

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

Osler Library Archive Collections

P133

RICHARD L. MacDONNELL COLLECTION

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.

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P133

P133: Richard L. MacDonnell Collection

DATES: 1846-1891

EXTENT: 25.5 cm textual records

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Dr. Richard Lea MacDonnell (1856-1891) was a son of Dr. Robert Lea MacDonnell (1818-1878) – a well-known Dublin-born surgeon, author (founder of the *Canadian Medical Journal*), professor, and director of the Department of Clinical Medicine at McGill University. Richard MacDonnell grew up in Montreal, and was educated at Bishop's College School in Lennoxville, QC before studying medicine at McGill University. MacDonnell graduated from McGill in 1876, then studied for a year in Europe and obtained an M.R.C.S. Upon his return, he was appointed one of the Demonstrators of Anatomy and eventually assumed the position of senior demonstrator in charge of the Department of Practical Anatomy. MacDonnell was also appointed assistant physician and then physician at the Montreal General Hospital, as well as professor of clinical medicine at McGill until his death. In addition to his work as a clinician and professor, MacDonnell was a regular contributor to the *Montreal Medical Journal* with many articles to his name. On July 31st, 1878, at the young age of 35, MacDonnell died of pulmonary disease, survived by his wife, mother, and sister. His friend and McGill colleague, Sir William Osler, wrote an obituary in the *New York Medical Journal* that stated: "Although only thirty-five years old, he had reached a position which gave scope to abilities of first-class order and afforded opportunities of impressing upon a large class of students those qualities of mind so essential in the teacher, so priceless to the taught – honesty, system, and painstaking care" (*NYMJ*, 54: 162, 1891).

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The collection consists of 3 scrapbooks assembled by Richard L. MacDonnell, and 1 McGill Dissection Room Record Book created and kept by MacDonnell from April 1883-1891. The scrapbooks contain notes, patient prescription information, reprints of various publications by MacDonnell, and lots of news clippings concerning various topics such as the history of Montreal, McGill University, the McGill faculty, Montreal General Hospital, and obituary notices. A second volume of dissection records (1896-1908) was compiled after MacDonnell's death, and can be found in the library catalogue.

CUSTODIAL HISTORY: Old accession number 257 for scrapbook 1. The other 2 scrapbooks and 1 dissection record book were added to P133 in August 2016, formerly part of The Medical Library Archives Collection (P205) acc. 544 (MLA item nos. 38/65/N/3/2; 38/65/N/3/7; 38/65/N/4/2). The MLA Collection still contains some correspondence material related to Richard Lea MacDonnell and Robert Lea MacDonnell (38/65/Z).

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

LANGUAGE: The documents are in English.

FINDING AIDS: Inventory list is available.

SERIES:

1. Scrapbooks
2. Dissecting Room Record Book

GENERAL NOTE: A second volume of dissection records (1896-1908) was compiled a few years after MacDonnell's death, and it has been catalogued separately (with a similar note attached to mention this first volume).

RETRIEVAL NUMBER: P133

SUBJECTS:

- McGill University Doctors
- MacDonnell, Richard L., 1853-1891
- McGill University – History
- Medical Historical Works

Series 1: Scrapbooks

Scrapbook 1, ca. 1866 - 1884

- Inside cover reads “The Osler Library McGill University Montreal Acc. 15310”
- Notes, McGill association programs, various theatre programs
- Newspaper clippings from Montreal Herald, Gazette, Daily Star, The Irish Times, The Toronto Mail, among others, March 1866-August 1884
 - Several articles on cholera

Scrapbook, ca. 1885-1891

- Contains reprints of Richard L. MacDonnell’s various publications in Montreal Medical Journal and others
- Also contains printed letters, patient notes, and misc. caricatures and postcard portraits of Members of the Royal College and
- An inscription reads “The Bequest of Richard Lea MacDonnell, M.D.”
- (Superseded McGill Medical Library Archives no. 544-38/65/N/3/2)

Scrapbook, 1852

- Signed “R L MacDonnell, 1852”
- Contains notes on patient prescriptions, and newspaper clippings on various drugs and cure methods
- suppliers information
- (Superseded McGill Medical Library Archives no. 544-38/65/N/3/7)

Series 2: Dissecting Room Record Book

“Medical Faculty McGill College Dissecting Room Record”, 1883-1891

- R. L. MacDonnell introductory note: “This record was begun at the date of the passing of the Amended Anatomy Act which was also the date of my appointment as Demonstrator of Anatomy – April 1883, R. L. MacDonnell”

- Provides cadaver details such as name/date received/received from/sex/religion/cause of death/burial location/burial date/age
- Notes at the back show annual receipts and expenditures from 1884-1890
- **Note: A second volume of dissection records (1896-1908) was compiled after MacDonnell's death, and has been catalogued with a note mentioning this first volume**