

Historical Highlights: Blaustein Donations

Posted March 26, 2018

Written by Tara Wink, HSHSL Historical Collections Librarian and Archivist



Dr. Mordecai Blaustein, M.J. Tooley, and Tara Wink view materials from the December 2017 donation.

In December 2017, the HS/HSL's Historical Collections received a remarkable donation from Dr. Mordecai Blaustein. Dr. Blaustein, a long-time professor of physiology and medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, has been a strong supporter of the HS/HSL for many years.

The most recent additions are especially impressive and include a first edition of William Withering's *An Account of the Foxglove, and Some of its Medical Uses*, a volume with special meaning to Dr. Blaustein. In the volume, Withering describes the ways in which foxglove can be used to cure or help certain medical ailments, including congestive heart failure. Dr. Blaustein's own research

centers around heart disease and hypertension. The Withering volume includes a beautiful hand-painted engraving of a foxglove.

The donation also included a second edition of G.B. Duchenne's *De L'électrisation Localisée et de son application à la Pathologie et à la Thérapeutique*, originally published in 1855. Duchenne introduced a form of non-invasive electrotherapy in this volume. Duchenne is well-known for describing muscular dystrophy, a condition that now bears his name (Duchenne muscular dystrophy).

Finally, the gift included a three-volume set by Richard Bright titled *Reports of Medical Cases*. These volumes include beautiful hand-painted engravings depicting the effect of disease on various organs. Bright is known for his research and work involving the kidneys, and for his description of Bright's disease, a form of kidney disease now known as acute or chronic nephritis.

Previous donations from Dr. and Mrs. Blaustein include volumes dedicated to the memory of Dr. Blaustein's father, Norman Blaustein, who was an avid book collector. Dr. Blaustein credits his father with inspiring him to start his own book collection, which, in addition to the donated volumes, contained a copy of Johannes Kepler's 1609 *Astronomia Nova*, and a number of herbals. Among the Blausteins' previous donations to the HS/HSL are monographs on European travel, human muscle, and anatomy.

In 1992, Dr. Blaustein donated an 1824 Maryland dissertation on measles. The dissertation was discovered by his book dealer in a European book store and made its way back to UMB through Dr. Blaustein. The [dissertation](#) is now available through the Library's UMB Digital Archive.

Dr. Blaustein joined the faculty at the UMB School of Medicine in 1979 as chair of the Department of Physiology, a position he held until 2003. After stepping down from the chairman position, he remained a member of the Department of Physiology and also served as director of the Maryland Center for Heart, Hypertension and Kidney Disease, and as an affiliate professor in the Biotechnology Center of the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute.