



# Medical History Society of New Jersey

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## NEWSLETTER

October 2008

Volume 28, Number 2

### SIXTH UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY FOUNDATION LECTURE

The fall meeting of the Medical History Society of New Jersey will be held Wednesday, October 15th, at The Nassau Club in Princeton. Dr. Margaret Humphreys will present the Sixth University of Medicine and Dentistry Foundation Lecture, entitled “The South’s Secret Weapon: Disease, Environment, and the Civil War.” Dr. Humphreys is the Josiah Charles Trent Professor in the History of Medicine and Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine at Duke University. Her books include *Yellow Fever and the South*, *Malaria: Poverty, Race, and Public Health in the United States*, and *Intensely Human: the Health of the Black Soldier in the American Civil War*. MHSNJ past president Frederick C. Skvara, MD will display medical philately related to the program. Registration begins at 3:30 p.m., and the program begins at 4:00 p.m.

#### [MHSNJ Business Meeting](#)

Karen Reeds, Ph.D., President

#### [Throw Away Your Truss! A Social History of the American Hernia](#)

Marc Mappen, Ph.D., New Jersey Historical Commission

#### [Twisted Symbols: Dr. Samuel Orton, June Orton, and the History of Dyslexia](#)

Robert Vietrogoski, M.L.S., C.A., UMDNJ Special Collections

#### [Franz Weitlaner – The Greatest Spreader of Surgery](#)

Amit Sharma, B.A., UMDNJ-NJMS,

Kenneth Swan, M.D., UMDNJ-NJMS, Department of Surgery, Mentor

#### [Russell Marker: The Unpredictable Genius who Fathered the Birth Control Pill](#)

Norman Ertel, M.D., Endocrinology and Metabolism, East Orange

Cocktails and Dinner (6:00-7:30)

#### [Medical Stamp Exhibit](#) – Frederick C. Skvara, MD

Sixth University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey Foundation Lecture:

#### [The South’s Secret Weapon: Disease, Environment, and the Civil War](#)

Margaret Humphreys, M.D., Ph.D.

Josiah Charles Trent Professor in the History of Medicine,

Duke University, Durham, N.C.

Members, students, and friends are invited to attend the dinner meeting. Cost is \$40/members, \$50/guests, \$20/students; advance registration is required. For information, contact MHSNJ, c/o UMDNJ Special Collections, G.F. Smith Library, 30 Twelfth Avenue, P.O. Box 1709, Newark, NJ 07101-1709 or email [vietrora@umdnj.edu](mailto:vietrora@umdnj.edu) or [moss.sandra@gmail.com](mailto:moss.sandra@gmail.com).



## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Dr. William C. Campbell published "History of the discovery of sulfaquinoxaline as a coccidiostat" in the August issue of the *Journal of Parasitology* 94:(4) 934-945, 2008.

He also recently reviewed *The Tropical World of Samuel Taylor Darling* by E. Chaves- Carballo. (*J. Parasitol.* 94:529, 2008)

Dr. George Hill's publisher is scheduling a series of lectures and guided walks this fall in sixteen towns in northern New Jersey featured in his book, *Edison's Environment: Invention and Pollution in the Career of Thomas Edison* (New Jersey Heritage Press, 2007). Details can be found on Dr. Hill's website, [www.georgejhill.com](http://www.georgejhill.com).

Dr. Hill and his wife Helene Hill co-authored "An Audacious World War II Trek. Three Allied Officers Traverse the Lowari Pass to Chitral in 1943: The Southern Route to Tirish Mir and the Hindu Kush Mountains" in the Summer/Fall 2008 issue of *Appalachia*. The paper is based on a previously unreported trip taken by Helene's father, who was chief of Naval Intelligence in Karachi, India (now Pakistan), in November-December 1943. This area along the Afghan-Pakistan border is now in the newspapers on a daily basis.

Dr. Hill's doctoral dissertation, *Intimate Relationships: Church and State in the U.S. and Liberia. Race, Religion, Rubber, and Politics in the Liberia Education Project, 1917-1947* (VDM-Verlag, 2008) is now available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). One event examined in this book is a yellow fever epidemic that swept across West Africa in June 1929 and led to important changes in public health practices in Liberia.

Dr. Sandra Moss delivered a lecture entitled "Heroics to Hydropathy: The Medical Marketplace in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century New Jersey" at the Hermitage in Ho-Ho-Kus on September 11<sup>th</sup>. She discussed the practice of "heroic" medicine in New Jersey and the rich medical marketplace of patent medicine hucksters, homeopaths, eclectics, and hydropaths.

Karen Reeds was awarded a grant by the New Jersey Historical Commission for "New Jersey Medical School—The First Half-Century: An Oral History Project." She is interviewing current and retired NJMS faculty, staff, and alumni, and Newark community leaders. The oral histories will be deposited in UMDNJ Special Collections.

Karen Reeds's exhibition, "Come into a New World: Linnaeus & America," is on view at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton through the end of 2008. The 32-page full-color exhibition guide, published by the American Swedish Historical Museum, is available from [www.dianepublishing.net/category\\_s/490.htm](http://www.dianepublishing.net/category_s/490.htm) (p.4).

Dr. Alan R. Rushton's book *Royal Maladies: Inherited Illnesses in the Ruling Houses of Europe* (Trafford Press, 2008) is now available through [www.trafford.com/08-0070](http://www.trafford.com/08-0070) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Dr. Kenneth Swan and Dr. Sean Monaghan, NJMS '07 had their article, "Tube thoracostomy: A struggle to standard of care," accepted for publication by *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery*.

Bob Vietrogoski will be guest lecturing on "Yankee Stadium and Medical History" to Rutgers University freshmen attending Professor Theresa Collins's Byrne Seminar on Yankee Stadium on October 7th. His presentation will focus on Lou Gehrig's eponymous disease and its depiction in *Pride of the Yankees*.

Dr. Allen Weisse hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Weisse Lecture in the History of Medicine at UMDNJ on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Eminent medical historian and former Dalhousie University Dean of Medicine Dr. T. Jock Murray lectured on "The Changing Frame of a Disease: The Case of Multiple Sclerosis" before a large audience that included several MHSNJ members.



## MEDICAL HISTORY EVENTS

25<sup>th</sup> Annual New Jersey History Conference - New Jersey Forum  
November 22, 2008, at the Marriott Hotel, Trenton NJ

Sponsored by the New Jersey Historical Commission, New Jersey State Archives, and New Jersey State Museum. See [www.newjerseyhistory.org](http://www.newjerseyhistory.org) for updates

10:15 – noon: Morning concurrent panels

PANEL 1: Hope, Fear and Pestilence: Public Health in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century New Jersey

Moderator: Karen Reeds, Princeton Research Forum

Newsprint, Fear, and the Cholera: A History of the 1832 Cholera Outbreaks in New Jersey

Margaret Charleroy, University of Minnesota

Death Unspoken: The Impact of the 1918 Influenza Pandemic in New Jersey

Jennifer Harmsen, Rutgers-NJIT History Department

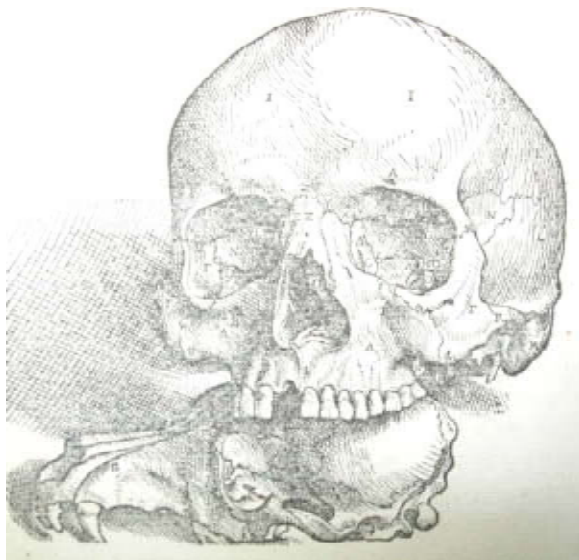
Pestilence Across the Delaware: New Jersey and the Yellow Fever Epidemics of the 1790s

Sandra Moss, Medical History Society of New Jersey



UMDNJ-University Libraries Special Collections

invites you to an Opening Reception



### “ART OF THE ANATOMIST”

an exhibit celebrating recent gifts from  
George Kozam, PhD, DDS

featuring  
Vesalius's *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (1555)  
and 150 Years of *Gray's Anatomy*

Thursday, October 23, 2008 3:00 p.m.  
UMDNJ-George F. Smith Library Exhibit Gallery  
30 Twelfth Avenue  
Newark, NJ

- Light Refreshments -

The exhibit will remain on display in the Smith Library  
Exhibit Gallery through December 19, 2008

To RSVP and for additional information, contact:  
Robert Vietrogoski, UMDNJ-Special Collections  
973-972-7830 [vietora@umdnj.edu](mailto:vietora@umdnj.edu)



## NJ VID PROJECT and MHSNJ

A consortium of New Jersey organizations, including VALE (Virtual Academic Library Environment), the New Jersey Digital Highway, and state universities including Rutgers and William Paterson, is working on a project named NJVid. In the project's own words, "NJVid is a statewide video portal & repository enabling educational & cultural institutions throughout New Jersey to digitize, archive & provide online access to their moving image material." NJVid was awarded nearly \$1 million to develop this project.

UMDNJ's NJVid coordinator Laura Barrett met with Bob Vietrogoski to discuss the collection of MHSNJ meetings recorded by Dr. Christine Haycock from 1992 to 2006. The earliest of these videotapes are now sixteen years old, and at increasing risk of degrading. Migrating the content of these videos to a digital format would aid both preservation and access.

As a pilot project, a videotape of the May 2001 meeting was sent to Rutgers University for digitization. The speakers were Drs. Michael Nevins, Daniel Greenfield, Frank Katz, and Allen Weisse. Many questions remain, and formal permissions from speakers must be obtained, but this project might prove to be a permanent and cost-free means of preserving and making accessible the video records of past MHSNJ meetings.

If MHSNJ members have questions or opinions about NJVid, please contact Bob Vietrogoski at [vietrora@umdnj.edu](mailto:vietrora@umdnj.edu), or Laura Barrett at [barrett@umdnj.edu](mailto:barrett@umdnj.edu).



## NEW JERSEY PROFILES

**John Bernhard Smith**

*by Vincent J. Cirillo, Ph.D.*

Although he was a lawyer by profession, and had no formal scientific training, John B. Smith (1858-1912) became a nationally renowned entomologist. Abandoning his law practice, Smith was fond of saying, "a fly on the wall is more interesting than a [law] case in hand." In 1889, he joined the New Jersey State Agricultural College Experiment Station as an entomologist, and also became professor of entomology at the New Jersey College of Agriculture of Rutgers University in New Brunswick. Five years later, he was installed as the state entomologist for the New Jersey Board of Agriculture. Smith held all three positions until his death from kidney disease on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1912.

In the early twentieth century, the salt marshes from the Hackensack Valley down to Cape May generated such enormous broods of mosquitoes that New Jersey was dubbed the "Mosquito State." Outsiders even spoke of the voracious "Jersey Mosquito" as if it were a separate species. In 1904, Smith published his comprehensive Report of the New Jersey State Agricultural Experiment Station Upon the Mosquitoes Occurring Within the State, their Habits, Life History, etc., which described the habitats, life cycles, and societal effects relating to disease for all mosquito species found in the Garden State. Importantly, he examined the issue of mosquito control as a public health measure. The work of Ronald Ross on malaria (1898), and Walter Reed and others on yellow fever (1900), had recently established the role of mosquitoes in the transmission of these infectious diseases.

Smith's research was the basis for the engineering projects that helped eliminate the pest. As state entomologist, he initiated and orchestrated a statewide anti-mosquito campaign. Private donations and municipal governments covered costs. By 1912, New Jersey stood "first in mosquito warfare" in the country, having drained more than 100,000 acres of wetlands by digging five million linear feet of ditches. In addition, patrols systematically checked all breeding areas for mosquito larvae. The reduction of the mosquito population translated into a significant decline in the number of malaria deaths statewide—from 481 in 1881 to 14 in 1912. Smith's work attracted public attention across the United States. The mosquito was now seen as a health menace rather than simply a nuisance, and its eradication became essential to public health campaigns. The work of no other individual has had so salutary an impact on the comfort and health of the people of New Jersey as that of John B. Smith.

See: Leland G. Merrill, "John Bernhard Smith." In: *American National Biography*, John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes, (eds.), 24 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 20:225-6.

David L. Cowen, *Medicine and Health in New Jersey: A History* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1964), pp. 141, 165-8.



### MEMBERS' RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Vincent Cirillo is comparing disease and combat fatalities in the U.S. Army during the Mexican War (1846-1848).

Gerald N. Grob is finishing a book with Allan Horwitz tentatively entitled *Diagnosis, Therapy, and Evidence: Conundrums of Modern American Medicine* (2009)

Dr. Sandra Moss's current research projects include:

1. the water-cure in nineteenth-century New Jersey
2. further research on "ironclad fever" and other health problems aboard the monitors
3. a book-length biography of Edgar Holden, M.D., nineteenth-century Newark physician
4. biographies of orthopedists Howard Kessler and Fred Albee
5. an upcoming talk on forensic medicine for a crime writers' group (Sisters in Crime)

Dr. Michael Nevins is working on three research projects related to the Holocaust and medicine. One project, "New Jersey's Dark Secret," concerns the story of the Skillman Village for Epileptics and its relationship to the American eugenics movement, involuntary sterilization of those "unfit" to live, and eventually even to Nazi war crimes. Another study, "Medical Morality and the Holocaust," traces the evolution of eugenics reasoning from sterilization to genocide. Dr. Nevins also will be lecturing several times on "Art & Medicine at Terezin."

Jonathan Reisman is writing an article on the history of autopsy in medical education.

Dr. Alan R. Rushton is researching William Bateson and the Chromosome Theory of Heredity, and Prince Albert, Queen Victoria, Hemophilia and the Royal Physicians.



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 April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Short articles (250 words) on medical history topics are especially welcome. Please send correspondence and submissions to:

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Thanks to Contributors: William C. Campbell, Vincent J. Cirillo, Gerald N. Grob, George J. Hill, Sandra W. Moss, Michael Nevins, Karen Reeds, Jonathan Reisman, Alan R. Rushton, Frederick C. Skvara, Kenneth Swan, and Allen B. Weisse.



# Philatelic Sketches *in Medicine*

Frederick C. Skvara, M.D.

## Smallpox - The Early Years

### The Disease

Smallpox (variola), one of the most devastating infectious diseases of human history, is caused by a double-stranded DNA virus of the *Poxviridae* family. Highly contagious, patient's initially present with an acute infectious disease and subsequently develop a vesico-pustular rash resulting in pockmarks in those who survive. In unprotected patients the virulent form has a 40–50 percent mortality. One of the successes of modern medicine, the disease has been eradicated through immunization and quarantine along with the fact that humans do not become 'carriers' and there is no animal reservoir.

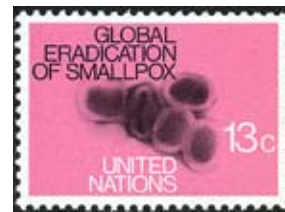
### Ancient History

Although there is some discussion as to where and when the disease initially arose, protection from the disease was often sought from the Hindu goddess Shitala from earliest times. From India it appears to have spread along the caravan trade routes to Mesopotamia and reached Europe with Roman legions returning from campaigns in Mesopotamia during 165–166 AD. The ensuing epidemic, known as the 'plague of Antonius' lasted until 180 AD and was named after the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius Antonius. That the 'plague' was indeed smallpox was because of the description of the clinical signs of the disease by Galen (c 130–200 AD). Another smallpox outbreak in Europe in 581 AD was described by Gregoire de Tours, a French pastor who wrote on literature and history as well as medicine and pharmacology. The first certain report of smallpox as distinct from measles was given in 910 AD by the Arab physician, Rhazes (c 865–932) in *A Treatise on the Small-Pox and Measles*. By the fifteenth century the disease was endemic in all the European countries.

### Arrival in the New World

The smallpox virus reached the New World in the early part of the sixteenth century with the establishment of colonies by Spain in the West Indies. It was introduced in Santo Domingo or Hispaniola around 1515 and then carried to Cuba, Mexico and later North and South America. The two most likely scenarios for its arrival 1) a case of virulent smallpox in an African slave brought over by the Spanish, or 2) a weaker strain carried by one of the Spaniards that then changed into a highly virulent form when introduced into an unprotected community. In either case it was brought over on Spanish ships and was devastating to the native populations.

In 1520 the Spanish conquistador, Hernando Cortés (1485–1547) and his army appeared to be defeated by the Aztecs and he retreated to the coast to regroup. By the time he returned to the Aztec capital over half the Aztec population, including their emperor Cuitlahuac, had died from smallpox. He easily defeated the new Aztec emperor Cuauhtemoc and his decimated army and remarked "A man could not set his foot down except on the corpse of an Indian." Similarly, the spread of smallpox to Guatemala and Peru allowed the Spanish conquistadors, Pedro de Alvarado (1485–1541) and Francisco Pizarro (1474–1541) to defeat the mighty Inca empire in 1532.



Smallpox virus. United Nations 1978.



Galen. Hungary 1989



Gregoire de Tours. France 1939



Rhazes. Iran 1964



Cuauhtemoc, Aztec emperor. Mexico 1950



Francisco Pizarro. Peru 1934



Pedro de Alvarado. Guatemala 1943