

**MEDICAL CENTER ARCHIVES  
OF  
NEWYORK-PRESBYTERIAN/WEILL CORNELL**

**1300 York Avenue # 34  
New York, NY 10065**

**Finding Aid To  
THE JULIA STIMSON, RN (1881-1948) PAPERS**

**Dates of Papers:  
1894-1949**

**43 Linear Inches  
(10 Boxes)**

**Finding Aid Prepared By:  
The Archival Staff  
Undated**

## Provenance

The papers of Julia C. Stimson are on indefinite loan to the Medical Archives of NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell. On September 14, 1968, Dr. Philip Moen Stimson, Julia's brother, signed an agreement with the U.S. Army Medical Department formalizing the loan of the memorabilia and personal papers of his sister which he had donated to the Army in 1957: On December 9, 1968 four cartons were sent from the Army and placed in temporary storage in Manhattan. In 1974, upon completion of the Stimson Room in the Cornell University Medical College Library, the records were removed from storage, reboxed and refoldered and a preliminary inventory was created.

There are other items included in this collection. In addition to the materials on loan from the Army, a scrapbook of Major Stimson's Army Nurse Corp Recruitment tour, 1942-1944, was received from the Cornell University Medical College Library. Box 9 of these papers of Julia C. Stimson contains materials from sources other than the Army, and are the property of The Medical Archives.

## Biographical Note

Julia C. Stimson was born in Worcester, Massachusetts on May 26, 1881 into the prestigious family of Rev. Henry Stimson. She attended Brearly School in New York City for her preliminary education and went on to Vassar College, graduating in 1901. In 1908, she received her diploma from the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses and took the position of Superintendent of Nurses at Harlem Hospital. In 1910 Stimson moved to St. Louis, becoming the first Director of the Social Services Department for the Children's Hospital and the Washington University Hospital the next year. In 1913 she was appointed the Superintendent of Nurses for both institutions. She returned to school, attending Washington University, and received her Masters degree in 1917 with the completion of her dissertation on "Compulsory Health Insurance".

On May 15, 1917, Stimson became a member of the Army Nurses Corps and sailed to Europe as the Chief Nurse of Base Hospital 21, the St. Louis Unit. She was stationed in France and served the Hospital group until April 1918 when she was assigned the duties of the Head of all Nurses associated with the American Red Cross Nurses in France. In December, she also became Director of Nursing Service of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) and was in charge of the Army Nurses Corps.

Ordered to return to America in July of 1919, Stimson was appointed Acting Superintendent of the Army Nurses Corps (later becoming full superintendent) and Dean of the Army School of Nursing. When Congress amended the National Defense Act in 1920, the amendatory act authorized that the Superintendent of the Nurses Corps have the rank of Major, thus making Major

Julia C. Stimson the first woman in the Army of that grade.

Besides being the recipient of many honorary awards and medals for her wartime services (the American Distinguished Service Medal, British Royal Red Cross, etc.), Major Stimson was the author of two books, the Nurses Handbook of Drugs and Solutions(1910) and Finding Themselves- The Letters of an American Army Chief Nurse in a British Hospital in France (1919). She published numerous articles pertaining to nursing as a career, and gave many speeches attempting to resolve the problems and obstacles nurses frequently faced. She was President of the American Association of University Women, an active member and President of the Alumni Association of Cornell University-New York Hospital School of Nursing, as well as President of the American Women's Association of New York City, and a founding member of the Army and Navy Country Club, Washington, D.C. She retired from her post as Dean of the Army School of Nursing in 1933 and as Superintendent of the Corps in 1937. During World War II she returned to duty for a short time to help recruit nurses from around the country to go overseas. She also served as an air-raid warden. She was given the rank of Colonel by an Act of Congress in August 1945. Colonel Stimson died suddenly in September of 1948.

### Scope and Content Note

The great strength of the Julia Stimson Collection is the insights that it offers into Major Stimson as a person. Her diaries (Box 1 & 2), while containing only brief entries for each day, are revelatory of her activities and her habits. The clippings, poems and inspirational phrases (Box 7) that she saw fit to keep, offer a valuable glimpse at her thoughts and values. Her correspondence from the very early years while still a school girl in New York City (Box 3, f.3), shows her intelligence, wit, and the capacity to go forward and attend to duty that were hallmarks of her life and career.

Major Stimson was, in many ways, a product of her time and of her social station, (this is particularly evident in her correspondence and diaries), but the turbulence of the years she lived through and her own strong qualities combined many times to push her where other women were either unwilling or unable to go. She used the position that she gained as a leader in nursing to urge nurses in their struggle to proclaim and maintain themselves as professionals. A brief glance at the titles of her papers and speeches bears this out (Box 7 & 8), as does her involvement in several nursing organizations. Unfortunately, her day-to-day activities along these lines are not documented to any great extent in this collection. There are a few scattered pieces of correspondence (Box 4, f.10, Box 5, f.1, 9), a notebook on Nurses Ideals and Ethics that Julia C. Stimson compiled of clippings, articles and notes of her own (Box 5, f.6), her Papers and Speeches, and four files from the 1940's on the National Nurses Council for War Service, International Council of Nurses and other groups to which she belonged.

Julia's work in and dedication to the Army and the Army School of Nursing are

displayed in her medals and awards, the scrapbook- of her Army recruitment tour of 1943-44, and in her correspondence, especially during the active period of the War Years when her letters served as the basis for the book Finding Themselves (edited by Major Stimson's father). Along with the files of work-related papers: memoranda and correspondence (Box 4, f.9 & 10), and official reports from 1918 and 1943 (Box 5, f.3), there is also a very personal letter (Box 4, f.3 12/22/18) written to her family, where the Major outlines her reasons for allowing the publication of her letters and her feelings about her part in organizing the nurses in France. This was prompted by some unexpectedly critical reactions to Finding Themselves from some of the Major's nursing friends. As with the files on nursing organizations, the amount of material recording Major Stimson's Army years is small. It is to be hoped that her official papers are in the files of the Army Nurse Corps, Army Medical Department in Washington, D.C.

As stated above, this collection is most notable for its documentation of the personal life of the Major, her close relationships with her family, her personal business affairs. There are scrap-books and clippings; the household book she kept during the 1940's detailing her properties, furnishings, bond purchases, etc. (Box 6, f.1), her health records (Box 3, f.6), family wills, including her own of September 1948 and that of her ward, Rodney Richmond (Box 7, f-8). This, indeed, seems to be one of the very few files containing any mention of Miss Richmond.

This is a wonderful resource for anyone interested in women's history, family studies, W.W.I, 20th century nursing and wartime nursing. There is a large group of photographic and non-manuscript material to further add to the vividness of the picture of Major Stimson and her times.

### Non Manuscript Material

Among the non-print material are an abundance of photographs and a photographic scrapbook covering Julia's life and career. There are portraits of Major Stimson in uniform and in civilian clothes. There are many candid's of her family and friends, abroad and at home. These have been removed to the personal photographic collections. See photo catalog. Other nonprint materials include a sewing box and a box of medals, buttons, and military insignia. These can be found in Box 9 & 10 of this collection.

### Subjects

Alumni, School of Nursing  
Reprints  
Stimson, Philip Moen  
Wartime Activity

## Container List

### Box 1

f.1-6 Diaries, 1903-1931

### Box 2

f.-4 Diaries, 1932-1948

f.5 Diaries--Clippings taken from JCS' Diaries

### Box 3

f.1 Girlhood Holy Bible

f.2 Biographical Summaries and Correspondence Requesting  
Biographical Information.

f.3 Letters of Julia Stimson to her Father and Mother,  
c 1895-1911

f.4 Class Day Booklet (1901)

f.5 College Year Book, 1901

f.6 Health Records of Julia Stimson, 1903-1943  
including professional paper by E.B. Bronson, M.D.  
and the X-ray of her hand after it was broken in an  
accident.

f.7 "Compulsory Health Insurance" - Dissertation, June 1917.

f.8 Family Wills and Correspondence regarding Legal Matters,  
1917, 1938-1940, 1948.

f.9 Scrapbook, Part 3

### Box 4

f.1 Letter of Appointment, Army Nurse Corps., May 15, 1917

f.2 Letters to family (from Julia), 5/17-12/17

f.3 Letters from France, January 1918-December 1918  
[including the originals used in her book Finding  
Themselves]

f.4 Letters from France, 1/7/19 - 7/28/19

f.5 Letters to Major Julia C. Stimson, ANC, from Bereaved  
Relatives of British Wounded or Killed in WWI,  
1917-1918.

f.6 Letters of the Rev. Henry A. Stimson to his Daughter,  
Julia, 1917-1934.

f.7 Letters Used in Finding Themselves and Publication Copies,

f.8 Reviews, Letters, and Correspondence with Publishers regarding  
Finding Themselves, 1917-1940

#### Box 4 (cont)

- f.9 Military Orders, Travel Vouchers, Passport, etc., 1917-1943
- f.10 Official Correspondence, 1917-1943.
- f.11 Pamphlets and Newsletter Pertaining to WWI Base Hospital #21

#### Box 5

- f.1 Personal Correspondence, 1917-1936
- f.2 Message from King George of England, 1918
- f.3 Official Reports, 1918, 1943
- f.4 Citations, Decorations and Honorary Degree of JCS, 1919 -1937.
- f.5 Scrapbook, April 1920-November 1926.
- f.6 Notebook-Nursing Ideals, Ethics, etc. [compiled by JCS], 1920 - c1938
- f.7 Correspondence between JCS and Col. Walter D. Smith, relative to sale of property in Arlington County, Virginia, 1925-1938
- f.8 Army-Navy Nurses Corps Monument, Arlington National Cemetery, April 1937-June 1944
- f.9 Correspondence regarding Retirement, Recall, and Duty, etc., May 1937-September 1948.
- f.10 Notes of JCS on the Duties of Air Raid Wardens, 10/21/1941

#### Box 6

- f.1 Household Book, 1940's--Inventory of Properties and Furnishings, Bonds, etc.
- f.2 Letters, Telegrams, Resolutions, Articles, etc., on the Death of JCS, September, 1948 - January 1949
- f.3 Resolution from District 16 of the New York Nurses Association on Death of JCS, Adopted, October 26, 1948.
- f.4 Undated Correspondence
- f.5 Humorous Drawings of WWI
- f.6 Text for Humorous Program on Women's Activities
- f.7 Clippings

#### Box 7

- f.1 Clippings, Poems, etc.
- f.2 Poems, Notes and Genealogical Notes, etc.
- f.3 Clippings, Postcards, etc., Taken from Photograph Files, 1917 -1932.
- f.4 Clippings Relating to War Service, H.A. Stimson's Death, and JCS, 1917-1942

Box 7 (cont)

- f.5-6 Clippings Focusing on Career of JCS and the U.S. Army Nursing Service (photocopies and originals)
- f.7 Galley proof for articles entitled "Women in the A.E.F.", by Gladys Moon Jones, Published in Ladies Home Journal, 1928/1929
- f.8 Correspondence between JCS and the Curtis Publishing Company  
Relative to the Articles in the Ladies Home Journal, 9/1928-4/1929
- f.9 Papers and Speeches, 1910-1919.

Box 8

- f. 1-4 Paper and Speeches, 1920-1943.

Box 9

Sewing Box

- f.1 National Nursing Council for War Service--Reports, Meeting Minutes, News, 1933, 1944-February 1946.
- f.2 Nursing Organizations--Correspondence, Reports, Newsletter, September 1945-February 1946.
- f.3 International Council of Nurses--Correspondence regarding Policy, Material from October 1944 Meetings, Reports, 1944-1947.
- f.4 "Report on visit to U.S.A. and Canada", by Lt. Col (Miss) A.L. Winner, RAMC, Oct 28- December 9, 1944.

Box 10

Medals, buttons, insignia, membership cards.