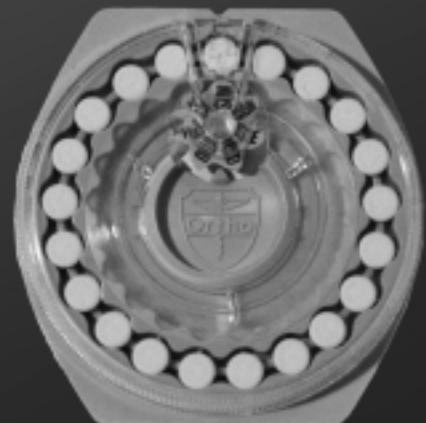
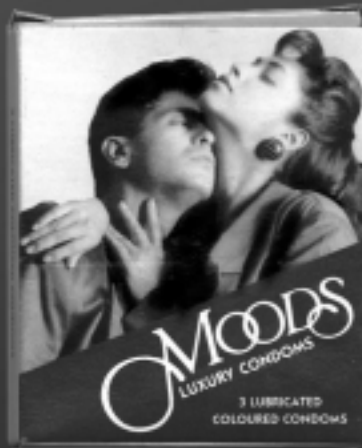


Newsletter of



The Cleveland Medical Library Association

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*A History of
Contraception
in America*

Trends and Realities at the Cleveland Health Sciences Library



FROM THE
CLEVELAND HEALTH
SCIENCES LIBRARY

Ginger Saha,
M.S.L.S.
Director

The World Wide Web—the internet-based system linking millions of computers around the globe—was launched in 1991. That means the medical, nursing and dental students of 2009 have been “surfing the Web” since they learned to read! This life-long immersion in electronically available information has proven to be a mixed blessing, however. For some, “research” means typing a few words into a Google™ or Yahoo!® search box, and then clicking on three or four links at the top of the first screen of results. There is often no assessment of the authoritative-ness of the websites listed. Instead, students rely on the validity of the search engine’s relevancy ranking, and trust that the websites listed first are the “best.” When a familiar site like Wikipedia pops up, there is a sense of confidence in the information provided. After all, in an often cited article “Internet encyclopaedias go head to head” [*Nature* 438, 900–901 (15 December 2005)], the summary trumpets: “Jimmy Wales’ Wikipedia comes close to Britannica in terms of the accuracy of its science entries, a *Nature* investigation finds.” This believability comes despite the fact that “Anyone with internet access can make changes to Wikipedia articles.” [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>] Now, I admit to using Wikipedia several times a week for a quick introduction to something I know nothing about, but I don’t stop there! Indeed, we have long pointed out to students during library orientation that while Wikipedia can be a useful start to a search for information, it would not be wise to treat a patient solely on what one finds there.

This academic year the Health Sciences Library initiated a new program called “Search Tips” to help students develop more sophisticated information searching skills, including critical analysis of resources. We started with the School of Medicine students, but if Search Tips proves to be useful, we plan to offer customized versions to the School of Dental Medicine and the School of Nursing as well. The format involves having a librarian visit each Inquiry [IQ] Group of nine to ten students once during a curriculum block for a five to ten minute session focusing on only a few information resources and search strategies rele-

vant to the subject material of that block. We were able to run a pilot session with second year medical students, and we benefited greatly from their suggestions. Before the IQ visits began, we briefed the faculty facilitators on the new program. We also were careful to let the IQ groups know exactly when we would be coming, and to time these visits so as to cause the least disruption to the IQ Group learning dynamic.

We began with Block 1 “Becoming a Doctor,” which covers population health, biostatistics, and health disparities among other topics. The Search Tips lesson had two parts: The first directed students to authoritative statistics websites, e.g. the CDC’s FastStats [<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats>], and the more comprehensive FedStats [<http://www.fedstats.gov/>]. Following the principle of starting where the students are, we began with a simple Google search. The results screen offered a variety of websites from which to choose. Students quickly recognized that while Mama’sHealth.com might have some useful information, seeing “nih” or “.gov” in a URL was a clue to the reliability of the information on the website, and going directly to the authoritative website would be a more efficient use of time. The second part of the session highlighted the Health Disparities Special Query available at PubMed.gov. This provided an opportunity to introduce some advanced PubMed searching options such as Limits, and selecting links to full text. The Search Tips sessions in Block 1 were well received—some IQ groups even applauded!—and the faculty facilitators learned something, too. So far, feedback has been positive, and we plan to expand the program to the rest of the WR2 curriculum.

Cover image: Contraceptive artifacts and images featured in the exhibition, Virtue, Vice, and Contraband: A History of Contraception in America. Clockwise, from top left: advertisement for “female pills,” 1855; vaginal sponge, c.1920; condom package, c.1960; cover of Latz’s The Rhythm, c.1932; condom package, c.1980; Ortho diapak, c.1970.

Re-opening of Skuy Collection gallery



FROM THE
DITTRICK MEDICAL
HISTORY CENTER

**James M.
Edmonson,
Ph.D.**
Chief Curator

We are pleased to announce the grand re-opening on September 17 of the Percy Skuy Collection, in its own dedicated gallery space. It has been a long time in the making, but has come together in a last burst of creative energy by the Dittrick team and our guest curator Jimmy Meyer. More on this process below. The Skuy Collection will be presented in a new specially themed exhibition entitled “Virtue, Vice, and Contraband: A History of Contraception in America.” To mark the re-opening we have scheduled as a speaker Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Ph.D.,

the Sydenham Clark Parsons Professor of History at Smith College, and a distinguished scholar of 19th century sexual discourse.

Her work has ranged over several areas: urban life, cultural philanthropy, women, and higher education. *Culture and the City* examined the cultural institutions of nineteenth century Chicago. *Alma Mater* explored the hopes and fears expressed by founders of women’s colleges as they offered them the liberal arts. *Campus Life* looked at the history of undergraduate cultures.

2009 Zverina Lecture by Helen Horowitz

Our choice of Professor Horowitz for the 2009 Zverina Lecture to mark the re-opening of the Skuy Collection stems from the influence that her scholarship has had upon our understanding of the history of contraception, and knowledge about reproduction more generally, in the nineteenth century. Her talk, “How Contraceptives Became Illegal: The Origins of the Comstock Law,” will focus upon the pivotal event in criminalizing knowledge and practices in this sphere: the Comstock Act of 1873.

Horowitz adroitly addressed this topic in her compelling book, *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth Century America* (2002). In that work she explored sexual representations and discourse in mid nineteenth century America, and the campaign to censor them leading to the landmark Comstock Law of 1873 banning obscene materials from the U.S. mails, including contraceptive information and devices. For the next half century, much like the era of Prohibition, America entered into a dark period of repression and retribution in the name of moral sanctity. The Comstock Act not only criminalized contraception; it also colored our perception of Victorian America. Howowitz’s inquiry into the era before Comstock, as captured in *Rereading Sex*, revealed a surprisingly lively, if at times contentious, discussion of sexuality, reproduction, and

contraception between 1830 and 1873. That discourse was muted and driven underground, much as the trade in contraceptives entered a black market era. Her lecture will explore how this came to pass and what it meant for Americans in the late nineteenth century and beyond.

Please plan to join us for Professor Horowitz’s lecture at 6:00 PM in the Ford Auditorium, on the ground floor of the Allen Memorial Medical Library. Following the lecture we will adjourn to the Dittrick (third floor of the Allen) for the unveiling of a new permanent gallery for the Skuy Collection at 7:00 PM. We will have our customary reception in the Dittrick main gallery and Zverina Room, both adjacent to the Skuy Collection gallery.



THE SKUY COLLECTION GALLERY: Virtue, Vice, and Contraband: A History of Contraception in America

We have chosen to reinterpret the Skuy Collection in a completely new manner, situating it within its social and cultural context. The Skuy Collection documents contraceptive beliefs and practices over the past four millennia, as far back as ancient Egypt. The real strength of the collection, in terms of period artifacts, is concentrated in the period since 1800. Therefore, we have elected to focus upon the variety and range of contraceptive choices available and used over the past two centuries. Moreover, we are situating contraception in an American context, but will touch upon Western cultures' experience more generally.

The exhibition, as now configured, comprises five main sections:

SECRETS REVEALED! Vernacular and folk understanding of sex, reproduction, and contraception; the “Population question” and new knowledge about birth control in America, 1800–1873.

THE COMSTOCK ERA Suppressing vice makes contraception illegal, 1873–1915.

THE SANGER ERA The Birth Control movement in America; medicalizing contraception; and the growing diversity of contraceptives, 1915–1950.

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE The Pill, IUDs, and other new methods, 1950 to the present.

AFTERWARD Birth control today and tomorrow: choices, emerging technologies, and issues of access.

In the course of crafting this exhibition on contraception, we made many discoveries in our collections, acquired new artifacts and pamphlets, and made connections with the community of scholars working on this subject area. It has been a very enriching experience, and our work will continue long beyond the re-opening of the new gallery for the Skuy Collection. At the very outset, four years ago, we convened a panel of expert consultants, and from that emerged our guest curator, Jimmy Wilkinson Meyer (College of Wooster). Jimmy did her dissertation at CWRU on the Cleveland Maternal Health Association, which appeared as *Any Friend of the Movement: Networking for Birth Control, 1920–1940* (2004). As guest curator, she helped work out the exhibit structure and content, and tracked down artifacts, images, and related literature. Jimmy visited archives and collections from Harvard and Smith College to the Smithsonian and Duke. She regularly scoured eBay in search of ephemeral and esoteric items—who knew that 21st century scholarship would also provide the welcome relief of retail therapy?! I invited Jimmy to reflect upon the experience as guest curator, and she offered her insights and commentary below.

Be sure to mark your calendar and plan to join us for the re-opening of the Skuy Collection on September 17, or simply stop by and spend some time exploring the gallery on your own at your leisure after that date.



Left to right: Frederick Hollick demonstrating anatomy with Auzoux papier-mâché mannikin. Frontispiece to The Origin of Life (1845); Seal of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice; and advertisement for douching syringe, c.1900

*Jimmy Wilkinson Meyer, guest curator,
reflects on crafting the new gallery*



Cabbages, lily pads, water wheels, or the stork—where exactly do babies come from? This is my latest obsession in the search for illustrations to add social and historical context to the Percy Skuy

Collection. The images indicate that babies might come from of all of the above. Who knew?

The Skuy collection shows that anxiety about unplanned pregnancy and worry about family size, as indicated in these images, began long before the modern age. The history of controlling reproduction is rich indeed.

Figuring out which stories to tell, which methods to focus on, which items to feature—these are only a few challenges that we faced in preparing the exhibit. How to tell this complex story in only a few words? Where can we get that critical photo in high resolution? Is this item really a contraceptive? Yet the gallery space filled more quickly than we could have imagined.

Imagination is the key to this exhibit. The artifacts tell a story of creativity and determination. Faced with a lack of knowledge, repressive laws, and other obstacles, couples over time still attempted to control their fertility—and sometimes succeeded—in amazing ways. Come and see for yourself!



Wrap up for 2009 AAHM, and thanks to all

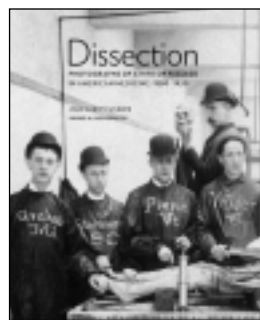
Late April, when we hosted the American Association for the History of Medicine, seems a long time ago right now. But the daunting prospect of such a big event (381 attendees) seemed all we could think about last January, when registration began. Planning and logistics went back yet another year before that. The great success of the event, remarked upon by so many who attended the meeting, came about through super collaborative efforts by Dittrick staff and CA&S colleagues. Patsy Gerstner (Dittrick emerita) took point on hotel logistics and planning, while I conducted necessary fundraising. Jennifer Nieves (Dittrick registrar and archivist) handled registration, transportation, and many other aspects of local arrangements, while Laura Travis (Dittrick assistant curator) did program brochure layout and printing, and many other graphics. Mark Eddy (Kelvin Smith Library) did yeoman's work directing the always popular rare book dealers and university press display. Jonathan Sadowsky (History) became liaison to the program committee, and read abstracts and helped craft the final selection of papers. Volunteers and students who helped make the event successful included: Dianne O'Malia, Nora Blackman, Lynne Graziano, Jeannette DeGuire, Elizabeth Salem, Katherine Schaub, Kathryn Goldberg, and Gretchen Hallerberg.

The CMLA Trustees graciously hosted the Garrison Lecture in our Ford Auditorium, and Dzwinka Holian (Allen) supervised the catering. Additional welcome support for hosting the AAHM came from Mt. Sinai Healthcare Foundation, the Kaiser Permanente Foundation, The Cleveland Clinic Foundation, and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. Perhaps the greatest source of relief is the notion that we've paid our dues with the Association, and won't have to host the meeting again for at least another twenty years—and then it will be on someone else's watch!

Morley exhibit case renovation completed

Being part of the College of Arts and Sciences affords many benefits for the Dittrick, and we welcome the opportunity to be of service in return. Helping to refurbish a display case featuring the life and scientific work of Edward Morley provided just such an opportunity this past Spring. The project actually started some time ago, when we collaborated with Bill Fickinger (Physics emeritus) to re-install the interferometer model celebrating the famous aether drift experiment of Michelson and Morley in 1887. That now graces a ground floor foyer in the Physics Department home, the Rockefeller Building, and the site of the Michelson Morley experiment was designated as a historical site by the American Physical Society in 2005. Following that, Bill proposed refurbishing the Morley display case in the lobby of Schmitt Lecture Hall in the Chemistry Department. Bill brought Alan Rocke on board as a collaborator to rewrite the label copy, and Laura Travis provided graphics, design, and installation. The resulting exhibition in the case is a welcome renovation of a previously shop-worn display of recent years. When you are on campus, seek out the display, just behind the Hvorka Atrium (accessible off Adelbert Road) connecting DeGrace Hall, the Clapp Building, the Millis Science Center, and the Schmitt Lecture Hall.

This Morley exhibit features intricate apparatus Morley actually made to determine the atomic weight of oxygen, and explains how he achieved this and what meaning it had.



Dissection soars on charts

The Dittrick's recent book project, *Dissection: Photographs of a Rite of Passage of American Medicine, 1880–1930* (Blast Books), has really taken off. Publicity began on April 24 with an online review by Barron Lerner in Slate.com, followed by a notice in the *New York Times Book Review*, and then by a full review by Abigail Zuger (a CWRU SOM alum) in the *NYT* Tuesday Health edition. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* gave the book an almost full page spread in their Metro section (April 27), with a very favorable and sympathetic piece by Brian Albrecht. Then we hit the airwaves, with Ira Flatow interviewing me on *Science Friday* on May 29, and then John Harley Warner was interviewed by Jacki Lyden on NPR's *All Things Considered* on June 2. Links to stories and archived audio interviews may be found here: <http://www.case.edu/origins/news/edmonson.htm>

With all this great publicity, we all felt some whiplash, but savored the sensation. Credit here is due to Blast Books publishers Laura Lindgren and Ken Swezey, and their publicist Ken Siman. With their help (and some luck) the book soared to #162 on Amazon.com. Right up there with best selling crime novels, self help books, and tell-alls! We've dropped somewhat, but sales have been brisk and a second printing is in the offing. Promotional events are scheduled for: the Waring Library (MUSC) in Charleston, South Carolina in November; a lecture at New York Public Library on December 7; an event at the International Museum of Surgical Science (Chicago) in January; and at Harvard Medical School in March. Our share of the proceeds from the book sales goes to the Friends of the Dittrick Museum. Order your copy from the Dittrick at www.case.edu/artsci/dittrick/site2/news/Order-form-Dissection.pdf.

Handerson Lecture on safe sex in the 18th century

The Handerson Lecture in 2010 (March/April date yet to be determined) will feature Natasha McEnroe, Grant Museum, University College London. Her talk, entitled “‘In armour complete’: practicing safe sex in 18th-century London,” takes an intimate look at the very private lives of some of 18th-century London’s leading literary and society figures. The basis for this work comes from Mrs. McEnroe’s time as past Curator of Dr. Johnson’s House, of Boswell and dictionary fame, and co-editor of *The Tyranny of Treatment: Samuel Johnson, His Friends and Georgian Medicine* (2003). Keep tuned to the Dittrick website for details.



Dr. Samuel Johnson

Custodian Retires

On June 30, 2009, Mr. Calvin Lewis retired from his daily custodial duties at the Allen Medical Library. For 22 years he carried out his duties with exceptional devotion, grace and a wonderful sense of humor. We will miss his comforting daily presence and will have to learn to muddle through without his vast knowledge of the library building, but we take great comfort in the fact that he will still come to oversee after hour Library and Ford Auditorium special events.

On July 6, 2009, the library staff celebrated Mr. Lewis with a retirement luncheon. He was deeply touched by all the attendees who came to wish him well—retired library staff; university staff and CMLA board members, Drs. Mary Hellerstein and Irving Kushner—and we were delighted to meet his amazing family—lovely wife, Irlene; 11 of his 12 children with their spouses and three grandchildren.

Thank you, Mr. Lewis.

Dzwinka Holian

Associate Director and CMLA Liaison

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Allen Library 216-368-3640
Health Center 216-368-3218

HOURS

For information, call either reference desk listed above or see “On the Web” below.

ON THE WEB

Cleveland Health Sciences Library

<http://www.cwru.edu/chsl/homepage.htm>

For hours see:

<http://www.cwru.edu/chsl/hc.htm>

Dittrick Medical History Center

<http://www.cwru.edu/artsci/dittrick/site2/>

For hours see:

<http://www.cwru.edu/artsci/dittrick/site2/operations/>

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DATES TO REMEMBER

SEPTEMBER 17

2009 ZVERINA LECTURE: Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, Ph.D.

How Contraceptives Became Illegal: The Origins of the Comstock Law

LECTURE: 6:00 PM, Ford Auditorium, Ground Floor, Allen Memorial Medical Library

RECEPTION: 7:00 PM, Dittrick Medical History Center and Museum, Third Floor,
Allen Memorial Medical Library

OCTOBER 17

CENTER FOR POLICY STUDIES (CWRU)

Public Affairs lunch and discussion of the exhibit, *Virtue, Vice, and Contraband:*

A History of Contraception in America, by James Edmonson, Ph.D. and

Jimmy Meyer, Ph.D. This is a brown-bag lunch from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM at the

Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence, Crawford Hall

DECEMBER 7

PRESENTATION OF *DISSECTION* BY James Edmonson, Ph.D.

New York Public Library, New York, NY