A Resource of Twentieth Century American-East Asian Relations: The William Henry Welch Papers at the Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions

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"I have come here for the purpose of learning what the needs are and with the hope of improving the facilities for medical study at this Union Medical College of Peking."
(Address to the students of the Union Medical College by William Henry Welch. Peking, October 11, 1915.)

"I wish I could tell you all that is in my heart with reference to your participation in this Oriental expedition. No one man has contributed so largely and in so important a way to the success of the expedition as you have from every point of view, and this I say with deliberation and without qualification."
(John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to William Henry Welch, October 19, 1921.)
educator, two stand out: first, he played a key part in the founding of The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions. In April 1884 he received the first full-time appointment to the medical faculty, and, over the next several years, he personally assembled the nucleus of the faculty which opened The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in 1893. Second, in 1918 Welch founded and became the first Director of The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health. As researcher, he conducted studies which helped to advance the frontiers of modern medical knowledge in the fields of pathology, bacteriology, and public health. In order to disseminate his findings and those of other medical scientists, he established the *Journal of Experimental Medicine* and served as its editor until 1906.

One of the most interesting aspects of Dr. Welch's career was his long-standing, close, and fruitful association with the Rockefeller Foundation. From 1901 until his death in 1933, Welch served as Chairman of the Board of Scientific Directors of the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research. It was while serving in that capacity that he traveled to China in 1915 as a member of the China Medical Commission. He and several others conducted a survey of medical colleges and hospitals in Mukden, Peking, Shanghai, Changsha, Soochow, and Hongkong. The purpose of the survey was to determine which of the several institutions would receive the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. The eventual recipient was the Peking Union Medical College (PUMC). It was designed to become, in the words of one recent commentator, the "Johns Hopkins of China." In 1921, Welch returned to China in the company of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to attend dedication ceremonies of the PUMC.

The William Henry Welch papers document the contributions of this John Hopkins professor to the founding of the Peking Union Medical College. Only about 5 to 6 of the approximately 100 linear feet in the collection deal with the PUMC and China. Specifically, the researcher should examine Boxes 49, 77, 78, 94, 95, 102, 103, 104, and 105 and the place to begin is with Boxes 94 and 95. They are the richest source of information about Welch's role in the establishment of PUMC. They contain his "diaries" in sixteen notebooks. Books 1 through 6 cover the 1915 trip to China and Books 15 and 16 the 1921 trip. The researcher will find a wealth of material about the work of the China Medical Commission in Books 1 and 2. For example, in Book 2 Welch offers his evaluations of numerous missionary hospitals and medical schools in China. Similarly, in Book 1 he comments critically about the strong German influence on Japanese medical education. In general, these diaries present Welch's impressions, as both a physician and a tourist, of scientific and political conditions in the Chinese Republic.

A word of caution is in order about Welch's "diaries". During the 1915 trip, Dr. Welch took copious notes on and about the various hospital facilities and medical schools he visited. After returning to Baltimore, he composed his "diaries" from these notes. The notes themselves are located in folders in Boxes 94, 95, and 102. They should be read because they include information Welch omitted from his so-called "diaries." The notes, moreover, provided the basis for his formal "Report of the China Medical Commission to the Rockefeller Foundation, relating to the Union Medical College of Peking" (1916). A handwritten and typed copy of that report can be found in Box 77.

In addition to the value of the Welch manuscripts to a study of the PUMC,
they also contain a number of marvelous bonuses for the historian of American-East Asian Relations. For example, Boxes 102, 103, and 104 include approximately forty catalogues of medical schools in China and Japan, newspaper clippings and articles dealing with various aspects of medicine in China, and lists of physicians and nurses at PUMC and other medical schools in China. The catalogues are especially important sources of information about American Protestant missionary hospitals and medical colleges in China, medical schools in Japan, and Western influence (American and German) on Chinese and Japanese medicine. The catalogues are in English, German, Chinese, and Japanese. Another bonus, found in Box 77, is a collection of speeches Dr. Welch delivered before Chinese student groups, foreign organizations in China, and clubs in Baltimore. The historian of American-East Asian Relations also might find the travel guides, such as "How to See Shanghai" and "Noted Sights of Nagoya," useful in reconstructing the sights and sounds of a select number of East Asian cities.

Close scrutiny of the Welch papers reveals a final bonus. During the past decade, historians of informal American-East Asian Relations have become increasingly aware of the importance and the desirability of identifying the circle of friends and the web of contacts among and between Americans, Chinese, and Japanese. In this regard, Welch's manuscripts, particularly the "diaries" in Boxes 94 and 95, are quite helpful. One finds, for example, valuable insights about and American reaction to such leading Chinese educators as Kuo P'ling-wen and Chang Po-ling. One also encounters significant details about the life of Roger S. Greene, a prominent member of the Sino-American community in North China.

Mary Brown Bullock has already made expert use of the William Henry Welch papers in her brilliant An American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and the Peking Union Medical College (Berkeley, 1980). In the foregoing paragraphs, we have suggested other uses a historian of American-East Asian Relations might make of Dr. Welch's manuscripts. With the exception of the body of material relating to the PUMC, the fragmentary nature of the other sources in the Welch papers points to a larger problem confronting students of American-East Asian cross cultural relations. Similar collections can be found in other repositories scattered around the country, and historians usually discover them in several ways: by consulting the National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections; by reading the Committee on East Asian Libraries Bulletin or, as in the present case, by accident. It was while preparing the excellent finding aid to the Welch collection, which is included in the Archives and Manuscripts: The Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives, The Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions (Johns Hopkins, 1980), that Dr. Harold K. Kanarek uncovered this important part of the Welch manuscripts. Rather than depend on happenstance, what we think is needed is a systematic listing of manuscript collections relating to American-East Asian Relations that are located in the United States and abroad. In this regard, we welcome and look forward to the publication of G. Raymond Nunn's volume on manuscripts and archival holdings about Asia.

For those interested in researching the papers of Dr. William Henry Welch or the other archival holdings at the Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives, write or call:
The Chesney Medical Archives are open from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Upon request, Dr. Kanarek will post a copy of the Archives and Manuscripts.

Notes


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