

**The Osler Library of the History of Medicine
McGill University, Montreal Canada**

Osler Library Archive Collections

P079

ROBERT BELL FONDS

FINDING AID AND INVENTORY LIST

This is a guide to one of the collections held by the [Osler Library of the History of Medicine](#),
McGill University.

Visit the [Osler Library Archive Collections](#) homepage for more information.

P079

P079: Robert Bell fonds

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 39.5 cm textual records

DATES: 1870-1979

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH/ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

Robert Bell (1841-1917) was born in Toronto, Ontario. He was the son of Rev. Andrew Bell (an early pioneer in Canadian geology), and the older brother of John Bell 1845-1878 (fellow McGill graduate and friend/colleague of William Osler). In 1861, at the age of 19, Robert Bell graduated from McGill with a Bachelor of Science and went on to teach chemistry and natural science at Queen's University from 1863-1867.

It was Bell's connection with the Geological Survey of Canada, which he began in 1857, that dominated much of his professional life. Over the years, he was responsible for Canadian surveys covering northern Quebec and Ontario, northern Manitoba, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories. He also took part in early expeditions to Hudson's Bay (1884, 1885 and 1897) and Baffinland (1897). Bell would go on to serve as Director of Survey from 1901 to 1906. Throughout his career, Bell was instrumental in naming more than 3000 geographical features such as hills, promontories, rivers, and places for possible habitation. The Geological Survey Board acknowledged his legacy by naming the Bell River in western Quebec after him, as well as naming Bell Island in Hudson Bay in his honour.

Bell was impressively known as a 'doctor-explorer', as he had returned to McGill and earned an MD in 1878 at the age of 37. Fifteen years later, he was given an LLD by Queen's in 1893 and was made a DSc at McGill in 1901. His services to science were also recognized by Cambridge University in another doctorate of science (ScD) in 1903. In that same year, he was awarded the Companionship of the Imperial Service Order (ISO) from the British government. Robert Bell's professional honours included the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society and the Cullum Gold Medal from the American Geographical Society.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The fonds consists of Robert Bell's student notebooks related to his medical studies in Surgery, Materia Medica, Practice of Medicine, Obstetrics, Physiology and Clinics at McGill University. The fonds also contains circular letters and medical advertisements. Inventory for acc.732 purchased from John Mappin in 1979 also included in fonds.

SOURCE OF SUPPLIED TITLE PROPER: Title based on content of fonds.

LANGUAGE: The documents are in English.

FINDING AIDS: Inventory list is available. Inventory for acc.732 purchased from John Mappin in 1979 also included.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY: Purchased at Montreal Book Auctions Ltd., sale 112, 12 October 1978 and from John Mappin in 1979. Old accession numbers 612, 732, 736, 742, 746 and 747.

SERIES:

1. Miscellaneous
2. McGill University Notebooks, 1870-1878

GENERAL NOTE: See also McGill University Archives M.G. 2042.

SUBJECTS:

McGill University Doctors
Bell, Robert, 1841-1917

Series 1: Miscellaneous

Folder 1: Accession 732 inventory list, Purchased from John Mappin, February 1979.

Folder 2: Newspaper clippings, circulars, promotional booklets and pamphlets for medicines, soaps and artificial limbs etc. (circa 1874-1900)

Folder 3: Medical Electors of the Bathurst and Rideau Division

- Includes several letters/circulars to the members of The Medical Electors of the Bathurst and Rideau Division, 1870

Folder 4: Osler testimonial fund, McGill graduates notice, 1903

Series 2: McGill University Notebooks, 1870-1878

Folder 5: Notebook 1

- “Surgery I” 1877-78 (Dr. Fenwick) and “Midwifery II” 1878 (Dr. MacCallum)

Folder 6: Notebook 2

- “Practice of Medicine by Dr. Robert Palmer Howard, commenced attending November 16, 1875)

Folder 7: Notebook 2

- “Practice of Medicine by R.P. Howard, Book II Session 1875-76”

Folder 8: Notebook 3

- “Practice of Medicine 1877-78 No.I”

Folder 9: Notebook 4

- “Practice of Medicine 1877-78 No.II”

Folder 10: Notebook 5

- “Practice of Medicine No.III, Session 1877-78”
- Some loose notes in on meningitis

Folder 11: Notebook 6

- “Obstetrics, Session 1875-76 No.I”
- “Obstetrics, Session 1877-78 No.II

Folder 12: Notebook 7

- “Obstetrics, Session 1875-76, No.II”
- Loose notes “Obstetrics, 1878” written on Geological Survey of Canada paper

Folder 13: Notebook 8

- “Midwifery, 1877-78 by Dr. MacCallum”
- “Jurisprudence lecture, Hygiene lecture, session 1877-78

Folder 14: Notebook 9

- “Physiology, 1875-76, No.I”

Folder 15: Notebook 10

- “Physiology, 1875-76, No.II”

Folder 16: Notebook 11

- “Physiology, 1875-76, No.III”

Folder 17: Notebook 12

- “Clinic Medicine, No.II, 1877-78, Dr. Ross”

Folder 18: Notebook 13

- “Clinic Surgery, Dr. Roddick, 1875-76”
- “Miscellaneous, 1876-77”

Folder 19: Notebook 14

- “Clinic Surgery, Dr. Roddick, 1877-78”
- “Clinic Medicine, Dr. Ross, 1877-78”

Folder 20: Notebook 15

- “Materia Medica, Professor Wright, 1875-76”

Folder 21: Notebook 16

- “Materia Medica, Dr. McWright, Book II, January 1876”

Folder 22: Notebook 17

- “Materia Medica, Dr. Wright, Book No. III, Session 1875-76”

Folder 23: Notebook 18

- “Materia Medica I, 1876-77”

Folder 24: Notebook 19

- “Materia Medica No.II, 1876-[77], Dr. Wright”

Folder 25: Notebook 20

- “Materia Medica III, 1876-77”

Folder 26: Notebook 21

- “Surgery, No.I, 1870-71”

Folder 27: Notebook 22

- “Surgery, No.II, 1870-71”

Folder 28: Notebook 23

- “Practice of Medicine, 1870-71, No.I”

Folder 29: Notebook 24

- “Practice of Medicine, 1870-71, No.II”