

Case Records of the Massachusetts General Hospital Records, 1896-1960

AC 6

Original accession: 6.67 c.f. in 6 containers
(4 records center cartons and 2 boxes)
Addition: 0.5 c.f. in 1 manuscript box

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 2000-4 and 2015-9

Original accession processed: 2000
By Jessica Steytler and Jeff Mifflin

Addition processed: 2015
By Gayle Schechter

ACQUISITION: The files of the original accession were transferred from the Case Records office by Lucy Phillips and Sally Ebeling in August 1999, and were accessioned in March 2000. The files of the September 2015 addition came from Jocelyn Leadbetter, Maine Medical Center, Portland, ME.

CONDITION: The majority of the records from 2015 are in good condition, but in need of document cleaning. Several records need to be photocopied for preservation purposes as their condition is deteriorating.

ACCESS: There are no restrictions on access to the published cases. The keys to patient identity and other identifiable patient-related material in boxes 5 and 6 are restricted. Consult the MGH Archivist for further information.

COPYRIGHT: Requests to publish non-restricted materials from the collection should be directed to the Case Records of the MGH office. The MGH Archivist can provide further information.

Agency History

Considered to be a substantial contribution to medical education, the use of case records as a teaching tool dates back to the late nineteenth century and their use by Dr. Frederick C. Shattuck in his Clinical Medicine exams. In 1895, Dr. Richard C. Cabot began to use Shattuck's case records in quiz exercises in his private office, and, beginning in 1910, Dr. Cabot began to use the case histories in his teaching at Harvard Medical School.

In 1910, with pathologist Dr. James H. Wright (later succeeded by Dr. Oscar Richardson), Dr. Cabot began to hold these exercises, now including autopsies and post-mortem reports, with the hospital's house officers and other visiting physicians. Later, the previously voluntary exercises became a requirement for all medical students. The exercises proved to be so popular that MGH began publishing the Clinicopathological Conferences (CPCs), better known as the Cabot Case Records, for distribution. Beginning in April 1915, four records a week were mailed to roughly 800 physicians paying a subscription of \$5.00 a year. By the end of the year, subscriptions reached over 1,000 physicians.

As subscriptions to the CPCs continued to surge, publication of the records was turned over to the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* (now known as the *New England Journal of Medicine*), and on October 25, 1923, the Case Records of the Massachusetts General Hospital were introduced in the journal, edited by Dr. Richard C. Cabot and Dr. Hugh Cabot. Following Dr. Richard Cabot's retirement from clinical professorship, supervision and editorship of the CPCs was resumed by Dr. Tracy B. Mallory, who opened them up to all interns, medical students, and physicians at MGH, and later by Dr. Benjamin Castleman. Today, CPCs remain a popular exercise at MGH, and continue to be one of the most widely-read features in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Summary of Contents

The collection consists of published clinicopathological conferences in bound volumes ranging from 1915 to 1924, and 1956 to 1960. Necropsies from 1896 to 1922 and indexes and keys from 1915 to 1966 are also included. Only the published CPCs are available for research.

The addition to the collection consists primarily of published clinicopathological conferences from 1918 through August 1919. In addition to these CPCs, indexes for CPCs from 1917 and 1918 are included, as well as a published excerpt from Cabot's *Physical Diagnosis*, historical information regarding the CPCs, excerpts from annual reports of the MGH General Executive Committee, correspondence pertaining to different aspects of CPC publication, an excerpt from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and compiled notes and book reviews, regarding the publication of CPCs in book format.

Box and Folder list:

b. 1

Bound volumes of Clinicopathological Conferences, 1915-1917

b.2

f.1 Correspondence re: circulation receipts, Frederic Washburn to John A. Blanchard January 17, 1916.

f.2 Report of the MGH General Executive Committee [1916]

f.3 Notes on the Technic of Physical Examination [1917]

f.4 War Conditions (WWI) – Austerity Measures – 1918

f.5 Form Letter re: Answers to Inquiries Department [April 1919]

f.6 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) – historical information [c. 1930-1940]

f.7 *New England Journal of Medicine*, pages 627-630 – April 4, 1935, regarding obituary of George H. Bigelow and first page of Clinicopathological Conference

f.8 Clinicopathological Conferences – notes on publication in book format and related reviews c. 1960-1962

f.9 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) – Index 1917

f.10 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) – Index 1918

f.11 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) 1918 – 1 of 4 – (Jan-Mar)

f.12 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) 1918 – 2 of 4 – (Apr-June)

f.13 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) 1918 – 3 of 4 – (July-Sept)

f.14 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) 1918 – 3 of 4 – (Oct-Dec)

f.15 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) 1919 – 1 of 2 – (Jan-Mar)

f.16 Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC) 1919 – 2 of 2 – (Apr-Aug)