Howard Christian Naffziger papers

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Howard Christian Naffziger papers

Dates: 1907-1983

Collection Number: MSS 97-04

Creator/Collector: Naffziger, Howard Christian
University of California, San Francisco

Extent: 8 linear feet (6 cartons, 1 oversize box).

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Abstract: The personal and professional papers of Howard Naffziger include correspondence, newspaper clippings, photographs, ephemera, certificates, military orders, notes, diaries, and artifacts. Subjects matters include Dr. Naffziger's military experience in World War I and II, biographical information, his experiences at UCSF and his instrumental role in neurological surgery, and other work-related information. Materials date from 1907-1983.

Language of Material: English

Access

Collection is open for research. Access to a small portion of the collection is restricted due to patient records. Please contact the UCSF Archivist for access to this material.

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Preferred Citation

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Acquisition Information

Donated by Jean Louise Thatcher in 1996.

Biography/Administrative History

Howard Christian Naffzier (1884-1961) was among the first in the United States to specialize in neurological surgery. He was UCSF faculty member from 1912-1951 first as Professor, then as Chairman of the Department of Surgery from 1929-1947, followed by Professor and the first Chairman of the Department of Neurological Surgery from 1947-1951. In 1951 he came Professor Emeritus. Naffziger served in World War I and II. He was very active in professional organizations including serving as president of the San Francisco County Medical Society, the California Academy of Medicine, the Pacific Coast Surgical Association, the American Surgical Association, the American Neurological Association, the Society of Neurological Surgeons, and the San Francisco Neurological Association.

Scope and Content of Collection

Dr. Naffziger's collection is a potpourri of papers that spans several years on both sides of two World Wars. The first highlight of his personal life is the log of a fishing trip that he and other physicians made to Montana. It was one of many learning experiences that were an important part of his many faceted life. He wrote several other diaries. The most important of are those dealing with his war experiences and travels, and which display a descriptive genius that livened such somber subjects as gas warfare. There are many eye-catching items, such as: 1) a certificate of registration in the Arabian Horse Club Registry of America, 2) menus of private dinner parties, 3) a handmade blue and gold clown head name tag for a University of California class of 1907 reunion. His "In Memoriam" files are interesting and include letters written to Mrs. Naffziger by Admiral Nimitz, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Earl Warren, and Dean Witter. The World War I is extensive , because he kept everything. The collection of his military orders is complete. A cartoon drawn by those who served under him hints at a near fatal occurrence. There are even records of uniform purchases. The outstanding wartime files are those containing the notes of notes of his surgical patients: a separate piece of paper for each man. There are some photographs of his neurosurgical cases and the elaborate French manor-house ballrooms that were converted into surgical wards. Some cases are noted by Base Hospitals #8 and #69. The 30th General Hospital of the University of California was evidently manned during both World Wars. Dr. Naffziger's World War II experience was more of an advisory nature and served as a springboard for his consolatory services in several foreign countries (see series #5). Since Dr. Naffziger is the only Doctor of Medicine to serve as a Regent of the University of California, his professional in this collection include many aspects of and reach out to several campuses of the University. Of special note are the files dealing with the Howard C. Naffziger Laboratories for Neurological Research, correspondence with Earl Warren (then Governor of the State...
of California), and the problems of funding a trip to England for the UCSF Medical Illustrator, Ralph Sweet.

**Indexing Terms**

- Neurosurgery
- Nervous system -- Surgery
- World War, 1914-1918 -- Medical care
- World War, 1939-1945 -- Medical care
- Naffziger, Louise McNear

University of California, San Francisco. Department of Neurosurgery

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