



Medical History Society of New Jersey

c/o UMDNJ—Special Collections
G.F. Smith Library of the Health Sciences
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NEWSLETTER

May 2004

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TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL SAFFRON LECTURE

The spring meeting of the Medical History Society of New Jersey will be held Wednesday, May 26th at The Nassau Club in Princeton. Bert Hansen, PhD, Baruch College, City University of New York will present the twenty-fifth Annual Saffron Lecture. Dr. Hansen's paper is entitled "Medical History for the Masses: Heroes of Medicine in Children's Comic Books of the 1940s." MHSNJ President, Frederick C. Skvara, MD will display medical philately related to the program. Registration begins at 3:30 p.m.; the program begins at 4 p.m.

Business Meeting & Election of Officers, Frederick Skvara, MD, President

Scrutinizing Herbal Medicines: What Have We Learned in the Past Decade?
William Wardell, MD, PhD

"Nothin' But Mud and Water as Far as I Could See": Pellagra, African-Americans, and Regional Perceptions of Health In the Wake of Disaster
Richard Mizelle, BA, Graduate History Department, Rutgers

Death, Medicine, and Photography
Theodore Eisenstat, MD

Mourning Glory
Sharon Eisenstat

Cocktails and Dinner (6-7:30 pm)

Twenty-Fifth Annual Saffron Lecture:

*Medical History for the Masses:
Heroes of Medicine in Children's Comic Books of the 1940s*
Bert Hansen, PhD, Baruch College, City University of New York

Members, students, and friends are invited to attend the dinner meeting. Cost is \$40/ members, \$50/guests; advance registration is required. For information, contact MHSNJ, c/o UMDNJ Special Collections, G.F. Smith Library, 30 Twelfth Avenue, PO Box 1709, Newark, NJ 07101-1709, (973) 972-7830, densky@umdnj.edu.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Lois R. Densky-Wolff, MA co-taught a new 'History of Medicine & Public Health' course this spring at UMDNJ with Bart Holland, PhD. The course was offered to graduate students in the UMDNJ-School of Public Health. The one-credit elective was held in Special Collections' Barbara Manisty Peck History of Medicine Room.

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A new book by **George J. Hill, MD** is forthcoming. **Dr. Hill's** book is entitled *Edison's Environment: Invention and Pollution in the Career of Thomas Edison* will be published by the Public Policy Center of New Jersey, Trenton.

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Sandra Moss, MD was a speaker in April at The Osler Society's annual meeting in Houston, where she presented a paper entitled "The Regius Professor of Medicine and the Mystery of the Sphygmograph."

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Karen Reeds, PhD gave a talk to the Harvard University Countway Library Associates in Boston in April about the CD-ROM facsimile edition of Leonhart Fuchs' *De Historia Stirpium Commentarii Insignes* (1542).

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Murray Rosenberg, MD will present a paper entitled "Christmas Eve in Cherbourg 1944" at the World War II Conference to be held June 3 and 4 at Siena College in Loudonville, NY.

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Frederick C. Skvara, MD assumed the editorship of *Scalpel & Tongs, The American Journal of Medical Philately* in January 2004.

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Kenneth Swan, MD presented a lecture entitled "Surgery and the Nobel Prize" on October 23 to a UMDNJ audience at the George F. Smith Library, Newark.

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Allen B. Weisse, MD presented a lecture entitled "On Days of Knights & Medicine in Malta" on January 29 to a UMDNJ audience at the George F. Smith Library, Newark. The UMDNJ-University Libraries Special Collections Department sponsored both Drs. Swan and Weisse's lectures as part of an occasional series of medical history programs held at the Library.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Allen B. Weisse Selected to Receive MHSNJ Cowen Award

The 2004 Cowen Award Committee, comprised of Drs. Frank Katz, Victor Parsonnet and

Sandra Moss (chair), nominated Allen B. Weisse, MD for the 2004 award. The MHSNJ Executive Committee heartily endorsed the committee's recommendation. The nomination reflects the excellence of a body of work on modern medical history, and particularly the valuable oral histories obtained in interviews with three generations of leading physicians.

Dr. Weiss practiced and taught cardiology at UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School before his retirement. He is a prolific writer of short medical history pieces, some of which have appeared in *Hospital Practice* and *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, as well as other journals. Dr. Weiss has published three collections of essays on wide-ranging medical topics; many of the collected pieces are based on personal interviews with prominent physicians of this and previous generations: *Conversations in Medicine: The Story of Twentieth-Century Medicine in the Words of Those Who Created It* (New York University Press, 1984); *Medical Odysseys: The Different and Sometimes Unexpected Pathways to Twentieth-Century Medical Discoveries* (Rutgers University Press, 1991) and *The Staff and the Serpent: Pertinent and Impertinent Observations on the World of Medicine* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1998).

Most recently, Dr. Weisse has received outstanding reviews for his book in the specialized area of cardiology and cardiac surgery, entitled *Heart to Heart: The Twentieth-Century Battle against Cardiac Disease: An Oral History* (Rutgers University Press, 2002). Bruce Fye, the leading American historian of cardiology and a former Saffron lecturer, called the book "a valuable addition to literature of the history of modern cardiology and cardiac surgery -- an excellent example of the valuable technique of oral history" (*JAMA*, 289 (2003): 2144). In its review, the academically oriented *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* (77 (2003): 991-3) likewise stressed the quality of the oral histories obtained by Dr. Weisse ... "This splendidly conceived and elegantly produced volume offers fascinating biographic vignettes of many great figures in twentieth-century diagnosis and treatment of heart disease."

The nominee has been selected as a speaker at both the American Association for the History of Medicine and American Osler Society, in addition to addressing our own Society on several occasions. Dr. Weisse is a past president of our organization.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,

Sandra Moss, MD, Chair
Frank Katz, PhD
Victor Parsonnet, MD

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Members' Books: A New Feature on the Society's Website

by
Vincent J. Cirillo, PhD

Rutgers University Press (RUP) has offered a 20% discount to MHSNJ members on books they have recently published by our members Vincent Cirillo, Karen Reeds, and Allen Weisse. To order, log onto www.mhsnj.org and click on the BOOK navigator button to bring up details. Next click on the image of your choice, which will connect you directly to the customer service department at RUP.

Presenting these publications on our website also serves to advertise the scholarly achievements of our members. With pride, we can say that MHSNJ authors have made significant contributions to the literature on the history of medicine. In this regard, we would like to list all books published by our members within the past few years. Therefore, members are encouraged to submit their titles, publishers, and dates of publication to Paul Cirillo, webmaster, at cirillop@aol.com. Further, if the press is willing to offer a discount to MHSNJ members, their marketing department must send the necessary information to Paul in the RUP format (see website ads).

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Weisse Lecture on the History of Medicine Established

In an effort to enable students, housestaff and medical faculty at the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) to become more aware of the role of medical history as part of their learning experience, Drs. Laura and Allen B. Weisse have endowed an annual lecture on the history of medicine at UMDNJ through the University's Foundation.

The Weisse Lecture on the History of Medicine will be presented annually as the New Jersey Medical School-Department of Medicine's second Medical Grand Rounds of the academic year, although members of other departments and the interested public will be welcome to attend.

The inaugural lecture will be given by Dr. Allen Weisse and is entitled "On First Looking Into Jarcho's Leibowitz: The Small Joys and Great Satisfactions of Medical Sleuthing." The lecture will be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2004, at 12 p.m., at the UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School, 185 South Orange Avenue, Newark in the Medical Science Building, Room B-610.

A free luncheon following the lecture will be held at the school to celebrate the initiation of what is hoped to become an informative and enjoyable tradition, one that will contribute to the medical education of all involved.

A registration flyer will be sent to all members of the MHSNJ in the near future inviting them to attend the lecture and luncheon. For more information, contact Dr. Allen Weisse at weisseab@umdnj.edu or 973-379-2322.

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What's New at UMDNJ Special Collections?

MHSNJ member, William H. Helfand, recently donated thirty-nine New Jersey medical pamphlets and ephemera to Special Collections. Materials document patent and pharmaceutical medicine in the state (1900-1956). Such firms as S.B. Goff & Sons of Camden, G.G. Green of Woodbury, Johnson & Johnson of New Brunswick, and Reed & Carnrick of Jersey City are represented in the gift. Special Collections actively seeks New Jersey medical ephemera and gratefully acknowledges Mr. Helfand's gift.

Recent additions were made to Special Collections Postcard Collection, which illustrates hospitals, sanitariums, pharmaceutical companies, drug stores, and other topics documenting the healthcare industry in New Jersey. The Department has an excellent collection of postcard images, numbering 600. The Postcard Collection is important adjuncts to the Department's photograph collections. A revised finding aid, illustrated with a sampling of historic postcards from the collection, was recently linked to our homepage and may be viewed at the following URL:

<http://www.umdj.edu/librweb/speccoll/postcards.html>

Walter Channing's *A treatise on etherisation in childbirth illustrated by five hundred and eighty-one cases* (Boston, 1848) and William Hammond's *A treatise on insanity* (NY, 1883) were acquired for the collection with funds from the Morris S. Saffron Book Endowment. Channing was the first physician in America to use ether anesthesia in childbirth, while Hammond is considered one of the founders of neurology in America.

'The Doctors in Our House: A Photographic Collection of New Jersey African American Physicians, 1812-1947' was on display in February, African-American History Month, at the UMDNJ-George F. Smith Library of the Health Sciences, Newark. The exhibit featured sixteen physicians who practiced medicine in New Jersey during a time when the white medical establishment disenfranchised minority healthcare professionals. These physicians overcame both discrimination and adversity to become leading figures in their own communities, and provided much needed healthcare services to minority citizens. Some of the physicians featured became the first African-Americans to gain medical privileges in New Jersey hospitals.

The exhibit was on loan and produced by the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Health and Senior Services. Linda Holmes, director of its Office of Minority and Multicultural Health, served as curator.

For more information about the programs and history collections at UMDNJ, please contact densky@umdj.edu.

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MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS IN THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE, 2003

Cirillo VJ. *Bullets and bacilli: the Spanish-American War and military medicine.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004. (Published in November 2003.)

Cowen DL. The history of pharmacy and the history of the south. Reprinted in *Apothecary's Cabinet* 2003; 6: 1-5.

_____. Industrial origins and pharmacy. Reprinted in, *Pharm Hist Australia* 2003; March 18: 8.

_____. Pharmacy. In *Dictionary of American history* 2003; 6: 308-311.

_____. Resorts and spas. In *Dictionary of American History* 2003; 7: 121-122.

_____. States' rights. Reprinted in *Apothecary's Cabinet* 2003; 7: 6.

Densky-Wolff LR. The books are old: must they be valuable? *ePulse* 2003; 50: Autumn: 11-13.

Grob GN. Peptic ulcer in twentieth-century America. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(1-2): 19-28.

_____. The rise of peptic ulcer, 1900-1950. *Perspect Biol Med* 2003 Fall; 46(4): 550-66.

Hill GJ. Thomas Alva Edison: health, medicine, and the great inventor. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(3): 19-21.

Lippman AJ. Medical practice in New Jersey: reflections on the 1930s from the Journal of the Medical Society of New Jersey. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(5): 23-27.

Louw DF, Sutherland GR, **Schulder M.** From microscopic to astronomic, the legacy of Carl Zeiss. *Neurosurgery* 2003 Mar; 52(3): 668-74.

Moss, SW. John A. Kenney, MD, and the North Jersey Medical Society: taking on Jim Crow. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(4): 37-41.

_____. To treat war's 'wounded & diseased': Newark's Civil War Hospital. *NJ Heritage* 2003; 2: 18-28.

Pinals, RS. Sarah's knee: a famous actress with chronic, inflammatory monoarthritis. *JCR*:

Jour Clin Rheumatology 2003; 10(Feb): 13-15.

Reeds, Karen. Commentary and bibliographic note. In Leonhart Fuchs, *De Historia Stirpium Commentarii Insignes* [CD-ROM facsimile of 1542 edition]. Oakland, CA: Octavo, 2003, pp. 1-11.

_____. Looking beyond the manuscript/monument divide. *AVISTA Forum Journal*; 2003 13(2): 33-36. [On the value of crossing disciplines in medieval studies, with an example that brings together medieval herbal manuscripts, plant physiology, and archaeology.]

Rutkow, IM. A selective history of hernia surgery in the late eighteenth century: the treatises of Percivall Pott, Jean Louis Petit, D. August Gottlieb Richter, Don Antonio de Gimbernat, and Pieter Camper. *Surg Clin North Am* 2003 Oct; 83(5): 1021-44.

Sherk HH. The editors of New Jersey Medicine. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(9): 29-37.

_____. The homefront, 1941-1945. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(6): 31-35,

_____. The Medical Society of New Jersey's journal. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(1-2): 14-17.

_____. Prohibition: the wets versus the dries in New Jersey. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(4): 24-27.

Trelstad RL. Post mortems on post mortems. *NJ Med* 2003; 100(11): 29-31.

Weisse AB. Profiles in cardiology: Timothy J. Regan. *Clin Cardiol* 2003; 26(11): 547-9.

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The *Newsletter of the Medical History Society of New Jersey* is published in May and October by the Society, and is a benefit of membership. **Deadline for the next newsletter is September 1, 2004.** Short articles (250 words) on medical history topics are especially welcome. Please send correspondence and submissions to:

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Philatelic Sketches in Medicine

Frederick C. Skvara, M.D.

Medical Heroes and Postage Stamps

Tales of medical heroes and breakthroughs in medicine became very popular subjects in the early to mid-twentieth century. By way of numerous books, movies, magazines and even comic books, stories of medical history reached a wide audience.¹ It should not be surprising that the postal-issuing entities of the world, noting the popularity of these tales, would want to garner some of this attention to themselves. They did so by issuing stamps and other philatelic items commemorating medical personages and significant events in the history of medicine, and to this day they are still at it.

Illustrated below is a selection of stamps showing medical heroes that were also popularized in the mass media.



Ambroise Paré (1510–1590)
France 1943



Louis Pasteur (1822–1895)
France 1938



Florence Nightingale
(1820–1910)
Germany 1955



Robert Koch (1843–1910)
Mexico 1982



Robert Koch (1854–1915)
Niger 1977



Christiaan Eijkman (1858–1930)
Grenada 1978



Mordecai Haffkine (1860–1930)
Israel 1994



Walter Reed (1851–1902)
United States 1940



Elizabeth Blackwell (1821–1910)
United States 1974

¹ Bert Hansen, "Medical History for the Masses: How American Comic Books Celebrated Heroes of Medicine in the 1940s" *Bull. Hist. Med.*, 2004, 78(1): 148–191