

W. Osler Abbott Papers

MSS 2/0015-01

Finding aid prepared by Finding aid prepared by JE.

Last updated on December 19, 2014.

Historical Medical Library of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia

5/8/1989

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Summary Information

Repository	Historical Medical Library of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia
Creator	Abbott, W. Osler, (William Osler), 1902-1943
Creator	Leeke, Catharine G.
Title	W. Osler Abbott Papers
Call number	MSS 2/0015-01
Date [inclusive]	1938-1949
Extent	5 folders
Language	English

Cite as:

[Description and date of item], MSS 2/0037-01, W. Osler Abbott Papers, 1938-1949, Historical Medical Library of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

Biography/History

William Osler Abbott was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on July 26, 1902. He was the son of a biologist, Alexander C. Abbott and Georgina Picton Osler, a niece of Sir William Osler. W. Osler Abbott, nicknamed "Pete", married Lucy Waldo in 1928. They had three children, Thomas William Osler, Ann

Gatewood, and Lucy Featherstone. On September 10, 1943, Abbott died of myelogenous leukemia at Waquoit, Massachusetts.

Abbott received his A.B. in 1925 and his M.D. in 1928 from the University of Pennsylvania. He then served as an intern at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, and from 1931 to 1934, he had a part time affiliation with the Department of Pharmacology. Abbott then became a member of the Gastro Intestinal Clinic at Penn. At Penn, Abbott rose from Medical Fellow (1930-1931) to Instructor (1931-1937), then Associate (1937-1941) and finally, in 1941, he became an Assistant Professor of Medicine. In the following year, Abbott entered the U.S. Army with the rank of major. He was diagnosed as suffering from leukemia and then discharged. Abbott spent the remaining months of his life in leukemia research.

Most of Abbott's professional work and published writings concern his work with small intestinal intubation. He began to work with T. Grier Miller at Penn in 1930. In 1934, they developed the Miller Abbott Tube, a double lumen intestinal drainage tube for relief of distention. Abbott also worked with Arthur Joy Rawson and created, in 1937, the Abbott Rawson Tube, a double barrelled gastroenterostomy tube for use in postoperative care.

Abbott was a member of several professional organizations including the Society for Clinical Investigation, the American Clinical and Climatological Association, the American Gastroenterological Association, the Association of American Physicians, the Pathological Society of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Physiological Society. He was elected to fellowship in the College of Physicians of Philadelphia in 1934.

Scope and Contents

This small collection contains personal information about W. Osler Abbott and his final years and gives a summary of his professional work.

Series 1, the personal letters and notes, 1938-1943, from Abbott to Catharine Leeke, concern his health and activities and describe his experiences in Walter Reed Army Hospital in 1942. The drawings, undated and mostly unidentified, and the poetry which form Series 2 hint at Abbott's humorous outlook and illustrate his nautical interests.

The reprints in the collection, 1941-1949, in Series 3, were retained for association value. Abbott himself signed and presented one to Catharine Leeke, while the other two bear holograph notes from Leeke about Abbott. The T. Grier Miller reprint also contains information about the collaborative work of Miller and Abbott. The two news clippings in Series 4 both contain photographs of W. Osler Abbott and one describes his final work with myelogenous leukemia.

The biographical memorials in Series 5 include a memorial by William C. Stadie read before the College of Physicians of Philadelphia on October 4, 1944 and printed in the College's Transactions and studies in December, 1944.

Arrangement note

Organized into five series: I. Correspondence to Catharine G. Leeke, 1938-1943. II. Drawings and Poetry, [n.d.]. III. Reprints, 1941-1949. IV. Newsclippings, 1943 and [n.d.]. V. Memorials, [ca. 1943-1944].

Administrative Information

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Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Personal Name(s)

- Abbott, W. Osler, (William Osler), 1902-1943
- Miller, T. Grier, (Thomas Grier), 1886-1981
- Stadie, William C., (William Christopher), 1886-1956

Subject(s)

- Gastroenterology

Provenance

This small collection of W. Osler Abbott papers was assembled by Catharine G. Leeke, Abbott's secretary at the Gastro Intestinal Clinic at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Leeke held this position from February 4, 1934 to May 15, 1942. On June 7, 1972, the collection was donated to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania by Thomas A. Urbine, Jr. on behalf of Catharine Leeke who was then living in Oxford, Pennsylvania. The collection was then transferred to the College of Physicians sometime after 1972.

Correspondence to Catharine G. Leeke

Collection Inventory

Correspondence to Catharine G. Leeke, 1938-1943.

Folder
1

Drawings and Poetry, undated.

Folder
2

Reprints, 1941-1949.

Folder
3
Folder

Abbott, W. Osler, "The problem of the professional guinea pig", Proceedings of the Charaka Club, Vol. 10, 1941.

3

Abbott, W. Osler, "The differential diagnosis of acute abdominal conditions", Medical Clinics of North America, 1943.

3

Miller, T. Grier, "Development of double lumen tube for intestinal intubation", Journal of the American Medical Association, Vol. 140, No.2, 1949.

3

Newsclippings, 1943 and undated.

Folder
4

Memorials of W. Osler Abbott by T. Grier Miller and William C. Stadie [copies], approximately 1943-1944.

Folder
5