



Collection #: MSS 309
Name: Robert B. Taft, M.D. Papers
Dates: 1921-1945
Size: 1.75 cubic feet
Processed: November 2007 by JMW
Restrictions: None
Citation: Robert B. Taft, M.D. Papers, MSS 309, Waring Historical Library, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston

Biographical Note: Radiologist Dr. Robert Burbidge Taft was born in Charleston, S.C. in 1899. After attending the College of Charleston, he completed his medical degree at the Medical College of the State of South Carolina in 1923. Dr. Taft served on the faculty of MCSSC from 1936-1951. Dr. Taft developed a portable, battery operated Geiger-Muller counter, which he referred to as his “radium hound”. He used the device to recover stolen and accidentally discarded radium. Dr. Taft was often called on to help hospitals around the United States locate their lost radium, and in 1938 published a book on his experiences entitled “Radium Lost and Found”. Dr. Taft X-rayed the Charleston Museum’s 2,500-year-old Egyptian mummy in 1932, providing a new understanding of the mummy. Dr. Taft was a member of the Radiological Society, the American Roentgen Ray Society, and also served as a consultant to the Institute of Nuclear Studies at Oak Ridge, TN. Dr. Taft died in 1951.

Scope and Content Note: The Robert B. Taft, M.D. Papers, 1.75 cubic feet, 1921-1945, document Dr. Taft’s career as a radiologist and “radium

hunter”. The collection contains three scrapbooks of correspondence, news clippings, and photos on his travels locating lost radium. The collection also includes correspondence between Dr. Taft and the Radiological Society concerning his attendance at their November 1941 meeting, as well as his papers published in the journal Radiology. Other correspondents include radiologists, physicists, and electrical and radiological instrument manufacturers. Also included in the collection are photos and negatives of Dr. Taft’s travels around the United States recovering lost radium, as well as illustrations by Mercedes Hoshall for Dr. Taft’s book, “Radium Lost and Found”. The collection contains typescripts for two papers and a large volume of biology notes. Dr. Taft’s 1932 radiological study of the Charleston Museum’s Egyptian mummy is also included. The collection is arranged alphabetically. Printed materials from the collection have been cataloged separately.

The following collections have been merged with MSS 309:

MSS 310 Lecture Notes

MSS 311 Radiologic Study of the Egyptian Mummy at the Charleston Museum

Subject Headings:

Hoshall, Mercedes (Erixon)

Taft, Robert B. (1899-1951)

Radiological Society

Geiger-Muller Counter

Radiologists- South Carolina

Radiology

Radium

Photographs

Negatives

News clippings

Typescripts

X-rays

Inventory:

Folder 1: Advertising Materials re: Radiological and Electrical Equipment, 1938, 1940-1941, no date, 17 items

- Folder 2: Correspondence: Geiger-Muller Counter, 1937-1947, 37 items
Folder 3: Correspondence: Geiger-Muller Counter, 1934-1941, 90 items
Folder 4: Correspondence: Radiological Society Meeting in San Francisco, 1941, 16 items
Folder 5: Lecture Notes, no date, 1 item
Folder 6: Miscellaneous Notes, no date, 13 items
Folder 7: Negatives, no date, 16 items
Folder 8: Negatives, no date, 7 items
Folder 9: Negatives, no date, 5 items
Folder 10: Negatives, no date, 9 items
Folder 11: News Clippings, 1931-1941, no date, 8 items
Folder 12: Prints and Negatives, no date, 13 items
Folder 13: Prints and Negatives, no date, 23 items
Folder 14: Prints and Negatives, no date, 19 items
Folder 15: Prints and Negatives for Paper “ A Portable Geiger-Muller Counter”, no date, 12 items
Folder 16: Prints With Notes From Monroe, N.C. Radium Recovery, no date 18 items
Folder 17: Receipts and Purchase Requests, 1935-1941, no date, 23 items
Folder 18: Scrapbook (1 of 2), 1935-1945, 1 item
Folder 19: Scrapbook (2 of 2), 1935-1945, 1 item
Folder 20: Scrapbook, 1935, 1937, 1 item
Folder 21: Scrapbook, 1938-1945, 1 item
Folder 22: Typescript: “Adventures With the Radium Hound”, no date, 1 item
Folder 23: Typescript: “Radiation Protection”, no date, 1 item
- Phase Box: Lecture Notes: “Biology Two”, 1917-1921, 1 item
- Oversize Box:
Hand-lettered Sign: “Egyptian Mummy: A Radiographic Study, Robert B. Taft, M.D., B.S., Charleston, S.C.”
Hand-lettered Sign: “Dr. Robert B. Taft, Charleston S.C., Ancient Egyptian Mummy”
News clippings (photocopy)
Typed Notes on Mummy’s Condition
Six X-Ray Prints of Mummy