



OSLER LIBRARY NEWSLETTER

McGill University, Montreal, Canada

No. 66 - February 1991

Osler's Use of "Ike" for Revere



In my paper on Revere, given at the 1980 meeting of the American Osler Society, I attributed Osler's use of "Ike" as a contraction of Izaak Walton to Revere's passion for fishing.¹ Apparently, at the time, other Oslerians also thought so and no one questioned it. Cushing (p. 645) cites Osler's first use of "Isaac Walton" (sic) in several handwritten letters sent in the summer of 1904 from Murray Bay, Canada, when Revere was age 8, mentioning for the first time the boy's interest in trout fishing, but not mentioning him by name.² He used the Biblical spelling Isaac. This fascination with fishing continued lifelong as Revere's greatest hobby and recreation. I found no acknowledgement by Revere of Osler's use of the nickname before then. As he grew up, Revere often signed himself "Disciple of Izaak Walton," began to collect his books and included the phrase in abbreviated form in his book plate. It was included in my address on the Tudor and Stuart Club of Johns Hopkins University given at the 1983 American Osler Society meeting.³ Revere always used Walton's spelling of Izaak. It would appear he accepted the connection with fishing.

In 1985, Alastair Robb-Smith, after reading my 1980 paper, raised the question of earlier uses of "Ike" that would require a different derivation. He recalls that in 1984 or '85 he read an article or book that suggested it was inspired by the Biblical Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, but he cannot recall or find the reference.⁴ Earl Nation, in his Dock lecture of 1965, had mentioned hearing of the possibility of a Biblical origin. He gave no reference, but recalls seeing one to Abraham and Isaac years before, though he cannot locate it.⁴ Inquiries to other Oslerians brought recollections that Osler had earlier used the term, obviously referring to Revere but not mentioning him by name. Cushing (p. 422) states that by 1896, following Revere's birth in 1895, Osler, in letters to friends, began to use "Ike" along with other nicknames such as Tommy, Isaac, or Edgerton. Edward Bensley, reviewing Cushing's manuscript files for 1895 and '96 in the Osler Library⁴, found the nickname usually used was Edgerton or some slight variation of it. The exception was one letter in July 1896 in which Osler referred to Revere, then seven months old, as "Ike". The files gave no explanations as to why Osler used the

term and I have found none. Cushing (p. 515) quotes a letter to Osler's sister Mrs. Gwyn (Chattie) about February 1900, when Revere was age four, referring to "Ike" long before the fishing trip of 1904.

The day after my inquiry in 1985, Bensley met with Harold Segall who had long been interested in Osler.⁴ They discussed the story in Genesis, Chapters 17-21, and concluded that the Biblical derivation is the correct one. Osler's background as the son of an Anglican Missionary to Canada, his own early university religious training before he switched to medicine, and his use of Biblical references in his writings over the years all make it reasonable. Osler was 46 and Grace 41 when Revere was born, so an allusion to a child born in old age is conceivable. According to the Bible, Abraham was 100 and Sarah 91 when Isaac was born. The actual ages given obviously are in error, but do confirm that both were up in years before having their son. Sarah had been barren, but God had promised Abraham he would have a child even though she was now old. She named him Isaac from the verb "he laughs" which she does over his birth. Osler was overjoyed at having a fine, happy son after the death of his and Grace's first.

The evidence clearly indicates the Biblical derivation though father and son continued to use their own interpretations of its origin.

References

1. Harrell, G. T. "The Oslers' Son - Revere". *Bull. Hist. Med.* 54: 561-71, 1980.
2. Cushing, H. *The Life of Sir William Osler*. Oxford University Press (One Volume Edition), 1940.
3. Harrell, G. T. "The Osler-Endowed Tudor and Stuart Club". *Pharos* 47: 23-26, Summer 1984.
4. Personal communications.

George T. Harrell, M.D.
Pennsylvania State University

Editor's note: This article was originally presented as a paper at the annual meeting of the American Osler Society, Baltimore, Maryland, May 8, 1990.

Faith Wallis Honoured

By a unanimous decision of the Board of Curators at its meeting on November 7th, 1990, Faith Wallis was awarded the honorific title of Osler Librarian.

Faith Wallis joined the staff of the Osler Library in January 1985 as Assistant History of Medicine Librarian. She immediately set the highest possible standard for the combined role of scholar and librarian. Following an international recruitment for a History of Medicine Librarian, Dr. Wallis was selected for this position in March, 1986.

Since her appointment as History of Medicine Librarian, Dr. Wallis has promoted the Osler Library in the Faculty of Medicine, the University community and externally to an unprecedented degree. She is committed to making available the resources of the Library in the advancement of scholarship. Her own scholarship, as a medievalist, enhances her role as ambassador on behalf of the Osler Library. At the same time, Dr. Wallis continues to play a daily role in the Osler Library, responding to numerous demands for service by users. Her commitment to developing the collection has been distinguished, in particular through her initiatives with respect to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Through her initiative, Dr. Eric Ormsby, Director of McGill University Libraries, acquired a substantial collection of 19th-century French medical theses for the Library. These are only a few of the many achievements that qualify Dr. Wallis for the title of Osler Librarian.

The designation Osler Librarian is an honorific title, without financial implications. However, since it is awarded by the Board of Curators and has been given only twice, to Dr. W. W. Francis and to Dr. Philip M. Teigen, it is most prestigious.

Richard Cruess
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
of McGill University
and Chairman, Board of Curators,
Osler Library



Sir Arthur Hurst by Sir Hubert von Herkomer RA

An Osler Letter to Lady Hurst, 1917

A previously unpublished Osler letter has recently come to light, pasted on the back of a framed copy of John Singer Sargent's crayon sketch of Osler (1914), in the possession of a daughter of the late Sir Arthur Hurst.

Sir Arthur Hurst (1879-1944), physician to Guy's Hospital and pioneer of British gastro-enterology, was one of this century's greatest doctors. He was an Oxford graduate and, early in his career in 1905, he was awarded a Radcliffe Travelling Fellowship. The Oslers, newly arrived in Oxford and not yet settled in 13 Norham Gardens, were lodging at the King's Arms. Hurst went there to see Osler and consulted him about his plans for foreign travel. They became good friends and Hurst was delighted when, in 1935, Oxford University awarded him the Osler Medal.

During the First World War, Osler and Hurst were medical consultants to the Army but Hurst (thirty years younger than Osler) served overseas with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and later in hospitals in Oxford, Netley and Seale Hayne.

In 1912, Hurst married a New Zealand girl, Cushla Riddiford, and a son and two daughters were born to them. Osler was fond of Cushla Hurst and, because she was from New Zealand, he dubbed her "Zelanda". The copy of the Sargent sketch was a present from Osler to Cushla Hurst and is inscribed: "Zelanda. With affectionate regards. 5.3.17".

The letter, pasted on the back of the Sargent print, is written on headed paper from 13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, and is simply dated "16th". Since the date on the Sargent print is 5.3.17 one may assume that the letter

was written on 16.3.17. The style is typical of Osler in light-hearted mood. The reference to "the major" is, of course, to Arthur Hurst, then serving at Netley Military Hospital, Hampshire. He was later promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel. Hurst was asthmatic and the reference to Netley night air being soporific may possibly relate to this.

16th
13 Norham Gardens,
Oxford.

Dear Zelanda

I was thrilled – head and heart – to hear from my niece today that the photographs were only now ready. I hope it has arrived. There has been such a run on [this] class of professional beauty photograph that the delay was unavoidable!

I hope all goes well with the major and that the Netley night air is soporific.

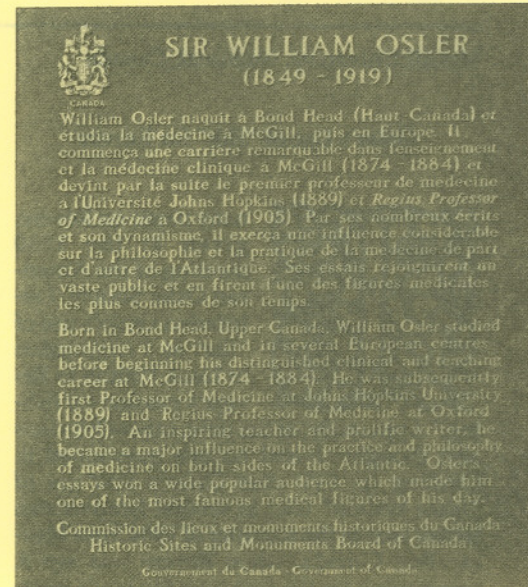
Yours sincerely
Wm Osler

Reference
A twentieth century physician, being the reminiscences of Sir Arthur Hurst. London: Arnold, 1949.

Acknowledgement

I am indebted to Rosemary Naegele (née Hurst) for her kind permission to publish this letter.

Alex Sakula, M.D., F.R.C.P.
Faculty of History of Medicine
Society of Apothecaries of London



The Osler Memorial Plaque

Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada Unveils Plaque Commemorating Sir William Osler

A special feature of Osler Day on November 7th, 1990 was the unveiling of a plaque of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commemorating Sir William Osler.

The ceremony of unveiling was held in the Osler Library, the afternoon of Osler Day. The Chair was occupied by Mrs. Raymond Gauthier, member of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Welcoming remarks were made by Dr. Richard Cruess, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, McGill University. Historical and biographical notes relating to Sir William Osler were provided by Dr. Faith Wallis, Dr. Richard Golden and Dr. Marian Kelen. The unveiling itself was performed by Dr. Richard Cruess and the Honourable Robert Layton, M.P. for Lachine — Lac-Saint-Louis, representing the Honourable Robert R. de Cotret, Minister of the Environment for Canada, to whom the Historic Sites and Monuments Board is an advisory body. Then Mr. Gilles Desaulniers, Director General, Canada Parks Service read the text of the plaque in French and English, and the Reverend Nick Brotherhood of the McGill University Chaplaincy Service offered the blessing.

Subsequently the plaque was mounted just outside the Drummond Street entrance of the McIntyre Medical Building.

The author's name, Palmer H. Futcher, was inadvertently omitted at the end of the leading article in the October 1990 *Newsletter*. We offer our apologies.

The caption under the illustration at that same lead article should read "Marjorie Howard at the time of her engagement to Thomas B. Futcher, 1909".

In the tribute to Harold Nathan Segall in the October 1990 *Newsletter*, "*Aequanimatas*" should have been "*Aequanimitas*".

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 1990-1991 academic year. To date 307 Friends have given a total of approximately \$13,820. A special donation of \$15,000 (U.S.) has been received for renovation projects to the Osler Library and a travel fund for the Librarians. Most of the contributions have come from Friends in Canada and the United States of America. However very welcome contributions have come also from Brazil, Chile, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom and West Indies.

The names of Friends whose contributions are recorded after January 31, 1991 will be listed in the June issue of the *Newsletter*.

Ted Adler
 Daniel M. Albert
 ✓Kenneth B. Andras
 ✓Sydney W. Arnold
 *Gary F. Bacon
 John C. Ball
 *Ronald Barr
 ✓J. A. Barondess
 *Beverly Baserman (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 *Don G. Bates
 William K. Beatty
 Jean Beaudoin
 Irving A. Beck
 ✓Robert Bell
 *E. H. Bensley
 Abel E. Berland
 ✓Dennis L. Bernardini
 Robert K. Blair
 Judy S. Blazar
 Zlatica Blazina
 Françoise Bloch
 Harry Bloch
 Georges Bordage
 F. Munroe Bourne
 ✓J. Robert Bowen
 ✓John W. Brennan
 *Joseph A. Brock
 *Ivan W. Brown Jr.
 ✓Ronald F. Buchan
 Ralf Buhrmann
 *James J. Bulger (in memory of Edmund E. Simpson)
 ✓Howard B. Burchell
 Stuart S. Burstein
 J. Walker Butin
 *Robert Campbell
 ✓D. J. Canale
 Fernande K. Cantero
 Richard M. Caplan

David R. Carlin II
 Eric T. Carlson
 ✓John C. Carson
 *Centre Canadien D'Architecture
 Françoise P. Chagnon
 *Donald A. Chambers
 *James C. M. Chan
 Robert J. Chapman
 *Bruce Charles
 Richard R. Cherry
 ✓L. Parker Chesney
 *S. D. Clark
 Elizabeth Clark-Price
 *Alan J. H. Coffey
 *Jack Cohen
 ✓Eleanor Colle (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 ✓Robert F. Commito
 ✓Earl M. Cooperman
 ✓M. Audrey Copping
 *Dykes Cordell
 R. F. P. Cronin
 *A. F. Culver
 *Richard A. Currie
 N. A. D'Amato
 *Lyubica Dabich
 Charles S. Davidson
 ✓Nicholas E. Davies
 *F. Andrew Davis
 *Eric De Bellaigue
 Giuseppe Del Priore
 *Patrice Delavenne
 Nicholas Dewey
 Vincenzo F. Di Nicola
 Peter S. B. Digby
 *William R. Dorsey
 Leopold Luiz Dos Santos-Neto
 ✓Althea Douglas
 D. E. Douglas
 ✓Keith N. Drummond
 J. M. Duffin
 *Thomas W. Dukes
 Dan A. Dunaway
 ✓James W. Dutton
 *Douglas L. Dykeman
 *Paul G. Dymont
 George C. Ebers
 *Phillip Eibel
 ✓John A. Ellerton
 ✓Charlotte Ferencz
 *Clare M. Flint
 *R. Roy Forsey
 *Robert Fortune
 T. Emmett Francoeur
 ✓Samuel O. Freedman
 Palmer H. Futcher
 ✓W. Bruce Fye
 ✓D. Lornes Gales
 ✓Richard R. Galpin
 Mr. & Mrs. Geller
 Keith B. Gianni
 Allan Gibofsky
 H. W. Gillen
 ✓Susan A. Gillespie
 Pierre Gloor
 *Alan B. Gold
 *David S. Goldbloom
 *Richard L. Golden
 *James T. Goodrich
 Willard Goodwin
 ✓Douglas L. Gordon
 *Sheldon H. Gottlieb
 ✓Dorothea Gould (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 *Peter Greig
 ✓John H. Greist
 Paul M. Gross
 *Richard Grothé
 Mary Guggenheimer

✓Fraser N. Gurd
 ✓Eve Osler Hampson
 William C. Hanigan
 *George T. Harrell
 *Robert G. Harries
 *Theodore J. Haywood
 *H. E. Heggveit
 T. B. Higginson
 Fred D. Hoeniger
 David C. Hull
 ✓Brahm B. Hyams
 *Dr. & Mrs. Jackson
 *Robert E. Johnson
 David L. Johnston
 *Orville N. Jones
 Edward D. Joseph
 ✓Mr. & Mrs. Kahn (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 *Richard J. Kahn
 ✓B. T. Keene
 ✓Andrew & Marian Kelen
 J. Susan Kelen
 ✓Stuart P. Kenning
 Elton R. Kerr
 *Michael Kiefer
 ✓Ralph J. Kimmerly
 *Douglas G. Kinnear
 Neil Klar
 *Nester B. Kowalsky
 H. A. Kozinn
 ✓Gordon Krip
 Joseph Kristan
 *Roy B. Lacoursiere
 *Robert C. Larimer
 Camilo Larrain
 *Donald Lawrence
 *Charles Lazarus (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 ✓Wayne LeBel
 *C. P. Leblond
 Carl Lee
 ✓Geoffrey Lehman
 Wilfred & Fae Leith (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 ✓Philip W. Leon
 *C. J. Leonard
 ✓Carwile LeRoy
 *Rachmiel Levine
 ✓Robert L. Lewandowski
 *John Lewis
 George W. Lilley
 *Hoong Lim
 Jain I. Lin
 ✓Brian Little
 Robert C. Love
 ✓Kenneth T. MacFarlane
 ✓C. D. MacLean
 ✓Dr. & Mrs. MacLean (in memory of Harold N. Segall)
 ✓J. Peter Macleod
 ✓J. Wendell MacLeod
 ✓John N. Mappin
 ✓Edward L. Margetts
 John J. Massarelli
 *Dr. & Mrs. Mauer
 Janet W. McArthur
 ✓Eleanor McGarry
 ✓John P. McGovern
 Bessie McKinlay
 *Eric McLean
 Robert E. McMahon
 McMaster University, Health Sciences
 Library, Serials Dept.
 Sandra F. McRae
 ✓J. F. Meakins
 Medizinhistorisches Institut der Universität
 Bern
 ✓C. David Merkel
 *Erich Meyerhoff
 ✓Milwaukee Academy of Medicine

Gabriella M. Miotto
 ✓R. E. Mitchell
 ✓J. R. Moore
 ✓Henry G. Morgan
 Sumner E. Moulton
 *Thomas G. Mulligan
 *Irena Murray
 *Morton Nathanson
 ✓Earl F. Nation
 National Museum of Science & Technology
 John A. Newsom
 *Robert Nicholls
 *H. F. Norman
 Jeremy Norman & Co.
 ✓Richard T. O'Kell
 ✓Ragnvald Okkenhaug
 Ynez Viole O'Neill
 *Dr. & Mrs. Orlandella
 ✓Campbell R. Osler
 *E. W. Outerbridge
 Harry Oxorn
 G. K. Parke
 W. David Parsons
 *John W. Patrick
 *Murray C. Patrick
 Pennsylvania Hospital, Medical Library
 Charles R. Perakis
 ✓Robert Z. Perkins
 ✓Irwin & Lena Pincus
 Jean-Maurice Poitras
 *M. B. Pranesch
 *Raymond Prince
 Bernice P. Quinn
 *Herbert Rakatansky
 Hugh A. Raphael
 *Ted F. H. Redewill
 *John H. Redpath
 Harris D. Riley Jr.
 *Lee H. Riley Jr.
 *A. H. Rinsler
 A. H. T. Robb-Smith
 *Charles Robert
 *K. B. Roberts
 ✓H. Rocke Robertson
 *Alvin E. Rodin
 ✓Charles G. Roland
 Stuart A. Rosenberg
 *Clarence Rosenhek
 *N. P. Rosman
 *Robert S. Rothwell
 *Frank H. Russ
 *Morris H. Saffron
 ✓André R. Sanschagrín
 J. W. Savacool
 Ralph Schlaeger
 *John W. Scott
 *R. Scott-Moncrieff
 ✓Myron Segal
 *Pierre M. Senecal
 Norman Shaftel
 *Thomas Shaw-Stiffel
 ✓Michael J. Shea
 ✓Huntington Sheldon
 Gordon Shepherd
 ✓Christopher B. Shields
 *J. Wendell Shnitka
 Mel Shore
 ✓Mark E. Silverman
 Robert R. Smalley
 *Asa J. Smith
 ✓Ralph F. Sortor
 ✓Theodore L. Sourkes
 *Edward A. Sprague
 *Elivira Stahl
 *Donald & Ingrid Stanley
 ✓D. H. Starkey
 William G. Stein
 Peter J. Stephens
 ✓E. T. Stevens
 ✓Jean Stevenson

William P. Stoneman
 James R. Stuart
 ✓Eleanor Sweezey
 W. A. Taylor
 G. T. Tanselle
 Eric Teboul
 B. W. Teigen
 ✓W. D. Tigertt
 *R. Carmichael Tilghman
 M. Wilson Toll
 Dr. & Mrs. Tournay
 ✓Catherine Townsend
 *Marshall Trossman
 Warren W. Tucker
 ✓André Turmel
 *Richard C. U'Ren
 UCLA, Art Library, Serials Dept.
 A. H. Van Soest
 Ronald E. Vlietstra
 *Frederick B. Wagner Jr.
 Lester Wallman (in memory of Harold
 N. Segall)
 *George C. Walsh
 Mrs. Allan Walters
 ✓Jean F. Webb
 Robert M. Webster
 *Leonard Weistrop
 ✓Ellen B. Wells
 Jan W. Weryho
 Bruce Whiteman
 *Fred M. Wiegand
 *Benson R. Wilcox
 *Josephine H. Wilcox (in memory of
 L. Dewitt Wilcox)
 ✓Jack W. Wilkerson
 ✓Donald R. Wilson
 James W. Wilson
 Joel A. Wirth
 *Leonard S. Wolfe

 *Supporting
 ✓Patron

Editorial Committee for the *Newsletter*:
 Edward H. Bensley, Honorary Osler Librarian and Editor; Eleanor MacLean, Head, Blacker-Wood Library of Biology and Acting History of Medicine Librarian (replacing Faith Wallis who is on leave 1990-91); Wayne LeBel, Assistant History of Medicine Librarian; Lily Szczygiel, Editorial Assistant.

Legal Deposit 1/1991 ISSN 0085-4557