

AC72

Santa Claus (and Mrs. Claus)

Medical and Surgical Records, 1955-2013

Accession No. 2015-5

1.0 c.f. (1 records carton)

Acquisition: The materials were transferred to the MGH's Russell Museum by Caroline M. Mitchell (of Health Information Services) and then to the MGH Archives in 2015.

Processed by: Jeannie Casey, 2017

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Historical context:

The tradition of admitting "Santa Claus" to the MGH surgical service every December originated in the early 1950s. This collection includes all chart notes on patient Claus, Santa spanning from 1955 to 2013. ER nurses are tasked with fabricating the patient as well as his IV fluids and laboratory specimens. Various services are paged for consult during the admission, and over the years, thousands of humorous notes have been written in Santa's medical record by participants. The exercise fosters bonding among staff members and serves as a valuable training tool for educational discussion surrounding the patient's presentation and work-up. The chart notes transition from laboriously hand-written reports and impressions in the 50s to rudimentary computerized results as seen in the laboratory data of the 70s and 80s.

Processing Note:

Materials were left in their original binders to preserve a sense of the stages of the movement of the patient and various specimens and test results from one part of the MGH to another. The crux of the annual prank is that each December Santa Claus arrives at the MGH with a condition that so puzzling or complicated that it requires many MGHers to be involved in one way or another.

Scope and Content Note:

Included in the collection are volumes 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,10 and 11 for patient Claus, Santa in standard medical record format and spanning years 1955-2012. There is also a volume (1) for Claus, Kristina (Mrs.) spanning 1965-1971 also in standard medical record format, and there are three sets of miscellaneous chart notes for the years 2010, 2011 and 2013 for Claus, Santa.

The breakdown by “volumes” (loose-leaf binders) is as follows:

SANTA CLAUS

Vol. 1 1955-1973
Vol. 2 1974-1986
Vol. 4 1989-1994
Vol. 5 1995-1996
Vol. 6 1997-1999
Vol. 7 2000-2002
Vol. 8 2004
Vol. 10 2005-2010
Vol. 11 2012

KRISTINA CLAUS

Vol. 1 1965-1971

CHART NOTES – SANTA CLAUS

2010
2011
2013