

A collage of anatomical illustrations of the human nose and sinuses. The central focus is a large, detailed illustration of a human nose in profile, showing the bridge, tip, and nostrils. Surrounding this central image are several smaller, detailed anatomical drawings. These include cross-sections of the nasal cavity, showing the turbinates and the flow of air; a view of the maxillary sinus (cheekbone) with its internal structure; and various views of the nasal bone and cartilage. The illustrations are rendered in a style that combines realistic shading with clear, white anatomical lines to highlight specific structures. The background is a dark, textured grey, which makes the white and light-colored anatomical drawings stand out.

Moody Medical Library
The University of Texas Medical Branch
NOVEMBER 1978

COVER ILLUSTRATION: Plate IV of Samuel
Thomas von Soemmerring's Abbildungen der
menschlichen organe des geruches (1809).

COVER DESIGN by Margaret Newman, Public
Information Office, UTMB.

The Bookman is published monthly by the UTMB Library for the purpose
of acquainting the campus community with the resources and services
of the Library. It is sent to UTMB faculty, distributed free of
charge in the Library, and mailed to interested medical libraries.

Publications Committee: Inci A. Bowman, Alex C. Bienkowski,
Pauline V. Power.

"P.S. THANKS FOR 'SMELL' REFERENCE.":

ROY BEDICHEK'S LETTERS TO DR. JOHN G. SINCLAIR

Roy Bedichek is probably best remembered for his books Adventures with a Texas Naturalist (1947) and Karankaway Country (1950). Others know him from his voluminous correspondence with J. Frank Dobie and Walter Prescott Webb. Some of that correspondence was edited and published by William A. Owens in Three Friends (1969).¹

All who were fortunate enough to receive a letter from Roy Bedichek knew what an enjoyable correspondent he could be. One of thosefortunates was Dr. John G. Sinclair of the University of Texas Medical Branch. Evidently, Bedichek's low regard for doctors² did not extend to Dr. Sinclair, and when Bedichek was working on his last book, The Sense of Smell (1960), he often called upon THE BOOKMAN, VOL 5 NO. 11 for advice.

The five letters which November 1978 from the John G. Sinclair Papers in the Moody Medical Library. Dr. Sinclair did not make copies of his letters to Bedichek. However, Bedichek did preserve the originals and they are available in the Roy Bedichek Papers in the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

Larry J. Hygant
Department of History of
Medicine and Archives

¹Additional information about Bedichek may be found in Ronnie Dugger, Three Men in Texas (Austin, 1967); Eleanor James, Roy Bedichek (Austin, 1971); and William A. Owens, Three Friends (New York, 1969).

²J. Frank Dobie, in his foreword to The Sense of Smell, recalled that Bedichek was, "in theory. . . against doctors; he wrote considerably on a book intended to expose several vulnerable sides of the medical profession. He would quote an old proverb: 'A man's either a fool or his own physician after forty.' He said that a sick man should have as much sense as a sick cow; she quits eating and goes off and lies down." The fact that Bedichek's daughter Mary had become a doctor after her graduation from the Medical Branch and that Sinclair was an anatomist rather than a physician almost certainly contributed to the friendship of the two men.

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Dear Dr. Sinclair:

The final suggestion in your letter of Jan. 6 that you may decide to "retire to Austin" sounds good to me. We may still have time to get together and settle some of the problems that are vexing the world, and settle them for the good of Man with a big M.

By the way, I have immediate need for a late and authoritative [sic] reference to the construction of the inner nose and the mechanical and chemical (?) means used to transmit whatever impulses the smelling part of the inner nose uses to transmute same into the sensation we call odor or scent. Truth is, I have a book about half done on the general subject of odors and need the guidance now and then of an honest-to-god scientist.

Roy Bedichek

February 27, 1958.

Dear Dr. Sinclair:

I am getting beyond my depth again in this book I am writing on odors. I find some authorities hint (they do not claim it outright) that different races show different metabolism. Hooten,³ for instance, intimates that further study may show that the metabolism rate may be a racial character.

It seems to me that if this is true, the tests would have to be statistical, that is to determine a Negro rating you would have to test a large number of individuals and thus establish an average as a racial character--Mongoloid the same, Whites same, etc. It is my understanding (of course, I may be wrong--often am) that individuals of any race vary widely in this matter.

I am supposing that the ordinary metabolism test applied to a human being in a doctor's office consists merely of measuring oxygen consumption and calculating therefrom the heat production per minute. Am I wrong again?

Anyway, if you are not too busy to help a helpless ignoramus, let me have a word of explanation on this.

Got the Science News Letter file, and passed it on to a likely subscriber. I have been taking this little digest of scientific developments for many years, and by diligently reading it, I have been passing among folk as ignorant as I am as a person of wide scientific reading. You know we're all guilty of such little tricks.

Bedichek

July 25, 1958

³Earnest Albert Hooten, Up From the Ape (New York, 1946).

Dear Dr. Sinclair:

I have transmitted to Dobie⁴ your excellent and corrective letter about Galveston. I had sent him only a few days before your letter came an excellent article on Galveston clipped from the Christian Science Monitor, taking exactly the opposite view of the results of the clean-up.⁵ From other sources I had come to believe that things there were in far better state than formerly and that there was no solid ground for much of what Dobie said or intimated.

Delighted at prospect of seeing you September 4 and am marking off that day on my calendar for hearing of your wonderful trip and for hearing stimulating suggestions "about many things." Opportunities for converse with articulate individuals who know anything become rarer and rarer with me.

I suggest that you tell me where and the time when you will be available on September 4.

Sincerely yours,

Bedi

August 22, 1958.

P.S. Thanks for "smell" reference.

⁴J. Frank Dobie was a good friend of Roy Bedichek.

⁵This refers to the closing down of illegal gambling operations in Galveston by The Texas Rangers in 1958.

Dear Dr. Sinclair:

What a piece of work is man! The more I delve in my fumbling fashion into the mechanisms of the human body, the more amazed I become. Your explanation of tear-flow excites my wonder again. And I have been digging into the sweat and sebaceous glands a bit to find out about sweat and oil secretions in search for something accountable for body odors, and be-damned if this tremendous and at the same time microscopic mechanism doesn't appal me. Had I my life to live over and had the option, as Franklin specified, of correcting the second edition, I think I should devote my life to comparative anatomy, for the sheer wonder of it.

Yours,

R.B.

Sept. 25, 1958.

Dear Dr. Sinclair:

Thanks for clip and tip--both invaluable. The Riggs⁶ clipping fits into a niche as if it, the niche, had been left there purposely. I have from a pamphlet long out of print, and which I had to get from the Congressional Library, a "manugraph" by George Catlin,⁷ the famous Indian painter, or rather painter of Indians. It is devoted exactly to the same functions of the nose to which Riggs addresses himself, that is, in places --especially the values to be derived from nose-breathing.

The other suggestion which I am transmitting to Kathleen promises much. It gives me a word I am trying to fit someway into the title of the book. I have not yet chosen a title⁸, although the work is practically done except for a few smoothings-off and fittings-in and dispensing with discrepancies, which last I find very disconcerting. I have been tempted to send you chapters on the exterior and interior of the nose, but I am adhering to a vow made while in the throes of reading some friend's ms to never inflict such pain on a friend of mine.

Thanks for your thoughtfulness.

Sincerely yours,⁹

Roy Bedichek

January 20, 1959

⁶Bedichek is referring possibly to Austen F. Riggs, II who was then an assistant professor of zoology at the University of Texas or to Ralph H. Riggs whose article on dermoid cysts of the nasal dorsum had appeared in the April 1958 issue of The Laryngoscope.

⁷George Catlin, The Breath of Life or Mal-Respiration. And its Effects Upon the Enjoyments and Life of Man (London, 1861).

⁸As late as February 1959, Bedichek still had not selected a title. James in her book Roy Bedichek (p.34) says that Bedichek, at that time, told Wilson M. Hudson he was calling the book "Speaking of Noses."

⁹This is the last of the letters to Dr. John Sinclair in the Sinclair Papers. Barely four months later, on May 21, 1959, Roy Bedichek died in his home in Austin. His last book, The Sense of Smell, was published posthumously by Doubleday and Co. in 1960.