heltai.

Services to the general public: Reference, photocopy (10¢ page). No borrowing, no interlibrary loan.

General collection (Health Affairs Library): 125,000 vols.; 2,200 periodicals.

Materials in the history of the health sciences: Approximately 6,500 vols., the nucleus being the Library of the Medical Society of South Carolina, begun in the 1790's. Anatomy - 400 vols., 1660-1899. Obstetrics & gynecology - 200 vols., 1694-1893. Pathology - 130 vols., 1658-1892. Pediatrics - 85 vols., 1698-1899. Physiology - 112 vols., 1712-1869. Psychiatry & psychology - 50 vols., 1656-1897. Surgery - 280 vols., 1656-1892. Medical theses, Edinburgh, 1700-1820: 50 vols. Emphasis of collection is on books pertaining to the history of the health sciences in South Carolina: ca. 1,000 books and pamphlets.

Manuscripts, archives, etc. Organizations, institutions, etc. Pinehaven Tuberculosis Sanatorium,



Medicine
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& Prints

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