



# THE OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 111 · 2009

Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, Montréal (Québec) Canada

## IN THIS ISSUE

EMERITUS LIBRARIAN DAVID Crawford pursues his research on notable medical diplomas, this time involving the fascinating tale of Pierre de Sales Laterrière, (c. 1743-1815) a resourceful early Canadian doctor who, among other things spent time in prison in Quebec on charges of selling iron and information to invading American troops in 1779. Subsequently Laterrière joined Harvard University's second graduating class in Medicine and became Harvard's first Canadian medical graduate.

Chris Lyon's describes a "big" addition to our collection of anatomical atlases. The Osler family's encounters with Charles Darwin, whose 200<sup>th</sup> birthday is being celebrated this year, are briefly noted.

Dr. Chuck Roland continues his Canadian Medical History Miniatures with a brief outline of the history of Bishop's Medical School. ❁



## THESES IN THE OSLER LIBRARY

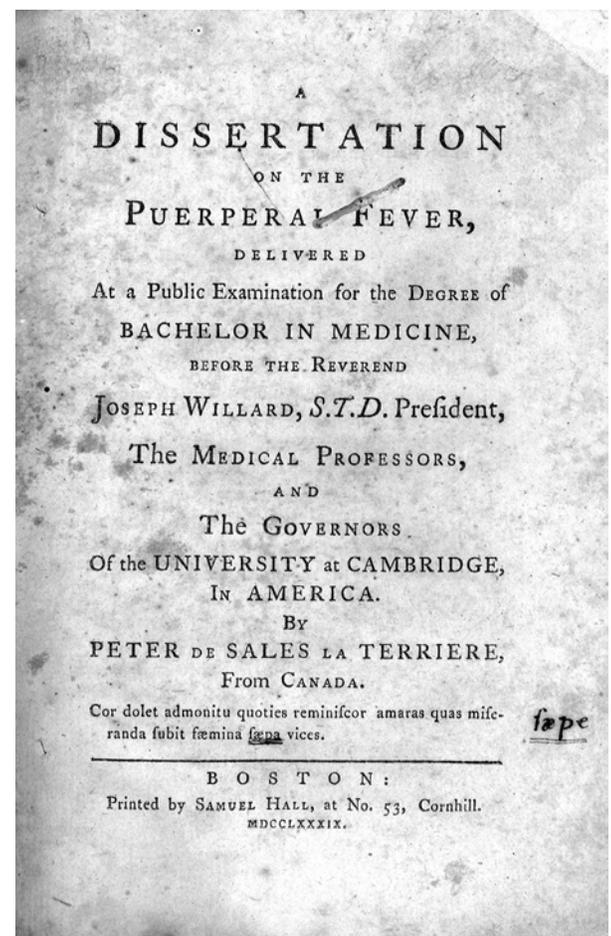
### INCLUDING THAT OF PIERRE DE SALES LATERRIÈRE

As might be expected, the Osler Library contains many medical theses — some are in collections, and some are individual items; some were published recently, and some are quite old primary works.

The "collections" category includes a large number of French medical theses published between the late 1700s and the 1930s. This collection is actually in two distinct parts: the 22,000 "French Theses", mostly published before 1900,<sup>(1)</sup> and the 10,000 "Paris Theses" that originally belonged to the McGill Medical Library, were deposited with the (then) National Science Library in 1972, and returned to McGill in the late 1990s. The "Paris Theses" primarily date from 1890 to 1930. By good luck or by chance there is very little duplication between the two collections — both of which, despite their names, contain only theses from the Université de Paris. Titles in the original purchase, the "French Theses", were individually catalogued (based on their listings in the sale catalogue) in the mid-1990s, thanks to funds specifically raised by the Friends of the Osler Library; the library is now in the final phases of cataloguing the "Paris Theses", again largely thanks to funding provided through the Friends.

The other major collection of older theses in the Osler Library is the "Edinburgh Theses" collection, described in an earlier issue of Osler Library Newsletter.<sup>(2)</sup> The library holds about 1100 Edinburgh University

by David S. Crawford



Osler Library

*"Cette thèse ...  
qui n'a  
qu'une valeur  
extrêmement  
médiocre au  
point de vue  
médicale,  
en a une au  
contraire  
considérable  
au point de  
vue  
bibliographique."*



theses, written in Latin and mostly published between 1793 and 1824. Included are theses by several people important in the history of medicine at McGill and in Canada, such as the 1809 theses by Robert Bayard (about opium), and William Bruce Almon (electrotherapeutics). Both men give their origin as "Anglo-Americanus ex Nova Scotia" and they appear to be the first Canadian medical graduates of the University of Edinburgh. This collection also includes the theses of two of the founders of the McGill Medical Faculty, Andrew Fernando Holmes (tetanus), and John Stephenson (cleft palate). The library also owns several commercially published Edinburgh theses and holds three of the four volumes of the published collection of early Edinburgh theses edited by William Smellie in the 1780s.<sup>(3)</sup>

Though one might expect to find a "McGill medical theses" collection, this is unfortunately not the case. It is not absolutely certain what happened to McGill's early medical theses, but their absence is attributed to the 1907 fire that destroyed the Faculty of Medicine's main building. Although the attached library was saved, the theses — assuming they were in the building — were not. The Osler Library does have a few early McGill theses such as those by Joseph Workman and Frederick Hart, both from 1835. As noted by David Crawford,<sup>(4)</sup> the library has only a photocopy of McGill's (and Canada's) first medical thesis, that by William Leslie Logie in 1833. McGill's Faculty of Medicine ended its MDCM thesis requirement in 1876, and the more recent McGill graduate medical theses are held by the Rare Books and Special Collections Department in the University Library and/or in

McGill's "e-thesis" collection. (See <http://www.mcgill.ca/library-findinfo/escholarship/>)

One of the more interesting individual theses held in the Osler Library is that by Pierre de Sales Laterrière.<sup>(5)</sup> In fact, the man is as interesting, or possibly even more interesting, than the thesis itself! Pierre de Sales Laterrière was a man with a rather mysterious history: he was a member of Harvard University's second (1789) graduating class in Medicine, and is Harvard's first Canadian medical graduate. Ægidius Fauteaux notes that "Cette thèse ... qui n'a qu'une valeur extrêmement médiocre au point de vue médicale, en a une au contraire considérable au point de vue bibliographique."<sup>(6)</sup> He reports that five hundred copies were printed, and though digitised versions are available, WorldCat reports only about twenty of the original printed copies in libraries today. The Osler Library copy was purchased in 1955 from a dealer in New York, for \$27.

The life story of Pierre de Sales Laterrière is obscure and enigmatic — even his birth name and date are not totally clear. He

was born on September 23, in either 1747 or (more likely) 1743, in the Languedoc-Rousillon region of France. There is a great deal of discussion as to whether his birth name was actually Fabre<sup>(6,7,8)</sup> and it has been suggested that he took the Laterrière name only on his arrival in Canada in 1766, where he was variously known as Jean, Jean-Baptiste, Jean Pierre, Pierre, and even Peter. His family name was sometimes spelled as one word and sometimes two. He may or may not have been the son of Count Jean-Pierre de Sales, a member of the well-known house of de Sales. The story of his life is described in his autobiographical *Mémoires*\*, which were published posthumously in 1873.<sup>(9)</sup> The *Mémoires* are noticeably inaccurate in many places and Dufour and Hamelin note, "In the present state of research it is difficult to separate truth from falsehood since the errors, contradictions, improbabilities, and abridgements in his account, whether deliberate or not, help to confuse issues and even tend to cast doubt on his identity."<sup>(10a)</sup> Reginald Fitz, who seems more inclined to accept the

---

\* *Laterrière wrote his memoirs in 1812, three years before his death, and they remained with his descendents, in manuscript form, until 1870 when they were brought to the attention of the historian Abbé Henri Casgrain who arranged for them to be edited by Alfred Garneau; they were published in an "édition intime" in 1873.*<sup>(9)</sup> *The original has not been found and the printed version is based on a copy made in 1855 by Laterrière's grandson.*<sup>(8)</sup> *Only one hundred copies were produced because his family did not want too many family details to be revealed. The book was reprinted in 1980 and, with some useful commentary and a chronology by Bernard Andrès, in 2003. A translation, by David Heald, of the sections on his time at Harvard was published in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal. 1909, 162(16):517-524. A digitised version of the 1873 edition of the Memoires is freely available at the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. (<http://www.banq.qc.ca>)*



Portrait of Pierre de Sales Laterrière, reproduction thanks to Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec, Québec, E6. S8, SS1, SSS286, D1279, PA3.

statements presented in the *Mémoires*, observes, "The whole affair [his reported address to the Royal Society of Arts in London] serves to remind the reader once more that he must consult the Memoir for pleasure and not for minute historical accuracy."<sup>(11)</sup> Bernard Andrès and René Beaudoin, who have done much research on Laterrière,<sup>(7,8)</sup> are more accepting of the statements given in the *Mémoires* but the only thing one can say with absolute certainty is that aspects of his lineage and his life are unclear and the exact dates on which

events occurred is often unknown.

Despite all the erroneous, contradictory and improbable reports, the most important facts in Laterrière's life, especially after he moved to Canada, are fairly well documented and corroborated. After he left home, Laterrière spent some time in Paris, where he says he studied medicine in 1765/1766 with the famous surgeon Charles Dionis (1710–1776) and apprenticed under a Dr. de la Rochambeau (or Rochambaux), a physician to Louis XV's Queen, Marie Leczinska. He then travelled to

London, England and stayed for several months before deciding to come to Canada, where he had some contacts. Together with his uncle (?) Pascal Rustan (Fabre), he sailed from London on July 15, 1766, on the barque *London* and arrived in Quebec City in early September. He subsequently spent time in both Quebec City and Montreal (an eight-day journey apart, at that time) and worked in several stores owned by Alexandre Dumas, a friend of his uncle. The stores sold drugs, among other things, and probably also offered opportunities to practise medicine. For about fifteen months he shared a medical partnership in St. Thomas, near Montmagny, with Dr. Jean-Bernard du Bergès (or Dubergès), who held a medical diploma from Montpellier.<sup>(8)</sup>

In 1771 he became the Quebec City agent for the Forges Saint-Maurice, and as he says in his *Mémoires*, "ma pratique comme tel se réduisit au traitement des jeunes gens atteints de syphilis." Les Forges, near Trois-Rivières, was the first (and at that time the largest) industrial complex in Canada. During the American Revolution and the subsequent American invasion of Canada, the ownership of the Forges changed; Laterrière became a shareholder, moved to Trois-Rivières and took over management of the ironworks. In 1779, following (probably false) accusations of involvement in selling information as well as iron to the invading American army, he was arrested and held until August 1782. He then went to Newfoundland to do some trading for a few months and doubtless to lie low, but returned to Quebec in 1783, settled near Quebec City and, according to his *Mémoires*, earned a good living practising medicine and doing some trading.

*In 1779, following (probably false) accusations of involvement in selling information as well as iron to the invading American army, he was arrested and held until August 1782.*

He applied to the Board of Examiners in Quebec City for a licence, but he did not pass the examination and could not produce a certificate, so his application was rejected.



Laterrière's life seemed to be settled, but on April 30, 1788, the governor, Lord Dorchester, proclaimed *An Act or Ordinance to prevent persons practising physic and surgery within the Province of Quebec, or Midwifery in the towns of Quebec or Montreal, without Licence.*<sup>(12)</sup> The relevant part of the Act reads:

Whereas many inconveniences have arisen to His Majesty's subjects in this Province, from unskilful persons practising physic and surgery; be it enacted by His Excellency the Governor and the Legislative Council that after the first day of November next, no person whatsoever shall on any pretence sell, vend or distribute medicines by retail, or prescribe for sick persons for gain, or practice physic or surgery within the Province, or practise midwifery in the towns of Quebec and Montreal, or the suburbs thereof, without licence having had and obtained from His Excellency the Governor or the Commander in Chief of the Province, for the time being, which licence shall not be granted but upon certificate of the person applying for the same, having been examined and approved by such persons as the Governor or Commander in Chief, for the time being, may have appointed for the purpose of examining and inquiring into the knowledge of such persons in physic, or skill in surgery, or pharmacy, or midwifery, a copy of which certificate is to be annexed to the licence, which is to be enregistered in the office of the clerk of the peace of the district where the practitioner resides. ... Provided

always, and be it hereby enacted, that nothing in this Ordinance shall extend, or be construed to extend, to the subjecting such persons as have taken a degree in any University ...

Though Laterrière states in his *Mémoires* that he had obtained a medical certificate in Paris, no trace or evidence of such a document has ever been found; Laterrière explained that he had lost his "certificats de Saint-Côme" [a college of surgeons in Paris] and his "acte d'apprentissage" in Paris. He applied to the Board of Examiners in Quebec City for a licence, but he did not pass the examination and could not produce a certificate, so his application was rejected. According to his *Mémoires*, his examination ran from 8am to 4pm, included facing a Board of four councilors and four doctors, and also involved contending with an audience of curious onlookers. If the *Mémoires* are to be believed, the Board was prejudiced against him for some reason (possibly connected to his alleged activities during the American invasion).

However, one of the audience was Thomas Aston Coffin, a 1772 Harvard graduate, who had moved to Canada with other Loyalists and subsequently became private secretary to Sir Guy Carleton, commander-in-chief of British forces in North America. In 1786 Coffin was civil secretary and controller of public accounts, based in Quebec City. He apparently recognised Laterrière's potential and urged him to go to the new medical school at his alma mater<sup>†</sup>. In fact, it appears the Board of Examiners also thought this was a good idea and promised Laterrière a certificate stating he had done well in front of it (but clearly not well enough!) Armed with this certificate and accompanied by his brother-in-law and "deux sauvages qui lui servaient de guides," he left Quebec in the autumn of 1788 and by December 15 was already borrowing books from the Harvard library.<sup>(13)</sup>

Laterrière apparently obtained admission by approaching the President of Harvard College, Joseph Willard, who recommended him to the Professor of Anatomy, John Warren. Warren

---

† The medical school dated from September 19, 1782 when the President and Fellows of Harvard College adopted a report outlining plans for a medical school; its first two graduates, in July 1788, were John Fleet (1766-1813) and George Holmes Hall (d. 1807). Medical education in that era meant attending formal lectures for a semester or two, and being apprenticed to a practising physician for several years. No academic preparation was required and no written exams were mandatory. Students did not pay tuition, but bought admission tickets to professors' lectures. Since there was no teaching hospital, there was very little clinical training as part of the degree requirement. Until 1811, graduates received the degree of Bachelor of Medicine — unless they were among the very few to follow a seven-year course.

met Laterrière and agreed to support his application and to discuss the matter with his colleagues. The next morning the members of the medical faculty convened at Warren's home to examine the first foreign student, who had come to complete his medical education at their new school. Warren was so pleased when his colleagues accepted his new protégé that he invited Laterrière to stay for dinner with the family. Fitz, who admits that his own account must give "some rein to the imagination" notes, "One is puzzled, however, to find that no record of the episode appears in the annals of the Corporation or Faculty, and indeed the exact manner of La Terrière's (sic) admission to the medical school is doubtful."<sup>(13)</sup> The exact chronology and circumstances of his acceptance at Harvard may be unclear but there is no doubt he was admitted, presumably before he was allowed to borrow library books on December 15!

In 1788 the teaching staff at the Harvard medical school consisted of three professors: John Warren, professor of anatomy and surgery; Benjamin Waterhouse, professor of the theory and practice of physic; and Aaron Dexter, the Dean and professor of chemistry and materia medica. They gave several two- to three-hour lectures each day — considering the workload, it is probably good that they were young: Warren was thirty-five, Waterhouse was thirty-four and Dexter only thirty-eight. Laterrière was their senior, being in his mid-forties.

On June 30, 1789, after about six months of study and some practical experience, it was time for Laterrière and his classmates to undergo an oral examination and defend their dissertations in the presence of not only the

faculty but also the local medical practitioners. Laterrière says that although the Class consisted of twenty-six students, only his performance and that of one other were deemed worthy enough to earn diplomas. The other was William Pearson (1768–1795), whose dissertation on mixed fever was dedicated to Dr. Marshall Spring, of Watertown, "In testimony of whose eminence in his profession and extensive practice this dissertation is respectfully inscribed by his obliged and grateful pupil."<sup>(14)</sup> The two

successful candidates were awarded the degree of Bachelor of Medicine. It is noteworthy that the French-born Laterrière's success was certified on July 14, 1789, the day the Bastille fell; both he and Pearson were awarded their degrees the following day. The previous year Harvard had not awarded the actual degree parchments at the ceremony but, perhaps because he was a foreigner, Laterrière apparently received his at that time.<sup>‡</sup>

---

‡ As is common in Universities today, Harvard even then engaged in fund-raising and self-publicity. In August 1789, only a month after the graduation, Dr. Waterhouse, writing under the pseudonym *Cantabrigiensis*, asked John Coakley Lettsom (the founder of the Medical Society of London) for funds for the new medical school, noting, "The Canadian practitioners are beginning to come among us to attend Medical Lectures in order to qualify themselves for practice agreeable to a late ordinance offered by the celebrated Lord Dorchester, who seems determined to cut quackery out by the roots and has actually prohibited a hundred or two from practising until they put themselves under regular practice and get them certificates as qualified according to the approved mode of practice. Some Canadians have in consequence crossed the lakes and attended Medical Lectures at Cambridge by recommendation of the first character in Canada. A prospect, therefore, offers of attracting the students of that vast Province to the University. But did they know our poverty they would be convinced that the profession could not continue to exert themselves much longer for the small fees they pay."<sup>(13)</sup> (There had only been one Canadian student, but the University fund-raisers of today could not teach Dr. Waterhouse much about making the most of what you have! Furthermore, Harvard gave Lettsom an honorary degree in 1790, and in 1796 received from him a collection of rare mineral specimens, which formed the basis of the Harvard Mineralogical and Geological Museum.)

Harvard continued to try to attract Canadian students and in September 1792 the *Quebec Magazine* published a quite lengthy bilingual article / advertisement for the Harvard medical school addressed to "such young men in that province [Canada], as might be desirous of studying physic etc. and whose circumstances, either pecuniary or local, would render it impracticable, or not eligible, to go to Great Britain, for the attaining that most useful branch of science — medicine."<sup>(26)</sup>

It is noteworthy that the French-born Laterrière's success was certified on July 14, 1789, the day the Bastille fell...

As was common at the time, both men's theses were short: Laterrière's consists of 18 pages, and the actual thesis does not begin until page 11. Its subject was "puerperal fever" and it was dedicated to Drs. Warren, Waterhouse and Dexter, "Gentlemen not more distinguished by their literary accomplishments, and their professional abilities, than respected for their attention to students, and their talents for instruction by their Humble Servant, Peter de Sales La Terriere, from Canada." His introduction takes two additional pages and he notes, not unreasonably:

To produce a dissertation in a language I have never professedly studied before I entered these walls is not so easy as some perhaps may imagine: but relying on that candor which distinguishes a polite education, I am emboldened to offer this specimen of my studies, hoping that every deficiency of language will be excused.

He goes on:

I shall say a few words for the information of those who may wonder to see a person of my age engaged in the study of physic. ... Ignorance and quackery having ... spread among us, to the great detriment of the lives of his Britannic Majesty's subjects it excited the attention of the legislature, and particularly of the humane Lord Dorchester, issued an Ordonance (sic) obliging every practitioner to undergo an examination before a committee of physicians and members of the legislative council.

The certificate is signed by all three of his professors and may have been written more for the authorities in Quebec than those at Harvard.



Whereas M<sup>r</sup>. La Terriere hath diligently attended our Lectures on Anatomy and Surgery, Theory and Practice of Physic, Chemistry and Materia Medica, in this University, and whereas We the Medical Professors have strictly examined him in the above branches of our Art, and have read and approved his Dissertation on the Puerperal Fever We do hereby certify that we have found him so far qualified in his profession as to recommend him to the Reverend and Honorable the Corporation and Officers, as worthy of a degree of Bachelor in Medicine.

In Testimony whereof, We have hereunto subscribed our names this 14<sup>th</sup> day of July 1789

University of Cambridge  
 J. Warren M.D. Master Chirurgery Prof.  
 R. Waterhouse M.D. Thes. & Prae. Prof.  
 A. Dexter M.D. Chem. & Materia Medica Prof.

Certificate attesting to Pierre de Sales Laterrière's degree of Bachelor of Medicine, 14 July, 1789. Reproduction thanks to Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec, Québec, P1000. S3, D2213.

The result of this plan was – a certain number having been examined, were approved and permitted to go on in practice; a number were rejected as unqualified and some were passed conditionally, that is, they were recommended to pass some time at any university, where medicine is taught with regularity, according to the most improved British systems.

Finding myself included among the last, I ... set off

for the University of Cambridge, which had been strongly recommended to me as a medical school where I could obtain every thing the Ordonance required of me.

(5)

As was the case in Quebec when McGill's first medical degree was awarded in 1833,<sup>(4,15)</sup> there were various undercurrents at play in Boston. Like the Medical Board in Montreal sixty years later, the Massachusetts Medical Society, which had the right to licence



Pierre de Sales Laterrière's Harvard Medical diploma, 15 July, 1789. Reproduction thanks to Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec, Québec, P1000. S3, D2213.

physicians, was increasingly worried that Harvard's new medical school would impinge on its turf and that the university's degrees would confer the right to practise. The Society's President, Cotton Tufts, conveyed his concerns to Harvard's President Willard in October 1789. His letter has been lost, but Willard's response confirmed only that Laterrière had received a diploma and was a foreigner. Verifying that Harvard clearly HAD awarded an obscure Canadian a medical degree did not assuage Tufts' annoyance, since the privileges of a medical degree included the right to practise in most parts of the world. The argument continued for several years and, as with the McGill medical degrees, subsequent Harvard diplomas were changed so that the "word[s] and expression[s] that could be

construed as implying a right or licence to practice physic were expunged."<sup>(13)</sup>

In fact, Laterrière received not only a degree but also a certificate signed by his three professors. The certificate is, according to Fitz, unlike anything seen before or since. It reads:

Whereas Mr. La Terrière hath diligently attended our lectures on Anatomy and Surgery, Theory and Practice of Physic, Chemistry and Materia Medica, in this University, we the medical professors have strictly examined him in the above branches of our Art and have read and approved his dissertation on the Puerperal Fever we do hereby certify that we have found him so far qualified in his profession as to recommend him to the

reverend and honorable Corporation and Overseers as worthy of a degree of Bachelor in medicine. In testimony whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names this 14th day of July 1789.<sup>(16)</sup>

The certificate is signed by all three of his professors and may have been written more for the authorities in Quebec than those at Harvard.

According to Fitz, the degree itself is also unusual.<sup>(16)</sup> It was apparently the practice in those days for graduates to have their own degree certificates prepared and then to get them signed by anyone they could find. The Laterrière diploma appears to have been prepared by a professional scrivener with university sanction and looks more like an honorary than a

After a brief oral examination and scrutiny of his extraordinary degree and certificate, the Board of Medical Examiners promptly awarded him the right to practise.



regular degree. Fitz provides a translation from the original Latin:

The Senate of Harvard University of Cambridge in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts sends to all to whom the present letter arrives eternal greeting in the Lord.

Whereas Peter de Sales La Terrière, a Canadian, a man endowed with great talents and knowledge and adorned with excellent character, after he had devoted much time to the study and practice of medicine and constantly attended the lectures of all the professors of medicine of this University and whereas, after holding a public examination and announcing his dissertation on Puerperal Fever, all the aforesaid professors found that he had made praiseworthy progress in the art of medicine and gave a written testimonial to that effect that it be known that he is worthy of being admitted to the grade of Bachelor of Medicine.

Wherefore, we, the President and Fellows, with the consent of the reverend Overseers and of the aforesaid University, have admitted Peter de Sales La Terrière to the grade of Bachelor of Medicine and have given him the right of giving counsel in medicine, of engaging in practice and the other functions that Bachelors of Medicine are wont to perform, and we have granted him all the insignia, rights and privileges, dignities and honors by which those who have

been elevated to a degree of this sort anywhere in the world are adorned or deserve to be adorned.

In testimony of this act, to this letter, corroborated by our common seal, we have, on 15th of July in the human year of salvation 1789 and the 14th of the American Republic, affixed our chirographies.<sup>(16,17)</sup>

Laterrière returned to Quebec City quite quickly (apparently without the "deux sauvages" to guide him), and met his friend Coffin there on August 15th. After a brief oral examination and scrutiny of his extraordinary

degree and certificate, the Board of Medical Examiners promptly awarded him the right to practise. According to Laterrière's *Mémoires*,<sup>(9)</sup> on August 19, 1789, the Board stated, "... Peter de Sales La Terrière, late of the Parish of Gentilly, in the district of Quebec, Gentleman, appeared this day before us, and produced a bachelor's degree in physic from the University of Cambridge, in the State of Massachusetts Bay, very ample certificates of his great exertions in study and a recommendation from the Professors of said University, also a recommendatory letter from Doctor Pain (sic)<sup>§</sup>, late physician to the British hospital at Halifax,

---

§ "Dr Pain" is certainly Dr William Paine, who was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, on 5 June 1750, graduated in arts from Harvard in 1768, was awarded an MD by Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1774, and qualified as a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (LRCP) of London in 1781. He was a Loyalist who became a British army physician and in 1782 was posted to Nova Scotia. At the time of his arrival there, Dr Paine was the most highly qualified medical doctor to have practised in the province, for he was the first to have both the MD and the LRCP qualifications. He remained in Halifax until June 1784, when he moved to Passamaquoddy in New Brunswick. Although he had been banished from Massachusetts for political reasons, he was accepted back into Worcester in 1789, where he lived and practised until his death in 1833.<sup>(27)</sup>

According to the *Mémoires*, Paine's letter was actually addressed to Dr. Nooth, who Laterrière describes as "le premier médecin anglois de Québec". Dr. John Mervin Nooth had been the superintendent general in charge of all British military hospitals in North America and the West Indies, and had been Paine's superior while Paine was the director of all the British army hospitals in Halifax; in 1788 Nooth had been appointed superintendent general of hospitals in Quebec City. He was the inventor of Nooth's Apparatus, which is described in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* as being "widely employed for some decades to produce fixed air, which among many uses was highly regarded as a therapeutic agent. His suggestion that his method would permit the production of artificial spring waters, thus saving patients the expense of visiting distant spas, proved unsuccessful in practice, but it presaged the now ubiquitous carbonated beverage industry."<sup>(10b,28)</sup>

in the Province of Nova Scotia: upon examination we found him deserving thereof, and conceive that he may be licensed to practise Physic, Surgery and Pharmacy." Obviously his 'very ample' Harvard degree and certificate had done the trick!

Though there were certainly foreign medical graduates practising in Canada before 1789, they were usually retired or active military medical officers, or civilians who had received their degrees before setting foot in Canada. It is unclear whether Laterrière was the first 'real' Canadian to obtain a medical degree but it seems likely. Lefebvre and Desjardins, in their useful article on Canadians who received foreign medical degrees in the 19th century,<sup>(18)</sup> do not mention him at all, possibly because he was born in France, though he had lived in Canada for over 20 years before obtaining the degree and would certainly fit the modern definition of a Canadian citizen. The earliest foreign medical graduate recognized by Lefebvre and Desjardins is the Canadian-born François Rieutord who received his training at Queen's College in New Jersey, "probably before 1793."<sup>(10c,18)</sup> They also refer to François Blanchet, whose 246-page French-language thesis (which is in the Osler Library) was presented in New York in 1800.<sup>(19)</sup> Their list mentions the 1810 Edinburgh graduate Thomas Fargues, from Quebec, but does not mention either of the Nova Scotians, Robert Bayard and William Almond, who received Edinburgh degrees in 1809. All three were born in Canada, and their theses are all in the Osler Library.<sup>(2)</sup>

For several years after obtaining his Quebec licence Laterrière seems to have given up his involvement in trading and

become a full-time physician and surgeon. He held official appointments as a doctor in several hospitals as well as a prison in Trois-Rivières, and in 1792 had a medical apprentice, Jean Duff. He maintained his interest in midwifery, and in March 1791 sent his "Representations concerning the practice of midwifery in country places" to the Legislative Council of Quebec.<sup>(20)</sup> In 1807–08, while in Europe trying to claim a family inheritance in France, he visited London and in 1807 was elected a Corresponding Member of the Royal Society of Arts.<sup>(21)</sup> He continued to operate a pharmacy and to practise medicine in Quebec City until about 1810, when he purchased the Seigneurie des Éboulements, and in 1813 was appointed as a Judge for the District of Québec.<sup>(22)</sup> He wrote his *Mémoires* in 1811-1812, died in Quebec City on June 14, 1815, and is buried in the Chapel of St. Anne in the cathedral of Québec.

Laterrière had three children, a girl and two boys, both the boys also became doctors. Pierre-Jean<sup>(10d)</sup> was born in July 1789 (perhaps one explanation for his father's quick return from Harvard?), and, after an apprenticeship with his father, studied medicine with Astley Cooper at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. According to the records of the Royal College of Surgeons, he was examined and awarded the College diploma (thus becoming a member) on May 19th, 1809. He practiced medicine in Quebec City, operated a drug store, and played a prominent part in the medical life of the city. Pierre-Jean was among the founders of the Quebec Dispensary (which provided free drugs to the needy) and was a member of the founding committee of a Quebec City branch of the Royal

Humane Society of London for the Recovery of the Apparently Drowned or Dead, a Society which had interested his father during the latter's 1807–08 sojourn in London.<sup>(23)</sup> In 1823, he and his English wife moved to London, a base from which he spent the rest of his life, though he often traveled between Canada and Europe, trying to bring the deteriorating political situation in Quebec to the attention of the British people and government.<sup>(24)</sup> He died in 1834, while on a visit to Les Éboulements, in Quebec.

His younger brother, Marc-Pascal,<sup>(10e)</sup> was born in 1792 and studied medicine under Benjamin Rush in Philadelphia.<sup>(25)</sup> He went on to become a member of the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada and, after Upper and Lower Canada were united, the Province of Canada. He ran, unsuccessfully, for a seat in the first parliament of Canada in 1867 and died in 1872. ❀

## References

1. Wallis, Faith. An Outstanding Acquisition: 22,500 Medical theses from France. *Osler Library Newsletter*. 1988 June; no.58:2. (A digitised version is freely available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/osler-library/no58June1988.pdf>)
2. Crawford, David S. Edinburgh University medical theses at the Osler Library. *Osler Library Newsletter*. 2004; no.101:1-6. (A digitised version is freely available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/osler-library/Osln101.pdf>)
3. Smellie, William. *Thesaurus Medicus: sive, disputationum, in Academia Edinensi, ad rem medicam pertinentium, a collegio instituto ad hoc usque tempus, delectus*. Edinburgi: Typis academicis, 1778-1785.

*He held official appointments as a doctor in several hospitals as well as a prison in Trois-Rivières, and in 1792 had a medical apprentice, Jean Duff.*

4. Crawford, David S. Montreal, Medicine and William Leslie Logie: McGill's first graduate and Canada's first medical graduate. 175th anniversary, 1833-2008. *Osler Library Newsletter*. 2008; no.109:1-7. (A digitised version is freely available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/osler-library/No1092008.pdf> )
5. Laterrière, Pierre de Sales. *A Dissertation on the Puerperal Fever*. Boston: Samuel Hall, 1789. (A French translation of the thesis is available as part of Jacques G. Ruelland's biographical article, *Pierre de Sales Laterrière 1745-1815 Médecin et libre penseur*, at <http://marigot.ca/html/setintro.htm> )
6. Fauteaux, Ægidius. La thèse de Laterrière. *Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*. 1931; 37:174-175.
7. Andrès, Bernard. L'influence des livres: figures du savoir médical chez Pierre de Sales. Laterrière et Philippe Aubert de Gaspé fils. *Voix et Images*. 1994; 19(3):466-486. (A digitised version is freely available at <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/201113ar> )
8. Beaudoin, René. Pierre de Sales Laterrière, médecin, mémorialiste et prototype de l'aventurier des lettres. *Cahiers de l'ALAQ*. 1993 août; no.2:43-56.
9. Laterrière, Pierre de Sales. *Les Mémoires de Pierre de Sales Laterrière, suivi de Correspondances*. [édité par] Bernard Andrès. Montréal: Triptyque, 2003.
10. *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. (Freely available at <http://www.biographi.ca>)
  - a. see Sales Laterrière, Pierre de
  - b. see Nooth, John Mervin
  - c. see Rieutord, Jean-Baptiste (Jean-Baptiste is François Rieutord's father; François is mentioned in the final paragraphs)
  - d. see Sales Laterrière, Pierre-Jean de
  - e. see Laterrière, Marc-Pascal de Sales
11. Fitz, Reginald. The surprising career of Peter La Terrière, Bachelor in Medicine (Part I). *Annals of Medical History*. 1941 July; Ser.3, 3:265-282.
12. *An Act or Ordinance to prevent persons practising physic and surgery within the Province of Quebec, or Midwifery in the towns of Quebec or Montreal, without Licence*. 1788; 28 Geo III, c8. (A digitised version is available to subscribers at <http://www.canadiana.org/view/42695/252> )
13. Fitz, Reginald. The surprising career of Peter La Terrière, Bachelor in Medicine (Part II). *Annals of Medical History*. 1941 September; Ser.3, 3:395-417.
14. Pearson, William. *A dissertation on the mixed fever: delivered June 30, 1789, at a public examination for the degree of Bachelor in Medicine, before the Rev. Joseph Willard, S.T.D. president, the medical professors, and the governors of the university at Cambridge in America*. [Boston: s.n., 1789.]
15. Tunis, Barbara R. Medical licensing in Lower Canada: the dispute over Canada's first medical degree. *Canadian Historical Review*. 1974 Dec; 55(4):489-504. (A digitised version is available to subscribers at <http://www.metapress.com/content/120322/> )
16. Fitz, Reginald. A word from the age that is past. *Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*. 1945; 19(2):48-51.
17. Fitz, Reginald. The Harvard Medical School 1788-89. Mémoires de Pierre de Sales La Terrière et ses traverses. *Harvard Medical Alumni Bulletin*. 1960 October; 35:20-24.
18. Lefebvre, Jean-Jacques; Desjardins, Edouard. Les médecins canadiens diplômés des universités étrangères au XIXe siècle. *Union Médicale du Canada*. 1972 mai; 101:935-951.
19. Blanchet, François Xavier. *Recherches sur la medecine, ou L'application de la chimie a la medecine*. New-York: L'Imprimerie de Parisot, 1800.
20. *Fonds de la Seigneurie des Éboulements, 22 mars 1791*. pp 483-485. Archives des Frères du Sacré Coeur: Ancienne-Lorette, Quebec. (A typed copy of this document, made in 1941, is in the Countway Library at Harvard University.)
21. Royal Society of Arts. Personal communication, January 2009.
22. *The Quebec Gazette – Gazette de Québec*. 1813 January 14.
23. *The Quebec Gazette – Gazette de Québec*. 1808 June 30. (Laterrière published a notice in this issue announcing his election and providing a French translation of the official letter from the Royal Society of Arts.)
24. "A Canadian" [i.e. Laterrière, Pierre-Jean de Sales]. *A Political and Historical Account of Lower Canada, With Remarks on the Present Situation of the People, As Regards Their Manners, Character, Religion, &C. &C*. London: W. Marsh & A. Miller; Edinburgh: Constable, 1830.
25. Casgrain, Henri Raymond. *La famille de Sales Laterrière*. Québec: Atelier typographique de L. Brousseau, 1870.
26. *The Quebec Magazine – Le Magasin de Québec*. 1792; 1(2):108-116.
27. Marble, Allan Everett. *Surgeon, Smallpox and the Poor: a history of medicine and social conditions in Nova Scotia, 1749-1799*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.
28. Zuck, David. Dr. Nooth and his apparatus: the role of carbon dioxide in medicine in

the late eighteenth century. *British Journal of Anaesthesia*. 1978; 50:393-405. (A digitised version is available to subscribers at <http://bjaoxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/50/4/393> )

#### Further reading

Andrès, Bernard. *L'Énigme de Sales Laterrière*. Montreal: Québec Amérique, 2000.

Andrès, Bernard. The life & times of Pierre de Sales Laterrière. *The Beaver: Exploring Canada's History*. 2002 Aug-Sept; 82(4):23-26. (A digitised version is freely available at [http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary\\_0286-31070659\\_ITM](http://www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-31070659_ITM))

#### Thanks

This paper would not have been written had W.W. Francis not noted "First foreign medical graduate of Harvard" on the Osler Library's catalogue card of the Laterrière thesis; this note was transferred to the online catalogue record where it caught my eye. Being a sceptic, I checked this out with my old friend Lucretia McClure of the Countway Library at Harvard, who confirmed this statement and referred me to some further information on Laterrière. As usual my friend and colleague Deanna Cowan rigorously edited my prose and my references; if this brief article is readable it is thanks to her editorial prowess.

---

---

## ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE, WAR AND ANATOMICAL ATLAS PUBLISHING

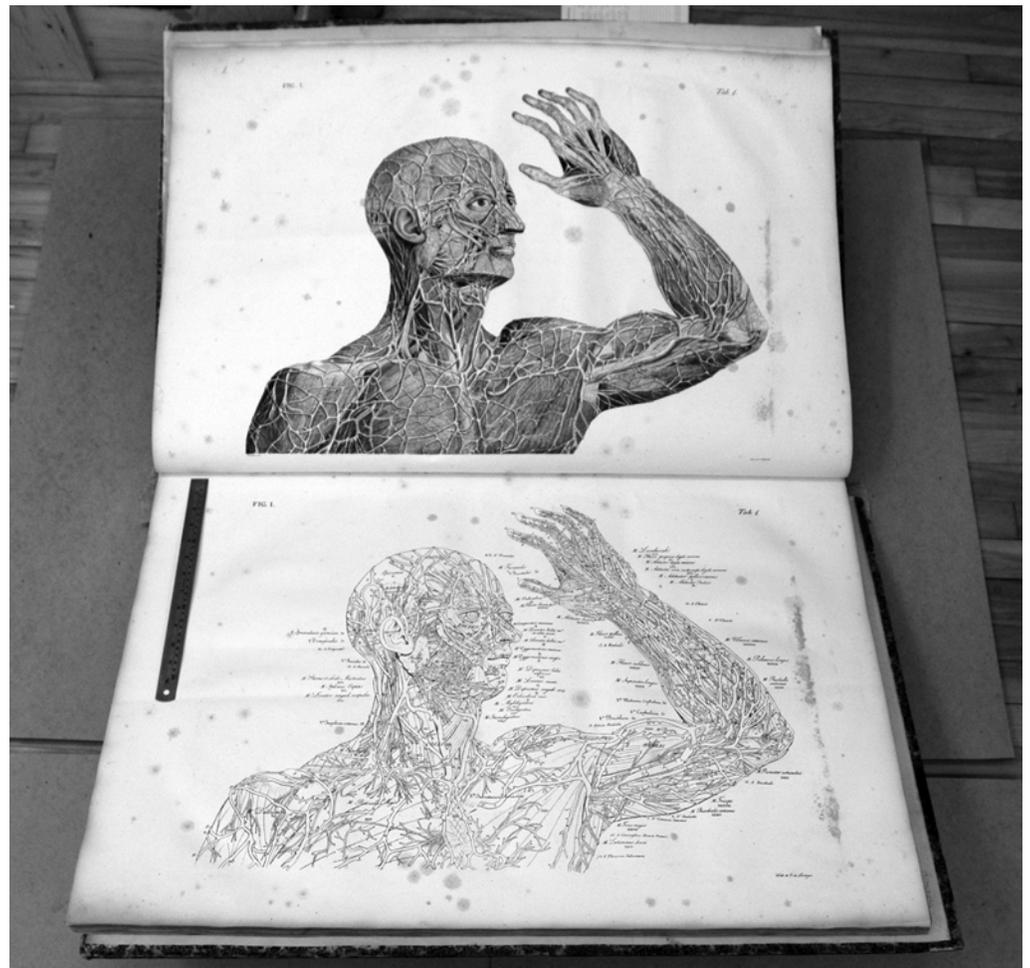
by Chris Lyons

The Osler Library is pleased to announce that it has added something big to its collection of anatomical atlases; in fact, it is the biggest book in our library. Entitled *Planches anatomiques du corps humain, exécutées d'après les dimensions naturelles accompagnées d'un texte explicative*, this bibliographic behemoth is 3

feet high by 24.5 inches wide and features full sized illustrations of various aspects of the human body. We purchased this rare work at auction in Germany last November. According to World-Cat, the union catalogue of North American, European and other academic and national libraries, only one other Canadian library and 6 American libraries possess this atlas. Given its unwieldy size, readers sometimes removed the plates they needed in their work, possibly for display in a classroom; our copy shows evidence of this.

This work was produced in fifteen parts in Paris between 1823 and 1826 by a physician named Francesco Antommarchi (1789-1838). The printer, the

*This work was produced in fifteen parts in Paris between 1823 and 1826 by a physician named Francesco Antommarchi (1789-1838).*



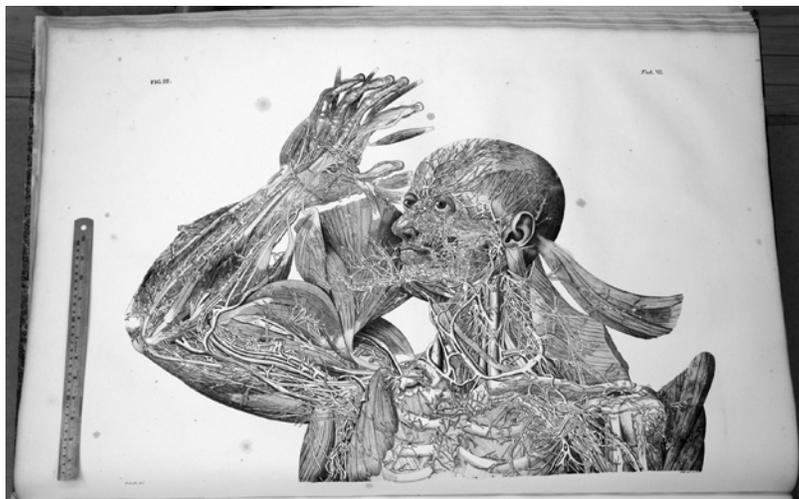
After returning to Paris in 1822 he began producing the *Planches anatomiques*, using several of Mascagni's illustrations, along with some adaptations and new ones.



Comte de Lateyrie, was a pioneer of the new printing technique of lithography, a process which simplified book illustration. With this new process, one could transfer an illustration drawn with a greasy pencil on a hard surface,

for example stone, directly onto paper as opposed to having to engrave an image onto a metal plate first, ink the plate and then press plate to paper. Like photocopying and scanning today, however, the relative ease

of lithography may have encouraged some piracy, since many of Antommarchi's illustrations were actually done by an Italian anatomy professor named Paolo Mascagni (1752-1815). According to *Anatomy as Art*<sup>1</sup>, Mascagni spent several years working on his monumental *Anatomia Universale*, but this and other works remained unpublished at the time of his death in 1815. Antommarchi, who had been Mascagni's prosector at the University of Siena, edited two of these posthumous publications until a quarrel broke out with Mascagni's estate over the profits. In 1819 the doctor left for St. Helena to become the exiled Napoleon's physician. He wrote about this experience in a book entitled *Mémoires du docteur F. Antommarchi, ou, Les derniers momens de Napoléon*, which the McGill Library has in its collection. After



returning to Paris in 1822 he began producing the *Planches anatomiques*, using several of Mascagni's illustrations, along with some adaptations and new ones. This was issued in 15 parts between 1823 and 1826. Meanwhile, an authorized version of the *Anatomia Universa* began production in Pisa. It was issued in 9 parts between 1823 and 1832, using the older and more labour intensive illustrative printing technique of engraving. Like Antommarchi's work, it was too large to be easily used, so a relatively smaller folio version entitled *Anatomia Universale* was published in 1833 in Florence.<sup>2</sup> In an earlier attempt to acquire this atlas, the Osler Library was the underbidder of the 1833 work at the Christie's auction of the anatomical books of Dr. Dean Edell in 2007, so getting the full sized Antommarchi edition was particularly sweet. Viewers so far have been very impressed with both the size of the work and the quality of the illustrations. The Osler Library's conservator Terry Rutherford has done some restoration work so that more people can enjoy this literally monumental work. ❁

#### Notes

- 1 *Anatomy as Art: The Dean Edell Collection*. New York: Christie's, 2007.
- 2 Information was drawn from the work noted above plus Mascagni: *Images from Anatomia Universa*. University of Iowa, Hardin Library. <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/hardin/mascagni/index.html> [accessed 19 March 2009].

---



---

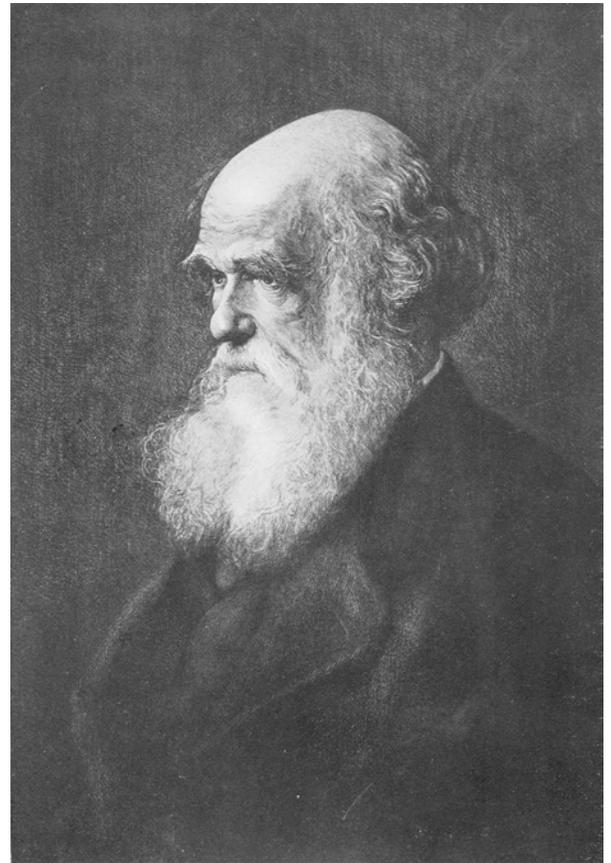
## THE OSLERS AND CHARLES DARWIN

by Pamela Miller

This year marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin. The year 2009 is also the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of, *On the Origin of Species* (1859) which stirred up scientific, philosophical and religious controversies that endure to the present. William Osler was born, was educated and flourished as the debates continued. Osler noted inside the cover of, "On the tendency of species to form varieties; and on the perpetuation of varieties and species by natural means of selection by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace..." taken from the *Journal of the Proceedings of the Linnean Society*, vol. 3 no. 9, London, 1858 (B.O. 1565),

"I have had this number bound separately as containing the two most fruitful contributions to science made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contributions which have revolutionized modern thought... I only saw Darwin once. During the winter of 1872-3 his son Francis worked at the table next to me in Burdon Sanderson's laboratory at University College. Several times in the spring he talked of taking me to Down for the week-end, but his father was ailing. It was I think, the next spring, I mean in '74, that I saw him at the Royal Society reception (?).

He spoke much of Principal Dawson of McGill, for whose



Charles Darwin 1809-1882, Osler Library Portrait Collection

work on fossil botany he had a great regard. I remember how pleased I was that he should have asked after Dr. Dawson. He was a most kindly old man, of large frame, with great bushy beard and eyebrows. Feb. 28, 1915. W.O."

Dawson did not accept Darwin's theory of evolution but this clearly did not diminish their mutual respect.

For years Dawson taught botany in the Faculty of Medicine and Osler refused McGill's initial offer of employment which was to teach Dawson's course, partly

*He spoke much of Principal Dawson of McGill, for whose work on fossil botany he had a great regard.*

on the grounds that he did not know enough about the subject. This so called lack of botanical knowledge did not prevent Osler from assembling a superb collection of herbals for his library including copies of works by Theophrastus (c.371-287 B.C.) the founder of botany, Dioscorides (1<sup>st</sup> century) and the 13<sup>th</sup> century Arabic manuscript of al-Ghafiqi. Osler's collection of Darwinian material includes the works of Darwin as well as those of Erasmus Darwin, Sir Francis Galton, Thomas Henry Huxley, Gregor Johann Mendel, Herbert Spencer, Alfred Russel Wallace and August Weismann.

*Had he accepted the invitation, he would have joined the Beagle, and worked with Charles Darwin on his famous voyage.*



Family history records that in 1832 Osler's father Featherstone, while stationed in Rio de Janeiro on the *Algerine*, received an invitation from the Captain of a frigate sailing on special service to the East Indies, to replace the officer in charge of the scientific department. Featherstone was tempted, but turned down the invitation because his father was unwell and he wished to return to England see him and to write naval exams necessary to confirm his officer's rank.<sup>2</sup> Had he accepted the invitation, he would have joined the *Beagle*, and worked with Charles Darwin on his famous voyage. Instead Featherstone returned to England, left the navy for the church, and served in Canada where he and his wife Ellen raised their talented children. ❀

#### Notes

1 *Lions in the Way, A Discursive History of the Oslers*, Anne Wilkinson, Toronto, 1956, p.15.

## ROLAND'S CANADIAN MEDICAL HISTORY MINIATURES

*by Charles G. Roland*

### Bishop's College Medical School

Long extinct, Bishop's Medical School played an important role for a few years at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The school was the intellectual child of the St. Lawrence School of Medicine, though there was no direct link. These two medical schools have been the only ones to challenge the hegemony of the McGill Faculty of Medicine in English-language medical teaching in Quebec.

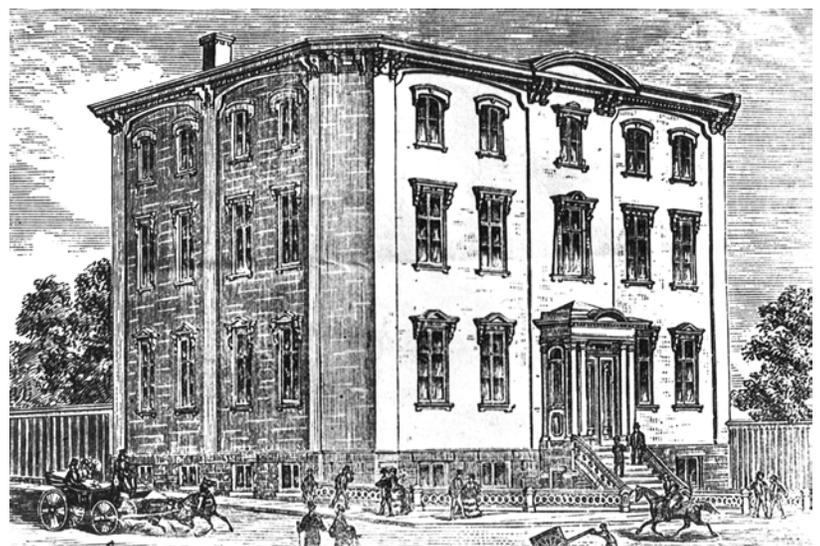
McGill was incorporated in 1829. The St. Lawrence school functioned briefly around 1850 but did not long survive the

competition. Bishop's did considerably better, offering medical education from 1871 until 1905.

As is so often the case with short-lived institutions, it was the energy of one person that provided much of the impetus; once removed, the school foundered. At Bishop's that vital person was Dr. Francis Wayland Campbell (1837-1905).

Not surprisingly, perhaps, one of the motivations spurring Campbell and his colleagues to establish a new school was the difficulty non-McGill practitioners had in acquiring hospital appointments. McGill controlled most of these and was loath to surrender its perquisites to outsiders. In addition, there was a conviction amongst the Bishop's pioneers that competition was good for its own sake.

The first dean of the new and as yet unnamed medical school was Dr. Charles Smallwood; Campbell was Secretary, Treasurer, and Registrar — hardly an éminence



*University of Bishop's College Medical School (from an advertisement in the Canada Medical Record for 1874). Osler Library Archives, P130 E.H. Bensley Fonds.*



Portrait of Maude Abbott by Mary Bell Eastlake. Osler Library Portrait Collection.

grise! One of the first tasks was to effect affiliation with a university so that the school could grant degrees. This was a crucial step because degree-bearing graduates of Canadian and British universities could obtain the license to practice simply by application. All others had to take, and pass, examinations administered by the Medical Board before receiving a license. Eventually the doctors were able to make suitable arrangements with the University of Bishop's College in Lennoxville, Québec. By March 1871 the University formally agreed to the proposal and established 1 October 1871 as the date to begin operations.

*Rather, the school is memorable because it accepted women as medical students while McGill adamantly refused to do so.*

Troubles loomed from the beginning. The Montreal General Hospital was a McGill enclave and now, despite earlier assurances, McGill was threatening not to let Bishop's students on the wards. This and other problems were overcome in the end and the school opened officially on schedule, in Montreal.

In 1876 a body-snatching scandal threatened the young school. The body of a woman from Cornwall, Ontario, had been removed from a cemetery there. She turned up on a dissecting table at Bishop's. The student involved was one Émile Charles Jenigor, who was warned by the school — probably Dr. Campbell — to stay away from the city to avoid arrest.

Bishop's best reason for remaining in memory relates to none of these events, however. Rather, the school is memorable because it accepted women as medical students while McGill adamantly refused to do so. Thanks to an



Wood Gold Medal awarded to another distinguished female doctor, Minnie Gomery (1875-1967) who graduated from Bishop's Medical School in 1895. Awarded to a senior student for highest aggregate marks overall. Donated by Margaret Saul.



*It is perhaps ironic that after she graduated from Bishop's, Maude Abbott joined the McGill Faculty of Medicine.*



endowment from Lord Strathcona, women were encouraged to enter McGill's main university system from 1888; but this experiment was vetoed by the medical faculty. Bishop's, deciding otherwise, thus acquired among other students, one who stands out in select group of contributors to Canadian medical science: Maude Elizabeth Seymour Abbott (1869-1940).

Abbott was a McGill graduate in Arts but could not gain acceptance into the medical school. It is perhaps ironic that after she graduated from Bishop's, Maude Abbott joined the McGill Faculty of Medicine. There, over a period of almost four decades, she established a reputation as an authoritative pathologist specializing in the study of cardiac defects. Her atlas of such defects, published in the 1930s, advanced the field enormously. Certainly it was one of the many contributions that made possible cardiac surgery as we know it today. The atlas was re-issued very recently.

Thus Bishop's College School of Medicine may have followed Dr. Francis Campbell, its strongest supporter, to the grave, but its influence lives on in the work of graduates such as Maude Abbott.



## NOTES FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY

Three hospitals are celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year: the Jewish General Hospital, the Montreal Chest Hospital and the Montreal Neurological Institute. The Jewish General Hospital has prepared a travelling exhibition



*In mid-February, library staff, friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate Dr. Theodore Sourkes 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

that will be located at the entry of the Osler Library from September 4<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup>. A display to mark the Montreal Neurological Institute's anniversary is being planned.

Dr. Edwin A. Mirand has forwarded us a copy of *Dr. Roswell Park and the World's First Cancer Center*, by Dr. Donald L. Trump and Dr. Mirand. In his note he underlines the role that William Osler played in keeping the Institute going when political support was needed to keep the institution functioning.

Our newsletter has turned green. This present issue is the first to be printed digitally without the waste of film negatives and metal plates of offset printing. The paper you are holding called Rockland 140 m in Ivory colour uses 30 percent post-consumer reclaimed material in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Your greener Newsletter is, of course, as always 100 percent recyclable. ❁

Editorial Committee for the Newsletter: Faith Wallis, Editor; Pamela Miller, History of Medicine Librarian and Assistant Editor; Lily Szczygiel, Editorial Assistant.

Address: Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, McIntyre Medical Sciences Building, 3655 Promenade Sir-William-Osler, Montréal, Québec, Canada, H3G 1Y6.

Tel: (514) 398-4475 ext. 09873

Fax: (514) 398-5747

E-mail: [osler.library@mcgill.ca](mailto:osler.library@mcgill.ca)

URL: <http://www.mcgill.ca/osler-library/>

Legal Deposit 1/2009 ISSN 0085-4557 (Print)

Legal Deposit 1/2009 ISSN 1712-7955 (Online)