

A Guide to the

**Dr. Jan Snellen *fonds***

COLL - 016

Arranged & Described by

**Greg Walsh**

Updated by

**Brain Hammond, Stephanie Harlick, Stephanie Bishop and Jenny Seeman**

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**Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive  
Health Sciences Library  
Memorial University of Newfoundland  
10 October 2000  
28 November 2003  
12 April 2004  
31 January 2005  
15 December 2009**

**Title:** Dr. Jan Snellen *fonds*  
**Dates:** 1935-2000; predominant 1966-2000  
**Extent:** 1 videotape; 1m of textual material; 177 slides; 286 photographs

## **Biographical sketch:**

Dr. Jan Willem Snellen, professor and physiologist, was born on 29 July 1925 in Tokyo, Japan, the son of Jan Bartholomeus Snellen and Minnie Charlotte Snellen (nee Schilperoort). On 3 February 1954, Dr. Snellen married Lydia Snellen (nee deBruyn), from the Hague in the Netherlands. They were married in Leiden and had three children: Anna Jozina, Jan Bartholomeus and Hans Christiaan.

Dr. Snellen's early education, from grades one to six, was spent in a Japanese elementary school; following this, he attended classes one to six in a Dutch Gymnasium where he studied Latin, Greek, Dutch, English, German, French, math, physics, chemistry and biology. In late 1955 he passed his medical examination and obtained his MD from the University of Leiden. He then went on to earn a doctorate in physiology from the University of Nijmegen, Holland, in 1966. Following work in Holland and South Africa, he joined Memorial University's Medical School in 1970.

Around 1951 Dr. Snellen began working part time for the Institute for Preventative Medicine in Leiden. Part of his responsibilities included visiting factories and mines to measure body heat, exertion and acclimatization of employees, helping to provide safer working conditions. It was during this time that he fell in love with physiology, especially thermal regulation, and decided to make it his life's work. The Dutch Royal Navy offered to pay for his education if he agreed to work as a medical doctor aboard a naval ship for ten years following the completion of his PHD. He took the required physical examinations and signed up with the navy. However, as circumstances changed in his life, it took him longer than expected to obtain his doctorate and by the time he was finished the navy no longer required his services, in part because of his choice to specialize in physiology rather than medical surgery. Both he and his wife, Lydia, took that as a blessing at the time. In 1961, he became a professor of physiology for second year students at the University of Nijmegen, Holland. Then, in 1967, Dr. Snellen and his family moved to South Africa where he conducted thermodynamic research for the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg with the aid of a machine called the Climate Chamber. From South Africa, the Snellen family finally moved to Newfoundland where Dr. Snellen became a professor of physiology in the Medical School (1970). Over the years at Memorial University, Dr. Snellen held joint appointments in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Physical Education, Recreation and Athletics. He retired from full-time work with the medical school in 1990 but continued on a part-time basis until 31 August 1997.

Dr. Snellen was a world-recognized authority in the area of human thermodynamics and supervised the construction and operation of one of the very few specialized total body calorimeters in the world. Following Dr. Snellen's retirement, the calorimeter, a cylindrical room

designed to manipulate wind and moisture levels affecting the human body, was relocated to the Defense and Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine in North York, Ontario. Much of Dr. Snellen's research, which was supported by the Department of Defense, concentrated on the study of whole body heat exchange with the environment. Throughout his years at Memorial, Dr. Snellen became known as a teacher, friend, mentor and role model for many of Memorial's medical students and faculty. As a result, he became the first recipient of the Killick Award, an award that students designed with Dr. Snellen in mind, in 1976.

Dr. Snellen kept busy with leisure as well as work. From a young age he was interested in nature and biology. He was a member of the Dutch Youth-Organization for Nature Study (NJN) and eventually became the president of the Leiden department of the NJN. In his spare time he enjoyed building model trains with his son Jan Bart and was a member of the train club of St. John's called the Terra Nova Model Railroaders and in due course became its president. He pursued filming and photography, passions that he shared with his wife. In addition Dr. Snellen enjoyed classical music and had a substantial record collection. Finally, towards the end of his life, he began to write in Japanese to his old elementary school friends. After corresponding briefly, he was invited back to Japan—expenses paid—to visit his old friends. One of those friends, Dr. Tetsuo Nagasaka, wrote a kind and sentimental biography entitled *My Dear Jan-San: A Man Lived in Two Cultures* about Dr. Snellen.

Dr. Snellen passed away on 26 July 2000 at St. Clare's Hospital in St. John's. He left to mourn: in Canada, his wife Lydia Snellen-de-Bruyn, daughter Anna, sons Jan Bart and Christiaan and grandchildren Fatima Joy, Marc, Robert and Sandy; in England his sister Minnie with Piet v.d. Loon; in the Netherlands, his sister-in-law Nell Snellen and brother-in-law Gerrit Jan with Jopie de Bruyn.

#### **Custodial history:**

The videotape was made during a gathering of friends and colleagues following the death of Dr. Jan Snellen, a retired Professor of Physiology in the Medical School at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Mrs. Snellen gave further material in 2003, which she had at the Snellen's home. Dr. Brian Payton also donated some slides from his personal collection (9.01.003) in 2009.

#### **Scope and content:**

*Fonds* consists of correspondence, research notes, publications and publication information relating to the writing and publication of 'An Improved Estimation of Mean Body Temperature', written by Dr. Jan Snellen and published in 2000. *Fonds* is composed of the following series:

- 1.0 Videotape, 2000
- 2.0 Tables and Graphs, 1976-1998
- 3.0 Correspondence, 1966-1999
- 4.0 Articles, 1937-2000
- 5.0 Pamphlets, 1971-1976
- 6.0 Books, 1966-1999
- 7.0 Research Notes, 1935-1994
- 8.0 Research Disks, 1993-1999

9.0 Slides on research, 1978

10.0 Photographs, 1933-1976

**Source of title:**

Supplied title is based on contents of the *fonds*.

**Acquisition:**

The videotape and some slides were acquired from Dr. Brian Payton who supervised the project and also ensured a copy of the video tape would be placed in the Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive. Mrs. Snellen, Dr. Snellen's wife, donated a further accrual in 18 November 2003, consisting of research material, various articles published, and correspondence between Dr. Snellen and other Doctors in the same field.

**Arrangement:**

Although the Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive holds other audio-visual material concerning the Faculty of Medicine, this is the only tape dealing specifically with the life and work of Dr. Jan Snellen. As a result, the videotape was arranged as a separate *fonds*. When further accrual was received by the Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive in 2003, there was some level of order present. Files and research material were labeled. This formed the framework for further arrangement and description of the collection, and the preservation of material in its original order as much as possible.

**Restrictions:**

Access to some of the materials in this *fonds* is restricted. Such material is clearly marked in the finding aid and will not be available to researchers. For further instruction, contact the archivist.

**Terms governing use and reproduction:**

Material in this *fonds* is protected by copyright. Copyright regulations state that any copy of archival material is to be used solely for **research** or **private study**. Any use of copied material for any other purpose may require the authorization of the copyright owner. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance from the copyright holder(s).

Patrons should also be aware that copyright regulations require that records be kept of all copies made of materials deposited prior to 1 September, 1999 and that these records may be viewed by the author of the material, the copyright owner or representatives of either.

**Accruals:**

Further accruals are expected.

**Location:**

COLL-016, Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive

**Finding aid available:**

Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive finding aid # 16. Item level control

## **Series and sub-series listing**

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- 1.0 Videotape, 2000**
  - 1.01 Videotape, 2000
  
- 2.0 Tables and Graphs, 1976-1998**
  - 2.01 Tables and Graphs, 1976-1998
  
- 3.0 Correspondence, 1966-1999**
  - 3.01 Correspondence, 1966-1999
  
- 4.0 Articles, 1937-2000**
  - 4.01 Articles, 1937-2000
  
- 5.0 Pamphlets, 1971-1976**
  - 5.01 Pamphlets, 1971-1976
  
- 6.0 Books, 1966-1999**
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- 7.0 Research Notes, 1935-1994**
  - 7.01 Research Notes, 1935-1994
  
- 8.0 Research Disks, 1993-1999**
  - 8.01 Research Disks, 1993-1999
  
- 9.0 Slides on research, 1978**
  - 9.01 Slides on research, 1978
  
- 10.0 Photographs, 1933-1976**
  - 10.01 Photographs, 1933-1976

## **Series and sub-series description**

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### **1.0 Videotape, 2000**

#### **1.01 Videotape, 2000**

1.01.001 “A Gathering to Celebrate the Life of Jan Snellen.” Filmed in the Auditorium of the Health Sciences Centre. Memorial University of Newfoundland: 2 August, 2000. Running time – 1 hour.

Following an introduction by a friend and past colleague in physiology, Dr. Brian Payton, there were addresses and tributes by:

1. Dr Ian Rusted (first Dean of the Medical School)
2. Dr. Ian Bowmer (current Dean)
3. Dr. Ken Roberts (forwarded tribute and message of sympathy)
4. Jan Bart Snellen (review of Jan’s early life and academic career)
5. Anna Snellen (early reminiscences of family life)
6. Lydia Snellen (memories of life in Newfoundland)
7. Dr. Bob Farrell (Class of 1989)
8. Dr. Howard Strong (reading letter from Dr. Oleh Whaler)
9. Dr. George Fox (Class of 1989)
10. Dr. Bill Eaton (Class of 1974)
11. Dr. Roger Butler (Class of 1977)
12. Dr. Penny Hansen (graduate student and colleague)
13. Dr. Brian Payton (closing remarks)

### **2.0 Tables and Graphs, 1976-1998**

#### **2.01 Tables and Graphs, 1976-1998**

- 2.01.001 Calorimeter Consultant, 1976-1987
- 2.01.002 Manuscript references, 1998
- 2.01.003 Generation of ten prediction equations A-J
- 2.01.004 Graphs on dMBT
- 2.01.005 Figures and drawings
- 2.01.006 Guide to MBALLCO, ALL6CO, ALLALLUN
- 2.01.007 Instructions for authors; figures, 1998
- 2.01.008 Model Summary
- 2.01.009 Reserve map graphics
- 2.01.010 TEM graph
- 2.01.011 Groups of graphs

2.01.012 Calibrations of TC's through Op. Amps, 1976

### **3.0 Correspondence, 1966-1999**

#### **3.01 Correspondence, 1966-1999**

- 3.01.001 Letters 8-23 from Dr. J.A. McLean, 1987-1992
- 3.01.002 Letters 1-7 from Dr. J.A. McLean, 1986-1987
- 3.01.003 Letters 1-11 to Dr. J.A. McLean, 1986-1988
- 3.01.004 Letters 12-22 to Dr. J.A. McLean, 1988-1992
- 3.01.005 Various Correspondents, 4 April, 1966-25 April, 1983
- 3.01.006 Correspondence with Dr. Paul Webb, 29 October, 1998-15 July, 1999

### **4.0 Articles, 1937-2000**

#### **4.01 Articles, 1937-2000**

- 4.01.001 Articles published by various authors, 1985-1995 (copyright)
- 4.01.002 Articles published by various authors, 1937-1992
- 4.01.003 Articles published by various authors, 1956-1993
- 4.01.004 Copies of articles about thermoregulation and other topics related to his research, 1986-1994
- 4.01.005 Dr. Snellen's articles published in the European Journal of Applied Physiology, 2000
- 4.01.006 Abstracts taken from the International Symposium on Depressed Metabolism and Cold Thermogenesis, 1974
- 4.01.007 Miscellaneous articles; obituary of Dr. Snellen, July 2000; Japanese article with picture of Dr. Snellen, 1994
- 4.01.008 Dr. Paul Webb's revision to article by Dr. Snellen, 26 November, 1998; various statistics
- 4.01.009 Draft and edited copy of Dr. Snellen's article, 'Change in Body Heat Content during air exposure using Calorimetry', 1996
- 4.01.010 Two copies revised of Dr. Snellen's article, 'An Improved Estimation of Mean Body Temperature', April 1999-November 1999
- 4.01.011 Versions of last article, including letters, figures and tables, 1999
- 4.01.012 Two copies of last article, 1999

### **5.0 Pamphlets, 1971-1976**

#### **5.01 Pamphlets, 1971-1976**

- 5.01.001 List of Registered Members at the International Symposium on Depressed Metabolism and Cold Thermogenesis, 1974
- 5.01.002 Copies of Timetables for various symposiums; copies of name tags; names of Congresses participated by Dr. Snellen; list of registered members, 1971-1974
- 5.01.003 Programme for the International Symposium in Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1974
- 5.01.004 Program for the Faculty of Medicine Graduation Dinner, 27 May 1976

## **6.0 Books, 1966-1999**

### **6.01 Books, 1966-1999**

- 6.01.001 *Workshop on Escape, Evacuation and Rescue in the Offshore Industry*, St. John's, NL., 17 and 18 June 1999
- 6.01.002 J.W. Snellen, *Mean Body Temperature and the Control of Thermal Sweating*, 1966

## **7.0 Research Notes, 1935-1994**

### **7.01 Research Notes, 1935-1994**

- 7.01.001 "Prediction of Tbc<sub>al</sub> from Thermo metrical data", 1935-1994

## **8.0 Research Disks, 1993-1999**

### **8.01 Research Disks, 1993-1999**

- 8.01.001 Thirteen 3.5" floppy disks, 1999
- 8.01.002 Sixteen 5.25" floppy disks on research files, 1993; one 3.5" floppy disk
- 8.01.003 Two 3.5" floppy disks, one with version of MS

## **9.0 Slides on research, 1978**

### **9.01 Slides on research, 1978**

- 9.01.001 155 slides of various graphs, figures, the laboratory, and tables relating to research, 1978



9.01.002 19 slides of the laboratory, graphs, figures, and tables relating to research, 1978  
9.01.003 3 Slides of Dr. Snellen and Calorimeter

**10.0 Photographs, 1933-1976**

**10.01 Photographs, 1933-1976**

10.01.001 Album 1, 29 photographs, 1955-1964  
10.01.002 Album 2, 137 photographs, 1933-1963  
10.01.003 Album 3, 58 photographs, 1975-1976

**BOX AND FILE LIST**

Box 1: 1.01.001  
Box 2: 2.01.001 – 3.01.003  
Box 3: 3.01.004 – 4.01.012  
Box 4: 5.01.001 – 9.01.003  
CD 1: 10.01