

Trent Associates Report History of Medicine Collections

David M. Rubenstein
Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Volume 26, No. 2

Spring 2019

My Interdisciplinary Internship with the History of Medicine Collections by Taylor de Klerk

As the 2018-2019 Josiah Charles Trent Intern for the History of Medicine Collections, I have been fortunate to experience many unique opportunities while working at the Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library. I met incredible people, handled and shared one-of-a-kind collection materials, and learned so much

through the process. The one overarching message I will take away from this internship is that the history of medicine and its subject librarianship, like so many other fields, is inherently interdisciplinary.

I know this from the wide variety of people and scholarship I was exposed to through all elements of my work over the past year. To understand the nature of this work, it's important to know that my internship was comprised of three main parts. First, instruction, where I helped share collection materials with students. Second, exhibits, where I am curating a



Taylor de Klerk, the 2018-2019 Josiah Charles Trent History of Medicine Intern

display case in the Trent exhibition room. And third, reference, where I assisted researchers with their queries, remotely and in-person in the Rubenstein's reading room.

I was expecting the instruction arm of my work to be about bringing rare books to classroom environments and telling students about the historical

background of primarily western medicine as well as how to handle rare books. I was not expecting, within the first hour of my first day, to be bringing materials to an "Archives Alive" course, taught by Professor Tom Robisheaux of Duke's History Department. I returned to this course several times over the course of the fall semester with Rubenstein Library staff Rachel Ingold and Trudi Abel, and watched Professor Robisheaux seamlessly weave texts on medicine, art, and natural history together with the ways people thought about life and the world around them in the Renaissance. He used Leonardo da

WE'RE GOING GREEN!

We are soon moving to an electronic version of the
Trent Associates Report.

Please ensure we have your current email address
by contacting Rachel Ingold at
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On Display

Five Hundred Years of Women's Work: The Lisa Unger Baskin Collection

February 28, 2019 – June 15, 2019

on display in multiple locations including the Josiah Charles Trent History of Medicine Room

Carefully assembled over forty-five years by noted bibliophile, activist, and collector Lisa Unger Baskin, the collection is a transformative body of material documenting women at work.

In Baskin's own words, "The unifying thread is that women have always been productive and working people and this history essentially has been hidden."

Materials on display in the Trent Room from the Lisa Unger Baskin Collection trace the evolution of the understanding of women's reproductive health and documents the contributions of female medical practitioners and professionals.



Internship Continued

Vinci's anatomical studies not only as evidence of developing medical thought, but also the different lenses that Renaissance artists gave to their work. Amplified by the rare materials before them, I witnessed how this exposure to interdisciplinary historical work greatly impacts undergraduate education, and it made an impression on me as well.

My internship also gave me the opportunity to curate a display case for the Trent exhibit room, nearly adjacent to the Rubenstein's reading room. With so many options available, I grappled with subjects for months, finally landing on one: Lydia Pinkham. Most famous for her vegetable compound for women's health, Pinkham and her family built a remarkably successful business at a time of national financial instability. However, the interdisciplinarity of her life as a topic is what struck me most about making Lydia Pinkham the subject of this exhibit, even though I knew I wouldn't be able to address all of my fascinations in one display case. Pinkham was raised in a nineteenth-century Massachusetts abolitionist environment, only a few houses away from where Frederick Douglass lived. Her family fervently stood for equal rights, not just for African Americans but for women, too. To add to Pinkham's beliefs in equality, the Lydia Pinkham Company not only earned a firm standing in the history of medicine, but also made a significant impact on advertising innovations. This exhibit, while important, presented no easy task.

For reference and research services, most of the questions I answered were remote, or via email. These generally came from researchers trying to determine if a trip to Duke was worthwhile. Several were inquiries about our travel grants program, which provides recipients with the financial means to visit and conduct research in the Rubenstein Library. Exposure to the variety of research topics presented in these reference emails served as further evidence



of the history of medicine's interdisciplinarity. For example, one researcher was trying to determine the historic relationship between mosquitoes and public health. They were seeking evidence of attempts to mitigate mosquito populations throughout the American South in the mid twentieth century and the impact that these attempts had on their environments. This is not a subject I could have guessed at before my internship began.

Throughout my time at the Rubenstein, the variety of subjects, materials, and professionals I interacted with amazed me. Every day presented new challenges and I learned so much through the experience. I couldn't be more grateful for the time I spent working at Duke. I witnessed a tremendously collaborative work environment, relentless research support, and many passionate librarians and archivists doing what they do best. The intersections between subject materials were inspiring, and refute any ideas of old dusty archives, because Rubenstein materials are heavily used in innovative and exciting ways. I am especially thankful to Rachel Ingold and the Trent and Semans family, but also to Brooke Guthrie, Tom Robisheaux, Meg Brown, Kelly Wooten, and many others for having such a valuable impact on my time in this internship. To the 2019-2020 intern: you are in good hands.

Taylor de Klerk received her Master's in Public History from NCSU in 2018 and will graduate with a Master's in Library Science from UNC-CH in December 2019.

Recent Acquisitions

The following items were acquired with assistance from the Josiah Charles Trent History of Medicine Endowment, the Trent Associates, and the Irwin A. Brody Memorial Neurological Book Collection Fund.

Gaynor, Florence Small. *Florence Small Gaynor scrapbook, 1970-1972, manuscript.* Trained as a registered nurse, Gaynor received a bachelor's degree in nursing, a master's in public health, and spent time at the University of Oslo studying the Scandinavian health system. In 1971, Gaynor was selected from a pool of numerous candidates, all male, to be executive director of Sydenham Hospital in Harlem. The next year, she was named executive director of Martland Hospital in Newark, New Jersey, a large teaching hospital of the state's medical school. She became the first black woman to head a major teaching hospital in the U.S. This scrapbook includes photographs, newspaper clippings, congratulatory letters and more that document the groundbreaking appointment of Florence Gaynor as Executive Director of Sydenham Hospital in 1971.



Knox, Robert. *Man, his structure and physiology : popularly explained and demonstrated.* London : H. Bailliere, publisher, 219, Regent Street, and 290, Broadway, New York ; Paris : H.B. Bailliere et Fils, rue Hautefeuille ; Madrid : Bailly Bailliere, calle del Principe, 1857. Scottish anatomist and lecturer Robert Knox (1791-1862) is best known for his connections with the notorious body snatchers, and convicted murderers, Burke and Hare, notably purchasing corpses from them. Knox denied complicity and Burke's confession exonerated him from blame, although his reputation continued to be associated with the murders. This particular work features color plates as well as anatomical flap overlays.

Sabin, Florence R. *An atlas of the medulla and midbrain : a laboratory manual illustrated with seven colored plates, one black plate and fifty-two figures.* Baltimore, MD., U.S.A. : The Friedenwald Company, 1901. Dr. Florence Sabin, an anatomist and histologist, became the first woman appointed to the rank of full professor at Johns Hopkins University. As a researcher and instructor, her work included research on embryological development of the brain and of the lymphatic system. The *Atlas of the medulla and midbrain* by Sabin became an influential textbook on neuroanatomy.

HOM in the Classroom

The History of Medicine Collections worked with the following classes:

History

- History of the Book
- History of Global Health
- Magic, Religion, Science since 1400

Literature

- Brains, Everywhere!

Religious Studies

- Harry Potter and Religion

School of Medicine

- History of Obstetrics
- History of Surgery

Visual Studies

- Visual Culture of Medicine

Writing 101

- Literature and Medicine



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LIBRARIES

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Duke University Library Annual Report

Thank you for your donation!