

OTIS HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

STAFF:

Michael Rhode, chief archivist

RESEARCH REQUESTS:

The Otis Historical Archives (OHA) received a total of 115 written or telephone requests for information this year not including medical museum and AFIP requests, visitors or referrals to other institutions. Researchers were affiliated with the American Heritage magazine, Arkansas Museum of Science and History, British Broadcasting Corporation, Cincinnati Medical Heritage Center, Gifu University, Office of the Army Surgeon General, Holocaust Memorial Museum, Indiana National Guard, Museu Historico da EPM, Mutter Museum, National Geographic, National Library of Medicine, National Museum of Natural History Repatriation Office, National Park Service, Oklahoma Historical Society, Pan-American Health Organization, Prentice Hall Publishing, University of Mississippi, University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and World Book Publishing among others. The archives had at least 116 visitors in 1992 for tours, in-depth research or professional discussions. A great deal of interest was shown in Dr. Pierre Finck's report on the autopsy of President Kennedy which was acquired as part of the Blumberg Collection. This report was the subject of a FOIA request and after it was opened to the public was used by Dennis Breo in his article "JFK's death, part III - Dr Finck speaks out: 'two bullets, from the rear'" published in JAMA. Breo has attempted to end the controversy surrounding President Kennedy's autopsy and credited Finck's 1965 report as adding up to "undeniable proof".

ACQUISITIONS AND PROJECTS:

Collecting was slow again this year with few major acquisitions. Dr. Frank Townsend, former Director of the AFIP and member of the Board of Governors donated many of his personal papers which illustrate his role at the AFIP and in aerospace pathology. Dr. Lent Johnson donated a set of reprints of the late Dr. Hans Smetana. Due to his wife, we acquired the papers of Dr. Milton Helpern of the New York City Medical Examiner's Office. Several people and institutions donated historic medical books for the museum library and the staff began considering a project to catalog the entire book collection.

The computerized inventory and finding aid project started in 1989 continued. Greg Heltzer, a DOD Science & Engineering Apprentice Program student, worked on Anita McGee's papers from the Russo-Japanese war. Volunteers assisted the staff with research on Civil War collections, Army Signal Corps photographs and the AFIP Historical Files. The AFIP Historical Files is a collection of information on the AFIP since it was founded. Records that had been collected and held by Records Repository, the Medical Illustration Service Library and the Museum have been merged and arranged in alphabetical order with a folder listing and are now available for use. If anyone has material that might be suitable, please contact the archivist. Gary Masters of the Casualty Care Research Center, USUHS continued arranging the Kenneth Swan Collection of Vietnam-era trauma slides for eventual publication. Dr. Swan visited the archives and agreed to help with the project. A NMHM audiovisual collection was begun with films transferred from CAME during the 1980's as its nucleus. It will continue to grow as WRAMC-TV transfers their obsolete films to us. Assistance in setting up a database and dating films was provided by Sara Richards of the National Library of Medicine. The combination shelf list and inventory of the archives is still continuing will eventually serve as the basis for a 'guide' to the OHA collections.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

Exhibit support was provided for the series of exhibits at the Pentagon with Rhode writing "Yellow Fever and Walter Reed", "Typhus in the World Wars" and "Malaria". Dr. Stocker's project for an AFIP Oral History continued with Dr. C. Stuart Kennedy of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program at Georgetown University doing the interviews. This year's

participants were Drs. Cowart, Earle, Helwig, Irey, F Johnson, TC Jones, Karnei, McMeekin, Mostofi, Stowell, Townsend and Weiss. Most of the interviews were filmed by WRAMC-TV and are available as transcripts or videotapes.

In the spring, Rhode accompanied Paul Sledzik, Anatomical Collections Curator to Utah to give professional advice and assist in packing the Shupe collection. In September, Rhode attended the Society of American Archivists annual meeting in Montreal. This fall he became a member of the Steering Committee for the DC Picture Group.

The OHA continued "fees for services" to recover costs. At the present, this consists of charging for duplicating services. There has been no drop in requests.