Mütter Museum and Historical Medical Library of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia

http://www.collphyphil.org/Site/mutter_museum.html

Location: 19 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia PA 19103

Hours/Access Policy:

Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Library, by appointment only: Tuesday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Contact Information:
info@collegeofphysicians.org, 215-563-3737; library@collegeofphysicians.org, 215-399-2304.

Overview:

The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, founded in 1787, is the oldest professional medical organization in the country. Twenty-four physicians of eighteenth-century Philadelphia gathered “to advance the science of medicine and to thereby lessen human misery.” Today, over 1,500 Fellows (elected members) continue to convene at the College and work towards better serving the public.

Throughout its 200-year history, the College has provided a place for both medical professionals and the general public to learn about medicine as both a science and as an art. This historic spirit continues in our current mission: advancing the cause of health, while upholding the ideals and heritage of medicine. Our programs, which the public is invited to attend, reflect our reverence for the past, our commitment to the present, and our vision for the future of medicine and health.

The College is home to the Mütter Museum and the Historical Medical Library. The Mütter Museum began in 1863 during the Civil War; members of the College of Physicians established the museum in part to build up a collection useful in training medical personnel for the front.

Civil War Collection:

The Mütter Museum has a significant collection of Civil War Era (1840-1880) specimens and medical paraphernalia. The bulk of the museum’s collection dates to the mid-19th century, therefore a great many museum objects will fall into the Civil War-era time criteria but may not be directly linked to the Civil War.

Collection Highlights:
The Medical Contribution:

Library Material:

Documentary
Historical Library of the College of Physicians

General Breakdown of holdings: Dozens of primary-source books and manuals; three periodicals published by participants during the War; over 20 manuscript collections with CW material, over 200 images of CW physicians and CW era physicians, many served in war; hundred of books and periodicals documenting medicine at the time of CW.

Highlights:
1. Patient register and scrapbook containing names of wounded at Philadelphia military hospitals, names of donors and caregivers.
4. First ed. of Louisa May Alcott’s Hospital Sketches.
7. Ward casebook, Broad Street Hospital Philadelphia.
10. 1861-62 daily diary and 1864 ledger and case notes of Hugh Lenox Hodge.
11. Newspaper West Philadelphia Hospital Register, pub. by Satterlee Hospital 1863-64.
12. Patient records of dozens of patients of S. Weir Mitchell, contract surgeon during the who worked to establish Turner’s Lane Hospital as a specialty hospital to treat soldiers with nerve injuries.
13. Follow-up correspondence (1890-1906) and surveys (1893) of patients with nerve injuries, conducted by S. Weir Mitchell and his son, John K. Mitchell. Results of the surveys published in J.K. Mitchell’s Remote consequences of injuries of nerves, and their treatment: an examination of the present condition of wounds received 1863-65, with additional illustrative cases, 1895.

Legacy:

Documentary
2. APA Album Undergraduate Essays on the 250th Anniversary of the UP 1990.
3. First edition and 1990 facsimile of Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion with index and bibliographical references

Artifacts
The following are objects specifically attributable to the Civil War, including biological specimens, instruments and pharmaceuticals.

**Museum Objects:**

**Fighting**

1. MISC-2102 - Tan-colored pouch in delicate condition, containing wooden organizers that hold vials of medicine. This Civil War kit can be clipped to a physician's belt, to be used on the battlefield. It represents the physician's place among soldiers.

2. 17823.76 - Nelaton's Bullet Probe used by William Williams Keen, a Surgeon for the 5th Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War. He served with troops on the field during the first Battle of Bull Run with little experience or guidance. This tool for removing bullets from wounds can present the physician's struggle during battle.

**Hurting**

1. 1194.870 - Bone mounted on wood, two lumbar vertebrae. This specimen is accompanied by a letter that describes the soldier from whom it was removed and his treatment. These remains from his surgery, along with his story, can represent the experience of a wounded soldier.

2. MISC-1685 - Amputation kit in wooden box. This kit is in perfect condition and fully intact. The blades, clamps, and saw are extremely evocative; they summon up a sensory response to descriptions of amputation practices from the time. These tools vividly stimulate the imagination, representing the pain that physicians were forced to inflict.

**Dying**

1. IS-1739 - Civil War dissection kit in small wooden case. Used during the war by John Hooker Packard, most likely to examine the remains of soldiers. This could be representative of the relationship between a physician and the dead.

2. 17830.88 - Marey’s Wrist Sphygmograph, c.1857. This instrument was used to measure the movements, form, and force of the arterial pulse. It was at one time the property of Dr. J. Cheston Morris. The sphygmograph is a gold metal, intricate-looking instrument contained in a box lined with purple velvet.

**Healing**

1. 1991.24.23A - Davis & Kidder's Patent Magneto-Electric Machine. This device used electricity for the treatment of “nervous diseases.” It includes directions for use and is contained in a wooden box. By connecting wires to the patient's body and turning a crank on the box, an electrical current is created. This peculiar-looking object is an example of medical invention at the time of the Civil War.
Pharmaceuticals:

Examples of some of the museum’s Civil War Era pharmaceuticals:

1. 2120-6 misc: Bottle of Benzine, from Frank P. Streeper, Pharmacist, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, in a bottle from Llewellyn, 1600 Chestnut St. Philadelphia
2. 2120-4 misc: Bottle of Whiskey, from Streeper.
3. 2120-8 misc: Bottle of Alcohol, Handwritten label, from Haverford Prescription Pharmacy.
4. 2120.7 misc: Bottle of Camphorated Oil, from Streeper.
5. 2120-5 misc: Bottle of Citrate of Magnesia, Effervescing Solution, from Streeper.
6. Wooden chests containing portable scales, intended for the measuring of materia medica for pharmaceutical products.
7. 2138-misc: Hand-written information in German.
8. 2143- misc: Contains hand-written conversion scales on the interior of the wooden lid.
9. 2120-3 misc: Flaxseed tin from Streeper, prepared by Reed & Carnrick, New York.
10. 2083-5: Apothecary scale and its drawer with miscellany.

Research Tools:

For more information about the Historical Medical Library’s Civil War collections, please see the online catalog: http://pacscl.exlibrisgroup.com:48998/F and Resources in CW Medicine: http://www.collphyphil.org/Site/FIND_AID/hist/histcvwr.htm