In 1912 Sir William Osler purchased a set of two manuscripts of what he believed to be medieval Arabic translations of the De materia medica of Dioscorides, the great first-century pharmacological encyclopaedist. The first manuscript, containing books 3-4 of the De materia medica, was donated to the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The second, since identified as a rare copy of the Herbal of twelfth-century Andalusian physician Abū Jafar al-Ghāfiqī, has come to be the centerpiece of the Osler Library’s Arabic medical collection and has garnered international scholarly interest. It has been reproduced in facsimile in a new publication by the Osler Library and McGill-Queen’s University Press.

Generously funded by the McGill Medicine class of 1961, whose gift was coordinated by Drs. Tony Ashwort, Phil Gold, Mort Levy, John Little, and Mrs. Judy Mendelsohn, The Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī: A Facsimile Edition features full-colour images of the entire manuscript, accompanied by six essays from internationally-known scholars of medieval materia medica, Islamic medicine, and paleography and codicology. The Herbal is comprised of 468 alphabetical pharmacognostic entries, each detailing a particular plant or, occasionally, animal product or mineral. Copied in the thirteenth century, the Osler Library manuscript contains approximately half of al-Ghāfiqī’s original work, making it the most complete textual witness in existence. Original contributions by a group of eminent scholars sketch out a history of the manuscript through discussions of its script, physical features, and richly-coloured hand drawn illustrations. They also situate al-Ghāfiqī’s work within a wider medieval intellectual and scientific culture through examinations of the text’s philological complexity and its incorporation of extensive textual sources from throughout the Classical Western and Islamic worlds.

The book’s publication was marked on January 14 by a book launch and manuscript viewing at the Osler Library sponsored by McGill Medievalists, a group that organizes interdisciplinary lectures and workshops by scholars of the medieval period, run by Professor Michael Van Dussen of McGill’s Department of English.

The Herbal of al-Ghāfiqī: A Facsimile Edition of MS 7508 in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine, McGill University, with Critical Essays, edited by F. Jamil Ragep and Faith Wallis, with Pamela Miller and Adam Gacek, is published for the Osler Library by McGill-Queen’s University Press. The book may be purchased for $150 in person at the Osler Library, at our online shop (www.mcgill.ca/library/branches/osler/shop), or the website of McGill-Queen’s University Press (www.mqup.ca).

OSLER LIBRARY RE-OPENS FOR BUSINESS

In last spring’s Newsletter (no. 120), we reported on a substantial renovation to the McIntyre Medical Building’s heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems on floors one to six, and extensive construction to the roof on the fifth-floor terrace, directly above the Osler Room. The renovations were originally planned to take place from April to October 2014. The Osler Library was closed in consequence and all collections relocated to a secure storage area built for that effect. Thankfully, scholarly progress in the history of medicine did not have to stop, as evidenced by the two winners of the 2014 round of the Osler Society and Osler Library Board of Curators Essay Contest (pp.12-13). Our colleagues at McGill’s Rare Books and Special Collections graciously hosted our researchers and their research materials. We are very pleased to announce that the library is open again as of January 5, 2015.

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On the Surface/Skin Deep:

An Introduction

Sylvie Boisjoli

The exhibition On the Surface / Skin Deep explores the medical histories of skin by examining how the surface of the body has been conceived and visualized in a wide range of nineteenth-century materials. From the beginning of the century, medical inquiries into the function, purpose, and physical properties of the skin became a specialized field of knowledge. In the burgeoning field of dermatology in France, doctors such as Jean-Louis-Marie Alibert (1768-1837) published medical atlases that aimed to record, categorize, and disseminate his observations on various skin diseases and ailments. By looking through the vast and varied materials on skin from the Osher Library collection, it became clear that images played a significant role in how doctors circulated ideas on how to diagnose skin diseases and other epidermal conditions. Indeed the authors of many of the medical texts on display in the exhibition stated that medical images were indispensable to teaching doctors how to correctly scrutinize the surface of the body, examining medical discourses on skin we were not only looking at how doctors diagnosed diseases, but also at how they were product and producers of medical knowledge that determined what was considered to be "normal" and healthy skin.

In the exhibition we also included a few examples of books on physiognomy from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Informed by popular pseudo-scientific and medical theories, physiognomy was the study of how external facial features referred to a person’s character. An important proponent of physiognomy was Swiss writer and theologian Johann Kaspar Lavater who defined it as a “science of man’s soul comprehended in the external and internal man, the visible superficies and the invisible contents.” Lavater’s books on physiognomy, many of which were richly illustrated, would go through multiple publications throughout the nineteenth century—perhaps more for the purpose of entertainment as physiognomy was not considered a serious part of medical practices. But by including material on physiognomy we see the emergence of the idea that skin was, as art historian Mechthild Fend argues, “a site of communication.” Indeed, skin was understood as the borderline between the body and the outside world, and as the outermost organ that communicated internal ailments.

As a pseudo-scientific branch of medical knowledge, physiognomy was a practice that focused on interpreting a person’s character and was not so concerned with treating perceived moral shortcomings or negative personality traits. Yet with this exhibition, we hope to show how medical knowledge was popularized and integrated into a broad range of discourses whose aims were to examine and improve the appearance, health, and physical fitness of the body’s exterior. This is why we’ve included a diverse range of materials: treatises on hygiene, beauty manuals, medical atlases, and guides for professional practitioners. We believe that this allows us to explore the wider historical and social contexts in which medical knowledge on skin developed.

From the start of planning the exhibition, we knew that the show’s themes would unfold from what types of images we could find in the Osher Library collection—images that would tell us something about how skin has been visualised. As art historians, we explore how and why skin has been depicted in paintings that are then reproduced in beauty manuals, how skin and the diseases, blisters, or creases that can mark it have been moulded into wax, photographed, or drawn. These considerations then led us to question how skin has been historically conceived. The extensive use of images, whether lithographic prints at the beginning of the nineteenth century or photographs later on, marks the importance doctors placed on their ability to accurately observe case studies and patients. Doctors’ use of images thus had a significant role in determining what constituted an objective way to visualize illness and disease.

Because of, and due to, the emphasis put on the visible aspects of diseases, current art historians at the Osher Library would be interested in how images were part of a medical discourse that considered changes in skin colour, for example, to be a pathological feature. Art historians might begin by asking why altered skin pigmentation was considered to be a disease in the first place. Indeed the social and historical significance of these pictures goes beyond our understanding of medical research that took place within the walls of research hospitals and photography rooms. Examining the pathologisation of skin colour—especially changes in skin colour—can lead to larger questions about the place of medical discourse in debates about race, class, and gender in nineteenth-century French society.

In Élie Chatelain’s Précis iconographique des maladies de la peau from 1893, the doctor provided little explanation for the cause of vitiligo, and even less for its treatment. Changes in skin colour were considered to be a cosmetic anomaly with only uncertain links to internal disturbances or anomalies. Yet Chatelain included a hand-painted photograph that highlights the difference between a male patient’s skin colour and patches of depigmented that emerged on his arms, shoulders, torso, and groin. Earlier in the century, Alibert described the case study of a man whose skin began to darken in large sections of his body. Alibert stated that such a change in skin colour could be a sign of a patient’s moral or mental decline. Doctors did not categorize vitiligo (and the like) as a skin disease because it was feared to cause infection, acute pain, or disrupt the function of a person’s life. Instead, changes in a person’s skin signaled the deviation from what society deemed to be their natural or so-called normal skin. With this exhibition, we hope that visitors will be able to explore the historical roots of how skin and social attitudes that surround—namely the ongoing pressure and pursuit to have smooth and evenly pigmented skin.

Sylvie Boisjoli is a PhD candidate in art history. She holds an MA in art history also from McGill University, where she conducted research on late nineteenth-century French representations of the development of serum therapy. Her PhD work focuses on the emergence of the notion of prehistoric time in France in the context of nineteenth-century scientific debates and analyses depictions of prehistoric people and places for their role in normalising the belief that time was a dynamic force driving or inhibiting national progress.

Our latest exhibition, On the Surface/Skin Deep, is up now in the Osher Library exhibition space on the third floor of the McEuen Library. We are delighted to welcome doctoral students Sylvie Boisjoli and Shana Cooperstein from the Department of Art History and Communications Studies as guest curators. The exhibition will run through July 2015. You can read an interview with Sylvie and Shana on the Osher Library blog: http://blogs.library.mcgill.ca/osler-library/ on-the-surface-skin-deep-interview-with-the-curators.

Opening Remarks

Shana Cooperstein

In the eighteenth-century American Romantic author Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1843 short story, “The Birth-Mark,” he characterizes the protagonist, Georgiana, as the epitome of human perfection. Marring her beauty, however, is a small red, hand-shaped blemish on her left cheek that repulses her husband, a renowned scientist named Aylmer. To Aylmer, the mark represented: “...the fatal flaw of humanity which Nature, in one shape or another, stamps insensibly on all her productions, either to imply that they are temporary and fragile, or that their perfection must be wrought by toil and pain. The crimson hand expressed the infallible grip in which mortality clutches the highest and purest of earthly mould, degrading them into kindred with the lowest, and even with the very brutes, like whom their visible frames return to dust. It acts as a symbol of his wife’s liability to sin, sorrow, decay and death...Aylmer’s sombre imagination was not long in rendering the blemish a frightful object.”

To “cure” her of imperfection, Aylmer concocts a potion to remove the mark. Yet in doing so, he accidentally poisons Georgiana. To highlight the impossibility of perfection, Hawthorne concludes that only in death can flawlessness be achieved.

“The Birth-Mark” was published at a historical moment when there was an increased desire to record, categorize, and disseminate specialized knowledge about skin. Yet, Hawthorne ridicules humankind’s attempts not only to understand nature, but also to improve it. While it may seem odd to introduce an exhibition at a medical library with a text that takes such a critical attitude toward positivism, a modern scientific philosophy championing empirical evidence, “The Birth-Mark” shares several key themes with this exhibition. Like Hawthorne’s fiction, On the Surface/Skin Deep explores the links between the body and the psyche, between the individual and society. The desire to masculinize imperfection in modern western societies.

Just as Georgiana’s birthmark became both an object of fascination and repulsion, our display examines the ways in which skin sat at the nexus of three binaries: beauty and ugliness; the normal and abnormal; and health and illness. Specifically, this show builds from “The Birth-Mark” by investigating how skin and its ties to beauty, aging, birthmarks, pigmentation, and disease were conceived through medical atlases, scientific texts, and cosmetic manuals. Juxtaposing such diverse resources sets the representational strategies deployed to convey modern medical knowledge in dialogue with the exhibition’s central theme: skin as both a biological organ and an embodiment of human identity. In his opening remarks, art history guest curator Shana Cooperstein explores the exhibition’s theme by taking us on a tour of the Osher Library’s Third Floor Exhibition Gallery.
with widespread Western conventions of *le beau ideal*, and blurs the boundaries between medicine and cosmetology. Cosmeticians and physicians not only sought to mask eczema, freckles, birthmarks, moles, pimples, wrinkles, and disease, but also offered remedies and surgical techniques for their removal. Cosmetic handbooks, in their citation of modern medical knowledge, lent supposedly scientific support to socially and historically constructed beauty conventions. Conversely, widespread conceptions of comeliness also created a standard against which norms and malignancies were defined in medical spheres. In other words, beauty conventions informed the way doctors understood disease and what required medical treatment.

To “dash out” the dichotomies present in this show, such as *le beau and le laid*, and normalcy and the abnormal, we look to five subcategories including beauty, wrinkles, birthmarks, pigmentation, and disease. The first grouping narrows the boundaries between medical and cosmetic knowledge. As previously mentioned, it exemplifies how pervasive notions of the beautiful shaped conceptions of healthy skin. Following this, the vitrine on wrinkles provides a case study for broader problems affecting the rest of the works chosen: the representations of individuals and types; the professionalization of modern medicine; and the desire to estrange scientific fact from colloquial assumptions.

Physiognomy, or the ability to identify particular personality traits based on physical appearance, flourished widely in modern literature, art, and science. Reminiscent of well-known characteristics, such as having “thin” or “thick” skin, and the double entendre “callous,” skin was believed to reflect human temperament. Physiognomists studied the colour, tone, and texture of the epidermis. Wrinkles, dimples, birthmarks, and pigmentation thus defied the well-known expression “beauty is only skin deep” by rendering skin an indicator of human type or character. For instance, thinkers, such as Johann Caspar Lavater (1741–1801) and Thomas Cooke (1763–1818), posit that a person’s sex coupled with the depth, configuration, and location of wrinkles reveal personality traits ranging from wisdom, genius, indolence, and propriety. Yet, just as physiognomy achieved widespread acclaim, medical practitioners questioned whether such physical features were markers of underlying medical conditions. This aspect complicated the practice of associating wrinkles—or even birthmarks or disease. In the nineteenth century, wrinkles, birthmarks, and pigmentation all posed diagnostic difficulties. Doctors debated whether the appearance of fine lines or marks were not only age or character related, but also symptomatic of an underlying medical condition. In a similar vein, while dermatological diagnostic practices often relied on idioms, such as *cherry angiomas, strawberry marks, or port wine stains*, to describe skin conditions, nineteenth-century doctors began to estrange such irregularities from their folkloric roots. As part of the growing tendency toward professionalization, nineteenth-century doctors began eschewing preconceived notions not sufficiently based in “objective” observations and facts. However, analyzing medical objects through an art historical lens reveals how the ostensibly scientific specialization of medical domains, such as dermatology, was defined in relationship to preconceived notions of beauty, personality, and folklore. Just as Alymer yielded modern scientific knowledge to correct nature’s imperfections, modern medical analysis of the skin indeed was “superficial.”

*Shana Cooperstein is a PhD candidate in art history. She received her MA in art history at Temple University. Her doctoral dissertation situates nineteenth-century French drawing pedagogy at the nexus of art, industrial design, and the theories of knowledge, and explores the institutionalization*
Meetings with Books

Dr. Jilliam Tomm

On March 20, 2013, McGill University held a one-day symposium titled “Meetings with Books: Raymond Klionsky, Special Collections and the Library in the 21st Century.” The aims of the symposium were threefold: to discuss the question “It is all on the Web, so why bother? Special Collections in the Digital Age”; to celebrate the memory of Raymond Klionsky as a mentor, scholar, collector, and donor of his significant and valuable research library to McGill; and to bring the narrative gifts of author Alberto Manguel to ignite inspiration as only he is able.

The day was an opportunity to consider why historical book collections matter, and how they connect, or might be connected, with current forms and directions in teaching, research, and learning. Speakers brought a wealth of perspectives from across the humanities and special collections librarianship to bear on upon the question of the role of special collections in the digital age.

Alberto Manguel powerfully evoked the drive that compels and leads to sometimes reach and cross boundaries, to provide material context for teaching, research, and learning in the digital age from scholars, students, professors, and rare books librarians across Canada, including a contribution by Anna Dysert, liaison librarian, and Chris Lyons, Head of the Osler Library. Writer, reader, and bookseller Alberto Manguel’s keynote speech on “The Uses of Curiosity” completes the essays in the collection.

Interspersed with these essays, a selection of more than fifty illustrated “vignettes” which serve to provide material context for the discussion. They illustrate variety and connections across historical collections at McGill University Library and Archives in particular, and suggest the great richness of still-potential research held in special collections libraries generally. Vignettes from Osler Library collections include the Bibliotheca Oseliana, the Sir William Osler Collection, (P100), almanacs, anatomical atlases, the library of Frank Dawson Adams, and more.

Dr. Jilliam Tomm is Assistant Head of McGill University Library Rare Books and Special Collections.

Opening a Time Capsule: The Papers and Books of the First Osler Librarian

Susan Kelen

My grandfather, W.W. Francis (WWF), was the first Osler Librarian. He catalogued 7,783 of Sir William Osler’s books with Dr. Archibald Malloch and Mr. Reginald Hill. This catalogue of books was published as the Bibliotheca Oseliana.

My grandfather brought the books, and his family, from Oxford to Canada in December 1928. The Osler Library opened at McGill University in 1929 and WWF served as its librarian for thirty years, from 1929 to 1959.

My mother, Marian Francis Kelen (1922–2014), inherited WWF’s personal books and papers in 1963 and I inherited them from her last year. I found myself with papers that spanned my grandfather’s lifetime and over 200 books, many of them with the names of William Osler (WO), Grace Revere Osler (GRO), and Edward Revere Osler (Revere) written on the cover page. These books had always been kept together in a six-foot-long bookcase from Norham Gardens. It has latticed glass doors. The papers were in several boxes.

With a Tribute to Raymond Klionsky & Illustiated Survey of Special Collections at McGill University Library and Archives compiled by Jilliam Tomm and Richard Virr is available as a free download from DigiLib. Scholarship@McGill (http://digitool.library.mcgill.ca/a/47).

A printed volume is available at a cost of $20.00 plus $3.50 shipping at rakapoship.library@mcgill.ca.

Photograph: W.W. Francis, part of the Kelen Family Funds, donated by Susan Kelen to the Osler Library, April 2013. CUS_011-004_F OSLR Library


Including one marked “WWF Strong Box Papers.”

I had gone through some of the papers with my mother before and I had heard stories about the material throughout my life. Opening the boxes, I felt that I had become a detective finding out about my own family history and the history of the Osler Library.

The question I asked myself at the beginning of this adventure was, “Why hadn’t WWF given the material to the Osler Library?” I found many books given to WWF that were inscribed by WO and GRO. And there were things that my grandfather (and my mother) enjoyed, such as Osler’s encyclopaedia of poetry. I knew they had wanted that book to go to the Osler Library.

There were a few items I knew of that WWF had held deliberately back from the library to avoid controversy and protect WO’s reputation. An example of this is “The Case of the Traps” documentation, held back by WWF and donated by my mother to the Osler Library only in 1995. The documents were about Osler’s report of a baby that had been born while her mother was in the “water closet” on a train. Despite the risk of the baby going twenty-five miles per hour, the baby was uninjured and neurologically sound. On follow-up when she was older, she had no disabilities. She was referred to as “Railroad Winnie.” The worry was that the affidavits and legal documents could be considered the work of E.Y. Davis, Osler’s nom de plume, and alter ego, and this would detract from Osler’s reputation.

In my search through the family papers, I discovered that he chose to continue working as the Osler Librarian rather than accept a position as Chair of the History of Medicine. WWF had received a classical education and, after having catalogued all WO’s books, he knew the collection in detail. He was blessed with a superb memory, to the point that my grandmother accused Wilder Penfield of using him “like an encyclopaedia.”2 He was known to combine his knowledge of the history of medicine and his wit to make a subject relevant with a touch of irreverence. His speeches and lectures illustrate this.

His favourite work was supporting researchers by finding material and he generously gave them his ideas. His answers to their questions were so detailed and thorough and well written they were often integrated in the published text. He influenced their questions were so detailed and thorough and well written they were often integrated in the published text. He influenced
OPENING A TIME CAPSULE - continued from page 7

At Baltimore where it was my custom at breakfast, often at lunch, sometimes after dinner. I read from it to Billie Francis and Revere. It was badly scorched in the fire, which took place in the dining room in 1915. WO said:

This is the volume of poetry which has the E. Y. Davis version of the John Keats poem, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," which is written in pencil on top of the printed text. As well, there is a second poem in which WO changed the wording, "Milton's Prayer of Patience," by Elizabeth Lloyd Howell. My grandfather has indicated WO's favourite poems in the "Index of Authors" at the beginning of the book. There are over a hundred poems marked. There is a family story of a librarian from Saranac Lake, nicknamed "Worthy" (Mrs. Ruth Worthington), who persistently asked my grandfather for years to give this book of poetry to her library in Saranac Lake. I was told that there was much banter between them about this.

2. Edward Revere's "Travelling Trunk" (48 x 34 x 28 cm)

This is a roughly made oak box with a black metal lock, metal handles, and twenty pieces of metal stapling, some for corner reinforcement and some decorative. The faded initials "ERO" are stencilled in black on the lid, in two-inch-high letters. The trunk is unvarnished. On the side and top of the trunk are the remnants of transit stickers from two British train lines and of Canada Steamship Line stickers, indicating that this trunk has crossed the ocean. The stickers suggest that my grandfather used the trunk in his move from Oxford to Montreal. It is sturdy and a perfect size for books or fragile items. I know that my grandfather kept the trunk because it had belonged to Revere.

3. Twelve books belonging to Revere Osler

Most of these books have Revere's bookplate in them and others have his name written in pen. Revere Osler's distinctive bookplate includes tools for woodwork, a fishing rod, the coat of arms of Oxford, and a reference to his favourite author (and fisherman), Isaac Walton.

Many of these books are also signed with either WO's or GRO's signature or initials suggesting that Revere appropriated them from his parents' collection to add to his own library. The books include a 1912 edition of *Religio Medici, Assagi Falsi, The Fable of the Fox and the Grapes and Tales of Ancient Greece*. They are dated between 1900 and 1916.

Initially, I wondered why my grandfather had kept these books. The antiquarian books of Revere's had been donated by GRO to the Tutor and Stewart Club at Johns Hopkins University. The Club room housed a small library of books of the Tutor period. The Revere books that my grandfather had kept, were from the 1900s, thus would not have fit the criteria for the Hopkins library. "They were always kept together in the Norham Garden's bookcase. I think that my grandfather may have kept them just because they belonged to Revere.

4. Rough draft of WO's editorial, "Why is it so? Is it so?"

This is a two-page draft written in pen of an editorial written for the *Journal of the Tennessee State Medical Association*. I also found the published pages of the *Tennessee Journal*. These were the editorial that inspired WO's comment, and also a copy of WO's editorial as it was published. The editorial discusses whether young physicians are turning away from general practice and going toward specialities or not. WO's editorial refutes the idea that young physicians are not interested in general practice.10

5. Letter from WO to Dr. Lewellys Barker, dated January 25th, 1910

This typed letter, dated January 25, 1910, is signed and addressed in pen. In it, WO asks Dr. Barker if he would take over as editor for the next edition of *The Principles and Practice of Medicine* to be published in 1912. The letter begins, "No longer in active work, and rather in the rear guard than the van, I felt that it would be most important for me to have someone associated with the next two editions." Osler proposes the edition would be named after Barker. (Barker declined because of a health issue.)

6. Handwritten letter by WO to an unknown recipient

The bottom half of this letter is torn as if it had been discarded, perhaps after it had been typed and mailed. On the bottom in pencil, WWF has written: "Letter from WO about Muriel Howard's death." (This was Muriel Howard Ebert. She died from an embolism on May 31, 1913, a week after having her fifth child.) The letter begins, "No longer in active work, and rather in the rear guard than the van, I felt that it would be most important for me to have someone associated with the next two editions." Osler proposes the edition would be named after Barker. (Barker declined because of a health issue.)

7. Documents about Bibliotheca Osleriana

One group of papers is enclosed in a file cover for legal-sized papers with a distinctive marbled design. The spine is split and the handwriting legible in strong light. On the inside cover, written in WO's handwriting, is a note referring to the auction of books by Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738) giving their provenance of the books—they are from Boerhaave's daughter's estate. The note is dated April 1900. There are additional notes on acquisitions as well by Osler. One of WO's is pencilled in another note asking what became if the "Lettres de Lancisi." I believe that my grandfather would not have added these files to the library because of their poor condition.

Among the papers, I found an affectionate letter from WWF to his wife, while she waited for him to finish work on the catalogue and come upstairs to bed. (My grandparents lived at Norham Gardens for almost four years.) The letter is an apology—he writes that she was asleep when he came to bed and Dr. Malloch is mentioned as the distraction.

8. Osleriana in unexpected places

A portrait of King Arthur at Trinity College School, Port Hope, Ontario

In a letter dated January 18, 1954, to WWF, the school's headmaster, Philip Ketchum, thanks WWF for a portrait of King Arthur that had hung in WWF's dining room in Norham Gardens. There is mention of unnamed books that WO used when he attended the school. These items were all to be put into a new Osler Room in the school's library. (In a conversation with a staff member from the school, I was told that the King Arthur portrait has been missing since 1999.)

Two books from the Osler Library at the Welch Medical Library

At the dedication of the Welch Medical Library at Johns Hopkins University on October 17, 1929, my grandfather gave a speech, with accompanying lantern slides. Thinking that WO would not have come "empty-handed," he brought along books from the Osler Library. These were duplicates. One book was by Pierre Castellan, of Antwerp, dated 1617, and the other was by Niccolo Leonicenus, dated 1529. One book has an "Osler book label (canceled)" and the other includes the note of purchase signed by WO.11

A rattan chair given to Osler Club of London

There are two letters to my mother, Marian Francis Kelen, from the secretary of the Osler Club of London, L.G. James, dated November 18, 1965, thanking her for the donation of a ladder-backed rattan chair. The chair was from Norham Gardens and had then been shipped from Quebec to London. Dr. James writes that it was to be placed in a reading room dedicated to Osler.
Dr. Theodore Sourkes, 1919-2015

Pamela Miller

One of the many privileges of my time in the Osler Library was the opportunity to meet and work with the members of our gifted and dedicated Board of Curators that meets annually to discuss, promote, and resolve questions pertaining to the Library. Dr. Theodore Sourkes was elected to the Board of Curators in about 1973 and ultimately served as Chairman of the Standing Committee. How fortunate that a man of such a stature would dedicate his time to the Osler Library. Dr. Sourkes is known as a scholar, scientist, and researcher whose work on L-Dopa replacement in Parkinson’s disease improved the lives of millions of sufferers. He was a professor in the Departments of Psychiatry, Biochemistry, Pharmacology, and Therapeutics and worked in the fields of neurology and neurosurgery. He published extensively and was highly rewarded, receiving the Order of Canada for his contributions to psychiatric pharmacology, the Ordre du Prés du Québec, and an Emeritus Professorship at McGill. The Theodore L. Sourkes Lecture Series in Neuropsychology honours his many contributions.

A person of broad intellectual interests, he read and wrote in the field of science and his publications include Nobel Prize Winners in Medicine and Physiology, 1902-1965, Montreal, 1967, and Building a Proud Past: 50 Years of Psychiatry at McGill, Montreal, 1995. In 2003, he mounted an exhibition, also a catalogue, on the life and work of J.L.W. Thudichum (1829-1901), a “chemist of the brain.” I was fortunate enough to work on this exhibition and his astute choice of documents and his concise labels made his job a pleasure. Ted understood the importance of archives and worked to preserve the support of his colleagues’ papers. His own archives are held by the Osler Library. He even enticed his wife Shena to volunteer at the Osler where she did lasting work on some of our more complex scientific material.

What I remember most about Ted, apart from his gentle nature and sense of humour, was his dedication to his position as Chairman of our Standing Committee. Ted visited almost every week, either for his research or to discuss the Library. He listened and advised. He had the ability to encourage discussion and at the appropriate moment, sum up the situation and request meetings. Colleagues and productive. Ted set an example for us all and although declining health obliged him to resign his Chairmanship in 2012, he remained devoted to the Osler until the end.

Pamela Miller was History of Medicine Librarian at the Osler Library from 1999 to 2011.
On Sir William Osler’s Relationship with Death

Julian Z. Xue

The Osler Library was unfortunately closed during the writing of this essay, although I was happily able to obtain most of the material I needed before it closed. This did with the crucial help of Dr. Faith Wallis and Christopher Lyons, who came even on a weekend. The material was preserved in the Rare Book section of the McLennan Library. There I spent several afternoons leafing through original manuscripts, trying to read Osler’s own handwriting and learning about editing techniques in an era in which cutting and pasting literally meant scissors and glue. It was fascinating to see how large edits were made to the writing of new sections on separate pieces of paper and sticking them on to the manuscript later; people before computers were not as helpless as I had imagined—or at least not as helpless as I am. To read Osler’s original work was emotionally exhilarating. Foremost there is far more requirement for sustained reading and of taking copious notes while reading for future use. The former I had been capable of, the latter is a new and necessary habit. Scientific reading almost always leaves readers with papers, the few books that one reads are usually well segregated into stand-alone chapters. Moreover, the process of constructing arguments in the humanities takes quite a bit more creativity, and I’ve found it takes much more effort to convince myself of my own arguments (likely because they’re not good enough) than in regular scientific work, where I can fall on more comfortable data and theorems.

In all, this was a fascinating exposure to the world of humanities research and the study of someone who died a century ago.

Julian Z. Xue is a member of McGill Medicine class of 2014. “My dad taught me Confucious as I grew up. I forgot nearly everything he taught me, but that’s what is the good life.” —the life of Sir William Osler, and Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.ca/) coupled with McGill VPN did most of the actual work. Reading the manuscripts in the library gave me a better idea of Osler’s thoughts and what existed, but trekking back to the library to track down the actual citations was more difficult during the writing of the essay. This is my first venture into writing anything for the humanities, and I had thought that the process is very different than in the sciences. It is in many ways much more different. The skillset of a humanities researcher does not overlap much with a scientist. Foremost there is far more requirement for sustained reading and of taking copious notes while reading for future use. The former I had been capable of, the latter is a new and necessary habit. Scientific reading almost always leaves readers with papers, the few books that one reads are usually well segregated into stand-alone chapters. Moreover, the process of constructing arguments in the humanities takes quite a bit more creativity, and I’ve found it takes much more effort to convince myself of my own arguments (likely because they’re not good enough) than in regular scientific work, where I can fall on more comfortable data and theorems.

In the process of finding and using this material, I became very familiar with how to search for Osler’s work through the Ask Osleriana (http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mcl/ask-osleriana), where you can search across various academic disciplines and journals in order to more sharply define my interest into a research question. I quickly found that much had been written about patient autonomy in the United States and medical paternalism in Southern Europe, but that no one had tried to compare the situations in order to uncover the roots underlying this difference. McGill offers access to journals across so many disciplines—providing me various academic perspectives I could integrate into my research. I started with nothing more than a vague interest in writing about cross-cultural differences in medicine. Being myself a dual American and French citizen, I found the cultural differences in patient-doctor relationships across different locales to be fascinating. Using the McGill VPN, I searched across several academic journal databases in order to more sharply define my interest into a research question. I quickly found that much had been written about patient autonomy in the United States and medical paternalism in Southern Europe, but that no one had tried to compare the situations in order to uncover the roots underlying this difference. McGill offers access to journals across so many disciplines—medicine, history, economics, law, etc.—providing me various academic perspectives I could integrate into my research. I supplemented my research with books from McGill’s various libraries. Although the Osler Library was closed, McGill’s other libraries provided several extremely valuable texts that added both depth and nuance to my essay. For example, the McLenann Social Sciences Library offered many books about the history of medicine, the Schulich Library of Medicine contained several key tomes about the history of research ethics, and I made frequent visits to the Nahum Gelber Law Library to learn about how the 1970s malpractice crisis affected the American patient-doctor relationship. Even in the few instances where I needed a book that was only located in the Osler Library, I took full advantage of McGill’s useful interlibrary loan (ILL) system (which I did not know about before), which delivers books from partner libraries within days of the request.

However, possibly my greatest resource were the people who helped me along the way. The library staff directed me to several databases and research techniques that helped me uncover sources that were otherwise inaccessible. Without the advice and recommendations, as well as the kindness and encouragement, of all the people who helped me along the way, this essay simply would not have been possible, and for that I thank them.

Gabriel Devil is currently in his second year of medical studies at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. He is interested in international health and the influence of cultural contexts upon medical care.

The Atlantic Divide: Paternalism and Patient Autonomy in the United States and Mediterranean Europe

Gabriel Devil

I was disappointed when I first learned that the Osler Library would be closed over the summer. I had visited the library many times throughout my undergraduate studies, back when I was minoring in Sociology, and I was looking forward to returning. However, the closure was also inconvenient. The Osler Library is a dependable and valuable resource when it comes to writing research papers. Its closure for renovation thus also posed a significant logistical and practical challenge for my essay writing, as I would need to find alternative avenues for information. However, the closure ultimately helped refine my skills as a researcher, made me discover new useful tools I had never come across, and made me fully appreciate the diversity and profusion of literature that Osler offers to its students.

When I first started researching for my essay, I started with nothing more than a vague interest in writing about cross-cultural differences in medicine. Being myself a dual American and French citizen, I found the cultural differences in patient-doctor relationships across different locales to be fascinating. Using the McGill VPN, I searched across several academic journal databases in order to more sharply define my interest into a research question. I quickly found that much had been written about patient autonomy in the United States and medical paternalism in Southern Europe, but that no one had tried to compare the situations in order to uncover the roots underlying this difference. McGill offers access to journals across so many disciplines—medicine, history, economics, law, etc.—providing me various academic perspectives I could integrate into my research. I supplemented my research with books from McGill’s various libraries. Although the Osler Library was closed, McGill’s other libraries provided several extremely valuable texts that added both depth and nuance to my essay. For example, the McLenann Social Sciences Library offered many books about the history of medicine, the Schuili Library of Medicine contained several key tomes about the history of research ethics, and I made frequent visits to the Nahum Gelber Law Library to learn about how the 1970s malpractice crisis affected the American patient-doctor relationship. Even in the few instances where I needed a book that was only located in the Osler Library, I took full advantage of McGill’s useful interlibrary loan (ILL) system (which I did not know about before), which delivers books from partner libraries within days of the request.

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Andrew Fernando Holmes (see below) was also his student and proctor. Arnold was instrumental in the foundation of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Lower Canada, and was its first president (1856–1860). Unfortunately, the proposal was unsuccessful, and seventeen years later, in 1873, the establishment of the Canadian Medical Council was formed. In 1857 he became the first president of the Canadian Medical Council. In 1862 he resigned his position as principal of the Royal College of Surgeons in Quebec, serving as its first president until 1867. In 1863, he was awarded Professor of Surgery at McGill, became the second Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in June 1866, and was elected fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. According to the history of the Queen’s Light Dragoons, which was the last cavalry regiment, his father, John Lancer was born in a medical family, and was also a military doctor. In 1808, he obtained a BA from Trinity College Dublin in 1821; became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in England, and was also from Trinity, in 1858. He joined the army in 1846, and was stationed in Malta, where he died in 1884. He was a military doctor, first practiced in Sorel’s military hospital, and served as an army doctor, being commissioned in 1858, and obtained his medical education in medical schools in Kingston. In addition, he was a founding member of the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University in 1847, and served as its first president until 1856. As a result, he was the first regularly elected mayor of Montreal. The marker also notes that his “services and social achievements cannot be questioned. McCullough was a member of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (RCPs) and received his MD in 1856. He is best known for his contributions to the advancement of clinical care in Canada. In 1857, he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He died in 1866, aged 42, after a few years, the holder of an ancient degree awarded by one university, he was appointed to the Chair of Clinical Medicine at McGill University. In 1875, he was appointed physician to the University of Bishop’s College, and was thus a member of the Corporation and was also a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. He returned to Canada, received his licence from the Medical Council of Ontario, and became a prominent doctor in Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Before he was appointed as surgeon to the first surgeon in Canada to use ether, he was also much involved in the (1867) formation of the Medical Association/Association médicale canadienne.

1869

Charles Collin Sewell (1841–1892), a graduate of the Wolfville Academy in Upper Canada, was the second medical student to graduate from the University of Bishop’s College, where he was a student of Daniel Arnoldi, Holmes (who came from England) and was appointed to the Chair of Clinical Medicine at McGill University. In 1875, he was appointed physician to the University of Bishop’s College, and was thus a member of the Corporation and was also a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. He returned to Canada, received his licence from the Medical Council of Ontario, and became a prominent doctor in Sherbrooke and the Eastern Townships of Quebec. Before he was appointed as surgeon to the first surgeon in Canada to use ether, he was also much involved in the (1867) formation of the Medical Association/Association médicale canadienne.

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John George Adami (1862–1926). Adami was born in England and attended an English medical school, but he did not graduate. In 1890, he joined McGill University as a medical professor and began his research in Paris, he came to Montreal to obtain a degree in 1899. He was thus the McGill’s first professor of Pathology. In 1900, he was appointed as a member of the Canadian Army Medical Corps during World War I. In 1915, he renewed his contract with McGill and resigned from the University of Ottawa in 1917.

1905 and 1906

McGill University awarded a further eleven odumend degrees. The 1905 cohort were the medical students who did not graduate, but it appears that only four of these odumend degrees were a condition of their student’s association with McGill. These were: James J. Benny, William Casey Wood had both taught at Bishop’s medical college, and also from the University of Ottawa in 1917. 

1909

John George Adam (1842–1924). Adam was born in England and attended an English medical school, but he did not graduate. In 1890, he joined McGill University as a medical professor and began his research in Paris, he came to Montreal to obtain a degree in 1899. He was thus the McGill’s first professor of Pathology. In 1900, he was appointed as a member of the Canadian Army Medical Corps during World War I. In 1915, he renewed his contract with McGill and resigned from the University of Ottawa in 1917.

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3. David AH. Reminiscences connected with the medical profession in Montreal during the last fifty years. Canada Medical Record. 1882 Oct; 11(1): 1–8.


26. Multiple sources also consulted, including:
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   - McGill University Archives
   - multiple newspaper and journal archives and databases
   - several genealogical websites
   - personal correspondence with archivists, genealogists, etc.

27. Personal (announcement of Colin Sewell’s departure from Montreal). Canada Medical Record. 1873 May; 1(10): 239.


34. The two convocations. Montreal Medical Journal. 1905 July; 34(7): 505–507

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