

DIGITIZATION AND TRANSCRIPTION OF THE BUSINESS LETTERS OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHY 1898-1900

The Museum of Osteopathic Medicine and International Center for Osteopathic History requested funds to digitize and transcribe two volumes (~900 pages) of business and personal correspondence from the American School of Osteopathy (ASO). These letters, found only at the Museum, are printed on onion skin and date from 1898-1900. The correspondence covers a wide range of topics including the growth from a 2-room school house to a major educational institution, demographic information on patients and students, as well as legal challenges, competition, and opportunities of the American School of Osteopathy. This project involved hiring a collections assistant to photograph and transcribe each letter as part of a larger Museum objective to inventory and digitize its entire collection, providing services and access to academic scholars, physicians, researchers, students, the public, and institutions around the world.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

Since the beginning of the AAOA Special Projects Fund grant in November 2015, the following activities have been accomplished:

- a. Payment of grant funds in the amount of \$2,500 was received on November 16, 2015 and a grant number was assigned to the project. The Museum contributed an additional \$2,902 to cover the cost difference of the collections assistant's salary and fringe benefits for this 13-week project.
- b. With approval from AAOA Special Projects Fund administrator dates for this project were adjusted to May 6-August 6, 2016. These dates coincide with summer break for college and university students who may be looking for summer internships resulting in a larger applicant pool.
- c. The project director collaborated with the University's communications and marketing department to disseminate a press release through regional newspapers, broadcast television news stations, social media, websites within the osteopathic profession, and university publications (i.e. *Iconnect*, *Still Magazine*, and the *Now & Then* newsletter).
- d. The open, 13-week collections assistant position was posted on museum-related listservs such as AAM Registrar's and Museum-L and was distributed to regional colleges and universities such as Eastern Illinois University, University of Kansas City, and Truman State University.
- e. Justin Gripple was hired by ATSU and employed from May 16, 2016 to August 12, 2016.
- f. Mr. Gripple transcribed and processed ~3,500 letters (date range 1903-1905) and 66 applications for matriculation.
- g. Historical information discussed in these business letters included: the lawsuit between the American School of Osteopathy and the National School of Osteopathy (Dr. E. Barber); the discussion of the differences between Magnetic Healing and Osteopathy; the expulsion of students who were practicing Osteopathy before they had graduated and received diplomas; and the discussion of moving the American School of Osteopathy to St. Louis, Missouri, Des Moines, Iowa, or Chicago, Illinois.
- h. Information and search terms from both ledgers were placed into the Museums online collection management system, PastPerfect, which can be accessed free of charge at <http://momicoh.pastperfectonline.com/>
- i. In addition to the digitization of the two business letter ledgers, Mr. Gripple was also able to inventory 1,512 books that have now been assigned to the education collection.

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EVALUATION:

n/a

OTHER:

The Museum of Osteopathic Medicine and International Center for Osteopathic History are grateful to the AAOA Special Projects Fund for enabling us to enhance access to these historical letters which are a valuable resource to the public, academic scholars, students, physicians, and researchers nationally and around the world.

Museum awarded grant from AAOA Special Projects Fund

December 7 2015 | [alumni headlines](#), [faculty/staff headlines](#), [Museum of Osteopathic Medicine](#)

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The Museum of Osteopathic Medicine and International Center for Osteopathic History (MOM-ICOH) has been awarded \$2,500 for the, "*Digitization and transcription of the business letters of the American School of Osteopathy 1889-1900.*" The purpose of the project is to digitally preserve and transcribe two volumes of the business and personal letters from the American School of Osteopathy (ASO). These volumes include a large portion of the business and personal letters sent to the ASO as the school was growing from a two-room school house to a major educational institution.

With the help of Advocates for the American Osteopathic Association Special Projects Fund (AAOA), these processed documents will reveal valuable demographic information accessible to patrons and researchers on the Museum online collection site <http://momicoh.pastperfectonline.com/>. The letters contain student applications, requests from patients to visit Dr. Still, discussions of patient cases studied, and from where those cases arrived.

This collection of letters shows the school's evolution, legal cases, competition, and ASO's development opportunities. Correspondence is included from many of the most important figures in the profession including: Drs. Andrew Taylor Still, Charlie Still, Harry Still, Herman Still, Arthur Hildreth, William Smith, John Martin Littlejohn, Elmer Barber, and many more.

The AAOA Special Projects Fund supports innovative and interesting projects that support osteopathic physicians, students, the profession, and its initiatives world-wide.

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If you are interested in donating to this or other preservation projects, please contact MOM-ICOH at museum@atsu.edu, or go to <http://www.at-su.edu/museum/>.