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From Hippocrates to the 20th century: Special Collections Outreach in Medical Libraries

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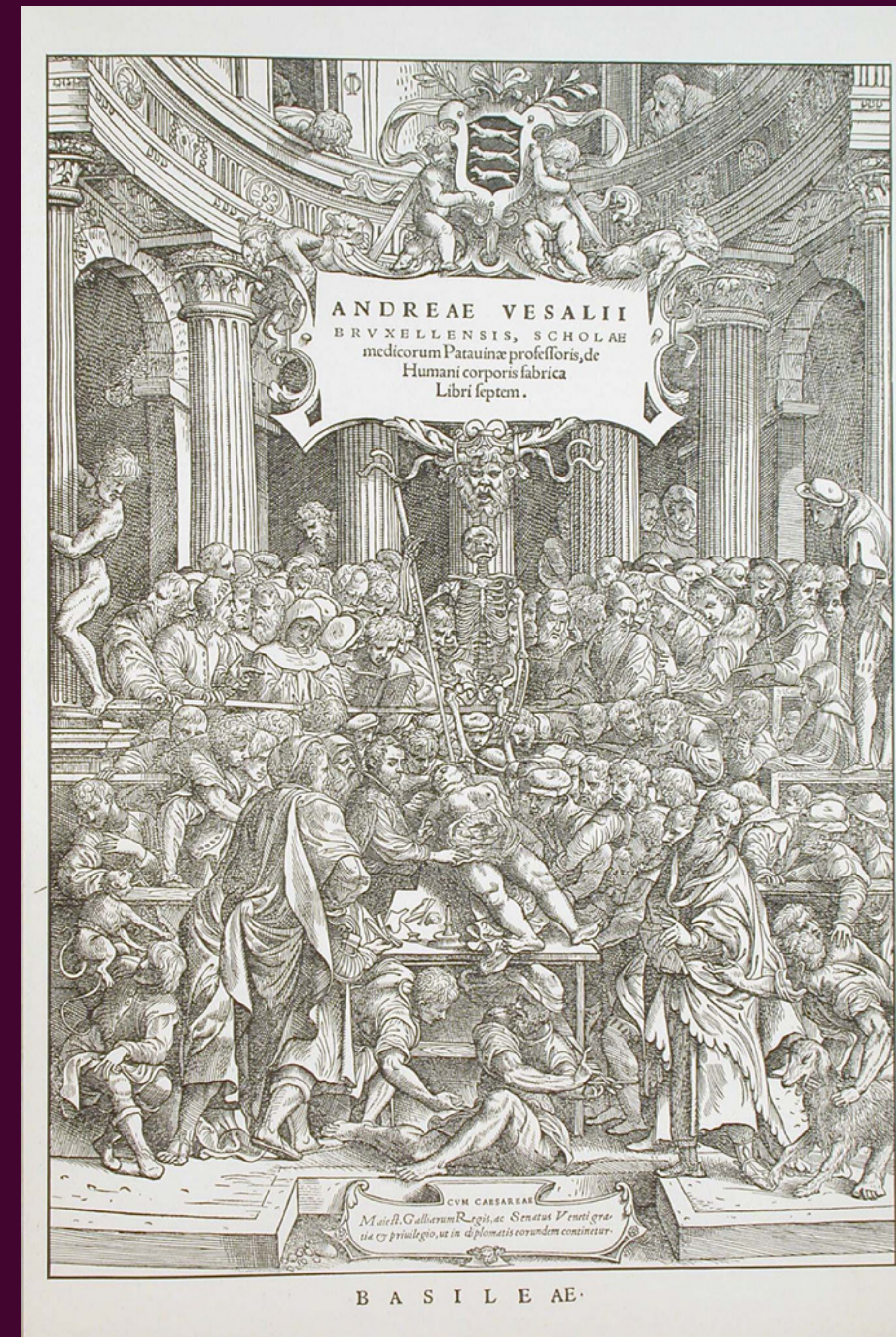
From Hippocrates to the 20th century: Special Collections Outreach in Medical Libraries

Case Study: Bernard Becker Medical Library



The Bernard Becker Medical Library at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine is home to an exceptionally fine collection of rare books that date from the late 1400s to the mid 20th century. It also houses the medical school archives, which document the the history of the school from its 19th century origins to the present day.

Collection Highlights at Becker



The rare book collections include Renaissance anatomical atlases, early medical journals, and early editions of works by key figures such as William Osler and William Beaumont. The archives include personal papers, class photos, yearbooks, and artifacts. Together, they provide an overview of the development of medical practice in Europe and North America from the 15th century onward, as well as the history of the medical school.

How Do We Encourage the Medical School Community to Engage with Historical Materials?

Exhibits



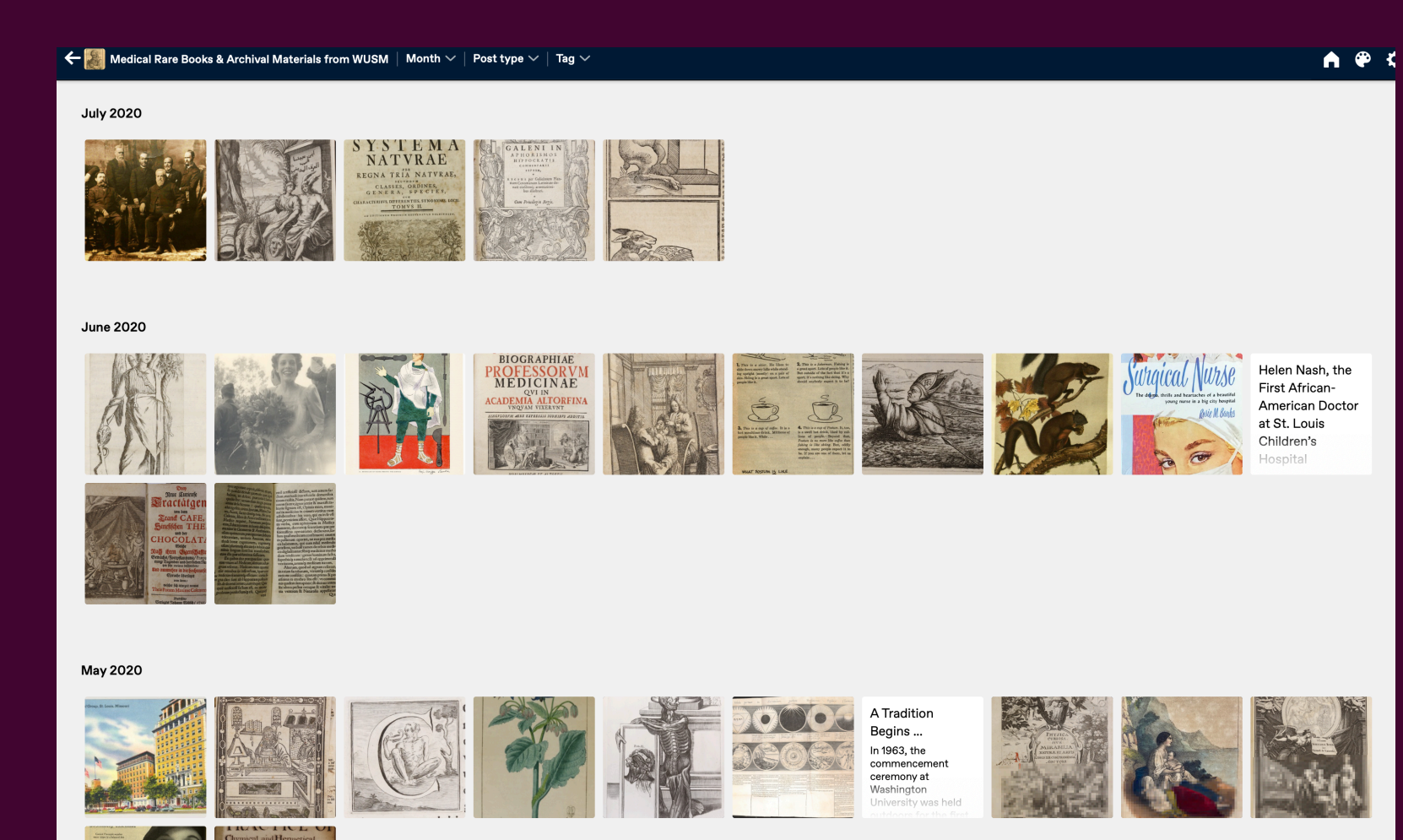
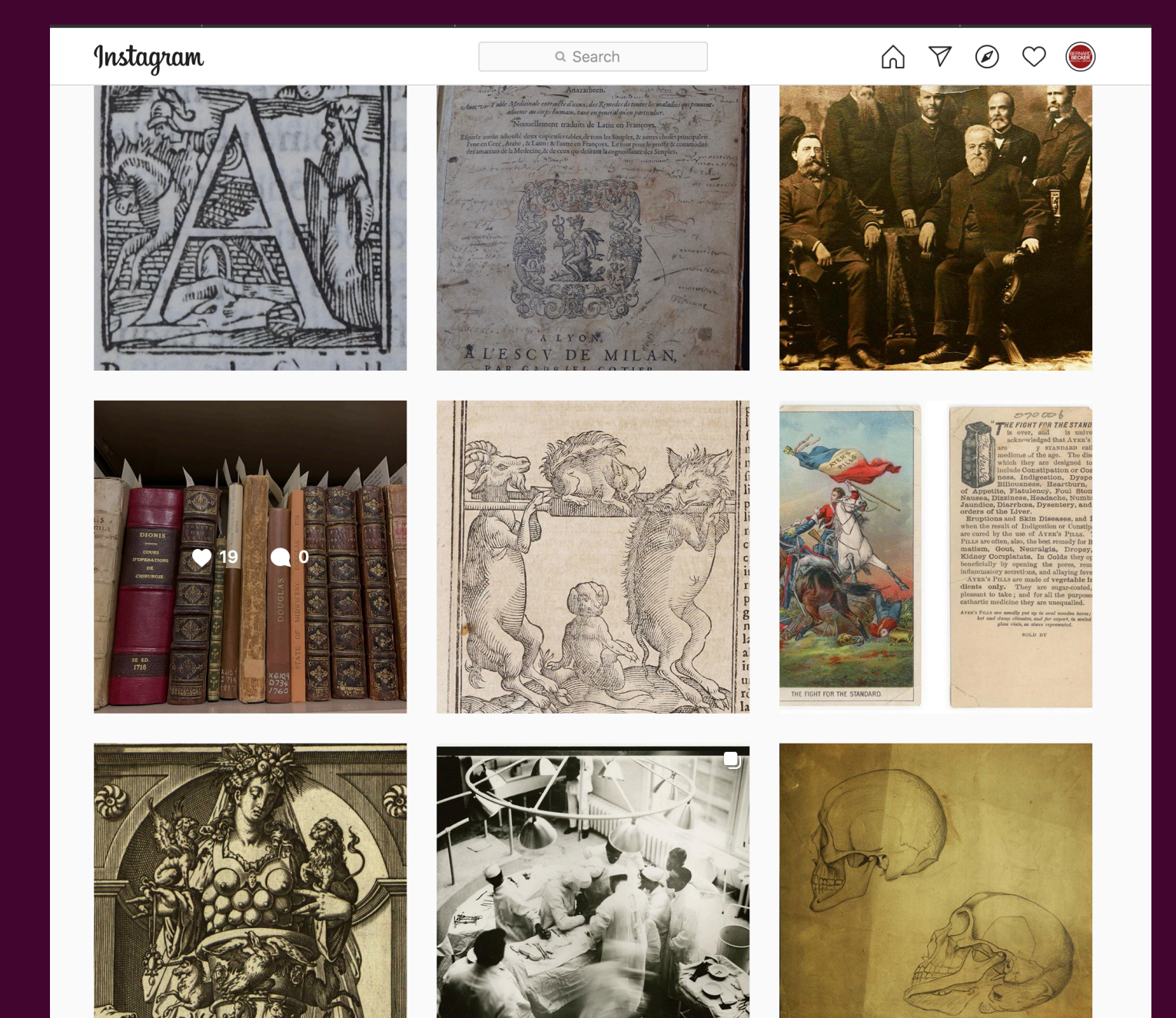
The Special Collections division curates four physical exhibits each year, usually balanced between the rare book and archival collections. But while these are great for passively conveying information about our holdings, they do not offer the opportunity for us to interact directly with the medical school community.

Face-to-Face Interactions



The Special Collections division also hosts events that invite the community into our space. During these events, attendees can speak with special collections staff about the material on display and ask questions. This gives them the chance to see historical materials up close, and it gives staff the chance to explain the nature of our work and what historical materials can tell us about the development of the medical profession.

Social Media



We also maintain an active presence on prominent social media sites to help spread awareness of our holdings.