

Elliot Vaughn Miller, M.D.
Mount Auburn Cemetery Tours [ca. 1989-2007]

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By Olivia Mandica-Hart

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ACCESS: Consult the MGH Archivist for further information.

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Biography

Dr. Elliot Vaughn Miller was born in South Dakota on June 14, 1932. He received his M.D. from Western Medical School in 1954, and his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Eastern Institute of Technology in 1958. In 1971, he became Assistant Professor of Anesthesia at Harvard Medical School. He worked as an anesthesiologist at Mount Auburn Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital before becoming an Assistant Anesthetist at MGH in 1967. In 1979, Dr. Miller became a full Anesthetist at MGH.

He also served as Chairman of MGH's Department of Anesthesia's Education Committee. Currently, Dr. Miller remains an Honorary Anesthetist Emeritus at Massachusetts General Hospital. He is also a longtime member of the MGH History Committee, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology in Chicago.

Scope and Content Note

This collection includes files and documents relating to the Mount Auburn Cemetery, which was founded in 1831 as "America's first garden cemetery" and is located in Watertown and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Several notable people are buried in the cemetery, including Isabella Stewart Gardner, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Dorothea Dix, and Winslow Homer, to name a few. Its grounds are listed on the National Register of Historic places, and have a unique and extensive horticultural landscape. The collection includes several documents describing various aspects of the cemetery, such as directories of birds and trees that can be found on the grounds, various maps, and self-guided tour instructions. The remaining documents pertain to some of the cemetery's noteworthy "residents," most of who were somehow involved in the "ether controversy." They include:

Jacob Bigelow (1787 - 1879) was a medical botanist and a central figure in the establishment of the Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

Charles Bulfinch (1763 - 1844) was a prominent architect who designed many buildings in the Boston area, including Massachusetts General Hospital.

Augustus Addison Gould (1805 - 1866) was a doctor at MGH, and helped design the double valves in the ether inhaler.

Charles Frederick Heywood (1823 - 1893) was a house surgeon at MGH, and published several letters in connection with the ether controversy.

Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809 - 1894) was an author, poet, and physician, who is credited with coining the term "anesthetic."

Charles Jackson (1805 - 1880) was a physician, chemist, geologist, and mineralogist, and claimed to have invented gun cotton, the telegraph, and to have discovered surgical anesthesia.

William Thomas Green Morton (1819 - 1868) was a dentist who experimented with anesthesia for the purpose of "painless" dentistry, and used ether for the extraction of a tooth for the first time in 1846.

The anesthesia department at MGH has a complex and interesting history, and researchers may be interested in reading about the first public demonstration of surgical anesthesia at an operation, which was performed at MGH on October 16, 1846. The "controversy" surrounds who should be credited with the discovery of surgical anesthesia, as several doctors claimed the title. (Additionally, the first folder in the collection also includes a packet of documents pertaining to the discovery of ether as a general anesthetic).

Box List

Box 1	Folder 1	Mount Auburn Cemetery Notes [ca. 1989-2003]
	2	Mt. Auburn Cemetery General Material [ca 1992-2004]
	4	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Jacob Bigelow [ca. 1994-2005]
	5	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Charles Bulfinch [ca. 1999-2007]
	6	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Augustus A. Gould [ca. 1994-2008]
	7	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Charles F. Heywood [ca. 2003-2005]
	8	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Oliver Wendell Holmes [ca. 1999]
	9	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - Charles Jackson [ca. 1994-2005]
	10	Mt. Auburn Cemetery - William T.G. Morton [ca. 1999-2005]

Related Collections

There are several pertinent related collections in the MGH Archives that may also be of interest to researchers.

Miller, Elliot V., M.D., Biographical File

MC 3 Ether Collection, 1846-1986

William T.G. Morton, M.D., Biographical File

Jacob Bigelow, M.D., Biographical File

Charles Bulfinch, M.D., Biographical File

Augustus Gould, M.D., Biographical File

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., M.D., Biographical File