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William Feindel and Richard Leblanc. *The Wounded Brain Healed: The Golden Age of the Montreal Neurological Institute, 1934–1984*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016. 632 pp. \$100. 9780773546370

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This exquisitely illustrated and information-packed book chronicles the first half century in the history of the Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI), an institution which, since 1934, has profitably brought together under one roof several medical specialties and scientific disciplines dealing with the brain, just as its founder had envisioned. That founder was neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield, a doctor who occupies a prominent place in Canadian medical history, and not surprisingly, a large part of this book is devoted either directly or indirectly to his work and legacy.

The title of the book is full of meaning and historical significance. It alludes both to an observation made by Galen and to a hope that deeply motivated Penfield's research and came to embody the *raison d'être* of the institution. But as far as titles go, it is also a bit unwieldy. The same can be said about the book as a whole: it is a rich and much needed exploration of the people and research associated with the MNI, but as histories go, it is ungainly, with flow and analysis having been sacrificed to an (impressive, to be sure) attempt at comprehensiveness and detail.

Relying on a large repository of archival material, published primary sources, and first person accounts (but not on history of medicine literature even when directly relevant), the

authors and contributors of the book painstakingly put together a detailed picture of the MNI. The book starts with a prologue that outlines Wilder Penfield's background prior to his move to Montreal, going perhaps into more detail than necessary for a book that focuses on the institute itself. It then covers Penfield's arrival at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH), his work there in the sub-department of neurosurgery along nurses, residents, and fellows, and his attempt to lay the foundations of a neurological institute. With local help, as well as financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the MNI was built a few years later across the street from the RVH, eventually connecting to the latter via a third-floor bridge, whose construction was quite contentious. In chronological fashion, the book describes the history of the institute over the subsequent decades and the tenure of its first three directors—Wilder Penfield, Theodore Rasmussen, and William Feindel. The chapters cover a dizzying variety of topics: from the features of the neurosurgical training programme to biographies of the visiting fellows; from descriptions of the surgical procedures, new technology, and neuropathological research to stories about the entertainment that followed the yearly Hughlings Jackson Memorial Lecture; from the activity of MNI's staff in England during the war to the institute's trainees' influence on the international scientific and medical scene. Transitions between all these subtopics are often eschewed in favor of dividing the chapters into many short subsections, a fact that gives the book the feel of a reference book rather than a typical work of historical narrative.

One of the most valuable contributions the book makes is to highlight the work of the support staff and the shorter-term doctors and researchers who came to the Neuro (as the MNI is fondly called to this day), rather than focusing exclusively on the names most famously associated with the institute—individuals like Donald Hebb, Herbert Jasper, or Brenda Milner, whose contributions certainly also get excellent representation in the book. The volume celebrates the outstanding work of generations of nurses, of hundreds of research fellows from all over the world, of psychologists like Molly Harrower-Erickson who spent a few years at the institute in the late 1930s, or Dorothy Russell, another woman who in the 1920s cut an unusual figure among neuropathologists also by virtue of her gender. Here, as elsewhere in the book, this reader would have liked to see deeper connections drawn to themes in the history of medicine, like the social and cultural context in which women doctors practiced at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Appealing to directly relevant literature (for instance, a few historians have written about Penfield) would have situated the Neuro even better in the debates and developments that shaped twentieth century medicine. More context and analysis would also have enriched some difficult topics the

book addresses, such as the suicide of Penfield's colleague William Cone.

The book concludes with a section containing four thematic essays written by contributors and covering disparate topics: the architecture of the institute, the history of neurochemistry at the institute, the research and treatment of multiple sclerosis, and William Feindel's professional sojourn in Saskatchewan. As a careful analysis of the process of building the institute, the first thematic essay is particularly fascinating, showing the extent to which Penfield was micro-managing the design, the political wrangling that almost thwarted the whole endeavor, and the inspiration for the architectural plans that make the building, inside and out, a gorgeous space in addition to a functional one.

This book is essential reference for historians interested in Canadian medical history or the history of any topic or person associated with the MNI. Surely, within the pages of this hefty and informative volume there is inspiration to be found for a hundred PhD theses. This volume will undoubtedly stimulate further historical research on a myriad topics associated with an important Canadian medical institution, one that in the past has not always received from historians the attention it so richly deserves.

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