

Stories of and about
Goldbloom, Goldblatt, Greenspon and Gross,
“The Four G’s” of the Class of
The McGill Medicine Class of 1916
As Told by Harold N. Segall of the Class of 1920

Au cours de l’année 1750, The American College Fraternity fut fondé. Il le fut apparemment sur émulation des Burschenschaft Societies des universités allemandes. L’atmosphère générale était à l’élitisme. En Amérique, la première société fut un club littéraire mais plus tard ces centres de rassemblement étaient des “foyers hors du foyer” pour ses membres. Il y eut un début fait dans ce domaine par des étudiants Juifs en 1898. L’auteur et le stimulateur autant que l’inspirateur en fut le rabbin Gustav Gotheil, dont le fils fut professeur de langues sémitiques à l’Université Columbia. 14 étudiants composèrent le groupe fondateur et étaient des étudiants en licence du Séminaire Théologique Juif de New York. Herman Abramovitz qui vint quelques années plus tard à Montréal occuper le poste de Rabbin de la Synagogue Shaar Hashomayim, était au nombre de ces 14. Le Rabbin Abramovitz devint l’un des premiers membres honoraires du chapitre “Upsilon” de l’Université McGill, ce qui mène à penser peut être correctement, qu’il ait pu inspirer les cinq grands de McGill à faire une demande de charte. Le nom de ces personnes est: Nathaniel S. Fineberg (loi 13), Harry Goldblatt (médecine 16), Alton Goldbloom (médecine 16), A. W. Muhlstock (loi 13) et Edgar C. Levine (médecine 13).

* * * * *

Goldbloom: Le fondateur de cette dynastie canadienne fut Samuel Goldbloom qui vint au Canada de Lithuanie à l’âge de 17 ans. Les trois enfants qui naquirent avant Alton moururent tous de maladie infectieuse. Les croyants diraient que le 4ème enfant survécut car à sa naissance il fut nommé Alter, prénom qu’il rendit un peu plus drôle en le changeant pour celui de Alton. Alton Goldbloom avait hérité de son père la jovialité un esprit vif et aiguisé ainsi qu’un grand tal-

* Address delivered at the meeting of the Montreal Jewish Historical Society on Thursday, March 8, 1979 at The Jewish Public Library.

ent cabotin. A l'âge de 9 ans, Alton fréquenta le Cheder et acquit une plus intense connaissance de l'hébreu que celle acquise d'habitude après les leçons d'hébreu à l'école de Montréal.

Après avoir longuement voyagé et retraversé l'Atlantique, la famille s'établit à Worcester, Massachusetts, où Alton fit son secondaire et noua une camaraderie à vie avec Samuel Behrman qui devint l'essayiste et dramaturge distingué. La famille déménagea à nouveau à Winnipeg et de là Alton Goldbloom alla fréquenter l'Université McGill en 1909 à l'âge de 19 ans et suivit des cours en Arts et médecine. Il fut le premier rédacteur dramatique du McGill Daily. Au cours de ses années, il obtint son B.A., son M.D.C.M., compléta son internat, de même que les études post-universitaires finales à l'Hôpital pour bébés de New York. Alton Goldbloom fut un pionnier en pédiatrie moderne dans cette partie du Canada. Il avait des talents exceptionnels de médecin, de professeur et de chercheur. Il réalisa ses principaux objectifs. Sa carrière créatrice fut couronnée par de nombreux honneurs ainsi qu'une chaire de professeur qui lui fut conférée par ses pairs.

Je pense que l'immortalité est assurée à des personnes qui ont un grand talent de conteur. Alton Goldbloom en fut un. L'auteur dans cette étude cite deux à trois historiettes qui sont récitées de mémoire d'homme.

Dans son autobiographie, Alton Goldbloom fait de brèves références à Goldblatt et Gross. Gross eut une influence importante en guidant Alton vers sa spécialité de pédiatrie. "Louis Gross avait disparu au cours de l'été 1914. Il avait ressenti le besoin d'en savoir plus en pédiatrie que ce que McGill pouvait lui en apprendre à cette époque. Il avait entendu parler de l'Hôpital Flottant de Boston qui acceptait des étudiants internes pendant la période d'été, fit une application et fut convoqué. A son retour, il fut si enthousiaste à propos de cet hôpital que je fis à mon tour une demande d'emploi et fut nommé étudiant interne pour l'été 1915". (extrait d'une histoire entre Louis Gross et Alton Goldbloom). Au cours des années suivantes, Louis me relata un autre des aspects de cet été de 1914 à bord de l'Hôpital Flottant de Boston.

Un peu plus tard, Alton écrivit à propos de sa dernière année à McGill ce qui suit: "Mes brillants camarades de classe Gross et Goldblatt, montraient déjà leurs dons de recherche qui germèrent et s'épanouirent complètement en des réalisations scientifiques et en une réputation mondiale que chacun obtint dans son domaine.

Harry Goldblatt: Parler de Harry Goldblatt pose des obstacles insurmontables. Un grand dossier de documents se rapportant à la carrière de Harry Goldblatt me fut gracieusement prêté et je dois mentionner aussi que sa soeur

Alta Kahn fit un don gracieux de ces documents à la Bibliothèque Osler de McGill. Dans l'un de ces documents, Adelaid Curtiss publia une silhouette seulement intitulée: "Portrait d'un homme". Je me contenterai seulement de vous en offrir deux extraits. "Si je me devais de résumer Harry en un mot, je dirai qu'il est la bonté. Bonté envers sa femme, ses deux enfants, ses collègues, ses aides, ses étudiants etc. . . S'il m'était permis de le caractériser encore par un autre mot, je dirais qu'il était tolérance. Il apprit très tôt la signification du mot intolérance et ne s'est jamais permis de fauter par intolérance." Harry eut un talent d'homme de science superbe, un talent en matière de camaraderie, un talent en matière de services à rendre à l'humanité, et il possédait tous ces talents à un degré plus élevé que toute personne que j'aie jamais connue en littérature ou côtoyée dans la vie. Il doit bien y avoir d'autres personnes à propos desquels on a écrit de la même manière. Elles sont si nombreuses et si rares.

En 1908, Harry s'inscrivit à McGill pour suivre les cours en Arts puis les cours en médecine.

En 1912, les "quatre G" se rencontrèrent pour la première fois alors qu'Alton et Harry accédaient à la classe de 1916 qui avait commencé en 1911 car le cours était d'une durée de 5 ans. Alton et Harry obtinrent des crédits pour leur première année parce qu'ils avaient pris des cours de biologie dans leur formation littéraire. Louis Gross et Sy Greenspon avaient commencé en 1911. C'est par le biais de la famille que Greenspon fut connu. La mère de Harry et la mère de Sy maintinrent une étroite camaraderie lorsque les Goldblatt vécurent à Montréal. Lorsque Sy décida de venir à McGill, sa mère demanda à Mme Goldblatt d'héberger Sy chez elle. Ainsi Harry et Sy développèrent un sentiment fraternel, le sentiment d'être des frères. Les rapports entre Harry et Louis Gross furent de nature différente. J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer les "quatre G" très tôt et ils m'adoptèrent comme leur mascotte. Je suivis leurs activités de très près et l'obtention de leurs diplômes fut un grand événement pour moi.

Il est hors de tout doute qu'Harry fut le plus amical et le plus populaire des étudiants de sa classe tant parmi ses pairs que parmi les professeurs. Il avait remporté le premier prix accordé par la Société Médicale des Etudiants en rédigeant un essai sur *Polyposis of the Intestinal Tract*. Alton Goldbloom remporta le second prix en rédigeant l'essai sur *Diarrheal Diseases*. Quant à Louis Gross, il remporta le plus prestigieux des prix: la Médaille d'Or Holmes. Depuis 1916, très peu de Juifs avaient remporté cette médaille. Deux membres du personnel actuel de l'Hôpital Général Juif, le Dr. Harold Rosen et le Dr. Nat Sheiner, la détiennent.

Harry fit un plaidoyer à l'effet que la réputation de McGill devrait être

sauvée. L'Institut Carnegie de New York était sur le point de classer McGill au second rang plutôt qu'au premier. Le professeur R. F. Ruttan, professeur de chimie, passa par toutes les couleurs devant les propos tenus par Harry alors que le professeur Blackadder l'appuya. En fait, plus tard, ce fut Charlie Martin devenu premier Doyen de Médecine à temps plein qui donna une brillante direction à l'école de médecine en lui trouvant les fonds et les hommes pour renforcer l'école de médecine. La carrière d'Harry Goldblatt, depuis qu'il obtint son diplôme, est très bien résumée dans son *curriculum vitae officiel*. Sa principale réalisation a rapport avec la recherche qu'il a menée à propos de la haute tension. Il réussit également à inventer des méthodes de diminution de flux sanguin dans l'un ou l'autre des reins. L'oeuvre de Harry fut des plus appréciées.

En 1962, à l'âge de 71 ans, les Instituts Nationaux de la Santé du Gouvernement des Etats-Unis lui remirent un don de \$1,065,000 affectés au Laboratoire Beaumont sous sa direction en matière de recherche sur la haute tension et sur le cancer.

E. A. Greenspon: Sy Greenspon et Harry Goldblatt furent élevés comme des frères en dépit du fait que Harry le dépassait de quelques années. Sy Greenspon ouvrit son cabinet dans le Medical Arts Building. Il avait manifesté un intérêt particulier dans le domaine de l'anémie et oeuvra de façon diligente sur ces études, d'un point de vue clinique et dans le laboratoire de pharmacologie à McGill. Son ami Sanford Rosenthal avait été nommé au poste du Département de Pharmacologie comme professeur adjoint. Sy Greenspon fut au nombre des dirigeants qui encouragèrent la formation de la construction de l'Hôpital Juif. Cette promotion culmina en 1934, année de l'inauguration de l'Hôpital.

Greenspon continua de faire de la recherche et d'être interne jusque vers la fin des années 50 lorsqu'il alla à l'étranger. Toutefois, il ne revint jamais à Montréal. La dernière fois où nous nous rencontrâmes, ce fut à Edinburg. Je sais qu'il correspondait avec H. Goldblatt qui agit envers lui comme un frère.

Louis Gross: Louis Gross s'écrasa dans un avion le "Mainliner" en route de Chicago vers Los Angeles. Il était sur le point de faire de la recherche clinique venant s'ajouter à ses études de médecine expérimentale et avait été nommé au sein du personnel de l'Université de Californie. Avant de quitter Chicago, L. Gross se rendit à Montréal. Une réception en son nom se tint chez Alton Goldbloom et dans la mienne.

En 1938, la première Conférence Commémorative Annuelle Louis Gross fut prononcée par Harry Goldblatt portant sur l'hypertension. Depuis lors, cette conférence devint un événement annuel. Elle est tenue sous les auspices de The Montreal Clinical Society à L'Hôpital Général Juif.

Quelques semaines auparavant, j'avais discuté avec le Dr. Nathan Freedman à propos de L. Gross car N. Freedman fut un compagnon de classe de Louis à l'Ecole Aberdeen. Il se souvint que Louis Gross fut le garçon le plus brillant de la classe. Toutefois, Louis Gross n'obtint pas de bourse, ce fut Nat qui la décrocha.

Louis Gross n'était pas aussi populaire que Harry Goldblatt. Harry et Louis savaient ce qu'ils disaient lorsqu'ils parlaient d'un besoin en recherche plus intense à l'Université McGill.

Pendant 11 ans après 1926, il créa un très grand département de Laboratoires très progressif. Il engagea des hommes qui y passèrent le reste de leur vie et y réalisa lui-même de très importants travaux.

L'écrasement du "Mainliner" interrompit une carrière brillante à l'âge de 42 ans.

In the year 1750, The American College Fraternity came into existence, apparently in emulation of the Burschenschaft Societies of German universities. The general tone was that of elitism. The Germans competed in swordsmanship; a scar on the cheek gave the man great prestige. And of course there were beer drinking parties. In America the first society was a literary club, but later fraternity houses were "homes away from home" for its members. A start was made in this field by Jewish students in 1898. The inspiring stimulus came from Rabbi Gustav Gottheil, whose son, Professor Richard Gottheil, was professor of Semitic Languages at Columbia University, and whose wife, Emma, was an Assyrian and an enthusiastic Zionist from the very beginning of the movement. The fourteen students who composed the founding group were undergraduates of The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Herman Abramovitz, who a few years later came to Montreal to occupy the post of rabbi at Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, was one of the fourteen. Although the official names adhered to the fashion of Greek letters the initials ZBT actually represented the three Hebrew words *Zion Bemishpot Tipoda*, Zion through justice shall be redeemed.

From the acorn a mighty oak did grow and one of the early branches of the tree was a chapter at McGill named "Upsilon" which sprouted in March of 1913. Knowing that Rabbi Abramovitz became its first honorary member leads one to assume, perhaps correctly, that he may have inspired the five senior McGill men to apply for a charter. They were Nathaniel S. Fineberg (law 13), Harry Goldblatt (med. 16), Alton Goldbloom (med. 16), A. W. Muhlstock (law 13) and Edgar C. Levine (med. 13).

“Goldbloom” — who in our midst does not know this name? The founder of this Canadian dynasty was Samuel Goldbloom, who came to Canada from Lithuania when he was about 17 years old. In 1880, some time after his arrival, he married a girl who had also immigrated from Lithuania. We read in Alton’s book *Small Patients* “my mother was captivated by my father’s incurable joviality and humour.” The three children who were born before Alton all died of infectious diseases in infancy. Believers would say that the fourth child survived because at its birth it was named Alter which he made a little fancy later on when he changed it to Alton. Anyone who spent more than a few minutes in the company of Alton Goldbloom would readily declare that he inherited from his father the joviality spiced with sharp wit and fine histrionic talent. The family moved about from Montreal to Winnipeg, back to Montreal, then for about a year to Kovna in Lithuania. His mother travelled with her three children, Alton the eldest, to visit her father. During that year Alton, then 9 years old, attended Cheder and acquired a more extensive knowledge of Hebrew than the usual after school Hebrew lessons in Montreal would have afforded him. Reminiscing about this time he related that, one day, resenting the prohibitions of a very strict orthodoxy, he asked himself what would happen if on the Sabbath he would walk a longer distance than was allowed and if he not only carried a piece of paper in his pocket but that at a certain moment when nobody could see he would actually take it out of his pocket and tear it. Well, he performed the experiment, the heavens did not thunder and the earth did not swallow him up.

After re-crossing the Atlantic the family settled in Worcester, Massachusetts where he attended high school and initiated a lifelong friendship with Samuel Behrman, who became the distinguished playwright and essayist. The family again moved to Winnipeg; from there he came to McGill in 1909 at the age of 19 to enter the course of Arts and Medicine at McGill. He became the first dramatic editor of the McGill Daily. The first girl he met was Annie Ballon and 9 years later in May 1918, they were married. I can boast that I was one of the four young fellows who held up the *Chupa*. During these years he earned his B.A. and his M.D.C.M., and completed internship and the final postgraduate studies at The Babies Hospital in New York. Thus, in 1920 Annie and Alton returned to Montreal. They lived in the Ballon home on Bishop Street for about two years and then moved into their home on Crescent Street, where he had his office. Alton Goldbloom pioneered modern pediatrics in this part of Canada, not, however, without overcoming great obstacles. His talents as a physician, as a teacher and a researcher and, richly endowed as he was with personal charm and a rare quality of maintaining firm and lasting friendships, he

achieved his principal goals. A creative career was crowned with a professorship and many honors bestowed by his peers. Of equal significance were a close, warm, family circle in a charming home, as well as children and grandchildren who were all good achievers.

Immortality, I think, is sometimes assured when a person tells a very good story; one which catches the attention of the listeners so that it comes to be repeated again and again for generations; and if the name of the first raconteur is mentioned often enough as the source, his immortality would be achieved. Alton Goldbloom was a superb raconteur. Let me tell you some of his stories. In the Bronx there lived a young family, the father Jewish and the mother Italian. They had one son who frequently asked what his nationality was and he never obtained a clear cut unambiguous answer. One day when he was about 12 he demanded a very precise answer saying, "My friend Joe is Italian, Mike is Irish, Moe is Jewish, George is Greek, what am I?" His father, startled by the firm demand asked why the urgency and the boy said, "I want to get a new bicycle. I don't know whether to buy it wholesale or to steal it."

Guests at the usual Sunday dinner would be told stories of his personal experience. Annie, the children, Victor and Dick, and certain guests who came frequently were not bored by hearing some of these stories again and again because they were so well told. Here is a favourite one: One night early in his career when he was making about 25 house calls a day the phone rang at 2 a.m., wakened him from a deep sleep and he heard a sobbing mother complain that her baby was crying and would not sleep. He had seen the child in the morning; it had a cold. He prescribed something that he was sure would be effective and then he fell asleep again. About an hour later the phone rang again; the same mother, "Oy, Doctor, I know you would want to know the medicine was so good. Thank God, the baby is asleep."

He relished stories about theatrical people. Here is one which provided scope for speaking Yiddish. Felix Adler, the great Yiddish actor performed regularly in the theatre on Second Avenue in New York. Among his fans was a rather attractive widow who at long last, after many months of planning, mustered up the courage to go backstage, introduce herself, and congratulate him. She found the great actor more friendly than she anticipated and so she dared to invite him for a late supper after the show on Friday night. He accepted. The supper progressed into an all night party. During breakfast she harboured some bold ideas; maybe he would like to leave a few dollars in appreciation. They would be useful to buy some new clothes for the children. She approached the subject gently whereupon he brought out his wallet and presented her with a

ticket for the next week's show. Surprised and frustrated she exclaimed, "Theatre darf ich haben broit is mier noitig." To this he calmly replied, "Nu gefint zich a becker."

In his autobiography Alton makes some brief references to Goldblatt and Gross. If he did mention Greenspon I missed the reference. Gross had an important influence in guiding Alton to the specialty of pediatrics. These few sentences tell this very important part of the story. "Louis Gross had disappeared during the summer of 1914. He had, like all of us, who were interested, felt the need for more pediatric instruction than McGill was giving at that time. He had heard of the Boston Floating Hospital which accepted student interns during the summer season, applied and got an appointment. On his return he was so fired with enthusiasm about the hospital that I in turn applied and was appointed a student intern in the summer of 1915." In later years Louis told me about another aspect of that summer of 1914 on the Floating Hospital. There was a very attractive, friendly, student nurse who contributed some calories to that firey enthusiasm. A little further on Alton wrote of his final year at McGill as follows: "My brilliant classmates, Gross and Goldblatt, were already demonstrating those investigative gifts which were later to germinate and flower into the full bloom of scientific achievement and world fame each in his field."

HARRY GOLDBLATT

Preparing what I have told you about Alton Goldbloom, aided by his autobiography and by my vivid reminiscences has been an easy task. But to tell of Harry Goldblatt poses insurmountable obstacles for which I will need and will use much help. Fortunately his precious sister Alta Kahn collected a nice package of documents related to Harry's career and has graciously loaned the whole collection to me. I might add that she has graciously donated these unique documents to The McGill Osler Library, the library devoted to the history of medicine.

In one of these documents, Volume 25, 1961 of *The Western Reserve University Medical School Alumni Bulletin*, the managing editor Adilaid Curtiss published a profile of Harry entitled, "Portrait of a Man". I have had to resist the temptation of reading it to you, in its entirety and I must content myself with offering only two brief excerpts. One colleague of Harry's, whom she interviewed said, "If I were to sum up Harry in one word I would say gentleness. Gentleness towards his wife, his two boys, his colleagues, his aids, his students and to the animals who play such an important role in his research. If I were allowed another word I would say tolerance. He learned early the meaning of intolerance and has never allowed himself to be guilty of it."

Harry had the talent of a superb scientist, the talent for friendship, the talent for service to mankind, the talent for family life including those roles of devoted son, brother, husband, father, all of these talents he possessed to a greater degree than any man I have ever known in literature or in life. There must be others like him described in literature; there may be some alive and active at present. They are few and far between.

Alta Kahn kindly granted me a long interview one Saturday morning in the course of which I learned pertinent things which do not appear in any of the documents. Their father, Philip Goldblatt, was born in Laskowa, Lithuania in 1861 and their mother, Jennie Spitz, in Telzin, Lithuania in 1865. They married in 1885 and six months later immigrated to North America accompanied by her mother and sister. Between 1885 and September 4, 1896, when they settled for the longest period in Montreal, they lived briefly in Montreal, then Hamilton, Ontario, then Muscaten, Iowa where Alta was born on August 21, 1889 and Harry on March 14, 1891. The family moved to Omaha, Nebraska and from there to Chicago and back to Montreal on September 4, 1896. In Canada also they moved about and spent about a year in each of the following: Hull, Valleyfield, Lachine, then returned to Montreal where they remained from 1899 to 1918. During these years, the two children attended Dufferin School where they won scholarships to The Montreal High School. Alta went on to McDonald College for a diploma as a teacher. She was the first Jewish girl to have her training at McDonald. There were four others who had their training in the normal school in Montreal. She graduated in 1908 and taught until she was married in 1912. She then had to stop teaching because married ladies were not allowed to teach. In this same year, 1908, Harry entered McGill to take the Arts course followed by the Medical course. He came under the influence of Professor Carrie Derrick, the biologist and botanist who took a special interest in him. During each summer holiday of about five months he worked at a variety of jobs to earn his university expenses. In the summer of 1909 he sold rat poison. In the summer of 1910 he peddled advertisements for The Windsor Hotel throughout the New England states. In 1911 he opened a moving picture theatre in Chicoutimi. In the presence of the parish priest he showed The Passion Play and just passed the censor. A month or so later the priest visited the theatre again but this time did not like what he saw. He preached a sermon condemning the theatre and Harry had to close shop. Alta does not know the name of the picture he was showing at the time. In 1912 he worked as a ticket collector on the famous Canada Steamship boat which sailed between Montreal and Tadoussac. Then for several summers, during his course of medicine, he

worked in the CPR Hotel in Lake Louise.

In 1912 the four G's met for the first time as Alton and Harry joined the class of 1916 which had started in 1911 because the course was a five year course. Alton and Harry got credits for their first year because they took Biology in the Arts course. Louis Gross and Sy Greenspon had started in 1911. Sy Greenspon entered the picture through the family. Harry's mother and Sy's mother were *landsleute* and maintained a close friendship when the Goldblatt's lived in Montreal. The Greenspons had a thriving business in Hawksbury. When Sy decided to come to McGill his mother prevailed on Mrs. Goldblatt to have Sy board in her house. Thus Harry and Sy developed a fraternal feeling, a feeling of being brothers. The relationship between Harry and Louis Gross was of a different kind. Louis was a good intellectual challenge and stimulus to Harry. Sy needed an older brother and that is what Harry was for him.

At this point it seem appropriate that I should tell you how it came about that I was the only freshman to attend the graduation convocation on that day in May, 1916 at The Royal Victoria College assembly hall. Louis Gross's father, Mr. Berrill Gross, had a kosher butcher shop and he delivered meat to our house, in spite of the fact that we lived about four miles away from his shop. About every few weeks he would call to collect his bills. Many years later I learnt from Louis and my father that during autumn, when Louis Gross had to pay fees at McGill, Mr. Gross would occasionally borrow money from my father to assist in meeting the expense. It was quite usual for immigrants at that time to help each other in this way with friendly interest-free loans. When I decided to enter medicine in 1915 the two fathers arranged for me to call on Louis and perhaps buy some books and materials that would be of use to a freshman. On the day I visited Louis he was sick with acute tonsillitis. I recall spending 15.00 on books and some materials. That of course was of much less importance than the fact that Louis became interested in me and took me under his wing. This led me to meet the four G's very soon afterwards and they adopted me as a sort of mascot. They were the seniors and I the freshman. I followed their activities very closely. Their graduation was a great event for me. I went alone on that beautiful spring day. The entire Faculty of Medicine in academic dress sat on the raised platform. Sir William Peterson, a distinguished, white haired gentleman officiated. In the audience, which numbered perhaps 200 people, were the friends and families of the graduating class. Alta Kahn was one of the happiest because her brother Harry not only won the prize for leading the final year but had been chosen as the valedictorian of the class. Harry was unquestionably the friendliest, and most popular student of the class both

among his peers and among the teachers. In addition, he had also won the first prize awarded by The Undergraduate Medical Society with an essay on *Polyposis of the Intestinal Tract*. Alton Goldbloom took the second prize with an essay on *Diarrheal Diseases*, a subject related to pediatrics. Louis Gross, the youngest member of the class, who had his 21st birthday only a few days before, won the most prestigious prize, The Holmes Gold Medal. A graduate of 1884, Dr. Hiram Vineberg, was the first Jew to win this prize and Louis was the second. Since 1916 quite a few Jewish boys have won it. Two members of the present Jewish General Hospital staff, Dr. Harold Rosen and Dr. Nat Sheiner are among them.

After the prizes had been awarded and the new graduates had been capped Harry came up to the podium to deliver the valedictory address. All went smoothly; he spoke as was expected of him in a gentlemanly fashion about the great men of McGill's past who had created it's reputation as one of the leading medical schools in the world. Then he calmly proceeded to explode a bomb. He pleaded that the reputation of McGill should be saved. It was already in grave danger. The Carnegie Institution of New York was about to classify McGill as a second-rate school instead of a first-rate school. He enumerated McGill's deficiencies, especially the lack of facilities and support for research. Among the professors sitting on the platform there was Professor R. F. Ruttan, the professor of Chemistry. He was a very handsome man in his fifties, tall, white-haired with long white side whiskers which framed a lovely face with a pinkish complexion. I saw his face become red and redder and redder to bluish-red with fury and embarrassment. Alta Kahn remembers that Sir William Peterson took issue with Harry's remarks and Professor Blackadder supported Harry. I remember only that Charlie Martin, my favorite teacher, rose and spoke so as to pour oil on troubled waters. In 1972 at the request of Andrew Collard, who was gathering reminiscences about McGill, I wrote the story of these events. Naturally I tried to get a copy of the valedictory manuscript from Harry. In reply to my request he told me that not only did he not have a copy of the manuscript but that he did not remember having been the valedictorian. Of course, all that Harry said was true and it was indeed Charlie Martin who, a few years later, became the first full-time Dean of Medicine and gave superb leadership in bringing money and men to strengthen the medical school. Harry's career since graduation is summerized in his official *curriculum vitae* which he himself composed. After graduation he became a resident in surgery at The Royal Victoria Hospital and assisted in The Department of Pathology until 1917 when he was inducted in The United States Army and served as a lieutenant for two years. He served

in The United States, in England, France and Germany. In 1919-1921 he was Assistant Pathologist at The Lakeside Hospital in Cleveland. In 1921 he became a Beit Memorial Fellow and went to England where he spent three years in research dividing his time between the Lister Institute in the first two years and The Department of Physiology at University College in the year 1923-1924. He then became assistant professor of Pathology at Western Reserve University from 1924-1927, associate professor from 1927-1935 and professor of Experimental Pathology from 1935-1946. In that year, he went to Los Angeles as professor of Pathology in the University of Southern California and Director of Laboratories of The Department of Medical Research at Cedars of Lebanon Hospital. In 1953 he returned to Cleveland and took on the task of pathologist to The Mount Sinai Hospital and Director of Laboratories. He remained professor of Pathology at the medical school until 1961 when he became Emeritus professor. He was of course a member of many medical societies and was honored on many occasions.

His chief accomplishment is related to the research that he has carried out on high blood pressure. In an article entitled, "Reflections" which he wrote in 1975 Harry summarized the evolution of his special interest in high blood pressure. He relates that as a student he was taught that high blood pressure was produced by some unknown mechanism in the body; this led to changes in the blood vessels which narrowed the arteries and so impaired the blood flow to the tissues, especially to the kidneys. In some cases the kidney function was greatly impaired and might be totally abolished. This would lead to uraemia; a condition in which substances which the kidney pours out of the body remain in the blood and because of their poisonous nature lead to death. Uraemia always was associated with high blood pressure. Doubts were triggered in his mind by the following experience: In 1917 at the Royal Victoria Hospital he had occasion to observe a woman who had her kidney removed. The surgeon who removed it did not know that it was her only kidney; she was born with only one kidney. After the operation she immediately became uraemic and lived for six days. But the exception feature was that she had a normal blood pressure during these six days. In the course of the next few years as he reflected on this experience he decided that it would be worthwhile investigating whether the reverse of what he was taught is really true; namely that first there is impairment in blood supply to the kidney and that this triggers the development of high blood pressure. In 1928 he devised ingenious experiments. He succeeded in inventing methods of impairing the blood flow to one or both kidneys, measuring the blood pressure in the animals. He thus proved that at least one type of mechanism which

causes high blood pressure is that which is initiated by reducing the blood flow to the kidneys. This of course led to studies by others all over the world, using the technique devised by Harry Goldblatt. Studies revealed that a substance called renin was produced in excessive quantities under these conditions. Measurement of renin has become very important in the study of both animals and human high blood pressure. In appreciation of Harry's work, the World Health Organization has decreed that the unit of measurement of this substance, renin, should be called a Goldblatt; very much as the unit of measurement for radiation is called a Curie and for X-ray a Roentgen. As you know, nowadays barometric pressure is measured in terms of a Pascal, in honor of Blaise Pascal who in the 16th century invented the mercury manometer. Thus the name of Goldblatt for Harry Goldblatt is assured immortality for as long as we can imagine. In an editorial of The American Medical Association for October 24, 1977 Dr. Leonard B. Berman wrote as follows: "Goldblatt's original experiment might influence us to alter the Churchillian phrase to this, 'Seldom has so much been owed by so many to a single experiment by a single investigator.' " Harry's work was well appreciated. In 1962 when he was 71 years old The National Institutes of Health of The United States Government presented a grant of \$1,065,000 to The Beaumont Laboratories for research on high blood pressure and cancer under Harry's direction.

E. A. GREENSPON

Sy Greenspon and Harry Goldblatt were as close as brothers, although Harry was older by a few years. Sy had an internship at The Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and an externship at The Johns Hopkin's Hospital, where I visited him in 1922. He returned to practice internal medicine in Montreal in about 1924. He established his office in The Medical Arts Building. He had developed a special interest in anaemias and worked diligently at these studies, clinically and in the pharmacology lab at McGill with his friend Sanford Rosenthal who had come from Johns Hopkins to hold a post in the Department of Pharmacology as assistant professor. Sy Greenspon was among the leading activists promoting the building of The Jewish Hospital. This culminated in 1929 by the campaign for funds and in 1934 by the opening of the hospital. I have no knowledge whatever about why Sy Greenspon was not made an important member of the staff of The Jewish Hospital. The powers in charge of the institution chose an older man with more experience in university life, Dr. Joseph Kauffman, and gave him the task of organizing the medical staff.

Greenspon continued the practice of internal medicine and research until the late fifties, when he went abroad, ostensibly for a sabatical year. However he

did not return to Montreal. I last saw him at the Edinburgh Infirmary when I was on a special visit with Professor Gilchrist in 1959. When I walked into the lecture theatre and looked up I saw Sy sitting in the audience. Later we met briefly. He did not speak of returning to Montreal. I know he died about ten years later and was interred at the Shaar Hashomayim Cemetery but we were not in correspondence. I do know that he corresponded with Harry, who gave him brotherly support.

LOUIS GROSS

On the 17th of October 1937 newspapers all over the globe headlined the tragic news of a disastrous accident when the airplane "Mainliner" en route from Chicago to Los Angeles crashed against Hayden's Peak. All occupants on the plane perished. Louis Gross was on that plane. He had boarded it in high spirits on his way to a new job and a new development in his career. He was to add clinical research to his studies in experimental medicine and had been appointed to the staff of The University of California. In preparation for this, he had spent two months with Paul Dudley White in the autumn of 1937. Before leaving for Chicago he visited Montreal. There was a party for him at Alton Goldbloom's house and at mine. He spoke glowingly of the prospect of flying. Alton Goldbloom was not convinced. He had in mind the fact that at that time flying was still a rather dangerous way of travelling. This proved to be the case, and a very promising career was interrupted at the age of 42. The funeral took place on the 24th of October 1937; Rabbi Abramovitz officiated, and Dr. Emmanuel Libman of New York pronounced the eulogy. The community was well represented by hundreds of people who crowded into St. Urbain Street between Pine Avenue and Duluth Avenue. There were various estimates of the numbers. I was there and it was my impression that many thousands were present. The police estimated about 3,000. In December of 1937 a memorial service was held at The Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue. Rabbi Abramovitz again officiated. The presentations were made by Harry Goldblatt, Dr. Paul Dudley White, Dr. Charles F. Martin, Dean of the Medical Faculty and Arthur Mirsky, one of the younger men who came under Louis Gross' influence. Harry Goldblatt was unable to come himself and Alton Goldbloom read his address. Each one dealt with a different fact of Louis Gross's life. In 1938 the first annual Louis Gross Memorial Lecture was delivered by Harry Goldblatt, dealing with hypertension. Since then, the lecture has been an annual event. It is given under the auspices of The Montreal Clinical Society at The Jewish General Hospital.

A few weeks ago I spoke with Dr. Nathan Freedman about Louis Gross be-

cause Nathan was a classmate of Louis' at Aberdeen School. He remembers that Louis Gross was the brightest boy in the class. However, to everybody's surprise, and Nat Freedman's no less than all others, Louis Gross did not get the scholarship. It was Nat who got it. After Louis Gross's death I spoke with his sister Mrs. Toba Berkovitz. She told me that Louis was always the brightest boy in school even though he did not study much. Apparently, Louis did not prepare himself adequately for the exams at Aberdeen School. This was a lesson for him which seems to have had good effect because at the university he won many prizes. However he was not as popular as Harry Goldblatt. Some of the older men may have resented the fact that he was indeed the brightest and the youngest member of the class. He was also a little conceited in his behaviour.

An event which I witnessed may serve as an example. One evening in the autumn of 1915 at a monthly meeting of The Medical Undergraduate Society Louis Gross led a discussion in the diagnosis of an interesting case. On such occasions, after all the discussions were over the man who prepared the case announced what the diagnosis was as proven at the hospital. In the course of the evening one of the men, a Mr. Oliver, disagreed acutely with Louis and cited a new book as his principal authority. Louis then took the floor, citing the very same authority in support of his own diagnosis. After the meeting I joined the four G's as we walked along Pine Avenue to Park Avenue; there at the corner there was the Pine's Ice Cream Parlor. We sat at the counter for awhile; there was much talk going on still about the evening's case. Then during the lull I quietly said to Louis, "Could you tell me how both you and Oliver could cite the same authority in support of opposite conclusions?" He promptly answered, "Oliver never read that book and neither did I."

Harry and Louis meant what they said when they talked about the need for more research at McGill University. Immediately after graduation Louis was appointed a Douglas Memorial Fellow. This provided him with a modest income during his research activities. He principally studied aspects of circulation and in particular the blood supply to the heart, that is, the coronary arteries and veins. This work led to the publication of a monograph on the subject which has become a classic. It was published in 1921, the year in which he married Gertie Gittleson and the year in which he was appointed a Bert Memorial Fellow. They sailed together for England. There she studied Music; she was a very talented pianist and a scholarly musicologist. Louis spent the three years working in anthropology with Sir Arthur Keith, biochemistry and also in physiology under Starling at University College in London. After a tour of the continent

Louis and Gertie returned to North America but not to Montreal. They went to New York. Their patron there, Dr. Emmanuel Libman, was organizing matters so that Louis would obtain an important appointment at Mount Sinai Hospital. This was consummated in 1926 when he became the assistant and shortly afterwards the director of the Department of Laboratories, the most prestigious appointment in the Jewish medical world. The Mount Sinai Hospital was the most important in North America. During the next eleven years he created a very progressive and large Department of Laboratories. He engaged men who remained in the department for the remainder of their careers, and produced very important work himself. He completed an important study in rheumatic fever and began to work on the coronary circulation. It was in this direction that his work was due to progress when conditions made it wise for him to extend his interests to clinical cardiology and to go to California to initiate a new career. The crash of the "Mainliner" against Hayden's Peak interrupted a brilliant life at the age of 42.