
OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGILL UNIVERSITY, MONTREAL, CANADA

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Duncan McIntyre and The McIntyre Family



In the October 1973 issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter* Dr. Lloyd G. Stevenson described the translation of the Osler Library to the McIntyre Medical Sciences Building. Many visitors to the Osler Library in its present home ask why the name McIntyre is attached to the building.

The purpose of this note is to explain how this came about and to record the McGill Medical Faculty's debt to the McIntyre family.

The McIntyre Medical Sciences Building stands on property which once belonged to Duncan McIntyre (1834-1894), a railroad financier who joined forces with George Stephen, later Lord Mount Stephen, to bring into existence the Canadian Pacific Railway. McIntyre was thus a founder of the Railway and he became its first vice-president. A man of considerable wealth, he acquired a ten-acre property with extensive frontage on both Pine Avenue and Drummond Street and a connecting right-of-way to Peel Street. Here he had his elegant Victorian mansion called "Craigrue." Following Duncan McIntyre's death, Craigrue was eventually demolished but the property remained for many years in the hands of the McIntyre family. Then, in 1947, the property was given to McGill University by Mrs. Archibald A. Hodgson, Mrs. Lewis L. Reford, and Mrs. R.A. Snowball, daughters of Duncan McIntyre, and Duncan McIntyre Hodgson, grandson of Duncan McIntyre. It was a very valuable piece of land and a very generous gift. The "Deed of Donation" contained the provision that the name McIntyre be incorporated in any future name attached to the property or to any principal building erected thereon. The property

was designated by McGill University as McIntyre Park and Dr. F. Cyril James, McGill's Principal, announced that it would be used as a centre of botanical research and for supplementary playing fields for students. However, as might be expected, it was not long before plans were made to erect a building on the property. The Faculty of Medicine was regarded as having the first claim and the medical building erected on McIntyre Park was named the McIntyre Medical Sciences Building. When this building was officially opened in March 1966, one of the donors of the property, Duncan McIntyre Hodgson, attended the ceremony as a representative of the McIntyre family.

The McGill Faculty of Medicine has other debts to the McIntyre family. In 1927 Dr. Wilder Penfield was invited to come to Montreal to practise neurosurgery. Acceptance of the invitation required that financial support be found for a laboratory of neuropathology with a salary for his assistant, Dr. William Cone. For several years this support came from donors who preferred to remain anonymous. Recently Dr. Penfield has revealed that these donors were two daughters of Duncan McIntyre, Mrs. Hodgson and Mrs. Reford, and their husbands. One of the husbands, Dr. Lewis L. Reford, had in his earlier years done post-graduate work under Dr. Harvey Cushing and this no doubt gave the McIntyre family a special interest in neurosurgery. Dr. Penfield states that the Refords and the Hodgsons also gave the funds for the statue in the entrance hall of the Montreal Neurological Institute, "La Nature se dévoilant devant la Science," and later Mrs. Reford and Mr. Hodgson contributed liberally to the addition to the Institute of its McConnell Wing.

The Faculty of Medicine of McGill University has good reasons for ensuring that the name McIntyre is not forgotten.

NORMAN BETHUNE VISITS THE OSLER LIBRARY

Norman Bethune came to the Osler Library on April 29th, 1932 and his signature appears in our Visitors Register under that date. He brought with him a guest who was especially warmly welcomed by the Osler Librarian, Dr. W.W. Francis. The guest was Mrs. Laura Bassett Boynton Rawlings of El Paso, Texas, the great-granddaughter of Osler's "Alabama Student," Dr. John Y. Bassett.* Her signature is in the Register above that of Norman Bethune. Presumably the purpose of Dr. Bethune's visit was to introduce Mrs. Rawlings to the Osler Library and Dr. Francis. To say that Dr. Francis must have been delighted is probably almost an understatement. Few visits could ever have given him so much pleasure.

Following this, Dr. Francis kept in touch with Mrs. Rawlings and her husband, who proved to be, like Dr. Francis, a medical graduate of The Johns Hopkins University. After Dr. Bethune's death in 1939, Dr. Francis recalled that visit to the Osler Library of April 29th, 1932 and his other contacts with Norman Bethune.

In a letter dated October 31st, 1940 to Mrs. Rawlings, Dr. Francis wrote as follows. "Our friend Dr. Norman Bethune, who ushered you into the Library 8 years ago, died in heroic squalor in China last year, as you may have heard. He was a brilliant fellow and if we could only have held him down to his job, lung surgery – but the warmongers and oppressors were too much for him. Like J.Y.B. [the Alabama Student] he heard the call. He organized a blood bank in Spain and when driven out of there went to China, where he operated all day for months, mostly on the move and under the most awful conditions of filth and misery, before getting a fatal infection himself."

Then in a letter dated November 22nd, 1940, also to Mrs. Rawlings, Dr. Francis had this to say. "I never really *knew* him [Bethune], and there seem to be few who did. ... Your visit was my first contact with him and he only twice came into the Library afterwards, but he impressed me as an interesting character and a learned man with an extraordinary knowledge of the history of philosophy."

It seems clear that Dr. Francis thought well of Norman Bethune and remembered with gratitude his having brought to the Osler Library a descendant of the Alabama Student on his visit in April 1932.

* "An Alabama Student," the story of Dr. John Y. Bassett of Huntsville, Alabama, was presented by William Osler at a meeting of The Johns Hopkins Historical Club, January 1895 and later became one of Osler's best known biographical essays.

A LETTER FROM LADY OSLER

Under the title "The Osler Library Reception Committee (1920-1928)" the February 1973 issue of the *Newsletter* provided an account of McGill University's preparations for the reception and housing of Osler's bequest of the greater part of his personal library. In that account, emphasis was laid on the active role played by Lady Osler. The letter reproduced here is of interest because it so clearly reveals Lady Osler's involvement in the detailed planning of the room which was to house the Osler Library at McGill University. The "Mr. Nobbs" to whom the letter is addressed was of course Percy Erskine Nobbs who designed the original Osler Library room and whose career was described in the June 1973 issue of the *Newsletter*. Lady Osler's letter to Professor Nobbs is preserved in the archives of the Osler Library.

13 Norham Gardens,
Oxford,

Dec 26 [1921]

Dear Mr. Nobbs

I am so glad you have the plans for the Osler Library under your care. Sir Arthur Currie [Principal of McGill University] sent me on the answers to my questions. Either oak or walnut I should like for the woodwork. The oak would be dark I suppose and evidently you feel as I do about the finish of the woodwork. Another thing pleases me too and that is about the portrait. I loathe all pictures of Sir William except his figure in Sargent's portrait of four Hopkins professors.

As to the glass for the windows – It is only a pattern that I object to – "leaded glass in obscure character" would be satisfactory I am sure. I am certain that all will be well under your care.

Remember me most kindly to your wife and believe me sincerely

Grace R. Osler

One of Lady Osler's comments requires explanation. She wrote "Another thing pleases me too and that is about the portrait." This was in reply to a statement by Professor Nobbs that he was not in favour of hanging a portrait of Sir William in the room and indeed had never seen a good portrait of him. In view of Lady Osler's expressed opinion of pictures of her husband, it should be recalled that it was she who chose the attractive Vernon plaque for the Osler Library. No doubt in referring to "pictures" she was not thinking of this portrait of Osler in bronze.

The 259th meeting of the Osler Society, held last October, saw the Osler Library filled to capacity with no less than 85 in attendance. Also present was Dr. F.W. Wiglesworth, our Honorary President this year. The topic, "Medicine, Faith Healing and Psychic Phenomena," presented by Warren Bell M.D.C.M. '74, drew this large audience including a delegation from the Montreal Silva Mind Control organization. Warren carefully traced the history of man's search for and definition of the "Vital Force" and he included mention of some fascinating experiments currently being done on faith healing. Needless to say the ensuing discussion was quite lively.

For its next session the Osler Society retreated to the more morbid side of medicine. Along with the History of Medicine Department the Osler Society presented a film borrowed from the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa. The film showed an autopsy performed on a remarkably well preserved 2000-year-old Chinese mummy. We were all amazed at the state of this ancient cadaver and noted that it equalled, if not surpassed, the quality of McGill's finer specimens in the Department of Anatomy!

In March 1975 Brian Kirkham M.D.C.M. III, who has devoted much time to the care of the aged, presented a paper on "Geriatrics - McGill's Rejection of the Aged." Brian's deep concern for this aspect of medicine came across to us all and several interesting proposals for improving the current situation were put forth by him.

For the last meeting of the year David McPherson M.D.C.M. III talked on "The Subjective Experience of Mental Illness." In an excellent presentation he reviewed a substantial segment of literature written by former institutionalized patients. As in many areas of medicine the patients' views often did not parallel those of their doctors. With several psychiatrists in the audience, the discussion which followed was indeed stimulating.

The 54th annual banquet held in the Faculty Club on May 6, 1975 was the highlight of the year and was host to 100 guests. We were very fortunate to have as our guest speaker Professor Ragnar Granit, Nobel Laureate, from the Royal Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Dr. Granit was a former student of Sir Charles Sherrington - the subject of his after-dinner talk. Following a superb and highly amusing introduction by Dr. Wiglesworth, Dr. Granit enlightened us with some fascinating anecdotal comments on his former teacher and renowned scientist who was also a personal friend of Sir William Osler.

Christopher Feindel M.D.C.M. III
President, Osler Society 1974-75

The appeal to the Friends for the 1974-75 academic year concluded at the end of May and the Library is very gratified to receive the \$2277 contributed by 169 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:

- W.C. Alvarez, Hillsborough, California
- S.C. Ballou, New York, New York
- J. Beaudoin, Quebec, Quebec
- F. Bloch, St.-Prex, Switzerland
- J.E. Boulding, Nanaimo, British Columbia
- F. Braun, Seattle, Washington
- *G.J. D'Angelo, Erie, Pennsylvania
- J.H. Derby, New London, Connecticut
- P. Gold, Montreal, Quebec
- W.E. Goodwin, Los Angeles, California
- *O.C. Gruner, Montreal, Quebec (in memoriam)
- *J. Hanaway, St. Louis, Missouri
- Institut für Geschichte der Medizin der Universität Tübingen,
Tübingen, West Germany
- J. Levitan, Montreal, Quebec
- L.D. Longo, Loma Linda, California
- F. Lowy, Toronto, Ontario
- P. McKinney, Chicago, Illinois
- F.L. McNaughton, Montreal, Quebec
- L. Mergler, Montreal, Quebec
- J.H. Oliver, Montreal, Quebec
- D.M. O'Sullivan, Ballarat, Australia
- W.D. Parsons, St. John's, Newfoundland
- *W. Penfield, Montreal, Quebec
- M.A. Revere, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts
- Henry Schuman Ltd., New York, New York
- *J.C. Sharp, Corpus Christi, Texas
- *J. Stratford, Montreal, Quebec
- J.F. Toole, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
- B. Tunis, Ottawa, Ontario
- J.F. Webb, Toronto, Ontario

*Supporting Friend

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CURATORS OF THE OSLER LIBRARY

The thirty-eighth meeting of the Board of Curators was held on April 16th, 1975. As has become customary, the gathering began informally at a coffee session in the W.W. Francis Seminar Room where the Curators had an opportunity to meet the Library staff. At 11 a.m. Dr. R.F.P. Cronin, Chairman of the Board and Dean of the McGill Faculty of Medicine, called the meeting to order in the Osler Room of the Library. He extended a special welcome to three newly appointed Curators—Mr. Allen L. Fein, medical student representative chosen by the Medical Students' Society of McGill; Miss Marianne Scott, Director of McGill University Libraries; and Mr. Philip Teigen, History of Medicine Librarian and Secretary of the Board of Curators.

The Board received the following requests relating to unpublished manuscripts in the Osler Library — (1) from Prof. Seymour Mayne, Department of English, University of Ottawa, request for permission to publish May Drummond's biography of her husband, Dr. William Henry Drummond, physician and poet; (2) from Dr. Charles G. Roland of the Mayo Clinic, request for permission to publish William Osler's notes on his dreams; (3) from Dr. E.H. Bensley and Mr. Philip Teigen, Department of the History of Medicine and Osler Library, McGill University, request for permission to publish William Osler's "A visit to the dismal swamp," *Bibl. Osl.* 4632 and 7642, a fanciful tale written by Osler to amuse his son Revere. With regard to the second item, Osler's notes on his dreams had been reproduced and circulated to

the Board before the meeting. These three requests were granted by the Board.

The Board received as a gift from Dr. Marshall Fulton of Providence, Rhode Island a picture of Sir Thomas Browne. The following are excerpts from Dr. Fulton's letter which accompanied this gift. "It [the picture] came to me in 1929 from Mrs. Henry B. Chapin of Boston, Lady Osler's sister, who had a lot to do with the closing out of 13 Norham Gardens after Lady Osler died. ... During my three years as a medical student at Oxford (1920-23), I had the wonderful good fortune to become a 'latch-keyer' at 13 Norham Gardens, and to come to know Lady Osler well. Mrs. Chapin came each year to visit as did other members of the Revere and Osler families. Wilder Penfield was just finishing his Rhodes Scholarship and starting his Beit Fellowship in London. John Fulton was in residence at Magdalen. Archie Malloch lived in London but came to Oxford and 13 Norham Gardens each week-end. Billy Francis was there working on 'the catalogue.' The hospitality of the Open Arms was unmatched. You can imagine what it could mean under such circumstances to receive this picture of Sir Thomas Browne as a memento and a gift from this remarkable and historic household. I have treasured it during the years, but I am happy to pass it along where it will be among its original surroundings." The Curators expressed their grateful appreciation of Dr. Fulton's gift and agreed that the picture should be placed in the Osler Room close by the collected works of Sir Thomas Browne.