



Collection #: MSS 350
Name: The Horace Gilbert Smithy, Jr., M.D. Papers
Dates: 1946-1948, no date
Size: .60 cubic feet
Processed: March 2008 by JMW
Restrictions: None
Citation: The Horace Gilbert Smithy, Jr., M.D. Papers, MSS 350, Waring Historical Library, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston

Biographical Note: Horace Gilbert Smithy, Jr. was born in Norfolk, Virginia in 1914. After graduating from the University of Virginia School of Medicine, he moved to Charleston, S.C. and eventually became the Chief Surgical Resident at Roper Hospital. He held that position from 1940-1942, and went on to become a faculty member at the Medical College of South Carolina.

Dr. Smithy discovered that he had scar tissue on the aortic valves of his heart as a result of rheumatic fever he suffered as a child. With the aid of the Medical College of South Carolina's maintenance superintendent, C.B. Coleman, Dr. Smithy invented a surgical tool (the valvulotome) to remove scar tissue from the heart. After conducting animal trials with the device, Dr. Smithy performed the first human operation in 1948. The surgery was a success, and Dr. Smithy received nationwide acclaim.

Dr. Smithy married Sara Rankin and had two children. Although he was training a surgeon, Dr. Alfred Blalock, to perform the surgery on him, Dr. Smithy died in 1948 before the surgery could take place.

Scope and Content Note: The Horace Gilbert Smithy, Jr., M.D. Papers, 1946-1948 and no date, .60 cubic feet, document Dr. Smithy's research and publications on the surgical treatment he developed for scar tissue of the aortic valve. The collection contains negatives, photographs, and original drawings used in his publications, correspondence of Dr. Alfred Blalock regarding Dr. Smithy, and a news clipping from the Atlanta Journal Constitution detailing Dr. Smithy's first valvulotomy. The collection also contains a scrapbook of Dr. Smithy's published and unpublished works. The collection is arranged alphabetically.

The following collection has been merged with MSS 350:
MSS SC 594 Horace Gilbert Smithy, Jr., M.D. Scrapbook

Subject Headings:

Smithy Jr., Horace Gilbert (1914-1948)
Cardiovascular Surgical Procedures
Rheumatic Fever
Valvulotomy

Inventory:

Folder 1: Correspondence: Dr. Blalock, re: Dr. Smithy, 1946-1948
Folder 2: Negatives, 1946-1947, no date
Folder 3: News Clipping, 1948
Folder 4: Original Drawings For Article on Aortic Valvulotomy With
Photographs and Notes, no date
Folder 5: Original Drawings By L. Schlossberg For Paper, no date
Folder 6: Photographs For Dr. Smithy's Articles, no date
Folder 7: Photographs For Dr. Smithy's Articles, no date
Folder 8: Photographs For Dr. Smithy's Articles, no date
Folder 9: Photostat of Dwight Harken Experiment in Intracardiac Surgery
With X-Rays and Notes, no date
Folder 10: Plate: Trans-Ventricular Method of Valvulotomy and the Lesion
of Extensive Valvular Division Produced in Majority of Animals,
no date
Folder 11: Prints Used for Presentation, no date