ANDREW TAYLOR STILL PAPERS

Andrew Taylor Still (1828-1917) was the founder of osteopathy, a new system of health care that rebelled against the standard American medical practices of his day. Osteopathy presented a new philosophy and way of viewing the patient, rather than being merely a reformed set of medical or surgical techniques or pharmaceutical remedies. Indeed, Still’s followers often referred to the “Old Doctor” as a philosopher. The Andrew Taylor Still Papers document Still’s development of both philosophy and practice and reflect his unique, homespun approach to both.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Quantity: ca. 6 linear feet
Dates: 1864-1937 (bulk 1891-1917)
Arrangement and description by: Cheryl Gracey (Former Curator), with Jean Kenney (Volunteer)
Processing assistance by: Debra Loguda-Summers (Curator)
Brian Grubb (TSU Student Associate)
Missy Nicol (TSU Student Associate)
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Digital Tech: AAOA Special Projects Fund
Aaron Loguda (Scanning of documents)

Missouri State Library, Library Services and Technology Act Federal Grant Program
Project Assistant(s): Olga Allred, Natalie Hall, B.A. and Sarah Bell, B.A.
Transcription of documents and Metadata: Cheryl Gracey, M.A. and Brian Grubbs, M.A.

Papers may also be viewed at:
Missouri Digital Heritage: http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/ Images and transcription
PastPerfect Online: http://snom.pastperfect-online.com/ Images only

Copyright and Permission to Publish: Requests for permission to publish material from the papers should be directed to the Curator. The Museum does not claim to hold the copyright for all material in the Still Papers; it is the responsibility of the researcher to identify and satisfy the holders of other copyrights.

Suggested Citation: Andrew Taylor Still Papers, Museum of Osteopathic Medicine, Kirksville, Missouri [Document. #]
History and Organization of the Papers

The collection includes Still’s original writings (essays, speeches, letters); letters to Still; military records and other personal documents; obituaries, condolence letters, and other materials relating to Still’s death in 1917; and miscellaneous other documentary items owned or used by Still. The collection includes handwritten, typed, and printed material. It includes very few tributes, articles, or general items about Still; suggested sources for such material are included in Appendix A: Related Material in Museum.

The bulk of the material was donated to the NCOH by Elizabeth Laughlin, the widow of A.T. Still’s grandson George Andrew Laughlin, in 1990. It is not known who compiled the Laughlin material originally; it was handed down through the family from Still’s daughter Blanche, who lived with him in his final years. It was possibly compiled in part by Mrs. Sol Morris, Still’s friend and unofficial secretary (see below). Most of the remaining documents were given individually to the Museum and the KCOM Library by separate donors over a period of years.

The material is largely undated and unorganized. See the Series descriptions for the organization of individual series. Portions of it received preservation treatment at the Northeast Document Conservation Center in 1991 and in 2000-03.1

Notes on Handwritten Documents

The ATS Papers contain a number of handwritten documents. Most are written in pencil on lined tablet paper, but other writing materials are also present. Some are written in what is clearly Still’s handwriting. Others appear to have been written by at least three other people. “Person A” has smoother, finer writing (see EL-4.8); “Person B” makes his/her letters larger and rounder (see EL-4.5); both have better spelling than Still. In most of these documents, the words sound like Still’s. They may be dictations by Still to Mrs. Sol Morris (see below) or some other stenographer, or notes taken during a Still lecture (for the latter, see especially EL-15.3 “Prayer). There are a few documents in which the writing changes from one section to another—sometimes even within a sentence—and the formation of certain words and letters is similar to Still’s, causing even greater uncertainty about who actually did the writing.

The writing of “Person C” greatly resembles Still in both letter formation and spelling, but several facts suggest that the writing is someone else’s:

a. At least one document (NCOH2.20) exists in which the penmanship changes from this writing to what is clearly Still’s hand.

b. The same document refers off-handedly to seeing someone in church; by all reports, Still had long since given up regular church attendance.

c. The same document and another are addressed to “Pa,” which may mean that one of Still’s children wrote them (but not necessarily, as Still may have been using that as a nickname for a close acquaintance).

1 Preservation work was funded in part by grants from Dr. and Mrs. Paul Grayson Smith and the Missouri Historical Records Grant Program. The MHRGP is funded by the state of Missouri, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and supported by the Missouri State Archives, a division of the Office of Secretary of State.
d. Some documents written in this hand use a sharp tone and vindictive language not seen elsewhere in Still’s writings (see D589E and EL-4.9). Although a document in this handwriting was found among Charles Still’s papers, comparison with samples of Charles’ writing indicates that Person C is not A.T. Still’s oldest son.

Yet other handwritings appear in individual documents. In the listings, handwriting believed to be someone other than Still is noted in the Comments column. However, researchers are advised to examine the manuscripts and make their own determination. Samples of the most common handwritings are included in Appendix B.

Entries in the Title/Description column retain Still’s idiosyncratic spelling.

Mrs. Morris, Still’s “Amanuensis”

Mrs. Sol Morris was a patient of A.T. Still’s who, along with her husband, became his close friend and benefactor. The Morris farm in Millard, just south of Kirksville, was Still’s refuge when he needed a break from the demands of his patients and students or a quiet place to reflect on his work. In a letter to another friend, Mrs. Herman Orschel of Chicago, Still wrote, “Am at ‘Mother’ Morris now and will stay till I get fat. She is good to me. And is a poor talker so I get to rest from gab.”

A little-known part of osteopathic history is Mrs. Morris’s role in translating Still’s thoughts to written form, described by Henry Stanhope Bunting (ASO 1900) in “A Trip to the Old Doctor’s Workshop”:

_She has taken down most of [Still’s] writings by dictation and has put the generation under obligations by preserving much of the philosopher’s fragmentary work which he dashed off for recreation or amusement expecting to throw it into the wood-box as soon as it ceased to amuse him…. By degrees she became able to understand his work and to follow him in his researches and reasoning and with this training became his invaluable secretary, librarian and keeper of records. She finished equipment by mastering the typewriter and in these late years Dr. Still seldom relies upon his own hand to record his reflections…._

_Mrs. Morris would have no scruples in letting breakfast dishes stand if the philosopher had notes to record. He sits perhaps two hours by the stove dictating his philosophy and then may lie down for a nap…. If some idea banishes sleep the sage has but to call out and “sponge” will sit in the bread pan by the kitchen stove until his dream has been recorded…._

—_Journal of Osteopathy_ (1899 Feb)

In other words, many of the handwritten documents in this collection (especially the Laughlin donation) may owe their existence to Mrs. Morris’s foresight in preserving them.

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2 Still also refers several times in the Orschel correspondence (Series 3) to Mrs. Morris reading him their letters, leading to speculation about the state of Still’s eyesight.
**CHRONOLOGY**

1818
Abram Still (father of A.T. Still) begins his work as a Methodist preacher (Tazewell Circuit, Va.)

1822
Abram Still marries Martha Pogue Moore.

1828
A.T. Still is born in Lee County, Va.

1834
Still family moves near New Market, Tenn.

1837
Still family moves to Macon County, Mo.

1849
A.T. Still marries Mary Margaret Vaughan; begins practicing medicine with his father (ca. 1849).

1853
A.T. and Mary Still join the Still family at Wakarusa Shawnee Mission in Kansas.

1854-1856
A.T. Still, his father, and his brothers join Free State Militia (1855).

1857
A.T. Still is elected to Kansas territorial legislature.

1858
Still family helps found Baker University in Baldwin City, Kan.

1859
Mary Still dies, leaving A.T. Still with three children.

1860
A.T. Still marries Mary Elvira Turner.

1861-1865
A.T. Still enlists and serves in several Kansas militia companies (1861-1864).

1864
Spinal meningitis epidemic kills 3 Still children; A.T. Still begins search for new ways of healing.

1871
Still patents butter churn.

1874
Still publicly announces discovery of new form of medicine; moves back to Missouri and settles in Kirksville.

1879
Still's trial for practicing medicine without a license ends in acquittal (Hannibal, Mo., ca. 1879).

1885
Still chooses "osteopathy" as the name for his new form of medicine (ca. 1885).

1892
Still founds American School of Osteopathy (ASO) in Kirksville, Mo.

1894
ASO awards first degrees.

1896
Charles Still opens first osteopathic office outside of Missouri, in Red Wing, Minn.

1910
Still patents furnace burner.

1913
A.T. Still Research Institute laboratories open in Chicago.

1914
Still-Hildreth Osteopathic Sanatorium opens in Macon, Mo.

1917
Still dies in Kirksville, Mo.

SERIES LIST

Series 1: Miscellaneous Manuscripts
Description: Essays, letters, and other items from the Museum and Library collections, given individually by various donors; also selected handwritten documents removed from 1990 Laughlin donation for preservation. Includes pages from a 28-page tablet with an interview by a correspondent from the Inter Ocean, a Chicago newspaper (1872-1914). The original source can be traced via the catalog number and donor code.
Dates: ca. 1894-1910
Volume: 1 linear foot (2 document boxes)
Arrangement: Alphabetical, with binder containing tablet material at end.

Series 2: Laughlin Box
Description: Essays, letters, book drafts, and other papers; these constitute the bulk of the 1990 Elizabeth Laughlin donation and are assumed to represent the state of the papers when they were in family hands.
Dates: ca. 1894-1910
Volume: 3 linear feet (6 document boxes)
Arrangement: As found (no obvious order)

Series 3: Orschel Family
Description: Material relating to the Herman Orschel family, former patients and family friends from Livingston, Montana (later Chicago). Includes personal letters and poems from ATS and Mary Elvira Still, primarily to Mrs. Orschel. According to correspondence in the files, the Orschels’ daughter gave the letters Dr. S.V. Robuck (ASO 1913). He sent them in 1963 to KCOS Dean R.M. Tilley, who apparently put them into a scrapbook with other material relating to ATS. The series is noteworthy for the rare personal glimpse it gives of both Stills, for whom very little correspondence has been found.
Dates: 1899-1900
Volume: ca. 1 inch (17 folders)
Arrangement: Chronological

Series 4: Philosophy and Mechanical Principles
Description: Drafts (mostly typescript) of chapters for Still’s book Philosophy and Mechanical Principles of Osteopathy (1902), identified by chapter where possible. Part of Laughlin donation (original placement within collection unknown). Note that Series 2 also contains draft material of Osteopathy Research and Practice and possibly other books.
Dates: ca. 1900
Volume: .5 linear foot (1 document box)
Arrangement: As found; some grouping by chapter
Finding Aid: 5 pp.

3Items were placed back in their original locations when these could be determined.
4Other loose material believed to be from the scrapbook is in Series 1 (annotated).
Series 5: Anthology Drafts
Description: Material apparently assembled and retyped for a (possibly posthumous) anthology of Still’s writings. Annotations suggest that the book was to have been organized by general domains such as Scientific, Historical, Law, and Addresses. Many of the sections are talks or lectures by A.T. Still that were also published in the Journal of Osteopathy. Some sections were matched to Still’s 1897 autobiography or noted as unpublished. The material is typewritten (most with handwritten corrections) unless otherwise noted. Annotations and corrections are in several handwritings other than A.T. Still’s; few if any are by Still (but see notes for 45-5.10D and 45-6.3D). The material was catalogued as STAT-45 by the KCOM Library; the Library is also believed to have added the penciled page numbers in the upper right corners.

Dates: unknown; dates of original material 1891-1904
Volume: .5 linear foot (1 document box)
Arrangement: As found; annotations suggest partial organization by domains such as Scientific, Historical, Law, and Addresses.
Finding Aid: 10 pp.

Series 6: Military
Description: Material relating to Still’s military career, especially his efforts to obtain a pension starting in 1877. (His difficulties arose largely from having served in militia units rather than the regular Union army; the fact that some documents were filed under “Andrew P. Still” probably didn’t help. He was finally awarded a pension of $12 a month in 1904.) Nearly all are copies, many of Bureau of Pensions documents at the National Archives. Also includes statements by Charles Still about his father’s military service.

Dates: 1864-1930; bulk 1877-1904
Volume: ca. 1 inch (21 folders)
Arrangement: Chronological

Series 7: Death
Description: Announcements, condolence letters and telegrams, floral cards, and other material relating to Still’s death on December 12, 1917. The series does not include the many tributes to Dr. Still in newspapers and osteopathic journals. The Museum has a number of clippings (e.g., D1-3 and D1048), and researchers are advised to consult individual publications, especially issues for December 1917 and January 1918. See also STAT1O-18, 23, 39-41.

Dates: 1917 Dec-1918 Jan
Volume: .5 linear foot (1 document box)
Arrangement: Alphabetical

Series 8: Other
Description: Miscellaneous material. Of particular interest are ATS’s medical registrations for Macon and Adair Counties; business cards; and materials relating to the fiftieth anniversary reunion of the six surviving members of the Kansas Free State Territorial Legislature (held in Topeka and Lawrence in 1907).

Dates: ca. 1883-1908
Volume: ca. 1 inch (12 folders + oversize documents)
Arrangement: Alphabetical

Key to Abbreviations in Finding Aids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATS</td>
<td>A.T. Still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>Charles E. Still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MES</td>
<td>Mary Elvira Still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASO</td>
<td>American School of Osteopathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA</td>
<td>American Osteopathic Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.P.</td>
<td>Osteopathy (abbreviation used by ATS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>no date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Handwritten (in pencil unless otherwise noted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Typed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/S</td>
<td>Typed, with handwritten signature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pr</td>
<td>Printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dup</td>
<td>carbon, mimeo, or other duplicate</td>
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</table>

Donor List

1. Elizabeth Laughlin
2. Jane Denslow
3. NCOH (Historic Files)
4. AOA
5. KCOM
6. Charles Still, Jr. D.O.
7. Dr. Joseph H. Sullivan
8. Dr. Ralph Boling
9. No Donation Name
10. Museum Property
11. Quintus L. Drennan, D.O.
12. Ellis M. Atkinson, D.O.
13. Barbara Peterson
14. Dr. George Andrew Laughlin
15. Mrs. Ralph Pink
16. David Patriquin, D.O.
17. Blanche Laughlin, D.O.
18. Dr. Jules Reinhart, DO

Key to Catalog Number Prefixes

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<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
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<tr>
<td>D, B, O, PP</td>
<td>From general Museum collection; donor as indicated</td>
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<tr>
<td>STAT</td>
<td>From NCOH (formerly Library) “Historical Files”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCOH</td>
<td>Three boxes of documents originally part of Laughlin donation but removed by Library for preservation (original locations not recorded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSC</td>
<td>From boxes labeled “ATS Miscellany” and “In process” by Library; most believed to be from Laughlin donation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEN</td>
<td>From unprocessed box of genealogy notes and photocopies gathered by [Elizabeth Laughlin]; believed to have been given to Library in 1994.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix A: RELATED MATERIAL IN MUSEUM (partial list)

Most of the Museum’s holdings are related to A.T. Still and his work in one way or another. The items listed below are primarily unpublished materials that reflect Still’s personal life and relationships, rather than his professional activities. The Museum collections also include a large number of Dr. Still’s personal belongings, including books; several walking sticks; his boots, pocket knife, and eyeglasses; some medical instruments; his Civil War sword; and two locks of his hair.

See also: “Suggested Resources in Osteopathic History” (Museum handout, 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cat. No./Collection</th>
<th>Items of Particular Interest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biographical Files</td>
<td>Biographical information for ATS, Still and Laughlin families, individual family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph Coll.</td>
<td>Photographs of ATS, Still family members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genealogy Materials</td>
<td>Unprocessed box of notes and photocopies gathered by [Elizabeth Laughlin]; some duplicates of Biographical Files material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Still Papers</td>
<td>Reminiscences about ATS by DOs who knew him, collected by Charles Still, Sr. Drawings, correspondence, and other material relating to ATS inventions and patents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steckel Papers</td>
<td>Correspondence of A.T. Still and sons Harry and Charles with W.J. and Amos Steckel of Bloomfield, IA, with related documents and printed material, 1892-96. Includes 1 handwritten ATS letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 761</td>
<td>Humorous stories about ATS, told by Blanche Still Laughlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 903</td>
<td>Article in Macon (MO) Republic concerning ATS home, 1913 Dec 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 399</td>
<td>Definition of osteopathy – reproduction of original in ATS writing (original privately owned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 906</td>
<td>Kansas Free State Legislature (1857-8) roster, inc. ATS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 323</td>
<td>Recipe for ATS liniment, in letter from Mary Milton to President Morris Thompson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 972</td>
<td>Smith, William – Letter to ATS re Edinburgh, 1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D 196</td>
<td>Form letters to DOs from ATS and Charles Still re stock subscriptions to osteopathic insurance company, 1912</td>
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**Appendix B: HANDWRITING SAMPLES**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>ATSP 1.1:6</th>
<th>MSC16.3</th>
<th>1906 Aug 8</th>
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<td>A.T. Still</td>
<td>ATSP 0.3.8</td>
<td>MSC15.4</td>
<td>[1899 Feb]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATSP 1.2:3</td>
<td>NCOH2.20</td>
<td>n.d. (also Person C)</td>
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<td>Person A</td>
<td>ATSP 2.1:52</td>
<td>EL-4.8</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Person B</td>
<td>ATSP 2.1:49</td>
<td>EL-4.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Person C</td>
<td>ATSP 1.2:3</td>
<td>NCOH2.20</td>
<td>(also ATS)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ATSP 1.1:62</td>
<td>D589E</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ATSP 2.1:53</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>ATSP 2.6.46</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ATSP 2.6:11</td>
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