Descriptive Summary

Title: Sir William Osler Papers
Dates: 1893-1939
Collection Number: mssOsler papers
Creator: Osler, William, Sir, 1849-1919
Extent: 231 items in 1 box
Repository: The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens Manuscripts Department
The Huntington Library
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, California 91108
Phone: (626) 405-2191
Fax: (626) 449-3477
Email: reference@huntington.org
URL: http://www.huntington.org

Abstract: This collection contains the papers of physician Sir William Osler (1849-1919), who helped found Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and served as Regius Chair of Medicine at Oxford University, chiefly consisting of correspondence.

Language of Material: The records are in English.

Access
Open to qualified researchers by prior application through the Reader Services Department. For more information, contact Reader Services.

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Preferred Citation

Provenance
On long-term loan from the Los Angeles County Medical Association, 1992.

Biographical Note
Born in 1849, Sir William Osler rose through the ranks of professional medicine eventually becoming one of the world's most renowned physicians. As chair of clinical medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in 1885, he helped found the American Association of Physicians. Later, in 1893, he helped establish the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. In 1905, he was appointed the Regius Chair of Medicine at Oxford University, where, in 1911, he received the honorary title of baronet.

Throughout his career as an instructor, Osler developed a philosophy of medicine based on equal parts science and humanism. He insisted students talk and listen directly to patients, supplementing their classroom education with participatory residencies in hospital wards. Meanwhile, his many publications, including the much reprinted textbook, *The Principles and Practices of Medicine* (1892), significantly contributed to the professionalization of medicine in the late nineteenth century.

In addition to his medical career, Osler gained fame for his wit and humor. He published several satirical articles under the pseudonym, "Egerton Yorrick Davis." During his farewell speech at John Hopkins, he infamously suggested retired men should be chloroformed instead of burdening society. The self-deprecating remark made national headlines, sparked debate, and further elevated Osler's notoriety.

Scope and Content
Correspondence forms the bulk of the Sir William Osler papers. These letters span the period from 1893-1939. They include Osler's own correspondence with his former student, C.N.B. Camac, concerning Camac's career and Osler's work. The collection also records the conversations between Osler and the prominent physicians William Sydney Thayer, and Henry Barton Jacobs. Also included are the letters exchanged between Camac, Harvey Cushing, and Lady Grace Revere Gross Osler about William Osler's career and the publishing of his biography. These letters reveal the inner workings of a dedicated scholar and the devotion of his students. Several letters detail the European travels of the Oslers, including...
postcards from Italy and France and ocean liners such as the Lusitania. Others discuss medical issues ranging from aneurisms to trypanosomiasis and Osler's passion for collecting rare books. There is one folder of miscellaneous correspondence and one letter book of Osler's.

One folder includes collected ephemera, mainly newspaper clippings. This material highlights Osler's public persona and medical expertise. A number of obituaries and memorials describe Osler's profound contribution to modern, Western medicine.

**Arrangement**
The collection is arranged by type. The majority of the collection is correspondence, which is arranged alphabetically by author.

**Indexing Terms**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

### Personal Names
- Osler, William, Sir, 1849-1919

### Subjects
- Medicine - History - 19th century - Sources
- Medicine - History - 20th century - Sources
- Medicine - Study and teaching - United States
- Physicians - United States - Correspondence

### Genre
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Letter books - United States - 19th century
- Letter books - United States - 20th century

### Alternate Author
- Camac, C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker), 1868-1940
- Cushing, Harvey, 1869-1939
- Davis, Egerton Yorrick
- Jacobs, Henry Barton, 1858-1939, addressee
- Osler, Grace Revere Gross, Lady
- Thayer, William Sydney, 1864-1932, addressee

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**Box 1**
**Folder 1**  
Correspondence and Ephemera

- Boggs, Thos. R. 6 letters to C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker) Camac, 1869-1940 (1916, November)

**Folder 2**  
Camac, C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker), 1868-1940. 13 letters to Sir William Osler, 1849-1919 (1897-1915)

**Folder 3**  
Camac, C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker), 1868-1940. 2 letters to Lady Grace Revere Gross Osler (1913-1920)

**Folder 4**  
Camac, C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker), 1868-1940. 1 letter to “Mr. Brown” (1916, December 15)

**Folder 5**  
Cushing, Harvey, 1869-1939. 18 letters to C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker) Camac, 1868-1940 (1898-1933)

**Folder 6**  
Osler, Grace Revere Gross, Lady. 26 letters to C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker) Camac, 1868-1940 (1903-1928)

**Folder 7**  
Osler, William, Sir, 1849-1919. 60 letters to C.N.B. (Charles Nicoll Bancker) Camac, 1868-1940 (1896-1905)

**Folder 8**  

**Folder 9**  
Osler, William, Sir, 1849-1919. 3 letters to Miscellaneous (1897-1912)

**Folder 10**  
Osler, William, Sir, 1849-1919. 1 letter to Julia Augusta Camac (1905, Sep. 18)

**Folder 11**  
Osler, William, Sir, 1849-1919. 2 letters to William Sydney Thayer, 1864-1932 (undated)
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Folder 12</th>
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