

# Editorial

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This thirteenth volume of *Fontanus* presents nine articles and three briefer “Notes and Comments” based on a wide range of McGill University collections. The McGill University Archives provided the main sources for six of the articles; the other articles mined holdings of the McGill Library’s Division of Rare Books and Special Collections, the Osler Library of the History of Medicine and the Islamic Studies Library. The Articles and Notes fall into three categories: 1) the history and development of individual McGill libraries and collections; 2) biographical and literary studies of individuals who played a role at McGill; and 3) aspects of McGill’s institutional history. While connected to McGill, the articles illuminate the gamut of activities common to most universities, including the role of benefactors; unique, accidentally acquired yet valuable collections; and not altogether happy professors. Not surprisingly, these categories can overlap. For instance, the article by Macy Zheng traces not only McGill’s early attempt to develop Chinese studies but a prescient, little known side of Sir Arthur Currie.

Our understanding of the history of McGill’s libraries is extended in two articles. John Hobbins recounts the early accomplishments and trials of the Law Faculty Library. Sean Swanick treats the development of the Islamic Studies Library, established in the 1950s, as the West was renewing its vital interest in Islam. Individual collections also are examined by two articles. Using Osler Library holdings, Daniel Hickey studies late eighteenth century reports of the Royal Medical Society of France to examine emerging developments in French medical practice. Library historians have long been fascinated by how private collections are formed and sometimes dispersed or “hidden” when submerged in large libraries: Svetlana Kochkina resurrects and closely analyses the collection of rare books and masters’ prints assembled by Thomas Mussen.

Other articles deal with studies of individuals who played a role at McGill and with various aspects of McGill’s history. William Fong, author of *J.W. McConnell: Financier, Philanthropist, Patriot* (McGill-Queen’s, 2008), offers an expanded, detailed account of this munificent benefactor and McGill’s Board of Governors’ politics regarding the Chancellorship in 1942-3. Robert Michel writes on the McGill careers of two accomplished, unconventional and dissatisfied French teachers. The first is Régis Messac (1924-1929) who wrote a satirical novel based on his McGill adventures. The second is Maxime Ingres (1895–1900), who is covered in a Note—as is Frank Scott (BCL 1927) and his foray into university satire. Peter McNally, historian of McGill, provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing the University in the turbulent 1960s as well as a Note on McGill’s construction of buildings, 1970–2002. Gordon Burr writes a history of a uniquely McGill organization, the McGill Non-Academic Staff Association (MUNASA), which has evolved through several changes since being founded in 1972.

In sum, this volume treats McGill’s interface with Chinese, Islamic and French studies, library and collections development, intriguing people, and internal and external politics and administration. We are confident that the issues, individuals and stories you meet here will be of intellectual, political and social interest to readers everywhere.

*The Editors*