

Stumbling across a piece of history

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You wouldn't think organizing a filing cabinet could be anything more than pure drudgery. Sifting through old logbooks and out-of-date user manuals all in hopes of scraping together enough space to store current logbooks and user manuals doesn't appeal to any of us. Yet lying flat, at the bottom of the second drawer down, was a piece of history I didn't expect to find.

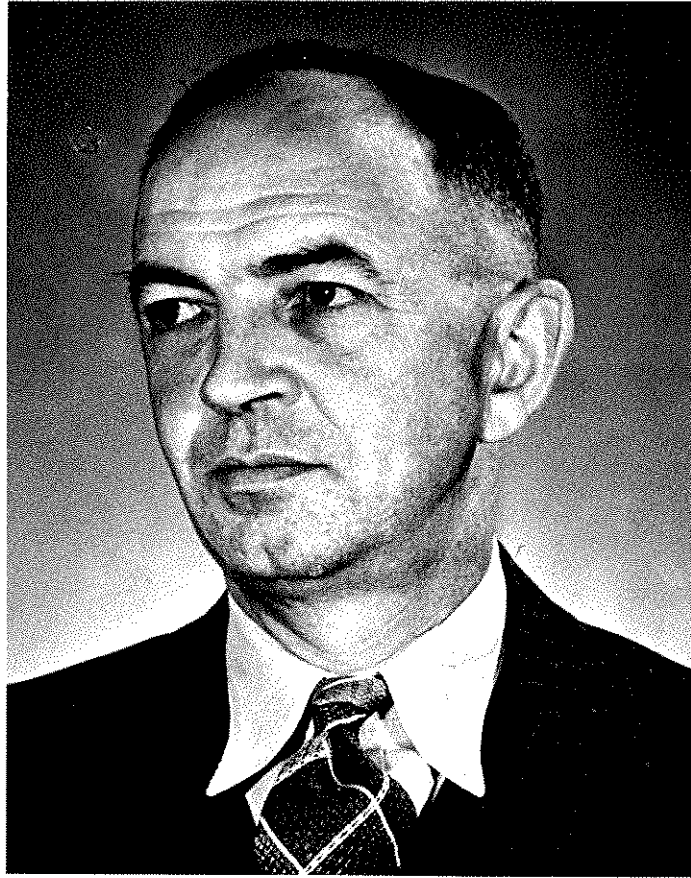
In a folder labeled Supervoltage - Clinical Experiences in the Therapeutic Use of 22 MeV X-rays was an original manuscript written by T.A. Watson and C.C. Burkell. In the folder were four bundles of papers: the manuscript, references, figures and letters between the author and the editor at the *American Journal of Roentgenology and Radium Therapy*.

Clinical Experiences in the Therapeutic Use of 22 Mev. X-rays *

T.A. Watson, M.B., Ch.B., D.M.R., and C.C. Burkell, M.D., D.M.R.(T.),
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The betatron, developed by Kerst^{13,14,15}, is an instrument which produces electrons or x-rays of very high energy, without the use of correspondingly high voltages. In the summer of 1948, a 25 Mev. betatron was installed at the Physics Department of the University of Saskatchewan. The instrument itself was purchased by the Canadian Atomic Energy Control Board and the building which houses it was constructed by the Saskatchewan Provincial Government. Following a period of about nine months during which numerous physical investigations of the machine were made, the actual treatment of certain selected advanced cases of malignant disease was started in March of 1949. Prior to this time, only one patient had been treated with high energy x-rays of the order of 22 Mev.²⁸. Although only little more than a year has elapsed since the start of these experiments, it is thought worthwhile recording clinical experience with the machine at this time, since several centres will probably be using it in the near future, and there is no guidance in the literature concerning the therapeutic use of x-rays of energies above 2 Mev.

Figure 1: The manuscript was read in London at the *Sixth International Congress of Radiology*, July, 1950. Following his return T.A. Watson submitted the article for publication in the *American Journal of Roentgenology and Radium Therapy*.



Harold Batho died in the Vancouver General Hospital on Thursday, June 13th, after some years of failing health. During his career he contributed greatly to the profession of physics and to radiological physics in particular, and his presence will be missed.

His career as a physicist began in Brandon, Manitoba, where he graduated with his Bachelor's degree in 1927. In 1933 he received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Between 1933 and 1945 he held teaching appointments at the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Toronto and the University of Manitoba. In 1945 he moved to Vancouver to take a post with the B.C. Research Council. It was during the next few years that his attraction to radiological physics developed, resulting in his full-time appointment as physicist to the British Columbia Cancer Institute in 1948. At that time he was one of only a handful of physicists in Canada working in the medical field.

He was one of the original members of the Canadian Association of Medical Physicists which later became the Division of Medical and Biological Physics of CAP, and he saw the division grow to its present size of some 120 members. His influence and guidance played a part in the development of the division to its present high status and as members we all owe him a debt.

During his twenty years as Head of the Physics Department at the Institute, his personal efforts played a large part in the development of the Institute into a radiotherapy centre of recognized excellence. One of his great interests was the teaching of physics to radiological technicians and residents and through his appointment at the University of British Columbia, to graduate students in radiological physics. Many a student technician or resident, not only in Vancouver but in other parts of Canada, has prepared for his final physics examination with the help of "Batho's Notes".

He was the author of numerous publications in the radiological field dealing with the fundamental aspects of radiation dosimetry and

with their application to the practice of radiotherapy. Any paper by Harold Batho is a model of conciseness, clarity and elegant style.

In 1968, the B.C. Cancer Institute agreed to participate in the construction and operation of a radiobiology-radiotherapy laboratory at the TRIUMF accelerator at U.B.C. to investigate the possibility of using negative pi-mesons for radiotherapy. Harold Batho accepted an appointment as research physicist to devote his time to this project. It is largely due to the energy and enthusiasm which he showed in enlisting financial support from the National Cancer Institute and the Health Resources Fund that the project was initially undertaken and that it has progressed to its present stage. It is indeed regrettable that he will not be present when the first pions enter the medical laboratory later this year.

Those of us who were privileged to work with him will remember him for his scientific insight and penetration and his integrity. He would not tolerate anything he characterized as "sloppy" and although students might sometimes find his standards irksome, his demands were met because it was recognized that he imposed even stricter standards on his own work. Furthermore, he was always prepared to spend whatever time was necessary to resolve an ambiguity or to track down the source of a difficulty. His medical colleagues knew they could rely on him absolutely. His straight-forward approach in dealing with other departments built within the Institute an atmosphere of reciprocal trust and cooperation from which we still benefit.

As a friend and colleague he was a warm and generous person with a keen sense of humour. In fact, the adjective "Bathonian" is still used around the Institute to describe a comment or retort which is particularly apt and witty. He will be sadly missed by his wife Kay, his daughter Eleanor, his son Gerry and by his colleagues and friends.

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R.O. Kornelsen