

A Short History of Paul Wood's Anesthesia Collection: The Wood Library- Museum of Anesthesiology

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., WLM Honorary Curator

*William D. Hammonds, M.D., M.P.H., President
WLM Board of Trustees*

Paul Meyer Wood, M.D., inherited bibliophilia and “the collecting bug” from his Hoosier parents. A love of chemistry took Dr. Wood from the Explosive Chemistry Laboratory at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, to physician-anesthetist training at Columbia University in New York City. In 1933, as a 37-year-old Manhattanite, Dr. Paul Wood suffered a heart attack. While convalescing he donated his entire anesthesia collection of books and artifacts to the New York Society of Anesthetists. By 1937 the collection moved from Dr. Wood’s apartment to the Squibb Building, near Central Park in New York City.



Paul Meyer Wood, M.D.

From 1940-44, Dr. Wood spent his mornings as the anesthesiologist to surgeon-antiquer Robert Bickley and afternoons as secretary of the American Board Anesthesiology and as ASA’s secretary, librarian-curator and *Anesthesiology* business manager. Lewis H. Wright, M.D., a Squibb Company medical director, soon helped Dr. Wood run the ASA Library-Museum committee. Dr. Wright realized that the committee needed a savvy politician such as Albert M. Betcher, M.D. When ASA’s business office shifted to Chicago in 1947, Dr. Wood’s collection remained behind in Manhattan. By 1949 the Wood Library-Museum (WLM) incorporated to receive ASA’s collection. Meanwhile the Squibb Company needed its office space back.

WLM Secretary Vincent J. Collins, M.D., stepped forward at this critical time and located a brownstone at 137 W. 11th St. for the collection to share with the New York State Society of Anesthesiologists. The New York Board of Regents granted WLM a 1950 provisional and 1952 absolute educational charter. In late 1952, however, a failed building inspection forced the semi-retired Dr. Wood to move the heavy apparatus of the collection 50 miles north to his garage in Highland Falls, New York. By 1956, an expansion at St. Vincent’s Hospital forced a move from 137 to even smaller quarters at 131 W. 11th St. Fortunately anesthesia equipment manufacturer Richard von Foregger, Ph.D., made his Long Island, New York, boathouse available for storage of the collection. That same year, the WLM was designated as the ASA archival repository.



Foregger's boat house, circa 1958.

1959 ASA President Daniel C. Moore, M.D., secured WLM's future by purchasing a lot in suburban Chicago for future ASA buildings. This also blocked an effort to move the WLM to San Francisco. In 1960 Dr. Foregger's widow evicted the WLM from her Long Island boathouse, and ASA President Leo V. Hand, M.D., offered the ASA's new building in Park Ridge, Illinois, as a WLM collection annex. Denied storage space by three New York hospitals, Dr. Wood visited Illinois three times to organize his namesake collection. Sadly Dr. Wood suffered a massive heart attack at home and died in May 1963, just six months before the official opening of the library-museum that bears his name.

Cost over-runs downsized the WLM annex from three to two stories. Librarian-Curator Walter Necker was hired a month before the grand opening of the WLM annex in November 1963. Mr. Necker organized the library-museum over the next three years, including its gallery dedication in 1965. Mr. Necker's disagreements with WLM officers, however, led to his resignation by 1967.



**Dedication of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology,
November 3, 1963**

Left to right: Bruce Wood, son of Dr. Wood; Edward R. Annis, M.D., AMA President and dedication speaker; Diana Bird, grand-daughter of Dr. Wood; Harriett Wood, Dr. Wood's wife; Lewis H. Wright, M.D., President Emeritus of the WLM; Albert M. Betcher, M.D., WLM President; Beatrice Bird, daughter of Dr. Wood; and Prall Bird, grandson of Dr. Wood.

That year WLM inaugurated an annual lecture on the history of anesthesia, the Lewis H. Wright Memorial Lecture, named posthumously after Dr. Wright in 1975. Under Seymour Alpert, M.D., *Anesthesiology Bibliography* and the Self-Evaluation Program commenced in 1968 and 1969, respectively. Because of a nationwide shortage of librarians, anatomy-illustrator Martin Levine, M.S., was hired in 1969 as WLM Curator. WLM President James E. Eckenhoff, M.D., bypassed the library committee of Eugene Connor, M.D., and the museum committee of Louis R. Orkin, M.D., instead adding Mr. Levine to the audiovisual committee. That committee prospered under the technical wizardry of Chair John Leahy, M.D., and the interviewing skill of John William Pender, M.D. Their recordings of legendary anesthesiologists evolved into today's Living History Collection with interviews dating back to 1944.

The next WLM president, bibliophile Charles C. Tandy, M.D., encouraged book conservation and the hiring of Patrick Sim, M.L.S., in 1971. Mr. Sim was educated in Hong Kong's parochial schools and the United States' premiere Dewey-decimalized graduate librarian program. Service-oriented yet visionary, Mr. Sim helped to inaugurate the WLM's Residents' Reading List and the *History of Anesthesiology* reprints. Six months after Sim's arrival, Curator Levine relocated.

After dissolving its New York charter, the WLM transferred all assets and liabilities to ASA. Dr. Tandy expanded his antiquarian book contacts to acquire rare books on acupuncture and mesmerism. With physician-printer K. Garth Huston, Sr., M.D., Dr. Tandy produced the 1976 bicentennial exhibit and Resuscitation Catalogue.

Succeeding Dr. Tandy, WLM President Huston internationalized the WLM's list of antiquarian bookseller contacts. He prompted Mr. Sim to begin annotating a WLM rare book catalogue. Consultants on bookbinding, de-acidification and special collections hastened the transformation of the WLM from an amateur collection to a professional library-museum. Dr. Huston co-presented papers with founders of the Anesthesia History Association (AHA). Editors C. Ronald Stephen, M.D., and then Doris K. Cope, M.D., began a cooperative effort between WLM and AHA by jointly publishing the *Bulletin of Anesthesia History*. Other AHA colleagues, William D. Hammonds, M.D., and Selma H. Calmes, M.D., formalized WLM liaisons with Georgia's Crawford W. Long Museum and California's Arthur E. Guedel Memorial Anesthesia Center, respectively.

By the 1970s, ASA office space for educational programs replaced the WLM's ground-floor gallery. Vincent J.

Collins, M.D., triaged WLM apparatus in 1983 for potential display, dispersal or disposal. From 1984-86, a growing ASA accommodated the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation, the Society for Ambulatory Anesthesia, the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research and the American Society of Critical Care Anesthesiologists at the headquarters office in Park Ridge, Illinois. Mr. Sim found himself retrieving discarded museum apparatus from the dumpster in the parking lot.

Harvard's Elliott V. Miller, M.D., was elected WLM President in 1985 and continued in that position until 1997. Architect of the modern WLM, Dr. Miller transformed the WLM by appointing committees to handle the major responsibilities of the WLM and running disciplined trustee meetings with clock-like precision. He also organized popular WLM dinners where influential guests and trustees mingled. He resuscitated the post of WLM Vice-President by convincing M.T. "Pepper" Jenkins, M.D., to take the position. Dr. Miller tapped George S. Bause, M.D., as WLM Medical, then Honorary, Curator. The new curator designed the 50-module museum gallery for the planned new ASA building. 1988 ASA President Harry H. Bird, M.D., and then Executive Director Glenn W. Johnson shepherded the project along.

First Dr. Miller, then Dr. Bause coordinated the WLM's convention exhibits. By 1992 three ASA foundations were combining annual exhibits, anticipating today's Anesthesia Resource Center. Dr. Miller hired Assistant Librarian Sally Graham, M.L.S., in 1988, who later indexed the 1982-95 AHA newsletters edited by Drs. Cope, Calmes and Stephen. Also in 1988, Roderick K. Calverley, M.D., founded the Paul M. Wood Memorial Fellowship program in anesthesia history.

For the new building, major WLM acquisitions included Laennec's 1819 stethoscope and Lawrence's 1821 painting of Sir Humphry Davy; Richardson's 1849 painting of James Robinson; and the Eric Webb Chloroform Collection. In 1992 the three-story ASA building at 520 N. Northwest Highway in Park Ridge formally opened. The 1994 centennial of Dr. Wood's birth celebrated the acquisition of diaries by Joseph T. Clover, M.D., and a letter by Joseph Lister, M.D., to J.A. Lawrie.

Succeeding Ms. Graham as Assistant Librarian, Karen Bieterman, M.L.I.S., quickly demonstrated her library skills by expertly handling a burgeoning demand for skilled reference research. Library Assistant Carole Siragusa mastered digital imaging along with diverse clerical activities. The two women witnessed a succession of WLM publications chairs (Nicholas M. Greene, M.D., B. Raymond Fink, M.D., Kathryn E. McGoldrick, M.D., and, currently, Donald Caton, M.D.) who published reprints by John Snow and Thomas Keys; English translations of Overton, Bernard and Pirogoff; and the *Proceedings of the Third International Symposium on the History of Anesthesia*. Dr. Greene also inaugurated a Nobel-like quadrennial prize: the WLM Laureate of the History of Anesthesia.

In 1997 Dr. Miller handed the presidential gavel to Dr. Caton, who now faced an ASA demanding financial self-sufficiency by the year 2000. Led by Franklin B. McKechnie, M.D., Dr. Cope, Dr. Caton, and then Jonathan C. Berman, M.D., the marketing committee soon improved visibility and income. Dr. Fink, Kathryn E. McGoldrick, M.D., and Dr. Caton edited *Careers in Anesthesiology*, a series by anesthesiologists about their work.

Organizing the collections became a major priority. Ms. Bieterman computer-catalogued the library holdings. The WLM's Virtual Tour appeared on CD-ROM and online. Mobile carriage shelving was installed to relieve the basement clutter. Acquisitions during this time included Charriere's 1847 Ether Inhaler, and A.M. Long's 1884 and S.J. Hayes' 1893 vaporizing apparatus. Collections Supervisor Judith A. Robins, M.A., transformed the jumbled dungeon of archives and apparatus in the ASA headquarters basement into organized collections. Archives Committee Chair Douglas R. Bacon, M.D., encouraged and obtained important archival donations.

Succeeding Dr. Caton as WLM President in 2001, Dr. McGoldrick learned that ASA might terminate its annual contribution to the WLM. Dr. McGoldrick oversaw the naming of the "Mayo Clinic" Curator's Room in 2001 and of the WLM gallery's Bause Collection in 2002. The next year ushered in curatorial exhibits at the ASA's Washington, D.C., office and scripting of the WLM gallery audiotour.



The Wood Library-Museum as it appears today.

A.H. “Buddy” Giesecke, M.D., then Lydia A. Conlay, M.D., Ph.D., highlighted WLM activities and exhibits in each September’s *ASA NEWSLETTER*. New acquisitions during this time included J.M. Churchill’s 1821 acupuncture needles, Hooper’s 1846 Ether Inhaler, Linus Pauling’s 1975 handwritten manuscript, the Maurice S. Albin M.D., Neuroscience Collection and the Tandy Archive of Sir Robert Macintosh. The WLM endowment increased six-fold from 1985-04. After introducing Dr. Caton as the incoming WLM Laureate, Dr. McGoldrick handed the helm to newly elected President William D. Hammonds, M.D., and Dr. Conlay became vice-president.

Throughout the last 34 years, the sustaining force at the WLM has been Head Librarian Patrick Sim. His consummate professionalism, tireless dedication and gracious hospitality have attracted legions of friends and supporters. Mr. Sim has embraced the vision of founder Paul M. Wood of a national repository for anesthesia apparatus and literature and molded it into the ASA’s Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology.

George S. Bause, M.D., is Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.



William D. Hammonds, M.D., is Professor of Anesthesia and Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.



