



# THE OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

Dr. Chuck Roland, Hannah Professor Emeritus, McMaster University, is familiar to us as a dedicated Oslerian. Keeping close to the family, he is currently writing a biography of Dr. Archibald E. Malloch (1844-1919) a man with wonderful Oslerian connections who first introduced Listerian concepts to Canadian medicine. Professor Archibald Malloch, A.E. Malloch's grandson, turned over a collection of delightful family letters to Dr. Roland for his research and in our lead article Dr. Roland reproduces a selection of correspondence to A.E. Malloch from his mother Elizabeth, providing the family context in which a young Canadian medical student pursued his studies at the University of Glasgow. The Osler Library is doubly blessed as Professor Malloch has donated the letters to the Osler Library, adding more fascinating material to the Malloch Family Fonds. Dr. Roland has donated his transcriptions!

Dr. Richard Fraser of McGill's Department of Pathology is the curator of the current exhibition at the Osler Library entitled *War, Bones and Books, the McGill Medical Museum and the American Civil War*. In explaining how this material relates to McGill and the Osler Library, Dr. Fraser gives us a fascinating glimpse into one of McGill's lesser-known heritage collections.

Our annual report and appeal, highlighting our year's activities completes this issue. ❀

## "MY DEAR ARCHY"

Recently I have had the pleasure of studying a group of letters written by Elizabeth Malloch (1807-1890) of Brockville to her son, Archy. The letters were written between 1864 and 1867. "Archy" may be better known to readers as Dr. Archibald E. Malloch (1844-1919), who notably was a student and then served as house surgeon to Joseph Lister in the 1860s. He returned to Canada in 1869 to practice medicine in Hamilton, Ontario – he was the first to introduce the full Listerian antiseptics into Canada. He was also, for the final 50 years of his life, a warm friend of Sir William Osler.

This fascinating material has come into my hands through the kindness of Professor Archibald Malloch, grandson to the "Archy" of the letters. I am writing a biography of the grandfather, a task for which the letters provide invaluable information. Ultimately, Prof. Malloch will donate the collection to the Osler Library Archives – to which he is already a generous and substantial benefactor.

Except for the first few letters written to Archy while he visited his half-sister Sarah in Hamilton, all reached him while he was a student in Glasgow. Scotland was the birthplace of both George and Elizabeth (Stewart) Malloch, and many letters refer to visits he made or was to make to relatives and family friends there.

Every letter begins, "My dear Archy," and all letters end: "Believe me Your aff'te Mother, Elizabeth Malloch," a curiously formal conclusion that certainly would be uncommon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Elizabeth's punctuation is sometimes

haphazard and paragraphing is rare. Throughout this note, all underlining occurs in the original.

The letters contain family news and some gossip. Illness, injury, and death occupy much space. Sometimes the tone seems set a little young for their recipient, who was between 21 and 23 years of age when he received them. Certainly "Motherly Advice" was proffered frequently. For example, "I sent your letter to Ruth & in writing to me she said she enjoyed reading it much – but I took the liberty of drawing a line through one word you spoke of leafy foliage, writing as you did in haste you forgot both words meant the same thing & I erased leafy – you also made a mistake in pebbles which I set right – I did not further interfere with the text." (9 November 1865). In addition to concerns about Archy's spelling and word usage, his mother also conveyed concern about her son's penmanship: "When you cannot write long letters for want of matter take pains with the penmanship. Papa complains that you are falling off in your writing & that won't do." (29 November 1865.) Nevertheless,

by  
Dr. Charles G.  
Roland



Archibald E.  
Malloch

*She advised Archy that "The way to get on wisely & well in this world is to have a loving spirit to all, even to such as we do not wholly approve of."*

*Of all the categories of news sent to Archy by his mother, by far the most common dealt with medical observations and experiences.*



Elizabeth tries to reassure her son that his letters are welcome even if short: "Don't vex yourself at not having much news to give – we all know a student's life does not afford much of that & your studies are not perhaps just the kind you would care to dilate upon to non professionals." (6 December 1866)

But much of Elizabeth's advice was geared to more substantial issues. She advised Archy that "The way to get on wisely & well in this world is to have a loving spirit to all, even to such as we do not wholly approve of. I sometimes fear that you take prejudices against people which prevent you seeing the good that is in them – endeavour to make allowance for imperfections & while you try to avoid what you see wrong in others do not quarrel with or speak against your neighbours. When we are faithful in examining ourselves, we must be lenient to others as we know neither their training nor their peculiar temptations." (20 December 1866)

Gossip found a place in these letters, such as this acerbic observation: "Daisie Fumour [?] speaks of an engagement between her and Robert Alway Jun'r. A very fit match if they can live on air! – if they make one I suppose they will struggle on some way – both are clever enough, but neither have had good training." (20 December 1866) And Mary Watson, a friend of the family, receives a decidedly equivocal review: "James Wylie said he had a very long letter from Mary Watson with details of her gaiety – I hope it may not prove injurious to her health which was never the best – owing in a great measure to her excitable temperament – for from her infancy she was bent like the whole world on having her will – & after a fight generally managed to get it – but this struggle was neither good for body or mind, what it may end in no one can foresee but she is undoubtedly gifted with looks & ability & has a very kind heart." (27 December 1866)

A recurring theme is the perils of tobacco and alcohol. Temperance was a vigorous movement in Ontario at the time and Elizabeth believed in the cause and urged its principles. She returned to her admonitions repeatedly, sometimes overtly, sometimes

not. Smoking and taking snuff were reprehensible, though here the criticism was muted because Archy's father George, the judge, also took snuff at times. But he could give it up: "Papa said after he finished his last letter to you that he was sorry he had not told you he still continued to dilate upon abstain from snuff. I said that he knows 'well he said it might induce him to give up smoking.'" (25 July 1867)

Alcohol, however, was an unequivocal issue. "Were you a teetollar [sic] at it and the marriage?" [i.e. at a recent wedding he had attended in Hamilton, Ontario] (27 April 1865). Servants seem to have been particularly prone to the evils of drink. "This reminds me to tell you that Papa had to part with poor Gilbert to-day – he has been getting more & more unsteady & we lost all hope of reclaiming him. I cannot tell you how sorry I am about him – he could do his work well & has now thrown himself on a world that will do its best to lead him astray as long as he has money in his pocket. I did all I could to try to get him to break off his bad habits but so far without any good effect but perhaps he may yet reform – 'As long as their [sic] is life there is hope.'" (8 August 1867) But the evil was by no means limited to the hired help. Even the clergy strayed: "Moirra writes that Mr. Maclardy is giving Dr. Spence some trouble – silly man! The sooner he is put out of the church the better. I am sorry for the Spences but they should have turned him off at once & not let him get a footing there – it is difficult to get a verdict against a drinker nearly as much so as a Distiller." (31 January 1867)

Finally, rooted in the growing temperance movement in Canada, was its local manifestation. In February 1867, a Mr. Poole preached in Brockville. "He gave a Temperance lecture on Tuesday – Aunt Jessie was there & I would have gone too if Papa had not just come home. There are great efforts being made all over the Province to enlist old & young in the Temperance movement – and I hope good may be done – no one can live long without seeing the great evil to individuals & families brought on by intemperance. Some of our best & most successful men in

Brockville have been teetotallers since I came here viz the Chaffeys & Henry Freeland not to speak of others & how many with apparently greater advantages have sunk into the drunkard's grave or become the pests of society, ruined themselves & trying to drag others down." (14 February 1867)

Of all the categories of news sent to Archy by his mother, by far the most common dealt with medical observations and experiences. Illness and injury were constant sources of worry, alarm, and often grief. "I think I told you her younger brother had broken his arm – he got cold in it and an abscess formed which gave him great pain. Dr. Campbell lanced it & the discharge was great and left him very weak – this news we have from Ruth." (8 November 1866)

Questions of medical theory were very much common topics of conversation – this is by no means a 21<sup>st</sup> century phenomenon: "We heard last week from & of Uncle Edward in his letter he says that Dr. Grant agrees about the vegetable matter in the stomach with Drs. Gordon, Wilson & Papa but that is not the disease. Sarah says in her last letter that Dr. Macdonald tells her vegetable matter is often formed where there is irritability of the stomach." (8 November 1866) This last sentence shows another example of the formality of the time, or at least of this correspondent. Sarah was Archy's half-sister, "Dr. Macdonald" was her husband.

Eye troubles also seem to have been common: "I was glad to hear the oculist gave Tom & Hamilton hopes of ultimately getting over this malady that is now afflicting them. It is a great trial to both but when God afflicts we must bear patiently the trials sent & learn lessons of humility by contemplating our weakness and His great power." (10 January 1867)

The death rate among children was prodigious. It has been estimated that of every four children born at the time, only one would live long enough to be schooled. Death often came quickly with no diagnosis obvious and no therapy available: "Herbert Macdonald's baby died on Sunday – it took cold on Friday. Dr. Morden saw it but did not think it seriously ill – on Saturday Dr.

Morden was not well & not able to be about & Dr. Gordon was sent for – he did not think it would recover & he was right as it died the following day. This is a great trial to the parents and an unexpected one as the child appeared very thriving till it took this cold. Papa was at the funeral on Tuesday...."(13 June 1867)

Was his mother hoping Archy would return to Brockville to practice? Why else would she think he might be "jealous" of a potential rival's success? "I know you will be jealous to hear Dr. Gordon is now getting into a very good practice. Dr. Morden is I fear but delicate & cannot be always here & Dr. Edmundson's best days are past so that Dr. Gordon is the only one always fit for work & I assure you he begins to look stout & strong – his being no longer bald is a great improvement. Boxwood tea is the wash we hear that has effected this great change. As you are very fond of using pomade I must tell you that Allan Turner told Grace the other day when she went to his shop to get something of that sort that the nicest thing for the hair was a tea spoonful of glycerine added to two table spoonfuls of water – it is not greasy & makes the hair soft & glossy, Try it."(20 June 1867) Later photographs show Archy with a full head of hair. We do not know if he tried his mother's prescription.

The family's health produces much concern. One topic Elizabeth refers to several times is Archy's hearing problem. "We are glad that your hearing is thought to be improved. I have faith in the blistering & hope you will not leave it off."(29 November 1866) And again: "I dare say your imperfect hearing would make the public (not publick) dinner irksome to you."(27 April 1865) She is treating his problem at many hundreds of miles distance: "I wish he would take my advice & give up drinking. If you would do the same, continue to blister your ears & ask God's blessing on the measures I have firm faith that you would find your hearing improved. Surely this self-denial is worthy at least of a trial not for a week or two but at least for a year – be brave enough to try it and you will not lack your reward. No matter what those around you say or think try you to overcome evil habits

not simply in your own strength which is weakness but by the Power of God. Blessed is the man who is strong in the Lord."(27 December 1866) In fact, Archy was partially deaf for the remainder of his life.

The health of Archy's father was of at least mild concern. He had had a lesion on his cheek for some time, about which he consulted Dr. Macdonald, his son-in-law in Hamilton: "Papa is a little anxious about his cheek it is not sore but a scab forms on it & falls off. Dr. Macdonald advised him to get Dr. Gordon to inject an acid under the scab but he has not yet spoken to Dr. Gordon about it it gives him no pain – his health is good..."(21 February 1867) Five months later some progress seems to have been made: "Papa's cheek is not quite whole yet but it is healing nicely. Dr. Gordon has treated it twice since his return from Montreal but the burning is not very painful indeed he never speaks of it as any thing formidable – it is quickly done & must be a little sharp at the time but nothing like what I dreaded – the plaster that covers the spot is not much larger than a silver three penny piece. Otherwise he is well & cheerful."(4 July 1867) Ultimately, Archy himself treated this lesion, one of his first patients in practice, operated on using Listerian principles.

References to the deity abound in the letters, as do urgings to accept the need to put oneself in godly hands. Elizabeth, Scottish-born, was a Church of Scotland parishioner; eventually, though, the family became Presbyterian. A few examples will suffice. "I was sorry to hear you were so fagged with your studies. I hope your success has repaid you if not be satisfied with the conviction that you did your best. When we do that we must leave results to God who knows what measure of success is best for us."(27 April 1865) A few months later, contemplating a friend's ill health, Elizabeth notes "How anxious all interested in her will feel now as you say so short a time was to decide how it was to fare with her. If it be God's will I trust she may be returned to health – if not however sad it may seem now we know it must be for the best."(14 September 1865)

Archy learns much news of the various social activities being pursued by members of his family and friends. This theme is, next to medical problems, perhaps the most frequent encountered. Music was a common



Dr. Joseph Lister in 1869

entertainment in these pre-radio pre-TV days. "The girls are now off to Macintires, I suppose to have another group, then they are going to ask Dr. & Mrs. Gordon, Helen Edmundson, Mr. & Mrs. W. Senkler, Maggie Gaston [?] & Agnes Senkler to spend this evening with us – they are all musical & Eliza thinks they can get on without a dance there being no young gentlemen that we care to ask at present."(8 November 1866) Again "the girls," Archy's sisters Eliza and Grace, meet with friends: "To-night the girls expect Susie Beale, Emma Windeat, Julie Tell & Agnes Senkler to spend a quiet evening. If Susie has no sore throat we expect plenty of singing."(21 February 1867)

For the adults, the prospect of a lonely Christmas – "the girls" are in Scotland – spurs Elizabeth to plan a small event: "We expect to be alone at Xmas & I propose inviting some solitary people like ourselves who either have no relations now in Brockville or whose intimate friends have left – but the carrying out of my plan depends on Papa – he has been & still is very busy at the Court House and if he is in the humour of being alone we will not murmur..."(20 December 1866) Judge Malloch had a hobby – a fashionable mid-19th-

*"I wish he would take my advice & give up drinking. If you would do the same, continue to blister your ears & ask God's blessing on the measures I have firm faith that you would find your hearing improved."*

Judge Malloch had a hobby – a fashionable mid-19th-century interest in microscopy, a field into which young William Osler was venturing just at this time.



century interest in microscopy, a field into which young William Osler was venturing just at this time. "Papa had a great night with the microscope. Mr. Scott, Mrs. Windeat & Mrs. C. Dockerty took a great interest in looking at many of its wonders." (27 December 1866)

On 1 July 1867, Canada became a nation. From Brockville the opinion seems decidedly positive: "You will see by the Canadian papers that the 1<sup>st</sup> of July is to be a general holiday. I do not know whether the boys will stay to enjoy the great doings in Montreal on that day or come to Brockville & see the fun here." (20 June 1867) Unfortunately, we are left in the dark as to exactly how Confederation was greeted.

A gift of apples often crossed the ocean to Britain, and there is frequent reference to this practice in the letters. "Aunt Jessie wished to send Mrs. Allan & Aunt Colina each a barrel & I told Mrs. Robertson this when I was in Montreal... I hope your barrel will arrive safely & in good order that you & your friends may enjoy them." (22 November 1866) Half a century later, Archy was sending barrels of apples to the Oslers in Oxford. Fruit evidently grew in abundance in the Brockville area. "This is the great preserving season & we are all taking a turn at it – Grace made raspberry jam this week & I made cherry & straw berry last week & the week before – to-day we got raspberries for your favourite beverage. Fruit is abundant & good & the crops promise well. Aunt Jessie's flowers are in great beauty & I think by & by we shall have abundance of tomatoes." (25 July 1867)

The Fenian incursions naturally caused much concern. Elizabeth mentioned it often: "...she is sending you the 'Globes' with the reports of the Fenian trials. You will see the Fenians in N. York are assuming a threatening blustering air about the condemnation to death of Lynch & Mahon – it is unfortunate that they are again rousing bad feelings that had nearly passed away." (1 November 1866)

The letters seem to convey mixed messages about Archy's time as a medical student in Glasgow. What form did his lack of enthusiasm take? There is no later evidence of such a

feeling: "I don't think from the tone of your letter you will ever be an enthusiast in your present occupation – but since you have undertaken it I would like if you could continue your appointed time." (20 June 1867) Just two weeks later the tone is more positive, and there is the first mention by name of Lister: "You may be very sure we were very thankful to get so much good news yesterday. Mr. Lister is really a kind friend & as it it [*sic*] promises to be a great advantage your getting into the Infirmary we are glad you are to be there but as every thing in this world has a draw back we regret that it will keep you longer from us but if you are well & improving yourself that at present is the great thing. I rejoice to hear you feel as if you could manage your present work." (4 July 1867)

In the summer of 1867, Archy spent two months in charge of a "lunatic asylum" at Lochgilphead, in western Scotland. Elizabeth is pleased to find that he can combine his religious experience with his newly acquired medical knowledge: "...your having lead prayers at home sometimes will make you feel that duty not altogether new & I fancy that you may make it profitable to yourself & others. I have often heard that Religious exercises in lunatic Asylums have been found so soothing & beneficial to diseased minds and I trust your three months there will not be lost to yourself or others." (4 July 1867) And three months later: "Thanks for all the minute details about the Asylum I understand pretty well about it now – & I hope you will have no more new patients till Dr. Sibbald returns." (25 July 1867) These details have not come down to us.

Inevitably, questions of finances arise between students and parents. Archy's parents try to balance their desire for reasonable prudence and sensible generosity: "I hope you are well & now busy at work in Glasgow – if so you will require money to carry you through your winter campaign and I am glad Papa has enabled me to enclose it – he thought of waiting till you asked for it but as the balance in your favour by your last statement was not great I advised him to send it now that you might not be forced to borrow or beg – but as you will see from his letter he expects you to be

as economical as possible. Still you must not deny yourself what is necessary in the matter of suitable warm clothing & proper diet. When there is dread of cholera the best thing humanly speaking is to keep the system as strong & healthy as possible." (9 November 1865) And again, a year later: "I am sorry I cannot send you my usual gift this season, when Mrs. Mackrichan [?] was getting money for the girls I could always order a small sum for you but I cannot do that now so you must just take what you require & charge it. Do not be extravagant neither must you be mean – to hit the right medium you must be self denying, but not to the extent of wanting strong boots, comfortable clothing & wholesome abundant diet." (20 December 1866)

And the notoriously abominable state of Montreal's streets ends with its own fashion statement: "Francis complains of the sad state of the streets in Montreal. A carriage passing splashes you from head to foot. How do the ladies bonnets fare? It must be good times for the milliners but perhaps they keep still to old hats – as to the Brockville ladies they wear bonnets done up with the brightest colours – now I have come to the fashions I had better stop." (6 December 1866)

In 1867, Archy became a "half-uncle," Sarah Macdonald having had a daughter in Hamilton: "A nice nurse for baby had just come & they were all pleased with her & little Miss Georgie thriving so well – Miss Macfarlane says she is going to be very pretty. Sarah nursed baby herself for nearly three weeks & perhaps it was too much for her – during the winter she was scarcely ever out as she did not feel able to walk & could not drive..." (24 January 1867)

In one of the last surviving letters, Elizabeth sends birthday greetings: "To-morrow is your birth day. May God bless you & spare you to see many of them. If you were a little nearer we would be offering you some little gift on the occasion – but so far off we can only give our prayers & good wishes." (13 June 1867) Her wish comes to pass, for Archy lived to see fifty-two more birthdays, and to accomplish much that would have made his "affte Mother" proud. ❀

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## WAR, BONES AND BOOKS

### The McGill Medical Museum and the American Civil War

Rick Fraser

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*The carnage of the American Civil War ...  
Fire at the McGill Faculty of Medicine ...  
Unconventional verse of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century ...  
A worldwide association of pathologists ...  
A celebrated library...*

This seemingly disparate group of events and institutions and the individuals associated with them – including William Hammond, Maude Abbott, Walt Whitman, James Carroll and William Osler – are in fact linked in a complex series of associations that extends from the 1860s to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present time. The tangible basis of these relations – at least so far as this article is concerned – lies in a collection of bones found “buried” in eight dusty cardboard boxes in the residuum of the McGill Medical Museum in the summer of 2000.

### The McGill Medical Museum and the International Association of Medical Museums

The origin of the McGill Medical Museum can be traced to the beginning of the Montreal General Hospital (in 1819) and its offshoot, the Montreal Medical Institution (which was established in 1823 and soon became the McGill Medical Faculty). Specimens of diseased tissue were collected throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century by physicians who worked at the hospital, most notably Osler between 1876 and 1886. In an attempt to provide some order to the collection, the job of Museum curator was included in the responsibilities of the Chair of Pathology when it was established in 1892. Perhaps because of his many other responsibilities, the first Chair, Dr. George Adami, had little to do with the collection other

than adding to it. He appointed Maude Abbott curator and suggested that she should visit some of the museums at teaching centres in the United States in order to learn how they were organized. In January 1899, Abbott traveled to Washington, DC, where she met Osler who told her:

“I wonder now, if you realize what an opportunity you have. The McGill Medical Museum is a great place ....” and (referring to the Medical Museum in London, England) “... it is the greatest place I know for teaching students in. Pictures of life and death together. Wonderful”. (1)

These words inspired Abbott and upon her return to Montreal, she began working on the Museum in earnest, reviewing and classifying specimens in the collection. Significant progress was made in her endeavor. However, disaster struck on April 16, 1907, when a fire broke out in the medical building and destroyed approximately two-thirds of the Museum specimens, including the entire collection of bones. This unfortunate event was a significant blow to Abbott’s goal of an active teaching museum; however, help was around the corner in the International Association of Medical Museums.

The concept of such an association originated with Wyatt Johnson (pathologist at the Montreal General Hospital), who suggested to Abbott in 1898 that she and the curator of the Army Medical Museum in Washington (Major James Carroll) should organize “a society of curators”. Informal discussions concerning such an institution were held over the following years, and the groundwork for the Association was laid at meetings in Washington and Baltimore in 1906. The first official meeting of the International Association of Medical Museums was held on May 6, 1907 in Washington, DC, shortly after the Montreal fire. One of the mandates of the association was to facilitate sharing of specimens between museums and, in the first Newsletter of the Association, Abbott made a request to the various member museums for

assistance in replenishing the McGill collection. Carroll and the Army Medical Museum responded with a donation of approximately 1500 specimens, mostly bones.(2) Seventy-five of these osseous specimens remain today, of which 32 are examples of injuries incurred during the American Civil War (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1-A . Comminuted fracture of lower half of right humerus just above the elbow. Gunshot wound, second Bull Run, Aug 30, 1862; amputation Sept 6; completely recovered in 3 weeks.

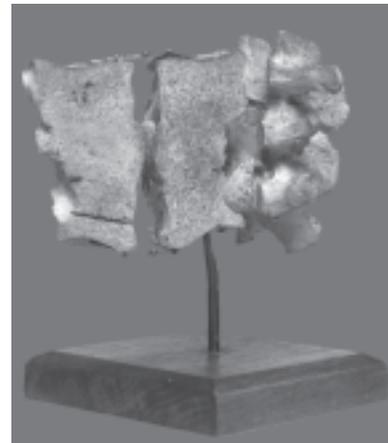


Fig. 1-B. A conoidal ball, apex downward, is present in the lamina of the 5<sup>th</sup> lumbar vertebra. Fusion is evident with the 4<sup>th</sup> vertebra above. “Incidental” finding at death 18 years after gunshot wound.

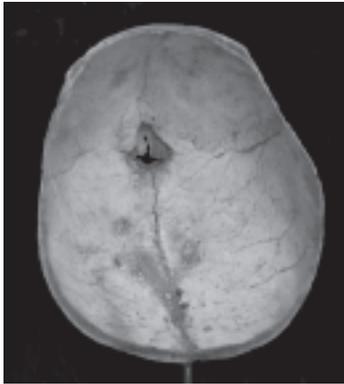
Fig 1.  
Specimens from  
McGill  
Pathology  
Museum

## The Army Medical Museum

The Army Medical Museum was established in Washington, DC, in 1862 by Surgeon-General William Hammond with the aim of increasing

limbs and autopsy specimens derived from the unfortunate soldiers. These were packed in kegs containing preservatives such as brine or whiskey and sent to Washington, where they were cleaned and documented for

After the end of the war, the Museum broadened its outlook and began collecting medical instruments and artifacts (such as the world renowned Billing's microscope collection). During World War 1, its mandate



*Fig. 1-C. Inner aspect of the skull shows an exit wound associated with a thin fracture line that runs anteriorly on the frontal bone. Musket ball injury; follow-up unknown.*

*Fig 3. Volume 2, The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion.*



*Case histories of the injured soldiers and the results of treatment were published in a massive six volume work entitled "The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion"*



knowledge of disease and battle-field injuries in order to better care for the soldiers of the Union Army, then engaged in the American Civil War. In addition to precise documentation of wounds and case histories, the mandate of the Museum included the collection of specimens related to battlefield injuries, including those that caused them (e.g. bullets) and those that resulted from them (e.g. amputated limbs).

The museum's first curator, John Brinton, and other officers visited the many battlefields and their associated surgical hospitals collecting severed

display in the museum. (3) Photographs and drawings of patients, their wounds, and the results of treatment were also accumulated (Fig. 2). The carnage of the war and the diligence of Brinton and his colleagues yielded an abundance of material (1,349 objects by the end of 1862 and over 4,700 by the end of the war). Case histories of the injured soldiers and the results of treatment were published in a massive six volume work entitled "The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion" over an 18 year period between 1870 and 1888 (Fig. 3).

expanded further to include the education of medical staff, troops and civilians (on subjects such as sexually transmitted disease). At this time, the number of pathologic specimens acquired by the Museum also increased dramatically and it began training pathologists to develop registries of this material as well as to engage in field work in the Army camps in Europe and the US. This work continued in the 1920's and 1930's, and the Army Institute of Pathology was created in 1944 as a division of the Museum, in order to better handle the accumulated pathologic material. It became known as the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in 1949 and continues to this day to offer educational and diagnostic services to American military and civilian pathologists throughout the world. The Army Medical Museum changed its name to the National Museum of Health and Medicine in 1988 and is currently one of the world's pre-eminent medical museums.



*FIG. 110.—Clitoris six months after coxo-femoral disarticulation and amputation. [From a photograph.]*

*Fig 2. Wood-cut of Private W. C. next to the specimens derived from his amputated limb, based on a photograph taken on April 22, 1872 during his visit to the Army Medical Museum. (The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion—Part II, Volume 6, p.153).*

## William Osler and Walt Whitman

The unconventional American poet Walt Whitman was 42 years old and living in New York City at the onset of the American Civil War. When he learned that his brother had been injured at the battle of Fredericksburg in 1862, he traveled to Virginia to take care of him. After a short time, he moved to Washington where he remained for three years, acting as a volunteer dressing wounds and spending time with soldiers during their convalescence in hospital wards throughout the city.

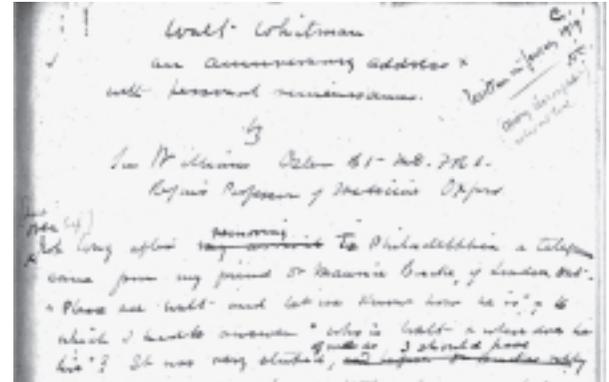
*"Arous'd and angry, I'd thought to beat the  
alarum, and urge relentless war,  
But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd  
and I resign'd myself,  
To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or  
silently watch the dead."*

As might be expected, this experience affected him deeply and he wrote a number of poems as testimony, published in two groups entitled "Drum-Taps" and "Memories of President Lincoln", both eventually incorporated in the on-going poem sequence "Leaves of Grass". A number of these poems dramatically illustrate the horrible battlefield injuries and the suffering that they caused.

*"Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,  
Straight and swift to my wounded I go,  
Where they lie on the ground, after the battle  
brought in,  
Where their priceless blood reddens the grass  
the ground,  
Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under  
the roof'd hospital,  
To the long rows of cots up and down, each  
side, I return,  
To each and all, one after another I draw  
near, not one do I miss,  
An attendant follows holding a tray, he  
carries a refuse pail,  
Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood,  
emptied, and fill'd again." (4)*

Osler first met Whitman in 1885 at the request of Dr. Richard Bucke and saw him professionally a number of times in 1888 after he had suffered what appeared to be one or more small strokes. The style of Whitman's poetry did not appeal to Osler at first, as indicated in the well known quote:

Fig 4. Opening lines of Osler's manuscript "Walt Whitman: An Anniversary Address with Personal Reminiscences"



*"Whether the meat was too strong,  
or whether it was the style of  
cooking – 'twas not for my  
pampered palate..." (5)*

However, Osler appeared to appreciate the style more in his later years and clearly admired the man himself. In fact, he had intended to give a lecture on the poet in 1919, which he was unable to do because of ill health. The manuscript containing his notes and a preliminary draft of the lecture resides in the Osler Library (Fig. 4).

•••

I found the bones in the summer of 2000, while undertaking an informal inventory of material of potential historical value that resided in the cupboards and hidden shelves of the Pathology Department in the Duff building of McGill. The bones were packed in no particular order in convenience store type cardboard boxes, each wrapped in newspaper dated August 1972. The specimens were re-catalogued and cleaned and the case histories of the soldiers from whom the specimens originated were reviewed in detail by Monica Farcas (graduate student, Faculty of Engineering) and Joan O'Malley (secretary, Pathology Department).

The relationships between the various institutions and individuals

*Not long after removing to Philadelphia a telegram came from my friend Dr. Maurice Bucke, of London Ont, "Please see Walt and let me know how he is" – to which I had to answer "Who is Walt and where does he live"?*

mentioned above – as well as many of the bone specimens and some of the related books and Whitman poetry are explored further in an exhibit at the Osler Library (September 2005 to February 2006). \*

1. MacDermot HE: Maude Abbott. A memoir. McMillan Company, Toronto. 1941. p74.
2. Abbott M: Curator's Report of donations received in museums of the medical faculty of McGill University since the fire of April 16, 1907.
3. Rutkow IR: Bleeding Blue and Grey. Civil war surgery and the evolution of American medicine. Random House, New York. 2005.
4. Whitman W: from "The Wound-Dresser" (Leaves of Grass, Edition of 1892).
5. Osler W: Walt Whitman: An Anniversary Address with Personal Reminiscences. 1919.

## ANNUAL APPEAL OSLER LIBRARY OF THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

by Pamela Miller  
History of Medicine Librarian

Students entering McGill's medical faculty this term will have a lot in common with William Osler when he first arrived as a student at McGill, including McGill University's outstanding reputation and its teachers. Osler had access to the finest university medical library on the continent, a library consisting of 4,000 volumes. [Bliss p. 60] As a professor at McGill, (four years after he began as a student) Osler helped build the collection by serving on the Library Committee and by traveling to Europe to purchase medical journals. He founded the Journal Club the proceeds of which went to purchasing journals for the library. In 1876 he helped launch the McGill Graduates' Society, to encourage graduates to donate money towards the purchase of books. His magnificent donation of his personal collection of rare books on the history of medicine to McGill University, in gratitude for the faculty's support during his student and teaching days, is well-known and launched the Osler Library of the History of Medicine that we know and love today.

Like Osler, today's McGill medical students have access to stunning resources with now well over 250,000 volumes and with print and electronic access to hundreds of thousands of journal articles. The print journals of Osler's day form an outstanding collection, still in use for historical purposes and they remind us of McGill's rich medical heritage. The Blacker-Wood Library, founded by Osler's first clinical clerk, ophthalmologist Casey Wood, is currently being incorporated into the Health Sciences Library forming the

re-named Life Sciences Library. It was Osler who first inspired Casey Wood to collect ophthalmological and ornithological books. [Bliss p. 489]

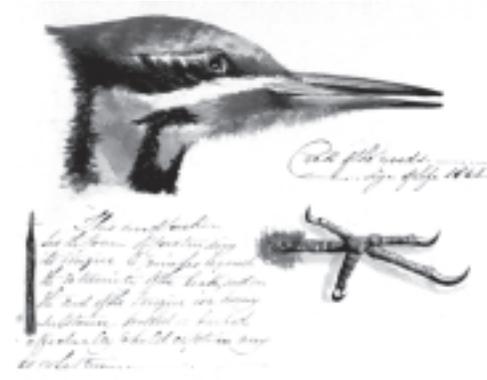


Drawings by Lt. Col. Johnson:  
*Persian Husbandmen taken from  
A Journey...*

Sir William and Lady Osler's careful planning and funding are carried on today by staff and friends of the Osler Library and this year there is a lot to cheer about. To begin with, as announced in the last Newsletter, Chris Lyons has joined our staff as Assistant History of Medicine Librarian. Chris has made a big difference in how we operate, most notably by making contact with 143 McGill professors who use or might use our resources, and offering to introduce their students to the Osler Library and its collections, in addition to meeting with their students through class tours and lectures. In a few short months, he has received glowing commentaries. [People rave about the new service at social gatherings!] The new web version of our guide to the archives at the Osler Library designed by Chris has been very well received and we hope to have it included in the national database, Archives Canada.

Two events this year have co-incidentally connected the Osler Library more closely to William Osler's student days. The first event arose from a question from Ian Dalton of Toronto who was hunting down the sketchbooks of his great great grandfather, Lt. Col. John Johnson

C.B. (1768-1846), the father of the Reverend William Arthur Johnson (1816-1880) the founder of Trinity College School and one of William Osler's great inspirations. Lt. Col. Johnson had served in India with the



*Cock of the woods, 1841, Osler  
Library*

Engineers in the service of the East India Company, returned to England for almost 20 years and then at the age of 67 decided to move his entire family to Canada West in 1835. In London in 1818 he published *A Journey from India to England through Persia, Georgia, Russia, Poland and Prussia in the Year 1817*, containing his own attractive illustrations of people and scenes along the way. Mr. Dalton had copies of the illustrations but was concerned that Johnson's original sketchbooks had disappeared when the Canadian Museum of Health and Medicine, where they resided, dispersed its holdings in 2002 [OLN No. 98, 2002]. The hunt is still on, but what we do have of course are the sketchbooks of W.A. Johnson, his son, who clearly inherited his father's talent and who as founder of Trinity College School, had such a profound effect on William Osler. Mr. Dalton has kindly given us a CD containing copies of the elder Johnson's sketches, copies made prior to their disappearance, and also his recently published *Lieut. Col. John Johnson, C.B. A Sketch of his Life*, Ian R. Dalton, Toronto, 2004. The volume is full of details about the Lt. Col.'s extraordinary adventures in India and Canada and is a welcome addition to our research collections.

Like Osler,  
today's  
McGill  
medical  
students have  
access to  
stunning  
resources with  
now well over  
250,000  
volumes and  
with print  
and electronic  
access to  
hundreds of  
thousands of  
journal  
articles.



While this correspondence was going on, Mr. Randy Mills, the Chapel Organist of Trinity College School requested permission to bring the Chapel Choir and Bellingers to visit the library of one of their most



"Hippocrates : Medicine Becomes a Science" from *A History of Medicine in Pictures*, Parke, Davis & Co., 1957

famous pupils. This was to be a first for the school. The Choir and Bellingers performed the school hymn and chants and then were given a tour of the Osler Library and some of its treasures. Dr. William Feindel, Honorary Osler Librarian, assisted, giving the students an introduction to neurology, illustrated by a demonstration of trephining with an actual instrument taken from a 19<sup>th</sup> century surgeon's box in our collection. Dr. Feindel's explanation of EEG electrodes used by Dr. William Cone at the Montreal Neurological Institute, illustrated the enormous progress in neurosurgery which helped quell jangled nerves. We hope that Trinity College School will make the visit an annual event.

In addition to his teaching role in the Library, Dr. William Feindel has significantly augmented our collection of works by René Descartes through his generous donation of the first biography of René Descartes, by Adrien Baillet, 1691 and three works by Descartes. These include the first edition of *Principia Philosophiae* (first edition) bound with *Specimina Philosophiae*, (first Latin edition) published in Amsterdam by Ludovic Elzevier in 1644. Dr. Feindel's gift also

includes *Epistolae partim ab auctore latino...*, London, John Dunmore & Octavius Pulleyn, 1668, first London edition.

Dr. Mark Berner presented us with an unusual gift, *A History of Medicine in Pictures*, Detroit: Parke, Davis & Co, 1957. This is a portfolio containing 45 prints all in very good condition and probably very familiar to many of us today. The portfolio was published in 1957, as a commercial venture and the illustrations were framed and displayed in doctor's offices and pharmacies across the United States and Canada. Professor Jaclyn Duffin points out in a fascinating article published in *ISIS*, vol. 86 in 1995, that although these images tell us more about the era in which they were published (on one occasion being parodied in *MAD* magazine!) than they do about the past, nevertheless, they were immensely popular with the public and were hung on the walls of several medical schools across Canada. Although the illustrations will not be hung in the Osler Library in the near future, we are delighted to accept this popular but provocative publication.

What have we done with your support this year? As usual, your funding has enabled us to put 953 new volumes on our shelves, a major part of our activities. The range of subjects is enormous, enthralling and in many languages: amazing autobiographies, histories of disease, of genetics, surgery, midwifery, depression, Chinese and Egyptian medicine and military medicine, to mention only a few broad fields. Our pre-selector, Mary Simon, has a remarkable ability to track down obscure titles and visitors who arrive primarily to see the Osler Room often end up marveling at our current collection.

Thanks to your help as well, we have purchased our own digital camera plus an excellent scanner so that we have more control over our photographic orders and projects. Thanks to the generosity of the Faculty of Medicine, we have access to a photographer, Alan Forster, for four hours of work a week dedicated to our projects, at no extra cost to

the Library. When not producing scans for researchers, Alan is working his way through the display panels on congenital heart disease that Maude Abbott exhibited at the 1932 meeting in London of the British



Trinity College School choir members with Dr. William Feindel

Medical Association. This part of our activities has become more secure and more efficient.

We have been fortunate enough to purchase archival material relating to Osler's teaching at the University of

*Descartes' Principia Philosophiae, Amsterdam, 1644*



*Eve Osler  
Hampson began a  
project  
encouraging  
family and  
friends to  
adopt specific  
books from a  
list, for  
conservation,  
to celebrate  
the 150<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary  
of Sir  
William  
Osler's birth.*



Pennsylvania. W.S. Huber attended that university's medical school from 1885 to 1888. This fonds contains over 34 carefully written notebooks giving us a clear idea of who was teaching and what was being taught during Osler's time there. Three years ago we acquired notes taken by A.M. Lichte, in 1885, another University of Pennsylvania medical student. This rare material gives us an idea of Osler's teaching immediately after leaving McGill.

Thanks to you, we have completed our microfilm set of medical incunabula based on the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* at the British Library. This is the medical part of the larger microfilm production entitled, *Incunabula, the Printing Revolution in Europe, 1455-1500* edited by Lotte Hellinga, a splendid, multi-titled addition to Osler's initial collection of 104 medical incunabula.

As you know, thanks to several endowments and to your generosity, we are able to conserve a number of rare books each year. In addition, in 1999 Mrs. Eve Osler Hampson began a project encouraging family and friends to adopt specific books from a list, for conservation, to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir William Osler's birth. Nineteen books were listed and this year, the last books, two volumes of Pietro Andrea Mattioli's commentary on Dioscorides were finally treated! Part of the reason for the delay was that our conservator, Louise Genest, retired. Terry Rutherford, whom some of you were fortunate enough to hear at our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary symposium, lives in British Columbia and transporting Mattioli back and forth across the country was not an option. This summer Terry decamped to Montreal for the summer, working on site for us, McGill's Rare Books and Special Collections Division and the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of the Université de Montréal, and turning the Francis Seminar Room into a conservation laboratory. After dealing with Mattioli, Terry turned her attention to William Osler's copy of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, presented to Osler on his election as Fellow of the Royal Society in 1898,

by his assistants and house physicians. Osler used it continuously and so, for 75 more years, did researchers, in the reference room of the Osler Library. Naturally, it was showing severe signs of wear and tear.

room on a bookshelf originally from Norham Gardens, easily accessible but slightly removed from the general reference area. The main point of Terry's stay at the Osler Library, was to enable her to spend time surveying



*Terry  
Rutherford at  
work*

Now however, the DNB is available on line and Terry worked through all 69 volumes, attaching broken spines and covers and coping with dangling headbands. The restored volumes are shelved in our post 1840 research

and restoring some of the more glaringly needy 19<sup>th</sup> century bindings in the collection which besides Osler's own collection, contains the books from McGill's Faculty of Medicine Library founded in 1823,



*Terry was able  
to carry out  
limited  
conservation on  
the illustrated  
text on  
medicinal plants  
written by Al-  
Ghafiki in the  
12<sup>th</sup> century.*

the first and oldest medical library in Canada. Finally, Terry was able to examine and carry out limited conservation on one of our most exciting manuscripts, the highly illustrated text on medicinal plants written by Al-Ghafiki in the twelfth century. Fortunately the thirteenth century manuscript and its many coloured illustrations is in stable condition.

Finally, your generosity is supporting two cataloguing projects which could not be undertaken by regular staff. The first is the long-standing checking of over 50 boxes of disbound French theses. Each year we are fortunate enough to be able to hire a student with the help of Work Study funding, to check through the theses and to incorporate any we do not have, into the central catalogue. In addition to being paid, the student, especially a library school student benefits by gaining library experience.

The second project, lasting for six months, aims to reduce our cataloguing backlog and put more books on our shelves. Thanks to your help, we have hired a cataloguer who is concentrating on hundreds of difficult to process medical works acquired in the last few years.

Montreal played host to the World Congress of Gastroenterologists this September and an article by Dr. Hugh Chaun in the *Congress News* brought visitors from Brazil, Ireland, India, Nassau, Jordan, Spain and the United States. We gave many tours and were moved by the role Osler has played in the lives of these dedicated doctors, who struggled up the hill on some of the hottest days this season.

This brief report launches our annual appeal. New students coming through our doors, like Osler in his day, have a wealth of resources upon which they can draw. Throughout his life, Osler, leading by example, added to these resources and cajoled others to do the same. Thank you for helping us to make more and more material available to our growing public and for keeping us and our collections at the centre of so much activity. ❀

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## FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The Library gratefully acknowledges the support it has received from Friends, both old and new, who have responded to the appeal for funds for the 2004-2005 academic year. Over the year, 194 Friends have given a total of approximately \$27,000 and they are listed below. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However, very welcome contributions have also come from several other continents.

The appeal to the Friends for the 2004-2005 academic year concluded on May 31, 2005. Contributions received after May 31, 2005 will be recorded in the 2006 fall issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter*.

The appeal for the 2005-2006 academic year is made in this issue, No. 104-2005.

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*New students  
coming  
through our  
doors, like  
Osler in his  
day, have a  
wealth of  
resources upon  
which they can  
draw.  
Throughout  
his life, Osler,  
leading by  
example, added  
to these  
resources and  
cajoled others  
to do the same.*



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## NOTES FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY

### Osler Library Memorial Rare Book Purchasing Fund

Thanks to the thoughtfulness of Dr. Frederick Charles Moore and Dr. Sydney A. Smith and their families, donations in their memory were recently directed to the Osler Library. As a result, we are establishing the Osler Library Memorial Rare Book Purchasing Fund to encourage others to do the same. The hope is that over time this endowment fund will grow to provide a steady source of income to assist the Library in acquiring rare material for our collection.

### William Osler and the Teaching of Microscopy at McGill

Two issues ago we published an article by Dr. Richard Fraser on the F.S. Greenwood box of histology slides prepared in 1877 during the first year Osler taught this new course at McGill. Dr. Fraser's presentation is now available on the Virtual Exhibition link on our web page, narrated and set to music. We hope you enjoy this extraordinary presentation as much as we did at our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary symposium! <http://www.health.library.mcgill.ca/osler>



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