Finding Aid for the Isabella C. Herb Papers, #1576x

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Collection name: Isabella C. Herb Papers (1898-1933)

Repository: Rush University Medical Center Archives

Creator: Herb, Isabella C., 1869-1943

Call Number: 1576x

Language: English

Extent:
This is an X collection.
Items: About 50 items
Linear feet: 0.1

Abstract: Anesthesiologist and instructor Isabella C. Herb was born in Clyman, Wisc., 5 November 1869, and obtained her medical degree from Woman’s Medical College of Northwestern University in 1892. After interning at Mary Thompson Hospital for Women and Children in Chicago she went on to Augustana Hospital to practice as an anesthetist and pathologist in 1897. There she worked with Lawrence Prince, assisting in the development of open drop ether and chloroform anesthesia. After working at the Mayo Clinic from 1899 to 1905, she returned to Chicago with a fellowship in pathology at Rush Medical College to work with microbiologist Ludvig Hektoen. In 1909, she was appointed head of the department of anesthesia at Presbyterian Hospital, as the first woman on staff. She went on to make noteworthy contributions in the field both as an instructor and innovator in methods and equipment design. Herb died in 1943, after retiring in 1941. The papers of Isabella C. Herb hold biographical material related to Herb, such as obituaries and photocopied articles about Herb; Herb’s writings in the fields of pathology and anesthesia, 1898-1933; and research notes concerning operations performed under ethylene.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions to access:
None

Acquisitions Information:
This artificial collection is composed of material from the vertical file collection and medical reprints collection.

**Processing Information:**
Processed by: Sarah Scheinman, January 2011
Finding aid by: Sarah Scheinman and Nathalie Wheaton, January 2011

**Preferred Citation:**
[Identification of item], in the Isabella C. Herb Papers, # 1576x, Rush University Medical Center Archives.

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**Potential Subject Headings:**
Anesthesia—History
Presbyterian Hospital of the City of Chicago.
Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital—History, 20th century
Chicago, Ill.
Herb, Isabella C., 1869-1943
History of medicine. United States. Chicago (Ill.)
Ochsner, Albert J. (Albert John), 1858-1925
Rush Medical College

**RELATED COLLECTIONS:**
Arthur Dean Bevan Papers, #329
Ludvig Hektoen Papers, #1533
Images in RG44000, Photograph Collection
Presbyterian Hospital of the City of Chicago Records, #4705
Rush Medical College Records, #4707

Collected Papers of William James Mayo, Mayo Foundation Archives
Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:**
Anesthesiologist and instructor Isabella C. Herb was born in Clyman, Wisc., on 5 November 1869. She married Charles Albert Herb but after only a few years of marriage, he was killed in an accident in 1888. Herb obtained her medical degree from Woman’s
Medical College of Northwestern University in 1892. She completed a year internship at the Mary Thompson Hospital for Women and Children in Chicago and was Assistant to the Medical Staff until 1894, as well as working as their Dispensary Physician and Superintendent. In 1897, she practiced as an anesthetist and pathologist in Augustana Hospital in Chicago. There she worked with Lawrence Prince, the major developer of open drop ether and chloroform anesthesia.

In November 1899, she left to become a member of the staff at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., serving as the first female physician anesthetist for Charles Mayo as well as the clinic pathologist. She left the Mayo Clinic in 1905 for Rush Medical College in Chicago as a Fellow in Pathology, working with microbiologist Ludvig Hektoen. In 1909, Arthur Dean Bevan, the head of surgery at Presbyterian Hospital and Rush Medical College, offered her the position as head of the department of anesthesia at Presbyterian Hospital, as the first woman on staff. Herb also became the first woman president of the American Association of Anesthetists as well as serving actively in many other professional societies.

Throughout her career she helped develop safer and more effective anesthesia methods including a new type of anesthetic screen to administer ethylene gas. She was the first to administer ethylene-oxygen clinically as an anesthesia during a surgery performed by Bevan, 1923. As a Professor of Surgery (Anesthesia) at Rush Medical College, she was also a leader in the field of medical education and advocated the need for a stronger anesthesia education program. Her research contributions and publications in the fields of pathology and anesthesia establish her as a pioneer and innovator. Herb retired in 1941 and died in 1943 of heart disease.

COLLECTION OVERVIEW:

The papers of Isabella C. Herb hold biographical material, writings and research notes. Biographical material contains items related to Herb, such as obituaries and clippings about Herb. Most of the collection consists of Herb’s published writings in the fields of pathology and anesthesia, 1898-1933. Also included are handwritten research notes concerning operations performed under ethylene.

ARRANGEMENT OF SERIES:

1. Biographical material
2. Writings, 1898-1933 and undated.
3. Research Notes, undated.

ITEMS SEPARATED:

None
DETAILS DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION:

Series 1. Biographical Material
About 20 items
Scope Content: Biographical material contains obituaries, bibliographies and photocopies of articles about Herb. Includes a photocopied article written by Herb, “Anesthesia in Relation to Medical Schools and Hospitals,” 1921.

BOX 1
Biographical material related to Herb

Series 2. Writings, 1898-1933 and undated
About 25 items
Arrangement: Chronological
Scope Content: Writings include reprints of Herb’s research articles regarding pathology and anesthesia from her early years at Augustana Hospital through her work in Chicago at Rush Medical College. Handwritten and typed drafts are included with the final copy of “The Present Status of Ethylene,” 1933. One frequently cited work is “Observations on One Thousand Consecutive Cases of Anesthesia,” 1898, while Herb was working under Albert J. Ochsner at Augustana Hospital.

BOX 1 (continued)

“Observations on One Thousand Consecutive Cases of Anesthesia In the Service of Dr. A.J. Ochsner, Augustana Hospital,” 1898
“Teratoma of the Thyroid Gland,” 1906
“Diverticulum of the Vermiform Appendix,” 1907
“Experimental Parotitis,” 1908
“Experimental Parotitis,” 1909
“Mixed Tumors of the Uterine Body,” 1910
“Administration of General Anesthetics with Special Reference to Ether and Chloroform,” 1911
“The Selection of an Anesthetic,” 1912
“Administration of Alkaloids before Anesthesia,” 1913
“Alkaloidal Medication in Relation to Anesthesia and Analogesia,” 1915
“Accidents During and Following General Anesthesia,” 1916
“Ether: Simplicity in its Administration,” 1916
“A New Anesthetic Shield,” 1917
“The Open Method of Etherization,” 1918
“The Anesthetist on the Hospital Staff,” 1919
“Anesthesia in Relation to Medical Schools and Hospitals,” 1921
“Postoperative Lung Complications,” 1922
“Explosions of Anesthetic Gases: A Method for the Control of Electrostatic Conditions,” 1925
“The Anesthetic Problem in Its Relation to the Hospital,” 1926
“Further Clinical Experiences with Ethylene-Oxygen Anesthesia,” 1927
“The Present Status of Ethylene,” 1933
“General Anesthesia,” undated
“General Anesthesia, Chapter 3” undated

Series 3. Research Notes, undated
1 item
Scope Content: Undated research notes by Herb titled “A List of Operations Performed under Ethylene.”

BOX 1 (continued)

Research notes by Herb, undated