

American Medical Center for Burma Records

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Library of Congress

Prepared by J. Butler



Manuscript Division, Library of
Congress

Washington, D.C.

2010

Contact information: <http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/mss/address.html>

Finding aid encoded by Library of
Congress Manuscript Division, 2010

Finding aid URL: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/eadmss.ms010275>

Collection Summary

Title: American Medical Center for Burma Records

Span Dates: 1945-1966

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1959-1965)

ID No.: MSS48058

Creator: American Medical Center for Burma

Extent: 9,000 items; 35 containers plus 1 oversize; 7 linear feet

Language: Collection material in English

Repository: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Abstract: Organization incorporated and based in New York to support Gordon Stifler Seagrave and the Namkham Hospital in Burma. Correspondence, administrative and financial records, clippings, magazines, subject files, maps, and other papers relating mainly to Seagrave's medical work in Burma.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People

Brown, Rothwell H.--Correspondence.
Dooley, Thomas A. (Thomas Anthony), 1927-1961.
Ellison, Fanny McConnell--Correspondence.
Everton, John Scott--Correspondence.
Key, David McKendree, 1900-1988--Correspondence.
Newhall, Joseph F.--Correspondence.
Newhall, Ruth--Correspondence.
Olmanson, Barbara--Correspondence.
Olmanson, Myron Donald--Correspondence.
Oram, Harold L., 1907-1990--Correspondence.
Radvin, R. S.--Correspondence.
Reinholt, Haldor--Correspondence.
Rich, John F.--Correspondence.
Seagrave, Gordon Stifler, 1897-1965--Correspondence.
Seagrave, Gordon Stifler, 1897-1965.
Seagrave, Marion--Correspondence.
Seagrave, Sterling--Correspondence.
Wilson, Howard P.--Correspondence.

Organizations

American Medical Center for Burma.
Midwives and Nurses Training School (Namkhan, Burma)
Namkham Hospital.
Peace Corps (U.S.)

Subjects

Hospitals--Burma--Namkhan.
Medicine--Burma--Namkhan.
Nurses--Burma--Namkhan.

Places

Burma--Politics and government.
Namkhan (Burma)--History.

United States--Foreign relations--20th century.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The records of the American Medical Center for Burma, an organization incorporated and based in New York to support Gordon Stifler Seagrave and the Namkham Hospital in Burma, were given to the Library of Congress by the center in 1966-1967. Additional material was given by Weston Seagrave in 1967 and by Esther N. Mertins in 1968.

Processing History

The records of the American Medical Center for Burma were arranged and described in 1966. The finding aid was revised in 2010.

Transfers

Items have been transferred from the Manuscript Division to other custodial divisions of the Library. Sound recordings have been transferred to the Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division. Some photographs have been transferred to the Prints and Photographs Division. All transfers are identified in these divisions as part of the American Medical Center for Burma Records.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of the American Medical Center for Burma is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The records of the American Medical Center for Burma are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, American Medical Center for Burma Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

Gordon Stifler Seagrave

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
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1897, Mar. 18	Born, Rangoon, Burma
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1917	A.B., Denison University, Granville, Ohio
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1920	Married Marion Grace Morse
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1921	M.D., Johns Hopkins University Medical School, Baltimore, Md.
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1922-1965	Practiced medicine, Namkham Hospital, Namkhan, Burma, with a four-year absence from 1942 to 1946
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1930	Published <i>Waste-Basket Surgery</i> . Philadelphia and Boston: Judson Press
1938	Published <i>Tales of a Waste-Basket Surgeon</i> . Philadelphia and Boston: Judson Press
1942-1946	Served in United States Army Medical Corps, first as Major and later as Lieutenant Colonel
1943	Published <i>Burma Surgeon</i> . New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
1946	Published <i>Burma Surgeon Returns</i> . New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
1955	Published <i>My Hospital in the Hills</i> . New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
1960	Published <i>Life of a Burma Surgeon</i> . New York: Ballantine Books
1965, Mar. 29	Died, Namkhan, Burma

Scope and Content Note

The records of the American Medical Center for Burma span the years 1945-1966, with the bulk of the material falling between 1959-1965. The American Medical Center for Burma, with a main office in New York, was a nonsectarian, nonprofit organization founded in 1946 to support the Namkham Hospital and Midwives and Nurses Training School founded by Gordon Stifler Seagrave, the famed "Burma Surgeon," in Namkhan, Burma, in 1922. The American Medical Center for Burma was reorganized in 1959 to give even greater financial support to Seagrave and the Namkham Hospital. The records of the American Medical Center for Burma consist primarily of correspondence between Seagrave and the staff, officers, and Board of Directors of the organization and are organized into the following series: [General Correspondence](#), [Special Correspondence](#), [Financial Contributors' Correspondence](#), [Newspaper Clippings](#), [Printed Matter](#), [Miscellany](#), [Addition](#), and [Oversize](#). The main body of correspondence is supported by administrative files of the organization, newspaper clippings, printed matter, financial records, and a galley proof of one of Seagrave's books, *Life of a Burma Surgeon*, published in 1960 by Ballantine Books.

The correspondence between the American Medical Center for Burma and Seagrave for the years 1946-1954 was originally held by the W. W. Norton Publishing Company and is the smallest segment of the records. With the reorganization of the American Medical Center for Burma in 1959, the records and files become more detailed and comprehensive. Following the death of Seagrave in 1965, the American Medical Center for Burma dissolved itself as a corporate entity.

Because Seagrave's personal papers were destroyed during World War II, the records of the American Medical Center for Burma became the only readily available source of material concerning Seagrave and his work at the Namkham Hospital. After his death, the Namkham Hospital was nationalized by the Burmese government. Any records at the hospital then became the possession of the Burmese government.

The records are rich in material concerning the last twenty years of Seagrave's life. His activities as a physician, his role in American foreign policy, and his financial difficulties with the hospital, with the procurement of supplies for the hospital, and with the Burmese government, are documented in the collection. His correspondence with the staff, officials, and Board of Directors of the American Medical Center for Burma, and his correspondence with his family and with members of the Burmese government, copies of which are generally included in the American

Medical Center for Burma's files, indicate the problems involved in supporting, administering, and directing this charitable institution.

The files of the American Medical Center for Burma are concerned not only with Seagrave directly, but also with the problem of fund-raising and the financial support of the Namkham Hospital. The records contain correspondence, notes, and memoranda exchanged by members of the organization with officials of the Burmese government and members of the hospital staff at Namkham, especially the American doctors and their spouses who were sent to Burma by the American Medical Center for Burma to aid and assist Seagrave.

Of special interest in this collection is correspondence concerning the growth of the American Peace Corps in the 1960s, Thomas A. Dooley, revolutions in some of the semi-autonomous states of Burma against the central government, and the difficulties encountered by foreigners traveling or living in Burma.

In addition to Seagrave other correspondents include Joseph F. Newhall, Ruth Newhall, Barbara Olmanson, Myron Donald Olmanson, Marion Seagrave, and Sterling Seagrave. The collection also contains the correspondence of members of the American Medical Center for Burma such as Rothwell H. Brown, Fanny McConnell Ellison, John Scott Everton, David McKendree Key, Harold L. Oram, R. S. Radvin, Haldor Reinholt, John F. Rich, and Howard P. Wilson.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in eight series:

- [General Correspondence, 1946-1965](#)
- [Special Correspondence, 1955-1966](#)
- [Financial Contributors' Correspondence, 1946-1965](#)
- [Newspaper Clippings, 1959-1965](#)
- [Printed Matter, 1948-1965](#)
- [Miscellany, 1946-1963](#)
- [Addition, 1947-1964](#)
- [Oversize, circa 1962](#)

Description of Series

<i>Container</i>	<i>Series</i>
BOX 1-5	<u>General Correspondence, 1946-1965</u> Letters to and from Seagrave and the staff, officials, and Board of Directors of the American Medical Center for Burma. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 6-12	<u>Special Correspondence, 1955-1966</u> Administrative correspondence files of the American Medical Center for Burma. Arranged alphabetically by subject and therein chronologically.
BOX 13-14	<u>Financial Contributors' Correspondence, 1946-1965</u> Correspondence and records concerning donations received from the public and replies to the donors. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 15-16	<u>Newspaper Clippings, 1959-1965</u> Newspaper clippings concerning Seagrave and the Namkham Hospital. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 17	<u>Printed Matter, 1948-1965</u> Magazines, articles, press clippings and releases, pamphlets, and journals concerning Seagrave. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 18	<u>Miscellany, 1946-1963</u> Memoranda, financial records, maps, and galley proofs. Arranged alphabetically by type of material.
BOX 19-36	<u>Addition, 1947-1964</u> Administrative files, corporate records, hospital drawings, and miscellaneous material. Arranged alphabetically by administrative files and corporate records and therein chronologically.
BOX OV 1	<u>Oversize, circa 1962</u> Hospital drawings. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.

Container List

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
BOX 1-5	General Correspondence, 1946-1965 Letters to and from Seagrave and the staff, officials, and Board of Directors of the American Medical Center for Burma. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 1	1946-1949
BOX 2	1950-1959
BOX 3	1960-1961, Aug.
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BOX 6-12	Special Correspondence, 1955-1966 Administrative correspondence files of the American Medical Center for Burma. Arranged alphabetically by subject and therein chronologically.
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BOX 6	American Medical Center for Burma <i>Bulletin</i>
BOX 6	Applications for Namkham Hospital personnel
BOX 6	Ballantine Books
BOX 7	Board of Directors
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BOX 8	Executive committee
BOX 8	Fortieth anniversary of Seagrave
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BOX 9	Hollingsworth, Dr. and Mrs. R. T.
BOX 9	Honorary awards
BOX 9	<i>Internationally Yours</i>
BOX 9	Inter-office memoranda
BOX 9	Key, David M.
BOX 9	Letters to the editor
BOX 9	Marshall, Clifford B.
BOX 9	Medical advisory council
BOX 9	Moses, Mrs. Henry L.
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Special Correspondence, 1955-1966

<i>Container</i>	<i>Contents</i>
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BOX 10	Newhall, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph
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BOX 10	Olmanson, Dr. and Mrs. Donald
BOX 10	<i>One Hundred and One Association</i>
BOX 11	Prioleau fund-raising drive
BOX 11	Public relations
BOX 11	Radvin, Dr. R. S.
BOX 11	<i>Reader's Digest</i>
BOX 11	Reinholt, Haldor
BOX 12	Rich, John and staff
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BOX 12	Rockefeller, John D., 1937-
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BOX 12	<i>Saturday Evening Post</i>
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BOX 13	1946-1962
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BOX 15	1959-1961
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BOX 17	Printed Matter, 1948-1965 Magazines, articles, press clippings and releases, pamphlets, and journals concerning Seagrave. Arranged chronologically.
BOX 17	1948-1965
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Miscellany, 1946-1963

Container	Contents
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BOX OV 1	Oversize, circa 1962 Hospital drawings. Arranged and described according to the series, containers, and folders from which the items were removed.
BOX OV 1	Addition
BOX OV 1	Administrative files
BOX OV 1	Chronological file

BOX OV 1	Miscellaneous material including 1964 administrative file, AID file, financial reports, photographs, hospital drawings (circa 1962), and reprints of articles about Seagrave, circa 1962 (Container 33)
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