

OBITUARY  
HENRY R. VIETS, M.D.

Dr. Henry Rouse Viets, Consultant to the Historical Collections of the Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine since 1965, died after a brief illness on 5 July 1969, aged 79. Dr. Viets was a well-known neurologist, medical historian, and for 36 years a lecturer at the Harvard Medical School.

He specialized in the disease myasthenia gravis, and established the first clinic in the world for diagnosis and treatment of the disorder. At the Second International Symposium on Myasthenia Gravis in 1959, he received a bronze plaque commemorating his pioneering in the field. He was also honoured with the establishment of the Henry R. Viets Lectureship and the Henry R. Viets Scholarship in that year.

Born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1890, he graduated from Dartmouth College in 1912 and Harvard Medical School in 1916. He was appointed Moseley Travelling Fellow and spent 1916–17 studying with Sir William Osler at Oxford. After serving in the Army Medical Corps from 1917 to 1919, he joined the Neurology staff at Massachusetts General Hospital, and lectured at Harvard Medical School on neurology.

A widely-known medical historian and librarian, Dr. Viets was past President of the American Association for the History of Medicine, past Chairman of the Historical Committee of the Honorary Consultants of the Army Medical Library, and Librarian (later Curator) of the Boston Medical Library between 1938 and 1965.

Author of many texts on neurology and medical history, Dr. Viets served on the Editorial Board of the *New England Journal of Medicine* from 1927 to 1966, and had been editor of the *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association*. His numerous books and articles on medical history include: *A Brief History of Medicine in Massachusetts* (1930); *Medical History, Humanism, and the Student of Medicine* (1960); many biographical articles including studies of Stephen d'Irsay (1894–1934) (*Isis*, 1936, 24 (2), 370–74), and Harvey Cushing (*New Engl. J. Med.* 1939, 220 (14), 608–10; 1947, 236, 153–55). Whilst Curator of the Boston Medical Library, he contributed regularly to the *New England Journal of Medicine* short articles under the heading 'From the Curator's Notebook'.

Dr. Viets was elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the American Antiquarian Society, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, the American Medical Association, the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Historical Section of the Swedish Medical Society, etc. He was the only American to be elected a member of the Osler Club of London.

The Henry R. Viets Memorial Fund, honouring his long services as Librarian and Curator of the Boston Medical Library, is being established in the Countway Library. Donations may be sent to The Henry R. Viets Memorial Fund, The Countway Library of Medicine, 10 Shattuck Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02115. Income from the fund will be used to purchase rare books and manuscripts.