

OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

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THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE OSLER LIBRARY MAY 29, 1929



When in 1954 Dr. W.W. Francis was given an opportunity to reminisce briefly about the official opening of the Osler Library, he devoted only one sentence to this event. He wrote, "It is twenty-five years since the Osler Library was formally opened at McGill on 29 May 1929, the hottest day in the memory of the

participants, particularly those functioning in academics."* Dr. Francis characteristically refrained from painting a glowing picture of a ceremony in which he himself, as Osler Librarian and chief editor of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana*, had played a prominent role. Modesty in such matters was one of his endearing qualities. The account presented here may not be glowing but it is intended to be sufficiently detailed to do justice to this unique milestone in the history of the Osler Library and to indicate the importance attached to the ceremony marking the formal acceptance by McGill University of Sir William Osler's bequest.

The official opening or dedication, as it was called in the printed program, took place before an audience of some 350 invited guests on the afternoon of May 29, 1929 in the Assembly Hall of the Strathcona Medical Building, two floors below the newly completed Osler Library. The presiding officer was the Chancellor of McGill University, Mr. E.W. Beatty, better known in later years as Sir Edward Beatty. With him on the platform were Sir Arthur Currie, Principal of McGill University; the Right Honourable William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada; Dr. C.F. Martin, Dean of the McGill Medical Faculty; Canon Emile Chartier, Vice-Rector of the University of Montreal; Professor W.S. Thayer of The Johns Hopkins University; and the Very Reverend Arthur Carlisle, Anglican Dean and Rector of Montreal.

After an invocation by Dean Carlisle, Dr. Francis gave a detailed account of the origin and growth of the Library and told how Sir William had come to leave his books to his old college. It is of interest to recall that the first copy of the *Bibliotheca* to reach Montreal had arrived only a few weeks earlier. The ceremony of May 29th was attended by the three who had assisted Dr. Francis in the monumental task of preparing this catalogue of the Osler Library. They were Mr. Reginald H. Hill of Oxford, Mr. Leonard L. Mackall of Savannah, Georgia and Dr. T. Archibald Malloch of New

York. The Board of Curators of the Osler Library had held its first meeting just prior to the ceremony and at that meeting Dr. Malloch, then Librarian of the New York Academy of Medicine, was elected a Curator "in view of his intimate connection with the Donor [Sir William Osler] and of his work on the Library and its catalogue."

To return to the proceedings at the official opening, Dr. Francis was followed by Dr. William Sydney Thayer, the principal guest speaker. At that time, Dr. Thayer was Emeritus Professor of Medicine at The Johns Hopkins University and Visiting Physician to The Johns Hopkins Hospital. He had had a long and intimate association with Sir William Osler commencing in 1890 when he became Osler's assistant resident at the recently founded Johns Hopkins Hospital and subsequently his resident from 1891 to 1898. A superb clinician, a polished speaker, a keen student of fine literature with a special love of poetry and a considerable command of languages, both classic and modern, Dr. Thayer was well suited to his task. He delivered an elegantly worded and touching appreciation of Osler and his much loved books.

After the completion of Dr. Thayer's address, Osler's bequest was formally presented to McGill University by Mr. Henry Smith Osler, K.C. acting on behalf of the Osler family. Mr. Osler was the eldest son of the Honourable Featherston Osler and thus a nephew of Sir William. At the suggestion of Lady Osler, Featherston Osler had been appointed a Curator of the Osler Library in 1921 but had died three years later. His son Henry had been chosen to replace him as a Curator and, at the ceremony, was the senior representative of the Osler family. After Mr. Osler's formal presentation, Sir Arthur Currie accepted the gift on behalf of McGill University and in a graceful speech made it clear how well he understood the value to the University of the Osler tradition and the Osler Library.

Several congratulatory messages had been received and these were read by Dr. C.F. Martin, who as Dean of the McGill Medical Faculty was Chairman of the Board of Curators of the Osler Library. They included greetings from the Osler Club of London, "written on vellum, illuminated, and sumptuously bound," and from the Curators of the Bodleian Library, "specially printed by the Oxford Press on one side of a large sheet of paper, rolled and cased" and brought from Oxford by Mr. R.H. Hill, the official delegate of the Bodleian at the opening of the Osler Library.

The ceremony closed with a Benediction pronounced by the Very Reverend Dean Carlisle and following this the guests visited the Osler Library and viewed the exhibits which Dr. Francis had arranged.

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The historiated letter which appears on this page is reproduced from *Catalogus impressorum Librorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae in Academia Oxoniensi*, Oxon., 1738. *Bibl. Osl.* 7244.

There is no doubt that the official opening ceremony was a success but there was one sad circumstance which made it less successful than had been hoped. When the plans were first laid, it was expected that Lady Osler would attend and make the presentation on behalf of the Osler family. The remarks of the speakers showed that all were deeply conscious of the shadow cast upon the ceremony by her death the previous year. Mr. H.S. Osler ably represented the Osler family and his presence was most welcome. Equally welcome was the presence of several other members of Sir William and Lady Osler's families, including Lady Osler's sister, Mrs. H.B. Chapin. But of course no one could take the place of Lady Osler.

Note — This account of the official opening of the Osler Library is based largely on early minutes of the Board of Curators and relevant material in the Osler Library archives and on the following publications: W.S. Thayer, "An Address on the Occasion of the Dedication of the Osler Library," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 1929, 21: 1-4; A.G.N[icholls], "The Dedication of the Osler Library," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 1929, 21: 71-72; Alan M. Chesney, *The Johns Hopkins Hospital and The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, A Chronicle*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1943, vol. 1, pp. 170-173.

E.H. Bensley



THE CURATORS OF THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY at Oxford send their greetings to the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, and the Governors of McGill University on the occasion of the Dedication of the Osler Library. They remember with gratitude the presence of Sir William Osler as their colleague, the keen interest which he at all times displayed in the welfare and development of the University Library at Oxford, and the inspiration which his words of counsel brought. They view with particular satisfaction this fulfilment of the pious intentions of Sir William Osler, so ably furthered by Lady Osler—the installation of the Osler Collection in his Alma Mater of McGill, and the completion and publication of the Bibliotheca Osleriana; and they are glad to send as their representative one who is privileged to be intimately associated with the culmination of both these aims. From the early home of experimental science, with full realization of the functions of the great university libraries in the preservation of the records of scientific progress, the Curators of the Bodleian Library send their cordial congratulations, and feel confident that the Osler Library will diffuse the spirit and advance the ideals of its Founder.

17 May 1929

Greetings from the Curators of the Bodleian Library brought by their delegate Mr. R.H. Hill to the official opening of the Osler Library.

OSLER, PETER REDPATH AND ACUPUNCTURE

In an article on acupuncture in the May 1974 issue of *Maclean's* magazine, attention is drawn to an episode in Osler's Montreal period. It involved an attempt by Osler to relieve intractable lumbago by acupuncture. The patient was Peter Redpath, the Montreal merchant and philanthropist, whose gifts to McGill University were on a princely scale. The episode was related by Harvey Cushing in his biography of Osler published in 1925. According to this story, at each jab of the acupuncture needle "the old gentleman is said to have ripped out a string of oaths, and in the end got up and hobbled out, no better of his pain,"

In view of the publicity given to this story with its rather unflattering portrayal of Peter Redpath, it seems only fair that publicity should also be given to rebuttals which have not previously appeared in print. Within a few months of its publication in 1925, Cushing's biography of Osler had been seen by several members of the Redpath family. Two of these were Lady Amy Redpath Roddick, Peter Redpath's niece (and the widow of Sir Thomas Roddick) and Mr. John Redpath Dougall, Peter Redpath's nephew. Lady Roddick and Mr. Dougall sent vigorous protests to Dr. C.F. Martin, who was then Dean of the McGill Medical Faculty and Acting Principal of McGill University. They pointed out that their uncle "did not hobble and he certainly *could* not swear" and added that "a more proper behaving, proper spoken man never lived." Similar protests were made by other members of the Redpath family, who clearly regarded the story of Peter Redpath's behaviour as completely false. When Harvey Cushing learned of these protests he wrote Dr. Martin that he had regarded the story as "quite apocryphal" and apologized for having included it in his biography of Osler. He even offered to "make a public retraction of the whole episode" if that was desired by the Redpath family. However it seems to have been decided that such a retraction would only make matters worse by lending emphasis to Cushing's account of the episode. No one could have anticipated that, almost fifty years later, the widespread interest in acupuncture would again call attention to this story which understandably caused the Redpath family so much distress.

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CURATORS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The thirty-seventh meeting of the Board of Curators was held on April 17th, 1974. The gathering began informally at a coffee session in the W.W. Francis Seminar Room where the Curators had an opportunity to meet the staff of the Library. At 11 a.m. Dr. R.F.P. Cronin, Chairman of the Board and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, called the meeting to order in the Library. It was noted that three Curators were attending a Board meeting for the first time — Dean Cronin, Dr. R.A. Farley, Director of McGill University Libraries, and Mrs. Frances Groen, Life Sciences Area Librarian, McGill University, all of whom are *ex officio* members. The Board also welcomed Mr. H.D. Vos, Acting History of Medicine Librarian, and Mr. Philip Teigen, History of Medicine Librarian designate, who attended by invitation.

APPOINTMENT OF HISTORY OF MEDICINE LIBRARIAN

The Board received an advance copy of *The Baglivi Correspondence from the Library of Sir William Osler* edited by Dorothy M. Schullian, dedicated to the memory of Dr. W.W. Francis and published by the Cornell University Press. This correspondence was purchased by Osler in 1908 (*Bibl. Osl.* 7516) and it was Osler's expressed wish that "someone should work up the letters." In 1963 Dr. Lloyd G. Stevenson, then Professor of the History of Medicine at McGill University, Dean of the McGill Medical Faculty and Chairman of the Board of Curators, asked Dr. Schullian to undertake this task. She agreed and the volume shown to the Curators is the result of her scholarly labours over a period of almost ten years. The Curators were gratified that the task had been undertaken by someone as eminent in the field of the history of Italian medicine and science as Dr. Schullian. Mention should also be made of their debt to the Cornell University Press which procured the funds for publication and gave to the volume its handsome format.

The Board was reminded that during 1973 a new biography of Dr. Norman Bethune had appeared. Written by Roderick Stewart and entitled simply *Bethune*, this was published by the New Press, Toronto, Canada. The Curators were happy to learn that Mr. Stewart will present all his research materials to the Osler Library. These will be a most important addition to our growing collection of Bethuniana and our sincere thanks go to Mr. Stewart.

FRIENDS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The appeal to the Friends for the 1973-74 academic year concluded at the end of May and the Library is very gratified to receive the \$2475 contributed by 191 Friends. The appeal for the upcoming academic year will be detailed in the October *Newsletter*; there will also be a note describing how the Friends' contributions have been used by the Library in addition to making possible the publication of the *Newsletter*. The Library acknowledges with thanks the support of all its Friends. The following have been added to the list since it was last published:

- G.F. Bacon, Moraga, California
- D.G. Barton, Concord, New Hampshire
- E. de Bellaigue, London, England
- F.E. Dugdale, Branford, Connecticut
- J. Hanaway, Webster Groves, Maryland
- E. Holman, San Francisco, California
- R. Lacoursiere, Topeka, Kansas
- *C.J. Leonard, Salinas, California
- S.W. Little, Roanoke, Virginia
- L.D. Longo, Loma Linda, California
- *J.R. Martin, St. John's, Newfoundland
- F.L. McNaughton, Montreal, Quebec
- J.F. Muirhead, San Francisco, California
- J.J. Naponick, New Orleans, Louisiana
- R.Z. Perkins, Oakland, California
- R.H. Prince, Montreal, Quebec
- *R.W. Quinn, Nashville, Tennessee
- B. Tunis, Ottawa, Ontario
- University of Oregon Medical School Library, Portland, Oregon
- R.C. U'Ren, Portland, Oregon
- E.B. Wells, Ithaca, New York
- *L.D. Wilcox, London, Ontario
- Woodward Library, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia

*Supporting friend

Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*: E.H. Bensley, Editor; Susan Biggs, Associate Editor; Karl Holeczek, Photography.

McGill University has appointed Mr. Philip M. Teigen to the post of History of Medicine Librarian. As such he is Librarian in charge of the Osler Library. Following an early education in English literature and two years of teaching in that subject, Mr. Teigen took his masters degree in library science at the University of Wisconsin with emphasis on historical, descriptive, and analytical bibliography. Subsequently he has become a candidate for the Ph.D. degree in the history of science from the same university, concentrating in the areas of paleography, history of science to the 18th century, and history of medicine to the 17th century. His doctoral dissertation is an edition (with glossary and introductory essay) of Richard Seymere's "Golden Workes of Phisecke and Surgury" (c. 1576).

Mr. Teigen has had experience as a librarian in a junior high school, in the serials department of the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater, and, since 1970, has been an assistant to John Neu, Bibliographer for the History of Science at the University of Wisconsin - Madison Memorial Library and Editor of the *ISIS* Annual Critical Bibliography.

Mr. Teigen assumed his duties in the Osler Library, June 1st, 1974. He succeeds Miss Ellen Wells, now Associate Rare Books Librarian at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

GIFTS TO THE LIBRARY

Two items of special interest have been received from Professor Archibald E. Malloch of McGill's Department of English. The first of these is an interleaved copy of the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* which belonged to Professor Malloch's father, Dr. Archibald Malloch. At the end of the Preface are the signatures of the three editors - W.W. Francis, Reginald H. Hill and Archibald Malloch. The second item is a copy of Walter Copland Perry's *The Boy's Odyssey*, London, Macmillan, 1901, originally a gift of William Osler to his son, Revere. The fly-leaf bears the following inscription - "E.R. Osler from dad, Xmas, 1901."

The Library is also grateful to the following who donated books or other gifts during 1973-74: McGill University Archives; Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University; National Institute of Canada; J-J. Lefebvre; La Société Royale du Canada; E. Desjardins; H.D. Vos; S. Gillespie; E. Rubin; M. Sourkes; E. Wells; E.H. Bensley; Medical Library, McGill University; F.B. Rogers; C. Kwo; Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen; National Library of Canada; M. Markowitz; Reader's Digest; Katedra sociálního lékařství; H.A. Savitz; J. Kristan; A.W. Franklin; E.F. Nation; Royal College of Physicians of London; Karolinska Institutets Bibliotek, Stockholm; Medizinhistorische Bibliothek der Universität Basel; M. Fransiszyn; Krankenhausgesellschaft, Düsseldorf; Centre d'études Canadiennes-Françaises, McGill University; Scottish Society of the History of Medicine; N. Woodworth; R.D. Walter; Montreal Neurological Institute Library; Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Sydney; M. Becklake; Washington University School of Medicine; Boehringer, Mannheim; H.F. Ellenberger; Medical Research Library of Brooklyn; N.H. Friedman; K.F. Russel; W.M. Fitzhugh, Jr; W.H. St. John-Brooks; M. Malachowski; Royal Army Medical College, London; L.D. Longo; Z. Blazina; M.L. Barr; R.J. Rossiter; S. Guillaume; S.B. Frost; J.W. Lella; P. Romanell; M. Terrin; Inter Nationes, Bonn; The Wellcome Trust; and anonymous donors.

OSLER SOCIETIES IN NORTH AMERICA*

When I was a premedical student I attended the University of Toronto, where there was an Osler Society, and I joined that society. I studied medicine at the University of Manitoba and helped to found an Osler Society there. So you will understand that by the time I graduated it was my clear understanding that every medical school had an Osler Society. A few years ago it became apparent to me that I was wrong. Every medical school did not have an Osler Society. But my impression was that most medical schools did and I decided I would try to ascertain the facts.

In 1971-72 a survey was made through the Dean's offices of 108 medical schools on this continent — all there were at that time. Replies were received from 106 of the 108. Of these 106 medical schools, 98 did not have and never had had Osler Societies. There were an additional five schools that once had Osler Societies but which no longer had them. These were (1) the school at Baylor University from which I received a report that included the phrase "suspended animation"; (2) the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston where I understand an Osler Society existed between 1953 and 1964; (3) the University of Alberta, where the Osler Society was replaced by the Alpha Omega Alpha Honour Medical Society; and, I was unhappy to discover, both (4) the University of Toronto, and (5) the University of Manitoba.

Three medical schools on this continent do have Osler Societies — the University of Western Ontario, the University of Vermont and McGill University. The McGill society, founded in 1921, is the oldest in North America, so far as I can determine.

It is interesting that one of the negative replies I received contained the following comment (in fact, this is the entire letter): "In answer to your letter of June 10, 1971, we are one of those few medical schools that does not have a society or club named after Sir William Osler." So my belief that these societies were widespread is shared by others.

I would add that I did receive unsolicited information about three other groups, which are not connected with medical schools but do represent societies that preserve Sir William's name. There is a Sir William Osler Society in Chicago — a very loosely organized group with representatives from the various Chicago-area schools. In 1966 this group held a meeting on the history of medicine and on Sir William Osler. My understanding is that the few other meetings they have held have not been historically oriented. There is an Osler Society in Vancouver which is affiliated with the Vancouver Medical Association. This is not a student organization. It sponsors an Osler Lecture each year. And finally, there is the Osler Society of Washington, D.C., which has a limited membership of practising physicians and surgeons. They hold monthly meetings October through May, at which they present and discuss scientific non-historical papers.

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Editor's Note: In Montreal there is a McGill Osler Reporting Society. Like the societies mentioned in Dr. Roland's last paragraph, it is not under the aegis of a medical school.

*Based on a paper presented before the American Osler Society, Montreal, May 4, 1972.

OSLER SOCIETY OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Report for the academic year 1973-74

During the past year, members and friends of the Osler Society enjoyed three regular meetings and the 53rd Annual Osler Banquet. President Nicholas Robert served the Society well both in choice of speakers and in fostering a spirit of inquiry and free discussion on all occasions.

At the first meeting Mr. Robert introduced Dr. Martin Hoffman, Honorary President for 1973-74. Then Markus Martin MDCM IV and Emmett Francoeur MDCM IV led a discussion entitled "The Religious Physician: A Man In Conflict." Mr. Francoeur spoke of his experiences at St. Joseph's Hospital where he devoted his efforts to meeting his patients' sacramental as well as medical and social needs; and wrestled with the meaning of the miracle in "A Leper Cured" (Mark 1:40-45). Mr. Martin spoke, from his researches in Judaic Studies, on the physician's role as defined in rabbinical codes, which reduce the possibility of conflict in the physician's service to the community. The lively discussion that followed included some contrasting of the markedly different perspectives a person can achieve in hospital by simply changing his position from vertical to horizontal!

At the second meeting Robert Allard MDCM IV presented a paper on "Psychiatry and Homosexuality." This dealt chronologically from 1870 onwards with the psychiatric community's changing attitudes on bisexuality, inborn versus acquired homosexuality, and diagnostic and prognostic attitudes with regard to homosexuality. Reviewing work in these fields by Kraft-Ebbing, Ferré, Bloch, Freud, Horney and others, Mr. Allard arrived at the interesting conclusion that instead of leading public opinion to illumination on sexual impulses and behaviour, prominent psychiatrists were influenced by popular belief. This conclusion and other controversial aspects of the paper generated much comment.

At the third meeting Warren Bell MDCM IV led a discussion entitled "History and Physical Examination." A brief but fascinating review by Mr. Bell of the development of modern techniques in history taking and physical examination included the stories of percussion and auscultation and a presentation of recent epidemiological data on the changing nature of the patient population in North America over the last half-century. This led to the moot point of the evening — are the history and physical examination as taught in medical schools today appropriate to today's medicine? Lengthy and laborious but rewarding discussion followed in which the history and physical examination were considered in their many facets.

The 53rd Annual Osler Banquet centered on a discussion of the life of Dr. Norman Bethune. Dr. Wendell Macleod, a former president of the Osler Society, delivered a stirring introduction of the guest speaker, Mr. Roderick Stewart of the University of Toronto Schools, author of the recently published *Bethune*. Mr. Stewart exhorted us to learn from the life of Dr. Bethune whose strengths and weaknesses as a man as well as his devotion to medicine were almost forgotten in times not long distant. Enriching the Banquet immeasurably was the presence of physicians who knew Dr. Bethune in Montreal including Drs. Wilder Penfield, F.L. McNaughton, H.N. Segall and R.A. Cleghorn. A tape recording of Mr. Stewart's talk and most of the discussion which followed was donated to the McGill University Archives. Another feature of the Osler Banquet deserving to be recorded was the presentation to Warren Bell of the W.W. Francis Prize for the best paper read to the Society during the academic year.

Michael Terrin MDCM IV
Secretary, Osler Society