



THE OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 110 • 2008

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

IN THIS ISSUE

IN THIS FALL ISSUE, ARTHUR Gryfe, pathologist at the Trillium Health Centre, Mississauga, Ontario, explores a mysterious trip that William Osler and young W.W. Francis embarked on to visit a leprosarium in New Brunswick... in the company of two unmarried ladies, one of them destined to be his wife. Please read on!

Recent McGill Information Studies graduate Jacqueline Barlow describes her role in our digital project, "The William Osler Photo Collection", which involved cataloguing the photographs assembled by Harvey Cushing, and subsequent Osler staff, for on-line access, thanks to generous funding from the McGovern Foundation.

Dr. Chuck Roland who has just published his biography of Dr. Archibald Malloch, the senior member of three generations of a family with close ties with the Osler family, continues with his column, "Roland's Canadian Medical History Miniatures". This issue's candidate is geologist/doctor Robert Bell.

And as is usual in the fall, we send you our annual appeal, with a report of the range of activities that take place here, in large measure, thanks to your help. ❁



OSLER AND GRACE VISIT TRACADIE

In 1889, William Osler decided, apparently at the eleventh hour, to change his summer travel plans. Instead of attending the annual meeting of the Canadian Medical Association in the beautiful mountainous setting of Banff, Alberta, he took his 11 year old cousin, Billy Francis, and headed off to the leper colony at Tracadie in remote New Brunswick. He also arranged to rendezvous along the way with the recently widowed Grace Revere Gross. Grace and a friend, Sarah Woolley, accompanied Osler to Tracadie. Billy decided to wait with friends 30 miles away in Caraquet.

It was the year before Osler began writing his famous textbook, *The Principles and Practice of Medicine*, in which, he refers to his trip to Tracadie. According to the time-honoured story, when Osler received the first copy of *Principles* in 1892, he tossed the book into Grace's lap and exclaimed, "There, take the darn thing; now what are you going to do with the man?" They married three months later. Osler had previously proposed to Grace sometime between their visit to Tracadie and the book-tossing incident, but she had advised him to complete his writing first.

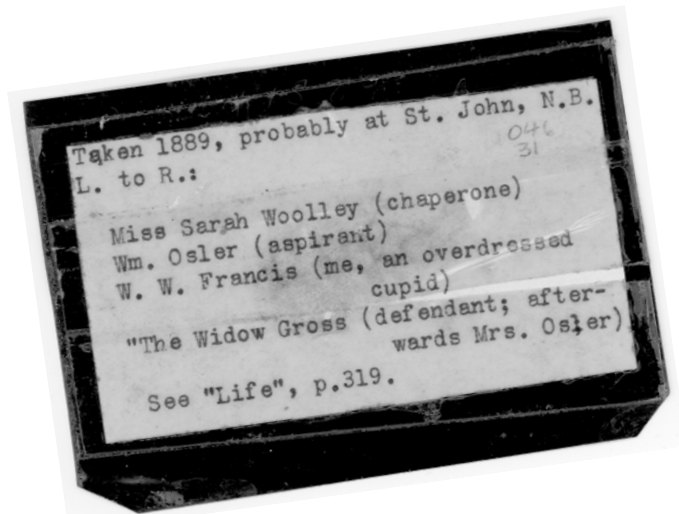
It is easy to understand why Osler, the consummate physician

and writer, planning to create the definitive medical textbook, would visit one of the two leprosaria in Canada. But why, of all places, would he take an 11 year-old boy, and the woman he would marry three years later?

by Arthur Gryfe



Miss Sarah Woolley, William Osler, W.W. Francis and Grace Revere Osler, taken in 1889, William Osler Photo Collection, CUS_046-34_P



Back of photo, William Osler Photo Collection, CUS_046-34_PB

When Osler visited Tracadie in 1889, he supported the theory that leprosy was infectious, possibly with some hereditary predisposition.



While searching for the answer to that question, I serendipitously discovered a previously unpublished letter from Osler to Dr. Alfred Corbett Smith, an attending physician to the lazaretto. This led to the discovery of four additional unpublished letters, directly associated with or resulting from Osler's visit, including two more written by Osler himself. These letters significantly influenced the management of leprosy patients in Canada, the career of Dr. Smith, and the construction of new living and hospital facilities for the leprosy patients and their care givers. This paper will discuss only briefly the history of leprosy in New Brunswick and the lazaretto in Tracadie, since these subjects have been described in other publications, most notably by Losier and Pinet in *Children of Lazarus: The Story of the Lazaretto at Tracadie*.⁽¹⁾

Leprosy first appeared in New Brunswick around 1815. The primary source of infection in the province is unknown. Until late in the 19th century, the medical community was undecided if the disease was contagious, hereditary, or both. When Osler

visited Tracadie in 1889, he supported the theory that leprosy was infectious, possibly with some hereditary predisposition.⁽²⁾

After an unsuccessful attempt to create a lazaretto on Sheldrake Island, and with unremitting lobbying by the clergy and by family and friends of the lepers, a lazaretto was constructed at Tracadie in 1849, where the patients would be close to home. However, the buildings were small and poorly ventilated. Three years later, they were accidentally destroyed by fire. A new lazaretto was constructed the following year.

The lazaretto was under the management of a Provincial Board of Health, each member of which, possessed despotic power. Lepers were hunted like wild beasts, dragged away by an iron hook attached to a long pole, handcuffed, and thrown into a prison, surrounded by a 12 foot wall, surmounted by a row of long spikes to prevent escape. When the Medical Superintendent died suddenly in 1865, 25 year old Dr. Alfred Corbett Smith, a recent graduate of Harvard Medical School and a native of nearby Bathurst, N.B., was appointed to the position,

and remained associated with the lazaretto until his death, 44 years later.

When Smith moved to Tracadie in 1865, there were 21 patients in the lazaretto. It was very difficult to get people from the area to work there, and no proper nursing was available. In September 1868, six nuns from the Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal were sent to the lazaretto, and under the name of Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph à Tracadie, they and their successors served the establishment for 97 years. Six months after the nursing sisters arrived, Dr. Smith's position as Medical Superintendent was terminated to save money. He and his wife, Helen, moved to Chatham where he opened a general practice. However he retained his interest in leprosy and the leprosarium.

Two years later, in 1871, Joseph-Auguste Babineau became the priest of the parish of Tracadie, and as the Superintendent of the lazaretto and a member of the Board, he wielded considerable power in the running of the institution and in the direction of the sisters. He decided who would be admitted as a patient, and had control over treatment. It was around this time that *Mycobacterium leprae*, the causative agent of leprosy, was discovered by Norwegian physician G.H.A. Hansen.

Before the 1870s were over, the sisters' authority was reduced. Due to faulty diagnoses, patients with skin diseases other than leprosy had been admitted. Some remained for over a year. It became obvious that Babineau and the nuns did not have sufficient medical expertise. As a result, in October 1878, Smith was appointed Consulting Physician to the lazaretto by the New Brunswick Legislature. He advised on in-patient care, and

visited the lazaretto four times a year, for which he received an annual salary of \$200 and travel expenses. However he had no real jurisdiction in the hospital itself, but visited the surrounding parishes, inspecting homes and factories, and by "moral suasion", removed suspected cases to the hospital.

In 1880, the jurisdiction of the lazaretto was transferred to the Federal Department of Agriculture, after an investigation revealed conflicts of interest and squabbles amongst Board members. The federal takeover of the lazaretto seemed to result in a sudden curiosity on the part of the general public. Throughout the 1880s, a steady stream of reporters, politicians, and the clergy made their way to the Tracadie hospital. The reports that appeared in the newspapers and magazines were not flattering.

During the summer of 1889, William Osler relocated from Philadelphia to the newly opened Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. According to Harvey Cushing's biography, *The Life of Sir William Osler*, "He got away by the end of August for a visit to Toronto, and from there in the company with his favourite nephew, W.W. Francis, [11 year old Francis was actually his first-cousin-once-removed] instead of proceeding to Banff, where the Canadian Medical Association was to meet, he for good and sufficient reasons went to pay a visit to a doctor-friend in charge of the leper colony at Tracadie, on the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the very north-eastern corner of the Province of New Brunswick. New Brunswick is not so large but that some Philadelphia friends who were spending the summer on the Island of Grand Manan, off the southwest corner of the

Province, joined forces with them".⁽³⁾

The "doctor-friend in charge of the leper colony" was Alfred Corbett Smith, and the "friends" with whom they "joined forces" were the recently widowed Grace Revere Gross and her closest friend, Sarah Woolley. Osler had known Grace and her late husband, Dr. Samuel Gross, for some time, and had often been a guest in their home. After the demise of Samuel, Osler continued to see Grace frequently and often referred to her as "The Widow Gross".

In all editions of his textbook, *Principles and Practice of Medicine*, Osler refers to his trip to Tracadie. In the first edition, published in 1892, he wrote, "An endemic focus [of leprosy] is at Tracadie, New Brunswick. A few cases are also met with in Cape Breton, N.S. At Tracadie, which is on a bay of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the disease is limited to two or three counties which are settled by French Canadians. The disease was imported from Normandy about the end of the last century. The cases are confined to a lazaretto, to which they are sent so soon as the disease is manifest. I made a visit to the settlement two years ago with the medical officer, A.A. Smith (*sic*), of Chatham, at which time there were only eighteen patients in the hospital. It is interesting to note that the disease has gradually diminished by segregation; formerly there were over forty under surveillance." In the second edition he corrected A.A. Smith to A.C. Smith. Osler continued to correspond with Smith and in later editions, mentions statistics sent to him by Smith in 1898 and 1904.

There does not appear to be any indication that Osler originally intended to travel to

Tracadie. The first mention that he was about to head for New Brunswick was a short, previously unpublished letter, in Osler's hand, to the Minister of the Interior, sent from 83 Wellesley Street, Toronto, and dated only, "Monday". It reads,

Dear Sir,

It is my intention to visit this month the Lazaretto for Lepers at Tracadie. Could you kindly send me an official letter in order to save any trouble there might be in seeing the place.

Yours truly,
William Osler
Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins Univ.
Baltimore⁽⁵⁾

It appears that when Osler reached Toronto, on his intended way to Alberta, he stopped to visit relatives, learned that Grace Gross was vacationing on Grand Manan Island, and decided to travel instead to New Brunswick. The only account of his eastward journey from Toronto was described years later by W.W. Francis.

Osler and Billy Francis went from Toronto, via Montreal to Portland, Maine and on to Eastport, "where", according to Francis, "we waited impatiently for a boat from Grand Manan, which was bringing two mysterious friends to join us. The four of us made the rest of the trip together, via St. John, Bathurst, and a funny little railway thence to Caraquet, on the Baie de Chaleurs, where we were all put up by a very charming family, with some girls who made a lot of me. Next day, the rest of them drove 30 miles to Tracadie and inspected the colony of 18 lepers. I was left behind with 'cold feet', the result of heat, lobsters and seeing some pictures of the

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lepers. When we got back to Bathurst and the main line, the train was late, hot and crowded, and the only accommodation left for W.O., and me and an enormously fat R.C. bishop was the smoking-room of the Pullman. The bishop offered to climb up to the upper berth, but we both looked at his girth, and he joined us in a laugh. W.O. and I shared the upper, and the bishop snored horribly. We dropped our companions the next day at Cacouna. Such is my childhood recollection. Boiled down, I fear there is nothing in it but the fact of the visit and that Mrs. Gross accompanied us".⁽⁶⁾

The next letter, and the second in Osler's hand, was to the Minister of Agriculture and was written when Osler returned to Johns Hopkins. It is dated Baltimore, Sept. 22nd, 1889, and reads:

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The Johns Hopkins Hospital,
NORTH BROADWAY.
Baltimore, Sept 22nd 1889

Osler Sept 22 1889

To the Honorable
The Minister of Agriculture

Sir

I made an inspection last month of the lazaretto for lepers at Tracadie and there are one or two points of public interest to which I should like to direct the attention of the department. In the first place the experiment which has there been carried out is of the greatest importance as showing that the careful segregation - even though incomplete is sufficient to reduce greatly the number of cases & diminish the risk to the community. I know of nothing more interesting in the history of modern leprosy than the way in which at Tracadie the disease has been gradually limited & the number of patients reduced. Upon this point the Government may be most heartily congratulated. I would like to make, with your permission, these suggestions

First:- the present accommodation is not at all satisfactory. It is not right that the women affected - 8 in number now - should be housed in a garret which though clean is altogether too contracted & inadequate. Two new wards should be built with proper conveniences.

Sir

I made an inspection last month of the Lazaretto for Lepers at Tracadie and there are one or two points of public interest to which I should like to direct the attention of the department.

In the first place the experiment which has there been carried out is of the greatest importance as showing that the careful segregation - even though incomplete is sufficient to reduce greatly the number of cases & diminish the risk to the community. I know of nothing more interesting in the history of modern Leprosy than the way in which at Tracadie the disease has been gradually limited & the number of patients reduced. Upon this point the Government may be most heartily congratulated.

I would like to make with your permission, three suggestions.

First: The present accommodation is not at all satisfactory. It is not right that the women affected - 8 in number now - should be housed in a garret which though clean is altogether too contracted & inadequate. Two new wards should be built with proper conveniences.

Second: As the questions of the modes of infection, the exact nature & c of leprosy now become of imperial interest and as the isolated Tracadie settlement offers very exceptional opportunities for the solution of these problems, I would suggest the appointment for a term of years of some one who would give his entire time to the study of the disease as it exists in the infected regions. Your visiting officer Dr. Smith has been in communication with physicians all over the world who are working at this subject & he has the necessary technical skill to pursue these enquiries - I know of no one more suitable for the position should you create it.

Third: An energetic attempt should be made in the next five years, by an annual house to house inspection of the infected counties, to isolate all the cases. Ample power should be given to the officers to remove patients and if necessary, in the case of workers, the government might pension for a time the children.

I feel certain that within twenty years Leprosy could be stamped out in New Brunswick. What has been done indicates clearly what could be

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Baltimore, _____ 18

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done with thorough inspection & additional police power.

The Sisters & Father Babineau are so devoted to the work that with them there could be no serious trouble in the compulsory segregation of all cases.

I have the honour to be
Yours truly
William Osler MD,
F.R.C.P.(Lond)
Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore⁽⁴⁾

Osler then wrote a letter to Dr. A.C. Smith in Tracadie. This, in fact, was the first of the unpublished letters that we discovered. It was located amongst Dr. Smith's papers in the University of Moncton archives in Shippagan, N.B., and was the impetus that led to the eventual

discovery of the other unpublished letters. Typical of Osler, the letter is dated only, "Baltimore, Monday 1889". It reads as follows:

Dear Dr. Smith
I was away all last week & only had your message last eve on my return. I have written to the Minister (3 pages) & urged: -
(1) the erection of more suitable buildings, (2) the provision for a thorough study of the disease in the infected regions, (3) the attempt to stamp out by an annual inspection with police power to remove to the lazaretto. I have urged you as the most suitable person for the study & I have written a private letter to Mr. Carling. I have lost my stenographer or I would send you a copy.

Thanks for the goodness in sending on the letters to Mrs. Gross.

Sincerely yours
Wm Osler⁽⁷⁾

The mention of "Mrs. Gross" at the end of the letter is the only reference by Osler that we have been able to find that Grace accompanied him to Tracadie, although her presence was confirmed by W.W. Francis, as noted previously.

During the months of September and October 1889, Smith had had communications with John Carling and John Lowe, respectively the Minister and Deputy Minister of Agriculture, regarding mainly segregation of lepers. On October 21, 1889, a letter was written from Dr. J.C. Taché, the former Deputy Minister of Agriculture, to John Lowe. This letter reads:

My dear Mr. Lowe: -

Concerning the questions approached in Documents respectively numbered 70,653, 70,719 and 70,724, (Dr. Smith, Dr. Smith, Dr. Osler) which herewith return to you, and on which you demanded my opinion, I have to say that I generally hold with Drs. Smith and Osler, that it is desirable to provide for compulsory means of seclusion when persuasion fails to bring it in due time, and to secure by an increase of the salary of the visiting physician (Dr. Smith), a large portion, if not the whole of his time for the discovery, inspection and seclusion of new cases of Leprosy within the Canadian territory. This opinion is not a new notion with me; oftentimes have I taken it up for consideration in the course of my official life, coupled with the view that

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The Johns Hopkins Hospital, 70724
NORTH BROADWAY.

Baltimore, _____ 18

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I have the honor to be,

Yours truly
William Osler M.D. F.R.C.P. (Lond)
Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore

Letter from William Osler to J. Carling,
Department of Agriculture, Canada, 1889

persons taken with Leprosy are not to be outlawed or treated like criminals, or considered as objects of horror, but dealt with, as heretofore they have been, as unfortunates to be especially attended to, both in their and the public interest.

J.C. Taché⁽⁸⁾

The fifth letter was written by Dr. Alfred Smith on Oct. 31, 1889, to John Carling, the Minister of Agriculture, stating that for a fixed annual salary of six hundred dollars plus traveling expenses, he would work full time at the lazaretto. Smith states that he is willing to "devote all of my time and attention, in addition to any present duties in education with the Tracadie lazaretto, to the study of Leprosy in the

Dominion of Canada, and to the stamping of it out of our country".⁽⁹⁾ Shortly thereafter Smith was hired as the full time physician for the lazaretto, and within a few years of Osler's visit and letters, a new lazaretto was constructed.

In conclusion, we describe here five letters, discovered serendipitously, relating directly to William Osler's visit to the lazaretto in Tracadie. Three of the letters were written by Osler himself. The visit and letters undoubtedly played a role in improving the conditions in the lazaretto and the treatment of leprosy in Canada, as well as the career of Dr. A.C. Smith. However, we never did find an explanation why Osler took Grace, the woman he soon married, or why he intended to

take 11 year old Willy to the lazaretto. Osler and Grace kept their courtship a secret until the day of the wedding and neither left any letters or other accounts of their trip together to Tracadie. Osler mentions his visit to the lazaretto in all editions of his textbook, but nowhere does he mention his companions. Grace's papers were destroyed after her death at her request. In the 21st century it is quite acceptable for an unmarried couple to travel together. Would it have been equally acceptable in Victorian 19th century? ❀

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"IN OSLER'S FOOTSTEPS" A ONE DAY COLLOQUY ON HEALING

by Chris Lyons

Sir William Osler means many things to many people – a great physician, a great researcher, a great teacher and a great bibliophile. These myriad roles have inspired past and present students and practitioners in the art of healing. On Saturday, September 27th 24 people gathered at the Osler Library to consider the theme of healing and the role of the healer. The background of the speakers ranged from physicians, those living with their own or a family member's illness, a minister/therapist and yes, even a librarian. Dr. David Elpern, the co-organiser of the colloquy and the first speaker, set the day in a proper Oslerian context by quoting from an extemporaneous speech that Sir William gave in 1899 to medical students in Albany, New York. Osler had told the gathered students that:

There is a strong feeling abroad among people – you see it in the newspapers – that we doctors are given over nowadays to science; that we care much more for the disease and its scientific aspects than for the individual. I don't believe it, but at any rate, whether the tendency exists or not, I would urge upon you in your own practice, to care more particularly ... for the individual patient than for the special features of the disease ...

Dealing as we do with poor suffering humanity, we see the man unmasked, exposed to all the frailties and weaknesses, and you have to keep your heart soft and tender lest you have too great a contempt for your fellow creatures. The best way is to keep a looking-glass in your own heart, and the more carefully you scan your own frailties the more tender you are for those of your fellow creatures.

Dr. Elpern stated that reading autobiographies about the illnesses of others, a genre called pathography, helped him to remain in touch with "poor suffering humanity" and provided an education beyond what he received in academia. He said that they allowed him to see the secret world of patients, their suffering and their not always pleasant feelings towards their care or caregivers. He illustrated this with a poem written by the late comedian Gilda Radner in her book about her battle with ovarian cancer:

*Doctors are whippersnappers in ironed white coats
who spy up your rectums and look down your throats
And press you and poke you with sterilized tools
And stab at solutions that pacify fools.
I used to revere them and do what they said
Till I learned what they learned on was already dead.
(It's Always Something, Harper, 2000)*

This sense of patient alienation from health professionals was expressed by two of the other speakers. Deborah Golden Alecson described how she was frustrated by the medical profession's attempts to keep her husband alive at all costs during his struggle with pancreatic cancer despite an obvious lack of success. Indeed the treatments

were increasing his suffering. Hospice care, in contrast, provided him with the chance to live the last few months of his life accepting and preparing for death, in part by consciously spending time with his family. Andy DeAngelis is a younger man who has lived with lamellar ichthyosis, a sometimes debilitating skin ailment. He too described the frustrations of dealing with insensitive health care providers, but more optimistically noted how positive interactions with members of the medical profession have allowed him to live a fulfilling life.

Several medical speakers discussed their sense of what it means to be a healer. Dr. Thomas Hutchinson, who is with the McGill Programs in Whole Person Care and who teaches in the physicianship programme, described the nature of the doctor-patient relationship which can help healing by being aware that there are two relationships – between the doctor and the patient and between the doctor and the

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disease. Often practitioners cut themselves off from their patient and focus on the disease in part to protect themselves from a sense of failure if the curative model doesn't work. The irony is that this kind of distancing actually can increase the likelihood of burnout since one then misses out on the positive aspects of a good relationship with the

Sir William linked books to improved medical practice, not only in terms of providing utilitarian information but also to inspire them to develop a greater nobility of character.



patient, regardless of the ultimate outcome. Dr. Bill Kober spoke of the importance of using humour when working with patients, noting that U.S. author Kurt Vonnegut described it as the soul seeking its release. Given that Osler humanised the relationship between doctors and patients, current practitioners should not be afraid to use a new form of therapeutic relief, which he dubbed Osler's laugh. Physician assistant Brian Mauer pointed out that everyone can benefit by listening to the stories of others. Even Sir William Osler had to deal with the tragedy of the loss of his own son. The theme of the wounded healer was also discussed by the Reverend Bill Zeckhausen, a Congregational minister who is a therapist with experience running physician support groups. He felt that having gone through trauma themselves gives doctors credibility as healers.

In addition to the presentations, participants were given a tour of the Osler Library along with a discourse on how Sir William linked books to improved medical practice, not only in terms of providing utilitarian information but also to inspire them to develop a greater nobility of character.

Part of what made the day feel like such a success were the interesting questioning, discussions and conversations that took place both after each presentation and during the breaks and lunch. Everyone was particularly pleased to see a goodly number of medical and nursing students attend as it bespeaks an interest in this important topic. The Osler Library was particularly delighted to host this event as it gave us the opportunity to propagate Sir William Osler's enduring legacy.



ROLAND'S CANADIAN MEDICAL HISTORY MINIATURES

by Charles Roland

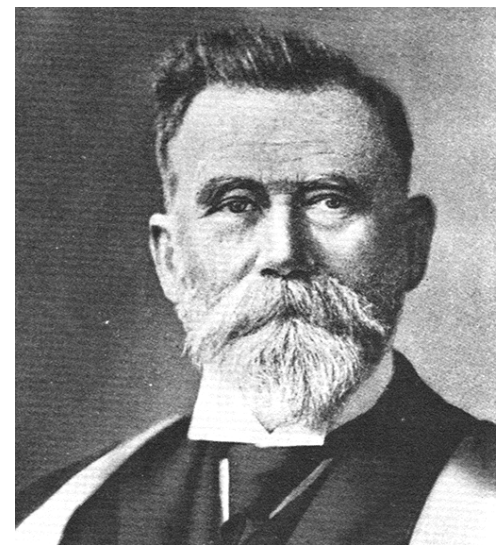
Robert Bell – Medical Geologist

If you ever happen to be standing on the bank looking across Bell River, in north-western Quebec, or seek a campsite in Bell Island, in Hudson Bay, you can impress your companions by pointing out that both geographical features are named after a Canadian physician. This man was Robert Bell (1841-1917), a doctor who seems never to have actually practiced medicine.

Bell was descended from Scots who came to Canada almost two centuries ago. Both his father and his father's father were ministers of the Church of Scotland. The father, the Rev. Andrew Bell, was a pioneer of Canadian geology, and whether by nature or nurture his son Robert followed the same path.

One of the many fascinations of Bell's life is his unusual educational history. After his first years at the grammar school in Prescott County, he went on to study at McGill. There he received his degree in Applied Science in 1861 and his MD in 1878. But he had joined the staff of the Geological Survey of Canada in 1857, aged 16. And when he retired in 1908 he was still with the Survey, his salary after 51 years having arrived at the munificent sum of \$3,000 annually.

According to one obituary notice, Bell studied medicine so as to be equipped "to meet



Robert Bell. ISO, FRS, MD, CM, DSc, LLD (1841-1917)

emergencies that might arise in the course of his exploratory journeys." That would help to explain his rather odd educational history. Whether or not he ever utilized his training is uncertain. He did attempt to teach, at Queen's, and was found to be incapable of maintaining order in his classes. Snowballs and other items were thrown among themselves; of course, medical students were a pretty rough-and-ready lot in the mid-19th-century.

In 1873 he and William Osler happened to be in London, England, at the same time. Bell obviously was already known to Osler and he was interested in medicine. Osler once wrote to him saying "if you feel inclined to see any practice I shall be most happy to show you around the wards." A decade later, Osler was soliciting Indian skulls from Bell to take with him for the anthropological collections of Rudolf Virchow in Germany.

His connection with medicine tenuous, Bell was a geologist first and last. He spent much of his adult life in the remotest parts of Canada. His surveys took him through a great portion of northern Quebec and Ontario, the area around Hudson Bay, northern Manitoba, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories. Among the rivers he surveyed were the Slave, Athabaska, Beaver, Churchill, Hayes, Nelson, Winnipeg, English, Nipigon, Moose, Harricanaw, Nottaway, and presumably the Bell. He believed firmly in the economic good sense of exporting wheat to Europe via Hudson Bay.

Bell was not the typical heavy-handed European intruder in the wilderness. He learned to speak Ojibway and other aboriginal languages, so that he could converse with the native population. He was deeply interested in the folklore of these people, and collected native legends, many hundreds of them. His intelligent and sympathetic interest was, evidently, appreciated, for at Grand Lake, Quebec, Bell was made an honorary chief of the Algonquin Indians. He was careful to seek native names for geographical features, and may have had the good grace to be embarrassed when his own name was attached to features that undoubtedly had earlier designations. Nevertheless, he is credited with naming more than 3,000 lakes, rivers, hills, valleys, and mountains.

In 1884, Bell was medical officer and geologist (almost certainly with the emphasis on geologist) to the *Neptune* expedition, and to the *Alert* expedition the next year. Both expeditions were spared serious epidemic or low-vitamin disorders, while the geological contributions to our

knowledge of the Arctic were substantial.

Surprisingly, perhaps, despite spending a substantial part of his life exploring northern Canada, Bell was married. Little seems to be known about his family life. He lived in brief retirement in Ottawa, then on a farm he purchased in Manitoba. There he died in June 1917. ❀

ANNUAL APPEAL TO THE FRIENDS 2008

The *Healing Hands* depicted here is taken from a woodcut done by Nova Scotia artist Robert Pope (1956-1992) who died after a ten year battle with cancer. In his discussion of this work he speaks of the healing power of hands, "The lines symbolize curative life energy flowing inside and outside the body." Hands are symbolic of a library as well. We think of helping hands and hands on experiences. The stained glass window designed by Percy Nobbs in the Osler Room depicts the heavenly hand and book, symbolizing learning and scholarship. When I think of this past year, "energy" is the word that best describes what our staff and researchers have displayed thanks to the help of our Friends.

This has been a great year for projects and for unusual and welcome gifts. We have continued to purchase the incredible books that are published each year on the history and social studies of medicine, over 1,600 volumes. We have been fortunate enough to purchase rare works to fill gaps in our collection and we



*"Healing Hands" on pgs. 108-109 in Robert Pope's
Illness & Healing: Images of Cancer, 2004*

have received some stunning gifts. Added to this is the happy opportunity each year, also provided by our Friends, of conserving fragile works in order to make them available to researchers for years to come. Remarkable projects include "The William Osler Photo Collection" and the addition of over 8,000 volumes covering the period of 1850 to 1913 from the Life Sciences Library holdings in remote storage!

A list of our recent purchases can always be found on our web page, but the following titles give you a brief overview of the range of material that you can expect to find here. A fascinating new arrival is *Medieval Islamic Medicine*, Washington, 2007 by Peter E. Pormann and Emilie Savage Smith that among other topics describes the interaction between Islamic, Christian and Jewish practitioners and sweeps away some of the cobwebs surrounding Islam's contribution to medicine.

*When
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displayed...*

Over the last year Dr. William Feindel has added to our outstanding holdings of the works of Thomas Willis.



L to R: Mr. William Pope, Mrs. Pamela Miller, Prof. Carman Miller, Mrs. Isabel Pope and Mrs. Janet Murray (photo by Dr. Jock Murray)

One of our most useful purchases is the *New Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, Editor-in-Chief Noretta Koertge, published by special arrangement with the American Council of Learned Societies with Thomson Gale, 2008, an 8 volume update of the 1970 edition. This edition includes portraits of the subjects and as it is not available on-line, is well worth consulting here. In addition, Dr. Theodore Sourkes, Chairman of our Standing Committee, has contributed a biography of J.L.W. Thudichum to this new edition. Gerard W. Boychuk's *National Health Insurance in the United States and Canada, Race, Territory, and the Roots of Difference*, Georgetown University Press, 2008, is intended to add a new dimension to the discussion of why neighbours have taken a different approach to a burning question. *Observing Bioethics* by Renée C. Fox and Judith P. Swazey, Oxford University Press, 2008, examines the development of this field (not uncritically) following World War II. At a time when there is a revival of interest

in life-like anatomical models, *Flesh and Wax, the Clemente Susini's Anatomical Models in the University of Cagliari*, edited by Alessandro Riva, Ilisso 2007, provides a highly illustrated folio volume that offers a detailed history of wax modelling, focussing on the artistic and scientific importance of the work of Clemente Susini, 1754-1814. Stanley Burns has presented us with his latest book in a series on medical photography, this one dedicated to Osler's distinguished senior colleague and friend Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914). Entitled *Seeing Insanity*, New York 2007, Dr. Burns uses photography to chart the history of psychiatry with the hope that understanding past practices will promote the improvement of future treatment.

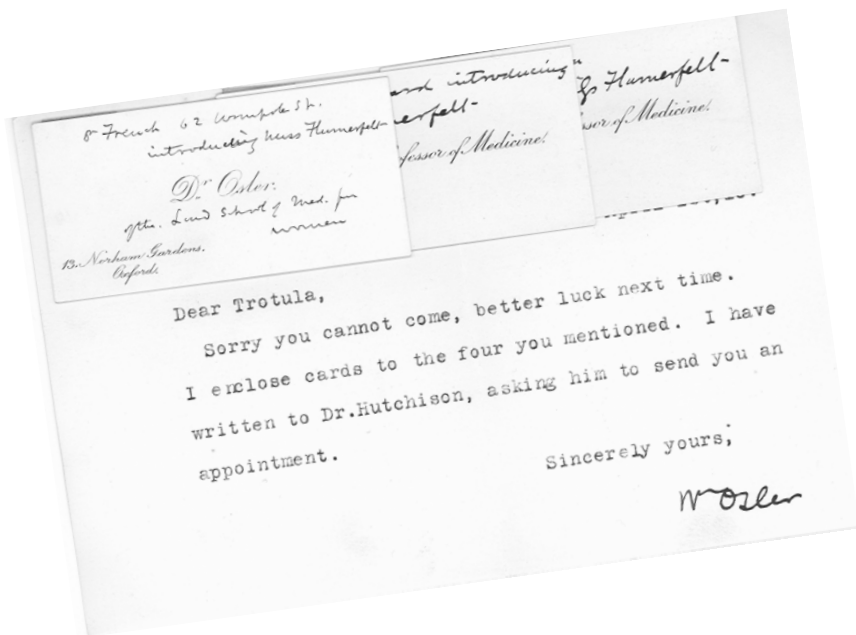
Among the most exciting of our rare book purchases are two works by Charles Bell (1774-1842). William Osler assembled a very good collection of Bell's works, but somehow these eluded him: *A System of Dissections, Explaining the Anatomy of the Human*

Body..., Edinburgh, 1799-1801 and *Engravings from Specimens of Morbid Parts...*, London, 1813. Another purchase is *Anatomia per uso et intelligenza ... del disegno...*, Rome 1691 by Bernardino Genga (1620-1690), believed to be the best professional atlas of its time, published for artists. Wilhelm Braune's (1831-1892) *Topographisch-anatomischer Atlas*, Leipzig, 1872, is a fine addition to a heavily used collection.

Over the last year Dr. William Feindel has added to our outstanding holdings of the works of Thomas Willis. These include: *Cerebri anatome, cui accessit nervorum...*, London, 1664, the first issue of the octavo edition; *De anima brutorum quae hominis...*, Oxford, 1672, also an octavo and Willis' great work on comparative neuroanatomy and the first work of medical psychology in England; *The remaining medical works of that famous and renowned physician Dr. Thomas Willis...* "Englished by Samuel Pordage..." London, 1681, a folio, bound with *Pharmaceutice rationalis or an exercitation of the operations...* 1679. To celebrate William Osler's 159th birthday (and Dr. Feindel's 90th) Dr. Feindel presented us with the third edition of René Descartes' *Opera philosophia*, published in Amsterdam in 1656.

Emeritus Librarian, David Crawford, continues to add to our collection of hospital histories, particularly very welcome histories of Canadian hospitals.

The Elliott family has donated 7 manuscript war diaries of Dr. Harold Elliott, (1907-1973) McGill MDCM 1936, a neurosurgeon who worked at the Royal Victoria Hospital, the Montreal Neurological Institute and at the Montreal General Hospital. During World War II, Dr. Elliott



Letter from William Osler to Gertrude Flumerfeld (Trotula) Jefferson, April 1st, 1910 (P100 Sir William Osler Collection)

served overseas with the No. 1 Canadian Neurological Hospital. His subsequent career centred on neurosurgery at the Montreal General Hospital concentrating on the prevention of traffic accidents. The diaries are illustrated with newspaper clippings and several small water colour sketches by the author. Coincidentally, the gift came at the same time as the following donation, and contains references to Sir Geoffrey Jefferson and to Lady Jefferson.

Andrew Jefferson of Kent, England, the grandson of Sir Geoffrey and Lady Jefferson, donated 13 letters from William Osler to Gertrude Flumerfeld, nick-named Trotula by Osler, and three from Lady Osler over the period of 1909 to 1918. Gertrude Flumerfeld was the very attractive daughter of a wealthy Canadian business man from the west coast, Alfred Cornelius Flumerfeld. She was admitted to do clinical studies in Manchester, married her fellow-student (Sir) Geoffrey Jefferson and had a distinguished

career in England in psychiatry. She was a frequent guest of the Oslers at Oxford, with whom she developed a warm friendship. Included in the gift are nine pages of Gertrude Flumerfeld's recollections of Osler. Harvey Cushing would have had access to these letters while writing Osler's biography, but these letters are the originals and are truly fun, revealing the teasing side of Osler's character who consistently downplayed her ability to succeed in medicine as a female, while at the same time providing introductions to colleagues who could help her on her way.

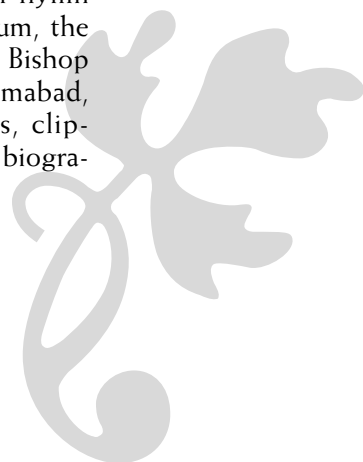
A copy of the *Book of Common Prayer*, London, 1847 was donated by Dr. Karen Smith. The inscription reads "Mary Ann Ludlow from Mrs. Osler, Tecumseh Parsonage, Dec. 24th, 1848. I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also. 1 Corinthians XIV. 15". Accompanying the little book were 51 "quarterly tickets," c. 1830-1899 from the Wesleyan-Methodist

Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada in the name of several members of the Ludlow family. According to Michael Bliss, the Methodists were a real thorn in the side of Featherstone Osler due to their highly emotional approach to religion and their attacks on his church. Her gift to a member of a Methodist family demonstrates Ellen Osler's missionary skill. (Our alert evaluator provided the stunning calculation from the date of the inscription that Ellen Osler was three months along in the pregnancy that produced William Osler!) The donor, Dr. Smith, is a descendant of the Ludlow family.

Donations of archives and artifacts this year include a framed letter from William Osler in 1901 announcing to Mrs A.T. Carver, the very serious illness with little hope of recovery, of her brother. Patty Vogel and her mother Mrs. Eleanor Bradsher are the donors (Mrs. A.T. Carver was Patty Vogel's great grandmother.)

Margaret Saul donated a 74 pp typescript entitled "Neighbours in Kashmir" written by Dr. Minnie Gomery in 1951 about her service as a medical missionary in Kashmir. Dr. Gomery graduated from Bishop's Medical College, winning the Wood Gold Medal, included in the donation, for the 1897-1898 session. The gift includes a Kashmiri hymn book, a small photo album, the guest book for the John Bishop Memorial Hospital, Islamabad, 1902-1935, plus photos, clippings and miscellaneous biographical information.

Her gift to a member of a Methodist family demonstrates Ellen Osler's missionary skill.



This year we have hired a student ... to carry out the Herculean task of putting order into the 88 metres of archives of prominent Montreal cardiologist Harold Nathan Segall.



Dr. S. William Gunn presenting the manuscript letter by Baron Dominique Larrey to Dr. William Feindel

Dr. William Gunn donated a letter by the distinguished surgeon Baron Dominique Larrey (1766-1842), appointed Surgeon-in-Chief to the French army by Napoleon in 1805. This is a letter of recommendation for a young friend, written a year before Larrey's death, to M. Brissot, Inspector General of la Salubrité de Paris.

Dr. Stuart Kenning has donated a splendid collection of 10 medals commemorating famous medical figures, but most importantly 2 gold medals from Canadian medical faculties including the Robert Nelson Medal from the University of Bishops College (1890) awarded for special examination in surgery to James Laurie and the Hutchinson Medal from the Manitoba Medical College awarded to Frederick William Andrew for highest aggregate in medical courses, 1907. The Osler Library has a collection of about 70 medals and these are important additions.

Conservator Terry Rutherford has taken up permanent residence in Montreal which means

that she can now work more easily on our most valuable items. Her work this year includes the restoration of a number of superb works, much in demand by researchers and specialized student groups. A selection includes: William Hunter's *Anatomia uteri humani gravid tabulis illustrata...*, Birmingham, 1774, Jacob Bigelow's *American Medical Botany*, Boston, 1817-1820, 3 volumes whose bindings were crumbling but whose illustrations are glorious, Symphorien Champier's *Index Librorum*, Lyon, 1517, *Illustrations of the Great Operations of Surgery*, Charles Bell, London, 1821, Johann Caspar Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy...*, London, 1850 and Bernhard Siegfried Albinus' *Tables of the Skeleton and Muscles of the Human Body*, London, 1749 [an elephant folio one of whose pages was torn almost in half.] It really is rewarding to know that thanks to your help, these works can be studied and even displayed, for many years to come.

Exhibitions highlight our exceptional collections but they also provide guest curators with the opportunity to display their research interests. As reported in the last Newsletter, at the end of June, Allister Neher of the Humanities Department of Dawson College presented an exhibition entitled, *Art Anatomy and the Representation of Knowledge*. Thanks to a grant from the Hannah Foundation, the exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, which we are giving away in the Library.

By coincidence this fall we are displaying two exhibitions simultaneously, but with one theme in common, namely art and medicine. Along with Allister Neher's exhibition, we are displaying nine copies of

paintings by Robert Pope, the young artist mentioned at the beginning of this report. This has come about thanks to Dr. Jock Murray and William Pope, the artist's father. Dr. Murray is a member of the Board of Governors of the Pope Foundation, a foundation dedicated to perpetuating the work of Robert Pope whose paintings depict illness from the patient's perspective and provide rare and touching insights into the patient's experience with modern medicine, family and caregivers. Dr. Murray gave the address at the annual White Coat Ceremony at McGill held for second year medical students on the 3rd of October. Each class member received a copy of Robert Pope's *Illness & Healing: Images of Cancer*.

Every year we like to focus on a particular project. Over the last few years, we have ensured that our French theses were catalogued. This year we have hired a student in the School of Information Studies, Duncan Cowie, to carry out the Herculean task of putting order into the 88 metres of archives of prominent Montreal cardiologist Harold Nathan Segall. The project is carried out with funds from our Friends and will result in an inventory to a unique source for research on cardiology in Montreal from the 1920s, to the 1970s.

It has been a great year for projects because of a generous donation of \$25,000 from the McGovern Foundation. With the close collaboration of Louise O'Neill and the department of Library Technology Services, Assistant History of Medicine Librarian Chris Lyons has spent a great deal of time and energy managing a project to digitize the photos assembled by Harvey

Cushing while he wrote his biography of Osler. "Managing" includes organizing numerous meetings to coordinate content, cataloguing standards, digital quality, search requirements and design. The report that follows, by Jacqueline Barlow on her work cataloguing the contents of The William Osler Photograph Collection, explains in depth the complicated process of cataloguing photographs so that the public will have easy access to a rich resource. It has been a wonderful project and all concerned feel gratified by the results. Chris' energy has also been spent on the transfer of about 8,000 volumes from the Life Sciences remote storage facility to the Osler Library's post-1840 storage facility, the H. Rocke Robertson Room as well as to Redpath open access storage. This has required months of planning but will ultimately result in far easier access to this impressive resource.

I hope that this report gives you a picture of the excitement generated by your help and our gratitude to you. It launches our annual appeal, and as you can see, we depend on you. Thank you.

THE WILLIAM OSLER PHOTO COLLECTION

by Jacqueline Barlow

My first inkling of the digitization of the Cushing Collection came in March of this year, when Chris Lyons, Assistant History of Medicine Librarian, asked me if



THE WILLIAM OSLER PHOTO COLLECTION

Home Biography The Collection Contact Us Browse Pictures

Introduction

By the time of his death, Sir William Osler (1849-1919) was the most famous physician and teacher in the English-speaking world. The William Osler Photo Collection chronicles Sir William's life from his childhood in the Canadian wilderness to his medical education at McGill University, his innovative days as a doctor and teacher in Canada and the United States, and the final years of his life in Oxford, England.

The William Osler Photo Collection was made possible through a generous donation from the John P. McGovern Foundation, and the support of the Friends of the Osler Library.

Browse by category:

								
Bond Head & Dundas Period. 1849-1864	Barrie, Weston & Toronto Period. 1864-1870	Montreal Period 1870-1884	Philadelphia Period 1884-1889	Baltimore Period 1889-1905	Oxford Period 1905-1919	Grace Revere Osler (wife) 1855-1928	Edward Revere Osler (son) 1895-1917	Osler Family 1866-1925

© McGill University Libraries

I'd be interested in working on it. I had been working at the Osler Library for almost a year as Library and Archives Assistant, a part-time job while I finished my Master of Library and Information Studies degree. The digitization project would provide me with a job right after graduation, and valuable experience to boot – digitization is big business these days in the world of archives and libraries. I happily accepted the offer.

I wasn't sure, at the time, what the Cushing Collection really was. As I came to learn well in the following months, the collection began when Harvey Cushing started research on his classic biography, *The Life of Sir William Osler*. He canvassed far and wide for recollections of

Osler and letters from him. By publishing requests in major newspapers and medical journals, writing to anyone who knew Osler, and visiting the homes of Osler's family members, Cushing amassed a large collection of papers and photographs chronicling Osler's life, and *The Life of Sir William Osler* was published in 1925. In 1932, Cushing deposited this collection at the Osler Library in Montreal. But it did not remain unchanged after it was deposited in the archives. Beginning with W.W. Francis, a succession of Osler Librarians continued to add to the collection new photographs, letters, and other documents relating to Osler's life, as they were given to the library. In this way – a way that would horrify

In 1932, Cushing deposited this collection at the Osler Library in Montreal.



Jacqueline Barlow in the Francis Seminar Room at the Osler Library

"The William Osler Photo Collection" will be a great success, an achievement to be proud of, and an outstanding resource. . .



most archivists I'm acquainted with – the Cushing collection came to contain a good deal of material that Cushing himself had never seen.

At some point in the history of the collections, the photos were separated from the papers, to be stored in more suitable conditions. (This would make the archivists feel a little better.) In certain cases, letters and notes which pertained to the photographs were kept with the photo collection. The photographs were organized into sections that corresponded with the periods of Osler's life: his boyhood in Bond Head and Dundas, Ontario; his schoolboy days in Barrie and Weston, and first years at university in Toronto; his long and productive stay in Montreal, as a medical student and then as a physician, professor and lecturer; his brief stint at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia; the pinnacle of his career, his sixteen glorious years at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore; and the latter days of his life as Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University. There were also separate sections for photographs of Lady Osler, their son Revere Osler, and the Osler and Francis families.

All of this makes the Cushing Collection an interesting and informative collection, but it is by no means the only interesting and informative photographic collection at the Osler Library, nor, by extension, at McGill University. Why was this collection chosen to be digitized?

A few years ago at the Osler Library another collection of photos, two albums in fragile condition, assembled by Marjorie Howard Futch (see *The Osler Library Newsletter* no. 92) was digitized purely for preservation purposes. This preservation project caught the eye of Alan Burk, who was then working as a digital consultant at McGill University Libraries. The Libraries had been looking for a collection that could act as a pilot project for future digitization efforts at the university. While the original digitized albums were ultimately not chosen, the Cushing Collection was soon identified as a suitable pilot project for a number of reasons. Among these reasons was the large and enthusiastic audience for a site about Osler's life; and a generous donation from the McGovern Foundation was the deciding factor.

Early this year, meetings began in earnest to plan the digitization of the Cushing photos, which was proving to be a big undertaking. At that time the "team" consisted of Alan Burk, Pamela Miller and Chris Lyons of the Osler Library, Greg Houston and Elizabeth Thomson of the Digital Program, Megan Chellew of Collection Services, and Louise O'Neill Associate Director of Library Technology Services. Not long afterwards, I was recruited to go through the photos and, under the supervision of Chris Lyons and Pamela Miller, evaluate them based on quality and content. Once we had agreed on which photos should be included, Deepak Mathews, a McGill student, began scanning them. Scanning took place through the month of May. Meanwhile, I was busy applying metadata to – basically, cataloguing – the photos. All told, digitizing 400 items took a good part of the time of six people over a six month period. And the team continued to meet and hash out some of the project's thornier issues.

Now that those thorny issues have been tamed, The William Osler Photo Collection is up and running and may be found at <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/osler>. My time at the Osler Library, sadly, has come to an end, but I'm quite confident that The William Osler Photo Collection will be a great success, an achievement to be proud of, and an outstanding resource, not just for the community of Oslerians but for any interested party. At the very least, the website will increase awareness of William Osler's life and achievements, which the Osler Library has long endeavoured to do. ❀

NOTES FROM THE OSLER LIBRARY

We are delighted and relieved to announce the appointment of Diane Philip as Senior Documentation Assistant. Diane replaces Mary Simon who recently retired. With her background in the Reference Department of the McLennan Library and at the Education Library and even a brief time spent working here during our recent renovation project, we have a fine new member of staff with a wide experience in the print and electronic environment.

Dr. Granville Nickerson, Med. '45, recently published a book entitled *One Hook One Fish* about growing up in Liverpool, Nova Scotia, his early days in medicine and about the family's role in the growth of the well known fish processing company, National Sea Products. There are still a few copies left and they may be obtained from The Queen's County Historical Society, P.O. Box 1078, Liverpool, Nova Scotia, B0T 1K0. ❁



Diane Philip in the Wellcome Camera

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 2007-2008 academic year. Over the year, 191 Friends have given a total of approximately \$29,853 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 2007-2008 academic year concluded on May 31, 2008. Contributions received after May 31, 2008 will be recorded in the 2009 fall issue of the *Osler Library Newsletter*.

The appeal for the 2008-2009 academic year is made in this issue, No. 110-2008.

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Legal Deposit 2/2008 ISSN
0085-4557 (Print)
Legal Deposit 2/2008 ISSN
1712-7955 (Online)