

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

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

**Finding Aid To
THE LEWIS ATTERBURY STIMSON, MD (1844-1917) PAPERS**

**Dates of Papers:
1861-1927**

**15 Linear Inches
(3 Boxes)**

**Finding Aid Prepared By:
Stephen Novak
Assistant Archivist
1980s**

Provenance

This collection was formed by combining L. A. Stimson material in the Philip Moen Stimson Papers (accessioned 1974) with two boxes of L. A. Stimson reprints received from the Pathology Department Library (which received them from Stimson himself) and the miscellaneous items acquired by the Archives over several years. The constant demand for material on and information about L. A. Stimson warrants these materials being drawn into a single collection.

Biographical Note

Lewis Atterbury Stimson was born August 24, 1844 in Paterson, New Jersey, the second son of Henry Clark and Julia Atterbury Stimson. He was educated in the Paterson schools and at Yale College from which he graduated in 1863.

After European travel and service in the Union Army, Dr. Stimson entered, in 1866, his father's New York banking firm. That same year in Paris he married Candace T. Wheeler. Two children, Henry Lewis (later *Secretary* of State and of War) and Candace Catherine Stimson, were born to the couple before Candace T. Stimson's premature death in 1876.

Dissatisfied with his life as banker and stockbroker, Lewis A. Stimson left New York in 1871 with family to study medicine in Paris. Returning in 1873 he entered Bellevue Hospital Medical College receiving his M.D. in 1875.

He was Visiting Surgeon at Presbyterian Hospital from 1876 to 1889, Attending Surgeon at The New York Hospital and its emergency branch, The House of Relief, from 1888 to 1909 as well as being Visiting Surgeon at Bellevue Hospital for many years after 1879.

In addition to being a practicing surgeon, Dr. Stimson was a medical educator. From 1878 to 1898 he taught physiology, anatomy and, finally, surgery, at the Medical College of the University of the City of New York (now New York University). He was instrumental in founding the Cornell University Medical College in 1898 after a dispute with N.Y.U. and was CUMC's first Professor of Surgery from 1898 to 1917. Dr. Stimson also had a large part in the initial affiliation of New York Hospital and Cornell University Medical College in 1912, inducing his friend, George F. Baker, to put up \$250,000 for such purpose.

Dr. Stimson, trained in Europe just as the discoveries of Drs. Pasteur and Lister were receiving wide publicity, became a leading American proponent of the germ theory of infection and of antisepsis in surgery. In 1876 he performed one of the first operations in the U.S. using Lister's methods and the year before had written "Bacteria and Their Influence Upon The Origin and Development of

Septic Complications of Wounds," a pioneer work in the field. His long experience as Surgeon at the House of Relief was used in writing his influential Practical Treatise on Fractures and Dislocations which went through eight editions between 1899 and 1917.

After retiring from active practice in 1909, Dr. Stimson continued teaching and writing. He took a great interest in the First World War, visiting the front in 1915 and 1916 to bring anti-tetanus serum to battlefield hospitals. He died September 17, 1917 at Shinnecock Hills, Long Island.

Scope and Content

This collection contains correspondence, notebooks, a diary, will and reprints as well as biographies and memorial statements relating to L. A. Stimson.

A large part of the correspondence consists of typewritten excerpts made by Dr. Stimson's nephew, Philip Moen Stimson, from original letters now presumably in the Henry L. Stimson Papers at Yale University. The correspondence also contains letters from Henry L. Stimson, Harvey Cushing and William S. Halsted.

The diary was kept in 1916 when Dr. Stimson made a trip to French military hospitals. The notebooks consist of three volumes of medical notes taken in Paris, 1872-1873. The other major component of the collection is memorial statements and biographies relative to Dr. Stimson, most of them dating to 1917-1918 after Dr. Stimson's death. There is, in addition, a three-volume bound set of Dr. Stimson's reprints, several loose reprints and a copy of his Civil War Memories published in 1918. The reprints, besides scientific articles, contain several speeches made by Dr. Stimson, including one made at the opening of the CUMC Building in 1900.

Non-Manuscript Material

An 1867 deed between Stimson and Mason Young for a plot on East 13th Street has been removed to Oversize Box I. Photographs of Dr. Stimson can be found in the Philip M. Stimson Papers as well as in the regular Biographical Photo Collection.

Subjects

Addresses
Biography
Class Notebooks
Cushing, Harvey
Diaries
France
Halsted, William S.

Subjects (Cont)

House of Relief
Obituaries
Pasteur, Louis
Payne, Oliver H.
Reprints
Surgery
University of the City of New York, Medical Department
Wartime Activity

Box 1

- f.1 Correspondence, 1865-1917
- f.2 Correspondence, 1872-1918: Excerpts edited by Philip M. Stimson
- f.3 Correspondence re Pasteur and antiseptic operation, 1875-1876
- f.4 Miscellaneous Papers, including Yale composition, 1861-1915
- f.5 MacCracken, Henry (Chancellor, N.Y.U.): Humorous letter to L. A. Stimson re formation of Cornell University Medical College, 1898
- f.6 George Rives to L. A. Stimson re Stimson's retirement from The New York Hospital, November 4, 1909
- f.7 Diary: Trip to France, 1916
- f.8 Notebook, c. 1916
- f.9 Will (1893) and correspondence re L. A. Stimson's death (1917)
- f.10 Memorial Statements/Biographies, 1917-1927
- f.11 Cornell University Board of Trustees: Resolution honoring L. A. Stimson, 1917
- f.12 CUMC Faculty Resolution Honoring L. A. Stimson, 1917
- f.13 Paris Medical School Notebook, 1873
- f.14 Paris Medical School Notebooks, c. 1872-1873, 2 v.
- f.15 L. A. Stimson's Bible

Box 2

Reprints, unbound 1874-1914
Operative Surgery, 1895

Box 3

Reprints, bound, 3v, 1874-1914
Civil War Memories of Lewis A. Stimson, M.D.: written by L. A. Stimson, 1914;
published in 1918 with a biography of Stimson by his close friend,
Edward L. Keyes, M.D.