

Special Collections Artifacts Brought Out into the Light

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As steward of the dental, medical, nursing, and pharmacy schools' heritage, the Galter Library Special Collections holds a large number of artifacts including photographs, prints, memorabilia, instruments, and equipment. Once an important part of medical education at Northwestern, the artifacts were formerly housed in various school museums until the late 1950s, at which time the large amount of space needed for display could no longer be justified (see image at left: The Dental School Museum, on the 10th floor of the Ward Memorial, 1927).

Many items were permanently loaned to other institutions, specifically, Chicago's Field Museum and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., or simply discarded. Items that were retained have, for the most part, been in storage. Legacies and gifts from faculty and alumni have also been added to the collection over the years.

With the acquisition of new display cases, we are pleased to announce that selected items will soon be available for viewing both in the Galter Library and in the refurbished Method Atrium and Ward Memorial-Morton corridor.

Pride in the library and museum collections was evident in the numerous descriptions that appeared in school publications from an earlier time. The 1870-1871 annual announcement of the medical school notes 'the museum is supplied with a large series of plates, drawings, paintings, casts, models, apparatus, surgical instruments, etc. both for study and illustration.'

An example that will be on display is this French trepanning set, dating from the late 18th century. The case is marked 1771. The instruments predate the case, as the surgeon would choose his preferred operating instruments and then have a case made for them. The instruments are marked 'Noel a Paris' and are made of un-plated polished steel and ebony. A search for the manufacturer produced no results, and unfortunately, the provenance is not known.

The new display cases are expected to debut in late September in the Method Atrium and Ward Memorial-Morton corridor.



Historical items including books, photographs, instruments and equipment are available for study and viewing. Please call (312) 503-8133 or [email](mailto:ron.sims@northwestern.edu) for an appointment with the Special Collections Librarian.

Printed: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 3:00 AM

Source: <https://galter.northwestern.edu/news/special-collections-artifacts-brought-out-into-the-light.pdf>