DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Collection name: Ernest E. Irons Papers (1902-1958)

Repository: Rush University Medical Center Archives

Creator: Irons, Ernest E. (Ernest Edward), (1877-1959)

Call Number: 4754

Language: English

Extent:
   Items: About 100 items
   Linear feet: 1.0

Abstract:
Physician and writer Ernest E. Irons, 1877-1959, graduated from Rush Medical College, 1903 and served as its Dean, 1923-1936. He also worked at Presbyterian Hospital, eventually becoming an attending physician and chief of medical service. His interests and writings included medical history, medical economics, and social medicines. He wrote The Story of Rush Medical College in 1953 and was working on the history of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital when he died. The papers of physician Ernest E. Irons include biographical material, correspondence, medical writings and other writings, and miscellaneous material. Medical writings include articles by Irons on bacteriology and pneumonia. Other writings include writings by Irons such as articles on medical education, socialized medicine, and history; addresses given by Irons; and personal diaries kept while abroad, 1948 and 1958.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Restrictions to access:
None

Usage Restrictions:
None

Acquisitions Information:
This artificial collection includes material received from Spencer E. Irons of Chicago, Ill., in March 1991 (Acc. 1993-042). Also included in this collection is unaccessioned material from boxes labeled Irons and material from Irons’s biographical file.

Processing Information:
Processed by: Nathalie Wheaton and Rene Ruzicka (April 2009)

Preferred Citation:
Irons, Ernest E. (Ernest Edward), b. 1877
Chicago, Ill.
History of medicine. United States. Chicago (Ill.)
Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital
Rush Medical College
Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Medical Center.
Rush University Medical Center—History, 20th century

RELATED COLLECTIONS:
Rush Medical College Records, #4707
(includes papers of Ernest E. Irons as Dean of Rush Medical College, 1923-1936)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE:
Physician and writer Ernest E. Irons was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa, 17 February 1877. He graduated from the University of Chicago in 1900, at which time he took a position in bacteriological studies in relation to the effects of Sanitary Canal waters in downstate Illinois. In 1903, he graduated from Rush Medical College, followed by an internship under James B. Herrick at Presbyterian Hospital. Irons was working as an intern under James B. Herrick when Herrick first described sickle cell anemia. Irons brought the abnormally shaped cells to Herrick’s attention after helping a patient with the disease, 1910.

Irons’s research in bacteriology contributed to his Ph.D., awarded by the University of Chicago in 1912. After a period of studying in Europe, Irons returned to practice in Chicago. He joined the faculty at Rush Medical College and served as its Dean, 1923-1936. He also worked at Presbyterian Hospital, eventually becoming an attending physician and chief of medical service.

Irons served as the president of the Institute of Medicine in 1946, the Chicago Society of Internal Medicine in 1926, the Board of Regents of the American College of Physicians 1945-1946, and the American Medical Association, 1949-1950. He was president of the Board of Directors of the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium of Chicago for many years. He helped organize the original American Board of Internal Medicine. His interests and
writings included medical history, medical economics, and social medicines. He wrote *The Story of Rush Medical College* in 1953 and was working on the history of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital when he died.


**COLLECTION OVERVIEW:**

The papers of physician Ernest E. Irons include biographical material, correspondence, medical writings and other writings, and miscellaneous material. Biographical material includes an obituary, a biographical sketch, and other items related to the life of Irons. Correspondence includes letters written by Irons regarding various topics, most written during the composition of his historical manuscript on Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital, 1957-1958. Medical writings include articles by Irons on bacteriology and pneumonia. Other writings include writings by Irons such as articles on medical education, socialized medicine, and history; addresses given by Irons; and personal diaries kept while abroad, 1948 and 1958. Miscellaneous material includes programs and other items related to Irons.

**ARRANGEMENT OF SERIES:**

1. Biographical information
2. Correspondence, 1935-1958
4. Writings, 1902-1958
   4.1. Medical writings, 1902-1947
   4.2. Other writings, 1922-1958
5. Miscellaneous material, 1941-1955 and undated

**ITEMS SEPARATED:**
None

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION:**

**Series 1. Biographical Material**

8 items
Arrangement: mostly chronological
Scope Content: Biographical material includes an obituary and memorial service announcement, announcements of Irons’ appointment as president elect of the American Medical Association, and a biographical sketch written by his son in 1991, entitled “Ernest E. Irons – Physician, Scientist, Educator.”
Newspaper clippings featuring Irons, including reports of his assault in 1958.
BOX 1

Biographical material including obituaries, articles about Irons’s life, and a biography written by Irons’s son

Series 2. Correspondence, 1935-1958

14 items
Arrangement: chronological
Scope Content: Letters written by Irons regarding various topics, most written during the composition of his historical manuscript on Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital, 1957-1958.

BOX 1 (continued)

Letters to and from Irons, 1935-1958


3 items
Arrangement: mostly chronological
Scope Content: Newspaper clippings featuring Irons, including reports of his assault in 1958.

BOX 1 (continued)

Newspaper clippings about Irons, 1955-1958

Series 4. Writings, 1902-1955

65 items
Arrangement: mostly chronological
Scope Content: Writings by Irons, including articles related to medicine and research, medical education, and history. Medical writings include articles on bacteriology and pneumonia. Other writings include writings by Irons such as articles on medical education, socialized medicine, and history; addresses given by Irons; and personal diaries kept while abroad, 1948 and 1958.

Subseries 4.1. Medical Writings, 1902-1947

35 items
Arrangement: mostly chronological
Scope Content: Medical writings by Irons include articles on bacteriology and pneumonia.

BOX 1 (continued)
“Some Observations on Methods for the Detection of B. Coli Communis in Water,” 1901
“Neutral-Red in the Routine Examination of Water,” 1902
“Generalized Blastomycosis,” 1906
“The Treatment of Gonococcus Arthritis by Injections of Dead Gonococci, and the Clinical Reaction which Follows the Reaction,” 1908
“Gonococcemia: With Report of Six Cases in which the Gonococcus was Isolated from the Blood During Life,” 1909
“Some Points in the Application of Vaccine Therapy,” 1910
“The Bacteriology and Pathology of Arthritis,” 1911
“The Value of Tetanus Antitoxin,” 1912
“Cutaneous Allergy in Gonococcal Infections,” 1912
“A Cutaneous Reaction in Gonococcal Infections,” 1912
“Bacteriology and Immunity Studies in Gonococcal Immunity,” 1914
“An Infection with the Paratyphoid Bacillus (B. Paratyphosus B.),” 1915
“Tetanus and Antitetanic Serum with Note on the Complications and Late Death in Tetanus,” 1915
“Pneumonia Following Influenza in the Camps in the United States,” 1921
“Presystic Murmurs in Rapid Hearts Simulating Murmur of Mitral Stenosis with Report of Necropsies,” 1922
“Acute Lobar Pneumonia,” 1922
“The Clinical Evaluation of Drugs,” 1929
“Selection of Proprietary Versus Nonproprietary Drugs in Hospital Prescribing,” 1930
“Telescopic Vision and Medical Economics,” 1930
“Facts and Fallacies Concerning Foreign Protein and Vaccine Therapy,” 1931
“The Etiology of Chronic Uveitis,” 1931
“Dental and Medical Practice,” 1934
“Acute Lobar Pneumonia,” 1935
“Focal Infection,” 1935
“Chronic Arthritis, A General Disease Requiring Individualized Treatment,” 1936
“Pulmonary Complications in Adult Medical and Surgical Patients,” 1938
“Lobar Pneumonia,” 1939
“Acute Lobar Pneumonia,” 1940
“Aspiration Bronchopneumonia with Special Reference to Aspiration of Stomach Content,” 1940
“Aspiration Pneumonia,” 1942
“Necropsies in the Hospitals of Chicago,” 1945
“The Theory of Focal Infection: Its Influence on the Practice of Medicine,” 1946
“Acute Lobar (pneumococcal) Pneumonia,” 1947
“Diseases of the Pleura,” [1940s]

**Subseries 4.2. Other Writings, 1922-1958**

30 items
Arrangement: mostly chronological
Scope Content: Writings by Irons on topics such as medical education, socialism, and history, as well as addresses given by Irons and personal diaries kept while working abroad in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Europe, and Japan, 1948; and Germany, 1954. Also includes notes and drafts for Irons’s proposed book about the history of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital, 1958.

BOX 1 (continued)

“The Hospital Year,” 1922
“The Purpose of an Internship,” 1926
“The Last Illness of Sir Joshua Reynolds,” 1939
“The American Board of Internal Medicine After Four Years; Organization, Purposes, and the Effects of Special Boards on Medical Education and Practice,” 1940
“Americal Medicine in War and Peace,” 1944
“Evolution in Medicine,” 1944
“Epochs in Medicine: The Improvement of Medical Service to Labor,” 1945
“Medicine and Social Changes,” 1945
“Medicine and Education,” 1946
“Medicine and Economics,” 1947
“Some Chicago Physicians,” 1948
“The Fate of Medicine under Socialism and Communism,” 1948
“Diary of Personal Observations as a Member of the Medical Mission to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands,” January-February 1948

BOX 2

“Notes from a Personal Diary: The American Medical Association Mission which Visited Japan at the Request of General Douglas MacArthur,” 1948
“The Great Deception, Nationalized Medicine,” 1949
“The Time of Decision,” 1949
“Medical Education: The Fable of the Frog,” 1950
“Medicine and Freedom,” 1950
“Nationalized Medicine and the Welfare of the State,” 1950
“Citizenship: A Physician’s Obligation,” 1951
“Medicine and Freedom of Choice,” 1952
“An Act to Incorporate the Rush Medical College,” 1953
“The Medical Profession,” 1953
“Notes from a Personal Diary as a Member of a Group of American Guests of the German Government,” 1954
“Medical Education Looks at General Education and the Universities,” 1955
“Book Reviews,” 1955
“Medicine and Citizenship,” 1955
Outline of History of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital, 1958-1959
Drafts, Notes, and Correspondence related to Irons’s History of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital, 1958
History of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital Notes: Clinical Departments of the Hospital Department of Medicine, 1958
History of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital Notes: The Department of Surgery in the Presbyterian Hospital by V. C. David, 1958
History of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital Notes: Department of Medicine, Organization Chart, Presbyterian Hospital, 1958
History of Presbyterian-St. Luke’s Hospital Notes: Rush Medical College/University of Chicago, University of Illinois, 1924-1941

**Series 5. Miscellaneous, 1941-1955 and undated**

7 items
Arrangement: mostly chronological
Scope Content: Miscellaneous material includes programs and other items related to Irons.

**BOX 2 (continued)**

*Detroit Medical News*, Irons as Speaker, 10 November 1941
Program, 100th Anniversary of American Medical Association, Atlantic City, New Jersey, 10 June 1947
Program for “Presbyopia,” by Richard Mossey and Gordon Curry, starring the 1951 Interne-Resident Staff of Presbyterian Hospital, Reunion Dinner and Irons’s speech, 8 June 1951
Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium, Progress Report, Irons President of Board of Directors, December 1955
Sheet from Irons’s Prescription Pad, undated