

HOW TO SET UP A LIBRARY ON THE HISTORY OF OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY, HEAD & NECK SURGERY (OHNS)

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Abstract:

The chief source in the history of OHNS is literature composed of primary and secondary writings. The aim of this paper is to present the main secondary reference books of the history of OHNS and superficially discuss their content. It was only in the mid 20th century that the first book dealing with the complete history of OHNS was published. Eight books, in four different languages, can be mentioned in a chronological order: *A history of oto-laryngology* in 1949, *Histoire des maladies de l'oreille, du nez et de la gorge* in 1980, *Naissance et développement de l'otorhinolaryngologie dans l'histoire de la médecine (Acta Otorhinolaryngologica Belgica)* in 1981, *Otolaryngology: an illustrated history* in 1990, *Offbeat of otolaryngology* in 2001, *Bilder aus der Geschichte der Hals-Nasen-Ohren-Heilkunde* in 2003, *A Otorrinolaringologia através da historia da medicina* in 2012, and *Otorhinolaryngology: an illustrated history* in 2013, the two most important ones being the books published in 1981 and 2013.

The chief source in the history of OHNS is literature composed of primary and secondary writings, but other sources are also available such as iconographic documentation, human remains, instruments, and artistic objects. The first step in every new historical research is to look for secondary references to have an idea about the projected subject of study. General secondary reference books on the history of OHNS are often written in different languages, dispersed in medical libraries, not easily classified and few in number. The aim of this paper is to present these main reference books and superficially discuss their content. The aim is also to encourage the historical researcher of OHNS to seek out these books by Antiquarians or for publishers to set up their own basic library. OHNS is an end of the 19th century born specialty resulting from the association of otology, rhinology and laryngology ⁽¹⁾. At the same time were written the first histories of laryngology, rhinology, pharyngology and otology. In 1885 the British laryngologist Gordon Holmes (1846-1927) published a "History of laryngology from the earliest times" in the form of nine papers in the *Medical Press and Circular* ⁽²⁾. It was compiled into a book and translated into German ⁽³⁾ and French ⁽⁴⁾ in 1887. In 1902 the American laryngologist Jonathan Wright (1860-1928) compiled his book *The Nose and Throat in Medical History* ⁽⁵⁾

from 12 papers published in the *Laryngoscope* from 1901 to 1902 ⁽⁶⁾. A second edition entitled *A History of Laryngology and Rhinology* appeared in 1914 ⁽⁷⁾. Between 1901 and 1906, the French laryngologist Claude Chauveau (1861-1940) edited a five-volume set about the *Histoire des maladies du pharynx* (History of the diseases of the pharynx) ⁽⁸⁾. In 1907 the Austrian otologist Adam Politzer (1835-1920) published the first volume on the *Geschichte der Ohrenheilkunde* (History of Otology) ⁽⁹⁾. An English translation was finally published in 1981 ⁽¹⁰⁾. A second volume was printed in 1913 ⁽¹¹⁾. Between 1914 and 1922 the German physician Karl Kassel (1870?-1928?) published a two-volume set related to the *Geschichte der Nasenheilkunde* (History of Rhinology) ⁽¹²⁾. It is a reprint of articles published in the *Zeitschrift für Laryngologie* published during the same time. The historical basis of OHNS main subspecialties was layed down in the first part of the 20th century. It was only in the mid 20th century that the first book dealing with the complete history of OHNS was published. Since this date, at least 7 other such books can be mentioned in a chronological order.

A history of otolaryngology – 1949

The first general historical book on OHNS was published in 1949 by the British otolaryngologist Robert Scott Stevenson (1889-1967) and the Scottish otolaryngologist and medical historian Douglas Guthrie (1885-1975). It was entitled *A history of oto-laryn-*

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gology ⁽¹³⁾ (Figure 1). As written in the preface: "This is the first history of the specialty of oto-laryngology to be written. It seemed to



Figure 1

the authors that, as oto-laryngology is now a fully established branch of medicine it would be well to examine its development, to study the available literature and to publish the narrative of its rise and progress from the earliest times to the present." This 155-page book, containing 52 black and white illustrations, is divided into seven main chapters: Ancient history – The middle ages and Renaissance – The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – Otology becomes a science – The education of the deaf – Laryngology in the nineteenth century – Modern history. This history is based on around 260 references, essentially primary and partially annotated in the text, which are regularly of difficult use because they are often incomplete, abbreviated, and with missing pages of many of the mentioned books. It remained the main book of reference until the beginning of the 1980's.

History of ear, nose, and throat diseases – 1980

It took more than thirty years to see the publication of a second general book on the history of OHNS. Comprised of 492-pages, entitled *Histoire des maladies de l'oreille, du nez et de la gorge* (History of ear,

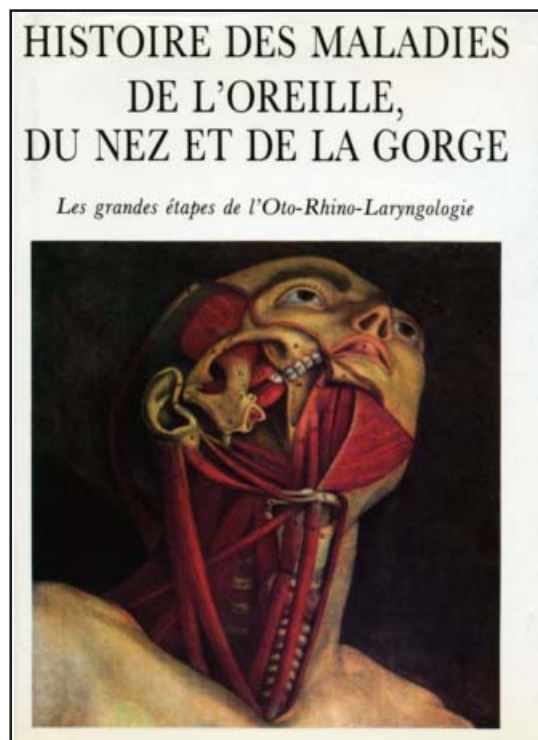


Figure 2

nose, and throat diseases), it was published in 1980 ⁽¹⁴⁾ by two French otorhinolaryngologists Yves Guerrier (1917-2003) and Pierre Mounier-Kuhn (1901-1998) (Figure 2). It is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the diseases of the ear, subdivided into: The ear from its origins until today – Hearing loss, tinnitus, dizziness – Suppurations, tumors, trauma and malformations; surgery of the ear – The deaf child. The second part covers the diseases of the nose, subdivided into: The origins – Renaissance – Contemporary period. The third part presents the diseases of the throat subdivided into: The great preliminaries – The infections of the throat – The tumors – The long and always actual history of digestive and bronchial foreign bodies. Easy to read, this history contains 108 black and white illustrations, 12 coloured plates and is based on around 295 references, partially annotated in the text and mainly secondary, thus of less pure historical value.

Birth and development of otorhinolaryngology in the history of medicine – 1981

A voluminous 1698-page Supplement of the *Acta Otorhinolaryngologica Belgica* was published in 1981⁽¹⁵⁾. Written by many collaborators under the supervision of the Belgian otorhinolaryngologist Jacques Willemot (1928-2011), and entitled “Naissance et développement de l’otorhinolaryngologie dans l’histoire de la médecine [Birth and development of otorhinolaryngology in the history of medicine]”, it has become the “Bible” for

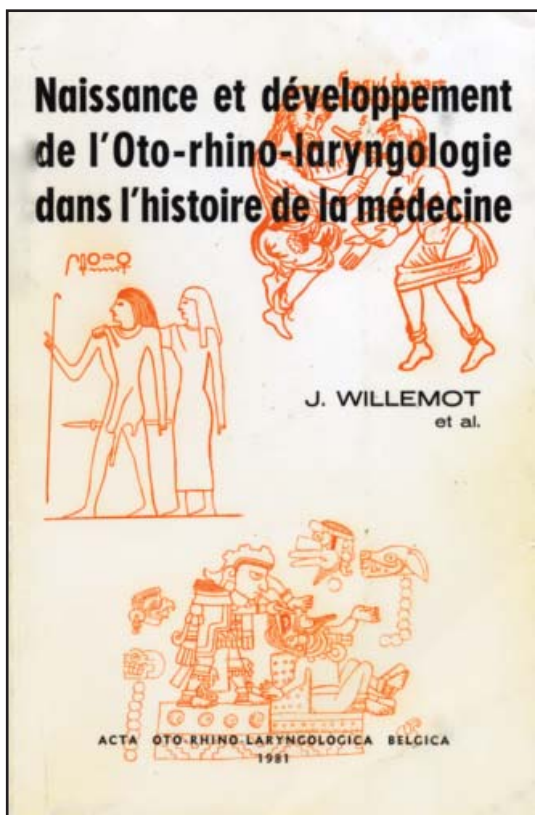


Figure 3

otorhinolaryngologists and remains the main secondary reference of the history of OHNS (Figure 3). The book is divided into twenty-three chapters: Rhinology, pharyngology – Anatomy and trauma of the nose, septorhinoplasty, nose and esthetics – Salivary glands – Endoscopy – Discovery of the diseases of the sinuses – Goiter – Phoniatriy – Logopedics – Medical afflictions of the larynx – Deaf-mutism – Hearing aids – Conception of dizziness through the ages and clinical discovery of the functional vestibular tests – Discovery of the vestibular function – Discovery of the functions and pathology of the fifth and seven cra-

nial nerves – Smell – Diseases of the oesophagus – Otology – Audiometry – Surgery of larynx and trachea – Evolution of song – Hebraic otorhinolaryngology in Antiquity and Middle Age – Nose, throat and ear in the medical manuscripts of Antiquity and Middle Age – and Birth of Belgian Otorhinolaryngology. It is not a real linear history of OHNS and the quality of the different chapters is varied. Nevertheless, it is up to now the most complete history of OHNS. It is based on more than 3000 references, mainly primary, not always clearly annotated in the text, and illustrated with 785 black and white images. Written in French, thus it explains its low impact on the history of OHNS in English speaking countries.

Otolaryngology. An Illustrated History – 1990

The second book written in English on the history of OHNS, *Otolaryngology: an illustrated history*, was published in 1990⁽¹⁶⁾ by the British otolaryngologist Neil Weir (born 1942) (Figure 4). In the preface the author

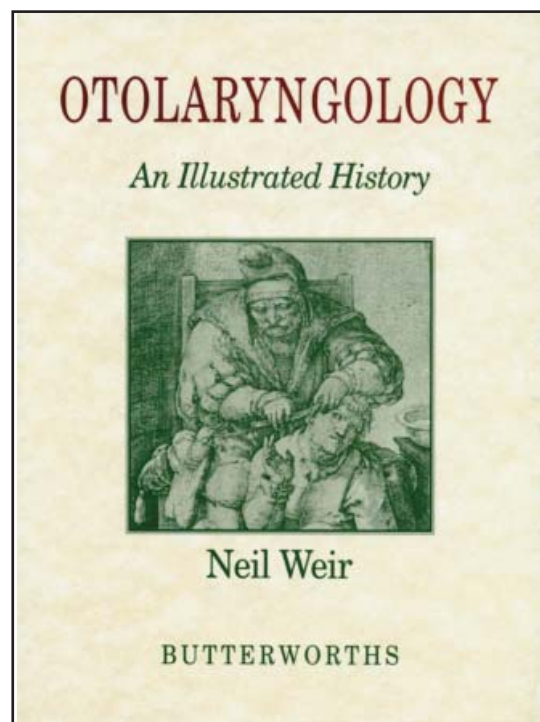


Figure 4

wrote: “I have been aware of the great contribution made by Scott Stevenson and Guthrie but I have not attempted merely to update their book. Rather, I have sought to enlarge

certain sections and have introduced, where possible, more biographical details.” This 290-page book is divided into 7 main chapters: Ancient History – The Middle Ages and Renaissance – The scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – The age of scientific subdivision: otology – The age of scientific subdivision: laryngology and rhinology – Otology and laryngology departments, societies and journals – and The twentieth century. Containing nearly 220 black and white unnumbered illustrations, the text is based on a mix of 488 primary and secondary references, alphabetically listed at the end of each chapter, not annotated in the text, thus rendering their use sometimes quite difficult ⁽¹⁷⁾. A larger part concerns mainly the history of OHNS in Great Britain.

Offbeat of Otolaryngology – 2001

In 2001 two British otolaryngologists John Bennett (born 1956) and John Riddington Young (born 1947) published *Offbeat of otolaryngology* ⁽¹⁸⁾ (Figure 5). This non-illustrated 161-page book is based on 331 references well

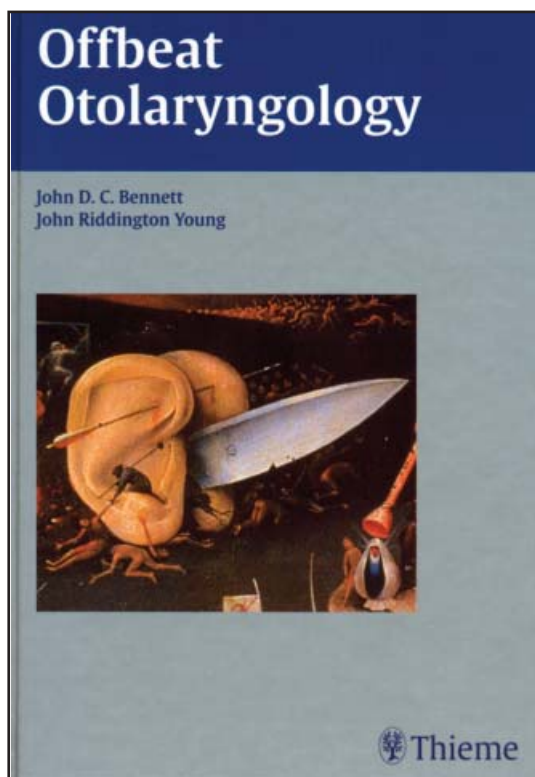


Figure 5

annotated in the text. It is divided into 13 chapters: Prolegomenon – The development

of the specialty and rise of hospitals – The gentle art of bouginage and endoscopy – Anesthetic correlates – Lotions, potions and preparations – Audiology – Otology – Military prowess within the field of otolaryngology – Rhinology – Surgery of the head and neck – Professional rivalries – The “fringes” of our subject, including the role of invalid cookery – Education and training. This delightful pamphlet is a mix regarding medical practices and historical figures in the spirit that the reader may find something which has not already been described. “With typical British wit and wry sense of humor, the authors provide an astounding collection of arcane and obscure medical facts pertaining to the practice of otolaryngology that could only have been collected by 2 eccentrics over a life time.” ⁽¹⁹⁾ Its historical value is not very important, but its way of studying the subject is very interesting.

Pictures from the history of ear, nose, and throat – 2003

The German otorhinolaryngologist Harald Feldmann (born 1926) compiled, in 2003, 31 articles mostly published in the journal *Laryngo-Rhino-Otologie* under the title of *Bilder aus der Geschichte der Hals-Nasen-Ohren-Heilkunde* (Pictures from the history of ear, nose, and throat) ⁽²⁰⁾ (Figure 6). As the author mentions in the preface, “This book does not raise the claim to present extensively and systematically the historical development of otorhinolaryngology. It must rather be a reading book, which handles particular aspects, methods of examination, instruments, therapies, diseases.” Every chapter presents a specific topic, the main ones being: Ear mirror – Ear and nose specula – Ear syringe – Mechanic acoumeter – Tuning fork and its related tests – Galton whistle – Monocord – Beginning of tonal audiometry – Eustachian tube and its value in the history of otology – Tympanotomy and tympanostomy tubes – Massage of the tympanic membrane – Menière’s disease – Ear surgery – Rhinopharynx in the history of otology and rhinology – Suck in of the nostrils – Nose bleeding – Diseases of the sinuses – Tonsillectomy – Diaphanoscopy – Injections – Diseases of the larynx – Inhalation therapy – Indirect laryngoscopy – Polylaryngoscope of Brünings – Direct laryngoscopy, esophagos-

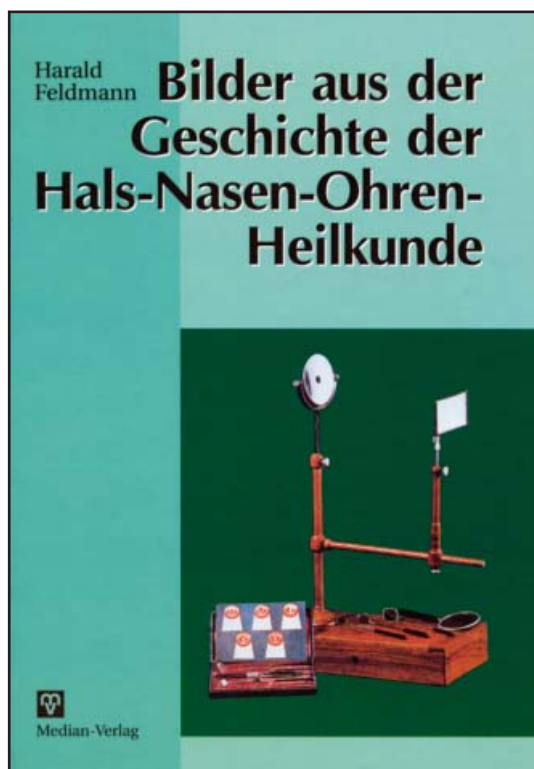


Figure 6

copy and bronchoscopy – Tracheotomy – Simulation of hearing loss and dyphonia. Illustrated with 249 black and white and coloured illustrations, it is based essentially on original references, many of them in German, for a total of 970 references. It does not give a general overview of the history of OHNS but develops specific topics, which are nicely illustrated.

Otorhinolaryngology through the history of medicine – 2012

Published in 2012 by the Portuguese otorhinolaryngologist Joao Edward Clode (born 1958) and entitled *A Otorrinolaringologia através da história da medicina* (Otorhinolaryngology through the history of medicine), it mainly presents the history of OHNS in Modern Times⁽²¹⁾ (Figure 7). After shortly presenting the history of OHNS from Antiquity to the 18th century, the author divides the history of OHNS into the following chapters: 19th century, the century of otology – The discovery of anesthesia – Adam Politzer and the Viennese School – History of surgery to improve hearing – History of the surgery of facial nerve – History of acoustic neurinoma – The deafness of Beethoven – Deafmutism –



Figure 7

Rhinology – Tonsils and adenoids – History of laryngology – History of tracheotomy – Societies of otorhinolaryngology – Congresses of otorhinolaryngology – and Journals of otorhinolaryngology. This 452-page book based on 169 mainly secondary references, is essentially valuable for the quality of nearly 550 black and white and coloured illustrations.

Otorhinolaryngology: An Illustrated History – 2013

The last book is the second edition of Weir's book published in 1990. It was co-authored by the Swiss otologist and historian Albert Mudry (born 1958) and the title slightly changed to become *Otorhinolaryngology: An Illustrated History*⁽²²⁾ (Figure 8). The structure of the book has remained the same with 7 chapters but the text was completely rewritten and enlarged to 358 pages. "The chapter dealing with the history of Otolaryngology departments, societies, and journals has had a significant update, while the timelines and references in each chapter have also been updated."⁽²³⁾ The number of black and white illustrations is expanded from around 220 to nearly 380, mainly by the addition of portraits. The references, which are now annotated in the text, were largely expanded from 488 to 1945 essentially by adding primary original references. "It is a very readable book and excellent value."⁽²⁴⁾ In the preface, the

authors “hope that the second edition will attract new doctors to read a history of their specialty and to continue the practice of seeing how valuable it is to know what has been done before.” It is the most up to date reference on the history of OHNS.

good way to begin the study of the *Historia Otorhinolaryngologiae*.

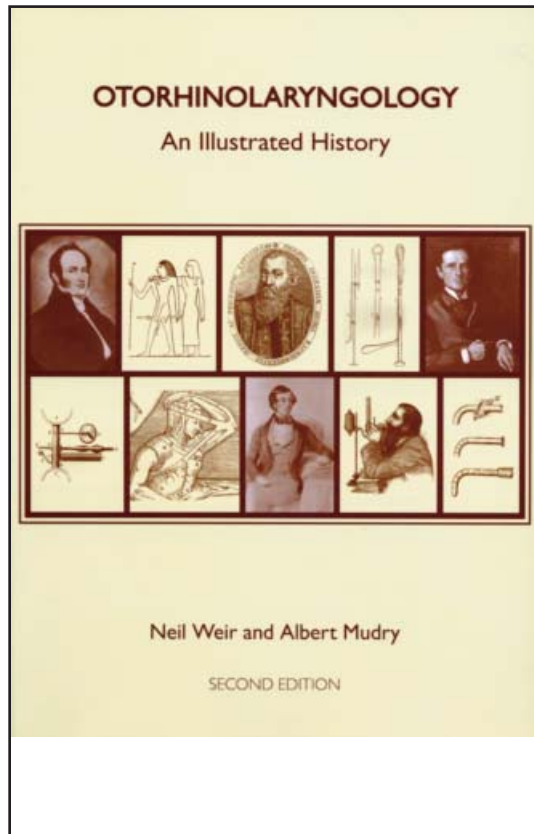


Figure 8

Other historical books relating to some subspecialties of OHNS have also been published dating from the mid 20th century. To mention the main ones: *Classics in modern otology* in 1978⁽²⁵⁾, *De la synanche à l'angine* (from synanche to angina) in 1982⁽²⁶⁾, *Geschichte der Hals-Nasen-Ohrenheilkunde (Rhinologie und Laryngologie)* (history of rhinology and laryngology) in 1989⁽²⁷⁾, *Die Geschichte der Mund-, Kiefer- und Gesichtschirurgie* (history of maxillo-facial surgery) in 1995⁽²⁸⁾, *Le vertige. Histoire et actualité* (dizziness, history and actuality) in 1998⁽²⁹⁾, *Otology's great moments* in 2000⁽³⁰⁾, and *History of otology* in 2015⁽³¹⁾. Alongside these books numerous historical articles on specific OHNS have regularly been published in the usual OHNS journals. To build up one's own basic library in history of OHNS is a very

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