Merging Popular Culture and Historical Medical Evidence: Downton Abbey and Rare Book Collections

*Lois Hendrickson*, Interim Curator, Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine, University of Minnesota
Exhibit Objectives

- Emphasize collection diversity
  - *Usable by many disciplines as well as the public*
- Extend outreach services
  - *Honor the university’s duty to the public*
- Discover and develop talent in students/staff
  - *Offer new kinds of opportunities for professional development*
- Engage in social media
  - *Extend our reach in order to encourage more people to feel comfortable visiting the exhibit*
Downton Abbey
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode &amp; Season</th>
<th>Article Info</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Caption</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Season 2: Episode 1 (5:38 and throughout) [food and rations]</td>
<td>1) Beyond the Ration: Sharing and Scrounging on the Western Front</td>
<td>Food rations (canister, list of rationed foods, recipes for wartime, what officers vs. foot soldiers ate)</td>
<td>Enacted wartime food rationing to support troops. While soldiers had diets providing meat, civilians lacked this and other provisions. Lack of flour.</td>
<td>(1:03:45) - Matthew shares condensed milk with sugar, with Thomas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Season 2: Episode 2 (2:00) [med exams]</td>
<td>16) Military Fitness and Civilian Health in Britain During the First World War.</td>
<td>Photos, paperwork that doctor would fill out for each exam, data of how many were accepted/ denied.</td>
<td>- Exams pass/fail: how could people get out of service/what would disqualify someone being able to?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Season 2: Episode 3 (37:55) [Bates goes to prosthetics shop]</td>
<td>15) Reconstructions: Prosthetics and the rehabilitation of the male body in World War I France.</td>
<td>19) Better Legs: Artificial Limbs for British Veterans of the First World War.</td>
<td>- Thomas helps at hospital with army men (blindness, amputations, etc.) - Bates buys a &quot;limp corrector&quot; at the prosthetics shop. - [end of episode Bates promises to never try to cure himself again.]</td>
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**Downton Abbey**

**Annotations:**
- Things to look into:
  - Enacted wartime food rationing to support troops. While soldiers had diets providing meat, civilians lacked this and other provisions. Lack of flour.
  - Exams pass/fail: how could people get out of service/what would disqualify someone being able to?
  - How many amputations done? How many prosthetics given to soldiers? Quality?
  - William has medical exam to get into army and receives his papers.
  - Thomas helps at hospital with army men (blindness, amputations, etc.).
  - Bates buys a "limp corrector" at the prosthetics shop. 
  - [end of episode Bates promises to never try to cure himself again.]
THE SCOURGE OF SPANISH INFLUENZA

To Prevent Influenza!

Did you know... Lavinia wasn't the only victim? At the end of November, 1918, The Times reported over 32,000 dead in only 6 weeks of the epidemic.

DOWNTON ABBEY

Behind the Scenes of Health and Illness

October 21st - May 16th
5th Floor of Diehl Hall

Open Monday - Friday
3:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Was you be coming to the events with a group? Would you like a formal tour?

Funds: winghr@uman.edu Or Call: 619-696-6961

THE WACRESWITZ HISTORICAL LIBRARY OF DURHAM AND MEDCIN PRESENTS

A NOVEL

DOWNTON ABBEY:

Behind the Scenes of Health and Illness

Tell your story - Me them and the other wars are recovering at Downton Abbey were only a few of the nearly 250,000 men discharged from the English army because of wounds and amputations! Find out more!

October 21st - May 16th

Will you be coming to the events with a group? Would you like a formal tour?

Funds: winghr@uman.edu Or Call: 619-696-6961

LIBRARIES
It takes 7 minutes to cook broiled tripe (the stomach lining of cows) a quick, light, and nutritious meal for the invalid!

LARD calories per pound: 4,218.5
POTATO calories per pound: 518.5

In the mid 19th century, breast cancer was responsible for nearly 5% of the mortality rate of women in the area surrounding Highclere Castle, the "real" Downton Abbey.

140,000 metric tons of rice were grown in and imported to England per year in 1909 - 1913.

That's a difference of 273,688!

1920: 826,116 babies born in the U.K.
1919: 552,428 babies born in the U.K.
1918: WWI Ends

152,000 excess deaths occurred due to the influenza outbreak June 1918 through May 1919.

Sybil had 4 of the 9 serious symptoms of toxemia, or eclampsia, as described by the Child Health Library.

60 days was the average time that American soldiers who were exposed to chlorine gas needed to recover from their injuries.
Lady Sybil’s shocking death. Did it have to happen?

Joss Barratt/JOSS BARRATT - On “Downton Abbey,” Lady Sybil and Tom Branson celebrate the birth of their child. Soon after, the mother dies.

David Brown, “Lady Sybil’s shocking death. Did it have to happen?”
Creating "Downton Abbey: Behind the Scenes of Health and Illness"

Emily Hagens is co-curator of Downton Abbey: Behind the Scenes of Health and Illness and a Ph.D. candidate in the Program in the History of Science, Technology and Medicine at the University of Minnesota. Aside from Masterpiece Theater and rare books, she studies 16th century Italian domestic medicine and vernacular print and manuscript culture.

Most of us know and love Downton Abbey. The beautiful scenery, the love and money that is constantly lost and re-found, the costumes... and the gut-wrenching moments of tragedy, too, keep viewers speculating, hosting themed tea parties, and coming back to Masterpiece Theater’s hit show time and again. Although I generally love the show, the historian of medicine side of me also thinks the detailed research that goes into some of the scenes most filled with tension is exciting. When Lois Hendrickson, interim curator at the Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine, offered me the opportunity to help curate this fall’s exhibit Downton Abbey: Behind the Scenes of Health and Illness, I jumped at the opportunity.

As a Ph.D. student in the history of medicine, I’m accustomed to research with archival sources and rare books, but this exhibit required a different kind of initial approach. Instead of beginning in the Wangensteen’s extensive collections of medical books and artifacts, I began on Hulu, re-watching all three seasons of Downton. With ears and eyes tuned to medical instruments and discussions, I took notes on every instant when a character mentioned, feared, or experienced a medical event. I also spent time perusing social and news media sites like Facebook, Pinterest, Buzzfeed, XOJane, and the Huffington Post for images and ideas that have been infused into the exhibit.
MEDICAL THEMES IN DOWNTON ABBEY

The Victoria and Albert Museum presents an exhibition on the theme of medical themes in Downton Abbey.

Exhibition highlights:
- A showcase of medical artifacts from the series
- Interactive displays and exhibits
- A rare opportunity to explore historical medical practices

Exhibition dates:
- Opening on [date]
- Closing on [date]

Visitors can explore the medical history depicted in the series, from the treatment of injuries to the unique medical devices used. The exhibition aims to provide a deeper understanding of the medical challenges faced by the characters and their impact on the storyline.

Although the series is set in the early 20th century, the exhibits also highlight modern medical practices and equipment used today, offering a fascinating comparison between the past and present.

The exhibition is open to the public and is sure to be a hit with fans of the series and history enthusiasts.

For more information, visit the website of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
Outcomes

Graduate students had the opportunity to:

• See themselves as part of the larger University and disciplinary community

• Extend their professional development by:
  • Presenting their work in clear, comprehensible terms to people outside their fields
  • Interacting with professionals
  • Exposure to the mechanics of exhibit preparation (planning, design, management and marketing)
  • Methods of audience and public interaction (publicity, promotion and audience assessment)
Visualizing the Body: Celebrating 500 Years of Andreas Vesalius, Renaissance Art and Medical Revolution
University Honors Student creates **interactive timeline** tracing the development of modern anatomy. The timeline features many works from the Wangensteen Historical Library. It has been developed as part of Wangensteen’s exhibit, **Visualizing the Body: Celebrating 500 Years of Andreas Vesalius, Renaissance Art and Medical Revolution**.
Culpeper Symposium: Visualizing the Body: the Convergence of Art, Cadaver, and Medical Knowledge

October 8, 2014
Vesalius letter illustrations add intrigue to anatomy
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