

Silas Burroughs, the Man who Made Wellcome: American Ambition and Global Enterprise *by Julia Sheppard*

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Sheppard played a key role in the acquisition of Silas Burroughs' papers for the Wellcome Library. His death in 1895, aged 49, meant that he has been largely overshadowed by his business partner, Henry Wellcome. Sheppard draws on a wide range of international sources, supported throughout by helpful footnotes and bibliography.

Her lively account sets Burroughs' life story firmly in context, painting a picture of his personality, relationships, political preoccupations and social life alongside his professional trajectory. Sheppard provides detailed insights into Burroughs' experiences in his own words, such as his journal in London and notes on his Indian contacts. Chapters focussing on Burroughs' extensive international travel are particularly evocative. Sheppard also provides enjoyable details: in bitterly cold January 1894, Burroughs Wellcome provided staff with a daily Quinine tabloid and used eucalyptus in the ventilation to ward off 'flu.

Sheppard's core mission is to rehabilitate Burroughs' reputation, primarily by examining the development and disintegration of his partnership with Wellcome. With Burroughs the older and wealthier partner, the unequal financial basis of their business allowed the firm to grow until what worked as complementary strengths became irreconcilable differences. Confident and impetuous Burroughs operated in stark contrast to Wellcome's methodical conservatism, including drawing on his personal finances to bypass Wellcome's caution. Sheppard portrays Burroughs' expertise in building relationships and quick understanding of opportunities as key to the partnership's success, while Wellcome viewed Burroughs as extravagant, eclipsing his own input.

What is missing in the Burroughs' archive is both sides of the significant correspondence that he maintained with his many contacts, particularly his wife Olive, and Henry Wellcome. These gaps resonate as the challenges in his relationship with Olive, and ultimately breakdown of his partnership with Wellcome were exacerbated by communication issues, created largely by Burroughs' continual drive to travel and expand the company's global markets.

The book's obvious readership is pharmacy historians but as a fascinating analysis of the dynamics between Burroughs and Wellcome, it will appeal to a wider audience, presenting an intriguing biography of this lesser-known pioneer.

Briony Hudson
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