Between Digitization and Promotion: Mining the McGill Student Publications Collection for Compelling Outreach Narratives

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Storytelling as Praxis
- Post-digitization, collections are technically more accessible than ever before.
- Despite the influx of accessible resources, many digitized collections are not being used.
- Through discovering thematic narratives for outreach, storytelling methodology provides examples of what users can find in the collection to spark interest for future use and research.

Why Storytelling?
- Promotes visibility
  - Storytelling-based outreach can include wide-range of narrative platforms, including articles, exhibitions, and social media.
- Connects individuals to resources
  - Provides diverse entry points to access collection for interdisciplinary use.
- Demonstrates value
  - Interesting narratives exemplify the value of the collection for further inquiry.

The Collection
- McGill Student Publications Collection
  - Collection of McGill student newspapers, currently housed on the Internet Archive.
  - OCR (Optical Character Recognition) and is full-text searchable.

Found Narratives
- Medical School "Bodysnatchers"
  - Nineteenth century medical students stealing corpses for anatomy class work.
- Lucy E. Potter
  - First woman editor-in-chief of a McGill student publication.
- Otto Klineberg
  - McGill alum with role in American desegregation cases.

Outreach Initiatives
- McGill Osler Library Blog Collaboration
  - Wrote article detailing the history of body snatching for the Osler Medical Library blog.
- Online Interactive Timeline
  - Created timeline of all publications, noting the papers at the helm of Lucy E. Potter.
- Narrative-Focused Collection Website
  - Designed and wrote content for collection website using narrative links to aid navigation of collection.

Mining the Collection
1. Use theme to guide search strategy
2. Pinpoint specific individuals and events
3. Target potential audience(s) for story
4. Craft effective outreach narratives

Future Considerations
- Utilize digital humanities tools, such as semantic mapping and topic modelling to make bibliographic research more robust.
- Outreach does not need to be virtual. In-person initiatives could include critical information literacy workshops using narrative methodology.