

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

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

**Finding Aid to the
Henry Heimlich, MD Papers**

**Dates:
1937-2017**

**9.25 Linear Feet
(13 Boxes)
0.968 GB
(129 files)**

REFERENCE CODE:US-NNCORMA-RGPPM-012

TITLE:Henry Heimlich, MD Papers

ABSTRACT:

Henry Heimlich was a thoracic surgeon and graduate of Cornell University (Class of 1941) and Cornell University Medical College (Class of 1943). The Henry Heimlich, MD Papers contain documents, analog and digital photographs, audiovisual material, and memorabilia documenting his life, career, inventions, and procedures.

CREATOR:Heimlich, Henry J.

PROVENANCE:

The Henry Heimlich, MD Papers were donated to the Medical Center Archives of NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine by his son, Philip Heimlich, in June 2017.

ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:

Henry Judah Heimlich was born on February 3, 1920, in Wilmington, Delaware to Mary Epstein and Philip Heimlich. He graduated from Cornell University with a BA in 1941 and from Cornell University Medical College with an MD in 1943. After a nine-month surgery internship in Boston, he joined the United States Navy in 1944 and served as a surgeon as part of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization, a secret organization established by the United States and China to perform intelligence and guerilla operations against Japan during World War II. Heimlich provided medical care to American military personnel, local civilians, and Chinese guerrillas in northwest China during his wartime service. After the war, he completed his residency training in thoracic surgery at several hospitals in New York City, including Veterans Hospital in the Bronx, Mount Sinai, Bellevue, and Triboro Hospital. After completing his training in 1950 he joined the attending surgical staff at Montefiore Hospital and was on the faculty of the New York Medical School. In 1969, he moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he spent the rest of his career: first at the Jewish Hospital as Director of Surgery and later at Xavier Hospital, where he established the Heimlich Institute.

Heimlich was involved with the invention, development, or promotion of medical or surgical procedures over the course of his career. This included the Heimlich-Gavriliu procedure, which involves the construction of a new esophagus using a tube created from the patient's stomach in the 1950s; the Heimlich chest drain valve, also known as the "flutter valve," which was created in 1962 and used widely during the Vietnam; and the MicroTrach portable oxygen system for ambulatory patients, which was a tube inserted into the trachea so patients could breathe through portable oxygen tanks, among others. In the 1980s he also became an advocate for the use of malariotherapy for the treatment of various medical issues (including HIV and AIDS), though other health experts deemed the treatments as ineffective and potentially dangerous.

Heimlich is best known for the anti-choking maneuver he is widely credited for, which became synonymous with his name: the Heimlich maneuver. Heimlich reportedly wanted to create a simple first-aid procedure which did not require any specialized instruments or equipment to reduce the number of choking deaths each year. He experimented by placing an endotracheal tube (blocked off at the end and the cuff inflated) into a dog's larynx, eventually finding success by pressing under the diaphragm to expel the tube. He continued experimenting on various subjects and ultimately published an essay on his new maneuver, a series of abdominal thrusts used to treat upper airway obstructions by foreign objects, in the June 1974 issue of *Emergency Medicine*. Heimlich would then publish a peer-reviewed article on the new maneuver in October 1975 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. He won the Albert Lasker Public Service Award in 1984 for the Heimlich maneuver. He would later recommend it also be used as a treatment for other health conditions or emergencies such as drowning, which was strongly criticized and disputed by other health experts.

Heimlich married Jane Murray in 1951, and together they had two sons and two daughters: Philip, Peter, Janet, and Elisabeth. Heimlich passed away at the age of 96 on December 17, 2016.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Gupta, Alisha. "Cornell Alum, Inventor of the Heimlich Maneuver, Dies at 96." Cornell Daily Sun, December 17, 2016. <https://cornellsun.com/2016/12/17/cornell-alum-inventor-of-the-heimlich-maneuver-dies-at-96/>.

Markel, Howard, MD, PhD. "How Dr. Heimlich got his maneuver 40 years ago." PBS News Hour, June 16, 2014. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/dr-heimlich-got-maneuver>.

McFadden, Robert D. "Dr. Henry J. Heimlich, Famous for Antichoking Technique, Dies at 96." New York Times, December 17, 2016. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/17/us/dr-henry-j-heimlich-famous-for-antichoking-technique-dies-at-96.html>.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

The Henry Heimlich, MD Papers contain documents, analog and digital photographs, audiovisual material, and memorabilia documenting his life, career, inventions, and procedures.

See the individual series descriptions for additional information.

ARRANGEMENT:

The Henry Heimlich, MD Papers are arranged into five series:

1. Personal Papers, 1937-2017
2. Military Service, 1942-2016
3. Heimlich Maneuver, 1974-2016
4. Medical Inventions, Procedures, and Research, 1941-2014
5. Reprints, 1951-2014

Unprocessed: Photographs, Slides, Audiovisual Material, Digital Files

See the individual series descriptions for additional information.

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Unprocessed materials in the collection may require additional permissions prior to access. Please contact the Medical Center Archives for more information.

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Please visit the Medical Center Archives website for the most updated policies and procedures regarding reproduction and use.

LANGUAGE OF MATERIAL:

English. Chinese.

PROCESSING NOTE:

The Henry Heimlich, MD Papers were partially processed by Associate Archivist Elizabeth Shepard in September 2017. Audiovisual material and most of the photographic material were separated from the papers at that time. Updates to the collection arrangement (including reuniting the audiovisual and photographic material with the collection) and preservation housing were made by Head Archivist Nicole Milano in 2023. A digital copy of his 2014 book, *Heimlich's Maneuvers* (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 2014), was also moved to the Medical Center Archives reference library during this time. A new finding aid was published online by Nicole Milano in 2024.

The bulk of the analog photographs and slides, audiovisual materials, and digital files (which are primarily, though not exclusively, photographic material) remain unprocessed.

EXISTENCE AND LOCATION OF COPIES:

Select digital and analog photographs from the collection are available online through the Medical Center Archives website.

RIGHTS STATEMENTS FOR ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTION:

The finding aid to the Henry Heimlich, MD Papers by the Medical Center Archives of NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

ACCESS POINTS:

Heimlich maneuver
Gavriliu, Dan
Malariotherapy
Sino-American Cooperative Organization
World War II

PREFERRED CITATION:

Item Name or Identification; Box #, Folder #; RGPPM-012, Henry Heimlich, MD Papers, 1937-2017 (Medical Center Archives of NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medicine, New York, NY).

RELATED MATERIAL:

Henry J. Heimlich Archival Collection, Henry R. Winkler Center for the History of the Health Professions, University of Cincinnati Libraries, Cincinnati, Ohio.

CONTAINER INVENTORY:

Series 1: Personal Papers, 1937-2017 **0.2 Linear Feet (1 box and 2 oversized folders)**

This series contains biographical clippings, correspondence, awards, certificates, and other non-medical research files from Heimlich's life, including articles about his efforts toward world peace. The series also includes a posthumous tribute to Heimlich from the United States Senate.

The series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Box 1: Series 1: Personal Papers, 1937-2017

Folder:	Description:
1	Articles: Biographical, 1960-1979
2	Articles: Biographical, 1980-1989

- 3 Articles: Biographical, 1990-1999
- 4 Articles: Biographical, 2000-2014
- 5 Articles: Biographical, undated
- 6 Awards, 1984-2014
- 7 Certificates, Honors, and Proclamations, 1977-1978
- 1 Certificates, Honors, and Proclamations, 1969-2016 (**Oversize, Box 12**)
- 8 Correspondence, 1937; 1982-2008
- 9 Correspondence to Janet Heimlich from Henry Heimlich, MD, 1980-1995
- 10 Heimlich Institute, circa 1993-2011
- 11 Leinhart Award (Includes Photographs), 1986
- 12 Letter of Recommendation, 1937
- 13 Program: 14th Annual Commencement of Sinclair Community College, 1980
- 14 Slides, undated
- 3 United States Senate Tribute, February 1, 2017 (**Oversize, Box 11**)
- 15 World's Fair, 1940
- 16 World Peace, 1982-1984

Series 2: Military Service, 1942-2016
0.5 Linear Feet (2 boxes)

This series includes correspondence, papers, appointments, supply lists, and other files related to Heimlich's involvement as a member of the United States Navy during World War II, as well as his status as a veteran after the war. The series also includes photographs of General Fu-Tso-Yi and undated slides of Heimlich in uniform standing with his sister, touring China, and on the United States Navy Hospital ship ("Repose"), among other wartime images.

The series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Box 1: Series 2: Military Service, 1942-2016

Folder:	Description:
17	Articles and Book Excerpt, circa 1994-1997
18	China Diary (Original and Typed Transcript), 1945
19	"Chinese Buddhism" by Unknown Author, undated
20	Correspondence, 1944-1946
21	Correspondence to/from Jack Shearer and Henry Heimlich, MD, 2014-2016 (Restricted- PHI, PII)
22	Generals Tai Li and Fu-Tso-Yi (Includes Photographs), 1945-1982
23	Guides for China and Chinese, 1942-1945
2	Maps, 1942; undated (Oversize, Box 12)
24	Maps, circa 1944-1945
25	Military Overview, 1943-1952

26 Patients (Restricted- PHI), 1945-1946

Box 2: Series 2: Military Service, 1942-2016

Folder:	Description:
1	Papers (Includes Passport Photographs), 1942-1949
2	Papers, 1945-1946
3	Papers: Chinese (Restricted- PHI), undated
4	Slides, undated
5	United States Navy Duty Request, 1952
6	Veterans Activities and Engagement, 1991-2015
7	Veterans Card, Medal, and Patch, 1975; undated
8	Veterans History Project, 2006-2013

Series 3: Heimlich Maneuver, 1974-2016
0.84 Linear Feet (3 boxes and 3 oversized folders)

This series consists of article clippings, correspondence, reports, brochures, slides, posters, and other documentation and items related to the Heimlich maneuver and Heimlich's recommended uses of the maneuver. The series includes a photocopied patent for the maneuver, a report by the National Academy of Sciences regarding the American Red Cross's initial lack of support for the procedure's use for drowning victims, a transcript of Heimlich's interview on the Today Show, an undated prayer card and note regarding a story about Saint Blaise Day (on which the Blessing of the Throats took place), a promotional packet, and scrapbook of news clippings about the Heimlich maneuver. The series also includes popular culture items collected by or sent to Heimlich about the Heimlich maneuver, including cartoons, greeting cards and postcards, some of which were originally bound into an album that also included photographs of children saved by the Heimlich maneuver.

This series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Box 2: Series 3: Heimlich Maneuver, 1974-2016

Folder:	Description:
9	Articles: Choking, 1974
10	Articles: Choking, 1975

Box 3: Series 3: Heimlich Maneuver, 1974-2016

Folder:	Description:
1	Articles: Choking, 1976
2	Articles: Choking, 1977-1979
3	Articles: Choking, 1980-1998
4	Articles: Choking, 2000-2015 (Restricted- PII)
5	Articles: Drowning, 1974-2016

- 6 Articles: General, 1974-2014
- 7 Brochures, undated
- 8 **Children Saved (Includes Photographs) (Restricted- PHI), 1977**
- 9 Correspondence, circa 1974-2007

Box 4: Series 3: Heimlich Maneuver, 1974-2016

Folder:	Description:
1	Correspondence: Drowning, 1974-2014
2	Informational Handout, 1976
3	Interview (Transcript) on the Today Show, 1975
4	Patent (Photocopy), 1978
5	Popular Culture (Includes Negatives and Slides), circa 1980-2016
6	Popular Culture and Children Saved by Heimlich Maneuver (Formerly in Album), Folder 1 of 2, circa 1982-2002
7	Popular Culture and Children Saved by Heimlich Maneuver (Formerly in Album), Folder 2 of 2, (Restricted- PHI), circa 1982-2002
5	Posters, 1992; undated (Oversize, Box 12)
8	Presentation to NAS Meeting by Heimlich, November 20, 1993
3	Promotional Packet (Includes T-Shirt), 1976 (Oversize, Box 12)
9	Report, National Academy of Sciences, undated (Folder 1 of 3)
10	Report, National Academy of Sciences, undated (Folder 2 of 3)
11	Report, National Academy of Sciences, undated (Folder 3 of 3)
12	Saint Blaise Day, undated
2	Scrapbook, circa 1974-2000 (Oversize, Box 11)
13	Slides, undated

Series 4: Medical Inventions, Procedures, and Research, 1941-2014
1.88 Linear Feet (4 boxes and 1 oversized folder)

This series includes articles, slides, photographs, correspondence, notes, and other documentation related to Heimlich's medical inventions, procedures, and research, unrelated to the Heimlich maneuver. Notably, the series includes materials related to Heimlich-Gavriliu procedure, including Heimlich's trip to Romania and two letters from Dr. Gavriliu; the Heimlich chest drain valve (also known as the "flutter valve"); Heimlich's proposed use of malaria therapy as a treatment for HIV, AIDS, and cancer; and the double diaphragm pump he collaborated on with astronaut Neil Armstrong, among other projects.

The series is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Box 5: Series 4: Medical Inventions, Procedures, and Research, 1941-2014

Folder: Description:

- 1 Articles: Accident Victims and Patients Saved by Heimlich, 1941-1965
- 2 Articles and Research, 1971-1972
- 3 Chest Drain Valve: Advertisements, undated
- 4 Chest Drain Valve: Articles and Research, 1958-2014
- 5 Chest Drain Valve: Correspondence (Restricted- PII), 1963-2013
- 6 Chest Drain Valve: Diagrams, undated
- 7 Chest Drain Valve: Patent (Photocopy), 1969
- 8 Chest Drain Valve: Photographs and Slides (Restricted- PHI), undated
- 9 Collapsible Respiratory Exerciser, 1982
- 10 Correspondence, 1955-1995
- 11 Correspondence: Patients (Restricted-PHI), 1960
- 12 Double Diaphragm Pump (Restricted-PII), circa 1975-2010
- 13 Drowning Victim (Restricted- PHI), 2006
- 4 Esophageal Replacement with a Reversed Gastric Tube: Articles, Diagrams, and Photographs, circa 1961-1978 (**Oversize, Box 12**)
- 14 Esophageal Replacement with a Reversed Gastric Tube: Articles and Research, 1956-2013
- 15 Esophageal Replacement with a Reversed Gastric Tube: Correspondence, circa 1957-1982
- 16 Esophageal Replacement with a Reversed Gastric Tube: Correspondence with Dan Gavriiliu, MD, 1956-1957
- 17 Esophageal Replacement with a Reversed Gastric Tube: Diagrams, Displays, and Photographs, undated
- 1 Esophageal Replacement with a Reversed Gastric Tube: Scrapbook, circa 1958-1963 (**Oversize, Box 11**)

Box 6: Series 4: Medical Inventions, Procedures, and Research, 1941-2014

Folder:	Description:
1	Malariotherapy: Articles and Research, circa 1986-2011
2	Malariotherapy: Biomolecular Malarial Immune Response Laboratory Proposal, undated
3	Malariotherapy: Correspondence, 1961-2012 (Restricted- PII); undated
4	Malariotherapy: Erwin Crawford Memorial Lecture by Dr. Heimlich, March 10, 1994
5	Malariotherapy for HIV/AIDS (Formerly in Binder 1), circa 1986-
1995	
6	Malariotherapy for HIV/AIDS (Formerly in Binder 2), circa 1989-
1995	
7	Malariotherapy for HIV/AIDS: Conference, 2008
8	Notes (Handwritten), undated

- 9 Slides (Includes MicroTrach and Valve, Cancer- Malariotherapy, Slides of Pathology), undated
- 10 Stress, 1984

Box 7: Series 4: Medical Inventions, Procedures, and Research, 1941-2014

Folder:	Description:
1	Suction Sponge: Articles (Includes Photographs), circa 1967-1970
1	Suction Sponge: Sets (Oversize, Box 13), undated
2	Stroke Victims Swallowing Method, undated

Series 5: Reprints, 1951-2014
0.3 Linear Feet (1 box)

This series includes reprints of Heimlich's published works.

The series is arranged chronologically.

Box 7: Series 5: Reprints, 1951-2014

Folder:	Description:
3	Reprints, circa 1951-1959
4	Reprints, circa 1960-1969
5	Reprints, circa 1970-1979
6	Reprint (bound), 1979
7	Reprints, 1982-1983
8	Reprints, circa 1990-1998
9	Reprints, 2002-2014

Unprocessed: Photographs and Slides
Box 8
0.41 Linear Feet (1 box)

Unprocessed: Audiovisual Material
Boxes 9-10
1.58 Linear Feet (1 boxes)

Unprocessed: Digital Files
968 MB (129 files)