

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

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

**Finding Aid to the
THE JULIA C. STIMSON, RN (1881-1948) PAPERS**

**Dates of Papers:
1894-1949**

**54.5 Linear Inches
(10 Boxes)**

ABSTRACT:

Julia C. Stimson graduated from the New York Hospital Training School for Nurses in 1908 and became the first woman to ever receive the rank of Major in the United States Army. She was later promoted to the rank of Colonel after World War II. The Julia C. Stimson, RN Papers contain correspondence, diaries, newspaper clippings, military paperwork, publications, speeches, and artifacts related to her life and career.

PROVENANCE:

The papers of Julia C. Stimson are on indefinite loan to the Medical Center Archives of New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine. On September 14, 1986, Dr. Philip Moen Stimson, Julia's brother, signed an agreement with the U.S. Army Medical Department formalizing the loan of memorabilia and personal papers of his sister, which had originally donated to the Army in 1957. On December 9, 1986, four cartons were sent from the Army and placed in temporary storage in New York, NY. In 1974, upon completion of the Stimson Room in the Cornell University Medical College Library, the records were removed from storage and placed in the Medical Center Archives.

In addition to the materials on loan from the Army there are other items included in the collection, which are fully under the purview of the Medical Center Archives. This includes a scrapbook of Julia C. Stimson's Army Nurse Corp Recruitment tour (1942-1944), which was received from the Cornell University Medical College Library.

ADMINISTRATIVE/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 at 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 oversaw 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 (including the American Distinguished Service Medal, British Royal Red Cross, among others), 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.

Stimson 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. She was also a founding member of the Army and Navy Country Club in Washington, D.C.

Major Stimson 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 Julia C. Stimson, RN Papers contains correspondence, diaries, newspaper clippings, military paperwork, publications, speeches, and artifacts related to her life and career. Some personal materials from Julia Stimson's early life, such as her childhood bible and college yearbook, as well as items from her time as a nursing school student, such as her report card and dissertation entitled "Compulsory Health Insurance," are also housed within this collection.

The diaries, which span 1908-1948, provide brief glimpses into Stimson's career and personal life. Though the entries are generally short – usually no more than a sentence long - they provide insight into Julia Stimson's daily activities and thoughts.

The personal and official includes letters from family, friends, nursing colleagues, and the U.S. military. Stimson's 1917-1919 correspondence provides first-hand observations about her experiences as a nurse during World War I, and these letters later served as the basis for her book *Finding Themselves- The Letters of an American Army Chief Nurse in a British*

Hospital in France (1919). The wartime letters from Julia Stimson to her parents also include messages from her brother, Dr. Philip Moen Stimson (Cornell University Medical College, Class of 1914), who also served during World War I and briefly spent time recuperating from a shrapnel injury at Julia's base hospital in France. Julia Stimson's later correspondence focuses strongly upon her publications about nursing, administrative work, and her daily routines. The collection also includes correspondence regarding Julia Stimson's death.

Colonel Stimson was a strong advocate for the nursing profession and her commitment is demonstrated through her many publications and speeches, as well as her membership in several nursing organizations (such as the National Nurses Council for War Service and International Council of Nurses), all of which are documented within the collection. Her work and dedication toward the Army and the Army School of Nursing are displayed in her military portfolio, letters of appointment, medals and awards, the scrapbook of her Army recruitment tour of 1943-1944, official papers, as well as in her wartime correspondence.

The newspaper clippings generally document Colonel Stimson's experience as a nurse during World War I, as well as her many later career achievements, such as book reviews and citation announcements.

Additionally, the collection contains scrapbook materials (mostly photocopies) and a household book she kept during the 1940's detailing her properties, furnishings, and bond purchases. Copies of Colonel Stimson's health records and family wills can also be found within the collection.

Finally, the collection includes a number of artifacts. This includes a sewing box, medals, buttons, various military insignia, ration books, professional cards, and other items presumably collected by or from Julia C. Stimson.

ARRANGEMENT:

The collection's documents have been arranged in alphabetical order by folder title. The artifacts have been placed at the end of the collection in Box 10.

CONDITIONS GOVERNING ACCESS:

Materials containing protected health information (PHI) and personally identifiable information (PII) have been restricted and require additional, advance permissions from the Medical Center Archives to review. Additionally, Julia Stimson's various diaries and her X-Ray are fragile and require advance permission from the Medical Center Archives to view.

LANGUAGE OF MATERIAL:

English, French

PROCESSING NOTE:

This collection was originally processed in 1974 upon completion of the Stimson Room in the Cornell University Medical College Library by an unknown staff member, after the records were moved from their temporary storage location to the Medical Center Archives.

Medical Archives Assistant Rebecca Snyder reprocessed the collection in 2021, including rehousing the collection, updating the restrictions and Scope and Content note, adding an arrangement note, processing note, language note, restrictions note, and an abstract, and arranging the folders in alphabetical order.

ACCESS POINTS:

New York Hospital. Training School for Nurses. Alumnae Association
Stimson, Philip Moen
Stimson, Julia C. (Julia Catherine), 1881-1948
Correspondence
World War I, 1914-1918
Nursing

PREFERRED CITATION:

Item Name or Identification; Box #, Folder #; Julia C. Stimson, RN Papers, 1894-1949 (Medical Center Archives of New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell, New York, NY).

RELATED MATERIAL:

The Photograph Collection includes an abundance of photographs and a photographic scrapbook covering Julia C. Stimson's life and career, which were removed from the Julia C. Stimson, RN Papers by Medical Center Archives staff at an earlier, unknown date. The photographs include portraits of Major Stimson in uniform and in civilian clothes, candid photographs of her family and friends both abroad and at home.

CONTENTS LIST:**Box 1:**

Folder:	Description:
1	Army-Navy Nurses Corps Monument, Arlington National Cemetery, 1937 April-1944 June

- 2 **Biographical Summaries and Correspondence Requesting
Biographical Information, 1922-1936, 1950 (RESTRICTED-PHI)**
- 3 Citations Information/Announcement, 1919, 1939
- 4 Citations, Decorations and Honorary Degree of JCS,
1919-1937
- 5 Class Day Booklet, 1901
- 6 Clippings and Documents, undated
- 7 Clippings, 1920, 1941
- 8 Clippings Focusing on Career of JCS and the U.S. Army
Nursing Service (photocopies and originals), undated
- 9 Clippings Focusing on Career of JCS and the U.S. Army
Nursing Service (photocopies and originals), undated
- 10 **Clippings, Poems, etc., 1929-1946, undated
(RESTRICTED-PHI)**
- 11 Clippings, Postcards, etc., taken from Photograph Files,
1917-1932

Box 2:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Clippings Relating to War Service, H.A. Stimson's Death, and JCS,
1917-1942 |
| 2 | College Yearbook, 1901 |
| 3 | "Compulsory Health Insurance" - Dissertation, 1917 June |
| 4 | Correspondence, undated |
| 5 | Correspondence: Julia Stimson to her Father and Mother,
ca. 1895-1911 |
| 6 | Correspondence between Julia Stimson and Col. Walter D.
Smith, relative to sale of property in Arlington County, Virginia,
1925-1938 |
| 7 | Correspondence between Julia Stimson and the Curtis
Publishing Company re: Articles in the <u>Ladies Home Journal</u> ,
1928 September – 1929 April |
| 8 | Correspondence from the Rev. Henry A. Stimson to his
Daughter, Julia Stimson, 1917-1934 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |
| 9 | Correspondence from France (including the originals used in her
book <i>Finding Themselves</i>), 1918 January- December (Restricted-
PHI) |
| 10 | Correspondence from France, 7 January-28 July 1919
(RESTRICTED-PHI) |
| 11 | Correspondence (Official), 1917-1943 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |

Box 3:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Correspondence: Personal, 1917-1936 |

- 2 Correspondence regarding Retirement, Recall, and Duty, etc., 1937 May-1948 September (RESTRICTED-PHI)
- 3 Correspondence to family from Julia Stimson, 1917 May-December (RESTRICTED-PHI)
- 4 Correspondence to Julia Stimson from Bereaved Relatives of British Wounded or Killed in World War I, 1917-1918 (RESTRICTED-PHI)
- 5 Correspondence used in *Finding Themselves* and Publication Copies, 1917-1918 (RESTRICTED – PHI)
- 6 Death of Julia Stimson: Correspondence, Telegrams, Resolutions, Articles, etc., 1948 September-1949 January (RESTRICTED-PHI)
- 7 Diary, 1903-1906
- 8 Diary, 1907-1911

Box 4:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Diary, 1912-1916 |
| 2 | Diary, 1917-1921 |
| 3 | Diary, 1922-1926 |
| 4 | Diary, 1927-1931 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |
| 5 | Diary, 1932-1936 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |

Box 5:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Diary, 1937-1941 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |
| 2 | Diary, 1942-1946 |
| 3 | Diary, 1947-1948 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |
| 4 | Diaries -- Clippings taken from Julia C. Stimson's ' Diaries, 1903-1948 |
| 5 | Family Wills and Correspondence regarding Legal Matters, 1917, 1938-1940, 1948 (RESTRICTED-PHI) |
| 6 | Galley proof for articles entitled "Women in the A.E.F.", by Gladys Moon Jones, Published in <i>Ladies Home Journal</i> , 1928-1929 |
| 7 | Health Records of Julia Stimson including professional paper by E.B. Bronson, M.D and X-Ray, 1903-1943 (RESTRICTED-PHI, FRAGILE) |

Box 6:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Holy Bible from Childhood, 1894 |

- 2 **Household Book: Inventory of Properties and Furnishings, Bonds, etc., ca. 1940's (RESTRICTED-PH)**
 3 Humorous Drawings of World War I, undated
 4 International Council of Nurses: Correspondence regarding Policy, Material from October 1944 Meetings, Reports, 1944-1947
 5 Letter of Appointment, Army Nurse Corps., 1917 May 15
 6 Message from King George of England, 1918
 7 Military Orders, Travel Vouchers, Passport, etc., 1917-1943

Box 7:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | National Nursing Council for War Service: Reports, Meeting Minutes, News, 1933, 1944-1946 February |
| 2 | Notes of Julia Stimson on the Duties of Air Raid Wardens, 1941 October 21 |
| 3 | Notebook-Nursing Ideals, Ethics, etc. (compiled by Julia Stimson), 1920 - ca. 1938 |
| 4 | Nursing Organizations: Correspondence, Reports, Newsletter, 1945 September-1946 February |
| 5 | Official Reports, 1918, 1943 |
| 6 | Pamphlets and Newsletter Pertaining to World War I Base Hospital #21, 1917, 1919 |
| 7 | Papers and Speeches, 1910-1919 |
| 8 | Papers and Speeches (Folder 1 of 2), 1920-1929 (RESTRICTED-PH) |

Box 8:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|---|
| 1 | Papers and Speeches (Folder 2 of 2), 1920-1929 (RESTRICTED-PH) |
| 2 | Papers and Speeches, 1930-1937 (RESTRICTED-PH) |
| 3 | Papers and Speeches (Folder 1 of 2), 1938-1939 |
| 4 | Papers and Speeches (Folder 2 of 2), 1938-1939 |
| 5 | Paper and Speeches, 1940-1943 |
| 6 | Poems, Notes and Genealogical Notes, etc., undated |

Box 9:

- | Folder: | Description: |
|----------------|--|
| 1 | Report Card, 1908 |
| 2 | "Report on visit to U.S.A. and Canada", by Lt. Col A.L. Winner, RAMC, 28 October-1944 December 9 |
| 3 | Resolution from District 16 of the New York Nurses Association on Death of JCS, Adopted, 1948 October 26 |

- 4 Reviews and Correspondence with Publishers regarding
Finding Themselves, 1917-1940
- 5 Scrapbooks (originals), undated
- 6 Scrapbook, 1920 April-1926 November
- 7 Scrapbook - Part 3, 1915-1919, 1923, 1933, 1935, 1938-
1939
- 8 Telegram, 1918 November 7
- 9 Text for Humorous Program on Women's Activities, undated

Box 10: Artifacts