Guide to the Crawford W. Long Collection

NMAH.AC.0120

Robert S. Harding, archivist and Grace Angle, volunteer

1984
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Crawford W. Long Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.0120
Date: 1897
Extent: 0.5 Cubic feet (3 boxes)
Creator: Taylor, Frances Long, Mrs. Long, Crawford Williamson, Dr., 1815-1878
Language: English
Summary: The collection documents Crawford W. Long’s use of sulphuric ether on a patient. The materials include glass plate negatives, correspondence, printed documents, and photprints.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
The collections was donated by Mrs. Frances Long Taylor in 1921.

Provenance
The collection was transferred from the Division of Medical Sciences (now the Division of Medicine and Science) on February 15, 1985. Four of the five pamphlets were given by Dr. Long's daughter, Mrs. Frances Long Taylor, in 1921 and the provenance of Senate Document No. 60 of the 69th Congress, 1st Session, a record of the proceedings in Statuary Hall on the presentation of a statue of Dr. Long, is not known.

Processing Information

Preferred Citation
Crawford W. Long Collection, 1841-1926, Archives Center, National Museum of American History

Restrictions
Collection is open for research.
Biographical / Historical

Crawford Williamson Long was born November 1, 1815, in Danielsville, Georgia, the son of James and Elizabeth Ware. He was a studious boy who entered Franklin College (now the University of Georgia) at fourteen and graduated in 1835, second in his class. After teaching one year he began to read medicine, first under a preceptor, later at Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky, and finally at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a degree in 1839.

Following eighteen months in New York, where he gained a reputation as a skillful surgeon, he began to practice in Jefferson, a village in Jackson County, Georgia. In August 1842, Dr. Long married Caroline Swain, the niece of Governor David Lowry Swain of North Carolina.

During the early 1840's laughing gas was the subject of much discussion and a number of demonstrations of its effects on volunteers. In January, 1842 several of Long's friends induced him to let them have a nitrous oxide frolic. No nitrous oxide was available but Long offered sulphuric ether as a substitute, explaining to his friends that it was equally exhilarating and as safe as nitrous oxide. After observing that the young men who had inhaled the sulphuric ether did not experience pain, Dr. Long decided to test its ability to produce insensitivity in his practice.

On March 30, 1842, Dr. Long administered sulphuric ether to James Venable and removed a small tumor from his neck. This was the first recorded surgical procedure using inhalation anaesthesia. On June 6 he removed another tumor from Venable's neck and on July 3 amputated a boy's toe. By September Long had performed eight operations using ether as the anaesthetic. This experience with ether was not published until December, 1849 as a result of the controversy over W. T. G. Morton's claim to priority in its discovery. At that time Dr. Long described his first five operations using ether in a paper in the Southern Medical and Surgical Journal under the title "An Account of the First Use of Sulphuric Ether by Inhalation as an Anaesthetic in Surgical Operations."

In 1850 Crawford Long moved to Athens, Georgia, where he immediately acquired a large surgical practice. He died there on June 16, 1878. In 1910 an obelisk was erected to his memory in Athens and in 1926 Georgia placed his statue in Statuary Hall in the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

The collection includes five publications: a biographical sketch; personal recollections of a contemporary pharmacist, together with correspondence and documentation of Long's priority in the use of ether; a paper read before the Johns Hopkins Historical Society; the proceedings in Statuary Hall when Crawford Long's statue was unveiled; and a memorial to Dr. Long published by the University of Pennsylvania.

Also included are an original letter (dated December 3, 1911) from Dudley W. Buxton to Mrs. Taylor, Dr. Long's daughter, regarding a paper he had read before the Royal Academy of Medicine, and glass plate photonegatives and one film negative, with corresponding photographic prints, of a number of letters attesting to Dr. Long's use of sulphuric ether as an anaesthetic on approximate or specific dates.
Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Anesthesia
- Medical sciences
- Physicians

Types of Materials:
- Photographs -- Black-and-white negatives -- Glass -- 1890-1920
- Photographs -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin -- 19th-20th century

Names:
- Edward VII, King
## Container Listing

1 Book  
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Foy, George, M.D. Crawford Williamson Long, M.D. *The Discoverer of Ether Anaesthesia. A Biographical Sketch.* , 1903  
1 Document  
Book bound in blue leather, 17 pp. Reprinted from Janus. undated, but autographed by Foy on first page, 8 June 1903. S.I. accession no. 66216. With exhibit label stating that this is one of three copies which were bound in limp blue leather, and stamped in gold for presentation to King Edward VII, because of his interest in anesthesia. |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Jacobs, Joseph, Phar. D. Dr. Crawford W. Long. *The Distinguished Physician Pharmacist.* Atlanta, Georgia. , 1919  
1 Book  
| Box 1, Folder 4 | University of Pennsylvania. *Memorial to Dr. Crawford W. Long...An Account of the Ceremonies... Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania*, 1912 April  
1 Book  
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Young, Hugh H. "Long, the Discoverer of Anaesthesia. A Presentation of His Original Documents," *The Johns Hopkins Historical Bulletin, 77-78.*, 1897  
1 Document  
Reprint, 22 pp. (August September 1897). U.S.N.M. Cat. No. 1086 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Photoprints, from glass plate and film negatives , undated  
17 Photographic prints  
copies of letters relating to the use of ether as an anaesthetic by Dr. Long, attesting to the approximate or specific date of its use. Location of original letters unknown. |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Original letter from Dudley W. Buxton to Mrs. Taylor, Dr. Long's daughter, regarding a paper he read before the Royal Academy of Medicine, 3 December 1911 |
| Box 2 | Negatives (glass and film)  
1 glass negative (14" x 17") |
| Box 2, Item 8; Box 2, Item 7; Box 2, Item 1 | De Laperrier, 1854 |
| Box 2, Item 2 | Mary E. Mare, 1846, 1854 |
| Box 2, Item 3 | James E. Hayes, 1854 |
| Box 2, Item 4 | Thurmond, 1853 |
| Box 2, Item 5 | Dr. Groves, undated |
| Box 2, Item 6 | Dr. Long, undated |
| Box 2, Item 9 | Stapler, 1853 |
| Box 2, Item 10 | Rawls, undated |
| Box 2, Item 11 | Camak, 1878 |
| Box 2, Item 12 | J.M. Venable, 1842 |
| Box 2, Item 13 | Vinson, 1849 |
| Box 2, Item 14 | Mrs. Carlton, undated |
| Box 2, Item 15 | Thompson, 1854 |
| Box 2, Item 16 | Rawls #2 |
| Box 2, Item 17 | James H. Hayes, 1853 December |
| Box 2, Item 18 | James E. Hayes, 1854 |

| Box 3 | Photonegatives |
|       | 17 glass negatives |
|       | 1 negatives (photographic) |